

## ABSTRACT

Prostitution is the most primitive practice in every society and nobody can deny this established truth. Recently women history is being given importance. Writing the history of prostitution in Bengal had already been started. But the trend of those writings does not make any interest to cover the northern part of Bengal which is popularly called *Uttarbanga* i.e. North Bengal. An overview of the scholarly works makes it evident that there is not a single work which has dealt with this issue of prostitution in North Bengal in historical outline.

North Bengal is popularly called the second capital of West Bengal, playing an important role in the international market of money making. A large section of women in this region involve in sex trade and directly or indirectly they have taken part in this process of money making. Through this research work a humble attempt has been made to focus on the history of prostitution in North Bengal.

The first chapter of this thesis dealing with the definition, ingredients, origin and morality of prostitution.

The chapter second attempts to understand the history of prostitution in ancient, medieval and modern India. It also refers to the varieties of prostitution.

The third chapter namely 'Socio - Historical Situation of North Bengal' minutely analyses the causes and background in this part of Bengal for patronizing sex business.

The fourth chapter provides the references of prostitution in different districts of North Bengal. It also brings to light on the sources of recruitment in this profession, role of pimps and categories of clients.

There are various laws and regulations being made since the ancient time. Law givers are trying to control the sex business, chapter five has focused on those laws and their implementation as well as reaction.

Role of the Government, non - governmental organizations (NGOs), several individuals are trying to mitigate the problems of this marginalized class. They have taken lots of welfare missions for the sake of these women. It is described in chapter six.

Not only the organizations doing benevolent jobs for the sex workers, but also the women of this trade have become more conscious about their rights and demands. Their contribution, sacrifices to any kind of crisis of the country has been mentioned in chapter seventh.

In the conclusion the antiquity of this profession, anthropological concept about prostitution and contradictory issues of prostitution have been mentioned. An attempt of comparative discussion between the nature of prostitution in South Bengal and in North Bengal have also been made in conclusion.