CHAPTER -II
AUTHENTICITY OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
2.1 The Authenticity of Rasosundari Devi's 'Amar Jiban'

First issue of Rasosundari's 'Amar Jiban' an autobiographical book, not available recently in West Bengal and Bangladesh. In the printed list of Bengal library the publication of the first issue was mentioned in 1876. But in the Rasosundari Devi's writing we find her saying, "This book was first printed in 1275, the Bengali era, when my age was 66."

(Ei bahi 1275 sale jakhan pratham chapa hay takhan amar bayahakram unashait bat-sar)

1275 Bengali era means 1868/1869 A.D. In 1305 Bengali era, this book was again published but the number of edition was not mentioned. In all, 177 pages were there in that book.

The third edition of 'Amar-Jiban' published on 1313 Bengali era, the total number of pages were 150. An introduction written by Jyotirindranath Tagore was added there. Along with the introduction of Jyotirindranath Tagore and book apprise of Dinesh Chandra Sen, 'Amar Jiban' was again published on 7th Jaistha 1363 B.S. (from Indian Associates Publishing Co.Pvt.Ltd., Calcutta).

Again 'Amar Jiban' was published on 10 May, 1981 in the serial compilation edited by Dr. Naresh Chandra Jana, Dr. Manu Jana and Kamal Kumar Sanyal named 'Atma-kala' from Anannya publication, Calcutta. In this compilation it has been established that 'Amar Jiban' is the first autobiography of Bengali literature by valid documents and reasons. According to the well-known critic, "In Bengali literature, the beginning of a full-fledged and purest form of autobiographical writing.

1. Debi, Rasosundari, - Amar Jiban, P-45
lies in the hands of sreemati Rasosundari, a God believer and God surrender woman, yet a purely housewife with struggling life but enthusiast for education".2

(Bangla Sahitye purnanga bishuddha atmakatha silpa charchar sutrapat Sreemati Rasosundarir mato iswar nibedita samsar samgrami athacha bidyatsahi grihabadhur hate).

The popularity of the book 'Amar Jiban' keeps no opportunity of doubt for its authenticity. First of all the reprint and revision of 'Amar Jiban' proves its wide spread influence and pervades upon mass people.

The grand daughter of Rasosundar Devi wrote about her grandmother in her reminiscence "My grandmother wrote an autobiography named 'Amar Jiban' a cordial treatment was received from erudite circle for this book and some portion of this book was in the syllabus of I.A. class of the University".3

(Amar pitamahi Rasosundari Devi 'Amar Jiban' name ekkhani atmajiban charit likhiachen, bidyajan samajje pustakhanir bishesh samadar haidhilo ebang tahar koek parichched University's I.A. class pathya rupe grihita haiachilo).

"Suniti Kumar Chatterjee in 19… edited one compilation of Bengali School text named charitra Samgraha for Bengal and Bihar's schools. In this compilation of chapter entitled 'Atma-Jibani', there are some portion of Rasosundari Devi's reminiscence of her early childhood. This 'Atma-Jibani' title given by the editor is very much significant".4

4. Chattapadhyay, Suniti Kumar (Ed) - Charitra Samgraha, Mitra & Ghosh Co., Calcutta, 1940, P-22.
According to erudite scholar Sukumari Sen, "Rasosundari Devi's 'Amar Jiban', excellent work among the writings of lady writers of mid nineteenth century".

In the words of Jyotish Chandra Ghose, "Kishorilal was the Tagore Law Lecturer at Calcutta University. He was very famous for his expertency in law. Girls education was started in his family. However it was beyond imagination for the girls to study in schools and colleges in those days. Still, Kishorilal's mother Rasosundari Devi wrote the book 'Amar Jiban' in Bengali and also published it".

Pramathanath Bishi who esteemed Rasosundari Devi's 'Amar Jiban' while discussing about Saralabala Sarkar, says "It was an offence for women to be educated in that time in Bengal. Saralabala Sarkar was the veiled lady of the nineteenth century. Her grandmother Rasosundari Devi was the writer of an amazing autobiography named 'Amar Jiban'. Rasosundari was born more than one fifty or one sixty years ago in Bengal. She got no scope to educate herself. She built herself by her own endeavour".

5. Sen, Sukumar - Bangla Sahitya Gadya - 3rd Ed. 1356 B.S., Calcutta, P-8

In the point of view of famous journalist and literateur Tushar Kanti Ghose, "Gourididi's (Saralabala Sarkar) grand-mother Rasosundari Devi was very famous for her autobiography 'Amar Jiban'.\(^8\)

(Gourididir [Saralabala Sarkar] thakurna Rasosundari Devi khub nam chila 'Amar Jiban' bale atmajibani lekhar janya).

The poet and literateur Nirendranath Chakraborty has given a valuable comments on Rasosundari Devi while discussing about Saralabala Sarkar.

"Born, one decade before Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, who wrote her autobiography in a simple and plain language, we should not forget, that Rasosundari Devi who was Saralabala Sarkar's grandmother"\(^9\)

(Iswarchandra Vidyasagarar ek dasak age janma grahan kare atyanta saral sundar banglay jini atmajibani

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Famous lady critic of now a days Chitra Devi's valuable comment also supports the authenticity of 'Amar Jiban' very strongly while evaluating Saralabala's writings.

"Her grand-mother has reputation for skillfully writing 'Amar Jiban', an amazing autobiography. Self educated extra-ordinary lady's self written life story was published some years ago prior to Saralabala's birth".10

The authenticity of 'Amar Jiban' is no doubt established by the statements and comments of such learned intelligentia of our society.

2.2 The Authenticity of Nalinibala Devi's 'Eri Aha Dinbor'

Before publication of 'Eri Aha Dinbor' (The days I have left behind) by Nalinibala Devi in a volume, it was published serially in a fortnightly named 'Navayug', but as the journal stopped publication suddenly, the autobiography ceased to appear and remain unpublished for a period.

"The 'Navayug' newspaper was publishing sequentially the autobiography entitled 'Eri Aha Dinbor'. But only the early part of my childhood was published on those issues. Suddenly the publication of 'Navayug' newspaper was stopped and 'Eri Aha Dinbor' remained unfinished".

(Navayug kakatat dharabahikrupe keibata o 'Eri Aha Dinbor' ei namat likha atmajibanita prakash habala. Abasnya tat balyakal - chowar kathakhiniei prakash pale. Hatate Novayug kakat bandha hai jowat 'Eri Aha Dinbor'lipi prakash asamapta hai ral).

Then in 1976 the autobiography appeared in a book pattern from Guwahati.

Though, till now, the book is not reprinted or its second edition has not come out, still its popularity and authenticity does not suffer since the judicious critics, literary persons and historians have left no room of doubt for its high place and longivity on the minds of the wide-spread reading public.

Dr. Satyendranath Sharma, the erudite scholar of Assamese literature in his book of history of Assamese literature, said this which is particularly worth remembering.

11. Devi, Nalinibala - 'Eri Aha Dinbor' (Preface, p-3)
"Two eminent ladies in their memoirs have informed us profusely about the Assamese society, the place of women in the Assamese society, the obstruction they had to face, the spread of female education and etc. The life long educationist Rajabala Das with her 'Tinikuri Deh Bacharar Smriti (1971) and Nalinibala Devi, the renowned poetess with her 'Eri Aha Dinbor' (1976) are worthy to be remembered in this connection. For those who pursue the life-philosophy and the trend of her poetry, the memoir of Nalinibala Devi is a valuable treasure."  


In the edited work of Tafazzul Ali, prominent literateur, poet and lyricist and in an article by Prof. Nanda Talukdar, the autobiography of Nalinibala is mentioned at several places.

"Preparations were made to print as a work of Ambikagiri Roy Choudhury's 'Mor jibanar dhumuhachati' and Nalinibala Devi's 'Eri Aha Dinbor'."

(Ambikagiri Roy Choudhurir 'Mor jibana dhumuhachati aru Nalinibala Devir 'Eri Aha Dinbor' puthir akare jujut kari chapabor jo ja kariche).

In the literary criticism of the late Dr. Hemanta Kumar Sarma, he opined about the autobiography of Nalinibala, saying, "In Eri aha dinbor":

(1976) poet Nalinibala Devi has thrown much light upon the contemporary Assamese society, the individual and literary life of her.\textsuperscript{14}

(Kavi Nalinibala Devi 'Eri Aha Dinbor': (1976) lekhikai samsamaik asomiya samaj, byaktigata aru sahitya jibanar bhalenam khabor diche).

The eminent short story writer and literary critic Jogesh Das in his captivating criticism on 'Eri Aha Dinbor' had made some assessment, regarding establishing the authenticity of this book, some quotations are mentioned here.

"In 'Eri Aha Dinbor' there are some significant things, it is not only a penpicture of the society. The poetical portraiture in these descriptions are wrought in an emotive language which implies verbal suggestions about the extraordinary poet's poetry and its genesis for the first time. \textsuperscript{15} 'Eri Aha Dinbor' was published on 1976.\textsuperscript{15}

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A modern literary figure Dr. Karabi Deka Hazarika remarks on 'Eri aha dinbor in a notable way' "The admixture of emotions and experiences of the poet done nicely, can be viewed in 'Eri aha dinbor'".\textsuperscript{16}

The popularity of the book and the valuable statements about 'Eri Aha Dinbor' keeps the opportunity of doubts about its authenticity.