

Preface

“Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought”. The sweet memories of mine were mixed with sad saga of Partition of India. The immature vision of my childhood days had been intermingled with painful memories told and narrated by my grandmother along with other elderly and uprooted women with whom I was closely, intimately and affectionately related. The physical and natural proximity to the northern districts of East Pakistan prompted the exodus of Hindus refugees to the districts of North Bengal. North Bengal, the northern part of West Bengal occupied a unique position in the Indian sub-continent. North Bengal was such a queer area of West Bengal which had no trace in the geographical map of India by its name, but it is still well known in India. Most of my relations had specially migrated from the districts of Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Rongpur, Bagura, Pabna, Faridpur, Dhaka and other adjoining districts to Jalpaiguri, Darjeelong, Dinajpur (now North and South), Malda and the then princely state of Cooch Behar.

My house was the mid-day meeting venue of the displaced women under the patronage of my grandmother. The women hailing from different districts of East Bengal narrated their stories and practical experiences following the Partition of India in 1947. Those atrocious stories, stories of abduction, arson, plunder; inhuman tortures upon the minority communities, rape, looting, unauthorized and forceful occupation of dwelling houses had become regular events and rampant. I heard all the stories with a vacant and innocent look but with intense interest and curiosity. Those ladies were not well educated but they had enough knowledge and experiences regarding the political scenario prevailed during the period. They held responsible the political leaders who were autocratic, unwise and who took hasty decision for the vivisection, bifurcation and partition of India that caused endless sufferings of the Hindus and the Muslims alike.

I left no stone unturned to procure sweetness from the sad songs of the million innocent masses. Those unfortunate men and women became the puppets in the hands of some so called politicians who threw them in the world of profound darkness of uncertainty. From that time onwards I took a sacred vow to unearth and unveil their relentless endeavours

for existence, survival, security and empowerment. Now the question arises what were the main causes behind the massive influx of Hindu exodus from East Pakistan to West Bengal? The simple answer was that West Bengal was the only state which was dependable and trustworthy friend of uprooted Hindus. West Bengal was the largest recipient of the uprooted and displaced persons for the reasons of geographical immediacy to East Pakistan. Following the same reason the Hindu refugees from East Pakistan, specially the inhabitants of Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Rangpur and other districts of East Pakistan preferred to migrate to the neighbouring district of North Bengal viz. Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Dinajpur (undivided) and Malda. As my research paper deals with the refugees migrated from East Pakistan to North Bengal, my interest is primarily focused on the different districts of North Bengal. The valuable interview relating to the partition acted silently which in the long run inspired and encouraged to think more and more of the miserable plight of the uprooted individuals, especially the womenfolk were concerned.