



Caste structure

Urban Scrawl
Mon Jun 15 2009

[Posted on behalf of **Paula Arab**]

It was a tough night for some of the girls. We stayed with several families in the village, a few of whom mistreated some young women because they were from the wrong castes. It's important to point out most of the village welcomed us, and in fact when families heard the next day what had happened -- some of the girls were not allowed to use the bathrooms or touch the furniture -- they immediately invited those teens to their houses to bathe. Still, one young woman, recovering from the horrors she experienced at a Bombay brothel, was pretty upset. She revealed her caste when asked, and was immediately shunned. The particular caste in question is known to make moonshine from coconut milk, which is a taboo because of the extreme problem of alcoholism in the villages.

Even though castes are no longer legal in **India**, the structure is clearly still practised in many rural areas. Most of the Odanadi family know not to reveal their castes, but even then, to not say, is to automatically put yourself in the same category of the untouchables. And they treat untouchables worse than animals. They're not even allowed to touch the sidewalks or spit in certain areas. Even their shadows are considered contaminated. They legally have rights, but no one enforces or protects them.

It is deeply disturbing, and difficult to imagine the same religion that gave birth to yoga, discriminates in this heinous way.

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Length: 249 words

Permalink: [communities.canada.com...>](#)