

**EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF INDIAN ORIGIN IN  
UNITED KINGDOM: A STUDY OF HOME-SCHOOL  
INTERACTIONS**

*Dissertation Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in  
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**Submitted by  
Anubhuti Rajpal**




**Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi 110067 India  
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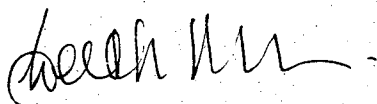
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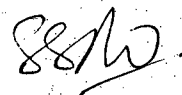
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ANUBHUTI RAJPAL

We recommend that the dissertation be placed before the examiners for the award of M.Phil Degree of this university.

  
GEETHA B. NAMBISSAN  
(CHAIRPERSON) 30/7/07

**CHAIRPERSON**  
Zakir Husain Centre for  
Educational Studies  
School of Social Sciences  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi- 110067

  
DR. S. SRINIVASA RAO  
(SUPERVISOR)

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## **CONTENT**

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
1. Introduction	1-32
2. Migration of Indians to United Kingdom: a socio-historical context	33-59
3. Education of Children of Indian Origin: Evidence on Performance and Achievement	60- 91
4. Home-School Interactions	92-116
5. Conclusion	117-121
Bibliography	122-128

## LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES

	<b>Page No.</b>
Table 1.1 Ethnic group composition of the population, Great Britain, 1999	6
Table 3.1 Population statistics: Ethnicity distribution in England and by primary and secondary schools (2002 figures and 2003 provisional figures.	69
Table 3.2 GCSE (General Certificate School Examination) attainments by ethnicity, in state schools, England and Wales, 1988, 1995 and 1997	70
Table: 3.3 Percentage of Pupils achieving the expected level at each Key Stage by Ethnic Group (2003)	74
Figure 3.1 Proportion of Pupils by Ethnic Group and Gender Achieving 5 + A*-C GCSE/GNVQs (2003)	77
Figure: 3.2 Proportion of Pupils by Ethnic Group and FSM Status Achieving 5 + A*-C GCSE/GNVQs (2003)	79
Figure: 3.3 Percentage of Minority Ethnic Pupils at Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools (2004)	80
Figure: 3.4 Percentage of Children Eligible for Free School Meals by Ethnic Group (2004)	82

# CHAPTER -1

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past 50 years Britain has become a multiracial and multicultural country. A series of migration to Britain took place after the Second World War which involved significant numbers of people emigrating from Britain's former colonies to settle in Britain (Pilkington:2003). The labour of migrants from former colonial countries was actively sought and there was relatively large scale migration from the Caribbean, Africa, South Asian countries. Since the 1960s Britain has also had migrants from Hong Kong, Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. The Forced expulsion of Asians from East Africa in the 1970s and the arrival of Vietnamese boat people in the 1980s brought further migrant inflows to Britain. Furthermore, by the 1990s new patterns of migration were getting established in Britain (Tomlinson: 2004). With the formalizing of work permits, there was a huge rise among the temporary skilled migrant labour from other countries (Tomlinson: 2005). Moreover, the movement of EU (European Union) nationals accelerated by the passage of the Single European Act. This in turn triggered transnational movement between countries. Britain was also home for a number of refugees and asylum seekers from several parts of the world. Civil wars in the 1990's brought in refugees and asylum seekers from Somalia, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and other places(Tomlinson:2005).

The 2001 census shows that 7.9% of the population of Britain described themselves as from an ethnic minority, mostly British citizens, but originally from the Caribbean, Africa and South Asian countries- Notably from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The

same year identified two London boroughs which had more ethnic population than the whites. In fact, census analysts have come up with a very interesting piece of information. They suggest that by 2011, Birmingham and Leicester will have non-white majorities (Tomlinson: 2005).

### **BRITAIN'S PRINCIPAL ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS**

Modood & Berthoud (1997) in their book titled 'Ethnic minority in Britain: Diversity and disadvantage' reveal that there is a strong presence of a diverse ethnic minority composition in Britain. Modood & Berthoud (1997) have examined 'diversity' in terms of diversity of origin. According to them the ethnic minority groups in Britain share in common the fact that they had once been subject to British imperial rule. However, the differences amongst them were more pronounced. They differed in terms of physical appearance, language, religion and clothing. The Asian sub-groups also had important distinctions. Some migrant groups have been successful in the British soil and the others have shown little signs of progress. For example, the Bangladeshis upon arrival were an uneducated and poor. On a relative basis, The East African Asians were well educated and more prosperous than them. All these factors, according to Modood and Berthoud must have played a very crucial role in the experiences of minority ethnic population in Britain.

### **CARIBBEAN'S/ WEST INDIAN'S.**

Post war immigration saw the arrival of Caribbean's to Britain. Caribbean's were the first to migrate to Britain, with the majority coming from one island, Jamaica. Jamaica was

also a former British colony which was taken over by the British from the Spanish in the seventeenth century. The Jamaican economy was geared to suit the needs of Britain. Lack of investment and underdevelopment persisted. Even after the abolition of slavery in Jamaica, their impoverished positions hardly improved and the economy was unable to generate sufficient jobs. All this encouraged the Jamaicans and other Caribbeans to migrate to Britain and North America to improve their situations (Pilkington: 2003).

The pattern of West Indians' migration to Britain is complex and of long duration. Initially, it was the men who migrated in majority. Their movement was economically driven and also Britain's need for labour to work in its factories was well advertised. Later, during the post war period they were joined in by their wives and children. The West Indians upon arrival mainly inhabited the greater London area while some settled in the midland cities of Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Leicester and Nottingham. Unlike most of the later settlers from South Asia, these people had the advantage of understanding and speaking in English. Religious orientation of these settlers also played an important part. Mainly followers of Christianity they felt close to the British population in terms of language and culture (Verma and Darby: 2002).

## **CHINESE**

The majority of Chinese now living in Britain are Cantonese from the New Territories. Migration from China to Britain began in the nineteenth century. In their case too it was mainly the men who migrated first and settled in major ports – chiefly London and Liverpool. Initially their number was small, and like most migrants they too had the inner desire to return back to their homeland. However, the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration



Act acted as a catalyst, and most of the men sent for their families and children. The early Chinese settlers set up Chinese laundries where they did not have to compete with the native population. Later with the collapse of laundry business in 1950s, they found their economic betterment in the restaurant trade with their emphasis on the 'takeaway' business. This development had important consequences for the distribution of Chinese families. For the purpose of flourishing trade, no takeaway owner wanted another competitor in his vicinity. Thus, they dispersed to various cities and towns across Britain. It is perhaps this dispersion which is perhaps accountable for the 'invisibility' of the Chinese presence in Britain (Verma & Darby: 2002).

## **PAKISTANIS**

Half or perhaps more of all Pakistani migrants in Britain hail either from Mirpur district or the neighbouring part of Rawalpindi District. The heaviest flow according to Ballard (1983) had come from the northern part of Pakistan. Like the other migrants they too were principally drawn to Britain by the possibility diverse work opportunities in British industries following the Second World War. During their initial period of stay the main aim of all Pakistani migrants was to work hard, earn money and return back to their homeland. They mainly took to unskilled or semi-skilled work in the heavy engineering or the textile industry mainly in the north of England or midlands. Their residence pattern in Britain reveals a highly concentrated nature, largely in inner city locations. The answer to this can perhaps be sought in the nature of society they had left back in Pakistan. Their custom of endogamous marriage fosters a closely knit kin group. Ballard (1990) while making his observation in Mirpur commented that amongst Pakistanis over half the

marriages were between first cousins. This powerfully strengthens a complex network of liaisons. Again in their case too it was the men who migrate first followed by their family reunion much later. Most Pakistani men saw something in the British society which was perceived by them as being morally corrupt. This was mainly related to their clothing, behaviour and the relationship between the sexes.

### **BANGLADESHIS**

The majority of Bangladeshis in Britain have their roots in Sylhet. The main motive of most of these migrants was essentially economic, and the poverty stricken men of Sylhet saw the possibility of making fortunes by migrating to Britain in search of employment. The pattern of family reunion was similar here too. It was the men who migrated first, followed by their wives and children later. Both the Pakistani and the Bangladeshi communities is essentially 'collectivist'. High sense of group solidarity and allegiance to the family honour was a way of life for them (Verma & Darby: 2002).

### **INDIANS**

Evidence from the available literature shows that several distinct phases of the development of Indian settlement in Britain have been observed. Indian men have been present in Britain for at least a century, but their permanent roots got firmly grounded in the British soil between the two World Wars. The majorities of Indians in Britain are from the Punjab or Gujarat and belong to the Hindu or Sikh faith. By and large their migration to Britain was not a method to escape poverty; rather it was to enhance their social identity and economic status in India. For them, migration from the Indian soil was

a viable option when the opportunity arose (Verma & Darby: 2002). The majority of first generation immigrant from India hailed from a rural background having completed only few years of formal schooling in their mother tongue, and they were not proficient in either written or oral English. This definitely acted as an obstacle in establishing communication with the members of the host society. Perhaps, this is one of the main reasons for the formation of ethnic enclaves: Southall in England - Little Punjab (Ghuman: 2003). Today the Indians comprise the largest Ethnic Minority in Britain. This is evident from the Census table below:

**Table 1.1 Ethnic group composition of the population, Great Britain, 1999**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Great Britain</b>	<b>Percent of Great Britain</b>
Total persons	56879400	100.0
White	53074200	93.3
Black Caribbean	490100	0.9
Black African	376200	0.7
Black-other	308400	0.5
<b>Indian</b>	<b>929600</b>	<b>1.6</b>
Pakistani	662900	1.2
Bangladeshi	267900	0.5
Chinese	136700	0.2
Other-Asians	206400	0.4
Other-other	408900	0.7
Total minorities	3787200	6.7

*Source: Labour Force Survey 1999, Adapted from Owen et al (2000)*

The data in the above table clearly indicate that the Indians are the largest ethnic minority in Britain forming 1.6 percent of the total ethnic minority population. Given the large scale migration of people from various parts of the world to Britain, it becomes essential to make an analysis of the host country's attitude towards its ethnic minorities. Such contacts among people belonging to diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds produce a necessary problem in terms of social adjustments. These problems of minority-majority contact situations in context to Britain have been dealt with in the following section.

### **THE IMMIGRANT- HOST FRAMEWORK**

In relation to the movement of people from one place to another, Jayaram (1994) opines that migration does not necessarily imply mere physical movement of people from one place to another. Migrants, in fact carry a socio-cultural baggage which consists of a pre defined social identity, a set of religious beliefs and practices, a set of norms governing family, kinship and food habits and language (Jayaram: 1994). This socio-cultural baggage is often quite different from that of the host society. It is perhaps this aspect of migration that has several implications for the entire social structure and social life of the host society (Cohen & Manion: 1983). Various frameworks emerge to explain the phenomena of receiving foreign migrants into the host society, the history of socio-cultural contact between them and the formal and informal practices of inclusion and exclusion in the attitudes and behavior of the majority (Rao: 2005). In certain cases, the immigrants adopt and assimilate into the host society. In yet other cases, the immigrants reject completely the socio-cultural pattern of the host society and attempt to maintain and perpetuate their own culture and identity. Thus, the differing contexts present

different scenarios for a society (Rao: 2005). Aurora (1967) in his book 'New Frontiersmen: A Sociological Study of Indian Immigrants in U.K' draws attention to the problems of 'social adjustment' faced by the migrant communities in the host society. According to him, social adaptations are necessary on the part of both the host society as well as the migrant community. Contact situations may also give rise to a tendency which is termed as resistance. The resistance may be mild and expressed in the form of prejudices, or strong in which case it may be expressed in the form of exclusion from certain fields. It might also lead to open or concealed conflict. Moreover, Aurora even mentions that social adjustment is a two way process. In this process, the attitudes of the immigrants count as much as the attitudes of the host society towards the incoming strangers. Thus, the process of social adjustment affects both, the host society and the migrant community.

The immigration of people from the Indian sub-continent (including India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) since the Second World War has resulted in the formation of distinct ethnic minority communities within the British society. In the process, Britain has been transformed into a more culturally and ethnically diverse society. A pertinent question which arises in such a scenario is how have the immigrant communities been received by the host society. Pilkington (2003) draws attention to the fact that while there is wide acceptance that the reception of these ethnic minority communities has been unwelcoming, two different answers have been put forward for this. The first answer points to the fact that these minority communities have been relatively new entrants in the British society, being either immigrants or the children of these immigrants. The other view emphasizes the fact that minority communities are different in outward appearance

from the native White population. Thus, their negative reception has two basic criteria for discrimination. In the first case their newness in the British society is seen as a problem. In the second case the color of their skin acts as a barrier in their inception in a predominantly White society.

The first stand is well illustrated in the early post war literature on race and ethnicity in Britain. Pilkington (2003) argues that the immigrants in the beginning have to undergo a two fold process before they can be absorbed or assimilated into the host society: Firstly, they have to adapt themselves to the new environment of the host society and simultaneously be accepted positively by its indigenous members. Neither of these two processes can in all likelihood take place in the life span of one generation. Thus, the initial reception which these ethnic minority communities meet is a negative one. Problems begin to arise when the migrant community members find difficulties in adjustments. On the other hand the host society views them as strangers who do not exhibit an understanding of the implicit socio- cultural norms governing the British society. The migrant culture is viewed as inappropriate and inferior by the dominant culture. However, most of the exponents of the *immigrant- host framework* recognize the fact that there certainly exists a degree of cultural antipathy to ethnic minorities in Britain. Though the overriding concern here is that of optimism, the prevalent scenario reveals a different story. The ‘absorption’ of the ethnic minority communities in Britain has been an extremely difficult process.

The *immigrant – host framework* has its roots deeply entrenched in a strong theoretical perspective – *functionalism*. The chief propounder of this theory has been *Emile Durkheim*. Durkheim views society being held together by common values – the shared

customs and traditions of the 'community' and 'nation'. In his view immigration, which implies the influx of migrants coming to the host society with different customs and traditions constitutes as a potential threat to the existing social order. 'Assimilation' or 'absorption' in such a scenario is considered as highly desirable. This process would ensure that there occurs no disruption in the socio – cultural fabric of the British society (Pilkington: 2003).

Even in situations where these differences are less pronounced, there may arise a scenario where the behaviour and roles of the immigrants differ from the expectation of the host society, thus paving way for potential conflict. As Rex and Moore (1967) put it, '*The host society is much more than just a complex system of class conflict and status*'. It is also a system of personal, familial, religious and political values that will differ in varying degrees from those shared by the immigrants.

In this present study titled '*Education of Children of Indian Origin in United Kingdom: A study of Home-School interactions*' an attempt has been made to explore certain important educational issues in multicultural Britain with particular reference to children of Indian origin. The study begins with examining the socio-historical context of Indian migration to United Kingdom. Also, the nature and patterns of migration finds mention in this study. Drawing from government documents, official statistics and various educational researches, the present work proposes to study the emerging trends in educational attainment of children of Indian origin at schools. Interplay of various factors affecting the educational achievement and underachievement of the Indian pupils has also been addressed in this study. Focus has also been placed on understanding and analyzing a variety of educational experiences encountered by the Indian children at school. In

addition the home -school interactions are discussed at length. Importance of the home and school for the educational achievement has been ascertained on the basis of various ethnographic and qualitative studies. Moreover, approaches pertaining to education in general, and teachers, parents, religion and culture in specific have been dealt with within the home-school dimension. Lastly, a brief comparison has been drawn showing the educational achievement trend among the children of different nationalities within the Indian sub-continent, i.e. between the Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshi.

However, before detailing on this study it is essential, in the light of the preceding discussions pertaining to the immigrant and the host society, to reach at some conceptual understanding of related terms. Any study requires a theoretical basis of understanding. Theory can be comprehended only by a comprehensive understanding of the concepts that are used in it.

## **CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION**

### **ASIANS**

Given the nature of the present study it is essential to clarify the term Asian. The term Asian is not as transparent as it seems to suggest. There are many dimensions to being an Asian. In most of the literature reviewed 'Asians' are treated as a single category. However, this term can be misleading because the term has a set of sub-group connotations also attached to it. Earlier, this term indicated crude grouping, which quite clearly ignored a whole host of subgroups within these three main groupings. The grouping was made cruder still by combining all three groups into a single category 'Asian'(Mackintosh, Taylor & West:1988). It is therefore wrong to use this term as a



blanket category because it consists of mainly three sub-groups- Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. In assessing the educational achievement of the different ethnic minority groups, this becomes even more deceptive. For example a number of research reports have revealed that Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are the lowest achieving ethnic minority group in Britain. In contrast Indian children have been achieving at par with their white school mates. Thus, it is unfair to classify both the highest and the lowest achieving ethnic minority group in the same category – Asians (Kysel: 1988).

There has also been a tendency for educationists interested in ethnic minorities to make use of the term Asian, despite the fact that Asians can cover Punjabi Sikhs, Gujarati Hindus and Bangladeshi Bengali Muslims and other various diverse groups. Such generalizations have little relationship with reality, and can often generate misleading impressions which could lead to the same generalized assumptions being made about the educational needs of Indian children at school (Ghuman & Gallop: 1981). To this M.A Barker commented in *New Society* (2.11.78):

*“To talk about Asians as a single category can be misleading and overlooks the existence of cultural sub- groups.” (p.274)*

There are various cultural sub-groups within Indians and a detailed understanding of the variations in the educational needs within different groups needs to be considered because the sub-cultural profile of migrant Indians often changes (Gallop & Ghuman: 1981).

## **MINORITY/MAJORITY:**

Aurora (1967) defines minority as a group of people occupying a subordinate position in a multi-ethnic society, suffering from the prejudices and discrimination and maintaining a separate group identity. Even though individual members of the group may improve their social status, the group itself remains in a subordinate position in terms of its power to shape the dominant value system of the society or to share fully in its reward. Parekh (2000) explains that the term minority has connotations of 'less important' or 'marginal'. In many circumstances it is not only insulting but also mathematically misleading or inaccurate. Furthermore, its use perpetuates the myth of white homogeneity – the notion that everyone who does not belong to a minority is by that token a member of majority in which there are no significant differences or tensions.

Worth states that minorities may be divided according to their attitudes to the majority. Firstly are the 'pluralistic minorities' who desire peaceful co-existence with other minorities and the majority. Such minorities wish to maintain their identity and cherish certain distinctive characteristics which they consider important for preserving their identity. Oriental minorities in Britain are example of pluralistic minorities. Second are the 'assimilationist minorities' who desire not only political and economic unity, but complete social acceptance into the host society. In the process of social intercourse with members of the host society, they prefer not to be made aware of their separateness. In addition, are the 'pluralistic majorities' who aim at the establishment of a distinct distance between itself and the minorities in major areas of social contact. Lastly, in case of societies with 'assimilationist majorities' the pressure on the minorities to conform to the norms of the society is considerably high (Aurora: 1986).

## **ETHNIC GROUP**

Specialists and non specialists use the term 'ethnic' differently. According to Parekh (2000), *'an ethnic group is one whose members have common origins, a shared sense of history, a shared culture and a sense of collective identity.'* According to Bennett (1986) Ethnic group refers to a group of people within a larger society that is socially distinguished or set apart by others primarily on the basis of racial and/ or cultural characteristics such as religion, language or tradition. This definition is based on Milton Gordon's broad definition of an ethnic group. The central factor associated with this term is the notion of being set apart. This distinctiveness can be based on either physical or cultural attributes or both.

## **RACE**

In contemporary educational debates, *Race* perhaps occupies one of the most controversial positions. There are many different theories of race relations but very little agreement (cf. Rex and Mason, 1986). According to David Gill born, biologists used the term '*Race*' in the nineteenth century to place human beings into apparently different groups (types) thought to share a common biological ancestry. These races were primarily defined in terms of physical differences (known as phenotypes), such as skin colour. Although, such a view of race still survives among some political and lay groups, in biological terms the notion of separate human races is now discredited (Gillborn: 1990). The usage of the term race in a biological sense contributes very little to the understanding human behaviour. Some writers disapprove of its usage even as an analytical term (Ashworth and Verma: 1986). There is a lot of evidence available in literature to show that the concept of 'race' is frequently over-generalized in ways which

serve to reinforce traditional stereotypes (Banton: 1979). The meaning of race has over a period of time transcended the narrow biological boundaries. Language, religion, mores, customs, dress styles and certain other elements are now used to define its meaning. In the present scenario, the word race connotes a socio-cultural metaphor. It even highlights the fact that biological and cultural differences are separate categories which cannot be used to associate one with the other (Ashworth and Verma: 1986). As David Gillborn puts it *'Race is no longer supposed to be a permanent, fixed genetic feature but is recognized as a variable, contested and changing social category.'* Therefore, the concept of race cannot be used as a meaningful tool probe into the issue of differential educational achievement amongst different ethnic groups. As Banton (1979) rightly comments:

*" Whenever anyone is inclined to use the term 'race' he should pause and wonder whether [there] is not another word that will help express his meanings more precisely. Usually, there is."*

Parekh (2000)<sup>1</sup> too talks of the negative connotation associated with the term race. He says that the term race is important since it refers to the reality of racism. It reflects and perpetuates the belief that human species consists of separate races. Further, it frequent

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<sup>1</sup> Parekh (2000) in his report on *'The Future of Multiethnic Britain'* commented on the notion of Racism. According to him *"Racism is understood either as a division of humankind into fixed closed and unalterable groups or as systematic domination of some groups by others, is an empirically false, logically incoherent and morally unacceptable doctrine. Racism is a subtle and complex phenomenon. It may be based on colour or physical feature or on culture, nationality and way of life; it may affirm equality of human worth but implicitly deny this by insisting on the absolute superiority of a particular culture; it may admit equality up to a point but impose a glass ceiling higher up. Whatever its subtle disguises and forms, it is deeply divisive, intolerant of differences, a source of much human suffering and inimical to the common sense of belonging lying at the basis of every stable political community. It can have no place in a decent society."*

use diverts attention from the cultural and religious aspects of racism as a distinct from those that are with physical appearance.

### **ETHNOCENTRISM**

Closely related to racism is the term ethnocentrism which helps us to explore more elaborately the complexity of life at multi-ethnic schools. This term is used in its most basic form by Gillborn (1990) meaning the tendency to evaluate other ethnic groups from the stand point of one's own ethnic group and experience. Ethnocentric judgments of others' behaviour, culture and experience may lead to misunderstandings and even to conflict and control. On many occasions, ethnocentrism and institutional racism are used in overlapping ways. However, it is important to distinguish between them as ethnocentrism illuminates the significant aspects of teacher-pupil interaction which otherwise would be lost within the blanket term 'racism' (Gillborn: 1990). For example, several writers have commented upon the stereotypes which teachers hold of South Asian pupil as being more positive than those they hold of Afro-Caribbeans (cf. Tomlinson, 1981; Mac an Ghail, 1988). Thus, the concept of ethnocentrism is immensely useful as an analytical tool which helps us to examine the behaviour of apparently liberal teachers who act in racist ways (Gillborn: 1990). Pilkington (2003) talks of the social construction of race and ethnicity. He opines that race and ethnicity both have divisive implications as they tend to draw boundaries between people. However, he also speaks of a conceptual distinction between the two. While racial boundaries are drawn keeping the physical parameters in mind, ethnic boundaries are drawn on the basis of cultural markers.

Nevertheless, the two at times overlap when the defined concept of race over a period of time becomes ethnicity.

### **EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

The term '*educational achievement*' connotes a range of meanings and applications. Categorically, this term can be used as an institutional as well as an individual variable. Institutional variable refers to the assessment of the relative performance of particular schools as well as the achievement of different groups in society. The individual variable assesses the relative performance of individual pupils or students. In most educational research, the educational attainment is ascertained by focusing on the performance of groups of individuals. Groups here are constructed on the basis of certain criterion such as ethnicity, social class, and religious orientation and so on. Importantly, within both categories various factors are responsible for a particular level of achievement. This is because educational achievement is not the product of a single phenomenon, but represents an interaction between the students and the institutional environment. Institutional factors relate to the school ethos, teacher-pupil interaction, the peer group and so on (Ashworth & Verma: 1986).

### **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON RACE, ETHNICITY, MIGRATION AND EDUCATION**

Sociologists studying race and ethnic relations, together with related questions of migration, have adopted a variety of theoretical orientations and research perspectives. An underlying value premise common to them all is that 'race' is an irrelevant criterion

of social differentiation, although in practice much used. Racial phenotypes assume varying symbolic connotations in different social situations (Richmond: 1973). According to Richmond the most influential theoretical approaches were developed by Park and his associates some fifty years ago. Park represented the interaction between the White and Negro migrants and the receiving society as a cycle beginning with an initial contact and ending with the assimilation of the ethnic minorities into the dominant culture and social system. Intermediate stages involved conflict and accommodation. Conflict was understood mainly as competition for scarce material resources such as land, housing and employment, together with social values, such as status and prestige. Overt conflict was gradually institutionalized and regulated, giving rise to varying types and degrees of accommodation of the several ethnic groups to each other. This frequently involved residential segregation, economic specialization and separation of primary and secondary social relations. Park even saw accommodation inevitably giving way to eventual assimilation.( add a footnote Richmond pp.2).

The theoretical perspective which emerges from the above theory forms a basic point of reference in this study. This theory by Park has been immensely helpful while trying to analyze the situation of Indian migrants in Britain. Their initial contact with the natives resulted in similar situations which have been reported in the theory. Instead of getting completely assimilated in the British society, the Indians have shown desirable degree of integration into the wider British society.

The 1950's and 1960's marked a change in the field of *Sociology of Education*. It now came to be largely focused on educational opportunity where social class was correlated to educational outcome. Education was deeply impacting meritocracy and social

mobility. Mac an Ghail (1996) refers to this as the '*old sociology of education*'. In the 1970's a '*new sociology of education*' came into prominence which laid stress upon the micro-analytical dimensions of teaching and learning processes. Instead of portraying education itself as the vehicle to bring about change and reduce the structural inequalities, the very structures of education were considered vehicles in their reproduction (Abbas: 2004).

Theoretical debates on social class and education finds elucidation in Bourdieu's work on social and cultural capital. His ideas are useful in theoretically examining the experience of migrant children and how they relate to the structure and functioning of the education system. Bourdieu in his book '*The Forms of Capital*' (1986) elaborately explains the concept of capital beyond its economic determinism and highlights the non-economic aspects in the form of cultural and social capital. Various forms of capital help us understand the structure and functioning of education.

Cultural capital theory has its origin in the education systems (the field) of advanced Western societies, with their inbuilt systems of stratification leading to differential levels of scholastic development, credentialisation and subsequent entry and development in the labour market. The theory of cultural capital represents the collection of different economic and cultural forces, such as family background, status, social class, income, wealth and varying interests in and obligations towards education itself.

Bourdieu distinguishes three forms of cultural capital. The third form of cultural capital in its '*institutionalized state*' provides academic credentials and qualifications which generate a '*certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional,*



*constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to power*' (*ibid.*). Academic qualifications can then be used to create additional cultural and economic capital.

Bourdieu argues that everyone has a '*cultural history*' accumulated through primary ('family resources') and secondary ('educational choices') socialization processes. In general terms, these include anything that gives an individual an advantage or disadvantage in certain situations. For example, gender and ethnicity, under certain circumstances, can be either advantageous or disadvantageous to opportunities in life. Moreover, Bourdieu even came up with the idea of *situational constraints*, to demonstrate how the working classes (and ethnic minorities) are systematically blamed for their relative failure within the education system: *cultural reproduction* (socio-pathologisation). Cultural reproduction, in this context, is the way in which schools in association with other social institutions help to perpetuate social and economic infrastructure (*base*) is a dependent one.

Reay (2000) has noted the significance of family background as a '*primary site of social reproduction*'. The concept of '*emotional labour*' is used to describe what is seen as the crucial role played by mothers in the educational life chances of their children. It is argued that middle class mothers, for example are 'better placed' (that is they have greater reserves of cultural capital) than their working class peers to provide the support required by children their school career. This 'emotional investment' works on a number of levels, from being better placed to provide their children with 'compensatory education' (help with school work, for example), having more time to spend with their children's education (middle class women, for example are less likely to spend large parts of their working day in paid employment, although not all) and have the status (and

confidence) to confront teachers when they feel that their children are not being pushed hard or taught well enough.

The theoretical framework provided by Bourdieu has been extremely helpful in this study for analyzing the educational outcomes and achievements of the ethnic minority pupils, especially Indian pupils. The concepts of social and cultural capital has been enlightening in understanding the structure and functioning of the education system of a country which is inhabited by ethnic minority groups. The importance of family background as a primary site for social reproduction and the idea of emotional labour in context of mothers as a part of parental strategy measures are an interesting phenomenon which have been touched upon by this theory.

Another important theoretical framework has been presented by Ogbu <sup>2</sup> (1991) to understand the educational experiences of the immigrant or the minority population. He also addresses the question of why some minority groups do relatively well in school in spite of facing substantial barriers related to factors such as their different cultures and languages or the prejudiced attitudes of the dominant groups, while other minority groups facing a similar situation perform far less well in school. He even draws attention to processes through which the minority groups have been incorporated into various societies, namely, voluntarily or involuntarily. Those who have been incorporated voluntarily are immigrants. They are the ones who have moved to the present societies willingly in search of economic well being, better overall opportunities or greater political freedom. In contrast, are the non-immigrant minorities whom Ogbu (1991) designates as being involuntary minorities. They were brought into the present society

<sup>2</sup> GIBSON, M. AND OGBU, J. (1991) 'Minority status and schooling: A comparative study of immigrant and involuntary minorities', *New York: Garland. Pp.8-9.*

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through slavery, conquest or colonization. Both immigrant and involuntary minorities are the victims of prejudice and discrimination by the dominant group of the society. It has been stated in his theory that the more successful minorities differ from the less academically successful minorities in relation to the type of cultural model which has been adapted by them. There are two types of cultural models which are in turn forced by historical forces. First model relates to the initial terms of incorporation of minorities in the larger within which they exist. The other model relates to the pattern of adaptive responses that the minorities have developed to protect themselves from the discriminatory treatment meted out to them by the members of the dominant group (Ogbu: 1991). Ogbu's theory has in very lucid terms led to the understanding of a complex question of why some minority groups perform relatively well in education while other minorities confronting similar situations perform less well. It is in relation to the initial process of incorporation and patterns of adaptive responses developed by the Indians which in turn explain their success at schools.

The reason to research into this area has a significant rationale attached to it. In recent years the British Indians have received considerable attention because children of Indian origin have exhibited a trend of rising academic achievement. They have even displayed a high degree of success in dismantling both the influence of prejudice and racial discrimination in British society and also overcoming their lower socio-economic status in the society (Ballard and Vellins, 1985; Swann Report, 1985).

Issues pertaining to race and ethnicity are seminal to the understanding of the nature of contemporary British society. Since post second world war period these issues have moved from the periphery to the centre of social scientific discourse.

## **RACE, ETHNIC MINORITIES AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENTS IN BRITAIN**

Issues pertaining to race and ethnicity are seminal to the understanding of the nature of contemporary British society. Since post second world war period these issues have moved from the periphery to the centre of social scientific discourse. Given the current nature and scope of the study focus has been on the education of Asians in Britain. The way in which all the above mentioned factors such as race and ethnicity influences the educational trajectory of these Asians has been zeroed upon.

An initial attempt to the preceding effect has been started with the following studies made on the above sub-section. It should be mentioned that these studies represent just a cross section of all the studies on this aspect.

David Smith and Sally Tomlinson's book titled '**The School Effect**' is an important book. It has had a great impact upon both policy makers and practitioners. This book reports the findings of a longitudinal research project carried out between 1981 and 1988, by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) and members of the Department of Educational Research at Lancaster University. The research was funded by the Department of Education and Science (1985).

A major part of the book is dedicated to the 'central objective' of measuring differences in schools' effectiveness after controlling for various factors (prior attainment, race, social class and gender). 'The School Effect' makes an important contribution to our understanding of complex issues of achievement and progress in schools. It also offers new insights into the issues facing multi – ethnic schools. The main essence of the book

is that schools possess the power to influence the educational experience, achievement and future life chances of their pupils. The authors also suggest that in terms of academic progress, the influence of school is greater than that of the child's ethnic group. Other significant findings concern the role of bilingualism in multi – ethnic schools.

Tahir Abbas (2004) in his book titled '**The Education of British South Asians: Ethnicity, Capital and Class Structure**' has researched the educational achievements of South Asians in the city of Birmingham (a city of one million people, approximately a third of which is non – white ethnic minority). His study is about how Britain's three largest and most significant ethnic minority groups (Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) first survived and then over a period of time thrived in an alien society. It attempts to explain variation in performance in terms of ethnicity and capital, which according to Abbas is a function of the individual's or group's ability to generate, maintain and cultivate the 'resources' that help to mobilize social and economic advancement, which include information, knowledge and networks, and social class. Qualitative research tools and techniques, in-depth interviews with pupils, parents and teachers and surveys of further education college students (16-19) and teachers provided the empirical data. His analysis of educational achievement of ethnic minority groups also takes into account the historical episodes of immigration that have been essentially important to probe into. This has implications for the process of integration and adaptation of the migrants because it illuminates the fact that at the time of arrival what capital (resources) they possessed, where did they reside and to which occupational strata did they enter. His Study also focuses on the differences in educational performance and attainment between the Indians, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis in the city of Birmingham.

His study explores the capital different groups possess. Abbas here draws attention to the social and cultural capital each group possesses apart from the economic capital. His book is important because it even explores critical issues such as teacher ethnicity, the role of religion and culture within the home.

Another powerful piece of informative literature emerges from Sally Tomlinson. Her book titled '**The Home and School in Multicultural Britain**' is quite illuminative as it discusses on a general level home-school relations and the place of parents in education as a context for understanding home-school relations with minority groups. It has been pointed by her in this book that early literature (1960s) was simplistic and encouraged stereotyping in the educational context. Later, there even emerged literature produced by minority academics to inform the teachers about the occupational, educational, linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds of minority groups. Other variables which affect the educational attainment of minority children at school like the social class, colonial educational background of parents have also been highlighted in this book. The typical attitude of white ethnocentric teachers and the difficulty they have in understanding the minority children and their home background also finds mention in her book. This book also examines the way in which the minority parents view the school and their high expectations of education. Tomlinson has even used three research studies to illustrate parental knowledge of and opinion of schools and concludes that there is a mismatch between these expectations and what schools can actually offer. Her work documents initiatives that have been taken for the minority children for example some form of supplementary or additional schooling and also discusses some segregated moves in education undertaken by some West Indian, Muslim and Sikh parents. Some problem

areas such as white parents' views of minority parents and pupils and defining the role of teacher in home-school relations have been the focus of the book. Only dialogue and contact between schools and parents can bridge the gap and solve the problems. Last but not the least the book talks of a common goal – the improved education of the children.

Ghazala Bhatti's book titled '**Asian Children at home and at school: An Ethnographic study**' is an extremely enlightening book. This book is based on research originally conducted for her Ph.D. It is an ethnographic account of the home and school experiences of a group of Asian children who attended '*Cherrydale School*', a mixed comprehensive in '*Cherry town*' in the south of England. Her book brings into focus the fact that British Asians are a generation worthy of serious study. This book is about how race, ethnicity, social class and gender combine to produce marginality for Asian children in a secondary school. It is also an account of the circumstances in which many Asian children struggle today and the difficulties they have to overcome in order to survive in dignity in an unequal society. According to her, in terms of ethnography, Asian children are an under-researched community. Fragments of their school experience, their academic achievement and their experiences of racism are vividly described. A holistic three dimensional study of Asian children's life experiences alongside their parents' and teachers' views has been very skillfully and sensitively dealt by her. This book also takes into account the economic, social, cultural and religious factors which have shaped the lives of Asian parents. This parental world view constitutes the home background of the children under study.

Tahir Abbas in his article titled '**The Home and the School in the Educational Achievements of South Asians**' has explored how South Asian parents and teachers

affect the educational achievements of South Asians in the city of Birmingham. It is a qualitative study in which the respondent's views on the importance of the home and the school for educational achievement were ascertained. Also, at one level the perspectives of teachers and schools were explored and at the other level religion and culture within the home. He also throws light on the adverse religio-cultural effect within the South Asian homes and how Muslims are negatively perceived by the majority. In contrast, he even shows in his study that Indians (Hindus and Sikhs) experience education favourably. This is mainly because they attend schools which are more effective and aspects of religion and culture have less impact on their lives at home and at school. Moreover, Indians as a group are positively perceived by the majority.

Another landmark in the history of education in Britain has been the **Swann Report - 1985**.<sup>3</sup> The Swann Report is an important report. It expresses in the best possible way the national policy objectives of the early 1980s regarding diversity in education. This policy enshrined both the ideal of social justice and a pragmatic concern for social order. The role of education was also made clear in the report.

*“Education should seek to counter any mistaken impressions, or inaccurate, hearsay evidence which he or she may have acquired within the family, peer group or, more broadly from the local community or the media. It is however essential that under no circumstances does education become simply a process of indoctrinating a pupil into one particular way of thinking as the only ‘right and proper’ view.”*

By 1985, the position was summarized in the Swann Report: ‘West Indian children on average are underachieving at school.....Asian children by contrast, show on average a

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<sup>3</sup> DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (1985) Education for All: Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups, The Swann Report (London, HMSO).



pattern of achievement which resembles that of white children's (Swann, 1985, pp.89). The Swann Report also acknowledges that the ethnic minority children, particularly the West Indian and the Bangladeshis, Grossly underachieve in British schools. Amongst many possible explanations, the Report suggests that racism in British society in general and in the schools in particular, is one of the most important reasons for this. The Report states that in order to address the issues confronting the ethnic minority children, it is important to bring about a change in the basic fabric of mainstream education (Verma & Pumphrey: 1988).

The range of literature suggests that there is a very few ethnographic data and other observational material. It implies that the conclusions in the studies have to be read with a pinch of salt. The studies also lack in qualitative data. It is very evident from the books that in most of the studies racism in British schools has been under emphasized. This

### **RATIONALE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

It is against the backdrop of the studies mentioned above that the present research agenda has been conceived. Although it is only one response to a much wider call for educational research on ethnic minority educational achievement in Britain, an attempt had been made to raise important concerns.

Until the 1980's the differential attainment levels of minority ethnic pupils were not an issue. This was primarily because the early studies discussed the achievements of minority ethnic pupil without recognizing or considering the important distinctions that existed between the various ethnic groups which entered Britain. The Swann Report

(1985) signified the first official recognition of a problem, revealing that pupils of Asian origin were generally achieving on a par with their white peers (Haque and Bell: 2001).

The reason to research into this area has a significant rationale attached to it. In recent years the British Indians have received considerable attention because children of Indian origin have exhibited a trend of rising academic achievement. They have even displayed a high degree of success in dismantling both the influence of prejudice and racial discrimination in British society and also overcoming their lower socio-economic status in the society (Ballard and Vellins, 1985; Swann Report, 1985)

Hence against this landscape it is extremely essential to attend to the problems and prospects involved in the education of the Asians especially Indians in Britain. Indians have a major presence in Britain. Moreover they have been performing well in every aspect of life including education. In this backdrop, having studied the literature on the present issue, concerns were bound to emerge. In this study all such concerns have been addressed. Focus has been placed on the attitude at school and the home school environment affecting Indian students' achievement pattern in schools. An interesting aspect which draws attention is the vivid description of the various achievement levels among the Asians themselves. These aspects require analysis and elaboration. Hence the idea of studying this particular topic emerged.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To trace the socio historical background of Indian immigration to U.K. Here an attempt will be made to explain the causes and the growth of Indian settlement in Britain.

2. To study the trends in educational attainment of Indian children at school. Here, an attempt will be made to collect data from a wide range of sources. Research reports and documents of the government will be looked into for exploring this aspect. Also, a brief comparison will be drawn between the educational attainment of Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils on the basis of the quantitative data collected from the above mentioned sources.

3. To explore the experiences of Indian children at schools and discuss how the home and the school affect the educational achievement of Indian pupils. In addition, the effects of religion and culture within the home would also be explored. The study also tries to deal with the effect of parental attitude about education of their children.

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

The major sources of data for the present research study have chiefly been derived from secondary sources. The data analyzed are a combination of both qualitative as well as quantitative ones. The study has largely been carried out by reviewing the existing literature, reviewing the government documents, policy statements and statistical reports. Attempts have also been made to include and hence analyze some major Committee Reports viz. The Swann Report and The Rampton Report. Certain significant research reports which have been referred to be Recent Research on the Achievements of Ethnic Minority pupils (*OFSTED: Office for Standards in Education*), Minority Ethnic Participation and Achievements in Education, Training and Labour Market (*DfES: Department for Education and Science*) and Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils. The literature has mainly been collected from the Newsam Library and Archives, Institute of Education, University of London. Founded in 1902, the

Institute of Education is a world class centre of excellence for research in education. The Institute's library has the largest collection in Europe of learned books and periodicals on educational studies. It contains over 300,000 volumes, including several special collections, and has files of nearly 2,000 periodicals from all over the world. Supplementing the major physical collections is a wide range of electronic journals, other full text documents and research databases, many available on the internet.

### **CHAPTERISATION PLAN**

In chapter two I attempt to chart the socio-historical context of Indian migration to Britain. One of the primary concerns in this chapter has been to trace the historical roots which triggered a chain of movement of people from both Indian and Britain. It seeks to impress upon the major causes of migration of Indian people to Britain in terms of the push and pull factors, where the most important pull factor has been ascertained as economic betterment. Also, the pattern of growth of the Indian settlement, particularly the Sikh<sup>4</sup> settlement has been explored. The issues pertaining to cultural adaptation and chain migration have also been touched upon.

In chapter three important educational concerns have been raised. Primarily, this chapter focuses upon the educational achievement of Indian pupils in British schools. Drawing heavily from the various research reports and statistical findings of the government an attempt has been made to analyze the quantitative data on the performance and achievement of Indian pupils. The main variables used to analyze this have been the social class. This analysis has been displayed in the form of tables and bar diagrams. In addition, a comparative analysis of the educational achievement of Bangladeshi and

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<sup>4</sup>It is worth mentioning that because of paucity of literature dealing in details with other Indian communities like the Gujarati's, the Sikh community has been majorly focused in the study.

Pakistani pupils has also been drawn to make the study more interesting. Quantitative analysis is followed by the qualitative analysis which tries to explore the reasons for the success of the Indian pupils at school and simultaneously, the reasons for the relative failure and underachievement of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils. When we seek to explain such underachievement, we again find a complex range of factors involved. These include socio-economic factors, which stem in partly from racially discriminatory practices; cultural factors; ineffective schools, which themselves are located in deprived areas; and some (often unintentional) discrimination in educational institutions. (Pilkington: 2003 pp.7) It is after all most improbable that any single factor will ever be found sufficient at all times and in all places to account for the performance of all ethnic minorities (cf. Verma: 1985).

In the final chapter, home-school relations in Britain have been discussed at length. The initials of this chapter discuss the parental educational background and their participation in the school processes. The primary concern here has been to delineate the linkages between the home and the school and whether the causes of achievement or underachievement lie in the home or in the school. When we seek to explain such underachievement we again find a varied range of factors involved. Education and educational achievement of Indian students seems to be strongly linked to the parental attitude on the one hand and the interplay of the complex dynamics of religion, culture and home.

## CHAPTER -2

### MIGRATION OF INDIANS TO UNITED KINGDOM: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The initials of this chapter attempts to provide a socio-historical account of migration of people belonging to varied racial and cultural origins in general, and that of Indians in particular. This chapter also intends to impress upon the causes as well as the patterns concerning the history of Indian migration to Britain. One important aspect also deals with the kind of lifestyle that these immigrants enjoy. The nature of work as a statistical measure, also finds mention. The emergence of the second and third generation Indians provides a new dimension to the immigration saga. This chapter purports to highlight on this aspect as well. Last but not the least, issues pertaining to socio-cultural adjustments, cultural conflict and societal demands with respect to accommodation, assimilation and integration has also been talked of.

Historically speaking, affiliation between India and Britain goes back to almost four hundred years. The arrival of Sir Thomas Roe, the first English ambassador to the court of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir in 1616 set the ball rolling. This has set in motion a chain of events leading to the foundation of the East India Company and, subsequently leading to the movement of peoples in both the directions. As the trade expanded and reached new heights, the Company sent out both civil and military agents to serve its commercial enterprises and factories at Surat, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. Over a period of time these places became little English enclaves on Indian Soil (Visram: 2003). Starting in the seventeenth century, Indian servants and ayahs (nannies) were brought over by the British families when they returned back to Britain after completing their

official term in India. Next to follow were the sailors, the lascars who were the crew of the company ships. From the eighteenth century onwards a handful of Indian emissaries, visitors and Indian wives of some European men and their children came to Britain. From about the middle of the nineteenth century, the Indians in Britain started expanding (Visram: 2003). Some came as a result of socio-political and economic changes brought about in India by the forces of imperialism. Others were drawn to Britain by a sense of adventure or to see the land of their rulers. Students also formed a considerable part of this influx to Britain. Students came on scholarships; others came to obtain a professional qualification which would facilitate them to enter into structures of colonial hierarchy. Some even stayed back in Britain to practice their profession. By the mid twentieth century; Britain saw a considerable presence of Indians. There was a small population of students, petty traders, merchants, industrial workers and professionals from different religious backgrounds and regions of India (Visram: 2003).

Today, Britain is home to many Indians. This is the result of large scale immigration from the Indian sub-continent (Indian, Pakistan & Bangladesh) during the post world war period to meet the demands of a growing British economy which was at that point of time facing a shortage of labour. Men from India, mainly from Punjab and Gujarat migrated to Britain to fill in the gap. Over a period of time their settlement in Britain strengthened and their roots were firmly laid in the British soil (Bhachu: 1985).

### **EARLY HISTORY OF INDIAN MIGRATION TO UNITED KINGDOM**

Movement of Indians to various nations of the world is centuries old, but the last century has witnessed massive movement of people from India. Indian settlement in Britain has

had a long history, its internal structure is not simple, and rather, it has now become complex and diverse. The history of Britain is marked by various migratory movements. A chronological analysis of the various phases of migration throws considerable light on the timing and duration of each phase and its specific characteristics. Such a framework provides a useful basis for comparative analysis. The first phase comprised of individual pioneers, who were initially all ex-seamen and later became pedlars. Over a period of time they began to put down permanent roots. This led to the establishment of small nuclei of Indian settlers in several British cities. The second phase began after the Second World War when there was a huge demand for unskilled labour in Britain. It was during this time that mass migration took place from India to the United Kingdom. The pattern of residence reveals that the workers then lived in densely packed all male households, mostly in the inner city areas. The 1960's marked the onset of the third phase, when the males were joined in by their wives and children. There also occurred a shift in the residential pattern- it moved from the crowded all male household to less crowded housing conditions. There also occurred a consolidation of the ethnic settlement and the formation of a social network of their own. The fourth and final phase to date is marked by a move away from the ghettos and the emergence of a second and third generation migrants who are mostly British born and British educated. (Ballard, R. & Ballard, C: 1977)

Most of the earliest Sikh migrants to Britain were members of the very small Bhatra caste, whose traditional occupation was hawking and peddling. Later, the Jats and the Ramgharias followed. The Bhatra's arrived in Britain in the early 1920's and earned a living by selling clothes from door to door, mainly in rural areas. By the end of 1930's,



they made their presence felt and were found in many British cities. In a short span of time their business started flourishing and the success of these peddlers lay in their skillful manipulation of prices and credit. An ex-pedlar said,

*“We were always ready to knock a few pennies off the price, because we always put it up beforehand. We always sold on credit too, ‘a bob now, love, and the rest next month’. That way we had a chance to come back and sell something else.”*

The 1950's was the era of mass migration. Migrants from all over the sub-continent came with very similar intentions- economic gains followed by status enhancement. For this they were prepared to do the most unpleasant jobs, often for long hours. Most of them minimized their living expenses in order to maximize their savings. Migrants lived in all male household which was closely linked by the ties of quasi-brotherhood. It was presided over by a single landlord who assumed a kind of patriarchal authority over its members.

All this was followed by the next phase: the reunion of families. With the intensification of the migrant's social relationship in Britain, it became imperative for a man to reunite with his wife and children. This, however, had a serious drawback as it hindered the sole purpose of migration - it reduced the rate of saving. The presence of a wife and children implied that the living expenditure would increase and with the passage of time, the pattern of expenditure also underwent a transformation. Competition for status and prestige intensified and migrants began to spend more on furnishing and equipping their houses. With settled life style it also became important to celebrate the life cycle rituals in Britain. Kin networks were reconstituted which in turn fostered traditional expectations

and obligations. This was a complete reversal to the situation prevailing in the 1950's when all male households were widespread, elaborate spending and search for prestige was restricted by their inner motive to save money and remit it to their homeland. Moreover, it was even assumed that the influence of British culture would morally degenerate their wives and daughters. This process of reunion very soon gained momentum and Ballard & Ballard, while conducting their fieldwork in Leeds in 1971 mention that they hardly met a Sikh family in Leeds that was not reunited. In sharp contrast the Bangladeshi and Pakistani all male house hold was quite common. A number of reasons can be attributed for these differences, the most important being that they greatly emphasize on *Purdah*, the seclusion of women. They were highly concerned about the exposure their womenfolk would be subjected to once they arrived in Britain (Ballard, R & Ballard, C: 1977).

1970's witnessed the emergence of a second generation: the British born, or at least the British educated children of Immigrant parents. During this period the character of Sikh settlement was changing subtly. Roger Ballard and Catherine Ballard in their study conducted in Leeds highlight that the sphere of employment had undergone change and there was a strong tendency to discard the lower rungs of hierarchy. Sikh women, as opposed to their Muslim counterparts, began to go out to work. Sikh children, especially the boys were encouraged to continue their education as it was viewed as a means to climb up the ladder of social hierarchy. There was also a growing tendency to exhibit a change in the housing pattern. Cheap terraced houses in the inner city areas were replaced by the semi-detached houses in the northern suburbs. Punjabi network of hospitality tightened and their commitment to Punjabi social and moral values intensified even if

they were adopting themselves to the 'western' material and social standards. This however, led to the young being socialized in two very different cultures, at home and at school. The question of crucial importance here is that how were these youngsters managing to resolve the contradictions between these two cultures and what were the mechanisms adopted by them to sustain their Punjabi ethnicity. In response to this, the second generation young Sikhs in Leeds resorted to exploring and evolving various behaviour patterns. There was general acceptance that they should reform and modify their parents' values, rather than abandoning them completely. The idea of 'becoming English' was completely rejected by the youth. As one of the respondent informed Ballard & Ballard:

*"I've learned to be two different people. I'm quite different when I'm away at college with English people than when I'm here with my family and my Punjabi friends. I'm so used to switching over that I don't even notice. I don't have any trouble getting along with English people, but I suppose that though that I'm really Punjabi at heart. Sometimes I get really depressed when I'm at college. I long to go home and be Indian."*

The Punjabi youth very skillfully managed making multiple presentations of self to counter racial discrimination in all walks of life. There was bitter awareness among them that being coloured was a major disadvantage. Their non-acceptance in the British society led them to assert separate ethnicity. (Ballard & Ballard: 1977).

## **PATTERNS OF POST WAR MIGRATION**

The end of the Second World War left Britain short of domestic labor, to meet growing indigenous demand. This gap was filled in primarily by the immigration from the New

Commonwealth countries and Pakistan. The pattern of arrival of immigrants to the United Kingdom has been greatly influenced by a series of Acts of Parliament and associated White Papers which have appeared since the Second World War (Croopley : 1983).

Under the British Nationality Act of 1948, citizens of the British Commonwealth were allowed to enter Britain, to seek work and settle here with their families. Some took the opportunity to do so. Caribbeans were the earliest to come, but were soon followed by South Asians – Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (Pilkington: 2003). Immigration from the Indian subcontinent to United Kingdom peaked in 1961 because of the anxieties generated by the news that the government was about to bring in a bill to restrict the entry of people from India and Pakistan. In such a situation of crisis, Sikhs in particular, started sending for their families before the bill came into operation. The first Immigration Act was passed in 1962 and took away from all Commonwealth citizens the automatic right to enter the United Kingdom except for those issued with vouchers. Immigration from the Indian subcontinent after 1962 became highly selective; teachers, doctors, engineers and scientists were issued vouchers in increasingly large numbers. Three types of vouchers were:

- A) For those with specific jobs to come
- B) For those who possessed specific skills
- C) For unskilled workers (Ghuman:1994).

Post 1962 saw the immigration of mainly independent professionals. These included doctors, engineers and scientists who have been educated at prominent universities at their country of origin, and who have the technical and social skills on which to capitalize

in their country of adoption. They fall into the category of migratory elite. They have a good command over English; have been westernized to a degree and come from main cities such as Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore. (Ghuman: 2003). During the 1990's new patterns of migration developed. Since then temporary migrant skilled workers were encouraged to come to United Kingdom by formalizing work permits.

### **CAUSES OF MIGRATION**

What caused some people from India to migrate to Britain after the Second World War? The answer to this question can perhaps be sought in the various explanations put forward by different scholars. Agnihotri, while discussing Sikh migrants in England, brings into light some evidence to show that the Sikhs constitute the single largest portion of Indian Immigrant population in Britain. The 1971 census of Great Britain reveals that the total number of Indian immigrants in Britain at that time was 322,670. In 1963, Desai's estimation highlights another important fact. The study reveals that the Punjabis constituted the majority of migrants from India and that their number was 4/5<sup>th</sup> of the total Indian migrants. Now, the question which looms large is that what caused Sikhs to migrate more than any other Indian community? The plausible explanations can perhaps lie in their historical, religious and cultural background. The Sikhs are known for their highly adventurous spirit and their capability to mould the most adverse situation or circumstance to their advantage. Several studies e.g. Aurora (1967), Shamsheer (1952), Ballard (1973) and Eames and Robboy (1978) have shown how the Sikhs have come up with various strategies and alternatives to maintain their identity and at the same time make the most out of the available environment. Another reason which explains why the

Sikhs from Punjab were most prone to migration was the pressure created on the available land because of the partition of India in 1947 which rendered many young hands superfluous. In such a situation, the hardworking Sikhs of Punjab started exploring new avenues of employment and economic growth. Fortunately, this section of the Indian population acted as a supply to Britain's growing demand for manual labour in the wake of Britain's industrial boom. During the 1950's and 1960's the need for unskilled labour in Britain was huge, and in such a scenario, migrants were thought to be beneficial to the economy. Moreover, during the British rule in India, the Sikhs served the army in large numbers. Later, they even helped the British in the construction of railway in Uganda and Kenya. During the course of construction, the British perceived them as honest, hard working and well-built. Aurora (1967) points out a how a laborious Sikh factory worker proved his worth and paved way for various fellowmen from India. He mentions that within a few years 40% of the labour force of the Woolf rubber factory was comprised of mainly Indians. Today, a substantial number of Sikhs are settled in major cities of Britain. (Agnihotri: 1987) The great majority of Sikh migrants have come from the Jullundur Doab, one of the most densely populated parts of the region. Migration to United Kingdom began not as a response to rural poverty, but rather it was guided by status competition. (Ballard, R & Ballard, C: 1977)

The Sikhs in Britain are a heterogeneous lot. The *twice migrants* who migrated to Britain from East Africa also constitute a significant minority. The early first generation settlers who migrated from rural Punjab are now quite urbanized, owing it greatly to their length of stay in the U.K. Bhachu's anthropological fieldwork (1982-84) on 35 Sikh families in London and West Midlands shows that the British Sikh population is also stratified along

caste and class lines. Her sample includes Khatri, Ramgharia and Jats. The former two groups traditionally were from a non agricultural background in India, unlike the Jats, were mainly urban based. (McLeod, 1976:98).The Ramgharias and the Khatri have always stressed on the need to acquire formal education, as this was viewed by them as the only means for occupational mobility, as opposed to the Jats who hailing from rural Punjab, later realized its importance. Consequently, both in India and in East Africa the former two groups occupied seats in public sector employment as well as in business. This employment pattern has been replicated in Britain. The Jats lagged behind in terms of access to secondary and higher education and thus tended to seek employment in skilled and unskilled workers in factories and heavy industry. (Gibson & Bhachu: 1986).

The causes of migration of people from one country to another are several, but scholars such as Watson (1979) and Anwar (1979) explain this phenomenon under the category of 'push and pull factors'. Push factors refer to those which encourage people to leave their country of origin and pull factors refer to those which encourage people to come other developed economies. The major push factors may include population upheaval brought through war, persecution, famine or acute shortage. It may also relate to poor opportunities in the country of origin. This, by and large does not explain a mechanical relation between the degree of poverty and emigration. It has been observed that mostly people with some wealth and from areas with a tradition of migration fall into this category. It was not seen as a method of economic emancipation rather, it was a mode of advancement for a section of people who already had carved out a social identity for themselves. Eisenstadt stresses upon the fact that every migratory movement is motivated by the migrant's feeling of some kind of inadequacy or insecurity in his place of origin.

The major pull factors are rather commonsensical ones. People have always migrated from one place to another to seek opportunities to improve their economic and socio-cultural level. Encouragement given to the citizens of other countries by the receiving society through the prospects of better jobs, housing and recreation also fall into the category of pull factors. [Pilkington: 2003]

Badr Dahya (1988), in his study of South Asians as economic migrants in Britain speaks of economically motivated migrants, whose migration is not just guided by short term benefits. They migrate not just to obtain a job or earn a livelihood; rather, they are interested in long term benefits and prosperity. Their motive is not just enjoying a higher standard of living, but they see their jobs as a means of enhancing status mobility in British society. In his study he interviewed Gujaratis Sikhs and Muslims from India analyzing each respondent's case history. The socio-economic characteristics and a brief biographical sketch of each respondent are as follows:

A) Gujarati: No data on year/place of birth, or education.

Traditional occupation: Jeweller, worked as an assistant in father's brother's jewellery shop in Bombay.

Came to Britain: 1955

B) Sikh: born 1931, Amritsar, Education: matric

Father was jute merchant, moved with father's family to Delhi but lacked means for further studies. Worked as a cashier in a glass factory, was transferred to Bombay as assistant manager, and then migrated to South East Asia where worked as manager and studied part-time, obtained M.Com. (Master of Commerce)

Came to Britain: 1961



C) Punjabi: born 1929, Ludhiana. Father's occupation: school head

Went to live with father's brother in East Africa where he received secondary education, qualified as a teacher.

Came to Britain: 1964.

D) Indian Muslim: born 1934. Education: B.Sc., LL.B., B.Ed.

Came to Britain: 1966 for further studies but failed to get admission to a university.

E) Punjabi: born 1935. No education. Family was too poor to send him to school Went to Assam in 1947 to join a fellow – villager who was a tailor. Eventually opened own tailoring business there.

Came to Britain: 1963.

F) Indian Muslim: born 1935. Education: B.Com. Wanted to read law but lacked means.

Came to Britain: 1963.

G) Sikh: born 1944, Lyallpur, migrated to Jullunder in 1947. Education: matric.

Came to Britain: 1963.

Reasons for migration:

**A** migrated because of his deep interest in jewellery as a craft (which is his traditional occupation), he came over to increase his knowledge and skills.

**B** migrated for economic betterment

**C** migrated to give his children better education

**D** migrated to acquire training in industrial chemistry

**E** too migrated for economic betterment

**F** migrated for further studies

**G** once again migrated for economic betterment

The reasons according to Dahya(1988) are too general and to ascertain interesting findings from the above sample Dahya explores individual case studies and follows up each respondent's career to trace his socio-economic journey.

**A** - worked as a labourer but detested it and so became determined to take up training as a food inspector in Kent. Passed the various examinations, worked as a food inspector for a couple of years and got posted to London. After he had settled down in his new post, began working as a jeweler in his spare time and when he had become established as a successful part-time jeweler, he gave up his job and now has a jewellery business in Hatton Garden.

**B** - took up a factory job in order to earn a living and to save money. It was a humiliating experience for him to have to work with 'illiterate' (sic) native labourers and this caused him considerable stress but there was no alternative except to endure it with patience. He struggled hard and within six months was able to buy a house and was gradually able to save a substantial amount of money. In 1970, that is, within a decade of his arrival here, he was able to open a fashionable clothing store which had turned out to be a successful enterprise.

**C** - came to Britain via East Africa where he was able to qualify as a school teacher. He has worked in that capacity since then and his family ran a tobacconist/ confectioner's shop. He was very fortunate that he was able to get the job for which he had been trained.

**D** - came to acquire training in industrial chemistry. In view of his educational qualifications (B.Sc., LL.B., B.Ed.) he spent one whole year looking for a teaching post but was unsuccessful. With the help of a Gujarati Muslim ( he is a Gujarati Muslim himself), who was a garment machinist, they formed a partnership business in which the

friend made garments while he went around as a salesman and made good progress. Now they own a garment factory which produces all kinds of casual wear.

**E** - whilst he was running a tailoring business in Assam, his Jullunduri friends in Britain used to write to him, describing life in England in most alluring terms, to wit as *jannat-e-be-nazir* (the incomparable paradise). So he decided to come over and joined them in 1963. He went to the west Midlands and was unemployed for some time. Then he managed to get a job in a carpenter's workshop and a few months later he found a job as a cutter in a tailor's shop in Birmingham. Later moved to London to work as a tailor and then went into partnership with a friend and the two set up a garment factory which is very successful.

**F** – came over to study economics and commerce. Worked as a clerk in an English firm and attended evening classes. One Sunday morning he happened to visit Middlesex Street where he came across a stall with some brass handicraft goods from Muradabad. He was struck by the number of customers buying them that he there and then decided to take up his Traditional occupation which is that of *maniyar* (a caste whose members make and sell bracelets, bangles beads and jewellery) for he is well acquainted with the buying and selling of handicrafts made of brass, ivory and sandalwood. With that goal in mind, he started to save as much as he could in order to raise capital and he now runs a flourishing handicraft business.

**G** – Worked as a motor mechanic in a factory for seven years. Now runs a travel agency in partnership with a friend, a Punjabi, who has an M.A from an Indian university (Dahya: 1988).

Ghazala Bhatti in her book *'Asian Children at Home and at School'* has discussed the South Asian pattern of migration and their myth of return. Her ethnographic study in Cherrytown, U.K revealed that the real motive behind migration was twofold. These two ideas were interconnected. In the first place they wanted to improve their own life chances and secondly, they were quite hopeful of their children's future in Britain. The educational system of Britain seemed to be very promising for the new immigrants.

*"Each migration was an 'economic migration'. None of them were political refugees. Neither was it a cultural migration in that the parents did not come with any desire to copy the western styles of life. They migrated because there were better employment opportunities available to them in Britain than there had been in their own countries, which were once British colonies. Their arrival in the 1960's and later was a direct outcome of the need for unskilled and semi-skilled labour in Britain."*

*(Bhatti: 1999)*

One Migrant who had come to Britain said that he had come here for *'better education and a better future'*. Others came here because means of earning a living in their countries of origin was eroded. Most of the respondents performed manual labour. Several respondents admitted that they were paid less than what their white counterpart was being paid for the same job. At the same time they felt that they had no choice, but to work to fulfill the economic needs of his family back home. One of the respondent commented:

*"There were more jobs here for illiterate men once, and now you got good money, say compared to what you could get in India."*

*(Mr. H.Singh: 26, Translated from Punjabi, taped interview)*

## CHAIN MIGRATION

As the name suggests chain migration takes place through an established network of family members, kinsmen, relatives and sometimes through friends. For instance Ghuman cites an example of the eldest son of the family coming to England and establishing and then arranging for his brother's passage, who in turn sponsors his wife's brother and so on. Ghuman has also drawn attention to a vivid account of this process from a Hindu graduate, now a bus driver.

*"I came to England in 1959. Got a job as a bus conductor, I worked overtime and made 30 pounds a week on average- a lot of money at that time. I spent 5 pounds on food and rent and saved the rest. Some I sent home and the rest went on a house deposit; I could rent out rooms then. I contacted a dalal and paid 300 pounds for my brother's immigration. Altogether it cost me 600 pounds but it was worth it. He joined me in 1962. Then I managed to have four more relatives join me here in Birmingham. I also helped them to get jobs in foundries. They all have done well." (Ghuman: 1994)*

Chain migration gave rise to a specific settlement pattern as well. This process ensured that the migrants settle along family, village, caste and religious lines. A Sikh teacher reports:

*"I came to my relative in Handsworth near Soho Road in 1959. To start with I shared a room with him. Later I got my own room but on the same road. He got me a job in a foundry in Smethwick. Handsworth was becoming very much like a Punjabi town at home." (Ghuman: 1994)*

Bath (1972) also conducted a study on the Punjabis from India. He analyzed their spatial pattern of settlement and found out that the house ownership pattern was quite similar to that of a Punjabi village scene. Bhai-Chara (kith and kin), religious and caste affiliations played a very important role in guiding the purchase of houses. Moreover, living in close proximity to their kith and kin provided them with a lot solace, security and continuity.

A close analysis of the migration pattern also reveals that prior to 1960's it was only males, young to middle aged who made United Kingdom their destination. They lived in all male households to cut down their accommodation expenditure. Primarily, their aim was to save as much money as they could and send it back to their family living in India. This saved money was also used to pay for the passage of other relatives as well. A narrative from a Hindu bus conductor throws light on this situation:

*“When I arrived in Birmingham in 1958 I had to share a room with another person. Rates were 10 shillings (50 pence) for a shared bed (i.e. on shift work basis), one pound for a shared room usually for three to four people and two pound for a room. Then we had to pay for our communal ‘langar’ (cooking) and take turns to make chapattis and cook vegetable and lentil curries. I could save fifteen pounds a week. It was a lot of money at that time. My other experience was a few pints of beer over weekends. Life was routine and dull. I did as much overtime as I could get. There was only ‘lino’ on the floor and very occasionally ‘Gymna’ (landlord) would light a coal fire in the dining room. So it was always cold in the house. For our baths we had to go to the public baths near Handsworth*

*Park. It used to be freezing cold in winter. We listened to Punjabi folk music and Hindi pop a lot."*

## **EAST AFRICAN ASIANS**

It is important to discuss another category of Indians who immigrated to Britain between the mid 1960's and early 1970's from East Africa mostly from Uganda, Kenya and Malawi. They are the descendents of indentured labourers hired in 1896 to build railways in Uganda for the imperial British East Africa Company (Ghuman: 1994). According to Mattausch, the majority of the migrants from East Africa were from the Gujarati community. They are mainly Hindus and they comprise the largest component (some three-fifth) of the wider British Gujarati community which now numbers some half a million people. This community in contemporary Britain is no longer viewed as political subjects, but are rather prosperous and successful citizens in Britain. In fact, they have made remarkable economic and cultural progress, and have occupied the position of one of the wealthiest ethnic minority community. At the cultural level too, their presence is greatly felt (Mattausch: 1998). Verma and Darby (2002) put forward a different view. According to them, the East African Asians were mainly Sikhs of the Ramgharia caste, though there were some Hindus and Muslims, and they remained in Africa for over 70 years, during which many rose to occupy middle class positions in African society (Verma and Darby: 2002). Ghai (1965) suggests that 36% were in executive, administrative and managerial positions, about 25% were skilled workers, another 25% were in Secretarial / clerical occupations and 15% were in professional or technical posts. The turmoil of emergent independent African states in the 1950's followed in the 1960's

by the development of Africanisation policies, made it impossible for them to retain, and many, particularly those who had been employed in the public sector and were therefore most powerfully affected, migrated to Britain in the mid- 1060's (Verma and Darby: 2002).

The experience of being twice migrant had a number of significant effects on their social and economic trajectory following their arrival. [Bhachu: 1985]. She summarizes these as follows:

‘They were already a part of an established community in East Africa, where there had developed considerable community skills prior to migration.

They moved from urban East Africa to Urban Britain, having being concentrated in a handful of towns in East Africa.

They were mainly public sector workers.

They were technically skilled because of early recruitment policies in Africa. Despite their absence from India for over 70 years and the lack of home orientations they had maintained many of the values and traditions they held when they first migrated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

They arrived in Britain with a considerable command of mainstream skills (i.e. language, education and familiarity with urban institutions and bureaucratic processes), and also a certain amount of capital which made them relatively prosperous.’

This group of migrants was a different lot in exhibiting settlement and social issues. They entered Britain with their complete family, so the question of family reunion, or longing to go back to their homeland did not exist. They knew that their arrival into Britain was not short lived and they were to leave a mark on the British society. Another feature



which distinguished this migrant community from the other ethnic minorities entering Britain at that time was that they did not form settlement patterns which were concentrated into particular areas. They rather displayed the dispersal tendency and did not feel the need to live in close vicinity of their kins and relatives.

### **SOCIO – CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS**

The relationship between the minority and majority group members is summarized by Khan (1979) by a lucid concept of opposing forces in social life: the processes of *support* and *stress*. This simple construct proposed by Khan allows us to explore the various meanings of these processes and the many levels on which they operate. This is a realistic approach to probe into the complexities and ambiguities of social life of an immigrant. According to Khan (1979), in ordinary language, *“the term ‘support’ conjures up notions of strength and help. Things and people or circumstances and experiences which are ‘supportive’ are either physical (material and human) resources or provide psychological reassurance. ‘Stress’, on the other hand, implies feelings and processes suggested by terms such as tension, uncertainty, confusion, isolation and experiences of people or groups.”*

The support mainly arises from personal ties such as friends, family and close relatives. Outside forms of support are mostly rejected by the minority groups. The main types of stress for ethnic minorities in Britain are those culminating from the nature of migration process and the settlement process, including culture contact and discrimination. Situations of stress may also arise from the repercussions of cultural and/or racial minority status in the British society. Both support and stress have been discussed by

Khan (1979) at different levels of social life. First, there is the support and stress of states of mind. This level primarily deals with questions of identity, self-image, world view and value systems. At this level the value system helps one to deal with internal conflict and structure events in a meaningful configuration which would add continuity of meaning. A strongly rooted value system is immensely supportive: it provides a degree of certainty and predictability in daily life.

Dhooleka (2003) in her book 'Where are you from? Middle class migrants in the modern world' has explored the complexities of ethnic minority cultural change faced by the first and second generation Middle class Punjabi Hindu families living in London. During her fieldwork, she learned that questions of ethnicity and socio-cultural adjustments loomed large. Explicit questions pertaining to identity – 'Where are you from?' – were perpetually asked of migrants and their children. This seemingly simple question definitely has deeper meanings. It is a question of ethnicity and difference, especially when the identity connections between people and places are in a problematic equation. A young Hindu Punjabi man commented on the derogatory connotations of this question. He stated:

*'I go back to India, and I'm a stranger, and I accept that. But I'm still a stranger here too.'*

This comment provides us with a useful insight into how Indians in Britain experience alterity in both Indian and Britain (Dhooleka: 2003).

Amongst the various respondents interviewed by Dhooleka, Uncle Prem's early experience in Britain is worth mentioning. He came to Britain in 1952 and is now retired from his management job with a major multinational industrial company. He has been

economically successful. His memory of the initial days when he worked on the shop floor is documented below:

*'At the time when in came only four or five people were here, like me only a few people were here. From Tilbury to Aldgate maybe four, five people. So hardly see any Indians around 'here. And that was really a tough time. You can't get accommodation at that time to live somewhere else. I become lucky; for three months it was a hell of a time. Then, after that, I had my own house, which was good for me.'*

Uncle Prem and other men of his generation often encountered difficulties and faced racism when trying to look for an accommodation or a job. Housing was their first concern, but renting an accommodation was a tough task since most of the advertisements would clearly state, 'No Blacks allowed'. The whites shut the doors on their faces and tell that the seat was occupied but later allow a white in to see the place.

Similarly, Sen (2006) recollects some of the fondest memories of his initial days in Cambridge when he first came here as a student in 1953. In his book 'Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny' he admits that how worried his first landlady in Cambridge was about the possibility that his skin colour might come off in the bath. For this he had to assure her that the colour of his skin was durable and would not wash off while bathing.

Earlier migration of Indians to U.K was mainly restricted. It was only the single men who first arrived in Britain. Their families were left back at home. As a consequence, their social adjustment in Britain was a difficult process. They lacked the support of near and dear ones. The stability, support and companionship of the family and kind were missing.

However, later these ties were strengthened when the migrants began to participate in primary group relationships with their own countrymen who spoke the same language and shared the same religious beliefs. To this Richmond (1973) comments that 'successful adaptation to life in a new country must involve the creation of new channels of communication and the extension of social participation beyond the primary group'. Upon arrival to a new country, the motive of the migrant is clear. What is not clear is perhaps certain expectations which the migrant has from the new country of opportunities. Within the new social structure, certain demands are made upon the immigrants which may or may not be compatible with the aspirations of the migrants themselves (Richmond: 1973).

Bhatti's (1999) ethnography reveals some interesting findings. Mostly the women migrants shared a deep sense of nostalgia about the country they had left behind. Later, when they were joined in by their relatives such as their parents, brothers and sisters in Britain they heaved a sigh of relief. Their arrival provided them with a sense of security and stability in a new land. Also, when families went back home, women on an average spent more time than their male counterparts. Getting back to the alien land was a pain for them. Some women even reported that getting back to Cherry town was problematic. One woman commented:

*"I get this bad headache whenever I come back. Must be something to do with this weather. When I go back to India, even in winter I'm fine!"*

(Mrs. H Kaur: 26, translated from Punjabi, field notes)

Mostly, women arrived later in Britain to join their men folk. Some came happily while others did not. One respondent reported:

*“You leave all your relations behind, your mother, father, brothers, sisters, friends.....all those who love you. It was so sad. I used to look out at the rain and cry. It is not easy to go away, so far away.”*

(Mrs. Mehmood: 36, translated from Punjabi, taped conversation)

## **LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES**

The majority of first generation immigrant from India hailed from a rural background having completed only few years of formal schooling in their mother tongue, and they were not proficient in either written or oral English. This definitely acted as an obstacle in establishing communication with the members of the host society. Perhaps, this is one of the main reasons for the formation of ethnic enclaves: Southall in England ( Little Punjab). [ Ghuman: 2003].When the migrant group is small in relation to the population of the host society, the pressure on it to adapt to the prevailing situation and to comply with the expectations of the minority group is extremely strong. The host society has certain distinct cultural characteristics. For instance, having a different language or dialect different from that of the migrant group may give rise to related problems of communication. A quote from a Muslim immigrant worker from Birmingham explains this further (translated from Punjabi in Ghuman, 1994:18-19)

*“The real problem was ‘baat’- language. I felt helpless, a fool and terribly confused. I got a job through my friends and everything has to be done through this English speaking boy. That’s why I stayed with my relatives. Got on the same bus, bought ‘ration’ (food) from the same shop and that was it. Ya Allah! How much I suffered. Now my children can*

*Speak English- the danger is that they won't speak our language. But it was hard to go to doctor or hospital. When it came to buying my house I was entirely at the mercy of this young boy. Then we had to pay bills – those were terrible times.*

Indian women had tougher time surviving in Britain with a language deficiency. Coping with the day to day activities was always fraught with difficulty. A Hindu woman from Birmingham commented:

*"I joined my husband in 1967 along with kids. We came in January. It was very cold. But kids 'pitta ji' (her husband) lit a coal fire so it was alright. The real 'Khasum nu Khani' (damn) problem was English. I was like deaf-mute, couldn't do shopping, talk to the milkman or go to the doctor. My husband had to take me everywhere – who spoke English. A short while after a lady from the University came to my house once a week to teach me English. 'Jhinde Rahe' (may she live long) she taught me a lot in two years. Then I went to her house once a week for six months. Still now I find it difficult to explain my ailments to the specialist. My angina was not diagnosed – he said it was arthritis – that wretched language has caused me so much distress. I don't fully understand TV programmes and still can't read English newspapers."*

The above discussion throws light on the fact that the initial migrants faced a lot of hardships in terms of striking a fine balance between their own beliefs and culture and

simultaneously adjusting to the demands of the host society. In all walks of their lives they were faced with socio-cultural handicaps. In spite of the hardships, the Indians as a community have shown great perseverance and have carved a special place for themselves in the British society. The second and third generations Indians also face racism and discrimination in the society, but they have developed alternating identities to deal skillfully in this multicultural world, where they happen to occupy a subordinate position. In the educational arena too they are faced with such problems. Despite difficulties, the Indians have shown great progress in terms of educational achievement at schools. The next chapter emerges from this perspective where the educational achievement of Indian children at school has been discussed.

#### **SUMMARY:**

This chapter has briefly overviewed the changing nature of the British society in the wake of large scale international migration which began as early as 1920's. The arrival of widely different groups from former colonies has made Britain a more ethnically diverse society. These groups share one thing in common—they differ in skin colour from the White indigenous population and consequently have been subjected to discrimination on account of being defined as racially different. Also, the discussion has taken into account the causes, nature, pattern and trends of Indian migration to Britain within a socio-historical framework. This chapter also helps to repair the inadequacies in current understanding of the significance of the Indian presence in Britain. It has been shown in the chapter that their background is far more complex and varied than what is commonly assumed. The enormous migratory flows have largely been determined by the

developments at the global economic level. Migration of people from India to Britain is now long established, though the movement began in the colonial period. The issues dealt in the chapter are simultaneously economic, political, local and global.



## CHAPTER – 3

### EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF INDIAN ORIGIN: EVIDENCE ON PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT

The experiences of ethnic minority children in British schools are well documented and have been a subject of many research reports and studies. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to examine evidence, mainly from secondary sources, on educational performance and some aspects of the experience of ethnic minority students at school, especially focusing on Indian students in particular. Also, qualitative and quantitative analysis explaining the educational achievement/underachievement of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils would feature in this chapter.

Migration of people to Britain from countries of the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean from 1950's onwards resulted in a range of pupils whose backgrounds were considered to be both culturally and ethnically different arriving in British schools. Since then the education system in Britain has geared to adapt to changes which are necessary in the creation of a stable multiracial, multicultural society by successfully incorporating the ethnic minority children into the schools. The majority of immigrants were from rural middle class strata and obviously less educated. For instance, Ballard (1982, 1990) reported how the Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrants have tended to come from the rural districts of Sylhet and Mirpur respectively – both areas of limited economic development. Many of the parents from these rural areas did not have a tradition of education in their background (education was not compulsory, and children often had to work alongside their families in agricultural areas) and lacked skills suited to an urban environment. In

comparison, the Indians are a more professionally qualified and commercially experienced group (possessing greater marketable skills for an industrial society) came from the Punjab and Gujarat in India – both very prosperous regions. Also, within this context, the educational level of parents was positively related with high educational aspirations from their children. It was even testified that higher the level of education of the parents, the greater was the academic attainment of the children (Kannan: 1978). Thus, Indian parents attached high educational aspirations with their children. Researchers have found that people of Indian origin generally hold education in high regard both for its ‘potential wisdom’ and its resultant occupational and social mobility (Bhachu: 1985)

It is therefore, essential in this context, to have a picture of the nature of education in multicultural Britain.

## **EDUCATION IN MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN**

British society is now an ethnically and culturally mixed society. It is composed of a number of distinct social, cultural, religious and linguistic groups and a change in its composition poses as a new reality for the education system as a whole. The education system does not operate in vacuum; rather it is influenced by the larger dominant culture and operates within its framework of specific attitudes, values and norms. The educational system in Britain too has followed this path. Its *monocultural* perspective is deeply embedded in its aims, objectives, curriculum, pedagogy and its assessment procedures of formal education. For example, Gajendra K. Verma, while discussing issues in multicultural education draws attention to the fact that the British syllabus of history,

geography, religious education, art and other subjects does not acknowledge other countries and cultures, particularly non-Western. They are often dismissed as 'primitive' and are of 'inferior' quality or are irrelevant (Pumfrey & Verma: 1988).

Racial forms of education in Britain have progressed through several distinct phases since the 1960's. The analytical framework which helps us to describe and periodize changes can be explained with the help of three categories- *Assimilation, Integration and Cultural Pluralism* (Troyna and Carrington 1990:20). The 1960's marks the onset of the process of assimilation. According to Troyna, in blunt terms assimilation refers to the process of becoming similar (Troyna: 1993, p.23). The racist convictions which characterize the assimilationist ideology were well reflected in the words of George Partiger, (former MP of Southall) in 1964:

*"I feel that Sikh parents should encourage their children to give up their turbans, their religion and their dietary laws. If they refuse to integrate then we must be tough. They must be told that they would be the first to go if there was unemployment and it should be a condition of being given National Assistance that the immigrants go to English classes".*

*(Troyna, 1982, p, 129)*

In '*the successful assimilation of the immigrant children*' (DES 1965, quoted in Willey 1984) the major obstacle to accomplish a good educational career was seen as the children's lack of proficiency in English language. Therefore, it was strongly recommended that English be taught as a second language to immigrant children at special centres. It was believed that if once this obstruction was vanquished, assimilation

of the immigrant pupil would be easily achieved. In this whole process, the immigrant children were seen as the problem. The following quote from the 1965 DES circular highlights this fact:

*It will be helpful if the parents of non-immigrant children can see that practical measures have been taken to deal with the problem in the schools, and that the progress of their own children is not being restricted by the undue preoccupation of the teaching staff with the linguistic and other difficulties of immigrant children (DES 1965, quoted in Willey 1984:22) (Pilkington: 2003).*

Assimilationist ideas which dominated the socio-political scenario during the 1960's in Britain prompted the development of *Monocultural Education* (Troyna: 1993). The assumption was that the cultural values of the minority would and should disappear and that minorities would with time merge in with the indigenous population (Bhachu: 1985). Troyna mentions that the aim of such an educational framework was to encourage 'them' to be like 'us'. Monocultural Education then meant the suppression and deprecation of ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences. Assimilationist tendency which was reflected in the discourse of monocultural education later prompted the framing and implementation of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) (Troyna: 1993).

This phase was followed by the Integrationist framework prevalent during the 1970's and eventually leading to the setting up of the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration which officially inquired into the causes of underachievement of children of West Indian origin (Swann 1985:216). Bhachu states that "this framework was less overtly racist with its guiding principle of *unity through diversity*. Whereas minority

cultures were rejected in the first approach, in the second there was a belief that they should be accommodated at least at a minimum level in the school curriculum". This can be analyzed in the light of the initiative taken by the government to increase the educational attainment level of the ethnic minority pupil. Later, it was even argued that their lower attainment and performance level could not be just attributed to the type of schools the ethnic minority children attended, but rather it was the ethnocentric bias of the school curriculum. The most influential proponent of this view was R. Jeffcoate. (1979)

The 1977 Green Paper *Education in Schools – A consultative Document*, produced under a Labour government very clearly government expectations of the role of the curriculum in a new kind of British society.

*'Our society is a multi-cultural and multi-racial one and the curriculum should reflect a sympathetic understanding of the different cultures and races that now make up our society. We also live in a complex inter-dependent world and many of our problems in Britain require international solutions; the curriculum should therefore reflect our need to know about and understand other countries.'* [DES, 1977, p. 41]

Lastly, Cultural Pluralism emerged which advocated a form of multicultural education which was aimed for all pupil. For a pluralist society is one 'which enables, expects and encourages members of all ethnic groups, both minority and majority, to participate fully in shaping the society as a whole within a framework of commonly accepted values, practices and procedures, whilst also allowing and, where necessary, assisting the ethnic

minority communities in maintaining their distinct ethnic identities within their common framework' (Swann, 1985: 5).

According to Bhachu, "The *multicultural* approach which developed later was based on the assumption that, if the curriculum was to reflect minority cultures, it would as a result help to create a positive image in the black pupil and also encourage greater understanding amongst white pupil. This would in turn result in mutual tolerance. Hence, recognition of problems of the minority pupils (particular attention was given to the children of immigrants from the Caribbean) and of their academic underachievement led to the formation of multicultural education, based on the concept of cultural pluralism, which advocates awareness, understanding and tolerance of cultural differences. This is particularly clear from one proponent of this view, Eric Bolton (1979), an HMI who has written 'the emergence of a second generation of black pupils in British schools has symbolized the weakness of both the assimilationist and integrationist ideas, which were considered patronizing and dismissive towards other cultures and lifestyles' (ibid.:5). Cultural pluralism is also seen as a response to the desire by minorities to maintain their cultural values. As a result cultural pluralism evolved as a system that accepts that people's values and lifestyles are different and operate in such a way as to allow equal opportunity for all to play a full part in society (ibid: 37)".

Pilkington [2003] mentions, that the policy response to the education of ethnic minority as a matter of course has not been adequately dealt with, neither has it generated a steady progress in the field of equality in education. Introduction of an official policy like multicultural education is not congruent with what Tomlinson (1990a:169) calls "*educational nationalism, a discourse which seeks to preserve British culture in the face*

*of threats from 'alien' cultures and claim that ethnic minorities face no obstacles to assimilation".*

Because of different value systems of the home and school (in some domains) the South Asian young people encounter difficulties at school which are not faced by their white counterparts (Anwar: 1998; Ghuman: 1994). In addition, they have to face the racism of British society which manifests itself in many different ways (Modood *et al.*, 1997).

The term Asian is a misnomer. In most of the literature reviewed 'Asians' are treated as a single category. However, this term can be misleading because the term has a set of sub-group connotations also attached to it. Earlier, this term indicated crude grouping, which quite clearly ignored a whole host of subgroups within these three main groupings. The grouping was made cruder still by combining all three groups into a single category 'Asian' (Mackintosh, Taylor & West: 1988). It is therefore wrong to use this term as a blanket category because it consists of mainly three sub-groups- Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. In assessing the educational achievement of the different ethnic minority groups, this becomes even more deceptive. For example a number of research reports have revealed that Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are the lowest achieving ethnic minority group in Britain. In contrast Indian children have been achieving at par with their white school mates. Thus, it is unfair to classify both the highest and the lowest achieving ethnic minority group in the same category – Asians (Kysel: 1988).

There has also been a tendency for educationists interested in ethnic minorities to make use of the term Asian, despite the fact that Asians can cover Punjabi Sikhs, Gujarati Hindus and Bangladeshi Bengali Muslims and other various diverse groups. Such generalizations have little relationship with reality, and can often generate misleading

impressions which could lead to the same generalized assumptions being made about the educational needs of Indian children at school (Ghuman & Gallop: 1981). To this M.A Barker commented in *New Society* (2.11.78):

*“To talk about Asians as a single category can be misleading and overlooks the existence of cultural sub- groups.” (p.274)*

There are various cultural sub-groups within Indians and a detailed understanding of the variations in the educational needs within different groups needs to be considered because the sub-cultural profile of migrant Indians often changes (Gallop & Ghuman: 1981).

It is in this light that the data below are presented to considerably illuminate the factors which explain differential educational achievement of the Indian, Pakistani and the Bangladeshi pupils.

## **PERFORMANCE, ACHIEVEMENT AND UNDERACHIEVEMENT**

Statistical data pertaining to the minority ethnic pupils in *primary* and *secondary* schools reveal that ethnic minority pupils comprised 11.8 percent of *primary* school pupils and 11.5 percent of secondary pupils in January 1999. The largest *minority ethnic groups*<sup>5</sup> in primary and secondary schools in England are Pakistanis and Indians (2.5 percent and 2.3 percent respectively). The greatest concentration of minority ethnic pupils in primary schools is in London, particularly in Inner London (where more than 50 percent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups). In Outer London, more than thirty percent of primary pupils are from a minority ethnic group. In Outer London, pupils of Indian origin form

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<sup>5</sup> minority ethnic group is defined throughout as ethnic groups excluding those defined as White British, unless otherwise stated



the largest non-white group. Within *secondary* schools, the non-white population of pupils in England as a whole is 11.5 percent. This proportion is again greater in Inner and Outer London. Outer London has a particularly high proportion of secondary school pupils of Indian origin. The largest minority ethnic groups in the West Midlands are the Indian and Pakistani groups (Race Research for the Future: 2000).

The minority ethnic primary school aged population in 2002<sup>6</sup> was 13.6 percent of the total primary school population. The provisional figure for 2003<sup>7</sup> reflects an increase, at 15.1 percent, but because of the use of new ethnicity codes in 2003, including the introduction of a 'Mixed' ethnicity<sup>8</sup> category direct comparisons between years must be treated cautiously. The minority ethnic secondary school aged population in 2002 was 12.1 percent of those classified by ethnicity at secondary schools. The provisional figure is for 2003 is 13.1 percent.

The national data for the year 2004 indicates that 17 percent of maintained school population in England was classified as belonging to a minority ethnic group. The minority ethnic population in the same year was 18 percent and 15 percent in primary and secondary school respectively (Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils).

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<sup>6</sup> Statistics of England: Schools in England 2002, (DfES).

<sup>7</sup> DfES Statistical First Release: Pupil characteristics and class sizes in Maintained schools in England, January 2003, provisional, SFR09/2003)

<sup>8</sup> In line with the National Census, new ethnicity categories were introduced optionally in 2002 and subsequently updated and implemented compulsorily in 2003)

**TABLE 3.1: Population statistics: Ethnicity distribution in England and by primary and secondary schools (2002 figures and 2003 provisional figures)**

	England 2001 figures	2002 figures	2003 provisional figures		
	%	% Pupils of compulsory school age and above			
	All ages	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
<b>White</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>86.4</b>	<b>87.9</b>	<b>84.9</b>	<b>86.9</b>
White British	-	-	-	82.2	84.4
Irish	1.3	-	-	0.4	0.4
Traveler of Irish Heritage	-	-	-	0.1	0
Gypsy/ Roma	-	-	-	0.1	0.1
Any other White background	-	-	-	2.1	2
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>1.3</b>	-	-	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>
White and Black Caribbean	0.5	-	-	1.1	0.7
White and Black African	0.2	-	-	0.3	0.2
White and Asian	0.4	-	-	0.6	0.4
Any other mixed background	0.3	-	-	1.1	0.7
<b>Asian</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6.5</b>
Indian	2.1	2.3	2.6	2.2	2.5
Pakistani	1.4	2.8	2.5	2.9	2.4
Bangladeshi	0.6	1.1	0.9	1.2	1
Any other Asian background	0.5	-	-	0.7	0.6
<b>Black</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Black Caribbean	1.1	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.5
Black African	1	1.7	1.3	1.9	1.4
Any other Black background	0.2	1	0.8	0.4	0.4
<b>Chinese</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Other ethnic group</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>Classified</b>		<b>3348263</b>	<b>3080760</b>	<b>3361700</b>	<b>3148000</b>
<b>Unclassified</b>		<b>56989</b>	<b>90913</b>	<b>111590</b>	<b>161100</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>49138831</b>	<b>3509012</b>	<b>3264086</b>	<b>3473200</b>	<b>3309200</b>

Sources: Census, April 2001, Office for National Statistics and Pupil Annual School Census (PLASC), 2002, 2003, DfES.

Table 3.1 shows the different age profile of minority ethnic groups in primary and secondary schools, and compared to the figures to the whole population of England. Pakistani children are the largest minority ethnic group in primary schools, with 2.8 percent in the year 2002 and 2.9 percent in the year 2003. But a contrasting trend is reflected when we consider the secondary school data. A dip in the percentage is revealed in the years 2002 and 2003 with 2.5 and 2.4 respectively. With regard to Indians, it can be asserted that there is a rise in percentage of secondary school pupils with respect to primary school pupils where former showing 2.3 percent and 2.2 percent and the latter showing 2.6 percent and 2.5 percent for the year 2002 and 2003 respectively. The data also reflects a younger age profiles of these ethnic minority groups (Bhattacharya, Ison & Blair 2003).

**TABLE 3.2: GCSE (General Certificate School Examination) attainments by ethnicity, in state schools, England and Wales, 1988, 1995 and 1997.**

Ethnic Group	Five or more higher grade passes (%)			Improvement (%)	
	1988	1995	1997	1995-97	1988-97
White	26	42	44	2	18
Black	17	21	28	7	11
Indian	23	44	49	5	26
Pakistani	20	22	28	6	8
Bangladeshi	13	23	32	9	19

*Source: YCS (Youth Cohort Study), adapted from Gillborn and Mirza (2000).*

Table 3.2 presents a comparison of changes in the attainment of five ethnic groups at GCSE level (grades A-C) between 1988 and 1997.

The data from the table illuminate the fact that the proportion of pupils attaining five or more higher-grade passes has increased in all ethnic groups since the introduction of the

GCSE. The Indian children show a remarkable rise in their attainment levels. Beginning from the year 1988, 1995 and 1997 the Indian pupils achieved 23 percent, 44 percent and 49 percent five or more higher grade passes respectively. The overall aggregate improvement for Indian pupils ranging over a span of nine years (1988 to 1997) shows optimistic results. The improvement percentage shows a total increase of 26 percent. The Indian pupils have performed exceedingly well, where they have shown almost double achievement level in a short span of seven years (1988-1995). Their attainment level increased from 23 percent in 1988 to 44 percent in 1995. This indeed is a noteworthy leap forward. Between the years 1995 and 1997 their percentage rose from 44 percent to 49 percent, which again is commendable achievement in a short span of two years.

In stark contrast to the Indian pupils is the performance of Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils at school. Where Indian pupils have reflected a sharp rise (almost double) in achievement in the first slot ranging from 1988 to 1995, The Pakistani pupils have performed miserably low. In a span of seven years, their attainment level has moved from 20 percent to 22 percent. They have exhibited a very meager increase of only 2 percent in this duration. The Bangladeshi pupils have shown a slightly better performance in the duration ranging from 1988 to 1995. In seven years, they have been able to register an increase from 13 percent in 1988 to 23 percent in 1995. Thus, they show an increase of 10 percent in this time span. From 1995 to 1997, the Bangladeshis again outperform the Pakistanis. While the Pakistanis only register an increase of 4 percent in two years (1995-1997), the Bangladeshis show an increase of 10 percent again in the same time span. The overall improvement percentage reveals that the Indian pupils outperform all other ethnic minority group, including the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis. The Indian pupils show a

total improvement of 26 percent, followed by the Bangladeshis who show a total increase of 19 percent. The Pakistani pupils show the lowest attainment level with a total increase of only 8 percent in a span of nine years.

The data produced by the Youth Cohort Study are significant. The most recent results from the 1997 confirm the finding of the Rampton and the Swann reports that Caribbean pupils are underachieving relative to White pupils but at the same time point to significant variability among Asian pupils, with Indians attaining better results than Whites but Pakistanis and Bangladeshis performing on a par with Black pupils (Pilkington:2003).

*“Indian pupils have made the greatest gains in the last decade: enough to take their white peers as a group.....Bangladeshi pupils have improved significantly but the gap between themselves and white youngsters is much the same.....African-Caribbean and Pakistani pupils have drawn least benefit from the rising levels of attainment: the gap between them and their white peers is now bigger than a decade ago.”*

*(Gillborn and Mirza: 2000, pp.14)*

The Youth Cohort Study enables us to analyze a nationally representative sample of young people not only by their ethnicity but also by gender and social class. Girls attain better results than boys. Also, in most ethnic groups, middle class pupils attained better results than working class pupils. When we compare pupils from different ethnic groups, after controlling the gender and social class variable, the results demonstrated that in 1995,

*“Indian pupils did best, followed by white, Pakistani/Bangladeshi and Black pupils respectively”*

*(Gillborn and Mirza: 2000, pp.26)*

Thus, by placing gender, class and ethnicity in a relative configuration, it has been observed:

*“The ethnic differences were larger than the gender differences and the social class differences were the largest of all.....We have to remember [however] that those ethnic groups with the lowest educational attainment (Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Blacks) are those with disproportionately large numbers in the lowest social class groups. Their problems are [therefore] ones of both race and social disadvantage”*

*(Demack et al. 2000:137-8)*

**Table: 3.3: Percentage of Pupils achieving the expected level at each Key Stage by Ethnic Group (2003)**

ETHNIC GROUP	KEY STAGE 1 % EXPECTED LEVEL			KEY STAGE 2: % EXPECTED LEVEL			KEY STAGE 3: % EXPECTED LEVEL			KEY STAGE 4: % EXPECTED LEVEL
	Reading	Writing	Maths	English	Maths	Science	English	Maths	Science	
<b>White</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>51</b>
White British	85	82	91	76	73	88	70	72	70	51
Irish	84	81	91	82	78	90	75	75	73	60
Traveler of Irish Heritage	28	28	52	23	19	36	49	49	45	42
Gypsy/Roma	42	38	60	30	27	48	33	35	35	23
Any other White background	80	78	89	74	72	84	66	70	65	52
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>49</b>
White and Black Caribbean	83	79	90	73	67	85	62	62	60	40
White and Black African	86	83	90	77	72	85	69	68	68	48
White and Asian	88	85	93	81	78	89	78	78	76	65
Any other mixed background	85	82	91	79	75	88	71	71	68	52
<b>Asian</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>53</b>
Indian	88	86	92	79	77	87	77	79	72	65
Pakistani	76	73	83	61	58	72	57	55	47	42
Bangladeshi	75	73	83	68	63	77	58	57	48	46
Any other	82	80	89	73	74	82	70	75	69	59

Asian background										
<b>Black</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>36</b>
Black Caribbean	79	74	84	68	59	78	66	53	51	33
Black African	77	73	83	67	62	75	56	55	60	41
Any other Black background	79	75	86	71	62	79	58	55	54	34
<b>Chinese</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>75</b>
Any other ethnic group	74	71	85	63	67	75	59	64	58	46
Unclassified	76	73	85	69	66	83	63	67	65	47
<b>App pupils</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>51</b>

*Source: National Curriculum Assessment and GCSE/GNVQ Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England, 2002 (final) and 2003 (provisional), Statistical First Release 04/2004.*

Attainment data in table 3 for the year 2003 shows a pattern of high achievement for Indians and Chinese pupils and lower achievement compared to the national average for Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupil. The key stage (footnote: There are four Key Stages and tests are taken at the end of each Key Stage, at ages: 7, 11, 14 and 16) 1 data reveals Indians to be performing much above the expected percentage level, with their scores in reading and writing being 88 percent and 86 percent, while the expected being 80 percent and 78 percent respectively. Both the skills show an increase of 8 percent in the achievement level than expected. In mathematics, Indian pupils have achieved 92 percent



whereas, the expected was 86 percent. Here again the Indian pupils show a jump of 6 percent in mathematical achievement.

The key stage 2 data reveals the expected English score being 69 percent, while the Indians achieved a 10 percent leap with their scores being 79 percent. Similarly, mathematical achievement has also shown a 10 percent rise with the expected being 67 percent and Indians scoring 77 percent. The science score enumerate Indians to be scoring 87 percent and the expected percentage being 79 percent.

From the data it can be inferred that the key stage 3 is a relatively tougher stage as compared to the key stage 1 and key stage 2 because the mean expected percentage level appears to be dipping. Moreover, once again The Indian pupils have maintained a high achievement level with their English, mathematics and science scores being 77, 79 and 72 percent respectively while the expected percentage level was 66, 66 and 59 percent. It can also be ascertained from that data that all the three subjects reflect a more than 10 percent rise in the achievement score as compared to the expected level.

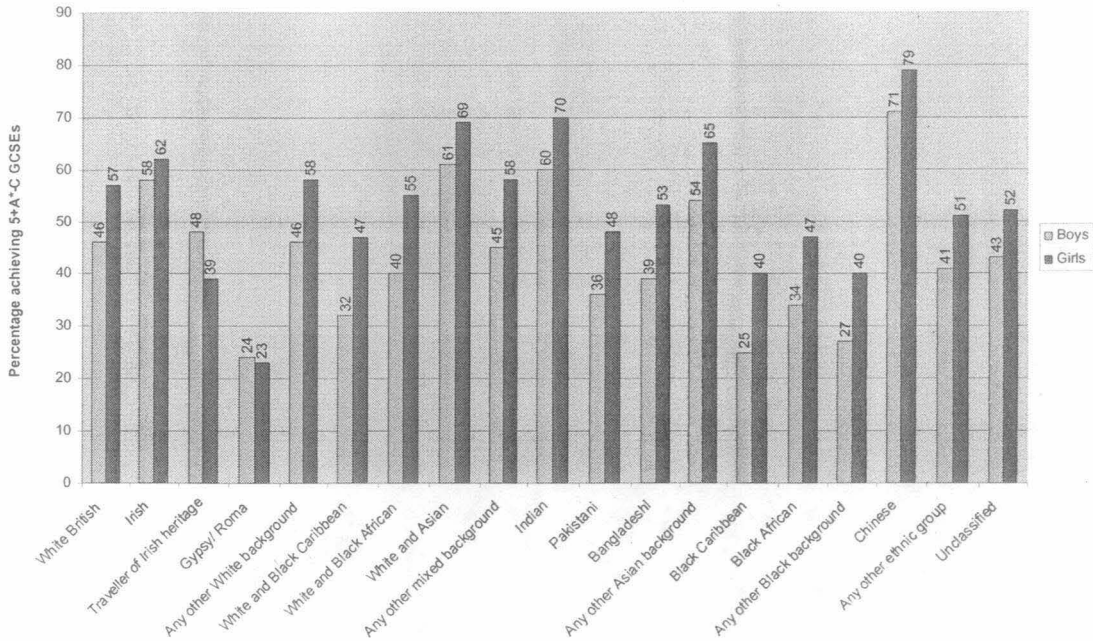
Attainment gap is defined here as the difference between groups in the percentage achieving the expected level at a Key Stage.

**Figure 3.1**

**Proportion of Pupils by Ethnic Group and Gender Achieving 5 + A\*-C GCSE/GNVQs (2003)**

National average for boys: 46%

National average for girls: 56%



Source: *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils*

Figure 3.1 indicates that the Indian boys and girls both perform much above the national average. Indian boys achieve 60 percent at GCSE which is 14 percent above the national average for them. Indian Girls too are way ahead of the national average. The Indian girls by achieving 70 percent cross the national average achievement by 14 percent. Overall, the Indian pupils at school perform remarkably well, outperforming their white British peers and just a little below the Chinese.

On the other hand the Pakistani pupils miserably lag behind. The Pakistani boys achieve much below the national average. Where the national average is 46 percent for boys, they

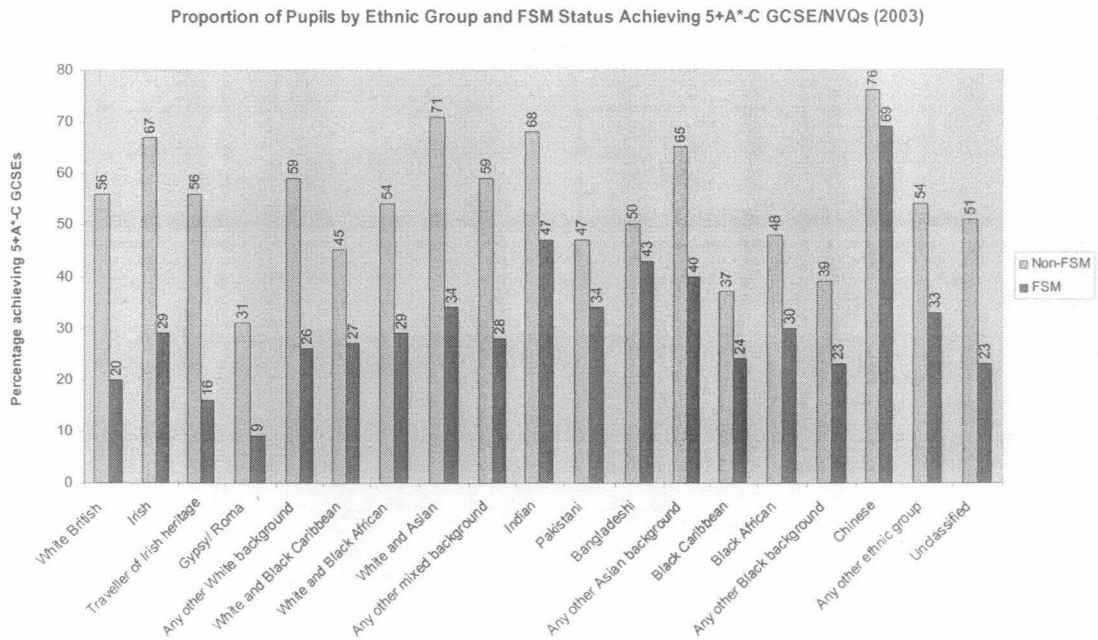
have just managed to attain 36 percent which is 10 percent below the national average. The Pakistani girls too display a poor performance which is again below the national average. They have achieved 48 percent which is 8 percent below the national average for girls. The present data also draws attention to the huge attainment gap between the Indian and the Pakistani pupils, both boys and girls. Where the Indian boys and girls achieve 14 percent and 14 percent above the national average percentage, the Pakistani boys and girls show poor achievement. They are 10 percent and 8 percent below the national average respectively.

The Bangladeshi pupils perform slightly better than the Pakistani pupils but still lag behind the Indian pupils. Bangladeshi boys and girls too achieve below the national average, achieving 39 percent and 53 percent respectively. In terms of gender, the boys are 7 percent below the national average and the girls are 3 percent below the national average. In comparison to Indian boys and girls, the Bangladeshi boys lag behind by 21 percent and the girls by 17 percent. From the above data analysis what emerges is a clear picture. The Indian pupils outperform both the Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils. Overall, the girls of these three minority groups exhibit an optimistic image and show greater achievement levels than the boys of their group.

**Figure: 3.2**

**Proportion of Pupils by Ethnic Group and FSM Status Achieving 5 + A\*-C GCSE/GNVQs (2003)**

National average for FSM Pupils: 24%      National average for non-FSM Pupils: 55%



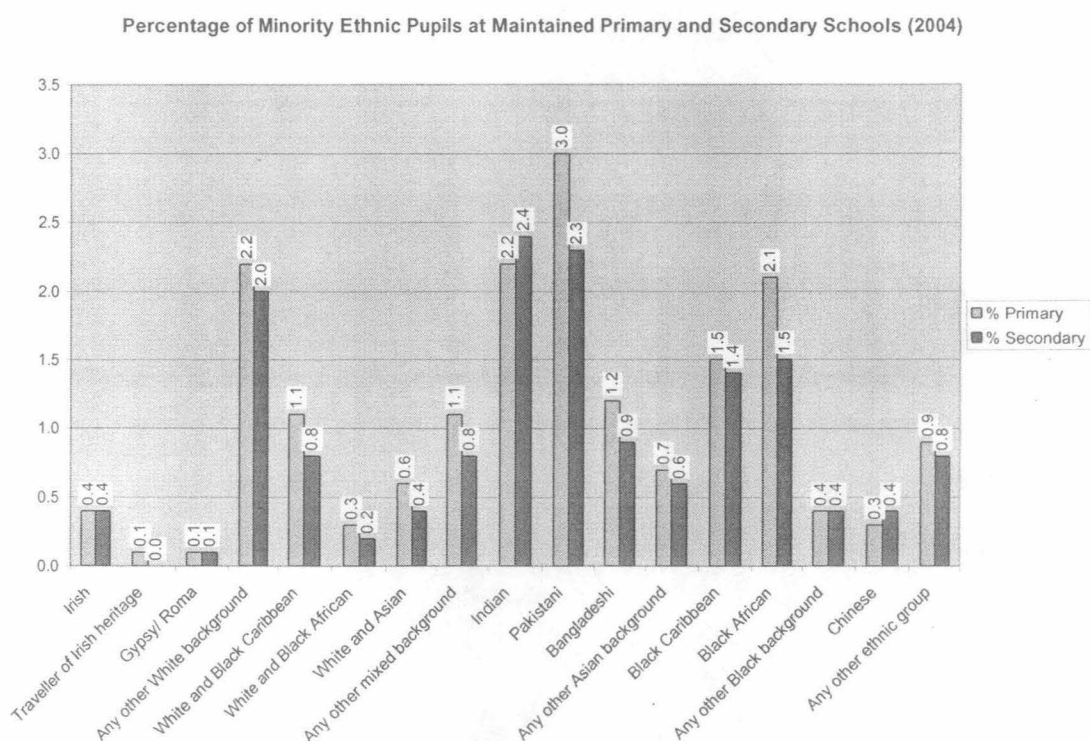
Source: *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils*

From the above figure, a relationship between attainment and deprivation can be drawn. FSM (Free School Meals) is treated as a handy measuring rod to ascertain the socio-economic status of the ethnic minority groups. The above data reveals that for all ethnic groups, pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) perform less well than those not entitled to free school meals. However, the difference in performance level of those eligible for FSM and those not eligible for FSM is almost the double, where the national average for FSM Pupils is 24 percent and for the non-FSM pupils is 55 percent. The non-FSM Indian pupils perform exceedingly well, scoring 68 percent, which is 13 percent

more than the national average. Even the Indian Pupils eligible for FSM perform quite well scoring 47 percent which is again almost the double of the national average.

**Figure: 3.3**

**Percentage of Minority Ethnic Pupils at Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools (2004)**



*Source: Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils*

Figure 3 shows the proportion of pupils in each minority ethnic group attending maintained primary schools and secondary schools in 2004. Table 1 indicates the percentage of primary and secondary school age pupils to be 2.3 and 2.6 respectively for the year 2002. In the year 2003 this figure declined to 2.2 and 2.5 respectively. Both

primary and secondary schools witnessed a 0.1 percent decline in the number of pupils attending school. From figure 1 it can be inferred that the percentage of Indian pupil at primary and secondary school for the year 2004 were 2.2 and 2.4 respectively. A close analysis of Table 1 and Figure 1 highlights a steady trend in the percentage of primary school goers over a span of three years with 2.3 percent in the year 2002 and 2.2 percent in the years 2003 and 2004. However, a declining pattern is revealed when the data of secondary school goers is compared. The year 2002 showed the percentage of pupil attending secondary school to be 2.6, with a 0.1 percent decline in both 2003 and 2004 (2.5 percent and 2.4 percent respectively).

Drawing the focus towards aggregate Asian data one comes across interesting findings. Here, it becomes imperative to discuss the trend among Pakistani and Bangladeshi school population. The percentage of Pakistani primary school goers reveal an upward trend with 2.8 percent in the year 2002, 2.9 percent in the year 2003 and 3 percent in the year 2004. Hence, a 0.1 percent increase among Pakistani primary school goers can be observed. Quite surprisingly, the data reveals a declining trend among Pakistani secondary school goers. The statistics indicate a 0.1 percent decline in the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 (2.5%, 2.4%, and 2.3% respectively). This declining trend in percentage can partly be attributed to the fact that the rate of exclusion among the Pakistani school goers is on a rise as they reach the secondary school level. Statistics indicate that exclusion from schools is being used with increasing frequency. The data even communicates that pupils who are permanently excluded never return to full time main stream education. Qualitative research documents individual cases where pupils and their families feel that racial discrimination has occurred [Gillborn and Gipps: 1996].

On the other hand, Bangladeshis show a relatively steady trend in the primary and secondary school population. No stark difference in the percentage among both primary and secondary school goers can be observed in the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 respectively. Moreover, they are the smallest in percentage among the Asians who send their children to school.

**Figure: 3.4**

**Percentage of Children Eligible for Free School Meals by Ethnic Group (2004)**

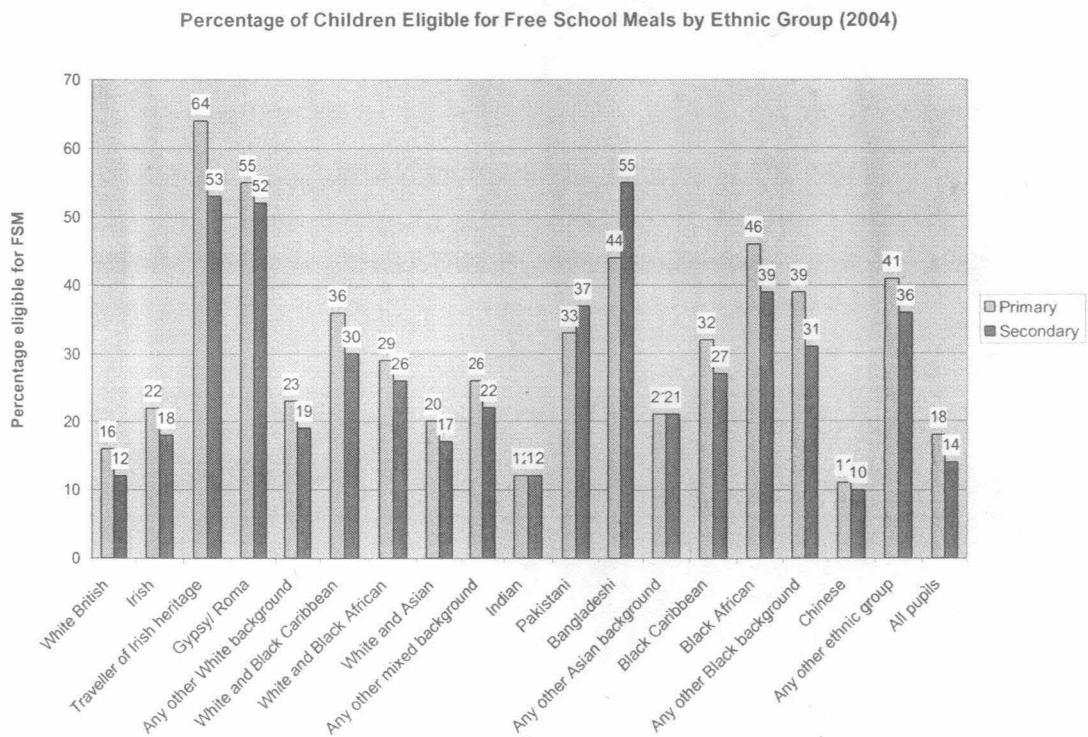


Figure: 4 Deprivation information relating to school/ attainment data makes use of the proxy socio- economic measure of eligibility for a free school meal (FSM), as collected from the annual school census and, this can be analyzed in relation to ethnic group. Minority ethnic children are more likely to live in low income households; 38 percent of

minority ethnic households are of low income compared to 18 percent of white households [Family Resources Survey, 2002/03]. For Indians, in the year 2004, the data points to 12 percent of the population availing the free school meals in both primary and secondary school. In case of Pakistanis' 33 percent of primary school pupil are eligible for free school meals. In secondary school, the percentage of Pakistani pupil availing the free school meal rises to 37 percent.

For the majority of ethnic groups, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is greater in primary than secondary schools. However, for Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils, the reverse pattern is shown, with a greater proportion of secondary school pupils on free school meals than primary school pupils. The availing of free school meal is strongly correlated with the socio economic variable, which in turn has implications for educational attainment.

The above discussed analysis indicates significant findings. The Indian children have performed consistently well in almost all years and against all parameters. Amongst the South Asian group, the Indian pupils have shown commendable progress in comparison to their sub-continent counterparts i.e. the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis. In relation to the above analysis, it is imperative to clarify the meanings of certain terms which repeatedly find mention. Terms like achievement, underachievement, and progress are closely intertwined and demand lucid explanations.

The OFSTED Report (1996) has explained the specific meaning of these terms which are frequently used in educational research and literature. Most of the research reports and educational reviews which make an attempt to deal with educational attainment focus on differences in the levels of achievement between different ethnic groups; it also considers



the influence of factors such as social class and gender. *'Underachievement is a relatively crude term, relating to differences in group averages. It has long been misunderstood as implying that some groups are better or worse than others.'*

'Progress' is a central concept in school effectiveness research; it refers to changes in performance over time, not to the final level of achievement. Achievement and progress is not the same: it is possible for a group to make relatively greater progress, yet still emerge with lesser qualifications (if they started with lower previous attainment levels). Social class is strongly associated with differences in pupil progress. The higher rates of unemployment among some ethnic minority groups may have important educational consequences.

This section of the chapter reviews the qualitative explanations provided by eminent educationists and researchers which throws light upon ethnic minority achievement in education, with special reference to Indians. It has been pointed that quantitative methods can only report *what* is happening; qualitative look at the *why* and the *how* [Gordon: 1984, p.106; quoted by Troyna, 1993, p.100, emphasis added]. Also, when looking at the influences on educational achievement, we must remember that the conclusions drawn from statistical evidence are only one side of the coin. For a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena, one needs to dwell into the qualitative aspect as well. One of the most distinctive aspects of qualitative research is the detail with which the real life situations can be reported and analyzed. Such research can be both striking and insightful, raising unexpected questions and highlighting the importance of events and assumptions that may previously have been taken for granted. Like all social science data, qualitative evidence is open to multiple interpretations; researchers usually try to

strengthen their analyses by drawing on several different types of material (OFSTED: 1996).

Since the early period of post war immigration from South Asia and the subsequent settlement and the formation of diverse communities in Britain has remained an important and debatable issue for ethnic minorities as well as the policy makers (Rose *et al.* 1969, DES, 1981, 1985). As opposed to simply the level of achievement, the processes of educational achievement are dependent upon culture. Early research on ethnic minorities in education suggested '*intellectual capacity, family structures, cultural differences, disadvantage and social background, language problems, low self-esteem, and racial prejudice as explanations*' for their educational underachievement (Tomlinson: 1991, pp.125-126).

When we explore divergent explanations for ethnic differentials in educational attainment, we enter a terrain which is highly charged with various opinions. Sociologists are now less inclined to fall into the trap of the 'fallacy of the single factor' (Parekh: 1983). It is now well documented and acknowledged that a range of factors operate in a complex way which explain achievement or underachievement of a particular ethnic minority group. Finding the causes of achievement or underachievement amongst any group is inevitably a difficult task, as the reasons for it are likely to be complex and interlinked (Haque: 2000). However, there is still a tendency to prioritize some factors to the exclusion of others. In the analysis of educational attainment of different ethnic groups, a range of factors are significant: economic deprivation indicated by social class and cultural factors (Pilkington: 2003, Abbas :). However, other factors like distinctive features of their culture or religion, duration of stay in Britain, parent's educational level

and pupils' relative fluency in English may be more important predictors of achievement or underachievement, irrespective of the country of origin (Haque:2000).

In Bourdieu's terms 'cultural capital' plays a very crucial part in explaining the educational outcomes such as differential educational achievement in a way that combines an array of differing influences. His theory tries to correlate the variables of home culture, family background, social class and the influence of religion in the domestic and social sphere to educational attainment. His theory is powerful in that sense that it recognizes that fact that a multi causal approach is required to understand the complexity of achievement or underachievement. A major drawback of such a theory is that it becomes difficult to pinpoint the relative influence of a particular cultural influence (Abbas: 2004).

Coming to the aspect of exploring the relationship between religion and educational attainment, it must be mentioned that a precise measurement of the effect of religion upon education cannot be drawn as it is determined by a myriad of factors. Nevertheless, it is meaningful to conceptualize the relative importance that religion has among the South Asian communities and its influence upon educational achievement.

Indian pupils (mainly Punjabi Sikhs) in Britain are strongly guided and rooted in the Sikh Ideology. The Sikh religious ethos contributes to their ability to adapt well in a new setting and overcoming difficulties by evolving educational strategies which suit their needs. The early Punjabi Sikh settlers in Britain welcomed the opportunities available, worked hard and sacrificed material comforts for the sake of future rewards. British Sikh parents, as a group share high educational expectations from their children. Even if they themselves had received little formal education in their homeland, they tried to keep in

touch with the highly educated individuals of their extended kin group or through the local Gurudwara. They perhaps had understood the importance of education, and thus focused on the instrumental value of formal schooling and its role in promoting socio-economic mobility for their children (Bhachu & Gibson: 1988). Sikh ideology of egalitarianism also acted as a facilitator in the achievement of educational success. Intermingling of individuals of different castes and class promoted a free temperament within the pupils. They were not restricted to join specific educational categories. Others are of the view that Indians are more integrated into the society, where the nature of their religion (Sikhism and Hinduism) promotes positive relations with non-believers (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane: 1990, Ghuman: 1997). A typical set of norms, values, attitudes and behaviour were associated with the Indian children. They even acquired knowledge and awareness that was necessarily advantageous to their position in society. Such set of conditions encourage children to develop a scholarly rigour and confidence (Abbas: 2003). Also, the cultural belief in the inherent importance of education and that withdrawal from it would be detrimental, fostered a zeal among the Indian children to succeed educationally (Abbas: 2002, c). Moreover, the Indians display a better performance educationally because of the nature of the religion they follow. Hinduism, for example, permits its adherents to be less religiously observant, but still remain technically religious. The Indian pupils are not much affected by their religions (Hinduism and Sikhism). The same is however not true of the Muslims (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane: 1990, Ghuman: 1997). Also, the spiritual dimension of Hinduism and Sikhism is expressed and manifested by its adherents in such a way that it does not tend to impact their lives in a restrictive way (Abbas: 2003).

The South Asian Muslim pupils (Pakistanis and Bangladeshis), are affected by an array of cultural and religious factors often analogous to their Indian (Hindu and Sikh) counterparts – which may impact, for example, constructions of identity, or the degree to which groups are seen to have ‘assimilated’ in educational settings (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane:1990, Ghuman: 2002).

In the lives of South Asian Muslim pupils (Pakistanis and Bangladeshis), religion acts upon as powerful force, guiding to a great extent the beliefs and behaviour of its adherents. Religion impacts the lives of Muslims in distinct ways, and often there are added pressures on them to succumb to it (Modood, 1990, 1994). Abbas (2002, c) in his study to analyze the secondary school experience of South Asian pupils noted that most of the Muslim respondents agreed that their religion was important to them individually and as part of the formation of their ‘educational identities’. Fifty percent of Pakistanis (25/51) adhered to the notion that their ‘faith was their guiding light’. Amongst Hindus, only fifteen percent quoted this. His study also revealed that Muslims were more likely to be more ‘religious’ per se, and they were also more likely to have experienced a level of difficulty within schools because of it. Also, adherence to their faith required both time and energy for religious observance. This definitely acted as a hindrance in educational achievement (Abbas: 2004). In the case, the education of the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis religion got into the way of formal education, especially because it is loaded with patriarchy and various other misinterpretations of Islam (Abbas: 2004). Moreover, the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis tend to be more isolated as communities and generally exhibit restricted cultural pluralism.

Religiosity must also be taken into account because of the apparent effect it has on the education of Muslim girls. Statistics show that Muslim women are the most lowly qualified group amongst the entire ethnic minority group, with a high level of unemployment compared to other ethnic minority women (Haque:2000). It is suggested that religious obligations act as obstacles to the path of academic success for Muslim girls because considerations of religious observance have a high priority for Muslim parents than the education of their daughters (Afshah: 1989). In relation to clothing practices, freedom of movement, practicing of *purdah*, restriction to socialize with young men and others outside their faith and the issue of alcohol consumption impact their lives in Britain (Abbas:2003).

In relation, Indian females (Sikh) in education, Bhachu's (1985, 1991) observations are worth mentioning. It was pointed by her that 'parental educational strategies' largely shaped the education of their Sikh daughters. A strong affirmative belief in education, Sikh mothers imparted values to their daughters that encouraged them to attain higher education and subsequent professional employment. The Sikhs had a belief that education cut across caste and class lines, making the importance of education highly permeable in all segments of the Sikh community. Many urbanized British Sikhs, in an effort to increase their child's educational achievement have adapted to what may be characterized as an 'interventionist approach to schooling, similar to that of the English middle class (Bhachu: 1985). These parents took extra effort to regularly attend school meetings, assist their children with homework and join in peripheral school activities. Also, Hindu females tended to perform exceptionally well in relation to other South Asian groups (Ghuman: 1997).

The economic factors are also considered to be critical to an explanation of group differences in achievement. The Swann Report (1985) established that the association between poverty and poor performance for White children could be applied to ethnic minority children as well (Swann Report: 1985, pp. 81-82). The Swann Report (1985) also pointed out that ethnic minorities are 'particularly disadvantaged in social and economic terms'. The observation of the report was indeed an important one, as the social class factor has proved very powerful in explaining educational differences in outcomes between different ethnic groups (Haque: 2000). Indians are no longer considered to be a group which is economically disadvantaged especially in relation to the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. This perhaps very well accounts for the educational achievement of Indian pupils at schools (Pilkington: 2003). *'The underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils is explicable in terms of both extreme economic deprivation, which exceeds that of other ethnic groups, and cultural factors – being the most recent immigrant group from South Asia, they are the least familiar with the English education system and understandably have less facility in the English language. The same factors – economic deprivation and lack of fluency in English – go some way also toward explaining the underachieving of Pakistanis (Modood et al. 1997).'*

The above analysis considers ways in which religion, culture and the social class affects the educational attainment of each group. A distinct cultural orientation of the Indians, Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis are explicable of the differential educational attainment levels.

## **SUMMARY**

In essence, the data in this chapter indicate a number of significant observations. Several important factors have emerged. This chapter has helped to show, in both qualitative and quantitative terms the reasons for the educational success of Indian pupils and simultaneously explored into the causes of underachievement of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi Pupils. By contextualizing this study in relation to religion, social and cultural capital it has been possible to rationalize that Muslim pupils (Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) show a specific variation. This chapter has also contributed in identifying some of the key religio-cultural characteristics of the three ethnic minority groups, and how it hinders or acts as a catalyst in the educational achievement. These findings have important implications for understanding differential educational attainment of different ethnic minority groups in Britain.



## CHAPTER - 4

### HOME – SCHOOL INTERACTIONS

In the recent years, home-school and community relations in multicultural Britain have emerged as a crucial area within academic debates and discussions. This is perhaps due to the increasing ethnic minority population in Britain. In response to these changes in the composition of the population it is imperative that the education system comes forward to incorporate, involve and educate all minority children by providing them equality education. What warrants our attention is not just the establishment of harmonious relations between minority homes and schools, but also the fact that how the schools are changing and adapting themselves to meet the challenges of an increasingly growing multicultural society. Various issues, problems and conflicts surface when one engages in understanding the way the *home-school interactions/relations* shapes the child's orientation towards achievement.

Asian parents are in a disadvantageous position in the British society. They can be empowered with confidence, knowledge and skills *which* would help their children, and prepare them for the long term goal of partnership with schools. One of the strategies to facilitate this process is the liaison between the home and the school (Dhasmana: 1994). Tomlinson (1984) in her book titled '*Home and School in Multicultural Britain*' describes *home-school relations as the co-operation, communication and mutual understanding between parents and teachers which ultimately results in the successful education of the minority pupils*. She even draws attention to the fact that home-school

encounters in Britain have always been enveloped by an atmosphere of racial animosity and intellectual mistrust rather than by harmony and peaceful co-existence.

Such a conflicting scenario perhaps, was bound to arise. Mostly, immigrants from India, predominantly from rural Punjab (Sikhs) and Gujarat (Hindus) were educated in a colonial setup and initially lacked any clues about the British education system which their children were entering at that point of time (Tomlinson: 1984, Dhayna: 1972)). The vast majority of first generation immigrants were from a rural background with only a few years of primary schoolings in their mother-tongue. As a consequence, they lacked fluency in English. This clearly was an insurmountable barrier for them, as it acted as a handicap in communication (Ghuman: 2003). To add gravity to the situation the British parents, during their schooling, were not equipped well to deal with a society which gradually came to be inhabited by people of different races and cultures (Tomlinson: 1984). The problem of the educational attainment of children from the ethnic minority groups stemmed partially from the fact that the newly arrived immigrants found difficulty in adjusting to the British schools (Mackintosh, Taylor & West: 1988). Moreover, the lack of multicultural awareness which eventually paved way for non-amicable relations between the minority and the majority groups worsened the situation. British ethnocentric parents were often very hostile to the presence of minority ethnic children in schools, which they regarded to be as 'their' schools. Teachers, who are viewed as agents of change in a society, were also quite averse to the new needs which arose in the British society (Tomlinson: 1984). Until recently, they were not provided with adequate skill and training which would assist them in understanding and appreciating home and cultural background of minority children. In fact, teachers have exhibited great perplexity on

issues relating to on how to respond to minority parents and community wishes (Tomlinson: 1984).

On the other hand, the minority parents expect enormously from the British education system (ref). Education for them is viewed as a ladder which would help their children join the established social order and gain access to better occupations and social rewards with the help of credentials and qualifications.

In this chapter, some of these issues are explored to discuss the marginality experienced by the Indian children in schools and also within the wider British society. An array of factors is viewed to be affecting the educational attainment and school progress of the children of South Asian origin, particularly Indians. These factors can be discussed at two different levels. Firstly, the discussion tends to move around the school and teachers and the other focuses on religion and culture within home. It also becomes crucial to examine how the home and the school effect education of the Indian children. The question of prime importance here is to determine whether the causes of achievement or underachievement are found within the home cultures or within the school environment.

Parents play a very crucial role in determining the educational achievement of their children. Over the past few years, a lot of studies have focused on the parental attitudes, the educational background of minority parents, their social class position, their colonial educational backgrounds and some inter-generational problems. Also there is a growing body of literature on the attitude of immigrant parents to education in Britain (Tomlinson: 1983, Ghuman: 1980, Verma: 1988, Anwar: 1998). In order to dwell deeper into these aspects, it is seminal to firstly discuss an important aspect - the background of Indian parents.

## **BACKGROUND OF INDIAN PARENTS**

It has been widely established that the type and level of parental educational qualification and experience is strongly and positively correlated with the attainment levels of the children (Gallop & Ghuman: 1981). Thus, while discussing parental participation in schools it becomes important for us to engage into exploring the background of ethnic minority parents. Coming to social class and educational levels, information from the 1971 census and a national survey by Smith (1977) revealed that Indian migrants in all likelihood possessed educational or professional qualifications. However, Indian and Pakistani migrant parents exhibited a polarized pattern, being either highly educated or uneducated. Rex and Tomlinson (1979) found that 50 percent of their sample of Indian parents had stayed at school beyond the minimum level, but 20 percent had never been to school. Information about the educational background of the adult population belonging to the main racial minority groups was provided by the third PSI survey of racial minorities carried out in 1982. The information stemming from the report indicated that among the Asians there existed a great diversity of educational level. A substantial number of adult Asians (women in particular) had acquired very little education or had never attended school. Asians who had very little education tended to speak English only slightly or not at all (Smith & Tomlinson: 1989). Also, the PSI survey which was carried out in 1974 showed that among the Asian groups, African Asians were the best qualified, while those originating from Pakistan and Bangladesh were least qualified (Smith & Tomlinson: 1989).

One Indian father commented:

*'My rural primary school was six miles away and I wasn't going to walk twelve miles a day just to get an education.'* (Kumar and Tomlinson 1979)

An even more optimistic picture of Indian parents was confirmed by Gallop & Ghuman in their study focusing on the 'Educational Attitudes of Bengali Families in Cardiff' where they discussed the educational background of Indian parents. Their study revealed that a majority of Hindu Bengalis in Cardiff originally arrived from West Bengal in India. Almost all the fathers in the sample had themselves experienced keen parental interest and support as far as their own education was concerned. Some even had had the privilege of availing private tuitions in their homeland. The vast majority of Hindu Bengalis arrived qualified as professional or semi-professional people, and had acquired a good command of English as their second language during their formal schooling. Because of their own educational background, therefore, such parents were able to provide a home that was very supportive of the schoolchild. Consequently, the child enjoyed success at school and the parents generally tended to hold favourable attitude toward the system of education in Britain and cherished high aspirations for their own children.

#### **PARENTAL PARTICIPATION AND THE SCHOOL**

If we take a retrospective view of the discussion, it can be deduced that contradictions were bound to arise between the minority and the majority community. Upon their arrival in Britain the minority groups were introduced to an unfamiliar education system of which they had high expectations. On the other hand, schools and teachers possessed a

scanty knowledge base about the ethnic minorities. They had to struggle a lot to accommodate the ethnic minority pupils into the schools which were primarily designed for the white majority. Thus, paucity of knowledge on both sides, ethnocentric teachers who refused any kind of mutual understanding on matters relating to minority cultures, values and home environment followed by a mismatch of expectations have tended to characterize minority home school contacts (Tomlinson: 1984).

Parental participation plays a very crucial role in determining the educational achievement of their children. The phrase parental participation/involvement is used to encompass a broad spectrum of activities; one common theme is that they all seek to bring together in some way the separate domains of the home and the school. The rationale for developing this contact is to equip the parents with strategies for dealing effectively with their children (Jowett & Baginsky: 1988). Much of the literature on home and school enumerate that parental satisfaction with school and school satisfaction with home largely relies upon how the child is progressing and achieving at school. There is no general definition of what exactly combines to build good home school relations. However, good home school relations may be regarded by most teachers and parents as a means to the end of improving their children's educational attainment (Tomlinson: 1984).

The teacher's view of minority homes was well documented in the Plowden Report (1967) who believed that they had a minimal role to play to enhance the minority children's achievement levels and openly blamed the poor home background for their lower achievement. Plowden in the report commented that '*home and school interact continuously – an improvement in school may raise the level of parental interest*' (Plowden 1967, p.37). This report emphasized the importance of the link between home

background, parental attitudes and the educational achievements of children in primary schools (Bhachu: 1984-85). Plowden even emphasized that active parental interest was largely dependent upon the knowledge parents had about how the school functioned or their children's progress. Apparently, in the 1960's, when this report was prepared this knowledge seemed to be low. Later, the report stated that contacts between the parents and schools started developing. Open days, parents' evenings, 'welcome to school' days and home visiting were recorded in the report and the committee also came up with the suggestion to organize special programme for contact with homes. With growing needs a variety of educational pressure groups came into existence such as The Advisory Council for Education, the Home-School Council, the Home School Liaison Association and the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Association. The development of such pressure groups created awareness in the British society and also fostered more accountability in education. Open to public scrutiny, the school and teachers assumed more responsibility. Proposals to include parents in decision making processes of the school by joining the management and governing bodies aroused a lot of public interest. For this Taylor Committee was set up in 1975 to inquire into school management, government and relations with parents. A report was released in 1977 titled '*A New Partnership for Our Schools*' which emphasized that LEA's should appoint parent-governors. This recommendation was later modified into a law in 1980:

The governing body of a county or controlled school shall include at least two governors. . . .elected by parents of registered pupils at the school and who are themselves such parents at the time they are elected.

*(Education Act 1980, Section 2, sub-section5)*

Moreover, home-school relations are characterized by misunderstandings and tensions. Teachers during this period generally displayed mixed feelings towards parental participation. Racial and cultural differences compounded the problem and added an extra dimension to the home school problems. Townsend and Brittan who had studied 230 multiracial schools in the early 1970's came to the conclusion:

*In general, home-school relations appear to be one of the most unsatisfactory areas of life in multicultural schools . . . more than half the schools reported difficulties in establishing personal contact with immigrant parents.*

*(Townsend and Brittan 1972, p.82)*

Having discussed the findings of reports on home school relations as being fraught with anxiety and tensions, it is important to draw attention to another set of literature which throws light on the positive home school contact which has been established by Indian parents and their children in Britain.

Over the past few years, a lot of studies have focused on the parental attitudes, their educational background, their social class position, their colonial educational backgrounds and some inter-generational problems. Also there is a growing body of literature on the attitude of immigrant parents to education in Britain (Tomlinson: 1983, Ghuman: 1980, Verma: 1988, Anwar: 1998). Also, a key point which emerges from an analysis of these literature is that migrant parents, especially Indian parents in general value the importance of education (Ghuman:2003). These issues demand immediate attention as they go a long way in explaining the ethnic minority educational achievement.



Dhasmana (1994) in her study of Asian parents' perceptions and experiences in schools reports that a majority of parents in her sample replied that it was the joint responsibility of the parents and the school to look into the education of the children. In their view, it was the parents' responsibility:

*'To encourage them to take interest in their work and concentrate on it'*

*'Talk to them about school when they come home'*

*'To tell them to spend more time on education and less on play' and*

*'To ensure that they do their homework'*

Her study also reported that the Asian parents expressed keenness about their children's education, were concerned about their homework and tried to gather more information about the British education system. However, the parents in her sample also mentioned that they were aware of the fact that in order to succeed in the task of helping their child educationally, the support of the school and the teacher was important. One of the parent commented:

*'If we want to help children in every possible way with their schooling, we must not leave it to school as teachers cannot do it alone.'*

Another mother in her sample commented:

*'Not only should the school tell parents how to help but it should also inform them of aims and objectives behind their teaching methods so that parents can give maximum help to their children to reach their potential.'*

On expressing their views about the teachers' role, a great majority of parents emphasized that they expected that the teachers 'provide a good standard of education'

for their children and also inform them if they were lagging behind in any subject, and to provide extra support to less able or slow learners. Suggestions came from other parents on providing extra time and language support to Asian pupils (Dhasmana: 1994).

In Gallop and Ghuman's (1981) study on Educational attitudes of Bengali families in Cardiff too a similar optimistic picture of the parental support and participation appears. In his sample of respondents, the Hindu Bengalis from West Bengal, India, stressed the need for parents to encourage their children, to take an interest in school, to help with homework, to give moral support, to provide adequate physical conditions at home and to encourage their children's active participation in extra curricular activities. A majority of the sample seemed to be satisfied with the curriculum which combined both academic and non academic subjects in a balanced way. Some of the comments made by the Hindu parents are mentioned below.

Engineer; Age: 34; Male:

*'I am quite happy with the combination of various subjects with sports, music, swimming etc. Children should have a wide range of subjects from athletics, sports, arts, sciences, craft work, so that they start from a broad base and gradually specialize.'*

On matters pertaining to discipline in the school, a mother commented:

Scientific officer; Age: 34; Female:

*'Shocked at the beginning but now I think it is good. "Shocked" in the beginning in the sense that we were used to doing as we were told – we*

*were not used to arguing with teachers. Here children are encouraged to argue and speak out which I now think is good.'*

On a similar matter, a Hindu father commented:

Doctor; age: 48; Male:

*'From personal experience I can say that discipline in my children's school is very good.'*

In general, the Bengali Hindu parents from India held optimistic views about the British education system and also cherished high aspirations for their own children. Also, more importantly, the establishment of a cordial home-school relation is widely acknowledged by Indian parents. This, in turn plays a very crucial role in the educational attainment of the child. A response from a concerned mother is reported below.

Part-time tutor; Age: 40, Female:

*'I was born and brought up in an academic family in India. My father was the Principal of the college, my mother a teacher. In that surrounding I had the best education possible – not only in school but also at home. My children are also lucky to have a good education in the U.K but I do not rely on the schools solely for my children's best education. I believe in home and school being complimentary.'*

Another mother expressed her concern on the similar matter.

Scientific officer; Age: 34, Female:

*'My children are getting much more facilities being educated in this country. Though I was satisfied with my own education, they are moving*

*in a larger community and getting more experiences than I had. But also the school can teach them the basic skills and tools; it is mother and father who encourage them: the moral support from a happy home is the most important thing in a child's life.'*

Drawing attention to another important piece of literature from the similar domain, P.A.S Ghuman's study on Ethnic minority children is worth mentioning. In his Study titled *Punjabi Parents and English Education* he interviewed forty Punjabi families and sought their views on various aspects relating to their children's education and schooling. The emphasis of the research was qualitative and the parent's views on issues pertaining to teaching methods, co-education, prejudice and discipline were asked. Interviewees ascertained their views about the English education which their children were receiving in Britain. Some of the responses are mentioned below.

Chemist, age 48, four children, male:

*'Basically things are different in this country. Moral values are important in India, but here free expression is considered more important. On the whole I am satisfied with my children's education.'*

Factory worker, age 36, two children, male:

*'I believe that education here is more practical and children are lucky to receive it. They can get a grant to go to a university.....I am not narrow minded that girls should not be educated with boys – but sex education in schools leads to bad morals.'*

University lecturer, age 43, three children, male:

*'I don't think that they teach too much in primary schools – I have to tutor my own children in the basic subjects. I liked the grammar schools, but new comprehensive schools lack the academic climate and teachers in these schools are less qualified. They seem to place too much emphasis on singing, games and project work. I have recently transferred my children to a grammar school.'*

Civil servant, age 48, three children, female:

*'English education is quite good; teachers are very cooperative and send reports on children's progress twice a year. I was disappointed, though, because they would not allow my son to do O- levels. He was recommended to take CSE examinations. They seemed to have given unrealistic reports throughout his school years – the school ought to give realistic reports on children's work.'*

Housewife, age 48, five children:

*'I don't know. I have never been to school and I haven't asked the children about the work they do in schools. Their daddy talks to them and knows a lot about English education. Why don't you ask him?'*

Porter, age 35, three children, male:

*'I am quite pleased. I am not educated and can't say much; but I try to help my children in as many ways as possible. I like their schools and whenever I go to see the teachers they are pleased to see me.'*

An Indian mother presented her views on the education and schooling system in Britain.

*'With S- I have a very good experience. She is dealing with her studies very well. Personally I feel quite happy with the educational system; children are not pressurized a lot like in India.....My aim is just that they should do well, study hard and we usually talk they should be doctors, engineers and scientists or I mean some good white collar job...that's the aspiration of most parents.'*

Bhachu (1985, 1991) carried out a few distinctive studies on the education of young Indian Sikh females. In her study she discussed how the 'parental educational strategies' have shaped their daughters education in Britain. Most of the Sikh mothers in the sample were in employment and they imparted this notion to their daughters. They encouraged them to attain higher education which would subsequently fetch them professional employment. This directly impacts the experience of young Sikh women in education, who become inculcated to the notion that joint income households allow for higher standards of living as well as respect in the community. In addition, the Sikh religious ethos is based on egalitarianism which allows its adherents to trespass the lines of caste and class and mingle freely with all members of the society. This in turn allows for greater interpenetration within the educational settings.

Thus, in a nutshell it can be deduced from the above studies that the Indian parents in general have been able to establish cordial home-school relations in Britain. This is evident from the fact that their children have been performing well and do not face much difficulty in the school. Also, the high educational aspiration of the Indian parents from their children is a point worthy to be noted. All this when viewed in a manageable

configuration help to show how the home environment has been able to contribute to the educational success of Indian children.

In the previous section of this chapter parental participation, their educational backgrounds, their views of the British education system have been explored in relation to home school interactions. Also, how these factors affect the educational achievement of the Indian children have been discussed. The next section of this chapter revolves around an analysis of the religion, culture and the home of South Asian pupils in Britain, with special reference to Indians, and how do these aspects affect the education of these pupils at school. Issues pertaining to the religious ethos and culture have already been discussed in the previous chapter in great length. However, in this chapter aspects of religious education and mother tongue learning (bilingualism) have been discussed in relation to religion and culture at home.

Also in this context an important issue arises which seeks to determine whether the causes of underachievement or achievement reside in the home or in the school. A further analysis of circumstances done by Abbas (2004) explores issues pertaining to religious observance and culture maintenance which may also affect the performance of children at school. To exactly measure the effect of religion upon education is not an easy task, neither is it determined by a single factor. The effects of religion and culture upon educational attainment are multicausal and are thus determined by an array of factors.

### **RELIGION, CULTURE AND HOME: EXPLORING THE LINKAGES**

The early Asian settlers in Britain, particularly from the rural areas were able to retain their social and cultural identities and made the bare minimum changes in their outlook

and lifestyle to accommodate to the demands of the host society. They led an encapsulated life. However, the second and third generation Indian children lead intricate lives. They are placed at the crossroad of socially and ethnically diverse culture. In all aspects of their lives they attempt to strike a delicate balance between matters pertaining to their homes and schools (Bhatti:1999). They shoulder the responsibility of reconciling to the often conflicting values of the home and school and also encounter racism in their daily lives. School life for them is also fraught with tensions. School teachers are ethnocentric and are not fully aware of the situation which an Asian child faces. In such a scenario, it becomes difficult for the child to create a harmonious balance in their lives. An Asian child's journey through his school life is an interesting area of study and raises important questions relating to their religious, social and cultural identities (Bhatti:1999). A pronounced difference of opinion exists between the Asian families and the British schools, mainly because of the underlying value systems of the two institutions. The home emphasizes the virtue of collectivity (*Birderi*) as opposed to the rugged individuality advocated by the schools (Ghuman: 1997). To this, Sethi (1991, p.12) comments:

*'The clash of tradition occurs when parents with a collectivistic ethnic orientation are attempting to raise their children in a society with an individualistic orientation.'*

In addition, differences also arise in relation to different role ascribed to males and females in most Indian subcontinent households. It has been observed that males often receive favourable treatment from parents in their choice of clothes, independence and education (Bhachu: 1997). Contrary to this, the British schools propagate gender equality



and encourage girls to come to the forefront and make the most of the existing education system. This can act as a line of discord between the home and the school, especially among the Muslim community, who do not encourage the teaching of physical education and drama and who detest the British school uniform and dietary patterns (Bhachu: 1997). To this, Rex (1985) commented:

*'On family matters, however, there are considerable tensions between minority communities and the school in contemporary Britain. Amongst Asians, for example, there is a great emphasis upon arranged marriage and the relative exclusion and modesty of females. Neither the official curriculum of British schools nor the peer group culture in which ethnic minority children inevitably participate foster the relevant values (p.10).'*

The above mentioned factors in varying degrees and proportions affect the education attainment of minority children. The religious orientation of the pupils and the culture propagated at the home is crucial in determining success or failure within the educational settings. Given this backdrop, certain aspects of religious education provided to the Indians are discussed, which may show positive relation between the religion and educational achievement.

## **SIKH EDUCATION**

Among the Asians, Sikh community in particular have made sincere efforts in Britain to establish separate Sikh schools in addition to the supplementary education offered in the

gurudwara to teach religious principles, culture and mother tongue to Sikh children. One Sikh leader told in a meeting:

*"We should instill pride in our religion and culture. The aim of education is to give identity and pride in one's heritage. The British education is narrow and only concentrates on teaching students to fit into a Christian world, not a universal world".*

*(Helwig 1979, p.102)*

However, there also emerged a contrary reaction among the Sikh community parents. Some of them considered that the Khalsa schools would produce students who would not 'fit into English society' and opposed separate schooling. Helwig (1979) drawing from his study of Sikhs in Gravesend commented that the Sikh parents there wanted to create a world for their children which would give them respect, acceptance and equal opportunities with both Punjabi and English people. Another Sikh leader from Southall stated:

*"The realization of a Sikh school is crucial not only for the continuity and survival of Sikhism, but is the only guarantee we can offer our children of success in a hostile and pervasively racist society".*

*(Mukherjee 1982, p.136)*

A brief sketch of the Sikh ideology explains how the Indian pupils have been able to overcome hardships in the form of racism and have moved ahead in life. Thus, religious influence has fostered a positive impact on these pupils.

## **MOTHER TONGUE TEACHING AND BILINGUALISM**

Language is one of the most integral elements of one's culture. *'It encapsulates people's world views' and is the chief instrument for the transmission to posterity of values, attitudes, sentiments and skills.'*

Scholars such as (Baker: 1995) are of the view that language's role is seminal in the development of personal identities and also serves as a social marker. For Indian migrants, their mother tongue language/community languages (Punjabi, Gujarati and Hindi) serve as important vehicles for the teaching of their religion (Ghuman: 2002). Earlier, bilingualism was by and large viewed as an obstacle in learning and achieving at schools as it was considered by many scholars as time and effort consuming. It was even believed that learning more than one language would lower down the mental functioning of the pupils at school and hence result in poor educational performance ( Baker:1995). However, this view had been questioned by many scholars and ( Bellin: 1995) has pointed to the fact that bilinguals have performed better than monolinguals in various ability tests and they even have the advantage of accessing two systems of constructing meanings and self expressions.

The provision for the teaching of minority language in Britain has been poor indeed. It has been half-heartedly supported by the Local Educational Authority (LEA's) and the Department of Education and Science (DES). Even the Swann Report (1985) failed to gauge the importance of ethnic minority languages in the maintenance and perpetuation of distinctive cultural identity and made no recommendation to include it in the formal school curriculum (Ghuman: 2002). On the other hand, South Asian minority all over

Britain have exhibited keen interest to value both their first language and English. To this Taylor and Hegarty (1985) concluded:

*“Overall there is considerable consensus across the relatively few studies on language attitudes the South Asian language speakers value both their first languages and English. Their mother tongues are seen to have considerable importance for communication at all levels, for cultural maintenance and identity.” (p. 188)*

It is in this light that it can be deduced that language plays an important part in preserving the identity of the ethnic minority in Britain. It also provides the members of a particular ethnic group to communicate among all generations. Feeling of belongingness fosters confidence to overcome the obstacles in the educational contexts too.

Nonetheless, a qualitative study on home – school relation by Abbas (2004) reveals some interesting findings, both from the parents and the children’s perspective. School pupils were asked elaborate questions pertaining to their degree of adherence to religion and culture and how and to what extent did it affect their education at school. A Hindu pupil from Psi Grove School commented on his religiosity.

*‘My parents have always been religious as such. I am religious. I go to the temple. I pray at home whenever my parents do. That isn’t a problem for me. I participate in all religious activities as such. It’s like which is more important right now. Let’s say if I were a Muslim, I am not allowed to smoke or I am not allowed to drink. I must admit I have drunk before and have smoked: if I was a Muslim all that peer group pressure that is there,*

*from home, you shouldn't do this or you shouldn't do that. My religion is less strict.'*

Another Sikh girl stated that in her home she felt a great impact of religion. It contained a lot of religious symbols and artifacts and she even expressed that her religiosity was not as acute as it ought to be. She said:

*'[Religious?] Yes, quite. My grandmother is very and so is my granddad.....my mom is kind of going that way now. My Aunt is. We don't go to the Gurdwara often....even though it's only five minutes down the road. I know I should go...but I just don't because I am lazy. We have photographs of Gurus and everything. Yes, we are quite religiously oriented.'*

The above two narratives of the Indian respondents reveals a positive impact of religion in their lives. The link between religious orientation and educational attainment has already been discussed in the previous chapter.

However, there were a number of female Muslim respondents in Abbas's (2002) study who spoke about a negative impact of Islam in their lives. A Pakistani female in Britain narrated her experience:

*'I personally feel that it is very important for a girl to be independent especially in Asian families which are patriarchal (headed by the authority and ruled by men). Basically I think that our culture stinks and has nothing to do with religion, because women are repressed within their own families. My parents are very understanding and broad-minded,*

*therefore I have no problems but many of my friends experience this. They are not allowed to do many things but their brothers are which is unjust and unfair, and it really annoys me! Islam is a beautiful religion which respects women, and honours women, but people, especially men, make rules which suit them and disadvantage women in many ways. Most Asian parents do not realize that in India and in Pakistan people are modernizing their ways, and Asians in Britain are left behind holding on to old traditional values, which are not important.'*

Another Muslim female stressed upon the compounded nature of religion and culture. She was born in 1970 but due to family obligations got married early, but later restarted her educational journey. She narrates:

*'It is difficult to go through education if you are born of a generation who have immigrated to this country. You are torn between two cultures. In my culture, women are regarded as being of marriageable age as soon as they are sixteen years of age. This is when the most important part of education starts. My parents got me married at nineteen. I did not get any type of qualification to get a job. All you hear is you cant do this and you can't do that, the religion does not permit it or the culture does not permit it or what people will say.'*

*'I felt torn between cultures. I even hated my religion, my culture, parents. But they (parents) were only like that because they had been brought up like that. Girls are restricted so much that some rebel against their parents. But I gave up and did what they wanted me to do.'*

*Now after all these years I have the opportunity to further myself and it is a great feeling.'*

*[Abbas: 2002 a]*

The influence of religion is evident within the Muslim homes. Often, additional demands are placed on Muslim women to comply with the rules of patriarchy at home.

### **PARENTS PERCEPTIONS**

South Asian parents were also questioned by Abbas (2002) about the role of religion and culture within the home and how it influenced their educational attainment at school.

View of a professional Hindu mother has been narrated below:

*'We are Hindus. But we are sort of, you know, not as religious as I suppose Muslims in the same class. I mean, they would still be coming to the school; in the evening going to the prayers and going out to the madrassas and things like that. So it's more built into them. They (her daughters) went to Church of England so obviously they learnt more about Christianity, though in RE (Religious Education) they learnt about all the religions. I mean they (her daughters) don't know much about their religion, their own religion like we don't know as much. Whether we were Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs whatever, I don't think it would have made any difference.'*

*(Abbas:2003)*

P.A.S Ghuman (2003) in his titled *Double Loyalties: South Asian Adolescents in the West* also talks about the importance of religion in the lives of South Asians. One of the Muslim respondents from Birmingham in his study revealed that:

*'We really need separate schools to bring up our children the Islamic way. But failing that, we have to make arrangements for our children to attend madrasas at mosques to learn Arabic and the Koran. My son and daughter go on Fridays and Sundays....it is important for me that they carry on with our religion. As you know, most Pakistanis send their deceased to be buried in their village grave with proper prayer. This is all part of our religion. (translated from Punjabi) [Ghuman: 2003]*

Again, from the above narratives it is indicated that Muslims are steeped into religiosity, which in turn acts as an impediment in the way of achieving educational success.

## **SUMMARY**

A detailed analysis of the parental educational background, their perception of the British educational system and how such perceptions differ between sub-groups and how such relationships affect children's educational progress are the main themes which have been dealt with in this chapter. Such processes shed a lot of light on the home-school interactions. Both the home and the school need to be viewed as complimentary agencies in the educational attainment of the child. The picture which emerges from the above discussion is an optimistic one. The parents instill a strong sense of faith in the English education system. *Researchers have found that people of Indian origin generally hold*



*education in high regard, both for its 'potential wisdom' and its resultant social and occupational mobility* (Bhachu: 1985). On the whole, the Indian families are satisfied with their children's schooling. They even have a strong desire to retain certain elements of their language and culture, which in turn are helpful for them because it provides them with a sense of belongingness and rootedness to one's own culture. An evaluation of religious orientation reveals that Hindus outperform Sikhs, who in turn outperform Muslims given their social class and the type of school which they attend (Abbas: 2002). Effects of religion and culture also influence the educational performance of children at school. South Asian Muslims under perform because a number of factors affect them negatively within the home and the school. At home Religious restrictions and patriarchy play havoc, especially for the females. At school, they are the victims of stereotypes which prevail for the Muslim community (cf. Runnymede Trust, 1997; Abbas: 2001). Indians, particularly the Hindus and the Sikhs are in an advantageous position. Their religion is less constraining; their socioeconomic status is better as well as they are positively perceived and accepted by the teachers and the society in general.

## **CHAPTER-5**

### **CONCLUSION**

A review of various studies and reports show the range of complex factors which impinge directly or indirectly on the lives and education of minority ethnic pupils in British schools. This study, which has been mainly carried out on the basis of secondary data cannot fully address a topic as immense and sprawling as the education of ethnic minorities in Britain. My open-endedness may have gaps and blind spots, as I do not intend to explain the interplay of several factors which seek to explain the educational achievement or underachievement of children of Indian origin. By contrast my job is to unfold and explore the intricate relations between few variables which affect the same.

The present volume is illustrative of the immense diversity in Britain. This is primarily due to the arrival of various ethnic minority groups, which has converted Britain into a multiracial and multicultural country. Presently Britain is home to a number of people originally belonging to Caribbean, West India, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. This has important implications for both the host society and the migrant community. It reflects a dynamic situation where both the groups through various processes of social adjustments try to co-exist peacefully. This in turn is determined by how the migrants and the host community have been interacting with each other in a multicultural society.

Given this Backdrop, the study has addressed the socio-historical context of Indian immigration to Britain. Today, the Indians are the largest ethnic minority in Britain. Citing the case of the Punjabi Sikhs from India as a primary migrant community in Britain, a picture has been drawn to show how the Sikh Settlement in Britain passed

through a number of phases. This group from India provided the bridgehead for mass migration to Britain in the post world war period. These Sikhs originated from a small scale peasant society in India wherein Britain was a dramatic contrast to their original situation (Helwig: 1979). In addition, they came to Britain with a clear economic goal (Watson: 1977). On arrival they encountered a string of problems: to find means of earning a livelihood, to get a roof over their heads and eventually save some money to send it back home for their family (Dahya: 1988). Problems of racial discrimination, prejudices and stereotyping added to the whole dimension of minority-majority contact situation. In such a scenario, the social values and skills which they brought with them to this new land helped them to sustain themselves, relying heavily on mutual assistance and group cohesion. The ways in which the Indian Sikh community has been able to dismantle the negative effect of racism and prejudice in the white society is highly commendable. Their accomplishments are numerous. This is evident by the fact that in contemporary Britain, Indians as a migrant community are a prominent and successful group. Young Sikhs today, irrespective of caste or class status have managed to enter the commercial enterprise (Gibson & Bhachu: 1988).

The hard work of the initial group of migrants did not go in vain. With sheer labour and perseverance, they were able to carve out an economic niche for themselves in the British society. Also, coupled with economic gain were their relative higher educational qualifications that they held in comparison to the other principal ethnic minority groups in Britain at that point of time (Ghuman:1981).This was definitely a positive implications for them, as it had a spill over effect on the educational achievement of their children. This is evident from the following statement:

'The academic achievement of Asian Indians settled in Britain has received considerable attention in recent years, in particular because Indian students have demonstrated a high degree of success in surmounting both the influence of prejudice and discrimination on British society and that of low socio-economic. Also, most recent results from the 1997 confirm the finding of the Rampton and the Swann reports that Caribbean pupils are underachieving relative to White pupils but at the same time point to significant variability among Asian pupils, with Indians attaining better results than Whites but Pakistanis and Bangladeshis performing on a par with Black pupils (Pilkington:2003).

These statements suggest that the Indians as a group are achieving well educationally, while the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis have been lagging behind. This aspect demands academic probing and has even been addressed by many educationalists and scholars who have come up with varied explanations.

In analyzing the educational achievement of South Asians, discernible patterns have emerged to explain variations in ethnic minority and South Asian educational performance (Abbas: 2002 c).

For example, it has been well established that educational background of the parents is strongly and positively correlated with the educational attainment level of their children (Gallop & Ghuman: 1981). In addition, the variable of social class also plays a significant role in determining the educational achievement or underachievement of a particular ethnic minority group.

While trying to explain the factors which explain achievement or underachievement of pupils at school, this present study has relied upon factors, namely ethnicity, religious orientation and social class. These factors, it can be argued have contributed to a clear

understanding of the question in focus. This task has been achieved by analyzing the available data in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

This study has also addressed the home school dimension in relation to the education of Indian pupils. Various issues, problems and conflicts surface when one engages in understanding the way the *home-school interactions/relations* shapes the child's orientation towards achievement. In this regard, the background of the Indian parents has been discussed. Parental participation and the strategies employed by them to further the achievement of their children also find mention in this study. The home environment has also taken into consideration while discussing this issue and it was deduced that the Indian homes provided conducive environment to their children. Indian parents have shown in various other studies a very enthusiastic approach about the education of their children.

An evaluation of religious orientation reveals that Hindus outperform Sikhs, who in turn outperform Muslims given their social class and the type of school which they attend (Abbas: 2002). Effects of religion and culture also influence the educational performance of children at school. South Asian Muslims under perform because a number of factors affect them negatively within the home and the school. Indians, particularly the Hindus and the Sikhs are in an advantageous position. Their religion is less constraining; their socioeconomic status is better as well as they are positively perceived and accepted by the teachers and the society in general.

In a nutshell, it can be deduced that all South Asian groups wished for success but it was apparent that there was a clear divergence between the experiences of Muslim (Bangladeshi and Pakistani) in relation to Indians (Hindus and Sikhs). This foundation

rests on cultural capital and social class differences between south Asian groups, considering too the ways in which religion and culture affects each group. (Abbas: 2004)

Lastly, shortcomings of this study also need to be mentioned. The present study is limited in its own respect. Firstly, the study is completely dependent upon secondary sources. The evidence available, if corroborated with primary data would have been more enriching. Secondly, an issue like determining the causes of educational achievement is largely determined by an array of factors, where as the present study has tried to explain the educational achievement in terms of relatively less number of factors only.

However, in broad terms there appear to be signs for optimism about the situation of pupils from Indian origin. The analysis of the available data clearly indication that they have been relatively quite successful in dismantling the inherent obstacles present in a racist society. In the educational context their achievement has been commendable.

A logical extension to this study would be a series of related studies conducted in other areas of Britain with a multi-ethnic population. Intensive and comprehensive ethnographic work in this field would perhaps be more interesting and enlightening.

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