

## **Coming to the Promised Land: 'Home' and the Creation of Pakistan**

**Yaqoob Khan Bangash**  
**IT University of the Punjab**

### **Abstract**

Pakistan was created in August 1947 as a 'homeland' for Indian Muslims. Since the Pakistan 'idea' was stronger in provinces where Muslims were in a minority, but the country was made from provinces where Muslims were a majority, the creation of the country caused a lot of confusion, anguish, and eventually mass migration. Millions of Muslims who believed in the Pakistan idea were left stranded on the Indian side, and therefore decided to move to their 'promised land' and thus began their often long and arduous journey. In fact, by the end of it, the creation of Pakistan led to the largest peacetime migration in modern history with over ten million people on the move between 1947-1949.

This paper focuses on the people from the United Provinces—the area where the Pakistan idea was the strongest, and their migration to Pakistan. While a lot of work has been done on migration resulting from the partition of East and West Punjab, and more recently on East and West Bengal, very few works focus on the experience of the people who came to Pakistan from other parts of north India. These people had different motives than the people from the Punjab since their move was motivated by ideology rather than being a result of violence. These 'UP walas' were moving not because Hindu-Muslim violence threatened them but because they wanted to go to their 'promised land,' their 'New Medina' or 'Zion' as has been recently argued by Dr Dhulipala and Dr Devji respectively.

Using data from the first decade after independence, this paper will trace the experience of the migrants from the United Provinces to Pakistan. Focusing on the city of Karachi this paper will investigate how notions of 'home', 'homeland,' 'belonging' etc, were shaped by these people as they moved to Pakistan. It will further look into how these migrants created a new 'home' in their new environment and its effects. It will also assesses the nature of the stories told between generations relating to migration, what objects did they bring and why, and to what extent did the migration experience shape their sense of identity, and with what results.