

The 'Entrepreneurial' Refugee in the *Bazaars*: Sindhi Migrants in Jaipur's Walled City

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I

*'Purushartha se Vikas...punarnirman...navyuga'*¹

This etching on a marble plaque in the middle of Indira Bazar in the walled city of Jaipur is an ode to 'purushartha' - the spirit of entrepreneurialism and hard work that is apparently embodied in the market where it stands. Below this plaque, a wall carving in red stone symbolizes 'Purushartha', written in Devanagari script underneath. The Purushartha park, where this sculpture stands was established by the Municipal Corporation in 2009, while the marble plaque was put up in 1976 when the market was just completed by the Municipal Corporation. The fading black lettering on one side of the sculpture prohibiting 'entry' into the park makes it a rather paradoxical public space. It was perhaps only meant to be a monument to the 'purushartha' - enshrining the developmental state of Nehru's dreams. It is therefore no surprise that the one quotation on the plaque in both Hindi and English is by Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Duty is the concern and not the reward.' The monument stands in a dilapidated condition and the grey metallic remains of probably an old illumination system over red protruding figures of laborers engaged in different occupations (butcher, ironsmith, animal husbandry) generates a sense of rustiness and industrial decay. Or it may be symbolic of an urban infrastructure shaped by the 'purusharthis' - the abstract figure of labour. The aim of this paper is to historically emplace this abstract labourer into the figure of the Sindhi refugee, which emerged in the city in decades following the partition. The building of Jaipur as the new capital city of Rajasthan was premised upon the tapping of these 'purusharthis' - their productive and entrepreneurial bodies. This paper is a part of my larger work on representations of past in contemporary Jaipur. Looking broadly at the ways in which Jaipur's princely past is invoked in the present imaginations of the city, my entry into the narratives around partition and refugees has been a result of my attempts at chronicling

¹ Roughly translated as, 'Development through hard work...rehabilitation...new era.'

the varied transformations, which the old city underwent in the period of 1940s and 1950s, when the process of nation-building was most intense.

In a socio-economic study of migration patterns and employment scenario in Jaipur city, conducted by the Economics Department of Rajasthan University and sponsored by Planning Commission, one notices a reflection of an urban-rural framework to understand partition-led migration in Jaipur. A section of migration to Jaipur from Pakistan was second tier rather than being direct- employment opportunities in the new capital being a major pull factor. Most of this migration was from other urban centers in Rajasthan, many at the border and comprised of non-agricultural population. Hence a lot of this labour force was absorbed in manufacturing, mining, services and transportation.² The partition of Punjab and Sindh saw the influx of several Sindhi Hindus from Pakistan to parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. One of the cities in which they found refuge was Jaipur. The wave of Sindhi immigration reinvigorated again to border districts of Rajasthan during the war between India and Pakistan in 1971, necessitating their rehabilitation.³ This task of rehabilitation in the context of larger processes of urban development in the walled city of Jaipur may be discussed in three distinct time periods.

II

The 1940s was a particularly tumultuous decade for the city, marking its transition from a princely city to the capital of newly formed state of Rajasthan. It was also the decade of 'modernization' of its infrastructure carried out by Sawai Man Singh II and most importantly, Sir Mirza Ismail, the Prime Minister of the Jaipur state from 1942 to 1944.⁴ The economy of the city, which till then was mostly patronized by the palace was now opened up to private businesses and a banking institution was opened up. Industrial capital flowed into the city since the passage of Jaipur Companies Act, 1942.⁵ The city was developed as the modern capital, replete with a Secretariat building, a University, industries and residential colonies outside of the walled city, namely C-Scheme, Banipark

² MV Mathur, RJ Chelliah and DL Gupta, *Economic Survey of Jaipur City*, Deptt. Of Economics, University of Rajasthan, 1965

³ Rajasthan Patrika, 13 November, 1977

⁴ C.V. Rao, ed. *New Jaipur: A Collection of Tributes and Appreciations*, n.p., August 1946

⁵ *ibid*

and Fateh Tibba. By January 1948, the city saw influx of the refugee population from across the border, mostly comprising ‘Hindu refugees from Sind (Khatris)’ and some from Punjab.⁶ These migrants met at nodal points in the city to decide on their future course of action and prospects of demanding rehabilitation. Communal tensions were also recorded by the Intelligence Bureau of Mahakma Khas in Jaipur state, mainly regarding petty squabble around Muharram and kite festival in 1947-48.⁷ Meanwhile the Hindu refugees from Sindh and Punjab put forth demand for a factory or a workshop to accommodate them.⁸ Some of them also decided to approach the government to allot them land for residential quarters.⁹ Camps were set up for them in Amber and Durgapura. In Jaipur, the central bus stand is a testimony to this settlement, and is still called ‘Sindhi Camp’, long after the refugees have diffused to become a part of the city.

A swamp to the north of the City Palace was also reclaimed and transformed into a residential colony. The colony, known as Kanwar Nagar boasts of a grand marble temple of Jhulelal/Jhoolaylal,¹⁰ the deity worshipped by the community. The Sindhi Hindu community of Jaipur also patronizes the temple of Mata Leelavati in Kahjane Walo Ka Rasta and organizes *satsangs* or evenings of devotional music. The procession of *Chetichand*, marking the onset of Sindhi New Year in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April) is taken out from the old markets of the city, with considerable Sindhi population and from the streets of new markets, formed to rehabilitate the Sindhis.¹¹

Three such markets were Bapu, Nehru and Indira Bazars. The former markets were created in the early 1950s, while Indira Bazar got set up after a visit of Sanjay Gandhi to the city in 1976, rehabilitating Sindhi refugees and poor Muslims, who had temporary tenements in the area. The Indira Bazar Market is divided into two streets cut in the middle by the Purusharthi Park. One one side are Sindhi shops and on the other, Muslim

⁶ Mahakma Khas Confidential, File no. 160, Confidential Daily Diary of Intelligence Bureau.

⁷ One finds reports of these communal tensions in daily diaries of September-November 1947.

⁸ Jan 15, 1948, Mahakma Khas Confidential Diary

⁹ Jan 26, 1948, Mahakama Khas Confidential Diary

¹⁰ The myth of Jhulelal, who is believed to have been born in a silver swing or *jhula*, similar to Lord Krishna and saved the community from onslaught of Muslim ruler Mirkhshah is foundational to the Sindhi Hindu community. Some of his most dominant images resemble Guru Nanak, with a flowing white beard. See K R Malkani, *The Sindh Story*, Delhi: Sindhi Academy, 1984, 36.

¹¹ Personal Interview, Shankar Lal Nanwani, Indira Bazar, 5th December, 2016

retailers. The area in the walled city, where these markets came up was earlier known as Ganda Nala, enabling drainage of 'waste' through a slushy stream, that used to merge with the bigger Amanishah Nala outside the walls on the east.

The 1970s (1975-77), during the Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi-led Congress ministry saw another major spate of urban revitalization and transformation. By this juncture, land and resources in the city were open to re-negotiation between the older elites attached to the royal family and the new claimants to power.¹² The refugees, who had set up temporary kiosks in the city, were granted more permanent establishments by this period in form of three new markets on an earlier drain- Indira Bazar, Sanjay Bazar and Kamala Nehru Market. The urban renewal under Emergency coincided with a 'City Beautiful' campaign launched to mark 250 years of Jaipur's foundation in 1977 under the auspices of Jaipur Municipal Corporation, Urban Improvement Trust and Traffic Police.¹³ The campaign entailed removal of 'encroachments' or *tharis* (temporary kiosks made of tin and wood) in the walled city. It is believed that within a month around 800 *tharis* were removed. Indira Market was seen as a big 'achievement' of the campaign. It emerged within a period of eight months in 1976 and was designed to rehabilitate the *thari* holders. 'The place where Indira Market is located was an ugly patch on the city surface where filth and dirt reigned in disdainful *Ganda Nallah* area.'¹⁴ The market was created with underground electric wiring meant for smooth walking. 'Aestheticism permeates the total structure of the market. Enclosed by rows of shops in a patch of greenery stands a statue embodying the undaunted zeal of the *purusharthis*.'¹⁵ It is this very statue, which now lies in a state of neglect and dereliction in the market- almost symbolizing the ruins of a utopian city.

Several old residents of the city lamented these new developments in the walled city, evoking nostalgia for the princely glory. A water body, to the north of the City Palace, Rajamull ka Talab, became a garbage dump, eventually converted into plots of land giving rise to the colony of 'Kanwar Nagar,' which to these older residents was 'slum-

¹² It is noteworthy that the Jaipur royals, who held position of opposition to the ruling Congress party were arrested and their properties re-evaluated in the wake of Emergency. Rajasthan Patrika, 22 Septemebr, 1977

¹³ Ramesh Arora, J Asopa, Jaipur: Profile of a Changing city, 83-84

¹⁴ *ibid*, 85

¹⁵ *ibid*

like'.¹⁶ Around the same area, another new market was set up to rehabilitate *thari* holders during Emergency. It was called Janata Bazar, with approximately 489 shops and a garden to begin with. Contrary to Kanwar Nagar, the new markets were lauded for their aesthetic homogeneity with the old city, especially their colour that resembled the 'pink' of Jaipur.¹⁷ The history of rehabilitation is also a history of ecological damage due to unbridled urban development on lands, which were drains or water bodies.

The discourse of post-colonial development and rehabilitation legible on the terrain of Jaipur's walled city was centered around the figure of the 'purushartha' - a term used in archives of the state and refugee associations.¹⁸ It became a template to justify development in the city through the 1950s and 1970s. This new figure in the city was symbolically antithetical to the 'old' economic, social and political markers of the princely city. And perhaps here lay the dissatisfaction among a section of old residents, whose cultural, social and economic life was now interspersed with the mores of the newcomers.

A fictional account of Maharaja Jai Singh II, visiting Jaipur in the 1960s century narrates his disappointment with the city- increased traffic, tin kiosks of small retailers, high prices of grains, pollution, lack of maintenance in temples and mounds of garbage on roads. This account published by an ex-member of the Jaipur Municipal Council, belonging to Jan Sangh, in the August 1962 issue of a 'progressive' weekly Sahi Baat dismisses 'development' as Congress propaganda.¹⁹ In the same issue of 1962, one finds a page dedicated to Maharani Gayatri Devi, who had spectacularly defeated the Congress

¹⁶ Nandkisor Parika, Rajdarbar aur Raniwas, 1984

¹⁷ *ibid*, 141. Pink colour has been an important feature of Jaipur's walled city since the 19th century as per most dominant narratives. In the contemporary period, the state government has undertaken several 'restoration' drives to recreate the pink city, which has made it popular among the visitors and tourists as well. All the new markets created to rehabilitate the Sindhis were also designed in pink colour with white designs. Over time, the colour has faded, prompting pleas to the Municipal Corporation by the Indira Bazar traders to maintain 'ekrupta' or homogeneity of the markets, in line with the older bazars. Interview, S L Nanwani, Treasurer of Indira Bazar Vyapar Sangh, 5th December, 2016.

¹⁸ See Purushartha Thari Holders' Union Directory, 2008

¹⁹ Sahi Baat, 25th August, 1962. It was a weekly published from Jaipur in the early 1960s. Its first issue was published on 4th November, 1961, however over time, it underwent economic difficulties. This special issue of August 1962 focused on Jaipur Municipal Council. The account was penned by Bhanwar Lal Sharma, a resident of Gangauri Bazar in the walled city, who was a RSS volunteer and joined the Jan Sangh in 1956. He went on to become the first Jan Sanghi President of the Municipal Council in 1961.

candidate in Parliamentary elections, as also a write up by the Rajpramukh and former ruler Man Singh II, lamenting the loss of Jaipur's beauty.²⁰

In contrast to such narratives, the nationalist agenda of Congress spelt 'anti-feudalism' for the people, when its leaders Devi Shankar Tiwari and Hiralal Shastri demanded democratic reforms in the city of Jaipur in the 1940s. Under the banner of organizations like the Praja Mandal and Jaipur Hitkarini Sabha, one saw a narrative of Jaipur that was free from any royal inflections and nostalgia. Through these two divergent accounts of development in Jaipur city- one, an abode of democracy and another, as a ruined princely capital in the age of modernization, the discussion on the 'purushartha' may be foregrounded.

Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, a non-Congress MLA in the 1960s, who will go on to be the Janata Party Chief Minister in 1977, writes about the Sindhi and Punjabi refugees as 'purusharthis'.²¹ Some of them also assumed important positions in local municipal politics, such as Leelaram Lalvani, who had migrated to Rajasthan in 1948 from Nawabshah, Sindh and started a bus transport business. Defecting from both the Congress and the Jan Sangh, he formed Pragatisheel Dal (Progressive Party) and played a central role in Municipal Council politics. He also played an active role in Sindhi Sahitya Sabha and Sindhi General Panchayat.²² Most of the Sindhis who came to Jaipur after partition engaged themselves in trade and business- many were small retailers in the newly established markets. Indira Bazar was created with an initial investment of 65 lakh under the Commissioner of Rehabilitation Department, Sher Singh Chittora. State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, though giving credit and Purushartha Thari Holders' Union, a political and social association of the Sindhi Hindus, played a pivotal role in its establishment. Completed in October 1976, the market had 529 shops, which were divided among Sindhis and Muslims.²³ The Purushartha Thadi Holders' Union was established in 1950 and claimed stakes in the economy and politics of the city by

²⁰ Ibid, 2.

²¹ ibid

²² Ibid, 35

²³ Personal Interview, CK Rupani, Indira Bazar Vyapar Mandal, 3rd December 2016.

delineating the role of ‘nationalist’ Sindhi Hindus in the freedom struggle, right from the days of Swadeshi Movement to Hindu revivalism in the 1920s.²⁴ In 1919, Sindhi revolutionaries in Punjab published a newspaper called ‘Hindu’. The history of Sindhi nationalism is also tied with the emergence of RSS and the activities of Arya Samaj.²⁵ LK Advani, KR Malkani and Jhamatmal Wadhvani emerged as important leaders of RSS persuasion.²⁶ Apart from Islamic influence, Hindu Sindhis were challenged by Christian missionaries in the 19th century and Arya Samaj became more influential by the 1930s. Tarachand Gajara and Swami Krishnanand were its significant proponents.²⁷ By 1945, the Muslim League had imposed a ban on Satyarth Prakash in Sindh, alleging it to be the cause of communal tension. However, on 7th May 1945, Satyarth Prakash Diwas was celebrated across the province under the leadership of Tarachand Gajara. He even visited Jaipur to address a general meeting in Azaad Chowk in the city on the atrocities of Muslim League and to mobilize people to demand revocation of ban on Satyarth Prakash.²⁸ This Hindu underpinning in Sindhi narratives was palpable in the story of Mr. Manchandani (name changed), whose father owned farmland and horses in Sindh before he came to India in 1947. Being a moneyed Sindhi refugee, who used to supply horses to Bollywood units shooting in Jaipur, he bought a house on the prime location of MI Road, in which the respondent was born in 1953. He says, ‘the Muslim workers under my father in Pakistan turned out to be ‘gaddar’ evoking a feeling of revenge among the Hindu landowners.’²⁹ Today, he runs a furniture shop in the bustling Indira Bazar. Most shops sell readymade garments, utensils, motor parts and wholesale electrical goods. One can also spot repair shops in the market, an indicator of its class profile compared to the richer shops of Bapu Bazar. Bapu Bazar, which was founded in the 1950s, is present in travel lore of the city and has shops selling block printed textiles, handloom, handicrafts and cotton textiles. While Nehru Bazar has medium range retailers of fancy items, cosmetics, hosiery garments and toys. Most of these readymade, mass produced goods are traded from Delhi and Ahmedabad, and are much in demand by the lower middle

²⁴ Purusharthi Thari Holders’ Union Directory, 2008

²⁵ Rita Kothari, ‘RSS in Sindh 1942-48,’ *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 2006.

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ Malkani, *Sindh Story*, 83

²⁸ *Arya Samaj Itihas, Kishanpole Bazar*, Jaipur, 56

²⁹ Personal Interview, Indira Bazar, 3rd December 2016

class consumers. The burgeoning middle class of the city, which lives outside the walled enclave, patronizes this economy, based on traded mass produced goods and ‘readymade’ garments. The walled city residents would still swear by their old shops in obscure streets of the city, with local patterns and workshop-designs.³⁰

Many shops in Indira Bazar are divided among family members and today it has around 750 shops. Mr. Thadani (name changed), who had come to Jaipur from Kota after marriage, helped his father-in-law with the cassette business. After it phased out, he started retailing readymade garments, mostly denims and T-shirts for boys. In 1988, he expanded his business to buy another small shop in the bazar, for his second son. He is one of the many Sindhi residents of Kanwar Nagar in the walled city and commutes daily on his old scooter.³¹ As opposed to the small and unassuming shops of Indira Bazar, with a makeshift structure on top for storage, the shops in Bapu Bazar and Link Road, owned by well-to-do Sindhis, serving the tourist and upper middle class customer base, have showroom designs, with false ceiling, lights and air conditioning. The shop owners either sit on the cash desk or are absent while most of the routine work is carried out by their employees, also Sindhis. Owing to their bigger scale, these shops have allegedly extended their godowns and storage facilities underground.

These markets, Indira, Bapu, Nehru and Sanjay Bazar, all run parallel inside the *parkota* or the ‘Wall’ of the old city from east to west. The Municipal Corporation, through a faded blue and white board, placed inconspicuously on the southern Gates to the walled city has declared this *parkota* as a ‘heritage’ structure. Here comes the third phase of urban development and another distinct episode from the more recent history of Sindhi negotiations with the state, beginning in the early 2000s, when heritage restoration and development are braided discourses. The development of heritage in the walled city is

³⁰ The Sindhi economy marks a departure from craft based production system, which flourished in Jaipur’s princely karkhanas earlier. Hand-block printed cotton from Bagru and Sanganer have now become articles of niche consumption, found in occasional fairs or traditional attire boutiques such as Fabindia and Anokhi. The reproducible block printed textiles of Bapu Bazar reflect popularity and reasonable prices, sourced from factories in the vicinity of Jaipur and even from textile hubs like Surat and Ahmedabad.

³¹ Personal Interview, Indira Bazar, 5th December, 2016

financed through international funding agencies and private capital.³² A legal battle has ensued between the traders' associations of these markets and the Jaipur Municipal Corporation on the status of the shops of these markets aligned with the 'heritage wall.' Notices have been served to several shopkeepers about the illegality of their shop constructions after the High Court had ordered 15 meters on either side of the *parkota* as a 'no construction zone.'³³ The Supreme Court had stayed that order, giving interim relief to the retailers of these bazars. However, the 'purusharthis' of the 1950s and 1970s, who had emerged as a central figure in the urban revitalization process, are set to perhaps lose out in the new battle on urban space- the logic of which is placed within the discourse of 'heritage' and a reinterpretation of historic significance of the *parkota* in the legal discourse. This brings us to the cultural interpretations of urban space in the heritage discourse and the repositioning of the 'purusharthi' figure in politics over urban past.

III

To understand social and cultural contestation around refugees and a changing urban form concomitant with it, it is imperative to delve into the plan of Jaipur, which was founded in 1727, by Sawai Jai Singh II. The walled city was divided into almost equal nine squares or *chowkris* with several smaller *mohallas* or neighbourhoods within them. Like many other cities of that period, people belonging to the same occupational group and caste inhabited these *mohallas*, making them homogeneous in nature.³⁴ The City Survey Report of 1969 noted, 'the social structure of the city still remains to be a traditional one. The pattern of neighbourhood has a homogeneous character in terms of clustering of identical caste, religion and occupational groups.'³⁵ The architectural

³² The Ford Foundation initiated one of the first heritage restoration projects in Jaipur in 1985, following the models developed in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad. Over the years, Asian Development Bank, Asia Urbs have been other international agencies funding these projects. Jaipur has also presented a dossier to UNESCO staking claims for the Heritage City status in early 2000s. See *Report on Urban Renewal of Walled City*, Asia Urbs, 2002.

³³ Dainik Bhaskar, 6th May 2015; Rajasthan Patrika, 3rd May 2015.

³⁴ Rama Bhatnagar, *Domestic Architecture in Jaipur*, PhD Dissertation, University of Rajasthan, 1989; Interview, Surendra Bothra, Prakrit Bharati Academy, 30th June 2014. The census of 1881 and 1901 details the names of mohallas and occupational profile of the city respectively.

³⁵ Cf. Bhatnagar, 240

profile, organization of public spaces, culinary cultures and street life depended on these resident communities and their way of life. Over a period of time, the city had predominantly Hindu (mostly comprising Kayasthas, Agarwalas, Khandelwals, Rajputs and Brahmins as also communities like Goojars and Kumawats), Jain (including Khandelwals, Saraogis, Oswals, Maheshwaris)³⁶ and Muslim communities, each of which played an important role in the market economy. For instance, several workshops, undertaking the task of gem cutting and polishing, owned by the Hindu *baniyas* (merchant community) or Jains, employed Muslim artisans for the work.³⁷

Against this backdrop, my aim is to understand the way in which Jaipur as a princely city was changing materially and discursively within the new found language of democratic state. Added to this was the influx of new inhabitants from across the border after partition, and the city was expanding into new market places and residential colonies. The old city at this juncture, with its so-called original residents, both Hindus and Muslims, was also at the centre of these changes. Now standing as only a small part of a burgeoning metropolis, in the 1940s the walled city, as it is often called was still a major chunk of Jaipur. Although the city was moving southwards beyond the walls under Sawai Man Singh II and Prime Minister Mirza Ismail, whose contributions to the city got commemorated in the name of a road running outside of the walled city.

The demands of Praja Mandal had also percolated down to the everyday concerns of 'citizenry'. Rights claims were being made even way back in 1922, when an employee at the Agent to the Governor General's Office in Mount Abu, GN Somany, had taken out a pamphlet titled 'Need and Demands of a Jaipuri' (*mein jaipuri kya chahta hun*). This pamphlet had reminded the ruler of his 'Rajdharm' quoting from the Mahabharata, and then went on to demand reduction in taxes, protection of businesses in Jaipur and iteration of what it meant to be a 'Jaipuri', a long residing member of the city, who represents its ethos at their best. According to the pamphlet, anyone who has merely resided in Jaipur for 12 years or spoken its language didn't become a 'Jaipuri' and it

³⁶ This data on castes within the city was recorded in Census 1881 and 1901. Cf. Bhatnagar, 235

³⁷ Lawrence Babb, *Emerald City*; AK Roy points out the high Muslim population in Chowkri Topkhana Hazuri, which was engaged in *gota* making (embroidered lace), gem polishing and cutting of precious stones. Many Muslims were engaged in weaving, foil making, dyeing and bangle making as well.

required a characteristic, which the pamphleteer chose to call ‘Jharshahipan’ after the name of Jaipur royalty’s flag and currency ‘Jharshahi’. Hence the language of democratic belonging was cast in princely symbols. In 1940s several articles that appeared in locally published newspapers such as Jai Dhvani, Jai Bhoomi and Lokvaani (the latter two had a strong Praja Mandal leaning) emphasized the need for popular government in the State and civic reforms, including cleansing the city of prostitutes, abolition of ritual feasts and public baths on occasion of deaths and so on.³⁸ The newspapers also employed a language of mutual cordiality between ‘Raja’ and ‘praja’, which would be instrumental for a successful democratic system.

Given the above renditions of what it meant to be a ‘Jaipuri’, it is interesting to see the discourse within which the new inhabitants to the city were ensconced in late 1940s, in the aftermath of partition. How did they belong to the city? Like other urban centers in India at this time, Jaipur also begins its conventional journey towards industrialization, expansion to accommodate more residential enclaves, administrative infrastructure and changes in everyday social relations, intensified with induction of the group of migrants. A confidential daily diary of the Intelligence Bureau in Jaipur from 1948 mentions a scuffle between a Muslim resident and one Balram Sindhi, who owned Hindu Hotel in Fateh Tibba, a predominantly Muslim neighborhood towards the south of the walled city, when he went to fill water from a public tap near Masjid Qasaban. The entry then goes on to trace the economic root of this conflict, contending the Sindhi’s proximity to sweepers of the area, who had earlier been the primary customers of waste from Muslim non-vegetarian hotels.³⁹

Another diary during the same period details the meeting of around 25 Hindu ghee dealers in Purani Basti, a chowkri with stronghold of Brahmins, to draft a petition against Sindhi dealers, who they alleged, were responsible for importing vegetable ghee in Jaipur.⁴⁰ The petition demanded custom posts to check ghee entering the city.

³⁸ Several Municipal Board meetings from the 1930s also reflect these concerns. File no.169 I, RSA, Bikaner.

³⁹ IB No. 2537, May 10 1948, RSAB

⁴⁰ IB No. 2430, May 3 1948, RSAB

Ghee is a layered commodity in the city of Jaipur. The resonance of purity with which ghee is imbued in the city is evident in rows of shops lining Johri Bazar with banners claiming the sale of shuddh desi or pure ghee there. One of the side streets, in what is Chowkri Ghat Darwaza, is a popular thoroughfare named after ghee retailers themselves, *Ghee walon ka Rasta*. Deep inside it, around two ornate Jain temples, one can always find a crowd buying ingredients for *goth*, a traditional community feast organized in Jaipur mainly during monsoon months. Carrying on the lineage of *jyonars* or royal feasts of yesteryears, these goths comprise a meal of *choorma bati*, both wheat flour products, soaked in dollops of ghee. The success of this feast depends on the aroma of ghee, invariably also a test of its purity or *shuddhata*. The lane is replete with sound of loudspeakers advertising local retailers during the high season of ghee sale, Diwali, while light smell of fried snacks and *parathas* waft through the alley. Why do I deviate into this tale of ghee and feasts in Jaipur? At an explicit level, this is to underline the importance of ghee in social life of Jaipur, more importantly in Hindu rituals and feasts. Obliquely, ghee also creates a series of binaries around itself- the pure and the impure being primary among them. The purity of ghee also translates into the social and economic status of its user, as also generates goodwill for its retailer. A relation of trust is developed in this transaction between the customer and the seller, which then gets reflected in a hierarchy of shops in the neighborhood on the basis of ghee's smell and its assumed quality. One hears common refrains such as 'this shop sells the best *desi ghee* sweets in town'. The influx of new traders in Jaipur, long inhabited by its 'original' settlers, who were apparently invited by Jai Singh II himself, generated anxiety into this structure of trust and purity, also risking the community meal with impure ingredients. In the earlier example too, one notices a gastronomic underpinning of the conflict, with new community of non-vegetarians creating cracks in the already established social and economic transactions between the Muslims and the group of sweepers. Purity of food and rituals was couched in religious terms when in October 1948, a resolution was passed by Arya Samajis in the city against the 'open sale of eggs and fish' due to the arrivals of Sindhis.⁴¹

⁴¹ Arya Samaj Itihas, 61.

Economy here was cushioned with narratives of social organization around meals and rituals of partaking. The rows of shops that proclaim themselves to be ‘original’ sellers of ghee for years is similar to a narrative of authenticity spun around many other similar ‘original’ retailers of carpets, sweets and so on. Mushrooming of such claims drawing legitimacy from trustworthy names have generated an anxiety of inauthentic reproduction. This inauthenticity seemed to be at the heart of petitions like that of the 25 ghee sellers in 1948, apart from their anxieties about a new system of governance. The ‘other’, in this case, the Sindhi was not only a refugee but also an aspiring one at that. Soon, one was to see the advent of Sindhis on the scene of retail trade in Jaipur, with two new markets almost entirely populated by their shops, selling garments- hosiery and block printed ones on coarse cotton, accessories, footwear using traditional motifs from Jaipur’s crafts repertoire. The disdain towards Sindhi ‘labour’, unlike its appraisal in state’s register of ‘*purushartha*’, is replete in the narratives of so-called ‘original’ residents of the walled city. ‘They (Sindhis) are not really craftsmen and have been responsible for bringing malpractices into trade in Jaipur. They have constructed unauthorized extensions to their shops.’⁴²

IV

The Sindhi entrepreneurialism or *purushartha* is undergirded by their exclusion from the city’s moral economy, culturally bound by the walled city. They remain liminal to the city in this sense, physically and metaphorically located on the borders of this old city, trying to expand beyond it, by constantly investing in new housing colonies.⁴³ Their ‘*purushartha*’ is embroiled in a history of wealth and land in Sindh⁴⁴, credit economy of state owned banks and politics of urban transformation in the 1940s and 1970s. Unlike Dipankar Sinha’s thesis of ‘self-initiative’ of East Bengali refugees in the settlement of

⁴² Personal Interview, Kripasharan Saraogi (name changed), Sarafa Market, 3rd December 2016

⁴³ Interview, Manchandani, 3rd December 2016. He said we make do with even the bare minimum given to us by using a popular idiom ‘*jangal mein mangal kar dete hain.*’

⁴⁴ This history is well laid out in the works of Rita Kothari, Saaz Agarwal, Nandita Bhavnani among others.

Bijoygarh market in South Kolkata,⁴⁵ the Sindhis and Punjabis in Jaipur had considerable state patronage. However, in an urban development paradigm, where the state has rolled back to invite finance capital to revitalize its old city, the community finds itself in a legal turmoil. The task of capital-making, where Sindhi *purushartha* was hailed by political elites is now giving way to a new economy of world-class city building, which perhaps requires another set of labour practices.

Gyanesh Kudaisya in his study of four capital cities, namely Dhaka, Calcutta, Lahore and Karachi, brings forth the changes which partition meted out to each of them- economic, demographic, social and political.⁴⁶ It materially dissected their industries, divided its labour force, sharpened communal edges and cast pressure on existing infrastructure. This decay necessitated a new centre of capitol-replete with bureaucratic paraphernalia and symbolic infrastructure of the nation-state, which was materialized in form of Islamabad and Chandigarh in Pakistan and India respectively. The specificity of Kudaysia's analysis of decay rests on those cities, which also became borders in a way- with several of them, having permanent transient populations, which to use Nilanjana Chatterjee's phrase were vying for 'survival'. In this scenario, how do we think of other urban centres, which were a part of 'mainland' India- experiencing a different trajectory of development and politics? Jaipur could be seen as one such city- a territory which was well within the North Indian heartland and governed by a princely figure, who had addressed an undifferentiated 'praja' on question of separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims in the 1940s while heralding constitutional reforms in his city. In this context, the figure of refugee, which was otherized in the everyday social and economic encounters of the neighborhood or the bazaar became the overarching entrepreneur- the 'purushartha' responsible for 're-territorialization' of Jaipur as the site of *capital*. It is also here that we may begin to perhaps understand the developmental career of second tier cities in India when looked at through the prism of refugee encounter- an encounter,

⁴⁵ Dipankar Sinha, 'Foundation of a Refugee Market: A Study in Self-Reliance Initiative,' in Pradip Kumar Bose ed. *Refugees in West Bengal: Institutional Processes and Contested Identities*, Calcutta Research Group, 2000

⁴⁶ Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, Routledge, 2000

which was socially debilitating like in many other cities, but economically generative, creating in its wake new tropes of belonging.