

Kamala Harris is making big headlines in India for the past week as she marked a historical moment in the US. Headlines in India are cheering the nomination of Kamala Harris, blooming of 'Kamal', the lotus they say. People of the subcontinent are overwhelmed with an Indian American making it to the Whitehouse to the highest level of American government shattering all the glass ceiling in the US presidential election history.

Kamala Devi Harris was born in Oakland, California to an Indian mother and Jamaican father. She was a prosecutor and former state attorney general in the state of California. She was the first non-white attorney general of California. She is the second black female US senator in history and has now become the first-ever Indian American to be nominated as the vice-presidential candidate.

A former presidential candidate, a toughest political rival for Joe Biden, is back in the race, now as his running mate, an outspoken critique of President Donald Trump, a woman of colour an Indian-Jamaican-American. Such a choice is testimony to the fact that America's domestic politics has suffered grossly this year and the establishment faced backlash not just for the poor handling of coronavirus pandemic but George Floyd's death had posed a serious threat to the racial fabric of the country. And hence a black Indian American female was the safe choice for Biden. Initially, Bidens' array of choices were almost entirely women. But after the black lives matter protest erupted in May, a clamour began for Biden to pick up a 'person of colour'.



Joe Biden with Kamala Harris/ Image source: AP

And there is more behind democrats' smart choice. Kamal's mixed-race heritage allows her to connect across identities. She is an American politician, with Indian and African roots, who had her eyes on 10 million Indian American voters, the fastest-growing minority in America and 5% of its total voting population and 13% of Afro American voters. This sum might help Biden to pull off a huge vote bank. Joe does not want to repeat the mistake Hilary Clinton did.

Although, the 50 thousand crores' Howdy Modi rally and the 110 thousand crore namaste from events highlighted the popularity of President Trump in the influential Indian diaspora. Now, it will be interesting to see whether Harris will be able to swing this support for the favour of democrats.

Nonetheless, Harris comes with experience and also the promises of many firsts. Harris has outspoken against POTUS. Her identity directly squares against President Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric. It's a make or breaks moment for democrats, they want to out Mr

Trump and that's where Kamala comes in.

But is this nomination 'good news' to celebrate for us Indians? Is she really sensible to India, her half-native or her mother's country? Well, she is carrying with herself, a bag full of ironies. This excitement amongst the netizens is nonsensical and premature! This debate going on in the continent that weather Harris will be pro Indian or anti-Indian is completely flawed.

The fundamental tenet to support this fact is that we Indians have a very diverse genetic mix because in any case, we are the second largest in the world. We are a nation of emigrants. Hence our genetic pool liberally scatters all around the world. Now, once a citizen is born overseas or acquired foreign citizenship, how far is it legitimate to think of them, as our own. To think of their conduct overseas just because of the genetic acquaintance is completely flawed. It's a bizarre idea to presume sitting here in a remote town of Bihar that some official of Indian origin in California will make policies for the development of our village. But this thing goes on and on with our country. Well for that matter we can say, we Indians are highly optimistic.

Let's look at her recent past dig out, there are a lot of sceptics in store.

Kamal Harris has been spotted flaunting her Indian origin on occasions, that's pretty much evident in her autobiography too. But when it comes to policymaking, she has been critical of the Modi government and taken tough positions on law and order and controversial episodes in Indian politics.

When Indian parliament abrogated Article 370, Kamala has spoken outrageously on the issue during her presidential campaign. She also stirred controversy in October 2019, when she said, 'We have to remind the Kashmiris they are not alone in the world. We are keeping a track of the situation. There is a need to intervene if the situation demands.'



Kamala Harris [Left] Pramila Jayapal [Right]

More recently when India passed CAA, five prominent Indian American lawmakers, all Democrats, spoke out against it. Kamala Harris and Pramila Jaipal were two of them. Pramila Jaipal pushed a resolution in the house in December 2020 and urged India to end the restrictions in the valley. Even Joe Biden has expressed disappointment in India's decision to implement CAA and NRC. But This is a clear case of selective outrage, this explains their political strategy and convenient positioning. Jaipal and Harris leave no opportunity to lecture India on human rights issues but they have nothing to say when Indians become the target of Pakistan sponsored terrorist attacks in the valley. Neither had they spoken about China's brutal and unprovoked assault on Indian soldiers in Ladakh. A pew poll suggests that Democrats are less likely to have an unfavourable view of the Chinese. But Trump's Administration is highly critical of China. However, when it comes to the question of immigration and visa rules, Kamal Harris will be much better than Trump administration.

If Democrats win, it is hard to predict which way the Indo-US relationship will swing. But by enlarge, how Kamal Harris will look at India will depend on how India's economy, India's internal cohesion; and India's external security will look by January next year.

But we can't deny the fact, Kamala Harris is America's first.

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