

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Human rights are inherent and must be obtained by every human being from birth to death. Human rights are rights that are obtained by humans solely because of the humans themselves, and because of their dignity as humans (Smith et al., 2008). Therefore, even though everyone is born with a different gender, skin color, language, culture, and nationality, that person is obliged to get their rights, and the basic rights of every human being cannot be revoked.

Humans are born with biological differences. The difference between men and women biologically is called sexuality (Nevid, 2021), and can be seen physically, such as differences in reproductive organs and physical form. So, if we are talking about anatomical differences between women and men, then we are talking about sexuality, not gender. Gender is society's view of the different roles, functions, and responsibilities between men and women which arise from habits that are ultimately agreed upon by society (Juditha, 2015). So it can be said that gender is a psychosocial concept that can differentiate between masculinity and femininity.

Women are God's creatures which can be interpreted as creatures that have glory. Women have an important role in life because women are given the privilege to conceive and give birth. That's why women are called noble creatures. However, the phenomenon of discrimination against women is still something that often occurs in a society where the concept of patriarchy is still ensnared in that society, the

position of women is always considered to be below men, both in terms of strength and ability. Therefore, because of this oppression and discrimination, many women have started to fight for their rights.

Equality of rights and justice for women is called gender equality. There are still many misconceptions about gender equality, many people think this concept is a woman's attempt to win over men (Subhan, 2015).. Even though what is meant by this concept is that justice is fairest for men and women, whether it's at home, at work, in education and in various other fields.

According to (Damono, 1978) Literary works that raise issues that occur in society can be studied using the theory of sociology of literature. The sociology of literature is considered to be a reflection of what is happening in society. Like sociology, literature also has a connection with humans in society: humans efforts to adapt and their efforts to change that society.

Many literary works raise issues of feminism that sometimes occur in society. These writers aim to channel women's voices through their work. The following are examples of literary works that raise the issue of feminism. *Things A Bright Girl Can Do* is a novel by Sally Nichols that describes how women's rights are taken away and they are forced to follow the wishes of other people and the circumstances around them. Like the three main characters in this novel, and also members of the suffragettes of that time (a movement that upheld women's suffrage). Evelyn, who was a girl from a rich family, wanted to fight for her right to receive an education at Oxford, but her parents opposed it because at that time women were thought to only need to be good housewives, according to people women did not need

education, this made Evelyn rebelled and joined the Suffragettes movement. The second character is Nell, a poor girl who wants to fight for women's rights because in terms of work at that time there was a lot of comparison between women and men. such as lower wages for women and jobs that only accept men. They joined the Suffragettes and upheld women's rights through demonstrations against the government.

The researcher uses *Things A Bright Girl Can Do* by Sally Nicholls as a research object. In this research, the researcher uses the main liberal feminist theory put forward by Mary Wollstonecraft. Liberal feminism is a theory of gender equality that strengthens the integration of women into greater roles in society, demanding justice and equal rights, wages, social status, and respect for women in social relations (Priyadharshini et al., 2021), with this theory the researcher wants to analyzed the forms of deprivation of rights experienced by women in this novel, and how they fight for and stand up to get your rights. To get maximum results, the researcher conducted research by analyzing in detail the forms of rights for women in the novel *Things A Bright Girl Can Do* by Sally Nichols.

The researcher's investigation is motivated by the absence of prior studies that have explored the subject matter of the novel *Things A Bright Can Do*. This novel, with a rating of 3.96 and 4,577 reviews on goodreads.com, has garnered prestigious accolades including being selected for the 2019 Carnegie Medal, National Book Award, Books Are My Bag Readers' Awards and the YA Book Prize. Additionally, the researcher's interest in feminism has driven her to conduct this

research, as they aim to address the prevailing perception that women are inherently weak and incapable of achieving equality with men.

**B. Problem Formulation**

1. How is the deprivation of rights against women portrayed in Sally Nicholls's *Things A Bright Girl Can Do*?
2. How do women uphold gender equality in Sally Nicholls's *Things A Bright Girl Can Do*?

**C. Objectives of the Study**

1. To analyze the deprivation of rights experienced by women in Sally Nicholls's *Things A Bright Girl Can Do*.
2. To analyze how the struggle of women in upholding gender equality in Sally Nicholls's *Things A Bright Girl Can Do*.

**D. Scope of the Study**

This research focuses on discrimination against women and gender equality which examined using liberal feminist theory by Mary Wollstonecraft. This theory focuses on the freedom and equal position of women and men in all matters, whether education, economics, or freedom of expression. Like in Sally Nichol's *Things A Bright Girl Can Do* (2017) which discusses how the female characters in this novel want to get individual freedom in the fields of education, work, and many things that at that time were considered only to be done by men. So a sense of struggle arose to uphold women's rights, even though there were many obstacles in its implementation.

## **E. Review of the Related Studies**

In this section, the researcher explains several previous studies that have been carried out and are relevant to the research that the researcher is currently conducting. The first is research by Purwarno, Sylvia Madatillah, and Andang Suhedi entitled *Liberal Feminism in Ika Natassa's novel Critical Eleven* (2021). In this research, the author focuses on equality in the workplace and education which is reflected in the main character, Tanya Baskoro. This character teaches the importance of equality between men and women because everything will run well if there are women in it. Anya Baskoro proves that she has a high education and can match her abilities with men.

The second is research by Putri Amalia Zahra, Tri Murniat, and Ririn Kurnia Trisnawati entitled *Liberal Feminism in Nawal El Saadawi's Memoirs of A Woman Doctor* (2000). to fight the concept of patriarchy. The nameless character then becomes a doctor and can achieve an equal position with men, the author also achieves economic equality, gets the right to exercise her choice, and achieves equality in civil liberties. This proves that she succeeded in opposing the concept of patriarchy where women are considered incapable of having the same position as men.

And the third is research by Halimatus Sakinah, and Ari Setyorini, entitled *Characterization Of Enola Holmes In The Case Of The Missing Marques: A Study Of Liberal Feminism* (2022). This research raises the issue of feminism by analyzing the character of the main character, Enola. where in the nineteenth century Enola had an appearance that tended to be masculine, which was not the same as most young

women at that time. She has critical and logical thinking and opposes gender roles that assume that women have intelligence below men. With her independent and brave personality, she received a lot of ridicule and opposition at that time, but she still did what she thought was right by proving that she had intelligent thinking.

The three studies above have relevance to the research being carried out by the researcher. There are several similarities, three previous studies contained issues about liberal feminism and the struggle for how a person tries to obtain the same rights and position as men in the fields of education, economics, and freedom of expression. However, on the other hand, there are also several differences between the three studies and the research currently being carried out by the researcher. The first is the difference in research objects. Secondly, the three studies above only focus on one main character, while the research conducted by the researcher of the novel *Things A Bright Girl Can Do* by Sally Nichols regarding Liberal Feminism does not only focus on the main character but also the struggle carried out by the Suffragettes.

In this review of related studies, the researcher encountered a dearth of studies specifically focusing on the subject matter explored in the novel *Things A Bright Girl Can Do*. Consequently, the researcher resorted to utilizing a range of studies that shared resemblances with the theoretical framework and concerns of liberal feminism.

## **F. Methods of Research**

This section discusses the data and data sources that are being carried out by the researcher, as well as the steps for collecting data and how to analyze the data.

This research is qualitative because this research aims to see how the deprivation of women's rights and gender inequality are reflected through the characters in the novel *Things A Bright Girl Can Do*.

1. Data and Source of Data

The data source for this research is the novel *Things A Bright Girl Can Do* by Sally Nicholls(2017). This novel consists of 432 pages in the printed version. This novel in the Historical fiction genre was published on september 7, 2017. The novel *Things A Bright Girl Can Do* is the primary data source for this research. This research also uses secondary data originating from previous research. as well as other complementary data sources from research such as websites, journal articles, and books

2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

To collect the required data, the researcher carried out several data collection steps. The first is by reading the novel and understanding its contents. The second researcher marked texts that are related to forms of deprivation of women's rights, gender inequality, and how female characters try to uphold gender equality, which is related to the theory used in this research, namely Liberal Feminist was coined by Mary Wollstonecraft, apart from novels as primary data source

objects, researchers also look for secondary data sources from websites, journal articles and books that have the same issues.

### 3. Data analysis

After the gathering of the data. To respond to the first query, the researcher employs a liberal feminist theory to examine the data and make connections between the experiences of the women in the novel. Includes the deprivation of rights and gender disparities in the workplace, freedom of expression, and educational spheres. In response to the second query, the researcher examines the difficulties faced by women in upholding gender equality.

## **G. Significance of the Study**

This research is expected to provide learning about the phenomenon of oppression against women. As well as knowing more about how literary works can reflect what is happening in society. Besides that, readers are expected to become more familiar with liberal feminist forms according to what is described and illustrated in this study, how gender equality and opposition to patriarchal concepts are upheld. On the other hand, this research is expected to be a reference for other



researchers who raise the same topic so that it can help researchers evaluate literary works, especially novels with the same theory.

## **H. Presentation**

With the aim that this paper is easily accepted, the researcher divides this research into four chapters. The first chapter starts with the background, with reasons for selecting the background subject and the subject topics to be analyzed. Then the researcher explains the problem formulation regarding the issues raised, the objectives of the study, a review of related studies, research methods, theoretical approaches, and presentations. After that the researcher will enter into the second chapter, this chapter covers the theoretical approach and theoretical framework that will be used by the researcher to analyze the problem. The third chapter covers the discussion of problems that will be encountered in the problems that the researcher raises. The fourth chapter is the conclusion of the analysis.