

The Quest for Social Justice by the Asian American and Caribbean Communities

by Ashook Ramsaran



ST. JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY



***Migration and Inequality
in the COVID-19 Pandemic***

May 21st – 22nd, 2021

VIRTUAL WEBEX CONFERENCE



ST. JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY

Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS)
11th Multidisciplinary Conference on Immigration:
Migration and Inequality in the Covid-19 Pandemic

Ashook K. Ramsaran
Indian Diaspora Council Int'l
www.IndianDiasporaCouncil.org



The Quest for Social Justice by Asian Americans – May 22, 2021

The Quest for Social Justice by the Asian American and Caribbean Communities *by Ashook Ramsaran*

Good morning.

My appreciation to Dr. Alina Camacho-Gingerich and the Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies (CLACS) for organizing this conference, bringing so many learned and expert presenters on the various topics at this

CLACS XI Multidisciplinary Conference on Immigration

Migration and Inequality in the COVID-19 Pandemic

My focus will be on:

"The Impact of Covid-19 on the Asian American and Caribbean Communities: Inequality and Abuses"

in the context of Migration & Inequality in the Covid-19 Pandemic

I want to examine the levels of discrimination, social injustices, attacks and hate crimes perpetrated against **Asian Americans**.

Time will not permit me to address discrimination, social injustices, attacks and hate crimes perpetrated against the **Caribbean Community** in USA which is a diverse community of peoples, languages, culture, religions, etc. – as that would take much more time than this session has allocated. It is a subject of enormous importance. I request CLACS to convene an entire session on this theme.

Regarding the topic of Asian Americans:

Note: I am not of Asian origin nor an expert on this subject, but I am exposed to this by affiliation, association and addressing these issues at the Queens Civic Congress which is the umbrella organization of civic associations in Queens, New York.

I will provide an assessment of the quest for social justice in various forms and in various arena to seek redress and safety – while seeking to function in American society that, in principle, supposedly protects freedom, equality under the law, fairness, ethnic, language, age, sex, religious, disability, place of origin, level of skills, and other facets of daily life.

First the demographics from the latest Census figures:

Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the U.S.

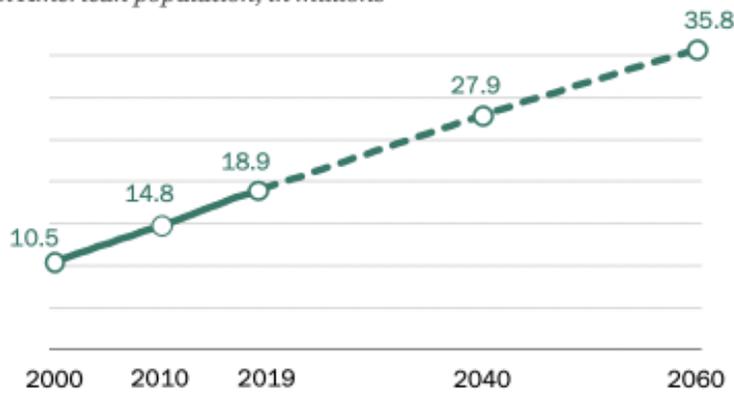
Asian Americans were the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the U.S. from 2000 to 2019 ...

U.S. population change by race and ethnicity, in thousands

	2019	2000	Change '00-'19	% Change '00-'19
Asian	18,906	10,469	8,437	81%
Hispanic	60,572	35,662	24,910	70
NHPI	596	370	226	61
Black	41,147	34,406	6,742	20
White	197,310	195,702	1,608	1
Total	328,240	282,162	46,077	16

... and their population is projected to pass 35 million by 2060

Asian American population, in millions



Note: NHPI is the acronym for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander. White, Black, Asian and NHPI individuals include those who report only being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Population figures rounded to nearest 1,000. American Indian and Alaska Native and multiracial groups not shown.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. intercensal population estimates for 2000-2009, U.S. Census Bureau Vintage 2019 estimates for 2010-2019, and Census Bureau 2017 population projections for 2020-2060.

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Asian Americans recorded the fastest population growth rate among all racial and ethnic groups in the United States between 2000 and 2019. The Asian population in the U.S. grew 81% during that span, from roughly 10.5 million to a record 18.9 million, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau population estimates, the last before 2020 census figures are released. Furthermore, by 2060, the number of U.S. Asians is projected to rise to 35.8 million, more than triple their 2000 population.

Hispanics saw the second-fastest population growth between 2000 and 2019, followed by Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) at 70% and 61%, respectively. The nation's Black population also grew during this period, albeit at a slower rate of 20%. There was virtually no change in the White population.

Analysis

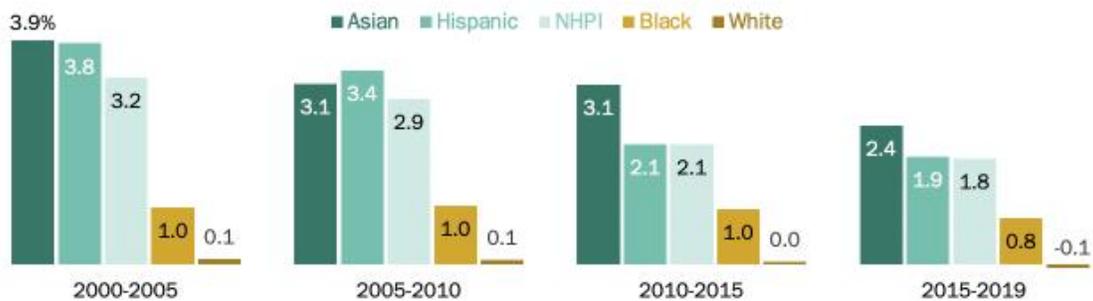
The growth of the Asian American population in the U.S. comes amid reports of discrimination and violence against this group since the start of the coronavirus outbreak. In a Pew Research Center survey conducted in early March 2021 – before the fatal shooting of six Asian women and two other people in the Atlanta area on March 16 – 87% of Asian Americans said there is a lot of or some discrimination against them in society. In a June 2020 survey, 31% of Asians reported they had been the subject of slurs or jokes since the COVID-19 outbreak began, and 26% said they had feared someone might threaten or physically attack them because of their race or ethnicity. (Asian adults in both surveys were interviewed in English only.)

Average population growth of Asian Americans has slowed over the past two decades

The average annual growth rate of the Asian American population in the U.S. has slowed since 2000. From 2000 to 2005, it grew by an average of 3.9% per year. It dropped to 3.1% per year between 2005 and 2010, remained at that level between 2010 and 2015, and then fell to 2.4% per year between 2015 and 2019.

Growth of Asian American population has slowed but remains among the highest

Average annual growth rate, by racial and ethnic group



Note: Growth is computed as a geometric mean. NHPI is the acronym for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander. White, Black, Asian and NHPI individuals include those who report only being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. American Indian and Alaska Native and multiracial groups not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. intercensal population estimates for 2000-2009, and U.S. Census Bureau Vintage 2019 estimates for 2010-2019.

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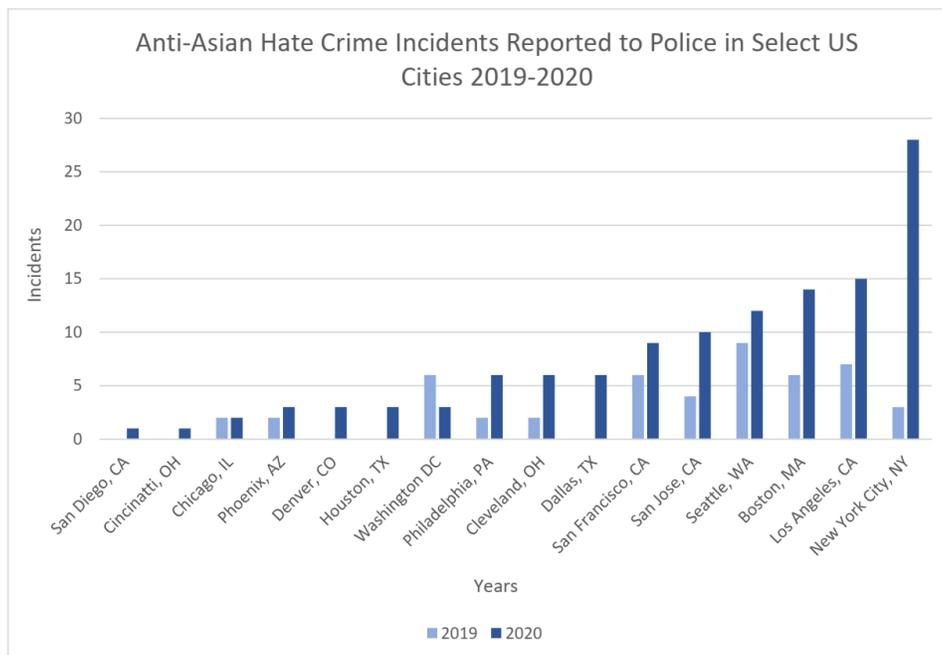
Despite the slowdown, the U.S. Asian population has still had one of the highest growth rates of any major racial and ethnic group in most years since 2000. The exception was between 2005 and 2010, when the growth rate among Hispanic Americans slightly outpaced that of Asian Americans (3.4% vs 3.1% per year).

Asian American population grew in all states and D.C. between 2000 and 2019

Detailed table: U.S. Asian populations in 50 states and D.C., 2000 and 2019

The Asian American population has increased in every state and the District of Columbia over the past two decades. California had an Asian population of roughly 5.9 million in 2019, by far the nation's largest. It was followed by New York (1.7 million), Texas (1.5 million), New Jersey (870,000) and Illinois (732,000). A majority of U.S. Asians (56%) live in these five states.

Discrimination, attacks and hate crimes:



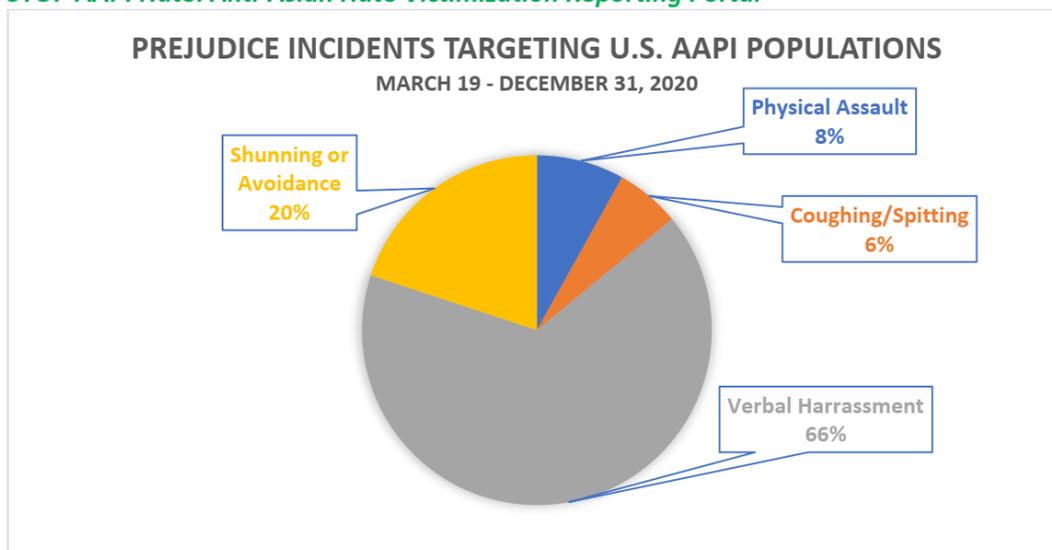
Source: CSHE

Discrimination, attacks and hate crimes:

Long before the former president targeted Asians during the outbreak of Covid-19 and continuing throughout 2020, there varying levels of discrimination, attacks and hate crimes targeted against Asians in America - ever since the first Asians were brought over 100 years ago to work building the cross country railroads; as well as the mass internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

The monitoring group, Stop AAPI Hate, reported 3,795 incidents nationwide between March 2020 and February 2021.

STOP AAPI Hate: Anti-Asian Hate Victimization Reporting Portal

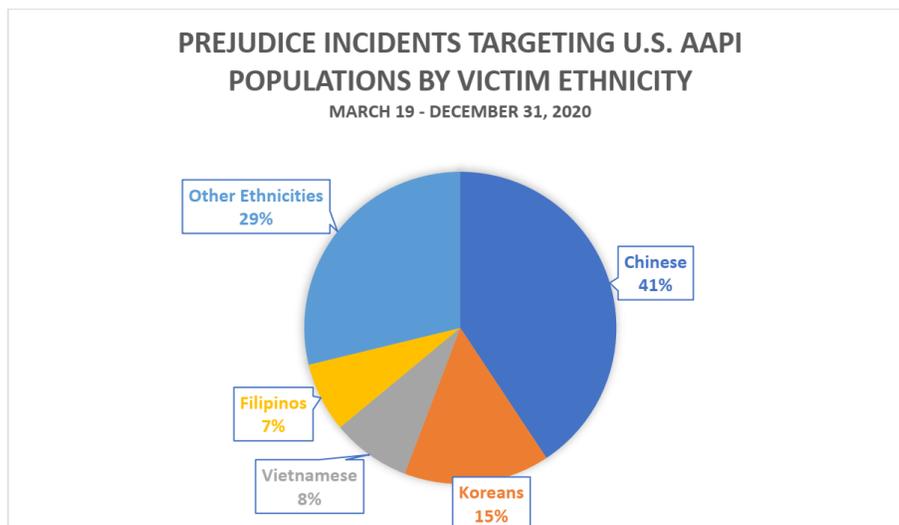


Note: It should be noted that spitting on someone is considered a type of assault.

Source: Stop AAPI Hate (February 9, 2021) Source: <https://stopaapihate.org>

Amid widespread reports of discrimination and violence against Asian Americans during the coronavirus outbreak, **32% of Asian adults say they have feared someone might threaten or physically attack them** – a greater share than other racial or ethnic groups. The vast majority of Asian adults (81%) also say violence against them is increasing, far surpassing the share of all U.S. adults (56%) who say the same, according to a new Pew Research Center survey.

Verbal harassment can also be a hate crime when it is in the form of an actionable threat, as opposed to mere offensiveness.



Source: Stop AAPI Hate (February 9, 2021) <https://stopaapihate.org>

Quest for social justice:

The Asian American population has strong political, economic, social and civic representation, very proactive and engaged at local and national levels.

The US has seen a surge in racially motivated crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

United States President Joe Biden signed anti-hate crime legislation on Thursday May 20, 2021 directing federal law enforcement to address a rise in violent attacks against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders during the coronavirus pandemic.

“There are simple core values and beliefs that should bring us together as Americans. One of them is standing together against hate, against racism,” Biden said at a White House ceremony attended by Democratic legislators and administration officials.

The new law seeks to speed the Justice Department’s review of anti-Asian hate crimes, and designates an official at the department to oversee the effort. Importantly for enforcement of anti-hate crime laws, it will make reporting easier for victims of all types of hate crimes and provide training for local and state officials.

The measure had passed both chambers of Congress by large majority votes. It was approved 94-1 in the Senate and 364-62 in the House of Representatives. The new law directs the US Department of Justice to focus on the prosecution of violent crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

US Representative Grace Meng (Flushing, NY) is lead sponsor of the bill. Others include Sen. Mazie Hirono, Sen. Tammy Duckworth, Rep Judy Chu, Rep Ted Liu, Rep Mark Takano, Rep Andy Kim, Rep Kai Kahale.

A few of the many organizations, civic groups and legal defense groups:

- Asian Americans Advancing Justice
- National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
- Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Atlanta
- National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum
- Asian American Advocacy Fund
- Center for the Pacific Asian Family
- The Asian and Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project
- Coalition of Asian American Leaders
- Asian American Resource Workshop
- The Council of Korean Americans

The quest for social justice among Asian Americans continues with the support and encouragement of other groups such as National Action Network, NAACP, and others.

In addition, several states and cities have established civil rights departments to address social injustice.

Examples:

NYC Commission on Human Rights (NYC CHR)

Queens Borough President Office of Civil Rights

Universities, colleges, churches and grassroots organizations across racial and ethnic lines are in support and rally to seek redress –

When one group is attacked or discriminated, we are all victims of that. All of America is a victim because it casts a dark cloud that blemishes the very fabric of American ideals and society.

The quest for social justice continues even as some progress in education, awareness and legal measures are being taken.

Center for Latin American Caribbean
Studies (CLACS)

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PROGRAM

May 21-22, 2021

Saturday, May 22, 2021

<https://sju.webex.com/sju/j.php?MTID=m3fa4fc1aa8ab983ebd46dcdb42d6f17f>

Meeting number: 161 922 0087

Password: 1234

Opening Remarks	9:45 am
	Alina Camacho-Gingerich, Ph.D. <i>Chair Department of Languages and Literatures Director, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies</i>
Keynote Speaker: José Calderón	10:00 am
	<i>The Latino Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic</i>
PANEL V <i>Impact of Covid-19 and Attacks on Asian Americans on the Caribbean community in USA</i>	11:00 am
	Moderator Ashook Ramsaran, President Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) 1. Dhanpaul Narine, Ph.D., <i>The Sociological Impact of Covid-19 on the Asian American and Caribbean Communities</i> 2. Sharla Khargi, Ph.D., <i>The Mental Impact of Covid-19 on the Asian American and Caribbean Communities</i> 3. John Albert Esq., <i>The Inequality and Abuses on the Asian American Community</i> 4. Ashook Ramsaran, <i>The Quest for Social Justice by the Asian American and Caribbean Communities</i>