

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature can be said as one of the most interesting and important expressions of humanity. Hjelle (1992:1) stated that literature represents some of directions taken to understand the complexity of human behavior and of human nature. Literature reflects the description of human life in which how people behave and deal with their problems and environment as well as to give knowledge about the value of life. It means reading literature is not only giving excitement but also enrich our knowledge and experience as it is a reflection of human life.

Literature has many kinds of works such as novel, poetry, drama, short story and etc. Many people are interested in a novel because it portrays human life involving characters, conversations and conditions of society. Van De Laar and Schoonderwoerd (1963:163) stated that a novel as a work of art in so far as it introduces us into a living world; in some respect resembling the world we live in, but in individuality of its own. It means that novel is the reflection of human experience that either portrays social problems, romance, personal ambition and many more.

Indu Sundaesan is an Indian American historical fiction author. Her first novel is *The Twentieth Wife* (2002), based on the life of Mehrunnisa, Empress Nur

Jahan, the tale of one of India's most powerful women. Her second novel is *The Feast of Roses* (2003), the sequel to *The Twentieth Wife*. She continues writing novels *The Splendor of Silence* (2006), *In the Convent of Little Flowers* (2008), *Shadow Princess* (2010), the sequel to her first two novels which is part of Taj Mahal Trilogy and she launched her novel again *The Mountain of Light* (2013).

The Twentieth Wife is a story about a woman named Mehrunnisa, later known as Empress Nur Jahan, who struggles to climb up the ladder to pursue her ambition to become Empress of Mughal Empire. She is one of India's legendary empresses in Mughal Empire. She is an enchanting woman with strong ambition. She grows with a good intelligence, beauty, and strong determination in pursuing her ambition. As a daughter of Persian refugee, her birth brings luck to her family and leads her father's introduction to Mughal Empire and changing their life. Living in the palace ground becomes such good opportunities and encourages her to have an influence and love over Jahangir or the fourth emperor of Mughal Empire, and to pursue her ambition to become Empress of Mughal Empire. On the other hand, she lives in a time when women were not meant to be seen, because of the veil, very little to be heard and were important consequential only for their physical appearance and their ability to bear children, living in a conservative patriarchy.

Advaita Ashrama in *Great Women in India* (1953) says that Eastern countries came under the influence of Islam; women have generally been assigned a place in the background. The old maxim, "A woman's place is in her home" has

found repeated and emphasized by other communities. Islam has relegated women to an inferior social position. Muslim women are a sacred trust which has to be guarded with jealous care and protected from the prying eyes of the populace; they are not to be dragged to publicity, should not be broadcast since they are meant for the special benefit of their male relatives.

That principle or tradition is practiced to the Mughal India, unexceptionally experienced by Mehrunnisa, the main female character in the novel. She does not really agree with the tradition applied in Mughal India where women have inferior social position than men, particularly to the women who have no positions in the society. Mehrunnisa who is categorized as a woman with no position in the society as she is not coming from royal family, yet she is a woman with ambition and powerful personality, struggles to pursue her ambition to climb up the ladder and become the empress or the number one lady of the court as being an empress provides her high social status, wealth, independence, freedom and most importantly power.

In Indu Sundaresan's *The Twentieth Wife*, there are two reasons why this novel is interesting to analyze. The first thing that the writer is interested in is the title of the novel, *The Twentieth Wife* which intrigues the writer of this *skripsi* as what *The Twentieth Wife* looks like and as in what ways to become the twentieth wife is worth fighting for. To discuss it, the writer of this *skripsi* will explore about characterization and motivations that encourage Mehrunnisa, *The Twentieth Wife* to have an ambition to become the Empress of Mughal Empire. The second

reason which draws the writer's attention is the main character, Mehrunnisa, *The Twentieth Wife*, a woman with ambition and a powerful figure that struggling to climb up the ladder and pursue her ambition to become the Empress of Mughal Empire.

Referring to the background above, Motivation on Pursuing Goal: Mehrunnisa in Indu Sundaesan's *The Twentieth Wife* is chosen title of this research.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1. How is Mehrunnisa's character portrayed in the novel?
2. What are Mehrunnisa's motivations to become Empress of Mughal Empire in Indu Sundaesan's *The Twentieth Wife*?
3. How does Mehrunnisa manage to achieve her goal to become Empress of Mughal Empire in Indu Sundaesan's *The Twentieth Wife*?

1.3 Purpose of the study

1. To portray Mehrunnisa's character in the novel.
2. To find out Mehrunnisa's motivations to become Empress of Mughal Empire.
3. To find out the actions Mehrunnisa take and the efforts she put in order to achieve her goal to become Empress of Mughal Empire.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer of this *skripsi* does this research through the analysis of the main character, Mehrunnisa. This study can relate the readers to the palace life of Mughal Empire during the late 16th and early 17th centuries, particularly the unexpected story of power behind the veil performed by a woman, non-royal family member, that climbing up the ladder and becoming a powerful and legendary empress at that time. Hopefully it will also provide explanation about human motivations based on its needs and to help the readers to realize their motivations in life as motivation is the most influential factor that encourages individuals to perform actions particularly to satisfy their needs and accomplish their dreams or goals. The writer also hopes that this research can be a good contribution in literary classes.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

There are several major female characters in this novel such as Mehrunnisa also known as Empress Nur Jahan, Ruqqaya Padshah Begam and Jagat Gosini but this *skripsi* will only analyze the major character, Mehrunnisa, as this novel tells the story of her life. There are also some literary topics to discuss in this novel such as love, patriarchy, gender stereotyping, human motivation and etc however this *skripsi* limits the analysis on human motivation particularly in this study, main character's motivation to become Empress of Mughal Empire as this novel tells much about one pursuing ambition.

1.6 Status of the Study

The writer of this *skripsi* has checked that there is research project analyzing about Indian women in Mughal Empire by other student at Fakultas Sastra Universitas Kristen Indonesia written by Christina Celine Joy. Her research project entitled *Woman and Power: Jahanara's Leadership as Portrayed in Indu Sundaresan's Shadow Princess*. Her research project focuses on portraying the condition of Mughal Empire Women in 17th century by exposing the struggles alongside with the roles, especially in Harem. However, there has never been a research project that focusing on human motivation and one struggles pursuing goal or ambition particularly to become the number one lady of the court also known as empress in Mughal Empire where the main character, Mehrunnisa as an ordinary woman lives in a conservative patriarchy.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The first chapter of this *skripsi* is about background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, status of the study and organization of the study.

The second chapter of this *skripsi* is a review of the selected literature in which the writer will talk about intrinsic elements of novel, theory of motivation, and the history of women in the late 16th century and early 17th century in Mughal Empire which are used to analyze Indu Sundaresan's *The Twentieth Wife*.

The third chapter of this *skripsi* is about description of the main character, the main character's motivations in pursuing goal and the main character's actions to get the goal reflected in Indu Sundaresan's selected novel.

The fourth chapter of this *skripsi* is the conclusion of the study and the suggestions.