
THE PROJECTION OF SUBMISSIVE AND REVOLUTIONARY BENGALI RURAL WOMEN IN SYED WALIULLAH'S *TREE WIHTOUT ROOTS*

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ABSTRACT: *This paper represents Syed Waliullah's comprehensive understanding of Bengali rural women in his novel "Tree without Roots". It concentrates on the controversial protagonist Abdul Majeed who grasped the rural people especially the simple and innocent like women for his greater projection of power and hunger. As a part of his prosperity, Majeed deeply feels inside that women can be the most flexible and reliable field for smooth cultivation and experimental adventure. Following qualitative content analysis method, it moves forward having three parts. Firstly, it shows how the peace loving women are intentionally abused and humiliated in the name of religious values and self-made superstitious customs to make women submissive. Secondly, it discusses how a tender aged girl Jamila becomes a revolutionary woman against Majeed's temporary tactics and mechanism. Thirdly, it figures out several factors that enforced rural women to be both submissive and impulsive from a feminist approach. Besides, it investigates how Majeed changes his extraordinary strategies and undetectable weapons like everlasting fear of God, inadequate religious education and dominant patriarchy to ensure his doubtful legitimacy and fragile existence.*

KEYWORDS: Bengali Rural Women, Misuse of Religion, Patriarchal Dominance, Submissiveness, Revolutionary Nature, Feminist Approach

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of world-wide literary treasure, Bangla literature could not contribute substantially due to the lack of translation from Bangla to English. This reality deprived the international readers from the ingenuity of Bangla culture, social customs and values especially the extraordinary literary gem of Bangla language. Syed Waliullah, a notable Bangla novelist,

dramatist and short story writer, exceeded this invisible linguistic barrier. He wrote *Lal Shalu* (Red Cloth) in Bangla for the first time. Later, he felt an inevitable urge to transmit his ideas into English and titled it *Tree Without Roots*. Serajul Islam Choudhury, a Bengali critic of English literature, noted the importance of this book:

Lal Shalu was published in 1948, only a year after Pakistan had come into being a new state, claiming to be the homeland for Muslims of the subcontinent...*Tree Without Roots* was published nineteen years later in 1967; and, as even those who have not read the original Bangla work will find out for themselves, this work is a great artistic achievement indeed (2005, p.ix). Essentially, this novel is vital in the sense that it smartly depicts how the so called religious hypocrites cheat, dominate and exploit general people in different forms applying the force of religion intentionally. They establish unofficial platform like different *mazars* attracting public concentration to ground a concrete foundation of a gigantic monetary hub. Another leading critic of English literature named Niaz Zaman emphasized the demand of this book and republished it from her own company "Writers.ink". In an interview with Jackie Kabir, Zaman expressed, "I felt that *Tree Without Roots* was an important book and needed to be republished" (2018, p. 152).

Therefore, this novel has vital significance in the arena of literary criticism. In this perspective, this paper has analyzed this text from feminist lens targeting all the Bengali rural women mentioned in the book. Basically, it has prepared the highlights on how the female characters became the worst victims of religious hypocrisy and exploitation. Similarly, it has investigated what possession and condition the rural Bengali women feel before Majeed and his self-created influential *mazar* where the rural women have been considered to be decoys or toys of his game. Besides, this paper has brought to light what Majeed did in the name of treatment and torture having no knowledge in medical science. In front of his mighty kingdom, women find no basic rights as human being. That is the noteworthy position of this paper which offers a critical insight of the everlasting sorrows and sadness of Bengali rural women.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Waliullah's *Tree Without Roots* attracted a number of researchers who criticized the novel from diverse angles. In his extraordinary "Introduction", Choudhury pointed multiple issues. First of all, he noted how Waliullah dealt the storyline and subject matter of this novel, "With the imagination of an artist, Waliullah had grasped the deprivation and sadness of the people in the villages, arising out of the stark fact that there was little land and too many mouths to be feed. Little food means more religion, he has written in the novel." (2005, p. ix) Later he talked about the fictional and mythical village Mahabbatpur, its isolation from the outer world and the makings of Majeed:

He plants fear into the hearts of the innocent peasants, makes them feel guilty for the neglect of the patron saint. He becomes the ruler and seeks to transform the simple peasants, almost pagans in their life-style, into devout Muslims. In the process he tries to drive out songs and laughter from their lives (2005, p. x).

Finally, Choudhury made a comparative analysis between the Bangla *Lal Shalu* and the English version *Tree Without Roots* where he figured out the basic changes Waliullah made, "In Tree

Without Roots there are abridgements and alterations, and an important addition in the ending, which no one but the writer himself could have made” (2005, p. ix).

Hayat Mamud, one of the Bengali essayists, poets and literary critics, wrote an introduction where he put his comment on Syed Waliullah, “We wonderfully notice that in his writing the general and polluted bare human body is commonly visible under the cover of long practiced religion” (1996). Later he noted two points on Syed Waliullah, “Basically, I think Waliullah’s writing can be divided into two parts: In one side, he forms the visible reality of the world and the effective truth hidden under practical life after bisecting the experience of real life world. On the other hand, he sows his means of experience on an unclear emotional land where flower blooms as symbol and sound” (Mamud, 1996, Trans. by the authors). He pointed out the reality of Majeed’s crisis, “It is true that we never support Majeed’s actions. But we cannot hate him because poverty and helplessness legitimize him to be a gentle and wretched man like us” (Mamud, 1996 Trans. by the authors).

In an introduction Saiful Islam pointed out several comments on Jamila, “Although she came after two-third part of the novel, she became the heroine. Her subconscious behavior marks as the rebel against Majeed’s injustice, hypocrisy and falsehood” (Trans. by authors, 2017, p.20). He also thinks that once all the villagers obeyed Majeed. The richest man Khaleq followed his instruction. But this young girl Jamila looks like different. She spits on Majeed’s mouth. In fact, Jamila spits on the society (Trans. by authors, 2017, p.20).

The word ‘*mazar*’ has become somehow an inseparable cultural constituent over the years in the history of Bengali people. Regarding it a holy place people from different parts of the country usually visit there. Arif Moin Uddin Khan (2013) suggested a comprehensive background of *mazar*, “Traditionally, majority of the people of this sub-continent have a deep respect for religion no matter to what degree they apply it in their practical aspects of life” (p.69). Another noticeable concern is religion in relation to power and basic establishment. “In 1947, when Pakistan took birth religion was a consequential point for the nations of both East and West Pakistan. Religious feelings were the prime weapon for the West Pakistan to have dominance over East Pakistan” (Jannat and Rayhan, 2018, p.44).

Majeed clearly knew that modern education was yet to reach Mahabbatpur. Therefore, Majeed thought to use religion as a sensitive tool. Walid and Islam (2018) pointed out the fact of pseudo-religious ideologies, “In the pseudo-religious activities, religion is used as a scheming weapon by pseudo-saints. By using the name of God, they bring fear in the mind of followers”(1298). Majeed captured both men and women together planting very sensitive seeds like fear and shame. Women became the worst victims of his project. Kabir and Kibria (2019) represented women’s vulnerable position, “In Bangladesh, men dominate, oppress and exploit women through private and public patriarchy. Private patriarchy is maintained in the family through the misinterpretation of religion and the non-recognition of unpaid work done by women at home” (p. 39). To have firm control and domination, Majeed distorted the religious sayings and explanations in his own way.

In the above mentioned discussion and sources, no particular paper is seen where the submissive and revolutionary Bengali women got special importance so vividly along with the inherent factors. The motivation of this paper lies here.

METHODOLOGY

This descriptive paper is based on theoretical analysis. Therefore, qualitative research method has been followed to accomplish the paper. For better understanding, both the primary and secondary sources have been closely read and analyzed from feminist point of view to figure out the inherent features, factors and motivations for substantial insight of this research.

THEORITICAL BACKGROUND

One of the world-shattering concepts in the field of literary and cultural theory is obviously feminism because it has rapidly worked to face the crucial and fundamental crisis of women. In fact, the feminists or feminist activists always hope to see a society which is free from patriarchal dominance and constant suppression. In a book titled *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction*, Margaret Walters pointed out these facts in the very beginning “Over the centuries, and in many different countries, women have spoken out for sex, and articulated, in different ways, their complaints, their needs, and their hopes” (2005, p. 2). The surprising concern is the question of house. Sophie Lewis (2017) remarked on the security of women in their own house and domestic violence, “People are only now beginning to realize that homes are actively dangerous places for many women, and in no sense sanctuaries, as we commonly imagined” (p. 57).

The ultimate reality is, “in almost every city in that period, feminists set up independent women’s crisis services and shelters, where victims of domestic violence could take refuge without having to file bureaucratic appeals” (Lewis, 2017, p. 59). Besides, other limitations and constraints, there remains a strong root of religion. Walters (2005) figured out the concern of religious root:

Some of the first European women to speak out for themselves and for their sex, did so within religious framework, and in religious terms. It is perhaps not always easy, in our secular society, to bring them back to life: to recognize fully their courage, or to understand the implications, or the extent, of their challenge to the status quo (6).

The novel *Tree Without Roots* has great connection with religion. In the name of religion women have been tortured and humiliated. “Consequently the protagonist of the novel in his clever dutiful role of a religious and holy man with aids from the patriarchal superstructures is able to create hegemony in Mahabbatpur, whereas his wives continue their subalternity” (Chakrabarty 770). Afterwards, Kath Woodward and Sophie Woodward (2009) related the Marxist concept and radical feminism, “Feminists have drawn on a wide range of conceptualizations of power, including structuralist accounts which identify a material source of power, for example as inspired by Marxist theories of the economic determinants of social relations and cultural forms” (p.117).

Syed Waliullah’s *Tree Without Roots* demonstrated the ins and outs of a *mazar* along with different existing issues like capitalism and existentialism. At the same time, he incorporated female characters and gave a natural look to examine their stands. He created not only Rahima and Amena but also Jamila as the elements of his experiment. One by one, he described their life-styles, daily expectations and conversations. Besides, he put his eyes towards their hidden desires, cries and sorrows.

He applied both Amena and Rahima to act positively following the patriarchal barrier. On the other hand, he welcomed Jamila to shake the entire set up existing in the society over the years. “Feminist theory argues that the representation of women as weak, docile, innocent, seductive or irrational –sentimental is rooted in and influences actual social conditions, where she does not have power, is treated as a sex-object or a procreating machine” (Nayar, 2010, p.83). The female characters are Rahima, Jamila, Amena, Tanu, Hasuni’s mother (Kulsum) and maternal grandmother. All the characters are tortured, abused or forced to accept the patriarchal destined ill-fate.

SUBMISSIVE WOMEN

The mechanism of patriarchy has a great influence to make somebody submissive. It systematically generates a sophisticated mind set of man or woman. Peter Barry (2002) argued, “In feminist criticism in the 1970s the major effort went into exposing what might be called the mechanism of patriarchy, that is , the cultural ‘mind-set’ in men and women which perpetuated sexual inequality” (p.122). If the spot light is directed to Amena and Rahima, a different kind of dominance becomes visible. Here, religion has been used as a tool to snatch away their individual expression and liberty. Nayar noted that feminism’s key political and theoretical stance is this: The inequalities that exist between men and woman are not natural but social, not pre-ordained but created by men so that they retain power (2010, p.83).

Majeed’s first wife Rahima still misses her eventful childhood days, “Rahima was a girl of village. As a child she used to run around like a boy, climb trees, jump over streams, enormously proud of the little silver ornament that dangled from her nose” (Waliullah, 2005, p.28). When Rahima came to Majeed’s hand, she lost her opinion. Majeed transformed his wife into an object like being. She has to see with the eyes of Majeed and think the way Majeed feels contended. Md. Abdullah Al Mahmud figured out Rahima’s mind set, “He is cared and respected by Rahima, his wife who never proves infidel to him. Yet he is unhappy. It is partly because he is ‘more than a husband to Rahima’ (132). So, whatever Majeed summons, she accepts as the law of nature, “Rahima, once the little village tomboy, was now by an aura of mystery and power” (Waliullah, 2005, p.28).

In fact it sounds like an incurable disease that Rahima suffers but never shares to anybody. The reason may be the position and dominant attitude of her husband. She fears both the *mazar* and Majeed. She feels helpless as she has to carry the responsibility of childlessness. Munasir Kamal pointed out:

Rahima is blamed for the couple's barrenness—a blame she accepts. However, Jamila is also shown to be childless in the course of the novel, attesting Majeed's incapacity. Ultimately it is this "weak female" who is successful in shaking, if not uprooting, the tree that stands firm on its roots, which her male counterparts are unable to do. (n.p)

Everyday people come to tell their expectation and she shares all to her husband except her own desire. The remarkable fact is she could give her opinions as a better half. The novelist stated, “Sometimes, in the stillness of the night, Rahima would utter her own secret desire. She would say that she was childless” (Waliullah, 2005, p.29). Rahima was a widow and childless before her marriage with Majeed. So, she might have developed a kind of sense of inferiority. When Majeed’s created fear entered into that sense, she became speechless and submissive.

Waliullah pointed out, “She never showed anger. Towards Majeed she developed a deep respect mingled with fear, for behind him stood the enormous shadow of the *mazar* over which people wept, prayed and burned scented sticks and candles” (2005, p.21). Majeed not only snatched Rahima’s freedom of speech but also freedom of walking style. Waliullah put Majeed’s remark “No, you must not walk that way. It makes the earth suffer. The earth doesn’t approve of it. It’s disrespectful” (2005, p.21).

Amena’s position can be an important element to discuss feminism in *Tree Without Roots*. Like Rahima, she is another victim of patriarchal mechanism. Of course, her husband Khaleque is well-mannered, good hearted and different from Majeed. Whatever the situation is she cannot cross the set up. Amena gets the same feelings and experience of Rahima. The responsibility of childlessness takes shelter on her shoulder. Waliullah explained, “Khaleques’s wife, Amena, had been gnawed at by a secret desire. Married for thirteen years, she was now over thirty but still childless, like Rahima” (2005, p.53). Although Khaleque has enough wealth and prosperity, he has to accept the traditional patriarchal solution to marry Tanu for the second time. The surprising action to be noted when Majeed gave his self-made superstitious fake explanation for a childless woman, “When a woman has coils in her womb, no child is ever conceived” (Waliullah, 2005, p.58).

The novel contains no indication of Majeed’s study on Medical Science yet he usually gives treatment unconventionally. It was nothing but a trap to punish Amena for her lack of faith on Majeed. Since Majeed had no way to take revenge directly, he framed a logical and practical design to do his job naturally and silently. The narrator of the novel clarifies Majeed’s intention saying, “He recalled his great anger when he had first heard of Amena’s desire for water blessed by the *pir*” (Waliullah, 2005, p.67). Now Amena has become a threat for Majeed. To wipe out this obstacle he needs more rational plan to establish his dominance once again. Later the novelist said, “It was on this account that he wanted to punish her. He knew that it was sometimes necessary to strike hard at people, to terrify them, roar out in denunciation” (Waliullah, 2005, p.67).

The disease and prescription Majeed made was completely fake to satisfy his anger. “He had made his plans accordingly. He would let Amena circle round the *mazar* and he would not have felt he pains of a woman in labour. He would then tell Khaleque that she was incurable” (Waliullah, 2005, p.67). It can be noted that Amena was childless and passing her older age. So she tried her last to have a fickle chance to hear the cries of a child. As a woman she must have the right to insist her husband naturally. But what Majeed did was entirely a criminal act. Besides he made a tough situation for Khaleque which forced him to be separated, “Amena was returned to her parental home. Khaleque had decided to accompany her all the way, moved by a sense of solemn duty towards the woman who, despite the separateness between man and wife decreed by custom” (Waliullah, 2005, p.82).

Later the narrator talked about how dominant and powerful a man can be, “Now she was going away forever at the dictate of a power greater than the sun and the moon, greater than the earth and all the men who lived on it” (Waliullah, 2005, p.82). The ultimate destiny of a woman is clearly visible through the eyes of Khleques’s second wife Tanu, “In her thoughts she saw Amena as though she were dead, her eyes shut and her limbs rigid. Yes, she was dead now-she

was being carried away to the land of the shadows, to oblivion” (Waliullah, 2005, p.82). Majeed snatched not only her life but also her hope to survive.

REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN

In this novel, Jamila appeared as a different natured character in comparison to the other women. Jannat and Rayhan (2018) argued, “In *Tree without Roots* Jamila is the only one revolutionary persona protesting against Majeed as well as against the extremists geared up by religion, hypocrisy, fakeness and frailty of the society who protests against him” (p.48). Feminist perspective can be clearly explored through the most vibrant and revolutionary woman Jamila in *Tree Without Roots*. Majeed easily made Amena and Rahima submissive but his formula did not work with Jamila. Although she is married, she looks like a child. She is totally different from others in all ways, “The girl who entered his home as his second wife was hardly more than a young kitten. She did not speak a word and kept her face well covered, not out of modesty but rather out of fear” (Waliullah, 2005, p.92).

The incident happened in Jamila’s life was a kind of storm. Still she is taking time to understand how her family took such a fatal decision to take Majeed as her husband who has already a wife. She is so helpless that she had no control over her family. When Jamila came for the first time, Rahima observed her and said, “But she hardly ever says anything. She’s very quiet” (Waliullah, 2005, p.93). Jamila’s mood proves that she married Majeed against her choice. In her own story Jamila shares, “You know, when he came to marry me, cousin Khodeza showed him to me through the chinks in the wall. I said no, you’re joking, surely he’s the bridegroom’s father” (Waliullah, 2005, p.95). Jamila was so young that she still does not understand the meaning of husband and new life. She says, “I just felt homesick. Sometimes I feel lonesome for them, especially for my little lame brother. And the goat” (Waliullah, 2005, p.95). As a woman Rahima understands Jamila’s mental position but says no word. She has enough capacity to shed her tears but no way to change the setup of a patriarchal society.

Like Rahima, Majeed tries to control her laugh applying his most powerful weapon, “It’s not proper for a Muslim woman to be heard laughing. No one is to laugh that way in my house again” (Waliullah, 2005, p.95). It proves that women will have no opinion in his house and they will act like dolls or speechless people. But Majeed fails to understand Jamila as she seems strange. He could not guess what really went on in Jamila’s head. In her eyes Majeed never saw the fear everyone had. The narrator says, “After Majeed had gone, fear came to her eyes. But it was the fear of man, not of God” (Waliullah, 2005, p.103). Jamila observed how cruel Majeed was when the old woman brought the dead body of her grandson Manu. Although the situation of the woman was hard, Majeed took her coins in the name of buying candle for *mazar*.

The most awful scenery Jamila experienced when she saw people in ‘zikh’. She discovered that Majeed was completely a hypocrite in the name of religious figure. During ‘zikh’ he used to faint so naturally that people would understand his true dedication to the Almighty. People used to take it seriously. They used to rush towards him to kiss his feet as a symbol of holiness and love. It was nothing but a plan to increase people’s faith towards him. Observing this game Jamila began to hate her husband. The most awful incident happened when Majeed lied and refused to introduce Jamila as his second wife, “That’s the mad servant girl,’ he said ‘The one

from my new wife's house'" (Waliullah, 2005, p.109). This statement proved Majeed's position clearly. Firstly, he did not recognize his own wife. Then he called her servant. According to his direction, a master-servant relationship had been noticed where Majeed was ruler and Jamila was ruled. He not only insulted her telling reported lies one after another but also questioned her social identity and dignity. He punished Tanu Mian only for his wife's false conviction and statement. To legitimize the issue, he recited lines from the holy Quran. But there was nobody to punish Majeed for this great lie against Jamila.

To get the revenge Majeed was waiting for a cause. He forced her to say tarabi as it was a long prayer. After that she was pressurized to pray before the *mazar*. In order to represent the dead man in the grave alive, Majeed says, "He is alive, and he sees everything and knows everything" (Waliullah, 2005, p.114). What Majeed told was entirely wrong and unscientific. It looks like Majeed thought Jamila as foolish and dull headed. He wanted to plant a false tree in her mind to have a control. Now the question is how a man can be dead and alive together. The next question is how a man can see everything after death. The most important fact is how Majeed gathered this information. Jamila knew that Majeed was making another trap for her.

Jamila scored the high position among all the women in the novel. Majeed himself says, "She is a snake, he told himself, a poisonous snake. Her charm is a snare, her sweet winsomeness a trap" (Waliullah, 2005, p.118). The terrible thought for Majeed is that once he made traps to consume Jamila's innocence. But the wave has been directed to the opposite. To Majeed Jamila was not an ordinary woman. She was dangerous than anybody Majeed knew. In the novel Majeed puts his own remark, "She is dangerous, far more dangerous than any ordinary human being can ever be, and I must be on my guard with her" (Waliullah, 2005, p.118). Majeed's understanding proves Jamila's revolutionary attitude. She is not a woman to be managed easily. She knows not only how to accept but also to reject. To Jamila, Majeed has no meaning, the *mazar* is baseless and the system Majeed always follows is full of emptiness.

When all the mechanisms proved wrong, Majeed began to recite the Quran. In his deep concern, he wanted to manage her through the religious scripture. Waliullah mentioned, "From his throat broke a torrential outburst of words, overwhelming the silence of the stars, the sky and the darkness outside. For Jamila these words were meaningless" (2005, p.118). As Majeed formed a building using false and faulty materials, it collapsed accordingly. The set up Majeed once installed wrongly can never be reset in Jamila's mind. Jamila could lead an average life with someone blind or lame but how she can stay with a great liar like Majeed. The heart which contains no respect for women, no space to show sympathy towards the wretched is nothing but an infertile and barren heart. Getting no alternatives, Jamila chose the option to react directly as the representative of all the suppressed and tortured women like her.

By tying Jamila with a rope very close to the *mazar*, Majeed wanted to let the evil spirit out from her heart. This inhuman treatment towards a woman invites many questions. It looks like Jamila was not a human being but trivial animals like cows or goats. Since these animals are helpless having no concrete or meaningful voice, people love to tie them with rope to control. Here Jamila is a simple girl. She carries a profound social designation-wife. In the name of anger, Majeed expressed his savagery like the wild animals.

Observing the false actions and the real nature of Majeed, Jamila lost her faith on him. When Majeed failed to sow the seed of fear, he applied physical force to control her, “She wriggled and twisted like a snake, trying to free her wrist from Majeed’s firm hold. But he was too strong for her. Then, coming up close to him, she spat in his face” (Waliullah, 2005, p.117). It is remarkable that Jamila was weak physically but strong mentally. The torture Majeed did later in the name of educating her was terrible and violent. Spitting on Majeed’s face Jamila proved that she was not like Amena or Rahima. She knows how to react equally like a man. In fact, she spat on the face of the patriarchal society which made many Majeeds to dominate people especially the women.

FACTORS BEHIND SUBMISSIVE AND REVOLUTIONARY ATTITUDE

There remain several factors which made the female characters both submissive and revolutionary. Firstly, women like Amena and Rahima are polite and over dedicated. But they themselves have no job or solvency. They are fully dependent on their husbands. If they had job, they would earn to have a remarkable contribution. Of course, they are working hard but society expects currency. When Hasuni’s mother Kulsum came back from her husband’s house, she got no way to support her. At last, she thought to work in Majeed’s house as an assistant with Rahima. Since they could not earn money, they had no opinion. During their crisis they had to remain silent.

Secondly, the women in the novel are not educated. They have no theoretical, scientific or practical knowledge to judge something applying their brain. They hardly understand what is good or bad for them. They accept the traditional beliefs and superstitions prevalent in the society. The best example is childlessness. The women are taking this responsibility on their own shoulders as their own fault. It was totally a superstition. Since they had no education, they did not know about medical science and treatment. When they became sick, they could go to hospital for better treatment and prescription. But the surprising fact is they went to Majeed without using their logical brain and practical knowledge. It is true that Majeed had inadequate or limited knowledge on a particular religion as he studied in a maktab. But it was evidently wrong to think that Majeed would give treatment for childlessness. In the name of treatment Majeed tortured Amena brutally. If the women had education, Majeed would never get this scope. Majeed knew it clearly. When Akkas wanted to establish a school Majeed became furious. He motivated Khaleque to build a mosque and a *madrasha* instead of school.

Thirdly, fate plays an important role in this novel. Hasuni’s mother is ill-fated because she has lost her husband at a tender age. She has accepted her fate. Whenever she comes to Rahima, she always wishes to die. She has already understood that the world is meaningless to her. Only death can be the better solution. When Rahima suggests her to re-marry, Hasuni opposes directly. Both Rahima and Amena are ill-fated. They have no child. The fate is cruel that both Khaleque and Majeed marry twice before their eyes. The equation is so hard for them that they have no way to protest. The interesting thing is both Tanu and Jamila become second wife of Khaleque and Majeed respectively. In fact, there remains an invisible design of God where all of them are children.

Another significant factor is social injustice. When they faced any critical situation, they could go to the police or court applying the prevalent laws in the country. If they went to court, they

would get at least a trustworthy impartial solution. Without going there, they went to Majeed for justice. They never thought how it is impossible for a general man to function the task of a real judge. The most important fact is the position of the village. It looks like an island which is detached from the world. Chowdhury opined, “The village is almost mythical; it is without connection with the world outside; it has no radio set; no newspaper reaches it; no school exists; even the favorite pastime of Bengalis called politics is absent” (2005, p.x).

Another important factor that worked behind the dominance against women is the submissive attitude of the female characters like Rahima and Amena. Although Jamila was alone and childlike having less experience of life and society, she fights for her individual existence and liberty. It is true that Majeed is her husband either she liked or disliked. As a wife she must have some duties and responsibilities towards her husband. At the same time, Jamila had expectations from Majeed. Of course there should be a balance. Jamila clearly understands that Majeed did not purchase her. She was a wife not a slave or servant. So, there should have some limitations where Majeed would not have access. This understanding of womanhood made Jamila bold and mentally strong. If she followed the attitude like Amena and Rahima, she would not have to face Majeed’s violence and physical torture.

On the other hand, if Amena did not follow Majeed’s prescription, she would not have to be separated. If Rahima reacted like Jamila, Majeed would not be so powerful and arrogant. When Majeed used to torture Jamila, Rahima could handle it strongly. However, both Rahima and Jamila could have a better position to exercise their freedom. But she did not join her. When Majeed used to insult her, Rahima could protest. Because of their so called softness and good manner that the patriarchal set up always demands was the basic elements to make Majeed dominant. The most surprising thing is that people were accepting Majeed blindly. They never exercised their brain to justify him through logic and rationality. Since no school existed there, no scientific knowledge or logical idea came to their mind. People were so haunted by poverty that they forgot their conscience. Although Khaleque was a positive character, he could not support Amena during their transition.

What feminists usually claim is the confirmation of equality between man and woman. As a human being a woman must have the privileges that a man enjoys. *Tree Without Roots* contains both male and female characters. They could live in harmony by sharing their sorrows and sufferings. Both Amena and Rahima could have a good life like their childhood if Majeed never abused religion as a source of dominance. If Majeed did not play the game, Amena would not lose her husband and family. As Hasuni’s father died, Kulsum could get support from her father’s house. She would not have to work in Majeed’s house. Since Jamila was young and childlike, Majeed could support her to adjust the situation. If she got respect from Majeed, she would respect him in return. There would be no incident of spitting. What Majeed did was totally wrong and unacceptable. As an agent of patriarchal mechanism, he became a successful tyrant by dominance, violence and suppression against women.

CONCLUSION

In the novel *Tree Without Roots*, the master planner Majeed confronted two storms where one was man-made and the other was a natural calamity. The pertinent fact is that Majeed considered the natural disaster to be manageable today or tomorrow. It may destroy the natural

harmony or any infrastructure. But it will not split out the wall of faith and fear. But the man-made storm seemed to him very dangerous and crucial. Majeed discovered an overwhelming storm in the core of Jamila's heart. He also understood that his long run tactics and weapons would not survive anymore. Jamila measured his source of power and charisma so sharply that there remained no way to return. Jamila also developed her practical and reasonable eyes to see the follies and hypocrisy of man. Therefore, she never followed the way Rahima went submissively. In fact, she felt an inevitable force to kick out the so called traditional obstruction of women empowerment.

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