

Chapter-1

Introduction:

This research is a study of the Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore's Bengali novel *Ghare Bahire*, which was translated by Surendranath Tagore as *The Home and the World*. This research examines the novel *The Home and the World* through a feminist lens by observing how male writer visualizes women in a patriarchal society. It also focuses why women should not cross the boundary of the home.

Tagore is one of the popular names in modern Bengali literature. His contribution to Bengali literature is unique and unequalled. He primarily wrote in Bengali language. He had translated his many Bengali poems and plays into English by changing, telescoping, and transforming the original form. His literary writing extends for a period of 65 years. He is a well known poet, dramatist, actor, producer, musician, painter, reformer, philosopher, novelist, and short story writer. His fecundity of writing was amazing. He even won Nobel prize for his poetry book *Gitanjali*. Not only that his two novels became very popular. They are *Gora* and *The Home and the World*.

The primary purpose of this research is to analyze the view on women against the social and political background of his time. Tagore established Santiniketan School for females to educate them in the society. In Bengal every caste was subdivided into numerous classes, each given a certain rank or status by tradition. U. Chakrabarty in *Condition of Bengali Women around the Second half of Nineteenth Century* writes:

Hence the station of every individual in Bengal is settled with nearly as much precision as that of the nobility of Europe...No family is lost in the crowd; there are always some beneath it, who view it's right and

dignity with feelings of respect; every individual therefore possesses acknowledged and defined rank in this mighty aristocracy .These family distinctions may be tarnished by ignoble alliances, but they may be regained by a series of advantageous marriages. (84)

In the late 18th and 19th centuries, the status of women in Bengal was rather low; almost all women above the age of ten were either married or widowed and the majorities of women were illiterate and worked in the fields. The high castes and upper class women lived most of their lives in segregated *antapurs* (inner-house). They received no formal education.

In *Women in India and in Nepal*, S.N Mukherjee says, “In Bengal, from the day of her birth, a girl was an unwelcome member of her family. Her education and upbringing were generally neglected” (288). Women lived in a male dominated world. No men from the outside would be allowed in the inner house; only male members of the family and close relatives were allowed in the inner houses. Similarly Mukherjee further says:

In their separate private space women enjoyed a degree of autonomy which was not possible in contemporary European and American middle class households. In Bengal, while men managed public affairs and provide finance, women ruled in the inner houses. They managed all domestic affairs including the arrangement of marriages. Being segregated from men women spent most of their time in the company of other women. (289)

Most of the women in Bengali society lived in joint families. Many women, especially childless brides and widows were ill treated by others.

Tagore has written numerous books during his life time. He has written numerous plays, novels and poetry, they are: *Gora*, *The Home and the World*, *The Wreck*, *Sesher Kavita Chokar Bali*, *Jogajog*, *char Adhay*, *Chaturanga*, *The Two Sisters*, *The Garden*, *Gitanjali* etc. Of Tagore's full length novels, only three appeared in approved English version in his own life time. They are: *Naukhadubi*, *Gora* and *The Home and the World*.

Gora has its assured place in literature. The main character in the book *Gora* has been created with deep sympathy. He is intensely patriotic but he is also a staunch Hindu of the orthodox type. His uncompromising avowal of the traditional ways is an aggressive sword in his hand. He is not an Indian at all; he is born of English parents. Circumstances assigned him in early infancy to a Hindu home where he was adopted as a son. He has become rootless and has no place among the caste-proud ones, or anywhere else in the Hindu fold.

In *The Wreck*, there are two marriage parties and they are drowned in a boat wreck, the only survivor being one of the bridegrooms and the other bride. These two Ramesh and Kamala, think that they are the recently married couples and try to settle down somewhere else Kamala at last meets her real husband and is accepted by him and Ramesh is free to marry Hemamalini. It is one of the Tagore's popular novels.

Tagore's another work *Sesher Kavita* was translated by Krishna Kripalani under the title, *Farewell, My Friend*. In this story Labanya, the heroine is of middle class, studious, rich with a serenity of temperament and Amit Roy, the hero is sophisticated with his intellectual brilliance. The philanderer is caught in the meshes of love amid. But in a while Labanya realizes that it is her idealized image that has fascinated Amit. She has no heart to play up that image; she has to be just herself, just

a woman of common day. She strips her finger of the engagement ring and gives it back to her lover.

Tagore's *Char Adhay* bears a certain semblance to *Sesher Kavita*. Ela the female character is in a way related in spirit to Labanya, even if she is less serene, more passionate, more a woman in the earthly sense. Whereas the male character Atindra is far more mature than Amit Ray. Both of them have joined Terrorist Movement. Atindra joined the party not for its sake but for Ela's sake. Presently, as he swings along with its violent gyrations, his inner nature revolts from the ruthless activities. But he cannot himself turn back; no easy way for him now, except to reap without wailing the fruits of his *karma*. They are trapped pair, doomed lovers; but they do not wince. Nothing in their lives became them so well as their end. It is a political story having a love background.

In *Jogajog*, Madhusudan marries a young girl from aristocratic family called Kumudini. Her heart is full of worship for her husband; but where is the deity to whom she can make her offering? There is no chance for her to adjust her dreams and make compromises. Her husband's tenderness is harder to bear than his domination. When it becomes unbearable she goes away. But there is no escape- she is an expectant mother. The compulsion of motherhood takes her back to the familiar heartbreak.

In *The Home and the World* there are three main characters they are Bimala, Nikhil and Sandip. This novel is written in an autobiographical form. Nikhil is an idealistic husband, Bimala is his wife and Sandip is his friend. Bimala, a typical Hindu wife, suddenly hears a call from the outside world. She is caught between the whirlpool of outside world and inner home. Of the three main characters neither

Nikhil nor Sandip change much in the course of novel; it is Bimala alone who changes under the stress of trial and error and failure.

The analysis of the novel will basically depend on the attempt to understand the patriarchal viewpoint of a male writer and the status of women in a patriarchal society. As the theory feminism enters in South Asian countries there was a kind of change in the activities of women, they tried to cross the boundary, which was limiting them only inside the family matters. Sensing the burden of Indian women serving as slaves to men enslaved by colonial power, women writers wrote incisive essays debating the role and situation of women. Women became more conscious about their identity and freedom. They tried to avoid the rules imposed by males. Such type of feminist trend was going on in every society. Rather than looking after family matters, they were more conscious about their own ideology.

The consciousness in the Asian countries appeared due to the impact of western education and due to the efforts of women's organization of the western world. They also started raising their voice for women's right. Indian women confronted with many social evils; they were also devoid of patriarchal right. Indian women were forced to live under the traditional male form of leadership. Patriarchal society has given the feminine image of women, Feminine means passiveness, weakness and girlishness. It also provides certain images such as coyness, coquettishness, etc. It means Femininity symbolizes tenderness, sensitivity and nurturance.

Males have supreme power in their hand whereas females are powerless. The power males possess is the powerful one because the power that comes through achievement and position is much more effective and long lasting than the power that comes through beauty. The word beauty is used for female figures. The power that

comes through beauty is not long lasting so females are regarded as powerless beings. Power makes people attractive, so males create the rules and norms around the society.

The cultural definition constructs women's identity within the male dominated cannon. So the women writers protest against the male made language. In literature female figures are given stereotypical images. As the female consciousnesses arose, they were against the images given by patriarchal society. In *Women Writing in India* Tharu and Lalita say:

Disturbed by the sudden realization that woman had invariably been represented in stereotypical ways by a literary heritage that claimed universality feminist critics turned to women authors for alternative images of women. (13)

Slowly women felt that their lives had been completely transformed and they had finally been released from the constriction of patriarchal ideology. Feminism first appeared from the western countries, and slowly it was widely circulated among the third world scholars. Feminist criticism has shaped a new discipline as the object of its study that is women's writing. Women writers directly engaged with their experience. Though women writers were the victim of social ideologies, different women writers appeared in the field of writing such as Bangalore Nagaratnamma, Muddupalani etc.

In Indian societies women still have extremely limited options to extend their role outside the domestic domain. Women cannot act as a collective body. Manjusri Chaki –Sircar in *Feminism in a Traditional Society* says, "Among some lower socio-economic communities women enjoy considerable freedom outside their home, but

they too are often subjected to pressures from high –caste ideology and male domination” (p.vii).

Jyotsana Chatterji in *Religions and the Status of Women* says “The people’s notion about the proper role of women in the home and society and the social restrictions on women are all rooted in religious conceptions regarding women” (1). Still the attitude towards women has remained unchanged. As she is separated from male, she becomes a dangerous and destructive force. In the same book Ranjana Kumari says:

A woman’s husband is her lord and it is her religious duty to see that he is happy and comfortable by yielding to every wish of his. The woman is defined primarily in relation to her husband and her household, and her interest and active participation in domestic matters is expected of her. The role of wife and mother is the optimal, singular and essential role through which a woman fulfills herself. (9)

In mythological formulation a woman is considered to be physically, spiritually and morally equal to man, in actual social life her expected role is one of subordination to man, perhaps an honorable subordination.

The patrilineal society demands the passive function of woman, like that of the passive function of the soil; it not only helps the tree to grow but also keeps its growth within limits. A male writer presents the passive qualities of woman such as chastity, modesty, devotion and power of self-sacrifice. Anupam Nagar in “*Shakti*” says these passive qualities turn nature’s monster forces into perfect creation of beauty. So in the depth of passiveness, potentiality of life is stored. The society presents women as powerless beings but Anupam Nagar says, “Women have the vital power more

strongly in them than men have. They are the mothers of the race and they have a real interest in the things that are around them, that are the common things of life” (282).

Society should understand that women are powerful. Anupam further says “women are the symbol of *Shakti*, the creative power and therefore, creative expression is the natural expression for a woman” (283). To lead a peaceful domestic life equal freedom in man –woman relationship is desirable.

It is quiet interesting to read the novel *The Home and the World* through a feminist lens and see how Tagore has addressed the patriarchal images. Here, an analysis of Tagore’s novel throws light on how he has presented the stereotypical images of women. In reality women should have equal status with males; they are no goddesses to be worshipped, nor the object of common pity. Contemporary feminist politics is more analogous. So the female self has the right of private ownership and there is a slavery free world. It is a world of equal work, equally shared domestic responsibilities, and widely shared intuitions. If we look at the cultural heritage of Indian society the image of women is derived from *Shakti*. It means the symbol of energy and power. Women symbolizes nature, nature indicates fertility, fecundity and prosperity. Adesh Pal in *Shakti* says, “on the other hand nature (opposed to culture) represents uncultured power, therefore, malevolent, aggressive and the destroyer” (298). It means uncultured power is dangerous. It indicates that women in a patriarchal society are dangerous; if they try to cross the boundary of the home it creates disaster. Bimala as she comes out of the home it creates imbalance in her life. Every time women are under the control of men. They are never independent. During childhood she is under the control of her father, during her youth she is under the control of her husband and after the death of her husband she is under the control of her son.

Hindu society expects women to be devoted to their husband. The wife is always under the control of her husband. The wife's role is subordinate. Bimala's husband is quiet conscious of what kind of support he needs to give his wife. Sufferings of women in a patriarchal society are private. So society does not know about the suffering of each individual woman. Women are the victims of patriarchal set up. A woman is never free. They are forced to obey and follow the command of their husband. Darshan Tridevi in *Shakti* says, "The place of women is "inferior" and subsidiary to man in Indian society" (250). He further says "her life is full of trials, turbulence, pains and suffering from birth to death" (250-251). Women are considered as commodity. They are possessions of patriarchy since ancient times. In Hindu society, after marriage, women are expected to wear all the signs of auspiciousness as the mark of her husband's existence. Bimala, the main female character also puts vermillion mark upon her forehead shining out like a morning star. Males are supposed to be superior and faultless. It is female whom the males blamed; she is the root cause of all the evils. A woman is particularly a man's property.

Today the world and the concept of people have dramatically changed. If we read the novel through a feminist lens we can feel that if a woman tries to cross the boundary of the home, she will be destroyed in the end. Different feminist aspects have emerged and these feminists try to look at the society from female's view. In almost every patriarchal society women is regarded as inherently inferior and vulnerable being. In such type of belief the present study throws light. The whole novel revolves round the problem of Indian women and their relation to the outside world.

Tagore in this novel has presented Bimala as a typical Bengali woman serving her husband. Bimala stands for her own culture. Patriarchal society shows that

women are only fit for food preservation and other domestic technology. So they should not be engaged in the outside world. Along with this conception Bimala also serves her husband and her family. It indicates that women should not be engaged in the outside world, she should serve her husband physically taking care of their homes, property etc. If she forgets to follow rule, she will be nowhere. So, women are presented as softer and weaker beings. In this novel, the female protagonist tries to come out and get involved in the outside world. But finally, she is made to be a failure to live successfully in the outside world.

Though Tagore presents Bimala as an ideal woman, we can say that she is perfectly stupid and submissive in the sense that she did not understand the trick of Sandip Babu who wants to loot her by taking money in the name of Nationalistic Movement.

Tagore is able to give the vision of women, which is created by the patriarchal society. Most often the male writers since very early times present women characters as the main characters in their text. They are viewed in relation to the man. Such writers also present biological and physical role of women in the text. Tagore has also portrayed Bimala as the central character. She is tall and black in complexion. Every morning she puts the vermilion mark upon her forehead.

This research is based on Tagore's concept of women through a feminist lens. He is strongly in favor of Indian culture. Even in his text, he has presented Bimala purely as an Indian woman. He tries to show that whenever, whoever tries to go against the culture, will have to face severe problems during his/her life span. He was a true Indian genius, so even in his novel, he has portrayed his characters running after a nationalistic movement who avoid using western goods and only use their own national products.

Bimala is an uneducated woman who does not know anything of the outer world. For an uneducated typical Indian woman her home is everything. Home is her world. If a woman comes out of the inner world in the name of getting education and freedom, that creates disharmonious relation in a family.

Tagore's *The Home and the World* portrays the inhabitants of a Bengali aristocratic family. The main female character of this novel tries to struggle to come out of the home in the outer world but in the last part of the novel she fails to adjust in the outer world.

In every patriarchal society, women are regarded as inferior beings that must be limited only within the home. The text written in such society represents women as vulnerable object. They are not given any rights in the society. If they are supposed to be given, they are forced to be damaged.

The Home and the World reinforces the beliefs and values of traditional patriarchal society by showing woman character as inherently inferior and vulnerable. Tagore in his novel tells a story of an aristocratic woman who fails to understand and deal with the outer world. Instead of developing the woman's struggle into success in that inevitable process of woman coming out of the traditional home, Tagore has structured the plot to demonstrate his value of how a woman is unfit to struggle and live in man's world or society.

The proposed thesis will, therefore, make a thorough textual analysis to support the claim that Tagore has implicitly supported the traditional values and expectations of the Indian male made culture. The development and design of the plot is evidently the means of structuring women's world and reinforcing traditional patriarchal Indian values.

Tagore first puts forward a new necessity for woman to come out of the home into the world and that too with the means of an idealistic husband. But as the story

unfolds, this man turns out to be impractical and thus a victim of his own outlandish idea that love can exist only in the real world where both husband and wife can understand it more clearly. His wife, the central character Bimala is attracted to a dandy who exploits her ignorance and her impractical enthusiasm for the national liberation movement and he almost morally corrupts her. The development of the plot seems to be meant to show how women can not, need not and must not, and should not venture out of her ideal home, role and values.

Tagore makes his women relapse into her old home and reinforces the stereotyping of women as weaker and softer beings who are only fit for beauty, care, sacrifice and the passive roles of home.

Bimala in this novel is a female character, though she tries to behave in masculine way going out of the home and engaging herself in nationalistic movement, she fails. Whatever she has done turns into pure nothingness. In the last part of the story she comes out of disillusionment. She comes to know that Sandip is a fraud. He had cheated her. She got nothing. Nikhil, her innocent husband is killed and she no longer has good relation with Sandip. She is left nothing more than a weak woman. This novel shows the problem of a cocksure woman. Bimala, the cocksure woman, instead of enjoying in the outside world becomes limited in the familial matters.

In this novel Bimala's husband Nikhil is a western educated liberal with nationalistic commitments, tries to bring his wife out of the home of Bengali society. He seems to improve home life and relation with his wife. Bimala as she comes out of her home she is attracted to Sandip who is the friend of her husband. So it is Nikhil who led to the destruction of family unity. Bimala's emancipation resulted in the broken nest. It proves that women should be confined to the home. It seems that male writers in a patriarchal society are against women's education and liberation

because it is Bimala who is destroyed in the end because of the education she receives from her husband that is crossing the boundary of the home. After the appearances of feminist approach women defy norms, move outside the social codes. But still there are some writers who present women's conventional roles and also portray women as being confined.

This novel is based mainly on family matters. Feminists view that in a patrilineal society woman should remain within the four walls of house. To live a harmonious life woman should not involve in the outer activities of the world.

The aim of this research paper is to throw some light on an ideology concerning the status of women. This paper helps to understand the male view of women in Bengal, and it also helps to understand better the realities of women's position. Reading this novel through a feminist lens, it helps us to understand the illusion and realities about women in Bengal.

Chapter-II

Theoretical modality: Feminism

Emergence of Feminism:

The history of feminism goes back before 18th century. Feminism is a term which includes social, educational and political equality of women with men. It studies women as suppressed or oppressed beings. In almost every patriarchal society women are regarded as inferior beings, limited within the home. Before 18th century women were not given any opportunities in the outer world. They were regarded as weaker beings who could not occupy the equal status in the society. They were also deprived of voting rights. Women were considered as objects rather than human beings who were forced to occupy a secondary place in the world in relation to men. They had to stay at home and depend on someone else to survive.

Feminism is a kind of awareness in the part of women. Women had suffered a lot in the course of time. There is domination of women in sex, religion, culture and society. Feminism as a movement appears as the awareness about women's position in society, culture and even in literature.

The patriarchal society is the main cause of women's suppression. In a society men have got the power of decision making whereas women, the home making. Sheila Ruth in *Issues in Feminism* writes:

Women are expected to serve men physically taking care of their homes, property, clothing or persons; economically, doing countless jobs for which women are ill paid or not paid at all; sexually as wives, mistress, or prostitutes; and reproductively, assuring men of paternity through female chastity. (86)

She further said that the softer and weaker the women are, the more strong and powerful the men are.

The images of women in a patriarchal society are bifurcated. “Woman is represented as a being at once a manifestation of the divine and an incarnation of evil” (87). Conceptualizing women as other have been male created. Women are given negative terms. Ruth further says:

Misogyny includes the belief that women are stupid, petty, manipulative, dishonest, silly, gossipy, irrational, incompetent, undependable, narcissistic, castrating, dirty, overemotional, unable to make altruistic or moral judgments, oversexed, undersexed, and a host of other rather ugly things. (89)

In a society a woman lives not for herself but for her husband. She is expected to serve men physically, taking care of their homes and property. Though she is most of the times engaged with her household work, she is regarded as less intelligent, less moral, less competent, and less able physically, psychologically, spiritually and small in body and mind.

It is believed that home is a private place whereas outside world is foreign. From the primitive age males believe that home is related to females and outside world is related to males. Women are forced to run after private affairs. Outside world is the world of competition. Males are working as competitors to find out suitable jobs in the outside world. Feminists are dissatisfied with such types of belief and to break this hierarchy they started revolting against males.

From the ancient time, men have shaped women’s identity. Women are regarded as second sex, the weaker one and the men are regarded as the first one. Such imbalance outlook of men and women has weakened the women.

Mary Wollstonecraft was one of the prominent critics who wrote a book called *A Vindication of the right of Women* (1792). In this book she has described the state of ignorance in which society kept women. Through her essay she paved the way to feminist writing. In her book she says that women are made inferior at several levels such as social, political and economical. In all these areas women never get proper position; they never get proper education, never get the right to vote. When all these things are impossible for women they suffer from inequality. Every time women's greater responsibility goes to men but men never give possible right for them. Men hold society therefore the position of women is inferior.

Virginia Woolf in *A Room of one's Own* (1992) argues about the imbalance of power between men and women. She says feminist movement is to liberate women. Women don't have their own room. It means they don't have their own right, prestige, space and don't have any identity. Room is the place where people get comfort. Women writers don't have their own right, they write literature in common room. She herself protests against the patriarchal society for not providing right to own a room of her own. She as a writer feels difficulty in accommodating in her husband's room. She argues that women should have their own room to go on with their writing works and they should have their own income for their survival so that it will not be necessary for them to depend upon their husbands.

Elaine Showalter one of the Gynocritics has not only shaped feminism but has also introduced 'Gynocriticism'. It is a criticism by the women for the women and of the women. Like Woolf, she also wants to see happy women. According to her a woman can be as much tyrannical as a powerful man is, if she is extremely powerful in the family.

From the very beginning women were treated as valueless beings who could not enjoy all the rights as males can enjoy. They were not given any franchise right up to 1920. Women started different movement for voting right. In 1921 for the first time women were given voting right in England. Women in France were able to enjoy voting right in 1949, whereas in 1983 New Zealand women were given voting right. At the very beginning women were concentrated on gaining legal equality. These women also fought to end educational and job discrimination against women.

Beauvoir, a French feminist critic says that there is no difference between two sexes such as male and female in the process of biological creation. Later, men seize all the power from women and make them ineffectual beings.

Slowly women started writing to reform the society, changing men's attitude towards women. Women of every society have to look after their children, household works, cooking food, washing clothes and are also forced to work outside their homes to solve their economic problem. The term feminism is originated from the awareness of the women. The concept of feminism was popularized since the Women's Liberation Movement of 1960s in America. Feminists started to revolt against male hegemony to protect women from their domination. In a society women's identity has been shaped by the values and norms set by men. The main cause of women's suffrage is due to the domination of powerful males. The great Greek philosopher Plato's philosophical theories have glorified women for their physical beauty only but not for the adventurous works. Women's status is always shaped by the norms and values set by men.

Women's writing reflects women's voices. Their writing presents painful life of the women. Mostly in eastern countries males are holding power and property they are the real successors of parental property.

With the rise of women's voice different women novelist appeared in the history of literature. The women characters in their novel are very conscious about their work and look bold at the difficult movement. Though they faced different problems in the society they are never afraid. Beside the four walls of the houses they seem more conscious about the outer world. They know that beside domestic matters there is also another world of music, painting, law, which they want to adopt.

As the women were given franchise right feminist movement nearly disappeared. Later during 1900s a large number of women entered the labor force. They come to know that many high paying jobs were closed to them; they began actively participating to end educational and job discrimination against women.

In second half of 20th century women became more independent. These women have challenged men for their exploitation and domination over them. They believed that married women are not husband's property but man's life partner to run the family.

After the introduction of feminism, different feminist appeared in the world history. Marxist feminist believe that women are being dominated because of lack of mode of production. Women are always proletarian and males behave as bourgeois so women must be economically independent. They opine that capitalism is the source of oppression. When capitalism is removed from the society then only the suppression of women will be removed.

Cultural feminist believe that the culture where women are living is the culture of male. All rituals, behaviors are male centric so women must decide their own culture then only they can be independent.

Bio-feminists talk about female body. They believe that females are richer than male, they have stronger experience like menstruation, pregnancy etc. Men

never understand such type of women's experience. Bio-feminists are proud of being women. They never feel inferior in front of males.

Gayatri Spivak Chakaravarty, a post colonial feminist in "Can Subaltern Speak?" says that eastern women are suffering from two problems i.e. they are women and they are not western European women. There is double domination for the non-western women. Women of east have suffered more. They are fighting with males as well as white women. Males dominate women and white women dominate eastern women. Eastern women charge white women because they represent themselves as males and try to throw out eastern women. So, post-colonial feminist demands equality.

Psychoanalytical feminist like Helen Saxon says males are suffering from phallus+logo centrism. These feminists simply oppose the Freudian idea. They say women never see erotic dreams. Males never understand the psychology of females.

Linguistic feminist believe that male has created language. They say that language should be desexing. Feminist believe that women should be as loud, rough, strong, ferocious, sharp and fast as man. It is a male myth that men are stronger, active, aggressive right from the beginning of birth, they prefer adventuresome activities in their life span. Women on the other side are less interested in adventuresome activities because they are not men. Ruth Says, "According to misogynist ideology women are inferior in two ways: (1) women are morally inferior, evil, bad, sinful, dangerous, harmful, and dirty; (2) women are inferior in competence-physically, intellectually and spiritually" (158).

Most of the time a woman is a homemaker and a mother. Ruth in this regard says:

To the question “why haven’t women produced any geniuses? Why are there no female Shakespeares or Beethovens? Virginia Woolf answered that we have not been allowed a “room of our own”. We have been accorded bread, but not roses. We have not been allowed the spiritual atmosphere, the creative space men are heir to the amenities that raise life above the mundane and encourage one to creativity. (160)

She further illustrates the fact that Male historians and anthropologists ‘forget’ to research the contribution of women to early civilization-the introduction of pottery, weaving, food preparation and so on.

We should not forget the fact that men and women are created equal and are given equal rights by our creator. But there are several male critics having the patriarchal notion and believe that women are worthless and inferior beings. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* writes:

For Montherlant transcendence is a situation; he is the transcendent ‘he soars in the sky of heroes; woman crouches on earth, beneath his feet; it amuses him to measure the distance that separates him from her; from time to time he raises her up to him, takes her, and then throws her back; never does he lower himself down to her realm of slimy shadows. (994)

From the above lines we can know that Montherlant believes that women submit her self to the will of men. She does not possess her own identity.

Lawrence believes that a woman should have demure quality rather than dauntless quality. In *Elements of Literature* he says:

The tragedy of cocksure women is that they are cockier, in their assurance, than the cock himself. They never realize that when the cock

gives his loud crow in the morning, he listens acutely afterwards, to hear if some other wretch of a cock dare crow defiance, challenge. To the cock there is always defiance, danger and death on the clear air; or the possibility thereof. (12)

It means hen is hen all the time; she can't be cock. The patriarchal society believes that cocksure women are dangerous and devastating. So, a woman in a society should not cross the boundary of the home, if she crosses the boundary of the home it creates disaster.

Many writers and critics talk about women's writing for many years but females expanded their territory of writing. A large number of women writer were discovered. They started writing their journals, letters, biographies, poem, novel, stories etc. Showalter says:

Supported by such feminist writers, artists, and poets as Adrienne Rich, Marge Percy, Judy Chicago, Susan Griffin, and Alice Walker, the female aesthetic spoke of a women's culture that had been neglected and had to be revived, of a "woman language", and of literary styles and forms that come out of a specific female psychology.

(6-7)

Feminism in India:

The seed of feminism started from the western countries and slowly it influenced the eastern countries too. In 1904 an Indian Women's Conference was organized in India. Indian women boycotted foreign goods in 1905. Women's Indian Association (1917), the National Council of Women (1928) and the all India Women's Conference (1927) discussed women's issues and social problems

concerning them. The formation of women's groups has changed people's views about male and female roles. *Women in Modern India* writes:

This women's movement continued to focus on traditional practices, beliefs, and institutions as the source of oppression. It also attends to violence against women, the institutional framework for the maintenance of gender differences, and the impact of the economic situation on the day-to-day lives of women. (Geraldine Forbes 244)

By the late 19th c. Indian Women took active participation in life outside the home. Women became more involved in politics during the early 20th c. During this period women actively joined the agitation, boycotted foreign goods and donated money and jewelry to the nationalist movement. Indian women have limited options to extend their role outside the domestic domain. They are often subjected to pressure from high caste ideology and male domination.

The social reformers spent much of their time and energy in organizing different movements, such as the abolition of Sati, widow remarriage, anti-polygamy and female education which were concerned with the position of women. B.N. Banerjee in *Sang Badpatre Sekaler Katha* writes "As early as 1835 women started expressing their own views on the status of women" (246-7).

Gandhi believed that women are the companions to men, who are given equal mental capacities. But instead of realizing this truth males considered themselves as lords, or masters of women, rather than considering them as their friends. Kumari Jayawardena in *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* says:

Gandhi believed that every man and woman had a duty to perform in the interest of self-realization and social well-being[....]even the most

ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have. (95)

Later, Indian women followed this Gandhian Ideology. Gandhi brought women in public life and gave them the tools to solve their own problems.

Jawaharlal Nehru also talks about women. He believes that women should go outside the home to be economically independent. He says that freedom always depends on economic condition, if a woman is not economically free, she should have to depend on her husband and she will never be free.

Sarojini Naidu in 1917 was involved in the campaign for women's right; she also gave lectures on women's emancipation. She gave emphasis on harmony and cooperation between men and women. Geraldine Forbes in *Women in Modern India* writes:

As women broadened their scope two things happened. First they lost their identification with the goddess and became "enemies" who could be beaten or killed without a movement's notice. The other significant change was the decline in their influence. Saraladevi Chaudhurani, Sarojini Naidu, Latika Ghosh, Lilavati Munshi, Manmohini Zutshi, and Satyavati Devi were all listened to with rapt attention. (222)

In a patriarchal society women's lives are meant to be lived for men's need but not for themselves. Women's differences were overshadowed by their biological characteristics and the subordinate, supportive roles they were destined to play. The suffrage of women is due to lack of freedom. The patriarchal society is male centered society where women are given subordinate position. The word feminine and masculine are cultural construct, which are generated by the same society. Female figures in the society are given marginal roles.

The contemporary feminist movement emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Forbes says:

Mary Katzenstein has defined the contemporary women's movement in India as similar to the women's movement in Europe in that feminist groups are dispersed, without one centralized organization, and with political commitments and language...more leftist than liberal. (243)

In most of the male produced literature females are given stereotypical images, which give negative impact on women readers, and it basically imposes traditional roles upon them. Geraldine Forbes further writes, "European inspired histories and the Indian texts they cited shared a belief in a unique female nature. Indian texts essentialized women as devoted and self sacrificing, yet occasionally rebellious and dangerous" (1).

Even in women writer or feminists there is difference. There are two types of feminism they are liberal feminism and radical feminism.

Liberal feminists emphasize on equality, harmony. They want to reform society rather than revolt. They don't have any objection towards male. They believe that male and female should work together. They don't want to show themselves superior.

Whereas radical feminists do not agree with males. There is a belief that males are the exploiters, so women should create their own culture. They are more aggressive and reject the patriarchal notion.

Feminists argue that males have overpowered the world and have defined it the way they like. They have defined women as subordinate, inferior beings. They want to rupture the hierarchy of male and female. Feminists are aware of the fact that males make them weaker, powerless, dependent, and incapable. Women are most of

the time engaged in their household works and men are free to spend their time in social activities. So, males receive great rewards and are renowned for their work. It is male who has not given women any chance to involve in the outer world. Males are overall and females are kept under their dominance.

Male images around the world are characterized as large, strong, hard, and heavy and female are characterized as small, weak, soft and light. Female images have negative tone.

The patriarchal society demands feminine quality of women. Women who are not characteristically inferior are not normal, they are not regarded attractive and feminine and not regarded as good women. So, if we look our history, we can see great scientists, inventors, salesmen, warriors have always been male. In a patriarchal Indian society, if the women writers are unmarried, they are dominated by the parental family members as well as by the society they live in. The case of the married women is worse than the unmarried ones. Though they are born writers having inborn quality, they have no time to write because of their responsibilities towards their families. So, women's writings echo women's voices.

Female voices have been appeared through literature, criticism, theory etc. A large number of poets, novelists, essayists appeared in the field of literature. Women became more conscious about their own language and tradition. There is literary abuse or textual harassments of women through popular male literature. Feminist critics were dissatisfied with such type of textual harassments and social misinterpretation and they emphasize on their importance. So the women writer produced their literature of their own.

Feminist criticism has shaped a new discipline as the object of its study that is women's writing. Women writers directly engage with their experience. Though

women writers were the victim of social ideology they appeared in the field of writing. Woman writer like Muddupalini's poem were filled with description of sex. Feminist writers focus on women's right and emancipation. They argue for the equality of sex and fight against contemporary culture and male dominated tradition. Different feminist theories explore the female voice against the patriarchal society. Forbes in *Women in Modern India* writes "The newer challenges to the task of writing women's history come from the subaltern school, originating in Calcutta, and from historians interested in everyday life" (3).

It was the subaltern project that led Gayatri Spivak to write her challenging article: "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In this article she states the problem of writing the history of colonial women. In her essay she charged the feminist intellectual to take her work very seriously. Females are marginalized due to the cultural tradition and value of contemporary society. Norms of female seclusion and sex segregation offered them an opportunity to form their own organization relatively free from male tutelage though not free from patriarchy.

After the emergence of Indian Feminism different feminist writers like Amrita Pritam, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Mahadevi Varma, Mahasweta Devi, Kamala Bhasin etc appeared. These feminist writers sensing the burden of Indian women serving as slaves to men enslaved by colonial power wrote incisive essays debating the role and situation of women.

Many educated women began to define their own problems. As women organizations developed men focused their attention to power politics. Slowly women started to involve in women's movement justified by their new roles with the ideology of social feminism.

Later in India there had been many educated women in the upper classes including popular women writers and poets but there was no general education available to women. Many reformers campaigned in favor of female education. Reformist like Vidyasagar established 40 girls school in Bengal between 1855 and 1858.

In India people have different concepts about women. Kumari Jayawardena in *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* writes:

Conservatives also joined the campaign for female education.

Ramkrishna Paramhansa, the Hindu philosopher who popularized the concept of a 'Supreme Mother' and her worship in the form of the goddess Kali said: 'I worshipped all women as representatives of the divine mother. I realized the Mother of the universe in every woman's form' (Everett 1979:55). Ramkrishna's renowned disciple Vivekananda, however, a radical on many issues, believed that woman should not be educated in the modern sciences but should be trained to achieve fulfillment within the family. (88)

Pandit Rambai one of the reformers of India began a series of women's organizations. She wrote *Sthri Dharma Neeti (Women's Religious Law)*, which advocated women's emancipation of attacked traditional practices harmful to women. Kumari further says, "Her book on the status of women, *The High Caste Hindu Woman*, was well received in America and led to the formation of the Rambai Association, one of whose objectives was to collect funds for women's activities in India" (91).

To modernize women's roles different reformers appeared during nineteenth century. Rammohun Ray is the father of modern India, a champion of women's rights and a feminist. Rasuundari Devi, a Bengali woman, wrote a story of her life, *Amar*

Jiban. This story revolves round her day to day experiences as a housewife and mother. Another reformer is Dr. Vina Mazumdar is a well known feminist scholar. He is only one of many Indians whose family history includes a sati story.

The term describing female images have negative tone. So the early feminists argued that women could be loud, rough, and strong. Feminists reject the discrimination, which is on the basis of sex, race, class, religion etc. Saroj Gulati in *Women and Society* writes:

In her role as a wife, a woman held an honored position in the family. In theory, she was the joint owner of the household and was known as *ardhangini* of her husband, though in actual practice she had a subordinate position. (225)

Different writers raise the voice for the emancipation of women and slowly developed various approaches on feminist criticism. Women's identity has been structured by the society since ancient time, it is difficult task to remove the deep-rooted structure of the society, and it takes a long time to establish woman's identity.

Chapter-III

Textual Analysis:

This section includes a brief survey of the context. Important paragraphs concerning about feminist view are taken for analysis. Feminism is the main concern in 21st century. Before that, women had been limited only within the home. So they have raised the questions which help them to emancipate themselves from male dominated cannon.

Tagore's characters Bimala, Nikhil and Sandip denote conventional Hindu names. Bimala's devotion to her husband is not different from any ideal Hindu wives. She looks very Indian and traditionally dressed in a sari. In a male dominated society, wife is not given the same position as her husband. She is somehow inferior to her husband though she regards him as the prince of her world. She says "I had the prince of my real world enthroned in my heart. I was his queen. I had my seat by his side. But, my real joy was that my true place was at his feet." (12)

Though Tagore favors Indian culture, he seems to be modern in his concept. So, in this novel also he wants to take Bimala out of 'Purdah' taking the help of Nikhil. Bimala says, "My husband was very eager to take me out of Purdah. One day I said to him: What do I want with the outside world? 'The outside world may want you,' he replies" (17).

During Tagore's time, he may be quite modern in his concept but now looking through the eye of feminism, one can say that if a woman tries to cross the boundary of the home she will be destroyed at last. Bimala, as she puts her step outside her home, is totally destroyed.

The Home and the World takes the story of a Bengali aristocratic Indian family. Bimala, the main character, stands in between the whirlpool of outside world

and inside world that is the world of limited boundary. She tries to come out and mix up in the outer world which is the world of freedom or the world without restriction. She has never felt like that before her husband insists her to come to the outside world. Before that she had done what is expected in a patriarchal family. She was behaving in a typical Indian manner. As she came out she had extra relation with Sandip. He used to regard her as a possession rather than an individual. He tortured her mentally in the name of Nationalistic movement. She spent most of her time visiting Sandip. When Sandip asked her to bring a large amount of money, she came to know that she was in illusion.

As Bimala steps outside her home, she changes slowly. She disregards her husband's wishes and often she ignores her family members. Bimala continues to disregard her husband's wishes and often ignores her family members. Bimala continues to disregard the custom of society by having extra affair with Sandip. Though Nikhil knows the affair between Sandip and Bimala he tries to hide Bimala's strange behavior from family members.

Freedom for women is an unthinkable thing in a typical Indian family. It is not Bimala who desires freedom, who has wishes and ambition, but it is her husband who pushed her into the outside world of freedom. He wants his wife to be independent and educated. Once he said to Bimala:

I would have you come into the heart of the outer world and meet reality. Merely going on with your household duties, living all your life in the world of household conventions and the drudgery of household tasks, -you were not made for that! If we meet, and recognize each other, in the real world, then only will our love be true. (18)

As she came out into the outside world, she became a revolutionary woman. Instead of giving the time to her family members, most of the time she was engaged in the revolution. She was caught in between the impulses of outside world and inside world. For her, outside world became more important than the inside world. But, a patriarchal society cannot digest individual thinking of a woman. In such type of society we can see gender discrimination that has been seated in a male psyche.

Reading this novel through a feminist lens this novel portrays the failure of self respect, status and identity of female character. His female character is supposed to be a possession of male figure. Sandip regards Bimala as his property and demands large amount of money from her. As she came near to him he said:

Queen! Everything is ready, success is at hand, but we must have money.

Money? How much money?’

‘Not so very much, but by hook or crook we must have it!

‘But how much?’

‘A mere fifty thousand rupees will do for the present’. (150)

Male writers even present women as an evil, unwanted burden, a source of disgrace and humiliation for the family. But, a society should believe that to remodel the society or to establish peace permanently women should play a prominent role. In a male dominated society, the development from women sector is comparatively weaker than from male section. In such society people believe that it is male who safeguards the life of women. The issue of domestic violence which is confined within the four walls should be a domestic issue. So, women can become aware of their rights.

Patriarchy indicates the rule of father. It also includes the rule of husband, of male boss. Bimala in this novel is a sympathetic character. Looking through the eye of feminism here the writer has shown his female character as inferior being who are small in thinking. Bimala from the beginning of the novel is portrayed as a typical Indian woman who enjoys her home and do not want to come out in the outside world. As her husband forced her to come out of the familial matters her suffering piles up one after another.

From the primitive time women are supposed to be the means of decoration and can satisfy the family members who were limited only in the household activities. Women are decorated in the traditional manner. Bimala's mother was also a typical Indian woman. Bimala in the first chapter says, "Mother, today there comes back to my mind the vermillion mark at the parting of your hair, the sari which you used to wear , with its wide red border, and those wonderful eyes of yours , full of depth and peace" (9).

In the beginning of married life relationship between Nikhil and Bimala seems very cordial and happy. But as she comes in contact with Sandip, her husband's friend, this happiness soon turns into anxiety. In the beginning, Bimala does not care for her own desire, happiness and dignity but she submits to the wishes and demands of her husband. The patriarchal society has taught women to be devoted towards her husband; women are expected to serve their husband as god. So, Bimala says:

I would cautiously and silently get up and take the dust of my husband's feet without waking him, how at such moments I could feel the vermillion mark upon my forehead shinning out like the morning star. (10-11)

Similarly she says “It was my woman’s heart, which must worship in order to love” (11). As social constructions shape the mind of people, members of the society are overwhelmed by this stereotypical notion. They don’t want to come out of the old convention. In her autobiography, Bimala remembers the satirical comment of her sister-in-law when she made a little bit change in her get up;

That morning I scented my flowering hair and tied it in a loose knot, bound by cunningly inter-twined red silk ribbon. Dinner, you see, was to be served at midday, and there was no time to dry my hair after my bath and do it up plaited in the ordinary way. I put on a gold-bordered white sari, and my short-sleeve Muslim jacket was also gold bordered. But my sister in law, who happened to be passing by, stopped dead before me, surveyed me from head to foot and with compressed lips smiles a meaning smile. When I asked her the reason, ‘I am admiring your get up! She said. (31)

Though Bimala is a married woman, she became too much close with Sandip Babu. Sandip used to take suggestions from Bimala. They used to discuss on different topics but they don’t make Nikhil involve in their counsels. “My husband had no place in our counsels” (58). But a society expects women to be close to her husband rather than a stranger. It is the same society which expects women as weaker beings so the woman born in such society believes themselves as weaker one. “We women are weak,’ replied Bimala. ‘So I suppose we must join in the conspiracy of the weak” (67).

From the prehistoric time, men had held the higher position. They had the belief of superiority. Sandip says “we are men, we are kings, and we must have our tribute” (152).

Bimala is involved in the outer activities but she is not totally free. Nikhil once says, "To try to keep Bimala as a garland round my neck, would have meant keeping a weight hanging over my heart" (178). With the words of freedom one cannot get freedom, one cannot be absolutely free. Bimala is not satisfied with the words of freedom, she is lacking freedom. She says:

And then, the other day in the garden, how easy my husband found it to tell me that he set me free! But can freedom –empty freedom –be given and taken so easily as all that? It is like setting a fish free in the sky,-for how can I move or live outside the atmosphere of loving care which has always sustained me? (183)

Rather than enjoying freedom Bimala feels mere emptiness. Rather than enjoying freedom she sees furniture. She further says:

When I came to my room to-day, I saw only furniture-only the bedstead, only the looking-glass, only the clothes –rack-not the all pervading heart which used to be there, over all. Instead of it there was freedom, only freedom, mere emptiness! A dried up watercourse with all its rocks and pebbles lay bare. No feeling, only furniture! (184)

Living inside the four walls of the house one cannot analyze the thing of the outer world. Nikhil's master once told Nikhil to take away Bimala from the home. So, she could see the outer world. He says:

Take Bimala away to Calcutta. She is getting too narrow a view of the outside world from here; she cannot see men and things in their true proportions. Let her see the world,-men and their work,-give her a broad vision. (224)

Bimala finally came to realize that she is cheated in the outside world. Sandip whom she had full faith in him is a fraud. “Only a few minutes ago I had thought that Sandip, whom I had once taken to be a hero, was only the stage hero of melodrama” (242).

To hold the place in the world women should be trust worthy. To be trustful she should follow the rules imposed by the society. Bimala finally came to realize that there is no place for her in this world. Bimala in her autobiography says:

But women live on the trust of their surroundings,-this is their whole world. If once it is out that this trust has been secretly betrayed, their place in their world is lost. They have then to stand upon the fragments of the thing they have broken, and its jagged edges keep on wounding them at every turn. (247)

The female protagonist in the middle of the novel seems breaking from existing traditional society. She lives a new kind of life having the right to exercise full power. Later, she is surrounded by problems and she has no ability to tackle with.

Bimala is a typical Indian woman living in the patriarchal cannon before coming out of her home. She wakes up every morning and takes the dust of her husband’s feet. Subramanian and Ray in *Rabindranath Tagore and the Challenges of Today* say:

To the conventional Hindu woman, the husband was not just a person, he was an ideal-a living god on earth whom the scriptures enjoined her to serve and worship for her own spiritual fulfillment. The subservience inherent in the relationship need not necessarily impair her personality, for, as Tagore pointed out, she submitted not to

coercion but to a moral and religious idea. But for man the arrangement was disastrous. (245)

Bimala would have been the happiest woman if she had been an understanding woman following the traditional roles and values of Indian society. For this she should not have extra relation with Sandip who is not her family member. B.C.

Chakravorty in *Rabindranath Tagore: His Mind and Art* says:

When Bimala meets Sandip for the first time, she is fascinated by the dynamic personality. Sandip is absolutely selfish and crafty. He flatters Bimala as the incarnation of Shakti; who is the source of inspiration to all the sons of Bengal. They come closer to each other as comrades in the service of the country till Sandip's homage to the 'goddess' is transformed into his love for Bimala. Bimala is hypnotized by the magnetic personality of Sandip and she almost surrenders herself to him. (207)

Instead of being equal partners, sharing ideas and problems, a wife in such society cannot be open with her husband. It is because they feel themselves different from each other. Nikhil in his autobiography says "She has had to steal these six thousand rupees because she could not be open with me, because she felt that, in certain things, I despotically differed from her" (272).

When Nikhil heard that the Mussulmans were looting Harish Kundu's treasury in the near by village Nikhil went there to fight with them. Bimala even did not stop her husband from going. In high class Indian family the status of women is given according to the seniority. They are titled as Bara and Chota. In the same family the Bara woman acts as superior one than the Chota. She holds the power of women group in the family. She acts in a masculine way. She tries to suppress the junior

females in the family As Bara Rani came to know about Nikhil she furiously outburst saying, 'Oh you witch, you ogress, you couldn't die yourself, but needs must send him to his death!' (278).

There are two types of world one is inner and another is external world, the inner world is the world of female where they can find their identity. The external world is the world of male; it is a material world where the identity of female is lost.

Partha Chatterjee in *Postcolonial Discourses: an Anthology* says:

Now apply the inner/ outer distinction to the matter of concrete day to day living and you get a separation of the social space into *ghar* and *bahir*, the home and the world. The world is the external, the domain of the material; the home represents our inner spiritual self, our true identity. The world is a treacherous terrain of the pursuit of material interests. Where practical considerations reign supreme. It is also typically the domain of the male. The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the profligate activities of the material world –and a woman is its representation. And so we get an identification of social roles by gender to correspond with the separation of the social space into *ghar* and *bahir*. (156)

In a patriarchal society if a woman tries to defy the social order she will be destroyed at last. A critical reading of the novel sufficiently supports the claim about the point of view of male writer. Male writers present women figure as misogyny in the text. Misogyny means stupid, dishonest, irrational, overemotional etc. Bimala in this text is also presented as misogyny character because she is not able to differentiate right or wrong. She is attracted towards Sandip. In a society if a woman keeps relation with any other male persons rather than her husband that is regarded as

an illegal act and such type of woman is punished in the society. Bimala is also punished by her fate.

Similarly, in such a society women should remain within the four walls of the house without seeking emancipation. To live harmonious life women should not involve in the outer activities of the world. Rather than having dauntless quality she should possess demure quality. Bimala, the female character, in this novel tries to behave in masculine way going out of the home and engaging her in nationalistic movement, but she fails at last. Whatever she had done is turned into pure nothingness.

Tagore is strongly in favor of Indian culture. Though he got western education, he is highly influenced by Indian culture. Even in his text, he has presented Bimala purely as an Indian woman. Reading this novel critically, we can say that whenever, whoever tries to go against the culture has to face several problems during his or her lifetime. Even in his novel he has given more emphasis on home. Tagore has structured the plot to demonstrate his value of how a woman is unfit to struggle and live in man's world or society at last. The proposed thesis will make a thorough textual analysis to support the claim that Tagore has implicitly supported the traditional values and expectations of the Indian male made culture. The development and design of the plot is evidently the means of structuring women's world and reinforcing traditional patriarchal Indian values.

Before marriage, a girl's palms are consulted with an astrologer to know whether she has good signs to be an ideal wife. Her marriage is fixed only after palm reading. After consulting the astrologer if her palms show no good fortune, she will be rejected for marriage. Similarly, when the proposal came for Bimala's marriage an astrologer was consulted to read her palm, he said, "This girl has good signs. She will

become an ideal wife" (10). Such type of traditional belief still exists in a patriarchal society. A boy does not need any good signs before marriage. It is believed that he is already perfect but a girl is searched for good signs.

In such type of patriarchal society, males are more educated than females. They even go outside the house; they are quite modern in comparison to females. Bimala in her autobiography says, "But my husband was absolutely modern. He was the first of the house to go through a college course and take his M.A. degree" (11).

In the house, the husband is the senior partner and wife is under his guidance. A good wife is one who is obedient towards her husband. Wife is regarded as the ornament of the house; it means she is the means of decoration in the house.

We should know that to live a happy peaceful life, there should be union between husband and wife. They are equal partners of life. One should not feel oneself superior and another inferior. A.S Altekar in *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization* writes:

The wise have observed, says Manu, that the husband is identical with the wife and vice versa. It was therefore natural that the happiness of each should be regarded as depending upon the other. If there was complete harmony between the two, the house would be a heaven, if there was discord, it would be a hell. Wife is the keystone of the arch of the husband's happiness. (96)

He further says:

She is the only friend, who never forsakes him in adversity. You may be in a forest, still your comfort is assured if your wife is by your side; in fact a home without wife is an orest. Wife alone is the husband's trust friend, counsel and companion. (96)

Nikhil is not happy as Bimala is engaged with Sandip in the outer world. A husband cannot even think of pleasure if his wife cannot participate with him. A society expects woman to be true to her husband and lead the life of an ideal *pativrata*.

In fact, man's superior physical strength to woman and his role as a head of the family have put him in more favorable atmosphere than woman in the society. In patriarchy, men feel themselves superior. They do not need to seek for freedom. Nikhil, in his autobiography, says; "We, men are knights whose quest is that freedom to which our ideals call us" (143-144). He further adds, "I have gained freedom myself; I shall allow freedom to others" (144).

In patriarchy, women are given different images; the same woman is regarded as good one time and bad at another time. Her image is determined according to her work. SheilaRuth in *Issues in Feminism* writes:

The judgment of good and bad, like the images themselves are male projections....That is an image may be judged good at one time, bad at another, depending on its serviceability to the man making the judgment. As the image is judged, she is the woman incarnating the image. (90)

As Amulya asked Sandip Babu to return extra two thousand five hundred rupees to Bimala, she rejects to touch that stolen money again. She left that money to them to do as their wish. Hearing Bimal's word Sandip feels a kind of happiness and says, "Can man ever gives as woman can" (199). In reply Amulya says, "They are goddesses!" (199).

The Home and the World revolves around the lives of a married couple Bimala, Nikhil and Sandip. Nikhil is western educated and he wishes for Bimala to

emerge into the world outside so that she could regard her husband in the light of other men. He is the one who introduces Bimala to the English way of life. As her relation lingers with Sandip in the outer world, Nikhil is broken and he tells Bimala that she is free to do as she pleases. Bimala had been intoxicated with the politics and passion of Sandip Babu. She even stole money to support Sandip's cause but later she realizes her folly.

Living in a patriarchal society, Bimala is engulfed by the social values and norms but at the same time she is also unassisted by the female partners i.e. Bara Rani who has also sacrificed her identity to patriarchy. Bimala, like traditional women, is not educated and not conscious of womanhood. But, as she meets the outer world, she tries to become bold, courageous, and determined to achieve the goal and she struggles to do this. But, she fails there in the outer world.

Character is an important thing for a woman in a patriarchal society. Her character easily stains if she is not aware of the values and norms of the society. Bimala, being a married woman keeps relation with Sandip Babu. So, Bara Rani looks her in a negative way. She should know that she is living in such a male-dominated social milieu that if she puts her steps outside the home, she will suffer a lot. Women are not allowed to be exposed in the outer world and they are not accepted as capable as men.

Women have more patience; they can endure more than men. They can tolerate pain. Bimala, though she was in difficulty, she tried to solve the problem of money herself. For this, she even did not hesitate to steal money from her house and finally she is ready to accept the punishment for her wrong doings.

Chapter-IV

Conclusion:

Reading the novel through a feminist perspective, Tagore's novel *The Home and the World* holds traditional views about women. It also projects the approaches as depicted in Indian myths regarding the Indian ideal of womanhood. During his time, Tagore was regarded an Indian genius but with the passage of time and degradation of culture, customs also underwent change and the consciousness of women suffered in this process. New ideas emerged within the tradition which was giving prominence and superiority to men and made women a servile partner, slave and an appendix of men. Gradually, women became more conscious about their matters. Women moved freely without any 'Purdah' or social taboos to construct their movement which could help them to involve in the outside world as men.

My research on this novel is from feminist perspective and it focuses upon Bimala's role within the patriarchal society. Bimala in this novel symbolizes the Indian wife whose capacity for endurance is proverbial. In the very beginning, Nikhil, her husband, wants her to involve herself in the outer world. She refuses to come out of her home. But, steadily she realizes the futility of her existence and walks out of her house. As she comes out of her traditional home, she engages herself with Sandip. Her attempt to involve in the nationalistic movement and outside world is a complete failure and she returns to her own husband. She returns because she has nowhere else to go.

Tagore's characters are related to Indian society and its culture. Though Tagore has the idea of freedom for women, today as we look at this novel through a feminist lens, we can say that he is following the conventional roles of women

because at the last part of the story, Bimala returns to her own husband leaving the outside world.

Feminism has become the crucial subject of discussion in today's literature. Tagore might not have thought of the feminism cult which had tremendously developed in western countries. From the overall study of Tagore's novel, it can be concluded that this novel is centered on women in relation to men and the society. Women are taken as instrument of men's entertainment though they are the copartners with equal status. Feminism is a concept which focuses on women and seeks to emancipate them from male dominance, suppressed under patriarchy searching their identity and existence in a male centered society. It views patriarchy as the main cause of women's oppression and deprived them from various things. Women don't have equal chances for education, politics, employment and right to property. It strongly negates the view that women are physically weak and cannot compete with men.

Tagore's characters are related to Indian society. He has created a male dominated world where Bimala is made to be a failure in the outside world. Feminists view patriarchal dominance as a social evil, where women are regarded as inferior beings. *The Home and the World* also views female as the object of failure in man's world. It is not Bimala who raises the voice for freedom rather it is her own husband. Until her husband had pushed out her in the outer world, she has not thrown away her feminine qualities. She was living with her husband happily as a dutiful wife and paid attention to the familial matters. When she came out, she did not hesitate to have relation with Sandip.

The central theme of the novel is that if a woman tries to cross the boundary of the home, she will be destroyed in the end. Bimala, in fact, has been portrayed as a

failure character who cannot survive in the outer world. It is the home which safeguards the women. The failure of female character in this novel shows the concept of female's inferiority in masculine writing and in society in general.

In the middle part of the story there is communication gap between Bimala and Nikhil. Bimala, without asking anything from her husband, stole money from his box and handed that to Nikhil. Bimala violates the traditionally fixed norm that women should follow the rule imposed by the patriarchal society so that she could get her place in the home. In this novel, the female character like Bara Rani did not like the behaviors of Chota Rani. She dislikes Sandip when he used to come to visit Bimala at her home. She even dislikes Bimala when she used to engage in the nationalistic movement with Sandip. This also shows that women themselves become the barriers to women's emancipation.

Bimala seems to be happy in the beginning. Later on, when she steps into the outside world she is surrounded by the problems; her happiness is lost in the outside world. In a male dominated society, a male can tackle problems or difficulties but a woman cannot tackle those problems. Sandip succeeds in handling the female character according to his wishes and desires.

The patriarchal society should know that women feel interested in her fellow beings not because of some particular purpose but because they are living creatures. Though women are biologically and psychologically different from men, women's world is concrete, personal, and humane. The human world is the woman's world –be it domestic or full of the other activities of life. So, equal freedom in woman–man relationship is desirable for domestic harmony. Women have more power in them than men. They are the mothers of all races.

Reading this novel through a feminist perspective, this novel reinforces man's culture and structures women's world. It also holds the beliefs and values of traditional patriarchal society. The world has been divided into two parts. One is 'ghar' which means home and another is 'bahir' meaning outside world. Home is a private place whereas outside world is a public place. Home refers to tradition whereas outside world is foreign. Home is related to females and outside world is related to males. Women in a patriarchal set up are limited within the home; they are forced to run after private affairs. Their status will be degraded according to their activities. Since a long time males are working in the outside world as competitors to find out suitable jobs. But males don't like female participating in the outer world as competitors. So, the patriarchal society limits the movement of women.

Finally, we can say that with the passage of time and culture, women have become more conscious about their ideology. During Tagore's time women in his society were living happily, they were enjoying their family. There was no dispute of any kind among women. But today, the world has changed. Today women have started raising their voices. They have become educated and started thinking about their position and the status in the family and the society. Today, as we look at Tagore's traditional society from a feminist perspective, we feel that during Tagore's time women were limited in the inner houses. Inner world was the world of women and outer world was for males. If a woman stepped outside her home, she was made to be a failure in the outside world. Subordination was an accepted norm then. Now, when females rebel against the inferior position given by the patriarchal society, Tagore's *Home and the World* attains a different meaning altogether.

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