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Geography 455

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### Book Report

The book I chose, for my book report is called “On the trail of an Uncertain Dreams”, by Sathi S. Dasgupta. The book is a hard covered research book with a black cover, which has gold colored text and inside has typed text. Why, Dasgupta wrote this book is because he thought being an Immigrant in the United States is a hard task and wanted to learn why this was a reality. Mostly, Indians who come to America is to follow their dreams of becoming something big. As a result, the title of this book can speak for itself in explaining what the book is about, which is about the experiences of different families, who came from a particular region of India that come to the United States to follow their dreams.

Dasgupta chooses to talk about the a group of Indian Bengali immigrants. This was to make it simple for the purposes of his research. In the book, the author had interviewed Indians to know what kinds of aspirations they had to come to the United States. Also, the author talks about the Issues that these Immigrants face in the United States. In the end, the author in this book finds nice ways to tell their stories of those families even though it is a research paper. The reason, I chose this book is because in each chapter the author lets the words of his Interviewees to take the spotlight instead of him explaining like a real research paper and as a result tells many short stories rather than one.

The characters of this book are the samples of 25 men and 25 women, which the author had chosen to sample. On the other hand, the author himself is one of the main characters of his book as he stitches everything together. The roles of the interviewees was explain, why they came to America and how America has treated them. I feel like the 25 families that were sampled head a narrow point of view because they know each other. I know this because the author says repeatedly that he let one interviewee choose another based off of their circle of people.

The first thing he talks about is the way the author collected his data, which was filled with all successful immigrants. In these families both the spouse where highly educated and were well settled in the working class. first, in order to talk to people the author has to plan what he is going to do. The author tries to interview people close to each other so that it is economical because he is on a budget. Then, the author made sure that all the interviewees spoke the same language because the interviews were in their mother tongue. According to the author, India has about fourteen different languages and it would be difficult to keep track of all of their information so they had to choose a language. The author chose bengali families because the interviewer had a strong sense of connection with bengali families and it would be easy to gain access. In order to get sufficient interviewees they used a technique called “snow-ball”, which meant that they let one subject choose the subsequent subject. So, you could say that the data that was collected could be biased no matter what the interviewer did.

The author says there are many reasons why Indian immigrants want to come to the United States. Some reasons according to the author why Indians come to America are better economic opportunities, higher professional growth, job problems in India, and just to get away

from India and simply just go see the world. On the other hand, it is hard to be an immigrant in the United States even after one gets in. The author says that this is why most Indian immigrants want to settle in America but they become ambivalent settlers over time, which means that they come to America to settle but they can't live without their motherland. One of the interviewee says that he being a settler in America and not going to school here he will never fit in the American society is a problem for him. The Indian settlers become ambivalent partly because they don't feel like they should change their distinctive lifestyle to live successfully. Also, Indian settlers feel like they are outsiders in the American society because they don't enjoy the same things that the Americans do. One of the women interviewees even said that she does not fit in and she stands out when she goes out.

The author says that in order to fit into the Indians took in only some values from the American society. For example, one of the interviewees said when she was back home in India, she and her husband used to do things based off of what her mother in law would want them to do. In the United States, they have complete autonomy and could make decision like a couple and would not have to think about disrespecting anyone in the family. This occurring to the author was because most of big decisions in Indian families were made by the head of the family. This was one such example, where Indian families use the values of American society but they still keep their cultural values and most other when they stay home and not completely assimilate.

The author talks about a cultural aspects that the Indian families still keep, which is the decision making for their ward till they are completely independent no matter their age. One parent says that if her daughter wants to be a fashion model there is no way that she would allow

that to happen, but it does not mean that she won't let her daughter make decisions for herself and that parent should guide them. This according to the author, is one such Indian value that would be kept in the family and would not be changed.

The last main thing that the author talks about is the fact that to fit into the American society Indians have to be accommodating and flexible with the American people. One male interviewee says that you have to do things the way the Americans do and learn how they do business, how they treat other people and how they behave. In other words, adapt to the ways the caucasian people do things. The author says that this does not happen all the time but when they go back home they reset into their original family views and the way they do things.

In the end, the elements that I liked about this book is that the book had both the words of the individual characters as interviewees and that the author explained and filled in the gap with information. The theme of the book is to understand what Indian families go through when they want to realize their dream of going to america. I would recommend this book to people how want to know who Indian families work and why they do what they do. On the other hand, don't choose this book for a book report because it would be heard to write about it.