

File: MVI_0023.mp4

Duration: 0:11:49

Date: 20/10/2017

Typist: 715

START AUDIO

Pat Rodwell: Hello.

Respondent: Hi.

Pat Rodwell: I'm Pat Rodwell and I'm from the sampad Partition Trail Project and I'm here today to talk to you about your experiences of partition.

Respondent: Okay.

Pat Rodwell: Would you like to say who you are?

Respondent: Yes, my name is Mashood Jalil and I was born in Patna, India, British India.

Pat Rodwell: What year were you born? If you wouldn't mind telling me.

Respondent: 194- no 1937.

Pat Rodwell: So you were 10 at the time of the partition?

Respondent: That's right, yes.

Pat Rodwell: Tell me a little bit first about your family and where you lived?

Respondent: Well we were quite comfortable living in Patna for quite a while. I mean my father had, what's it called, a glass factory in part of (Tipihar?)____[0:01:05] which was, I think it was _____. I mean I'm just talking by memory. So we worked sometimes in Patna and sometimes in Hazirbagh which was about 200 miles from Patna but it was all part of the Bihar.

So yes.

Pat Rodwell: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Respondent: Oh yes, we are six brothers and three sisters but before partition we were two sisters and six brothers so that's where, yes.

Pat Rodwell: What sort of house did you live in?

Respondent: Well the house was very good, very big, quite a lot of rooms, there's kind of a veranda on the front and veranda on the back but big gardens and trees. You've got trees like mango trees every kind of trees. So there were very big and palacious [gracious] houses.

Pat Rodwell: What were your neighbours like?

Respondent: Well because the houses were away from each other so it was very difficult to know what was... Yes, but there were people were all mixed there, all kinds... There was no differentiation between who was who, whether you are Hindu or Muslims or the Sikhs or... There were no Sikhs at that end, no.

Pat Rodwell: How would you describe the atmosphere, locally, between people?

Respondent: It's difficult because we were a bit above them (laughs). You know lets put it that way, so we were not, I mean we were playing with our kind of people and the majority of people are serving us, so...

Pat Rodwell: You were quite a well-off, prosperous family?

Respondent: Yes, very comfortable, that's what exactly so we were having what we'd want.

Pat Rodwell: What memories have you got of your early childhood in that house with your family?

Respondent: We were very happy together. We were doing things which were very nice but you can't compare it because that was there. It's very difficult to say so, yes, I mean we were taken to the shop to buy things which we preferred to buy in good like toys and things like that. The servants used to take us to the park so they were nice.

Pat Rodwell: That was good. Did things begin to change as time went on?

Respondent: Yes, things were getting worse or slowly, slowly worse when, it must've been, '46, early '46/late '45 that when was which we started getting aware of. Various people were demanding, wanting independence. People were very politically, very much involved and because my father was very involved with politics, so we were very much exposed to, you know.

Pat Rodwell: What were your father's views about independence?

Respondent: He wanted to have independence, he was solely for independence so that was... but as I gathered, the very early time, they were all part of the one party, which was the Communist Party. So we were going to be more like a rainbow type India where we live altogether but, gradually, people find that no, it is one imperial goes, another imperial walk in.

The Muslims realised we would be second-class and the Hindus would be wanting to have a so-called Hindustan, meaning Hindus land, you know, so they wanted to be the masters and the rest of them would be the subordinates. That was the thing which started bubbling.

Pat Rodwell: What sort of things happened or changed because of this?

Respondent: Actually it's because of this people were finding, particularly the Muslims, finding after the Second World War which was the eyeopener for all, every one of them whether it was Hindu, whether it was Sikh and whether it was Muslims. It was very much but before, I mean we're talking about, what, from the war started, it was '4-...?

Pat Rodwell: '39?

Respondent: Yes, exactly. So that time the people were finding that, no, it's not going to be the British move out and we will rule the whole of India as a Hindustan or Indian, no because they all have got, been divided by their religion. The thing which was happening is very much identity.

Pat Rodwell: What did your father and your family think about these religious divides that were happening?

Respondent: Well our father was very much politically involved and he was more like not as religion but politically to religion, it was there.

First of all my father had his own newspaper, so he was politically very much involved in that, you know. All the big people like Nehru and Gandhi and those sorts of people, he was meeting those people and had to, you know.

The majority wanted, was to have their own homeland.

Pat Rodwell: When you were young, did you realise that your father was meeting these important people and was active?

Respondent: Very, rarely, sometimes... I remember once it was experience, which was we were taken to the very huge mansion house, I think it was Nehru's house, must've been Nehru's house with all the - what are they called? The guard on the front gate and things like that. So we were there and most of the very important people were meeting and we were all the children because they would go as a family. So all the children were on the other side and those sorts of things.

I mean the girl who was looking after us as a supervisor she more wanted to be in the next room where all the things were happening instead of looking at these people, [I can agree 0:10:50], you know. So that sort of thing was there.

Pat Rodwell: That's very interesting. What about as partition came, well, as independence came what was it like then?

Respondent: After independence?

Pat Rodwell: Yes.

Respondent: It was very hard. You mean the part when we were, you know, it was just very hard.

Pat Rodwell: Can you tell me in what way it was hard?

Respondent: Well because we had nothing. Sorry I... Can you stop this?

Pat Rodwell: Yes.

END AUDIO

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File: MVI_0024.mp4

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START AUDIO

Pat Rodwell: Let's go back to your time in Patna. Can you tell me how things began to change?

Respondent: Yes, the thing which I remember is things were changing because the people started demonstrating, most of the time, every town. What we found in those early times it changed here. When we went to the Eid Mass, you know, the prayer for the Eid. People were, you know, the militia which was the Muslim militia who wore different dress because we were all having the prayer in the field, in the park. They were all standing, guarding, that there was no kind of... Difficult to start with the Hindus and things like that.

That's what I found, that yes, here we were. Things started getting bad.

Pat Rodwell: In what ways did they start getting bad?

Respondent: They were asking India for Hindus, that was what they were chanting all the time, to leave India to the Hindus.

Pat Rodwell: Were there demonstrations or actions against Muslims who lived there?

Respondent: Yes, the same was happening to both sides. That was Jai Hind[0:01:48] or the Pakistan Zindabad so there were these two, that you could hear. That was the thing. We knew because where we were living, it was very much Hindu jewellers, around living near jewellers. So all of a sudden, we found that the people who were cleaning, gradually they started saying, "No, I'm not coming." So those sort of things.

There was one worse day, I'm just thinking with the memory, the worst day was at night because we had all gone - I'm trying to remember. We woke up and we always said, "Let's go to the second storey." So we stayed in there and then you could hear the people shouting, "Burn the house, burn the house." That's what we heard and we were all huddled on one storey and we knew they were hyped up, people were getting more and more [remote 0:03:24], that's what we were hearing and that was a very frightening part.

Then, I don't know what happened. Then everybody dispersed. I don't know what happened, we never knew that. Then the next morning we remember that lots and lots of carriages came and we all went to a friend's of my father who had a big house, somewhere, away from there[0:03:59] and we went there. So, from there... That's right, then my father must have decided that we had to go from Patna to Calcutta. We were then happy there because we had a First-Class carriage and we had a full carriage for ourselves and we went to Calcutta.

Pat Rodwell: How long was that journey?

Respondent: Oh it's approximately about six/seven hours, you know, or less there. I don't know the distance between Patna and Calcutta, I think it's about 300 miles/400 miles, something like that, anyway. I thought that was very nice, the house was very palatial, first time we had electricity, a flush toilet so that was very nice but things were getting worse because the chanting was, I went straight from the house because there we heard of the butcheries on [Jaipur 0:05:34] were Hindus. So they were saying, "We will have revenge. We have to in Bengal."

So it was vice versa. There were no innocent parties, that was that, so it was going on. It was really and then I remember once, again I'm skipping back to Patna again, you know, there was my father's paper and all of a sudden it had been seized because he was against saying about the British and all those, so it had been seized. But he had one advantage because he had his own press so he had different papers, you know, so he played hide and seek. That was quite interesting as I think of it now but all through that it was not very good, anyway.

Pat Rodwell: When you moved to Calcutta, you had to leave all of that behind?

Respondent: Yes, but quite a lot of things were there in Calcutta because he had transferred everything there so it was quite good. We moved to there in 1946, I think it was, it must be April, no, not April. We moved to Calcutta - we didn't stay very long - I think it was September there and then things were getting worse

and worse, even where we were living it was suburbia, so even there.

Pat Rodwell: What was happening?

Respondent: They threatened that they would kill, any Muslims they would kill.

Pat Rodwell: It must've been very frightening for you and your family?

Respondent: We were living through it, so every day was the same. Then the second thing that I remember we'd all been bundled on because of the railway station. We were lucky that we had a ticket and we were on such train and we got into the carriages. That's when the journey started from Calcutta to Karachi.

What we found, at the second station, I think, people were forcing getting on to the train so were just being pushed to one side because everybody wanted to get the train. We knew that nobody could control it, it was everybody who could get in those carriages. We were travelling, it's a very long journey and people were talking and some people were crying, some people doing something. It was all muddled up, together, completely.

I think at one station we stopped, I don't know which station it was before Amritsar and there were rumours that there was a whole massacre going on and somebody said that they were marking the carriages. In the horizon there was smoke and fire everywhere, like purple everywhere so we were really... It's frightening, if you've never ever experienced that sort of thing.

Then we found that the train was coming into Amritsar Station, we were told to lay down, it was going at a speed, I thought we would come off the track, it was going so fast. So when we passed through the station you could smell this coming from all the human flesh, bodies were scattered all over on the ___[0:11:50] so it was [glimpsed] because the train had to be driven in double the speed so we just came and zoom, we were gone, but it was.

Then I think everybody was holding their breath because they weren't able to stop the train. The second stop we had was in Lahore and there the ___[0:12:35] army which was ___ but they were all Muslim Army so we were able to stretch our legs and things like that, get down from the train.

Pat Rodwell: Did you feel safe then?

Respondent: The first time we could breathe, that was the simple thing. When I think about it now, you get so quickly immune as the things happen. You've already been climatized, you know, that's what you here.

Pat Rodwell: Even though you were so young?

Respondent: You grow-up very fast. Then, we had drinks and everything there, fresh water and things like that. The next thing we remember we landed in Karachi. It's a 48-hour journey from Calcutta to Karachi.

Pat Rodwell: What happened when you got to Karachi? I'm just wondering if you want...?

END AUDIO

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START AUDIO

Pat Rodwell: Tell me what it was like, when you arrived in Karachi?

Respondent: We arrived in Karachi, I think it was April 1947 and it was a place called Haji Camp. This is the Camp where the Haji used to go for the pilgrimage to Mecca and that was the ___[0:00:39] area. It was just rows and rows of, you know, the block with the partition with hessian. So were just like a cattle market, more like.

Pat Rodwell: So very different to your previous accommodation, your houses?

Respondent: Of course, yes, we didn't have anything but just what we were wearing and what we carried. I can remember standing there, there was no furniture or anything, you just sat down with everybody on the floor and when looking at my mother's face, she didn't know what to do. She had a little child and it was completely... I think we were ___[0:01:59] or something like this or something because the refugees were pouring into there and ___ there was no greenery, there was sand

everywhere. We'd never seen things like that, we'd come from a very green area to completely dry. You could see miles of sand, that's all.

I think we stayed there for two or three months and it was a communal - what's it called - washroom. One side for all the men and one side for all the women so the noises and, you know... It was ___[0:03:10] we were running around, playing in the sand, we were all fine in there. Then what happened in there, as I gathered, that, yes... So one thing I remember that in the middle of the so-called [madan 0:03:38], they call it, it's kind of an open area where they had had a huge pole and I think it was August the 14th, that was Independence Day and they put the flag in there and we all gathered there and we all clapped when the flag went up. So that's when they announced that we had an independent country ___[0:04:10].

Then life started... What happened with my family, India nationalised the Bank so we lost completely, there was nothing. At that time because ___[0:04:41] did not have any industry, there was nothing in there, commerce-wise and everything was completely, as we call it, destitute - more or less. So the people had to build and that's what all everybody had. We all had been allocated what was called quarters, a five-room with three-bedroom quarters with a tin roof, rows and rows of that and that's where we were... Then, I remember in the square, the people used to come early in the morning and ask about who had got ___[0:05:47]? So you had to go ____. So this was happening but it's grown, it's grown very fast and we didn't know. We didn't hear a soul.

Pat Rodwell: What did your father do?

Respondent: I think he was still in newspapers. Then he was 30 years, started his own business, you know, so it's kind of a more consulting-type business. He had a huge experience about how to do the industry and things like that and I mean everything from the cotton produced to cement, sugar, you know, until you got hold, it was a completely virgin land so you had to...

I knew that irrigation is number one because without that they would not survive because they hadn't got anything to buy. So the number one thing was to have a canal irrigation system.

Pat Rodwell: What was life like for you as a young boy there?

Respondent: Not very good, very hard. We were all doing various things.

Pat Rodwell: Hard, in what way?

Respondent: Money-wise, we were all poor. So then we had to pick up. We went to the technical college and then we had to learn about mechanical design or mechanical, machinery, how to operate a machine and things like that. Then we were fine and then we were sorting ourselves.

Pat Rodwell: How long did you live in Karachi?

Respondent: We lived in Karachi for about - '47 to '52, then we moved to Lahore and then we moved around. I mean we moved around, ___[0:09:08].

Pat Rodwell: What do you remember it being like, once independence had been gained?

Respondent: Everybody was hyped up as independent, you know, so I mean we were all very much, Pakistan is our country. The thing which was unfortunate is ___[0:09:46] died because of his illness, the Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan who was a very good Prime Minister. He didn't even have a [penny taken 0:10:00] from, you know, where he was. Even at the senate. So that was the end of the partition.

Then you got various ___ the Civil Service, you know, the civilian government never happened because they'd always been muddled from the foreign, you know, which was promoting... That was my view. That's pure my... So you see, so they ___[0:10:45], the Army took over, bloodless coup, you know from that one, and another Army they would have to wait ___ from.

Pat Rodwell: What was life like then for you as a young man?

Respondent: Good, not bad at all, good. We would have lots of... I mean when I was growing-up people were very... Karachi, particularly, was totally different because that was ___[0:11:30] so it was very much, there was no barrier because Karachi cannot claim. Karachi could claim the native wasn't enough to

claim. It's grown, well at that time it must have been about four or five million. Today it's almost twenty-eight million or something like that.

Pat Rodwell: What was your story? What happened after that for you?

Respondent: Well my story, you know, I went from one place to another. Then we spent lots of time on the North-West frontier and there was land and things like that so we were looking after that. Then I used to have a lovely time there. We used to cross-over almost to Kabul and Afghanistan, it was a lovely time. Those people, where we were, [Modan 0:12:59] area in there, we were there and because we'd come from Karachi so all the same aged boys were great, they used to have, you know... So all the, so-called the Khan Family they're all landowners so we used to all get into the one big car and drive all the way to the Kabul Pass straight to Kabul. That's where all the goodies were.

Pat Rodwell: What's your thoughts now, when you look back at the time just before partition and independence? What's your thoughts of it, looking back now?

Respondent: Looking back, what I think of it now, at my age, Pakistan is not giving into full, you know, what's that called? Pakistan deserves better than what they had. They did not give into ___[0:14:19], Pakistan's very resilient but it's always been the subordinate. If you look at that, without any bloodshed, the Army took over and was very much influenced around the ___ Frontier, the various part of ___[0:14:44], you know. If we look

at ___ in India, you always had... Well there was corruption and everything but there is a democracy and they claim it's the biggest democracy in the world. I mean, you cannot take it away which Pakistan deserved that. If that had happened then we could've progressed far more than what we have but, even saying that, the Pakistanis have, when you think about it, they built the whole lot. It's the biggest waterworks in the world, you know, the dam system.

Pat Rodwell: So there's been some big achievements?

Respondent: Yes, I mean it's 70 years with nothing to people have to think twice before leaving, you know, but Pakistanis have got one attitude, they never say, "Oh we are great, great we have this." You will never hear that, you will hear, "Yes, we always have... You are better than us." Mind you, I'm not.

Pat Rodwell: That's been really good. Is there anything else about it you'd like to mention that's come to mind?

Respondent: No.

Pat Rodwell: Thank you.

Respondent: The last one, I was working in ___[0:16:34] and that must've been quite interesting because those were the repairing areas so the burned houses and things like that, before coming to England. That was the lot.

Pat Rodwell: Good. That's lovely, thank you very much for sharing your memories.

Respondent: Thank you very much indeed.

Pat Rodwell: And hopefully we've captured everything...

END AUDIO

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