The refugee migration is rightly attributed to the partition of India on 15th of August, 1947. Deterioration of the communal situation made the life of the Hindus in Pakistan increasingly insecure. The outflow of Hindus from Pakistan progressively swelled through 1946 to presume proportions of a tide in the beginning of 1947. The partition resulted in some 47.5 lakh (4.75 million) refugees migrating to India and of these, 4,95,391 came to Delhi.1 The total number of displaced persons coming into Delhi each year during the period between 1946 and 1950 ranged from 91 persons in 1940 to 408,562 in 1947; it then declined to 26,222,400 and 166 during the next three years.2

Some Punjabi refugees who were government servants came to Delhi on transfer, others because of caste or group affiliations and quite a large number of them purely by accident. This type of subsequent re-migration appeared to be the part of a process of redistribution of the refugee load of immigration designed presumably to correct the imbalance of the deficiencies of the initial improvisations arranged under the stresses and strains of a very grave calamity.

Table 1: Population Growth in Delhi Area (1931-71)3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Decade Variation</th>
<th>Decade Percentage Variation</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>6,36,246</td>
<td>+1,47,794</td>
<td>+30.26</td>
<td>3,69,497</td>
<td>2,66,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>9,17,939</td>
<td>+2,81,693</td>
<td>+44.30</td>
<td>5,35,236</td>
<td>3,82,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>17,44,072</td>
<td>+8,26,133</td>
<td>+90.00</td>
<td>9,86,538</td>
<td>7,57,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>26,58,612</td>
<td>+9,14,540</td>
<td>+52.44</td>
<td>14,89,378</td>
<td>11,69,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>40,65,698</td>
<td>+14,07,086</td>
<td>+52.92</td>
<td>22,57,515</td>
<td>18,08,183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Distribution of Refugees According to Source of Migration4

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According to the study of Rao and Desai, as against the total of 15,364 refugees reporting direct migration from Pakistan to Delhi, there was slightly a smaller number of 15,216 persons. The remaining 148 claimed to have changed places more than once. Their changes in place related, however, to migrations that they had undertaken within the territory constituting Pakistan prior to their move into Delhi at the time of the partition. The mobility of the refugees in distress was clearly in the search of security; the multiple movement only showed that some of them had tried other places before they got what accommodation Delhi could provide for them. There were several

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6 Ibid.
reasons for the refugees to choose Delhi as the place for immigration. The proportion of persons inclusive of direct migrants reporting economic reasons such as employment and better employment, accounts for nearly 21%, while for those among them with independent reasons came to as much as 71%. Friends and relatives in Delhi claims the next place in the order of importance as for the refugees in distress friends and relatives had played some part in attracting them to Delhi. Delhi’s social services and civic amenities had been an equally important consideration among the refugees. The majority of refugees also had an urban background and hence chose Delhi for business opportunities. Some affluent Punjabi businessmen who had migrated from Pakistan remarked: “Where else could we go? Amritsar was sucking on the border. Ludhiana had not developed. Ambala had no water supply. Delhi was the only obvious choice because it was both the capital and commercial centre. Economic rehabilitation had been the primary factor in promoting the immigration of the refugees into Delhi.

Table 3: Refugees Distributed According to their Reason for Choosing Delhi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>No. of Persons</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>% of Total with Independent Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Employment</td>
<td>4,032</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Better Employment</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Friends and Relatives in Delhi</td>
<td>1,192</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nearness to Delhi</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Educational Facilities</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Medical Facilities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lower Cost of Living</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Transfer of Service</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Marriage</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Moved with the head</td>
<td>14,451</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Head Settled in Delhi</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Other Unspecified Reason</td>
<td>1,435</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23,881</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These refugees flooded Delhi, spreading themselves out wherever they could. They thronged into camps, schools, colleges, temples, gurudwaras, dharamsalas, military barracks, and gardens. They squatted on railway platforms, streets, pavements, and every conceivable space. The Purana Qila became a refugee colony. Wooden shacks sprang up, leaning against crumbling walls and ancient battlements. Houses in the old city ‘evacuated’ by Muslims were forcibly occupied by incoming refugees, thereby creating subsequent property problems for the government. Government officials also encountered difficulties in trying to remove various forms of unauthorized construction, encroachment and occupancy. This influx of refugees in Delhi brought about a situation for which there was no parallel nor precedent. No physical, economic, and administrative infrastructure existed to cope with it. No extra housing, water supply, sewage, or transport was available. The refugees were in such dire straits, that unless something was done immediately, there might have been dangerous social and political consequences. The Government of India decided to set up a Ministry of Rehabilitation to tackle the situation. The Ministry of Rehabilitation, established on 6 September 1947 with K.C. Neogy as Minister, set up three refugee camps. These were located in Kingsway (the largest, with 30,000 inmates), in Tibia College area in Karol Bagh and in Shahdara. These refugee camps were a temporary arrangement: Census figures show that the population at the camps was declining by July 1948 and serve as an index of the pace of rehabilitation.

**New Housing Accommodation**

For those refugees who could not be accommodated in abandoned houses, new construction was taken in hand. By December 1950, three lakhs of refugees had been housed (1,90,000 in evacuated houses and 1,00,000 in new constructions).\(^9\) Besides these, 1,100 plots were allotted to displaced persons who then built their own houses. The rest, temporarily, were living in make

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By the end of 1951, 529 one-roomed, 3,398 two-roomed, 257 single-storey and 166 double-storey three-roomed houses; 11,159 single roomed tenements; 1,518 shops and stalls; and 593 shops-cum-residences had been completed. Another 88 two-roomed and 19 three-roomed houses, and 8,456 tenements had been constructed.10

### Table 511

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony</th>
<th>Area (Acres)</th>
<th>Anticipated Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rajendra Nagar (New Delhi Extn. Area)</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patel Nagar (Shadipur)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malkaganj</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsway</td>
<td>151.3</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vijay Nagar</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nizamuddin</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nizamuddin Extension</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jangpura</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jangpura Neighbourhood (A and B)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lajpat Nagar (East)</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lajpat Nagar (West)</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalkaji</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malviya Nagar</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bharat Nagar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilak Nagar</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purana Qila</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotla Ferozshah</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azadpur</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regharpura</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anguri Bagh</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pradesh Garden</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Delhi Census Handbook, 1951, p. LXV.
11 Ibid., p. LXIV.
Table 6: Shops Constructed by the Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kamla Market</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>Rajendra Nagar</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man Nagar</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>Patel Nagar</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarojini Market</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Lajpat Nagar</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewanagar</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Purana Qila</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karolbagh</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>Ferozshah Kotla</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryaganj</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Malkaganj</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lehna Singh Market</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Vinay Nagar</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roshanara</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>Nizamuddin</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mori Gate</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Nizamuddin Extension</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saar Bazar</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Jangpura</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Offices</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Kalkaji</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qutub Road</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Malviya Nagar</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensway</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Tilak Nagar</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irwin Road</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>Azadpur</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchkuian Road</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>Pardah Garden</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsway</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>Mutiny Memorial Road</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total value of assistance rendered to 97,602 persons claiming ‘displaced’ or ‘refugee’ status, as of 31 January 1961, came to: 18,33,40,634 rupees’ worth in property transfers; 13,77,05,933 rupees in cash payments; and 4,57,99,084 rupees in ‘adjustment of public dues’ (cancellation, forgiveness or remissions of taxation).13

The construction of a large number of houses, shops, and industrial establishments resulted in the creation of new colonies. Townships sprang up. There were four core areas: in the south, Malviya Nagar, in the West the two

12 Ibid., p. LXV-I.
Rajendra Nagars, the three Patel Nagars, Moti Nagar, Ramesh Nagar and Tilak Nagar; in the east, Gandhi Nagar in Shahdara. Sardar, Paharganj, Karol Bagh, Patel Nagar, Civil Lines, Subzimandi and West Delhi formed the main resettlement areas of refugees. These colonies remained like islands, self-contained, yet were drawn into the mainstream of Delhi life. These colonies were each equipped with a market place, a shopping centre, a temple and a gurudwara, a bank, a police station, a school, a post and telegraph office, a taxi stand, a cinema hall and, in certain cases, a swimming pool and a terminal bus depot. The houses were, usually, not multi-storeyed or spacious. On the main roads, there were larger houses, but within the colony single-storeyed houses predominated and further on were laid out the small houses of low-income groups. Daily needs could be met in a market, which was usually in the centre of each colony. People in these colonies had tried to recreate their former lives. As these colonies expanded, their well to do inhabitants moved out to healthier and more select localities like Golf Links, Vasant Vihar, Greater Kailash, Ring Road, South Extension, New Friends Colony and Defence Colony. While government schemes had contributed a lot for the rehabilitation of refugees, the initiative and enterprise of Punjabi refugees could not be overlooked. Dr. Stephen L. Keller in his study of refugees has shown how in the initial stages a Punjabi refugee was bemused and semi-paralysed by events, but very soon he recovered and not only set about making himself a new life with firmness and perseverance, but finally became ‘aggressive in spirit’.

While 3.29 lakh Muslims moved out of Delhi on account of the Partition, 4.95 lakh non-Muslims entered Delhi. Thus the population of non-Muslims as a whole gained by 1.66 lakhs. The Muslim population grew rapidly, from 99,500 in 1947 to 155,534 in the decade between 1951 and

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13 Ibid., p. 124.
1961. But Muslims who had migrated also caused an economic gap which non-Muslim refugees could hardly fill. The occupational skills of non-Muslim refugees was vastly different from those of Delhi Muslims. The local Muslims were mostly artisans, petty traders and labourers. Non-Muslim refugee newcomers were non-cultivating landlords, moneylenders, doctors, lawyers, teachers, traders and small shopkeepers. Thus, a striking change in the occupational pattern of Delhi occurred, as it was difficult for non-Muslims to adopt the hitherto Muslim occupations. No simple substitution was possible. Refugees took up jobs, which were new to them, as hawkers, vendors, mechanics, carpenters, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, etc. Even traders turned to service and other professions.

The Punjabis came mostly from urban areas in West Punjab. Of the total of 495,391 refugees, 470,386 had been city dwellers; 82,340 refugees had belonged to Lahore. Of the others 39,081 were from Rawalpindi 36,312 from Multan, 26,527 from Shahpura, 25,586 from Gujranwala, 24,683 from Lyallpur and 17,624 from Sialkot. With their urban backgrounds the Punjabis naturally interested themselves in trade and commerce. The refugees from rural Punjab constituted a very small minority. Their natural inclination was towards government services, professions and even took to skilled labour. Initially, they were slow to enter trade as capital was required. The proportion of traders thus fell steeply after 1947, but then rose steadily till it reached a figure of 29.0 percent in 1952 as compared to 16.7 in 1947. The pre-Partition figure had been 45.3 percent. Some refugees had carried assets worth no more than 100 rupees or so. But they sold whatever jewellery or utensils they possessed in order to set up small businesses. Another factor which helped refugees to make

19 Ibid., p. 30.
22 Ibid., p. 20.
a success in trade was that most of them were literate. The literacy percentage
of refugees was 51.8 as compared to 48.2 for the population of Delhi in 1951.  

There was a vast distinction between the refugees and residents of Delhi. In relation to residents, refugees began to improve their economic status in terms of employment, income, and standard of living. There was a rise in the proportion of earning dependents in Delhi over what had existed in pre-Partition days. The proportion of those employed marked a rise from 23.1 to 32.8 percent. The number of people in agriculture fell from 6.2 to 0.04 percent. In manufacture, service, transport, construction, percentages rose from 15.2, 27.1, 7.4 and 2.7 to 20.8, 31.4, 9.6 and 3.3, respectively. Trade and Commerce percentages fell from 40.5 to 33 percent. About 70 percent found employment in trade, transport and services while manufacturing could account for about 20 percent. The rest were absorbed in construction and public utilities. In 1951, while the percentages for the total population of the Delhi area came to 22.71 percent in commerce, 5.46 percent in public transport, and 44.63 in other services, the percentages of ‘displaced persons or refugees incomparable categories of livelihood came to 34.5 percent in commerce, 19.6 in public transport and 412.4 percent in other services.

Thus, in commerce and transport, refugees could show an increase of about twelve and fourteen percent against the total Delhi population. Obviously, refugees became more concentrated in services, commerce, and public transport. Not much fundamental change occurred in patterns of economic activity. From the pre-migration period to the period after 1947, people took to the same types of economic activity. The occupations which they pursued in higher proportions were those of hawkers, shop assistants, small shopkeepers, clerks and typists. Sweepers and domestic servants did not

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figure largely among them. The refugees slowly began to gain ascendancy over local residents. Trade and services claimed 31.9 and 36.3 percent of all refugees respectively, while only 25.2 and 33.0 percent of the residents remained in the same occupations. More interesting, the average earned income of the refugees came to 162.8 rupees as compared to 156.6 rupees for the resident.

The refugees, in fact, stole a march over the resident in trade and commerce. In the beginning, the resident was sympathetic to the plight of the refugee; but when he found that the refugee was becoming a strong rival in business, his attitude changed. The fact was that the refugees began to dominate trade in Delhi. He did this because of superior initiative and enterprise. The local businessman tended to stock his goods, and then took his own time in selling them, at an excessive profit. He tended not to bring in new articles. The refugees on the contrary would sell his wares for a small profit. He tended to find new articles for sale. He would sit at a strategic spot on the pavement or in front of a resident’s shop and sell his wares. Chandni Chowk was popular with tourists; and the refugee planted himself there. He learned the arts of attracting customers. Bargaining did not tire him. He used to possess endurance and patience. He wanted quick returns and needed money to meet his daily needs; but the resident, not so pressed for money, would wait and delay. On the one hand, there was drive, patience and the competitive spirit of the refugee; on the other, conservatism, smugness; and caution of the resident. The Punjabi was frank and ingratiating; the resident, apathetic.

It is no wonder, therefore, that resident merchants could not complete. Refugees proved that they could. In pre-partition days, non-Muslims had built up the economy of West Punjab by hard work in trade and banking. Khatris and Arorars had provided the intelligentsia and had developed much by their industry in West Punjab. A casual look at the Delhi telephone directory of

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26 Ibid.
1979 shows that Khatris and Aroras—surnames such as Khanna, Kapur, Chopra, Tandon, Malhotra, Seth, Puri, Sondhi, Talwar, Sahni, Mehra, Nagpal, Chawla, Taneja, Juteja, Juneja, Dhingra, and Grover were connected with business and services. They now reside in Golf Links, Vasant Vihar, Greater Kailash, Lajpat Nagar, Defence Colony, Maharani Bagh, Bungalow Road, and other select neighbourhoods. A Khatri was now not merely a shopkeeper. He was a successful administrator, a banker and a merchant. He was industrious, tactful and enterprising. This reservoir of energy provided foundations for the rapid urbanization of Delhi in recent decades.

In Katra Nawab, Cloth Market in Chandni Chowk, one discovered that when Punjabi refugees first came to do business there, ninety percent of these shops had belonged to the old residents of Delhi. Now only ten percent of the shops belong to old residents and the rest to Punjabi refugees. Some migrants who had been very rich in Pakistan and who lost almost all their property and assets developed a different outlook. They were content with making only enough money to provide them with a comfortable living.

Retail shops, stores for general merchandise and repair works owned by Punjabi refugees lie scattered all over Delhi. But they are principally concentrated in Chandni Chowk, Connaught Place, Janpath, Karol Bagh and Kingsway, or within business enclaves in places like South Extension, Rajendra Nagar and Lajpat Nagar. Some of these centres have their own markets—such as Lajpat Rai Market in Chandni Chowk, Shankar Market for Connaught Place, and Gaffar Market for Karol Bagh. Panchkuian Road is dominated by Punjabi refugees and houses numerous shopkeepers serving the middle and lower income groups. The proliferation of retail and general merchandise shops under Punjabi refugee ownership is one of the reasons why Delhi has become such a great retail market.

28 Ibid., p. 454.
29 Ibid.
Many a refugee had no interest in industry. He had neither money to invest nor experience. There had not been much industry in West Punjab. Furthermore, quick returns did not come from it. The Punjabi refugee could only invest in a business which brought immediate profits. Trade had been hard hit in Delhi. This was largely due to interstate tax policies. Industry was needed to mitigate the situation. A transfer of nine percent of the total workforce from services and trade to manufacturing industries occurred. The proportion of employees in industry increased from 8 to 17.3 percent, of independent workers increased from 12 to 13 percent; and of house workers, from 23.5 to 27.4 percent. The proportion of unemployed workers fell from 4.4 to 2.1 percent. Refugees took to industry after saving some capital for investment. Government loans and concessions helped them set up small-scale industries. The Ministry of Rehabilitation extended facilities for establishing such industries to refugees in Malaviya Nagar and Kalkaji. About twenty-five industries were allotted to them. The number of registered factories grew from 227 to 431 between 1945 and 1951. The first comprehensive survey by the Directorate of Industries shows that, by 1951, there were 8,160 industrial units employing 69,266 persons; and that they represented a capital investment of eighteen crores. Delhi is now an important industrial centre, predominantly small-scale, with plants manufacturing sophisticated electronic items – micro calculators, tape recorders, transformers, radio, and television sets. An area with a radius of fifty kilometres around Delhi has become the hub of this industrial activity. New ‘ring towns’ have sprung up: Sonepat, Ballabghar and Ghaziabad. These are part of a ‘spill over of the industrial potential of Delhi’. Okhla Industrial Estate was set up by the government for refugee enterprises. Faridabad, also exclusively meant for rehabilitating refugees, serves as a

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30 Ibid., 455.
33 Second Industrial Survey of Delhi, 1964, p. 6.
34 A Report on the Census of Industrial Units. Directorate of Industries, Delhi Administration, Delhi, p. 2.
remarkable testimony to the self-sacrifice, hard work and dedication of the early settlers. Built brick by brick, it began with the construction of seventy-four sheds. These were later transformed into factories and production centres. By 1969 Okhla had 1,800 units in large-scale machine plants and in small-scale sectors. This represented a total investment of over Rs. 650 and an annual turnover exceeding 750 crore rupees, with an employment strength of 115,000 people.36

Punjabi refugees secured loans and other forms of assistance from the government to set up industries in towns neighbouring Delhi. Some of these have become widely known for the quality and great variety of manufactured goods they produce. Escorts (Faridabad, managed by H.P. Nanda, was once a small agency house. Uprooted from Punjab, it is now the largest manufacturer of 20 to 50 H.P. tractors in Asia. Its annual turnover is 80 crore rupees.37 Atlas (Sonepat) was set up by Janki Dass Kapur. A businessman from Lahore, Kapur has become one of the largest manufacturers of cycles in Asia, with annual production running at one million cycles – one cycle every thirty seconds, and with an annual turnover of twenty crore rupees.38 Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd. (Okhla), managed by Bhai Mohan Singh, are the manufacturers of pharmacological products, with an annual turnover of eight crore rupees.39 Usha spinning and weaving Mills (Fardiabad), managed by Jaswant Rai, are turning out cotton yarn and have an annual turnover of 5.13 crores.40 Tabros Automotive Components Ltd. (Faridabad) established by W.N. Talwar, process petro-chemicals and have an annual turnover of 3.20 crores.41

As the population of Delhi has increased, former Punjabi refugees have led the way towards rapid commercial and industrial expansion. This reservoir of human material, waiting to be harnessed for reconstruction and

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36 Census of Industrial Units, p. XXN.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
development, came at the right moment and met the challenge. Former refugees from Punjab have gained a commanding influence in Delhi, and are a directing force in the life of the city. In moments of national peril, they have shown resilience and adaptability. They have not only restored for themselves their former standards of life but have exceeded those standards. There is a society based on individual achievement. Uprooted from their old moorings, their original environment could not be reproduced. It would be difficult to say whether they could ever have recreated a homogenous Punjabi society in Delhi. Yet, there can be no doubt that they have left their mark upon the city. Punjabi refugees never looked back. The future was in their bones. It was this attitude which enabled them to meet new situations and environment boldly and not to fear the future. These helpless people had undergone a lot of pain and suffering. They had lost their homes, property, business, family members and above all, they had to restart and rebuild their lives in a new environment. Though they had gone through many difficulties but, in the end, most of them had come out as winners. Their case studies throw a great deal of light on their journey to new beginnings. I have conducted more than 100 interviews, which have helped to make a general analysis of their agony, pain, suffering and the process of rehabilitation, which they underwent. Some of these case studies are mentioned below.

**CASE STUDIES:**

**Case Study 1**

I was 17 at the time of partition. We had a big ‘haveli’ in District Jhelum. We were five brothers and three sisters. We were well known Timber Merchants and owned a Printing Press. One night, our Muslim workers and servants came to our house and requested my father to leave Pakistan as we were not safe there anymore. We were totally shattered as all of a sudden the realization dawned on us that we did not have a home anymore. The next

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41 Ibid.
morning, we all got up early and with as much money we had at the house, we began our journey to an unknown future. We did not particularly face many difficulties as we left by a military convoy. We arrived in India on 29th of August. We stayed at Purana Qila for a while. We were given a ‘Printing Press’ in compensation but it did not work for us and all of us had to get into some kind of professions. Two of my brothers joined the Indian Army. Now, I’m residing here in Janakpuri for the last 40 years with my family. Though at times, I still miss my home in Jhelum, but I am happy here. If today also, these two nations united together they would be a force to reckon with. Given a chance, I would like to visit my birthplace once, before I die.

Case Study 2

I was a captain in the army. We were living in a village near Gurdaspur district. One night, there was an attack by a Muslim mob on our village. We were about 50 people who fled for our lives. We were all very frightened. We fled on foot. At night, we hid ourselves in the fields. The children were so frightened that they used to cry. Some mothers smothered their young ones while trying to quieten them down so that our hide out would not be revealed. There was an old man who fell sick and he wanted his family to move ahead leaving him behind but they were not ready. Somehow after three nights of utter fear and desolation, we reached Gurdaspur. We stayed at a Gurudwara there. But the most horrendous thing that happened to us was that one night, we were attacked by some local people who thought we might have brought a lot of money or jewellery with us. After a few days, I left for Delhi as my sister and her husband were residing there. Later, I rejoined army. I retired as a Colonel and now I’m happily residing here in South Extension with my family. I married my wife in Delhi only. Both my sons are serving in the Indian army and my daughter is a doctor. Yes, I would like to visit my birthplace again. As for these two nations getting together, it is difficult as Pakistan is a fundamentalist state.

42 No names have been mentioned as per the wishes of the interviewees.
Case Study 3

I was born and brought up in Sindh. At the time of the partition, I was in jail because of my political ideologies. So, I was told that I’ll be released if I go to India. My wife and son were staying in a Mohalla in which Muslim refugees had settled and they had tried to attack them but some Muslims only saved my family. I came on a ship to Bombay with only Rs. 20 in my pocket. I came after two years of partition. I was involved in the Trade Union Movement and that was the reason of my coming to Bombay. I did not go to any camp. Later on, some relatives invited me and my family to Delhi but did not provide much support. My personal nature was not to take any help from anybody but some friends helped by keeping me and my family in their house. On the whole I got rehabilitated myself as I did not get any help from the then Government. I could not get much of a compensation as it was proved that I wasn’t a refugee, so the house I had got allotted in Kalkaji was taken away. Though my father and grandfather were big guns under the British government, I had taken up the profession of a tailor and was a freedom fighter. I became a tailor at Rajendra Nagar; within a few weeks of coming, I got employment as a cloth cutter. Later on, as I was interested in acting, I joined a theatre. My shop started flourishing and my per capita income increased. If we had remained united rather than being two independent nations, things would have been much better and our economic condition would have been many times better. I am very happy and contended here but still miss my home in Sindh. I still remember those days and I wish that I could go to Karachi, Sialkot, Peshawar once before dying. At that point of time, partition was inevitable as the power was in British hands and they wanted to divide the country. The people who came as refugees became very subjective rather than objective as their miseries and sufferings had biased them. National Movement was secular in character but the partition gave birth to religious and communal sentiments between the Hindus and the

43 There was an agreement between India and Pakistan regarding the transfer of prisoners. There was a clause that a prisoner had to be consulted and should be allowed to make the choice (According to the Narrator).
Muslims. After it, people became subjective. I am of the view that within next 50 years, India and Pakistan might become a federation. I have come here for good and would never go back. I would like to visit but settle back after so many years, No!

**Case Study 4**

I was a lawyer at Lahore when the riots started. It had been only a year since I got married. One of my lawyer friend had emphatically stressed once that it would be difficult to survive in Pakistan as it is a fundamentalist state. On the night of 18th August, we packed our luggage and started our journey to the destination unknown. Our train was jam packed. There was such a look of on each face that till date, I am unable to forget it. All the shutters of the coaches were pulled down. The doors were tightly shut. We had heard of the stories wherein many trains had been looted and its people massacred. We did not even know the stations we crossed. It was a nightmarish journey. Every time our train halted at a station, we could feel hearts in our mouths. At one station, we could hear the slogans being raised by a Muslim mob, “Kalam se liya hai Pakistan: Talwar se lenge Hindustan” (We took Pakistan with a pen and we shall take India by Sword). We reached Amritsar station the next day. All of us heaved sighs of relief. My sister and her husband were residing in Delhi and they offered to put us up for a while. I started practising in Delhi High Court and became very successful in my career but I still miss my home, life and friends in Lahore. I have done very well for myself and all my children are well settled but if we had been in Pakistan, we would have been more economically sound as we left all our ancestral property in Pakistan. Though the Government did pay us some compensation, but it was much less than what we had lost. I would love to visit Lahore again and if given a chance would like to wash away all these years and be there only – such is my attachment with my roots. I do not think that these two nations could ever get together as the issue of Kashmir is a big bone of Contention between the two.
Case Study 5

I intended to remain in Pakistan as all my property was out there. We were driven out because of the hatred and we were surprised by the hatred. We used to live like brothers, we used to study together, we used to eat together as if there was hardly any difference between the Hindus and the Muslims. In Amanpur where we had all gathered, there was one Muslim who was telling all the Hindus to stay over but we found it was quite unsafe. We used to never openly admit that we wanted to go to India. We would keep mum about it whenever anyone asked us out of fear. While we were coming in the train from Pakistan, from Amanpur, the train was escorted by Muslim military. At Malhotgren there was to be a change of military, Hindu military would take over. Our belongings and luggage was taken away by those Muslim military. So, we went to Amanpur from there. My father had a friend, a Muslim, who took the whole family with him to Amanpur. We stayed there for 22 days. Later, we made to Kurukshetra by train and stayed in a Kurukshetra Camp. We fell ill because of the change in the type of food and all such things. Afterwards, we got acclimatized to it. From there, I moved to Delhi and started working in a factory and took to a professional job. I had lost all my belongings and everything. In Pakistan, I was a rich landlord and here, I had to start from the scratch. I think Partition took place because of the ambitious politicians. Yes, I would like to visit my village but there must be lots of changes by now. I don’t think that India and Pakistan can ever be united as they both work upon entirely different ideologies. I would definitely like to go for a visit but India is my home now.

Case Study 6

At the time of the Partition, I was about 14 years old. There was military around my village and they tried to slaughter all the Hindus in my village one night but their attempt was unsuccessful as we had a lot of ammunition and guns. We scared them away. In the villages, there was a lot of slaughtering and
slaying. I had one elder sister who was married. In her village, Hindus, to avoid being slain by the other faction collected about fifty quintals of firewood in the centre of the village and they built a huge fire and they threw all the children into it – their own children. This was done with the motive that they could escape from being forcibly converted by the Muslims. The parents threw in their own sons, and even the parents also burnt themselves in the same fire. They said that we won't disgrace our own village. We had gone to Havenpur. A curfew was imposed there. As soon as the curfew was lifted, we started walking towards the central jail, which was made into a refugee camp. The Muslims started firing from behind. But, somehow, we managed to reach the camp but several people were shot dead. Not much of the violence was started by people wanting land. It was just a faction of hatred. The whole, this fire of hatred, broke out because Muslims in Pakistan were presuming that their brethren in India were being slain and similarly, the Hindus in India were presuming that their brethren in Pakistan were being slain. And so, both were trying to neutralize each other. I had thought that the partition did not mean that even people had to be exchanged. I believed those who lived in Pakistan would have lived there, the Hindus and the Muslims, so the ratios wouldn't have been affected. My life is not as good now as if I would have stayed in Pakistan as I was already much more prosperous than am at present. I would like to go back and stay in my village in Pakistan.

Case Study 7

I used to stay at a big village called Atimomalpur, which was, predominantly, a Hindu village. When there was a massacre at our village, we went to Sogiabad on the camel back and then to Kutri Jaban. This place was ten kilometres away from Atimomalpur. When we reached Sogiabad, in the neighbouring parts, a lot of massacring had started. So, the lives of the Hindus in Sogiabad were highly in danger. So, the Hindus in Sogiabad went to big cities and approached Hindus to come to their help. Then Dogra regiment came over and took care of the situation and, all around the city, there was heavy
patrolling by the Dogra regiment. The military made arrangements for the trains. They made a list of how many trains they needed. Then they would announce how many people could leave on a train. I boarded the fourth train and when it reached Montgomery, it was stopped and the driver stated that the engine belonged to Pakistan, so it was detached and taken back to Pakistan. It wasn’t a passenger train, it was a goods train. So, we all sat on the luggage. The Muslim military left to have tea, other Muslim soldiers came and started looting. Our escorts had not even had their tea when they heard this huge outcry and rushed back. And then, they took positions to fight. The Muslims who had come to loot, all fled. We were all very frightened. We, somehow, reached Fazilika and the local people greeted us and provided us with rations. They were very hospitable to us. These families were very humble and thoughtful. They gave groceries, resting place, etc. at schools. The next day at Fazilika, we were lodged in inns and schools and social organizations out there helped us a lot. These people used to arrange for all our necessities. From there, I came to Delhi looking for a job. The partition was inevitable and I do not even want to go back as I am very happy and contented with my life here in India. Though I had lost a lot, but still my life here is much better than in Pakistan. Economically, I am better placed as in Pakistan, we had very little land and I got a house in Patel Nagar by way of compensation.

Case Study 8

I had got married only two days before the partition. All of a sudden, I had to leave my job, my friends and relatives and move towards some unknown future. I was a lecturer in a college and my wife was a school teacher. We packed our luggage and took a train from Lahore. We reached Amritsar and from there we made our way to Delhi as most of our relatives were in Delhi. We went to my maternal uncle’s place. We were allotted a house which had been left by a Muslim and we started living in it but after a few months, he came back and proved that he had gone to Japan on business trip and was not at Pakistan and we had to vacate the house. Later on, he sold all his property and
moved to Pakistan. I got a job in a Government college. My wife also started teaching. Yes, I’m sure that partition could not have been averted. Economically, we are much better here in India. In Pakistan, women did not have much freedom but here in India women were able to have much more economic, social, cultural and political freedom. I had visited my birthplace a few years back and things have totally changed. I could not even recognize my house as it had been taken over by a jeweller and has been totally renovated. But, yes, at times, I do get nostalgic and miss my friends.

Case Study 9

When the trouble started, I went to my sister’s place and there was a majority of Muslims. We were strong property-wise as we had 350 acres of land. All surrounding village were of Muslims. We had a lot of weapons since the situation was worsening day by day. One day, Muslims came and asked us to get away and came prepared to massacre us but we were prepared and fought with them. We were aware of the danger we were in and so we started to move and joined a carvan at Jambar. The river Ravi was in flood and we had to cross at night as, in the morning, it was very dangerous and we could be spotted by the Muslims. We kept on moving without any food or drink. After moving 12-14 miles, we came across a base and our carvan was long in length, something around 8-10miles in carts. The Gurkhas were escorting us. After 8 days, a village was reached 6-7 miles from the Indian and Pakistani border. Then the Gurkhas returned to bring others. At night, our carvan was looted by the Muslim military. There was an exchange of fire as we had 500-600 rifles, and children and women were given shelter under carts. On both sides, 8-10 persons died and later they fled. We reached the Indian border walking. What happened during Partition, what I recounted having happened, had never been heard in the history of the nation. I have an extended family here in Delhi and I am a satisfied person but, sometimes, I do wish I was back in my native place.
Case Study 10

At the time of the partition, I was staying with my brother, and there were only three Hindu houses and the rest were Muslims. We had a big haveli.‘ and quite a large chunk of land and many rifles for our protection. One night, the Muslims from surrounding areas came to attack us and started wrecking the Hindu houses. When they were in the village, we fired in the air just to frighten them and the Muslims were taken aback, as they had no rifles. Muslims ran and didn’t come at night to frighten us. Since one of my sisters was living 2km away from my village, we left from this village on horses. We left late at night and crossed the river Ravi and joined another caravan often crossing the river on a boat. On the away, a Muslim Mob attacked us and there was a shoot-out, many people died, then, we were joined by military and were told that we could shoot whenever we found ourselves in danger. No further orders came from there. We had only a type of wheat, no water. At Landiali, the Military left us and at that movement the Muslim Military attacked us and there was a big shoot out. We hid our women and children in casts and fought against the Military. When they found the strength of the Hindus too mighty, they fled and left us. Finally, we managed to reach India. My wife’s parents were living at Ambala and we went to them. From there, I got a job in a big company in Delhi and came and settled here. Now, I’ve been living in this city for more than 50 years and it is my home but I would like to visit my birthplace though I would not want to settle there. I don’t think that India and Pakistan could even unite as they are too different in there outlooks. Economically, I’m doing fine but if I had been in Pakistan, I would have been more economically sound.

Case Study 11

Pakistan and India got created and we got their land and they got ours in this change. It happened because the British did it, by dividing the country, i.e. creating a boundary. Both sides were engaged in menacing acts of violence and
people tried to migrate to the safer place of their own ethnic identify. The boundary was created and due to this, we too had to make a move. There was slaughtering of Hindus and Sikhs but at my village, we had a strange hold and no one dared to come here. There was a big mob of Muslims who came to loot and siege, and we were also armed and there was a big fight. Both sides lost many lives. We faced a lot of troubles, like starving and a lot of people lost family members on the way, but mine survived this episode of migration. We were guarded by the army and we were ourselves heavily armed and strong. For many days and nights, there was an exchange of fire and, at times, it went on up to 12 hours. When the partition took place, we had to leave for Hindustan as no one was happy in Pakistan were lynching was going on and no one was happy or safe. Muslims, while migrating, attacked the Hindus in cities as well as in villages. While coming to this place, we encountered no trouble – no loss of life due to famine or disease. The army gave us all sort of protection. From Jalalpur, we came across the border in caravan and safely came to Khanpur city. I'm happy and have no desire to go back.

Case Study 12

The whole situation in 1946-47 was very tense and there was a major upheaval in my village, my birthplace. A day before the Muslims would come, they put up notices on the walls about the day they were coming to kill. This happened for three days in row and the third day, at 9.00 in the night, we could hear the noise of their coming from almost a distance of 6 miles. The were yelling and shouting while attacking. There was a Muslim goldsmith who gave us shelter in his house so as to give the illusion that they would never suspect him. I also had a very big house and one of the doors, the main door opened towards the street and there was a backdoor, which opened into a jungle. And then, our half of the village sought shelter here. Some of the people hid in the jungle and the others took shelter in this Muslim goldsmith’s house. The invaders were about 300 to 400 in number and they burnt our village. Later on, I with my family went to the place of my father’s friend and took refuge there.
The mob also invaded the goldsmith’s house. The jewellery of the women was
snatched and their heads were severed. One of my neighbour’s wife was among
the 6 females who were abducted. At the break of day, the army came for our
protection and we left for India in a caravan on foot. Everything was taken care
of by the government: rations, clothing, everything. We came and settled at the
Kurukshestra camp and later on got some land allotted which I sold and came to
Delhi and opened a handicraft shop at Delhi and my business started
flourishing. I blame all the leaders for the partition and I don’t think that these
two nations could ever get together. I do not want to visit my native town as I
do not want to re-live memories associated with it. I am grateful to be doing
well economically and emotionally.

Case Study 13

I was born in district Gujranwala. My father was Superintendent, Jails. I
was only 15 years old at the time of the partition. We were five brothers and
two sisters. The situation started worsening there and we had to leave as it was
becoming unsafe day by day. Hindus and Sikhs were being killed and their
houses and shops and business establishments were being burnt. My father
opted to go to East Punjab and we came to India penniless and could bring
nothing along. We came by train and it was a very terrifying journey as we
could hear slogans like ‘Kafiron ko Maro’ (meaning kill the infidels) being
raised by the Muslim mob at the stations. We reached Amritsar on 20th of
August and later went to Ambala and we did not visit any camp. All our
relatives who had been displaced came and stayed together. We were around
120 people including about 60 children of different ages and we were staying
in a huge Government House. We used to have ‘langar’. Afterwards, we moved
to Delhi utterly bankrupt and we had nothing except some jewellery and our
relatives extended no help. Governmental support was inadequate and for the
next 7 years, the bank account’s money was not transferred by the Government.
There was no rape or abduction in my family but my ‘fufa’ (paternal aunt’s
husband) was killed. We got one hundredth of the property of what we had in
West Punjab and that too after 7-8 years. It was like “if you see a beggar, if you feel like, you might give alms, that too only 50 paise or nothing”. We did not get any aid from any voluntary organisations. Though my dad was in service, he had owned a lot of ancestral land in West Punjab but did not receive much by way of compensation. We became self-sufficient in about 35 years. We were not well received by the local population and they called us bad as we were very hardworking. Influx of Punjabi refugees had made the residents feel insecure. There was a lot of mental anguish and we had to live with the fear and traumas for a long time. The British had created such a situation where it was difficult for both the nations to be together. People still treat us as refugees. I have never been back of Pakistan but would like to visit if given a chance. It could be a great thing if both the nations decided to get together but it doesn’t look likely.

Case Study 14

I was born in village Ahemdabad of District Gujranwala. In my village, the Muslim population was in majority and the Chairman of the village was also a Muslim named ‘Chaudhry Nasseruddin’. There was a lot of love, friendship and brotherhood among both the communities. When the riots broke out, Nasseruddin kept every Hindu safely and there was a camp in which we stayed. I was 14 years old at the time of the partition. Ours was a joint family comprising of 32 members. When the Muslim mob from other villages attacked our village, Nasseruddin called military and dropped us at Lahore. They asked him, ‘Tere Jawai Ne’, he replied, “Haan, Mere Jawai Ne’ (meaning when he was asked ‘Are these Hindus your sons-in-law’). He dropped us at Lahore Islamia college where a refugee camp was functioning. From there, we made our way to Attari. In Amritsar, there was a ‘son-in-law’ of our village posted at the old jail and he got us quarters. There was inadequacy of trains. From Amritsar, I moved to Panipat and then finally came down to Delhi. All my family members had migrated. We could not bring any money and whatever jewellery we possessed had been looted from us. We had dry-fruit shops in
‘Quetta Baluchistan’ and were financially very strong. We had no relatives in India and do not know much about the compensation. We faced lots of difficulties, even worked as labourers at construction sites and now own a small food joint in South Extension. It took us 25 years to resettle. Our per capita income deteriorated as there were times of extreme poverty too. Steps taken by the Government were not adequate and no voluntary organisation helped us. Local population was very good to us but never tried to help. Though we are not very well off, but have no desire to go back to Pakistan. Partition was inevitable.

**Case Study 15**

We came to Lyallpur and were scared because people did not let us go out since a lot of slaughtering was going on. We stayed in a military camp for 7-10 days. Then male members were left behind since they could fight and take care of themselves, and females were escorted across to the border by the army, so that no Muslim could abduct, assault or kill them. The honour of women was valued more than anything else and that was why they were offered the maximum protection. Our bus was halted by the Muslims at Jadhanwala and we were attacked and many of us were killed. Then, buses were diverted towards a school, and all were asked to keep quiet and, at night, the military trucks were taken out to get us across the border to Amritsar. We were advised not to eat or drink from outside because wells, at times, were poisoned. At Bhudhian, we stayed for 15-18 days and then our relations from Nakhnaus took us to a village. I had brought all my jewellery. I met my husband, father and brother after 3 months of separation and it was a tragic, tearful episode of reunion. My husband joined Delhi Police and we came down to Delhi. I had been very happy all these years but I still miss my old village and friends. The serials or movies like ‘Tamas’ or ‘Gaddar’ make me very nostalgic and open my wounds. I do not take much interest in politics but I’m sure that these two nations if they so decide can be united.
One night, at around 12o’ clock, the Muslim mob came to loot and assault. We jumped from the rooftops of our houses and saved ourselves. There was a Muslim landlord who gave us shelter in his house. This mob had come from a village around 10 miles away from our village. When these gangsters inquired from the Muslims of our village about our whereabouts, they took oath of the Holy Kuran, the holy book of the Muslims to prove that we had left the village. The gangsters had faith in this oath and so they did not take any life but took away all the property that they could get hold of. And all that remained, they gathered and burned it. Then we fled to the city of Khanpur on bullock carts but on reaching Khanpur, we had to face a Muslim mob who were on a looting spree. Then by God’s grace, at that very moment, the Gorkha regiment arrived in Khanpur and thus this mob fled and we lived here for a few months in full security. We boarded a train for India, which was stopped at Samasatav but no one was killed and we got a safe passage to India. Then I crossed the border and came over to Hindu Malkot. When we were fleeing from the village to Khanpur city, many of my friends and my father and brother were slain by the Muslims who had come from the surrounding villages. They were cut, axed and thrown into a canal and I had witnessed it with my own eyes. I lost many dear ones in this episode and this was a heavy price to be paid to get across the border. Till date, I’m unable to forget that nightmarish incident. I have a chain of restaurants in Delhi and am economically very sound but somewhere I feel guilty that I was spared to witness the execution of my loved ones. I have no wish to visit that place ever though, maybe, I do relive those terrible times again and again. There is no point in uniting the two nations as there had been a lot of bad blood between the two and the gaps created can never be filled.
Case Study 17

When we came to know about the partition, the people of 4 or 5 villages assembled and we left in a caravan of bullock carts. At a place along the way, Muslims had concentrated to kill and we had to fight with them and lot of killings took place. At one place, these Muslims destroyed the head of the Canal and there was a flood and we were detained. We had to face severe food and water problems and even Cholera broke out and many people died on the way and even their buffaloes and the cattle died. The Ravi flood also took a lot of lives. Then we fled across the border to Ferozpur. When caravans of Hindus and Sikhs came across a Muslim caravan or vice versa, people usually got into fights because each side had stories of their ethnic counterparts being killed, tortured, mutilated, abducted or raped. We were escorted by the army. The Muslim army also did escort us but instead of helping us, they used to grab and beat us, molest us – things like that. I believe that these riots broke out because of the creation of two states of Hindustan and Pakistan and we Hindus had to leave our ancestral homes and properties. My father’s friend was staying in Delhi and offered to help us. He helped us set up a shop at Connaught Place and we started dealing in cloth. I have a very secure and blissful life but sometimes, I still wish to be back in my village. Things would be much better between the two nations if the Kashmir problem could be solved.

Case Study 18

The amount of tension already existing in my village was quite high and there was communal prejudice between the two communities, so when the partition was announced, these Muslims got a chance to attack us. Ultimately, we decided to leave the village and move to East Punjab. We had swords with us and fought back whenever Muslims tried to attack us on the way. Some of the Muslims also saved us from being killed by Muslims. One of my booa’s (my dad’s sister) had been abducted and till date we have no news of her. We had covered a long distance before we took shelter in a camp and we had
walked for four days without any rest or respite as there was danger of being killed at every step. We spent one month at Daska camp where military took care of us and helped us a lot while travelling by train. We had been looted by Muslims and all cash and jewellery had been taken away. We were, literally, paupers when we reached India. At Pasrur (India), Cholera broke out and 3 members of my family died. We were allotted land near Jalandhar but the productivity was not very high. My father sold it and came to Delhi thinking that it being the capital of the country had much to offer. We opened a shop in Karol Bagh and it flourished. Now, we have around 10 shops all over Delhi.

Partition could have been averted if Nehru had let Jinnah become the Prime Minister. I would love to visit Pakistan but as for settling there, I do not think so. India is my home now and I am very happy here.

Case Study 19

It was such a panicky state that no one knew where to go, so we went over to Rawalpindi and the people there gave us help and we stayed there. We stayed over in Rawalpindi for 3 or 4 months in expectation that may be things would cool down again and then we could perhaps return to our native places. We thought so because Rawalpindi was peaceful at that time as there were no riots there. But, gradually, at the end of 3 months or so, riots broke out there also and then we took shelter at an English official’s house. He gave us protection for sometime. Then later on the Maharaja of Patiala declared that those who belonged to his district or state would be taken care of by him. We left for East Punjab by train and no one tried to stop the train and there was no stopping of the train anywhere as the Maharaja had taken care of everything. As I belonged to an agriculturalist class and was aware of the fact that Maharaja of Patiala had a lot of farming, so we decided to go to Patiala. I reached India and did receive some land in compensation though it was, by far, less than what I had owned in West Punjab. My brother-in-law invited me to settle at Delhi and get into some business, so I went into wholesale business with him and opened a shop at Lajpat Nagar. I do not wish to go back to...
Pakistan as there is nothing left for me to go to. The local populace had been helpful though, at times, I did face hostilities from them as I had been able to earn more than them. The Government did provide compensation but it was inadequate. India and Pakistan cannot be united because of different ideologies.

Case Study 20

After June 1948, things became unbearable in Pakistan and we felt that we had to migrate as there had been lots of massacres and atrocities. Two young girls from our Mohalla had been gang-raped by the Muslims in broad daylight. We knew that it was dangerous for us to stay, there and more so, for our womenfolk. So, my father took the decision of leaving his home and moving to India. We boarded the train in the dead of the night in the month of January and it was biting cold. The train was jam-packed. The women and children were made to sit in the coaches and I with other men, sat on the rooftop of the train. It was a nightmarish journey as we all had heard how the trains were being stopped, people looted and massacred. We reached Amritsar without any major incident. At the station, the scene was pitiable as the refugees were in pathetic condition because of torture, cold and hunger. A woman had given birth to a child on the platform itself. She had seen her husband being killed and her father-in-law, an old man bent with age and grief, looked so bewildered and lost. Anywhere one moved one’s eye, there were people weeping loudly or trying to search for their lost friends. We left for Delhi as my mother’s brother had made living arrangement for us. Though we had been used to a palatial house, we did manage in a rented two-room set. We were 9 members in the family including my parents. My dad got a Government job and we started our schooling. I had a comfortable living but if I had been in Pakistan, I would have lived like a king. I would love to visit my birthplace though it might have changed a lot. India and Pakistan should resolve their differences and if they get united, they would be a force to reckon with.
The journey of these displaced people through many difficulties and hardships throws light on their essential character and that is the hardy nature of the Punjabis. Though they underwent a lot of trauma – mental, emotional, physical and economical; they came out as winners as they had not only been able to survive but survive on their terms. They were very enterprising, self-reliant, confident and had a lot of self-respect. They believed in hard work and toil, which did bear them fruits. Delhi is the example of their forbearance and fortitude. Most of the well-known business establishments are owned by these refugees and they are found in the best of residential areas. Their standard of living is really high and they are a proof of the Punjabi’s sturdiness and strength, but, at what price!