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A DREAM OF CHANGE: A STUDY OF ROKEYASAKHAWATHUSSAIN'S SULTANA'S DREAM

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Abstract: The fourteen-page novella Sultana's Dream became one of the most radical early works by women activists. Social dislocation in pre-independence India is depicted in Rokeya's work. Rokeya's women's activism thoughts were ahead of her Western partners.. It's possible that Rokeya prepared the groundwork for women's liberation in the Third World. She demonstrates the connection between a culture centred on men and imperialism. Rokeya's concerns about women's activism aren't simply theoretical; she's already put her plan into action. Rokeya, on the other hand, has come up with a solution to the problem of sexual orientation subordination. Her women's activism isn't confined to her own neighbourhood or to her own social strata; rather, it encompasses discouraged and persecuted women from all networks. The male-dominated culture that Rokeya despises in general is held responsible for the plight and agony of women, like an extreme women's activist. A new societal and political structure is needed to combat sexual orientation abuse, she says. Women's liberation seemed impossible in the face of imperialism and a society dominated by men. Her female characters strive to liberate themselves from the constraints imposed by a patriarchal society. Rokeya dismantles the presumption that women's empowerment and

Islam are incompatible. She uses religious sacred texts as a strategy to bolster her argument for gender equality. That western feminist activism is not applicable everywhere is demonstrated by Rokeya. When the first wave of women's rights was at its peak in the United States and the United Kingdom, her compositions appeared. Disregard was shown for the needs of working-class women, poor women, and women of colour. In contrast to her western peers who were constrained to the issues of white collar class instructed women, Rokeya's works demanded 'sisterhood'.

Key words: religious patriarchy and women's feminism.

Introduction:

A woman's role in the public sphere was revolutionised by Rokeya. When it came to the advancement of female education as well as the advancement of the social well-being of women, she was a pioneer. Rokeya was born into a typical home, where women had a great deal of freedom. Rokeya's official education was stifled by strict purdah, as well as the belief that formal education would make women obstinate and distract them from their 'natural' duties of raising children and maintaining the home. Although her lack of formal education represented a setback in her life, her vigour and enthusiasm shone through.



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The school in Bahagapur, India, was the first step in her journey toward a career in feminine enhancement.

At the time of Rokeya's birth, the majority of people held the view that women should be confined to the home and kept apart from men and boys. As a result, male-dominated society resented women's schooling because of the belief that they were sceptical, cynical, and prone to impulsiveness, which might lead to family conflict and marital strife. Women's plight was derided by the Muslim upper class, who saw them as weak and dependent on the males in their lives. As Partha Chatterjee correctly points out, the polarity of inward/external space for male and female was imposed by the male-dominated society.

A person's home is a place where they can be themselves, where they can be who they really are. The quest of material gains is a dangerous endeavour, and it is often the realm of men. Home's core is to remain undisturbed by profane worldly activities, and woman is its symbol.²

For women, the Patriot development provided a place in the political and social arenas. Regardless, Muslim women remained on the fringes. Islam's civilization has begun many new advancements, but the attitude toward female education remained hostile. In the accompanying text, S. N. Amin depicts Rokeya's efforts to better the status of women.

For her, women's liberation meant achieving parity with males in the fields of education, business, and politics. On its own, this would create a civilization where men and women

could coexist peacefully, "like the two wheels of carts." ²

As does Bharati Ray: "To males, she said: offer women equality and appreciate their work. Her message to women was simple: "wake up."

When it comes to the plight of women and the oppression they face, Rokeya, like Sultana, believes that education is the answer. Rokeya collects women who have been subjected to different forms of oppression in order to highlight the plight of women and raise awareness of their plight. These ladies represent different social backgrounds, and as a result, they have a unique perspective on the sexism and exploitation that women face in their respective spheres.

"The girls were encouraged to grow up into good daughters, housewives, and mothers inspired by high ideals, and to love their country and their religion more than life itself," writes Rokeya in her book, "Women's Training." (p.31) There are many ways to interpret Sultana's Dream, but one interpretation is that it represents her search for womanliness in a dangerously patriarchal environment that is hostile to any change in the status of women that would undermine its control. Rokeya's writing serves as a tool for her break through the barriers she faces.

social constraints and also to take an interest in the world outside of Zenana (internal quarters of home for women).

Disrupting the man-centric framework, Sultana's Dream is an attempt to "glorify their strong phallic selves"⁴ and to create a society where women either adopt a masculine identity or are repressed. They'd lose their sense of themselves in any case. They are victims of double collapsing mistreatment: male-centric



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servitude and frontier persecution in Rokeya's stories. In *Sultana's Dream*, social displacement occurs in the mind. Temperate young women's 'proper' attitude in a male-dominated society was marked by virtues such as submission, forfeiture, compassion, and voicelessness. Uniqueness and the essence of request have replaced it. This resulted in the demise of sex jobs and relationships in somewhat man-centric courses of action. Men in the area have always believed that women had inferior mental skills, and pioneer high and mighty technique is no different. There has been an uptick in the male-centric prejudice in *Sultana's Dream*. Rokeya encourages women to push beyond their talents in order to fight the societal changes that are taking place, to find their own individuality, and to achieve their way of life, which is the state of intellectual growth. As the title suggests, *Sultana's Dream* was written with a focus on the sex differences amongst women. It is a polemical attack on the misshaped Islamic purdah framework, which has disfigured Islamic populist ideals and constructed a male-centric adaption under the rule of man-controlled society. While some people have seen this as Rokeya's disobedience to the Islamic purdah system, others have seen it as a misunderstanding of Rokeya's views on purdah: But in some of her remarks, she made a compromise and differentiated between abarodh and purdah, despite her relentless attacks on abarodh. In order to come up with a practical answer, she had to reject the most extreme type of suppression while allowing for what couldn't be eliminated. That's why she wrote about it in her piece titled 'Burqa', saying that it was acceptable in terms of women's modesty as long as it didn't go too far. 5

Since in the Indian social setting the British's innovation was disapproved by the male-controlled society, and it was also an attack on indigenous social foundations of which women were the agents, Rokeya set out on a central method for the "elective women's activist advancement" in *Sultana's Dream*. It was in this way that Rokeya challenged the Western authority over modernization and sought to show that the Western development was not "all around applicable" because of the social specifics. Individuals in India stuck to their traditions and did not adapt to western rhetoric of innovation in the context of the Indian culture. Rokeya finds herself in this predicament due to the fact that her cultural roots are firmly rooted in Bengali and Islamic traditions. In a protest against the Western concept of innovation, she established the concept of elective progress. The person has more control over his or her career path when it comes to elective progression. To be present-day does not mean to be westernised and contemptuous of one's own way of life, as the amazement due of expansionism's weight.

For women who had been socially disenfranchised by a man-dominated culture and imperialism, *Sultana's Dream* is a call to find new identities. Unlike the nation depicted in the book, *Ladyland* is a world where women don't depend on males to define their personalities. A country where the patriarchal social structure is flipped and "the lost matriarchal civilization is reclaimed" is depicted in this novel. 6

It's a reverberation of her own women's activism voice and a picture of Indian femininity that is undervalued and stifled by the man-centric culture that Rokeya portrays in her



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portrayal of Sultana. Sr. Sara is a symbol of women's rights and liberty. While Sultana is sleeping in her chair, the narrative begins. The seat is a representation of the normal Indian woman's status since she is bound to her family.

Her slumber is a picture of indifference. The night is a metaphor for the darkness that engulfs Indian female, whereas the "dawn" is a symbol of freedom and light. When Sultana learns that her guide isn't Sister Sara, but rather someone more fascinating, her fear and trepidation reflect those of the ladies in Rokeya's broader audience. Despite the fact that she's a lady, Sultana seems uneasy and hesitant in the presence of an outsider. Rokeya uses the daydream mode to escape her isolation. Her criticism of a culture that is hostile to women for religious reasons is scathing. Rokeya challenges the well ingrained snobbish belief that women are less intelligent than men and reorganises masculine power. Rokeya establishes the general public of Ladyland where males employ "sturdiness instead of thinking" and women strive to use their maximum clever capacity in order to portray this hawkish mindset. Rokeya encourages women to make use of their mental abilities by displaying Ladyland to the broader world. While doing so, she urges the males in the room to release the ladies who are being held against their will. In addition, Rokeya pushes oneself to accept the perks of a man-dominated society created to oppress women and relegate them to the domestic sphere. For all the political and social privileges that were taken away from them, women have a place in Ladyland. He has seized control of the zenana and locked the ladies within. (p.5)

According to Rokeya's extreme philosophy, the male sex is complicit and lacks control in praising women and isolating them: "You should not be terrified of running into a guy here. There are no faults or damage in Ladyland. Here, "virtue is in the air." (p.4) Rokeya disproves the male authority figure's view that women are second-class citizens. Meanwhile, she instils women with a sense of self-confidence in their physical talents. Using the analogy of a "frog in a well," Rokeya chastises women who are unaware of their own emancipation and freedom: "You have abandoned the responsibility you owe to yourself and you have forfeited your inherent rights by closing your eyes." (p.5)

According to Rokeya's research, males are undervalued because of the way their homes are designed to keep them inside as zenana, or "within the house." In Ladyland, women value freedom and use their natural abilities. societal and national advancement; previously undervalued skillsets and talents. Each aspect of life, including government, military, economics, training and research is used by women to the fullest extent possible. Rather of focusing on a woman's physical attributes, Rokeya emphasises her mental abilities. Women have shown that they can compete with men, if not outperform them, by the use of their intuition. Rokeya believes that women's dependency on money and lack of education are the root causes of their oppression and subjugation, thus she requires equal access to education for women in order to eliminate the prevalent sexual orientation disparity in her general public.



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A rift between Ladyland's Queen and the King of a nearby country's adjacent nation shows the polarity of women's and men's ideals. Ladyland's monarch is generous. She puts her country's safety at danger for the sake of exiles. The King is a representation of human aggression. His only motivation for attacking Ladyland is to maintain his phoney respect. Her Majesty, the Queen of Ladyland, is kind. Unlike western women's emancipation, Rokeya's woman's rights are shared; when Ladyland is assaulted, the monarch and her people continue to bear the brunt of the battle.

In Ladyland, masculine and female creativity are seen as mutually exclusive. While masculine creativity is destructive, female innovation is kind, "non lethal"⁷, and "based on sun energy."⁸ Rokeya's women also fight in the battlefield, but they don't use the same kinds of weapons that the men use, which may lead to horrific accidents and the deaths of innocent civilians. As a last line of defence, the Ladyland soldiers rely on "beams of focused sunshine." Males' pretentiousness and faux regard for the task they have promised is ridiculed by Rokeya: "They waste their time smoking." Some people smoke up to three cheroots a day at work. Do little but talk a lot about what they're doing." Pages 6 to 7

Rokeya shatters a long-held stereotype about women's ability to do well in the workplace. As a generalisation of sexual orientation, women in India speak a much and do nothing. Forsaking their obligations to humanity and to the land, she chastises the men of the people. This is a practical application of Rokeya's theory, in which she envisions the growth of the nation

via the optimal use of physical and mental skills, irrespective of sexual orientation.

Sultana's journey is seen as a symbol of the transition from an unfavourable societal demand to an ideal one by Rokeya. She lacks individuality when she is confined to the man-centric societal framework of her day. Since her intellectual advancement has been hindered by a man-centric culture, she has also been socially exiled. During the journey, her mental state undergoes a shift. She had been enslaved both physically and mentally up until this point. Even if she's outside her house, she still lacks mental freedom in her imagination. In spite of the fact that she is still confined to a state of psychological isolation, she continues to adhere to the well-established male centred belief that feminine deficiency is an inherent weakness. Her time spent in Ladyland, a place where women clearly define their own selves and aren't afraid to say what they thinkbound to social jobs characterized by the man controlled society, drives her to self- acknowledgment and in addition mental freedom. It proposes that just physical freedom from the local imprisonment isn't sufficient for women's enhancement yet in addition sound instruction is required for forming their psychological freedom. Without edification women's liberation is aimless.

1.To entirety up Rokeya's women's activist thoughts are crucial to a wide scope of societies and networks. Rokeya energetically restricts the patriarchally characterized personal conduct standards of spouse, little girl, sister and mother. She propounds that woman and man can exist together agreeably. Rokeya's undertaking is to characterize man-woman



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relationship based on equity. The novella Sultana's Dream draws out the inward most clashes of abuse on women and manly vanity communicated in a fantasy vision.

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8. Bharati Ray New Delhi: Oxford University Press 2002, p.62. Sarala Devi Choudharani and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain were two early colonial Indian feminists.

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