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Canada's GTS program will make Indian immigration easier: All you need to know

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Although Canada Global Talent Stream (GTS) program was a temporary experiment, it has shot up in popularity in recent months. Indian immigrants, especially those with a background in science and technology, are increasing applying for Canadian permanent residency under the GTS program because of how quickly it processes applications.

Indians have also grown disgruntled with the US' backlog in processing green cards and lottery-based H-1B visa allotment. US President Trump's "Buy American, Hire American" policy has rubbed off on the world as isolationist and a pushback to globalisation.

Moreover, his anti-immigration rhetoric is also pushing Indians to choose Canada for education, livelihood, and permanent settlement- through the GTS program.

Canada's GTS Program And Permanent Residency

Canada's Global Talent Stream (GTS) program is set to become a permanent fixture for Indians who want to migrate overseas.

Under this scheme, Indian who have a background in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) fields will be eligible to apply for jobs through the GTS program. Indians currently based in the US can also avail of the program.

Category A of the GTS asks for employers to be validated as innovative companies by referral partners such as regional development agencies. This usually pertains to quickly expanding start ups.

For Category B, companies must sponsor "unique and specialised" hires and submit applications to the Canadian government on their behalf. Most companies use this route and provide IT services.

They have to display a desire to fill vacancies in positions on the "Global Occupation List" that are usually limited in Canada's domestic supply.

In the GTS programme, these applications are processed swiftly, within two weeks.

The GTS will be a two-year long pilot project. But the Canadian government has noted that the programme is extremely popular and created 40,000 jobs in the country for Canadians and permanent residents.

The GTS program also provides work experience in Canada, says *Times of India (TOI)*, which makes it easier for Indian immigrants to be approved as permanent residents in the country.

Canada evaluates permanent residency applications on a point-based system called the Express Entry route. The GST work scheme allowed Indians to increase their edge and become more attractive applicants in the eyes of the Canadian government.

The GTS programme allows Canadian companies to field talented and skilled employees from across the world, diversify their staff, and strive for innovation.

Indian Immigration To Canada

TOI reports that although there are no official statistics on which nationality received the most Canadian visas under the GTS, “anecdotal evidence suggests that a significant number of them were Indians including H-1B workers in US who were tired of the green-card backlog and had migrated to Canada.”

Business Standard (BS) also spoke to Indian nationals waiting for American green-cards who said that they had been waiting for approval for over a decade.

According to the CATO institute, for more than 3,00,000 Indians, the waiting period for a green card is as long as 151 years.

The US' H-1B process has many structural flaws: companies hiring low skilled labourers for cheap instead of qualified professionals who have higher salary demands, a fluctuating cap on H-1B visa allotments, an extremely short application window, expensive application process, and an overflow of applicants.

BS reports that the application fees for H-1B visas is funneled to science and tech training for Americans. Moreover, applicants are given visas based on a lottery system, not on merit. This means the cap figure is randomly selected from a pool of applicants, unlike Canada's point-based system.

Trump's anti-immigration rhetoric has also discouraged people, especially Indians, from migrating to the US for fear of discrimination. Even Indians who have legal, updated immigration documentation worry about Trump's policies.

Americans are also concerned about Trump overturning already passed welfare legislation like the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), *Roe v. Wade*, and the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

However, Canada has been a source of relief for many Indian immigrants, particularly those in tech-related fields like software engineers, data analysts, programmers, and designers. Even academics and professors were a major category.

In 2017, almost 42% of the applications in the Express Entry programme belonged to Indian nationals. The 86,022 applications sent that year was a 200% increase from 2016. Also, 9% and 6% of the applications came from China and Nigeria respectively.

In 2018, Canada saw a 50% increase in Indians opting for Canadian citizenship. The only other country to match this rate is Iran with a 125% year on year increase.

Canada allows Indians a faster and, some would argue, fairer process for permanent residency. Indians who settle abroad also transfer remittances back to the country in volume, benefitting the Indian economy.