



SUCHIBROTA ROY CHOUDHURY

A Larger Than Life Personality

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This world is still a beautiful place to live in because of a few self-sacrificing souls with their missionary zeal and undaunted efforts to serve humanity at the cost of their individual self-interest.

‘Dinabandhabi’ (friend of the poor) Suchibrata Roy Choudhury was such a person. She was a pioneer in diverse fields of activities for which she had to face all the challenges that came in her way.

Suchibrota was born in 1931 to Asom Keshori Ambikagiri Roy Choudhury and Kaushallya Roy Choudhury. ‘Sinha Purush’ Ambikagiri Roy Choudhury was a patriot, freedom fighter, a firebrand revolutionary and well known literary figure of Assam. Suchibrota, the eldest daughter of the family was highly inspired by the ideals of her father.

She had a very brilliant career all along. For being a topper in the primary examination, she was given ‘Prativa Devi’ memorial award; she passed matriculation examination with letter marks in Assamese and History from Panbazar Girls M.E.School. During her days as a student in Handique Girls’ College, she received

'Narayani Handique' scholarship and with that money, she continued her studies as she was facing great financial hardship at that time. She also took to private tuition, wrote songs and plays for All India Radio, Guwahati to support herself.

After graduation she started her career as a teacher in T C School of Guwahati. In 1953, she became the first Assamese Woman A C S officer and joined Assam Civil Service as class-1 Magistrate. While serving different Departments in different places of Assam, she had to face lots of challenges. An unmarried young woman, Suchibrata had to bear heavy responsibilities in a transferable post. But with her indomitable courage, self confidence and iron will she could prove herself as a successful and efficient administrator. Her relentless service brought in revolutionary changes and consolidated the Department of Panchayat and Village Development, Khadi and Gramodyog, Assam Gazetteers' Education, Social welfare and Revenue Department. In 1996 she also accepted the responsibility of the founder President of Assam Lekhika Santha.

There might not be many people like this simple, down-to-earth woman who has set example of commitment to ideology, sacrifice and patriotism. In 1959, while serving as magistrate in Dhuburi, she started a pre-primary school for the children of the down-trodden and Harijan Community. Having seen the difficulties faced by working women in finding accommodation, she started a hostel for them in 1968. In the same year she also established 'Pub-Guwahati Bahumukhi Mahila Samabai Samiti,' a co-operative society for the benefit of women. She was the President of Assam branch of Indian Social Health Organization and started a destitute home for orphan children and women. For de-addiction and rehabilitation of drug addicted people she started two centres, 'Ashwas' and 'Nabajivan Kendra.'

As a member of the advisory Board of Assam Kasturba Gandhi Memorial National Trust, President of Assam Gramya Swaraj Samiti, General Secretary of Assam Gosewa Samity, Convenor of Assam Matri Samaj, the President of Assam Branch of Indian council for social welfare, Treasurer of Assam Branch of Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Secretary of Assam Sarvadaliya Samaj, she had immensely contributed towards the all round development of the society. Her most important social contribution can be seen in the form of 'Amarghar', an old age home in Guwahati. She was so devoted in her zeal to help the helpless old people that she used to live amongst them as one of the inmates. Inspired by her patriotic father and Mahatma Gandhi, she associated herself with the freedom movement of the Country. She was actively associated with Gandhi Ashram of Guwahati. She started a handicraft training centre at her home to enable the women to learn a skill for economic self reliance. She was also actively associated with Sarvoday Sangathan and Gram Raj Sangha.

Suchibrata's love with the pen started at a very early age. She was a novelist, dramatist, poet, story writer, essayist, child litterateur and translator; she scripted a play 'Kone bate' when she was student of class VIII and it was broadcast by AIR Guwahati. She authored

more than 20 books which included *Bamaroli* (novel), *Sonalipera* (child-literature), *Tumi Aru Moi* (Kavya-Grandha), *Sundar Desh* (child-novel), *Sapta Parna* (Short story collection), *O Henrir 'Premor Galpa'* and *Jivan Premar Atandra Anal'* (translation work), *Matho* (poetic work), *Suhuri* (Song collection) etc.

Her work 'Vaishnav Dharmar Atiguri Aru Vikash' brought her Sahitya Akademi award in 2001. She was conferred Praveena Saikia award by Assam Lekhika Santha in 2002 for her creative writing. Her writings reflect modern thought, patriotism, love, romanticism and humanism. She was a true nationalist but she strongly believed that development of India demands development of Assam. She was very keen in using Assamese as the official language of Assam.

A true humanitarian, Suchibrata's life, as pure as fire, was an example of selfless service to humanity. By donating her body for scientific research she contributed to the society even after her death. This noble soul left for her heavenly abode on 2nd December, 2009 and the state has lost a true philanthropist. □□