

Justice® Nasira Iqbal

About- Mrs Nasira Iqbal

Mrs Nasira Waheed Iqbal is a retired Judge of the Lahore High Court, Lahore. She is one of the best people to ask about Partition, not only because she is the daughter-in-law of Dr. Muhammad Allama Iqbal but also because she has experienced the events and has been a major part of them too. She was one of the first five women to be appointed to the Lahore High Court, where she served as a justice from 1994 to 2002.

Sir Muhammad Iqbal, widely known as Allama Iqbal was a poet, philosopher and politician, who is widely regarded as having inspired the Pakistan Movement. He is called the “Spiritual Father of Pakistan” and is known to have first dreamt of Pakistan.

QUESTIONS: 1947 PARTITION OF BRITISH INDIA: PARTITION STORIES Before Partition Before Partition

1. Describe life before Partition. Where were you before Partition happened? What were you doing? What were things like? What was the feeling then? (Your feelings, general atmosphere.)

Answer: We were in Lahore. My life was very simple. Hindu, Sikhs and Christians, we were all living together. It was a mixed community. I was studying at Queen Mary’s which was one of the best schools there at the time. It too had a mixed crowd. We also happened to be one of the only Muslim houses in the area. My father owned a printing press- this was the only Muslim printing press in Lahore at the time.

During Partition

2. When and how did you learn about Partition? Please tell us about your experience: What happened during Partition? Where were you when Partition happened? Did you stay where you were or did you have to leave?

Answer: We lived next to the Civil Secretariat. My parents were both part of the Pakistan movement which allowed me to know about what was going on. My father also went to jail for some time because all the freedom fighters were locked in. Everyone was very enthusiastic when it came to Pakistan, especially the young crowd. I remember that during this time tensions between Hindus and Muslims increased.

Migration

If you migrated:

3a. Where did you leave from/to? Which towns did you cross or stay in? How was the decision to leave reached?

3b. Who did you travel with? What method(s) of transportation did you take? Did people in your area leave? Who left, who stayed back?

3c. What did you take with you and why? What did you end up with? What happened on the journey?

If you did not migrate:

3a. please describe how it was decided to stay. Where did you stay? Who did you stay with?

3b. did you interact with migrants? How?

Answer: Our whole family was in Lahore so we did not migrate. We belonged in Pakistan and thus we did not need to migrate. However, we did interact with the people that came from there, as my mother would feed and fund for the education of migrants and refugees.

Refugee Camps

4. Were you at a refugee camp (at any point on the journey)?

Answer: We were not at a refugee camp, as we did not travel but there was a refugee camp near our house. My mother would feed them daily. She even opened a school for them, which grew with time. It eventually became a High School, "Fatima Feroz High School".

Health

5. Could you tell us what kind of diseases or illnesses were common at the time of Partition?

Answer: There were widespread respiratory and digestive tract ailments. Many refugees suffered from depression, injuries, fatigue and fever.

6. Did you, or anyone you know of, experience any health-related issues during Partition (for e.g. diseases, injuries, or mental illnesses)? If yes, did you get any help to deal with those issues during that time? Who provided help?

Answer: No one I knew experienced any health issues, we were in Lahore. The health issues were in the areas with more bloodshed. The refugees were treated by all the doctors and hospitals in Lahore, The health issues were in the areas where migration took place.

Education

7. What was the impact of Partition on your education? Did you change your stream? Could you tell us if you missed school/ college, and if yes, for how long?

Answer: There was no effect on my education. I continued to study in Lahore. I completed my education.

Livelihood/ Profession

8. How did the Partition impact your livelihood/ professional life?

Answer: Our life was the same even after the Partition; it had no great effect on our livelihood.

Response of the Government and Civil Society

9. How did the government and/or civil society in the new countries respond to the Partition? What do you think they did well and where did they falter? Do you remember any other individuals that were active during that time?

Answer: I remember, after Pakistan was made. The first time we all sat and listened to the radio. The Government was announced. The Government lacked funds but initially they would care for the people and understand that their rights came before their own.

10. What do you remember about the role of the police and military during the Partition?

Answer: The police tried their best to control the panic and disorder. Military had no equipment.

After Partition

11. What was it like after Partition? Was life any different than it was before Partition happened? (Did you undergo any lifestyle changes as a result of Partition? For example: change schools, eat different foods, aspects of daily life and care, etc.)

Answer: There were several empty houses in our neighborhood after Hindus and Sikhs left. After partition, corruption increased. Our life was the same overall. Non- migrants got Evacuee properties against bogus claims.

12. How do you feel about the decision of Partition? Is that any different than how you felt in 1947-8?

Answer: I feel as if that was the right thing to do and because of that decision, today I can talk about my experience and see Pakistan's success. It is only because we are citizens of a free country and not the subjects of foreign powers.

13. Have you been, or are you in touch (present or past) with anyone from your birth place/ location before Partition? Would you like to share anything about that communication?

Answer: Yes, my entire family lived in Lahore; we frequently share our experiences with each other and others.

14. Can you share any photographs or memorabilia with us from the time of Partition?

Answer: I do not have photographs from that time.

15. Have you been interviewed before? If yes, by whom

Answer: Yes, I have been interviewed by students, researchers and the media several times but not for this particular project, up till now.