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## DISPLACED PERSONS AND URBAN REHABILITATION IN PUNJAB (1947-48)

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The task of urban rehabilitation in east Punjab was not easy. It was much more difficult than that of resettling the rural refugees. Some of the reasons for this being the considerable imbalance in the number of displaced persons, properties left by them, standard of living and occupational disparity between the outgoing and incoming people. The proportion of urban population was much higher in the case of non-Muslims who had come to east Punjab than in the case of Muslims who had migrated to west Punjab. It was estimated that approximately 13 lacs displaced persons came into urban areas in the east Punjab<sup>1</sup> taking the place of about (to the 1941 census) 8 to 9 lakhs Muslims had.<sup>2</sup>

The Hindus and Sikhs, who migrated from the west Punjab had a greater urban element and a higher standard of living.<sup>3</sup> Although they formed a minority of the population in west Punjab, it is estimated that nearly 80 per cent of the industrial undertakings belonged to them. According to a survey conducted by the Board of Economic Enquiry in the year 1945-46, the non-Muslims were reported to have contributed as much as Rs. 5 crores in the total investment of Rs. 6 crores in the Lahore factories. They owned 167 factories out of a total of 215 indigenous factories in that city. The entire money market in west Pakistan was controlled by them. It has been estimated that nearly 95 per cent of the deposits of large joint-stock banks of western Pakistan were reported to have been held in the accounts of non-Muslims. More than 92 per cent of the insurance premium was paid by non-Muslims. . Even with respect to foreign trade carried on in the part of Karachi, 87 per cent of the concerns were controlled by them.<sup>4</sup> The above figures clearly give a picture of the great prosperity which Hindu and Sikh displaced persons had enjoyed in western Pakistan before the migration. On the other side, the Muslims who migrated to the west Pakistan had a predominantly rural character.

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<sup>1</sup> Govt. of East Punjab, *Urban Rehabilitation in East Punjab* (hereafter Urban Rehabilitation) (Shimla n.d.) p.1.

<sup>2</sup> *Census of India, 1941.*

<sup>3</sup> Kirpal Singh, *The Partition of Punjab*, (Patiala 1972) p.153.

<sup>4</sup> C.N. Vakil, *Economic Consequences of Divided India*, (Bombay 1956) p.133.



Properties left by Muslims in east Punjab were therefore very much inferior to what the urban displaced persons abandoned in west Punjab. They left behind 154,000 houses in west Punjab towns, whereas the Muslims in east Punjab left only 1,10,000. There were 51,000 shops and business premises abandoned in west Punjab by Hindus and the Sikhs, whereas the Muslims left behind 17,000 only.<sup>5</sup> In the case of industrial establishments, the ratio was 13:1.<sup>6</sup>

Another problem in the urban rehabilitation was that the bulk of the urban Muslim population of east Punjab comprised of artisans, craftsmen, mechanics and labourers, whereas the Hindus and Sikhs refugees from west Punjab were traders, shopkeepers, middlemen, industrialists, money-lenders, bankers and people in professions like doctors, teachers, lawyers.<sup>7</sup>

In tackling the problem of re-settling the urban families, the government had to face two immediate problems. First was the provision of housing accommodation and the second was the acquisition of gainful employment to the people to enable them to earn their livelihood.

### Housing

In the beginning some refugees had found accommodation with their relatives and friends, while a few who brought some money with them were able to purchase houses or to obtain them on rent. But the majority of the refugees were living in tents in the camps. For the immediate rehabilitation of urban refugees the government allotted the evacuee houses on a temporary basis.

Table -1

#### District-wise Allocation of Evacuee Houses (upto 30 Sept. 1948)

Sr. No.	District	Houses Abandoned	Houses Allottable	Houses Allotted	Percentage of Column 4 on Column 3
1.	Kangra	920	415	415	100
2.	Rohtak	9,696	7,420	7,383	100
3.	Karnal	13,181	11,364	11,314	100
4.	Amritsar	24,292	18,452	18,412	100

<sup>5</sup> Govt. of Punjab, *Relief and Rehabilitation in Punjab* (Simla n.d.) p.14.

<sup>6</sup> *Urban Rehabilitation*, p.1.

<sup>7</sup> U.B. Rao, *The Story of Rehabilitation*, (Delhi 1967) p.27.



5.	Ambala	14,598	12,892	12,740	99.0
6.	Hoshiarpur	10,998	8,124	7,994	98.0
7.	Ludhiana	13,710	11,432	11,221	98.0
8.	Gugaon	7,785	4,284	4,104	96.0
9.	Ferozepore	10,368	6,929	6,618	96.0
10.	Jullundur	17,986	14,452	13,659	95.0
11.	Hissar	6,412	5,234	4,603	88.0
12.	Gurdaspur	9,070	8,609	7,546	88.0
13.	Simla	659	486	364	75.0
	Total	139,675	110,090	106,373	97.0

Source: *Urban Rehabilitation*, Appendix-I, p.20.

### Model Towns

The acute shortage of houses made it imperative for the Government to immediately take up the issue of repairing damaged Muslim evacuee houses. Initially the work was extremely slow, but later the work was expedited to meet the needs of the refugees. As part of this policy the east Punjab Government decided to establish model townships in the suburbs of 17 towns:<sup>8</sup>

- |                |                 |             |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Jullundur   | 2. Rohtak       | 3. Jagadhri |
| 4. Sonapat     | 5. Gurgaon      | 6. Sirsa    |
| 7. Ludhiana    | 8. Karnal       | 9. Khanna   |
| 10. Bhiwani    | 11. Bahadurgarh | 12. Palwal  |
| 13. Hoshiarpur | 14. Panipat     | 15. Hissar  |
| 16. Rewari     | 17. Hansi       |             |

It was decided to construct 4200 new houses<sup>9</sup> by the end of May 1948. In the beginning the construction of houses proceeded at a “snail’s pace” and only 144 houses were under construction till about April, (1948) in some towns the construction could not even start. But after May 1948 the work was speeded up and 3776 houses had been completed by the end of Jan, 1949.<sup>10</sup> The Table given below show the progress of construction of new houses:

<sup>8</sup> *Urban Rehabilitation*, p.3, *The Tribune* 26 Jan. 1950.

<sup>9</sup> *Relief and Rehabilitation in Punjab*, p.17

<sup>10</sup>V.P. Malhotra, *Economic Conditions Survey of Displaced Person in East Punjab* , pp. 13-14



Table -2

**Progress of Construction of New Houses**

	April 1948	May 1948	June 1948	July 1948	Aug. 1948	Sep. 1948	Oct. 1948	Nov. 1948	Dec. 1948	Jan. 1949
No. of houses under construction	144	561	1194	1942	2486	2866	3328	N.A.	3869	N.A.
No. of houses completed	Nil	Nil	14	342	1026	2187	2626	N.A.	3640	3776

Source: V.P. Malhotra, *Economic Condition Survey of Displaced Person in East Punjab.*, p.13.

Of these 2128 houses had been sold to the bonafide displaced persons till March, 1949 and 393 houses were allotted to displaced soldiers. Some houses had been reserved for provision of essential amenities such as for the establishment of schools, police post, dispensaries, shops, post offices and centres for technical and vocational training. These newly built houses became very popular in Ludhiana, Panipat and Jagadhri. While the houses at Khanna, Palwal and Rewari were not as good.<sup>11</sup>

**Building Sites**

The Government also sold by auction 6800 building sites in the areas adjacent to the model colonies. Out of these 274 were reserved for displaced military personnel. These building sites were of various sizes, ranging from 16 marlas to 6 kanals, to suit the requirements to the different classes of purchasers.<sup>12</sup>

**Cheap Housing Scheme**

A 'Cheap House' scheme was also prepared for the working classes and low-income groups. This scheme aimed at providing 6150 building sites and 10,000 eight-marla plots at various places in the state.

Table -3

**Building Sites for Cheap Housing Schemes**

Place	No. of Houses
Pathankot	1000
Batala	700
Amritsar	500
Moga	300

<sup>11</sup> *Relief and Rehabilitation in Punjab*, p.17.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*



Pupar	250
Bhawani	500
Hansi	100
Shahbad	100
Jullundur	1000
Ludhiana	500
Jagadhari	200
Panipat	300
Ambala	700
Total	6150

Source: *Relief and Rehabilitation in Punjab*, p.21.

Table -4

**Eight Marla Plots**

Places	No. of Houses
Batala	400
Pathankot	400
Ludhiana	500
Jullundur	1000
Ambala	700
Jagadhri	500
Rohtak	1000
Hissar	400
Gurgaon	1000
Palwal	800 (Faridabad)
Karnal	800
Panipat	800
Site of the Capital	1500
Total	9800

(200 Kept in reserve)

Source: *Relief and Rehabilitation in Punjab*, p.22.

These cheap houses were constructed outside some of the important urban areas, to provide accommodation to the labour force who were employed in the factories of the industrial areas. The total cost of this scheme was Rs. 70 lacs.

**Mud Huts**

In addition to the above steps in the direction of housing, the Punjab Government also constructed cheap mud-hut colonies for providing accommodation to the residual population in relief camps. In Punjab, nearly 13,200 mud-huts were built in various towns (Rohtak 1600, Gurgaon 1500, Jullundher 1500, Ambala 1300, Karnal 1200, Panipat 1000,



Ludhiana 800, Sonapat 630, Yamunanagar 500, Jagadhri 400, Hisar 400, Palwal 250)<sup>13</sup> to provide accommodation to nearly 70,000 persons. The total cost of the scheme of mud-huts was approximately Rs. 40 lacs, for which a special allotment had been placed at the disposal of Punjab Government by the Government of India.<sup>14</sup>

### New Townships

Government of India built 15 new townships in different part of India for the accommodation of 6.3 lakh displaced persons. Out of these 5 New Townships were built in east Punjab. The statement below shows the location and size of the townships:

Table -5

State	Location	No. of displaced persons settled	For displaced persons from
Punjab	Faridabad	40,000	N.W.F.P. and West Punjab
	Sonapat	60,000	West Punjab
	Bahadurgarh	60,000	West Punjab
	Chandigarh	80,000	West Punjab
	Nilokheri	15,000	West Punjab
Pepsu	Tripuri	20,000	Bahawalpur
Delhi	Kalkaji	35,000	West Pakistan
	Sheikh Sarai	10,000	West Pakistan
Bombay	Ulhasnagar (Kalyan)	1,30,000	Sind
	Ahmedabad	30,000	Sind
Bhopal	Bairagarh	15,000	Sind
Kutch	Kandla	24,000	Sind
Rajasthan	Pratapnagar, Udaipuri	20,000	Sind
U.P.	Shahjehanpur	24,000	West Pakistan
West Bengal	Habra Baigachi	70,000	East Bengal
Total for 15 Townships		6,33,000	

(Source: Report, Ministry of Rehabilitation, p.11)

### Gainful Employment

#### (Allotment of Evacuee Shops and Factories)

After the first requirement of residential accommodation for the displaced persons was met, the next important step was towards effecting speedy rehabilitation in their avocations. According to a laid down policy the evacuee shops and factories were only allotted to the displaced persons. The only essential conditions of eligibility was that the

<sup>13</sup> *The Tribune*, 26 January 1950.

<sup>14</sup> *Relief and Rehabilitation in Punjab*, p.7.



displaced persons, who claimed allotment of a shop or a factory, should have carried on a similar business or industry in the West Punjab.<sup>15</sup>

There were in all 17,167 allottable shops. Out of these 16,317 had been allotted by the 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1948. District-wise figure in Punjab are given in the below listed table.<sup>16</sup>

Table -6

**District Wise Allotment of Evacuee Shops in Punjab**

Sr. No.	District	Shops abandoned	Allotable shops	Shops allotted	Percentage
1.	Kangra	247	193	193	100
2.	Karnal	2,220	2,176	2,176	100
3.	Gurgaon	852	789	787	100
4.	Amritsar	4,552	3,974	3,963	100
5.	Ludhiana	1,681	986	974	99
6.	Rohtak	1,598	1,174	1,138	97
7.	Hoshiarpur	1,595	1,098	1,070	98
8.	Ferozepore	661	584	567	97
9.	Ambala	1,943	1,791	1,728	96
10.	Hissar	546	477	448	94
11.	Jullundur	2,449	2,339	1,984	85
12.	Gurdaspur	1,529	1,216	1,024	84
13.	Simla	371	370	265	72
	Total	20,244	17,167	16,317	95

(Source: *Urban Rehabilitation*, Appendix-II, p.22.)

**Vocational Training**

There was a wide disparity in the occupations pursued by the outgoing and inflowing people. Displaced persons who took shelter in the east Punjab were mainly from trading classes, whereas the bulk of the Muslims who had migrated from the east Punjab were technicians and labourers. The following table gives the various occupations followed by the Muslims of the east Punjab and the Hindus and the Sikhs of the west Punjab:

Table -7

Occupation	Hindu and Sikhs in West Punjab	Muslims in East Punjab
Agriculture	8.2 lakhs	29.60 lakhs
Traders	14.1 lakhs	2.79 lakhs
Weavers	0.80 lakhs	3.70 lakhs
Shoemakers	1.25 lakhs	1.64 lakhs

<sup>15</sup> *Relief and Rehabilitation in Punjab*, p.24.

<sup>16</sup> *Urban Rehabilitation*, p.6.



Carpenters	0.56 lakhs	0.79 lakhs
Blacksmiths	0.57 lakhs	-
Potters	0.45 lakhs	1.64 lakhs
Dyers	0.04 lakhs	0.41 lakhs
Bakers and Water Carriers	0.57 lakhs	1.84 lakhs
Barbers	0.17 lakhs	0.86 lakhs
Sweepers	2.10 lakhs	0.07 lakhs
Washerman	0.05 lakhs	0.52 lakhs
Tailors	0.02 lakhs	0.08 lakhs

(Source: Pakistan Government, *Economy of Pakistan*, p.397)

The exodus of Muslim skilled labour from the east Punjab substantially crippled the industries like hosiery, metal-works and railways, in which the Muslims formed about ninety percent of skilled or semi-skilled labour. The east Punjab, which was already backward in industrial development, suffered much on this account.<sup>17</sup> The textile industry, carpet and blanket-weaving, foundry and engineering industries, which were mostly in the hands of the Muslims, suffered a serious set-back.

To fit the Hindu and Sikhs displaced persons into the economy of the east Punjab and to make up for the acute shortage in skilled and unskilled labour, a number of vocational training centres had been established at various places in the east Punjab. Three different agencies imparted these technical and vocational training centres in east Punjab.

Ministry of Rehabilitation, Government of India.

Directorate General of Resettlement and Employment, Ministry of Labour, Government of India. (DGRE)

Department of Industries, Government of east Punjab.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

### Urban Small Loans

The majority of displaced persons did not have the means to start any business, trade, industry or profession on their own. Therefore, Government decided to provide financial assistance in the form of loans and grants. The administration of these loans was in the hands of state governments and provinces. The east Punjab Government passed the Punjab Refugee Rehabilitation (Loans and Grants) Act, 1948. Small loans for rehabilitation of

<sup>17</sup> Punjab Government, *Public Relations Department, Industries and Civil Supplies* (Simla n.d.), p.1.





displaced persons had been sanctioned under this Act. The loan was limited to Rs. 5000 to individual, Rs. 20,000 to a group of four or more displaced persons, and Rs. 25,000 to a co-operative society.<sup>18</sup> Maximum amounts fixed for each class of borrowers are indicated below:<sup>19</sup>

Traders, shopkeepers and those persons who wish to start their own workshop or cottage industries Rs. 5000

Doctors, lawyers, architects and consulting engineers Rs. 3000

Purchase of tongas Rs. 1000

Others Rs.500

The following table shows the total amount of loans and grants sanctioned till 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1949 in various districts of east Punjab.

Table -8

**Distribution of Small Loans and Grants in the Districts of East Punjab (upto January 1949)**

Sr. No.	Name of Districts	Loans		Grants	
		Total Amount	Percentage of Total Amount	Total Amount	Percentage of Total Amount
1.	Hissar	4,06,850	4.0	73,605	7.2
2.	Rohtak	7,44,950	7.4	22,400	2.2
3.	Gurgaon	3,74,350	3.7	40,000	3.9
4.	Karnal	8,78,700	8.7	49,015	4.8
5.	Ambala	10,02,500	9.9	1,04,550	10.2
6.	Simla	3,27,250	3.2	6,450	0.6
7.	Kangra	60,000	0.6	2,250	0.2
8.	Hoshiarpur	7,96,900	7.9	90,100	8.7
9.	Ludhiana	10,34,875	10.2	1,07,205	10.4
10.	Jullundur	13,50,725	13.3	1,65,080	16.1
11.	Ferozepur	13,01,300	12.8	79,034	7.8
12.	Amritsar	8,97,550	8.8	2,01,620	19.6
13.	Gurdaspur	9,66,130	9.5	85,670	8.3
	Total	1,01,42,080	100	10,28,979	100

(Source: Malhotra, *Economic Condition Survey*, p.38)

**Re-employment to Employees**

The Government of India and east Punjab Government made efforts for placing displaced employees in suitable jobs. The Central Government entrusted this work to the Employment

<sup>18</sup> *Relief and Rehabilitation in Punjab*, p.31.

<sup>19</sup> Vakil, *Economic Consequences of Divided India*, p.96.



Exchanges under the control of the Directorate General of Resettlement and Employment in the Ministry of Labour. Regional Director of Resettlement and Employment, east Punjab in coordination with the district employment exchanges, did pivotal work in this direction.

It is estimated that 4,00,000 displaced employees from West Pakistan got registered in east Punjab, out of these 1,11,074 were placed in various type of employments. We can not ofcourse overlook that there were a large number of complaints against the whole process of employment and favouritism that was routine in most departments.

Table -9

**Placement of Displaced Persons Through Employment Exchanges (upto December, 1958)**

	Number of displaced persons in employment						
	upto Nov. 1948	During (1949-52)	During (1953-55)	During (1956)	During (1957)	During (1958)	Total upto 31-12-1958
Punjab	61,349	30,551 (Approximately)	13,296	3,180	1,681	1,071	1,11,074
Total in West Zone (Including Punjab)	1,67,092	(upto 1952)	22,544	5,822	3,708	2,478	2,01,644

(Source: Report, Ministry of Rehabilitation, p.71)

**Rehabilitation of Displaced Students**

A large number of school and colleges displaced students had suffered greatly due to the weakening of the financial position of their parents and guardians as a consequence of their forced migration. This caused premature termination of studies in the case of many students. The Punjab Government provided grants and loans to the students of colleges and technical institutions. Relief to school students was also given in the form of grants for purchase of books and stationery.<sup>20</sup>

The loans were given to college and technical students usually on the following scales.<sup>21</sup>

Intermediate	Rs. 40 per month plus tuition fee
B.A., B.Sc.	Rs. 50 per month plus tuition fee
B.T. Classes	Rs. 60 per month plus tuition fee
M.A., M.Sc.	Rs. 65 per month plus tuition fee
Agriculture	Rs. 70 per month plus tuition fee
Law College Students	Rs. 80 per month plus tuition fee
Medical Students	Rs. 100 per month plus tuition fee

<sup>20</sup> Relief and Rehabilitation in Punjab, p.33.

<sup>21</sup> Malhotra, Economic Condition Survey, p.16.



The loans were repayable within four years of the date of the payment of last installment and carried on interest at 2 per cent per annum.

In schools, a large number of displaced students were given grants for purchase of books, apparatus and stationery. Concessions were also given in examination fees. In the case of IX and X class the maximum limit for a grant had been fixed at Rs. 75. In the case of V to Middle Classes at Rs. 50.<sup>22</sup>

Though the government claimed that the policy of urban rehabilitation proved successful, yet a large number of displaced persons were very critical about the urban rehabilitation policies and its implementation. In fact the Minister of State for Relief and Rehabilitation himself admitted in the Constituent Assembly in March 1949 that the progress of urban rehabilitation had been slow. Jaswant Singh Duggal, the President of the Refugee Association, complained that the refugees had not been treated properly. In a speech, on 14 May 1959 he said,<sup>23</sup> "The refugees are being molested for the last four and half years. Instead of enjoying the fruits of freedom they had suffered ruination... It is remittable that the Muslim houses are in the occupation of local persons... The refugees had purchased rickshaws jointly and were earning one or two rupees daily. The Minister-in-charge of the Local Self Government ordered that only one person could run one rickshaw only. But you will find many local persons who own four rickshaws each.... Some refugees complain of starvation...."

As early as 1952 the government was of the opinion that between 80 to 90 per cent of the west Pa kistan refugees had been rehabilitated. On the contrary Sardar Hukam Singh, MP, while presiding over the All India Refugee conference in Delhi in December 1952 stated on the basis of a sample survey conducted by All India Refugee Association that "the majority of the unfortunate victims of partition were still unsettled."<sup>24</sup> Up to 1958, thousands of urban displaced persons were unsettled. But these displaced persons displayed great energy and spirit of enterprise for rebuilding their lives and restoring their shattered fortunes. They were determined to stand on their own feet again. By dint of their hard work and determination these refugees achieved a certain level of prosperity. But this of course is another story.

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<sup>22</sup> *Relief and Rehabilitation in Punjab*, p.33.

<sup>23</sup> PLA, vol.I, no. 8, Part-II, 14 May 1952.

<sup>24</sup> *The Tribune*, 16 Dec. 1952.