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Asian College Students in America

Asian Americans belong to the minority group, which consists mainly of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans. Even though there are many other minority groups, these are the main ones. They are considered minority groups, whether in terms of ethnicity, race, or religion. Over the years, Asian Americans worked as slaves, low-wage, and low-skilled laborers. They were also targets of racial discrimination, especially by white Americans. However, this group has turned the tables through persistence and determination. Right now, they are among the most enviable groups in America. A large part of this success can be attributed to hard work through education.

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Asians who migrate to the United States are inspired by financial requirements, better opportunities, and better education. Currently, most elite universities and colleges have a higher representation of Asian-American students than reflected in their general population. Colleges continue to increase enrolment of these students. Despite the success of Asian students in the colleges, they face various problems including lack of diversity, racial discrimination, and over expectation. The purpose of this paper is to describe the experience of Asian students in American colleges beginning from their history, success, and challenges they face.

Due to the rise in globalization and technological advancements, the world has become a society where people travel and information travel within a short time. Education is one of the sectors that have improved due to globalization. Students can easily seek education from any part of the world as long as they meet the requirements. The Asian population has benefited from the development to further their education from the most established systems in the world (Lee, Park, and Wong 492). There are many Asian students in American and European schools.

Researching on this topic will, therefore, help to understand the real experience of these students as well as identifying areas which still need to be improved.

### **History of Asian-American Education**

There was a serious demand for Asian American education programs that began in the late 1960s. As a result, many West Coast universities and some few colleges began education programs for Asian students. The programs began as multidisciplinary study centers. There were sub-departments and classes which created the need for books. This led to the creation of Amerasia Journal in 1971 by Yale students. It later moved to the University of California to become part of the Asian American Studies (Lee et al. 494). Association for Asian American Studies, a learned society, began to sponsor annual conferences.

The early Asian students studying in America had to overcome some unfair legal entities making it difficult to learn effectively. An example is the famous encounter between the Chinese and the American legal system. Instead of remaining helpless victims, the 19th-century Chinese immigrants decided to struggle against the perceived unjust laws. They also demonstrated their ability to adapt to the American legal norms, thereby, speeding their establishment in the education systems of the region (Nguyen et al. 484). In their struggles, they lost most of the major constitutional battles. However, they succeeded in negating or modifying many of the state and municipal discriminatory restrictions through suits and petitions. This formed a background for the current developments seen, which allows more Asian students to study in America.

Asians are among the best students in America. Despite their small number, the Asian students are top performers in their respective colleges. According to Chen and Graham 938, Asian-Americans are the best-educated group in the United States. The study shows that about 54% of Asians in the US are at least bachelor's degree holders. In 1995, it was only 38%. The overall college-graduation rate in the US is 33% (Nguyen et al. 484). This means that Asians are doing well in the education sector. The achievement rate in the education sector is similar to native-born Asian Americans and foreign-born individuals.

The success of Asian students in American colleges is due to factors such as the immigration policy of the US, which favors applications from highly educated immigrants and those seeking to learn in the country. Also, Asian-American parents believe that it is through education that they will break the existing barriers in the labor market. For this reason, they are ready to spend on their children's education. The parents also pass the knowledge of how to study and become successful in education (Nguyen et al. 484). The persistent on education by

the middle-class Asian parents is part of the reason they continue to do well in American colleges.

### **Admission Considerations**

Asians comprise of approximately 5% of the total US population. They are the third underrepresented minority population. Despite their small number, there were concerns by college administrators that there may be too many Asian students enrolled in American higher education (Museus and Park 551). This brought fear to the Asian students seeking enrolment in American colleges who knew that their chances might become limited because of the disfavored race. A study done in 2009 by Espenshade and Radford revealed that there was an Asian student needed 140 SAT more points than white students, 320 more points than Hispanics, and 450 more points than African-American students to get enrollment (Espenshade and Radford 17).

There are some recent lawsuits targeting Harvard and Yale universities. The lawsuits confirm the fear of discrimination during admissions. Because of the involvement of elite institutions such as Harvard and Yale, the problem might get worse. U.S. Census Bureau recorded that the population of the American-Asians increased from 10.4 million in 2000 to about 18.9 million people in 2017. On the other hand, college enrollment of the Asian students increased by 40% from 1.1 million between 2000 and 2007 to 1.5 million during the 2012 to 2015 period. All this while, the number of Asian student applicants has doubled while the university enrollments have remained steady (Chen and Graham 942). The Asian students applying for enrollment at Stanford University has doubled while the institution's enrolments continue to decline. This also confirms the admission discrimination trend.

Even though efforts have been made to reduce the discriminations during admission, some cases are still being reported. For example, there was an instance when Taiwanese

community living in Atlanta advised its members to reject policies in college admissions, which were racially preferential. Also, in an annual meeting of the National Association for College Admission Counselling, it was documented that some Asian students tend not to check boxes that identify their race or ethnicity when applying for college admissions (Lee et al. 494). They hide their identities to avoid being denied opportunities because of their race.

The issue of identification during admissions can have impacts on one's mental health. Students who do not possess strong racial identity tend to have mental problems such as low self-actualization and acceptance (Nguyen et al. 484). It also impacts their education and attitude towards school. The results are seen in low performance and low academic achievements. Some Asian students who are doing well academically go as far as denying their Asian heritage. For example, it is common to find native-born Asian students insisting that they are American-born (Museus and Park 555). This practice results in denial of some cultural values, thereby, creating cultural gaps and integration conflicts between these students and their parents.

Other than discrimination during admissions, there are also cases of general racial discrimination that Asian students experience in American schools. Most of the cases are experienced at student-student interaction levels. The intensity of discriminations varies according to the regions and level of education (Lee et al. 507). For example, most students report that they were discriminated against more frequently in high school than in college. Also, there are regions where students from minority groups form the largest population. There are a few cases of discrimination in these schools.

Asian college students are not diverse enough. Diversity in school helps to get more chances in the job market and college admissions. In their pursuit of academic excellence, most Asian college students apply for common courses which are highly populated. They have to

battle for opportunities with other students who are favored during selection. This leads to low admission rates for the Asian students. It also limits their success in getting jobs after graduation (Chen and Graham 947). To increase their opportunities, the students should diversify their choices to less populated courses and careers.

Asian students have much pressure to succeed. They worry too much about the expectations of the schools and their families. The Asian students get to examinations with anxiety because of what would happen if they fail to perform as expected. Their families value education so much that they want their children to succeed at whatever cost. This burden of expectation puts much pressure on these students, and it might affect their performance and self-confidence (Museus and Park 564). Surprisingly, the worries do not lead to high anxiety levels among Asian students.

### **Conclusion**

Asian students are among the top performing group in America. Asian-American education has grown gradually due to globalization and advancement in technology. Decades ago, Asian-Americans were slaves and low-wage workers. They worked their way up through education and now enjoy much success. Despite their success, there are still a few problems the Asian students face in their studies in American colleges. The common problem they face is discrimination. The main level of discrimination is seen during school admissions. Many college administrators got alarmed by increasing Asian students in their institutions. They decided to limit their enrollment to control the trend. The students also face the problem of over-expectation from parents and schools.

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