



MY REFUGEE LIFE STORY

OUR STORY

My Name Is Tika Ram Bhattarai

I was born in Bhutanese refugee camp in Nepal. I spend 13 years in the refugee camp. We are six members in a family with mom, dad, elder brother, myself and two younger brothers.

Originally my parents told me that their forefathers were born in Nepal then they migrate to Bhutan, which is located next to India and China, for better life. In Bhutan they lived within their own property for many years.

As democracy came to Bhutan, the government forced my parents to exile from country Bhutan and told to go back to Nepal. They told me that they were very nervous, scared, felt terrible at that time which they had to lose their properties, their home, their country, every things and they were not sure what to do next.

There was no freedom, no sufficient food to eat and feed for their kids. The many Bhutanese people came to stay as refugee in eastern part of Nepal. My parents came and lived in refugee camps since 1992. While we are in refugee camp, there were many challenges and experience we faced.

As we living our houses were made up of bamboo and thatch as well as plastic. There was no school building and we have to stay outside sitting on the ground to get education. There were not enough materials to study, no computers etc. we were living in a house with two bed room for six people, some have 12 peoples living in a house with not enough clothes to wear. There was no electricity at home and have to get firewood to cook food.

There was one hospital for 17,000 people with two doctors. We have to wait till a week or couple of week to get turn for treatment. We have to eat food and do most things one day at a time. It is hard to make plans for next minute meals. Every day had to go out and look for work. There was no guarantee of work the next day, therefore no guarantee of money, therefore no guarantee of food. Many children as young as 12 went out to look for work each day. I remember thinking my brother was so big when he first went out to look for work when he was 12. Now I see he was actually very young.

The many years later the international government UNHCR, LWF start helping to provide some support such as they build our schools, provide rice, etc. but still have lots of problems arises. They provide 15 KG rice for six members for 15 days but still not sufficient to feed for those days. There was not enough water.

My parents never get chance to go to school. My parents always worried about us. I always see that tears in my parent's eyes. I remember when I was in child care (nursery) we had to walk about 1 hour in a group of six to seven children to get to nursery school. We were all only 5 or 6 years old. It was such a long way to walk. I wasn't interesting going to school. I always wanted holidays just for playing football, cards, swimming and other games with friends.

Most of the Bhutanese refugee they passed through poorness and conflicts in every movement of their life. Ever since I know my parents had always worked hard for me and my brothers for our better future. Since 2008 (UNHCR) start the settlement program for the Bhutanese refugees for their better lifestyle.

For our better future, we came to Australia in 2012 with the support of international government (IOM). After that I get lots of opportunities such as school to study and hospital.

English language, getting along with the people and employment are the difficult experiences my parents and myself face. I and my brothers able to speak little broken English so we explain to our parents with everything's, mostly they have to rely on us. There's already 85,000 of Bhutanese refugee settled all over the world.

Link- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tSrZ7gb9kU>