**PERSONAL PROFILE: Mohammed**

In 1947, Mohammed was eight years old and living with his family in Sadarpura, a village in Ludhiana District, Panjab. At the announcement of Partition, he and his Muslim family had to leave their farmlands and travel west to Sidhwan-Saleempur, where they spent two and a half months in a refugee camp.

Mohammed and his family were then escorted to Jagraon, crossing the Sutlej River at a bridge near Firozpur. They arrived in Kasur, the first town on the Pakistani side after the river crossing and settled in Lyallpur (now called Faisalbad).

Mohammed first came to the UK in 1969, moving to Cardiff in 1970 where he lives today with his wife. Mohammed has four children and three grandchildren.

**ASSIGNMENT**:

**PART 1**:

Read the transcript of the interview with Mohammed on the following page (additional option: watch the video and read more about Mohammed here: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/panjab1947/mohammed.htm>

Then, answer the questions below on a separate piece of paper:

1. In a paragraph (in your own words) describe how the partition of India affected Mohammed personally (be specific).

2. How did religion play a role in Mohammed’s experience during the partition?

**PART 2**: After meeting the other people in your round table discussion, answer the following questions:

1. Which people do you think Mohammed would have the most in common with? Why?

2. Which people do you think Mohammed would have the least in common with? Why?

3. If this group of people was called upon to solve political, ethnic, and social tension during the partition, what do you think they would have suggested as the most important thing for political leaders to do?

**Transcript**

It was a mixed village; we never realised that somebody was Hindu or Sikh or Muslim. In marriages, the whole village used to join in. If somebody died, the whole village would mourn. Whether it was Hindus or Sikhs, it would not make a difference.

All of a sudden, in the space of a year or so this madness came. I remember people saying slogans; 'Pakistan ka matlab kiya', ('What's the meaning of Pakistan?') 'La ilaha il Allah' ('there is only one God'). People were debating whether to vote for Congress or for the Muslim League. At the time people did not understand what that would mean. There was a lot of propaganda and hate spreading against communities and religions.

India was divided. Nobody knows exactly how many people died, but it was in the millions. Nobody was brought to justice. It was not the people who did it. It was the politicians who did it.

People left their homes because they were afraid for their lives and they were driven into the camps. We were in a camp at Seleempur for two and a half months waiting to move to Pakistan. We never had any problem with our food or our animals' food because it was being brought by people who were not Muslims. They were Sikhs and Hindus - my father's friends, who looked after us while we were in camp. I have seen the children; I have seen the elders living on grass. That's terrible - children suffering and refusing to eat that stuff. But you have to live on something. They were terrible times.

The time came for that camp to move to Pakistan. We were told by the army that was guarding us that this was a temporary arrangement because nobody wanted to go. We moved 12-15 miles a day and then camped again for the night. People were so weak by staying in camp when they didn't have much food as well… It was difficult for them to move and walk.

Amongst us, there were certain people who had lost most of their family, who were murdered. I remember one woman who had two small babies with her. After moving the third time, some 45 miles, her feet were swollen and she had no proper shoes on either but she had two babies to carry. After the third day, she could not carry the babies. One day she left one baby on the roadside because she could only carry one. This happened to many other women and children because they could not walk and their parents were not strong enough to carry them. If you were slow, you were more likely to be killed.

We settled in a village. Eventually, the government allotted us some land which was vacated by Hindus and Sikhs. That happened in 1947. My father died in 1958. He was still waiting to move back to his own house. He said: 'this cannot happen that somebody can take away my property, my house, my land, everything'.

I was brought up hating Hindus and Sikhs until I was educated and went to the civil service. I was put in charge of India-Pakistan trade, representing Pakistan. The first time I went to Amritsar, it was a completely new world. It was amazing. People greeted me in such a way; Hindus, Sikhs. People wanted to take me to their houses and eat there, spend time with their families. The first day I was completely taken aback. What I was taught in Pakistan had no reality. Hindus, Sikhs loved to see people from Pakistan. I did not see a sign of hate. I have seen similar positions over here. There is no difference between Hindus and Sikhs and Muslims…especially Panjabi people together.

'My memories of my childhood are not the sort of memories that one should have.' Those experiences have taught me to have a lot of respect for everybody. I live for the people and I hope I will live for the people till I die.