# 1947 Partition on the Margins: The Untold Testimonies of Sikh, Bahawalpur and Marwari Communities

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This poster offers a concise working plan of a digital project titled *1947 Partition on the Margins: The Untold Testimonies of Sikh, Bahawalpur and Marwari Communities*. The project aims to collect undocumented narratives of many 'Punjabi' and 'Rajasthani' communities who migrated from villages in current Eastern Pakistan to villages in the current Western India during the 1947 partition. The primary objective of the project is to create an open access visual and narrative based digital archive of partition and post-partition testimonies developed through audio-video transcripts and photographs. The audio-visual transcripts will be collected through personal interviews of the partition witnesses, their families and subsequent generations. These interviews will take place on-site in their villages. This population mostly consists of Sikh, Bahawalpur and Marwari communities who travelled comparatively short distances during partition, settling in the nearby villages close to the border in Indian states of Rajasthan and Punjab. The geographical distance travelled by these communities towards Indian villages was only about 40 to 50 KM. However, the spatial definitions changed and any hope of revisiting the ancestral homeland was shattered with the newly constructed international border.

These are a few minority communities residing in small villages whose partition experiences are not traced in public memory or documented in any literature, primarily because their journey of migration was relatively hushed and non-violent. However, the geo-political movement from one place to another brought larger social, cultural, political and economic challenges in the post-independence India for families in these many communities. They migrated from one small village to another leaving behind whatever geographical, economical and cultural assets that belonged to them. Even after almost 70 years of partition in 1947, families in these communities are struggling to own lands of their own. The generation that witnessed the partition of 1947 is disappearing and will not be there after next 4 to 5 years. Therefore, it becomes an obligatory task to document the narratives of a traumatic historical event that completely changed the flow of history.

The subsequent generations of these families who migrated to India continue to face economic and cultural challenges. The nostalgia of not being able to visit their ancestral homeland disturbs the process of connecting with their current homeland. Therefore, this project aims to contextualise these first-hand audio-video interviews and photographs into narratives that will provide an influential palimpsest of history and the contemporary cultural and political state.

There are several ongoing digital projects that contextualise historical events into narratives such as *1947 Partition Archive*, *1984 Living History*, *Kashmir Oral History*, *Indian Memory Project* and *Holocaust Memorial Museum*. The memory projects on the 1947 partition such as *1947 Partition Archive* mostly record stories that are often (rightly so) narratives of violence and bloodshed. However, there is gap in existing literature and database that do not document less violent partition experiences of a large population that mostly live at the western Indian border. The aim of the current project is to document those unheard communities which escaped immediate violence but continue to suffer the residual pains of geo-cultural and economical traumas in post-partition India. The poster also offers a framework of methodology to be followed for developing the project. The methodology involves collection of data by visiting the villages, audio-video interviews with families, collecting photographs and letters, transcription and description of interviews and contextualising photographs and letters in narratives. The development of final testimonies achieved through these working stages will be developed into an open access website, hosted through KSHIP (Knowledge Sharing In Publication) which is a multilingual academic publishing project at IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) Indore, India.