

The Quest for Learning: Five Learned Bengali Muslim Women of the Early Twentieth Century

Saika Hossain

Abstract

Bengali Muslim women in Colonial Bengal were among the most disadvantaged, economically impoverished and marginalized section of the society. In the traditional Bengali Muslim society, women were the victims of the age-old bondage and were segregated completely, from the outside world. The so-called Quranic injunction and fatwas imposed on them by the orthodox Mullahs and Maulanas prevented most of the Muslim women from receiving the rudiments of education. Throughout the nineteenth century, there were strong prejudices against Muslim women's education and even in the early twentieth century, the education of Bengali Muslim girls, was in a deplorable state. Most of the discourses on women in India has therefore ignored or dismissed Bengali Muslim women's role in society as insignificant as they remained subjugated and invisible in the society. The social prejudices which had hindered the education among Muslim women till the 19th Century began to disappear gradually in the 20th Century. The traditional idea of female education began to change, *aborodh* or seclusion of women lost its force and traditional family life of the Muslims began to enter into transition. With the progress of education in the Muslim community of Bengal, a group of 'new women' emerged in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Many of these 'new women' were no longer contented in their static role of domesticity and they were attending schools and colleges in large numbers for education. This article mainly focuses on the lives of five such first generation educated Bengali Muslim women who emerged out of their confines into the outside world.

Key words: Bengali Muslim Women, Colonial Bengal, Early 20th Century, Backwardness, Marginalization, Aborodh, Education, Empowerment.

In the nationalist histories of colonial India, we find that Bengali Muslim women are invisible and silenced. The absence of Muslim women from the written history of the nineteenth century Bengal is typically explained in terms of their apparent 'traditionalism' and 'backwardness.' History appears in these studies not as an 'incomplete record of the past' in need of

TRIVIUM

correction but as an active participant in the ‘production of knowledge’ that legitimizes the exclusion and subordination of subaltern groups such as Muslim women. According to the conventional story of the Bengal Renaissance, Muslim women in Bengal, unlike many Brahma or Hindu upper castes, were largely unable or perhaps even unwilling to participate in the nineteenth century reforms initiated by the Brahma or the Hindu *Bhadralok*. Therefore since the historical accounts of nineteenth century Bengal typically centre around the story of the Bengal Renaissance, Muslim women rarely appear in them except as footnotes, even when such accounts deal explicitly with women. Indeed, from a survey of the Indian historiography, one might get the impression that as far as the public life of late colonial Bengal was concerned, Muslim women almost did not exist. Mahua Sarkar has pointed out that history appears in her study not as an incomplete record of the past’ in need of correction but as an active participant in the production of knowledge that legitimizes the exclusion and subordination of subaltern groups such as Bengali Muslim women.¹ Although some attempts in this direction are being made, none the less Bengali Muslim women still remain almost invisible in our academic discourses and historical literature. This essay will endeavour to fill up the lacuna to some extent, and will focus on Bengali Muslim women during the first half of the twentieth century. In this essay I would like to focus on five such remarkable Bengali Muslim “New Women” who overcame many constraints and orthodoxies in the prevailing nineteenth century Bengali society and played a significant role in the society.

During the end of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth, the world of Bengali Muslim women was undergoing vast changes. They were coming out of their isolated and exclusively domestic existence.² Sonia Nishat Amin has used the terms *bhadralok* and *bhadramahila* respectively for the new type of Muslim men and women that emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century. Amin used *bhadramahila* to denote Muslim women of the *andarmahal* who were participating in the process of “modernization.” Maleka Begum dates Bengali Muslim women’s *jagaran* (literally meaning awakening, revival or regeneration) from the late nineteenth century and the birth of Muslim women’s movement from the early twentieth century. Scholars pointed out that a change had started since the mid-nineteenth century and that even in the

The Quest for Learning: Five Learned Bengali Muslim Women of the Early Twentieth Century

1980s the process was not completed. Nor did it influence in a uniform manner all strata of middle class women. Nevertheless, during the first half of the twentieth century, while the political struggle against the British rule dominated the front stage, in the backyard of social scenario, major changes were taking place. Perhaps the most significant shift, from women's perspective was their entry into the public domain, the impact of which is being felt even today at multiple levels.

Although in moral terms, Islam places the two sexes in a position of equality before god, in social terms women were subordinate to men. The Koran provides legal protection for women in matters like inheritance and divorce.³ The Koran emphasizes on the just treatment of women and prohibits female infanticide. However, in reality Bengali Muslim women enjoyed no such rights (except in very special cases) and were not normally entitled to inherit. The sons were to carry on the family name, while the daughters were given away in marriage to their husbands (to whose families they were supposed to belong). Elementary education was never denied to a Muslim girl as it was believed to be the tool to spread the basic tenets of the faith. Muslim women of the upper and middle class families received some traditional education that consisted of primarily knowledge of the Koran and a few religious texts. Education was usually imparted from the age of four or five and girls in about two years learned to read the Koran in Arabic without any comprehension. In some families they were taught some Urdu too. Begum Rokeya pointed out in a satirical manner:

In Bengal Muslim girls are not educated in a sensible way. They are not allowed to begin their studies by reading books which are easy to understand. Before learning their mother tongue, they are expected to memorize the Quran like a parrot without understanding the meaning of the Arabic words. Naturally the girls cannot make satisfactory progress in the field of learning. Some of them learn to read Urdu but do not learn to hold the pen and finally early marriage closes this chapter of incomplete learning. The maximum qualification that a Muslim girl can achieve under such circumstances is to learn cooking and sewing.⁴

A woman's secondary position was largely because of her economic dependence on her male kin. She was also not permitted to earn her living by gainful employment, which involved participation in public and male

TRIVIUM

domain. The denial of education to them, child marriage and the purdah completed their invisibility in the public domain.⁵ Contact with a different culture in the colonial period directed the attention of Bengali men to the condition of women in their society. Faith in Modern education led *bhadralok* reformers to believe that the education of women was necessary to achieve any reform, not only in the condition of women but in the state of society at large. Bengali Muslim reformers like Ameer Ali, Ameer Hossain argued that women when educated, would become better Muslims, learn to appreciate the message of Islam and consequently would be better equipped to bring up their children in the true spirit of Islam. At this time, the movement for women's education was of greater significance and the programme of *zenana* education was launched. Some of the first generation of educated women began to write and publish their works. Thus we see that the situation began to improve for women, only from the late nineteenth century.

The first Bengali Muslim woman to write in modern prose was Bibi Taherannessa. Her essay is in the form of a long letter, 'Bamaganer Rachana' which appeared in the *Bamabodhini Patrika* between the middle of February and the middle of March in 1865, was the first published essay written by a Bengali Muslim woman.⁶ Taherannessa writes this letter to the editor of *Bamabodhini Patrika* and in this letter she pleads for women's education. She writes, 'The women of this country who lack this gem of education wreak indiscipline in this world of the Great Creator, which is a cause for regret.' She also points out, 'If their blind lack of knowledge cannot be removed through education, they will fall prey to wrong practices.' She appeals to the men, 'O civilized men of this land, do not remain neglectful of educating women. If you really want to see the earth a happy place, then make the effort to adorn your women with the ornament of education.' Taherannessa raised a few valid points about education and social rights of women. She wrote:

Men and Women together constitute the whole society, therefore women have a definite role to play; but they are unable to do so owing to their ignorance and backwardness. Let women be educated.⁷

Thus we see, that Taherannesa justifies her position that women should be educated, because a woman without knowledge would not know what to do with wealth or power.

The Quest for Learning: Five Learned Bengali Muslim Women of the Early Twentieth Century

At a time when even the liberal reformers, such as Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in North India and Abdul Lateef in Bengal hardly thought it necessary for women to acquire education beyond the most rudimentary stage, Faizunnessa foresaw the importance of both Muslim men and women acquiring western education.⁸ With this in view, she took various measures for the spread of education. She established a free Madrassah at her residence in Paschimgaon, which today functions as Faizunnessa Degree College. In 1901, she founded an English middle school named after her daughter, Badrunnessa. She also set up primary schools at each of her administrative centres (*kacharis*) in her estate. Sonia Nishat Amin points out that, perhaps her single greatest achievement was the establishment of an English medium school for girls in 1873, several decades before Rokeya founded the Sakhawat Memorial in Calcutta in 1911.⁹ The Faizunnessa Girl's pilot High School was designed for *pardanashin* girls. Many women, who later became eminent, studied in this school, though the initial response from the Muslim community was lukewarm. It was later taken up by the government and converted into a high school.¹⁰ This school was founded a few years prior to the establishment of the Eden Female School in Dhaka. Faizunnessa may therefore be regarded as the pioneer in Muslim women's education in Bengal.

In 1889, Faizunnessa received the title of Nawab from Queen Victoria for the administration of her estates and her philanthropy. The award of the title Nawab to a Muslim lady in those times created quite a stir and was flashed in contemporary newspapers.¹¹ The credit for being the first Bengali Muslim woman in modern times to write a full-length book also goes to Nawab Faizunnessa Chaudhurani, the author of *Rupjalal*. Faizunnessa's *Rupjalal* which was considered semi-autobiographical was published from Dhaka in 1876. The book is considered to be an epic and has the flavour of the Islamic Hindu syncretic ethos of rural Bengal. Apart from *Rupjalal* she wrote some other excellent books like *Tatta O Jatiya Sangeet*, *Sangeetsar* and *Sangeet Lahari*.¹²

Being a philanthropist and a champion of women's emancipation, Faizunnessa established a number of schools and Madrassahs and a zenana hospital in 1893.¹³ She was the first woman in Bengal who was given the title of 'Nawab' by the British Parliament for her philanthropic works.

TRIVIUM

Although she was offered by Government the title of 'Begum,' Faizunnesa did not accept it as she wanted the masculine title of 'Nawab' and this was ultimately given to her.¹⁴ Faizunnesa separated from her husband, returned to her ancestral home in Paschimgaon near Comilla and looked after the estates remaining behind *pardah*, in keeping with the custom of female seclusion. Although Faizunnesa herself was not a full-fledged progressive, modern *bhadramohila* as she traversed the public forum everyday retaining her invisibility by observing strict *pardah*, it would be wrong to mark Faizunnesa as a conservative person.¹⁵ She was a Bengali Muslim woman who had administered her own zamindari, set up a Girl's school, left her husband on account of polygamy and raised the gender issue by refusing the title of Begum. Although Faizunnesa was not a feminist, her wholehearted patronisation of female education placed her in a high position among enlightened Muslim women.

Bibi Khairunnesa Khatun (c 1870-1912) is one of the many Muslim female writers, whose details seem to have been lost in the ravages of time. However from an essay written by Saiyyad Abdul Maqsood (a writer, reporter and researcher from Dhaka), one finds that she was born in a middle class family of Sirajganj. Khairunnesa served as a Headmistress in Hossainpur Balika Vidyalaya in Sirajganj during the end of the nineteenth century. She organized a night school to educate the *pardanashin* Muslim girls and she went from village to village on foot to collect girl students and educate them in her night school. In 1904, she published an essay 'Amader Shikhar Antarai' (The Impediments to our Education) in *Nabonoor*, (vol. 8, no. 2) in which she propagated female education. In this essay she also mentions that she is extremely worried about the financial crisis of Hossainpur Girl's School. In order to solve the financial crisis of the school, Khairunnesa went from door to door and collected money and goods donated by liberal Muslims.¹⁶ In 1908, she published 'Satir Patibhakti' (The Devotion of a Chaste Wife) which was a manual for women, listing the duties of a good wife. In this book she highlighted the husband-wife relationship, duties of a woman to her family and women's emancipation. In her writing she pointed out that female backwardness was the root of social decline. Women were not born to bear children and the household in which women were not happy would never prosper.¹⁷ Khairunnesa was probably the first of the early women writers to formulate her ideas on

The Quest for Learning: Five Learned Bengali Muslim Women of the Early Twentieth Century

social and political issues of that time. In 1905, she published an essay entitled 'Swadeshanwag' in which she appealed to women to boycott foreign goods and to take a *Swadeshi* vow. She played a huge role in the anti-partition agitation of 1905. It is also said that Khairunnessa participated in the Congress-led processions in Sirajganj at the time. Khairunnessa died sometime between 1908 and 1911. She would be remembered as a well learned and cultured lady who played an active part in the anti-Partition movement of 1905 and made a huge contribution to women's education.

Another erudite Bengali Muslim woman was Shamsunnahar Mahmud, a writer, educationist, teacher, social worker and later, a parliamentarian in East Pakistan. She was born in an aristocratic, cultured and enlightened family of Noakhali, which had taken to western liberal education and had crusaded for women's rights. Her maternal grandfather, Maulana Abdul Aziz, was one of the founding members of the Muslim Suhrid Sammelani. Nonetheless, her childhood was spent in the strictest *Purdah* in Chittagong. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree with distinction in 1932 from Calcutta University and was accorded a civic reception by Rokeya's Anjuman-i-Khawmateen-i-Islam the same year. In her address, Rokeya said:

We are assembled here on the occasion of Nahar's passing her B.A. This is an honour for all of us women. I pray that more women follow Nahar's footsteps.¹⁸

Shamsunnahar appeared for the Master's examination as a private candidate and she successfully passed M.A. in 1942. She was married to the educated and magnanimous Dr. Wahiduddin Mahmud and her marriage opened the doors for her to higher education and ended her days of confinement. Since then, there was no looking back, only a steady climb up the ladder.

Shamsunnahar and her brother Habibullah Bahar jointly edited *Bulbul* from Calcutta in 1933. She was primarily an educationist and many of her writings were concerned with the various aspects of education. Her main literary works are *Punnyamayee* (1925), *Rokeya Jibani* (1937), *Begum Mahal* (1938), *Shishur Siksha* (1939), *Nazrulke Jeman Dekhechi* (1958) and *Amar Dekha Turaska*. Shamsunnahar started writing at the age of ten. Her first work *Punnyamayee* (The virtuous woman) was published in 1925, when she was only seventeen years old.¹⁹ It contained short biographies of

TRIVIUM

eight great women of the Muslim world who served as role models. In her *Begum Mahal* Shamsunnahar recorded the lives of great Pathan and Mughal women of medieval India. Her most well known work was *Rokeya Jibani*, an authentic biography of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, her mentor and comrade in the crusade for women's education. *Rokeya Jibani* (The life of Rokeya) was published from Calcutta in 1937. Her work entitled 'Shishur Siksha' was highly appreciated by Rabindranath Tagore who was experimenting with the ideal environment for the development of children at Santiniketan.²⁰ In Prabasi, Shamsunnahar wrote an article titled 'Shishu-Sahitya' in which she explained the child psychology, citing the educational ideas of Frobel, Montessori, Harbert Spencer and Rabindranath Tagore.²¹ Her book *Nazrulke Jemon Dekhechi* (As I saw Nazrul) was about the common and firm belief that both of them shared regarding the lamentable conditions of the women of Bengali society. In 1926 Kazi Nazrul Islam visited their home in Calcutta with her elder brother Habibullah Bahar. On that occasion she did not get to meet him and she only heard him read and sing his poetry of protest from the inner chambers. Back in Dhaka, Nazrul wrote to Shamsunnahar, 'The girls in our country are very unfortunate. I have seen many girls born with enormous talent, but their potential dried up under demands of society.'²²

Shamsunnahar was largely involved with issues concerning women throughout her life. In 1935 women had no voting rights. Shamsunnahar was one of the chief pioneers who on behalf of the Nikhil Bharat Mahila Andolan principally struggled for the voting rights of women. In 1939, at the initiative of A.K. Fazlul Huq, the Chief Minister of Bengal at the time, Lady Brabourne College was set up in Calcutta and Shamsunnahar was appointed the Head of the Bengali Department. In the 1930s her work was creating innumerable waves. She joined many women's organizations and became active in the women's movement in undivided India. She was a tireless worker for the All India Women's Conference, National Council for women in India, Bengal Women's Education League, Bengal Provincial Council of Women and other women's organizations. She got the opportunity to exchange views and discuss ideas with well-known women from India and abroad. In 1944, in recognition of her achievements in the fields of education and social welfare the British government honoured her with the title of MBE. After partition of India Shamsunnahar returned to Dhaka and joined the Eden Girls's College. She joined the government run

The Quest for Learning: Five Learned Bengali Muslim Women of the Early Twentieth Century

women's organization APWA (All Pakistan Women's Association). On the question of women's rights, she was extremely vocal. In 1961, in the drawing up of Muslim Family Law, her role was pioneering. She was the president of the 'Begum Club' in Dhaka, from its inception till the end of her life. She died on 14 April 1964.

Fazilatunnesa Zoha (1905-1975) was one of the pioneers of women's emancipation and was considered as a model for the women of the time. She was born in an ordinary family in Tangail and was self-made. She passed the Matriculation examination from Eden school with flying colours in 1921. She was the first Muslim student at Bethune College and received her B.A degree in 1923. After completing her bachelor's degree, she went to Dhaka University which had been founded in 1921. She was not only the first among Bengali Muslim women to study for M.A, but also the first Muslim female student at the University of Dhaka where she completed her M.A degree. Mohammad Nasiruddin wrote:

In those days, the attitude of Muslim society towards women was extremely old fashioned. They could not imagine a Muslim girl sitting with boys in a classroom. When Fazilatunnesa went to attend classes in a sari, without wearing the burqa, occasionally stones would be thrown at her. But she remained undaunted. She earned a scholarship and through sheer hard work and grit fulfilled her ambition of receiving higher education.²³

Her result in the M.A examination in 1927 created a stir in all circles and Nazrul Islam himself wrote a poem in her honour. She was intelligent, hardworking and in 1928, she went to England for higher education.

Fazilatunnesa chose education for a career. She was the Head of the Department of Mathematics at Bethune College in Calcutta and later the Vice-Principal till 1947. 'It was a rare honour for a Muslim woman to become a Vice-Principal in a premier educational institution in those days.'²⁴ In 1947, her family opted for Pakistan and Fazilatunnesa went to Dhaka and took charge of Eden College as its Principal. Fazilatunnesa expressed her opinion against patriarchal society through her writings. In an article on female education which was published in *Saogat* in 1927, she advocated equal educational rights for women. In this article entitled

TRIVIUM

‘Muslim Nari Sikshar Prayojaniyata’ she wrote in favour of the spread of formal secular female education along western lines where boys and girls would receive the same education.²⁵ Such an education she believed would be beneficial for the Muslim society at large. She said that women have been confined in prison, which resisted the advance of knowledge in women’s mind. Citing the ideas of Romain Rolland and Bertrand Russell, Fazilatunnesa said that freedom of women is a necessity and no society can prosper without recognition of women’s freedom. In an article entitled ‘Muslim Narir Mukti’ published in *Saogat* in 1336 B.S. she boldly pleaded for women’s emancipation through education.²⁶ Thus, we see that Fazilatunnesa was the first Bengali Muslim woman to earn a postgraduate degree and the courage with which she took the first step in that direction was awe-inspiring.

In conclusion, it may be said that by the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, Bengali Muslim women were portrayed as ‘backward’ or simply ‘invisible’ in the national imaginary. In fact, it is in the figure of the traditional women silenced and victimized by the barbarity of Muslim men, that Muslim women make their few appearances in the nationalist discourse. We see that the Bengali Muslim women were mostly incorporated into the larger story of Indian womanhood in this particular manner, and hence everything else that they did simply became invisible in the Nationalist historiography. It appears as if the colonization of the subcontinent and birth of the nation were events as a result of which the lives of Hindu (middle class/ upper caste) women changed immensely, and all these tumultuous changes simply passed by Muslim women who continued to languish in their misery because of their religion.

In this paper, I discussed five enlightened Bengali Muslim women in the first half of the twentieth century who through their works tried to improve the condition of the women in the prevailing Bengali Muslim society. Thus we see that the late nineteenth and early twentieth century witnessed the emergence of “new women” within Bengali Muslim society. Taherunnesa criticized the native *bhadralok*, both the Hindus and the Muslims for their opposition to female education, pointing out that like sons, the educated daughters too can glorify both private and public worlds. Faizunnesa’s single-minded effort for promotion of education had given her a rank among the enlightened Muslim women. Khairunnesa was a nationalist and was also a patron of learning. Muslim women like Shamsunnahar and

The Quest for Learning: Five Learned Bengali Muslim Women of the Early Twentieth Century

Fazilatunnessa stressed on women's economic self-sufficiency for achieving self reliance for the entire nation. They wrote on a wide range of issues pertinent to women's lives in the first half of the twentieth century. Western education, husband-wife relationship, child education and above all, a call for revolt against patriarchal society comprised the main themes of their thought process. These Bengali Muslim women gained respect and recognition for both their writing and their activism over time, but few readers outside Bangladesh and West Bengal would recognize their names. As historical sources the works of all these early Bengali Muslim women writers is important and they deserve much more attention from historians and scholars of the present day. As scholars of history, we would definitely appreciate the efforts of these women, writing in the early days of the twentieth century. These women broke years of silence to write about women's education, employment, seclusion or marriage and broadened the horizons of the reform movement so that women could have an easier passage in the future.

Endnotes:

- 1 Mahua Sarkar, *Visible Histories, Disappearing Women: Producing Muslim Womanhood in Late Colonial Bengal* (New Delhi: Zuban, 2008).
- 2 Bharati Roy, 'Beyond the Domestic / Public Dichotomy: Women's History in Bengal, 1905-1947' in S. P. Sen and N. R. Roy, ed. *Modern Bengal: A Socio-Economic Survey* (Calcutta: Naya Prakash, 1973).
- 3 Bharati Roy, *Early Feminists of Colonial India: Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 43.
- 4 *Rokeya Rachanabali* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1984), p. 33. Press, 1984).
- 6 Bibi Taherunnesa, 'Bamabodhini Sampadakke patra,' *Bamabodhini Patrika*, (1865; Falgun 1271 B.S):2.19, part1, 275-77.
- 7 Ghulam Murshid, *Reluctant Debutante*, (Rajshahi: Sahitya Sansad, 1983), p. 40.
- 8 Gail Minault, 'Sayyid Mumtaz Ali and 'Huquq un-Niswan': An Advocate of Women's Rights in Islam in the Late Nineteenth Century,' *Modern Asian Studies* 24.1(February, 1990): 147-172
- 9 Sonia Nishat Amin, 'The Early Muslim Bhadramahila: The Growth of learning and Creativity, 1876 to 1939' in Bharati Ray, ed. *From the Seams of History: Essays on Indian Women*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 114-116.

TRIVIUM

- 10 For more details about Faizunnessa see Manirujjaman, *Faizunnessa Chaudhurani* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1988).
- 11 Abdul Quddus, *Rupjalal* (preface), pp. 15-16.
- 12 Rowson Ara Begum, *Nawab Faizunnessa O Purbabanger Muslim Samaj*, (Dacca: Bangla Academy, 1993), pp. 77-101.
- 13 Selina Bahar Zaman, 'Kalantare Nari, Nawab Faizunnessa: Jibon O Sahitya Karma,' *Sangbad Patrika*, 30th year, no. 306, Dacca, 20 Chaitra, 1387 B.S.
- 14 W.H Thomson, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Tippera, 1915-1919*, (Calcutta, 1920), p. 77.
- 15 Sonia Nishat Amin, *The World of Muslim Women in Colonial Bengal, 1876-1939* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 217.
- 16 'Shikshabratī Khairunnessa' in *Zenana Mehfil: Bengali Musalman Lekhikader Nirbachita Rachana, 1904-1938*, Shaheen Akhtar and Moushumi Bhowmik, eds. (Calcutta: Stree Publication, 1998), pp. 36-39.
- 17 Mohammad Mansuruddin, *Bangla Sahitye Muslim Sadhana* (Dacca : Ratan Publishers, 1981), pp. 197-198.
- 18 Cited by Anwara Bahar Chowdhury, *Shamsunnahar Mahmud* (Dhaka Bangla Akademi, 1987), p. 20.
- 19 *Punyamoyee* (Calcutta : Bulbul Publishing House, 1925).
- 20 Anwara Bahar Chowdhury, *Shamsunnahar Mahmud* (Dacca: Bangla Academy, 1987), p. 54.
- 21 Shamsunnahar Mahmud, 'Shishu-Sahitya,' *Probasi*, Shrabān, 1350 B.S. p. 268.
- 22 Shamsunnahar Mahmud, *Nazrulke Jemon Dekhechi* (Calcutta : Navyug Prakashani, 1958), p. 35.
- 23 Mohammad Nasiruddin, 'Miss Fazilatunnessa, M.A.,' *Bangla Sahitye Saugat Yug* (Dhaka : Noorjahan Begum, 1985), p. 583.
- 24 Akhtar Imam, *Eden theke Bethune*, (Dhaka, Akhtar Imam, 1990), p.37.
- 25 Fazilatunnessa, 'Muslim Nari Shiksar Prayojanijata,' *Saugat*, Agraphayan, 1334 B.S.; pp. 524-529.
- 26 Fazilatunnessa, 'Muslim Narir Mukti,' *Saugat*, Agraphayan, 1334 B.S. in *Zenana Mehfil*, pp. 167-170.