

PREFACE

Status of Women had been largely in a state of subjugation when historical records are being consulted particularly in Indian scenario. Apart from the Vedic Era, no historical references could be found where women were held high in the society. Since the Post-Vedic Period, women in Indian society have faced derogatory and most taken-for-granted status. This is because of the supremacy of the patriarchy in the social milieu. As the civilization progressed, humans got exposure to new inventions and cultural diffusion. The advent of the Colonial Rule did not make any difference to the fate of the women of the country at large. It was after the social awakening during the 19th Century, women started a new journey towards improvement. Gradually, they stepped outside their domain and started to shoulder responsibilities like that of their counterparts. Modern education and employment ushered in significant changes to their lives and living.

The traditional role of women associated with that of procreation and homemaking remained intact and along with it became added the new phenomenon of ‘working women’ in the society. The workload of the women increased, the responsibility became doubled; they now required to strike a perfect balance between their roles at the workplaces as well as in their households. So, the present study has been intended to understand the socio-economic conditions of the working women of the Cooch Behar Town area especially throwing light to their life experiences satisfying both the public and private ends. The researcher also wanted to know that whether employment has made any difference to the livability conditions and given a positive boosting to the psychological set up of the urban working women. Since the society is always at a state of flux, hence the status and role of the women in general and working women in particular is a matter of great concern. The attitude of people also changes with time – a normative behaviour might not be accepted today may have some significance tomorrow. Therefore, an assessment of the status and role of working women in family, society and work places for the study area has been attempted. Four aspects of a woman’s life such as: Education, Marriage, Family and Employment may be considered as the core stones. Thus, this effort has also been intended to illuminate the perception of the working women towards these phenomena.

The inquiry is largely based on qualitative data derived from extensive field surveys which have been quantified for analysis and inferences. This enquiry was essentially sociological in aspect hence primary survey was given due importance. Besides this, secondary materials included census reports and statistical data from authentic sources were also considered as major inputs.

The study has been represented in 7 chapters including the introduction and conclusion. Chapter I is the introductory chapter; Chapter II deals with the General background of the study area with emphasis on historical settings as the study area has got a significant historical antecedence; Chapter III portrays the Changing Role and Status of Women through history in India; Chapter IV deals with the socio-economic profile of the respondents of the Study Area and their Status & Role in Family, Society and Work Places; Chapter V discusses about the Constitutional and Legislative support for women in India & related Development Programmes; Chapter VI delves into the perception of the working women of the study area towards Education, Marriage, Family and Employment and Chapter VII summarizes the research work and draws the conclusion.

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