

Throughout my childhood, I heard captivating stories about my great-great-grandfather, Sardar Mohan Singh Ramgarhia, who was a naturally gifted engineer. Our family found grave inspiration in his moving story: despite lacking a formal education due to financial difficulties, he made education more accessible. Through years of self-education at a public library, he established 16 colleges, along with several schools, throughout his career. Additionally, he selflessly financed the education of many.

When our family speaks of him, I envision what it would be like to have a conversation with him and hear about his remarkable journey as well as delve deeper into his impressive list of accomplishments. So when the chance presented itself, I was certain that I would take advantage of it to broaden my perception.

I began by creating a family tree, and was eventually determined to interview three significant members of my family. Equipped with curiosity, I formulated tailored questions to steer my search: what major challenges did he encounter? What was his childhood like? What were his motivations? I began with his daughter, my great grandmother, who is 89 and dripping with elegance. She provided a wealth of intriguing information about her father. However, one that piqued my interest was his experiences during India's struggle for independence and the partition. Unbothered by religious differences, my great-great-grandfather provided financial assistance and shelter to countless Indians, ensuring their protection until they could safely reach Pakistan.

Next, through an informative Google-Meet session with his grandson, a retired Indian army colonel, I discovered fascinating insights into my great-great-grandfather's contributions to

agriculture in 1950's Punjab. He revolutionized farming by introducing innovative machines that significantly improved the lives of farmers across the state.

As my mother helped bridge the gaps, she shared with me the praise he received from his community and how it led to recognition from the former prime minister. Upon collecting all the fascinating information, I meticulously categorized it into an informative chart that showcased his lifestyle, achievements, and beliefs.

Upon analyzing the divisions, I noticed the emphasis on uplifting community in my great-great-grandfather's life. With his remarkable contributions during the war and unwavering commitment to enhancing the livelihoods of farmers, his initiatives not only allowed him to progress, but also fostered advancement in society. This got me contemplating the path I wish to pave in my life. I now have a burning desire to pursue a career that enables me to be more generous towards others as I continue to grow.

During this process, I discovered an opportunity to participate in "'sewa' at my local Gurdwara (Sikh temple) through which I was able to distribute food to the homeless and help distribute unique green pencils that could sprout into trees once sowed. I was inspired by my great-great-grandfather to participate in these rewarding projects and I truly enjoyed the experience. I know I may never rival his impressive legacy, but I take great pride in being able to make a meaningful impact in this world in my own way.