

Our story is 35 years old – my father opened a grocery shop on Witton Road in Aston which he had for 10 years, Overnight we closed the shop and we were brought up to Stratford rd. My dad's friend was a fabric merchant – he helped set up we were selling milk one day and then selling fabric.

Most of the stuff then were Japanese – there was no dupatta – we would have to match the dupatta we had crimpolene - and something called flat – 1985 we opened. 4 wholesalers – we thought we were good business people but we were the only business people.

I took over the shop in the 1990's. My dad's friend was importing – he was a Punjabi and the Bengali customers boycotted him after the India – Pakistan war. His customers left over night. He was bringing in Japanese goods. Japanese kapda was expensive but amazing quality. Japanese kapda – floral or plain print not made for the Asian market, it was all polyester.

Azaad Kashmir people didn't know what cotton was – we were practical people. The men were buying the clothes

Pataan families would come and I would have to leave the shop and my mom would have to serve them. 10 or 15 years ago this was, they weren't allowed out. They used to do a courier service.

Japan is a conservative society we would be selling the same stuff over and over again. We did get stuff from India and Pakistan but the quality was low. Pakistan started from zero – they much better now.

Indonesia – China – Japan – supplies the online material now.

Partition fabric in the UK, this community was a section of Azaad Kashmir – it's a story to do with Mangla Dam someone negotiated visas as part of getting the contract to get the dam made. Everybody came Small heath, Aston, Allum Rock Smethwick are all from the Kashmir side of Pakistan.

Most the men got married here to the English population they thought they never gonna go back.

Partition is today is still a problem in this day and age – we are here – what are we doing here? Why do people still have to be far away from your parents? They can't

Would we have been here if partition didn't happen?

With fabric I got a feeling we have evolved now, we started with house mosques then in pubs and churches and now we have purpose built mosques. Fashion and fabric right now we ended up in India – we were buying from Korea – China Indonesia they didn't know what we were doing with the fabric, there was a communication issue – the scarves didn't match.

Mehim sahib - SKD salwar kameez dupatta –

Pakistan quality was very bad –

Mom bank rolled the family she was a seamstress in Aston using a Puff sewing machine and then at the Stratford Road. Readymade quality not good, fashion wasn't good. Recession a lot of illegal immigrants here in the last 5 years they have all gone. Eid everyone now has gone to readymade, ladies used to sew 40 suits in 2 weeks. A lot of fabric shops have become readymade. We have now become a specialist wedding shop.

False economy we were living in – we were the only ones, the girls wanted to go to Next. Out of respect my girls wear salwar kameez at

Pakistani community is still rigid but how long can you hold out, Hindu community much more westernised, Punjabi community.....

Kashmiri community – wedding day you wear salwar kameez on the vilima people are all dressed up.

New technology is going to rapidly change everything now in Karachi/Lahore we say we need it here on Friday. Now there isn't even a fashion, you can't say what styles in or what colours in.

Trends now, for the last 20 years it was the same and then someone clicked a switch in the last 5 years,

Technology

Fashion now is a massive wave of things, establishment means nothing it's difficult now to become established anything goes, I don't know where we going to be in 5 years. The customer base is going the girls have grown up with western clothes.

We went quickly to on line store and sold our fabric on line. We can switch from an Asian to UK customer. Completely white English, our community wasn't on line – they weren't as open to on line shopping.

We do internet, Facebook, snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, auction on amazon, we have 6000 items

Pakistani designers have come on board, they couldn't compete with India, and Pakistan wouldn't compete with India on price. They have gone couture, designer.

The books come out 4 seasons – 4 collections in a year the stock is sold out in hours, Because technology is so easy, sold in front rooms, we are losing customers to that. No exclusivity anymore – anyone can sell anything to anyone.

Partition affects people still – Pakistan hasn't got a history like India has, phulkari work, winter shawls, Kashmir shawls, a lot of the kids now it's lost already.

mobile phones going to trap them into this world.

We never saw a full face niqab for years but now it's more common,