

The Changing Roles of Women: South Asian Women and Work

Task Sheet

Learning Objectives

- To **know** how the roles of South Asian women have changed in the UK.
- To **understand** why attitudes have changed
- **Evaluate** the roles of South Asian men and women, and whether they should have equal roles in life

Key Terms:

- Gender
- Employment
- Communities
- Supplement
- Attitudes
- Traditions

Introduction

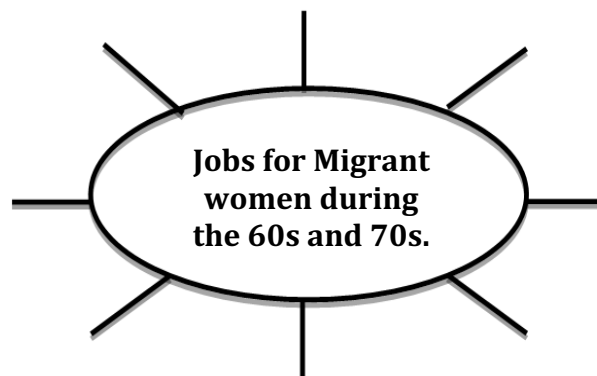
Many South Asian women came to Britain in the 1960s and 1970s to join their husbands who were already settled and working. In Britain, the 1960s saw an increase in the number of women being accepted into higher education and finding employment. However, there were still attitudes and practices that meant women were treated differently because of their **gender**, for example as soon as they married or were pregnant they were sacked or required to leave their jobs. Within the South Asian **communities attitudes** were also changing. While some cultural **traditions** meant that women were not allowed to work outside of the home, many women had to take up **employment** in order to **supplement** the family income and make ends meet.

QUESTION ? MATRIX	IS? DOES? (PRESENT)	HAS? DID? WAS? (PAST)	CAN? (POSSIBILITY)	SHOULD? (OPINION)	WOULD? COULD? (PROBABILITY)	WILL? (PREDICTION)	MIGHT? (IMAGINATION)
WHAT? (EVENT)	<p><i>"I worked for the United Dairy, because I did a degree in science. So I got the job with the United Dairies and they had a laboratory ...so I worked there for 5 years. I was quite happy there... And that was my first job; I never had to work before in Pakistan."</i></p>						
WHERE? (PLACE)							
WHEN? (TIME)							
WHICH? (CHOICE)							
WHO? (PERSON)							
WHY? (REASON)							
HOW? (MEANING)							

What questions can you think of after reading the above statement? Choose 5 questions and write down what the answers could be.

Task 2

What type of jobs do you think other women like Najma would have done once they were in England? Write down your ideas.



Read and examine sources 2a, 2b, 3, 4a, 4b and 5.

a) List the types of jobs mentioned in the sources.

Oral History Interview	Country of origin	List of jobs
<p>Source 1 Najma Mirza (arrived in England in 1967)</p>		
<p>Source 2a Jamila Qureshi (arrived in England in 1960)</p>		
<p>Source 3 Nusrat Syed (arrived in England in 1967)</p>		
<p>Source 4a+4b Zahida Mughal (arrived in England in 1974)</p>		
<p>Source 5 Navid Akhtar (son of a migrant) (arrived in England in 1960)</p>		

b) Look carefully at source 2a and 2b. What are similarities and difference between the two?

Source 2a

Excerpt from an oral history interview conducted with Jamila Qureshi. Jamila was born in Delhi, India in 1930 and arrived in London in 1960.

*"[I did] sewing... I worked there [at a company], and they really liked my work. So the owner, Mr Grove, he made me an offer to go into partnership with him. I was excited, even though I couldn't even speak English properly. So I took my husband with me to meet him and he asked, why, in such a big factory, out of all these people, did he make an offer to work with his wife? So Mr Grove said because 'she's talented' and he was planning on opening a factory to make leather coats, so that's what the offer was for. But my husband refused. Then Mr Wolman, he had a coat factory, offered me a partnership, told me not to stay at home, because I was talented but to work with him. But my husband refused that too, because there was no one else to manage the house and the children were growing up too. [...]
So I started thinking...I've already had two serious offers, why can't I [start a company] myself...We lived in the upstairs flat and I worked in the ground*



Source 2b

- c) Look at source 4a and 4b. Write down how the Terms and Conditions have changed for women in the 21st century.

- d) Give two examples of how these sources are useful in studying South Asian women's work-life in Britain?

Task 3

Imagine you are a migrant from the sources above. A union has asked you about the changes you want to see. Design a placard for a protest?



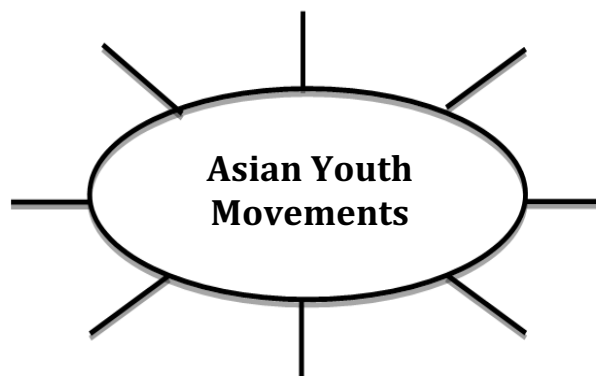
The strike at Grunwick began with a small number of Asian workers walking out 'in protest at oppressive working conditions' on 20 August 1976.

Extension 1



<https://kenanmalik.wordpress.com/2012/03/28/here-to-stay-here-to-fight/>

Research Asian Youth Movements



Extension 2

Research Noorunissa Inayat Khan and complete the Facebook page with factual details (For her wall you may want to find Noorunissa's actual quotes)



Research

<http://www.enemyofthereich.com/>

Noor Inayat Khan: The Indian princess who spied for Britain

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20240693>

“The Noor Inayat Khan Story reveals the courage, strength and compassion of Noor Khan as her Muslim faith inspired her to risk everything to battle Nazi oppression. She is a source of inspiration for anyone working for freedom and justice today”

~ **Dalia Mogahed**

co-author of “Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think”

“[This] story was the most alluring because of her deep spirituality.”

~Religion News Service



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Information

Relationship Status:

Current City:

Birthday:

Friends



Username: Status goes here

5 minutes ago

Wall Info Photos +

What's on your mind?

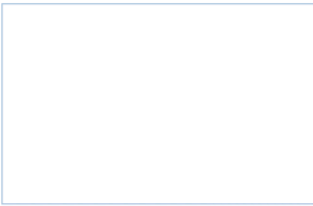
Attach:     

Share





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5 minutes ago

Wall Info Photos +

Basic information

Sex:

Current City:

Birthday:

Relationship Status:

Looking for:

Political Views:

Religious Views:

Personal Information

Activities:

Interests:

Favourite Music:

Favourite TV shows:

Favourite Quotations:

About Me:

Contact Information

Email:

Current address:

Education and Work

College:

High School:

Employer:

Position:

Description:

Groups

Teacher's notes

These educational resources are intended to be used in the study of the changing roles and status of women in Britain through the lens of South Asian female women who migrated to the UK in the 1960s and 1970s. Students are given the opportunity to interact with a variety of sources. The use of photographs and documents in the lesson plan shows how information can be gathered from non-oral history sources and can be used alongside oral history testimonies to provide a fuller picture. (E.g. the address and telephone number of Jamila Qureshi's company which was not mentioned in the oral history interview).

While many Asian women from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and East Africa worked in textile and manufacturing factories, there were also those who came to England with not only undergraduate degrees but also Masters degrees. This counters the assumption that many took up menial jobs because of their lack of education. Rather it was a number of factors. Cultural attitudes meant that some women were expected to remain at home and look after the house and families and therefore were only able to supplement the income by taking in piecemeal work. Some women had not worked prior to coming to England because of their social standing – they had not needed to. Their arrival in England often signalled a shift in that to keep up with the cost of day-to-day living they had to work to supplement the household income.