PREFACE

Partition of India was one of the most traumatic events of History. Millions were uprooted from their roots and migrated as a consequence. This partition was as a result of the ‘Divide and Rule’ policy followed by the British and taken up by the Muslims fundamentalists. The division was not based on a clear-cut acceptance of geographical boundaries by India and Pakistan. When the final Radcliffe Award was announced, it failed to satisfy the aspirations of the people. As a consequence, people were pushed out of their homes and hearths causing one of the largest violent migrations in the history of the world.

The first ten years of the newly independent Government were largely taken up to settle these refugees. The Government needed to rehabilitate these migrants socially, culturally, economically and it also provided them with psychological support. Though some work bordering on rehabilitation has been focussed upon, I have made an indepth inquiry into all these aspects including the condition of women, which has received very little focus so far. In order to give an operational aspect to my study, I have also carried out a survey-based inquiry into the process of rehabilitation.

In my first chapter, I have striven to establish the prevailing uncertainties of pre-partition days. I have followed it up with events leading upto the partition.
In the second chapter, I have discussed setting up of the boundary commission, its compulsions and handicaps; the mass exodus of humanity to and fro; the anticipated and declared frontiers have been dealt with at length.

In the next two chapters, the response of the Government to the socio economic and political implications has been dealt with.

I further focussed on the immense suffering which women and children underwent as a consequence of this migration.

In my last chapter, I have made a case study of Delhi, where a maximum number of migrants have settled. Hence, I abstained from taking up any study for the Bengal area, which again had seen a similar scenario.

It may be pointed out that I have used the terms refugees, displaced persons, migrants and immigrants interchangeably for the unlucky millions who underwent the traumatic experience of settling in an alien environment.

To substantiate my work, I have made a study of governmental reports, census reports, journals, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, micro-films, micro-fiches, private papers, personal letters besides secondary sources such as books, papers on partition and rehabilitation by eminent historians and popular fiction by renowned writers. I sifted through thousands of pages of significant books and primary sources at Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi, National Archives, New Delhi, Parliamentary Library, New Delhi, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, Maharashtra Archives, Mumbai, JNU Library, New Delhi and, of course, various libraries of Panjab University, Chandigarh.