

Research into Sikh Presence and Relationships in the Region for East of England Faiths Council

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Introduction:

Sikhism (*Sikhi*) is one of the youngest and fifth largest world religion. Its founder, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) spread a simple, egalitarian message of *Ek Ongkar*: One Creator of all Creation; meaning that all are equal before One Creator Being by whatever Name called. This was at a time when India was being torn apart by social divisions and religious conflicts. He preached that there were many religious paths leading to the same Ultimate Reality given many Names by different religions. He used many of those Names (for *God*) commonly used during his time, and founded his own religious path on the three pillars of constant God awareness (*Naam japna*), honest work (*kirat karni*) and sharing (*wand shakna*).

The Sikhs believe that the same teaching Divine Light of Guru Nanak (*Guru Jote*) was preached and lived as ten human Gurus and now resides in Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy Scripture.

The Sikh place of worship is called a *Gurdwara*. Outside a Gurdwara, can be seen the traditional triangular saffron Sikh flag called the *Nishan Sahib* hoisted on a tall flagpole with a steel *Khanda* (short double-edged sword) on the top. The flagpole is covered with yellow or saffron fabric. The cotton or silk flag carries an emblem, also called *Khanda*, which shows the double-edged sword in the centre of a circular quoit flanked by two single-edged curved *Kirpans* (Sikh swords).

Everyone is welcome to visit the Gurdwara, with the exception of anyone under the influence of drink or drugs. On entering the Gurdwara people are asked to remove their shoes and cover their heads. All are invited to partake in *the langar*, a free vegetarian meal in the Gurdwara kitchen hall, where everyone eats the same food and sits together regardless of caste , colour, creed or gender, denoting equality. Visitors may also see *the darbar sahib* where the Guru Granth Sahib is kept.

Male Sikhs can be easily identified by their outward appearance: the wearing of the turban and, if initiated (called *Amrit-dhari* Sikhs) , by their articles of faith, the 5 'k's. These are:

Kara (steel bracelet)

Kanga (wooden comb)

Kaccha - also spelt, Kachh, Kachhera (knee-length shorts, usually worn as underwear)

Kirpan (steel sword of any length, and of great spiritual and moral significance for Sikhs.)

Kesh (unshorn hair)

However there are many Sikhs who wear turbans but trim their beards, and equally there are many Sikhs who do not wear turbans and are 'clean shaven'. They are sometimes referred to as *sehajdari* Sikhs; who may have been born in Sikh families but who have, as yet, to undergo initiation to become *Amrit-dhari* Sikhs.

Sikhs have historically fitted in and adapted to wherever they have settled. They are known for their hard work and voluntary community service (*seva*).

Management of Gurdwaras

Gurdwaras are managed in two ways: either by those elected (or selected) from the holy congregation (*sangat*); or by a “spiritual head”.

Committees are usually elected annually or bi-annually. In Gurdwaras that are caste or social group (*braadri*) based e.g. *Bhatra*, *Ravidass* and *Ramgarhia*, only people from the specific caste can vote. However all are welcome to attend the Gurdwara.

Other Gurdwaras, which may or may not be caste based, are run by Sants and *Babas* (spiritual heads). A *sant* (literally “saint”) or ‘*baba*’ (“elder”) is the sole unelected, spiritual and administrative head in the Gurdwara and has full time *sevadaars* (those who serve) dedicated to specific tasks.

Gurdwara contacts

In the UK, a Gurdwara’s Honorary General Secretary is usually English literate, and is the best person to contact in the first instance. The President, called *Pardhaan Sahib*, is usually the symbolic head and leader of the Sikh grouping which won the last Gurdwara election.

Sikhs have no ordained priesthood, but Gurdwaras do employ one or more *granthis* to do the duties normally associated with priests. Most *granthis* are not English literate and may not be the best people to take part in interfaith forums. This is a situation the Gurdwaras are increasingly becoming concerned about and some Gurdwaras now employ *granthis* capable of speaking and preaching the faith in English.

Regarding engagement with interfaith forums (discussed later in this paper), usually it is best to get some English speaking youngish person from the congregation, who has an interest, nominated by the Secretary or *Pardhaan Sahib* as the regular contact. However, the Secretary and the *Pardhaan Sahib* should be given due recognition and mention in official contacts.

Sant or *baba* (spiritual head) Gurdwaras are better organised and decision making is more immediate. If the *sant* or *baba* can be persuaded that interfaith involvement is important, then a regular contact with an English speaking *sevadaar* nominated by the *sant* or *baba*, can be established.

A list of Gurdwaras is at appendix 3.

Information about Sikh religious personnel, titles and duties is at appendix 4

Sikh Demographics in the East of England

Appendix 1 shows the proportion of Sikhs in the population in different Local Authority areas in the region.

Sikhs are the fourth largest religion in the UK, but the fifth largest in the East of England. There are regional variations, both in terms of Sikh population and also places of worship and engagement with local interfaith forums/councils. In Bedford for example there are four Gurdwaras and a large well organised and active Sikh Community.

This is in contrast to Cambridge where there are a handful of Sikh families that congregate at the Arbury Community Centre on the last Sunday of every month.

In Peterborough there is a large Bhatra Community (belonging to a certain caste) who therefore have their own Gurdwara.

Understanding types of Gurdwara and main Sikh groupings in the UK in the context of EEFC participation

UK Sikh organisations (including Gurdwaras) fall into three broad categories: (1) those with Sikh nationalist leanings who are from the “mainstream” category; (2) those led by so called *sants* or “spiritual” and cult (*dera*) heads (ideologically controversial); and (3) “all others”.

- (1) The “nationalist” category gained popularity following the invasion of Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) at Amritsar, by the Indian army in June 1984, and was given further impetus by large scale killing of Sikhs in Delhi and other Indian cities in early November 1984, following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Their separatist agenda may have lost support in recent years, but Sikh nationalist movement is better organised at grassroots and Gurdwara level than any other grouping. This is evidenced by their lobbying power and response to government consultations on Sikh issues.
- (2) Gurdwaras and Sikh centres with “spiritual heads” vary from small sects and cults to those which are close to Sikh mainstream. Leading examples in the UK are Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha at Birmingham with a nationwide following. Sant Amar Singh at own Gurdwara in Wolverhampton also has nationwide following. He funded the first Sikh school (now government funded) at Hayes, Middlesex.
- (3) The third category is by far the largest but least well organised category made up of other (non-nationalist) “main-stream” *Singh Sabha* and many *Ramgarhia* (caste or *braadri*) Gurdwaras, other caste or sect based Gurdwaras and associations.

Some Sikh movements, like the *Akhand Kirtani Jatha*, with a large nationwide membership, although, part of mainstream, follow own distinct way of life and practices.

The *Naamdhari* or *Kooka* Sikh sect believes in a living guru, as distinct from Sikh belief in Guru Granth Sahib, the Word Guru as the “Living Guru or Guide”. This sect is somewhat removed from the mainstream Sikh movement. Others like *Radhaswamis*, although associated with and mainly from Sikhs, are even more removed from mainstream Sikh teachings and Code of Practice (i.e. *Sikh Reht Maryada*.)

Other than “spiritual head” Gurdwaras, the managements of others change every one or two years. This makes it difficult for outside organisations to retain links with these Gurdwaras.

The best organised and controlled is the middle category with spiritual *sant* or *baba* heads. For example, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha based at Birmingham, with branches in other towns, is headed by a “*Bhai Sahib*” spiritual head. (*Bhai Sahib* is usually the form of address for a Sikh Gurdwara priest called *granthi*.) Decisions by spiritual heads are speedy and funding from generous donations by the faithful followers is much more readily available.

The above gives some idea of Gurdwaras and organisation which come under the umbrella of “Sikhism” in the UK. The lines between many shades of *Sikhi* are rather blurred at times.

National Organisations

In addition to the above, there are two individual led organisations, which can also help in promoting local Sikh interest in interfaith participation.

Dr Indarjit Singh CBE is the Director of the **Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO)** and leads on Sikh interfaith matters. NSO first came into existence when many Gurdwaras and other organisations, which had come together to celebrate a centennial event, were then retained as “members” of this organisation. It was set up by Dr Indarjit Singh, a radio presenter and Sikh interfaith representative. Some years ago, a Dr Jasdev Singh Rai formed a “closed” (i.e. membership) **British Sikh Consultative Forum (BSCF)**, as distinct from an earlier open forum with the same name. The closed BSCF was registered as an organisation to represent Sikh faith issues to the government.

Implications of caste based Gurdwaras for EEFC engagement

It needs to be remembered that Guru Nanak (1469 -1539) rejected the Hindu caste system at the outset of his egalitarian religio-social reform mission. Therefore, ideologically, caste and sect based Gurdwaras are a contradiction, and centres (*deras*) with “spiritual” heads, highly controversial in Sikhism. They do not accord with mainstream Sikh teachings or the centrally approved *Sikh Reht Maryada* – The Code of Sikh Conduct & Conventions issued by the highest spiritual-temporal Sikh institution, the *Akal Takht Sahib* at Amritsar in Punjab, India.

However, Caste based Gurdwaras are there to stay and are on the increase. Regional and national level interfaith forums like the EEFC, in view of advisory/consultative role vis a vis local and central government departments and agencies need to be aware of these internal ideological divisions in faith communities. They need to develop strategies, in consultation with mainstream religious representatives, how best to engage as wide a representation from each faith community as possible, but without giving the impression of encouraging such internal faith divisions through undue recognition of any particular splinter group.

The overall impression gained is that caste based Gurdwaras should engage with EEFC.

Inter-Gurdwara relations in towns with more than one Gurdwara

Most Gurdwaras run their own affairs but in many towns with more than one Gurdwara e.g. Bedford and Hitchin they do come together on Sikh issues of general concern e.g. relating to the wearing of Sikh articles of faith including the turban, and when celebrating main Sikh religious festivals. However, for EEFC engagement, town or city level co-operation cannot be taken for granted. It is not sufficiently advanced for joint representation. This should not discourage local proposals for joint representation by Sikhs in larger towns.

Engaging local Gurdwaras and religious organisations in interfaith dialogue

There is a noticeable increase in the number of local Sikh organisations operating outside Gurdwaras. In Gurdwaras, there is more demand for English educated religious personnel. There are indications e.g. through The Sikh Missionary Society UK with over 1,800 nationwide membership, that, in view of government consultations about faith matters, the Sikh community is developing a keener interest in the interfaith issues, and wider social and civic activities at local level.

For the purpose of this study, the most important aspect of the Sikh nationalist faction in the UK is that leading organisations in this category like the Sikh Federation and British Sikh Federation, while leading on UK and European Sikh issues are also in touch with Sikh grassroots. Faith issues like official guidelines regarding Sikh articles of faith are important in their representations. These organisations are supported by many Gurdwaras (whilst vehemently opposed by some others!). Where UK Sikh issues and faith matters are concerned, they are willing to work with other organisations like The Sikh Missionary Society UK, Sikhs in England, United Sikhs, Sikh Women's Alliance, Khalsa Aid, Sikh Care Society Heathrow and many Gurdwaras and local organisations. Useful EEFC contacts can be developed with local representatives of, for example, the Sikh Federation, or the main players at national level can be contacted to encourage local engagement.

Sikh participation in interfaith matters.

“Spiritual heads” of Gurdwaras can be approached to nominate educated *sevadaars* to take part in interfaith forums. **However, EEFC’s approach should not be seen to be divisive or promoting or recognising cultish type of Sikhism, at the expense of mainstream Sikhs who believe in Guru Granth Sahib as the one and only spiritual Guru, and the centrally approved Sikh Reht Maryada as the Sikh Code of Conduct and Conventions.** Advice from organisations like The Sikh Missionary Society UK can be sought on such matters.

EEFC can enlist the support of both the NSO and the “closed” BSCF, for attracting local interest in interfaith forums, by contacting Dr Indarjit Singh CBE and Dr Jasdev Singh Rai

Important contacts are given at Appendix 5

The Survey

The survey covered modi operandi of Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations in the region, and also national Sikh issues which concern regional Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations. These issues have a direct bearing on how Sikh participation in a regional forum like EEFC can be encouraged directly, or on the back of wider national issues of Sikh concern being taken up by nationwide Sikh organisations. There are possible areas where the two can work together to engage the local Sikh community.

When dealing with Gurdwaras, past experience shows that they do not respond to written communications or surveys by post or by e-mail (only some have this facility). In fact, this survey has shown that it is with difficulty that one can speak directly to either of the two most important office holders in a Gurdwara i.e. the Hon. General Secretary or the President. Even if one succeeds in making contact directly, sometimes it is difficult to make the office holders understand and accept the purpose of such a survey even in fluent Punjabi.

Therefore, in addition to direct contact with some Gurdwara representatives, this survey takes into account views of influential Sikhs with extensive experience in dealing with Gurdwara managements. For example, the record of meetings at Gurdwaras around the country, of the “open” British Sikh Consultative Forum (open BSCF) – not to be confused with a “closed” or membership BSCF mentioned below - covers a period of three years from July 2002. These meetings chaired by local Gurdwara representatives, discussed issues of most concern to the UK Sikhs. Experience of dealing with Gurdwaras managements, gained from those meetings has been made available to this survey by the convenor of the open BSCF, Gurmukh Singh.

Therefore, not surprisingly, the initial response to the EEFC Survey from the Gurdwaras when contacted by telephone, was not forthcoming. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, most Gurdwara office holders, quite intentionally, limit their interest to Gurdwara affairs and management only, and make this clear when first contacted.

Running a Gurdwara takes up a lot of time and Gurdwara office holders call themselves *sevadaar* (those who serve the gurdwara, as distinct from personal *sevadaar* of a *sant* or *baba*), a title which is interpreted to mean doing “seva” (service) *within* the four walls of the Gurdwara. The immediate response to any query which does not seem to be relevant to the internal affairs of the Gurdwara, is along the lines, “We are just *sevadaar* (servants) of the Gurdwara and the *sangat* (holy congregation).” They have hardly any interest in external socio-civic activism. Queries by the media and others are ignored, even if, very occasionally, the right person i.e. a responsible office holder picks up the telephone. It is an open secret that outer office administration is not a strong point of even apex Sikh bodies like the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) based at Amritsar in Punjab.

Of course, this is not the case with some better organised, larger Gurdwaras in other parts of the country.

The second reason for general lack of interest in external activities, including interfaith involvement, is that, with the exception of *Ramgarhia* (caste based) Gurdwaras which cater mostly for better educated Sikh migrants from East Africa, many other Gurdwara office holders are from first generation immigrant Sikhs from Punjab, who may not understand the importance of engagement with other faiths and communities. Language also is sometimes a problem.

However, this survey shows that there are exceptions, which may be relevant to EEFC’s aim to engage Gurdwaras in interfaith dialogue. Gurdwara office holders, the Presidents (*pardhaan sahib*) and Secretaries, being only human, are attracted by the opportunity to get involved with national Sikh events and newsworthy Sikh religious issues is noticeable. One recent example is the widespread Sikh concern about turban searches at airports in UK and Europe.

There was a noticeable sharp rise in interest in this EEFC survey – perhaps mistaken for some sort of government survey - after it was announced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) that Census 2011 will not include the category of “Sikh” in the “Ethnicity” section. Sikh Punjabi weeklies and cyber forums started raising this issue and further publicity was given by the new “Sikh Channel” (TV). With coverage on other digital media such as Punjab radio and the social networking sites such as Facebook, the momentum grew quite rapidly for support using these mediums. One of the main nationwide organisations leading on this issue is the Sikh Federation. They have been gathering support by using the media and by addressing congregations asking for support and lobbying their MP’s .

Led by nationwide organisations like the British Sikh Federation and the Sikh Federation – first UK political organisation to represent Sikh religious and national issues - the great importance of Sikhs being counted and monitored under the current ONS classification was brought home to the Sikhs. Even though not all Gurdwara office holders fully grasped the advantages, “Sikh monitoring” became a popular topic to raise with visiting senior politicians before the general election. The former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, was quizzed on this question jointly by the Derby Gurdwaras through a young Sikh presenter. However, an overwhelming majority of educated Sikhs in UK do understand that the “ethnicity” classification in the national census is used by local authorities and other public and private sectors for routine monitoring in order to inform policy adjustments to ensure a level playing field for UK minority communities in different spheres.

These include: education, employment, health, policing and crime reporting including racial attacks, delivery of services, and allocation of resources for community development programmes. Sikh Federation survey showed up to 95 % support for retaining the 'ethnicity' question (also reflected through the questionnaires actually returned to an ONS survey)

Regarding the question of Sikh "ethnic" monitoring, opposition came from some Sikhs. Surprisingly, one opponent is Dr Indarjit Singh CBE of Network of Sikh Organisations, who was himself an important supporting witness in the Mandla case (see below). He regards **Sikhi**(sm) as a "religion" and not an "ethnic" community as defined by the House of Lords in the landmark Mandla Case (Mandla and another v Dowell Lee and another 1983) In defining Sikhs as an "ethnic" minority, the Law Lords relied on characteristics such religion, shared history, culture, geographical origin, language, common literature peculiar to the group, and being a minority within a larger community. To quote Lord Fraser, "A group defined by reference to enough of these characteristics would be capable of including converts, for example, persons who marry into the group, and of excluding apostates.

Provided a person who joins the group feels himself or herself to be a member of it, and is accepted by other members, then he is, for the purpose of the 1976 Act, a member."

Another opponent is Dr Jasdev Singh Rai of the "closed" British Sikh Consultative Forum. His reasons based on a "clause 67" agreed at a conference in Durban of a UN affiliated forum some years ago, remain unclear. He deserves mention because he is recognised as a "faith representative" and was one of the faith advisers to the previous government.

Not surprisingly, as confirmed by surveys carried out by the Sikh Federation, and active support of about 140 Gurdwaras and organisation for the British Sikh Federation's lead on this issue, a very large number of Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations agree that Sikhs should be monitored as a distinct and sizeable community in their own right under any current statistics collation system.

Some of these issues have been mentioned in this report to show the type of community topics that do interest Gurdwaras and other Sikh associations. There are ongoing Sikh heritage and aid projects undertaken by organisations like Anglo-Sikh Heritage Trail (ASHT website <http://www.asht.info/>) and Khalsa Aid (<http://www.khalsaaid.org/>) respectively. ASHT linked to Maharajah Duleep Singh Centenary Trust, commissioned a bronze statue of Maharajah Duleep Singh, last Sikh Maharaja of Punjab, in Thetford; which is "the first major piece of Sikh art outside India". Such organisations generate local Sikh interest and may be able to identify local educated Sikhs who can represent Sikh faith interests in liaison with local Gurdwaras. The overall impression of this survey is that there is growing awareness in the Sikh community of the urgent need for engagement with local communities and activities outside Gurdwaras. In the region covered by this survey, this is especially true for Gurdwaras in towns like Peterborough, Bedford, and Hitchin.

Educated next generation and older retired professional Sikhs in Gurdwara congregations are best placed to engage in such activities on behalf of Gurdwara managements. Experience of some Gurdwaras is that when they have been invited to serve (do "*seva*"), they have responded positively.

Personal visits to some selected Gurdwaras to discuss the importance of Sikh faith engagement with EEFC, and to help them to identify possible volunteers, can be the next step. If this can be done by someone known to Gurdwara office holders, so much the better. Nationwide organisations at Appendix 5 may be able to help. Even a few committed volunteers in the region should be able generate wider interest.

Challenges

Some of the main constraints, which have been discussed in this paper, may be summarised as follows:-

Most Sikhs who are actively involved with the running of Gurdwaras and other Sikh organisations feel that their limited resources should be spent on their own community projects and priorities. The better educated Sikhs, especially in the younger age groups, feel that these priorities e.g. setting up new Gurdwaras or spending on more Gurdwara buildings etc. need to be revised.

Other than the Gurdwaras with permanent spiritual heads (*sant* and *baba*), changing managements make long-term relationships difficult.

This paper draws on the experience of longstanding Sikh activists, keen to promote Sikh participation in interfaith, educational, health, police and other civic forums and activities outside Gurdwaras, and a more structured interface with local and central government departments and agencies. It shows that, generally, Gurdwara personnel i.e. office holders, who are mostly in the elderly age group, and those who perform religious duties, have little time, interest or incentive to engage in socio-civic activities outside Gurdwaras. A lack of understanding about the increasing importance of interfaith involvement and language difficulties add to the general apathy.

Because Sikhism is not a proselytising religion, this means that religious personnel see no reason to mix with other faith communities in order to seek converts. Yet the founder of Sikh religion, Guru Nanak (1469 to 1539), travelled extensively in the Indian subcontinent and many middle eastern countries, mixing with communities in distant places and teaching in local languages. Following in their Guru's footsteps, the Sikhs are a widespread and thriving global community. This suggests that Sikhs who are educated, professional or retired can be incentivised to take part in activities outside their Gurdwaras, especially if they can be compensated for travel and related expenses.

There are very few women and young Sikhs in Gurdwara committees. Many Gurdwaras are now encouraging participation of these groups. Younger Sikh men and women are more inclined to get involved in outside activities. EEFC participation offers an attractive opportunity for such work.

Ravidass (caste based) Gurdwaras sometimes feel isolated from mainstream. They suspect that their views may not be heard or respected by other Sikh representatives on forums. This can change with greater confidence on their part, and with the push for introducing of anti-caste discrimination laws in the UK by organisations like Castewatch UK.

Solutions

This paper gives some pointers to the possible ways in which Sikh interest in EEFC participation can be encouraged in collaboration with nationwide organisations with local presence, and in tandem with issues which receive publicity in the expanding Sikh media, including some weeklies, radio stations and two dedicated Sikh TV channels. [In addition to the first "Sikh Channel" (digital 840), the second TV station, "Sangat TV" (digital 847), started on 1 September, 2010.]

Sikh engagement can be prompted by through personal contacts nationwide organisations. For example, organisations like the Network of Sikh Organisations claiming nationwide membership of over a hundred Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations, The Sikh Missionary Society UK with nationwide membership and the Sikh Federation with Gurdwara contacts and field workers at grassroots level, should all be able to promote local interest and/or identify local Sikhs capable of taking part in local activities, including participation in EEFC.

This survey confirms that given the right incentives, including refund of travel costs, the same people should be able to combine their local activism in different fields. Many national Sikh faith issues e.g. restrictions on the wearing of Sikh articles of faith (a current issue being addressed in proposals for government guidance), and the question of Sikh monitoring to eliminate discrimination due to distinct Sikh religio-cultural identity, are also matters which need to be raised at regional level.

Participation of women can be explored through local Gurdwaras and nationwide organisations like the Sikh Nari Munch UK led by Bibi Gurdev Kaur OBE. (see Appendix 5)

There should be an EEFC liaison worker/community engagement worker to help with what is available.

Meetings at Gurdwaras with other members from EEFC can explore how the Sikh community can benefit from regular EEFC attendance.

Report collated by:
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Appendix 1

Ethnicity and Religion			
Sikh			
East of England	Value	Percentage	Ranking
North Hertfordshire	2270	1.9	1
Bedford	2740	1.9	2
Luton UA	1487	0.8	3
Thurrock UA	995	0.7	4
Epping Forest	698	0.6	5
Peterborough UA	833	0.5	6
Watford	392	0.5	7
Stevenage	267	0.3	8
Three Rivers	221	0.3	9
Welwyn Hatfield	219	0.2	10
Ipswich	246	0.2	11
Mid Bedfordshire	247	0.2	12
Cambridge	205	0.2	13
South Bedfordshire	185	0.2	14
Hertsmere	146	0.2	15
St. Albans	183	0.1	16
East Cambridgeshire	100	0.1	17

Huntingdonshire	185	0.1	18
East Hertfordshire	141	0.1	19
Fenland	79	0.1	20
South Cambridgeshire	122	0.1	21
Harlow	71	0.1	22
Norwich	102	0.1	23
Dacorum	112	0.1	24
Broxbourne	67	0.1	25
Colchester	117	0.1	26
Brentwood	45	0.1	27
Southend-on-Sea UA	103	0.1	28
Suffolk Coastal	73	0.1	29
Castle Point	53	0.1	30
Basildon	93	0.1	31
Chelmsford	85	0.1	32
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	68	0.1	33
Maldon	29	0.0	34
Waveney	42	0.0	35
Braintree	49	0.0	36
Broadland	43	0.0	37
Breckland	44	0.0	38
South Norfolk	40	0.0	39
Rochford	28	0.0	40
Uttlesford	23	0.0	41
Forest Heath	17	0.0	42
Tendring	34	0.0	43
St. Edmundsbury	21	0.0	44
North Norfolk	18	0.0	45
Great Yarmouth	11	0.0	46
Babergh	9	0.0	47
Mid Suffolk	7	0.0	48



Appendix 2:

Visit the BSF website at www.british-sikh-federation.org to see details of previous successful campaigns to safeguard Sikh Rights over many years, e.g. work as bus drivers and conductors wearing turbans (1969), wearing of turbans on construction sites (1989), defence for Sikh school children to wear Kirpan (1996), the right for Sikh workers at UK airports to wear Kirpan (2002), Government commitment to set up Commission for Equalities and Human Rights (2004), etc.

Other website:

<http://www.nsouk.co.uk/employment.htm>

Appendix 3

EAST OF ENGLAND: Gurdwaras and other local Sikh organisations

Name and address
<i>Guru Nanak Gurdwara</i> 72 Ford End Road, Queens Park , Bedford MK40 4JW
<i>Ramgarhia Sikh Society</i> 33-39 Ampthill Street, Bedford MK42 9BT
<i>Cambridge Sikh Society</i> 17 Woodcock Close, Impington, Cambridge CB4 9LD
<i>Harlow Sikh Society</i> 80 Greygoose Park, Harlow CM19 4JL
<i>Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara</i> 37 Wilbury Way, Hitchin SG4 0TW
<i>Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara</i> Radcliffe Road, Hitchin SG5 1QH
<i>Ramgarhia Gurdwara Society - Hitchin</i> Bearton Avenue, Hitchin SG5 1NZ
<i>Guru Nanak Gurdwara</i> 719 Bramford Road, Ipswich IP1 2LJ
<i>Sikh Temple</i> 6 Maidstone Road, Thurrock , Grays RM17 6NF
<i>Guru Nanak Gurdwara</i> 2a Dallow Road , Luton LU1 1LY

<i>Gurdwara Sikh Bhat Samparda</i> 184-186 Cromwell Road, Peterborough PE1 2EJ
<i>Singh Sabha Gurdwara</i> Newark Road, Fengate, Peterborough
<i>Guru Nanak Sikh Sabha</i> 12 Colne Way, Garston, Watford WD25 9DB
<i>Sikh Youth Association</i> Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, 48 Kings Close, Watford WD1 8UB
<i>Watford Sikh Association</i> 48 Kings Close, Watford WD1 8UB

Appendix 4

Nationwide Sikh organisations & Sikh TV Channels

British Sikh Consultative Forum	http://bscf.org
British Sikh Federation	http://www.british-sikh-federation.org
Network of Sikh Organisations	http://www.nsouk.co.uk
Sikhs in England	http://www.sikhs.org.uk
Sikh Federation (UK)	http://www.sikhfederation.com
Sikh Missionary Society UK	http://www.sikhmissionarysociety.org
Sikh Nari Munch	http://www.sikhnarimanch.com/home.asp
Khalsa Aid	http://www.khalsaaid.org/
Sikh Channel TV	http://www.sikhchannel.tv/
Sangat TV	http://sangattrust.org/

Appendix 5

Sikh Religious Titles, Duties, and Related Skills.

(Paper by Sikh Education Welfare & Advancement (SEWA) network)

There is no ordained priesthood in Sikhism, and no structured hierarchy or strict division of duties.

Generally, any *Amritdhari* Sikh, with the necessary skills and proficiencies, can perform all the ceremonial and other duties in a Gurdwara without any discrimination regarding gender, caste or race. An *Amritdhari* Sikh is one who has accepted the full physical and spiritual discipline according to the Sikh code (the Sikh Reht Maryada) at an *Amrit Sanchar* ceremony. This ceremony is conducted by the Five Beloved Ones (the Panj Piaray) – themselves *Amritdhari* Sikhs, who are selected for the ceremony by the holy congregation, the *Sangat* (or the Gurdwara management these days).

While the same person, with the necessary qualifications, can perform all the religious duties, the following are the titles and related functions performed at the Gurdwaras:

Granthi: Bearing in mind that there is no ordained priesthood in Sikhism, a Granthi equates to a priest or “minister of religion”. Any qualified Amritdhari Sikh can perform the duties of a Granthi. One appointed as a full time Granthi MUST be an Amritdhari practicing Sikh following the prescribed code of religious discipline, the Sikh Reht Maryada. He (or she) should have all the skills of a Paatthi (be able to read the holy Scriptures, Guru Granth Sahib), be able to interpret the Gurbani (sacred hymns in Guru Granth Sahib), deliver sermons to the holy congregation (Sangat) and do all the duties relating to the care of Guru Granth Sahib as the “living Guru” at ceremonial occasions. Preferably, a Granthi should be able to hold discourses, know the language of the country and carry out extrovert religious duties including those relating to the interfaith aspect. It is desirable but not essential that a Granthi be able to sing the sacred hymns i.e. musical proficiency is not a requirement. Also, it is preferable that a Granthi should be married.

Paatthi: A person who is proficient in reading the holy Scriptures, Guru Granth Sahib. Usually, a Paatthi is also able to do the other tasks associated with supplication (Ardaas) in the congregation (Sangat) and the morning evening ceremonies associated with Guru Granth Sahib e.g. first opening in the early morning and final closure of the holy Book in the evening. These tasks do not require much proficiency but the reading of the Scripture requires years of practice in correct pronunciation. Some never reach the final stage of absolutely correct pronunciation (Shudh Ucharan) which has great significance for interpretation. Knowledge of any other language is not necessary. Granthis, Raagis, Kathakars and most practicing Sikhs who can read Panjabi in Gurmukhi alphabet, are usually reasonably proficient (acceptable) Paatthis.

Raagi & Raagi Jatha members: A Raagi is a singer of sacred hymns. A professional Raagi must have a group called a Raagi Jatha of at least two persons: the main singer and a percussionist who usually plays the Indian tabla (two small drums placed side by side).

Usually Raagi Jathas (groups) travel in threes – the main Raagi and another, maybe less proficient, and the percussionist, the one who keeps the drum beat. The main Raagi should be proficient at singing Gurbani (sacred hymns) preferably to the musical measures prescribed in Guru Granth Sahib. Years of training is required. These days the main Raagi must be able to play the harmonium or a string instrument (rare). Any practising Sikh with reasonable proficiency can sing Gurbani in a Gurdwara. Ability to speak local language would be desirable e.g. to be able to teach children or do short translations of hymns in between singing for the benefit of Sikh youth or non-Sikhs who are entitled to sit in the Sangat. There are well known Raagi families (Ghranas) in Panjab tracing their ancestry back to the days of the Sikh Gurus. They command much respect amongst the Sikhs but may not be able to speak any other language. .

Percussionist with Raagi Jathas: Beat is almost essential for professional Gurbani singing. A Raagi Jatha always has a percussionist, playing Indian tabla – a pair of small drums – or some other type of traditional drum e.g. dholki or mardang, which are rarely played these days except in cultural programmes. A number of years of training is required to play the tabla proficiently, although, there are always local amateurs.

Kathakar and Pracharak: Kathakars are Sikh scholars proficient at interpreting the holy Scriptures in the traditional and modern context. The interpretation is direct (of the Guru’s Word or Gurbani) as well as illustrative through historical accounts and modern incidents.

Most Granthis should also be reasonably proficient Kathakars. **Pracharaks** are articulate missionary preachers well versed in Sikh history and religious tradition, and may also be proficient kathakars. It is highly desirable that Kathakars and Pracharaks should be reasonably proficient in the English language.

Dhadi and Dhadi Jathas are very popular, especially amongst Sikh migrants from Panjab: A Dhadi sings religious ballads, usually martial in nature telling the stories of great Sikh heroes, sacrifices and armed struggle for the righteous cause. These ballads are called the Dhadi Vars and are sung to popular traditional beats and rhythms from the land of undivided Panjab. Considerable vocal and musical instrumental skills are required. The two instruments usually played are a string instrument called the sarangi, and a small hand-held drum called the dhad. One person plays the sarangi and two play dhads. Some dhadi jathas may occasionally use sarangi and a harmonium accompanied by a percussionist playing a drum called dholki. Dhadi jathas are part of the Sikh religious martial tradition. They travel around in groups of threes or four and are never employed full time by Gurdwaras. Knowledge of English is not relevant.

Sikh religious scholars visiting UK should be proficient in the English language. However, certain traditional Sikh schools of learning do not teach English, yet, they produce Sikh scholars of the highest calibre capable of interpreting Guru Granth Sahib and the Sikh religious tradition.

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