

THE NEXT STEP

ELITA KARIM

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Dilif K. Tripura, Senior Financial Analyst, Management Assurance at Transcom Limited, is an ambitious person, who says yes to new experiences and challenges. According to him, in Bangladesh where the market is still emerging in comparison to the world outside, business houses traditionally have a unique way of running businesses. "However, to cater the growing demand for business activities, companies need to expand nationally and internationally while staying competitive through sustainable business practices, efficient business operations, identifying market trend and making strategic investments," he says. "CIMA qualified professionals can play a crucial leadership role in transforming local businesses into established national and global players."

Companies around the world recognise CIMA as the "most relevant global finance qualification for business" because of the rich course contents and practical work relevancy of those contents, says Tripura. "After obtaining membership (ACMA/FCMA and CGMA) from CIMA, CPD (CIMA professional development) is also a compulsory part of maintaining the membership which involves a continuous process of professional development by identifying future learning needs," he says. "Besides, I would also like to explore the learning opportunities by becoming member of other affiliated professional bodies with CIMA. This way, I will be able to stay updated with the ever-changing business world and make value adding contribution to my company."



Dilif K. Tripura

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

CIMA

ENDEAVOUR

EDUCATION

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN GENDER AND RELIGION

NAZIBA BASHER

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO



Gender discrimination has been a prevailing problem for years now in South East Asia and is an issue, for which many people use religion as an excuse.

Especially in Bangladesh, Islam is often confused with cultural traditions, where women become a minority and are discriminated daily through the issues of child marriage, divorce, male-centric polygamy, physical abuse, and more. To shed some light on the matter, on May 16th, 2015, a seminar titled Women's Empowerment, Gender, Justice and Religion, was organised in Spectra Convention Center, Dhaka.

The seminar was a collaboration between Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, World Faith's Development Dialogue (WFDD), and BRAC University's Department of Economics and Social Sciences. It was divided into three sessions- with three separate panels of speakers including Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir from Fahmina Institute, Indonesia, Zainah Anwar from Sisters in Islam, Malaysia; Flavia Agnes from Majlis, India, Ferdous Azim from BRAC University, Bangladesh, Nani Zulmirnami from PEKKA, Indonesia and Sara Taylor from Asia Foundation, Bangladesh.

The opening remarks were made by Syed Hashemi, Chairperson, ESS, BRAC University. He introduced Katherine Marshall who talked about WFDD, the Berkley Center and their work in Georgetown University.

The first session was Understanding Concepts and the Terrain of Gender

Justice: The Secular and Religious Divide, the second session was Advocating for Gender Justice in Religious Traditions and the third session was Voices from the Ground: Women of Faith and Issues of Empowerment in Bangladesh.

Throughout the seminar, some serious discussions took place where the interpretation of Islam was the main focus. The audience had learned about how Islam can be more of a reason for women to be liberated instead of repressed. It was inspiring to hear Faqihuddin talk about his work where he educated people from the grass-root level to interpret Islam in a non-misogynistic manner, while Zainah stressed on how gender-justice is necessary, since feminism is considered a more secular belief. "Religious leaders and activists have to come together to

change the negative perception on Islam," she said.

Some more ideas came from others like Sara Taylor, when she talked about the brilliant project "Leaders of Influence," where they take religious leaders like Imams, and their wives, and show them the status-quo of women facing discrimination, which they often think comes from Islam.

Flavia Agnes then mentioned how Islam and the Holy Qur'an say nothing about child-marriage, and how this is a more cultural tradition, which has stemmed from Hinduism. She also spoke about the famous Shah Bano case in India, which was the result of Muslims being a minority in the country.

The third panel was the most interesting because it featured four regular

Muslim Bangladeshi women, who talked about being a part of the Asian Foundation workshops, where they learn new ways to interpret religion. They stressed on how education is necessary for young girls, and how they have been setting up committees to tackle child marriage, domestic violence and polygamy, in a religious context.

It was refreshing to see male and female Islamic Religious Leaders talk about Islam in such a moderate and liberal manner, and also women and men from other religions discussing how Islam is actually a woman-friendly religion, contrary to popular belief. With more discussions and seminars like this, we can hope to see Bangladesh reach higher standards where our men and women can live equally, in peace and harmony. ■

HERITAGE

SATI'S STORY

FAYEKA ZABEEN SIDDIQUA

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS




Not too many people are aware of a small village that is rich in historical relics, called Bhabanipur. If you go a few kilometres south-west from Bogra, you will get to a relatively unknown, landmark of our country – the Bhabanipur temple.

According to ancient Hindu texts, King Daksha did not approve of the marriage between his daughter Sati and Lord Shiva. After Sati got married to Shiva, he organised a 'yagna', a prayer ceremony,

dispersed them all over the world. Wherever her body parts fell, temples called Peetha or Shakti Peethas were established.

Legend has it that the right eye of Sati fell in Sherpur Upazila of Bogra, Bangladesh and the Bhabanipur temple, as a Shakti Peetha was erected there and become an important Hindu pilgrimage that is revered by the devotees from all over the country. Later, Rani Bhavani had made significant renovations in the Bhabanipur temple and the Goddess Maa



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and invited all the deities, heavenly creations and dignitaries, except Sati and Shiva. As Sati attended the yagna to confront her father, she was ridiculed by the king and the guests. Angry and insulted, Sati decided to break all ties with her father, and even sacrificed her body that was given to her by her father.

When he came to know of his wife's death, the enraged Shiva started dancing with the deceased body (Tandava Nritya). To control this destructive dance, Vishnu dissected Sati's body into 51 pieces and

Tara of the Bhabanipur temple is named after Rani Bhabani. This legendary structure is equipped with a south facing key temple, Shiv temples, Naat temple, guest rooms, Bashudher temple, the Shakhari pond and a few other temples.

The Bhabanipur temple is a treasure of the past that demands care and preservation. This is a priceless remnant of our heritage that we must safeguard and honour for ourselves and our future generations. ■