

## Feminism in Rabindranath Tagore's "Haimanti" and Mahbuba Sarkar Shama's "Rosina's Dilemma": A Comparative Study

K.M. Wazed Kabir<sup>1\*</sup>, Marjana Akter<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor & Chairperson Department of English, Green University of Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup>Research Fellow, Department of English, Green University of Bangladesh

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\*Corresponding author: K.M. Wazed Kabir

### Abstract

### Original Research Article

Feminism is a revolutionary movement that stands for women. It gives women the freedom and power to stand upright to achieve an equal position in society. Rabindranath Tagore wrote many short stories which center the women as significant characters. He represented them in such a way that mirrors the condition of contemporary Indian subcontinental women. These women were suffering from different inevitable issues like dowry, polygamous marriage, superstitions, poverty, the domination of patriarchal society etc. Mahbuba Sarkar Shama also includes these issues in her writings to evaluate the position of 21<sup>st</sup> century Bangladeshi women. These women are also caged to social norms, cultures, laws and regulations. Tagore's Haimanti and Shama's Rosina – both are the representative women who demolished their lives to fight against the oppression. Many profound laureates and critics have worked on Tagore's writings to describe the ideas of feminism and its nature. The aim of this study is to explore the lifestyle and ailments of women in two different centuries. This study has been conducted by analyzing some scholarly articles and e-library books. The rights of women should be properly provided to make a balanced society.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Dowry, Marriage, Poverty, Patriarchal Society.

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## INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore alias Bhanu Singha Thakur is a big name in the Bengali literature. He is one of the greatest authors, novelists, poets, and literary persons of all time. His art of presenting human life into texts and building social awareness through significant ways was entirely different from contemporary authors. Indeed, he was far ahead of his time. His thoughts about humans, especially about the women, are just like the mirror, which reflects everything original what happens. Technically, he had shown the actual position of women in society of his time, which actually exists even in this post-modern period. His writings were set in the early twentieth century colonial Bengal. This was the time when the United States met the first wave of "Feminism".

Feminism is the movement for the women who don't get equal rights or even proper opportunities to speak of their own for their rights in the male-dominated society. Critics and writers have represented Feminism through the reactions against different social problems those women face. Many Bengali writers have spoken about the position of women in this region.

Dowry, polygamous marriage etc. are such kinds of social problems that led the women to face discrimination. Tagore had implied this as a part of the Feminist movement.

The trend of dowry is patrilineal and the women are the sufferer of this illegal act. It is a common social curse for women. It's the part of untold oppression towards women from the male-dominated society. From ancient Babylon to the present days, many people are involved in giving and taking dowry. Many critics, authors, writers have included this problem in their writings to create awareness by showing the gruesomeness of dowry. Haimanti; a famous Bengali short story is such kind of writings where the writer remains objective to emphasize how dowry can affect someone's life. Undoubtedly, the dowry has the power to manipulate any family of any society.

"Haimanti" – a short story of Tagore was first published in monthly magazine *Sabuj Patra* in 1914. It is a marvelous story where he crafted a girl who was given early marriage and had sufferings in her further married life. In this short story, Tagore illustrated how

women were treated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and indirectly pointed out to the society how women should be honored. A girl like Haimanti, aged 16-17 years becomes a burden of her family. Her low-income family can't bear the unbearable whispering of the neighbors. Besides giving early marriage, a huge some of dowry is the part of the culture. Tagore started the story of Haimanti with –“Father could have waited but the father of the groom didn't want to” (1).

This line explains when it comes to the matter of a girl's marriage; it does not depend not only on her father (or her guardian) but even on her father-in-law. If the context is the twentieth century, it becomes too much biased which is not correct at all. There was no freedom of a woman who could hardly claim her right. At a very early age, parents of a girl start thinking about giving her marriage. Not only in marriage but also in other aspects women were least privileged. What we learn from “Feminism” is to show and give equal rights to the women similar to their counterparts. Earlier, when the in-law family of Haimanti learns that her father works at the King's palace, they treated her like their own daughter. Her father-in-law says: “Sir, don't worry. May be your daughter has left your house, but she has got new father and mother over here” (Tagore 6). But when they came to learn that he is only the principal of a school, their actual mentality. An old neighbor woman says – “Alas! My bad luck. Granddaughter has lost me with her age!” (Tagore 11). Slowly she becomes the scapegoat in her in-law's family.

Almost similar catalysts are visible in another post-modern writer, Mahbuba Sarker Shama's short story “Rosina's Dillemma.” Shama set the context of the story where a girl becomes the victim of her husband who has polygynous marriage. The time frame of the story is the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The main character of the story is Rosina, a 15 years old girl. She belongs to a low-class family and resides in somewhere in Bangladesh. She faces quite similar issues like Haimanti. “Young flesh, beauty, white skin, long hairs, naïve, a girl who can be controlled, overthrown, beaten as well as ignored” (Shama 7) from the story tells how is the present condition of the women.

In this story, there is one similar thing visible as Haimanti. Rosina's marriage held with giving dowry yet her mother-in-law had reacted on the amount of the money. Her father wasn't able to give more money than ten thousand takas. Her mother-in-law was dissatisfied as “she had hardly given them enough money to get married to such a boy” (7).

Daughters or female children should be the pride of the parents as they are the better-halves of the men. Feminism explores the social importance of the women. In Rosina's Dillemma, even Rosina's daughter is considered as the disgrace to the family. Now Rosina

“can only cook, sleep, eat and live like a dead corpse” (8). She is nothing but a matter of hatred and avoidance.

It may seem like Rosina is questioning her own self on behalf of girls of this age like “Why have I given birth to two girls? Am I cursed? What have I done? Am I ugly? Who I am? What is my future...” (9). All these questions show the reality of woman belonging to the poor class. These types of women have no freedom to speak, share the whereabouts of their urges, needs and can't revolt against the social system.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is being prepared to find out the presence of “Feminism” in these two stories. After the completion of the research work, it will be possible to answer the following research questions:

1. How “Feminism” is interpreted in Tagore's “Haimanti” and Shama's “Rosina's Dillemma”?
2. What are the main problems faced by the women from 20<sup>th</sup> century till present period listed in this two stories?
3. Is there any effect of dowry on the major characters of these two stories?

However, the detailed discussions with proper references and informative ideas will possibly make the readers finding this research effective, energizing, entertaining and interesting. This discussion will also help the reader to understand how Rabindranath as well as Shama explained “Feminism” through their stories.

## Rationale of the Study

Many critics and authors have done plenty of researches on the core topic “Feminism”. In Bengali Literature, the number of these researches is significant. Following the way, this study is possibly important to find out Feminism in two specific stories of two authors. They both are from different periods; Tagore from 20<sup>th</sup> century and Shama from 21<sup>st</sup> century. Both of them wrote about their contemporary women's life and their social status.

This study will be helpful for the enthusiasts to get comparative as well as informative opinions and views of the women of two ages. From Tagore's Haimanti, readers come to know how dowry manipulated a girl's life even after her marriage at early age. Shama's Rosina's Dillemma also includes the crisis of a poor married woman whose husband is not satisfied with one wife and the dowry he gets from his first marriage.

People should know how these social problems make the women's life hell and suffer in the long run. After all, this is a good medium to showcase the improper treatments of the women are getting from men.

### Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

While working on the research, the researcher found few limitations. Conducting any research especially on literature requires sufficient time. But the researcher got a very limited time to list more well-discussed and furnished research. Another problem she got was that there was lack of reading materials.

Works on “Haimanti” in English language were very limited in number. Even there was no notable work on “Rosina’s Dilemma”. So, the researcher had to depend on theories and critic views on topics like feminism, dowry, women’s portrayal, contemporary society and social norms, materialism etc. She had included information and arguments by comparing and contrasting the events and characteristics of the main characters of these two stories.

### METHODOLOGY

Many researches have been worked on “Feminism” in Bengali literature. Some of them are used as the useful resources to discuss Feminism in “Haimanti” and “Rosina’s Dilemma.” There was no requirement of field study, statistics, or numerical comparison discuss about two authors’ writings. As the subject of the study is part of literature itself, qualitative research is a perfect and fit to choose to finalize the study. This study is based on online journals, websites as well some eBooks which are connected to the topic.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a lot of feminist writers who have used their pen to ask others about the rights of women in every spheres of life. Sylvia Plath, Audre Lorde, Kate Chopin, Virginia Woolf, Gloria Steinem etc. are popular feminist writers of 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were at the zenith of success from the mid to later part of the century.

In Indian region, Malati Bedekar, Ismat Chughtai, Amrita Pritam among others was the popular feminist writers. However, not only the female writers, but also some men became very dominant in writing on the women-favored topics. Rabindranath Tagore and R.K. Narayan had always presented the women in realistic way. These two writers had shown the pathetic life of 20<sup>th</sup> century women. Some other writers like Homen Borgchain, Narayan Sanyal, Bimal Mitra, N. Mitra, Prem Chand, Yashpal, Nagar, Ashoka are still writing and speaking about the less facilitated class of human. Some people who were not writers have also tried to put emphasis and give human equal rights to women. “Rammohun Roy was the pioneer to uphold the banner of women's emancipation from the age-old oppression. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar continued the movement against the stream” (Bhattacharya 375). Rammohun Roy had successfully campaigned against burning the widows which was an absurd rule of the Hindu society.

Rabindranath Tagore was quite indifferent to female feminist writers. He had posted good gesture and posture of women in his stories, novels, poems and other forms of literary works. According to the article of Pallab Kumar Sadhu, “Women in Rabindranath Tagore’s Selected Short Stories from Sabuj Patra”, in an interview of Tagore, he said that “They (the early stories) have the freshness of youth...my later stories haven’t got that freshness...” (90). This line of Tagore explains how female had lost their beauties as well as their proper rights.

He also stated that “they have greater psychological value and they deal with problems...my stories of a later period have got the necessary technique...but I wish I could go back once more to my former life.” These were the base of his latter writings such as short stories (Sadhu, 90). Tagore was very much objective to idealize what actually was biting the society to disinherit women to get what actually deserved. Mrinmoyee, Charulata, Kalyani, Mrinal etc. were his great but oppressed female characters. He had shown the oppression against women for different reasons such as money, lust, superiority etc. through these characters in diversified plots. Feminism had been one of the core topics in the writings of Tagore.

Indra Nath Choudhuri in her article, “Tagore and the Feminine: A Journey in Translations” explains the nature of Tagore of presenting the women in his works. He says, “Tagore’s discourse on women is not a limiting factor but an expanding one—holistic, eclectic, trans specific, and encompassing diverse stirrings; and, hence, his notion of the feminine is based not only on the totalised oppression of women, but also a display of great hope—that in our country when Indian women would move from their artificial, liberated self to the attainment of the glory of the perfect human self, only then would men achieve” (150).

It has been clear that Tagore was positive about women’s future. Choudhuri’s opinion is identically proved in Tagore’s female characters like Binodini, Mrinmayi, Mrinal etc. As example, Binodini of *Chokher Bali* (1959) is a widow who seeks for mental peace and fulfillment of sexual desires. She retreats to follow the ongoing social rules of women’s living. She tries to bring as much change as she can to improve the condition of women. She also declares the importance of female education. She speaks with frustration in this way, “... if I had been uneducated, like other widows, I would have been able to easily endure the society’s negligence.” *Samapti*’s (1997) Mrinmayi raises question about how women are being neglected and how the society is valuing their freedom of speech. She says, “All the rules are wrong [...] Did anyone try to find to what I like? You like me and I should follow all the rules”. Through these ways, Tagore took steps to put impact of women’s future

where equality, importance, evaluation, education etc. are significant aspects.

Bharati Ray, in her article, "Women of Bengal: Transformation in Ideas and Ideals" speaks, marriage, under customary Hindu law, was an indissoluble sacrament, but whereas a man could marry as many women as he wanted and could desert his wife, a woman had no similar rights. For a Hindu girl marriage was not an option; it was the only destination of life; its fulfilment lay in begetting a son for the family. She was married by her parents as part of their religious obligations, along with a dowry" (5). Actually, this was a very common trend in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century India. Rabindranath Tagore had included the same situation and subjects in his writings. "Haimanti" is a great example following this aspect.

Presently, many post-modern writers are also doing the same thing – following the path of previous feminist writers. Though the situation of women in the society has changed yet many changes have kept the women under-rated or underestimated to their capability which is totally dissatisfying for them. Writers like Margaret Atwood, Naomi Woolf, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Khaled Hosseini etc. are the people who are very much concerned about the feminist moments and standing with the women. "The Handmaid's Tale" of Atwood, "The Beauty Myth" of Woolf, "We Should All Be Feminists" of Adichie are the books which indicate the present condition of the female. These authors are pretty much futuristic and clear about the present.

Mahbuba Sarker Shama is a contemporary Bangladeshi feminist writer who also owns the core values of modernist feminism in her writing style as well as in her thought process. She has written and published some remarkable articles. "The Creation of Women: A Feminist Reading of D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*" is one of them. It is a well-constructed piece of writing on feminist criticism of Lawrence's writings. "Rosina's Dilemma" is her latest addition. She has followed the feminists writing style which has also matched to that of Rabindranath Tagore. She always raises her voice through the texts to point out the injustice, prejudice, gender discrimination towards the women. This short story contains lines or sentences with powerful meanings. These are critically analyzed in the analysis part of the research paper.

### Theoretical Framework

Feminism is a popular topic nowadays on the books or off the books. This word "feminism" is quite familiar to be found in many female (also male) authors' writings. It's a belief, theory, and movement of and for the women. The term or theory of "Feminism" stands as a belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes according to Encyclopedia Britannica.

The origin of the word "Feminism" comes from "féminisme". Charles Fourier was the inventor of this French word who coined this in 1837. Later on, "féminisme" and "féministe"(feminist) became known in France and Netherlands in 1872. Feminists work for feminism to fulfill the rights of women. History says, the feminist movements appeared in different waves, had their own set of purposes. "Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) in Asia" is such kind of movement that started in late 1960s and through the 1970s. This had a huge impact on the contemporary society. In India, this movement helped the women to coming beyond the caste system which earlier controlled the females in the society.

Judith Astelarra in her article "Feminism and Democratic Transition in Spain" spoke about the feminism. She remarked feminism as the planning for the changes of society and movement which is targeted to stop oppression over women.

Gender plays a vital role in this point. Gender is a structure which shows the men as men and women as women. From the childhood, people are taught "you are a man, you are a girl" through their mind, personalities, activities, culture etc. Thus, there appears gender discrimination. Male sophisticated society controls the power to give women their proper rights. They are considered to be the maids to the men. In every sector, they get less facilitated. Rabindranath Tagore, Mahbuba Sarker Shama – both have shown the discrimination in their respective stories.

There are several feminist theories which are cultivated in different time and dimensions. Liberal, Marxist or socialist, Radical etc. are popular feminism theories which work on different aspects.

Liberal feminism puts emphasis on individual power and ability of a woman which they should apply to gain their rights through their actions and choice. This theory came from political liberalism. Liberal feminists believe women and men – both are equal parts of society. Society is the entity as a whole. It should not be divided. There should be equalization of male and female persons in the society. So, women should be educated, well-trained to flourish as working women. However, they identify the imbalance in law enforcement, job opportunities of women as the main reasons behind gender discrimination.

Liberal feminists do not identify men as their enemy. They don't study on motherhood and family. But they are active against the contemporary structure of the family. Betty Friedan spoke that a woman is virtually free whom her family does not tolerate.

In Marxist feminism, the pain of a girl or woman can't be described. According to this, Bourgeois or upper-class people control and exploit proletariats.

But discussion of men's torture on women was not discussed well. Actually, this was the reason why social feminism was born. Marxist feminists believe, women were the leaders from the time when people started becoming civilized. Male were busy in taking care of the family. They went to collect foods or hunting animals. But with the development of technologies, the cards were flipped. Men had better control on technologies which they used to cultivate. Through these ways, women lost their position and men had influence over them. Patriarchal family, individualism, class society etc. came due to the advancement of science. The responsibilities of family were handed over to men. Men started getting more wages, respect and opportunities. Women were not getting the same. So, Marxist feminists came there to figure out the importance of a socialist revolution. Through this kind of revolution, political and economic democracy is possible. They found this democracy as an effective path to balance the rights of men and women.

Radical feminism was introduced in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this theory, the male superiority is considered to be removed from the society. It relies on radical rephrasing of social classes in terms of any economic and social contexts. Radical feminists see the society as an unjust society where some social norms, laws are forcefully imposed to the women as well as their counterparts. They think women are counted as sexual objects and a medium to amuse the men. So, they want or do activities to create public awareness against crimes like rape, violence, mistreatments etc. towards women. They want to clarify the true concept of gender roles.

### **Feminist Reading of "Haimanti" and "Rosina's Dilemma"**

Simone de Beauvoir, the French writer once said, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" in her book *Le Deuxième Sexe/The Second Sex* (1949). This book, *Women*, was translated into Bengali by Bangladeshi writer Humayun Azad. Simone's name can be found in the list of great authors of the present time.

Her opinion stands for the patriarchal society that has restricted women to be complete and independent human beings. Instead, they are posted into such a position where they are helpless, half of men. It can be explained as women are just born biologically with the limbs of women. This is the harsh natural truth. Day by day, when they start to step forward, they are trapped by wearing bangles, moles, hair bands, playing dolls, handling households etc. In fact, they are shackled with unscientific prejudices, dogmas of blind cultures in our Bengali society. Later on, there is only "Code of Conduct" to live in the society appears in front of them. The concept of artificial gender roles and division starts flying over the sky of the society. This air flows every part of the social life like in people's

behavior, discussions, literature, philosophy, songs, poems, humors, fashion etc.

### **Socio-economic Position of Haimanti**

Rabindranath Tagore was born in such a kind of society where social class, cultural rules, religious complexities were stronger than real evaluation of a person as a "human being". Most of the upper-class people were trying to dominate the other class families. The Hindu patriarchal society was far from understanding the equal rights and privileges of women. Very few persons stood against the misjudgment of the society. Oppression towards women was visible in every aspect of the society. From their birth to death, they were caged with certain codes which shattered them inwardly and outwardly.

Tagore raised his voice not through the microphone; instead he was fine at writing stories and novels to satirize the society through events and characters. His maximum short stories had focuses on female protagonists. Even some of his novels had women as main characters. These stories show the feelings of Tagore towards women. It's not from love rather it had come from responsibilities as the stories showcased the condition of contemporary women. Though he came from elite Bengali society, he had written for the middle class, lower-middle class women. He even presented women ahead than other writers like Bankim Chandra used the female characters. In fact, he invisibly made a great future of Bengali women. He established such a generation probably where women would be independent, clever, meritorious, honest, brave and revolutionary.

Haimanti or Haimo, the center character of the story was once a lively girl born in a lower-middle class family. Her everyday becomes harder when she reaches her 16-17 years age. At this age, usually people from Tagore's context tried to arrange marriage of young or pre-mature women with mature or older men. Haimanti wasn't an exception. She is the doll in the hand of the patriarchal society as in the story. Her parents had arranged marriage against her opinion. It's a heinous act to go against one's right as marriage is her right.

There are hundreds of writings focusing the light on serious matters for the welfare of the women. The isolation, torture, imprisonment, mental and physical harassment, superstitions etc. against women are visible in these writings. Women were and are used as a thing to earn money; as dowry or the slave. Similar to these, Haimanti being a young girl is full of youth. As the story is set in 20<sup>th</sup> century, so it's quite possible that things will remain the same to her. She once remains as "...a spotless bright girl, a holy one" (Tagore 9).

Haimanti's beauty can't be described in just one sentence. From the voice of her husband Apu, she is differently stunning than other girls. Apu describes "this 17-years girl has got all the graces of youth yet she is not awakened from the embrace of the adolescence" (9). He uses metaphor to make sure that his wife is an incredible one. He says "Like the sun has started blessing on the mountain peak early in the morning, but the ice isn't melting". All these lines show Haimanti is certainly a beautiful creation of the Almighty. She has her ripeness and completeness of a woman to be praised.

But this beauty isn't properly evaluated in the story. Her teacher father Gawri Shankar has listened to the intrigues of the society, the neighbors. His daughter's "marital age is beyond the limit" and it will be harder to hide her age "gently" or "indecently". He starts thinking "The age of the daughter has crossed the limit unruly" (Tagore 1). So, the ratio of dowry is still higher than her age.

Dowry appears as a crucial part of the society. The more a woman becomes aged, the amount of the dowry increases. The standard of the age isn't mentioned when to give marriage and what will be the scale of paying dowry. In Haimanti, it's clearly visible, "Maybe the age of her is higher so that the amount of offering is bigger" (4). This line shows there's no value of humanity rather value of women is given depending on her age.

There are a couple of more facts to be noticed. The amount of property from the parents' side of the bride is also a determiner where the daughter will be married. Poor class family couldn't hold their daughter's marriage to a well-established family. Even the profession of bride's father is also important. In this story of Tagore, these matters are clearly visible. Apu says "My father-in-law works at the king's palace. There's been rumor about his bank savings in the society, no rumor isn't compromising" (9).

Apu's family has thought they might get more dowries from Haimanti's family. But they are not satisfied with "15000-taka advance" and "gold of 5000 taka". Considerably, this amount was huge according to contemporary society. But the greed of getting more money or gold was very common to the parents of a marriageable son.

Gradually, the loving Haimanti becomes a point to her husband. It happens when they come to know Haimanti's father is only a school principal. However, no one was interested in her opinion. There was no fault to have a tutor father. A teacher is the builder of the nation. But in Haimanti, working under king is better than teaching.

Superstition is another fact that could ruin a female person's life. "She is just seventeen, written on her horoscope" (11) – this line shows the age of Haimanti is being challenged. They don't believe in education. They trust more on horoscope which can be hence illogical. The elder women of the society had no work except intriguing about others. They say "Bride's side must have decreased the age of Haimanti" (11). Haimanti believes in her father's words. She claims that her father never tells a lie.

Hindu patriarchal society tried to follow all the religious norms strictly. A bride had to arrange and devote to the God. But when Haimanti asks to teach her how to devote God, everyone goes against her belief. They said "Oh my God! She is an atheist. The God has stopped blessing on this family."

Haimanti has left everything behind. She has now only husband and their parents with her. But they fail to take care of her. Dowry has changed her life. She starts getting depression. It put impact on her mind and health. Apu says "Haimo was dying from the inside in every moment. I can give her everything but can't give her freedom" (18). These lines are quite painful and can put anyone in distress. Also, it defines how harder Haimanti's life was.

At the end of the story, Haimanti's life was put into the last chapter. She goes to his father's home but never returns. Her broken health and mind didn't support her to stay fit. Though it isn't clear whether Haimanti died or not. But from Apu's voice, "After this, I haven't seen the smiling face of Haimo for a single day."

Polygamous marriage is also present in the short story. However, this is mentioned once at the end of the story after the departure of Haimanti. Apu says "Mother is looking for bride" (23). He will somehow agree to his mother's order. But there's no value of marrying a woman earlier. Everything will be forgotten.

### **Socio-economic Position of Rosina**

In "Rosina's Dilemma," the settings maybe different. But the position of the central character Rosina is almost similar to that of Haimanti. Mahbuba Sarkar Shama is the 21<sup>st</sup> century feminist writer. She is different in writing style but her discussion on the condition of women is similar to that of Tagore. She has talked about Rosina, a contemporary struggling woman. This young lady is apprehended by the society's court. She is found guilty to her husband. It made her suffer in the long run.

Shama starts the story with "Today Rosina is putting all her efforts to decorate the flower bed." This "flower bed" is welcoming to any man or woman. But from Rosina's perspective, it stands for something else. This is the bed where she had her first night with her

only loving husband. But now she is preparing a bed for another woman. This woman is the competitor of her well-organized family. Her husband is getting married and bringing another woman in the family.

Ramzan is the name of her man. He is about 34 years old whereas Rosina wasn't more than 20. This unequal marriage has made her life as hell. Ramzan's next wife Rehana is also a teenage girl. She is a girl of "young flesh, beauty, white skin, long hairs, naïve..." Rosina was also married at same condition. She has four sisters and two brothers. Her family was in a hurry to complete marriage of their second daughter Rosina. Rosina's father gave Ramzan a dowry of 10000 taka. It's because the society teaches women should be married at a very early age. And it's more critical in a low-class family. Family produces more children and fails to feed, teach, carry the costs of taking care of them. They expect to have more male kids who will be the wage earner as well as get more dowry to the family. So, Rosina is just a sacrificial object to her family. Marriage was just a way of relief for her family which becomes burden to Ramzan's family.

When she comes to her in-law's house, she starts facing problems. The 10000 taka couldn't let her allow living happily. Shama includes "Her mother-in-law insulted her soon by saying that she has hardly given them enough money to get married to such a boy". Here, two things are pretty much clear. The first one is Rosina is treated like an object. The second one is Ramzan is considered as "boy" who is more valuable than Rosina. "She is too lucky" – her mother-in-law considers her as a lucky person. Yet it is very much ironical. Her dowry couldn't shut up the mouth of her in-laws. Her "good husband" appears as "not only poor but also alcoholic, a drug dealer, a lazy liar, and on top of all, a characterless man."

Giving birth to female kids is like a curse. Rosina has two daughters; one is six and another is of eight years old. Her husband says "Why cannot you give birth to a boy in this family?" This means whole family is accusing Rosina for giving birth to girls. But if the matter is taken in sense of biology, the whole responsibilities go to her husband. If the male body has XX sex hormones instead of XY, then there is possibly no chance to give birth to male children. But the ignorance about this matter is common in the society. They male dominated society blames women why they are unable to give birth to baby boy.

Actually, the present society wants son more than daughter. Male gets job, earns money, have freedom to speak. But the women are tortured as they are considered weaker than men. They can't earn money, get financial freedom, can't take part in any programs. When Rosina's husband and other members of the family were abusing her for these reasons, she tried to find happiness. "She thought of joining dress

makers or going to school but women cannot go outside her house" – this line sadly expresses the condition of a woman. Women should bring money but can't break the social rules. Again, this is ironical. They are accused when their family can't pay a huge sum of money. But they can't mix up with others by joining any business or company. If they go outside of house, who will take care of the kids, who will feed them and take care of?

If any woman goes outside of house, she is marked as a disobedient being. So, Rosina can "only cook, sleep, eat and live like a dead corpse". Here the phrase "dead corpse" stands for actually a person who is dead inside but pretending to be alive outwardly. There won't be any woman who wants her husband to marry another woman while she is alive.

Money plays a big role in a woman's life. Rosina's father couldn't pay more money to his son-in-law. So, the "rotten husband" of Rosina is bringing another girl whose life would be the same. Again, she thinks about escaping to Dhaka or abroad. Her friend Sabrina works in Dhaka and earns a lot of money. But the harsh truth of Sabrina can bring tears in anyone's eyes. Sabrina has been raped and the society does not accept her. Even some ill-minded people think her as a prostitute. In such conditions, Rosina controls her emotions. She could have gone but her kids will be parentless. Who will take care of these young flowers?

Male dominated society has put her in dilemma. In Shama's words "Her two daughters – her pull of nerves. She is in dilemma. What to do? What not to do?" This is the actual condition of a poor mother. She can't live happy together or go alone avoiding others. Women are helpless. The two daughters are getting step-mom. Even the matter of polygamous marriage may affect the kids' minds. Yet nobody cares about Rosina or her children. She starts questioning herself. She doesn't know how to revolt or how to hold her position. She thinks "Oh Allah! The touch, the flesh of her husband will be with another woman." A woman like Rosina has only friend, he is none but Allah, the Almighty. She shares question with Allah (God) and keeps continuing. Curse, ugliness, future, existence, pain – these are common parts of these questions.

Ramzan is doing injustice to his first wife. But the society is celebrating. The villagers enjoy by singing songs. They think male can marry as many as they want. But a woman can't do more than once. They never ask her about her opinions. Finding no other ways, she fixes plans. She is going to be hanged from a fan.

When she commits suicide, nobody looks for the reason. But they are busy in accusing her to do so. People find Rosina guilty. Some men start saying she is just a fool. She can't get respect even after the suicide. Her mother-in-law gives her title of "a witch." Her

things Rosina has brought two curses (her daughters) and a bad omen. Her death is too “childish.”

The last lines of the story give clearer concept of the women’s position in the society. “Soon all will be getting rid of the two daughters by getting them married. Good Riddance!” This show marriage is the only thing woman is being prepared for. They are born to be dominated by men and can’t break the rules. The result is totally dissatisfying. Their life ends in dilemma and finishes with dilemma.

### Comparison and Contrast between “Haimanti” and “Rosina’s Dilemma”

Tagore’s short story “Haimanti” was written in Bengali language whereas “Rosina’s Dilemma” is in English. But except the language, the main themes of the stories are same. Haimanti is from Hindu lower middle-class family whose father earns fixed salary. But Rosina’s father lives in more critical condition. Both characters were given to marriage for their better welfare. Haimanti’s father paid 15K Taka and 5K taka gold. Rosina’s father paid 10K taka. But the result of these two characters at the end remains same. Former one becomes ill and die. Second one commits suicide.

Presence of polygamous marriage, dowry, superstition, verbal abuse etc. is equally available in these two stories. Apu’s mother looks for another girl to arrange marriage of him to gain more dowry. Ramzan gets married at the old age for money. There is no real love towards Haimanti or Rosina. When their father couldn’t arrange more money, both were harassed by the neighbors, society.

From the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present 21<sup>st</sup> century, women are treated in the same way. They get torture, frustration, pain from the males of the society. They become used to be objectified. They can’t revolt against the society. If they start revolting, the society forces them to be penalized. In fact, women are just stationery piece to the men. They were born to follow the orders of the males.

### CONCLUSION

The true purpose of feminist writers is to express the feelings of a woman. They write about the conditions of women. They point out the problems and try to give correct solutions. A true feminist doesn’t discriminate between male and female. In fact, feminist writing is a result of author’s personal experience. Rabindranath Tagore had seen the issues well in his time. He had included common nature, culture, trends of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mahbuba Sarker Shama has included things which she is seeing in this present society.

“Haimanti” and “Rosina’s Dilemma” are great examples of feminist writing. This research has brought out the environment women face. The researcher has

tried to include necessary information about feminism and its implication in the two stories. This article would be helpful to get concept of true feminism.

Rabindranath Tagore and Mahbuba Akter Shama – both are good at writing on the topic “Feminism”. They have followed liberal feminism. In terms of liberal feminism, individual freedom gets more value. They don’t discriminate between male and female persons of the society. They even don’t make anyone inferior based on gender roles. Individual freedom to speak, participate, react etc. is the main concerns of liberal feminism.

Haimanti and Rosina, both try to get individual rights and values. But both fail to get so. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian subcontinent and present Bangladesh – women are getting isolated. This isolation can be either visible or to be felt. Haimanti couldn’t suicide though it’s a crime. Rosina thought she could be free if she dies.

When Rosina’s husband is getting multiple marriages, there’s none to stop it. Haimanti’s father takes her to his home from son-in-law’s home. Everyone was doing their own jobs. None stops her to stay. When Rosina’s husband is getting married, everyone blamed her as a fool. So, the two stories show the position of female persons in the society. If they are unable to revolt, the result will always be the same.

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