



The geography of our minds

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Context: These poems have been created using the words of past and present learners from the health professions in India who have ever experienced othering during their training, and who have volunteered to talk about it. **Click here** to read the editorial about the project. Alternatively, you may right click over the hyperlinked text, copy the link, and paste it in a browser of your choice.

Nothing estranges us more

In matters of language,
North Indians made me feel very low
when I didn't use Hindi as my medium with them.
I felt rejected, ignored
in a crowd of Hindi speaking people.

Down South, in an academic institution,
I felt really left out
through and through.
Even the faculty sharing the room
changed places
and went to her "South Indian" friend.

I wish people didn't stereotype at all.
Whether in Delhi
or in other parts of the country...

Instead...
I wish they treated everyone
with openness and respect.

Nothing estranges us more than regionalism.

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The North-East is not its own country

People are biased
against the way we look,
but
our complexion, or what we wear
doesn't define the true inner us.

To you, we're "Chinkies"
to be marginalised
treated as tribal.
Judged,
presumed incapable, incompetent.

Our medical colleges are considered sub-par,
even though infrastructure development
is the job of governments.

Side-lining, on the other hand,
is the work of the ill-informed,
the incurious,
the envious,
the insecure.

West Bengal is NOT the end point of the East.
The North-East IS a part of India.
The 'other side' is NOT the enemy.

Fear and hatred are the enemies.

A reflection of your beliefs

People stereotype:
whatever we do,
they will never refrain
from judging us.

Comments, jeering,
and name-calling...

To date I do not understand
why it happens,
why I am made to feel
as though I am inferior.

Is it their own insecurity?
Or is it that my will
tells me to not react

or bend to their wishes?

I don't fit into your cruel
and judgmental world
because I am different.

When I can respect every individual
as they are,
why can't you?

When you look at me,
start seeing a person,
and not a reflection of your beliefs.

Acknowledgment: without the authentic contributions made by the respondents, it would not have been possible to create poems on othering that illustrate such a wide spectrum of issues.