

# Ethnic minorities in England and Wales 'better qualified'

March 10 2014, by Mike Addelman

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New evidence from the 2011 Census shows that ethnic minorities in England and Wales have become increasingly better qualified than their White British counterparts.

The research, by The University of Manchester's Centre on Dynamics and Ethnicity (CoDE), shows an overall improvement in attainment by students in further and higher education over the past 20 years.

However, ethnic minority groups are doing better overall. For example, Indian, Chinese and Black African groups had higher educational attainment than other ethnic minorities and the White British group in both 2001 and 2011.

The findings are particularly significant; argue the team, given the continuing ethnic inequalities in employment identified in CoDE's earlier census briefings.

The figures, says Kitty Lympelopoulou from The University of Manchester, are mostly down to wider and improved access to higher education, particularly among women.

Previous government policies aimed at raising the attainment of ethnic minority pupils in schools are also likely to have contributed to some of the improvement, she adds.

Immigration policies aiming to attract international students and high

skilled migrants are also likely to have had some impact.

A third of people born outside of the UK had degree level qualifications compared with a quarter of people born in the UK, they found.

However, the study of the 1991, 2001 and 2001 censuses reveal some groups continue to be disadvantaged.

Sixty per cent of one group –White Gypsy/Irish Travellers – had no qualifications in 2011, making them two and a half times more likely than the White British group to be educationally disadvantaged.

Published today, the study is the latest of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation funded briefings for CoDE.

The findings include:

- In 2011, the groups with the highest proportion of people with degree level qualifications were the Chinese (43%), Indian (42%) and Black African groups (40%).
- The Black African group, which comprises of a large number of international students, were the least likely to have no qualifications (11%).
- In contrast, a quarter of people from the White British group had no qualifications (24%)
- The Indian and Pakistani groups increased their degree level qualifications by 27 and 18 percentage points respectively, between 1991 and 2011.
- The Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups saw a 19 and 16 percentage point decrease respectively in those without any qualifications between 2001 and 2011.

Kitty Lympelopoulou said, "Over the last twenty years, educational

attainment has been increasing among ethnic groups as a result of an improvement in access to education overseas and the increasing proportion of ethnic minority people educated in Britain.

"Though this is good news for ethnic minorities, we need to remember that despite achievement gaps between some ethnic groups and White British people narrowing or even disappearing, [ethnic minority](#) groups continue to experience inequalities in education and the labour market.

"Whilst younger members of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups are achieving higher levels of attainment, members of these groups were also more likely to have no qualifications than White British people. This partly reflects the lower rates of participation in education among Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, but also other factors including poverty and discrimination."

**More information:** The CoDE briefing, How are ethnic inequalities in education changing? including graphics, is available here:

[www.ethnicity.ac.uk/](http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk/)

Provided by University of Manchester

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