CHAPTER-III

IMPORTANCE AS FIRST AUTOBIOGRAPHIES
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IMPORTANCE AS FIRST AUTOBIOGRAPHIES BY WOMEN

3.1 The Importance of Amar Jiban

In Bengali literature the art of autobiographical writings though started in nineteenth century, but its evolutionary process has to be traced way back in medieval period or old period.

In autobiography, a picture of self search or self analysis of self conscious personality is present. But this category of self consciousness in old and medieval Bengali literature is observed in a scattered manner or as a supporting reference or just a life sketch of a poet or a writer as an introductory manner, because the introduction of the poet was essential part of 'Mangal Kabya'. The self introduction as given by poet Mukundaram Chakraborty, while describing the history of 'Kabya rachana' may be considered in one sense as the first brief autobiography, though details of life's experiences are not available. In subsequent period he was followed by poet like Ramram Chakraborty, Ramdas Adak, Moniram Gangully. However in our old literature the art of self-introduction is just subjective and traditional. The initiative to look into the series of development of life through self scrutinizing or self analysis is not seen.

In the early period of nineteenth century, though Raja Rammohan Roy's self introductory letter are available, but it do not constitute detailed autobiography. However we should remember it as the first modern Indian personality's self introduction while discussing the beginning of autobiography. But we find that "In Bengali literature, the beginning of fullfledged and purest form of autobiographical writings lies in the hands
of Sreemati Rasosundari, a god believer, and god surrenderer, a woman, yet a purely housewife with struggling life but enthusiast for education".\textsuperscript{1}

(Bangla Sahitye ei purnango bisuddha atmakatha silpha-charchar sutrapat Sreemati Rasosundarir mato ek iswar-nibedita sansar sangrami athacha bidyatsahi grihabadhr hate).

Writer of 'Amar Jiban' wrote herself "In 1216 sal, in the month of chaitra, I was born and in the 1275 B.S. this book was published when my age was 59".\textsuperscript{2}

(Barosa sola sale chaitra mase amar janma haiache ar ei bahi jakhan chapa hai takhan amar bayakram unashait batsar chila).

Rasosundari Devi's granddaughter Saralabala in her grandmother's remembrance wrote "Her autobiography 'Amar Jiban' was published for the third time."\textsuperscript{3}

At the age of 88 she completed her book (autobiography) after expressing her wishes. "The second part of my autobiography ends here. After my death any one of my family, who wishes can write the last part of my autobiography".\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Majumdar, Ujjwal Kumar – Atma Katha(Ed) Dr.Naresh Chandra Jana, 1981, Calcutta. Pp.12.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Devi, Rasosundari – Amar Jiban, P-45.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Sarkar, Saralabala – Amar thakurma : Rachana Sangraha, Saralabala Sarkar(1st Par:), 1989, Calcutta, P-756
\item \textsuperscript{4} Devi Rasosundari – Amar Jiban, P-79.
\end{itemize}
It would be better not to expect all the criteria and detail coverage of the art of autobiographical writings in Rasosundari's 'Amar Jiban'. There is indeed some sight of this art in the first part of 'Amar Jiban', second part fully speaks of individualistic spiritual realisation. However, at the dawn of autobiography, it is surprisingly noteworthy that a woman who was sent taught and unaware of the art of literature, took great care and immense pain to expose her personality and self-existence through her writings.

As far as information is available, even when stalwart of Bengali literature were not interested in the art of autobiographical writings, it was at that time in 1868, Rasosundari Devi wrote in Bengali her autobiography and proves herself as a trendsetter in Bengali literature. A period when women education was discouraged and deplored, it was at that period, a housewife from a conservative family created a revolution by writing her autobiography named 'Amar Jiban'. A self-taught village housewife, in spite of all encumbrances and hurdles, opened a new chapter in Bengali literature by expressing in the simplest of language, the condition prevailing during that period, a period of superstition, a society against women education, a society of total male domination.

She is not only the first lady to write an autobiography, but is also the first person among men and women in Bengali literature who can rightly be said the pioneer in the art of autobiographical writings.
'An autobiography first of its kind by a woman expressed many desires and wishes of a woman's mind. It is absolutely new thing. Prior to Rasosundari Devi, it was never known that a woman could ever write to express her feelings and thoughts.'

(Ek jan meyer lekha pratham atmajivani, jate mey maner one-k shad, ichcha, asha akanshar pratiphalan ghateche. Sampurna nutan jinish kono meye eman likhte pare, maner katha janite pare, Rasosundarir age to jana jai na!).

It was for the first time a Bengali woman expressed her feelings and exposed herself through her autobiography. Many girls though wanted to be educated, could not get any scope and quietly bore the bout of the then prevailing system of society, out of fear. The real episode has been neatly expressed by Rasosundari Devi in her autobiography. She has drawn the true picture of the neglected woman of the nineteenth century. In this respect, the value of this 'first autobiography' in Bengali literature is infinite.

"Rasosundari's 'Amar Jiban' is a precious book of Bengali literature. There was no form of basic principle of Autobiographical writing at that time in Bengali literature. The literature could be created by centering one's own life - this idea was also not properly established at that time amongst the littereteur circle. "Even though the fact that Rasosundari was able to reflect her personal life story is really an example of her bravery and self confidence".

(Rasosundarir 'Amar Jiban' Bangla Sahitye ek mulyaban grantha. Atmajibani rachanar kona adarsha i takhan Bangla.

From her description, we get a picture of down trodden life of women of her era due to ruthless society. Such touching and sensitive expression was possible only because she was a woman.

"Such was the system of society in those days for the women, that those who became bride had to put on long 'ghomta or 'Veil', should work inside the house without talking to anybody; it is only then she is considered as a good bride. In those days fine clothes were not available like now a days. Clothes were very thick, used to wear those clothes with long ghomta and work without talking to anybody. Nothing was visible outside through that cloths - like a covered eyes of bull or by engaged in smashing mustard seeds. Except my feet nothing else was visible. Such was the life style of the brides of those days. I had to abide by that prevailing system."?

(Bishesata takhan meye cheler ei prakar niam chila, je bou haibe, se hatkhanek ghomta dia gharer madhye ka karibe ar kahara sange katha kahibe na, taha haile bara bhalo bue hailo. Sekale ekhankar mato chikon kapar chilo na, mota chilo. Ami sei kapar paria buk porjanta ghomta dia ei sokal kaj karitam, ar je sokal lok, tahader samage katha kahitam na. Se kaparer madhya haite bahir dristi haita na, jeno kalur balader mata duiti chakhudhaka thakita. Apanar paer pata vinnya annya kono dike dristi chalitana, ei prakar sakal bishoe bouder kamarer riti chilo, ami ei ritimato chalitam).

She could never object to the prevailing system, but her inner desire to acquire knowledge made her aware of her rights. As because she is a

woman and for this there are so much obstacles in the way of being educated and literate, this pains her very much.

"In my mind, my earnest endeavour was to be literate so that I could read books. But it was my ill luck that girls of those days did not learn reading and writing. People used to say that 'Kolikal' has come and so women are going to do the work of man. It was not there before. Now women are dominating, men are cripple. Now days, in the reign of 'Lady King', we have to visualize so many things day by day. It is difficult to maintain the status of man in this period".  


Very little was found elsewhere about such a true and real picture of those days of society. Autobiography is not mere self-search; it is also a reflection of social, environmental and family conditions, whose value is not negligible. In her family life, she was very happy. At that age of male domination, she was lucky that she had not faced such suppression. She was happy in her family in every way. She had no complaint about her husband and also about her beloved children. But the social bindings of that age was such cruel and unbearable against women liberation that this reality definitely hurts Rusosundari Devi. The individuality of woman was tortured in such a way that, the true picture of the downtrodden life of women of that age was depicted by Rasosundari repeatedly.

"That was the period when women had no freedom at all. They cannot do any thing at their own accord. They had to lead dependent life like a bird in a cage."  

(Takankar sei ekkal chilo; sekale meyedar swadhinata moteo chilona. Nijer ksmatai kono karmai karita para jaitona; sompurna paradhina halya kaljapan karita haita. se jeno ek kale pinjara badha bihangir mato thaka haita).

In this autobiography we find, Rasosundari Devi tried to maintain balance and sequence while depicting her life story, whose beginning to end gives a detailed history of mental, social, familial changes. This consciousness or awareness was due to her power of sharp judgement and matured personality.

"She could fully understand that by just narrating her daily life, the pages of autobiography cannot be filled up. She had a very good taste and therefore the minor events of her day to day life did not get importance in her writings".  

(Nijer dainandin jibaner bibaran je atmajibanir pata bharate parena, sekatha tinini sathik bujhiten. Parichanna ruchibodh chilotnar, tai tnar dinjapaner mamuli ghatana gulake pradhan kare tulte paren ni).

It is really surprising that a scared but self conscious lady, who without breaking the social system of a conservative society and inspite of her acceptance of the society and family and her faith in god become a learned woman and thereby open a new era

in Bengali literature. 'Amar Jiban', the first autobiography in Bengali literature is its solid proof and its value as the first autobiography is immense. "Though born a decade before Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, the lady who wrote her autobiography in a simple and plain language, we should not forget that Rasosundari Devi who was Saralabala's grand-mother. In the life of grand-mother and grand-daughter we find much similarity, likewise great similarity is also observed in their literature too. Those who have read Rasosundari Devi's 'Amar Jiban' and Saralabala Sarkar's 'Harano Atit', should know that the main characterisation of their prose is simplicity. That simple and unornamental prose being the major strength of their literature is a matter of great importance."


It is really enchanting and surprisingly note-worthy that a women who was unaware about the autobiographical art, can write a life story by her original thinking. Her habit of reading poetry and epic helped her to develop an artistic sense of well balanced self styled writing. Naturally she started her life story by a prayer to obtain divine benison. Every chapter of her book begins with a nice and meaningful poetry and every events of her life was arranged in a dramatic manner.

"This first full fledged autobiography of Bengali literature can easily be given the honour of innate autobiographical art".12

(Bangla sahityer ei pratham purnanna atmajibanitike anayasei sahajata atmakatha silper mariyada deoya jay).

The Importance of Eri Aha Dinbor

The existence of an autobiography or self narration of life either in Assamese or Indian literature is a rarity without a long tradition. Since the concluding part of the nineteenth century, the beginning of such prose work is noticed in the Assamese language. Yet till now this branch of prose writing has attained maturity in Assamese. In the words of a certain literary critic, "It is a happy sight to see that this branch of literature, although remains in its adolescence in Assamese, appears stought in growth and in quality also. It is not without effulgence".13

(Sukar bishay je bayasar pinar para Asomiy Sahityar ei shakhati chalukiya thakileo, iyar kalebar khudra hai thassai nai aru gunagata dishatoi anujjwal nahay).

In the ancient and medieval Assamese literature, the feature of self introduction can be noticed only somewhere as a reference or in an unhinged way. But even those instances seldom thrown any light on a full life basing on the experiences.

An autobiography as a rule, is a subjective form of writing. The development of a life seen through self assessment and self analysis with some conscious efforts, forms the basis of a true autobiography. This sort of work is rarely seen in Assamese literature.

Till now the first autobiography in Assamese which can be counted so far is the autobiography of Harakanta Sarma Majindar Barua(1960 AD). The work entitled 'Sadar-aminar Atmajibani' describes in details all the true events.

events that occurred in Assam during the Burmese invasion and the inception of British reign (from 1815 A.D. till 1872 A.D). Though this work, complete with all requirements was written in the last part of the nineteenth century, saw the light of the day only in the sixties of the twentieth century. On that account the autobiography by Lakshminath Bezbaroah (entitled 'Mor Jiban Sowaran' published in 1944 A.D) can be reckoned as the first published autobiography in Assamese.

Among the journals in Assamese, 'Jonaki' occupies a significant place which was published in the closure of the nineteenth century (1889 A.D). In the 'Jonaki' era a considerable number of writers wrote autobiographical literature. Although all these cannot be identified as complete autobiographies, nevertheless these evince a full length documentary of the contemporaneous Assamese society, the realistic profiles of the writers and the sources of inspiration of a good many writers and the background of certain books.

For instance, in the autobiography of Hem Chandra Barua published in the vol.-IV of 'Jonaki', many unknown facts about the nineteenth century Assamese society can be known.

'Mor Jiban Sowaran' by Lakshminath Bezbaroah is another addition worth mention to the autobiographical literature of Assam (published in 1944 A.D). The book is rich with simple language, yet full with the sentiment of humour. Besides the background of his literary career can be witnessed in it. However only the first chapter of Bezbaroah's life was described in this book. It should therefore be called the reminiscence of Bezbaroah's life instead of calling it a regular autobiography. Nevertheless the work is famed for its adroit use of language and the sincere expression of ideas.
Besides, there are so many other outstanding autobiographies and reminiscences in Assamese literature such as Md. Tyabulla's 'Karagarar Chitti', Padmadhar Chalita's 'Jivan' (1963), in a later period Rajanikanta Bordoloi's 'Atmajitan charit', Benudhar Rajkhowa's 'Mor Jibandapan' (1969), Sailachar Rajkhowa's 'Atitor Sowarani' (1969), Padmanath Gohain Barua's 'Mor Sowarani' (1970) and Debeswar Sharma's 'Herowa Dinar Katha' (1969) etc. The autobiographies written by male writers in Assamese literature are not discussed in details rather some mention about these writers are made.

No doubt the number of autobiographies by male writers is greater than that of female writers in Assamese literature. The first autobiographical writing by a woman writer in Assamese may be ascribed to Srimati Rajabala Das, an educationist of Assam, whose 'Tinikuri daabhacharar Samariti' (1967 A.D) is the reminiscence of seventy years of her life. Memoirs, reminiscences and autobiography, though closely related, have some differences which must be admitted.

In such writings where the personal matters are only narrated, while the social or political matters are mentioned only in references to certain events, but in the light of the writer's own view of life as experienced by him or her in the personal perspective. The significance of such a writing becomes singularly personal. Such a writing is called a reminiscences.

In the autobiographical writings in which the social and environmental matters occupy larger space pushing back the personal matters of the writer to the wall, such writings are termed as memoirs. But the real autobiographies lay equal emphasis on the personal as well as social matters to make them a harmonious whole. In this sense, the autobiography by Smti. Rajabala Das is therefore a memoir and not a full length autobiography. An important feature of an autobiography is the expression of the facts of life of a person or the self revelations or self analysis under different conditions of mind.
But instead of the description of the personal events of life, the book by Rajabala Das gives a full length realistic picture of the position of the women in the contemporary society and of their education etc. as confessed by her saying, "The purpose of the book entitled 'Tinikuri Dah Bacharar Smriti' is to paint a realistic picture of the progress and changes of the society of women in Assam during the seventy years of writer's life time".14

"Tinikuri Dah Bacharar Smriti" bala puthi khanar udesya haiche lekhikar tinikuri dah bashar jiwana jitan kalat Assom narisamajpuragati aru paribortan samparke eta bastab chitra dangi dhana.

It is therefore, justified that such an autobiographical writing is described only as a memoir, since the writer herself has consciously expressed the purpose of this autobiographical work. "The writer had the opportunity to actively involve herself with a number of female educational institutions. As such an attempt is made to describe the purpose of the book through a number of personal events of writer's life. In the development of these institutions the tiniest contribution of the writer imbued her inspiration, might make the book 'Tinikuri Dah Bachar Smriti' a lively work".15

(Keibata o strisikshar anusthanar jagat lekhika sakriobhabe jarita hai parar sujog ghatichil. Gnyehe lekhikar byaktigata jibanar ghatonarbalir jogedya udesya byakhya taribalai atma kara haiche ei anusthanbarar bikash sadanat lekhikar samanyataba arilanar prerona 'Tinikuri Dah Bacharar Smriti' jibantakari tuliba).

Although 'Tinikuri Dah Bacharar Smriti' occupies a special place in the history of Assamese literature, the full protraiture of life of the writer is not visible here. As such, it cannot be described as a genuine autobiography since it is written with a purpose.

15. Ibid, P-Kha
In Assamese literature the art of writing of an autobiography by women with all its necessary elements began with Padmashri Nalinibala Devi who was a purely housewife, yet with a knack for spiritual exploration. She did not write this book with a particular purpose. Her main objective was only to ruminate her past days deviating at times to social and political matters as references. As such 'Eri Aha Dinbor'(1976 A.D) is a work of repute.

"The varied views of life have been reflected in the mirror of my mind like the movie pictures while I have been walking by the road, trying to resurrect them from the tomb of oblivion. While walking by the road of a thousand conflicts and confrontations help man to fulfill his being as a complete man with the experiences and self-reliance which are treasured in the store-house of memory. The enthusiastic youths ask me a thousand questions to quench their thirst of eagerness by knowing about the eventless life of mine, and urge me always to write down the events of my life".16

(Paharanir arot bur jowa eri aha tinikuri dah bacharar dighaliya bat bulanit batar dukakhar nanan chitraren chayachabir dare manas dapanat jilik udiche...............Marnhe jibanar batat bat bulate jibanar hejar samghatar kob khai smritir bharalat bahu abhignata, atmapratyay lab kara mahuhsutta purna kari tnat sahay kare. Baichitrarin ai dighaliya jibanar batari pabalai uthi aha tasarunbor utsukatare mak hejar prasna kare - mar jibanar ghananabor lokha jabilai sadai sakiai thake).

The score of inspiration to write her autobiography were the youths, among whom was Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, the reputed literateur of Assam. The autobiography by Nalinibala Devi was first published serially in 'Navayug'(a literary Journal edited by B.K.Bhattacharyya). 16. Devi, Nalinibala - Eri Aha Dinbor, Preface, P-3.
But after some time, the journal stopped its publication and
then the work with some additions was published in the
form of volume in 1976 A.D.

Nalinibala in her lifetime had seen
a multiple number of changes in Assam; her personal worries
and agonies and the pangs of separation etc. deep realisation
of the spiritual life, her literary career with various
feelings from the beginning - all these have been depicted in
the work entitled 'Eri Aha Dinbor'.

Though not educated in the
traditional system of education, the lady who was able to win
the Sahitya Academy Award only being enlightened with the
education obtained from the private teachers and her
wisdom, her artistic creation is this wonderful and
unprecedented 'Eri Aha Dinbor', an admixture of joy and sorrow.
An attempt to judge a society from the perspective of a woman
and its unhesitant realisation is visible in 'Eri Aha Dinbor'.

An autobiography is defined in the
'Encyclopaedia of Literature' by Cassell, thus, "The most
autobiographies are those which dwell upon the movement of a
man's inner life - the confession of St. Augustine for
instance and more recently Stephen Spender's volume of
recollection". ¹⁷

The autobiography of Nalinibala is
not only a narrative of her personal life and its related
events alone, but her lamentation of the soul can also be
heard in it. A deep and intensive memory of her realisations of
life envisaged in this book (Eri Aha Dinbor).

"In every moment of this life of
of numberless woes and wounds and injuries inflicted on her

¹⁷. Steinberg, S.H. (Ed) - Cassell's Encyclopaedia of Literature, 1st
London, P-63.
by the successes, failures and unexpected honours, I have felt
the soft, bright beautiful and kindly glance like a touch over
my trivial life and by the side of my thoughts, this
incomparable touch or the glance of my life's beauties
being, the ever vigilant watchman is the real guide to every
action of my life".  

(ai jibanate pawa bahu dukkha, hejar samghat
sak bedana, saphalata, biphalata, asatit sammanar majat prati muhurte
anubhab kari ahichomor jibanar sundar sattar, jibanar sajag
praharijanar, mor ai akinchitkar jibanar anre anre prati chintar pare pare
eti ujjal sundar singdha snehakamal drishtir parash, Atulania ai amapam
drishtiei mor jibanar prati karma pathapadarsak).

Nalinibala Devi while narrating her
life story has depicted a number of pictures of justice and
injustice of the society. In 'Eri Aha Dinbor' she has
described realistically how the women passed their lives in
the indescribable negligence and oppressions in the nineteenth
and early twentieth centuries.

"Those dark days under the cover of
the coarse screens......... All gentle ladies including the
daughter -in-laws and the daughters had to pass their days in
the nooks of the houses........ The women remained unseen by
the sun and the moon".  

(Dath pardar abaranere abari thowa endhar
din........ Bowari, jiwari sakalo bhadramahila bhayanak pardaprathar sat
gharar chukat din katawa lagiya haichil.......... Mai ki manuh achil sari
chandra dekha nepowa).

Towards the end of her life,
Nalinibala could view the liberty of women to some extent and
was glad at the sight, but her mind was repeatedly pained by

the remembrance of those women who had to lose their "fair dreams in the obstructions and narrow confinements of the past.

"The horrible system of screened of my early life bewilder my mind when remembered. It is also the difference between heaven and earth when the present day of women's liberty is compared with the past days of confinement. Who can count the numerous lives of women which withered in silence under the inviolable system of the screen? Today I remember those dark of the past."  

(Mor jibanar agchowro dorphar parde prathar arnat dinboralai manat parile sapan jen tage.Sei din aru al ete mukta swadhin tirate jibanar swarga marttar byabadhan. Ei alon - ghanive pardaprathar arnat bahu narir jiban nirale marahi gaiche.tar lekh kone lay? Aji suwaricho atitar ai endhar dinbarar katha).

In the nineteenth century and ever till the earlier part of the twentieth century the systematic female education was not so easily available. In the description of Nalinibala Devi it is thus found, "In those days particularly in the Assamese society, there was no facility for female education."  

(Sai dinat bisheskai Asomiyasamaj strisikshar kano subidha nachil).

The value of the pictures of political and familial life that are painted in an autobiography along with the depiction of the personal life is also undeniable. In an autobiography, proper the candid pictures of the age, the society and the circumstances are also drawn.

20. Devi, Nalinibala - Eri Aha Dinbor, P-13
As Nalinibala Devi's father was a politician so politics occupied a considerable part of her book. After reviewing many political histories of Assam and India as well, she arrived at such a conclusion at the end of her life.

"There was no dearth of peace in the minds of the citizens. There was no (political) party in every nook and corner like today and there was no difference of opinion. Today I remember those days of unpolluted peace and joy." 22

(Sei samajat kano asanti nachil, nagarikas manat. Ajir dare chuke chuke party nachil. Matar amil nachil Aji suwaricho atitar sei santimay anabil anandar dinbarar katha).

The value of the portrayal of the personal life in Nalinibala Devi's book 'Eri Aha dinbor' is enormous. The direct impact of three distinguished persons on her life is specially noticeable.

First, her father Nabin Chandra Bordoloi was the real guide of her life. He was the preceptor of her spiritual life.

"I have made learning the penance of my life with the blessing of my great father who was the guide and helmsman of my entire life time" 23

(Mor gotei jibanar pathpradarsat kandariswarup mor mohan pitrir ashirbad sar kari likha parha kei jibanar brat karilo).

The second influential person in the life of Nalinibala Devi was Gopal Krishna Dey, who was the most

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22. Devi, Nalinibala - Eri Aha Dinbor, P-21
revered preceptor of her life. He was not only her private tutor but also her friend, philosopher and guide. At home, after completion of her primary education Nalinibala started her study of Sanskrit poetry to become familiar with the classical literature under the guidance of teacher Gopal Krishna Dey, the influences of which wrought her in the later period of her life as an educated lady of refined tastes and high interest and renowned poetess.

"The educational system of Sri Gopal Krishna Dey was similar to that of the ancient hermitage of the sages. He knew well how to sow the seeds of learning in the mind of the pupils which he won with affection and interest. He saw my zeal for poetry and so sowed the seeds of poetry in my tender heart through the poetry lessons. His affection was the source of my inspiration. He worked as the guide of my wounded life throwing the light of knowledge on my path. I have been paying my obeisance to this most worshipful teacher for every success of my life."  

The third influence on her life was that of her husband. In a society dominated by the male she has received profound sympathy, encouragement and love from her husband during the eight transitory years of her conjugal life. Thus memory remained ever green in her mind till the end of her life.

"The golden days of the eight years of my married life were tinged with the golden memory of love of my kindliest husband. That as it were constitutes a separate chapter of my life. The days of the conjugal life were sweetened by the busy programmes of Activity".

(Bibahita jibanar athatibacharar son-sowa ranir s onbuliya dinbar achil maramiyal swamir chenehare bhar pur. Sijen jibanar an eti adhyay. Samsari-jibanar karma bysta dinbar achil karmere madhumay).

To know the life of Nalinibala Devi as a poet the book 'Eri Aha Dinbor' also appears to be mine of informations. In this book we find a series of revelations about her creativity of poetry.

In her 'Eri Aha Dinbar' Nalinibala Devi she gives a very significant description, not merely the social scenario. The poetical description given here with surging emotions are also expressive of this distinguished poetess with her first revelations of poetic creations forming the verbal indications. In her autobiography, Nalinibala Devi relates almost all the basic things about her creation of poetry.

(Nalinibala Devi 'Eri aha dinbarar bunana diche, tato bahuta tatparjya purna katha ache; Akal samajik chitra nahay, ei citrar kavyik barnana, jenekai abegpurna bhasare diya haiche, tenekai ei garaki bishista mahila-kavir kavya sristir antaralar bongney ingito iyaty pratham baralai bykta haiche - Nalinibala Devi, Atmojibanit bishystha mahila kavya sristir praykhini gurirkathai kai haiche).

Nalinibala's 'Eri Aha Dinbor' deserves a high place of distinction in the history of Assamese literature. Though much judicious discussion about this book

is not available in Assamese literature, time has come to realize the necessity of evaluation of it. This is not only pleasant reading; this autobiography as though contains an era beginning from the latter half of nineteenth century till the middle of the twentieth century. Written by a lady this first full length autobiography occupies a place of importance in Assamese literature.

In the final stage of her life surrounded by fatigue, inertia and infirmity, she completed this work inserting in it a multiplicity of persona affairs, along with the descriptions of social and political events such as conferences, pilgrimages etc.

Although it cannot be assured that there is not a single irrelevance, errors and omissions in the book, but it can however be said with almost certainty that the book is an enormous treasure for the litterateur, historian, the common reader and for the researchers.