

When I remember my childhood back in Nepal I always picture a small house made of up bamboo and thatch. We lived in huts, fragile tents-like a house, crowding people into the camp like chickens on a farm. It was so horrifying and painful. My life in Nepal where I spent 16 years I would like define as a desert. It was a miserable life because each and every day refugee people needed to think about how to survive. Living in a place that is deprived of basic necessities for life such as food, electricity and a home was a miserable life. Everyone in the camp searched for something to eat, in order to survive, but we found little or nothing until an international organization called UNHCR provided rations and camps for all the Bhutanese refugees to live in. Even though it was really hard for me to survive, I had a happy life with my friends, stayed connected to relatives, and spent time in a supportive community whose first language was the same as mine.

In contrast, my parents and grandparents were born in Bhutan. We know that Bhutan is a landlocked country located in Himalayas and was ruled by the kings from 1907 until now. Our parents lived as Bhutanese but early in 1980 the king of Bhutan introduced a dreadfully harsh new citizenship law, which was against the majority of the Bhutanese of Nepali origin called lhotshampas, or "people of the south". Knowledge of the Dzongkha language, Bhutanese customs, and traditional values became requirements for citizenship but the Bhutanese of Nepali origin which were my grandparents and parents had their own languages, culture and traditional customs. Thus, they wanted to flee the country. However, they protested and claimed their right to stay where their generations were born. They didn't flee because they considered Bhutan to be their motherland.

Unfortunately, our parents couldn't continue that routine because a cultural cleansing began. Language, culture and customs became the tools of persecution. Bhutanese soldiers were ordered by the government to kill people of Nepali origin. As a result, many children became orphans, many women were raped, many properties such as land, jewelry, domestic animals were lost. As a result, all of the violence compelled my parents to leave their land and flee from Bhutan to Nepal. Even though our culture, language, and customs were Nepali, Nepal didn't accept us as citizens. My family and millions of Bhutanese-Nepali lived in Nepal for 27 years or longer.

Thus, the organization called International Organization of Migration (IOM) started to take us to different countries such as the USA, Canada, Norway, etc that had a place to gain education, 24/7 electricity, shiny cars. These were things that we had never seen or received in our life. So, my dad made a huge decision for our family. We decided to move to a new country, the USA where there was a sufficient amount of opportunity and facilities. However, we had to adopt to a new environment, learn a new language, and new culture. It was tough for me. We departed from Nepal on December 2, 2016. On our journey, it was really fun and scary. As a second language learner, I was totally silent on plane while I traveled. We arrived here in the USA on December 8th. Our first destination was Miami, Florida. We

stayed at a hotel for 1 day and after that on December 9th we finally reached our final destination on 8:45 pm in St. Paul Minnesota. We were picked up by some of the organization members from the Blue Cross Society.

As time went on, I got a chance to continue my aim which was to get to go to school and get knowledge. At first, language made me lonely in school. I had a difficulty having conversation with school teachers and friends. In my first half year in America, people would just walk away from me because they couldn't understand me. But, overall I learned the language because of my hard work, and with the help of teachers and school.

There is a vast difference in the living standard of people. The USA has a better education system with modern technology and health care services. Generally, life in Nepal was simple and good life. If I were back in my country, I would never imagine that my life would be like this and I would never expect to continue my studies further but I'm glad that I came to land of opportunities. I must be thankful to the agency who helped us and they are like the god of the refugee. Here in the USA it has always been fun with my family, friends, and community living with love and trust, despite different cultures, languages, rituals, and customs. Though my life is busy in the USA from doing hard work, I can say that I can make my future bright and make my family proud and full of happiness. Being a refugee, adapting to a new culture, and learning a new language were difficult but I have learned a lot from it. Through pain comes opportunities, and we should never give up and always be resilient. It is a land of opportunity so hard work pays off later.