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TEJ BAHADUR<sup>1</sup>  
AALOK PANDYA<sup>2,\*</sup>  
RAGHUVeer SINGH<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Manipal University,  
Jaipur 303 007, India

<sup>2</sup>JECRC University,  
Jaipur 303 905, India

<sup>3</sup>Jaisalmer Fort Museum,  
Jaisalmer 303 007, India

\*e-mail: aalok.pandya@jecrcu.edu.in

### Response:

We must thank Bahadur *et al.* for mentioning the date of what they consider as the ‘Great migration’. Our suggestion about earthquake-related devastation was based on the field examination of different villages where the Paliwal Brahmins lived. We presented some telltale evidence of destruction of houses made of blocks of rocks without using any cementing materials. The earthquake-related destruction features in the poorly constructed stone-block houses of Kuldhar and other Paliwal villages were similar to those destroyed during the Latur earthquake in the recent past, and at about 4000 years ago site at the historical Mohenjodaro. In the Paliwal villages near Jaisalmer, many people may have been buried under the heavy blocks of rocks, and very few could have survived the fatality. Whoever visits these villages, hears the stories of ghosts haunting the place. The unnatural deaths of people must be the reason for these ghost stories in circulation in the desolate Paliwal villages.

We have serious doubts whether Bahadur *et al.* personally visited these Paliwal villages. The authenticity of the *British India Gazetteer* information on the earthquake incidence in the early 19th century is doubtful, especially from such remote places away from Jaisalmer town; further, the pristine Jaisalmer Royal State, was never under British rule. How can

we rely on data regarding an event that took place in the early 19th century, compiled in the *British India Gazetteer* more than 100 years after the incidence of earthquake? Is there any mention of the supposed migration of the Paliwal Brahmins in the *Gazetteer*? The massive exodus of the Paliwal Brahmins is a fabricated story, which was imbibed in the folklore at a later period. There is no documented evidence supporting it. On the other hand, geological studies of the terrain provide enough proof about the region being neotectonically and seismically active.

Have Bahadur *et al.* visited the Jaisalmer fort and witnessed the damaged walls in the fort area? Why do some buildings within the Fort show tilting and walls appear cracked? Did they try to understand what might have caused the present derelict condition of Jaisalmer Fort, unlike any other fort in Rajasthan? What led the then King and his royal troops to abandon the Palace in the fort? Have any of these features found place in the *Gazetteer*?

A. B. ROY\*  
HARSH BHU  
PANKAJ SHARMA  
KISHAN VAISHNAV

*Niloy Apartment,*  
*Flat 3/2G, 46A, R.N. Das Road,*  
*Kolkata 700 031, India*  
\*e-mail: ashitbaranroy@gmail.com