Experience of Bangladeshi Diaspora in the Multiethnic UK

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Tanzina Choudhury
Department of Sociology, Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Sylhet, Bangladesh
E-mail: tanzinachoudhury@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper tries to explore the experience of Bangladeshi diaspora in the United Kingdom (UK). It focuses on different deprivations and discriminations encountered by the community, especially the second and third generations who were born and bred in Britain and consider it as their ‘home’. These people are thought to suffer the most, both as the South Asians and as the Muslims. On one hand, the UK government policies urge them to ‘integrate’ with the British society, and on the other, the same society denies them equal rights regarding different basic issues, which in turn exposes them to a hard reality where they find themselves in an ambivalent situation. The paper deals with this particular experience of UK based Bangladeshis. It is grounded upon the content analysis of literature review and observation.

Introduction

The history of migration is probably as old as the history of human civilization itself. Migration often leaves considerable positive and negative impacts on both the sending and receiving societies. Integration of immigrants to the host society is perhaps the most important and widely researched outcome of migration and hence discussion regarding this issue has also been in the center for decades. In fact, immigrant assimilation or integration has occupied social scientists for a long period of time (see Alba and Nee 2003). People who migrate to a new place most of the times find that the culture of the host society is significantly different from their own. A considerably large number of studies have been conducted on this topic in different parts of the globe and the researchers concluded with diverse analyses regarding the issue of integration of migrant communities (Zhou and Xiong 2005).

One group of thinkers tends to believe that both the host society and migrant communities live in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance and enjoy cultural diversities (see Alba and Logan 1993). Another group, mainly the theorists of Chicago school, on the other hand, seems to hold that the migrants gradually lose most of the elements of their own culture and get acclimatized with the culture of their host society (Park quoted in Henry 1944). This view of Chicago school, however, triggered huge debate as it emphasized on a one dimensional process like complete assimilation, where only the migrants require to shed off their own characteristics and cultural traits, and eventually accept the culture of the dominant group (see Palo et al. 2006). In addition to these classical views, recent approaches towards assimilation also offer new explanations. Most of the studies (e.g., Gans 1992, Landale and Orpesa 1995, Zhou 1997, Kucher 2006), however, reveal that in this process migrant communities often face deprivation and discrimination. In order to investigate Bangladeshi community’s experience in a multiethnic society like UK, the paper also sheds light on the issue as to whether government policies play any role to elevate the status of this migrant community or just exclude them or push them further from the mainstream. In this paper, the terms ‘migrant community’, ‘immigrants community’ and ‘diaspora community’ will be used interchangeably. The paper is divided into three broad sections. The first section briefly describes the concept of diaspora. The second section highlights on socio-demographic, economic characteristics of Bangladeshi community and their linkage to homeland. The third section deals with the experiences of Bangladeshi community as Muslim minority and as South Asian ethnic or racial groups. This section is again divided into several sub-sections.

Diaspora refers to transnational movement and ties with arguments around globalization and the growth of non-nation biased solidarities (Anthias 1998). According to Khachig Tololian (1991:4-5) diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational moment. The concept shares meaning with a large semantic domain including words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community,
etc. (Tololian 1991 quoted in Clifford 1994). They connect multiple communities of a dispersed population (Clifford 1994). Safran (1991: 83-84) identified six characteristics of diaspora. According to him, diasporas are “expatriate minority communities” (i) that are dispersed from an original center to at least two peripheral places; (ii) that maintain a “memory, vision or myth about their original homeland”; (iii) that “believe they are not and perhaps cannot be fully accepted by their host country”; (iv) that see the ancestral home as a place of eventual return, when the time is right; (v) that are committed to the maintenance or restoration of this homeland; and (vi) of which the groups’ consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by this continuing relationship with the homeland. However, not all diasporic communities fit with these characteristics. The next section will discuss the characteristics of Bangladeshi community living in the UK and provide an understanding to what extent they fit with such definitions.

Bangladeshi Community in the UK

Bangladeshi working in the British ships traveled to various parts of the globe during the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries (Eade and Garbin 2003). Migration from Bangladesh to Britain started in 1930s and was predominantly a Sylheti (North-Eastern district of Bangladesh) phenomenon. Men of this particular geographical area employed by the British ship companies first started the process of migration (Gardner 1993). These men were largely illiterate and belonged to landless peasantry. After the World War II due to labor shortages, British government encouraged labor migration from its former colonies (Chowdhury 2000). The postwar British economy demanded cheap and plentiful labor, much of which was recruited from South Asia. Since Sylhetis had already forged a strong link with the UK, most new labor was drawn from there. Sylhetis, based in the UK, helped each other to integrate into the new society by providing credit, arranging documents, and gradually spreading the network (Gardner 1993). During the 1950s, the numbers increased dramatically (Adams 1987). However, except the people from poorer background, a small number of urban upper and middle class Bangladeshis also migrated even before the World War II for higher education and settled in the UK (Siddiqi 2004).

Studies reveal that only a few families of these migrants joined them in the 1950s (Ullah 2007). The first generation of Bangladeshi women arrived in Britain as part of a slow process of family reunion (Dale et al. 2002). In the 1950s and 60s, Britain was a very different place to the modern, globalized state as it is today. The UK was steeped in a racist colonial history that ascribed zero value to Asian or African cultures, and the new migrants who came from old colonies faced a chilly reception (Stubbs 2008). Most of them were given the low paid jobs working in nightshifts in the mills at a time when local men could not be recruited to do these jobs (Dale et al. 2002).

According to 2001 census, 283,063 Bangladeshis lived in the UK, which is 0.5 percent of the total population (Eade and Garbin 2003). In Britain, they are primarily concentrated in Greater London (54 percent) and the third generation of Bangladeshi population, those ‘born and bred’ in Britain, constitute half of the community (Garbin 2005). The largest Bangladeshi population outside London is located in Oldham, and the others are scattered across Birmingham, Luton and Bradford (Eade and Garbin 2003). British Bangladeshis are predominantly Muslim and studies reveal that the second and the third generation Bangladeshis seem to uphold their Muslim identity rather than their identity as Bangladeshis. Werbner (2004) argued that the absence of a strong linkage with ancestral home makes UK based Pakistanis to identify themselves as Muslims rather than as Pakistanis. Maybe the same reason acts as a catalyst as well for Bangladeshi youths in the UK to espouse their Muslim identity.

However, the absence of a strong tie does not mean that the Bangladeshi community is completely detached from their homeland. In the era of globalization and social networking, like other diaspora communities, British Bangladeshis are also linked to their countries of origin by phone, mail, internet and television. By the virtue of technological advancement, communication of news is rapid and sustained, which renders migrant communities a sense of belonging to multiple homes (Khanum 2000 and 2001, Eade and Garbin 2003, Gardner 2006). While having made lives in Britain many people, especially the first generation migrants, continue to regard Bangladesh as central to their identity; a key location in lives where home is situated in several places at once (Gardner and Mand undated). Besides maintaining relationship with their place of origin, the British Bangladeshis also keep up ties with the members of their extended families living in the USA, Canada, Middle East and other European countries. Matrimonial connections also take place and strengthen the bond (see Garbin 2005).

The UK based Bangladeshis usually send remittances to their relatives at home which plays an important role in the economy. Researchers observe migration has had an impact on the local landscape in many Sylheti villages. New roads and eye-catching houses, mosques, schools or madrasahs have been built which is a great contrast with the rest of rural Bangladesh (Eade and Garbin 2003). When these migrants visit Bangladesh, they are often found to be lavishly generous, giving a great deal of help to their village-based relatives, and other forms of charity to the local poor (Gardner and Ahmed 2006). The financial relation between Bangladeshis in Britain and their kin in
Bangladesh is however changing. In 1995, a report indicated 20 percent of the Bangladeshi families in the East London were sending money to Bangladesh, whereas during the 1960s and 70s approximately 85 percent were remitting their savings (Garbin 2005). Maybe a more recent statistics will show a further decline in percentage of remittance senders. Probably financial constraints encountered by the Bangladeshis and the emergence of a second and a third generations of British Bangladeshis are the factors explaining the declining proportions of people’s income being invested in remittances (Eade and Garbin 2003). The information provided above, however, clearly indicates that in Bangladesh they are highly successful though in Britain they have been one of the most impoverished and least successful South Asian communities (Gardner and Mand undated).

In the UK, a large number of Bangladeshis are concentrated in semi-skilled and unskilled sectors of industry. This community experiences unemployment, poor working conditions, poverty, and overcrowded housing, poor health, and low educational qualification (Dale et. al 2002, Chahal 2004). The combined figure for Bangladeshi and Pakistani families was of 50 percent of working households living below the poverty line (Ahmed et al. 2001). According to 2005-06 statistics, 12.8 percent of men and 12.5 percent of women of Tower Hamlet borough were unemployed (Gardner and Mand undated). In Oldham, on the other hand, 25 percent Bangladeshi and Pakistani men were unemployed (Dale et al. 2002). Studies reveal that differences exist not only in terms of employment and economic activity rates, rates of pay also vary substantially, with Bangladeshi men facing particularly low rates of pay (Platt 2007).

Like the first generation male migrants, females of Bangladeshi origin also were mainly from rural background. Most of them did not have formal education and language skill. Thus, they have low levels of economic activity at all stages of the life course (Chris et al. 2003), particularly for married women and women with dependent children. Second and third generations of British Bangladeshis, however, demonstrate high aspirations and high levels of participation, particularly in relation to the educational and occupational level of their parents (Dale et al. 2002). Studies noted a significant improvement in the performance of Bangladeshi boys and girls at schools (Ahmed et al. 2001). Parents are also taking interest in educating their daughters vis-à-vis sons. Although girls who wished to continue their education face a more adverse situation than boys, statistics show that number of girls as undergraduate students is increasing (Dale et al. 2002). While taking into account their identity as members of minority group mired in a troubled situation, the next section will try to shed light on the issue as to what extent this effort and aspiration shown by the diaspora group to achieve a respectable position in society receives appreciation and encouragement from the society.

**British Bangladeshis in the UK as South Asians and Muslims**

Bangladeshi community along with other South Asians living in Britain is officially categorized by virtue of their place of origins in the Indian subcontinent. Though these peoples are different by languages, food habits and taboos, customs and rituals, they have some common traits as well. They are more like each other than they look like the English, which made them a single population category in Britain (Wallman 1978). Writers like Lyon consider South Asians as ethnic groups instead of racial groups (Lyon quoted in Solomos and Back 1996). However, it does not necessarily mean that ethnic groups do not face discrimination (Chahal 2004).

Ethnic group membership refers to the network of people with whom an individual is in contact, and the ethnic affiliation of those people and the groups they form. And ethnic identity consists of: the perception of differences among ethnic groups; the feeling of attachment to and pride in one ethnic group and cultural heritage as opposed to others; and at least where there are perceived physical differences between groups, the perception of prejudice and discrimination against one’s own ethnic group (Keefe 1992). Nagel (1994) states, ethnicity is best understood as a dynamic, constantly evolving property of both individual identity and group organization. It (ethnicity) is the product of actions undertaken by ethnic groups as they shape and reshape their self-definition and culture; however, external social, economic and political processes and actors also construct ethnicity as they shape and reshape ethnic categories and definitions.

Ethnic identity of Bangladeshis in Britain also evolved, and as referred to earlier, they are considered as South Asian ethnic group. Wallman argues ethnicities cannot exist without an ethnically, or racially defined, opposite number (Solomos and Back 1996). This assumption reflects that ethnic identities are not merely the product of ‘traditional mores’, but the upshot of an asymmetrical conversation between dominant and minority groupings. The boundary system approach clearly explains how actors of both sides are involved in the production of ethnic definitions (Wallman quoted in Solomos and Back 1996).

It is most likely that in order to evade the debate of race, ethnicity, deprivation and other relevant issues it is often said that in England there are no ethnics, there are only ethnic relations (Wallman 1978). However, keeping away from this discourse does not necessarily mean that the complexities regarding these issues would disappear.
Studies (e.g., Kundnani 2001, Chahal 2004, Plat, 2007, Stubbs 2008, Communities and Local Government Report 2009) reveal ethnic minority groups in the UK suffer from different types of deprivations. Black and minority ethnic people suffer an ‘ethnic penalty’ that makes it difficult for them to achieve something in job market, in education and in politics (Stubbs 2008). Studies also disclose that British Bangladeshis especially the second and third generations believe that they are not considered as equal by the English people and often looked down upon only because they are not English (Communities and Local Government Report 2009).

### Inequalities in Every Sphere of Life

#### Income inequality and poverty

Since the World War II, Muslim migrants to Britain are largely from Bangladesh and Pakistan. In Britain, Muslims are largely concentrated in areas of multiple deprivations, living in dwellings designated as unfit or in serious disrepair. They suffer from institutionalized discrimination at the local level such as employment, health and dependence on means-tested benefits (Mares et. al 1985, Torkington 1983). Government policies also contribute to the informal segregation between white and Muslims in terms of housing and education. A government report reveals that Muslim men of Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds are currently more likely to be unemployed than other Asians (Ansari 2002).

Platt (2007), in her studies, finds that in the UK minority ethnic groups had higher rates of poverty than the average for the population. Around 40 percent of people from ethnic minorities are in income poverty, twice the rate for white people. The income poverty rate varies substantially between ethnic groups (Palmer and Kenway 2007). Rates of poverty were highest for Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and Black Africans. Poverty especially for Bangladeshis appeared to be severe and more long-lasting than that experienced by other groups (Platt 2007).

Some people argue that Bangladeshis in the UK are the most impoverished migrant community because of the fact that the first generation settlers in the UK were not educated and therefore constrained to engage in the low paid jobs. Platt (2007), however, argues education can only partially explain employment disadvantage. To understand the situation better we need to consider ‘ethnic penalty’ as well.

#### Discrimination on the basis of racial differences

Research shows that people from minority ethnic groups who have higher educational achievements do not receive the same rewards as those from White British backgrounds with similar qualification (JRF 2007). Individuals from all ethnic minorities earned less on average than White people and women from ethnic minority backgrounds could not close the employment gap with White women (Clark and Drinkwater 2007, Khanum and Sharma 2003). Studies suggest even though the young people are showing remarkable enthusiasm in education, they experience disproportionate rate of unemployment and other socio-economic deprivations (Ansari 2002, Eade and Garbin 2003). Young people of Bangladeshi origin also believe, in order to compete with the white young people in the labor market, they had to demonstrate that they were not just as good but better than the others (Dale et al. 2002).

#### Housing and social services

Asian minority ethnic groups also face discrimination in terms of housing. They hardly get council accommodation in white estates and those who did get council accommodation in white estates soon found their homes targeted, bricks thrown through windows, sometimes patrol and a lighted match under the door. The fear of racial harassment meant that most Asian sought the safety of their own areas, in spite of the inconvenience involved such as overcrowding, damp and dingy houses (Kundnani 2001).

Minority ethnic service users also feel mainstream services were inappropriate for their needs. And service providers usually make assumptions based on stereotypes and prejudice about the needs of these users without trying to know their true needs (Chahal 2004).

#### Construction of Asian criminality

Discriminations against ethnic groups are not limited to economic sector, housing, education and the service sector. Some studies suggest press, radio and television attempt to construct Asian criminality (Webster 1997). New generation of young Asians born and bred in Britain are unwilling to accept the second-class status like their predecessors. When racists came to their way, they met violence with violence. However, the police increasingly targeted Asian areas as they decided that gangs of Asian youths were getting out of hand. Among young Asians a hatred for police force grew as they left them vulnerable to racism on one hand, and criminalized them for defending themselves on the other (Kundnani 2001, Webster 1997). In addition to these inequities, Bangladeshi community in Britain also encounters some discrimination as Muslim minority.
Islamophobia, integration and cohesion

Political events across the globe as well as the countries of origin have an impact on socio-political and cultural development among the migrant communities. The Bangladeshi Muslims in Britain are no exception. They watched closely the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East and Chechnya (Abbas 2004 quoted in Eade and Garbin 2006). After September 2001, Islamophobia was expressed in many ways and Muslim identity in public sphere becomes potentially problematic (Werbner 2004). Muslim adults and children were attacked, physically and verbally. They were punched, spat at, hit with umbrellas at bus stops, publicly doused with alcohol and pelted with fruits and vegetables. Dog excrement and fireworks were pushed through their letterboxes and bricks were thrown through their windows (Ansari 2002). At that moment, Muslim migrants in the West became symbolic victims of a global mythology, caught in a spiral of alienation and ambivalent identifications (Werbner 2004). They were called murderers and excluded from the social gatherings. Although police forces across the UK condemned the attack on Muslims, the mainstream media continued to reproduce stereotypes of Muslims as fanatics and treats Islam as a one dimensional, monolithic religion that poses a threat to Western democratic values (Ansari 2002).

After 11 September 2001, Muslims were singled out and repeatedly pressed to condemn the attacks louder than the other citizens since anything less was perceived as hidden support for the murder of innocent civilians (Ansari 2002). Some even tend to believe Muslims have failed to embrace the normative ideal of rights, responsibilities, social values and a stake in society. They have willingly isolated themselves from the British society. After the attack on London in 2005, the then Prime Minister Tony Blair also stated that Muslims are not integrating with the society. In order to resolve the problems of extremism the government encouraged integration of Muslims into British society (Amin 2006) and subsequently in 2006 the commission of integration and cohesion was formed (Brighton 2007). So a blame of discourse was directed towards British Muslims who were expected to prove themselves (Worley 2005). Some people, however, argue that integration is a two way process and it is not the solitary responsibility of the minority. Masroor (2006) argues it is only the Muslims who are told to integrate; seldom have we heard the same for the Non-Muslim communities. Tariq Modood (2006) argues that both the migrant communities and the majority community need to extend cooperation to each other and the migrant or ethnic community alone cannot be blamed for failing to or not trying to integrate. However, it appeared from different studies that the British model of integration sought to claim one-sided assimilation from this diaspora community. The culture and religious values of the community never acknowledged with equal dignity. Muslim community was clearly conveyed the message that Britain is predominantly Christian in its values, traditions and practices when British Muslims protested against Salman Rushdie’s book The Satanic Verses. It is not the place to unpack the debate whether the demand of Muslim community was justified or not, the point is, even before the law of the land, the rights of the citizens vary with the variation of their religious affiliation (see Brighton 2007).

Participation of Muslims in national mainstream politics has grown steadily since the 1970s. However, the main British political parties appear reluctant to advance ethnic minority participation beyond certain ‘acceptable limits’ (Ansari 2002). The government wishes Muslims to integrate into British society only if they are to hold viewpoints considered acceptable. Otherwise, the government would seem to prefer apolitical and humble Muslims, who behave with all the colonial subservience and do not consider Britain as their home (Amin 2006). Amin (2006) goes on to argue, rather than foster the involvement of British Muslims in political life, the Government has systematically sought to undercut and destabilize burgeoning association and movements by driving a wedge between them and Muslims.

Multiculturalism was the product of its time and a large number of thinkers seem to agree that multiculturalism is dead (Stubbs 2008). In the past, Britain also used to claim itself a multicultural society but now things have changed. Instead of the previous policies of multiculturalism, ‘community cohesion’ has become increasingly popular in public policy debates (Worley 2005). Perhaps the incapacity or disinclination of attaining the characteristics of a multicultural society led the concerned authority to shift its focus from multiculturalism to integration and community cohesion.

Reflection and Conclusion

It seems to be tricky to apply the ideal type of definition of diaspora mentioned earlier to the Bangladeshi community in the UK, yet British Bangladeshis fit with the definition to a great extent. The first generation Bangladeshis in the UK used to maintain a good contact with their homeland, for example, sending remittances regularly, constructing homestead, directly participating in the political process of their villages of origin or financing the local level elections, possessing the dreams to return the home some day and feeling the sense of belonging to the place of origin instead of the host society bear testimony to the fact. Most of the first generation migrants were from humble background with little or no education; they were incorporated in the lowest ladder of
the host society. Since they did not have language skill and other marketable skills, they unconditionally accepted
the subordinate status in the host society.

The second and third generations, who were born and brought up in Britain, however, cannot accept the status
unquestionably. Although second and third generations of British-Bangladeshis have a link with their predecessors' place of origin, they do not possess the same passion like their elders. Their linkage with Bangladesh is increasingly getting weaker. They do not take much interest in buying land, making house, or doing charity in Bangladesh. Almost everybody considers Britain as his or her home. Studies, nevertheless, reveal that a good number of British Bangladeshis deem that the British society and its people neither welcome nor consider them equal (see Communities and Local Government Report 2009). Rather they (British Bangladeshis) often encounter censure by mass media and even by the concerned authority within the government. They face criticism for not being loyal to the society and not showing willingness to discharge their responsibilities as good citizens. They were increasingly facing pressure from the majority to integrate with the (British) society. The attack on London in 2005 prompted the government to take stringent measures to combat terrorism and extremism. Although there was no substantial evidence to prove the causal relation between lack of integration on the part of the minority and terrorist attacks, the issue of integration, nevertheless had been at the center and Government high ups, media and even the then Prime Minister continued to put emphasis on integration of minority communities. However, it seems the uniqueness of culture of each community and a wide range of differences existent among them did not receive much insightful consideration. Moreover, when the Prime Minister himself commented that Muslims were not integrating, it came as a serious blow for the whole community and it not only validates the allegation brought against the Muslims thus far but also dismantled their confidence. Things were largely measured according to the cultural, political and religious standard of the host society. So it is very disappointing as well as painful for the British Bangladeshis to face both deprivations and allegations by the same society where they were born and bred and where they feel they belong to.

To conclude, the information provided above clearly shows that on the one hand Bangladeshis are suffering from various deprivations for their ethnic identity, and on the other, they are facing systematic exclusion as the member of Muslim minority group. In addition to that, their identity and allegiance is under constant suspicion and surveillance. However, the people who are White and non-Muslims do not encounter similar circumstance. Although the members of this minority group are British citizens, the dominant group does not believe that they are loyal enough to the country where they were born and bred. Media also constantly represents them as criminals both as Asians and as Muslims. They are being told that they are not integrating with their own society. Thus, it is a very strange situation for the Bangladeshi diaspora community to react. It is no wonder that this reaction of the host society towards the diaspora community could effectively push them away and lead them to more marginalization and alienation.

References:


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The Bangladeshi diaspora consists of people of Bangladeshi descent who have immigrated to or were born in another country. First generation migrants may have moved abroad from Bangladesh for better living conditions, to escape poverty, to support their financial condition or to send money back to families in Bangladesh. There is a large Bangladeshi diaspora population in Saudi Arabia, where there are almost 1.2 million. There are also significant migrant communities in various Arab states of the Historically many Sylheti diaspora settled in UK over several decades since the early 20th century due to historical ties with the pre-1947 British Raj (many joined the British Indian Army and Navy/and or fought in WWI/WWII and well as feudal landlord/zamindars maintaining business ties with the British or embarking on joint venture e.g. tea estates etc.,) as. Sylhetis are a culturally distinct peoples In Bangladesh. We also have a large diaspora in the UK, US and Canada. Our Sylheti culture is distinct because of our language, Sylheti Islam with strong Sufi tendencies and conservative social values. Family is the most important thing to a Sylheti. Diaspora Gives Bangladesh enables donors to support charitable causes in Bangladesh. A Conversation with Jannatun Nabila CAF America’s Voice of Diaspora interview series presents diasporans living in the US and Canada who share their views on heritage, culture, and being part of a diaspora group. Ambassador: Diaspora Gives Bangladesh Jannatun Nabila is a Grants Associate at the C F A Conversation with Jannatun Nabila CAF America’s Voice of Diaspora interview series presents diasporans living in the US and Canada who share their views on heritage, culture, and being part of a diaspora group. Ambassador: Diaspora Gives Bangladesh Jannatun Nabila is a Grants Associate at the C F A Conversation with Jannatun Nabila CAF America’s Voice of Diaspora interview series presents diasporans living in the US and Canada who share their views on heritage, culture, and being part of a diaspora group. Ambassador: Diaspora Gives Bangladesh Jannatun Nabila is a Grants Associate at the C F A Conversation with Jannatun Nabila CAF America’s Voice of Diaspora interview series presents diasporans living in the US and Canada who share their views on heritage, culture, and being part of a diaspora group. Ambassador: Diaspora Gives Bangladesh Jannatun Nabila is a Grants Associate at the C F A Conversation with Jannatun Nabila CAF America’s Voice of Diaspora interview series presents diasporans living in the US and Canada who share their views on heritage, culture, and being part of a diaspora group. As many other diaspora group, Bangladeshi immigrants in the UK maintain several linkages-economical, social and cultural, and political-with their home country Bangladesh. In this host society, they present their distinctive life by maintaining close ties with ethnic Bangla cultural objects. In this study we contextualize the diaspora formation of Bangladeshi immigrants in the UK by analyzing three broad types of diaspora characteristics - dispersion; connection with the homelands; and maintaining a distinctive identity in the host society. Based on secondary data, this study revealed that Bangladeshi diaspora members in the UK are mainly dispersed from their country of origin for economic reasons. The Bangladeshi diaspora consists of people of Bangladeshi descent who have immigrated to or were born in another country. First generation migrants may have moved abroad from Bangladesh for better living conditions, to escape poverty, to support their financial condition or to send money back to families in Bangladesh. Besides the UK and Middle East, Bangladeshis also have a significant presence in the United States, mainly in New York City (where many are also from Sylhet, Chittagong, and other regions) and Paterson in New Jersey, in East and Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, South Korea and Japan, and in other Western countries such as Italy, Canada, and Australia.