



Diverse Issues

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Diversity in People: Asian Indians

One of the fastest growing peoples of color in this country today are Asian Indians. The term Asian Indian was first used by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1980 when, for the first time, Asian Indians appeared as a separate category within the Race question on the census form.

According to the 2000 Census, Asian Indians now number about 1.7 million in a national population of about 280 million. Additionally, there are 0.2 million people who reported Asian Indian in combination with one or more other races or Asian groups, making a total of 1.9 million. This figure may not include several thousand Indian students at various colleges and universities. Most Asian Indians have immigrated to this country since 1970, and more than half came between 1990 and 1999. Many were needed to assist with technology needs associated with Y2K. Due to the lengthy process required for citizenship, only about 36% are currently United States citizens.

Changes in Immigration Law

The 1965 Amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act abolished the previously established national-origin quota system, eliminating national origin, race, or ancestry as a basis for immigration. Instead, it substituted an immigration ceiling of 20,000 per country for people coming from the Eastern Hemisphere. Additionally, the Act created a strong preference for immigrants with professional educational and occupational skills and those with close relatives of United States citizens. Later, the Refugee Act of 1980 raised the ceiling to 50,000, and the

Immigration Act of 1990 further relaxed the ceiling to 70,000 immigrants per country. These changes resulted in a shift in the geographic origins of immigrants. Of the 43 million immigrants admitted between 1820 and 1965, about 81% or 35 million were from Europe.



A Unique Immigrant Group

The Asian Indian population in the United States is unique to many other immigrant groups. A very high proportion of Asian Indian immigrants come to this country with high levels of education, fluency in English, education from distinctly European (particularly British) educational systems, and strong work ethics. Therefore, they are able to rapidly enter into the economic mainstream of American life.

In fact, Asian Indians are one of the most affluent groups in the country. In 1994, according to the U.S. Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans (Sicar, 2000), their median

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household income was \$59,777, and the average per capita income in the group was considerably higher than the national average. This is due to the disproportionate number of college educated professionals in the group. There is a high concentration of doctors, engineers, computer specialists, and college professors among the Asian Indian population. Additionally, a higher than average percentage of Asian Indians is self-employed. For instance, it is estimated that about 25% of all small hotels and motels in America are owned by Asian Indians (Indians in USA, 1994). This is particularly true in the South.

Close to 89% of Asian Indians in the United States have completed high school, 65% have completed college, and 40% hold Masters or Doctorate degrees (Malhotra, 2003). This compares to the total population figures of 88% having completed high school and 28% having completed a bachelor's or higher degree. It follows that the poverty rate of 10% is lower than the average (14%) in this country.



The Asian Indian community is primarily urban, with 91% of its members living in urban areas. Most are foreign born (75% in 1990). While the ethnic group is widely dispersed in America, there are populations in excess of 50,000 in California, New York, Illinois, Texas, and New Jersey. During the 1990's the eight-county Philadelphia area experienced an Indian population growth of 11%.

The Asian Indian Family

Asian Indian life is very much centered on the family. Generally speaking, most Asian Indians live in traditional, male-headed families. Only 4.5% of Asian Indian-American households have no husband present and only 1.3% are single-parent households. The husband is the authority figure and decision-maker in the family. Women retain the primary

household and childcare responsibilities. Even though highly educated women may be assertive and hold high level positions at work, in the home they remain in an essentially subordinate position. “[Indian wives] consider spousal hierarchy to be “natural” and not infringing upon the wife’s personhood” (Sircar, 2000, p. 16).

While most wives successfully balance work and family life, most strongly believe that a working mother should prioritize her children’s concerns over her personal ones, including her career (Sircar, 2000). Outside of work, Asian Indians socialize with each other as families. The children are present in social as well as in religious functions.

The commitment to marriage is very strong for both husbands and wives. The divorce rate is very low; only about 2.5% are divorced or separated. Many Asian Indians were married when they came to the United States, and some return home for a customary family-arranged wedding.

Maintaining Cultural Identity

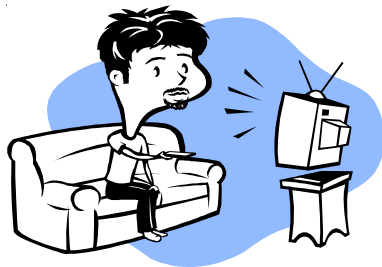
Although most Asian Indians do not settle into residential ethnic enclaves, many first-generation Asian Indians maintain strong ties to the Indian community and culture. A strong network of community ties are focused around religion and voluntary associations. Food stores, clothing stores, restaurants, and institutions for religious practices help to maintain cultural practices in this country. Active participation in Indian organizations is an important way to help the children become aware of their Indian heritage.

To preserve a sense of cultural identity and to facilitate the transmission of religious tradition to the next generation, many first generation Asian Indians socialize almost exclusively with members of their own ethnic and religious group. Most Indians also maintain close contact with relatives and friends in India. Saving money to travel to India every two or three years or for special family occasions is considered a good investment. It allows children to get sufficient exposure to India.

(Continued on page 3)

Child Rearing and Associated Stresses

Asian Indian youth have a very respectful relationship with their parents. Parents assume a serious role in teaching values to their children. According to the research findings of Gawlick (1997), core values mentioned by parents include mutual respect, especially respect for parents and elders, maintaining close family ties, being a hard worker, and having a high motivation for achievement. Indian parents are often very protective and strict with their young children. They watch closely with whom the children socialize, and how they spend their time. Limits are placed on the amount and type of television programs that are watched.



Many parents attempt to shield their children from “mainstream American values,” which they view negatively as leading to high divorce rates,

high crime rates, teenage pregnancies, and drug use. Many consider Hindu morality to be superior to American values. Some even send their children back to India when they reach the teenage period.

Similar to other cultural groups, conflict between parents and youth increase as children become teenagers. Youth are torn between maintaining the strict expectations of their parents, such as not dating before the age of eighteen, and “fitting in” with non-Indian peers at school. Second generation Asian Indian teenagers are split between feeling “half Indian” and “half American.” Some studies suggest that raising Indian children, especially females, in America is considered one of the major sources of strain for Asian Indians in this country (Saran, 1985).

In addition to social norms, Asian Indian children are held to exceptionally high levels of achievement in the educational realm. The children’s education is seen as a sound investment. Parents are prepared to spend large amounts of money to

send their children to the best colleges and universities. Many children are strongly encouraged to be doctors, lawyers, engineers and business professionals.

Food, Language, and Religion

All three are important parts of Indian culture. Although many Indian families eat American foods for breakfast and lunch, most Asian Indian families enjoy an Indian-style dinner. Meals usually consist of rice, bread, vegetables and meat and are eaten by 8:00 p.m. Usually the meat is poultry and not red meat. There is no stigma attached to eating beef as there is in India, but men are more likely to eat beef than are women. Many households are vegetarian. Eating out is less frequent, but inviting and visiting friends for meals is common.

English as well as regional Indian languages are spoken at home. India has more than 25 major regional language dialects, most with different alphabets. Although children typically use English, they often understand the language spoken by their parents.



Although mostly Hindu, about 10% of the population is Muslim, and there are a small percentage of Sikh, Jain, Christian, Parsi, and Buddhist followers. Hindus believe that God is the Supreme Being or Reality. God is thought of as formless and is everywhere. Therefore, God can be worshipped in many different forms. Thousands of gods and goddesses represent some form of God and are worshipped. Hindus say that each individual has his or her own duty to do good actions, to understand that the spirit of God and the spirit in humans are linked; and perform devotion to one’s chosen god or goddess. Life is believed to be a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. One’s next existence depends on how far one fulfills one’s duty by living correctly and performing good actions. Hindus aim finally to be released from the repeated cycle once the duty has been achieved. (Kadodwala, 1995). Many acts of worship (puja) are practiced at home in the family shrine or at a Hindu temple. *(Continued on page 4)*

The Caste System



Prior to 1950, a four-tiered caste/class system was enforced. The highest ranked caste is Brahmin (teachers, and clergy); the second highest caste is Kshatriya (members of the military); the third ranked caste is Vaishya (merchants and business persons); and the lowest ranked caste is Shudra (farmers, janitors, and landless workers). The system was outlawed by the Constitution in 1950, but caste considerations continue to inform social relations. The caste system is still prevalent in rural communities. Brahmin and Kshatriya have historically enjoyed a disparate share of educational and occupational opportunities. Due to government policy adopted in recent years, however, the tradition has changed - some say reversed - to incorporate lower classes into the socio-economic mainstream. Marriage below one's social caste in India is considered taboo. The practice of women marrying up into higher castes has been traditionally accepted among Hindus in India.✽

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Books and Web Sites of Interest

American Indian Sports Team Mascots

<http://aistm.org/1indexpage.htm>

What is the issue? This site contains scholarly articles, news articles, books, links, and other resources related to the controversial issue of the use of Indian names and symbols for sports team mascots.

Yellow Robe, W. S., Jr. (2000). *Where the Pavement Ends: Five Native American Plays*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press

These plays present authentic Native American issues and themes, providing opportunities for understanding that different cultures have different worldviews and values. There is a play that will appeal to most age levels. To order, contact University of Oklahoma Press, 4100 28th Avenue NW, Norman, OK 73069-8218. Tel: (405) 325-2000 or (800) 627-7377.

Johnson, A. G. (2001). *Privilege, Power, and Difference*. CA: Mayfield Publishing Company

The author provides an easily applied theoretical model for thinking about systems of privilege and difference. Writing in accessible, conversational prose, Johnson joins theory with engaging examples in ways that enable readers to see the nature and consequences of privilege and their connection to us.

“The world is too dangerous to live in – not because of the people who do evil, but because of the people who stand by and let them.”

Albert Einstein

Diversity in the Workplace: How to Recruit and Maintain the Latino Volunteer

The following is a slightly adapted excerpt from a presentation by Betty Swinner and Lisi Cocina, delivered at the V2K: Volunteerism Beyond 2000 Conference at Aspen Lodge and Conference Center April 21-24, 1999. The title of the presentation is *Creating Awareness and Recruiting Latino Volunteers*. The information in this presentation is worth revisiting.

Use relationships-familial and friendships to begin a chain effect.

The Latino community is very family oriented. If you can get one to agree to volunteer, more than likely you will get the other family members and extended family members to volunteer as well. The Latino definition of family extends to **compadre (godfather)**, **comadre (godmother)**, and **madrina (midwife)**—symbolic kinship.

Allow volunteers to provide support to one another. Give them the room to socialize. Peer identification and peer contact is critical to the immigrant's sense of self-esteem.

It is important to build a team/family-oriented environment. Create projects that multiple people can work on so that families can participate. Allow time for them to be social. Always have food to offer.

Use alternative media and communication sources to get the word out.

Utilize the Spanish media to get the Latino communities informed. Take flyers and do grass roots outreach. Go to restaurants, apartments complexes, laundromats, churches, flea markets, grocery stores, etc., and any place where you might encounter a large Latino population.

Face to face contact is critical. Expect very little response to the "blind" request.

Coordinate a "**platicar**" (**meeting**) and invite people to attend. Make sure that there is food and door prizes. Make sure to note that on the flyer. The flyer must be attractive, colorful, and express how you will be helping people and needing people to help.

Tailor the volunteer work time to cultural norms of the Latino.

This culture is very family oriented. Quality time with the children and dinner is very important. They take pride in their cooking and enjoy spending the time preparing the traditional foods for their loved ones. Volunteer time is best in the morning after the children have gone off to school. If you want the entire family to participate, make it a weekend event.

Be sensitive to differences in class in the Latino community.

Assign volunteers accordingly and/or provide support and training when or if cross-class errors occur. Volunteers should be placed in an area that they are comfortable with. Train and prepare them to take new challenges when needed.

Help to establish Spanish as an acceptable means of communication in the workplace or site.

Speaking in Spanish allows for a significantly greater level of comfort for Latinos. Ensure that the environment they will be volunteering in is Spanish friendly. Make sure that you have training available in Spanish and in an appropriate language for the volunteer you are recruiting to be a part of your organization.

Be prepared.

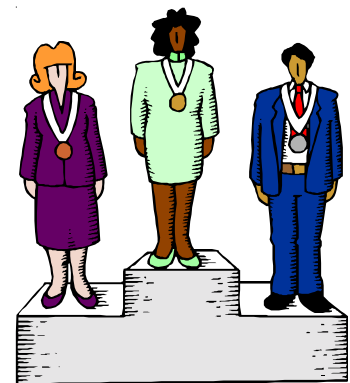
The worst thing you can do is attract Spanish speaking volunteers and not have training available for them or work prepared. Use Spanish staff or locate other Spanish-speaking people to assist volunteers when needed. Design training to reach many levels of literacy effectively.

Recognition is critical.

Latino volunteers need to be shown appreciation and rewarded for their work. A simple certificate of appreciation or just a note will make a difference. Reward as a group. If you choose to reward an individual, it is best that you do so in private to avoid the issue of favoritism. Offering rewards and incentives that benefit the volunteers' children often has great results.

Incentives.

Continuously express why their role as a volunteer is important. Mention children and how they benefit from volunteerism. Couching the act of volunteerism as a way to help one's children carries great weight with Latinos. Provide food, drink, music, and raffles. Make volunteerism fun and create a happy environment.*



Diversity Resource: Extension in Espanol

Extension en Espanol is a new national clearinghouse for Spanish-language educational resources operated by and for Extension professionals. This comprehensive site offers a wealth of materials, opportunities, and services to Extension professionals who work with Spanish speaking audiences. The following are some of the many sections of this site:

➤ **Publications Collection**

Publications have been provided by members from throughout the Cooperative Extension System. The publications are in Acrobat PDF format for immediate download and use in your educational programs. Publications are organized under the following topic headings:

- Agriculture
- Animals
- Business
- Disaster Preparedness
- Environment
- Family & Personal
- Food
- Government & Community
- Health & Safety
- Insects
- Work & Money

➤ **Language, Culture, and Spanish-Speaking Communities**

Thirty-three individual articles/documents are provided to help Extension professionals learn about and more effectively serve their Spanish-speaking audiences.

This section contains links to agencies and institutions that provide materials for use with Spanish-speaking audiences. Some materials have been produced by Extension specialists throughout the Cooperative Extension system. Other materials have been produced by various governmental and non-governmental entities.

➤ **News-Print/Audio**

These sites contain audio and print materials on a variety of subjects relevant to Extension outreach in both English and Spanish.

➤ **Reference Materials**



This section contains helpful information for producers of Spanish Language materials. Several sub-libraries include a bibliography of reference

books, language references, glossaries, style guides, and translation organizations.

Additionally, Other Services Include:

- Document Submission - translation of publications that are appropriate for Extension audiences and that can be added to the publications collection.
- Forums - opportunities for ongoing discussions of issues in Extension work as they relate to outreach to Spanish-speaking audiences.
- Link Submission - opportunities to share links to relevant materials for all to access.
- Contacts - contact information for colleagues throughout the Cooperative Extension system and other professionals working to improve outreach to Spanish-speaking audiences.

This site is sponsored by CREES and state Extension service cooperating. Go to <http://extensionenespanol.net> to take advantage of this wonderful resource!⌘



Diversity Calendar

May 2003 - Asian Pacific Heritage Month

- 1st Flores de Mayo.** Philippine. A festival of tribute to the Virgin Mary. Lasts all month.
- 5th Cinco de Mayo.** Mexican. A day for U.S. citizens of Mexican heritage to celebrate their ancestry.
- Children's Day.** Korean.
- Kodomo no hi (Boy's Day).** Japanese. Honors boys with brightly colored flown kits shaped like carp (a sign of great will, strength, and longevity).
- 10th Great Spike Day.** U.S. Asian American. Commemorates the day in 1869 when the last spike was driven into the Transcontinental Railroad. The contribution of the Chinese immigrant labor on the railroad was recognized in 1999.
- 11th Mother's Day.** U.S. An official holiday to honor mothers.
- 13th Mawlid Al-Nabi.** Islamic (begins sundown). Commemorates the prophet Muhammad's birthday.
- 15th Vesak.** Buddhist. Theravada Buddhist celebration of the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha.
- 22nd Declaration of the Bab.** Baha'i (begins sundown).
- 25th African Liberation Day.** International. Focuses on the progress of liberation for all African nations.
- 26th Memorial Day.** U.S. Commemorates U.S. heroes and those who have died.
- 28th Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Glory of God).** Baha'i (begins sundown). Commemorates the death of the prophet-founder of the Baha'i faith.
- 29th Ascension Day.** Christian. Marks the ascent of Jesus Christ into heaven.

June 2003 - Gay and Lesbian Pride Month

- 1st Children's Day.** Chinese.
- 5th Shavot.** Jewish (begins sundown). Commemorates the revelation of the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai.
- 6th D Day.** U.S. Commemorates the beginning of the ending of WWII when U.S. troops landed on Normandy.
- 6th Red Earth Native American Cultural Festival.** U.S. Native Americans. Features nearly 2,000 artists from over 100 tribes, nations, and bands. Designed to preserve the rich tradition of Native American culture.
- 8th Pentecost.** Christian. Commemorates the Holy Spirit's descent upon the 12 apostles.
- Race Unity Day.** Baha'i. Promotes racial harmony and understanding.
- 15th Father's Day.** U.S. Honors all fathers in the world.
- Pentecost.** Coptic and Eastern Orthodox Christian.
- Trinity Sunday.** Christian. Celebrates the belief that God, his son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are one.
- 16th Martyrdom of Guru Arjan.** Sikh. Commemorates the death of the fifth guru of the Sikhs and the first Sikh martyr.

- 19th Corpus Christi.** Christian. Catholic. Honors the sacrament of the communion. In the U.S. it is known as The Body and Blood of Christ and is celebrated on the following Sunday.
- Juneteenth.** African American. Celebrates the day in 1865 that Union troops brought news to Texas of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation.
- 24th San Juan Day.** Puerto Rican. Commemorates the birth of St. John the Baptist.
- 28th Stonewall Rebellion.** Gay and Lesbian. Commemorates the protest by gays and lesbians against police harassment in New York City.
- 29th All Saints Day.** Orthodox Christianity. Celebrates the lives of those saints, known and unknown.

July 2003

- 4th Independence Day.** U.S. Marks the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
- 8th Martyrdom of the Bab.** Baha'i (begins sundown). Commemorates the arrest, torture, imprisonment, and execution of the Bab, the forerunner of Baha'u'llah.
- 13th AsalhaPuja.** Buddhist. Celebrates Buddha's first sermon and the setting of the Wheel of Truth into the world.
- O-Bon.** Japanese. Lanterns are lit for the souls of the dead who visit the earth during this time.
- 17th Munoz-Rivera Day.** Puerto Rican. Celebrates the birthday of Luis Munoz-Rivera, a Puerto Rican patriot, poet, and journalist.
- 20th Umi no hi.** Japanese. A national holiday to honor the importance of the sea in Japanese history and culture.
- 24th Pioneer Day.** Mormon. Honors the U.S. pioneers who came to Utah and began the first settlement, by Brigham Young in 1847.
- 31st Feast of St. Ignatius Loyola.** Spanish. Commemorates the life of St. Ignatius Loyola who founded the Jesuits.

Sources: *Honoring Differences*, *The Pro-Group, Inc.*, *The National Conference for Community and Justice*



Diversity Activity: Complimentary Round Table

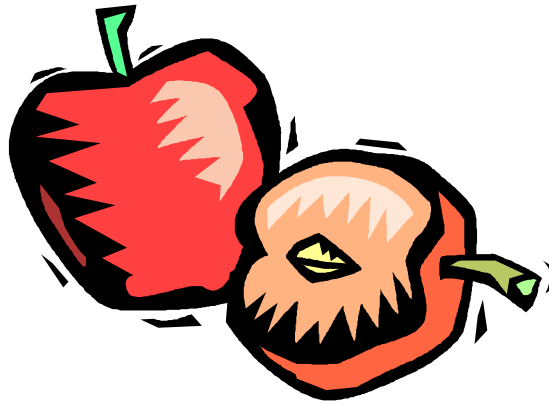
By Rose Guzauskas

Grade Level - K-adult

Objective: To enhance social skills development by illustrating how our words affect people.

Directions:

You will need two apples and a knife. Seat a group of 6-8 at a round table. Take one apple and say something mean to it, (e.g., "I hate you," "I don't want to be around you"), and drop it to the floor. The next person picks it up, is mean to the apple, and drops it. This continues around the table a couple times as everyone take turns being mean to it and dropping it. Cut that apple in half and lay it in the center of the table allowing it to brown. Take the other apple and as each participant takes a turn holding the apple, everyone else in the group takes turns complimenting or affirming the person holding the apple. Continue until everyone in the group has been complimented by everybody else.



Lead the participants in a discussion of how it felt to be complimented? Were they easy to receive? Why or why not? What was easier, being mean or giving compliments? Why?

Both youth and adults alike respond well to this activity. Social skills are developed as youth and adults are more sensitive to the feelings of others.

Ask who wants the brown, battered apple on the table? No one, of course. Discuss how a lot of people feel like that apple, all bruised and battered, because they've heard mean things all their lives. They feel like no one cares about them and no one wants to be their friend. Explain that our words can make people feel like that apple.*

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