

FAZAL MIAH

- 1. When did you first come to Britain? (What was the reason, why choose Britain?)**
1965, my father was here in UK, so my brother arranged to bring me here. He came here long time ago, he came by ship.
- 2. Where did you settle and why? (If not Westminster where was it? What made you come to Westminster?)**
First I was in Camden, W1. One of my relatives were there, he had a 12 room house.
- 3. Did you come on your own? (If not who were you accompanied by anybody? With relative? With your children?)**
One of my friends was with me.
- 4. Did you come to join other members of your village/neighbourhood/ family who had previously migrated to the UK?**
None of my family members were here; I had a cousin in Scotland. Only two Bengali families were near us.

UK

- 1. When coming to the UK what were you thinking? Were you excited (about?) or fearful (of coming to a new country-environment?)**
Previous people have love; white black everybody had good relationship. I was happy to come here and had no fear.
- 2. What were your first impressions of the UK?**
Not many people were outside but the country was nice.
- 3. What did you find different (to Bangladesh people/accommodation/weather/transport/built environment?)- (Any familiarities with Bangladesh?)**
Not like our country. That time there were no bath inside of the house; people had to go to public bath, two people slept in one bed, instead of that people had love and were happy. People send all of their earnings to Bangladesh but currently people have lost this interest. People's of our country has lost their sympathy.
- 4. What were your expectations of the UK if any? (Expectations from relatives/people who had been to the UK/images/media/films etc)**
My expectation was to see London, earn money and build a good house for better life.

Westminster

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

I came to Westminster after having my family with me say about 1969. Westminster was very good at that time. I had a relative in Dudley house in Westminster; he sheltered me at his house with my family.

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

Some more Bengali families were here.

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

I could speak very little.

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

I learnt some English just by listening the way people were talking. I never attend any English classes. People hardly went to doctor as most of the time people were healthy.

Language barriers, cultural differences and religious obligations

1. Were your neighbours helpful? (Who else?)

Neighbours were very good, previously almost all people were helpful, I never faced any hostility from my neighbours.

2. 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?

Previously it was very cold in this country, every time we had to wear a coat and over coat, now it is not much cold.

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

Once I was attacked and he wanted money. He put out a dagger I kicked him and run away. Nearby an Iraqi man helped me and sheltered me.

If Muslim

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

Halal food was available; we had to get it from Aldgate or Birwick Street in Camden.

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

I never faced any difficulties to practice my religion.

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

That time not many people bothered about Eid, few people went to Eid prayer and it was not like now. There were not many mosques around either.

- 7. 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 always observed Ramadan and it was not difficult for me.

Experiences of service providers in integrating the Bengali community

- 1. Were you able to go to any agency for help? (From Whom? - CAB, Council, GP, library etc.)**

No, I never went to any agencies on that time.

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

I visited relatives and friends and occasionally went to cinema.

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?)**

One of them was born in Bangladesh and one has born here. One of my neighbors was Sri lankan, she helped to take my wife to hospital. Doctors and nurses were amazing, big differences now. Previously they were lovely. Behavior of Doctors and nurses of that time and current time is day night difference.

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

One of my children went to Gateway school, teachers were lovely.

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

They played with mixed children.

- 4. 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 did not think of anything else, I only depend on Allah, in this country how much you could do.

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

They did not ask for but if they wanted what I could do, am I able to do much?

6. Would you allow your children to marry outside your faith?

I was never worried I just depend on Allah.

Settling in Westminster

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

I did not face any difficulties, they grown up as usual way.

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 gave them religious education; they read Quran but not Bengali.

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

Its ok, praise to Allah, they are fine. They mostly speak English. I don't mind because they have to live in this culture.

Future

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

There are Lots of changes, especially official services, it is not like before, even the housing situation has been changed in Westminster.

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

What shall I say, as they have got passport of this country, they are British.

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

They are Bengali as well.

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

Both of my children are practicing Muslim.