

Second-generation immigrant Indian's identity formation: An intersectional study of pan-ethnicity, gender, and religion

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Abstract

This paper explores the multi-dimensional Asian American identity of immigrant Indians from their interview responses. Pan-ethnic identity of Indians in the US as Asian Americans, the Mar Thoma Church community for religious identity, and the second-generation Patel family's union formation in terms of gender identity will be analyzed to find out the reasons behind their choice of a particular identity. Historical frameworks like Asian American movement and theoretical frameworks like identity formation theories will be used to interpret the reasons behind the choice of the identity of Indian Americans. For analyzing interview data, methodological frameworks, including thematic and statistical analysis, will be used. Results show the reasons behind their choice of different identities, including professional advantage and their future directives as part of hypotheses of Indian Americans as they merge with the American identity as part of cultural assimilation, in other cases, retain their Asian-ness beyond Americanized identity and sometimes go beyond both American, Asian identity to restate their Indian ethnicity. To conclude, the identity of Indian Americans remains evenly poised and keeps on changing due to the requirements of the ever-evolving world.

Keywords: cultural assimilation; culture shock; Asian Americans; model minority; Americanization

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Introduction

“They can not represent themselves; they must be represented” – Karl Marx in Edward Said's *Orientalism*. This line reflects the problem of the representation of the ethnic identity of Indians in America. It all comes down to the point of representation of whom by whom. Generally, the representation is administrated by the authorities or the ruling class, race, gender, or religion in power. In the history of Asian American immigration to the US, most of the time, the immigrants were labeled by the authorities in terms of their ethnic identity. The representation of identity by the authorities may be allowed if their presumed identity of the ruled people matches their real identity. However, problems arise when the presumed identity is often superficial and leads to an identity crisis for the people to whom the identity is allotted.

“Why did some people identify as their national identity plus American?” “Why did some people identify themselves as Asian Americans?” These two questions posed by Varghese (2022) show the problem of identity that the ethnic Asian people living in America face while their “acculturation” process takes place along with the overarching threat of “culture shock” at the same time. The first question is directed to national identities like the Indian or the Chinese to be attached to American identity to form Indian-American or Chinese-American, respectively. The second question is directed to pan-Asian identity to be formed along with American identity as Asian Americans. These two questions provide the basis for critically analyzing the multifaceted identity formation process of Indian Americans in terms of both national and pan-ethnic identity. The intersectional approach is used to critically comment on the reasons for choosing a particular



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identity in terms of race, gender, and religion. The second-generation Indians in America are fragmented in the formation of a triple identity of being an Indian, Asian, and American. This paper will demonstrate the reasons behind their choice of different identities to assimilate wholly with the American identity by subscribing to either White or Black identity or reinforcing their Indianness by identifying themselves with Asian Americans. The analysis will be organized in terms of its beginning with the analysis of important factors of pan-ethnicity and then of gender and religion consecutively as part of the thematic analysis. Finally, in conclusion, the final results of the future directives on the identity of Indian Asian Americans will be justified by statistical analysis.

The three important historical frameworks are provided with a timeline and cause and effect in Table 1. In the US, the “black-white” binary connotes all the other races except white as black. Even “yellow peril” and “model minority” are the same terms to define Asian Americans in two different views where “yellow” is considered a degeneration and “model” is considered an idea to emulate whites for all other minorities (Dhingra & Rodriguez, 2014, pp. 38–39).

Table 1.
Important historical frameworks

Serial	Important historical frameworks	Timeline	Cause and effect
1	Yellow Peril /Anti-Asian fear	1850-1940	1 is Cause of 2
2	Asian American Movement	1960s to 1970s	2 is effect of 1 and 3
3	Model Minority Myth	1950s to 1960s	3 is Effect 2

Methods

An online interview was taken via Zoom meeting where the participants of each target community were asked separately about their primary ethnic identity and the reasons behind choosing that particular identity. The participants were selected from different Indian American social networking websites, including Facebook. Responses were recorded in the following Table 2. Detailed responses were analyzed further in the following thematic and statistical analysis section in terms of their relevance to racialization in terms of the intersectional approach of ethnicity, gender, and religion. The identities are presented in the following table as claimed by the interviewees, and not all of these are officially recognized ethnic identity markers as many of the identities (e.g., Christians, Indian Americans) do not conform to the restricted framework of ethnic identity as “Asian Indians” in the US census. The target communities include first- and second-generation Indian Americans, the Patel community, the Mar Thoma Church community and H-1B visa holders, and their wives of H-4 visas. Fifteen participants were selected for each target community, and a total of 90 participated. First-generation interviewees were at least above 45 years old, and the second-generation were between 22 to 35 years old. First-generation interviewees held a graduate degree, while the second-generation held a higher secondary degree. The consent of the interviewees to participate in this interview was taken beforehand. Participants of the requisite categories were selected from social networks and invited for interviews. Only the responses of the maximum number of participants in each category on their ethnic identity are presented here.

The target communities are chosen in terms of immigrant Indians in America in general for racial identity, Patel community in America for religious identity, and H-B1 male and H-4 female visa holders for gender identity. As the race of Indian Americans is a common concern for all of them, the target community is set as the whole Indian community irrespective of class, gender, religion, and other determiners. For religious identity, the Mar Thoma church community consists of two generations, where the older generation is loyal to Kerala based church and the younger to the Evangelical Christian church providing religious diversity. For gender entity, the Patel community is selected as they (both male and female) represent diverse ethnic affinity in their union formation activities. H-B1 and H-4 visa holders are chosen because they provide a

professional viewpoint on gender. In all four target communities, first- and second-generation responses will be evaluated to determine their affinity to their ethnic identity or beyond.

Both thematic analyses of the intersection of racial, gender, and religious identities and statistical analysis will be used. The rationale for choosing the methodologies include thematic analysis, or qualitative analytical method will be used to show how ethnic identity is constructed through the intermingling of themes of racial, gender, and religious identities with ethnic identity.

The research question of whether second-generation Indian Americans have a separate pan-ethnic identity from Asian Americans, or they maintain an Americanized identity or retain Asian-ness or go beyond both Asian and American identity to form separate Indian identity will be justified in terms of the following four hypotheses: 1) Indians in America have a separate identity as Asian Americans from East and South East Asians, 2) The second generation Indian-Americans assimilate with union formation activities in terms gender identity, 3) the disagreement and negotiation in religious practices and social engagements among generations of Indians as Asian Americans form social engagement of multigenerational Christian congregation, 4) Immigration policies of US stimulate H-1B visa holder Indian males to assimilate with Americans while H-4 holder wives of H-1B retain Indianness.

Results and Discussion

Now the result in Table 2 will be analyzed to find out the reasons behind the intersectional choices of identity made by participants to justify the claims of the four hypotheses.

Table 2.
Result of the interview

Generations of Indians (Ethnic identity formation)	1. Indians have separate identity as "Indian Americans" (Race)	2. Union formation activities for Indian Patel community in US (Gender)	3. Mar Thoma church community of Indians (Religion)
First Generation Indians	Black/White	*Indian American	Mar Thoma Church based Indian (Kerala based)
Second Generation Indians	Indian American (Non-Indian demographic setting) Asian American (Indian demographic setting)	American	Christian American (Evangelical Christian)
Patel Male (Both first and second generation)	N/A	Americanized identity	N/A
Patel Female first generation	N/A	Patel/Indian identity	ethnic N/A
Second generation Professional H-B1 visa Male	American	Asian American identity N/A	N/A
Professional H-4 visa Female	**Indian ethnic identity (Under Trump) **American identity (Under Biden)	N/A	N/A

Note: *In actuality Black or White, assigned by govt. **most answered both
Source: (Shafi, 2023)

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From the final result in Table 3 of the comparative analysis of interview results and its comparison with the three hypotheses, the first two hypotheses are proven partially and the third fully. It can be claimed that the identity of Indians as second-generation Asian Americans goes beyond their Asian and American dual identity in two directions.

Table 3.
Final result of the three hypotheses

Serial	Descriptions of each of the hypotheses	Final decision (Yes/No)
1	Indians in America have separate identity as Asian Americans from East and South East Asians,	Both Yes and No Yes: Indian American (Non-Indian demographic setting) No: Asian American (Indian demographic setting)
2.	The second generation Indian-Americans assimilate with union formation activities in terms gender identity	Both Yeas and No Yes: for Male Patels- Americanized identity No: for Female Patels- Patel/Indian ethnic identity
3.	The disagreement and negotiation in religious practices and social engagements among generations of Indians as Asian Americans form social engagement of multigenerational Christian congregation.	Yes Yes, for the Second-generation Mar Thoma community who identify themselves as Christians unlike the first generation's ethno-religious Mar Thoma (ethnic) identity

Source: (Shafi, 2023)

Table 4, in one way, restates the ethnic Indian identity by reinforcing their Indian origin in union formation activities by Indian females. On the other way, the Christian or American identity is reinforced by second-generation Mar Thoma churchgoers in their religious practice influenced by Evangelical Christian beliefs with more civil exposure. Table 4 shows the complexities of the primary identity of Indians in America as multi-dimensional religious, ethnoreligious, racial, or phenotypic identities supersede the two extremities of American and Indian ethnic identity alongside Asian American pan-ethnic identity. The Indians, as Asian Americans, continuously struggle to reinforce their ethnic identity as Indians or South Asians to separate themselves from other ethnic Asian American groups like East Asians or South-East Asians. The “unintended consequences” of the Immigration and Nationality Act led to the rise in numbers of Asian American immigrants, especially the Chinese and the Indians. The Diversity Visa (DV) and H-4 Visa also were responsible for offering lucrative professional opportunities for Indian men and women.

Table 4.
Names of identity and their types

Names of identity	Types of identity
Black	Racial/phenotypic identity
White	Racial/phenotypic identity
Evangelical Christian	Religious identity
Mar Thoma Christianity (Kerala)	Ethno-Religious identity
Asian American	Pan-ethnic identity
American	National identity
Indian (ethnic)	Ethnic identity

Both thematic and statistical analysis of the Immigration and Nationality Act, H-4 Visa, and demographic locations of Indian-Asian Americans will be used to justify whether the above-stated hypotheses are justified or not.

The analysis of important factors, including the intersection of pan-ethnicity, gender, race, and religion with immigration policy, ethnonational status, and cultural cosmopolitanism, will be vital in the final results of the future directives of restructuring of the identity of Indian Asian Americans in the second decade of 21st century.

Race and ethnicity: Immigrant Indians in America in general

The question is whether Indians have a separate identity as Asian Americans from East and South-East Asians. From interview results (Table 1), racial identity formation is seen to be intersectioned with gender, ethnicity, and religion. The first-generation interviewees racially identify themselves as either “black” or “white,” which are socially constructed identities on the cognitive level. To add to Purkayastha's (2005a) reasons for racialization, including family connections across the globe and they are being ethnic consumers, varied ethno-geographical setting all over the US is the most important reasons for the racialization of second-generation interviewees in the second decade of the 21st century. One group from a non-Indian ethno-geographical setting mostly identified as “Indian Americans,” taking ethnonational identity, while other groups from an Indian ethno-geographical setting proclaimed to be “Asian-Americans” using pan-ethnic Asian identity. The interviewees talked about historical, religious, and phenotypic differences, which continue to racialize them in largely non-Indian settings due to culture shock even after fulfilling assimilation measures, including membership in non-Indian civic bodies, as described in Purkayastha (2005a). US census did not recognize Indians as “Indian Americans” as opposed to the other Asian sub-groups like South-East Asians and East Asians (Kibria in Schachter, 2014). Even South Asians did not have a separate identity as an Asian sub-ethnic group and were termed as “ambiguously non-White,” according to Shankar (1998).

The 1990 US census (Hoeffel, Rastogi, Kim, & Shahid, 2012) also shows that first-generation Indians categorized as Asians are more likely to reject the Asian identity and accept either White or Black identity to assimilate with the majority of the host country. The presumed or subjective racialization in generalizing East and South East Asian image also does not match with that of Indians due to ascriptive and phenotypic differences. Unlike them, the second-generation Indian interviewees claimed to be highly skilled and well qualified in education, but still, they failed to assimilate as these assimilation measures were wrong (Kibria, 2000). Indians are further otherized as they are now recognized as “Asian Indian” in the US census, but none of the interviewees claimed to be so. Rather, they hold pour -soi or Being for Itself, active agentic identity due to their presence in larger numbers only trailing to China. First-generation Indians, in some cases, identify themselves as Black or White as their pan-ethnic identity as Asian American is often contested due to their phenotypic differences from other Asian American ethnic groups (Schachter, 2014). Another reason is that if the Indians identify themselves with pan-ethnic identity as Asian Americans through cultural assimilation, they are more exposed to racial discrimination, according to Kibria (1996). Most of the interviewees in the non-Indian demographic setting provide strategies in the interview to hold on to Indian ethnic identity as Indian-Americans during the Covid-19 pandemic by using various social media sites and online streaming apps like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar, etc., to connect with their relatives in India as well as Indian cultures. Indians are treated as “invaders,” and the Chinese co-exist with Whites as the model minority, so the Indians “blend in” with the Whites. Finally, the ethnographic context of first-generation Indians also facilitates their identity of merging with dominant Whites as only 25% of them live on the West Coast, and others are spread all over the US, whereas 50% of Chinese live on West Coast. As West Coast is a predominantly multi-ethnic region with more exposure to Asian Americans, 25% of all Indians living in the US identify themselves as Asian Americans. But the other 75% of Indians are spread out all over the rest of the US, mostly comprising of White majority states leading to their identification as White or Black.

Gender and ethnicity: Immigrant Patel community (Indian) in America

The second-generation Indians' identities have developed distinctively from their parents, on which religion often exerted a dramatic effect. Adding gender into Joshi's (2006) religion as an ethnic identifier mostly accounts for the interview responses on the formation of ethnic identity of second-generation Indians provides context for the Patel community. Gender is used by the second-generation Patel immigrant community of India to interact with union formation activities in the US. The Patel-American females are seen as conservative of the "authentic" Patel ethnicity while confronting Americanization or acculturation, according to Manohar (2008). Union formation is the process of cohabitation with probable marriage partners and/or direct marriage with a partner, here among Patel community immigrants of Indian origin in the US. The transformation of union formation is two-fold; identity-based and culture based. In the interview, while the first-generation Patel females equated themselves with rebellious female-led movie characters like Patricia Rivera who trained herself with military training and exacted vengeance on assaulters of her family in *Venganza Suicida* (1987), second generation focused on movies like *Bounty Maid* (2017), where Chinese female trio destroy underground money-laundering gang as agents. According to first-generation female interviewees, they liked Latino actresses more as opposed to Chinese actresses, as during the 1980s, Indians felt threatened by the Chinese who formed a pan-ethnicity of "Asian-American" with other East Asian neighbors. Patels are holding on to their ethnic identity as part of Being-for-Itself or active identity in the face of biculturalism. The gendered ethnicity of Indians is that of women whose conservative response in union formation activities includes cohabitation and marriage, and they present themselves as representatives of preserving Indian ethnic identity (Manohar, 2008). Second-generation Patel women interviewees claim that religious practice is taught to them as an essential part of female identity, which is supported by different minority rights groups. Nagel (1994) identifies ethnicity as a social construct where interaction and negotiation between the guest (India) and host (America) lead to cultural assimilation in Indian-ness merging with Americanization. "Gendered ethnicity and its corresponding interpretation of union formation are the agentic responses of Indians to their structural marginalization as a community of color in the United States" (Manohar, 2008, p. 212). The intersectional theory treats ethnicity as a multifaceted identity formed from the intersection of ethnic identity and host identity. Indians are, on the one hand, treated as model minorities by the dominant white people and, on the other hand, are condemned as foreigners and non-Americans due to their non-White phenotype of skin color. Manohar (2008) defines the ethnic identity construction of Indians as "Indians designate the Indian community and Indian families as private spaces- shaped in response to external ("public") forces and envisaged as being structurally distinct from their American counterparts" which is reflected on the views of first-generation Patel interviewees who believe that protecting their "Indianness" is essential for their active agentic roles. In accordance with Bhattacharjee's (1997) view of the protection policy of the first-generation to save their second-generation from the aggression of Americanization, the first-generation interviewees claim to keep on reinforcing the Indian ethnic identity on their children by advising them to watch movies and serials on Gujarati channels, Star Plus, etc., channels. Gender is constructed in a way that designates women as the role of preserver of Indian ethnic rituals and practices. Gupta (1997) draws the fine line of ethnic preservation for women, which includes being chaste and embodying Hindu culture through dress, religion, behavior, and demeanor, and most of the first-generation Patel interviewees consider these to be essential to preserve ethnic purity. Abraham (2000) provides reasons for domestic violence against South Asian immigrant women, including immigrant status. Within a larger intersectional ethnopolitical context, his findings interpret the identity formation of Indian American women here in this paper. Union formation is seen through different spectacles in terms of gendered ethnicity as the first-generation sees dating as an illicit affair between men and women, a sin and social embarrassment that sometimes led to domestic violence, according to second-generation Patel women interviewees. Along with dating, partying, drinking, and sexuality are also considered vices of Americanization, according to first-generation Patel interviewees. Furthermore, they claim that movies like *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* or *K3G* (2001) provide an excellent example of how Indian ethnicity is kept alive by *sangskari bahus* (Indian traditionally cultured wives) of both

first- and second-generation Indians like Jaya and Kajal in London. But there is a double standard in the judgment of first-generation Indians like Patels, who only apply these restrictions on social congregation on women and not men. Finally, there is the rhetoric said by one of the second-generation interviewees, “Do not marry a BMW!” which indicates the view of first-generation Patels who consider Black, Muslim, and White as not religiously right to marry a non-Hindu man who demonstrates the racialization of identity in terms of the intersection of race, gender, and religion.

Religion and ethnicity: Immigrant Mar Thoma (Christian) church community in America

The disagreement and negotiation in religious practices and social engagements among generations of Christian Indians take place as they form multigenerational Christian congregations. The first-generation interviewees followed Kerala based Christian church doctrines about their religious and ethnic identity, whereas the second generation formed different perceptions about Asian American to form a cognitive identity by getting influenced by the American Evangelical Christian community. It is the non-White racial status that barred first-generation Asian or Indian people from immigrating to the US. However, now for the second-generation Indians as Asian American, it is the Christian religious values and practices that incorporate them into Americanization while the first generation continues to follow the rituals ethnic Indian church of the Mar Thoma community. Joshi (2020) provides the context of the religious dimension of identity by connecting Christian privilege and White supremacy, whereas the interview responses of second-generation Indians show that Christian privilege is associated with colored Indian's assimilation with American hierarchy in terms of economic ascendancy. That provides the reason for the cultural and religious assimilation of second-generation Indian Mar Thoma communities as being Christians, as they claim in the interview that they enjoy more social, cultural, and economic privileges than other non-Christian Indian Americans. After the 9/11 attack, both generations claimed that they felt ‘safe’ being Christians even though their brownish skin color equated them with Muslim Indians who were constantly under severe scrutiny by US secret service agents-religious organizations (Kurien, 2013). Serving the needs of immigrants and the Evangelic community is the primary goal of the second generation. This social service defines them as both Christian and American at the same time. Both the generations and especially the second-generation, claimed that movies like *My Name Is Khan* show how traumatic experiences shaped the identity of Indian American Muslims and being Christians, Indian Americans can save their face from racial and religious attacks. The second generation is not given committee positions in the Mar Thoma Church, and they are not encouraged to become church pastors as opposed to the first generation. The first-generation Mar-Thoma Christians identified themselves ethnically as Indians or Malayali, and they have the “obligation” of going to Kerala and other parts of India to serve the needy, as more needy people live in India than in the US. Almost all the second-generation interviewees identify themselves primarily as Christians than Indian, Malayali, or Mar Thomaite. The American Evangelical community influences the second-generation thoughts on being Asian American by forming their Americanized and Christian identity rather than Asian American or Indian identity. Indian ethnic identity is generally associated with Hindu identity, which is an ethnoreligious identity, and American ethnic identity is usually associated with Christianity, which is also an ethnoreligious identity. To avoid getting generalized as “Hindus” or Indians and to avoid hate crimes, they identify themselves as Christians, an ethnonational identity. According to second-generation interviewees, their civil participation leads to their formation of an ‘Americanized’ identity as Christians by eliminating Asian or Indian identity. Unlike them, the first-generation, by reinforcing their Asian American identity, tries to hold on to the ‘pure’ Indian ethnoreligious identity in terms of their Mar Thoma religious practice. Being a Christian is more important than being a Mar Thomite as one's primary obligation is to obey and pray to Jesus Christ, according to second-generation interviewees.

Statistical analysis: Interview responses of H-B1 visa holders and their H-4 visa holders’ wives account for using the intersectional approach of the racialization of gender and ethnic identity of second-generation Indian Americans by immigration laws in the context of the second decade of

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the 21st century. The statistical analysis of Asian Americans, especially Indian Americans, will justify the claims made by the H-1B and H-4 visa holder interviewees that the laws, including the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, Diversity Visa, H-4 Visa, and RAISE act have influenced the Indian immigrants to integrate more with the American community to assert their identity as they choose whether to be known as Indian Americans, American Christians or Asian Americans. The following graphs and charts will provide a statistical basis for the acculturation of Indian Americans and show how the first generation's culture shock will turn out to be acculturation for the second generation.

Firstly, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was initially proposed to bring more skilled and educated immigrants from all over the globe who were the “expected immigrants” to maintain the “predominantly Anglo-Saxon European base” (Chisti, Hipsman, & Ball, 2015). That was formulated to maintain the entrance of predominantly White immigrants from Europe into America. However, the flow of “unintended immigrants,” who are mostly Asians, including Indians and Latinos, came to the United States according to (Chisti et al., 2015), as legal permanent residents among recent arrivals saw drastic growth from 2,97,000 in 1965 to around 1 million in mid-2000. This flow is considered an “unintended consequence” as instead of the intended predominantly White Europeans, most of the immigrants were from “unintended” Asians and Latinos.

Secondly, according to Chisti et al. (2015), Indians share 7.7% of all new legal permanent residents of the US as the second largest racial group after the Mexicans. That shows the tendency to assimilate with American identity as Asian Americans or Christians rather than Indian Americans or Hindus. The law changed the racial and ethnic community structures as the number of Hispanics and Asians started to rise from 18% and 6% in 2015 from 4% and 1% in 1965 and are expected to rise to 24% and 14%, respectively. In contrast, the whites of European origin were reduced to 62% from 84% and are expected to go down to 46% in 2065, according to pew projects.

Thirdly, the consequences were “unintended” as the US leaders tried to pursue people that the bill would not alter the demographic structure of the country by altering the original racial distribution of predominantly white people, but it was also changed. Due to the fall of the British Empire, the Western Hemisphere people stayed back in Europe due to economic recession and altered these parameters significantly. One-fourth of the professional groups, like doctors and engineers, were from the immigrants’ of 1965 law and their decedents. Indians and other Asian Americans are highly skilled workers and have made themselves acculturated as they are welcomed by the US government via the H-B1 visa with permanent residence and integrated into the US by reaping the harvest of their economic success according to Chisti et al. (2015). So, there are also positive way-out of this “unintended immigration”. However, the cultural question still looms over the issue of national identity.

Fourthly, the H-4 is a temporary, non-immigrant visa category for spouses and unmarried children under 21 years age-old individuals in one of the non-immigrant visa categories: H-1B (workers in a specialty occupation), and other professional groups including H-2A, H-2B, H-3. The H-4 visa shaped the lives of women who came to the US with this visa in many ways. The H-1B visa was given to highly skilled workers from India like Satya Nadella, CEO, Microsoft and Sundar Pichai, CEO, Google coming into the US, while H-4 visas were given to their spouses. Since 2001, 50.5% of H-B1 visas have been awarded to Indian nationals, according to the Pew Research Center (2015a).

According to H-1B holder interviewees, it was not only the skilled male workers shifting to the US, but also their whole families moved with him. Purkayastha (2005b) demonstrates the struggles of highly skilled Asian Indian women within the context of immigration policies, workplace, and household experiences, which provide insights into investigating further into the assimilation measures of Indian American women. Until 2015, it was legal to live in the US under the H-4 visa, but a work permit was not granted. As most of the H-B1 workers were Indians, and the tradition in India was that the highly skilled workers with highly educated backgrounds marry

highly educated women who are often highly skilled. So, the spouses were allowed to work only after six years of staying in the US under the H-4 visa in 2015 by the Obama administration. Under the Trump administration, the Reforming American Immigration for a Strong Economy (RAISE) Act in August 2017 was passed (Pew Research Center, 2019). The RAISE Act was initiated to decrease legal immigration to the United States by 50% by reducing the number of green cards. However, in 2019 under the Trump administration, this largely predominant women group lost their jobs. It is more likely that if the spouses of H-B1 workers are not allowed to work, they may lose their aspiration to work in the US, according to Miano, a lawyer for Save Job US. Under the Biden administration, the policy of Trump was reversed, and Diversity Visas and Green cards are being provided to Indians and other minority groups in Asia. Biden is proposing to provide permanent work permits to wives of H-1B visa holders, especially Indians without permanent citizenship.

This results in culture shock that the wives of H-B1 professionals go through, and H-4 visa holder interviewees identify themselves as Indian women than American women in the interview. Banerjee (2022) provides insights into the gendered racialization of visa policy on the skilled wives with H-4 visas of H-B1 visa holders highly skilled males, and this result will be contextualized within the boundaries of ethnonational identity formation of Indian women. The sense of being lost in an identity crisis results from the existential crisis of those IT expert women who are not allowed Permanent Residence (PR) in the US, and the sense of belonging to America is gone. Due to their inactive roles, even after being highly skilled IT professionals, they tend to leave America for other North American countries like Canada and other European countries where they could work as IT experts and exert their identity as the citizens of that country plus their ethnic and gender identity like Canadian Indian women. According to Forbes Magazine (2021), the current Biden Administration has agreed to provide automatic work authorization permits to the spouses of H-B1 visa holders. This move would likely allow acculturation for women of Indian origin working in India to exert their active roles in both family and workplace and they will identify themselves more as American-free women due to their economic Independence.

Fifth, according to Pew Research Center (2015b), six origin groups make up 85% of all Asian Americans. While the Chinese are the dominant group, with 23% of all Asian Americans, the Indians remain the second largest group among Asian Americans, with a 19% share of the whole Asian American population. The 2019 Pew Research Center (2019) report shows that the six origin groups comprise 85% of Asian Americans. Here Chinese, Indians, and Filipinos consist of 24%, 21%, and 19%. The drop to 19% for Indians is the direct result of the anti-immigrant policy of the Trump administration. That will lead to culture shock among second-generation Indians, and they may shift to other countries for better job conditions. From 2015 to 2019, the Chinese American population has risen to 24% from 23%, while the Indian population has risen from 19% to 21%. This growth is due to the change in the policy of the US government to allow more citizens from Asian countries, including China and India. H-B1 and H-4 visas were responsible for the growth of highly skilled immigrant couples from India. Doctors, engineers, and academicians were among the professionals migrating to the US. This incentive to acculturation allowed more and more Indians to apply for those visas. As a result, Indians will acculturate more with American identity.

Conclusion

The interpretation of pan-ethnicity, gender, and religion entails a complex identification of Indian Americans, who still continue to struggle to find meaning in their identity. All three cases are found to co-exist among this community, including Indian, Asian, and American identity alongside religious (for example, Christian) and racial (for example, Black or White). For policy recommendations, US Census Bureau should include Indian Americans as the separate ethnic identity for Indian immigrants like Chinese Americans, the Japanese Americans. It should carry out more demographic surveys to find out the primary ethnic identification trends for Indian

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Americans. USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Services) should reform policies to include the wives of H-4 visa holders who are currently H-B1 visa holders without permanent citizenship. They should provide full immigrant rights to the newly arriving highly skilled women IT experts from India. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should provide a secure living environment for Indian immigrants free of racial prejudices. It should provide equal rights to security for Indian Americans like other citizens of the country. The US Department of Labor should provide equal opportunities for women in immigration and further work permits.

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