

Many reports based on surveys tend to find both a loyal readership and avowed critics; this could be due to the empirical data collection methods that drive quantitative reportage rather than descriptive feedback. This is the case with the hefty 53 page British Sikh Report (BSR) 2013. Remarkably the first of its kind and with an annual publication planned, one that offers a promising herald for Sikh interests in England and Wales. In that sense, the report's use of the 2011 national census should ensure the avoidance of the sense-check readers may get on reading this report. Which is; who is this report for? The BSR team aims for the report "to be the leading light in respect of statistics for the British Sikh community" (pp. 4), itself a strong possibility but one that is somewhat undermined by the realisation that the bulk of the data used is organically sourced. Perhaps this is deliberate as only in a decade's time will new census data be available to retail. But using national statistics this year ought to have given the BSR an opportunity to compare 2011 to 2001 and at the same time make the BSR's own survey comparable to both, not having done so leaves the BSR's data in an unnecessary professional limbo.

Structurally, the report runs as follows; an introduction sets out its objectives, chapter one is the a literature review, chapter two covers research methods and then chapters 3 through to 14 delve into specific feedback areas the BSR team selected. It is not noted how these topics were selected; did respondents contribute? Not covered here for instance are marriage and divorce, racial, ethnic and gender relationships and the contentious rise of Sikh-ethos 'free schools'. Chapter 15 recognises some of this in a humbling self-review entitled "Future Research". Chapter 1's review of literature will be useful to newer interests in this field as it deftly balances well-garnished academic references with popular insight as a backdrop to Sikh settlement in Britain. The inclusion of some connective figures, for instance Udham Singh, the Anglo-Sikh figure of immense appeal would have assisted further. Also the statement here that studies on Sikhs have hitherto "...not considered the existence of British Sikhs as a distinct identifiable group" (pp. 10) is disappointingly inaccurate given this chapter's scholastic tone; it also unnecessarily endangers the report's reliability. Sikhs in Britain have for decades attracted publication and seminal monographs remain available, for instance there is the 1974 Alan James work, *Sikh Children in Britain*, Cole and Sambhi's (1978) *The Sikhs* or GS Aurora's 1967 work, *The New Frontiersmen: A Sociological Study of Indian Immigrants in the United Kingdom*, newer examples include Singh and Tatla's 2006, *Sikhs in Britain: The Making of a Community* and Shinder Thandi's graceful chapters in *A South Asian History of Britain* (2007). So the report is not

peerless but is without precedent in its format - this is the BSR's nook. Furthermore, remedying the simplistic statement that the Sikh community in Britain is "distinctly identifiable" (pp. 10) may simply require a wider BSR committee make-up as Sikh diversity in appearance, belief systems and language makes categorisation tricky. For instance, the polemic response from many Ravidassias to the 'Sikh' religion question in the national census aptly reflects this.

Significantly, the BSR attracted 662 respondents to its survey, so at over 0.15% this sample size is not parsimonious, however by its own admission data collection was skewed as an online survey. So for instance, despite the respondents' age range being 9-92, its average of 30 may not be representative of Britain's Sikhs (pp.12). This reviewer would also have liked to have seen the respondents' geographical spread to support the thoughtful section on Sikhs outside England (pp. 14); section that neatly links into British identity's regionalisation into the 'home nations' of Scotland, Wales and N. Ireland. Southern Ireland is also left out, perhaps understandably being beyond the report's scope, but without mention. This omission may also suggest a limitation on descriptive feedback in favour of binary responses as Sikhs (online at least) from the Republic would surely have asked for some inclusion in this precedential report?

The individual chapters that form the largesse (25 pgs.) of the work admirably tackle both the religious and secular Sikh in Britain, with the work on caste a reminder of the visceral protests preceding Parliament's vote on caste discrimination in April. The Ravidassia paragraph (pp.19) remains a powerful portent of the *qaum's* unsettled "superdiversity" politics. The chapter (13) on older Sikhs is very welcome as they often get forgotten in the global mediatisation that schisms Sikh generations. The significant challenges Britain's older Sikhs face in the lack of provision for the English-illiterate both in social amenities and the daily lifestyle infrastructure is pointedly shown here. Linking this rising dependency problem to the decrease in extended family homesteads amongst Britain's Sikhs is essential reading for social support providers. In particular should be *gurdware*, as the high percentage of older respondents who lack social interaction could benefit immensely from a provision on local temple premises. The data here also confirms the wider (extra-*qaumic*) socialisation spheres that Britain's Sikh youths' now operate in when compared to their predecessors; an aspect which may further help understand some of their conflicted Brit-Sikh upbringing.

Of mixed satisfaction is chapter 14, the "policy recommendations". Simply put, there is not enough identification as to whom these ideas are directed towards and what impact they would make. Take for example the statement that there is a need, in electronic media, to raise the quality of work on Sikh culture and history. Two aspects are missing here, what part of the

BSR survey identified this and to whom are these comments directed at, simply suggesting “Sikh and non-Sikh heritage organisations” is non-committal at best (pp.40). Perhaps a critique of the BBC Asian Network could have been useful here? Positively, the report has unearthed many other stakeholders and organisations that can assist with the challenges Britain's Sikhs face. With this in mind, it is a shame that this publication was not better launched as many beneficiaries remain unaware of this report's existence. This is also partly due to its lack of publication in Punjabi - a serious oversight and a sore point for the very Sikh elders highlighted here as facing linguistic barriers. The BSR team have emotively acknowledge the error and this reviewer finds that even a single page précis ought to work in 2014.

Future publications of this report are much-needed and the following may hopefully help sustain its continuity. Of singular importance is the need to find affiliation with a professional research institute, a well-known difficulty in Britain's Sikh studies but one that ought to be the focus for this report's committee. Context can be sought in other faith group reports, the British Jewish report is published by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research and the Muslim Council of Britain honours its publications using external invigilators. As with the latter, perhaps several smaller reports containing focused insights to Sikhs' ethno-religious life in Britain could avoid the coldness of a large report's ‘big data’. Contributions from non-Sikh Britons as authors or respondents are essential in bringing context and refereeing to what is ultimately a self-generated community report whose impartiality ought to be unassailable. It currently is not. Methodologically, cluster sampling in separate geographical areas will counter the innate ‘tightness’ of peer snowballing prevalent here. The wisdom of including politicians and eschewing notable British Sikhs will also irk those with a purist *Sikhi* interest. Let none of this take away the satisfaction that by its existence alone the report has completed the most important task; it has made things better. So congratulations BSR 2013, with a concept now to build on, your future reports are certain to help us reflect on Britain's Sikhs in *Gemeinschaft* terms such as British Sikhs, Sikhs in Britain or as *Gesellschaft*: simply British.

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London, Oct 2013

