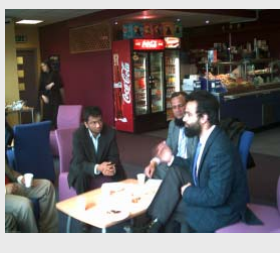


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Harmony through Dialogue

For a long time people from countries throughout Europe, Russia, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the new Commonwealth, have been settling in to Britain who now make up 7.9% of the entire UK population as recorded in 2001 Census. These groups termed as minority ethnic bring not only work force of immigrants but also their ethnic and cultural heritage. The fact remains that that most members of the ethnic minority groups are working very hard to make sure their next generation have a better and prosperous future in this country. There is nothing wrong in this approach. What is important is to encourage these groups not to be isolated from the mainstream approach of the wider community we are all living in. It does not mean that minority ethnics have to loss their identity, national characteristics and culture. There is nothing wrong with a shared identity if someone says I am 'British and Scottish' or 'British and Bangladeshi'. What is important is that as a member of the British society we respect the Rule of Law, norms, values, customs, and traditions of the society. We have tolerance towards the faith of others and those who have no religious beliefs. We have a respect for equal rights and are subject to the laws of the land including Human Rights and Equal Rights legislation. We accept parliamentary democratic culture and respect the formal institutions including the constitutional monarchy, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, the electoral system, the party political system, the judiciary, the police, and the civil service. However, it is very hard to develop a strong sense of belonging that should lie to the interests of the land first. It is not enough for someone to show that he or she is going to play an active economic and political role in the British society by giving allegiance to the state in return for its



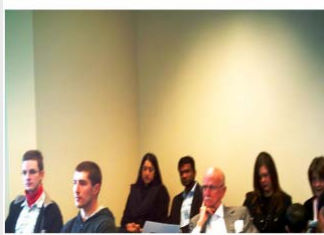
protection and making a pledge to observe the rules, regulations, and fundamental aspects of democratic citizenships. What is important is to make sure that members of both the majority and minority communities are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities towards the community they are living in. It is also important to make sure they are capable of bringing a dynamic positive change in the community. To develop one's awareness and capacity to his own community is the path to the dynamic inclusive, cohesive, and well-integrated community. In Britain today the demand for a dynamic inclusive community is very strong. Centre for Study and Research (CFSR) underpins this by offering a strong and positive relationship between people from different backgrounds, communities, and institutions. The motive force behind our support is to ensure greater equality and greater interaction between people of different backgrounds. We see dynamic inclusive community as an integrated society. We see integration as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural variety in an environment of harmony, not discord. We strongly believe there can be no true integration and true equality without harmony, peace, and mutual understanding. Through intellectual stimulation and dialogue, we aim to engage both majority and minority communities with integration agenda in order to establish a strong, dynamic inclusive community, accompanied by cultural diversity in an environment of equality, mutual respect, trust, co-operation, understanding, tolerance, and peace.

Seminar 2006: 'Harmony through Dialogue'

Centre for Study and Research (CFSR) held a seminar on 2nd April 2006 at Skatepark Conference Centre in Dundee discussing poverty in Dundee and Bangladesh. Iqbal Mostafa, Director of the Centre for Study and Research, chaired the seminar. Kiddie Kare Chairperson Ina Paton and CFSR Advisor for Scotland and Bangladesh Mr K M Mozibul Islam were among the speakers. Participants spoke about how poverty affects the population and compared both Dundee and Bangladesh experience. "Kiddie Kare located in Dundee Antipoverty Forum was born to provide safety support to Dundee's poorest families' children," Ina Paton said.

"Since 1998 through Kiddie Kare project we have been helping more than a 1000 single parents and families on income support by providing them with items for their children such as safety gate, fire guard, child monitor alarm, socket covers, cupboard / drawer lock, toilet seat lock etc etc" she said.

K M Mozibul Islam presented the key note on Anti-poverty campaign in Bangladesh. Mr Islam said, "Flood and other natural disasters, lack of structural reform, adjustment, political unrest, absence of economic democracy, corruption, government's incapacity of handling road, transportation and telecommunication problems, lack of proper education, lack of proper foreign policy, absence of free and Fair Trade for Agricultural Commodities, lack of women's rights, and unsolved health issues and consequences are the main causes of poverty in Bangladesh".



"Flood causes in Bangladesh due to Farakka Barrage which was built in 1974 on the Ganges in India at the border of Bangladesh and is why 40 millions peoples manily farmers and poor workers are now directly affected and 70 millions people have been infected with arsenic disease", he said. By referring to the World Bank Report (2002) Mr Islam also said "the central message that emerges from the above situations is that the aggregate growth possibilities of the Bangladesh economy depend critically on the success in mobilizing adequate resources for investment. If adequate domestic resources are not available, the resource gap has to be increasingly met through borrowings from both domestic and external sources. In my opinion the policies which I have discussed above should be considered within the broader area of developing human capital including health, education, nutrition and social, political and other economic and non-economic assets that can contribute to enhancing the capabilities of the poor".

Iqbal Mostafa said we want to promote "harmony through dialogue" and learn lessons from Kiddie Kare to see how we can work to promote an anti-poverty campaign in Bangladesh. "We also want to see what problems both Britain and Bangladesh have been experiencing in education, health, environment, culture, social structure and public opinion, how Britain is producing solutions to its' problems, and whether or not Bangladesh could take any lessons from UK experience", he said. The seminar was followed by lunch. Awards for All and 'Janomot' (UK's best Bengali Newsweekly) sponsored this seminar.

Social Event: 'Promoting a sense of belonging to a wider community'

Participants spoke how they feel when working and studying in Britain.

Professionals, scholars, students and CFSR members attended a social event held in Dundee on Saturday 15th April discussing problems affecting life and study in Britain. Participants spoke how pride they feel when working and studying in a different part of the world. Sadia Chowdhury, an IT student of Sunderland University highlighted how lucky she feels when staying and studying in Britain. "But I do not certainly understand why it has been so difficult for an overseas student to get a National Insurance card since someone is willing to work legally and lawfully to support his or her studies and maintenance", Sadia said.

Abul Kalam Azad, a St. Andrew's University Research Fellow said, "I enjoy researching in a British University. But NI card issue seems to be a serious problem for both students and their spouses."

Monica Ahmed working for the DWP said, "As I have seen and heard of Bangladesh, it is one of the happiest countries in the world". But Tanvir Ahmed, a former postgraduate student of a University in Oxford believes that it is possible to work and lead a life in Britain without being corrupt as it is impossible to think in case of Bangladesh.

A postgraduate student of Abertay University in Dundee and Lecturer of MIS Dept of Dhaka University, Helal Ahmed, expressed his concerns about UK based seminars and conferences on issues and problems of Bangladesh. He said, "Despite the fact that Bangladesh is progressing, we have to express our concerns about the country not in here but in Bangladesh". The event was followed by light refreshment. Awards for All and 'Janomot' (UK's best Bengali Newsweekly) sponsored the event.

Researchers recruited

Centre for Study and Research recruited some researchers who will be taking part in the feasibility study to be carried out between April and August 2006. Our feasibility studies will have much to say about how Britain is going about solving problems in a particular area and to consider whether such solutions or reforms might be transferable to Bangladesh itself.

The whole study will provide an insight into the conceptual, descriptive, and comparative and application aspects of the issues and debates.

Making a difference to people

Editorial

The development of Centre for Study and Research is a courageous initiative that will help establish dynamic cohesive community and promote a sense of belonging to a wider community. The Centre also helps bring understanding, peace between our countries in an increasingly troubled world. It has certainly opened the doors for the members of the wider community.

CFSR will provide the impetus and the stimulus in order that members of the British and ethnic minority communities work together to build an effective relationship between our countries. We aim to take deliberate planned steps to create an environment that will enable members to understand and deliver Centre objectives. With the help of students, professionals and members of the wider community and their valuable experience, CFSR can develop their skills and competence.

By running seminars or conference professionals, students and members will get to know each other and discuss problems affecting civic life and civic processes as they arise. By establishing community links and promoting social and cultural events and activities members of the wider community will be able to work for the interests of their community and be part of an audience. The outcome is an effective engagement with the community, providing opportunities for participation and feedback.

Through our training and consultancy services members of the wider community will receive free, confidential and impartial advice on various problems with regard to equality, integration, study and research, or about other ways of managing common conditions.

Through Centre's Bulletin and other publication materials we aim to focus on the needs of the communities and concentrate actions on those areas where partnership working can make a difference. Consequently, local authorities will be able to work in a more innovative and creative way in responding to the needs of their communities. Through these publications, we aim to develop a vision shared by the members of a wider community, help more people to play an active role in civic life and civic processes and find out better ways to work with individuals and communities to identify and address their needs.

Bangladesh and Scotland – ties of friendship

Sadia Chowdhury, University of Sunderland

Few Bangladeshi know the year in which the Scots gave up their independence to England (1707) but every Bangladeshi is well aware of the fact that there exists a country called Scotland. Indeed, it is surprising how many pupils at schools in Bangladesh are still familiar with the name 'Robert the Bruce' – the champion of the Scots- because of his unique characteristic feature – perseverance.

Bangladesh is always very keen to maintain ties of friendship with Scotland. The Scots have the blood of many people coursing through their veins. Even before history was written, tribes were coming in from Indian subcontinent. In the early 60's many people from Bangladesh came to Scotland, which brought them more in close contact with the Scottish. Many Bangladeshi were heading for the jute-processing city of Dundee. Never mind, the country now feels comfortable because of its' multicultural character and racial harmony.

Since Independence in December 1971, the relationship between Bangladesh and Scotland has grown stronger. Bangladeshi community is now very active and very thriving in Scotland. In Scottish Universities, there are Bangladeshi students, researchers, scholars, and professionals. Many have already contributed to the Scottish society through intellectual stimulation and community involvement while others are writing and publishing books, research articles on various community issues in Scotland and Bangladesh. Besides, in towns and villages everywhere in Scotland, there are Bangladeshi restaurants. There are around 30,000 Scots of Bangladeshi origin in Scotland today. It is no secret how pride they feel as Bangladeshi born United Kingdom citizens when working and studying in a beautiful part of Britain which has one of the romantic settings in the world. Like Scottish, they are also proud to see that the Scots have maintained their own legal and educational systems, which are widely considered superior to those in England, and they still print their own design of bank notes. The Bangladeshi community here in Scotland regard contribution to enlighten Scotland as an important element to the multicultural society.

In celebration to the national and other days in Bangladesh, every year the Scots of Bangladeshi origin and Bangladeshi born UK citizens and residents in Scotland organise colourful ceremonies to recall the few drops of Bangladeshi blood they have lurking in their veins. They organise seminars, conferences, social events to learn lessons from Scottish experience, which is separable as the Scots themselves, have a sense of identification, of different norms and societal values, and of their own history and traditions unparallel in Great Britain. Despite the fact that Bangladesh paid a high price for its' independence, it is still our country and we could make a big difference to the people of Bangladesh by taking lessons from Scottish society.

Making a better Public Service in Britain through the Extent of Equality

K M Mozibul Islam, Advisor for Scotland and Bangladesh, Centre for Study and Research

Introduction

Equality does not mean as similarity, uniformity, likeness, or resemblance in comparison to the fitness of other individual. In broad sense, it means for the treatment or the opportunity of any individual of any race, colour, and gender should be the same like other member of the citizen within the community or elsewhere within the country. Nevertheless, equality does not bear the meaning (Titmuss, 1976) that every body need same things as for example food, house, and clothes for basic needs and medical treatment, education, and transportation facilities for the second needs. What is important to consider is that the factors such as sex, marital status, ethnic origin, race, religion, colour, nationality and disability should not be taken into consideration for the purposes of recruitment, appointment, training, appraisal, promotion, discipline etc or for a course of study or academic attainment; to which the equality underpins the provision of educational services. Britain is very much alert about it and equal opportunities is now high on the agenda of the government, local authorities, and voluntary and community organisations.

Let us discuss LEA's (Local Education Authority) activities and responsibilities in Britain with other public sectors to consider how the extent of equality and service provision can have an effect upon the entire British public service.

Extent of Equality and Service Provision

Disability Education

In Britain approximately 8 million disabled people and 6 million people those who have ethnic backgrounds with spending power. As for example a picture given below of disable children from different backgrounds; these children one day will be grown up and become adults and will have their voting right. Therefore, society cannot ignore them at all. LEA could try to underpin the government provision. Because LEA is a government body and they think, these children are the citizens of the United Kingdom and they have the rights of vote and freedom of expressions.

The empolyers, school governors or the community members should think and treat them equally and make sure the government's amended law for their rights is observed. When we visit mainstream or special school, we could notice the above provision. So if this equality could extent then the problems of harmony, acheivement of the school climate would be resolved.

LEA's Policies

LEA has the policy of the following according to the Race Relation Amendment (2000), curriculum activities, children progress staff requirment and so and so forth. And we could see the school authorities are following the many principles. Because the equality provision could eliminate all sorts of discremination and extent the harmony in work climates. As for example most of the LEA's schools administrative governors could register some of the undernoted principles:

- Pupils' regular attainment and progress
- Curriculum activities, teaching and learning for different classes and age groups
- Care & assessment
- Staff recruitment and career development
- The school's values and ethics
- Pupil behaviour, discipline and exclusion
- Racism and racial harassment including bullying
- Admissions and transfer procedures
- Membership of the governing body
- Partnership activities with parents and voluntary sectors

We could notice each of the points that deserve equality when we visit any school, which is controlling by LEA.

Morality, Race, Faith and LEA

We could tell common humanity, morality and unbiasedness exist here. In a sense we could say, although these children focused above are from different backgrounds and cultures but they are human being too. So LEA follows the same principles of common humanity. The moral values work here. If we think, all men and women created by God in the sense of religion like Christianity, Muslim, Buddhism or any other faith; the priest of that faith can't disagree to support the people in need and disregard their religions. In fact all the great philosophers like Aristotle or the apostles like Jesus or Moses gave it a very good thought. They weren't outrageous. Their achievement and expression couldn't detach moral worth from all contingencies. Unbiasedness or unequal situation also exist in LEA administration for race, colour or languages in their education system. Here, there is no question of unfairness or injustice. In the opinion of Aristotle, it is distributive justice that means every one treating equal. I think it is reasonable to say that LEA would qualify in this concern but still the school governors should extent and underpin for the targets of the politicians promised and by fulfilment of the law.

Disability law, Equal Opportunity and Commitment of Authority

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 says about the disability is "if a person has a physical or mental injury which given him /her enormous difficulties to carryout his day-to-day normal works like other individuals". This includes physical problems such as heart conditions or diabetes, sensory problems as blindness or mental problems as depression and so and so forth. And (The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995) wish to look the requirement for the disable peoples for every school or service for the legal requirement of Braille, Videotape with British Sign Language, CD ROM, Floppy Disk Large Print, Easy Words and Pictures, Audiotape and Other individual requirements as requested. It is a service provision and strengthens them by the local authority or central government otherwise; their service will be in risk. In this case NHS, LEA and voluntary sector viz. School Boards, PTA (Parents Teacher Association) work with schools as partnership with a view to work effectively for the disable persons or their mainstream school pupils.

The Scottish Executive is committed to establishing one Scotland no place for Racism to promote equality and social justice for everybody in Scotland. And First Minister (Jack McConnell, September 2002) has aim to raise awerness of give up racist behaviour and their negative impact in the society and recognise the contribution of other culture to make Scotland better. Therefore, LEA in Scotland or other public or private sectors should underpin the provision and proud of the commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations among the peoples of different gender, age, physical ability, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, nationality and social classes.

Conclusion

Equal opportunities are seriously being promoted by the local government under the authority of LEA across the United Kingdom. There is no dominance and monopoly or violation against race, colour, disable or gender as and when they provide teaching in special school or mainstream. Simple equality exist in British or Scottish education system and no tyranny and complex equality issues for the pupils are noticed. Yet still bullying has become a chronic feature in every school in Britain. Also there is a widespread concern about lack of proper attention on the part of school staff to their pupils especially from different ethnic background. What we experience is that there are few lessons to be learned which could resolve debates surrounding the extent of equality and service provisions in the United Kingdom. Yet it can be said that still the system is better than any other system that exists in a developing country like Bangladesh. It is widely believed that the education authority of the government of Bangladesh should follow the similar provisions of Britain in order to extent the equality for male and female in different races and tribes for better public service.

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Lessons Learned

Dave McRitchie, Freelance Consultant

In 1961 I left this country to embark upon a career that would take me to many foreign countries in diverse parts of the world. At that time, different coloured skins of any hue were a rarity in this area as the influx of immigrants had barely reached the environs of Tayside. My recollection is that Chinese ethnics working in restaurants were the preponderant foreigners in Dundee. I personally did not encounter any others from foreign climes during my earlier formative years although there was a healthy mix of Caribbean workers in London where I trained for a short time before sailing out to the Far East.

How to interact with people of other skin colours and different religions were not questions that weighed heavily on my mind. More basic objectives such as job advancement etc., had to be tackled and conquered before contemplating these more important and weighty issues.

When originally approached by CFSR to write an article for this newsletter, I hesitated. Certainly, I had been fortunate enough to live in countries in the Far East, Middle East and the United States and as a consequence had done business and interacted on a social level with businessmen and women in many countries. However, I was unsure whether my perceptions and viewpoints would meld with the aspirations of CFSR.

So let's examine what I learned along the way and I leave it up to you – the reader – to decide whether there are any points worthy of consideration by CFSR.

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Singapore in 1961 was a melting pot of the majority Chinese and significant and important minorities of Malay, Indian/Sinhalese and European ethnics. There were other smaller groups that added to the flavour and spice of this beautiful city state that had a vibrancy that was almost palpable

As a junior bank executive I was immediately put in charge of a department where the majority of staff was Chinese with a minority of Malays and Indians. Looking back, I must confess that it was wonderful and so natural how everyone interacted regardless of race. Birthday parties, marriages and a myriad of other social events were all celebrated in great harmony. There was genuine respect and acceptance for each others beliefs and social mores. In a word, what was constantly on display was **Tolerance**

The racial equilibrium of Singapore was disturbed briefly a couple of years later when there were race riots between segments of the Chinese and Malay communities. My recollection is that the trouble stemmed from the thinking in certain segments of the minority Malay community that they were being denied a proper share in the expanding economic base of the island state. Undoubtedly, the Malays were not prospering at the same rate of increase as the Chinese majority. This is not the forum to delve into the reasons for this situation. However, I now subscribe to the case for an **Affirmative Action** policy – don't you just love how the Americans come up with all these phrases?- to help achieve a better sense of economic wellbeing within all major racial groups of a country to douse, if not entirely eradicate, the flames of economic jealousy.

Let's fast forward to 1966.

By then I had moved on to Malaysia and after spending around a year in the state of Kedah was transferred down to Kuala Lumpur the country's capital. KL, as it was affectionately known, was at that time a city resplendent in architectural edifices designed by the former colonialists. A sprinkling of junior skyscrapers were appearing but a time traveller from Pernas Towers 2006, going back some 40 years would be hard pressed to recognise Kuala Lumpur.

Although the ethnic majority in Malaysia were Malays, the Chinese were once again predominant in commerce and industry. There was a concerted effort by the government – the Malay based political party known as UMNO – to promote Malays through affirmative action and liberal loans to Malays with an entrepreneurial flair. This seemed to promote the interests of the host community well although I sensed there was not the same level of harmony as I had evidenced previously in

Singapore. However, I must stress that is my personal observation and perhaps other expatriates from that same era will have a different recollection. Interracial relationships within the office environment seemed to work well and social gatherings were all positive experiences.

Earlier, I have admitted to now believing in a programme of affirmative action. Permit me to refine that belief slightly by stating that any such philosophy must be tempered by implementing a **Balanced and Measured** programme.

Join me now on my flying carpet to India in 1969.

Bombay (Mumbai) was a seething mass of humanity living in a sprawling city, The unfortunates of the time could be found living in abject poverty and squalid dank surroundings where putrid smells abounded. Free enterprise occupied a small part of the overall Indian economy at that time and expansion of the private sector was in its infancy.

My staff was 100% Indian although within that culture were Hindus, Sikhs, Moslems, Zoroastrians and Christians. This was a tinder box of different political and religious beliefs. There was also the added dimension of the Indian caste system to contend with.

However, I never once saw any show of overt chauvinism by anyone from this diverse group within the office environment. Oh, I almost forgot, that is apart from the time all my staff surrounded my desk and gave me a verbal tongue lashing during a union protest. No big deal really, they apologised after the haranguing for any inconvenience caused!

From early on in my stay in India, I had made the conscientious decision to learn the Hindi language and studied very hard to graduate. Once fluent in the language, I made a point of using it wherever practical. The difference in how I was received by Indian nationals once they learned I had made the effort to learn their language and was prepared to use it was stark.

This taught me the inestimable worth of making the effort to understand the culture of the host country. The 1st and most important step in that direction must surely be learning the language. In summary, **Assimilate and Integrate**

By 1975, we had moved to California and started a new life in the land of the free.

No longer was I working in the international banking game. I had made the decision to pursue a career in international business and ended up working for an international trading and export company focusing on business with Middle East countries.

America opened my eyes to the hard cut and thrust of business. "Take no prisoners", is a phrase that springs to mind.

Although the United States welcomed immigrants from all over the world, there was and continues to be a preference policy regarding the origins of immigrants. The white / black issue continues to plague the United States and every once and a while there are eruptions caused by an isolated blatantly hostile racial act. However that is a matter better left for discussion to greater minds than mine.

My experiences with local businessmen and their families in many Middle East countries are perhaps more relevant. We were suppliers to many very large construction companies involved in the building phase of government expansion programmes. Most negotiations and completion of transactions were handled in the same unremarkable way as would occur in this country or indeed any other country. The Arabs are extremely shrewd business people and we had to work very hard to make it all worth while. Also, they are very generous and hospitable hosts and I can honestly say every social occasion was wonderful.

In 1982, an incident occurred that continues to be etched vividly in my mind and is very pertinent to this article.

We were supplying all components for an integrated ceiling installation in a major project in the State of Kuwait. Problems surfaced with the product manufacturer/supplier in regard

to various technical issues and things escalated rapidly to a point where costly lawyer fees seemed the next step towards a resolution. The Big Chill had set in between us. It was agreed that a last stab at resolution would take place in a San Francisco hotel and a conference room was hired for the occasion. There were 4 people at the meeting - a Scotsman and an Arab American – from our side and a Jewish American and a Mexican American from the suppliers' side. The four of us had many previous meetings and conversations and there never had been any invective or rancour.

Unfortunately, this meeting did not maintain a business like atmosphere and it quickly descended into verbal mayhem with castigations being made against all things Jewish and Arab. It seemed like a replay of all previous wars between these two peoples and the arguments dipped back into wars shrouded by the mists of time to those of us from a non Semitic background.

The noise levels in the conference room rose and eventually the two protagonists were squaring up to each other. Imagine, two senior business executives from multi million corporations quite prepared to duke it out. Eventually we two bystanders separated the two individuals and quietened things down to the extent we all exited the room. Eventually, the dispute was resolved through the legal process.

Reading today's papers it is evident that the resolution of the Middle East situation is no further forward than it was all these years ago. Undoubtedly it is intractable – let's just all pray that it is resolved sooner rather than later.

What lesson can be drawn from this incident? Perhaps that it is paramount at all times to recognise the importance of Historical events and how they impact on present day matters. Also, we must all accept the overwhelming strength and pivotal part played by religion in certain cultures. **Respect for religion and historical events** sums it up pretty well.

In 1992 I returned to the United Kingdom by courtesy of British Airlines.

Since my return, there are no personal experiences that can add to the subject of interracial harmony. However, the rise of the far right in this country does give me cause for concern. I suggest that the apparent unwillingness of certain segments of the immigrant population to assimilate and integrate may have been influential in persuading British nationals to give support to the BNP. Equally worrying is the growing number of Brits who exhibit **Ignorance and Non Acceptance** in their treatment of non whites.

Thank you for coming along with me on this short journey. What have I learned over all these years and is there anything for CFSR to take on board.

I have emphasised a few words that provide me with positive values. These are:

Tolerance, Balanced and Measured Affirmative Action, Assimilate and Integrate, Respect for religion and historical events.

The only negative thought revolves around individuals who display **Ignorance and Non Acceptance** on racial matters.

Currently, the state of relations between the many cultures and religions seems very fragile indeed. I would suggest that through the practice of the positive values listed above, the negative thought will eventually be minimised or hopefully eradicated. Both individually and collectively, we have the moral obligation to contribute positively in any way – no matter how small – by practicing these positive elements in our daily lives.

CFSR can be a force for good in the long march towards interracial harmony and undoubtedly already have the outlined positive thoughts in their agenda.

Establishing dynamic inclusive society and promoting integration and a sense of belonging to a wider community

Iqbal M Mostafa, Director, Centre for Study and Research

For a long time the belief has been very simple in Britain that both the majority and the minority communities will play a fuller role in the community. This simple belief does not say much about what it means to live in a civic society or how minority communities could or should contribute to the community. In fact, there is no general assessment of what it means to establish a dynamic cohesive community or to promote a sense of belonging to a wider community.

Every society has its arbitrary barriers of race, caste, class, religion, gender, fears and prejudice, disability, age and sexual orientation. These barriers could easily destroy the opportunities, hope, aspiration, income, civic rights, and overall well-being of an individual. Dynamic inclusive community is therefore about changing this and building a wider community in which everyone has better chances in life, is able to work together to fight against inequalities and feels he /she has a sense of belonging. In Britain today, the demand for a dynamic inclusive and integrated community is very strong. The fulfilment of this demand, however, will depend upon the following developments:

- Harmony through dialogue
- Development of dynamic and integrated community ideas
- Establishment of community links and community consultation
- Feasibility Studies
- Training and Development
- Study Visits / Trips
- Professional help and advice
- Effective partnership working with various governmental organisations / bodies and local authorities

Harmony through Dialogue

Harmony, not discord is the motive force behind the idea of inclusive community. Both new and old arrivals as immigrants from these countries have brought a variety of cultural identities within a wider British identity. A variety of culture means a variety of behaviour patterns, life styles, characters, traits, language, faiths, norms, values, customs, and traditions. Moreover, variety is the spice of life, as it is still widely believed. There are lessons to be learned from every culture no matter how old it is. It is important that we underpin this by providing opportunity for the old and new arrivals to exchange of ideas, experiences, and facts in order to embrace positively the variety of background, culture, and faiths that living in civil Britain involves. By running a series of dialogues on the following key areas, it is possible to promote racial harmony.

- Ethnic diversity in Britain
- Democratic citizenship: integrating new arrivals in the UK
- Approach to a cohesive, well-integrated and inclusive community
- problems of old and new arrivals affecting community integration
- solutions to problems
- role of government, voluntary and community organisation in promoting dynamic integrated community
- role of public opinion

Development of dynamic and integrated community ideas

Dynamic inclusive community is about an integrated society whereas integration is about promoting equal opportunity. The truth is unless people are integrated they can never be truly equal, and if they are not equal, they will never have access to the best services that a community can offer. There can be no true integration without true equality and there can be no true equality without true integration. The requirement to have a dynamic inclusive community with equality and a strong sense of belonging to the wider community needs to mean something, needs to be supplemented by an intellectual stimulation of what it means to be an active member of a modern, democratic and civic society to influence civic processes constantly.

Community integration ideas could be developed by offering a well-balanced analysis of why for almost everyone, a sense of belonging to a wider community is important, what those core integration criteria are and how we underpin this by setting out in practical terms criteria that lead to a dynamic inclusive community with equal opportunity.

What we learn from seminars and conferences, community meeting and workshops, government and non-government sources of information on community integration is to be developed as ideas. Further tests could be carried out on these ideas in relation to different ethnic minority groups to make sure ideas as projects attract their increasing interests and they now know what it means to live in a civic society and ready to contribute to the community. It is then important to deliver promises that we have made with the wider community to see how our ideas and projects help with all community members to a better way of life through a greater way of integration.

Establishment of local / community links and community consultation

Dynamic inclusive community can also be perceived as a source of community links to embrace positively the variety of background, culture, and faiths that living in civic Britain involves. The idea of establishing a dynamic inclusive community is to ensure greater equality and greater interaction between people of different backgrounds. Community organisations and voluntary groups can underpin this by developing a strong and positive relationship between people from different backgrounds, communities, and institutions.

Through community links and community consultation, these organisations could thus act as an institution to facilitate a better understanding of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and faiths that living in modern Britain involves and thus act as a bridge for fostering closeness and integration through mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance. They could also encourage members of the wider community to participate in a wide assortment of community activities to help them reduce their isolation within their own community and develop relationships outside the community.

To encourage one's contribution to own culture and to respect other cultures, religious faiths, customs, and traditional values is the path to the dynamic inclusive community. Through community links and community consultation, both governmental and non-governmental / voluntary organisations can meet openly people from diverse cultures and communities, share the history and customs of their respective traditions and cultures, and find out all forms of discrimination and inequalities in accessing services and better ways to tackle them.

Feasibility study

Studies of dynamic community and community integration have generally not had much to say about what problems of integration old and new arrivals are experiencing or how these problems can be solved. Studies have not even much to say whether the solutions found in other parts of Britain are feasible to apply in Scotland or even how conditions for dynamic inclusive community can be created and positive lessons be applied within the ethnic minority and the wider community at large. To establish a cohesive, integrated, and dynamic inclusive community it is important to carry out its feasibility studies on these practical terms. The focus of attention will be:

- obstacles (stumbling blocks in the path of dynamic community and integration)
- solutions to obstacles (found in the UK and other developed and developing societies)
- transferability (whether the solutions found because of our research are feasible to apply in the wider community of Scotland).

Through feasibility studies, it is then possible to continually assess community influence in civic processes and review members' involvement in civic society.

Training and Development

An organisation can offer many opportunities for committee members to improve their qualification for work and increase their involvement in the local community. The primary focus of training and development will be on areas such as office management, community communication, human relations, volunteering and work experience, health and safety, benefits and tax credits, housing, equal opportunities, immigration, and community care. The members who usually come from a very different environment require a set of specific skills and behaviours to fit them in the idea of a community project. They need to learn to embrace diverse cultures efficiently and communicate effectively across other organisations and the community. They also need skills that helps resolve community problems or conflicts and not just bury it or tolerate it and integrate new and old arrivals into Scottish culture. To develop these and other skills through training is the path to better understanding of community contribution and greater involvement in civic life and community activities. To increase one's ability and interests in community is also the path to the

development of a sense of belonging to a wider community. Training and development aspect will facilitate ethnic minority communities' access to essential services including training and employment opportunities.

Study visits / trips

There are lessons to be learned from history of successful projects as there is always a lack of interest on the part of communities / community leaders in understanding the consequences of ignorance of history, and in studying the successes and failures of past community project efforts. While investing community ideas, many communities or their project leaders/ personnel tend to examine only contemporary events. The review of the past programmes/efforts/activities is often ignored in many cases. Consequently, the lessons that could have learned from the success and failures of past projects are not applied.

There may be some solutions to problems of integration, inclusion, and cohesion offered by various projects. May be certain factors have contributed to the development of sense of belonging to a wider community. By visiting other projects in the UK, it is then possible to say about whether the solutions are feasible or how conditions for a cohesive, integrated, and inclusive community can be created and positive lessons applied in local community. Therefore, exchange visits will also allow community based organisations to improve the performance of the project through measuring and assessing the achievements of other successful projects in the area of fostering integration and equality and promoting a sense of belonging to a wider community.

Effective partnership working with various governmental organisations / bodies, local authorities, and voluntary groups

Working in partnership with various governmental organisations / bodies and local authorities is crucially important in order to find out obstacles in the way of integration and cohesion and the best possible way to deal with community issues and problems. Therefore, technical reports and project / scheme design studies will be required to publish to make sure partnership working is going in the right direction and targets of the projects are going to be achieved. Through effective partnership working with the government it is possible to identify and use resources to meet needs of new and old members of ethnic minority communities and implement community ideas and activities in the most deprived parts of Britain where the vast majority of the ethnic minority communities live. It is also possible to create opportunities for people from different local communities to connect and to ensure community issues and concerns given a high profile within public and private sector organisations.

Professional help and advice

It is important that community based projects and ideas are formulated and implemented in line with professional standards by which the performance of the project can be measured. Therefore, governmental organisations and voluntary and community groups need to get help from effective, dedicated, and committed professional groups/individuals that will supply technical information and advice required by the members of the organisation or provide quality service to the project implementation phase.

Concluding Remarks

Under the new government legislation, new arrivals settling in to this country are now required to be tested to demonstrate they have understood what it really means to live in modern Britain and contribute to the community integration. Nevertheless, it is not enough for the government to promote English language skills or courses or arrange for citizenship tests for new arrivals to integrate and to become active citizens. What is important is to develop the awareness and capacity of both the majority and the minority communities to engage with integration agenda in order to establish a strong, dynamic inclusive community, accompanied by cultural diversity in an environment of equality, mutual respect, trust, co-operation, understanding, and tolerance. Therefore, the above noted developments are crucially important on which the development of awareness and capacity of both communities to benefit the wider society is crucially dependent.

Does this amendment reduce the value of OFR as narrative information?

M Mashuk, University of Dundee

The OFR RS 1 (Operating Financial Review, Reporting Standard 1) was a break through in 2005 for mandatory narrative reporting but recent announcement makes it guidance only for statutory 'Business Review'. The recent amendment of the operating financial review may be of interest to the company executives as it allows a company with an effective OFR and gives investors and other stakeholders' deeper and clearer insights into value aspects of business. Presumably, investors and users of annual reports need a forward-looking perspective to reach their goal, i.e. predict the company's financial future.

On 10th May 2005, the Accounting Standard Board (ASB) issued Reporting Standard –1 "The Operating and Financial Review" whose objective is "to assist members to assess the strategies adopted by the entity and the potential for those strategies to succeed" (ASB 2005).

According to a 2004 survey of FTSE 100 companies conducted by HBOS, "two-thirds of listed UK companies" were affected by the Government Order to publish an OFR along with their report and accounts. In this regard, 'the Department of Trade and Industry' Secretary Patricia Hewitt's view was "The OFR will improve the quality of reporting and complete the corporate jigsaw to give investors a clearer picture." However, at the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) annual conference on Monday, 28th Nov. '05 the Chancellor G. Brown announced, "The Government had decided no longer to require quoted companies to prepare a statutory Operating and Financial Review, in addition to the Business Review." "We all agree that at the heart of the modern enterprise a challenge is minimising regulatory concerns, and the benefits of the OFR would not have been worth the extra cost to business," Gordon Brown told the business leaders at that conference. The Chancellor also said, "There would be a full audit of Government departments where gold plating of European regulation had led to additional and unnecessary burdens and these would be addressed and, where possible, removed".

Nevertheless, according to a columnist:

"The new model of regulation can be applied not just to the regulation of environment, health and safety and social standards but is being applied to other areas vital to the success of British business: to the regulation of financial services and indeed to the administration of tax".

From the announcement of new regulation, the following key points are now becoming known:

- "The content of the newly announced Business Review covers much of the ground covered in the Operating and Financial Review, but in less perspective form." (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2006).
- "The government is committed to improving strategic, forward looking narrative reporting by companies, and to enhanced dialogue with shareholders based on reporting." (Explanatory Memorandum to 'The Companies Act 1985' Para.: 7.9 (Operating and Financial Review) (REPEAL) Regulations 2005 No 3442).
- "Companies that have been preparing to produce an OFR will be able to use all the work they have undertaken with this expectation to produce their Business Review." (Explanatory Memorandum to 'The Companies Act 1985' Para.: 7.7 (Operating and Financial Review) (REPEAL) Regulations 2005 No 3442).
- "It will be open to them (Companies) to provide an OFR voluntarily when they believe this will be beneficial to shareholders." (Explanatory Memorandum to 'The Companies Act 1985' Para.: 7.7 (Operating and Financial Review) (REPEAL) Regulations 2005 No 3442).
- The Financial Reporting Review Panel (FRRP) has responsibility for reviewing business reviews from financial year beginning on, or after, 1st April 2006. (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2006).
- Auditors' role will be reduced to stating whether the OFR information is consistent with a company's accounts. (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2006).
- "Ministers consider that there will still be an important role for best practice and that the [reporting] standard provides useful guidance" (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2006).
- The depth of analysis required is proportionate to the size and complexity of the business. A small company, normally one that satisfies two of the followings: Turnover of not more than GBP. 5.6 m per year, or/and balance sheet totals not more than GBP. 2.8 m or/and not more than 50 employees (C.A.'85.sec. 261), need provide no such review" (Explanatory Memorandum to 'The Companies Act 1985' (Operating and Financial Review) (REPEAL) Regulations 2005 No 3442).

However, the Reporting Statement has already substituted the statutory guidance (Reporting Standard-1) which was provided to fulfill the mandatory requirements of OFR: OFR. In this context, the view of ASB is "...it is intended to have persuasive rather than mandatory force and is not an accounting or reporting standard." At this moment, the guidance (OFR Statement) has no legal force to compel directors publish an OFR but is intended to assist directors to understand the features of Business Review which are the legal requirements of the Directors' Report. This stance is consistent with the Financial Reporting Council who recently announced, "The existing ASB Reporting Standard will remain as a voluntary good practice guide." However, the Directors have to consider the legal guidance of "The statement of Legal Requirements" as stated in Part 7 of Companies Act '85. In this viewpoint, whatever the change is, the concept will remain same, which is why "Business Review is considered to be identical to that which was established for the OFR:

- the same criminal penalties exist
- the FRRP has the same role in reviewing Business Reviews that it did for OFRs
- the auditor is required to express a positive opinion on a Business Review, as was the case for the OFR, with the only difference being that for a Business Review auditors do not have to state in their report: whether any matters come to their attention, in the performance their function as auditor of the company, which in their opinion are inconsistent with the information given in the operating and financial review" (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2006).

It is widely believed that the Government's endeavor is to improve the quality of reporting by making available the financial and non-financial information. Here the statutory rules states that the:

"Business Review includes the key reporting requirements and performance indicators that are necessary to monitor business performance and risks, including on environmental and employee issues (where these are material to the business). Therefore, it has been concluded, on reflection, that the OFR requirements are unnecessary." (Explanatory Memorandum to The Companies Act 1985 (Operating and Financial Review) (Repeal) Regulations 2005. 2005 No. 3442 para 7.4).

The Business Review requires disclosure of material items, in this regard FRRP's view is "Companies producing a business review are not specifically required to make disclosures in as many additional areas, but will need to considering doing so where information is material to understanding the development, performance and position of the company" (FRRP Guidance on the changes to the Directors' Report requirement in the companies Act- '85). Undoubtedly, this is an indication of the UK Government's willingness to assure high level reporting. According to Explanatory Memorandum to The Companies Act 1985 (Operating and Financial Review) (Repeal) Regulations 2005. 2005 No. 3442, Para 7.5:

"Under the central requirements of the Business Review companies must disclose all material information. The Business Review requires a balanced and comprehensive analysis of the development, performance and position of the business; a description of its principal risks and uncertainties; and analysis of appropriate financial and other key performance indicators".

FRRP Guidance on the changes to the Directors' Report requirement in the companies Act- '85) says "Both the OFR and Business Review represent a significant enhancement in narrative reporting from previous requirements and also Government is committed to improve strategic forward-looking narrative reporting and believes it is important for companies to report on non-financial issues such as employees and the environment." That is, it leads towards more extensive disclosure of business performance.

ASB Chairman believes "The Operating and Financial Review has for some years been an important feature of corporate reporting, providing an opportunity for directors to set out a clear and balanced analysis of the strategic position and direction of their business. Whether or not the OFR is a statutory requirement, the publication of a narrative explanation of a company's development, performance, position, and prospects should continue to be encouraged as an important element of best practice. The reporting statement gives companies clear guidance and a framework within which they can achieve transparent and open communication with their shareholders."

In summary, it can be said that statutory requirement 'Reporting Standard 1' has been offset by another statutory requirement (introduced by the European Accounts Modernisation-2) 'Business Review' in the Directors Report. Consequently, the publication of an OFR or a Business Review endeavors to satisfy users of 'Annual Reports' and presumably more extensive disclosure of business performance in 'Annual Report' will satisfy users through their understanding.

General experience of study as a Research /Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Aberdeen

Professor Md Shahjalal, School of Biological Sciences, Aberdeen University

As a former research student of the University of Aberdeen, I am familiar with living in Aberdeen and did not face any problem related to social, cultural and academic aspects during the tenure of fellowship programme. I was given status of Honorary Research Fellow as a member of staff in the School. I had full access to field and laboratory facilities in a challenging research and teaching environment with the opportunity of developing skills and knowledge. I took part in the academic activities of the School of Biological Sciences including discussion and seminar groups, became involved with research development activities and also had the opportunity for interactions with postgraduate students and sharing ideas with colleagues at nearby Research Institutes. Knowledge and expertise through six-month postdoctoral research on lameness have assisted me to develop strategy to reduce losses in dairy production and to optimise milk production in Bangladesh. Moreover, training in the mechanisms regulating hoof tissues improved my knowledge of tissue biology, which along with hoof pathology will contribute effectively to my academic career and professional development and will have positive impact on teaching and future research capabilities required at the Bangladesh Agricultural University.

Be a Member of Writer's Forum

If you would like to be a member of our writer's forum then write any of the following area (s) of interest and send it to editor@cfsr.net. Alternatively, email mozibul@cfsr.net or ismatchowdhury@cfsr.net.

*agriculture *citizenship * art & culture
 *development *NGOs *economics
 *education*environment *health
 *history *human rights *technology
 *public policy & gov't *rural
 development *politics *law *migration
 *social structure *foreign policy *media

Deadline for Next CFSR Newsletter

May/June and November/December 2006. News, views and short articles / features welcomed. Email info@cfsr.net or editor@cfsr.net

Be a Research Volunteer/Advisor

Currently we are recruiting research volunteer and advisor across the United Kingdom. If you are interested, please email your current CV to info@cfsr.net or ismatchowdhury@cfsr.net. We will make the rest of it for you.

Contribute your Articles, Research notes, Book Reviews in CFSR Journal

CFSR is going to publicise any work that shows promise in identifying problems that both Britain and Bangladesh have been experiencing in the areas of environment, health, education, technology, art & culture, heritage, economy, social structure, and public opinion. The rationale behind this publication is a desire to produce solutions to various problems, and examine Bangladesh case with Britain to see whether general conclusions found in the UK are confirmed. The current Journal is going to be published in November / December 2006. Scholars, professionals, research students, or anyone concerned with British and Bangladesh studies are invited to contribute short articles research notes, and book reviews. For further information, please email: iqbalmostafa@cfsr.net. For any other editorial correspondence, please email editor@cfsr.net.

Send Your Details

A Directory containing information on member details, his or her areas of interest and involvement, academic and general progress, recent publications and institutional contacts in Britain and Bangladesh will be published soon. If you would like further information, please email info@cfsr.net or mozibul@cfsr.net or kawserjamal@cfsr.net

Have your say

We are carrying out a feasibility study on the issues and debates surrounding Bangladesh that have been of interest to us. The focus of attention has been on what problems Bangladesh is experiencing in environment, history, technology, art and culture, heritage, economy, health, social structure, and public opinion, and how these problems can be solved. Our feasibility study will have much to say about whether the solutions found in British system are feasible or how conditions for better Bangladesh can be created and positive lessons be applied in Bangladesh. We would be grateful if you would take time to complete our online questionnaire that can be accessed at <http://www.cfsr.net/guestbook>. For more details please email sadia_choto@cfsr.net or contact iqbalmostafa@cfsr.net

Book a place in advance

We are running seminars and conferences in July, September and November/December to underpin racial harmony, take positive lessons from the British and Scottish society, and apply them to Bangladeshi and other communities to see whether beneficial affects are confirmed.

Main Theme of Seminars: Harmony through Dialogue. Topics to be discussed: Dundee Anti-poverty Campaign, Community cohesion, and integration, Ethnic Diversity, Equal Opportunities, Democratic Citizenship, Globalization and public policy, IT Revolution. For further information, please email: seminars@cfsr.net or info@cfsr.net. You could also contact ismatchowdhury@cfsr.net and mozibul@cfsr.net. Besides, the Centre will hold some social events that allow members to get to know each other and discuss problems affecting life and academic work in Britain as they arise. Email socialevents@cfsr.net for details. **Main Theme of Social Events: Promoting equal opportunities and sense of belonging to a wider community**

Read our articles that can be accessed at <http://www.cfsr.net/bulletin.htm>

Customer care in Organisations in Bangladesh: Lessons to be learned from Britain - Ismat Chowdhury

The relationship between service provider (management) and service user (clients / customers) is always central to the development and smooth running of an organization which is why customer care is high on the agenda of organizations in Britain today.

I have seen of Bangladesh - Alexandra Cadzow

Although I am not of the Asian community, I have long admired the closeness and loyalty there appears to be in the Asian community, particularly in Bangladesh – both within their community, and within their families.

Anti-poverty campaign in Bangladesh - K M Mozibul Islam

Government of Bangladesh (GOB, 2003) has set out two main targets by the year 2015 i.e., (i) remove the “ugly faces” of poverty by eradicating hunger, chronic food insecurity, and excessive difficulty and (ii) reduce the proportion of poverty line by 50% of people’s standard of livings.

Pressure Groups in the system of governance - Iqbal Mostafa

Where democratic system of governance exists, pressure groups seem to be working fine within the institutional arrangements to make sure that individuals do not suffer undeservedly from government rules.

NGO APPROACH - Mohammad Khairul Alam

The vision of Rainbow Nari O Shishu Kallyan Foundation is very vast. It is trying to develop the society in a way where the society is materially optimum, socially equitable, and ecologically sound and satisfying to live in.

Centre for Study and Research (CFSR)

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copies of this newsletter are distributed to Universities / Colleges, voluntary sector organisations / groups, libraries, GP's and Dental Surgeries



Did you know?

Centre for Study and Research is now

- promoting community cohesion and integration of Bangladeshi into Scottish culture
- establishing a cohesive and inclusive society with equality and a sense of belonging to the wider community
- creating a forum for the exchange of ideas, facts, and experiences among members of the UK communities
- providing training and advisory and consultancy services
- providing information on Bangladesh for the UK and the rest of the world through intellectual stimulation
- promoting discussion forums for members to raise issues of concern in their communities
- making accessible appropriate resources and materials on Bangladesh to scholars carry out their research
- sharing research findings and information between students and other professionals
- promoting academic research projects
- working in partnership with other UK communities
- concentrating actions on those areas where partnership working can make a difference
- providing a wide range of services to the Bangladeshi Community living and studying across Scotland .