

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter mainly discusses the background, problem, objective of study and significance of the study.

### I.1 Background Of The Study

In patriarchal society, women are considered having the second position, one step behind men. It means that the system of the culture and their dependency of men, make women are easily to be exploited. This inequality of women role is shown in many aspects of society such as in workplace and law.

In workplace and economy aspect, there is limitation for women which makes women's position jeopardized in society. For example, there are several jobs which are mostly considered common for men but not for women, like pilot, driver or jobs with technical abilities. This condition sometimes forces women to get limited freedom. They have to choose jobs which are considered by society more appropriate for women like nurse, teacher, etc.

In addition, women are still considered as the weak one in law protection. Many cases, like women trafficking and oppression against women workers show us how women are unprotected in law case. Even in some countries, women do not have right to vote, limited opportunities to participate in social life, and even to express their opinion. The oppression of women also forces women to enter the workforce in order to increase their income. This condition is treated women as a

commodity that can produce money. While women are objectified and oppressed as commodity of economy, society expects men, who are superior than women, to enjoy women's sacrifices. When men are forced to make money, they usually are not oppressed like what women experience as commodity. It is because society describes men as the essential gender.

Commodity of economy is everything that can be used as product that hold for sale in economic aspect. These aspects involve quality and profit of product. Women as commodity of economy means women are forced to work to earn money to fulfill herself and her family economically. Segrave and Milivojevic in *Sex Trafficking - A New Agenda* stated that economic condition forces people to migrate across borders to find better way of life and women, who "are increasingly relied upon to provide low paid and unskilled services," provide no exception (2005; p. 12)

Quality aspect in this case, is women are forced to have an ability that can help her to do her job, so she can explore her potential thoroughly. Quantity and variation aspects push women to have open-minded thought. It drives women to use their abilities to get many benefits to overcome difficulties and earn money easier.

As stated in *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* by David Ricardo, the natural price of labour is price which enables laborers to subsist and perpetuate them to reproduce their labor-power. The worker sells his commodity on the labor market and for exchange, she receives a given sum of value of money (1963, p. 45). As commodities, women are also forced to get higher

income continually. These aspects will be investigated to clarify the role of women as commodities under the male domination of a patriarchal society.

Inequality of women right also happens in Japan. Japanese women are bounded in society with partriarchal system. In educational system, Japanese women can not get equal education as men. Tanaka Yukiko as stated in *Contemporary Portraits of Japanese Women* argued that in Japan, about 50% of women have jobs which however, most of the female employees are young and unmarried (Praeger, 1995) . These working women mainly have jobs in farming, fishing, and family-owned businesses. This inequity gender roles which emphasizes women right was shown clearly in *Memoirs of a Geisha*. This is a film adaptation of the novel of similar work by Arthur Golden, which is directed by Rob Marshall.

In the beginning of the story, Sayuri and her family are described as living under represive partriarchal system that forces them to be dependent to men. When their father has no money, Sayuri and her sister are sold into Geisha house named Okiya. Then, because of her eyes of the color of rain, little Sayuri, is separated from her sister, Satsu, who is sold into prostitution house. In Okiya, Little Sayuri and Pumpkin, friend of Sayuri in Okiya, are forced to be a servant and pay for the rent before becoming geisha. Pumpin, like Satsu, sold into Okiya when she was a child by her parents. She wanted to become a Geisha and taught Sayuri how to survive in Okiya. In the of the story, she becomes prostitute and enjoys her new life.

After being a Geisha, Hatsumomo has to give half of her income to Geisha House in order to pay the rent. In the end of the story, Hatsumomo is forced to leave the okiya. There is also a precise measure of her success when her virginity is auctioned off for a price of 10,000 yen, more than Hatsumomo. Sayuri, Hatsumoto and Mameha, characters of this movie, have a precise measure of their virginity. This oppression happens after their first performance as Geisha. As commodity, a geisha is forced to get higher income by entertaining guests and hiding away her feeling when they are either in good or bad feeling.

People who love each other sometimes show their feeling directly, but not for Geisha who is forbidden to fall in love, which is not appropriate treatment for a normal human being. Because of this condition, Sayuri keeps her secret love to the Chairman. It also happens in Hatsumomo character who hides her relationship with her boyfriend.

It is shown in *Memoirs of Geisha* how women are exploited as commodity in patriarchal system. Based on this reason, the writer decides to analyze the position of women characters as commodity of economy which is reflected in *Memoirs of Geisha* movie. To analyze this movie, the writer uses feminism theory which proposes for the equality of women and argues that women should share opportunities in society equally. It is supported by Mary Wollstonecraft, one of feminist, authored "*A Vindication of Their Right of Women (1792)*". She argues that women should stand up for their right and not allow their male dominated society to define what it means to be woman (Bessler, 1999: 181).

Women themselves should get similar chances like men do. Most importantly, they should change the patriarchal assumption that women are inferior to men. Thus, by conducting this research, the writer hopes that this study can function as the exposure of how women, especially in Japan, still undergo hardship related to their position in patriarchal system.

## **I.2. Problem Of The Study**

Based on the background of the study, the problem of the study is how the women characters are exploited as commodity of economy in *Memoirs Of Geisha* movie

## **I.3 Objectives Of The Study**

Based on the problem of the study above, the objective of the study is to analyze how the women characters are exploited as commodity of economy in *Memoirs Of Geisha* movie.