

## From Writer to Peace Maker



1. Your life is full of sorrow, from your early age, from the time of your father's death you have been struggling and meeting the harsh realities of life in the every step of your life. Where did you get the inner strength to fight against such ups and downs of your life?

Indira Goswami (IG): When I was very young, my father died. My husband left for heavenly just after eighteen months of our marriage. In my autobiography- Adhalekha Dastaveja (Unfinished Autobiography) I candidly mentioned about my state of mind after life being completely ruined. It developed suicidal tendency in the early part of my life. But as I grew up I realized that life is stressful, solitary and directionless and I to have fight against all odds. I decided to start writing to make myself alive. And it became my inner strength to fight against all ups and downs of my life.

2. You are a well-established contemporary Indian female writer. Do you think that the rise of the concept of feminism has helped in the overall development of women?

### Dr. Indira Goswami

On 14th November, 1942, on Children's Day, the birth day of first prime minister of India-Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Goswami was born in Guwahati. She did her schooling in Pine Mount School, Shillong. She completed her studies from Cotton College, Guwahati with honours in Assamese Literature.

Indira Goswami, popularly known as Mamoni Raisom Goswami in Assam, showed literary talent in her early age. In 1962, while being a student she published her first collection of short stories called Chinaki Morom.

In the literary circle, she is one of the most excellent contemporary Indian writers. She is known for her fresh and original style of writing with novel issues. Her literary contribution, mainly short stories and novels set in different locales of India, offer her readers a real taste of different lives of India. In her works, the way of expressing anger or indignation at forced rituals and oppressive social customs is very delicate and well guarded.

She lost her father in very early age. And the death of husband just after eighteen months of marriage, her life was completely shattered. In her autobiography- Adhalekha Dastaveja (Unfinished Autobiography translated into English by Prafulla Kataki), she mentions about her growing suicidal tendency during the early part of her life. She also mentioned about the regular doses of sleeping tablets which she used to consume to keep herself alive. But effect of sleeping tablets was not



IG: Yes, it has definitely helped a lot in the upliftment of the state of woman. But at the same time, my senses and experiences made me to perceive a separate view point on feminism. It is founded on the woman's thirst for freedom. It is basically the struggle for her rights and for enhancement of better conditions for herself.

3. Have you ever affected by any criticism due to your brave style of writing or bring social issues like sacrification in temple, the plights of plight of the Radheswamis of Vrindavan etc. into light?

IG: Where there is no criticism, there is no growth. I believe that a compassionate criticism can do a lot of good to a writer. But on the other hand, a critic can also destroy a writer. A good criticism help a writer his path, to make him more explicit and touching. I have been personally benefited by the criticisms of some of the great contemporary Indian writers.

4. As a writer you portray the socio-economic issues of our society in a creative way. How do you assess your responsibility as a writer?

IG: A writer always tries to portray the real image of the society. For this he has to keep his eyes and ears open. He must protest against the evil forces. In the same time, he should praise the society for all constructive efforts. I always try to fit myself in the mentioned role.

5. You have been playing the role of key mediator between ULFA and the Central Government. From writer to mediator, what made you to make this transition?

permanent. And for a permanent solution she decided to start writing.

In her novel Ahiron and Chenabor Srota, she depicts the life and culture of Madhya Pradesh and Kashmir, where her husband worked as an engineer. Her teacher Upendra Chandra Lekharu advised her to visit to Vrindavan for peace of mind. In Vrindavan she involved in research on Ramayana literature. Her experiences as a widow as well as a researcher finds expression in her novel The Blue Necked Braja (Nilakanthi Braja), which is based on the plight of the Radheswamis of Vrindavan who live ordinary lives and save money by sacrificing on their food so that they can have a decent, ritualised cremation after their death. She exposed this hard reality of Vrindavan, the city of Lord Krishna. It remains as a classic in Indian Literature and the first novel to be written on this subject.

From tough issues of urban and rural lives, the harsh lives of animals, and the plight of widows in Vrindavan and other parts of the country, Goswami displays great empathy and compassion. In fact readers find her confidence, courage and determination in reflecting the social-evils of different places of India.

Dr Goswami's voluminous works on the Assamese and Hindi Ramayanas have won her many laurels including the International Tulsī Award, 1999, given by Florida International University, Miami. For her critically acclaimed novel- Mamare Dhara Tarwal, she received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983. Her other widely read novels are Dantal Hatir Une Khowda Howda, and Tejaru Dhulire Dhusarita Prshtha.

