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The Case of Indian Diaspora in United States of America: Changing Pattern of Immigration and Its Subsequent Effects

Priya Mathur



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Priya Mathur



Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism

K-1/114, First Floor, C R Park, New Delhi-110019,

Email: contact@grfdt.org, Contact: +91-9818602718

Website- www.grfdt.org,

Facebook- www.facebook.com/diaspora.transnationalism

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Abstract

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Author(s)

Priya Mathur is a third semester Ph.D. Student in Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. She is a graduate from Hindu College, University of Delhi in Political Science and did her Masters from Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her research interests lie in the area of citizenship, diaspora studies, gender studies, public policy and critical legal theory. She is a recipient of CBSE Merit Scholarship, ICSSR International Travel Grant and Keast Lion Fund for International Scholars from Center for the Study of Citizenship (CSC), Wayne State University, USA. Email: priyamathur132@gmail.com

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The Case of Indian Diaspora in United States of America: Changing Pattern of Immigration and Its Subsequent Effects

Priya Mathur

People of India have migrated to different countries for various reasons at various periods of its history. Among the immigrants of diverse nationality overseas, Indians constitute second largest Diaspora of Asia next only to China. It is estimated that besides six millions Indian citizens there are more than 20 million people of Indian origin all over the world.

In popular imagination as well as in academic discourse, Indian speaking diaspora in United States of America occupies a prominent position. History of U.S. tells us that migration of Indians has not been a result of aggressive invasion or a colonizing need; on the contrary, it was and continues to be a peaceful migration. Indians have maintained their tradition of high achievements by contributing to the economic growth of U.S. and at the same time retaining their identity by maintaining their socio-economic and cultural links with their home country. In United States, Indians are spread all over the country with largest concentrations in California, New York, New Jersey, Texas and Illinois.

This paper is therefore devoted to understanding Indians migration to United States and their role as a part of the larger Asian community. During the course of this paper we will try to explore the migration of Indians to the United States by looking back at history in three phases, understanding patterns of their political participation in the U.S. as well try to analyze how

Indian Diaspora has helped in bridging the U.S-India divide.

1. HISTORY OF MIGRATION PATTERN

The United States of America is often called the land of immigrants as the history of this country is the 'history of waves of migration' (Jha, 2003). Families have settled here from all over the world and the flow of immigrants keeps on increasing year by year. Earlier mainly European immigrants of Irish, German and Spanish ancestry were in abundance and now the influx of Asians is dominating the state figures of migrants. Japanese and Chinese already form substantial amount of Asian population in the U.S. along with Koreans, Filipinos and Vietnamese. A substantial section of these migrants from Asia also comprises of South Asians who mainly of Indian origin.

It must be noted that the history of migration to United States of Indian migrants can be divided into two sections: the early immigrants till mid 1960s and post- 1965 immigrants, when stricter and detailed immigration laws were passed by US Congress.

EARLY IMMIGRANTS

The Indian American community in the United States

is over two million in today's time. A cursory look at the records of U.S. Census Bureau (2014) shows that Indian Diaspora constitutes 17 percent of total Asian immigrants (Zong and Batalova, 2016). However this significantly large number has grown over a period of time. The first case of Indian migrant recorded in history books is of an Indian maritime worker who entered U.S. in 1790. He came as part of early trade connections between the two countries. However Indian immigration in significant numbers started more than a century later.

The main reason for relatively low migration during this period of Indians to U.S. can be linked to Naturalization Act of 1790. From Declaration of Independence in 1776 to the year 1882, United States government had an open border policy and even the U.S. Constitution which was adopted in 1789 did not make any provisions for regulating immigration to the country. The major reason for this was that most of the U.S. nationals were of European ancestry who arrived in 17th to 19th century and no major attention was given to regulate their immigration. However when migration from Asia started in abundance, the US enacted Naturalization Act of 1790 that denied Asians the right to become naturalized citizens.

However this does not mean that there was a total stop to Indian migration to U.S. Traders and religious leaders did come to America in nineteenth century and economic opportunities in California did entice Indians at the end of nineteenth century. However influx of sizable groups from India to U.S. can only be recorded in early 20th Century. These were largely agricultural workers and were described as 'Hindus' even though these migrants were predominantly of Sikh religion. Many came legally during the first six years of 20th century and till 1911, the number of Indian immigrants

could already be counted in thousands.

However it is often argued that this number was much larger than what the official record books show as many migrants came from Canada. This is because India and Canada were both British colonies and visa was not required to travel to Canada. As a result, many Punjabi Indians migrated in search of economic opportunities and started working at lower wages in Canadian mills. Unfortunately soon racial antagonism seeped into the minds of locals who felt threatened by labor competition from Punjabi farmers and laborers. Thereafter, around 1900s immigration restrictions were laid out which made legal immigration to Canada difficult for Indians. Since the economic opportunities were closing in Canada, Indians started looking towards the U.S. and zero restrictions on crossing border from Canada to U.S. only aided their efforts. Couple this with immigrants who were coming directly from India and other countries like Hong Kong, U.S. in 20th century had significant Indian population.

As already noted the majority of these immigrants were Sikhs who observed 'their religious beliefs and practices by keeping beard, long hair on their head and wore turban' (Singh, 2006). This made them quite distinguishable from other migrants which resulted into racial discrimination. They were often called 'Rag heads' who possessed 'immodest and filthy habits' (Lal, 1999). Infact their presence even invoked severe hostility from Asiatic Exclusion League which was established in 1907 to exclusively promote America as a 'white's man nation' and carry a propaganda against South Asians and Chinese immigrants. They called the arrival of Sikhs in the country as 'the tide of turbans' and provoked the general public against what they called as 'Hindu invasion of America' (Singh, 2006).

As a result, Indians were forced to survive in a hostile environment where trade unions were opposed to them and they had to accept low wages and poor working conditions. The rampant hostility and prejudice soon reached its tipping point in 1907 when a mob of 500 men attacked mills and boarding houses in Bellingham in Washington State, assaulting Indians while the police stood by and did not intervene. Around 410 Indians were even held in protective custody in Bellingham Jail. This terrifying incident forced more than 300 Indians to move out of the town in fear of their security.

The Bellingham riots and efforts of Asiatic Exclusion League further made it difficult for Indians to buy property in the Pacific Coast. *Alien Land Law* was passed in 1913 which 'prevented "aliens ineligible for citizenship" to own property in California' (Singh, 2006). However Indians responded to the law 'by transferring, buying or leasing land or property in the name of American friends who sometimes deprived them of their harvest. A few Indians married Mexican women who were US citizens, and leased property in the wife's name' (Singh, 2006). In response, *Cable Act of 1922* was implemented by the state which made such weddings more difficult. The Cable Act stated that 'if an American woman married an alien ineligible for citizenship, she would lose her own citizenship' (Singh, 2006).

During this period, the struggle for Indian independence also found its advocates in San Francisco where the Gadar Party was formed in 1913. They periodically expressed their views through their weekly newspaper. However they were soon silenced after America's entry into the war in 1917 when US government prosecuted the members of the party for conspiring against the British monarchy with Germans illegally. During this period, efforts for formal exclusion of Asians from

the U.S. were subsequently made when a California Senator pushed forward a campaign on the same. The Immigration Regional Restriction Act came into implementation in 1917 and banned areas in Asia from where Indians and Filipinos were immigrating. It also imposed English literacy restrictions on Indians while allowing immigration of Europeans who were born in this banned Asian region. This virtually barred all immigration of Asians to the United States.

It is important to note that during this period naturalized citizenship was reserved for 'whites' and any challenge in court of law did not bear any fruit. However Bhagat Singh Thind, a veteran of US Army who belonged to a 'high- caste Hindu lineage' was granted citizenship in 1920 by Oregon District Court.¹ This verdict was soon challenged by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals which forwarded the matter to the U.S. Supreme Court who in its ruling restricted naturalization to white Caucasians only as Thind lost his case to be classified as a Caucasian or a white. Over the next few years, some fifty naturalized Indians were stripped of their American citizenship. In such conditions, the number of Indians within the United States during early 1920s stagnated to around five thousand.

However by the end of Second World War, pressure built up to change the unfair immigration policy. At the same time, the U.S. desire for more professional and skilled workers grew particularly engineers, doctors and entrepreneurs which facilitated the immigration of Indians into the US. Under such circumstances, Indian lobbying, led by Sikh merchant, J.J. Singh, resulted in bipartisan effort of Congressman Emmanuel Celler and Clare Booth Luce culminating into the Congressional approval of the Act of July, 1946 popularly known as Luce-Cellar Act. This not only gave Indians the

right to naturalization but also allowed 100 Indians, exclusive of non-quota immigrants such as spouses and minor children of citizens, to enter the United States every year. Between 1948 and 1965, 7,000 Indians immigrated to the U.S. and nearly 1,780 Indians, many of whom had been American residents for two decades or more, acquired American citizenship (Singh, 2006).

POST- 1965 PERIOD

The most important changes in immigration policy were enacted in 1965 under President Lyndon Johnson. It was during this year that the quota system which permitted only 100 Indians to be admitted in the U.S. in a single year was modified by the U.S. Congress through enactment of Immigration and Naturalization Act. The new law deleted race as a factor. Every nation regardless of size, race, religion and political ideology was allowed. The *Immigration Act of 1965* liberalized immigration, increasing per country quota to 20,000 people with a total for all countries not to exceed 170,000 per year. India and China were now placed on the same footing as England and Germany. This law moreover gave preference to the relatives of people already settled there and workers with skills needed in the United States. This resulted in migration of Indian professionals such as doctors, architects, engineers, pharmacists and now computer professionals to the United States.

We can say this Act fundamentally changed the background of Indian immigrants. Within a very short period of time, the Indian immigrants made the transition from ‘pariahs to elite’ (Rangaswamy, 2000). While the first wave immigrants comprised of the Punjabi Sikh diaspora, the second wave of Indian immigrants included highly skilled professionals primarily from Gujrat, Kerala and Punjab, mostly from

science related fields such as chemistry, biochemistry, maths, physics, biology and medicine. Between 1966 and 1977, 83% of Indians who migrated to U.S.A. were highly skilled professionals comprising of scientists with PhDs, engineers and doctors. Consequently then, these professional Indians resided in suburban areas across America and made it their ‘home’, making themselves one of the most ‘visible’ minority groups with an increase from 13,149 in 1970 to 387,223 in 1980 (Leonard, 1997).

In addition, the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service’s estimated that the number of undocumented resident immigrants from India in 1992 was about 28,000. Most of these undocumented Indian immigrants were people who were supposed to visit the United States only for a specific period of time, but then they decided to remain there indefinitely. The largest portion of these immigrants resides in California, New York, Texas, Florida and Illinois.

POST 9/11

It must be noted that Americans of Indian descent are one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups in the country and also one of the most successful, with high education attainments and high income. However, despite this story of academic and professional achievements, there are still many struggles faced by Americans who can trace their ancestry to the Indian subcontinent. With immigration a contentious issue, as well as the fallout from 9/11, South Asians including Indians continues to face considerable problems and challenges from time to time in the United States (Ghosh, 2011).

According to the 2010 Census, the Indian population in the U.S. has reached 2,843,391, which is 69.37% increase from 2000. However right after the attacks,

some Indians were abused, beaten or even killed particularly Sikhs who were targeted because of their turbans. There were 645 incidents and crimes reported which were specifically aimed at people of South Asian and Middle Eastern descent just in the week following September 11th. One of the first fatalities among Indians was Balbir Singh Sodhi who on September 15, 2001 was murdered outside his gas station in Mesa, Arizona by Frank Roque. The perpetrator said he wanted to ‘kill a Muslim’ in retaliation for the terrorist attacks. Many South Asian and Muslim youths have faced similar bias-based bullying often making them a victim of physical harm.

There is continuing evidence which suggests that harassment, bullying and racism have not only increased over time, but also is at peak during times of specific racially charged incidents. One such example is of the days during the Park 51 (Ground Zero Muslim Cultural Center) debate when numerous racially motivated incidents against Indians as well as Pakistanis and Bangladeshis were reported. In the summer and fall of 2010, several Islamic centers and mosques were threatened with violence, were vandalized and copies of the Quran were found burned and left at various Muslim places of worship (Bhatia, 2008).

In August 2010, a New York taxi driver was attacked by a passenger with a knife who asked if he was Muslim; and a Sikh convenience store clerk was struck in the head by a attacker who called him ‘Al-Qaeda’ and said ‘go back to your country’ (Ghosh, 2011). In 2011, following the death of Osama bin Laden, significant number of incidents were reported in Maine, where a mosque was vandalized while in New York two imams were not allowed to board a plane.

These incidents have progressively continued over

the past 10 years – whether translating to physical violence or verbal. This is evident from the fact that under **President Trump Administration**, there have been three violent attacks against Indians in the United States in the month of February and March itself of this year which has claimed two lives. Out of these, two incidents can be concluded as racially motivated attacks against Indians. On February 24, 2017 two Indian men were shot outside a bar in Kansas City while on March 5, 2017 a 39 year old Sikh man was shot in Kent, Washington while he was working on his vehicle in the driveway. In both incidents, the respective shooters reportedly yelled ‘get out of my country’ or ‘go back to your country’ before firing the gun (Maizland, 2017). Whether or not it is a result of President Trump’s anti-immigration rhetoric, the fact remains that South Asians including Indians continue to be targeted as a community.

2. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN AMERICA AND LOBBYING FOR INDIA-U.S. RELATIONS

Significant numbers of Indians are rising to positions of political power, notably Bobby Jindal, who was governor of Louisiana, and Nikki Haley, the current United States Ambassador to United Nations and the former governor of South Carolina. It is obvious that Indians are playing a crucial role in the social, political and community landscape of the US. However, this has been the case for centuries. Indians have played a monumental role in becoming part of the foundations of this country. While there has been an unprecedented number of Indians running and winning office in recent years, xenophobia continues to be a challenge for candidates.

This is evident from the fact that post 9/11 with strict

visa laws, Indians are often being detained at airport for several hours facing questioning by U.S.A. officials. The list includes even prominent personalities like Shahrukh Khan, Irfan Khan, and even Ex- President APJ Abdul Kalam. Now with anti immigration stand of President Trump Administration and controversy surrounding H1-B visa, the “model minority” myth can significantly hurt Indian communities. There is no doubt that many Indians in various parts of the country area have attained economic success, and many are drawn to various opportunities. The increase of businesses and services geared towards the growing South Asian population is a testament to this. Yet, it is necessary to remember that the Indian community is not homogenous. Post-9/11 discrimination continues to be a concern for Indian- American politicians in public and private spheres. South Asian candidates have been regularly ‘called slurs like “raghead”, “turban topper”, “dothead”. While the rise of Nikki Haley and Bobby Jindal is certainly a step forward, there is much work that needs to be done to demand accountability from elected officials who get away with such rhetoric’ (Ghosh, 2011a).

This has led to an increasing awareness among Indian American community to participate in the political process and voice their opinion. They realize that without this they can neither protect their rights nor safeguard their interests as a minority. The leaders and opinion makers of the community, therefore, are now engaged in educating their community to actively participate in American politics.

The nature and extent of participation can be divided into two phases- pre 1965 and post 1965. The 19th century cannot be taken into account due to negligible number of Indian immigrants. The pre-independence phase of 20th century also cannot be significantly included

as the political activities of Indian immigrants were restricted to protest against restrictive US immigration and naturalization laws. The activities of ‘Gadar Party and the Komagata Maru episode of 1914² underlined this twin involvement’ (Jha, 2003). We can say Indian immigrants largely tried to influence the American political process from the periphery as ‘the fact that they were not eligible to become American citizens prohibited them from influencing it from the within’ (Jha, 2003).

After the 1946 Congressional law made Indians eligible for American citizenship, Indians started actively participating in the political process of United States. In this context, Dilip Singh Saund is an important figure in the political history of Indians. He was elected as judge of justice court in 1953 and later elected to US House of Representative in 1956. He became the first Asian to be elevated to that post and was subsequently appointed to the House of Foreign Affairs Committee. His political achievements are testament to the fact that while it was important to raise minority issues, identifying oneself with national issues was equally necessary to make one’s presence felt in the political process of the country. This two tier strategy is still dominantly used by politicians of Indian decent i.e first, to assert the distinctiveness of the community in relation to other minority ethnic or racial groups in order to extract benefits out of the system and second, to participate in mainstream politics of the United States especially during presidential campaigns.

Protecting the interests of Indian community is not only restricted to Indian-American politicians but also involves 1,000 Indian American organizations which have steadily came into existence. These organizations while on one hand engage in cultural or civic activities, on the other hand also actively participate in the political

system. Some of these organizations are Federation of Indian American Associations (FIA), the National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA), and the National Association of Americans of Asian Indian Descent (NAAOID), National Association for the Defence of Indian Americans (NADIA), Indian American Forum for Political Education (IAFPE) etc.

Association of Indians in America (AIA) successfully advocated to classify Indians as Asian Indians in 1980 census to establish their eligibility for Affirmative Action Program (Jha, 2003) while 'the NFIA, together with the American Indian Forum for Political Education and AAPI, agitated against proposed legislation in 1985 that would have deeply cut Medicare funding to hospitals employing doctors with foreign medical degrees' (Lal, 1999). The NFIA also lobbied for the interests of the Indian nation-state when 'in 1987 it mobilized the Indian community, with apparent success, to persuade Congress to withdraw the sale of sophisticated AWACS planes to Pakistan' (Lal, 1999).

At the local level too, Indian community and organizations have done intense lobbying. Jersey City recently renamed a portion of one of its streets after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, one of the architects of Indian Constitution. In the same town, a school has been named after Mahatma Gandhi and his statues can be found in numerous American cities, including New York City and Atlanta. In 2000, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in front of Indian Embassy in Washington, D.C (Jha, 2003).

It must be noticed that despite successful political visibility, Indian-American political consciousness has always been troubled by the issue of race relation in American society. This is evident from the fact that in

late 1980s, when the racism within the US took violent turn and number of Indians were attacked and murdered in New Jersey by young white men who came to be known as "dot busters", the political response of the Indian community was swift and two-fold. As a short term response they organized meetings, marches, sit-ins to register their point that immediate steps should be taken to revamp police departments in the city to stop further attacks on Indians. As a long term response, Indians realized that they must participate in American political process to ensure their security. As a result, Indian American organizations like National Association for the Defence of Indian Americans (NADIA) and Indian American Forum for Political Education (IAFPE) intensified their efforts towards this end. Recently in 58th Presidential elections, Republican Hindu Coalition, emerged as one of the biggest donors for President Donald Trump election campaign (Swan, 2016).

We can say that the Indian-American community is quickly emerging as a political force in the United States. They exercise the most political influence through their campaign contributions and active involvement in fund-raising for political candidates on federal, state and local levels. Immense contribution is done by Kumar Barve who has been a delegate for several terms in Maryland assembly. Several Indian Americans have hold position of Mayor such as Bala K. Srinivas in Hollywood Park, Texas, Arun Jhaveri in Burien, Washington. At the same time numerous Indians are rising to higher positions of political power, notably Bobby Jindal, who was previously the governor of Louisiana and Nikki Haley, the governor of South Carolina. Indians are thus working at all levels of the political spectrum and their activities, particularly in grassroots movements, are increasing.

An active participation of Indian-Americans in United States politics has come alongside active lobbying for better US-India relations. Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans in US Congress was formed in 1993 with a dual mission of being an advocate for the concerns and needs of the Indian American community and to promote better Indo-US ties. The Caucus members like Frank Pallone, S. Brown, Ackerman, Stephen Solaraz, Jim McDermott, Ed Royce, Joe Wilson and Crowley have been vocal for Indian Americans and India on many important issues such as terrorism, foreign aid, Kashmir, commercial ties, etc. They have countered India's opponent's activities in Congress and administration, and educated Congress members on the issues concerning India. Formation of Friends of India Group in 2004 in US Senate under the co-chairmanship of John Cornyn and Hillary Clinton dedicated to address a single country is another example of growing political clout of India and Indian Americans in the US (Rajghattal, 2004).

The *Henry J. Hyde US-India Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Act* is another example of growing clout and increasing political participation of Indian Diaspora in the United States. Since July 2005 Indian Americans have been lobbying with US-India Business Council and India Caucus members for the successful passage of the Indo-US Nuclear agreement in the US Congress. They countered non-proliferation lobby in the US congress at every stage of the Indo-US nuclear bill. Indian Americans did intense lobbying in final stage especially when it was being tabled before the Senate and House of Representative for voting to become an Act. They realized that an easy passage of the agreement is not possible, so one could witness various pro-nuclear lobbying activities by the affluent Indian Americans.

Despite the fact that Republicans had the majority in the US Congress and the deal was supported by the Bush administration, there were deeply influential actors within the US State department and the non-proliferation lobby that opposed the deal. Activists like David Albright and prominent Republicans like Indiana's Dan Burton and California's Dana Rohrabacher resisted the deal while Pakistan and China also made efforts to block it in the US Congress.

The intensive lobbying against Indo-US nuclear deal energized Indian Americans who launched their own intensive drive to support the nuclear pact. Heavy spending was done on lobbying, campaign contributions and public relations to persuade Congress to approve the deal. Lobbyists were hired and fund-raisers were organized to muster the support. They also organized meetings with prominent members of Congress and lobbied members of the Foreign Relations Committees in both houses to get the bill on the floor of the house (Sharma 2006).

The struggle for nuclear deal proved to be a unique opportunity for many Indian Americans to demonstrate their growing political clout in the country. Indian Americans with the help of Indian American organizations like USINPAC, IACPA, IAFPE, along with leading Indian Caucus members like Garry Ackerman, Frank Pallone, John Cornyn lobbied to ensure that the 39 members of the Indian Caucus in the Senate and more than 180 members of the Caucus in the House of Representatives vote in favor of the deal. India further reached out to the 43 member black Caucus and 20 members Hispanic Caucus to extend their legislative support. US-India Political Action Committee (USINPAC) also organized a fundraiser month for Senator Hillary Clinton, co-chairwoman of the Senate's 39-member Indian Caucus to gain

the support of members of the Indian Caucus. The support of Hillary Clinton and Bill Clinton, former President and a prominent Democratic leader, who seriously pursued non-proliferation policies, ensured the support of a majority of Democrats for the nuclear pact. Further the United States-India Business Council (USIBC) and Indian American Friendship Council along with Patton Boggs, a lobbying firm hired by the Indian government at a cost of \$.3 million, successfully launched 'a concerted lobbying campaign to convince US Congressmen that approving the necessary changes in US non-proliferation law is essential for the strategic partnership between US and India' (Sharma 2006). The above stated efforts by Indian Americans backed by the Indian government, business interest groups and the Bush administration ensured a smooth passage of the Indo-US deal in the Congress.

CONCLUSION

Indians have come to enjoy a dominant position in the United States of America. They have not only contributed to their adopted country but also to their homeland. This is evident from the fact that Indian Diaspora around the world have regularly mobilized substantial financial resources and collaborated with private relief agencies to help Indian nationals during times of natural calamities in India. Rise in the proportion of elderly population in the rich countries coupled with the demand for skilled immigration from India and elsewhere has led to an amplified the economic and political clout of Indians in the United States. At the same time, as bureaucratic barriers are coming down and economic reforms are being carried out in phased manner, Indian Diaspora will increasingly look for investment opportunities in their country of birth.

The 'glass ceiling' that has prevented the ascent of all Asian Americans to the highest political, managerial, and executive positions may have dimmed their political enthusiasm, but they have not let this affect their political participation. The cohesion of the community has continued to grow. Although internal differences within community organizations continue to subsist, as they do between organizations, the community has been able to get together to celebrate every year the Anniversary of Independence on August 15 in Washington DC, with a gala banquet always attended by community representatives from across the country, representative of all sections, religious and regional, of Indian Americans. Thus Indian diaspora has been active in improving image of India at popular level, making relations between the host country and India more diverse and fruitful, and contributing to India's development through different channels.

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1 The case of Bhagat Singh Thind is important to the history of Indian immigration because in 1910, in the US vs. Balsara case, the lower federal court had held that Indians were Caucasians. In 1922, in the US vs. Ozawa case, the U.S. Supreme Court had officially equated "white person" with "a person of the Caucasian race". Thus in view of the decisions in the two cases, grant of citizenship to Thind should not have warranted any challenge. Shockingly, however, Justice Sutherland of the US Supreme Court, the same judge who had declared Whites as Caucasians in Ozawa vs. US, pronounced on February 19, 1923, that Thind and other Indians though Caucasians, were not "White" and thus were ineligible for US citizenship. The judge obviously decided the first case on the basis of race, the second, on the basis of colour.

2 In 1914 Komagata Maru affair, a ship carrying hundreds of Indian immigrants was turned back on Vancouver Harbour by Canada due to the discriminatory immigration laws of the time. The ship was carrying 376 passengers out of which 340 were Sikhs, 24 Muslims and 12 Hindus.

Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) is a consortium of researchers and policy makers drawn from national and international universities, institutes and organizations. GRFDT is presently based in India and is shaping as the largest such group focusing specifically on the issues related to diaspora and transnationalism.

The GRFDT works as an academic and policy think tank by engaging national and international experts from academics, practitioners and policy makers in a broad range of areas such as migration policies, transnational linkages of development, human rights, culture, gender to mention a few. In the changing global environment of academic research and policy making, the role of GRFDT will be of immense help to the various stakeholders. Many developing countries cannot afford to miss the opportunity to harness the knowledge revolution of the present era. The engagement of diaspora with various platform need to be reassessed in the present context to engage them in the best possible manner for the development human societies by providing policy in-put at the national and global context.