

## Bibi cherishes personal milestone

Receiving her first tertiary qualification in the presence of her family, 18 years after completing high school was a momentous occasion for Rukshana Bibi.

Amidst 274 other graduates, Bibi graduated this month from Fiji National University's (FNU), National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) with an Advanced Diploma of Accounting.

Despite her reserved nature, pride and humility reflected greatly in Bibi's eyes as she hugged her youngest daughter after the graduation ceremony.

"I am so happy. No words can describe how much this means to me," she said.

"I finished secondary school about 18 years ago and now to be graduating from university with a certificate to prove my qualification is something I am so proud of."

"I feel like Superwoman, I feel like I can conquer anything right now," Bibi shared with a laugh.

Originally from Sigatoka, Bibi is now married with three daughters and lives in Lautoka.

"After high school, I started working for a tax agent in Lautoka and this is where I gained experience, even though I did not have any qualifications."

"My husband and workmates kept encouraging me to enroll in the NTPC course and I finally decided to undertake the programme when I realised that I would be learning a field that I was already working in."

"During my studies, I was blessed to have been offered a position at another similar company in Lautoka and I have now joined that tax agent firm."

Bibi said her work experience contributed to her ease in adapting to the student learning environment.

"When I started, I was able to apply my work experiences to my studies and once the lecturers started teaching I could easily relate and understand the theoretical work as I had already done the practical component whilst I was working."

"So for me it was like studying in reverse, I went out and did the real-life work experience part before I came back into a classroom to learn everything else."



*Rukshana Bibi and her youngest daughter after receiving her diploma during the FNU May 2019 graduation.*

"I am happy that I was supported throughout my studies by my workmates and family."

She said balancing her role as a wife, mother, student and worker was a challenge she had to overcome.

"Some people will say that it was easy for them, and if it was, then that's good," Bibi said.

"But I will be honest and say that it was quite a challenge for me because at times I felt like I was being a student more than a mother, or a worker more than a wife, so of course I made it my business to find that balance between my many roles and responsibilities."

"In all of this, I am most grateful for my husband, who was the most supportive and made sure I was able to focus on my studies."

Bibi said now that she had attained a diploma, she would continue working and save in order to further her academic qualifications.