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Guidelines for British Asian Representation

Your guide to choosing the right visuals





Representation matters

The British Asian population has various ethnicities, religions, linguistic and regional groups. Yet visual storytelling about British Asian lacks understanding of the diverse heritage and cultures that continue to link to the UK with South and East Asia.

The underrepresentation of the British Asian communities is limiting the full experiences and cultures of British Asian stories.

To celebrate the unique stories of British Asian communities, brands and marketers must create a deeper engagement with their audience by limiting the stereotypes pervasive in the media.

Getty Images has created an toolkit, offering more in-depth visual analysis, curated boards, and recommendations for visual storytelling to help improve the representation of British Asian communities.

Source: Cultural Atlas



Who are British Asians?

According to the Census of England and Wales, the Chinese ethnic group moved from the 'Other' ethnic group (in 2001) to the 'Asian' ethnic group (in 2011).

Asian or British Asian are:

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background



Biggest communities

There are **1.5 million** people of Indian descent living in the UK. They make up the largest subgroup of British Asians and are one of the biggest communities within the global Indian diaspora.

The largest South Asian communities are in the main regions of Leicester, Birmingham, Bolton, Slough, Coventry, and Wolverhampton. Leicester is home to the largest Indian population, with **(6.6%)** of all Indian people living there, followed by Birmingham **(4.6%)** and Harrow **(4.5%)**.

The Chinese communities are found in many cities including Manchester, Liverpool and Belfast. Manchester has the largest Chinese population, with **3.4%** of all Chinese people living there. **23.7%** of people from the Chinese ethnic group were born in the UK.

The Southeast Asian community continues to grow within the UK, over half **(55.3%)** were born in Eastern Asia and **13.4%** were born in Southeast Asia.

Within the Southeast Asian communities there are various ethnicities and nationalities all of which have cultural and nuanced traditions:

- Burmese
- Filipinos
- Indonesians
- Malaysians
- Singaporeans
- Thais
- Vietnamese

Include all ages within the British Asian communities

With the over-representation of Asian people shown in working scenarios, the age demographic is one-dimensional: children and teens are missing in trending visuals.

- ▶ **1 in 10** of visuals feature Chinese children while more than **5 in 10** visuals feature young Chinese adults.
- ▶ **Less than 1%** of visuals highlight young and older adults taking part in social and sport activities or cultural aspects of everyday life.
- ▶ Getty Images VisualGPS research shows that only **1.7%** of media and advertising features South Asian ethnicities and they are underrepresented in all age groups and scenarios.



When it comes to visualising Asian people of all ages, consider visuals that tell authentic lifestyle stories that reflect the community.

Points to consider:

- ▶ Have you considered how children are represented in visuals? Are you showing relatable visuals of teens and children under 11?
- ▶ Are you focusing on young adults, participating in sporting and leisure activities?
- ▶ Are you representing older people alongside other intersections of their identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender identity or expression, body type, religion, etc.)?
- ▶ Are you showing women over 40s as content, active and fulfilled?
- ▶ Are you representing over 50s, enjoying an active lifestyle and spending time with family?

Authenticity within the British Asian communities

Getty Images VisualGPS research shows that UK consumers relate to visuals that look like them and portray their lifestyle.

For better representation, brands need to consider visualising diversity in all its forms within the British Asian communities, reflecting all skin tones and intentionally address issues of colourism.

- ▶ Over half of visuals feature Asian people with a slim build who are lighter skinned. Only **1%** of visuals of Asian people feature people with a diversity of body types.
- ▶ Skin conditions such as vitiligo, acne or freckles are rarely seen.



It is important to connect with UK consumers with authentic messaging that reflects diversity within the British Asian groups:

Points to consider:

- ▶ Are you showing a range of skin tones, facial features and hair textures?
- ▶ Have you considered the representation of people with different skin conditions?
- ▶ Are you intentionally addressing issues of colorism?
- ▶ Have you considered the intersection of gender and different body types? Gender nonconforming individuals of all shapes and sizes?
- ▶ Are you representing Asian people with larger bodies? Are you selecting imagery that features them living full lives?

Include British Asian women working in a range of environments

A third of visuals show young professional Chinese women working within generic business environments, compared to professional South Asian and Chinese men who are visually seen at their place of work.

British Chinese workers have higher average earnings than their white British counterparts, and **12.8%** of people of Chinese descent are in professional and managerial occupations, the second highest after people of Indian descent.

- ▶ South Asian women are often shown as a team player or a colleague, while **less than 1%** of South Asian women are seen as leaders.
- ▶ Asian women are included in **less than 1%** of visuals representing as people with disabilities, more often are seen as caregivers.
- ▶ **50%** of Southern Asian women say they rarely or never see people from their ethnic groups in ads.

Source: ONS, Unstereotype Alliance



When visualising Asian women at work, consider a wider variety of roles and scenarios. For example: in managerial or leadership roles, as small business owners, or as educators.

Points to consider:

- ▶ Are you considering images that help counter gender- reinforcing stereotypes ?
- ▶ Are the roles depicted in the imagery you choose equally attributable to women and men (e.g., who takes on the caregiver role, who is featured in a power role, and the activities they are engaging in)?
- ▶ Are you showing the whole range of life experiences that people with disabilities may have? Are you showing them at work?

Connecting with the British Asian community

Due to the importance of family within British Asian culture, older people are viewed as guardians of knowledge. The focus includes harmony and unity with others.

Among the British Asian communities, we expect to see visual representation of larger regional groups, the older generation at the centre of the family or wider communities. Overall, visuals should reflect the richness of the first, second and third generational of representation, we need to see families working and celebrating together.

- Currently, **10.5%** of Chinese households are multigenerational families, however, **less than 1%** of trending visuals represent multigenerational Chinese families.

Source: ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk Gov stats from Census



As the multigenerational household is a significant part of British Asian life, featuring visuals that show all ages connecting with families having authentic lifestyles, will help brands create a deeper engagement with UK consumers.

Points to consider:

- Are children being seen with both their grandparents?
- Are you considering the environment around the families? Are you showing families/friends celebrating milestones?
- Have you visually considered gatherings with traditional aspects (e.g., clothing or food)?
- Are you representing British Asian communities from across the UK?
- Are you showing a range of experiences within British Asian communities?

Representing British Asian people through an inclusive lens



LGBTQ+ community

Are you representing LGBTQ+ people who are nonbinary or who may have other gender nonconforming identities? Show different gender identities, avoid stereotypes based on gender.

Different faiths

Show visuals that represent people that are both within and outside of their religious practice. Think about visuals that show cultural nuances and traditions within the Asian communities.

Representing everyone

People of all ethnicities with disabilities should be represented, overwhelming majority of people living with a disability are portrayed as white.

Family first

Be more inclusive when representing British Asian families. Show more authentic stories around family life, including different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Visualising every body

Consider a range of body types and shapes as well as skin colour and skin conditions.

All ages

Featuring British Asian people of all ages within multigenerational families, sharing unique stories around family life.



🔍 Search for keywords...

Indian ethnicity

South Asian family

South Asian cultures

Pakistani culture

Pakistani ethnicity

Asian and Indian ethnicities

Chinese ethnicity

Chinese family

Chinese culture

Multi-generation family

Togetherness

Community

Inclusion

Disability

Domestic life

LGBTQA people

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