

PREFACE

Women are considered secondary segments of the human society. It appears as universal phenomenon. They are honored as mothers who render invaluable service to the sustenance of human race. In the growth of human intellect and intellectual works of the human society, their contribution is either negated or evaluated in second consideration. And when a few women did wonderful works in any important field of human development, they are regarded as exceptional. Women carry the wheel of production system but they are not duly recognized as the part of production. They also confine themselves within the conventional roles. However society is not a static one. Changes come either through the process of evolution as well as human efforts. Response to the change of situation may vary in different section in different degrees. The late response of the Muslims in India to the western education of Science and Technology might have affected the community women much. Muslim women of India have responded to the changes more lately than their counterparts. In Tripura they are not exception. The historical setback (i.e. Partition of India), the geographical location, non intervention of traditional economy and its political status in the nation's perspective, all these account for backwardness of the state itself. They are regarded backward in all respects of their participation in education, economy, politics and many social activities. They are ^{lagging} behind the current stream of social development. Since the Princely Tripura, Muslims are found as not only contributing to the major revenue source of the state but also politically conscious. A sizeable number of men are found in several modern occupations. The contribution of women remains invisible. The matrimonial status of Muslim women and their low participation in education and social activities are subject of popular debates and discussions. Therefore, a resercher is to explore the reasons behind this high gender gap among the Muslims as well as the gap between Muslim women and other communities' women. It is an wonder that in the socio-religious philosophy of Islam, women are accorded high dignity but in real situation they are found in low status. Hence to study the sociological reality is the driving source of inspiration for the present research work on Muslim women in Tripura.

The basic objective of this study is to examine the status and role of Muslim women of Tripura. Emphasis has also been given here to explore their problems and prospects of development and change.

For completion of this thesis I should express my first gratitude to my Supervisor, Dr. Sekh Rahim Mondal. He liberally agreed to guide and supervise me when I first met him as a Lecturer in a Refresher Course arranged by the Political Science Department in the North Bengal University in 1996. I did my Ph.D. Registration in 1997 under him in the Department of Sociology of North Bengal University. Unfortunately, I could not complete the work within scheduled time. Then I registered again in 2002 to continue my Research work. For his necessary guidance, I have always maintained contact with Dr. Mondal. He is now a Professor in the Department of Anthropology of this University. He has never disappointed me to extend necessary supervision. So I am obliged to him.

I also express my gratitude to Prof. R.K.Bhadra, Prof. R.S.Mukhopadhyay, Dr. Sanjoy Roy, Dr. Mrs. Mita Bhadra, Dr. Mrs. S.Biswas and Mr. S.Sarkar of the Department of Sociology and other staffs of the Department who have cooperated with me to complete the work. I acknowledge the help and cooperation received from the Library staffs, specially the Reference Section and Women Study Centre of North Bengal University; I should not forget the help from the rich libraries of Agartala M.B.B college, B.B.M college and the State library in Tripura.

I can't forget the help and support received from the local Party offices of C.P.I.(M) and the Nagar Panchayat Offices at Sonamura, Udaipur and Kailasahar in Tripura. I am thankful to Mr. Sahid Chowdhury (M.L.A., Tripura Bidhan Sabha) for his nice cooperation. It is a good chance to express my deep gratitude to the people of the study areas specially the informants, respondents and others who have expressed their eagerness to know the results of this study. I am grateful to the Directorate of Higher Education, Agartala for granting me permission to do Research work without hampering my normal duty for the institution.

Lastly, I wish to express my feelings to my mother, sisters, brothers, my beloved daughter, son and the students. Ranesh Bhattacharya, my son has done a large part of computer works sacrificing his pleasure works in computer.

I wish to express my sincere hearts to all.

Department of Sociology
University of North Bengal

Anjali Chakraborty
14.7.06
Signature