



AMERICA as an INDIAN child

◆ Manali Deshpande

Many times I hear stories living in the United States about how people have been insulted due to the race they originate from. Almost every person who has been through their high school career has dictated a story when they have been deeply offended. Fortunately for me, I can sincerely say that I have never been verbally abused for the reason of being Indian. I find it astonishing that people have gone through various vulgar scenarios because I have never experienced such vile behavior directed to me. I pity the people who go through this rudeness and pity the people who say offensive lines even more. I have never found it difficult growing up in

America as an Indian child. I have always been associated with Indian activities and never once felt that I was being pressured to stop taking pleasure in my religion and culture. I have attended garbas almost every year since I was eight and have enjoyed them immensely. Never have I felt regret or sadness about the fact that I am so connected with my culture. If anyone does try to bring me down, I have been brought up by my parents to realize that those people aren't worth my time, and that it is their loss in losing an opportunity to get to know a person like me.

◆ Manali Deshpande (Age: 16)

◆ Shefali Deshpande

I'm Indian

Being an Indian in America has never really been hard for me. My name, Shefali, has been a challenge to many people around me including teachers, friends, and other students. Once they catch on, though, it's no problem. I like having a name that no one has heard before, so people will turn heads to look at me when they hear a name such as mine. Many times, I have been asked what my name means, and I am always more than happy to answer their questions. I participate in many Indian activities, and I never try to

hide the fact that I'm Indian. I'm always excited to learn about new and different cultures, and I'm sure other people are too. I go to garbas and dandia. My parents made sure that all my principles and values remained those of an Indian. I take classes for not only tap and jazz, but many Indian activities such as, Indian classical Hindustani music, and Classical dance, Bharatnatyam. I never fail to help my mom decorate the house for a pooja on Diwali, Ganpati, or any other special occasion. I love going to India and shopping for new clothes, or catching up with a new Hindi movie that hasn't even come out in the U.S. yet, and I love spending time with my family in India. I agree that I'm an American in my daily activities, but I'll always be desi at heart, with love for Indian snacks and sweets.

◆ Shefali Deshpande