THE PRACTISING MIDWIFE

News and Views

Description

South Asian Heritage Month 2024 – ‘Free to be me’



As South Asian Heritage Month comes to an end, we reflect on this vibrant month-long observance, running from July 18th to August 17th, which offers an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the rich history, culture, and contributions of the South Asian community in the UK and beyond.

Reflections

South Asian Heritage Month was first launched in 2019, aiming to shine a light on the diverse cultures of the South Asian diaspora, which includes people with roots in countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives. These nations, each with their unique traditions and histories, form a vibrant mosaic of

cultures, languages, religions, and communities that have significantly enriched global culture.

The Dates

The dates for South Asian Heritage Month hold historical significance. July 18th marks the anniversary of the Indian Independence Act of 1947, which led to the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan. August 17th is the date the Radcliffe Line was published, marking the border between India and Pakistan. These dates frame a month of reflection, education, and celebration, acknowledging the profound impact of these events on millions of lives and generations.

Celebrating Cultural Diversity



South Asian Heritage Month is a time to explore and celebrate the immense cultural diversity within South Asian communities. From the vibrant festivals of Diwali, Eid, and Vaisakhi, to the rich culinary traditions that have influenced global cuisine, South Asian culture is a tapestry woven with threads of history, spirituality, and creativity.

Throughout the month, various events and activities were held across the UK, ranging from cultural exhibitions, film screenings, and literature festivals, to music and dance performances that showcase the depth and diversity of South Asian art forms. These events not only celebrate the heritage but also provide a platform for younger generations to connect with their roots and share their cultural pride.

South Asian Communities

South Asian communities have made significant contributions to the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the UK. South Asians have been integral to the maternity and health services, particularly the NHS and we are so delighted to be able to work collaboratively with The Association of South Asian Midwives. Benash Nazmeen, Co-Founder & Co-Director of ASAM is a member of The Practising Midwife Editorial Advisory Board and we feel honoured to work alongside her, promoting the vital work that midwives from South Asian heritages do for women and birthing people.



Reflecting on Challenges

While South Asian Heritage Month is a time for celebration, it is also a moment for reflection. The history of the South Asian diaspora is marked by challenges, including the painful legacy of colonialism, the trauma of partition, and the ongoing struggles against racism and discrimination in various forms. Acknowledging these challenges is essential in fostering a more inclusive and understanding society.

Looking Ahead

As South Asian Heritage Month continues to grow in prominence, it offers a vital space for dialogue, education, and community building. It is a reminder of the importance of embracing diversity and celebrating the contributions of all cultures to the collective human experience. This month serves not only as a celebration of heritage but also as a call to action—an invitation to learn, connect, and honour the rich tapestry of cultures that make up the South Asian community. As we move forward, let us continue to embrace the values of inclusivity, respect, and unity, ensuring that the legacy of South Asian heritage is preserved and celebrated for generations to come.

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