

## Unit Nine: Diaspora

### Lesson 4

#### Bangladeshi Community in the UK

Migration from Bangladesh to Britain started in 1930s and was predominantly a Sylheti phenomenon. Men of this particular geographical area employed by the British ship companies first started the process of migration. These men were largely illiterate and belonged to the landless peasantry. After the World War II, due to labor shortages, British government encouraged labor migration from its former colonies. The postwar British economy demanded cheap and plentiful labor, much of which was recruited from South Asia. Since Sylhet had already forged a strong link with the UK, most new labor was drawn from there. Sylhetis, based in the UK, helped each other to integrate into the new society by providing credit, arranging documents, and gradually spreading the network. During the 1950s, the numbers increased dramatically. However, along with people from poorer backgrounds, a small number of urban upper and middle class Bangladeshis also migrated even before the World War II for higher education and settled in the UK.

According to the 2001 census, 283,063 Bangladeshis lived in the UK, which is 0.5 percent of the total population. In Britain, they are primarily concentrated in Greater London and the third generation of Bangladeshi population, those 'born and bred' in Britain, constitute half of the community. The largest Bangladeshi population outside London is located in Oldham, and the others are scattered across Birmingham, Luton and Bradford. British Bangladeshis are predominantly Muslims. Studies reveal that the second and the third generation Bangladeshis seem to uphold their Muslim identity rather than their identity as Bangladeshis.

However, the absence of a strong tie does not mean that the Bangladeshi community is completely detached from their homeland. In the era of globalization and social networking, like other diaspora communities, British Bangladeshis are also linked to their countries of origin by phone, mail, Internet and television. By the virtue of technological advancement, communication of news is rapid and sustained, which gives migrant communities a sense of belonging to multiple homes. In particular, the first generation of migrants continues to regard Bangladesh as central to their identity.

#### A Choose the correct answer from the alternatives:

1x5=5

(a) Initially the significance of networking among the immigrants was felt-----

- i. useful                      ii. ineffectual                      iii. futile                      iv. fruitless

(b) the communications of British Bangladeshis with their motherland has been -----

- i. restricted                      ii. increased                      iii. unchanged                      iv. modified

(c) what does the word "migrate" means-----

- i. transfer                      ii. emigrate                      iii. move                      iv. run through

(d) "Peasantry" could be replaced by-----

- i. fishermen                      ii. businessmen                      iii. factory workers                      iv. farming community

(e) what does the word "a strong Tie" refers to-----

- i. binding                      ii. habit                      iii. relationship                      iv. enmity

#### B. Answer the following Question:

2x5=10

- (a) which was chiefly a sylheti issue and why?
- (b) What accelerated the migration process in Bangladesh?
- (c) Why did the poorer Bangladeshis migrate to the UK?
- (d) What do you understanding by globalization?
- (e) What type of labour did British Government need?

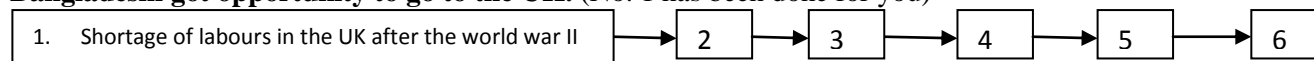
#### 2. Read the passage and complete the table below with the given information.

1x10=10

| Who/what     | Description                | When     | Where     |
|--------------|----------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Bangladeshis | (i)-----                   | 1930s    | (ii)----- |
| (iii)-----   | Employed by ship company   |          | (iv)----- |
| (v)-----     | Demanded cheap labour from |          | (vi)----- |
| Sylhetis     | (vii)-----                 |          | UK        |
| (viii)-----  | (ix)-----                  | 1950s    |           |
| Bangladeshis | Migrated to United Kingdom | (x)----- |           |

Or

Based on your reading of the Passage below, make short notes in each of the boxes in the flow-chart showing how Bangladeshi got opportunity to go to the UK. (No. 1 has been done for you)



#### 3. Summarize the text.