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Backing Obama

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According to a recent survey of Asian-American citizens, Obama holds a large lead despite his lacklustre performance in the first debate, which has led to a late Romney surge. The latest survey was conducted among likely voters between September 21 and October 13, where Asian-Americans likely voters backed Obama 43 percent to 24 percent, with almost one-third undecided, according to a report by Karthick Ramakrishnan, Taeku Lee and the National Asian American Survey (NAAS).

Why such a huge gap despite higher income and education levels among Asian-Americans? Why are Asians not voting with their wallets for Romney in higher proportions? Is it the history of immigration, ethnicity, race or class that draws them to Obama?

Ramakrishnan speculated that "Asian-Americans either weren't paying much attention to the debate or they weren't greatly influenced by pundits who criticised Obama's October 3 debate performance". Or may be Asian-Americans were "smart" enough to see through the many personalities of Mitt Romney?

Among Indian-Americans, democratic support is even stronger: Obama 68 percent, Romney 5 percent and undecided 25 percent, despite Obama's rhetorical attacks on outsourcing; his job approval rating is at 81 percent among Indian-Americans.

Obama has had a close relationship with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Hillary Clinton has been to India many times as Secretary of State, while they have tried to make bold policy changes in South Asia. In this case, the Pacific pivot bodes well for President Obama in the swing states.

The support for Obama among Indian Americans is statistically higher than any other Asian-American subgroup: Chinese (43 percent), Filipino (32 percent), Vietnamese (24 percent), Korean (49 percent), Japanese (49 percent), Cambodian (59 percent) and Hmong (56 percent).

Asian-Americans approve of President Obama's performance more than the national average (59 percent vs 50 percent) and rate Mitt Romney considerably poorly than the national average (30 percent vs 45 percent).

Asian-Americans highlight similar issues as the rest of the country; the economy and jobs are by far the most important issues, followed by healthcare and education. Women's rights and healthcare works in

Obama's favour, while the deficit favours Mitt Romney.

A majority of Asian-Americans claim to be non-partisan (51 percent are Independent or have no party affiliation). In this sample of more 3,000 telephone respondents, one in six Asian-Americans (17 percent) lives in a battleground state during the 2012 presidential election.

According to a global survey by BBC, all but one country supports Obama over Romney in 2012. Of 22,000 respondents, 50 percent support Obama while only 9 percent back Romney in the global sample of 21 countries, which makes the anti-Obama duo of Jindal-Haley a rather parochial voice in the wilderness. "They seem to be in relatively small minority of Indian-Americans who support Mitt Romney," according to the Asian-American survey.

Will Obama have a strong coalition to garner enough electoral votes, turning the tide against Romney, who, according to Gallup poll, seems to be leading in the popular votes? It remains to be seen whether the president's segmented, micro-targeting strategy, will deliver the goods on election-day.

Excerpts taken from the article "Indian-American's back Obama in a big way" originally posted on www.aljazeera.com.

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