## Voice file name: Kutub Uddin 1 & Kutub Uddin 2

Key:

**I: Interviewer**

R: Respondent

R2: Respondent 2

R3: Respondent 3

R4: Respondent 4

s.l. sounds like

**I: Okay, so I would like to thank you for participating in the research. Before starting, can I get your full name and age please?**

R: Thank you too as well to choose me for the interview and I’m Kutub Uddin.

**I: And how old are you?**

R: 60 plus.

**I: Okay, and tell me a little bit about yourself, who came to Britain first in your family?**

R: My father.

**I: Okay, do you know when he came?**

R: 1967.

**I: Okay and what motivated him to come to Britain?**

R: He was local businessman and he was local village, like, politician as well; he stand for the membership and there was a problem in the village and then he decide to come in England and one of his, his not friend, his uncle, he write to him, that time, is the, is, it’s called the *voucher*system, it was something, it was stop about 1967 and at that time he wrote back to him, I ask you before, you didn’t come now you want to come, now everything has been stopped but I’ll try for you and that how Dada *(dad's dad)* - *Abdul Aziz Choudhury* [*Bengali*00:01:20] because of him, the relationship and this other friendship and that, from that family, our families are very, *well received a lot of help from that family.* Then my dad come in 1967, ‘68. ‘69 one years later my grandfather was, wasn’t well and I send him a telegram then Dada is not well.

**I: You sent your dad a telegram from Bangladesh?**

R: Bangladesh, yes.

**I: Okay.**

R: Then he gone within one years, he’s staying one years and go to Ban…, gone to Bangladesh back to see his parents and the children, of course, us.  Then he stay over there and he come back.  That time, I was class nine, secondary school.  I used to, *Science*section, the, my dad very much is agriculture-minded person.  Bangladesh is agriculture then I remember he was a dealer as well *but then from a school in Gulapganj he sent me to a school called Dhaka Dhokkeen in class 9. After transferring me there the teacher there, Lola Ahmed Choudhury, he was also my father's teacher. He told my father, whose name was Haris, he only studied up to GCSE level and there was only one university in Moymunsheen and said it wasn't worth going to university but then I wanted to because my country is agricultural, our country is a, a God-gifted country and we should make it our prerogative to look after it and I had that way of thinking about my country. I was in class 10 and then the war started in Bangladesh and then I wrote to my dad here in the UK, asking him to bring me here because the war had kicked off.*

**I: So, when your dad came in ‘67, he stayed for a year, he went back to Bangladesh and how long did he stay in Bangladesh during that period?**

R: Maybe two, two years.

**I: Okay, so let’s say about ‘69 and ‘70 he came -**

R: ‘73 come, he come -

**I: - he came back to the UK.**

R: - yes, he come back here.

**I: What are your memories of living in East Pakistan politically?**

R: It was, it was good, it was good. That time ‘round we were student [s.l. party there 00:04:22] it was trouble there but politically I think it was for the country. The politicians done their politics but itself, the country wasn’t bad.

**I: Uh huh and so you messaged your dad in the UK that you want to move to the UK?**

R: Yes.

**I: When did he bring you over because you mentioned that the, the war -**

R: War, when, after war, after war.

**I: - okay.**

R: And [s.l. I have 00:04:51] when the, the country got independence in 1971, in December, I come in 1972, 17 March in England.

**I: So, you came in 1972?**

R: ‘72.

**I: 16th of March did you say?**

R: Yes, so 17th of -

**I: 17th.**

R: - Ap…, not March, 17th of April.

**I: Okay.**

R: Sorry for the -

**I: No, it’s okay and what are your memories of the war in Bangladesh?**

R: - it’s very, very sad memories out there because I was 16 and a half although I did not go to *Mukti Juyddo* but we was very sad now and here and there, everywhere, these Pakistanis was doing the bad things.  Bengali, we are getting help from here and there, all over the world as far as I know and our people live in this, we used to do the cultivate the field student aid, everyone go to India and fight for the country.  It was horrible for us and a day I should remember, the la…, *The day we were supposed to get our independence* there’s independence [inaudible 00:06:12] couple of days before is front of my, in our village, front of our ho…, house, you can say or bari, bari *(village) there was a bus which the Pakistani army blew up.*That time it was a very sad story for me because, because of our bari was near the road that everybody had to leave the house, my, but my grandfather was 85.  He cannot go and my mother give him a, sorry for my emotion -

**I: No.**

R:           - my mother gave him a food and everything and my Nana also there as well.  They are cousin brother and *because of their age they couldn't run*, they cannot run.

**I:            So, your *Nani*?**

R:        *Nana, and Dada.*

**I:            Dada, okay.**

R:           *My Nani had passed away by then.*

**I:            Okay.**

R:          *My dadi (dad's mum) was able to move. I loved my granddads but despite the fire I came back because of my love for them.*

**I:            Uh huh.**

R:           - to see my Dada and I have seen, he finish his meal and because of he was 85 plus and can’t see much, he was a little bit, *he couldn't see very well. After he finished eating he started looking for his glass of water and that's when I entered and he had his glass of water. After he finishing drinking, I gave him more water.* I feel very emotional and cry and *then I give his pipe, hookah. I prepared it and gave it to him and had to leave because I feared for my life but I can’t go, leave him behind.* It, it, it’s a very sad story over there but every household of Bangladeshis are very sad, very sad and very, it’s scary *situation*.

**I: Uh huh and then when you got out, where did you head towards when you did leave the village?**

R: Oh.

**I: When you did walk out -**

R: Uh huh.

**I: - where did you, where, where did you, where were you heading, where were you hoping to go?**

R: I was hiding somewhere -

**I: Okay.**

R: - [*Bengali* 00:08:38] because our, our, our, we were near to the, where the incident is happen, in front of my -

**I: So, because the fire was approaching [multi-speakers 00:08:45]?**

R: - yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**I: So, you were just looking to hide somewhere?**

R: Hide somewhere.

**I: Okay.**

R: All of villager, all villagers.

**I: Yes.**

R:           It was the only the maybe 16 December maybe it was 12 or 13 and at that time there,*I mean, you have quite a lot of the people who fought for independence here in the UK and in our village back home we still have mukti juddo fighters who are still around at that time, I have seen.*

**I: Uh huh and then when independence came in December, after nine months’ battle -**

R: Uh huh.

**I: - from March how did you feel? What are your memories of the feelings that people were expressing at the time when suddenly it was announced?**

R: *Feeling of joy, feeling of joy because we were so young and our country had finally gained its independence but same time, it was too much chaos and even the aftermath of the war that they say is what we were going through.*

**I: Uh huh and then, of course, three months later or four months later in April, you moved to the UK. Do you think maybe moving to the UK, that helped you process the war?**

R: Help me process?

**I: Process the war [*Bengali* 00:10:05] do you feel moving away, far away from it helped?**

R: No, no, no, no, no, no, no. It’s, it’s not for the war, it, my intention was to come here.

**I: No, I mean generally just do you find, did you find that moving here, maybe it helped with understanding what was happening in Bangladesh with wha…, with the politics and the war? [*Bengali* 00:10:27 – 00:10:29] do you think that perhaps helped you?**

R: No, never help.

**I: Okay.**

R: Never help, always I think for the country.

**I: Right.**

R: And I’m very much someone who visits Bangladesh often.

**I: Uh huh so after you came in April, what did you do? Did you go to school, college?**

R: Yeah, my father send me this school and although I’m, I was in class ten [s.l. science 00:10:53] student but I can read and write little bit of English but I cannot understand a single word. It was a big problem and I thought well, we come then my dad send me in the evening, eve school.

**I: Uh huh.**

R: There, also same problem, there, but there was Bengali teacher in the evening that used to taught, taught us.

**I: So, were they teaching you English or Bengali?**

R: No, no English.

**I: English.**

R: But Bengali teacher but at that time the school wasn’t Bengali teacher, no, no, no. Then I found there, it is strange story, I’m moving into the, my lifestyle now, the (laughter) once I went there to learn English, go back to study first language then I see there, there is a drama school as well and I joined the drama and my parents knows I’m going to learning the English, that was the, another sad part of my life. My dad was very upset that time.

**I: So, your dad didn’t want you to do drama?**

R: No.

**I: Why not?**

R:           I don’t know, I don’t know.  He scared me otherwise I was the only one person that’s after ‘72, ‘73, 1974, I become a drama director as well and by ‘75, I done the diploma as well and he called this our teacher, Mr Omorbush,, he was from Calcutta, he’s, he call him at my home and he, he request him leave my son alone and as you see, immediately I join, he was our director and teacher and Mr.Shayez and the others, immediate I join only first two days [s.l. back it was 00:12:43] I become a, a, leader of the team even and I become a, he gave me opportunity to give direction as well.

**I:            But -**

R:           Also, it was mainly his help- my teacher's help - but question was that how I increase and since I’m child, I used to do drama in my village in 1967, I think I have done my first drama in 1968, ‘69 in our village.

**I: - uh huh.**

R: Our area, it was culturally very rich.

**I: So, what sort of drama -**

R: And I do [inaudible 00:13:22].

**I: - what sort of drama were you doing in Bangladesh?**

R:           Bangladesh, it was, I was child at that time, I remember the drama, it was called [*Bengali*00:00:13:31].  It’s 22 years after -

**I:            Yeah.**

R:           - drama name, it was.

**I:            Yes.**

R:           And I, I, another drama *Shunay Diki* [*Bengali*00:13:41].  The two of my uncle pass away, one in, one become a lawyer and one was civil engineer, they were same my, my age, God bless them and they pass away.  There was, there, we was all same age.  Another uncle, one is, name is Abdul Khalid *Shofique*Uddin, Hasnu all of them [s.l. Humrah 00:14:08] the same age, *we all grew up together* ‘61, ‘62, I’m ‘60, *some were one or two years older than me or younger than me* we did dramas that time in our village and I feel that is the history as well in our area, in Dhaka Dhokshin since the time of the British, the culture start over there, *known as the jatra*. I cannot tell you the whole story but there is a history.  The first drama when the British rule was there it *start from Dhaka Dhokshin within Gulapganj where Sri Sri Cheytanno was born - a famous Hindu pritest.*

**I:            Are you not Sylheti?**

R:           I’m a Sylheti.

**I:            Where is your thana?**

R:           It's in Gulapganj.

**I:            Oh, okay.**

R:           Yes, our area is known as Dhaka Dhokkeen.

**I:            Okay.**

R:           It's not referring to the capital, Dhaka. It's Dhaka Dhokshin.

**I:            Okay. okay.  I just got confused with the capital.**

R:           Yes, *Dhaka Dhokkeen is one side, and Dhaka Uttor is one side.*

**I:            Okay. *Is Dhokkeen, is that east?***

R:           East, no Dhakkeen is the south.

**I:            Oh, the...**

R:           No, north.  East, west, south, north, I don’t know, north.

**I:            Dhokkeen, okay I don’t, I can’t remember -**

R:           [Multi-speakers 00:15:34], yes.

**I:            - my north, south, east, west in Bengali (laughter) but I know Dhokkeen sounds like one of the directions.**

R:           Wait, when I visit west, east, south and north. \*Starts scribbling\*

**I:            This would be west.**

R:           No, this would be...

**I:            No, this has to be East and that side is West...**

R:           West or east...

**I:            Okay.**

R:           West, south and north.

**I:            Okay.**

R:           Which one would be dhokkeen?

**I:            I don't know. I don’t know, I don’t know what [*dhokkeen* is, if it’s south or north, I don’t know.  I don’t even know how you [s.l. say the west 00:16:38].**

R:           (Laughter)

**I:            (Laughter)**

R:           You try to confuse me, I lost as well.

**I:            It’s okay, I’ll ask my family**

R:           Uttor has to be south, well...yeah...

**I: (Laughter) and so, when you started the drama classes here in London, where, wa…, was it still in Bengali the drama?**

R: Bengali drama, yes, yes.

**I: Okay.**

R: And the same time, there was the classes for the English as well, they’re teaching English but I, I move into there and my parents -

**I: So, you stopped doing your English classes?**

R: - yes, and my parents knows I’m learning English and my father was hoping that my son go back to full time study but I didn’t go and then he realised, once he realised then he take me to factory to do, learn some work as well that he was in at that time. It was the leather factory [*Bengali* 00:17:37]. It was such a smell [*Bengali* 00:17:41].

**I: Where was this leather factory where you were working?**

R: It was New Road down there in East London and one of our [*Bengali* 00:17:54]. The, my parents that time [*Bengali* 00:18:01 – 00:18:04] they are prepared to send me back again, go back and study over there but one of the uncle, he say, “You come, your dad didn’t bring you here, you come and your dad was hoping to you study over there in Bangladesh” [*Bengali* 00:18:21 – 00:18:25]. I listen to him and stay behind but it’s still I love my country, I love, I go every year, the last year I’ve been nine times this year and it’s still and I’m going this Sunday as well.

**I: Okay and so you said that there was a bit of tension with your dad because he wanted you to do English and go into studies but you remained in drama. What was it that drew you to do drama because drama is quite an unusual subject for a lot of Bangladeshis?**

R: Yes.

**I: To study.**

R: It, it’s maybe, is, is on me, on me because it’s still, I have to now, even the two years that I done the drama live in, live drama in MTV television, even now if I got the opportunity I be choosy as well and if I got the right script I’ll do again. I’m, I’m, I, I like to say I can do best.

**I: Do you think that -**

R: I got on my character on acting, I am a director as well.

**I: - uh huh.**

R: I’m a -

**I: And also, do you find, do you find that the younger generation of Bangladeshis are interested in the arts and culture of Bangladesh?**

R: - I think now, yes, yes, they are.

**I: Have you, have you seen this development recently?**

R: I’ve seen the lots of dramas going on and [inaudible 00:19:48] time and because of [*Bengali* 00:19:52] that what’s they’re [s.l. telling it 00:19:55] otherwise it would not. [*Bengali* 00:19:57].

**I: [*Bengali* 00:19:59].**

R: [*Bengali* 00:20:00 – 00:20:02] cultural activity with Bengali language [*Bengali* 00:20:07 – 00:20:18].

**I: So, are you, do you participate or take part in the season of Bangla drama that they have in November in [multi-speakers 00:20:24]?**

R: No, no I don’t.

**I: Okay and talking about Bangladesh, so you said you’re going on Sunday?**

R: Yes.

**I: When was the last time you went to Bangladesh?**

R: December.

**I: Okay and how comes you go so regularly?**

R: Because I’m working over there, some companies send me over there with my experience to do some buying and sourcing and procuring and -

**I: Uh huh.**

R: - from Pakistan, leather as well and the cloth.

**I: So, you go to Pakistan as well as Bangladesh?**

R: Yeah, Pakistan yeah.

**I: Okay, so is that because you work in importing/exporting?**

R: It’s all related.

**I: Okay and do you take time out to go and visit family also when you’re in Bangladesh?**

R: Yeah, I, I’m not [s.l. time 00:21:05] once I’m free after the work the same time you which city I am regardless, Chittagong or Dhaka or any city but I’ll do the normal work, this is the weekend tomorrow, I go to my own house and over there, [*Bengali* 00:21:22].

**I: Yes.**

R: [*Bengali* 00:21:24 – 00:21:33] I’m a very frequent traveller [*Bengali* 00:21:35 – 00:48] very frequently [*Bengali* 00:21:49 – 00:21:35] 85, 86 up to 90 business purpose [*Bengali* 00:21:59 – 00:22:09].

**I: So, you travel a lot?**

R: I travel a lot.

**I: What motivates you to travel? What inspires you to travel?**

R: Only the business, it, and pleasure as well and this, it’s not my hobby to travel but it’s my business make me travel a lot.

**I: Okay and what was your dad’s reason to move to the UK, by the way?**

R: Because I told you.

**I: [Multi-speakers 00:22:32].**

R: He was the businessman -

**I: Okay.**

R: - in the, in the village, he stand for the membership election of the [s.l. union position 00:22:40].

**I: So, what -**

R: And there was a [*Bengali* 00:22:45] and he decide -

**I: - okay.**

R: - he should leave the country and he, before he leave he gone to the tea garden, [*Bengali* 00:22:55 – 00:23:02] he decide to come here.

**I: What job was your dad doing when he moved to the UK?**

R: He was do the British Rail, I think he was on the catering section of British, British Rail.

**I: And how long did he do that?**

R: It’s very interesting, he, until his death, he come and goes but I, I have calculated out of his ‘67 to his pass over 2005, within that period, he used to come and go but very hardly four to five years he work in this country out of his whole life because he was to come and go and once I was here then my immediate brother come, sister come then he leave the country. One brother and sister born here, he leave the country with them. One of my brother born in this country and he went there after 30 years, he came back. He become a father of two or three children, he came back now (laughter).

**I: So, why did your dad decide to leave and go to Bangladesh?**

R: He, he used to love his country and as you know, this is a very agricultural-minded and he got this inheritance, you know, his own land and the father, grandfather, his father, from his father and he, he used to cultivate with this, this modern technology, this call agricultural [inaudible 00:24:40] fertiliser [*Bengali* 00:24:41] and he used to inspire people and he was so social minded and so social work he done all his life.

**I: Uh huh are you -**

R: Because I used to go for a one day or two day on my business trip, I went to Pakistan or India, I pass by Bangladesh to see my grandmother, grandparents and the whole village is my grandfather and grandmother [inaudible 00:25:09]. Then sometime I very hardly to see my father because he going here and there for this village social work. That is his story [inaudible 00:25:21].

**I: - and when did, are you a citizen of Bangladesh?**

R: Yes.

**I: Do you have Bangladeshi passport?**

R: Passport, yes.

**I: And when did you become British?**

R: I’ve seen a letter somewhere here. I think it’s the early ‘80s.

**I: Early ‘80s?**

R: Uh huh.

**I: Okay, so it took you -**

R: Early, yeah.

**I: - almost ten years to become a citizen?**

R: Not ten years, maybe late ‘70s, yes, early ‘80s yeah, yeah because I come to ‘72 and yes, maybe, very soon, very soon maybe because my father had a British passport maybe and he applied and we got the British passport.

**I: So, you said you worked in the leather factory on New Road?**

R: Yeah.

**I: How long were you there for?**

R: I learn over there [inaudible 00:26:09] you can see some label there, 43 years back the thing over there, for some jacket, 40, 46 years old is here and then I learn the, six month only and then I open my own factory. I work altogether six month and then open my own factory with [s.l. full mission 00:26:39] and asset.

**I: So, you worked in this leather factory for four months, six months?**

R: Six months.

**I: Okay and you felt you, you learnt everything in those six months?**

R: Yes, so [inaudible 00:26:48] but one of the uncle, he called me to come and join me and my thinking was the, the story another subject I have to stop. I’ve seen the factory [inaudible 00:26:58] he is still there, he is my boss [inaudible 00:27:02] but he used to show us in the magazine such as I got the magazine here, I’ll show you, there are people making things, it’s come out in a magazine, it’s a fashion magazine, I used to enjoy that and I was thinking then why we don’t do things like that and I did it within very short period and I create my own label and I gave my [inaudible 00:27:35] this is not for you but it is a, this is a, this is a leather skirt here, it was ours and all this garment in the magazines, London International 1990, this is all my garment here, Palace Studio, Palace Studio, my, we are going into different direction maybe now it might be just like then I become a very early ‘80s, ‘80s all as you, as you say, I said is … this was our factory and this is me and all this … [inaudible 00:28:33] Palace Studio. [Inaudible 00:28:35].

This is my level, this is me with my exhibition with Chris Eubank, I’m talking to a customer. This is having a dinner with accountants and university professor of the Queen Mary College and this is our exhibition picture. It’s a story here is very big, you know. This is my exhibition, this is, that’s why I told you this is a, his name is Mr Mark, he was a model and this is a Daniella model in 1985 or ‘86 we are having a coffee in the Eifel Tower, middle of the tower there is a canteen.

**I: And these are all from the, is it ‘90s, early ‘90s?**

R: Yeah, yeah early ‘80, early ‘80 and ‘90. This is my, one of the garment I, in my own shop. I used to have three shop as well in the West End, one in Oxford Street, one in Knightsbridge opposite Harrods and one in Chelsea. This garment, my garment was very expensive up to that time you can see the prices there and this garment I sold that time in my own shop, £2,495 in 1986 or ‘85, you know. This is me, all the exhibition pictures there, this is my customer from Switzerland. This is the things I was exhibiting in the Ascot and this, that time, is 1986. This time I was international market. The, this is our High Commissioner for [inaudible 00:30:15] at that time and Ec…, Economic Minister. He came and asked me, “Are you Bengali?” and we say, “Yes.” Then he say, “Can I bring my sir?” I’m say, “Who are you and who is your sir?” (laughter) and within, you know the Queen’s Gate is, As…, Ascot is very near –

**I: Yeah, yeah.**

R: - he just within five minutes bring the [inaudible 0:30:37] the High Commissioner or something and here [inaudible 00:30:42] inspired me to open a factory in Bangladesh. I, I did open a factory in Bangladesh even in 1986, ‘87. That time Bangladesh leather wasn’t good that I have to come back and the recession start, we having a problem here with our Palace Studio.

This is Princess Anne as well in the picture happened to be because the organisation was BKCEC, it’s called British Knitting Clothing Export Council. I was member of that and I was member of DTI only Bengali organisation was that and we used to exhibit our product under that banner, BKCEC, British Knitting Clothing Export Council. Then I remember that is I was exhibiting in America in 1987 and the ship there, you know, the, the plane courier, this is model Paul and we had a, that ship fought, the museum that is fought in Vietnam we went to see in 1987, this one, I remember this is 1987 and we, in this Paul is here, I’m here and the, my accountant there. This is my designer, he’s a West Indian. He was des…, he used to design all these thing. This is me in 1987 in America after exhibition I’m seeing what, how much the, oh my god, how much (laughter) how much, how much older I got now.

**I: [Inaudible 00:32:30] (laughter).**

R: You know why this make me laugh? This is me underneath that ship, you know, the fighter courier ship. I’m watching the video, the Vietnam -

**I: Yeah.**

R: - how they fight, watching the video there.

**I: [*Bengali* 00:32:52 – 00:32:55].**

R: [*Bengali* 00:32:55]. This is me and my uncle, my partner [*Bengali* 00:33:01 – 00:33:17]. Anyway, this is my designer and this a buyer, [inaudible 00:33:23] division. This is, I, I am with the model Daniella and Mark. Mark is a big businessman now.

**I: Actually, I might -**

R: This is, I’m coming up from the underground of the thingy, France, me and the other two. We used to … every years twice, about ten to fifteen years, that’s why I say I was a frequent flyer and this etc. This age, I start the exhibiting.

**I: - so tell me -**

R: This was my, one of the West End shop [inaudible 00:33:58]. This is me. There, this is me, oh, [inaudible 00:34:07] this, look at that.

**I: - [*Bengali* 00:34:10 – 00:34:13] (laughter).**

R: (Laughter).

**I: Okay, so you said you go back to Bangladesh quite often; what do you enjoy about those trips?**

R: My business as well the, my own country -

**I: Uh huh.**

R: - and I’m going back because as I mentioned be…, from the beginning, I don’t know where this story going, the beginning my father was this farmer as well as the businessman, as well very social work he has done for this village. There’s still people remember and people who remember until he done every, a school, [inaudible 00:34:48] all over, everything. His contribution is bigger than anybody else. His wish was that I become an agriculture administer star or something. My age now, he is controlling the Department of Agriculture [inaudible 00:35:09] and now I’ve gone back I have inherit quite a lot land from my grandfather and father. We are three brother and two sister and I also got another over 100 Bigha than, about 250 Bigha plus land we got. I’m cultivating there fish and the cow farm and -

**I: So, you have a lot of business interests in Bangladesh?**

R: - and, and, and the chicken farm.

**I: Do you.**

R: I’m, I’m doing business and I’m trying to create because I like to be, live over there the rest of my life because I become now a grandfather.

**I: Okay.**

R: And the, if I got a chance to live over there rest of my life -

**I: Yeah.**

R: - whatever, [inaudible 00:35:58] I enjoy that.

**I: And how often did you take your children? When did you get married?**

R: 1978.

**I: And how often did you take your children to Bangladesh?**

R: Oh, very often, very often.

**I: How –**

R: As I said, it’s my oldest son, he just come back with me the, in December, he’s going again and he want to settle over there as well. He also born in this country but he want to settle over there. He married as well. I just had a, a lunch with my daughter-in-law; she work in a hospital, London Hospital and she’s a medical scientist, pathologist department.

**I: - and why, was it important to you that your children were growing up with being in touch with their Bengali roots, Bengali heritage?**

R: Yes.

**I: Did you speak to them in Bengali while they were growing up?**

R: Yes, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**I: Why was that important?**

R: Oh, it is important to [s.l. know 00:36:59] your own language, whatever it is, because I have seen the people all over the world, fifth generation, fourth generation, sixth generation is still you remain black and your own identity [inaudible 00:37:14] and another identity if you’re Muslim, Hindu or whatever religion you carry, you will carry that but you’re a, a parents and identity it, it will not change even your accent. I went to America first in 1987, the immigration officials was like a mix Chinese or something like that and he, he was asking, “How long you stay in England?” and I say I was going to ‘70 to and back, “16 years you live there, your acc…, accent hasn’t been changed.” He, I’m a, I’m [inaudible 00:37:47]. I tell them, “Neither my colour” then he just then, I think it will be lost, our children will be lost. You people, you younger national you will be lost, you will not be any identity because I go to sports centre and etc, they only know they come from India, they come from -

**I: Which centre?**

R: - eh?

**I: Which centre?**

R: A sports centre.

**I: Oh, sports centre, yes.**

R: Yeah, yeah. They mix the various people then I feel sorry for them then I am thinking our children like you and your children and your children will become like that.

**I: So, do you think there’ll be an identity crisis?**

R: Of course.

**I: Why?**

R: Never it will be recognised, it’ll be wh…, wherever you go in the wor…, world, I think that, that is a, I would not say the racism but the identity crisis for anywhere. That will not, that will not disappear.

**I: Have you experienced any form of discrimination?**

R: That’s as I said, this in 1987 this immigration officer asked me.

**I: No, in the UK, in London?**

R: First we thought we never mix this our neighbours and etc. Now is, is more or less, is very closed like a global village like Staines. We used to even scare this 30 years, 35 years I, I go to talk to an Englishman and he went [.] but now, it’s a very common, it’s very understanding. Also, they’re realising all are human being.

**I: Uh huh and in the ‘70s, were you ever confronted with any form of racism?**

R: Oh, yes, so much and I was one of the East London, the, the racism fighter as well, you know, the our, [*Bengali* 00:39:32] and I was that time, in 1976, I was an organisation called Bangladeshi Youth Movement has been formed. I was chairman and founder of that youth movement.

R2: It all was [inaudible 00:39:54] then it was [inaudible 00:39:59].

**I: Have you ever heard all these stories?**

R2: Pardon?

**I: Have you ever heard all these stories?**

R2: Yes, many times I’ve, I’ve listened to his stories.

R: This is a, a yes, here’s our organisation but if, if you ask [inaudible 00:40:17] you see because I was the, with the community so much and I was that time, I was, we were fighting, this is Bangladesh Youth Movement and I form in 1976 and I was chairman, continue three years as well as … and this is the only one organisation, only, one and only organisation form in Great Britain in the Bengali organisation youth, youth organisation. This is me here and our High Commissioner also, I’m giving the [s.l. piece over there 00:40:58], you can see that.

**I: Thank you.**

R: And our younger brothers [*Bengali* 00:41:06 – 00:41:30].

**I: Yes, and -**

R: [*Bengali* 00:41:31 – 00:41:51]. This, this sort of history doesn’t [inaudible 00:41:52] no one can show and also, the [inaudible 00:42:00] but my bad luck, I cannot stay. As you see, this label there, Palace Studio, London, is has the [*Bengali* 00:42:05 – 00:42:11].

**I: Uh huh, why was it not successful?**

R: It’s a recession twice, three years -

**I: Okay.**

R: - I lost, it’s a very big, big recession, the ‘90s recession as you know, when the Gulf War start is the ‘90s recession, it was loss of business and loss of houses being deposition, 250 houses being deposition a week and 250 businesses average it was comparing them in the press, it come up, that much struggle we had.

**I: Uh huh but going back to the racism, so you, you formed this Bangladeshi Youth Movement -**

R: Youth Movement, yes.

**I: - and then -**

R: And not me form, it’s all of our young generation form.

**I: - uh huh.**

R: And they are drama group as well (laughter).

**I: So, where, where were you experiencing the racism you faced? Was it at work?**

R: The, well, well alone, we used to, as I said, is we used to scare some of the [inaudible 00:43:09] the Tower Hamlets, some of the area we’d never go. Our area was the only the little bit Brick Lane and the [s.l. has a listed 00:43:17] market and our work. Even the white new market they used to call the English market. Where we’re sitting, it’s very unlikely in 1973, ‘74 we, we came here in the day, only the down the road.

**I: So, where were you living in the ‘70s? Which part of Tower Hamlets?**

R: In, in East Channing Street -

**I: Okay.**

R: - down there off Commercial Road, from here to very near here and the Poplar as well, very, very, very [inaudible 00:43:43]. Very [inaudible 00:43:46] but [*Bengali* 00:43:46] different situation [*Bengali* 00:43:50 – 00:44:16] (laughter). Ask your dad as well (laughter).

**I: (Laughter) okay and do you take an interest in Bangladeshi politics?**

R: Ah, there’s another thing. I’m a, I was a young leader [inaudible 00:44:29]. In Tower Hamlets [*Bengali* 00:44:31]. I’m coming to the Bangladesh, Tower Hamlets [*Bengali* 00:44:36 – 00:44:57].

**I: Okay.**

R: 1980. [*Bengali* 00:44:57 – 00:45:36] no politician in this country at all and he’s useless. [*Bengali* 00:45:41 – 00:45:44] mainstream politician [inaudible 00:45:47] because he got to live here.

**I: But do you -**

R: Because they are our children, you are losing the identity as I mentioned before, identity of nowhere, you will be nowhere then rather when you’re born and brought up. [*Whistling noise*]. Try to stay here with the inte…, integrate here with the politics, with the language, with the education, with the [s.l. polls 00:46:15], with the cultural activity. Either way, you have to keep your own culture as well and the religion but you have to integrate with this land of law. Lots of people think then there I’m not living here, they are going, no one will go back and I’m, I’m very much, very much sad now and I’m filling now than our [*Bengali* 00:46:48] –

R3: [Inaudible 00:46:49] did you move it?

R2: Yes, I did [inaudible 00:46:54].

R: Yes, [inaudible 00:46:55].

R3: [Multi-speakers 00:46:55] have to move it again. I think there’s someone taking pictures [inaudible 00:46:59].

R2: Okay.

R3: Already.

R2: Can I do it with you?

R3: [Multi-speakers 00:47:01] already taking pictures, I think.

R: [*Bengali* 00:47:05] yes, then, this is my son.

**I: Okay.**

R: Can I take a leave for a minute?

**I: Yes, sure, sure, sure.**

R4: [Inaudible 00:47:21].

**END OF FIRST RECORDING**

**I: Okay, so we were briefly, we started talking about Bangladeshi politics -**

R: Yeah.

**I: - and if you’re interested, if you follow Bangladeshi politics.**

R: No.

**I: No.**

R: I don’t do but I joined, on the first [inaudible 00:00:12] I came here, I joined the BNP, I, I was in the reception committee as well, me and, [*Bengali* 00:00:19] and the late [*Bengali* 00:00:22 – 00:00:28] but I’m not interested in Bangladeshi politics.

**I: Why not?**

R: Because from here is Bangladeshi politics [*Bengali* 00:00:35].

**I: [*Bengali* 00:00:36].**

R: We cannot become a politician and etc [*Bengali* 00:00:41 – 00:00:48].

**I: [*Bengali* 00:00:48].**

R: If you eat and live in this country, you do the politics in this country and then foreign affairs [inaudible 00:00:58] or whatever, you help the others.

**I: [*Bengali* 00:01:02] and are there any organisations in the UK which help you retain your connection to Bangladesh?**

R: No.

**I: No, and are there any, I mean, what about the travels that you make to Bangladesh; is it through local Bangladesh sort of travel agencies that you go?**

R: Yeah, local, local and there’s our, one of my friend, he’s based in Manchester, I use him and then I used to, before when I with my business I used to, it was the English firm, Colney, Thomas, you know because our, every year [inaudible 00:01:43] to travelling to exhibit all over the world.

**I: But now you use your friend -**

R: [Multi-speakers 00:01:48] yeah, yeah.

**I: - who’s a Bangladeshi -**

R: Bengali.

**I: - who runs a travel agency but based in Manchester you said?**

R: Yeah.

**I: And what about charities or businesses; are there any charities or businesses that help you remain connected to Bangladesh?**

R: To my, myself?

**I: Yes [multi-speakers 00:02:03].**

R: No, our family got little [inaudible 00:02:05] I mean [inaudible 00:02:07] like things in my father’s, it’s called [*Bengali* 00:02:16] in English, yes? You put a [inaudible 00:02:24] a brilliant student [*Bengali* 00:02:30].

**I: So, is it like a scholarship?**

R: Scholarship, yes.

**I: A scholarship for the [multi-speakers 00:02:34].**

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah [*Bengali* 00:02:33 – 00:02:39].

**I: Oh, so it’s like a Trust, a Foundation?**

R: Like a Trust, family Trust.

**I: So, it’s under your dad’s name, this Trust.**

R: Dad’s name, yes.

**I: And you give scholarships to prize students?**

R: Yeah, yeah to prize student.

**I: Okay and are there any religious organisations that help you connect to Bangladesh?**

R: Help?

**I: You connect to Bangladesh.**

R: No.

**I: Any religious organisations, [*Bengali* 00:02:57] and did you go Umrah or Hajj? Have you done any of those?**

R: Yes, I did, both.

**I: You’ve done both?**

R: Yeah, last year I did Umrah and the 1970, 2002, [inaudible 00:03:13] the main Hajj in [inaudible 00:03:14] and last year Umrahs.

**I: [*Bengali* 00:03:14] and -**

R: With my wife, my son, my daughter-in-law, my grandson. That was my one of the top things in my life that with my grandson -

**I: Uh huh.**

R: - I done the Umrah.

**I: And when you came back, what kind of effect did the Hajj as well as the Umrah have on your life in the UK? What impact did they have, you doing Umrah and Hajj, on your life in the UK?**

R: No, nothing. No, impact.

**I: Positive, negative?**

R: Positive, negative, both of the [*Bengali* 00:03:54 – 00:03:57] positive, positive. [*Bengali* 00:04:01] just normal life. [*Bengali* 00:04:02 – 00:04:07].

**I: [*Bengali* 00:04:07] and do you -**

R: Well yes, people change for certain the reason, I don’t know why and then the Hajj [*Bengali* 00:04:16 – 00:04:21]. Everybody doing this here and there, everything, like the restaurant owner, [*Bengali* 00:04:28 – 00:04:33]. That sort of things is nonsense [*Bengali* 00:04:38]. If you do, do, do you’re [inaudible 00:04:41] the way your life lead.

**I: One of the things I’m interested in is because you’re in the garment sector and garment sector is a big sector in Bangladesh -**

R: Uh huh.

**I: - is that why you took an interest in having businesses, businesses?**

R: No, that time there weren’t the Bangladesh garment sector develop. That time I was very busy in England, lots of people invite me to go there and do the business. Also, in 1986, I went there but that time it was very early for me. Very early I went there.

**I: But now the business links that you have with Bangladesh -**

R: With Bangladesh yes, the garment sector I got here.

**I: - oh, okay.**

R: And the Pakistan I got the leather sector.

**I: Okay and you also mentioned the other link that you have with Bangladesh is through your father’s land that you cultivated, the farm.**

R: Our father, father land, grandfather land -

**I: Okay.**

R: - I’m cultivating the, I’m doing the farming and that will be my enjoyment as well.

**I: So, you know these business links you have and you’re maintaining your grandfather and your father’s land, do you find it easy to maintain all of these things or do you find it difficult?**

R: Nothing difficult. Lots of people I heard that them, them go and say diffi…, difficult.

**I: Uh huh.**

R: I haven’t found any difficult. Also, this maybe the people have to [inaudible 00:06:02] but I haven’t found it difficult.

**I: [Inaudible 00:06:04].**

R: I’m [inaudible 00:06:06] my everything from here as well.

**I: Okay and do you send remittances back to Bangladesh [*Bengali* 00:06:11]?**

R: No, recently no, I mean [*Bengali* 00:06:16] never in Bangladesh. Father, mother [*Bengali* 00:06:20].

**I: Uh huh.**

R: [*Bengali* 00:06:25 – 00:06:29].

**I: [*Bengali* 00:06:29].**

R: [*Bengali* 00:06:30 – 00:06:40].

**I: [*Bengali* 00:06:39] and so all these links that you keep with Bangladesh whether it’s through business or pleasure, do you feel that improves your life in the UK here? Does it add to your life?**

R: Yeah, I be active and this, I enjoy the business in my 60 years I can be retired now maybe but I like to work and I work all the way until my, when I [*Bengali* 00:07:07].

**I: Do you?**

R: I’ll work, I’ll work.

**I: You seem to enjoy [multi-speakers 00:07:12].**

R: Yeah, I, I enjoy my work.

**I: Yeah.**

R: I never leave work in last 46 years but my business up and down we say but work 40 years.

**I: Uh huh. So, for you it adds to your life but you’ll keep, continue going and keeping up with everything?**

R: Yeah, okay.

**I: And have you ever experienced any suspicion on the part of government agencies and law enforcement when travelling back to Bangladesh or sending money there or anything to do with your business?**

R: No.

**I: No?**

R: No.

**I: Okay and do you think the fact that you’re a man, your gender influences your relationship with Bangladesh?**

R: You?

**I: Your gender -**

R: Uh huh?

**I: - does that influence your relationship with Bangladesh do you think?**

R: Wha…, what do you mean by the gender?

**I: [*Bengali* 00:07:58 – 00:08:01] that influences your relationship with Bangladesh?**

R: No.

**I: You don’t think so?**

R: No.

**I: And do you think your age influences your relationship with Bangladesh?**

R: No, it’s the, nothing is, is being a Bangladeshi and I born over there maybe by, because of my, my, my birth, that’s it.

**I: And what about social background, do you think that influences your relationship with Bangladesh?**

R: Yes, also, also social and the religion as well as my birth country. That, that the main thing I think.

**I: Why social background? Why do you think, how do you think it influences your relationship with Bangladesh?**

R: Influence with the social background?

**I: [Inaudible 00:08:37].**

R: These are own language, these our own land, these are own everything -

**I: [Inaudible 00:08:39].**

R: - that’s the thing.

**I: No, by social background we mean sort of class status.**

R: Hmm.

**I: That’s what we’re referring to [*Bengali* 00:08:50 – 00:08:53] you know, middle class, you know, do you think that influences your relationship with Bangladesh upper middle class or the [*Bengali* 00:08:58]?**

R: [*Bengali* 00:09:03 – 00:09:06].

**I: [*Bengali* 00:09:06 – 00:09:09].**

R: Uh huh.

**I: Do you -**

R: [*Bengali* 00:09:10 – 00:09:12].

**I: - [*Bengali* 00:09:12] what do you think?**

R: Huh?

**I: Do you think, do, do you think, which class would you -?**

R: I don’t think so, the Bengali can say that the middle class or any class is a working class. We are all worker. We are all working class people.

**I: So, would you consider yourself working class?**

R: Working class.

**I: Do you think that status, you being working class, influences your relationship with Bangladesh, being working class?**

R: Maybe.

**I: In what ways do you think it might?**

R: Because countries, our country is not rich -

**I: Hmm.**

R: - and you can mix with the people, this working class people and, and I, I, I like to be with them and that is my mentality and my mind.

**I: Hmm.**

R: And that is maybe my character.

**I: Uh huh. Do you think your life would have been different if you were settled in a different part of the UK with a smaller Asian community? How do you think your life would have been different?**

R: Very, very small community is a different life. Bengali community [*Bengali* 00:10:23], small community [inaudible 00:10:24], they’re leading one life and we are leading a different life here because of the [s.l. vast 00:10:23] community, we’ve got everything big here.

**I: Uh huh.**

R: In England, London. I think London [*Bengali* 00:10:40 – 00:10:44] but this London community is the best [inaudible 00:10:49] community as well and I think the [*Bengali* 00:10:52 – 00:11:58] Newham and Tower Hamlets they’re doing local government [*Bengali* 00:11:01] all authority are -

**I: So, do you see it as a good thing that when you’re in a majority you, you have more influence?**

R: - yes, yes, yes, yes.

**I: Okay.**

R: Yes, yes.

**I: So, you don’t think you can have that much influence when you’re in a minority?**

R: Yes.

**I: As in, if you’re in a smaller Asian community?**

R: A smaller community, yes.

**I: Okay and are there any organisations that have helped you here in Tower Hamlets?**

R: Such as what?

**I: [*Bengali* 00:11:27].**

R: [*Bengali* 00:11:28 – 00:11:32] such help is not there.

**I: [*Bengali* 00:11:33].**

R: Such help is not there.

**I: Is *not* there?**

R: No.

**I: Why do you think?**

R: I, I think this is, it, gov…, government bound to doing it is I, I believe this in say…, saying this, this mayor are doing it, that councillor doing it, no.

**I: Yeah.**

R: It’s on the agenda but the local government, government doing it and he’s the representative of the public and he’s a public servant. Through him doing it, but they just [*Bengali* 00:11:58 – 00:12:04], I don’t believe that.

**I: So, you think it’s difficult to get help from the government or local authority?**

R: If you are genuine not, why not help is there always.

**I: Okay, so you think help is available?**

R: Help is available.

**I: [*Bengali* 00:12:19].**

R: Uh huh but if you complain there is not help, there is something wrong with it.

**I: Okay.**

R: What sort of help you seeking.

**I: Okay, so it depends on the [multi-speakers 00:12:31]?**

R: Yeah, it depends on the -

**I: On the context.**

R: - the individual case.

**I: Okay and, and right now in Tower Hamlets, what do you think, which services do you think are most needed? So, do you think, for example, for older people, for young people, what do you think is the most needed here in Tower Hamlets right now?**

R: It’s Tower Hamlets the most needed is this for the law enforcement should be more strong because our young generation that is educated and the jobs should be created. For Tower Hamlets, there are the, when I had a factory and we got a factory upstairs as well, only three, four factory left in London. When we had a factory 35 years back about 35, about 2,000 – 3,000 small, small factory was there.

**I: Uh huh.**

R: This government policy is demolish the factory, all the work has gone abroad and all these youngster have got education but there is no job.

**I: So, you think the government should [multi-speakers 00:13:32]?**

R: Yeah, yeah the more industry should be develop once again. Industry should go, gone out from the country, that, that is very bad for any community especially we come, as I say, we are working class people, our parents come for the work here and work the, this pass to our own country now and we remain here, nowhere.

**I: So, you think that -**

R: And this [inaudible 00:13:59] the next generation like you’ve got education, you’ll have a job but everyone will not have the right job, right job but I think this country’s government also realising that. Even the textile industry we was, it has disappeared and people need the British made things. I have seen this because I was in the fashion industry so long, I know how to dress up, I know what do people make, person to dress up and the what is the you or he or she look nice, I can recognise this although I’m not a designer [inaudible 00:14:38] I’m in the fashion industry last 40 years and internationally I was exhibiting my own product, I was creating our own design, producing our things, sourcing, procuring, buying and selling and the modelling. All this job has been disappear. Even myself, if I got a chance now, what experience I’ve got even the, in the big factory we can run a big factory in, in here then we can create within our community there is a model girl, we can make the model, we can make the designer, we can make the pattern cutter, we can make the machiner, everything. We can create the job but everybody, politician talking they are, they’re, I think is it.

**I: So, you think these garment factories should be revived?**

R: Revived, yes because I have seen the City boys now, what I call the City boys, they’re hanging around the [s.l. clothes 00:15:35] made in China and Bangladesh, is nowhere. They are dress up is not like an Englishman anymore.

**I: So, you want to revive the tradition of dressing, dressing properly?**

R: Of course, of course, dress, dress up properly.

**I: Okay and -**

R: And it’s all this foreign made things is, is, is the product made in foreign made and British made is British made.

**I: - so, you think they should be made in the UK [multi-speakers 00:16:01].**

R: Yeah, yeah.

**I: Okay and do you feel as a British citizen you have effective citizenship rights?**

R: Effective?

**I: Effective citizenship rights that you’re able to -**

R: No, this is citizen, citizenship right of everybody got. As you see the world how it’s going where this America, what they’re saying, we are very fragile situation. As I say, I mention quite few time, our generation, our children, they are very fragile. They are nowhere. They are nowhere seem to be and this our parents’ fault. We bring them here back then but as, who, everybody reminding even the British passport that’s written on demand you have to surrender. What’s this there? This is not you are a permanent here then the, what is the America doing, the British, Britain can do any time.

**I: So, you think your passport can be taken away from, your citizenship?**

R: No, no, no they can taken away if need to be. It’s their country, the Great Britain is a problem that they not look after all these people.

**I: So, you feel there’s a chance that your -**

R: Yeah, of course, of course.

**I: - [multi-speakers 00:17:05] citizenship could be?**

R: There should be.

**I: Could be revoked?**

R: Yes, could be revoked because of the passport there is a written. Written thing there is there on demand you have to surrender to the Queen.

**I: So, you don’t feel -**

R: That’s mean we are all, this, the English are [s.l. kingdom 00:17:22] people.

**I: - hmm.**

R: That is I feel for people. Them, land of birth is a very important thing. From there, nobody can take away from you identity. Nobody can take away your passport. Nobody can take away your citizenship. We are sort of a, like lots of refugee hanging around all over the world. Nobody talking about it as you touching little bit politics, I’m not a politician but why become a refugee? Who make them refugee? Who make them homeless and they are looking for shelter all over the world? Who is responsibility? Who is responsible to create that? Is it the politics there? For example, is Saddam, Quaddaffi or Libya or whoever it is, America, is they’re running their own country but why we should go and intervene there? There is some interest and then interest create a problem.

Now British, America, everybody is suffering, everybody knocking on their door, they are, they got to be shame now. European and English, got to be shame because they gone and with their foreign policy and interfere other country, destroy the countries and decivilise people. They make them poor. They make them refugees. They make them homeless. These are the people they do, if they don’t destroy all this country like the Iraq, Iran, whatever it is, which country, I don’t know, I’m not a politician but it is my thinking if don’t destroy them they should not become a, a refugee, they should not become a homeless, they should not become a, a, they will not be starving. They will do their own job and create their own shelter and everything in their own country. Decivilise [*Bengali* 00:19:35] British or America all over the world or politicians [inaudible 00:19:40].

**I: Coming back to the UK, do you think we, I mean, we briefly spoke about racism; do you think Islamophobia is a problem?**

R: It’s a too much activism Islam [inaudible 00:19:52]. When, when you start, as I said, it’s, I got this Bangla and Islamic, we start to teach in our club, Bangladesh Youth Movement. I become a Bangla…, a, a tea…, tutor as well for drama and the other religious side, Bengali side [*Bengali* 00:20:11 – 00:20:16] too much [inaudible 00:20:18] and themselves not one word. Islam is one word but when the Islam [*Bengali* 00:20:25 – 00:20:30] supposed to be pleased, they don’t say one word, one say one word, one way, another say another word the, people are, world are confused. One girl like a, a, she putting [*Bengali* 00:20:45 – 00:21:02]. That is wrong.

**I: Well, what about Islamophobia where Muslims are being attacked and experiencing discrimination. Do you think -**

R: Why, why Muslim being attacked, this is my, the best question. Can you answer me?

**I: - why do you think they’re being attacked?**

R: I think there’s too much Muslimism.

**I: What do you mean by that?**

R: Because as I say -

**I: Too much -**

R: - if you’ve got to road and you put these up and no one say you are a man or woman, [inaudible 00:21:29] what people have to do? There should be a phobia like things.

**I: - uh huh, so you feel Muslims are partially responsible for the attacks?**

R: Responsible, yes.

**I: Okay and have you experienced Islamophobia?**

R: No.

**I: Okay and have you heard of the Prevent duty? Prevent?**

R: Prevent, no?

**I: Prevent, it’s a government legislation where the public sector workers have to look for signs of radicalisation amongst, so, if they’re a nurse they have to look for it in patients or if you’re a teacher you have to look for it in students. Have you heard of this?**

R: No.

**I: You haven’t, okay and have you had any interaction with any government agencies in the past? So, for example, UK Immigration Services or welfare officers.**

R: No.

**I: No, okay. Well, I wish to thank you for your time and for giving me almost two hours of your time for the interview. Thank you so much.**

R: Thank you too as well, thank you.