

The story, originally published in *The Indian Ladies Magazine*, Madras, India, 1905, in English, is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, documented expressions of the scientific imagination behind solar cookers. The same story, a pungent satire on male dominated society, which antedated by a decade the much better-known feminist utopian novel, Herland, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, is also a masterpiece of ecological and renewable energy literature which envisioned natural conservation, environmental protection and -- even more astonishing --scientific advancements which included the use of solar electricity, solar heat collectors, rainwater harvesting and hydrogen-powered vehicles!

Rokeya Sadan, a shelter for girls and women operated by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, is named after Begum Rokeya. It occupies an entire upper floor in a multi-story building in Mahila Parishad's headquarters in Dhaka. The building, Sufia Kamal Bhaban, is named after Poet Sufia Kamal (1911-1999), the founder-president of Mahila Parishad. Fortunately, she was also my mother and the one who introduced me to Begum Rokeya's writings on renewable energy.

It was a great honour and pleasure for me, with the support of my family and friends, to be able to contribute a stand-alone photovoltaic system which reliably provides lighting for Rokeya Sadan, even when it is dark in the rest of the building due to the frequent load shedding and the unreliability of the grid. The system was installed in 2004 -- one hundred years after Begum Rokeya wrote "Sultana's Dream."

Together let us act to more fully to realise Begum Rokeya's dream -- and vision -- and Bangladesh's aspiration for an energy self-sufficient, prosperous, sustainable and peaceable future. Such a future is eminently possible by relying on a path lighted by its very own renewable energy mine, and at the same time, by becoming a part of the global solution and setting an inspiring example for the rest of the world -- which too is our shared home, under the same sun!

Endnotes

1. Schumacher, E. F., A Guide for the Perplexed. New York: Harper & Row, 1977, p. 15.
2. Edison, Thomas Alva, quoted in "Power for the 21st Century," a booklet of SELCO (Solar Electric Light Company), Chevy Chase, MD. Also, http://radio.weblogs.com/0109157/stories/2003/01/20/randomQuotes.html
3. See, e.g. Editors of The Ecologists, Blueprint for Survival. New York: New American Library.
4. Scheer, Hermann, www.windworks.org/FeedLaws/HermannScheerLessonsfromGermany.html
5. Nocera, Daniel, http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/ 2008/oxygen-0731.html
6. Rabindranath Tagore on rural reconstruction, Government of India, New Delhi (no date) Quoted in: Sillitoe, Paul, ed. Indigenous Knowledge and Development in Bangladesh: Present and Future. London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 2000.7. http://www.bencenter.org/energy/BEN_Energy_Panel_Final_Final_Sep%201_2006.doc