

# Investigate the Narrative Techniques Employed By Nasrin to Depict Acts of Protest and Resistance within Her Work

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## ABSTRACT

**“Women are crossing the limits” is prevalent in contemporary criticism of women. Is that so? This could be the case because, rather than the traditional tactic of remaining silent, women are now using protest and resistance. Two books, Lajja and French Lover, have been chosen for this debate. Both of Taslima Nasrin's books In both Lajja and French Lover, we have strong female characters who, after years of feeling invisible, stand up against the so-called established social conventions that have been crafted to benefit males. She embarks on a mission to fight against the sexism in healthcare and to end the ongoing oppression of women. Patriarchal hegemony is an oppressive system that this text seeks to highlight.**

**An outspoken critic of sexism and oppression in literature, Bangladeshi expatriate writer Taslima Nasrin is also a human rights campaigner. Revenge (1992) is Nasrin's work that most visibly displays her feminist viewpoint; it tells the narrative of Jhumur, a well-educated wife who takes a stand against the domestic abuse she endures at the hands of her husband, Haroon. With an eye towards the future and a sense of purpose, a writer documents in their body of work what they see and experience in the social environment. Members of the community who write on women also include those who provide their perspectives on patriarchal social norms and behaviours based on their own experiences and observations.**

**Keyword: Prevalent, Contemporary, Criticism, Narrative, Social Environment**

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## INTRODUCTION

Legal, economic, and societal constraints on women have persisted across all cultures and all periods. Women are subject to the beliefs of patriarchal societies. Their goal is to ensure that women will always have to rely on males for their own existence. The status of women was devalued by them. Domesticated, submissive, and selfless women are what they want on a global scale. In his book "Inching Towards Freedom," Prasanna Sree lays forth this concept:

She is not on par with men... She owes her own existence to men, namely her father, husband, and kid. Over time, women's standing and position declined and worsened...The patriarchal social order required a domesticated, submissive, and self-sacrificing woman in every part of the globe. (Sree, 65)

The majority of societies did not accept female students and did not allow them to attend university. Being uneducated is essential for women to have self-control. This is why they were not instructed in anything. There has been much discussion and controversy around women's education. The patriarchal mindset is something that Jain strongly disagrees with: "The man should be strong and active; the woman should be weak and passive; it is enough that the others should offer little resistance."

Gender stereotypes are well-known over the globe, not only in less developed nations. There are established societies where men are still seen as superior to women. Colours may convey meanings specific to gender; for example, pink is associated with girls and femininity, whereas blue is associated with masculinity and power. The parents display bias even while distributing the meals. Bernard thinks that gender is an inherent part of language and that morphemes are gender-specific. Words that describe male conduct have a stronger sense of authority than those that describe female conduct, which might

have a different meaning. Take the sun and moon as an example; one is masculine and the other is feminine. Those that describe masculine conduct imply strength, whereas those that describe feminine behaviour imply frailty. Males squawk, while women purr; males shout, while ladies screen; men get furious, while women worry; men squawk, while women squeak. There are a variety of terms that allude to masculinity and femininity. Those that denote femininity, such as "sweet" or "pretty," are wholesome and delicate, while those that denote masculinity are powerful. While "death" is a masculine noun, "love" is a feminine one.

The family's responsibilities have traditionally fallen on women. Her spouse uses her as a slave. No society values her highly since she is a helpless victim and an inferior creature. She did not find herself in this subordinate role by chance, but rather as a result of societal pressures. "Women have carried the burden of family," adds Prasanna Sree. For the sake of her family, her children, and her husband, she has sworn to be a slave. In both families and society at large, women are portrayed as helpless victims who endure their mistreatment in silence. When a woman grows up, she learns to see herself as less than males. The dominant environmental factors, such as social tradition and education, have historically been controlled by males, and not inherent feminine traits, are to blame for this position's imposition.

Additionally, in ancient times, women were not allowed to write about their own lives or experiences. It was only within the law that male authors may publish their writings. Many times, when male writers wanted to portray strong female characters, they would paint an idealized picture of what a woman should be. They adopted certain beliefs in accordance with social standards, and male writers helped spread the conventional wisdom of male supremacy. Because of this, women's genuine feelings were kept under wraps.

Suppressing women were not simply masculine ideals but also religious ones. Although cultural norms about women's roles vary, it is universally acknowledged that they are not on par with males. As far as males are concerned, women are inherently inferior. Women are seen as inferior to males by several faiths across the globe. Man is inherently better than woman, according to the Bible. It is believed that Adam, together with his wife Eve, is the master who bestows names on all living things. Adam is supreme ruler over all living things, including women.

Through Nila, Nasrin expresses her feminist views, and she argues that a patriarchal culture, similar to her own, is to blame for Nila's intricacies. The pain of a woman entangled in the knot of tradition and religion is shown in Nasrin's writings. As a societal institution that uses women for sexual gratification and reproduction, she sees marriage as the most repressive. The Muslim world has mistakenly perceived the growth of Islamic fundamentalism as a struggle between modernity and traditionalism, democracy and authoritarianism, etc., as I contend in this article. Western liberal democracy and pluralism are naturally embraced as a response to the rising tide of Islamic extremism in the Islamic world, and Nasrin's case is regarded as a symbol of this opposition.

## **2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The proposed study mainly focuses its attention on the aspect of 'Rudiments of Protest and Resistance in Taslima Nasrin's Fictional and Non-Fictional Works'. The study intends to look into the protest and resistance in Nasrin's fictional and non-fictional works. Through her works Nasrin questions the educated, economically employed woman. Child marriage, lack of education, lack of social participation, dowry system, wife-killing, rape, suppression and murder are going on peacefully in the present day is a questioning fact.

In the study, "Protest" signifies a kind of expression of disapproval or dissent often contrary to something one is powerless to prevent or avoid. The word is very similar to the term "resistance" which is taken as an active participation in opposing something a person is dissatisfied with. To be more precise protest tends to be more passive and resistance is more aggressive. The difference between the two lies in the idea that a protest is generally going to focus more on spreading a message, or simply making it clear that there is dissatisfaction with the subject matter, while a resistance actually does something to demonstrate this dissatisfaction. It is, in fact, a vital tool for social transformation, articulating people's grievances and challenges.

Nasrin reminds through her writings that still there is no strong women's movement in the country that can fight for a healthy life free from the grip of religion and prejudices and, thereby, ensure women's rights, human rights and equal rights. In light of this, it is apparent of the intense emotional investment in the writings of Nasrin. The endeavour is to explore, understand and reckon the elements of protest and resistance in Taslima Nasrin's writings.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

L. S. Shanthi et al (2022) The challenges that women encounter in many areas of life captivate Taslima Nasrin and Bama.

While each author approaches the topic from a different angle, they all have a passion for women's empowerment and a strong desire to see them speak up. The people and events that shaped Bama and Nasrin's lives couldn't have been more different. The rising consciousness of female maltreatment and gender subjugation in Bangladesh is the subject of Taslima Nasrin's *My Girlhood*. Throughout *My Girlhood*, we follow a young girl as she struggles to carve out her own territory. As Taslima Nasrin seeks love and autonomy, she comes to terms with her own identity as a woman. No matter how much economic power a Dalit gains, their caste will always be a part of them. In the eyes of the higher castes, they are not human beings with equal rights. At many stages during her life, Bama discusses her Dalit identity in her memoirs. Examining the identity and self-representation diagram in *My Girlhood* by Taslima Nasrin and *Karukku* by Bama is the primary goal of this paper.

Gaurav Kumar, Dr. Bharti Karnik (2019) Author, feminist, human rights campaigner, and secular humanist Taslima Nasreen was born and raised in Bangladesh. She was educated liberally after being born into a Muslim middle-class household in the northern region of Bangladesh in 1962. She began helping the underprivileged in her nation after becoming a doctor at the age of 23. When she became known in the West, she wrote significantly for magazines. Ananda Puraskar, the Sakharov medal for freedom of thought from the European Parliament, the Kurt Tuckholsky award from Swedish PEN, a human rights prize from the French government, and a humanist award from the International Humanist and Ethical Union are just a few of the many accolades bestowed upon her. Taslima Nasreen made a public appearance in Delhi after being exiled for 18 years. Given that fundamentalists want to force everyone to consume, dress, and live according to their rigid body type, Taslima knows that her fight is crucial.

It rejects fundamentalism because it forbids people from expressing their opinions openly and cannot tolerate what its adherents see as infidelity. In my view, it is not a dispute between Christian and Muslim groups, Hindu and Muslim groups, or Jewish and Muslim groups. A small number of extremists exist within every major religious system. Taslima Nasreen has made controversy her habitude, as shown by her decision to withdraw her new *Nirbasan* book from the Kolkata Book Fair. Both women's rights and the rights of Islamic fundamentalists are central to her dissertation. She has had difficulty exercising her right to free speech. "I want the government not to violate freedom of speech," she says in an interview with *The Hindu*, describing how Bengal and Bangladesh make her feel. Strange as it may seem, the government, not fundamentalists, were the ones who stopped *Nirbasan* from releasing him. *Dwikhandito* really started attacking the fanatics. "Had they not banned the novel, the issues of attacks on me, setting my head price, deportation requirements and cancellation of my book launch would not have risen," the writer asserts. Her belief is firm, according to *The Hindu*.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. Examine Themes of Oppression and Patriarchy
2. Investigate the narrative techniques employed by Nasrin to depict acts of protest and resistance within her work

### **DISCUSSION**

Taslima Nasrin (often written Nasreen) is the most widely translated Bangladeshi novelist, and she has gained international renown as a radical feminist, secular humanist, and advocate for human rights. Not only is she skilled at realistically portraying life, but she also manages to reveal aspects of it. She gained fame for her works that challenged patriarchy and religion. Her views on female sexuality are open and honest. Throughout her literature, she always advocates for women's emancipation from patriarchal society's expectations. Reforming society and achieving equality for everyone, regardless of religion, caste, or gender, is the fundamental goal of Taslima Nasrin's literature. For the sake of women's equality and free expression, she has been an outspoken advocate. For that reason, she has become as a symbol of unrestrained expression.

In general, Taslima Nasrin writes on fundamentalist themes. An ideology that weakens personal liberties and diverts individuals from the path of natural growth of awareness and individuality is fundamentalism, she explains, shedding light on the topic. When presented with fundamentalism as a substitute for secular thought, I am unable to accept it. The first is that fundamentalists' tenet that human laws have divine backing is my main objection. Furthermore, fundamentalists' unwavering reliance on religion rather than reason is a second issue.

The third point is fundamentalists' adamant stance that every person is meaningless and unimportant. One distinctive aspect of fundamentalism is the prioritisation of group allegiance above personal rights and accomplishments. For fundamentalists, there is only one right way to live, and they wish to impose their way of life on everyone. This includes the rules for what people should dress, what they should eat, and how they should go about their daily lives. In conclusion, they present themselves as a moral force, although they advocate violence and hate in their rhetoric. Can a humanist and rationalist ever come to terms with such horrific oppression?

Lajja is a violent indictment of religious fanaticism and human depravity; it is also a contentious book. The religious savagery has been depicted by Taslima Nasrin.

Taslima Nasrin has proclaimed the beginning of her book with excellent language skill: "let another name for religion be humanism." She has dedicated her work "to the people of the Indian subcontinent." Ram Janmabhoomi, the site of the birth of the supernatural entity avatar, is revered as a sacred site in Hinduism. It is widely believed that this site is located where the Babri mosque once stood in the Uttar Pradesh town of Ayodhya, however there is little historical evidence to back up this claim. During the 1528 Mungol invasion, general Meer Baqi of the Mongols constructed a mosque on the site. The mosque was named the Babri Masjid in honour of Mongol king Babar, who widely believed that Babri had destroyed an avatar temple in order to build the mosque. However, only a small amount of archaeological evidence seems to back up this theory.

There was a building there before the mosque, according to archaeologists. Various people have referred to this building as a Buddhist temple and a Hindu temple. Both Hindus and Muslims used the location for religious purposes for at least 400 years. In 1822, a legislator from the Faizabad court first made the assertion that the place of worship was built on the site of a temple.

Later in the nineteenth century, the Nirmohi Akhara group used this pronouncement as a pretext to attack the location, which led to the first recorded incidents of non-secular cruelty at the location, about 1853. To prevent further fighting, the country's royal administration found a means to partition the outside structure of the place of worship in 1859. The ruling class remained in setu until 1949, when members of the purportedly pious Hindu Mahasabha secretly placed sculptures of avatar within the temple. Each party has registered civil cases assumption to the landscape, making this intersection look more like a crossroads than a disaster. Users of the mosque saw the idol's installation as disrespectful. The gates of the mosque were locked since the location was deemed to be in dispute.

At the disputed creation on December 6, 1992, the R.S.S. unionized a public meeting that included 150,000, the V.H.P., and the B.J.P. Karsevaks. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, and Uma Bharti were among the B.J.P. leaders who delivered remarks during the ceremonies. The gang became more upset and began chanting the rally's motto as the event began. All corners of the building were cordoned off by the police in an effort to halt the assault. In contrast, a young man slipped past the barricade and ascended the building itself while waving a saffron flag in the moonlight. The police perimeter managed to break free due to their vast numerical disadvantage and inadequate preparation for the magnitude of the attack. At one point, the whole muck and chalk edifice was dismantled as the mob angrily attacked it with choppers, malleted hooks, and grappling hooks. According to Justice Manmohan Liberhan's 2009 report, 68 people, mostly B.J.P. leaders, were found guilty of the destruction of the Masjid.

Muslims in Bangladesh began assaulting and torching Hindu temples after the 1992 damage. Nowhere in Bangladesh were stores and houses ever-present, yet there was that one time a crowd of at least 5,000 people tried to storm the Bangabandhu national building in the nation's capital.

The headquarters of AirAsia was attacked and destroyed. Reportedly, ten lives were lost, eleven Hindu temples were destroyed, and several additional houses were damaged. As a result of the bloodshed, the Hindu community of Bangladesh had to postpone Durga Puja festivities in 1993. This allowed authorities to focus on repairing the temples that had been damaged and conducting investigations into the crimes.

An ignominious and uncompromising event in India occurred when "a crowd of Hindu extremists demolished Babri Mosque at Ayodhya" on December 6, 1992, which serves as the novel's background. The incident infuriated the Islamic sentiments of Muslims all over the world. The event's most horrific consequences played out in Bangladesh, where radical Muslims shamelessly treated the country's Hindu population. A minority community, the Hindus of Bangladesh, are terrorized by the dominant Muslim population in this book.

It is sad that Muslims in her country have attacked Hindus after the destruction of the Babri Mosque; this is one of the reasons why Taslima Nasrin wrote the book Lajja, which she cites as an example of her loathing of collectivism and extremism. Bangladeshis should be ashamed that such a terrible thing could happen in their beautiful country, according to the United Nations. We are all responsible for what happened in Bangladesh in 1992, and we are all in control. Lajja is proof of our group's failure.

Author Taslima Nasrin of Asia wrote a book called Lajja, which means shame, in the Bengali language. The Bengali language, like many other distinct Indo-Aryan languages, uses the term Lajja to mean insult. After its 1993 Bengali debut,

the book was banned in many Asian countries. "Taslima fled her native Asian country when receiving death threats from Muslim teams," the book explains, adding that even after six months of compilation, it still had 50,000 copies sold.

"Let humanism be another name for the religion." Taslima Nasrin opened the book with these remarks. In her dedication, she praised the Indian people. The book is structured around a preamble and a history of events. Perhaps Taslima Nasrin was moved to write this essay in response to the Hindu-Muslim violence that erupted in several Asian nations after the destruction of the Babri mosque in India. The book lays forth the facts: rising tide of public opinion, unjust treatment of the Hindu population, and secret school of thinking in the Asian nation. The city of Ayodhya in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh was the site of the 1992 Gregorian calendar-semester demolition of the Babri Mosque. In Bangladesh, deconstruction has unforeseen and detrimental consequences. As the social riot's flames flared, the Dutta family suffered and still feels the communal pain. Every single one of my relatives feels strongly about this.

In 1992, after the demolition of the Babri house of worship, there were widespread violent uprisings in Asian nations, which reached the Hindu minority in particular. Two additional significant events in Bangladeshi history are also mentioned in detail. There occurred the 1971 war between East and West Pakistan, the first of these events. The people of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) fought for their independence in this conflict. The expertise of Sudha Moy is shown via flashbacks. Second, in 1990, the Babri mosque controversy in Ayodhya, India, began. Disturbances in the nation's communities followed.

### CONCLUSION

Both male and female critics have typically reached the conclusion that female authors tend to be more reserved, traditional, and conventional. When writing about *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir's frameworks on creative women are praised by Elizabeth Hardwick:

Women writers, says Simone de Beauvoir, suffer from narcissism and inferiority complexes; they write to please, but originality—until death—makes them astonishingly controversial. Change terrifies and entices.

The literary canon, however, reveals that reviewers have been harsh towards female authors who have sought originality—that is, who have dared to challenge societal conventions and preconceptions. As a result of their gender, the Bronte sisters became social outcasts. The character of Elizabeth Barrett Browning was described as coarse. *The Awakening*, by Kate Chopin, was deemed morally poisonous; Simone de Beauvoir was proclaimed to be icy; and Kate Millett was said to be perverted. Even Taslima Nasreen follows this custom. The majority of her remarks are critical. "A woman in a hurry, both to acquire publicity and to establish sexual equality" (Engineer, 1) describes her, while "The darling of the press" describes her (Engineer, 1). She is said to have focused only on criticizing religion, disregarding the actuality of the current "Social context" (Engineer, 1). "Thoroughly westernized and cut adrift from her own roots" (Engineer, 2) is another way of describing her. She has been the topic of controversy after being dubbed a radical feminist.

This critique does not diminish Taslima Nasreen's importance in the literary world. Among her contemporaries, her works are considered bestsellers. Evaluations and reevaluations will take place. Her writings are captivating because she fearlessly challenges patriarchy via her genuine depictions of occurrences. She may be the first Bangladeshi woman to publicly voice her disapproval of the country's gender gap. Her female heroines stand up for themselves and demand the freedom to define who they are. They are adamantly opposed to conforming to societal patriarchal standards that devalue women. When discussing female sexuality, Nasreen does not hold back. The domain of man-woman interpersonal interaction, most closely linked to sexuality, is where her literary audacity is on full display. Sexuality is more than just a number to her. Not only is it a pleasurable physiological need, but it is also a very personal and psychologically charged event.

When the deeper Eros, the principle of psychological relatedness, is at work, she becomes concerned about the men and women who have an innate need for a connection. Focusing on the Eros values that traditional brains have in an unconscious and primordial form is of particular importance. She goes beyond and beyond the typical literary portrayal of sexuality, which either glosses over the Eros-truth of life or portrays men and women as being satisfied with the level of relatedness caused by an unconscious, innate sexual link.

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