

## *Original Paper*

# Empowering Bangladeshi Female Teachers through Ibsen's A

## *Doll's House*

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### **Abstract**

*The term, "empowerment" is undoubtedly a debating issue to many critics, scholars, politicians, academicians, practitioners, feminists, researchers, and litterateurs around the world; it is difficult to define in a practical sense. This study would like to apply this term with a view to empowering Bangladesh's female teachers. And, the term, "empowerment" would be connected with women empowerment in the Bangladesh Perspective to clarify the discussion of this study. Truly speaking, Ibsen's A Doll's House bears the everlasting testimony of a feminist play around the planet. Though Ibsen's outstanding creation of Nora's character is still a globally controversial question, but to womankind, she is regarded as a model of freedom, power, and protect. In Bangladeshi colleges and universities, the participation of women is on the increase day by day across the country. Many of them are keenly interested in teaching profession, especially Bengali and English literature. It is interesting to note that many female teachers are very much eager to teach and carry out their scientific research project on A Doll's House in the light of Bangladesh. They would like to find out an innovative and potential aspect of contemporary women's issues differently through an epoch making creation of Ibsen's female character, Nora. Some of female teachers regard Nora as an inspiration of women empowerment in the Bangladesh perspective. They have a popular notion that Nora is not only for the Scandinavian women, but also for Bangladeshi. In this regard, the researcher would like to frame Nora as a pioneer of women empowerment to Bangladeshi female teachers. Moreover, this study would like to examine how Ibsen's A Doll's House is now being evaluated, learnt, and taught in the Bangladeshi colleges and universities.*

### **Keywords**

*A Doll's House, empowerment, empowerment of women, female teachers, Henrik Ibsen, Nora*

## 1. Empowerment

Empowerment is a construct shared by many disciplines and arenas: community development, psychology, education, economics, and studies of social movements and organizations, among others. How empowerment is understood varies among these perspectives. In recent empowerment literature, the meaning of the term empowerment is often assumed rather than explained or defined. Rappoport (1984) has noted that it is easy to define empowerment by its absence, but difficult to define in action as it takes on different forms in different people and contexts. Even defining the concept is subject to debate. Zimmerman (1984) has stated that asserting a single definition of empowerment may make attempts to achieve it formulaic, or prescription, like contradicting the very concept of empowerment.

A common understanding of empowerment is necessary, however, to allow us to know empowerment when we see it among people with whom we are working, and for program evaluation. According to Bailey (1992), how we precisely define empowerment within our projects and programs will depend upon the specific people and context involved. As a general definition, however, we suggest that empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power, or the capacity to implement among people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important.

We suggest that three components of our definition are basic to any understanding of empowerment. Empowerment is multi-dimensional, social, and a process. It is multi-dimensional in that it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, and other dimensions. Empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as individual, group, and community. Empowerment, by definition, is a social process, since it occurs in relationship to others. Empowerment is a process that is similar to a path or journey, one that develops as we work through it. Other aspects of empowerment may vary according to the specific context and people involved, but these remain constant. In addition, one important implication of this definition of empowerment is that the individual and community are fundamentally connected.

We see empowerment as a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power among people for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society by acting on issues that they define as important. In PEP as in Extension we strive to teach people skills and knowledge that will motivate them to take steps to improve their own lives to be empowered. The idea of power is at the root of the term empowerment. Power can be understood as operating in a number of different ways:

**Power Over:** This power involves an either/or relationship of domination vs. subordination. Ultimately, it is based on socially sanctioned threats of violence and intimidation, it requires constant vigilance to maintain; and it invites active and passive resistance;

**Power To:** This power relates to having decision-making authority, power to solve problems and can be creative and enabling;

**Power With:** This power involves people organising with a common purpose, or common

understanding to achieve collective goals;

**Power Within:** This power refers to self-confidence, self-awareness and assertiveness. It relates to how individual can recognise through analysing their experience how power operates in their lives, and gain the confidence to act to influence and change this (Williams et al., 1994).

## 2. Empowerment of Women

Empowerment was a strategy first proposed internationally in the 1980s by a group of activists from the South to challenge the hegemony of northern feminists in international discourse regarding women (Sen & Grown, 1987). The term was mainstreamed by international development agencies as a way of mobilizing women's well-documented commitment to family well-being for development's goal (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005). Women's empowerment has to be associated with local grassroots, participatory initiatives that allow women voice, but not power. This focus on the local leads to neglect of the structural constraints is embedded in global and national institutions that limit the prospects for empowerment. Parpart, Rai, and Staudt suggest it "encourages a rather romantic equation between empowerment, inclusion, and voice that papers over the complexities of empowerment, both as a process and a goal" (2002). The empowerment of women has been co-opted as a neoliberal strategy to abdicate state responsibility for social provisioning and promote woman's "self-help". Women are encouraged to form community associations to perform activities assumed by the state. Women's empowerment is rescued from a future as a "motherhood" term by focusing on its core meaning: women gaining power to shape their lives, their communities, their status, and the international system (Parpart, Rai, & Staudt, 2002, p. 3). Empowerment may be defined as an individual's capacity to take control of her own life and resources; to make decisions about strategic life choices; to alter power relations that constraint her opinion, autonomy, and well-being; and to achieve her desired outcomes (Chow, 2003, pp. 443-460). The concept is about a process of transformation, from being disadvantaged by power relations that shape choices and well-being into a position of being able to make meaningful choices. Power is central to the notion of empowerment.

Though the concept of empowerment is not fully accepted internationally, feminists have long used it to emphasize the social constructions of masculinity and femininity in contrast to the biological determination of sex. The concept of gender forces us to examine power relations between male and female in both intimate and social settings, and to study the cultural trends of male-dominated society. Empowerment means a woman, or a group of women, finding their power within themselves to make choices and act upon them to achieve results. Empowerment, however, involves not only observable action, but also meaning, motivation, and purpose (Kabeer, 2005). Empowerment of women is to motivate women's community into socio-economic and political development through implementing successfully different functions, in where they will be able to gain their rights and to protect themselves individually, or concertedly.

### 3. Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh

One of the most discussed topics in the current world is Women's Empowerment. The use of the term "empowerment" in the international arena can be found in contemporary times of 1860. Meaning of achieving political power is a very narrow sense. In the 1980s, it became popular worldwide. Demanding to claim the overall rights of women is private development organizations. Development Alternative for Women for New Era explains the definition of empowerment of women; in this way, its main goal is to develop a world without discrimination, where women will be able to make changes in their own life through empowerment in the world.

In South Asia, three perspectives on women empowerment were preferred. Comprehensive development, economic development, and awareness increase. The main philosophy of integrated development theory is that women's development is the key to family and social development. The main point of the economic development theory is that they have to make them aware of the issues that make women subordinate. The main goal of empowering women is to change the source of the power and the structure, the ability to develop the possibilities of a woman's latent talent and possibilities, the ability to decide on her own life by taking part in decisions that influence her.

The main theme of International Women's Day was "Women Empowerment; development empowerment is not a human philosophy". Awareness needed to use empowerment in human rights. Empowerment of women in any process is not possible without considering the values of education, values, honesty, ethics, common values of values, and not the view of tradition. To empower women, a woman should be aware of herself first. The prerequisites for empowerment will be achieved. In addition to the awareness of those who will be empowered, there are people who are thinking people in society, those who think about these issues should also be aware of them. To increase awareness at all levels. Considering the real aspects of the life of women society, she must understand her position. In the era of globalization, with the development of information technology, our social perspectives and structural reforms did not happen. Yet the women of Bangladesh did not live. Through walking and walking, they progressed a long way. Violent behaviour towards women is increasing, which is not desirable. Taking advantage of various obstacles, Bangladesh is trying to advance in the field of empowerment, like other countries of the world. Women's contribution in the development of social development, continuous economic mobility, empowerment at the grassroots' level, maximum participation as voting and first place in clothing exports, in present Bangladesh, is significant. From the point of view of political empowerment, women have gradually achieved success after independence. In the general elections of 1986, only five women were elected to the parliament. At present, a total of 69 women in the parliament represent women's society in the parliament as a member of parliament. The Prime Minister of the current Government and Leader of the House of Parliament and Deputy Leader of the House/speaker are everyone. According to the latest survey of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1.56 million women in 5 crore 41 lakh workers in the country. There

are 16 thousand women among small and medium enterprises 697 people of the 76 lakh expatriates working in different occupations, 82 thousand 558 women. Besides, 80% of the women workers in the garment sector are the main workers of foreign currency. Women are also 90% of the country's small loans. She has made remarkable contributions to her many obstacles and obstacles. In many areas, the participation of women in the local government, especially in the union councils and Upzila/Thana council, as an elected representative, is an example in the world. Since the empowerment of the current women is considered as an indicator of social development, it is no longer for women's liberation or women's development. Empowerment of women is considered necessary as one of the main steps to solve any problems faced by any state, or the world. Not only in the international arena; is it emphasizing the importance of women's empowerment in any policy-making discussion or problem in national level starting from Bangladesh and local level. Women worldwide have achieved success everywhere today. By having a very important position, they have contributed in thinking, thinking and working from family to international level. Yet social and structural inequality towards women, hostility is not eliminated. Violence and abuse of women is happening. This hostile environment will have to end. The end of this will not be easy, woman will have to move forward slowly from various clashes. Today, the need for women's development and empowerment, in which women's empowerment is not enough, the humanity's humanity is very poor. The development of women in our country has progressed a lot. Economist Amthan Sen in his study highlighted that in this way the grassroots women of Bangladesh are moving forward economically from other countries. Finally, the development of women will happen only when they have their participation in every field of work. It can be from small to large family and society which will give importance to its decision if an active woman is financially self-sufficient in exchange for her labour. She can be able to play a role in social activities. Then, the empowerment of women will be the development of humanity. By introducing supportive laws to reforming race, caste, religion, social economic, and political structure and raising awareness through religious, educational system, inspirational propaganda, amendment of law, and empowerment of women:

The world's greatest victory, big campaign, Mahian has left mother and sister-in-law behind The verse of Kazi Nazrul Islam proves that every success of the world, every victory, every contribution of women is contributed in some way. Woman has increased the child in her mother's shelter, has inspired her from the side of the male; has made her husband go ahead in brotherhood. Men's courage has won men's air, the Himalayas have reached the sea, have crossed the sea. But women have not only been motivated by motivation, love, pleasure, but also have played a leading role among women at different times. Ella Mitra, the woman's leader of the sub-continent, showed how to fight against subversion, Pritilata Waddedar showed how to fight against enemy, Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam has shown how the oppressors have to be judged.

Bangladesh is a small populated country in the world. Due to the high population pressure, corruption, disappearance, and the oppression of women, many countries suffer from problems. After all, the country is moving forward. The West thinks the country will soon come to the level of the developed state. But empowering women has given Bangladesh another identity in the world. In the case of women's empowerment, many countries today consider Bangladesh to follow. Women of a country, like Bangladesh and the leader of the opposition are both women. Awami League Government took various steps to strengthen women's empowerment while coming to power. The Government increased women's reserved seats in the parliament from 45 to 50. The cabinet held women in important positions. Women's place in Bangladesh is also seen as the Head of various social organizations.

But, the question is, despite the empowerment of women, is the full-right of women in this country? Torture and discrimination against women, got a little amount of greed? Bangladesh still cannot guarantee full-rights of women. She still could not take effective action to stop women's repression. Rather, violence against women is increasing at an increasing rate. Rape of a woman at Manikganj has been repeated in the wake of the incident in Bangladesh. A woman is raped in CNG-run auto rickshaw in Chittagong Women's children are not excluded from the sexual violence of women. Women are not safe at workplaces today. The victim is being victimized by colleagues. Women are just being cheated from society. So empowering women in Bangladesh, women's emancipation has not reached yet. Only women's empowerment will not bring the liberation of women. The need for the release of women is the change in man's mentality in the male-dominated society. As long as men will learn to think of women as their associates, this problem will not be solved until women learn to consider the important part of the society.

Women are being neglected for years in Bangladesh. In the male-dominated society, women have always been humiliated for religious orthodoxy, social prejudice, oppression, graffiti and discrimination. Her talents and labourers were spent only in cultural work. She was never involved in the formation of society and nation. Not only in Bangladesh, are women lagging behind in education? In their family and society, their place is still not equal to men. It is believed that there is no need to empower women in family, social, political and economic issues. As a result, women did not get adequate rights in their political and economic fields. But women cannot be considered human development without excluding women. Before the 1950s, in many developed countries, women were not allowed to compete as women candidates despite the franchise rights. World leaders have come forward to establish political rights of women since the 1970s. Although in the Third World country, Bangladesh is now a role model for the world, in many ways including socio-economic progress. In the advancement of women, Bangladesh has now surpassed many rich countries.

Empowerment is to decide how a person controls his/her own life. To gain professional skills, empowerment strengthens self-confidence within a person. By this confidence, the person learns to solve problems and is self-reliant. Empowerment is a complex case for women. To understand whether

women have been empowered or not, whether women's rights have been established on the property or not, whether women are able to control wealth or not, whether women are able to enjoy the fruits of various developmental activities. That is, women are directly benefitted from the development.

Bangladesh's economic, social and political empowerment has increased in Bangladesh. Women's political empowerment is the full-participation of women in politics. Voting, participating in elections, and ensuring the place of competence in the political parties. For the first time in the parliament, Bangabandhu preserved 15 seats for women and took the first strong step to empower women in the history of Bangladesh. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2016 deems as the value of women participation in political empowerment, Bangladesh is in sixth place. According to this report, Bangladesh's position in 144 countries is empowerment in all areas, which indicates a better position than any other South Asian countries.

However, despite being a developing country of small size, Bangladesh has already become an example of intense integrated management of natural disaster, use of micro-credit, poverty reduction, positive change in social and economic affairs, and empowerment of women. Women's empowerment in Bangladesh is especially visible in South Asia. Yet in some cases women's empowerment could not be implemented. To increase the leadership of women in different fields, there is a need to exclude those women who work in silence. To reach the highest level, the capacities of women should be increased. In addition to state support, family support is also very important for women's empowerment. The Government has to take strict vigil to enforce stringent laws and regulations and enforce administrative rules to stop violence against women, child marriage or trafficking of women and girls. Above all, to ensure the empowerment of women, all the women should get institutional education to ensure their full-participation.

#### **4. Female Participation in Teaching Profession in Bangladesh**

Dr. Sardar M. Anisur Rahman comments that in Bangladesh, there is a lot of enthusiasm about the progress of women's education; in this case we have made a revolution. Although progress in primary and secondary education in reality is not satisfactory, women in higher education are still behind many obstacles. And, due to this, we also slow down our overall development. Of course, our liabilities of our state and society cannot be avoided. On the other hand, women behind higher education in the profession are behind. According to the University Grants Commission Report, Public and Private Universities have fewer female teachers than male teachers.

Of the 19,410 people, 4,321 female teachers the total number of teachers of the public university is 9,726. Of these, only 1,861 female teachers have been appointed. Total number of teachers in Private universities 9,684 of these 2,460 women is women. However, the comparative position in Public Universities is better. Besides, women are less interested in study and teaching profession at Universities located far away from the Capital and Divisional City Center. Though women are lagging

behind in higher education, however, the recent rates have increased significantly. After the primary level, in higher education the participation of female teacher is also increasing.

It is reported that, in Science, Technology and Engineering Universities, women are still far away from teaching professions. Even if the quota is allocated officially, no institution of primary education is now being appointed except 30% of female teachers in Bangladesh.

According to the official announcement without primary education, the female teacher cannot ensure that educational institution of any level in Bangladesh. There are also 30% of female teachers in lower secondary and secondary schools, colleges, madrasa, technical education institutions and even universities. In order to implement the goal of women development, the government has allocated 30% of quota for women, but they are unable to ensure that these institutions are not completely successful. At present, 26% of teachers in secondary level are women. And, the number of female teachers in Madrasah is only 13%. There are 75 teachers in three Government or Public Madrasahs, but no one is female.

The Government's newly published National Education Survey and the findings of Janakantha came out of the picture of the fearsome teacher-education of the students from the lower secondary to the highest level. It has been found, despite being meritorious, many female teachers are unable to ensure the desired number of teachers. Women are faced with various irregularities and obstacles in the face of appointment of teachers by introducing merit in all public examinations. Women are not being appointed even after 30% of quota allocated due to various adversities, including the power of power. However, only after ensuring 30% of female teachers in an MPO-affiliated institution, only the remaining teachers will be appointed and MPOs.

The Bangladesh Council of Education Information and Statistics Bureau (BANBEIS) have specially emphasized the importance of recruitment of women teachers in 2018's survey. Chief Executive Officer of Banjayes Mohammad Shamsul Alam says that that situation is not satisfactory at all. The official involved in this work for a long time also comments that the survey clearly shows that in the various levels of education, people still cannot confirm 30% of female teachers declared by the Government. In reference to this variation of the teacher, the researchers related to the survey said that while working, it is seen that girls are lagging behind on merit. Rather, their results are good. But, as teachers, they face a lot of problems. Due to the merit of the candidate, there is a lot of respect for the candidate with respect to the relationship. Madrasah Education makes it clearer. Many of those involved in the management of madrasa are not supporting female education. This is reflected in their recruitment process. Researchers say that due to unfavourable circumstances, women have become ungrateful as a teacher.

Referring to the opacity of recruitment of teachers in different levels, experts say that in most cases the appointment takes priority over the relationship with the authorities and the relationship between personal relationship and power. For these reasons, naturally women lag behind even meritorious boys.



Due to this crisis of recruitment process, many people have expressed concern over the loss of merchants. It is learned that according to the Government's policy, 30% of female teachers will be appointed. No institution can appoint any male teacher without ensuring 30% of female teachers, but according to the rules, the teacher cannot be eligible to be MPO. There are government and MPO Private Secondary Schools in the country 20,297, where there are 2,43,117 teachers. Of, there are 61,701 female teachers; which is only 26%. There are 1,11,11,612 teachers in 4,113 colleges. Of this, 25,803 female teacher teachers and their percentage is 23%. Of these, 302 public colleges are 27% of female teachers. 9,319 teachers in Madrasa are 14,033 teachers. Of these, only 14,450 teachers of the female teacher are only 13%. Among these madrasas, there are 9, 316 MPOs. While 30% of female teachers were not appointed before, the rest would not be included in the MPO. But that's why they disobey all rules. Worrying information about Madrasa is that there are 75 teachers in three public madrasahs, but there is no female teacher. The concerned teachers have questioned how this is happening in Bangladesh.

Officials of 37 and 85 Private Universities are 26,319 teachers. Of these, 6,704 women are women that are 25%. Of the 12,414 teachers in 37 Public Universities, there are 2,721 female teachers among 22% of the population. There are 4,212 Government and MPO Technical and Vocational Institutes. There are 29,918 teachers; among them 6086 women, which is 20%. There are 2,157 teacher training colleges, 2,679 people of them, 558 female teachers; 21% of female teachers. There are only 19% of female teachers in 480 Professional Educational Institutions.

It is to be noted that, in the past, a survey conducted by Public Universities came up with a separate picture of all institutions. Wherever it is seen, female teachers at Dhaka University are 25%, Rajshahi University 15%, Bangladesh Agricultural University 8%, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology 17%, Chittagong University 14%, Jahangirnagar University 23%, Bangladesh Islamic University 8%, Shahjalal Science and University of Technology 17%, Khulna World Bank Alaye 15%, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University 5%, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University 5%, located in Gazipur 7%, Haji Danesh Science and Technology University 15%, and Patuakhali Science and Technology University 5%.

Moreover, 10% at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, 11% at Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, 4% at Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology, 4% at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, 10% at Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology, 6% at Noakhali Science and Technology University, Sylhet Agriculture Babidyalaye 10%, Comilla University, 19%, Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam University 18%, Animal Science at the University of Chittagong Bheteranari Eyanda 15% of teachers are women.

Along with the rotation of time, there is a change in all the places. Earlier, women were not allowed to go out of the house. Women are currently headed by many countries. Earlier the word "education" was only related to men. At present there is a significant increase in the presence of women in higher level

institutions. Bangladesh does not have any clue to this change. Rather, in some cases women's participation in different fields is much more than any other country of the globe.

### **5. Role of Women at Jahangirnagar University**

If we look at Jahangirnagar University, we can understand this change very easily. As the country's only Residential University, the University's Education Program began in 1971. In order to motivate women to pursue Higher Education, 40% of seats are allocated to the students of this University.

However, Deputy Registrar (Education) Abu Hassan of Jahangirnagar University comments that increasing the number of these allotments, the decision was made to enroll 49% of students from the academic year of 2016-2017. As a result, the ratio of students in JU stood at 51:49. Women's participation at this university is much higher than any other institution in the country. The reason is that no educational institution has been able to allocate 49% of the seats to the Higher Education for women to the present. He further says that the rate of the students will be 50=50 soon. Meanwhile, in the last three decades, the number of female teachers at this university has increased almost 10 times. Senior teachers of the University says that in 1985-1986, only about 17 to 18 women teachers were teachers in about 100 teachers at the university. This was one-fifth of the teacher's total. But, Deputy Registrar (Education) Abu Hassan has reports that this number is currently more than 193 people, where the total number of teachers is 671. That is, now the number of female teachers has increased from one third of the total population, about one third of the population stands nearby. Besides, this university has got the first female Vice Chancellor among the Public Universities of the educational institution. Professor Dr. Farzana Islam of Anthropology Department took part in the Vice-Chancellor's panel election and took office on 2 March 2014 as the elected Vice-Chancellor. Since then, she has been working successfully.

The students of this university are known as the capital of culture, who is leading different cultural organizations. Shakila Sharmin, the 38<sup>th</sup> batch of the Department of Geography and Environment, was led as the General Secretary of the Cultural Movement. Sharifa Shabnam Tania, a student of Mathematics Department, led the debate as the President. Many students currently are holding important positions of many organizations.

Male patriarchal behaviour at this university is very less. The proof of this is that under the leadership of women, men are working here without any hesitation. Nearly four hundred teachers are teaching women under a women's Vice Chancellor. And, many students are working under the leadership of many organizations. On the Women Empowerment at Jahangirnagar University, Jubonnesa, Associate Professor of the Department of Public Administration and Professional Women's Society, says that Jahangirnagar University, as a Public University in the developing world of the Third World, has set an example in empowering women; it is much more satisfying. She believes that there will be a time when the number of students and men and women teachers will stand at 50=50. Referring to the participation

of women at the Universities of the developed world, she said, “Begum Rokeya started the liberation struggle for women, she thinks that the first universities will have to take initiative”. Referring to women’s involvement in family work, Jubonnesa said, “I think women participation should be increased at the level of officers and employees of Jahangirnagar University”. Referring to the need to increase the participation of women at other Universities, like Jahangirnagar University, she argues that women’s participation should be increased not only in the University, but also at all levels.

Professor of Government and Politics Department in this regard, Nasima Akhter Hossain says that women’s participation here is more than any place in the country. But, that’s not enough. They want to bring it back to 50=50. The female provincial warden and house tutor are still men; she says that there are now many female teachers at the University, still considering the political appointments of male teachers in the Women’s halls. They want it to end. Referring to women being considered as women instead of human beings, she says that—to ensure equal participation of women at the University, the male and female population would be brought to 50=50. However, it does not consider women. Of course, women should be given place in the appropriate place, regardless of qualifications and people.

## **6. Role of Women at Dhaka University**

Although Dhaka University (DU) began its journey without a single female teacher or student in 1921, women currently account for over 31% of its teachers. Even a decade ago, the number of female teachers was miniscule. However, things started changing in 2009, when the number of female teachers saw a significant rise.

On June 6, 2012, for the first time in its 96-year history, Dhaka University appointed a female pro vice-chancellor in Prof Dr Nasreen Ahmad. She has been serving as the Pro-VC (Academic) at the University. According to the DU administration as quoted by UNB, there are now 2,012 teachers at DU, including 630 women. Over the last eight years, the ratio of male-to-female teacher appointments has decreased to a large extent. During the period from 2009-2017, a total of 621 teachers were appointed to the University. Of them, 195 were women. Currently, the ratio between female teachers and their male counterparts is 1:3.18. Recent past DU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique says that teachers are appointed to the university based on merit. He says that the university authorities never appoint any teacher on special consideration; those who are skilled at making presentations are given priority. The VC further comments that today women are outshining their male counterparts in all the sectors, like politics, economics, education, and administration.

At present, the Heads of 16 Departments at DU are women: Economics, English, History, Psychology, Bangla, Music, Dance, Chemistry, Microbiology, Fisheries, Education, and Counselling Psychology, Geography and Environment, Meteorology, Robotics & Mechatronics Engineering, Television, Film and Photography and Art History. In addition, five institutes—Education and Research (IER), Institute of Nutrition and Food Sciences, Social Welfare and Research Institute, Institute of Modern Languages

(ILM) and Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies—have appointed female Directors. More importantly, female teachers are now more active in teacher politics than in the past. Prof Najma Shaheen has long led the pro-Awami League Blue Panel of the University Teachers. Under her leadership, the panel won 33 seats out of 35 in the last Senate Election held on May 22 last year and also swept all 15 seats in the last election to the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) held on December 8, 2017.

Riffat Ferdous, Head of DU Television, Film and Photography Department, says that the stereotype that women are weak and that they cannot take challenges has become obsolete. Women have proved their worth in all sectors. Women are going ahead on all fronts, she added, expressing hope that women power at Dhaka University will encourage other women across the country to rise up and make their mark on history (Note 1).

### **7. *A Doll's House* as a Feminist Play**

Undoubtedly, it is said that Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is a manifesto of feminism. Through this play, Ibsen has earned popularity and fame as one of the leading playwrights in the history of English literature. To many, this play demands the appreciation. Again, on the contrary, it is mostly criticized play of Ibsen. Nora is one of the top of the topic and criticized female characters among Ibsen's women. It may be expressed that Ibsen's treatment of women has been much impacted through this character.

When the official birthday celebration was over, Ibsen and his wife Thoresen Ibsen were invited to a banquet in his honour given by the leading Norwegian Feminist Society. There Ibsen's speech regarding women still reminds us:

I am not a member of the Women's Rights League. Whatever I have written has been without any conscious thought of making propaganda. I have been more the poet and less the social philosopher than people generally seem inclined to believe. I thank you for the toast, but must disclaim the honor of having consciously worked for the Women's Rights Movement. I am not even quite clear as to just what this Women's Rights Movement really is. To me, it has seemed a problem of mankind in general (Johnston, 2004, p. 437).

His speech to the Norwegian Women's Rights League notwithstanding, the younger Ibsen makes a number of claims which qualifies the playwright for the position of "social philosopher". While making notes for *A Doll's House* in 1878, he wrote: "A woman cannot be herself in contemporary society; it is an exclusively male society with laws drafted by men, and with counsels and judges who judge feminine conduct from the male point of view" (Finney, 1994, p. 90). Ibsen also writes that the post of librarian be filled by a woman and that the female members of the society be granted the right to vote in the meetings. Even more politically charged was his support in 1884 of a petition in favour of separate property rights for the married women; in explaining why women and not men should be consulted about the married women's property bill, Ibsen has commented: "to consult men in such a

matter is like asking wolves if they desire better protection of the sheep” (p. 90).

In *The Modern Ibsen*, G. Wilson Knight observes in Ibsen’s plays, the theme of respecting Women’s Rights features predominantly since women are the pillars of society. Ibsen, whom Hans Heiberg describes as “the champion of women’s causes”, is influenced by his strong views on Women’s Rights at the time of writing *A Doll’s House*. Rolf Fjelde records that, when in February 1879 Ibsen’s proposal to the Scandinavian club in Rome that its female members be granted equal voting rights was narrowly defeated; he criticized the male majority. He challenged with them to assert that women were not in any way inferior to men in culture, intelligence, knowledge or artistic talent. Weigand, who deems Ibsen as “an ardent champion of Woman’s Rights” and an “apostle of freedom and individualism”, states that Ibsen’s indignation against organized society’s attempt “to keep woman in a state of virtual slavery” influenced his conception of the characters of *A Doll’s House* and the play’s plot (*The Modern Ibsen*, pp. 74-75).

While Ibsen makes the notes for *A Doll’s House*, he comments: “There are two kinds of spiritual law, two kinds of conscience, one in man and another, altogether different in woman. They do not understand each other; but in practical life a woman is judged by man’s law, as though she were not a woman but a man. The wife in the play ends by having no idea of what is right or wrong; natural feeling on the one hand and belief in authority on the other have altogether bewildered her” (Chilala, 2002, p. 109). In other words, as Bradbrook observes, *A Doll’s House* deals with the conflict of two worlds, male against female: “...the woman’s world of personal relationship and human values against the man’s world of legal rights and duties...” (p. 109).

In *The Modern Ibsen*, Weigand comments that Nora rebels: “We can follow Nora’s indictment of Torvald and conventional man-governed society with the most alert sympathy; we can be thrilled by her spirited gesture of emancipation; we can applaud her bravery; we can enjoy watching Torvald’s bluffed expression turn gradually into a hangdog look of contrition he winces under her trouncing and gets worsted in every phase of the argument” (p. 110). Nora realizes that the male-dominated society treats her as a doll; her rebellion is justified, as is her forgery and little lies. The real crime, the real corruption, from her viewpoint, as Fjelde observes, “The male conspiracy to debase the female”. Nora’s rebellion is a way of demonstrating to Helmer that, contrary to what he thinks, and what she has made him believe in their eight years marriage, she can do without him. She can actually help him, as she does with his treatment, instead of being a mere recipient of his provisions. Torvald Helmer wrongly believes that Nora is totally dependent upon him spiritually, intellectually, and materially. But she plays along with his misconception, if only to divert his attention from the real source of money uses for his treatment. Weigand puts it in this way: “She very cleverly inculcates the idea in Torvald that she is dependent upon his counsel even in such matters as choosing a fancy dress” (p. 111).

Ibsen’s Nora is an embodiment of the 19th century Scandinavian feminism. The main motto of Nora is to get rid of the patriarchal norms and dominations. That is why, she hits upon a plan that by hook or by

crook she must be able to gain her true freedom with a view to getting self-employed like a complete human being. In fact, Nora wants to see the unseen, and to know the unknown through her own inner eyes, but not through man's gazes.

Ibsen unveils women's status through Nora Helmer by setting the scene in Norway in 1872. In the late 1800s, Women did not play an important role in society at all. Their job was mainly to cook, clean, sewing, take care of the family, and keep the house in order. They were treated as a material possession rather than a human being that could think and act for them and looked upon as a decorative member of the household. Women were robbed of their true identity, and to the end, Nora leaves everything behind to go out into the world to seek her identity. This behaviour can be traced back to the beginning of time when women were to stay at home and gather nuts and berries, while men would go out and do hunting and fishing. The male always dominated over the female and it was not viewed as unfair. Male children would go to school to get an education in history, mathematics, science, English writing, while the female would go to school to learn how to cook, sew, clean, and do household chores.

Male could advance his education by attending a college or university, whereas no college would accept a woman student. Women were the inferior gender and had to have special attention given to them. Women were very limited in their rights in 1872. Such rights included: women had to submit to laws when they had no voice in their formation, married women had no property rights, husbands had legal power over and responsibility for their wives to the extent that they could imprison or beat them with impunity, divorce, and child custody laws favoured men, giving no rights to women and when women did work they were paid only a fraction of what men earned, women were not allowed to enter professions, such as medicine or law; and women were robbed off their self-confidence and self-respect, and they were made totally dependent on men.

Ibsen wants to focus upon the 19th century Norwegian social system through portraying the characters of Mrs. Linden and Nora. Linda's husband died and left her penniless and being that her father passed away. She is able to apply for a position at the bank. This is the only exception society made women in holding a job outside the household. But today, women have come a long way around the globe since 1872, gaining the right to vote in 1920 under the 19th century amendment in the constitution, gaining a right to an equal education, owning property, and having a job. These were all results of the Women's Rights Movement among others. Throughout the play, Nora plays the role of a role model in the 1800s, staying by her husband's side, taking care of the children, and doing all the household activities. When she realizes that she is unfit to do anything in life and announces her remedy: "I have to try to educate myself" (Act III, p. 165). She walks out of the door and expresses a deal of feminism universally agreed—upon base for women's emancipation, telling Helmer that she no longer knows how to be his wife and no longer knows who she is. Nora does not know any better because she comes from being treated like a material object in her own house by her father and Helmer. Her whole life is based around other people making decisions for her and conformed to their way of thinking until the end of the play,

when she walks out and makes her own decision. She makes fun of her childish tricks by eating macaroons, by listening to Helmer's negligence, and by romping with the children. Finally, she makes the right decision to leave although society hardly supports her departure.

In the 21st century globe, women have progressed much more and have played an important role. Women are treated with equality today with men. Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* is a very example of how life was like for women in the 19th century Norway. What women have done for today's society will continue fighting this is never ending battle for equality until the very end as Nora has done for her family and husband. Ibsen has created Nora so that her independent and farsightedness might have shown through her adolescent capriciousness. Although her father and husband have, seriously, injured her practical education, Nora has retained enough native wisdom to confront an emergency. That she bungles the situation by a careless forgery provides credence to her independence of thought as well as to her lack of sophistication. It enables her to oppose the knowledge of books and the doctrines of her worldly husband and to test by experience the social hypothesis which declares duty to the family is the most sacred. Only an innocent creature can be brave the perils of the outside world to her identity.

In this way, Ibsen sheds a new light on Nora as a model of feminism, and an advent of self-sacrificing soul. To achieve her power and freedom, she becomes homeless voluntarily leaving her husband, children, and family. The playwright shows not only female situation of age, but also an illogical aspect of his plan before all.

### **8. Evaluation of *A Doll's House* in the Bangladeshi Universities**

Like Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen is well-familiar dramatist at both Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh. Some Central Libraries have a rare collection on literary works, journals, articles, reference books, thesis, monograph, and magazine on Ibsen.

Ibsen's plays, especially *A Doll's House*, are being investigated at both Public and Private Universities. At some famous universities, like University of Dhaka, Jahangirnagar University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Jagannath University, North South University, Independent University, East West University, BRAC University, American International University, The People's University of Bangladesh faculties are using multimedia projector while they teach the students Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in the classrooms. On the contrary, many universities, teachers teach English literature through traditional approaches in the classroom-activities; some use duster and blackboard, and also mercury while writing some points and giving suggestions. The situation is commonly seen in the current classrooms. Due to the poor knowledge of literary sense and maturity, it becomes very difficult for both students and teachers to understand the original texts. As a result, they have to depend on notes, guides, and simplified English version of Henrik Ibsen written by Indian and Bangladeshi literary experts. But very few have a good knowledge on western critics. Only meritorious students are very much interested

to study references, criticism on Ibsen's plays. Again some of them are much eager to study PhD and M Phil program on Ibsen's works at home and abroad just after completing their graduation.

In the Treatise, "Ibsen in Bangladesh" according to Kazal Bandyopadhyay (2006), Dhaka University was established 1921 where Ibsen was to wait for occupying his position in English and Bengali Department. In the course of English Department, Ibsen was included whose title was "Modern Classical in Translation". It was a course of MA Part II. Several years ago of Session: 1968-1969, Ibsen was first included in the Syllabus Design of English Department of Dhaka University. Ibsen has been included in the MA syllabus since the session of 1973-74. Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was included in the course, entitled "Continental Literature" of 100 marks in 1993. Again, in the session: 1998-1999, the play, *An Enemy of the People* was also included along with *A Doll's House*. Moreover, Henrik Ibsen was included in the Department of Music and Drama since 1989. Its course title was "European Theatre (1875-1915)".

Rajshahi University was established in 1954 where Ibsen was included in the Department of English as well as Music and Dramaturgy. Ibsen was included in the English Honours' Syllabus consisting of 300 marks in the session 1997-1998. Anyway, Music and Dramaturgy Department was founded in 2000-2001 where Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* and *A Doll's House* were included in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Honours level of English Department and the course title was "Modern European Drama".

National University was established in 1992 where Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was included in the session: 2013-2014 for the 4<sup>th</sup> year Honours Syllabus of English Department and the course title was "Continental Literature" and its Paper Code: 241117 consisting of 100 marks.

Chittagong University was established in 1966, where Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was included in the session: 1992-1993 for the 1<sup>st</sup> year Honours Syllabus of English Department. After a long time, *A Doll's House* was included in the session: 1996-1997 for the final year of MA in English syllabus; and its mark distribution was 50. The whole syllabus design was 400 marks. Ibsen had been included in the course title, namely "Modern Western Drama" from 1996-1997 to 2000-2001. Moreover, Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and *The Wild Duck* were included in the session: 1998-99 for the MA final year.

Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was included in the session: 1989-1990 for MA Program in the Department of English at Jahangirnagar University. In that session, the course title was "Modern European Drama". But it is very interesting to note that this course was not offered for the students. *A Doll's House* was included for the undergraduate level in the same course title consisting of 50 marks; and it has always been offered since the session: 1992-1993.

In the Department of Drama and Dramaturgy at Jahangirnagar University, Ibsen was enlisted in the session: 1989-1990 for the MA Program as a Compulsory Subject and its course title was "Playwrights of Old and Modern Times". Ibsen was included in the different courses of different course titles. Again he was also rejected in several sessions. Anyway, in the M. Phil Program Ibsen was included in the session: 2003-2004 & 2005-2006 (Bandhapadhyay, 2006).



To write Assignment, Thesis, Dissertation, some students of undergraduate and graduate level are interested to carry out their research project on Ibsen's social plays. Some of them are interested to write articles on Henrik Ibsen. It is a matter of sorrow that Bangladeshi students are not good at research methodology, and even they do not have any better knowledge how to write documentation, acknowledgements, in-text citation, and references in APA, MLA, or Chicago Manual style as well.

Question pattern of both public and private universities on Ibsen's plays are generally dealt with broad questions, short questions, short notes, and explanation. Some of the students learn their answers by heart; they never try to increase creative knowledge while they learn Ibsen in the classrooms. Another important issue may be mentioned here that they never try to compare Henrik Ibsen with Bengali literature in the exam scripts or in their research paper. So their ideas are limited to cramming system; copy paste is very common to them; they don't know how to apply literary theory while carrying out their research project.

Moreover, at the PhD and M. Phil level in Bangladeshi Public Universities, some students and teachers are currently very much eager to carry out the research project on Ibsen's plays in the light of Comparative Study. Some of them try to investigate a research project upon the "Henrik Ibsen and Recent Feminism"; again, they try to compare and contrast Ibsen with Bangladeshi authors; some also try to do research on Ibsen through apply the literary theories. Moreover, some young scholars, researchers, and teachers, from the Eco-feminist, Eco-critical, Postfeminist and Postmodernist point of view, are very much interested to examine Ibsen's plays in 21<sup>st</sup> century Bengali Literature Perspectives for carrying out a PhD and an M. Phil Research Project in the Bangladeshi Universities.

To develop their potential, researchers should practice Ibsen's plays in the light of the 21<sup>st</sup> century English literature so that they can be able to find out innovative aspects on Ibsen's *Oeuvre*. The output would be that our Bengali literature will be enriched through Ibsen's social plays; students and teachers have to try to understand that literature is based upon comparison and contrast in the light of world literature.

Each and every English department of both Public and Private Universities ought to establish Literary Research Centre so that both students and teachers can achieve new branches of literary knowledge and sense by carrying out the scholarly project. While the teachers teach Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in the classrooms, they should use electronic device instead of traditional teaching method. They should try to provide the notion of scientific teaching system so that students can be able to foster their domain of knowledge of Ibsen-play text critically and theoretically. Again some universities should arrange Ibsen Festival, Stage Productions, Conference, Symposium, Roundtable, and Workshop, like Shakespeare for enhancing the educational quality of the students. If such steps are taken by the University Authority, Ibsen can be familiarized and popularized as a notable playwright to the young teachers and researchers of Bangladeshi Universities.

Ibsen's *A Doll's House* has been getting popularized and familiarized in the syllabus design of Bangladeshi Universities, especially for the undergraduate and graduate level. In 2009, Jahangirnagar University organized an International Ibsen Seminar; and its title was: "Ibsen through New Eyes: Religion and Freedom" in collaboration with Centre for Asian Theatre. It is very important to note that the contribution of Centre for Asian Theatre (popularly known as CAT) is no less to establish Ibsen in Bangladesh. This institute has been organizing Seminar, Symposium, Workshop, and Conference as well as staging Ibsen's plays in different times. This organization has played an important role to present Ibsen's plays as well as his ideology to the people of Bangladesh not through its stage production but through different types of activities. Above all, Ibsen's plays have been translated and transformed into Bengali language by the theatre experts, researchers, and authors. Writer Selina Hossain has edited *Ibsen's Women* and *Ibsen's Plays and Poems* into Bengali language. Moreover, Ali Anwar has translated Ibsen into Bengali language and Monjura Mowla has also translated *Brand* and has written a short book on *Three Ibsen* into Bengali language.

#### 9. "Nora" as a Model of Female Teachers

In this study, I would like to highlight Nora as a model of female teachers in Bangladesh context. Now-a-days many women are seen to enter teaching profession; and they think that teaching profession is suitable for them and also this profession seems to be a safer place for them. Many women, teaching English literature, language and linguistics at School, College, National University, Private University and Public University, are devoted to carry out their research works on Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, especially Nora's character. Now, it is seen that in Bangladesh, some female teachers are interested to do M. Phil and PhD at Public University, like Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, and Islamic University of Khustia on Henrik Ibsen in the light of Bangladeshi feminism, or Comparative Study. What I mean here is that they would like to compare *A Doll's House* with Bengali literature. Moreover, this play is staged by many departments of Bangladeshi Universities.

Henrik Ibsen has created Nora's character as a model of universal feminism so that each woman enables to realize her identity and autonomy. I sense that each female teacher ought to read *A Doll's House* very attentively what the playwright wants to find out through portraying Nora. It is also true that at the time of portraying this character, Ibsen's psychology proves that he has wanted to motivate the universal female community what a woman's real identity ought to be. This grim truth we must realize very closely though he has been severely criticized how a mother leaves her innocent children forever—some critics don't support her departure.

Whatever the case is—what I want to propose here is that if a female teacher ponders her full-attention over Nora's departure, she will certainly understand that Nora wants to see the unseen and to know the unknown not through the male gaze but through her own eyes. She wants to get the equal share like a

male in the society. She wants to educate herself through her leave behind family and children. She has a one aim: how to invent her self-identity and self-freedom. What she expected from the society during eight years married life is deprived of everything—therefore she decides to leave behind everything.

However, if we look at Bangladeshi female teachers, we can see that they have journeyed a long way; now they are almost getting equal opportunity in comparison with men. An example may be mentioned in this regard: Female participation in teaching profession is much more than male in Bangladeshi educational institutions. The main objective of this study is to show Nora as a representative of Bangladeshi female teachers. Those who are feminist teachers/writers will of course try to understand Nora's hidden core of philosophy why she has left everything if they are devoted to research writing. Still now many young female teachers here in Bangladesh have failed to understand their own identity due to the lack of radical attitude. The reason is that they are deprived of the global feminism; they don't want to bother about the current affairs what are happening around the world. Ibsen's Nora has enabled to come to the Bangladeshi female teachers as a preacher of feminism from the farthest land, Norway. Certainly, we will have to think very deeply why Nora seems to be very significant for women. As a woman, female teachers must prioritize Nora; not only this why Ibsen has let Nora leave home—they should regard her as an icon.

Now let us come to Nora as a model of female teachers in Bangladesh. I would like to emphasize on my arguments why Nora as a model of female teachers. Firstly, I think that Ibsen has created Nora as a dedicated woman in this sense that he wants to show that no woman can be neglected in the male society; each has equal share and right like a male. Secondly, it seems to me that Nora is a legendary figure in this sense that Nora is not for the Norwegian women, but also for the Bangladeshi women. She is for all women—a symbol of woman for awakening new dawn of life. The essence of self is dealt with Nora's dedication for the greater welfare of womanhood. Thirdly, Nora is a symbol of protesting mood. When Nora is immature during her married life with Torvald Hermer, but after eight years, she regains her maturity about the definition of life. When she realizes that she has to do some important task as a dutiful being; otherwise, she will fail to understand the real meaning of life. At one time to her-life is full of struggle and complexity; she must endure such hurdles and barriers. That is why she takes her right decision to leave home at a right time. Finally, my argument is that I would like to introduce Nora as a model of Bangladeshi female teachers in this logic that they should follow her example what she has done to invent the core meaning of life. I think each female teacher should to carry out their research project on Nora's character in the context of social system now and then. They should find out similarities and differences of *A Doll's House* in the light of current Bangladeshi feminist situation and social system. Those who are dedicated to literary criticism must have a profound knowledge of literary research; they must have a deep sense of literary realm of knowledge. Then they will realize why Nora is called a model figure for women community around the world.

## 10. “Nora” as a Representative of Everywoman

Nora bears the testimony for all ages and for everywoman around the globe. I think what she does to claim her rights feminists should welcome her adventurous task; and they have already welcomed her. As a mother or sister, she has sacrificed herself for a greater welfare for the global women community for which she is still remembered as a model of feminism. The female character which Ibsen has created in the play, *A Doll's House*, is deemed as a guide of each woman. In many countries of the globe, many litterateurs, teachers, scholars, researchers, and critics have given much more attention on this Nora's characters in many respects, especially among women community Nora is mostly prioritized. From my research experience, I can say that much research-work has been done on Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in Africa, Middle East, Asia, and North America and Europe. Scholars and researchers have tried to find out the feminist aspects of Ibsen's plays, but I have seen that much attention has given on Nora's character in the light of time, space and action around the world, which is still getting continued. Based on Nora's character, the play, *A Doll's House* has been investigated, translated, transformed, and staged in many languages of the world. In this way, Nora's character has been globalized; and this character has occupied a remarkable place among Ibsen's fans and lovers.

In my point of view, Ibsen has portrayed Nora as a protesting figure who has enabled to break the shackle of cruelty of masculine norm and order. She never tolerates her father's and husband's call a “doll-child” while she realizes that such a call is like an inferior being, or a subaltern who has no existence of her own. She hits upon a plan to educate herself first; and then, she plans to leave her family forever despite being a real mother of three children at Hemmer's home. But, many critics and scholars don't support her departure; they think that Nora as a real mother cannot leave her innocent children. No society accepts her decision though she has wanted to invent an existence in her. With the passage of time, it is seen that women of any age have been following her example; and they have also realized their own identity and autonomy.

In Bangladesh context, I would like to represent Nora as an icon and a model figure to our women communities. Women of our time are enjoying many facilities like men; they are now competing with men in most cases. They have enabled to come out of their cocoon; and they are now getting well-educated and participating in all matters though they still lag behind in some matters, but it is hoped that they would fulfill their demands in near decades. Anyway, my aim is to introduce Nora to the Bangladeshi women who are still far away from their own identity. Though Ibsen has portrayed Nora in his popular play, *A Doll's House* in the 19th century Norway, his superb-making creation is no less important to the Bangladeshi women. Therefore I would like to show Nora as a representative of everywoman.

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**Note**

Note 1. At the time of writing several subtitles, including “Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh”, “Female Participation in Teaching Profession in Bangladesh”, “Role of Women at Jahangirnagar University”, and “Role of Women at Dhaka University” of this research project, I have collected different internet materials, and most of which were published in The National Dailies of Bangladesh; and then, from those sources, I have translated from Bengali to English.