

Scientists who broke glass ceiling at ZSI

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Kolkata: They were leaders in building the early foundation of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and broke the gender barriers. The contribution of women scientists — all 100 of them — in Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has been documented on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the research institute.

ZSI, which was established 1916 and is headquartered in Kolkata, has decided to highlight the role of women as one of the key themes of the centenary celebrations.

“We have decided to honour their legacy in the best possible way so that young women get inspired to pursue careers in science,” said K Venkataraman, former director of ZSI who initiated the project with the help of Kailash Chandra, director-in-charge, ZSI.

“One of the factors that inspired more women to pursue careers in science has been examples of successful women who have done the same,” said ZSI scientist Dhriti Banerjee, who has co-authored the document along with scientists Debashree Dam and Nivedita Saha.

Titled ‘The Glorious 100-women’s Scientific Contribution in ZSI’, the document shows how women scientists significantly contributed to studies related to different ani-



(Clockwise from top left) Mira Mansukhani, Geeta Chhotani, Dhriti Banerjee & Rina Chakraborty

mal groups — from protozoa to mammalia — and successfully explored their all possible habitats.

The journey of women at ZSI started in 1949, more than three decades after the inception of ZSI in 1916. Mira Mansukhani was the first woman to join ZSI in 1949. She created history in an organization which was largely dominated by men.

“Our work will help give out the message that women are equal partners in social and scientific development and nation building. The success stories of the 100 women in scientific research will inspire and motivate the young girls to come forward and play an active role in conservation and promotion of our natural heritage, flora and fauna through modern scientific means,” said Dam.