

Tribhuvan University

Quest of Women's Independence in Henrik Ibsen's Plays: *A Doll's House* and *The
Lady from the Sea*

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Abstract

The present research is a comparative study between *A Doll's House* and *The Lady from the Sea* both written by Henrik Ibsen. It basically focuses on the gradual development of the consciousness of Nora and Ellida. Both of them succeed to break the patriarchal social structure of eccentric design for their individual development. This research further analyzes the causes why they slam the door of patriarchy and household and enter a space wider than the space offered by household. From feminist perspectives it studies the given plays in the light of some established institutions like marriage, religion, education, morality and ideological formation.

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I. Introduction

From the very beginning of human civilization women have been considered as inferior and second class citizens. They have been assigned subordinate and peripheral position in the society. It was believed that women were made to fulfill men's purpose. They were expected to serve men physically, sexually and mentally. They have always been dominated, violated and subjected to male supremacist ideology. Grimkes claims, "The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpation on the part of men towards woman, having in indirect object, the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her" (37).

Women for centuries were considered weak, so they could not come rank of men and at the same time they could not occupy the equal status in the society. The concept that women are physically weak by nature was universally accepted in patriarchal society which becomes the means of controlling women each and every sphere social, political and even literary. Focusing on this subject Seldon writes, "Women have been made inferior and oppression has been compounded by men's belief that women are inferior by nature however, the abstract notion of equality receives lip service but demands for real quality well usually be resisted" (135). However, it is not an easy task to remove the deep rooted structure of society. It has taken a long time to realize and establish women's identity.

Women have been victimized sexually. Primitive society established certain restrictions and dictated certain rules over sexes as a result male started showing leadership and imposing his authority over female. Men as their supposed superiority, started to think that it was their right to rule over women. They established unanimous rule in every aspects of humanity. Their ideology taught female to believe that they

are less valuable and they are physically inferior and unequal to men. Women have been denied the rights as human being.

The history of western society has remained highly discriminative and bias in women's career advancement through all the ages. Even scholars and philosophers were bias in defining women. They depicted women as inferior immature, incomplete being in their intellectual potentialities such as Aristotle, St Aquinas, Selden. Aristotle declared that "the female is female by virtue of certain lack of qualities" (Selden 134) and the "misbegotten, male" (Ruth 96). Thomas Aquinas believed that "women is an imperfect (Selden,134). To the puritan conviction "women are less intelligent than men" (qtd in Laurent 270) and for Confucius. Women have been misinterpreted in socio-political cultural, biological, religious work. And they tried to neglect women's role in their literary writing to justify their patriarchal ideology.

The denigration and subordination of women in the western culture begins with the mythical description of God and Goddesses. For instance, Apollo is worshipped as the symbol of wisdom, knowledge and supremacy, while Eros is considered as symbol of jealousy and sensuality and Venus as a symbol of beauty. Women's position remained flexible and supplementary and depicted as stereotypical, faithful and devoted wife.

In patriarchal society, women are treated as a second class citizens. According to Ruth women as human beings have always been substandard: less intelligent less moral; less competent; less able physically, psychologically, and spiritually; small of body, mind and characters; often bad and destructive (96). It is an assumption designed to dominate women, which allowed all men to rule women in families, to decide their fate and shape their destiny. A woman is taught to be good woman moral, pious, devoted, submissive subservient and nurturing.

But women started becoming conscious of their position in society and discrimination between men and women. Many feminists emerged who forced up on women's minds, their well-being and emancipation. They emerged from different nations focusing on various aspects responsible for women's suffering and secondary position in the society. Patriarchal society has indeed been well served by masculinity images, where all images of women have been male centered

The first blow to patriarchal structure however was first given by Virginia Woolf in her *A Room of One's Own* (1928). She believed that women had always faced social and economic obstacles to their literary ambitions looking at the condition of women writers in the past, Woolf portrays very pitiable conditions of theirs. She says that to write anything at the time was considered a sin for their attempt was not only criticized and concerned but also at the same time they were disfigured and deformed. Society had prevented a woman writer from writing openly. So, she had to write surreptitiously: She must have shut herself up in the room in the country to write and been torn asunder by bitterness and surplus perhaps, through her husband was of the kindest and their Married life perfection (96).

Woolf argued that women for centuries were not provided separate room for literary creation. Due to the lack of separate room, a women writer had to face difficulties in order to express their idea in literary writing and they had not given a chance to be alone. This was the case with Jane Austin, says Woolf, who wrote in a common setting room-subject to all kinds of casual interpretations.

Ellane Showalter *In A Literature of Their Own* (1980) writes that like male writers female writers in Britain mainly women novelists such as the Bronte sisters started writing from the point of view of women's experience. Showalter divides the female in three phases. The first; the Feminine phase, was from (1840 to 1880). In this

phase women were so curious that they imitated the masculine mode of writing because it was their first attempt and they had tried to perform through feminine concerns. The second, the feminist phase, lasted until 1920s. It was a challenging period for women who were required to protect against male cruelty. The third phase begins from 1920s. In this period, the idea of female writing and female experience of self-discovery developed, female writers showed more consciousness towards their own sex.

During the eighties, a major text on feminism *The Mad Woman on the Attic* (1979) by Gilbert and Gubar appeared. The book concentrates on the figure of suppressed female. This is taken as a kind of realization of female identity placing woman's experience at the centre of attention. Gilbert and Gubar locate the female territory in the larger context.

In the nineteenth century, education brought awareness among woman. As a result, more and more able woman came to the forefront. They were conscious over their right. They argued against patriarchy, and their demands were increasingly translated in to mainstream political action, inspiring movements for educational, legal and political reform. They did not only focus for general principle to women which focused upon moral principle to woman but also focused on sex difference.

Nineteenth century female writers and intellectuals were in many ways more radical. They articulated their desire to be separate from society and identified distinct group. They formed a class having distinct interest and opposed to those of men. Most of the women were conscious towards their life, liberty and started to question over the then society and challenged to reform it. Particularly in Europe women questioned on the marginal value of familial structure because in England a women on a marriage surrendered all independent legal rights, including protection from an abusive

husband, the right to keep her own property earning and they reached into the conclusion that the social structure which had been made by male ideology was totally wrong. Mary Wollstonecraft, argued the responsible motherhood could be an important source of citizenship. She further claimed that motherhood, calls not only the negative virtues but also belong to apathetic classes, such as patience, endurance, and self-sacrifice. (vol. 1-22). Some modern feminist argued that such a view is inevitable outcome to liberal premises, which involve an uncritical adoption of male values and devaluation of traditional female activity.

Nevertheless, in the 19th century women become more conscious over their position and their role in the society. Not only the female writers but also the feminist have raised their voice over the status of women in contemporary society. John Stuart Mill, Henric Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw among others raised the voice infavour of female and tried to uplift the position of women in the society. They tried to give voice who had remained voiceless. Stuart Mill claimed that his philosophical reading had always convinced him of the need to give equal rights to the women. It showed that male were not also against the independent of women they questioned the whole social structure. In 19th century women's role was *naturally* and *essentially* domestic and family-centered while man's role was in the public world of work and politics. This view is summed up in the often-quoted line from Tennyson's *The Princes*:

Man for the field and women for the hearth;

Man for the sword and for the needle she;

Man with the head- and woman with the heart;

Man to command and woman to obey;

All else confusion. (164)

Nevertheless, slowly and gradually woman became conscious and independent.

Education increasingly gave women the skills and confidence with which to demand and campaign for these rights.

Henrik Ibsen, gave the voice of women especially in the 19th century. Ibsen suggested women to know their natural rights of equality and liberty. In most of his drama he presents rebellious women character, who raise voice against the then 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 women characters like Nora, Hedda and Ellida are capable to secure their life in their own choice.

Henrik Ibsen and his works

This research is the comparative study of *A Doll's House* and *The Lady from the Sea* by Henrik Johan Ibsen. Ibsen was born on 20 March 1828 and died on 23 May 1906. He was a Norwegian dramatist, who became the most influential modern dramatist in the nineteenth century. He devoted his life and energies to the art of drama and the theatre. He gave a lot of contribution to the European drama. He became source of inspiration for the artistic quality in the dramatic field, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Most of his works concerned with social and national problem of contemporary time. He tries to give vivid picture of his country. He presents the subjects dramatically and naturalistically which became the matter of significance during his life time.

Ibsen's deep concern towards the women offended the conservatives of contemporary late 19th century European society, however, it was the most daring 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. In this regard, Margaret Drabble writes “that his plays are concerned largely with social and political themes but last six plays[...] are more deeply concerned with the forces of the unconscious and were greatly admired by friend”(490). Each of Ibsen's play focuses on personal awakening and inner transformation through confrontations with family guilt social hypocrisy, venereal disease conventional sexual morality and the materialistic bourgeois ethnics.

His early period was characterized by an extensive use of symbolism, myth, religious concern in the plays that are intended to be read rather than performed. His early plays were famous for realistic depiction of contemporary life, deep psychological portrait of his characters and their interaction, penetrating dialogue, and religious thought. However, the discussion of Ibsen's plays have centered "on a few issues like realism and naturalism and women's emancipation, a sweeping generalization that has put several other aspects themes and dimensions of exceptional playwrights under shadow" (Subedi et al forward).

Ibsen challenged contemporary social structure. His plays mainly attacked the nineteenth century European middle class belief, values, norms and morality that was for protective husband, submissive and obedient wife. Ibsen brought the border line or marginal issues into the centre. The research study examines the oppression of women. Abhi Subedi, on Ibsen's use of image and style remarks, “he was not an experimentalist and avant-gardist; he was an innovator, a rebel, a reformist and a humanist” (5). Actually, Ibsen was an innovator and reformist as claimed by Abhi subedi. The quality of his dialogue and his discarding of traditional theatrical effects, demanded and achieved a new style of performance.

Regarding Ibsen's contributions to the theater, number of critics argue was three fold, and in each respect the drama owes more to him than to any other dramatist often Shakespeare. Firstly, he broke down the social barriers. He was the first man to show that high tragedy could be written about ordinary people and Ordinary prose and its importance can hardly be exaggerated. Before Ibsen, tragedy had concerned itself with kings, queens, princes and princesses. He was of course not the first dramatist to attempt this, but he was the first to write a tragedy about ordinary people with a tremendous success.

Ibsen's voice is realist as well as naturalist at the same time he focused on the depiction of objective reality of the contemporary time (Ibsen's time) that cut across geo-cultural boundaries of the worldliness works illustrated the exploration of human condition, the social problem and the problem of individual struggling against the demand of society. His writing mainly focuses on repression, depression, obsession, mental torture, patriarchal domination and exploration upon those women struggling and seeking for their right and freedom. Nevertheless Ibsen's plays often deal with the issues of financial deficiently as well as mental, moral inflects steaming from dark, private secrets hidden from his society.

Ibsen gave new voice and new concept almost all of the people especially who have long been ignored, marginalized, subordinated and dominated in the patriarchal society. He was indeed the first major dramatist who wrote about the tragicomedy sensibilities of ordinary people in prose which was otherwise neglected and ignored. Most of his plays attacked on the Victorian codes, norms, values and belief. Regarding with this context Michel Joy, the director of Yatrik defines Ibsen as,

One of the greatest dramatist, after Shakespeare who initiated into the complexities of the modern world," because through his wide-ranging

choice of themes and various shades of contemporary life [...] we learnt to look at the contemporary society, per-occupied with problem of personal and social reality. Yes, he is relevant to society of his own time. (179)

Many women critics and women writers have argued that Ibsen tried to uplift the position of women and highlighted the position of women in the late 19th patriarchal society. Right from the earliest time to the present, women have been struggling to assert a respectable place for themselves. It is often said that a large number of women all over the world are undergoing some deplorable situation though degree of their suppression varies from place to place and time. The concept of individualism was buried in the Victorian ideal of economics. As Hummer stated Victoria society lived through “class dichotomy between ideology and practice”(121). After the hundred of years since the French revolution, economic power had replaced the quest for individual liberty and married women had least amount of economic power. Women character like Nora subjects her marriage, and rejects bourgeois middle class values. She challenges the sustaining elements. In the society, that dethrones the bourgeois family as the cultural intuition. Ibsen probes into their inner recesses on his female characters in order to figure out the intensity of male domination. In this context Astraid Sather States that "Ibsen's attention to female psychology as well as to women social situations has assured him [...] a position in feminist cannon" (30). What fascinated him more than glittering surface of society is the inner dynamics of his characters lives and motives.

Ibsen's plays *A Doll's House* and *The Lady From the Sea* explore the condition of women, who have been suppressed, oppressed, alienated and dominated by patriarchal society. They have been treated as the commodity of patriarchal society

and their identity is no where whether they are wife or daughter or mother rather, and their identity is personified by male ideologies which they have given different object. Both protagonist Nora and Ellida are married and their marriage later became the means of victimization.

Helmer in *A Doll's House* regards Nora as his playmate. He wants to confine her with narrow word. She seems to be busy playing with her children and dancing to please Helmer. As a consequence of her discovery of Helmer's true character' Nora decides to leave him. This act of leaving Helmer shocks him as well as his society because Nora is crossing the limit of the society.

Similarly in *The Lady From The Sea*, the protagonist Ellida seems to be more bold, courageous who discards, challenge the structure of the family but she is ready to follow the patriarchal norms and succumb herself to the domination, women and tolerance. She becomes submissive, mute, docile, possessive. However, she gives importance to the familial values both marriage and divorce. She rather focuses on the autonomous independence of herself in order to challenge the patriarchal norms and values. This play had been written in the earlier phase of feminine transitory where women were trying to be conscious over their rights and freedom. It was due to the transition period, Ibsen created such type of revolutionary character like Ellida who fought for the status-quo of the patriarchal of the 19th century values and norms. Even if she had tried to overthrow the bourgeoisies middle class, she accepted the role of mother and wife in the condition that when she is independent and totally free mentally as well as physically. She came to realize that there is no meaning of individual in the absence of familial structure of on society.

In patriarchal social structure, women are treated as their commodity object or play thing. A male plays with the commodity whenever he has interest in it, when his

intersect on her is over, her need is also over. In *A Doll's House*, Nora has been given the same position. It means she is the commodity of Helmer's home. In his home, she is a doll where he can play according to his wish, he gives different names to her such as "my bird" skylark, little squirrel spindrift. No doubt Helmer loves her but his love manifested oppressive mentality. In other words, he is exploiting her through love. For Helmer there is no difference between doll and his wife, both of them are lovely things but they should respect for their wife or women. A doll is something which needs protection, care, but Torvald does not realize this fact and for him both wife and doll are equal. Therefore, he was exploiting her through love.

George Bernard Shaw considers the feminist issue are the heart of *A Doll's House*. He pays close attention on Nora's character development. Regarding Nora's character he says;

Then he sees their whole family life has been fiction their home a male Doll's house they have been playing at ideal husband and father, wife and mother. So she leaves him then and there and goes out in to the real world to find out in reality for herself, and to gain some position no fundamentally false refusing to see her children again until she is fit to be in charge (the quintessence 66).

George Bernard Shaw points out Nora's character development. She realizes that her life with him has been playing there ideal roles. When she discovers the bitter fact about Helmer's character then she immediately decides to leave him, his home, and her children. She does this to get her position in Society and to get first hand experience about the real world.

Ibsen generally condemns the dead hand of conventions, which under guise of duty or loyalty on moral obligation stunts the personality inhabits a natural

development in the individual and shuts him organization her off from genuine living.

James Walter Mc Falrane states that the established institutions like home and marriage are the sole causes of women's suppression. He says;

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

Ibsen deals with the problem of individuals in relation to his social environment and shows his characters wrestling hard against the conventions of an up healing society that hindered the growth and expression of their personality. Ibsen sympathies towards the women and make them courage to raise voices against the social order. He argues that the whole social structure becomes the barrier in the development of the individual carrier. Ibsen dramatized conflict between man and society and projected how the ruthless laws and tradition of a society determined human destiny and led to trainmaster and suffering. His main focus is over the individuals struggle against the conservatism of society.

Ibsen's characters are not only passive creatures of their society, but they are also self-seeking active participates of it. His characters are universal in nature representing the issue of their autonomous existence as well as independence.

Regarding the context of *A Doll's House* the major protagonist Nora is struggling against patriarchy, which is much more misled toward then those of Rebeeca and Ellida. Nora is more obviously restricted and constrained. In a sense, *A Doll's House* is about consciousness-raising. Nora is as much misled and misguided as she is dominated; her lack of awareness and insight into what is happening around her

contributes greatly to her situations, she has been restrained by her Doll's House like existence and by a husband who wants her to be nothing then amusing and entertaining. Likewise, her ideal with Helmer, which has informed her to adjust life, is suddenly shattered, she immediately questions all that she has experienced up to this point. The sound of the door closing behind her at the end of the play resonates with her realization that she has grossly misapprehended her prior existence. Consequently, Nora is able to mark out on as oppressive life, although what will become of her remains unclear.

The Lady from the Sea has been derived from a lot of reviews since it was published in 1888. Most of the critics argue that, *The Lady from the Sea* deals with the theme of liberation as emancipation from domination, and other social barriers boundaries which has been created by the patriarchal norms, and values which is created over women regarding the issue for their duties and responsibility which they have to pay for it. Regarding the context of the *Lady from the Sea*, James Height says, "there is nonetheless no question that the specifying of middle-class Norwegian domestic life in the 1880s is one of the dominant element in the play" and that "it can and probably should be related to that period is feminist movements, called the women question in Norway" (122).

Analyzing the difficulties experienced by the protagonist Ellida, Lorraine Markotic writes.

Ellida [...] is not dominated in any obvious way, her circumstances are not manifestly oppressive. Her husband, Wangle, is not tyrant. He is not even Helmer or a Rosmer and actually seems genuinely concerned about her. All the same, Ellida feels unhappy and she longs for something else, something different another life. And the elusiveness

of her dissatisfaction seems to be a constrictive aspect of her
discontent. (432)

Ellida's obsessions towards the sea are not neurosis but her inner desire for freedom and emancipation. In this regard, Eva Leo Gallienne in her introduction to six plays by Henrik Ibsen talks about Ibsen's interest in female identity and emancipation:

The women of sages with her wild deep nature had always held a great satisfaction for him; and something of their sharply individual, fearless spirit, warm and strong at the same time undoubtedly crept in to many of the women in Ibsen's plays; they are combination of Ice and flame. (XIV)

Ellida has kept something secret from her husband Dr. Wangel. Once she tried to share the secret but her husband did not care about it. The secret grows inside her, takes an enormous and destructive form and because one of the root causes of her obsession spoiling her familiar relations. In this connection, Sir Edmund Gorse shares similar ideas while analyzing similarities and differences of the play *The Lady from the Sea*.

Ellida's case is psychological too as Frank N. Magil comments: "*The Lady from the Sea* (is) the first of psychological drama written by Ibsen, who had formally devoted himself almost entirely to social criticism, here a class, for they are strongly and finally drawn in their own right" (536). He further says that these are two subplots, another departure from the great dramatist is usual style (545).

As Nora is disillusioned with her marriage and family life, she knows exactly what she has to do. She expresses her determination in her manner. Nora claims that she has "never felt more clear-headed and sure in my life (1326). After separation, they got a new and true life. This is her miracle, yet she knows this is only way to be

reunited. Finally, she learns her house so that she could see the world on her own act of leaving, home tells us more than she tells us through words. All these expressions and actions make it clear that Nora subaltern women, has managed to express herself. But in Ellida's case is different because Nora has been victim of patriarchal, or husband but child tries to face the problem which she has to face in such a problematic situations. So, she is strong and persistent enough to compel her husband to let her freedom. She pursues that she has not been able to live as a responsible human being until she gets freedom. Ellida deceives both herself and her husband while cherishing her irresistible fascination to sea and Stranger. Sea stands for her longing for freedom.

The Lady from The Sea through a symbolic play describes another females demand i.e. freedom of choice. Ellida obliged to stay with Wangle because she is his wife. The attraction freely for sea urges her to leave her husband when the stranger comes a seaman whom she had loved as young girl. No argument can dissuade her, no prudence's can keep her there. All of a sudden, Wangle lets her free totally free. He loves her so much that he finds generosity of placing her happiness above his own .

Society is an institution that determines behaviour and attitude of people living there. In *A Doll's House* Nora is depicted as a product of society which is guided by male principles speaks in favour of male member of society Oscar G. Brouckes Sees defect in the society which shapes mentality of people. As he states "Torvald is a product of a society, which values respectability and position more than it does a wife's love" (63). Patriarchal society has the preconception that women can do no good thing. Because of the wrong concept regarding women, most male partners and their wives a monster who destroy their reputation in society

T.R Henn regards that each and every event in *A Doll's House* has emerged because of the circumstances which force Nora to leave her children and husband's house as Henn states:

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

However, *A Doll's House* is said to be a problem play. A problem play is how should Nora's act? What would happens if every mother, wife, sister and other women leave home forever in the name of education? Is she responsible only towards herself or towards her family too? What is the mistake of those newly born children? They don't know oppression or revolution. No doubt she should get individual identity. Is it the solution to the problem? Nora and Torvald were living not in a man's house but in a doll's house. Ibsen does not have clear answer about what women should do.

Ibsen asserted all his plays were first and foremost about individuals and human relationship. There is no doubt that these plays deal with problems which the people generally discuss. People come out of the theatre after witnessing a performance of a play by Ibsen, with their minds occupied with serious issues. The issues which stand forth in these plays (*A Doll's House and the Lady from the Sea*) are: Do they mean justify the end in politics? Does a woman have the right to leave her husband and children? Can incest, under certain circumstances, be justified? In

other words, Ibsen in these plays appears as a dramatist of ideas. People had never before come out of the theatre with such big question-works in their minds.

His dramas *A Doll's House* and *A Lady from The Sea* are about the way women are presented in the real world, that is why they have been able to speak and they have been able to heard. Women like Nora and Ellida 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 the female and challenge it, but they are never afraid of the result which they have chosen. They challenge the patriarchal contemporary Victorian society where women have to be oppressive, suppressive alienated by the patriarchal society and their position was docile, demure, meek, and marginalized. Ultimately, they challenge the position, which is given by male ideology and having confidence that they themselves are capable of securing their life as Nora did in the play. Women like Ellida who obsesses towards freedom because she has been victimized by the male like Dr. Wangle and Stranger, later she declares herself that she has right to choose how to live her life. She can no longer bear the burden of male ideology. Her obsession towards sea indicates the obsession towards freedom.

Ibsen's women characters try to revolt against the suppression, oppression, exploitation, domination status-quo, the standardization of norms and values, rules and regulation which have been practiced by middle class bourgeois like Torvald, Dr. Wangel, Neil Krogasted. However, women in bourgeoisie society ready to face the challenge which have chosen by themselves rather they refused to surrender with the traditional roles which have given by the patriarchal ideology. In patriarchal society the law has been made by male ideology for the female, they are given different objective name which is matched according to their desire they call their wife as a

darling when the situation is in favor of them, but at the same time darling become demon when the situation doesn't match for them. So Ibsen goes against the traditional belief norms, values and concept that women are capable of facing new problem, of their own choice. They challenge patriarchal society. They reformed their own path in order do it where they would not feel any support of male ideology though it has been said that women can't shape their life themselves, they should be suppressed, oppressed, treat them as a passive and object without any human sentiments. They refuse to confine themselves as a traditional women insignificant victim or passive object for others use and pleasure.

So, both of the protagonists of the play Ellida and Nora long for their autonomous existence for their own identity. They are fighting to prove that women are also capable of making their own position in the society. They challenge the patriarchal ideology that women are to be demure, docile, meek and coward, rather they have decided that they are ready to face the challenge which they have chosen.

II. Theoretical Concepts (Feminism)

The term "feminism", develops from the early period of nineteenth century. Feminism as a literary discourse develops after 1960s. In its broadest concept, feminism continues to be closely interrelated with the movement by political feminism for social, economic, and cultural freedom. Generally, it advocates women's right based on belief in the equality of the sexes politically and biologically or from a women centered point of view and it refuses to accept the cult of masculine chauvanism and superiority that reduces women to sex object, as second sex, submissive to the other. It seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression inequalities and injustices of women that suffer because of their sex, and defends equal rights for women in a political, economic, social, psychological, personal and aesthetic sense.

The growing feminist movement sought to change society, prevailing stereotypes of women as relatively weak, passive docile and dependent individuals who are less rational and emotional than men. Feminist are those who want to achieve greater freedom for women to work, to broaden both women's self-awareness and their opportunities to the point of equality with men. They want equal opportunities, equality right of freedom, in the society with males. They argue that they can do better if they have given more chances with men to decide their own careers and life partners. Feminist themselves, however, believed that there is biologically difference between male and female. Women's is social construct, not real one. Despite some biological difference women can do better in the society. Feminist generally concerned with marginalities of all women or their being related to secondary position in the society as well as in other disciplines here of social life. They believe that sex is determined biologically, but gender is determined psychologically concept which

refers to culturally acquired sexual identity. But they reject the wrong belief of cultural ignorance on women. As Stevi Jackson claims " Masculinity" and femininity are defined not by biology but by social, cultural and psychological attributes which are acquired through becoming a man or a women in particular society at a particular time" (133).

Feminism came in to practice to attack against female marginalization in all social forms of knowledge and practice. This happens because our society, civilization and practices all are pervasively patriarchal, that is male centered, which is controlled, organized and conducted, in such as normal subordinates that it women to men in all cultural domains, such as: familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic as well. By this cultural process the masculine in our culture has come to be widely defined as active dominating, adventurous rational, creative, the feminine by systematic opposition to such traits has come to be identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional and conventional. Men are always overpowered with the sense of " I am man, she is women, I am strong, she is weak, I am tough, she is tender. I am self-sufficient, she is needful" (Ruth 54).

The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology, defines Feminism as a "doctrine suggesting that women are systematically disadvantaged in modern society and advocating equal opportunities for men and women" (132). Feminism has been defined not simply as a particular frame work, set of ideas, a form of social analysis or a critical questioning around the issues on women and power but also as representing specifies way of experience. Andrine Rich defines feminism as "the place where in the most natural organic way subjectiving and polities have to come together" (315). Feminism is a political movement or political theory and practice to break the social bondage of patriarchy. Focusing on this aspect, Troil Mio, a feminist, states "The

word feminist or feminism are political levels indicating support for the aims of the new women's movements" (135). She further says, "At the same time she makes clear what feminist criticism is saying. Feminist criticism then is a specific kind of political discourse, critical and theoretical practice. Committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature" (204).

These show feminist criticism concerns gender differences. Its development as theory and its application are useful to learn social, institutional and personal power relations between the sexes. In this regard, Elaine Showalter focuses not only on the recognition of women's writing but also on rethinking the concept of literary study, she says, "Feminist criticism has demanded not just the recognition of women's writing but a radical rethinking of the concept of literary . . . feminist criticism is international in its resources, and feminist critics criss-cross national boundaries" (181).

Feminism literally means humanism, a massive complaint against patriarchy. Feminists today have finally recognized that the world they have described is not the whole world because its control concern is social distraction between men and women. So, it is commitment to eradicate the ideology of domination and discrimination.

Feminists believe that the entire spectrum is dominated by patriarchal values. Patriarchy is a society in which formal power over public decision and policy making is held by men. Feminists use the term patriarchy (rule of father) to describe the causes of women's oppression. Raman Selden States. "Patriarchy subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male" (137). Patriarchy has determined a very large part the nature and quality of our society: its value and priorities, the place and image of women within it, and the relation between sexes—

patriarchy, historically exists and sustain itself in the form of male domination through female subordination by means of ideological practice patriarchy fosters gender-based inequalities that decides male superior and women as inferior, man as powerful and female as powerless. In male made culture, women have to survive in formulated expression and discrimination on the basis of sex, race, age, religion, etc.

In patriarchy, women are projected as the 'other' subordinate being. Men perceive themselves as self and women as other. Men assume that they (male) are the defining and dominating 'subject' who represent humanity in general. This othering according to Beauvoir mystifies women's qualities and pushes her in to isolation. The categories with which men think of the world are established from their point of view as absolute. In her, celebrated book Beauvoir the *Second Sex* Beauvoir states. Thus, humanity is male and man defines woman not as herself but as relative to him, she is not regarded as an autonomous being, (XVIII). Man defines woman as relative being. They treat women like their 'object' or property. It is taken for granted everywhere that women as men can have no right and privilege.

In patriarchal society, women are imaginative that they are sublime, perfect beautiful. She is awful, stupid and contemptible behavior discloses the ambivalence of man's nature towards woman as he calls woman a muse or goddesses on the one hand while he associates her with demon, death, cruel step mother or the other. Woman is the mother of God as well as Traitor of the garden. As Shelia Ruth Claims "This bifurcation of images is called the Mary/Eve dichotomy women is represented as being at once a manifestation to the divine and an incarnation of evil" (87). She is the tender young creature man marries and protects as well as the treacherous, manipulative sneak who tricked him in to a union he never sought, explicitly or implicitly. Women are represented as having that nature, of being all that is desirable

fascinating and wonderful, yet extremely destructive and dangerous. Actually, in patriarchy, images of women, like other conceptualizations, have been male created. The stereotypes of women, contradictory and conflicting, are male projections and such as they must be understood as outward expression of male attitudes. This dichotomy in the representation of women, therefore, it is a strong indication of extreme ambivalence on the part of kinsmen were regarded inferior from the beginning of the civilization, it was because male tried to be superior then the female. Male wanted to take women as their own commodity and they thought they can control over them in an every aspect of their life.

However, situation did not remain same, women have become conscious of their secondary situation and began to question over it. They started to fight against patriarchy and tried to establish their own position in their own way. In early 19th century, England, wives were taken as slave, and were said by their male counterparts. Women were taken as weaker sex to the superior physicals and economic power of free and independent males. But women were paid less attention than male, and they were not allowed to study as go to school as the male. They were restricted by getting systematic training. So Mary Wollstoncraft first raised the voice in support of the education and emancipation of women. She was the first feminist theorist and with her publication of *A Vindication of Right of Women's* feminism gained momentum. The lack of sufficient training and proper guidance were felt to be one of the major disabilities in women's struggle for independence. Industrial revolution brought radical change in the life of the western society in the second half of the eighteenth century. The increasing development of industries resulted in the decline of domestic industries which had an impact in the income generation of women. They were given poor education. At the same time, middle class women

raised their voice for equal opportunities and higher education. So the several acts were praised for the benefit of women and children.

In the nineteenth century, education brought awareness among women, then they began to ask question over the whole political economical socio-psychological structure of society. They claimed to get political freedom the right to work as well as the right to get equality and freedom. Women now acquired a sense of sin a hearing the injustices of men. And there emerged number of writers such as John Austin, George Eliot and Bronte sisters they were supposed to be the pioneers of their time. However, they contributed a lot to the protest against the condition and status of women in society.

In 1833, Oberlin college was established first far co-education ,where female were given educations to make good wife. Francis Wright, who is one of the first women orators, raised her voice for the better education to be offered to women.

Most of the feminist critics have raised a strong voice for women's emancipation and form the biased attitude on women since long time. Mary Wollstonecraft in the eighteen century attempted to liberate women form male dominating motives hidden in the emphasis of feminine features like meekness, humility, docile, childness and demure. Wollstonecraft indicates the fault in the process of the socialization. She detests the then false system of education that inspired women to love at the expense of reason, and encouraged women to study medicine, business, and mathematics. Rosemarie Tong examines Wollstonecraft view about women's education and father, claims that they should "be provided with real education, one that sharpens and focuses her mind and gives her a chance to develop her mind and gives her national and moral capacities her full human potential" (15).

Similarly, Virginia Woolf advocates for the radical change in the conception of family and social life. She refuses the traditional views about women that they are submissive, and rather focuses for a separate space for women in literature and society. Woolf says;

Women are supposed to be very calm generally, but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and field for their effects as much as their brothers do, they suffer from the rigid a restraint for absolute stagnation [...] it is narrow minded in their more privileged fellow creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting as to cooking to playing on piano and embroidering boys. (B22)

From these lines. She tries to deal with the fact that women are closed with in domestic spheres, but just contrary to this men are free and public life is reserved for them.

Historical Background of Feminism

Gender issues have occupied a significant role in the recent critical discourse. All social, cultural, literary, economic, religions legal and many other aspects are dominated by male ideology. Cultures that developed carried out of the masculine ideology and continued to emphasizes male interest male ego and male objectives. Female had little space in social, cultural, and economic areas and had to remain dominated, invisible and ineffective acting merely as the play mate of the male. They were not given any attention towards their liberation.

In the past women were suppressed everywhere. They were shown inferior physically, biologically and psychologically too. Some of the critics, writers and philosophers like Aristotle, Plato, St Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Rosseau and

Freud have treated women as inferior, unfinished man and incomplete beings in their intellectual discourses. Aristotle thinks that slaves women should occupy a subordinate place in the society. For him, male by nature is superior and female is inferior. He regards women as passive and receptive culture by nature. He further says “we should regard the female as afflicted with a natural defectiveness” (qtd in Beauvoir XVIII). For him, the inferiority of women is innate. It can't be cured. St. Thomas Aquinas as believers of Aristotle, continued thinking about the women that they are inferior and "*unfinished man*" or imperfect man and incidental darling "XVIII". This statement shows that humanity is male and man defines women not as herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. It is said that man can think himself without women but women can't think of herself without man.

Regarding the contest of female subordination history Rosseau had added one block that "Girls should be early subjected to restraint" (qtd in Altekarak 332). This statement shows that he is not in favors of women's freedom. He further says that women should be educated to please the men. The main duty of women is to please the men and to serve the male. They should make please and pray to their male partners. Similarly Martin Luthers, the great Renaissance Reformist also has quite negative views regarding women. He says that women are stock of tricks form which they destroy men. He further says, " God made Adam master over all creatures , to rule over all living things , but when Eve persuaded him that he was lord even over God she spoiled everything--- with sticks and cunning women deceive men" (qtd in Ruth 158).

So, patriarchal society, form the primitive age, women were regarded as no-entity and their opinions and expressions, however important and rational, were

ignore indeed. They were rarely asked their opinion and their views concerning with their experiences. If women expressed their views on any social or other aspects, they were ridiculed or looked down with contempt by men and they were always considered different from men. So is the case in most societies because they are pitied by men who have always doubted women's intelligences and capability.

Similarly, Sigmund Freud, the father of psychologists has massively brought gender issues in his writing; he wanted to show the psychological treatments of women especially in 19th century. He talks about the formation of the unconscious of women. At the same time he found that there are fundamental difference between male and female and attributes egoist, ambitious dreams to men and erotic ambitious dreams to women. As he states "In young women the erotic wishes predominate almost exclusively for their ambition is a rule absorbed by erotic trends. In young men egoistic and ambitions wishes come to the face clearly enough alongside of erotic ones" (Adams 713). In this statement he presents women as libidinous creature.

Viewing the plight of women in society some male writers also had positive attitude towards women to some extent. They wrote for women emancipation and they thought that they are the part of nature. They felt as women writers feel about women's suffering and oppression on caused by men. But they were not real feminist because they did not love women's experience of evaluation, menstruation and child birth.

At the same time some efforts were made by some male writers, critics and philosophers in the past. They tried to uplift the women's position in the society. For Socrates and Plato, 'man' includes all human beings even women even foreigners, even perhaps, slaves. For Socrates in short, and underlying quality exists in the human species. He says that all men and women are equal at least until they prove themselves

to be otherwise. According to Socrates, "All men and women are equal there, and all are qualified in rule, because, their rule requires no special expertise" (qtd in Doren 47). This is splendid things for someone living in the fifth century B.C beliefs. Plato shares with Socrates and over viewing concern and fascination with politics and morality. He claims "women could govern just as effectively as men for the simple reason that the rules govern by virtue wisdom and their reason." (qtd in Gender 2) Women he asserts, have exactly the same powers of reasoning as men, if they get the same training and education.

Similarly, in eighteenth and nineteenth century, genuinely democratic men began to think over the matter objectively, Diderot among others, strove to show that women is, like man, a human being. Some others writers and critics like Samuel Richardson of eighteenth century, John Stuart says Henrik Ibsen of nineteenth century have spoken frankly about women. Similarly, we can find such type of attitude in Stuart Mill writing. His 1869 essay, the subjection of women drew tremendous attention in England and has immediately translated and distributed throughout Europe and United states. Mill's arguments are exactly what an incipient international women's movement needed. Likewise Henrik Ibsen is interested in women's emancipation from patriarchal ideology.

It is because of his interest a female issues, never has shown Nora, in *A Doll's House* as a transformed women from a subordinate one he sees there is wrong and defects or weakness in his time. It is because of male attitude towards women that they wanted to make their own possession. He states "a women can't be herself in the society of the present day". (The Bedford 635). As a social realist George Bernard Shaw, suggests women as antithesis of a true women. He argues "women have to repudiate duty altogether. In that, repudiation lies her freedom" (40).

By the time women become conscious of their own position in society and discrimination between men and women. Many feminists emerged who forced upon women's minds, their well-being nation emancipation. They emerged from different nation and focusing on various subject matter which were typically concerned on women sufficient and emancipation from patriarchy and how they become second in the society. Patriarchal society has indeed been well served by masculinity images, where all images of women have been male centered. Time and again we come across the ambivalence men feel towards women. For male women and sex are almost synonymous terms. If sex evokes mixed feelings of approach and avoidance most certainly it is likely that women the same feelings. Misogynist distrust of women is an integral part of masculism and patriarchy. It includes the belief that women are stupid, pretty, manipulative, dishonest, silly, irrational, incompetent, castrating, overemotional, over seeded and host of many other things. Such misbelieve can easily be seen in the views of Aristotle, St Aquinas, Freud and other philosophers. So, feminists view that such beliefs must be controlled, dominated subdued as well as abused.

In Patriarchy, women have been treated in general as a weak passive, creature and they have been forced to occupy secondary place in the world in relation to men, a position comparable in many aspects with that of social minorities in spite of the fact that women constitute numerically as least half of the human race. Further, this secondary standing is not impressed of necessity by natural feminine characteristics, rather by strong environmental famous of educational and social tradition under purposeful control of men. Infact women have failed to occupy places of dignity with free and independent existence to associate with men and a place to intellectual and professional equality. This condition has not only limited their achievement in many

fields but also given rise to pervasive social evils that have had a patriarchy vitiating effect on the sexual relation between men and women.

Feminism contains both narrow and broad aspects. It is narrow in the sense that it admits only those adherents and those sympathetic to the movement. It is broad in the sense that it proclaims a revaluation in all relations between the sexes. The aim was to end the notion that one's biological sex was superior or inferior to the other. Before the first quarter of the nineteenth century, women seemed to be merely asking for the right of the vote. Basically, though women's voice was closely attached to politics, it wanted the removal of social, political, cultural, economic and other discrimination based up on the sexes. And the vision of feminists encompassed economic, social rules and sexuality for emancipation from sexual stereotyping of any kind.

Presentation of Female Characters in Ibsen's Plays

Ibsen focuses on the autonomous identity of women. The young Irish writer James Joyce paid a tribute to Ibsen's supreme insight into the psychology and ways of thinking of modern women. He writes "Ibsen's knowledge of humanity's nowhere more obvious than his portrayal of women. He amazes one by his painful introspection. He seems to know them better than they know themselves" (qtd in Aarseth 13). This positive evaluation of Ibsen's character portrayal was shared by many critics and writers as well.

Ibsen tries to show the transitory period of women movement condition where the women did not like to remain under patriarchal ideology that they were docile, meek beautiful passive, oppressive (i.e.) rather they decided to be independent emancipation from the patriarchal society and tried to get freedom. They rejected the patriarchal values norms and tradition in society. However, they are related mostly to

social, political, economies, spiritual and cultural problems his characters are portrayed to achieve their aim in their life. They are ready to undergo serve their pain and suffering but they don't like to surrender before any forces that challenge their identity. His women characters like Nora and Ellida are universal characters; they are shown brave and strong and most important they are of to-day. That is why the effect of an Ibsen play is unfailing: Ibsen comes home to us his problems are real problems and are ours (qtd. in Aarseth 15).

In *A Doll's House* Nora's husband Torvald treats her as an adorable but scatter-brained child. At the very beginning of the play she has been represented as a traditionally ideal type of women who seems to be loving, beautiful caring and devoted wife. But at the end of the play, she leaves her husband who is unthoughtfulness, selfish, opportunistic fellow, and leaving all her children-slamming door behind of his house. She leaves the house because she wants to be herself and to give her true identify. In this context, MC Graw opines "she walks out [...] to seek a life in which her values and a human being can be realized" (393). However, Nora challenges the hypocritical society and its norms and values. She wants to assert her position as a human being not as a silent, passive, obedient, and docile creature for patriarchal use and pleasure. She is in search of meaning and position of women in human society being autonomous women.

Most of the critics believe that realization of the self as an individual personality is to be herself and to transcend the narrow demarcation of the independence on man, which contributes to the widespread development of new woman's personality. Consciousness on self produces the duty and responsibilities towards themselves, reminding who they are and what they are. The same awakeners of the self leads them to independence and freedom from the submissive mentality,

self confidence is a way to make a separate identity where they identify themselves different from others; they become strong enough in decide their behaviors and action. Accentuation of their individuality simultaneously knows the value of the individuality in feminine roles rooted in social psychological structure Elizabeth J. Pacter affirms that individuality has the sense of " the autonomy of the others as self-respecting individuals who are also capable of freely determining their own action and behaviors" (55). The individuality of the autonomous women is related with community, and emancipation form patriarchal ideology.

Nevertheless, contemporary audience fell strong dissatisfaction with the sudden unexpected decision of Nora contemporary audience was so much dissatisfied with the unexpected decision of Nora that she makes herself giving the play unhappy end that, as Prof. Subedi opines, "Ibsen had to put happy ending with Nora in the end going to the door of her children and cry bitterly" (4).The play extremely shocked the people all over the world presenting a housewife as a rebellious women who discards the mother- women role. Women in Ibsen's drama in different ways have an important message. In this regard, Beret Winkled says, "That must come, in a society which is based on female was values, acting according to natural forces and openly accepting aspects of natural life, including death and pain- that would be the wonderful" (58). Wicklurd further says, in *A Doll's House* Nora gives message to the world that we need, "cultural change on a much more profound level then equality for women in a political level" (54).

Ibsen presents a typical rebellious women character of women character in *A Doll's House* ,*The Lady From the Sea* and *Hedda Gabler*, where one can see the leading and firmly determined role of emerging autonomous women who are struggling to asserts their self reliance, self-decision and autonomous existence. Some

of his women characters are extra rebellious like Nora and Ellida. But Ellida the female protagonist in Ibsen's play *The Lady From The Sea*, is different from other character, she is rebellious and self destructive like Hedda. Ellida, though she is also a new type of women, thinks patriarchy was got evil but they can be and should be corrected living with in the same structure. However, she does not like to be an escapist and separatist form the male society she values familial structure but she is against patriarchal domination and exploitation up on women. Ellida's principle is that life has no meaning out of family and society. She also thinks solution of any problem can be achieved through compromise and mutual understanding. She is in favors of emancipation through compromise. Her compromise is not one sided, temporary and further encouraging the patriarchal domination but one firm step ahead to institutions through self- assertion and self-reliance she believes that true freedom and emancipation comes through compromise-mutual coexistence with the men in society. She does not direct the familial, value and social structure, rather she assures her audience that with in the society we can get our identity and can show our existence as independent woman.

III. Textual Analysis

A Doll's House is a feminist play. It advocates the right of women, and especially of wives in relation to their husbands. In another words *A Doll's House* is about female emancipation. It is a women's predicament that the play deals. It is the disillusionment of wife that is the subject of the play; it is the drastic step taken by a wife with which the play ends; it is the women in the play is the out maximum sympathy.

Nora, the main protagonist of the play, is the wife of Torvald Helmer. In the beginning of the play, she seems to be an obedient, meek and docile housewife. She respects her husband and tries to manage the household behavior; she has great affection towards her husband. She has been passing respectful life rather than to exist. Similarly, Torvald behaves her as his own property, he loves her and treating her aspect is only manifestation of his attitude of possessiveness. These position has been perfectly accepted by Nora. Later she finds herself that she is his own property, and possession. Thereafter, she tries to be independent, she is 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 her own mind, she wants to establish her own identity in order to do so she must educate herself. As for her duties to her husband and her children, there is another duty which is even more sacred and that is her duty to herself. she further says, "yes [...] but you were so very right. I am not up to the job. There is another job, I have to do first, I have to try to educate myself, you can't help me with that, I have go to do it alone, and that's why I'm leaving you now" (1510).

She is certainly a wife, a mother; but first and foremost. She is an "individual". She would no longer be content with that most people say or that what the books tell her. She wants to think things out for herself, and get things clear. Whenever Helmer talks about the 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 father's feeling on his death-bed, and that the laws allowed a woman to save the life of her husband who lay critically ill; consequently she had told that the law does not allow her to do things. She then tells him that she has ceased to love him because he is not the man she had thought to be. At the same time, she had believed that one day miracle would happen and he would prove that he too was capable of making a sacrifice for her; but she has found miracle did not happen. Nora therefore wants to have no further dealing with Helmer. She takes back her wedding and slamming the outer door behind her:

Nora, Listen, Torvald- I've heard that 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 , any more 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. (1441)

The question of women's right and feminist equality is an important aspect of understanding *A Doll House* social reform was closely linked to feminism. The most prominent socialist thinkers of the day, male female, saw that true sexual equality necessities fundamental changes in the structure of society.

The incriminating part of that transaction has Nora's act of forgery, which she had committing without realizing its implication Nora has all long been a living, devoted and self-sacrificing wife. At the same time she has all long been regarding her husband as devoted to her and as capable of making sacrifices for her. She now thinks that her husband would come forward and take up on himself the responsibility for the criminal act which she had unwittingly committed. She also thinks that her husband has moral courage to defy Krogstad and face the consequence of any action that Krogstad might choose to take against her and her husband at this time Nora is completely disillusioned. She had even thought of committing suicide in order to save husband from the disagree which he would have to fall in case Krogstad were to make a public disclosure to Nora's criminal act of forgery, when Nora finds that neither her husband loves her enough to make any sacrifice for her sake nor has the moral courage to defy Krogstad, her illusion shattered and her hopes are dashed to the ground. All the moral principles which her husband used to prefers have turned out to be shallow; and all the love which he used to show her has proved be unsatisfactory and incomplete. She discover herself that she has been treated as his doll-wife and she has been all these years as a doll's house.

No, only lighthearted, and you've always been so kind to me. But our home's 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 you played with me, just as they thought it fun when I played with them. (1493)

Now she wakes up to the fact that she is an individual in her own right, and not a puppet. She had discovered her own identity. She finds that she has mind of her own and that her mind can develop still further 'during' the action of the play this women

has ground in mental and moral structure. She decides to give up her husband and home in order to find out her first hand experience what is right and what is wrong. Helmer tries his utmost to dissavade her from learning, and he suggests all sorts of comprises also.

When Mrs. Linde comes to see Nora. The letter gets an opportunity to speak about her act of self-sacrifice and about her self-denial. She tells Mrs. Linde that she is both proud of, and happy at, what she had done in order to save her husband's life. But at the same time her feeling of pride and joy receive a severe blow soon afterwards when Krogstad comes and give her threat Helmer's criticism of Krogstad soon afterwards arouses a sense of guilt in her, and she begins to feel miserable. She finds herself has given her threat to expose her long kept secret and especially her children and poisoning her home by her very presence. "Well [...] it should not have done you any good anyway if you stood in front of me with a fistful of bliss, you still could not buy you signature back" (1010).

Although Helmer is really fond of Nora, he treats her merely as his pet and his possession. She does not have any individuality or any responsibility of her own in his eyes. He regards himself as the master in the house and as the man who has to lay down the rules. He expects his wife to confirm to the rules which he lays down and to have courage enough to take up on himself the responsibility for everything and he says also in many words that if Nora were threatened by some terrible danger he would risk his own life to save her but as soon as his assertions are put to the test, he fails miserably. Not only does he fail as a husband who had been claiming to be his wife's protector and lover, but he fails also to uphold the moral values of which he had been boasting so much. When he goes through Krogstad's letter revealing Nora's long-kept secret all his love for her collapses because his own reputation is now in danger, so

that this love for Nora is pushed in to the background. Nora had thought that he would take all blame for her guilty deed up on his own shoulders, but her expectations, he begins to scold her sternly.

Nora's decision at the end is psychologically quite convincing and dramatically quite credible. There is no inconsistency in the portrayal of Nora. A correct reading of her character would make her decision appear to be inevitable. There are some persons who are by nature self-assertive, defiant and rebellious such persons never hesitate to rebel against injustices. They try to keep their rebellious nature in check as long as they can because they don't want any unpleasantness. Nora belongs to the category of these persons. She was never a complete nonentity. The very fact that she has borrowed the money without telling her husband about it shows her initiative and her capacity to be independent action. Even her paying regular monthly installment without the knowledge of her husband for so many years show that the woman has an inner strength. Of course, she is by no means a woman of steel; she is not an iron lady. That is the why, Mrs. Krogstad threatens her, and that is the reason why Helmer's adverse comments on Krogstad's act of forgery demoralize her. She revolts against the man who had been always hero in the eyes. "No, [...], that is exactly if you don't understand me. And I've never understood you either —until tonight. No, don't interrupt, you can just listen to what I say. We've closing out accounts, Torvald" (1485). Nora thinks she should be free from the male dominated family and male ideology. So, she decides to give up every thing to seek her identity in the male dominated society.

Time and again she is haunted by the sense of forgery especially the role of Krogstad who threatens her that one day her forgery would open if she does not care about his condition Nora had been guilty of an act of forgery. But she had forged a

signature with the best motives and she had forged it without realizing that she was committed an act of forgery, with the intention to make money and knowing fully well and doing. But Krogstad reveals every thing dropping a letter in the box. Thus, Krogstad is responsible to make her rebellious, if he had not told the forgery, she could not have been so rebellious as what she seemed to be.

Nora is a new emerging woman who struggle for a long time to release her self form the traditional husband Torvold Helmer who used to make her without respecting her own identity. Similarly, she rejects the threatening of Krogstad that he would reveal all her secret, rather she decides to be independent, self to know the self. She challenges all the patriarchal norms, values, tradition that women should be obedient, towards male and have courage that she would face the problem which has chosen.

She is not absolutely docile. She does not hesitate to express her own point of view. At a crucial moment, when Helmer comes out with his real reason for dismissing Kragastad. She tells Helmer that he is petty minded. In the course of her conversation with all others—with Mrs. Linde, with Krogstad, and with Doctor Rank— she makes her presence felt by all of them and by us only.

Nora is rebellious character who goes against all patriarchal rules and regulation and longs for freedom or to be autonomous. She declares that she is more belong to Helmer's family household activities. She rejects all the objectives given by Torvald Helmer or patriarchy. She is seeking emancipation from Healmer. She can't bear the position which is given by society as a mother and good wife. "I am [...] sure I'll think of you after, and about the children and the house here. She is different form other general women as she is disillusioned with the vicious circle created by patriarchal society"(1498). Simultaneously she is aware of the fact that how women are

deprived of freedom in patriarchal society. She longs for freedom, her individual identity and decides to establish her own position in the society showing that women are equally capable to exist themselves and they can create their autonomous identity.

Mrs. Linde presence in the play plays an important role in the play. She is useful as a kind of contrast to the characters of Nora. At the outset she is somewhat immature and girlish in her behaviour and in living in a world of illusion. Mrs. Linde has already passed through the vicissitudes of life and has attained maturity. Furthermore, while Nora is walking out of her husband's home to face an uncertain future, Mrs. Linde is going to marry Krogstad in order to settle down to a life of security.

Mrs. Linde does not suggest Mrs. Helmer to go against the standard of patriarchal norms and values, but Nora refuses to do so, whereupon Mrs. Linde says that one day she will reveal and Mr. Helmer will learn the fact from Krogstad's letters. Thus, Mrs. Linde advocates openness and truthfulness as against Nora's secrecy which involves deceit. Mrs. Linde wants that Nora and Helmer should face the facts so that they may come to some sort of understanding even though in the event, no understanding is reached. Mrs. Linde thus represents as a high moral principle by supporting the claims of truth as against falsehood.

The Lady From the Sea generally deals with the position of women in the contemporary life 19th century Norwegian society, where women had to be victims of patriarchal society. Women have been victims of gender discrimination of patriarchy and male ideology which ultimately cause them to suffer from repression, suppression, and mental torture. Ellida is the main protagonist of the drama, has been struggling for asserting complete freedom and rights for her meaningful life in the male dominated society.

The main protagonist of the drama is, Ellida Wangle, the second wife of Dr. Wangel devoted towards him, but at the same time she wants to live her respectful life, she seems to be self— seeking women and she tries establish her position independently in the society that she is capable of giving her own autonomous identity in the society. we can say that in the beginning of this drama, there is no real affection between Ellida and her two step daughters for she thinks self precedes the social relation. She is more concerned about herself, rather than to her husband's home and find it is very difficult to manage everything in the new environment. To express her dissatisfaction and longing for freedom Ellida uses symbols and image, she asks Ballasted on artist, to paint picture of a dying mermaid. Here Ballasted in describing the picture to Lyngstrand who is interested to know more about "She is strayed in form the open sea, and now she can't find her way back. And the water's brackish, [...], so here she lies— dying. It was the lady of the house here who gave me the idea of painting of the sort [...] I shall entitle it *The Mermaid's Death*" (236). The painting is the symbol of Ellida her self , which represents her rebellion against stifling mileau of Dr. Wangle's home and her growing urge for freedom and conducive atmosphere to enjoy it, and to give her own existence in the family.

Ellida becomes sense less, rootless in her new home. Dr. Wangle brings her to his home by the open sea but he does not make her a part of his world of his home Psychologically she is frustrated, she ponders her marriage with Dr. Wangel and comes to the conclusion that it can't be called true marriage. She moreover thinks that it is like buying and selling the objects because she can't express her will to husband she says " the truth [...], is that you come out three and –and bought me" (304). Ellida takes marriage as an important bond between two individuals to give continuity of

human existence in the world but she wants freedom and she requests her husband to let her free to choice and to select the proper partner of her life.

Ellida becomes senseless because she is haunted by the love vow which she had promised years ago with stranger. She is mad psychologically, but her husband can't make cure though he is a medical doctor. Ellida longs to be free, ultimately she discloses her enforced love vow to stranger: "He took a key-chain out of his pocket, and he pulled form his finger a ring he always wore, then form me he took a little ring that I had, and he slipped the two rings on the key-chain. Then he says the same time that we must be married to the sea [...]" (269). However, she comes to her senses immediately and she writes a letter to cancel betrothal. Stranger writes a letter to her that he will come to back to take her away. The selfish stranger does not think about other response he tries to dominate her and take her as a mysterious, docile, meek, passive, devoted and submissive creatures, just and object of marriage.

Ellida is frightened due to the Lyngstrand's story about the same stranger, so she is curious to know about his model of group, Lyngstrand tells her about it:

(T) here'll be one other" figure- more of a shape, [...] it's her husband she's been unfaithful to him while he was away and now he's been drowned at sea [...] well, now comes the extraordinarily part. It seems, she is claming but she's mine and she always will be and she shall come with me, even if I have to come like a drowned man form the depths of the sea to fetch her. (254)

It seems that stranger takes Ellida as an object that can be bought abandoned for some time and claimed it again according to his wish. Hearing such type of behaviour Ellida becomes terrified and frustrating.

Psychologically, Ellida becomes nervous because there is frequent encounter between stranger and Ellida. There is long bargaining treated as an object and possession. Both, her husband and lover are claiming her for each of the. Possession. However, stranger to leave the garden promiscuity to come to the next night to take Ellida. After his departure from garden, she repeats the stranger's tempting phrase " of her own free will" and gains power from it. At the same time she arises question about her autonomous identity and complete freedom with in itself she engages herself persuade husband to release her from the marriage now. As a result Dr. Wangel is ready to let her free and at last she gets an opportunity to give her autonomous identity.

Now, Ellida comes in to the conclusion that her husband had changed himself allowing her to get complete freedom and putting her happiness. Ellida has a novel idea about how to solve the familial relation. she believe that familial relation and social problem faced by women could be solved through cooperation understanding and dialogue relationship with the local patriarchy (the husband). No doubt she is always against the patriarchal values, marriage, discrimination, but she happily accepts marriage, maternity and co-existence with male partner for their prosperity and happiness in a family as well as in a society. She decides to stay with Wangle because she thinks human life has no meaning out of human society. Here Dr. Wangle represents landlocked values like solidity and reliability where as the stranger represents sea and in mystery, uncertainty, dangers and fluidity.

Ellida accepted to get married with Dr. Wangle but due to his self-consciousness she feels trapped, isolated, stifled and rootless in her new home. She finds it is very difficult to manage with new milieu Dr. Wangle's home. To express her dissatisfaction and her longing for freedom she requests ballasted an artist to paint

a picture. Ballested is describing the picture to Lyngstrand, a traveling sculpture who is interested to know more about it:

It's the Fjord I'm doing there, between the islands...[o]n this rock in the foreground I'm to put a dying mermaid. She's strayed in from the open sea, and now she can't find her way back. And the water's brackish [...] so here she lies dying. It was the lady of the house here who gave me the idea of painting something of the sort. (236)

Here, mermaid is a symbol, and it is attached to Mrs. Wangle and her reaction to the stifling milieu of her new home. She wants her autonomous self identity with marital life.

Here Ellida seems to be rebellious against oppression discrimination, inequalities and all sorts of sexual harassments of patriarchy, imagination, dehumanization. She is more concerned about the predicament about women and around the world. She tries to overcome with social reformation in the society by including women in the mainstream of development. She hopes that women leading role can take the society to perfection and happiness. However, she is concerned towards her own self, because of her self-seeking nature she can't carry out her duties and responsibilities set by patriarchy as expected. Talking to Mr. Arnholm, her former suitor in the harbour where she often stays, Ellida says, I think that if only men had chosen from the very beginning live on the sea-or even in the sea-we should have enacted –a perfection state –both better and happier (230). Here sea symbolizes the kind of society where women can enjoy complete freedom and materialize their longing and desires.

We can say that Ellida is different from other general women. They hide their desires, pain and sufferings within themselves but Ellida being rebellious women,

wants to settle the problem through cooperation, understanding and dialogic relationship with the local patriarchy her husband. In act II , Dr. Wangel and Ellida Frankly talk about their frozen relation.

Ellida is frequently haunted by the enforced betrothal that she made about a decade ago to a mysterious lawless sailar who had killed the captain of his ship. Recollecting the event so vividly. She tells her husband what the subjects of their chats were and show she felt while being with him.

[W] e talked about the sea about its storms and its claims... dark nights and sea... and the sea sparkling in the sunshine. But we tacked mostly about whales and dolphins and the seals that lie out on the rocks basking in the noon day warmth. And we talked about the gulls and the skuas and all the other seabirds [...] and, so you know, it's an extraordinary thing, but as we talked like this he seemed to me have something in common with the birds and beasts of the sea. (268)

Ellida longs for freedom, she tries to swim freely like whales and dolphins in the open sea water.

Ellida makes up her mind to get emancipation from the dominating vicious trap of patriarchy. Now Ellida determines with in herself that she must revolt against those discriminating and dehumanizing forces of patriarchal society. She tries to examine her position in patriarchal society. Where her husband who is never ready to accept her autonomous 'self' tries to comfort her saying that he will be there to tackle with stranger to protect her" let us try to get through this day wisely- to act calmly and sensibly. I dare not to let you go today. I have no right to for- your own sake, Ellida I claim a duty and right to protect you" (300).

Ellida longs to be independent who decides to fight against the oppositional forces that comes on her path of liberation from dominating norms and currents of patriarchy. So she is bold, courageous she does not accept the support the patriarchy (her husband). She believes that nobody can help to fight against the terror of anything that lies in the deeper level of human mind, her confidence can be observed with the Conversation Dr. Wangel, "protect? What is there to protect me form? There is no force form outside that's threatening me. The terrible thing lies deeper, Wangle... it is the terrible fascination with in my own mind and what can you do against that? " (302). One can easily see her self-defense and self—reliance which encourages a women's self empowerment, reducing dependently on others Ellida is confident and determine to settle her whole problem through path of non-violence , cooperation and understanding with in the familial value.

Quest of Autonomous Identity

Ibsen presents rebellious characters who try to be independence either slamming the patriarchy or realization of its value and improving their condition. Which reflects the limitary phase of women consciousness in 19th century, where they tried to over throw the patriarchal society and its ideology. Women were supposed to be silent, passive docile. Devoted and submissive in the late 19th century. There were hardly any women who could raise question up on their marriage. Women were just taken for an object of marriage.

Ellida tries to seek the solution of problem by compromising , and understanding and dialogue between husband and wife. It shows that social structure can be changed through the compromise and their understanding. Nora, on the other hand seems to be more rebellious and determines to change the society through violating or slamming the patriarchal values, norms and ideology. She does not

believe compromise and dialogue, "I can't spend the night in a strange man's room" (1630). She does not believe that patriarchy can be improved and come in to compromise.

Nora evaluates her marriage and her condition in the society or family and goes on to complain that she has greatly been wronged, first by her own father, and then by her husband. They take her as a commodity and doll where they can use her and play with her as long as they have desire and when their desire is over they throw away her. Nora says that so far as he Torvald concerned, he had never loved her and that she had. She never differed with her father openly because he would not have liked it. He used to call her his "doll-child" when she came to live with her husband's, it was Torvald who arranged everything according to his own taste:

Nora (unperturbed): I mean, then I want from papa's hands in to yours. You arranged everything to your own taste, and so I got the same taste as you as I pretended to, [...], but that's the way you wanted it. It's great sin what you and papa did to me. You're blame nothing's become of me. (1490)

Therefore she believes that both her father and her husband have committed a great sin against her. It is Torvald's fault and her father's fault that she has made nothing of her life.

However, Nora decides to leave her husband without any delay. She would be going away at once. Nora says that she must acquire some knowledge and wisdom. He asks if she has thought what people would say, she replies that she need not pay attention any need to what people would say. At the same time Torvald says that her behavior is shocking and asks if she would ignore her most sacred duties to her husband and her children. She replies she has other duties, those other duties are her

duties to herself. Now, she believes that before everything else. She is human being just as he is; she is a reasonable human being. She says that most people would certainly think him to be right and her to be wrong but that is because she views as there are to be found in books. She has denied even religious book. It religion can't guide her correctly. She should give him a chance to try and waken her conscience and her moral sense. She has now realized the importance of law that is some thing quite different from what she had believed it to be; but she finds it impossible to accept it.

But Ellida does not give importance of divorce, biased patriarchal formalities of legal marriage rather she values her own free will and autonomous existence. When her husband asks her if it is a formal legal divorce that what she wants, she unreservedly responds him, "my dear, you do not understand me all. It isn't the formalities that I mind about- that sort of thing does not seem to me rather what I want to that you and I should release each other of our own free will (206). Women were not expected to be even bold, frank and seeking freedom. It utterly surprises Dr. Wangel, it becomes a terrible thing for him. Now he himself is in favor of compromise and understanding and dialogue relationship. But Ellida's only one and never changing demand is complete freedom before the stranger arrives there again in garden. Ellida believes that human mind can't make proper decision if it is not free. " I don't want to have the excuse that I am another man's wife that I have to choice. because there'd be no decision in that" (307). Eliida is confident one day she would get freedom and achieve her own identity.

Ellida has different opinion about marriage then the Nora that marriage becomes fruitful only if it comes of one's own free will. The Stranger's arrival and his last and desperate attempt to possess Ellida awakens her "self". The stranger tempts

her with the preparations he has made for her, "I'm not talking about traveling clothes as packed trunks, or anything of that sort. I have everything that she needs for the voyage on board and I have taken a cabin for her "(to Ellida). So I ask you, are you ready to come with me – to come with me of your own free will? Ellida immediately rejecting his offer says, "oh don't ask me! Don't tempt me so!" (327).

Patriarchal society takes women to be inferior, weak, and brainwashed creatures. They are also expected to be objects, which is created by male ideology that they should be meek, docile, obedient, means of pleasure, and housewife, but these rebellious characters, Ellida and Nora reject all these norms and values which have been created by male ideology and try to get emancipation from such belief and tradition and try to show their autonomous identity. These characters try to establish their own identity, either following patriarchal norms and marriage system or rejecting it. They want to correct and reform the set of stereotypes about women. Patriarchy takes women for passive, emotional, submissive, weak and inferior creatures. But these characters show that they are not as passive as male ideology creates, rather they can draw their aim of life and at the same time they are sure that their life is bright and clear in near future.

Ibsen's women characters are rebellious, and they struggle for autonomous identity. They become successful to change the norms, values of patriarchal society. Ellida struggles to establish a conducting and favorable environment for co-existence. She has become really thankful to her husband's courage to use right remedy for her illness. But Nora on the other hand ignores the familial relation. For her knowing the "self" is important than knowing society, law, morality and religion. She does not believe that we can't change the society through compromise and dialogue, rather it is the emancipation which helps to change their position in the society.

IV. Conclusion

Ibsen tries to focus on the exploration of human condition, especially with the married women who have long been suffering at the hand of heartless or cruel husband who treat their wife as their property and their commodity. At the same time he deals with the theme of social problems under patriarchy and deals with the theme of humanity rather than the theme of individuality. Each of the Ibsen's protagonist is conscious about their self and "autonomous identity". They are ready to choose alienation isolation and struggle for independence. Moreover, they prefer suicide rather to succumb themselves to patriarchy slave domination subjection, dehumanization and exploitation.

Ibsen's *A Doll's House* intends to show an individual's liberation from the shackles and restraints of society. He exposes his keen interest especially towards in marriage and position of women, contemporary time when this plays have been written. Through these plays he has expressed his dissatisfaction with the then prevailing custom and contention. Similarly, Ibsen tries to give revolutionary marriage for the public so far as the relationship between husband and wife. So explosive was this message that the technical originality of the play went almost unnoticed at the time. Ibsen shown himself very much in advance of his time as regards craftsmanship just as he was in advance of his time as regards to the status of wife in the household. So, Nora represents the typical rebellious behaviour she is not demure and meek as Mrs. Linde rather she tries to know her self, slamming the norms of patriarchy because she thinks that she has to educate and know herself, then to be docile, meek and obedient house wife.

Ellida is the typical rebellious character who tries to assert her autonomous self- identity with in the familial and marriage life. No doubt she accepts marriage but

at the same time she resist the dominating and discriminating patriarchal norms and values of the then society. She does not loose her struggle for complete freed and self-identity. She determines to break the dominating tradition. She tries to get emancipation through the path of compromise and self-understanding cooperation and dialogic relation with her husband. She does not believe that leaving the home, children and husband is the complete solution, as Nora does rather she believes that we can improve our condition remaining with in the same society but he has to come with the new ideas to improve the society.

Ibsen's female characters try to be independent either slapping the patriarchal norms and values or accepting the patriarchal value with new forms and structure. However, they rebel against the contemporary patriarchal society and assert individuality and personal freedoms.

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