

This is Your Heritage...

Stories from the Indian Community in South Gloucestershire

Interview: Sarika and Devin Morrison with Shiv Sama Full interview Audio (19.11.2021)

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Interviewer: Halima Malek

Recorder: Hardik Gaurav

Location: At Sarika Morrison's home in Bradley Stoke

Interview

Participant prefix key:

I: Interviewer
R: Respondent

Sarika: My name is Sarika Morrison and Shiv is my father.

I: Thank you. Okay. So, where were you born?

Sarika: During my father's story he talked about moving back to Northern Ireland so I was born in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, on the 6th of December 1978.

I: Thank you. What was your childhood like?

Sarika: My childhood was great. My mother and her family, so she's one of seven, my grandparents, all my cousins from my mum's side, so it was really good to have that family connection. My aunt and uncle lived in London from my father's side, so we had lots of family connection and it was really great growing up in Northern Ireland actually.

I: How did you feel? You are born and bred in Northern Ireland, so you're Irish, but you have a very strong Hindu traditional upbringing. How was that for you?

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Sarika: It was different because both my parents being Indian, both being Hindu and really proud to be Indian and Hindu, but I was born in Northern Ireland. I have a very strong Northern Irish accent and I don't think people can place where I am from, but I felt that gave me the best of both worlds. So, growing up in Northern Ireland but having a very strong connection to India, to my Indian heritage and to Hinduism. We would go to the temple a lot in Belfast. Because my dad was really active in that, again, there was the strong community of Hinduism which was great, so I had the best of both worlds really.

I: Did you have a big connection with your Irish friends in school?

Sarika: Yeah, absolutely. Again, I think because of some of the issues that were happening in Northern Ireland during the 80s and certainly 90s, there was quite a lot of focus on Catholic and Protestants that any other culture was sort of included. There were no issues growing up. Yes, I clearly looked different. Myself and my brother in primary school and secondary school were the only children of visible ethnicity and, although everybody looked and sort of stared, there was never any big issues. We never were involved in any hate or racism. I think people were just interested. They didn't really know what to do or what to say but I was always included. I've got fantastic friends [inaudible 50:55] particularly secondary school. They're still friends. When I go back to Northern Ireland we meet up. We're friends on Facebook and things like that. So, being in Northern Ireland is very family orientated also, so that connected quite well with how strong our family values were.

I: That's brilliant. So, you said you've had an amazing upbringing, school has been fine, you have a very big family on your mum's side especially. So, how ambitious were you now, as a child? What did you want to do? Your father obviously wanted to travel and move out of India and see the rest of the world. What were your ambitions as a child?

Sarika: Sort of similar. I'm very independent like my father. I'm a very strong person. I wanted to achieve quite a lot. You know, family ethics, values, respect, working hard just like my father did and his family. So, for me, nobody likes school but I didn't mind school and I knew that education was really important. I went to a grammar school. I did my A-levels and I knew I wanted to go to university but I knew I didn't want to go to university in Ireland, North or South. I wanted to go to England, albeit it's not wanting to go to Canada or move somewhere very far away. As much as I very much enjoyed Northern Ireland there wasn't a lot of industry. There weren't a lot of jobs because of the troubles in the 90s, late 9's, at that particular time. So, I worked really hard, did my A-levels and then applied to university and I went to university in '97 in England, North of England, University of Sunderland near Newcastle.

I: Okay. You've gone through a lot and it says it all, you're very ambitious. How was that move to England for you, your first initial take?

Sarika: For me, I was very excited to go. That was a real ambitious drive for me because my family supported me 100%. They were always there so, for me, going, this was something for me, knowing my family were fully supportive and wanted me to do well whatever that might be. It was scary though because none of my friends... we all went to different universities or did different things. [Over coughing 53:25]. I got a very small plane from Belfast to Newcastle. It was a sort of small airline. It was really scary for the first couple of days. It was really quite scary. Mum and Dad came with me to leave me at university and were there for a day or two and then I was on my own. But although it was scary it was really exciting because it was a whole new chapter of my life. I was 18 years old. I hadn't really lived outside of Northern Ireland but it was great. It was three years. An absolutely fantastic three years which made me into the person that I am. I've got my friends from university that I'm still friends with today and then seeing the difference between Northern Ireland and England was quite a difference.

I: Was it a big difference?

Sarika: Yes, because in Northern Ireland, as I mentioned, myself and my brother and our family, we would have been the only ethnicity and although we visited my father's sister in London a lot, we went every summer, having such a multi-cultural area in terms of England in comparison to a small place like Northern Ireland, it was very different. Yeah, absolutely.

I: So, like you said, this is what's made you the strong independent person you are. Obviously you've got a lot of your father in you. If we just rewind back just a little. Do you have any memories of your visits to India as a child?

Sarika: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, because of the temple in Belfast, that was always really strong. The language, the culture, celebrating Diwali, all of those types of things. When we were younger my brother and I went to India a few times. Sadly my memory's not great but I just remember because my mother's family and my father's family were so close in terms of distance. We were able to go between the two families. There were always strange things like there were [over coughing 55:27], those types of things. The food was a bit different. But it was really great and we enjoyed it. It didn't travel as much then in our school years because actually education was really important for us so we would stay, my brother and I, with my mum. My dad would try and go back as business allowed him time to go back. So, there was a period of 18 years where myself and my mum didn't go because of school and things like that, so it wasn't until much later that I went back to India. I was in my early 20's the next time I went.

I: Now, obviously being of Indian ethnicity but being Irish, or British if you now want to [inaudible 56:13] as you've moved to England, what was that like to go back as a 20 year old to India?

Sarika: I'd wanted to go for a long time but because of education and then I got my degree and [over coughing 56:26] I'd actually gone back to get married. I'd gone to get married. So, I was at university for three years and I ended up coming back to Northern Ireland, although I [had a plan 56:38] because of jobs and things like that. I'd said to my dad 'I'm applying for lots of jobs. There aren't enough... I am ambitious. I've just got my degree. I think I might go back to somewhere different in England'. But I happened to meet my husband when I was out with my friends and we swapped numbers and we started dating and then we had our wedding in Northern Ireland.

I: Okay. Just for the audience, what ethnicity was your husband?

Sarika: My husband's not Indian. As I said, there weren't very many Indian families or Indian people in Northern Ireland and although my father and my family and I had talked about a similar thing to my mum and dad, have an arranged marriage, that wasn't something that I wanted. It might have been that I would have met somebody of my own heritage when I was in university, which I didn't, it just didn't happen that way, and coming back to Northern Ireland, just happened to meet my husband. But, yes, he's an Irishman and he's a Roman Catholic so he's not of the same ethnicity.

I: Okay. If I can just bring Shiv into this. How did you feel that your daughter is getting married, which is exciting for any parent but that he wasn't of an Indian or Hindu heritage.

R: Being very much stronger Indian, that was a bit of a shock, but we had a talk, talks, and I understood that my daughter's life is her life. If she is happy I'll be happy, but the only one thing I said was 'you can get married but we have to have an Indian wedding'.

I: Okay. So, you still wanted to hold onto your tradition?

R: Yes. So, because most of my family is India they all couldn't come so we agreed on that we would have a Court wedding here where all the people from his family and our friends and family were invited here. After that we went to India, had a traditional Indian wedding. Even my son-in-law went on the horse and everything. So, it was totally a traditional Indian wedding.

I: So, it was very happily received?

Sarika: Oh, absolutely. Yes. Of course. Of course.

I: What was it like for your husband's family now, to have a daughter from an Indian heritage? How did they receive that news?

Sarika: They were great. I think in Northern Ireland they had come through so much by this stage, this was early 2000, there was no issue. [Ph. Kieron's 59:43] family are fantastic. They didn't have an issue that (a) he wasn't marrying somebody of his own faith and (b) somebody very, very different. You know, it's a completely different faith and different ethnicity, but they received it really well. We had a fantastic wedding. My husband was only too happy for us to have an Indian wedding. He was completely... I mean, my dad, we talked about an elephant at one point coming to the wedding but he came on the horse. He had a traditional turban, he had a sword, he was very excited about that, and did all of that and it was great because I, as I mentioned, hadn't been to India for a long time. I wasn't sure how my cousins, in particular, would receive my husband, so most of my dad's brothers and sisters their children are of a similar age, particularly my dad's brother's, welcomed him in like he was another brother. It was fabulous. Absolutely, you know, they were getting him into trouble, taking him to different places that they enjoyed around them. They were showing him lots of different things so it was brilliant, yeah.

I: So, you were very blessed that it all came together really, really well?

Sarika: Absolutely. Absolutely.

I: So, now you're married, you visited India and your husband's there, you're family's there. What was next? Did you come back then to Ireland after you got married?

Sarika: Yeah, so we had got married in May 2003 in Ireland and had our Court marriage, but it wasn't until February the next year that we went to India for a variety of different logistical reasons. So, when we came back from India we – my husband's an engineer – I had actually gone back to do my Master's degree at night while I worked full-time and again that ambitious... I wanted a really good career and although Northern Ireland was in a better place after the troubles companies weren't investing there. There wasn't as many opportunities for both myself and my husband so, yeah, we had a big talk about our future.

I: So, how did you move to Bristol? What happened?

Sarika: I had said to my husband [over coughing 61:58] even when I was going to university, 'our family are always our family, they're behind us no matter what. No matter where we live, our family is there, they support us'. I lived in North of England which was great while I was at university but similarly the [s.l. academy 62:14] wasn't very good, particularly in North England. I thought London was a little bit too much, too competitive, maybe not as friendly as it could be, even though I had relatives in London. We looked at Bristol. Don't ask me why but I think there were flights from Bristol to Belfast so it would be easier to get home. Like I said, London felt too much. North of England wasn't dissimilar to Northern Ireland in terms of the economy and also the weather. Bristol was much better weather at that time.

I: Was there a story [over coughing 62:49] you just chose Bristol off a map? Could you share this story with us because it's really interesting?

Sarika: Yeah. Like I said, North of England wasn't quite... I've been there and I've done that and it was fabulous but, again, from a career point of view I think we'd looked at [over coughing 63:07] down south but I think because Bristol was quite a big – you know, on the map – it was a big area. I done a little bit of research. There was going to be plenty of jobs for my engineer husband. At that particular time my Masters was in guidance and counselling. I was a counsellor and there seemed like plenty of opportunities in Bristol and, like I said, it wasn't going to be too hard to get back to Northern Ireland if that was the case.

I: Brilliant. Okay, so you've now moved to Bristol for work, for career. Which part of Bristol did you move to?

Sarika: I remember I'd said to my husband – we had bought a house in Northern Ireland – so, 'we'll put our house on the market. While we're waiting for that to sell I'll go over to Bristol for a couple of days and just find out what that looks like, where we could stay'. That was really scary. I remember coming over, flying over. I'd booked a B&B in Henleaze. I had taken my suit to go and look for jobs and look for somewhere to live and I remember walking down Whiteladies Road and I was really scared because I thought 'what am I... this is huge. This is huge'. We've left our jobs, really decent jobs, we've put our house up on the market, I'm here on my own, my husband didn't come with me because he was handling things in Northern Ireland, and it was really quite scary. But, by the end of the day, the estate agent on Whiteladies Road had showed us a house in Bradley Stoke, I'd applied for some jobs, because in Northern Ireland when I was applying for jobs they only saw the Northern Ireland address and I think they were thinking 'well, you're applying for jobs here in Bristol but your address on your CV is Northern Ireland. That just doesn't feel right'. So, yeah, we found a place to rent, while our house was being sold, in Bradley Stoke and within a few weeks my husband and I had left our job, our house was sold, we put everything in the back of our car and a van was coming with some of our bigger items, and that was in May of 2004. It was the week of our first wedding anniversary. The end of that week was our first wedding anniversary.

I: As a young couple it really shows how strong and ambitious you are. After this move did you ever think 'oh my god, I need to move back or were you really happy with this joint decision that you had made for your future?

Sarika: My husband and I say all the time it was the best decision we ever made. Northern Ireland is still where we were born. My husband was born in Northern Ireland 10 minutes away from where we lived. It's always our home. My husband's family is there, we go back often, but this just felt right because we wanted to have a better life for our jobs, we wanted to have a better [s.l. community 66:08] and we've never looked back. Absolutely never looked back.

I: How was that for you, for your dad and your mum to come and move with you?

Sarika: For the first couple of years when Kieron and I were here we'd probably go back to Northern Ireland at least four or five times a year at least because both sets of our parents and family were there and, as my father mentioned, his health was getting worse, my brother was in Canada, so I flew back quite often to see him and I just kept saying to him 'your health isn't as good as it could be, your businesses have wound down now, you need to retire, you need to look after yourself, it's me or my brother'. I was fortunate because I had the grandchild. I had the only grandchild so I had an extra card. I wanted him to come over, be with us, have my mum and my dad close by in this great new life that we had and spend time with our grandson because family is really important to us. So, luckily it didn't take very much persuading and they moved over and that for me was the best thing ever. I could finally have the great life I'd started to build with my husband here in Bristol and my son and have my mum and dad close by. I couldn't have wished for anything more.

I: Which is important, especially now you have children.

Sarika: Yeah.

I: So, your life now and your husband's life, how culturally was it for you? Were you still including your Hindu traditions in your everyday life and obviously now you have a child, so how important was this for you now?

Sarika: Yeah, very much. Kieron and I always spoke about when we would have children and how we would bring them up and actually for us it's important that they have both faiths because my son, Devin, is half Irish from his father's side and from me and a great reason when my dad did come over was he could help support me with some of the language, celebrating Diwali and some of the other traditions that we had and as my dad started to get better and because of his faith and his heritage it's important he made a lot of connections in Bristol with the temples and things like that so it meant that my son could keep that richness, to keep involved in that as much as possible. So, yeah, it was really important that we kept that element because I'm really proud to be Indian and Hindu and I wanted my son to have that element as well.

I: That's fantastic. Back to you Mr Shiv. Was it quite daunting for you now to make a very big move, even though you knew England, but you spent a lot of your life in Ireland and obviously it's nice, you've got a daughter and a son-in-law and a grandson but was the move still quite daunting, especially for your wife who was leaving a lot of her family?

R: It was. We never ever thought that we would leave Northern Ireland, but my wife she doesn't keep that well, I wasn't well at all, so we both needed help so we decided to move here. My wife, she moved half-heartedly. Sarika used to live one street up from me, where I live, before she moved here.

I: Okay, in Ireland, yeah.

R: No, no. Here.

Sarika: When my parents first came to Bristol they literally lived around the corner from us so we could walk, within walking distance, and then a few years later, because of better schooling, we moved.

R: Yeah. We looked around everywhere. We got a flat near my daughter so it was walking distance, so I would pick up my grandson from school every day. Actually that made my health better.

I: Brilliant.

R: That's what I looked forward to every day, that I'm going to pick him up from school and bring him to my house. He would always have his meal with us before I would leave him back and even to all the primary schools, all the... yeah, primary school. Even when he moved to secondary school I used to pick him up from the bus station every day from school and would make sure that he went to my house every evening, had a dinner there and me leaving him here. He wouldn't have wanted anybody else to leave him here. So, it was a kind of booster for me. My wife it took her a couple of years. Then she got again very attached to the grandson so whenever he was coming from school she would have everything ready for him and the life became great. My health got a little bit better. I started doing a bit of community work. I do a lot of community work from South Glos, as well as Bristol. That was part of it, that we came to... we had a talk with Bristol's head of the library. No, sorry, South Glos, and he said 'sure, why don't we do a project'. I thought it was a great idea but it hasn't been done before so we initiated this project and here we are. I'm here myself and gathering up our history is very important for the future generations [I: of course] to know how people came here and how they manage. I'm one of the very lucky ones. I loved India. When I came here I was able to stay at my sister's house so everything was done for me. It was easier to set up a business. I didn't really have to work for anybody. Things were pretty normal for me, but the stories I heard of people that came before me, they had such a hard time and I consider myself very lucky to have a family and friends' circle. Now I'm actually official spokesperson for the Hindu community for Bristol and South Glos, which I'm very proud of and I try my best to help the Indian community. Before we used to come to visit my daughter, she had told me there was a temple so I was very interested, so we went to the temple and when I came here I was very lonely, my health wasn't that great so, being Indian and religious, I wanted to go to the temple and pray. There I met Mr Mehta. He was the chairperson for Avon Indian Community Association and I talked to him and I told him how involved I was back in Northern Ireland. He said 'why don't you join AICA, which I did and a few years later I became a chairman. I'm a chairman for about six years. It's the same in the temple because I used to go there. I had restaurant, so they wanted me to help with their kitchen so get a new kitchen sorted out because I had the knowledge, so that's why I got involved with the Bristol Hindu temple. I'm a board member for that, and that's how I got to know a lot of Indian community and local community. Then, a few years after that, I was doing the community posters for the Avon Indian community. I met Batook. He was the chairperson for SARI and he said to me 'Shiv, there is a lot of Indian community moving into South Glos, Bradley Stoke, the Council are looking for somebody who could do the race equality and you're the right kind of person, you have the knowledge. Would you be interested?' So, I thought 'why not?' Then I started South Glos Race Equality Network in 2013. I was elected the first chairperson for that, which I still am, and with the help of Council and everything we are doing a lot of good stuff in South Gloucestershire. That actually passes my time, gave me a life. I still have a lot of health issues. I can't do what I should be doing but I'm trying my best to help the community.

I: You're really pushing yourself and you've obviously really integrated into this community and you're a very big part of it [R: yeah], of all the community networking and that's beautiful. If we can bring your son in?

R: Yeah.

I: Today we're sat here with Devin Morrison. Could you please introduce yourself and spell your name for us?

Devin: I'm Devin Morrison. It's spelt D-e-v-i-n, not o-n. Normally it gets confused. Some people get confused.

I: Brilliant. Thank you. Could you please tell us what your relationship is to Sarika and to Shiv?

Devin: Well, Sarika's my mum and Shiv's my grandad, which I call nana.

I: Which you call nana?

Devin: Yeah.

I: Could you explain for the viewers what does nana mean?

Devin: I don't really know. I just call them nana.

R: An Indian tradition. The maternal grandfathers are called nana and nani and paternal parents are called dada and dadi.

I: Okay, so that's how you differentiate which parent. Okay, Devin, so you obviously come from an inter-racial family. Can you summarise how does that feel? I mean, it must be very natural to you but for us who's watching how is that to have an English Irish family but also a very strong Hindu traditional family?

Devin: It's pretty normal, except that I got to Hindu events and I go to the temple. That's really the difference.

I: Okay, and how is that for you? How does that feel to go to Hindu traditional days and temples? How does it... because obviously you must stand out in your school around your peers and friends, but it also must really enrich you as a person because you know so much about two different traditions, so how is that?

Devin: Well, I know many people from different places. Everybody's from everywhere so it doesn't really matter.

I: Yeah. Okay.

Sarika: But do you remember when... a really good story I can share actually about Devin's name.

I: Please, yeah.

Sarika: He talked about [inaudible 78:51]. When I was pregnant my husband and I had picked a girl's name but we couldn't agree on a boy's name and we wanted sometime that was meaningful so my husband and I were reading through baby books and we wanted something that meant for both cultures so my husband found the name Devin then, but it's spelt differently, but Devin is the Irish word for poet but it's the Indian word for god and that's why we picked D-e-v-i-n because a lot of people think it's the county Devon in the UK but it's not. My husband and I had actually never visited Devon before Devin was born. So, the i-n is that his name means both Irish and Indian and that was really important for us. Yeah.

I: Wow. Yeah, which is really beautiful to keep that connection.

Sarika: Absolutely.

I: Your grandad mentioned how as a child he picked you up from school and he went to nani's house and had traditional food, and for your grandad, for your nana, which is very important, especially moving from his time to Ireland how important is that for you to have this very strong connection with your grandparents in your life? Like every day you see them and you [inaudible 80:09]?

Devin: Well, it's good because I get to learn about my culture and everything and it just's fun to have them. I enjoy it.

I: Which is the best part? The food? Your nani's food?

Devin: Yeah, the food's really good.

I: What's your favourite Indian food?

Devin: [S.l. Farturas 80:30], they're nice.

R: Fartura. You know fartura? Fartura and [ph. trolley 80:35].

I: I know trolley.

R: Yeah, trolley and fartura is a traditional Punjabi bread which is fried.

I: Like [ph. bully 80:44]?

R: Yeah.

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Sarika: Yes, yes.

R: Bully is made with the chapatti flour whereas fartura is made with self-raising flour.

I: Okay.

R: You never had one?

I: No.

R: Oh my, you don't know what you're missing.

I: [Inaudible 80:57]! So, it's like a sort of fried pancake [inaudible 81:03]?

R: Yeah.

I: So, if you had to choose right now, fartura and trolley and fish and chips, which one would it be?

Devin: Don't know.

I: [Laughter]. You don't know?

Devin: No.

I: They're both about the same in balance? Okay. Your grandad mentioned before that you spend a lot of time going with him to events?

Devin: Yeah.

I: How is that for you, first of all, Shiva, as a nana, a very proud nana, to be able to take your grandson?

R: Very proud that he's leaning about Indian culture. If we were doing a Havan, which is a very traditional Indian thing. We used to have one every month.

I: What is that?

R: Havan is lighting a fire and reciting the mantras and putting the [inaudible 82:02] in it for the benefit of the earth and the community. He will sit beside me. You have to put ghee, which is purified butter, and the samagri. He would put the ghee and I would put the samagri and chant the mantras and, when you go to the function, he'll greet the people the way I do, just does the same thing. He's a great help in the temple at trying to serve people.

- I:** Ah, beautiful. So, you're very much connected in the community. Does he stand out in the community?
- R:** A little bit. A little bit, yes.
- Sarika:** For me, you know, my dad's just talked about helping in the temple. My favourite things are when there is a Havan my dad will help with the food in the kitchen. This is the sous chef [I: laughs] so he will go and help make the chapattis and help make the food. They all know him in the temple as Shiv's son and then I will come along to help as well and I can stand very proudly and have our generations there. I think it probably doesn't sound it because I'm quite light and, as I mentioned, my husband's a very white Irishman. But Devin, tell about the story... my son is, or was, a scout, because he's a little bit older now, so a few years ago his investiture from going from a cub to a scout, tell the story about when you did your investiture?
- Devin:** Okay. So, what you do there's like different countries of different languages, so they had different languages, like you had a say when you were getting invested by hugging the scout flag pole. I wanted to do the Indian one and he was like 'are you sure you're Indian?' and I was like 'yes'. But they had to ask my dad.
- Sarika:** Yeah. My husband normally takes him to Scouts and I'm doing something around the house so they hadn't seen me and didn't realise that Dev had a Hindu connection so when he asked 'can I do the Hindu investiture? Can I wait and say the language?' they kind of went 'oh, okay, yeah, if that's what you want to do', so he did that, and afterwards the scout master spoke to my husband and said 'oh, really interesting, Devin wanted to do the investiture in Hindi' and my husband said 'he is half Indian, his mother is Indian, it's very important to him'. So, that was lovely for me that he chose to say 'actually could I say it in Hindi'. So, yeah, that's one of my favourite stories I think.
- I:** Do all your friends and peers, do you proudly talk about this Indian heritage side of yours?
- Devin:** They know I'm Indian but don't really go onto it much.
- I:** Do you have any Indian language?
- Devin:** No.
- R:** Just a little bit.
- Sarika:** Yeah. When Devin was younger – not so much now obviously with COVID – the temple had an Indian school on a Saturday because again there were lots of people who...
- R:** [Inaudible 85:28].

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Sarika: Yeah, so where they may or may not be mixed culture or just have come here and maybe finding it difficult to keep that connection, so my dad would take Devin on a Saturday so he learned the prayers, some of the language, get to meet other children. He would have done that particularly when he was eight, nine, ten. Yeah, so that was good.

I: Yeah. Cool. So, you've visited India?

Devin: Yes.

I: How many times?

Devin: Once.

Sarika: Once.

I: Do you have a memory of when you actually got into India? Your first memory, maybe coming off the plane? Have you seen any Indian toilets 86:09?

Devin: No, I don't really remember. All I really remember was when we went to the Taj Mahal and that's it.

I: How was that?

Devin: It was good. It was massive and beautiful.

I: How was the heat? What time of the year did you go?

R: We went in March.

Sarika: Yeah, we went in March. Kieron and I wanted to... we'd gone and got married in 2004 and then because of our children, my dad's health and things we hadn't gone out, so about three years ago I said to my dad 'we'll all go'. So, my mum, dad, Kieron and myself, Devin, and we went out for a few weeks. My dad was able to show the house he talked about, although it's not there anymore after many years, got to meet relatives. We did some of the touristy things like the Taj Mahal. We went to Jaipur. But he got to meet a lot of his relatives and just see all his nana's stories about the shops and schools and rickshaws and all of those types of things so [over speaking 87:12].

I: So these things came alive?

Sarika: Yeah.

- I:** Did they come alive, because obviously you'd seen it and heard it, maybe seen a few pictures, but obviously now going to India and seeing these faces?
- Devin:** Yeah.
- I:** So, would you visit India again?
- Devin:** Maybe, yeah.
- I:** Yeah? Brilliant. Okay. We're just going to round off slightly soon. Sarika, Irish or Indian? What do you connect more with?
- Sarika:** I would say Indian actually, very much so, I think, because of the strong cultural connection we had. I always say I'm proud to be Indian and proud to be a Hindu. I can't get away from the Northern Irish because clearly my accent is very strong but actually that brings a lot of conversations up because my accent doesn't match. It's very, very different to how I look, and there's always interesting conversations. People ask me. I'm really happy for them to ask about why do I sound like this but look so different. But I would say Indian.
- I:** Okay. One more question. Ireland or Bristol?
- Sarika:** Bristol, for sure. I love that I was born in Northern Ireland, I was brought up there, but for me Bristol has become our home and, like I said, having my mum and dad here, this is our home.
- I:** Okay. Devin, what are you?! What are you is so funny! It's a silly question. What does your heart relate more to, your mum's culture or your dad's culture or both?
- Devin:** Both.
- I:** That's really nice.
- Devin:** Because I've visited both of the countries. I've seen my relatives on both sides so I don't think I'd pick either one. I'd pick both.
- I:** Okay. Do you have more of a strong connection with your mum's side of the family just because they live near you and you spend a lot more time with them, or it works both ways?
- Devin:** I think it works both ways because I still love my other grandparents and I love my grandparents here.
- I:** That's beautiful. So, he's very well [over speaking 89:29]?

Sarika: Yeah, family is very, very important to us. As I said, even though my husband and I moved to Bristol our family is always our family, so we do go... I'm very lucky my parents live so close. It's amazing. But Northern Ireland isn't far away so we do visit often. He sees his grandparents and his cousins a lot.

I: Yeah, that's very important.

Sarika: Absolutely.

I: Thank you. Okay, Mr Shiv, Indian or Irish?

R: Oh, Indian.

I: Indian?!

R: Indian. Until my last breath. I love here. I lived here 40 odd years but still Indian.

I: Even though you lived more in Ireland and England than India?

R: Yeah. I loved my life in Northern Ireland. I had a brilliant time, lot of friends, the business was good, but still my connection to India was very strong. I went to India every year apart from special circumstances, like COVID or the year I was very ill.

I: But your heart is still in India?

R: Yeah. Yeah.

I: Like the song, '[inaudible 90:47] India'?

R: Yeah.

I: Okay. Ireland or Bristol?

R: It's very different for me. I left India, came to London, left London, went to Northern Ireland, left Northern Ireland, here. No big difference to me. My home is where my family is.

I: That's beautiful.

R: If my family is here I'm just as good as anywhere.

I: Yeah. Sure. Okay. What's next in Shiv Sama's life? You've done so much. You've moved and travelled and you are also the push behind this project. What's next?

- R:** I want to see that my community which is very much growing, especially in South Gloucestershire. My biggest dream or my legacy which I would like it to be, to have a community centre for Indian people in South Gloucestershire. I am in talk with the authorities. We are working on it. If that happened while I'm living, that would be me.
- I:** So, no plans to return? No?
- R:** My life is around my children, you know, and my family and apart from that the community has given me a lot, I want to give something back to the community.
- I:** And I am sure that you will, the ambitious man that you are and to have such an ambitious and beautiful supporting family.
- R:** Yeah.
- I:** I wish you all the luck and thank you too, Sarika and Devin, and most of all thank you Mr Shiv.
- R:** Thank you.
- Sarika:** Thank you.

Transcript ends 92:59



Interview: Shiv Sama, Sarika and Devin Morrison Full interview Audio (19.11.2021)