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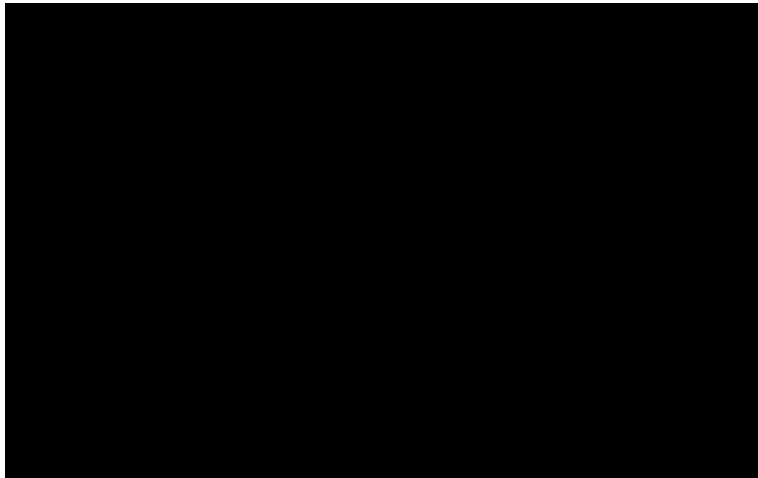


Notes on the World's Largest Democracy

November 6, 2012, 6:49 AM | 1 Comment

## 'Nobody Ignores Indians'

By HEATHER TIMMONS



A series of offbeat, provocative and sometimes downright earnest media campaigns hope to get South Asian-American voters to the polls in the United States on Tuesday.

One, the "14<sup>th</sup> Annual Desi Spelling Bee," organized by [18millionRising.org](#), features South Asian-American actors as spelling bee contestants, who are given words like "undecided" and "ignored" to spell.

"Eighty-four percent of Indians were ignored by both parties with regard to voting in 2012," the spelling bee judge [tells one contestant](#). "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa," the contestant responds. "Nobody ignores Indians."

"Twenty-five percent of South Asians are considered undecided voters," [another spelling bee commercial](#) said. "Asian-Americans will be the deciding swing voters in November's election," said [a third](#). The videos don't endorse any particular candidate, just urge South Asian voters go to the polls.

South Asian voters generally favor Democrats, a [poll released earlier this year](#) found, but Asian-Americans in general have yet to be "fully engaged" by either Democrats and Republicans.

A Pew Research Center [study](#) released earlier this year shows that Asian-Americans recently passed Hispanic-Americans as the largest group of new immigrants in the United States. But Asian-Americans have been virtually ignored in recent presidential campaigns, leading some political experts to [speculate earlier this year](#) that this bloc would be a key swing vote, courted by both Republicans and Democrats.

A separate campaign, dubbed [We Are America](#), uses social media and celebrities to encourage South Asian voters to go to the polls in favor of President Obama. In a series of public service announcements, the actors Sarita Choudhury ("Homeland") and Sheetal Sheth and the musician Reena Shah, among others, discuss President Obama's positions on civil rights and women's rights, as well as other issues. The campaign's [Facebook page](#) solicits pictures from South Asian-Americans around the country.

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### Special Series

"Even though a large number of South Asians supported President Obama in the last election, four years later they have lost touch and felt a bit left out in this year's election process from the Democratic Party's outreach," said Tim Dutta, one of the campaign's founders.

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**K R** - Los Angeles, CA

This particular statistic (and many others in this Desi Bee video series) comes from the 2012 National Asian American Survey: <http://www.naasurvey.com/>

**Karthick Ramakrishnan**  
 Director, National Asian American Survey  
 Associate Professor, University of California, Riverside

Nov. 6, 2012 at 5:57 p.m.

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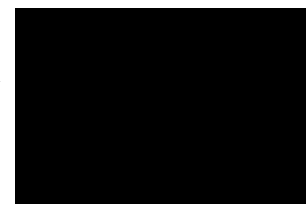
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