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## PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IN RASHID JAHAN'S PLAY "WOMEN" (AURAT)

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**Abstract:** This paper "Psychological distress in Rashid Jahan play "Women" (Aurat) will deal with the psychological distress a woman goes through when her husband in a Muslim family decides to marry for the second time. She (protagonist) protests from the very beginning but becomes a helpless victim trapped in the clutches of social customs and tradition practiced in the name of religion. This paper will be dealt with the Feminist perspective and will trace the protagonist's quest for identity. It will also throw light on the psychological and physical violence she has been going through, all her life and emerges as a universal woman.

The research paper's focus will be in the context of marriage. It will discuss the problems and issues a wife solves and avoids for the sake of her relationship but men, in the name of religion (shariat), decide to marry again, this shakes a woman's identity to the core.

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**Introduction:** Rashid Jahan (1905- 1952) was an Indian writer who inaugurated a new era of Urdu literature written by women. Rashid Jahan, a gynecologist by profession and the daughter of Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah, was her senior in Aligarh school days. She was a committed political organizer, a founder-member of the Progressive Writers' Association, an active member of Indian Peoples' Theatre Association (IPTA), a life-long campaigner for women's rights, and a free-spirited writer whose life was cut short by cancer at the age of 47. Her works can be divided into four main themes: marriage and oppressive domesticity; women as political subjects; critique of colonialism; women's body and health; and her critique of religion, poverty and human suffering.

In December 1932, she co-authored a book called "Angaare" which was promptly banned by the colonial government for hurting the religious sentiments of the Muslim community

"Angaare" (Live Coals) contained five stories by Sajjad Zaheer, two each by Ahmed Ali and Rasheed Jahan and one by Mahmudduzzafar. *Aurat aur Digar Afsane (Woman and Other Stories: 1937)*; *Shola-e-Jawwala (Raging Flames: 1974)* and *Voh aur Dusre Afsane Wa Drame (That One and Other stories and Plays: 1988)*. These writers of "Angare", critiqued Islamic orthodoxy through their stories which contained good deal of anger and agitation against obsolete and retrogressive values. Being born in that community, they showed an acutely critical awareness of the world around them, and felt themselves better qualified to speak for that alone. Her play 'Pardey Ke Peechey' (Behind the Veil) published in the controversial anthology 'Angaare' and four other plays "Aurat" (Woman), Hindustaani (Indian), Padosi (Neighbour) and Gosha-e- Afiyat published in her work 'Voh aur Dusre Afsane wa Dramey'.

The play Aurat (Women) enlightened the reader about the codes and customs which privileged men and undermined the position of Women. Rashid Jahan's play (Women) plots the cruelties imposed on women in the name of religion and society. Her women character in 'Aurat' raised the issue of the importance of property rights for women, which prompts rethinking of the implementation of rights to inherit and control property. It further reinforced the ownership of property as empowerment. Through the character Fatima in the play she audaciously tried to explore, inform and explain to the readers the social contours of patriarchy. She says, "All those books that talks about women's role, have been written by men. The propagators of religion, the codifiers of shariat, formulating rules were men who wrote to suit their needs".

In the play Atiqullah, husband of the protagonist Fatima convinces her that shariat has allowed men to remarry if the wife was barren. Fatima however being a firm woman argues:

This is the first time I've heard the Shari'at law about children not being alive. Godforbid, I'm not barren. I've given birth to ten-twelve children, What can I do if none of them lived? Is it my fault? Should I be punished for that? You give amulets to the whole world. When will you put that knowledge to some use for your own good? Hurling accusations at him she says "You pose as a great maulvi (Muslim religious teacher). The community respects you. People come to you for fatwa. But by god I tell you, all these fabricated dreams of your bum my heart to cinders. Your lies don't affect me anymore. You were saying all these days that one of your disciples was after you, imploring you to marry his daughter. Now suddenly a wise man appears in your dreams on jumerat (Thursday) night!

Women psychologically suffer a lot in marriage. It is just the duty of a "wife" to fulfill the needs of her husband, duty of a "daughter-in-law" to take care of her in-laws, and duty of a "mother" to protect her children and all this stress her (women) mentally, and so Fatima was also under this stress.

She says in an argument with her husband, "What did they know of women's suffering? Had they been women, they would have understood what we have to suffer".

But Fatima being strong and firm woman fights back to the whims of her husband and the demands of domesticity.

To conclude it can be said that Rashid Jahan's writings caused uproar. Being Muslim women she writes about the inequalities faced by women in her Religion. Many of them criticized her but she didn't stop her blunt writings and Aurat was one of her many writings which focuses on the psychological distress as well as the strong side of a woman who doesn't stoops in front of the patriarchal society.

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