

## **“A Review over Assamese Autobiography Literature”**

Meghalee Morang

*Department of Assamese, Dibrugarh University, India*

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### **Abstract:**

**Autobiography** literature is an integral part of Assamese literature. Its role in Assamese literature is very crucial. The writer narrates own personal life along with public life and social, political, economic and cultural aspects in his autobiography. Despite of externally connection with biography, but an autobiography is not similar with a biography. An autobiography is a narration of biography, where the person himself is the writer of the narration. The writer narrates about his own life in autobiography, so usually autobiography is subjectivity. Although the seed of autobiography literature implanted in the Arunodoi era, but the full development of autobiography literature installed in the post Jonaki, Ramdhenu period and at the earliest of the contemporary period. In this discussion, “A discussion over Assamese autobiography literature” is upheld.

**Keywords:** Biography, autobiography, literature, integral, personal, public, socio-political, subjectivity, era.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

Autobiography literature is distinguished subject which enriches the Assamese literature to a great extent. In English, the word “Biography” is used to narrate biography, likewise the word “Autobiography” used to compose autobiography. In general terms, both Biography and Autobiography are seemed to be less difference, but both the literature are not same.

Roy Pascal in his Book “Design and Truth of Autobiography”, states definition on autobiography as “autobiography is a kind of biography narration where the writer gets his own life and mind in a particular state and publishes similarly in which way he understands his life.” Usually Autobiography is subjective. Although Human life is the subject in biography and autobiography, the person on whom an autobiography is written, is the writer of the autobiography. On the other hand, the person on whom biography is written is not the writer of the biography. Other person composes the biography. For instance, Albeit the biography “Juganayak Sankardeva” inscribed in 1967, on the life of Sankardev, but Sankardev is not the writer, it is Dimbeswar Neog who writes Sankardev’s biography. However, it assumes to be parallel, but biography and autobiography are not same.

In the discussion, it is attempted to narrate regarding the Assamese autobiography literature. In the literature discourses, it is also an important matter to discuss concerning autobiography. Because it facilitates to know about the writer who narrates his personal life along with public life, his creativity and intellectual workings and so on, in a lucid and cordial manner. It is not so easy to write an autobiography, it reflects courage of the writer who expresses and unfolds all aspects of personal life in a lucid manner, in front of the readers.

In the discussion, it is also attempted to give introduction of different autobiographers along with the introduction of autobiography.

### **II. METHODOLOGY:**

The Descriptive and Analytical methods are used to carry the study on “A Review over Assamese autobiography Literature”. Whereas the information gathered from various books, magazines and some articles are used as secondary sources.

### **III. MAIN DISCUSSION:**

**Autobiography:** Autobiography is an exemplary biography literature in the first generation’s narrated literature. The writer narrates about own personal life along with all other aspects of social, political, economic and cultural environment etc. Though the seed for autobiography literature implanted in the Arunodoi era, but the overall development of autobiography literature is seen in the subsequent Jonaki, Ramdhenu period and at the earliest of the contemporary period. In Indian Tradition, there was no such rule of writing about own personal life or composition of autobiography. Although, in the medieval Indian literature, there could be given an example of narrated biography. But the composition of autobiography can’t be proved. In the narrations of

Madhav Kandali, Sankardeva, Ram Saraswati, Kabiraj Chakraborty and so on, there is found self-introductory “Vonita” in accordance to the rules of this era. Though its objective was not to publish narration about own personal life. In the post British rule, this sort of literature intensified gradually with the influence of the western literature by the litterateurs in Indian literature.

In Autobiography, personal life and personality of particular person are delineated in own hands. In an Autobiography whichever the writer thinks of himself, reflects in the same way. As an Autobiography is a narration of the writer’s own personal life, for which subjectivity is seen to be its main objective. Nobody else can write about own personal life except own. Every man tries to hide his own faults. Generally, this is human’s weakness, as we are Human. For which, the writers of autobiography are also not or can’t be free from this weakness. So, it requires immense courage to reveal veracity and truthfulness of Autobiography. William Somerset Maugham, in his book “The Summing Up” quoted “**No One can tell the whole Truth about himself**”

However, the Autobiography literature is a crucial organ in Assamese literature and its rule in Assamese literature is influential.

#### **Classification of Autobiography:**

Autobiography can be classified into two main branches, such as “Jeensmriti or Reminiscence” and Smritikatha or Memoirs “The narration written on the influences of those people or experiences in a person’s whole life is called Jeensmriti or life Reminiscences. On the other hand, if there is emphasis over the influences of public life instead of personal life in a narration is called memories.

#### **IV. INTRODUCTION TO ASSAMESE AUTOBIOGRAPHY.**

Although Harakanta Sarmah Mazindra Boruah’s Autobiography is the first among all other written Assamese Autobiography, but Hem Chandra Boruah’s “Atmajeen Sarit” is considered to be the first among all published Autobiographies. Albeit, in 1890, Harakanta Sarmah Mozindar Boruah’s Autobiography was composed completely, but the Autobiography was published by the Editorship of Kumud Chandra Bordoloi in 1960. After a long time, this 19<sup>th</sup> Century’s composed book incorporates variety of precious information regarding Social, Economic and Political environment of the writer’s contemporary time. There are resilient narration of certain incidents, where during the writer’s childhood days, the family of the writer was heavily razed by the invasion of Maan and the subsequent life of the writer was profoundly influenced by the Ahom Dynasty and Higher rank holder officials of the British Government, in the Autobiography.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Harakanta Sadaramin’s Autobiography composition and Hem Chandra Boruah’s publication of essay on Autobiography opened the doors for the publication of this class of literature. After that, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, in the year 1922, Laxmi nath Bezborua’s Autobiography “Mur Jeevan huwaran” started publishing serially in the Magazine “Bahi”. In the subsequent times of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Autobiography literature gradually started getting importance and glorification in the Assamese literature. In Laxminath Bezborua’s Autobiography, he started his Autobiography with the quotation that “There is nothing in my mind that on which date and in which century I was born”. In his Autobiography, his personal life reflected more than public life works. In Bezborua’s “Mur Jeevan Suwaran” Bezborua’s upheld the aesthetic landscape of Assam of his childhood days. Moreover, he narrated about cultural aspects, society of Sivasagar, personalities of his time, Kolkata’s “OH.BHA.U.KHA.sabha” the magazine Jonaki’s spirit along with various individual defects of writers, in a lucid way. He himself expressed about his personal weakness and limitations amidst the description.

After that the subsequent autobiography writer Padma Nath Gohain Boruah’s (1871-1946). “Mur Suwaran” initially started publishing partly from 1931. In the magazine “Abahan”. After that, in the year 1971, The Axom Prakashan Parishad published the first edition along with the unpublished episodes of the Autobiography. As an Autobiography, it is a very comprehensive, informative, interesting and valuable Autobiography. There is very coherent blend of Gohain Boruah’s personal life and public life experiences in this autobiography. In contrast of Bezborua’s ironical or self-satirical, the language and expressions are very grave and thoughtful of this autobiography. Gohain Boruah’s life centred autobiography inscribed indivisible, educational, literary and political phenomena with proper information of Assam in the initial third decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Gohain Borua’s elucidated his own workings and ideals with immense importance.

In the year 1963, published Padmadhar Chaliha’s “Jeevan Binar Sur” is a very interesting autobiography from many aspects. Introduction of the writer’s autobiographical notion can be known from the preface of the book. In his autobiography, he cited that “Hum an is Human is Human’s life is convergence of merits and demerits, good and bad. Occurring mistakes are normal in life. So, making efforts to hide those mistakes doesn’t nature a flaw less and impartial life. Keeping this thing in mind, I attempted to portray my life in proper way as far as possible. The writer explicitly elucidated about ancestors, education, freedom struggle, employment, reporter’s life, composition of songs and various aspects of life in the autobiography. 20<sup>th</sup>

century's initial Sivasagar town and its Socio-cultural introduction are found in this book. He cited many important events of his personal life. He stated that he did fall in love with a brilliant and talented girl of a backward community during the days of youth. Furthermore, he mentioned that a communication with a high educated Bengali girl through love letters continued during the Congress's non-co-operation movement in his autobiography.

“The Karagarar Sithi” (Letter of Prison) is a compilation of letters to his daughter which was written on the basis of Nehru's ideals by Mohammed Tubeullah during his imprisonment from 1942 - 1945. The publication of this book is very much precious from many aspects such as with description regarding the writer's family, race, childhood days and ideals of Indian freedom struggle. Harinarayan Duttaboruah's “Jeevan Smriti” (1966), Padmadhar Borthakur's “Shadhinatar Ronar Shonsprokhat” (In the touch of freedom war 1968), Pratap Chandra Goswami's “Jeevan Smriti aru Kamrupi Samaj” (1971), Purna Chandra Sarmah's “Mur Jeevan Huwaran aru Nagaon Muktisangram” (1<sup>st</sup> edition 1973), Nityananda Bordoloi's “Purani Dinar Rengani” (1974), In Krishna Sarmah's “Krishna Samahar Diary” (1971). There is found a fascinating description of social conflict where a loyal congress worker appears as a protagonist of the untouchability exclusion movement.

Najar Ali's “Mur Jeevanar Kisu Katha” (1969) is reminiscence of a rural primary school teacher's family and personal life. Amidst of the autobiography, there is illustration of the initial 20<sup>th</sup> century's life style of Muslim Village. Dhonai Bora's “Mur Jeevan Jatrar Katha” (Story of my life journey) (1980) is a brief reminiscence of a teacher at lower primary school and many moments of the poet's personal life. In Rajendra Lal Ujir's “Jeevan Howaran” (1979). There is found many phenomena of the 1<sup>st</sup> world war. In Satrayandra Nath Borkakoti's “Hakimor Tighil Ghilani” (1963), there is explicit illustration of multicolored experiences of a civil service officer during his roaming and shifting at different places. Satryandra Nath Borkakoti's “Hakimor Tighil Ghilani” is a memoirs, narrated on the experiences of service life in a lucid and juicy language.

In Benudhar Rajkhuwa's autobiography “Mur Jeevan Dapun” 1969, narrated experiences of his service life as a higher ranking officer of British government along with prevalent education, Society, transportation system and economic state etc.

Shoiladhar Rajkhowa's “Atitar Huwarani” 1969 is an interesting autobiography of the poet and government's higher ranking official. Nalinibala Devi's “Ari Oha Din Bur” 1977, and Rajabala Das's “Tinikuri Doh basarar Smriti” 1971, these two Assamese autobiographies unfolded about women's position, restrictions and spread of women education etc. to a great extent in the Assamese society.

In the “Ari Ohar Din Bur” the distinguished poetess of the romantic era in Assamese literature elucidated her literary life and discords of domestic life in a very explicit manner. The poetess narrated her life story from birth to the age of 78 years consistently. Moreover, in the courteous description of own life. There falls a delicate narration of contemporary political and social life in the book.

In Rajbala das's “Tinikuri Doh basarar Smriti” in this autobiography, the writer upholds description on how the writer acquired education during the tradition of excluding woman from education in the Assamese society, in the initial period of this century. Furthermore, the writer narrated cordially how she engaged herself in promoting and spreading woman education in Assamese society and how she decorated the post of Professor of Handique girl's college and devoted herself in higher education.

Atul Chandra Hazarika's “Smriti Papor” 1977 a compilation of subjective essays and “Smritilekha” (1981) is an autobiography. In his autobiography, he gently delineated about his childhood days, education, career, domestic life and family etc. The writer also referred about his attachment and involvement with various persons and social institutions. Furthermore, there are many important things regarding the history of Assamese literature in this autobiography.

Debeswar Sarmah's famous autobiography “Herai Juwa Din Bur” 1980 in this autobiography, there is revelation of the writer's personal life and family's wealth and woe, happiness and sorrow along with his diverse experiences.

Gunabhiram Boruah's “Mur kotha” published serially in the magazine Ramdhenu in the year 1950-51. In Ambikagiri Rai choudhary's autobiography “Mur Jeevan Dhumuhar Esati” there is found many valuable findings of literature, culture and politics of the Assamese society.

Dimbeswar Neog's “Atit Madhuri” is such a remarkable autobiography too. In Fani Sarmah's autobiography “Rang Birang”, he mainly put emphasis on the narration of his diverse experiences acquired from acting in drama, films and as a Director, in this concise autobiography. Braza Nath Sarmah's “Biplabi” 1973 is an autobiography of real revolutionary.

In the year 1987, Laskhmidhar Sarmah's “Jeevan Smriti” published in the first episode of his composition. Sarmah's “Jeevansmriti” is a succinct autobiography engulfing his entire exemplary self-contained and self-realized life.

In the year 1934, he died of Zakhma only at age of 34 years. He completed writing this “Jeevansmriti” before a few days of his departure.

Dr. Moheswar Neog, who started doing study and research on different aspects of the Assamese language, literature and culture since the time of student. His “Jeevanar digh aru Bani” 1988 is a fructuous and descriptive autobiography. The writer unfolds long introduction from various experiences of his childhood days at his birth place Kumardiya in Sivasagar and up to his stay at residence of Guwahati after being retired from professional life at University, in this autobiography. There are accounts of different aspects along with the writer’s childhood and adolescent days in the autobiography.

Benudhar Sarmah’s autobiography “Moziar Pora mezoloi” 1986 published as a first episode of his Essay. At the first, the autobiography published in the magazines like Shantidut, Jayanti, Axomia, Abahan and “Nilachal” etc. Furthermore, the editor also made attempts to incorporate Benudhar Sarmah’s book “Congressor Kasioli Rodot” as an episode towards giving a complete shape of the autobiography.

There are some literature and professors who revealed their diverse experiences and thoughts obtained during the days in prison, in some remarkable books. Among these books, Hiroinya Kumar Bhattacharjya’s “Kararudha Jeevanor Bakrudha Kahani” 1984, Lakhmi Nandan Borah’s “Dustor Karagar”, Keshabanandan Goswami’s “Loh Pinger” 1980 are remarkable books. He was a professor of the department of Assamese, Dibrugarh University; there was explicit representation of experiences and sufferings from imprisonment of Assamese people for the cause of Anti-illegal foreigners moment in Assam.

In the context of exceptional autobiography writing of Assamese autobiographical literature. Specially, the writer, thinker and litterateur Human Borgohain is outstanding and distinguished. In the autobiographical book “Atmanusandhan” 1988 there is found analysis of certain selected accounts and experiences of the writer’s entry for studying at Cotton College. In Assamese literature, such kind of autobiographical book can be said as the first book which upholds the background of own literature working source. On the other hand, in his book “Mur Sangbadik Jeevan” 1981, he exposed bizarre accounts of journalist life along with his involvement in news paper, magazines and his close contact with famous and notorious politicians, after resignation from government job to be as journalist.

After the publication of these two autobiographical books, Human Borgohain published his first and second volume of complete autobiography with three volumes plan. These names are “Dhumuha” and “Ramdhenu” first volume in 1997 and Second volume in 1998. In the first volume, Borgohain narrated his first twelve years of life experience. At many times, his childhood was full of gloomy and painful experience. In the second volume of the autobiography, in the year 1977, the writer started the second volume from his beginning to stay after suddenly detaching from his family.

After Human Borgohain, it is Mamoni Raisom Goswami whose name can be uttered remarkably in the autobiography literature. In her “Adhalekha Dastabez” (1988), there is explicit description from the time of her study at primary school and up to the time of her joining as a professor in Delhi University. The writer doesn’t uphold the narration of her own life consistently. So, this book can be remarked as an autobiography for the purpose of literature. In the autobiography, the narration of adolescent and youth days or the lucid description of love, marriage and of her husband’s sudden death and her loneliness surrounding with frustration and mental instability, golden memories of martial life, engagement in research works at Vindaban along with various spiritual experiences faced by the writer made this book consumable.

Mohendra Borah’s autobiography “Upola Nodir Dore” is a precious autobiography. In the preface of this autobiography, Mohendra Borah quoted “This is not genuine autobiography. I have no right to write such kind of autobiography”. His autobiography published in the year of 1989. There is illustration of all aspects of the writer’s life and Mohendra Borah’s views and observations regarding various aspects of the contemporary society, polity and economy in the autobiography. In the autobiography, the writer’s way of representation is enchanting. This autobiography is decorated with own composing rule and juicy language.

Nirupoma Borgohain’s autobiography “Biswakh aru shankhayar Majedi” is a notable autobiography. At first, different chapters of the autobiography published in the magazine “Shrimoy”. This autobiography begins and comes out with the life’s first learning home, parents ideals and description of educational life along with many aspects of the brave writer.

Troilokya Nath Goswami’s “Otitar Kotha” (1989), Sayad Abdul Malik’s “Mur Jibonor Nohalbur” 1990, Nilima Dutt’s “Luitar Pani Jabi Oi Boi” 1993, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika’s “Moi Eti Jajabar”. These autobiographical books reflect bizarre experience, talents and multicolored personality of the writers.

Profulla Dutta Goswami’s “Monor Pokhi Uvati Ure” is a complete exceptional characterised autobiography. Shilavadra as pseudonym, the writer enriched the Assamese literature and the writer’s “Smritisaran” is a notable autobiography. There is representation of Sanatan Satya among myriad small events or experiences in each leaf of the Smritisaran.

In Poragdar Chaliha’s book “Chittra Bisitra” containing the autobiographical essay “Ahaikuri Bosoror Silmil Huwarani” that unfolds the writer’s own lucid Assamese expression. Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi’s “Jeevan Jeevan Bor Anupam” is another remarkable autobiography. The narration of this autobiography is classified in various chapters with different aspects of the writer’s childhood days, education, second world war,

freedom struggle and collegiate education etc. The autobiography “Jeevan Jeevan Bor Anupam” is not written in consistent way. In this autobiography, the writer’s life chronologies are not represented in accordance to dates. This is merely an exceptional autobiography where is no mention of years and dates. The writer reflected various obstacles and hardships faced in his life, through a very aesthetic manner in this autobiography. There is not representation of each life event of Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi’s struggle for establishing her own life by transcending all hardships surged from the husband’s mastery and unexpected motherhood during her childhood due to trapped in child marriage. There are some autobiographies of distinguished litterateurs of Assamese literature remaining in the pages of magazine, amongst these autobiographies. Jogeswar Sarmah’s “Jaute Jaute Batof” published in the magazine “Prakash” Vinanda Borah’s “Otor Ring” and Jugal Das’s “Ranthali” are remarkable.

Dr. Nogen Saikia’s “Sapna aru Smriti” published merely a few episodes in the pages of Notun Dainik. However, this autobiography started publishing incessantly in the magazine “Kaustav” from Dibrugarh. The readers get extraordinary pleasure from Dr. Bhobendra Nath Saikia’s autobiography “Jeevan Bitti” published continuously in the magazine “Prantik”. Dr. Saikia’s story-Novel’s tiniest detailed activities are witnessed in each chapter of this autobiography. Nirud Chaudhary’s autobiography “Dumduma Dumduma” continuously keeps up publishing in the pages of Dainik Janambhumi.

## V. CONCLUSION:

In this discussion, the introduction of various Autobiography and their writers are given. However, the implication of Assamese autobiography literature in enriching the Assamese literature can’t be overlooked and denied.

In the conclusion, it can be said that the Assamese autobiography literature is a significant and inevitable branch of Assamese literature. The autobiography literature extensively contributes in enriching the treasury of Assamese literature. The autobiography literature plays an important role in understanding and making sense of different aspects of society, culture, political, economy, literature of different time in Assamese literature.

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