Memory of the World Asia Pacific Regional Register Nomination Form

1 Title of Documentary Heritage Item or Collection (max 10 words)

The title will be used for such activities as publicity and certificates of inscription.

"Sultana's Dream by Rokeya S. Hossain"

2 Summary (max 200 words)

Give a brief description of the documentary heritage being nominated, and the reasons for proposing it. Include the type of document heritage such as manuscripts, papers, film etc. Highlight the nature, uniqueness and significance of the nominated documentary heritage.

R.S. Hossain's 'Sultana's Dream', a sci-fi story about an utopian ladyland was first published in Madras in 1905 in the "The Indian Ladies Magazine" and later on as a book in 1908 by S. K. Lahiri & Co., Kolkata, India. The story describes a fictional ladyland of the future with green urbanscapes where people travel by helicopter, use solar power and, most significantly, women are running the affairs of the state and society. Written in English by a woman from conservative Muslim family without any formal education, the work is amazing. Rokeya's life and contribution to the education of girls are remarkable. She was much ahead of her time and it took decades for the society to recognize her contribution.

Since the 1960's, Rokeya began to draw attention with her writings and social work. The research and academic treatise on 'Sultana's Dream' made it one of the most influential feminist writings from the Indian sub-continent. The book has been translated in many other languages.

'Sultana's Dream' become synonymous with the dream of women for emancipation in Bangladesh, the Indian sub-continent and beyond.

Documents Regarding the inscription:

a. Photocopy of the first edition of the book published in 1908 is in the custody of the Liberation War Museum, Bangladesh along with other related documents. (Attachment 1)
b. Photograph of Rokeya with her husband during the time of publication (attachment 2)
c. Original letter of Rokeya written to Khan Mohammad Mainuddin enquiring about the sale of her booklet "Speeches" (Attachment 3)
d. Playbill and photos of adaptation of "Sultana's Dream" for the stage performed in 1980's. (Attachment 4)
e. The original "Indian Ladies Magazine" of 1905 in the custody of the Prime Minister Museum and Library, New Delhi, India and information about the depository with requisite form, print-out as well as exchange of letters with the authority. (Attachment 5)
f. Original of Indian Ladies' Magazine in the British Library, UK with exchange of letters regarding the collection (Attachment 6).
g. 27 Etchings in the 2017 US Edition of Sultana's Dream by Artist Chitra Ganesh, (Attachment 7)
h. Bibliography on Rokeya and Sultanas Dream (Attachment 8)

3 Nominator/s Contact details

3.1 Name of nominator/s (person/s or organisation/s)

A. Liberation War Museum, Dhaka, Bangladesh

3.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

1. Liberation War Museum (LWM) is the custodian of the items of the nominated heritage including a photocopy of the first edition of Sultana's Dream (published in 1908), the photo of Rokeya with her husband at the time of writing the book, and several later editions of '*Sultana's Dream*' published at various time from various places. Attached is a short list of the published editions, reflecting the ever-growing interest of feminists, activists and academics about the book. The playbill of the adoption of the story for stage, photographs of the performance, AV materials, research papers, films and documentaries on Rokeya are being archived at the LWM.

3.3 Contact person/s

Mofidul Hoque

Researcher and Founder-Trustee

Liberation War Museum

3.4 Contact details

Name Mofidul Hoque Researcher and Founder-Trustee **Telephone** 02-48114993, 01611677223 (Office) 01922106600 (Mobile)	**Address** Liberation War Museum **Email** mofidul_hoque@yahoo.com mukti.jadughar@gmail.com

4 Declaration of Authority

I certify that I/we have the authority to nominate the documentary heritage described in this document to the Asia Pacific Regional Memory of the World Register. All nominators must sign here. (A signed support letter from the nominators' National Commissions is required when the nomination is from two or more Member States. See Section J in the Process document for more details)

Name Mofidul Hoque **Address** Liberation War Museum Plot : F-11/A-B, Civic Sector Agargaon, Sher-E Bangla Nagar, Dhaka – 1207	**Position** Founder Trustee **Email** mukti.jadughar@gmail.com

Signature/s of nominator/s……

…… (Mofidul Hoque)

5 Legal Information

5.1 Owner/s of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different from the nominator/s)

Name	Address
Telephone	Email

5.2 Custodian/s of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner/s)

Name **Telephone**	**Address** **Email**
Name **Telephone**	**Address** **Email**

Please note: Written permission for nomination of this item from the Owners and/or Custodian/s if different from the nominator **must be attached** to this Nomination Form.

5.3 Legal status

Provide details of the legal and administrative powers for the preservation of the documentary heritage.

Liberation War Museum is a recognised institution to receive documentary heritage, artifacts, memorabilia etc. from family members or other bonafide owners making voluntary contributions. All the deposits are du received

and the donors name is recorded. LWM has the right to preserve, present and share the donated items

for dissemination of information following fair use principle. Legal status LWM:

Legal Status of LWM and Accession

1. Trust Deed of the Muktijuddha Smriti Trust, the parent body of the Liberation War Museum, Date of Issue : 19/06/1995
2. NGO Registration with the Bureau of NGO Affairs , The Prime Minister Office, Govt. of Bangladesh, No : 1007, Date of Issue : 04/02/1996
3. Registration as Joint Stock Company with Registrar of JSC of Bangladesh, No. S-3545(334), Date of Issue : 17/01/2004

5.4 Accessibility

Describe how the documentary heritage may be accessed

Any access restrictions should be explicitly stated below (for instance if advance permission is required, or if general access is not permitted by tradition or custom of the originating community).

1. LWM is committed to offer services to the public and accessibility is open following certain rules. The nominated items are not classified materials and permission is not required to provide them for fair and educational use.

5.5 Copyright status

Describe the copyright status of the item(s) / collection, if known.

The answer to this question is not taken into account when determining whether the nominated documentary heritage meets the criteria for inscription.

The collections of Rokeya S. Hossain's publications and associated items in the LWM have no copyright restriction.

6 Details of the Nominated Documentary Heritage

6.1 Exact title of the documentary heritage

Give the exact title of the nominated documentary heritage and the exact name of the nominating institution/s.

"Sultana's Dream" by Rokeya S. Hossain.

Nominator : Liberation War Museum, Dhaka, Bangladesh

6.2 Type of documentary heritage

Describe the type/s of documentary heritage. Examples include papers, photos, digital, maps, manuscripts, film etc.

1. Photocopy of the first edition of the book ”Sultana’s Dream” published in 1908.
2. Photo of Rokeya with her husband during the time of publication
3. Original letter of Rokeya written to Khan Mohammad Moiuddin enquiring about the sale of her booklet “Speeches”
4. Playbill and photos of adaptation of “Sultana's Dream” for the stage.
5. Information regarding the original 1905 edition of “The Indian Ladies’ Magazine” at the PPM&L, India.
6. Information regarding the original 1905 publication of the Indian Ladies’ Magazine in the British Library.

Depository of the original item is in the two other country, namely India and the UK.
The original of the journal “Indian Ladies’ Magazine’ 1905 edition with the writing of ‘Sultana’s Dream’ by Rokeya S. Hossain is in the collection of the following two institutions :

a. Prime Minister Museum and Library (Previous name : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library), Teen Murti House, New Delhi, 110011, India has the item in its collection. Upon submission of a request from LWM in the prescribed form dated 10-11-2022 NMM&L has provided the Liberation War Museum (Bangladesh) with thirteen page print-out of the original writing published in the magazine.

   LWM have written letters to the Director of the PMM&L, New Delhi for a certification of the item in their depository. Ms. Linh Anh Moreau, Secretary-General of MOWCAP has also send a letter to the Director of PMM&L on 7 February 2024. The letters and duly filled in form with print-out are provided in Attachment-5.

b. The original of the 1905 edition of ‘Indian Ladies’ Magazine’ is also in the custody of The British Library. In reply to our enquiry Dr. Arani Ilankuberan, Head of South Asian Collection, has located a record for the ‘Indian Ladies’ Magazine’ with the following shelf-mark (P.P.3778.bc). Unfortunately The British Library suffered a cyber-attack at the end of October 2023 and their server is still down. The item is in Boston Spa and BL could not access the item until the issue is resolved. Our correspondence with Dr. Arani Ilankuberan regarding this issue is provided in Attachment-6.

6.3 Catalogue or registration details

Give the catalogue or registration details for the item or collection.

A nominated collection or archival fonds must be finite, with clear beginning and end dates. If the catalogue or registration details are too long, provide a description of the contents with sample catalogue entries, accession or registration numbers. **Or** you can add the catalogue/registration details as an appendix, or provide a link to an online inventory.

Accession list of the items

1. Photo copy of the first edition of the book "Sultana's Dream"
   Collection Number 758
   Date : 4 March 2000
   Donor : Selina Bahar Zaman
   Accession No : 2000-783

2. Photo of Rokeya with her husband Sakhawat Hossain
   Collection No : 758
   Date : 4 March 2000
   Accession No. 2000-782
   Donor : Selina Bahar Zaman

3. Original Letter written by Rokeya S. Hossain to Khan Mohammad Mainuddin
   Collection No . 1796
   Date : 8 September 2023
   Accession No. 2023-146
   Donor : Ranu Syed

6.4 Images of the documentary heritage.

Three to six digital images of the documentary heritage should be provided as attachments to this form. By providing the images you are agreeing that they can be used by MOWCAP for the purpose of promoting Memory of the World e.g. newsletters, website etc. Please clearly note on this form if you do not wish MOWCAP to use the images for publicity or promotional purposes (for instance if not permitted by tradition or custom of the originating community).

Images of Documentary Heritage

(See Attachments 1, 2, 3 and 4)

1. Photocopy of first edition of "Sultana's Dream" in the collection of the LWM
2. Photo of Rokeya and her husband around 1908 in the collection of the LWM
3. Letter written by Rokeya to Khan Mohammed Mainuddin
4. Playbill of the drama 'Sultana's Dream' produced in the 1980's.

6.5 History/Origin/Background/Provenance

Set out the history of the item or collection - its 'life story' or provenance - from the time when it was created to its place in your institution. This is critical to the item or collection's authenticity. You may not know all the details, but give as comprehensive an account of the item or collection's provenance as you can.

1. First Edition of "Sultana's Dream" is a rare item. LWM received a photocopy of the book

from a donor and subsequently published the facsimile edition in 2006.

2. The photo of Rokeya and her husband has been donated to the LWM by Selina Bahar Zaman, whose mother Anwara Bahar Choudhury studied under Rokeya.

3. The letter was donated by researcher and author Abdul Mannan Syed's family to the LWM

6.6 Bibliography

Provide a list of at least 3 published sources that have been produced using the nominated documentary heritage.

A bibliography provides evidence that the documentary heritage has been used by scholars, and knowledge of its impact and influence is in the public domain. It is a good idea to cite the works of scholars from outside your own country, as well as local scholars, to demonstrate this influence.

Bibliography

List of Books and cultural products on Rokeya's work and "Sultana's Dream".

Attachment-8

6.7 Names, qualifications and contact details of experts

Provide the details of two to three independent people with expert knowledge about the values and provenance of the documentary heritage who may be contacted by MOWCAP for further information on your nomination. Note that the Register Sub Committee (RSC) may also contact other experts.

The names and contact details of your referees will not be publicly disclosed by MOWCAP nor disclosed without their permission to any third party.

Name	**Qualifications**	[redacted]
Dr[redacted]	Professor of History Bangabandhu Chair Bangladesh University of Professionals	
Name Dr[redacted]	**Qualifications** [redacted] Bangladesh Mahila Parished (Bangladesh Womens Organization)	

I certify that the above named experts have given their written permission for their names and contact details to be used in connection with this nomination to the Memory of the World Asia Pacific Regional Register.

Name : Mofidul Hoque

Signature : Full name (Please PRINT)

Date : 15 April 2024

7 Authenticity and Integrity

7.1 Authenticity and Integrity

Is the documentary heritage what it appears to be? For example, has its identity and provenance been reliably established; are supplementary parts being kept elsewhere and not included in the nomination; has it been altered or damaged; are sections or pages missing; is part of the documentary heritage lost?

The documentary heritage "Sultana's Dream" is an authentic edition of the magazine where it was first published in 1905 and the photocopy of the book published in 1908. There have been many subsequent editions but the authenticity has not been altered or damaged. As it was first published in 1905 in “The Indian Ladies’ Magazine” that also establish its authenticity.

8 Primary criteria: Regional Significance

More details on what is required for each criterion are provided in the MOWCAP Register Guidelines document available on the MOWCAP website

You only need to provide information for criteria that are relevant to your nomination

8.1 Historical Significance

What does the documentary heritage tell us in relation to the history of the Asia Pacific region as a whole, or to a sub-region such as Central, South, Southeast, East Asia or Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, Australasia?

The documentary heritage of “Sultana’s Dream" has made a fascinating journey since its first publication in a magazine in 1905. It took time for the society to recognise its significance. Now more than 100 years after its publication it is receiving growing attention. In the 2005 edition of the book published by Penguin India, the editor highlighted it as "a delightful satirical work set in Ladyland, where men are in purdah and women firmly in charge of home and government”. The editor Barnita Bagchi rightly pointed out, "Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain is a name familiar to many South Asians today”.

As Rokeya came from a tradition bound conservative society and broke many of the limits imposed by the patriarchal society, her contribution has great relevance for Women’s struggles for their rights and the establishment of gender equality in South Asia and beyond**.**

Two recent work based on “Sultana’s Dream’ shows the global impact of Rokeya’s work. One is the 2018 edition of the book published by Dunham Press, USA with 27 artworks done by Chitra Ganesh. The artist said her work “connects with the problems shaping 21st century life”, and by placing Sultana’s Dream in the present or near future the artist explores contemporary issues of societal unrest, environmental catastrophe, geopolitical conflicts, and modern hurdles to realizing utopian dreams. The illustrations are provided in Attachment -7.

Another important work is the full-length animation film titled “Sultana’s Dream”, made by the Spanish Director Isabel Herguera. The 84-minute animation film is a co-production of Spain, Germany and India. It was premiered at the Main Competition of the San Sebastian Film Festival in 2023. The promotional material can be accessed at :
http://squareeyesfilm.com/features/sultanas-dream/press materials. Password : Feature 2023.

The link and phone number of the producer Mr. Wouter Jansen is : www.squareeysfilm.com and Mob : +43 660 9805377

8.2 Form and Style Significance

Is the document an outstanding example of its type?

This criterion refers to the physical nature of the documentary heritage. Is the documentary heritage a particularly fine exemplar of its type; does it have outstanding qualities of beauty and craftsmanship; is it a new or unusual type of carrier or is it an example of a type of document that is now obsolete or superseded?

"Sultana’s Dream" is outstanding in many ways. As a book by a young Muslim women, it is pioneering in many respects. It is an early science-fiction, ma be the first for the subcontinent. It

is a feminist work with boldness and imagination. It has been hailed as a feminist version of science and utopia that promoted women's rights in a powerful way.

8.3 Social Community or Spiritual Significance

Is the documentary heritage attached to a specific existing community and demonstrably significant? Information should be provided on what the nominated item represents and how this attachment is expressed. If there are any, ensure to mention any relation to Gender, Indigenous and other minority or marginalised groups.

The documentary heritage became the common heritage of women in the sub-continent, specially to the women's movement of Bengal. In West Bengal the study of Rokeya has become widespread. Not only by academics but by activists of the women's movement who have found inspiration in Rokeya and specially in Sultana's Dream.

In Bangladesh the first women's dormitory of Dhaka University has been named after her. A university has been established in her name. The annual state award for outstanding contribution by women is titled "Rokeya Padak".

9 Regional Significance: Comparative criteria

The item or collection should be compared to similar items or collections, whether on any of the Memory of the World registers or not. The comparison should outline the similarities between the nominated documentary heritage has with others as well as the differences, and the reasons that make the nominated documentary heritage stand out. The comparative analysis should aim to explain the importance of the nominated documentary heritage in its national, regional and even international context (if applicable). Consulting successful inscriptions to both regional and international registers is highly encouraged for this endeavour in order to ascertain and demonstrate uniqueness or intercultural connections.

The purpose of the comparative analysis is to show that the nominator has tried to find any existing duplicates or other similar examples of the item or collection, and to demonstrate that there is room for this item or collection to be included on the MOWCAP Regional Register.

9.1 Uniqueness or Rarity

Provide the results of the comparative analysis. Can the documentary heritage be described as unique (the only one of its kind ever created) or rare (one of a few survivors from a larger number)?

The item Sultana's Dream is not a mere historical document but one with great contemporary significance. The manuscripts and original documents connected with Rokeya and "Sultana's Dream" are difficult to find. Very few of her personal papers survived. UNESCO recognition can open the possibility to retrieve and collect related documents. The Liberation War Museum and other organisations are trying to collect materials produced on "Sultana's Dream" and Rokeya, a collection which is growing richer and richer with time. It is unique that although various historical records related to "Sultana's Dream"' are difficult to find, the contemporary artistic and reprographies products are many.

10 Gender

Gender equality is one of two global priorities of UNESCO. If there are any specific aspects of the nomination that relate to gender equality, please describe them in detail, explaining what the nominated documentary heritage tells us about the lives of women and girls in Asia and the Pacific, and any impacts on women and girls or on gender equality in the region.

"Sultana's Dream" is a specific gender based document with great significance beyond its time and space. The author was a visionary social reformer and the work is a pioneering feminist work with relevance for the regional and global community.

11 Statement of Significance

Provide a summary of the points made under the primary and comparative criteria, and the test of authenticity and integrity. Why is the documentary heritage important to the world and what has its impact been beyond the boundaries of a single Asia Pacific state?

The summary should be **about** 300-600 words

"Sultana's Dream" is a unique work that found its rightful place in history. This happened because of the inner strength of the author and her social and educational work. In recent years interest in Rokeya and her dream has gained momentum. Lloyd Price from Cardiff University in his/her dissertation on Rokeya wrote: "Rokeya deploys the tropes of dreaming, history and modernity in order to argue the gender norms are construction. The nature and impact of which are dependent upon relative context and the balance of social, economic and technological power between gender."

At the same time Rokeya, the emancipator, has always been an inspiration to women in their struggle for freedom and rights. "Sultana's Dream" gives them hope by showing the power of women. The reality of life is different where women suffer in many ways but casting ladyland as an utopia, creates strength when embraced by many.

In the journal "Lady Science". Thomas Lewtor wrote on July 31, 2019

"Rokeya's witty and cutting indictment of Indian society, and the men who rule it, also depicts an alternative, feminist science- one which better serves society. In her ideas, Rokeya was decades ahead of her time, critiquing not only the close relationship between science and patriarchy but also that between science and the colonial powers that controlled India at the time of her writing."

Women in history have often been denied their rightful place. The same happened with Rokeya and her "Sultana's Dream". She made a magnificent comeback but very few documents and records are available on her life and work. The recognition of "Sultana's Dream" as a major historical document of the MOW will greatly contribute to give Rokeya her due place and strengthen the common struggle of women in South Asia, Asia-Pacific and beyond.

12 Risk Assessment

12.1 Condition

Describe the physical condition of the documentary heritage.

As paper document it is in stable condition.

12.2 Threat/Risk

Detail the nature and scope of threats to the nominated documentary heritage. For example, poor storage, climate, control of access.

There is no threat.

Both institutions maintain professional archive standards to ensure the preservation and proper useage of the items.

13 Preservation and Access Management Plan

Management Plan

Are there management plans to preserve and provide access to the nominated documentary heritage?

√ YES NO

If YES, describe or attach a summary of the plan or plans.

LWM has full-fledged archival facilities with preservation skill and technique. As the museum is custodian of many type of documents it also developed manpower needed to handle old papers, photographs, books etc. LWM has worked with UNESCO previously with the Memory of the World inscription with BNCU and MOWCAP on the Historic 7th March Speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In 2017 the item we recognized as MoW and LWM as custodian of the Documentary heritage.

India:

If NO, provide details about any proposed preservation, storage and access strategies and plans.

Is there a disaster risk management plan in place to support the preservation and safeguarding of the nominated documentary heritage?

√ YES NO

If YES, describe or attach a summary of the disaster risk management plan or plans (if not included in the management plan).

Newly constructed (2017) permanent structure of the LWM has earthquake, flood and other natural calamity resistance strength. Standard firefighting measures and smoke-detection facilities are in place. 24 hour security surveillance is operating.

India:

If NO, provide details about any proposed disaster risk management strategies and plans. This is an opportunity to express any needs for technical support/assistance.

14 Consultation with Stakeholders

Provide details of consultation with stakeholders about this nomination. Stakeholders include communities with an involvement in the documentary heritage, owners and custodians of the documentary heritage and scholars who research the documentary heritage.

LWM conducted consultation with researchers, academics and collectors regarding the nomination. Time to time LWM discussed with officials from BNCU. In its effort to find the original edition of 'Sultana's Dream' LWM has made appeal in newspaper and TV. The search lead LWM to the PMML in Delhi, India and they previously shared a copy of original magazine of 1905 with LWM.

LWM has also traced the original of the 'Indian Ladies' Magazine' in the South Asian Collection of the British Library. LWM has exchange of notes with both the institution regarding the collection. The letters are self-explanatory and are given in Attachment 5 & 6.

15 Other Information to Support the Nomination

Please provide any other information that supports the inclusion of this documentary heritage collection on the Memory of the World Asia Pacific Regional Register.

মুক্তিযুদ্ধ াদুঘর

LIBERATION WAR MUSEUM

Plot# F-11/A-B, Civic Sector, Agargaon
Sher-E-Banglanagar, Dhaka – 1207, Bangladesh
Institutional Member of AAM
Founder Member of International Coalition of Sites of Conscience
Phone : 88-02-48114991-3, 09611-677223, e-mail : mukti.jadughar@gmail.com
website : www.liberationwarmuseumbd.org

সর্বসাধারণের সহযোগিতায় স্থাপিত নাগরিকজনের প্রতিষ্ঠান

Ref: Mu-Ju/04-24/057

15 April 2024

Ms. Linh Anh Moreau
Secretary General
MOWCAP

Dear Ms. Linh Anh Moreau,

Thank you for your mail dated 28 March 2024 informing us about the Register Sub-Committee (RSC) review of our nomination. As per the RSC suggestion we have changed the title to "Sultana's Dream' by Rokeya S. Hossain" and revised the proposal as a single country nomination solely of the Liberation War Museum, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

We have also incorporated detail info about the holding of the original copy of the Indian Ladies' Magazine outside Bangladesh, in the Prime Minister Museum & Library (PMM&L), India and South Asian Collection in the British Library, UK. Our exchange of letters with both institutions are given as Attachment-5 and 6, which explains the issue as of today.

We are also happy to note that we have added two new information regarding the publication of 'Sultana's Dream' from the USA in 2017 with 27 etchings by the Artist Chitra Ganesh. Morever a full-length animation feature film has been made by Spanish Director Isabel Herguera, premiered at San Sebastian Film Festival in 2023. The relevant information with links has been added in the text. The film depicts the relevance of Sultana's Dream in today's world, both the West and the East.

We look forward to join the 10th MOWCAP General Meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia from 6th to 10th May, 2024 and hope to make the presentation on our nomination.

Thank you for all your cooperation.

(Mofidul Hoque)
Trustee
Liberation War Museum
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Liberation War Museum ★ Agargaon, Dhaka-1207 ★

Gmail

Liberation War Museum <mukti.jadughar@gmail.com>

Need your co-operation regarding the 1905 Publication of "Sultana's Dream"

12 March 2024 at 18:19

Ilankuberan, Arani <[redacted]>
To: Liberation War Museum <[redacted]>
Mofidul Hoque <mofidul.hoque71@gmail.com>

Dear Mofidul,

Many thanks for your email, I'm afraid we will not be able to access the items in Boston Spa until the issue is resolved. I apologise for the delays but as soon as it is possible to view them, I will certainly make this a priority to check for you. I will also send an image of the item in my response, I hope this helps, thank you.

I have also requested my colleagues to help with locating the 1908 version of the publication. I will keep you posted on what we find, but please bear in mind that it will take us longer to locate as we are making these checks manually, thank you.

Best wishes,
Arani

BRITISH LIBRARY

Dr Arani Ilankuberan
Head of South Asian Collections
Pronouns: she/her/hers

[redacted]

The British Library
96 Euston Road
LONDON
NW1 2DB

www.bl.uk

From: Liberation War Museum <[redacted]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 8:21 AM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Fwd: Need your co-operation regarding the 1905 Publication of "Sultana's Dream"

You don't often get email from mukti.jadughar@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Dr. Arani Ilankuberan,
[Quoted text hidden]
[Quoted text hidden]

****

[Quoted text hidden]

Photograph of Rokeya S. Hossain with her husband

THE

INDIAN LADIES' MAGAZINE

Vol. V.

July, 1905 to June, 1906

Edited by
Kamala Satthianadhan.

MADRAS
M. E. PRESS, MOUNT ROAD

1906

On Western clouds, the crimson grace
Of sunset lingers still,
A spiritual purple haze
Enshrouds the distant hill
. . . . . .

SARASVATI.

II.—SULTANA'S DREAM.

BY MRS. R. S. HOSSEIN.

ONE evening I was lounging in an easy chair in my bed-room and thinking lazily of the condition of Indian womanhood. I am not sure whether I dozed off or not. But, as far as I remember, I was wide awake. I saw the moonlit sky sparkling with thousands of diamond-like stars, very distinctly.

All of a sudden a lady stood before me; how she came in, I do not know. I took her for my friend, Sister Sara.

"Good morning!" said Sister Sara. I smiled inwardly as I knew it was not *morning*, but starry night. However, I replied to her, saying,

"How do you do?"

"I am all right, thank you. Will you please come out and have a look at our garden?"

I looked again at the moon through the open window, and thought there was no harm in going out at that time. The men servants outside were fast asleep just then, and I could have a pleasant walk with Sister Sara.

I used to have my walks with Sister Sara, when we were at Darjeeling. Many a time did we walk hand in hand and talk light-heartedly in the Botanical gardens there. I fancied, Sister Sara had probably come to take me to some such garden, and I readily accepted her offer and went out with her.

When walking, I found to my surprise that it was a fine morning! The town was fully awake and the streets alive with bustling crowds. I was feeling very shy, thinking I was walking in the street in broad daylight, but there was not a single man visible.

Some of the passers-by made jokes at me. Though I could not understand their language, yet I felt sure they were joking. I asked my friend, "What do they say?"

"The women say that you look very mannish."

"Mannish!" said I, "What do they mean by that?"

"They mean that you are shy and timid like men!"

"Shy and timid like a man!" It was really a joke! I became very nervous, when I found that my companion was not Sister Sara, but a stranger. Oh! what a fool had I been to mistake this lady for my dear old friend, Sister Sara!

She felt my fingers tremble in her hand, as we were walking hand in hand.

"What is the matter, dear?" she said affectionately.

"I feel somewhat awkward," I said in a rather apologising tone, "as being a purdahnishin woman I am not accustomed to walking about unveiled."

"You need not be afraid of coming across a man here. This is Ladyland, free from sin and harm. Virtue herself reigns here."

By and by I was enjoying the scenery. Really it was very grand. I mistook a patch of grass for a velvet cushion! Feeling as if I were walking on soft carpet, I looked down and found the path was covered with moss and flowers.

"How nice it is?" said I.

"Do you like it?" asked Sister Sara. (I continued calling her "Sister Sara," and she kept calling me by my name).

"Yes, very much; but I do not like to tread on the tender and sweet flowers!"

"Never mind, dear Sultana! Your treading will not harm them; they are street flowers."

"The whole palace looks like a garden," said I admiringly, "You have arranged every plant so skilfully."

"Your Calcutta could become a nicer garden than this, if only your countrymen wanted to make it so."

"They would think it useless to give so much attention to horticulture, while they have so many other things to do."

"They could not find a better excuse!" said she with a smile.

I became very curious to know where the men were. I met more than a hundred women, while walking there, but not a single man!

"Where are the men?" I asked her.

"In their proper places, where they ought to be."

"Pray let me know what you mean by 'their proper places.'"

"O! I see my mistake, you cannot know our customs, as you were never here before. We shut our men indoors."

"Just as we are kept in the zenana?"

"Exactly so."

"How funny!" I burst into a laugh. Sister Sara laughed too.

"But dear Sultana! how unfair it is to shut in the harmless women and let loose the men."

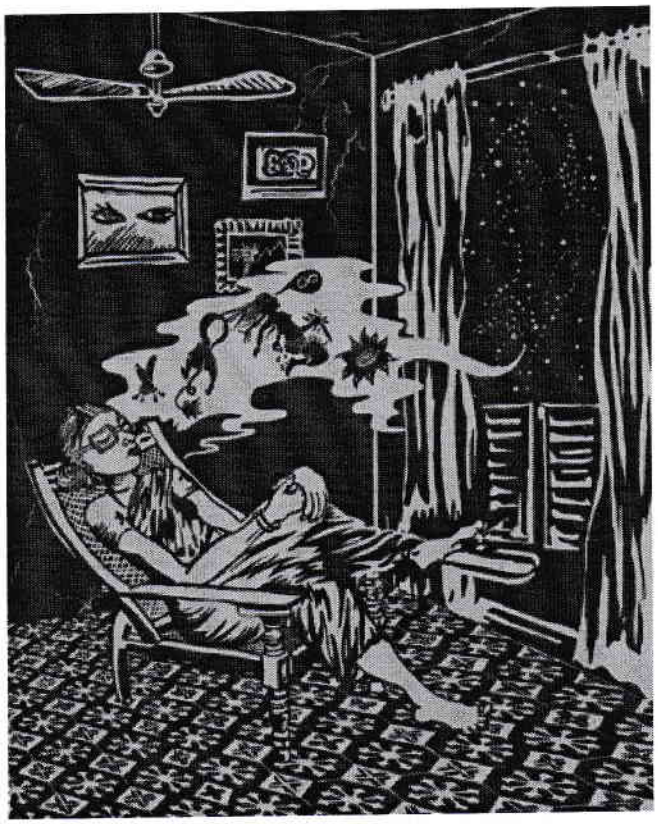
"Why? It is not safe for us to come out of the zenana, as we are naturally weak."

"Yes, it is not safe so long as there are men

SULTANA'S DREAM

Chitra Ganesh adapted "Sultana's Dream," a 1905 feminist utopian story by Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain into a series of 27 linocut prints. Ganesh has said her work "connects with the problems shaping 21st-century life," and by placing Sultana's Dream in the present or near future, the artist explores contemporary issues of societal unrest, environmental catastrophe, geopolitical conflicts, and modern hurdles to realizing utopian dreams.

Explore all 27 prints below. Click on an image to read the corresponding part of the original 1905 story that inspired the print. Click here to read the full story or hear it read to you.



The Condition of Womanhood