



**RESEMBLANCE STUDY OF NORA FROM A DOLL'S HOUSE AND
VASUDHA FROM SEVEN STEPS IN THE SKY**

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the similarities and dissimilarities of two major female characters - Nora and Vasudha. Nora is the protagonist of Ibsen's play, 'A Doll's House' and Vasudha is the protagonist of a gujarati novel, 'Saat pagla aakash ma' (Seven Steps in the Sky). Both of the female characters were struggling to find their own identity in the beginning but they find themselves and become independent. Both of the female characters justify their own arguments and circumstances to the readers for leaving their husband's house. Few people support them and few protest against it. Both the writers were also acknowledged and accused by people at the same time. Both of the works portray male dominated society and where women have to suffer and have no socio- economic freedom. In both of the works writers seem to be optimistic because they believe that there will be betterment and equality among all the people in society.

Key words: feminist, family, husband, freedom, parents.

Introduction

Seven steps in the sky is a feminist novel written by Kundanika Kapadiya, originally in gujarati (1984) and translated into english by Kunjabala and William Anthony in 1994.

On the other hand 'A Doll's House' is a feminist play written by Henrik Ibsen in 1879.

Both the works deal with feminist perspective which means they describe the women's condition in male dominated society where they were oppressed by their husband. Both the



works contain feminist ideology where they portray the social, political, and economically unequal status of women.

Nora and Vasudha who were similar and dissimilar to each other in many aspects. When the novel begins, we find Vasudha at the flower house where she was living with the same kind of women who were not treated well by their husbands or loved ones. They all lived their life according to their husband, family, and loved one but in return they were found that they were not treated well by them. The same thing happens with Nora in the beginning who was loving and caring for her husband and she thinks that or she was living in a dream world where she believes that her husband loves her a lot. But the reality was that she was just a showpiece to him. When we are doing the comparative study of Nora and Vasudha, one can also find similarities in between their husbands. Torvald and Vyomesh were selfish and possessive husbands. Though few believe Torvald as a husband gave some liberty to Nora but in the end we find she was only a possession for him. **‘It was a golden cage for a little skylark and a little squirrel’**. In both the works we find descriptions of birds where Vasudha standing at terrace and sighting those birds symbolize her love for freedom from the beginning. In Ibsen’s play Torvald calls her skylark and squirrel, symbolizing ultimate freedom. The major resemblance between both the characters is their early life which was totally dependent on their family. For example when we look at Vasudha, having no freedom to choose her life partner and the marriage is mixed by her parents, similarly Nora says that,

“Nora. *No , only merry. And you have always
been so kind to me. But our house has been nothing
but a. playroom. Here I have been your doll wife,
just as at home i used to be papa's doll child ”.*(*A Doll's House, Act 3,114*)

As Ibsen early given the title to the play was **‘The child wife’** that indicates that she was like a child for Torvald. Their relationship was not like a husband and wife but as a master and servant.



“I thought it fun when you played with me, just as the children did when I played with them. That has been our marriage, Torvald”. (A Doll's House, 115)

Both the works deal with the life of their before and after marriage. We find that both were caring and loving for their husband and family. But they didn't get that freedom, respect, love and honor that both deserve from their husband. Nora loves to have macaroons to eat but Torvald was against it and Vasudha also likes to have malai on her coffee but Faiba denies her to have it. Both the characters were not having the permission for having their most lovable things. Vasudha in the beginning of the novel asks a question: *what according to you is the definition of happiness for a woman*. Another resemblance between both the characters is their children. Both the characters have three children. Ibsen has written another ending of the play which describes that her children need her more than her freedom. Both the characters were lovable to their children. Vasudha, many times thought to leave her husband's house but the major responsibility she had was her children. She decides to stay and take care of her children. When they grow up she leaves Vyomesh. It describes that Vasudha always understood her responsibilities. Some of the critics argue that Vasudha has a complaining nature, she always used to complain about her situations but never fought for herself truly. She can consult Faiba and Vyomesh about her situation but she believes that they won't listen to her and will not understand her truly. As I earlier mentioned both the women were struggling to find their identity but in both the works a major incident is common is the party incident. In both the works after the party, they find that they are never valued and loved by their husbands. In Ibsen's play on Christmas evening they were having a party where Nils Krogstad (Antagonist of the play) blackmails Nora for a mistake which was committed by her. She signed unknowingly the bond to have money on loan to save her husband's life and she was repaying the debts by saving the money. But Krogstad blackmails her and sends a letter to Torvald. Nora was ready to sacrifice her own life for her husband's dignity and honor in the society because he was against the borrowing. But Torvald humiliated and insulted her, he was angry at her. Nora always thought that my husband will always understand me and will understand my situation and she felt bad for that. Her dream world was shattered. Similarly in case of Vasudha when Faiba dies, Vyomesh was having a party at his house with



his friends and Vasudha informs him but Vyomesh was not just a selfish husband but a selfish person. He didn't end his party for the one who always took care of him and always loved him like her own child. When Vyomesh says, ornaments didn't belong to you and Vasudha replies then what belongs to me? Vasudha also realizes that Vyomesh has never understood her and doesn't value her. In both the works we find descriptions of other women of the same kind like Vasudha and Nora who always sacrifice their lives for families and husbands. They were dependent on their husband for social, economic freedom. In the play, Nora repaid her debts by saving the money that describes, they were dependent on husband but saved his life. It defines her as a responsible and caring wife like Vasudha. People can connect more with Nora because she truly devotes her life to her family.

"Is it rash to Save one's husband's life?".(A Doll's House, Act 1,20)

The thing which makes both the characters dissimilar is their justification. Nora after that incident was totally changed and wanted to be a rational being and to educate herself. Same in the case of Vasudha, who leaves her husband's house to find her own identity and happiness. Nora gives a proper justification where she says that she wants to live her life according to herself. Both the characters leave their house because they want to find themselves and to live their life according to themselves. Vasudha with other women in the flower house fought for justice and expressed her love for freedom and equality among every individual in the society. Nora also in the end wants to leave his house because she wants to identify herself. In both of the works, we find themes of unhappy marriage and freedom. Both were having unhappy marriages. In the end Nora explains her reasons to the readers about her love for freedom and why she is leaving the house of Torvald. On the other hand, one thing lacking in the novel is the proper justification of Vasudha. But what I believe is that in the end when Aditya (whom she likes) tells her to accompany him to himalayas, where she takes a decision that shows her independent nature.

It describes that she is completely independent to choose what is better for her own life rather than being dependent on someone else. Similarly in Nora when she leaves the house, she slammed the door that symbolizes her beginning of a new life full of opportunities and can live her life according to herself. In both the works, writers conclude with giving their opinions about how women should be treated in society, what can be an ideal life for them,



how society should treat them and should give them social and economical rights. Vasudha asks a question in the novel that can one live life the way they want, especially one who is a woman? I believe that yes one have an opportunity to live life according to themselves but the thing is to follow the rules and regulations. One should have freedom to have their own choices and freedom to express themselves. In both the works a major resemblance is two male characters who encourage both the protagonists - Nora and Vasudha are Dr. Rank and Aditya. They are examples of those men who have supported women in their life. Torvald says that no man will sacrifice his honor for one whom he loves, but we find these characters have always encouraged the protagonist for growing themselves and for fighting for their freedom. They are supportive characters in the true sense of '**supportive characters**'. Both of these characters were in love with the protagonist. When Nora replies to Torvald's question and says that hundreds and thousands of men have sacrificed for their loved ones including these characters. Writers are presenting their point of view that if there are people like Vyomesh and Torvald in the society then there are people like Dr. Rank and Aditya, who support and embolden the status of women in the society.

Conclusion

In both the works writers try to justify their protagonist. They show how they suffered against traditional odds and norms where their freedom was surpassed and treated unequally. But both the works end with giving justice to their protagonist and opportunity to live their life themselves. The only dissimilar thing is that the justification of Vasudha is not appropriate like Nora. Nora as the protagonist of the play justified herself truly in front of readers and clearly mentioned her reasons to leave her husband's house. But whereas Vasudha didn't end up with clear reasons, writers indicate some situations and things that make us understand her reasons to leave his house. Both overall one can find similarities between these two characters. Ibsen as a problem playwright has advocated for women's rights and honor and similarly Kundanika kapadiya also describes a woman who was living a miserable life but ends up novel with giving freedom to live life according to herself. Both the characters are applauded and questioned as well but give a feminist perspective. Both the works describes that feminism is an ideology that believes in women should also have equal rights, opportunities, power like men and should be treated in same manner that they are treated.



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