Name

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Final Exam Essay

Every individual belongs to a certain society that forms his social beliefs and builds his notion of deviant behavior and normative practices. These factors vary across different societies and at the cultural level. Every society has a distinct concept of norms and values as these are shaped differently in every country. This essay is a comparative analysis between the article *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich and I, as a first-generation Muslim American girl. It will view the aspects of being a first-class citizen in America and what privileges it can have over a third-class citizen. Likewise, it will look into what constitutes as deviant behavior according to the American concept of norms and values for an immigrant.

The author Ehrenreich holds a doctorate degree but still, she had to work for low-wages because of the high unemployment rate in America. For years, she could not land herself a well-paid job that matched her skill sets. It was at that time that she realized that every job demanded concentration and dedication. This realization also sheds light on the significance of capitalist ideology and its exploitation that despite working hard, there is a low number of jobs available in the market. As she reflected these thoughts in her book, “Work hard and you'll get ahead” or “It's hard work that got us where we are.” No one ever said that you could work hard - harder even than you ever thought possible - and still find yourself sinking ever deeper into poverty and debt” (Ehrenreich 120). Similarly, her work required high performativity levels which physically drained her at times but she remained steadfast because she had to survive. During her job, Ehrenreich and her coworkers were not uncommon to the work environment because they grew up in the American culture. Besides, she was well-informed about the ongoing social practices in America. On the other hand, when I searched for various jobs that matched my skill set, I could not get a good job because I was an immigrant. Likewise, my parents migrated from Pakistan and due to my religion, Islam, I was viewed with countless doubts because of Islamophobia. I grew up in this culture but my ways of socialization and norms had to be aligned according to my religion and native land. Nevertheless, the unemployment condition in America affected me twice as much because I was a third-class citizen and a Muslim American.

In society, an insider can develop a sense of normative and deviant behavior in no time because she grows up in a particular environment where these practices are going on from decades. Similarly, social class differences are present in every society and there is an unequal flow of wealth everywhere, however, the issue of the wage gap is addressed by the writer. Ehrenreich proclaims that low wage workers are hired to perform hard manual labor tasks. Moreover, the author is a female and women are paid less because of gender stereotypes. They face humiliation in society because they do not get lucrative jobs and cannot afford a good lifestyle. The author shares the anecdote of her office manager as, “Maybe there's been some secret division of the world's women into breeders and drones, Maybe this is why our office manager, Tammy, who was once a maid herself, wears inch-long fake nails and tarty little outfits” (Ehrenreich 49). She encounters rent issues and classism, quite similarly, I face this issue as well because so far, I can only get the cleaning job. Quite on the contrary, I am a Pakistani immigrant and my host country despised my native country because of the terrorist labeling. However, I also became a victim of huge wage-gaps as both a woman and an immigrant. Likewise, immigrants are not treated on an equal basis in America because it is a normalized practice to treat them as third-class citizens.

In conclusion, life gets extra hard in another country because of immigration status but the first-class citizens encounter unemployment and unequal distribution of wages because of gender stereotypes.

**Work Cited:**

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and dimed: On (not) getting by in America*. Metropolitan Books, 2010. Ted.