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Indian Americans are with Obama: Survey

Yashwant Raj, Hindustan Times
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Indian Americans are solidly behind President Barack Obama, more so now than in 2008. And over half of them are unshakably with the Democratic Party. But there is hope yet for Republicans. A lot of Indian Americans also count themselves as independent or non-partisan. But is Mitt Romney going to get them? Unlikely.

A substantial 68% of Indian Americans who are likely to vote are backing Obama, and only 5% are with Romney, says 2012 National Asian American Survey.

This is way higher than the Asian American average of 43% for Obama, and the national average of 48% (this number changes every day, mostly upwards).

Indian Americans are solidly with Obama, and the new poll is only one of several making that point. That hasn't been in dispute, not in a very long time.

But some people have noticed the beginnings of shift toward the Republican Party, which has exhibited willingness to welcome them — the Tampa convention was one clear evidence.

Ishwar Singh, a Sikh led the invocation on Day Two at the convention, and Yash Wadhwa, a Wisconsin Indian American breathlessly related his success story at the same convention.

"These are isolated cases, and anecdotal," director of the survey, Karthick Ramakrishnan, political science professor at University of California, told Hindustan Times.

The survey didn't find any evidence — scientific evidence, Ramakrishnan insisted — of the Indian Americans shifting in any perceptible manner to the Republican Party.

If anything, Indian American were the last to identify with Republicans — 3% to the Filipinos at 27%, Vietnamese at 20%, Japanese at 18% and the Chinese at 9%. This is despite the fact that the only two Indian American governors in the history of the US are both Republican: Nikky Haley of South Carolina and Bobby Jindal of Louisiana. But that has not helped move the needle.

If some Indian Americans are making that journey —howsoever few in numbers —it's because of the typically Republican instinct to protect their prosperity from taxes.

Or so Rao Polavarapu, an Indiana Indian American software engineer, told this reporter at the Tampa convention of the Republican party last August.

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