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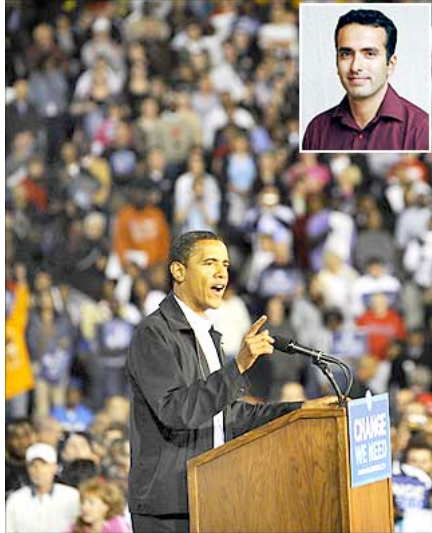


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'Obama may have the support of over 60 per cent Indian Americans'

November 03, 2008

Indian Americans identify more strongly with the Democratic Party than any other Asian American ethnic group, according to **Professor Karthick Ramakrishnan** (inset), principal investigator on the first large-scale national study of Asian American politics and voter preferences that was conducted by researchers of four leading universities.

The Coimbatore-born and Bangalore-raised Ramakrishnan, who immigrated to the United States at age 10 with his parents, is associate professor of political science at University of California, Riverside, and a leading researcher on political participation, civic voluntarism, and the politics of race, ethnicity, and immigration in the US.

The author of several publication on immigrant adaptation, local governance and civic engagement, Ramakrishnan scoffed at the suggestion that a large number of Indian Americans who voted for Senator Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primaries had now turned to Republican candidate John McCain.

The National Asian American Survey he had led clearly indicated that virtually all those who voted for Clinton were now solidly behind Democratic hopeful Barack Obama, he pointed out.

The lead researcher in a study of Asian American voter preferences spoke to **Aziz Haniffa**.

Your survey of Asian American voter preferences showed 41 per cent for Democratic candidate Barack Obama over 24 per cent for Republican hopeful John McCain, but there was a hefty 34 per cent who said they were undecided. Have you in the two weeks since done an update to see whether that segment has now made up its mind?

We have, but the thing is we haven't been able to produce the same estimates on the Obama versus McCain thing because it requires a kind of weighting strategy and that takes a lot of effort. But one thing we've noticed is that the undecideds have gone down.

By how much, and whose support has that added to?

The undecideds have gone down to 20 percent and basically, it's getting split between both of them, but that means that Obama now has over 50 percent support among Asian American voters.

Image: US Democratic presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama at a rally in Cincinnati, Ohio on Sunday. (inset) Professor Karthick Ramakrishnan

Photograph: Emmanuel Dunand/AFP/Getty Images

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