

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

In spite of the world's modernity that has been increasing, gender-related issues, particularly discrimination against women, still continue to rank as one of the most significant problems that is faced by women from all over the world. Generally, someone's action could be categorized as gender discrimination when they treat another person unfairly or negatively because of their gender which is also not only in a sexual way. From a book that had been published by Rogers (1981) the expert stated that women who worked in the non-domestic area experienced many types of discriminations as the result of the domestication in the terms of doing the household chores and childcare. Moreover, Rogers (1981) also argued that the limitation of women's educational opportunities was justified in the terms of the ultimate domestic activities that women would have as mothers and wives.

As the cause of the gender discriminations, women continue to struggle every day because most of the time, women are the ones who receive the unfair treatment—including in the workplace. According to Rogers (1981) there was a stereotype that woman didn't have to work because they could rely themselves to their husbands. This statement was also supported by Lundberg-Love & Marmion (2006) as they also argued that gender discrimination created conditions that allowed women to be exploited. They argued that gender discrimination could also be the main reason that increased the risk of violent behaviors. As

unfortunate as it may sound, the society demonstrates that women cannot be separated from their powerlessness and oppression in order to live a better life. This leads women to be categorized as subaltern due to the fact that they are unable to speak up to stop the discrimination they have been subjected to.

The term “subaltern” was originally popularized by a post-colonial theorist named Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In general, subaltern woman is defined as a particular group of women who hold a subordination position in the society because of their gender. Spivak (1988) stated that subaltern women referred to a group of oppressed women whose contributions are not recognized nor were allowed to speak for their own life. Spivak (1988) also stated that women would never be able to present themselves. Typically, subaltern women are those who suffer from the systemic discrimination, those whose opportunities are very limited, and those whose voice are restricted. The term “subaltern” is best to define people or groups in the society who lack of power and authority and are frequently oppressed and marginalized.

The society still shows that women still hold a lower status than men despite the fact that as fellow human beings, both men and women must be treated equally. The reason why women still hold a lower status than men is because of the patriarchy. Patriarchy is defined as a social structure in which men are the major figures of the authority in the society. In the patriarchal societies, men frequently hold positions of the authority, making choices that affect women, while women are “designed” with the subordinate roles and their access to power and resources are very limited. This statement was supported by Walby (1990) by

defining patriarchy as both social structure and practice which showed how men were always the ones who dominate, oppress, and exploit. The patriarchal system continuously becomes the “culture” in the society because it is a hereditary from the ancestors. One of the examples based on the previous explanation is patriarchal norms restrict women from receiving a formal education and may marry at a young age.

The rise of the feminist movement is undoubtedly one of the important effects of the patriarchal system. The feminist movement is a social and cultural movement that seeks for the equality between both men and women, and it also a movement that spreads the empowerment of women. Furthermore, this idea was also supported by Hooks (2000) by stating that as a movement, feminism must put an end to sexist exploitation, sexism, and oppression toward women. There are pros and contras regarding to the feminist movement as some people consider it as a movement to show hatred against men when in fact women merely desire for an equal opportunities and rights. An example of the widespread phenomenon is since the late 2010s, Korean women have been battling their country’s patriarchal society.

One of the literary works that chose feminist as its main approach is “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” which was written by a South Korean author whose name is Cho Nam-joo. Cho Nam-joo, who once worked as a television shows scriptwriter, took only two months to finish the script of “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” as she once experienced what Kim Jiyoung experienced. She said, “Kim Jiyoung’s life is that similar to me. That is why I was capable to write effortlessly and without

much preparation.” This book was first published in October 2016 by Minumsa and as of November 27, 2018 and it had sold more than one million copies which later became the very first Korean book that had sold more than million copies. “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” had been translated into several languages, including English, by the translator Jamie Chang. There are six chapters in total in this novel, they are: Autumn, 2015, Childhood, 1982-1994, Adolescence 1995-2000, Early Adulthood, 2001-2011, Marriage, 2012-2015, and lastly 2016.

This novel was set in South Korea and follows the life of Kim Jiyoung, a 33-years-old woman who lived in Seoul with her husband and her newborn daughter. She left her job in order to take care of her newborn daughter and her husband. In the autumn of 2015, she started to act very strangely by impersonating someone else that alarmed her husband that something must be wrong with her. Before marrying her husband, she lived with a family in which the father worked and the mother stayed at home to serve the family. Kim Jiyoung, then realized that she lived in a culture that prioritized men. The novel also described how Kim Jiyoung was genuinely disadvantaged by the mistreatment as it got her to be diagnosed with postpartum depression. Kim Jiyoung was a woman who had been suffering because of the discrimination both by her own family and people in general.

Gender discrimination is very clearly illustrated in the novel of “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982.” The novel reflected the patriarchal system in the country South Korea in the life of Kim Jiyoung, an ordinary thirteen years old woman who happened to live with her family who privileged men. Kim Jiyoung and her elder sister, Kim Eunyoung, were always treated differently by her family merely

because they were not born as men as the family only expected to have sons in the family. The proof of the patriarchal system in Kim Jiyoung's family can be seen in the quotation below:

“I'm sorry, little girl,” she had said, hanging her head. Koh Boonsoon repeated warmly to her daughter-in-law, **“It is okay, the third will be a boy.”** (Nam-joo, 2016, p.13)

It clearly shows that the family only expected men in the family. By saying, “It is okay, the third will be a boy,” can be concluded that this family privileged men. If they didn't privilege men, they probably would have shown the behavior that they were grateful Jiyoung was born healthily. According to the novel (Nam-joo, 2016) Jiyoung was also a victim of sexual harassment, but none in her family stood up for her. Her father, who was present when she was followed by a man, blamed Jiyoung for wearing short skirt and talking to a stranger. The quotation that shows she was blamed for being a victim is proven below:

“But that night, Jiyoung got an earful from her father. **“Why is your cram school so far away? Why do you talk to strangers? Why is your skirt so short?”** (Nam-joo, 2016, p.36)

Jiyoung was also working in a company before she got married, but then she chose to leave following the birth of her first child. According to the novel, there are two reasons why she had to give up on her job and decided to be a housewife. Firstly, a working woman with children in South Korea is frequently discriminated. As a result, they must leave. The social barriers make women in South Korea stop working. Secondly, she had been through a lot while she was working there. Some of Jiyoung's co-workers never treated her properly and she was often discriminated unfairly simply because she is a woman. No matter how

hard Jiyoung worked, she would always receive unfair treatments. The quotation of the patriarchal system in Kim Jiyoung's workplace can be seen as below:

“Her boss grumbled, **“This is why we do not hire women.”** She replied, “Women do not stay because you make it impossible for us to stay.”” (Nam-joo, 2016, p.53)

Unfortunately, Jiyoung's life drastically changed with the birth of her first daughter. Her husband, Jung Daehyun, happened to be the first one who noticed her unusual behavior that she often did which was imitating the others and then forgot what happened later. Then, Daehyun went to the finally psychiatrist alone to discuss about Jiyoung's condition before encouraging her to go to the psychiatrist. It was difficult for him at first to convince her that it was the best decision, but Jiyoung eventually agreed to give it a shot. Then, as a result, Jiyoung's psychiatrist diagnosed her with postpartum depression. Receiving unfair treatments from her family was also the major factor in her postpartum depression, aside from her resignation from her prior company and the birth of her first child.

“Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” became the third novel that Cho Nam-joo wrote and published. Nam-joo was able to write a novel that described how the patriarchal system works in South Korea that still exists up until this very day. After the release of the novel, there were pros and contras regarding to the novel. Some said that it was Nam-joo's way to show her hatred against men and some also said that it was clearly a way to show how the society badly treated women—mainly in the country of South Korea. Because of its popularity and its accuracy, many researchers have decided to choose “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” as the data

for their research. As a conclusion, the researcher of this research also decided to choose the English version of the novel “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” as the data of this research.

While preparing for this research, the researcher had chosen some of the previous studies as the references. The first research that was chosen had been done by Rosida and Rejeki (2017). The aims of this research were to find how the patriarchal culture is depicted in the main character’s life and to show how gender discrimination strengthened the social segregation. The method of the research that researchers have chosen was the descriptive qualitative. The concept of gender discrimination was applied from Mansour Fakih’s theory and the concept of intersectionality was applied from Kimberlé Crenshaw’s theory. The second research that was chosen had been done by Rahmah et al. (2020). The researchers also chose the novel Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 as the data. The method used in this research was the descriptive qualitative approach. The researchers took a conclusion that no women wanted to be marginalized.

This research was focused on the feminist approach, especially the gender discrimination experienced by the main character in the novel. The data of this research was chosen from the novel “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” which was portrayed by a woman who goes by the name Kim Jiyoung. The researcher is interested in analyzing the mentioned novel because the researcher wants to encourage women to speak for the discrimination that they have been experiencing as gender discrimination can still be seen in the society up until this very day. As for this research, what makes it more special than the others that had

been published before is the researched applied the theory of subaltern woman by Spivak (1988) that are quite unfamiliar by some people.

One of the common phenomena related to the gender discrimination is women tend to be the victims of sexual harassment in the workplace. The researcher had chosen the theory of feminist by Hooks (2000) subaltern women by Spivak (1988) gender discrimination by Rogers (1981) along with its impacts by Lundberg-Love & Marmion (2006) and patriarchy by Walby (1990) to be applied in this research.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the research, the researcher had categorized the problems of the novel into:

1. Gender discriminations experienced by Kim Jiyoung in the novel “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” by Cho Nam-joo.
2. The violence caused by discriminations received by Kim Jiyoung in the novel “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” by Cho Nam-joo.
3. The misogynist experienced by South Korean women in the novel “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” by Cho Nam-joo.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem, the researcher had limited the problems into:

1. Gender discriminations experienced by Kim Jiyoung in the novel “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” by Cho Nam-joo.
2. The violence caused by the discriminations received by Kim Jiyoung in the novel “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” by Cho Nam-joo.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem, the researcher had formulated this into:

1. What are the gender discriminations experienced by Kim Jiyoung in the novel “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” by Cho Nam-joo?
2. What are the violence caused by the discriminations received by Kim Jiyoung in the novel “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” by Cho Nam-joo.

1.5 Objective of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem, the researcher had found the purposes of this research:

1. To figure out the gender discriminations experienced by Kim Jiyoung in the novel Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 by Cho Nam-joo.
2. To find out the violence caused by the discriminations received by Kim Jiyoung in the novel “Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982” by Cho Nam-joo.

1.6 Significance of the Research

1. Theoretically

Theoretically, the main goal of this research is to benefit the readers who want to enrich their knowledge related to the theories that had been applied for this research. This research is also expected to help the readers to understand the gender discrimination experienced by Kim Jiyoung, the main character of the novel with the applied theories.

2. Practically

The researcher hopes that this research can be helpful and beneficial to all of the readers in general, the students of Putera Batam University, and also the future researchers who want to study more about feminist approach, especially the discrimination related to women, in order to finish their studies.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Feminist Approach : Feminism is a movement that is expected to put an end to sexist exploitation, sexism, and oppression toward women that they have been facing since a long time ago.

Subaltern Woman : Subaltern women is defined as a group of oppressed women whose contributions are not recognized, nor they are allowed to speak for their own life. In another definition, subaltern women have always been oppressed.

Gender Discrimination : Gender discrimination is when someone is treated negatively based on their sex or gender. This can happen in the non-domestic sphere as a result of the domestication in the terms of housework and childcare.