



RITA CHOWDHURY

Carving a Niche for Herself

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Dr Rita Chowdhury a Lecturer by profession in the Department of Political Science in Cotton College was born on 20th August, 1960, in the Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh. Her father was Biraja Nanda Chowdhury. She is an established poet, novelist and also a Sahitya Akademi Award recipient for her fiction *Deo Langkhui*.

She did her schooling in Upper Haflong L.P. School and Higher Secondary in Margherita Public Higher Secondary School. She obtained her M.A degree both in Political Science and in Assamese along with an LL.B and Ph.D degree.

Rita Chowdhury was one of the prominent members of Jatiyatabadi Juba Chatra Parishad during the Assam Agitation in 1980, and was imprisoned twice in Guwahati and thrice in Dibrugarh Jail.

Dr Chowdhury's first novel was *Abirata Jatra* in 1981, which won the first prize in a competition held by Asom Sahitya Sabha on the contemporary Assamese situation. She wrote this novel while she had to go underground during the Assam Movement. She was also



the editor of magazine *Adharxila* from 2001-2002.

In 2008, Dr. Chowdhury was honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel 'Deo Langkhui' (*The Divine Sword*). It is an epoch-making novel, that unveils some important aspects of the Tiwa society, their customs and traditions. The subject of the novel is marked by the elements of romance, conflict, betrayal, aggression and loyalty. The novel can be read as a fantastic story, or as a historical novel or as an epic. She throws light on the social, cultural and some other important aspects of Assam's history. She also mentions the Jonbeel Mela, a symbol of union between the upper and lower Assam, which has become not only a place of exchanging merchandise, but also a place for exchanging hearts. Besides throwing significant light on a politically tumultuous period in the Tiwa history and its great hero Jungal Balahu This fictional narrative also portrays the courage and ingenuity of a few Tiwa women like Chandra prabha, Gangawati, Lakhiatara and Sukumala.

Her recent release *Makam* is again another landmark in the field of Assamese literature, where she narrates the sufferings of a section of people who were originally from China and were brought to Assam for tea plantation and subsequently got settled in Assam long ago. Now they constitute an integral part of the Assamese society.

Dr Chowdhury got married to Chandra Mohan Patowary, the then Student leader of the Assam Agitation and now a political leader. She continued her literary works even after she entered into the family life.

Her Literary Works include *Abirata Jatra* in 1981. *Thirthabhumi* in 1988, *Maha Jibanar Adharshila* in 1993, *Nayana Tarali Sujata* in (1996), *Popiya Torar Xadhu* in 1998, *Ragmalkosh* in (1999), *Jala Padma* in 1999, *Hridoy Nirupai* in 2003 and *Deo Langkhui* in 2005. She also has four collections of poetry to her credit : *Xudoor Nakshatra* in 1989. *Banariya Batahar Xuhuri* in 1996. *Alop Pooharar Alop Andharar* in 1997. *Boga Matir Tulaxi* in 1999. Some of her recent releases are, *Rajeev Eeshwar*, *Jahnavi*, *Ai Xomoy Xei Xomoy* and *Makam*. Dr Chowdhury has so far received, Asom Shitya Sabha Award, Kolaguru Bishnuprasad Rabha Award, 2006 and Sahitya Akademi Award, 2008. □□