Unknown and Unseen

The needs and issues of Kashmiris in Rochdale

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FOREWORDS

It is with great pleasure that I present to you this very important report on the needs and issues of Rochdale Kashmiris titled aptly 'Unknown and Unseen' as this is the first ever research report of its kind on a British community whose existence can be traced back in 1830s and estimated reaching to a million mark soon but little is known about this group of British citizens among the policy makers.

I hope all relevant officers, elected members and interested members of public will find this report both informative and interesting and that it will give you a greater understanding of the British Kashmiri community.

More importantly, I hope that you will gain an appreciation of the difficulties and challenges faced by our community due to their exclusion from the ethnic monitoring systems which makes it difficult for policy makers to include any specific needs and issues of this particular minority community such as in health, communication, education and employment areas.

I also hope that the formula developed for this research will be proved valuable for estimating Kashmiris population in other towns and cities till the community is included in the national census and other systems of gathering statistics and monitoring community trends etc.

Tony Lloyd MP for Rochdale
Shadow Secretary for Northern Ireland

Rochdale's Kashmiris community plays a vital role in supporting the borough and the local authority. From elected members to local business and community leaders, Kashmiris provide many citizens who work hard for the good of Rochdale and its people. One of my deputy leaders, Cllr Daalat Ali, and the current mayor, Cllr Mohamed Zaman, are two such people.

Yet, as this report highlights, these remarkable achievements are set against a backdrop of an historical lack of understanding, appreciation and support for the needs of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale.

Unknown and Unseen is a thought-provoking study which offers an excellent insight into the needs and issues affecting Rochdale Kashmiris, both past and present. Reading it certainly gave me a greater understanding of the challenges sections of the community, not least elderly women, face on a daily basis.

But, crucially, *Unknown and Unseen* also offers achievable recommendations designed to address these challenges head on. Ways we can offer the Kashmir community the support they have shown the borough over the years.

I certainly hope this research will sound the starting gun for a conversation where this can be achieved.

Councillor Allen Brett
Leader of the Council
Labour Councillor for Milkstone and Deeplish

As a Kashmiri who arrived in the UK in early 70's, growing up in Rochdale had its challenges. At home, I was a Kashmiri, at school a Pakistani, and in my head, I was starting to feel British. *Unknown and Unseen* is a ground-breaking study that finally sheds light on the plight of Rochdale's Kashmiri community, including a lack of recognition locally and its subsequent impact on the community as a whole.

It would be tempting to classify this report as *overzealous identity politics*, but that would be a big mistake. By denying a community its heritage, you deny its history and stifle its potential. If you do not recognise differences, you cannot value strengths. If you cannot differentiate language and culture, how can you communicate ideas and values?

The Kashmir Youth Project's (a community centre established in 1979) sole purpose is to help the Kashmiri community settle and engage with the wider society. As its CEO I know we have tackled many of the issues raised in this report, and on our 40th anniversary, the Kashmiri community is now more prominent right across the borough than ever before.

However, that is not enough. Clarity of categorisation for local services is a minimal requirement and essential for community cohesion. This data should be share with other authorities where large Kashmiri communities live so that they too can learn from our experience. I am convinced that recognition leading to deeper understanding will improve local level service delivery, therefore changes to national census categorisation will have a national impact. Crucially, providers can start to design services that engage rather than marginalise Kashmiris to build a stronger and more cohesive environment for all.

Zulf Ali
Chief Executive Officer
Kashmir Youth Project

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Several people contributed and participated in this research from inception to completion in different capacities and wish to extend our thanks to all of them.

First of all we are grateful to the University of Manchester, Rochdale Borough Council, the Economic and Social Research Council and the Crime Commissioner Office Manchester for providing resources to carry out the research.

The research support team and council officers to name few Sajjad Mian, Sally Atueyi, Jeanette Staley, then acting chief executive Linda Fisher and current chief executive Steve Rumbelow.

Ward councillors who gave their support: Cllr Aftab Hussain, Iftikhar Ahmed, Shakil Ahmed, Amina Mir, Neil Emmott, John Blundell, Liam o' Rourke, Ali Ahmed, Deputy leader Daalat Ali for identifying communities and Cllr Janet Emsley for expert guidance and critical feedback.

Special thanks to Rashida Bi for her support in carrying out staff survey and interview transcriptions. Also to Gagun Chhina for technical support. Jaleel Miyan for providing resources for software procurement.

The household survey that forms a key component of this research was not possible without the hard work done by the volunteers trained for this purpose. Therefore, a big thank you to all of you who the surveys. We also appreciate the time and information provided by all 500 respondents in our household survey, 20 participants of in-depth face to face interviews and 30 Focus group participants.

Special thanks to Dr Serena Hussain, Sofia Ahmed, Farah Bi, The then Mayor Rochdale Surrender Biant, Fazal Karim, Waseem Rasheed and Gulfam Rasheed, Parvez Iqbal, M Shabir, Abid Hussain, Haji Akram, Javed Iqbal, Zulf and Hafiz Abdul Qayumm for traveling from far and wide to share their experiences, observations, knowledge and support in our specially organised research and community events.

We would like to thank KYP for providing space, Kashmiri Development Foundation for response to written questions, Rochdale Kashmiri Association and Almi Pahari Adabi Sangat (International Pahari literary society) for their support in accessing relevant members and places of the community.

Last but not least thanks to all those members of Kashmiri community who gave a lot of their time voluntarily to help us carrying out the mini census in the selected wards. It was not possible without you.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This research was commissioned by Rochdale Borough Council (RBC) to University of Manchester in 2015 and has been supported by the Greater Manchester Police Crime and Crime Commissioners (GMPCC) and the Kashmiri community in Rochdale The research primarily aimed to identify the social, cultural and economic needs of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale and to provide a method for delivering services to communities who do not fit into existing monitoring systems.

Data for this research was collected through a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods including a Kashmiris in Rochdale Survey (KiRS) of 500 respondents (including other communities in the selected wards), 20 face to face in-depth interviews, 4 Focus groups involving 30 participants as well as a 'ward censuses, a small staff survey and informal conversations with about 50 community members in different community settings. Data of Kashmiris who self-wrote 'Kashmiri' in 2011 census was also used for comparative purposes.

Key Findings

- *Only the Rochdale Borughwide Housing (RBH) uses Kashmiri category in the list of their ethnicity monitoring question. The Education department also collects data on Kashmiris in the borough.* However, the data collected by the Education department has little analytical value as they use three categories for Kashmiris including: "Kashmiri Pakistani," "Mirpuri Pakistani" and "Kashmiri Other."
- This confusion over categories and lack of data results in a lack of systematic information being available on Kashmiris for planning purposes in the Council and its partners.

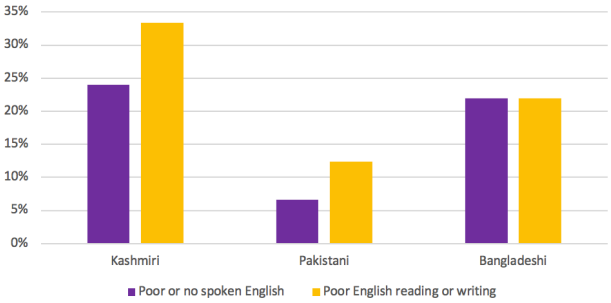
Rochdale Kashmiri Population

- From our ward census the actual population of Kashmiris calculated in the selected wards appears more than five times higher than the number of Kashmiris recorded in the 2011 census.

Lack of Awareness

- From services survey and face to face interviews it appears that most officers from different public services have fairly limited awareness about the basic characteristics of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale.
- Most participating staff assumed that Kashmiris are same as Pakistanis who speak Urdu or Punjabi and have no distinct needs and issues. This is especially problematic when considering the potentially unmet needs of older Kashmiri women who are at increased risk of becoming isolated and neglected as they do not receive support in their native language.

Figure 1. Proportion of people with poor English language competence by ethnic group



Source: KiRS

Language Barriers

- *Pahari*, the mother language of Rochdale Kashmiris is not recognised on par with other community languages used by public bodies to provide language support.
- From the household survey, it appears that 25% Kashmiri respondents cannot speak English or have poor spoken English. This compares to 5% of Pakistanis and 21% of Bangladeshis. In terms of reading and writing nearly 35% of Kashmiris have poor language competence in comparison to 11% of Pakistanis and 21% of Bangladeshis.

Table 1. Actual numbers of Pakistanis and Kashmiris in the selected wards

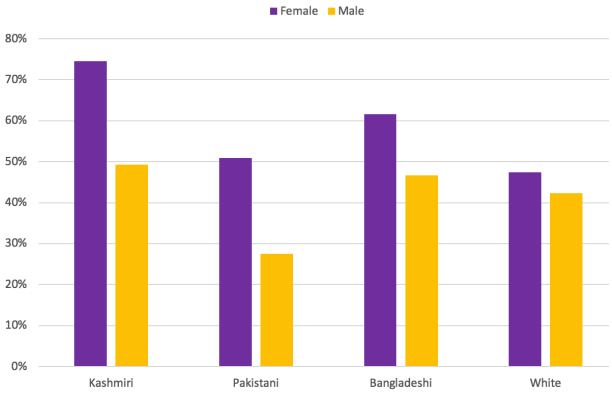
Ward	Pakistanis in 2011 census	Kashmiris counted in the Ward Census	Percentage of Pakistani community that is Kashmiri	Revised number of Pakistanis	Percentage of the Pakistani community that is Pakistani
Central	3412	2226	65%	1186	35%
Smallbridge and Firgrove	1815	1240	68%	575	32%
Spotland and Falinge	2236	1694	76%	542	24%
Total	**7463**	**5160**	**69%**	**2303**	**31%**

- Community interviews revealed a stigma attached to the Pahari language which they reported is looked down by Punjabi and Urdu speaking Pakistanis as a worthless language. Subsequently, the speakers of Pahari tend to hide their language and identity.

Economic marginalisation

- Survey data show that unemployment amongst Kashmiris is significantly higher than other South Asian minorities. An overwhelming majority of employed Kashmiri men work in the Night-Time Economy, specifically in taxi and/or private car hire companies. Nearly half (48%) of employed Kashmiri respondents work as taxi drivers.

Figure 2. The proportion of people who have done no paid work in the past 7 days by ethnic group and gender

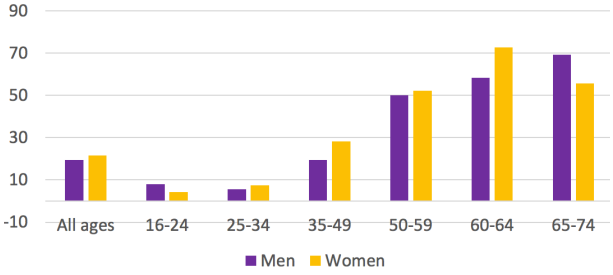


Source: KiRS

Health Status

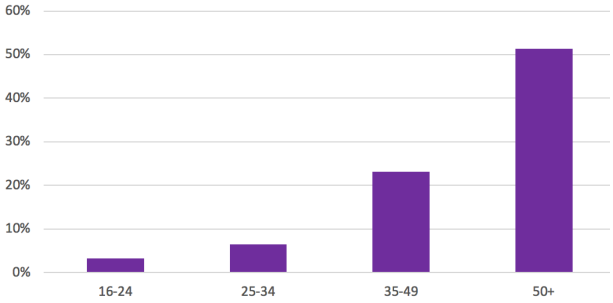
- While from qualitative data it appears that the health of community is perceived fairly poor, the quantitative data shows that the general health of community was actually good. However, as shown below (Figure 3) the limiting disability and long standing illness (Figure 4) are fairly high in Kashmiri community, especially amongst the ages over 50.
- Awareness about the Healthy Living provisions in Rochdale is significantly low. For example, fewer than 40% of Kashmiris in Rochdale had heard of or used Link4life, compared to nearly 59% of their Pakistani counterparts.

Figure 3. Limiting disability amongst Kashmiri respondents by age group



Source: UK Census

Figure 4. Proportion of Kashmiris who report having a limiting longstanding illness.



Source: KiRS

- Depression is also higher amongst Kashmiris than Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, especially in 'most or all of the time' which is 12% amongst Kashmiris with compare to 6% in Bangladeshis and 5% in Pakistanis.

Educational Attainment

- The Kashmiri community also appears to be lagging behind other minorities in Rochdale in terms of educational attainment. Over 60% of 16-24yr old respondents in the household survey had lower level qualifications.
- Although the extended categories used by the education department are confusing and need to be improved, the aggregated data calculated by aggregating all three categories used for Kashmiris shows that the level of achievement for Kashmiris is lower than that for Pakistanis.

Table 2. GCSE grades by Pakistani and Kashmiri pupils[1]

Ethnicity	Numbers	3+A*-A	5+ A*-C	5+ A*-G	1+A*-G
Kashmiri Other	3	0.0	33.3	66.7	100
Kashmiri Pakistani	28	14.3	57.1	89.3	96.4
Mirpuri Pakistani	46	15.2	65.2	95.7	97.8
Other Pakistani	124	27.4	74.2	92.7	95.2
Pakistani	153	22.2	68.6	96.7	99.3

1 2011, Z:\Census Reports\Pupil Census\SC062 - Kashmiri Pupils on Roll. rpt

Crime, Discrimination and Safety

- Around 4 in 10 Kashmiri participants said that they were fairly worried or very worried about being the victim of crime.
- Moreover 39% said that they were worried about being physically attacked because of their ethnic origin.
- Almost half of those asked said that Britain was more prejudiced today than 5 years ago.
- Around 30% of the sample reported that they had experienced harassment in their local area because of their ethnic origin.
- There is a widespread perception that there is a problem with drug dealing among some young people in the community. Some interviewees reported that in tough economic climate, some young people may find this lifestyle appealing.

Religion

- 74% of all the respondents who answered question about religion in our household survey were practising, of whom an overwhelming majority (88%) said that they felt able to practice their religion freely in Britain.
- While the majority (76%) also feel British, only 31% think that others see them as British.
- 45% said that they were worried about being physically attacked because of their religion.
- In the interviews people felt that a growing minority was becoming attracted to extremist views. A number of issues were raised as possible reasons for this. Key amongst these were the growth of an intolerance to 'the point of view of others.'
- Islamic Students' Societies in universities, as well as social media were also mentioned by some respondents as having a negative influence on younger people, especially in relation to extremist views.
- Frustration about global politics, in relation to conflicts around the world, including those in Kashmir and Palestine were also seen as a source of resentment from the older respondents and anger from younger interviewees.

Community Infrastructure

- Mosques remain the most important space for community gatherings. With improvement in the relevant skills and knowledge these can play a more effective role in addressing the issues of segregation, cohesion and integration.
- Some community organisations such as the Kashmir Youth Project and media voices such as Crescent Radio also provide spaces for community interaction and communication.

Conclusion

It appears from the research that the Kashmiri community in Britain lagged behind other South Asian communities mainly because of the subdued status of their areas of origin rooted in the unresolved status of Kashmir. Over 99% Kashmiris in Britain originate from 'Azad' Kashmir, which is under Pakistani administration. The disparity in the relationship back home was recreated in the relationship between the Pakistani and Kashmiri community in Britain, resulting in the loss of Kashmiri identity and the Pahari language, the mother tongue of British Kashmiris from 'Azad' Kashmir. This added to their marginalisation and exclusion as a minority population from the British Equality and Inclusion framework.

The statistical method devised for this research shows that two thirds of Pakistanis in Rochdale are actually Kashmiris, making them the largest South Asian community in the borough.

The awareness about Kashmiris amongst services is poor, mainly because Kashmiris are not properly included in the ethnic monitoring systems, which means that Kashmiris remain an unknown and unseen community. The local schools, despite having a Kashmiri category in the extended categories they use, add to the confusion and seriously undermine the analytical values of the data about Kashmiri pupils. Subsequently, it is not possible for the relevant services and authorities to identify and address the needs and issues of the Kashmiri community.

The views of several community members were recorded in this research and indicate the significant tendencies towards introversion in the Kashmiri community. This appears to be rooted in the lack of self-confidence and self-respect, which stems from the lack of recognition of the Kashmiri identity and language on par with other BME communities. To some extent this explains the over representation of Kashmiris in certain areas of economic activities i.e. Night-Time Economy.

Mosques, along with Kashmiri political and community organisations, provide a good starting point for relevant council and public services to interact and engage with the Kashmiri community in order to address the issues identified in this report and to take action on the recommendations.

Recommendations[2]

1. The Rochdale Borough Council (RBC) and their partner agencies in public, voluntary and third sector as well as the Department for Education (DfE) should include the Kashmiri category in all their ethnic data monitoring systems to ensure accurate knowledge about the needs and representation of the community.
2. RBC and its partner agencies should reach out to ensure that relevant information, awareness and opportunities are provided for members of the Kashmiri community to meaningfully engage with local decision-making processes, community and

2 Recommendations are summarised from the main report

neighbourhood development programmes, and citizenship rights and responsibilities.

3. The Pahari language should be adopted in the list of community languages at par with other languages in Public Health and Criminal Justice System to provide language support, especially for older Kashmiris with poor English language skills.
4. The Pahari language should be represented in libraries along with other languages to encourage the greater use of these services by the Kashmiri community. Material on Kashmiri history, migration and heritage should be collected and included in the local museums.
5. Public Health departments should run specifically targeted campaigns for the Kashmiri community to increase the engagement of the Kashmiri community, particularly the older generation and women with services such as Link4Life and the clinical commissioning group (CCG).
6. RBC and its partners should encourage and support the events and activities in the Borough around the role of Sufism and Pahari music as a key method to celebrate Kashmiri community cultural heritage through community, public and private sector organisations such as annual heritage events and *melas* (festivals).
7. Targeted campaigns from leisure and sports related services should be developed to attract Kashmiri youth to engage in leisure and recreational activities to tackle youth alienation. Borough youth services should liaise with community organisations to devise specific activities for Kashmiri youth to increase the sense of positive identity and belonging.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research was commissioned by Rochdale Borough Council (RBC) to University of Manchester in 2015 and has been supported by the Greater Manchester Police Crime and Crime Commissioners (GMPCC) and the Kashmiri community in Rochdale. Informed by the available academic and policy evidence, the main aim of the research was to identify the social, cultural and economic needs of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale and to provide a method for delivering services to communities who do not fit into existing monitoring systems.
Data for this research was collected through a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods including a Kashmiris in Rochdale Survey (KiRS) of 500 respondents (including other communities in the selected wards), 20 face to face in-depth interviews, 4 Focus groups involving 30 participants as well as a 'ward censuses, a small staff survey of 20 members and informal conversations with about 50 community members in different community settings. Data of Kashmiris who self-wrote 'Kashmiri' in 2011 census was also used for comparative purposes.

Presented below are the key findings from the quantitative and qualitative data gathered between 2015 and 2017 to identify the needs and issues of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale.

As this is a pioneering project, it was not possible to comprehensively cover and reflect on the views of the entire Kashmiri community on all aspects of life in Rochdale. However, we believe that the findings of this research discussed here offer a valuable insight into the social, economic and cultural needs of the community and their views and perceptions.

The main focus of the report is on the population size, socio-economic context and needs and issues in relation to health, education, the criminal justice system and the growth of community infrastructure. However, a general background of Kashmiri migration to Britain and settlement in Rochdale is also offered to make the reader aware of the context in which the Kashmiri community has been established and has evolved in Rochdale as well as nationally.

While the discussion offered here of the needs and issues of Kashmiris in Rochdale is expected to make a significant contribution to improve the local policy making and service provision processes, it will also add to the wider debate on the need for the inclusion of the Kashmiri community in the ethnic monitoring system at the national level including the national census.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

The need for this research was initially identified in 2012 following the concerns expressed by members of the Kashmiri community at the annual Equality Listening Event of RBC that the issues faced by the Kashmiri community in Rochdale were not being addressed due to the absence of a Kashmiri category in the ethnic monitoring system. It was claimed that this absence had led to a lack of awareness and understanding about the community at policy making and service provision levels.

Ongoing academic research with Kashmiris in the North West of England for the last twenty years, noted that the majority of British Pakistanis were actually Kashmiris from 'Azad' (free) Kashmir[3] who were experiencing persistent socio-economic deprivation, identity crisis and the lack of adequate resource provision.[4]

Following growing concerns about rising Islamophobia and extremism the North West, local councillors of Kashmiri heritage raised concerns that Kashmiris were becoming more vulnerable to such activities. They also claimed that Kashmiris suffer greater degrees of social marginalisation and exclusion compared to other South Asian communities, but their needs and issues remain unknown hence unaddressed due to the Kashmiri category not being included in the ethnic monitoring system both at local and national levels.

In this context, the RBC worked with partners to commission research that resulted in this project aiming to identify the main social, economic and cultural needs of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale.

Although the research was carried out in Rochdale, it is expected that findings will have significant relevance to the wider Kashmiri community residing in various towns across the country.

3 Pakistani administered part of the divided state of Jammu Kashmir.
4 Ballard,R. (2005); Kalra, V.S. (2000) also see Khan, Z. (2010) Ali, N. (2011); Hussain, S. (2014)

3. AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The main aims of the project included:

- To find out about the level of awareness amongst the local service providers about the Kashmiri community and identify any information gaps;
- To explore the awareness and views in the community about the relevant services available in the borough and identify any service gaps and barriers in accessing, and engaging with, such services;
- To identify the major needs and issues of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale;
- To devise a statistical formula for a reliable estimation of the Kashmiri population in the Borough of Rochdale to know the size, monitor and address, any specific needs and issues of the community;
- To analyse existing statistical data and to carry out primary survey research to quantify the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the Kashmiri community;
- To make recommendations for addressing the issues arising from this research.

4. METHODOLOGY

A multi-methods approach was employed to collect qualitative and quantitative data to best address the following questions:

- What are the sources and levels of awareness amongst different council services including public and voluntary sector about the Kashmiri community?
- What are the views and perceptions in the community about their needs, issues and the available services?
- What are the available sources of data on Kashmiris and how can we develop a formula for reliable estimates of the Kashmiri population in Rochdale?
- To what extent do the quantitative data support the findings from the qualitative data?
- What are the possible measures available for the Rochdale Borough Council and its partner agencies to address any issues identified in this research?

Some of the problems and issues highlighted from this research carry a range of complexities and sensitivities and there are no easy, ready-made solutions to the challenges they pose. The information presented in this report is an aid for relevant services, to develop appropriate policy and provision, to address the main issues facing the Kashmiri community. The research will also contribute to the wider debate on identity, inclusion, equality, cohesion and integration in Rochdale, Greater Manchester and nationally.

4.1 Methods

A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to collect data for this research.

4.1.0 Qualitative methods

To gain a background understanding of Kashmiri migration and the individual perception of the needs and issues of Kashmiris in Rochdale, 20 face-to-face, in-depth interviews were conducted. Convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods were used to select interviewees to ensure that they reflect the mix of age, gender and occupation.

Interviews were also conducted with elected members and officers including those of Kashmiri heritage.

Four focus groups were conducted for detailed and in-depth discussions to gain a wider picture of peoples' concerns, perceptions and expectations in relation to community needs and issues. We also discussed issues around local services and the nature, scale and barriers to engagement with, and access to, services. In total 25 people participated in these focus groups, e.g. approximately 6 -7 participants per group.

Conversations were also carried out with around 50 members of general public at different public places including mosques, community centres and the town centre.

4.1.1 Quantitative methods

20 completed questionnaires were received out of 30 from council and voluntary services staff approached at the Equality Listening Event 2015 as well as via email to gauge the general level of awareness about the Kashmiri community.

Since a category for Kashmiris is not included in the current ethnicity question in the national census, the first and foremost challenge for this research was to develop a credible formula to gain reliable estimates about the size of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale. This exercise was seen as being of particular significance because the size of the community seems to be one of the key determining factors in planning and resource allocation. It is expected that the formula we have developed for this research will also be useful for relevant services to make reliable estimates about the size of the Kashmiri population in scores of other wards in Greater Manchester and nationally.

5. FORMULA TO ESTIMATE THE KASHMIRI POPULATION

Although there is no Kashmiri category in the UK Census, some data is available on those Kashmiris who chose the option of 'Other' under the question of Asian/British Asian and then 'Write-in' Kashmiri.[5] We secured this data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for this project, and it shows that in the 2011 UK Census 24,683 people 'wrote in' Kashmiri as their ethnic identity. The figures for Rochdale were 1,658 people. However, previous research[6] and community intelligence indicates that the actual number of Kashmiris was significantly higher. Hence, we considered other possible means available for counting the total population of Kashmiris.

One option was to do a full ward census which involved visiting and counting members of each Kashmiri household. However, this was not practicable due to the time and financial constraints of this project. An alternative method was to identify the number of Kashmiris on the electoral rolls for our selected wards. This is what we did.

Although, the ethnicity of the voters is not included on electoral rolls, with some exploring and consultation with active members of the community in the selected wards we were able to identify each and every Kashmiri household and counted registered voters for each household to get the total number of Kashmiris on the electoral rolls in the selected wards.

After getting the number of Kashmiris aged 18 or over from electoral rolls, we needed to collect the number of Kashmiris who were under eighteen. For this we calculated the percentage of difference between total population of the wards and those who were registered on voting registers and applied that percentage to the Kashmiris counted from the electoral registers and got the total population of Kashmiris in our selected wards.

In the absence of a pre-defined Kashmiri category in the Census we feel that this is the best method for a reliable estimate of the size of the Kashmiri community anywhere in Britain.

5 Also called Self Identification
6 Office for National Statistics. (2009). Kashmiri Research Project Final Report: 2011 Census Programme. ONS, London

6. KASHMIRIS IN ROCHDALE SURVEY (KiRS)

The lack of available sources of data on Kashmiris highlighted the need for a household survey to collect quantitative data about the socio-economic characteristics of the Kashmiri population. This would also allow us to compare the situation of Kashmiris with other communities in these wards. We were interested to see if there was any quantitative evidence of the perceived marginalisation and exclusion of the community.

Therefore, the Kashmiris in Rochdale Survey (KiRS) was completed with around 500 respondents. Using a quasi-random quota sampling technique, we were able to include respondents from the Kashmiri, Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities to gain a comparative picture of the socio-economic conditions of different communities and to see specifically if any significant differences existed between Kashmiris and other communities. Twelve volunteers were trained to conduct the KiRS. The survey was conducted using hand-held tablets. Trained interviewers were randomly allocated streets to survey in each of the wards. Once a household agreed to participate in the survey all members of the household aged 18 and over were asked to complete the survey. Where possible this was done as a self-completion questionnaire. However, if respondents required assistance, e.g. due to language difficulties, the interviewers could administer the questionnaire. All interviewers were bilingual in English and Pahari and spoke some Punjabi, Urdu or Bangla. Despite an initially good response rate the fieldwork took longer to complete than was initially planned. In part this seems to be due to a reluctance to participate in the survey around the time of the EU referendum.

Unless explicitly stated otherwise all figures reported from the KiRS will only be for the Kashmiri respondents.

In 2011 census 1658 Kashmiris from Rochdale used the option of 'Other' and wrote in Kashmiri in the ethnicity question where Kashmiri category is not provided. At places this data is also used for comparative purposes and explicitly stated.

7. KEY FINDINGS

The presentation of research findings is organised into two parts.

The first part begins with a presentation of existing data on Kashmiris, followed by the analysis of the awareness amongst RBC staff about the community. This is followed by a quick introduction to Kashmir and Kashmiris and the historical context of Kashmiri migration and subsequent exclusion and marginalisation in Rochdale.

The second part discusses the impact of the absence of a Kashmiri category and the Pahari language from ethnic monitoring and service provision respectively. This part ends with the illustration of a statistical formula devised and utilised to estimate the population of Kashmiris in Rochdale.

7.1 Existing sources of data on the Kashmiri Community

The National Census is the main source of data that government departments employ to design policies, plan and provide public services, and to allocate resources. The data on ethnic groups helps services identify the extent and nature of disadvantage in the UK and informs the evaluation of equal opportunity policies. However, in the absence of a pre-defined Kashmiri category in the National Census, only two sources of data are available on Kashmiris in Rochdale:

- Census Data collected through the 'write in' or 'Self Identification' option
- Data collected by local services through the use of extended categories

7.1.0. Self-Identification or Write In

A 'write-in' answer, according to the National Statistics guide "is where someone has ticked 'Other' in the ethnic group question, and then has 'written in' a description of his or her ethnic group. The ethnic group question in the Census form has a number of 'Other' subcategories, one under 'White', one under 'Mixed', one under 'Asian or Asian British', one under 'Black or Black British', and one under 'Chinese or another ethnic group'."

The 'Write-in' answers are then allocated to the main category appropriate for that specific group. In the case of Kashmiris, the main category used is Pakistani. However, it is advised in the ONS guide that if there are large communities in your area which are not included in the Census you could include the sub-category under the main category.

In the case of Kashmiris, the sub-category is Kashmiri. In the previous Census carried out in 2011, a total of 1,658 Rochdale citizens identified themselves as Kashmiri using the option of 'Other'. This was our starting point for a statistical analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of Kashmiris in Rochdale that is included and presented in the relevant sections.

We also used this data to develop a statistical method to estimate the Kashmiri population as closely as possible to the actual population of Kashmiris in any given electoral ward in Rochdale as well as nationally.

7.1.1. Extended categories

The other main source of data on Kashmiris in Rochdale and in Britain at large is the Department for Education (DfE) which uses extended categories to collect data on ethnic communities that are not included in the national census. In line with the guidance by the DfE, schools in Rochdale use the following categories to collect data on Kashmiris:

- Kashmiri Pakistani
- Mirpuri Pakistani
- Kashmiri Other
- Pakistani Other

7.1.2 Limitations of the existing data sources and extended categories.

As mentioned above, 1658 people in Rochdale self-identified as Kashmiris in the 2011 Census. This is the figure that is used by most council services, e.g., the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2013 and the Single Equality and Community Policy's Development framework for schools to estimate the population of Kashmiris.

The extended categories used by the DfE have some analytical use, but only if the user is aware that all the categories used above, ('Kashmiri Pakistani', 'Mirpuri Pakistani' and 'Kashmiri Other') are actually for the Kashmiri community. The aggregation of all data from the above categories provides an estimation of the total number of Kashmiri pupils.

This point is elaborated below with the help of the data collected by the Rochdale Schools on the number of Kashmiri pupils on roll.

Table 3.1. Kashmiri pupils in 24 schools in Rochdale using extended categories in 2016[7]

Category	Number	Percentage
Other Kashmiri	19	0.17
Kashmiri Pakistani	410	3.75
Mirpuri Pakistani	789	7.22
Total pupils of Kashmiri heritage	**1298**	**11.88**

7 2011, Z:\Census Reports\Pupil Census\SC062 - Kashmiri Pupils on Roll. rpt

However, the question remains, why use three categories when you can use just one category – Kashmiri? The most confusing aspect of this usage of categories to collect data on Kashmiris is that Mirpur is just one of the ten districts of the part of Kashmir where British Kashmiris originate from. The only possible rationale one can think of using Mirpuri as an ethnic category is that the majority of Kashmiris in Britain originate from Mirpur. But then most of the other South Asians in Britain originate from specific

regions of their countries. For example, most Indians come from Jalandhar in Punjab or Surat in Gujarat, the majority of Bangladeshis come from Sylhet and the majority of Pakistanis from Faisalabad or Pothwar regions of Punjab or from Khyber Pakhtoon Kwa (formerly North West Frontier Province). Significant frustration was expressed about this by several participants. One, Mr Ali went as far as claiming that there was some sort of conspiracy behind this:

> *"I think this is deliberately done by some Pakistani 'up there' to create confusion amongst Kashmiris as well as amongst the authorities. Otherwise with even a basic knowledge about Kashmir and Kashmiris in Britain, how can you use Mirpuri as an ethnic category? Will you use Sylheti Bangladeshi or Faisalabadi Pakistani or Surati Indian because these are the regions of these countries where majority of them came from. Kashmiri is Kashmiri like Indian is Indian and Pakistani is Pakistani and Bangladeshi is Bangladeshi but they (are) playing politics."*

As several participants asserted during this research, this use of extended categories is confusing as all three categories may look applicable to most Kashmiris. Therefore, this confusion outweighs any analytical use as all three categories are for one community. To avoid this confusion, until the Kashmiri category is included in the census, a better form of data collection on Kashmiris for DfE and local authorities, would be to use Kashmiri as the *only* extended category as advised by the Census Guide to identify the ethnic groups which are not included in the census.[8]

7.2. Awareness amongst council service providers about the Kashmiri Community

Results from the survey and face-to-face interviews with representatives of different public services in Rochdale show that the level of awareness about the Kashmiri community is quite low. In total 30 questionnaires were issued to the staff of different council and voluntary sectors, in person and via emails, of which 20 were returned completed. The survey shows that one of the participants was not aware of the existence of Kashmiris in Rochdale. About half said that they had some awareness and the remaining half said that they were well aware that there was a Kashmiri community in Rochdale.

Of those who were aware of the community most thought there were fewer than 2000 Kashmiris in Rochdale. Only two were aware that Pahari was spoken by Kashmiris in Rochdale as their mother language. Most thought that they spoke Urdu or Punjabi. The majority of service providers said that they collect data on ethnicity using the National Census categories and do not use a Kashmiri category on its own or as an extended category.

Some of these issues were explored further during face-to-face interviews with senior officers of some of the public services, including the Police, Health and Substance Misuse, and elected council members.

The lack of awareness about the Kashmiri community was mainly explained in terms of the monitoring system which suggests that there are only two main South Asian communities in Rochdale – Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. In terms of the first languages of the South Asian communities it is generally perceived that Pakistanis speak Urdu and Punjabi and Bangladeshis speak Bangla. Most participants agreed that the inclusion of a Kashmiri category in the ethnic monitoring system would enable services to identify trends in relation to engagement and accessing the services by the Kashmiri community and to spot if there are certain needs and issues that need addressing.

However, it was pointed out that it can be most effective if the Kashmiri category was included in the National Census as all services at local level use the categories used by the National Census.

> *… when it comes to submitting data those are the categories, only those fields are available within the data monitoring system. We do have local monitoring but we follow the pattern the national data system uses because we have to compare data alongside the national database.* (Ms. J., Drug and Alcohol Action Team, DAAT).

Some service providers are aware that Kashmiris in Rochdale speak a distinct language. For example, in the borough's Literacy Policy devised in 2006, Kashmiris are distinctly mentioned as one of the main BME communities of the borough who speak Mirpuri as their language.

However, like the 'Mirpuri Pakistani' ethnic category used by the DfE, there is a problem with the use of the Mirpuri language category as Mirpur is just one of the areas of Kashmir where this language is spoken. As a significant number of Kashmiris in Rochdale and nationally come from other districts who speak the same language and the name of that language is Pahari of which Mirpuri is one of the dialects. Therefore, the recommended name is Pahari. The lack of recognition in the ethnic monitoring

8 Ethnic Group Statistics: A guide for collection and classification of ethnic data. pp: 51-52 *available on* file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/ethnic-group-statistics_tcm77-186499.pdf

system appears to be the major cause of the lack of awareness about Kashmiri community amongst services. All officers interviewed stated that they take a very proactive approach regarding access to their services and community engagement and treat all communities equally:

> *In terms of the service we provide we are inclusive, everybody is welcome and all ethnicities are respected so I don't think we'd be offering treatment services differently.* (Ms. J. DAAT)

However, currently there is no way of knowing how many Kashmiris are using their services or whether there are any specific needs and issues that they need to be aware of. Subsequently, the awareness amongst services is anecdotal or over-generalised as reflected in this comment by one participant from DAAT.

> *They (Kashmiris) tend not to be communities that are misusing drugs and alcohol generally, we're not aware of any Kashmiris accessing our services.* (Ms. J)

In some interviews with officers and elected members the wider issues concerning ethnic monitoring also came up, for example, should there be categories at all in the ethnic monitoring system?

One strongly presented argument was that ethnicity should be self-identified and the question asked should be 'what do you see as your ethnic identity?' Respondents should describe their identity rather than be told by someone else or bounded by the list of categories.

It was also discussed that ethnic categories in the census about South Asian communities were decided on the basis of nation-state status such as India, Pakistan, China and Bangladesh, because the countries were too diverse to be encompassed in any number of categories. An alternative viewpoint on this issue was that this approach negates the very purpose of the data collection on ethnicity at national and local levels, which is to capture the diverse nature of our population to identify the trends and patterns, as well as issues relating to how communities were doing in different aspects of their lives. Therefore, categorisation must reflect the ethnic composition of Britain and Rochdale rather than that of the countries of their origin.

The inclusion of Kashmiris in the ethnic monitoring system was seen more in terms of monitoring the issues and service gaps in relation to equality, community engagement, inclusion, discrimination, community cohesion and integration. Some actually went as far as claiming that excluding Kashmiris was:

> *'political and discriminatory because they pay taxes like any other community and policies for service provision must be informed of the needs and issues of Kashmiris like all other communities'* (Mr N, elected member)

Currently the system that informs policies is the ethnic monitoring system and the exclusion of Kashmiris from ethnic monitoring obscures their needs and issues, which therefore go unaddressed. This was how the issue of Kashmiri inclusion for monitoring purposes was summed up by Mr N, who has worked with South Asian communities in various capacities and in different towns before his current role in Rochdale:

> *'I think there's probably less understanding of the needs of the Kashmiri community and how we address that, I think we have to recognise we have to speak to the community. I don't like the term separate, but looking at the Kashmiri community as separate means seeing it as having its own needs that are different from other communities. I don't know what those needs are because no one's asked the community, so until somebody does I don't know. One of the things that always amazes me that I've come across here is what I would call typical institutional racism on the part of some people in the white British community, and white councillors and officers. I certainly came across it when I was a community development officer in another predominantly white town, going to an office talking about different communities then they're saying to me, 'why can't they all work together?' To me that is so patronisingly institutionally racist because it's like saying within the white British community you've got Protestants, Catholics, you've got Manchester United supporters, Man City supporters, you've got sports groups, brass bands, are we going to lump them all together and say why can't they all work together? 'Course we're not. So there is that, I think people who say that they don't think they're being racist by saying things like that, there's a need for more recognition and understanding of the Kashmiri community.'*

8. WHO ARE THE ROCHDALE KASHMIRIS AND HOW MANY?

Our 'mini ward census' shows that the Kashmiri population in Rochdale can possibly be five times higher than counted in the 2011 Census. While in the census a total of 1026 people from the selected wards 'wrote in' Kashmiri, our counting shows that the total number of Kashmiris in these wards is 5160. This is two-thirds of the Pakistani population counted in the 2011 census (which included Kashmiris). If this two-third estimation method is applied to the total Pakistani population of Rochdale according to the 2011 census which is 22,265, then the total number of Kashmiris in Rochdale is more than 14,000.

Before going into the details of census and ward census, this section address some basic questions of origins, the when, how and why of the Kashmiri community.

This section is included here in particular because several officers and some young people of Kashmiri heritage expressed the need for including this basic information about the Kashmiri community in Rochdale and about their language and culture.

> *I think we'd look forward to your research, so we could say well actually did you know this percentage of population are Kashmiris, Kashmir is a country here, people from Kashmir speak this language, for the first generation this is the language they speak.* (Mr A, Police)

This lack of knowledge about Kashmiris is not confined to the officers but also to the younger generations of Kashmiris born and bred in Britain, who also expressed the need for more information about their community's background and the history of its areas of origin.

> *'Till recently when I was involved in a community project from my work I knew little about Kashmir or Kashmiris and the migration of our parents or language and cultural issues. I think there should be a resource centre with general information in different formats.'* (Ms P, community member)

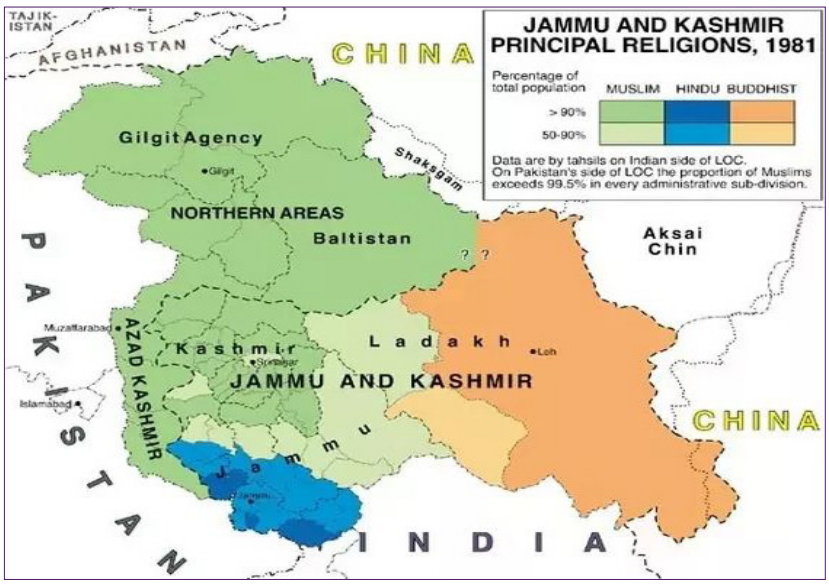
8.1 Origins of Rochdale Kashmiris

Kashmiris are described in this study as those British citizens, or permanent residents in Rochdale who or their forefathers migrated from any part of Kashmir.

Kashmir is the commonly used description by British Kashmiris for the state of Jammu and Kashmir that was founded on 16 March 1846 as an autonomous princely state through a Treaty between a local ruler and the British East India Company.[9] Situated in the North of India and Pakistan, currently, the main constituent parts of the state include, the Kashmir Valley, Azad Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh and Gilgit Baltistan covering an area of 84258 sq. miles (218227 sq. km) [10] and a population of nearly 20 million of which an estimated two million lives in the diaspora, including nearly 0.7 million in the UK.[11]

Since 1947, the state has remained divided and controlled by India and Pakistan. About 60% of Kashmir is under Indian control and is referred to as (using the United Nations terminology) Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK). The remaining 40% is controlled by Pakistan and is referred to as Pakistani Administered Kashmir (PAK). Some territories of Kashmir were taken by China from India in the 1962 war and around the same period Pakistan presented some territories to China.[12] The citizens of Kashmir across the division line are waiting for the referendum promised by India and Pakistan at the United Nations in 1948 to determine their political status.[13] Internally,

Figure 4.1. Religions and regions of Kashmir



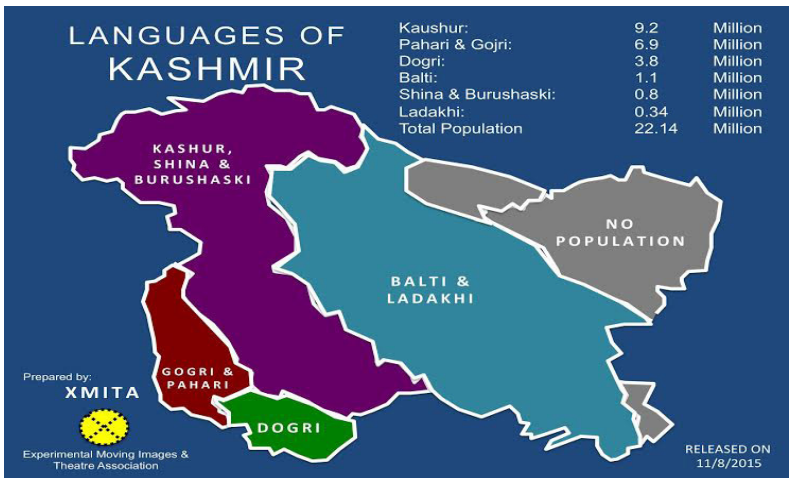
9 Schofield, V. (2000)
10 Saraf, Y.M. (1977)
11 For population details, see the Pakistani administered Kashmir webpage http://www.ajk.gov.pk/qStatus.php and the Indian administered Kashmir government ENVIS centre available on http://jkenvis.nic.in/administrative_demography.html
12 Alastair Lamb (2008)
The text of agreement available here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Pakistan_Agreement
13 Das, T. (1950),

Kashmir is a state with multiple identities associated with and constructed around regions, religions and cultures. The population is made up of the followers of all the major religions of South Asia. While Muslims form the overall majority, there are significant numbers of Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Christians in the state. [14]

8.2 Languages

Kashmir is a multilingual state with over a dozen languages spoken in different regions including Pahari (Azad Kashmir) Koshur, Dogri, Gojri, Ladakhi (Indian Administered Kashmir) Broshiski, Sheena and Balti (Pakistani Administered Kashmir's Gilgit Baltistan region).

Figure 4.2. Languages of Kashmir[15]



8.3 Labour Migration: The Kashmiri Community in Rochdale

Kashmiri labour migration to Britain started in the closing years of the 19th century and took place mainly from what became 'Azad' (free) Kashmir or Pakistani Administered Kashmir. Almost all Kashmiris in Rochdale originate from this part of Kashmir, except a few families who are from the Kashmir Valley.

Azad Kashmir is composed of the western strip of the Kashmir State with an area of nearly 5000 sq. miles and a population of about 5 million people with around a 2 million strong diaspora, scattered around the globe including an estimated three quarters of a million in Britain of which we estimate 14,000 live in Rochdale. The Azad Kashmiri population is over 99% Muslims and speaks Pahari as the main first language with Gojri and Koshur also spoken in some regions. However, almost all Rochdale Kashmiris speak Pahari as their home language whilst some families also speak Gojri.

The British links with Kashmir existed long before the labour migration from Azad Kashmir. The first 'material' link between Britain and Kashmir was through Kashmiri Shawls, initiated within years of the East Indian Company establishing itself in India.[16] The Pashmina[17] shawls became a status symbol for royal and upper class British women soon after the Company started business with India in the 17th century.[18]

The earliest Kashmiris in Britain were also from the Valley of Kashmir. Their presence in Britain can be traced as far back as the early decades of the 19th century. The first recorded Kashmiri in Britain was Nazir Begum who married a British colonial army officer, Major Thomas Alexander Cobb (1788-1836) and came to Britain.[19] Although no dates are given of her arrival, it seems it must have been many years before the demise of the Major. Another Kashmiri woman who also married a British colonial army officer Col. Robert Thorpe was called Jani and she came to Britain in the 1830s.[20]

The labour migration from Kashmir to Britain started in the closing years of the 19th century, when men from Mirpur who worked as stokers in the coal rooms of the British Merchant Navy ships left their scorching hot workplaces to try their luck in the freezing cold British coastal towns.[21]

The next channel of Kashmiri labour migration to Britain was through the British army, which comprised the thousands of Kashmiris who fought in the First and Second World Wars alongside a million soldiers from British India. From local oral history it appears that after the wars some Kashmiris stayed in Britain.[22]

The invasion by India and Pakistan in Kashmir in October 1947 caused widespread displacement of Kashmiris from Mirpur that came under Pakistani control and from Jammu city that became Indian controlled. Many of these internally and externally displaced Kashmiris later migrated to Britain through their contacts with the British Kashmiri migrants.[23]

By the mid-1950s, the migration from Mirpur developed into a 'chain process' which meant that people from Mirpur and its surrounding areas came

14 Behera, N.C. (2000)
15 http://www.kashmirlife.net/42-92-lakh-population-speaks-kashmiri-in-entire-jk-claims-x-mita-study-83232/
16 Keay, J. (2010).
17 Produced from the wool of Pashmina goats or Changthangi inhabiting the plateaus of Ladakh region of the Jammu Kashmir State.
18 Maskeil, M. (1992).
19 Visram, R. (2005)
20 Saraf, Y. (1977).
21 Ballard, R. (2005)
22 Ibid.
23 Desai, R. (1963)

to Britain through their existing contacts in Britain, forming chains of related migrants. By the late 1950s and early 1960s several thousand more Kashmiris from Mirpur came to Britain to beat the restrictions that were to be introduced in the 1962 Immigration Act.[24] Including those who came to work in the textile industry in Rochdale, Oldham and other towns of Lancashire.[25] The 1968 and 1970 Immigration Acts which reduced migration from Commonwealth countries to children under sixteen accompanied with their mothers gave rise to the migration of Kashmiri families. [26]

From the 1980s onwards, migration from Mirpur was mainly of spouses and older relatives. Recently, a significant number of Kashmiris from Poonch and Muzaffarabad districts have come to Britain as skilled labour and students.[27] Today, three and in some cases four generations of Kashmiris live with different experiences and expectations in their new homes in numerous towns across Britain, including Rochdale. [28]

8.4 Historical context of the marginalisation and invisibility of Kashmiris in Britain

While the primary purpose of this study was to look into the impacts of perceived Kashmiri exclusion from the equality and diversity framework in contemporary Britain, it seems important to have a quick overview of the historical and political context to which the roots of the exclusion and marginalisation of British Kashmiris can be traced.

Although, Azad (free) Kashmir has all the governance institutions of an independent country including a Prime Minister, President, legislative assembly, national flag, national anthem and supreme court since 1947[29], the power lies with Pakistan through a multi-layered mechanism of control including Kashmir Council, Intelligence agencies, national curriculum and religious institutions.[30]

Many participants in our study pointed out to this unequal relationship between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, combined with the disputed nature of Kashmir as one of the causes of Kashmiris' marginalisation and lack of recognition in Britain. This means that Azad Kashmir remains a neglected and marginalised area in terms of development. In terms of resources Azad Kashmir is rich in water with huge potential for hydroelectricity (up to 20,000 MW) and sizeable foreign exchange because of the high migrant population.[31] However, the Azad Kashmir

Figure 4.3. Azad Kashmir, the ancestral home of over 99% British Kashmiris

government has little control over or say in the use of these resources. [32]

This unequal relationship between the Pakistani and Azad Kashmir governments appears to have been gradually replicated here in Britain. Since Kashmiris from 'Azad' Kashmir travelled on Pakistani passports they were classified as Pakistanis in the British Equality and Ethnic monitoring structures initially in the Racial Equality Council and later in the National Censuses. Subsequently, they were represented by Pakistanis who were more likely to be from middle-class urban backgrounds. This had the effect of turning Kashmiris into a silent or silenced majority within the Pakistani ethnic minority in Britain. The areas in Bradford and Birmingham identified in the Casey Report as most segregated are overwhelmingly Kashmiri areas but are described as Pakistani due to the lack of recognition of their Kashmiri identity.[33]

This research shows that Kashmiris could not challenge this marginality and invisibility until recently

24 Shaw, A. (2000)
25 Kalra, V.S. (2000).
26 Ballard, R. op. cit.
27 Kalra, V.S. op. cit.
28 Rehman, S. (2011)
29 http://ajkcs.gov.pk/
30 UN Report on Kashmir available on https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23198&LangID=E
31 https://www.dawn.com/news/1115921
32 Human Rights Watch report (2006), available here https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=99WTTyxnkDYC&pg=PA28&lpg=PA28&dq=with+friends+like+these+kashmir&source=bl&ots=ElrSclXVKl&sig=5D6SQw17LSTfpSCHhUWDBZQz4bc&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwikt6Llu8jXAhVDKcAKHdZrAh8Q6AEIVTAM#v=onepage&q=with%20friends%20like%20these%20kashmir&f=false.
33 Casey report (2016) available here https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575973/The_Casey_Review_Report.pdf

due to a range of factors. One of the repeatedly mentioned reasons was the predominant intention amongst early arrivals that they would go back once they had earned sufficient money to start life back in Kashmir. However, from the 1970s, when they realised that going back was not an option, their marginalised position became the major factor in their inability to assert their Kashmiri identity in British public spaces and institutions. Lack of representation in, and access to, the policy making levels led to further marginalisation.

Politically, the first and second generations spent a great deal of their energies and resources in the politics of the 'Kashmir Question' aimed at liberating Kashmir. Even today those generations of Kashmiris who migrated from Kashmir are more engaged with the politics of Kashmir than with British politics and community development programmes.

Some signs of change can however be noted in the position of British Kashmiris over the past few decades. A significant increase in the participation of Kashmiris in British politics, at both local and national levels, an increasing number of Kashmiri businesses and more Kashmiris in local and national government offices are some key signs of this change.

It appears that some British Kashmiris, mainly second and third generation, who managed to gain some access to British public institutions and local politics and had better awareness of the Equality and Inclusion issues started realising the impacts of exclusion from the ethnic monitoring systems on the community. As one of the participants in this research stated, although there is still a widespread perception that asking for equality and inclusion is asking for a favour, more people now understand that this is not the case:

> *'We are not asking for any favours or special treatment. We are asking for equal treatment on par with other British communities as we pay all the taxes like other communities and it is our right to be treated equally and fairly.'* (P: Akhtar, a Kashmiri professional who grew up in Rochdale since arriving as a teenager in the 1970s)

It is this background context in which Kashmiris in Britain and in Rochdale experience exclusion and marginalisation. Evidence has also emerged from this research that they also face a significant degree of stigma and prejudice within South Asian communities. They are viewed and treated by some Pakistanis and Indians as backwards, commoners and illiterate. Their language is described as 'no language' and their history and heritage are seen as non-existent. The popular identity of 'Mirpuri,' which participants stated was sometimes abbreviated to 'MP' or 'Mip' was used to denigrate British Kashmiris with emphasis that they are Mirpuris and not Kashmiris.

In an event organised for this research, Dr Serena Hussain, a British born Kashmiri academic expressed how she discovered this discrimination while studying for her PhD at Oxford University:

> *'Two things are definite without any doubt. There is widespread stigmatisation of this diaspora community and stereotyping and othering of this community. This happened within other South Asians particularly those from Pakistani Punjab. It is a common theme coming up in social media that people are telling the people of AJK how to speak properly because they could not speak Punjabi well, or alleging that they are calling themselves Kashmiris but were not Kashmiris because they did not hail from the Valley. So, there are all these things coming up, sort of disputing their identity. Subsequent studies show that people from Azad Kashmir could not actually say who they were or what language they spoke. Now to me as a young person who is battling with issues around heritage, if you can't even say who you are and you can't even say what language you speak, or to defend the right to speak that language because people are telling you that this is not your language then there is something really wrong. This confusion then has impact on the service provision for this community.'*

She used this quote from an online 'debate' to highlight the prejudice about Pahari Mirpuri language.

> *'I hope Allah Speedens (sic) language change so that Mirpuri is erased. No one understands you. What a joke of a dialect that is trying to pass off as a language.'*

These kinds of extreme views are said be to be rare in Rochdale, but do exist and indicate the level of prejudice against Kashmiris.

9. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT IN ROCHDALE

Just as it is important to understand the migration history of Kashmiris living in Rochdale it is equally significant to understand their local socio-economic background in Rochdale.

Rochdale rose to prominence in the 19th century as a mill town and centre for textile manufacture during the Industrial Revolution. It was a booming town of the Industrial Revolution, and amongst the first industrialised towns. The socioeconomic change brought by the success of Rochdale's textile industry in the 19th century led to its rise to borough status and it remained a dominant settlement in its region. However, during the 20th century Rochdale's spinning capacity declined towards an eventual halt.[34]

In 2011, Rochdale had a population of 107,926, which has increased from 95,796 in 2001. In 2011, 34.8% of Rochdale's population were non-white British.

Over the last 20 years, the borough has faced significant economic challenges. Whilst some parts of Greater Manchester have experienced significant economic growth, others including Rochdale have experienced a significant loss in job numbers – 8000 in the past 10 years, predominantly from the traditional manufacturing sector. Between 2009 and 2013 Rochdale experienced an 8.8% decline in total full-time equivalent jobs.[35]

Rochdale has had a low business start-up rate and low business stock compared to most other parts of Greater Manchester, although the borough has 1500 more businesses than 10 years ago. Notwithstanding other key drivers, e.g. skill levels, this represents a significant drag on the economy in terms of productivity, output and economic growth. The borough's economy has been over-dependent on low-skilled, low-wage manufacturing and more than 95% of businesses are small and medium sized enterprises.

Ongoing restructuring of the manufacturing sector will mean a move towards higher value-added manufacturing businesses, which will need people with higher skills to be successful, along with modern premises and new development opportunities. The borough's reliance on traditional manufacturing industries has left a legacy of old commercial properties, many of which are in close proximity to residential areas and unsuited to the needs of the modern economy.

Residents' skills have increased at all levels and the number of residents with no qualifications has fallen by 6,700 in the last 10 years. However, this modest improvement is below the Greater Manchester and national rate of improvement in skill levels and employers continue to cite employability and technical skills as a brake on productivity improvement and growth. Of particular concern are technical skills at all levels with a good proficiency in English and command over Maths. Rochdale is in the bottom 10 cities for the proportion of those aged 16 to 64 years with a degree in 2011.[36] Wages for both borough residents and workers in the borough who reside elsewhere, have increased but at a lower rate than the regional and national rates. Rochdale was identified as the town that had experienced the highest levels of relative decline in the nation between 2001 and 2011.[37]

However, in the last 10 years the borough has seen new transport infrastructure and improved connectivity to Manchester City Centre, the continued development of the regionally significant Kingsway Business Park, improved educational attainment levels, and a focus on supporting employment generating business growth. Yet despite this, there are pockets of significant deprivation in the borough where unemployment levels are significantly above both the national and Greater Manchester average levels.

34 McNeil, R. & Nevell, M. (2000).
35 Pike, A. et al (2016).
36 ibid
37 ibid

10. KASHMIRIS AND ETHNIC MONITORING

This section looks further into the issues of the ethnic classification of Kashmiris and their first language 'Pahari,' in relation to monitoring and service provision. It also includes the views of participants on the lack of recognition and inclusion of Kashmiri identity and Pahari language and how these are contributory factors in the lack of effective service provision, service access and community engagement.

10.1 Kashmiri category and Service Provision

Defining and measuring ethnicity and national identity has never been easy, especially as these terms are constantly evolving. However, it is vitally important that we do measure ethnicity and national identity and that we do so in a way that is, sensitive, relevant and useful. We also need this to be consistent over some period of time, so that a clear picture of minorities in contemporary Britain can be constructed. In the current monitoring environment, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), "some of the groups in society that are the most vulnerable to becoming victims of social exclusion are forgotten simply because not enough is known about their particular circumstances."[38]

The first Race Relation Act was introduced in 1965 which made discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, ethnicity and nationality unlawful. Subsequently, ethnic data was required to monitor equality of opportunities and discrimination. Different categories were tried in different systems of data collection at different levels. However, ethnic categories were not included in the National Census until 1991.

Currently, the ethnic categories used in the Census for Asians are actually based on the countries of origin or the 'nation-states' including Indian, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Chinese. There is no category for Kashmiris. Subsequently, Kashmiris from the Pakistani Administered Kashmir (PAK) have to choose either the Pakistani category or use the option of 'Other' and 'write in' Kashmiri. Similarly, Kashmiris from the Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK), choose Indian or tick 'Other' and write in Kashmiri.

As can be seen from the examples included in the previous section, the distinct sense of being Kashmiri existed in the generations that came from Kashmir, but they failed to have it included in the ethnic monitoring and transfer it to the next generations because of several reasons including:

- Lack of understanding of the concepts and politics of racial and ethnic equality
- Lack of access to policy and planning departments of the state at local and national levels.
- Lack of awareness of the ethnic monitoring systems and its link with equality of opportunity and service provision.

Mr. Shabir, who led the way in the formation of the Kashmiri Youth Association and later Kashmir Youth Project in Rochdale in the early 1980s, had this to say in response to a question about why Kashmiris did not petition service providers to include a Kashmiri category in their monitoring systems:

> *'We were aware of the racial discrimination and also understood the internal prejudices and bias, but to be honest we did not think of campaigning for the inclusion of the Kashmiri category because we were not aware that ethnic data at that level could be collected.'*

The Kashmiri category was locally used in some other local authorities including Luton, Pendle and Bradford in the 1990s. Later a Kashmiri Identity Campaign was formed at the national level which took the case of Kashmiri inclusion to the National Census offices and both houses of parliament. An Early Day Motion by Bradford MP Marsha Singh in 1999 was followed by a motion tabled by Baroness Emma Nicholson in House of Lords in 2007 and later an adjournment debate by the Rochdale MP Simon Denczuk in 2014.

A Kashmiri category is still not included in the National Census because in the pre-census consultation Arab and Traveller categories were deemed to be more important to include than Kashmiris. However, another round of piloting was planned for 2017.

From the very first focus group of this research project it has been repeatedly noted that the key barrier for Kashmiris to be treated on par with other communities is the inclusion of a Kashmiri category in the ethnic monitoring system in Rochdale by the Council and all its partner agencies.

The main argument for inclusion was that without having a Kashmiri category on ethnic monitoring forms across all departments and services, the Council cannot have the proper data required to have meaningful information about the needs and issues of this community.

It was summed up by one Mr Mushtaq as follows:

> *'We know from our everyday experiences here that Kashmiris are suffering more from poverty, heart*

38 **ONS, (2003) Ethnic group statistics:** *A guide for the collection and classification of ethnicity data available on* file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/ethnic-group-statistics_tcm77-186499.pdf

related problems, diabetes, depression and so on but because they are included under the Pakistani category, the relevant actions taken by the government to address these issues cannot have full impact as the channels and agencies through which health awareness or any consultation is carried out hardly reaches the people, who have poor language skills and need to be targeted with specific language and cultural skills and expertise.'

Similar points were raised about crime. Some participants claimed that if there was clear monitoring then the majority of the 'Pakistanis' arrested, charged and convicted of a range of crimes, especially drug related ones, would turn out to be Kashmiris. Mr Mushtaq said it was '*because they don't know much about us and we find it hard to explain.*'

Mr Parvez claimed that lack of recognition of a Kashmiri identity was not merely a barrier between the community and relevant services but also linked it with other issues that hindered community development and integration in present day Britain:

'Because of the lack of recognition of Kashmiri identity, Kashmiris try to cling to their clan identities for self-respect, especially first and second generation Kashmiries, but the tendency can also be seen in the generation born here. However, the scope and space for clan identity is confined within the community and we remain confused about our identity outside of the community circles. That is why it is very important for authorities here to recognise Kashmiri identity to boost the self-confidence of Kashmiris and enhance self-respect. That is essential to overcome negative self-perception and introversion that is rife in the Kashmiri community.'

10.2 Language and service provision

Language is important for service delivery, especially for those people of minority communities, including women, who, for a range of reasons, can often communicate only in their native language. While the younger generation of Kashmiris speak English as their first language or as a second language but with great fluency, a significant number of older men and women have very little spoken or written English skills and equally limited Urdu skills. They need language support to use various public services including health, education and CJS services.

Data from the KiRS (figure 6.1) show that 25% of Kashmiri respondents have none or have very poor spoken English skills when compared to 5% of Pakistanis and 21% of Bangladeshis. In terms of reading and writing, nearly 35% of Kashmiris have poor language competence in comparison to 11% of Pakistanis and 21% of Bangladeshis. The main reasons highlighted in the research include the lack of English learning opportunities and capabilities of the older Kashmiri men and women, and a lack of Pahari speaking English teachers.

Several participants repeatedly asked for the full recognition of the Pahari language which is also called Mirpuri in Britain. As the findings of the Services Survey highlight, the level of awareness amongst the services about the language of Rochdale Kashmiris is very low. Most services, even those who are aware of the presence of a significant Kashmiri community in Rochdale, know little about the language of their local population of Kashmiri background. Many participants were not aware that some interpreting and translation services do provide language support in Pahari/ Mirpuri. Thus, when they needed language support, they asked for Punjabi or Urdu languages instead.

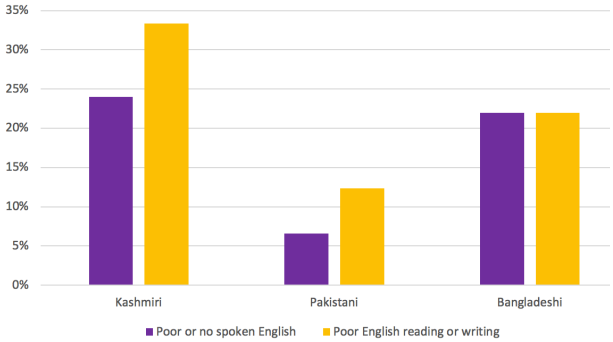


Figure 6.1. Proportion of people with poor English language competence by ethnic group

Source: KiRS

The stigma attached to the Pahari/Mirpuri language within South Asian communities in Rochdale strengthens the barriers for the Kashmiri community to access language services. Service providers assume Kashmiris speak Urdu or Punjabi which makes it difficult to provide services in Pahari/Mirpuri when needed. The following example provided by Mr Aslam, one of the focus group participants, who is a professional interpreter highlights this point:

'I was sitting in a hospital waiting room when I heard the receptionist trying to communicate with an older lady who spoke pure Pahari. The receptionist then shouted if anyone could help her in communicating with the lady. One man in his 30s stood up and provided high quality interpreting in Pahari. As soon as he returned to his seat the receptionist came to him and asked which language did you speak because I have to book an interpreter for her appointment next week. The helpful man said 'Urdu'. I looked up surprisingly and asked the man 'you spoke Pahari for the lady didn't you?
'Yes', he said adding 'but what will she (the receptionist) know about Pahari?
Well I am sure she will when you tell her.
He then went and told the receptionist that the lady spoke Pahari Mirpuri.'

Mr Suleman, a social worker also highlighted the confusion about and stigmatisation of the language of Rochdale Kashmiris. His story also highlights the importance of professionals from the Kashmiri community as well:

'I went to a family visit with the information that they were a Pakistani family who spoke Urdu. But when I went there they were actually Kashmiris and spoke Pahari. If I had not been of similar background, I would not have realised it. Some service users, carers and professionals are now more aware but most are still unaware and people don't have the confidence to speak up and say that they speak Pahari. Due to this stigma around Pahari they claim that they speak Urdu when asked, rather than saying Pahari even when they can't speak any language other than Pahari.'

Dr Serena Hussain, in her presentation at a community event regarding this research, narrated her own journey to learn about her mother language (Pahari). She described that this confusion and stigma had its roots in the classification of Pahari by academics and services as Punjabi, mainly due to Punjabi speaking Pakistanis telling British Kashmiris from Azad Kashmir that they cannot speak Punjabi and their language is not a language and is merely a 'jungle language'.

This bias causes problems for services in providing the correct language support. This was explained well from a service provision point of view by Mr Zaman who worked as manager for a translation and interpreting service:

'Initially there was only Urdu for all Pakistanis including for Bangladeshis before 1971. Then Punjabi was added and recently some language services have included Pahari and Pothwari as well. But there is not enough awareness amongst the Kashmiri community that they can ask for interpreting services in Pahari. They are so used to the Urdu and Punjabi categories that it appears from the feedback we get from our interpreters that most Kashmiris in Greater Manchester still say that they speak Urdu or Punjabi when actually they can't speak or fully understand any of these languages properly and speak Pahari. So sometimes when we send Urdu and/or Punjabi speaking interpreters they cannot communicate, and we have to re-arrange the appointment be it with health or with social services. This of course causes a waste of our professionals' time and resources.'

Other participants shared their stories showing that services also sometimes assume that all Kashmiris can speak Urdu or Punjabi and provide interpreters in these languages rather than Pahari. The point was made that those Kashmiris who can communicate in Urdu are those who have learnt Urdu in schools in Kashmir and they are also more likely to be able to speak English as well. The people from the Kashmiri community who need help with language are mostly those who cannot speak or read Urdu and/or Punjabi, especially the first and second-generation women and those who came recently as spouses and had had little exposure to Urdu and/or Punjabi languages.

Mr Ashfaq's experience is just one of many told by different participants about their mothers and fathers, especially in relation to medical appointments:

'My father needed language help at one of his health appointments. However, we ended up rearranging that twice because once the interpreter sent was an Urdu speaker who my father could not communicate with at all. The second time it was a Punjabi speaker who also struggled. My father understood bits and bats of what they said but they could not understand what my father was saying.'

10.3. The Numbers: How Many Kashmiris are there in Rochdale?

Our research estimates that the number of Kashmiris in our selected wards are up to nine times more than counted in the National Census 2011. To understand this finding, it is important to understand the formula we have devised for this research to enumerate the number of Kashmiris. We feel that having accurate estimates of the number of Kashmiris living in Rochdale will help to improve service planning and provision to reflect the demographic composition of the borough.

Currently, the Census is the only source of data to get an idea of the number of Kashmiris living in Rochdale and in Britain. However, since a pre-defined Kashmiri category is not included in the Census question on ethnicity, Kashmiris can be counted only if they choose the option of 'Other' in the census form and then 'write-in' Kashmiri. This is called self-identification.

In the 2011 Census 1658 people from Rochdale identified themselves as Kashmiris choosing the option of 'Other' under the broader category of Asian/British Asian. Of these, 1026 lived in our selected wards. So, if we look at the ratio of Kashmiris and Pakistanis using the Census data in these wards it would appear as shown in Table 6.1.

Roger Ballard claimed in the 1980s that up to two-thirds of Pakistanis living in Britain were actually Kashmiris.[39] Several scholars of migration and ethnicity later reinforced this claim in various studies that a large majority amongst Pakistanis are actually from 'Azad' (free) Kashmir.[40] In general, community claims align with those made by academics.

39 Ballard, Roger (1983)
40 Also see the report 'Pakistani Muslim Communities in Britain, by the Department of Communities and Local Government 2009.

Table 6.1 number and percentage of Pakistanis and Kashmiris in the 2011 Census

Ward	Total Population	Pakistanis (N)	Pakistanis (%)	Kashmiris (N)	Kashmiris(%)
Central	11304	3412	30	541	4,8
Smallbridge and Firgrove	11469	1815	16	314	2.7
Spotland and Falinge	10805	2236	21	171	1.6
Total	**33578**	**7463**	**22.2**	**1026**	**3.05**

Source: UK Census, 2011

Therefore, the first challenge for this study was to devise a method to make a reliable estimate of the Kashmiri population in Rochdale. As noted above in the methods section, due to the time and financial constraints of this project, it was not possible to cover the entire borough. To circumvent this, we decided to select those wards where the population of Kashmiris was perceived as relatively high. We selected three such wards: Smallbridge, Central and Spotland. Census data and electoral registers were the two main sources of data used to enumerate the number of Kashmiris in these wards.

Census data showed that there are 1026 Kashmiris in the three wards, which is 62% of the total number of Kashmiris counted in Rochdale in the 2011 Census.

As explained in more detail in the methods section, the first step in developing the formula to estimate the total population of Kashmiris, we counted the total number of Kashmiris on the electoral register which came to 3969. This is nearly four times greater than the self-identified figure in the Census.

Since voter registers record only those people who are 18 or over, the above figure did not include any Kashmiris under the age of 18 in the selected wards. To find out the total number we needed to know the number of Kashmiris under the age of 18. There were two options available to undertake this. In theory we could visit each household and count people under 18. However, it was not possible do to this within the time available for this project. Instead we calculated the percentage of the total population of the ward registered on electoral rolls which is 30%. We applied that percentage to Kashmiris which gave us an additional figure of 1191. Adding that figure to the total number counted from the electoral registers (3969) gave us the total number of Kashmiris in the selected wards which is 5159, five times greater than the numbers counted in the 2011 census (1026). These figures are presented in table 6.2.

In light of the above data it can be safely argued that only a fraction of Kashmiris in Rochdale used the option of 'Other' and 'wrote-in' Kashmiri in the National Census. For example, in our selected wards a total of 1026 people used the option of 'Other' and wrote-in Kashmiri in the 2011 census. However, our counting of Kashmiris from electoral rolls and Census data in these three wards shows that there are at least 5159 people of Kashmiri heritage in these wards. We have come up with this figure through the above mentioned method, particularly developed for this project. This can be used for reliable estimates of the Kashmiri community in any electoral ward across Britain.

The next crucial question for this report was to estimate the ratio of Kashmiris to Pakistanis in the selected wards. This is necessary to provide a relatively accurate picture to local authorities and partner public bodies so that they can readjust their policies and service provision to make them more reflective of the population they serve.

This was done by using the simple subtraction method. The number of Kashmiris counted by our method was subtracted from the total number of Pakistanis counted in the last census in each selected ward. The result, as shown in table 6.3, is that more than two thirds of those previously identified as Pakistanis in the Census data for our selected wards are actually Kashmiris.

Table 6.2 The calculation of the total number of Kashmiris in given wards

Ward Name	Total population 2011 census	Kashmiri Write In 2011 census	Total Voters on Electoral Rolls	Counted number of Kashmiris	Under 18 Kashmiris	Total number of Kashmiris
Central	11304	541	7436	1712	514	2226
Smallbridge and Firgrove	11469	314	8095	954	286	1240
Spotland and Falinge	10805	171	8140	1303	391	1694
TOTAL	33578	1026	23671	3969	1191	5160

Table 6.3. Actual numbers of Pakistanis and Kashmiris in the selected wards

Ward	Pakistanis in 2011 census	Kashmiris counted in the Ward Census	Percentage of Pakistani community that is Kashmiri	Revised number of Pakistanis	Percentage of the Pakistani community that is Pakistani
Central	3412	2226	65%	1186	35%
Smallbridge and Firgrove	1815	1240	68%	575	32%
Spotland and Falinge	2236	1694	76%	542	24%
Total	**7463**	**5160**	**69%**	**2303**	**31%**

Source: Electoral register, selected wards in Rochdale

Table 6.4. Percentage of Kashmiris used Write-In option in the 2011 Census

Ward	Self-Identified Kashmiris in Census	Estimated real number of Kashmiris	Percentage of Kashmiris who self-identified in the Census
Central	541	2226	24%
Smallbridge and Firgrove	314	1240	25%
Spotland and Falinge	171	1694	10%
TOTAL	1026	5160	18%

Based on this formula one way of calculating the total number of Kashmiris in Rochdale is to multiply the number of self-identified Kashmiris in the national census by five which will be 1658 x 5 = 8,290. However, this calculation is based on the assumption that the same percentage of Kashmiris self-identified themselves as Kashmiri in all wards. Whereas, the trend is clearly different in all three of our selected wards. For example, 24% Kashmiris self-identified in Central ward, 25% in Smallbridge and only 10% in Spotland ward. Therefore, to get the closest estimate using this formula, an essential component is counting the total number of Kashmiris using the electoral rolls, and then adding 30% for under 18s.

The alternative method to estimate the Kashmiri population is to use the 'Two Third' method based on the estimation provided by Ballard.[41] This means that two third of the Pakistanis counted in the Census are actually Kashmiris. For example, in Rochdale borough the total population of Pakistanis in 2011 Census was counted at 22,265. If we use this simple method, we estimate that there are 14,847 Kashmiris in Rochdale, which is nine times more than those who self-identified in the last census.

41 Ballard, Roger (1983)

11. NEEDS AND ISSUES

This section offers a detailed discussion of the findings about the social, economic and cultural needs of Kashmiris in Rochdale including employment, health, education, crime, culture and community infrastructure based on qualitative and quantitative data gathered for this research.

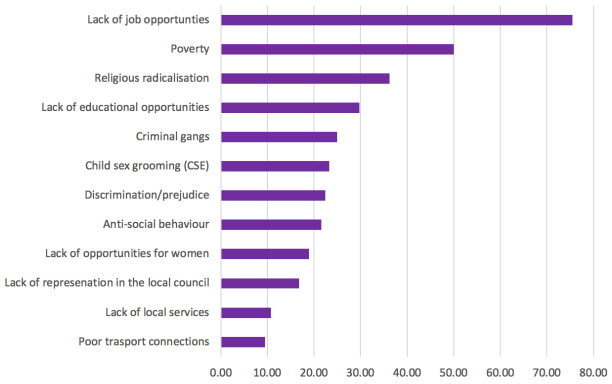
Quantitative data are based on relevant Census data and data from around 500 participants in the KiRS of which 51% were male and 48% female. While the majority of the respondents identified Asian/British as their main ethnic group (90%) there were also 10% White participants. Within the Asian group 59% were Kashmiris, 27% Pakistani and 10% were of Bangladeshi heritage. In terms of the ages of the respondents in the KiRS there was a wide range of ages from 16 to 50 years. The age groups from different communities are presented in table 7.1.

Our qualitative data are based on 20 semi-structured interviews with different people of the community representing different ages, genders and occupational backgrounds and 3 focus groups in which 30 people participated. It also includes some information from informal 'participant conversations/ discussions,' including one with a contingent of Kashmiri political activists on a return journey from Rochdale to London. Views and quotes presented in this section are drawn from the participants and most of the names are changed or abbreviated to protect the anonymity of the participants.

A list of the important issues and needs of the Kashmiri community was given by the participants in face-to-face interviews and quantified through the KiRS. The data presented in figure 7.1 show that a lack of job opportunities was the most important issue reported by the Kashmiri respondents.

This was followed by poverty, lack of educational opportunities, religious radicalisation, criminal gangs, anti-social behaviour, lack of opportunities for women, lack of representation in local councils, discrimination/ prejudice, child sex grooming, lack of local services and poor transport connections.

Figure 7.1. The most important issues facing the Kashmiri Community.[42]



Source: KiRS

The priorities stated by the respondents of different communities are presented in table 7.2. The common element is the lack of job opportunities, poverty and lack of educational opportunities. This indicates that any measure aimed at improving community cohesion could focus on general improvements in socio-economic conditions for all.

Table 7.1. Kashmiris in Rochdale Survey (KiRS) participants by ethnicity and age groups

Ethnicity	16-24	25-34	35-49	50+
Kashmiri	30%	19%	32%	20%
Pakistani	30%	29%	35%	6%
Bangladeshi	36%	32%	25%	7%
White	33%	30%	30%	7%

Source: KiRS

42 Note. Figures do not add up to 100% as respondents could chose up to 3 issues.

Table 7.2: Major issues cited facing different communities

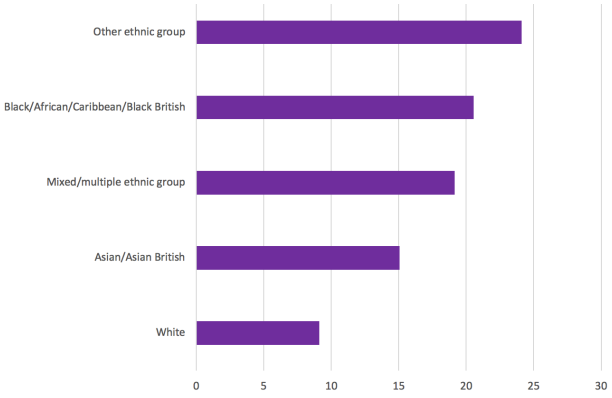
Kashmiri	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	White
Lack of job opportunities	Lack of job opportunities	Lack of job opportunities	Lack of job opportunities
Poverty	Lack of educational opportunities	Lack of educational opportunities	Lack of educational opportunities
Religious radicalisation	Criminal gangs	Poverty	Religious radicalisation
Lack of educational opportunities	Poverty	Lack of opportunities for women	Poverty
Criminal gangs	Anti-social behaviour	Anti-social behaviour	Lack of opportunities for women
Child sex grooming (CSE)	Religious radicalisation	Lack of representation in the local council	Lack of representation in the local council
Discrimination/prejudice	Lack of representation in the local council	Religious radicalisation	Child sex grooming (CSE)
Anti-social behaviour	Discrimination/prejudice	Discrimination/prejudice	Poor transport connections
Lack of opportunities for women	Lack of opportunities for women	Lack of local services	Discrimination/prejudice
Lack of representation in the local council	Lack of local services	Poor transport connections	Lack of local services
Lack of local services	Child sex grooming (CSE)	Criminal gangs	Criminal gangs
Poor transport connections	Poor transport connections	Child sex grooming (CSE)	Anti-social behaviour

11.1 Economic Conditions

As noted above one of the key issues identified by the participants was the lack of job opportunities in the area. Access to good jobs provides more than just the economic resources one needs to be able to participate in society. Work also provides a sense of self-worth and social contact, and good workplaces have been shown to have a positive effect on health and well-being.[43] However, as we have also seen, Rochdale has experienced a period of economic difficulty and unemployment rates have remained high in the town. Hence, it is important to see whether there are ethnic inequalities in unemployment rates in the town and, if so, whether Kashmiris are particularly disadvantaged. Turning first to the data from the UK National Census on unemployment in Rochdale as a whole (presented in figure 7.2), we can see quite a range of ethnic variations with Whites reporting the lowest levels of unemployment and 'Other' ethnic groups reporting the highest rates. In these figures around 15% of Asians/ Asian British reported being unemployed.

However, as we have demonstrated in this report, this broad classification does not allow us to understand the position of Kashmiris in Rochdale as they would often be subsumed under the Pakistani category. Hence in order to gain a proper understanding of the economic activity rates of Kashmiris living in Rochdale we must use the data from the KiRS (figure 7.3). These figures show a much starker picture of ethnic inequalities in employment and demonstrate the differences within the Asian community in Rochdale.

Figure 7.2: Unemployment rate by ethnic group in Rochdale: 2011

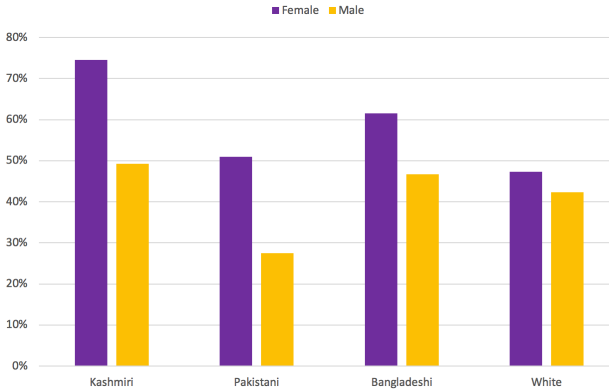


Source: UK Census

The data show that Kashmiris are more likely to have reported being in unpaid employment in the 7 days prior to the survey compared to other ethnic groups. These differences are particularly stark for women. Over 70% of Kashmiri women report that they had done no paid work in the previous week. It should be remembered that the data from the KiRS are drawn from only 3 wards in Rochdale, so they are not directly comparable to the Census data. Nonetheless, these data clearly demonstrate the wide ethnic variations in employment rates within the borough and emphasise the need for labour market statistics to include a Kashmiri category to ensure that this issue is highlighted.

43 Noblet, A. (2003)

Figure 7.3: The proportion of people who have done no paid work in the past 7 days by ethnic group and gender



Source: KiRS.

A number of possible explanations for these low rates of employment emerged from our qualitative research with community members. As discussed in the background section above, the early arrivals from Kashmir between the 1950s and 1970s consisted of agrarian mountainous people, mainly men or young boys. The dominant thinking of this generation was to go back to Kashmir after a few years. Therefore, the main priority was to work in mills as long hours were available and only a few thought about looking for any work, education or business beyond the mills and factories. They did not even buy houses because that was seen as a waste of money as they were not planning on staying in Britain.

Although there were many active mills in those days, employment was not easy for all new arrivals. Mr Nazir, now a pensioner in his 80s came to Rochdale in the 1960s when things were not easy work wise:

> *'I came from Kashmir in 1960 initially to Birmingham but soon my cousin brought me to Rochdale saying he can help me find work here. There were some Kashmiris in Rochdale who came on ships but the numbers of Kashmiris were not very many. For six months, I had to 'sign on' and tried in many mills but could not find any work. Unemployment money was just enough to survive here but we came to work and earn more to support our families back home. Then I found work through a person called Majeed who I knew from back home. I worked there, and later changed to another mill where I worked for two years, followed by work at the John Bright mill, before finally moving to Heywood mill.'*

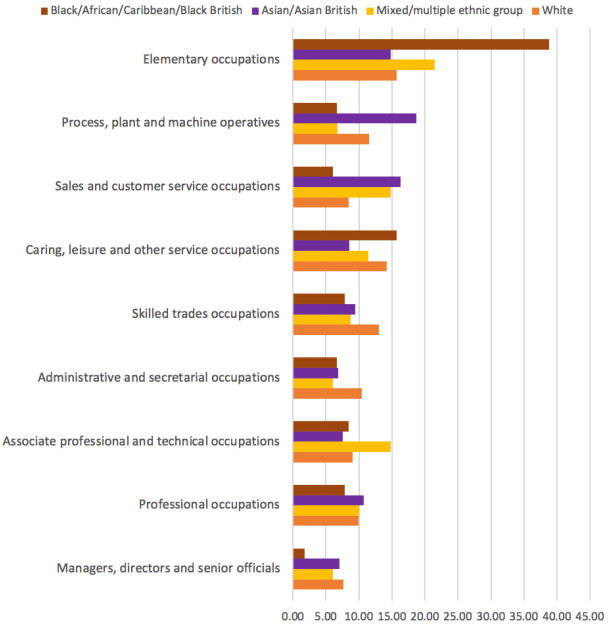
The majority amongst the early generation of Kashmiris had a background in farming, or as artisans, with some ex-army men. Not only were they themselves not looking for anything beyond the factories, they also discouraged others from doing so. Mr Bashir was an exception in the 1960s, as he came as a student who had completed his matriculation (Secondary School Certificate equivalent to GCSE). He recalls that there was an active culture of discouraging people to do anything but work in the mills:

> *'I came in 1964 as a student to live with my uncle here. I passed my matric (Higher Secondary) exams from Dadyal town in Mirpur. I was determined to study and learn driving and do some high jobs. But others from Mirpur persuaded my uncle that we came here to work and there is no point in spending money on education or driving. We were trained from our childhood not to disobey our elders so I told my uncle I will work in the mill and earn like everyone else in the evenings but study during the day time. That is what I did.'*

11.1.0. The changing nature of employment amongst Kashmiris

As both the economy and the Kashmiri community in Rochdale became more diverse the nature of employment amongst Kashmiris changed. As noted earlier the economy in Rochdale has transformed from one dominated by manufacture, notably the textile industries, to a more diverse, service based economy. This has created new industries and new occupations in the town. However, it is important to see whether members of all ethnic communities have benefitted equally from these changes or whether some groups have remained trapped in low-skill, low-pay occupations. Figure 7.4 shows data from the 2011 UK Census for the same 3 wards covered by the KiRS, showing the distribution of ethnic groups across the main occupational categories.

Figure 7.4. Occupational groupings by main ethnic categories Central Rochdale, Smallbridge and Firgrove and Spotland and Falinge



Source: UK Census, 2011

As we can see from these data, Asian/Asian British

respondents were predominantly concentrated in the plant and machine operatives, sales and elementary occupations. However, the data also show that they had the highest proportion of those working in professional occupations. But, as is often the case with data on employment, these figures are extremely limited for understanding the occupational position of Kashmiris in Rochdale.

Many in the generation who started coming to Rochdale in the 1970s with their mothers and siblings came with some schooling and qualifications from Kashmir and had potential to be trained for better jobs and business skills. However, due to a lack of guidance and encouragement from parents, most ended up doing the same jobs as their fathers. They started working in mills on night shifts mostly, and some learnt to drive and moved on to driving taxis, working in takeaways or other manual jobs. Some tried to start businesses but this was mostly restricted to opening up a corner shop in the newly emerging Kashmiri and Pakistani neighbourhoods. Only a few were able to continue their studies or learnt skills to help them find work outside of the mills, taxis and takeaways. However, some amongst this generation went out and took the risk of setting up businesses and became success stories.

> *'I worked in the mills for a couple of years but wanted to, and knew that I could do better. So, despite discouragement from my elders who were too scared to take any risks, I started a partnership with a distant cousin and then developed our business which, praise God, is doing fine…Not only that, I was then able to help some of my relatives to set up businesses as well.'* (Ahmed)

While many second-generation Kashmiris moved out of the factories and mills and got jobs in professional and public sectors the overall ratio remained low due to high dropout rates in higher education. It seems that, after the closing down of the textile mills, the majority of Kashmiris started working in taxis and takeaways and other manual and sometimes skilled labour occupations. Some started their own businesses especially food retail. Today the majority work as taxi drivers, in takeaways and in other low skilled jobs. The results of the KiRS confirm this. The data show that 48% of employed Kashmiri men are working as taxi drivers, a further 6% are working as public drivers and another 2% as bus drivers. The other notable occupations were warehouse operatives (11%) and takeaway workers (9%). The most popular job amongst employed Kashmiri women is school teaching, with 8% of women employed as school teachers.

11.1.1. Business ethos

According to some participants there is a clear difference between the Kashmiri and Pakistani communities in terms of their involvement in, and approach to, business. Mr Akhtar, one of the few Kashmiris in Rochdale with a highly paid professional job and also with a property portfolio, highlighted these points in some detail:

> *'In Rochdale, I see that there is a clear distinctiveness between Kashmiris and Pakistanis. The Pakistani community has generally thrived. The Kashmiri community has sunk. It has gone many steps backwards. They might have moved house but they have not progressed anywhere. The basics of development (in our situation) are usually education and profession. Education in the Kashmiri community is cosmetic. There aren't enough professionals. We ended up in trades that are, of course, part of society, but many young people with great potential end up in professions like plumbing etc. Many have also gone to call centres with (educational) degrees.'*

The reasons for this according to Akhtar are a lack of vision and misplaced priorities:

> *'We have desire for money. We think money is the king when it is not. We do long hours of driving taxis to support people everywhere. We have no desire for an intellectual future or a professional future. They work very hard for money but don't know what to do with it. They don't have a positive impact on people around them. Kashmiri men sacrifice their families for money by working 12 hours a day. They are very hard workers but don't know why they are working so hard. There's no long term thinking and planning. This chaotic lifestyle of those who are in work did not have a positive impact on their children, most of whom, especially boys, have developed a negative attitude towards work and have little motivation for professional education and for learning skills.'*

However, Rangzeb who is a plumber says that it is the lack of guidance, exposure and opportunities that keeps Kashmiris confined to certain types of work:

> *'I came to Rochdale in the 1980s with an intermediate qualification (equivalent to A level) and wanted to study but there was no guidance and everybody around said that there was no point in studying here. So I started working in a plastic factory and then one of my uncles who was a plumber took me on and taught me plumbing. Even now I think that there isn't enough guidance and opportunity for young people here. That is why there are so many young people wandering around in the streets.'*

11.1.2 Gender and Economy

From the patterns emerging from interviews and focus group discussions, it appears that first and second generation Kashmiri women were not expected to be employed as most of them were trained to be housewives and had few skills required for formal employment. However, by the 1980s when their

children were grown up and the mills were closing down, some women in these generations also started doing work from home, mainly sewing for manufacturing factories owned mostly by Pakistanis.

Until recently, private economic activity amongst the Kashmiri community was clearly gendered as private hire and cab driving remained exclusively male areas of employment. Catering and retail were also traditionally a male terrain, but recently women have also started working in these businesses, mainly serving or working the till.

The third and fourth generations of Kashmiri women appear to work in a range of fields including white collar jobs in retails shops, call centres, and recently in garment shops and beauty parlours. It was a general agreement amongst male and female participants that employment amongst Kashmiri women has recently increased, but remains lower than that for Pakistani women. The data in figure 4 above corroborate this feeling, showing that Kashmiri women have the highest level of unemployment amongst all ethnic groups.

For public sector employment, the issue of recruitment for specialist posts specific to communities was also raised. Participants observed that the engagement/outreach jobs for Pakistanis (including Kashmiris) are usually advertised asking for Punjabi or Urdu skills (and qualifications) in addition to English, and there is a widespread perception within the community that because of that, Pakistanis are usually appointed to these posts as most Kashmiris have little or no proficiency in Urdu and Punjabi. Therefore, posts where bilingual skills are required and are aimed at working with the Kashmiri community need to advertise a need for command over Pahari. The Council's MBE workforce figures for 2014 show that 50 Kashmiris applied for such jobs. However, this fell by half in 2015.

Overall, our research shows that unemployment amongst Kashmiris is relatively high and almost half of the employed population works in the night-time economy (NTE). However, when such a huge proportion of the working population of a minority community has confined itself to the NTE, it can have an adverse effect on the motivation and aspirations of the younger generation. The other negative effects highlighted in the interviews and discussions include: lack of quality time with family, and a higher risk of becoming a victim of racist abuse and/or attacks.

This becomes a greater cause for concern when viewed in combination with the other findings of this research which show that a significant number of young people of Kashmiri heritage in Rochdale are involved in drugs and substance misuse and are vulnerable to extremist ideas (see the Crime section below), both of which lead them away from engaging with mainstream life and using legitimate channels to express their concerns. This adds to the marginalisation and exclusion of the community.

To address economic issues such as unemployment, over representation in the NTE, lack of business vision and below average working conditions in private sector employment, some of the participants suggested setting up a Community Business Forum. This will work with relevant local and national authorities to share ideas and provide relevant information, guidance, training and support for businessmen, especially young people, in relation to education, employment, entrepreneurship and business. It was also suggested that detailed research into the economic activity and prosperity of this marginalised community will identify and unlock the generational cycle of low level and low value economic activity.

11.2. Social Issues

Until the 1970s, Kashmiri migration and settlement in Rochdale was mainly a male phenomenon. Women started coming to Rochdale in 1970s. It was during this period that a 'Kashmiri household' started to be (re)created in Rochdale. The older participants explained in some detail that their lifestyle and priorities changed after the arrival of their families. However, their work patterns remained the same with the majority working night shifts, leaving women to manage the household.

Participants in this research from the Kashmiri community highlighted a list of issues surrounding health services, education, the criminal justice system, social services and cultural services. Some key issues are discussed in this section in light of the qualitative data from the participants, and quantitative results from Census data and the KiRS.

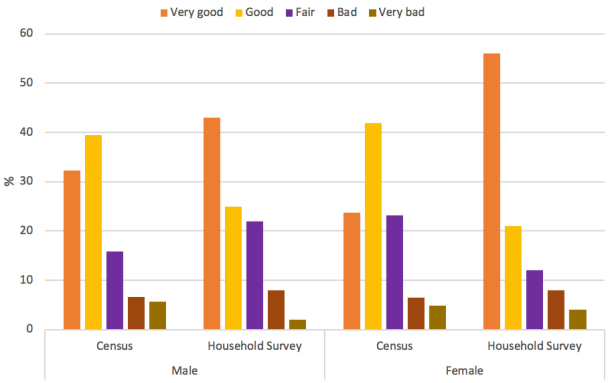
11.2.0. Health and Healthy Living

Most participants described the overall health of the community as poor, especially that of the older generation. The health issues that were repeatedly highlighted in interviews and focus group discussions included Coronary Heart Disease, high or low blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes, long standing illness, disability, obesity, arthritis and various mental health issues.

Turning to the quantitative data presented in figure 7.5, we can see a fairly positive picture of health within the Kashmiri community in Rochdale. From the Census data available about those who self-identified as Kashmiris, it seems that the overall health of the community is good. As a majority of the respondents described their health as very good, good or fair, and amongst them, the women described their health as better than the men. Only a small proportion (10%) described their health as bad and very bad, again, men were slightly more likely to have bad health than women. The picture from the KiRS is somewhat

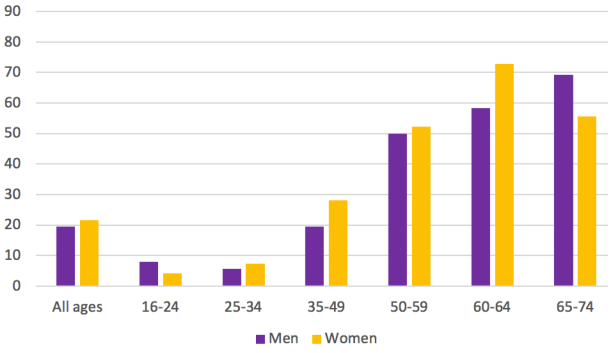
different with a greater proportion reporting very good health. This could in part be due to either a selection effect, such that those in poor health were less likely to participate in the KiRS, or due to a 'social desirability' effect amongst respondents who did not want to admit to poor health in front of the interviewer. Nonetheless, the overall impression of generally good self-perceived health amongst Kashmiris in Rochdale is the same.

Figure 7.5: Self-rated health amongst Kashmiris in Rochdale by gender: Data from both the UK Census and KiRS



However, a look at the UK Census data on the rate of limiting disability amongst Kashmiris reveals that a significant population of Kashmiris in Rochdale have some form of disability. The data in figure 7.6 show that for both men and women this becomes more common after the age of 35. Rates of limiting disability also appear to be higher amongst women up to the age of 65. After that men are more likely to be disabled than women.

Figure 7.6: Limiting disability amongst Kashmiri respondents by age group



Source: UK Census

Reassuringly, the figures are very similar to those that we found in the KiRS for the Kashmiri population as a whole (see figure 7.7). However, as we had very few respondents aged in their 60s and 70s we have had to collapse the older ages into those aged 50 and over. Hence the data are not directly comparable, but they do show a very similar picture.

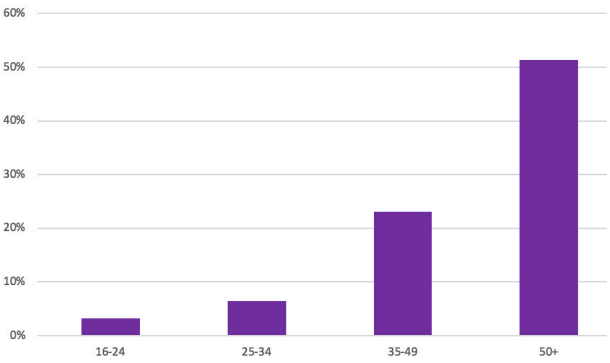
A number of historical and contemporary reasons were cited by different participants for this poor state of health. Older participants linked the health issues with their lifestyle back home and hard work here in the mills and factories. Now they are suffering from different health issues due to lack of physical activity:

> *'When we came in 1960s we were young and healthy and came from a lifestyle where physical work was a norm. We were not rich and did not have much to eat but whatever we ate was digested well due to hard labour. We continued working hard here too. But towards the end of our working life many of us developed several health issues including lung problems. After retirement, we became house-bound and lost much of our physical activity and now face many issues including arthritis and blood pressure etc.'*

For others earning money to go back to the motherland was the priority over health:

> *'In those days, people were young and healthy and even when we had some health issue we still went to work because we needed money and had to send money back. Almost all of us thought that we would go back. We did not care much about food and had whatever was available but our health was good. Many people did not go to doctors for ages and when they needed to go, they could not find their records.' (Rashid)*

Figure 7.7: Proportion of Kashmiris who report having a limiting longstanding illness.



Source: KiRS

Depression is another area which was raised repeatedly both in the one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions. As figure 7.8 shows, Kashmiris reported higher levels of depression than Pakistanis or Bangladeshis in the 3 wards in Rochdale that were selected for the survey.

Depression was seen mainly in the older generation, and more so in women. Several reasons were talked about. Amongst the older generation, it is linked with two main issues. Firstly, after their retirement they do not have much to do and the only place for most of them to go to is the local mosque. Mr Nazar,

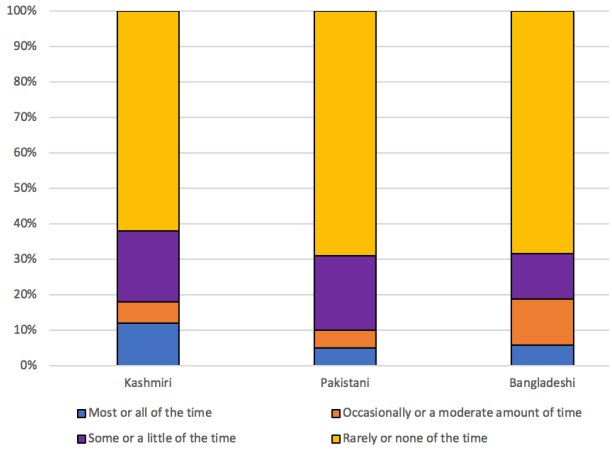
who spends most of his time in the front room of his terrace house, says:

'Now I stay here 6 days and most of the time keep thinking about my life which has gone by. But now it feels like my memory is fading. My children are good, they look after me but I can't talk to them much. On Sunday, my son comes and takes me to his house for a specially cooked meal and drives me around as well, but still sometimes I feel all alone.'

Secondly, at home they find it hard to manage the changing intergenerational relationships. Although they still tend to live in extended families, but because the new generations have different lifestyles, it generates stress and depression as they cannot communicate with each other well. The unemployment amongst the younger generation, marital problems, as well as issues concerning substance misuse and drug pushing are also stated as contributory factors for depression amongst the older generation.

According to some, there are additional factors that cause depression amongst women. These include managing household budgets on a low income, supervising young children and family relationships on their own whilst men are out working, language/ generational barriers, a lack of understanding of local support/services, domestic abuse and violence.

Figure 7.8: Rates of depression by ethnic group



Source: KiRS

Some issues were described to be rooted in the 'Myth of Return' and transnational marriages. Mr Rashid who is now retired thinks that his generation always thought of back home:

'First, we thought of going back but when that became impossible, we thought we would go back after retirement. However, due to health issues and with all our children settled here and unwilling to move back, we can't go back either. We made efforts to marry our children there so that they will have some family values from back home, but these marriages have become the main cause of stress and depression for us now because they are not compatible. Now we think we made a big mistake but it is too late.'

The younger generation is equally unhappy with parents thinking too much of back home and having little interest in life here. The middle generation, who have grown up children of their own, are also depressed because their children do not get jobs and they do not know where they are going and/or spending their time. As Rozina explains:

'I have two grown-up sons. Both graduated but can't find jobs. They applied for so many jobs but have had no success. Now they are also at a marriageable age, but how can I marry them off without them having jobs and homes of their own? That really depresses me sometimes. Everything looks bleak and I don't feel interested in doing anything. I used to go to the gym but then they started charging for that which I can't afford.'

These accounts are borne out in the survey data. Although the majority of respondents across all 3 ethnic groups report that they are rarely or never depressed, a higher proportion of those from the Kashmiri community report being depressed at least some of the time and over 1-in-10 report being depressed most or all of the time.

11.2.1. Lack of awareness about and access to services

While some support and services may be available to deal with these issues, their use amongst the Kashmiri community appears fairly low, mainly because of the lack of awareness, coordination and communication between those who know and those who need to know within the community.

Mr Zarar, who was born in Rochdale, thinks that the major problem is that most people in the Kashmiri community are not aware that there are services available regarding substance misuse, employment and for adopting a healthy life style:

'We are a community still relying on the traditional networks of communication and support, and we have outdated and misplaced expectations while the world has moved on. We are living in our own little world and there is little communication and interaction with those who know and those who need to know. For institutions, we don't exist.'

Yasmin, a white lady who married a fellow Kashmiri mill worker who can speak fluent Pahari and lived in Kashmir for many years concluded:

'The Kashmiri community, especially first and second generation has no motivation to go out and find out what is available. They think that it

should be provided to them at home and even then, sometimes they are not prepared to use it.'

When asked why they do this she replied, *'I don't know, maybe they are lazy I don't know'.*

Mr Parvez, who came to Britain as a teenager in the latter half of the 1970s, agreed that there is a serious lack of self-help in the community. However, he explained it in relation to self-confidence and self-respect, as well as a lack of recognition:

'They don't have self-confidence or desire to do things for themselves. That is driven out of a lack of self-respect. Self-respect is linked with a realisation of identity, knowing who I am and where I come from.'

11.2.2. Healthy Living

Most participants stated that awareness amongst Kashmiris about services and support regarding healthy living such as exercise and diet is very limited:

'Services needs to increase awareness about existing facilitie, and should provide services related to a healthy lifestyle, especially free access to a gym and they should encourage guided walks in open spaces and maybe the countryside, particularly for retired or unemployed men and women.' (Zahoor)

In response to a question as to why this is the case given that public health services spend a lot of money on public awareness and healthy lifestyle facilities, many participants said that usually Pakistanis are employed to raise awareness who have a very low opinion of the Kashmiris and the communication channels used don't connect with the Kashmiri community:

'They think that Kashmiris are too backward to be engaged in health living and healthy lifestyle activities because they think we don't want to get out of our houses.' (Rozina)

11.3. Education

As can be seen from the examples presented in the employment section, only a few among the first generation of Kashmiris in Rochdale held significant educational qualifications. Most came with little schooling from Kashmir, and were only able to sign their names. Many depended on Pakistanis for their paperwork, a community with more educated people than Kashmiris.

The second generation resolved this issue for the first generation, however there were many amongst the second generation who wanted to go for further education but only a few were lucky enough to get any support from their parents. Those who managed to gain some qualifications and are now in better jobs or run successful businesses report how hard their journey was and how their parents had no idea about the value of education and were unable to offer any support and guidance.

The limited data that is available on Kashmiris supports the qualitative claims. For example, the data collected by the local schools which, although seriously confusing and problematic, does offer some analytical value if used with the knowledge that the aggregation of three categories gives us the total number of Kashmiri pupils. On that basis, a comparison between Kashmiri and Pakistanis pupils show that Kashmiri pupils lag behind in achieving the top grades. As shown in table 7.3 Kashmiri pupils score significantly less than Pakistani students.

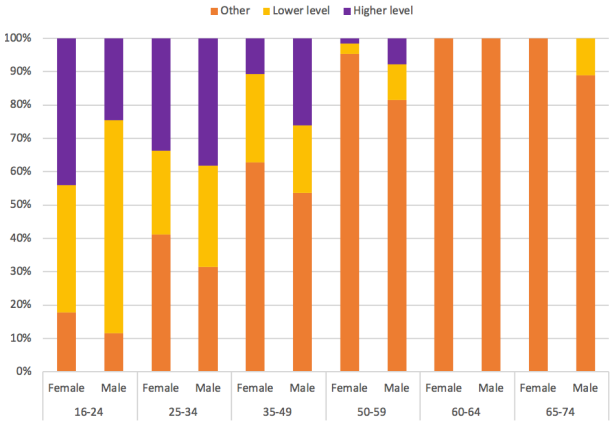
A similar picture of low levels of educational achievement across all ages appears from the census data that is available on self-identified Kashmiris in the 2011 Census (see figure 7.9). This is particularly acute in the 50+ groups where the overwhelming majority have no or low levels of achievement. Even in those aged 35-49 we see relatively low levels of achievement. Only 10% of women and 25% of men have any form of post-compulsory education in this age group. Encouragingly there is a more positive picture in the younger cohorts. Around one third of women aged 35-49 and 38% of men in this age group have post-compulsory education. There is evidence that younger women are also overtaking their male counterparts as 43% of women aged 16-24 have higher levels of education compared to just 24% of men.

Although achievement levels are higher amongst younger Kashmiri women, some female participants in the qualitative study reported that this is despite the low expectations of many teachers, most of whom have a Pakistani heritage and hold that there is little point in working hard with Kashmiri female pupils because most of them will be 'married off' as soon they are 18 years old.

Table 7.3: GCSE grades by Pakistani and Kashmiri pupils

Ethnicity	Numbers	3+A*-A	5+ A*-C	5+ A*-G	1+A*-G
Kashmiri Other	3	0.0	33.3	66.7	100
Kashmiri Pakistani	28	14.3	57.1	89.3	96.4
Mirpuri Pakistani	46	15.2	65.2	95.7	97.8
Other Pakistani	124	27.4	74.2	92.7	95.2
Pakistani	153	22.2	68.6	96.7	99.3

Figure 7.9. Educational attainment levels amongst Kashmiri men by age group in 2011 census



Source: UK Census 2011

Mr Shabir came to Britain in 1970 at the age of 14 with some schooling back in Kashmir. After his compulsory attendance at the English Language Centre and school, he wanted to continue his education. However, his parents who had no formal education themselves, did not think it was a good idea:

> *'Both my mother and father had never been through any schooling but they, especially my father, were convinced that education here in this country is no good. So he tried to convince me that if I wanted to stay here then I should start working soon and if I wanted to study then I should go back and study there because education was better in Kashmir than here in Britain. This was commoly held among most of the Kashmiris in Rochdale. However, one of my teachers who I spoke to about this, came over and convinced my father that I was doing fine at school and education here is actually better than in Pakistan or Kashmir. After that my parents did not discourage me but they did not encourage e either. However, I managed to gain a professional degree and establish a good career. From that position then, I was able to encourage, guide and support my family and my extended family to do better in education and business.'*

Mr Zaman is another success story from second generation Kashmiris in Rochdale who came in 1975 at the age of 19:

> *'I was a student of BA economics in Kashmir. My father and older brother were already here. I wanted to study or get a job on the basis of my qualifications, but there was no one to guide me. I started working night shifts in a mill and teaching Urdu to children in the mosque for about an hour before going to work. Later, I was able to train as a youth worker and then moved on to a service management post.'*

Aftab Hussain came to Rochdale from Mirpur in 1990 after completing his FA (intermediate) and wanted to continue with studies here. However, his father was unemployed and told him that he can provide him with accommodation and food but no pocket money. Aftab worked in a family business and also continued with his education:

> *'When I came over, I was 14 and went for compulsory schooling. There in school I had quite a few pupils from Mirpur but the higher I went on the educational ladder, the lower the number of Kashmiri heritage students fell. The dropout rate was very high amongst Kashmiris.'*

Many participants highlighted that this situation has continued and even today, educational achievement amongst Kashmiris in Rochdale is perceived as the lowest within the Asian community.

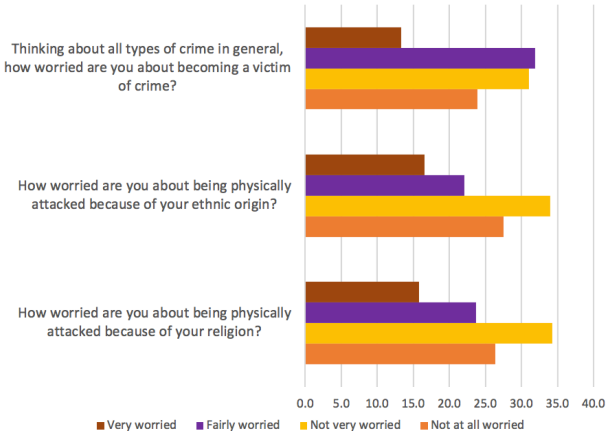
12. CRIME, DISCRIMINATION AND SAFETY

Issues of crime, discrimination and safety are of paramount importance to all communities living in Rochdale. However, there has been concern that members of ethnic minority communities were more likely to be worried about being a victim of crime. These concerns are supported by figures from the UK as a whole, showing that those from ethnic minority groups are more likely to fear becoming a victim of crime.[44] Figures from the Crime Survey if England and Wales show that in 2015/16, a smaller proportion of White people reported a fear of crime compared with Asian people, Black people, and those from the Other ethnic group. However, these figures cannot tell us much about the fear of crime or the experience of harassment in the Kashmiri community as data are not routinely collected on this group. For this we must turn to the KiRS data.

12.1 Fear of crime

As the data in figure 8.1 show, around 4-in-10 Kashmiri participants said that they were fairly worried or very worried about being a victim of crime. Moreover, 39% said that they were worried about being physically attacked because of their ethnic origin and 45% said that they were worried about being physically attacked because of their religion.

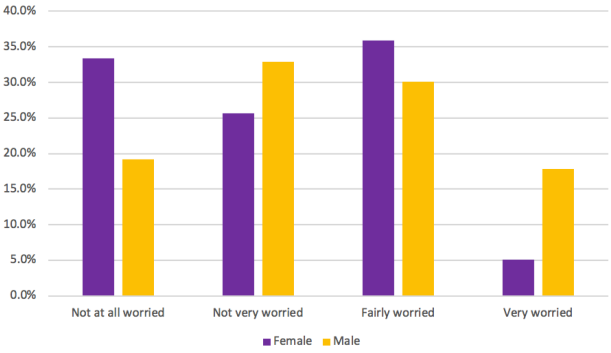
Figure 8.1: Fear of crime amongst Kashmiris living in Rochdale



Source: KiRS

However, these figures mask some important gender differences in the fear of crime amongst the Kashmiri community. Our findings from the KiRS show that men are much more likely to report being worried about becoming a victim of crime. Around 18% of Kashmiri men reported that they were very worried about becoming a victim of crime compared to just 5% of Kashmiri women.

Figure 8.2: Fear of becoming a victim of crime by gender in the Kashmiri community

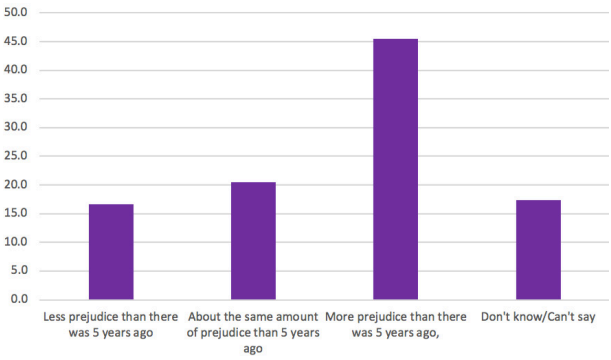


Source: KiRS

12.2 Harassment and discrimination

Respondents were asked to say whether levels of prejudice in Britain had gotten worse, better or remained the same over the past 5 years. As the data in figure 8.3 show, the majority of respondents felt that levels of prejudice have gotten worse. Almost half of those asked said that Britain was more prejudiced today than 5 years ago. Conversely only 17% said that things had gotten better.

Figure 8.3: Assessment by Kashmiris of current levels of prejudice in the UK compared to 5 years ago



Source: KiRS

Around 30% of the sample reported that they had experienced harassment in their local area because of their ethnic origin. Of those that had experienced harassment the vast majority (92.5%) said that this harassment took the form of verbal harassment. 5% of those who said they had been harassed said that it had taken the form of a physical attack, and 5% said that it had been in the form of damage to property.[45]

Just under 4-in-10 Kashmiris felt that they had been discriminated against during hiring processes for jobs.

44 ONS. (2018). Fear of Crime. https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-the-law/crime-and-reoffending/fear-of-crime/latest
45 Figures can add up to more than 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

When asked if they were treated with respect in key places or institutions, Kashmiri respondents reported a mix of experiences. In general, they felt that they were treated with respect in school/college and when using the health services. Forty-seven percent of respondents said that they were always treated with respect in school/college and 44% said the same of their experiences with the health services. The picture for their experiences at work was somewhat less positive. Only 32% said that they were treated with respect at work at all times. However, an additional 45% reported that they were treated with respect most of the time at work. Worryingly, respondents reported very negative experiences with using public transport: 37% of Kashmiris felt that they were never treated with respect when using public transport.

Figure 8.4: Whether Kashmiris felt that they were treated with respect in key places

12.3. Drugs

Although no particular question was asked about drugs in the KiRS, from the qualitative interviews the concern was fairly high about criminal gangs and anti-social behaviour.

Both in one-to-one interviews and in focus groups, it was repeatedly highlighted that drug use and drug dealing is one of the major issues for the Kashmiri community in Rochdale, particularly amongst young people. For example, Mr Suleman, a social worker by profession relayed his experience of living in Rochdale since 1980s:

> *'It is a common observation that more and more young people are becoming involved in crimes and anti-social behaviour. Their positive role models are not the people who are working but those who are dealing with substance issues and drugs. So, it's about educating them and changing their thought process so that they opt for education and better life choices.'*

However, according to some elder participants, it is neither something new nor exclusively to do with the younger generation.

> *'Even before the mills were closed and before a generation of Kashmiris were born and brought up here, drug dealing in our community was not unknown. There were some people who became distinctly rich and people talked about them that they did some 'pherey' (trips) which meant that they brought drugs. The saying was that such and such 'kotti' (big houses) is made of powder. Drugs were smuggled through PIA staff or cleaners. These days people have invented new methods and new routes.' (Liaqat Ali)*

The main attraction for many is that there is quick and easy money to be made:

> *'They think it is easy money but they don't realise the consequences. There are cases where very well-known people got raided and arrested and then people found out that they had been involved in drug pushing. There are so many people involved in this crime. Mainly because of quick money and competition, because if some families have lavish lifestyles or luxurious items to show off and they are said to be in the drugs business, others think that they can also be like them. Even the risk of imprisonment doesn't stop them because they think they will be out again after a certain number of years and the kind of money they can make in drug dealing cannot be earned any other way. But there was certainly no street business in those days.' (Ali Hussain)*

However, in the younger generation, the perception of the scale of the problem has certainly grown:

> *'In some streets, almost everyone is involved in dealing or using. When I was at university in the mid 1990s, some people my age dropped out of college went on to dealing drugs. They were caught and spent some years in prison but by the time I got a job they had big flashy cars and luxurious lifestyles.'* (A. Hussain)

Once again it was pointed out that awareness about the symptoms of drug misuse, support services for substance misuse, and information on how to approach or engage them, was very low amongst Kashmiris. On the other extreme, it was such a taboo subject that people did not want to be seen to be engaged with services to access help and support as this was viewed as bringing shame to the family name. This leads to the perception amongst DAA services that Kashmiris tend not to be communities that are misusing drugs and alcohol.

One former councillor also linked the issue of drugs to a lack of parental involvement with children at an early age, and the tendency to accept money with no qualms about where it comes from. It was also pointed out that cuts to youth services added to the problems of anti-social behaviour and drug pushing. Another participant highlighted that the lack of good employment and business opportunities are the push factors for young people, including high educational achievers, to get involved with drugs. Further, there are no community forums for having informed discussions on such issues and to provide advice and guidance to young people and parents.

13. RELIGION

Eighty-five percent of the respondents in our survey described their religious identity as Muslim, 6% as Christian, 2% as Hindu, 4% as having no religion, and 3% as 'other religions.' Sunni Muslims are the majority amongst the Muslims. However, there are some followers of other sects, including Wahabis and Shias. Amongst Christian respondents, 48% identified themselves as Catholic, 23% as Protestants, 3% as Eastern Orthodox and 26% preferred not to express their preference.

Of the Kashmiri respondents who expressed a religious affiliation, 74% reported that they were practicing their religion and 26% said that they were non-practicing. Of those who were practicing, 88% said that they were able to practice their religion freely in Britain. Three-quarters said that they felt British. However, only 31% said that they think most other people see them as British, and 36% thought that only some people see them as British. Worryingly, a quarter said that they think most people don't see them as British. So while the Kashmiri community in Rochdale might feel British, they do not think others see them in that way.

It appears from the interviews and discussions recorded for this research that, initially, religion had little significance in the public life of early Kashmiri migrants. Those who practiced their religion did so in the domestic sphere. Eventually, a mosque was built which was used by all Muslims for worship and for Friday sermons, regardless of ethnic or sectarian backgrounds.

From the 1990s onwards, Muslim identity appears to have gained greater significance in public spaces and has emerged as an umbrella or wider identity for all Muslims regardless of which country they came from. However, with some probing in the interviews it was obvious that Muslim is not a homogenous identity. There is no single Muslim community, rather there are different Muslim communities with distinct ethnic, cultural, linguistic as well as sectarian identities which can have specific needs, issues and approaches/ viewpoints.

It appears from the interviews and focus group discussions that association with and practice of religion currently appears at an all-time high amongst Kashmiris in Rochdale. One demonstration of this growth is the rise in the number of mosques in the town and religious TV channels which have become available from the 1990s as a result of developments in satellite technology.

For most early Kashmiris in Rochdale, religious practice was similar to what it had been in Kashmir. It was predominantly a spiritual version of Islam rooted in local traditions of Sufism, which meant that people had a very relaxed attitude towards formal religious practices, which were viewed as an individual matter. Not many people prayed five times a day. A relatively greater number went to the mosque on Fridays, and most went to mosques only twice a year on Eid days. As Mr Sharif who came to Britain in the 1960s notes:

> *'There was only one mosque in Rochdale, the Sunehri or Golden mosque and we used to go there on Friday or on Eid days. There were some gatherings where some imams would do speeches, but we hardly paid any attention to what they were saying because mostly they spoke in very difficult Urdu* (a reference to Arabic and Persian use in speeches and talks on religion in mosques) *that most of us did not understand. Our main focus was work and socialisation, for some, in pubs, while most of us played cards on Sundays or went to cinemas, watching three movies with one ticket! Movies were mostly Indian Bollywood. Pakistani films were also shown but not as often.'*

Mr Rashid who came to Britain in late 1970s said he did not know the basics of the prayer:

> *'My parents in Mirpur were not strict about children learning to readthe Quran or Namaz (prayer). So, when I came to Britain I was unable to read the Quran. I never prayed there in Dadyal or here in Bradford* (later in Rochdale). *However, when I was retired on account of poor health in the latter half of the 1980s, I started learning how to read the Quran and to pray.'*

It seems that for the first and second generation, religion was not connected with politics, and the sense of being Muslim was not a political, but a religious identity linked to the spiritual realm and confined to the domestic spaces of the community. This changed with the third generation. In our research, two main viewpoints emerged about this change. Some argued that it was the people who started seeing themselves more as Muslims, and the media and public institutions picked that up and started presenting the community as Muslim:

> *'You know these Muslim organisations like Islamic Centres and Muslim Councils etc. initiated the move to promote Muslim identity to expand their constituency for a range of reasons.'* (Mr Ali)

However, others said that the Muslim identity became significant after the publication of Salman Rushdie's novel 'Satanic Verses,' commonly known as the Rushdie affair:

'It was after the Rushdie affair that we were seen by most of the white people around us as Muslim rather than Asian. Before that we were Asian.' (Ms Bi)

Whatever came first, it is evident that within the community, religion has moved significantly to centre-stage in the lives of a growing number of people:

'By the 1990s, the teaching of Quran and Urdu in mosques had increased, and I made sure that my children went to the mosque and learnt the basics of Islam because religion was more widely practiced here by the 1990s and I felt embarrassed at religious gatherings or on occasions of condolence (Fateh) when most others would read something from the Quran and I sat there quietly because I did not know much. I did not want my children to go through that embarrassment, so I made sure they went to the mosque and learnt the basics of Islam.' (Rashid)

Mr N, a retired textile worker, raised a somewhat surprising point when he said that he regretted donating money to people who used to raise money in the name of religion:

'People used to come to the mosque to collect money and we gave it to them but it was a mistake. We saw their beards and thought that they were Muslims and would do good for the society, but they did not. May God forgive them, but there are many fake and artificial people misusing religion.'

13.1. Extremism

Mr Shan, who is now in his fifties and came to Rochdale at the age of 14, has been involved closely with community development activities and is a well-respected businessman. He offered an in-depth and detailed analysis of the growth of religion amongst Rochdale South Asians in general and Kashmiris in particular. Only a summary is included below:

'The growth of religion has two broader aspects. One is to do with worship and the other, with indoctrination. While this growth in general can be measured by the increasing number of mosques and mosque goers and the growth of religious TV channels, the indoctrination can be traced by following the interpretations projected in mosques and on the religious TV channels. There are positive aspects such as mosques which are also, or at least potentially, can be a useful community asset where with some regulation, support and training, the preachers and teachers can be trained to educate and empower the community to deal with their issues more effectively. All they need to understand is that there are different views and understandings of religion, just as there are variations in other social and political aspects of life.

I think the problem stems from the prevailing tendency to believe that there is only one final understanding in religion, and those who do it differently are defectors who need to be put on a straight path.'

Most participants were hopeful that young people who were learning about Islam were doing it in search of 'truth,' which they said is to be a pious and considerate human being and to make a positive and healthy contribution wherever we live. Many shared the observation that most young people were involved in various charity and support initiatives such as collections for refugees, aid for flood victims and feeding the poor and homeless rather than in extremist activities.

However, some people did show concern about extremism and radicalisation. Again, as summed up by Mr Shan there are two spheres or forms of extremism – sectarian and political:

'One is to do with sectarianism where more and more people appear to be becoming followers of one or the other sects without developing the ability to question some of their narrow and absolutist aspects that lead to alienation, not only from the wider society of Rochdale but also from the followers of different sects within the Muslim community. Some signs of intolerance towards other sects can also be noticed. The other form concerns politics, and has links with the history of colonialism and the contemporary politics of the superpowers. It is in this context that the older generation shows resentment about the past and the younger generation feels angry about the present situation in many conflicts around the world including Palestine and Kashmir.'

Further, the sectarianisation and regionalisation of mosques was also pointed out by several other participants:

'Mosques are defined by regions and sects. For example, one is known as Wahabi and others as Sunni, while some are known as Punjabi, Bangladeshis or Kashmiri mosques. Sectarian differences has increased over the years. In our days, we knew that there were Wahabis, Sunnis and Shias in our community, but now many other sects have emerged whose lines are more sharply defined without much religious interaction between them.' (Zahoor)

The politicisation of Islam or the rise of political Islam was also highlighted:

'Initially, I learned the basics, and how to read Arabic and Urdu. In those days there was some confusion about this East and West distinction, and Muslims versus Kafirs (infidels). But then when

I did my own research, I found out that the word 'Islam' meant peace, and I heard about the taunts that the West is against Islam and Muslims but I was confused because I looked around and saw what rights and facilities we had in this country and there were no restrictions whatsoever on religious practice in Britain. I realised later that this is politics and religion is being used for political purposes by people with political plans.' (Zafar)

Another aspect of the radicalisation debate discussed by a few participants threw light on the Kashmiri case in particular:

'Our kids are being radicalised and brainwashed by the leaders of other Muslim communities, mainly Arabs and Pakistani middle-class activists and madrasa teachers or scholars. There is hardly any Kashmiri amongst them. Yet the majority of their audience is Kashmiri.' (Khan)

One participant pointed out that people who ran madrassas seldom sent their own children to study there:

'I think that people who run madrasas send their children to private schools and persuade Kashmiris to send their children to madrassas instead.' (Ahmed)

In response to being asked what can be done to identify their vulnerability to extremism, one participant gave the following example from his extended family that demonstrates that engaging young people at early stages can them from gravitating towards extremist interpretations of Islam:

'My cousin's two sons used to go to a particular mosque. He used to say very proudly that they will become Hafiz-e-Quran and he will go to heaven in the next life on account of their piety. But soon they started telling him that he was not a proper Muslim and denigrated their parents' Islamic practice. He told me about this, and I spoke to the boys and informed one of their cousins, who was a lawyer, who also spoke to them. Now they tell me that had I not intervened and helped they would have ended up in Syria or somewhere else.' (Mr Ali)

Mr PA also highlighted the vulnerability of young people to extremist ideologies. Drawing on his own experience of growing up in Rochdale, he said that,

'The age of 14-23 or 24 is the age when you are finding yourself. You are searching for yourself and if you don't find the answer, you become a Muslim. What kind of Muslim you become depends on whose preaching is the most effective, and I think in Rochdale there has been a problem with that and still is because people don't know where they come from and have a poorly developed sense of self. There are winners and losers. The winners are those people who realise where they from, where they are and where they want to go.'

Interviews with some young people who have been involved in religious politics and related activism showed that the first point of contact was seeing injustice committed against weaker people, particularly in Gaza, and what they perceive as the prejudiced and biased coverage and presentation of the situation in the media. For example, Yousaf who has been to several demonstrations and fund-raising activities explains:

'The first time it happened was you know when things were going on in Palestine and Gaza, and in 2006 when it got really bad, when it hit the mainstream news and we were debating all the issues, and there were protests in Rochdale and we went to those as well. The main motivating factor initially was religion because of the significance of the Aqsa mosque for Muslims. It was also because of the people there, many of whom were our age, and were Muslims as well. That's why we thought we'd jump on that, we want to get our voice heard and talk about that, because we felt like that was more urgent to talk about. When we learn about the world of politics, we think about what's right and wrong and consider it from a religious perspective as well, but we look at it that way from the perspective of an average human being as well. Religiously yeah, I'm not really that religious but I have quite a lot of religious friends as well who share the same political views as me. It's both, but I look at it as a political issue, as a moral issue, what's happening is wrong, religiously or not, little kids are dying, being bombed and all that stuff, it's wrong regardless of whether it's from a religious perspective or not.'

Were there any ways available to develop peoples' abilities to be critical towards all ideologies and not be brainwashed into accepting them? In response to this question most respondents said that the main problem was this mind-set that 'what I follow is the only and absolute truth':

'Addressing this is not an easy task but any efforts to deal with this with the intention of controlling people is less likely to bring about positive results. The best way to deal with this is to provide spaces for open expression and discussion, for example, TV channels can be incentivized to allocate a certain percentage of their time for holding open debates about all religions with scholars of different viewpoints presenting their side of the argument rather than one scholar preaching one point of view as the only and absolute truth.'

Mr P linked the vulnerability to extremism of Kashmiri youth with the confusion about their ethnic identity and socio-cultural heritage, and to the role of extremist student societies in universities:

'Kashmiri parents have lived their life wanting to go back, and their children don't know whether to go back or to stay. This confusion over identity causes big issues. It leads them towards something that is neither Kashmiri nor Pakistani or British, which is Islam. They see their parents who don't belong anywhere and feel that they have not achieved anything, although they have achieved a lot but they have not been able to communicate this their children. Their children have no money and no direction, or some have money but no direction, s, direction is the key because I think the tragedy of our situation is that we have our feet in two boats that are both sinking. Kashmiri children don't get the skills to integrate and fit in from their home and community. For example, many of those who managed to go to university find it hard to integrate and fit in there. They either drop out or join some extremist group for some sort of sense of belonging.'

In conclusion, extremism is considered a serious issue within the Kashmiri community in Rochdale. The older generations are vulnerable to sectarian ideologies, younger generations to religious-political extremism. One source of these tendencies is the dominance of sectarian and political interpretations of Islam, with little access to alternative views and a lack of resources for developing critical thinking towards what is being preached as the absolute truth.

14. CULTURAL LIFE

Culture is referred here mainly to various expressions of art and music. Results from the KiRS show that in these areas, the Kashmiri community is also lagging behind other minorities. More than 70% of Kashmiris had never participated in any sports, leisure or cultural groups, compared to 63% of Pakistanis.

It appears from the interviews that when the early migrant Kashmiri community in Rochdale consisted only of male workers, their cultural activities included gathering at one of the few houses they lived in and sharing information, playing cards or listening to music which included Indian, Pakistani or sometimes Pothwari music and recitations of the Saif ul Muluk. Later, cinemas became a place to spend Sundays. As the films were typically three hours long, the men were there all day, often watching three films in a row on one ticket.

By the early 1980s, when the Kashmir Youth project (KYP) was set up, cultural programmes took place there. However, gradually the space for cultural events at the KYP was reduced and the pace of cultural activity amongst Rochdale Kashmiris became stagnant. While the Indian, Punjabi and Pakistani Urdu culture thrived in Britain as well as in Rochdale in the forms of community melas and commercial events where various Indian and/or Pakistani artists are often invited to perform, no tradition of inviting artists from Kashmir was developed.

The main reason cited for this was the backwardness of music and art in Azad Kashmir due to the domination of Urdu and Punjabi through official Pakistani patronage. The subordinated position of 'Azad' Kashmir was also cited as a reason that the rich traditions of Sufi poetry and music could not make their way to Britain. However, some participants disagreed with this reasoning. They said it is more to do with the marginalised position of Kashmir and Kashmiris. This is evidenced by the fact that Saifulmuluk, the epic book of Sufi poetic philosophy associated with Kashmiri culture is in fact sung by Indian and Pakistani artists in events across Britain. However, these respondents failed to name any Kashmiri artist who can perhaps be invited to perform here.

No literature is available in Pahari in the local library where shelves are full of books in scores of other languages used by the communities of Rochdale. Recently, Kashmiri Day and Kashmiri cultural evening has been announced to be celebrated in October every year in Rochdale Town Hall. Last year, some British Kashmiri artists performed there and a Pahari poetry event was also organised. This is seen by many local Kashmiris as a new beginning for Kashmiri art and cultural activities in Rochdale, and a lot of optimism is shown for the development and growth of this tradition as a healthy way for dealing with extremist ideas and for alleviating the suffering of elder community members who are in isolation.

15. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENGAGEMENT CAPACITY

There are some established Community organisations and networks that can be useful channels for information dissemination and communication, for example, for raising awareness about services and opportunities as well as consultation on various issues.

Currently there is a serious lack of information, awareness and opportunities to meaningfully engage with relevant local decision-making processes, community and neighbourhood development programmes, and understanding citizenship rights and responsibilities.

15.1 First generation 'back home' networks

Historically, the initial building blocks of the internal community infrastructure of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale consisted of the 'back home' relationship amongst friends, village affiliations and regional identity. It appears that it was then that the Mirpuri identity emerged to distinguish them from Punjabis:

> *'Anyone who spoke Pothwari was seen as Mirpuri by Punjabis and anyone who spoke Punjabi was perceived as Lyallpuri (Faisalabad's old name) by Mirpuris. They did not know much about each other's regions. For example, Punjabi did not know what was Mirpur and Mirpuris did not know anything about Lyallpur.'* (Bashir)

The earliest community organisation of the Kashmiris in Rochdale was the setting up of the funeral committee by first-generation Kashmiris, which is still functional and works to meet funeral costs for its members. Weddings are also organised by the village and *biradari* (extended family) networks, but now more and more weddings are being organised by hired companies. Along with funerals, weddings also provide a very important space for interaction between Kashmiris from different towns.

15.2 Politics and welfare

The earliest political organisation of Rochdale Kashmiris, like most other towns, was around the political question of Kashmir. Public meetings were held in Rochdale to raise awareness about the Kashmir situation and political organisations were set up including Jammu Kashmir Muslim Conference (JKMC), Jammu Kashmir Liberation League (JKLL) and Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). Recently, more political parties have set up their branches including the Jammu Kashmir Peoples Party (JKPPP), Jammu Kashmir Peoples National Party (JKPNP) and Jammu Kashmir Freedom Movement (JKLFM).

It appears from interviews that by the middle of 1970s, the interest in local politics started to grow significantly amongst Mirpuris and Punjabis. Initially, they supported the Labour Party where Pakistanis had a stronghold. Thus, gradually, Kashmiris started drifting away to Liberal Democrats. Master Karim Dad, who is among the few Kashmiris with some education and understanding of British politics became very popular.

The Pakistan Welfare Association was formed and led by Punjabis. It set up the first Pakistani community centres in the Spotland and Waddleworth areas. Initially, some Kashmiris were also involved, but soon conflicts started to emerge because both of the centres were dominated by Pakistanis and also because no advice was offered in Pahari-Pothwari languages.

Most Kashmiri activists until then were mainly concerned with the politics of the Kashmir conflict back home and they exhibited little interest in the community's welfare issues in Rochdale. Interestingly, it was through their involvement in Kashmiri political activism that some Kashmiris started taking an interest in local issues. Mr Muhammed Shabir, one of the three founders of the Kashmiri Youth Association (KYA) and later of the Kashmir Youth Project, provided detailed background context to the growth of Kashmiri community organisation and the distinct needs and issues of Kashmiris in relation to Pakistanis. This is summarised below:

> *'In the late 1970s and 1980s, there was a lot of racial discrimination and a general feeling that we were not given equal opportunities. Our people were actively involved in activism around the Kashmir issue which we also supported. But some of us were more concerned about the marginalisation of our community here and wanted to do something for people here in Rochdale. That is how we formed the Kashmiri Youth Association in 1979-80 and we formalised and constitutionalised the organisation under the guidance of a community development worker of Bangladeshi origin. Three of the founding members included Shabir Hussain (now a successful businessman), Qurban Hussian (now Lord of Luton) who was active in JKLF, and Noor Hussain (now Dr Noor Hussain). They went to school together and stayed in touch and brought together, some local people such as Aftab Khan, Lala Mehmood Ghori and later on Daalat Ali (now a councillor and prominent Pahari writer, Abid Hussain Hashmir (now senior local government manager) and Hafiz Abdul Qayum (businessman and founder of Kramblers; the Kashmiri Ramblers).'*

Established politicians, mainly of Pakistani heritage, who saw themselves as the sole representatives of the Kashmiri and Pakistani community felt threatened and

tried to discredit the KYA by accusing them of using funds for militancy in Kashmir:

> *'Although we had no plans to challenge them, they opposed us. They were powerful people. They were close to MPs who had great influence. The overwhelming majority of Kashmiris was clearly supportive. When we grew stronger and got an office and a worker and started providing people with help in filling forms, benefits advice etc, we were reported to the police for allegedly abusing public funds for militancy in Kashmir. However, we continued our work and founded the Kashmir Youth Project that became a hub of advice and information for the Kashmiri community and is still serving Kashmiris as well as other communities.'*

KYP is mentioned in several interviews and focus group discussions as the hub of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale. However, concerns were also repeatedly expressed that its community aspect has been reduced over the years and the focus has shifted more on training and renting out space. It was also suggested that this can be developed into a community place where people can share their concerns and discuss problems as a community to address the issues which are the focus of this report.

KYP says that their approach has always been to actively encourage and provide space for the training and employment for the community, focusing particularly on opening up avenues for women and young people for their personal and community development. However, they have not been an exclusively Kashmiri community project and have always welcomed other communities of the borough including Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

15.3 Mosques

Mosques have become the largest community spaces. It is here that the majority of the community gets together every Friday and for funerals and other religious gatherings. Despite the fragmentation of mosques and the polarisation on regional and sectarian lines, it is generally suggested and hoped that mosques can be instrumental for greater community welfare, education and empowerment if the imams are properly qualified and trained in teaching and preaching what is compatible with the lives of their followers in Rochdale and how to empower local communities to be competitive in the contemporary situation rather than merely on theological issues. From a different viewpoint, it was argued that mosques are a religious space and for welfare, spaces like KYP should be developed and expanded.

15.4 Women's participation in community networks

Women's participation remains confined to the margins of weddings and funerals and they are almost completely excluded from mosques and religious networks. However, recently women have created a space for themselves through religious gatherings, especially m*elads* or *Giyarvein sharif,* a day to to celebrate the birth of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on the 11th day of every Islamic month. Some women participants criticised the male domination of all religious spaces and practices and asked for greater women to be represented. One woman particularly pointed out that due to the lack of representation of women, men have free hand to interpret issues such as marriages from male perspectives. She relayed a case where a woman in an abusive and violent relationship was begging her husband and the extended family for a divorce but to no avail:

> *'When I asked them why can't she apply for Khula (women's right to divorce in Islam), they did not know what that was and whether a woman had the right to end the marriage.'*

16. CONCLUSION

This research was set out to test the hypothesis that Kashmiris were the largest South Asian community in Rochdale but due to their absence from the ethnic monitoring systems at national and local level, their needs and issues go unknown, hence unaddressed, which adds to their social exclusion and marginalisation. This makes them comparatively more vulnerable to certain activities that can lead to criminal offences and segregation.

As summarised below the findings from both qualitative and quantitative data collated for this research support the assumptions of the hypothesis above.

The links of Britain with Kashmir and the presence of Kashmiris in Britain can be traced back to the period of British colonial rule. However, the bulk of labour migration from Kashmir took place after its division in 1947, and currently four generations of Kashmiris live in Rochdale and other parts of the UK.

It appears that the Kashmiri community in Britain lagged behind other South Asian communities mainly because of the subdued position of 'azad' Kashmir rooted in the unresolved status of the Jammu Kashmir state. Over 99% Kashmiris in Britain originate from 'Azad' Kashmir, which is under Pakistani administration. The disparity in the relationship back home was recreated in the relationship between the Pakistani and Kashmiri community in Britain, resulting in the loss of Kashmiri identity and the Pahari language, the mother tongue of British Kashmiris from 'Azad' Kashmir. This added to their marginalisation and exclusion as a minority population from the British Equality and Inclusion framework.

The statistical method devised for this research shows that two thirds of Pakistanis in Rochdale are actually Kashmiris, making them the largest South Asian community in the borough.

The awareness about Kashmiris amongst services is poor mainly because Kashmiris are not properly included in the ethnic monitoring systems, which means that Kashmiris remain an unknown and unseen community. The local schools, despite having a Kashmiri category in the extended categories they use, add to the confusion and seriously undermine the analytical values of the data about Kashmiri pupils. Subsequently, it is not possible for the relevant services and authorities to identify and address the needs and issues of the Kashmiri community.

The views of several community members were recorded in this research and indicate the significant tendencies towards introversion in the Kashmiri community. This appears to be rooted in the lack of self-confidence and self-respect, which stems from the lack of recognition of the Kashmiri identity and language on par with other BME communities. To some extent this explains the over representation of Kashmiris in certain areas of economic activities i.e. Night-Time Economy.

Mosques, along with Kashmiri political and community organisations, provide a good starting point for relevant council and public services to interact and engage with the Kashmiri community in order to address the issues identified in this report and to take action on the recommendations made in the next section.

17. RECOMMENDATIONS

The local Council and their partner agencies in the public, voluntary and third sector should include the Kashmiri category in their all ethnic data monitoring systems and collate and analyse their qualitative and quantitative data and community engagement feedback from service users to inform the design, development and delivery of their services for all communities.

1. The RBC should share these recommendations with the GMCA, LGA and National Statistics Office and all its partner agencies asking for the inclusion of the Kashmiri category in their ethnic monitoring systems.
2. RBC and its partner agencies should reach out to ensure that relevant information, awareness and opportunities are provided for the Kashmiri community to meaningfully engage with local decision making processes, community and neighbourhood development programmes, and understanding on citizenship rights and responsibilities.
3. The Pahari language should be adopted in the list of community languages on a par with other languages in Public Health and the Criminal Justice System to provide language support, especially for the elder Kashmiris with poor English language skills.
   - Pahari language should be represented in libraries along with other languages to encourage the greater use of this service by the Kashmiri community.
   - Material on Kashmiri history, migration and heritage should be collected and included in the local museums.
4. Borough youth services should liaise with and devise specific activities for Kashmiri youth to increase their sense of positive identity and belonging.
5. Public Health should run specifically targeted campaigns for the Kashmiri community involving Link4Life and CCG – the clinical commission group, to increase the use and engagement of the Kashmiri community, particularly the older generation and women.
6. The Education department should improve their data collection system in relation to Kashmiris by using one category, 'Kashmiri,' for Kashmiris. They should also devise specific policies and strategies to address the gap in achievement by Kashmiris pupils.
7. Further research should be carried out to ensure that projects such as the drugs outreach are accessible to the Kashmiri community.
8. The promotion of Sufism and Pahari music should be encouraged and supported by all relevant services and departments as a key method to celebrate Kashmiri cultural heritage through community, public and private sector organisations such as annual heritage events and *melas* (festivals).
9. Targeted campaigns for leisure and sports related services to attract Kashmiri youth to engage in leisure and recreational activities to tackle youth alienation.

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