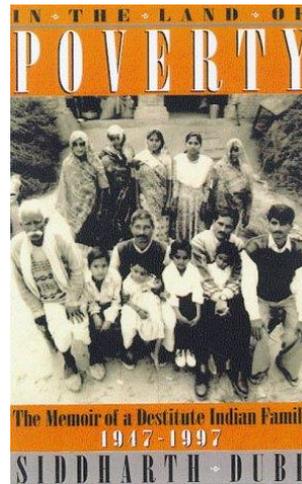


## BOOK REVIEW

Nafeesathul Mizriya \*

***In the Land of Poverty: Memoirs of an Indian Family, 1947-97* by  
Siddarth Dube*****In the Land of Poverty: Memoirs of an Indian Family, 1947-97*****Siddarth Dube (1998)****Zed Books, ISBN 978-1856495974, Pp. 256**

Despite India being declared Independent from the colonial clutches on 15 August 1947, our country still has a tagline of an impoverished nation where poverty impairs progress and development. Over the years, several programs were launched for the betterment of the rural poor, the vast fraction of society is beneath the shades of the lowest of the law. While the country has comprehensive reforms in the arenas of livelihood and unleashed a new growth era for economic progress, the realization still holds that mass poverty is a predominant factor in India as the country remains a land of hunger and suffering. The plight of poor people and their perspective of the root causes of their misery are overlooked in the narrative *In the Land of Poverty: Memoirs of an Indian Family, 1947-97* by Siddarth Dube.

Dube's book is a poignant memoir of the life experiences of a rural Dalit Family. This book elegantly validates a profound study of poverty enhanced by a vivid description with multiple dimensions illuminating the voices of the poor and marginalized sectors of society. The book is an eye-opener to the fragile false hopes exerted on the masses by the self-proclaimed leaders that poverty is going to disappear but it remains in the cards. Dube puts forth the question of what the purpose of freedom meant for India and asserts that India is destined to be doomed as a land of poverty. The realistic and penetrating

biography about the history of poverty made the readers comprehend the darkest realities of the so-called Indian masses. The book is a narrative validation of an Impoverished Indian Family that draws an understanding and is better organized.

The narrative revolves around Ram Dass Pasi and his family set in the dawn of Independent India, termed as 'untouchables' in an unchanging caste system, landless serfs bonded to a feudal village lord in a remote village of Uttar Pradesh, the heartland of India. Years later, in the half century of Independence, his family still are victim of constant poverty and oppression despite the transformations for the renewal phase of new modern India. This memoir is not only the plight of Ram but a paradox of Modern India narrated through the voices of the oppressed people. The book takes the reader to associate powerlessness and the deprived populace and their struggle to emancipate their fruitful endeavours.

Dube's commendable word power brings out the injustice suffered by these fractions of people still having aspirations and desires for the betterment of their future. He offers an opportunity for a sure-shot political and social analysis in the perfectly crafted piece of work. The work truly justifies the voices of people who are subjected to extreme suffering and sidelined to the margins of society. The author skillfully brings harsh realities of human lives articulated in a simple, effective and convincing way of narrative language making the book relevant and relatable in the prime sense.

As poverty is a social issue, the central character is a replica of every man in the country. The trajectory of events happening in the lives of an untouchable family projects a wide range of human emotions in the readers. The pertaining social issue showcasing the contemporary marginalized people asserts the significance of the book in the present society. The book provides a wide provision of engagement to the readers to analyze the meaning-making system of present society. The author himself proclaimed that we should learn to think about the issue of poverty rather than calling out outdated socialist ideas of the government to enhance the so-called masses. The book is likable leaving an everlasting impression to comprehend and make sense to the one who reads it is worth appreciating.

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