

Reflective Essay

The last time when I went to my village, which is in the Khagaria district of Bihar, that was an unforgettable trip; this time, I was quite mature and was able to understand every situation. I was supposed to go to the market with my cousin. I decided to go by the area where lower caste people live(basically these are chamar,musahar, dom), my uncle and aunt stopped me, they told me that you should not go by that area, you could take another route, but don't go by that route. I was amazed why they said this because I have never been lived in the village that much so I was unaware of the village culture. I got to understand after that by my cousin that if you come under the shadow of those people, then you will get polluted and for that, we should not go by that area. At that moment I decided to go as my uncle said.

As I am living in Delhi since my childhood, I have never seen anything like this in my life earlier. I have been in the school where I had many friends who belong to lower castes whom we call bhangis in Delhi.

Caste and untouchability have been practices in India are too common, as we go more in villages of India. Caste and untouchability are being practised in India since ancient time. There have been many reformers in the past who tried to change the mentality of the people of India. But it has been possible to implement laws only after the independence of India. After the independence government implemented many laws against untouchability, but still, all these laws, it has been seen that untouchability is in the blood of the people of India.

We can take one positive from this law that in the schools and colleges of the metro city, it has been eradicated untouchability. But there have been many instances in the metro cities too, like in my case I have seen that only a particular group of people are allowed to work in the municipalities, and people from other castes are not even allowed to touch them, even in my house we were told that do not make any physical contact with them. This is because they belong to a caste called "bhangis"(we can call them Dalits more precisely) in the local language Caste system and untouchability has two sides; in my opinion, one thing is that due to this, they feel that they don't belong to this society. They feel alienated, and that makes them more difficult to survive in society. If I talked about the one case in that when a musahar came to our shop in the village, my aunt asked him to stay away from our shop told him to sit on the road and gave whatever he wanted but not directly in hand, she put that on the road in the same way that musahar guy put money on the road, and my aunt washed money and then touched that after all this when musahar guy went, she washed the area of that road with the whole bucket of water. I was totally shocked at how much villagers taking this serious. Even I was amazed that the guy did not protest against this as this has been abolished way back in the '50s.

One thing which I was able to understand that being in society, they are not allowed to even protest against this; in that case, they would have to face big consequences due that they are used to this. Even I saw the condition of those people; they were not able to send their children

to schools. They were supposed to work for the house and bring some money. I think illiteracy is one of the major reason that they are underprivileged. This has been seen that in the remote villages, they are most vulnerable as they are not aware of all these things.

We have seen many cases of that Dalit boy has been beaten due to touching normal people or drinking water from the brahmins area. It's a problem in the mindset of the people, which we need to change. There are many lower castes people who have changed their status using the benefits giving by the government. This is because they are aware, and they got the chance to excel. Being in the city has changed their status and lifestyle somehow, but they are still underprivileged. If we talk about the people in the villages, they are forced to live like that, and they don't have the other options. As far as I have experienced, untouchability can not be eradicated from the Indian culture and society until or unless we are not going to aware everyone about this. And making them aware is an impossible thing as it seems now. There are also instances where people belonging to Dalits and lower castes, who have been uplifted there status, are not willing to connect themselves with others. This clearly shows us the class differences in the lower caste itself, which makes it more vulnerable as their own people are not accepting them. There are also many instances where people from lower castes come into politics in the name of caste, but once they get the recognition, they forget their own people and stay away from them. This is another story of them. We can say that due to lack of awareness, reachability to resources, they are being underprivileged and also, due to all these, they have more gender inequalities too. These people are destined to do some selected work in the villages which they have to do, other than that they can not choose any other profession, which I have seen in my village. I think this is the story of many villages in the bihar. This needs to be changed, but this will take a long time, even it can take more than 100 years or more. In your opinion, what steps should we take to eradicate this thing in our society? Just give a brainstorm on this.