

# The indian-style caste system

Business



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How terrible, to be separated into groups of status, before you're even born. From where I stand, the Indian-style caste system seems so distant; intangible.

It's not that unreal. In a diluted form, it's lurking in our schools in the form of the all-powerful hierarchy of students. The popular ones; all hail the mighty! The beautiful girls with high singing voices and pom-poms come next, with the boys who are always right behind the popular guys in sports. Then the audience, the normal kids who sit around and watch the action, out of the way of those of higher rank. Lastly, those who are constantly picked on, cowering in the shadows as did the untouchables. I'm not beautiful, but not nearly ugly, either.

I have witnessed the work of each of these political groups. I have been picked on and laughed at, by people who had been my friends for many years, one who transferred schools with me. I defy the school hierarchy. My true friends reside in the grade lower, where no one cares if I be myself, it's to be expected. Sure, some others of my grade ask why I hang out with them. I just reply that they're my friends, end of story.

One night, my friend, Alex, called me, and we chatted and I mentioned two kids in my English class. 'Oh yeah,' she says, ' They were saying something about you in the hallways and laughing. I don't know what it was, but distinctly heard your name said in a making fun kind of way,' then she stops, worried about how I would take this, measuring how upset I am she slipped and mentioned this. I wonder myself, and find, to my greatest surprise, I really, truly, don't care.' Ah, well, I do some things in class that should be

talked about,' this stuns her for a second, but she recovers and laughs, and we return to our conversation.

I have disowned castes, daring people to see me, not the group to which I belong.