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Only 10% Indians who applied for Green Card got it in 2017

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Latest official figures show that out of the nearly 6,00,000 Indians who are waiting for Green Card, only 60,394 (10.06 per cent) received the most sought-after legal permanent residency last year. The Green Card is in much demand because it allows the holder to live and work in the US.

Skilled immigrants from India need to wait anywhere between 25-92 years for a Green Card due to per-country limits under the current regulation, said GCReforms.org, a website founded by members of the Indian diaspora living in the United States that focuses on immigration issues.

There were 6,32,219 Indian immigrants and their spouses and minor children waiting for Green Cards, as of April 2018.

Of the 60,394 Indians who received Green Cards in 2017, the maximum 23,569 were issued to the employment-based preferences like those on the H-1B visas.

Having a Green Card allows a person to live and work permanently in the US. Indian-Americans, most of whom are highly skilled and come to the US mainly on the H-1B work visas are the worst sufferers of the current immigration system which imposes a seven per cent per country quota on allotment of Green Cards or permanent legal residency.

As many as 20,549 Indians were issued Green Cards in the capacity of them being immediate relatives (spouses, children and parents) of the US citizens, while 14,962 Indians were issued the Green Cards under the family sponsored categories like brothers and sisters.

Dip in Indian Green Card Holders

The latest annual figures released on October 2 by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), however, reveal that the number of Indians getting Green Cards has dropped - albeit marginally - than the previous two years.

In 2015, as many as 64,116 Indians were issued legal permanent residency, and the next year in 2016, the figure was 64,687.

Among the employment-based preferences - which is the route followed by the H-1B visa holders - 137,855 Green Cards were issued.

The DHS said around half of its Green Cards were issued to the immediate relatives of US citizens - spouses (292,909), children (74,989) and parents (148,610).

In all 1,127,167 million foreigners received Green Cards, which is a step below citizenship, in the year 2017, the figures revealed.

The previous year 1,183,505 foreigners received Green Cards in 2016 and 1,051,031 in 2015.

People from Asia (424,743) and North America (413,650) account for the maximum number of Green Card recipients in 2017.

Country-wise figures reveal that China topped the list with 71,565 Green Cards, followed by Cuba (65,028) and India (60,394).

However, India is different from other countries as it has the maximum number of people waiting in line.

Because of the Congressional mandated country quota, Indians according to Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, would have to wait for decades and in some cases as much as 151 years to get a Green Card.

In 2017, as many as 795 Indians who sought asylum or refugee status were issued Green Cards. Last year, 40 Indians were issued Green Cards under diversity visa category and 479 Indians were issued Green Cards under other categories, according to DHS annual report.

The figures also reveal that in 2017, Americans adopted 222 Indian kids, of which 176 were females and 46 males. Eight of these were of less than year old, 170 between one and four years, while 44 were over five years of age at the time of adoption.