

I. General Introduction to *Lajja*

Taslima Nasrin and Islamic Fundamentalism

In February 1993, a Bangladeshi woman writer, Taslima Nasrin, published a book titled *Lajja* (Shame). In the book, Nasrin presents a fictionalized form of an actual account of Bangladeshi Muslim men raping Hindu women in alleged retaliation for the 1992 destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodha, India, by Hindu fundamentalists. Nasrin's book immediately sparked a controversy. Islamic fundamentalists pronounced a fatwa against her and offered a bounty for her death. In 1994, organized groups identified with religious fundamentalists demanded her execution by hanging after her view that Koran should be revised thoroughly was published in the Indian newspapers. The government of the day, whilst not taking action against those who had issued threats, filed a court case against Nasrin charging her with hurting the religious feelings of people and an arrest warrant was issued. Although she anticipated that she may have faced a jail term of up to two years, Nasrin felt it was very likely that she would have been murdered in jail; she went into hiding. After two months she was granted bail and left the country.

Since the publication of *Lajja* Bangladesh has become the center of international attraction. Almost every newspaper wrote about Nasrin. In Bangladesh Nasrin was charged of hurting the religious sentiments of the majority of the people. Although a Muslim herself, Nasrin is not guided by propaganda regarding Hindu and Muslim majority still she has sympathy upon Hindus. One of the reasons she sympathizes with the Hindu minority is that she sees a correlation between the domination of the Muslim females and the Hindu minorities.

Taslima Nasrin was born in August 1962 to a Muslim family in Mymensingh, East Pakistan. As the area became independent in 1971, her city of birth is now in

Bangladesh. Her father was physician and professor at the government medical college. She started writing when she was 15 years old. Nasrin has already published about nineteen books, including poems, short stories, novels and newspaper columns that were eventually published as books. Few of Nasrin's books have been translated into English. From the early phase she started writing about women's oppression. With no hesitation she criticizes religion, traditions and the oppressive cultures and costumes that discriminate women. Her strong language and uncompromising attitude against male domination stirred many people, eliciting both from her readers familiar as well as unacceptable to the Bengali readers.

Nasrin married and divorced more than once. That itself gave her the apparent image of fickleness and recklessness. But what was worse in the eyes of the conventional reader was that she 'unashamedly' talked of women's sexuality and through that challenged male sexual aggression. The challenge that Nasrin threw to the Bangali reader was, however, well received by young students and middle class housewives and professionals.

Nasrin though wrote a lot of articles, poems, short stories but her popularity reached its pick after *Lajja* was published. She was recognized as a writer by the international world. *Lajja* was a short novel, which was written on the spur of movement to depict the plight of the Hindu and Muslim females as well as Hindu minorities in Bangladesh, who were targets of Muslim wrath in the aftermath of the storming of the Babri Mosque in Ayodha, Uttar Pradesh, India in 1992.

In Bangladesh the issue of women appears in the Constitution in part 3, "Fundamental Rights," Subsection 2 of Section 28: "Woman shall have equal rights with man in all sphere of the state and of public life" (10). Whatever the constitution

may be the Islamic society has valued the women in terms of secondary objects as men are the primary ones.

In Bangladesh men deprived women of their rights, women are not behaved as human beings at all. If we view the world's history, each page of history can be seen as created by males. Neither the decision of women nor the thoughts can be found. The Islamic culture seems totally framed by males. The culture of Islam makes females just as an object. The woman is compelled to follow the path shown by her father, husband and the community in the name of rules and regulation or norms and values. The women have to wear the cloth designed by the male (covering their heads) they have to walk, live and eat within the territory of Islamic veil.

In Islamic society, women are compelled to act as inactive, dull and worthless. Regarding their duties they are just the machines to bear child, to cook food, to wash, to make happy to their husband and four walls where they are free to walk wherever they want to but only in the wishes of her children, husband and stay inside other family member's will, only then she is a perfect and good woman otherwise if she even tries to utter a single word which is against her husband's will, she is punished with a tortured word or may be with physical punishment.

In Bangladesh many women are deprived of the bright ray of education. Lack of awareness, discrimination between son and daughter, following traditional culture are some of the problems for women to get education. When the daughter grows up parents are worried to get her daughter married. When a girl attends puberty, her parents immediately begin to suffer from a social anxiety about how to save their daughter's purity so that she can be regarded as a marriageable 'good girl.' This can ensure by marrying daughters off as soon as possible. A woman has no choice and has to follow whatever her parents command and whatever the Islam law says. Under the

cover of Islamic law almost every male has imposed power upon women. In Sathkira district, northwestern Bangladesh, a young woman committed suicide after she was given 101 lashes in public after a village mullah issued a fatwa. Her crime was that she had collected shrimp from the river and sold them in the market, thus violating sexual segregation. Hundreds of girls' schools were burned after mullahs issued fatwas to the effect that sending girls to school instead of to madrasha (religious schools) was an un-Islamic act (11). Delware Hussain Saidi, a top-ranking JI leader whose cassettes of speeches are readily available throughout rural Bangladesh, said in one of his speeches that when a woman works alongside her male colleagues, men will lose interest in her, because men are not interested in those women who are readily available (11). This particular argument by Saidi touches another aspect of the Islam-based cultural construction of gender relations in Bangladesh: sexuality and sexual domination.

Since independence in 1971, a quiet revolution has been taking place in Bangladesh, especially in the rural areas where most Bangladeshis live. Rural women are becoming politically organized and asserting themselves. Various NGOs are placing more importance on girls' education. Women are accepting family planning in greater numbers and lowering the birthrate, and women's contribution to the family income, a sign of independence, has increased. Rural Bangladesh, in particular, is going through a rapid social transformation where the Islam-based interpretation of gender relations is constantly being challenged. The Bangladeshi Islamic fundamentalists are responding violently to these challenges. Recently they demanded the abolition of the Western-funded NGO activities that establish schools for girls and issued numerous fatwas against those who do not send their children to madrasha (religious school), women who work outside the home, and women who bring their children to local health clinics.

Society needs an organization and management for the long lasting and peaceful world, however in Islamic society, women are compelled to act as inactive dull and worthless. Regarding their duties the society thinks when the husband calculates the distance between a star and the sun, the wife measures the length and breath of the pillow case (in order to sew it). When the husband in his imagination moves in a far away solar system surrounded by innumerable heavenly bodies and finds the motion of a comet, the wife moves in her kitchen, measures rice and lentils and watches the movement of the cook. She is no more than a machine to bear children. Her voice is suppressed and if she tries to utter a single word which is against her husband she is punished with a tortured words or may be with physical punishment.

The situation of Hindu women staying in Bangladesh is even worse. Religion is one of the main obstacles as they follow Hinduism where majority follow Islamic religion. Not only Islamic religion, Hindu religion also sees women in two ways. The concept of the female in Hindu ideology presents an essential duality: on the one hand, she is fertile, benevolent the bestowed; on the other, she is aggressive, malevolent – the destroyer. Hinduism as opposite to Christianity, Judaism and Islam, lacks a single authoritative text; rather, it has thousand, produced over a 3,000 year period.

A female must be subject to her father in her childhood, in youth to her husband and when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman can never be independent. Though despite of virtue or good qualities a husband must be constantly worshiped as a god by a faithful wife. If she violates her duty towards her husband, a wife is disgraced in this world; (after death) she enters in the womb of jackal, and is tormented by diseases (as punishment) of her sin. She who controls her thoughts, words, and deeds, is never slight her lord, resides with her husband (in heaven after

death), and is called virtuous (wife). Substitution to male control is the dominant duty of women: nothing must be done independently, even in her own house by a young girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one.

Religion is one of the important parts in Bangladesh for exploiting Hindu women. Majority of people in Bangladesh adopt Islamic religion. In the group of large Islamic people, few numbers of people have almost no choice. Being a woman is even worse. They are first suppressed by the family members and then comes the Islamic society. Hindu females are suppressed more than the Muslim females. They are counted as the second class citizens.

In Bangladesh, Hindu marriage differs from caste to caste. The Hindu marriage rituals have often no lawful ground. So, when the Hindu women want to come out of bad marriages they are in trouble because there is no marriage registration system in the Hindu society in Bangladesh. According to Hindu customs, Hindus marriages are solemnized merely through some religious rituals. There is no marriage registration system for Hindu people in Bangladesh. It is also surprising that there is also no Hindu marriage law or Hindu marriage register in the country. So if any Hindu woman suffers in the hands of her in-laws, she does not get legal help.

As per a 1946 law, Hindu women can file cases in courts to only regain the right to conjugal life. Besides, the Hindu women can file cases under Family Court Ordinance 1985, Dowry Act 1980 and women and children Repression Act 2003. But these laws are too inadequate to protect the Hindu women's rights.

Hindu women in Bangladesh suffer greater gender discrimination than Muslim women due to existing legislation that governs the religious community. Hindu women do not have any legal rights to inherit property and so no formal registration of Hindu marriage is required. Hindu women do not have the legal rights to divorce.

Under the country's Muslim laws Muslim women are allowed to divorce under compelling circumstances. While the government is in favor of amendments to marriage and inheritance laws governing Hindus, it wants the impetus to come from the Hindu community as the government does not want to offend any religious sentiments.

A Hindu woman has no freedom of choice. She cannot live in Muslim society freely. Daily rape case comes on news and often Hindu women are of victim. The situation gets still worse when conflict gets in the name of religion. A Hindu woman either has to take shelter in the Muslim home or should be ready to face the upcoming sexual violence from the Muslim community.

Showing the real situation of women in Bangladesh Taslima Nasrin, a Bangladesh woman writer, wrote *Lajja*. *Lajja* depicts a fictionalized narrative of an actual rape and the torment of Hindu minority family in Bangladesh after the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India, in December 6, 1992. In *Lajja* Nasrin combines historical fiction with a subversive intent. In an interview in a Calcutta newspaper, *Ajkal Kgoj* (1994), Nasrin said that in *Lajja* she had attempted to write a "factual novel" that she got all the information about communal violence against Bangladeshi Hindus and Muslim man raping Hindu women for actual newspaper stories and then create the characters and fictionalized the narrative (9). Nasrin describes the historical and fictional contents of *Lajja* in the following ways: "I saw the communal terrorism of December (1992) with my own eyes. *Lajja* is not a product of my sudden emotions, but the story of the defeat of all of us. *Lajja* is every one's sadness. Human "Suranjan" becomes "Hindu Suranjan," human Hider becomes "Muslim Haidar," to me these two are equally sad" (9). It shows that *Lajja* is not just a fiction but factual as well. Writing *Lajja* she tries to show that humanism is the best religion among all.

Nasrin's writing permanently galvanizes and polarizes political culture in Bangladesh. This political culture that Nasrin introduces through her writings is one of the freshest and most enduring aspects of the numerous contributions. Nasrin argues that her writings are part of a broad political movement against Islamic fundamentalists in their war against women.

In the patriarchal society women are not behaved as human beings at all. Moreover, man deprives woman of her rights. But woman tolerates all types of exploitations without any complaint. Nasrin encourages such women to be bold and conscious of their rights. On September 12, 1994 in an interview to the *New Yorker*, Nasrin said:

Why shouldn't I write about what I've seen? I'm a doctor, remember! Do you know what it like is to see a women crying out in the delivery room. When she gives birth to a girl, terrified that her husband will divorce her? To see the ruptures vaginas of women who've been raped? The six and seven year olds who have been violated by there fathers, brothers, and uncles- by there own families? No, I will not keep quite. I will continue to speak out about these women's wretched lives. (17)

It clearly shows how much she is determined to speak from the side of women those who are exploited by family, and society. She says that Islam oppresses women and is against humanity. To provide justice for woman she is struggling against the society and law.

The novel experiments the feelings, pains, sufferings, sharing of the women in Islamic society which is guided by religion in the name of rules and regulation. The writer of the book has dedicated the book to the women and the entire human beings

who heartily share the feelings and pains of women under the suppression of male domination.

She is against the Koran which is followed by the Muslim community. The reason of her exile is her daring task of bringing into light dark side of the Koran. She says, “According to the Koran, women’s heaven is to be like our Mother Earth which man should irrigate in order to make her fertile” (1). She has courage to face the upcoming challenge rather than to surrender. For this she chooses exile rather than surrender in front of an unjust society.

The book *Lajja* was the best seller in neighboring India after it was banned in Bangladesh. In one of the interviews given to the Indian newspaper she says: “I am not in favor of minor changes, it serves no purpose. *The Koran* should be revised thoroughly” (2). Nasrin’s interview in the Indian newspaper and consequent controversy simply added fuel to fire in an already volatile situation where women and the progressive all over Bangladesh were becoming targets of fundamentalist fervor.

Her view about Koran makes her suffer a lot. A case was filed by the government charging that she hurt people’s religious feelings, and a non-bail arrest warrant was issued. Nasrin hid in her relative’s house. Salman Rusdie, who is an outstanding writer and also a victim of Islamic religion, wrote a letter to Nasrin. He supported Nasrin’s work and asked her not to surrender in front of the government. He has the same view about the Koran as Nasrin had. He wrote saying:

You are accused of having said that the Koran should be revised though you have said that you were only referring to the Islamic religious code. And even if you did say that and even if every Muslim

mans in the world where to disagree with you, it would remain a perfectly legitimate opinion. (*New York Times* 4)

There were both views about *Lajja*. Some supported it and some criticized it. Tatal Gupta after reading *Lajja* writes:

Lajja, the controversial novel by Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin, is a savage indictment of religious extremism and man's inhumanity to man. Unremittingly dark and menacing, the novel exposes the mindless bloodthirstiness of fundamentalism and brilliantly captures the insanity of violence in our time. (Afterword, *Lajja*)

According to Gupta, *Lajja* speaks man's inhumanity to man, loss of humanity, insanity of violence.

Similarly, Ebadi Shirin, one of the writers, supports Nasrin's *Lajja* as:

I really don't understand why people get so worked up when someone says something unpleasant about the Koran, it's the great book and any amount of mud slinging can't and wouldn't change that fact. Even if they defaced a copy of it, its truth is eternal and powerful. No one I know will do it but let's be a little rational and a bit less emotional about this! It's not a "magic" book in the sense of "jadoo", it's miraculous for the things it says and the way it guides us. (3)

He strongly supports whatever is written in the book. He indirectly says people not to be worried when someone writes about Koran. Nothing will happen to the work if they burn lots of copies of *Lajja*. In this way, he supports *Lajja*.

Nasrin has spoken out in favor of equal rights for a woman and has expressed her disagreement against the oppression of non-Islamic minorities in Islamic

societies, such as in her home country in Bangladesh. She criticizes the tendency of women in advertisement in Bangladesh. They appear in advertisement with their physical seductiveness, dress and make up presented in such a way that women become more important than the product itself. Through her writing she desires to awake the women from their sleep by helping them know their follies. She wants to alert those who think their identity is given by their husbands: they are incomplete without them and their likes and dislikes are to be determined by males.

Nasrin's writing expresses her thoughts on religion, feminism and sexuality clearly issues that are not often expressed in the open in the traditional Muslim society of Bangladesh. Nasrin from her early phase had been addressing the women's question in a genre which was both familiar as well as unacceptable to the Bengali reader often when her writings have been described; it has been in a manner of astonishingly simplistic caricature: "she advocated free sex and open marriage. A woman should be allowed to have as many as four husbands [...] Religion is a great oppressor and should be abolished" (3).

In *Lajja* the violence upon women is shown clearly. The two climatic events of violence and revenge are figured through two rapes: the abduction and possible rape of Maya, the Hindu daughter, which marks the moral destitution of Dutta family; and the rape of Muslim prostitute by Suranjan, the son, as revenge for Maya's abduction. The later is graphic in its violence, and sympathetic to the plight of the economically deprived Muslim who submits to the rape for money.

In the war against Hindus, Muslims are destroying private property (temple, business, and home). These are the destruction which can be seen through the eyes. Besides, Nasrin has presented such a scene which most of the time becomes invisible from the readers. She has shown the women suffering in such a way that a reader

should read with close observation. Women are seen as oppressed within both Hindu and Muslim society. This is made evident by the fact that the two rapes are of women from Hindu and the Muslim community. Thus, Nasrin argues for the ties beyond those forged by religion and the rape of women become a universal and moral misfortune.

In conclusion, Nasrin's women characters suffer a lot from the family, society and law. They raise voice for equality to women each and every time suppressed taking the help of the Koran. She wholeheartedly prays no more violence in the name of religion. It become clearer when we read her reply to what kind of society she dreams of she replies, "A society shouldn't be called Islamic or Christian. A society should be secular and multicultural. I believe in a modern socialist society where people are equal"(1). These words exemplify Nasrin's advocacy for secularism.

II. Third World Feminism

Feminism is a modern movement that resists the way patriarchy gives power and control over natural resources, labor and sexuality of women to certain groups of men. The term feminism has been defined, analyzed, reviewed, criticized, deconstructed, re visited, re defined or, in another words, has been pulled and stretched from so many directions for so long that sometimes writing about it feels like dragging a dead horse even beyond the outer limits. This is no way to mean that feminism itself is a dead subject. Feminism is a discourse that involves various movements, theories and philosophies which are concerned with the issue of gender difference, advocate equality for women and campaign for women right and interest.

Feminism is a diverse collection of social theories, political movement and moral philosopher largely motivated by a concerning the experience of women, especially in terms of their social, political and economic situation. As a social movement, feminism largely focuses on limiting or eradicating gender inequality and promoting women's rights, interest and issue in society.

Groups of feminist theorists who make their own alliance to show the problem faced by Third World female are called Third World feminists. Western feminist has created a dangerous image of the Third World tradition. Western feminists produce the image that Third World women are uneducated, ignorant, family- oriented, poor, tradition bound, domestic, victimized which depicts their self -representation as educated, modern, free to make their own discussions. Third World feminists talk about their own experiences and criticize western feminism in the ground that it is ethnocentric and doesn't take into account the different experience of the Third World women.

To understand Third World feminism it is important to understand what the Third World means. Various scholars have tried to define Third World in their own way. Chandra Talpade Mohanty defines the Third World geographically:

The nation states of Latin America, the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, south and south-east Asia, China, South Africa, and Oceania constitute the parameters of the non-European third world. In addition, black, Latino, Asia, and indigenous people in the U.S., Europe, Australia, some of whom have historic links with geography defines third worlds, also defines themselves as the Third World people. (5)

KumKum Sangari argues that the term "Third World" not only designates specific geographical areas, but imaginary spaces. According to Sangari, "Third World" is "a term that both signifies and blurs the functioning of an economic, political, and imaginary geography able to unite vast and vastly differentiated areas of the world into a single 'underdeveloped' terrain" (217). Sangari is critical of the way "Third World" is used by the West to indiscriminately lump together vastly different places.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak explains that the term "Third World" was initially coined in 1955 by those emerging from the "old" world order:

The initial attempt in the Bandung Conference (1955) to establish a third way - neither with the Eastern nor within the Western bloc - in the world system, in response to the seemingly new world order established after the Second World War, was not accompanied by a commensurate intellectual effort. The only idioms deployed for the nurturing of this nascent Third World in the cultural field belonged then to positions emerging from resistance within the supposedly 'old' world order -anti-imperialism, and/or nationalism. (270)

Whatever the scholars view about the Third World one thing is clear that Third World women have been presented as the “oppressed” without any attempt of further analysis of the form and extent of the process of oppression. Upholding women’s problem in mainstream development planning or policy making conferences, or even at women’s summits –where women meant white, middle class, western women vis a vis uneducated, ignorant, Third World women has been widely criticized. In other words, positing “women” as an analytical category has been problematized. Women as a group/ social category are not a homogeneous collectivity. Terms like “women’s problem/s” often hide the fact that women from different class, culture, race and religion face very different challenges and can experience even contrasting outcomes of the same social phenomenon.

Third World societies are mostly postcolonial, developing (economically speaking) countries and they are situated at a juncture where legacies of old traditions and influences of western ways of life create fusion that continually shapes the structure of the societies. Each Third World society is distinct and is shaped by its cultural tradition, religion, social norms as well as the position of the particular nation-state in the world system. As the sovereignty of the nation state has been compromised under globalization, national politics are gradually influenced by international politics, affecting in turn, the citizens within each national territory.

Third world woman, sometime also known as postcolonial feminism, is a form of feminist philosophy which centers around the idea that racism, colonialism and the long lasting effects (economic, political, and cultural) of colonialism in the postcolonial setting, don't only involve non-white, non-western women. Postcolonial feminists criticize Western feminists because they have a history of universalizing women's issues, and their discourses are often misunderstood to represent women

globally. One of the central ideas in postcolonial feminism is that by using the term 'woman' as a universal group, they are then only defined by their gender and not by social classes and ethnic identities. Also, it is believed by postcolonial feminists that mainstream Western feminists ignored the voices of non-white, non-western women for many years, thus creating resentment from feminists in developing nations. Post colonialism can provide an outlet for citizens to discuss various experiences endured during colonialism. These can include migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential discourses of imperial Europe. Postcolonial feminists see the parallels between recently decolonized nations and the state of women within patriarchy - both take the "perspective of a socially marginalized subgroup in their relationship to the dominant culture."

The United Nations international conferences in Mexico (1975) and Copenhagen (1980) revealed tensions between First World and Third World women. Clearly divisions along lines of nationality, race, class, caste, religion, and sexual orientation needed to be inserted into women's experiences of oppression. By the Nairobi Conference (1985) the myth of "global sisterhood" had been abandoned and feminism became as heterogeneous as the women who supported it across the globe.

The 1980s witnessed a lashing out against white middle-class feminists' universalizing and homogenizing discourses that erased the voices of women who differed in race, class, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Although the contestations had already been initiated by black women, an even stronger challenge came from women of color (of other ethnicities: Latina, Chicana) and Third World women from postcolonial societies in Asia and Africa. Chandra Talpade Mohanty theorized in a 1986 article about the location of Third World women "Under Western Eyes." The

writings of Trinh T. Minh-ha and Gloria Anzaldúa powerfully critiqued white women's hegemony in conceptualizations of feminism and feminist struggles. Sophisticated theorizing by Spivak, Minh-ha, and Mohanty established that women in formerly colonized societies had cast aside old lines of dependency on the "center."

For marching forward, the obstacles for Third World females are deeply rooted and socially constructed norms, traditions. There still exists such tradition in the Third World that the female of First World cannot even imagine. Where in the world, First World females are struggling to get equal rights; the Third World women are still in the circle of tradition and are trying to come out of it. There are various traditions in which females suffer among them one is 'sati' system.

Writing from an Indian feminist position, Uma Narayan in *Dislocating Cultures* attempts to clarify misconceptions that she believes have resulted in a false perception of Indian values, how Indian women live and religious constructions of Indian culture, law and society. Narayan defines and addresses the roots of *sati*, *dowry* and *dowry-murder* - terms that are often confused or jointly defined. She also moves any critical reader to rethink and redefine the notion of "tradition" and resituate the roles Hinduism and other religions have played in establishing and propelling sati, dowry and dowry-murder in some pockets of Indian history and regions.

Narayan also does a proficient job discussing cross-cultural comparisons between domestic violence and dowry-murders while requiring the reader to consider whether dowry-murder exemplifies culture or religion -or if it is another example of violence against women that happens around the globe every day. *Dislocating Cultures* contributes a philosophical perspective on areas of ongoing interest such as nationalism, postcolonial studies and the cultural politics of debates over tradition and westernization in Third World context. Uma Narayan disputes feminism as a solely

Western notion, while also challenging assumptions that East Indian feminism is based on a Western model of feminism. Additionally, Narayan holds that the charges of what constitutes "Westernization" need to be radically re-examined.

Narayan criticizes the advocator who talks about the rights of female. They have to talk about the domestic violence, there pain, suffering within there own house. For this Narayan provide the historical background and present day context of the dowry system. She claims the 'otherness' and exorcizing of dowry-murder party accounts for its crossing the national border.

Mismatched arranged marriage is another means to dominate the Third World female. The daughters are not allowed to choose there life partner. The parents will decide to whom there daughter will be married and it will be final. She is allowed to see a groom only after marriage. The daughter since her childhood are taught to remain mute domestic animals that are to be served, limited within the home and children, who in turn would give birth to children, cook food, do household work and remain innocent and obedience. They were treated no more then machines. They have no choice of there own.

Uma Narayan in *Dislocating Cultures* tries to show the misrepresentation of Third World cultures and feminist genders She says:

Issue that feminist group in India have politically engaged with include problems of dowry murders and dowry related harassment of women; police rape of women in custody, issue relating to women's poverty, work, health and reproduction and issue of ecology and communication that effects women lives. (13)

She further argues that many Third World feminist issues are hardly 'foreign imports' imposed by feminist into context where "culturally authentic non feminist women would entirely fail to see what the feminist fuss was about. Women beyond Third World might not be aware of the violence against women in the name of culture and tradition.

Dislocating Cultures takes aim at the related notions of nation, identity, and tradition to show how Western and Third World scholars have misrepresented Third World cultures and feminist agendas. Drawing attention to the political forces that have spawned, shaped, and perpetuated these misrepresentations since colonial times, Uma Narayan inspects the underlying problems which "culture" poses for the respect of difference and cross-cultural understanding. Questioning the problematic roles assigned to Third World subjects within multiculturalism, Narayan examines ways in which the flow of information across national contexts affects our understanding of issues. "Dislocating Cultures" contributes a philosophical perspective on areas of ongoing interest such as nationalism, post-colonial studies, and the cultural politics of debates over tradition and "westernization" in Third World contexts.

The Third World feminists have criticized many mainstream western feminist perspectives for exclusion or marginalization from their analysis and agendas, the interests and concerns of women who are additionally marginalized in term of class, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Such exclusion not only generates inadequate feminist theories but also results in political agendas and public policies that fail to be adequately responsive to the interests of women from these marginalized groups. Third World women are victimized by the unchanging tradition.

Cheryl Johnson-Odim identifies problems some Third World women have with First World feminism:

While it may be legitimately argued that there is no one school of thought on feminism among First World feminists - who are not, after all, monolithic - there is still, among Third World women, a widely accepted perception that the feminism emerging from white, middle-class Western women narrowly confines itself to a struggle against gender discrimination. (315)

In much reviewed and cited article "On the Relationship between First World and Third World Feminisms," Chandra Mohanty argued that for too long, women in the Third World have been considered, not agent of their own destiny, but victims. A potent image has been constructed, even in feminist scholarship, of the "average Third World woman" who leads and essentially truncates life based on her feminine gender and her being 'Third World'. She argues:

What seems to constitute 'women of color' or 'Third World women' as a viable oppositional alliance is a common context of struggle rather than color or racial identifications. Similarly, it is Third World women's oppositional political relation to sexist, racist, and imperialistic structures that constitutes our political commonality. (7)

Mohanty argues that western feminisms articulate a discursive colonization through the production of "Third World difference": "that stable, a historical something that apparently oppresses most if not all of the women in [third world] countries" (53-54).

Alexander & Mohanty (1996) argue that in the Third World especially feminism cannot escape state intervention. As postcolonial states attempt to build their power base and increase legitimacy, often constrained by their dependency on foreign capital, they control, survey, and discipline women's lives. Thus, special attention has to be paid to state interests and state capacities in any analysis of the

political opportunities within which Third World women must organize. There are various ways in which the policies of Third World states shape women's lives and thus create the possibilities of women's activism. Economically, as many feminist scholars have argued, the policies of developing countries either make women invisible or actively exploit them.

Ketu H. Kathrak in *Politics of Female Body* argues that it is not only possible, but common especially for women who have been subjects of colonial empires. Through her careful analysis of postcolonial literary texts, Kathrak uncovers the ways that the female bodies become the site of both oppression and resistance. *Politics of Female Body* makes an important scholarly contribution in analyzing postcolonial women writer's representations of female exile from the body and community, resistance via speech and silence, and the outcome that may be fatal or positive such as reintegration into the community.

Ketu Kathrak articulates an innovative feminist agenda in *Politics of the Female Body* by comparing the works of different authors from regions that were colonies of Britain. She examines the portrayal of female subjects through tropes of "exile, including self-exile and self-censorship, outsidership, and un-belonging to itself within indigenous patriarchy strengthened by British racialized colonial practices in the regions of India, Africa, and the Caribbean". The book extends a line of intellectual inquiry taken up by feminists to position resistance to patriarchy with and against historicized colonialism and postcolonialism, but it also makes important contributions by threading together key cultural practices (like dowry and bride-price, for example) to explain how the embodied subject functions according to complementary, contradictory, and competing traditions in each respective society. She views culture as: "Cultural traditions are used to validate controls of female

sexuality. Key aspects of such domination are legitimized by an evolution of ideologies of family, female roles of acceptance sexual behavior such as wife hood under monology, polygamy – formal and informal (visiting relationships) and motherhood” (164).

Using novels, plays, pamphlets, and even poems (sometimes in concert and sometimes by themselves), Katrak carefully explains the effects of two of the most pernicious legacies of colonization—an English education and constructions of normative femininity—to demonstrate how they serve as the base for postcolonial forms of patriarchal control. Each chapter underscores how such control becomes palpable through social attitudes and cultural morés to result in what she reads as different forms and degrees of "exile." That is, the restraints placed upon female subjectivity cause a dislocation of the self so profoundly traumatic that it leads to silence, violence, and/or self-annihilation. Katrak employs different narrative genres combined with cultural practices to illustrate this point. Out of a carefully selected slate of hegemonic control mechanisms wielded by traditions, here are just a few. She draws on Heads's autobiographical novel, *A Question of Power* (2002), and Laretta Ngcobo's essay on "African Motherhood" (2000) to discuss the epistemology and injurious custom of bride-price that systemically locates girls as outsiders; she uses Anita Desai's novels and *Manushi: A Journal of Women and Society* from India to explain other forms of oppression exerted through bride-burning, dowry system, and exclusion of lesbian subjects. Katrak concludes by noting that protagonists in each instance create daring moves to overcome such oppression that become noticeable in a comparative study, which, in turn, reveals a growing sense of feminist agency around the world. The book enriches debates in postcolonial scholarship by deepening and widening the arena of feminist discourses. Katrak uncovers the ways that the female body becomes a site of both oppression and resistance.

The image of women in the “Third World” generally, and of Muslim women in particular, in the West, is very schematic and prejudiced. Marred by racism and ethnocentrism, attitudes towards Muslims have become harsher in recent years. The Muslim woman has been portrayed as submissive, oppressed, and backward. Mass media and educational systems have played a major role in the construction of this representation.

Mohanty makes argument when she proposes that the universal image of the “Third World woman” is constructed by adding Third World’s differences to gender relation. This image is predicted by the assumption of western woman as secular, liberated, and in control of her life, in contrast to the makeup of the Third World women. Yet not all women in the West are in fact secular and liberated, just as not all women in Islamic societies match the pre-made image of “Muslim woman.” Also, not all Muslim women have the same idea about Islam. Their ideas are influenced by their class status, cultural background, education, and position in society. Mohanty points out that many feminists write about Muslim women being powerless and oppressed, about their needs and problems. But there are few feminists who write about their choices, freedom, or power of action.

The problems faced by the First World and Third World female are completely different. The First World females are struggling to make equal position with males where as the Third World women are struggling to change the existing culture and tradition which is created by patriarchal society to dominate women. The Third World feminist are trying to get rid of early marriage, mismatched marriage, dowry murder, domestic violence, discrimination in the name of race, cast and gender which are almost totally different from western culture.

The discrimination starts since the child gets birth. If she is female she has to learn every household work in her early days. Parents take the daughter as a burden so they want to send their daughter to her husband's house as soon as possible. The daughters are not sent to school as there is belief that to educate the daughter is the waste of time and money. The daughters are taught to cook food, wash dishes, and when the daughter home education is complete they are married and sent to there husband house.

The experience of suppression of female of the First World and the Third World is totally different. First World females suffer from gender discrimination where as Third World female suffer from man's gender based discrimination, colonized oppression, tradition, culture and norms. The unchangeable tradition is the root cause for women to suffer. In addition the Third World females suffer from early marriage, domestic violence, and dowry murder and so on. Third World females are treated as just a machine to give birth to a child. They are treated just as slaves which perhaps the First World females don't experience in their lives.

The token inclusion of Third World women in Western feminist discourse has long resulted in a global and cross-cultural homogenization of women's experience. This undermines every woman's ability to proceed with a political agenda consonant with her own social and cultural exigencies. These social factors differ from country to country and further are mediated within any particular social context by issues of race, sex, sexuality and class. Contrary to Western feminist myths, feminism in the Third World is not an isolated effort focusing only on issues of women's access to wealth, health and legal rights. Third World feminists also focus on the disruption of patterns of hegemony which bind whole groups of people to poverty, illiteracy, and lives filled with violence.

One of the reasons why the existence of feminism in the Third World has been contested is that woman's lives generally and women's political activities specifically have been largely undocumented in these contexts. Nationalist agendas, focusing as they do on the generic "people," have, by and large, been gendered as male even as they espouse gender-neutral politics.

Although women from the third world have always been engaged in the feminism movement, some criticize mainstream Western feminism on the grounds that it is ethnocentric and does not take into account the unique experiences of women from third world countries or the existence of feminism(s) indigenous to third world countries. Third world women accuse mainstream Western feminists of looking at women's experiences as homogeneous, based on the perspectives of middle-class white Western women. According to Mohanty, third world women feel mainstream feminism bases its understanding of women on "internal racism, classism and homophobia" (7).

The main concern here appears to be the creating of spaces for women to participate in the management of their society through access to key resources such as education, health and housing.

Many mainstream western feminists are criticized by Third World feminists for excluding or marginalization from their analysis and agendas their interest and concerns of women who are additionally marginalized in terms of class, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Such exclusion only generates inadequate feminist theories but also results in political agendas and public policies that fail to be adequately responsive to the interests of women from these marginalized groups. Third World women are victimized by the unchanged tradition.

So, to show the hidden part of female suffering which the First World feminist eyes never catch the Third World feminism came into existence. Third World feminism talks about the Third World female, suppression of female by male, nation, law, culture, religion and tradition. It raises the voice so as to get rid of exploitation and to move forward towards the progress. Third World feminism has collectively helped us to understand the psyche, lives, feelings, and desire of women in Third World countries like India, Bangladesh and so on. So as a theoretical tool, Third World feminism is very appropriate and useful one to analyze this novel written in the context of Third World women.

III. Exploration of Double Marginalization in *Lajja*

The novel *Lajja* is based on the suffering of Hindu family after the destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in India on 6 Dec, 1992. Taslima Nasrin providing the historical fact has tried her best to make *Lajja* a real event. The novel contains the description of the situation after the destruction of Babri mosque up to 13 days. Here 13 days is enough to show the destruction of one small, happy Hindu family. The destruction here is physical as well as mental destruction. Nasrin through her novel tries to show the woman's suffering not just by being female only but by the virtue of being a Hindu too. Bringing Nilanjana (Maya) as the main character she has tried to show the suffering of minority Hindu woman staying in Bangladesh.

Nasrin, a third world female writer, tries to show the female's condition as it is. By doing this she wants to appeal the feminists to be aware of their all rights. She from the novel *Lajja* tries to awake the feminist by indirectly saying, we feminist hadn't done anything for women and there is lot more to do. Not to feminist only, she tried to awake the whole society who are doing unfair to the female. Doing this she wants a guarantee from society that male and female will be equally treated and there won't be any violence in the name of religion. She says, "Let another name of religion be humanism" (Foreword).

It was really a challenging work to awake the Muslim people who were deeply devoted towards the religion. After the publication of *Lajja* not only Muslim community burnt the book but also demanded the government to hang Nasrin for speaking against the Koran. Her fault was that being a Muslim woman she wrote in favor of the Hindus who were in minority in Bangladesh. She very courageously faced the challenge rather than to surrender in front of Muslim society. She was not terrified at all; she didn't leave to write the suffering of Maya, fear of Kironmoyee,

worries of Ratna and the rest. She chose to exile rather than to surrender in front of patriarchal society.

In the novel *Lajja* a small Hindu family is described which is terribly terrorized by the Muslims. Sudhamoy Dutta and Kironmoyee are the parents. Suranjan, is their son and Nilanjana (Maya) is their daughter. There is suspicion in the family when they hear the news that some Hindus broke Babri Masjid in India. The Hindus and the Muslims argue blaming each other. According to the explanation of Hindus, they are very much afraid of the majority of Muslim community as they are often tortured at every opportunity by the Muslim community, where as according to the explanation of the Muslims, they are very aggressive, wrathful and revengeful. During the conflict between the two religions, the trouble is, all the time, more in the side of women.

Generally, religions have a patriarchal view of the relationship between the genders. The relationship between Adam and Eve symbolizes how religion view women. As Al Hibri writes: God was declared male, and man was declared to be created in his likeness. Eve became the symbol of temptation and sin. The woman was consequently judged as a less likely candidate for salvation and an everlasting life in heaven than man (176).

In *Lajja* Nasrin attempts to show the different status of male and female relation. She shows a male sitting in the air conditioned room who has raped at list ten young women. He gets excited by staring at the belly of the women at the cocktail party. He changes the test of sexual intercourse by sleeping with different women. At home he beats his wife. In return his wife cries but continues her daily house work. She has no choice. She has to follow the order of her husband and sacrifice her own will. Nasrin through her novel shows that a Hindu woman in Bangladesh has no

choice at all and should be ready to face the disaster at any movement in her life. She has spoken of equal rights for women and has expressed her dissatisfaction to the suppression of non-Islamic minorities in Islamic societies, in her home county Bangladesh.

Nasrin does not view the body as the biological entity: rather, she attempts to unwrap the socio-cultural meaning of the female body, especially the historical configurations of male female power relations to which the female body in Bangladesh is subjected. "Sexual difference between men and women is a historically grounded complex ideological terrain across which are gathered a range of meanings directed towards notions of biological sex, social gender, gender identity and sexual identification" (27).

Not only in Bangladesh, almost in the third world, female body is being comodified. Male always attempts to show that females are made just to give sexual pleasure. Being a Muslim female it is interesting that Nasrin has chosen a Hindu protagonist to vent her anger against Muslim fundamentalism. She very openly talks about the rape done by male upon female and its results. While reading *Lajja* one can never feel that Nasrin and not an enraged Hindu oppressed and suppressed by the patriarchal male dominated society.

She choses the subject matter from her own experience. In 1971, when Nasrin was nine years old, the occupying Pakistani army destroyed her parent's home. Two of her uncles where killed, and her father who was a physician, was torture by Pakistani forces. After the liberation war everybody in her house and neighbor where happy that it was finally over and that all the Mukti bahini (freedom fighters) had returned. Nasrin recalled that her twenty year old aunt also returned home from the war without any fanfare or celebration. For the first time, Nasrin revealed in her

Nirbachito column that her aunt had been raped in a mukti bahini camp for sixteen days by ten men. She remembering the past says:

Our society didn't honor my aunt. All the big people talked with big words of the raped women in the newspaper and public meetings. They poked fun by calling them biranganas (brave female warriors).

Everybody accepts the inhuman torture, breaking, boots, bayoneting but never the incidents of rape. While political leaders shouted about the honor of mother and sister outsiders, my aunt hanged herself from the ceiling to save her honor from society, and the month was

December. (26)

Nasrin's narrative recounts that campaign of penalizing terror as experienced by one Hindu family in Bangladesh and particularly its adult daughter wariness about her future. Maya has a different childhood being a Hindu girl in midst of Muslim kids. Maya was kidnapped when she was just six years old. She returns home after two days on her own but she behaves in a strange manner up to two whole months. The reason of her kidnap was she was the daughter of Hindu living in Muslim community. After this incident her family decided to leave Mymensingh. Her father determines to sell his property and move to Dhaka.

In the third world the wariness of the parents grows with the growth of their daughter. The daughter most of the time are regarded as burden by the family. The parents are much more apprehensive until they get married to there daughter. The wariness is more to the mother then the rest of the family. Once Kironmoyee said to Sudhamoy, "Our daughter has grown up. I am unable to sleep at night" (13).

The destruction of Ayodhya brought a tremendous terror in the family. There was no environment to come out of the house. Hindu family had to feel terrified of the

people of their own neighborhood, with whom they had intimate and neighborly reconciliation up to the day before. The people of the same locality appeared on the nearby street shouting the slogans very unpleasant and frightening to them against the Hindus. This incident makes women suffer a lot. The women want safe shelter to hide.

Naturally females worry more than the males do. It is said that man has strong heart than female. After the destruction of Babri mosque Maya is too much concerned for family security. She frequently requests her brother to take the family to his friend's home. It is the belief in the third world that male should protect the house and family. Sudhamoy the head of the family was in bed because of illness show it was the duty of Suranjan to take the family to the safe place. Here Suranjan instead worrying where to take the family lies in the bed and hopes for a cup of tea. His sister frequently requests her brother to take them to the safe place but he doesn't pay attention towards her. When Maya knew that her brother will not do any thing she finally decided to protect self by her own. She says, "If none of you have any intentions of moving out, I may as well leave on my own. I'll go to Parul's house and stay there till the situation improves. I don't suppose dada has plans to take us anywhere. He may not have the will to live, but I certainly do" (4).

Kironmoyee also has inner hope that her son will take them to his Muslim friend's home till the situation gets normal. As Sudhamoy is lying in bed it is the duty of son to protect the family. Kironmoyee doesn't utter words, sit's still, her eyes filled with plaintive entity seems to say, "Let us live, let us go away" (11).

In the third world almost no women, even with an independent career in a city can set up a home by her own, without the protection of a male. A divorced woman or a widow must turn to her father or brother, if they will have her, unless she has a

grown up son under whose protection she can live. This is all powerful factor of control over women. A woman who is not prepared to accept such a fate has little choice. Kironmoyee does not revolt because she knew that was the desire of her husband and son not to leave the house.

God and Goddesses differs according to religion. The Hindu women at the time of suffering pray the god and goddess in the hope of getting help. In Hindu religion there are abundance of god and goddess to pray. Worshipping the god and goddesses help to fight with the upcoming challenges. It is believed in the third world that god will come to help at the time of difficulty. Kironmoyee at the time of difficulty sits mute in the corner and clasped her god.

Nasrin's women characters are usual to live at home to do household works. Only living inside the house becomes there daily routines. They manage house and kitchen for children and for their husband. Yet there is also a strong sense of boredom in these women while doing household works. Kironmoyee almost all the time without any interest prepares tea for her son and husband.

Nasrin raises the serious voice of women and the religion in this novel. Generally speaking male and female are equal by birth. By birth no one belong to any religion. But slowly with the growth of child the society shows the hidden demarcation line created by the society in order to show male as a primary and female as secondary. Talking about religion we can see every society has belief towards certain religion and the people follow what the society teaches. In fact man has created religion in order to show women as inferior. In fact the male members are the spokes person of the religion. They treat women as the second class people. Nasrin vociferously refuses the notion of a female essence prior to individual existence and attack patriarchal myth of women that presumes the false essence.

In Bangladesh after the destruction of Babri mosque in India, religion became one of the burning issues. Majority of Muslims who were in Bangladesh, thought that the Hindus were their unadulterated opponents. They start breaking the house of Hindu, burning whatever they get of Hindus, breaking the bones of people those who follow the Hindu religion. More than male almost every Hindu female were feeling insecure. They went to search the safe place in order to survive self and the family members. The male member doesn't want to listen to the word "leave" but the female want to leave the house as soon as possible. The male member because of the male pride doesn't want to move to the next place in order to protect self and the family till the situation gets normal.

Sentiment is more attached with female than with male. Females have the custom of loving the things once they use it. They are familiar with every room of the house, they uphold with love and care. It would be really a painful scene when they should leave the house and move to the next place for shelter. In Mymensingh when Dutta family got various threatened from the Muslim community they finally decided to move to Dhaka. At the departure when Sudhamoy has said to Kironmoyee, "come, come let's get our things together we have to leave,"(16) his wife has fallen to the ground and cried painfully. Not only Kironmoyee, even Maya who has been the most compelling reason for Sudhamoy to make the decision, was unwilling to go. She has said, "I don't want to leave Sufia and go away"(16). Sofia is her school friend and lives in the neighborhood. Though to leave the house was a difficult work for male but it was more difficult for female.

Talking about marriage in every culture has its own types of practice. It would be really difficult to get married if the girl and boy belong from different religion. If the boy and girl who love with each other belong from different religion then the ending will be really gloomy. Talking about the marriage between Hindu and Muslim

is almost impossible. The love between Hindu and Muslim most of the time results into break up. The pain of separation will be more with females than with males. Once Maya was in love with a young man called Jahangir and was sure she would go out with him if she had the opportunity. But finally he decided to go to America and stay there. Even Suranjan was in love with Parveen, a Muslim girl. He was set to marry Parveen, but the marriage didn't take place when Parveen demand Suranjan to convert his religion and become Muslim. The girl family didn't approve to her Hindu suitor: they finally married their daughter off to a Muslim businessman. She cried her heart out in protest, but eventually acquiesced in her family's wishes. Here both Maya and Suranjan's dream of marrying their lover's didn't come true because of different religion.

Nasrin, talking about the marriage, tries to show the differences of Muslim and Hindu culture. Generally speaking culture is related with the totality of belief system, social manner, political values and economic system. Culture is the product of social consciousness that provides identity to a nation in the global context, it vitalize nation. The Muslim society has valued the women in terms of secondary object. Not only the Muslim society, women are suffering in Hindu society too. Male are treating female as 'second sex.' The females are compelled to follow the path shown by her father, husband and the community in the name of rules and regulation or norms and values created by patriarchal society. Female are denied by religion, culture and society too.

Simone de Beauvoir argues in the essay, "Women: Myth and Reality" that man had, made women the 'other' in the society by putting a false aura of "mystery around them" (24). Nasrin also adds that men used this as an excuse not to help them, and that this stereotyping was always done in societies by the group higher in the hierarchy to the group lower in the hierarchy. In Bangladesh the majority of Muslim are dominating minority of Hindu. In Bangladesh the people belonging from Hindu

community does not get good jobs. Applying for a job religion plays a major role rather than qualification. Sudhamoy was not made Associate professor simply because he was a Hindu called Sudhamoy Dutta. This sort of discrimination was not limited in government job alone. Even when business and trading were concerned, no Hindu could hope to achieve anything on his own. It was essential for him to have a Muslim partner because no establishment with a purely Hindu name was given a license to operate.

Every patriarchal society wants the female who is completely devoted towards her family. Maternity is the symbol of patience and selflessness devoted to the childcare which must create a world of love and attentiveness. The mother eats after her children. A mother never sees her child as a grown up. When Suranjan prepares himself to leave the house, shuddering with fear Kironmoyee runs up to him and takes the comb away from him. She then says, “ Listen to me, Suranjan it is dangerous to go out. Even though there’s a hartal, they are attacking shops and temples. Stay at home. There is absolutely no need for you to go out and see what’s happening in the city” (26). Suranjan however does not take note his mother words. He thinks the work of female is just to worry with no reason at all. The culture trained him to think that he can decide more properly than his mother because he is well educated male. Regarding household work Suranjan very much depends upon his mother and sister. Suranjan being a grown up man still depends with his mother and sister to clean his bed so that he can sleep comfortably.

A daughter loves her parent more than a son does. The son most of the time becomes careless towards the family. Sudhamoy also agrees that a daughter loves her parents more than a son does. On one occasion Sudhamoy has says:

It is the daughter who looks after her parents in their old age. Son always move out with their wives to live separately, but daughters [...] they ever forsake their husband's home to look after their parents. I know this for a fact, because I have seen daughters come and attend to their sick old parents at the hospital. The son comes as well, but only as visitors. (158)

Staying as Hindu women to do any kind of work is really a challenge in Bangladesh. Society has forbidden the female to come in the public and show their talent openly. To do work at first a woman should get permission from her husband, father, and son when she passes all the levels she is allowed to come in a real field of struggle. During her struggle no one supports her. All are there to criticize her. It was even difficult for a Hindu woman to work in a Muslim society. Kironmoyee was really a good singer. She used to sing and people who listened to her song also used to clap their hand also said, "It is only because Hindu women are shameless that they learn how to sing: that is why they sit in public in front of unknown man and sing for everyone" (37). As a result the melodious voice stopped singing in public throughout her life. No one since then encourage her to sing. It displace that female are deprive of displaying their creative talent in a Muslim country. There is a strong obstacle for them to involve in art, literature and music. The Muslim community considers that such activity degrades female's character. The Muslim interpretation that Hindu women are shameless, so, they learn how to sing is the strong weapon to dominate their creative potentialities.

Fatima Mernessi, a famous Arab feminist, explained a long time ago that the Christian portrayal of the individual as tragically torn between two poles (good and evil, flesh and spirit, instinct and reason) is very different from that of Islam, which

has a more sophisticated theory of the instincts, more akin to the Freudian concept of the libido. She writes:

In western culture, sexual inequality is based on the belief in the biological inferiority of woman. In Islam, it is the contrary: the whole system is based on the assumption that woman is a powerful and dangerous being. All sexual institutions (polygamy, repudiation, sexual segregation, etc.) can be perceived as a strategy for constraining her power. (16)

This explains why the Koran maintains man's superiority and domination over woman. It is men's responsibility and duty to keep women under their protection and control.

A female from her early childhood should learn to compromise in order to survive. Compromise is needed in each and every step in her life. She should compromise with father, mother, brother, husband and finally with her son. She cannot revolt for any thing. Maya knew how to make compromise and survive. She managed quiet with her tuitions and it was likely that she would be able to get a job with a NGO.

It is supposed that religion aims at peace and tolerance. But here it has created a lot of disorder and unrest. It is indeed a pity that even at the close of the twentieth century; they are so many atrocities in the name of religion. Instead of saving society and humanity, it has created complexity. But religion is not blameworthy. It is the marks of those who are circulating religious discourse. When religion is used by power holders, then it creates destructive consequence. Even religion should be independent of power structure. Only then, it can serve society and humanity

otherwise it will turn towards destruction which results in the destruction of life and property.

Kironmoyee is very much submissive to her husband. She for the happiness of her husband and the family forgets her individual agonies, likes and dislikes. She has never been all that keen on saris and jewellery she had never said to her husband, “I would like the sari, or buy me that earring” (158). He had deprived her of the needs of the body for the past twenty one years. He has slept beside her quite literally just by guarding her chastity and helping her by the faithful wife. It was always been his own interest that had matters more. He tried to compensate for his physical sort comings by loving her verbally as fiercely as he could to convince her that she must not live leave such love for the pleasures of the flesh. Kironmoyee never exposes her internal agonies. She just hides her desire inside except some times in the form of tears. She is one of the representative Hindu women who stay in Bangladesh suffering from Muslim society and form Hindu family with no reason at all.

Muslim society dominates females the most. In Hindu society, by misinterpreting the religious books, men are ruling over their wives but the women are somehow free in comparison to the Muslim women. The discourse that man should keep their wife under control, women should not go against their husband, husband is like god, is more in the society for centuries, it has been natural and well established. So, women do not dare to raise their voice against it. They consider it as a universal truth but in fact it is not so: it is the truth created by patriarchal discourse. When the power is shifted to women in the society, then this truth will be replaced with another version of truth. Any oppressed groups are victimized by the dominant power structure and are also capable of resisting or transforming the power of structure. But the need is that they should exploit their capacity.

The terror was materialized when a mob of seven Muslim boys enter into their house, break all the materials and grab Maya. Her mother wails in terror and the invalid Sudhamoy moans. In a last desperate measure to save her self, Maya catches hold of the bedposts. Her mother comes running in order to protect her daughter. The attackers wrench Kironmoyee off her daughter, break Maya's grip on the bed and leave as swiftly as they had come, carrying Maya. Recovering Kironmoyee runs after them, screaming and begging, "Please let her go. Please let my daughter go [...]" (147).

Before the Muslim boys enter there home, Maya was with her ill father taking care of him. She was brought back from Parul's house by Kironmoyee. Suranjan though knew that his father's physical condition was not good he didn't stay at home. Instead of staying at home he went to visit his friends to know about their condition. It seems as if he has not any responsibility towards his family. Instead of Suranjan, Maya fulfills her responsibility towards the family. She takes care of her father very much. Seeing this Sudhmoy says, "you are nursing me back to health too soon Maya. I could have stayed in bed for a few more days. You know there are drawbacks to being fit too" (145).

The reason to take Maya with them is nothing but just because she is a Hindu girl. Maya did not even know who they were? Why are they taking her and where are they taking her? Her mother runs towards the direction they took Maya in order to protect her. She cries for help but her voice disappears in the air. Her voice is unheard because a Hindu is seeking help in a Muslim society. The tear of mother and daughter doesn't work in front of their Muslim neighbor. Kironmoyee and Maya's hearts break into pieces because of fear and pain but nobody is ready to feel it and help them.

In the street two autorickshaws are waiting to take Maya. Maya's hands are still soiled with the rice and curry she had been mixing for her father. She screams to her mother for help "Ma... please help me, ma ..."(148) she fights with the captors as she is dragged away, looking back in pain and terror, hoping that her mother would be able to save her. Kironmoyee tries her best but the two men who hold her daughter, push aside Kironmoyee's attack and bundle Maya into one of the autorickshaws. As the vehicles speed off, Kironmoyee runs after them weeping and screaming. "They've taken my daughter [...] Please save her [...]" (148).

Women after all were like commodities, and therefore stolen just like gold and silver. Here Maya is stolen with no reason at all. What is she guilty of that they should abduct her so ruthlessly? Was it so criminal an offence to be a Hindu? So criminal that one could without a thought ruin and burn their house, abduct their women and rape them too? Maya has so very much wanted to live. She has fled to Parul's house on her own, and it was only Sudhamoy's illness that has brought her back to be carried away by those heartless monsters.

The Muslims during the time of riot were searching Hindu woman to rape. The news of rape was frequently heard. Wives were being raped in front of husbands, daughters in front of fathers and sisters in front of brothers. There have even been cases of mother and daughter being jointly raped. As compared to Muslim women the Hindu women were raped the most. It is said that during the riot in Golokpur, thirty Hindu women were raped. Chanchali, Sandhya, Moni Nikunja Dutta had died. Bhagavati, an old lady, had been so terrified that she had died of a heart attack. These are only the representative females. Almost every part of the country females were searched in order to give torture. In Golokpur incidents of daylight rape were reported. Even women who had taken refuge in Muslim homes were being raped. The

girls who were raped are so shocked that they cannot even speak or there is no trace of them to talk about the incident.

The Muslim women sometimes were in the target of Hindu males. When opportunity came then Hindu males also raped the Muslim women in order to take revenge. Suranjan was longing to rape one of the Muslim girls in order to take revenge as what the Muslim did to his sister. He takes Muslim girl Shamima Begum to his home. She was a prostitute selling her own body in order to feed herself. She was one of the victims of a callous social system that had ignored whatever talent she may have had and pushed her into the gutter. Suranjan takes her home and orders her not to utter a word. After a while Suranjan takes quick, deep breaths, as he digs his nails into the girl's flesh. He bites her breasts, one part of his mind understanding that what he has been doing is certainly not love. Either a Hindu or Muslim, women are suffering from the hand of males without their single mistakes.

Foucault sees sex as a historical construct that deals with the “most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality , their forces, energies , sensations and pleasures” (145). When male does sex with female forcefully then its called rape. In place of providing pleasure it will turn in pain, destroy the relationship and some time can destroy even the life of people. The Muslims are doing rape upon Hindus, not only physical but mental too. The reason at last will be only destruction.

Here sexuality is reduced to something “profane and sinful”, sexuality signifies the division of human beings into body and soul. Civilization represents the soul's victory over the body, spirit over the flesh, and diligence over lust. Islam takes a different approach. It never repudiates sexuality as such. In fact sex is a taste of paradise. But Islam attacks women instead. As the living carrier of the danger of

sexuality and its infinite social destructive forces, women have to be controlled. Sexuality itself is not dangerous since it is the foretaste of paradise that leads men to Allah.

Maya was kidnapped before also when she was six years old but now she is twenty-one and the reason to kidnap girls at these widely disparate ages would also be different. The society's eyes to view men and women are different. If a male member returns home after months, no one raises any question but in the same place if a female do that then a lot of questions are raised. People very curiously ask about her disappearance. If the woman is married then this incident may lead up to divorce. Here Maya was taken by unknown people. One cannot imagine the condition of her mother and father. They certainly may have the frightening heart by thinking what those people are doing upon her? Now how can she be married? When will she return? Will she be able to return or not?

A woman who has been raped is seen as "damaged goods." Rape means dishonor and humiliation for the family and makes it virtually impossible for the victims to marry. Knowing very well the state's dilemma and inability to change the patriarchal disgrace attached to rape, the postcolonial state of Bangladesh attempted to resolve the issue with nationalistic fervor. But to work in the real life was really a difficult task. The victims can't forget the torture faced by them.

The darkness spreads all over in Sudhamoy's house. Kironmoyee's power of patience and endurance are really incredible. She never seems to be tired. All night long she cries miserably and then at the break of day she would work in the kitchen whether or not she wants to. Patriarchal society does not allow to express desire and to be free from domestic bondage to women. The society gives negative attributes to femininity and it forces to conceptualize the femininity, the true nature of women.

Women are inferior, passive, domestic minded and can't go outside their home. If Kironmoyee was brave and active she would have gone to search for her daughter rather than to cry and in the mean time work in the kitchen.

Divorce was common in the Muslim community. The husband easily gets divorce from his wife whenever he wants to but the wife has to face a lot of difficulties if she wants divorce. A male can easily get female to marry though he is divorced but a female's life will really be troublesome. The divorce of Parveen has been often heard news. And Suranjan the lover of Parveen has already sexually abused Parveen in his mind. Parveen's possibility of remarriage has almost become impossible. Maybe she should stay alone throughout her life.

When a girl marries she loses her identity. Her identity is attached with her husband. Society identifies a female as a housewife. Men think that women are child bearing machines. Kironmoyee though has a talent to do something she is confined to do household works. Maya though she is educated like her brother she never raises the voice against her brother if she sees him committing mistake too. She never asks him to prepare tea because she was trained from her early days that her duty was to work in the kitchen.

Social surrounding shapes the mind of the people. Most of the members of the society are overwhelmed by the old contentions. So they have the thinking that only the sons are our hope. Son can fulfil our desire but not daughter. Kironmoyee and Sudhamoy were in the hope that Suranjan will bring his sister Maya back. He will find out Maya and bring her back home from the trap of Muslims.

The small happy Hindu family has now become so sad. Maya isn't found. The Hindu family gets the news that a girl like Maya's dead body is in the water. But no one from the family would go to see it because everyone believes that Maya would

return one day. If they become able to identify the body as Maya's then the hope that she would come back in a day or two may be a month or two, or may be even longer, would be shattered once and for all. So no one from the family goes to see the dead body and confirm whether the dead body is of Maya or not.

What mistake had the Hindu family done so that a Muslim destroyed each and everything? Are not the Hindus citizens of the country? What had the innocent Maya done to the Muslims so that their hands didn't shudder while touching her? Is it her fault to stay in Bangladesh being a Hindu female? Had Maya destroyed the Babri Masjid. There are lots of questions which are unanswered.

Hindus love the country as Muslims do. They jointly fought with Pakistan for the independence but now the Muslims have forgotten each and every thing. Suranjan who used to think that Bangladesh is his country and at any cost he is not going to leave it at the end of the novel requests his father "they will chop off your heads and fling them into the Buriganga. Haven't you still understood the nature of the people in this country? They will make a shack out of Hindu, if they find one. And they won't distinguish between young and old, I can assure you" (206).

In Bangladesh, the Muslims were burning the Hindu homes after the Babri Mosque was destroyed. But it was not only home and temple; they had burnt the heart and minds of the Hindu as well. Because of fear Ratna, a Hindu girl, in order to protect herself from the trouble married the Muslim man. Suranjan who was in love with Ratna doesn't spoke even a word. Hadn't the Hindu women any choice in the Muslim society? Aren't they human being at all? The inner desire of Ratna to marry Suranjan wasn't fulfilled. Ratna, in the hope to get short time protection specified her whole desire.

At last, a destroyed Hindu family decides to leave the country. By now they have lost the property and a young daughter. Sudhamoy still doesn't want to leave. He as a father has the responsibility to protect his daughter but because of his illness he couldn't. He asks Suranjan, "if I couldn't protect Maya, whom then will I protect" (214). Suranjan then replies "ourselves" (214). Maya is no more with them now. Had they decided to go away earlier perhaps Maya would have been among them. They lose Maya because of their pride. Here the male failed to protect Maya but are trying to protect themselves.

They lose Maya because of their arrogance. Had Suranjan taken the family to Muslim friends house perhaps Maya would have been with them now. After they lost her then only the male members realize the mistake. Kiranmoyee doesn't disclose her any view either to stay or not. What the husband and son decide she will follow without any objection.

In this way, the happy family is filled with sadness. If Maya was a male then perhaps she would be alive. No one belongs to any religion by birth, the society imposes upon them. The religion builds walls among people which sometimes lead to the destruction of life and property. Here Maya, a child of Hindu family, falls victim in the hands of the Muslims. The religion plays an important role with the people of the third world. Females are dominated by males on the one hand and they are shown inferior to males by the religion. Taking help of women's weak physical structure, males all the time want to suppress them. Kiranmoyee, though she is a mother, can't stop her son to go out. He never listens to her voice.

The Muslim woman follows strict rules created by religion as compared to the Hindu woman. The Muslim male has a fear that Muslim women may copy the activities of Hindu women. They all the time look for a chance to force the Hindu woman

to be a Muslims. The Hindu woman till the end of the life doesn't want to turn to be a Muslim rather decides to face the upcoming challenges. When the opportunity comes then the Muslim man wants to take revenge. As a result innocent Hindu women become victim of the Muslim community. So, Hindu women's condition will not be changed in Bangladesh and women will not be safe until the Muslim know that all the women of the world are same like their mother, daughter, and sister.

Kironmoyee up to the end of the novel is not harmed physically but she suffers a lot. Here mental suffering is more than a physical one. Maya suffers both physically and mentally. When ever the riot breaks in Bangladesh, Hindu woman suffers more than the males. Though the woman doesn't take part in any kind of destructive activity they are made target especially by Muslim males. Poor Maya is made a victim who was very eager to live. Kironmoyee is all the time worried: she is worried about her family. Ratna for her own future security ends up marrying a Muslim. Because of male on the one hand and because of religion third world women are suffering and they will suffer in the days to come.

Nasrin through her novel tries to awaken the people to change the mentality in order to create a prosperous, happy society. She tries to say we from our past mistake should learn a lesson and should stop to repeat the mistake in the days to come. The only religion is the religion of humanity so we should love each other as all human beings. From now no Maya should give life just because she is Hindu female staying in Muslim society. The death of Maya in the name of religion is the shame not only to the Muslim community but shame to all human beings. Her shame here is every human being's shame.

IV. Conclusion

Taslima Nasrin attempts to write a 'historical novel' that she got all the information about communal violence against Bangladeshi Hindu and Muslim men raping Hindu women from actual newspaper stories and then created the characters and fictionalized the narrative. *Lajja* protests religious domination upon women. Nasrin argues that her writing is part of a broad political movement against Islamic fundamentalists in their war against women. She often raises the issue like women suppression, religious fundamentalism, and class conflict. In *Lajja* she presents Hindu woman's real existence in Muslim society. This patriarchal society tries to put women under its control giving negative attributes to women. Nasrin here implements irony to attack and mock at the religious fanaticism of the society.

Patriarchal society tries to put women under its control giving negative attributes to women. Society ignores women's desires and voice. Kironmoyee's desire to sing is not fulfilled. Nasrin raises the serious voice of women in this novel. Nasrin vociferously refuses the notion of a female essence prior to individual existence and attacks patriarchal myth of women that presumes the false essence. This society is patriarchal. So, femininity and masculinity are defined as opposite poles. Femininity is defined in negative way and masculinity in positive.

Lajja recounts that campaign retaliatory terror as experienced by a Hindu family in Bangladesh and particularly the female members, Maya and Kironmoyee. Though Maya is educated, she is unable to raise the voice against the male dominated society. She is double marginalized first by the male member and by religion. Maya is abducted and disappears in the near chaos after she is taken away by some Muslim boys. Before she is taken away, she very much requests her brother to take the family to a safe place. She is worried because she is a Hindu woman staying in Bangladesh

where Muslim's are in majority. Her wariness for her own safety does not help her. At last she becomes a victim in the hand of Muslim.

Kironmoyee suffers a lot in the Muslim community. She is not given chance to sing in the public place though she wants. She all the time is working inside the kitchen. She is very much submissive to her husband; Kironmoyee never exposes her internal agonies. She just hides her desire inside except for some time in the form of tears. She requests her husband to go and stay in India. He refuses her but she never revolts against her husband. At last, she loses her daughter, but she complains no one. She is mute like machines who does not speak but does work silently.

Nasrin in *Lajja*, exposes the religious arrogance of the Bangladeshi Muslims and their brutal attack upon the innocent Hindu minorities. The novel has also shown the failure of the existing government to save the rights of Hindu women who are also the citizens of the country. The government does not take any step to save the Hindu women from the inhuman treatment of the Muslim.

Though Ratna, a Hindu girl who loves a Hindu boy Suranjan, she marries a Muslim boy at last. Here Ratna for her own future security ends up marrying a Muslim. Here the three Hindu women individually suffer but their suffering is the same. Maya, Kironmoyee and Ratna suffer from the Muslim community because they are Hindu and they suffer from males because they are females who are defined as second sex by males. So, *Lajja* is about the women's double marginalization first by male and second by religion.

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