

Indian Immigration to the United Kingdom

Will Somerville

Migration Policy Institute, UK

Amar Dhudwar

National Institute for Economic and Social Research, UK

Abstract

This paper examines Indian immigration to the United Kingdom. The paper first explores the trends and patterns of recent immigration (from 1997) to the United Kingdom from India; then the socio-economic and spatial characteristics of the Indian community in the UK; before finally examining recent immigration policy reforms relevant to Indian flows. We find that there have also been rising flows from India to the UK. This flow is young, mostly male, and coming either for work (mainly through the work permit system), study, or to reunify with their families. Those coming for work are overwhelming professional and focused on science and technology and are likely to be disproportionately entering via Intra-Company Transfer permits. The Indian community in the UK has a long history and is marked by heterogeneity. Broadly speaking it is a young community, well-educated, and performing better than virtually all other minority groups on a variety of socio-economic indicators, with the caveat that certain key indicators (such as the employment rate) are lower than the general population. The main centres of the Indian community are in identifiable areas of London, Birmingham and Leicester. Policy reforms have transformed the immigration system in last decade. The system is now “selectively open” to those coming for work and study, regardless of nationality, and opposed, as far as possible, to those coming illegally or to claim asylum. This has impacted Indian flows. The increased numbers entering through business and study routes relate to the liberalisation of those channels, while certain policy obstacles (for example asylum restrictions) has prima facie contributed to reduced entry through those channels.

Keywords: Immigration to the UK, Indian flows, Policy reforms, Multi-ethnic Britain.

Introduction

This paper examines Indian immigration to the United Kingdom, proceeding in three parts. First, we examine the trends and patterns of recent immigration (from 1997) to the United Kingdom. We begin in generalities before focusing on Indian immigration. In part two we are concerned with the Indian community in the UK; its size, location, and—through an analysis of socio-economic integrators—its performance. Finally, in part three, we discuss the UK immigration policy response since 1997, both in general terms and the specific policy responses to Indian flows.

1. Part One: Trends and Patterns

1.1 General Trends

Immigration to the United Kingdom (UK) in the 21st century is larger, more diverse, and more mobile than ever before. The first years of this century show the highest net inflows and

outflows ever counted in absolute numbers. The last decade and a half differs from the past because the country has experienced high and sustained levels of net immigration on an unprecedented scale. (Prior to the mid 1980s, the UK was a country of net emigration.) Net immigration has contributed a net addition of 1.85 million people in the last decade, as shown in Table 1.

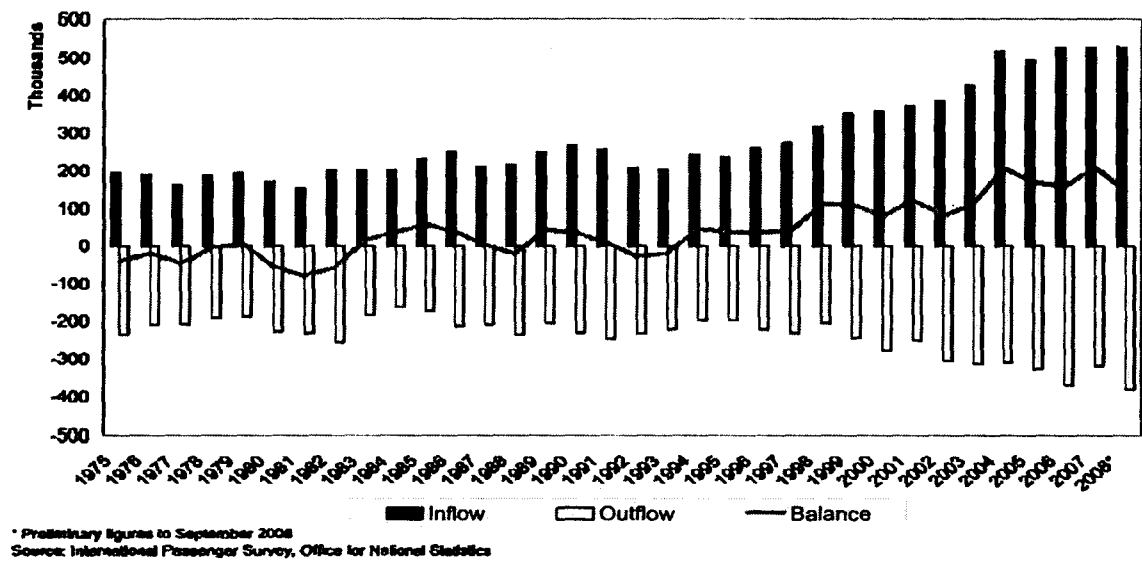
Table 1: Migration to Britain 1997-2007

	British	Non-British	Total
Gross Immigration	1,054,000	4,412,000	5,466,000
Gross Emigration	1,867,000	1,747,000	3,614,000
Net Immigration	-813,000	+ 2,665,000	+ 1,852,000

Source: Somerville, Srinskandarajah, and Latorre, 2009. Total International Migration, Office for National Statistics 2008
Note: Numbers may not round; minus sign refers to net outflow and plus sign refers to net inflow.

The salient feature of the last decade has not just been rising inflows, but rising inflows of non-British nationals and net emigration of British nationals. The sustained inflows of non-British nationals have resulted in increases in the stock of the foreign national population in the UK.¹ This figure has almost tripled between 1984 and 2008, from 1.55 million to around 4.16 million, or seven percent of the total population of 60.4 million. Figure 1 provides a historical picture of this trend.

Figure 1: Total Migration to the UK, 1975-2008



Source: Somerville, Srinskandarajah, and Latorre, 2009

1.2 Flows from India to the United Kingdom

Consequently, it is unsurprising that recent Indian migration to the United Kingdom has risen. Before proceeding, it is worth acknowledging a major caveat: that this review only

¹ Foreign nationals include all residents who do not have British nationality

covers the last decade-and-a-half. This leaves out immigration directly from India prior the early 1990s plus several mass movements from East Africa following Asian (many with Indian heritage) expulsions from those countries.

We first examine flows. One way of estimating immigration to the UK is through an examination of the number of people granted the right to settle permanently. Foreigners can receive permanent settlement rights by marrying a UK national, being granted refugee status, or living and working in the UK for the requisite period. During the 1980s, there were around 50,000 acceptances for settlement per year. Since the late 1990s, there have been major increases, with acceptances totalling more than 100,000 per year since 2000. India was the top country of nationality granted settlement in 2006 with 11,220 people (8 per cent of the total). However, this is not a proxy for current flows and gives no “purchase” on non-permanent migration.

The best way of estimating immigration flows is through analysis of the International Passenger Survey (IPS). The IPS is a sample survey of passengers arriving at and departing from UK air and sea ports and the Channel Tunnel. Immigrants are defined as those intending to stay in the UK for a year or more, having lived out of the UK for a year or more (the UN definition). IPS data is based on intentions, so adjustments are made for those people (and their dependants) seeking asylum. These and other adjustments are used to produce Total International Migration (TIM) statistics.

The leading UK expert on flows and the UK correspondent for the OECD, Professor John Salt of University College London, estimates flows from the four countries of the Indian sub-continent. India is not disaggregated as the sample size from IPS is inadequate for the task, although we can assume that Indians make up the largest single group within the Indian sub-continent. Table 2 shows that net immigration from the Indian sub-continent totals 351,000 for the five years 2003-2007 (but recall that this is a far from satisfactory proxy).

Table 2: Migration Flows from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India & Sri Lanka 2003-2006

Year	Immigration	Emigration	Net migration
2003	50,000	7,000	43,000
2004	82,000	5,000	77,000
2005	78,000	14,000	64,000
2006	1,03,000	13,000	90,000
2007	93,000	16,000	77,000
TOTAL			3,51,000

Source: SOPEMI, 2008

The data available from 2006 show the characteristics of the flow from the Indian sub-continent to be young—92 percent of immigrants were between the ages of 15-44—and predominantly male, at 68 percent (SOPEMI, 2007, calculated from the tables on page 14). The most recent SOPEMI data indicates a similar age split (95 percent) with a more even gender split, with 53 percent of the inflow male (SOPEMI, 2008, p 14, p 15).

However, this does not reveal the type of entry into the country (whether immigrants are coming as students, workers, etc.). While again the data is incomplete, we can make several observations as to where the majority of Indian immigration enters the UK, from a variety of other data sources.

We start with the work permit system (now incorporated as Tier 2 of the new Points Based System, which we describe in more detail below). Work permits and first permissions are a reasonable indicator of international labour migration from outside the European Union. India is currently the largest foreign national group, accounting for 37 percent of the total number with 35,809 issues in 2006 (SOPEMI, 2007, p. 75). The latest available figures for the more general category of total work permit holders and dependants tell the same story: in 2006, India accounted for 45,600, nearly a third of the total (SOPEMI, 2007, p. 24; see also ESRC, 2006, p. 14).

India overtook the United States as the largest source country for work permit holders in the year 2001. It has remained the top sending country for work permit holders since then (see Table 3 for the percentage of all UK work permits awarded to Indian nationals).² By 2007, Indian nationals were accounting for over 40 percent of all work permits. Data from the first nine months of 2008 show that 41.5 percent of all work permits issued went to Indian nationals.

Table 3: Percentage of Work Permits and First Permissions Issued in the UK to Those of Indian Nationality 1996-2006

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Percent	10.1	12.7	15.1	13.5	19.0	19.9	21.4	23.3	30.1	33.9	37.0	41.2

Source: Adapted from SOPEMI, 2007, Tables p. 81, also SOPEMI, 2008, p. 82

There is also some data on what this flow of Indian work permit holders comes to the UK to do. The flow of Indians is steered mainly towards professional occupations in science, technology and health. A remarkable 60 percent enter for science and technology professions alone (Salt, 2007, p 75, 80).

This is likely to mean that many Indian nationals are coming for temporary periods of work. The explanation lies in that fact that given the sectors where Indian nationals are being awarded permits are also ones that reveal a high number of of Intra-Company Transfer (ICT) work permit awards. For example, in 2007, of all the work permits given for all those coming to undertake “computer services”, a remarkable 83.4 percent of permits were awarded as ICTs (Salt, 2008, p. 79, based on UKBA data).

Before turning to other routes outside of work, it is also worth pointing out that Indian nationals have increased their numbers (in absolute terms) under other work or work-related visas. Most importantly, this includes the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (the HSMP has now been absorbed under Tier 1 of the Points Based System) but also the Working Holidaymaker Scheme (WHS). Indian nationals accounted for the largest number entering under the HSMP in both 2005 (6,716) and 2006 (9,091)—between a third and a half of all those entering. A much smaller proportion, approximately five percent of the total or 2,285 people came under the Working Holidaymaker Scheme in 2006.

The number of students coming from India has risen steadily in recent years. In 2005/06, India overtook Greece to become the second largest provider of foreign students to UK universities, behind China. There were 19,205 Indian students in UK Universities in 2005/06 and a further increase in 2006/07, reaching 23,835 (HESA, 2008; Verbik & Lasanowski,

² European Union (EU) nationals do not need a work permit to enter and work in the UK. Thus it is important to bear in mind that work permits only apply to non-EU countries.

2007). According to the British Council, there are currently about 30,000 Indian students in the UK and the forecast is estimated to double to approximately 60,000 over the next five years.

The cumulative total of Indian nationals on “permanent” entry for work (made up of work permit holders and their dependents and those entering under the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme) totalled 54,691 while those coming for “temporary” entry (namely students and those under the Working Holidaymaker Scheme) cumulatively totalled 26,120. Examining work and study flows together, we can therefore calculate (conservatively) that 80,881 Indian nationals entered in the UK in 2006 through such routes.

Measuring family reunification flows specifically (grants made to spouses—both husbands and wives—children, and dependant relatives) is complex. 20,130 grants of family formation were made to those from the Indian sub-continent (made up of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) in 2006. This figure is broadly reflective of the previous five years, with grants to the Indian sub-continent forming nearly a quarter of all family formation grants awarded in the UK. (Again, note that these figures do not disaggregate India as a single country.)

Finally, it is important to recognise that until recently India was also a source of a significant number of asylum claims in the UK (part of the reason why this is no longer the case is explored under policy changes, below). Table 4 shows the absolute numbers claiming asylum from India since 1997.

Table 4: Applications for Asylum, Excluding Dependents, from India, 1997-2007

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
From India	1,285	1,030	1,365	2,120	1,850	1,865	2,290	1,405	940	680	510
Total Asylum Claims	32,500	46,015	71,160	80,315	71,025	84,130	49,405	33,960	25,710	23,610	23,430

Source: Asylum Statistics United Kingdom, 2007

1.3 The Size of the Indian Population in the UK

We now turn to the “stock” of the foreign-born Indian population. The 2001 Census showed that 1.05 million people or 1.8 percent of the population identified themselves as “British Indian”. Those born in India but resident in the UK (i.e. the Indian foreign-born population) have been estimated at 466,416 (Khadria, 2006; Kyambi, 2005) and more recently at 613,00 using country of birth statistics (ONS, 2008).

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS)—the official statistical source of the population and the labour market, which surveys 0.2 percent of all households in the UK on a continuous quarterly household sample basis—there were 284,000 Indian foreign nationals working in the first quarter of 2008. This makes Indians the third largest foreign national group in the UK labour market, behind the Polish and the Irish.

In Part Two of this paper, we turn to the foreign-born Indian population in more detail and make a series of observations on how the Indian community lives, works, and resides.

Summary

In the context of rising immigration, there have also been rising flows from India to the UK. This flow is young, mostly male, and coming either for work (mainly through the work permit system), study, or to reunify with their families. Those coming for work are overwhelming professional and focused on science and technology.

2 Part Two: Indian Communities in the UK

2.1 Introduction: Overview

The relationship between the Indian Subcontinent and the United Kingdom can be traced back over four centuries with the rise and fall of trading relationships, colonial dominance and independence of the Indian Subcontinent in 1947. Although the most significant modern period of migration from the Indian Sub-continent began from the early 1950s, as workers from India and Pakistan were encouraged to relocate to meet the post-war labour shortages, the flow and settlement of Indian migrants has a much longer history. From as early as the 17th century, the recruitment of lascars (East Indian seamen) and domestics (such as ayahs or nannies), as well as the arrival of small numbers of professionals, has meant that Indian immigration to the UK has a long history (Visram, 1986). However, more recent immigration began after World War II leading to the long term settlement of a sizeable Indian community and the Indian diaspora in the United Kingdom.

2.2 Migration after the Second World War

From the early 1950s until the end of the 1970s, with the UK economy acutely short of labour, successive waves of migrants from the subcontinent gathered momentum as workers were required to fill vacancies in London Transport, the health service, cotton mills, and other areas of manual work (Hiro, 1971).

The subsequent growth of the Indian community in the UK has been affected by many factors, including the expulsion of Kenyan and Ugandan Asians³; the boom and subsequent industrial decline which reduced the need for unskilled labour; the introduction of restrictive immigration rules during the late 70s to the early 90s; family reunification, as wives and children joined the primary migrant; the socio-economic performance of a burgeoning second generation; and more recently the liberalisation and streamlining of economic migration rules which has attracted both professionals (e.g. IT workers and health professionals) and other skilled and unskilled labour (through the former Working Holidaymakers Scheme). This latter, higher skilled migration, is discussed more fully in the first part of this paper.

2.3 Growth of the Indian Community

Although the Indian community still only make up a small proportion of the overall ethnic minority community and the total population, as a whole their total numbers have grown rapidly since the early 1950s.

³ Asians were also expelled from Tanzania.

Table 5: Indian and east African Ethnic Communities in the Total Population of the UK

Country of birth/ ethnicity	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
India	81,400	240, 730	673, 704	823, 821	1, 053,411
East Africa	-	44, 860	181, 321	-	-
% of Total population	0.23%	0.85%	2.52%	3.04%	7.90%

Source: Rose *et al* (1969) *Colour and Citizenship*; 1971 and 1981 Census reports; 1991 and 2001 ONS

At the outset growth was largely a result of further immigration, namely the reunification of family members where wives and children had remained in the country of origin and the primary migrant would engage in circular migration and work for periods at a time and then return home for an extended period. These network effects were particularly strongly associated with the Punjab region (Khadria, 2006).

However with the imposition of ever restrictive immigration laws, such patterns of migration became difficult to maintain and resulted in the permanent settlement of migrants. From the 1960s onwards the inflow from the subcontinent consequently slowed down, but both because the demographic profile of Indian migrants was heavily skewed towards young adults which led to increasing family unification and because of higher fertility rates and the tendency for larger families, the growth of the community in the UK has continued (Ilfie, 1978; Willits and Swales, 2003).

Even now, with the subsequent generations of ethnic minorities, the growth of those with Indian heritage has been rapid. The Indian community of working age has grown rapidly from 28 percent in 1991 to 37 percent in 2001, for example. However population trends statistics have indicated that while Indian Subcontinent communities on the whole have experienced growth, it was lowest within the Indian community. Between 1992–94 and 1997–99, the number of people of Indian origin increased by only 4 percent – from 900,000 to 936,000, in comparison to increases of 13 percent and 30 percent within the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities respectively (ONS, 2001).

Table 6: Estimated Size of the Indian Community in the UK 2001-2006

Year	Estimated number of Indians
2001	1,045,600
2002	1,074,700
2003	1,109,100
2004	1,156,000
2005	1,215,400
2006	1,264,200

Source: Office for National Statistics, *Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group*.

In 2008, including those of partial Indian heritage, there are likely to be at least 1,500,000 in England, with around 1,600,000 in the UK as a whole. It is worth recalling this is a broad estimate. The Indian foreign-born population (i.e. those born in India) is estimated at 613,000 (ONS, 2008) and those of Indian ethnicity at 1.05 million. Based on ONS analysis, the most common non-UK country of birth in recent years has been India. This top-level evidence suggests that Indian migration is set to continue to strengthen the diaspora in the United Kingdom.

2.4 Multi-Ethnic Britain

The Indian community in the UK is now in its third generation. Although many of these individuals, and indeed perhaps their parents and grandparents, will now count themselves as British Asians, the Indian community is by no means homogenous as there are further layers to their identity which contribute to the diversity within the Indian community. The first of these intra-group differences is regional affiliation.

The migration of Indians during its peak can be traced from three geographical regions – the Punjab, Gujarat and East Africa (Uganda and Kenya). Of the three, the Punjab provided by far the largest inflow and a large proportion of the Indian community is of Punjabi ancestry (Ballard, 1994). The second largest inflow were the ‘twice migrants’, mainly of Gujarati origin, who had migrated from India to East Africa, and then after their expulsion further migrated to the U.K as refugees. Since then and more recently with larger numbers of professional and semi/unskilled labour arriving through various immigration schemes, such as work permits, the HSMP and the former Working Holidaymakers Scheme, the regional origins of newcomers from India will have been more diverse.

The second differential is religion, with the Indian community practising a diverse range of religions. At the time of the last census (2001), the Indian population was made-up of 45 percent Hindus, 29 percent Sikhs, 13 percent Muslims, and 5 percent Christians. Further differentials between the ethnicity and religion nexus become apparent when available data is broken into regional dispersion and settlement and labour market participation.

2.5 Geography of Residence

The ethnic minority population largely reflects a settlement pattern established by the early waves of migration in the 1950s and 1960s, with immigrants tending to settle in Greater London, the Midlands and a number of Northern industrial towns and cities (Cabinet Office, 2003). In contrast to the larger proportions of ethnic groups in England, the rest of the U.K. (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) is significantly less ethnically mixed. Within England, figures show that ethnic minority groups are largely settled in urban centres, with London having the highest proportion of ethnic minority communities. However, in recent years there has been a small population drift of ethnic minority communities out into smaller towns, semi- and rural areas (Cabinet Office, 2003).

There are interesting inter-ethnic differences regarding settlement patterns. When disaggregated, data by ethnicity and regional geography shows that different religions and ethnic groups have moved and settled in different areas. Taking the Indian population, figures from the census show that 40 percent of Indians live in London and 30 percent in the West and East Midlands. However, Leicester has the highest proportion of Indians of any local council (27.5 percent), with London Boroughs (such as Brent, Ealing, Hounslow, Barnet, Croydon and Newham) and the other areas within the West Midlands (Birmingham and Wolverhampton) making up the remainder.

It is worth noting that religion has proved a marker of residence. Thus Indian Hindus tended to live in different regions from Indian Sikhs. Taking London as an example, Indian Hindus are clustered in North West London within boroughs such as Harrow, Brent and

Hounslow; whereas Indian Sikhs predominate in Hillingdon, Hounslow and Ealing, with Southall being home to the largest Sikh communities.

If we take the narrower measure of the Indian foreign-born, we find that 173,000 (37 percent) of the 466,000 lived in London (Kyambi, 2005, p. 78). The foreign-born Indian population is therefore less likely to be concentrated in the capital than other minorities. Work by Sarah Kyambi shows that sizeable minorities are found in the West Midlands (13,000 in the Handsworth area of Birmingham); the East Midlands (25,000 in Leicester); and some communities in the North West (6,000 in Bolton for instance).

2.6 Socio-economic Performance

On almost all socio-economic indicators, ethnic minorities in the UK are performing less well than their white counterparts. However, an important caveat to this is revealed when data is examined in accordance with ethnicity and religion. Overall most second and third generation Indians are upwardly mobile with a high standard of educational achievement and, on average, are doing well in the labour market.

2.6.1 Educational Attainment

Indians consistently perform above the national average. At GCSE level (taken at the end of secondary school at age 16), attainment of at least five A*-C grades by students of Indian origin has increased from 60 percent to 72 percent between 2002-2004, continuing to outperform white students (55 percent) and students from most other ethnic groups (achieving 45 percent and less).

Statistics from the Annual Population Survey reveals that 27.2 percent of Indians have a degree or equivalent as their highest qualification, as compared to 18.8 percent of the white population⁴. However, the proportion of the Indian population without any qualification is above the national average (13.8 percent) at 15.1 percent, as compared with 13.2 percent of White Britons.

2.6.2 Labour Market

The employment rate for the ethnic minority population is 60 percent as compared to 74 percent for the general population. Research into ethnic minorities in the labour market have stated that members from minority groups are more likely to be overeducated than their white counterparts, and thus should be faring better in the labour market. The reasons for the differential are numerous and range from skills and education, geographical mobility, geographical deprivation and direct and indirect discrimination (Cabinet Office, 2003). Taking this into account, statistics still indicate that Indians perform better than most ethnic groups. There are marked differences between ethnic minority groups, as Indians perform better in the labour market with an employment rate estimated at 69 percent as compared to Bangladeshi and Pakistani workers with employment rates of 47 percent and 44 percent, respectively (NAO, 2008). However there are gender differences, as female Indians perform less well than male Indian with employment rates of 60 percent and 79 percent, respectively

⁴ Annual Population Survey, January 2006 to December 2006, Office for National Statistics, cited in: National Audit Office (2008). Increasing employment rates for ethnic minorities. NAO: London

(Clark and Drinkwater, 2007). Indians also have the lowest unemployment rate among minority groups, at 8 percent.

For the Indian community, data on occupational attainment over the period 1991-2001 indicates there have been increases in those with higher level occupations. Specifically, for Indian males there have been increases in skilled non-manual work and managerial positions, and for Indian females there have been increases in skilled manual, managerial and professional jobs (Clark and Drinkwater, 2007). While such figures undermine the traditional perception of Indians as a community of shopkeepers or restaurant owners, the levels of self-employment are still above average amongst Asian communities. While around 17 percent of White groups are self-employed, the corresponding figure for Indians stands at 21 percent⁵.

With regards to pay levels, research indicates that Indian men do not appear to have a pay gap relative to White men; however, a pay penalty was found through an overlapping analysis of ethnicity and religion for Hindu Indian men. Furthermore, Indian women faced a pay gap of 18 percent when compared to Indian men (Longhi and Platt, 2007). Earlier research over the period 1994- 2000, was also broadly consistent in showing that Indian men among the least disadvantaged, earning 3 percent more than Whites by 2000. Specifically by 2000, the average net weekly pay for Indian men was just over £200, and for Indian women the net average per week was just under £200 (Cabinet Office, 2003).

2.6.3 Political Participation and Representation

A key feature of ethnic minority integration is civic and political representation. In recent years there have been concerted and targeted efforts to mobilise and raise the participation of ethnic minorities in the political process, namely Operation Black Vote and localised initiatives to increase voter registration by local authorities.

At the last election the ethnic minority turnout was 47 percent, as compared with 61.4 percent of all registered voters – in fact, in addition to the low turnout, voter registration amongst ethnic minority communities is the equivalent of three out of four of those entitled to vote (Electoral Commission, 2005). Amongst those using their votes, analysis show that 80 percent of Asian communities tend to vote for Labour, though within the broad community there is a significant proportion of the Indian community (representing 23 percent of all Non-White British votes) who vote for the Conservative Party.

Within Westminster, the last election increased the numbers of MPs from an ethnic minority background from 13 to 15. Of these, at least 6 are of Indian origin. However, it has been observed that to reflect the make-up of the U.K, there should be at least 51 MPs from an ethnic minority background (Electoral Commission, 2005).

Summary

The Indian community in the UK has a long history and is marked by heterogeneity. Broadly speaking it is a young community, well-educated, and performing better than virtually all other minority groups, with the caveat that certain key indicators (such as the employment

⁵ Changing Patterns of Ethnic Minority Self-Employment in Britain: Evidence from Census Microdata' by Ken Clark and Stephen Drinkwater was presented at the Royal Economic Society's 2007 annual conference at the University of Warwick, 11-13 April.

rate) are lower than the general population. The main centres of the Indian community are in several parts of London, Birmingham and Leicester.

3. Part Three: Policy in the Past, Present and Future

UK policymakers since 1997 have implemented radical policy responses in an attempt to manage migration (Somerville, 2007). To better understand these changes it is necessary to illustrate the previous “model” for the sake of comparison.

3.1 The Post-1945 Policy Model

The post-war policy model, created at a time when the British Empire was dismembering itself, was based on two pillars; each entrenched by three laws (Somerville, 2007). The first pillar, limitation, comprised three Parliamentary Acts—enacted in 1962, 1968, and 1971—that together had the goal of “zero net immigration.” The 1971 Immigration Act, the capstone legislation, made a strong statement that Britain was a country of “zero net immigration”. It repealed previous legislation and replaced them with strong control procedures for most immigrants. Perhaps above all, new legal distinctions between the rights of the UK-born and UK passport-holders meant that people from former British colonies—notably including India—became subject to immigration controls (Miles & Phizacklea, 1984; Khadria, 2006).

The second pillar, integration, involved a framework of race relations. The most potent policy measures came in the form of anti-discrimination law, in a limited form in the 1965 Race Relations Act, in an expanded form in the 1968 Race Relations Act, and most comprehensively in the 1976 Race Relations Act. In précis, the dominant post-war policy model was a bifurcated one: emphasizing the integration of immigrants (through a ‘race relations’ approach) and the restriction of immigration.

3.2 Policy under New Labour: 1997-2009

Policy has shifted significantly between 1997 and 2009, including through the liberalisation of the economic migration system to (mainly) high-skilled immigration; increased restrictions and faster processing of asylum seekers; strenuous control measures against unauthorised immigration; expanded internal security measures; and a reorientation of the official position on ‘integration’, including the expansion of anti-discrimination measures.

The major policy change, developed in the period 2001-2003, is the concept of “managing migration” (Somerville, 2007). This commitment to economic migration has been accepted across the political divide, and, consequently, limitation and restriction on immigration is no longer a prerequisite for UK migration policy. Accompanying programs have encouraged the migration both of high-skilled immigrants (for example, the Highly Skilled Migrants Programme, now Tier 1 of the new Points-Based System) and low-skilled vacancies in agriculture and hospitality (e.g. the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme), although low skilled labour is expected to come in future from an expanded European Union (EU).

Measures have also been put into place to attract international students. Such efforts carried the imprimatur of Prime Minister Tony Blair (1997-2007), who was personally concerned with increasing numbers (especially through two “Prime Minister’s Initiatives” in 1999 and 2006). Measures included more vigorous marketing abroad, especially through

British Council offices, and easing the visa processing and transition into work within the UK. There are for instance five British Council libraries and four major British Council offices across India.

The government has also attempted to restrict particular immigration streams, notably asylum. In response to increased numbers and public pressure, the government has introduced successive pieces of legislation which sought to curb the number of asylum applications, speed up application processing, and more effectively remove failed asylum seekers. Reducing the quantity of asylum claims remains a key policy goal.

A set of measures to effectively extend UK borders abroad has also had a major impact on “undesirable” flows, including the asylum route. These include a more restrictive visa regime and a new identity management system. India is the UK’s largest visa operation in the world and has often been a test-bed for new ideas. For example, from 12 December 2007, biometric data has been taken from applicants making visa application at one of the 12 visa processing centres across India. As of November 2008, all foreign nationals in the UK who reapply for a visa must now carry a National Identity Card, which is now required by all foreign nationals.

The UK government has also put in place major institutional reforms, redesigning the immigration “delivery system” to reflect new priorities. The responsibilities of the Home Office were split between a new Ministry of Justice and a streamlined Home Office, while the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) was hived off into a separate agency with greater operational freedom and renamed the United Kingdom Borders Agency (UKBA). Thus, recent UK immigration policy reflects an overarching desire for greater control over migration flows while also selectively opening its borders to preferred flows.

3.3 Policy Changes Impacting on Immigration Flows from India 1997-2009

The broad sweep of the policy changes outlined above misses much of the detail (see, for example, Somerville, 2007). The next section attempts to draw out some of the key changes over the last decade that are relevant to Indian migration to the UK.

Readers should be aware that the choices of policy changes made below are the result of the authors’ reflections on what is important and has impacted on flows, although causal proof of the impact of these policy changes on immigration flows has not been established. Nevertheless, for the purpose of the historical record, we note key changes under “work and study” routes, “family” routes, and finally “asylum” or political routes.

3.3.1 Work and Study Immigration Streams

- The Highly Skilled Migrant Programme has been a major source of Indian immigration to the UK. The HSMP began life in 2002 as a boutique scheme to attract the “best and brightest”. It was the forerunner of Tier 1 of the Points-Based System (PBS) and was a departure from the previous employer-led economic migration selection system and was incorporated in the PBS from 7 November 2006. Tier 1 of the PBS, like the HSMP, does not require a job offer, but instead awards points for human capital and other characteristics upon which applicants are expected to reach a “pass mark”. Points are awarded for education, youth, and work experience, for

instance. Indian nationals have been the largest foreign national group to avail themselves of the HSMP and are likely to be a significant group within Tier 1.

- The introduction of the Points-Based System (PBS) has had a significant effect on Indian immigration. The somewhat ham-fisted introduction of the PBS meant a number of previous schemes were effectively halted. Furthermore, the arrangements of previous schemes (particularly residence rights) were called into question. Several of those schemes, especially the HSMP and schemes for nurses and doctors, included many Indian nationals. For example, as the HSMP was amalgamated into Tier 1 of the PBS, it affected the residence rights of a number of Indian nationals to the extent that a judicial review case was called before the High Court, who ruled in favour of the claimants in April 2008.
- The Working Holidaymaker Scheme was reorganised in 2003 specifically to redress the balance towards the New Commonwealth (Hansard, 20 June 2003). This policy change was largely rescinded in 2005, and became an issue of bilateral agreement, but the increase in absolute (not relative) numbers from India has remained.

3.3.2 *Family Entry*

- The so-called “Primary Purpose Rule”, first introduced in 1980 by the then-Conservative government to ensure genuine marriages, but largely seen as an obstacle to family formation from Asian communities, was dropped upon Labour’s election in 1997. This certainly reduced a policy barrier to family reunification for Indian families.
- In contrast, concerns over “chain migration” have not abated (defined as family members who enter the UK and who then themselves sponsor relatives). Indeed, the Home Office made “ending the practice” a specific goal of policy in its recent five year strategy (Home Office, 2005, p 22). Concerns over chain migration are concentrated on the Indian sub-continent.
- There has also been concern over forced marriages, which has had an indirect effect on policy as the age for marriage for those seeking a visa has risen from 16 to 18 and is intended to rise to 21 years of age. (The law that British nationals can marry at 16 is unchanged.)

3.3.3 *Asylum Seekers*

- The decision in 2005 to place India on the “safe country” list for those seeking asylum. The safe country list, often known as the “white list”, makes a presumption that the country is safe, with the result that it makes it harder to claim asylum in the UK. The immediate drop off in asylum applications from India that can be seen in Table 4, above, makes clear the impact of this policy on those seeking asylum from India. Opponents have pointed out that this overlooks persecution on the basis of religion in some areas of India—such as Sikhs in the Punjab—and more general gender-specific persecution.

3.4 UK-India Policies Relevant to the Immigration Debate

There have also been a number of government policies that have relevance to immigration policy but are not specifically designed for immigration ends. The major policy initiatives have been focused on trade. Among them is the India-UK accord of 2004 (given prominence by the former Prime Minister Tony Blair, who wanted to strengthen the strategic alliance between the two countries), an institutional reorganisation and funding lift (notably the creation of the UK India Business Council in 2006 and a budget allocation of one million pounds), and greater attention to the issue within government (for example Parliamentary reports from the Business and Enterprise Committee in 2006 and Ministerial visits, including by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in 2008).

Immigration policy (notably facilitating visas for business) has spilled out of the trade discussions as one of the key issues for improvement between the UK and India (see for Business and Enterprise Committee, 2007, pp 17-18).

3.5 Future Changes

The economic migration system in the UK has recently been reformed. First announced in the government's 2005 five-year plan (Home Office, 2005), and refined following a major consultation exercise in 2006, the existing labour migration schemes are being revised and consolidated into a new Points-Based System (PBS). The PBS is currently being rolled out.

This new system will make the route to permanent settlement more selective and lower skilled workers will not be eligible (instead the UK will rely on European workers, who hold the right of free movement). It will facilitate transfers between certain visa statuses, notably (temporary) student visas and (permanent) work permit holders.

Future changes are not only limited to work and study routes through the PBS. There has also been discussion that prospective spouses should undergo a "Life in the UK" test (a multiple choice examination which tests basic facts about life in the UK, from population and governance to say-to-day living). For those without the facility in English, a basic language test is required. Given the high level of family formation this will clearly impact Indian nationals coming to the UK.

Finally, the key event on the political horizon - the General Election slated for May 2010 - will lead to policy changes if, as expected, there is a Conservative victory. One of the few identifiable policy commitments made by the Conservative party is to introduce a cap on non-EU migration. This will inevitably impacts on Indian migration flows, although at present, such a view must be categorised as informed speculation.

Summary

The history of UK immigration policy, with its racial undertones, has been transformed in the last decade. The system is now "selectively open" to those coming for work and study, regardless of nationality, and ambivalent to those coming for the purpose of rejoining their families, and opposed, as far as possible, to those coming illegally or to claim asylum.

This has undoubtedly had an impact on Indian flows. The increased numbers entering through business and study routes relates to the liberalisation of those channels, while certain

policy obstacles (for example asylum restrictions) has prima facie contributed to reduced entry through those channels.

4. Conclusion

Indian migration to the United Kingdom has risen in the last fifteen years. It has also changed in character, defined now by entry to work and study.

The growth in trade and relations between India and the UK, patterns of economic competitiveness (especially India's phenomenal economic growth and output of talent), the upward mobility and broad success of the Indian community in the UK, and a change in the UK policy model that has selectively opened the country's borders, makes this trend likely to continue.

References

- Ballard, R (ed). (1994), *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain*, London: Hurst and Company.
- Cabinet Office (2003), *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market: Final Report*, London: Strategy Unit/ Cabinet Office.
- Clark, K. and Drinkwater, S. (2007), *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market: Dynamics and Diversity*, JRF: York.
- Electoral Commission (2005), *Election 2005: How Many, Who and Why?* London: Electoral Commission.
- HESA. (Various years), *Higher Education Statistics for the UK*, London: Higher Education Statistical Authority.
- Hiro, D. (1971), *Black British, White British. A History of Race Relations in Britain*, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode.
- Home Office (Various years), *Asylum Statistics*, London: Home Office.
- Home Office (Various years), *Control of Immigration Statistics*, London: Home Office.
- Home Office (Various years), *Persons Granted British Citizenship United Kingdom*, London: Home Office.
- Iliffe, L. (1978), "Estimated Fertility Rates of Asian and West Indian Immigrant Women in Britain, 1969-1974", *Journal of Biomedical Sciences*, Vol. 10, pp.189-197.
- Joppke, C. (1999), *Immigration and the Nation State: the United States, Germany and Great Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Khadria, B. (2006), *Migration between India and the UK*, Public Policy Research, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Kyambi, S. (2005), *Mapping Black and White*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Layton-Henry, Z. (1992), *The Politics of Immigration: Immigration, Race, and Race Relations in Post-war Britain*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Longhi, S. and Platt, L. (2008), *Pay Gaps across Equality Areas: Research Report 9*, London: Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Miles, R. and Phizacklea, A. (1984), *White Man's Country: Racism in British Politics*, London: Pluto Press.
- National Audit Office (2008), *Increasing Employment Rates for Ethnic Minorities*, London: National Audit Office.
- Office for National Statistics (2001), *Population Trends 105*, ONS: London.
- Office of National Statistics (2008), *UK Resident Population by Country of Birth*, London: Office of National Statistics. See: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/population_trends/PT135POPCOBARTICLE.pdf (last accessed 21 November 2009)
- Rees, Phil and Faisal Butt (2004), "Ethnic Change and Diversity in England, 1981-2001", *Area*, Vol. 36, No. 2, pp.174-186.
- Salt, J. (2007), *International Migration and the United Kingdom* (Report of the United Kingdom SOPEMI Correspondent to the OECD, 2007), Paris: OECD.

- Salt, J. (2008), *International Migration and the United Kingdom* (Report of the United Kingdom SOPEMI Correspondent to the OECD, 2008), Paris: OECD. http://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/research/mobility-identity-and-security/migration-research-unit/pdfs/Sop08_fin.pdf.
- Salt, J. (2009), *International Migration and the United Kingdom* (Report of the United Kingdom SOPEMI Correspondent to the OECD, 2009), Paris: OECD.
- Somerville, W. & Goodman, S. (2010), "The Role of Networks in the Development of UK Migration Policy", *Journal of Political Studies*. Available for early view: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/user/accessdenied?ID=123241333&Act=2138&Code=4719&Page=/cgi-bin/fulltext/123241333/PDFSTART>
- Somerville, W. (2007), *Immigration under New Labour*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Somerville, W., Srinskandarajah, D., and Latorre, M. (2010), *The United Kingdom: A Reluctant Country of Immigration*, Washington DC: Migration Information Source.
- Spencer, S. (2003), *The Politics of Migration*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Verbik, L. & Lasanowski, V. (2007), *International Student Mobility: Patterns and Trends*, London: Observatory on Borderless Higher Education.
- Visram, R. (1986), *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes*, London: Pluto.
- Willits, M. and Swales, K. (2003), *Characteristics of Large Families*, London: DWP.