

Dr. Gusain was born in India, which she refers to as her "passport country." For the rest of her life, she has been putting that passport to use, migrating all over the world as her father filled his job obligations as a diplomat. The first place that she and her family moved to after her birth was Beijing, China, where they stayed for almost five years. Next, her family moved to Saudi Arabia before briefly moving back to India, and then to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. This pattern of movement continued until Dr. Gusain came to the United States to get her P.h.D., where she has stayed ever since.

For someone experiencing relocation to this degree, culture shock is virtually nonexistent. For Dr. Gusain, the tangible aspects of a place do not constitute the concept of home. Instead, people do. Thanks to her parents' efforts to normalize their migration, Dr. Gusain felt that "no where was home, and everywhere was home." Never in her childhood did she feel like she was in a strange, foreign land. Instead, she was just somewhere, surrounded by people she loves.

Moving from place to place has provided Dr. Gusain with invaluable insight on human behavior. Living in a vast array of countries has taught her that humans are extremely complex beings, but they are often categorized or defined by only one dominant aspect of their identity, such as their nationality, ethnicity, or religion. By understanding this to be the case, Dr. Gusain was able to learn at an early age to separate the behavior of others from their nationality. When one sole, dominant facet of one's identity is no longer in question, Dr. Gusain posits that the core goodness and unpleasantness of others is the same in all areas of the world. To cite examples of the sheer goodness she's seen in the world, Dr. Gusain turns to her mother, who benevolently spoke to everybody she met in every country she moved to while Dr. Gusain was growing up, trying to learn their language and understand their culture. Talking to everybody, regardless of the categories we may impose on them, is undoubtedly a characteristic inherited by Dr. Gusain.

Although Dr. Gusain challenges the notion that people can be inherently explained by their nationality or ethnicity, she does value the importance of cultural identity and appreciates her parents' efforts to preserve their Indian culture through keeping Indian texts in the house, making Indian food, and celebrating Indian holidays regardless of where they were living at the time. Today, Dr. Gusain uses her position as an educator to teach about her culture and challenge her students with meta cognitive activities, designed to make them think about how they categorize people. As a former student of Dr. Gusain's who has had the opportunity to learn about her unique migration experience, I am very glad she ended up where she did.