

## Preface

*The journey of rewriting women's history especially of secreted and marginalized people from Darjeeling in the Indian Nationalist Movement was very challenging and a thorny mission. I faced numerous hindrances in the initial period of my journey just like the seas faces the tides. But I believed if we move ahead the ways opens automatically. In India when one begins to write about women and nationalism, the names of few elite women are easily drawn as their roles and leadership that they provided to the Indian nationalist movement are already incorporated in the mainstream history. The present era demands the necessity to move away from the mainstream history so that women's history and women's experiences could be projected as unique and different. The women's history is not linear nor does it have well-organized structure. In fact, it is an integral , though mostly invisible part of the saga of civilization and it's threads are closely interwoven with those of culture, society, state and above all, with the lives of the people. The study is indispensably a historic-analytical enquiry based upon a variety of primary and secondary sources. The study includes a large number of archival sources, original writings, autobiographies, memoirs etc of women leaders and participants, all that have been consulted and necessary data had been collected. In addition, the transcripts of interviews with women leaders in the oral history been explored in details. I was fortunate to gain personal interviews with the families of those freedom fighters from the region. The contemporary newspapers and journals have also been significant sources for me in collecting data on this premise. Among the vast secondary sources, I have focused upon contemporary and later publications, autobiography of the eminent leaders and several works in the emerging field broadly categorized as women's studies. Thus, Geraldine Forbes asserts "to read a history of women from the women's point of view is to read between the lines" (Forbes 2001).*

*This study would not have been possible without the unstinted and wholehearted support and assistance extended and rendered by innumerable personalities and institutions that contributed their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study. As I thrive to express my sense of gratitude to them as I become acutely conscious of the fact that words are poor representatives of human emotions.*

*First and foremost, I am deeply indebted to my research supervisor, Dr. Ranjita Chakraborty, who took the initiative to guide me on this research. Her constant encouragement motherly guidance, facilitations and affectionate prodding has been a major source of inspiration and sustenance through the entire period of this work. Her unselfish and unfailing support, the valuable insight she shared, her sincere cooperation, patience, steadfast encouragement, resourceful instruction, constructive comments throughout the work and assistance in the preparation and analysis of data are praiseworthy and word are inadequate for expressing such feelings. She has been my inspiration and her benevolent attitude during the entire course of this work helped me to overcome all the obstacles in the completion of my research work. Her critical insight has been of inestimable value to the crystallization of most of my inchoate ideas and thoughts. Whatever little I have been able to accomplish has been possible only due to her invaluable and unfailing guidance at every stage of this study.*

*I also owe a special vote of thanks to Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship for financing through a grant in our Department. I received an adequate financial support from this grant to visit many places and libraries outside West Bengal without which it was not possible to travel and collect data to great extent.*

*It is insufficient to express my feelings and sincere gratitude to my husband Mr. Sunil Pradhan. I am indebted to him for each and every day of my PhD life for his kind concern, assistance, assiduous support, constant guidance, management, farsighted perception, valuable suggestions, inspiration and moral support throughout the work are graciously auspices. Above all, I am extremely grateful to him for his gracious tutelage, meticulous typing and compassionate attitude in developing my academic career.*

*I offer my sincere and warm thanks to my Sister Prasanti Pakhrin for her parental concern and inspiration that was a crucial source of strength for my study. Her positive feedback during my dark phase of research work was immensely helpful and facilitated in successfully completion of my work.*

*Central Library of University of North Bengal is always memorable for me, where I have spent some of the precious and worthy moments of my life. It is difficult to search words for all the staff members of Library for their help, co-operation, affection and lively companionship.*

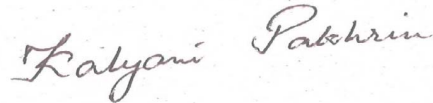
*I extend my thanks to my uncle Bijay Thapa who has supported me and provided all the valuable information regarding my research topics.*

*I also express my sincere thank to Ratnamani Lama, daughter of Mrs. Maya Devi Chettri for her help in providing me the autobiography of Mrs. Maya Devi Chettri, and also discussing different aspects of her mother's life that helped me develop my work.*

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*The single largest contribution in shaping me what I am today comes from the faith, hope, inspiration and sustained support of my parents, sister and brother. Indeed, the debts of ceaseless encouragement and inexhaustible love from my family are numerously recounted and even to recompense. My nieces Chimie and Brithi's innocent and insistent query everyday- "Anghi" why you don't finish your boring work so that we can spend time with you on vacation provided a special motivation for completing this work.*

*However, for all limitations and shortcomings, the responsibility is entirely mine.*



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