

Principal Investigator:
Dr Joya Chatterji
Trinity College, Cambridge
Email: jc280@cam.ac.uk

Co-Applicant:
Dr Claire Alexander
London School of Economics
Email: c.e.alexander@lse.ac.uk

'The Bengal Diaspora: Bengali settlers in South Asia and Britain'

Summary

This three-year project will bring together historical, sociological and anthropological perspectives and methodologies to compare the history of migration and settlement of Bengali Muslims in the Bengal Delta region and across the United Kingdom since 1947.

The project will inquire who these migrants were, where they came from, and why they resettled where they did, and explore in what ways their experience of integration has been shaped by their different locations.

Fieldwork in the Bengal delta will be conducted primarily by Dr. Annu Jalais (Anthropology, LSE) and by a second research assistant in the UK. It will focus on oral history accounts of migration, arrival and settlement, the imagination of old and new 'homes', and the formation of new cultural and religious communities.

The project hopes to interrogate current theorisations of diaspora by investigating whether the sharp distinctions drawn between 'economic' and 'forced' migrations are tenable or useful concepts in understanding the movement of people in modern times.