Preface

The focus of my study is on the terracotta female figurines of West Bengal, emphasizing different roles of women from Early Historic period to Late Mediaeval period. West Bengal has a rich repository of ancient terracotta figurines which have been discovered through a number of excavation and exploration conducted by Archaeological Survey of India, Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of West Bengal, different branches of University of Calcutta and other Universities of West Bengal. The present dissertation is mainly based on these materials which can be considered as the index of different cultural phases of West Bengal. As an integral part of the Gangetic Civilization this geographical region has been considered as a core region of terracotta production centre.

Working with huge collection of early-historic terracotta plaques in State Archaeological Musrum, West Bengal, the unique female figurines fascinate me. When I joined State Archaeological, as a research assistant in 1992 and later as an employee in 1997, my museum museum had already possessed hundreds of terracotta plaques. In 1999 the Museum received nearly thousand terracotta objects as donation; most of them were terracotta plaques from early-historic period.

The present dissertation is based on my surveyed material and the collection of different museums.
I am deeply indebted to a number of distinguished scholars for their unstinted help and cooperation in completion of this work.

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I have taken help for my study from different Museums of India, National Museum-New Delhi, Indian Museum-Kolkata, Asutosh Museseum of Indian Art-University of Calcutta, State Archaeological Museum-West Bengal, site museums of Archaeological Survey of India, districts and local private museums of Shri Devi Shankar Mirdha, Shri K.K.Mondal, Shri Dilip Kumar Maite and late Jabbar Saheb.

Last but not least I want to thank my family for their constant support, encouragement and suggestions.