
**BUREAUCRATIC CONTESTATIONS AND COMMUNITY SURVIVAL:
THE REHABILITATION OF MEOS IN THE MATSYA UNION AND
GURGAON IN THE SHADOW OF NEHRU–PATEL DIFFERENCES,
1948–1949**

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Article Received: 27 August 2026, Article Revised: 17 September 2026, Published on: 07 October 2026

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Doi: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijarp.9476>

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the contested processes of rehabilitation of the Meo community in the Matsya Union (formed by the merger of the princely states of Alwar, Bharatpur, Dholpur and Karauli) and the adjoining Gurgaon district between 1948 and 1949. In the aftermath of Partition violence, tens of thousands of Meos- a liminal agrarian community straddling Hindu and Muslim cultural practices- were displaced from their lands in Alwar and Bharatpur, seeking refuge primarily in Gurgaon. While many ultimately migrated to Pakistan, a substantial number remained in or returned to India, asserting claims to their ancestral holdings amid the competing demands of Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Punjab. Drawing on archival correspondence, cabinet committee records, fact-finding committee reports and ministerial notes, the study analyses the bureaucratic contestations that shaped Meo resettlement. Central to these conflicts were jurisdictional and ideological differences between the Ministry of States (under Vallabhbhai Patel) and the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, as well as broader divergences between Nehru and Patel. Nehru consistently pressed for the return and temporary-to-permanent allotment of land to Meos who had remained in or returned to the Indian Union, viewing their rehabilitation as essential to secular nation-building and agricultural continuity. Patel and officials aligned with the States Ministry, by contrast, prioritised the settlement of non-Muslim refugees on vacated Meo lands and favoured more restrictive criteria for Meo claims, reflecting security concerns and local political pressures in the newly integrated princely territories.

KEYWORDS: Meos, Mewat, Nehru, Patel, Rehabilitation, Matsya Union.

INTRODUCTION

The Meos, a liminal community historically positioned “in-between Hinduism and Islam” in the former princely states of Alwar and Bharatpur (later part of the Matsya Union) and Gurgaon district (East Punjab), faced displacement, violence, and suspicion amid the communal upheavals of 1947. Many fled or were driven out; others remained or returned, only to encounter an “onslaught by the modern bureaucracy of the postcolonial state.” Existing accounts often end around 1948–49; this work picks up the story of their re-territorialization- attempts to reclaim or be allotted land on what had become their own soil within a partitioned nation-state- and treats Mewat as an early laboratory for testing the Indian state’s claims of parity, equality, and freedom. Differences between Jawaharlal Nehru (and allies in the Prime Minister’s Secretariat and Relief & Rehabilitation) and Vallabhbhai Patel (with the Ministry of States and local officials) shaped policy.

Nehru pressed for the return and settlement of Meos who had remained or returned, citing loyalty, food production needs, and principles of secular citizenship; Patel and Ministry of States officials often favoured settling non-Muslim refugees on vacated Meo lands and resisted large-scale Meo rehabilitation. Fact-finding committees, inter-departmental meetings (including high-level Cabinet Committee sessions in May-June 1949), census data, land allotments, and local resistance produced a contested, incomplete process of resettlement. Local revenue officials, residual princely-state personnel, and refugee pressures further complicated implementation. The paper draws on archival sources (including Nehru’s notes and correspondence, Ministry records, and committee reports) to show how paper-based manoeuvring in New Delhi and on-the-ground realities in Matsya Union/Gurgaon determined community survival. It frames these events as a “prehistory” of later tensions in Mewat, highlighting the limits of early postcolonial state capacity and the enduring impact of Partition-era bureaucratic politics on a liminal community.

The paper traces the formation and delayed functioning of fact-finding committees, the provisional allotments of land in Nuh, Ferozepur Jhirka, Tijara and Pahari tahsils, the verification of claims, and the practical obstacles- ranging from incomplete reports and competing refugee claims to local resistance and administrative inertia- that prolonged uncertainty for the Meos. It argues that community survival strategies, including petitions, reliance on Gandhian intermediaries and local political allies, operated within and against this bureaucratic field. Ultimately, the 1948–49 episode reveals how early postcolonial state-

making in Mewat was marked less by coherent policy than by inter-ministerial friction and high-level political differences, leaving a lasting imprint on land relations, minority belonging and state–community interactions in the region.

Process of Rehabilitation

The Meos displaced or rather evacuated from Matsya Union and forced to leave for Pakistan stationed in the transit camps in Nuh, Sohna, Gurgaon and Delhi. There were also some Meos who had returned from Pakistan as they were unable to rehabilitate in a unknown land. The non-Muslim refugees arriving from Pakistan were being settled in Bharatpur and Alwar, while Meos returning from Pakistan were to be settled in Gurgaon; close to but not on their former homelands. Sardar Patel after meeting with the deputation of the Matsya Union, told them that he was entirely opposed to the return of Muslims to Alwar and Bharatpur. The Matsya Union's position was that 'in place of Muslims', it would accept refugees.¹ On the other hand Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru finally entered the fray directly and told that "It is the decided policy of the Government of India that Muslims who had left their houses temporarily owing to disturbed conditions, for other parts of India, are entitled to have their property restored to them provided the Custodian considers it justified."²

Nehru's allies in this matter were Maulavi Mohammad Ibrahim in Alwar and Maulana Azad in Delhi. Maulavi Mohammad Ibrahim, representing the Meos of Alwar, came to see him on 31 May 1948 and requested that the one and a half lakh Meos of Alwar and Bharatpur, residing in Gurgaon, should be resettled in these states, as the lands evacuated by them had been redistributed among local and neighbouring Jats non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan.³ In Delhi, the Education Minister Abul Kalam Azad communicated directly with the Deputy Prime Minister's powerful advisor on princely states, V. P. Menon, asking him to permit to settle those Bharatpur and Alwar Meos, who went to Pakistan but have now returned and are anxious to settle down in their old homes as well as those Meos who took refuge in Gurgaon. He too had been 'given to understand' that the people as well as the administration of both the states were amenable to their resettlement.⁴ With pressure mounting thus, Neogy visited Patel in Dehradun, where the latter was recovering from his heart attack, to discuss the matter. Patel stuck to his previous opinion that all those Meos who belonged to Alwar and Bharatpur and had left for Gurgaon should be given facilities for rehabilitation there and that, in turn those non-Muslims entitled to rehabilitation facilities in Gurgaon would be given corresponding facilities in Alwar and Bharatpur. Meos who had migrated to Pakistan and have returned should be put into a camp and be removed to Pakistan as soon as arrangements

could be made. Neogy understood from Patel that 'it was a mistake to have retained any Meos in Gurgaon and a demand for the removal of all the Meos in Gurgaon district to Pakistan would be justified. In any case, no Meo should be allowed to migrate from Pakistan to India'.⁵

Faced with this united front of the MoS and R&R, Nehru took away the responsibility for the Meo question from Neogy's hands and assigned it to the Minister without Portfolio, N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar. The latter reached out to K. B. Lall, Administrator of the Matsya Union, for information about the situation on ground. There the Meos, prevented from returning to Alwar and Bharatpur but staying just across the border in Gurgaon, were starting to take matters into their own hands and enter the territory of their former home-states. This led both Gurgaon and Matsya Union authorities to employ heavy-handed methods of army deployment. Lall's informative reply to Ayyangar's query is quite illustrative of the workings of the Matsya Union ministry and the MoS, in the summer of 1948. It is also remarkable for its casualness towards the plight of the one and a half to two lakh Meos. On its part, the Matsya Union had moved on regarding the entire agricultural evacuee land as reserved for the rehabilitation of refugees from Pakistan.⁶ Many Meos were managing to 'infiltrate' into the vacant areas on the borders of Gurgaon. Terming their entrance into their old homes and lands as an 'illegal occupation of evacuee property, Lall estimated their number at 8,000-10,000. Incredibly, they were being persuaded to move back to Gurgaon'. There were also those 15,000 Meo converts who had not migrated and were holed up in the Lachhmangarh tehsil of the Union.⁷

Matters came to ahead at the eighth meeting of the Joint Rehabilitation Board held on 25 June 1948. Nehru presided over the usual galaxy of ministers and mandarins, with the exception of Patel, who was represented by M. K. Kirpalani, Joint Secretary (MoS). Interestingly, Vinoba Bhave and Sudhir Ghose, two Gandhian social workers who were involved with the Meos' struggle, were present. The resettlement of the Meos, which was item number three on the agenda, was taken up first. It was declared that it was 'GOI's responsibility to resettle Meos who belonging to areas in the Indian Union had left their homes and lands but had either not left the Union or having left it have already returned to it'.⁸ They were to be resettled 'somewhere in the area comprising the Gurgaon district of East Punjab and the states of Alwar and Bharatpur in the Matsya Union'. Second, a 'fact-finding' committee comprising three persons consisting of a representative each of the Ministry of R&R, East Punjab and Matsya Union was to be appointed. It was to report by 15 July 1948. It was to record the number of Meos present in the area, enumerate those who belonged to the Matsya Union, and

those who had gone over to Pakistan but had returned and, lastly, determine the land available for allotment in East Punjab and Matsya Union. Finally, it was accepted that the 8000-10,000 Meos who had 'already infiltrated into the Matsya Union need not be ejected'. These decisions clearly bore the stamp of the Prime Minister, who requested Mohan Lal Saxena, the new Minister for R&R, to see that the fact-finding committee keeps 'in close touch with Vinoba Bhave'. Nehru reminded Saksena that the Meo question was one matter that 'though not big in itself', involved 'important principles and may lead to far reaching consequences'. Finally, to the Prime Minister, there was 'a definite connection between this business of our dealing with Meos and the Kashmir situation'.⁹

Patel's disapproval delayed the formation of the fact-finding committee, which received its instructions on 30 July 1948, at the ninth meeting of the Joint Rehabilitation Board. It was directed to come up with 'a definite scheme for the resettlement of displaced Meos now in Gurgaon district in a compact area on the borders of the Gurgaon district and the Matsya Union, the area being wholly in Gurgaon/Matsya or contiguous', on the basis of a census of Meos. At the outset, it appeared that the number of persons to be rehabilitated was 60,230 (persons who evacuated Alwar and Bharatpur for Gurgaon) + 1,812 (members of families partially migrated who stayed in India throughout and members of families partially migrated who have since returned to India) = 62,042 persons. The figure of 62,042 was reached by estimating Meos in Alwar, Bharatpur and Gurgaon (based on 1941 figures + percentage increase) before the exodus i.e. 4,01,596 in 1947-48.¹⁰

In early-August 1948, Nehru received a letter from the journalist B. Shiva Rao. It drew upon the eye-witness account of another, Dr Sivakamu of Women's Hospital, Alwar to report that while the government was thinking of sending Meos back to Alwar, those who were actually there were being 'driven out'.¹¹ Several groups of Meos walking on the Alwar-Gurgaon-Delhi highway had told Dr Sivakamu that they were being driven out of their homes to Pakistan: 'the police and the soldiers tell us, your home is in Pakistan and these lands are for the Hindus. If you do not go away, we shall drive you with our sticks'. Ironically, they had returned to India, from Pakistan, relying on Nehru's and Gandhi's assurances that they could do so safely. Shiva Rao could not resist the jibe that large tracts of land were lying fallow because the Punjabis did not know 'how to cultivate these lands without water',¹² as against the Meos, who knew Mewati soil but had been repeatedly removed from it.

While these turf-wars continued, Vallabhbhai Patel sent a long note to Nehru on the above-mentioned decisions. Beginning with the questionable claim that ‘the Meos [did] not belong to the category of those who had left their homes temporarily for another place in India’, Patel further stated that ‘they had left their homes for good and were fully resolved to leave for Pakistan’. He asserted that ‘the main difficulty’ in regard to return of Meos to Alwar and Bharatpur was ‘the law and order problem’. He felt that ‘the return of Meos, even in comparatively small numbers, would upset the whole non-Muslim population of Alwar and Bharatpur’ as Meos had never been a ‘peaceful section of the population’. They had the ‘upper hand’ in inter-communal feuds and ‘even in the last disturbances’, they took the law into their own hands ‘with a view to aligning themselves with the Muslim League and establishing for themselves a Meoistan’. Patel therefore insisted that it was ‘unwise and inappropriate’ to accentuate the law and order problem by sending these Meos to ‘hostile surroundings’. He claimed that the rulers of Alwar and Bharatpur had done their best to protect the Meos, and on this basis assumed that ‘if these Meos left, they did so because their loyalties were elsewhere and because they did not wish to face the revenge and anger of the population, whom they had wronged’.¹³ As *The Statesman* had commented on 5 October 1947, ‘how were the Muslims of India to prove their loyalty when the very act of fleeing in fear from their homes was interpreted as a sign of disloyalty and extra-territorial attachment?’¹⁴ Patel’s conclusion was that “...grievance and bitterness of that wrong [persisted] in the areas ravaged by Meos and in view of the population being either local or refugee or mixed, the return of Meos to their old homes would be fraught with serious risk. Nor would it be in our interests to force Meos back in to their homes at the points of bayonet...”¹⁵

On 15 September 1948, the committee consisting of N.C. Shrivastava, K.B. Lall and Tarlok Singh reported to the Nehru cabinet. While outlining its scheme, the committee emphasised the need for an early settlement, in time for sowing Rabi crops. It was conscious that, as temporary allotments to refugees had already been made till the end of Rabi 1948-49, the two schemes – refugee rehabilitation and Meo restoration – had got intertwined. Thus, permanently resettling Meos in Alwar and Bharatpur meant relocating refugees and it appeared that sufficient area was simply no longer available. On the other hand, a temporary settlement of Meos was possible for Rabi 1948-49 in Nuh and Ferozepur Jhirka regions of Gurgaon in the free land (24,987 acres) and that portion of leased land (21,000 acres) already held by the Meos, who had been residing there since the disturbances. Moreover, 13,315

acres were available in the Tijara and Pahari tehsils of Alwar and Bharatpur, which were contiguous to Nuh and Ferozepur Jhirka. Taken together, these lands amounted to 59,302 acres, a 'compact area' on which the displaced Meos could be settled. In effect, this meant that four-fifths of the displaced Meos were to be settled in the villages of their dislocation and were not to be sent back to their original homes. The committee claimed that the Nuh and Ferozepur land was better in quality than their original holdings in the dry lands of Alwar and Bharatpur. For the remaining one-fifth, twenty villages in Tijara (Alwar) and twelve villages in Pahari (Bharatpur) were to be provided.¹⁶

The Joint Rehabilitation Board met on 24 September to consider these proposals and decided that the displaced Meos from the Matsya Union and Gurgaon district who remained in the Indian Union or who, having left it, returned and been included in the census, be given temporary allotment up to the end of Rabi 1948-49, 45,987 acres of cultivated land in the Nuh and Ferozepur Jhirka tehsils of Gurgaon district and 13,315 acres of cultivated land in the Tijara and Pahari tehsils of the Matsya Union, immediately adjoining Nuh and Ferozepur Jhirka.

Further, 'in view of the inadequacy of information regarding the quality of land in the Matsya Union and the insufficiency of the area immediately available', each landholder was to get three-fourths of his verified holding in Matsya i.e. one acre of well-irrigated land was to be taken as equivalent to one and a half acres of unirrigated land. This ad hoc evaluation was, however, not intended to prejudice the final assessment of land in Matsya Union and the permanent allotment of land outside Matsya Union. Finally, the fact-finding committee was directed to prepare a scheme for permanent settlement for displaced Meos to take effect from Kharif 1949. However, even this permanent allotment was not to happen in Alwar and Bharatpur, from where an area of 50,000 acres of cultivated land was to be made available for immediate temporary allotment to refugees from East Punjab. This area was 'on account for East Punjab refugees', but the question of how much land was to be made available in the Matsya Union for allotment to refugees selected by the East Punjab government was to be considered at the time of permanent settlement of Meos in Gurgaon i.e. East Punjab.¹⁷

With the policy decision seemingly made, the officials were keen to implement and entrench it. K. B. Lall, at the Matsya Union, was first in instructing his officers to lease out 13,350 acres of cultivable land in Tijara and Pahari tehsils for a year. The irony, as Lall himself noted, was that there were 'no refugees from East Punjab requiring rehabilitation facilities in

Matsya Union', and the latter had merely been asked 'to reserve 50,000 acres of land for refugees from West Punjab in lieu of the area to be allotted to our Meos in the Gurgaon district'. Matsya's Meos largely remained in Gurgaon, West Punjab's refugees largely remained in East Punjab, and the former's land was reserved for the latter's future use.¹⁸ Some, like Patel's influential secretary, V. Shankar continued to remain restive, having noticed that the Rehabilitation Board had included 'Meos who had returned from Pakistan' in the plans. Shankar challenged this, as the previous position had referred only to Meos who had left Alwar and Bharatpur, but not those who had 'left for Pakistan'.¹⁹ Shankar wanted the MoS to look into this and drew the attention of the Ministry of R&R. The East Punjab government was complaining that the Matsya Union had not transferred the stipulated 50,000 acres of land for allotment to Punjabi refugees, while the East Punjab government had allotted land to the Meos of Matsya Union. According to the terms of evacuee property arrangement in the two Punjabs, the area allotted to Punjabi refugees, who owned land in Pakistan, was to be carved from these 50,000 acres.²⁰

A surprised Lall replied that by end-October it was 'too late for refugees to prepare for Rabi sowings', and that East Punjab had not made any requests either. He claimed it was 'too late to talk in terms of temporary allotment' but promised to set apart 'an equivalent area of land in Matsya Union for the rehabilitation of refugees of Punjabi extraction, who would otherwise have been settled in Gurgaon district, in the final resettlement scheme'.²¹ Unconvinced, the East Punjab government continued to press.²² Lall however asserted that since approximately 27,000 acres of land had already been allotted to Punjabi refugees in Alwar district and an equal area in Bharatpur district, the claim of the East Punjab government had already been met.²³ This 'staggered programme', as Ian Copland called it,²⁴ of reluctant rehabilitation can scarcely be called either an assertion of Prime Ministerial authority or an acknowledgement of Gandhi's wish for the Meos. Smothered by a stalling bureaucracy and supported by non-officials like Sunder Lal, Bhave, Sarabhai and Ghosh, Nehru had reached out within the Congress Working Committee to President Rajendra Prasad. Patel's response to Prasad on that occasion indicates well the intensity and personal impress with which the Deputy Prime Minister was determined to hold his hard-line approach. In the face of such intransigence, as follows, the Prime Minister had little alternative but to accept whatever assurance Patel was agreeing to:

"I am not aware of any promise which Gandhiji made. I am sure he could not have given any promise about resettlement of Meos in the States. I had long talks with him on this question and our policy then was not to interfere with internal administration of the States. It was only

after his murder that we dared to interfere in these States...I have no hesitation in saying that any other policy might well result in a disaster similar to the one which cost us Gandhiji's precious life. I see no reason why there should be any hurry about this matter and I do not appreciate the reason why this matter should come before the Working Committee...I would advise postponement of consideration of this question...If however postponement is not considered possible and any decision to reverse the existing policy is taken, I am afraid I will have no alternative but to resign from the Working Committee."²⁵

Final Settlement of Meos in Gurgaon, Bharatpur and Alwar

Meanwhile, while the Matsya Union was fulfilling the commitment of rehabilitating the Meos in the thirty-three ear-marked villages, in addition to allotting 77,000 acres of land to Punjabi refugees, the East Punjab administration was slacking in allotting land to the displaced Meos. Consequently, a number of Meos were moving in the countryside of Gurgaon, Alwar and Bharatpur. With social workers like Vinoba Bhave, religious leaders like Maulavi Ibrahim, and, interested ministers like Bhola Ram touring, assuring and encouraging Meos 'to resettle in their deserted houses', the East Punjab Government's lack of action was tantamount to flouting New Delhi's 'compact area' decision. An irked K.B. Lall was now suggesting 'substantially adding to the area reserved in the Matsya Union' for Meos. In the present situation, he did not see any possibility of refugees and Meos sharing the same village peacefully. Lall felt that 'if each and every' displaced Meo was allowed to return to his home, a large number of those who had gone to Pakistan would 'trek back to theirlands'. Instead Lall proposed another list of villages amounting to 21,013 acres in Alwar and 21,166 acres in Bharatpur for Meos' resettlement, while warning the MoS about the 'rapid infiltration' of Meos. Lall's complaint was forwarded to the East Punjab government and Patel himself sent a letter to Premier Bhimsen Sachar on 23 April 1949. He also approved Lall's proposal of the extra land for Meos with the proviso that 'care should be taken to ensure that the Meos settled in these villages are in no circumstances allowed to overflow into other areas' thereby giving rise to undesirable complications.²⁶

By April 1949, the situation on the ground was overtaking the permission on paper and some 27,000 Meos had made their way into Bharatpur, as Lall put it, 'without permits' and with the assistance of 'corrupt local police and Mahajans'.²⁷ Almost exactly two years after they were forcibly removed from their homes, Meos were forcing their way back to their original holdings despite the resistance of the MoS and the Matsya Union administration.²⁸ Much like their departure in March-April 1947, their arrival in March-April 1949 too was achieved in an

‘unsatisfactory atmosphere’. In both years, the administrative arrangements were ‘inadequate to hold the scales between the Meos, the Punjabi refugees and the Jats’.²⁹ And, like the many Gandhians who supported them in 1947, there was another Gandhian on the scene in 1949, Sudhir Ghosh. Appointed as a Deputy Rehabilitation Commissioner by Nehru, he was pushing for the ‘wholesale restoration’ of Meo holdings in Matsya Union.³⁰

In the last meeting of the fact-finding committee, it was finally decided to acknowledge ground realities and trifurcate the solution to the Meos’ problem. Land was to be ‘reserved’ for refugees, ‘restored’ to Meos and maintained ‘vacant’ for future settlement of either displaced Muslims or non-Muslim refugees. Original holdings were to be matched with their equivalent, rehabilitation was to be met with resettlement and, together, both were to contribute to the ‘grow more food’ campaign. As far as possible, these categories were to be made complementary and not conflictual. In case of a clash, ‘compact’ areas were to be created, with Meos to be settled in the interior tracts, with its brackish water, deep wells and light soil, while the refugees were to be settled on agricultural property. Of course, ‘mixed communities’ were not yet to be countenanced.³¹

Two years from the summer of 1947, the process of the return of Meos to their homelands had begun. The Matsya Union had verified the claims of 6,329 Meos (3,016 from Alwar and 3,315 from Bharatpur), amounting to 70,220 acres (34,400 in Alwar and 35,820 in Bharatpur). In the villages ear-marked for them, 9,449 acres in Alwar and 4,567 acres in Bharatpur had been allotted, making it a total of 14,016 acres in the Matsya Union. In Gurgaon, Meos belonging to the district had been allotted 19,904 acres, of which possession had been taken to the extent of 19,039 acres. A total allotment of 11,635 acres had been made to the Meos of Matsya Union in Gurgaon district, of which physical possession had been taken to the extent of 5,193 acres. In Ferozepur Jhirka, possession of 4,808 acres had been taken out of 5,748 acres allotted. It was only in the Nuh tehsil, where the allotted area was 5,887 acres that barely any physical possession had been taken: 385 acres only.

As they were able to get back to their homelands or its adjoining areas, Meos of the Matsya Union were not inclined to go to Nuh, which was non-contiguous to Matsya. Gopilal Yadav, minister for R&R in the Matsya Union in 1949, now sought to convince the ‘official mind’ in New Delhi that their settlement of Meos and other Muslim land owners ‘in their own villages’ did not present any law and order problem. That concern was complicated by another: namely that evacuee lands had remained only partially utilised. Consequently, the population that turned against them two years previously, seemed willing to ‘welcome’ them. By their own actions, Meos had made restoration in their villages ‘the more obvious course’

because of the considerable number who had already gone there. Moreover, in the neighbouring Gurgaon, under the order of the East Punjab government, ‘all Muslims who had remained in the Indian Union were being given their own lands with effect from Kharif 1949’ and the fact-finding committee thus recommended that, simultaneously, there would be a ‘restoration of Meos and Muslim landowners recorded in the census of July 1948, even if they were returnees from Pakistan, and including Meos of Matsya Union, who had received temporary allotment in Gurgaon during Rabi 1948-49’.³²

CONCLUSION

The Meos faced a “fourfold onslaught” (state, other social groups, press, and postcolonial bureaucracy). Existing accounts often end around 1947–48 displacement; this work extends into the resettlement phase, using previously underused Ministry of States, Relief & Rehabilitation, Home Affairs, and Prime Minister’s Secretariat files plus Nehru papers. High-level differences were decisive. Nehru (and supporters such as certain social/political workers and parts of his Secretariat) pushed for restoration of Meo rights to original lands and homes where feasible, temporary allotments, and opposition to permanent displacement or forced migration to Pakistan. Patel and the Ministry of States (plus aligned local bureaucrats and refugee-settlement priorities) favored prioritizing non-Muslim refugees on vacated Meo lands, restricted returns (often limited to those counted in the July 1948 census), compact-area schemes, and a more security-oriented, homogenizing approach. These clashes delayed fact-finding committees, produced conflicting instructions, and created a “war on paper” even as ground realities shifted.

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28. MoS, File No. F.8 (2)–R/49, A B Chatterjee’s note, 28 April 1949. (National Archives of India, New Delhi)
29. MoS, File No. F.8 (2)–R/49, Lall to Chatterjee, 30 April 1949. (National Archives of India, New Delhi)
30. MoS, File No. F.8 (2)–R/49, Ghosh to Chatterjee, DO No. RHA(502)78, 13 May 1949. (National Archives of India, New Delhi)
31. MoS, File No. F.8 (2)–R/49, Lall to Ghosh, 30 April 1949. (National Archives of India, New Delhi)
32. MoS, File No. F.8 (2)–R/49, final report of the Fact-Finding committee, 24 April 1949. (National Archives of India, New Delhi)