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## Why Indians In The U.S. Should Not Qualify For Minority Jobs And Contracts

By: Ignatius Chithelen

*Indian-Americans say they do not enjoy any privileges, but since 1976 Indian businesses have availed of US government benefits to minorities, which they should not be entitled to since Indians in the US never suffered historical discrimination. The privileges may end in the event of a Trump victory.*

In June, United States Senator J.D. Vance, along with fellow Republican lawmakers, introduced a bill to [eliminate all federal diversity, equity, inclusion \(DEI\)](#) “programs and funding for federal agencies, contractors which receive federal funding, organizations which receive federal grants, and educational accreditation agencies.”

Earlier in May, Vance, along with two fellow Republican Senators, wrote a letter to officials at the Department of Justice (DOJ) criticizing President Joe Biden’s Administration for “not faithfully carrying out its legal duties to protect American workers from employment practices that privilege asylum seekers, parolees, and other aliens over American citizens.”

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If Trump is re-elected President in November, his administration will likely end DEI – also known as minority - jobs and contracts in the government, pressure private employers and educational institutions to end their DEI programs and seek to restrict employment of non-U.S. citizens. This may lead to loss of jobs for Indian Americans and Indians on working visas in the U.S., as well as loss of business income of Indian Americans, who benefit from minority programmes - for which they should not qualify - in the first place.

In June 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that [admissions based on race](#) at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina are unconstitutional.

This decision [was welcomed](#) by some Indian Americans. They find the minority quotas in college admissions “hypocritical in a country which [values meritocracy](#) above all else,” according to The QUINT. Also, some of them believe that Indian Americans have achieved a “breathtaking amount” in the U.S. in a couple of generations, while “[No ethnic or racial favors](#) have come their way from schools, colleges or government.”

Yes, the managerial, technical, professional, business, and other accomplishments of Indians in the U.S. are remarkable. This largely reflects the fact that most of them - or their parents for those born in the U.S. - are immigrants who were [among the top 1%](#) of India’s educated talent.

More important, it needs to be acknowledged that, for nearly 50 years, some Indians have ignored meritocracy to secure jobs and business contracts originally set aside for economically and socially disadvantaged minorities.

In 1976, the Association of Indians in America (AIA) successfully lobbied that Indians be included as a minority in the Asian and Pacific Islander category, David Bernstein points out in his book, [Classified: The Untold Story of Racial Classifications in America](#). Indians, the AIA argued, “are [equally dark-skinned](#) as other nonwhite individuals” and the only label for Indians “is Asian by virtue of geographic origin.”

The term minority in this context is not a statistical measure. In 1965, in a Harvard Commencement speech, President Lyndon B. Johnson described what the minority quotas he initiated had hoped to achieve: “You do not take a person who, for years, [has been hobbled by chains](#) and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, ‘You are free to compete with all the others,’ and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.”

So, initially the minority criterion applied to African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, Asian Pacific Islanders, and descendants of Chinese immigrants [who built the railroads](#) in the U.S. in the 19th century.

Data from the [2020 U.S. Census](#) confirms that Indians do not suffer any social or economic disadvantages which would enable them to qualify for minority jobs and contracts. In fact, Indians enjoy several major advantages: four out of five have a college degree; have the [highest per capita income](#) of any ethnic community; hold a sizeable number of jobs in technology and on Wall Street; and about [six per cent of the nearly one million doctors](#) in America are of Indian descent.

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Also, none of [the four million Indians in the U.S.](#), except for [Sikh farmers](#) who emigrated to the U.S. in the early 20th century and their descendants, suffered any historical discrimination and economic hardships.

Today, U.S. employers, from financial firms, large corporations, technology companies, consultancies and small businesses to universities, hospitals, government agencies and others, point to Indians on their staff as proof of their commitment towards meeting diversity goals, including for [senior management](#) and director positions.

In the case of minority business contracts, studies - such as one done for the Ohio Department of Transportation - show Indians get a [disproportionate share](#), relative to their population size.

In 1976, the Indian League of America (ILA), a rival to the AIA, opposed Indians seeking minority status. The ILA noted, writes Bernstein in his book, that the racial preferences for Indians, despite their high average economic and educational status, would lead to a backlash from whites and others. The opponents may seek a restrictive quota for Indians, a ceiling instead of a floor, for preferential admissions to educational institutions, job placements and securing government and private business contracts, the ILA stated.

As the ILA predicted, conservative groups can soon be expected to turn towards restricting the number of Indians and other Asians admitted to the top colleges. Asian Americans currently make up [more than 20%](#) of students at the top colleges, while they are [only 7%](#) of the U.S. population.

Conservative groups, Reuters [reported](#) in December 2023, have already pressured six major companies, including J.P. Morgan Chase, to modify “policies meant to boost racial and ethnic representation”, which have benefitted Indians.

Indians should follow the example of Ankur Gopal, founder of Interapt: “My vision has always been to create [10,000 technology jobs](#)” in a region of Kentucky, hurt economically by the closure of coal mines. As Raja Krishnamoorthi, Democrat from Illinois in the U.S. House of Representatives, told the *Indian Express*, “What’s really important is for Indian Americans to recognize that not all people in the United States have enjoyed the same level of economic success or educational attainment, and it’s really up to us to [help everyone else](#) to succeed.”

In a video, comedian Akaash Singh pokes fun of fellow Indians in the U.S. [seeking to qualify as minorities](#). While Blacks have been mistreated and oppressed for centuries, Singh says, “I wanted to send a message to anybody who looks like me: You don’t deserve anything...Your parents...did not get here because they thought everybody owes them...They came over here because they worked, they were the best of the best...how we lost that so quickly disgusts me.”

Indians should ask employers, funds and businesses to exclude them from the lists they compile, and often publicize, to show their commitment to affirmative action. This will help establish that they were chosen based on merit. It will also ensure that the [employers, funds and businesses](#) help more Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians who suffered historical discrimination.

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