



LAKSHAHIRA DAS

In the Estuary of Melody and Learning

“She has tremendous passion for music, art and culture. She is the first and only woman artist of Assam to receive approval of All India Radio as Lyricist, Composer and Singer in 1948.”

An incredible zest for music and poetry, and a strong sense of commitment to the cause of education are the qualities which aptly describe the multifaceted personality of Dr. Lakshahira Das. Prof. Lakshahira Das, a well known educationist, was born on 13th February 1933, in Sualkuchi (Kamrup), Assam. Her mother late Dhairjya Bala Vaishya Saud was a very simple lady and her father late Lalit Chandra Vaishya Saud was a Magistrate, Govt. of Assam. Her husband late Ramcharan Das was also an academician, who retired as the Head Department of Anthropology, A.V.College, Guwahati. She had a brilliant academic career and was the first Professor and Head, Department of Education, Cotton College (1959-1977); thereafter she joined Gauhati University and served this institution of higher education with utmost devotion till her retirement from the department of Education in 1993. She has travelled extensively throughout India and abroad and presented a number of research papers in international seminars and conferences. She has to

her credit fourteen text books, both in Assamese and English for the undergraduate and post graduate courses.

Prof. Lakshahira Das is a woman of versatile qualities and inner strength. This, coupled with determination, hard work and dedication enabled her to materialize her dreams. Besides being a reputed educationist, she is a noted litterateur, particularly in the field of children writing. At the tender age of 9, her first poem (Prabhati) was published in a school magazine (Jagaran), in Jorhat. Her first collection of lyrical poems (Prathama) was published while she was a student of Cotton College in 1950. Her poems have been translated into English and various Indian languages as well, which are included in several anthologies viz; *Modern Assamese Poetry*, *New Voices of Indian Poetry* edited by Hem Barua (Kavita Series, 1960 and Rajendra Awasthy *et al* (Authors Guild of India, New Delhi, 1984) respectively. In 1980 the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Assam also published an anthology, *Assamese Poetry*.

She has tremendous passion for music, art and culture. She is the first and only woman artist of Assam to receive approval of All India Radio as Lyricist, Composer and Singer in 1948. She had the unique opportunity and privilege to compose lyrics for internationally acclaimed singers like Manna Dey, Dr Bhupen Hazarika and others. Twenty two songs in her voice (Borgeet, Lokageet, traditional songs, adhunik geet, etc) have been recorded by H.M.V. She has been the playback singer of one of the most famous Assamese films of yesteryears, 'Lachit Borphukan'. During 1985–1999 she rendered her voice to the L.P.Records and cassettes of some of the wonderful songs of Ambikagiri Rai Chowdhury, Nalini Bala Devi and many others. Audio cassettes and CDs of her poems and songs have also been released.

Prof. Lakshahira Das, a multifaceted woman is the recipient of many prestigious awards, amongst them a few significant ones are-Best woman writer of Assam, Asom Sahitya Sabha 1995; Silpi Puraskar, Govt. of Assam, 2003; "Life-time achievement award", R.G. Baruah Memorial Committee, 2005; Best writer of children literature, 2008 and "Prajnasree" title, Asom Likhika Samaroh Samittee, 2009.

Prof. Lakshahira Das was nominated to the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi as a member of the General Council and Assamese Advisory Board for 5 years (2003-07). She has been associated with various organizations from time to time–Women's Studies Research Centre, New Delhi, Research and Innovation Committee NCERT, New Delhi, Board of Studies and Academics, Gauhati University and N.E.H.U., member of the Governing Body of most of the prestigious Colleges in Guwahati, including that of Handique Girls' College, Asom Sahitya Sabha, Radio Artist Association.

Prof. Lakshahira Das has been playing a vital role in the evolution of an Assamese consciousness in all spheres of social, cultural, educational and literary life of Assam. She inculcated the virtues of self-sufficiency in the members of her family, especially her three sons. □□