PREFACE

From the historic times man has always been on the move. As a nomad, he moved to places abundant in food, resources and favorable climate. This process characterized the phenomenon of migration which depended mainly on the survival instincts in new and extreme conditions. In modern times however, people have moved across continents and international borders essentially in search of better economic opportunities and prosperity. This phenomenon characterized the process of immigration.

People from the Indian sub-continent too have been transmigrating for centuries, to various parts of the world. In the 20th century Indian immigration took a significant and new dimension as people moved towards the industrially developed nations of the world especially to the Europe and North America. In this context, the Indian migration to the United States offers an insight into the socio-political challenges and economic successes encountered by them while adjusting themselves in an alien and culturally diverse land.

This thesis makes an attempt to trace the historical patterns of Indian migration to the United States, their socio-economic prospects and political involvement in the U.S. domestic political process.

The first chapter analyses the various Immigration Acts passed by the U.S. Congress and their impact on the Indian migration. It was only after the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act that significant number of Asian Indians migrated to the United States. The family reunion clause helped the Indians to call their family members.

The second chapter focuses on the economic profile of the Asian Indians in the U.S. In this I have tried to find out how they have transformed themselves from a labor community to a very highly trained professional community. The knowledge of English language has played an important role in the acceptance of the Asian Indians by the American
society. Their (Asian Indians) British education and hard work helped them to communicate better with American natives, by which they had an advantage over the other ethnic groups.

The Asian Indians are mostly employed in white collar jobs. They generally work as professionals, managers/ Administrators, academicians etc. Some Asian Indians have also moved to the labor intensive industries such as gas (petrol) stations and hotels and motels. They are the highest income earning group in the United States and the highest tax payers as an ethnic group in US.

The third chapter probes the political participation of Asian Indians in the U.S. domestic politics. The political involvement of the Asian Indians started as protests and demonstrations against the ill treatment meted out to them and to grant them citizenship rights in the early 20th century. Gradually, they started contesting elections. It was started by Dilip Singh Saund in 1956. He was elected as a Congressman twice from the state of California. So far he is the only Asian Indian to be elected to the Congress.

In the 1960s, 1970s and mid 1980s, the Asian Indian community did not actively participate in the American domestic politics as the community was working hard to establish themselves financially. From the late 1980s and early 1990s the Asian Indians were actively involved in politics and some members of the Asian Indian community have been elected to various posts such as Kumar Barve, Nimi McConigley, Satveer Chaudhary, Swati Dandekar, Upendra Chivukula, and others. The Asian Indian community is now supports both the Democrats and the Republicans and independents. They raise funds, campaign actively for various candidates at different levels of elections.

In the fourth chapter, the role of Indian Diaspora in the improvement of bilateral relations between India and United States have been discussed. The chapter analyses the Asian Indian community’s efforts for the betterment of relations between the two nations. The Asian Indians have been very instrumental in the improvement of bilateral relations between
India and the U.S. The law makers can not ignore the needs and aspirations of the Asian Indian community as now they fund the candidates during elections and also seek their votes. With their efforts the community has formed Caucuses in both the Houses to raise issues concerning India and Asian Indians in the U.S. In the near future the community is going to play important role in the American politics and it will be good for India as well.