

Inequality: United States v. India

Inequality exists in every part of the world, whether you want to admit it or not. Everywhere in the world, there is a group of people, whether it be based on gender, race, social status, or something else, that is being held at a lower standard than other groups. When you first look at me, it is blatantly obvious that I am a minority woman. Unfortunately, this group of people is not often considered equal in many societies. The United States, while not equal by any means, actually try very hard to acknowledge some of these inequalities and fix them. This is something that I did not realize until coming to India. In India, I have experienced more gender inequality, while in America, I have experienced more racial inequality.

In India, the gender ratio is 1.08 males to females. To put that in comparison, the gender ratio in the United States is 0.97 males to females. This disproportionate ratio of females to males is due to things such as bride burnings and female feticide. This also shows the lack of desire for females in Indian society. If wives are burned to death when they become widows and newborns are being killed solely because they are female and families would much prefer to have males, where is the equality of genders in India? This gender ratio gap became evident pretty fast when I arrived to India. Throughout my time here, there have been numerous occasions in which I have been the only woman in a room full of men. For example, in Bangalore, I walked into a small store with two of my guy friends. There were about thirty men in their thirties or forties in the store at the time. As soon as I walked in, I could feel everyone's gaze shift towards me. I immediately felt uncomfortable, but did not want to wait outside by myself because it was nighttime, so I shuffled closer to my friends. I hugged my purse closer to my body and kept my gaze down, but still felt the laser stares of the other men in the room. It

became one of the most uncomfortable moments of my life, and as soon as we left the store, I ran back to the hotel, not wanting to be out in public for the rest of the night.

Even though India has shown itself to be an unequal society, this is not to say that the United States is an equal civilization. There is a plethora of data that suggests that America is not the equal opportunity society like we think it is. For example, in terms of gender inequality, white women make \$0.77 for every dollar that a man makes. In addition, in terms of racial and gender inequality, Latino women make \$0.56 for every dollar a white man makes and black women make \$0.64 for every dollar that a white man makes. It is 2015, this is completely unacceptable. I should not have to settle for a lesser salary for the same job that a white man does. Thankfully, I have not run into many situations in which I was discriminated against because of my gender in America. I am not sure if this is because I have not noticed it, pure luck, or for some other reason.

Personally, I face racial inequality more than gender inequality in America. I am a mix of a multitude of ethnicities, including African, Latino, Asian, Caribbean, and Caucasian. Even though I am partially white, it does not show in my appearance. There are a lot of expectations placed on myself simply because of what race I look like. For example, because I look Asian, I have been held to a higher academic standard because stereotypically Asians are smart. I should not be held to a higher academic standard solely because I am Asian, but because I am actually an intelligent human being. I have not been in India long enough to have noticed racial inequality. I have also found out that I blend in more with Indians, especially in North India. Many Indians have asked me if I am Indian and were genuinely surprised to find out that I am not, because I look Indo-Chinese, a look that is very common in northern parts of India. America

is such a diverse melting pot of races that it is hard to blend in with a common American look. Even if there was a stereotypical American look, I probably would not fit that mold.

It is one thing to hear about and acknowledge that inequality is a thing, but it is another thing to actually live through it. I am not saying that people who have not experienced inequality should not fight it, it just becomes a more personal cause when you have directly felt inequality. Gender inequality and racial inequality are two causes that I am very passionate about, stemming from my experience with these two issues. It is something that I will have to deal with my entire life, but it has been very interesting to experience these two inequalities in both the United States and India. It is incredibly unfortunate that not everyone will experience some form of inequality, it is an experience I highly suggest everyone go through at least once, just to see how the other half lives.