

School, Family and Community Relationships, with reference to families of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin in the North East of England.

Authors: Gill Crozier, University of Sunderland School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Hammerton Hall, Gray Road, Sunderland, SR2 8JB UK 44 (0) 1919 515 2364
gill.crozier@sunderland.ac.uk

Jane Davies, University of Sunderland School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Hammerton Hall, Gray Road, Sunderland, SR2 8JB UK 44 (0) 1919 515 2364 jane.davies@sunderland.ac.uk

This paper presents work in progress of a two year ethnographic study of parents and children of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origins in the North East of England; the research commenced in May 2002. The paper focuses on the parents' role in relation to their children's education and home – school relations as part of that; however, the parent is located within the context of the wider family and the Bangladeshi/Pakistani communities. The concept of 'parental involvement' is therefore broadened and takes into account these other dimensions. In the paper we discuss the diversity of behaviour and perspectives within and between these ethnic groups. We explore how the parents' traditions, cultures and values correspond to or conflict with the expectations of their children's schools; we discuss how this impacts on home-school relations and consider the implications for the parents, their children and the schools themselves. We discuss the parents' educational aspirations for their children, both in relation to school but also more broadly, and the recognition parents give to young people's decision-making autonomy. In doing so we deconstruct a range of stereotypes commonly held about 'Asian' parents -particularly from these two ethnic groups.

The research should have relevance within the UK and European contexts, as well as elsewhere. It should provide insights to help practitioners develop strategies to enable minority ethnic group parents to have the opportunity to take a more democratic and informed role in their children's education. And it should provide practitioners with an understanding of the need to tackle ethnocentric and discriminatory practices which militate against minority ethnic group parents developing positive and fruitful relationships with their children's schools.