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Exploration of 19th Century Women's Condition by Henrik Ibsen: A Study from *A Doll's House*

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ABSTRACT : This study aimed at exploring the true condition of women by the eminent playwright Henrik Ibsen in his famous play *A Doll's House*. The researchers chose content analysis method of research to analyze data. Here, the main focus was given on the exploration of the protagonist of *A Doll's House*, Nora. *A Doll's House* was a true revolutionary creation of Henrik Ibsen questioning the position of a woman in society and focusing the individual self of a woman than the role of a wife or mother. The play uniquely dealt with the real social problem of that time engaging the middle class people as the core characters. Superiority of males to females was a common practice of the patriarchal society of that time. In that case, women had no right or chance to break the rules. The study explored that women were deprived of their rights as a human being in the name of patriarchy. They had no freedom to take part in economic, social, political and decision making arena. They were shaped physically and mentally to follow the command of the male members of the family being confined to the four walls of their house. The scenario has been unfolded from the condition of Nora, the protagonist of *A Doll's House*, who could not take even a Macaroon as her husband forbade her to do so. She was treated like a doll by her husband in every step of their conjugal life. Notably, the animal nicknames like "my little skylark" and "my squirrel" used by her husband to call her indicates her helplessness, dependence on her husband and a degree of dehumanization imposed by her husband. Besides, the other female characters were also seen mentally and physically shaped and suppressed by surrounded male authority.

Keywords- Women, Ibsen, *A Doll's House*

I. INTRODUCTION

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* explores the social phenomena in the 19th century's patriarchal society. Patriarchal system made the males, especially fathers supreme authoritative figures over women, children, and property (Lambert, 2009). Grown up with its dominating

force in every arena including social, legal, political, and economic fields of every society and country, the patriarchal system has constructed women to be the ideal role model of good homemakers who only take care of their husband, children and house. The traditional roles of 'wife' and 'mother' became a legal duty, and the 'failure to perform them has legal and moral consequences' (Radek, 2008). According to Case, 'the result of the suppression of actual women in the classical world created the invention of a representation of the gender 'Woman' within the culture.' (Case, 1986, p. 318). It is important to note the historical context of women's oppression during the 18th and 19th century. Wives were considered the personal property of their husbands; children belonged solely to the father, and women had fewer grounds for divorce than men. 'The gender roles of 19th-century patriarchy can be interpreted in two ways: as a social system which reserved power and privilege for men; or a process of gradual female rejection and challenge to their exclusion' (Marsh, 2013). Mill progressively argued that social and legal terms which restrict the liberty of women serve as one of the 'chief hindrances to human improvement' (Smith, 2001, p. 181). A woman must be knowledgeable enough to take charge of her husband's affairs in his absence, but in his presence 'she will humble herself towards him in deed and word and by curtsying; she will obey without complaint, and she will hold her peace to the best of her ability.' (Lloyd, 1995, p. 332). The man belongs in the public sphere and is 'active, progressive, and defensive. He is the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender' (Bartleby, 1993). But a woman's power is for 'sweet ordering and arrangement' and her greatest function is praise. (Bartleby, 1993).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of scholarly works including dissertations, papers, articles, essays and books have already been done regarding the plays of Henrik Ibsen, especially on *A Doll's House*. As the current study is of a similar kind, different reviews in the respective fields are presented below. Tayeng (2017) mentioned that the status of woman in society has always been inferior though the degree of subordination and domination differed from society to society and country to country. They focused about woman and their problems faced by oppressions in patriarchal society, sexual colonialism, sexual politics and her marginalization, loss of identity, her freedom and suppression of her view and want. The paper showed the untrue system of marriage norms, stressing fighting for individual identity and their freedom, in addition protesting against all restrictions in society. It depicted the real social issues in bringing justice and equality towards women's voices. Ghafourinia and Jamili (2014) focused on different negative issues of the society including the so called male dominated untrue system of marriage and conjugal life and women's suppressed condition, and then it emphasized on the struggle of women for gaining individual identity and their fighting against a number of injustice. The paper also dealt with the Ibsen's ideology, individuality and humanity which were the most important social issues developed in Ibsen's writing. The findings shows that the protagonist of *A Doll's House*, Nora, as a woman, a wife, or a mother, behaves like a doll. She has been made automatically such a woman by the ritual and the practice of the so called patriarchal society. Ranjani (2017) unfolded the condition of women, especially Nora, the heroine of the respective play. Nora was seen as a doll in the very beginning but the same guy was seen as an independent individual in the ending though it was not an easy matter. It took lots of sacrifices, sufferings and struggle. Khurram (2016) centered the criticalness of "A Doll" in association with Nora; in Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House*. The study unfolded the scenario of the era of Ibsen connected to the issues of feminism. The paper presented the findings regarding the domination of male part of the society over females labelling them as 'doll' so that they were bound to be ruled and shaped as the husband, father and the male centered society wanted. From the very beginning of the play, it had been seen that Nora could not think of doing a simple

thing without the concern of her husband. Her husband as well as the society made her to be such type of 'doll' though this 'doll' was not a real 'doll' rather a bold personality that aspect came into light at the end of the play. Dan (2007) conducted a study on "The Faces of Feminine Devotion in Ibsen's Theatre." The theme of the study is the sacrifice of female characters in some of Ibsen's plays. To unfold the real scenario, the researcher asked a number of questions regarding the sufferings, sacrifices and the struggle of women. The researcher mentioned that though the heroines are different in different plays of Ibsen, most of them are seen to sacrifice themselves to the patriarchal power and in some turning points they revolted for the true identity and freedom. So, all the studies reviewed above are basically connected to the theme of the current study though the current study aims at exploring the respective issue more elaborately and precisely.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section of the study mainly deals with the exploration of the condition of 19th century women with reference to the Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. The scenario of women suppressed condition is unfolded from the very beginning of the play.

HELMER. Is that my lark twittering there?

NORA. [Busy opening some of her parcels.] Yes, it is.

HELMER. Is it the squirrel frisking around?

NORA. Yes!

HELMER. When did the squirrel get home?

NORA. Just this minute. [Hides the bag of macaroons in her pocket and wipes her mouth.] Come here, Torvald, and see what I've been buying.

HELMER. Don't interrupt me. [A little later he opens the door and looks in, pen in hand.] Buying, did you say? What! All that? Has my little spendthrift been making the money fly again?

NORA. Why, Torvald, surely we can afford to launch out a little now. It's the first Christmas we haven't had to pinch.

HELMER. Come come; we can't afford to squander money. (Act-I, P-23,24)

From the above mentioned lines, it is seen that Helmer addresses Nora as his "Lark", "Spendthrift" and in each cases as "My". Those all the addresses express the authoritative position of Helmer and his attitude to Nora where he treats her as a child who just knows to expense money irrespectively as Torvald thinks and that is why she should not decide anything of her own. The thinking of possessiveness regarding Nora is expressed by him as "And I don't wish you anything but just what you are- my own".

One of the notable aspects is that Nora is also automatically shaped how Helmer as well as the system want. She has bought Sword and Horse for her male child and a doll for her daughter that indicates her mentality grown with the effect of the patriarchal society. She does not have her own choice in any case. These issues are seen in the following lines from the beginning section of the play.

HELMER. Oh! Ah! But now tell me, you little spendthrift, have you thought of anything for yourself?

NORA. For myself! Oh, I don't want anything.

HELMER. Nonsense! Just tell me something sensible you would like to have.

NORA. No, really I don't know of anything- Well, listen, Torvald

HELMER. Well! (Act-I, P-26, 27)

These lines of the play states the condition that Nora choices and buys gifts for family members except herself because she does not have any choice for her own as well as her

thinking is like that she does not need anything. It has two dimensions, one is her less demand as a wife who only knows to sacrifice everything for others whom she loves and cares and another is giving the priority of Torvald's choice in every case consciously or subconsciously.

Another example of the authority of Helmer on Nora is viewed in a very simple case like going to the confectionary shops and having some sweet item. It is also controlled by Helmer.

HELMER. Didn't she just look in at the confectioner's?

NORA. No, Torvald; really-

HELMER. Not to sip a little jelly?

NORA. No; certainly not.

HELMER. Hasn't she even nibbled a macaroon or two?

NORA. No, Torvald, indeed, indeed!

HELMER. Well, well, well; of course I'm only joking.

NORA. [Goes to the table on the right.] I shouldn't think of doing what you disapprove of.

HELMER. No, I'm sure of that; and, besides, you've given me your word- [Going towards her.] (Act-I, P-29, 30)

Here, it is seen that Nora is not permitted to have some macaroons even because Helmer thinks that those are harmful for Nora's teeth. In another place of the play, it is seen that Nora lies to Dr. Rank about the macaroon she has bought. She says that these are brought by Mrs. Linden because Dr. Rank knows about the order of Torvald in this regard. It indicates how Nora is controlled by her husband in such a silly issue even. From the last two lines mentioned above, it is seen that Nora says him that she should not do anything that Helmer disapproves and Helmer always thinks that way.

Nora is delighted with the upcoming higher position of Helmer instead of thinking a bit about her own career because she cannot think out the households. Helmer is also seen very conscious about having power and authority that is clear from the following lines:

HELMER. Ah, it's glorious to feel that one has an assured position and ample means. Isn't it delightful to think of?

NORA. Oh, it's wonderful! (Act-I, P-30)

It is seen from the beginning to almost the end of the play that a woman does not have the freedom of decision, choice or any other important thing. When Nora asks Helmer to borrow some money from other people for the occasion of Christmas, Helmer thinks that it is a shame for him to ask for a loan from other people because there will be no happiness in a family if they depend on a loan. In every step, women are seen unequal to men. Women have not the right of borrowing money without the consent of husband as explored in the play "a wife can't borrow without her husband's consent". The following lines of the play describes the situation very well.

"Nora, Nora! What a woman you are! But seriously, Nora, you know my principles on these points. No debts! No borrowing! Home life ceases to be free and beautiful as soon as it is founded on borrowing and debt. We two have held out bravely till now, and we are not going to give in at the last." (Act-I, P-25)

When the husband and wife are equal they have a minimum influence on each other. In case of Torvald, it is seen that he has hundred percent influence on Nora but the situation is completely reverse in case of Nora. It is clearly unfolded by the saying of Nora when Mr. Krogstad requests Nora to use her influence on Torvald to save Krogstad's position in the Bank.

KROGSTAD. Come come now, once for all: there is time yet, and I advise you to use your influence to prevent it.

NORA. But, Mr. Krogstad, I have no influence- absolutely none.

KROGSTAD. None? I thought you said a moment ago-

NORA. Of course not in that sense. I! How can you imagine that I should have any such influence over my husband? (Act-I, P-65)

Nora is also cheated by another male character Mr. Krogstad as well and it happens such a moment when she should get support from everyone because she does her everything only to save her husband's life. She has to take loan from Krogstad. Here, Krogstad added some lines in the agreement without informing Nora and which really goes against Nora. Nora explains that she has to forge her father's signature because of an important reason, which is to get the money soon. She uses the money to go to Italy as the doctor suggested, a place where her husband could possibly get better, but Krogstad does not care about Nora's motive. He only cares about his matter. He also compels her to help him that is to persuade her husband to restore his position in the Bank. If it does not occur then he will reveal Nora's secret to Helmer that Nora has borrowed some money from him and she has also forged her father's signature to get the loan. The following lines describes the issue very well.

KROGSTAD. When your husband was ill, you came to me to borrow twelve hundred dollars.

NORA. I knew of nobody else.

KROGSTAD. I promised to find you the money-

NORA. And you did find it.

KROGSTAD. I promised to find you the money, on certain conditions. You were so much taken up at the time about your husband's illness, and so eager to have the wherewithal for your journey, that you probably did not give much thought to the details. Allow me to remind you of them. I promised to find you the amount in exchange for a note of hand, which I drew up.

NORA. Yes, and I signed it.

KROGSTAD. Quite right. But then I added a few lines, making your father security for the debt. Your father was to sign this.

NORA. Was to-? He did sign it!

KROGSTAD. I had left the date blank. That is to say, your father was himself to date his signature. (Act-I, P-68, 69)

In every case, it is noticed that Nora loves her father and husband from the core of her heart and that is why she always think of their betterment scarifying her own happiness. She has not inform her father about the loan because of his illness and takes such a risk of borrowing money from Krogstad only to save her husband's life. This scenario is explored in the section mentioned below.

KROGSTAD. May I ask you one more question? Why did you not send the paper to your father?

NORA. It was impossible. Father was ill. If I had asked him for his signature, I should have had to tell him why I wanted the money; but he was so ill I really could not tell him that my husband's life was in danger. It was impossible.

KROGSTAD. Then it would have been better to have given up your tour.

NORA. No, I couldn't do that; my husband's life depended on that journey. I couldn't give it up. (Act-I, P-71)

Nora's belonging society is really full of hollowness and unfriendly laws regarding the rights of women where a woman cannot borrow money with a great purpose like saving husband's life and a woman cannot take the responsibility of making someone free from trouble and so on. These things are seen in the following statement made by Nora.

"I don't believe that. Do you mean to tell me that a daughter has no right to spare her dying father trouble and anxiety?- that a wife has no right to save her husband's life? I

don't know much about the law, but I'm sure you'll find, somewhere or another, that that is allowed. And you don't know that- you, a lawyer! You must be a bad one, Mr. Krogstad." (Act-I, P-72, 73)

From the dialogue above, the innocent and child-like mind of Nora is unfolded through her thinking that laws of a society cannot be unfriendly like that said by Krogstad. She thinks that there must be some other friendly and logical options of law that will focus on humanity first. How the male dominated society is biased regarding gender issue in every step is clearly understood from the following lines of the play.

HELMER. As a lawyer, my dear, I have seen it often enough. Nearly all cases of early corruption may be traced to lying mothers.

NORA. Why- mothers?

HELMER. It generally comes from the mother's side; (Act-I, P-79, 80)

These above mentioned lines come when Torvald mentions Nora about the corruption done by Krogstad. Torvald firmly believes that almost all cases, early corruptions of people are inherited from lying mothers.

When Nora is tensed with the issue of her loan and some other connecting issues, she also thinks that this is not her job as she is a woman. She believes that these types of jobs can be well managed by a man and the other important female character of the play Mrs. Linden also thinks the same way which are explored in the following lines of the play.

NORA. [Walking up and down.] A man can manage these things much better than a woman.

MRS. LINDEN. One's own husband, yes. (Act-II, P-90)

A notable aspect of subordination of women is seen from Nora's style of request to Torvald for keeping Krogstad in his post. It is seen that she requests her husband like a child so humbly and politely with the promise of entertaining him how he likes but finally Torvald denies to accept her request without considering her logical points. Even, when the reference of Nora's father comes, Torvald teases Nora mentioning the difference between her father and him without showing any kind of minimum respect and gratitude though till that Torvald knew that the financial support for his treatment came from Nora's father. These phenomena are clearly understood from the following lines of the play.

NORA. Torvald.

HELMER. [Stopping.] Yes?

NORA. If your little squirrel were to beg you for something so prettily-

HELMER. Well?

NORA. Would you do it?

HELMER. I must know first what it is.

NORA. The squirrel would skip about and play all sorts of tricks if you would only be nice and kind.

HELMER. Come, then, out with it.

NORA. Your lark would twitter from morning till night- HELMER. Oh, that she does in any case.

NORA. I'll be an elf and dance in the moonlight for you,

Torvald. HELMER. Nora- you can't mean what you were hinting at this morning?

NORA. [Coming nearer.] Yes, Torvald, I beg and implore you!

HELMER. Have you really the courage to begin that again?

HELMER. My little Nora, between your father and me there is all the difference in the world. Your father was not altogether unimpeachable. I am; and I hope to remain so. (Act-II, P-93)

A notable general view of the male part to the female part is clearly understood from the view of Helmer to Nora. When Nora asks him about his tempted looking to her, Helmer says that as she is his treasure, he has the right to look at her as he wishes because she completely belongs to Helmer only. Even, Helmer basically thinks Nora as an entertaining creature who will entertain him by her beauty and exciting activities like dancing as well as sexual intercourses. All these thinking of Helmer are explored in the following lines of the play.

NORA. Don't look at me in that way, Torvald.

HELMER. I am not to look at my dearest treasure?- at all the loveliness that is mine, mine only, wholly and entirely mine?

NORA. [Goes to the other side of the table.] You mustn't say these things to me this evening.

HELMER. [Following.] I see you have the tarantella still in your blood- and that makes you all the more enticing. Listen! the other people are going now. [More softly.] Nora- soon the whole house will be still.

NORA. Yes, I hope so.

(Act-III, P-142)

How much the male part of the society are conscious about their position is unfolded when Krogstad sends them a letter with the declaration that he will not do any harm submitting the papers related to Nora's borrowing of money from Krogstad. Reading the letter, Torvald utters that he is safe but does not utter the name of Nora as saved and after her asking he only says that she is also saved. This expression of Torvald easily unfolds his selfishness who always like to carry own position forward without considering Nora's sacrifices for him. This issue is clearer from the following lines.

HELMER. Nora!- Oh! I must read it again.- Yes, yes, it is so. I am saved! Nora, I am saved!

NORA. And I?

HELMER. You too, (Act-III, P-157)

Another notable scenario of the subordination of women comes in light in the final act when Nora really can understand her place in the family. She cherishes the dream and belief for long that Torvald will save her in any trouble but when the secrets regarding borrowing money from Krogstad is disclosed to Torvald, the scenario turns totally reverse of her thinking. Instead of taking the responsibility on own shoulder, Torvald blames Nora crucially. In his view, no man is ready to sacrifice honor for a woman if she is his wife even. It is not only Torvald's view but also the view of male dominated so called society. When Nora reminds him that lots of women have done such sacrifices for one they love then he treats her as a child. In this stage Nora can really realize how she has been treated discriminately by male dominated society and especially by her husband. This core theme is explored in the following lines of the play.

NORA. Then I firmly believed that you would come forward, take everything upon yourself, and say, "I am the guilty one."

HELMER. Nora-!

NORA. You mean I would never have accepted such a sacrifice? No, certainly not. But assertions have been worth in opposition to yours?- That was the miracle that I hoped for and dreaded. And it was to hinder that that I wanted to die.

HELMER. I would gladly work for you day and night, Nora- bear sorrow and want for your sake. But no man sacrifices his honour, even for one he loves.

NORA. Millions of women have done so.

HELMER. Oh, you think and talk like a silly child.

NORA. Very likely. But you neither think nor talk like the man I can share my life with. When your terror was over- not for what threatened me, but for yourself- when there was nothing more to fear- then it seemed to you as though nothing had happened. I was your lark again, your doll, just as before- whom you would take twice as much care of in future, because she was so weak and fragile. [Stands up.] Torvald- in that moment it burst upon me that I had been living here these eight years with a strange man, and had borne him three children.- Oh, I can't bear to think of it! I could tear myself to pieces! (Act-III, P-171, 172)

Regarding the condition of women of that time, Ibsen says:

“A woman cannot be herself in the society of the present day, which is an exclusively masculine society, with laws framed by men and a judicial system that judges feminine conduct from a masculine point of view.”

Besides the protagonist of *A Doll's House*, Nora Helmer, Mrs. Linden is also a significant character who represents another perspective of the terrible condition of women of that time. She is seen a widow who has come to town to look for a job. It is explored from the conversation between Mrs. Linden and Nora that her husband died without leaving nothing like wealth, children or even any good memory for her. So, she has been passing a terrible time of helplessness and loneliness. This condition of Mrs. Linden can be realized from the following lines of the Play *A Doll's House*.

NORA. [Softly.] Poor Christina! I forgot: you are a widow.

MRS. LINDEN. Yes; my husband died three years ago.

NORA. I know, I know; I saw it in the papers. Oh, believe me, Christina, I did mean to write to you; but I kept putting it off, and something always came in the way.

MRS. LINDEN. I can quite understand that, Nora dear.

NORA. No, Christina; it was horrid of me. Oh, you poor darling! how much you must have gone through!- And he left you nothing?

MRS. LINDEN. Nothing.

NORA. And no children? MRS. LINDEN. None.

NORA. Nothing, nothing at all?

MRS. LINDEN. Not even a sorrow or a longing to dwell upon.

NORA. [Looking at her incredulously.] My dear Christina, how is that possible?

MRS. LINDEN. [Smiling sadly and stroking her hair.] Oh, it happens so sometimes, Nora.

NORA. So utterly alone! How dreadful that must be! (Act-I, P-34, 35)

Again, a number of notable issues regarding the sufferings of Mrs. Linden are explored through her conversation with Nora that she had to pass a very critical condition as her mother was seriously sick with the need of her care and two younger bother to take care of as well. That crucial moment of financially helplessness made her bound to marry a wealthy man not for love but only for the sake of the betterment of her mother and brothers. More unfortunately, she was financially empty for the uncertain business of her dead husband and she had to go through continuous hard work in shop, school and so on. Her mother has also died and brothers are fit to take care of themselves. Now, she is an isolated woman who has no one to think and to live for that makes her an empty beings. All these situations have made her bound to come to the town to look for a job. These themes are well described in the following lines of the play.

MRS. LINDEN. My mother was still alive, you see, bedridden and helpless; and then I had my two younger brothers to think of. I didn't think it would be right for me to refuse him.

NORA. Perhaps it wouldn't have been. I suppose he was rich then?

MRS. LINDEN. Very well off, I believe. But his business was uncertain. It fell to pieces at his death, and there was nothing left.

NORA. And then-?

MRS. LINDEN. Then I had to fight my way by keeping a shop, a little school, anything I could turn my hand to. The last three years have been one long struggle for me. But now it is over, Nora. My poor mother no longer needs me; she is at rest. And the boys are in business, and can look after themselves.

NORA. How free your life must feel!

MRS. LINDEN. No, Nora; only inexpressibly empty. No one to live for! [Stands up restlessly.] That's why I could not bear to stay any longer in that out-of-the-way corner. Here it must be easier to find something to take one up- to occupy one's thoughts. If I could only get some settled employment- some office work. (Act-I, P-39, 40)

Sufferings of Mrs. Linden is also seen from her conversation with Dr. Rank. Physical weakness for more workload of Mrs. Linden is explored in the eye of Dr. Rank. And a crucial issue is seen that when Mrs. Linden needs some rest to recover her weakness, she has to search another work only for her livelihood. These issues are well expressed in the following lines of the play.

RANK. Oh, indeed; I've often heard Mrs. Linden's name; I think I passed you on the stairs as I came up.

MRS. LINDEN. Yes; I go so very slowly. Stairs try me so much. RANK. Ah- you are not very strong?

MRS. LINDEN. Only overworked.

RANK. Nothing more? Then no doubt you've come to town to find rest in a round of dissipation?

MRS. LINDEN. I have come to look for employment.

RANK. Is that an approved remedy for overwork?

MRS. LINDEN. One must live, Doctor Rank. (Act-I, P-52, 53)

Finally, core suffering of Mrs. Linden come into light from a conversation with her ex-lover Krogstad. It is seen that both of them truly loved each other but for family crisis, Mrs. Linden had to hide several issues to Krogstad that represented her wrongly to Krogstad as well. She also had to fight against herself sacrificing her true love only for the service of family. These points are well understood from the lines mentioned below.

KROGSTAD. Have we two anything to say to each other?

MRS. LINDEN. A great deal.

KROGSTAD. I should not have thought so.

MRS. LINDEN. Because you have never really understood me.

KROGSTAD. What was there to understand? The most natural thing in the world- a heartless woman throws a man over when a better match offers.

MRS. LINDEN. Do you really think me so heartless? Do you think I broke with you lightly?

KROGSTAD. Did you not?

MRS. LINDEN. Do you really think so?

KROGSTAD. If not, why did you write me that letter?

MRS. LINDEN. Was it not best? Since I had to break with you, was it not right that I should try to put an end to all that you felt for me?

KROGSTAD. [Clenching his hands together.] So that was it? And all this- for the sake of money!

MRS. LINDEN. You ought not to forget that I had a helpless mother and two little brothers. We could not wait for you, Nils, as your prospects then stood.

KROGSTAD. Perhaps not; but you had no right to cast me off for the sake of others, whoever the others might be.

MRS. LINDEN. I don't know. I have often asked myself whether I had the right.

KROGSTAD. [More softly.] When I had lost you, I seemed to have no firm ground left under my feet. Look at me now. I am a shipwrecked man clinging to a spar. (Act-III, P-130, 131)

Anna, a minor but significant female character of *A Doll's House*, represents the poor and marginalized women of her time. It is explored that Anna has to give up her own daughter for a number of reasons including the bindings of the society regarding an illegitimate child, loving an irresponsible man whom she has to term as 'wicked' and finally her poor social and economic condition. She is a woman who had to sacrifice the golden time of her youth only to get food, shelter and security. It is clear from her voice that a poor and troubled woman cannot want much of this position. She started her career as a nursemaid in Nora's parents' house to take care of Nora and now she is doing the same work in Nora's house. All these matters are disclosed in the following lines of the play.

NORA. Tell me, Anna- I've so often wondered about it- how could you bring yourself to give your child up to strangers?

ANNA. I had to when I came to nurse my little Miss Nora.

NORA. But how could you make up your mind to it?

ANNA. When I had the chance of such a good place? A poor girl who's been in trouble must take what comes. That wicked man did nothing for me.

NORA. But your daughter must have forgotten you.

ANNA. Oh, no, ma'am, that she hasn't. She wrote to me both when she was confirmed and when she was married.

NORA. [Embracing her.] Dear old Anna- you were a good mother to me when I was little.

ANNA. My poor little Nora had no mother but me.

NORA. And if my little ones had nobody else, I'm sure you would- Nonsense, nonsense! [Opens the box.] Go in to the children. Now I must- You'll see how lovely I shall be to-morrow.

ANNA. I'm sure there will be no one at the ball so lovely as my Miss Nora. (Act-II, P-84, 85)

IV. CONCLUSION

So, based on the above findings and discussions, it can be said that women had to go through a very critical, discriminated and suppressed condition in the era of Ibsen. Most of the laws of the patriarchal society were in the favor of the male part that automatically went against the female part of the society. All these notable issues have been clearly unfolded from the representation of Nora, Mrs. Linden and Anna in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen.

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