

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Since the beginning of human life, every one of us has been bound in certain habits that develop into morality norms and finally into tradition, rules and set of laws which must be obeyed. Norms are closely related to customs. On the other hand, according to Wikipedia Encyclopedia, a norm may arise as a formal description of an implicitly followed custom that consists of established patterns of behaviors that can be objectively verified within a particular social setting (Online). In the development into tradition, it passed down men legitimation which socially and psychologically framed human inspiration to treat male as the center. Based on biological, the next human civilization always put women as inferior. Sons, particularly in patriarchal system, are the only hope to continue the generation. Family who cannot have children, or only able to have daughter, is said as women mistakes.

It is a fact, especially in Indian social system, that there is a tendency to award daughters a secondary status in relation to sons, a general feature directly linked to the caste system, a patriarchal system of family structured around the thorough control of women's sexuality. There is a mentality of caste system where women should marriage with men from same caste because women will join her husband family. The mental system brings consequence when women get married; it is as if they had changed family. This situation lead into women



inferiority because daughter treat as only guest who passing by and has less acknowledgement than son as future members of the household. According to Anyar "Women should be married with the same caste husband, or above, if possible. In any case, daughters are not their parents' responsibility further than childhood, *dowry* arrangements and the search for a husband" (Online).

Basudha Chaterjee, as Indian, must live in the situation. She was born in the same time as her cousin, Anju, in high caste family. They grow up together, carefree and sheltered by the Mothers (their mothers, Gouri and Nalini, and Gouri's widowed sister-in-law, Pishi) and servants in a huge crumbling old house. Clever and independent Anju is a daughter of Gouri Ma, a proud descendant of the wealthy Chatterjee family. She grows up with many dreams for her future and knows that she will one day go to college. Basudha that has nickname Sudha is a beautiful girl who comes from a branch of the family tree that is shadowy and dark. Her only dream for the future is to have a happy and unharmed family, to be a wife and mother. When Sudha begs Pishi to tell a dark family secret, both her perception of herself and her connection to Anju fade slightly. Later, bound by honor and duty to the sister of her heart, Sudha must make the decision to either face an arranged marriage - the girls not only are born on the same day, but are set to be wedded on the same day, in marriages arranged by the Mothers, and years later become pregnant all together - or to escape with a man with whom she has fallen in love, a decision that haunts her for years. Basudha traps between obeying

the obligation as married women, as determine by the tradition, and following own hope. She must choose how she is going to face her life.

Sister of My Heart is one of Divakaruni's novels that allow her readers to imagine the atmosphere of her characters' lives and to feel their joy, disappointment, sisterhood and sorrow in the deep Indian tradition. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning author and poet. Divakaruni's work is widely known, as and published in over 50 magazines, and her writing has been included in over 30 anthologies. She was born in India and lived there until 1976, until she was nineteen, at which point she left Calcutta and came to the United States. She continued her education in the field of English by receiving a Master degree from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, and a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley.

Women in *Sister of My Heart* have suffered in patriarchal tradition, including the two major characters, Basudha and Anju. However Basudha's struggle is more significant because she lives in deep tradition in small town of India. Basudha's life in *Sister of My Heart* is a portrait of a woman who is trapped in tradition. The patriarchal tradition has set her life especially as women.

Basudha tried hard to be good, to obey and to fulfill tradition demand toward a woman since she was born but when she realizes how the tradition has bound her and how it has taken her rights; she starts to release the tradition. Her struggle for freedom is very significant to reveal because not every woman realizes the patriarchy boundaries and have courage to let it go. There are many aspects that influence her to take decision for letting go all tradition that has

bound her since she was born and she choose the way with some reasons. Due to these reasons, the writer is attracted to analyze in this thesis.

B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

1. How is Indian tradition related with patriarchal system pictured in this work?
2. How does Basudha as the main character struggle for releasing the tradition that bound her?

C. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To describe about the India traditions toward women especially that happen to Basudha.

To explain Basudha struggles; her attitudes and her thought those finally lead her for releasing the tradition.

Analyzing the reasons why finally Basudha decides to struggle in certain attitudes or thought.

D. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

By studying Basudha's struggle in India tradition, hopefully the readers will get a better insight about women position in patriarchal traditions. Furthermore, the study may give a valuable knowledge about women especially about struggle gaining equality and freedom in the middle of traditions in the society that has bound them.

Moreover, for English Department readers this study may give contribution to those who want to learn about this novel further. Hopefully, this thesis is useful for readers who are interesting in the subject of women.

E. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The analysis in this paper will focus in the India tradition in Basudha Chaterjee's in her life, especially traditions that have bound women, about Basudha's struggle, as one of major character, in facing the India tradition that bound women and finally to analyze why Basudha releasing herself from the traditions.

F. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Since the focus of this thesis is about woman in tradition, the writer will use radical cultural feminist point of view to get deep analysis about Basudha's struggle for releasing tradition boundaries. Feminism believes that men and women are equal. According to Jenn in the Winston Canadian Dictionary, feminism is "the belief that women are mentally as highly endowed as men, and should be given social, economic, and political equality (Online)." In this thesis, the writer will focuses on feminist radical cultural theory as the main theory. Feminist radical cultural believes that women have been oppressed by patriarchy therefore women should resist it by affirm women's privilege.

The character of Basudha lives in Indian traditional culture which put her in inferior position since she was born. Therefore, the writer considers that very

important to explaining the Indian tradition in order to gain more analysis related with Basudha's struggle. In order to get adequate analysis the writer uses anthropological approach to discuss the tradition. Human societies often include millions or billions of people who share a common culture. Anthropology, from the word *anthropos* (human), is the study of all aspects of human life and culture.

G. METHOD OF THE STUDY

The writer is using the library research method in the writing process. Since the writer is dealing with a work of fiction, the writer must read and collect material and data in the Divakaruni's *Sister of My Heart* to make a proper analysis. The writer also collects data and information from various books, Dictionary of literature, internet and any kinds of materials that related to the study.

In creating deeper analysis for better comprehension, the study is using descriptive analysis method. This method is done by describing the relevant facts then analyzing those facts. Etymologically, descriptive analysis means describing but it also has additional meaning, not only describe but also giving understanding and explanations. (Ratna 53)

H. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Feminism: Belief in the principle that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men.

Inferior: Low or lower in rank, social position, importance, quality, etc.

Patriarchal: Ruled or controlled by men.

Struggle: To try very hard to do or achieve something that is difficult.

Superior: ~ better in quality than someone or something else.

~ A person with higher rank, status or position.

Tradition: The passing of beliefs or customs from one generation to next.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW