

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The issue about gender seems to be “a long last” issue that appears in every point of view of human history. It is even most probably provided in various focuses of problem. As history goes by, the struggle to abolish this difference always appears in any kind of need. When a group of people face a problem, it will not suddenly give an exactly the same way of solving between one and another because of “gender is the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioral characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, man and woman” (Nobelius, 2004:4). Based on Nobelius statement, gender is something that can show us where a woman and a man are because gender can show us about the characteristic between man and women, but it cannot be limited about a woman activity like in gender equality.

In its exploration of the diverse meanings of gender equality, it not only takes into account the existence of different visions of gender equality, and the way in which different political and theoretical debates crosscut these visions, but also reflects upon the geographical contexts in which the visions and debates over gender equality are located. (Verloo, 2007:21)

Gender equality put itself as an issue that happens in the universe and has its own difference in one place and another place. It depends on what point that should be the dominance in equalizing process. Verloo’s statement emphasizes that gender equality is influenced by the vision. It is also influenced by the geographical context where the effort of equalizing the gender is located. Another fact is that the contention about gender equality also appears in America. America still remains the question about the exact interpretation of gender equality. The term gender equality has been defined in multiple ways in the development literature and has been the subject of great debate in the America (Grown et al, 2003:3)

Based on the quotation above, gender equality will provide a huge analysis when it is looked in different point of view that exists around the world. Grown (2003) stated that gender equality denotes women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere. Gender equality denotes the equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognizing their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources. The analysis in this research will get clearer information either for the writer or the reader. By considering the various purposes of gender equality struggle that exists in entire universe, the writer agrees the summary of the definition of gender equality as put below.

The issue of gender equality also happens in America. It is most probably happened in the middle of 20th century. For example in 1963 most of American did not believe that gender equality was possible or even desirable. Conventional wisdom held that a woman could not pursue a career and still be a fulfilled wife or successful mother. Normal women, psychiatrists proclaimed, renounced all aspirations outside the home to meet their feminine need for dependence. Coontz in 2013 stated that; Over the next 30 years this emphasis on equalizing gender roles at home as well as at work produced a revolutionary transformation in American's attitudes. It was not instant (Coontz, 2013:1)

Based on statements above, gender equality is not an issue that can be overcome by an instant time. From quotation above, it is seen that the struggle in gaining gender equality in America needs time before it could be accepted within the society. This issue actually has its own purpose and become the habitual acts that diversity of gender cannot be a wall that separates women in getting same opportunity with men.

In this research, the writer tries to figure out the existence of gender equality in America in the novel by Sydney Sheldon an title *The Stars Shine Down*. The main character in the novel named Lara Cameron, a successful real estate developer. She was the child of a broken family came from Nova Scotia, Canada. Her mother died at the time she was born. Her father didnot accept her because she is a woman. Early in her life, she learns to fend herself science her only parent not even aware to her. She worked as a cost collector for a boarding- house business. There after her father passed away, Lara made a deal with the business's owner to grant a building to be her own. Thrilled at her success, she moved to Chicago, United State to start her real estate empire. Even though she encountered many problems, she was able to overcome them all. She became one of America's successful business women, and was called as "iron butterfly". Once she falls in love with a talented pianist, Phillip Adler, and married him. She was on the verge of losing everything she has achieved because the man she'd married, but the iron butterfly miraculously recovered from all her shattered dreams and gained back all her hopes and met a man whom she ever truly loved.

Overall, the writer chooses Sydney Sheldon's the *Stars Shine Down* as the subject of analysis since Sydney Sheldon's the *Stars Shine Down* is attracting writer with its interesting story, more because Sydney Sheldon's the *Stars Shine Down* provokes the writer with the possibility of the existence of *Gender Equality* portrayal in America especially in the late of 20th century. After the description above writer will reveal the idea of gender Equality in America which is portrayed in this novel. The fact that the novel is published in the latest 20th century, it hopefully will beneficially give significant information about the part of history in the gender equality struggle in America which is suitably taken from the novel portrayal.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Referring to the background of the story when there are many problems about gender equality in America so, the writer formulates the formulation of problem as:

How is gender equality in America portrayed in Sheldon's *TheStars Shine Down*?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the formulation of problem above, this study is to reveal the gender equality in America portrayed in Sheldon's *TheStars Shine down*

1.4 Uses of the Study

There are two kinds of the uses of the study in this research; they are theoretical and practical uses.

1.4.1 Theoretical Use

In conducting this thesis, the writer hopes that this thesis will be used theoretically by the readers to enrich knowledge and discourse on gender Equality in America and as a resource for other students who want to analyze similar topic. By completing this research, the writer also hopes that this research can give any motivation to the reader to reach more about the gender equality especially in America and further can apply in their life and impact positively to people around them.

1.4.2 Practical Use

Practically, this thesis is hopefully used as knowledge about the crucial issue of gender equality so that gender equality can be applied in the real life. It is not stalled only in the form of written text.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Bringing the issue about gender equality, the writer realizes that this issue has its own general meaning and need in all around the world. To prevent the paper from a more complex analysis that probably can bring destructive result, the writer only focused on analyzing gender equality in America especially Clara (main character) portrayed in the novel by Sidney Sheldon entitled as *The Stars Shine Down*.