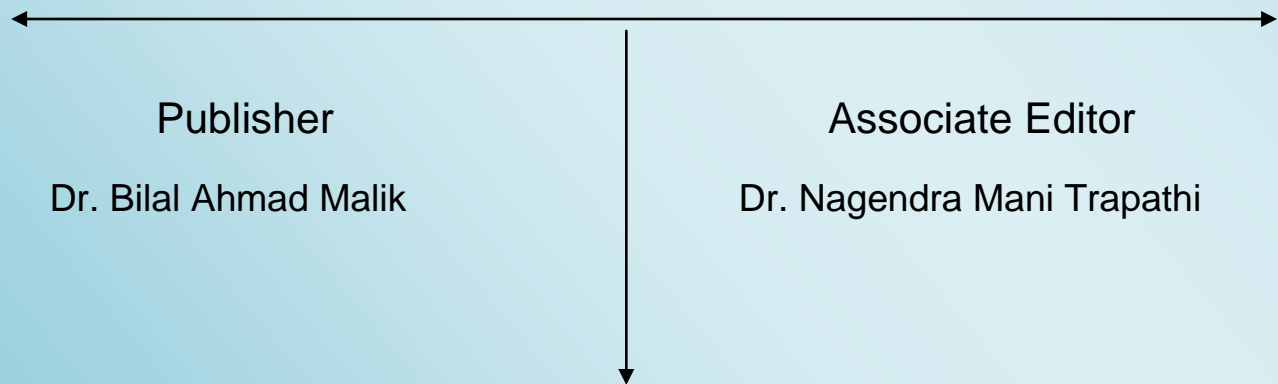


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EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT OF BEGAM ROKEYA AND CONTRIBUTION THROUGH LITERATURE

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In 19th century, Renaissances came in Bengal. But at that time only Hindu middle class society was influenced by it. The Bengalee Muslim families were away from it. As a result Muslims were away from the light of western education. A few families of Muslim society took part. But the numbers of families were very less. As the national language became English, the Muslim society's condition become poorer. A large portion of Muslim society did not enter into new educational system.

Social change and women empowerment are the part of Renaissance. At that time the door of Sanskrit college was opened for all caste and class. Muslim women were far away from it. At that time awakening in Muslim society was occurred on the basis of socio-religion and socio-politico. There were two types of social reformers in Muslim society one was progressive and another was conservative. Though the both thought about the education as a weapon of social change but there were difference in types of method. One team wanted the Jenana vidyalya, and education system.

Begam Rokeya (1880-1932) expressed herself as a writer, social worker and an education lover. She entered in the core of Muslim society to improve the condition of women, to change their mentality. She quoted from holly books to expend women education and critiqued the Conservative people in society.

Before Rokeya a few persons took responsibility for women education. But she included it to the greater movement like Vidyasagar. Her educational thought derived from her social reformation. Social progress and educational thought were like two flows. She used education as a weapon of social change.

But what is education to Begam Rokeya? What is thought about women? These answers found in 'Matichur', 'Padmorag', 'Aborodbasini', 'Sultana's dream'.

In modern age, women literacy does not mean the ability to signature only. Women literacy is their progress in society, political field, women awareness and their mentality to protest against gender discrimination.

Begam Rokeya's 1st step of women education was to literate the women. And Rokeya thought about that education which makes conscious the women against blind-believes, women-rights, confidence, possibility and personality. So she suggested that:

Again realist Rokeya said about the difference between inner possibility of women and working skill of women. She said if the women could not enter in any majestic work place, they could enter in farming. Then their father would not cry for their daughter marriage. They should educate their daughters. Then daughters can earn and can manage their own life.

Her thought about women education is progressive even today also Equality and economic development is one of the main features of human right. The women were deprived from it.

In a speech of 'BangioNariSikhaSammelan' Rokeya considered the negligence of women education for the poor condition of Muslim society.

In the childhood of Begam Rokeya, she did not take part any traditional education system. She learned English from her husband. Her husband gave 10 thousand rupees to introduce a girls' school before his death to fulfill the dream of his wife. After the death of her husband, she started only with five students in Bhagalpur. Then she shifted her school from Bhagalpur to Kolkata in 1911.

This noble women's philosophy of life, society and education at last met a point role sometimes she was humanist, sometime a model of women empowerment. Love for nation, consciousness of women power, real knowledge in education, health, agriculture etc. all were the characteristics of this great woman's university (Sultana's Dream). And her that dream is made real in todays. In the field of Muslim women education that was like played a role of lamp on the darkness.

She knew only education can give freedom; can be a lamp in the darkness of women life. For this she had done a lot of work.

To her education was not to read few book or write few lines. Only pass the exam was not true education to her. She wanted those educations which create the right of citizenship of India. She criticized the Purdah Paratha' to distribute the light of education in Muslim society.

She denoted the early marriage as the main burden of girls' education. So, she dreamed in the light of education many blind believes and child marriages were abolished. She said that a girl should not marry before 21. Rokeya dreamed this when the law of protection of child marriage was panning.

She wanted every Muslim woman took the promise to serve the ill person and educate the illiterate Muslim woman. She wanted the teaching of holy Koran in primary level. Because The Koran can save from ill believes and blind believes.

In hind society, Rammohan, Vidyasagar, ShibnathSastri came forward for women education. In muslim Bengalee society, Rokeya only one person took the all roles for muslim women education.

HER EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTION THROUGH LITERATURE:

Begam Rokeya played a great role for Muslim women education. In her literature, we see how high thinking she had thought. In her letters we see how hard work she had done for women. In her poems we see a Bengalee woman, who thought for all her family members. Her novels, essays are also reflection of her high thinking power. Here in short we discuss her thoughts reflected in literature.

The novel 'Sultana's Dream' was the story of science fiction. That was written in 1905. The time was more than 100 years ago. And she translated it into Bengali. It was published in 'Motichur' 2nd part. This dream was a plan for run a society against the men centered society. And it makes us spellbound that the modernity that she had thought before 100 years match today's society.

Rokeya's Sultana's Dream is a small English book. In this book we see that before long days they lived in Banka division, Bhagalpur. Her husband went to tour. She was alone in her room. To spend her time she wrote something. After returning her husband, husband asked how her wife spent the time. Then she saw the draft of 'Sultana's Dream'. After reading he told it was a terrible revenge. And then he sent it to the commissioner of Bhagalpur for correction the copy.

The commissioner did not use her ink for correction. She wrote a letter.

'The ideas expressed in it are quite de-lightful and full of originality: and they are written in perfect English. I wonder if she has foretold here the manner in which we may be able to move in the air at some future time. Her suggestions on this point are most ingenious.'

It is true that in Sultana's Dream she used a high ideal thought. She had dreamed a wonderful women empire. There males were in Jenana. The women had a magical power to control the nature. And the men were the all causes of sorrows, war, destructions etc. In her dreamland men were captive in home. And for this that became a land of joy. We do not know in which day the dream will true. But her dream showed her thinking for women was how much high and valuable. How strong was her confidence, believes. The women can choose their way of freedom from this dream.

It may be treated one of the best science fiction story. On that day there was no presence of motor cars, even there was no electricity in India. Airplanes were daydream or imagination to them. But she saw a vehicle that could fly in air. So, the Sultana's dream was not an absurd dream.

In this novel, we see how Rokeya saw the future. In this novel we see the writer choose an autumn full moon night for her dream. In this novel Sultana went to visit the garden with her European sister Sara. And the sister Sara was a lady with a vast knowledge of Botany. And the sisters spoke about plants, flowers etc.

The queen in this novel became happy to see a country where men were in Jenana. When the queen told Sara that in her countrymen were strong physically and they kept women in Jenana. Here Sara gave a nice answer.

‘A lion is stronger than a man, but it does not enable him to dominate the human race. You have neglected the duty you owe to yourselves and you have your natural rights by shutting your eyes to your own interests’.

In Sultana’s dream we saw use of solar system, create clouds by using science. These are a future of science development country. Before 100 years, Rokeya dreamed a few number of women Universities. Thus the Sultana’s Dream shows the thought of Begam Rokeya.

‘Padmorag’ is a novel of Begam Rokeya. She dedicated this book to her elder brother.

In this book she told about the problems, fights and dream of women created around establishment of an organization. There was no control of any religion or castes in Tarini School in this novel. We can see the Sakhawat Memorial Girls’ School through the novel. In Padmorag, we see a woman beyond all class, caste, race and religion. Here she became a universal Education lover. She congratulated the works of women in Madras. She felt glory in the success of a woman as a barrister in Rangoon.

In this novel she placed the humanism above all relation. Here all women from different castes, races, religions were introduced as ‘woman’ who was suffering for their society.

The school in this novel is an example of modern school. Here modern education, life centered education were given. There was no scope for religious education. In Rokeya’s word:

Aborodhbasini- is one of the famous creations of Begam Rokeya. It published in 1931. She dedicated her book to her respected mother. She said it was a satire. The novel was written on few true incidents. Through 47 episodes she described the painful life of women.

She did not write this to create literature. She wanted to open the eyes of society through her nib. She welcome women to do job, increase self-confidence etc.

In her essay ‘Educational ideals for the modern Indian girl’ showed her scientific knowledge about education.

In this essay she described the traditional Indian education. How it was held in the lap of nature. How the education gave us the lesson to live successfully. In past science, grammar was the part of education.

‘If education is described as the preparation for life or complete living the Indian educator had formed of it a true valuable conception.’

She wanted the life centered Education. She felt the need of vocational education. She did not give importance too much on religious education. In her sentence:

‘In this utilitarian age when religion is treated as obstacle and the engrossing objective ordinarily are personal ambition and the advancement of material prosperity.’

She also described that now days facilities are developed. But in the past only fulfill the Aim was achievement of education. She put emphasis on vocational and value education.

According to her India is a country where sweetest relation of teacher students belongs.

To say about women education she mentioned Upanishad, Vedas.

‘We should by all means broaden the outlook of our girls and teach them to modernize themselves. Yet they should be made to realize that the domestic duties entrusted to them cover a task on which the welfare of the country depends.’

She dreamed that creates a good personality. About women education, she said ;

‘In short, our girls would not obtain university degrees, but must be ideal daughter; wives and mothers- or I may say obedient daughters, loving sisters, dutiful wives and instructive mothers.’

Now we said about few selective letters where she told about the education perspective talks.

A letter to MoriomRasid she gave excuse for not writing the letter. And in this perouse she said about her duties to school (8th September,1916 from Kolkata).

She had observed five classes, 70 girls, two cars, coachmen etc. Even she had observed if the horses were cared properly.

On the another letter to her sister MoriomRasid on 5th January,1926 she described about her three days journey to Aligar.And she observed that the elite class of Aligar were interested in women education. For this they donated freely. She hoped an university for women would setup soon.

On 19/5/26 in another letter to this sister she told her that the number of students in her school was decreased. And she could not collect proper workmen, As a result she had to do a lot of work.

A letter to MohesenaRhaman on 21/5/1929 showed that she was in economical need. She wanted 5/6 rupees at the place of pickle.

In a letter to Md. Babar Ali she requested him to send his daughter to school.(26/6/31)

A letter to Bahadur TasddakAhamed25/4/32 she said briefly that her objective was to run the school, not to keep memory of her husband by school name,

Besides these she wrote many letters to Muzibar Rahman,the editor of Musllman to circulate few news like establishment of hostels(10/01/1913) arrangement of ladies conference(21/2/1919)etc.

At last we can say that she was not bound in the theoretical concept of education. She did a lot for it. She took a great role for the education of Muslim girls in British ruled India.

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