

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

In our society, many people in higher position often intimidate another people in the lower position. It happens in all aspects of life. This case happens because people in higher position have more power and strength in the society. They will be respected by another people, especially by people in the lower position. Everything they do, and their prejudice is often considered right, even sometimes it is wrong. Because of their position, they often exploit it to intimidate people in the lower position. They consider people in the lower position less important. In life, it is very important to show family reputation. To save family reputation, those who are from high position often blame other people in the lower position. Their position makes those people apply double standards. In everyday life, they use their position to show who they are to other people.

The God of Small Things is a novel by an Indian author, Arundhati Roy. This novel tells about a story of a bad childhood experience of Rahel and Estha as Kochamma family. They lived in Ayemenem, India. Their bad childhood experience is related to the social stratification which happened in that place. The book shows how small things such as love, understanding, and care in life are always defeated by big things such as social stratification, power, strength, and position.

Based on www.shmoop.com, published in 1997, *The God of Small Things* quickly skyrocketed Arundhati Roy to worldwide critical and popular acclaim. Her first (and to date only) novel won the 1997 Booker Prize, one of

the most prestigious awards in the English-language literary world. Interestingly, Roy was trained as an architect and had never before considered herself a novelist. The novel, which Roy wrote between 1992 and 1996, has sold over 6 million copies and has been translated into 40 languages.

The story in the novel, begins when Rahel came to the Ayemenem house to meet her twin, Estha. When she met him, Estha was depressed. He never talked to anybody. From there, the story begins to tell about their hard childhood experience with their family. The conflicts were triggered by a social stratification in India. Their childhood experience was a bad impact of social stratification existed in that place.

The social stratification itself has some weaknesses. It causes a social class and it can separate people into groups. Someone in the higher position does not allow to have relationship with people in lower position. People in the higher position consider themselves as always right. Because of that, social stratification can make oppressions to people in the the lowest position that also represents in the Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*.

The researcher choose *The God of Small Things* for the research because the social stratification still exists in all societies even though it is not explicitly practiced. Many people become hypocrite. They will do everything to save themselves even they use the wrong way such as intimidating other people in lower position as Arundhati Roy showed in the novel *The God of Small Things*.

1.2 Statement of Problem

1. What is the general description of Rahel and Estha as the main character in the novel?
2. What conflicts are experienced by Rahel and Estha as the main character in the novel?
3. What settings are described in the novel?
4. How is social stratification described in the novel?

1.3 Scope of The Study

The researcher focuses on the general description of the main character, conflicts experienced by the main character, and settings described in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. Besides of that, this research also scrutinize the social stratification happens in the novel *The God of Small Things*.

1.4 Objectives of The Study

1. To describe the general description of Rahel and Estha as the main characters.
2. To describe the conflict experienced of Rahel and Estha as the main characters.
3. To describe the setting in the novel.
4. To describe the social stratification in the novel.

1.5 Significance of The Study

1. For The Researcher

As this research can be the medium to implement the literary knowledge she got during the study especially on the sociological side in literature. This also becomes additional information about social stratification happens in India.

2. For The Reader

As an additional reference for the students who study in English Department, particularly section to study sociology of literature. The reader also gets reference about structural elements such as, general description, conflict, setting and sociological side of literature about social stratification.

3. For The University

As an additional reference in the library or *Self Access Center* in Faculty of Humanities in Dian Nuswantoro University.

1.6 Thesis Organization

This thesis organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 is introduction of this thesis which consist of background of the study, statement of the problem, scope of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and thesis organization. Chapter 2 is review related literature which consists of the theory of the intrinsic elements such as, general discription, conflict, and setting and extrinsic elements such as, sociology, sociology in literature, and social stratification. Chapter 3 is method of the study which consists of research design, unit of analysis, source of the data, technique of data collection, and technique of data analysis.

Chapters four is discussion, finding the data analysis and discuss the explanation as the result of the research. Chapter 5 is conclusion and suggestion, explains the conclusion of the research and the suggestion based on the research.