

I. Rise of Feminist Consciousness in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler*

The present researcher attempts to analyze Ibsen's new women in the liminal space in his works *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler*. The present researcher studies the condition of women and their ultimate struggle for liberation and independence in a patriarchal norms and values. The whole research sees the struggle of protagonists as Nora and Hedda by Henrik Ibsen. They become conscious over their rights and struggle to achieve meaningful life but at the same time it becomes problematic. Both protagonists are trying to come out from the utter domination of their husband or patriarchal hegemony for establishing their own identity or autonomous self but they fall into the liminal space.

While representing the new women like Nora and Hedda in *A Doll's house* and *Hedda Gabler*, Ibsen put them in the space of liminality where women like Nora and Hedda neither discard the familial values nor is ready to succumb oppressive patriarchal values in late nineteenth century. They do not value formality of both marriage and divorce.

Ibsen has a rare sensitivity that enables him to explore the consciousness of his characters. His female characters are in the perpetual quest for meaning and value of life. They refuse to surrender their individual selves. They differ from those in the sense that they long for, aspire and strive to be true to their selves. They rebel against gender discrimination, question the double standards and refuse the dual morality. They continue their struggle unmindful of its outcome. Thus, Henrik Ibsen is the vanguard of a new generation of European playwright who are experimenting with themes of inner consciousness. He gives his readers valuable insight into the feminine consciousness through memorable protagonists like Nora, Hedda Gabler, Rebecca, and so on, who are on the attempt of being new woman.

New emerging woman is contemplative about her predicament and chooses to revolt against the suppressive, oppressive and exploitative norms and currents of patriarchy. What is different about these women is that they are prepared to face the consequences of their choices. The new emerging woman challenges the traditional roles and refuses to surrender to it. She takes up a new reformed path where nobody can suppress, oppress and treat her as a passive objects without any human sentiments. She refuses to confine herself as a traditional woman, an insignificant victim or passive object for other's use and pleasure.

A Doll's house is not concerned with female identity and freedom rather it has been seen as problematic. The play is centred about the theme freedom as an essential choice between an acceptance of the symbolic castration through setting for a limited freedom within the law, or pursuit of absolute freedom beyond law or society, but absolute freedom leads to the lack of freedom and to annihilation. Female character, Nora is seen to be a transcendental protagonist. She tries to exit from her husband's house to challenge patriarchy and to prove herself as a new woman. But unknowingly, she is affirming the patriarchy. If her attempt was really a challenge to the patriarchy, she would have stayed in husband's house so as to struggle against patriarchal norms and values. She can't be new woman as she escapes and remains in the liminal space because she can't adapt herself there and cannot struggle too. Nora is also transcendental for she has thought about women's liberation and equality only within her mind. But she is unaware of the fact that there is no place as such in a real world. Without thinking reality, she exists from patriarchy thereby, providing herself as a transcendental character.

The another play *Hedda Gabler* is also centred about the theme of freedom as protagonist Hedda is trying to get her freedom at any cost and when she is unable to

secure her rights, she sees suicide as the only alternate for the protection of her individual self. She values who she is more than what she can do. She does not care for her competence at all. She simply wants to be the one but family and social surroundings make her the other. The major problem is the contradiction between her essential self and outer self. This outer self keeps making demands upon her. She is expected to act within prescribed social limits. But she protest against all those limitations by rejecting them, Her protest extends up to the extent of rejecting life itself. By doing this she protests against the society to overcome the problem which obstructs her independence, she chooses suicide. Suicide is normally not a solution rather it helps to promote patriarchal society. If her attempt was really to prove herself as new woman she should stay in same society to struggle against patriarchal norms and value. Rather she escapes and adopts the way of suicide to overcome with the problem. So, Hedda is failure to seek her freedom and unable to protect her individual self.

A Doll's House and *Hedda Gabler* by Ibsen deals with the internalized kind of consciousness in the woman of the society who were sub-ordinated in the hands of male who have been always been the ultimate cause of women's co modification. Ibsen is remarkable for the protest against the social rigidities and limitations and the cultural conventions, understanding the equally valuable without being equal. He depicts a woman's search of freedom in the repressive society of the late nineteenth century world. He subtle representation of a tormented and self- conflicting woman's psychology and the consequence in his life that breed frustration, isolation and rebellion culminates in a woman's self realization.

Henrik Ibsen, a renowned realist playwright gave the voice of woman especially in the nineteenth century. He suggested women that they know their natural

rights of equality and liberty. In most of his dramas he presents rebellious women characters, who raise voice against the society and try to be independent either rejecting the patriarchal social structure or accepting the social structure. Ibsen's female characters try to establish their autonomous identity to declare that women themselves can secure their life, which they have chosen as a result woman characters like Nora and Hedda are capable to secure their life in their own choice. However, their ultimate decision becomes an appropriate way for conforming the patriarchal society.

Most of his works deeply concerned towards the women offended the conservatives of contemporary late nineteenth century European society. However, it was the most daring about theme. Indeed his problem plays mainly deal with the theme of alienation from society and breaking down of conventions, the relation of individual to his/her society and environment. Margaret Drabble, a critic on Ibsen remarks "that his plays are concerned largely with social and political themes but six plays[...] are more deeply concerned with the forces of the unconscious and were greatly admired by friend" (490). Hence, Ibsen's play focuses on personal awakening and inner transformation through confomations with family guilt, social hypocrisy, venereal disease, conventional sexual morality and materialistic, bourgeois ethnics.

In most of his popular drams his female characters show an expression of free individual rights. The movement is an expression of spatial constraints, the free individual travels through a free landscape. Nora goes out, Hedda leaves the Verenda door open, Rebecca looks in through the keyhole and out of the windows, and Hilde comes from the mountains. They all are in a way searching out from the life they are living in. The spatial movements they show is so indicating their psychological movement towards freedom.

Looking at the dramas of Ibsen in terms of gender issue, it is tempting to extract from his plays this or that woman character and consider her qualities, her courage and moral strength., her intellectual capacity, her ambitions, perhaps her seducing abilities or her power over the men surrounding her, and try to interpret the character as some kind of an ideal women presented by Ibsen both to the female and male part of his audience.

While going through his typical problem play *A Doll's House*, it advocates the right of women ,and especially of wives in relation to their husbands. In other words *A Doll's House* is about female emancipation. It is a women's predicament that the play ; it is the drastic step taken by a wife with which the play ends ; for Nora that is the dramatic escape for liberating the self but when this situation is critically analyzed it is the conformation to the patriarchy.

Walter Mcfarlane state that established institutions like home and marriage are the sole causes for women's suppression. He claims:

For the married woman of Nora's day, the 'home' could be just as disabling as for the child; Nora finds herself reduced to the level of a house- comfort, something that merely contributes to the husband's domestic well-being and flatters his ego at the cost of destroying hers. She becomes a possession. (9)

Mcfarlane regards home and marriage as the influential institutions that reduce Nora to the level of home- comfort or to the husband's domestic well-being or his property.

Magic Human regards that each and every events in *A Doll's House* has emerged because of the circumstances which force Nora to leave her children and husband's house as human states.

Events in *A Doll's House* are stimulated into activity by the forged letter, now emerging, through a combination of circumstances from the past into the present and future. But it is clear that in the strict sense no action has a beginning or end. All events spring from the past causation, all continue through time. Man is not simply in the situation. He is only in the respect that is just emerging out of one situation to another. (210)

This indicates that in *A Doll's House* the protagonist Nora is responsible for her deteriorating liberty and freedom. Though she claims her leaving as a solution to the problem created by male ideology. Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* has been interrupted as the drama of pain and pathos, double suppression and victimization of the women under patriarchy. One of the renowned critics, Clement Scott criticizes *A Doll's House* as a story of Nora; He remarks:

She is a child fraudulent father, badly brought up, neglected at home, bred in an atmosphere of love less-ness, who has had no one to influence her in her girlhood's day for good. She marries the man of her choice, a practical, hard headed, untamable banker. There is no suggestion that the marriage is forced upon her, she does it for her own free will. (19)

In this regard females are the subject of sheer negligence and loveless ness under the shadow of male hegemony. Similarly in *Hedda Gabler* chooses the ways of suicide in order to assert herself to overcome the problem which obstruct her independence, she chooses suicide. Suicide is normally not a solution Hedda act of suicide and her activities in Ibsen's. *Hedda Gabler* has attracted the attention of many critics since its publication. Astrid Saether, Director of centre for Ibsen studies, university of Oslo

,Norway ,argues that the character s presented by Ibsen show the clear views for why there is always conflict between men and women .In this writing “female expectations and male ambitions in Ibsen’s late plays “ he writes;

There is a bias between male and female perception of the world and of man. In his notes pertaining to the drama, Ibsen wrote: There are two kinds of spiritual law. Two kinds of conscience, one in man and other: but in practical life the woman is judged by man’s law, as though she were not a woman but a man. (29)

The perception of male and female according to Saether is different. This always may not be true in each case because it depends on the circumstances of the society in which an individual is born and brought up. Regarding the character Hedda in *Hedda Gabler* it sounds appropriate. Hedda and George Tesman have two different perceptions regarding their life. Hedda wants to lead her life on her own style but she is all the time stopped by her husband. She has to follow what her husband says. In another words, Hedda is always judged by the law of man. So, it seems true to some extent that in a patriarchal society woman are bound to please their male members whereas male always feel superior to woman. Woman like Hedda fails to raise strong voice because of man-made law to judge to a woman in the society.

Kott Jan describes it on the psychoanalytic perspective behind Hedda’s suicide. For him, the frustration caused by sexual repression leads her to destruction. So, he states, “Two pistols in *Hedda Gabler* are not only the props exploited by Ibsen with iron-clad dramatic logic and preordained consequences. They have also sexual undertones. By shooting herself, Hedda kills the shadow of her father and the child she never wanted. The shadow of the father kills the daughter”. (651)

Similarly, Hedda is interpreted in psychological term by Mrs. J. Lee.

According to her “Hedda is the pistol: the chief character is not a woman but a slim, straight, deadly weapon: That pistols have other signification in conjunction with the vine leaves in Dionysian phallic symbol has been broached. (qtd. In Raymond 83)

The critics above tend to argue that Hedda longs for father. Since her father remained absent from her, she commits suicide to get relief from the sense of lack. But Hedda Gabbler doesn't need to long for her father. Husband has to come to take his place. She has got a good substitute. It is true that we cannot give up pleasure. But we can substitute it. People fulfill their desire through the substitution as well. If Hedda really did have the sexual hunger, why couldn't she take her husband as a substitute? Hedda's pregnancy also suggests her husband is sexually potent. So the argument of sexual repression does not provide complete justice on Hedda.

Caroline W. Mayerson views that Hedda's suicide is merely the result of her foolishness and lack of understanding. In this context he states:

Hedda's yearning for self-realization through the exercise of natural endowments is in conflict to a narrow standpoint of conduct. This conflict is complicated by her incomplete understanding of what freedom and fulfillment mean and how they may be achieved. She fails to realize that one must earn her inheritance in order to possess it and she romanticizes the destructive and sensational aspects of Dionysian ecstasy without perceiving that its true end and regeneration through the sublimation of ego in a larger unity. (645)

The opinion generated by Caroline is on Hedda's foolishness and lack of understanding. Hedda does not seem to be that much of a fool. She values herself more than society. But if we analyze her understanding on freedom deeply we can say that

she has incomplete understanding of what freedom mean and how it can be achieved. From her father she has understood that one has to see his/her power to junior in order to get authority. Her understanding of freedom may be described as to dominate the people. She seems failure to achieve her independency because of not having fully understanding on freedom is. While talking about the character of any drama, it is the dramatist who gives the life and role to the character. So in *Hedda Gabbler* we must say that Ibsen deliberately creates such female character who is seeking for her freedom though she does not fully understand what freedom is in true sense.

Both works Of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler* are about the way women are presented in the real world, that is why they have been able to speak and heard. Women like Nora and Hedda are capable of giving their voice, they are conscious over their rights. They have been able to question the discourse which is produced by male about female and challenge it, but they are never afraid of the result which they have chosen. Ultimately, they challenge the position, which is given by male ideology and having confidence that they themselves are capable of securing their life. They reformed their own path in order to do it where they would not feel any support of male ideology though it has been said that women can not shape their life themselves, they should de suppressed, oppressed, treat them as a passive and object without any human sentiments. They refuse to continue themselves as traditional women insignificant victim or passive object for others use and pleasure. Both ways of condemning the patriarchy seems almost same as Nora leave home at last and Hedda suicide herself to get emancipation.

This research paper explores the predicament of contemporary society and their ways of struggle in such society. Writer is rich in internalizing to his outstanding issues for the liberty and sovereignty of the female characters who are just made a

pawn to be moved on someone's interest. Though, the writer appeal through his protagonists to pump the fuel of challenge against the male domination, his attempt do not release himself totally, rather his protagonists just remain in the liminal space and they only become the surest ways for conforming to the patriarchy. Both protagonists Nora and Hedda are eager to get their identity and to release themselves to prove them as a new women challenging the patriarchal norms and currents by leaving the society but unknowingly they themselves support to intuitionalize the patriarch domain. To analyze their motive, the researcher depends on the theoretical background of feminism.

II. New Woman and Liminal Space

Women have always been oppressed and denied power and right of any kind in field, in patriarchal culture. Power and rights are centered on men in civil as well as domestic life. But the new woman is essentially a woman of awareness and consciousness of her low position and oppression within the family and society. New woman symbolized an independent woman and self-supporting woman, uninterested in domestic life or family, reflecting her belief in the importance of a woman developing her own identity. She is contemplative about her predicament and choose to protest and fight against the general accepted norms and currents.

In the patriarchal society, where woman are marginalized in every fields that is social, political, economic, religious, educational, and so forth, new woman has emerged who chooses not to surrender and be meek but break the convention to face their situation and take up a new road where no one can dictate them. She is independent and liberated. The new woman can obtain everything in life without the help of the masculine forces because she is confident and self reliant. She rebels in the society not for equality outside the house but within. She protests against the general current of the patriarchal society and in exploring or true potential, along with the struggle to fulfill her urges and needs in every fields.

In general, women were dehumanized in every sector. She is treated as helpless and dependent as a child and intermingled in the social bond or traditional culture. Saying that girls should not go outside home but should take care of home and their siblings impose restriction on her. She is compelled to follow the same order that was given by her family that what she should do or what not to do and she is not given comfortable dress to wear. Their life was in the hand of her father in the childhood age, in the hand of husband in the young age and in the hand of son in the

old age. This means male has been the protector or a master of female since a long time. Female's desire, need, independency and right was overlapped by male's oppression over female. But now new woman is different from that of traditional girl. New woman raises her voice for equal opportunity like that of male and realize that she is not helpless but independent and not in need of any master to continue her life but she is now independent and self reliant.

In religious field also goddess are not worshipped separately. For instance, if the god is in couple, they are worshipped but if they are separated only male God is worshipped. Same is the case with Radha and Krishna. Radha is not worshipped alone. But surprisingly, "Durga and Kali are worshipped in their individual capacity [...]" (Saxena 23). In order to gain respect from man, women must project a Durga-like image. Individual females are also forced to tolerate the mental trauma and physical as well in the name of religion like in the menstrual period; still females are kept in the cowshed that is full of diseases. They are not permitted even to touch their own family and other things too because of the traditional rituals that is superstition, "for the ordinary women, there is still a hopeless apathy towards their suffering" (24).

Political circle have also been exploiting females. This patriarchal politics do not want females to take part in politics and decision- making. Opportunities are handed over to males whereas females are thought to be meek, irresponsible and dependent. They had no rights to vote. Females expect that they should be treated as per with man but the tragedy is that even in the developed countries the right to equality and freedom exists only in the constitution, "only the man determine her fate, make decisions on her behalf and decide what is good or bad for her" (24). But the new woman has become conscious of her destination, way to liberate herself from the clutches of unjust taboos and customs forced on her by the male dominance.

Her right to own the property is handed over to male. Property owned by father will be owned by son later and again by the grandson. Like in other matters, females are kept behind in economic aspect. If they wish to be independent, a member from a family that is males have to permission to her by signing on a consent paper and if some female think of establishing business there should be at least one supporter either he is father, husband, brother or even son. Male thinks that without the support of male, female can do nothing and should suffer and remains aloof in home. If females are living in the life of vegetables, the only reason behind this submissiveness is male dominance. Because of the oppression and dominations, females are abducted from education. It is thought that females should not get better education because they are not get married and leave parents home. If they are given more education, they will deny the culture and religion. It is also thought that females are only to take care of children, home and husband. She can depend on male fully and whatever she needs for household work it is not education.

Actually the position of the woman in general and in particular has been paradoxical. Though woman is the key person, master figure in the family, and yet she is living in the life of slavery, subjugation and suppression. And now the suffering of woman ends here because the new woman is very conscious of her right in every field, responsibilities, distress and destination. This new woman has waged her war, which is not so easy and short-lived. She still has miles to go before the goal is reached. The new woman shows the way to others, by convincing “assert yourself, don’t suppress. Let it grow and flourish never mind how many things it destroys in the bargain”. The new woman typically values self-fulfillment and independence rather than the stereo typically feminine ideal of self-sacrifice; believes in legal and sexual

equality; often remain single because of the difficulty of combining such equality with marriage; is educated and has a job and prefers comfortable clothes.

Traditionally, man has been regarded as a protector, a master, a guardian of woman. For years, woman has lived under protection of either parents or husband or even her own children. This pattern of life outwardly made female's life safe and smooth but actually slavish and dependent and this is indigestible for the woman who is striving to be free and self-reliant. She has started to think and feel differently which was resulted in form of 'feminism.' As feminism is all about women's right, opportunity and equality with men, it is believed that will obviously rejects and ends the gender biasness. According to M.H Abrams:

It is widely held that while one's sex is determined by anatomy, the prevailing concepts of gender- of the traits that constitute what is masculine and what is feminine- are largely-, if generated by the omnipresent patriarchal biases of our civilization.
(235)

Feminism mainly focus on the way to discard the gender discrimination, while marching on the chosen path, it should not be forgotten that gender biasness can't be eliminated in the society to the axis of equality and liberty through constitution and legislation alone, but through mutual understanding, love, and respect as well.

Alka Saxena claims, "Feminism demands love, respect, compassion and understanding from the males. If the love of man towards women would stem from devotion, I am quite confident that the problems faced by women would easily solved" (18). Unless and until men don't develop respect, love and feeling of equality for women, gender biasness will exist for years and years. In this case, feminism is

that which may degrade the uppish and superior attitude of men and this is the root cause of female dissatisfaction:

Women's progress is very slow all over the world. It is well known that even in advanced nations like America and other European countries, women workers are overworked and underpaid [...]. One cannot ignore the fact that women have taken up jobs only after having obtained the consent of male members of the family. (Saxena 24)

Feminism actually encourages rebelling against the traditional moulds created by male and their society that is patriarchal. As feminism exists since long time, females still have to work hard for the love, respectability and freedom because it will not come on a golden platter. The efforts of a handful will be ineffective; a mass movement is what is requires. The refusal is the core of feminism.

As feminism is all about voice of women empowerment raised by the women, it demands the right to empower the human rights as the males do in the society. They need to enjoy the rights not only in the constitution limited in the pages of the book but in their life. Females are given the very rights, equally in comparison to males but the so-called traditional norms and values created by the patriarchal society take that granted. E Porter defines feminism as, "a perspective that seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities and injustice women suffer because of their sex" (Beasley 27).

The concept of male female hierarchy and cultural assumption of male superiority produced a formidable sex-role ideology which was also reinforced by education and training. But the theory feminism discards the notion and began to question the sex-roles assigned to them. Feminism is the term that supports the female ride in the struggle for the possession of the power. It undertakes the tasks of exposing

male dominance over female. Feminists argue that women are morally and intellectually equal to men, but lack equal opportunities of access to the social institution that enables self-development. If both males and females practice this notion, the gender discrimination will end and this is one of the ways to decline the gender biasness.

Feminism is a kind of awareness of the patriarchal oppression, in whatever forms it comes, and also a manifestation of struggle against such oppression. The belief that sex determines gender is supported by centuries of religious, philosophical, scientific and literary thoughts. As a result, it becomes common sense for two reasons: first, because culture invests its meaning in something natural. Such meanings appear to have been given by nature rather than to have been constructed by human activity. Second, because we are born into the system. (Sex, gender, system) It remains mostly invisible to us, we learn to be feminine and masculine before we learn those words or their words or their significance.

Feminism appears in opposition to culturally assigned sex-roles and raise voice against male domination. Women have repeatedly to repress their emotions, their finer impulses, due to a social code, not of their own making. Constant rebuffs lead her on to utter humiliation and desolation. Females stand in a position of sexual inferiority and emotional vulnerability from which she tries, not successfully, to make an imaginative escape from gender unfairness. Knowing what is to be a woman and a sensitive intelligent one is a true rebel in her own individual way paving a path of revolt against the conventional exploitive system. Women are not allowed to play any active role in decision- making. They are ignored or brushed aside. In such situation, the theory feminism tries to terminate the gender inequality from the society forever:

It is certainly possible to construct a baseline definition of feminism [...] many should agree that the very least a feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change [...] in the social, economic, and political order. (Beasley 27-28)

Feminism is all about female's right, oppression, power, education, and marginalization. It is not only defines the aspects of feminism but attempts to remove the veil of gender bigotry from the social order. As this theory itself is contributing highly to eradicate gender prejudice.

They are more concerned about their self and always in practice to save their self in any cost. The search for their self is not newly generated search but it started from 19th century onwards. Though it took almost a century to reach the voice raises by women from nineteenth century to 20th century, they are still marching against the mask of their identity. But on going the process, they have changed themselves from submissive true woman to new woman during this journey. This means each milestone is supporting them to make the pathway shorter for them. The true woman was the ideal woman, a domestic wife and a mother who found her identity and voice through her husband, her children and her home. But the new woman at present keeps the family and domestic life aside and valued them as subsidiary and give importance to the development of their identity, self and voice," The woman's search for selfhood, for what Pratt calls the achievement of authenticity through individual choice, must battle against the long-held belief that such a desire on the part of women is by itself selfish and contrary to femininity, which should aim at social acceptance rather than freedom and selfhood. (Urbashi 55)

The women in the struggle in finding their own place in society proves to be a difficult endeavour since the majority of people are highly sceptical of a woman of her own voice. On the contrary, the deeper look at the destructiveness of the illusions of a traditional society not completely ready to reconstruct those hierarchical allegiances that deeply shaped the relationships between men and women, on the women who seek to destroy those illusions. The new women today assert that woman have often and must always bring about such transformations of themselves and even change in the social system. It is said that females have so many homes to dwell at, father's home, and husband's home as well. Mira Mies defines autonomy as such:

Autonomous means the preservation of human essence in women [...]. It is also a struggle concept which was developed to demonstrate the women wanted to separate from mixed, male dominated organizations and to form their autonomous organization, and to form their autonomous organization, with their own analysis, programs and methods. (40-41)

In the childhood period, she learns about identity and attempts to get rid of her father's identity so that she can have her own individual self-identity, and when she reaches near to discover her self-identity, she is sent to husband house with a new identity of her husband. The previous identity will have to replace on her new one. She becomes wife and learns to live with wife's identity and there comes child and compelled to have a new identity of a mother. This means women have got so many identities but not her single, self-identity.

New woman always struggles to affirm her autonomous self. Self refers to the inner being of a person, which directs and controls his/ her social interaction. A person has to acclimatize with the mileu where one lives, and the acclimatization develops into different human personality that varies according to socio-cultural

values. New women are inclined towards an autonomous individual self. They tend to seek for their own dreams and desires for the future. Their self precedes the social relation. Observing new woman self, Alison Prentice and Ruth Pierson say, “Women have a human need equal to men’s for affection and emotional support but that for satisfaction of this need women should not have to make a greater sacrifice of autonomy than men”(164). The autonomous personality motivates them towards the self assertion. That self assertion leads and encourages them to search for individual respect even in married life.

Many women regard marriage as a relation between two individuals. They accentuate on their own beliefs, existence and identity, who are free from husband’s imposition of his beliefs. Living with their husbands, they are very aware of their self-respect and individuality, and the serious consciousness of self-existence makes them rebel against any condescending behaviour from their husband. Quasim Amin elucidates the relation between a man and a woman, “A[...] man realizes that his wife has right to like what he meets her taste, her ideas, and her feelings, and she lives in a manner that she considers compatible with her own point of view” (30). They follow their thoughts and ideas. The sense of the individuality makes them aware of the loss of happiness in marriage.

Some women regard marriage is loss of autonomy, freedom and happiness. They think that marriage is a boredom and imprisonment within the routine household activities. They have to abandon their will and dreams to fulfill these needs of others. For them, marriage is a continuum of sacrifice, which creates a pseudo-existence under the name of their husbands. Simon de Beauvior says: “The tragedy of marriage is not that it fails to assure women the promised happiness- there is no such thing such

as assurance in regard to happiness but it mutilates her, it dooms her repetition and routine” (534).

In short, though some women feel controlled within marriage bond, new woman regard marriage as an important bond between two individual to give continuity to human existence in the world. They are not against marriage, but they are against hypocritical, selfish, short-sighted norms and values of patriarchy. They want freedom of choice, to select an appropriate life partner. They think women should not be confined to domestic life; rather they should get free access even in public life.

Society needs an organization and management for the long-lasting and peaceful world; the division of labour betters social development. New women have been very conscious of their unpaid and undervalued position of household works and demand the share of males in it. They question and renounce the social construction of labour division based on biology. They are suspicious of the biased patriarchal society and its persuasion that women are weaker than men and hence suitable for household activities. They comment on the persuasion by saying that is way to reduce women into mere objects-moving but lifeless. They object the unpaid domestic labour of women that goes unnoticed and undervalued. In the labour market of household activities, women are “neglected producers, but benefit goes to men, women become dependent beings on men (qtd. In Freedom 52). In new women’s opinion, the weak and helpless condition of women should be put forward, and their household activities should be valued.

The awareness of the neglected condition of household works also demands the support and the participation of men in household activities. New women take women primarily as human beings having intellectual psyche and strong physique just

as men have. Women are capable of earning their living and conducting politics and business but they need spare time. It is with the help of men that women get leisure time to exercise their psychic capacity, to gain their autonomy and the wholeness of mind and body. And the psychic exercise helps them to remove the social assumption that women are unfitted to intellectual world. Maris Mies suggests for the men's participation at home, "Men have to share the responsibility for the immediate production of life, for child care, housework, the care of the sick and the old, the relationship work, all work so far subsumed under the term 'housework'" (222). Here Maria Mies is in favour of mutual cooperation, love, caring and sharing mutual understanding and reconciliation between men and women in a family, only then the familial life becomes long-lasting and prosperous.

In short, new women emphasize on the redemption of women from the routine household activities, and urge to have the sharing of males in the household works. The strong urge for sharing paves a way to refute the social comparison of female with nature.

The new women deny the male-beliefs that women are near nature-women have productivity and yielding nature, they are meek and weak; their social role to rear children is uncivilized. These women vehemently oppose the underestimation of women in terms of physique and social roles. Sherry B. Ortner refutes the limited explanation of women's value: "He creates relatively lasting, eternal, transcendental objects, while the woman creates only perishables- human beings" (29). Ortner further emphasizes the civilized nature of women by saying that mothering teaches children civilization, and gives an orientation towards social interaction. In this way, the prejudiced opinions of males in patriarchal society have spooked new women to rebel against the social teaching to assert their capacity for intellectual work. And the

self-assertion against the inferior social mentality towards women also creates a new world towards motherhood.

Some feminists regard motherhood as a heavy burden along with the annihilation of their autonomy and career. It adds unnecessary tasks; keeping child in the womb for nine months becomes a miserable experience. Jane Scoular expresses the pain: “Pregenancy is a hedonic experience felt... [not] by all women” (65). The maternity, for them, deprives them of their individuality and privacy. Rosemarie Tong writes about Wollstonecraft: “A woman must, Wollstonecraft believed, obey the commands of reason and discharge her wifely and motherly duties faithfully” (16). Since the motherhood reduces them to routine duties and responsibilities, the notion towards motherhood as a load generates an indifference between mother and child. New women also give more attention to their individuality and self-respect, and accordingly are careful not to violate their children’s individuality and self-respect. The individualistic attitude in new women has created a different perspective towards sexuality.

Sexuality reminds people of the erotic pleasure, which is completely a private matter. It is considered to be natural and essential for the continuation of human existence in the world. The new women tend to be more liberal in the matter and more conscious to have rights over their bodies and sexual relation.

New women also consume sexual freedom, which has become part of their lives, conducive to the mental and physical health. Taking and having free sex is liberating and reinvigoration source for them. It is a kind of entertainment, which is beyond marriage, love, and maternity. They enjoy sexuality as just as men do. Maim Attallah quotes Averil Borugess: “We have a far more promiscuous generation, and it may be that today’s young women are interpreting a sexual relationship as a simple on

its own, not as a long-term relationship, which could have been our social conditions” (Attallah 570). They like to have a control over their body and sexuality. Jane Freedman clarifies Crystal Eastman’s notion about new women sexuality: “The desire echoes feminists’ continuing concern with giving women control over their own bodies, providing them with the power and the knowledge to enjoy their sexuality and to have children if and when they wish” (Freedman 59).

The new women are very conscious of their body and sexuality. They no longer want to be passive givers of their bodies to males. They demand freedom and self-authority in sexuality. The firm belief in the sexual freedom for women also leads to the economic independence.

Economic independence means the right to earn independently and freedom to spend the income and expenditure. The economic self-dependence becomes an assuring factor for their self-respect in marital life. It gives support to self-duty and self-responsibility. Attallah quotes the remarks of Frances here: “If a woman has no means to earn a living, she is dependent upon a man. When she is dependent upon a man, she is not free and she also does not trust him, because if you’re dependent, you can’t trust. There cannot be a healthy relationship if you’re dependent upon somebody else for survival” (500).

A new woman wants to be economically independent or realize her existence and happiness, and the self-dependent life is more successful and happier, which ultimately strengthens the choice of a woman in divorce.

Divorce refers to the end of marital relationships legally. With the increase in human rights and freedom, the divorce has been increased in the modern society. The divorce has also become a part of new women’s life where they can have free play of their wishes. Attallah quotes Baria Allamuddin’s view on liberated new woman:

“liberated [new] woman is a woman who can easily shed all the social factors and just walk away from them and go towards whatever she wants as a completely liberated individual, regardless of tradition” (450).

Although new woman tries to discover all forms of violence and oppression against women of different social and political context, its causes and consequences provides favourable strategies for women’s liberation. Questioning the oppressive male values of society and launching a call of struggle against such monopoly of female values to adjust the existence of women as human beings are the main aim of new woman. New woman even does not care about traditional patriarchal norms and values. They want to lead a respectable life, with every sort of freedom such as freedom of movement, freedom of making friends and involving extra-marital affairs.

Compromise, realization and emancipation are most important factors in new woman’s life. These factors are reconciliatory situation where new women have love, social inspiration, self-awareness, and freedom to work in the public field, within the limit of social ethos. These factors bring liberation on them. For new woman, liberation means the free and secured socio-familial environment that invites a reliable mobility and visibility on the part of women, and emancipation brings a more genuine environment that permits women to actualize their aspiration by serving society and fulfilling the duty towards themselves .But new women even does not care about these factors. They want to be more rebellious and self-destructive. They even want to be escapist and separatist from the male society to challenge male norms and values. They never think that solution of any problem can be achieved through compromise and mutual understanding and even never believes that true freedom and emancipation comes through compromise and mutual coexistence with men in the society. This merely remains them in the state of liminality.

New women show dual characteristics. Some time they regard marriage as an important bond between male and female and at the same time as a loss of autonomy, freedom and happiness. They sometime prefer divorce in the name of saving their autonomous self. This aspect shows their paradoxical or liminal situation. Liminality is an in-between state characterized by ambiguity, openness and indeterminacy and transitional passage between alternative states. It is a transitional threshold involves the interrelationship between two phenomena rather than opposition. It allows an individual to occupy two diverse worlds creating a “Third space”. In this regard Victor Turner comments on liminality that, “liminal state is a state where a person in neither “here” nor “there” but “in-between”, the judicially, traditionally, conventionally and ceremonially established position” (504).

New women try to be independent and self-centered. Though they raise voice against patriarchy they do not fond their exact destination. Either they move to the unknown zone or they themselves surrender to patriarchy. This position shows some how paradoxical situation of new woman. Their revolution remains in incomplete form. This incomplete form of revolution compelled them to remain in liminal position.

In a nutshell, the position of new women in general and particular has been paradoxical. Though new woman tries to go beyond the patriarchal norms and values, they do not succeed. They are in liminal space in the sense that they are neither inside the system of society nor they reach to the destination where they long for. They neither discard the familial values nor is ready to succumb themselves to the patriarchal domination, suppression, oppression and mental torture. Thus, they are completely in the space of liminality.

From the above descriptions many theorists speak about the concepts of new women and liminality and in both dramas too this researcher is trying to elaborate the liminal space remain on the part of protagonists Hedda and Nora.

III. New Woman in Liminal Space in *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler*

Nora and Hedda show the transitory period of new woman where women did not like to remain under patriarchal/male domination rather they decided to be independent and emancipated from the male ideology and tried to get freedom. They are ready to undergo serve their pain and suffering but they do not like to surrender before any forces that challenge their individuality. Although they tries to be independent and save their individuality they cannot do so because both women neither discard the familial values nor is ready to succumb themselves to the patriarchal domination, suppression, oppression and mental torture as a submissive, mute and docile creature. From above it is clear that they are remaining in the space of liminality in course of being new woman or their new womanhood has taken them to liminality.

Nora, the main protagonist of the play *A Doll's House* , is the wife of Torvald Helmer. From the very beginning Nora, The protagonist is treated as an object or the property of her husband. Her husband first words to her are “my little lark twittering [...] squirrel rummaging [...]”? (562) Nora is considered like a child or a pet as if she has no existence. She seems to be content with this relationship. She manipulates her husband with the same ingenious plot that children use to get their way. Helmer says, “Don’t deny it, my little Nora. Spend thrifts are sweet, but they use up a frightful amount of money. It is incredible what it costs a man to feed such birds” (563). Here Nora is confined as a bird, which protects its baby birds by its wings. The woman should give birth to the children and look after them properly by managing time and by casting aside their individual self and interest. Nora’s main purpose is to please her husband and maintain their role properly. Nora is objectified and stereotyped like animals, birds and so on.

Hedda Gabler also deals with the position of women in the contemporary society where women had to be the victim of patriarchy. Women have been victims of male ideology which untimely cause them to suffer from repression, suppression and mental torture. Hedda is the main protagonist of the novel, who is pregnant and expects care and love from her husband. But her husband is always busy building his career. He never shows his love and affection to his wife. He never shows his love towards her during honey moon trip too because of her husband. She shares her secret with Brack that she didn't like her honeymoon trip at all. So, she says "I've been so dreadfully bored" (609). It is clear in the drama that Hedda never gets love from her husband and becomes frustrated.

A loyal wife, Nora, takes pride in her act of saving her husband's life through an illegal act of forgery. While talking to her friend, Mrs. Linde, Nora expresses her pride over her act of borrowing money and saving her husband's life by taking him to Italy. She expresses her pride while talking with Mrs. Linde as:

Nora: I agree. But listen to this, Kristine-I've also got something to be proud and happy for.

Mrs Linde: I don't doubt it. But whatever do you mean?

Nora: Not so loud. What if Torvald heard !

He mustn't, not for anything in the world.

Nobody must know, Kristine. No one but you.

Mrs. Linde: But what is it, then?

Nora: Come here. (*Drawing her down beside her on the sofa.*) It's true -I've also got something to be proud and happy for. I'm the one who saved Torvald's life. (566)

From the above conversation we come to know that Nora is very happy because she successfully saved her husband from his serious illness. In spite of her deed she is not able to express the pride she feels because she has done something without the consent of her husband.

In patriarchal society, a wife should laugh if her husband laughs, and feel sorry if he is sad. Nora, being a member of the same society shares her happiness and sorrow according to the mood of her husband. When Helmer is made manager in the bank, she becomes so happy that she forgets everything. While talking with Dr. Rank she expresses her happiness.

Rank: Why do you laugh at that? Do you have any real idea of what society is?

Nora: What do I care about dreary old society? I was laughing at something quite different – something terribly funny. Tell me, Doctor, is everyone who works in the bank dependent now on Torvald?

Rank: Is that what you find so terribly funny?

Nora (*smiling and Humming*): Never mind, never mind (*pacing the Floor*) Yes, that's really immensely amusing: that we – that Torvald has so much power now over all those people. (*The bag out of her pocket.*) Dr. rank, a little macaroon on that? (568)

She is very happy that her husband had got much power in the bank. In this conversation it could be clearly seen that she is laughing over the success of her husband and feels very much secure.

On the other hand Hedda seems totally indifference with her husband, George Tesman is expecting to be a professor. For that, he is trying his best. Normally his

expectation should be the matter of concern to his wife. But Hedda heavily bored in “listening the history of civilization morning, noon and the evening” (609). She understands that it’s Tesman’s business. Instead of wishing for his success, she shows her indifference, as if he is no one to her. She seems even uninterested with her marriage. She says she does not celebrate her marriage because she does not want to say it is a marriage of her. “Hedda energetically refuses to serve as hostess. She will not celebrate their marriage because in her opinion, it isn’t marriage” (642).

According to Hedda marriage is not her will but a compulsion. She says “it was the passion for the old fold mansion that drew George Tesman and me together. It was nothing more than that, which brought on our engagement and the marriage and the wedding trip and everything else” (611). Analyzing Hedda’s ideal concept on marriage she seems trying escape the marriage life as radical feminists believe marriage is one of the greatest obstacles for women to think about their future. But Hedda’s ideal concept and her reality are totally different. If she really would feel marriage as the obstacle on her world of free life she must not marry with Tesman. She gets married with him on her own will but she herself say it’s not a marriage. She evaluates marriage in terms of profit and loss, sees the possibility of profit and accepts it. By taking marriage in such a lightly manner, she is destroying the culture in the name of improvement. If she was a new woman, she wouldn’t have to marry a man only for the house which she loves. How can we believe such woman would built the society. If she herself is destroying her home? Hedda’s concept of marriage seems completely opposite with the activities she is doing in terms of her marriage life. So, it is one of the reasons that remain her in the space of liminality.

Nora, in *A Doll’s House*, always thinks about how to please Helmer. She says, “[...] I’ll do anything to please you Torvald. I’ll sing for you, dance for you” (573).

She does not think about her life, health and responsibilities but always thinks of the ways to please him. As a wife, she is very keen to retain her husband's affection, and therefore tries to humour in every possible way. She cannot plan her costume for the party. Her dependence is clearly seemed in the following conversation.

Nora: You know, there isn't anyone who has your good taste- and I want so much to look well at the costume party. Torvald, couldn't you take over and decide what I should be and plan my costume?

Helmer: Ah, is my stubborn little creature calling for a lifeguard?

Nora: Yes, Torvald, I can't get anywhere without your help. (574)

This conversation makes it clear that as a submissive wife who is totally dependent upon her husband. She presents herself as if she were machine or an object for Helmer having no thinking power at all. She shows her dependent attitude time and again because her religion says that her interests should be conditioned by her husband's interests. She further says, "Oh it's absolutely necessary, Torvald. But I can't get anywhere without your help. I've forgotten the whole thing completely". (584) From this it is clear that Nora is entirely dependent on her husband. She seeks his advice as to what kind of a costume she should wear at the fancy-dress ball. She tells him that she cannot move a step without his guidance in her life. She then seeks his guidance in rehearsing the Tarantella, appealing almost helplessly to him for direction. In deed, according to the ideas then prevailing, Nora is model of wifely devotion.

Hedda on the other hand has a strong desire to control men by being a ruler. So she says "for once in my life; I want to have power over a human being" (619). She feels happy in prescribing the norms for others. She wants Tesman to follow her suggestions. Similarly, she wants other characters to act according to her wish. Here

in this case too Hedda is unable to understand the reality. Her theory of domination is only based on what she has seen in a patriarchal dominated society. In a patriarchal dominated society we see a male dominates the entire members of the house and the rules over them according to his wish. This way, he shows his power on human being. Hedda too just wants to copy from such ruler. She takes a gun and tries to show that she is as powerful as man. Generally in conventional society we rarely see a woman carrying a gun. Similarly gun itself is a symbol of power. She has seen her from childhood that her father used to carry a gun in order to control others. So she believed she would be strong and powerful by threatening people with a gun in hand. In this matter too Hedda fails to handle the issue in apposite way or from new woman perspective.

Nora is always conscious towards her duties and responsibility. When he feels critically ill, she took him to Italy for treatment, thinking it's her duty and responsibility. She even forgets moral norms and values and forges her father's signature in order to get money. She becomes successful in saving him from illness. Since she took pride in the fact she had saved her husband's life. From her conversation with her friend, we notice her pride over saving him. But she does not tell about the loan and nature of the loan to her husband thinking that it would hurt his ego. While talking with Mrs. Linde, she says, "For heaven's sake, no! Are you serious? He's so strict on that subject. Besides- Torvald, with all his masculine pride- how painfully humiliating from him if he ever found out he was in debt to me. That would just ruin our relationship. Our beautiful, happy home would never be the same" (567). This short piece makes her wifely devotion, love and responsibility towards her husband clearly. She is not telling what sacrifice she has made in order to save his wife, because telling him would be hurting his self- respect and wounding ego. Here

she acts following her responsibility towards her husband. Being a true wife, she thinks that it's her responsibility to save her husband from illness.

While talking about Hedda, she is running away from her responsibility. When her husband says, aunt Rina is dying, she answers that it is "no more than she has "been expecting" (610). She answers as if it is very normal news. This news does not affect her at all. Such answer does not suit to the sensitive family member. We can see her indifference in the following conversation between George Tesman and Hedda Gabler:

Tesman: Oh, Hedda dearest, if you could only bring yourself to come with me! Think of it!

Hedda (*Rises and dismisses her thought wearily*): No, no don't ask me to do such things. I don't want to look on sickness and death. I want to be free of everything ugly. (622)

The conversation reveals that Hedda Gabler does not want to visit Aunt Rina who is dying. She openly says that she does not want to look on sickness and death and she wants to be free of those ugly things. She would have been shocked by the news of aunt Rina approaching death only if she had sense of responsibility and attachment. Since she does not have these things, she is not least bit affected. Hedda never feels responsible towards her husband and family members. Their pain and pleasure are not the matter of her concern. She is pleased avoiding the news of sickness and death.

Nora, being a member of patriarchal society, accepts her duties like cooking, washing, managing her house, bringing up her children and pleasing her husband. As a true mother she expresses joy at seeing the children with their rosy cheeks which she compares with apples and roses. She wants to know their activities of that day.

She asks the Nurse to bring hot coffee to them. She even enjoys playing with her children. We can notice her motherly duties in the following lines:

How fresh and strong you look. Oh, such red cheeks you have! Like
 apples and roses [...] My sweet little doll baby! (*Takes the smallest rom
 rom the nurse and dances with her.*) Yes, yes, mama will dance with
 Bob as well, [...] Shall we play? What shall we play? Hide – and –
 seek? Yes, let's play hide – and – seek. Bob must hide first. I must?
 Yes, let me hide first. (569-570)

From above piece we come to know her motherly devotion towards her children. She takes this duty very joyfully and engages with children. Thinking of her secret duty that is to make her children happy, she even plays with them, dances, sings and does many more things for them. Similarly, she tries her best to please her husband. She says that she sings, dances and does everything to please him. She is mainly concerned with her family life, and does everything for the well-being and pleasure of her husband and children. She dances, sings, and keeps the house tidy in perfect order to please her husband. She decorates the Christmas tree because children like it. She knows perfectly well what the duty of a house wife is. She even accepts the hardship of life and undertakes any trouble for the sake of betterment of her family.

Hedda on the other side does not take motherhood in the way women generally take. Women feel pride for the opportunity to become a mother. They see completion of their life only through motherhood. But Hedda Gabler is opposed to it due to the belief that motherhood imposes a burden on the mother. She has taken a child as a block on the way to autonomy. In her conception the birth of the child is the death of the mother's selfhood. Mother is constrained in so many activities due to the child. Due to this conception she protests against her limitation by rejecting it. She

has recently come home from wedding trip abroad. Her husband's remarks that she has grown indicates that she has become pregnant. Her husband happily shares the news of pregnancy with his aunt Tesman which Hedda dislikes. She even asks her husband to be "quiet". This means that she does not even want to talk about it. If she had taken positively, it was the happiest moment she had come across in her life. She would share with her closest relatives. She dislikes talking about it means that she has taken it as an obstacle upon her autonomy. Generally new woman are raising problem of bearing the child and taking care of it has thrown the women two steps back than men. It is true to some extent and because of it there are so many women in the world who do not enter in marital life .But a woman who already is pregnant can never feel burden of her child. From the activities of Hedda's rejecting the unborn child we can say that she has neglected negated even the definition of motherhood. So such a woman can never be complete new woman.

The fact that Hedda Gabler rejects motherhood can be symbolically seen in the scene of burning of the manuscript. In the last act, Hedda burns the manuscript of Eilert Lovborg which he had prepared with the help of Mrs. Elvsted. Eliert Lovborg and Mrs. Elvsted jointly prepare a manuscript for a history book, which Lovborg loses on the way. But he tells Mrs. Elvsted that he deliberately destroyed it. Mrs. Elvsted is heavily shocked by this news. It is something beyond her capacities to tolerate. Therefore she says to Lovborg "this thing you've done with the book for the rest of my life, it will seem as if you have killed a little child" (625). She has taken the manuscript on the way she takes a child. It is the result of cooperation between male and female. As the child is the result of union between male and female, so is the manuscript. For her, manuscript represents the child. In destroying the manuscript, Eilert Lovborg destroys the child. The word "Child" strikes Hedda Gabler. It

produces hatred on her, even against the manuscript. Eilert Lovborg is the professional rival of George Tesman. Both of them is competing in the same field. Hedda Gabler does not have anything to do with it. She hates manuscript, not because she sees challenge to her husband's career it, but because she sees the image of a child in it. In burning the manuscript, she burns the child. The manuscript signals the child, which following dialogues reveal:

Hedda (throwing some of the sheets in to the fire and whispering to her).

Now I am burning your child, Thea with your curly hair!

(Throwing another sheet in the stove) your child and Eilert

Lovborg's! *(Throwing the rest)* Now I am burning the child.

(628)

In burning this manuscript, Hedda Gabler is burning her desire for a child. She cannot emotionally identify with the child. Hedda Gabler is so self-conscious in an ideal world that she even takes the child as the challenge to her autonomous existence. She wants to exist as a free being, having no responsibility towards the society and family. Therefore, she creates a wall between herself and the child she is begetting in the future. The reason behind burning the manuscript is nothing but referring it as to the child of Eilert and Mrs. Elvsted. Here Hedda's such hateful act shows that she is completely in a wrong way on her understanding about who is the subject of her protest. In other words she does not find out the real subject of patriarchal domination. There is not any cause to be jealous with Mrs. Elvsted. She is her friend and she is supporting to create a book. But Hedda does not understand it and she is jealous with Mrs. Elvsted and her relation with Eilert Lovborg. Females are the symbol of creation either her thinking to destroy her own child or the created child (manuscript) of Eilert

and Mrs. Elvsted. Regarding Women's natural potentiality too Hedda seems unable to give true message though she tries to be new woman.

Nora always behaves positively with female characters through out the drama. Nora treated her so positively. An old school friend, Kristine Linde, comes to visit Nora. During the conversation, Kristine reveals that she has married a wealthy man she did not love in order to support an invalid mother. Her husband's death three years ago left her penniless and she's has returned to seek work. Nora promise to speak to Torvald about a job in his bank. Nora says:

Nora: How so? Oh, I see. You think may be Torvald
could do something for you.

Mrs. Linde: Yes, that's what I thought.

Nora: And he will, Kristine! Just leave it to me; I'll
bring it up so delicately – find something attractive
to humour him with. Oh, I'm so eager to help you.(566)

From above piece we come to know that Nora is so positive toward her former classmate Mrs. Linde. Not only has this Nora even revealed to Mrs. Linde that she has saved her husband's life from his terrible illness by managing the money herself and taking him to Italy. We find her expression in the following conversation with Mrs. Linde:

Nora: I agree. But listen to this, Kristine – I've also got something
to be proud and happy for you.

Mrs. Linde: I don't doubt it. But whatever do you mean?

Nora: Not so loud . What if Torvald heard! He mustn't,
not for anything in the world. Nobody must
know, Krsitine. No one but you.

Mrs. Linde: But what is it, then?

Nora: Come here. (*Drawing her down beside her on*

the sofa.)It's true – I've also got something to be proud

and happy for. I'm the one who saved Torvald's

life. (566)

This short conversation clearly shows her belief toward her female friend. By believing her former classmate she even reveals her secret act of saving her husband that she never has revealed to anyone.

While Hedda throughout the drama never behaves positively with other female characters. She is not seen positive towards the female characters in the drama. She never respects aunt Tesman. "The aunt means nothing to her" (644). Similarly she suggests her husband to expel Berta from her work. Hedda complains on each of her work. She says "We're never going to manage with his maid" 9601). The reason behind saying such unsuitable dialogue is just because that she has left her old hat lying in the table. In the same way she never seems positive towards Mrs. Elvsted when she knows that Mrs. Elvsted is quite close with Eilert Labvorg who is Hedda's former suitor too. If Hedda was a complete new woman she would have to unite with all female characters to fight against the patriarchal domination. But she seems to have prejudice with all of them. She is unable to recognize the real subject to whom she has to protest. Instead of it she is envying with other women who are in the surrounding of the male characters of the drama. If she was really a new woman, she would have to share her problem with them and try to find out some solution together. Similarly when she was pregnant and suffering from the psychological problem she must have to share with aunt Tesman who would pay attention on her seriously and she can help to bridge the gap with her husband regarding their relation. But Hedda

never does so. Hedda has never realized that the victory is never possible from the individual efforts. Whenever there is not any unity of women their voice cannot be strong to raise the total's women's voice in a male dominated society. That is why the relation of women characters of the drama also proves that Hedda is a failure to prove herself as a new woman.

Hedda feels happy to be with male friends. She enjoys being with Brack, and shares the secret. Similarly when Labvorg says she has passion of life to be with Lovborg, she becomes very angry with Lovborg and totally cuts off the relation with him and says that she only wants a good friendship with its limitation Hedda is very much jealous with the life of Brack and hopes to have the same kind of life in which would have full freedom. She will get the glimpse of happiness among the circle of the friends. When Brack says "All I want is to have a warm circle of intimate friends, where I can be of use one way or another, with the freedom to come and go as a trusted friend" (609). Hedda is more concerned with his philosophy. She also expects the same. She not only expects this kind of freedom but also tries to bring this concept into the reality. Hedda here seems to negate her own reality that "she is a female". In the name of revolting the male supremacy she is trying to forget her existence as a female and wants to be a male. Actually new woman are happy to be female and try to bring change of those sorts of practice which are against the female's privileges. To protest the male is not to become the male themselves but to change the customs and tradition of patriarchy which have negative effect on female. In this case too Hedda seems unable to show her as a new woman.

After discovering Helmer's true character, Nora's illusions about herself are shattered. She seems herself an ignorant and silly woman, a dangerous mother, and a wife for her husband's pleasure. Nora, the puppet becomes vitalized, changed into a

suffering woman who realizes that there is something seriously wrong somewhere in the state of women as wives. She accepts no more her domestic role and starts to see herself out of the home. She realizes that she was living in the fiction where everybody wronged her. Thereafter, she tries to be independent; more concerned about herself rather than to her duties and responsibilities. She expresses her dissatisfaction; she realizes that now she is free to choose her life. She has own mind; she wants to establish her own identity in order to do so she must educate herself. She says:

No, only lighthearted. And you have always been so kind to me. But our Home has been nothing but a playpen. I've been your doll-wife here, just As at home I was papa's doll- Child. And in turn the children have been my dolls. I thought it was fun when they played with me, just as you thought it fun when I played with. That's been, marriage Torvald. (592)

Now she wakes up to the fact that she is an individual in her own right, and not a puppet. At this volcanic moment of exploding anger Nora happened to know that hitherto life is a fiction, real life is yet to be explored. The above statement shows that she tries to be culminating as a new woman. She further advocates:

I mean, then I went from papa's hand into yours. You arranged Everything to your own taste, and so I got the same taste as you- or I pretended to; I can't remember. I guess a little of both, first one, then the other. Now when I look back, It seems as if I'd lived here like a beggar-Just from hand to mouth [...] it's a great sin what you and Papa did to me. You're blame that nothing's become of me. (591)

Nora is a character who is awake to the new consciousness. She says that her father at first dominated her. She got freedom from being dominated by her father when she married Helmer. But again she continued to be tormented by overweening husband. Having been wedded to Helmer she thought that she is emancipated being. But destined of being dominated never left her. Hence from early childhood to her married life, Nora had been tormented by domination. This short conversation shows Nora's anger to his husband and father. This conversation also shows the memory of her past. The memory of past preoccupies present too. A person, who is really intends to change the society and want to establish autonomous self, always live in the present and seeks for better future for oneself and for other too. Taking herself in the memory of past she is doing nothing to trouble to herself. So it proves that though she tries to establish herself as new woman, she is not successful in bringing out her as new woman completely.

When Nora realizes she is an individual at first. She wants to think things out for herself, and get things clear. Whenever Helmer talks about religion and morality. Nora replies that she does not know what the religion is and what the morality is. Nora feels that it is the laws of society that allowed a woman to spare her old fathers feeling on his death-bed, that laws allowed a woman to save the life of her husband. She then tells him that she has ceased to love him because he is not the man she has thought that one day miracle would happen and he would prove he too was capable of making sacrifice for her but she has found miracle did not happen. She takes back her wedding and come out slamming the outer door behind her. She puts:

Listen, TORVALD –I've heard when a wife deserts her husband's house just as I'm doing then the law frees him from all responsibility in any case, I am freeing you from being responsible. Don't feel

yourself bound, anymore than I will. There has to be absolute freedom for us both. Here, take your ring back. Give me mine [...] you and I both would have to transform ourselves to the point that-

Oh, torvald, I've stopped believing in miracles. (593)

From above we come to know Nora is actualization and creation of identity happens in the atmosphere of freedom. But freedom not only can preserve her happiness and identity. As marriage naturally adds one's responsibilities and gives the feeling that one is not alone in one's life world .Nora cannot understand that . Actually new woman wants to seeks her identity struggling within the family. But Nora wants to escape from home to prove herself as new woman. But this act of leaving home only makes Nora escapist instead of being new woman.

Nora to some extent is a New woman, who struggle for a long to release her self from the traditional husband Helmer who use to make her without respecting her own identity. Similarly Nora rejects the treating of Krogstad that he would reveal all her secret, rather she decides to be independent. Her husband tells "Abandon your home, your husband, and your children! And you've not even thinking what people will say" (592). Nora does not care about anything. She says, "I can't be concerned about that. I only know how essential that is "(592). She challenges all the patriarchal norms, values, traditions that women should be obedient towards the male and has courage that she would face the problem, which has chosen. Nora further says:

I do not believe in that anymore. I believe that before all else, I'm a Human being, no less than you or anyway, I ought to try to become one. I know the majority thinks you are right. Torvald and plenty of books agree with you, too. But I can't go on believing what the

majority says or what's written in books. I have to think over these things myself and try to understand them. (592)

This sharp talking shows that she is emerging as a new woman from previous and innocent one. Now she has completely abandoned her previous mechanical belief. Especially, she is seeking emancipation and self-neglecting all patriarchal norms and values. She puts "I have to stand completely alone, if I'm ever going to discover myself and the world out there so I can't go on living with you." (592). From this we come to know that she evaluates herself more important than any one else. Nothing is more valuable to her than her individual self. So she wants to live alone to preserve her happiness and to respect her self. But only by living alone too she cannot establish her self respect. Though she does many things and activities to prove herself as new woman but she can not completely be as she always want to escape from each and every activities.

Similarly Hedda too respect herself. As Hedda from very beginning of the play wants to save her individual respect and ready to do anything in order to save her self respect. Hedda is a self-centered woman. Self centricism refers to the state in which a person gives priority to oneself at each and every decision. When we talk about self centricism, we are referring to that sort of behaviour which is oriented towards the self. Self centered man does not care for other's pains and pleasures and only thinks of what pleases and pains him/her. The protagonist Hedda Gabler, gives priority to herself, rather than to her husband and family members. Their pain and pleasures are not the matter of her concern. She feels it is her responsibility to protect her personal happiness. She is pleased avoiding the news of sickness and death. She cares for what pleases her while making decisions, not at what other people say about her. The heroine is self centered because love of the self is her guiding principle. Why

does Hedda consent to marry George Tesman, if she really loves her personal freedom? After all; one enters marriage at the cost of one's freedom. Marriage is a contrast in which she compromise works rather than individuality. But Hedda does not contrast her will through marriage. She uses marriage as the platform to fulfill her personal interest. She consents to marry George Tesman, not because she loves him, but because she loves the house that George Tesman loves .She anticipates the life of comfort through marriage. She chooses marriage because she sees the possibility of her personal desire in it. It is revealed in the following conversation:

Tesman: Well at least we have our comfortable home, Hedda! The home that we always wanted. That we both fell in love with, I could almost say Hm?

Hedda (*rising slowly and wearily*): It was the part of our bargain- that we'd live in a society- that we'd keep a great house. (607)

Now it is clear that Hedda doesn't do anything at the cost of her freedom. Marriage is a pious bond between male and female, in which feelings, emotions and attachment matter rather than profit and loss. Hedda Gabler evaluates marriage in terms of profit and loss, sees the possibility of profit and accepts it. Then in choosing marriage, she is choosing home and consequently the personal wish. Hedda admits that "it was this passion for the old fold mansion that drew George Tesman and me together" (611). Hedda's self centricism can even seen in another incident. Hedda Gabler and Eilert Lovborg were so close to one another. They used to exchange their secret. Their intimacy reaches a climax. But suddenly Hedda makes a decision to break it. She continues up to the extent it doesn't do any harm to her freedom. When she sees the possibility of challenge to her freedom, she gives it up. She breaks friendship when it "threatened to grow more serious" (615). She thinks that this intimacy may lead them

to other relations and it is possible that she may come under his authority. Through this friendship, she may come to the situation, which she has been long struggling to avoid. She continues friendship up to the extent that she is safe. When she feels the danger to her security, she breaks it in spite of Lovborg's wish for continuation.

Hedda takes her relation as something genuine in which both friends would get equal space. But in her perception Lovborg had taken it somewhat differently. She understands that he tries to violate her trust when she had been "so bold" in her friendship. Therefore she breaks it. Though breaking up friendship does not sound somewhat pleasant, Hedda still protects her autonomy by doing that. She makes her choice, protects her autonomy and affirms her existence. While doing this, she only thinks of what pleases her, irrespective of Lovborg's pleasure. Hedda Gabler's self-centrism seems stronger when she meets her school friend Mrs. Elvsted is married to a man who is twenty years older than her. Therefore she has nothing in common with him. Despite her husband's attempts to please her, she leaves him for another man Eilert Lovborg, the professional rival of George Tesman. While doing this, she does not think what her husband think or how he feels. Mrs. Elvsted thinks of her pleasure alone. She even does not care of the social norms and values, and therefore says that the people in society will "say what they please and I did what I had to do" (605). Mrs. Elvested becomes so bold that she challenges everything. Hedda Gabler gets reinforcement from her to develop self centrism further.

Hedda's ideal concept is that she believes suicide as a brave act and a mode of liberation. Therefore she encourages Eilert Lovborg to commit suicide by shooting himself. She wants him to be master of his own life and death. She gives him a pistol asking him to promise that he will "use it" (628).because suicide for her is something which liberates from the darkness. And when she know that Eilert died by shooting

himself, she appreciates it as an act of courage. She is pleased to know that Lovborg has had the courage to live after his own mind and that he had the strength and the will to break away from the banquet of life – so young (632). All the people don't dare to take such bold action. His suicide for her is “something that shimmers with spontaneous beauty” (632). She sees beauty in suicide and his suicide provides her with hope.

Thereafter she is pleased to know that there can still be a free and courageous action in this world. Then Hedda gets reinforcement from Eilert's death for suicide.

When Hedda hears the news of Lovborg's dying. She is happy she says:

Hedda (*her voice lowered*): Ah, judge - - what a liberation it is, this act of Eilert Lovborg's

Brack: Liberation, Mrs. Hedda? Wee yes, for him; up could certainly say He has been liberated---

Hedda: I mean for me it's liberating to know that there can still be a free and courageous action in this world. Something that shimmers with spontaneous beauty. I simply know that Eilert Lovborg's has the courage to live life after his own mind. And now – this last great act, filled with beauty! That he had the strength and the will to break away from the banquet of life – so young . (632)

Hedda's ideal thinking is totally opposite with the idea of her suicide in reality.

However she feels suicide is something courageous act, though she is not doing so to show courage, she is doing it because she cannot face the challenge of life. We can not take her suicide as a courageous act. She is caught when Brack reveals the truth about the pistol. She knows that she'd confront a public scandal if this case is taken to the court. She can be protected from facing a public scandal if this case is taken to the

court. She can be protected from facing a public scandal if judge Brack keeps silent. But the price of silence is so high that she cannot afford to pay it. She will have to do whatever he wishes her to do. The price of silence is becoming his mistress. She has two alternatives; either to face a public scandal, or to become his mistress. She can neither confront a public scandal, nor can she be his mistress. Hedda Gabler seems to realize her predicament when she says “So I am in your power, Judge you have your hold over me from now on” (633). In contrast to her desire to rule over human being, she is herself ruled. She comes to such situation in which she fails to assert her autonomy. Hedda knows that everything she touches “turns ridiculous and vile” (632). The situation made her so much afraid that she would not be able to hear the scandal about her. In this situation she is completely unable to face the challenges of her in front, and commits suicide. So her suicide is not a courageous or beautiful thing but to run away from the challenges in life. Hedda is doing a great crime by killing herself. She not only kills an individual subject but also the voice she is trying to raise being a new woman. In her ideology it may be courageous things but in reality her act is complete acceptance of the patriarchy. In other words she is supporting the patriarchal society by killing herself in the name of braveness. Hedda could search alternate rather taking suicide.

Suicide is not the solution for a person. Ibsen states in his note on *Hedda Gabler* as “the happiest mission of life is to place the people of today in the conditions of the future” (643). So taking her towards death is spoiling her possibility of attaining freedom. By taking suicide it seems that she is taking her step back with the society and struggle in place of trying to attain the freedom. Her suicide does not give any courageous meaning for women who are fighting for women’s right. She is loosing battle of struggle and she is being escapist by doing suicide. In this regard

Carloline believe “She dies to escape a sordid situation that is largely of her own making; she will not face reality nor assume responsibility for the consequences of her acts. The pistols, having descended to a coward and a cheat, bring only death without honor” (649).

No doubt, Nora’s patronizing and domineering husband is the representative of the patriarchal society. Her slamming the door at the end of play is magically significant because it symbolically stands for Nora’s strong revolt against her husband by extension a slap in the face of patriarchy. Similarly Hedda act of suicide too symbolically shows action against ill patriarchal norms and values. Slamming the door and act of suicide are the explosion of her energies against patriarchy. These acts are challenge to patriarchy. Both of them want to be an individual with establishes identity bedecked with freedom. But when Nora move towards unknown zone in search of identity, it is very difficult to say that whether she gets identity or not. In the same way Hedda’s act of suicide also moves her toward unknown zone. Both Nora and Hedda’s decision is one-sided, temporary and further encouraging the patriarchal domination.. If they are really new woman they should think that patriarchy has got some evils but they should be corrected living in the same structure. But instead of living and struggling within society they choose the way of nowhere ness. In this way they are escapist and separatist. That’s why though they are attempting to be new women but in practical they remain in the space of liminality because of their unknown destination.

IV. Conclusion

The whole research work has projected the problems of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century women in the light of feminism, a movement flourished in 1960s and 70s, to show female attempts to be enlightening their individuality. As feminist critics advocate that ideology developed by the male to disintegrate the female wishes is the central cause of the female trauma and pangs.

In order to delimit, the researcher has focuse on Ibsen's and *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler*, in which central characters Hedda and Nora implant the seeds of resistance to liberate themselves from the patriarchal ideology in order to save their autonomous self. Hedda and Nora both figure out the transcendental escape from male chauvinism. Both of their ways of resistance do not ultimately carry out the total release but they invite the confirmation to patriarchal norms and values.

The patriarchal indoctrination compels the women to be marginalized and suffocated. Whenever the women understand that they are excessively commodified and they are provided subservient role in the society, their realization and dissatisfaction brings the internalized resistance into their minds and hearts. So, revolting against male ideology is indispensable factor, sp as to establish the just society excluding any sorts of marginalization.

The central characters in *Hedda Gabler* and *Doll's House* alienate themselves from the patriarchal norms and values. The rebellious female characters Hedda and Nora long to challenge the male ideology for their liberty and self identity. They even escape from their rights and duty in order to get one's rights. Rights and duty come together and complement each other. So, one cannot escape from duty if she/he really wants the true changes in life. Similarly we also have learnt from the dramas that women must be positive and be able to unite with other colleagues in order to achieve

the true means of independence. It gives us key lesson that an individual's effort is always fruitless. Hedda's and Nora's failure also has given us a guidance that we should first of all find out the real subject of patriarchal domination if we really want to bring the systematic and positive change. Rejecting the existing life and problem is not the true sign of a change maker. We must be able to face the challenge, understand the situation, and try to turn it in positive way in order to reach the destination. We must be able to change the negative attitude of patriarchy by being a female itself not trying to be a male. We need to analyze what are the rights and wrong with patriarchal activities regarding their performance instead of trying to be exactly powerful like them through wrong method.

Ibsen in his both plays *Hedda Gabler* and *A Dolls House*, tries to present a strong feminist as he does in his other plays. However, there is some politics of conformity to patriarchy embedded in their movement of resistance.

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