



BRITISH SIKH REPORT 2017

AN INSIGHT INTO THE BRITISH SIKH COMMUNITY



British Sikh Report 2017

The British Sikh Report (BSR) has been published annually since 2013. It is based on a survey of Sikhs living in the UK, gathering information about views on their faith, and on topical British issues – political, economic, social and cultural.

British Sikh Report website: www.britishsikhreport.org

PREVIOUS REPORTS:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Welcome to the British Sikh Report 2017. This is the fifth in our series of strategic documents created by Sikhs about Sikhs, and for everyone with an interest in the lives of Sikhs in Britain.

Over the last five years, we have developed robust and unrivalled statistical information about Sikhs living in Britain. This highly influential annual document has been quoted by MPs and Peers, referred to in several pieces of research and white papers regarding faith in modern society, and used by a multitude of public authorities and private companies in identifying the needs of British Sikhs.

Our experienced team has worked with a large and diverse group of Sikh organisations throughout the country to create the questionnaire and collect the data. This year's team has included research analysts, lawyers, academics, senior consultants and managers amongst many others who have volunteered their valuable time and expertise to the project. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has helped us along the way, including those who went out within the Sikh community to gather responses.

The findings from this year's report include:

- 65% of Sikhs voted to remain in the EU, but 73% would now vote to remain if there was a second EU Referendum, suggesting that 8% of Sikhs regret how they voted in June 2016
- 13% of British Sikhs have been victims of hate crimes since the EU Referendum
- Over 72% consider violence and sexism to be issues affecting British Sikh women
- 68% felt negative or very negative towards the decision 70 years ago to partition Punjab in two
- Just under 40% were positive or very positive regarding the political and economic case for an independent Sikh state. Over 30% were negative or very negative towards the case for independence and around 30% were neutral
- 69% said they would support their child joining the Armed Forces
- 75% felt that not enough is done by mainstream organisations such as museums and film companies to promote Sikh heritage and culture

British Sikhs are a strongly proud community with a distinct identity, as can be seen across these pages. Some of their concerns are unique to Sikhs, whilst others quite clearly reflect national sentiments and sensibilities. As such, this document provides a snapshot of what it means to be Sikh in contemporary Britain.

We hope that you find the British Sikh Report 2017 fascinating, thought-provoking, and most of all, insightful.

Jasvir Singh DBE

SIKH DHARAM - GENDER EQUALITY, CULTURAL CHANGE AND 'BREAKING GLASS CEILINGS'.

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When South Asians were invited to satisfy the British demand for labour in the 1950s, the response came mainly from single male Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The majority of Sikhs were from rural Punjab and had traditionally practised agriculture and petty trading. After British immigration laws were tightened in the 1960s, the male Sikhs were joined by their wives, children, parents and other relatives. The presence of the Sikh family in Britain encouraged the purchase of homes, and eventually resulted in the demise of the 'myth of return'. In the beginning women generally stayed at home while the men went out to work, in line with traditional Punjabi culture and the reluctance of allowing women into a foreign workplace. This changed in the 1970s with the collapse of manufacturing industries, the traditional bastions of employment for male immigrants, particularly in the Midlands and the North of England. The resulting higher rates of male unemployment opened up opportunities for unskilled immigrant women to join the labour force, primarily out of economic necessity. This also reflected the fruits of the feminist movement of the 1960s and the growing trend in western societies of women entering the workplace. Unlike in Punjab, both female and male children of immigrants also had 'free' and fair access to education, and this coupled with employment opportunities motivated Sikhs to settle permanently in Britain.ⁱ The community today is successfully integrated into British society, and this is evidenced by employment, education, and social and cultural adaptation. Integration, however, has not led to the loss of religious beliefs and values. Instead, British Sikhs have begun to re-interpret their scripture and teachings through the lens of their experiences of living in the West and have found a

natural fit between Sikh teachings and western liberal values of respect, tolerance, equality and justice for all.

The Sikh tradition emerged in the fifteen century C.E, at the confluence of Abrahamic and Indic 'religious' traditions, and at the transitional phase from 'medieval' to 'modern' times. As such, it is inherently comparative, inclusive, diverse, critical, and heterogeneous. Its development constitutes a sort of Indic 'Enlightenment' that invents new ways to speak and act beyond the 'sacred' and 'secular.' That is, it is both 'religious' and 'secular,' and neither. This 'Enlightenment,' thus espoused by the Sikh gurus, is different from the European Enlightenment movement, which sought to move beyond 'religion' and elevate reason to the highest status. The Sikh tradition offered an alternative point of view that not only confronted many archaic, superstitious belief systems, but also provided a way for the 'guru-teacher' relationship to lead to individual spiritual awakening and social harmony.ⁱⁱ

Guru Nanak the founder of the Sikh Dharam emphasized spiritual wisdom, righteous living, and responsibility towards God and creation. He advocated for a sense of 'duty' and 'way of life'ⁱⁱⁱ that all Sikhs should aspire towards - which involves three core teachings of Guru Nanak: *naam japna* (recitation of God's name), *dharam di kirat karna* (earning an honest living), and *vand chakana* (selfless service and sharing). This way of life is further guided by the notion that the one Divine Reality/Light - Ik Oankar - resides within all of God's creation:

Allah is hidden in every heart; reflect upon this in your mind. The One Lord is within both Hindu and Muslim; Kabear proclaims this out loud. (Guru Granth Sahib, at 483)

Through and through, the Formless Lord is woven into each and every heart.
(Guru Granth Sahib, at 518)



It is this, the Divine light residing within all people that strengthened the argument espoused by the ten human Gurus, and now the Eternal Living Guru, the Guru Granth Sahib on equality. Respect for women - along with caste, class, and religious equality - are central tenets of the Sikh Dharam. The patriarchal polarization that existed - women and nature on the one side against men and culture on the other - was repudiated by the Gurus who gave women greater equality, both social and religious. The Gurus taught that men and women are equal in the eyes of God, and both are born to complement one another. This is distinct from some of the other religious traditions that believe women came to exist only as part of a man and could therefore only achieve salvation through men. Instead, Sikh scripture outlines that women are to be regarded as equal to men and have the same right to grow spiritually, and that they are essential for the continuance of society and the preservation of its ethical structure:

From woman, man is born; within woman, man is conceived; to woman he is engaged and married.

Woman becomes his friend; through woman, the future generations come.

When his woman dies, he seeks another woman; to woman he is bound.

So why call her bad? From her, kings are born. From woman, woman is born; without woman, there would be no one at all.

O Nanak, only the True Lord is without a woman.

That mouth which praises the Lord continually is blessed and beautiful.

O Nanak, those faces shall be radiant in the Court of the True Lord.

(Guru Granth Sahib, at 473)^{iv}

This revolutionary message from Guru Nanak, which accorded women equality in the eyes of God and recognized their importance in the society allowed Sikhs from the time of the Gurus to 'break glass ceilings'. The third Guru, Guru Amar Das trained missionaries to spread Sikhism throughout the country. Of the 146 missionaries Guru Amar Das trained and sent out, 52 were women, and of the 22 *manjis* (or dioceses) he established four were run by women. Their position was equivalent to an Anglican Bishop. The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh during the initiation ceremony of the Khalsa in 1699, asked Mata Jito Ji to participate in the first initiation by adding sugar cakes (*patashas*) to water which was stirred with the khanda (double edged sword) and administered to the Khalsa as *amrit* (ambrosia or sanctified water).

Throughout history we have seen Sikh women take an active role in the social and political domain – Mai Bhago, Maharani Jind Kaur, Mai Sulkan, Rani Sada Kaur and Maharani Chand Kaur being leading examples.^v

Today, Sikh families encourage education for sons and daughters alike, and this is particularly evident in the current British Sikh diasporic context where Sikh women continue to pursue and achieve success and equality through education (Table 1, BSR 2017) and employment.

Today, Sikh families encourage education for sons and daughters alike, and this is particularly evident in the current British Sikh diasporic context where Sikh women continue to pursue and achieve success and equality through education (Table 1, BSR 2017) and employment.

Table 1 Highest Qualification *(percentage of total)*

Highest qualification	Females	Males	Total
PhD	2%	3%	3%
Masters	20%	18%	19%
University Degree	45%	44%	45%
Other	33%	35%	33%

Sikh women are to be found in full-time and part-time employment (Table 2, BSR 2017).

Table 2 Employment Status *(percentage of total)*

Employment status	Females	Males	Total
Full time employment	58%	60%	59%
Part time employed	14%	2%	8%
Self employed	8%	20%	14%
Other	20%	18%	19%

As we scan the secular political, education, business, healthcare, and education arena of Britain, Sikh women are to be found in positions in key sectors of the economy (Table 3, BSR 2017):

Table 3 Types of Employment – Key Sectors for Women
(percentage of total)

Employment sector	Females	Males	Total
Financial Services	15%	19%	17%
Healthcare	16%	9%	13%
Law	7%	4%	5%
Media & Advertising	4%	2%	3%
Non-for-profit	9%	4%	7%
Teacher	15%	5%	10%
Other	34%	57%	45%

Examples of prominent Sikh women in Britain include:

Academia:

Professor Kalwant Bhopal, Professor of Education and Social Justice, University of Birmingham

Politics:

Baroness Sandip Verma, Conservative Peer
Neena Gill, Labour MEP and only elected Sikh Parliamentarian in Europe
Reena Ranger, Conservative Councillor at Three Rivers District Council
Kirith Ahluwalia, Vice Chair of Young Fabians International Network

Actor:

Parminder Nagra, Bend it like Beckham

TV:

Anita Rani, BBC presenter
Daljit Dhaliwal, journalist and news anchor

Film Director:

Gurinder Chadha

Artists:

Amrit Kaur Singh and Rabindra Kaur Singh, otherwise known as The Singh Twins

Law:

Mejinderpal Kaur, United Sikhs Legal Director

Model:

Neelam Gill
Harnaam Kaur

Sports:

Harleen Kaur, World Martial Kombat Federation (WMKF), World Champion Silver Medallist, as well as an Asian Sports Foundation Ambassador

It is ironic that whilst Sikh women are well represented in the key sectors of employment, within Sikh religious organisations they are still subject to more 'traditional' norms of patriarchal behaviour where they are either given lesser roles or token roles on committees. In a similar vein as women in other religious communities dominated by patriarchal structures, Sikh women still have not achieved the gender equality that many Sikhs would interpret the Sikh teachings advocate. Gender inequality is further demonstrated by the lack of women in roles of religious authority, and the prevention of female participation in certain religious activities and ceremonies. For example, women traditionally have not been allowed to be one of the *panj pyare* (five beloved ones), and nor can they take part in *sewa* in the sanctum sanctorum of the Sikh holiest of holies at Harmandir Sahib^{vi} in Amritsar during the *Sukhasan* ceremony.^{vii}

Similar to the issue of the ordination of women bishops in certain Christian organisations, women becoming part of the *panj pyare* (five beloved ones) is a contentious issue related to history and tradition: religious Sikhs argue that in 1699, when called upon by the tenth Guru, it was only five men who were prepared to sacrifice their lives; therefore, women cannot join the tradition of the five. However, what is interesting is that organisations that represent non-Punjabi Sikh converts do allow women to be part of the *panj pyare*.^{viii}

The Sikh Dharam, like other religious traditions (Anglican Church had to consider the issue of women Bishops), will have to consider the gender imbalance in religious institutions particularly in an environment where gender equality is enshrined in law and is part of the norm of the wider society.

Women, whether initiated or not, through service form the bulk of the congregation at gurdwaras and have been just as active in the life and running of the local gurdwaras as men as demonstrated by 43% of women doing at least 1-5 hours of *sewa* and another 10 per cent doing even more than this.

Despite being equal contributors in terms of *sewa* and attendance at gurdwaras they are invisible on gurdwara management committees, and need to be present so that the voice of women is heard, not as merely 'women's representatives' but as equals to the male leadership.^{ix}

There are some Sikh females who do not object to a lack of representation on management committees either because they are generally apathetic to the whole issue of gender roles within the gurdwara or because they object to western attitudes on equality and its application to Sikhs, focusing instead on their role within the *langar* (communal kitchen), and the preservation of traditional practices to demonstrate their support and obedience to their faith. However, the majority of Sikh women are objecting and raising questions about whether these restrictions are indeed theologically grounded at all, or merely a result of cultural practices.^x Sikh women would not call this a feminist struggle, but describe it as a reclamation of their faith which will enable them to represent women's views and subsequently ensure women's needs are met (Table 4, BSR 2017).

Table 4 Are women sufficiently involved in the running of gurdwaras?
(percentage of total)

	Females	Males	Total
No	53%	52%	52%
Not sure	18%	15%	17%
Yes	29%	33%	31%

Whilst women, on the whole, may not have had access to participate in gurdwara management there have been instances where they have had to take control. There have been instances in Coventry, Leicester, Birmingham and London where women have taken over the running of gurdwaras when rival factions developed in the all-male committees.

Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick, was managed by local women during 1981–2; Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara, Leicester, which had no elections for nine years, was also taken over by women. The Shepherd's Bush Gurdwara, when faced with a crisis as a result of rivalry between two factions, delegated charge to an all-women's committee in March 1983. (Singh and Tatla 2006: 85)^{xi}

Recently, there have been landmark achievements like the election of Bibi Paramjit Kaur as President of the Committee for Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara Bristol, Rajinder Kaur Lard in her capacity as the current president of Harley Grove Gurdwara in Bow, East London, and the appointment of Mandeep Kaur, the Sikh Civilian Chaplain to the Military (UK). The extent of this development must not be exaggerated; it is still limited to rather restricted circles within the Sikh community, and the existence of such women leaders in the religious realm is still 'under the radar' instead of championed by the community.

Another important development has been the formation of women-only religious groups, such as the Sikh Nari Manch^{xii} which have provided women the opportunity to practice their faith through a more 'feminine' interpretation of Sikh scripture.

Social media and the online platform has also provided women with forums, such as Kaurista, Kaur Life, Kaurageous to participate in debates about religion and identity, but it is also clear that they provide opportunity for online bullying which puts female participation at risk.^{xiii}



While Sikh women are addressing their position and access within religious organisations, national Sikh organisations which represent British Sikhs also need to address the issue of gender imbalance in their organisations. To be truly representative they need to be more inclusive of women, removing existing barriers to female participation and allowing Sikh women the space and opportunity to contribute to the public debate, represent and most importantly lead. They should also be open to criticism, particularly from Sikh women, who may take a contrarian position to their views, and instead attempt to engage constructively with this section of the community. This would certainly widen participation by women in these organisations.

In conclusion, in an age where girls are told they can be or do anything, Sikh women are highly educated and high achievers who have been, and are continuing to 'break glass ceilings' in social activism, business, law, politics and education; however, they have only made a small crack in the religious 'glass ceiling' because religious tradition has been interpreted to bar women from certain religious activities, and male dominated organisations, influenced by cultural practices and norms of patriarchy from the sub-continent, have unfortunately perpetuated this gender imbalance. The incumbent leadership of important Sikh religious organisations has generally been slow to adopt the changes necessary to create more gender diversity and representation within leadership teams and have been reluctant to relinquish positions of power.

Despite this, Sikh women have not been held back. A new generation of Sikh women has emerged following in the footsteps of Princess Sophia Alexandra Duleep Singh, a prominent Sikh suffragette in the United Kingdom who was goddaughter to Queen Victoria and the granddaughter of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.^{xiv} Recognising the Sikh ethic of equality as demonstrated in the Guru Granth Sahib and the historical accounts of the Gurus, Sikh women are standing up for themselves by carrying out selfless service for the cause of Sikhs and non-Sikhs with complete humility and without ego (*haumai*) outside of the realm of traditional male-dominated religious organisations. It is hoped that this determination will also prevail within the realm of religious organisations.^{xv} Indeed, women like Bibi Parmjit Kaur and Mandeep Kaur are creating opportunities and inroads for women to rise within the ranks of religious organisations. A trend has been set, and it is inevitable that more and more Sikh women will begin to exert more influence and impact on religious organisations resulting in that slightly cracked 'religious glass ceiling' being completely shattered.

- (i) Singh, Gurharpal, and Tatla, D. S. (2006). *Sikhs in Britain: The Making of a Community*. London: Zed Books.
- (ii) Jhutti-Johal, J. (forthcoming 2017). 'Sikh Dharma', in Veena R. Howard and Rita D. Sherma (eds.), *Dharma: The Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh Traditions of India*. London: I.B Tauris.
- (iii) Three core teachings of its founder, Guru Nanak: *naam japna* (recitation of God's name), *dharam di kirat karna* (earning an honest living), and *vand chakana* (selfless service).
- (iv) Guru Nanak, Guru Granth Sahib, at 473. Since the *ang/page* numbers of the scriptures correspond with a digitized version, all citations are from the following digital version:
<http://www.srigranth.org/servlet/gurbani.gurbani> [Accessed 14th July 2016].
- (v) *Great Sikh Women: Biographies of Great Sikh Women*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.allaboutsikhs.com/great-sikh-women/great-sikh-women> [Accessed 4th January 2017].
- (vi) Also referred to as the Golden Temple.
- (vii) *Sukhasan* ceremony involves taking the Guru Granth Sahib from the main room to another room to rest. At the Harmandir Sahib the Guru Granth Sahib is removed and taken to rest in Sri Akal Takht Sahib (Throne/Seat of the Almighty) which is located within the Harmandir Sahib complex. In 2003 two British Sikh women tried to take part in the procession and were told that they could not. For further details see Jakobsh, D.R. (2006). 'Sikhism, interfaith dialogue, and women: Transformation and identity', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 21(2), pp.183-199.
- (viii) American convert Sikhs allow women to be part of the *panj pyare*. For further details see Jakobsh, D.R. (2006). 'Sikhism, interfaith dialogue, and women: Transformation and identity', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 21(2), pp.183-199.
- (ix) Sikhs engage in three forms of *sewa* (selfless service): "seva

rendered through one's body (*tan*), *seva* rendered through one's mind (*man*), and *seva* rendered through giving of one's material wealth (*dhan*). While all three forms of *seva* are considered equally important, the Sikh Gurus stressed that all *seva* should be a labour of love performed without desire (*nishkam*), without intention (*nishkapat*), and with humility (*nimarta*)." Virdee, G.S. (2005, p.13). 'Labour of love: Kar seva at Darbar Sahib's Amrit Sarover', *Sikh Formations*, 1:1, pp. 13-28.

(x) Jhutti-Johal, J. (2010). 'The Role of Women in their Religious Institutions: A Contemporary Account', in Doris R. Jakobsh (ed.), *Sikhism and Women: History, Texts and Experience*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

(xi) Singh, Gurharpal, and Tatla, D. S. (2006). *Sikhs in Britain: The Making of a Community*. London: Zed Books.

(xii) Sikh Nari Manch UK was established by Bibi Gurdev Kaur to empower and educate women on the Sikh Dharam.

(xiii) An example can be evidenced by the following article: *Challenging Patriarchy in the Sikh Community* by Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa (24th January 2017). [online] Kaur Life. Available at: <https://kaur-life.org/2017/01/24/patriarchy/> [Accessed 13 February 2017].

(xiv) Anand, A. (2015). *Sophia: princess, suffragette, revolutionary*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

(xv) For example, 'Include Me TOO' established and led by Parminder Dheensa (<http://includemetoo.org.uk/>); 'UK Friends of Unique Home' trustee Sharan Ghuman (<http://www.uniquehomeforgirls.org/>), and 'Cysters – Women's Support and Awareness Group' established and led by Neelam Heera (<http://www.cysters.co.uk/neelam-heera/>).



BRITISH SIKH REPORT 2017

SURVEY INTRODUCTION



This is the latest and fifth in the series of annual British Sikh Reports (BSR). This year's questionnaire saw over 2,000 respondents spread across the United Kingdom, making this our largest sample to date. The survey was primarily conducted online, as in previous years, but there was a concerted effort to supplement that sample with a paper questionnaire to reach those without internet access. Responses were monitored and particular areas of shortfall were targeted to ensure that the overall sample is representative of Sikhs in Britain in terms of age group, gender, marital status and region. All responses were scrutinised and validated by applying a range of checks, and about 200 were rejected because they were assessed to be false. The resultant sample of just over 2,000 is considered to be a very robust and reliable representation of all British Sikhs. The final sample has also been assessed against the information on British Sikhs available from the 2011 Census. After allowing for expected changes between 2011 and 2016, the sample distributions by age, gender and region are very close to the Census. There is a small shortfall in the sample of the elderly, but this is

not considered to have any significant effects on the results more widely.

The BSR aims to collect British Sikhs' views on various aspects of life. This year's questionnaire has focused on a range of issues that are particularly affecting the lives of British Sikhs now, asking questions about topics such as Brexit, hate crime, management of gurdwaras in Britain, and issues affecting Sikh women. With 2017 being the 70th anniversary of India's independence and Punjab's partition, there are also questions seeking British Sikhs' views on the partition, links with Punjab and views on an independent Sikh state. In addition, the questionnaire sought data on identity, ethnicity, and observance of the five Kakaars, wearing of the Dastaar, and about whether respondents are Amritdhari Sikhs. The BSR continues to collect basic demographic information on age, gender, marital status, disability and place of residence, as well as on employment and qualifications. This year, we have also started to collect information on place of birth and first arrival to Britain if not born here. The following sections summarise the results of the BSR questionnaire.

The questionnaire underpinning the BSR 2017 received over 2,000 responses, and there was an equal split between male and female respondents, with 12 people choosing not to disclose their gender.

Figure 1 shows the breakdown by age group and gender. The distribution is broadly in line with the 2011 Census, allowing for some change between 2011 and 2016. While the overall numbers of Sikh men and women in Britain are similar, there are differences within age groups, and these differences are also consistent with the 2011 Census. There is some under representation in the older age group compared with the Census. However, this is not considered to have any significant impact on the findings of the survey in terms of views on the topics covered.

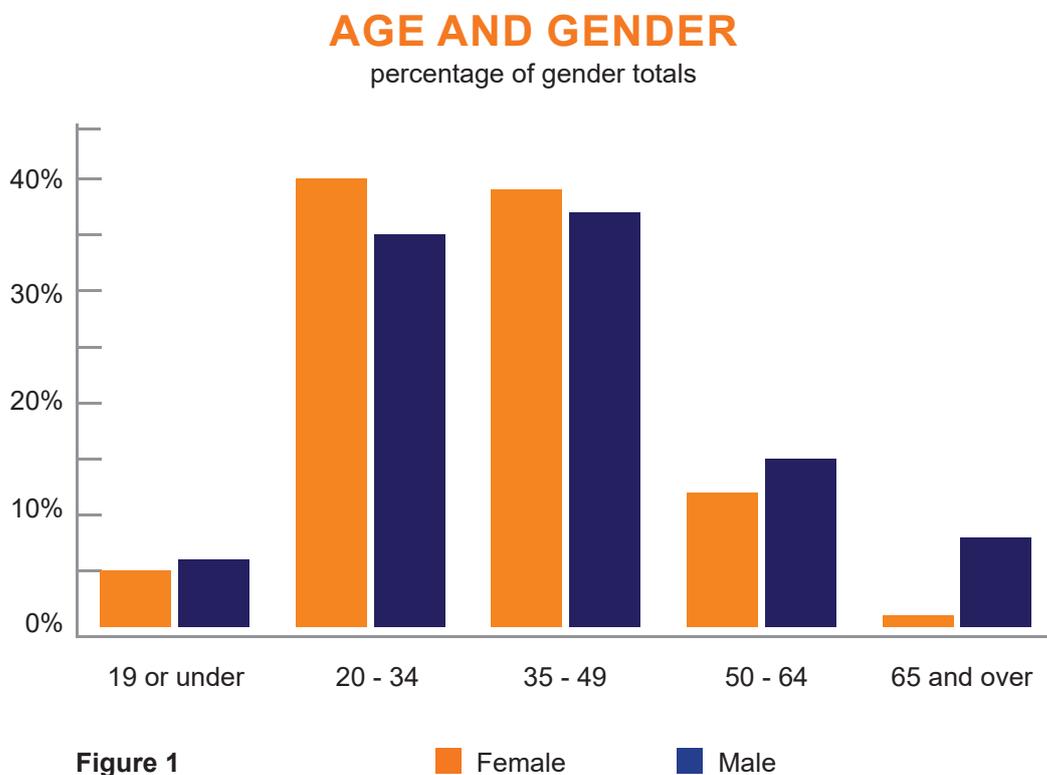
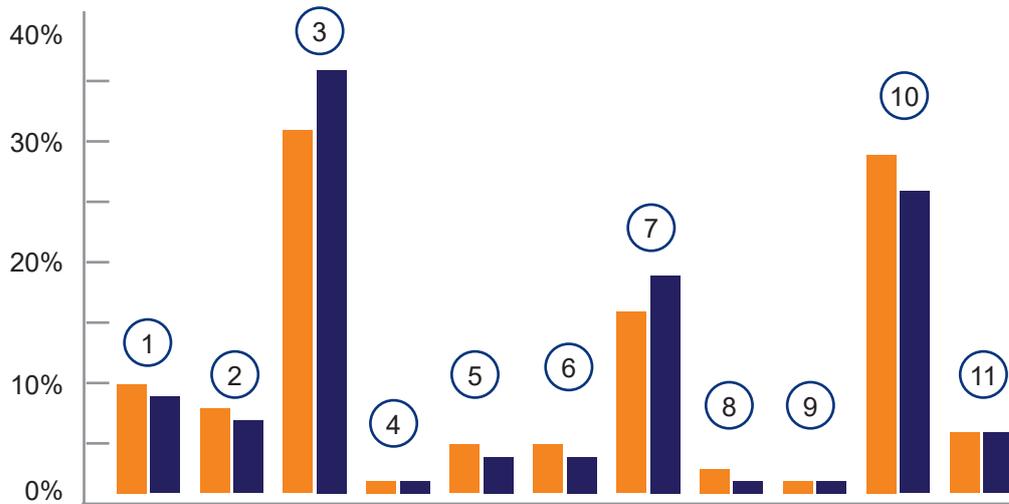


Figure 2 shows the distribution of the BSR sample across the regions and countries of the United Kingdom. About a third of Sikhs responding live in London, a similar figure to that shown by the 2011 Census. The region with the next largest population of Sikhs is West Midlands, at about 25 percent. Wales and Northern Ireland have been combined in the table, because of very small numbers in these parts of the United Kingdom. There are only about 200 Sikhs living in Northern Ireland.

REGION OF RESIDENCE

percentage of total



1. East Midlands | 2. East of England | 3. London | 4. North East | 5. North West | 6. Scotland | 7. South East
8. South West | 9. Wales and Northern Ireland | 10. West Midlands | 11. Yorkshire & the Humber

Figure 2

Female

Male

Figure 3 shows the marital status of respondents. About 57 per cent are married, and another 34 per cent are single. About 5 per cent of Sikhs in Britain are divorced. Population estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for England in 2015 show that about 51 per cent of the population aged over 16 were married, and over 8 per cent were divorced.

MARITAL STATUS

percentage of total

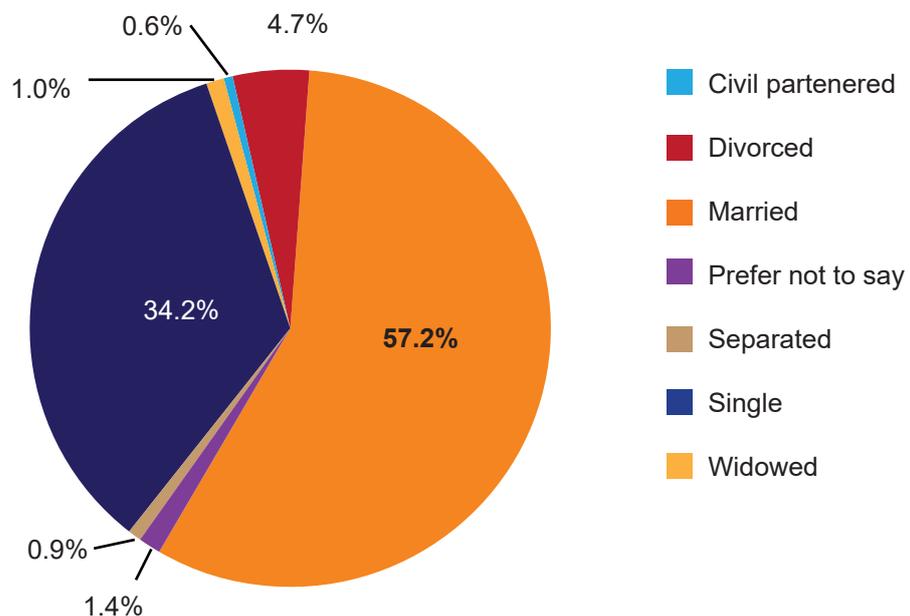


Figure 3

About 2.5% of British Sikhs overall consider themselves to be disabled. However, the percentage increases with age, and nearly 9% of those aged 65 and over consider themselves to be disabled (Figure 4).

DISABLED BY AGE GROUP

percentage of age group

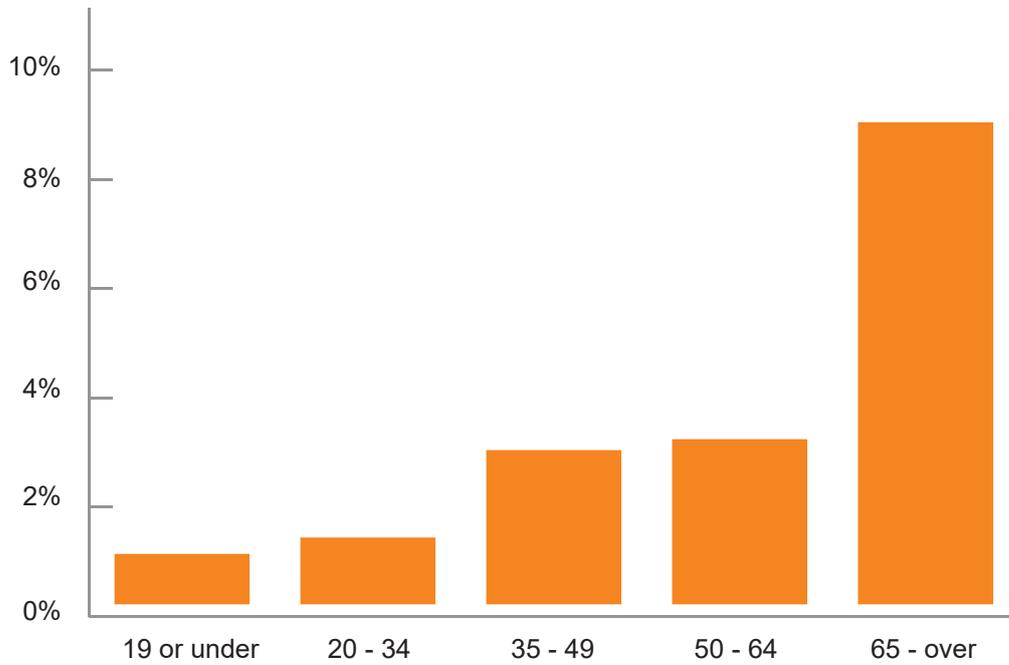


Figure 4

Age Group



IDENTITY AND ETHNICITY

The place of birth was a newly introduced question for the BSR 2017. The results showed that over 70% of respondents were British-born, with a majority born in England. As expected, India and East Africa made up significant numbers next, with most of the East African births being in Kenya. Scotland is now the fourth most common birth-place of British Sikhs. The fifth position of Afghanistan shows the breadth of Sikh identity in Britain. At the other end of the results, it is noteworthy that more British Sikhs are born in Mainland Europe than in Wales. This will be significant given the uncertainty about Britain's European membership following the referendum's results.

Place of Birth

percentage of total



Figure 5

Arrival in the United Kingdom

The year of arrival to Britain, and thus settlement period, was newly introduced to the BSR 2017. In this, the surprise is the steady increase in Sikh migrants since the 1980s, a time when stricter immigration controls were put in place. These waves included the arrival of Sikhs from Afghanistan from the 1990s, arrival of European born Sikhs from the 2000s, and an increase in numbers of Sikhs from India, possibly via Europe, in the same decade.

By age bracket, the results were interestingly diverse for a community that has settled into citizenship very quickly. English born Sikhs belonged mainly to the 20-49 age group. The Indian-born Sikhs have previously been thought to be older Sikhs who migrated post-war, much like those from East Africa. In fact, they include those of a younger age with only 37% in the 50-64 range compared to 57% for East Africans. A large percentage (31%) of Indian-born Sikhs are relatively younger, aged 35-49. These survey results may challenge common notions that Sikhs are in the future all going to be a young, British-born community. However, this can probably be said of the Scottish born Sikhs who were mostly in the 20-34 range.

By gender also, significant differences can be seen in Sikh migrants. More females are English-born and Scottish-born, and there is a major bias towards males from India, East Africa and Afghanistan.

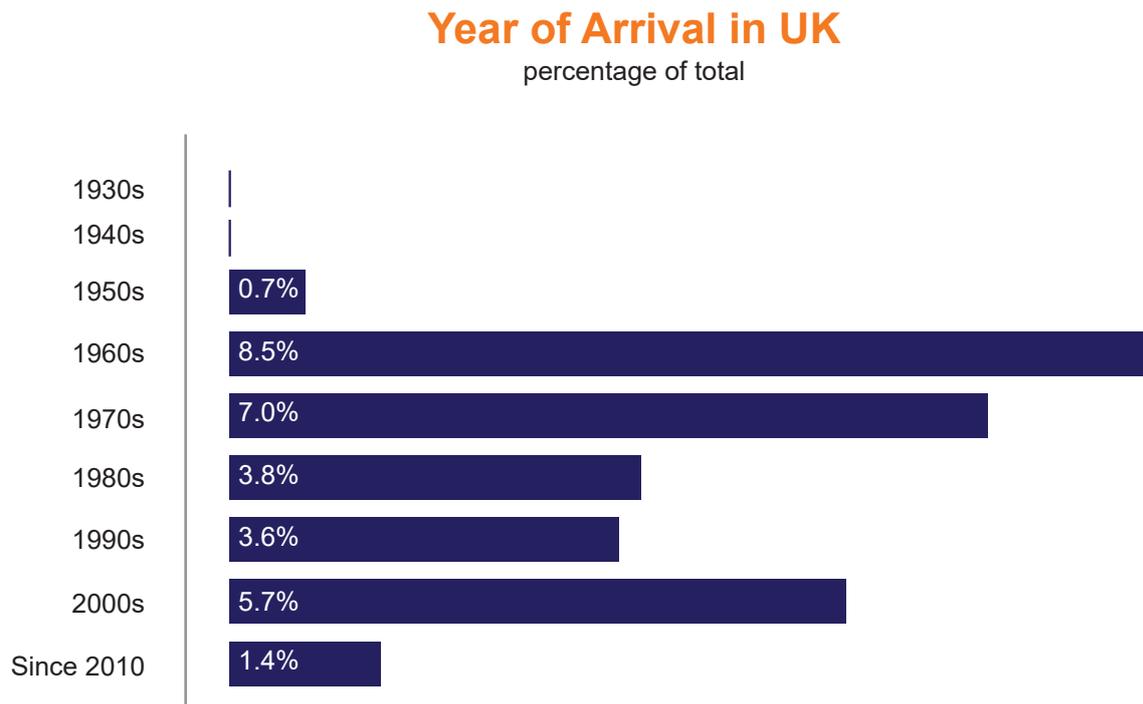


Figure 6

The Sikh community appears to be more diverse than has been popularly thought in its sexual orientation. This can be seen in the results from the BSR 2017. In those that are not heterosexual, there is bias towards males as 3.6% of men and 1.4% of women respondents identified themselves as Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual, and again the gender difference is similar to the UK population as a whole.

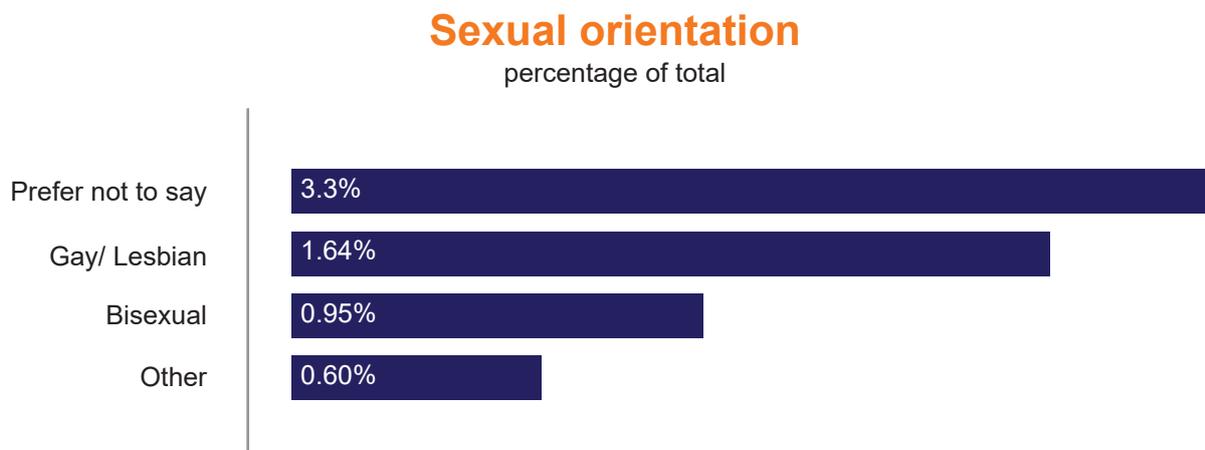


Figure 7



Sikhs responding to the BSR 2017 predominantly (92%) classified themselves to the “Asian/Asian British – Indian” category. These were the majority of British Sikhs, irrespective of where they were born, including those born in the four countries of the UK. The next two groups are “Any other Ethnic group” (2.7 %) and “Any other Asian background” (2.2%), perhaps reflecting that no single category in the ethnicity classification captures how Sikhs identify with their ethnicity. Furthermore, the long tail of the other categories shows that ethnicity may not be so straightforward in the future. For example, the sixth most popular category was “White English” while the eighth was “Scottish”. The first is explained by the increase in mixed-ethnic parentage and the second by the newer populism associated with regional British identities.

Ethnic group percentage of total

- Asian/Asian British - Indian
- Any other ethnic group
- Any other Asian background
- Asian/Asian British - Afghan
- Prefer not to say
- White English
- Mixed - White and Asian
- Scottish



Figure 8

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY YOURSELF

(multiple answers)

This question allowed respondents to select a single answer, or a combination of answers. The pattern of replies follows a similar one to that of country of birth, arrival times and ethnicity categories. Thus, 82% identified with 'Sikh' or 'British' or a combination of these, and 70% with 'British Sikh'. The third most popular identifier is 'Punjabi', which is of interest as it is a cultural or regional identity rather a religious or national one. The comparatively low position of 'Indian' as a means of self-description appears to be a relatively new phenomenon. The relatively high position of 'English' is evidence of Sikhs becoming more aware, and more confident, in moving away from white ethno-racial connotations of Englishness. This has precedent in those Sikhs who still self-identify as 'East African Sikhs' some 40 years after moving from East Africa to Britain, and 'Scottish Sikhs' who are fast-accustoming to notions of independent belonging. The remaining categories again show the identity nuances now present amongst Sikhs in Britain with White and European being categories to watch in future years.

SELF-IDENTITY

percentage of total

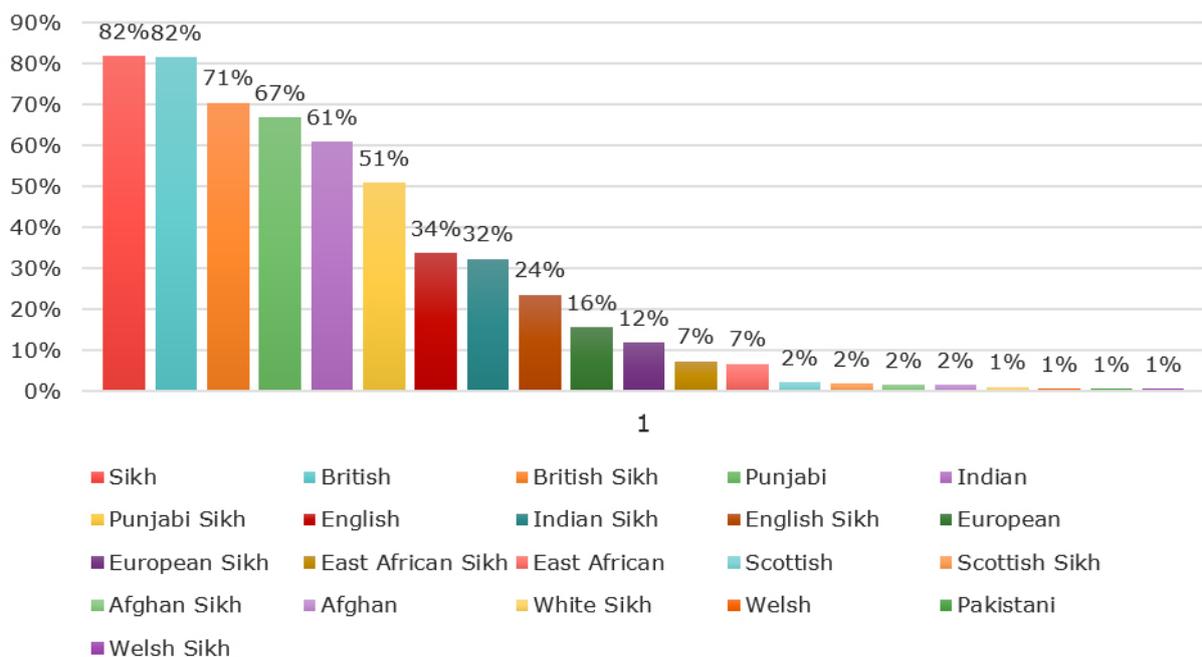


Figure 9

Some respondents chose to describe their identity in their own words, rather than tick one of the choices in the above list. The graphic on the back cover of this report shows the words written in as well as those listed in a 'word cloud' where the size of the words is proportional to the number of times they were used.

SIKHI AND OBSERVANCE OF FIVE KAKAARS

Approximately 10% of the respondents had taken Amrit (and become Amritdhari Sikhs initiated into the Khalsa). This had a clear variation by age group with 35% of the 65 and older category having taken Amrit but only 7% of the under 49 year olds.

AMRITDHARI PERCENTAGE BY AGE GROUP

percentage of total

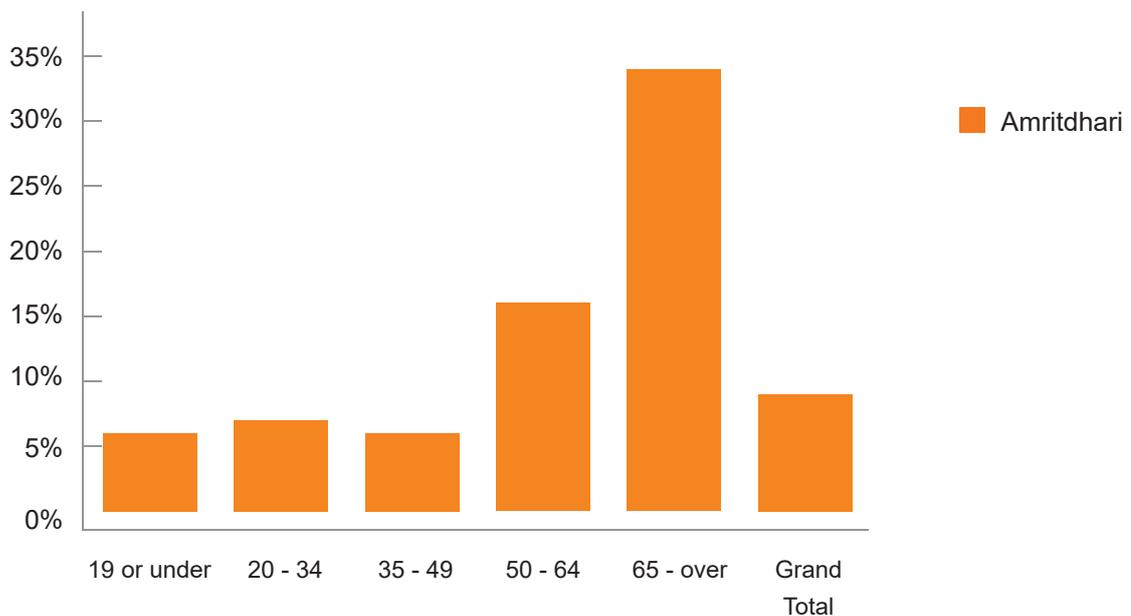


Figure 10

AMRITDHARI BY GENDER

percentage of total

Male respondents (13%) were more than twice as likely to be Amritdhari than female respondents (6%).

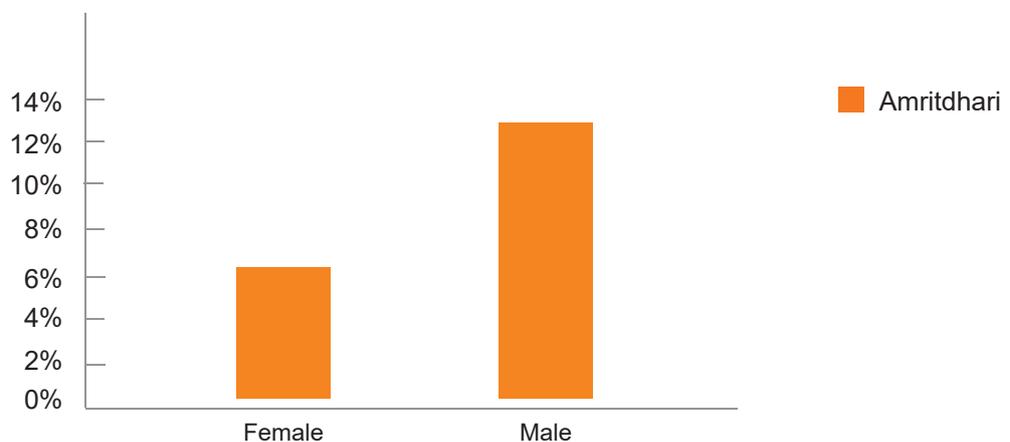


Figure 11

Although the 5Ks analysed in the next question are the mandated articles of faith to be observed by all Amritdhari Sikhs, the Dastaar (Turban) is also a key symbol of being a Sikh. Dastaar wearing differs greatly by age and gender. In Figure 12 men overall (54%) were significantly more likely than women (4%) to wear the Dastaar. Women of all age groups were much less likely to wear the Dastaar (highest was the 65 years and older category with 11%). Men were more likely than not to wear the Dastaar, although there was some variation with age. Men above 65 were 76% likely to wear a Dastaar with the lowest recording at the 35-49 age group (46%). Those responding from the youngest age groups had Dastaar-wearing of just over 50%.

DASTAAR WEARING BY AGE AND GENDER

percentage of total

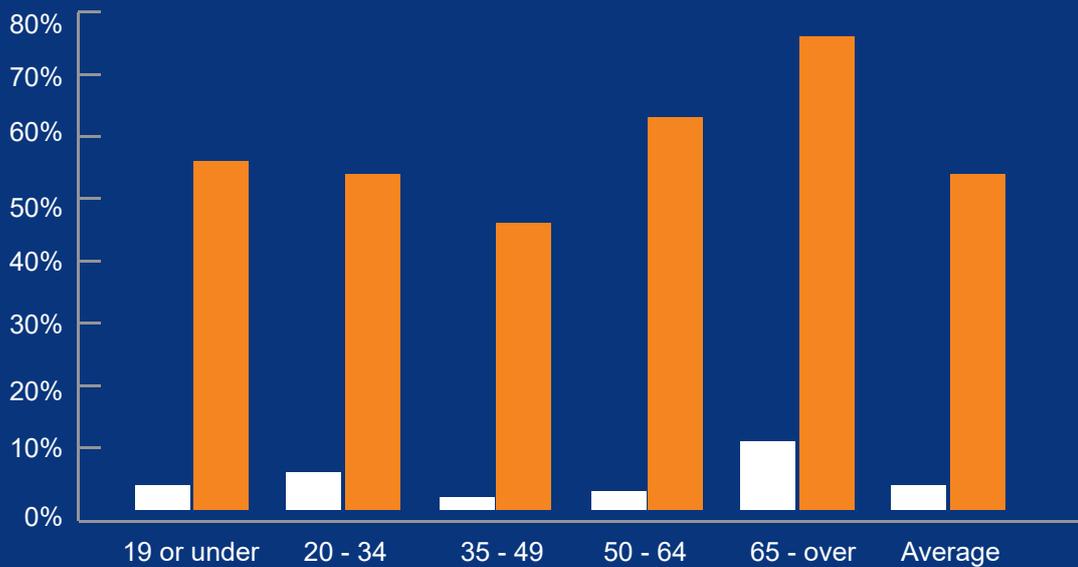


Figure 12

Female

Male



Respondents were asked which of the 5Ks they observe and the results are shown in Figures 13 and 14.

- Kara: 86% of respondents wore the Kara, which had more than 80% in each age and gender category.
- Kesh: The second highest incidence of observance, with 38% of respondents having uncut hair. Much like the Dastaar, men were more likely to observe this than women and older age groups were more likely to observe this than younger age groups.
- Kacchera: Observed by 16% of respondents with a greater observance by older age groups and men (much like Kesh)
- Kanga: Observed by 15% of respondents with greater observance by older age groups and men
- Kirpan: Observed by 11% of respondents and also with greater observance by older age groups and men.

OBSERVANCE OF INDIVIDUAL KAKAARS BY AGE

percentage of total

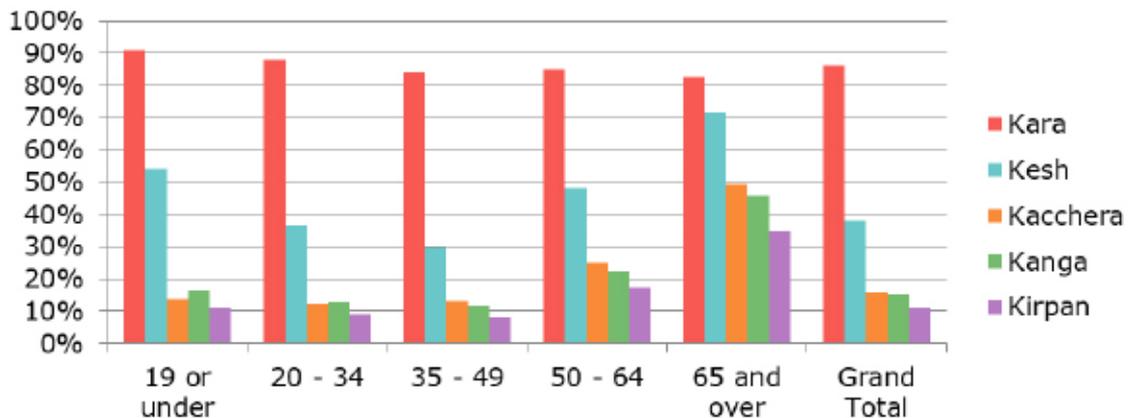


Figure 13

OBSERVANCE OF INDIVIDUAL KAKAARS BY GENDER

percentage of total

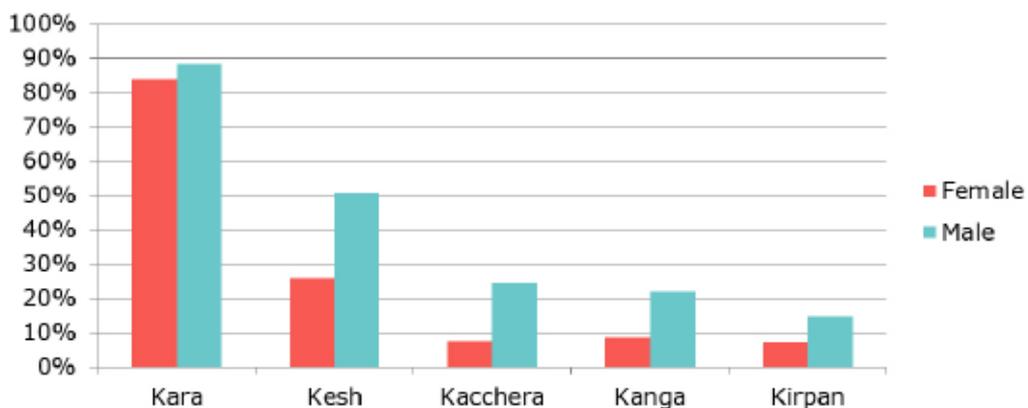


Figure 14

In terms of how many of the 5Ks people observed, one was most common (48%) and two the second most common (23%), for all groups below 65 years of age. The over 65s were the only group for which the observance of all of the 5Ks was the most common (31%).

NUMBER OF KAKAARS OBSERVED BY AGE GROUP

percentage of total

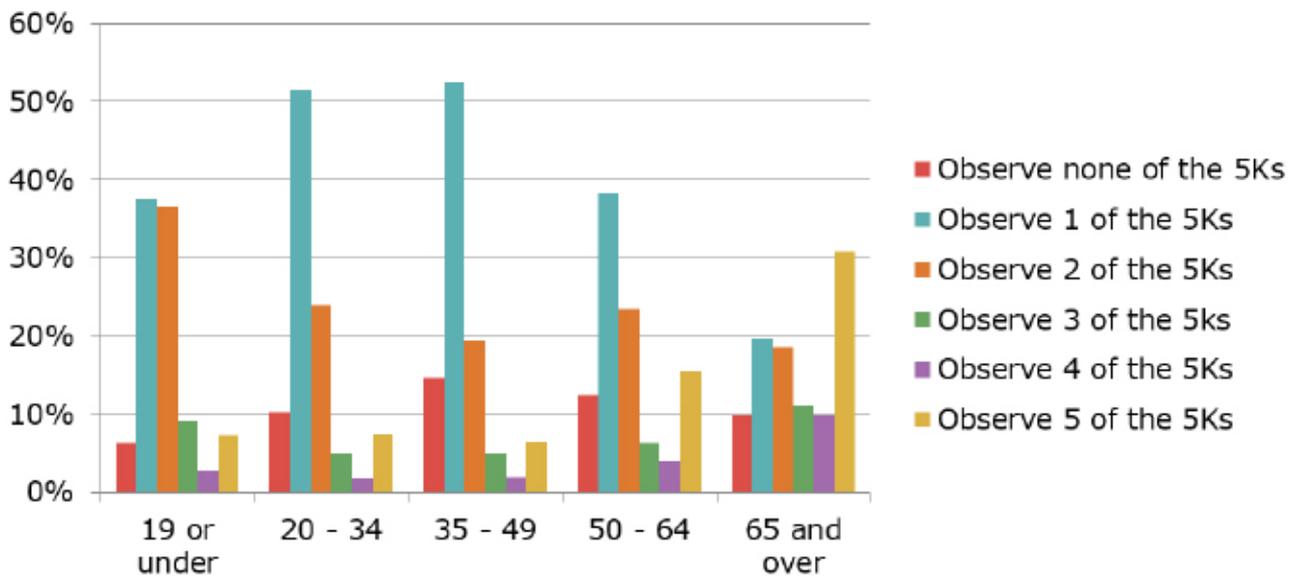


Figure 15

Men were more likely than women to observe each of the 5Ks although this was least evident with the Kara. Women are significantly more likely to observe none of the 5Ks (15%) compared with men (9%).

NUMBER OF KAKAARS OBSERVED BY GENDER

percentage of total

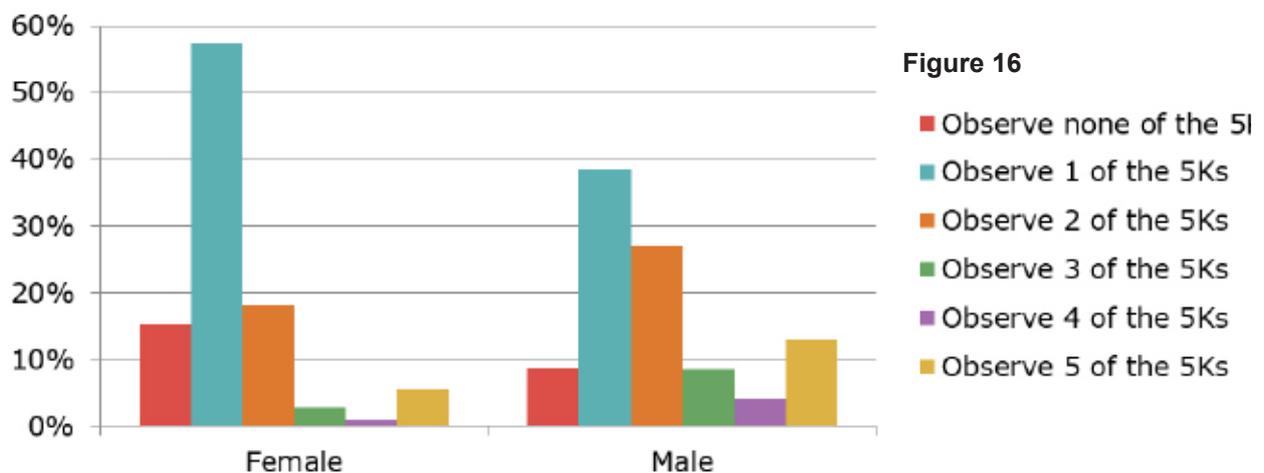


Figure 16

Figure 16

QUALIFICATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT

The majority of respondents of working age (between 20 and 64) were in full time employment, with those in the 20-34 age category having the highest proportion of full-time workers (67%). Self-employment was less common among the 20 to 34 age range (9%) but this increased with each age group with the 35 to 49 age group showing 17% and 50 to 64 at 24%. Those continuing to work beyond the age of 65 tended to favour self-employment over full-time employment, whilst none of those over 65 who responded categorised themselves as working part time.

EMPLOYMENT TYPE BY AGE GROUP

percentage of total

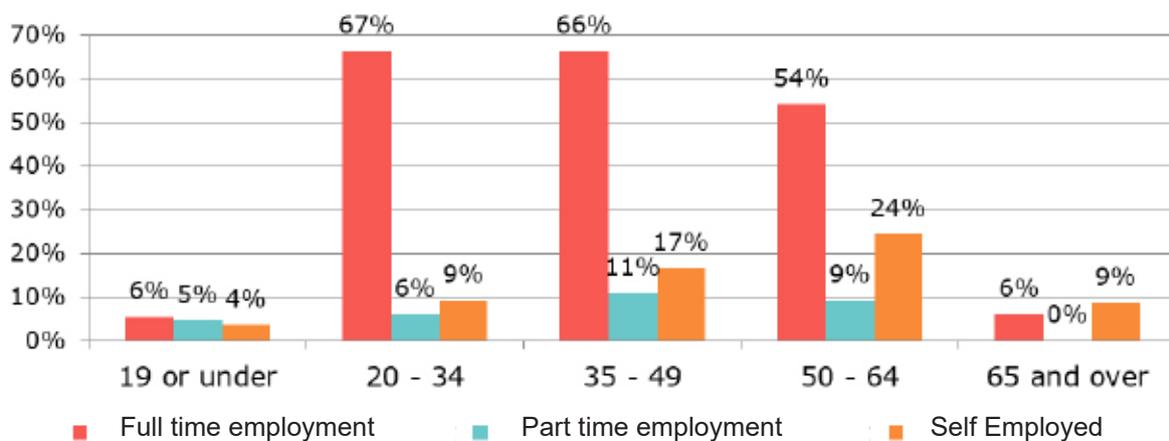
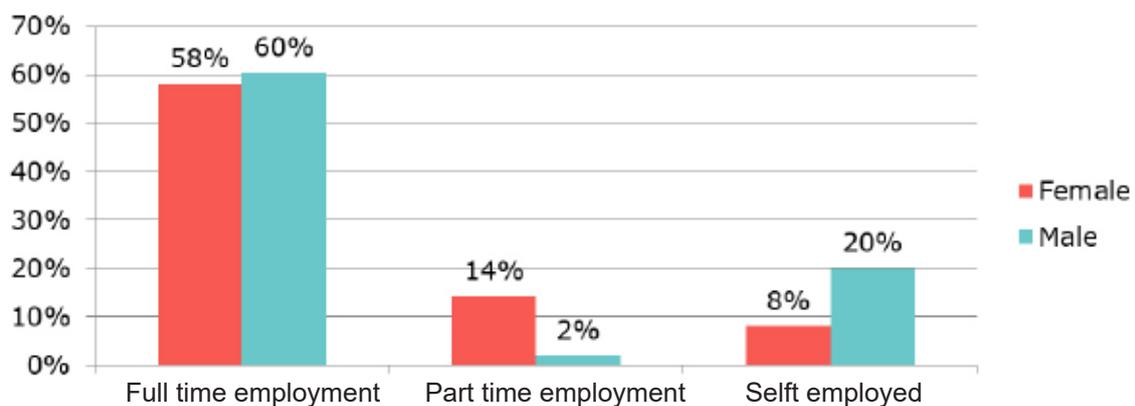


Figure 17

Women (14%) were more likely to be in part time employment than their male counterparts (2%), and men (20%) were more likely to be self-employed than women (8%). There were similar levels of full-time employment for men and women.

EMPLOYMENT TYPE BY GENDER

percentage of total



The four top sectors for work that Sikhs who responded to BSR favoured were: Financial Services, Healthcare, Education and IT. This indicates that technical professional roles are a common choice for Sikhs (Figure 19). There are considerable differences between age groups. Financial Services was the highest in all age groups, but there were more Sikhs working in healthcare in the 20 to 34 category (14%) than in education (8%) whereas it was the opposite for the 50 to 64 category where there were marginally more in education (11.4% vs 10.7%).

TOP EMPLOYMENT SECTORS BY AGE GROUP

percentage of total

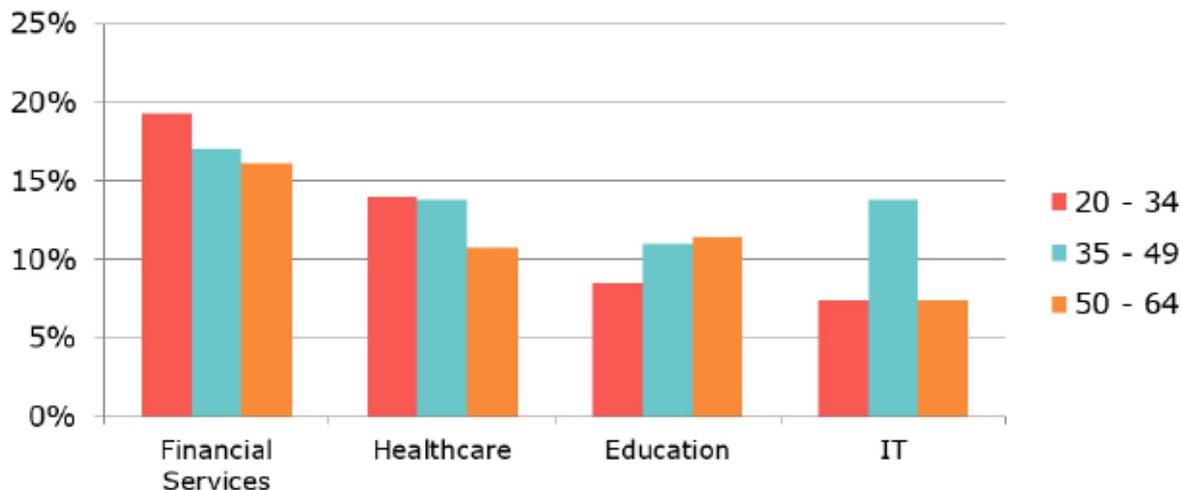


Figure 19

Between the genders, career choices were quite different with each having a different top two choices. While Financial Services (19%) and IT (15%) were clearly the highest amongst males, female respondents had Healthcare (16%) and Education (15%) as the top two sectors.

TOP EMPLOYMENT SECTORS BY GENDER

percentage of total

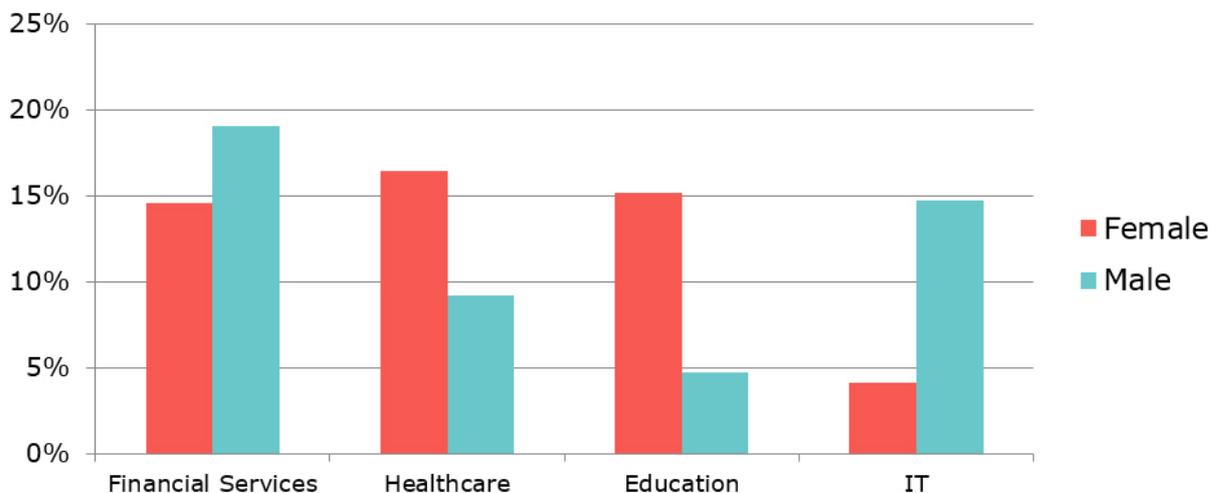


Figure 20

Respondents aged 20 to 34 had the highest level of graduates (81%), with 25% of the age group having also completed post-graduate professional or academic qualifications. This was higher than the average across all age groups of 67%.

GRADUATE OR POST GRADUATE QUALIFICATION

percentage of total

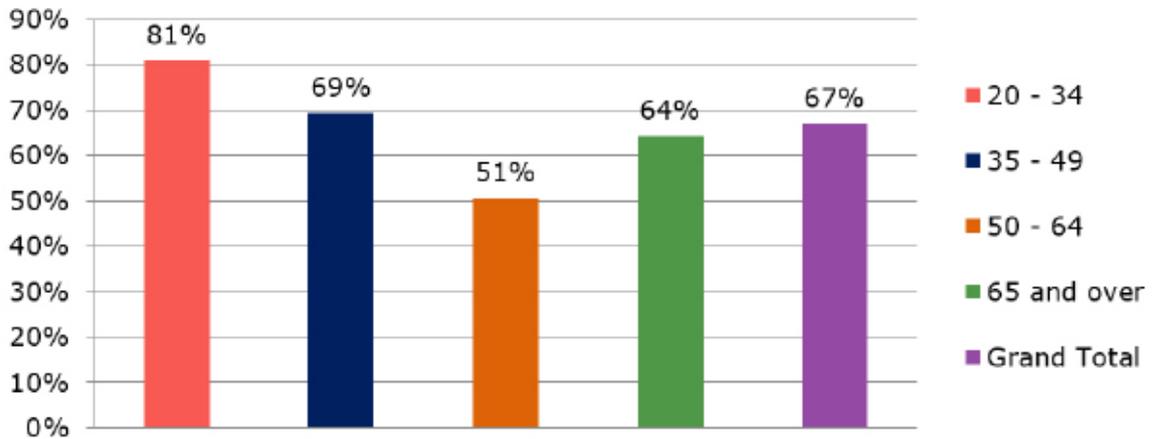


Figure 21

Formal education was similar amongst men and women as can be seen in Figure 22. 23% of women versus 22% of men had postgraduate qualifications. 45% of women versus 44% of men had graduate degrees without post graduate qualifications.

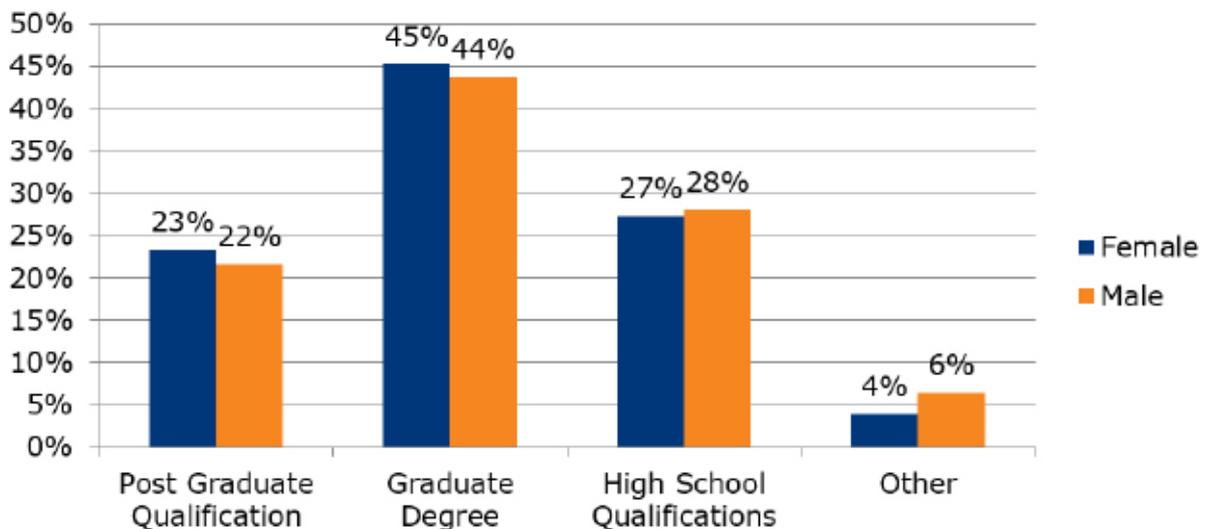


Figure 22

The result of the EU referendum in June 2016 was a shock to politicians, the press, pollsters, and the public alike; it has been a topic of heated debate since the vote, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. 65% of respondents voted in favour of Britain remaining a part of the EU. The BSR 2016 found that 57% of respondents intended to vote to remain in the EU (with reforms, or otherwise), with another 31% undecided. This year's results would indicate that the majority of those undecided last year were more convinced by the Leave campaign than Remain.

EU REFERENDUM VOTING

percentage of total

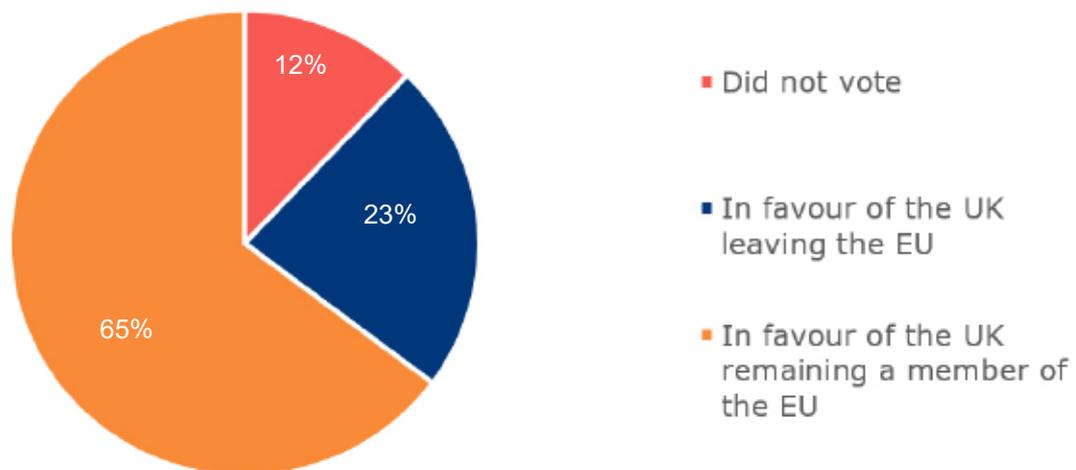


Figure 23

Older voters were more likely to have voted in the Referendum and more likely to have voted to leave, while younger people were more likely to have voted to remain; this is reflective of the country as a whole. Considering votes cast by gender shows that men were more likely to have voted to leave, and women to remain.

EU REFERENDUM VOTING BY AGE GROUP

percentage of total

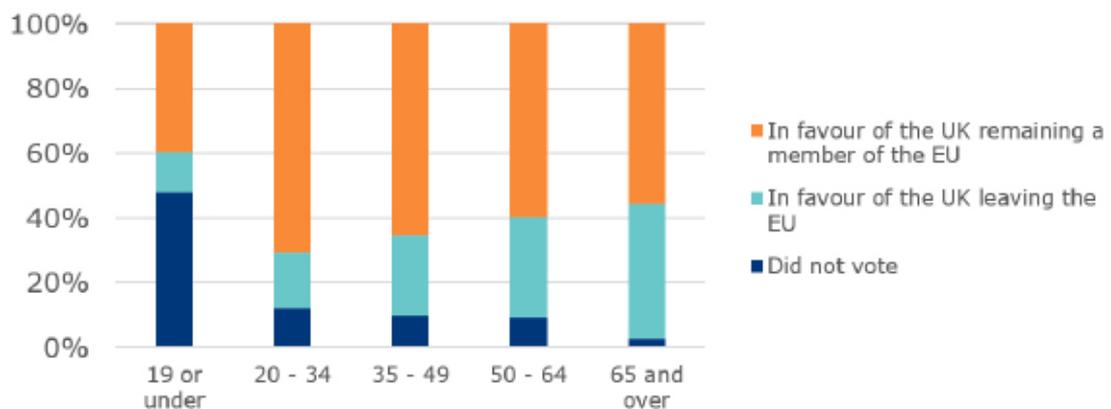


Figure 24

EU REFERENDUM VOTING BY GENDER

percentage of total

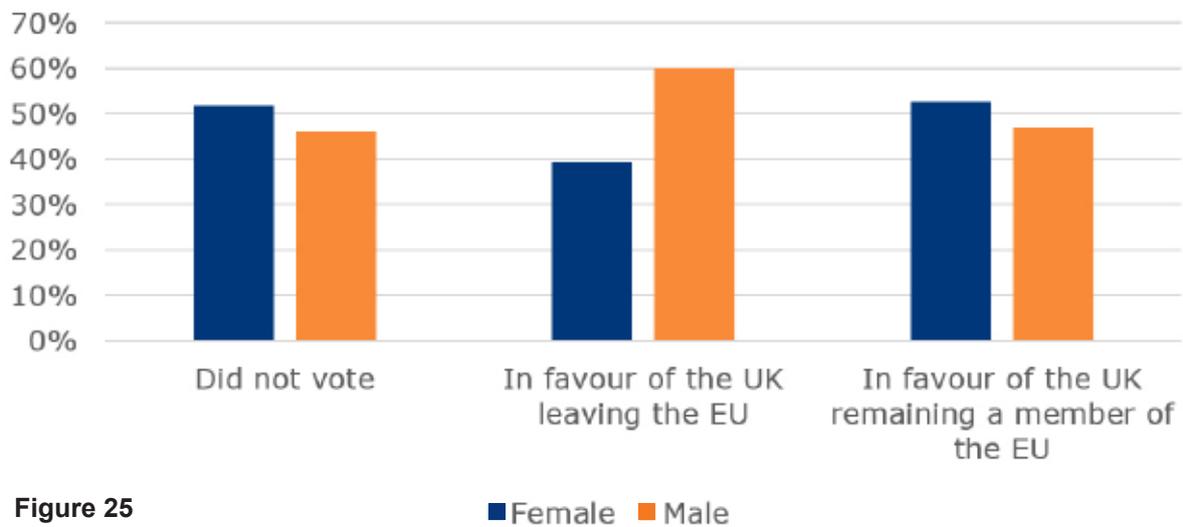


Figure 25

■ Female ■ Male

The main factors that influenced how people voted were related to immigration and the economy. Out of those who voted to leave the EU, 79% gave immigration as one of their key issues for voting the way that they did, and 60% said that job rates and wages were a key issue. For those who voted to remain within the EU, the main issues were access to the single market (68%) and economic risks outside the EU (65%).

EFFECT OF BREXIT

percentage of total

Only 25% of respondents believe that Brexit will have a positive, or very positive long-term effect on the economy and employment, while 60% believe the opposite. However, it was 31% of women and 20% of men who viewed the result as positive or very positive, a significant difference between the genders. Views on whether Brexit as a whole is seen as a positive or negative result is similar to this. Interestingly, 59% of respondents believe that Brexit will have a negative, or very negative effect on the population of Britain as a whole while only 45% believe this to be the case for British Sikhs; this is perhaps reflective of Sikhs being seen as an economically strong community.

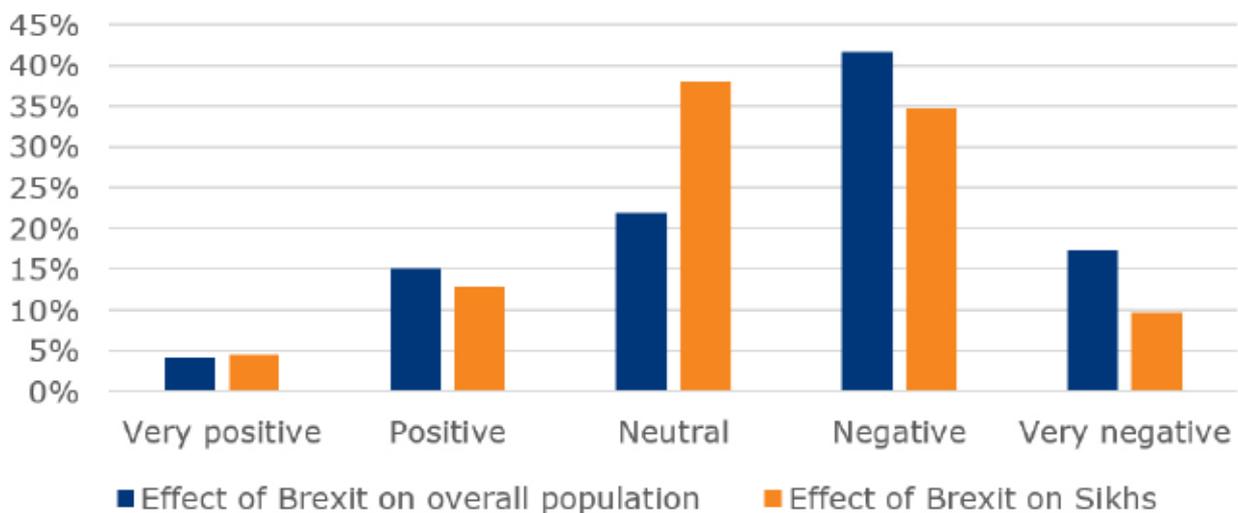


Figure 26

If a second referendum were held, almost 73% of respondents would vote for Britain to remain a member of the EU, suggesting voter regret on the part of some that voted to leave. A similar proportion (73%) would want the right to vote on the terms of the Government's deal with the EU, which indicates that those who would now vote to remain in the EU would like to have some sense of control over the future outside it.

VOTER INTENTION IN SECOND REFERENDUM

percentage of total

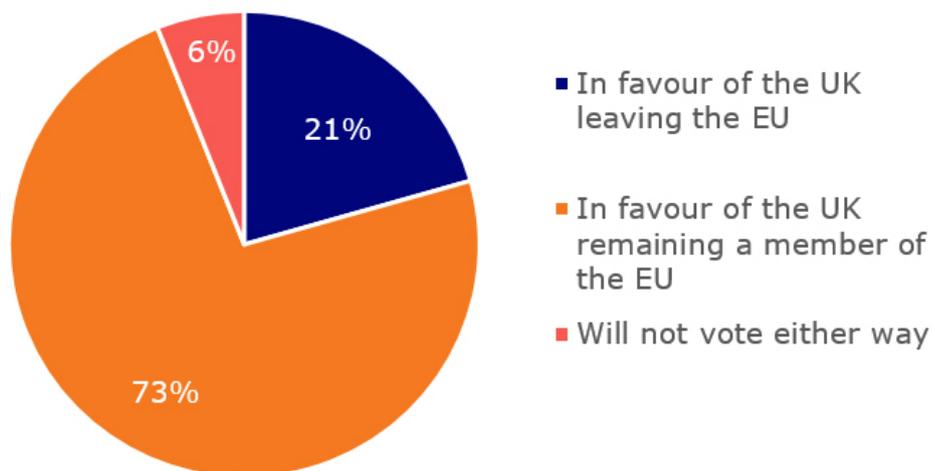


Figure 27

HATE CRIMES

The BSR asked respondents whether they or members of their family had experienced any hate crimes since the EU referendum in June 2016. 13% of all respondents said that they had been victims of hate crime, and this was similar in all age groups and for men and women.

When asked if they had ever experienced hate crimes in Britain, over 60% said yes. About half of these experiences had been before the year 2001, 12% between 2001 and 2010, and 9% between 2011 and 2015. In these recent periods, those aged 20 to 34 were more likely to be victims.

The BSR team asked the Office for National Statistics to produce analysis of the Crime Survey of England and Wales by religion, showing the proportion of adults who were victims of personal crime and household crime by religion, for each of the four years ending March 2016. Combining the data for the four years shows that about 7% of Sikhs had been victims of personal crimes and 16% of household crime, and this was also the case in each year. The personal crime figure is higher than all other main religious groups, and the household crime figure is second after those of the Jewish faith.

INDIA AND PUNJAB ISSUES



In 2017, India and Pakistan will be commemorating the 70th anniversary of independence. The act of independence also led to the Partition of Punjab between India and Pakistan. The BSR this year asked respondents for their views on aspects of this anniversary relevant to British Sikhs and their connections with Punjab.

Links with Punjab

Punjab is the historical homeland of Sikhs. 60% of respondents have visited Punjab since 2011, of which 18% visited in 2016. Only 6% of respondents had never been to Punjab.

YEAR OF LAST VISIT TO PUNJAB

percentage of total

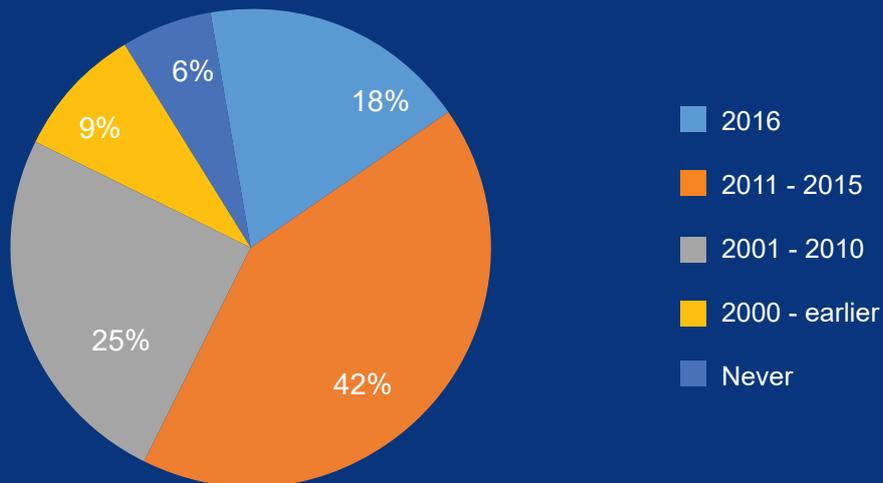


Figure 28



Over half of respondents stated that they visit Punjab at least every 5 years or so. A quarter of respondents in the 65 and over age group visit Punjab every year compared with only 9% for all age groups combined.

FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO PUNJAB: ALL BRITISH SIKHS

percentage of total

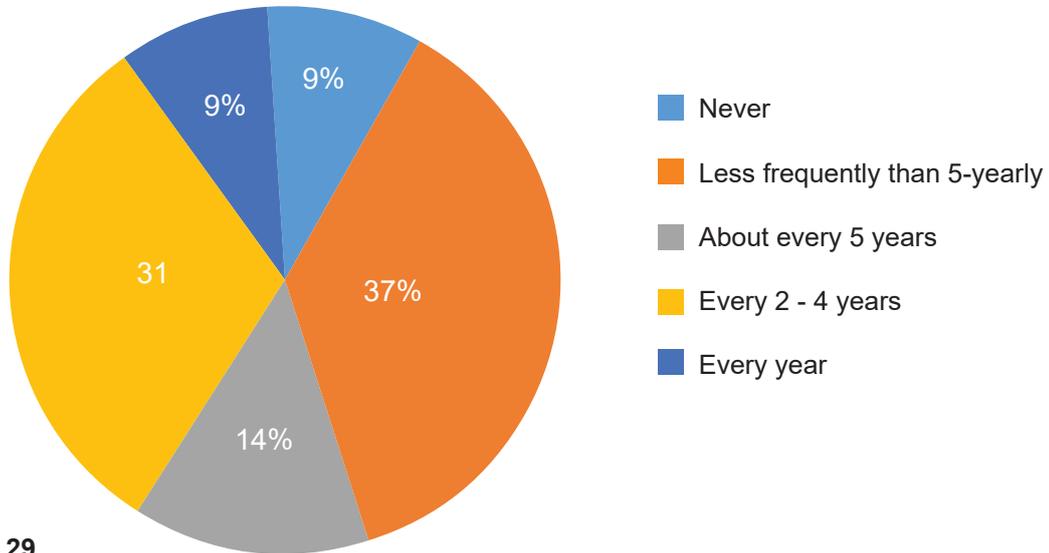


Figure 29

Figure 30 shows that the frequency of visits to Punjab increases with age. More than 10% of those aged 34 or less have never been to Punjab, while only 1% of those aged 65 and over say that they never go there.

FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO PUNJAB: BRITISH SIKHS BY AGE GROUP

percentage of total

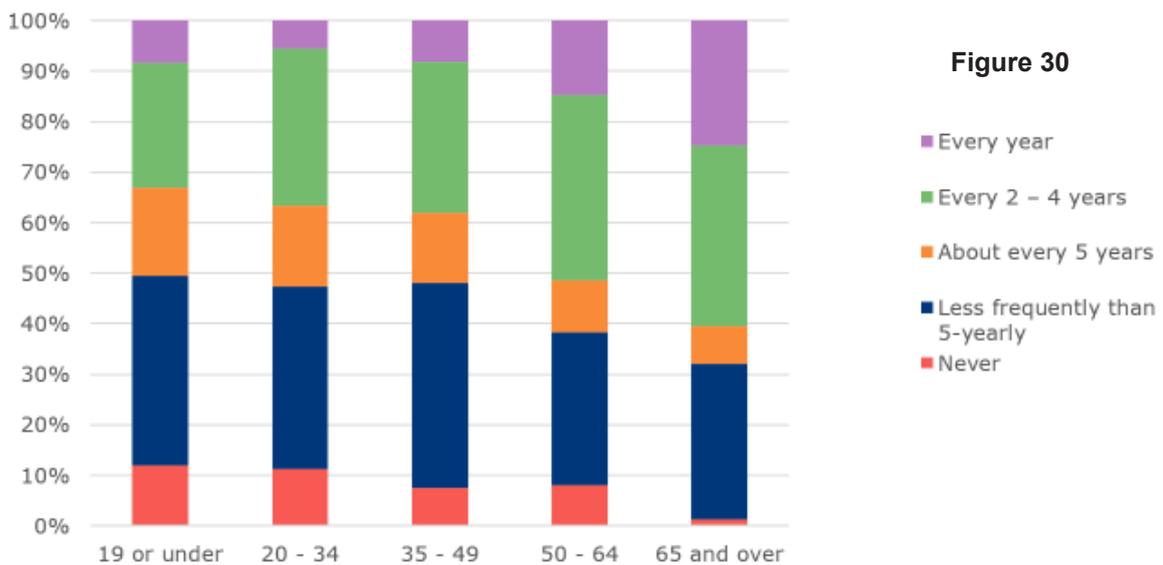


Figure 30

Figure 30

ATTITUDES TOWARDS 1947 PARTITION OF INDIA AND PUNJAB

Reflecting on the partition in 1947, 61% of respondents felt negative or very negative towards the decision to create separate nations of India and Pakistan. An even higher number (68%) felt negative or very negative with regards to the decision to partition the state of Punjab into two. Only 11% of respondents felt positive or very positive towards the partition of Punjab, and 18% towards partition of India as a whole.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PARTITION OF INDIA & OF PUNJAB

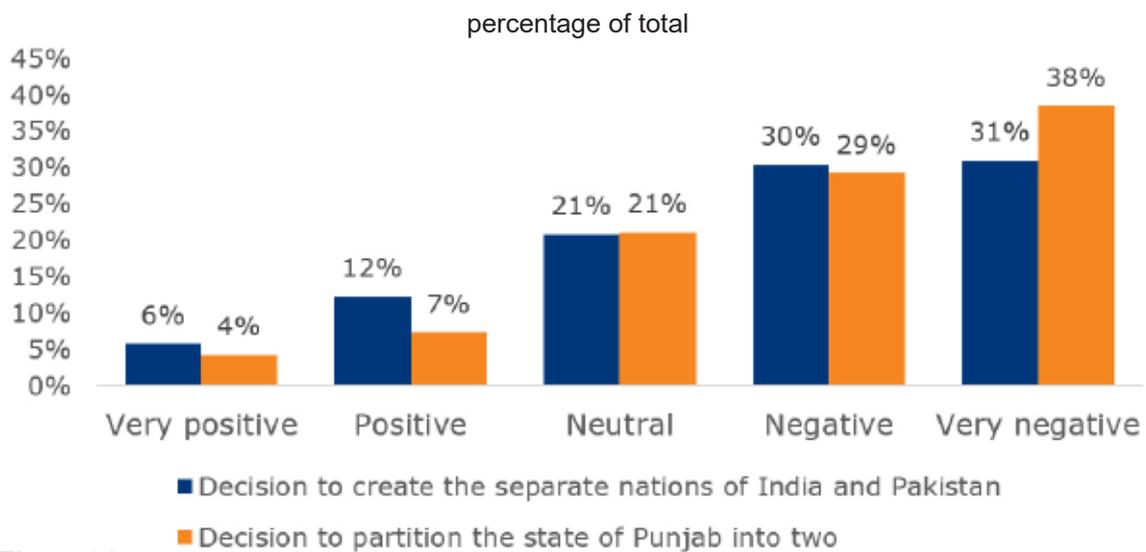


Figure 31

Figure 32 shows that 44% of respondents believe that all of Punjab should have been allocated to India at the time of partition. A similar number of respondents believe that Punjab should have been formed as an independent nation (42%) whilst only 7 per cent believe the current arrangement was the right one.

WHAT SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED TO PUNJAB IN 1947?

percentage of total

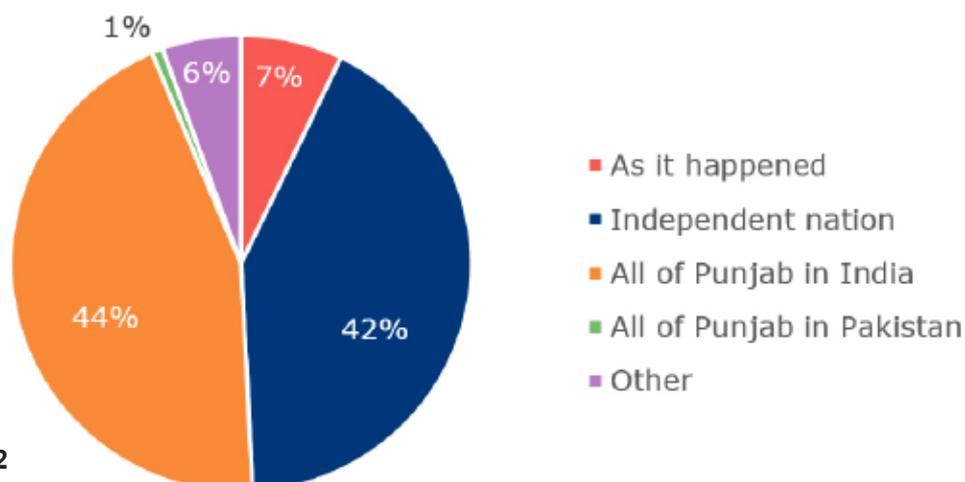


Figure 32

ATTITUDES TOWARDS AN INDEPENDENT SIKH STATE

The BSR survey asked British Sikhs for their views regarding the political and economic case for an independent Sikh state. Opinions varied, with just under 40% of respondents having a positive or very positive view regarding both the political and economic case for an independent Sikh state. Over 30% were negative or very negative towards the case for independence and around 30% felt neutral about the topic.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CASE FOR AN INDEPENDENT PUNJAB

percentage of total

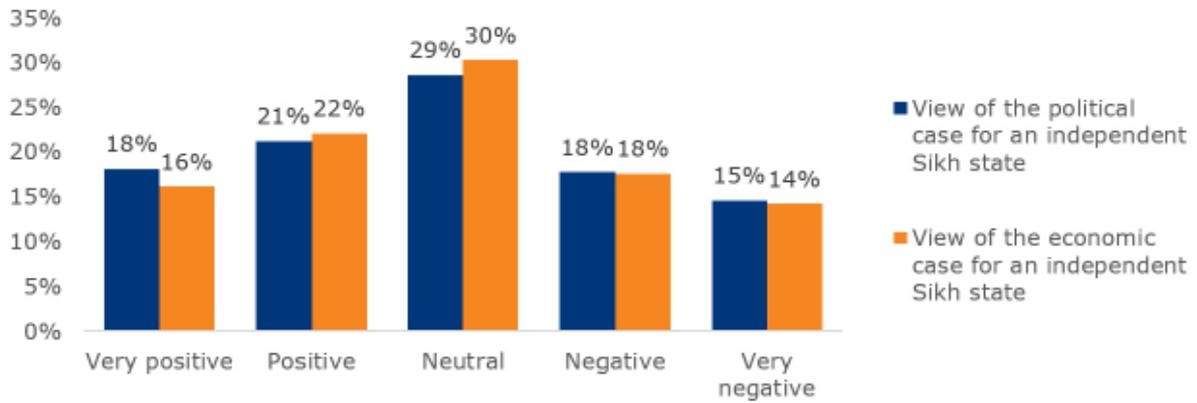


Figure 33

Interestingly, only 13% were very likely or likely to move and permanently live in an independent Sikh state. Those who are 65 and over were more willing to move to an independent Sikh state than the younger age groups.

WOULD YOU MOVE TO LIVE IN AN INDEPENDENT PUNJAB?

percentage of total

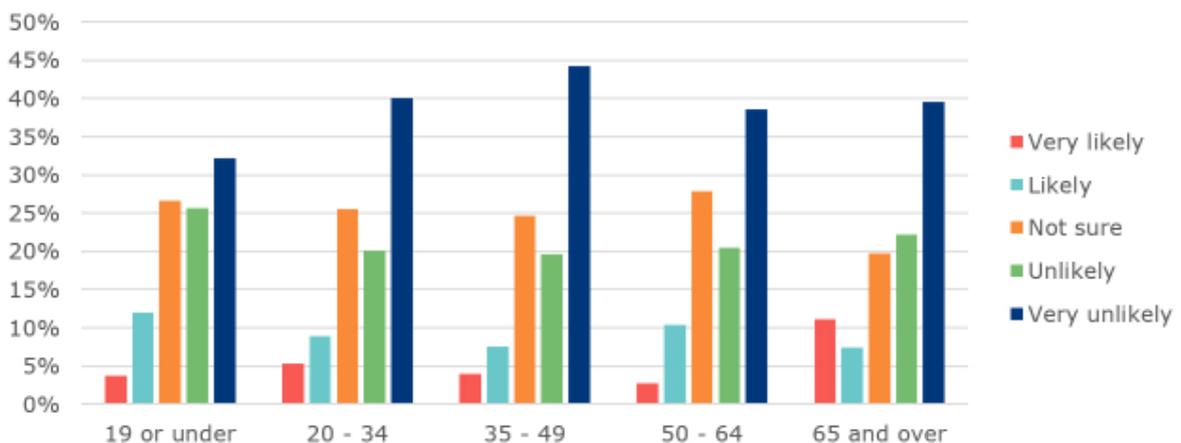


Figure 34

Volunteering

One of the central tenets of the Sikh faith is selfless and voluntary service, known as sewa. Much of this sewa takes place in gurdwaras as they are the focal point of Sikh communities. Gurdwaras often have volunteers to help conduct prayers and to keep the premises in a clean state. Teams of volunteers help prepare, cook and serve langar. Gurdwara management committees are normally also comprised entirely of unpaid volunteers.

The BSR asked respondents about the number of hours that they undertook in voluntary work. More than half of all respondents spent some time each week in some form of voluntary work. About 40% of respondents of all age groups below retirement age volunteer between 1 to 5 hours a week. However, those aged 65 and over were more likely to volunteer, with 60% of them volunteering for at least 1 hour a week and 21% volunteering for between 6 and 10 hours a week. 12% of the 65 and over age group volunteer 11 hours or more per week. Out of those respondents who spent between 1 and 5 hours of volunteering, 51% were females and 49% were males. However, the percentage of men volunteering for longer hours was higher. Men represented 55% of those volunteering for 6 to 10 hours, and higher percentages for longer periods.

HOURS VOLUNTEERED PER WEEK

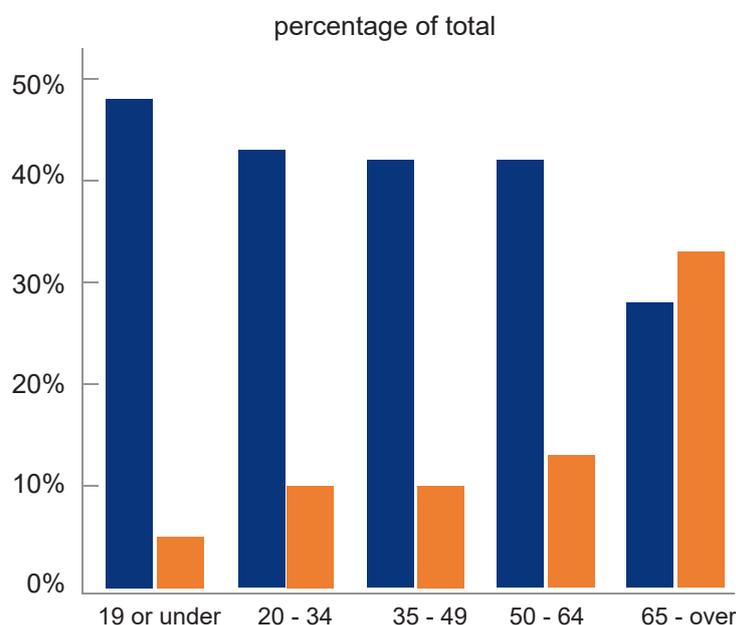


Figure 35 ■ 1-5 Hours ■ 6 Hours or more

Women tend to play an important role in volunteering in gurdwaras, particularly in respect of langar and the prayer shifts when volunteers take turns in the 48 hour non-stop reading of the Guru Granth Sahib (Akhand Paath). Many of these women are devoted, committed volunteers who have skills that could be effectively utilised for the benefit of young people within the context of gurdwara activities. For example, these women can teach reading of prayers, cooking and kirtan (singing of Sikh hymns).

GURDWARA MANAGEMENT ISSUES

However, these traditional skills have changed in contemporary society. Women and young people have a range of skills and responsibilities which they are eager to use for the benefit of gurdwaras. 52% of respondents felt that women were not sufficiently involved in the running of gurdwaras, and 67% said the same in respect of young people. 64 % of older female respondents did not feel that they were sufficiently involved in gurdwaras.

The BSR asked respondents what they felt they could offer to gurdwaras. 52% felt they could support the management of the gurdwaras, with similar numbers willing to provide skills for fundraising (51%), communications (51%) and health promotion activities (49%). The results of the BSR show a real desire for Sikhs wanting to share their skills set on a voluntary basis for the wellbeing of the community.

SKILLS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT GURDWARAS

percentage of total

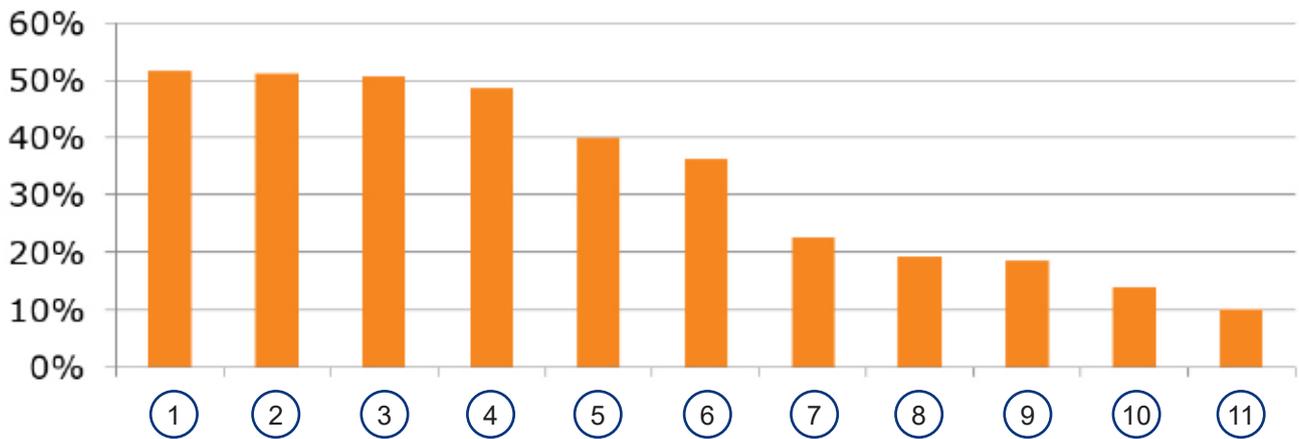


Figure 36

- 1. Gurdwara activities management | 2. Fundraising | 3. Communications & social media
- 4. Health promotion | 5. Langar | 6. Translation | 7. Civil marriages | 8. Accountancy
- 9. Buildings management | 10. Punjabi teaching | 11. Dharmic teaching



Many gurdwaras are open seven days a week from the early morning through to the late evening, and langar is usually served throughout the day. Given the central role played by gurdwaras within the Sikh community, there is a growing demand for them to provide additional support specifically for women. 84% of respondents felt that female mental health support should be provided in gurdwaras, whilst 79% wanted free education and training for women, 78% wished there to be better leisure and social activity provision, and 77% wanted parenting support. One area which had less support was women-only spaces in gurdwaras, with only 30% of respondents considering such spaces to be necessary.

FACILITIES REQUIRED FOR SIKH GIRLS AND WOMEN

percentage of total

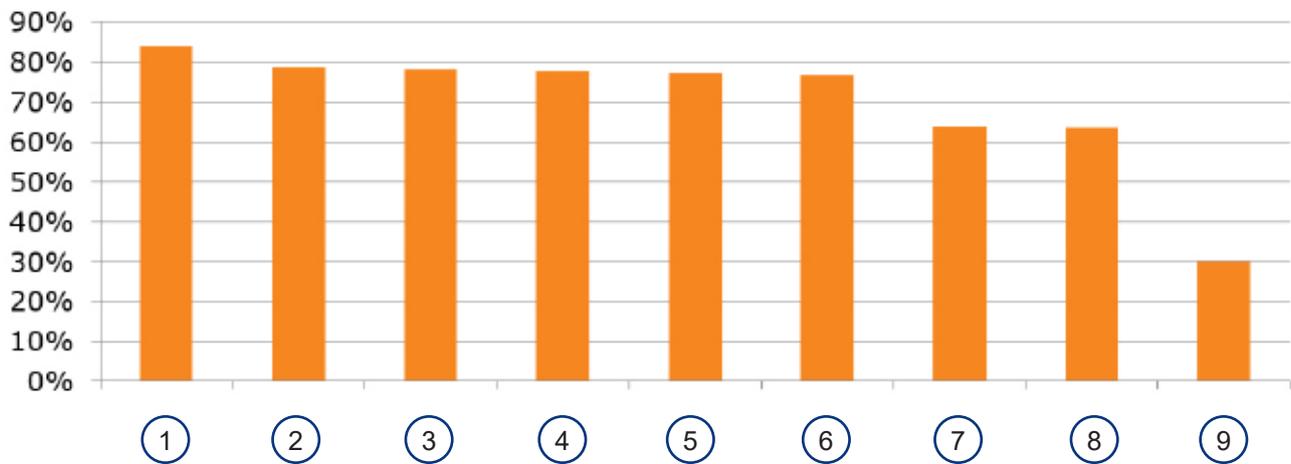


Figure 37

1. Mental health support | 2. Free education & training | 3. Leisure & social activities
 4. Support for women by women | 5. Parenting support | 6. Job opportunities
 7. Independant affordable housing | 8. Safe spaces | 9. Women only spaces

The BSR also asked respondents what general facilities they would like to be provided in gurdwaras. 89% wanted Punjabi lessons, 80% wished to have gatka and other sports provision, with the same number also wanting a 'mother and baby room' which would allow women to breastfeed babies in privacy as well as having the opportunity to calm babies and toddlers. 73% also wanted mediation to be made available within gurdwaras.





MAIN ISSUES AFFECTING SIKH WOMEN IN BRITAIN

The BSR looked at the wider social and economic issues affecting Sikh women in Britain.

The respondents felt that violence towards women is one of the most important issues affecting women. The survey did not go into the type of violence, whether it was domestic violence, grooming, rape or bullying. As there was an equal number of males and females who responded, it is important to note that the survey asked the question 'what is the most important issue affecting women?'. Both males and females felt it was violence. The other issues affecting women as reported by over 50% of respondents were sexism, mental and physical wellbeing, equal pay, and racism.

MAIN ISSUES AFFECTING SIKH WOMEN IN BRITAIN

percentage of total

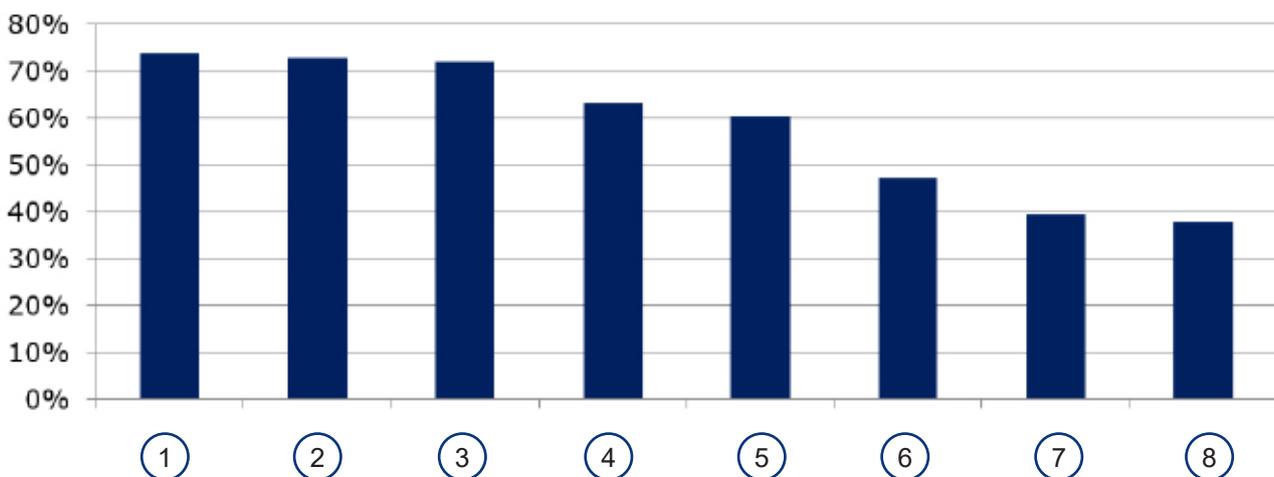


Figure 38

1. Violence | 2. Sexism | 3. Wellbeing | 4. Equal pay | 5. Racism | 6. Access to education & training
7. Secure employment | 8. Affordable housing



ANAND KARAJ CEREMONY

The Sikh community has been divided over the issue of whether members of other faiths can undertake the Anand Karaj (Sikh marriage) ceremony. There have been mixed views on this subject, with opinions ranging from those who believe that the deeply spiritual ceremony should be reserved solely for Amritdhari Sikhs, through to those who believe that it should be open to everyone on the basis that turning away any non-Sikhs from the ceremony goes against the teachings of the Gurus.

The majority (54%) of respondents felt either negative or very negative about the ban on the Anand Karaj ceremony for mixed faith couples, and 30% felt positive or very positive.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS BAN ON ANAND KARAJ FOR MIXED FAITH COUPLES

percentage of total

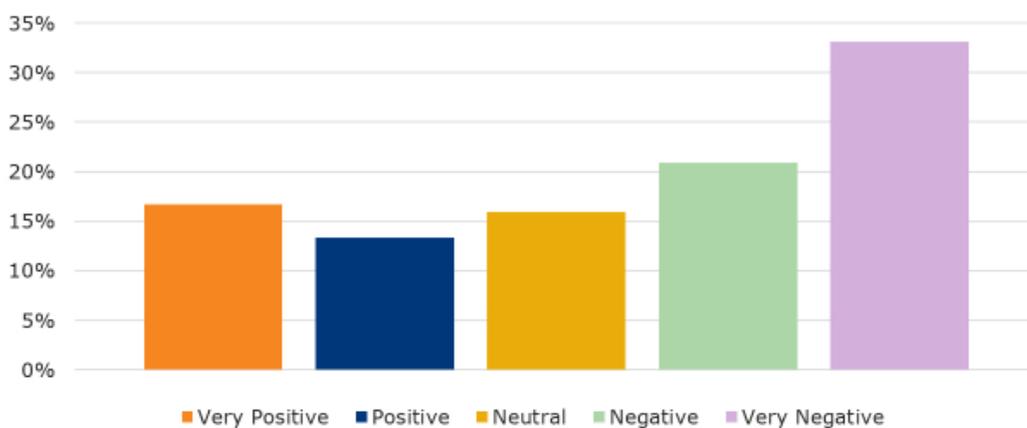


Figure 39

All age groups viewed the ban more negatively than positively. However, those aged 34 and under had the highest number of respondents who viewed the ban as positive or very positive (35%).

ATTITUDE TOWARDS BAN ON ANAND KARAJ FOR MIXED FAITH COUPLES BY AGE

percentage of total

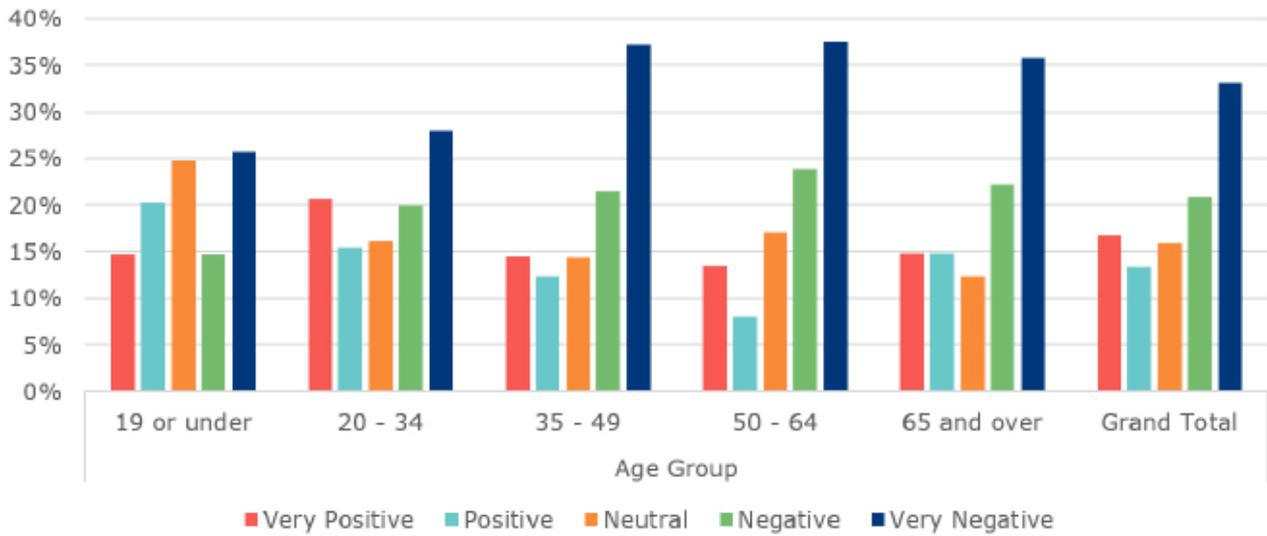


Figure 40

There was a clear difference between the genders when it came to views regarding the ban on the Anand Karaj for mixed faith couples. Women were more likely to view the ban on marriage negatively than men. In total, 62% of females and 47% of males were likely to view the ban on interfaith marriage negatively or very negatively.



JOINING THE ARMED FORCES

The BSR looked at attitudes of Sikhs in terms of their children joining the armed forces. 69% of respondents said they would support their child taking a career to defend the nation, with 40% saying they would strongly support their son or daughter's decision. However, there was a clear gender divide on this, with 47% of male respondents saying they would strongly support their child's choice compared to just 34% of females. Older respondents were also more supportive than younger people, with 65% of those aged 65 and over strongly supportive of young people joining the armed forces.

NATIONAL SIKH MONUMENT

90% of respondents either strongly or somewhat supported the suggestion that there should be a national monument in the capital to commemorate Sikhs who died during the two World Wars and other conflicts, and the support was at this level in all age groups. Only 2% disagreed or disagreed strongly.



PUNJABI, GURMUKHI AND THE BBC

Respondents were asked for their views on the proposal that the BBC should provide news on its website in Punjabi and Gurmukhi. 70% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, with stronger support coming from the younger age groups and from men.

PROMOTION OF SIKH AND PUNJABI HERITAGE MATERIAL

Respondents were asked whether enough is done by various organisations to promote Sikh and Punjabi culture. A majority (75% of respondents in both cases) felt that not enough is done by mainstream organisations (museums, TV, film studios, book publishers), or by schools, colleges and universities. About half also thought that not enough is done by Sikh organisations and gurdwaras.

Online TV, apps and websites, social media, education packs and exhibitions all received support by more than 80% of respondents for the media through which they would like heritage material to be made available and accessible to the widest audiences. Books, e-Books, radio and podcasts also received strong support.

When asked about which topics of Sikh and Punjabi heritage are of greatest interest, the most popular topics were Sikhs in Britain, spirituality and philosophy, women in Sikh history and evolution of customs and traditions. Many further suggestions were made by respondents which will be made available to those working in this field.



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