

Contents

Chapter 1

Asian Women in the West • 1

Chapter 2

The history, geography and culture of the Indian Subcontinent • 7

Prehistory: 3000BC to 1st century • 8

Vedic period to Aryan invasion and rise of Hinduism • 9

Mauyrua and Gupta period and the invasion of Alexander the Great • 10

The Moghuls • 10

European invasions and British colonisation • 12

Intellectual justification for colonialism • 12

The effect on women and their roles during British colonial rule • 14

The struggle for independence • 16

A pattern of complexity; some aspects of modern Indian
Subcontinent culture • 18

Chapter 3

Ethnic minority women: their religious roles and expectations • 23

The white man's burden • 26

Purdah • 26

What is purdah? • 27

The origins of purdah • 29

The colonial legacy • 31

Degrees of purdah • 33

Adaptability of purdah • 35

Sati • 39

The history of sati • 41

The colonial legacy • 45

Arranged marriages • 47

Divorce • 51

Chapter 4

Asian Women in the Subcontinent • 55

- Interviewing methods • 56
- Retailing – Meena bazaar • 60
- Banking and insurance • 68
- Education • 71
- Aspirations of teachers • 73
- Manufacturing • 76
- Comparison with Britain • 78

Chapter 5

The Asian Family • 89

- The reality behind the stereotypes • 91
- Arranged marriages with close relatives • 95
- Limited horizons and ambitions for women • 96
- Many children • 97
- Children's cognitive development is retarded • 97
- The consequences of stereotyping • 99

Chapter 6

Asian Women in a Town in Northern England • 101

- Women at work in England since 1800 • 104
- Asian women at work in Britain • 107
- Media treatment of Asian Women • 108
- Case study: Asian women's experience in an English town • 110
- Interviews with women in Calderdale • 119

Chapter 7

East and West • 131

- The Power of patriarchy • 131
- Asian women in England • 132

Poem: Oppressed Coverage • 138

Glossary • 139

Bibliography • 143