

Windrush Generation

Who are the Windrush Generation?

The Windrush Generation of people or Windrush Britons refer to Caribbean natives who immigrated to the United Kingdom from the late 1940s till 1973.

- This migration continued till 1973 when immigration from Commonwealth countries was curtailed and made more stringent.
- Windrush generation refers to those citizens of former British colonies who came to live and work in Britain before 1973.
- The name 'Windrush' comes from the name of one of the vessels that was used to ship people from the Caribbean islands to the UK in 1948.
- They were encouraged to move to the UK, along with their families, to meet the shortage of labour there.
- Many of them had fought for Britain in World War II and were ex-servicemen looking for employment.
- Although mostly composed of Caribbean natives, the Windrush generation also includes some Indians and other South Asians.

In its bid to tighten immigration rules, the British government enacted the 1971 Immigration Act. Citizens of Commonwealth countries who were in the UK were allowed to remain in the country. After this Act was passed, a British-passport holder born abroad could settle in the UK only if he/she had a work permit and were able to prove that one parent or grandparent was born in Britain.

To know more about the [Commonwealth of Nations](#), visit the linked article

Background of the Windrush Scandal

In 2018, many people were wrongly detained and threatened with deportation because they could not produce documentation to support their status. Many of them belonged to the Windrush generation, particularly from Caribbean countries, and had been born British subjects.

- Many people were wrongly denied re-entry to Britain, denied medical care and medical benefits, and also lost jobs and homes, in addition to being detained or deported.
- Many people, who have lived all of their lives in the UK, but had cultural links to the Caribbean region, had to show proof of residence of every year of their stay up to 6 or 7 decades.
- When the issue broke out, there was an outcry from the people affected and also from diplomats of the West Indies nations.
- The government then initiated the Windrush Scheme, which led to the granting of citizenship to many such people including their children who had arrived in the country as minors. The group granted British citizenship also included many Indian origin people.

The larger implication of the issue

The issue showcases the failure of governments of the day to handle the fallouts of globalisation. This can also be talked about in terms of the Brexit issue. The [European Union](#) (EU) advocates the free movement of people across borders, whereas the far-right envisages a world with lesser free cross-border movement and tighter immigration rules. It also touches upon the subject of what is national identity.

When the erstwhile USSR countries were brought under the EU, Western Europe got access to cheap labour. But, this also fuelled xenophobia and sections of the political spectrum advocated to halt immigration.

Windrush Day

Britain observes 22nd June every year as Windrush Day. This day marks the arrival of the ship Empire Windrush at Essex, Britain in 1948 which brought people in the hundreds from the Caribbean.

Frequently Asked Questions related to the Windrush Generation

How did the Windrush Generation Change Britain?

By 1956, more than 40,000 immigrants from the West Indies had moved to Britain. New immigration rules were introduced in the intervening years before the Immigration Act 1971 changed the law to grant only temporary residence to most people arriving from Commonwealth countries.

What is the importance of the Windrush Generation?

When the Windrush passenger ship docked at Tilbury from Jamaica on 22 June 1948, it marked the start of the postwar immigration boom which was to change British society. Windrush carried 492 migrants who were coming to a country promising prosperity and employment.

What is the Windrush Lessons Learned Review?

On 19 March 2020, the Home Office released the Windrush Lessons Learned Review. This study, described by the Home Secretary as “long-awaited”, was an independent inquiry managed and conducted by Wendy Williams, an inspector of constabulary. The report concluded that the Home Office showed an inexcusable “ignorance and thoughtlessness”, and that what had happened had been “foreseeable and avoidable”.