

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Literary work is one of the media that has an impact on changes in social phenomena. Many changes in social life from literary works such as novels. Novels are a form of literary work that is already familiar to connoisseurs of literature. The novel is a work of prose fiction that is written narratively and is usually written in the form of stories. Novel in the broadest sense is an imaginative work that is built through its intrinsic elements such as events, plots, figures, backgrounds, perspectives, diverse settings and so on which are imaginative. The contents of the novel are longer and more complex than the contents of short stories, and there are no structural and poetic restrictions. In general, a novel tells about the characters in daily life along with all the characteristics. A novel usually tells about human life in interacting with the environment and also with other humans. In a novel, the author usually tries his best to direct the reader to various kinds of images of the reality of life through the stories contained in the novel. Thus, the novel has an important role when it can provide perspectives on how to respond to life that is presented imaginatively. This is because what is presented in a novel is a matter of human life. One of the studies that are often examined from novel literary works is about women. Many novels examine real life for the context of women's lives from

violence to injustice. This has become a very interesting phenomenon (Qalbi & Arfani, 2021)

The modern Korean woman faces various dimensions of inequality—social, cultural, and economic. From a historical perspective, the gender inequality problem has been improving greatly since the takeoff of the Korean economy in the 1970s. However, Korean women still have many hurdles to overcome to get equal treatment from the various sectors of society. On a positive note, the educational attainment of women in the Republic of Korea has improved substantially in the last half-century. In 1990, the average years of schooling for Korean women in their 30s was 10.4 while the average years for men was 11.8. By 2010, those averages had risen to 13.9 for women and to 14.1 for men. However, if we consider only women in their 20s, their average schooling years actually reached 14.3 in 2010, even higher than the 13.9 years of their male counterparts (Social Indicators in Korea, Statistics Korea). The general improvement in gender equality in the Republic of Korea was also manifest in the change in sex ratio at birth. In 1990, at the peak of its rise, the sex ratio at birth—measured by the number of boys born per 100 girls—reached 116.5; by 2007, that ratio fell down to the normal level of 106. It is widely believed that the high sex ratio at birth in the past was mainly due to gender inequality in Korean society. That the sex ratio has gone down to the normal level could be an indicator that Korean parents no longer perceive any disadvantage in having daughters instead of sons. Even with these indications of improvement in gender equality, however, significant

inequality between men and women still persists in various forms in the Republic of Korea (Kim et al., 2016).

According to Claire Lee, Gender inequality is still widespread in South Korea's workplaces, according to data from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. The employment rate among women stood at 51.2% last year, which is 18.8 percentage points lower than the male employment rate. Among all female workers in the country, 47.4% were irregular workers and 22.1% received low income, scoring a proportion higher than their male counterparts in both categories, reports Korea Bizwire. Female wage workers earned 15,804 won (US\$11.41) per hour, which was 69.8% of what men earned. There were also more women benefiting from South Korea's National Basic Livelihood Security Programme, at 55.4% or 1.26 million women, up by 131,000 people from 2020. Among newlywed women between 15 and 54 years of age, 3.24 million were unemployed. There were 1.45 million women who experienced career interruptions due to marriage, pregnancy, or child-rearing, accounting for 17.4% of all married women. Of these, women quit their jobs mostly due to child-rearing (43.2%), followed by marriage (27.4%) and pregnancy/childbirth (22.1%) (Lee. Claire, 2022)

Feminism is often interpreted as a women's rights movement that speaks about improving women's positions and rejecting the difference in degrees between women and men. Men always become dominant and women must obey all orders of men. In other words, it creates a stereotyped gender that increasingly restricts women. Patriarchy is a system in society that places men in a higher position than women,

men are more dominant in the social, political, and other aspects of life, and also women are part of men so that men have complete control of women. Patriarchy is no longer a conventional issue for gender analysis. Patriarchy is a social system that recognizes men as the major holders of power and dominates in the roles of political leadership, moral authority, social rights, and property control. In the family domain, a figure called a father has authority over women as a mother, children, and including property (Permata, n.d.).

Feminism can be found in many literary works, including the South Korean novel "Kim Ji-Young, born 1982," which discusses the topic of feminism and gender inequality. Cho Nam Joo's novel published in Minumsa on October 2016. Being a woman in South Korea with its strong patriarchal culture is not an easy thing, not a few of them have to experience unpleasant things in social life, school, family, even in the world of work. Women cannot be leaders just because they are female, especially when they are married. They are considered inconsistent in their work, such as maternity leave or permission not to work because they take care of their families. In the novel "Kim Ji-Young, Born 1982" the inequality in the post-marriage phase makes Kim Jiyoung lose her identity, she only does domestic work, such as taking care of her children, and husbands and taking care of the household. The patriarchal culture in South Korea puts Kim Jiyoung in a disadvantaged position, how could it not be, when Kim Jiyoung decided not to have children, she actually received unpleasant treatment from her family who considered that Kim Jiyoung's

health was problematic, while her husband Jung Daehyun was not questioned for his joint decision not to have children.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher chose the novel "Kim Ji-Young, born in 1982" because it wanted to represent how the reflection of gender inequality and the patriarchal culture in South Korea. So it is hoped that this research can be a reference for the community to find out and provide an overview of what gender inequality and patriarchal culture are unconsciously carried out by the community itself and will not happen again in the form of gender inequality and patriarchal culture towards an individual.

### **1.2 Limitation of The Problem**

The researcher focuses on analyzing the main woman character in the novel Kim Ji-Young, Born 1982 (2016) by analyzing the gender inequality that she experienced from childhood to adulthood and marriage. The research uses a liberal feminism approach by Betty Friedan (2001), characterization and setting of fiction theory by William Kenney (1966) and the theory of reflection by Alan Swingewood (1972).

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. Who is the main woman character in novel "Kim Ji-Young, born in 1982"?
2. How is the social settings in novel "Kim Ji-Young, born in 1982"?
3. How is gender inequality revealed in novel "Kim Ji-Young, born in 1982"?

### **1.4 The objective of The Research**

1. To analyze the main woman character in the novel "Kim Ji-Young, born 1982"

2. To analyze the social setting in the novel “Kim Ji-Young, born 1982”
3. To reveal reflection gender inequality in the novel “Kim Ji-Young, born 1982”

