

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains about background of the study, statement of problem, research problem, objectives of the study, research significances, previous studies, conceptual framework, and definition of key terms.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Gender is one of the dimensions of life. The culture of social society greatly influences the thinking of a group of people. One of them is the thought of gender discrimination. Some people believe that women's psychology and men's psychology are contradictory. Men are stronger than women and more intelligent than women. Women have an important role in life. As we know, we are all born from a woman's womb. Men have an important role, too, to fertilize a woman's womb. Therefore, both (male and female) have equally important roles. However, because their vital organs are different, they are always considered different. In gender construction, women are required to be feminine, and men are required to be masculine.

Over the centuries, the plight of females has been complex and multifaceted. Such oppression is expressed as discrimination against women, which is practiced in various forms in the spheres of politics, economy, and culture. From this perspective, the oppression of women has its genesis in the patriarchal social order where men are in control politically and socially, which leaves women at a disadvantage. The political, social, economic, and cultural structures that are created and sustained within society tend to favor men, while women are discriminated against in nearly all spheres of life. There is an attempt to rationalize and validate such inequality through some customs, selective readings of scriptures, and sociocultural practices.

Women face several constraints when accepting roles confined to performing housework and caring for children. The fact that women have a "double burden" - taking care of the family and going out to work - points to a deeply entrenched inequity in gender role distribution. Domestic violence in its various forms, whether physical, sexual, or psychological, is yet another matter that women have to contend with. In the workplace, this discrimination manifests itself in the form of the gap between men's and women's earnings, obstacles to career advancement, and also in the form of sexual harassment at the workplace. Women are always said to be confronted with a "glass ceiling," a strong but invisible barrier that stops them from progressing to the very top of the organization. Societal constructs regarding women's ability to lead only serve to make this issue worse. Women's bodies in almost every society are subjected to social control through rules and norms that guide how they ought to dress, behave, and express themselves. The portrayal of women's bodies in the media and popular culture has significant implications for the entrenchment and perpetuation of gender stereotypes and discrimination.

In all its forms and details, the impact of this oppression is serious. Many women suffer from trauma, self-loathing, and deep-set negative stereotypes. Oppression, economically, is continuous poverty and dependence. Socially, it undermines women's involvement in public life and the development of women's potential.

The constant brutality of women's lives has made women mobilize against such forms of torture. The movement is called the feminism movement. The women's movement is defined as the movement that advocates against all forms of oppression of women in society to be treated as equal human beings like men. Women's position in the social hierarchy has always been lower than men's. Even in contemporary society, women are just like men, but for some reason, despite wanting, women are deprived of having equal rights.

The long history of the women's movement ranges over several centuries. At the close of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth, the

suffragette movement sprang into existence in the USA and Europe. It worked towards equal voting rights for women. Iconic figures like Emmeline Pankhurst from England and Susan B. Anthony from America launched the women's suffrage movement globally. During World Wars, women occupied strategic positions in factories, hospitals, and other previously male-dominated fields. The second feminist wave (1960-1980) focused on issues related to women, such as work, reproductive rights, and violence against women. The shift of working positions occupied by women during the wars shifted to a demand women made thereafter for equal work rights.

In Indonesia, the fight for women's rights is very much intertwined with the struggle against colonialism, social injustice, and secular discrimination. In this instance, one could select Kartini to emphasize her ideas on women's emancipation, particularly her thoughts on the significance of education. The book *Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang* inspired the women's movement in Indonesia. At the start of the 20th century, women's groups like Putri Mardika (1912) started emerging and focused on education and women's rights. In this case, some of these people, including women in Indonesia, participated in the fight against colonialism as soldiers (for example, Cut Nyak Dien and Martha Christina Tiahahu) and as thinkers of the nation's loving ideas. In 1946, the Indonesian Women's Congress was launched to advocate and fight for women's rights, looking at law control and improving social living conditions.

Throughout history, women's journey has been filled with political, social, and economic struggles involving pursuing social justice and human rights. Such events are but a microcosm of the deeply entrenched power relations within patriarchal systems that tend to force women out of active participation into a more passive role. There is a huge movement among women to have a say, be heard, and have their voices included in decision-making. For instance, the early twentieth century witnessed the suffragette movement that specifically agitated for women's voting rights.

In Indonesia, some women got on with their education while doing politics, starting with R.A. Kartini and Dewi Sartika. The franchise issue is not only limited to women's challenges but also covers income earning, such as equal salaries, employment opportunities, and control over economic assets. Many women workers in the labor movement seek to improve their work conditions. Furthermore, on the donative sociocultural aspect, they also seek to curtail negative gender norms and stereotypes about their positions in employment. For instance, contemporary feminism addresses issues like gender-based violence, sexual harassment, as well as discrimination in the workplace. Education has always been the best investment in nurturing human capital. Advocacy to allow women access to education has increased their expectations of other aspects of life.

Many Indonesian novels have feminist themes, such as *Pada Sebuah Kapal*, *La Barka*, and *Keberangkatan* by NH. Dini. *Saman*, *Larung*, and *Si Parasit Lajang* by Ayu Utami. *Nadira dan Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori and many other feminist novels. From the many Indonesian novels with the theme of feminism, the author chose the novel *Tarian Bumi* by Oka Rusmini. *Tarian Bumi*, in the context of feminism, lies in its ability to portray women's struggles within a very specific cultural context, namely Bali, in a very profound and meaningful way. The novel not only provides a view of resistance to patriarchy but also provides a critique of oppressive culture while providing hope about the possibility of empowerment and freedom for women. Through its strong narrative, complex characters, and deep symbolism, *Tarian Bumi* remains one of the most relevant and important works of Indonesian feminist literature.

Oka Rusmini's *Tarian Bumi* is a novel about Balinese women oppressed by cultural rules and customs. This novel has a woman with the Brahmin caste, the highest caste. The woman lives among people who strictly adhere to caste rules. Born into a society that adheres to the caste system, Balinese women are forced to follow the rules. These rules made them depressed and oppressed. However, they do not remain silent. They rebel and fight against the existing rules. The

difference between this novel and other feminist novels is in its theme, which focuses on the rebellion of a Balinese woman. The main character is very brave in fighting against the traditions and cultural systems that exist in society. A woman of Balinese descent also wrote this novel with a Brahmin caste.

No less interesting, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* tells the story of a black woman who is discriminated against by her social environment. In this novel, the highlighted topic is racial differences that make a person discriminated against. Also, because the main character in this novel is a woman, this novel raises gender inequality that befalls women. The main character in this novel fights for her rights as a black woman who wants to be treated the same as others. The theme of this novels, which emphasises a woman's skin colour empowerment, sets it apart from other feminist novels. In defying societal norms and cultural structures, the female characters exhibit courage and strength. This novels is also written by a woman with dark skin.

The novels Oka Rusmini's *Tarian Bumi* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* were chosen as research materials because the authors highlight similar themes. The topic displayed is about oppression or inequality against women. Behind the inequality against women, the two novels also display the feminist movement described by the characters in the two novels. Oka Rusmini's *Tarian Bumi* features a woman who opposes the customs in her region. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* also features a woman who opposes her social situation, where the black race always gets social inequality. The characters in both novels are women who fight for their rights as equal human beings. Moreover, they are also both fighting for freedom within the shackles of their respective regional cultures.

Particularly, how feminism is viewed vis-a-vis the oppression and struggles women go through is thoroughly discussed by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, published in 1949. In this book, Beauvoir proposes rather polarizing opinions on the concerns of women in the social order, going so far as to critique the institution of marriage on account of its subservient nature.

Simone de Beauvoir contributed by showing how the patriarchal system shapes and controls women's societal roles. For example, in regards to 'being a woman,' she shifts to the discussion of 'the other,' signifying how women are placed in an oppressed position in the social structure and the household. On the other hand, she does not leave out the possibility and the way out together with the fight for equality. She emphasizes the need for an effective and politically conscious education as an effective means of liberation from the deprivation of women.

Throughout the years, Bell Hooks has emerged as arguably the most important feminist thinker when it comes to the concepts of feminism, oppression, and challenges women face throughout the world. In *Ain't I a Woman* (1981), she advocates for an elaborate and radical debate over feminism, gender oppression, and the active resistance of various women, particularly those of the black lower class and other minority groups. By exploring a much broader range of issues like race, class, and sexual orientation in conjunction with sexism, Bell Hooks developed an advanced and more meaningful definition of feminism. As a scholar, she coined intersectionality, highlighting the diversity of women's oppression. Furthermore, she explains the core reason why feminism ought to exist: to seek social justice and to foster authentic freedom, love, and equality without domination or violence. Feminism, according to Hooks, is a multi-faceted endeavor, which means the objective is not only to liberate women but also to create a more egalitarian society for everyone.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

The novels *Tarian Bumi* and *The Color Purple* depict a social reality in which women are treated as a marginalized class, both in the context of the culture and the social system. Although set in different cultural backgrounds, namely Bali in Indonesia in *Tarian Bumi* and South America in *The Color*



*Purple*, these two novels have a strong common thread in depicting women's suffering due to physical, emotional, and social violence perpetrated by patriarchal structures.

This research will integrate feminist theories and comparative literature to analyze how both authors portray women's oppression and struggle through the main characters in each novel. The focus will be on how women in both stories struggle for voice, power, and freedom and how social and cultural contexts influence these struggles.

This research will use feminist theory as an analytical lens and a comparative literary approach to provide insights into how women's oppression has been portrayed in literary works from different cultures and how women struggle to break free from the patriarchal structures that constrain them.

### 1.3 Research Objective

In this study, the researcher aims to analyze the novels *Tarian Bumi* and *The Color Purple* further. Using the feminist theory, the researcher seeks to explore how women's oppression and struggles are portrayed in both novels. The researcher has developed two main questions to achieve the purpose of this study. These questions are as follows:

1. How do social norms oppress women in the novel *Tarian Bumi* and *The Color Purple*?
2. How are women's struggle against social norms in the novels *Tarian Bumi* and *The Color Purple*?

### 1.4 Objectives of the Study

In this research, the author endeavors to make this research describe the study as below:

1. Describing the social norms that oppress women in the novel *Tarian Bumi* and *The Color Purple*.
2. Describing women's struggle against social norms in the novels *Tarian Bumi* and *The Color Purple*.

## **1.5 Research Significances**

### **1.5.1 Benefits theoretically**

The purpose of this research is to better understand feminist theory and its literary relevance. This paper will examine how women are portrayed as oppressed in these two novels and how feminist theory can be used as a foundation for analysing literature about gender, power, and society.

This study will address the issue of women's representation and the contexts of their struggles and strengths in a particular culture and history. It seeks the answer by employing comparative literary methods that will further the understanding of the discourse of feminism in different literary contexts.

This research aims to guide different scholars seeking to understand feminist criticism in literature to provide a basis for further research on issues such as gender discrimination and the portrayal of women in literature. Through the analysis of the women's experiences in these novels, it attempts to show that these literary works have the potential to be transformed through feminist analysis and contribute to the fight against gender injustice.

### **1.5.2 Benefits in practice**

The research aims to frame the issue of feminism to encourage the critical examination of social beliefs and values. The study hopes that by raising awareness of feminist perspectives, there will be a tendency to shift from a patriarchal society that propagates



gender discrimination. It intends to make people rethink orthodox gender stereotypes and question their actions and norms to work towards an inclusive world.

The very undertaking of feminist thinking in its comparative approach within this research also sheds light on the multiplicity of women's lives across cultures and historical settings. This study on how women from different cultures cope with and resist oppression will add to understanding feminism as a worldwide social justice issue. Ultimately, this research will motivate young generations to change the world for the better by achieving equality amongst all genders for all races and breaking down patriarchy.

## 1.6 Previous Studies

Researchers search for previous research to understand similar topics and objects. They can then use the theories and their applications as references in their research.

Researchers are looking for previous research to understand similar themes and objects. With this, researchers can see the theories and their application as references in conducting their research. Previous research on women's struggle is a thesis entitled *Struggle of Woman In The Novel Sing Me To Sleep By Angela Morrison (The Analysis Of Feminism)* by Eka Serli Sudarni (2017). In the novel *Sing Me To Sleep By Angela Morrison*, Beth Evans experiences obstacles in achieving her dreams. Beth is a woman who is marginalized in her school because of her ugly face. On the other hand, she has a beautiful voice, making people recognize her. The research *Struggle of Woman In The Novel Sing Me To Sleep By Angela Morrison (The Analysis Of Feminism)* by Eka Serli Sudarni (2017) focuses on the struggle of women to achieve their dreams, gain affection, and accept themselves.

Previous research that uses feminism theory is a thesis entitled *Women's Oppression And Struggle In The Movie Suffragette And Iron Jawed Angels* by Betina Oky Dwi Purnamasari (2019). In the movie *Suffragette*, women's struggle is carried out militarily, while in the movie *Iron Jawed Angels*, women's struggle is carried out peacefully. Both have the same theme, namely the struggle of women. Using the theory of feminism and comparative studies, researchers use this research as one of the research references.

The research *PERBANDINGAN FEMINISME DALAM CERPEN FANTASI DUNIA DAN CERPEN SEHER* in the journal was written by Noviatul Latifah and Dian Hartati. The study shows differences in setting, characters, and storylines between the two short stories. However, both raised the theme of women's struggle. Similar to the research that the researchers took, in the two novels that the author raised, there are differences in setting, character, and storyline, but with the same theme, namely, the struggle of women. Reviewing previous research gives the author a new view that can support his research.

The research work done by Sarah Johnson (2019) with the title 'Comparative Study of Virginia Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway" And Kate Chopin's 'The Awakening' Female Characters' describes the depiction of the female characters in two critical feminist novels written within the first half of 20th century. For her research, Johnson focuses on the usage of gynocritics, which centers on women as a writer or characters in literature, and existential feminism, which investigates the process of understanding existence in a world dominated by men. Johnson, while analyzing 'Mrs. Dalloway', elaborates on how Clarissa Dalloway is torn between social expectations and self-actualization, as depicted by Virginia Woolf. In 'The Awakening,' she interprets Edna Pontellier's quest to find herself outside the mother and wife roles. These two novels were written in vastly different social settings, but Johnson noted that they share the same alienation and rebellion against imposed gender roles.

A piece of research, 'Representations of Female Resistance in Postcolonial Feminist Literature: A Comparative Study of Tsitsi Dangarembga's 'Nervous Conditions' and Jamaica Kincaid's 'Annie John' (Patel,

2021) on the other hand, focuses specifically on the intersectionality of postcolonial feminist discourses. It seeks to understand how these works of fiction, one from Africa and the other from the Caribbean, grapple with the realities of women living under diverse and interlocking systems of oppression. By employing intersectional feminism, Patel demonstrates that women are not only empowered; instead, their experiences are a factor of gender but also race, class, and the impact of colonialism. For example, in her analysis of *Nervous Conditions*, Patel examines how education can overcome traditional and colonial endeavors that oppress a woman's desire to achieve. In *Annie John*, she observes the process of self-construction that the character undertakes as she balances British colonial and Jamaican Caribbean inheritance. In both novels, her research revealed that the characters develop similar strategies to challenge the oppressive reality within which they live: the women use education and writing to achieve freedom.

Much of the previously conducted research has been focused on shedding light on feminist studies. It includes how literature depicts the emotional lives of women and how novels break gender stereotypes. It also shows how feminist literary criticism is approached. For example, it incorporates politics and culture, space and time, and is concerned with the global understanding of identity, power, and gender. These works indicate that the study of comparative feminism is not merely structural. However, it deals with studying feminist novels, which focuses on how power relations are articulated within and around the text. They also demonstrate how women writers challenge gender oppression in creative ways. These approaches are valuable for scholarship on women writers.

## **1.7 Conceptual Framework**

This research aims to investigate women's oppression and struggle in the novels *Tarian Bumi* and *The Color Purple*. It looks for opportunities utilizing feminism theories proposed by Simone de Beauvoir and Bell Hooks in the study

of activism. Moreover, the research conducts comparative literature to make a comparison.

The thesis will focus on *Tarian Bumi* and *The Color Purple*, applying feminist theories and character studies to comprehend the novels' characters better. *The Color Purple* is a novel about a woman's struggle against the caste system that suppresses women's rights.

The feminism theory used in this research is from Simone de Beauvoir and bell hooks. The application of these two feminist scholars is because the two novels under study have different types and natures of oppression. The idea of feminism by Simone de Beauvoir will be applied to the study of *Tarian Bumi* to understand the oppression of the caste system and social norms. The concept of feminism by Bell Hooks will be used to analyze *The Color Purple* with its oppressive forms of social norms, patriarchy, capitalism, and racism.

According to Sapardi Djoko Damono, comparative literature is meant to be a research study of literature with at least two different works from different countries. It seeks to find the relationships/similarities between two or more literary works by examining politics, history, philosophy, sociology, social phenomena, and others. In the book *Comparative Literature* by Susan Bassnet, feminist criticism is said to be one of the themes in comparative literature, where the comparison focuses on the oppression and struggle of women.

## **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

### **1.8.1 Struggle**

A struggle or effort is made to overcome hurdles, challenges, difficulties, or obstacles to accomplishing a set goal. It can be a personal or a social effort.

### **1.8.2 Oppression**

Deliberate and systematic cruelty or discrimination against a particular person or group by which the dominant party, through exercising its power or authority, limits the scope of rights, freedom, and chances to another. It is widely believed that struggle is mostly caused by oppressed groups seeking to gain freedom from oppression.

### **1.8.3 Characters**

Characterization is a clear description of a person in a story. Characterization involves the problem of who the characters are, how they are characterized, and how they are placed and portrayed in a story so that they can give a clear picture to the reader. Characterization also includes the problem of who the characters are, how they are characterized, and how they are placed and portrayed in a story.

### **1.8.4 Plot**

A story that contains a sequence of events, but each event is only causally related; one event causes or leads to another event. The plot is a reflection or journey of the characters' behavior in acting, thinking, feeling, and behaving in dealing with various life problems. The plot is a series of interrelated causal or cause-and-effect events.