



SOWING THE SEEDS

This brief report presents the experiences, challenges, and resilience of Sikh women who migrated from conflict-affected regions to Nankana Sahib, Punjab. It highlights their migration journeys, social and economic struggles, cultural adaptation, and contributions to the local community. The report aims to provide meaningful insights into their lived experiences, emphasizing the importance of social support, inclusion, and sustainable opportunities for displaced women rebuilding their lives after conflict.

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Introduction

Nankana Sahib, located in the Punjab province of Pakistan, holds immense religious and historical significance as the birthplace of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469–1539), the founder of Sikhism. Originally known as Rai-Bhoi-di-Talwandi, the city was later renamed Nankana Sahib in honor of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Today, it is regarded as one of the holiest cities in Sikhism and serves as a major center of spiritual devotion and pilgrimage for Sikhs from across the world.



The city is home to several historic Gurdwaras associated with the life and teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Among the most prominent is Gurdwara Janam Asthan, which marks his birthplace and stands as the spiritual heart of the city. Other important religious sites include Gurdwara Bal Leela Sahib, commemorating his childhood years and games; Gurdwara Patti Sahib, where he received his early education; Gurdwara Malji Sahib, associated with his period of rest; and Gurdwara

Tambu Sahib. These sacred places collectively preserve the spiritual legacy and teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and attract thousands of pilgrims annually, especially during the celebration of Guru Nanak Gurpurab.

Beyond its religious importance, the Sikh community in Nankana Sahib has long upheld a philosophy of **peaceful coexistence**, **inclusivity**, and **humanitarian service**. Rooted in Guru Nanak's principle of ***Wand Chakna***—the practice of sharing one's honest earnings with others, the community actively supports people from diverse religious and social backgrounds. A notable example of this tradition is the *Langar* (community kitchen) at Gurdwara Janam Asthan, where free meals are provided daily to all visitors regardless of religion, ethnicity, or social status. Local Muslims, Hindus, Christians, travelers, and pilgrims alike are welcomed with equality and respect, reflecting the Sikh values of compassion, service, and communal harmony.



Historically, the Sikh community of Punjab has maintained close cultural and spiritual ties with other religious communities, particularly Hindus, fostering an environment of mutual respect and cooperation. Educational and social development initiatives also form an important part of the community's contribution to the region. Institutions such as the Guru Nanak High School, established by prominent Sikh community members, provide both religious and secular education to local children and contribute significantly to social development within the city.

Although Sikhs constitute the largest minority group in Nankana Sahib, with an estimated population of approximately 1,875 residents, the city is also home to a significant Christian population and several other minority communities. The multicultural and inclusive environment of Nankana Sahib has made it not only a center of spiritual significance but also a place of refuge, solidarity, and support for vulnerable and displaced populations, including Sikh women who have migrated from conflict-affected areas.

Demographic Profile

Population Size

According to the 2017 Census of Pakistan, the population of Nankana Sahib is estimated to be approximately 80,000–100,000 within the urban area, while the total population of Nankana Sahib District is approximately 1.3–1.4 million. The district is predominantly inhabited by Muslims; however, it is also home to several minority communities, including Sikhs, Christians, and Hindus, who contribute to the cultural and religious diversity of the region.

Situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Pakistan

Religious minority Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Pakistan, including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and Ahmadis from regions such as the former FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Swat, and other conflict-affected areas, continue to face severe and multidimensional discrimination. Their displacement is often compounded by religious persecution, social exclusion, and economic vulnerability, placing them among the most marginalized groups in society.

Minority IDPs frequently encounter barriers in accessing humanitarian assistance and government support programs due to bureaucratic challenges, lack of documentation, dual-address complications, and social discrimination. Many displaced families struggle to obtain basic services such as healthcare, education, housing, and livelihood opportunities, further increasing their vulnerability.



Victimization based on religion or belief has particularly devastating consequences for minority women and girls. In addition to social stigmatization and exclusion, they are exposed to serious human rights violations, including abduction, forced conversion, underage marriage, sexual violence, and coercion. Minority women often face double marginalization due to both their gender and religious identity. As a result, the majority of religious minority women in Pakistan are engaged in low-income and informal labor sectors such

as agriculture, sanitation work, brick kilns, and domestic labor. Only a very small percentage are employed in professional sectors such as education, healthcare, administration, or office-based employment, reflecting the deep-rooted economic marginalization of minority women.

Internal displacement among minority communities in Pakistan is not a recent phenomenon. Many families have lived in displacement for decades due to recurring violence, sectarian tensions, and insecurity. Reports from previous years documented the forced migration of hundreds of Hindu families who fled their homes due to communal violence and intimidation by extremist groups. In some cases, entire communities were forced to relocate in search of safety and protection. More recently, incidents of migration by minority families seeking refuge outside Pakistan have also highlighted the ongoing challenges faced by vulnerable communities.



The military operations conducted in the Swat Valley and other conflict-affected regions during and after 2009 resulted in the displacement of millions of people. Many displaced families lost their homes, livelihoods, possessions, and important legal documents, including National Identity Cards (NICs). The absence of documentation created additional challenges, limiting access to voting rights, public services, relief programs, and official registration processes.

Challenges Faced by Sikh Communities in Conflict-Affected Areas

Sikh communities residing in conflict-prone regions of Pakistan have experienced a range of interconnected social, economic, and security-related challenges. Due to their small population and visibly distinct religious identity, Sikhs in areas such as Peshawar and other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have often faced targeted violence, insecurity, and discrimination.

Incidents involving attacks on Sikh traders, businesses, and places of worship have contributed to a persistent atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. These repeated incidents have resulted in significant migration from conflict-affected areas, substantially reducing the Sikh population in several regions. Economic insecurity is another major concern, as prolonged conflict disrupts local markets, trade activities, and employment opportunities. In some cases, minority business owners have reportedly faced extortion, threats, and social pressure from militant or extremist groups.

Reports of forced conversions, social coercion, and intimidation have further weakened community confidence and increased fear among minority families, particularly women and young girls. Over time, these pressures contribute to internal displacement, migration, psychological trauma, and the erosion of cultural and religious institutions, threatening the long-term sustainability and preservation of Sikh communities in conflict-affected areas.

Baseline Study Initiative

Keeping in view the current socio-economic conditions and the multiple challenges faced by minority women, particularly women from the Sikh community, Roshan Development Foundation (RDF) initiated a baseline study aimed at documenting the experiences, migration journeys, and immediate needs of internally displaced minority women from conflict-affected regions of Pakistan.

The purpose of the study is to better understand the socio-economic realities of displaced women and identify opportunities for targeted interventions that can improve their living conditions, access to services, livelihood opportunities, and social inclusion.

Proceedings

The first Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted on 13 February 2026 in Nankana Sahib with an interfaith group of internally displaced women. The discussion was organized at a local Gurdwara with women who had migrated from various conflict-affected regions of Pakistan and had settled in Nankana Sahib, considering it a relatively safer and more secure environment for minority communities.

A total of 11 women participated in the discussion, representing Sikh, Christian, and Hindu communities. The meeting commenced with participant introductions followed by an explanation of the objectives of the group discussion focused.

The participants migrated from areas including Kashmore, Bajaur, Bara, Tirah, and the former FATA regions. During the discussion, participants identified several key reasons for their displacement, including the growing influence of militant and extremist groups, religious discrimination, insecurity, social pressure, and lack of livelihood opportunities within their native communities.

Two women participants specifically shared that severe economic hardship, and the absence of employment opportunities forced them to leave Kashmore and relocate to Nankana Sahib in search of better living conditions and economic security.

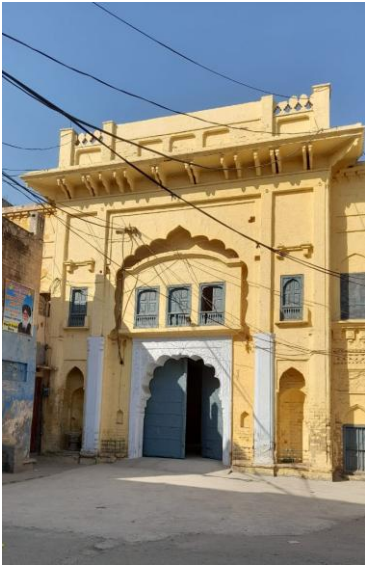


Testimonies:

1. Migration and Struggle for Survival

Testimony 1, Kour was born and raised in Doaba, a small town located in the Tall Tehsil of Hangu District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. She spent her childhood there and later married within the same community. Despite facing economic hardships, she and her family lived a relatively peaceful and stable life for many years.

She is the mother of eight children, including three sons and five daughters. Among her children, four daughters and two sons are visually impaired, placing an immense caregiving and financial responsibility on the family. Her husband is also blind, which made her the primary caregiver and income earner for the household. Demonstrating remarkable resilience and determination, she managed the family's livelihood independently by raising livestock and selling dairy products within the local community.



However, the situation in the region deteriorated significantly after Taliban influence increased in the area and strict extremist laws were imposed. Religious minorities, particularly Sikh families, began to experience insecurity, fear, and social exclusion. Educational opportunities for children became increasingly limited, and families lived under constant fear due to incidents of forced conversions and the abduction of young girls that were being reported in nearby areas. For Gobind Kour and her family, these developments created an environment where continuing a peaceful and dignified life became impossible.

Concerned for the safety and future of their children, the family made the difficult decision to migrate to Nankana Sahib, which they considered a safer and more welcoming place for religious minorities, particularly Sikhs. Their migration was not only a search for physical safety but also an attempt to preserve their religious identity and secure a more stable future for their children.

Today, the family lives in a rented house in Nankana Sahib under extremely challenging economic conditions. Their primary source of income comes from one of her sons, who sells samosas outside the local Gurdwara Sahib. However, the income generated from this small-scale business is insufficient to meet the family's daily needs, including rent, groceries, healthcare, and utility expenses. As a result, the family largely depends on financial assistance and food support provided by the local Sikh community.

Gobind Kour shared that neither the government nor any humanitarian organization has provided them with formal assistance or rehabilitation support since their migration. According to her, the Sikh community remains their only source of social and financial support. She also highlighted the discrimination they face in attempting to expand their livelihood opportunities. She explained that members of the local Muslim community often avoid purchasing food products from them because they are non-Muslims. As a result, much of their unsold fried and frozen food goes to waste, limiting their ability to establish or expand a sustainable food business.

In her words, “I cannot even expand my business of frozen food, as the Muslim community never buys from us because we are non-Muslims. We often waste the leftover fried food because people refuse to buy from us. This has become a major limitation for our survival and growth.”

She expressed a strong desire for inclusion in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and requested financial assistance to help manage her household expenses and improve the living conditions of her family. Her story reflects the multiple layers of vulnerability faced by displaced minority women, including religious discrimination, poverty, disability-related caregiving burdens, economic exclusion, and the absence of institutional support systems.

This case highlights the urgent need for inclusive social protection mechanisms, livelihood assistance, and targeted humanitarian support for displaced minority women and their families living in vulnerable conditions in Pakistan.

ii) Kour

Testimony 2: Kour was living in Charsadda before migrating to Nankana Sahib five years ago due to the worsening security situation, increasing terrorism, and Talibanization in the district. According to her, the environment became increasingly hostile for religious minorities, particularly Sikhs and Hindus. Incidents of abduction, forced religious conversions, and intimidation created constant fear among minority families. In addition, sectarian tensions and violent conflicts between Shia and Sunni communities further destabilized the area and contributed to widespread insecurity.

Her husband was a well-known *Hakeem* (traditional herbal practitioner) in Charsadda and had an established and respected business in the community for many years. However, as the law-and-order situation deteriorated, the family, along with several other Sikh families, decided to leave their hometown and relocate to Nankana Sahib in search of safety and stability.

Although she deeply misses her hometown and the life she left behind, she expressed that she does not wish to return due to the trauma and insecurity associated with the area. She stated, “I miss my hometown very much because all my memories are attached to that place, but I do not want to go back because we finally feel safe here.”

She further shared that Sikh women in their community are generally expected to remain within the home, which limits their mobility and access to employment opportunities outside the household. However, she possesses basic stitching skills and believes that with vocational training, sewing equipment, and financial support, she could establish a home-based tailoring business to support her family economically.

Despite years of displacement and economic hardship, she reported that neither government institutions nor non-governmental organizations have provided any assistance to her family. She



emphasized the urgent need for livelihood support programs, vocational training opportunities, and small business grants for displaced minority women.

iii) D Kour

Testimony 3: Kour moved from Kurram District to Nankana Sahib about ten years ago because of rising terrorism, insecurity, and forced religious conversions in her home area. As part of the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Kurram District faced prolonged instability that seriously affected the safety and well-being of minority communities.

Despite the challenges of displacement, Kour remained determined to secure a better future for her children through education. She proudly shared that one of her daughters is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Psychology in Lahore. However, the family continues to face serious economic and emotional hardships.

Her son lives in Lahore with his wife, who has been hospitalized for the past one and a half years due to prolonged illness. As her son remains occupied with caregiving responsibilities, the family lacks a stable income source to meet daily household expenses. Her younger daughter currently resides in a Gurdwara Sahib in Lahore, where the Sikh community is assisting with educational and living expenses.

The prolonged illness of her daughter-in-law has created immense psychological stress, emotional exhaustion, and financial instability within the family. Kour expressed deep concern regarding the absence of healthcare support and financial assistance. She stated that neither government institutions nor humanitarian organizations have ever extended support to her family.

She emphasized the urgent need for medical assistance, psychosocial support, and financial aid to help the family cope with mounting healthcare costs and household expenses.

iv) H Kour

Testimony 4: Kour migrated from Bara to Nankana Sahib five years ago due to escalating Talibanization, military operations, and deteriorating security conditions in the region. Initially, her family relocated to Peshawar; however, they later moved again because Peshawar also became increasingly unsafe for the Sikh community due to incidents of targeted killings and attacks against Sikh minorities.

Kour is the mother of four young children, aged seven, six, two years, and two-and-a-half months. Her husband works as a helper at a local shop and earns only a modest income, which is insufficient to support the family's growing needs. Harmeet Kour remains at home caring for the children and managing household responsibilities.

Due to repeated displacement and economic instability, the family has been unable to save resources or establish a sustainable livelihood. H Kour shared that they barely escaped the violence and insecurity they faced in previous areas and arrived in Nankana Sahib with almost no financial assets.

Although she currently lacks formal vocational skills, she expressed strong interest in receiving stitching and tailoring training. She believes that acquiring such skills would allow her to establish a home-based business and contribute financially to the household income.

v) Kour

Testimony 5: P Kour was born and raised in Khairpur, a region widely known for date farming and agricultural labor. Prior to displacement, she worked as a laborer on date farms, which served as the primary source of livelihood for her family.

P Kour is 30 years old and the mother of four children, including three sons and one daughter. She migrated to Nankana Sahib due to growing insecurity, particularly the increasing incidents of abduction of young Hindu girls in her native area. According to her, approximately 10–15 Hindu families, including her own, lived under constant fear and pressure from elements within the local community. Several incidents involving the abduction of Hindu girls compelled these families to leave the area to protect their daughters and preserve their safety.

Currently, P Kour serves at a local Gurdwara Sahib, where she performs *Sewa* in the community kitchen, including peeling vegetables and assisting with other kitchen-related tasks. She lives with her family in a rented two-bedroom house for which they pay approximately PKR 9,000 per month.

Her children are receiving free education at the Guru Nanak School for underprivileged families, although she still struggles to pay additional tuition expenses of approximately PKR 1,200 per month.

P Kour also highlighted the absence of a Hindu temple in Nankana Sahib for the local Hindu community. Following their relocation, she and her family converted to Sikhism, which allowed them to participate in *Sewa* activities within the Gurdwara. She explained that kitchen *Sewa* is traditionally reserved for members of the Sikh community.

She possesses basic embroidery and stitching skills and believes these abilities could be transformed into a sustainable livelihood opportunity if proper training and resources were available. She recalled that a stitching center previously operated at Gurdwara Bal Leela Sahib, where women from the community learned tailoring and embroidery. However, the classes were discontinued due to the unavailability of a teacher.

According to P Kour, many women within the community are eager to work and become economically independent, but the absence of vocational training centers and skills development programs remains a major obstacle.

vi) Bashiran Mae

Testimony 6: Mae was originally born into a Hindu family and later converted to Sikhism after relocating to Nankana Sahib. Her birth name was Lakshmi; however, due to an informal and incorrect registration process, her name was recorded as “ Mae” in official NADRA documents at

the suggestion of a Muslim neighbor. According to her, the change was made casually and without understanding the long-term consequences.

Today, she faces serious difficulties correcting her identity documents because she lacks the supporting records and verification required to amend her official information in the NADRA database.

She previously lived in Rahim Yar Khan and migrated to Nankana Sahib approximately eight to nine years ago after the death of her husband. As a widow, she sought better livelihood opportunities and a safer environment for herself and her children. She chose Nankana Sahib because several of her relatives already lived there and because it was considered a relatively secure place for minorities.

Currently, she performs *Sewa* at a local Gurdwara Sahib, while her son works as a helper at a cosmetics shop. Her daughters are married, and her sons continue to work in low-income support roles. The family lives in a modest two-room house under financially constrained conditions.

Mae expressed interest in learning stitching and tailoring skills so she could earn an independent income and contribute more effectively to household expenses.

vii) Kour

Testimony 7: G Kour, wife of Manjeet Singh, migrated from Torawari to Nankana Sahib five years ago. Reflecting on her displacement, she shared that she deeply misses her hometown because she spent her entire life there and remained emotionally attached to the place.

The family faced severe financial hardship after her father-in-law was diagnosed with cancer. They borrowed approximately four million rupees for his medical treatment. When they became unable to repay the debt, the family came under immense social and financial pressure. Alongside economic hardship, fear of Taliban influence and the shrinking livelihood opportunities for minorities in the region contributed to their decision to leave the area.

G Kour is the mother of four daughters and one son. Her son is non-verbal and experiences significant mental health challenges, requiring constant supervision and care. She explained that she cannot leave him unattended because he often wanders away from home. She also shared that the family has already spent approximately 1.5 million rupees on his treatment without significant improvement.

The family currently lives in rented accommodation and pays approximately PKR 20,000 per month in rent. Her husband works as a *Sewadar* at the Gurdwara and supplements the family income by selling cold drinks and snacks.

G Kour also shared the painful story of her daughter, who was married in Sindh. After her in-laws migrated to India, her daughter reportedly suffered prolonged abuse and mistreatment from her husband's family. According to Gobind Kour, her daughter died at the age of 22 after enduring

severe emotional and physical suffering. She left behind a young son who now lives with his paternal family, and Gobind Kour has no access to meet him.

Recalling the tragedy, G Kour became emotional and described living under constant grief, stress, and psychological pain. She stated that the emotional trauma, combined with the caregiving responsibilities for her son, has made it impossible for her to engage in any form of home-based work or income generation.

viii) Gul Khatoon

Testimony 8: Khatoon belongs to the Hindu community of Kashmore. Her family previously worked as farm laborers, which served as their primary source of income. Due to devastating floods, the family initially migrated to Daharki. However, according to Gul Khatoon, they continued to face insecurity and discrimination there.

She explained that incidents involving the abduction of girls within the Hindu community created constant fear among minority families. After the abduction of one of her cousins, she decided that remaining in the area was no longer safe for her daughters.

She shared that women and girls from minority communities were often unable to leave their homes after evening hours, even during medical emergencies, due to fear and insecurity.

Khatoon is the mother of four sons and two daughters. She emphasized that the protection and future of her daughters were the primary reasons behind the family's relocation to Nankana Sahib.

Currently, her husband performs cleaning duties and *Sewa* at a local Gurdwara Sahib, while Gul Khatoon works as a domestic helper in Sikh households. She described Nankana Sahib as one of the safest places for minorities in Pakistan and stated that the local Muslim community has generally been supportive and cooperative toward them.

Her sons work as daily wage laborers, while her daughters remain interested in acquiring vocational skills. Khatoon believes that vocational training opportunities could significantly improve the family's household income and future economic stability.

ix) Patras

Testimony 9: Patras was born and raised in Nankana Sahib. Although she was married in Jaranwala, she later returned to Nankana Sahib in search of better economic opportunities and social security because it was her hometown and she felt familiar with the social environment there.

She works as a waste picker and also performs domestic work for Sikh families to support her household expenses. She expressed that in Nankana Sahib, she feels safe and does not face questions regarding her religious identity. Her primary concern and aspiration is the education and well-being of her children.

She lives in rented accommodation and works tirelessly to meet household expenses. She also shared that she possesses stitching skills, including the ability to sew sofa covers and curtains. However, she lacks a sewing machine and sufficient resources to establish her own tailoring business.

According to her, receiving a sewing machine would significantly improve her earning capacity and provide greater financial stability for her family.

She also briefly discussed the challenges in her married life. After separating from her husband for a period of time, she lived with her parents before eventually reconciling with him. She reflected on the significant age gaps among her four children as symbolic of the years spent apart and later reunited with her husband.

x) Bibi –

Testimony10: Bibi was born and raised in Nankana Sahib. She is the mother of two daughters and two sons, all of whom are married. Her husband works as a cobbler and has also worked as a rickshaw driver to support the household.

Currently, Bibi and her husband live alone in a single-room residence, while their sons live separately and do not provide financial assistance to them.

The couple previously attempted to establish a small grocery business; however, according to Bibi, many customers from the surrounding Muslim community avoided purchasing goods from them because they belonged to a minority community. This discrimination negatively affected the sustainability of their business.

She expressed a strong interest in obtaining microfinance support to purchase a rickshaw that could be used to provide transportation services, particularly pick-and-drop facilities for minority children within the community. She believes that because the family has established trust within the minority community, such a service could become a reliable source of income.

xi) S

Testimony 11: S belongs to the Christian community and was born and raised in Nankana Sahib. She recently relocated to Faisalabad with her family but had returned to Nankana Sahib to visit her parents at the time of the discussion.

She is the mother of two children, including a son and a daughter. Her husband works as a driver, while she possesses basic stitching skills and hopes to further improve her abilities through vocational training.

S believes that advanced tailoring and embroidery training could help her establish a small home-based business and contribute financially to her family's income.

Analysis of the Situation



The testimonies collectively reveal a consistent pattern of security-driven internal displacement among religious minority women and families from conflict-affected regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, including areas such as Doaba, Charsadda, Kurram District, Khairpur, Torawari, and Kashmore. The primary drivers of displacement include insecurity, fear of abduction, forced religious conversions, sectarian violence, Talibanization, social discrimination, and economic marginalization.

For many families, Nankana Sahib represents a comparatively safer and more inclusive environment for religious minorities. However, relocation has also resulted in severe economic decline and livelihood disruption. Families that previously depended on livestock rearing, farming, established businesses, or skilled professions are now surviving through low-paying informal labor, including domestic work, daily wage labor, *Sewa* in Gurdwaras, waste picking, or small-scale vending.

The findings also highlight the disproportionate burden carried by women within displaced households. Many women are simultaneously managing caregiving responsibilities for blind family members, children with disabilities, chronically ill relatives, and elderly dependents while coping with grief, trauma, and psychological stress resulting from displacement and personal loss.

Particularly concerning is the experience of some Hindu families who reported feeling compelled to convert to Sikhism after relocation in order to access community support systems, social protection, and greater security within the local environment. This reflects the complex layers of vulnerability and identity-based survival strategies adopted by marginalized communities.

Although many women possess basic stitching, embroidery, tailoring, and domestic production skills, they lack access to sewing machines, vocational training centers, financial capital, and sustainable market opportunities. Some participants also reported discrimination that restricts their ability to sell products within broader local markets.

None of the interviewed families reported receiving substantial support from government institutions or humanitarian organizations. Many remain excluded from formal social protection mechanisms such as the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), reflecting significant gaps in outreach and welfare inclusion for internally displaced minority families.

Identity and documentation issues, particularly inaccurate NADRA records and lack of supporting documentation, further limit access to entitlements, welfare schemes, and formal assistance.

The findings clearly demonstrate the urgent need for a comprehensive and integrated response that combines immediate humanitarian assistance with long-term livelihood restoration and social inclusion initiatives.

Recommendations & Way Forward

Immediate Support

- Facilitate enrollment of eligible families in the Benazir Income Support Programme and other government welfare schemes.
- Provide emergency cash assistance to support rent, food, utilities, and other essential household expenses.
- Ensure access to medical support for chronic illnesses, disabilities, mental health conditions, and long-term hospitalization cases.
- Support correction of NADRA documentation and identity records to improve access to entitlements and legal recognition.
- Conduct disability assessments to enable eligible individuals to receive disability-related allowances and services.

Livelihood Restoration

- Re-establish community-based vocational and skill development centers focused on stitching, embroidery, tailoring, and other marketable skills.
- Provide sewing machines, tailoring kits, and starter packages for women-led home-based enterprises.
- Introduce small business grants and interest-free microfinance opportunities for income-generating activities such as food carts, tailoring units, and transport services.
- Develop women-led cooperatives for the production of garments, school uniforms, embroidery items, and household textiles.
- Create institutional market linkages with schools, NGOs, community organizations, and local businesses to reduce dependency on discriminatory local market systems.

Women's Economic Empowerment

- Promote culturally appropriate home-based enterprise models that respect mobility restrictions faced by some women.
- Provide entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and business development training.
- Establish mentorship and peer-support groups for women entrepreneurs to encourage confidence, networking, and shared learning.

Health & Psychosocial Support

- Organize regular medical camps and strengthen referral linkages with public hospitals and healthcare facilities.
- Provide mental health and psychosocial counseling services for women and families affected by trauma, grief, displacement, and stress.
- Ensure long-term treatment and rehabilitation support for children with disabilities and chronically ill family members.

Education Support

- Provide scholarships and tuition support for children from vulnerable and displaced minority households.
- Establish special education support mechanisms for children with disabilities and special learning needs.

Community & Policy-Level Actions

- Advocate for the formal recognition and inclusion of internally displaced minority families within district-level planning and development frameworks.
- Strengthen coordination between community institutions, civil society organizations, and government departments.
- Develop inclusive district-level livelihood, protection, and welfare programs specifically addressing the needs of minority communities.

Conclusion

The experiences shared by internally displaced minority women in Nankana Sahib reflect not only the consequences of conflict, insecurity, and discrimination, but also the extraordinary resilience and determination of women striving to rebuild their lives under extremely difficult circumstances.

While Nankana Sahib offers relative safety and social acceptance for many displaced minority families, long-term sustainability cannot be achieved without targeted interventions that address economic vulnerability, social exclusion, healthcare needs, psychosocial trauma, and limited livelihood opportunities.

An integrated and community-centered approach that combines emergency support, social protection, vocational training, livelihood restoration, healthcare services, and women's economic empowerment is essential to help these families transition from prolonged dependency and insecurity toward dignified, sustainable, and self-reliant lives.

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Annexure:

IDP Testimony Questionnaire

Location: Nankana Sahib

Date: _____

Facilitator: _____

Note Taker: _____

Participant Code (No names for confidentiality): _____

Gender: _____

Age Group: ☐ 18–30 ☐ 31–45 ☐ 46–60 ☐ 60+

Family Size: _____

Section 1: Displacement History

1. From which area did you originate before displacement?
2. When did you leave your place of origin?
3. What were the main reasons that forced you to leave?
4. Did you experience displacement before this incident? If yes, please describe.
5. Can you describe your journey from your place of origin to Nankana Sahib?
 - Transit locations
 - Duration of movement
 - Challenges faced during movement

Section 2: Risks and Protection Concerns

6. What types of threats or dangers did you face before or during displacement?
 - ☐ Armed actors
 - ☐ Military operations
 - ☐ Ethnic/religious tensions
 - ☐ Violence
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
7. Did you or your family experience any protection risks during displacement? Please explain.
8. Are there any current protection risks affecting you or your family here?
9. Are women, girls, boys, or elderly persons in your community facing specific risks? Please describe.
10. Without sharing personal details unless comfortable, are there concerns related to gender-based violence (GBV) affecting displaced individuals?

Section 3: Current Living Conditions

- 11. How would you describe your current security and safety situation?**
- 12. What type of shelter are you currently living in?**
 - ☐ Rented house
 - ☐ Shared accommodation
 - ☐ Informal settlement
 - ☐ Camp
 - ☐ Other: _____
- 13. Is your shelter adequate in terms of space, privacy, and protection from weather? Please explain.**
- 14. What challenges do you face in your current living conditions?**

Section 4: Access to Basic Needs and Services

A. Food Security

- 15. Do you have regular access to sufficient food?**
- 16. What coping mechanisms do you use when food is insufficient?**

B. Water and Sanitation

- 17. Do you have access to safe drinking water?**
- 18. Are sanitation facilities adequate and safe, especially for women and children?**

C. Healthcare

- 19. Do you have access to healthcare services when needed?**
- 20. What barriers prevent access to healthcare?**

D. Education

- 21. Are children in your family able to attend school?**
- 22. What challenges affect access to education?**

Section 5: Livelihoods and Coping Mechanisms

23. What was your main source of income before displacement?
24. What is your current source of income, if any?
25. What coping strategies are you using to manage financially?

Section 6: Social Cohesion and Community Relations

26. How would you describe your relationship with the host community in Nankana Sahib?
27. Have you received any support? If yes, from whom?
☐ Host community
☐ Government
☐ NGOs
☐ Religious institutions
☐ Relatives/friends
☐ Other: _____
28. Have you experienced any discrimination or social tensions?

Section 7: Urgent Needs and Assistance Priorities

29. What are your most urgent needs at this time? (Rank if possible)
☐ Food assistance
☐ Cash support
☐ Shelter support
☐ Healthcare
☐ Protection services
☐ Education support
☐ Livelihood assistance
☐ Legal documentation
☐ Other: _____
30. What type of assistance would make the biggest difference in your situation?

Section 8: Future Intentions

31. Would you consider returning to your place of origin if conditions improve? Why or why not?
32. Are you interested in integrating locally in Nankana Sahib?
33. Are you considering relocating elsewhere? If yes, where and why?
34. What conditions would need to be met for you to make a durable solution decision?

Section 9: Closing Reflections

35. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience that we have not discussed?

Enumerator Ethical Notes (Not to be read aloud)

- **Ensure voluntary participation and informed consent.**
- **Do not record names or identifying information.**
- **Avoid probing into traumatic experiences unless participant is willing.**
- **Maintain neutrality and confidentiality.**
- **Refer any urgent protection or GBV cases to appropriate service providers following referral pathways.**

Annex: Images

