

Bhavini - Barriers and challenges

People congregate, so you have very specific areas, with very specific ethnic groups. It's more noticeable in Leicester, although it's probably happening everywhere, but it's noticeable here. So I'd say that's a challenge, because if you live in the 'wrong' area, you might feel a bit isolated. The difference in demographic groups is a lot more visible because it's a smaller place. One of the things I notice for example where I live, at the school my children went to, we were friends with parents who were Sikh, Muslim, Christian. But I'd never heard about a Madrasa until I moved to Leicester. There were parents at the school who were so staunch, saying their kids had to go to Madrasa every day. But I had [Muslim] friends in London and I'd never heard them say that. I found they were a lot more patriotic here, and it made me think why are we not doing things like this? Everything felt magnified. You can end up going into your own little congregation, because everything else is so magnified. We'd never seen it before. It's not Leicester, but I think it's just more visible here, as there are fewer people where we're living so we're seeing a lot more of it. Whereas in London, it's not in your face, because everything's so far apart. I did find people were more into their communities, and you can't enter in, that's a challenge. I think as people start spiritually elevating themselves, it becomes difficult then because you're on different journeys and you're not as accepting. Discrimination between races is very apparent here, and everyone is so patriotic about their religion, that I find that a challenge.