



Neil Upadhyay

**High School: 3rd place
winner**



IndiaFEST 2010– Essay Contest

Indian Immigrants in the US

A young man and his wife, both in their early 20s, with sad eyes and expressionless faces exit out of a petite, subcompact car. Seeing their families for possibly the last time, they touch their feet---hoping for good luck, fortune, and protection in their new life. Exchanges of hugs, tears, and a few alleviating words occurs. As they both drag their bags full of belongings through the double doors, it's apparent that their new lives will be full of struggle. The journey from India to America is no easy obstacle to overcome, yet its effects are life changing for a myriad of people. Medical care, business, and the Hindu cultural life have experienced major alterations as a result of immigration by Indian Citizens. It's safe to say that America, as we know it, would be dramatically altered had it not been for the Indian community here.

The British brought European medicine to India in the 19th century, and the impact Indian physicians have made on the American healthcare system is an enormous one. Indian doctors have higher educational qualifications than doctors from any other country. Thus, there are around 60,000 Indian physicians practicing in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia, the majority-35,000- predominately in the US. The health care field has been dominated by the exceptional skills of Indian medical professionals. "Medical Tourism," as well as IT and Business Outsourcing, produce a 6.2% gross domestic product growth rate, compared with 4.4% of the US, and 2.4% of the European Union. As the number of physicians decreases here in the US, the large "Indian Medical Immigration" has acted like a buffer to alleviate physician shortages. There's also an acute shortage of nurses in America, which resulted in recruiters probing India for English-speaking RN's, as the supply from nations such as the Philippines, Ireland, and Canada dry up. This has opened the opportunity for the 30,000 annually graduating nurses in India. Hot shot doctors, such as CNN's medical correspondent Sanjay Gupta have brought a new name to medical care here in the States. Professor of neurosurgery at Emory University School of Medicine and a former White House fellow (primary advisor to Hilary Clinton), Gupta is recognized greatly for his accomplishments in the healthcare field. He is currently active in Haiti, administering medicines and care to the earthquake victims. Also, Deepak Chopra, and endocrinologist who later shifted to alternative medicine, as well a professor at Tufts and Boston Universities, has been appreciated for his work after immigrating form New Delhi. The author of a multitude of books, Chopra

demonstrated how he has come very far in the world of Medicine. Moreover, US medicine has changed as a result of the manufacturing of various drugs in India. Drug companies are choosing to establish their plants in the large cities of India, including New Delhi, Ahmedabad, and Bangalore. Everything from the typical acetaminophen to the complex antihypertensive have, at one point or another, been produced in an Indian plant. So, the successful doctors that have emigrated from India to the US have given India the upper hand in terms of pharmaceuticals. These drugs will later supply the US, if not a large portion of the world, with antibiotics and drugs of future miracles. From the mid-19th century onward, India has been a powerhouse in the healthcare field, supplying talented MD's and RN's, as well as lifesaving medicines.

Indian immigrants have also changed the nature of politics and business in the United States. Both have shifted greatly through the direct influence of Indians here. Big-name companies, like HP, Microsoft, Dell and Apple, have set up their headquarters in India. Thus, this economic influence produces jobs for Americans who actually design the products, while full scale production occurs at the HQ in India. Without these companies in India, America would suffer losses in terms of jobs. As a result, as one nation helps another, it brings in not only revenue and jobs, but a higher economic production total. Moreover, the Indian auto industry has had a drastic impact on the US. As trends in India to adopt miniature, economic vehicles diffuse to the States, so does the actual manufacturing of the car. In the early weeks of January 2010, Tata Motors introduced the Nano to the US. This ultra nominal car has revolutionized the American auto market, with an MSRP around \$ 8,500. The company has also required the labor of Americans. Tata Motors has recently bought Jaguar, thus putting more Americans under its belt of manufacturing. This move, as well as the introduction of Tata Motors to the US, has brought more prosperity to the American Auto Industry. In addition, Tata will be able to get its foot in the door of the American auto industry with the decreasing reliability of Toyota. Plagued with safety issues and declining capital, the once genuine Toyota is now being second-guessed by consumers. With this, Tata will be better able to get its product out to the American population. In addition to the auto industry, politics have also been altered as a result of Indian influence. Many medical doctors, especially in South Florida, have partnered with Governor Charlie Christ to improve medical care. These doctors are playing a major role in the political world. Also, as governor of Louisiana, Bobby Jindal has made immense changes in America's political world. At age 36, becoming the youngest governor of the US, he's the 1st non-white Governor of Louisiana and the first of American-Indian origin. Needless to say, Indians have impacted the political field with excessive force here in America.

Indian immigrants in the US have also had a profound affect of cultural life. They have made Americans aware of what India is all about: its customs, religion, food, and festivals. Just as the Portuguese and Spanish brought aspects of their lives to their Latin American colonies in the 15th and 16th centuries, Indians have also transformed features of their lifestyle to the US. A growing tolerance for Indian foods has developed, and there are numerous Indian restaurants and stores scattered throughout major cities, like Atlanta, Tampa, Dallas, New York, and Los Angeles. Thus, Americans gain an appreciation for Indian cuisine, like Curry, Naan, and rice, which are introduced to a new culture. Also,

there are a growing amount of “purely vegetarian” restaurants within these metropolitan areas. Chain restaurants in Florida, like Woodlands, have introduced native Indian and flavorful food to American Citizens. Multiculturalism has and will continue to be a prominent player in the modern-day American society; and Indian have only added to this vast, ever-growing melting pot. Moreover, there is an immense acknowledgement of the Hindu Faith itself, with regards to the US. Americans are attracted to Hindu lifestyles, and the Hindu faith has gained awareness in America. Also, the Hindi language itself has had tremendous impacts in the English language. Words like *shampoo*, *jungle*, *guru*, and *avatar* have been incorporated into English. The Hindu faith also has profound affects in America. One of the oldest faiths, introduced in the *Vedic Ages* by Krishna to his devotee Arjuna, and as a result of a massive, epic battle, Hinduism has continued to thrive, not only in India, but England, Canada, Europe, and America, with over 781.2 Million followers. Being brought for the first time in America on August 13th, 1965 by *Srila Prabhupada*, Hinduism has gained the attention of Americans. With the establishment of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, Hinduism was able to gain a significant number of American devotees. Religious establishments have provided a bridge for Americans to the vibrant spiritual celebrations in India. Religious festivals, as well as customs and traditions, are still continuing in the US.

In the years that followed, the young gentleman and his wife continued their educations, prospering in the American society. Working as a physician’s assistant and an engineer, both were able to enjoy the delicious fruits of their labor. Since the 1600s, immigrants came to the Land of Opportunity, and as much “opportunity” America has provided, the Indian community has given it back through the healthcare industry, business, and Indian cultural aspects. Consequently, the United States has grown substantial and secure as a result of the expertise the Indians have provided in various fields. Through the centuries, Indian immigrants were able to leave America in greater shape than that of their arrival. Just as Atlas holds up the sky, Indians hold up America as a shining example to the rest of the world. They have been able to immensely impact America in a positive manner, and that will continue to stay that way in the years to come. Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Adaptability is not imitation. It means power of resistance and assimilation.” Thus, Indians are able to retain their cultural heritage and ideas, diffusing them to the United States of America.