

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Justice is rooted to equality. Women and equality are commonly considered two contradictory things; fundamental rights restrictions based on gender have been detrimental to women because they limited their space neither in society, education, and workplace nor in exercising their political rights. Gender takes them as weak creatures and must be under the protection of men. This then builds a stereotype that women can only work at home and take care of their families. Eventually, the notion that "women do not need to be educated because they will only end up working as wives and mothers" becomes a social weapon to limit women's access to education as a start to eliminating the other equality right. As Virginia Woolf states in her book "*A Room of One's Room*", that women need to have their own room, and education is the key for women to be equal. Unfortunately, the social perception of women that has been built makes them lose their awareness of the right itself. Women even do not know that they have the same right as men as well.

In so many countries, gender inequality is an unresolved problem and no exception for developed countries like the United States. There are several forms of gender inequality found in the United States, including the limitation of women's political representation and participation, the different roles in

household labor, and job division. In 2018, the World Economic Forum ranked the United States 51st in gender equality out of 149 countries.

“Currently, the United States has closed exactly 72% of its overall gender gap, a decrease of 2% since 2015.” (The Global Gender Report, 2018:25).”

Refers to the previous statement, one of the problems in the United States is occupational segregation. Patriarchal society is the reason why it happens. Thought of patriarchy influences them to divide work into masculine and feminine jobs. According to Lawrence University research, males are more likely to be employed in traditionally masculine occupations like sales management or business leadership, while women are more likely to be appointed in traditionally feminine jobs like secretaries, staff administrator, or cleaning houses. (Glick P et al, 1988).

In the sense of gender pay gap in the United States, International Labour Organization (ILO) notes that as of 2010, women in the United States were paid about 81% of what men received (BLS 2010; DOL 2011). The job segregation based on gender influences the wages system because feminine jobs were commonly paid lower than masculine jobs. Waldfogel (Darity&Mason, 1998:69) added that the term "family gap" also exists besides the pay gap. This term correlates with a comparison of women who have and have not children yet. In the United States, women who are married and have children earned 10-15% lower than single women or women who have not had children yet. Otherwise, men are allowed to be paid more and move up the career ladder regardless of their status.

The other crucial issue of gender inequality in the United States of America (USA) is education, even though it is not as big as the issue that arises before

because the USA is still one step ahead of other countries in education. The study of Mississippi University has found that most women in the United States choose to marry and stay at home for their family after acquiring a bachelor's degree rather than those who continue their degree and have a good carrier. (Allison & Margaret:2018)

The deterioration of women was at its peak during the Victorian era (1837-1901), where their role was considered a compliment and support system of men. They must be married to a rich or influential man to create their identities and recognize them. Nonetheless, their status did not guarantee them to get any persecution from their husbands in verbal and physical forms.

Generally, feminism is the concept of equality of the rights and opportunities between men and women. In the book *Feminist Thought*, Rosemarie Tong wrote that liberal feminism underlines women's freedom and emphasizes that every individual, particularly women, must have the power to fight their rights in law, society, workplace, and education. Through this theory, she tried to convey the message that every entire system of individual rights is justified that everyone is free to decide, choose and fulfil their want as long as it does not interfere or violate the rights of others (2008). In harmony with Tong, Mery Wollstonecraft stated in her book *A Vindication of Women*; she challenged the notion that women exist only to please men. She proposed that women must have the opportunity to participate in every aspect without being mocked, underestimated, and considered masculine (1975).

Gender inequality has become a theme in literary work since a long time ago. Kate Chopin, Susan Glaspell, Maria Irene Fornes, and Maya Angelou are few writers who raise women's oppression in several ways to criticize and allusion the society, especially men. As Wellek and Warren (1977) stated, literary works reflect real life including cultural conditions and social background. This is evidence that literature and society are two things that are interrelated and influential. The feminism theory reinforces their implicit ideas in literary work that the feminists suggested.

Later gender inequality also takes place in a movie. There are number of directors raise feminism as the theme. The patriarchal society with strict and conservative values is the part of the story that is often highlighted as what we can see in the movie *On the Basis of Sex*.

On the Basis of Sex is the biopic movie of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a supreme court judge in the United States. The movie was released in 2018 directed by Mimi Leder, and the script was written by Ruth's husband's nephew, namely Daniel Stiepleman. *On the Basis of Sex* tells Ruth Bader Ginsburg's story in 1956 when Ruth was a lawyer and women activist. The movie portrays her struggle against stereotypes about women in the patriarchal society in the United States. As her very first step opposed society, Ruth decided to continue her studies at the same university as her husband as a law student. She showed that she could harmonize her life as a mother and wife without forgetting her dreams. Ruth's struggle did not end there, after graduating from university, Due to social conventions in the United States that require women to care for their families' children, she was rejected by a

number of legal firms. Ruth believed that she needed to reform society or else more women would find themselves in her position. They discovered tax cases of a widower, Charles Moritz, with her spouse, Martin David Ginsburg. Because he was caring for his ill mother, he applied for a caregiver tax break, but he was refused and prosecuted because the benefit is only accessible to women. Ruth realized that Moritz's case is a gender inequality; it can change her career and how the court views gender discrimination. Eventually, through this case, Ruth succeeded in changing the law to pay more attention to women and the equality right of both genders.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the statement of the problem can be formulated as follows:

1. What are the forms of gender inequality represented in *On The Basis of Sex*?
2. Why does gender inequality happen in *On the Basis of Sex*?
3. What are the impacts of gender inequality in *On the Basis of Sex*?

1.3. Objective of the Study

According to the statement of the study, this research is arranged into three objectives of the study as follows :

1. To find out the forms of gender inequality in *On the Basis of Sex*.
2. To find out the causes of gender inequality in *On the Basis of Sex*.
3. To find out the impacts of gender inequality in *On the Basis of Sex*.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The study will be focus on the form of gender inequality, the causes of gender inequality, and the impact of gender inequality reflected in *On the Basis of Sex*. It means that the researcher will analyze the data needed to determine the form of gender inequality, the cause of the gender inequality, and the impact on the gender inequality in the movie.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The result of the study is expected to give new knowledge to the readers and students about gender inequality and the views of these matters from the perspective of feminist theory. This study provides lessons especially for women pertaining to how women should fight for their own rights and independence. In addition, the study is anticipated to give beneficial information as contributing to related research.

1.6. Approach to the Study

The feminism approach was used in this research. The feminism approach is a theory for explaining the concept of gender equality and analyzing gender inequality. In a nutshell, feminism is an ideology of women's emancipation since it believes that women are treated unfairly due to their gender in all of its methods. (Humm, 2002).

Theme that develops in feminism includes discrimination, objectification (especially sexual objectification), oppression, patriarchy, stereotyping art history, and contemporary art and aesthetics (Heroepetri & Valentina, 2004:34). Based on the main character's struggle and issues about gender inequality raised in the movie,

the researcher specifies Liberal Feminism By John Stuart Mill from the book *The Subjection of Women* to analyze it.

This research will be conducted using a qualitative methodology. According to Bogdan and Taylor ((1975), in Moleong, 2012:04), Qualitative research methods are processes for gathering descriptive data from individuals and activities that may be examined in the form of written words. Linked to the explanation before, the qualitative method is helpful in getting variations of problems relating to the patriarchy system caused gender inequality in the movie as a source to be or are being studied. In addition, qualitative research is empirical, in which observations on the data are based on the research subject's expressions, as desired and interpreted by the research subjects (Mulyana, 2013: 05 & 11).

In collecting data, the researcher has done some procedures as follows:

1. Reading and watching the movie and movie script
2. Identifying the data based on the problems
3. Analyzing the data
4. Interpreting the data

1.7. Organization of the Paper

This paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction that consists of a background of the study, statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, approach to the study, and organization of the paper. Chapter two includes a synopsis of the movie and a biography of the director. Chapter three is the review of related literature that includes previous studies, the theory of liberal feminism by John Stuart Mill.

Chapter four consists of analysis and discussion of the study. And the final chapter consists of conclusion and suggestion.

