

HAJI FAZAR ALI

- 1. When did you first come to Britain? (What was the reason, why choose Britain?)**

1967

- 2. Where did you settle and why? (If not Westminster where was it? What made you come to Westminster?)**

Piccadilly Circus.

- 3. Did you come on your own? (If not who were you accompanied by anybody? With relative? With your children?)**

I was 13 years old when I came to London. I came to London with my cousin and then I met up with Dad and lived with him.

- 4. Did you come to join other members of your village/neighbourhood/ family who had previously migrated to the UK? When i came i didn't know anyone**

I joined with my cousins and I had Bengali neighbours.

UK

- 1. When coming to the UK what were you thinking? Were you excited (about?) or fearful (of coming to a new country-environment?)**

I was young and did not understand anything. I was scared coming to the UK.

- 2. What were your first impressions of the UK?**

I did not understand anything. I slowly began to learn things once my dad took me to school.

Bangladesh and England are very different.

- 3. What did you find different (to Bangladesh- people/accommodation/weather/transport/built environment?)- (Any familiarities with Bangladesh?)**

In Bangladesh, my whole family stayed in one house where as in London in one house it was just me and my dad.

I never saw snow in Bangladesh. I saw it in London for the first time.

- 4. Did you bring anything from Bangladesh to remind you of back home? (For your children? What items?)**

I did not bring anything.

- 5. What were your expectations of the UK if any? (Expectations from relatives/people who had been to the UK/images/media/films etc)**

I started school and then started working. I came to London to make money.

Westminster

- 1. How did you find Westminster at the time? What was it like?**

I came to London to make money but it is difficult in this area to make an earning.

- 2. Were there other Bengalis settled? Asians, Blacks, other non-Bengalis (their numbers, single men, women, children, families?)**

There was a lot of Bengalis in the area.

- 3. Did you know English? (Level-fluent, to get by, none?)**

No I learnt English during school.

- 4. If not, how did you communicate with non-Bengalis? Learn English? (Class, course, friends, relatives, neighbours, community groups, TV, radio, cinema)?**

There were 4 Bengalis in school. We helped each other communicate with non – Bengalis.

Language barriers, cultural differences and religious obligations

- 1. If you didn't know English initially how did you communicate with neighbors, doctors, milkman, post office, on public transport, in shops?**

My dad would take me to the doctors.

- 2. Were your neighbours helpful? (Who else?)**

They were helpful. My white neighbours weren't as helpful as Bengali neighbours, but if you needed help you could still ask them.

3. What clothes did you wear (for women was sari a problem-how was it viewed by English people?) How did you cope in cold weather coming from a hot country?

Shirt and trousers.

4. Did you face any difficulties (What were they? How did you overcome?)

I was coming back from school. I was meant to get off the bus at Piccadilly Circus but instead I got off the bus at Green Park. It was dark and I did not know what to do. My dad gave me a card with my address and said if I ever get lost, show someone the card. I found a lady and showed them the card and she took me home.

If Muslim

5. Was halal food easily available? No – What did you eat?

There are halal grocery stores.

6. Did you find any difficulty in practicing your religion? Did you have to make compromises? How do you feel about that?

I was young, so I did not pray much.

7. Do you feel you are able to freely practice your religion in the public sphere in the UK.

You could not practice freely, but slowly it became easier to practice your religion in the public. People were scared of the skinheads.

8. What was Eid day like when you first came here, and has it changed now?

There was a hired hall at King cross which I attended.

9. Do you observe Ramadan? Does your daily life change or do you do things differently during the month? – Pray more or abstain from anything you do usually?

I never missed Ramadan. It was easier in those days as I felt the days were shorter.

Experiences of service providers in integrating the Bengali community

- 1. How did you spend your spare time? (TV, radio, films, newspapers, hobby, visiting friends-who, relatives-where, park, museum, places of interest?)**

With my friends I used to go to the cinema.

- 2. Did you go to cultural or faith events? (Where & Name the events)**

I never knew about any events that was taking place.

Children

- 1. If you didn't come with children when & where did you have your first child? (Home, hospital? What was it like in hospital? Nurses? Doctors?)**

My first child was born in Bangladesh. I had 3 children born in England. The nurses were very good and caring.

My family came to England in 1987.

- 2. What was their first crèche/school like? For yourself, your child? How were the teachers?**

My eldest child went to secondary school whilst my other 3 children went to Gateway primary school. The teachers used to care for everyone.

- 3. Did you get any support provided from the local community, schools, health centres, and community organisations? (If yes what kind of support did you receive?)**

I got a lot of support from the health centres. In Marylebone, the health centres were very helpful.

- 4. Who did your child play with? Who were his/her friends? Other Bengali kids or mixed?**

They would play with a mix of children. E.g. Bengali, Jamaican and English.

In Gateway school there were a lot of Bengali.

5. **What were your greatest fears (if any) in allowing your children to be integrated within the mainstream society? (your thoughts/feelings) What factors predicted their successful integration? (What would have made you proud?)**

I had no fear. I was very happy they were socializing with different children.

6. **Would you allow your children to marry outside your culture?**

No.

7. **Would you allow your children to marry outside your faith?**

No.

Settling in Westminster

1. **What struggles and obstacles did you face in adapting your life in raising your new British born child/children?**

It was a struggle living in a house with only 2 rooms and I had a temporary house in Dagenham. I did not have much help. I found it hard.

2. **Did you do anything specific (i.e. take them to Bengali/religious class/school/cultural events/Christmas parties/street parties/birthday parties/White friend parties)?**

I did not take them to any Christmas or street parties. I used to take them to mosque sometimes.

3. **How has your child/children turned out to be? (as expected/not expected).**

Yes, I am happy with them as they turned out to be the way I expected.

Future

1. **What is Westminster like today compared to when you first came in ...? (biggest changes you have seen, how has it changed)?**

90% change. Road and buildings have changed as well as people's mentality.

2. **How British are they? (How integrated are they? How British do they feel? Do they have many White friends?)**

They have good communication with the Bengali community but they also have their British culture. They make money and have British friends.

3. How Bengali are they? (how much are they in touch with the Bengali community/Bangladesh/Bengali language?)

They speak to me in Bengali and are good at communicating with the Bengali community.

4. How religious are they? (devout/practicing/political/non practicing but culturally Muslim/secular/humanist/non-believing)

100%.

5. How do you see their future? Would you be happy or disappointed?,

I can see their future life would be positive and good.