



The Indian Democrat Dr Syed Taj, running from Michigan

US ELECTIONS

Which Way Will The Indo-Americans Go?

The community is more Democrat-inclined

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When it comes to the Indian American community, the outcome of the US presidential election on November 6 is a foregone one. Barack Obama, a Democrat, will win, by a landslide. Indian Americans, by large numbers, support the Democrats over the Republicans, a fact corroborated by a recent National Asian American Survey which found that 68 per cent of the Indian Americans surveyed backed Obama, while 5 per cent said they'd vote for his Republican challenger, Mitt Romney.

Karthick Ramakrishnan, an associate professor of political science at the University of California at Riverside and director of the survey, says Indian American support for the Democrats owes to three factors: President Bill Clinton portrayed the party in the '90s as pro-economic growth, attracting immigrants; the racial profiling of South Asians following the Sep 11, 2001 attacks took place under a Republican administration, driving Indian Americans towards the Dems; and the party is generally viewed as more tolerant than the Republican Party of different religions and race.

"Given their educational attainment and socio-economic status," says Ramakrishnan, "you might think the Republican Party is a potential home for a lot of Indian Americans." Instead, he says, Republican policies on racial discrimination and immigration, and the rise of Christian

conservatives in the party, makes many Indian Americans stay away.

There are, however, some Indian Americans for whom the Republicans are the obvious choice. Ashok Mago, a prominent Indian American based in Dallas, identifies with the party because of its pro-business policies and unwavering support for Indo-US ties. "You may agree or disagree with (George W.) Bush's policies, but what he did for India no president has ever done or will ever do: help lift the nuclear ban," he says.

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