

MRS ANOWARA BEGUM

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

I came with my husband. He went to Bangladesh and was very happy so he told everyone that accompanying us with him for a long period of time. That time I was 27. When I came in this country that time there were quite few of Bengalis were here, quite often I met with them in the street.

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 very excited and very happy so that I can join with my husband and was living together with our children. Children schooling will be good. I always heard about this country, life standard, education etc. from my husband. Quite often he mentioned about parks, friends and museum and many other things. Some times I had also worried about language. How I will I speak with people? What would be my answer if a teacher of my children asks any question to me? My English was so limited I only knew `what is your name? Where are you from? First time I took my daughter to nursery and received a good welcoming from school. Teachers were fantastic, even other parents white or black everyone was so lovely. I used to lose the way to school but always received help from others. One funny story is that one day my husband asked me to collect his cloths from laundry; it was just ground floor of the building. I went to collect his clothes but could find out which one is laundry. Then I show the ticket to a white lady she helped me. She went with me inside of the shop and collects the cloths for me.

Did you have any friends that time?

Yes, I had some friends, Mrs chowdhury, Hassans Mum and one white lady name was Marry. Marry did a lot for me. Our next door neighbours were very helpful. She had one child where as I had three and we were in one room with children. She always took my children to her flat and allows them to play with her child.

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

In 1985 I went to language classes in North Westminster School. That time only mostly white and black people were there. Even I went to Harrow Road to an English language class. It was not easy for me as my children were very small, one of my sons was two years and another one was younger than him. My husband took time off on my class time. I left one with him and one of them always was with me.

Language barriers, cultural differences and religious obligations

- 1. 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?**

I always wore shari=ees, I never dropped out my culture. When I was a school student I used to wear Kamiz Shelwar. My father encouraged me to wear saris, he loved it therefore, to keep him in my memory I always wear saris. I worked in school for a long time with sharee but never faced any problem. I have not seen any negative feelings amongst my colleagues or other. No one raised this issue with me. Previously I hardly cover my head or wear burka but after hajj I have been covering my head and wearing burka.

- 2. How did you cook that time?**

I could cook but not everything but my husband always showed me how to cook here and brought all types of spices for me.

If Muslim

- 3. Was halal food easily available? No – What did you eat?**

Halal was not available locally so he purchased halal from Aldgate. There was a shop in Seymour place, occasionally get halal from there but mostly he did marketing from Aldgate. On Eid day I made Pita and other food like Bangladesh and eat together. I always preferred my children to be dressed up with Kamiz Shelwar, I made for them as it was rare on that time. May be available somewhere else but I was not known about this. For my boys, I always ordered Panjabi clothes from Bangladesh. On Eid day I invited my neighbours and feed them and children were always free in my house.

1. What were your thoughts (if any) about raising your children maintaining their own culture within the mainstream society?

I always try to raise my children with good behaviour and proper education. I was not much aware about the culture of this country therefore I always gave them time, helped them in their homework, I strictly maintained time table for them. I dropped them in school at right time and exactly 8pm was their bed time. Still I am following the same timetable.

Settling in Westminster

1. What role did you play to educate and raise your child/children between two cultures (British & Bengali)?

I ways tried to educate my children about our culture and custom even I mostly feed them Bengali foods. But it has not worked completely, little different now. But still I am keeping my efforts. I always interact in Bengali with my grandchildren. I give them Bengali food. I know they will not fix with it; they will eat outside whatever they like. But I facilitate everybody for everything. I did maintain our own culture inside of our household not outside culture.