

The Ugandan Asian Archive Oral History Project
An Oral History with Amin S. Visram

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Abstract:

Mr. Amin S. Visram and his entire family came to Canada in November of 1972 as they were expelled from Uganda by President and Military General Idi Amin. This oral history covers Mr. Visram's childhood and upbringing in Uganda as well as his new life in Canada.

He reflects fondly on his childhood in Uganda recalling the 'congenial lifestyle'. Mr. Visram was just thirteen years old when he was forced to leave his home. Upon establishing themselves in Mississauga, Mr. Visram went on to attend Sheridan College followed by a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from York University and finally a Juris Doctor from the New England School of Law. He practiced as a lawyer in the United States as one of the first assistant district attorneys of Indian origin in Massachusetts.

Currently, Mr. Visram serves as CEO of Vista Hospitality Group which he co-founded with his brother Ally Visram in 1992. Both brothers are also co-founders of REACH by the Visram Foundation, a charitable foundation in India that provides underprivileged girls with housing, education, food, and healthcare.

This oral history was conducted in Mr. Visram's office in Kitchener, Ontario.

Shezan Muhammedi: “So this an oral history interview with Amin Visram. Um yeah we'll just start with uh where were you born in Uganda?”

Amin Visram: ““Born in Kampala, Uganda. In 1959, so I'm 55 years old. Born in a hospital, in a hospital called Mango hospital, just about um couple of miles from home. Where all my brothers and sister were born.”

Shezan: “Ok, how many brothers or sisters did you guys have?”

Amin: “I have uh 2 other brothers and 2 sisters, older than me, I am the youngest but the range between all of is basically a 6 year range between five kids in the family. So the oldest is, um I'm 55, and the oldest is almost 61.”

Shezan: “Ok, and then your parents were doing what exactly in Kampala?”

Amin: “My parents were, mother was always a housewife, uh, as is customary in places like Uganda. Father was working for Shell and British Petroleum in Kampala. Just simply a working person, no businesses no nothing.”

Shezan: “And then I guess how old were you when the expulsion happened?”

Amin: “I just turned 13, I just turned 13, it was November 2nd 1972 when we landed into Canada. I was born in 1959, so that made me 13. 13 and called it 13 and a half in December.”

Shezan: “And then what do you sort of remember about life in Uganda? When you were growing up?”

Amin: “Growing up it was one of the best lives one could have in terms of the culture of friendship, people, community, neighbours, was your life. Uh, I don't recall ever not having fun. It was one way or another, coming from home, coming from school, leaving home to go to school, whether you were at school, whether you were in jamat khana, or whether you were at home you just had different friends. All neighbours, all kids of neighbours would always hang out together, 10-15-20 of us, whether we were beating each other up or whether we were having fun, or we were playing badminton, or we were

playing marbles or whatever. And we always were basically dressed in shorts with our sandals. You know those rubber sandals with three holes in them and if something happened to your rubber sandals we wouldn't have the ability to go out and buy new ones we'd take uh little piece, I guess, necessity was the mother of invention, so we would take any piece of cloth or something to tie it up so that it worked until it was torn completely. But it was uh you know, less was more."

Shezan: "Yeah a very different lifestyle"

Amin: ""It was, but it was a very congenial lifestyle, a very friend driven lifestyle. It was uh, you would be basically your friend would be your best friends, uh family was very very close with each other. Brothers and sisters would be very close, we didn't have uh for or five bedrooms we had two or three bedrooms. One bedroom would be my two sisters and my grandmother, and the other bedroom was my three brothers and my grandfather, and I, including myself as a brother. And then my parents in another but it was the coziness of being together."

Shezan: "It was a full house!"

Amin and Shezan: "[laughter]

Amin: "Definitely, and then you had a dog on top of that, hahaha

Amin and Shezan: "[laughter]

Shezan: "That's fantastic and then I guess sort of do you feel like there were some sort of ethnic tensions? Do you feel like this was something that you saw might become an issue between South Asians and Ugandans?"

Amin: "It was very surprising, nobody even, I think it came from left field. What had happened was in 1971, I still remember the day, when I was 12 and change, on January 25th, it was a Sunday, no it was a Monday rather, it was a Monday that's right. At midnight, all of a sudden, we came from my uncle's house, we had a BBQ on that Sunday and all of a sudden there was just guns going off everywhere and bombs. This was on the eve of January 24th, well January 25th rather. Sunday night which would have been the 24th 1971 and there was a lot of bombing going on everywhere. In the middle of the night,

people were waking up to see what is going on. Next morning, we woke up it was Monday morning and we all went to school and we told to rush back home. We rushed back home and the bombing continued. And then in the evening that's when Idi Amin announced that he had now taken over the country, which was on the 25th Monday January 1971. So, he had basically taken over the country about a year and what 8 months before he decided to expel everyone. That's my recollection of it now, unless it was 1972 January, I can't remember that."

Shezan: "No, I'm pretty sure it was 1971. You're definitely right."

Amin: "So everybody was happy because what had happened at that point when he took over the president before then, and this was uh the Common Man's Charter for the people, by the people of the people, which was President Milton Obote from what I remember. Again my memory was very sparse being only 12 years old."

Shezan: "Oh no that's bang on it was Obote, yeah."

Amin: "And when he left, and he was traveling, when he took over, the Asian community was flabbergasted that things are going to happen now, they are going to be in our favour but I guess for a year it was and then everything went haywire. So, but, though it came from left field, in fact, that first year when Idi Amin was there I don't think anybody had any problems. Even the first year and a half, and all of a sudden, this August of 1972 is when it happened. And everybody thought it was a joke. We were in Jinja at that time. My father was going to be transferred by Shell, or British Petroleum, to Jinja to work at the depot there. We were looking at homes there; it was a Saturday I remember. It was a Saturday night when we came back and Sunday was when the bombing started and then Monday is when he announced this in January in 1971 is when he announced that he was in power. That's as far as my memory goes back.

Shezan: "And then I guess when the expulsion happened, when he made the decree, so when the expulsion happened what sort of happened within your family? Or I guess within the community?"

Amin: "Well when he, when he announced, and I believe it was August 2nd 1972 because he gave everyone three months to leave, 90 days. When he announced, people thought it was a joke, nobody

really anticipated that this is serious. And for the first few days nobody really paid any attention but as time developed and you started seeing more, more situations where people started saying this is very serious and then on top of that, I think around that time, a few weeks, or two three weeks after, he announced the seriousness really came in when he said to the Asians that those Asians that are Ugandan citizens. Because what had happened was after independence in 1967, I believe, a lot of the Hindu Asians, the Ismaili Asians had forfeited had their British subject citizenship and decided to become Ugandan citizens. So they had passports, now my father had both British and I believe we had some Ugandan. So the issue really became two-three weeks after when he said anybody who is of non-black origin and who's got a Ugandan passport is stateless, I'm forfeiting them. That's when I think paranoia came about. Uh, so you had a lot of Hindu people that were from India, and you know the Patels and the uh and you had a lot of Goans, the Desousas and stuff from Goa but about 80,000 to about 100,000 Asians. So they started going into a panic mode and he said that the Indians that are from India, go back to your homeland, I'm making you all stateless. So in the process I think his intent was to get rid of all the Indians and go back to India but by declaring stateless status it triggered the refugee act and I think that's where people like us became so so you had either the choice of the British taking back the British subjects, hence you had people starting to go to London. You had the Indians from India that were now declared stateless, some of whom when back to India. And you had people like us who were in the middle of it all, which was partly being stateless and partly having British subject and partly having a refugee status. So when when that happened I think around mid-late August, all of a sudden you had a lot of these embassies coming from other places in the world into Uganda. So I think Canada came and started parking their people in September.”

Shezan: “Yeah they opened shop right at the beginning of September”

Amin: “So then we didn't know if we were moving to England, India, whether were going to Pakistan, or whether we were coming to Canada. So then people would stand in lines. So now, now panic hit, I think about in September panic hit everybody and what happened was he confiscated everything as you know. So, including any cash, any money, any bank accounts, so you were only allowed to leave with 50 dollars, that's it, and the suitcase you had. Now I think you were allowed to load of the suitcase with whatever you wanted, so around that time reality set in and now when you go to downtown Kampala, all the stores started becoming empty. You would start to see all of these Asian buying things to take back with them. So the reality started setting in then. I don't believe we were invited to the Canadian

embassy that was set up there on Kampala road until about the end of September because you had to go stand in line to get a number. And I remember our, my brothers would stand in line all night to get a number and then we were invited for an interview and I think we subsequently got accepted. Now I wasn't involved in those details. I was I think 12 years old at that time, so my father and my brother were heavily involved in that. And then I think our flight was then booked on November 2nd, Air Canada came to pick us, we didn't even have to pay for air fare."

Shezan: "Yeah"

Amin: "We basically just uh, and people were, people were towards the September-October area people were starting to get very nervous. Military people were going into different homes, they knew people were leaving, raping women, uh stealing their luggages, if they go to the airport, Entebbe airport, it wasn't even advisable if you were leaving to even stay in your house for a couple of days, people would check out and go stay in a hotel. So from there you would basically take the buses and the buses would take you to the airport. Every day I think there were two planes leaving at some point but towards the months of I believe October-November the last 30 days I think there were a couple of planes. One going to London, one going to Canada, that type of thing. I think Canada had accepted somewhere around 6 or 8 thousand people."

Shezan: "Yeah they had taken 6 about 6,100 visas in that first chunk and then about 2,000 came from refugee camps over the next two years."

Amin: "Yeah from Italy and all those places, I have friends of mine that stayed there. So 8,000 people and you know at that time the planes would carry 150-200 passengers so even if you divide it, that's 400 loads, 400 loads of planes at that time. But Canada, when Canada accepted, nobody really knew where Canada was. Everybody had heard of London but uh, it was uh a Godsend absolutely. I think it was the best thing that ever happened to any of us."

Shezan: "So you guys flew from Kampala, probably to Montreal first?"

Amin: "Well we flew, this is how it went. It was a 18-20 hours flight somewhere around that. Kampala to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, we refueled, we went from Addis Ababa to the Canary Islands. From there we fly

to Montreal. Montreal, haha, my grandfather, we were all wearing shorts I mean it's November and were landing and we come out and the first thing everybody did was look at the mist and go [blow air outwards] kind of like the movies, you know when you watched black and white tv in Africa. Nobody knew and then the government was so gracious and so so loving that they took us to army barracks. And in the army barracks, I remember very distinctly, everybody was hungry and there was all this fruit nobody had seen grapes or apples, everybody just jammed right to the fruit. It was just a beautiful way the government was so well organized and took care of us. And then we, I think we went there and then they had a Manpower section set up as to where you want to go from there.”

Shezan: “Yeah, awesome”

Amin: “And my dad had particularly requested that we come to Toronto area because my mom's sister and her husband were living in Canada about 6-8 years before”

Shezan: “Oh wow, and they come from Uganda, or?”

Amin: “Yeah my uncle is an engineer or at least was now they are separated and um he would have been 30 at that time maybe 28 and my aunt was married so they'd been living there for 2-3 years before. And I think the fact that they sent a letter on our behalf of all the people that were similarly situated helped us in getting our visas to Canada. 'Cause they said that they would assist and that they had relatives here. So when we first came and we were in Montreal and my dad obviously met with Manpower and we wanted to be in Toronto. So they, I think a few days later, by overnight train, we came to Toronto. They put over at the Hotel on Charles Street called the Waldorf Estoria but it was no Waldorf it was a motel, it was just the name but a nice location right downtown, King, sorry Young and Charles going north of Charles street. It's no longer there, in fact I wanted to see it about 4 or 5 years ago and I wonder if that hotel is there but it wasn't. And that's when we were given the ability to meet with the manpower people and then they would then give us 50 dollars a week for groceries and stuff. We stayed there for about a good month a month and a half. We had two rooms so we had brothers and sisters, we were basically sleeping there. And we wanted to basically so a month and a half two months. And then because there was 5 brothers and sister including myself, my grandfather, mom, and dad, somebody told us that time that the law in Canada is that you can't have brothers and sisters in the same room so we had to find a three-bedroom apartment.”

Shezan: “Yeah, yeah somebody else was telling me about this rule. There's a certain ratio”

Amin: “Yeah a lot of Ismailis were at Don Mills so we couldn't go to Don Mills. So we came to Mississauga. They found us an apartment in Mississauga, on highway 10 and Dundas. Just 2504 Hurontario street apartment 758 and it was on the top floor, it was a three bedroom. So in one bedroom it was my mom and dad, in the other bedroom was my brother Ali and myself and my grandpa, we were in a bunk bed and the third bedroom was my sisters and my oldest brother was on the couch in the living room. So that's how it all happened. Uh from but from the minute we landed, even when we were at the Waldor Estoria, the motel, I started working, I remember making my first quarter at the age of thirteen. There was a baker's milk store and the guy would tell me please go to this for me go to that for me so he would give me a quarter or 50 cents. My brother Azim was working in the hotel, cleaning floors downstairs. So they were paying him and he was what 18-17 at that time? And when we came to Mississauga, right away within hours, within a day we were all working. I worked ever since I was 13 all my life, all my life, and so I started working delivering you know those flyers back then”

Shezan: “Yeah, yeah.”

Amin: “Prints of flyers. So they would give us a penny a flyer because even to this day I still pick up a penny because I always find that it's good luck for me. Even to this day, even to this day, just the other day I was picking up a couple of pennies somebody and thrown. And uhm so I was delivering flyers and then I started working in a fish and chips store where I was cutting French fries and after that I basically they put me in standard 7 grade 7 in a public school with another Indian guy who was there. But I think back then, I don't recall seeing anybody of Indian origin where I was. Anything north of Burnhamthorpe and highway 10 on the left hand side in 74, 1974, they opened square one. But anything beyond that was farmland, just farmland. I think highway 401 was two lanes each way.”

Shezan: “Yeah probably at that time”

Amin: “Yeah back at that time so so you know I kept working and then in 1973 I found a job in square one in a shoe store which I kept. But all along when I was working I was always going to school. I never gave up the motivational drive to finish my school. Ah high school was, high school I hated. I didn't hate but I hated the people there it was very derogatory at times because you didn't speak with a very, you

know you spoke with a thick accent. Um, people sort of, overall it was great but there were a few bad omens that are always there. So there was like uh 2 or 3 of us, a guy by the name of Ivan Charles who was from Pakistan, myself and there was a guy by the name of A.W., we just hung out together. I think we were the only three, there was nobody else, everybody else was uh pure you know raised and born in Canada. So it was a pretty demeaning time at that time. However, we finished grade 12 and then I went to Sheraton College and there I excelled very well but I kept working all my life. Then I went to York University and got my economics degree and I said that's not enough and then I went to Law School and became a lawyer at law school and then I said that's not enough, hahaha. No that was it, you know I'm a lawyer by profession and then in Boston. So 1972-1973 was high school sorry standard grade 7, Camilla Road public school. 1973 to 1977 was TL Kennedy secondary school in Mississauga, 1977-79 was Sheraton College business, did very well there. '79-81, I got advanced credits finished in an economics degree at York. '81-84 I went to Boston and did my law school. From '84 to '88 I worked as an assistant district attorney in Boston. One of the first assistant district attorney's in the history of the commonwealth of Massachusetts of Indian origin. Uh and then all along I always worked even when I was in law school, I was working as a security guard 'cause there was no money right. There was uh, money was a premium. My parents worked, my father made average salary, my mother worked in a pizza factory."

Shezan: "What was your dad doing?"

Amin: "My dad just worked, what happened was in 1972-73 they gave him a job at one of these public schools that was closing down so he had to take all the inventory and basically wrap it all up and ship it somewhere. And then when the school closed down in 6 months or 8 months it was a temporary job, then he looked for another one. So from 73 he started working at the Mississauga hospital in the stores department downstairs. Supplying all floors of all inventory and merchandise. So and then he retired, that was his only job, he retired in 1994 at the age of 65 and unfortunately, when he retired, he was gonna enjoy life and within 6 months he was diagnosed with Leukemia and then in 95 he passed away. So my dad, so that's one of the reasons I moved back here. I was living in Boston until 95 and then my mother was alone so I said there's no way I'm gonna leave her alone. So I moved here, so God was kind in 1988 when I finished with the DA's office, I opened my own law firm called Visram-Ronke and Associates former assistant DA's and we did very well.

And then in 93-94-92 my brother Ally and I, Ally was working as an accountant decided that let's try a dab into real estate in 1992. So we had no capability of finances because we were both paying our student loans but I had paid it off because the law firm started doing very well and then I did other things which is bought a little condo here for my parents and things started looking good in 92. And then him and I had basically [deleted for privacy] saved for 92, after paying all mortgages and everything else, and sort of loans, student loans etc. And we said let's dabble into real estate, so we bought our first little motel through a syndication of partners which required about [deleted for privacy] down as a down payment. The whole acquisition was about [deleted for privacy] and we paid these partners off and from there, him and I grew the company today the company is probably worth north of [deleted for privacy]"

Shezan: "Wow that's fantastic"

Amin: "So we have hotels, we have shopping malls, we have retirement homes, ones that you can see."

Shezan: "Is it all based in Ontario?"

Amin: "Ontario, Quebec, New York, South Carolina, Myrtle Beach, and Florida. We have 4 hotels, this one is ours as well. The Crowne Plaza. This one we bought in 1994 as well as Valhalla Inn and we made it into a Sheraton 4 points and then we sold it and we made some good capital and then we bought it back just 2 years ago. So we have this we have a Radisson in Sudbury a Holiday Inn in Sudbury, we have a property in Quebec called the Deltas and Saginee. We have uh marine, you can look at it all in the website."

Shezan: "And then so what sort of happened with your brothers and sisters when they, did they follow a similar path of kind of going to school?"

Amin: "Well my brothers are my partners, yeah yeah yup."

Shezan: "The two older brothers right?"

Amin: "Yeah my oldest brother Azim is more on his own but my brother Ally and I are very much hand in hand but Azim is also part of our partnership in certain areas. Uhm the one thing we uh you know we

are very close as a family and we make that a point because of what we, I've truly believed when you're united and you go through a crisis you always never forget where you are, who you are, and where you came from right? Because at the end of the day, that's what it's about and I hope that the generation that follows understands what that means. That's one thing that I try to drill into my four daughters as well. There's gonna be many people out there that's gonna try and divide and conquer you guys and we go through that all the time Ally and I. We've got a total of [deleted for privacy] employees in our company so there's always somebody or the other who's trying to break the unity of family."

Shezan: "Of family yeah"

Amin: "You've gotta have an understanding that you gotta be sure that if anything every happens that the family understands that it's not something that you would take lightly because put that to bed immediately once you see something like that, you know. So that's, that's basically how it all happened."

Shezan: "And then your sisters what do they do?"

Amin: "My sisters one is in Texas and one is in Toronto, yeah and my, I've got my brother-in-law in Texas my sister in Toronto is separated."

Shezan: "Your one other sister is um Sophie's mom, Annar aunty."

Amin: "Yeah that's right"

Shezan: "Ok yeah, that's your sister right?"

Amin: "Yeah"

Shezan: "I met her once"

Amin: "Unionville khane?"

Shezan: "Yeah yeah exactly"

Amin: "S.'s mom is my sister. S. is my niece who is a character too"

Shezan: "Haha, yeah she's definitely a character"

Amin: "Yeah I always mess around with her. Yeah so as I tell them all, I tell M. I tell S. I tell S., the beauty is that S. who is Azim's daughter who is now. So from my brother's side, my oldest brother is Azim, he's got two kids, S.'s a lawyer she's practicing out of Fort Lauderdale and she's about 28 she's amazing. Uhm S. is his second son who's into sometime of nuclear medicine over at Tufts university in Boston, so they did well. My sister in Texas she has three kids, one is A. who's the oldest he followed my, uh you know, in a lot of ways footsteps in a way that I had, which is going through law school I did. It was at Richard Ivey by the way, graduated there, went to Boston law school then became an assistant DA with the same DA's office and now he's, I just met with him yesterday. He's now in Texas. His sister A. she's about 31, she went through Waterloo, she did mechanical engineering, then she went to London England and she wanted to get into car design so she went to this car design course with all these ethnic Chinese people and she was the only girl and she got a job in uhm Paris sorry Belgium working for Toyota so she was in a senior level there. Then she said I need to do my MBA so she went to Carnegie Mellon did her MBA and now she's working with Wellsfargo, oil and gas in Houston, probably a [deleted for privacy] starting close to it. Her youngest son is J. who's at Furman at South Carolina, one of the best golf players there is cause there golfing there and then I've got my brother Ali uh Annar of course who know S. She's at Western. Then my brother Ali has got two kids, Z. and Z. Z. is over at Syracuse university just started and Z. is still young and then of course I have four daughters. You know M. and A. and Z., and M. and my wife Celina. So you know it the second generation"

Shezan: "Yeah it's the second generation. So this is good, so now that I guess you've raised your family here and things like that and everyone is kind of gotten used to Canada. How do you sort of identify yourself? Do you think of yourself as a Ugandan Canadian, a Canadian, an Ismaili, what sort of..."

Amin: "I think of myself as a Canadian first. I think of myself, and I think my family does as well and we are dual citizens by the way we have American citizenship as well. But I think of myself as a Canadian of Indian origin. Ok, I don't think of myself as a Canadian of Ugandan origin. I've never really uhm because I you know I have an affinity towards India because of the foundation that I've opened in India and plus

I've taken the girls to India um I don't think of myself as a Ugandan. Never did, never did because you know I, in fact I visited in 1994. I don't think I would ever be somewhere I would want to live. I think we are very fortunate to be part of this beautiful country called Canada. It is very neutral to us and it is not in any, I think it is the only country in the world that by constitution multiculturalism is a right not a privilege. It's a right. Very big difference compared to the United States where you don't have such a thing."

Shezan: "And good timing too it came in in 71"

Amin: "81, Multiculturalism policy, the B and A act"

Shezan: "Yeah, the official act"

Amin: "So that was then, yeah so no I think of uh, as I said I've got both citizenships. I travel extensively to the United States, in fact I'm gone again next week for a while. We have assets both ways and between Canada and the United States I think they are phenomenal countries. I think uhm that our children need to understand the strength of where they are and utilize those strengths to their benefit and create the best examples they can. That's very important.

Shezan: "And I guess were your parents born in Uganda?"

Amin: "Mhm, my parents were both born in 1928 in Uganda but our grandparents from what I gather, my grandfather was born in 1891 in India in Kutch Gujarat but I believe that he moved from Uganda sorry from India to Uganda in early 1910s when he was 15-18 somewhere around there and so he was married called it as late as 1925, my parents, both our parents were born there. Even the same thing for grandmas, you know mom's side of the equation, you know there was a big migration. If you go to Ugandan now you almost tend to see a deja vu of the new Indians that are coming. You know like the last twenty years, and you say you know what this is what our parents were what a 100 years ago well almost 90 years ago. These are beautiful countries to live in if the stability is there you know."

Shezan: "You never know what's gonna happen."

Amin: “Yeah you never know, that's the problem. Corruption is a way of life there and I have zero patience for corruption. Zero because at the end of the day you know when you go to places like India or places like Africa and you still have to bribe someone to get something done you say well what am I doing here. You know, you go to a restaurant and there are line ups and you do a little baksheesh and you get to the front of the line, it's not a nice thing.”

Shezan: “And then uhm, your philanthropic work, that was kind of motivated based on I guess your parents or was it sort of?”

Amin: “Yeah well what had happened was when my dad passed away in 1995 when I was cleaning his you know file cabinets I came across a file that basically he was donating maybe twenty-five dollars every 3-6 months to India to a place called Pradhan boarding school in Kutch Gujarat. This is back because of my grandfather's birth place and I said to myself when we have adequate resources and god has been kind to us, we should give something back to that culture. So in 2000 I tried to open up an organization after he passed away in 96 and it almost took me 4 years 5 years because I had to register here, register in the US, then I had to get paper work done in India and that's a process trust me”

A and Shezan: [laughter]

Amin: “And then in 2002 I almost had it ready to open and it was going to be called the Sherali, Fazal, Visram memorial foundation and my mother took ill in January of 2003 and she passed away in April of 2003. Everything was on hold and then I had to amend the articles to reflect her name on it. So now it's Malikkhanu and Sherali Fazal Visram. So in 2003 October, I said that's it, I went and flew there and got it done. So it's been with us since that time. Yeah take a look at it Visram foundation when you get a chance.”

Shezan: “So I guess there is another question that I have, growing up and dealing with I guess adjusting to Canadian society did you find that it helped to know other South Asians or did you find that the Ismaili community was a really good source of comfort or was it mainly your family that kind of helped”

Amin: “Well when you first came you almost tried to keep away from other South Asians in the environment of your schools. But come Friday night or Saturday you would merge with them. You didn't want to be seen around them because everyone was called Paki at that time. There was a lot of discrimination so you sort of tried to keep a low profile in the eyes of everyone else. But on a Saturday you would go to get together where they would be there. Right? but come Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday but but don't get me wrong it was fine but if you really were conglomerate, if you really were gathering in batches of 10-20 people it becomes a scary phenomenon because there were people out there, gangs. Back then you know there were similar gangs not in Canada necessarily but in England called Skin Heads. They would go and beat the hell out of these people so you tried to keep a low profile but at the same time you didn't hate being with them but you wanted to be safe so you would make sure because the discrimination words of Paki were very common.

I mean I myself, see this thumb, I myself got into a fight at my high school. One guy came along was Gary, long hair, really rough looking trailer trash type of a guy and we were in machine shop. Hey you fucking Paki, sorry you you Pakis. So my little buddy there Ivan Charles, he was a big guy but he was short said hey who you calling Paki? So this guy went and slapped Ivan and then a couple of them got together and there was this skinny guy Ali Walji and he was just scared. He hit Ivan and I grabbed this guy and I just went nuts. I started punching him, I took his head and started beating it against the lay. I guess all my anger, I wasn't suspended so that was the good part, hahaha. But you know sometimes, you know these things happen. Today if these things happened it would be a hate crime. The world changed in 1981 with the multiculturalism act and that's the cause of all the immigration that happened after that cause I'll tell you otherwise I don't think it would've happened. Trudeau was very net neutral in terms of the culture he wanted to create which is a phenomenal culture. I mean Canada's growth. The reality is, it is in large part due to you know Canada needs the immigration influx, it won't survive otherwise. I mean at the end of the day our population is 35 million which is less than the size of California, one state. California is at 36-37 million.

Shezan: “That's pretty much all of the questions, thank you for sharing your story”