

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Study

Feminism is a social concept that argues men and women should have equal rights and privileges in the political, economic, and social realms. According to Mangan (2019), Feminism was coined by Frenchman Charles Fourier in 1837 to describe a movement aimed at achieving legal, economic, and social equality between the sexes, as well as ending patriarchy and male oppression of women. Various strands of what defines feminism arise as a result of differing goals and patterns of inequality across the world. Feminism's developing ideals and goals have continued to influence cultures since its conception, and it now ranks as one of the most important revolutions of our day, stimulating, affecting, and even upsetting large audiences as it develops resulting a lot of incident related to fighting the equality of sexes happened.

One of the issues that grind away through society because of the development ideas of feminism overlapping the problem in the equality of human right is racism. This issue happened because of the differences in races, sex, class, culture, religion, etc. Those, unfortunately, triggered radical discrimination throughout history. For example, the Ku Klux movement in South America, the Sun Down incident, and woman slavery in American history. At times, racism issues have developed, causing a lot of harm to people, especially to African-American people.

One of the heartbreaking phenomena histories of the United States was a history of African-American people struggle, the grapple of women's position, and American slavery. In the 20<sup>th</sup>, the struggle to survive the war between race, gender, the class has made the most significant history in America that hard to forget.

Freeman (1992) states that in the U.S., African Americans had a background of struggle, a history of resistance; a history of specific successes and losses in the fight against racism. A history of winning struggles for universal democratic rights. A tradition of the relentless battle for civil rights; a long, long tradition of class struggle

Not just that, African American women's fight to secure their rights as human beings has also a rich history of African-American people in emancipation for women, particularly African-American women. Freedman (2002:15) stated that we could list two tensions here, accommodation and resistance, flowing through African-American culture. Although African Americans struggled to come to terms with the patriarchal system and refused to enter the system on a fair basis with whites, the thread of revolution has been the dominant thread that runs through the history of African America. Poor African women's status has not changed significantly with independence and has also worsened in some cases.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, people thought women should stay at home serving men. Hooks (2015:214) states that this radical action toward women occurred day by day provoke some of the huge women to figure to step ahead and protect the woman's right, which is also called feminism. A

civil rights lawsuit or a case on equal rights, which claims several discriminatory factors, will be dealt with in one way or another. The interpretation of the argument will vary based on the chosen method, and the result may also be influenced.

African-American women are the category of individuals most severely influenced by social racial differences. While slavery is forbidden and perceived as a violation of human rights, African-American women continue to suffer seriously more than white women or even African-American men. That is because their race and gender intersect; in all of these identities, they are part of the marginalized community, which subsequently puts them among the lowest social position of society. On average, an African-American woman in the united states would work harder to earn what a white male does in one calendar year, according to Greenfield, Holman (2018). They elaborate, saying that the key explanation why African-American women are oppressed in this way is "occupational sorting." Greenfield and Holman note, using statistics from the American Population Study of the Census Bureau, the home health or personal care assistants, secretaries or administrative assistants, housekeepers, and social workers are some of the most common occupations for African-American women. "The classification of population groups into such occupational fields" is referred to as occupational filtering. "Women appear to group in lower-paying jobs than men, and African-American people in lower-paying jobs than white people..." according to the report. As a result, since they are

both women and African-American, "African-American women are doubly prosecuted."

In some instances, an intersectional approach to several claims in one case is an ideal strategy in certain cases. According to Hopkins (2018:3) The definition of "intersectionality" is characterized as the "intersectional oppression resulting from a combination of different oppressions that together produce something unique and distinctive from every single form of discrimination."

Windsong (2016:3) argues Intersectionality as a field of study and philosophy founded by African-American Women through scholarly resources, mainstream feminism, and race/ethnic scholarship has been criticized. Both aspects of science were criticized. For not taking the perspectives of African-American Women into account in women's studies and feminism, a universal category of femininity that typically gave priority to white women was sometimes referred to. From the viewpoint of men of color, race/ethnic analyses most also concentrated on social injustice. Therefore, in all research on women and race/ethnic studies, the perceptions of African-American Women were not taken into account; African-American Women were instead asked to assign preference to either gender or race and to interpret their experiences.

The novel 'The Help' by Kathryn Stockett was published in (2009) is an attempt to describe a realistic image of the lives of domestic/household African-American female servants. It is not about how they live in a discriminating world, face abuse and shame, but also how to strive for

reform, development, and peace at the same time. Aibileen Clark, Minny Jackson, and Miss Hilly Holbrook are the three main characters in the novel. The racism toward the woman in this novel occurred only because the character used the bathroom reserved for the whites and barred from the African-American servants, Minny gets fired.

This study analyzed African-American woman's image in the 1960s in Kathryn Stockett's Novel 'The Help.' The study is conducted using intersectional Feminism Theory, which will show the hardship of African-American women in that era. In this thesis, the researcher will analyze the novel from a woman's perspective and focusing on the main character.

### **1.2.The objective of the study**

This part provides the goal of the study, which is to reveal the image of an African-American woman in Kathryn Stockett' Novel 'The Help' happened to the main character, Aibileen Clark, and Minny Jackson in Mississippi early 1960s using intersectional feminism theory.

### **1.3.Problem's formulation**

Based on the objective, two problems are going to analyze in this study, as follow:

1. What are the images of African-American women in Kathryn Stockett's Novel 'The Help'?
2. How are the intersectional issues in Kathryn Stockett's Novel 'The Help' reflected through the element of the novel?

### **1.4. Scope of the Study**

This study will focus on the feminism analysis, how the image of an African-American woman early 1960s in the novel described using intersectional theory.

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This study provides information about African-American women's critical problems in the early 1960s and their struggle to find their rights in that era in Mississippi for the reader. For future researchers who are interested in studying related race or race-related cases or multiple forms of racism, this study might be a useful reference to conduct their research. For education, the lecturers can also use this study as a reference to develop teaching materials in subject literary criticism, feminism-related cases, feminism discourse analysis, and so on. The students can also use this novel to learn how to respect women in this society, which is full of differences, and take good examples from Aibileen and Minny's life experience