NATIONAL CONGRESS OF GUJARATI ORGANISATIONS UK

Serving the Gujarati Community as a National Body of Gujarati Organisations in UK

Email: info@ukncgo.org Website: www.ukncgo.org

NATIONAL CONGRESS

OF

GUJARATI ORGANISATIONS UK

"HOW CAN NCGO ENGAGE WITH THE GUJARATI COMMUNITY"

TO

MEET THE CHALLENGES

AFTER

BREXIT

AND

TO ENSURE GUJARATI COMMUNITY HAS A VOICE

IN THE CORRIDOR OF POWERS

TO REPRESENT THE COMMUNITY

President: C J Rabheru **Tel: 07958 275 222**

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Treasurer: G P Desai **Tel: 07956 922 172**

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Gujarati Communities' migration to UK started since 1956, initially as students and thereafter as economic migration.

Gujarati Community arriving from East Africa since 1968 had huge problems to find housing and jobs due to racialism, language barrier and general environment.

Ugandan Asians had hostile reception from the Far Right in 1972 when they were forced out of Uganda by Idi Amin, though assisted by Uganda Re-settlement Board they suffered the same as others did before their arrival. It was a struggle to obtain Loans or find house to rent.

Gujaratis being self reliant established corner shops and gradually expanded their businesses which are now thriving in various parts of UK opening Supermarkets, Sub- Post Offices, Cash & Carry, Pharmacies, Solicitor Practices, Accountancy Practices, Media and other

Gujaratis have always valued the importance of the education, every Gujarati Parent's dream was that their children achieved the highest academic qualification.

Life for Gujaratis was hectic, parents were either in full time jobs or in business working endless hours to make a living and to give brighter future for their children. It was the family spirit which helped the Gujaratis to prosper.

Until 1986 no regard was given to form Pressure Group to address the concerns of the Gujarati Community with the Local Government nor with the National Government instead each community started their own caste based organisations.

Group of Gujarati Community Leaders saw the divide within the Gujarati Community which prompted them in 1986 to start National Congress of Gujarati Organisations UK, Gujarati Organisations which were formed by each community became the Members of NCGO.

NCGO Executive Committee was formed in 1986, drafting a Constitution which identified the Aims and Objects of the NCGO. EC was fairly represented by having EC Members from all sections of the Gujarati Community.

NCGO was highly active for few years, core Members either due to age or other issues retired from NCGO which resulted in reduced activities by NCGO. It must be noted that in 1986 and thereafter for Executive Committee composed of resourceful individuals with contacts within the Gujarati Community. EC consisted Members from Media, Legal Profession, Political background, Accountants and Leading Members of the Community who had good networking, dedicated and resourceful.

NCGO was sustained by successive committees for which we must thank them all. These committees lacked the calibre which founding committee had hence NCGO started hosting few events which drifted towards mostly social types of activities such as Gujarat Day, Dinner and Dance Party to raise funds. No doubt there were few and far in between seminars to engage with Political Parties but lacked the tooth to be recognised as truly National Organisation of Gujarati Community in UK due to: **(My sincere apologies for hurt sentiments as some Past and Present EC may feel this is not the true)**

1 Lack of Awareness of NCGO's Existence within the Gujarati Community in UK
2. Lack of talent
3. Lack of Funding
4. Lack of Support from the Gujarati Organisations – Lack of Participation
5. NCGO failed to establish Regional Structure outside London and in other parts of London.
6. Lack of Networking Power and Resource deficit, there were few but not enough.
7. Pseudo Organisations becoming Members of the NCGO and appointing Members to the NCGO EC at the AGM.

There is need for NCGO to be active if it wants to be a National Organisation to fight for the Gujarati Community's needs in this ever changing Political and Economic situations.

Brexit will bring lots of challenges, no one knows what will be the economic climate, unemployment is now a permanent feature, elderly people needs are increasing, our youth is now feeling the pinch, extremism and terrorism is a reality, Government is cutting their budgets, Law and Order situation is grim, there is threat from certain sector of the Ethnic Group. If there is no viable Organisation to represent the interest of the Gujarati Community then we will always be an insignificant minority group. Why is Gujarati Community not a Vocal Force despite it being one of the most successful and vibrant Ethnic Group.

Gujaratis must look at Indians who went to Guyana, Hindu Community in Guyana is disintegrated beyond recognition, is this the fate Gujaratis in UK wish to have.

Gujaratis in UK has excelled ever since arriving in UK:

The Gujarati community makes up a dynamic and increasingly successful sector of the British population at present estimated to be in excess of 850,000. They are mainly settled in metropolitan areas like Greater London, East Midlands, West Midlands, Lancashire and Yorkshire. However, they are also settled far beyond the cities. Former British Prime Minister, Baroness Margaret Thatcher, pointed out in her message for 'Asian Business', they are 'not only helping to bring new life back into the inner cities, but also into our smaller towns and villages'. Approximately 65% of the Gujaratis in Britain are settled in or around London, so that Gujaratis in the capital number some 600,000 plus presently.

There is a large Gujarati business community in Britain, involved in the retail sector, wholesale, export and import, manufacturing and financial services, including banking,

insurance, etc. Gujaratis are also well represented in the professions in the UK, many of them being respected doctors, accountants, solicitors, pharmacists, opticians, engineers, and others including, increasingly, in the mainstream media. The number of professionals would easily run to over 60,000, in the economic sector, the largest concentration of Gujaratis is in retailing. According to an Economist Intelligence Unit report, 48% of Britain independent retailers are now Asians. And, according to tobacco giant Rothmans Southern Sales Division, 90% of the latter's customers are Asian, almost 70% of these being Gujaratis. Based on the above statistics, one can safely presume that there are between 40,000 and 50,000 Gujarati owned businesses of various types in Britain today. These are between predominantly to be found in the grocery, CTN (confectionery, tobacconist, and newsagent), convenience stores and pharmacy sector, as well as in sub-post offices, off-licences.

According to several reports about the numbers of Asian and Gujarati students in various schools and colleges, Gujarati youngsters would seem to be in the forefront of achievement in higher education in Britain both quantitatively and qualitatively. Today there is hardly any prominent institution of learning in the United Kingdom, including such world famous names as Oxford, Cambridge and LSE, where Gujarati boys and girls are not well represented. Gujaratis in Britain have not only become prominent in both the educational and economical fields in their country of adoption, but they are also eager to contribute to various worthwhile and philanthropic projects in Britain, India and other countries.

Despite such Economic Power and Academic Power Gujaratis have failed to form a formidable National Organisation which would be taken seriously by the British Government at National and Local Level compared to Jewish and Muslim Community. Scattered based on caste basis we have built Temples and Community Hall but not under “GUJARATI COMMUNITY BANNER” this we need to do hence NCGO as the only existing Organisation needs to be a Force.

<u>What are the Issues that concern the Gujarati Organisations:</u>

1. Needs of Elders with regards to Health & Welfare.
2. Youth – Education and Job Opportunities
3. Women’s Issues
4. Gujarati Business Community Issues by engaging with them to identify the Issues
5. Bring awareness of NCGO and its Aims & Objectives
6. Planning Issues for Temple & Community Centres
7. Visas for Priest, Cooks, House Helpers, Students, Dependents
8. Non – Domicile Tax
9. Government assistance to Ethnic Groups when approving Tenders
10. Engage with Government to explore probability of Pensions drawn in India
11. Crematorium for Hindus
12. Engage with Gujarati Community to provide facilities for Youth to have venue to cater for their needs

13. Awareness to be involved with Political Parties and support Hindu Candidates or others who are sympathisers to our cause
14. Engage with Gujarat Government to address issues relating to Visa, Property matters etc
15. Engage with Airlines to have Direct Flights to Gujarat
16. Engage with Jewish Community and Learn from them how they engage with the Government
17. Have NCGO Regional Officers and Regular Engagement with them
18. Challenges after Brexit

Above is a tall order, NCGO alone cannot tackle all these issues, some of these issues could be tackled by direct action by NCGO subject to having the required resources, other issues could be tackled by forming Task Committees by outsourcing from interested and capable individuals.

How can the Gujarati Community help NCGO:

- Non affiliated organisations to join NCGO
- Organisations to convey concerns of their Members to NCGO
- Organisations to convey NCGO's message to their Members
- Business Community either contribute funds to NCGO or Sponsor NCGO Events
- All Organisations to promote NCGO's Events and Participate actively
- Organisations to seek Nominations at the AGM, they must Nominate someone who has desire and ability to work for NCGO.

We lag far behind Jewish, Muslim and Afro-Caribbean people in the area of Political Engagement. Look at the Council Map, Hindus are now a Minority in terms of Hindu Councillors and same applies to the House of Commons. Gujarati Community needs to educate the Community to join the Political Parties and be active like Jewish & Muslim Community.

Jewish Community has been involved in to UK's Politics since Henry the VIII Era. Today Jewish Community has a strong foothold within the Government and in the Economic arena. They have tremendous influence upon the policies favouring Jewish Community. This they have achieved by being united having suffered badly during the holocaust. One needs to admire their resolve and tenacity

Muslim Community similarly is flexing their muscles in the Political Arena. They have penetrated the Political Parties mainly Labour Party. They have hold on Council seats.

Hindus are now being side lined by the Parties in favour of a Muslim Candidate due to voting power Muslims have within the Party System. This has been achieved because of their unity.

"Britain is changing rapidly. Will our political parties be up to the challenge of recognising that process?" Will the interest of Gujarati Community be on the list for consideration?

The analysis found that in 159 of Britain's 632 constituencies, the number of Muslim voters was greater than the margin of victory in 2010. Of these 159 seats, 90 were considered marginal.

In 51 constituencies – which make up eight per cent of the total seats, and where 40 of them are considered marginal – the number of Hindu voters exceeded the 2010 margin of victory. Sikh voters, meanwhile, exceeded the margin in 34 constituencies, Buddhists in 15 and Jews in 13.

Researchers found many examples of Muslim voting intentions affected by perceptions of British foreign policy and concerns about Islamophobia. Some Muslims and Jews would weigh up which party seemed closer to their own views on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, they say, while some Indian voters attached importance to politicians' views on the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir

Political Party has not attached much importance to the Hindu Vote Bank except in certain areas where the standing MP has maintained the links with Hindu Community in their local areas.

If this political imbalance continues then we Gujaratis will have no say within the Local and National Levels. Hindus/Gujaratis must play an active role in Politics by first joining the Party of their choice, ensuring that Hindus/Gujaratis have the influence to nominate a candidate. We must nurture the candidates, support them both in terms of men power and finance so that these candidates do get elected to provide us a voice where it matters.

NCGO Requests Help from Gujarati Business Community, Professional Community and People with Community Experience:

As incoming President, elected on 26thSeptember 2016, my mission is to revive the NCGO so that we can start to address concerns of Gujarati Community and bring awareness of NCGO and its mission. NCGO must engage with all the Gujarati Organisations in UK to make them understand why there is need for centralised organisation.

To achieve success NCGO needs support from Gujarati Community, Gujarati Organisations, Gujarati Business Community and Professionals from Gujarati Community and Youth:

1. Please help us to identify the needs of the Community.
2. Be Part of NCGO at EC Level or as a Guiding Entity.
3. Help NCGO to be Financially sufficient

4. Help us to Organise identified Seminars to bring awareness.
5. Those with Community Experience please be part of NCGO Committee

NCGO as an Organisation can raise the issues that concerns Gujarati Community but to be a recognisable force it needs to have committed, resourceful and known faces with ability to reach out to the ordinary members of the community.

It is in the interest of the Gujarati Community to ensure that NCGO is strong in terms of in-house talent, ability and financial power.

NCGO urges all the Gujarati Organisations to be affiliated with NCGO and to play an active part in fulfilling the aspirations of the community and protecting the future needs of our generation to come. Priority is to motivate the youth to be involved in the community affairs and make them understand why it is important to maintain identity of the Gujarati Community. There is a serious concern of grooming, forced marriages, failed interfaith marriages, induced marriages etc.

On my part as the incoming President of NCGO:

1. will try to engage with Business Community, Professionals and individuals to bring awareness about NCGO and seek their support.
2. will also engage with Gujarati Communities to be Members of NCGO
3. will weed out pseudo organisations which are Members of NCGO to stop them seeking false representation on the Executive Committee
4. will try to ensure that those EC Members elected do justify holding the post.

NCGO's present Executive Committee will have to work hard and make contribution where required to achieve the set out goal of NCGO. Without the dedication and commitment of the EC Members any of the above objectives will not be realised.

Please kindly refer to NCGO's website www.ukncgo.org for regular updates on issues and events. Site will be re-designed for easy access and mobile phone receptive.

NCGO present Executive Committee:

Officers:

C J Rabheru – **President**, Pravin Amin – **Vice President,** Anita Ruparelia – **Secretary**
G P Desai – **Treasurer**, Sumantrai Desai – **Assistant Treasurer**, Jitubhai Patel – **PRO**
EC Members: Vim Odedra, Mahendrasinh Jadeja, G M Patel, Krishna Pujara, Nitiben Gheewala
Nimuben Parekh. **Past President: Sharad Parikh**
Patrons Council Chairman: C B Patel **Advisory Council**: Kantibhai Nagda, Lalubhai Parekh

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF GUJARATI COMMUNITY UK
PLEASE SUPPORT US
FILL THE FORM IF YOU CAN HELP US

Name: _____ Surname _____

Business Name if any: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code _____

Mobile: _____ Email: _____

I**ndividual Person**

NCGO needs individual who are capable of leading a Task or help NCGO to be a National Organisation, able to identify needs of the community and lead the task committee:

How can you help us: (please write below)

For Business Community: Please we need your support

1. Advise us of issues NCGO can assist with
2. Sponsor NCGO's Events
3. Donate
4. Sponsor an Advert on NCGO's website: www.ukncgo.org £100 yearly.
5. Assist us in any way you can

WE SEEK YOU SUPPORT

Email this form to:: info@ukncgo.org **& cc to: totalitjobs@aol.com**

Or post to the Secretary:
Anita Ruparelia, 51 Harrow Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 6DG
Tel:07971813370 or 0208 903 5032 Email: anitaruparelia@aol.com