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THE EXPERIENCES OF SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
IN THE BRITISH EDUCATION SYSTEM
AND IN THEIR SEARCH FOR WORK

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Doctor of Philosophy

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September 1987

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SUMMARY

The University of Aston in Birmingham

THE EXPERIENCES OF SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE BRITISH EDUCATION SYSTEM AND IN THEIR SEARCH FOR WORK

KRUTIKA D TANNA PhD September 1987

This research aimed to provide a comparative analysis of South Asian and White British students in their academic attainment at school and university and, in their search for employment.

Data were gathered by using a variety of methodological techniques. Completed postal questionnaires were received from 301 South Asian and White British undergraduates from 12 British universities, who were in their final year of study in 1985. In-depth interviews were also conducted with 49 graduates who were a self selected group from the original sample. Additional information was also collected by using diary report forms and by administering a second postal questionnaire to selected South Asian and White British participants.

It was found that while the pre-university qualifications of the White British and South Asian undergraduates did not differ considerably, many members in the latter group had travelled a more arduous path to academic success. For some South Asians, school experiences included the confrontation of racist attitudes and behaviour, both from teachers and peers. The South Asian respondents in this study were more likely than their White British counterparts, to have attempted some C.S.E. examinations, obtained some of their 'O' levels in the Sixth Form and retaken their 'A' levels. As a result the South Asians were on average older than their White British peers when entering university. A small sample of South Asians also found that the effects of racism were perpetuated in higher education, where they faced difficulty both academically and socially. Overall, however, since going to university most South Asians felt further drawn towards their 'cultural background', this often being their own unique view of 'Asianess'.

Regarding their plans after graduation, it was found that South Asians were more likely to opt for further study, believing that they needed to be better qualified than their White British counterparts. For those South Asians who were searching for work, it was noted that they were better qualified, willing to accept a lower minimum salary, had made more job applications and had started searching for work earlier than the comparable White British participants. Also, although generally they were not having difficulty in obtaining interviews, South Asian applicants were less likely to receive an offer of employment. In the final analysis examining their future plans, it was found that a large proportion of South Asian graduates were aspiring towards self employment.

Key words: South Asian, Ethnic Minorities, Education, Graduate Employment.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Ba and Bapuji

and to

Shamee, Amar, Shenal . . .

in the hope that they may not need to ... nevertheless, they
have the courage and the resources to challenge their destinies.

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CHAPTER 1

I N T R O D U C T I O N

This thesis is concerned with the experiences in education and employment of home South Asian and White British undergraduates at British universities.

It would be appropriate to initially define the principal terms used throughout this thesis which refer to discernible groups within the population. The term, 'South Asian', has been used to refer to those individuals whose families originate from the South Asian sub-continent and who may have migrated to the U.K. from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or East Africa; 'ethnic minority' refers to those groups who are identified by others and, possibly using separate criteria, who may identify themselves, as being culturally and often racially distinct from the majority people in that locality; the term 'black' is used to denote the political and social unity of people of Afro Caribbean and South Asian origin; finally, 'White British' is self explanatory and describes the majority population, whose families have been living and working in the U.K. for several generations.

Individuals of South Asian origin are known to have settled in this country since the turn of the century (Alexander and Dewjee, 1972). However, the presence of the majority of the South Asian communities living in Britain today, has been perceived to be a result of "push" and "pull" factors, respectively operating

within the country of migration and immigration (Rose et al, 1969; Allen, 1971). The main 'wave' of immigration from the New Commonwealth came during the 1950s and the 1960s. In the period between 1955-60, although many individuals were arriving from the South Asian sub-continent, the majority of the New Commonwealth immigrants were then coming from the Caribbean (Rose et al, 1969). However, this trend changed dramatically in the early 1960s with an increasing proportion of migrants arriving from India and Pakistan, due to the restrictions expected in the impending legislation of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962. Further limitations were also imposed by the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968 and the Immigration Act of 1971. The result was that, with the exception of those South Asians with U.K. passports who were forcibly evacuated from Uganda in 1972, the majority of the South Asians arriving in Britain during the 1970s were dependent wives and children of those Commonwealth citizens who had entered the U.K. before 1 January 1973 (Rees, 1982).

Distinct stages which may be seen to have been initiated in parallel to immigration legislation, can be identified in the ideological responses made to the presence of black pupils in the British education system since the 1960s. This can be viewed as a pattern of gradual change, where policy decisions were not always informed by the prevailing ideological position.

The initial reaction of the education system towards the arrival of Afro Caribbean and South Asian pupils in the early 1960s, was to adopt an assimilationist philosophy. In retrospect this has been viewed as the "problem-centred" approach to the

education of ethnic minority pupils' (Swann,1985:194). Here the aim was to compensate black children for their assumed deficiencies especially in terms of language and culture. An equally important concern was to minimise the disruption in the education of the then indigenous population, which was operationalised by dispersing minority pupils away from their local schools where there were high concentrations of ethnic minority pupils (DES Circular 7, 1965). Two principal notions underpinned the assimilation theory. Firstly, it was accepted that there was a shared unity of culture amongst the indigenous population of this country, which was at risk of contamination if alternative cultures were allowed to operate. Secondly, it was believed that if minority pupils could be made indistinguishable from their white peers, they would both quickly assimilate into and be accepted as equals by wider society (Street-Porter, 1978).

As it became evident that assimilationist policies were often resisted by minority communities and could not be totally effective in their main aims, the second approach, that of integration, was promoted in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This was, however, essentially based on the same ideology as the assimilationist philosophy. Troyna (1982) has suggested, 'the two models varied only in so far as integrationists did not advocate the total suppression of cultural differences; instead, they defined the aim as 'unity through diversity' (1982:133). This was seen as possible by encouraging a minimal awareness and acknowledgement of cultural differences. Nevertheless, the continuing 'underachievement' of ethnic minority pupils in British

schools demonstrated the failure of assimilationist and integrationist educational responses. In retrospect, policies based on these ideologies were viewed as 'misguided and ill-founded' (Swann Report, 1985:198).

Growing concerns about the mis-education of their children from the black communities, served as a catalyst for the emergence of the third stage of responses to the presence of ethnic minority pupils in British schools (Coard, 1971). This may be seen as the cultural pluralism model adopted in the late 1970s and operationalised under the label of multicultural education. The nature of such an education was indicated by the DES as follows:

'For the curriculum to have meaning and relevance for all pupils now in our schools, its content, emphasis and the values and assumptions contained must reflect the wide range of cultures, histories and life styles in our multi-racial society (White Paper 1978, Cmnd 7186:6).

However, as with integration, strong ideological connections can be identified between the multicultural approach and the assimilationist model for educating black pupils. While the pluralist viewpoint had attempted to promote a global perspective on education, it has been argued that it still viewed the disadvantages of black pupils to be a result of deficiencies within the individuals, either in their culture or in their ability to form a positive identity of themselves (Stone, 1981). Thus the promotion of minority cultures in schools, was seen as a compensatory device following in the liberal tradition of

providing equality of opportunity, to promote occupational and social mobility (Green, 1982).

Entering the 1980s, it is clear that in assessing the educational performance of black pupils, a significant departure in debate is required from concerns about the schooling of 'immigrant' children, to the education of black British pupils. Drawing upon statistics provided by the Department of Education and Science and the Labour Force Survey, Taylor and Hegarty (1985) have argued:

'In 1972 children of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin constituted respectively the second, third and fourth largest groups of ethnic minority pupils, and collectively they now form the largest group of ethnic minority pupils in British schools, numbering about 386,000 of whom three-quarters are UK-born' (1985:16).

The contribution of the Swann Report (1985), to the debate on the education of ethnic minority pupils therefore needs to be evaluated within this context. In critically assessing the historical development in the educational responses made to black pupils, the Swann Report attempted to move away from previous perspectives, by promoting the notion of 'Education for All'. However, the foundations of the pluralist society envisaged remained within the multicultural mould, with an additional emphasis on making those who attend 'all-white' schools, aware of the multi-ethnic society in which they live. In Swann's conceptualisation, the problematic was still couched in terms of cultural differences. A critical reading of the Committee's analysis and interpretation of different levels of achievement

between ethnic minority students demonstrates this clearly. In analysing the empirical data gathered on the achievement levels of school leavers from five LEAs, the report concluded that, while Afro Caribbean pupils were 'underachieving', pupils of South Asian origin were seen to be achieving 'on a par' with their white peers locally. Further the report explained this situation by stating:

'the reasons for the very different school performances of Asians and West Indians seem likely to lie deep within their respective cultures' (1985:87).

The Swann Committee found it possible to use this argument due to the prevailing stereotypical images of the lifestyles of South Asian and Afro Caribbean families, where the characteristics of the former were seen as more likely to lead to academic success (Lawrence, 1981).

So far a brief chronological account of the ideological responses to the arrival and presence of ethnic minority pupils in British schools, has been provided. It is important to reiterate that integration and cultural pluralism were essentially a variant on the assimilationist model. Further, these stages do not necessarily refer to classroom processes but rather to ideological philosophies of intent on the part of local and national educational networks (Troyna, 1987). Troyna and Williams (1986) have devised a conceptual framework which may be used to identify and assess more clearly developments in the educational responses towards black pupils. In their analysis they have used the categories of 'deracialisation' and 'racialisation' of educational issues. The former, refers to situations where the

specific problems of black pupils are subsumed within wider categories of disadvantage. However, as the authors argue, 'the prevalence of deracialised rhetorical forms does not suggest that racial issues were unimportant or that racial inequalities were being mitigated' (Troyna and Williams, 1986:44). Troyna (1987) has further exemplified this position when he notes,

' policy formulations, whether embedded in the ideological framework of assimilation, integration or cultural pluralism were premised on the assumption that the priority was the management of problems thrown up by the presence of black students rather than the mitigation of problems which they encountered directly because they were black citizens living in a racist society. The outcome of this was discrimination by proxy (Troyna, 1987:5).

Alternatively the 'racialisation' of educational discourse would make it necessary to recognise the importance of perceived racial differences in society, while "benign" racialisation would make it clear that this division has originated from and is sustained by racism. Such a stance has been promoted by some academics in the form of anti-racist education. For Mullard (1983) anti-racist education is 'a truly alternative and oppositional expression', which has always been in the background but only recently been acknowledged as an educational ideology. He further expands,

'From its (anti-racist education's) formal emergence in the early 1960s as a reaction to the structural racism built into immigrant education to its educational efflorescence in the 1980s as a largely 'Black' response to the ethnicism of multi-cultural education, this dominated form addresses the central problem of White racism' (Mullard, 1983:6).

Troyna and Williams (1986) have argued that while there has been the 'benign' racialisation' of educational policies in some LEAs, the operative terms of multicultural education are still more evident.

The discussion so far may be seen as a historical and ideological backcloth to the debate about the education of blacks in Britain. It is within this context that the present study, which examines the educational experiences of academically successful South Asian and White British university students, can be located. However, the study also looks beyond schooling and investigates these students' subsequent prospects in the graduate labour market. Thus, two other factors which may serve to further contextualise the research, can be mentioned. Firstly, both immediately before and during the period in which this study was conducted (1984-86), major ideological changes and financial constraints were affecting the British higher education system. One of the results of these developments was that, while there was an overall increase in the number of places available in higher education, there were fewer places available at universities (Kogan and Kogan, 1983; Walford, 1987a). This situation made the competition to obtain admission at university even more severe. The second important issue which needs to be mentioned is the alarming increase throughout the 1980s, in the number of people who were unemployed (Ashton, 1986). For the purposes of this thesis it is imperative to emphasise that as the unemployment rates in the total population increased there was a disproportionate rise in the unemployment levels of black people,

especially amongst black youth (Labour Force Survey, 1985). Additionally it should be noted that the early 1980s also saw fluctuations in graduate unemployment levels, with those following certain degrees being more affected than others (Tarsh, 1982).

An appraisal of available literature identified three main areas where there was little or no current knowledge, regarding the position of those South Asians who had been wholly or mostly educated in this country, both within the British education system and their subsequent transition into the labour market. Initially it was observed that most existing studies investigating the education of South Asian pupils viewed their educational performance in terms of 'achievement' levels (Driver and Ballard, 1979; Swann, 1985). However, there was little exploration of the processes of attainment and therefore precisely how they may come to 'achieve'. Further, although it was evident that South Asian students were persistent and keen to continue with their education and obtain academic qualifications, there was a dearth of information relating to their numerical presence and experiences in British higher education. Finally, the results of several studies have demonstrated the disadvantaged position of blacks in the labour market, a situation which has often been explained by their lack of formal credentials (Rampton Report, 1981). However, little attention has been given to the prospects of black graduates in the labour market or of those black individuals who having been through the education system of this country are emerging with higher academic qualifications. The vast majority of the existing literature in education has concentrated on the

problems created and the difficulties faced by the initial arrival of black children in Britain (Taylor and Hegarty, 1985). Nevertheless, as the black communities have become more established in this country, and with the virtual absence of new arrivals, the focus of concern needs to move towards the prospects and performance of those blacks who are either born or largely educated in this country.

The research conducted for this thesis attempts to illuminate some of the gaps identified in the literature. The study focused on the comparative analysis of the experiences in education and employment of South Asian and White British university undergraduates. Three major areas of interest directed this project towards an investigation of academically successful South Asian students. Firstly, the prevailing emphasis on achievement levels had led to the general conclusion, that on the whole, pupils of South Asian origin did not face any major problems at school and may be seen to be achieving as well as their White British peers (Swann Report, 1985). Unlike the fate of other ethnic minority groups, the presumed levels of academic success within the South Asian communities, in itself made them a category of interest. As Fuller (1983) has argued:

'Researchers have been slow to see the sociological significance of other kinds of pupil, who in not being defined as deviant are relegated to the realms of the sociologically uninteresting and unremarkable' (1983:187).

While achievement levels were also documented, the present study was primarily designed to examine the process by which

academically successful South Asian pupils had ultimately attained their school leaving qualifications.

The second reason why the thesis focused on undergraduates of South Asian origin was to help assess the numerical presence, and distribution by subject area, of all home South Asians attending British universities. Thirdly by considering the employment prospects of South Asians with higher academic credentials, their success levels beyond the education system could also be evaluated.

To enable an adequate assessment of this thesis it must also be acknowledged that the prevailing ideology throughout the research has been to accept students' perceptions and their construction of reality as valid knowledge. Without consulting the other major protagonists, including teachers, lecturers, parents and employers it is difficult to determine, how far students' perceptions are reflections of 'the truth'. However, the interpretations of events and situations by those who are most concerned may be seen as a legitimate area for research. As Thomas notes, 'If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences' (1928:527). This argument was also later discussed by Berger and Luckmann (1966).

The bulk of the thesis may be divided into two sections. The first section consists of four chapters which provide a critical review of relevant literature. The second section, of five chapters, deals with the methodology adopted for this research, followed by a presentation and analysis of the data collected. Chapter 2, which is the first of the literature review

chapters, examines the current perspectives in the sociology of education and attempts to locate issues of 'race' and class within these contours. Chapter 3 provides a critical analysis of the current knowledge on the position of South Asian pupils in British schools. This is followed by the fourth chapter which assesses the main aims and working of the British higher education system. It also investigates the underrepresentation of discernible groups within its establishments. Also included is a review of those few studies which have examined black students' attendance at higher education institutions. The final chapter of the literature review section discusses the relationship between credentials and employment, particularly at the graduate level, and gives an assessment of the position of South Asians in the British labour market.

Chapter 6 opens the second part of this thesis and provides details of the methods used to collect and analyse the data. Here the dynamic process of research is emphasised while pointing out that it was not possible to achieve all the initial objectives of the study. As the author acknowledges, compromises had to be made with the actual focus of the research being narrowed. Chapter 7 provides a description and background information on the respondents participating in this study. The following three chapters present a comparative analysis of South Asian and White British undergraduates experiences at school (Chapter 8), in higher education (Chapter 9) and in their search for employment (Chapter 10). The final chapter of the thesis provides a summary of the main findings and assesses their significance for South

Asian communities. Additionally, theoretical and policy implications are also discussed along with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION

This chapter will discuss the major theoretical debates in the sociology of education and the explanations promoted as to how and why discernible groups benefit differentially from the education system, in terms of access, treatment and outcome. Reference will also be made to the relative effectiveness of the reforms which were recommended and often implemented, as a direct result of such discourse.

2.1 The Social Democratic or Liberal Ideology in Education

During the 1950s and 1960s, 'political arithmetic' or the documentation of educational inequalities was the major preoccupation within British sociology of education. Despite the various post war reforms in education, Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956) noted the persistence of class inequalities in ability and attainment. Similar comments were also evident in the official publications of the 1960s, such as the Robbins Report on Higher Education (1963) and the Plowden Report on Primary Schools (1967). The dominant explanations for such discrepancies in achievement, were located within a politically optimistic discourse. The liberal ideology accepted the notion of education as a 'good

thing', which had the power to influence and change the class composition of society. It saw education as being able to increase the knowledge levels of a growing number of people and thus improve the quality of their lives. The liberal view advocated mass schooling and this was said to determine society and eradicate class differences through upward social mobility. Research deriving from this perspective viewed differentials in academic achievement chiefly as differences in the achievement levels of various social class groups, especially emphasising the failure of working class pupils (Douglas, 1964). Here class was seen as a system of social stratification, where distinctions were made between occupations in terms of income and status. However as Apple notes:

'... class connotes not just 'how much money you make' or 'what kind of job you have'.... - but one's relationship to the control and production of cultural and economic capital (also) class issomething lived, not an abstract entity or set of structural determinations somewhere 'out there' in an equally abstracted and totally separate economic sector of society' (1982:92).

The reluctance of liberal ideologists to embrace processes of cultural and political hegemony, led to the development of a positivist empiricist approach which failed to reflect the lived reality of individuals, also affected by other variables, such as status or occupational hierarchies of race and gender.

Although the social democratic idiom discusses education as it relates to the economy and the opportunity structure, these issues are seen somehow as given and external to the lives of the people involved. For individuals may only respond or react to existing inequalities by accommodating to the credentialling

education system, with the assumption that egalitarian notions would transcend schooling, and lead to upward social mobility. Further the CCCS (1981) noted that the particular findings of liberal ideologists (that of working class failure in education) were presented without locating them in a total theory of social class reproduction. It is this narrow focus on the manifest features of social class which led to the emergence of the deficiency model in education. This was brought about by an analysis of the lifestyles of working class and middle class families where the characteristics of the latter were taken as the norm and any variance from them were seen as deviant. Thus uncritical cause and effect relations were assumed between the 'deviant' features of working class life and the failure of their children at school.

The ability of such an analysis to ameliorate educational inequalities is confined by its inherent characteristics: it is essentially descriptive and cannot explain why working class pupils are not performing as well as their middle class peers, in the school system. The ideological constraints within which the problem was situated, resulted in any actions for social change focusing on access rather than ideology in education. However, Young and Whitty (1977) have argued that the 'theories of liberals and social democrats proved inadequate because they could not comprehend that the education to which they sought to widen access might itself be involved in perpetuating the inequalities they were concerned to overcome' (1977:16).

2.2 The New Sociology Of Education

The traditional approach to the sociology of education had been at a macro level, within which education was discussed in its relation to the wider economy. In this context, the restructuring of educational institutions was seen as the main strategy for realising equality. The micro level of education, on the other hand, focused directly on the content of education and the internal functioning of schools. The 1970s saw a shift in focus from 'macro' to a 'micro' perspective in the sociology of education, though it cannot be assumed that there was a developmental or total transition in theoretical perspective (Walford, 1987b).

The micro level was heralded as the new sociology of education and is usually associated with the works of Young, Esland and Keddie (1971). Here the emphasis was on the content and process of education itself, where the nature of the curriculum, the status of 'knowledge' within it, and the relationship between teachers and pupils and the differential influences on discernible groups, were seen to be especially important. While this new perspective provided a critique of the liberal ideology of schooling, it may still be seen as situated within a politically optimistic mode where schools could determine society and inequalities could be eradicated by providing equality of access (Gorbutt, 1972). Like the liberal ideologists, those educationists who adhered to the 'new' sociology of education, also located the problem on a single dimension and as Young and

Whitty (1977) have commented, they 'tended to abstract schools and school knowledge from their historical, political and economic contexts, and thus to locate the current crisis and its solution within the schools' (1977:19). Ahier (1977) continues this critique by suggesting that any restratification of educational knowledge will not make it necessary 'for the social distribution of new kinds of rewards to be different' (1977:69).

2.3 Equality Of Opportunity And Meritocracy

Where the crisis in education was located within the politics of access, as with the liberal and the 'new' sociology of education, the solution lay in the provision of equity in education. Various definitions of this maxim have been forwarded, ranging from equal schooling inputs, equality in pupil achievement levels and ensuring proportional representation from every relevant category of individuals such as those from differing social classes, gender and ethnic groups. (Bowman, 1975). However, the provision of equality of opportunity was still seen as the most effective method of enforcing equity in education. The notion of equality of opportunity was hardly considered in 19th century Britain, and, in fact, the system was designed to provide differential educational opportunities, which would help maintain the existing social order in the face of industrialisation. (OCCS, 1981; Davies, 1986) However, it also became clear that a greater degree of occupational mobility was now possible, but this was

seen as related to educational achievements and this led to the demand for equality in educational opportunity.

Coleman (1966) concluded from his research in the U.S.A. that family background rather than school characteristics were more important in explaining differences in attainment levels. He also suggested that the notion of equality of opportunity had evolved in three stages. Initially it was believed that all children should receive the same type of education and in similar schools; at the second level it was assumed that pupils would have different career destinies and therefore equality of opportunity would mean providing the appropriate curriculum for different groups of students; at the third stage it was recognised that such differentiation would be inherently unequal and this led to a shift in emphasis from equality in the inputs to schools, to equality in the effects of schooling. Along with this, '...the school's responsibility (also) shifted from increasing distributing equally its 'quality' to increasing the quality of its students' achievements' (Coleman, 1966:240).

The maxim of equality of opportunity in education is normally operated within schools through the notion of meritocracy. This may be defined as replacing ascription with achievement in deciding individual destinies, where family background, class and gender were used for the former and educational qualifications for the latter. However, the actual assessment of individual merit and talent may be seen as biased along variables such as class and culture and this led Bowles and Gintis (1976) to comment that 'the education system legitimates

inequality by providing an open, objective and ostensibly meritocratic mechanism for assigning individuals to unequal economic positions' (1976:103). For, amongst other things ascriptive factors such as wealth and the ability to privately educate ones children could easily be seen as achievement. Meritocracy is based on the rationale that everyone has an equal start in life, and thus individual effort and attainment are rewarded. In reality, however, this is not the case, and the multitude of disadvantages faced by various groups in society are thus neglected. In 1977, David Saxon the then president of the University of California wrote in the Los Angeles Times, that in his view, the existing policy of selection of students from among qualified applicants encouraged the development and maintenance of a racially and ethnically insulated university system.

'For many years, the selection was based primarily on the highest grade point averages and test scores, in the belief that this would assure practitioners with a high degree of professional knowledge and technical skill. However, this basis of selection judging from the results, has given preference to students with the best educational opportunities and the most academically supportive family and cultural background - in short, middle and upper class white students' (1977:2).

In the U.K. Halsey, Heath and Ridge (1980) have also demonstrated that the meritocratic traditions here have brought us no nearer to a classless society.

So far the ideal of providing an equal right to education has been discussed. However, Mary Warnock (1975) has argued that only the right to an equal education can be seen as the principle

of egalitarianism. For the provision of equal opportunity in education cannot challenge social inequality, it can only provide an equal opportunity to participate in an unequal society. In his assessment of the position of ethnic minority pupils in the British education system, Rex (1984) uses the concept of 'equality of opportunity within a very competitive credentialling system of education and social selection.' He acknowledges that this may be seen as a 'limited goal and that equality of outcome rather than merely equality of opportunity should be the standard in terms of which education is judged.' This is seen, however, as 'based upon long term goals of an essentially Utopian kind. There is no effective political force which is capable of realising "equality of outcome" in the immediate future' (1984:2). Rex is thus cautious in ignoring the concept of equal opportunities with reference to ethnic minorities, as he states, 'if it is left out in what will for the foreseeable future be a competitive and credentialling system, minorities are liable to be fobbed off with the recognition of their right to be culturally different without being given a fair chance to compete' (Rex, 1984:2).

However, until the 1970s inequities of 'race' and gender in education did not figure prominently on policy agendas in the U.K., and as Troyna and Williams (1986) have argued, educational policies were overtly deracialised. The liberalist ideals expressed in the deficiency model (and apparently resolved by the notion of equality of opportunity) resulted in reforms and compensatory programmes which were to help working class pupils overcome the 'problems' inherent in their lifestyle. This

included Butler's Education Act of 1944 which abolished fees for secondary education and established discretionary grants for higher education - which were to become mandatory in 1966; the recommendation for the abolition of the 11 plus in 1966; and the introduction of comprehensive schooling. Despite these and other amendments to the organisational structure of the school system, major class inequalities continued to persist in terms of ability and attainment. (Halsey, Floud and Anderson, 1961; Douglas, 1964; Robbins Report, 1963; Plowden Report, 1967). Even by 1975 little had changed, with 65% of 16-18 year olds with professional fathers in full time education, compared with only 14% of children with fathers in unskilled manual occupations (HMSO, 1979:Social Trends, No 9:76).

Three critical flaws within the theoretical debate which led to the post war reforms in education, may be identified as being largely responsible for the limited eradication of class inequalities in schooling. Initially and perhaps most significantly the issue itself or 'the problem of schooling' was only partially identified. It was noted that groups in the population were underachieving in the school system but a highly complex situation was first reduced to differences in social class and later to the internal functioning of schools. The main focus of several studies (Coleman 1966; Hargreaves, 1967; Jencks, 1973) adhering both to the traditional and 'new' theories of sociology of education, had been a demonstration rather than explanation of social inequalities in education. The solutions were essentially seen as the provision of equal access to slight variations of

existing educational institutions. However, the ability of the educational system to equally educate all its students was left unquestioned. Secondly, the partial identification of the 'problem' invariably only led to a glimpse of the maintenance and legitimisation of wider inequalities. Concern was noted about the home background and general lifestyles of working class pupils, about school practices and the interactions between teachers and pupils. Although these are important arenas where social inequalities are perpetuated, such myopic vision has resulted in an abstract analysis of the family and the school, leaving unquestioned wider political and economic structures. It is important to contextualise the issue for it is within this milieu that problems are located, interpreted, and accepted or challenged. This leads to the third explanation for the failure of post-war reforms. Simply, the misidentification of the causes of differential educational outcomes led to the recommendation of inappropriate or inadequate reformist measures. It has been argued (Young and Whitty, 1977) that one of the reasons why class inequalities in schooling have only marginally diminished, is because the reforms which were implemented and the theories they were based on were not sufficiently radical. The aims of these reforms were fairly modest, not to enable working class children to benefit from the school system on a par with their middle class counterparts, but simply to provide an equal opportunity for them to participate in a system inherently unequal. Access to educational resources may be seen as either directly (private schooling) or indirectly (middle class residential area) linked

with an individual's financial status, thus the concept of equality of opportunity seems unviable. The drive for 'equality of opportunity' was in fact a move away from egalitarian ideals because it merely facilitated the meritocratic system which 'assumes as rational both the terms under which the competition takes place and the goals to be achieved' (Dale and Esland, 1977:40).

2.4 Marxist Perspectives in Education: theories of reproduction and resistance

While liberal ideologists demonstrated inequalities in education and tried to explain them by identifying differences and labelling them as deficiencies within working class families, the Marxist perspective viewed schools as determined by society, where education helped to maintain a structured social inequality. Louis Althusser was one of the most influential Neo-Marxist theorists in education. Erben and Gleeson (1977) stated that 'for Althusser the school system is a crucial Ideological State Apparatus facilitating and ensuring the reproduction of the essential conditions for capitalist institutions to adapt, survive and innovate ' (1977:77). The work of Bowles and Gintis (1977) may also be located within the reproductionist paradigm. They have argued that the education system is crucial to the reproduction of a division of labour: this is seen to occur through the twin forces of class linked differences in levels of

achievement and types of socialisation. Bowles and Gintis have argued that 'schools foster legitimate inequality through the ostensibly meritocratic manner by which they reward and promote students, and allocate them to distinct positions in the occupational hierarchy. They create and reinforce patterns of social class, racial and sexual identification among students which allow them to relate "properly" to their eventual standing in the hierarchy of authority and status in the production process' (1977:11).

The main criticism of the reproduction theorists has been that in trying to adjust for the optimism of the liberals and the limited vision of the new sociology of education, they have developed a discourse which is totally opposite to the prevailing debates in education. They noted that inequalities in education existed precisely because the school system was designed to do so, thus fulfilling the demands of the economy. Thus an uncomplicated, functional relationship was assumed between the needs of a capitalist society and the ethos of schools, which led to an emphasis on input to, and the output of, the education system. Yet the 'black box' of schooling and what went on within it and the specific processes of reproduction were left unexamined. There is another fundamental flaw in the thesis. The meritocratic feature of education which legitimates the differential levels of achievement of children from different social origins could not be explained by reproduction theorists. For in rejecting the cultural deprivation explanations, they inadvertently pointed towards the schools, without being able to

identify the processes responsible. This neglect of the content of schooling also resulted in the view of teachers and pupils as passive consumers of the education system. Willis (1983) notes that according to the reproduction theorists, 'education's main and uninterrupted purpose is the insertion of working class agents into unequal futures. Pupil experience and agency become merely a reflex of structural determination. The actually varied, complex and creative field of human consciousness, culture and capacity is reduced to a dry abstraction' (1983:111). Bourdieu (1973) argues that schools may be a site where society's fundamental relations are contested, and that they are not simply institutions of reproduction, for the main actors may challenge and try to reconstruct their 'given' destinies. While the Marxist perspectives of Bowles and Gintis and Althusser develops upon the new sociology of education, by suggesting that for any significant transformation struggle must extend beyond schools, it cannot accomodate any potential for challenge or change from within the system.

However, other theoreticians have built upon the crude Marxist reproduction theories in education. For Apple (1982) 'the crisis, though clearly related to processes of capital accumulation, is not only economic. It is political and cultural/ideological as well. In fact, it is at the intersection of these three spheres of social life...' (1982:2). All three domains of existence may be seen to be inextricably linked, influenced by and a reaction to, the unequal distribution of power in society. This position may be clarified if it is acknowledged

that there is no direct structural correspondence between the economy and the educational institutions. It must also be recognised that reproduction does not occur automatically within schools; after all as Apple notes students are not 'passive internalizers of pregiven social messages' (1982:14). In this approach, behavioural and ideological responses such as contradiction, conflict and resistance are introduced, whereby groups of people who find themselves in specific collective niches react to change or maintain their structural position.

Recently Willis (1983) has advanced a cultural studies perspective, which may be seen as the conduct by groups to make sense of and respond to the situation in which they may find themselves. Willis (1983) specifically emphasises the active production of culture, which is noted as 'the process of the collective, creative use of discourse, meanings, materials, practices and group processes to explore, understand and creatively occupy particular positions, relations and sets of material possibilities.' These in turn are seen to be both determining and determined by 'Life experiences; individual and group projects; secret illicit and informal knowledge; private fears and fantasies...' (Willis, 1983:114). In his book, Learning to Labour (1977), Willis demonstrated the strategies used by working class boys to resist school and develop their own subculture. From a similar theoretical perspective McRobbie (1978) has reported on the distinctive lifestyles of working class girls, as they tried to deal with the disadvantages of class and gender.

It may also be observed that groups of people located within specific positions of race, class and gender, as they reinterpret, struggle, accomodate or challenge the political and ideological debates touching their lives, are constantly transforming and are being transformed by these processes. Thus it is crucial to note that while school may be an arena of conflicts and resistances, such informal cultural responses may have a contradictory effect and eventually result in reproduction: being unable to 'transcend some of the givenness and structuring power of history, social location and inherited ideological and cultural discourses' (Willis, 1983:113). However, in assessing the relationship between educational practice, theory and the reproduction of inequality, it is also important to examine the strategies used by discernible groups of students to deal with the norms of school life, as they perceive them. Such an investigation would highlight not only the differential functions of schooling, but also the processes underpinning the collective experiences and resourcefulness of the groups in question.

2.5 Locating Race And Class Within The Reproduction And Resistance Paradigms In Education

Directly drawing upon the variations on the Marxist perspectives in education, Barton and Walker (1983) have developed a conceptual framework which consolidates 'class struggle and cultural practice'. They have located race and class relations in

education, firmly within the political, social and economic milieu of the country. Barton and Walker (1983) have stated that it is within this 'situation' that race relations in Britain are 'constructed and enacted', interpreted and to which responses are made. Educational processes are said to be intertwined with the class linked conflicts prevalent in wider society. However, in responding to the given situation, the connections between strategies implemented by specific social class groups, and the dynamic processes of cultural struggle, need to be examined and further scrutinised. Barton and Walker (1983) have commented that 'although the class location of a particular group of people will condition the kinds of struggles in which they are involved, i.e., to conserve power or to challenge it, the outcomes of these struggles in terms of the cultural practices and perceptions they produce are neither completely predictable nor wholly homogeneous' (1983:4).

Here pupils and teachers are not seen as conductive transmitters of dominant social messages, but as active participants in a dialectical relationship. This is seen to be enacted through specific cultural ideologies and practices which, 'are not separable from the political and economic struggles of which such meanings are an expression' (Young and Whitty, 1977:8).

Thus it is from within this politically located perspective of culture, that collective identities are established and coping strategies are developed. Discernible groups who have shared similar experiences both inside and outside school and who are situated within specific political, social and economic

boundaries, will identify with other similar individuals. (Carrington, 1983). Such shared perceptions of 'given' destinies may result in collective responses, though operated at an individual level (Troyna, 1978). In an educational context subordinate groups may develop ideological and behavioural practices which challenge the established norms of the school (Willis, 1977). However, where groups are at risk of being academically marginalised, such resistance may also take the form of accommodation and acceptance of the overall ethos of the credentialling system of education (Tomlinson, 1982). Directly based on the theoretical perspective developed by Willis, Lois Weis (1985) has examined the interplay of race, class and gender in an American Urban Community College. She comments that 'it is the culture which students produce within the college that helps to ensure the continued structural bases of their own "superexploitation"' (1985:2). However, the precise nature of such a culture, could not be seen as simple responses to 'situations' either internal or external to the institution. Weis (1985) states 'lived culture really does exhibit a degree of autonomy - while not free floating, it is also not thoroughly determined' (1985:162). For her research showed that in their reaction to college, black Americans while accepting the validity of the knowledge being taught, often persisted in absenteeism, lateness for class and drug taking. However, not all students fell in this category and those who succeeded had to break from the security of the black collective culture of college and adopt mainstream values.

The perception by discernible groups of their location within a wider context and the reconstruction of this situation through struggle is a complex issue. Thus Barton and Walker (1983) have cautioned that,

'sets of cultural practice cannot be conveniently categorised and labelled as distinctive and unambiguous areas of specific forms of oppression or as unique types of resistance... (therefore)... a collective response in which provision is made for the accommodation of a plurality of interests is required both at the level of description and action' (1983:105).

It is evident that the sociology of education has failed to generate a framework of analysis which satisfactorily copes with inequalities of race, class and gender (Culley and Demaine, 1983). Nonetheless the benefit of using the approach suggested by Barton and Walker (1983) to assess the implications of race and class in an educational setting, is that it offers an insight of the processes both within and outside such establishments which bring about the reproduction of inequalities and ways in which these might be resisted. While such conflicts may not always be successful 'by inspecting empirical instances of where cultural groups have both succeeded and failed in their efforts to construct a set of alternative interpretations and practices we can increase our understanding of the way power is both exercised and dealt with,....' (Barton and Walker, 1983:7). It is within this framework that the data collected for this study, has both been analysed and presented.

CHAPTER 3

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF RESEARCH ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDENTS IN THE BRITISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

The principal aim of this chapter is to explore the portrayal of high achievement levels amongst South Asian pupils in British schools. Initially there is a summary of the commonly accepted view of the academic performance of South Asian pupils. This is followed by a critical analysis revealing the fallacy of such convictions. Finally there is comment on how the myth of South Asian 'over achievement' is being maintained and why such an analysis may reduce the onus from the education system to implement change.

It would be inappropriate to provide a complete review of the vast amount of literature in this area. This has already been completed by Tomlinson (1983) and, more recently, by Taylor and Hegarty (1985). A reproduction of these reviews would seem both superfluous and irrelevant in this context. This would be not only due to the great diversity in the style and emphasis of existing studies, but also because the majority focus on the imminent and unique problems faced by pupils newly arrived to the UK: thus a large section of the literature cannot be seen to be directly relevant to the immediate concerns of this thesis.

Although the studies conducted before 1970 showed South Asian educational performance levels to be below those of their

White British peers, their attainment was expected to improve with their duration in the UK and greater familiarity with its education system (Ashby et al, 1970; Haynes, 1971; Little, 1975). One of the aims of this thesis is to investigate this assumption. Therefore the emphasis in this appraisal will be on recent and significant studies which examine the performance of South Asian pupils who have had all or most of their education in the UK. There will also be a consideration of the secondary level of education as success in this sphere is a prerequisite for entry into higher education - one of the main areas of concern in the current study.

3.1 The 'Overachievement' of South Asian Students ?

In the continuing debate on the education of ethnic minority pupils in the UK, progress has normally been measured with reference to levels of 'achievement'. However, researchers have not always been explicit about the meaning of the terminology and this will be investigated in the next section. Since the 1970s it has generally been accepted that, whereas pupils of Afro Caribbean origin are 'underachieving', those from South Asian backgrounds are 'overachieving' in the British education system. Several studies have shown that the attainment levels of South Asian children are equivalent to and may often surpass those of their English peers (Driver and Ballard, 1979; Swann Report, 1985).

Driver and Ballard (1979) conducted a study assessing the performance of all pupils leaving five inner-city schools between 1975-77. Only three of these schools had sufficient South Asian pupils to allow for comparative analysis of the 'O' levels and C.S.E.s obtained. The authors found that with the exception of English language, 'Asian pupils achieve higher average results than do English pupils attending the same secondary schools' (1979:147).

Unlike the Driver and Ballard (1979) study, Essen and Ghodsian (1979) presented results for tests of reading and mathematics, taken at the end of compulsory schooling. The data were extracted from a longitudinal study conducted by the National Children's Bureau, involving 16,000 children. In 1974 they assessed the performance of first and second generation 'immigrant' pupils, including those of Irish and European descent. Referring to all groups including South Asians, Essen and Ghodsian concluded,

'... immigrants tend to have relatively poor attainment overall, but when children of similar financial and other material circumstances are compared most of the immigrant groups do as well as non immigrants, the main exception of this being the West Indians. Secondly, the poorer school performance is generally only found among first generation immigrants, not second generation immigrants, and to some extent is relatively short-term and language specific' (1979:428).

A further study acknowledging class differences was conducted by Robinson (1980). Here 627 junior school children were assessed on a word recognition and mathematics test. An examination of the findings revealed that the Asian children were

overrepresented in the lowest ability groupings. However, the author states that when class factors were taken into account, 'Asian under-achievement is restricted, in the main, to the low status sector of the community', this sector being defined as 'rural born Asians with little experience of education, restricted aspirations and low status poorly paid employment' (1980:149). Similarly Craft and Craft (1983) demonstrated from the examination performance of all fifth formers in an Outer London Borough in 1979, that even when differentiated by class, Asians seem to be doing as well and sometimes even better than their white counterparts (See Table 3.1).

Ostensibly, the most persuasive evidence suggesting the high achievement levels amongst South Asian pupils has been presented by the Rampton (1981) and Swann Reports (1985) both of which examined the performance of ethnic minority pupils in UK schools. The School Leavers Survey regularly conducted by the DES was the principal source used by the Committees to assess pupils' attainment levels. An ethnic origin question was included in surveys of six inner city areas in 1978-9 and in five of these areas in 1981-2. School leavers' examination qualifications and their immediate destinations, were used as measures of academic achievement. Table 3.2 summarises the findings of both surveys, with reference to examination qualifications. The Swann Report concluded that 'In general terms the findings of the two exercises, taken together, show Asian leavers to be achieving very much on a par with, and in some cases marginally better than, their school fellows from all other groups in the same LEA's in terms of

Fifth-form Examination Performance by Ethnicity and Social Class



Aston University

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T A B L E 3.1

(Source, Craft and Craft, 1982)

Performances of School Leavers in C.S.E. , 'O' Level
and 'A' Level Examinations



T A B L E 3.2

(Adapted from the Swann Report, 1985)

the various measures used' (1985:64). The only noted discrepancy was the performance of South Asian pupils on C.S.E. and 'O' level English language examinations.

In order to examine the general trend in the findings of existing studies the Swann Committee commissioned a review of research from the NFER into the education of pupils of South Asian origin. To date this is the most comprehensive review of its kind. It summarised by noting, 'It certainly can be stated that Asians do not in general perform worse at public examinations than indigenous peers from the same schools and neighbourhoods...Most of the studies point to performance levels on the part of Asians that either match or exceed those of indigenous peers' (Taylor and Hegarty, 1985:308).

3.2 The Fallacy of High Achievement

Although the various studies reported appear to indicate high academic performance amongst South Asian pupils, complexities within the research process have often been overlooked by authors, which have helped to create and sustain a myth, based on fallacious evidence. The data may be seen as both methodologically and conceptually flawed, and the critique which follows examines these discrepancies along the logical stages of conducting research: choosing a sample for investigation, the measurement of achievement and the analysis of results.

3.2.1 Techniques of Sampling

The norm of social survey research is to investigate a sample in order to make generalisations about the wider population. Thus the larger the sample, which is representative not only of the group of interest, but also of any comparative population (where one is used), the greater the reliability of the results and the analysis.

Within existing data on South Asian achievement, there exist enormous variations in the size of samples studied. Tomlinson (1980) distinguished between small scale (under 100 pupils), medium scale (101-600 pupils) and large scale (over 600 pupils) samples. In her review which includes 23 studies which comment on South Asian performance, almost 70% are said to note Asian scores to be lower than those of their white peers. Such statistical information alone, make the claims of high achievement levels amongst Asians, questionable. What is interesting, however, is that more than 67% of those studies which showed Asians to be underachieving, had large samples. Thus Troyna (1984) has suggested that 'empirical evidence for 'Asian underachievement' might be said to have a stronger quantitative base than the evidence for 'black underachievement'' (1984:161, original emphasis). Of the research cited in the previous section, only that conducted by Craft and Craft (1983) may be seen as a large scale study. Often, although a survey or sample may include several thousand participants, the ethnic minority composition in

general, and the South Asian students in particular, will be relatively small (Driver and Ballard, 1979; Robinson, 1980).

A related concern is the sampling techniques used in these studies. Taylor and Hegarty (1985) have noted the predominance of 'opportunity samples', where reseachers have relied on existing groupings of individuals, at a particular school or locality. Such a configuration may be a result of a variety of selective factors and therefore may not be representative of the population in question. Most studies into South Asian achievement levels have drawn their sample from areas of high ethnic concentration (Rampton Report, 1981; Swann Report, 1985). It is clear from geographical surveys, that the ethnic minority population of the U.K. is not evenly dispersed but is mainly concentrated around inner city areas (Coleman, 1982). The disparities which exist between inner urban schools and those to be found in other areas, is also evident (Rutter et al, 1979), as is the fact that the standard of achievement in these schools is likely to be lower than in schools generally (Driver and Ballard, 1979). Thus in most comparative studies, a cross section of the South Asian population is compared with some of the most disadvantaged White British groups (Rampton Report, 1981; Swann Report, 1985). The effect of such differences is best summed up by the review on the education of South Asian pupils, commissioned by the Swann Committee. The authors state that,

'... whereas evidence overall tends to suggest that the performance of pupils of Asian origin compares fairly favourably with that of their white peers locally this is not the case when comparisons are made with the whole range of white pupils, either over a

larger locality such as in the ILFA, or nationally' (Taylor and Hegarty, 1985:548, original emphasis).

3.2.2 Qualities Valued By Educators And Their Measurement

a) Ability and Attainment

It is necessary here to clarify the broad understanding of the key terminology used in studies in this area. Although most researchers do not comment on the meaning of the essential concepts used in their studies (Robinson, 1980), where such information is available the interpretation may vary between studies thus making comparisons difficult. This suggests that there is no definitive meaning to any psychometric notions such as intelligence or ability. However, with reference to Vernon's (1958) distinctions, Taylor and Hegarty (1985) have defined 'ability' as a capacity which a child develops either by direct teaching or through ordinary interaction within the home, school and society...' (1985:117). 'Attainment' on the other hand has been seen 'to relate more specifically to concepts and skills developed as a result of instruction and depending on a child's motivation and work in particular subjects' (1985:117). As defined here, the terms 'ability' and 'attainment' are open to various interpretations which may operate within a social and structural framework. The cultural context is also important, for example, as Robinson (1981) states, I.Q. tests require the use of

a 'thought style which is much valued in Western society' (1981:62).

A further problem in the use of such attributes to assess minority pupils has been their societal experiences, which are seen to be 'profoundly and qualitatively different from those of their white classmates' (Troyna, 1984:158). This led Troyna (1984) to argue against the use of inter-group comparison as a method of assessing the performance of ethnic minority children. With reference to Afro-Caribbean pupils it was stated that such comparisons provided 'a particular and contentious conception of underachievement.' Such criticism can also be seen as applicable to what has been seen as the 'overachievement' of South Asian pupils. More recently the Swann Report (1985) has distinguished between comparing the academic performance of ethnic minority children, with that of 'their school fellows in the White majority' (1985:58), with that which their potential suggests.

b) Achievement

'Achievement' can be said to refer strictly to the level of measurement and does not imply what is being measured. However, the tools of assessment generally used are another area of contention. Largely due to a lack of alternatives, tests standardised on a white British population continue to be used in multi-ethnic schools. The need to develop a culture-fair test is evident, yet the nearer educationists were towards its

construction, the further they have moved away from devising a test which could be used in making educational predictions (Hegarty and Lucas, 1978).

Regarding I.Q. tests Pidgeon (1970) claimed that 'the use by teachers, of intelligence test score to indicate potential ability would certainly work to the disadvantage of children coming from socially and culturally deprived backgrounds' (1970:32). If the scores of minority children on such tests are depressed, as it is claimed here, then there exists a grave possibility that many teachers will formulate low expectations of these children and may be satisfied with their low levels of attainment. While this may influence individual pupils, it is under the structure of streaming that its effect is most likely to become apparent. Studies conducted by Townsend and Brittan (1972) and Figueroa and Swart (1984), demonstrated that minority students were clustered mainly in the lower streams at school.

Often non-verbal or pictorial group tests were used to assess the full educational potential of individual children (Ashby et al, 1970). These were seen by some to be more culture-free than verbal tests, however, the former's inferiority in predicting educability was also acknowledged. Irvine (1969) concluded that scores on non-verbal tests, 'will simply be biased in ways that are different and, probably more difficult to define', than those of verbal tests (1969:73).

So far it has been established that what may be termed as 'ability' or 'attainment', and the way these concepts are measured, prove to be problematic when assessing the performance

of ethnic minority pupils. A further area of concern must be the idiosyncratic nature in which researchers transform established scores of measurement for the purposes of analysis. This is especially pertinent where attainment in public examinations is analysed. Here a group's average score may be calculated from the entire year group (Craft and Craft, 1983), from those who started the course (Driver and Ballard, 1979), or from those who actually took the exam - often where they were seen simply as school leaving qualifications (Rampton Report, 1981; Swann Report, 1985). Such variations make it difficult to make comparisons between studies.

Returning to the concept of 'achievement', the terms 'under' and 'over achievement' may both be seen as contentious, for rather than being invariant factors they are relational scores of measurement, with an accepted norm or average. The term 'overachievement' will obviously vary according to who is setting the standards (for example the white teachers or the black parents), and from which group such judgement is based. Where a discernable group is seen to be academically 'underachieving' there are two possibilities: either the norm set for this group was inappropriate where too much was expected of them, or their performance was not a genuine reflection of their capabilities. In the case of 'overachievement', however, the latter argument becomes redundant, and the judgement is based solely on erroneous expectations. The dubious use of the phrase 'overachievement' always places the onus of the problematic on the perceiver, for it

is illogical for an individual to achieve beyond his/her capabilities.

c) The Emphasis On Levels Of Achievement

A major limitation of studies of South Asian performance, has been the focus on achievement which has been defined exclusively in academic terms and has been poorly explained even within this framework. The neglect of most other measures of accomplishment has resulted in the rationale for research, its measurement and analysis to be based within a narrow conceptual framework. Thus a network of complicated and intricate procedures are reduced to a single measure of 'achievement', while ignoring the actual process of attainment.

The selective distribution of pupils into different teaching groups, which is influenced both by test scores and teacher expectations, is a crucial area of investigation for streaming may curtail the development of potential and the availability of further opportunities. In a large scale study, enquiring into the organisation of 230 multi-racial schools, Townsend and Brittan (1972) found that of the 22 schools which reported the selective distribution of Indian pupils nine replied that they were clustered in lower streams, six that they were mainly in the middle streams and seven stated that Indian children were evenly distributed across streams. The inflexibility of the streaming system and the lack of opportunities available to children who may

wish to move upstream were also noted. What was interesting, however, was that minority children of Italian or Cypriot origin were much more evenly distributed across streams than the Indians, indicating that linguistic differences were not the sole cause of any difference between distributions of immigrant and non immigrant pupils.

In a Report presented to the Commission of Racial Equality, almost twelve years after Townsend and Brittan published their findings, Figueroa and Swart (1984) provided evidence to confirm these findings. They adopted an ethnographic approach to study a co-educational secondary school with a 48% Asian population. The aim was to explore the academic achievements of ethnic minority pupils, view the pupils' and teachers' frames of reference and examine the school and classroom processes. The research methodology was novel in that emphasis was placed on both the low and high achieving minority pupils. By focusing on school processes rather than parental background (though it would have been useful if they had also examined the latter), Figueroa and Swart were tackling some major assumptions about the system; this enabled them to begin to 'identify the conditions in school conducive to 'high' achievement among ethnic minority pupils' (1984:3). Overall the findings demonstrated that the South Asian pupils were disproportionately represented in the lower streams of the school.

A further issue which demonstrates the limited usefulness of achievement levels as indicators of performance is the age at which such qualifications are obtained. On the whole, test and

examination scores are provided without reference to the age of the sample (Craft and Craft, 1983); where such information is provided, data are not tabulated in a manner by which they might show the qualifications possessed by the sample and the age at which they were obtained (Rampton Report, 1981; Swann Report, 1985). However, a critical reading of the analysis and interpretation of the School Leavers Survey used both by the Rampton and Swann Committees, show that South Asian pupils had to remain in school longer, in order to achieve 'on a par' with White British pupils attending the same schools. Table 3.2 represented the examination performances of South Asians, West Indians and the total leavers from 5 Local Education Authorities in 1978/9 and 1981/2. While both the Rampton and Swann Reports have failed to assess the age at which these qualifications were obtained, they have provided some information on the age of all school leavers from maintained secondary schools (see Table 3.3). It may be noted that according to both surveys, of all the groups compared, South Asians were least likely to leave school at the earliest opportunity. However, a greater proportion of the South Asians were leaving school aged 17 and 18 plus, than any other group: this was 29% in 1978/79 and 25% in 1981/2, compared to the national average of 16% and 17% respectively. These figures would indicate South Asian pupils keenness to obtain academic qualifications. Additionally it is evident that while a greater proportion of the South Asians were staying on longer in the education system than any other group, their credentials were not

Age of School Leavers from Maintained Secondary Schools



T A B L E 3.3

(Source: Swann Report, 1985)

significantly better than those of their school peers and were distinctly inferior to the school leaving qualifications of those who had attended maintained secondary schools nationally (see Table 3.2).

This argument was first proposed by the author in 1985 (Tanna, 1985: see Appendix 1). The evidence of South Asian underachievement is also acknowledged by the Swann Report in Annex B, where it is clearly stated that, 'Asian children stay on longer at school than other children, and achieve slightly below the national average in overall levels of academic achievement' (1985:116).

d) Achievement And Aspiration

The myth of high achievement levels amongst South Asians is often derived from and supported by studies which demonstrate high levels of aspiration and persistence amongst this group (Hilton, 1972; Fowler et al, 1977). As the previous section demonstrated, this was particularly the case with both the Rampton Report (1981) and the Swann Report (1985). Further, two dimensions used by Taylor (1976), may be effectively seen as measures of aspiration rather than attainment. The first assessment looked at the terminal age of individual full time education, while the second looked at the proportion of the White and Asian groups still in full time education, at the time of the interview. By using 'staying on' as an index of attainment, Taylor has assumed that

these pupils will be better qualified. However, as is evident from the studies and analysis of Afro-Caribbeans (Rutter, 1982) and South Asians (Tanna, 1985), ethnic minority pupils may need to 'stay on' at school, simply to obtain basic qualifications. Townsend and Brittan (1972) also found that although almost twice as many Indians and Pakistanis remained at school for fifth year courses, compared to the English population, between a quarter and a third of them were in non-examination classes, compared to a third of the non-immigrants. These data again show that continuing in full-time education does not necessarily result in greater academic success for ethnic minorities.

3.2.3 Data Analysis

Having explored both the techniques of sampling and measurement, the way in which the data are analysed may also influence the nature of the findings. With reference to the academic performance of South Asian pupils it may be noted that, in the analysis of results distinctions of social class, gender and variables relating to ethnicity are often lacking.

a) Social Class

In any form of sociological analysis, social class has traditionally been seen as a major descriptive variable. However,

when dealing with ethnic minority communities it proves problematic to place them within the existing categories, because of their diverse backgrounds, differing life experiences and expectations. Moreover if the current Registrar General's classification of occupations were to be used as the basis for a class analysis, it cannot be assumed that the minority groups would reproduce the norms of educational performance which are characteristic of the group in which they may be placed.

Regarding the existing data on the performance of South Asian pupils, there is a lack of analysis along the dimension of social class (Driver and Ballard, 1979; Rampton Report, 1981; Swann Report, 1985). Where there has been an attempt at such an investigation, there have been diverse approaches with largely inconclusive results. Robinson (1980) used social class as an explanatory device to examine his data, which showed Asian scores to be lower than those of white children. Unfortunately, however, the criterion of social class was used exclusively, and the influence of other issues such as school processes was neglected. It would seem to be a gross over simplification of the situation to explain Asian childrens' levels of performance, purely on the basis of class - especially because of the problems already mentioned in adapting an existing system of stratification to an ethnic minority population (Bulmer, 1986).

In a study investigating the participation of ethnic minorities in further and higher education, Craft and Craft (1983) noted that when differentiated by class, Asian and White scores on fifth year examinations were equally distributed. They

also found that a greater proportion of both working class and middle class Asians stayed on into the sixth form. However, at the sixth form level, ethnicity was seen as a much stronger indicator of examination performance than social class: even middle class Asians were found to achieve less than their white counterparts (See Table 3.4) This further indicates both the limited use of imposing existing social structures on ethnic minority communities, as well as the influences of other processes on examination performance.

b) Gender

As with social class, gender has rarely been used by researchers as a variable in explaining the ability, attainment and school leaving qualifications of South Asian pupils. In her review of research on the educational performance of children of South Asian origin, Tomlinson (1984) noted that of those studies which had differentiated by gender, Asian girls were shown, in general to score lower than Asian boys.

The level of analysis in this area, however, can be found to vary enormously. The study by Craft and Craft (1983) failed to make gender distinctions in their sample, as was largely the case for the School Leavers Surveys used by the Rampton and Swann Committees, where gender differentiations were only made in providing the school leaving age of the sample. In contrast,

Sixth-form examination performance by ethnicity and social class



T A B L E 3.4

(Source: Craft and Craft, 1983)

Taylor's (1976) investigation concentrated only on South Asian boys, while the Driver and Ballard (1979) study noted girls' scores to be higher than those of boys, amongst the South Asian group.

c) Homogeneity Of The South Asian Communities

Authors reviewing studies on the educational performance of South Asian pupils have often criticised existing research for treating South Asian communities as a homogenous group (Tomlinson, 1984). For example, although the Swann Report (1985) made a special case of the Bengali community, it failed to differentiate between the other South Asian groups. It has also been argued that where such differences are noted, it is mainly along the criterion of country of origin and rarely along religious, linguistic or caste distinctions, which are said to be more relevant to how South Asians may perceive themselves (Taylor and Hegarty, 1985). In the conclusion to the review of research into the education of pupils of South Asian origin and with specific reference to differences within the South Asian communities, Taylor and Hegarty (1985) drew attention to a number of pertinent issues. They found that Pakistani pupils had exhibited the greatest range in academic achievement which might be associated with parents urban or rural origins (Robinson, 1980; Mabey, 1981). Similar influences were also evident in the performance of Indian pupils, where research has mainly focused on Sikh pupils because

of 'their earlier migration and numerical superiority' (Taylor and Hegarty, 1985:546). However, those pupils whose families had migrated from East Africa were seen to be achieving higher than any other discernible South Asian group (Lee and Wrench, 1981). Further, those pupils of East African Asian origin who were also Gujarati-speaking were found to be performing particularly well (Ganguly and Ormerod, 1980). The higher academic performance of East African Asians has been explained by their environment, prior to migration. In summarising the differences in performance within the South Asian communities, Taylor and Hegarty noted,

'However, it cannot be too greatly emphasized that as research has only recently begun to attend to these finer distinctions of language, nationality, regional origin and caste, which may be significantly affected by location of settlement, not to mention schooling experience in this country, any apparent differentials in performance according to group membership within the Asian communities must be regarded as tentative' (1985:546).

Additionally it can be argued that while it is important to be aware of the diversity in educational performances which may exist within the South Asian communities, this knowledge alone cannot increase our understanding of the processes by which they may attain at school. The capacity of such information is descriptive rather than explanatory. Moreover, underpinning the demand for intra-ethnic distinction in academic performance is the assumption that religious or linguistic differences imply differential educational experiences. Unless basic characteristics which may affect academic achievement can also be identified, it is irrelevant to conclude that those migrating from

East Africa, Hindus or Gujarati speaking South Asians are achieving better than those from other South Asian communities, for these attributes in themselves cannot be conducive to greater achievement levels, they are merely aids to religious and linguistic categorisation. Further, it cannot be assumed that teachers will react differently to the various South Asian groups, when classified in terms of country of origin, religion or language. As Taylor and Hegarty (1985) state, 'a point must come when Asian pupils are viewed as pupils first and Asians second' (1985:538).

3.3 The Maintenance of the Myth

The evidence and criticisms presented in the previous sections have indicated and referred to the fallacy of high performance amongst British South Asian pupils. It has also been suggested that the myth has been generated largely due to the methodological and conceptual flaws within which research is based. It now remains to examine how and perhaps why the myth of Asian 'overachievement', has been maintained.

3.3.1 Comparing Afro-Caribbean and Asian Performance

In assessing the academic performance of South Asian pupils, invariably comparisons are made with the scores of Afro-Caribbean pupils. The relative underachievement of the latter group has been well documented (Taylor, 1981). It has also been argued that due to the vast differences both within and between the two groups, comparative analysis merely succeeds in providing a meaningless 'ranking exercise' (Taylor and Hegarty, 1985:537).

With reference to the debate on race and I.Q. in the late 1960s and early 1970s, they also note: 'Curiously the issues have received far less attention apropos of pupils of Asian origin, even though, their performance on tests of ability, though generally not as low as that of pupils of West Indian origin, was usually unequal to that of their school peers, and certainly that of indigenous peers nationally' (Taylor and Hegarty, 1985:118). This may be seen as indicative of a general trend, where the poorer performance of Afro Caribbean pupils overshadowed South Asian claims to failure.

It has also been suggested that due to the differing colonial backgrounds of the Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities, teachers have had different expectations of the two groups of children. Tomlinson (1984) has claimed that Asian children have been treated more favourably by teachers, because their linguistic, cultural and religious differences made them more obviously different, whereas Afro-Caribbean children were viewed merely as sub-standard, compared to their white peers.

Tomlinson goes on to say, 'from the early 1960's practitioners and researchers were acknowledging that Asian children did have educational problems, and were suggesting strategies and offering structured teaching programmes' (Tomlinson, 1984:391, original emphasis).

It may be argued, however, that what these early practitioners recognised were linguistic rather than educational difficulties. Ironically even where the former was realised Asian pupils received very basic help with their English and only in the short term; little effort was made to maintain or improve their initial grasp of the language (Townsend, 1971). It is also important to note that any pragmatic suggestions during the 1960s and early 1970s, would have been formulated within an assimilationist framework, which operated under the misconception that length of schooling in the U.K. and a basic knowledge of the English language, would improve South Asian performance, so as to be equal to that of White British children (Ashby et al 1970; Essen and Ghodsian, 1979). Thus the response of the education system to the presence of South Asian pupils may only be seen as favourable when compared with that meted out to Afro-Caribbean children. Such conceptual misgivings have succeeded in abetting the myth of high achievement amongst South Asian pupils.

3.3.2 Traits Assigned to Asian Communities

It can also be argued that popular traits assigned to the South Asian populations in the U.K. have also facilitated the myth of high achievement amongst their children.

The Asian family is characterised as very close-knit and supportive of its members: where education is greatly valued and is seen as perhaps the only means of social mobility in this country. Thus the parents' high ambitions and desires for their children, which result in strong encouragement, are seen to aid academic achievement (Marett, 1976). The assumed characteristics of South Asian pupils emerge directly from such stereotypical images. Researchers and educationists have often viewed them in stark contrast to Afro-Caribbean pupils, where the latter are seen to be loud, boisterous and uninterested in education. The South Asian pupils, on the other hand, are characterised as passive, docile and hardworking (Brittan, 1975; Swann Report, 1985).

At the level of analysis most studies in this field, have failed to consider the effects of school ethos, such as atmosphere, organisation and teaching style, on the academic performance of pupils (Craft and Craft, 1982). Where such an attempt has been made, studies fail to support the general trend of high achievement levels amongst South Asian pupils. Instead there has been an undue emphasis on the home background of Asian pupils (Robinson, 1980), which points towards a 'pathological' interpretation of Asian 'overachievement'. It is not the

intention of this section to debate whether the prevailing characteristics assigned to South Asian communities are correct, only to assert that these attributes have helped to explain their children's apparently high levels of academic performance.

In conclusion it can be argued that, it is advantageous for those responsible for the functioning of the state education system to promote the thesis of differential levels of achievement of South Asian and Afro Caribbean pupils. As this perspective may enable them to claim that the causes for such differences are 'likely to lie deep within their respective cultures' (Swann Report, 1985:87). Therefore by placing the onus of academic achievement on the home and the family much of the responsibility can be removed from the education system. Troyna (1986) has argued that the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children of Ethnic Minority Groups was established in 1978, largely in response to the concerns of black parents about their childrens' education. However, he states:

' at least after the Conservative party secured power in 1979, the inquiry was never intended to focus on the school as an agent for the reproduction of racial inequalities. If anything its official terms of reference geared it towards explicating cultural and social phenomena which might be associated with differential performance between students from different ethnic backgrounds' (Troyna, 1986:175).

Troyna has suggested that this 'restricted and restrictive' research paradigm helped to perpetuate stereotypical images of ethnic minority communities.

This chapter has provided a critical appraisal of research on the performance of South Asian students in the British education system. It has been suggested that the 'overachievement' of South Asian pupils may be viewed as a myth, based on fallacious evidence and maintained by reference to stereotypical images.

CHAPTER 4

THE BRITISH HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE PARTICIPATION OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDENTS

This chapter examines the nature of higher education specifically referring to the system operating in the U.K. Discussion includes reflections on the purpose of higher education, alternative models of access and concerns of equity in selection for higher education. This is followed by an assessment of the participation of discernible groups in the British higher education system.

4.1 Conceptions and Possible aims of Higher Education

Although basic schooling may be seen as a prerequisite for any form of higher education, the latter should not be seen merely as an extension of the former. The crucial distinction is that whereas schooling up to a prescribed age is compulsory in western industrialised countries, enrolment on to courses of higher education is usually on a voluntary basis. The manifest and latent aims of these two stages of learning might also differ, but the Department of Education and Science and other related bodies have been reluctant to provide any clear statement of intentions. As the 1985 White Paper stated of schools: 'There has been neither

clarity nor agreement about priorities among the many aims they set for themselves and those which others set for them' (DES, 1985).

Although there has been some indication of the purposes of learning at school, until recently little had been said of the functions of higher education (DES, 1985a; DES, 1985b; DES, 1987). Declared aims and purposes are important because they point not only towards the structures and processes of the higher education institutions and who should be participating within them, but also because they make those responsible (the University Grants Committee, Senates, Vice Chancellors, Lecturers and Researchers) accountable for their undertakings.

In examining its functions, Burgess (1978) distinguished between the 'autonomous' and 'service' traditions of higher education. The autonomous tradition was said to be chiefly concerned with the 'preservation, extension and dissemination of knowledge - for its own sake' (1978:43), while institutions in the 'service' tradition were essentially vocationally oriented and thus responsive to market forces.

More recently David Warren Piper (1984) has suggested three distinct purposes of a system of higher education. The first, analagous to Burgess's service tradition and labelled the functional view, defines its main purpose the production of an educated workforce. In line with Burgess's autonomous tradition, Warren Piper notes the cultural view of higher education as the second purpose, where the maintenance and growth of culture takes precedence over all other matters, and students pursue

intellectual rather than utilitarian exercises. The main aim of the third and final perspective is to view higher education as a social service, serving the needs of the student body, rather than those of the institutions or the economy. This perspective can also be seen to contribute towards national development, but as Warren Piper notes, 'it differs from the functional view in that the students immediate opportunity for choice is the focus, rather than a pre-determined outcome' (1984:8).

Although not mutually exclusive, the broad aims of higher education may be differentiated between training people for jobs and professions, where the social consequences of the educational programmes are largely predictable, and where learning and research are conducted for their own ends, the implications of which are not always clear. Dearden (1984) distinguished between training and education. Training, 'typically involves instruction and practice aimed at reaching a particular level of competence or operative efficiency' (1984:58). Education, on the other hand, is said to involve 'a degree of critical reflectiveness and hence autonomy of judgement' (1984:62). If training were the main aim of higher education then a system based on the notion of apprenticeship would be more appropriate. Although it is important to recognise the close links between higher education and the labour market, it would be inappropriate to adopt a strictly teleological perspective, thus justifying a system of higher education by its ultimate consequences. To reduce the system to the production of specialised skills and attitudes would

not only limit the vast potential of higher education but would also create conceptual contradictions.

A number of assumptions underpin the notion of training. These include the existence of stratified occupational categories and an awareness of the characteristics and skills required for them which are not always easily definable. Even if this were possible, training is in essence a limiting exercise, for it operates within the domains of our current knowledge and does not actively seek out new ideas. However, if institutions of higher education responded in their research capacities to the demands of employers this would imply dissatisfaction with the status quo and would necessitate a critical analysis of the society in which we live. This could only be achieved effectively if the researchers were to be free of both commercial and societal constraints: thus changing the focus of higher education from training to the creation and development of knowledge (Stoneman, 1970).

With the great investment of time and money in higher education, its often ambiguous relationship with the economy cannot be ignored. The future of students after graduation also requires consideration. It has been suggested that higher education may best satisfy this situation if it were to provide a more broadly based vocational education, 'by promoting the imaginative consideration of the various general principles underlying that career' (Whitehead, 1932:44). In this way when individuals are trained in the skills required for their chosen professions, they would be encouraged to approach the tasks critically thus producing dynamic workers rather than a passive

labour force. This is especially relevant for the development of the economy, for graduates are normally recruited for the most responsible and influential positions (Catto et al, 1981). One of the latent functions of higher education is its ability to distribute the highest financial rewards and status to a chosen few: and in this sense, for the system to retain credibility, it must discriminate in its selection procedure. However, the increasing pressure from educationists to increase the number of students in higher education and the pool from which they are selected, has posed a dilemma for the system.

4.2 Models of Access to Higher Education

4.2.1 Functional, Cultural and Social Perspectives: a discussion of Warren Piper's conceptualisation

The decision about who should be able to participate in higher education is largely dependent on the aims and structure of the institutions concerned. David Warren Piper (1984) approached the question of access by assessing the relevance of egalitarian notions to a higher education system. The author's previously defined functional view of higher education may be seen as a manpower planning policy, designed to serve the polity rather than the people. Institutions may thus select individuals according to their suitability for employment: this could be done most

effectively if selection were to take place from the total pool of ability. However it would be wrong to assume that selection was based purely on ability. For the functional view of higher education gives a misleading picture of the real world of change and conflict, where higher education is only partially responsible for nominating people for future roles. Most pupils cannot avail themselves of higher education due to the effects of earlier school processes which may have facilitated underachievement and also early leaving. It has been demonstrated that ethnic minorities and working class pupils are most vulnerable to such processes (Stone, 1981; Farrant, 1981). It would not be contradictory, however, to increase their participation, thus ostensibly encouraging equity in higher education. Where it was felt that these groups would be the most appropriate in effectively filling certain posts (DES, 1978: special access courses for ethnic minorities were recommended in teaching, social work, nursing and youth and community work). Working within the framework of demand led objectives, the functional view of higher education will inevitably be discriminatory and exclusive.

In Warren Piper's second category, that of the cultural view of higher education, only candidates able to contribute to the academic ideal and the prescribed 'culture', may be selected. In this system fairness cannot be seen as a relevant criterion for the education system. Institutions of higher education are organised around middle class values (Jackson and Marsden, 1962) and thus pupils from backgrounds differing from this ideal may be seen as inappropriate for selection. Access to higher education

as defined by the functional and cultural views of education will be inherently discriminatory and it is only in Warren Piper's final perspective, education as a social service, where notions of equality are feasible. Here social equality is seen as the main aim where there is 'open entry into the system: that is, everybody would be offered some way in, although not necessarily the same way . . . and each would give equal opportunity of reaching one of a number of exit points. These exit points giving different levels and types of accreditations or implying different kinds of educational experience, would reflect the wishes and capacities of students' (Warren Piper, 1984:8). Even from this viewpoint some selection will be necessary, in order to distribute the students along the hierarchical institutions and courses of higher education. The possible contradiction between selection and equality in higher education are dealt with later in this chapter.

4.2.2 Elite-Mass-Universal Models of Access

There are three main criteria external to the processes within higher education, which influence the size and structure of these institutions (Kogan and Kogan, 1983). Firstly and of obvious importance is population growth, which enlarges the pool from which students can be drawn and therefore generates a tendency for numbers to rise. Yet what is important is not the growth or decline of the population as a whole, but of those groups who have the means and the inclination to send their

children to a university or polytechnic. A second factor is the motivation of the young people to compete for courses in higher education. This is affected by the monetary costs involved in attending an institution, along with the opportunity costs incurred in the loss of immediate earnings. Also of importance is the state of the graduate labour market which, when healthy, will induce many young people to remain in the formal education system (Pissarides, 1981). However Dore (1976) has claimed that as the pool of educated unemployed grows and as lower level qualifications become less important, the pressure for an expansion of educational facilities grows stronger, thus leading to qualification inflation. The final issue of importance is the decisions of policy makers which, operated within the framework of political options, manifest as national and international trends in educational structures.

One such trend reported by U.N.E.S.C.O and generated by concepts of democratization of education and that of national development, was the growth after the Second World War of secondary education, which remained unmatched by any changes in higher education. This brought about many qualified but unsuccessful applicants for entry into higher education (Bowles, 1963). Many countries were already aware of the pressures being placed upon these institutions and the genesis for the expansion of higher education in the 1960s revolved around both the potential contribution of education to economic growth and the objective of equality of opportunity. The argument for the former was that a change in qualification structure would make

possible a closer adjustment to manpower needs. In equity terms, social inequality was not at issue: this was legitimated by achievement in education and at work. The aim was to provide equal opportunity to take part in this process (Teichler et al, 1980).

The solution was seen to be in the quantitative expansion of higher education, thus expanding facilities and providing more places. In the 1960s and 1970s the question of access to institutions of higher education in western countries, was often argued and debated around the model of 'elite-mass-universal access'. Where an elite education system was seen to prepare up to 15-20% of an age group for the traditional professional careers; mass higher education was to prepare up to 50% of the age group for a wide range of white collar positions, while universal access would prepare even greater proportions, thus increasing the level of basic education (Trow, 1981). This model was not formulated as a description of the diversity of the existing structures of higher education, but rather as a developmental model of access. During the 1970s the higher education systems of most Western European countries drifted, to varying degrees, away from elite and towards mass higher education (Neave, 1985).

4.3 Admissibility and Selection

With the expansion of higher education, considerations of who should benefit from this increased capacity, have been emphasised and selection procedures have grown more problematic. However selection may be seen as secondary to the problem of 'numerus fixus'. As Hofstee (1979) states, 'if there were no fixed numbers, we would either have no selection problem at all or the selection problem would be fundamentally different:...' (1979:71). The acceptance of the notion of a fixed capacity in higher education may be seen to be motivated by three arguments. Firstly that the state would not have the financial ability to fulfill the demands of each individual. Secondly, pressure had been imposed by professional bodies to protect their market. Finally the pool of talent within the population was seen to be limited. British studies however have repeatedly shown the invalidity of the latter argument (Fulton and Gordon, 1979). Thus for economic reasons and the emphasis on the consequential function of status distribution, selection procedures in higher education have come to dominate educational goals.

Of further relevance is the distinction between admissibility and selection (Carnegie Council, 1977). Thus, access to higher education may be seen as a two stage process where individuals have to first fulfil the minimal requirements and secondly be selected from the pool of qualified applicants.

Decisions about admissions are based on the premise that there exist measurable differences between individuals on

specified criteria. As the collection of European works edited by Mitter (1979) suggests, the measurement and interpretation of such differences are not always commonly agreed. Selection, in its very nature, and especially under these circumstances, offers the opportunity to discriminate, and this may be seen as necessary by institutions of higher education in order to retain their credibility. However it is disturbing that discernible groups such as ethnic minorities, women and working class pupils are especially vulnerable to failure in their attempts to gain access to higher education (Craft and Craft, 1982; Acker and Warren Piper, 1984). This would indicate the effective operation of processes other than objective measures of ability as the basis of selection.

Selection for higher education may be seen as a reward for past achievements or as a prediction for future success. The latter, however, cannot be disengaged from the notion of achievement, for any predictions are invariably based primarily on attainment levels. As the prevailing processes in several European countries have shown, whether selection occurs prior to admission as in the United Kingdom, or during the course of study as in France, it is essentially achievement oriented (Mitter, 1979). This emphasis has a significant impact on school structures and curriculum.

The actual process of selection may differ according to the accepted mode of upward mobility prevalent in the wider society and will be reflected in the education system. Turner (1974) differentiates between the organising norms of contest and

sponsored mobility. The former gives 'elite status to those who earn it, . . . Under sponsored mobility, elite recruits are chosen by the established elite or their agents, and elite status is given on the basis of some criterion of supposed merit and cannot be taken by any amount of effort or strategy' (1974:450). With reference to selection for higher education, where contest mobility is accepted as in the United States, social separation of superior and inferior students is avoided and selection occurs as late as possible, thus resulting in a high dropout rate and wastage in higher education (Astin, 1982). An education system accepting the norm of sponsored mobility tends to be characterised by early selection and specialisation, as in the United Kingdom especially while a selective secondary system is in operation. This, however, means neglecting the development of the majority of children at an early age. Both modes of mobility may be seen to facilitate discriminatory processes of admissions and selection to higher education. Assumptions of fair play underpin the notion of contest mobility, yet this is based on the fallacy that individuals have the same starting point and develop in similar social environments. Sponsored mobility is more overtly discriminatory for it aims to maintain an elite system.

4.4 Equity in Selection for Higher Education

In his analysis of the Swedish education system Wedman (1979) suggests three approaches towards a fair system of access to higher education. The first category sees fair selection to be based on knowledge and skills. The second, noted as 'equal-chance fairness', may be seen as randomized selection. The final perspective focuses on social fairness and providing an equal opportunity for all groups in society. Within a framework of limited resources and the consequent importance of their effective investment, the first approach would seem the most objective. However, as the development of such ability may be seen as dependent on factors which are not always equally available, selection on this basis maybe seen as indirectly unfair. The case of randomised selection to higher education ironically may be seen as conflicting with the principle of fairness, for here it is likely that those who are selected may not neccessarily be seen as 'deserving'.

Of the three models discussed, the maxim of equality of opportunity, normally operationalised within the meritocratic ideal, has been the most frequently used as the basis for egalitarian notions in higher education (Carnegie Council, 1977; Lawson, 1979). The clarification of the term 'equality of opportunity' as related to higher education is vital, especially under the prevailing system of a hierarchy of institutions, with a variety of aims and functions: to view it merely as an opportunity to participate within this set up would be too simplistic an

approach, and the question arises, opportunity for what? Thus equality of opportunity may be seen as being selected for the same type of higher education in similar institutions, or perhaps different forms of learning on a non-hierarchical basis.

In his discussion on the subject, Coleman (1966) has suggested a shift in emphasis from equality in the inputs to institutions to equality in the effects of learning. Fairness is seen as the equal probability of success between groups of equal ability. Therefore any new technique for admission which would provide equal opportunity for access to higher education and which resulted in equal access to occupation and high status positions would enhance equality. Even if improved access does not lead to equality of results, it may still be seen as a successful implementation of the principle of equality of opportunity in selection to higher education. As Teichler et al (1980) note: 'the demand for equal opportunity poses no immediate challenge to social inequality as such, but rather to the determination of status on the basis of a particular criterion' (1980:64). They also suggest that in promoting equality of opportunity, the aim is to create 'representative' inequality, rather than social equality. Differences in academic credentials may be seen as central to the legitimization of inequity and under the ideal of equal opportunity the structure of social inequality remains essentially unchanged. However, due to the positive correlation between higher academic qualifications and socio-economic status (Catto et al, 1980), equal opportunity of access to higher

education may be seen as necessary yet not an adequate challenge to social inequality.

4.5 The British Higher Education System

In Britain, universities have never had a monopoly over the creation and maintenance of knowledge. Initially, there existed many influential court and monastic schools and only in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, did the Medieval Universities emerge (Rashdall, 1936). The most important contribution of these institutions has been seen as the idea of the university itself and the 'separation of intellectual authority from the political power on which this depended' (Scott, 1984:26). Religion was seen as the source of intellectual authority and as it changed in intent and popularity, it led to fluctuations in the size and structure of the university. The period between 1550 to 1669 saw a major expansion in British higher education. This was followed by stagnation and neglect for over a century when the shift of emphasis from religion to science revived the university structure.

The liberal tradition of higher education is said to have begun in the nineteenth century: Scott (1984) sees the three major functions of the liberal university to have been, the maintenance of cultural knowledge; the reproduction of traditional professions; and the transmission of cultural capital. The publication of the Robbins Report (1963) which assessed the weaknesses and future needs of British higher education may be

seen to have emerged from a background where cultural maintenance was the main function of higher education. However during the late 1950s and the 1960s both the functional and social perspectives tried to penetrate the British higher education system.

The Robbins Committee provided four objectives which they saw as essential for a higher education system. The first was the provision of a skilled workforce which would aid the processes of the general division of labour. However, also emphasised was the need to 'promote the general powers of the mind', rather than the production of specialists. The third function of a higher education system was seen as the 'advancement of learning', and finally 'the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship'. Even before the Robbins Report, there had been a move towards the functional aspects of higher education in the United Kingdom. The Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs), for instance, were set up specifically to meet the needs of industry. Robbins followed this line for, along with setting up further new universities, the Committee also recommended the development of five Special Institutions for Scientific and Technological Education and Research. Although distinct from the provisions recommended in 1963, a binary system of higher education was also developed later, where the newly established polytechnics were to focus on more vocational courses. However such measures have not been altogether successful mainly due to the narrow definition of what is seen as valuable and commendable in the British education tradition, where excellence is largely seen as synonymous with

purely intellectual pursuits (Weiner, 1981). This position resulted in the other institutions, founded for different purposes, slowly drifting towards the university sector, trying to emulate their functions. Along these lines the technological universities established by the Robbins Report gradually became similar to other universities, and the polytechnics also largely failed to produce the new thinking in higher education which was expected of them.

In viewing higher education as a social service, the Robbins Committee noted that, in comparison with other major western countries, the British age participation rate could be seen as highly unfavourable; what is more, there existed a large pool of untapped ability, especially amongst girls. In line with other reports (Early Leaving Report, 1954; Crowther Report, 1959; Newsom Report, 1963), Robbins recognised that these students could be seen as unable rather than incapable, of benefitting from higher education. Thus the principle recommended for access was that 'higher education should be available for all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so' (1963:8). They also recommended that young people from families of poor educational backgrounds should especially be introduced to institutions of higher education. However, as later research has shown (Halsey, Heath and Ridge, 1980) there is no evidence that class inequalities have been eliminated at the higher education level. This may be partially attributed to the vague aims presented by the Robbins Committee, along with the ingenuous assumption that expansion would lead to equality. Soon

after the Robbins Report, the Indian government also evaluated its system of higher education. One of its major aims was 'to strive to promote equality and social justice and to reduce social and cultural differences through diffusion of education' (Education and National Development, Report of the Education Commission 1964-1966). Similarly the Carnegie Commission (1973) in the U.S.A. suggested 'increasing social justice through greater equality of opportunity to obtain an advanced education', as one of the major functions of its higher education institutions. In trying to come to terms with the potentially functional and social purposes of higher education, the Robbins Report resulted in conceptual contradictions, in trying to accomodate both student demand at the point of access, as well as some form of manpower planning.

The wish for economic growth and the increasing demand for higher learning brought about rapid and major expansion of higher education throughout Europe and America from the late 1950s until the mid 1970s. This period in Britain saw the establishment of the new Universities, thirty new Polytechnics and more than sixty Colleges of Higher Education (DES, 1956; DES, 1966). These developments resulted in an unprecedented increase in student participation and total numbers in higher education increased from 179,000 in 1960/1 to 504,700 in 1975/6 with a projected level of 603,100 for 1986/7. Similarly the age participation rate also rose for the same period from 6.9% to 13.4% and was expected to rise to 15.9% (DES and Scottish Education Department, 1978). These new developments may be seen as essentially rooted in the liberal tradition of higher education, yet Scott (1984) has viewed the

crucial changes as epitomised by the rise of the 'modern university'. That is, a shift away from teaching and towards research. Where previously knowledge was regarded as an 'intellectual process', it had now become a 'political process', a 'product or commodity' (1984:55).

This is evident in the recent assessment of British higher education, reported in the Green Paper: The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s (1985). It focuses on the utilitarian functions of higher education, where the main concern of institutions is seen as the efficient production of qualified manpower with 'a distinct emphasis on technological and directly vocational courses' (1985:8). Further, the report also concentrates on the twin issues of reduced financial support to the Universities, along with their contraction due to a fall in the 18 year old population. In terms of access to higher education, the Green Paper accepts a modified proposal made by the National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education (NAB) and the University Grants Committee (UGC), which disfigures the Robbins principle by suggesting that 'courses of higher education should be available to all those who can benefit from them and who wish to do so' (1985:10). Such a vague and ambiguous statement will be open to many interpretations and may justify diverse policies. However, the underlying assumptions in central government's acceptance of the NAB and UGC proposal are clear, for they qualify the statement, making the ability to benefit even for those who are qualified, subject to financial constraints. It may be argued that the Green Paper on Higher Education (1985) has

focused strictly on economic rather than educational policies. This ideology was reaffirmed in the recently published White Paper on Higher Education (1987). Although this document revealed plans for an increase in student numbers and a projected increase in the total age participation index, these are expected to develop within a wider framework of meeting the manpower requirements of the economy.

The basic admissions requirements at British institutions have been the General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level in England and Wales and Highers in Scotland. Selection may also be influenced by the references provided by the school headteacher and interviews with the admissions tutor. However, with the conflicting pressures to reduce institutional capacity and an increasing demand from students, universities have seen the solution in significantly increasing their requirements for entrance in the form of 'A' level points (Aston Fortnight, 1985). Although this response will reduce the number of applicants, thus reducing the pressure on the selection process, it is highly unsatisfactory and will only serve to increase inequalities in higher education. Firstly as an instrument to measure suitability, 'A' levels may be seen as unreliable, largely due to a lack of uniformity in standards, because of the autonomy of the various boards governing G.C.E. examinations. (Martini et al, 1985; Nash, 1987). Neither can they be seen as effective predictors of degree performance, for only a very tenuous link has been demonstrated (Sear, 1983): and this may be due to the often small percentage differences between various 'A' level grades

(Guy, 1984). Even if such grades were to be seen as effective in differentiating the relative abilities of students, the recent increases in point scores required for entrance, cannot be justified in terms of overall improvement in academic standards within higher education.

The distinction made by the Carnegie Council in the U.S.A. between admissions and selection should be acknowledged here, for in this country even with the Robbins principle, all those who were qualified and wanted to continue their education were not always selected to participate in higher education. The inflation of minimal requirements makes the standards of admissibility indistinguishable from the standards employed in selection decisions. Whereas the former should assure minimum standards of academic competence, the selection process may consider a much wider range of objectives. This may include non-academic criteria, such as past disadvantages, and the potential for future contributions to society. This may also result in the restructuring of the school curriculum, which is currently dominated by the admissions requirements of the higher education system. It may be argued that the reduction in the number of places available in higher education will disproportionately affect marginal students: those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and who have received relatively poor academic preparation. Since the working class population and the ethnic minority communities in this country are disproportionately represented in these groups it is likely that the greatest negative impact will be on them.

Two points may be concluded from this brief resume of British higher education policies. Firstly, that the system has not been based on any one philosophy of education and this has enabled development at different levels, based on differing ideologies, often contradictory in character. Secondly, that the dominant thinking has been to view education as a cultural and, more recently, as a functional asset. As was noted earlier such systems will be inherently unequal. Therefore even the commendable efforts of the Robbins Committee have largely resulted in the expansion of an elite system of higher education. In the post-Robbins era however, equality of opportunity was accepted in principle at least. Current thinking has chosen not to accept this ideal and although government policies have increased the total number of participants in higher education, there have been moves towards categorising institutions hierarchically and awarding funding accordingly, thus maintaining and further encouraging an elitist system of higher education. The prospect of promoting any form of equality in higher education seems rather gloomy and as Halsey has concluded in his criticism of the Green Paper on Higher Education (1985), the 'educational system for the 21st century must have ambitions beyond that of a commercial training camp' (1985:15).

4.6 Factors influencing motivation for Higher Education

The development of higher education may be seen to parallel the growth in the number of students qualified to enter. Despite the attempts of various state policies to expand the capacities within higher education (Robbins Report, 1963), and to extend the opportunities to qualify for admission to these institutions (the replacement of the tripartite system with comprehensive schools), there has not been a steady growth in the proportions of school leavers qualified to enter higher education (Trow, 1981). Although the qualified leaver rate (QLR) more than doubled from 1962 to 1972, it has largely remained unchanged since then. Of equal importance is the fact that the qualified participation rate (QPR), increased slightly from 1962 to 1972 and from then on has steadily continued to decline (Judge, 1982).

These trends may be partially explained by examining the factors which influence the motivation to aim for higher education. Prior to applying for such courses, decisive steps need to be taken by pupils at two critical transition points: first there must be the decision to continue with education beyond the official school leaving age, and second there must be the active decision to proceed to higher education. As Bowles (1963) comments, 'Admission to higher education is not a single administrative act, performed when a student moves from secondary to higher education, but a process which extends over a period of years during which a series of selections determines those

students who continue towards the goal of ultimate entry to higher education' (1963:25).

Several factors influence the educational choices of young people and their prospects of being selected to participate in higher education: these may be seen as social, educational and economic features (Gordon, 1981). Regarding social aspects parental background is seen as the most important especially in terms of their own occupations and level of education, both of which are seen to affect their attitudes towards their childrens education. The effects of schooling are also influential for not only do they develop individual abilities and competence but they may also provide the knowledge and understanding of the nature of opportunities available. Disenchantment with school and teachers is the major reason given by early leavers and as Rutter et al (1979) have argued, school can make a difference and be a force for good, even in deprived areas. Judge (1982) has also suggested that the restricted access to British higher education may be seen to be directly facilitated by the structure of the school system: examinations at secondary level are designed to ensure that only about 20% of an age group obtain the appropriate 'O' level passes, required for entry to 'A' level courses, and thus the ability to apply for higher education. Economic considerations also affect demand in several ways. For instance, in terms of the material circumstances of the home and the value placed by employers on academic education. After all, when the margin between graduate and non-graduate earnings is very slight, it may deter some students from enrolling on to courses of higher education, for the

economic benefits to be derived in the long run may not be seen to compensate the immediate loss of earnings (Pissarides, 1981).

4.7 Underepresentation in Higher Education

David Warren Piper (1984) provides five possible reasons which may explain why certain groups are unequally represented in higher education. He suggests that some members of society may not value the education currently available or they may not consider higher education as a viable alternative because they have a low value of themselves. Alternatively they may want to participate but fail to qualify for entry, or having obtained the minimal requirements they may fail to be selected for higher education. Lastly even having secured a place, candidates may not successfully complete the course because their work may not be deemed to be of the required standard. Within the British context the last explanation may be seen as the least important for wastage in higher education has been shown to be minimal (Miller, 1970). Thus the underepresentation in higher education of discernible groups in the population may be discussed and explained within the framework of the first four possible explanations. Underepresentation in higher education has been seen to operate along distinctive lines of class, gender and age (Doherty, 1982; Acker and Warren Piper, 1984). The following sections provide a profile of the recent positions of members of these social categories in British higher education.

4.7.1 Social Class

The post war reforms in British education saw the breakdown of class barriers as their main objective. Although the various reforms enabled many working class children to benefit in ways which would not have been earlier possible it was ironically, the children of the middle class families who benefited most. In their study of 10,000 men born in England and Wales between 1913-1952, Halsey, Heath and Ridge (1980) demonstrated that since the 1944 Education Act, differences between the social classes in their rate of staying on after the minimum school leaving age has narrowed. Nonetheless, there still exist significant disparities. It was found that in relation to higher education, 'an extra 2% of the working class children found their way to the universities compared with an extra 19% of the service class and 6% of the intermediate class children' (Halsey et al, 1980:206).

This is also reflected in the statistics published by the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA), which show that of all classified home applicants for a university place in 1982, 79% were middle class of which 22% were in Class 1. The 1981 Census, however, showed that of all economically active heads of household, only 45% could be termed as middle class and 6% of these as being in professional occupations. However as Rudd (1984) points out the information collected by UCCA is primarily to enable universities to select students and therefore is not as detailed or as accurate as that presented in the Census.

The minimal presence of pupils from working class backgrounds in higher education has been attributed to their presumed disregard for education. Murphy (1984) has argued that the decline in real terms of the proportion of working class entrants to universities cannot be seen as a result of any educational disadvantages, but to their indifference to academic qualifications. However, in their assesment of the impact of post Robbins changes on the aspirations of 15 year olds towards higher levels of education, Fulton and Gordon (1979) found that a large pool of ability still existed, especially within the working class sector of the population, who were less likely to aim towards post compulsory education.

It should be noted that working class pupils were half as likely as those from middle class backgrounds to obtain five or more 'O' levels thus restricting the academic aspirations of a large majority in the group (Gordon, 1981). Those who successfully obtain the relevant qualifications for admission to higher education, may suffer disadvantages during the selection procedures. Fogleman (1976) showed that in 1974 the distribution by social class for all those who wished to be accepted for courses of higher education was : 33.5% of class I and II, 19% of IIIN, 10.4% of IIIM and 8% of classes IV and V. The actual rates of acceptance were 29.1% , 21.2% , 5.6% , and 4.1% respectively: these are more likely to converge with the intended rates of middle class children than those from working class backgrounds. This position may be partially explained and the selection process further illuminated, if it was understood that as among university

applicants offering 'A' levels for the 1982 entry, the working class students obtained poorer grade scores than their middle class counterparts (UCCA Statistical Supplement, 1982-83, Table E7).

4.7.2 Gender

Discrimination against girls and women has a long history in the British education system. In higher education, for example, until 1871 women were barred from entering university. While the Robbins Committee's recommendations were still being implemented in 1965, women formed 32% of the total home candidates accepted through UCCA. Almost twenty years later in October 1984, they still formed only 42% of the total intake. Despite the fact that the total home candidates accepted had more than doubled the intake of 1965.

However, the trend towards increased representation of women in higher education cannot be denied. Between 1965-66 and 1979-80, there was a 75% increase in the full time undergraduate population of the United Kingdom: during this time the number of female undergraduates rose by 140% (O'Hara, 1983:47). Their interest in education is also reflected in the proportion of the relevant age group gaining 2 or more 'A' level passes. Whereas the rate for men decreased from 1975-76 to 1979-80, during the same period the proportion of women achieving this standard increased, though still being lower than that for the boys.

The DES statistics show that in 1981, of all school leavers with 'A' levels, 55% of the boys went on to degree level courses compared to 42% of the girls. This may be explained by the fact that a greater percentage of the boys had 'A' level passes in more than two subjects. Yet even amongst the better qualified, boys were more likely to enrol on to undergraduate courses (DES, 1981). It has been suggested that this may be because women have been focusing on a very narrow range of courses, with a greater concentration in Languages and the Social Sciences. This could be seen as a consequence of societal and school processes, where girls are geared towards non-technical and non-scientific subjects (DES, 1973). The selection procedures for admission to higher education are also important. Watts (1972) has demonstrated that before the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 which made the practice illegal, many universities operated a quota system, thus maintaining a balance which disadvantaged female applicants.

4.7.3 Age

Most courses of higher education are geared towards the 18-20 age group, thus neglecting a great majority of people who for various reasons were unable or unwilling to participate at that period in their lives. It is problematic to assess the situation of mature students for it very much depends on the definitions of the terminology used, such as 'mature' and 'adult'. In 1982, more than 87% of the total home candidates accepted at British

universities were under the age of 20 years, with 6.1% between 21 and 25 years of age (UCCA Statistical Supplement, 1982-83, Table B2). The prospects for the 'mature' student, however, have improved considerably, with notions of 'adult education' and 'continuing education' (as emphasised in the recent Green Paper on Higher Education, 1985), and perhaps most profoundly by the emergence of the Open University in 1971.

The Open University has been seen as a teaching system designed essentially for adults who want to enrol on a part time degree course, which is more flexible in various ways to that offered traditionally and therefore, more suitable to their lifestyles. In 1984 the Open University had 79,350 students registered for its undergraduate courses and 828 for higher degrees. The institution has often been criticised for attracting students from mainly middle class backgrounds, and not providing a second chance for those working people, who did not have the opportunity to benefit from such education in the first place. However as Tunstall (1974) says of Walter Perry, the first Vice Chancellor of the Open University, 'Social purpose was not paramount. He simply wanted to create a university open to anybody, with no entry qualifications, whose degrees were of the same standard as others' (1974:15).

The success of and demand for this establishment is evident by the annual oversubscription to the places available at the University. This demonstrates that there are sections within the adult population who value higher education and wish to participate within it, but may not possess the normal entry

qualifications. In recent years there has been increasing pressure from the Conservative Government for the Open University to open its services to school leavers: thus providing a cheaper form of higher education, in an environment of financial cuts at the more established universities. According to the 1984 Report of the Vice Chancellor of the Open University, the minimum age of entry will be lowered to 18 years for undergraduate courses from 1986. This is largely in response to the cut in places in traditional institutions. If, as a result of these actions, many school leavers who would otherwise have attended a more conventional institution, now enrol on an Open University course, it may disfigure the original purpose and rationale of the Open University.

4.8 The Participation of South Asians in British Higher Education

Although not strictly a focus of policy initiatives, both the influence of gender and age on participation levels in higher education have been statistically noted and debated over the last decade. This, however, has evidently been lacking in the case of ethnic minorities, where most research and policy implementations have concentrated on pupils below school leaving age. The 1981 Census showed that individuals originating from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan formed 4.2% of the total United Kingdom population: 41% of this group was under the age of 20, compared to an average of 28.4% in the population as a whole. Thus in

proportion to their total population there will be a greater participation of ethnic minority pupils in the British education system.

One of the major aims of both multicultural and antiracist educational policies has been to improve the academic achievements of minority groups, yet the next logical step, their participation in higher education has mostly been neglected. Only recently has the British higher education system begun to address itself to the issue of access for ethnic minorities. Thus, the existing statistical records do not even note the ethnic origins of home students. As Little and Robbins (1981) state, 'The precise numerical underrepresentation of black students in higher education is easier to observe than to prove' (1981:57). Nor are the findings of the few studies conducted in this area easily comparable, because of the diversity of their principal aims along with the methodologies adopted. This general lack of valid information hinders the identification of problem areas and the policies to tackle them.

The limited contribution of the state, as manifested by the Department of Education and Science, towards the debate on ethnic minorities in higher education, has been made through the Rampton (1981) and Swann (1985) Reports. Both Committees required the DES to include an ethnic origin question in its survey of school leavers' first destinations: this was done in six inner city areas in 1978/9 and in five of these areas in 1981/2. Their findings relating to higher education are presented in Table 4.1.

Destinations of School Leavers from Maintained Secondary
Schools: Percentage of those Entering University and
other Degree Level Courses



T A B L E 4.1

(Source: Rampton Report, 1981 and Swann Report, 1985)

From this Table it may be seen that in the earlier survey, although Asians seemed to be more successful than any other groups in the five Local Education Authorities, they did not fare as well as the leavers from all maintained schools. This is an important point because the LEAs chosen by the DES for the purpose of these surveys, were areas of high ethnic minority settlement. As the White Paper , 'Racial Discrimination' (1975) states: '...relatively low paid or low status jobs for the first generation of immigrants go hand in hand with poor overcrowded living conditions and a depressed environment' (1975:8). Inevitably, such areas comprise poor job opportunities, as well as inadequate educational facilities and housing. Even the white indigenous populations of these areas, are not very likely to aim for post compulsory education. Thus what the DES succeeded in doing was to compare a cross section of minority pupils, with an essentially working class indigenous population. The dubious nature of the methodology used here compelled both the Rampton and Swann Committees to acknowledge that interpretations from the data presented by them should be made with great caution. Inevitably the DES surveys have raised more questions than they have answered.

Recently the Office of Population and Census Surveys (OPCS) has presented some relevant and previously unpublished data, extracted from the Labour Force Survey of 1981 (O'Hara, 1983). The main objective of these surveys is to produce regional and national statistics of employment and unemployment in the United Kingdom, thus enabling a comparison with other regions and

countries in the E.E.C. The 1981 survey had a sample of 100,000 households in Britain and 5,000 in Northern Ireland; it also provided limited information on the highest qualifications held by individuals of various ethnic groups (See Table 4.2).

Evident in this Table are three things of particular interest. Firstly, the South Asians seem to be doing as well as all other groups, and they are mostly concentrated on degree level courses. Secondly, although the West Indians are well represented in higher education below degree level (but above 'A' levels or equivalent), overall they may be seen to be doing poorly, for they have hardly begun to penetrate undergraduate courses. Thirdly, and perhaps most strikingly are the figures in Table 4.2, for the members of 'Other' ethnic origins, presumably non black. They are seen to outstrip all other groups in their ability to obtain higher educational qualifications of degree standard and below.

The point of contention with the OPCS data, however, is that in the final analysis, differences along the lines of gender and age groups have not been emphasised. As Brown (1984) states, 'There is such a strong relationship between age and qualifications that comparisons must be made within age groups' (1984:133). The 1981 Census showed that within the South Asian communities in Britain, more than 87% of those between 16 and pensionable age, were born outside the United Kingdom. Thus it is highly probable that many of them will have had at least part of their education abroad and indeed it is also possible that many may have obtained their higher educational qualifications overseas. Even if some qualifications were obtained from the

Persons Aged 16-59 by Ethnic Origin and Highest Qualification Held
(Labour Force Survey, 1981 - Great Britain)



T A B L E 4.2

(Source: O'Hara, 1983)

United Kingdom it is likely that many individuals will have received them as overseas students, and these cannot be equated with those black Britons who will have had most, if not all, of their education in this country. These are all issues which will effect the interpretation of the OPCS data, but which have been neglected in some of the official analysis.

The Policy Studies Institute (PSI) survey (Brown, 1984), may be more informative in this context. In examining the highest qualifications held by individuals, the survey also considered ethnic origin, gender and age groups (See Table 4.3). From this we may see that for those over the age of 44, the West Indians had a poor achievement level, while the performances of the White group and the Asian group were identical. However, it is likely that many Asian members within this category would have had a significant amount of their education overseas. Of those in the middle age cohort, differences appear between the Asian and White groups. The latter is seen to be faring better than both the other ethnic groups in being able to secure places at degree and non degree levels. Again, the West Indians seem to be doing the least well. Overall, it is within the 25-44 age group that a greater proportion of individuals from all three ethnicgroups have obtained a degree or higher qualification, compared to the other two age cohorts. This can at least partially be explained by the great expansion of British higher education during the 1960s, by which many individuals in this age group were able to benefit.

Highest Qualifications Held by Persons Aged 16 and over by Age Group and Ethnic Group



T A B L E 4.3

(Adapted from PSI Survey: Brown, 1984)

The final age group in this category, of those aged 16-24, has proved to be problematic in this analysis. This is because finer distinctions by age have not been made. Thus some of the students may simply be too young to have had the opportunity to obtain higher qualifications. There may also be unequal distribution of students by age in the three different categories, thus entailing further ambiguity of the data observed. In summary it may be stated that the PSI survey fails to provide adequate information about the qualifications held by young adults from ethnic minority communities who are the main focus of the current research project.

Although gender differences have not been included in Table 4.3 some things should be noted. Firstly, that as an aggregate, and with the exception of West Indian women over the age of 44, women obtained fewer higher qualifications, in all three age and ethnic groups, than their respective male counterparts. Secondly, again as an aggregate, white women in the two youngest age cohorts, fared better than those in the other ethnic groups, in securing a place in higher education. For those aged 44 and above, both Asian women and White women did equally well. Finally it is important to state that, on the whole, women were concentrated along the lower rungs of the higher education ladder: with only 1.8% obtaining a degree or a higher degree and 6% obtaining other higher qualifications, not conferred by a degree.

The OPCS survey raises further questions, including where the older members of the ethnic minority communities received most of their schooling and in which country they obtained their

qualifications. For the younger generation, along with these questions, there are also the issues of the type of qualifications obtained, especially at the lower level of the higher education sector, the factors affecting the decision to continue education, and the processes involved in making it a reality. Neither has there been any information provided, regarding the socioeconomic backgrounds of the individuals in the sample. Perhaps most importantly however, although the reader is informed of the age participation rate, nothing is said of the qualified participation rate: that is, those who are participating in higher education out of the total who are qualified to do so.

Some words of caution should be noted in comparing the OPCS data with the PSI findings. Firstly, in its analysis PSI included all individuals over the age of 16, whereas OPCS was limited to those aged between 16 and 59. Further in assessing the lower levels of the higher education sector, the Institute's study included those with GCE 'A' levels; this group was not included in the OPCS data, however. Thirdly, while the OPCS had a separate category for those members of their sample who were 'still studying', PSI distributed them according to the highest qualifications held at the time of the survey. Due to these differences the PSI figures may be expected to be slightly higher than those of the OPCS (See Tables 4.2 and 4.3), yet this is not the case. Such small discrepancies, however, can easily arise due to differences in sampling techniques and the actual method of investigation. It may be appropriate here to recall the principal aims of the two surveys. The main purpose of the Labour Force

Survey, with its sample of 15,000 households in the United Kingdom is to provide regional and national statistics, showing the rate of employment and unemployment within the country. While the 1982 PSI survey, with its much smaller sample of 5,388 households, was designed specifically to assess the extent of racial discrimination suffered by ethnic minorities in Britain. To this end the proportion of black respondents in the second sample was greater than that in the first sample.

A study which had as its main aim an examination of the participation levels of ethnic minority pupils in further and higher education, was conducted by Craft and Craft (1982) in all 16 secondary schools of an Outer London Borough. The study involved a total of 2,874 pupils, of which 53% were White, 9% were West Indians, 24% Asians and 13% of the students were allocated to the 'Others' category. To accurately assess the decision making processes which affected the involvement of ethnic minorities in post compulsory education the authors explored 'the flow both into and out of the sixth form'. Thus the main focus of the study were pupils in the fifth form and in the upper sixth. Unlike most previous studies which have looked at the schooling of ethnic minority children, Craft and Craft used examination performance and social class in conjunction, as variables in their analysis. This enabled a more valid interpretation of the data.

Regarding the examination performance of the fifth formers, it was found that even when controlled for social class, the West Indians had lower levels of achievement than either the Whites or the Asians. As a point of caution, however, it should be noted

that whereas 36% of the Whites (445 pupils) and 31% of the Asians (165 pupils) in the fifth forms were deemed as middle class, only 14% of the West Indians (31 pupils) were to be found in this category. The low number of middle class West Indians involved in the analysis inevitably affects the reliability of 'controlling for social class'. It may be assumed, however, that where a group is found to perform badly in examinations this will have obvious repercussions on their chances of staying on in the sixth form or beyond. It was also found that of all groups the Asians were the most likely and the Whites least likely to stay on in the sixth form. Also, whereas class was seen as an important decisive factor for the Whites and the West Indians, it seemed irrelevant for the Asians, where 78% of the working class group (compared to 38% White and 52% West Indian) wished to enter the sixth form.

Within the context of this chapter, the most significant information from this survey is the eventual destinations of the second year sixth formers. At this stage ethnicity was found to be a more predictive variable than social class in determining examination performance and the decision to continue in higher education. Craft and Craft (1982) demonstrated that of the sixth formers, White pupils were more likely to perform at a higher level (2 or more 'A' level passes) than those from the ethnic minority groups; yet the Asians were more likely to continue in full time education at all ability levels. The West Indians cannot be realistically included in these analysis, for only 9 pupils were involved, a greater number having gone to Further Education Colleges. Of those pupils who decided to continue in

full time education, 51% of the Whites went on to university, compared to only 19% of the Asians (See Table 4.4).

Amongst those who had reached a high ability level, an almost equal proportion of Whites and Asians went on to higher education. However, a greater percentage of the Whites secured a place at university. Thus analysis must look beyond the descriptive and examine the reasons why a greater proportion of Asians than Whites found themselves on polytechnic courses rather than at universities.

The most informative and valuable study about the presence of ethnic minorities in British higher education, was provided by Selma Vellins in 1982. The aim of her study was to provide 'a numerical account of the incidence within British Universities of South Asian students, who were born in the sub-continent of South Asia or East Africa...' (1982:206). The statistics presented were collated by the Universities Statistical Records, which is associated with the Universities Central Council on Admissions. They refer to all 'home-fee paying' students who entered British Universities in September 1979 and were born in South Asia or East Africa (See Table 4.5).

At the time of writing, the 1981 Census data was unavailable and thus, using OPCS figures, Vellins estimated that whereas South Asians formed 1.8% of the total United Kingdom population, they formed 2.6% 'of the first year student population of 1979'. Also noted was the Asians markedly different distribution from their White counterparts, in the subjects studied at university. The former showed keenness in the fields of medicine and pure sciences

Destinations of Sixth Formers Wishing to Continue
With Full Time Education, By Ethnic Group



Illustration removed for copyright restrictions

T A B L E 4.4

(Adapted from Craft and Craft, 1983)

Number of Students Entering British Universities in 1979, By Country of Birth -
Figure in brackets % of total South Asian



T A B L E 4.5

(Source: Vellins, 1982)

rather than social sciences or languages, whereas those born in the United Kingdom were more evenly distributed in the different subject areas.

In a later article, and with the use of data gathered for the 1981 Census, Ballard and Vellins (1985) demonstrated that as a percentage of their age group (those who entered universities in 1979, would be around 20 years of age in 1981), Asian students 'do only a little less well' than White British students, with the former having an age participation rate of 8.1% and the latter that of 9.3% (See Table 4.6). With a breakdown by gender we can see that Asian men fared slightly better than their White male peers while the women were not very successful. By country of birth the East Africans were undoubtedly the most successful; a greater proportion of both men and women, secured places at universities in 1979, compared to those from the indigenous population. Of those born in the South Asian sub-continent, it may be seen that although the Indian men had been quite successful, the other groups did not do very well, and the poor performance of Bengali and Pakistani women in particular may be noted.

The authors have suggested that these differential rates of participation were due to differences in the economic circumstances and migration patterns of the various South Asian groups. The East Africans were seen by the authors as a migrant and more adaptive community, whose children attended English medium schools offering British examinations before their arrival in the United Kingdom, thus giving them a head start over the

Age Participation Rate at British Universities (1979)
- By Country of Birth



T A B L E 4.6

(Source: Ballard and Vellins, 1985)

other groups. The Pakistani and Bengali communities, on the other hand, were seen to originate from rural areas with poor educational facilities and, in both cases, families were still in the process of being reunited with many children only recently arrived in this country. An attempt is also made to explain such different rates of membership to universities by examining the parental occupations of the various South Asian students who entered universities in 1979. It was found that 49% of the White British students had parents in the Managerial or Professional sector, compared to 34% of the South Asians, who were better distributed amongst the manual and white collar categories.

Thus Ballard and Vellins (1985) suggest, 'if we look at the figures for South Asian students as a whole, it is very clear that they do have a much greater capacity than do white children to overcome the well known obstacles of class in the British educational system' (1985:263). There are several problems with this claim. Firstly, because of the vast differences in background, both within the South Asian communities and between them and the indigenous populations, it is difficult to place the former into existing occupational or social class categories. This is because the categories have been especially designed for western industrialised societies. It is also unwise to infer South Asian parental attitudes towards education, simply from their current occupations. For many of them may have middle class attributes, especially in their value of education which may derive from their own higher qualifications. This factor however remains concealed when focusing merely on parental occupations,

for the achievements of many first generation migrants were not acknowledged by British employers and resulted in their underemployment. Within the South Asian population in the United Kingdom, education may be seen to transcend 'class' barriers, for even amongst the genuinely working class parents, there is a great desire for their children to succeed academically - one of the main reasons for their presence in this country (Kitwood and Borrill, 1980; Bhachu, 1985).

On concluding this section, it may be noted that no systematic approach has been developed in the existing material. Furthermore, as no record of the students' ethnicity is kept by any existing bodies we have had to rely on the findings of surveys which, while examining wider issues, have also touched on the academic and vocational qualifications obtained by ethnic minorities normally residing in the United Kingdom. The results of such investigations cannot be seen as wholly accurate. This is due to sampling problems (for example the Rampton Report, 1981; and the Swann Report, 1985), or forms of categorisation, where distinctions are not made along the lines of age group or gender (OPCS, 1981). There is also a tendency for a diverse range of people to be grouped under the term 'Asian' and 'White', where the structural positions both within and between the various communities are ignored (OPCS, 1981; PSI, 1984). Where the Asian groups are differentiated, even along the lines of country of birth, contrasting levels of participation in higher education are evident (Vellins, 1982). Similarly, there are problems where an attempt is made to assess the positions of South Asians in the

economy and from this infer their attitudes to education. Often distinctions are not made between those Asians born and educated in this country and those born and educated abroad (OPCS, 1981; PSI, 1984). Where such distinctions are drawn, inferences about the fate of pupils born in this country are made from the success of those born overseas.

It is difficult to compare the findings of the studies reviewed here, chiefly because of the differences in the approaches taken towards the main issues. The result is a picture which is both ambiguous and contradictory. Both the Rampton (1981) and Swann (1985) Reports have shown Asians to be less likely to go to university than total leavers from all maintained schools. While the evidence presented by Craft and Craft (1982) notes that of those Asians continuing with full time education the majority were to be found in the residual category rather than strictly participating in higher education. The PSI (1984) survey, on the other hand, demonstrated that Asians over the age of 44 were equally qualified as their White peers and those between 25 and 44 were less likely to be qualified, compared to their White counterparts. Importantly, however, the PSI (1984) survey failed to provide accurate data on the performance of the younger members of the ethnic minority communities. While the data presented by Ballard and Vellins (1985) suggested that the age participation rate for Asians was only a little below that of the indigenous group. Finally it was explicitly clear from the two studies which used gender as a line of distinction (Vellins,

1982; PSI, 1984) that South Asian women were greatly underrepresented in British higher education.

Two important points emerge from this discussion. Firstly, it is clear that in all the studies cited here there has been an attempt to assess what proportion of members of an age group or pupils from a particular school or local education authority, either held higher qualifications or were able to obtain places in such institutions. Although this information is important, by itself it is limited for it assumes that the level of participation in higher education is directly related to the pupils themselves, the schools they attend and the LEAs in which they find themselves. In short the focus has been at the secondary level and thus the preparatory stage before higher education rather than the process of admissions itself. The limitations of this approach reflects the acceptance of the doctrine of meritocracy on which the British education system is based. Secondly, to conclude the issue by making strict comparisons of the age participation rates of different ethnic minorities, is to concentrate on academic achievement as opposed to the process of attainment. This will prove to be misleading, particularly in the case of South Asian pupils.

Thus to accurately assess the representation of ethnic minorities in higher education there is a need to embrace the Robbins principle. This involves an assessment of what proportion of those 'who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so', and are actually able to benefit from courses of higher education. The topic may therefore be

approached from the twin perspectives of motivation and attainment. There is almost unanimous agreement in the field of race and education that the ethnic minority communities in this country place great importance on their children's education (Ghuman, 1980; Kitwood and Borrill, 1980). It is crucial to note that education has been seen as relevant and valuable, across the social spectrum of the British South Asian communities (Gupta, 1977; Bhachu, 1985). Those from privileged backgrounds may see it as a way of maintaining their lifestyles; for the disadvantaged, education is perhaps the only means which has the potential to elevate them from their deprived status (Whitehead, 1984). With regard to ethnic minorities Nandy (1969) has argued '... that higher aspirations of the coloured youngsters may also reflect an understanding by coloured (sic) immigrants and their children that in an alien and white world they must aim higher and be better to get as far as their white counterparts' (1969:9). Such anxiety may be seen as justified by the processes operating within the labour market (Ballard and Holden, 1975; Brooks, 1983). It follows then that many minority pupils will want to attend institutions of higher education and several studies have demonstrated not only their determination but also their persistence to follow this path (Craft and Craft, 1982; Eggleston et al, 1985). They may be seen to be valuing not only education, but also themselves, in being able to qualify for entry to higher education. As yet though no coherent picture has emerged of their ability to penetrate institutions of higher education. It should be noted however, that the reported perseverance of South Asians may only be seen as

necessary if the students initially failed to gain the required qualifications. Here is is likely that although many students may persist in their wish to participate, they will fail to qualify for entry to higher education (Townsend and Brittan, 1972; Swann, 1985).

This situation may be better understood if it is realised that most ethnic minorities are concentrated in inner city schools with little tradition for preparing children for higher education. Also streaming or banding is a distinctive feature of many comprehensive schools where children are allocated early in their secondary education, with little possibility of being transferred (Wright, 1985). Such a system will serve a dual purpose: firstly many of the children in the lower streams may begin to place a lower value on themselves, believing themselves to be incapable of achieving anything better; and secondly even if they had high aspirations and wanted to continue with their education, this opportunity will not be available to them because they may not even be entered for the appropriate exams which are a prerequisite for further study. These pupils can only be said to be 'overaspiring' in relation to the educational opportunities made available to them. Social factors may serve to motivate students, but it is essentially the school which can enable pupils to obtain the relevant qualifications at the appropriate age.

Undoubtedly many ethnic minority students will qualify for entry to higher education, but may obtain poor 'A' level grades and thus fail to be selected. This may be due to the confluence of the processes of admission and selection, which were discussed

earlier. On the other hand it may be the result of more overt processes during the selection procedures. This is demonstrated by a study conducted by McManus and Richards (1984), which examined 'the process of application, selection and admission', at a London Medical School, which dealt with 12.6% of all applicants to British medical schools in October 1981. The authors found that of all British applicants, those with non-European surnames were less likely to be accepted by a medical school in the United Kingdom. They further concluded that this,

'cannot be explained in terms of academic achievement or delay in application but is a consequence of having a greater chance of being assessed, both from UCCA forms and at interview, as being less suitable on non-academic grounds' (1985:320).

These findings suggest the use of criteria other than strictly meritocratic, during the selection process: neither can such assessment be seen as based on individual characteristics, but on factors which succeed in discriminating against identifiable groups in the population.

A further study conducted by Collier and Burke (1986) also revealed processes of racial and sexual discrimination in the selection of applicants for medical education. They analysed the names of students from London Medical Schools who were taking their final examinations in June 1982, 1983 and 1984. From this information a ratio of European and non-European (African, Asian and Arabic) students was calculated for each Medical School. It was found that for each school, there was a tendency for the ratio

of European to non-European students to remain consistent over the three year period. This ranged from a relatively low level of non-European participation at Westminster Medical School (5%), to a high participation rate at the Royal Free Medical School (16%). The authors also noted a strong positive correlation for the acceptance of non-European and female students by the Medical Schools. It was also acknowledged that most of the former were in fact male students. This evidence indicates the possibility of a quota system operated by some medical schools, in their intake of non-Europeans and women applicants.

In conclusion South Asians may be said to face problems at two critical levels in their relationship to entry of higher education. Firstly the school system is failing them by being unable to equip them with the relevant qualifications at the appropriate age; secondly, there is evidence that they suffer at the point of selection.

4.9 Experiences of Minority Students in British Higher Education

To date there exist only two British studies which have documented the subjectively felt experiences and perceptions of ethnic minority students in higher education. Although research has shown that South Asians are more likely to opt for further and higher education (Swann, 1985), both these studies have focused exclusively on students of Afro Caribbean origin. However, with the lack of such research on South Asian students, a review of

current literature on minority experiences may highlight certain common trends which may be compared with the data gathered for this study.

The National Union of Students (N.U.S.) was the first body to document the 'subjective reality' of the education system, as seen by Afro Caribbean students in British higher education institutions. Their findings were presented to the Rampton Committee for the interim report, 'West Indian Children In Our Schools' (1981). The contribution by the N.U.S. to the Rampton Committee's work had two related phases. The first of these was reported in a publication entitled, 'Just A Segment' (1980): this presented discussions of Afro Caribbean students from two Colleges of Further Education about their experiences of the British education system. The topics included interpersonal relationships between pupils, pupils and teachers, and the issue of streaming. While there was little evidence of overt racial abuse, the students expressed concern about their teachers' commitment to their welfare and education. This was seen to be evident from the allocation of Afro Caribbean pupils in the streaming process. Several participants in the study mentioned being placed in the lower or non-examination streams. One student commented:

' they sort of flung the CSEs at you and say you can get the grades now, CSEs are worthless really...'

However, as the report states,

'Certainly where a student and her/his parents had fought being put into the CSE groups, then the

student was successful in achieving the 'O' level qualifications. Although in some cases this had only been possible by a change in the school or a parent putting the students in for the examination privately' (1981:3).

Those participating in this study were all full time students, they were thus asked to give their opinions as to why only small numbers of blacks reached further and higher education in the United Kingdom and also to reflect on the ways in which they had 'broken the cycle'. Several students mentioned that Afro Caribbean parents were not fully aware of the British education and examination systems. Success, however, was seen to be possible, if the student had encouraging parents who could bring the individual to the attention of the teachers. The special interest and support of a teacher was also seen as an aid to success. In sum the N.U.S. stated, 'Individual experiences of the group indicated that it was possible to be successful in the British education system, either by 'playing the game' or by challenging and changing school/teacher decisions' (1981:6). However, academic success was seen to bring its own problems, for many students felt that they were able to climb up the academic ladder only at the expense of their cultural identity.

As a result of the submission of Just A Segment, the Rampton Committee asked N.U.S. to arrange a meeting with black students in higher education. Such a meeting took place in November 1980, with about 25 black students, 6 members of the Committee and N.U.S. executive and staff. As the report of this meeting claims, 'the event itself was significant enough, as the largest gathering

ever of black students in higher education' (1981:1). The discussion was divided into four categories: school experience, higher education, career prospects and the general theme of how black students succeed. The attitudes of teachers and parents towards black pupils were seen as a central feature of their school experience. Problems were also seen to arise from a basic clash of cultural values, and teachers' low expectations of black children. It was acknowledged that there existed no simple solutions, yet challenging the attitudes and assumptions held by teachers and the employment of more black teachers were seen as a positive move.

As with those in Further Education Colleges, Afro Caribbean students in higher education also commented 'almost without exception', that they had succeeded academically with a loss in their personality and cultural identity. One student commented:

' The only way black people see themselves getting ahead is to think of themselves as white I personally denied my blackness.'

Both teachers and parents were also seen to be implicated in this process: some parents did not allow their children to mix with other black children while some teachers isolated individual black pupils and groomed them for success. One Afro Caribbean related his experience of school:

'Instead of changing their attitudes about black people, they make an exception of you, you are different from the rest of the rabble who just can't succeed and haven't got the ability'.

Another common theme which emerged from discussions with these students, was that Afro Caribbeans in higher education were more likely to have come via Colleges of Further Education, rather than directly from school.

The second study refers to case studies of black women in British universities (Tomlinson, 1982). The author interviewed eight undergraduate women of Afro Caribbean origin and enquired into their experiences of the British education system. The majority of the women were from manual working class backgrounds, and three came from families with middle class occupations. All the women, however, asserted the importance of parental support and encouragement for academic success. They mostly noted the support provided by their fathers and, as Tomlinson states, the parents had to be 'willing to take action as well as provide verbal encouragement.'

Referring to their experiences in higher education, the students expressed satisfaction with their respective universities and courses. They considered themselves fortunate to have reached such a high academic level, especially due to the disadvantages associated with their race and gender. Although aware of their fortunate situation, the women also felt a sense of isolation and alienation which arose from getting to and being at university. One woman commented:

' Black people easily feel isolated at university, being such a minority, its not easy, ___ some tutors are racist.'

From this small scale study Tomlinson identified factors which appeared to have aided the academic success of the Afro Caribbean women. These included parental encouragement (particularly from fathers) and sympathetic teachers who had high expectations of the pupils. Avoiding being placed into a C.S.E. stream and the ability to speak standard English were also seen as characteristics which may allow for academic success.

Both the N.U.S. (1981) and Tomlinson (1982) studies are small scale and unlikely to be representative but have shown that Afro Caribbean pupils may succeed in the British education system if they have parental encouragement, and the confidence of at least one teacher at school. Along with this type of support, however, the pupil must also be able to challenge the internal school processes, especially those of streaming, which disadvantage black pupils. It is also clear that even where pupils have succeeded, they may be ambivalent about their position in further or higher education.

CHAPTER 5

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT : THE POSITION OF SOUTH ASIAN GRADUATES IN THE LABOUR MARKET

This chapter assesses the various debates about the relationship between education and employment. In the first part, special reference is made to the attainment of higher academic qualifications and the graduate labour market. In particular, it investigates why graduates may be employed, and how they come to be recruited and selected. The second section examines the position of South Asian workers in the labour market and reviews the limited literature on the prospects of those with higher qualifications. The chapter concludes by highlighting the complex interactions between 'race', education and employment.

5.1 The Tightening Bond Theory

Reforms made to the structure of the British education system based on the liberal or social democratic philosophy, were intended to ameliorate the inequalities within it (See Chapter 2). Here a strong relationship between qualifications and occupational allocation was assumed and thus the mitigation of inequalities in education was to trigger off a chain reaction providing equality in occupational opportunity (White Paper, 1943). Education's

potential for social mobility implied the development of a meritocratic society, where individual life chances were dependant on achievement rather than ascription. It was believed that greater opportunities in education and an increasing demand for an educated and skilled workforce would tighten the bond between credentials and occupations and therefore of income, status and power (Tyler:1977).

Over the last fifty years there have been major changes in the educational attainment of the population and the structure of occupations in the United Kingdom. In sum, there has been a tendency for a greater proportion of the population to possess some form of educational qualification, with a shift away from manual occupations and towards non manual work (Reid,1978). However as Tyler (1977) claims, '.... it does not appear that the relationship between credentials and either income or status has 'tightened' significantly'(1977:40). This may be supported by evidence which demonstrates that, despite educational upgrading, there has been little equalisation of social rewards in British society. For example access to elite groups has been found to be less meritocratic than in the 1930s (Halsey and Crewe, 1967; Boyd, 1973), while the correlation between fathers' and sons' occupational status may be seen as relatively stable, thus indicating the importance of family background in social opportunity (Ridge, 1974). In addition the 1971 British Labour Statistics have indicated that any redistribution of income over the last ninety years has not significantly increased the share of

the lowest paid (Field, 1974). Using the 1972 General Household Survey, Reid (1978) concluded:

'that while there is a very strong relationship between education and occupation it is not absolute. For example, not all those with higher education qualifications work as professionals, employers' or managers, nor are these jobs undertaken exclusively by the holders of such qualifications. This must be due to changes in the occupational structure and educational opportunities over time, and to the importance of factors other than education in getting and keeping a job' (1978:212).

The next section will briefly examine dominant theoretical explanations of the relationship between education and employment.

5.2 Different Perspectives On The Relationship Between Education And Employment

It is not the aim of this section to provide a detailed analysis of the theoretical approaches available, but rather to provide examples which may highlight current debates on the relationship between education and employment.

5.2.1 Neo-Marxist Perspectives

Bowles and Gintis (1976) have suggested a direct structural link between the processes within school and those occurring in the labour market. They suggest that schools prepare pupils for

the world of work by instilling them with a respect for hierarchy and authority, which is necessary for a compliant work force in a capitalist society. Bowles and Gintis have termed this the principle of 'correspondence', where the behaviour and attitudes required of a workforce are correspondingly developed in an educational context. This may include emphasis on the adherence of rules, dependability and punctuality. While it is apparent that some aspects of schooling may focus on these notions (Willis, 1977), Rosemary Deem (1983) has argued that it remains unclear precisely how the correspondence between education and employment operates, especially in 'decentralized educational systems'. Within their theoretical framework Bowles and Gintis are cynical about the provision of qualifications, they state, '....Education reproduces inequality by justifying privilege and attributing poverty to personal failure' (1976:14).

Dore's (1976) conceptualisation of the relationship between education and employment is similar to the perspective developed by Bowles and Gintis. He suggested that there has been an inflation in the value of qualifications, where a greater number of people are obtaining more qualifications, thus making the western world at least, an increasingly credentialist society. In his assessment of Dore's work, Collins (1979) is particularly disturbed by the likelihood that while technological and economic changes have influenced the types of jobs currently available, this still does not account for the high academic qualifications often demanded for such positions. Collins also argues that there is often little connection between the skill content of the

qualification and the occupation for which it is required. Collins views education as 'status culture', where the main purpose of schools and colleges is the teaching of the core values and attributes of this culture: here pupils are groomed to participate in this culture and respect it. Therefore credentials are seen as important not for their intrinsic content, but for their 'cultural value', in that they are used by employers as a screening device to identify suitable employees with desirable middle class characteristics. It is ironic however, that while high status is seen to be available to those who possess credentials in a seemingly open access meritocratic education system, there is a high positive correlation between parental socio economic grouping, possession of qualifications and high status occupational allocation (U.S.R., 1984-85).

5.2.2 Labour Market Irregularities

In an analysis of the processes involved in gaining employment, some distinction must be made between the supply of labour and the demand for labour. Thus both the processes of choice and selection need to be examined (Blau, 1956). In this interaction it is the employer, through his/her role in a capitalist economy, who is the more powerful, especially in a market where there are more people available for work and only a limited number of vacancies (Jenkins, 1986). Thus the focus of investigation may shift from career choice to occupational

allocation. Ashton (1986) has referred to the rising levels of youth and adult unemployment levels in Britain during the early 1980s largely as a result of 'labour market dynamics' and 'institutional arrangements' (1986:82). He has also pointed out that particular groups such as women, ethnic minorities and young people are more vulnerable to the risk of unemployment because of restricted access to secure work positions. Ashton suggests that the arising competition may be regulated by stipulating minimum qualifications and by adopting specific recruitment strategies. Both of these processes may serve to exclude from the competition, identifiable groups of the economically active population.

Employers' recruitment practices have adversely affected women workers. In a study involving female school leavers, Wolpe (1978) suggested that the labour market operated differently for boys and girls. A feminist perspective was offered for the relationship between school and work where it was argued, the pervasive differentials of class and gender were seen to operate within education and employment, thus placing girls (especially those from working class backgrounds), at a disadvantage. It was noted that the sexual divisions within society permeated the structure of the labour market; thus the work done by women was dependent more on the opportunities available than on individual effort and aspiration. However, the debate assessing womens' marginal position in employment also includes the suggestion that this may be a result of their position in the reproductive and domestic situations (West, 1982). While others have argued that as a result of both processes, employers' attitudes towards women

workers and their own domestic responsibilities have confined large proportions of the female workforce at the lower end of the employment hierarchy (Wainwright, 1978; Gordon et al, 1982).

Such labour market irregularities can also be seen in the case of ethnic minority workers. Several studies have highlighted their disadvantaged structural position in the labour market (Brown, 1984). The entrenched nature of such disadvantage may be clearly located within labour market processes, when it is evident that young black people who are unemployed tend to be better qualified than white unemployed youngsters (Cross, 1978). A similar pattern is also evident for those adults who are unemployed (Labour Force Survey, 1985). In their review of the relationship between education and employment for young people, Jenkins and Troyna (1983), conclude, '....we are left with the stubborn fact that the possession of equivalent educational qualifications does not appear to have the same employment implications for black and white school leavers alike' (1983:12). With specific reference to this argument, Ashton (1986) has suggested:

'Because of this ability to transcend other sheltering mechanisms, racist beliefs are one of the most powerful forms of discrimination that are operative in the allocation of labour to the various segments' (1986:80).

The studies cited in this section have indicated the influence of factors other than credentials in the selection of employees. This area is further illuminated by a study by Ashton and Maguire (1981) which investigated the processes used by

employers to recruit young school leavers. Their evidence is in contrast to the tightening bond theory and it was demonstrated that while some employers used credentials for screening purposes, non-academic criteria such as personality were generally seen as more important in determining selection.

Due to the general difficulties in matching the skills required for a job to the potential employee's ability, along with the paucity of directly job related credentials (Collins, 1979), the use of implicit job selection criteria are prevalent. These may include an employer's perceptions of the attitude and manner of the person seeking work and the connotations associated with their gender and ethnicity. Importantly, it should be noted that where such criteria are used heavily, discriminatory practices which are not based solely on job related issues may occur (Jenkins, 1986). However the disadvantage in the labour market of discernable groups cannot be explained by the preferences and idiosyncracies of individual employers'. Rather as Reid (1978) claims, 'the relationship between education, occupation and income must be viewed as being mediated by the social and power structure and relations of society' (1978:231). The next section will examine the problematic with reference to higher academic qualifications and the graduate labour market.

5.3 The Graduate Labour Market

The 1981 Labour Force Survey, using a sample of 80,000 private households in Britain, included an analysis of the qualifications held and the occupational patterns of all persons in the sample aged 16 to 59 years. It was found that the well qualified were more likely to be economically active and less likely to be unemployed, made redundant or be dismissed. Of the unemployed those who were qualified were also less likely to have been in that situation for more than one year. The survey further demonstrated that graduates tended to be engaged in professional work in the service sector, and also had a slightly above average rate of mobility both between firms and occupations.

The data indicate the differential experiences in the labour market of those persons with qualifications and those without. However, the precise relationship between higher academic credentials and the employment sector are complex, and will be dealt with later in this chapter.

5.3.1 Current Prospects For Graduates

The primary source of information about graduate prospects in employment is the annual survey conducted by the Careers Advisory Service at each university and polytechnic in the United Kingdom. The first known destinations of graduates are assessed up to 31st December of the year of graduation. Local information

is collated into national statistics, and for university graduates is published each year by the University Statistical Records. As this thesis concentrates on the employment prospects of those graduating from United Kingdom universities, the comparative situation for polytechnic graduates will not be discussed.

Drawing upon the data corresponding to the first half of this decade, Table 5.1 presents the first known destinations of U.K. domiciled, first degree university graduates, by year of graduation. Before analysing the implications of the data reported in this table, it would be beneficial to assess the validity of this information. In his investigation of the employment prospects for those graduating in 1980, Tarsh (1982) identified methodological flaws in the way such data are collected, which could lead to an inaccurate representation of graduate participation in the labour market. He noted that,

' . . . the statistics are very short term. They cover at most the first nine months of a new graduates's career. People who find a job after March of the year after graduation are excluded from the employment totals. There is no record of graduates who soon change their first job for a period of unemployment. Most subsequent destinations of graduates who go in for a period of further academic study or training' (1982:206).

However, Tarsh has claimed that, for a number of reasons, the information gathered by the Careers Service may be acceptable in the assessment of graduate involvement in the economy. Firstly it is noted that as undergraduates are able to participate in a

Total United Kingdom Domiciled Graduates Known Destinations

1980-85



T A B L E 5.1

(Source: University Statistical Records - First Destinations of Graduates)

highly structured labour market in the form of the 'milk round', and there is access to expert careers advice, their relative positions over a nine month period may reflect actual differences between graduates. Secondly the author suggests that those graduates who continue with their education or go on to do further training, can be said to be more marketable and therefore cannot be compared with those who join the labour force immediately after graduation.

Returning to Table 5.1 the proportion of home graduates engaged in permanent employment within months of graduation, may be seen to be gradually increasing since 1980. For the last category, that is those graduating in 1985, 61.5% of those who gained employment in the United Kingdom were engaged in industry and commerce, while 24.7% of the graduates were employed in public services, such as the Civil Service, Local Authorities and the Forces. Of the remaining graduates 5.8% were employed at an educational institution, with 8.1% involved in miscellaneous occupations. Corresponding to the increased graduate participation in the labour force, the proportion of those who were unemployed or in temporary work, can also be seen to be diminishing (See Table 5.1). However, to present a more accurate picture of the difficulties faced by graduates in seeking work, their rates of unemployment have been calculated: these refer to the percentage of the total graduates seeking employment who were unemployed or in short term work. Table 5.1 demonstrates that while the rates of unemployment for new graduates have lessened between 1980 and 1985, they still remain quite high at 16.4%.

Nevertheless, the initially high unemployment rates amongst graduates may be explained by their position in the labour market. They may be seen as new recruits to the labour force, and thus can be compared to school leavers who are also generally searching for their first full time, paid positions.

Unemployment rates for graduates may also vary by degree subjects. Recent trends show that for those graduating in medicine, dentistry, maths, physics and certain engineering subjects, students were likely to find work easily. This is in contrast to graduates with degrees in biology, botany, chemistry or any combined sciences. Within the social sciences there were clear differences in employability, with a greater proportion of graduates in business studies, accountancy and economics finding work compared to their peers in geography, sociology and psychology (First Destination of University Graduates, 1980-82, Tables 1 and 2; 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85, Table 5.3).

Similar trends of employability by degree subject were evident both for male and female graduates. However Tarsh (1982) noted for those graduating from U.K. universities in 1982, that

'within each subject women's unemployment rates were lower than men's. In aggregate their unemployment rate was slightly higher because they were more likely to have graduated in subjects where unemployment was high for men and women' (1982:210).

Womens' greater success to gain employment has been explained by their likelihood to accept non graduate jobs and also by their decision to defer entry to the labour force by engaging in further training.

Finally Table 5.1 also demonstrates that between 1980 and 1985, as the proportion of graduates immediately entering the labour force increases and the rate of unemployment decreases, the propensity to undertake further education or training also diminishes. Thus a correlation may be said to exist between graduate perceptions or experiences of unemployment and their tendency to continue with their education. This will be exemplified by the data presented in Chapter 10, which includes an examination of plans after graduation, of the undergraduates who formed the sample for this study.

5.3.2 Higher Education And Employment

The relationship between higher education and employment has been described as one of 'mutual dependence', where one influences the other in several ways forming a complex and dynamic association (Peston, 1981). However, for the purpose of analysis, discussions of a graduate labour market may be divided into the supply of and the demand for graduates.

In a waged economy where power relations are associated with income levels, it is the demand made by employers which may be seen as more influential. Two dominant interpretations of the relationship between higher education and employment are evident from existing literature on the demand for graduate labour. The first of these asserts the use of credentials as a 'screening' device by employers (Arrow, 1973). As with Dore's (1976) theory

of credentialism discussed earlier, the screening hypothesis maintains that qualifications aid the identification of, rather than develop, qualities seen as desirable in individuals. It is further suggested that as graduate employers are recruiting from a pool of candidates who are qualified, yet lacking in experience, additional screening may also occur where selection is based on other characteristics especially personal factors. This may include issues of gender, ethnicity and general family background. Individual differences in the process of attainment can also influence employers, who may have preferences for specific institutions or qualifications. Hunter (1981) has criticised the theory, however, by stating, 'the significant point in screening is that measures are being introduced which cannot be regarded as objective tests of likely performance in the job but can only stand as proxies for such a test' (1981:6).

The screening hypothesis has also been criticised for oversimplifying the relationship between higher education and employment. Magnussen (1979) for instance, has identified two particular flaws in the argument. Firstly, where it is assumed that education may only highlight inherent qualities, there is a total disregard for professional and vocational skills which can only be adopted through formal learning. Secondly, it is suggested that screening cannot account for the employment and promotion procedures internal to a company. In this context there may be no differentiation in the rewards available for new employees, who are almost always compelled to start at the bottom of the income scale.

The second theoretical debate located within the demand for graduate labour, is the contentious issue of 'manpower' planning. Briefly this perspective recommends some intervention in market procedures, which would ensure compatibility in the subjects studied by graduates and the requirements of employers (Hunter, 1981). Existing literature indicates the prevalence of diverse opinions on this issue. There are those in government and industry who view the financial support provided to higher education as an investment from which appropriate returns may be expected (DES, 1972; DES, 1985). While others have argued that the main purpose of universities and polytechnics is that of educating and not of preparing 'manpower' for the economy (Blaug, 1970). However, in his discussion of the relationship between higher education and employment, Teichler (1980) suggested that debates about manpower planning can only be academic because of the difficulty in effectively operating such a system. This is largely due to the problems in predicting employer requirements, the time gap involved in communicating this information to students and, their availability for work. The impracticality of manpower planning in higher education was also referred to in the Robbins Report on Higher Education (1963) and has been more recently indicated in the reports by the Unit of Manpower Studies (Catto et al, 1981) and by the Education, Science and Arts Committee (The Funding and Organisation of Courses in Higher Education, 1980).

The supply of graduate labour can also be seen to be inextricably linked with the demand for higher education. This

demand has sometimes been explained in terms of the human capital theory. In contrast to screening, it is asserted from this perspective that both nations and individuals would benefit from investing in education as this would produce and develop skills which, in turn, would increase productivity and individual and collective wealth (Blaug, 1970; Freeman, 1971). The main problem with this argument has been the lack of attention given to the actual processes which could bring about a human capital approach. For instance in terms of seeing education as an investment it is not very clear as to precisely who would bear the cost and who would benefit from such investment. Further it cannot be assumed that individual decisions to enter higher education are based on these issues. As Roizen and Jepson (1985) state, 'for most students who are relatively able academically, higher education has simply become a fact of social and economic life....(also)....employers do not necessarily need the degree...what they need is a way of limiting the recruitment exercise' (1985:163). Additionally, and most importantly for the arguments covered in this chapter, the human capital theory assumes that there is a free market for labour. This is to state that the most demanding and rewarding jobs would go to those members of society who are the most educated. However, it has already been indicated that non job-related factors also intervene in the allocation of occupations.

5.3.3 Employer Demands For Graduates And The Criteria Used For Selection

In assessing recruitment processes within the graduate labour market, it is first necessary to investigate why employers might wish to attract graduates to their establishments. In 1981 Gordon conducted a study examining the attitudes of graduate recruitment officers, who represented 58 companies with nearly two million British employees. Sixty percent of the respondents claimed that their graduate employees were more productive than other employees doing similar work. Employers said that they particularly appreciated the communication skills of social science graduates and the knowledge base acquired by those with degrees in pure and applied science. In addition both types of graduates were seen as flexible, ambitious and highly motivated. Bacon, Benton and Gruneberg (1979) conducted a study which examined the differences in employers' opinions of university and polytechnic graduates. The results indicated that university graduates were more likely to be recruited for their management potential and innovative abilities, while polytechnic students were approached because of their greater 'insight into the practicalities of industry' (1979:98). Therefore it is evident that employer expectations of graduates vary by the type of higher education establishment attended. However, employers cannot be seen as totally satisfied with their graduate recruits. Gordon (1983) noted that the two important criticisms levelled against

graduates were their lack of commercial and industrial training and their unrealistic expectations of the world of work.

It has been argued that one of the main functions of higher education in advanced industrial societies is to distribute status on the basis of 'achievement'. Teichler (1980) suggests that as equity in educational opportunity increases, and the number of people gaining credentials rises, the established relationship between education and occupations may be challenged unless there is also a concomitant change in the structure of the labour market. This perspective is further illuminated by the work conducted by the Unit of Manpower Studies which projected an increase of over a million, economically active highly qualified people between 1971 and 1986. In addition, a slower growth of graduate level jobs was predicted over the same period (Catto et al, 1981). The resulting situation may have two important consequences for the structure of the labour market. Firstly, the increased output of qualified individuals will decrease the employability of those with poor or no credentials. Secondly, it may mean that graduates will need to be absorbed into areas of work previously not considered by qualified individuals. Butler (1978) has suggested that the encompassment of non traditional areas of work by graduates has been occurring since the expansion of higher education and the increased supply of graduates. The changes that have taken place for them in the labour market are evident in the findings of the Unit of Manpower Studies which considered the current and future employment of highly qualified manpower (Butler, 1978). Here it was suggested that employers

were recruiting graduates for work which was previously undertaken by school leavers. On their part, graduates were also applying for jobs which did not specify a degree as a necessary requirement. Further, the differentiation between the earnings of particular groups of graduates and non graduates was also declining.

The early 1980s witnessed a slight increase in graduate output and a relative reduction in the demand for graduates by employers (Roizen and Jepson, 1985). Although there may be variation by subject type, in effect it has become a 'buyers market', where individual career choices suffer and occupational allocation is likely to prevail. This strengthening of graduate employers' already powerful position, means that they can make greater demands of their potential employees. This is evident from the presentations made by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Standing Conference of Employers of Graduates (SCOEG) to the House of Commons Select Committee (1980) which was assessing the funding and organisation of higher education. The CBI noted that they would like an increase in both the quality and quantity of graduates.

Employers' reactions and adjustments to the increase in the number of graduates available were investigated in 1975 by the Institute of Manpower Studies. Case studies were conducted with organisations which traditionally recruited graduates and also with those which had only then recently accepted graduate employees. The findings of this study were reported by Pearson et al (1978) who identified three recruitment streams, to account for

the demand for graduates by employers. Firstly, graduates were seen as attractive because of their potential in senior management. Those recruited in this category usually followed established training schemes and structured career paths. Secondly, graduates could be recruited as specialists, in either professional or vocational occupations. Major changes have occurred in this sector with professions such as law and accountancy reorganising their intake and limiting it to graduate entry. It was noted that the absorption of surplus graduates was most likely to occur in the final category of recruitment, that of general intake. Here graduates were employed to meet the short term needs of the company, with a possible view to junior or middle management. Often they are accepted not because they are graduates but because they were not available for work as school leavers. Pearson and his colleagues' (1978) conclusions indicate that graduate employers may be operating in several distinct markets to satisfy their specific requirements. However, Roizen and Jepson (1985) have argued that, while it may be conceptually useful to identify the various facets of the graduate labour market, there is said to be much 'blurring of the boundaries', and in reality the categories may not be seen as totally distinct (1985:158). In their survey of employers' expectations of higher education and their requirements of a graduate labour force, Roizen and Jepson (1985) found that recruitment procedures between companies varied enormously and were largely a response to their specific demands for graduate type employees.

Having discussed employers' demands for a graduate level workforce, it is now necessary to examine how a graduate applicant becomes a graduate recruit and thus the basis upon which employers' selection decisions are made. From their survey with employers, Roizen and Jepson (1985) identified three elements in the process of graduate selection: 'the mix of qualities and factors; the weight attached to different factors; and the choice of pool of candidates' (1985:166). Each one may be considered separately. While there have been investigations into why organisations may wish to employ graduates, there is a paucity of research which examines the criteria used by employers to differentiate between graduates. Existing literature, however, indicates that recruiters differ considerably in the qualities they see as desirable in potential employees (Mayfield and Carlson, 1966), and in the overall balance between academic and non-academic factors (Roizen and Jepson, 1985). The relative importance attached by employers to such information can also vary (Hakel, Hollman and Dunnette, 1970). Additionally, Valenzi and Andrews (1973) discovered discrepancies between the perceived and actual significance given to specific items in an employment interview. Finally, further constraints are sometimes placed on the recruitment process by limiting the pool of graduates from which selection is to take place. This will also be influenced by the weighting attached to particular factors, thereby preselecting a pool with desirable qualities, with selection at an individual level occurring at a later stage.

This may be exemplified by the study conducted by Bacon, Benton and Gruneberg (1979) who found that employers held different opinions of those graduating from universities and polytechnics. The majority believed that universities produced better students and while employers were not always able to offer explanations for this, those who responded commented on the lower 'A' level requirements for entry to polytechnics. Similar reasons were also given for employers' institutional preferences within the university sector (Gordon, 1983). However Roizen and Jepson (1985) have pointed to the difficulties involved in judging the direction of causality, where 'students with good A levels choose universities because they know that employers will turn there first, while employers' rank institutions by A levels of entering students' (1985:97). Graduate employers can also limit the pool of candidates for selection by stipulating a minimum degree class requirement. Generally, though, it is evident that while some organisations operate this scheme, as most appointments are made before students degree classes are known employers seldom withdraw an offer of employment made to an undergraduate who may have obtained a degree at a lower level (Gordon, 1983; Fennell, 1985).

The graduate labour market in the U.K. is highly structured, enabling an examination of the processes occurring between the application and selection for employment. Herriot (1984) has seen it as a 'three-hurdle course', involving 'preselection, milk-round interview, and final selection procedure' (1984:58). This procedure has been maintained largely because it is seen as cost effective and convenient both for employers and undergraduates

(Farmer, 1980). The issues raised by Roizen and Jepson (1985) as influential in the process of graduate selection, and discussed earlier, may be especially relevant at the preselection stage. Employers' initial choices are based solely on application forms and Herriot (1984) notes that over 50% of the applicants may be eliminated at this crucial stage. Because the structure of the British education system encourages early involvement in higher education, recent graduates are often lacking in work experience and thus can only provide biographical data on their application forms. Studies examining the usefulness of this information suggest that graduate recruiters often have an image of the ideal employee and each new applicant is compared with this portrayal (Hakel, Hollman and Dunnette, 1970). Here the influence of those characteristics perceived as unfavourable may be greater, as the emphasis at this stage in the selection procedure is not on identifying potential employees but in rejecting those candidates who are considered as unsuitable (Hollman, 1972).

If a candidate is successful at the preselection stage he/she may remain in the competition and be invited to attend a milk round interview, normally held at the student's educational establishment. In the findings presented by Keenan (1978), several instances are reported where the graduate recruiters at the milk round were often lacking in interview technique and experience and were therefore inadequately prepared for the interaction. As a tool for assessment the interview situation may be seen as highly problematic. Blakeney and McNaughton (1971) have indicated that first impressions are significantly more

important than the remainder of the interview period. As long ago as 1958 Springbett demonstrated that recruiters had reached their final decision typically within the first four minutes of the interview. It was also shown that initial impressions were more likely to change from positive to negative, than vice versa. Similar findings also emerged from the studies conducted by Webster (1964) and Hollman (1972).

Judgements for selection may be based on several factors but importantly it has been found that interviewers tended to favour applicants who were similar to themselves (Rand and Wexley, 1975) and that candidates are often compared with idealised stereotypes rather than judged on their suitability for the post (Hakel, Hollman and Dunette, 1970). Additionally it has been suggested that the greater part of the interview involves employers trying to confirm their initial judgements about the candidate made from both the application form and the opening of the interaction (Ross, Greene and House, 1977; Snyder, Tanke and Berscheid, 1977). More recently Snyder and White (1981) observed that interviewers direct their questioning in a way which may elicit information to corroborate their earlier judgements. A favourable or unfavourable bias can also be influenced by non verbal behaviour (Forbes and Jackson, 1980) and character inferences made from general stereotypes rather than accurate information (Cantor and Mischel, 1977). There is also evidence that gender stereotypes can disadvantage women applying for jobs which are categorised as male oriented (Schein, 1973). This is especially important in the

light of Herriot's claim that 'stereotypes are strongly resistant to contrary evidence' (1984:137).

Clearly the potential sources of bias discussed in this section may adversely affect the selection procedure. With specific reference to the employment of graduates, Roizen and Jepson (1985) have concluded from their study that the interaction of various employer preferences in terms of higher education institutions, the qualities seen as desirable in an applicant and the judgemental biases within an interview situation, may inadvertently result in selection based on social class divisions. The authors elaborate,

' We are not asserting here that employers do select by family background and perceptions of social status but that the evidence suggests that they may do so. Some of the important non-meritocratic factors which are sought will have a strong association with family background and social status. Selection of the 'pool' of candidates to interview may have an implicit class and social bias because of an over-representation of middle and upper class students in particular institutions and courses. This is largely because non-academic and academic characteristics interact throughout the academic career. Middle and upper middle class children do better than working-class children in every educational transition and it would be surprising indeed if these factors ceased to operate directly or indirectly in the transition from higher education to work' (1985:167).

While there is a dearth in research of the specific problems faced by ethnic minority graduates in their search for employment, the evidence relating to the biases influencing the decision making process, especially at interviews, suggests that they may encounter acute disadvantages. The next section reviews the limited literature on the employment of South Asian graduates. It

also locates the position of black workers within the British economy and examines the interactions between race, education and employment.

5.4 South Asian Workers in the British Labour Market

In assessing the location of discernible groups within wider society, their opportunities in employment may be a crucial area of concern. This is essentially because occupational position and status greatly affect the life style of the individual and the life chances of his/her dependants. Studies have demonstrated a close correlation between the type of employment people are engaged in, the quality of their housing and opportunities in education (Halsey, Heath and Ridge, 1980). Thus where identifiable groups are confined to particular niches within the economy, this may lead them into positions of 'multiple deprivation' (Rex and Moore, 1967; Rex and Tomlinson, 1979).

The current position of South Asian workers in the British labour market cannot be abstracted from the experiences of early migrants from the Indian sub-continent and those who have more recently arrived from East Africa. This historical perspective not only explains the presence of these minorities within the United Kingdom, but also indicates the reasons for, and the continual nature of, the disadvantages they have faced.

5.4.1 Employment Patterns of Early Migrants

The presence of ethnic minority communities in this country have generally been discussed in terms of 'push' and 'pull' factors (Rose et al, 1969; Allen, 1971). The former refer to the circumstances within the country of origin which may persuade groups to seek their livelihood elsewhere. An acute example is the case of those South Asians who were expelled from Uganda in the height of political unrest within the country (Kuepper, Lackey and Swinerton, 1975). However, the majority of the adult South Asians resident in this country have arrived from India and Pakistan, with motivations which cannot be seen as being as urgent as for those fleeing from East Africa. It is argued that for some of these people, 'migration was part of a deliberate strategy of occupational and social mobility' (Jenkins, 1986:8). The aim was either to escape from the poverty and settle in the United Kingdom or to accumulate capital and then return home with an improved economic and social standing (Anwar, 1979; Saifullah Khan, 1979). This situation is discussed by Brah and Golding (1983):

' Economic exploitation was a key feature of the colonial system in which the economy of the colony was distorted and geared to the needs of the metropolitan economy, with the result that over a period of time the former became 'underdeveloped'. At the time of independence in 1947 the Indian sub-continent was, thus, left with a large labour force with few means to make that labour productive, and the large scale migration of South Asians to Britian in the 1950s needs to be understood in this context' (1983:1.2).

However, the specific trends of migration and the particular location of ethnic minority groups in the economic structure, may be better explained by processes occurring within the country of settlement. That is 'pull' factors. After the Second World War, along with other European countries, Britain was involved in a period of major economic expansion. Labour market trends saw a shift away from manual work towards white collar occupations. The availability of more desirable employment resulted in labour shortages, particularly for skilled manual workers (Castles and Kosack, 1981). Employers thus looked towards non-indigenous labour to mitigate this situation. Until 1952 those workers recruited to Britain were largely of European origin especially the Poles and the Irish, who were part of a broader shift of labour into north western Europe (Zubrzycki, 1956; Jackson, 1963). However, this supply was found to be inadequate to meet the great demand for extra workers and therefore the British Ministry of Labour launched an Overseas Volunteer Scheme in 1942. Under this scheme both skilled and unskilled men were recruited from the Caribbean and India to fill the vacancies in the metropolitan cities (Issacs, 1954). Sivanandan (1981) has further suggested that while,

'.... Germany, was reconstructing its industries and infrastructure with a judicious mix of capital and labour (importing labour as and when required), Britain, with easy access to cheap black labour and easy profit from racial exploitation, resorted to labour-intensive production. And it was in the nature of that colonial relationship that the immigrants should have come as settlers and not as labourers on contract' (1981:61).

It may be suggested that the changes in the patterns of migration, the occupational allocation both within and between industries and the geographic dispersal in Britain of black workers during the 1950s and the 1960s, are directly related to the then demand for labour in this country (Jones and Smith, 1970). Table 5.2 presents the net arrival of individuals from India, Pakistan and the West Indies, located within three specific time periods. It is evident that between 1955-60 Commonwealth immigrants were more likely to have come from the Caribbean with those from India and Pakistan arriving mainly during the early and mid 1960s. While these trends in migration were a response to market demands, they were also monitored and regulated by legislation (Peach, 1968).

During the 1950s there was a tendency for the local labour force to become upwardly mobile and Britain faced an acute shortage of manual workers. Black labour was thus recruited for the jobs which were abandoned by the indigenous population and which were no longer seen as desirable. Even during this period White employers were generally reluctant to employ black labour, but they were forced to do so out of economic necessity (Patterson, 1969; Allen et al, 1977). These early migrants from the Caribbean and South Asia were essentially concentrated in those areas of work which had previously employed European immigrants (Braham and Rhodes, 1982). For example British Rail and London Transport had both recruited Irish labour and the

Net Arrivals from India, Pakistan and the
West Indies, 1955-67



Aston University

Illustration removed for copyright restrictions

T A B L E 5.2

(Source: Rose et al, 1969)

National Health Service had employed European Volunteer Workers immediately after the war. Both London Transport and the National Health Service later made direct arrangements with the Barbados Government in the the 1950s for the supply of labour. On the other hand, early South Asian migrants were mainly concentrated in the iron foundries in the West Midlands and the wool and textile mills in northern British towns (Allen et al, 1977; Duffield, 1982). These factories had also previously employed considerable numbers of European Voluntary Workers and Poles. For the South Asians their presence in these areas may be a result of traditional industrial ties, along with the simultaneous problems of language difficulties and trade union barriers to other workplaces (Patterson, 1969; Duffield, 1982).

While these migrants may be seen as replacement labour, economic expansion in the form of greater capital investment also often relied on non-indigenous workers. In a study focusing on the wool textile industry in Yorkshire, Cohen and Jenner (1968) found that the most effective use of the expensive machinery introduced in the post war period, made some form of shift work necessary. They commented that this was facilitated largely by Pakistani mens' willingness to work the night shifts which white workers were reluctant to accept. Similar findings emerge from the study conducted by Allen et al (1977) during 1966-1969 on the Bradford labour market. They found that not only were the migrant communities more dependent on the textile industry than the indigenous population for employment, but that within that industry they were mostly concentrated within the night shifts.

South Asian workers thus have faced both industrial and occupational allocation.

Between 1955 and 1960 migration to Britain continued, with Caribbeans greatly outnumbering those arriving from India and Pakistan. However, this trend changed dramatically during the eighteen month period between January 1961 and June 1962 (See Table 5.2). The impending fear of immigration controls resulted in the inflow of large numbers of South Asian workers, along with those from the Caribbean. For the latter group this included the arrival to the United Kingdom of many dependent women and children (Patterson, 1969).

In July 1962 the Commonwealth Immigrants Act was passed whereby migrants required an employment voucher prior to their arrival to Britain. These vouchers were issued by the Ministry of Labour who could thus regulate the skill levels of the incoming population, on the basis of labour market demands. Three categories of vouchers were available. 'Category 'A' was for applications by employers who had a specific job (skilled or unskilled), to offer a particular immigrant; Category 'B' was for those without a specific job to come to but with certain special qualifications; and Category 'C' was for all others.' (Patterson, 1969:142). Priorities were generally given to categories 'A' and 'B' while category 'C', which had mainly attracted unskilled workers, was finally discontinued in 1965. About the same time the required qualifications for category 'B' were revised and limited to doctors, nurses, dentists, qualified teachers and science graduates with work experience.

Rose et al (1969) have argued that the introduction of immigration controls in 1962 and the refinements which followed affected the pattern of migration from the Commonwealth in three decisive ways. Firstly, the emphasis had shifted towards skilled and professional workers as opposed to unskilled labour. This may be partly responsible for the second effect, which was that those from India and Pakistan greatly outnumbered migrants from the Caribbean (See Table 5.2). Thirdly, the shift in emphasis, especially in the late 1960s, was from single male migrants to dependent wives and children. Between 1962 and 1967 Indians and Pakistanis were issued with 11,450 'A' vouchers, 31,050 'B' vouchers and 30,440 'C' vouchers (72,940 in total), thus assuring a combination of unskilled, skilled and professional workers. This was in contrast to a total of only 14,590 vouchers provided to those of 'West Indian' origin (Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1962: Statistics).

Focusing on the West Midlands and London, Rose et al (1969) concluded that the employment patterns of immigrant groups varied considerably from the indigenous population, and were generally less favourable. Similar conclusions were reached by Patterson (1969) in her review of literature examining the occupational distribution of migrant workers. Daniel (1968) drew attention to the under employment of qualified migrant workers. In this sample, 164 individuals had been engaged in non manual labour prior to migration, 90% of whom were employed in manual occupations in Britain (1968:62 Table 7). It is clear that economic benefits were accrued by Britain from the allocation of

Commonwealth workers to the lower levels of the labour market. Castles and Kosack (1981) have argued, however, that the concentration of immigrant workers in unskilled and semi-skilled employment with poor working conditions and low pay, had 'a profound impact on the class consciousness of the indigenous workers concerned' (1981:49). The latter were now able to see themselves as upwardly mobile with a new group of workers engaged in the most undesirable and inferior jobs. Castles and Kosack also suggested that the white working class viewed themselves as superior to the immigrant labour and mistakenly believed they had a different relationship with the means of production. These beliefs were reinforced by the disadvantaged legal, political and social positions of the immigrant communities. Divisions within the working class were said to exist, based on the aspiration for, and the ostensible achievement of, advancement by merit in a hierarchical economic structure (Castles and Kosack, 1981).

Because of the prevalence of the meritocratic ideology social analysts tended to view the disadvantaged position of immigrants and essentially black communities in Britain as ephemeral. It was widely assumed that as the minority workers assimilated within British society by gaining the necessary skills and experience and as the indigenous population adjusted to the presence of minority groups, any differential opportunities in the labour market would disappear (Patterson, 1969). In a comparative analysis of the occupational distributions in 1961 and 1966 of immigrant workers in London, Rose et al (1969) found no indications to suggest that their patterns of employment were

moving towards those of the indigenous population. The authors concluded:

'if this pattern continues into the 1970s, then the assessment that the situation is still fluid and has not hardened into a rigid class-colour or caste-colour structure may well be over-optimistic. The basic problem should not, however, be seen in those sectors of employment that have over concentrations of coloured immigrants, but in those that have few' (1969:181).

Over the last thirty years, various institutions engaged in social analysis have assessed the employment prospects of black workers in the British labour market. These include surveys of central government such as the Census, General Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey. Additional information is also available from the comprehensive research conducted by the Policy Studies Institute. An excellent review of relevant data is provided by Eggleston and his colleagues (1986) which indicates that the occupational position of black workers cannot be seen to have improved significantly. The most recent data available in this area is the 1985 Labour Force Survey which noted the differential distribution of ethnic minority and white workers by the industry in which they were employed. One quarter of the male ethnic minority workers were engaged in distribution, hotels, catering and repairs, which accounted for only 16% of the white male workforce. Further, white women were more likely than women of ethnic minority origin to be involved in banking or other financial services and less likely to be involved in health services or 'other manufacturing'. It is also clear that within

these industries, ethnic minorities were still largely concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs and are correspondingly absent from white collar occupations (Census of Population, 1971; Labour Force Survey, 1981; Brown, 1984). In a study investigating the employment practices of a sample of firms in the West Midlands, Brooks (1975) found that black workers were still only recruited when no suitable white labour was available. A survey carried out by the Political and Economic Planning group demonstrated that black people were more likely to be employed on shift work and especially on night shifts. Of the various minority groups, South Asian men were the most likely to be employed on permanent night shifts (Smith, 1977).

The disadvantaged position of black employees within the labour market is ultimately shown in the differential earnings of black and white workers at the same occupational level. Drawing upon the data collected by the General Household Survey between 1975 and 1978, Field et al (1981) have demonstrated that men born in the New Commonwealth and Pakistan, were obtaining a lower weekly income than their white counterparts for non-manual and skilled manual occupations. Similar findings were also indicated by the Policy Studies Institute project and were reported by Brown in 1984. Here it was noted that the median weekly earnings for white men were about £18 higher than for Asian men. While this may partly be a result of their different job levels, a pattern of unequal earnings by ethnicity, was also evident within the different socio economic groups.

5.4.2 South Asian Youth in the Labour Market

It is evident from the literature presented in the previous section, that the passage of time has not significantly improved the labour market positions of black immigrants. However, it was generally believed that their children, who will have had all or most of their education in Britain would be assimilated into the economic and social fabric of the country. Nevertheless, while the focus of research over the past 20 years has shifted away from 'immigrants' to the plight of the second generation or 'black youth', similar patterns of disadvantage may be identified (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979; Brooks, 1983). In reviewing existing literature on South Asian students transition from school to work or unemployment, Taylor and Hegarty (1985) conclude:

'.... they had more difficulty and took longer in getting work; they were more likely to be unemployed; the jobs they got were at a lower level; they earned less; and they had fewer opportunities for further training and promotion at work Moreover, there is some evidence to suggest that the disadvantages of Asians have increased disproportionately in recent years as the employment situation for all school leavers has become more difficult' (1985:345).

Several studies have suggested that young South Asians have significantly higher occupational aspirations than their White British counterparts (Fowler, Littlewood and Madigan, 1977; Gupta, 1977; Verma, 1981). The thesis of 'unrealistic aspirations' has often been applied to South Asian students especially by Careers Advisors and was given some credence by the work conducted by Beetham in 1967. However, in a recent study

which included a review of literature on the employment aspirations of young people, Eggleston et al (1986) have argued that the ambitions of South Asians were no higher than those of white youth who were committed and willing to make the necessary investment in time to obtain the required qualifications. The authors have strengthened this argument by noting:

' The difference in aspirations seems to appear from the location of these minorities in schools and areas where white young people are not similarly determined, with the result that a greater proportion of Asians both stay on at school and college and have aspirations concomitant with this course of action' (1986:61).

In an overview of the position of young blacks and Asians in the labour market, Brooks (1983) indicated that ethnic minority school leavers had to make more applications over a longer period of time before they secured work (Brooks and Singh, 1975; C.R.E., 1978). It was also suggested that with poor access to 'informal networks', minority youngsters were more dependent than their White British contemporaries on statutory bodies such as the Careers Service (Dex, 1978). Brooks (1983) has also identified a wider gap between the aspirations and job attainments of South Asian school leavers than that for the indigenous whites (Brooks and Singh, 1975; Lee and Wrench, 1981).

Economic inequality between young people of different racial groups is most clearly evident in their rates of unemployment. For example, an analysis of British unemployment statistics between 1980-1981 for those aged 16-24, showed that the rates of increase in unemployment were higher for Indian and Pakistani men

and Bangladeshi women, than for any other ethnic group (Runnymede Trust, 1981). The report also demonstrated that while there was a general increase in youth unemployment and a correspondingly greater increase for young blacks, British born blacks were the most susceptible to the risk of unemployment. More recently the 1985 Labour Force Survey has shown that nearly half of the economically active young people (aged 16-24) of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin were unemployed, compared to a third of the 'West Indians' and one sixth of the White British. The unemployment trends of young South Asians indicated by national statistics have also been supported by small scale research conducted in specific localities (Fowler, Littlewood and Madigan, 1977; Campbell and Jones, 1982). Additionally, both Brooks (1983) and Eggleston et al (1986) have cautioned that references to South Asian youth unemployment may be seen as 'underestimates', due to their propensity to continue with full time education which delays their entry into the labour market.

5.5 Race, Education and Employment

While the nature of initial labour shortages in the United Kingdom may partially account for the poor employment positions of early migrants, it cannot account for the disadvantages they and their offsprings have continued to face. In a society which at that time was firmly committed to the meritocratic ideal of upward social mobility, it was widely believed that as young blacks born

and educated in this country attained relevant skills and qualifications their inferior standing in the labour market would be ameliorated (Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, 1969). A similar theme is also evident in the Rampton Report (1981) which examined the education of 'West Indian' pupils in British schools. This Committee suggested that the employability of a school leaver,

'is determined largely by the academic qualifications which he or she has obtained at school and since West Indians are underachieving at school, they will clearly be at a disadvantage in the jobs market ' (1981:52).

However, in the light of contrary evidence, Braham and Rhodes (1982) have suggested that the differential treatment of ethnic minorities in the education system, which has resulted in their lower levels of attainment, may help to maintain inequality. This is because entry to several occupational groupings can be seen to be limited by the 'objective' requirements of minimal qualifications. While this may be a valid argument, the main theme of this chapter needs to be emphasised: that although credentials may enable one to compete within a specific labour market, selection and occupational allocation are largely based on external factors (Ashton and Maguire, 1980; Jenkins, 1986). This argument can be further illustrated by an assessment of the labour market prospects in Britain of academically qualified members of ethnic minority communities.

5.5.1 The Disadvantaged Position of Black Graduates

The lack of research into the participation of ethnic minorities in higher education has already been indicated in the previous chapter. There is also limited data concerning the position in the labour market of those minority individuals who have attained higher academic qualifications. Methodological differences between the few existing studies also make comparative analysis difficult. Often it may not be clear whether the credentials were obtained in the United Kingdom or abroad (Brown, 1982; Labour Force Survey, 1985); and the differential prospects of South Asians and Caribbeans may not always be acknowledged (Ballard and Holden, 1975). However, despite these discrepancies, general trends in existing literature indicate the relatively disadvantaged position of black graduates in the British labour market.

One of the earliest studies examining the patterns in employment of early migrants from India, Pakistan and the Caribbean was conducted between 1966-69 by Allen, Bentley and Bonnat (1977). A major area of interest in their work was the changes in the economic positions of incoming black graduates. Allen et al suggested that the impetus for this focus arose from concerns about race relations expressed in the 1960s. It was argued that the frustrations of highly qualified but disadvantaged black people may be a potential source of civil unrest (Daniel, 1968). The findings presented by Allen et al (1977), however, did not confirm these fears.

Their sample consisted of 60 Indian and Pakistani graduates, all of whom had attained at least one first degree, though several had two or more first degrees, higher degrees and/or vocational qualifications. While most of these were gained abroad, some credentials were also obtained from Britain; the country of attainment did not significantly influence employment prospects. The authors noted that all the graduates in their sample had been occupationally displaced in migration mostly from non-manual to manual work. It was also suggested that although the participants had searched for employment which was commensurate with their qualifications, they had largely been unsuccessful. Employers often gave no reasons for refusals and their practices were perceived as racially discriminatory by the South Asians concerned. In conclusion Allen et al noted, '....contrary to all expectations, the level of discrimination against (South Asian) graduates is high, and it is experienced in an acute form' (1977:296). Almost as an aside the authors have suggested that in the mid 1960s South Asian graduates were recruited by certain local authority departments for key posts where they may be 'able to "deal" with other immigrants within the general population' (1977:275). With specific reference to the employment of those graduates who participated in the present study, the data presented in Chapter 10 indicate that twenty years later South Asians graduating from British universities may still continue to be channelled into such marginal positions.

To date, four studies have examined the employment prospects of home students of ethnic minority origin, graduating from higher

education institutions in Britain. The first of these was conducted by Ballard and Holden (1975). They obtained their sample of home students born in Asia, Africa and the 'West Indies', who were in their final year in 1973-4 at two universities and a polytechnic in north west England. Due to the special post graduation recruitment of medical, dental and law graduates, the students following these subjects were excluded from the survey. The total sample contacted thus consisted of 60 'coloured' students, of whom 36 were of South Asian origin. For the purposes of comparative analysis an attempt was made to construct a white sample where two undergraduates were matched with each black student identified, by gender and subject studied.

The total respondents to this survey included 95 white and 42 'coloured' students: nearly three quarters of the latter were of South Asian origin. However, not all of these students were seeking employment; 19% of the white and 24% of the black students were aiming for further higher qualifications. Ballard and Holden (1975) commented that for the black group this was often in anticipation of difficulties in the labour market which resulted in their wish to become better qualified. Additionally, details were only available for 54 white and 22 black participants remaining in the survey who were looking for work. The procedures involved in obtaining graduate level employment are rather complex and have been divided by the researchers into direct and "milk round" applications. The decisions affecting black and white graduates at each stage of the job attainment process are presented in Table 5.3.

Applications and rejections of coloured and white students at
different stages of the job application process



Aston University

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T A B L E 5.3

(Source: Ballard and Holden, 1975)

By focusing initially on direct applications, it may be calculated from Table 5.3 that, on average, the white students had made 3.9 applications per person compared to 5 each for the black participants. Ballard and Holden (1975) have suggested that the tendency amongst ethnic minorities to make more applications was largely a reaction of the greater difficulty they faced in securing employment. It is also clear from Table 5.3 that applications made by black candidates were significantly more likely to be rejected outright.

Turning now to a more structured graduate recruitment convention, Ballard and Holden found that on average 38 white candidates had made 22 milk round applications each compared to a mean of 18 applications per black graduate. Here also significant differences were found in the mean rejection rates for black and white applicants, with the former being at a much higher level (See Table 5.3). The final column in this table also shows that 42% (144) of the total applications made by whites had reached the final interview stage compared to only 20% (41) of those made by minority students. The interpretation of this information is less straightforward than might be supposed, as candidates might have left the competition at various stages as they secured employment. It should be noted, however, that according to the authors even those who reached the 'last hurdle', found they were significantly more likely to be rejected than their white counterparts.

In terms of final attainment in employment it was found that 45 white applicants had received a total of 97 offers while 11 minority candidates were presented with a total of 14 jobs. Thus compared to the black sample a greater proportion of the white students had received offers of employment, and many were also able to choose between posts made available to them. This was despite the fact that the minority candidates had made more applications per person. Unfortunately, a major weakness in the data presented by Ballard and Holden is their failure to monitor any differences in the types of jobs applied for and those eventually attained by members of each racial group. Nonetheless, having ensured that there were no significant disparities between the two groups in terms of gender, degree level and social class and drawing directly from the data gathered, the authors state, 'we have no alternative but to conclude that it is the colour of the black students in our sample which lies at the root of their difficulties in gaining employment' (1975:333). Ballard and Holden go on to suggest that, in general, employers only consider black candidates for employment when the pool of suitably qualified white candidates has proved ineffective. If this is the case, then the original role ascribed to immigrants as replacement labour can also be seen to continue in the case of their British educated offsprings. In informal discussions with careers officers, it was suggested to the authors that ethnic minority graduates could increase their 'employability' by presenting themselves as 'indistinguishable' from their white contemporaries. This strategy, however, is criticised by Ballard and Holden who

claim that black graduates cannot challenge the disadvantages they face by denying their existence.

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (1978) undertook a major investigation of the application of race relations policy in the Civil Service. The aim was to assess whether equality of opportunities in employment was available for the various 'racial groups'. Several case studies were conducted of the actual recruitment procedures for specific positions in the Civil Service Commission. The processes used in the recruitment of Examiners in the Insolvency Service was taken as representative of general practice. Here it was noted that 292 applications were received for the posts advertised in December 1975. Of these 42% (123) were identified as belonging to minority groups, more than half of whom were of South Asian origin. Eligibility for these positions was said to be based on satisfying nationality rules and the attainment of minimum professional qualifications. Pre-selection was based on the 'best qualifications and experience', with selections taking place after interview.

A summary of the December 1975 intake demonstrated that of the total eligible White British sample who had not withdrawn at any stage in the competition, 19% (20 candidates) were offered a post, compared to 5% (4 candidates) of the similarly placed ethnic minority group. Additional information about the participants makes it apparent that selection could not have been based solely on the criteria stated earlier. It was found that of the eligible applicants 87% of the ethnic minority sample compared to 68% of the White British had received some form of higher education.

Nearly two thirds of the former group had obtained their qualifications in this country. Further 34% of the eligible ethnic minority candidates held a degree and 14% had been previously employed by the Civil Service, the comparative figures for the White sample was 15% and 6% respectively. The report found ethnic minority candidates to be disadvantaged both at the pre-selection and interview stages. It was concluded that the lack of explicit criteria for selection, which allowed for discrepancies in the decision making process might be responsible for the unfavourable position of ethnic minority applicants.

The third study which examined the prospects in employment of home students of ethnic minority origin graduating from higher education institutions in Britain, was conducted by the Association of Graduates Careers Advisory Service (AGCAS). They produced a report in 1981 entitled the 'Coloured Graduates Survey', which focused on 35 students who graduated in the summer of 1979. The sample consisted of 17 pairs of 'coloured' and 'white' students who were matched by age, gender, socioeconomic grouping and the degree level anticipated. Additionally an extra 'coloured' individual was also included in the data analysis. It was noted that the majority of the 'coloured' were of South Asian origin with 83% (15 respondents) having had all or most of their secondary education in the United Kingdom. All participants were asked to keep a log of details relating to their applications from 'November-December' 1978, until they graduated in 'May-June' 1979.

From the data collected, several significant findings were noted by the AGCAS. To begin with, they concluded that compared

to the 'white' group, the 'coloureds' had started searching for work earlier. In terms of applications made and job offers received, they had to make '25% more effort in order to obtain the same results' (1981:2). Further, where job applications were made using the Careers Service, the 'coloureds' were more likely to receive first and equally likely as their 'white' counterparts to receive second interviews. However, the 'coloureds' were less likely to be made an offer of employment. In the case of direct applications, for example in response to a newspaper advertisement, 'the rejection rate for the coloured group (61%) was twice as high as for the white group (29%)' (1981:13). It was also found that black respondents were less likely to be called for interviews or offered positions of employment. Commenting on the actual interview situation the AGCAS reported that a greater proportion of the 'coloured' graduates (22%) compared to the 'white' group (6%) had expressed dissatisfaction with their interviews and/or interviewers. Information provided by respondents suggested that either recruiters had placed undue emphasis on their ethnicity, or, it seemed, interviewers were not interested in them as candidates.

The final study to be reviewed in this section is still awaiting publication. However, a press release from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) (May 1986), gave the interim findings on an investigation of recruitment into Chartered Accountancy training contracts. It was found that overall, in large and medium firms, the success rate of white applicants was nearly three times as high as that of black applicants. While for

those reaching the interview stage, the white success rate was nearly twice that for black applicants. These findings are similar to those reported in the AGCAS survey. However, the CRE study is unique in that whereas most other research has focused on the perceptions of those directly concerned, the black graduates, the CRE data were obtained by the graduate employers in one profession, who monitored their own recruitment procedures. It is significant that similar conclusions were reached in the assessment of black graduates' search for employment, whether viewed from their own perspective or those reported by their potential employers.

The disadvantaged position in employment of ethnic minorities with higher academic qualifications is also illustrated by the data presented by two national surveys. The first of these was the Policy Studies Institute (P.S.I.) survey conducted in 1982. Here Brown (1984) noted that 84% of the total Asian male employees, with qualifications of 'A' levels and above were employed as non-manual workers. For those with 'O' levels the gap between ethnic groups and whites is even greater, with 61% of the white men and only 29% of the Asian men being engaged in non-manual employment.

The most recent information on the occupational distribution of persons of working age by highest qualification and ethnicity, has been provided by the Labour Force Survey conducted in 1985. The data gathered indicate that for those in managerial and professional positions, 39.3% of the white males compared to 50.3% of ethnic minority men had obtained higher qualifications.

Similar trends were also found for those engaged in clerical (7.6% v 20.6% respectively), and other non-manual employment (6.9% v 11.3% respectively). In both, ethnic minority males tended to be more highly qualified than their white counterparts.

Another way of assessing disadvantage within the labour market is to examine the risk of unemployment. The 1984 Labour Force Survey demonstrated that the unemployment rate for white men with higher qualifications (first or higher degree and other degree level qualifications) was 3% compared to 8% for non-whites. Similarly for women with higher qualifications, the unemployment rate for white females was found to be 6% compared to 18% for non-white females. The report concluded 'that for different levels of qualifications and for both sexes non-white people are more likely to be unemployed than white people' (Labour Force Survey, 1984:24). Importantly, however, while the rate for white men with the highest educational qualifications seems to have remained stable, the risk of unemployment for similarly qualified black men can be seen to have increased between 1984 and 1985. The 1985 Labour Force Survey indicated the unemployment rate for white men with higher qualifications to be 3% and that for ethnic minority men to be 10%, and for those of Pakistani and Bengali origin to be 13%.

The general trends indicated by these surveys are also evident for those with lower level qualifications. In a study examining the transition from school, Campbell and Jones (1982) found that although Asian school leavers in Bradford were better qualified, only 28% compared to 66% of total Bradford leavers were

in 'real paid employment' a year after leaving school. Similarly in their investigations of disadvantages in youth labour markets, Roberts, Duggan and Noble (1983) also found that, while the black participants in their survey had more C.S.E.s and 'O' level credentials, they were still at a greater risk of unemployment than their white peers. These findings were more recently replicated in the Eggleston Report (1986) which noted that 'at each level of examination results achieved, black respondents were far more likely to be unemployed than white' (1986:400).

5.5.2 The Facts Of Discrimination

The literature reviewed in the previous section strongly indicates the continued inequalities experienced in the labour market by ethnic minorities with higher educational qualifications. This evidence throws even further doubt on the theory discussed critically earlier in this chapter, where developments within the education system were expected to create a 'tightening bond' between credentials and employment. Additionally, in their contribution to the debate on race, education and employment, Troyna and Jenkins (1983) have suggested that qualifications may hold differential rewards for black and white people. Occupational allocation thus cannot be seen as dependent on any single criterion such as academic qualifications, but rather as influenced by multi-faceted decision making processes. Jenkins points out:

' Class, ethnicity, gender and age, mediated, inter alia, by the educational system and the family, all intervene in the social construction of an inverted pyramid of hierarchically stratified occupational choice, those at the top having considerably more scope to achieve their desired ends' (1986:11).

While the other factors are of profound importance, the main focus of this thesis are the effects of ethnicity or perceived racial grouping, which form a backcloth against which the processes of education and employment may be located. Therefore the disadvantaged position of black graduates in the economy cannot be isolated from the experiences of black school leavers in the youth labour market. This situation, however, also needs to be firmly rooted in the historical perspective and the employment prospects of the early migrants to Britain.

In trying to rationalise the subordinate position of black workers, Jenkins (1986) has perceived the problem from the twin aspects of the supply and demand for labour. For the first category it is suggested, that either blacks may be actually choosing to work in the industries and positions in which they find themselves, or that this may simply be a result of legitimate discrimination based on their lack of skills and qualifications. On the demand side of the equation it is argued that racially discriminatory practices may be operated in the recruitment procedure, sometimes due to possible opposition from white workers. Jenkins has further commented that the considerations of those who require labour will predominantly influence the structure of the labour market, especially in times of high unemployment: for while they may recruit and select, a potential

employee may only offer his/her services. However, each of the issues raised by Jenkins can be dealt with separately.

With reference to minority workers' occupational choices, it will be recalled from the earlier review of migratory patterns that individuals from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan, were essentially recruited to fill manual and other lower level vacancies in the metropolitan cities. For many, migration involved underemployment and a downgrading from their previous occupations. In an investigation of the work histories of South Asians in the Midlands, Ratcliffe (1980) has suggested that their current positions in the labour market may be explained as a result of limited alternatives rather than the exercise of independent choice. Similar trends are also evident within the youth labour market. In the literature reviewed earlier it was argued that the gap between occupational aspiration and achievement was greater for young black workers than their white contemporaries (C.R.E., 1978). In sum it appears that white employees may be more able to exercise their preferences in the labour market than black job seekers.

This leaves scope for the discussion of discrimination on the part of employers as an explanation for the disadvantaged position of the black workforce. Jenkins (1986) has argued that discrimination must be seen as a necessary feature of the labour market where selections normally have to be made from a pool of potential employees. He also suggests that the meritocratic ideals of social mobility have legitimated the distinction between 'fair' and 'unfair' discrimination. Choices made on 'fair'

criteria have invariably been based on the acquisition of academic credentials which suggest that their poor standing in the economy may be a result of the lack of qualified individuals within the black communities. However, as the previous section on the disadvantaged position of black graduates indicates, an unequivocal or direct relationship cannot be assumed between credentials and occupational allocation. Several studies have noted that qualifications held by black job seekers may have comparatively less 'exchange value' due to the connotations associated with their ethnicity (Dex, 1982; Lee and Wrench, 1981). Jenkins has therefore concluded, 'There is thus no likelihood that parity in the market for educational qualifications or training will bring equality of opportunity in the labour market' (1986:13).

The relative powerlessness of black workers strongly points towards factors in the recruitment procedure, as constraining their movement into desirable employment positions. However, the criteria by which recruitment and selection may operate cannot be seen to exist in a social or economic vacuum. Thus it has been argued that discrimination on racial grounds may not be a result of individual employer preferences, but rather an outcome of historically embedded power relations built into the structure of the labour market. Bosanquet and Doeringer (1973) have presented the 'dual-labour market' model, which asserts the segregation of the market into primary and secondary sectors. The first category consists of organisations with developed internal labour markets, characterised by good working conditions, high wages and job

security. The secondary sector refers to smaller establishments which may be labour intensive and involved in highly competitive markets. These firms provide low pay and few prospects for career advancement and tend to have a high labour turnover. Organisations in the secondary sector of the labour market are said to recruit externally and to rely on 'marginal labour' such as women and ethnic minorities. Blackburn and Mann (1981), amongst others (e.g. Ashton, 1986), have argued against the dualist model, stating that there is little empirical evidence to show the British labour market to be segregated so distinctly. Instead Blackburn and Mann have suggested it would be more appropriate to view the concentration of ethnic minority workers in less desirable jobs, in the establishments located both within the primary and secondary sectors of the labour market.

Brooks (1983) has viewed discrimination in employment to be essentially concerned with 'organisational processes'. With reference to the position of black workers these include the mechanisms of recruitment, selection and promotion. All three areas may be permeated by practices which may be directly or indirectly racially discriminatory. Drawing upon the Race Relations Act of 1976, the Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice, defines these practices as follows.

' Direct discrimination consists of treating a person, on racial grounds, less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances' (1983:5).

' Indirect discrimination consists of applying in any circumstances covered by the Act a requirement or condition which, although applied equally to persons of all racial groups, is such that a considerably

smaller proportion of a particular racial group can comply with it and it cannot be shown to be justifiable on other than racial grounds' (1983:6).

Both direct and indirect discrimination occurring in recruitment from the external market and in upgrading within the internal labour market can seriously affect the rates of employment and social mobility of ethnic minority workers (Lee and Wrench, 1981; Brown, 1984). However, the process of selection, ultimately based on informal criteria, may be the crucial area where discriminatory practices may be both widely applied and be the most effective (Braham and Rhodes, 1982). This is especially significant for the graduate labour market where employers have to select from a pool of candidates who are similarly qualified and lacking in experience. Additionally it can be noted that many large organisations who have traditionally recruited graduates have recently taken to monitoring the ethnicity of their applicants. While an internal policy of equal opportunity may require a specific quota of these candidates to be interviewed, judgemental biases may be reserved for the selection procedure.

The decision making processes may be comparable in the selection of both manual and white collar employees (Blackburn and Mann, 1979; Silverman and Jones, 1976; Ashton and Maguire, 1980). From their study of manual workers in Peterborough, Blackburn and Mann (1976) commented:

' Though employers do not operate very rigorous selection procedures, they do make an attempt to be selective.....Instead of using direct measures of ability, they use what the economic literature terms "screening devices", that is, they assume that some readily observable characteristics can serve as an

indicator of a certain degree of ability, and select according to that' (1979:13).

The most commonly used factors are those of gender, ethnicity, age and work history. It has also been argued that for high status occupations where competition may be limited to those with relevant qualifications, selection from within this pool may nonetheless, be based on similar criteria (Offe, 1976).

In an ethnographic study investigating the effects of racism on recruitment Jenkins (1986) focused on managers' perceptions of selection processes, involving manual and non-manual workers. His study was conducted in the early 1980s and focused on 40 organisations involved in manufacturing, large scale retailing and public service industries, all of which were based in the West Midlands. The study dissected the selection procedure for choosing employees' into twin categories of 'suitability' and 'acceptability' : the former refers to those criteria which are 'functionally specific' and directly related to the skill content of the occupation, while the latter include 'functionally non-specific' characteristics located within the organisational structure. Jenkins has argued that factors indicating suitability such as qualifications and training may be explicit and thus easier to quantify, while elements of acceptability such as personality, 'ability to fit in' and 'gut feeling' on the part of employers', should be seen as implicit criteria, and therefore difficult to assess. The study demonstrated that, in their reference to black employees, managers did not comment on their competence to do the job but on their cultural disposition, often

based on stereotypical and contradictory evaluations. Racist attitudes were also justified on the basis of such cultural differences where minority workers rather than employer preferences were seen as the problem. Jenkins has concluded that 'the notion of acceptability, particularly when it interacts with ethnic stereotypes, is likely to be systematically detrimental to black workers' (1986:115). The framework of recruitment practices developed by Jenkins, will be adopted for an analysis of the experiences, of South Asian and White British graduates participating in this study, in their search for employment.

Other evidence exists which illustrates clearly the theoretical perspective presented by Jenkins and suggests that racially discriminatory practices may be responsible for the subordinate position of black employees in the labour market. An important study examining discrimination against applicants for white-collar jobs using a unique method in social research, was conducted by the institute of Political and Economic Planning (PEP) during 1973-74 (Smith, 1977). Here a tightly controlled 'experiment' was designed where two applications were made by similarly qualified and experienced fictitious candidates of White British and ethnic minority origin to each of a sample of advertised jobs. Discrimination was seen to be the case when the white candidate was invited for interview and the black applicant rejected outright.

Subsequent results of these correspondence tests showed that in 30% of the cases South Asian and Afro Caribbean applications had been treated unfairly. It is also likely that such

discrimination was primarily on the basis of colour as only 10% of the applications using Italian names were rejected in preference of the White British candidate. Smith (1977) has cautioned that these rates of discrimination are probably underestimates as the methodology used was sensitive only to the differential treatment in the initial stages of selection. With specific reference to the present research, the most important finding of the PEP survey was that levels of discrimination also varied by the type of white-collar jobs for which the application was made. The data demonstrated that discrimination against minorities was highest for junior clerical jobs, management trainees and accountants. In a later article Smith noted that it was 'highly significant that management trainee applicants face a high level of discrimination, because this is one of the main routes by which young people can set off towards really senior positions' (1981:180).

The findings of the PEP survey were later replicated by Hubbuck and Carter (1980), who focused on the prospects for black youths in the Nottingham labour market. Duplicating the correspondence test technique they found that in 50% of the cases, applications made on behalf of fictitious South Asians and Afro Caribbeans were discriminated against. They also found no significant difference in the responses meted out to the two racial groups, which suggested colour rather than ethnicity was the determining factor. The data gathered by Hubbuck and Carter also indicated that racial discrimination may be most pronounced in appointments for high status jobs with promotional prospects. The authors suggest that this may be due to employers' 'own

untested and therefore unwarranted beliefs about adverse reactions from existing staff or customers of the firm' (1980:70).

The findings reported by Smith (1977) and Hubbuck and Carter (1980) strongly suggest that while black school leavers with minimum qualifications may have greater difficulty than their white counterparts in securing employment, the discrepancies between the two groups may be even greater for those with higher academic qualifications. Earlier discussions on employers' demand for graduates indicated that they were primarily recruited for their management potential, even where they may be employed as specialists. Thus it is clear that black graduates would be competing for those positions in the labour market, which show the highest levels of discrimination. This may be illustrated by the findings of the National Training Survey which included a sample of black and white male workers (Stewart, 1982). The aim was to provide a comparative analysis of the positions in employment of black and white individuals equal in other 'occupation-determining characteristics'. Here it was noted that at all levels of education, the white sample had secured greater success than their black counterparts. Additionally Stewart stated, 'It would appear that there may be significant barriers to entry facing black workers in regard to those jobs for which higher education is the entry route for whites' (1982:13).

This assessment may be further supported by an analysis of the processes occurring within the graduate labour market. It was concluded from earlier discussions that many graduate employers' recruit non specialists where the content of the degree course is

not seen as relevant to their requirements. This use of credentials may be seen to align with Collins' (1971) view of education as 'status culture', where qualifications are used to select employees with desirable cultural attributes. Thus at the graduate labour market there should be a blurring of boundaries in Jenkins' (1986) distinction between the 'suitability' and 'acceptability' of an employee. Under these circumstances, however, as a group, black graduates may be viewed as an ambivalent social construction. For while they may have attained graduate status, their location within the imposed racial and ethnic hierarchy is not seen as desirable. Collins (1971) has also argued that the use of credentials to 'screen' for appropriate cultural traits is seen as particularly important for white collar occupations, as this is where 'employees were most visible to the public' (Reid, 1978:229). In this context the consequence of the irrefutable distinction by colour between black and white graduates may be acknowledged.

Employer dilemmas about black graduates who have survived the pre-selection procedure may be 'inadvertently' resolved during the final stages of recruitment. As a tool of assessment the interview will broadly reflect the ethnocentric biases of those conducting it. This may include comparing the candidates to a stereotyped image, often based on the interviewer's self-image, rather than assessing their ability for the job (Rand and Wexley, 1975). It has also been demonstrated that the interview may be used essentially to confirm initial judgements by restricting the exposure of contrary information (Snyder and White, 1981). The

outcome of these and other processes operating within the interview situation may result in the rejection of black applicants. The important point, however, is that this may be rationalised on non-racial grounds, despite the origins of the decision being firmly rooted in the racial, cultural and colour differences between black and white candidates.

The major trends evident in the literature reviewed in this chapter indicate that despite the attainment of higher academic qualifications, racism is still a major influence in the employment prospects of black people. Early diagnoses which expected the acquisition of British education and qualifications to ameliorate the disadvantaged position of minority workers assumed that occupational allocation was based on explicit and rational criteria. However Brah has commented:

' This somewhat naive prediction has not been fulfilled partly because it did not address the role of racism in the reproduction of inequality in Britain' (1984:8).

Racial discrimination in employment may thus be seen within a wider context of disadvantage by class and gender in a variety of social arenas. The incidence of racial disadvantage experienced by black graduates has important policy implications, particularly in the light of current debates on multi-cultural and anti-racist education with a view to improving the educational performance of ethnic minority pupils and their subsequent positions in the labour market. Jenkins and Troyna (1983) have succinctly argued

that developments within the education system alone, cannot eradicate wider inequalities affecting young blacks.

Thus it is necessary to ascertain precisely how members of ethnic minority communities come to be disadvantaged in the labour market. Here limitations of existing studies need to be acknowledged, for while they have demonstrated conclusively the subordinate position of black workers, they have largely failed to illuminate the complex ways in which this may be occurring. Such flaws may be accounted for by the methodological constraints of this type of research. Studies examining the prospects of young blacks have focused exclusively on the point of entry to employment (Roberts et al, 1983; Lee and Wrench, 1981). In contrast, surveys investigating the position of adult members of ethnic minority communities have only presented the final outcome of the processes of seeking employment; that is, their distribution by occupational level. However, there is a dearth of evidence featuring labour market processes, such as recruitment, selection and promotion, key areas by which ethnic minorities may be disadvantaged in employment. This research aims to throw some light on this issue.

CHAPTER 6

METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Objectives

The original objectives of the research were:

a) To obtain quantitative data on South Asian students at universities, along two sets of variables:

i) Gender, class, occupational and educational circumstances which may help to identify their social and economic positions in this country.

ii) Caste, religion, language and regional backgrounds (i.e. ethnicity), and parental occupation prior to migration - which would help to locate their positions in the country of origin (Brah, 1979).

The overall concern of the additional aims was to draw comparisons between the experiences and perceptions of South Asian and White British undergraduates.

b) To identify some of the characteristics of educationally successful students, and to note similarities and differences in the educational histories of the two groups.

c) To identify features which were perceived by the students to be the major barriers to their educational success and how these were overcome, or avoided.

d) To examine the routes followed to higher education - schools, sixth form colleges, further education colleges etc.

e) To note pre-university qualifications and establish whether South Asians had to remain in formal education for a longer period, than their White British peers, in order to obtain basic qualifications (Taylor, 1976; Rutter, 1982).

f) To obtain information on students perceptions of their higher education experience, and consider whether the South Asians felt they had become more anglicised (Tomlinson, 1982).

g) To assess both present and future aspirations of students and examine the extent to which the graduate degree was seen as a means of upward mobility.

h) Finally, to examine whether the acquisition of higher academic qualifications could bring about equality of opportunity in the employment sector for South Asian graduates.

6.2 Research Strategy

The main objectives stated in the previous section directly affected the way in which the enquiry was conducted. This required transforming an area of concern into a manageable research project developed within the constraints of time as well as financial and human resources.

Existing studies examining the position of South Asians both at school and work have largely used a single method of data collection where the findings may be susceptible to the disadvantages inherent in the technique utilised (Taylor and Hegarty, 1985). Additionally, Smith (1975) has argued that the various research methods may only be sensitive to particular types of information. Thus, relying on a single method of observation may only provide a partial view of the complexity of human behaviour. Taking this into account, the approach adopted here is one of 'methodological triangulation', where more than one technique of collecting data is used, normally including both quantitative and qualitative methods (Denzin, 1970). The major advantage in using several methods of collecting data is that it leads to greater confidence in the validity of the data obtained. If similar themes emerge from both the quantitative and qualitative information gathered, greater confidence may be placed on these findings, as they are less likely to be artefacts of the methods used.

This study also differs from others in this area by moving away from the traditional comparative analysis of achievement

levels and focusing instead on differential processes of attainment both in education and employment. This emphasis is sustained by exploring the perceptions of those directly concerned (i.e. South Asian and White British students), who, having had most of their schooling in the United Kingdom, were then undergraduates at British universities and subsequently continued with their education or entered the graduate labour market.

In order to attain the main objectives of this study, it was decided to focus on academically successful South Asian students: the reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, to have documented systematically and analysed the problems faced by South Asian students at school and the coping strategies they adopted to enable them to overcome these problems and enter higher education, would have required a longitudinal study. This was not viable in the context of the normal restrictions of time imposed on a thesis. Therefore, the study concentrated on those students who had already succeeded academically and their histories and educational experiences were elicited by adopting a retrospective approach. This enabled the researcher to identify some of the factors in their social and educational environments which may have facilitated their academic success. The second reason for focusing on South Asian undergraduates was to assess the value of qualifications for ethnic minorities in their search for work. This was done by examining processes in the graduate labour market which may be perceived by the South Asian participants to be racially discriminatory. It was decided that in order to assess the uniqueness of the experiences and perceptions of South Asians,

a comparative sample of White British undergraduates would also be required.

The research has been designed so as to permit 'new insights or alternative explanations to emerge', which may both accurately reflect and move some way towards explaining the experiences of South Asians in the education system and their position in the labour market (Taylor and Hegarty, 1985:534). The research strategies adopted for this project will be described and discussed in the next section.

6.3 Techniques of Data Collection

The information required to explore the research problems as stated was obtained by using a variety of methodological techniques. While acknowledging the constraints of finance and time, specific methods were selected on the basis of the type of information which was to be elicited from the participants.

The aim throughout the research process was to maximise both the reliability and validity of the data gathered (Cohen and Manion, 1981). Reliability essentially refers to the absence of errors embedded in the research procedure. Kitwood (1977) has suggested that a highly structured environment may result in greater reliability of data, but this may be achieved at the expense of reduced validity of responses. For validity refers to the accuracy and truthfulness of factual and attitudinal information provided by the respondents (Tuckman, 1972). Thus

close links may be seen to exist between the reliability and validity of the data collected, where the former may set limits on the latter. Throughout the present research great care was taken to attempt to increase the reliability and validity of the research findings. The way in which this was done in the present study will be indicated in the description of the dynamics of the research process.

The entire data collection procedure spanned 22 months from September 1984 to June 1986, and has been summarised and presented as a research agenda in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1

Research Agenda

Aug '84 :	Initial letters sent to University Registrars.
Oct '84 :	Reminders sent to University Registrars. Meeting with AGCAS. Letters sent to University Asian Societies.
Nov '84 :	Selecting the Survey Sample.
Jan '85 :	Sent out 590 postal questionnaires and SAEs to South Asian and White British undergraduates in their final year at 12 universities.
Mar '85 :	Reminder letters sent to undergraduates enclosing a spare questionnaire. A further letter and a stamped self addressed post card sent to those who were living outside London or the Midlands, and had not already agreed to be interviewed.

Mar/Apr
'85 : A group of 58 South Asian and White British undergraduates were identified for interview from a self-selected sample. They were sent letters thanking them for their cooperation and informing them that they would be contacted in the summer.

Apr '85 : A total of 312 completed questionnaires received.

Jun '85 : Interviewees were initially contacted by telephone, with the arrangements discussed being confirmed in writing. A diary report form to be completed prior to the interview was also enclosed with this letter.

Jun/Aug
'85 : A total of 49 interviews were conducted and diary report forms were collected. Those who were seeking work and had not secured employment at the time of the interview, were left with another diary report form and an SAE.

Sept '85: Letters sent to all interviewees thanking them for their cooperation and informing them that they would be contacted again.

Nov '85: Letters sent requesting the return of diary report forms with another one enclosed.

Jan '86: Letters sent requesting the return of diary report forms.

Mar '86: Postal Questionnaires and SAEs sent to 33 South Asian and White British graduate employees.

May/Jun
'86 : Two reminders sent requesting the return of the postal questionnaires.

Jun '86 A total of 26 employment questionnaires received.

The methodology used in this project can be viewed as operating at three distinct levels. Each stage had specific aims

and used a variety of techniques to gather information. Each level will be discussed separately.

6.3.1 Level 1

Identifying the population of South Asian undergraduates and drawing a comparative sample of White British students

The first task of this study was to identify the population of home (as opposed to overseas) students of South Asian origin who were following undergraduate courses at British higher education institutions. Prior knowledge of this group was negligible as there were not even any accurate estimates of their levels of participation in higher education. The absence of an existing list identifying those students with whom this thesis is primarily concerned might have necessitated screening the total population of undergraduate students. This would have been an enormous task which was unviable due to the limitations of time and resources.

Consequently, the focus of the research was narrowed considerably to make it a more manageable project. Initially it was decided to concentrate solely on universities, as opposed to polytechnics or colleges of higher education. It was felt that by choosing one type of establishment for scrutiny, some of the external variables such as differences between the various higher educational establishments might be controlled. Additionally,

universities were chosen for examination because they are seen to offer the highest qualifications available in the British education system and which are seen to be preferred both by employers and students, above those credentials provided by polytechnics and colleges of higher education (Gordon, 1983). The focus of the research was further crystallised by the decision to identify only those home South Asian undergraduates at U.K. universities who would be graduating in the summer of 1985. The majority of these students would have entered universities in the academic year 1982-3. This group was chosen as the focus of this study because the research plan included a follow up of a small sample of South Asian and White British graduates into employment. The timing of this project as described in the research agenda, made it convenient to assess the prospects of those searching for work in the summer of 1985.

However, the main aim at this first stage was to obtain quantitative data, documenting the total number of home South Asian students and their distributions between various departments at British universities. Here the first problem encountered was that while the main gatekeeping organisations such as UCCA and the individual universities themselves recorded the ethnicity of their overseas students, this was not done for home students of ethnic minority origin. There was no centrally maintained list of South Asian students, and statistical information on this population could only be constructed through the laborious process of contacting each university separately. Statistical data on the South Asian population were only accessible through a process of

screening the list of names of the entire undergraduate population, of all British universities, who would be graduating in 1985. This exercise would entail selecting all those with South Asian names thereby formulating a unique list of students.

While this may not be seen as a very reliable method of identifying a minority sample due to the lack of any accurately monitored information, it was the only practical option. A similar method was also used by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (1978) in their study of the application of Race Relations policy in the Civil Service. In their effort to classify those applicants of ethnic minority origin, the authors stated: 'Identification from name alone is virtually the only practical way of identifying possible members of minorities, in the absence of the sort of information given on application forms' (1979:9). However, this is only possible where the minority communities in question have first and second names which differ significantly from those of the majority population and which may be easily identified. While such an exercise might have difficulty in detecting members of Afro Caribbean communities in Britain, due to the unique characteristics of South Asian names, greater reliability may be assumed in their identification.

The initial intention was to obtain a list of undergraduates from each university and identify South Asian students by their names. Letters were sent in August 1984 to 51 out of the total of 55 university institutions in the U.K. Four establishments were not included in the study because they were not UGC funded and were either postgraduate colleges or designed essentially for

adult education. Contact was also made with each alternate college from an alphabetical list of all colleges affiliated to London University. Letters were sent to the Academic Registrars of each university institution included in the study requesting a list of the names and departments of all home students who were in the final year of their first degree course (See Appendix 2:a). The researcher also guaranteed discretion and confidentiality in the use of any information and stated that the final report would not identify individual students or university institutions. Although information on students' country of birth would have helped to identify South Asian students this was not requested as it was thought that Registrars might have been unwilling to provide such details.

In order to encourage cooperation from universities two strategies were adopted. Firstly, the letter was written on behalf of the researcher by a senior member of the Management Centre at Aston University, who emphasised the national focus of the proposed study. It was thought that university Registrars might attach greater significance to such a research project than if a direct approach were made by a postgraduate student to gather data for a thesis. Secondly, due to the political sensitivity of issues of 'race' it was decided not to mention this emphasis as one of the main aims of the study. However, it was acknowledged that the study intended to examine the prospects in employment of those graduating in 1985.

It was hoped that the manner in which the universities were approached would encourage high levels of cooperation. The

responses received, however, proved problematic and varied in their levels of willingness to become involved in the research project. These responses may be grouped into four categories. The first and smallest group consisted of 7 universities which were willing to provide all the relevant information. These often made contact by telephone to clarify aspects of the precise nature of the data requested. The second group was made up of 8 universities who informed the researcher of their policy of confidentiality on all details relating to their students, and therefore felt unable to divulge any such information. The response of the third set of institutions can also be seen as a result of the need to maintain confidentiality. For although 10 universities were willing to participate in the research and offered to distribute questionnaires to an internally selected sample, they refused to provide a list of students' names by course of study. The final group of responses from 5 university Registrars stated that they would consider providing the necessary information if approaches were made through the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), or if AGCAS sent a letter of formal support for the project. In sum 30 university institutions acknowledged receipt of the letter inviting them to participate in the study.

During October 1984 reminder letters were posted to Registrars of all universities who had not responded to the initial request. As the number of cooperating universities at this stage was very low (7 universities), it was decided that contact should be made with the AGCAS to attract their approval.

Thus a meeting was arranged for the 23rd of October 1984 with the Chairman of the Statistics Sub Committee of the AGCAS. This meeting was attended by the researcher and Dr Robin Ward who had made the initial contact with all universities. The resulting discussion was not very favourable and the Chairman of the Statistics Sub Committee expressed concern about the proliferation of such studies which could affect the validity of any data which may be gathered by the AGCAS.

While this lack of support seemed unfortunate at the time, it was soon discovered that a greater barrier to the successful progress of this study had already been established. It was found that in mid September 1984, and prior to the meeting, the Chairman of the Statistics Sub Committee of AGCAS had circulated a letter to all Heads of University Careers Services, suggesting that they should discourage their Registrars from participating in this study (See Appendix 2:b). This communication may have significantly reduced the level of cooperation which could be anticipated from individual universities. In the event, only seven universities provided lists of the names and departments of all home undergraduates who intended to graduate in 1985: from these, 216 South Asian students were identified. However, a range of institutions were represented in those who responded positively, including technological and 'red brick' universities and specialist colleges affiliated to the London university network. There was no reason to believe that the willingness of individual universities to participate, was influenced by issues of race, which was the major variable of interest in the study.

However, the small number of institutions willing to cooperate made it difficult to achieve one of the principal aims of the research, that of numerically identifying the participation of South Asian students at universities in the United Kingdom.

One effect of the compromises made necessary by the research process was a shift in emphasis of the main objectives of the study. Greater emphasis was now given to the aim of contributing to the development of an understanding of the processes by which students of South Asian origin might achieve in education and how they may be disadvantaged in the graduate labour market. However, as the number of South Asian students identified at this point was fairly small, it was felt desirable to try to increase the number of such students to be included in the study. Thus four additional methods of detecting these students were used. Although these strategies may be seen as less reliable than screening from a total population of undergraduate students at each university, such shortcomings had to be accepted in order to increase the size of the sample.

Firstly, as a result of the negative responses obtained from several Registrars, contact was made through individual Students Unions with various university Asian Cultural Societies. Letters were addressed to the the Presidents of these Societies explaining the main purposes of the research (See Appendix 2:c). They were asked to assist by providing a list of home students of South Asian origin, who were then in their final year of undergraduate study. This approach was not found to be very successful, as only two university Asian Societies volunteered any information.

Secondly, one university had formerly responded by stating they were unable to provide the information requested because of a policy of confidentiality. Fortunately, however, this institution published an annual list of students by the colleges to which they belonged. Thus access to this list was obtained for those who were in their final year in 1984/5 and the South Asian students were identified by screening the total undergraduate population.

The third alternative strategy adopted to maximise student participation in the survey was to accept the offer of one university to internally distribute letters to all undergraduates in their final year of study (See Appendix 2:d). This letter invited students to take part in the project and to express their interest by completing and returning the detachable part of the letter to the researcher. While many students were willing to participate in the study, this did not include a significant number of South Asians and was unlikely to gain a representative sample. The high costs of this method also prohibited its wider use. The final method used was perhaps the most unsystematic. As a local institution had refused to provide the necessary information, the researcher went to the university and examined the notice boards in each department. A list of students' names by year of study were often provided there and from these a list of South Asian undergraduates in their final year was compiled.

In sum, in addition to searching through lists provided by universities, various non-traditional and expedient methods were also used to identify the minority population. In the end, twelve university institutions either wittingly or unwittingly

participated in this study. From these, a total of 309 home South Asian undergraduates who were in their final year of study in 1984/5 were identified and invited to take part in the research. They were detected by screening from the lists of students available; or, for one university, from those who were willing to take part in the study; and, for two institutions, had been nominated by the Asian Societies in those universities. Identification by screening was done by isolating students with South Asian names: this task was more tedious than problematic as the researcher herself was of South Asian origin and was thus easily able to detect such names. However, the Asian communities in Britain may not be seen as homogenous and the limited ability of a Hindu Gujarati researcher to accurately identify the names of South Asian Muslim students must be acknowledged. Thus the compiled list of South Asian students was finally checked by an associate of the researcher, who was of Pakistani origin.

Having formulated a list of South Asian undergraduates it was important to assess how representative they were of the total South Asian undergraduates at British universities. This is vital if the findings of the study are to be generalised and used to make estimates of the characteristics of a wider population. Fox (1969) has suggested that this can only be done if the sample examined is representative in terms of those variables that are known to be related to the phenomena under study. There is, however, no available information regarding the characteristics of academically successful minority students. This makes it impossible to measure biases in the present sample as there are no

population data of these characteristics which may be used as the basis for comparison. In their review of literature on the education of South Asian pupils, Taylor and Hegarty (1985), while stressing the importance of correct sampling, also note that 'strict adherence to sampling theory is extremely difficult in this area since the requisite information to guide sample selection is not available. Even basic data on total numbers or geographical distribution are difficult to come by' (1985: 535). With specific reference to the present study it may be noted that in the absence of general information about the presence of ethnic minority students in higher education, it was not possible to assess how far the South Asian students identified for this study were representative of the target population. However, there is no reason to believe that they differed in any significant way and thus it is hoped that the methods used to detect South Asian students would lead to a fairly representative sample.

The strategies adopted in this research project also required access to a comparative sample of White British undergraduates. It was believed that the experiences of South Asians in education and employment could only be viewed in appropriate perspective if compared with those of White British students. However, two conditions would be necessary in order to make accurate inferences from such a comparison. Firstly, the White British undergraduates invited to participate in the study would need to be representative of their total population. Secondly, they would need to be matched with the South Asian students along criteria which are known to influence general

experiences in education and employment. In practical terms these requirements may be incompatible and therefore difficult to fulfill. For the characteristics used to match the White British with those South Asians identified, may, in themselves, make the former group unrepresentative of their total population. Thus the bias inherent in any method of drawing a comparative sample must be acknowledged.

In this study a technique of systematic sampling was adopted to compile a list of students for comparison purposes. White British students were drawn by selecting the first non-Asian name, of the same gender and following the same degree course at that university, which appeared after each South Asian name that had been identified. This procedure was followed for those universities which provided a complete list of undergraduate students. It was also used in compiling a sample of South Asian and White British students from lists on departmental noticeboards. However, where such access was not available, other means had to be used to compile a comparative sample of White British students. At the institution where letters were internally distributed to all final year undergraduates asking them if they were willing to participate in the study, White British respondents were matched by gender and subject studied, with those South Asians who had also shown an interest. Further, where the South Asian students were detected from a published list of names and colleges of those in their final year at a specific university, the first non-Asian name of the same gender appearing after each South Asian identified, was selected to participate in

the survey. However, in this case, the two groups were not matched by the course of study followed because this information was not available for either set. Finally, where South Asian students had been identified because they were nominated by the Asian Societies, it was impossible to gain access to White British undergraduates who could then be matched with the South Asian students, and thus none were obtained.

In all 281 White British undergraduates were selected from ten universities and invited to take part in the research. The distribution of South Asian and White British students drawn from the ten universities is presented in Table 6.2.

a) Use Of The Postal Questionnaire

Having identified the South Asian and White British undergraduates who would be invited to participate in this research, the next step was to decide how they should be approached and precisely what information was required of them. An assessment of both issues indicated the postal questionnaire as the most appropriate method by which data could be initially collected from these students. The size of the total sample and its wide geographical dispersal would make any other technique of gathering information both highly expensive and, within the time constraints, quite impossible for a single researcher. Additionally, those being contacted were known to be an academically capable and literate sample who would not face major

Total Number of South Asian and White
British Undergraduates Identified to
Participate in this Study -
By University

Participating Universities	South Asians	White British
1	38	38
2	11	11
3	50	50
4	25	25
5	39	39
6	15	-
7	23	23
8	14	14
9	13	-
10	35	35
11	31	31
12	15	15
Total	309	281

T A B L E 6.2

problems in completing the questionnaire. The type of information sought of them also made this technique an obvious choice. The focus on minority groups in higher education is a relatively new area of study and therefore some measure of descriptive information was necessary to contextualise specific processes. This might include documenting factual knowledge along with students' attitudes about their schooling and their experiences in higher education. The principal aim of the questionnaire was thus to gather preliminary data which could highlight areas requiring further investigation.

Other researchers have found the poor rates of response to be a major drawback of the postal questionnaire this is often seen to be a result of a lack of motivation on the part of those contacted to provide the information requested. Nevertheless, several decisive steps were adopted in both designing and administering the questionnaire, which were aimed at increasing reliability and validity of the data gathered.

Decisions about the major themes to be covered in the questionnaire were largely informed by the following preliminary procedures. Firstly, the literature reviewed earlier in the thesis pointed towards certain areas of concern. These supported the findings of a small scale study conducted by the researcher in 1983 as part of a previous degree (Tanna, 1983). Then the focus was on home undergraduates of South Asian origin, all of whom were attending a university in North West England. The areas identified were further explored, specifically for the purposes of this thesis, through informal conversations with South Asian

pupils attending a Sixth Form College in an English city. The major areas of concern resulting from all these procedures were fairly similar: they generally indicated the need to document the entire educational histories of academically successful ethnic minority students. It was also believed that if these were further contextualised with additional background information, dominant and recurrent trends in their experiences might emerge.

The sample of South Asian undergraduates identified for this project may be seen as a unique group to whom access had not previously been gained on such a large scale. As a group of academically successful black students, their experiences in the education system and their prospects in employment were expected to be significantly different from those of other black people. Thus it was tempting to capitalise on the access obtained and to include a wide range of questions in the initial questionnaire. However, this had to be balanced against the wish to keep the questionnaire to a minimum length, thus encouraging higher rates of response. These dilemmas were resolved by piloting draft questionnaires on South Asian and White British undergraduates who were in their second year and attended a university in the Midlands. At this stage, particular emphasis was placed on students' willingness to respond and their correct understanding of the questions asked. Despite eliminating certain sections of the draft copy, the final questionnaire was still fairly lengthy. The questionnaire designed for the White British group was 17 pages long and that sent to South Asian undergraduates 21 pages long (See Appendix 2: e and f). While the same basic questions

were included in both questionnaires, the copy sent to South Asians contained some additional requests for information, unique to their experiences. These included factual data on migration, linguistic and religious categorisation, and their reflections on the higher education experience.

Once the precise areas to be covered in the questionnaire were decided upon, these themes were ordered in a logical sequence, thus helping the respondent to organise his/her thinking when completing the questionnaire. The themes were followed historically. First, some basic questions were asked about the student and their parents. Second, questions about primary and secondary schooling, preparation for and experiences in higher education and finally, an assessment of future aspirations. Questions relating to social class, siblings, patterns of migration, religious and linguistic affiliations, all of which might not be seen as directly related to the stated purpose of the study, were placed at the end of the questionnaire. These techniques were adopted in an attempt to increase the validity of the data gathered and to encourage completion of the questionnaire.

The validity of the data collected may also be threatened by the construction of individual questions. Bias in question wording could result in responses of a specific type and attitudinal questions may be seen as particularly sensitive to this problem. Such biases, however, were minimised by constructing short questions using plain language and worded in a friendly manner. Additionally, to increase reliability, highly

structured precoded questions were asked wherever possible and open ended questions were kept to a minimum.

The careful preparation of a questionnaire is ineffectual if those invited to participate in the study cannot be persuaded to complete and return it. Due to the physical absence of the researcher in this method of data collection, rapport had to be developed with the participant by the use of additional material enclosed with the questionnaire. Consequently, a short covering letter was used which explained clearly the main purposes of the research, appealed for the cooperation of students and guaranteed anonymity in the use of any data provided. The directions and instructions included throughout the questionnaire were also intended to 'speak' for the researcher and, correctly used, would help maintain interest in the study.

Prior to administering the questionnaire a system was created whereby each participating South Asian and White British student was allocated a code number. A four digit number was used; the first two digits referred to the university attended and the remaining numbers identified both the individuals and their ethnicity. Thus appropriately coded questionnaires, which were slightly different for the South Asian and White British groups, were posted to individual students at their departmental addresses in early January 1985, the beginning of the second term of the students' final year. Enclosed with each questionnaire was a covering letter and a stamped self addressed envelope for its return by the end of February 1985.

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A total of 590 questionnaires were mailed and while many completed forms were returned, it was clear that by the end of February 1985, that many questionnaires were still outstanding. Therefore, as is customary with most studies using postal questionnaires, a programme of reminders had to be adopted. By comparing the returned questionnaires with the coding schedule, those who had not already responded were each sent a reminder letter and a second copy of the questionnaire in the first week of March 1985 (Appendix 2:g). These were asked to be returned by the 22nd of March at the latest. Completed questionnaires, however, continued to arrive until the end of April 1985 this being the beginning of the third term of the academic year.

Of the 590 undergraduates contacted, a total of 312 completed questionnaires were received making it a response rate of 52.8%. While this may be seen as the 'accepting sample', the 'data producing sample' was further reduced because eleven returned questionnaires contained discrepancies which meant that they had to be eliminated from the final analysis. These included some overseas students and some home students who were mainly from South East Asia. The maximum possible sample was thus reduced to 579 with the actual response being 301, giving a response rate of 51.9%. Of the eleven questionnaires which had to be discarded from the final analysis, seven were part of the South Asian sample and four were categorised as White British. Thus if the response of each ethnic group were to be assessed separately, for the South Asians the possible response rate was 302, with the actual response being 138 (45.6%); for the White British the possible

response rate was 277, with the actual response rate being 163 (58.8%).

It is only possible to speculate about the reasons for the difference in the rates of response between the two ethnic groups. It is likely that South Asian undergraduates may have been less willing to complete and return the questionnaire because of its greater length and perhaps because they were cautious about providing information relating to their personal background. With the absence of data on the wider population, it is difficult to judge whether those South Asians and White British students who failed to respond differed significantly from those who agreed to participate. However, except for the latter group's greater interest in the research project, there is no reason to believe that respondents and non-respondents within each ethnic group should differ on relevant variables.

6.3.2 Level 2

Obtaining an Interview Sample

This second stage of data collection can largely be seen as complementing Level 1 and exploring further its objectives. The aim at this second stage was to gather qualitative data which would check the reliability of the information provided earlier, while also providing an opportunity to follow the main areas of concern identified from preliminary analysis. The interview

seemed the most appropriate technique of collecting such data. It is a flexible tool which may be adapted to individual situations, for questions may be amplified and probing of ambiguous responses facilitated. Additionally, in a face to face interview a confidential relationship may be developed with the interviewee, making it possible to elicit sensitive information. However, these advantages of the interview technique may also be viewed as one of its major weaknesses, in that the data obtained cannot be seen as totally reliable for responses are being made to unique interview situations. Various steps were taken to mitigate such problems of reliability.

Unlike the postal survey conducted at Level 1, a programme of interviews is time consuming and financially expensive. These constraints necessitated the use of a small sample. This sample was identified directly from the questionnaire survey. A form was attached at the end of each questionnaire sent which asked respondents whose home was in London or the Midlands, if they were willing to be interviewed during the summer of 1985 (i.e. after they had graduated), at a time and place convenient to them (Appendix 3:a). Undergraduates were first contacted at the beginning of their second term of their final year at university, during which they were likely to have major academic commitments. However, it was unlikely that many would have started work immediately after graduation. Instead the summer months following graduation are usually an important transition period for most people, moving from academic study to the world of work. It was therefore decided to capitalise on students' heightened awareness

of their experiences and aspirations during this decisive period in their lives. Initially, the aim was to conduct interviews only in London and the Midlands, because these areas were the most convenient for the researcher. While many students from these regions reported their willingness to be interviewed, they were not of the correct mix: that is to say, only a limited number of South Asian and White British undergraduates could be matched by gender, subject studied and university attended. Such pairing was seen as necessary because one of the aims of the study was to examine the comparative experiences of the two ethnic groups in their search for work.

Therefore measures had to be taken to increase the numbers of this self selected sub-sample. The only practical solution was for the researcher to adopt greater flexibility and conduct interviews throughout Britain. However, undergraduates who may have previously seen the request for an interview as inapplicable had to be notified of these changes in the research plans. Subsequently respondents who had indicated their home town to be other than London or in the Midlands and who had failed to complete the form requesting an interview, were informed by letter about a change in circumstances whereby the researcher now had access to greater funds, thus enabling her to conduct interviews throughout Britain (Appendix 3:b). Enclosed with this letter was a stamped self addressed postcard asking undergraduates to provide their term-time and home addresses and telephone numbers, if they were willing to be interviewed regardless of their area of

permanent residence. Fortunately, this procedure yielded a larger number of suitable candidates.

Of the total students from both ethnic groups who were willing to be interviewed, 19 "pairs" were created. A pair consisted of a South Asian undergraduate who was searching for work matched with a White British student also seeking employment, who was of the same gender, following the same degree course and, wherever possible, also attending the same university. 8 further South Asians looking for work had also volunteered, but no suitable White British students were available for interview. Nevertheless, it was decided that the former should still be included in the interview sample. Preliminary analysis of the questionnaire data had revealed a greater tendency amongst South Asians than the White British to opt for further study or vocational training after graduation. It was decided that this area needed further investigation and thus 12 South Asians who were going to follow either of these courses and had volunteered to be interviewed were also included in the sample. In March and April 1985, 39 South Asians and 19 White British undergraduates were thanked for cooperating in the study and were informed that they would be contacted again to make the necessary arrangements for an interview (See Appendix 3:c).

During June 1985 an attempt was made to contact all 58 students, usually by their home telephone numbers. For various reasons, some students were either unwilling or unable to continue their cooperation in the study. However, a total of 49 interviews were conducted between the 17th of June and 29th of August 1985.

This included 16 matched pairs of South Asian and White British graduates, 8 other South Asian graduates also seeking employment and a further 9 South Asians whose immediate plans were to continue with their education by doing a higher degree or some form of vocational training. These students were geographically dispersed between Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Clacton-on-Sea. As it was often necessary for the researcher to travel long distances to conduct each interview it was important that there was no misunderstanding on the part of both interviewer and interviewee about the time and place arranged for the interview. This was ensured by following a strictly organised procedure.

When the respondent was initially contacted by phone the researcher would introduce herself and briefly remind them of the research aims and of their stated willingness to be interviewed. They were then offered a choice of 2/3 dates when the interviewer was going to be in their vicinity. Normally a mutually suitable date and time were quickly arranged on the telephone, which was immediately confirmed in writing. The respondents were also requested to inform the researcher as soon as possible, if at any stage they were unable to keep the appointment. If nothing was heard from them then, as a further precaution, the interviewee was also reminded of the arrangement by phone on the day before the interview. Most of the interviews were conducted at the respondents' homes and, as often the researcher had no previous knowledge of their precise locations within the cities, two measures were taken. Firstly, whenever possible a street map of the appropriate city was obtained from the library and the exact

location of the train station and the area of destination were identified, with a copy of the map taken to the interview. Secondly, when the respondent was contacted on the day before the interview, they were asked for detailed directions to their homes. This request prompted several of them to offer to meet the researcher at the train station, which was always gratefully accepted. By strictly adhering to this procedure in organising interviews it was ensured that no wasted journeys were undertaken by the researcher; it also maintained the respondents' interest in and commitment to the study.

a) Conducting the Interview

The areas covered in the interview largely emerged from the questionnaire survey. The interview schedule included questions to confirm further evident trends or to provide additional information which may explore these processes. The schedule was divided into three distinctive themes (See Appendix 3:d). As the participants were recent graduates the first area covered was their experiences in higher education. This was followed by a focus on the transition from school to higher education. Finally the interview concentrated on the present and examined their aspirations for the future, especially in terms of employment. A set of core questions was developed for each of these sections; however, prior to each interview further questions were formulated

which were directly informed by the specific information provided by the respondent in the initial questionnaire.

The major disadvantage of the interview technique is the problem of the reliability of the data collected. Therefore it was important to assess how far the responses obtained were a direct result of the variables being examined, or whether other factors had influenced the answers obtained. The principal sources of error such as question wording and the ordering of themes, already identified in the discussion of the postal questionnaire, could also be seen as applicable to the interview. However, here the problems could be seen as more acute because all other sources of error could now interact with the inherent biases the researcher brings to the interview situation. While great care needs to be taken in the way in which the interview is to be conducted, the researcher is immediately faced with a dilemma. For she may try to behave uniformly and therefore increase the reliability of the information gathered, or be more friendly and develop rapport with the individual interviewee and elicit more valid responses. This difficulty was resolved pragmatically by accepting that each interaction would be unique, for the nature of the information gained is influenced by both participants.

Most interviews were conducted at the students' permanent homes or at their university accommodation. As far as possible an attempt was made throughout the process to reduce the formality of the interview situation and instead to construct it as a friendly discussion. This was initiated from the moment contact was made with the interviewee. The formal discussion was never launched

into immediately and where respondents met the researcher at the train station this provided an opportunity to develop rapport with the individual. General topics of conversation included the journey, the city where the interview was to take place and mutual experiences in higher education. This proved largely successful in developing a friendly atmosphere. Rapport was also probably increased because there was no obviously hierarchical relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. As both participants in the interaction were graduates there was some acknowledgement of shared experiences and thus a level of identification with the researcher on the part of the researched. This was especially the case in relationships with graduates of South Asian origin who could further identify with the interviewer because of their perceived common experiences and shared ethnicity. While this meant that a high level of trust might be expected from the South Asian interviewees, this was rarely automatically forthcoming. As Anne Oakley (1981) has discussed in relation to doing feminist research, the researcher is required to invest some of her own identity in the interview situation. South Asian respondents often inquired why the study was being conducted, how the researcher had first become interested in this field, what was she hoping to do with the data collected and what type of employment there was available having been involved in such a research project. Wherever possible an honest, but brief, reply was provided to these questions thus satisfying the interviewee without going into great detail.

The rapport initiated at the beginning of the interaction was developed and maintained throughout the interview session. The interview itself was conducted in a semi-structured fashion and usually lasted between 50 and 90 minutes. A 'natural conversation' strategy was adopted. Thus although the three themes presented in the interview schedule were always discussed in the same order, questions within them were allowed to develop in the course of the discussion, with probing for further information whenever necessary.

It was decided that this method could be facilitated by recording the interview in a mini taperecorder. This might encourage the general flow of conversation as the interviewer would not be preoccupied by manually transcribing what was being said. It was expected also to increase the accuracy in the use of the data collected. This was found to be the case when the taperecorder was previously used to record informal discussions with South Asian students at a Sixth Form College in Manchester. All 49 interviewees participating at the second level of this research methodology agreed to the interview being recorded.

6.3.3 Level 3

Use of Diary Reports and Second Postal Questionnaire

The main purpose at this stage was to examine the link between academic qualifications and employment; to observe in particular, whether a degree provided South Asian graduates with

equality of opportunity and outcome in the labour market. Although the literature reviewed in the previous chapter (Chapter 5) would recommend a strategy which was employer focused and which examined the processes of selection rather than the exercise of choice on the part of the employee, this was not seen as strictly viable in the current study. Firstly it seemed highly unlikely that graduate employers would cooperate in a project which might reveal their employment practices to be racially discriminatory (Jenkins, 1986). Secondly, the features of the wider study with its emphasis on education and a specific examination of the perceptions of those directly concerned, made it appropriate to devise a follow up sample of South Asian and White British graduates who were seeking employment.

The strategy adopted here was similar to that used by Ballard and Holden (1979) in their investigation of the employment prospects of black graduates. However, certain major flaws were identified in their design and have largely been eliminated in the present methodology. Ballard and Holden's work included following a group of black and white graduates in their search for employment. A numerical assessment was made of the number of applications made by each group and the proportion of these which were immediately and finally rejected. However, Ballard and Holden made no attempt to note if there were any significant differences between the two groups in the type of jobs for which applications were made, or examine the processes by which black students were being disadvantaged. What is more, for those graduates who were offered employment, no details were provided of

the quality of work which they would be doing, or the financial and other rewards being made available to them.

In the present study, labour market aspirations of South Asian students and their experiences in searching for work had already been examined in the first two stages of this research methodology. The aim at Level 3 was to collect data which might provide the type of knowledge lacking in Ballard and Holden's work. The sample used here was drawn directly from Level 2 and consisted of the 16 matched pairs of South Asian and White British students and a further 8 South Asians, all of whom were hoping to enter the labour market immediately upon graduation. A diary report form which required students to provide detailed information of all the jobs for which they had made applications, was initially attached to the letter sent in June 1985, confirming the interview arrangements of these 40 students (See Appendix 4:a). The students were asked to complete this form and have it with them at the interview. This was then collected and those graduates who had not secured employment by the time of the interview (held between June and August 1985), were left with a further copy. This was to be completed and returned in the stamped self addressed envelope provided, as soon as they had found work. Those graduates whose forms were outstanding were contacted in November 1985 and January 1986, with a request for the return of the completed diary reports. This letter was also accompanied by a new form. Most students were willing to provide the information asked of them and thus the researcher was able to record both the number and type of posts applied for by each

graduate and the processes by which he or she was accepted or rejected for each one.

Finally, in March 1986, nine months after graduation, all South Asian and White British students who were interviewed and were known to be in employment, were sent a postal questionnaire asking for factual and attitudinal information relating to their work environment. This was seen as the most suitable time to make contact as many of those who were working may have moved away from home and as the researcher did not have their new addresses, it was thought important that the questionnaires reached them around Easter when many would be returning home for the vacation.

As with the postal questionnaires used in Level 1 and the interview schedule designed in Level 2, both the White British and South Asians were asked a common set of questions. In addition, however, questions specifically relating to their ethnicity were incorporated in the South Asian questionnaire (See Appendix 4: b and c). Of the 24 South Asian and 16 White British students who were looking for work immediately after graduation, 19 of the former and 14 of the latter group were known to be in employment by January 1986. They were sent employment questionnaires in March 1986 followed by reminders in May and June 1986. In the final analysis completed questionnaires were received from 73% (14 respondents) of the South Asian and 85% (12 respondents) of the White British graduate employees.

6.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

It is evident from the preceding sections that the methodology used for this research included a range of data collection techniques. Similarly a variety of methods were adopted to analyse effectively the information gathered.

By far the greatest volume of data was available in the questionnaires returned in Level 1. Wherever possible closed questions had been used where all responses were precoded. The procedure for open ended questions, however, was to examine all the possible responses given from which general categories were developed and coded. The richness of the data available in such responses was also utilised by making direct quotations in the text where findings are reported. Such quotes as are taken from questionnaires are placed within single quotation marks in the remainder of this thesis. In order to assess the respondents' social and economic backgrounds they were asked to provide details of the present or last occupations of both parents. These were then categorised and coded using both socio economic grouping and social class allocations of occupations, as described by the Office of Population Census and Surveys. Due to the difficulties of interpretation involved in using the current occupations of migrant communities in placing them in such social categories, South Asian participants were also asked to note their father's occupation prior to migration.

All the data available in the postal questionnaires were coded and subjected to computer aided statistical analysis using

the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis was initially limited to a comparison of both ethnic groups by the frequency distribution of each variable examined. These preliminary findings, informed by wider reading were used to conduct cross tabulations between two or more variables. However, it was recognised that direct causal connections cannot be made between these variables. Additionally, discovering a relationship between variables may have limited implications unless that relationship can be found to be statistically significant. While social researchers normally only study a sample of all possible cases, it is usually hoped that inferences can be made from the data collected which may also apply to the population represented by the sample. Thus it is necessary to measure the strength of the association identified between variables, to eliminate the possibility that the observed distributions had occurred by chance and were perhaps a result of peculiarities amongst the sample chosen. This may be done using a test of statistical significance.

The selection of an appropriate test is made on the basis of the characteristics of the data to be examined. The assessments available are normally divided into parametric and non-parametric tests of statistical significance. The former is based on highly restrictive assumptions of the type of data which is to be analysed, including that the variables concerned have been measured on an interval scale. As the type of information gathered for this research project normally did not permit such measurement, parametric tests were only used occasionally. More

common, however, was the use of non-parametric tests which allow for the testing of ordinal and nominal data. Two tests of statistical significance were used to analyse the information collected for this study. The first of these was a parametric test, the t-test, which can measure the difference between the means of two independent samples. The second was non-parametric, namely the chi-square test. This is a measure of association indicating the probability that the observed joint distribution of cases could have happened by chance when no association actually existed between the variables in the target population. For both tests a significance level of 0.05 has been accepted, which would mean that the extent of the differences in the distribution observed was only likely to occur by chance 5 times out of every 100 samples drawn.

Only data derived from the postal questionnaire used at Level 1, were subjected to such stringent statistical analysis. This is because the information gathered at all other stages of the data collection procedure was essentially qualitative and had involved smaller sample sizes. The interviews recorded on tape were transcribed and the scripts thematically organised for each participant in a specially designed response booklet (See Appendix 5:a and b). Where it seemed necessary for comparative purposes, frequency distributions were constructed manually for specific variables for each ethnic group. Essentially, however, the information provided in the interviews was used to qualitatively exemplify trends observed in the survey data and to gain more detailed information on individual cases. Direct quotes taken

from interviews are placed within double quotation marks within the remainder of this thesis.

The reliability of data gained retrospectively has often given researchers cause for concern. Although it is not possible to measure the extent to which the perceptions of the students are accurate representations of reality, it is to be acknowledged that the prevailing ideology of this thesis accepts students' perceptions and their construction of reality as valid knowledge. This was not found to be a problem for the information gathered in Level 3 of the research methodology. Both the diary reports and the employment questionnaires were obtaining current information, which may be seen as qualitative in nature. This required manually analysing the information provided and identifying major trends.

This chapter has highlighted the main practical problems encountered in conducting this research and analysing the data collected. In particular, there has been an emphasis on how the principal aims of the study were continually developed and changed as compromises had to be made as a result of difficulties faced throughout the research process. Ideal solutions were not always available and complications had to be resolved pragmatically.

CHAPTER 7

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

7.1 The Students

The total sample for Level 1 (the questionnaire) consisted of 301 undergraduates of whom 138 were of South Asian origin and 163 were from the White British population. Of the South Asian group 72.5% (100) were male and 27.5% (38) were female. There was a similar distribution by gender for the White British sample, where 73% (119) were male and 27% (44) were female.

7.1.1 Age

It was found that the South Asians in the sample were older than their White British counterparts: with 71.2% of the latter being 21 or younger, compared to 50% of the South Asians. Also 18.1% of the South Asians were aged 23 or over, compared to just over 10% of the White British. A t-test on the mean ages of the two groups, showed the differences to be significant at the .01 level. While the chi-square statistic, measuring the level of association between ethnicity and age was also significant at the .01 level, thus demonstrating that the observed distribution was unlikely to have occurred by chance. The data further confirm the findings of Ballard and Holden (1975), who noted that in their

regional sample of students graduating in 1974, 41% of the 'coloured' students were aged 22 and under, compared to 80% of the 'white' students. This comparison is especially relevant as three quarters of Ballard and Holden's 'coloured' sample, consisted of students of South Asian origin.

The methodology of the present survey was designed so as to provide a sample of students who were in the 'final year' of their degree course: therefore any comparative analysis of the age distribution of the South Asian and White British samples, would need to control for the length of the course they were following. Table 7.1 demonstrates that of those students on three year courses, the difference between the two samples in their distribution by age, was significant at the .01 level. Further analysis, however, showed that this was largely accountable by the differences between the female samples which was significant at the .05 level, whereas the difference between the male samples was not found to be significant.

Table 7.2 provides a summary of those students on 4 year courses: here the measure of association between ethnicity and age was not found to be significant. Again this was largely attributable to the female samples where the differences were not found to be significant, though for the male students it was found to be significant at the .05 level. A t-test on the mean ages of the South Asian and White British students on 4 year courses also showed the differences to be significant at the .05 level.

Age Distribution of total South Asian and White British Undergraduates - Following 3 Year Degree Courses

Age	20	21	22	23	24, +	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	$\chi^2 = 13.03$ with 4df
South Asian	27.4 (26)	38.9 (37)	28.4 (27)	3.2 (3)	2.1 (2)	41.9 (95)	
White British	28.0 (37)	53.0 (70)	10.6 (14)	3.8 (5)	4.5 (6)	58.1 (132)	Sig=0.01
N	27.8 (63)	47.1 (107)	18.1 (41)	3.5 (8)	3.5 (8)		

T A B L E 7.1

Age Distribution of total South Asian and White British
Undergraduates - Following 4 Year Degree Courses

Age	21	22	23	24, +	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	
South Asian	17.1 (6)	45.7 (16)	22.9 (8)	14.3 (5)	59.3 (35)	$\chi^2 = 6.06$ with 3 df Not Signif
White British	37.5 (9)	50.0 (12)	4.2 (1)	8.3 (2)	40.7 (24)	
N	25.4 (15)	47.5 (28)	15.3 (9)	11.9 (7)		

T A B L E 7.2

Due to the small numbers involved, it would not be appropriate to conduct such an analysis on those students who were enrolled on to courses of more than 4 years duration (e.g. medicine). However, when the South Asian and White British samples were taken as a whole and the length of degree (3 or 4 years) was held constant, there existed significant variations in the age distributions of the two groups: the South Asian sample was older than the comparative White British group.

7.1.2 South Asian Undergraduates: Place of Birth, Religion and Language

More than three quarters of the South Asians participating in this study were born overseas. The majority had been born in East Africa (35.5%) or India (22.5%), with very few having originated from Pakistan or Bangladesh. 58% of the South Asians, however, stated that they had either always lived in the United Kingdom, or had been here for more than 15 years, thus having had most of their education in this country.

The South Asian sample may be further differentiated by religious affiliations; nearly half were Hindus (47.8%) with large minorities of Muslims (22.5%) and Sikhs (17.4%). As would be expected then, the most popular languages spoken at home, by the South Asian respondents in the main sample were Gujarati (32.6%) or Punjabi (30.4%). Several students (15.2%) used mainly English

at home, with negligible numbers practicing either Hindi, Urdu or Bengali.

7.2 Parental Background

7.2.1 South Asian Parents: Period and Region of Migration

More than three quarters of the South Asian respondents noted that their parents had emigrated mainly from East Africa (37.4%) and India (38.9%) with minimal proportions coming from Pakistan or Bangladesh.

Just over a quarter of the students' parents had migrated to the United Kingdom before the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act came into force. More than 16% arrived here between 1962 and 1964 with numbers being later curtailed due to the 1965 Immigration White Paper, which restricted the number of New Commonwealth migrants allowed into the United Kingdom. Despite two further immigration measures of 1968 and 1971, over 43% of the respondents parents had migrated to this country between 1968 and 1980. It should be noted however that more than 80% of those from East Africa arrived during this period, with those from India and Pakistan generally having arrived before 1964.

7.2.2 South Asian Parents' Reasons for Migration

More than 55% of those South Asian respondents whose families were settled here noted the main reasons for their parents migration to the United Kingdom to be the prospect of improved living standards (30.3%) and for their childrens education (25.4%). Others came mainly in search of employment (19.7%) or for political reasons (11.5%). The data thus seem to suggest that, on the whole, 'pull' rather than 'push' factors attracted these South Asian parents to the United Kingdom.

Due to the large proportion of East African South Asians in this sample, and because of the known political turmoils in that area during the early 1970s (Kuepper et al, 1975), it may be argued that for this group at least, 'push' factors may be responsible for their presence in the United Kingdom. However, only 28.3% of the East African South Asians in this sample were said to be here due to political difficulties in the region of emmigration. More than half of the East African group explained their family's presence in this country, by referring to what may be termed as 'pull' factors of migration. It may be noted that political difficulties faced by South Asians in East Africa were constrained in the main to Uganda. Many of the students (and their parents) in this sample had migrated from Kenya and Tanzania, with a few having migrated from Zambia.

7.2.3 Parental Occupations: Social Class and Socio Economic Grouping

For the purposes of analysis parental occupations were categorised using both socio economic grouping and social class as described by the Office of Population Census and Surveys. Of those participants who gave an answer, 64.2% (86 respondents) of the South Asians compared to 83.8% (134 respondents) of the White British students, stated that their fathers were, or had last been in Professional, Managerial or Clerical occupations. In further contrast 35.8% (48 respondents) of the South Asians, compared to only 16.2% (26 respondents) of the White British fathers were said to be in Manual work.

Where fathers' occupations were categorised in terms of socio economic grouping, and a separate category of own account (self employed) workers was maintained, it is significant to note that 27.4% of the South Asians, compared to 10.6% of the White British fathers, were in this grouping. When those who were self employed are differentiated within the analysis, a stark contrast between the South Asian and White British groups is evident. Table 7.3 notes that while 73.7% of the White British fathers were categorised in SEG 1-7, only 37.6% of the South Asians were thus distributed. It may be suggested therefore that whereas the White British group may be seen as largely reproducing class structures through the higher education system, this may not be seen as true for the South Asian sample.

Fathers Occupation - Of South Asian and White British Respondents

Socio Economic Grouping	Current Occupation		Occupat Prior to Migration
	White British	South Asian	
	%	%	%
1-2 Employers & Manag	17.5 (28)	7.4 (10)	8.7 (10)
3-4 Professionals	17.5 (28)	16.2 (22)	13.9 (16)
5-7 Non-Man Workers	38.7 (62)	14.0 (19)	32.2 (37)
8-9 Skilled-Man Workers	10.0 (16)	17.0 (23)	7.8 (9)
10-11 Semi-Sk & Unskill Work	5.0 (8)	17.7 (24)	0
12 Own Account Workers	10.6 (17)	27.4 (37)	23.5 (27)
13-16 Farmers & Armed Forces	0.6 (1)	0	13.9 (16)
N	100 (160)	100 (135)	100 (115)

T A B L E 7.3

Table 7.3 also shows the allocation to SEG of South Asian fathers occupations prior to migration. In comparison with their current SEG positions, rather fewer of the fathers who were working prior to their arrival to this country, were either self employed (23.5% v 27.4%) or engaged in manual work (7.8% v 34.7%). Before coming to the United Kingdom, South Asian fathers were mainly concentrated in non manual work.

The last two columns in Table 7.3 suggest therefore that with their arrival to this country, many of the South Asian fathers were occupationally displaced. Their present concentration in self employment and manual work, may thus be a reaction to the difficulties faced in penetrating the British labour market. However, even with reference to South Asian fathers' SEG prior to migration, their offsprings may be seen as upwardly mobile to a greater extent than the children of the White British fathers, who have largely maintained their current familial positions. For while 73.7% of the White British fathers were categorised as Employers and Managers, Professionals and Non-Manual workers, compared to 37.8% of the South Asian fathers working in the U.K., the percentage for the latter group rose to only 54.8% when they were categorised by their occupations prior to migration .

There appears to be some discrepancy between the data observed for this study (which examined a sample of South Asian and White British students who graduated in 1985, the majority of whom had entered university in 1982) and that based on the information provided by the University Statistical Records (USR)

(which provided fathers' employment of 1982 university entrants, with a breakdown by students country of birth) on fathers' Social Class and Socio Economic Group, which is derived from their stated occupations.

However, the USR information was limited to those South Asian undergraduates who were born in the South Asian sub-continent and East Africa. Therefore, it was unable to provide those South Asian fathers' occupations whose offsprings were born in the U.K. Over a quarter of the South Asian students involved in the current study were born in this country and in order to make comparisons with the USR data, information pertaining to their fathers was excluded from the analysis presented in Table 7.4. Here it may be noted that according to the information provided by the USR, rather more of the South Asian fathers than were identified in the present sample could be classified within the higher Social Class (76.5% v 59.6%) and Socio Economic Group (65.8% v 28.7%) categories. However, as Rudd (1984) has argued, information provided in the UCCA form on parental occupations is very basic and lacks the detail necessary for accurate interpretation. Further he suggests that 'when applicants are completing these forms, the generation of accurate statistics is not the consideration that is foremost in their minds. What they are after is to persuade someone, somewhere to offer them a place there must be a temptation to make Dad's boring old job seem a bit more interesting, which might put him into a higher social class' (Rudd, 1984:28). In contrast it may be stated that

Fathers Current Occupation By Socio Economic Grouping and Social Class -
Of South Asian Undergraduates born outside the United Kingdom

Socio Economic Grouping	USR Statistics	Present Study Sample	Social Class	USR Statistics	Present Study Sample
1-2 Employers & Managers	% 14.3 (169)	% 7.4 (7)	I Professional	% 26.1 (305)	% 12.8 (12)
3-4 Professionals	24.8 (293)	9.6 (9)	II Managerial	39.5 (461)	39.4 (37)
5-7 Non-Manual Workers	26.7 (315)	11.7 (11)	IIIN Clerical	10.9 (127)	7.4 (7)
8-9 Skill-Manual Workers	11.0 (130)	17.0 (16)	IIIM Skill-Manual	10.1 (118)	17.0 (16)
10-11 Semi-Skill & Unskill Worker	11.1 (131)	22.3 (21)	IV Semi-Skilled Manual	9.4 (110)	19.1 (18)
12 Own Account Workers	9.5 (112)	31.9 (30)	V Unskilled Manual	2.4 (28)	4.3 (4)
13-16 Farmers & Armed Forces	2.2 (27)	0			
N	100 *(1177)	100 (95)	N	100 †(1165)	100 (95)

*Of the total undergraduate intake in 1982 of home South Asians born overseas (1374) only 1177 students had described their fathers' occupation adequately.

† Of the 1177 students, 12 had fathers who were in the Armed Forces and these were not included in the analysis of Social Class by the USR.

the students who completed the questionnaire for the present study did not stand to gain or lose anything on the basis of the answers provided. Also they were asked to provide a detailed description of their fathers' occupations, thus enabling a more accurate categorisation in terms of social class and socio economic grouping.

Regarding the occupational distribution of the mothers of the South Asian participants in this study, it was noted that 37% of this group, compared with 19.8% of the White British mothers were not currently engaged in and had not previously been in any form of employment. Just under half of the South Asian working mothers (48.2%) were concentrated in Managerial and Clerical occupations, compared to more than 80% of the White working mothers. A significantly larger proportion of the South Asian mothers were also engaged in Manual work (45.9% v 13.6%). This pattern may be seen to reflect the occupational distribution of the South Asian fathers.

7.2.4 Highest Qualifications Held by Parents

Table 7.5 demonstrates that at the highest level of achievement, almost equal proportions of South Asian and White British fathers had obtained a degree or professional qualification. Thus supportingng Bourdieu's thesis of cultural captial, where education and qualifications were seen to

Fathers Highest Qualification - Of South Asian
and White British Respondents

Highest Qualification Held	South Asian	White British
	%	%
Professional Qualific	10.1 (14)	11.7 (19)
University/Poly	22.5 (31)	22.1 (36)
Diploma/Certificate	5.8 (8)	12.9 (21)
A Levels	6.5 (9)	4.3 (7)
O Levels	12.3 (17)	13.5 (22)
None	13.0 (18)	16.6 (27)
Other	0	0.6 (1)
N.A/D.K.	29.7 (41)	18.4 (30)
N	100 (138)	100 (163)

T A B L E 7.5

legitimise the reproduction of capital within the dominant classes.

It is unfortunate, however, that a large proportion of both the South Asian students (29.7%) and White British students (18.4%), did not know of the highest qualifications held by their fathers. It is most likely that this group had no qualifications or possessed very low level academic achievements. Therefore in the final analysis a greater proportion of the South Asian fathers (42.7%), as compared to their white British counterparts (35%), may be seen as having either none or very low level qualifications. 16% of the South Asians, compared to 12.3% of the White British students stated that their mothers had a degree or a professional qualification. However, as with the fathers, a relatively larger proportion of the White British, than South Asian mothers, possessed some form of Diploma or Certificate (27% v 7.2%). Also almost a quarter (24.6%) of the latter group had no qualifications compared to 17.8% of the White British mothers, with a further 38.4% of the South Asian students compared to 22.1% of the White British students, stating that they did not know of the highest qualifications held by their mothers.

In all, the analysis of parental occupation and qualifications suggests that there is greater intergenerational mobility in the South Asian sample.

7.2.5 Parents Attitudes to their Children's Education

90% of both South Asian and White British respondents in this study noted that their parents were interested in their education. This theme will be further developed in the next chapter which examines the experiences at school of South Asian and White British undergraduates.

CHAPTER 8

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOOLING OF SOUTH ASIAN AND WHITE BRITISH STUDENTS

One of the chief areas of interest of this research was to make a comparative analysis of the educational histories of South Asian and White British undergraduates. Existing studies on the educational experiences of South Asian school pupils, have emphasised levels of achievement while neglecting the actual process of attainment (Rampton Report, 1981; Swann Report, 1985). In contrast, this chapter focuses on schooling and examines the experiences of the students in the sample during their primary and secondary education, the processes which may have hindered their academic progress, and how these were overcome. Information will be drawn both from the questionnaire survey (quotes from which are presented in single quotation marks) and interviews (quotes from which are presented in double quotation marks). It is important to note that due to the very nature of the population being examined, the sample for this study consists of academically successful students. What follows is an exposition of the perceptions of those directly concerned: of what South Asian and White British university students had to say about their schooling in the United Kingdom, the ideological arena in which this took place and their interpretations of and responses to the situation.

8.1 Primary Education

The vast majority of the White British sample in the survey (97.5%) and 68% of the South Asian sample had all or most of their primary education in the United Kingdom. Table 8.1 provides a distribution of the total South Asian sample by the country where all or most of their primary schooling occurred. It may be noted that for those South Asians who had most of their primary education overseas, this was mainly in East Africa and other parts of Africa, which were prominent in the 'Other' category. Very few students seemed to have had their primary education in the South Asian subcontinent. In order to make a more valid comparison, what follows in the remainder of this section on primary education, will only refer to those South Asians who had all, or the majority, of their primary schooling in the United Kingdom. This gives a sample of 94 students (i.e 68.1% of the total South Asian sample).

On the whole, members from both the South Asian and White British groups, indicated in their questionnaire responses that they were satisfied with their primary schooling. Three quarters of the students from both ethnic groups noted their primary education to be either excellent or fair. Here most references were made to 'good teachers' and 'friendly atmosphere'. In all, 12% of the students from each ethnic groups saw their primary schooling to be adequate, but of which they had no special memory.

However, 13% (12 students) of the South Asians and 11% (14 students) White British respondents had some negative

Total South Asian Respondents Country
Of Primary Education

Country	%
United Kingdom	68.1 (94)
East Africa	15.2 (21)
India	4.3 (6)
Pakistan	2.9 (4)
Bangladesh	0.7 (1)
Other	8.7 (12)
N	100 (138)

T A B L E 8.1

recollections of their primary education. Some members from each group mentioned being unhappy during their formative years of education. For the South Asian students this ranged from ambivalent responses, referring both to the positive and negative aspects of schooling, to very bitter perceptions of their time at primary school. One South Asian student with ambivalent feelings about his primary education noted in his questionnaire:

'My form tutor was very supportive and influential in broadening my outlook and create an interest in current affairs. He also went to the trouble to talk about W. Indian culture, racism, colonialism. He was very popular among the children.....
.....But Headmistress made life difficult. She refused to put my name forward for 11 plus exam, or grammar school. Eventually applied independently of school.'

The following responses were typical of the negative perceptions of some South Asian students:

' The teachers were very superficially 'nice', but gave particularly little attention to Asian or other children of different ethnic origin, other than Brit's. Attention, in terms of encouragement (in many ways!).'

' Very formal, not much understanding of my culture and background on reflection, teachers were quite racist.'

Even those students who felt that they had generally enjoyed their primary education sometimes mentioned that teachers had stereotyped views of South Asian pupils. This was most evident in the experiences of those individuals who had arrived in the United Kingdom during their formative years and had transferred from one

system of primary education to another. The incoming South Asian pupils had very diverse educational histories and backgrounds. One student said at the interview:

" In Pakistan you have set texts for each class and then you just memorise it, its all memory work.... there's no room for originality, thought or expression."

While another South Asian student said of his primary school in the United Kingdom:

"By and large the school was obsessed with Ladybird readers, while in India we had already been encouraged to read Dickens!"

Yet many South Asian pupils invariably found themselves in the lower streams and classes. As one student commented of his experiences of British primary schooling:

" They pushed the white students more than the Asian students I was quite fortunate, I could speak English quite well and I could write it but they classified all the Asian students in one set, of a lower ability there was quite obvious unfair treatment between the students, whether those teachers did it consciously or subconsciously I don't know, but there was in my opinion a conscious effort not to push the Asian students."

Neither may this be seen as a process which simply affected South Asian pupils who had arrived during their primary school years. A South Asian student who was born in this country and who 'had no problems with English', related his experiences at the interview:

"but I was put in the remedial class with all the other Asians my parents complained and this was rectified quickly. All the Asians were put together, one or two were smart, but they were stuck into this group and they started to believe themselves, that I'm thick and I can't do anything I still see them now and they haven't really done much."

For many students the transition from one country to another, accompanied by a change in the academic environment and the ethos of the educational structure, resulted in a feeling of isolation and alienation from the new system. A South Asian girl who had migrated from India, said of her primary school in this country:

' It was a surprise to 'discover' prejudice + associated malice. However, learning compensated for the unpleasantness of the playground. It was lonely, few real friends, and being the only black child meant being a freak.'

And another student said of his experiences on his arrival to the United Kingdom from East Africa:

"For quite a long time, one always felt one was different one did things differently one talked with an accent or whatever I guess things split up into two bits, the school life, which was quite English, in the sense that kids always adapt, and the home life which was quite Indian there was always a feeling you were very very different and I guess it took a number of years before you readjusted and learnt western customs and you said well O.K. I'm both."

Such a feeling of isolation may be further exacerbated if the pupils also had difficulties with the English language. However 87% of the total South Asian sample who had had their

primary education in the United Kingdom, stated in their questionnaires that they had not faced any difficulties with English at that level. Thirteen per cent of this sample (6 students) did have problems in this area, with less than half of them having received any assistance. For those who did receive help with their language difficulties, this was provided mainly in the form of remedial classes and special attention from the form teacher.

In general a greater proportion of the South Asians (52.7%), compared to 41.7% of the White British pupils noted that they had received some form of encouragement from their primary school teachers.

8.2 Secondary Education

With the exception of one person, the total White British sample had all or most of its secondary education in the United Kingdom. This was also the case for the vast majority of the South Asian sample, of whom 95% (131 respondents) had their secondary schooling in this country. Table 8.2 provides a breakdown of the type of school attended by all the White British respondents and those South Asians who had their secondary education in the United Kingdom.

It may be noted that a greater proportion of the White British respondents had attended an independent school. With more than 60% of the latter having been to a comprehensive school.

Type of Secondary School Attended by South Asian
And White British Respondents

Type of School	South Asian	White British
	%	%
Grammar	22.1 (29)	21.5 (35)
Comprehensive	58.7 (81)	51.5 (84)
Secondary Modern	7.2 (10)	4.9 (8)
Church	1.4 (2)	0.6 (1)
Independent	10.1 (14)	19.6 (32)
Other	1.4 (2)	1.8 (3)
N	100 (138)	100 (163)

T A B L E 8.2

However, when the respondents were asked to make detailed comments about their secondary schooling there were no significant variations for either ethnic group, by the type of school attended or their perceptions of their time there.

77% of the White British respondents and 71% of those South Asians who had their secondary education in the United Kingdom commented that they were largely satisfied with their schooling. One White British undergraduate noted in his questionnaire:

' My secondary education was excellent. All the teachers were very helpful and also understanding. Very few teachers within the school were disliked and the pupils had a great respect for most of the teachers, which also prevented the use of severe discipline. The school had a very happy and studious atmosphere.'

Some typical responses from South Asian students about their secondary education are given below:

' School was a fascinating experience; I didn't achieve much academically but the experience was enlightening. Teachers gave one every encouragement necessary - for four years I assumed I was 'white'.'

' One of the most enjoyable periods in my life. I got along with most of the boys, the teachers were very good who encouraged me to work hard and who told me I have a good chance to make a success of my life.'

Of the remaining students 17% of the White British, compared to 25% of the South Asians, made some negative comments about their secondary education. However, 11.9% of the South Asians described their secondary schooling as 'bad' compared to only 2%

of the White British undergraduates. One of the latter said of his secondary schooling:

"... very boring at times, things seemed pointless, some teachers were a total waste of time. They just couldn't be bothered and would rather let you copy from textbooks than teach."

While a South Asian undergraduate noted in his questionnaire:

' a majority of the teachers were racist. West Indians were generally geared towards sport and told they could do nothing else therefore, most W/I left at 16. Asians stayed on and we were told that we were 'better' than the W/I's. Education was geared toward eventual assimilation - our culture and background totally ignored, i.e. not reflected in History and Geography, etc. White teachers incredibly racist towards the 3 Asian teachers.'

Another South Asian student wrote about his secondary schooling:

' My heart was not really in what we were being taught; the whole atmosphere was hostile + teachers unhelpful. A lot of what we were taught was uninteresting + inappropriate. A lot of the time I was made to feel inadequate'

While several existing studies have demonstrated the positive attitudes of South Asian pupils towards their schooling (Dove, 1975; Kitwood and Borrill, 1980), research has not focused on the perceptions of actual school experiences of those South Asians who have had most of their schooling in the United Kingdom.

Of the two sample groups (including those who were generally dissatisfied with their secondary education), 63% of the South Asians and 59% of the White British respondents stated that they

had received particular encouragement from one or more of their teachers at secondary school. For the South Asians this was not always a response to difficulties with English language as 86% of the total sample had stated that they had not faced any problems in this area at secondary school.

These findings can generally be seen as supportive of the study conducted by Dove (1975) in three multi-racial comprehensive schools. She noted that the Asian pupils were more likely to claim a favourable relationship with their teachers than pupils from other ethnic groups; with only 12% of the 60 South Asians in the study claiming to have had unfavourable relationships with their teachers. A separate study which included an examination of the retrospective views of their teachers by young South Asians, showed that of the sub-sample of 25 respondents, more than half believed that their teachers had shown some interest in their progress at school (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979).

Schools may not be seen exclusively as domains of intellectual development for they also serve the function of personal development, largely through social interaction. The intellectual and social aims and outcomes of schooling, however, are not easily distinguishable, for each can transform and be transformed by the other factors. Further, such processes occurring within schools may not be seen as insulated from wider societal influences, including the racial climate prevailing in the area. However as Taylor and Hegarty (1985) have argued,

'little attempt has been made to ascertain the views and perceptions of such (South Asian) pupils of their schools as places of social and

academic learning, and the influence which the expression of prejudice and racial attitudes, has on their school lives and learning' (1985:525).

Thus the next two sections of this chapter will examine the interpersonal relationships between South Asian pupils in this survey with their peers and teachers.

8.2.1 Relations Between Black And White Pupils At Secondary School

Of those South Asians who had their secondary education in the United Kingdom, 61% compared to over 95% of the White British group said that they went to schools which had minimal proportions of ethnic minorities (0-10%). However, more than 23% of the South Asians, compared to only 5% of the White British students, said that they had attended secondary schools where ethnic minorities comprised over 30% of the total school population. It should be noted that these may not be wholly accurate estimates, but rather retrospective, subjective perceptions of their school population. These figures reflect the residential patterns of the two groups, where the White British probably attended rural or suburban schools, with the South Asians being more likely to have been in inner city areas of the United Kingdom .

Of the 122 White British students who said there were some black pupils at their secondary school, almost 60% said that both the black and white groups got on very well; 24% stated that they 'didn't really bother each other'. However, it needs to be emphasised that the South Asian and Afro Caribbean pupils mostly

formed a very small minority within these schools. Nonetheless 14% of the White British respondents claimed that the black and white pupils at their secondary school did not get on very amicably.

Amongst those South Asian respondents, who had their secondary education in the United Kingdom, and who had some ethnic minorities in their schools, over 40% stated that both the black and white pupils got on very well with each other. Often, however, allowances were made for such situations, as a typical comment from one South Asian student demonstrates. When talking about racist behaviour between pupils, he commented:

".... not in my particular school, and I'm stressing my school, because I think there are a lot of worse off schools in my area and if I'd gone to the local comprehensive (name of school), I think things would have been very different there used to be gangs of White youths that used to go round just picking on Asians and I'm sure my outcome would have been very different if I was in a situation like that here I was allowed, I was given the opportunity to sort of go forward and further myself academically."

On the other hand, 29% of the South Asians indicated in their questionnaires that the black and white pupils at their secondary school, 'didn't really bother each other.' As one student noted:

' In general the white English tended to befriend Indians who were very 'English' in their mannerisms and behaviour.'

When being interviewed another South Asian said of his experiences in secondary education:

"It was the kind of school that pupils only went for one thing, academic work, besides I just stuck with a group of friends I knew quite well obviously we did get some hassle, but we just ignored it and chose to think of those people as immature kids when say a white student was aggressive and he couldn't get his own way, he'd turn to verbal insults and use Paki, 'cause he knows its got a negative connotation and therefore its insulting to us."

In total, over 27% of the South Asian sample made negative remarks about the relationship between black and white pupils at their school. References were made to a feeling of isolation and alienation, on the part of the South Asians, often resulting from both verbal and physical abuse. A Bangladeshi student related his experiences both at a comprehensive school on the outskirts of a large city, and at a Secondary Modern school within the city itself.

" at the comprehensive school I was the only Asian there and I found it very difficult I used to hate the moment when the bell used to go for break, I preferred to stay in as soon as I walked out they used to stare at me as if I was out of another space or something you know, I think that gave me a strong subconscious mind about being an Asian, when I came to (name of the city) I used to feel the same, but I used to look around and they didn't look at me that much because there were so many Asians and that helped sometimes I wished I was white then, not now, I'm proud to be Asian. If I was white they'd treat me just as the others, I could walk around with them and have a laugh, but I used to be left behind I had a few friends but they were afraid and didn't get too involved in case they were told off by the big ones."

Another South Asian student commented:

" In my first three years of secondary school there was a lot of trouble it was quite common to get punched, to get mud thrown at you I mean that

was really quite normal, but then by the fifth form, 'O' level area, it had almost gone."

Developments outside the educational establishments also influence relations between pupils at school. References were made to incidents, similar to that cited below, by several South Asians.

" after the National Front became famous, there was much more bullying"

" Once there was a march, fourth or fifth form black kids an English guy and a black guy had a fight and things developed from there, a whole group of people went round (the school) and the teachers had to stop it."

For the South Asians in this survey sample, relations between black and white pupils at their secondary school were only exceptionally strained to the extent where they culminated in physical violence. While being interviewed, however, one student commented at length about his bitter experiences:

" It was a rough school even at the sixth form level, sometimes they (South Asians) used to call the police to give them protection to get home they used to get picked on after school, not during school and people used to wait for you outside sometimes the school teachers used to take them home I was beaten up once or twice I was stoned once I can remember, it just hurting your hands and face and everywhere generally you come home with people but sometimes if you get held behind or something and you come home alone sometimes, they'd throw milk bottles at you and stuff like that,"

One way in which such bullying at school was dealt with was highlighted in the response made by this South Asian student:

" I came across racism (in the school) in the form of abuse, fights as long as it didn't affect me it was fine I couldn't go and solve anyone else's problem but once it did, I started doing martial arts there were too many of them and I thought with a gang like that, I'd better do something for myself and since then it's been O.K."

Existing studies which have examined relations between black and white pupils have approached the topic in terms of friendship formation (Evans, 1971; Jelinek and Brittan, 1975; Brittan, 1976; Yates, 1980). In documenting the relevant literature on South Asian and White British school pupils, Taylor and Hegarty (1985) concluded,

' it would appear that although the preference of Asians for their own-race group may not be exclusive, it is strong it seems from studies of desired friendship that many Asian pupils do in fact wish to have more white friends....than they do in fact have. It is important to note, however, that the majority of white pupils have a preference for friends of their own group and this may be stronger than that manifested by pupils of Asian origin. Thus Asian pupils may have fewer white friends than they desire because this is as white pupils wish it to be' (1985:424).

However, it would be inappropriate to make a comparison with the data presented here.

Thus on the whole, research has not focused on the racial tensions occurring in the playground or those which occur immediately before or after school. However, the data presented in this section has demonstrated that such occurrences may be part of the lived reality of some South Asian pupils. Findings

presented in the next chapter also indicate that such racist attitudes and behaviour amongst peers, though often in a more subtle manner, is perpetuated at university.

8.2.2 The Attitudes Of Secondary School Teachers Towards Black Pupils

Of the 131 South Asians who had their secondary education in the United Kingdom, 62% perceived their teachers' attitudes towards them as indistinguishable from those shown towards their White British peers. Some of these respondents, however, acknowledged the prospect of differences in teacher opinions based upon racial categorisation and operated at a covert level. Typical responses were:

" I think our school was too professional to let racialism come into it, even if there was, it was very well subdued."

Talking specifically about racist attitudes from teachers, one South Asian student commented:

" It does happen but its subtle others control themselves, they're too clever to show it directly."

Five students from the South Asian survey sample indicated that there was some awareness by a few teachers of the difficulties faced by Asian and Afro Caribbean pupils. One student recalled:

' teachers came down very hard on pupils making racially offensive comments.'

Interestingly, 7.6% of the South Asian sample (ten undergraduates) stated that their teachers' attitudes at secondary school were positive towards the South Asians, yet negative towards the Afro Caribbean pupils. A South Asian girl reported of her teachers' perceptions and assumptions as:

' Very racist and very patronising. West Indian pupils presented as unruly and not important, whereas Asian pupils were 'hard working'. - the two ethnic groups divided. West Indian pupils not given the chance to go into H.E. , nor to do 'A' levels.'

There are two points of importance which emerge from this issue. Firstly in contrast to existing literature (Tomlinson, 1981) only a small group of South Asians referred to the differences in teachers' attitudes towards South Asian and Afro Caribbean pupils. Secondly it may be noted that, nonetheless, such stereotypical views were internalised by some South Asian students and along with other factors, were transforming their perceptions. For instance, one South Asian undergraduate said of his school:

" My comprehensive school was a pigsty it was an immigrant area. It wasn't a good area as far as education was concerned, I mean you can understand the problem, about 70% of the school was West Indian I mean they come from broken families and the situation is pretty dire there was a very lax attitude amongst teachers nobody really gave a damn"

Another student, when asked about the relationship between teachers and ethnic minority pupils at his secondary school, commented:

" Obviously they (teachers) had problems with the black kids (Afro Caribbean) you know how they can get they knew that we (South Asians) were there for learning. The Asians were there to get all the knowledge that they can."

Overall, however, a quarter of the South Asian total sample (25.8%), indicated that they were dissatisfied with their teachers' attitudes towards pupils of ethnic minority origin. Although cases of overt prejudice were not common, notorious incidents were recalled by some students. For example, one South Asian student said of his secondary school teachers:

' sometimes they were prepared to use words in ordinary conversation which I found offensive , e.g. 'wogs'.'

While another noted on his questionnaire:

' In some cases, overtly racist. One instance of a pupil attacking a teacher after he was referred to as a 'nigger'. The teacher received no reprimand; the pupil was suspended.'

A South Asian undergraduate also stated:

" one teacher, he was the head of the N.F. in (County) he used to give out these N.F. pamphlets at school and he was never stopped from doing that."

South Asian students' dissatisfactions with their secondary school teachers, however, came more from the outcome of differential attitudes amongst teachers, which resulted in discriminatory practices or preferential treatment given to other students. One South Asian girl referring to her secondary school teachers noted in her questionnaire that they,

' Tended to expect less + had some odd ideas eg. "Don't you speak/write English well!" Not actively anti, but only really positive in sports - "Blacks are natural athletes aren't they?"'

During an interview another student commented:

" Our Chemistry teacher at school, I mean she would make it obvious if you were stuck with something, she would never come to you you could sit and wait the whole lesson, but she'd run to other people white people."

Other comments made by South Asian respondents, and which were representative of the ways in which teacher attitudes to black pupils were demonstrated, are given below.

' There were always racial overtones - comments like "in this country we don't do things like that"'

' Occassionally patronising but generally fair Expectation was lower and extra effort was required to be recognised in the class.'

It is clear from these data that, for some South Asian pupils in this study their school experiences included the confrontation of racist attitudes and behaviour, both from their

peer groups and teachers. Similar findings emerge from Gillespie's (1982) ethnographic study of a secondary school in Southall, London. Here South Asian pupils commented on subtle forms of racism exercised by some teachers.

In their review of literature Taylor and Hegarty (1985) have acknowledged that the paucity of evidence in this area could lead to an underestimation of racist incidents in schools. From their research with young Muslims, Kitwood and Borrill (1980) have provided two possible reasons which may explain the lack of studies examining the racism faced in schools by South Asian pupils. Firstly, they claim that South Asians are not very willing to talk about such experiences and secondly because any comments made, may not usually be corroborated by direct observation. These issues may be dealt with separately. Regarding the first, in the process of conducting the present study the researcher, who was also of South Asian origin, found that she was able to develop an empathetic relationship with the South Asian interviewees, who were thus willing to openly relate their experiences of racism at school. However, with reference to the second explanation provided by Kitwood and Borrill (1980), some caution must be exercised in the inferential analysis of such data. In this context Taylor and Hegarty (1985) have noted: 'The criteria of judgement of prejudice must also be questioned especially when it depends, as much anecdotal evidence of racism must do, on the perceptions of the observer' (1985:525).

With the methodological difficulties involved in being able reliably to observe and document racist attitudes and behaviour,

the perceptions of those directly concerned may be seen as at least relevant. Racist incidents at school may serve to insulate South Asian pupils, affect self confidence and individual processes of learning, in varying degrees. The final section of this chapter discusses the possible reasons why the South Asians in this sample were largely able to overcome such problems.

8.3 Levels Of Achievement

In the questionnaire distributed to the total sample, respondents were asked to note all the C.S.E. and G.C.E. 'O', 'A' and 'S' level examinations which they had attempted in their academic careers. They were also asked to provide the grade obtained and the year in which each subject was attempted, even where it was failed or retaken.

8.3.1 C.S.E.s and 'O'Levels

In the analysis for this section, a pass was assumed when a student attained grades A, B or C at G.C.E. or a grade 1 at C.S.E. Of the 163 White British students participating in this study, two respondents failed to provide information relating to their examination achievements. However of the remaining 161 White British students and the total South Asian sample ($n = 138$), the latter had passed on average 8.2 'O' levels each, compared to 8.7 for the White British sample. A detailed distribution of the

number of 'O' levels obtained by the two sample groups is provided in Table 8.3. A chi-square analysis did not show this distribution to be statistically significant at the .05 level. Therefore the variance in the number of 'O' levels obtained between the South Asian and White British groups in this sample may not be seen as generalisable to a wider South Asian and White British school population.

8.3.2 'A' Levels

Of the total survey sample six South Asians and fifteen White British students had not attempted any 'A' level examinations. Instead they were accepted by universities on the basis of their BEC and TEC qualifications. However, of those students who had taken the examination, the South Asian students had passed (grades A - E) on average 3.2 'A' levels, compared to an average of 3.4 for the White British sample. A detailed distribution of the number of 'A' levels obtained by the two sample groups is provided in Table 8.4. A chi-square analysis showed this distribution to be statistically significant at the .05 level, and therefore unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Number of 'O' Levels Obtained by total South Asian and White British Respondents

	Number of 'O' Levels Obtained *				N	
	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-15		
	%	%	%	%	%	
South Asian	5.8 (8)	51.4 (71)	39.1 (54)	3.6 (5)	100 (138)	$\chi^2 = 7.3$ 3 df
White British	4.3 (7)	37.9 (61)	50.3 (81)	7.2 (12)	100 (161)	Not Signif.
N	15	132	135	17	299	

* ('O' Levels passed at grades A-C)

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Number of 'A' Levels Obtained by total South Asian and White British Respondents

	Number of 'A' Levels Obtained *						N	
	2	3	4	5	6			
South Asian	7.6 (10)	67.4 (89)	18.9 (25)	4.5 (6)	1.5 (2)		100 (132)	$\chi^2 = 14.2$ 4 df
White British	4.1 (6)	53.4 (79)	37.2 (55)	5.4 (8)	0		100 (148)	Signif = .001
N	16	168	80	14	2		280	

* ('A' Levels passed at grades A-E)

T A B L E 8.4

This significance suggests that, the White British sample were more likely to gain a greater number of 'A' levels than the South Asian students: with 42.6% of the former attaining between four and six 'A' levels, compared to only 24.9% of the South Asians. When the type of secondary school attended by the respondents was controlled for, similar trends were evident between the two sample groups for those who had been to an Independent School, Grammar School or a Comprehensive/Secondary Modern School. However the variance in the distribution of 'A' levels obtained for the South Asian and White British samples, reached a level of statistical significance at the .05 level only in the last category.

Perhaps a direct result of the White British sample's likelihood of obtaining a greater number of 'A' levels, is its correspondingly high 'A' level point scores. For the purposes of analysis, the scoring system used by individual universities and University Statistical Records, has been adopted here: where a grade A is awarded 5 points, through to grade E being awarded 1 point. Thus the total 'A' level point scores of each individual were collated. However, of those respondents in this survey who had attempted 'A' level examinations, one South Asian and two White British students failed to provide their grades. In the final analysis the average 'A' level score for 131 South Asians was 10.8 points each, compared to 12.0 points for 146 White British students. A chi-square analysis on the distribution of 'A' level point scores of the two groups, was not found to be significant at the .05 level.

8.3.3 'S' Levels

Of the total sample, 22 (15.9%) South Asians and 28 (17.2%) of the White British respondents had attempted 'S' level examinations.

8.4 The Process Of Attainment

8.4.1 Streaming

Explicit examples of institutional racism are rarely provided by researchers in education. However as Taylor and Hegarty (1985) have argued, '....there is a real sense in which racist assumptions or attitudes may, even if covert and unintended, be present in a range of structural features of the educational system'(1985:500). It is the examination of the process of streaming which will be the main feature of this section.

Although mixed ability teaching was thought by many to be one of the hallmarks of comprehensivisation, this has largely remained unfulfilled and one of the main characteristics of secondary schools in the United Kingdom is the early selection of pupils, to accomodate differential teaching levels. Therefore grouping pupils by 'ability' into streams is an important arena where the images and perceptions developed by teachers, along with any stereotypical assumptions, may be crucially enacted (Wright,

1986). Of consequence, however, is the constraining influence of within school placements on examination opportunities (Scarr et al, 1983). Further, pupils' streamed positions may also serve to reinforce teachers' attitudes about individual students. This is highlighted by the remarks of a South Asian undergraduate commenting on the perceptions of his school teachers towards black pupils:

' I would say that it varied according to which stream one was put into. In the higher streams they were treated in a similar way as to their White counterparts. In the lower bands certain teachers had stereotyped images of ethnic youngsters. i.e, little academic achievement.'

Of the total survey sample 76% of the South Asians and 85% of the White British respondents had attended secondary schools which operated some form of streaming or banding.

8.4.2 Certificate Of Secondary Education

Significant differences were found between the two sample groups where 46.4% of the South Asian participants, compared to 25.8% of the total White British sample, had attempted at least one C.S.E. examination. As would be expected significant differences were also found by the type of school attended: where for both sample groups, those who had attended a Comprehensive or Secondary Modern School, were more likely to attempt C.S.Es, than those South Asian or White British students who were at a Grammar

School or an Independent School. As a greater proportion of the South Asians (65.9%, compared to 56.4% for the White British), had been to a Comprehensive or Secondary Modern School (See Table 8.2), it may be argued that it was the type of school attended which was responsible for their greater uptake of C.S.Es, rather than any discriminatory processes of streaming, occurring within schools.

However, when further analysis was conducted and the type of secondary school attended by the respondents was controlled for, greater discrepancies were found. Where even for those students in the study who had been to a Comprehensive or Secondary Modern school, 62.6% of the South Asians, compared to only 36.7% of the White British students had attempted at least one C.S.E. examination. A chi-square analysis on this comparative data was found to be statistically significant at the 0.001 level, thus demonstrating that such a distribution was unlikely to have occurred by chance (See Table 8.5).

Several South Asian respondents indicated both in their questionnaires and during the interviews, that they were mostly in the lower streams at school and were encouraged to do C.S.E.s rather than 'O' levels.

Comments typically made by these students were:

" they'll always throw you into the lower stream first and its up to you to work your way up."

" My secondary school thought I was 'as thick as two planks', and they put me in C.S.E. grouping for everything"

C.S.E.s Attempted by South Asian and White British Respondents

<u>Were any CSEs Attempted?</u>	<u>Total Sample</u>		<u>Comprehensive & Secondary Modern School attendants only</u>	
	South Asian %	White British %	South Asian %	White British %
YES	46.4 (64)	26.1 (42)	62.6	36.7
NO	53.6 (74)	73.9 (119)	37.4 (34)	63.3 (57)
N	138	161	91	90
				Corrected $\chi^2 = 11.1$ 1 df Signif = .001
				Corrected $\chi^2 = 12.4$ 1 df Signif = .001

T A B L E 8.5

Even those South Asians who were in the higher streams, noted the concentration of ethnic minority pupils in the bottom streams:

' In the lower streams there were hardly any whites, mainly Asians and West Indians but in my class there were mostly whites.'

Another South Asian student, while acknowledging the advantages of streaming, commented during his interview:

" Streaming helped me because I was in the top stream but on the whole streaming or banding doesn't always work for you, especially if you're in the lower stream, its difficult to work up, you really have to prove yourself."

However, the responses of those South Asians who found themselves in C.S.E. groupings varied according to their relative awareness of the processes occurring within school; along with their commitment and ability to rebel and to create and follow alternate routes to academic success. These responses appeared to be of two different types and may be categorised as 'deferred reaction' or 'immediate intervention'. The first group refers to those pupils who accepted their teachers' recommendation to do C.S.E.s, though often unwillingly and through the lack of other options. These students, however, later went on to do 'O' levels either at school or college. Typical responses which may be seen as 'deferred reaction' included:

" I would have liked to have done 'O' levels, but the guy (teacher) said I'd get a definite '1' with the C.S.E.s, but with the 'O' levels, it was a bit dodgy, so he advised me to stay in the C.S.E. group, so I just carried on and did 'O' levels later."

" I knew I could do 'O' levels at school but I found myself doing C.S.Es while other people in my class were doing 'O' levels I knew I could do it, but they never put me in, I proved to them though 'cause I got grade 1s anyway and I thought well I'm not going to let them get me so I went to college and did one year 'O' levels there and got As and Bs."

Other South Asian students, however, finding themselves in the predicament of having to take C.S.E.s rather than 'O' levels, adopted a more interventionist stance. Some of them opted for dual entry, whereby they financed themselves to do 'O' levels, while also taking the C.S.E examinations. One South Asian student commented:

" We were taught to do C.S.E.s , if you want to do 'O' levels, then its up to you, you've got to enter yourself and pay for it, so I did well, I wanted to do them ('O' levels) to get on afterwards and get jobs my parents didn't know anything about these things even I didn't know what 'A' levels were at that stage, but I knew that 'O' levels were better than C.S.E.s"

Another South Asian student spoke at length about his frustrating experiences at secondary school, he stated:

". . . I was pushed to traditional subjects, geared towards apprenticeships such as Metalwork etc ... at that time I didn't know anything about the English education system I wasn't in the position to choose or to make the right decisions but I knew I was held back all the time, being in a C.S.E group and having potential for 'O' levels is extremely boring and frustrating ... they're so slow I never gave up really, I knew I was capable of doing it, so just to prove I had something to offer, I did 'O' level Maths and that was done all by myself. I was in the C.S.E. groups till I left (school), I have 'O' levels but that's because of dual entry, I went and did that"

This student later went on to college to study for 'A' level examinations, he obtained two grade As and a grade B, and was accepted by a prestigious university to study Aeronautical Engineering. As an afterthought he noted:

".... when I go back now (to visit the school), the teachers are really embarrassed that they put me in C.S.E. groups they expect you to be unemployed or on an apprentice (ship) or something."

Other South Asian students reacted more forcefully to their allocation to lower streams and C.S.E. groupings. Here parental intervention was seen as one of the major factors which could challenge both the teachers and the schools. This comment made by one South Asian was typical of many others:

' Two teachers (History and Maths) at 'O' level thought /advised my parents that I wasn't capable. The reason is unclear, but I'm sure, from their behaviour during the year, that it was a reflection of their attitude. I was the only Asian/Black student in the 'O' level. I did 'O' level after my parents insisted to the school.'

It should be noted, however, that regardless of racial origin, such pressure upon schools will only be made by those parents who are aware of the processes of selection and streaming within British schools, their right to challenge these procedures as they affect their offsprings and their ability and confidence to articulate such challenges. Amongst other things parental intervention may be seen as dependent on the working knowledge of the British education system. As the majority (75%) of the parents of the South Asian students in this sample migrated to the

United Kingdom after 1962, it is likely that the parents would have had most, if not all, of their education overseas and thus no experience of schooling in the United Kingdom. This would have made it difficult for them to intervene on behalf of their children.

However, the parents were not the only challengers, for the pupils themselves were intervening and actively shaping their opportunities to gain academic qualifications. Several South Asian students made comments similar to that reported here:

" She (teacher) didn't think I was good enough to do 'O' level Commerce so I had to fight to get my place in the 'O' level group of the four of us entered I got the best grade."

In comparison, existing studies mostly conducted during the 1960s, also found South Asian pupils in secondary schools to be concentrated in lower streams (Wiles, 1968; Bath, 1970). This however, was largely attributed to their initial linguistic difficulties rather than their intellectual capacities. A D.E.S. survey of 54 secondary schools, conducted during 1969-70, indicated that the streamed position of minority pupils would improve with an increase in the time spent in British education. Townsend and Brittan (1972) also demonstrated that as their English improved, South Asian pupils were more evenly distributed along streams, at secondary school.

However more recent findings (Yates, 1980; Figueroa and Swart, 1982), which refer to pupils who have had a considerable proportion of their schooling in the United Kingdom, have shown

South Asian pupils to be concentrated in the lower streams. Figueroa and Swart (1982) conducted an ethnographic study of 'high' and 'low' achievers at a comprehensive school, where almost 50% of the total population were of 'Asian' origin. The school operated a three tier streaming system. According to the headteacher the A stream was the 'examination group' and the B and C streams denoted as 'non-examination groups' (1982:9). The study focused on the top and bottom stream classes for English and Maths in forms 4 and 2. The authors concluded that there was 'an over-representation of Whites in the top Form 4 class, and Asians in the C stream classes in Forms 4 and 2' (1982:1).

This may be seen as supportive of the data presented in this section, where it was found that even for this 'special' group, who were ultimately successful, the South Asians were more likely than their White British counterparts to be placed in C.S.E. streams at school. As yet no comparative data exist which have examined the processes how and why some of these pupils were able to ameliorate the position in which they found themselves.

The differential levels of streaming and the processes of attainment, found within the South Asian and White British samples in this study, are further confirmed by an examination of the procedures by which the groups obtained their 'O' level qualifications.

8.4.3 'O' Level Examinations

A comparative analysis of the two sample groups showed significant differences in the stage in their school careers at which 'O' level examinations were attempted (See Table 8.6). For the total sample in this study, it was found that proportionately fewer South Asian pupils had taken all their 'O' levels in the same year. Also, while more of the White British respondents had attempted at least one 'O' level earlier (usually in the fourth year of secondary school), a greater proportion of the South Asians had taken at least one 'O' level later - normally in the lower or upper sixth forms.

Significant differences were also found between the sample groups regarding 'O' level examinations, by the type of secondary school they had attended. Those South Asian and White British respondents who had been to a Grammar or an Independent School were more likely to have taken some 'O' levels earlier. As nearly two thirds of the South Asian students had attended a Comprehensive or Secondary Modern School, a comparative analysis was conducted, of the processes whereby 'O' levels were attained, for both sample groups from such schools. (See Table 8.6). It is clear that the trends which emerged from the total sample, are present here. Significant differences were found between South Asian and White British students from Comprehensive and Secondary Modern Schools in their patterns of 'O' level attainment. When between group assessments were made of those students attending a Grammar or an Independent School, it was also found that the

Stage in their Schooling when South Asian and White British Respondents Attempted

'O' Levels

<u>When 'O' Levels were attempted</u>	<u>Total Sample</u>		<u>Comprehensive & Secondary Modern School attendants only</u>	
	South Asian %	White British %	South Asian %	White British %
All in the same year	37.7 (52)	47.8 (77)	33.0 (30)	46.7 (42)
At least 1 'O' Level taken early *	19.6 (27)	30.9 (49)	14.3 (13)	22.2 (20)
At least 1 'O' Level taken later †	42.8 (59)	21.7 (35)	52.7 (48)	31.1 (28)
N	138	161	91	90

$$\chi^2 = 8.7$$

2 df

Signif =
.01

$$\chi^2 = 15.6$$

2 df

Signif =
.001

* (Normally in the 4th year of secondary school)

† (Normally in the 6th or 7th year of secondary school)

T A B L E 8.6

White British were more likely to have attempted an 'O' level earlier, with the South Asians being more likely to have attempted one or more 'O' levels later in their school careers. The data presented so far indicate that ethnic origin rather than the type of secondary school attended, may be seen as an important factor which influences the stage in their schooling, where pupils may attempt their 'O' level examinations.

Further it may be noted that of those pupils in the total sample who had obtained at least one 'O' level later than when the majority of the examinations were taken, 82% (29 students) of the White British were retaking their 'O' levels, compared to 52% (31 students) of the South Asian respondents. Thus suggesting that the delay amongst the South Asians in acquiring qualifications, was not necessarily due to earlier failure but often it was a 'topping up' process, whereby they obtained further qualifications, thus responding to earlier constraints in their academic achievements.

8.4.4 'A' Level Examinations

Of the 132 South Asians and 148 White British students who had attempted 'A' levels, 24.2% of the former and 10.8% of the latter, retook at least one of these examinations. A chi-square analysis found the variance between the two groups to be significant at the 0.01 level. A similar analysis showed that

South Asians were more likely to retake 'A' level examinations, regardless of the type of secondary school they had attended. Such differences between ethnic groups, however, were not found to be significant.

The tendency of many South Asians to retake their 'A' levels was discussed during the interviews; from these, three possible explanations for the trend emerged. Firstly it was suggested that, as many South Asians were doing some 'O' levels during their sixth form this, along with their 'A' level commitments, was proving to be too demanding. Secondly it was noted that South Asian students' difficult and perhaps unconventional process of attainment, partly brought about by teacher attitudes and streaming, at this stage further served to confirm teacher opinions. As several South Asians had not followed a 'natural progression' to academic success within school, teachers often commented that they were not suitable for 'A' level study, and did not view them as 'university material'; there were said to be echoes of 'unrealistic expectations' and 'high aspirations'. One South Asian student commented at her interview:

" My two years in the sixth form at school were to prove to be a major struggle. I was not allowed to sit Economics 'A' level due to a clash of opinions and views. I was also constantly told that my standard was not that of university and therefore I need not apply. But due to the encouragement of one or two teachers I persevered."

While another student said of his teachers:

' I was disgusted by the lack of encouragement + guidance. I was told not to take 'O' levels but carry

on with C.S.Es + then maybe do a HND course but I went on and did the 'A' levels anyway.'

Where teachers have limited faith in their pupils' capabilities, these attitudes can permeate both the processes of teaching and learning and are likely to affect the students' performance.

The third set of reasons for poor performance at 'A' level examinations and the compulsion to retake them, were provided by both the South Asian and White British interviewees. These included references to generally 'poor teaching' and 'bad schooling'. Also mentioned were negative attitudes attributed to the individual, such as 'laziness' and 'apathy'. For the South Asian sample, the subjects chosen for 'A' level study, may have exacerbated the difficulty faced by some in initially gaining satisfactory 'A' level grades. That is to say, some students chose particular subjects not because of their proven expertise and confidence but out of a realisation that these subjects offered favourable career prospects. Referring to his 'A' level options, one South Asian student noted:

' If I hadn't been thinking in terms of a career, if I'd just decided to do what I wanted to do, what I enjoyed I would have probably gone towards the Classics I wouldn't have gone into Physics and Chemistry.'

Similarly another student stated:

' I was probably better at say the Art subjects, but if I did Arts A levels, they wouldn't get me anywhere'

Therefore it is possible that some South Asian students may have changed their personal allegiencies from Arts to Sciences fairly late in their school careers and subsequently had greater difficulty with their 'A' levels.

One of the responses of those students who had difficulty with their 'A' levels at school was to repeat them at college. It was found that of the total sample who took 'A' levels, 33.3% of the South Asians compared to 24.8% of the White British respondents had passed these examinations at Colleges of Further Education, rather than in schools or sixth form colleges.

In summary it may be noted that in comparing the educational performance of two groups of pupils, analysis would be inadequate if it were to focus exclusively on their levels of achievement. A thorough examination of the processes whereby qualifications are attained, thus penetrating the 'black box' of schooling, may reveal information which can aid the explanation of, rather than provide simply the description of the situation which has been observed.

While the pre-university qualifications obtained by the White British and South Asian undergraduates participating in this study did not differ considerably, for many South Asians this was a relatively more difficult struggle. Often, South Asian students were required to take C.S.E examinations before being entered for 'O' levels. When 'O' levels were attempted, the examinations were not always taken together; thus one or more 'O' levels were gained in the sixth form. At the 'A' level stage nearly a quarter of the South Asian respondents noted that they had to resit at least one

of these examinations. The cumulative result of these processes has been that the South Asian sample is comparatively older than their White British peers at each stage of qualification (See Chapter 7).

It may be recalled that the sample chosen for this study may be termed as 'academically successful', as at the time of the study all were following degree level courses. It should also be emphasised that in terms of school qualifications, the South Asian and White British groups were almost equally qualified. However, for the South Asians the procedures involved in their attainment proved far more problematic than for their counterparts. This is most clearly demonstrated in the responses made by participants in the questionnaire, when asked whether they had ever been constrained by their school from taking a G.C.E. examination. Analysis revealed that 25.4% (35 students) of the South Asians and 34.4% (56 students) of the White Britons said they had been constrained by their schools, from taking 'O'/'A' levels in a subject they wished to be examined in. A chi-square analysis did not find this distribution to be significant at the 0.05 level. However, when those who had faced difficulties were asked to elaborate, 52.9% of the South Asians, compared to only 14.5% of the White British were in this position because they were not entered for specific examinations. This contrasts with 26.5% of the South Asians and 58.8% of the White British students who were constrained in their choice, by time tabling difficulties at school. Other reasons were also given by a few students from both groups and a statistical analysis of the total distribution

revealed a chi-square significant at the 0.001 level. This suggests that South Asian respondents were significantly more likely to be constrained at school, because they were not being entered for specific examinations.

This section has examined the processes occurring within school which are largely responsible for the position of South Asian pupils and some of the responses made by them and the coping strategies adopted. It has also emerged that while the students were being transformed by the situation in which they found themselves, the impact of their reactions was further changing the arena within which they operate.

8.5 Preparation For Higher Education

All respondents were asked to note why they had decided to enter higher education: the first explanation given was used in the analysis. Table 8.7 shows that 47.1% of the South Asians and 49.7% of the White British had decided to enter higher education in order to improve their prospects in employment and to fulfil career ambitions. One White British undergraduate stated in his questionnaire that he had considered higher education:

' Because I did not know what kind of work/job would be suitable for me (and still do not) and realised that a professional qualification (degree) would give me a wider scope from which to make a careful decision about work.'

Basis on which South Asian and White British
Respondents decided to enter Higher Education

Decision to enter H.E.	South Asian %	White British %
To improve prospects in employment	34.1 (47)	28.6 (46)
Necessary for planned Career	13.0 (18)	21.1 (34)
Seen as the next step	26.8 (37)	34.2 (55)
Expected by Family	13.0 (18)	5.0 (8)
Could not get a job	2.2 (3)	4.3 (7)
Did not want to work	5.1 (7)	3.1 (5)
To get away from home	5.1 (7)	2.5 (4)
Other	0.7 (1)	1.2 (2)
N	138	161

T A B L E 8.7

A similar theme was evident in several South Asian comments:

' It seemed a natural and possibly essential choice to make for an interesting career.'

Other South Asians acknowledged, however, that while higher qualifications would improve their prospects in employment, they were also important in helping to secure a better lifestyle. One student had noted:

' I believe education is the most important 'possession' a person can have when he/she is looking for a career. Life can bring many problems career wise but an educated person always has something which can enable him/her to learn something new.'

While another South Asian said of higher education:

' Its the only way for a better life, unless your family is in business and they can just take you in (which ours isn't) without education you are basically nothing.'

Of the total survey sample 26.8% of the South Asians and 34.2% of the White British respondents, viewed entering higher education as the 'next step' in their academic careers. A White British student who had been to a comprehensive school and came from a family where none of the members had attained any higher qualifications, commented about his school:

' It was the 'done' thing - it was practically brainwashed into you that it was University or Bust!'

A South Asian student commented about his decision to continue with his education:

' part of me also wanted to go on, but I didn't feel I had the capability it was a grammar school and it was the norm to do 'O's, 'A's and then university its like you were caught up in a rat race and you had no choice but to carry on forward rather than turn back'.

Although a greater proportion of the South Asians had stated that their families expected them to carry on with their education, there was not always direct pressure on the students. Often, however, individuals viewed the attainment of higher qualification as a way in which they could 'prove their worth' to their families.

One student noted:

' I did not want to enter my father's business without proving something; doing a difficult degree is a way of proving that I can achieve something myself.'

While another South Asian student commented during his interview:

" Prior to going to university, within your own background, your own family, you can't say anything in my family, you go to university and that's it, you've made it, then you can come back with some authority, then you can speak out and your father will listen to you its a passport, so it was important for me to get to university."

While the South Asian and White British students entered higher education for a variety of reasons, information gathered from those respondents who were interviewed, indicated that the

South Asians were more likely to have made this decision fairly early in their school careers. Of the 16 White British and 33 South Asians interviewed, 15 (45.4%) from the latter group and only one of the White British students, made comments about entering higher education, as 'something I've always wanted to do', or 'its always been at the back of my mind.' A typical comment from South Asian respondents was:

" it's drummed into your head from a young age by your parents it's the same with all Indian parents isn't it? they expect you to go into education, higher education"

Therefore it may be argued that for many South Asians in this study the decision to enter higher education was not necessarily a reaction to the processes occurring at school. Rather it may be suggested that their reactions to such processes were, in themselves, a response to a determination to continue with their education beyond schooling.

Five South Asians and three White British interviewees said they were aiming for higher education while doing their 'O' level courses. However, 75% of the White British students who were interviewed, compared to only 37% of their South Asian peers, made the decision to continue with their education, while preparing for their 'A' level examinations, and often only when UCCA application forms were made available. This may be seen as confirming the data presented in Table 8.7, where it is shown that a greater proportion of the White British (34%) compared to the South Asians

(26%) decided to enter higher education, simply as the next step in their academic careers.

The total sample was further asked to indicate who had suggested that they should apply to university. Respondents were not limited to one choice, for often there were various influences. The analysis revealed only marginal differences between the South Asian and White British samples. A greater proportion of the South Asian (64.5%) compared to the White British (54.6%) indicated that their parents had suggested that they should apply to university. While 61.3% of the latter and 58.7% of the South Asians indicated that their teachers had recommended university. The biggest difference between the two sample groups however, was in the number of South Asians (21%) and White British (31.3%) who stated that they had been advised to apply to university by their Careers teachers.

8.6 Careers Advice

The Careers Service provided by schools and LEA's was discussed thoroughly by students from both sample groups. Roughly equal proportions of South Asian (55%) and White British (52%) respondents stated that they had received no careers advice or that which was very poor. With the benefit of hindsight various students commented that they were not provided with adequate information either relating to higher education or regarding the

career they wished to pursue. A White British student noted in his questionnaire:

' There were all sorts of awards and scholarships people could have applied for - but we were never even told about it.'

While a South Asian Pharmacy undergraduate commented about the careers advice she received as:

'Very poor. Before O levels I was told it was very difficult to get into Medical School and had I thought about nursing I consider that I received v. poor advice about Medical Schools eg. I was told Physics was 'essential' - I hated it and would have liked to do Biology. I later found out that Physics wasn't essential and I had spent 3 years unsuccessfully trying to get a B grade in it!'

Other South Asians stated during interviews that they were not made aware of the variety of courses which are available at institutions of higher education. A typical comment was:

" The careers people never offered any other alternative - they just said what are you good at and I said Biology, so they said why don't you apply to do something in Biology at university.'

Both South Asian and White British respondents also commented on the short sightedness of Careers Advisers, who failed to look beyond higher education and discuss the employment prospects of specific subject areas. A South Asian Economics undergraduate stated:

" Careers teachers always say do what you enjoy ... but in terms of actual careers paths, (mine) was

more of a family decision for us it very much had to leave open a good career path."

It was evident from this student's G.C.E examinations that he was particularly talented in Mathematics: thus he was asked why he had not pursued this subject further. He commented:

" ... in a sense that subject I was good at (Maths), but again we didn't see any straight career path after it, we didn't know then, but we thought it would be just teaching and that was definitely something I was not going to do"

However, of the total sample only 13% (18 students) of the South Asians and 11% (19 students) of the White British respondents noted that they were provided with good careers facilities. For example a South Asian student stated on his questionnaire:

' It was good on advising you on how to enter higher education. For instance, a two day careers conference was held for those in the Lower Sixth Form.'

Of those who had received some form of careers advice, 10% (16 students) of the White British and 10% (13 students) of the South Asians stated that they were encouraged in specific directions. While all of the former had received positive support some South Asian respondents claimed that they had been discouraged from pursuing their chosen careers. This was further highlighted during interviews. Some students found that they were dissuaded from aiming for higher education or applying to

university. A South Asian student who went on to obtain an Upper Second Class degree, said of his Careers Officer:

" The particular guy who was dealing with us, I don't know what it was but he obviously had this idea that I wouldn't make it at university and I wouldn't be able to get a degree, so he just said don't bother and I can't even remember him suggesting anything else, but I was quite adamant then and I said I'd like to go."

While another South Asian respondent noted:

' I didn't receive any (careers advice) after the 5th form. What I received at that time I found very offputting, so I didn't seek any after that.'

During interviews with South Asian students it also became evident that where they were not being totally discouraged from applying to university by Careers advisers, they were often dissuaded from following courses they had chosen initially, and encouraged, instead, to pursue less prestigious or non degree level courses. Typical responses about the careers advice received by some South Asians are given below:

" I was discouraged about 'O' level time I said that's what I wanted to do (Medicine) and I was discouraged then, I was advised to go into nursing and not go into medicine ... ('How did you react to this?') I was very cross actually, I was very angry because I felt I had more than to be a nurse, even then I thought that and I felt very angry that he didn't seem to go by my record at school, where I was one of the best pupils"

" I was discouraged from doing Law and many of my Asian friends also if they wanted to do Pharmacy or something, she'd (careers adviser) suggest another course which wasn't at degree level perhaps. Most of

the whites who weren't as good, she still pushed them."

" At our school, it was much easier for us, because they were keen to send us to university but this often meant that they would try and make some of the Asians go for lower objectives, so that they go to University and it goes down on the schools report they would say, ' don't try for medicine but have you thought of Pharmacy?'"

While several existing studies (Brooks and Singh, 1975; Lee and Wrench, 1981) have demonstrated the greater use of the Careers Service by South Asian school leavers, there has not been an assessment about the quality of advice received by them. However, in a comparative study Sheridan (1983) identified major discrepancies between the careers provisions available for all children in a suburban and an inner city school within the same locality. Additionally there is a dearth of evidence relating to the Careers advice received by those South Asians who may wish to continue with their education. Richards (1977) observed at a secondary school in the Midlands that many young South Asians who aspired to further education were often advised by Careers teachers to seek employment in factories or offices. This may be seen as consistent with the discouraging advice received by some South Asian respondents in this survey. From a study which involved indepth interviews and discussions with 'almost a hundred young South Asians', Brah and Golding (1983) concluded:

'One of the interviewees' major complaints was that the careers teachers and careers officers tended to underestimate the abilities of Asian pupils, and were likely to actively discourage them from pursuing

careers in higher education and in the professions' (1983:4.5).

The findings of these studies may serve to further endorse the discouraging careers advice received by the South Asian respondents in this survey.

8.7 Locating The Data Within A Theoretical Framework

In order to locate the data presented on schooling in a coherent theoretical framework, it is necessary to further assess it while drawing upon the major debates in sociology of education, which were dealt with in the literature review.

In contrast to the social democratic or liberal ideologies in education the data emerging from this study have demonstrated that inequalities in education are not brought about simply due to class differences or deficiencies in the home background. Rather, it is the impact of these and other differences on those involved in the educative process, which bring about disadvantages. The main focus of this study has been the effects of racial differences on how pupils are taught and by which they may learn and achieve. This perspective may be seen to be supportive of the shift away from political arithmetic that developed during the 1970s and labelled as the 'new sociology of education.' Here the emphasis was on the content and process of education itself, but this was abstracted from the wider political and economic contexts. The present study, however, has shown that inequalities

in education may exist along several socially defined strata such as class and race. Also the effects in education of various criteria, may not be seen as mutually exclusive, and that individuals' lived realities are more influential, where disadvantage may cut across the normal boundaries of race and class. For instance it was found that despite their middle class background many South Asian pupils were at a disadvantage in British schools. It was also clear that in spite of the normal assumptions of limited progress which may be made due to their position on an imposed racial hierarchy, several South Asians were proving to be academically successful, though often not without difficulty.

Due to the emphasis of this study on the process of attainment, as opposed to a comparative analysis of achievement levels, it was thought necessary to contextualise the main findings within an educational milieu. Thus there was an examination of pupils' social experiences at school, and specifically, their relations with their peers and teachers. A slightly greater proportion of South Asians than White British students had stated that they received particular encouragement from at least one teacher, during their primary (52% v 41%) and secondary schooling (63% v 59%). However, a quarter of the South Asian sample also stated that they were dissatisfied with their teachers' attitudes towards black pupils. The important issue here is that such specific racial frames of reference may lead to discriminatory practices or differential treatment operated through the teaching process (Figuerola, 1982).

The main interest of the study was a comparative analysis of the procedures by which South Asian and White British pupils attained their qualifications. Consequently there was concern with the allocation of pupils to differential teaching levels. It was found that the South Asian sample was considerably disadvantaged in the streaming process. Further, both sample groups wished to enter higher education for broadly similar reasons with over half the students from each group claiming to have received either very little or no careers advice. Some of the South Asian students, however, had received negative and often discouraging careers advice.

While this may be seen as the situation in which South Asian students found themselves it cannot support the crude Marxist perspectives in education (Bowles and Gintis, 1977), where schools are seen as determined by society, thus helping to maintain a structured social inequality. This approach emphasises input and output structures without allowing for responses by those primarily concerned. The present research has shown clearly that pupils are not always passive consumers of the processes occurring at school. Rather they may respond by resisting such situations: ironically for the South Asians in this sample, such resistance has taken the form of accommodation and acceptance of 'normal' school values, an approach which has been discussed in theoretical terms, by Apple (1982) and Willis (1983).

Many South Asians students in this survey (it should be noted that 68% of their total sample had all or most of their primary education and 95% had their secondary education in the

United Kingdom), found themselves marginalised from the process of attainment. In response they developed ideological and behavioural practices geared towards high achievement levels. In effect, then, they challenged the norms of the school, as they affected them. With those students who had attempted C.S.E.s, there was often deferred reaction or immediate intervention, in their wish to take 'O' level examinations. As the 'O' levels were often delayed and not always taken together, there occurred a 'topping up' process, whereby in response to earlier constraints, one or more 'O' levels were taken in the lower or upper sixth years. With regard to 'A' levels, a quarter of the South Asian sample had initially failed to obtain the required grades. However, they persisted and retook the necessary examinations. Finally, in terms of careers advice, although many South Asians were discouraged from aiming for higher education, they ignored such suggestions and continued regardless.

Such responses may be seen as the active production of culture, where individuals finding themselves in similar predicaments, develop collective identities and establish coping strategies in response to the situations in which they find themselves. Brah (1979) has argued that young South Asians in the United Kingdom may neither be seen as enveloped by the cultures of their countries of origin nor seen as in the process of complete anglicisation. Rather she suggests that the reality of their lives is a dynamic adjustment, embedded within both milieu.

This process of cultural struggle cannot be seen as separable from wider political and economic struggles. For the

South Asian students in this sample there was concern with the normative racist practices in Britain, and a desire to mitigate their position as Black Britons. The attainment of good academic qualifications was seen as one of the ways in which this was thought possible. During interview a South Asian Chemical Engineering student commented on his father's response to his position in the United Kingdom:

" My dad's a cynic and he kept plugging it into me that you've got to be 200% better than any white man at first I didn't believe this, but as I've got on in life, I realise he's right."

Another South Asian student noted that it was more difficult for ethnic minorities to 'do well' in this country, he continued:

"In the sense that Asians have to work a little bit harder than anybody else well blacks in particular have to work a little bit harder to get anywhere but I think there is always a feeling that if you give other people a chance to discriminate, then they will, and if you're always up to the mark and say look you can't deny me a place, then they won't"

In a case study of race and streaming Troyna (1978) reported that in their peer group nominations there was a realisation amongst ethnic minority pupils 'of a common identity', which emerged from a shared position in the streaming process (1978:64). Similarly, those South Asians in this sample who were placed in low streams and could see the constraints placed on their academic careers, developed a common identity and collective responses based on their individual and group experiences.

Through these responses groups were constantly transforming school processes. In this instance, South Asian students were developing alternate routes to academic success. However, they, in turn, were also constantly being transformed by these processes, in that their attainment was problematic: this, in itself, would influence teachers' and careers advisers' judgements about their intellectual abilities and future potential. The nature of their attainment would make the South Asians older at the age of achievement, which could have consequences on their future careers, if necessary training were conditional on a maximum age limit.

It has been argued by Barton and Walker (1983) that while class position may condition the type of struggle that people may be involved in, it may not account for a predictable outcome. Referring to the sample in this survey and using parent's current occupations, it can be noted that while the White British respondents were largely from middle class backgrounds, the South Asian sample was more widely distributed with 36% of their fathers engaged in manual work. Therefore while the White British students in this study were entering university essentially to maintain their positions of privilege and power, some South Asians were aiming for higher education in order to challenge this power. It is this politically located perspective of culture which is being adopted, where the 'cultural' response of some South Asians to academical marginalisation is to persist and maintain their aspirations for qualifications. The point of contention, however, is the presence of both middle class and working class South

Asians, but a largely middle class White British group, in this sample of undergraduates students. This situation begs certain obvious questions, as to whether some of the South Asians were truly working class and, if they were, why they behaved differently from White British working class pupils.

A close scrutiny of South Asian parental occupations demonstrated that although the current positions of South Asian mothers and fathers showed a significant proportion to be engaged in working class occupations, an assessment of fathers' occupations prior to migration, showed them to be largely middle class with only 7.8% being involved in manual work (See Chapter 7). Therefore it is evident that some South Asian fathers have become occupationally displaced through migration. Thus it may be suggested that, as with the White British sample, the South Asian undergraduates in this survey were also essentially from middle class backgrounds, though they had travelled a more arduous path to success.

Here it is crucial to identify why the South Asian sample in this survey were able to respond positively to the adversities faced by some in their schooling. The prominent themes emerging from the data suggest some possibilities, emphasising South Asian students reliance on certain human resources which were available to them: namely familial encouragement, self determination and teacher interest. Which is to say that it is likely that these factors were ultimately influential in enabling South Asian pupils to achieve highly in the face of a complicated and problematic process of attainment.

Parental encouragement was seen as a major source of support by South Asian pupils. While 90% of the respondents from both sample groups noted that their parents showed interest in their education, the South Asian parents were perhaps the more vociferous and demanding of their offsprings. These are typical comments made by South Asian respondents about their parents' attitude towards their education:

" My parents pushed me into further education and I'm happy they did They wanted me to achieve and go as high as possible but they couldn't and didn't help in any other way they've seen the hardship they've had to suffer because of their lack of education, and they sort of decided, 'Right, my children are never going to have to go through this', and they push you as much as possible."

Another South Asian said of his father's attitude as:

" very aggressive in his ideas about education he got my brother into Oxford, even though the school weren't going to enter him - dad was dogmatic and stubborn, but it worked in the end and Indian parents have to do that. I wouldn't have been as highly motivated without dad his whole motivating force for coming to England was to get my sons not just educated, but educated at Oxford and Cambridge he came over in the 60s dad is very single minded and with a very strong sense of purpose."

Many of these parents were engaged in manual work and thus a clear and direct relationship between parental occupation and attitudes towards education does not seem likely. For the present sample of South Asians has demonstrated that, even where parents may have become occupationally displaced, they will often retain some of the attitudes prevalent in their previous class position. From

the indepth interviews conducted with the students, it also emerged that there was a belief amongst some South Asian fathers that they had been occupationally displaced in migration precisely because they did not possess a professional qualification, which could be used as international currency. This led to greater reverence for the possession of academic qualifications and especially professional qualifications. A South Asian Dentistry undergraduate whose family had migrated from East Africa, said of his parents' attitude towards education:

"they've always emphasised right from the time in Primary school, the need to have good education and that was in a way reinforced by the fact that they were kicked out of Uganda and had nothing to fall back on in terms of a profession and I guess they've always encouraged us ... to have some sort of profession to fall back on ... in the future if something happens ... you can have money but it can vanish in a day, but if you have a profession, it's something that no one can take away from you."

While another student commented about his parents attitudes as:

" Typical middle class Bangladeshi they expect you to work hard, they expect you to do well, they expect you to choose one of the professions I suppose it's restrictive in some ways...."

South Asian parents' staunch support for education, however, may be seen to derive from the colonial era. For instance, when the British ruled India, social mobility in the form of civil service jobs could only be attained through higher qualifications. With the rise of meritocracy, power is further seen in terms of

education and even in the United Kingdom, South Asian parents view academic qualifications as the most viable and perhaps the only means of upward social mobility. Because of the high regard for education within the South Asian communities, qualifications serve a further purpose in bringing status to the individual within the family, and to the family within the community in which they are located and by which they identify themselves.

While family influences helped to sustain and motivate these South Asian pupils, positive attitudes towards education were also fostered by the students themselves. Academic qualifications were seen as a relatively secure investment in an uncertain and often racist employment market. The sincerity of these aspirations was evident from their willingness to persist in order to obtain the necessary qualifications. A hypothetical question was posed to both sample groups: they were asked of their contingency plans, if they had failed to obtain the required 'A' levels. It was found that compared to 44% of the White British sample, nearly 60% of the South Asian respondents would have been willing to retake their 'A' level examinations. Significantly, less than 3% of the latter compared to 11% of the White British were planning to look for work.

The personal commitment of South Asian students in this sample towards higher education may be seen to be derived in part from their own family backgrounds. During the interviews conducted with both South Asian and White British students it was noted that 53% (17 students) of the former and only 37% (6 students) of the latter were part of a unit where the wider family

had a tradition of educational success. One South Asian student commented about his family background:

" My grandfather died when they were very young and it was through education that the family came up, my uncles are Doctors and my dad's a Pharmacist in East Africa they had just two rooms for my grandmother and eight kids and my mum when she came and it was dad who qualified as a Pharmacist and financed my uncles through schooling "

It was also noted that a greater proportion of the South Asians had older siblings who possessed higher academic qualifications, thus setting precedence for their younger brothers and sisters. 8% of the respondents from both the South Asian and White British groups failed to provide the necessary information. However, of those who answered 70% (89 students) of the South Asians and 56.6% (85 students) of the White British students stated that they had older siblings. Of this group 77.5% (69 students) of the South Asians claimed they had an older brother or sister who held a higher academic qualification, compared to 58% (50 students) of the White British. For the former group such qualifications may sometimes have been obtained overseas.

Many South Asian students in this sample were also helped in their academic careers by the interest of at least one teacher at Secondary School. About equal proportions of South Asians (63%) and White British (59%), claimed they had received particular encouragement from a teacher. Thus it may be suggested that while some South Asians may have ultimately attained well, partly because of good teaching, others had achieved success inspite of poor schooling.

So far three factors have been discussed, those of family encouragement, self determination and teacher interest, which may possibly explain how the group of middle class South Asians in this study were able to overcome some of the barriers they faced in their process of attainment. It should be clear that all three elements may not be present or necessary in individual cases. It is simply being suggested that these are the most prominent explanations which have emerged from the data collected. They point to some of the reasons why the South Asian students in this study were able to challenge established school procedures.

CHAPTER 9

THE EXPERIENCES OF SOUTH ASIAN AND WHITE BRITISH STUDENTS AT BRITISH UNIVERSITIES

The main concerns of this research have ranged from processes occurring at school to those associated with the search for graduate employment. In the determination of post-education opportunities for South Asian and White British students, the questionnaire and interview samples for this study were obtained from universities. 590 South Asian and White British undergraduates, who were in their final year of study at 12 British universities, were sent postal questionnaires, enquiring into their educational backgrounds and their plans for the future. The White British students were matched with the South Asian group by gender, subject studied and the university attended.

There is a paucity of research about the participation of home students of ethnic minority origin at British Universities. The need for such data in terms of policy implications is evident. However, undertaking such a large scale project was not seen as viable, within the constraints of this thesis. Nonetheless, in order to place the findings of this study within some context and to assess the representativeness of the sample, national statistics were specially collated for this project by the University Statistical Records (USR). The first part of this chapter provides an analysis of these statistics, along with those

previously published by Vellins (1982): these demonstrate the presence and differential distribution by subject area of home undergraduates born in the South Asian sub-continent and of the total student population.

The main part of this chapter deals with the presence and experiences in higher education of those South Asian and White British students participating in this study. A summary is provided by gender and ethnicity, of the distribution by subject area of those undergraduates who were initially contacted for this study and the total respondents.

Drawing upon the qualitative evidence provided by the South Asian respondents, both in the questionnaires and during interviews, their preference for scientific and medically related subjects is also examined. There is also a comparative analysis of South Asian and White British undergraduate experiences in higher education, based solely on the information gathered during interviews. There were, however, certain areas of enquiry related specifically to their ethnicity, which were only followed through with the South Asian sample. These are discussed separately. They include perceptions of racial discrimination both academically and socially, along with an assessment of their ethnic identity.

Finally the chapter deals with the total South Asian and White British respondents' plans after graduation, their career aspirations and their perceptions of the prospects of obtaining their preferred employment.

9.1 Comparative Analysis of National and Sample Statistics

All British universities are affiliated to the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA), which monitors and regulates the admissions procedure for all full time first degree courses to these establishments. The USR was set up in 1968 by the University Grants Committee and the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals to provide comprehensive statistical information on the staff and students within higher education. The USR record and analyse the data provided by all applicants on their UCCA forms, the final destinations of these applicants, and their relationship to the type of university attended and the course of study followed. The general trends formulated from such data are published annually. However, they also provide previously unpublished data and tabulate specific correlations for research purposes.

As all the participants involved in the research for this thesis graduated in the summer of 1985 and as most were following three year courses, it can be assumed that they entered university in the 1982-83 academic year. The USR were thus asked to collate information on home students who had started full time undergraduate degree courses in 1982, by gender, ethnicity and their distribution by subject area. The aim was to document and compare data for South Asian and White British students.

From the information provided by students on their UCCA forms, ethnicity may only be inferred by country of birth. The USR were requested to provide data for those born in the South

Asian sub-continent (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) and in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania). It was necessary to include the second region in the analysis, as many South Asian families now settled in Britain had migrated from East Africa. However, the country in which an individual is born is not always an accurate measure of ethnic origin; for instance, some Europeans or Africans could be labelled as South Asian. More importantly perhaps for the purposes of this study, such categorisation would exclude those South Asians born in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, as more accurate information relating to the ethnicity of home students is neither held by individual universities or by the USR, general trends in student distribution can only be inferred from the data available. With specific reference to South Asian students entering British higher education it may be argued that in a few years time, country of birth will become a totally unreliable measure of ethnic origin, as an increasing number of ethnic minorities will have been born in the United Kingdom. However, for those entering universities in 1982, the data provided by the South Asian participants in this research indicates that 68% (95 students) were born in the South Asian sub-continent and East Africa.

The statistics provided by the USR show some interesting variations between the subject choices of the total U.K. born undergraduates and those South Asians who were born overseas. Table 9.1 demonstrates that both in 1979 and 1982 South Asians were more than twice as likely as U.K. born students to choose to study a medically-related subject. The South Asians also showed a

Distribution of Undergraduates by Subject Area and Ethnicity

Degree Subject	A		B		C
	Students Entering Universities in 1979		Students Entering Universities in 1982		South Asian students identified for this survey
	U.K. %	South Asian %	U.K. %	South Asian %	%
Medical Subjects	7.6	19.0	8.7	19.2	21.8
Pure Sciences	25.2	29.9	28.3	28.8	23.3
Engineering	13.2	18.8	13.4	18.9	28.8
Social Sciences	25.3	20.6	23.7	21.3	21.4
Arts/ Languages	28.6	11.6	25.3	10.4	4.4
N	67,502	1,779	67,999	1,374	270

(A) Data collated by USR and published by Vellins (1979) on 'home fee paying' undergraduates, born in the U.K., the Sub Continent of South Asia and East Africa - the last two categories have been amalgamated in the above Table.

(B) As (A) - data specially collated by USR for this study.

(C) 309 South Asians were initially contacted and invited to take part in this survey, however, the subject distribution of only 270 students was known.

greater preference for Engineering and the Pure Sciences. By 1982, however, the White British students had also increased their participation in the latter sector. The tendency of South Asian undergraduates to opt for scientific areas of study may be seen in contrast to their relatively poor representation in the Social Sciences and especially the Arts and Languages.

It is also clear from Table 9.1 that those South Asian students who comprised the total sample in this research and whose subject choices were known, cannot be seen as totally representative of the national South Asian sample, in terms of the subject area studied. This, however, might be a reflection of the type of universities which were willing to participate in this research. It should also be noted that while the South Asian undergraduates identified by USR were those who were born in South Asia or East Africa, the South Asians in this survey also included those students who were born in the U.K.

If the national statistics provided by the USR for home undergraduates entering university in 1979 and 1982, are assessed along divisions of gender, certain interesting trends emerge (See Table 9.2). Firstly, it is evident that South Asian women were equally likely as their male counterparts to choose to study medically related degrees, or one of the pure science subjects. By 1982, however, the men had slightly increased and the women slightly decreased their participation in the latter area. Secondly, however, in the areas of Engineering and the Social

Distribution of Undergraduates by Subject Area, Gender and Ethnicity

Degree Subject	UK born students entering Univer - 1979		South Asian students entering Univer - 1979		UK born students entering Univer - 1982		South Asian students entering Univer - 1982	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Medical Subjects	% 6.8	% 8.7	% 19.2	% 19.0	% 7.2	% 10.8	% 19.2	% 19.4
Pure Sciences	28.7	19.8	29.7	29.8	32.5	22.6	30.1	27.7
Engineering	20.4	2.2	25.7	2.2	20.8	3.0	26.4	3.3
Social Sciences	24.7	26.3	17.8	27.3	22.5	25.4	17.7	29.1
Arts/ Languages	19.2	42.8	7.4	21.5	16.7	37.8	6.4	20.3
N	40,475	27,027	1,249	530	39,684	28,315	931	443

T A B L E 9.2

Sciences, the influences of gender seemed to override those of ethnicity with regard to South Asian women. In these areas their levels of participation largely resembled those of U.K. born women rather than South Asian men.

The third point of interest in Table 9.2, is that while the distribution of South Asian male and female undergraduates by subject area was essentially the same in 1982 as in 1979, this was not the case for the U.K. born students. The figures in Table 9.2 suggest a tendency for both men and women born in this country to move away from the Social Sciences, Arts and Languages and towards the Pure and Applied Sciences.

Referring now to the current research, Table 9.3 provides a summary by subject area, gender and ethnicity, of undergraduates initially contacted and those who eventually responded. It may be noted that no figures are provided for the White British students originally identified, for they were matched with the South Asians, by gender, subject studied and university attended. Table 9.4 (which is a synthesis of data in Tables 9.2 and 9.3), indicates that the South Asian sample identified for this survey, most of whom had also entered university in 1982, was not representative of the national South Asian undergraduate population, in terms of their distribution by gender and subject area. It was evident that a greater proportion of the South Asian men identified for this survey were following courses in Engineering rather than the Pure Sciences and the women were essentially concentrated in the medically related subjects and the Social Sciences. It can be speculated that the discrepancies in

Distribution of Undergraduates Contacted for this Study and Total Respondents
By Subject Area, Gender and Ethnicity

Degree Subject	South Asian * Students Identified for this Study		Total South Asian Respondents		Total White British Respondents	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Medical Subjects	19.2	32.2	22.0	34.2	21.0	29.5
Pure Sciences	24.5	17.7	28.0	18.4	23.5	18.2
Engineering	36.5	1.6	26.0	2.6	35.3	2.2
Social Sciences	16.3	40.3	22.0	31.6	13.4	38.6
Arts/ Languages	3.3	8.0	2.0	13.2	6.6	11.3
N	208	62	100	38	119	44

* 309 South Asians were initially contacted and invited to take part in this study, however, the subject distribution of only 270 students was known.

T A B L E 9.3

Distribution of Total South Asian Undergraduates
Entering University in 1982 and Those Identified
for this Study - By Subject Area and Gender

Degree Subject	South Asian students entering University - 1982		South Asian * students identified for this study	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Medical Subjects	19.2	19.4	19.2	32.2
Pure Sciences	30.1	27.7	24.5	17.7
Engineering	26.4	3.3	36.5	1.6
Social Sciences	17.7	29.1	16.3	40.3
Arts/ Languages	6.4	20.3	3.3	8.0
N	931	443	208	62

* 309 South Asians were initially contacted and invited to take part in this study, however, the subject distribution of only 270 students was known.

T A B L E 9.4

the subject area distributions for the national sample and of those identified for this survey were probably a result of the type of universities willing to cooperate in this study.

9.2 Graduate Perceptions Of the Higher Education Experience

The methodology for this study was designed, so that students were initially contacted during their final year at university, and interviews (33 with South Asians and 16 with White British respondents) were conducted in the summer after they had completed their final examinations. This was a decisive period for all respondents: many had come to the end of their academic education and were hoping to enter "the world of work". For others the degree enabled them to continue with their higher education and perhaps train for a professional career. The recent graduates who were interviewed in the summer of 1985, found that the end of their degree course made them consider their careers and their futures; it was also an opportunity to assess the benefits or otherwise of their experiences in higher education.

All the respondents were asked whether they felt they had gained, academically and socially, from their time at university. The open ended nature of the questions resulted in a wide range of comments. 81% (27 students) of the South Asians and 87% (14 students) of the White British respondents interviewed said that academically they had benefited greatly from being at university. They felt they had gained greater insight into and felt competent

within their chosen areas of study. A South Asian student of Banking commented:

'....now I know how the financial system works - I can apply this knowledge to industry.'

While a South Asian Electronics graduate felt that he had gained 'intensive knowledge and expertise' in his field. A White British student of Economics said that his university course was structured such that he had 'learnt lots of little things', while not being sufficiently knowledgeable in any one area. For those students who had opted for a vocational degree, the academic benefits of following such a course were perhaps more obvious. Two students, one from each ethnic group, who had graduated in Dentistry, felt that they had left university 'with a profession'.

Most graduates, however, who felt they had gained academically from being at university, noted that this was essentially because they had obtained a degree, or a qualification which would provide various employment opportunities. A South Asian Civil Engineering graduate commented:

'.... I aimed for a degree and I got that that's the main thing isn't it? some sort of security its like a licence for employment'

A White British woman with a degree in Business Studies, and the offer of a position of trainee manageress with a large retail outlet, stated clearly:

"My degree was directly responsible for my getting the job I have."

Many students also suggested that, regardless of the subject area studied, following a degree level course meant that they developed and learnt to utilise, a different perspective in approaching problems and searching for solutions. This was seen by many as the most beneficial byproduct of their formal learning at university. A South Asian Economics student stated:

"I've learnt to think logically, rationally I'm much sharper now than I used to be."

While another South Asian student claimed:

"Academically I think it's not that I know much more in terms of material, but I've learnt a certain way of looking at things and a certain way of thinking."

A White British Civil Engineer said of his time in higher education:

" when I went to university my attitude to academic work was quite different to now well, I got DDE at 'A' level and I've ended up with a First, so I've changed quite a lot really. But it did take three years, it wasn't an instantaneous thing I wanted to be a very good Engineer and getting a good degree, seemed the best way of doing it..."

Three White British and six South Asian interviewees stated that, academically, they did not feel they had gained much from their period in higher education. This was seen mainly as a result of poor teaching, coupled with individual students' retrospective views that the areas they had chosen to study did not always reflect their interests and abilities. Several students also felt they had been negatively affected by the financial constraints

placed upon British universities during the 1980s. Graduates of both ethnic groups made comments such as:

" the course was hopeless towards the end because of the cuts"

".... because of the cuts, departments were merged and options were reduced."

All the respondents in the interview sample were also asked whether they felt socially enriched after their experiences at university. 24% of the South Asians interviewed (8 students) and 37% (6 students) of the White British interviewees made no comment on this issue. The number of students remaining in both groups were too small to make any comparative analysis. Yet for many graduates what they learned outside their strictly formal education was seen as more important and perhaps of greater consequence. Respondents from both ethnic groups reported that since coming to university they had grown in maturity and gained confidence both about themselves and in their dealings with other people. Both South Asian and White British students made comments such as:

" living away from home it's a sink or swim situation and I think I've developed as a person."

Such experiences led to a feeling of self confidence and self worth, which often resulted in an acute sense of independence. A South Asian graduate said of his time at university:

"It's taught me independence, I've grown up a hell of a lot I don't feel the need for emotional, physical, financial security from my parents, say as much as I would have done had I stayed at home, or perhaps not had the same kind of education."

Both South Asians and White British undergraduates found the university environment to be a safe arena, where they learnt to deal with a variety of people and new and different situations. These were seen as 'invaluable experiences', which were potentially useful both socially and in the work environment.

The only area where there were notable differences between the two groups' perceptions of the social benefits of higher education, was that while many of the South Asians mentioned status, the White British tended to emphasise the development of close friendships. A South Asian Banking graduate commented:

" status was achieved by going to university, this was important both personally and for the family."

While a South Asian Biology graduate stated:

" I've gained a piece of paper with a 2:2, which is fine by me, obviously the family are very proud, so am I, I worked hard for it it was a great sense of achievement for myself really, because it was for myself that I did it"

The most significant differences in this area emerged, when the two groups were talking of their total experiences in higher education and whether, with hindsight, they would have done anything differently. 62% (10 students) of the White British interviewees and 39% (13 students) of the South Asians stated that

if they were about to enter an institution of higher education for the first time, they would not do anything differently. A South Asian Economics graduate commented:

" once you decide you're going to work as hard as a certain level, to do reasonably well, like a 2:1 or a 1st, then that only leaves a certain amount of time and of that time, I think I made pretty good use."

Yet 37% of the White British, compared to 59% of the South Asian students noted that having been through higher education, there are certain things they would do differently, if they had their time at university again. These included working harder and making more effective use of the leisure facilities available at university. Interestingly, however, 12% (2 respondents) of the White British and 24% (8 respondents) of the South Asians interviewed said that they would have chosen a different course of study. From the South Asians there was a unanimous response, that they would select a more vocational degree course, with improved prospects in employment being the most critical factor. A South Asian Chemical Engineering graduate, who was having difficulty in securing suitable employment, stated:

"Thinking in terms of a career, I wish I'd done Optics or Pharmacy after your first year pre-reg, you're guaranteed a job."

While another South Asian said he had chosen to study Management at university,

" because I didn't want to do Medicine every (Asian) parent, uncle, auntie, they always say 'you're

going to be a doctor aren't you?' I know my mother wanted me to be a doctor as well, simply because my dad was to be honest I slightly regret that now (not doing medicine) at least there'd be a job for me at the end'

A South Asian Computer Science graduate also commented that certain vocational degrees would improve the prospects of self employment:

"Computing is boring, that was the only drawback I think I may have done Pharmacy it's a better course, I could start my own business, but in this way I'll have to go out and look for a job and that's also tough"

Two White British respondents also remarked that if they were to start again, they would choose to follow a different course. One stated the preference for a vocational degree; the other, an Engineering graduate, simply wished for 'an easier course'.

However, all the White British interviewees and the majority of the South Asians felt they had made the right decision in going to university. A South Asian student who had studied Biology reflected:

"If I hadn't had the opportunity for education, I'd be stuck at home and perhaps got involved with the family business which didn't interest me at all, which is also part of the reason I wanted to go away to university they encouraged me all the time, they never stopped (the family) to join the business I see that (business) as a security, at least I've got something to fall back on, but it's something I don't want to fall back on. I felt the need to go out and develop myself as a person rather than being spoon fed all my life"

While a South Asian Computer Science graduate did have certain reservations about the benefits incurred from his university education:

" if I did anything else I would have been in business that's all that's the advantage in that you'd be rich by now I mean after four years you'd have progressed a lot I don't want to be a shopkeeper now because I've got a degree now if I go out to work, I'll earn what about 8K, push it up in a few years to whatever 12K, 15K - but you'll never be as rich as in a business I enjoyed university but if you look at it financially then yes there's a regret, 'cause it doesn't make sense"

For the total sample, that is of the 163 White British and 138 South Asian undergraduates and those who responded to the question, 96% of the former and 98% of the latter stated that they did not regret entering higher education. The five White British and two South Asians who did have regrets, claimed that this was mainly because they did not feel that they had gained a great deal from the experience and that higher education had not necessarily improved their prospects in employment.

Although the interview sample which provided the information presented in this section, was relatively small, the responses broadly indicated the similarities between the South Asian and White British respondents' perceptions of their general experiences in higher education. On the whole both groups felt that their 3 or 4 years at university had given them the opportunity to develop personally and intellectually while the degree also provided some form of security for the future. This concern for security was particularly stressed in the responses

of the South Asians who valued an academic qualification for the status it brought, as well as its perceived ability to enable entry to the high levels of the labour market. This was demonstrated in their desire to follow vocational courses which would prepare them for a profession and 'guarantee' future employment.

9.3 The Experiences of South Asians at University

A major area of interest of this study has been the experiences of South Asian students at British Universities. In total there were 138 South Asian respondents in the sample and of those who answered the question, 74% (97 participants) stated that they had not faced any problems at university, which could be specifically attributed to their ethnicity. 26% (34 students), however, admitted having faced some difficulties because of this fact. Of those South Asians who had experienced problems, 64% (22 respondents) saw these as being mainly socially oriented, 23% (8 students) specified academic difficulties and 11% (4 students) noted problems experienced in both areas.

From the total sample, indepth interviews were conducted with 33 South Asian students. The findings derived from this phase were not entirely consistent with those drawn from similar questions in the questionnaire stage. An overall larger proportion of the interview sample (46%) claimed to have faced some difficulty at university, which could be attributable to

their ethnicity. The differences in the responses given by the questionnaire and interview samples could partly be a result of the different research methods used. The interview may be seen as the most appropriate technique of eliciting information on sensitive issues, such as race and racism. Additionally, as the interviewer, herself, was of South Asian origin, this shared identity may have encouraged respondents to talk more openly about their attitudes and experiences.

Despite the discrepancies between the responses of the questionnaire and interview samples, the major trend remains the same: a greater proportion of both groups had faced social as opposed to academic difficulties, as a result of their ethnic origin.

9.3.1 Academic Difficulties

The academically related problems faced by South Asian students at university may be distinguished between those of attitudes held by tutors and lecturers and the perception of differential treatment resulting from such attitudes. Figueroa (1982) has termed this as the 'racial frame of reference', which refers to the set of 'common' or 'accepted' knowledge about a particular ethnic group or ethnic minorities in general. It is suggested that these may be used by teachers or lecturers in their daily interactions with these students. In the present study there is evidence of university lecturers holding stereotypical

images of black people as 'foreigners' who experience difficulties with the English language. One South Asian undergraduate attending a university in a city with a large ethnic minority population, mentioned the following incident:

"When we were sitting in a lecture and a black guy, a close friend of mine, he came in about 20 minutes late and the lecturer, who happened to be my tutor, turned round and said, 'Well perhaps Mr (name of student) you'd care to set your watch to the time of this country.' I nearly died, I thought if I were that student, I'd have turned around and walked away."

Regarding linguistic ability, one Sociology student commented:

"They tended to pick on your English a lot more than anybody else, even if you were writing the same standard essays"

While a South Asian woman wishing to study for a French degree, noted:

'I had to prove to a few lecturers in my 1st year that my French was good enough to be studied at university. I also felt that I had to prove that I could write essays in Social Sciences, i.e. subjects which required "thinking".'

Such attitudes held by tutors and lecturers may not only reflect in their behaviour, but may also influence their decision making. In this study, some students of South Asian origin felt they were ignored or overlooked in preference to White British students. One Chemical Engineering undergraduate noted:

"I think some of the teachers were discriminating all the 'coloureds' were doing the worst I

couldn't believe it their (tutors) attitude of just ignoring you and not giving you any help especially my course tutor ... when I used to go to see him, he'd say to me after a few minutes, that I've got to leave and I'd see other White students going in and staying there an hour, two hours, sitting and discussing with him and when I'd go he'd say "Sorry Mr (name of student), I've got this problem, that's your problem and you've got to sort it out yourself" some of the problems he could do something about"

A South Asian medical student hoping to obtain further clinical training noted:

"I believe academically I was overlooked in favour of a White candidate in an interview for a clinical school place - indeed the very fact that I spoke the Queens English amazed them (name of university) is typical in that people here like to think themselves as liberals, but underneath lurk the resentments and certainly we have our share of racist snobs".

Other South Asians made more general comments about their dissatisfaction. One undergraduate when asked if he had faced any academic difficulties which were specifically related to his ethnicity, commented:

' I'm not bitter about them, but they relate to the differing marks and opportunities open to the other students in preference to me.'

While another student made a pertinent point when he remarked:

" you never get to that personal level with tutors really, at university. All you do is attend lectures and then go and sit the exam, so I don't think you can face any prejudices only if you know them at a personal level, that you find out what their feelings are by my final year I realised

that they don't really regard black people as much
...."

This student was following a four year degree in Computer Science, where the third year was spent in industry, gaining valuable work experience. His search for industrial placement, as related below, was one of the incidents responsible for the student's disillusionment with the attitudes of certain academics at university.

" especially our Head of Department I'd say he was very prejudiced. There were about 10 people who wanted to do industrial training, and all you had to do was fill in a form and he'd arrange interviews for you ... I was the only 'coloured' student who applied they (the White British) were all given interviews, you know, everywhere and some even had two interviews at different firms and they made choices as to where they wanted to go and so on, and at that time I wasn't sent for any interviews. So then I saw the Head, three or four times, so he said, 'O.K. I'll do something for you' ... I didn't think he'd get me a job anyway so I applied to about 100 firms myself, I didn't get any interviews though just before Easter, the lecturer asked me to fill in a form for a company in Wolves and he said 'During Easter you should have an interview,' in Wolves this was, for Cobol Programming he phoned me up later and said 'I've arranged an interview for you in Devon I went to Devon anyway for the interview because I had no choice I got the job the salary was £65 a week, before tax, before insurance, and because that place was a holiday resort, the accommodation was also expensive. They (the company) said they'd find me accommodation it was £20 a week and I was expected to share one room with 3 other students so I went to see my lecturer again after that I said that I didn't think that was enough (the money) he said it was enough in his opinion and when I asked if he could send me for some other interviews, he said he can't in the end everyone got a place anyway, it's just that I ended up with the worst one of all.

In the summer (name of reputable computer company based in London), who I'd applied to earlier, called me for an interview and I got a job with them - but I got that of my own accord really. So I took

it and phoned the university up and told them he (lecturer) was really upset with me for that the phone went dead when I was talking to him...."

Although this student was bitter about the treatment he had received, he felt powerless to challenge the processes which placed him at a disadvantage. As he later commented:

" you can't really go up to him (Head of Department) and accuse him of being racist or anything, I mean whenever I write references down for my job, I have to write his name."

Similarly a South Asian student at a different university, studying for a four year degree in Biology, also mentioned that he was given very few interviews for his industrial placement. He said that those he did receive were mainly for poor positions. When initially he had failed to gain employment, the placements officer at university suggested to him, that perhaps he was going to interviews with a negative attitude. Finally, he was offered a job picking cucumbers at a farm:

" when I phoned the university and told them I wasn't keen to take the job, they almost threatened me, and said I wouldn't get my degree otherwise, so I had to do it."

In assessing the comments presented in this section it must be acknowledged that the researcher only had access to one side of each situation - that is the students' views of their position. Further, questions on individual academic ability, which may help contextualise their experiences, could not be easily examined. Nonetheless, the final degree results of South Asian

undergraduates interviewed for this study (see Chapter 10), suggest they may have above average levels of ability. However, it is important that some South Asian students actually perceived their interactions with university lecturers to be influenced by racist overtones and their own construction of reality should be accepted as valid knowledge.

Thus the information discussed in this section indicates the 'racial frames of reference' used by some lecturers in higher education as identified by some South Asian students. These may be seen to be similar to those used by some teachers at school, therefore perpetuating racist activity throughout the education system.

9.3.2 Social Difficulties

For those South Asian undergraduates (from the questionnaire and interview samples) who had faced problems at university, ethnic and racial differences resulted in difficulties mainly in the social arena. The problems of interpersonal relationships were twofold. First, the South Asian students were not readily accepted by the majority White British student population. Second, the South Asians themselves found it difficult to relate to the White British students.

As far as the first issue is concerned, there are various ways in which South Asian students were made to feel uncomfortable

during their time at university. As a Pharmacy student noted on his questionnaire:

' Racial hatred is shown in many ways - abuse, non-cooperation, violence etc. Socially you are not accepted but merely tolerated.'

Even this was not always the case, however; some South Asians told of unpleasant experiences in university Halls of Residence.

One woman in campus accommodation stated:

' I first lived in a corridor where I was the only Asian. The others had never seen or been in close contact with an Asian and it took a long time before I was accepted as a person. I would over hear racist jokes and then they'd say, "but not you of course!"

General problems which were socially oriented were also mentioned by other South Asian students. A Bengali student of Chemical Engineering noted:

' I come from a very poor country, and a lot of people seem to treat me inferior to the average friendly group at university.'

While a Sikh student stated on the questionnaire:

' Socially, some people find me difficult to talk to (because I wear a turban?)'

Even within the environment of the academic department it was found that friendships were not easily formed. As one undergraduate put it:

' (I was the) only Asian in the whole of the Geography department, therefore more easily noticed and recognised, not initially accepted by peer groups, as readily as other students.'

And where friendships were formed, tensions still remained:

' Students are the biggest biggots around. You'd expect students to have liberal views and generally accepting - but 9/10 are not. I am very aware of any racist comments made on the course or by friends, who make the comments, and then justify themselves by saying that they didn't meant it'.

However, not all the South Asian undergraduates had negative perceptions of the attitudes of the White British student population. One Sociology student referred to her friendship with members of the White British communities in the following manner:

" We sat down and had good discussions about our positions in life and our views, our values, us being Asians and them being White"

While a Pharmacy undergraduate, when asked if he had faced any difficulties with the White British students at university, remarked:

" they're all intelligent people, they realise that making racist remarks is not worth it, they know we're the same and all that. I think they're more grown up about it and if they are racist, they won't show it openly, they'll talk amongst themselves."

The prevalence of potentially racist attitudes which may not be overtly demonstrated to minority students was further suggested by

the comments of another South Asian graduate, who said at the interview:

" Socially nothing directly to my face, but again you live your own life, in your own little groups but when you're with certain people it's quite clear that they don't really like you but it could have been class or it could be just colour."

Perceived differences in attitudes and lifestyles also resulted in difficulties on the part of many South Asian students to socialise with and adapt to the White British student population. Certain habits of the latter group were seen as particularly problematic, as one undergraduate recalled:

" In my first year I found it difficult to settle down and make friends most of these guys were into drinking and I wasn't really used to it if you want to mix with them, you have to be like them, or at least know about it"

While a Pakistani student noted on his questionnaire:

' Being a Moslem, I don't drink; I feel that by not drinking, it is more difficult to get to know people. Most people at the (name of university) are "boozers" and hang around in the bar - I find myself out of place there. Note - it is more difficult to socialise BUT NOT impossible.'

For other South Asian students, however, the general differences in attitudes and beliefs between themselves and the wider student population were found to be too great, thus hindering the development of interpersonal relationships. This is indicated by the perceptions of at least three students:

' Difficulty in relating to Whites properly - although get on well on the surface, deep down you find that they are different. Easier to get on with Asians as they shared the same problems I did.'

' Also, socially you have to compromise with the Whites + there is little room to show one's Indianess in a white group. It can be very restrictive and limiting.'

" A lot of these whites, I don't necessarily agree with or get on with too well, a lot of their attitudes beat the hell out of me I felt superior to them because of our background and attitudes it's not something you advertise though"

Due to the twin difficulties faced by many South Asians in being socially accepted by and adjusting to the White British students at university, many turned to other minority students for companionship.

Of the 33 South Asians interviewed, 51% (17 respondents) said that their closest friends at university were mainly other South Asian students. On the other hand, 33% (11 respondents) stated that their closest friends were from varied backgrounds. Only 15% (5 respondents) of those South Asians interviewed said that they mixed mainly with White British students, the chief reason being the small numbers of South Asians at their university. Minority students' preference to form close relationships with those from a similar background was mainly explained in terms of feeling more comfortable with those with whom they had more in common. A female medical student noted:

" I had very few Asian friends at school when I came to university, all the girls in the house were English, most of the people on my course they were as well I felt the need to sort of have Asian friends, I felt more at home with them ..."

While a South Asian student who had previously attended a large inner city comprehensive school remarked:

" At school I knew mostly Asians and so at university I intended to broaden out, but it just happened that Asians were the people I preferred to be with and found most interesting...."

Even for those South Asians with some White British friends it was noted:

" you naturally feel different because they're a different race there are jokes that I'm white and you're brown subconsciously you always think you are from another part of the world"

A Biology graduate commented upon his friendships with other students,

" On the whole I didn't get any hassle and where my white friends were being racist I'd tell them and I chose friends who were not racist, sexist etc You obviously choose your company and you wouldn't stick around with a guy who's making racist jokes and thinks this is funny and you should accept it as part and parcel of life, like the English take the mickey of the Irish and think that's funny. I think there's a limit"

One of the main ways in which friendships at university were both developed and maintained, was through the activities of the various societies. 66% (92 respondents) of the total sample of South Asian students were members of their university Asian societies. The main reasons given for membership were to meet other South Asians, or people with whom they shared common values, which would enable the maintenance of their cultural ties. The

following quotes represent the reasoning of several students for joining the various Asian Societies at their university.

' I think it was important for me to have something I could identify with, something that was familiar to me, something that reinforced my cultural beliefs and traditions.'

' To meet other Asians and make more friends outside the English university community - to which you feel you don't belong.'

" to take part in the cultural activities and deep down, for a sense of security, to meet other Asians and to know that you are not alone."

While some South Asians had attended schools with a limited number of minority pupils, the university environment and particularly the Asian Societies facilitated the process of meeting and learning. This was done by mixing with other South Asian students from diverse backgrounds along with overseas students who had come from the Asian sub-continent. A further function served by such Societies was to help South Asians share and deal with the reality of their experiences as minority students in a White majority environment. One undergraduate noted that he joined the Asian society,

" to participate in social activities, and alleviate the isolation of being away from home, and identify with others and share the problems and difficulties"

While another South Asian student stated:

' I've become more aware of racism and therefore more sensitive to it. The opportunity to share experiences with people of the same ethnic group as myself has made me more distant from the host culture and people, more wary of their intentions/behaviour.'

A Pharmacy undergraduate commented upon the cohesive nature of the Asian society at his university:

" I was quite surprised it's completely different from school when you are there (university), you're all together, they protect each other and help each other out, it's good it's one big happy family"

Similar experiences were mentioned by many of the South Asians interviewed. However, not all the students felt that the Asian Society created a sense of cohesion amongst the minority students at university. Other South Asians felt that such 'self segregation' was not necessarily desirable. One student of South Asian origin (who had migrated from Mauritius) noted:

' Initially, for the first few weeks of the first year the feeling that there were so many whites and me one of few Asians also a feeling of not belonging to any Asian group, due to my inability to speak an Asian language'

While an Engineering undergraduate noted both positive and negative outcomes from his involvement with the Asian Society:

' I have found things at university about Indian culture which make me proud to be an Indian. I try to mix around as much as I can, but it doesn't take long to realise that many (maybe I to a certain extent) Indians stick together. When I see tables (in the refectory) full of Indians and other tables full of English people, it really makes me sick. As far as I'm concerned its our fault as much as theirs - and having

an Indian Society (in my opinion) promotes segregation.'

It was also felt that often the majority students saw the existence of Cultural Societies as divisive; as one South Asian respondent noted:

' We've got an Indian Society at our place and I think they resent that; and I don't think its one or two, but the majority of the whites what they are trying to say is, and they've got a valid point I think, they say that if you're part of the university, you shouldn't try and segregate yourselves purposely.'

However, the 'self segregation' of minority students was said to occur beyond Society activities, and this was seen to be generally undesirable by some South Asian students:

" Asians tend to have flats on ther own, that's a bad move, because though you're happier there, it doesn't improve anybodys understanding of you. This is important because it improves relationships on campus and you get far less hassle then. I wouldn't do it consciously I don't think we owe them anything"

Another student commented:

" I don't want to get too invloved in the Asian life (at university), because you find yourself insulated. Lot of Indians have a bad attitude, where they don't want to mix you have to participate at their (White British) level, and not always stick together as a bunch of Indians, it's the most counterproductive thing you can do - you're not aware of the outside world then ... 'gorias' (whites) have this killer instinct where the opportunities are and how can I snap them up and the Indians don't have that"

A prominent feature of this section, examining the social difficulties encountered by South Asian undergraduates during their time at university, has been the variability in the perceptions elicited. However, the overtly racist attitudes and behaviour reported here may be seen as an underestimation of such beliefs amongst students in higher education. For, as several South Asians commented, on the whole you can choose the type of people you wish to mix with and you are unlikely to choose a friend who has racist inclinations. As with the Afro Caribbean undergraduates participating in Tomlinson's (1983) study, some South Asian undergraduates who were the focus of this research also related feelings of isolation and alienation from the wider student population. The 'sheltering' strategies adopted here included socialising mainly with other minority students. This was made more congenial by the existence of student Asian Societies, which served an important function in a racially hostile environment. Although some South Asian students who favoured 'integration' were critical of such separatist groups, they largely placed the burden of integration on the ethnic

minorities, as opposed to a reappraisal of total student attitudes.

9.3.3 Personal Development and Possible Change in Outlook

Several studies have demonstrated that British parents of South Asian origin are very interested in their children's education and are keen for them to gain higher academic qualifications (Gupta, 1977; Kitwood and Borrill, 1980). South Asian parents' concern with cultural issues may also be seen as important, as indicated by the group meetings of ethnic minority parents, arranged by the PSI research team in 1984. With reference to one group, Tomlinson notes the 'major anxiety which many Muslim parents feel: that their British-born children will move away from their faith, culture and influence' (1984:78).

To date no study has investigated South Asian parental views of their offsprings leaving home in pursuit of higher qualifications. Existing data, however, suggest that some parents may be concerned if their children were to move away from home and into an environment with greater western influences. Nevertheless, the findings of the present study indicated that, since going to university, a greater proportion of South Asians, both in the questionnaire and interview samples, felt further drawn towards their cultural background than towards the acceptance of more western attitudes and values (see Table 9.5). The discrepant findings of the two techniques of data collection

Cultural Development of South Asian Undergraduates
During Their Time At University

Answers to the question: 'Since coming to University (and possibly living away from home) do you feel you have become more anglicised in your outlook, or have you been further drawn towards your cultural background?

Response	Questionnaire Sample	Interview Sample
	%	%
(A) Cultural Background	33.3 (46)	63.6 (21)
(B) Anglicised	22.4 (31)	18.1 (6)
Both (A) + (B)	15.9 (22)	15.1 (5)
Neither (A) or (B)	23.1 (32)	3.0 (1)
No Answer/Don't Know	5.0 (7)	-
N	100 (138)	100 (33)

T A B L E 9.5

have already been alluded to and may be seen as affected both by the methods used and the nature of the information to be elicited from the respondents.

The results presented in Table 9.5 are in general agreement with a small scale study involving twelve South Asian undergraduates. It was found there that more than half of the sample felt they had been more drawn towards their cultural background since coming to university (Tanna, 1983). However, this was in contrast to the findings of two other studies (N.U.S., 1980; Tomlinson, 1983), which noted that large proportions of minority undergraduates felt that they had succeeded in education only at the cost of sacrificing their cultural identity. Unfortunately, both of these studies dealt with small samples of Afro Caribbean students. In the absence of existing research dealing with the experiences of South Asians in British higher education, this is the first study which has examined the influence of university on South Asian undergraduates' cultural perceptions of themselves.

The present study noted that 35% (46 students) of the South Asians in the questionnaire sample and 63% (21 students) of those in the interview sample felt more drawn towards their cultural background after having attended university. The reasons given by these respondents were threefold. Firstly, it was believed that being at university gave them a chance to re-evaluate their ideas. Secondly, they were seen to be influenced by other South Asians and finally, the interest shown in Asian cultures by some non-Asian students also aroused their curiosity.

Many South Asian students found that after having had the opportunity of assessing non-Asian values and lifestyles more fully they were happier adhering to their own cultural background.

A South Asian woman noted on her questionnaire:

' I am further drawn to my cultural background since the opportunity to experience English way of life was presented and I was able to choose what suited me most. I have been able to balance both out but I will always remain Asian through and through - regardless of clothes or speech (English most of the time).'

While another student stated:

' coming away from home has brought me even closer to my culture since I have had the chance to assess and re-evaluate ideas about my own culture with respect to others. Thus have come to appreciate and value my own culture and religion.'

Some South Asian undergraduates in this study had attended schools where ethnic minorities formed a very small proportion of the total school population: university gave them the first opportunity to meet numerous South Asians, who were of their own age group.

One Indian student who had migrated from Trinidad commented:

' My background is far from traditional for an Asian, or even an Asian/West Indian come to that. When I came to university I was anglicised to a very great degree, due in part to the school I went to, where there were very few Asians, and due also to my upbringing. If anything, I suppose I have become more drawn to my cultural background. My parents never pressured me to follow their upbringing (if it was good enough for me, its good enough for you!). I feel as though I've missed out quite a lot by not having the knowledge/cultural background that many of my friends share.'

Another South Asian student, having attended a large comprehensive school with high concentrations of ethnic minorities, also felt greater affinity with his ethnicity after three years at university. He stated:

' At university you meet a lot of Indian students and unlike school, you discuss a lot of things - and also when you're away you appreciate certain home values much more'

Many undergraduates also found that university gave them the opportunity to meet a variety of South Asians, who differed in religion, language and lifestyles. There was also a chance to mix with overseas students, especially those who came from the Indian sub-continent, and who brought with them a distinct perspective of Asian cultures. A South Asian student of Politics commented:

" I can definitely say that I have drawn towards my own cultural background I appreciate it much more I have learnt so much more about other Asians from the different parts of India, Pakistan, Kenya etc. Somehow it brought me close to my ethnic origin, perhaps it is because I see that we have so much, the English way of life seems very dull. When I look towards my own culture I feel proud."

A South Asian student who was both adamant in his opinions and confident of his future prospects, said of his experience at university:

" I've become more aggressive and it was necessary, in order to compete both in job market and socially, you shouldn't concede so much and you have to compete in any conversation - you have to have the will to win if you want to maintain your credibility in this sort of community (university) you have to prove something it's important to prove to yourself,

especially for Asians, it's a confidence building process. At university you experience both cultures at their severest, now I can flirt from one to the other and it's a fantastic feeling - I've realised the merits of both and if it should come to the death I'm Asian and university has confirmed this Even though I'm born here, my affinity is with India, you know, the feelings that run through Indian people are totally different to the English sentiments."

However, the process of consciously accepting their ethnicity, was not always an easy one. A South Asian undergraduate said at the interview:

" It was a shock for me to fit in with their kind of life which was different to the life that I'd led and at first I wanted to do that and then I realised that I didn't really need to fit in with them but it took a while for that to happen I wasn't very happy about it in the first term."

While a female student of Biological Sciences related:

" I know I'm Indian and I'm going to stay (that) no matter what I do, so I think I've learnt to blend the two together than trying to apologise for things now I try and get my white friends to accept things rather than me having to apologise for them."

Many South Asians who were previously reluctant to acknowledge their ethnicity found that at university many non-Asians were interested in their culture and background. Such interest may be seen as a process of legitimisation, which enabled many South Asians to take pride in their own culture. One South Asian commented:

" At school I was always a bit hesitant to tell people sort of about our culture at university I found that people were really interested and it seemed that

both cultures could coexist without any trouble I think I got a bit of pride in some of the things we do."

Additionally, South Asians also found that the university provided a 'safe environment', where the acceptance of their home culture could be allowed to develop. One student noted:

' I've become more conscious of my ethnic background and upbringing and value it in contrast to my contempt for it at school because I thought it kept me apart from the friends I had made.'

Another student, when asked whether he felt he had become more anglicised since coming to university, commented:

' More like de-anglicised - I felt and discovered that university was a place where you could be yourself and do what you wanted, particular with regard to holding views about your culture and following your culture. There, I felt no fear of ridicule for holding Asian views, whereas at school I did and hated people mistaking me for an Indian. (I always let them know I was Mauritian not Indian).'

23% (31 respondents) of the South Asians who completed the questionnaire and 18% (6 respondents) of those who were interviewed felt that they had become anglicised since coming to university. Very few of these students, however, felt totally anglicised. One Pharmacy student commented:

" I've begun to think more like them the longer we stay here the less you are in contact with your customs also our family is not very religious, so we don't go to 'gurdwaras' or temples and we don't meet other people, so we're out of contact with people (my family) are not anglicised, it's just the job they have, running a shop is a 7 days a week thing and they don't get a chance really."

While a South Asian Geography student found himself increasingly drawn into particular aspects of the White British lifestyles. He noted:

' There has been a tendency to move away from the cultural background and to accept some of the white middle class views of peer students + lecturers alike. A tendency to mix in white m/c circles, and undertake white m/c pursuits eg. theatre, reading professional journals and m/c newspapers. Imposition of a conservative attitude and outlook on life.'

While some South Asians felt that although the university experience had made them more anglicised in their perspectives on life, it was not always possible or desirable to ignore their ethnic origins. A South Asian medical student commented:

' I have become more anglicised now - but when I first came to Uni I felt the conflict was very great and I did feel troubled. Now I feel at home being me - and maybe that is to be anglicised. I haven't forgotten my cultural background and I'm proud of it - but I have lived here so long, it isn't a great part of my life anymore - when I am with my family + their circle of friends it certainly is, but I cherish the other part of my life which is separate from my family - I am independent and I love it!'

Another student made a highly pertinent point when he stated:

' I have become more anglicised but one can't change skin colour therefore you must be aware of your background + cultures - not necessarily religion, as long as you are morally intact.'

For the majority of South Asians, however, who saw themselves as having become anglicised, this was mostly at a superficial level, where certain overt aspects of the 'western'

lifestyle were adopted, with their core values remaining at variance to those held by their parents. Catherine Ballard (1979) commented in her study on second generation South Asians that, 'most young Asians are able to participate effectively in both cultural systems. This may mislead outsiders into believing that the "British" self which is presented to them is the whole picture' (1979:122). Ballard's conclusions are further supported by the findings of the present study, which are demonstrated by the perceptions of two South Asian undergraduates.

' I've become anglicised in the social sense i.e. do what the natives do in a strange place - this includes food, way of eating, social drinking. I feel, that I prefer the Indian way of living, and in this sense, I am more drawn to my cultural background.'

" I can understand and appreciate the westernised life and I think most people do become anglicised, within myself I've always been conscious that I'm Asian it doesn't matter how westernised I become in things I may do, even though I do those things, I'm still aware that I'm Asian - if there were a dividing line I'd always take the side of the Asian. I would know within myself when to stop. You have to become slightly anglicised living in this society, you can't go on living your own way, otherwise they don't like you"

Such comments seem to indicate that for some South Asian respondents who perceived themselves as having become anglicised since going to university, any changes may have been limited to superficial features of their life.

Table 9.5 also shows that similar proportions of both the South Asian questionnaire and interview samples (15%) stated that during their period at university they were further drawn towards

their cultural background, while also being attracted to certain aspects of the White British cultures. Here there is the emergence of South Asian identities, which reflect these young peoples' lived realities. There is not simply the imposition of certain 'western' attributes on an essentially Asian lifestyle. Rather, most of these respondents while aware of the more prominent differences in the values and lifestyles which make up the two separate cultural traditions, have carved their own identities. This has been done by accepting and rejecting aspects of both cultural traditions, thus reflecting the realities of their lives, which is neither as Asians, nor as British, but a synthesis of the various influences and cultures to which they have been exposed.

This is demonstrated by the comments of a South Asian woman studying Modern Languages. When asked whether her university experiences had made her more anglicised or perhaps more sympathetic towards her parental background she replied:

' There is a mixture of the two. I have been drawn further into my own culture - i.e. I place greater importance on my mother tongue, my religion, my family ties. I reject some of the long held beliefs about the woman's role in the family, I am a lot more independent and would not want to be stereotyped into any category'

An Economics student made the following comments about his own development at university:

" The biggest change socially is that I tend to step back a lot, even from friends and people I know well and sort of look at them a bit more cynically if you like it would be nice to be naive, but I

think it is necessary to be the way I am especially at (name of university) everybody's really nice on the surface and that's one of the biggest things I noticed, especially public school people, I think they are taught to be 'wonderful' they're very very polite Being at (name of university) involved making choices in how you wish to live and after (name of university) I've been able to make choices in the sense I choose now what I want to be and in some ways I emphasise the Indian side and in some ways I've accepted the English culture."

'Culture', however, cannot be seen as a static phenomenon, it is a dynamic process of conflict and change. Many South Asian students in this study were questioning and developing upon their cultural heritage. One undergraduate saw himself as adhering to South Asian cultural values, but not in an unquestioning manner:

' But I cannot accept some of the behaviour and attitudes of Asians bound by a strict sense of caste, religion and ritual which many of my generation still accept as a valid means of giving themselves an identity I think the nature of that identity must change.'

While a student reading Biology, said of his experience at university:

" You get to see your own culture from a different angle and perhaps accept things that you can accept at your own level, rather than being told that this is the way things are"

In conclusion to this section it should be noted that since coming to university the majority of South Asian students in this study did not neglect their 'culture' or move away from it to any great extent. Although secondary socialisation had occurred at university, individual students took different approaches to their

cultural adjustment. Even those respondents who perceived themselves as having become anglicised considered this to have taken place at a very superficial level. While others saw their lives as embedded within both cultures, to varying degrees. It may be argued that such a process of cultural acceptance would be inevitable as individuals get older; in fact this was given as an explanation by an undergraduate who found himself invariably leaning towards his cultural traditions:

' I have always maintained the philosophy that if it is good, adopt it! In that respect I have become neither; although having said that I must admit, with age, I have tended more and more to the Indian culture.'

However, such a process may not be totally expected when it is noted that of the total South Asian sample in this study, 23% were born in the U.K. and 58% had either always lived here, or had been here for more than fifteen years. Also of interest is that nearly 95% of the South Asian sample had most of their secondary education in this country.

Almost a quarter of the South Asians in the total sample, did not feel there had been any change in their outlook since coming to university. One undergraduate stated:

' I respect all cultures and take interest in all aspects of human interactions. I follow my own beliefs and practices, however, which are my personal thought on how I should behave in society. Therefore I am neither anglicised nor have I any cultural background.'

While another South Asian commented:

' To be honest, I don't think the problem has arisen. I never felt this "clash" of cultures and have had no problem in retaining my identity. Whether it was Asian or English, I don't know, but it was and is me. Having said that I have certainly come to appreciate the functional importance of Asian family structures and ethical conduct.'

To summarise: while at university, South Asian students had perhaps the most direct experiences of other cultures and also a limited opportunity to adopt and practice these. However, most of the participants in this study, followed a different path, whereby they increasingly identified with their cultural background, this often being their own unique view of 'Asianness'. These findings are in contrast to Rex's (1982) conjecture where he suggests, 'being a good Indian and being a successful middle-class student at the same time are by no means easy goals to attain. There is bound to be breakdown' (1982:61). Although the author has failed to provide any description or an indication of the characteristics which may identify 'a good Indian' or 'a successful middle-class student', it may be noted that the majority of the South Asians in this survey perceived themselves to be 'Asian' and there is no suggestion that they were in any way unhappy about this. On the contrary, pride in their culture was frequently mentioned. Nor is there any doubt that they were successful students; they were all following a degree level course at university and at least those in the interview sample had obtained respectable degrees (see Chapter 10).

It may be argued that Rex has construed culture in static terms which impoverishes his analysis. The issues discussed in this section, however, indicate empirically that culture should be

seen as a dynamic concept comprising evolving patterns and changes. Further, it must be acknowledged that both South Asian parents and their offsprings are involved in a continual process of socialisation and adaptation, which are seriously affected by the 'economic, political and ideological structures of the British society in which the Asians are a "racial" minority from the ex-colonies' (Brah, 1978:35). Nevertheless, different characteristics may be used by the two age groups in their definition of 'being Asian', which is largely influenced by the reality of their everyday lives.

9.4 Plans After Graduation

Table 9.6 refers to the post-graduation plans of all South Asian and White British students participating in this study. It can be pointed out that compared to the White British sample (59%), a slightly smaller proportion of the South Asians (51%) were going to look for employment directly after leaving university. A greater proportion of the South Asians were also hoping to enter postgraduate education. The main reason given by South Asian undergraduates for their wish to gain further qualifications was their belief that they had to be better qualified than their White British contemporaries in order to enter the same type of employment. However, many also acknowledged that the possession of higher academic credentials,

South Asian and White British Respondents' Plans
After Graduation

Plans	White British	South Asian
	%	%
Get a Job	59.0 (92)	51.9 (69)
Further Study	18.6 (29)	28.6 (38)
Vocational Training	14.7 (23)	15.0 (20)
Self Employment	3.7 (6)	1.5 (2)
Join Family Business	0.6 (1)	1.5 (2)
Emigrate	1.3 (2)	0
Other	3.8 (6)	1.5 (2)
N	159	133

T A B L E 9.6

would not eradicate automatically discriminatory processes in the labour market. They realised then, that by continuing with their education they might only be delaying the inevitable. A South Asian Physics graduate, hoping to enter Medicine commented:

" my parents always say that you've got to be better than other people.... whites, just to stand an equal chance, but I'm not quite as disillusioned as they are, but then again it's probably because I haven't had any serious experience of that sort of thing yet."

While a South Asian Chemical Engineering graduate, who was having difficulties in securing employment was considering doing an MBA, as he said, "out of desperation, just to do something!" When interviewed, a South Asian Sociology graduate going on to do a teacher training course stated:

" being black and female doesn't help matters much I'm sure you're going to face problems of some description there's not much you can do about it, so you tend to keep putting it off, to delay it, which is probably another reason why I'm not looking for jobs alright so I'm avoiding the subject a lot"

These arguments are further elaborated in the next Chapter which deals with the data relating to the labour market.

Table 9.6 also shows that a significant proportion of both the South Asian and White British students were planning to engage in some form of vocational training after they had left university. This was essentially due to the subjects studied by the South Asian sample (with the White British students being matched with the South Asians by subject area), such as Pharmacy,

Medicine, Optics and Law, all of which required some type of vocational training.

All 301 participants in the sample, irrespective of their immediate post graduation plans, were asked of the type of occupation they would eventually wish to enter. The majority from both ethnic groups had either applied for, or were eventually going to apply for, professional occupations (see Table 9.7).

The respondents were also asked to indicate those factors which they perceived to be the most important in their choice of career. Table 9.8 provides a summary of their responses. It may be noted that amongst both the White British and South Asian samples 'interest in the career' was found to be the most popular factor, though this was seen as more important for the former group. For the South Asians, 'independence', 'money' and 'security' were all seen as important criteria. Such preferences demonstrated by some South Asian undergraduates were further supported by, and may perhaps be responsible for, an enthusiasm amongst many interviewees for eventual self - employment.

The entire sample was also asked about the prospects of obtaining the type of occupation which they preferred. Table 9.9 shows that of those who answered, more than double the proportion of White British undergraduates, compared to the South Asians, stated that they had very good prospects, of securing the type of employment which they wanted. The South Asian sample may be seen to be rather less optimistic with 29% feeling that they did not have very good prospects or that they had very poor prospects, of

South Asian and White British Respondents
Occupational Preferences Expressed as
Socio Economic Grouping

Socio Economic Grouping	White British	South Asian
	%	%
1-2 Employers & Managers	1.3 (2)	0
3-4 Professional	89.3 (134)	92.6 (113)
5-7 Non-Manual	8.7 (13)	7.4 (9)
13-16 Farmers & Armed Forces	0.7 (1)	0
N	151	122

TABLE 9.7

Factors Identified by South Asian and White British
Respondents As The Most Important In Their Choice
Of Career

Most Important Criterion in Choice of Career	White British	South Asian
	%	%
Interest	57.0 (93)	44.9 (62)
Independence	9.2 (15)	15.2 (21)
Money	9.2 (15)	10.8 (15)
Security	7.3 (12)	10.1 (14)
Variety	9.8 (16)	7.2 (10)
Availability	3.6 (6)	5.7 (8)
Status	2.4 (4)	4.3 (6)
Other	1.2 (2)	1.4 (2)
N	163	138

T A B L E 9.8

Prospects Expected by South Asian and White British
Respondents of Obtaining the Type of Employment
Preferred

Prospects Expected in Employment	White British	South Asian
	%	%
Very Good	34.2 (51)	15.7 (19)
Good	33.6 (50)	33.1 (40)
Reasonable	20.1 (30)	22.3 (27)
Not Very Good	10.1 (15)	25.6 (31)
Very Poor	1.3 (2)	3.3 (4)
Other	0.7 (1)	0
N	149	121

T A B L E 9.9

being offered the type of job which they preferred. Three main reasons were given by both South Asian and White British respondents who were optimistic about securing appropriate employment. First, it was believed that in the subject that they had studied the demand for graduates was greater than their supply. This was especially true where a vocational degree was taken. Second, students commented that the particular institutions they had attended were highly thought of by employers. Finally, students referred to their personal qualities which would make them more employable. A South Asian Chemical Engineering graduate said of his area of work:

' The chemical industries have come out of the recession and are employing more graduates than a few years ago. Also several universities took up 4 year courses the year I went to university and this means they won't be graduating this year - thus increasing my chances.'

And another student commented about his vocational degree:

' Pharmacy is one of the few professions that one can reasonably expect to get a job when one requires it.'

However, even in those areas of the labour market where various opportunities were seen to be available some South Asian students felt that they would have to overcome certain barriers. As another Engineering graduate noted of his prospects in employment:

' fairly good at present. However an Asian would probably have to try 20-60% harder than others to penetrate these areas.'

Respondents from both ethnic groups also referred to personal experiences and qualities which they felt would make them attractive to employers. A White British student who was very optimistic about his prospects in the labour market, commented:

' I've done excellent in the past two years of my course and understand my subject well. Hopefully, companies will appreciate this. Also I get on well with people and participate in social and sporting activities.'

Those respondents in the sample from both ethnic groups, who were pessimistic about their future prospects in the economy often explained this by stating that there was an oversupply of graduates in their subject area, along with a general market recession in graduate employment. One White British student gave the following reasons about his pessimism in entering the labour market:

' Not one of the better universities attended competition is intense and the number of job opportunities had declined.'

While a South Asian Civil Engineering graduate stated in his questionnaire:

' (i) Not many jobs available (these days).
(ii) Not many firms appreciate graduate Engineers. (Who must have a chance to enter a firm so that experience can be obtained gradually). After all, experienced, senior, well motivated Engineers were once graduates.'

13% (16 students) of the South Asians in the main sample were not very hopeful of their prospects due to alleged racist practices operated by employers. The systematic, oppressive and marginalising influences of race, class and gender, were alluded to by many minority undergraduates. The most pertinent comments were made by various South Asians hoping to enter the British legal system. One male Law student who had graduated from a highly prestigious university noted:

' I'm the wrong colour, religion, class and politics, but fortunately not the wrong sex, for the Bar. But I'm going to break down those barriers if I can. The Bar is the epitome of the White (male) Anglo-Saxon Protestant establishment. The bastion of "Waspishness" if there ever was one.

Another Law graduate was even more pessimistic about his career as he felt that the legal system in the U.K. succeeded in marginalising minority individuals. He noted on the questionnaire:

' It is difficult for Asians/Blacks to penetrate the profession (they) are forced to find jobs in obscure provincial towns and run down urban slum areas. It is extremely difficult to find jobs in big practices because of entrenched attitudes. A survey by Legal Action Group (LAG) in 1982/83 showed that a large proportion of Asians and blacks simply surrender to the racist pressure within the profession and look for other work.'

South Asian Law graduates' apprehension about their future careers may be further supported by the experiences of one interviewee who had graduated with an Upper Second Class degree

and was having difficulty in securing a place to serve his articles. He commented:

" I've applied to about 50 firms all rejections, only one interview and that's through my dad and his contacts. Seeing other people on my course and how they are getting on, I'm sure there's discrimination there's a black girl on my course, she's the second best in the department and hasn't had a single interview, where as a white guy whose pushing to get a 2:2, has had three interviews it's not that there aren't enough jobs, there are plenty, it's just plain discrimination. The Law Society has been looking into this themselves."

This particular student's father was a barrister by profession (although he was not practicing), and through his contacts the student had been able to gain valuable work experience during his university vacations. Having faced difficulties in obtaining articles, despite this work experience, had made the respondent especially bitter:

" I've had the experience, I've got contacts with people in the profession and I'm not stupid it's just that people who aren't in such a fortunate position and who aren't as clever as me, they're actually getting a chance to prove themselves and I haven't even been given that chance."

Although despondent, the student was fairly confident of his prospects, though these were seen as limited:

" I have to be confident that I'll get something somewhere, I feel I'm capable and that once I pass my Part 2's (of Law School Finals), they can't deny me a place, what can they say if I don't get in then it's just discrimination it's a matter of getting training and I'll get that, if it's not one of those White firms it'll be through contacts with perhaps an Asian firm. I want to work in a White firm

and get in there independently of any contacts and get in there with my qualifications I would have liked to have gone to the Bar, but I won't because of all the discrimination it's so difficult to get Chambers and I wouldn't be getting proper Briefs, I'll just be doing the loose ends, when all the other barristers would be making their money and I just wouldn't be able to make a living"

The effects of discriminatory practices in employment, based on race and gender, were illuminated by the experiences and perceptions of a South Asian female medical graduate. When interviewed she noted:

" I'm hoping to get on to a training scheme for General Practice most of the GPs are sort of middle class and White and they are the ones who are picking you and it's the trend here in (name of university town) that they very rarely pick any Asians, this is what you can see very good students with very good qualifications. I mean they have been shortlisted, but it's at the interview where people fall down, where your background counts I've heard this said by some of the Consultants, that if they get a foreign sounding name, you put it at the bottom of the pile and they sort of look through the other applications first."

Although there were only 38 South Asian women participating in this study (largely a reflection of their relatively small numbers at universities) it was found that they generally expected to be disadvantaged in the labour market due to the connotations of their race and gender. Again the graduate quoted above noted on her questionnaire:

' It is harder for a woman to get the "good" jobs in medicine because prospective employers are wary of women who may take time off etc. to have children.'

Several South Asian graduates stated both in their questionnaires and at the interview stage that the relative lack of appropriate jobs, coupled with the discriminatory practices operated by employers, were adversely affecting their position in the British economy. A South Asian Business Studies graduate who was having difficulty in obtaining interviews for Personnel and Retail Management jobs noted the following reasons in his questionnaire for his poor prospects:

- ' - Growth of unemployed graduates.
- Increasing Racism.
- Tendency of White Employers to give 1st preference to white graduates.
- Belief by employers that Asians will not fit into their firm.
- Belief that Asians will not be able to represent the firm.'

A Chemical Engineering graduate also noted, that the type of jobs he was looking for, were,

- ' traditionally dominated by those of European appearance/manner and suitable social background. This is because of the credibility of the company, an Asian makes in the face of:
 - a) The workforce
 - b) Potential customers '

Again, South Asian women found themselves to be acutely handicapped in their search for work. A Business Studies graduate said at her interview:

" There are few jobs for graduates, and I think employers will be more likely to choose White people or Asian men."

South Asian students' apprehensions of racist and discriminatory practices in employment were often justified by their own experiences. One Mathematics undergraduate who was later to gain an Upper Second Class degree and who was keen to become a trainee accountant, but consistently failed to be called for interviews, explained his position by noting in the questionnaire:

- ' Because of racial discrimination. Unlike other candidates I am always asked about:
- a) Whether my parents can speak English.
 - b) What types of jobs they have.
 - c) My brothers occupation.
 - d) My parents financial position etc.'

Some of the arguments presented in this section on students' plans after graduation are elaborated in the following chapter, which provides a comparative analysis of South Asian and White British graduates' search for work.

CHAPTER 10

THE EXPERIENCES OF SOUTH ASIAN AND WHITE BRITISH GRADUATES IN THEIR SEARCH FOR EMPLOYMENT AND THEIR INITIAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE OCCUPATION ENTERED

10.1 The Sample

The original postal questionnaire mailed to 590 South Asian and White British final year undergraduates asked the respondents if they were willing to be interviewed during the summer months following their graduation. A further letter was also sent to these students requesting their cooperation; details are provided in Chapter 6. Of the total students who volunteered to be interviewed, a sample of 58 was formulated. This group included 40 South Asian and White British respondents who planned to enter the labour market immediately upon graduation. The analysis which follows traces the fortunes of these graduates in their efforts to secure employment. This sub-sample consisted of 16 "pairs", where the South Asian and White British participants were matched by gender, course studied and wherever possible also by the university attended. (Unfortunately only one such pair was made up of female graduates. This may be a reflection of the small numbers of South Asian women identified for the original sample, as well as the tendency amongst those who responded to enter teacher training courses). Additionally, 8 further South Asians

who would be seeking employment and were willing to be interviewed were also included in the sub-sample. Suitable White British students, however, were not available for matching purposes. Therefore the data to be presented in this chapter were provided mainly by 24 South Asians and 16 White British respondents.

All interviews took place during July and August 1985: that is, after the students had taken their final examinations. Enclosed with each letter confirming the interview appointment was a Diary Report Form (see Appendix 4:a) which students were asked to complete and present at the interview. Here they were asked to provide a complete list of all the job applications made in their final year at university. For each one, respondents were asked to note the job title, name of firm or company, how they had been made aware of the vacancy and the procedural outcome of each application. Where the respondents had not secured a job at the time of the interview they were left with another Diary Report Form where they could continue to note the details of all further job applications. This form was recalled in late November 1986, with another being sent to those who remained unsuccessful in gaining employment. This last form was recalled in January 1987.

10.1.1 Degree Results

As the South Asian and White British samples were matched before their degree results were known, it was impossible to control for academic achievement. A later analysis, however, demonstrated that for the sub-sample in question, the South Asians had performed slightly better than their White British counterparts (see Table 10.1). It may be noted that almost 25% of the South Asians, compared to only 18% of the White British students had obtained a First or Upper Second Class degree. While 75% of the latter were concentrated in the Lower Second or Third Class categories, compared to 66% of the South Asians. This contrasts with the findings of Ballard and Holden (1979), who noted that in their sample of 1974 "black" (mainly South Asian) and "white" graduates, the latter had performed slightly, although not significantly, better. They also concluded that the class of degree obtained by students was not found to influence their ability to gain employment. Where this may have been true in 1974, several students in the present study, perceived degree classifications to have an important influence in their search for graduate employment.

10.1.2 Mobility and Minimum Salary Required

It could be justifiably argued that a reluctance to be mobile and the search for high salary levels may result in greater

Degree Classification of South Asian and White
British Graduates

Degree Classification	South Asian	White British
	%	%
I	4.1 (1)	12.5 (2)
IIIi	20.8 (5)	6.2 (1)
IIIii	54.1 (13)	37.5 (6)
III	12.5 (3)	37.5 (6)
Ordinary Pass	4.1 (1)	0
BDS (Unclassified)	4.1 (1)	6.2 (1)
N	100 (24)	100 (16)

T A B L E 10.1

difficulty in gaining employment. An analysis of the data provided in the student's diary reports, in conjunction with the information given at interviews, demonstrated that there were no significant differences in South Asian and White British samples' willingness to move for jobs. 75% (18 respondents) of the South Asians compared to 81% (13 respondents) of their White British peers were willing to move away from home in pursuit of a job. Against this, 25% (6 respondents) of the former and 19% (3 respondents) of the latter, preferred to obtain employment within specific parts of the country, such as "the South", or, "the Midlands." This distribution is largely in agreement with the high levels of mobility evident both in the black and white samples in the study conducted by Ballard and Holden. A factor which they failed to investigate, however, was whether there were any differences between the two groups in their perception of an acceptable minimum salary. The present study found clear differences in this area.

From Table 10.2 it can be seen that for their first jobs, South Asian students were accepting of slightly lower salary levels than their White British counterparts. With 58% of the former and 49% of the latter willing to accept a salary of £6,500 or less. In contrast, nearly a third of the White British sample, compared to 16% of the South Asians, were aiming for a salary range of £7,500 to £8,000. Interestingly, many of the South Asians said that at this stage in their career salary was not a

Salary Levels Seen As Acceptable by South Asian
and White British Graduates for their First
Appointment

£ '000	South Asian	White British
	%	%
5K	0	6.2 (1)
6K	33.3 (8)	31.2 (5)
6.5K	25.0 (6)	12.5 (2)
7K	8.3 (2)	12.5 (2)
7.5K	8.3 (2)	25.0 (4)
8K	8.3 (2)	6.2 (1)
Not Seen as Important	16.6 (4)	6.2 (1)
N	100 (24)	100 (16)

T A B L E 10.2

crucial factor. Due to the small numbers involved in this sub-sample, it would be inappropriate to conduct any statistical analysis on these data.

10.1.3 Type of Occupation Preferred and the Methods used for Seeking Employment

A comparative analysis which aims to assess the processes in which two groups may gain employment and the procedural outcome of each application made needs to acknowledge factors which might affect these procedures. These may include differences between the two sample groups in the type of jobs for which they have made applications; the size and reputation of the companies contacted (particularly with reference to graduate employment); and, where there is a seasonal demand in the last few months of the academic year, the time at which applications were made. Of further interest would be the differences in the channels used to seek employment by members of each ethnic group. These are all areas which were neglected by Ballard and Holden (1979) in their research methodology, and may be regarded as significant omissions in their study. The present research has attempted to explore these various issues, each of which will be dealt with separately.

No important differences were found between the South Asian and White British groups in the level of jobs they had applied for and the companies which had been approached. Members of both groups in this sub-sample were aiming for graduate level jobs. As

might be expected, these were largely dictated by the subjects studied at university by individuals. The majority of the respondents held a pure or applied science degree, the positions they had aimed for were mainly those of Graduate Engineer, Scientific Officer, Technical Analyst, Trainee Programmer and other such posts. Where individuals had followed a vocational degree such as Pharmacy or Dentistry, they wished to enter the relevant professions. The few students who had gained a business related qualification, were mainly applying for Accountancy, Consultancy or general Trainee Management positions.

There were also similarities in the type of firms contacted by both South Asian and White British students. Thus 87% (21 respondents) of the former and 93% (15 respondents) of the latter had applied mainly to large nationalised and private companies. These included British Gas, British Telecom, Austin Rover, GEC, Racal, ICI and several major retail outlets.

Nevertheless, an analysis of the Diary Report Forms indicated disparity between the two groups in the time at which they had started looking for work and the methods which had been used. It was noted that the South Asians had begun their search for employment relatively early: 33% (8 students), compared to 18% (3 students) of the White British graduates had started looking for a job between September and December 1984, that is in the first term of their final year at university. A study conducted by the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) (1981), investigating the employment prospects of "coloured" and "white" graduates in 1979, also found that the former group had

begun their search for jobs earlier than their "white" counterparts.

In the current study it was also found that while similar proportions of both ethnic groups had made use of the Careers Service available at university, there was a tendency amongst the South Asians to also consult Newspapers and Specialist Magazines to look for vacancies. In all, only one South Asian and two White British respondents were able to rely on personal contacts to obtain employment.

Before investigating the actual job applications made by students and their subsequent outcomes, a summary can be provided of those factors which may have a direct or indirect influence on the procedures involved in securing employment. Initially it was noted that for the 40 respondents for whom data in this section were collected, the South Asians had obtained somewhat better degree results but were willing to accept a slightly lower salary level than their White British counterparts. There also appeared to be no major differences between the two groups in the type of jobs preferred, the companies to which applications were made and only slight variations in their preference for mobility. Greater disparity, however, emerged in job search processes, where South Asians were seen to have started making applications earlier.

10.2 Job Applications, Recruitment and Selection

It is notoriously difficult to provide an accurate or meaningful assessment of the relationship between job applications and outcomes. The complexities are even greater when an attempt is made to provide a comparative analysis of the experiences of two distinct sample groups in their search for employment. An important factor to be acknowledged is that occupational choice and employee recruitment are interactive procedures where, in a given situation, both the potential employee and the potential employer may try and maximize their returns from each other. In this struggle compromises are inevitable and, especially in periods of full employment, power and influence may be firmly located on the side of the employer (Ashton, 1986).

Nevertheless, those on both sides of the work equation will be operating within constraints, where choices have to be made. An individual looking for employment may make several applications for different types of jobs using various channels for identifying such vacancies. A potential employer may then choose to reject an application straight away, or may eventually reject it after first, second or even third round interviews. The candidate, however, could also decide to withdraw his/her application at any stage in the proceedings. A successful outcome would thus be where, at some stage, a company wishes to employ an individual, who in turn is willing to be employed by them.

The graduate labour market may be seen to operate separately from the wider labour market processes. Pearson et al (1978) have

demonstrated that, overall, graduate employers seek employees with potential for management positions. For new graduates entering the market there exists a highly organised recruitment strategy. They either make "direct" applications to companies or participate in the "milk round", where applicants may be interviewed by representatives of major companies visiting their university.

In the assessment of the employment prospects of "black" and "white" students who had graduated in 1974, Ballard and Holden (1979) distinguished between these two job search methods. They stated that, to 'attend a milk round interview a student only has to sign his (sic) name on a list and he is automatically interviewed' (1979:330). Due to the obvious distortions in analysis where judgement was based on whether individuals secured interviews, Ballard and Holden (1979) conducted separate investigations of "direct" and "milk round" applications. Enquiries at the Careers Service at Aston University have indicated that while in 1974 the "milk round" largely operated as Ballard and Holden suggest, in recent years stringent pre-selection has occurred even at this stage (Herriot, 1984). Thus submitting an application form, does not guarantee an interview. This may be a reflection of the increase in the supply of graduates in particular subject areas without a corresponding increase in the number of graduate level jobs available. This enables employers to be more selective in their recruitment strategies (Roizen and Jepson, 1985). The "milk round" procedure is therefore fairly similar to direct applications and, in the analysis which follows, differentiations have not been made.

In order to reduce the conceptual complexity of the process of graduate employment, Ballard and Holden (1979) have suggested 'using the analogy of a race-course'. They write: 'students may set out for the final goal, a job, from two different points, and to reach their goal they have to overcome a number of obstacles, including interviews. The use of such an analogy enables one to examine the ways in which different groups of students set out on this obstacle course, and whether they fare differently in surmounting various obstacles' (1979:331). Their analogy, however, illustrates a limited understanding of labour market processes. For the underpinning assumption allows for variations between potential employees, while accepting that the obstacles they may face will be standard.

The data collected for this study suggest that the 'golfer' may be a more appropriate sporting metaphor, as this may include a system of handicaps. Thus it could be argued that differences in social class, gender and ethnicity may influence individual chances of gaining employment. Not least because such variations may not agree with employers' implicit requirements, but also, as will be demonstrated in the case of ethnicity, because black candidates often have to overcome other specific obstacles, which are not faced by the vast majority of applicants. Using Jenkins (1986) terminology, although black applicants may be "suitable" for the vacancies available, they may not be deemed to be "acceptable" to the employers. This is especially apposite in the graduate labour market where recruitment is conducted from a pool of candidates who are, on the whole, equally lacking in work

experience and who may be similarly qualified. In this situation selection is largely based on external factors which may not be directly related to the ability to do the job (Herriot, 1984). As will be illustrated by the data gathered for this research, such processes may be seen to operate at each stage of the recruitment procedure.

All the data examined in this chapter so far has related to individuals searching for employment. That is, the analysis has concentrated on applicants rather than their applications. It is now appropriate to focus on the latter, a shift in emphasis which requires a reexamination of the sub-sample to be analysed. Up to now this sample has consisted of 24 South Asians and 16 White British graduates, all of whom were looking for work. However, the data analysis on job applications which follows, is based on all 24 South Asians, but only 14 of the White British graduates. It was decided to exclude two members of the latter group, as including the high numbers of job applications made by them in the analysis, would have distorted the general picture. For while the number of individual applications made by the South Asians, ranged from 1 to 36 and from 1 to 49 for the White British group, two respondents from the latter category had made 98 and 150 applications each. It should be noted that this was not a reflection of increasing difficulty in obtaining employment, but rather the use of different techniques in seeking work. As one of these undergraduates stated:

" I did one application form, photocopied it and sent it to various companies all jobs were done in one go(although interested in one particular type of

work) I'm considering anything and only if I get an offer will I actually think about it.'

It should also be pointed out that these two White British undergraduates were also unable to provide specific details of the applications which they had made.

10.2.1 Comparative Analysis of the Job Applications made by South Asian and White British graduates

A total of 345 applications for employment were made by 24 South Asians and 157 applications by 14 White British students. Thus on average the South Asians had made 14.3 applications compared to 11.2 for each White British graduate. In their study of 1974 graduates, Ballard and Holden (1979) found that, on average, the "coloureds" participating in their sample had each made 5.2 applications for work compared to 3.7 for the "whites" in the study. A comparison of the data collected by Ballard and Holden with the findings of the present research would indicate, that in the decade separating the two studies there had been a general increase in the number of job applications made by graduates. Nevertheless, the general trend remained the same, where black groups had made on average more applications for work, than their White British counterparts.

Table 10.3 shows that of those participating in the current research, a greater proportion of the South Asian applications had

Total Job Applications Made by South Asian and
White British Graduates

	South Asian	White British
	%	%
Total Applicants	100 (24)	100 (14)
Total Applications	100 (345)	100 (157)
Immediate Rejections	53.9 (186)	45.2 (71)
1st Interview	40.8 (141)	30.5 (48)
Applications Outstanding	1.4 (5)	11.4 (18)
Applications Withdrawn by Candidate	1.1 (4)	12.1 (19)
Speculative Applications- No Vacancies	2.6 (9)	0.7 (1)

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been immediately rejected, compared to the White British sample. Nonetheless, more of their applications had also reached the first interview stage. This apparent contradiction may be explained by the large proportion of the White British applications which were either withdrawn, or where there was no information available by January 1986.

Table 10.4 provides an analysis of all South Asian and White British applications, where some response was made by the employer, and where the application was not withdrawn. This refers to 327 applications made by 24 South Asian and 119 applications made by 14 White British respondents. The crucial finding here is that although proportionally more South Asian applications reached first, second and third interview stages, they were less likely to be offered employment at each level than their White British counterparts. This is despite the fact that on average the South Asians had obtained degrees of a higher classification (see Table 10.1). Table 10.4 notes that of the 141 South Asian and 48 White British applications which reached the first interview stage, 7% of the former, compared with 22% of the latter received an offer of employment at this level. Also while 57 South Asian applications were invited to attend a second interview, 31% of which were successful, this compared unfavourably to 14 White British applications of which 57% were accepted by employers. Similar findings were presented in the AGCAS (1981) survey. This noted that for those applicants which were made through the Careers Service the "coloured" graduates were more likely to receive first and equally likely as their

Total Job Applications and their Outcomes for
South Asian and White British Graduates -
Where there was a Response from the Employer
And where the Application was not Withdrawn
By the Candidate

	South Asian	White British
	%	%
Total Applicants	100 (24)	100 (14)
Total Applications	100 (327)	100 (119)
Immediate Rejections	56.8 (136)	59.6 (71)
1st Interview	43.1 (141)	40.3 (48)
Rejected	51.7 (73)	47.9 (23)
Accepted	7.8 (11)	22.9 (11)
2nd Interview	17.4 (57)	11.9 (14)
Rejected	50.8 (29)	42.8 (6)
Accepted	31.5 (18)	57.1 (8)
3rd Interview	3.0 (10)	-
Rejected	60.0 (6)	-
Accepted	40.0 (4)	-
Total Applications Rejected	89.9 (294)	84.0 (100)
Total Applications Accepted	10.0 (33)	15.9 (19)

T A B L E 10.4

"white" counterparts to receive second interviews. In the end, however, they were less likely to receive offers of employment.

The final point of interest demonstrated by Table 10.4 is that overall, a greater proportion of the South Asian applications were rejected while a larger ratio of the White British applications were made an offer of employment. The discrepancies between the two groups increase greatly when it is recognised that of all those applications where at least one interview was required, 39.5% of those made by White British applicants were successful, compared to only 23.4% of those made by South Asians. This trend is also evident in the interim findings of an investigation of recruitment into Chartered Accountancy. This reported that of those who were interviewed, the success rate amongst the white graduates was nearly twice as that of black graduates (C.R.E., 1986). This study, which is awaiting publication, is particularly interesting as the methodology involved cooperating employers monitoring their own recruitment and selection procedures. Unfortunately no comparisons can be made with the Ballard and Holden (1979) data, for they failed to investigate the procedural outcome of applications, where individuals are asked to attend one or more interviews, with decisions being made at each stage.

In conclusion it may be summarised that the South Asian subsample in this study, were better qualified, willing to accept a lower minimum salary and had started searching for work earlier. This group had also made more applications for work (with an average of 14.3 compared to 11.2 for each White British student),

but had received only marginally more job offers: 1.37 compared to 1.28 for each White British participant. This is despite the fact that 12% of the White British applications were withdrawn. It is also relevant to note that in fact by January 1986, that is six months after graduation, out of 24 South Asians looking for work, 19 of them had 33 offers of work, while of the 14 White British, 13 of them had received 18 job offers.

Overall, then, of those applications which received some response, it may be noted that South Asians were generally not having difficulty in obtaining interviews. This could be accounted for by their relatively early applications and their greater potential as indicated by their degree results. Nonetheless, this finding is in contrast to the data presented by Ballard and Holden (1979). Therefore the results presented in this section empirically suggest that the processes which place black graduates at a disadvantage in the labour market may have shifted beyond initial recruitment and towards selection at the interview.

10.3 South Asian Graduates Perceptions Of and Experiences in Seeking Employment

10.3.1 Difficulties Anticipated in Securing Work

Of the 24 South Asians looking for work, 45% (11 candidates) felt that their chances of gaining employment were equal to those of a White British student with comparable qualifications. The other South Asians in the group felt that they had comparatively poorer prospects. Those in the latter group thought this was largely because of the existence of cliques within major companies and a general preference by employers to select "their own kind". As a Banking graduate claimed:

" There's no hope in hell of getting a job with a Merchant Bank, if you're not White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, Public School background and have been to Oxbridge."

Several students stated that this was especially the case when applying for managerial positions:

" They're loads of Indians in Chartered Accountancy, good jobs as well, it's easy to get in but Management Accountancy, that's into Management you're upstairs, therefore better paid and you're making decisions they're bigger companies, nationalised companies and they just don't take Indians"

" There is a lot of inherent racism in our society whether people like it or not, people assume that it's better to see a white face behind a counter than a black face I just think that black people aren't

given the opportunity to get into better paid or better positioned jobs for example, if you go to a say MacDonalds or any of these big Hamburger joints you'll see all the assistants inside are all blacks or Asians and one White face, and he's going to be the manager, now where's the equality in that? Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all kept at a certain level, and we're just left at that level without being allowed to succeed and get to higher positions I don't think necessarily the argument works that we're not as qualified as the White person, because we are"

Studies undertaken by PEP which were reported by Smith (1976) and the work of Hubbuck and Carter (1980), both of which have been reviewed in Chapter 5, would suggest that these students' perceptions may be accurate reflections of labour market processes. The findings reported in both studies have indicated that racial discrimination in the selection of employees may be most prevalent for management type occupations.

Several South Asian respondents participating in the present research felt that the only way they could overcome these barriers was by achieving higher than their White British counterparts. As one successful South Asian student stated:

" If I had a 2:1 from a university, then there are lots of other people with 2:1s, English people, and it's possible for someone to say, you know, 'We'll pick the other guy'. But with a 1st from (name of university), and if they reject me, it would have to be on the grounds of 'Well he didn't perform well at the interview', which sometimes works and sometimes doesn't."

Other South Asians attempted to avoid the perceived barriers of racial discrimination by using different techniques. A South

Asian student who was applying for positions in Banking, commented:

" the firms I applied for were almost all American where there isn't the same sort of emphasis on social class or anything with British firms, if I aimed high, I'd be with people who were at least as good as me and it wasn't going to be easy, proving that I was better with American firms I get a feeling they are not like that necessarily they're much more international."

Nearly half the South Asians looking for work, however, expected factors other than ethnicity, such as experience, ability and confidence to be more influential, and anticipated their employment prospects to be similar to those of White graduates. To the question do you think your chances of getting a job are better/worse than a White person with comparable qualifications, a South Asian Physics graduate answered:

" I think they would be similar that might be naive of me I'm just hoping that (through) my abilities, I will be able to sell myself over and above any sort of bias or prejudice anyone may have."

While other South Asians, although believing that they had the same opportunities as White British graduates, had started to wonder if other processes were at work. One student who had had several rejections stated:

" Generally all through my life, I've had very little prejudice against me, so I don't tend to think like that but when you get so many rejections, you think why, because you're no worse than them."

10.3.2 Being Selected for Interviews

It may be argued that one of the reasons why a large proportion of the South Asians anticipated similar employment prospects as White British graduates is, because generally, as the data show, they did not have any great difficulty in obtaining first interviews. However, occasionally South Asian students had mentioned that a non-European name on a form may deter some employers from pursuing the application any further. However, while this process may occur (Hubbuck and Carter, 1980), it was not revealed in the findings of this study (see Table 10.4).

Most South Asian students noted that obtaining interviews was not difficult, and as one Economics graduate stated:

" I got lots of first interviews, but getting beyond that was more difficult I think being coloured was much more important in the interview than on paper I'm sure they were sifting through quite a lot (of applications) and they weren't going to sit and look for the Asian people"

This presumption may be illustrated by the experiences of another South Asian graduate, who, in his industrial year at University, had worked for a major computer manufacturer. He commented:

" People think that at a higher level after a degree this (discrimination in employment) doesn't have an effect, but it does, I know that from (name of company) when I was there in the whole building I was the only coloured person I was very friendly with one of the Personnel Officers she told me that (name of company) had an equal opportunities policy, where they have to have a certain percentage of 'coloured' people, black people and when they get to the Managerial level (to be interviewed), they'd always be rejected my manager was the only

one who would take coloured people at that time I found out a little about him and heard that he'd stayed with an Asian family so that's why he was different from the others"

While the system of quotas alluded to by this respondent, is unlawful, such a practice may partially explain why a greater proportion of applications made by South Asians (and called for at least one interview) were rejected compared with those of White British students (see Table 10.4). It also suggests that South Asian experiences at interview could be qualitatively different.

10.3.3 The Interview

The process of matching 'skill' requirements to job-seekers' abilities is an inherently difficult task. Further, it has been argued that in the absence of evidently differentiating factors, there is a tendency amongst recruiters in employment to base their judgements on stereotypes (Hakel, Hollman and Dunette, 1970). As already mentioned, Jenkins (1986) has developed a conceptual framework where the process of selection for employment is broken down into two categories of "suitability" and "acceptability". The former refers to 'functionally specific' criteria which may be explicitly quantified, such as credentials and training. On the other hand, "acceptability" refers to 'functionally non-specific issues' which are implicitly related to the perceived requirements of the organisation. These include judgements on the appearance, manner and attitude of each candidate. Additionally, Jenkins

identified "gut feeling", which was heavily dependent on tacit and taken for granted knowledge, as influential in managers' perceptions of the "acceptability" of candidates. Jenkins concludes that in order to be selected, an applicant may need to be deemed as both "suitable" and "acceptable". He also suggests that while black applicants may fulfil the explicit criteria of "suitability", the notion of "acceptability" allows for the encouragement and maintenance of racially discriminatory practices.

The empirical data to be presented in this section support Jenkins analysis, as it becomes clear that while the South Asian candidates, by the nature of their qualifications, were seen as "suitable" for graduate employment, often, they were not believed to be "acceptable" within the organisational context. The data which follow examines the actual processes in which this occurred.

The literature on graduate selection techniques reviewed in Chapter 5, suggested that recruiters had normally made their decision fairly early in the interview and the remaining period was used mainly to elicit information which may confirm their earlier judgements (Snyder and White, 1981). With specific reference to the recruitment of black graduates the AGCAS (1981) study also found that a greater proportion of their "coloured" sample had expressed dissatisfaction with their interviews and interviewers. Many of the participants reported that either the recruiters did not seem to be interested in them or, alternatively, throughout the interview, there was undue emphasis

on their ethnic origin. Further support for these findings is revealed in the current research.

It was found that, although all of the 24 South Asians in this sub-sample had been resident in the U.K. for fifteen years or more, and had had most of their education in this country (as was indicated on their C.Vs), 10 respondents were asked if they had found it difficult to settle in the U.K. and whether they were eventually planning to return "home". Several students were also quizzed about their ethnicity with recruiters enquiring about their cultural affiliations. An Engineering student who was rejected by a major company after a second interview stated:

" (name of company) asked me how important was it (for me) to keep in contact with the Asian society I said I'm an Asian my family and friends are Asians and I'd very much like to know and keep in contact with what's happening"

Another student who had been called for six interviews in total by various organisations also claimed:

" Everyone of the interviewers asked me very detailed questions about my ethnic origin things like parents, arranged marriages etc. everytime I was asked something like this I tried to see what was their motive behind it before I answered the question."

While this line of questioning may be seen as unnecessary, its major criticism is that this process may place South Asian students at a distinct disadvantage. As one student commented:

" forty minutes of one interview was totally on Indian this and that the 'gorias' (whites)

weren't exposed to that, so I didn't have an opportunity to prove my knowledge on Chemical Engineering etc and I felt I was at a disadvantage."

For some South Asian students such enquiries about their ethnicity and cultural background extended to highly unscrupulous selection procedures. The examples given here may provide an insight of the 'racial frames of reference' (Figueroa, 1982) used by some employers in their dealings with black applicants. Similar findings were also reported by Jenkins (1986) in his interviews with Managers in charge of recruiting manual and non-manual labour. A South Asian Physics graduate participating in this study was called for a second interview for Software Programming by a major industrial company in South East England. Here the student relates the conversation that took place, near the end of the interview:

" he (the interviewer) said, 'you're not born in this country, you come from Uganda', and I said 'yeah that's right'. Then he said 'does that mean you can live here', I said 'well, as long as you've been here for 5 years, or something like that, you are part of the country' he said 'does that mean you're going to get married to an English woman', and I just looked at him and said 'perhaps',you know, just being casual about it, not thinking that there's anything in it then I started walking out and that's when he said, 'You didn't think us British were like this, so blunt?'

This student was later rejected, as was another South Asian graduate, having attended the second interview for the position of Business Analyst with a large private company, he noted:

" the first time they saw me was at the milkround, that interview went well, but I think they weren't sure whether I was the right type so the second time, they actually had a cup of tea brought in, you know, a jug, the milk and the tea and then the guy sort of gets up to pour it and said, 'Oh what goes in first, the milk or the tea, I can never remember?' And I got really mad about it and said, 'Well I'm told it's the milk but I don't really know' and that was really obvious 'cause the guy was very much aware of what went in first he was very much an establishment type."

Several processes may be seen as operating in the incidents related by these students. Initially it seems that the recruiters had already come to a decision early on in the interview and were using the remaining time to corroborate their opinions (Ross et al, 1977). Further, it may be speculated that not only do interviews favour applicants who are similar to themselves (Rand and Wexley, 1975), but also that they may make judgements about individuals, which are based on general stereotypes (Cantor and Mischel, 1977). Additional confirmation of these processes was evident in the experiences of those South Asians who were invited for second interviews.

At this stage many large companies organised a two day residential session where candidates could meet both managers and recent graduates employed by the company. The process included both formal and informal selection procedures, with the latter often being judged to be the more important. One South Asian student said of a large Electronics firm:

" one of their recent graduate intakes told us 'They're not looking for bright students they're looking for people who can mix and talk,"

Some South Asian graduates however felt isolated and ignored at these informal meetings where they could not effectively use the opportunity to impress their potential employers. A Business Studies graduate with a Lower Second Class degree had applied for the post of Management Accountancy with a large car manufacturer and was asked to attend a second interview. He recalled that at an informal meeting in the evening he was standing at one point with three White British candidates, when one of the managers came towards them,

" and everyone's pushing themselves and talking, so you stand a better chance the next day when the interviews and tests are everytime I asked a question or came in, the guy never really looked at me, you're supposed to look at someone when you answer, but he just answered generally looking at the white guys."

Another South Asian candidate remarked:

" you could sense a patronising attitude, particularly at (name of company) social manners, dinner conversation etc. you try to force your presence, but there seemed to be cliques, people who knew each other, from the same background and so on there was a feeling of isolation, more social than racial, but there was an element of the latter, I could sense it and I'm not paranoid."

The interview experiences of South Asian graduates also indicated that some employers attempted to channel candidates away from mainstream work and towards more marginalised positions. For example, three students were asked whether they would be interested in returning to their country of origin for the purposes of employment. One of these students noted,

" (they asked) whether I was interested in the Economics of India I think that's a new firm and they probably do a lot of work with the Commonwealth, and they were quite interested in that perhaps as an Asian I would be interested in going back At the interview they talked to me for the first five minutes, which was quite a normal interview and then I said I wasn't interested whatsoever in India and then they just weren't interested"

Another student who had secured a Trainee Management position with an internationally renowned chemical company, was being questioned at great length about his ethnic origins. He thought that he had been offered the position, essentially because he was Asian. He stated :

" at Slough they have got a lot of Asians working there, on the shop floor, may be it's a case of positive discrimination and I got the job because I was Asian."

The processes which may channel South Asian graduates away from specific occupations also seem to be entrenched within institutional practices. This was demonstrated by the experience of a Pakistani graduate who had applied for the post of Production Controller, with a major electronics firm. He was, however, informed that the job involved working on a contract for the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and as his parents were not born in the U.K., he could not be considered for the post. A Careers Officer at the student's university confirmed this as company policy. According to the C.R.E's (1983) definition of indirect discrimination, such a practice cannot be seen as discriminatory, as it may be justifiable on grounds of national security. However, it may be seen as limiting the employment options of

young British South Asian graduates, many of whom are obtaining Science based degrees and who may find themselves excluded from the competition for some MOD projects. The MOD distributes research briefs amongst various organisations and institutions, and may be seen as one of the major employers of those graduating with scientific degrees.

The incidents related by some of the South Asian participants in this sub-sample show that graduate employers may use their applicants' ethnicity instrumentally. That is to say, South Asian graduate employees may be marginalised into peripheral occupations and away from mainstream employment. A similar situation was also evident in the late 1960s where South Asian graduates living in Bradford were either found to be underemployed or mainly concentrated in those jobs which required contact with members of ethnic minority communities (Allen et al, 1977). The present research also found support for the findings of Smith (1976) and Hubbuck and Carter (1980), which suggested that racial discrimination was most likely to occur where employers were making appointments for management type jobs. One graduate in this study who was applying for a trainee Management position, commented:

" The jobs I applied for required you to present yourself and represent the company in getting contracts etc, and most companies want a White man than an Asian no matter how clever he is "

Another South Asian participant who had reached the third interview stage for the post of graduate Engineer with a large Manufacturing firm in Newcastle, recalled:

" but I didn't get the job and one of last years recruits told me 'You were perfect for the job, absolutely, but we felt there are pretty hard men on our shop floor and we've had a bit of an industrial relations problem, so we couldn't really risk having an Indian on the shop floor' I was very bitter about it, but I could still understand it."

Two clear patterns emerged from the interview experiences of South Asian graduates looking for employment. Firstly, it was evident that some employers did not perceive them as Black Britons, but rather as "foreigners" or "immigrants". Working within this conceptual framework, graduate employers often presented South Asian candidates with additional questions and situations at the interview which were not experienced by their White British counterparts. Secondly, it can be argued that there was an attempt by some employers to place South Asian applicants in marginal work positions and away from mainstream employment.

The employers' 'Code of Practice' published by the Commission for Racial Equality and based on the Race Relations Act (1976), suggests:

' in order to avoid direct or indirect discrimination it is recommended that selection tests which contain irrelevant questions or exercises on matters which may be unfamiliar to racial minority applicants should not be used selection tests should be checked to ensure that they are related to the job's requirements.....' (1983:11).

The data presented in this section have clearly demonstrated that South Asian graduates are often faced with additional obstacles during the employment interview which might be construed as superfluous to the requirements of the job. In this sense, the selection practices highlighted in this section of the chapter may be seen as unlawfully discriminatory.

In conclusion it must be noted that the meritocratic ideology which expected education to significantly reduce the disadvantaged position of the black communities in the U.K. (Patterson, 1969; Rampton Report, 1981) cannot be supported by the findings of this research. More likely, the data show that occupational allocation is a multi-faceted procedure, within which credentials held by black and white individuals are sometimes differentially valued. With specific reference to the graduate labour market it is worth reiterating that employers are essentially seeking candidates with management potential and in the absence of explicit selection criteria and major differentiating factors between applicants, selection may be largely based on subjective and judgemental criteria. In this situation, while South Asian participants in this sub-sample were seen as 'suitable', they were not always deemed to be 'acceptable', particularly in a managerial role.

The data have generally identified aspects within the selection procedure which serve to disadvantage South Asian graduate applicants in the labour market. Their position may thus be seen to be similar to that of South Asian graduates in the 1960s and 1970s, many of whom had also obtained their

qualifications in the U.K. and were then searching for work (Allen et al, 1977; Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, 1978).

10.4 The Experiences of South Asian and White British Graduates in Employment

The previous section discussed the replies of those South Asian and White British participants in the sub-sample who were looking for employment. Of the 24 South Asians in this category, 79% (19 respondents) had secured a job by the end of January 1986, that is six months after graduation. The remaining 5 graduates were still unemployed. Of the 16 White British graduates also looking for work, 87% (14 respondents) had obtained employment during the same period. Of the two remaining students, one had chosen to study for an MSc, despite the offer of a job, while the other was still unemployed.

The post-graduation destinations of the 16 matched "pairs" of South Asian and White British participants and the 8 additional South Asians who were also looking for work is provided in Table 10.5, alongside the degree subject and classification for each student. The 19 South Asian and 14 White British participants who were in employment were each sent a further questionnaire in April 1986. This asked them to reflect on their initial experiences in employment (see Appendix 4:b and c).

Despite repeated reminders, however, only 14 of the 19 employed South Asians completed questionnaires, whilst 12 out of

First Destinations of South Asian and White British
Graduates Searching for Employment

	South Asian			White British	
PAIR	Job and Degree Obtained		Subject Studied	Job and Degree Obtained	
1	Research Engineer	Ord	Maths	3rd	Trainee Accountant
2	Junior Engineer	2.2	Civil Engineering	2.2	Graduate Engineer
3	Flight Test Engineer	3rd	Electronic Engineering	3rd	Electronics Engineer
4	Trainee Manager	2.1	Economics	2.2	Trainee Manager
5	Design & Development Engineer	3rd	Electronic Engineering	3rd	Systems Analyst
6	Associate Consultant	2.1	Physics	2.2	Electronic Engineer
7	Unemployed	2.2	Civil Engineering	1st	Construction Engineer
8	Unemployed	2.2	Physical Electronics	2.1	Design Engineer
9	Dentist	BDS	Dentistry	BDS	Dentist
10	Unemployed	3rd	Chemical Engineering	1st	MSc
11	Associate Consultant	1st	Economics	2.2	Unemployed
12	Systems Engineer	2.2	Business Admin	2.2	Asst Staff Manager
13	Graduate Engineer	2.2	Engineering	3rd	Technical Asst
14	Trainee Programmer	2.2	Physics	2.2	Programming Asst
15	Unemployed	2.2	Chemical Engineering	3rd	Production Controller
16	Pharmacist	2.1	Pharmacy	3rd	Pharmacist

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the 14 White British graduates responded. Therefore, the analysis which follows is limited to the work experiences of 26 participants who were in their first job after graduation. Due to the small numbers involved, it is inappropriate to generalise the findings too broadly. For the same reason, gender was not used as a variable to assess differential work experiences.

It was found that 78% (11 respondents) of the South Asians and 83% (10 respondents) of the White British graduates had started work between July and October 1985, though students of South Asian origin tended to obtain work slightly later than their White British counterparts; that is, between November 1985 and January 1986.

10.4.1 Income and Fringe Benefits

Table 10.6 suggests South Asian income levels to be slightly higher than those of their White British counterparts in this sub-sample. This information, however, should be seen in the context of two other factors. Firstly, as will be demonstrated, a greater proportion of the White British graduates were in jobs where there was an official training period, resulting in a lower starting salary. Nevertheless, this salary was expected to rise steeply and rapidly. Secondly, it should also be remembered that, as a whole, the South Asian sub-sample was better qualified, having obtained higher degree levels and, *prima facie*, may expect to command higher salaries.

Income Received by South Asian and White British
Graduates on First Appointment

Income Level	South Asian	White British
	%	%
£7,000 & Under	14 (2)	33 (4)
£7,001-£8,000	14 (2)	8 (1)
£8,001-£9,000	42 (6)	41 (5)
£9,001 +	28 (4)	16 (2)
N	100 (14)	100 (12)

T A B L E 10.6

It is often the case that, in high status occupations, material rewards are not limited to the salary received. These are often enhanced by the fringe benefits for the employee. These may range from nominal discounts on company products, to subsidised canteens, leisure facilities, private health care, removal expenses and special arrangements for financial assistance. For the sub-sample in question, one person from each group, said they were not entitled to any fringe benefits in their terms of employment. However, 57% (8 respondents) of the South Asians and 41% (5 respondents) of the White British stated that they had access to some limited benefits, mostly reclaiming expenses. As one South Asian employee noted:

' At my level, there are no formal fringe benefits apart from a gym inside the firm. But "expenses" are generous and do raise one's standard of living (through e.g. free meals etc.)'

A White British employee who was a Trainee Accountant whose work required some travelling said:

' £1 lunch allowance if working more than 1 mile from office £8 for an evening meal and the cost of a hotel room (£30-£40) per night if I am working a considerable distance from B'ham. Of course if you are the sort of person that enjoys staying in fairly comfortable hotels (as I do) then this is quite nice, although when working it is hard to enjoy it'

A greater proportion of the White British students, 50% (6 respondents) compared to 36% (5 respondents) of the South Asians stated that they were entitled to a whole range of benefits. As the following examples demonstrated, the extra support and

assistance made available by companies to attract and maintain employees, vary enormously, while upgrading the general living standards of their workers. One White British trainee Manageress noted her fringe benefits as:

- ' 15% (name of company) discount
- 20% discount in (name of 5 major retail outlets)
- Disturbance/Mobility allowance
- Full (moving house) costs
- Travel home allowance
- Accommodation allowance
- Help with finding new accommodation
- Eating allowance when on courses etc.'

A South Asian trainee Chemical Engineer with a large company, stated:

- ' It depends who you know! A car/van can be hired (at 30% rate) eg. for home removal, company business etc.
- For house purchases interest free loan - solicitors fees, survey fees paid. Free membership of exclusive managers' club and sports facilities.
- Good overtime if requested.
- Discount at some local shops.
- Good relationship with bank - eg. overdraft/mortgage "easily" acquired.'

10.4.2 Training and Job Satisfaction

The quality and status of graduate employment may also be assessed by examining the level of training provided for new recruits. It was found that 66% (9 respondents) of the White British graduate employees compared to 57% (8 respondents) of the South Asians, had received some form of official training from their employers. A greater proportion of the latter, however, had received mostly 'on the job' training.

It could not be argued that the South Asian graduates were more prepared for their work roles as 71% (10 respondents) compared to 50% (6 respondents) of their White British counterparts claimed that either nothing or very little of what they had learnt at university could be applied in the work situations. Most graduate employees also believed that the university experience was proving more useful than the actual knowledge gained from the subject studied. This assertion is supported by the work of Ashton and Maguire (1980) who also suggest that experience rather than formal qualifications may be more important in the employment situation.

Nearly twice as many White British employees, 42% (5 respondents) compared to only 21% (3 respondents) of the South Asians noted that, in general, they were satisfied with the actual work and the employment environment in which they were involved. Of those White British who had some misgivings these centered mainly on salary levels and the geographical location of their place of work. One White British trainee Engineer with a starting salary of £6,000, noted:

' I feel that Civil Engineering does offer good job satisfaction but there comes a time when, although wanting job satisfaction, other factors such as finance must be considered. Many graduates this year will be starting on over £8,000 per year and it is very doubtful that any pay rise I get will put me over £7,000. This is mainly a function of the industry itself, and I feel Engineers are considered as "second rate" professionals when compared with Lawyers, Accountants etc.'

For those White British graduates who had moved away from home to gain employment, the problem of work location was often twofold, as the following examples demonstrate.

' I would rather be working in or around a city the size of say Bristol or Cardiff, since Wookey Hole is not exactly the hub of the Universe.'

' My biggest dislike is the geographical position - South and so far from family and friends - would have preferred Birmingham Yorkshire.
At present, job interest and security are most important + gaining a good background.'

For the South Asian employees the main areas of dissatisfaction were lack of training, long hours, stressful work and the unexpected amount of paperwork involved in many technical jobs. As a South Asian trainee Programmer commented:

' I am a bit dissatisfied with the training. A lot is left to you, you have to be highly motivated, otherwise you could end up not learning much. Not enough emphasis is placed on close supervision of new starters. There is not enough guidance to help you with particular problems since every individual has their own job to do and very little is known about his/her problem by others.'

Some South Asians found that, although their work was very satisfying and interesting, it was also highly stressful. As one trainee Consultant noted:

'Work plans tend to be based on days, not weeks work, and thus the pace is intense and the hours can be long. Deadlines have meant pressure, but I am getting used to it.'

10.4.3 Ethnicity and the Workplace

All 14 South Asians who were in employment were asked whether there were other Asians or Afro Caribbeans working with them. Two graduates stated that there were no other black employees at their workplace, the others indicating the presence of other minority workers at various positions in the company. As one South Asian said of his place of work:

' (Name of company) is an international company which normally obtains work from countries all over the world. As a result, it also believes in an "international workforce". i.e. there are many Asians and a few blacks at the company - their status vary from equal to mine to Senior Engineering positions. Most of them having been there longer and who are more experienced are on a higher scale than me.'

Two South Asian graduates commented that although there were other minority workers in the firm, they were mostly at a lower position than the respondents. A Process Control Scientist at a large chemical firm reported:

' Approx 40% of the workforce is Asian/foreign. All are operators on the shop floor. 2 clerical workers, 1 supervisor. None on equal or higher grade. Apparently I was the first Asian ever employed straight in on a Management grade.'

As with their White British counterparts, however, the majority of the South Asian employees found that they fitted in well within their work environment. Although two students initially found it difficult to adjust to the "high culture" of their employing establishments, this was often believed to be a

result of compounded differences of social class, age and ethnicity. To the question do you feel you '"fit in" with the people you work with', one South Asian employee replied on the questionnaire:

' No problems whatsoever with working colleagues. Initially it was difficult to get into the "culture" of the place and I did feel out of place. People were a bit curious both from "new graduate" and "first Asian" point of view as most people are significantly older one does feel slightly less willing to socialize frequently with working colleagues.'

While a South Asian graduate, newly recruited by an established Consultancy Agency, replied:

' I get on fine with the people I work with. However, though on the formal level I have good relations with the people at work, I have found it difficult to "fit in". Some of this (though only some) is due to my Asian origin; in any establishment that is predominantly White, the onus of adjustment will always lie with the coloured man. But the biggest factor is probably "class". The firm is largely (very upper) upper middle class in the English sense with a strong "Yuppie" influence. It is this that has set me apart more than anything else. Colour has been much less important. The firm is American with a very international staff (Americans, Canadians, Frenchmen, Germans, Austrians, Spaniards, Italians etc.) and has a liberal attitude towards cultural differences. But almost all these people come from affluent backgrounds and this sets the standard for socializing, and more than anything else sets me apart.'

85% (12 respondents) of those South Asians who were in employment noted that they had not had any positive or negative experiences at work as a result of their ethnicity. However, as with the search for employment, some South Asian employees were

unwilling to accept the influence of their ethnic origin, on their experiences at work. This is demonstrated by the comments by a recently appointed Junior Engineer:

' As yet I have not experienced anything negative due to my ethnic background but it is very difficult to tell if I will for two reasons! The first is that I feel I am so anglicised that people accept me pretty quickly as being very English; secondly, I generally don't put down any shortcomings to my ethnicity as this would hamper my determination to do well.'

Other minority employees, although not having faced any direct difficulties, were aware of the indirect consequences of their differing ethnic and racial origin. As one South Asian graduate remarked:

' I believe that ethnicity has no direct impact at work. Most people are not racist (I do not know one that is) and the firm as an entity is a studious meritocracy. Within the firm you will succeed if you meet the grade.

However, there are some indirect consequences, eg. in order to succeed one has to achieve the standard across all the dimensions of the job. Some, especially personal skills like communication, are more difficult for people of a different cultural origin since the "ideal" is that enshrined in the dominant, (in this case English) culture The firm has a very strong and dominant corporate culture. Most new recruits (including the English) have to adjust to it. But since my cultural origin is even more different, I find the adjustment more difficult. It is therefore more difficult to walk the cultural tightrope of maintaining one's identity and yet succeeding in a "white man's world".'

Of the 14 South Asians who were in employment, two of them believed they had faced incidents at work, which were directly related to their ethnicity. One student, recruited by a major

chemical company for a graduate position at a plant with a large South Asian workforce, found that his ethnicity served as both a positive and negative attribute:

' It seems that MORE is expected of me. Some/v/few people have been more critical and "pounce" on mistakes - ethnicity may only, I feel, be a small component of this in those cases As expected, at first, more probing/suspicion originated from the Asian workers themselves! However, since then I've established a particular rapport with them. Some were at first (and still are) unwilling to recognise my seniority or/and maybe felt I couldn't compete on level terms with my white colleagues. Others genuinely feel proud that a "brother" is doing so well. This has been a great advantage in achieving objectives in my job e.g. special favours etc.'

In contrast, an Asian female graduate working in the Midlands had encountered only negative attitudes from her colleagues at work:

' Shortly after the riots in Birmingham I was in the Ladies toilets shared by a section, when a couple of ladies started discussing the matter. One became quite abusive, knowing full well that I could hear, and said things such as, "I think that they should all go back to where they came from." This had not been said to my face but as I saw them I gave them a dirty look to which the other lady said, "Take no notice of her, she's harmless", and both went out.

I also encountered subtle racism from graduate trainees who had not had to deal with coloured people before. I faced mockery and catty remarks from a couple of girls on the fact that I live at home and eat differently to them.

With some I have to prove that I know something. Constantly I get put into the stereotype Asian female upbringing of having a very sheltered and restricted life.'

This section on the effects of ethnicity in the workplace as related by the South Asian participants in this sub-sample, may be concluded by highlighting the major trends. Initially, it was

clear that the majority of the respondents were employed by organisations which already had some ethnic minorities in their workforce. On the whole, the South Asian graduates did not find it difficult to "fit into" the work environment in which they were involved. However, some references were made to the compounded influences of differences in social class and ethnicity in their struggle to gain recognition and progress within the organisation.

Also while only 2 of the 14 South Asian participants related experiences at work which were a direct result of their ethnic origin, there was indication that other respondents may be aware of the disadvantaged position in relation to the expected characteristics embedded within the organisation structure. It was also suggested that some South Asians may simply be unwilling to use their ethnicity as an explanatory factor for their experiences in employment.

10.5 South Asian and White British Graduates Career Development and Aspirations for the Future

All 40 graduates who were looking for work were asked at the interview and in the employment questionnaire about their ambitions and goals for the future. Some of the most interesting differences between the South Asians and their White British counterparts emerged in their perceptions of the future and what they hoped to achieve within the next five to ten years.

Table 10.7 demonstrated that half of the South Asian sub-sample hoped to be self employed while nearly all of the White British graduates and a third of the South Asians, hoped to be qualified and in a senior position within an established company. The following examples given by those already in employment demonstrate that some of those who expected to move on to better positions were nonetheless, keen to remain in their chosen fields, if not necessarily with their present employers. One White British graduate noted:

' Within the next 5 years I intend either to be a lead Programmer or to have moved into systems analysis and have established myself in that field. It's early days yet. I am prepared to stay with my present employer for about 3 years unless I am offered a reasonable salary and better conditions.'

While two South Asian employees in Engineering positions reflected:

' Since the Chem Eng contracting industry is so volatile in terms of when and how much work is available, it is difficult to tell how prosperous my career will be at (name of company). However, knowing that I am one of a new generation of engineers at (name of company), I feel quite safe that if I do well then my future is secure. Whether or not I continue at (name of company) will depend on what they have to offer me in the future; In the next 5 years: I will most likely rise to a senior engineering position in 2 years and continue to gain valuable experiences from then on.'

' I will not stay with (name of company) for longer than two years. Hopefully I will have obtained a better position by then. I intend to start looking for better paid jobs within production management, after I have worked for about 1 year.'

South Asian and White British Graduates'
Aspirations for the Future

	South Asian	White British
	%	%
Self Employed	50 (12)	-
Management/ Senior Position	37 (9)	94 (15)
To Travel	12 (3)	-
Don't Know	-	6 (1)
N	100 (24)	100 (16)

T A B L E 10.7

Other South Asian and White British graduates, however, while happy to remain as employees, were keeping their options open, and were willing to consider other types of work. A graduate Engineer, who had been working for 6 months noted:

' After two years or so I should be a bit more confident and could be asked to undertake the design of a circuit board or part of a circuit board on my own. I will probably either move to another company after 2-3 years or possibly go back to University to study for an MSc/PhD. If I stay in industry, after 5 years I would hope to be at least a Senior Engineer.'

While a South Asian graduate working for a large chemical company stated:

' I cannot see myself in the present position much longer. Although very good experience and enjoyable at times, I feel stifled - i.e. there isn't much scope for expressing myself to the extent I feel I could i.e. in a Commercial/Marketing role. If there is no movement upwards or sideways (probably the latter) in the next 6 months I shall re-evaluate my position in the company'

A White British Mathematics graduate, who was training to become an Accountant, also commented:

' I'm under a 3 year training contract. If and when I qualify I'll give serious thought as to what I'd like to do and whether to stick with my current employer. Any career move would probably stay within the financial world but maybe more into industry.'

One White British respondent, who had graduated in Physics and Mathematics was rather cynical about his future prospects in the

"world of work". He stated that he was not very sure of what he wanted to do, but probably,

" Going on and getting into the rat race like everyone else it's a fairly morbid idea having to work for the next 40 years for a similar company. I sort of tried of thinking of ways to avoid it, but none of them seemed satisfactory, unfortunately the way society seems to be structured, it's no good saying 'I'm going to ignore you society, I'm going to do something completely different,' sit on my rock and ignore society and watch the sea because it doesn't get me anywhere and it doesn't harm society, society just goes on therefore I suppose I'll have to join in and continue on'

10.5.1 South Asian Aspirations for Self Employment

The major difference between the White British and South Asian groups in their ambitions for the future, was the greater preference amongst the latter to penetrate a separate part of the economy, by becoming self employed (see Table 10.7). This may be seen as following the national trend where 14% of all White males of working age were self employed, compared to 22.5% of their South Asian counterparts (Labour Force Survey, 1985).

Ward's analysis provides two distinct perspectives which may be used to examine business activity amongst members of ethnic minority communities. It is claimed that the presence of British ethnic minorities within the business community, has largely been interpreted 'as a response to constraints experienced in obtaining employment in the labour market' (1983:3). This may be seen as a reflection not only of a generally contracting economy, but also as a result of racially discriminatory practices operated by many

employers (Brooks and Singh, 1978). Ward (1983), however, has put forward another explanation, for the growth and development of ethnic businesses. He suggests that ethnic minority individuals may wish to be self employed, in order to use their resources most efficiently and profitably and take advantage of various business opportunities, 'without being held back by external constraints' (1983:3). Ward has viewed the resources available to ethnic minorities as human capital, labour, and access to financial capital. Their business opportunities have been categorised either as those serving essentially minority communities or those which may venture into the wider economy.

In his survey of black businesses in the London Borough of Lambeth, Brooks (1983) found that the most common 'positive reasons' given by those who were self employed were the desire to make money, ambition and, the wish to become or maintain independence. While the 'negative reasons' expressed for becoming self employed were found to vary by ethnicity. Afro-Caribbean businessmen mainly referred to initial difficulty in obtaining employment and, redundancy; for the South Asians, a failure to get the type of job for which they were qualified, was seen as a major precipitating factor. Of the 70 South Asian businessmen participating in the Lambeth survey, 37% possessed a university degree; compared to 8% of the 'whites' and none of the Afro Caribbeans (Brooks, 1983). However, it is not clear whether these qualifications were gained in the U.K. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the South Asian graduates participating in the current research were following the trend indicated by

Brooks, and for broadly similar reasons. The positive factors of money, ambition and independence, which were identified by Brooks (1983), were also rationales expressed by those South Asian graduates in this study. An Electronics Engineer, who had recently started work at a medium sized local firm, noted:

" I just want to get some experience and then get out I'm hoping to set up my own business eventually something in Electronics business.... thats where the money is."

In terms of ambition, a female Pharmacy graduate commented:

" I'm not going to work for somebody for the rest of my life, so I'd like to get my own business we have to aim for something and that's all I can aim for"

However, of all three factors, 'independence' was most frequently mentioned: this may be seen as both a positive and a negative reason for wanting to become self employed. Brooks (1983) has noted, 'As a consequence of their relatively disadvantaged position in the wage economy, many black people are motivated to independence from white controlled employing organisations as a way of obtaining greater control over their own future' (1983:44). This argument was reinforced by the remarks of some South Asian graduates:

" I don't think you'd ever get to any kind of higher level when you're working, you'll always be the lowest level worker there and someone whose expected to work the hardest"

" In (name of large retail pharmacy) there aren't many Indians higher up in management and I think it might be a problem but I'm not even willing to take a chance, because I'm going to leave (name of company) pretty soon I'll work there maybe 2-3 years and then I'll go into business on my own."

While another South Asian, who had always had the opportunity to join his family in their business of small retail outlets, commented:

" "I'm still encouraged to join (the business) if I want to, but I've never been forced. My dad told me that within a few years you'll be doing business anyway, he said you'll be doing it of your own accord. He said you just go out and work for a few years and then you'll see for yourself he's right in his own way...."

75% (9 respondents) of those South Asian graduates who eventually wished to become self employed came from families with a history of business activity; that is, families which were either currently engaged in, or had, prior to migration, been involved in some form of business. These graduates could also capitalise on the 'human capital' resources, those of general business 'know how', made available to them. One South Asian graduate, when questioned about his desire for setting up his own business, commented:

" That's almost a tradition with the Asians, it's always been a possibility that an Asian can do for himself and he won't be hampered by anyone else lately I've been more interested in it because the possibilities are much wider for it (business) than any kind of work just in terms of prosperity, the challenge and it's much more fun I think it's very much in the blood, my uncles are in business, cousins here in England are in business, my dad's got a shop."

The cohesion and influence of Asian families were also seen as important factors. As one student noted:

" Business acts as a centre for the whole family, because the whole family can join in and that incurs respect for the family"

While another South Asian graduate saw self employment as perhaps the only acceptable form of 'success' within his family set up.

" From quite an early age I've always wanted to set up my own business, because I felt being in a family dominated by the business, I think it is the only way you can make a success of yourself"

Not all South Asian parents encouraged self-employment, however. A Pharmacy graduate who was keen to start his own business said that his parents had tried to deter him from this path,

" because my dad's got his own shop anyway, it's a grocery shop it is hard work, you work 7 days a week, you work long hours. He works about 14 hours a day, so he just tells me to watch it and I think he's right really, but I think I'll get more job satisfaction and be my own boss, I don't like being told by people what to do"

It is also interesting that of the 12 South Asian graduates who wished to become self employed 9 came from families with a business background; only one of these respondents wished to join his family business, however. Most graduates hoped to set up in business where they could utilise their degree in some respect and perhaps enter a wider economy. To this end, several South Asian

graduates were highly instrumental in formulating their post-graduation plans and the type of occupations they were hoping to enter. For many, the principal aim of their first job was to gain the correct experience which would both enable and be beneficial to the ultimate goal of self employment. A Computer Science graduate noted:

" I've always felt that I'd give myself say 3 years of work and if I don't succeed and am just kept at the ordinary stage then I'll do some kind of business I want to try and get as much experience as I can now, the right kind and then hopefully I can do some kind of Computing self employed work."

While a Banking graduate, who was going to join his family's import and export business commented:

" The idea is to work for no more than a year, two years for maximum, just to get a kick up the backside plus a year or two years in a commercial environment will broaden my mind, make me much more active"

A South Asian Electronics Engineer who had firmly decided at a very young age to become self employed noted that going to university had simply helped him choose the nature of his future business. And with regards to his first job he remarked:

" most Electronics companies these days are involved in defence work and military work, although I have nothing against that, I don't think it would help me very much in setting up my own business I'd rather work for a company who was working towards more civilian electronics projects and not really military defence projects."

An atypical yet noteworthy example was that of a South Asian Economics graduate's pragmatic approach to work and the transition to self employment. At the interview he recalled that there were three main areas of work which he had seriously considered: Banking, Accountancy and Management Consultancy, though he soon realised that the first two would not be very appropriate. When this was questioned, he remarked:

" it was partly seeing the future and leaving avenues open Banking would have meant standing at the bottom for a very large corporation, working my way up and very much making my choice for the rest of my life which didn't seem a good idea Accountancy offered the possibility of setting up my own practice working for yourself, not being dependent on anybody else that is attractive to almost all the Asians like myself that you don't rely on a white man and certainly in the British establishment and in Banking, there are very few Asians at the upper level, it's fine you get £20,000 when you're 26, but you don't go any further and that's frustrating and it didn't leave open the possibility of going on your own
.... I guess I am fairly keen on setting up my own business at a later date and Management Consultancy, would give me much wider experience Accountancy would give me the financial expertise, but I think you can pick that up being involved in business"

Having decided on Management Consultancy, there were still choices to be made about the type of company which would provide the most appropriate experience. When an offer of employment was made, the candidate opted to join 'Firm A' rather than wait for the response of 'Firm B', although the latter had a much higher starting salary. As he commented:

" I actually preferred (Firm A) in the final analysis that suited me much more, (Firm B) is very much high brow strategy world, you know, really

intellectual, which is fine if you want to be a Corporate Manager or something, but (Firm A) actually does a lot of the nuts and bolts (Firm A) was much more useful if I was going to start my own business strategy again."

The above example provides an analysis of the decision making processes made necessary for a South Asian graduate in his evaluation of the alternatives available to him, while giving precedence to the objective of self employment.

Of the 24 South Asians, that is the total sub-sample who were looking for employment, over 63% (15 respondents), compared to 56% (9 respondents) of the White British group expected their future to be in the U.K. As one South Asian commented:

"...this is my home country and I will stay here"

Thus a greater proportion of the White British graduates 44% (7 respondents) compared to 38% (9 respondents) of the South Asians were willing and often keen to move abroad. None of the latter, however, anticipated settling permanently in either their country of origin or their country of birth. Amongst the South Asians preference was expressed mainly for America, Canada and the Middle East. As one South Asian graduate put it, on behalf of his business family,

" The way we see the situation in this country fact is we are people of a different colour and if you want to make money and if that is your objective however hard I try, I'm not going to be allowed to do so here, there are certain barriers people put up constraints so as far as we are concerned, we have to get out again, to develop to expand"

His observation highlights the difficulties faced by ethnic minority entrepreneurs; these are, manifestations of the perceived discriminatory practices within the British economy.

In conclusion it must be emphasised that the data presented here were derived from a fairly small sample (24 South Asian and 16 White British respondents). The subsequent problems of interpretation need to be acknowledged. Nevertheless, the trend suggests a greater propensity amongst the South Asian group to aspire towards self employment. The main reason given was the wish to become economically independent, therefore avoiding the perceived constraints which may be placed upon them by white employers. However, it cannot be assumed that if and when these South Asians were to set up in business, they would be totally successful. It remains to be seen how far they would penetrate the wider economy with existing obstacles 'in terms of access to finance, supplies, premises and markets' (Ward, 1983). It could be argued that if the small scale undertakings of these South Asian graduates were to remain as such over a long period, then this would reproduce an existing pattern: where many South Asian entrepreneurs are 'overqualified' for 'petty retailing' (Brooks, 1983). The result would be a substantial waste of talent and ability.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This thesis has provided a comparative analysis of the experiences of South Asian and White British university students in the British education system and in their search for work. The concluding chapter will briefly summarise the main objectives of the study reported and critically assess how far these have been achieved. The theoretical and policy implications of the research findings will also be considered along with suggestions for future research based on an improved methodology.

However, prior to such an examination it is important for the author to acknowledge her own ideological position particularly due to the sensitive nature of the investigation conducted. In the social sciences the research process is dominated by interactions between the researcher and the researched and while detailed information has been provided on the background, attitudes and perceptions of the researched little has been said of the researcher. Yet the assumptions of the latter will greatly affect the design and execution of the research and interpretation of the data collected. As Taylor and Hegarty state:

'....knowledge neither exists nor is generated in a vacuum, in cognizance of this, research evidence needs to be seen in relation to the context in which it is produced ' (1985:541).

In the area of race related research it is equally important for both black and white researchers to acknowledge their ideological positions. This is because they may both be shaped by their unique experiences which are partly a result of the consequences of their colour or racial grouping.

As a student of South Asian origin the author was able to greatly identify with the individuals who were the main focus of this investigation. Both the researcher and the researched largely enjoyed a shared context for their experiences. Further, although the target group for this study involved South Asian undergraduates the main areas of concern were the processes underpinning the British education system and the graduate labour market. Thus, her unique position combined with the specific experiences of South Asian undergraduates resulted in the author being able to assess the two major topics of interest more intimately.

Both as a result of personal experience and as demonstrated by several studies (Brown, 1984) the operational assumption upon which the methods and theoretical framework of the present study were developed, was that blacks suffer from systematic social and economic injustices in the U.K. In practical terms this involved the total restructuring of the existing stock of knowledge: moving away from merely documenting information to trying to expose and explain significant variations in the underlying trends of the collective experiences of South Asian and White British undergraduates. Directly emerging from this process was the redefinition of the 'problem' regarding the education of ethnic

minority pupils. It was previously claimed that generally South Asian pupils were achieving as well as white pupils and that pupils of Afro Caribbean origin were underachieving in British schools. Further such discrepancies in the achievement levels of the two ethnic minority groups were explained by the differences in their cultural background (Swann, 1985). However, through the combined use of existing literature and empirical data, it has been consistently argued throughout this thesis that South Asian students cannot be seen to be achieving on a par with White British students in the British education system. Thus as the education of the children of the two major ethnic groups in the U.K. is seen as unsatisfactory, the cultural explanation promoted earlier becomes questionable. A critical examination has required the researcher to also look to other factors, including issues of racism and discrimination which have affected the lives of black people in a variety of social settings, in assessing and explaining the educative process as it affects them.

It has been necessary to initially provide the above exposition which indicates the stance from which the current research was approached. This has been important because the author's overriding assumptions may influence the interpretation and implications of the research findings.

11.1 Summary of Research Objectives

A clear statement of research objectives has already been provided in the Introduction (Chapter 1) and the section on Methodology (Chapter 6). Here the main aims of the present study are reiterated in a summarised form.

- a) To draw comparisons between South Asian and White British students in their process of attainment in the British education system.
- b) To accurately assess the numerical participation of experiences of South Asian students at British universities.
- c) To compare the employment prospects for South Asian and White British graduates in the labour market.

11.2 Summary of Research Findings

The results of this study have already been extensively discussed in Chapters 8, 9 and 10. This section provides a brief summary of the main conclusions in relation to the initial objectives already outlined.

11.2.1 Schooling

68% of the total South Asian sample had all or most of their primary education in the U.K. While 95% of the total South Asian sample had had all or most of their secondary education in the U.K. On the whole most of these pupils had not faced any difficulties with the English language.

Levels of Achievement:

On average the South Asian respondents had obtained 8.2 'O' levels each compared to 8.7 for the White British respondents (significant at .05 level).

When the type of secondary school attended (Independent, Grammar or a Comprehensive/Secondary Modern) was controlled for, similar trends were evident between the two sample groups for both 'O' and 'A' level achievements.

The average 'A' level point score for the South Asian respondents was found to be 10.8 points compared to 12 points for the White British respondents (not significant).

The Process of Attainment:

46% of the South Asian respondents compared to 25% of the White British had attempted at least one C.S.E. examination.

For both sample groups those who had attended a Comprehensive/Secondary Modern school were more likely to have attempted C.S.E.s than those from Independent or Grammar schools.

However, even when the type of school attended was held constant, 62% of the South Asians compared to 36% of the White British respondents from Comprehensive/Secondary Modern schools had attempted at least one C.S.E. examination (significant at .001 level).

Where South Asian pupils were encouraged to do C.S.E.s rather than 'O' levels they responded in two ways:

Deferred Reaction - where they did C.S.E.s and then went on to do 'O' levels at school or college.

Immediate Intervention - this was in the form of 'dual entry', where parents and/or pupils were intervening and actively shaping their opportunities to gain academic qualifications.

South Asians were less likely than their White British respondents to have taken all their 'O' levels in the same year and were more likely to have taken at least one 'O' level later (normally in the lower or upper sixth form). However, White British respondents were more likely than their South Asian counterparts to have taken at least one 'O' level earlier (normally in the fourth year). (Significant at .001 level in all three cases).

Of those taking at least one 'O' level later 82% of the White British compared to only 52% of the South Asians were retaking examinations.

With reference to 'A' levels, South Asians were more likely to have retaken at least one examination than their White British counterparts (significant at .01 level).

Overall, a significantly greater proportion of South Asians felt they were constrained from taking G.C.E. examinations at school because they were not being entered for specific examinations.

For some South Asian pupils in this study their school experiences included the confrontation of racist attitudes and behaviour both from their peers and teachers.

The most prominent issues emerging from the data which may explain why the South Asian students in this study were able to challenge established school procedures refer to: family encouragement, teacher interest and self determination.

11.2.2 Higher Education

One of the main objectives of the study, that of assessing the numerical presence of home South Asians at British universities has unfortunately remained unfulfilled. Greater details are provided in the Methodology section (Chapter 6). The main

reasons, however, being the non existence of a list(s) assessing the participation of South Asian students in higher education and the lack of cooperation received from universities for the compilation of such a list.

In the sample of South Asian and White British final year undergraduates significant differences were noted in the age distribution of the two groups, where the South Asians were older than their White British counterparts.

26% of the South Asian respondents in this study expressed having faced social and academic problems at university which could be attributed to their ethnic origin.

Additionally the majority of the South Asians noted that their experience at university had not caused them to neglect their culture or to move away from it to any great extent.

11.2.3 Employment

In a matched sample of South Asian and White British graduates it was found that the former were better qualified, willing to accept a lower minimum salary and had started searching for work earlier.

The South Asians had also made more applications for work and although proportionally more of their applications reached first, second and third interview stages, they were less likely than

their White British counterparts to be offered employment at each level.

Some of the procedures operated at employment interviews and reported by South Asian graduates may be construed as superfluous to the requirements of the job and may be seen as unlawfully discriminatory.

The future aspirations of the two sample groups differed considerably. Nearly all the White British respondents hoped to be qualified and in a senior position within an established company, while almost half of the South Asians hoped to be self-employed.

11.3 Implications of Research Findings

11.3.1 Implications for South Asian Communities

One of the main outcomes of the type of investigation reported in this thesis is that it may enable those groups who were the focus of this study to enhance their understanding of their everyday life. Such a report may help members of the South Asian communities to locate their individual encounters within a framework of collective experiences. Subsequently these may be identified as consequences of systematic processes operating within various social arenas.

The data presented earlier has clearly indicated that although South Asian and White British respondents were almost equally qualified in their school leaving credentials, the former had faced greater difficulty in this attainment. South Asian pupils were often placed in lower streams and had to spend more time and money in order to obtain their qualifications: the overall result being that they were older when they entered university. However, such 'success' was only possible with the support of family and teachers.

Further it was also evident that higher academic qualifications could not insulate South Asian graduates from discriminatory processes operating within the labour market.

11.3.2 Implications for Theory

The theoretical implications of the findings have already been discussed in the chapters where the data were presented (sections 8.7 and 10.3). This part will simply reiterate some of the main issues.

This research has noted that inequalities in education may exist along several socially defined strata such as class and race. Also the effects of various criteria may not be mutually exclusive, where disadvantage may cut across the normal boundaries of race and class.

Further in trying to assess the education received by any specific group, it would be inadequate to simply compare achievement levels, it is crucial to also examine the process of attainment.

It has also been demonstrated that pupils are not always passive consumers of the processes occurring at school. Rather they may respond by resisting such situations. This argument is also supported by the theoretical perspective discussed by Willis (1983). Ironically for the South Asians in this sample who were marginalised from the process of attainment, such resistance took the form of internalising and accepting 'normal' school values.

The precise nature of the struggle entered into by discernible groups of students and its procedural outcome may only be explained when located within its political and economic context. This further confirms the suggestions made by Barton and Walker (1983).

No direct relationship between schools, credentials and the labour market was identified, thus making it difficult to accept the meritocratic ideology of upward social mobility.

Jenkins (1986) distinction between 'suitable' and 'acceptable' employees was also found to be applicable in the recruitment and selection procedures of the graduate labour market.

Racially discriminatory practices may be more prevalent in the graduate labour market because employers are recruiting from a

largely equally qualified pool and mainly for managerial type postions.

11.3.3 Implications for Policy

The most urgent policy implication of this research is the basic acknowledgement by the partners in education that South Asian pupils are facing difficulties in the British education system. This was indicated even in the experiences of those South Asian students who may eventually be seen to be academically 'successful'.

It was believed that the educational performance of South Asian pupils would improve with their greater familiarity with the British education system (Ashby et al, 1970; Little, 1975). However, this study has demonstrated that even those South Asians who have had all or most of their schooling in the U.K. are facing difficulties in attainment

Both overt and covert processes of streaming particularly require monitoring within schools.

Training should be compulsory both in intial and in-service teacher education which may make teachers aware of such processes occurring within schools and how these may be mitigated. Such training should also be extened to university lecturers.

The Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA), the Polytechnics Central Admission System (PCAS) and the Association of Graduate Careers and Advisory Service (AGCAS) should monitor the participation and the employment prospects of home ethnic minorities in higher education. This is already the case regarding women students.

The lack of correspondence between higher academic qualifications and good prospects in employment also has implications for current debates on multicultural and antiracist education, which are expected to improve the educational performance of ethnic minorities and their subsequent position in the labour market.

There should be pressure for graduate employers to monitor and act upon their own recruitment and selection procedures regarding ethnicity.

11.4 Methodological Limitations of the Present Study

While this study has provided a thorough investigation of the experiences of South Asian university students in the British education system and in their search for work its limitations need to be acknowledged. These may also provide suggestions for future research.

Firstly, it must be acknowledged that this research has essentially focused on those South Asians who were eventually seen

to be academically 'successful' - in the sense that they were willing and able to go to university. Therefore any generalisations about the wider South Asian population would be on a speculative basis.

Secondly, the sampling techniques used in this study cannot be seen as totally satisfactory. However, they were used due to the unavailability of a stricter sampling frame.

Thirdly, due to the absence of a substantial female population in the sample chosen, it has been difficult to provide specific analysis along gender divisions.

Finally, it is important to note that all the empirical issues considered in this thesis have been investigated from the perspective of those most concerned. There has been no attempt to assess the views of other influential groups including teachers, parents and employers.

11.5 Directions for Future Research

There is a need to investigate the processes by which ethnic minorities may succeed or fail in attaining their academic qualifications. Such an examination would reveal information which would help to explain rather than simply describe procedures occurring within schools.

Particular attention should be paid to the examination of the criteria used by teachers in placing individual pupils in academic streams.

It would be useful to compare the proportions of those South Asian and White British students who are qualified by ability and attainment and who wish to do so and are actually able to benefit from higher education.

Bodies such as the AGCAS should investigate the prospects in employment for ethnic minority graduates.

Involving the active participation of both employers and graduates, research should particularly focus on the procedures operating during the employment interview. Also of concern would be the promotional prospects of black graduates once in employment.

Another area of interest suggested by the present study is the participation of ethnic minority graduates in self employment.

APPENDIX 1

Article published by the author critically appraising the Swann Report.

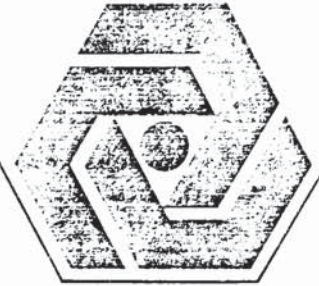
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APPENDIX 2

Postal Questionnaires used for the South Asian and White British Undergraduates and Correspondence used in gaining access to the sample.

The University of Aston
MANAGEMENT CENTRE

South Wing, Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ET
Telephone: 021-359 3011 Ex. 4715 Telex:336997



Your Ref

Our Ref

Date 29th August 1984

Dear (Name of Registrar)

We are currently engaged in research on the difficulties faced by university graduates in securing employment and wish to conduct a national survey as part of our enquiry.

In order to obtain a representative sample, we need a list of the names and departments of all home students at Universities, who will be in their final year of undergraduate study in the academic year 1984/5.

The information obtained will of course be treated in the strictest confidence and the final report will not mention the names of individuals, departments/faculties, or specific universities. The success of this research is largely dependent on the cooperation of individual universities. I hope, therefore, that you will give this request your urgent and sympathetic attention.

The work is being undertaken by Ms K Tanna, and should you wish to discuss the issues raised in this letter, she can be contacted at the above telephone number.

Meanwhile we hope it will be possible for you to forward a list of students, to Ms K Tanna, at your earliest convenience.

With many thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Dr Robin Ward
Senior Research Fellow

ASSOCIATION
OF GRADUATE
CAREERS
ADVISORY
SERVICES

University of Birmingham

Careers Service
Hornton Grange
53 Edgbaston Park Road
Birmingham B15 2RS

Telephone: 021-472 1301

Statistics Sub-Committee

To Heads of University Careers Services

18th September 1984

Dear Colleague,

I have had a number of calls from colleagues asking me what advice they should give their registrars concerning a proposed survey of 1985 graduates by a Dr Robin Ward of the University of Aston Management Centre. I have had a brief discussion with Dr Ward, and will be meeting him and his research associate early in October.

I understand that the research is privately funded, and that Dr Ward is proposing a prospective survey of a sample of 1985 graduates - the first questionnaire to be sent to departments - to look at the effect of criteria such as institution, subject, sex, and ethnic background on the search for employment and the early years of employment. Nothing wrong with those aims, but I am concerned about the proliferation of such surveys, with no apparent central control, and the possible watering-down of the results by the understandable reaction of graduates against being treated as statistical and sociological fodder.

AGCAS itself must also be concerned because, at its last meeting, Plenary Committee agreed to institute a prospective survey of graduates and postgraduates. This may be adding to the proliferation, but it seems to me that we are the most appropriate people to be involved in such surveys, perhaps in collaboration with Government and researchers in higher education. We shall be presenting this view at various meetings planned for the coming months.

Dr Ward appreciates the problems associated with duplication, and would be very happy to know that data could be available from work already being done or to be carried out in the future. I would suggest, therefore, that you advise your registrars to hold fire for at least a couple of months until AGCAS has had the opportunity both to present its views in appropriate places and to work out more-detailed plans for its own prospective survey. I am disappointed that some registrars have agreed to co-operate - obviously without taking the advice of their careers services - but it would be helpful if others could be encouraged to postpone taking any action.

Ian Davies

Dr Ian Davies
Chairman



The University of Aston
MANAGEMENT CENTRE

South Wing, Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ET

Telephone: 021-359 3011 Ex.

Telex: 336997



Your Ref

Our Ref

Date

9th October 1984

The President of the Asian Society

Hi! I am a postgraduate student at the University of Aston in Birmingham and am conducting research on Asian students in Higher Education. (Details are enclosed).

The work will contribute towards a greater understanding of Asian students in Higher Education and subsequently enable those at the school level, to succeed. However the success of this research is largely dependent on the cooperation of individual University Asian Societies.

For the purposes of this study I require a list of names and departments, of all home (as opposed to overseas), Asian students at your University who are currently in the final year of their undergraduate course. If you could also provide their addresses, that would be very useful.

It is important that this list is as complete as possible. Considering that not all Asian students join the Society, I would appreciate it if you could also include in the list, those students who would fall into my category but are not members of the Society.

I hope you will give this request your urgent and sympathetic attention. If you wish to discuss the issues raised in this letter, I can be contacted at the above telephone number. I look forward to hearing from you.

With many thanks,

Yours faithfully,

Ms Krutika Tanna
Research Student

P.S. If there is a Sikh/Pakistani Society at your University, please pass on a copy of this letter to them.

15th November 1984

Dear Student,

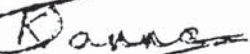
I am a postgraduate researcher interested in the educational backgrounds and employment prospects of undergraduates. As part of my study, I wish to conduct a national survey of final year, U.K., undergraduates. I hope you will agree to help me.

If you agree to co-operate it would involve you filling in a questionnaire about your educational background. The information you provide will, of course, be treated in the strictest confidence. My final report will not mention the names of individuals, departments/faculties, or specific universities.

The success of this research is heavily dependent on the co-operation of individual students like yourself; and in this time of rising unemployment, I hope you will appreciate the importance of such a study.

I would be grateful if you could please complete and return the tear-off slip below, indicating whether or not you are willing to take part. You can send it to me through the internal mail.

Thank you for your co-operation.



Ms. K. Tanna

PLEASE RETURN TO Ms K TANNA, POSTGRADUATE STUDENT, CRER, ARTS BUILDING

Name: _____

Dept: _____

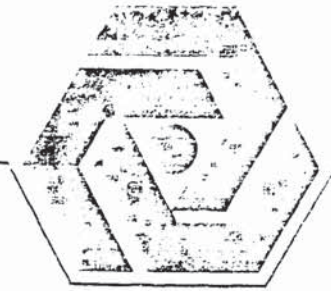
I am willing/unwilling to co-operate in your research (delete as appropriate)

The University of Aston

MANAGEMENT CENTRE

South Wing, Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ET

Telephone: 021-359 3011 Ex. 4715 Telex: 336997



Your Ref

Our Ref

Date

January 1985.

Dear Student,

I am a postgraduate researcher interested in the educational backgrounds and employment prospects of undergraduates. As part of my study I am conducting a national survey of final year undergraduates. I hope you will agree to help me by completing the enclosed questionnaire.

Although at first sight it looks a lengthy questionnaire, most of the questions require simply yes/no answers or a tick in the appropriate box. I would ask you, however, to pay careful attention to the instructions regarding questions you should/should not answer.

The information you provide will of course be treated in the strictest confidence. My final report will not mention the names of individuals, departments/faculties, or specific universities.

I would be grateful if you could return to me, as soon as possible (and certainly no later than the end of February 1985), your completed questionnaire in the SAE provided.

Many thanks

Ms K. Tanna

			C.C. Serial	
			No	
			1-4	
			Card	
			No1	
			1 5	
1.	Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	1	6
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>	2	
2.	Age	20 years <input type="checkbox"/>	1	7
		21 years <input type="checkbox"/>	2	
		22 years <input type="checkbox"/>	3	
		23 years <input type="checkbox"/>	4	
		Over 23 years <input type="checkbox"/>	5	
		(please specify)		
3.	Country of Birth			8
		United Kingdom <input type="checkbox"/>	1	
		Bangladesh <input type="checkbox"/>	2	
		India <input type="checkbox"/>	3	
		Pakistan <input type="checkbox"/>	4	
		East Africa <input type="checkbox"/>	5	
		Other(please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	7	
3a.	Have you lived in the United Kingdom all your life?			9
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES(Go to Q 4)		1	
	<input type="checkbox"/> NO			
	If no, how many years have you lived in the UK?			
	1 - 4 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	
	5 - 9 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	
	10 - 14 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
	15 years and over	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	
			6	

4. Home town in the U.K.

C.C.
☐ ☐ ☐ 10-12

5. Is your father in employment?

☐ ☐ 13-14

YES

☐ What is his occupation(as much detail as possible)

NO

☐ What was his last occupation

☐ DON'T KNOW

☒ 15

ALL RESPONDENTS

6. Approximately how many years full-time education has your father had?

16

No full time education	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 - 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 - 9 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 - 11 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 - 14 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
15 years or more	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>

1
2
3
4
5
6
9

6a. What was the highest qualification he obtained, if any?

C.C.
☐ 17

7. Is your mother in employment?

☐ ☐ 18-19

YES

☐ What is her occupation?(as much detail as possible)

NO

☐ What was her last job?

☐ DON'T KNOW

ALL RESPONDENTS

8. Approximately how many years full-time education has your mother had?

20

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| No full-time education | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1 - 4 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 - 9 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 - 11 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 - 14 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 years or more | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't Know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1
2
3
4
5
6
9

8a. What was the highest qualification she obtained, if any?

☐ C.C.
21

PRIMARY EDUCATION

9. In which country did you receive most of your primary education?

22

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| United Kingdom | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bangladesh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| India | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pakistan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| East Africa | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other(please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1
2
3
4
5
7

10. What proportion of the children attending your primary school(s) were Black/Asian?

23

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 0 - 10% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 - 30% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31 - 50% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 50% and over | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1
2
3
4

10a. To which ethnic group did most of these children belong?

☐ 24

11. How would you describe your primary education?
(eg. the atmosphere in the school, your likes and dislikes
about the teachers, what you were taught etc)

C.C.
☐ 25

12. Did you receive particular encouragement from any of your
primary school teachers?

☐ ☐ 26-27

☐ NO(Go to Q. 13)
☐ YES

If yes, from whom and in what ways.

☐ ☐ 28-29

SECONDARY EDUCATION

13. In which country did you receive most of your
secondary education?

30

United Kingdom ☐
Bangladesh ☐
India ☐
Pakistan ☐
East Africa ☐
Other(please specify) ☐

1
2
3
4
5
7

14. What type(s) of secondary school(s) did you attend?

C.C.
31

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comprehensive | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Secondary Modern | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Church | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1
2
3
4
5
7

15. What proportion of the children attending your secondary school(s) were Black/Asian?

32

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 0 - 10% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 - 30% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31 - 50% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 50% and over | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1
2
3
4

15a. To which ethnic group did most of these children belong?

☐ 33

15b. In general how did the white English children get on with the Black/Asian children?

☐ 34

15c. In general what were the teachers attitudes towards the Black/Asian pupils?

☐ 35

C.C.

ALL RESPONDENTS

16. How would you describe your secondary education?
(eg. the atmosphere in the school, your likes and dislikes about the teachers, what you were taught etc.)

☐ 36

17. Which of these best describes the way your school was organised?

37

- Streaming/Banding ☐
Setting for Specific Subjects ☐
Mixed Ability ☐
Other(please specify) ☐

1
2
3
7

- 17a. Which stream (top/middle/low) were you in at the beginning and at the end of your school career, for the following subjects. (Where the subjects were not studied throughout school, place not applicable (N/A) in the end column.)

☐ 38-39
☐ 40-41
☐ 42-43
☐ 44-45
☐ 46-47

	Beginning	End
Maths		
English		
Sciences		
Arts		
Modern Lang.		

18. Did you receive particular encouragement from any of your secondary school teachers?

☐

NO (Go to Q19)

YES

If yes, from whom and in what ways

C.C.
48-49

50-51

19. On reflection how would you describe your parents attitude towards your education at school level?

Very supportive

☐

1

Interested

☐

2

Indifferent

☐

3

Wanted you to leave at the earliest opportunity

☐

4

Other(please specify)

☐

7

52

2 5

- | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|-------|
| | | | | | 6-11 |
| | | | | | 12-17 |
| | | | | | 18-23 |
| | | | | | 24-29 |
| | | | | | 30-35 |
| | | | | | 36-41 |
| | | | | | 42-47 |
| | | | | | 48-53 |
| | | | | | 54-59 |
| | | | | | 60-65 |
| | | | | | 66-71 |
| | | | | | 72-77 |

35

					6-11
					12-17
					18-23
					24-29
					30-35
					36-41
					42-47
					48-53
					54-59
					60-65
					66-71
					72-77

20a. If any of the examinations were not taken at school, please state why.

21. How did you come to decide which subjects to study at 'A' level?

21a. Were you constrained at any instance by your school, from taking 'O' and 'A' levels in a subject you wanted to study?

☐ NO
☐ YES

Why do you think this was?

22. How do you feel about the careers advice you received while studying for your 'O' and 'A' levels?

C.C.
Serial

No

--	--	--	--	--

1-4

Card

No4

☒ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ ☐ 8-9

☐ 10

22a. Were you encouraged in any particular career directions?

C.C.
☐ ☐ 11-12

☐ NO
☐ YES

In which direction(s) and why

23. Why did you decide to go on to Higher Education?

☐ 13

23a. What was your parents reaction to this decision?

14

Pleased/Encouraging ☐
Indifferent ☐
Opposed ☐
Don't Know ☐

1
2
3
9

23b. Why do you think they reacted in this way?

☐ 15

24. Who suggested that you should apply to Universities?
(Tick as many as may be appropriate)

Teacher(s) ☐
 Careers Advisor ☐
 Parents ☐
 Relatives ☐
 Friends ☐
 Self ☐
 Other(please specify) ☐

C.C.
16-22

- 24a. Where or from whom did you obtain most of the information
relevant to applying to University? (Tick as many as may be appropriate).

Teacher(s) ☐
 Careers Advisor ☐
 Parents ☐
 Friends ☐
 Library ☐
 Other(please specify) ☐

23-28

25. Which subject(s) did you apply to study and why?

☐ ☐ 29-30

26. Had you failed to obtain the appropriate 'A' level grades
for a university offer, would you have:

31

Retaken 'A'levels ☐
 Accepted place at a polytechnic ☐
 Accepted place at a college of H.E. ☐
 Looked for a job ☐
 Other(please specify) ☐

1
2
3
4
7

27. On reflection do you think you faced any major barriers on your educational road to University?

C.C.
32-33

<input type="checkbox"/>	NO(Go to Q.28)
<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
What were they and how did you avoid or overcome them?	
Now Go to Q.28	

ALL RESPONDENTS

28. In your opinion which factors helped you get to University?

☐ 34

HIGHER EDUCATION

29. How long is your degree course?

35

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 3years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other(please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1
2
7

29a. Which year are you currently studying in?

- 2nd year ☐
- 3rd year ☐
- 4th year ☐
- Other(please specify) ☐

C.C.
36

1
2
3
7

30. What level, subject(s) and class of degree do you expect to receive? (eg BSc (Hons) Mathematics , 2:2/Lower Second)

37-40

31. As part of your degree course have you had the opportunity to gain any industrial experience?

41-42

YES

<input type="checkbox"/>	Did you take up the opportunity?
--------------------------	----------------------------------

NO

<input type="checkbox"/>	Would you have liked the opportunity and why?
--------------------------	---

32. Do you regret having entered Higher Education?

43-44

☐ NO(Go to Q. 33)

☐ YES

Why do you say that?

33. What do you intend to do after you graduate?

- Further Study ☐
- Vocational Training ☐
- Get a Job ☐
- Own Business/Self Employment ☐
- Emigrate ☐
- Join Family Business ☐
- Other(please specify) ☐
- Don't Know ☐

C.C.
☐ ☐ 45-46

34. What kind of job/careers are you applying for or thinking of applying for?

☐ 47

34a. What do you think are the prospects of getting that type of job/career?

☐ 48

34b. Why do you say that?

☐ 49

C.C.

35. Put in order of preference what you consider to be the three most important factors in your choice of career (1-3)

Independence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Status	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interest	<input type="checkbox"/>
Security	<input type="checkbox"/>
Variety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other(please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

<input type="checkbox"/>	50
<input type="checkbox"/>	51
<input type="checkbox"/>	52
<input type="checkbox"/>	53
<input type="checkbox"/>	54
<input type="checkbox"/>	55
<input type="checkbox"/>	56
<input type="checkbox"/>	57

☒ 58-65

☒ 66-75

The following questions are simply to help us classify your answers and make statistical comparisons.

- a) Could you provide some information on your brothers and sisters:

	<u>Sibling</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
eg	Sister	19	'O' levels	Secretary

Serial No
1-4
Card No5
☐ 5

<input type="checkbox"/>	6-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	10-13
<input type="checkbox"/>	14-17
<input type="checkbox"/>	18-21
<input type="checkbox"/>	22-25

- b) In which of these socio-economic groupings, would you place your family:

Upper middle class	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lower middle class	<input type="checkbox"/>
Upper working class	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lower working class	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other(please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

26
1
2
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7

☒ 27

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

During the months of July and August 1985 I would like to interview students who will have recently finished their University courses. The interview will last for about forty five minutes and will mainly deal with your experiences at University and your plans for the future.

If your home is in the Midlands (eg. Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry, Nottingham, Leicester) or London, and you would be willing to be interviewed at a time and place convenient to you, please provide the following information.

Name

Your term time address and phone no.

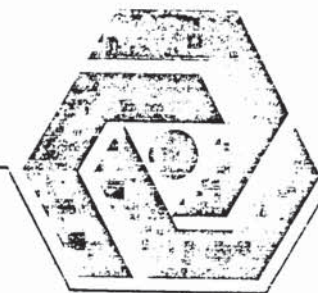
Your home address and phone no.

The University of Aston

MANAGEMENT CENTRE

South Wing, Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ET

Telephone: 021-359 3011 Ex. 4715 Telex: 336997



Your Ref

Our Ref

Date

January 1985.

Dear Student,

I am a postgraduate researcher interested in the educational backgrounds and employment prospects of undergraduates. As part of my study I am conducting a national survey of final year undergraduates. I hope you will agree to help me by completing the enclosed questionnaire.

Although at first sight it looks a lengthy questionnaire, most of the questions require simply yes/no answers or a tick in the appropriate box. I would ask you, however, to pay careful attention to the instructions regarding questions you should/should not answer.

The information you provide will of course be treated in the strictest confidence. My final report will not mention the names of individuals, departments/faculties, or specific universities.

I would be grateful if you could return to me, as soon as possible (and certainly no later than the end of February 1985), your completed questionnaire in the SAE provided.

Many thanks

Ms K. Tanna

			C.C. Serial No
			<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> 1-4
			Card No1
			<input type="text"/> 5
1. Gender	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 6
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
2. Age	20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 7
	21 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
	22 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
	23 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
	Over 23 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
	(please specify)		
3. Country of Birth			8
	United Kingdom	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
	Bangladesh	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
	India	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
	Pakistan	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
	East Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
	Other(please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	7
3a. Have you lived in the United Kingdom all your life?			9
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES(Go to Q 4)		1
	<input type="checkbox"/> NO		
If no, how many years have you lived in the UK?			
	1 - 4 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
	5 - 9 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
	10 - 14 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
	15 years and over	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
			6

4. Home town in the U.K.

C.C.
☐☐☐ 10-12

5. Is your father in employment?

☐☐ 13-14

YES

☐ What is his occupation(as much detail as possible)

NO

☐ What was his last occupation

☐ DON'T KNOW

5a. What was his occupation before he came to the U.K?

☐ 15

ALL RESPONDENTS

6. Approximately how many years full-time education has your father had?

16

No full time education

☐

1

1 - 4 years

☐

2

5 - 9 years

☐

3

10 - 11 years

☐

4

12 - 14 years

☐

5

15 years or more

☐

6

Don't Know

☐

9

6a. What was the highest qualification he obtained, if any?

C.C.
☐ 17

7. Is your mother in employment?

☐ ☐ 18-19

YES

☐ What is her occupation?(as much detail as possible)

NO

☐ What was her last job?

☐ DON'T KNOW

ALL RESPONDENTS

8. Approximately how many years full-time education has your mother had?

20

- No full-time education ☐
- 1 - 4 years ☐
- 5 - 9 years ☐
- 10 - 11 years ☐
- 12 - 14 years ☐
- 15 years or more ☐
- Don't Know ☐

1
2
3
4
5
6
9

8a. What was the highest qualification she obtained, if any?

C.C.
☐ 21

PRIMARY EDUCATION

9. In which country did you receive most of your primary education?

22

United Kingdom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bangladesh	<input type="checkbox"/>
India	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistan	<input type="checkbox"/>
East Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other(please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

1
2
3
4
5
7

10. What proportion of the children attending your primary school(s) were Black/Asian?

23

0 - 10%	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 - 30%	<input type="checkbox"/>
31 - 50%	<input type="checkbox"/>
50% and over	<input type="checkbox"/>

1
2
3
4

10a. To which ethnic group did most of these children belong?

☐ 24

11. How would you describe your primary education?
(eg. the atmosphere in the school, your likes and dislikes
about the teachers, what you were taught etc)

C.C.
☐ 25

12. Did you receive particular encouragement from any of your
primary school teachers?

☐☐ 26-27

☐ NO (Go to Q. 13)
☐ YES

If yes, from whom and in what ways.

13. Did you have any difficulty with the English language
at primary school?

☐☐ 28-29

☐ NO (Go to Q. 14)
☐ YES

Were you given any special help at primary school

☐ NO
☐ YES

If yes, from whom and in what ways.

C.C.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

14. In which country did you receive most of your secondary education?

30

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| United Kingdom | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| Bangladesh | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| India | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Pakistan | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| East Africa | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Other(please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 |

15. What type(s) of secondary school(s) did you attend?

31

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| Comprehensive | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| Secondary Modern | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Church | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Other (please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 |

16. What proportion of the children attending your secondary school(s) were Black/Asian?

32

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|
| 0 - 10% | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| 11 - 30% | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| 31 - 50% | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| 50% and over | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |

- 16a. To which ethnic group did most of these children belong?

☐ 33

16b. In general how did the white English children get on with the Black/Asian children?

C.C.
☐ 34

16c. In general what were the teachers attitudes towards the Black/Asian pupils?

☐ 35

ALL RESPONDENTS

17. How would you describe your secondary education?
(eg. the atmosphere in the school, your likes and dislikes about the teachers, what you were taught etc.)

☐ 36

18. Which of these best describes the way your school was organised?

37

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Streaming/Banding | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Setting for Specific Subjects | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mixed Ability | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other(please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1
2
3
7

- 18a. Which stream (top/middle/low) were you in at the beginning and at the end of your school career, for the following subjects. (Where the subjects were not studied throughout school, put not applicable (N/A) in the end column.)

	Beginning	End
Maths		
English		
Sciences		
Arts		
Modern Lang.		

C.C.

		38-39
		40-41
		42-43
		44-45
		46-47

19. Did you receive particular encouragement from any of your secondary school teachers?

		48-49
--	--	-------

☐ NO (Go to Q.20)
☐ YES

If yes, from whom and in what ways

20. Did you have any difficulty with the English language at secondary school?

C.C.
50-51

<input type="checkbox"/> NO(Go to Q.21) <input type="checkbox"/> YES	
Were you given any special help at secondary school	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	
If you were, from whom and in what ways.	
Now GO to Q. 21	

21. On reflection how would you describe your parents attitude towards your education at school level?

52

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Very supportive | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| Interested | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| Indifferent | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Wanted you to leave at the earliest opportunity | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Other(please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 |

PREPARATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

22. Please list all public examinations taken (CSE /GCE 'O' & 'A' levels etc), whether passed or failed. A repeated subject will thus be recorded twice.

[illegible]

C.C.

Serial

No

1-4

Card

No2

25

6-11

12-17

18-23

24-29

30-35

36-41

42-47

48-53

54-59

59 55

60-65
66 71

65-71

72-77

Serial

No

1-4

Card

No3

35

6-11

12-17

118-23

28	25
34	30

24-29	
30-35	

30-35

36-41
42 45

42-47

48-53

54-59

60-65

66-77

72-77

C.C.
Serial

No

1-4

Card
No4

☒ 5

☐ 6

22a. If any of the examinations were not taken at school,
please state why.

23. How did you come do decide which subjects to study
at 'A' level?

☐ 7

23a. Were you constrained at any instance by your school,
from taking 'O' and 'A' levels in a subject you wanted to study?

☐ 8-9

☐ NO
☐ YES

Why do you think this was?

24. How do you feel about the careers advice you received
while studying for your 'O' and 'A' levels?

☐ 10

24a. Were you encouraged in any particular career directions?

☐ ☐ 11-12

☐

NO

YES

In which direction(s) and why

25. Why did you decide to go on to Higher Education?

☐ 13

25a. What was your parents reaction to this decision?

14

Pleased/Encouraging

☐

Indifferent

☐

Opposed

☐

Don't Know

☐

1

2

3

9

25b. Why do you think they reacted in this way?

☐ 15

26. Who suggested that you should apply to Universities?
(Tick as many as may be appropriate)

Teacher(s) ☐
 Careers Advisor ☐
 Parents ☐
 Relatives ☐
 Friends ☐
 Self ☐
 Other(please specify) ☐

C.C.

16-22

- 26a. Where or from whom did you obtain most of the information
relevant to applying to University?
(Tick as many as may be appropriate)

Teacher(s) ☐
 Careers Advisor ☐
 Parents ☐
 Friends ☐
 Library ☐
 Other(please specify) ☐

23-28

27. Which subject(s) did you apply to study and why?

☐ ☐ 29-30

28. Had you failed to obtain the appropriate 'A' level grades
for a university offer, would you have:

Retaken 'A'levels ☐
 Accepted place at a polytechnic ☐
 Accepted place at a college of H.E. ☐
 Looked for a job ☐
 Other(please specify) ☐

31

1
2
3
4
7

29. on reflection do you think you faced any major barriers on your educational road to University?

C.C.
32-33

☐ NO(Go to Q. 30)
☐ YES

What were they and how did you avoid or overcome them?

Now Go to Q. 30

ALL RESPONDENTS

30. In your opinion which factors helped you get to University?

☐ 34

HIGHER EDUCATION

31. How long is your degree course?

35

3years ☐
4years ☐
Other(please specify) ☐

1
2
7

C.C.

36

31a. Which year are you currently studying in?

- 2nd year ☐
- 3rd year ☐
- 4th year ☐
- Other(please specify) ☐

1

2

3

7

32. What level, subject(s) and class of degree do you expect to receive? (eg BSc (Hons) Mathematics , 2:2/Lower Second)

☐☐☐☐ 37-40

33. As part of your degree course have you had the opportunity to gain any industrial experience?

☐☐ 41-42

YES

<input type="checkbox"/>	Did you take up the opportunity?
--------------------------	----------------------------------

NO

<input type="checkbox"/>	Would you have liked the opportunity and why?
--------------------------	---

34. Do you regret having entered Higher Education?

☐☐ 43-44

☐ NO(Go to Q. 35)

☐ YES

Why do you say that?

35. What do you intend to do after you graduate?

C.C.
☐ ☐ 45-46

- Further Study ☐
- Vocational Training ☐
- Get a Job ☐
- Own Business/Self Employment ☐
- Emigrate ☐
- Join Family Business ☐
- Other(please specify) ☐
- Don't Know ☐

36. What kind of job/careers are you applying for or thinking of applying for?

☐ 47

36a. What do you think are the prospects of getting that type of job/career?

☐ 48

36b. Why do you say that?

☐ 49

C.1.

37. Put in order of preference what you consider to be the three most important factors in your choice of career (1-3)

Independence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Status	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interest	<input type="checkbox"/>
Security	<input type="checkbox"/>
Variety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other(please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

<input type="checkbox"/>	51
<input type="checkbox"/>	52
<input type="checkbox"/>	53
<input type="checkbox"/>	54
<input type="checkbox"/>	55
<input type="checkbox"/>	56
<input type="checkbox"/>	57
<input type="checkbox"/>	58
<input type="checkbox"/>	59

ASIAN STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

38. Do you think Asians have particular problems in entering Higher Education institutions in this country?

☐ ☐ ☐ 51-60

☐ NO(Go to Q.39)
☐ YES

Please give reasons

Do you think Asian women face more problems than Asian men?

39. Have you experienced any problems (academically or socially) at University, which can be attributed to your ethnic origin?

C.C.
61-2

☐
☐

NO
YES

Please give details

40. Are you a member of any Asian Society at University?

63-6

☐
☐

NO
YES

Why did you join?

41. Since coming to University (and possibly living away from home), do you feel you have become more anglicised in your outlook, or have you been further drawn towards your cultural background?

65

The following questions are simply to help us classify your answers and make statistical comparisons.

a) What religion are you?

- Buddhist ☐
- Christian ☐
- Hindu ☐
- Muslim ☐
- Sikh ☐
- Other(please specify) ☐

1
2
3
4
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7

C.I.

66

b) Which (sub)caste do you belong to, if known?

☐ ☐ 67-68

c) What language do you speak at your parents home?

- English ☐
- Bengali ☐
- Gujrati ☐
- Hindi ☐
- Punjabi ☐
- Urdu ☐
- Other(please specify) ☐

1
2
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7

69

d) When did your parents migrate to the U.K.?

☐ 70

e) From which region of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, East Africa etc, did your parents emigrate to the U.K.?

☐ ☐ 71-72

f) Why do you think they migrated to the U.K.?

C.C.
75-74

g) Are you an overseas student (in this country for the purpose of study) or a home student (normally residing in the U.K.)?

Overseas ☐
Home ☐

75
1
2

Serial

No

--	--	--	--

1-4

Card

No

5 5

h) Could you also provide some information on your brothers and sisters:

	<u>Sibling</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
eg	Sister	19	'O' levels	Secretary

6-8

10-13

14-17

18-21

22-25

i) In which of these socio-economic groupings, would you place your family:

Upper middle class ☐
Lower middle class ☐
Upper working class ☐
Lower working class ☐
Other (please specify) ☐

26
1
2
3
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27

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

During the months of July and August 1985 I would like to interview students who will have recently finished their University courses. The interview will last for about forty five minutes and will mainly deal with your experiences at University and your plans for the future.

If you are willing to be interviewed at a time and place convenient to you, please provide the following information.

Name

Your term time address and phone no.

Your home address and phone no.

The University of Aston
MANAGEMENT CENTRE

South Wing, Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ET

Telephone: 021-359 3011 Ex. 4715 Telex: 336997



Your Ref

Our Ref

Date

March 1985

Dear

In January 1985 I sent you a questionnaire and a self addressed envelope in an effort to encourage your cooperation in my postgraduate research. You may remember that the study is a national survey of final year undergraduates.

I realise that this is a busy time of the year for you and that you probably have a number of other more urgent priorities. However, if you could complete the questionnaire, and return it to me as soon as possible in the SAE, I would be extremely grateful. As I said in my original letter the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence.

I hope very much that you will agree to cooperate.

Yours sincerely,

Ms K. Tanna

APPENDIX 3

The Interview Schedule and Correspondence used to arrange interviews.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

During the months of July and August 1985 I would like to interview students who will have recently finished their University courses. The interview will last for about forty five minutes and will mainly deal with your experiences at University and your plans for the future.

If your home is in the Midlands (eg. Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry, Nottingham, Leicester) or London, and you would be willing to be interviewed at a time and place convenient to you, please provide the following information.

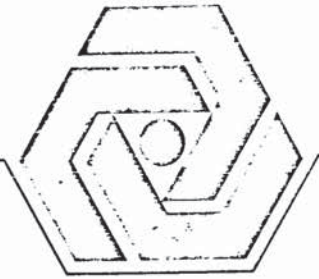
Name

Your term time address and phone no.

Your home address and phone no.

The University of Aston
MANAGEMENT CENTRE

South Wing, Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ET
Telephone: 021-359 3011 Ex. Telex: 336997



March 1985

Dear

Thank you for completing my questionnaire which asked about your educational background.

The study itself is going very well, mainly due to the high response rate amongst undergraduates in the national sample.

At the end of the questionnaire, I asked if you would provide your name and address if your home was in the West Midlands or London, and if you were willing to be interviewed during July or August 1985. You failed to fill in this part of the questionnaire, perhaps because you do not wish to be interviewed, but more likely because your home is not in the West Midlands or London.

However, due to a change in circumstances, (i.e. Aston University has now agreed to pay for all my travelling expenses) I will now be able to conduct interviews in various parts of the country. Thus I hope you will be willing to cooperate.

May I remind you that the interviews are planned for July and August 1985 and would be arranged at a time and place convenient to you. It would involve a single interview lasting approximately 45 minutes, dealing mainly with your experiences in higher education and your plans for the future.

I hope that you will continue to cooperate in this study and complete and return the enclosed post card, as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K Tanna'.

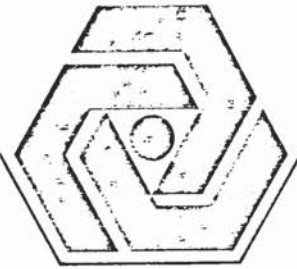
Ms K Tanna

The University of Aston
MANAGEMENT CENTRE

South Wing, Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ET

Telephone: 021-359 3011 Ex.

Telex: 336997



Your Ref

Our Ref

Date

March 1985

Dear

Thank you for completing my questionnaire asking about your educational background and for agreeing to be interviewed during the summer months.

The study itself is going very well, mainly due to the high response rate by undergraduates in the national sample.

I will be writing to you at your home address during June, to set up an interview date for July or August 1985. If there are any dates which you know now that you shall not be at home, perhaps you could let me know.

Once again thank you for your cooperation and good luck with your exams!

Yours sincerely,

Ms K Tanna

-1-

INTERVIEW SCHEDULEExperiences In Higher Education

1. What do you think you've gained from your time at University?
- probe on class of degree obtained/expected
2. In what ways do you think what you have learnt at University will help you in your life.
3. Is there anything you expected to get out of University, but didn't
- what kind of things did you do in your spare time at Uni
- who were your closest friends at Uni
4. If you were just about to go to Uni^{now}, would you do anything differently?
5. What was it like being an Asian at X Uni?
- did you face any academic or social problems due to your racial or ethnic background?
6. Do you think you have changed in any way over the last 3 yrs?
- probe on whether they have become anglicised or drawn towards cultural background
- why do you think this is so?
7. Which Universities did you apply to?
- what influenced these choices
- did you consider any alternatives
- was X Uni your first choice
- probe on whether arrived through clearing
8. Why did you choose to study X at University?
- probe if there are discrepancies between the subject applied for and that eventually studied.
9. Looking back do you think you made the right decision in going to Uni?

Transition From School To Higher Education

10. When you decided to carry on to H.E. how far did you make up your own mind and how far was it made up for you?
- at what stage did you start thinking in terms of H.E.
11. What kind of careers advice did you have at school/college?
-probe better or worse than expected or wanted.
12. Exam results - if retakes: why do you think you didn't do very well the first time? Why did you persist?

12a. Did you take part in any extra curricular activities at school?

13. Some people have mentioned one or more of the following problems/difficulties they came up against in their school careers. Did any of these hinder your progress?

(Hand respondent the following list)

Type of school attended (e.g. Sec Mod, Comprehensive)

Teaching methods

Ability groups

Lack of teacher interest

Working class Background

Lack of parental concern

Being a girl

Being black

13a. Did you go to a supplementary school (e.g. Saturday School)

14. How did you get on with the teachers at school?
- probe on racial differences also relating peer group relations.
15. Some people have said to me that they think there is racism in British schools. What are your views about this?
- did you or your friends confront any?
- what forms did it take?
- how pervasive was it?
16. What happened to the other Asians in your year?
- did they stay on in the 6th form, if so what were they studying and what happened to them?
17. Did you have all your primary education in the U.K.?
18. Did you take the 11+ - if so what was the outcome?
19. Did you have any pre-school education?
- probe on what type, who by, etc.
20. How would you describe your parents attitudes to your ed?
- did they come to school events
- help with homework, etc.
21. Is there a tradition of educational success in your wider family? (e.g. cousins, uncles, aunts) - especially on vocational courses
- probe on who and what

Emoloyment

22. Have you got a job? If yes ask for details
OR - are you looking for a job, what kinds have you applied for, current situation, probe on mobility, level of salary seen as acceptable
23. Have you worked before?
24. Do you think you will get a job corresponding to your qualifications?
25. Some people have said to me that there's racism in the labour market, what do you think?
- have you come across it at all
 - do you know of anybody else who has
 - do you think your chances of getting a job are better/worse than a white person with comparable qualifications
 - has this influenced the kind of jobs you've applied for
26. Have your perceptions of the job market changed since you first started applying?
- have your ambitions changed?
 - *pick on careers advice at Univeisty*
27. What kind of future do you see for yourself
- do you intend to stay in this country?

APPENDIX 4

Diary Report Form and Postal Questionnaires used for South Asian and White British Graduates.

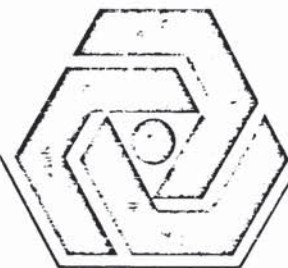
PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR ALL THE JOBS
YOU HAVE APPLIED FOR IN YOUR FINAL YEAR AT UNIVERSITY

<u>Post Applied For & Approx. Date Of Application</u>	<u>Name And Location Of Firm</u>	<u>How Did You Hear Of The Vacancy</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
e.g. Trainee Accountant - Jan '85	Ashe & Sons - London	Newspaper Advert	I was invited for an interview early March & received a rejection 2 weeks later.

9th Floor

The University of Aston
MANAGEMENT CENTRE

South Wing, Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ET
Telephone: 021-359 3011 Ex. 4715 Telex: 336997



Your Ref

Our Ref 24th March 1986

Date

Dear

I am doing a small survey to follow up my interview last summer, where if you recall I asked you about your experiences in the education system.

As you have now been employed for some time, I am interested to know a little about the work you are involved in and your general impressions and experiences at work. Thus I would be very grateful if you could complete the attached form and return it to me (in the S.A.E. provided) as soon as possible.

May I also remind you that the information you provide will only be used towards my PhD Thesis and will be treated in the strictest confidence. The final document will not identify individuals, Universities or Firms/Companies.

Finally may I thank you in advance for completing the form and for your continued support, without which this study would not have been possible.

Yours sincerely,

Krutika Tanna

Name:

Age:

Job Title:

Name of Firm/Company:

When did you start working for the above Firm/Company?

THE JOB

Can you give me some details of the job you are doing and what it involves on a day to day basis.

Does your job involve what you expected or were led to believe?

In your work, have you been able to put into practice what you learnt at University?

Have you or are you going to receive any formal training from the Firm/Company. Please elaborate.

What are the prospects of promotion within your Firm/Company? Please elaborate.

THE FIRM/COMPANY

About how many graduates did your Department recruit last year?

What do you feel you have to offer, or will be able to contribute to your Firm/Company?

Does your job entitle you to any fringe benefits?
i.e. car allowance, subsidised travel, sports facilities etc.
Please elaborate.

How do you get on with the people you work with? Do you feel you 'fit in' - both in terms of the work environment and socially.

THE FUTURE

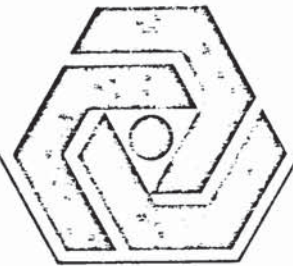
How do you see your career developing within the next 5 years?
Do you intend to stay with your present employer?

Please indicate your current income per annum.

- a) £6,000 & under
- b) £7,001 - £8,000
- c) £8,001 - £9,000
- d) £9,001 - £10,000
- f) £10,001 & over

Are you dissatisfied with any aspect of your employment?

9th Floor The University of Aston
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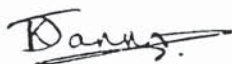
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What are the prospects of promotion within your Firm/Company? Please elaborate.

THE FIRM/COMPANY

About how many graduates did your Department recruit last year?

What do you feel you have to offer, or will be able to contribute to your Firm/Company?

Does your job entitle you to any fringe benefits?
i.e. car allowance, subsidised travel, sports facilities etc.
Please elaborate.

Are there any other Asians or Blacks working with you? Are they on a lower, equal or a higher scale than yourself? Please elaborate.

How do you get on with the people you work with? Do you feel you 'fit in' - both in terms of the work environment and socially?

Have you had any positive/negative experiences at work, which were a direct/indirect result of your ethnicity? Please elaborate.

THE FUTURE

How do you see your career developing within the next 5 years?
Do you intend to stay with your present employer?

Please indicate your current income per annum.

- a) £6,000 & under
- b) £7,001 - £8,000
- c) £8,001 - £9,000
- d) £9,001 - £10,000
- f) £10,001 & over

Are you dissatisfied with any aspect of your employment?

APPENDIX 5

Response Booklets devised for transcribing interviews with
South Asian and White British Graduates.

SERIAL NO.

NAME

ADDRESS.....

.....

.....

.....

TEL.

(1)

Section One: EXPERIENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1) Which Universities did you apply to and why?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

-- Did you consider any alternatives?

Yes - No

2) Why did you choose to study at University?

3) What do you feel you have gained from your time at Uni?

Academically:

Degree: 1st, 2.1, 2.2, 3rd

Socially:

4) The application of what you have learnt at Uni, in later life.

5) Is there anything you expected to get out of Uni, but didn't?

Yes - No

-- Spare time activities

(3)

- 6) If you were about to go to Uni now, would you do anything differently?

Yes - No

- 7) With hindsight - was it the right decision for you to go to Uni?

Yes - No

(4)

Section 2: TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO HIGHER EDUCATION

8) Decision to go on to H.E.

Individual - Family - School

-- At what stage did you start thinking in terms of H.E.

9) Careers advice at school/college

(5)

10) Exam results

11) Extra curricular activities at school?

12) How did you get on with the teachers at school?

-- Racial tensions

13) Supplementary schooling

14) Difficulties faced in your school career:

Type of school attended
Teaching methods
Ability groups/Streaming
Lack of teacher interest
W.C. Background
Lack parental concern
Being a girl
Being black

(7)

15) Did you take the 11+ ?

Yes - No

16) Pre-school education

17) Parents attitude to you education

18) Is there a tradition of educational success in your wider family?

Section 3: EMPLOYMENT

19) Have you got a job?

Yes: What is it?

No: Are you looking for a job?

Yes - No

Are you confident of getting a job soon?

Yes - No

20) Mobility

21) Level of salary seen as acceptable

(9)

22) Have you worked before?

Yes - No

23) Careers advice at University?

24) Parental influence in mobility and job aimed for.

(10)

- 25) Have you perceptions of the job market changed since you first started applying?

Yes - No

Have your ambitions changed?

Yes - No

- 26) The future-

SERIAL NO.

NAME

ADDRESS.....

.....

.....

.....

TEL.

(1)

Section One; EXPERIENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1) Which Universities did you apply to and why?

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5) Is there anything you expected to get out of Uni, but didn't?

Yes - No

-- Spare time activities

(3)

- 6) If you were about to go to Uni now, would you do anything differently?

Yes - No

- 7) With hindsight - was it the right decision for you to go to Uni?

Yes - No

1) What was it like being an Asian at

Uni?

2) Closest friends at University?

Asian - Mixed - English

3) Have you changed over the last 3/4 years?

Anglicised - Cultural Background

Section 2: TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO HIGHER EDUCATION

8) Decision to go on to H.E.

. Individual - Family - School

-- At what stage did you start thinking in terms of H.E.

9) Careers advice at school/college

(5)

10) Exam results

11) Extra curricular activities at school?

12) How did you get on with the teachers at school?

-- Racial tensions

13) Supplementary schooling

14) Difficulties faced in your school career:

Type of school attended
Teaching methods
Ability groups/Streaming
Lack of teacher interest
W.C. Background
Lack parental concern
Being a girl
Being black

1) · Racism in British schools

2) What happened to the other Asians in your 6th Form?

3) Did you have all your primary education in U.K.?

(7)

15) Did you take the 11+ ?

Yes - No

16) Pre-school education

17) Parents attitude to you education

18) Is there a tradition of educational success in your wider family?

Section 3: EMPLOYMENT

19) Have you got a job?

Yes: What is it?

No: Are you looking for a job?

Yes - No

Are you confident of getting a job soon?

Yes - No

20) Mobility

21) Level of salary seen as acceptable

(9)

22) Have you worked before?

Yes - No

23) Careers advice at University?

24) Parental influence in mobility and job aimed for.

1) Racism in the labour market

2) Do you think your chances of getting a job are better/worse than a white person with comparable qualifications?

Better - Equal - Worse

(10)

25) Have you perceptions of the job market changed since you first started applying?

Yes - No

Have your ambitions changed?

Yes - No

26) The future-

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