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Rotorua a good place to raise family

By Cherie Taylor

Rotorua is a nice and peaceful place for Indian immigrant Samir Shah and his young family to live.

The 36-year-old research scientist will be sharing his culture, food and life settling in New Zealand with people at the Neighbours in Our Community meeting being held at RAVE on Friday, October 28.

He has been in New Zealand for seven years, settling in Rotorua six years ago after spending one year in Auckland. He comes from Baroda, in western India.

While he works at Scion his wife Shital Shah runs an Indian shop in Eruera St called Shreeji Food and Spices. The couple have a 5-year-old daughter Dhairya.

Samir says New Zealand, especially Rotorua is the perfect place to raise a family.

"It's a good country. There is less population here than in India. It's a beautiful country offering good opportunities for myself and my family," he says.

However, he did have a few difficulties with the language when he arrived even though he was educated in an English university.

"It was a bit hard at first because I'm wasn't very practiced at speaking English — it wasn't too bad though," he says. "The people here are very friendly and were every helpful. They value the cultures from different countries."

Another issue which he soon resolved on arrival was where to buy vegetarian food, Samir says.

"Most of the Indian food available was from northern Indian," he says. "But now I know where to look for vegetarian

food."

He has been back to India twice and family have visited them here but Rotorua is home, Samir says.

"It's really nice and peaceful here and a good place for families," he says.

India borders Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, Nepal and Pakistan. It is the world's largest democracy with a diverse population, geography and climate. India is the world's second most populous country with about 1.2 billion people and the world's 7th largest country in area — a third the size of America.

The majority of Gujaratis from Baroda are vegetarian.

Samir will be speaking and taking along samples of Indian food for people to try at RAVE on Hinemaru St next Friday, October 28 starting at 12pm for an hour.

The meeting is free to attend.



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NEIGHBOUR: Rotorua's Samir Shah, 36, is speaking at Neighbours in Our Community at RAVE next Friday.

PICTURE: ANDREW WARNER