

Ethnic Minority Women and Access to the Labour Market in Leicester

Bernadette Stiel
Ning Tang

Foreword

This study provides an excellent insight into the experiences and motivations of ethnic minority women in specific areas of Leicester. It gives invaluable advice to organisations seeking to engage with these women, who are often classed as “hard-to-reach” and therefore tend to be excluded from mainstream services.

The research also demonstrates the importance of the voluntary and community sector in engaging people and helping them overcome the barriers to further education, training and employment. It reveals an untapped pool of talent, capable of playing a full part in Leicester's labour market, but restricted by lack of accessible and affordable local education and training services, most notably the English language.

If Leicester is to recover its position as an economic powerhouse of the East Midlands, it must address the very low economic activity rates of ethnic minority women. This study clearly refutes the perception that many ethnic minority women do not want to be economically active – the women interviewed are clearly ambitious, determined and skilled.

The different service provider partners in Leicester now need to use this information to help these women through the obstacles to employment; and make a real difference to their lives and their community.

Councillor Roman Scuplak

Vice-Chair of Leicester Economic Action Partnership



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Members of the GELLM Team contributed as follows:

Statistical Analysis	Lisa Buckner; Gerard Poole; Ning Tang
Documentary Analysis	Bernadette Stiell; Lucy Shipton
Workshops / Interviews	Bernadette Stiell; Ning Tang
Report drafting	Bernadette Stiell, Christopher Price, Lucy Shipton, Sue Yeandle

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Key findings

This study has explored the situation of ethnic minority women in Leicester - particularly those resident in the wards of Spinney Hills and Stoneygate - in relation to their access to the labour market.

The study has used a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, and has built on other research. This report presents its findings, noting that:

- A range of national policy initiatives have been developed to tackle the inequalities faced by ethnic minorities in relation to education, training and employment. These include *Aimhigher*; the work of the *Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force* and the *Ethnic Minority Outreach scheme*; and the *Fair Cities Programme*.
- At the regional and local level, some initiatives have focused on increasing the number of women, ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups in education, training and employment. These have tackled a variety of barriers to employment, but there is limited information available on how effective they have been.

Our analysis of 2001 Census data reveals that:

- Leicester is much more ethnically diverse than the East Midlands or England as a whole, with 39% of its women from groups other than White British. Indian women are by far the largest ethnic group (26% of all local women).
- Of the two wards studied, Spinney Hills has the highest proportion of ethnic minority women. Here 60% of women identify themselves as Indian and 5% as Pakistani.
- Bangladeshi and Pakistani women are far less likely to be employed. Only 9% of Bangladeshi women and 7% of Pakistani women have full-time jobs, compared with 30% of all women in Leicester. They are more likely to be either students or looking after their homes and families full-time, than White women in Leicester.
- There is also evidence that women from ethnic minority groups can face very difficult problems when they wish to enter the labour market. In Leicester's Stoneygate ward, for example, 22% of economically active Bangladeshi women were unemployed and actively seeking work, compared with just

7.5% of all economically active women in that ward.

- In both the Leicester wards selected for detailed analysis, the high proportion of Bangladeshi women who were unemployed suggests they experience more significant barriers to employment (and possibly more discrimination) than other groups.
- In Leicester, 21% of employed Pakistani and Bangladeshi women work in process, plant and machine operative occupations, compared with 7% of White British women.
- Among those in employment, Leicester's large population of Indian women is much more strongly concentrated in the manufacturing sector than the city's White female population. Within this sector, 88% of Indian women, compared with 62% of White women, were in the lower level and lowest paid jobs, while only 4% - compared with 18% of White women - were in the best paid jobs.
- 47% of Leicester's Bangladeshi women and girls and 55% of the city's Pakistani women and girls were born in the UK. The Bangladeshi, Pakistani and (to a lesser degree) the Indian female populations in Leicester are significantly younger than Whiter British women. 24% of White British women in the city were aged 60 or older in 2001, compared with only 4% of Bangladeshi and Pakistani women and 11% of Indian women.

This study's arts-based workshops indicate that the labour market disadvantage experienced by local ethnic minority women is related to a combination of the following factors. Although the importance of each of these varies for each individual woman, and not all are relevant in every case, these are the main factors which policy-makers, and others supporting ethnic minority women in gaining fair access to employment, need to take into account:

- migration history
- language, qualifications, skills and experience
- aspirations and confidence
- infrastructure of the local area
- available range of job opportunities
- cultural/family expectations/circumstances
- discrimination and racism

Although the workshops did not explore the views of all ethnic minority women in the area (and cannot be used as a basis for generalisation), they gave voice to many issues important to those involved, and raised a number of key issues.

Introduction

This report presents research undertaken as part of the *Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets* (GELLM) research programme (Appendix 1). Parallel local research studies on women in ethnic minority communities have also been conducted in four other local authorities (Camden, Newcastle, Somerset and Southwark), and these are reported separately. A synthesis report of the findings from all five areas is also available (Yeandle et al, 2006). The *Gender Profile of Leicester's Labour Market* (Buckner et al 2004) provides the city-wide statistical evidence and context for the study. This study is one of three GELLM local research studies relating to Leicester; the other two are also available as separate reports (Bennett et al 2006; Grant et al, 2006). This particular study aimed to:

- Research the skills, achievements and aspirations of ethnic minority women in selected localities.
- Investigate mismatches between skills and employment opportunities.
- Identify the support needs of ethnic minority women which need to be met if they are to overcome barriers in accessing the labour market or progressing within it.
- Provide opportunities for activities that will be empowering and confidence-building for women from ethnic minority groups.
- Make recommendations about ways of supporting ethnic minority women in entering /progressing in the labour market.

The study included:

- Detailed analysis of 2001 Census data for ethnic minority women living in Spinney Hills and Stoneygate, and comparisons with Leicester and England as a whole.
- A review of existing local information and data on these issues.
- Qualitative evidence gathered during innovative arts-based workshops with a diverse group of first and second generation migrant women living locally.

The workshops were developed in close collaboration with local authority officers and community organisations.

The study explored differences in labour market patterns and experiences for ethnic minority women in the wards of Spinney Hills and Stoneygate. These areas were chosen by the local authority for the focus of this study because less was known about the diversity of issues facing ethnic minority women in these particular wards.

This report, which relates specifically to Leicester, outlines the national and local policy background in this field as it affects statutory and voluntary sector organisations, and highlights the main findings from the research.

Ethnic minority women and the labour market: national and local policy developments

National policy

Across England there are complex variations in levels of labour market participation and achievement among men and women from ethnic minority groups. Although a high proportion of people from ethnic minority groups enter post-16 education and training, many face barriers to learning, gaining qualifications, and finding and progressing within employment (PIU 2002; Berthoud 2003; Barnes et al 2005; TUC, 2006). Muslim women - mainly those from Pakistan and Bangladesh - have the highest rates of economic inactivity and unemployment, and suffer the greatest employment penalty of any ethnic group (Twomey 2001; Lindley et al 2004; Berthoud and Blekesaune 2006). Whilst differences between first and subsequent generations of Muslim women have been identified (Dale et al 2002), the employment rates of female Muslim graduates still lag far behind those of their male counterparts, and of other female graduates (Steer 2005).

The labour market disadvantage of ethnic minority groups is a major policy concern for government, and has resulted in a number of national policy initiatives relating to education, skills, training, employment and social inclusion, including:

- The *Aimhigher* initiatives, which seek to increase the higher education participation rates of under-represented groups by raising

the aspirations and motivation of young people.¹

- The *Learning and Skills Council's* equality and diversity strategy, which includes initiatives aimed at ethnic minority learners and staff (Ethnic Minority Student Achievement Grant; Adult Ethnic Minority Student Achievement Grant; Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities; Black Leadership Initiative) (LSC 2004, 2005).
- The *Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force*, set up to deliver the recommendations of the 2003 Strategy Unit report, *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market*.² The Task Force focuses on: *building employability*, to improve education and skills; *connecting people to work* in the most disadvantaged areas with limited support services; and *equal opportunities in the workplace*, to tackle employer discrimination. Its strategy highlights the importance of English language skills, noting that three-quarters of Bangladeshi women aged over 25 are unable to speak English fluently, and the need to better understand the demand for ESOL training (Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force, 2004:27).
- The Department for Work and Pensions' *Ethnic Minority Outreach* (EMO) schemes, which report to the *Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force* and operate through Jobcentre Plus. These work through private and voluntary sector organisations to attract job seekers into the mainstream labour market, offering outreach-based, employer focused, and positive action training provision. The EMO schemes have been successful in increasing ethnic minorities' awareness of employment and training opportunities, especially among Indian and Pakistani women, where the language and outreach skills of EMO staff were crucial in reaching these groups (Barnes et al 2005).
- The employer-led *Fair Cities Programme*, which highlights the barriers to employment often faced by ethnic minorities in urban areas, including: low levels of basic and workplace skills; their disproportionate concentration in localities with poor employment opportunities; and the relatively weak social networks available to help people

from ethnic minority groups gain access to employment³.

Recent data suggests that refugees are now among the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market (Bloch 2002). The causes of their flight, their first language literacy skills, and their English fluency, as well as their country of origin, education, age, class, household composition, culture and religious beliefs vary greatly, and are key determinants of their economic activity, with important variations by gender (Bloch 2004; Kirk 2004). The removal of asylum seekers' employment concessions in 2002 further reduced the employment prospects of those in exile.

Women from some countries are less likely than men to receive formal education and to be literate in their first language. Research with refugee women found that 16% were in paid work, and that those in employment were most likely to be fluent in English, to be under 35 years old, to have lived in the UK for five years or more, and to have gained a UK qualification. However, their working conditions, terms of employment and pay were generally poor, and the level of their work did not reflect their skills and experience (Bloch 2002).

Official policies and initiatives to tackle this issue include the Home Office's refugee integration strategy *Integration Matters*, launched in 2005, and *Working to Rebuild Lives*⁴, the DWP's refugee employment strategy. Both emphasise refugees 'gaining skills to give something back to the community'. They highlight unemployment, racism and housing problems and the need for regional and local partnership action, which can provide both direct support and volunteering opportunities. However, these initiatives do not address gender directly, and *Working to Rebuild Lives* makes no reference to women or to gender.

These developments at national level have been developed in the context of over 30 years of equalities legislation, including the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975*, the *Race Relations Act 1975* (and its subsequent amendments), and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*. The recent enactment of the *Equality Act 2006* will in 2007 establish a *Commission for Equality and Human Rights* and a new duty requiring public bodies to promote gender equality. This will require service

¹ www.aimhigher.ac.uk

² www.emetaskforce.gov.uk/summary.asp

³ www.nationalemploymentpanel.gov.uk

⁴ www.dwp.gov.uk/

providers and public sector employers to design their employment and services to meet the needs of different groups of women and men, and to take action to meet equality goals in consultation with their service users and employees.

The Women and Work Commission has recently reported on its investigations⁵, although some feel more emphasis could have been given to the situation of ethnic minority women⁶. The Equal Opportunities Commission is also currently undertaking an investigation into the participation, pay and progression of ethnic minority women in the GB labour market, which may help raise the profile of these issues⁷.

Leicester's strategy and policy responses

Leicester City Council and its partner agencies address the needs of ethnic minority women in a number of ways, including the following strategic approaches:

- *Leicester City Council's cultural strategy (2006-2008)*⁸ is inclusive of all minority groups; its focus is on ethnicity and race more than on gender. Actions include the identification and removal of cultural participation barriers; investing in multi-cultural business and cultural sectors; and making cultural organisations more representative of the diverse city.
- Leicester's *Local Public Service Agreement (2003-2005)* had a target to increase the number of refugees in sustainable employment by 180 by March 2005. After a slow start, the target was exceeded, with 195 refugees having been employed for more than 13 weeks at the end of the period.
- The Improvement and Development Agency's *Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester* report, commissioned by Leicester City Council, shows a clear commitment to involving more women and young people from BME communities in leadership roles. Here attracting more ethnic minority health care workers is a priority. There is also an emphasis within the Council on addressing the under-representation of women and BME workers at senior levels, and on addressing

the under-representation of Pakistani, Bengali and African Caribbean staff.

- Leicester's *Community Plan (2003)* aims to target disadvantaged groups, such as members of ethnic minorities and women returning to work in the labour market, to increase their employment prospects.
- Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership's local employment strategy (2004-2007)⁹ identifies people from ethnic minority groups as being among the most vulnerable people in the city in terms of labour market difficulties. It notes that there may be culturally specific family and childcare commitments in some ethnic minority families. Tourism and leisure, and business services, are identified as likely growth sectors in the city. The strategy's targets include increasing the employment rates of ethnic minority groups.
- The East Midlands Development Agency's consultation document *Creating a Flourishing Region Together (2006)* (prepared for the Regional Economic Strategy) states that women and ethnic minority groups are under-represented in terms of entrepreneurship. EMDA has targeted its support at making business start-ups more realistic and sustainable for women and people from ethnic minority groups, by improving their access to skills, business support and finance.
- Voice East Midlands' *Business Plan Summary (2004)* aims to help local ethnic minority voluntary organisations to influence the regional agenda, and sets out strategic objectives to unlock funding and increase the effectiveness of the sector through capacity-building support, such as training and sector assistance.

Targeted training and employment-related projects include:

- The County Council, on behalf of Leicester Shire Economic Partnership is managing *Access Centres* which provide Basic Skills, IT training, careers advice, and structured progress routes with childcare facilities in place;

⁵ www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/publications/

⁶ <http://www.blackbritain.co.uk/news/>

⁷ <http://www.eoc.org.uk>

⁸ Leicester City Council, (2006) *Diverse City - a vision for cultural life in Leicester, 2006-2008*. Leicester: Leicester City Council.

⁹ Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership, (2003) *Leicester Works: Leicester Local Employment Strategy 2004-2007*. Leicester: Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership

- The *Learning Outreach Project* (2001-2003) run by Leicester City Council's Education Department provides Basic Skills and ESOL at 5 community centres;
- The City Council's *Job Service Partnership* provides outreach to ethnic minority women, to help them with their job preparation skills, and to help people into real jobs. Employers such as ASDA and De Montfort University have signed up to the Job Interview Guarantee Scheme;
- The *Employment Support Unit* provides information about employment issues, such as flexible working, childcare and entitlements, as well as running a project that challenges discrimination in the workplace;
- The *Virtual Labour Market (VLM)* project, managed by Leicestershire Asian Business Association for Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership aims to take employment opportunities to the most deprived wards, using a mobile employment bus. The VLM consists of an online skills register where employers list vacancies that are matched with clients' skills and experience;
- The *Pakistani Youth and Community Association's (PYCA)* activities include adult education and learning, and women's and girls groups. PYCA is supportive and sympathetic to the specific religious and cultural needs of the Pakistani community;
- The *Bangladeshi Youth & Cultural Shomiti's (BYCS)* projects include raising standards in English, mathematics and science and research looking at overcoming barriers for women seeking career enhancement or progression in a number of BME groups;
- *Walkers Snack Foods Ltd* ran workshops with the Somali community to raise awareness of their recruitment procedures;
- *The Leicester Partnership* aims to raise the quality of life for the people of Leicester, including refugees, focusing on fear of crime and community safety; creating opportunities for young people; better education for children; breaking down health inequalities, and providing better access to jobs and training;

- *Refugee Action* in Leicester and Nottingham helps people to develop skills and builds the capacity of those that require further skills, including helping people to access funding, training and education.

Despite the many strategies and projects which have been taking place in Leicester to improve the employment prospects of ethnic minority groups there is still a need to raise awareness of what is being provided by the statutory sector¹⁰. Ethnic minority women in employment in the city have also been identified as poorly paid¹¹. With the decline of the hosiery and textile industry in Leicester - in which a high number of ethnic minority women have worked - training and skill acquisition in the city needs to concentrate on giving these women skills to work in the growing industries of Finance and Business Services, Consumer Services and Recreation, or Public Services¹². Language is one of the major barriers for these women from ethnic minority groups, as many of the factories in which they previously worked did not operate in English.

Ethnic minority women in Leicester

In 2001, Leicester's residents included just over 88,000 White British women and girls and some 56,000 women and girls from other ethnic groups. The latter included:

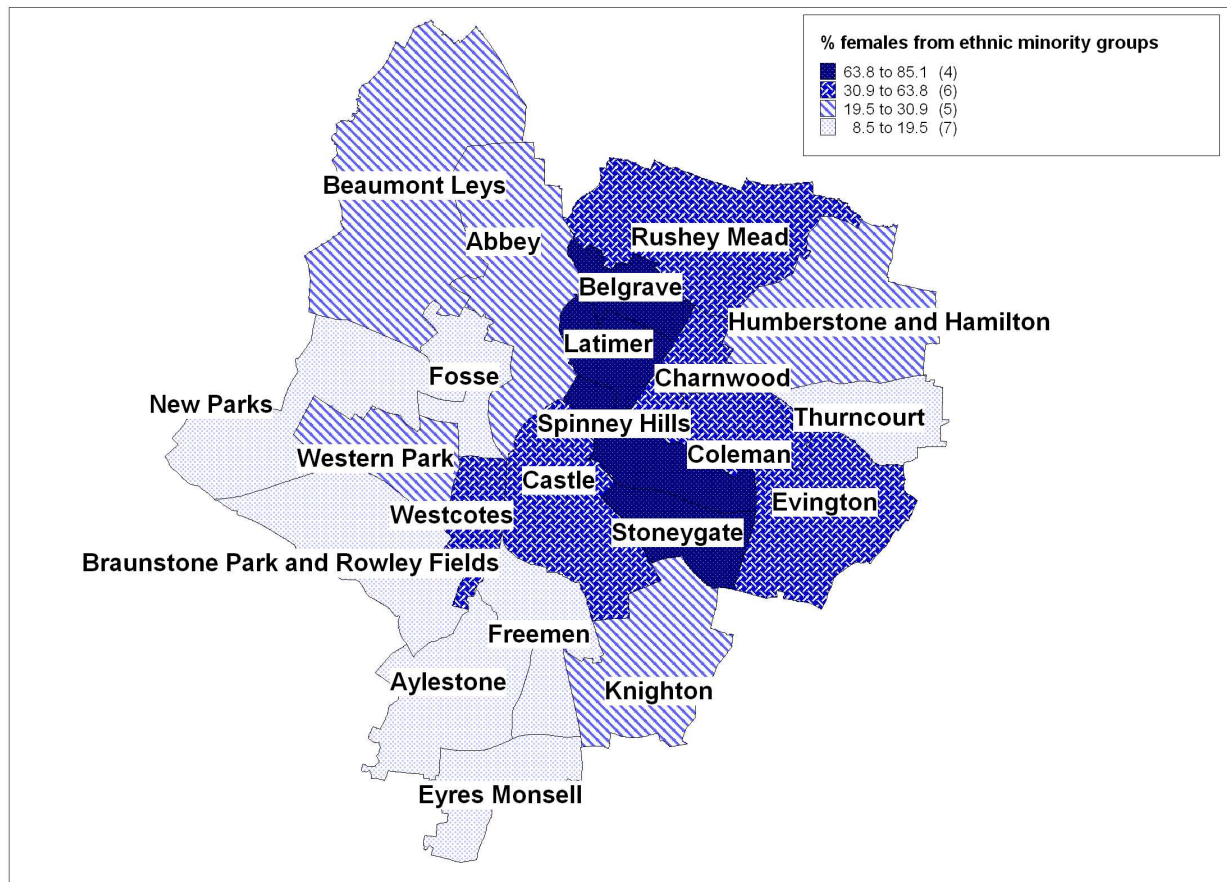
- 43,000 women and girls of Indian (37,000), Pakistani (2,200), Bangladeshi (980) and other Asian (2,600) backgrounds
- almost 4,800 from the White Other/White Irish groups
- nearly 4,500 Black women and girls (Black Caribbean 2,500, 1,700 Black African, 295 Other Black)
- over 3,300 of Mixed ethnic backgrounds
- over 700 Chinese
- and 460 from other ethnic groups

¹⁰ Research carried out by the Pakistani Youth and Community Association (2002) found a lack of awareness and satisfaction amongst the Pakistani Community with services provided by the statutory sector in Leicester.

¹¹ Leicester City Council's report on *The Impact of the Minimum Wage on Ethnic Minority Workers* (2001) found 64% of women interviewed were being paid less than the minimum wage and low awareness of who to seek advice from regarding their rights.

¹² Growth areas as stated in *Leicester Shire Economic Baseline Study* (2004), Leicester Shire Intelligence

Figure 1 Distribution of ethnic minority women (non-White British) in Leicester's wards (2001)



Source: 2001 Census Areas Statistics Theme Tables, Crown Copyright 2003, 2001 Census Output Areas, Crown Copyright 2003. This work is based on data provided through EDINA UKBORDERS with the support of the ESRC and JISC and uses boundary material which is Copyright of the Crown.

Taken together, the two wards selected for this study (Spinney Hills and Stoneygate) had almost 19,500 female residents, including women from all the ethnic groups mentioned above, in some cases in quite small numbers. Appendix 3 to this report contains further detail about women and the labour market for those ethnic groups where numbers are sufficiently large to justify statistical presentation. The figures presented in Appendix 3 thus draw on data for female residents in the two wards as follows:

- All women and girls (19,437, given as a reference point)
- Indian (10,390 women and girls)
- White British (4,153 women and girls)
- Pakistani (975 women and girls)
- Bangladeshi (751 women and girls)

In all other ethnic groups the total female population across the two wards was less than

600, and in some cases very small (e.g. Stoneygate ward had only 21 females of Chinese origin in 2001) (see Appendix, Figure A1).

In Leicester and the selected wards, about half of female Bangladeshi residents were born in Bangladesh – the remainder are mostly UK-born. Among the local Pakistani residents who are female, most (55%) are UK-born, a large minority (36-41%) were born in Pakistan, and a small number were born in India, Africa or elsewhere. Among the city's female Indian residents, about a third were born in India, but another large minority (18-22%) were born in Africa, and 42-45% were born in the UK. Thus very significant numbers of Leicester women and girls in these population groups are first generation migrants.

Gender and ethnicity in Leicester's labour market

As shown in the *Gender Profile of Leicester's Labour Market*, economic activity indicators for the city vary considerably between ethnic groups, with relatively low employment rates found among Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black African women. The city's Pakistani population, both male and female, is highly concentrated in lower level jobs, especially in 'plant, process and machine operative positions', while the percentage of Indian women working in manufacturing industry far exceeds that for the city's overall female population (see opposite).

Before looking at other features of the lives of ethnic minority women in Leicester and our selected districts within the city, we need to highlight a few of the special features of the city's labour market.

Employed women in Leicester are considerably more likely than women in England as a whole to work in manufacturing industry (17% of the city's women doing so in 2001, compared with 9% in England as a whole). This concentration is even more marked in the Spinney Hills and Stoneygate wards (see Figure A6 in the Appendix). Analysis by ethnicity nevertheless shows that the city's White British women are much less likely to work in manufacturing than local women from ethnic minority groups. 12% of employed White British women in Leicester work in manufacturing firms, compared with 34% of Indian women, 26% of Pakistani women and 25% of Bangladeshi women. In the selected wards, this contrast is especially marked, for example:

- In Stoneygate ward, 33% of Indian women work in manufacturing, compared with 6% of White British women.
- In Spinney Hills ward, 38% of Indian women work in manufacturing, compared with 9% of White British women.

Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are also quite highly concentrated in the wholesale and retail sector (around 20% for all three groups in the city as a whole), but this is also a sector in which many White British women work (18% in the city, 13% in Stoneygate, and 18% in Spinney Hills).

Manufacturing sector jobs in Leicester: the situation of Indian women employees

Because manufacturing industry is such an important feature of Leicester's economy, and because of the particular challenges faced in this sector locally, where the clothing industry has been under significant pressure from global markets, we undertook a special analysis of this sector.

This shows that in 2001, 34% of Leicester's Indian women worked in manufacturing (almost 4,200 women), compared with less than 12% of White British women (over 3,700 women).

Yet *within the city's manufacturing sector*:

- 67% of Indian women employees worked in process, plant and machine operative positions, compared with 52% of White British women
- 19% of Indian women were employed in elementary (unskilled) occupations, compared with less than 10% of White British women
- Only 4% of Indian women occupied better paid jobs in the sector, as managers, professionals, associate professionals or technicians – compared with almost 18% of White British women

This confirms that in Leicester, Indian women occupy a particularly disadvantaged position in a key segment of the city's economy – where they are much more strongly concentrated than White British women. They are also very strongly concentrated in the least well paid positions, and very few have secured better paid jobs.

Their disadvantage is particularly worrying given continuing job losses in the manufacturing sector locally, and the limited relevance of their work experience to employment in other and more buoyant segments of the local economy. Local intelligence indicates that some are also employed in small manufacturing firms which do not use English as their operational language. Thus, if displaced through restructuring, some may face additional problems in entering other sectors because of their limited fluency in spoken and written English.

This data was derived from the 2001 Census Controlled Access Microdata. The support of the Office for National Statistics (and General Register Office for Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency where appropriate), CCSR and ESRC/JISC Census of Population Programme is gratefully acknowledged. The authors alone are responsible for the interpretation of the data. Data from the CAMS remain Crown copyright.

Ethnicity in Leicester – Spinney Hills and Stoneygate¹³

This section of the report provides further statistical information about the Leicester wards which were the specific focus of this study, and where the workshop participants were recruited.

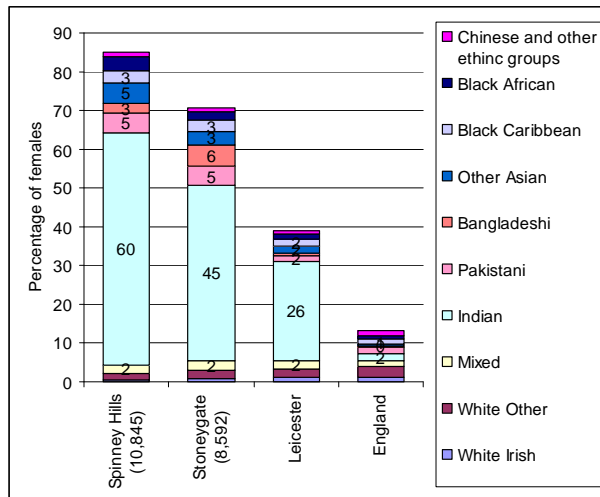
Compared with England as a whole, Leicester has a high proportion of ethnic minority women and men: 40% of Leicester's men and 39% of its women are from groups other than White British (Buckner et al 2004). The highest concentrations of these groups are in the wards of Belgrave, Latimer, Spinney Hills and Stoneygate (Figure 1). The latter two wards have been examined in particular detail.

By far the largest ethnic minority group in the city as a whole is the Indian population (26% of all women and girls), followed by girls and women of White Other origin and Black Caribbean women and girls (both about 2%). There are particular concentrations of ethnic groups in the different wards within Leicester.

In **Spinney Hills**, the proportion of ethnic minority women is very high (85%) (Figure 2). 60% are of Indian origin, 5% are Pakistani and 3% are from the Bangladeshi group.

In **Stoneygate**, where 70% of women and girls belong to ethnic minority groups, 45% of females are of Indian origin, whilst 6% are Bangladeshi and 5% Pakistani.

Figure 2 Ethnic minority women in selected Leicester wards



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

¹³ More detailed data relating to this part of the report can be found in Appendix 3.

The household structures of the population in the two selected wards vary significantly by ethnicity. The White British households in these wards are very often single person households (56% in Spinney Hills and 46% in Stoneygate), with rather few one-family households containing dependent children (8% in both wards).

By contrast, only about 10% of Indian households in these wards are single person households. Around 40% are one-family households with dependent children, and a further 13-14% are 'other households with dependent children'. As in the White British group, relatively few households are single parent families.

The picture is similar for the Pakistani group: few single person households; a rather large number of couple-headed households with dependent children (over 40%), and, especially in Stoneygate, quite a large number of 'other household types' (25% of households), which are likely to contain several families, or three generations. However, 10% of these households are single parents with dependent children.

This pattern is also found among the Bangladeshi community, where 58% of households are couples with dependent children, very few are single person households, and around a quarter are more complex households, usually with several families or three generations living together.

Employment status

Figure 3 shows that Indian women in Stoneygate ward have slightly higher employment rates than local White British women (44% for Indian women, including 29% in full-time employment, compared with 41% for White British women, of which 30% are in full-time employment). Indian women in Spinney Hills, by contrast, have much lower employment rates than local White British women (29% compared with 42%). A key difference in this ward, not seen in Stoneygate, is that a very high proportion of Indian women in Spinney Hills are looking after their homes and families full-time (29% compared with 11% of White British women in Spinney Hills, and with 16% of Indian women in Stoneygate).

Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in Leicester have lower rates of full time employment, compared with the other groups shown¹⁴. 9% of Bangladeshi and 17% of Pakistani women in Leicester work full time, compared with 30% of all

¹⁴ Buckner et al. (2004).

Leicester women. In Stoneygate and Spinney Hills, Bangladeshi women are even less likely to work full-time (7% and 8%)(Figure 3).

Leicester has very high rates of unemployment among its economically active Bangladeshi and Pakistani women. This means that there are significant numbers of women who want paid work but cannot find a job.

- In Stoneygate, 22% of economically active Bangladeshi women were unemployed, compared with just 7% of all economically active women in Leicester as a whole.
- Unemployment rates were very high for Pakistani women in Spinney Hills, where 18% were unemployed (compared with 12% of all women and with 10% of White British women).

The much higher proportions of Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in these wards who were unemployed and actively seeking work in 2001 (Figure 4) suggests that they experience considerably greater barriers to employment (and possibly more discrimination) than other groups.

As shown elsewhere (Buckner et al 2004), when in paid work, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in Leicester are also less likely to be managers, senior officials and professionals, and are more likely to work in sales and customer services, personal services and elementary occupations.¹⁵

Local knowledge of the issues faced by ethnic minority women

To ensure that our study was also informed by up-to-date local knowledge, requests for information were sent to all key local statutory and voluntary sector organisations that provide services for ethnic minority women in Leicester. An additional internet trawl was also conducted. This section of the report draws on the sources which addressed their situations. Although quite a large number of reports and studies focus on ethnic minority issues, few of these reports looked specifically at the situation of ethnic minority women in Leicester.

The impact of the minimum wage among ethnic minority workers in Leicester (Report by Leicester City Council, 2001)

This report, based on interviews with 54 women and men, mostly from the Indian community and working in the textile sector, found that among the interviewees, two-thirds of women, and almost as

many men, were being paid less than the minimum wage' (p13). Although pay was the most important reason for working, age, lack of skills, language, low self-confidence, child care and domestic responsibilities were all factors inhibiting interviewees from changing their job.

Although most interviewees were aware of the National Minimum Wage (NMW), few knew how to seek advice about rights and legal issues affecting their employment. The fear of losing their job, and the difficulty in finding another, meant workers were reluctant to 'rock the boat'. The report noted that some employers were cutting piece rates, not paying for work done, and falsifying pay statements to avoid paying the NMW, and that employees often felt intimidated by these employers.

Mapping the Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Sector in the East Midlands (Report by Voice East Midlands)

This study found that the BME voluntary and community sector was seriously under-funded, when compared to non-BME voluntary and community organisations, and was largely excluded from development initiatives.

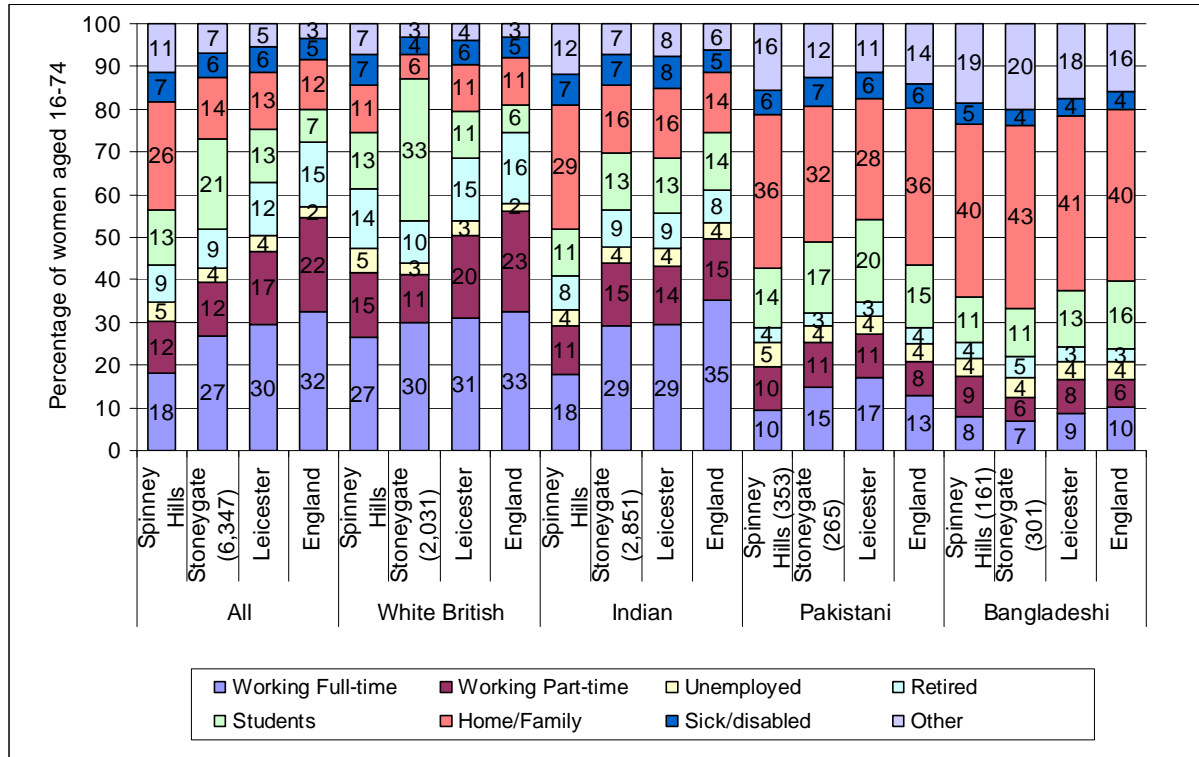
Research into the needs of the Pakistani Community in Leicester 2002 (Report by the Pakistani Youth and Community Association, 2002)

This study of 102 people (49% women) reported a lack of awareness of available services, and a lack of satisfaction with those provided by statutory agencies. Specific concerns were raised about teaching in schools, with problems including issues about religious education and sex education, and lack of teaching in Urdu. Almost a third of parents reported a problem of some kind with harassment or discrimination in the school setting, and about one in six reported some type of gender based discrimination.

The report suggested that problems with service provision may be related to a widespread assumption that the Pakistani community is well established in Leicester. It noted that almost a third of survey respondents arrived during the 1990's, and that in this decade Leicester saw a steady flow of individual Pakistani migrants; a very different situation from the larger scale migrations experienced in the 1950s and 1960s. The report claimed that these 1990s developments 'slipped under the radar' of the statutory sector.

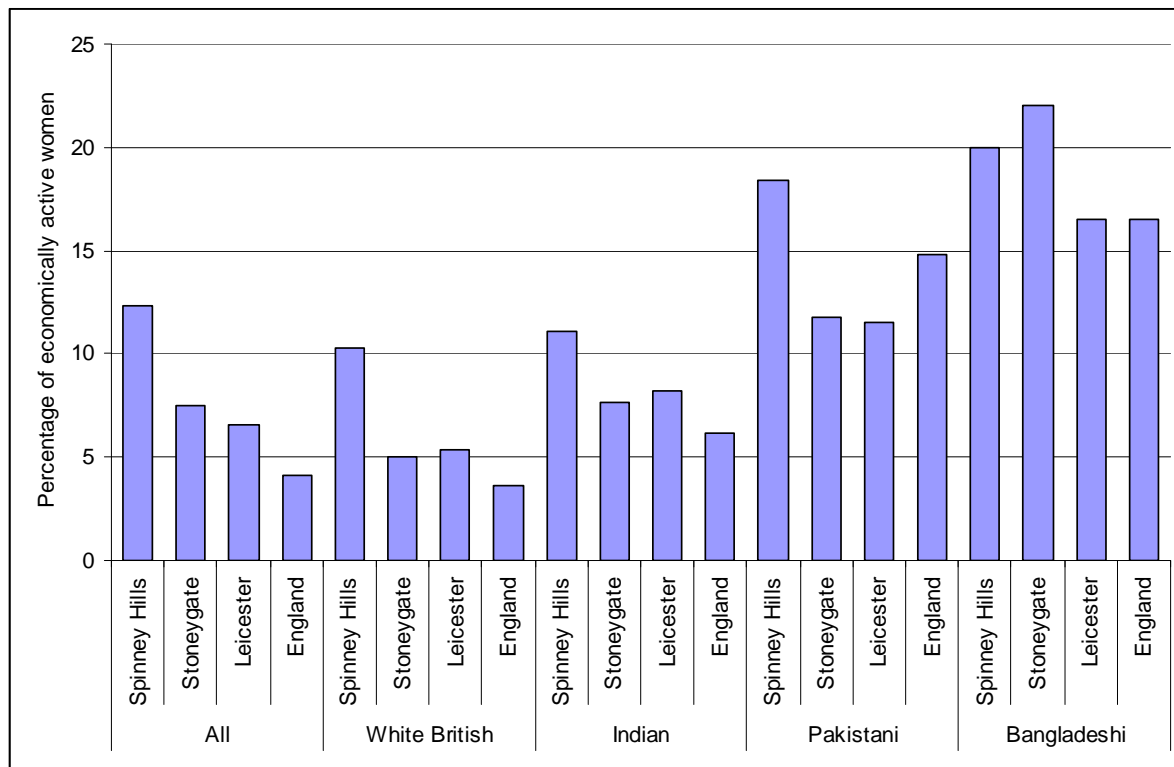
¹⁵ Elementary occupations include packers, kitchen and catering assistants, waitresses, cleaners and shelf fillers.

Figure 3 Economic activity status of women, selected ethnic groups, Leicester and selected wards¹⁶



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

Figure 4 Unemployment among economically active women, selected ethnic groups, Leicester and selected wards



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

¹⁶ Gender and ethnicity disaggregated data on economic activity rates are only available at ward level for the 16-74 age group.

Housing Needs Survey: Final Report

(Leicester City Council, 2002)

This study found that ethnically mixed households, the Black population and some Asian families were comparatively worse off financially and were disadvantaged in the housing market. The report found that 25% of the Black population, 23% of Asians and 18% of Mixed households felt they were in unsuitable housing (compared with 10% of the White population). The report found that overall 3.5% of households were in 'housing need', but that this applied to 18% of Black households, 11% of Mixed households and 5% of Asian households, noting that lone parents were the group most likely to be in housing need.

LeicesterHERday Report 2004

Black and ethnic minority women at a well-attended LeicesterHERday event in 2004 noted the following issues of concern:

- a lack of time and work-life balance problems
- experiences of discrimination related to their race, gender and age
- unsafe transport, particularly at night, which was especially problematic for those learning or working in the evening
- a lack of information about support networks
- the need for training at 'women friendly' times

Voluntary sector organisations in Leicester

Leicester has a large number of voluntary organisations supporting its ethnic minority population. DVORE East Midlands recently reported serious under funding of the BME voluntary sector.

Leicester City Council comments:

“Recent re-prioritisation of public sector budgets, especially that of the City Council, has caused changes in the way the voluntary sector is funded. The introduction of Government targets; for example the emphasis on only funding training courses which result in a qualification; forced the voluntary sector into the same hard decisions as had been experienced by the adult education services.

The immediate effect of introducing formal contracts instead of grant aid was to threaten the existence of smaller (and especially BME and women's) organisations; which often did not have the experience or capacity to write business plans, provide evidence of outputs, or understand the implications for voluntary organisations of becoming contracted service providers.

As a result of this new complexity, some voluntary organisations have been unable to meet the conditions of public sector funding and have either closed or reduced their services. This appears to have disproportionately affected BME and women's organisations.

Although Lottery funding has provided some organisations with more stability, the source of the money is morally unacceptable for some, especially Muslim, groups; and this is not a sustainable solution.

Work by Voluntary Action Leicester, the voluntary sector umbrella group, has concentrated on giving the smaller organisations the necessary advice and development to enable them to flourish in the new funding environment.

The 2006 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) commissioning process for reducing worklessness recognises the key role of the voluntary and social enterprise sector in engaging hard-to-reach communities, and offers a new route for these organisations to provide services on a consortium basis. When rolled out across the whole Local Area Agreement funding stream, this will provide more stability for the sector.”

The concerns and aspirations of local ethnic minority women

To understand more about the complexity of ethnic minority women's circumstances and experiences in the selected Leicester wards, we provided positive, arts-based opportunities for women to reflect on: their skills and aspirations; their past achievements and experiences; the role of paid and unpaid work in their lives; the mismatch between their skills and employment opportunities; and the support they needed to overcome the barriers they still faced.

Four arts-based workshops were held in December 2005 at the *Pakistani Youth and Community Association* (PYCA) and at the *Shama Women's Centre* in Highfields. A final celebratory session, bringing the participants of both groups together, provided the opportunity for the women to present and discuss their artwork¹⁷.

In total 12 women attended the arts workshops, 8 at *Shama* and 4 at *PYCA*. All were of South Asian origin, mostly Indian and Pakistani women, but also including two participants who were Africans of South Asian descent. The majority of participants were in their 20s and 30s, and all were first generation migrants to the UK; the time they had spent in the UK varied from 25 years to 5 months. Nearly all of the women had come to the UK with their husbands, but not all had remained married. The skills and employment history of the group was diverse. Some of the women had obtained degree level qualifications overseas and were professionally qualified in their country of origin. Others had little experience of paid employment, either in the UK or overseas, but were trying to bridge this gap through voluntary sector activities. All the participants were involved in learning of some kind, through the *Shama* and *PYCA* centres. Their studies included language, IT, vocational, and recreational courses.

The findings presented here reflect the views of those who participated in the workshops, and are not representative of *all* ethnic minority women in the area. In this section of the report we identify those issues that were important to this group of local women.

¹⁷ See Appendix 2 for details of the workshops.

Barriers and sources of disadvantage

- English language skills

English language difficulties and a lack of confidence in communicating were experienced by the majority of the participants. This was a barrier to employment in English speaking workplaces, but also limited their participation in the wider community. Because they did not speak English fluently, many of the women felt their employment opportunities were limited to manual work, usually in Asian-run local businesses. As one participant explained:

Nothing is straightforward - which means I have fears in my mind. Things that will stop me, and will fail me, because my English is not so good. I am willing to do factory work.

Another woman, who had arrived in the UK as a child, also expressed the importance of language:

I was being bullied, and I couldn't do anything about it because I didn't know any English. This picture (referring to her artwork) reminds me of my teacher. He helped me a lot to come out of my shell at that time. After six months I started to speak and put my hand up - and that's why I've put the word 'change' on my collage. It began to change me, I was more confident and happy over here.

Given the wide differences in personal migration histories, not all of the women who attended the workshops had had the opportunity to learn English from an early age within the formal education system. Of those who had come to the UK as adults, nearly all had enrolled (or had attempted to enrol) on ESOL courses. They noted a shortage of accredited (publicly funded) ESOL providers in Leicester. Several women expressed their frustration about their limited access to free ESOL classes, citing long waiting lists and complex eligibility rules affecting some recent immigrant groups. The women reported that without opportunities to improve their language skills, confidence and social contacts in the first three years after arrival in the UK, many recent immigrant women they knew had become socially isolated, depressed and had lost their motivation to succeed in the UK.

- Suitable job opportunities, local support services and locality

The women regarded *Shama* and *PYCA* as essential local resources that provided them with a social space, an education facility and a link to the local labour market. Courses offered in the

centres covered very diverse subjects, including ESOL, flower arranging, and 'over locking'¹⁸, and had helped build their confidence and experience. Some of the women expressed the desire to work in childcare and had enrolled on relevant training courses. Others explained that *Shama* and *PYCA* had provided them with voluntary work experience as assistant teachers (within the centre) or as receptionists – but for them the transition to paid work had not yet been achieved.

Shama had played a particularly effective role in linking women to the labour market by acting as a 'feeder' for the hosiery sector in Leicester. Many of those taking part in the workshops at *Shama* had participated in courses at the centre which had helped them secure employment in local manufacturing enterprises. *Shama* had received funding from both Leicester City Council and local businesses to provide training for local women in the hosiery industry. This training had enabled women to enter employment with local, often Asian-owned, businesses quite quickly. However women noted that while the ease of entry to flexible employment, where spoken English was not essential, was an advantage, this was sometimes offset by poor working conditions, limited job security and low pay.

I learned over locking at Shama - 6 weeks training in hosiery. Then they found work for me. I did this work for a year and a half. Then they said they have no material, fabric, so I had to leave this job.

The women pointed out that the success of the *Shama* centre in finding employment had begun to fade as Leicester's hosiery industry had declined. Losses in this industry had seriously affected job opportunities for local Asian women. Recently, financial support for hosiery courses at *Shama* had been reduced, threatening the continuation of the support services subsidised by the hosiery sector funding. Some participants were worried that the continued existence of the *Shama* Women's Centre could be in jeopardy.¹⁹

- Discrimination and racism

Experience of racism and discrimination was widespread within the group, and many of the women said they felt unsafe on the street and considered they were extremely vulnerable to unfair treatment, both in employment and in

accessing services. The women felt that their experiences of racism were further compounded by sexist attitudes and assumptions based on their dress. This was particularly relevant to those Muslim women who wear the Hijab, but these fears were also expressed by Hindu and Sikh women. Some women linked their experience to September 11th. As one Muslim woman explained:

We're judged by our faith and the clothes we wear. It's really easy for women to go into depression because of our beliefs. Since 9/11 and 7/7, innocent people like us have to fight harder for our rights.

One woman at the *Shama* workshop created a poem to articulate her feelings (see below):

Fear

**What is fear?
Can we feel it?**

**Can we taste it, can we smell it, can we see it, can
we touch it?**

**I think when one has the symptoms of fear,
It trembles through your body
So feeling it could be possible,
But then again one can almost taste and smell
fear.**

**Seeing all this fear in someone is so visible,
You can almost touch it.**

**Feel is all of your senses,
So don't let fear enter your senses
And you will never meet fear**

**F-fright
E-evil
A-anxious
R-red blood that races through you**

**Making you feel anxious when the evil demons
frighten you**

¹⁸ Over locking is a technique used in hosiery manufacturing.

¹⁹ *Leicester City Council* comments that, as textiles is a declining industry in Leicester, training courses in the sector are no longer publicly funded. It notes that *Shama* will need to provide accredited training for employment sectors which need new workers if it is to attract public funding.

As this poem was read out (at the final celebratory workshop session), all the women applauded. Until this point they had not openly discussed their experiences of racism, but the reading proved to be cathartic, and many experiences and stories were then shared. The women spoke of feeling repeatedly 'bullied', and said they now lived in fear of such treatment. In the face of such behaviour, their response was mainly to ignore it or to try to avoid situations where racism was likely to arise. Instilling confidence and respect in their children to enable them to deal with racism was part of their long term coping strategy.

- Aspirations and the confidence to face new challenges

All of the women in these workshops were motivated to improve their skills. For some this meant attending 'core skills' courses at *Shama* and *PYCA*, for others it involved attending university. Although the women felt that obtaining a degree would lead to employment opportunities, one IT student said she was very concerned about her life after university, given the high cost of study, her family commitments and her perception that in Leicester it would be difficult to find appropriate jobs:

I have a £16,000 loan that I need to pay back when I finish my degree. That will go up to £20,000. There are worries. If I do not get a job, how will I repay my loan? Because when I was finding my placement, I went for interviews, but couldn't find many IT jobs in Leicester. They wanted to send us to London. My family comes first, the degree second.

Others were very keen to re-qualify in their previous professional fields, which included teaching, after acquiring the necessary English language competence. *PYCA* and *Shama* were key sources of information and motivation for these women, who were looking to continue their learning and to gain UK experience in their chosen field. Some of those who had been in professional positions overseas had come almost to expect that their goals would not be achieved. This did not stop them striving to seek entry into their chosen profession, however. As one participant, who had been in Leicester for 18 months, stated:

In PYCA I got the information about school teacher's voluntary work. I went for the interview today. It's 4-5 months of voluntary work, then the school will offer me a paid job. I will know the result in two days' time. I had a Masters in

education in Pakistan - I was a teacher there. So I still want to be a teacher here. But I have a language problem. I need to improve my English.

While some women felt they had to seek work below their previous skill and experience levels, migration had given others new opportunities that would not have been possible for them in their country of origin. For these women, the considerable cultural leap they had taken had opened up their imaginations, and stoked their desire to achieve high ambitions:

I came to marry a Pakistani husband. (I've been here) only for 4 or 5 months, I do not know him very well yet. My husband works in the council. He encouraged me to do a course, to go out, to speak English. This is a swift change from my life in Pakistan, where my father always asked me not to go out. Women usually stay at home in Pakistan. I want to do some courses, and then find a respectable job, like in an office working at a computer. My husband said I could find a job in the council, (I should) not do a low level job.

These women were very aware that, ultimately, however motivated and ambitious they were, they needed to improve their English language proficiency if they were to realise their goals and potential. They stressed that the support offered by organisations such as *PYCA* and *Shama* was vitally significant in helping them, and other women like them, to achieve their aspirations.

The evidence presented in this report, both from the analysis of Census data and from national and local intelligence, supported by the insights gained through these workshops with a small group of women, enable us to draw out following key issues, and to make the recommendations for local agencies included below.

Key points and recommendations

This study of ethnic minority women in Leicester shows that ethnic minority women's disadvantage can arise from their:

- *Migration history*: their settlement and assimilation patterns, residency status, and whether they are first or subsequent generation residents.
- *Language, qualifications, skills and experience*: these affected women's confidence, employment aspirations and achievements, and their ability to access information and support services.
- *Aspirations/confidence*: this depended on both personal and family circumstances, levels of qualification and skill, and on experiences in the labour market.
- *Local area*: The women identified some continuing weaknesses in the local support infrastructure, including childcare, public transport and other services.
- *Suitable job opportunities*: Although the textile and clothing sector was still an important source of employment, job insecurity and restructuring of this part of the economy was limiting women's opportunities.
- *Cultural/family circumstances*: These were highly variable within and between different ethnic groups; although sometimes barriers to employment, family and cultural networks also offer ways of accessing some kinds of work and were important sources of support for some women.
- *Discrimination and racism*: Direct and indirect racism was a common experience, at school, in some kinds of employment; and on the street.

Locally, there are a number of examples of good practice in supporting ethnic minority women to move closer to the labour market. Nevertheless, major challenges remain for local ethnic minority women. Leicester City Council and its partner agencies should continue to explore ways of developing closer partnerships with local agencies, and of deepening understanding of the support and provision needed by its resident ethnic minority women. Our recommendations are set out below for different key stakeholder groups to consider:

Voluntary/community sector organisations and funders

- *Need support to sustain the work of local, community-focused organisations in meeting the needs of ethnic minority women*. These centres have successfully engaged hard-to-reach groups, by building their trust, increasing their skills, confidence and employability, and bringing them closer to the labour market. They offer 'value-added', by encouraging women's self-help and independence, as participants progress from 'beneficiaries' to volunteers. It will be important to identify ways of sustaining this work in the longer term.
- *Could increase opportunities for training and progression*: e.g. to accredit skills and experience gained in the voluntary sector, and to provide improved career structures and opportunities for gaining professional qualifications, while retaining opportunities for women lacking qualifications to enter the sector.
- *Extended ESOL/English-language support is needed*: Free access is needed in community-based centres providing opportunities to develop skills and confidence in a safe environment, alongside basic skills/IT training to enhance employability. This provision needs to be culturally appropriate and gender sensitive. Crèche facilities (preferably on-site) are important. Translation and interpretation services should be monitored and reviewed to ensure this provision meets the needs of local women.
- *Increased provision of personal development and confidence-building courses and activities is needed*: Arts-based/creative activities can be highly positive and empowering, without over-reliance on verbal communication skills. Group activities further enhance mutual understanding and shared experiences.

Employers/employers' organisations

- *Recognition of prior qualifications and skills gained abroad* needs to improve, building on existing schemes. Employer awareness needs to be raised by challenging misconceptions and assumptions about particular groups, and recognising that prior experience and motivation to work can be an indication of potential.

- *Work placement and on-the-job training opportunities are needed:* tasters of alternative and non-traditional opportunities; and opportunities to gain experience.
- *Staff management, career progression and staff development support may need to be enhanced.* Managers need to be aware of how workplace cultures exclude certain groups. Practices need to be sensitive to individual differences and needs, and to recognise that lack of confidence can hamper progression for some groups.
- *A much wider range of part-time jobs is needed,* to enable women with other responsibilities to progress and achieve their potential.
- *Vacancies need to be advertised in a wide range of local community settings and media.*

Jobcentre Plus, Connexions, careers-related services and training organisations

- *Improved access to careers advice is needed:* This should be tailored to women from different backgrounds, with varied experience and aspirations, offering advice and guidance on short, medium and longer-term goals. Non-stereotyped careers advice and information on alternative and non-traditional employment and training options, matched to local skills gaps, employers, and job opportunities is required – particularly in schools and colleges.
- *Access to pre-interview and job-preparation support and coaching* in schools, colleges and elsewhere, on: job-search skills, CV writing, applications, and interview skills. Because ‘self-promotion’ in applications and interviews is a cultural barrier for some groups, specific, targeted coaching may be needed.
- *Better local information, advice and guidance are needed:* This should relate to employment, training, the education system and benefits, and be offered in community languages or with language support. Further outreach work by JobCentre Plus and community organisations needs to be developed, to bring mainstream support, local jobs and information to local women. Particular attention needs to be given to ethnic minority women displaced from textile, hosiery and other manufacturing industry.
- *Targeted support is needed to tackle the barriers experienced by unemployed ethnic*

minority women e.g. for Bangladeshi and Pakistani women seeking work through JobCentre Plus. High unemployment among economically active Pakistani/Bangladeshi women suggests entrenched disadvantage and discrimination persist.

- *Formal accreditation mechanisms that value and recognise practical competences and skills need to be developed.*

Local authorities/other local service providers could:

- *Undertake additional work to tackle racism and discrimination:*
 - Awareness raising/information for the local population, through schools and colleges, local media and employers.
 - Anti-racist, diversity training for service providers and employers.
 - Heightened profile of the work, policies and actions taken by Street Wardens, the Police, Victim Support, legal services and other agencies in combating racism.
 - Initiatives to encourage reporting of incidents.
- *Improve targeting and promotion of information and support services to ethnic minority women* using trusted community links (organisations, events, workers, volunteers), using informal communication mechanisms.
- *Improve access to childcare:* flexible, local, affordable and culturally sensitive provision, to support course attendance, training, volunteering activities and paid work.
- *Improve monitoring data and targeting of services,* relevant to the situation of different groups of ethnic minority women. Guidance could be developed for organisations on how they can meet the multi-layered needs of the local population.
- *Mainstream equalities/diversity policies:* Across all statutory, voluntary and private sector provision/services (in line with the new public duty to promote gender equality.²⁰)
- *Positively encourage and promote ethnic minority women's representation and participation in local decision making and governance bodies* (e.g. as local councillors, on Boards, and in other ways) to enable local change.

²⁰ Under the *Equality Act 2006* all public sector bodies will have a new duty to promote gender equality from 2007.

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Appendix 1 Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets

The *Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets* project was funded, between September 2003 and August 2006, by a core European Social Fund grant to Professor Sue Yeandle and her research team at the *Centre for Social Inclusion*, Sheffield Hallam University. The award was made from within ESF Policy Field 5 Measure 2, 'Gender and Discrimination in Employment'. The grant was supplemented with additional funds and resources provided by a range of partner agencies, notably the Equal Opportunities Commission, the TUC, and 12 English local authorities.

The GELLM project output comprises:

- new statistical analysis of district-level labour market data, led by Dr Lisa Buckner, producing separate **Gender Profiles** of the local labour markets of each of the participating local authorities (Buckner, Tang and Yeandle 2004, 2005, 2006) - available from the local authorities concerned and at www.shu.ac.uk/research/csi/
- 6 **Local Research Studies**, each involving between three and six of the project's local authority partners. Locality and Synthesis reports of these studies, published spring-summer 2006 are available at www.shu.ac.uk/research/csi/. Details of other publications and presentations relating to the GELLM programme are also posted on this website.
 1. *Working below potential: women and part-time work*, led by Dr Linda Grant and part-funded by the EOC (first published by the EOC in 2005)
 2. *Connecting women with the labour market*, led by Dr Linda Grant
 3. *Ethnic minority women and access to the labour market*, led by Bernadette Stiell
 4. *Women's career development in the local authority sector in England* led by Dr Cinnamon Bennett
 5. *Addressing women's poverty: local labour market initiatives* led by Karen Escott
 6. *Local challenges in meeting demand for domiciliary care* led from autumn 2005 by Professor Sue Yeandle and prior to this by Anu Suokas

The GELLM Team

Led by Professor Sue Yeandle, the members of the GELLM research team at the *Centre for Social Inclusion* are: Dr Cinnamon Bennett, Dr Lisa Buckner, Ian Chesters (administrator), Karen Escott, Dr Linda Grant, Christopher Price, Lucy Shipton, Bernadette Stiell, Anu Suokas (until autumn 2005), and Dr Ning Tang. The team is grateful to Dr Pamela Fisher for her contribution to the project in 2004, and for the advice and support of Dr Chris Gardiner.

The GELLM Partnership

The national partners supporting the GELLM project are the Equal Opportunities Commission and the TUC. The project's 12 local authority partners are: Birmingham City Council, the London Borough of Camden, East Staffordshire Borough Council, Leicester Council, Newcastle City Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Somerset County Council, the London Borough of Southwark, Thurrock Council, Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and West Sussex County Council. The North East Coalition of Employers has also provided financial resources via Camden Council. The team is grateful for the support of these agencies, without which the project could not have been developed. The GELLM project engaged Professor Damian Grimshaw, Professor Ed Fieldhouse (both of Manchester University) and Professor Irene Hardill (Nottingham Trent University), as external academic advisers to the project team, and thanks them for their valuable advice and support.

Appendix 2 Research methods

This study used a mixed method research design, incorporating:

- Detailed analysis of the 2001 Census
- A review of local information and intelligence using documentary analysis
- Qualitative research with local ethnic minority women

Analysis of the 2001 Census

Data from the 2001 Census relating to women resident in the wards were analysed for particular ethnic minority groups. This included:

- Background information - population size, age-sex profile, country of birth, household composition
- Economic activity - full-time/part-time employment, unemployment, economic inactivity
- Occupation and industry data for women in employment.

Where possible, data are presented for women of working age (16-59), however some Census output was only available for women aged 16-74.

Review of local information and intelligence

Through Leicester City Council relevant information from local statutory and voluntary and community sector organisations that deal with, support or collect data on, ethnic minority women was obtained. These documents were supplemented with national policy and academic literature, and internet sources.

Qualitative methodology: art-based workshops

These innovative workshops enabled women participants to use art and poetry to represent images of their lives, whilst evidencing their aspirations, skills and capabilities. The women also identified barriers to employment / job progression which affected them, and their support needs. The workshops produced detailed qualitative data relating to the women's:

- views, preferences and values regarding child-care, caring, and employment;
- existing experience, skills, capacities and qualifications;
- personal choices, and how these are influenced by cultural/ family expectations;
- local barriers to employment such as transport, childcare, education & discrimination.

The art-based approach was a way of attracting the women to a research experience that was confidence-enhancing and interactive, but not wholly reliant on their verbal skills and confidence. It was also an alternative means of tapping into, and expressing, their life experiences and stories. The informal and interactive workshop ethos enabled trust and rapport to develop between attendees and encouraged everyone to join in – often 'doing' the art while also talking and sharing experiences, building up snippets of each others' stories over time. Participants were assured that their confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained – their work, images or words would only be used with their consent.

The workshops were designed and facilitated by the research team and attended by 12 women, 6 from Indian, 3 from Pakistani and 3 from other Asian backgrounds. Participants produced collages and poetry to represent aspects of their past, present and future lives. During the workshops the women were encouraged to talk about their artwork with each other and the researchers, in a relaxed environment. A final celebratory session was attended by a larger group of women and a Leicester City Council employee who had been invited to listen and respond to the issues raised and provide effective signposting to the relevant local authority services.

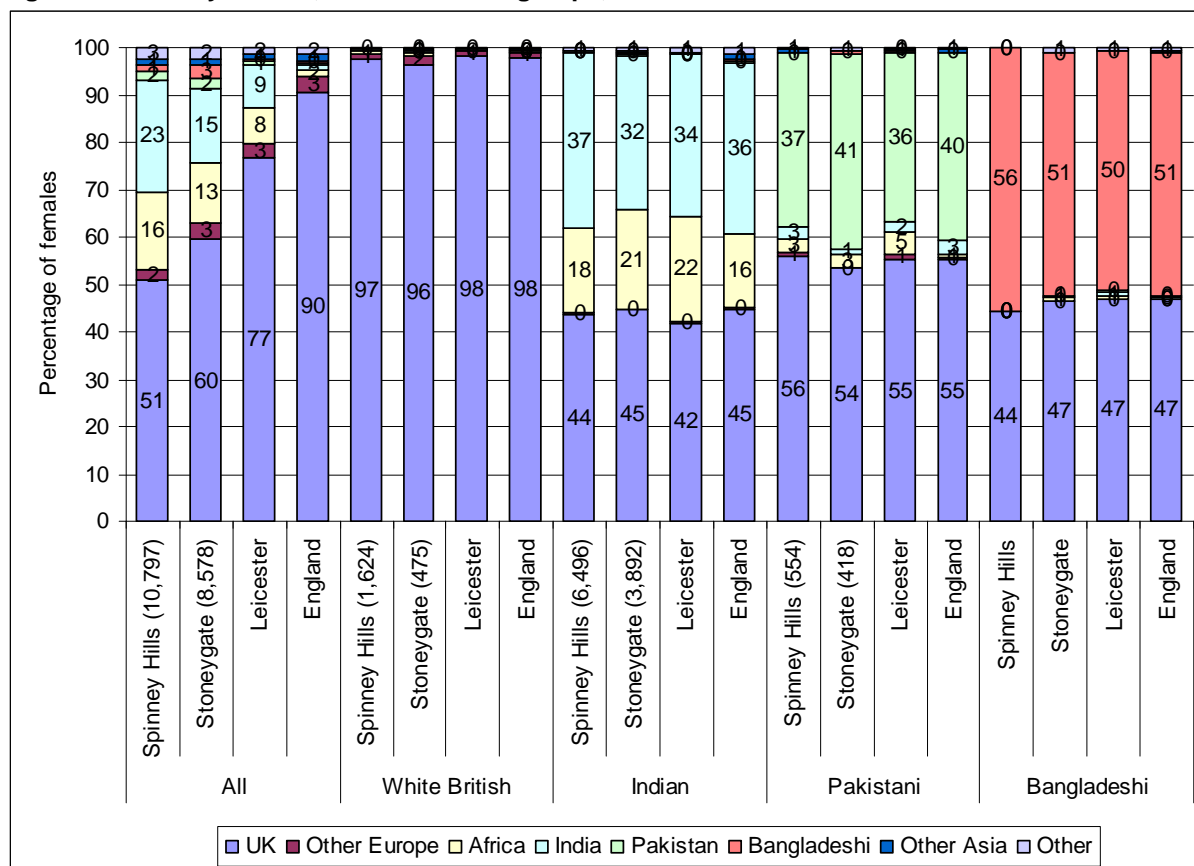
Appendix 3 Additional informational about ethnic minority women in Leicester and the selected wards

Table A1 Ethnic Groups: female residents (all ages)

	Spinney Hills	Stoneygate	Leicester	England
ALL PEOPLE	10,845	8,592	145,140	25,216,687
White British	1,626	2,527	88,564	21,918,492
White Irish	59	82	1,853	330,054
White Other	163	192	2,936	699,237
White and Black Caribbean	79	60	1,483	118,379
White and Black African	31	24	241	38,940
White and Asian	78	65	924	91,414
Other Mixed	67	49	644	78,236
Indian	6,498	3,892	37,057	517,342
Pakistani	555	420	2,211	348,496
Bangladeshi	275	476	982	136,422
Other Asian	558	295	2,575	107,672
Black Caribbean	342	241	2,486	301,365
Black African	381	197	1,716	246,835
Other Black	36	20	295	50,024
Chinese	50	21	714	114,768
Other Ethnic Group	47	31	459	119,011

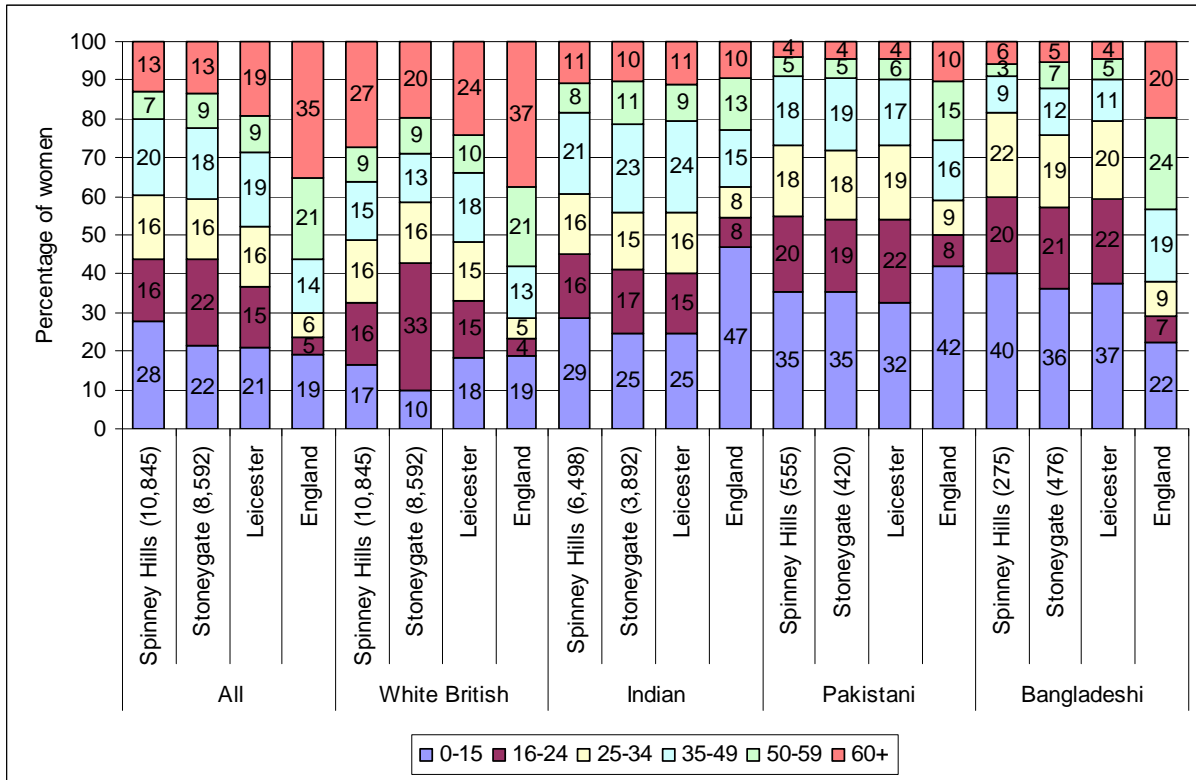
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

Figure A2 Country of birth, selected ethnic groups, Leicester and selected wards



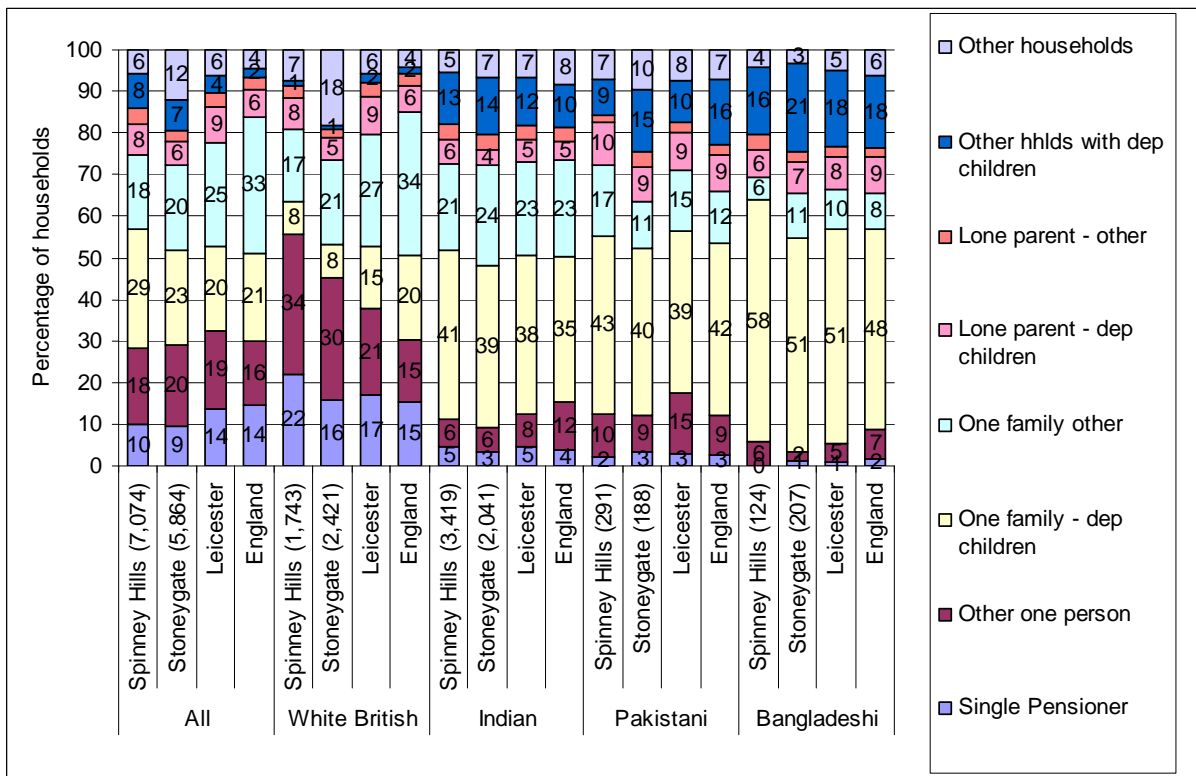
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

Figure A3 Age profile of female residents, selected ethnic groups: Leicester and selected wards



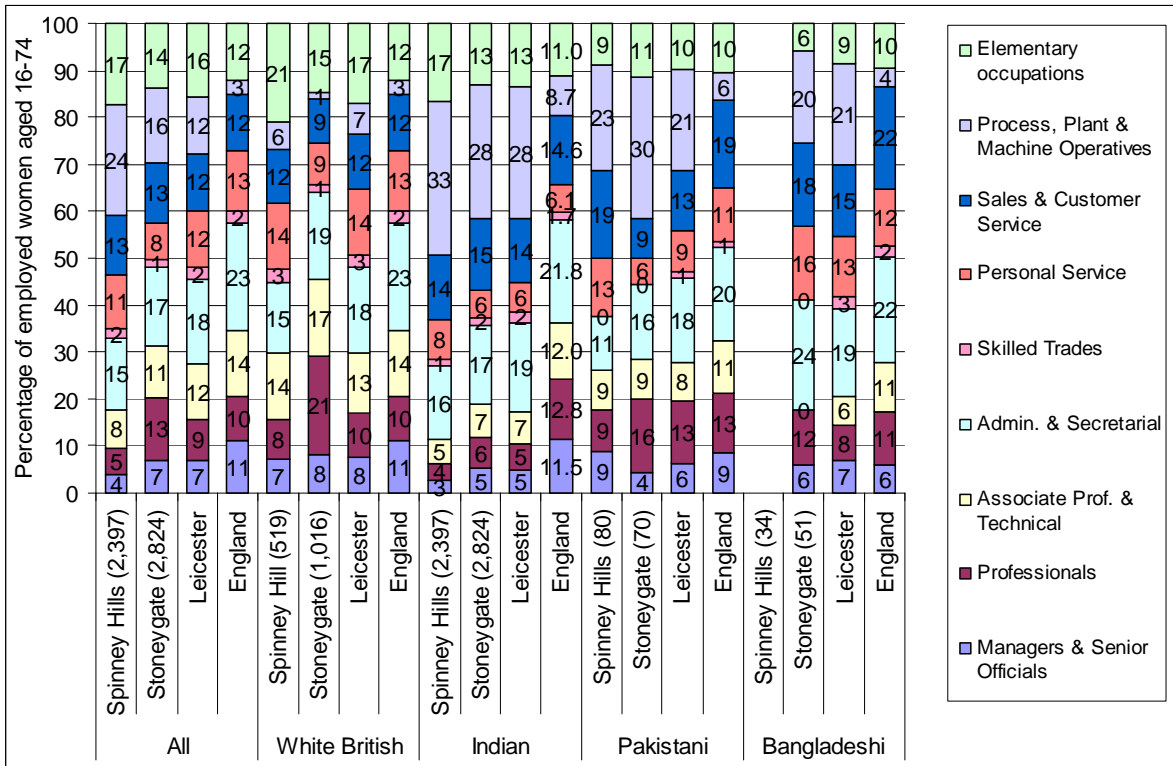
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Figure A4. Household composition by ethnic group of household representative person (selected ethnic groups): Leicester and selected wards



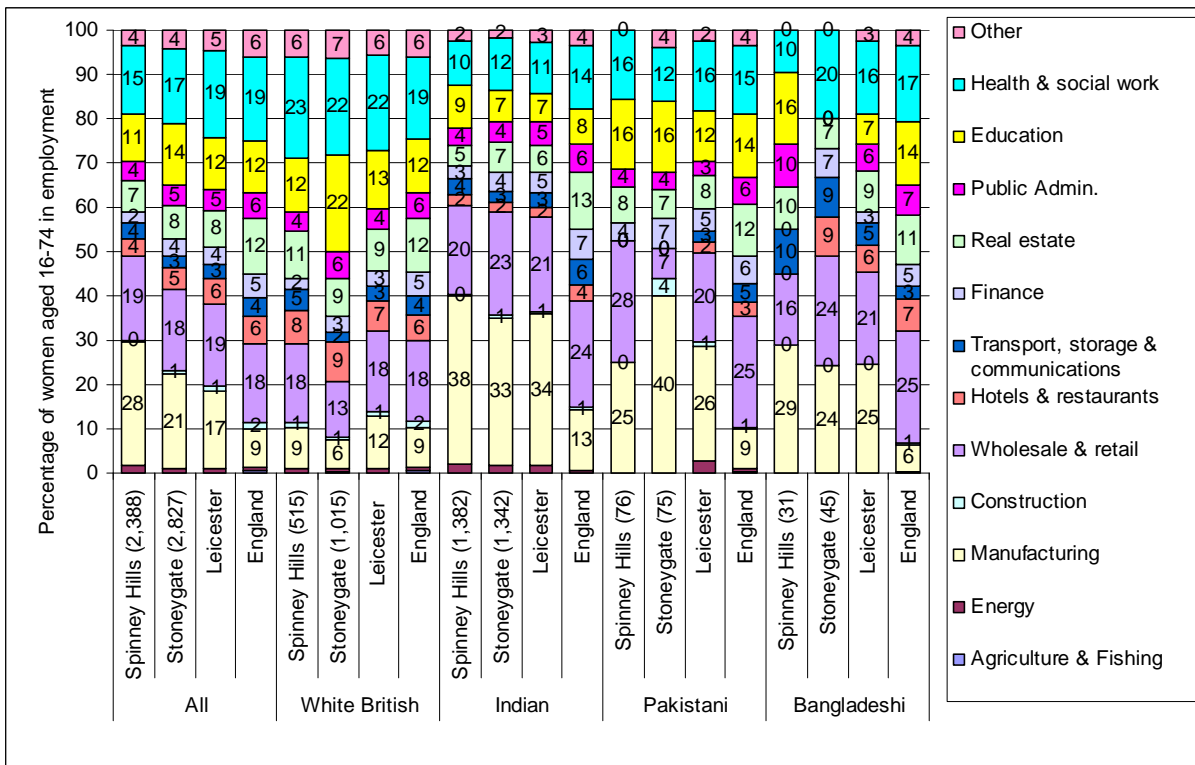
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

Figure A5
Occupation by ethnicity for women from selected ethnic groups: Leicester and selected wards



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

Figure A6 Industry by ethnicity for women from selected ethnic groups: Leicester and selected wards



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003