

I grew up in Abbotsford, BC which is where I reside now. This small town is home to roughly 140,000 people which includes many families from various cultural backgrounds. I was born in October of 1995 and I am fortunate to have experienced very little racism growing up compared to that of my parents, grandparents etc. I feel as though my hometown has a lot to do with this. Though Abbotsford is home to many different cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds, there are still some people in this town who struggle with accepting everyone. As a 25 year old Indian woman I have experienced racism, and gender discrimination. However, I have also witnessed other cultures in my hometown embrace the Indian community, excited to learn more about our history and culture, as well as respect us. For this critical analysis I will be going into detail about my educational background and how it differed from my dad's experience in a Canadian school setting. I will discuss and relate my experience to gender, race, and cultural indifferences faced by many.

I began the Bachelor of Business Administration program in 2013 and chose my major shortly after. I majored in Human Resources as this field requires a ton of teamwork, leadership, and collaboration. I took a gender and diversity course as an elective for my program, and in this course I learned a great deal of information regarding this topic. This topic is now something I am extremely passionate about as I believe it is very important for everyone to be educated on. In this course my peers and I would get together for a three hour discussion once a week on a topic related to gender and diversity. Whether it was race, ethnicity, sex, religion etc. we talked about it all and explored the topic in depth. Everyone had the opportunity to share their opinion on how they felt about the topic as well as share their own experiences. I myself shared examples of discrimination I had faced over the years. One particular example was when I was seventeen, employed at my very first job as a cashier at Wal-mart. I was ringing through this customer, engaging in conversation when he asked me what I was doing for school. I told him how I was completing my BBA degree with a major in HR. He responded "Shame on you, that is a males profession, girls do not work in offices". He proceeded to ask me how my parents felt with my career choice and made it very clear that he was ashamed of what I was doing in school. I felt upset, embarrassed, and extremely offended. I responded by telling him that my parents support my decision and are proud of the career path i've chosen as long as it makes me happy. That there are many girls enrolled in the program, that he shouldn't be so stuck in a traditional mindset of men working in offices and women strictly at home working in a domestic setting. It made it clear to me that women have experienced gender discrimination over the years and that sadly it is still present in todays world. This was one of the first incidents where I had expereinced gender discrimination. "Achieving women's equality in the workplace will enable more women to ascend to leadership positions and become role models for other women and girls." (Arnaud, 2018). I hope that I am fortunate enough to encourage students to go after what they want. To not worry about what other people think, or what is appropriate for men or

women to do. Instead work towards achieving what you've set your mind to. We need to work towards blurring the lines between what is a male dominated profession, and what is a female dominated profession. Everyone should have equal opportunities to pursue a career in whichever path they choose.

I am fortunate to have parents who have always supported me with my career choice. I was confused for quite awhile when I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do long term. However, when I decided to pursue teaching during my last semester of my undergrad, there were no hesitations. When looking back at my educational background and comparing it to my dad's educational background, we have many differences. My dad was born and raised in Punjab, India. He grew up with his parents and three brothers. My dad and his family left India to come to Canada when he was about seven years old. My dad has always been very formative and clear in explaining the racism he experienced growing up in Canada. After having a discussion about his educational background, I realized how tough it was for my dad to attend school where the majority of the students were white. My dad wore a turban at a young age, this turban symbolizes the Sikh identity and represents faith for the Indian culture. Unfortunately my dad was made fun of and harassed for being Indian, wearing a turban, and felt as a minority. It got to the point where his brothers and him would refuse to attend school because of the discrimination they were facing at school (Seikhon, 2020). My dad is an extremely social and respectable person. He explained how though he experienced racism first hand at a young age, he learned how to deal with it and move on. His experience with bullying and racial discrimination relates well to the current incident that occurred in the UK at a middle school. This hate crime involves a young Sikh boy being attacked for wearing a turban to school. He was attacked by two other boys that attended the school and filmed by bystanders who laughed at what was going on. "(First turbaned Sikh MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi tweeted,) "Saddened to see such vile behaviour towards a young boy. Brings back memories of when someone tried to pull off my turban at school. Bullying and anti-Sikh hate can't be tolerated." (Kaur, 2020). One would think that incidents like this would not be present today in 2020. The fact of the matter is that my dad could very well relate to this young boy and the hate crime he experienced. Though my educational background from K-12 was smooth sailing. I felt extremely accepted by all of my peers, teachers, and comfortable in my school and that is something that I am very thankful for. I can say that my siblings and I never faced a form of racism or cultural discrimination when we attended school. That is where my experience with education differs from my dad's. His experience in school involved racial slurs, bullying, and feeling like a minority due to his appearance, and skin colour. Whereas I was fortunate enough to not have experienced those issues and instead felt very accepted amongst every student in my school.

The above experience relates well to the diversity topic from the BC Public Schools Policies. This policy is designed to ensure that differences among students are recognized and accepted. With these differences being acknowledged positively it will benefit the quality of learning for students. They will feel a sense of belonging, acceptance, and appreciation (Diversity in BC Schools, 2017). I believe that it is

important for the education system to reevaluate some of the course material being taught as black history along with other cultures makes up for very little of it. "She added that it's important for her children to understand that people from all different cultural backgrounds have contributed to making Canada a great country." (Peng, 2019). Personally, I don't recall learning very much about black history or any other culture. I learned a lot about black history over the past year due to the "Black Lives Matter" protests. The black community was doing a better job of educating others on the issues than the education system. "B.C.'s education minister said Tuesday the province is looking at ways to include more Black history in the province's K-12 classrooms." (Little & Stewart, 2020). I strongly believe that with this in place the world can improve going forward and every culture, race, ethnicity, sex etc. will be appreciated.

To conclude, my educational background and upbringing has been a healthy and positive one. After interviewing my dad and critically thinking about my experiences in education, I have a new understanding and appreciation for the privileged school setting I had. It's unfortunate that my dad's education is different from mine in a negative way. However, he was able to grow and learn from his experiences. By relaying this information on to my siblings and I, we became aware of racism and its presence at a young age. With the conversation my dad and I had, as well as looking back at my own experiences with education, gender discrimination, religion, social class etc. I have learned a lot of information and become more aware of my own encounters which relate to our course concepts.

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