

## Chapter One

### Nasrin, *Lajja*, and Fundamentalism

#### Background

The novel *Lajja* explores the loss of the free and multicultural environment of Bangladesh in the wake of communal strife over the debate of dismantling the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, India, to rebuild the reportedly destroyed Ram Temple. The novel treats the problem of fundamentalism leading to religious strife. They made it increasingly difficult families like Suranjan's, who are minority Hindus by religion, to live in Bangladesh. By establishing this proposition, *Lajja* presents a severe critique of the forces of jingoism, communal nationalism and fundamentalism.

Taslina Nasrin was born in August 1962 to a Muslim family in Mymensingh, East Pakistan, which became independent in 1971. Her city of birth is now in Bangladesh. Her father was a physician and professor at the government medical college. She studied at Mymensingh Medical College. Grown up in a highly restrictive and conservative environment, Nasrin was fond of literature while she also excelled in science. She started writing when she was 15 years old, beginning with poetry, in literary magazines, and afterwards she herself edited a literary organization while studying in the medical college, where she staged many cultural programs. Earning her medical degree in 1984, she worked in public hospitals for eight years.

Her first book of poetry was published in 1986. Her second book became a huge success in 1989, and editors of progressive daily and weekly newspapers asked her to write regular columns. She started writing about women's oppression. With no hesitation she criticized religion, traditions and the oppressive cultures and customs that discriminated women. Her strong language and uncompromising attitude against male domination stirred many people, eliciting both love and hatred from her readers.

In 1992, she received the prestigious literary award “Ananda” from West Bengal in India for her “Nirbachino Kolam” (selected columns), and became the first writer from Bangladesh to receive that award. There grew jealousy among other writers in her success. Islamic fundamentalists launched a campaign against her in 1990, staging street demonstrations and processions. They broke into newspaper offices that she used to regularly write for, sued her editors and publishers, and put her life in danger that increased over time. She was publicly assaulted several times by fundamentalist mobs. No longer was she welcomed to any public places, and she could not even go to fairs that she loved to visit.

### **Islamic Fundamentalism in Bangladesh**

She expressed strong ideas against the Islamic society where women are treated as objects. She criticized the tendency of using women in advertisements in Bangladesh. Women are presented in advertisements in physically seductive and in dress and makeup in such a way that they become more important than the product itself. Nasrin opines that these women are not actually doing anything in these advertisements. They are just being used for their sex appeal, and the society considers that their primary task is to be used. Through her writings, she wants to awake the women from their sleep by helping them know their follies and realize how they are being exploited. She wants to alert women who think that their identity is given by their husbands that they are incomplete without them and their likes and dislikes are to be determined by males. These women themselves are accountable for their weak condition in the society. Whenever two women talk to each other, they talk more about their husbands than about themselves. They do not articulate even their names; they just talk about their husbands without uttering their names. Moreover, men have deprived women of their rights. Women are not treated as human beings at

all. But women tolerate all types of exploitations without any complaint. Nasrin wants such women to be bold and conscious of their rights. She further argues that if a woman wants to be a human being, she first may have to appear bad in the eyes of the society. If she is not willing to be bad, she will never be a truly strong, independent and free person. Appreciating Nasrin, Mandrakanta Bose writes:

Ms. Nasrin, one of Bangladesh's best-known literary figures, became the focus of bitter attacks by the clergy in Bangladesh after the publication of her book on the tragedy overwhelming a Hindu family in her country after Hindu militants destroyed a Mosque in India 1992. Hindus are a minority in Bangladesh, which has an Islamic constitution, and there have been complaints of violation of their rights over the last decade. Many continue to slip into India and settle with relatives. (118)

Nasrin has spoken out in favor of equal rights for women and has expressed opposition to the oppression of non-Islamic minorities in Islamic societies, as in Bangladesh. In her autobiography, Nasrin mentions that she was sexually assaulted by her relatives and other men in her early years. This experience has a strong influence on her later life and she grew up to become a staunch feminist. She initially gained fame as a poet and columnist. However, later she gradually became a courageous woman activist through a series of books that she wrote. Some of her critics believe that part of the reason of her popularity is because of her critical views on religion, especially Islam.

She is determined to write about women's miserable condition in Muslim societies without caring at all what misfortune may happen to her for doing that. Her comments on religion made people angry. She has criticized verses in the *Koran* that

treat women as property, slaves, and sexual objects. She says, “according to the Koran, woman’s heaven is to be like our Mother Earth which man should irrigate in order to make her fertile” (5). So she is determined to write against the *Koran* for the rights of women and humanity. Due to the rising intolerance of the Islamic clergymen, she was forced into exile in Sweden. Sara Whyatt remarks:

Nasrin is an uncompromising critic of patriarchal religious traditions that she sees as oppressive to women and an outspoken advocate of women’s social, political, and sexual liberation. In her crusading syndicated newspaper columns, collected and published into books, she protested religious intolerance and increasing incidents of violence against Hindu minority and women by local Islamic village councils in Bangladesh, as well as the failure of the government to take adequate measures to stop them. (175)

### ***Lajja* and Fundamentalism**

The word “*Lajja*” means “shame” in Bengali and many other Indian languages. The novel has been translated into several languages, but banned in Bangladesh and a few states of India. Taslima Nasrin, the writer of the book, has dedicated the book “to the people of the Indian Subcontinent,” and has opened book with the words: “let another name for religion be humanism.” The novel is preceded by a preface and a chronology of events. Janet Ingraham writes:

A seething indictment of oppression and religious fundamentalism couched precariously as a novel, this important work is impassioned but difficult to read. More reportage and protest than story, it is recommended more for its historic than its literary value. (5)

So, for Ingraham this novel has more historical significance than literary value.

Similarly, Tutul Gupta 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. (1)

According to him, this novel displays the terrible effect of religious fundamentalism, loss of humanity, birth of violence and so on.

The story of *Lajja* centers on a Hindu Dutta family of four members, a young man named Suranjan, his father Sudhamoy, his mother Kironmoyee, and his sister Maya. The story recounts an environment of communal frenzy with the help of these four characters. In a far off place in Ayodhya, in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India, on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1992, Babri Masjid was demolished. The demolition had repercussions even in Bangladesh, a different country, and a far off place from Ayodhya. The fire of communal rioting erupts in Bangladesh. The Hindu minority Dutta family becomes a victim of communal hatred and violence. Each member of the Dutta family suffers indignities and violence. Sudhamoy, the patriarch and head of the family, feels that Bangladesh, his motherland, shall never let him down. Kironmoyee as a faithful wife stands on the side of her husband's views. Suranjan, their son, cares very little about the events. He shows no interest in these adversities and violence. So he wanders here and there passively. Even in this critical situation he does not feel any necessity to take any action. He never takes shelter with his Muslim friends. He believes that the events have occurred in a far foreign place of India. He thinks that this wave will never touch and affect his countrymen. Maya curses her brother's apathy. She

criticizes her brother for his unwillingness to take the family to a Muslim friend's house for safety.

Nasrin does not claim to be writing a creative and fictional work as she reveals the fact that she is worried by the political upheavals of Bangladesh and that the nation is falling into the grip of religious leaders and corrupt houses. She makes it pretty clear that her major concern is to examine the religious and political climate of the country. She wants to establish humanity, brotherhood and fraternity among the people. The novel springs from the pressing topics of religion, factionalism, fundamentalism, and religious intolerance, which are serious problems for a country. It evokes secularism and democracy. Despite being advanced technologically, the modern world is getting parochial owing to its inhabitants' narrow mental boundaries. Religious intolerance and sectarian politics have made the world a hellish place for aspiring and free minds.

Seeing the post – Babri Mosque riot and its consequent violence in Bangladesh, Nasrin raises her voice against a section of Muslim fundamental groups, who have become violent and destructive towards the minority Hindu people. She is really worried about the condition of the minority people. They are not getting justice. They are bullied and tortured each and every moment. Even the government has become indifferent towards them and has supported Muslim fundamental groups. Through characters and settings, she attempts to portray the society as it really is. Neither does she support any fundamental group nor does she want to break the communal harmony. She is worried about the humanitarian condition which is really pitiable. She writes about the wrong chronological events. Appreciating her work Mishra writes:

Taslima Nasrin's success as novelist lies in her faithful portrayal of the characters of a minority community undergoing an ethnic crisis. It must understand clearly that the demolition of Babri Mosque was not the prologue to this crisis. Such crisis has been extant earlier too. By re-locating the minority characters in the construction of the nation's history and attributing them their due space the author has very successfully projects the identity crisis confronting them. (191)

According to Mishra, Nasrin advocate and tries to preserve the rights of the minority through her convincing characters, who are treated inhumanly by the Muslim fundamental groups.

### **Nasrin's *Lajja***

*Lajja* was published in February 1993 in Bangladesh and it sold over 60,000 copies before it was banned by the government five months later under the charge that it disturbed communal peace. In September that year a fatwa was issued against Nasrin by a fundamentalist organization and a big reward was offered for her murder. There were marches on the streets of Dhaka by communalist clamoring for her life. Similarly, the government confiscated her passport and asked her to stop writing if she hoped to keep her job as a medical doctor in Dhaka Medical College Hospital. She was, thus, forced to quit her job to continue her battle against religious persecution, genocide and communalism. She writes in the preface to *Lajja*:

The disease of religious fundamentalism is not restricted to Bangladesh alone and it must be fought at every turn. For myself, I am not afraid of any challenge or threat to my life. I will continue to write and protest persecution and discrimination. I am convinced that the only way the fundamentalist forces can be stopped as if all of us who are secular and

humanistic join together and fight their malignant influence. I, for one, will not be silenced. (x)

It shows that she is ready to go through fire to continue her writing against persecution and discrimination. At the same time, she asks all those who are secular and humanistic to band together, arguing that it is the only way to stop the fundamentalist forces.

The novel is Nasrin's response to anti-Hindu riots which erupted in parts of Bangladesh soon after the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The book subtly indicates that communal feelings are on the rise. The Hindu minority of Bangladesh was not fairly treated and secularism was under shadow. Nasrin writes in the Preface:

I detest fundamentalism and communalism. This was the reason I wrote *Lajja* soon after the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on 6 December 1992. The book took me seven days to write, deals with the persecution of Hindus, a religious minority in Bangladesh, by the Muslim who are in the majority. It is disgraceful that the Hindus in my country were haunted by the Muslim after the destruction of Babri Masjid. All of us who love Bangladesh should feel ashamed that such a terrible thing could happen in our beautiful country. The riots that took place in 1992 in Bangladesh are the responsibility of us all, and we are all to blame. *Lajja* is a document of our collective defeat. (ix)

According to Nasrin, the religious scriptures are out of place. Instead of religious laws, she strongly argues that laws and values of civil code are needed to safeguard according to equality and justice. Her views brought fourteen different political and non-political religious organizations to be united for the first time in order to speak and act against her. They called for general strikes. They blocked the



government offices and demanded her immediate execution. They asked the government for her death penalty when after she argued that “[...] the Koran should be revised thoroughly.” The government, instead of taking action against the fundamentalists, turned against her. A case was filed by the government charging that she has hurt people’s religious feelings, and a non- bailable arrest warrant was issued. Deeming prison to be an extremely unsafe place, Nasrin went into hiding. Salman Rushdie, in his open letter to her writes:

As you know, Taslima, Bengali Culture – and I mean the culture of Bangladesh as well as the Indian Bengali – has always prided itself on its openness, its freedom to think and argue, its lack of bigotry. It is a disgrace that your Government has chosen to side with the religious extremists against their history, their own civilization, their own values. It is the treasure –house of the intelligence, the imagination and the word that your opponents are trying to loot. (1)

This is the view of Salman Rushdie who underwent almost a similar persecution. He strongly reacts against the government’s siding with the religious extremists and its disgraceful decision.

In the meantime two more fatwa’s were issued by Islamic extremists, two more prices were set on her head, and hundreds of thousands of fundamentalists on the streets demanded her death. The non fundamentalist minority remained silent. Some anti fundamentalist political groups protested against the fundamentalist uprising but they did not defend the minority. People’s fundamental rights were deprived by the government. Nasrin as a writer and fellow human being who should have the freedom to express her views became intolerable to the government and

fundamentalist groups. So Nasrin and her views were banned in public. There were only a few writers who defended her rights. Shrine opines:

I really don't understand why people get so worked up when someone says something unpleasant about the Koran. It's a great book, and any amount of mad slinging can't and won't change that fact. Even if they defaced a copy of it, its truth is eternal and powerful. No one I know would 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)

In this way, he strongly supports and praises *Lajja* as a great book for displaying the truth, which is eternal and powerful and shows his astonishment at people's reluctance to call a spade a spade.

Nasrin has written eight books of poetry, essays, novels, and short stories in her native language, Bengali. Many of these have been translated into twenty different languages. The Bangladesh government has recently banned three other books, *Amar Mayebela (My Girlhood)*, *Utol Hawa (Wild Wind)*, and *Seisob Ondhokar (Those Dark Days)*.

Nasrin has received numerous prestigious awards in western countries. As a result she has got international attention for her struggle for women's rights and freedom of expression. She has become a symbol of free-speech. She has been invited to speak in many countries and renowned universities throughout the world. Her dreams of secularization of society and secular instead of religious education are increasingly accepted and honored by those who value freedom.

The novel *Lajja* sorrowfully presents the story of how secularism and communal harmony, multiculturalism and co-existence in the post independence

Bangladesh is destroyed by the communal politicians. Nasrin exposes the bad aspects of religious fundamental groups which are really inhuman and intolerable not only in Bangladesh but also in the world. Appreciating her book Hanifa Deen writes:

Shame was the English title of Nasrin's new book, a work of documentary fiction. It is a harrowing story which tells of the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh through the life of one family who lose everything and see its property seized, its temples destroyed and wives and daughters raped. In the 1<sup>st</sup> edition, a rushed seventy- page revision, there is not one instance of a Bangladeshi Muslim shown as anything but 'communal' in outlook (44).

The major themes to be found in the novel are the threats of communal celebration of Bangladesh and a lament for its becoming like a small village. It is turning into an underdeveloped and backward, superstitious place by the brutal activities of the sectarian forces. This suggestion is observable even from a superficial reading of the novel.

### **Objectives of the Research**

This thesis is concerned with explicating how Nasrin's keen criticism of intolerance and communalism gets expressed in the novel. The primary tool for my thesis is to study the novel in light of the details which strike out as being politically significant ones and which therefore project the personal view of the novelist under study. For this purpose, the thesis uses the tool of social realism. Nasrin's novel will help the researcher in revealing her views about the duty and position of a writer as a political being as well as an artist. This reference text will further reveal the similarities between the creator and her fictional characters in the novel under study. A glance into the history and historiography of modern Bangladesh, that is how

Bangladesh has been described, as a multicultural society will also be undertaken to explain the liberal religious and political but radical personal and individual characteristic of the person and the writer. Likewise, a general survey of Nasrin's biography, her literary trend, and involvement in political comment will be made in the course of furthering this thesis work. For this purpose, I have tried to explore the autobiographical elements in the novel which reveal much about the writer as a person who is the product of the multicultural world and who celebrates the diversity of Bangladesh.

The novel has many references to the realities of Bangladesh its political incidents and personalities. It is a political work and Nasrin takes up the role of a political analyst of Bangladesh. She is thus a politically engaged writer who comments upon the degrading political practices in Bangladesh and also wishes for a developed and tolerant world where people would be able to solve religious and cultural differences in a peaceful manner. Thus, dealing with the history of Bangladesh, the novel becomes a criticism, a wishful writing and a prophecy about the future of the world at large.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Realistic Perspectives

#### Realism: an Introduction

Realism in literature attempts to describe life without any kind of idealization or romanticization. In its pure form, realism is a precise and unpainted representation of human life and social conditions. Although realism is not limited to any one century or group of writers, it is most often associated with the literary movement in nineteenth century France, especially started by Flaubert and Balzac. George Eliot introduced realism into England, and William Dean Howells introduced it into the United States. Realism has been chiefly concerned with the commonplaces of everyday life among the middle and lower classes. It looks at characters as products of social factors and environment. In drama, realism is most closely associated with Ibsen's social plays.

Critics of the realistic approach to fiction claim that realism in its extreme form puts too much emphasis on external reality and too little on the inner qualities of the character. In this regard Donald Pizer writes:

The underlying beliefs of the first generation of critics of realism were firmly middle class. Literature had a job of work to do: to make us known to each other in our common political and social progress (and also, in Howells's later modification of his views our defects). It was to serve social ends as their ends were defined by the socially responsible. It is therefore no surprising to find a disparity between the radical implications of the realists' ideal of change and the actual themes and forms of the literature proposed as meeting this ideal. (7)

A good fiction should reveal good and evil aspects of the society. It should equally let us know about the political upheavals or ups and downs of the contemporary society. As stated earlier, a work of art needs to reflect everyday life of the people. Richard Chase in *The American Novel and Its Tradition* argues that the romance was the quintessential mode of fiction in the United States yet. Chase observes that realism maintains a liberalizing and forward looking literary program. It does not devote exclusively to translating everything into symbols, myths, and archetypes (Chase 21). Thus, the job of fiction or a fiction writer is not only to give pleasure of reading to the readers but also to report different aspects of the real world in his/her fiction. It should contain political, cultural, religious, historical, ideas.

Realism has spread all over the world and it might mean differently in different places. So, George Levine opines:

Realism in England belongs...to a much more affable and moderate tradition, focusing not on the dregs of society, not on the degradation and degeneration of humans in bondage to a social and cosmic determinism. It belongs almost provincially, to a middling condition and defines itself against the excesses, both stylistic and narrative, of various kinds of romantic, exotic, or sensational literature. Whatever else it means; it always implies an attempt to use language to get beyond languages, to discover some non verbal truth out there (240).

Thus, Levine focuses on getting the language beyond its nonverbal truth.

Broadly defined as the faithful representation of reality, realism is a literary technique practiced by many schools of writing. Although strictly speaking realism is a technique, it also denotes a particular kind of subject matter, especially the representation of middle class life. A reaction against romanticism, an interest in

scientific method, the systematizing of the study of documentary history, and the influence of rational philosophy all affected the rise of realism. In defining realism *The World Book Encyclopedia* says:

Realistic fiction has been primarily a revolt against the sentimentality and melodrama of romantic idealism. Characters in realistic fiction tend to be more complex than those in romantic fiction. Settings are more ordinary, plots are less important and themes are less obvious. Most realistic fiction deals with probable commonplace events and even offensive subject matter. (159-60)

This clarifies the important elements needed to for a realistic literature. The work should deal with very common and everyday activities of the people, mostly middle class. These aspects of realism apply to *Lajja*.

### **Emergence of Realism**

In English literature, realism first became important in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the work of Daniel Defoe. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century realism became much more important in the works of Jane Austen, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, George Moore, William Makepeace Thackeray and Anthony Trollope. Honore de Balzac, Gustave Flubert, and Stendhal of France, and Leo Tolstoy and Ivan Turgenev of Russia are other outstanding European realists of this period.

The Industrial Revolution that took place at the end of the nineteenth century changed Americans in remarkable ways. People left rural homes for opportunities in urban cities. With the development of new machinery and equipment, the US economy became more focused on factory production. Americans did not have to chiefly rely on farming and agriculture to support their families. At the same time, immigrants from all over the world crowded into tenements to take advantages of new

urban opportunities. In the end, the sweeping economic, social and political changes that took place in post war life allowed American Realism to prevail.

The writing during this period was also very regional. The Industrial Revolution called for standardization, mass production of goods and streamlined channels of distribution. America was leaping into a new modern age and people feared that local folkways and traditions would be soon forgotten. Responding to these sentiments, realistic writers set their stories in specific American regions, rushing to capture the “local color” before it was lost. They drew upon the sometimes grim realities of everyday life, showing the breakdown of traditional values and the growing plight of the new urban poor. American realist works contained regional dialects and extensive dialogues which concerned much with the public. As a result, readers were attracted to realism because they saw their own struggle in print. Conversely, the public had little patience for the slow packed narratives, allegory and symbolism of the romantic writers. America was shifting into higher gear and readers wanted those writers who clearly communicated the complexities of their human experiences. At its basic, realism was grounded in the faithful reporting of all facts of everyday American life. After all, realistic literature reflected more than mere external reality. According to Richard Chase realism has specific social, political and artistic characteristic that set it apart from the other genres.

### **Influence of Realism in Literature**

The realistic movement of the late nineteenth century saw authors accurately depicting life and its problems. Realists attempted to “give a comprehensive picture of modern life” (Eliot 502) by presenting the entire picture. They did not try to give one view of life but instead attempted to show the different classes, manners and stratification of life in America. Realists created this picture of America by combining



a wide variety of “details derived from observation and documentation to approach the norm of experience...” (Eliot 503). Along with this technique, realists compared the objectives of absolute existence in America to that of the universal truths, or observed facts of life. In other words, the realists objectively looked at American society and pointed out the aspects that it had in common with the general truths of existence. To clarify the influence of realism on literature Emory Eliot says:

After World War I, American people and the authors among them were left disillusioned by the effects that war had on their society.

Americans needed a literature that would explain what had happened and what was happening to their society. American writers turned to what is now known as modernism. The influence of nineteenth century realism and naturalism and their truthful representation of American life and people were evident in post World War I modernism. Realism in Modernity not only depicted American society after World War I acutely but also tried to find the solution brought upon by the suffering created by the wars. (705)

The growing popularity of realism has been more than simply a reaction against the pretty words of romantic fiction. More fundamentally, its popularity has been due to two factors. One is the development of modern science with its emphasis on detailed reporting. The other is an increasing desire of writers and readers for a realistic understanding of social problems.

Common realistic themes include the importance of subconscious, the role of racial minorities in society, and the search for values in a hostile world. In American literature, the term “realism” encompasses the period of time from the Civil War to the turn of the century. During this period, writers such as William Dean Howells,

Rebecca Harding Davis, Henry James, Mark Twain, and others wrote fiction. They made accurate representation and an exploration of American lives in various contexts. As the United States grew rapidly after the Civil War, the increasing rates of democracy and literacy, the rapid growth in industrialization and urbanization, an expanding population base due to immigration, and a relative rise in middle-class affluence provided a fertile literary environment. The readers were interested in understanding these rapid shifts in culture. In this regard realism's influences in literature can be defined as a strategy for imagining and managing the threads of social change. For this, Hazle clarifies:

I am far from intending by this to minimize the importance of exactness of truth of detail. One can speak best from one's own taste, and I may therefore venture to say that the air of reality (solidity of specification) seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel the merit on which all its other merits helplessly and submissively depended. If it be not there they are all as nothing, and if these be there, they owe their effect to the success with which the authors have produced the illusion of life. (43)

This lets us know how careful a fiction writer is, while producing any work of art. The air of reality has always been in the center to expose all the merits of the work.

### **Features of Realism**

It is very difficult to say at once whether any work of art is realistic or not. Different people have different views regarding realistic literature. Though the opinions of the people vary from one to another, there are some salient points that a realistic literary work should contain.

First of all character is more important than action or plot and complex ethical choices are often the subject. Characters appear in the real complexity of temperament and motive. They have inexplicable relation to nature, to each other, to their social class, to their own past. Humans control their destinies; characters act on their environment rather than simply react to it. Realism renders reality closely and in comprehensive detail. There should be selective presentation of reality with an emphasis on verisimilitude, even at the expense of a well made plot. Events will usually be plausible. Realistic novels avoid the sensational, dramatic elements of naturalistic novels and romances. Class is important in realism; the novel traditionally serves the interest and aspirations of an insurgent middle class.

Realism is also viewed as a realization of democracy. The morality of realism is intrinsic, integral, and relativistic – relations between people and society are explored. Realism is pragmatic, relativistic, democratic and experimental. The purpose of writing is to instruct and to entertain.

Diction is the natural vernacular, not heightened or poetic; tone may be comic, or satiric. The use of symbolism is controlled and limited. Instead the realists depend considerably on the use of images. Objective presentation becomes increasingly important and explicit authorial comments or intrusions get diminished.

Interior or psychological realism is variant form of realism. Realism of James and Twain is critically acclaimed in the twentieth century. Howellsian realism fell into disfavor as part of an early twentieth century rebellion against the refined tradition.

Realism is the truthful treatment of material. It is believed that a realist writer should have belief in democracy and he/ she should be able to describe the common and everyday activities of the people. Much emphasis is given on the middle class, its

life style and its manners. The writers always center their attention on the here and now. They present the specification and its verifiable consequence. Such writers intend to be very moralistic; they want to have a moral effect on the reader.

The authors in realism highly value the individual. They try to explore the ethical values and issues of conduct. They usually maintain an optimistic attitude. They show the central issues of life (ethical, moral issues) accurately as they affect the characters in actual situations.

A great deal of description is required in realist literature. Plots are very credible and designed to both flatter the reader and convince the fictional truth of the story. Use of simple, clear and direct prose is a part of realism. Plots are secondary to characterization because the realists feel that life lacks symmetry and a realist story does not emphasize on symmetry and plot.

All realistic fiction is still the author's perception of what is "real" no matter how objective he tries to be. Everett Carter writes:

The basic axiom of the realistic view of morality was that there could be no moralizing in the novel [...] the morality of the realist, then was built upon what appears a paradox – morality with an abhorrence of moralizing. Their ethical beliefs called, first of all, for a rejection of scheme of moral behavior imposed, from without, upon the characters of fiction and their actions. Yet Howells always claimed for his works a deep moral purpose. What was it? It was based upon three proposition; the life, social life as lived in the world Howells knew, was valuable, and was permeated with morality; that its continued health depended upon the use of human reason to overcome the anarchic selfishness of human life, by art, will illustrate the superior

value of social, civilized man, of human reason over animal passion and primitive ignorance. (157)

From Marx and Engels onwards, realism held a privileged position within Marxist literary criticism. This critical tradition was most fully developed by George Lukacs in his books. Lukacs claimed Balzac's fiction as the culminating point of realist achievement in France, emphasizing two central qualities that defined this triumph of from Balzac's ability to convey the force of history underlying the details of social milieu and his representation of character as type. In *Studies in European Realism*, Lukacs claims:

The central category and criteria of realist literature is the type, a peculiar synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in characters and in situations. What makes a type is not its average quality... what makes it a type is that in it all the humanly and socially essential determinants, in extreme presentation of their extreme, reordering concrete peaks and limits of men and epochs. (6)

The main thing is about realism is that the authors always portray the social reality. They deal with common characters and give details of the everyday activities. So, novels and short stories are important genres to explore many features of realism.

## Chapter Three

### Torture, Patience and Transformation

The novel, *Lajja* is based on the historical event of the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in India on 6 Dec, 1992 by a mob of Hindu fundamentalist. Its fallout spread was in Bangladesh that resulted in Muslim persecution of Hindu minority. The event has been interpreted as a matter of tremendous threat in Bangladesh. Communal harmony was dismantled. The bond between people (especially Hindus and Muslims) faded away. Islamic fundamentalists abandoned all the relations of humanity and took the path of religious orthodoxy. People assumed that the only superior thing was religion and their aim in life was to follow the rules and conventions blindly. The minority Hindu community faced a great danger. The majority of the Muslim fundamental groups took very aggressive steps against the minority community. According to the novel, Hindu minority were very much afraid of the majority Muslim community, who were very aggressive, wrathful and revengeful.

The Muslims argued that the novelist must be given a death penalty for writing against the Muslim community. The government also sided with the Muslim fundamentalists and banned the novel. The government said that its contents might hurt the existing social system and religious sentiments of the people. A charge was filed against Nasrin in June 1994 that Nasrin had blasphemed against the *Koran* in her Novel *Lajja*, which the writer repeatedly denied.

She got death threats from the Muslim clergies. The government charged her for allegedly criticizing the *Koran*. The Muslim fundamentalists were infuriated by a newspaper article where she urged a revision of the *Koran*, the Islamic holy book. Extremist groups offered 5,000 U.S. dollar reward for her death. She was also charged

by a Bangladeshi court for offending the religious sentiments of the Muslims, a crime that carried a maximum penalty of two years in prison. Abdul Kader Mollan, Spokesman for Bangladesh's leading Fundamentalist party, Jammait-e-Islami, said "the government will have to pay a very heavy price for letting Ms. Nasrin go out of the country" (5).

The Muslim fundamentalists continued their brutal treatment of the minority Hindu community. There was no sympathy for the innocent marginalized Hindus. They had also fought at the cost of their life to liberate Bangladesh from Pakistan. But they were denied the fundamental rights to live in their country.

The contemporary socio-historical reality was much adverse for the Hindus. They had no any alternative except silently leaving their country. But, in the novel, Sudhamoy, the head of a small Hindu family, does not pursue this path. He is a nationalist. He has a strong feeling that the society where he has been residing maintains good relationship even with the Muslim people. Although his belief is not agreeable to other family members, they cannot persuade him because it is very hard to dismantle the strong mountain that he has built within himself. But when the environment is intolerably adverse day by day, he has to agree to leave his place.

The novel displays that the minority Hindus in Bangladesh were not tortured by the Muslims only after the demolition of the Mosque. But there have already occurred many incidents in which the Hindus were tormented and their religious structures smashed into pieces. The novelist has given a long list of such events and devastation. This novel is a cultural artifact that can tell us something about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meanings, operating in the time and place in which it is written:

After many years of struggle, Bangladesh has freed itself from the grip of Pakistan in 1971. A new constitution had been implemented: “we, the people of Bangladesh, having proclaimed our independence on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March 1971 and through a historic struggle for national Liberation, established the independent, sovereign People’s Republic of Bangladesh” (182).

After the independence of Bangladesh, the reactionaries who have been against the very spirit of independence gained power. They changed the face of the constitution and revived the evils of communalism and unbending fundamentalism. After independence, amongst four clauses, a clause that enshrined secularism was included in the constitution of Bangladesh. This was an invincible weapon against the possible resurrection of communalism. But after 15 August 1975 communalism was reborn. Along with it came the forces of fundamentalism, fanaticism, malice and despotism. Religion is used as a political weapon and a large number of people were forced to follow the dictates of the Islam. Thus, unlawfully and unconstitutionally, Islam became the national religion of Bangladesh. As a result, communalism and religious fanaticism exploded out of control. After the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment in 1988 the constitution of Bangladesh acquired the following insertion: “The state religion of the Republic is Islam, but other religion may be practiced in peace and harmony in the Republic” (181). Thus Bangladesh was declared an Islamic state and it dominated other religion through the amendment in the constitution. Those who possessed the authority to define religious discourse excluded those who were not in power.

Bangladesh has not come into being only by the effort of the Muslims. It was the joint effort of Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians that made her birth possible. To declare only one religion official is to discriminate others. When a



country proclaims a national religion, a kind of partition falls between the people, and certain groups of people who find that their religion is regarded as secondary are also branded as second class citizens and then their egos take a tremendous battering. The promoters of the national religion are absolutely responsible for arousing the feeling of communalism in the people. Generally the feeling of communalism of the majority in a society is naturally stronger and more pervasive than that of the minority. Those who are in power circulate their discourse far and wide through media and truth is created. But the truth cannot be true forever. When there is change in power structure, it will also be changed. It is always related to power. Power and truth are interwoven.

There are no Hindus in high administrative posts in Bangladesh. Since Pakistani times, no Hindus had been appointed to the post of government secretary. There are only a few Hindus in the army. They never get promotion. There are also no Hindus at all in the Air Force and the Navy. When it came to send students abroad for higher studies for training, the Hindus were selectively avoided. The Hindus also do not have any profitable business in their hands. If the Hindus wish to go into business, it is a must for them to get hold of a Muslim partner. Only then they are granted a license. Moreover, they are not given any industrial loans by various organizations. Similarly, extracts from the Koran are religiously read out at all state functions, societies and associations. But the extracts from the *Geeta* are never read. In the whole year, the government has reserved only two days as holidays for the Hindus. Nor could they opt for any special holiday. In every public function, there was a proposal to construct new mosque but they never speak of constructing temples, nor do they talk about maintaining the existing temples, churches and pagodas in the country. It displays the miserable plight of the Hindu minorities. They are

discriminated in each and every sector by the government supporting fundamentalism. They are marginalized and their contribution to Bangladesh is forgotten.

In the novel, Sudhamoy is enormously faithful to his father's nationalistic impulses. He is the one who has contributed remarkably for his country's independence. But his contribution is neglected as he is a Hindu by religion in a religiously aggressive Muslim country. In spite of suppression by the Muslim at every opportunity he does not lose his patience. He refuses to leave his country as most of his friends and relatives have done. His thoughts are quite contrary to other Hindus. He has unshakable nationalistic faith. He seems as if he is ready to be destroyed than to abandon his country. He thinks that those who desert their country are inhuman. He is even averse of sending his daughter out of the country for any reason. Once when his cousin suggests him to buy a house and land in Calcutta, he replies with anger, "You mean, you want to earn the money here and spend it in that country? You know, you should be condemned as a traitor" (18). It shows that he has immense love for his country.

But the socio historical environment is very much adverse for his belief and determination. He has to face ineffable discrimination as he belongs to the Hindu community. He has suffered from the very unpleasant impact of religious extremism even in his professional life. The officers, junior to him, get their promotion, but as Sudhamoy is a Hindu, he is deprived of it. His continuous attempt for promotion proves futile. He only succeeds in wearing out the soles of his shoes. He is destined to retire as an assistant professor only. Indeed, it is foolishness of him to expect promotion in the Muslim country. On the day of Sudhamoy's retirement, one of his colleagues put a garland of marigolds around his neck and whispered into his ear, "It is not right to expect too many benefits in a Muslim country. What we are getting is

more than enough for us” (21). It shows the miserable plight of the Hindus in Bangladesh where Muslims are all in all.

The incident in Ayodhya brings a tremendous terror to the family. There is no environment to come out of the house. They have to feel terrified of the people of their own neighborhood. They get threats with whom they have intimate and neighborly relationship up to the day before. The people of the same locality appear on the nearby street shouting the slogans, very unpleasant and frightening, against the Hindus:

As the procession passed by their house, they should clearly hear the voices say, ‘Let us catch a Hindu or two, eat them in the mornings and evenings too [...]’ Suranjan saw his father shiver. His mother stood with her back to the window that she had just shut. Suranjan remembered that they had used the same slogan in 1990. Who were they? Ironically, they were boys from the neighbored! Jabber , Ramjan, Alamgir, Kabir and Abedin! They were all friends who lived in the same area, met frequently, discussed matters of mutual interest without rancor, and even took joint decision on issues of significance. And it was the same people who wanted to make a snack of Suranjan! (17)

The extract shows the effects of violent religious consciousness on the psychology and relationships of people. The Muslim people’s religious conscience is generated and made aggressive by the fundamentalist leaders to take action upon their Hindu neighbors. The demonstration on the street is the demonstration for power. The Muslims forget their neighborly reconciliation with their Hindu neighbors. They are convinced that religion is more important than neighborly relationship. They are used by the fundamentalist to fulfill their interest. Sudhamoy’s act of innumerable help

become negligible to them. They are blind and cruel to their own well wishers and helpers. The Hindus have to be scared of the Muslim friends with whom they used to move in all social affairs hand in hand. The innocent Hindus are destined to face the unpleasant punishment of the mistake made by the Indian Hindus, i.e., destruction of the age old Masjid. Hindus in India are powerful and so they destroyed the age old mosque. In Bangladesh the Muslims are more powerful and vengeful, and so they start their violent action upon the powerless Hindus. Every historical event that took place in India and Bangladesh is thus related to power.

Generally it is believed 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, there are so many atrocities in the name of religion. Instead of serving society and humanity, it has created complexity. When religion is used by power holders, then it creates destructive consequences. When religion is independent of power structure, only then it can serve society and humanity.

Suranjan has also been influenced by his father, Sudhamoy. He is a young man involved in every sociopolitical affair in his neighborhood. When his sister Maya is terrified of the probable disaster, she tells her brother to take shelter in a safe place. But he shows complete unwillingness. He just remains in the house passively. So, she manages her security herself. Then Suranjan decides to move around the city although it is very dangerous for him to do so. Just as he enters a bigger street, a group of boys shout out, "Catch him, he's a Hindu" (27). The boys are his neighbors. For the last seven years he has been meeting them at least once a day. They are often in his house asking for all sorts of help because they are neighbors. Sudhamoy often gives them free medical treatment. And it is these very people who are threatening him to beat up because he is a Hindu. Then Suranjan walks briskly in the opposite direction not out

of fear, but out of “shame.” He is truly ashamed and anguished by the thought of these boys beating him up during his visit. He sees around him a lot of devastation made by the Muslims.

Being a Hindu, Suranjan is deprived of job opportunity. Although he is qualified for the jobs he tries, he is not selected in the interview. He is one of the sharpest students in the university. But ironically, the students whom he has helped with their studies get better marks in the final examination. The high posts in the employment sector and education are occupied by the Muslims because the society is very biased towards the Hindus. Nasrin observes:

In the country’s General Assembly in 1954, there were 309 members. Of these seventy- two belonged to the various minority communities. In 1970, out of 300, the minorities numbered only eleven. In 1986, there were seven out of 330, in 1988, there were only four and in 1991 it had gone up slightly to twelve out of 330[...] And that was not all. In the Bangladesh Bank or any other banks for that matter, there were no Hindus at the Director, Chairman or MD level. Nor were there any post for Hindus in any of the branches of commercial banks. (193)

These data shows how the minority people are deprived of their human rights and the country is biased inhumanly.

Sudhamoy does not lose his patience easily. He has immense hope that the situation will soon improve. He is not ready to acknowledge that there are riots absolutely because of their extreme love of their religion. Rather he takes it as a matter of vandalism, hooliganism and their desire for plundering wealth. He thinks that they are doing so with their aim to loot and plunder. And when they get a lot, they

will be satisfied and there will be no more torture for the poor Hindu families like his family. He says to his son:

Actually, do you know what the truth is? Those who are causing these riots are not doing so for the love of any particular religion. Their main aim is to loot and plunder. Do you know why they loot the sweetmeat shop? Simply in order to satisfy their greed for sweets. Likewise, jewellery shops have been broken into because of a love of gold. The riots are quite clearly the result of hooliganism. In fact, there is no real difference between the members of the two different communities. And the rate at which peace marches are being conducted, something or the other will soon be done to normalize the situation. (61)

But whatever the matter is, it is done in the name of religion. Religion is the root cause of all these devastation. They are also destroying temples through which they do not obtain any material benefit. So, we can say that they are more or less religiously aggressive fundamentalists and in every demonstration of any country such types of vandalism and hooliganism occur.

Sudhamoy believes that the Hindus will get justice. He wants to convince himself that Hindus and Muslims are treated the same and that Hindus are not second class citizens in his country. He has the hope of an improved situation. But his son, Suranjan is impatient with his father's view of the situation. He thinks it is foolishness to try and see themselves as equal to the Muslims, who are the first class citizens of the country, being the member of the second class Hindu minority. Indeed, they have never been orthodox Hindus. They have accepted the Muslims as their brothers and friends. But it has not done any good to them. Rather they have to live with the fear of being insulted and wounded. They still have to cringe with fear at the prospect of

being charred by the flames of communalism. Their well wishes are always reciprocated with rudeness.

Kironmoyee, the wife of Sudhamoy, represents an ideal Hindu woman. She is very submissive to her husband. She forgets her individual agonies, likes and dislikes for the happiness of her husband and the family. Sudhamoy has brought her from a well to do, educated, cultured family into his insolvent, hopeless family. She has never been all that keen on saris and jewellery. She has never said to him, "I would like that sari, or buy me that earring" (158). Over and above that, he has deprived her quite literally just by guarding her chastity and helping her to be a faithful wife. He tries to compensate for his material shortcomings by loving her verbally. She has no feelings of her own. She has subdued her feelings and sentiments time and again. She has no private life. She represents the plight of the Hindu women in a male dominated society. Even when a great decision has to be taken about her own and her family, she has no right. Kironmoyee wants her husband to leave the country. But she does not force him because she never thinks of going against her husband's belief idealism and optimism.

To make Sudhamoy a Muslim, he is treated in the worst possible manner by the Muslim guard in the jail. They jerk up his lungi and mutilate his penis. He sees the blood and the severed foreskins and hears the harsh laughter before he losing consciousness. The other Hindus in the camp agree to read the *Koran* and convert to Islam in the hope that they would be freed. But Sudhamoy prepared to be destroyed than to surrender to the fundamentalists.

Nasrin suggests that in Hinduism as well, by misinterpreting the religious books of Hindus, men have been ruling upon their wives. The discourses of male superiority have been circulated in the society for centuries. So, women do not dare to

raise their voice against them. They consider it as a universal truth but in fact it is not so; it is just the truth created by patriarchal discourse. When the power is shifted to women in the society, then this truth will be replaced by another version of truth. Any oppressed groups are victimized by the dominant power structure and they are capable of resisting or transforming that power structure. But they should use their capacity. Kironomoyee reveals the Hindu Patriarchy. She is also an excellent singer, but she stops singing because it is considered a shameful act by the Muslim people. They used to abuse her and call her a shameless Hindu woman. They also do not like the Hindu women to sing and dance in public. They fear that the Muslim girls might learn from them. She remembers the bitter remarks of the Muslims, which take away her interest to sing. 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 men and sing for everyone (37). Females are deprived of displaying their creative talent in a Muslim country. There is a strong obstacle for them to involve in art, literature and music. So as a woman, she suffers from both the religious groups.

Suranjan is fed up with the behavior of the Muslims. He feels the Hindus have reached situation of committing suicide or leaving the country. He feels defeated by communalism and unlike his father loses his hope. He is different from his father in this sense. He says to his Hindu friend:

You know something, Pulok? Those whom we think of as non communal deep down people, and as our friends, are highly communal deep down. We respect their religious practices, and avoid drinking tea or smoking in public during the month of Ramzon. In fact, we do not even go to their restaurants on those days. But how close are they to us actually? For whom do we make these sacrifices? They are the same,



Pulok [...] all the same. The only options left to us now are either suicide or migration. (107)

It reveals that he is not similar to his father in ideas. He views that it is almost impossible to minimize the feeling of communalism in Muslims. Indeed, his opinion is the result of the solid reality taking place in the society. His ideas are embedded and shaped by the context. He is more practical than his father in this sense. His father's opinions are far from social reality. He does not understand that his thoughts and contextual reality are not in harmony. As a result, his father suffers big psychological agony at the end of the novel.

The terror of the family is materialized when a mob of Muslim fundamentalists enters into their house, breaks all the materials and abducts Maya. Then a terrible sadness and silence begins in the family. It also leads to a gradual loss in the nationalistic faith of Sudhamoy. Suranjan has never claimed to be a Hindu before, being influenced by his father. He used to call himself a human being and believed in humanism but now he considers that the Muslims do not let him stay as a human; they make him a Hindu and communal. Before he used to say:

Let all those brick built buildings of worship be smashed to smithereens. Let there be no mandirs, masjids, girjas and gurudwaras, and after they are all destroyed, we will build on their ruins beautiful flower gardens and schools for children. For the good of man, the places of worship should be hospitals, orphanages, schools and universities. From now onwards let the prayer homes be Art and Handicrafts Academics, Schools for Fine Arts, halls for Scientific Discourse. Let our places of worship be converted into rich, green, sunbathed paddy fields, vast rolling fields, gurgling blue rivers and wild unquiet oceans. Let the other name for religion be Humanity. (164)

But now he is becoming communal and revengeful towards the Muslims. As they are destroying the temples, and the Hindu's houses, in the same way he wants to destroy their mosque and houses. He also wants to rape the Muslim girls as they are doing with the Hindu girls. He feels so much communal and revengeful that he brings home a whore. However, he does not look upon her as a whore. To him, she is a girl belonging to the majority Islamic community. He is longing to rape her in revenge for what they have done to his sister. He wants to compensate for his sister's abduction by raping a Muslim girl and his raping is very aggressive and painful to her. The novelist writes:

He pulled her hair; bit her on the cheek, neck and breasts. He scratched her waist, her stomach, her buttocks and her thighs with his sharp nails. The girls were only a prostitute, after all! As Suranjan attacked her naked body, the girl moaned with pain, screaming occasionally, 'O my God! I am dying of pain [...]' Suranjan laughed with savage satisfaction. He continued to hurt her till he could do no more and then he raped her. As he moved above her, the girl thought fearfully that this must be the worst, savage customer she had ever encountered. (200)

It shows that he gives up his earlier thoughts. He realizes that there is no environment at all to locate his thoughts and he thinks that they are just idealism. As a result, he wants to be realistic, communal and revengeful like his Muslim friends.

It also reveals that one can not be away from the reality of the society where he / she is living. At the end of the novel, when Suranjan says that he is feeling strongly to be communal and Hindu, Sudhamoy feels very agitated. But Suranjan endeavors to convince him of it and leave the country. He says, "However, much we call ourselves atheists, however much we call ourselves humanist, those people out there will isolate us. We cannot trust them, Baba" (215). But Sudhamoy is reluctant to be convinced. He is so stubborn, so strong in his convictions that there is no way to shake him. He has the

opinion that anyone who leaves his or her country is inhuman but his discourse is even disagreeable to his own son and wife although she does not disagree openly. Sudhamoy endeavors to materialize his discourse into truth, but he is unsuccessful. For the time being it becomes truth as he is the head of the family but his truth is turned into wrong direction and his son's truth becomes victorious because the social reality is not supportive of Sudhamoy whereas it is supportive of his son's discourse.

Next day, he comes to his son's room and asks him to go to India. He realizes his meaningless, absurd and too idealistic faith in his country. His strong feeling of nationalism gets dashed to the ground because this feeling is too extreme and idealistic and the extreme fundamentalism outside is very real, and undefeatable for him.

Sudhamoy says:

‘Come, let us go away?’ Suranjan could not conceal at his surprise.’

Where will we go Baba?’ he asked. Sudhamoy said, ‘India’. And his voice cracked as the shame swept over him. But he had said it, he had forced it out, he had compelled himself to say that they would go; and he had realized that was the way it would have to be because the strong mountain that he had within himself was crumbling day by day. (216)

In this way, at last, he agrees with his son and feels extreme shame. The reason for feeling shame is that he has to lose his long –possessed nationalistic faith due to its own extremity and the undefeatable communalism roaring outside. But, in fact, it is not shame; it is intolerable pain that he feels because his discourse is unsuccessful to create durable truth and the discourse of his son, which is also pervasive in the society, becomes a more powerful and bigger truth.

## Chapter Four

### Projection of Social Realism in *Lajja*

Realist writers reveal good and evil aspects of the society. As the responsibility of the art is to reveal the political upheavals or the ups and downs of the contemporary society, Nasrin uses several recurring events and facts that happened after the erupting of violence in Bangladesh in the name of religion. Though she is a Muslim by birth, she raises her voice equally against all the discriminations that have prevailed in the society. She exposes brutalities prevalent against woman in the name of religion and succeeds evoking universal appeal by showing the pitiful condition of the minority class. Religion has a big presence in a place like Bangladesh. When the communal harmony breaks and violence raises its head in society, the minority group has to go through obscenities. Nasrin brings to her readers a shocking picture of religious brutalities and its culture in her work. Her stories portray the lives of the people in Bangladesh and reveal much about the universal human condition.

Nasrin focuses on the ordinary events of modern life, eloquently evoking universal emotion; the humiliation of losing everything physically and mentally. She explores the nature of human attitude in a changing society. She minutely presents the situation in a simple and lucid version. Her entire attempt in *Lajja* is continuation of a series of literary attempts to dig out the realities from within. She renders an account of national modernity that is inscribed, not with affirmations of identity and subjectivity, but with displacement and difference.

The prime theme of the novel is the clash between the establishment and the outcastes. A down- to-earth fiction writer, Nasrin's experience is deeply rooted in the social condition of her time. A Muslim country by religion, Bangladesh is her prime

concern, and her characters with all their authenticity represent a society charged with communal disharmony and appalling economic differences.

*Lajja* is a novel of realism where various social elements like caste and religion play important roles. Nasrin tries to set social harmony through the novel. Society is a union of social elements. There are Muslims, Hindus and Christians, rich and poor as the components of the society. The novel is a unification of these elements. These elements are necessary for the development of a society. No society is a perfect society. So, Nasrin presents both positive and negative elements in the novel. Social problems are seen as negative elements which are need to be changed. That's why, Nasrin is a social reformist. *Lajja* is a novel of social reform.

*Lajja* chronicles a tale of domination, subordination, resistance and revolt along with religious differentiation. As a banned novel in Bangladesh it is the reality for Nasrin to present religious taboos with great minuteness. The novel presents social manners, customs, ideas and beliefs, which are characteristic of life in a Muslim country. Nasrin's realism is also seen in her use of portraying a camera like scenario of the events. Severe violence and domination are frequently portrayed in her novel.

Dhakeshwari mandir, Siddeswari Kali mandir, Ramakrishna Mission, Mahaprakash Math, Narinda Gouriya Math, and Bholagiri Asharam have all been stoned, looted and plundered. Swamibagh Ashram has also been looted. Twenty-five homes near Shoni's gym have been burnt down. The shoni mandir and the Durga mandir have both been destroyed and burnt. Narinda's Rishipara and Dayagunj Jelepara have not been spared either. Farmgate, Paltan, the Nawabpur MAran Chand sweetshop and the Deshbandhu sweetshop at Tikatuli have also been

demolished and set ablaze. The temples at Thathari Bazaar have also been torched. (33)

This extract clarifies how serial violence represents the real fate of the people. Nasrin's realism is also seen in her portrayal of all aspects of life, even the ugly and seamy ones. She does not eliminate the ugly aspects of human nature from her picture of life. Terror, violence, threat, revenge are as much as parts of life as peace, prosperity and reconciliation. It is not that she loves ugliness of the society but realism demands it if it is there in actual life.

Nasrin begins with a scene of city, chaos markets, smashed down homes and towns, fearful people, rioting procession; mass killing is practiced in the name of religion. In connection with this, Nasrin opines:

Ironically, all religious point towards one goal- peace. Yet it is in the name of religion that there has been so much unrest and lack of peace. So much blood has been shed and so many people have suffered. It is indeed a pity that even at the close of the twentieth century we've had to witness such atrocities, all in the name of religion. Flying the flag of religion has always proved the easiest way to crush to nothingness human beings, as well as the spirit of humanity. (35-36)

People are revengeful and orthodox. Nasrin further writes:

He could not remember having ever prayed in his life. Nor had he ever visited a temple. Indeed, he had vowed to bring socialism to his country and in pursuit of his dream had gone out into the streets and given speeches, attended meetings. He had espoused the cause of farmers and laborers, lobbied for the socio-economic uplift of the country. In fact, he had spent so much time looking after interests of

others that he had hardly had the time to worry about his families and his own interests. And yet, it was the same Suranjan at whom they were pointing a collective finger and labeling a Hindu! It was the same Suranjan that the local boys were chasing with cries of “catch him, catch him...” they hadn’t beaten him up today, but may be they would tomorrow. (59)

The above lines show the real image of the Hindu in a Muslim society. Living in such a society is the real problem for the minority and marginalized people. They are suffering always, crisis or no crisis. They have to live their lives with full of pain and die with pain. In *Lajja*, Nasrin presents their real miserable lives as:

Shuddering with the fear she ran up to Suranjan and took the comb away from him. “Listen to me, Suranjan” she said. 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)

These lines show the real message to the readers that the minority has to live under fear, threat and tension. In their own country, they are marginalized, subjugated and insulted. They have to think many times before setting out from the houses. All the fundamental rights are seized and they are treated inhumanly. They are being tormented by the rascal political attitudes of fake religionists. Every single moment for them is very fearful and when they hear the voices of any crowd, they get scared and close the doors and windows. The protagonist in the novel walks briskly in the street full of tension and frustration. Sudhamoy, Kironomoyee get paralyzed when the situation becomes worse and they lose their child Maya.

Nasrin shows the inhuman activity of the fundamental groups, who kidnap, rape and kill women mercilessly. She reveals the marginalized people's situation through this extract:

Frenzied and savage, the young men continued to destroy the earthly possessions of the Duttas. Immobilized and silent the terror-stricken family watched their house being reduced to a shambles.... And then the spell was broken for one of the thugs' grabbed hold of Maya. Her mother wailed in terror and the invalid Sudhamoy moaned. In a last desperate measure to save her, Maya caught hold the bedposts. Her mother came running up and flung herself on her daughter, in doomed attempts to protect Maya. But their attackers were relentless. They wrenched Kironomoyee off her daughter, broke Maya's grip on the bed and left as swiftly as they had come, carrying their prize with them. Recovering, Kironomoyee ran after them, screaming and begging: "Please let her go. Please let my daughter go..." (147)

It is the fate of those poor people. They are insecure in their own home. The sign of threat always chases them. They become passive, handicapped and paralyzed at the hand of the majority people. They lose their wealth, prestige and family members. All this is disgusting, no doubt, but it is a part of society, and so Nasrin does not hesitate to introduce it in her novel.

In *Lajja*, Nasrin is denouncing an aspect of traditional Muslim society which deserves condemnation. Nasrin's condemnation of unsociability derives its effectiveness from a total control of all the aspects of her problem. She shows a sure grasp of the psychology of both the Muslim and Hindu people. This is a feeling which refuses to accept the fact that religion is a man made thing, but it insists on treating



the follower of another religion like a sub-human and secondary, to be ignored or bullied or exploited as the occasion demands.

The people are treated inhumanly. All the authority is monopolized by the so called majority groups. They do not show their humanity even when someone is in the deathbed. They treat them as if they are animals. The minority people are compelled to obey all their commands.

Nasrin further presents the real contemporary tradition and explains how the majority ruled over the minority groups. The public institutions, education system and all the government authorities are manipulated in such a way that the minority class is tormented at each and every moment in the society. Nasrin presents the real verbal language of the society to show how the majority use their language especially to insult the minority in public places like shops and bazaars.

The shopkeepers and all those who were passing by just stood and laughed while they beat me, I did not say anything at all. They kept abusing me all the while “Bloody low caste Hindu...” they called me. “We’ll kill you, you bastard. “You think you’ll get away with breaking our Musjid? We’ll see to it that the whole lot of you chucked out of this country.” (74)

It is the real problem of contemporary Bangladeshi society. Nasrin exhibits the inhuman psychology of the Muslim people who think themselves superior by religion. Religious elitism is criticized in *Lajja*. But such religious people have no justice in their soul. They only show their physical and psychological exploitation of the non – elites.

Nasrin presents Suranjan, Sudhamoy, and the deprived, marginalized people and compiles an interaction between different types of consciousnesses – caste, class, religion and nation. She speaks for the relatively powerless groups in society.

Through the characters of Kironomoyee, and Maya, Nasrin tries to show a picture of the dominated female. Kironomoyee remains all the time dominated in the whole novel. Her desires, aspirations and her decisions are kept under domination. The tradition of remaining silent and being subjugated to the males is well presented in the novel. Nasrin is undoubtedly writing a message for her own culture in *Lajja*; much of the novel contrasts the innate decency of Sudhamoy with the gap between his own treatments of the women in his household in the larger context of Muslim domination in Bangladesh. Kironomoyee is also an important character in the novel. She is intelligent and beautiful but a passive sufferer whereas Maya is an active sufferer. They have become victims of the male dominated society. The cruel society and its culture pollute her. Although Maya tries to escape from those fundamental groups but unfortunately she is kidnapped, raped and killed cruelly. It is a real picture of an out caste woman. The young beautiful girl is physically and mentally tortured and killed as a weak subhuman being. She is exploited sexually. The sexual molestation is done by the majority group in the male dominated society. The novel reads:

Her clothes were in disarray as wild-eyed screamed to her mother for help ‘Ma ...please help me, Ma...’ she fought with her captors as she was dragged away, looking back in pain and terror, hoping against hope that her mother would be able to save her. Kironomoyee tried her best. With scant regard for her own safety, she threw herself at the goondas, dodged the shining chopper they aimed at her, and tried to get

hold of Maya. But the two men, who held her daughter, pushed aside Kironomoyee's attack and bundled Maya into one of the auto rickshaws. (148)

Nasrin explicitly portrays the lust of those fake people and the insecurity of these weak women and girls like Mayain the community of the minority Hindus.

Nasrin further uses the poignant narrative technique to present the humiliation. Minority people have to live their lives always in self-humiliation and torture bestowed upon them. In the novel Sudhamoy assumes that "Despite his optimism, and faith in his countrymen, he was aware that the fanatics could at any time bomb their house or set it on fire. It was quite possible that they would be murdered. He wondered if there was really an exodus of Hindus from the country"(67).

The minority people do not have any alternative option to get rid of that problem. It is their fate to accept whatever falls upon them.

Nasrin presents the interior realism of the both Suranjan and Sudhamoy. When the fundamental groups take their property and torture them, they themselves get paralyzed. They do not have any idea what to do or what not to do. The situation gradually becomes worse and turns more dangerous day by day. The fundamental groups could rape women openly and could loot and burn them openly. Though the Hindus in this country have the right as free citizens to preserve and protect their lives and property along with their own ideals and religion but all the idealism of the country turns fake. Most of the minority people are beaten, burned and most of them are killed. The political parties indirectly support them to gain power for their own political gains. To support this Nasrin refers:

But I don't think it will be wise to take them to court, because the parties, who failed to protect us when we were attacked, will surely not

provide us with any security after litigation. As a matter of fact, this was exactly how every victim could be accepted to react when faced with the prospect of initiating legal action. Suranjan felt the call for litigation was clearly a political stunt. (178)

The communal violence brings terror among the people. Many people are scattered, several lose their life and family members. It brings mass frustration and humiliation among the people. It brings disorder in the simple day to day life of the people.

Sudhamoy, a good hearted, helpful and patriotic person, loses his all. He always remains in a state of chaos. He loses his job, and he is an outcast from his neighbors and friends. They give him up. All his faith, patience and hopes gradually fall down. As Nasrin says: “their lives had really taken a turn for the worse. Suranjan had almost given up bathing and eating, Kironomoyee had done the same, admittedly to a far lesser extent. Sudhamoy, too, did not feel like eating” (180).

The high ideals of nationalism, socialism and democracy fall down when cruelties and obscenities hover over them. They are in a perpetual state of coma. They have no power to endure it. They have nothing keep them alive and safe. They don't have any choice. They are in a great confusion. So they leave their country for peace and safety.

Suranjan is compared to a passive hero, a number of times throughout this novel. Sometimes Suranjan seems more rebellious and sometimes a feeble character. Despite his hatred of society and its tradition, culture and discrimination, he still has faith that it will be changed soon. But his idealism, his attitude and his thought always deceived him. His responsibility to keep his family safe and upright fails because of embedded fanatics. He loses his sister Maya, who has been abducted. He loses also his beloved Ratna.

Suranjan faces multiple humiliations while he is on the road, or even in the assembly of people. When Suranjan passes through the road or comes to assemblies of people, he is not allowed to remain there and listen. They scold him and chase him away from there.

*Lajja* offers a social theory to speak against religious taboos and fake inhuman attitude. The focus of the novel is to dig out the rooted bad social tradition which always hampers social integrity and harmony of the country. Religion is the problem of all societies. To be a good society, there must be unity of people. So Nasrin includes a small flick of unity in the novel *Lajja*. This is a good example of harmony among the people in the society.

After his retirement he had run a small private practice out of a shop at Gopibagh in the evenings, but he'd been unable to go there regularly. Patients came for consultation to his house instead. A table was kept in the drawing room for Sudhamoy to examine his patients. The room also had a divan and a cane settee and chairs in it – medical journals, literature, books on sociology, politics... sudhamoy spent most of his time in that room. In the evening people like Nishit-babu, Akhtarujjaman, Saihdul Islam and Haripada often came to see him. They would discuss the political situation in the country, and Kironomoyee would make tea for them (23).

These above lines show how racial harmony is necessary to establish good relationship among the people. However, Suranjan and Sudhamoy never receive kindness and sympathy from that society. Their hunger for sympathy and kindness remains unquenched.

### **Segregation of Religious Minority.**

The organized Muslim religion has the concept of superiority over other minority groups. They are exploited in such a way that the minority people leave their country and some are killed mercilessly.

There was still a lot of tension in the air. Suranjan's mood again swung toward a desire to participate in all that was happening. He wanted to blend with the crowd, he wanted to make a survey of the temples that were destroyed and burnt, he wanted to enquire about the homes and shops that were looted and plundered. He wanted to protest against the recent events. These fanatics should be whipped. These fake religionists are imposters who provoke in the name of religion. (33)

These ideas support the religious exploitation in the name of religion. A Hindu family is outcast from the country by being a follower of another religion. About the plight of the outcast people, Nasrin writes:

Ironically, all religions point towards one goal – peace. Yet it is in the name of religion that there has been so much unrest and lack of peace. So much blood has been shed and so many people have suffered. It is indeed a pity that even at the close of the twentieth century we've had to witness such atrocities, all in the name of religion. Flying the flag of religion has always proved the easiest way to crush to nothingness human beings, as well as the spirit of humanity. (36)

Social exploitation is in direct proportion to the exploiter's conservatism in religion and inverse proportion to their enlightenment. In addition, social exploitation breaks up relationships. It is hypocrisy. The outward symptoms of social exploitation are slapping, abusing and segregation. Extra religious social exploitation is based on

psychic torture. Although we can find different themes of exploitation the novel focuses on cruelty of religion.

The fundamentalists have polluted the whole society and it has become the main cause of shame for the people who want to have their society respected. Wherever its origin might be it has created a great grief among human beings. Either in the name of religion or in the name of social status it has done nothing good except polluting the human relation. In the name of superiority, the treatment of the so-called upper class people against the weak and minority people is really heart rending and condemnable.

### **Emphasis on Characters.**

Nasrin's characters are sympathetic. They feel real and familiar. Nasrin has given much importance to the characters. Beneath an elaborate schema of tradition and custom, it is the everyday world of lost identity, jobs, failed relationship and transgression of desire that occupy the lives of her characters.

At first reading, one might think that Nasrin has focused her novel on historical facts and events. But at close reading she has proved her characters to be as important as the facts and events. Sudhamoy, the guardian of the family, suffers very much due to violence. He is quite obsessed due to his tension for the safety and security of his family. Suranjan, the son is frustrated due to violence in the country and his break up with his beloved. Kironomoyee, a passive house wife, becomes a victim of the male dominated society. She loses her freedom, her own interest and her own culture and custom. Maya a younger family member, is abducted, raped and killed. In this story Nasrin emphasizes on characters, their struggle and the way they live. Characters act on their environment rather than simply reacting to it. This mode of presentation is a basic feature of realistic writing. The novel reads:

Suranjan did not say anything. He was confused and disoriented. Did he have to stay at home just because his name was Suranjan Dutta while Kaiser, Latif, Belal and Shahin could not only be out of their houses but could also discuss the events that were taking place and join processions denouncing communalism? Surely this was not fair. Wasn't Suranjan as conscientious, logical and as independent a thinker as the rest of them? He leaned against a wall, a vacant look on his face as he lit a Bangla Five that he had picked up from a nearby cigrattee shop. He felt very lost and isolated. Many of the people around him were his acquaintances, indeed he was quite close to some of them, and yet he was so alone! He felt depressed that he could not join the people around him as they excitedly discussed the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the destruction of the temples in this country. Even if he wanted to merge and mingle with them, he could not, for there was a line he could not cross. He understood why people tried to avoid him and excluded him from their groups, even pitied him but it wasn't easy to accept. He inhaled deeply on his cigarette and puffed out a number of smoke rings. And then in the middle of the frenzied activity around him, he let his body limp and slumped against a nearby wall. (31)

This is how the characters appear. They have an explicable relation to nature, to each other, to their class, to their own past.

One of the things that distinguishes Nasrin's book is her fine sense of place suitable to the characters. She draws an evocative map of the city; the smashed down city truly evokes a feeling of loss in the readers. However, Nasrin's paramount interest is in presenting different aspects of human life within a subdued middle-class



milieu. The people in Bangladesh live in a shadow land between true deprivation and true freedom. There lies the drama between means on the one hand and hopes and fears on the other. Nasrin has thus put much emphasis on the characters' hopes, fears, emotions, struggle than on plot or action. The opening lines of the novel tell us how important the character is in the stories of Nasrin:

There had been no lack of hospitality in Kamal's house. They had had eggs and toast for breakfast, fish and rice for lunch and spent long, lazy evenings on the lawns. They had slept peacefully and comfortably on thick dunlopillow mattresses and had altogether had a glorious time. But no matter how pleasant their stay at their friend's house, it had provided no answers to the basic question: why had it all been necessary to take refuge in Kamal's house? It was true that Kamal was an old friend of Suranjan's friends did visit each other but not circumstance. (2)

Nasrin's eye is focused tightly on her characters as they struggle with feelings of existential malaise in a country where religious faith is palpable. There are characters like Belal, Ratna, Haider who turn selfish and hypocritical with the changing course of time. The characters who are supposed to be ignored in the society as they are from the minority class have occupied a very special place in the story.

### **Simple Diction: Reflection of Simple Life**

In her novel, Nasrin narrates her story in a simple and straightforward way. With her simple diction Nasrin dissects the religious culture of Bangladesh, extracting the murkiness that lurks behind it – the relation between the people of different castes. The diction of Nasrin is natural vernacular; it's not heightened.

She has used her simple diction to dig out the culture of middle class minority Hindu people. The city has a rich culture. But rich culture of is intertwined with modernity and social taboos. The novel beautifully crafts several facts and details, which easily attract the viewer's attention.

Nasrin uses sharp and extracting words to give voice to the hidden and unspeakable desires and dreams of her characters. This sort of technique is mostly used in a realistic work. Any work of art which explores the reality of the society should contain the diction as a tool to describe the matter of fact. That is to say the diction should describe the common, the average and everyday.

Nasrin has used various facts and description so that the real situation can be explained. The series of communal riots, processions, broken houses and devastating people have been abundantly used to give a clear picture of the situation. The right selection of the names has always been suitable to the characters. Nasrin has used such words so that the readers would be able to visualize the stories as the real situations found in Bangladesh.

More than seventy –five percent of the houses were burnt to the ground, numerous goats and cattle killed and many women raped. The estimated loss was over twenty –five million takas. Approximately 200 people armed with lathis and iron rods attacked the Satbaria village temple and destroyed all the idols inside. The people in the adjacent villages came to know of the destruction and fled. Many of them took shelter in the neighboring jungle. (95)

Nasrin is a realist also in the sense that complex ethical choices are often the subject of her writing. The characters appear in the real complexity of temperament and motive.

Sudhamoy was embarrassed. Suranjan was aware that he was hurting his simple, good-natured father but he was impatient with his view of the situation. As members of the second class Hindu minority, it was foolish, he thought, to try and see them an equal to the Muslim who were the first class citizens of this country. They had accepted the Muslim their brothers and their friends [...] but to what end? What good had it done Sudhamoy and Suranjan? Despite everything, the only identity that they had was their Hindu ones. They had always been non-believers, and they had spent their lives professing humanity and humanitarianism... but what good had they achieved? They still had to live with fear of being insulted and of course physically wounded. (63)

In this way, Nasrin has put racial minority to dig out the problem of religious taboos in a highly communal country. In the extract given above Suranjan simply knows the facts that they were insulted, beaten and outcaste because of being second class Hindu minority. They have remained with only one option whether to leave their religion and turn into a Muslim, or to leave the country. Being a liberal they were a rewarded to live in fear.

Many families and many individual have been ruined in the way of Dutta family. This situation has been a common thing in the racial majority culture. All the relationships are ruined by the means of being superior and inferior. It is simply a reference to readers but it eventually ruined all the minority groups in Bangladesh. Ratna had laughed when she heard this. She had said, 'it is best not to marry. After all life is short, and it is best to live it without any ties and commitments (79).

Nasrin has portrayed how relationship and humanity wither along the changing environment. The situation becomes worse when the class conflict becomes intense and at the climax.

*Lajja*'s conceptual focus on religion, as signaled by the title, makes it a particularly suitable text to explore the ambiguous legacy of religious rationality in Bangladesh. When its characters become aggressive, it is to escape the religious atrocities, driven by the rationalities of the religion. The novel, however, fully acknowledges the very different circumstance of majority religious groups. At the level of plot, the forces of majority class people criminalize minority and defeat their enlightened utopian objects. People from the minority group have no right to get education and even to live freely. Consequently, they feel be alienated and disregarded. They are treated as if they are not the human beings. Such treatment hinders the development of a harmonious society and distorts the feeling of unity.

## Chapter Five

### Sudhamoy as a Passive Rebel

Nasrin's *Lajja* is a big challenge to the conservative Muslim communities in the world. It has urged them to think critically about their religion, beliefs and assumptions. By doing this amid a seriously unfavorable situation Nasrin has become a woman of unprecedented courage, determination and dynamism who dares to go against long established ideals and concepts. She has amazed the world by courageously putting forward her strong ideas against Islamic fundamentalism. Her attempts at democratizing and liberalizing the Muslim communities are very commendable. But considering her as a big threat to Islamic societies, she has not been granted permission to return to her country yet.

In *Lajja*, she has exposed the religious arrogance of the Bangladeshi Muslims and their brutal attack upon the innocent Hindu minorities. Through the minute description of the plight of a Hindu family, she has displayed the terror befallen on every Hindu family. The head of the selected family, Sudhamoy, is confused to find his long-posed nationalistic faith being tremendously threatened and eroded. Despite the limitless oppression and too adverse atmosphere he is not in the mood to lose his faith. He loves his country more than anyone or anything else. He desires to save his belief at the cost of his and his family's life. However, there is no environment at all to sustain his belief.

When the Muslims' religious aggressiveness increases day by day, his faith in nationalism starts decreasing and ultimately there is a complete loss of faith in his country. Such a loss of faith is due to the incompatibility between his extreme nationalist views and extreme communalism taking place outside. There is a defeat of idealism by realism. He seems emotional, not practical at all. He is found to have

worked more by heart than by head. If he were not so nationalistic, idealistic and overtly optimistic, he and his family would not suffer as he could have done something to avoid the terrible consequences as his friends did. Although he does not do anything to resist Muslims' oppression, he is a kind of rebel because he does not take their aggressive activities seriously. He seems unaffected and indifferent. In this sense, he can be called a passive rebel. The novel has also shown the failure of the existing government to save the rights of the Hindu minorities who are also the citizens of the country. The Bangladeshi government's siding with the Muslim fundamentalists is unethical discriminatory and partial. It does not take any steps to save the Hindus from the inhuman treatment of the Muslims. Instead through media, it circulates the deformation that there is no communal feeling: there is perfect communal harmony in the country. It shows how the truth is concealed and the minorities are marginalized and the majorities are favored to assume power and sustain the rule. As a result, the Hindus are helpless and compelled to leave their country. Their contributions to free Bangladesh for her betterment become negligible, which was really a very shocking and painful experience for Hindu patriots like Sudhamoy.

*Lajja* is, thus a typical literary work in the mode of social realism. The featured story and the author's explicit urge for reformation are in the path of liberalizing and forward looking programs. It clearly negates dogmatism and conservatism. Instead, it promotes progressive changes in the society. This is all done on the canvas of middle class life that is an important aspect of social realism. From the middle class people too, more specifically, their very common and everyday activities have been highlighted.

Similarly, as a typical realistic novel *Lajja* contains adequate regional dialects and vocabulary in narration and dialogue. General diction, food items, religious terms, and various cultural phenomena of both Islamic and Hindu groups have been skillfully blended with plain and simple English discourses.

Following the footprints of American realism, *Lajja* offers a true picture of what had happened and what was happening in the Bangladeshi society. In order to do this due emphasis has been given on characters at the expense of plot.

This research ventures through the multiple instances of marginalization and suppression of minority Hindu people in the light of social realistic studies. The people in Bangladesh are the constant victims of religious economical and political subordination in Nasrin's novel. The historicity is embedded in Nasrin's reluctant narrative, even after the multiple efforts to harmonize life. The effort gains no weight because it fell into the cruel hands of notorious fundamentalist and their far reaching practices of class segregation. From beginning to the end page *Lajja* remains realistic itself. This novel explains the use of the term *lajja* by outlating the drawbacks of humankind. Exploitation, displacement, imposed violence through the state apparatus; that they were given inferior ranking and excluded from the economy and policy were the shameful practices at the context of well advanced modern world.

*Lajja* conceptual focus on religion, as signaled by the title makes it a particularly suitable text to explore the ambiguous legacy of religious rationality in Bangladesh. Dutta family represents the world of the minority. They face a lot of social evils due to the religious discrimination. *Lajja* displays the penetrating insight and human attitudes the grim realities and social evil of the downtrodden people of Bangladesh.

*Lajja* directly reflects the loss of humanity. After being a human being, they have right of equality, fraternity justice and freedom. But all the rights are kept under the dictatorship of fundamental groups. Certainly it creates the loss of human value. So the novel *Lajja* laments for those atrocities, discrimination, rivalry and conflicts in the name of any religion, cast and creed, which humankind is face today is really remorseful and shameful.

Although human development has improved at the aggregate level, the gap between the advantaged caste and ethnic groups remains constant. Thus the minority class who have had lower levels of human development for generations, continue to suffer today. These kinds of tendency criticize beautifully in the novel *Lajja* and raise the voice of integration, unity and peace. The novel encouraged people to the creation of a unified national society by enforcing the use of humanity and loyalty to human being and appeal to understand human value and its worthiness.



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