

Proud to be Madheshi? II

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By- Divya Jha

Being a citizen of a country and belonging to a country are 2 different things indeed..... On reading the article, I too being a Madheshi, was reminded of many incidents I have had to come across my student life studying in Kathmandu. The comments were really humiliating !

When I came to Delhi for my further studies, when asked where I belonged to, I used to say "Nepal", to be followed with the usual remark "but you don't look like.....!" Then I had to explain how the faces of Nepal varied from "Chinky look alike" and "Indian look alike". Still not giving up, they would say "but your surname is Jha and they are from Bihar....", I would explain that I belonged to the Terai region of Nepal which is adjoining Bihar and that they should not go by surnames; as a number of surnames like Jha, Mishra, Chaudhary, Tiwari, Sharma, Joshi, Khatri, Rana..... are common between India and Nepal . Huh !

Immediately after, they would associate Nepalese to the most common service offered by them as "Bahadurs" the gate-keepers, or cooks or "kanchhas" the domestic helps in Delhi. There again, I used to feel that it would have been better if I didn't call myself a Nepalese. Totally exhausted after each elaborative explanation, I often had the identity crisis and gradually started thinking twice before I chose to call myself a Nepalese.

Do you know what is the situation at present? I hardly tell anybody that I am Nepali, until and unless it is required. My deceptive face like Indian (sharp features and dusky complexion) accepts me quite naturally as Indian and so I feel at ease to be called Indian than struggling to be called a Nepali and yet feel ill at ease. And you will be astonished that I don't feel ashamed telling them I am a "Bihari" and that I belong to Bihar. I feel that the general here has little lowly image of "Biharis", I feel it's

still better to be known as Bihari, an integral part of Indian, than be called a "Nepali" for name sake, and be not considered as one !

I went through each and every letter / word of your article and appreciate your ideas for backing up the Madheshis. Thanks and wish you all the best Ms. Chaudhary. May your writing flare soothe our wounds at heart more and more.

Divya Jha

Source::<http://www.nepalnews.com.np/contents/englishweekly/telegraph/2004/sep/sep01/letter.htm>

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