

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Gender inequality is a condition of inequality or difference between men and women. Inequality comes from the root word equivalent or tara which means equal, the same level and commensurate. If the word equivalent is added with the affix keand an-then it will become inequality which means something that is not equal, not at the same level and not commensurate (Fakih, 2013).

Gender inequality against women is often triggered by the dominance of patriarchal culture, where men are considered stronger, more powerful, and more entitled to fill key roles (Susanto, 2015). Women are often considered weak in all aspects without realizing that discriminatory behavior is happening. Women often face discrimination in access to proper education, equal employment opportunities, decision-making participation, and various other aspects of social life (Judiasih, 2022).

This is because Indonesian society believes that women have a lower status than men. As is known, the low status of women in society is often associated with gender inequality and gender discrimination (Judiasih, 2022). Gender inequality in society is a result of social construction and cultural influences (Judiasih, 2022).

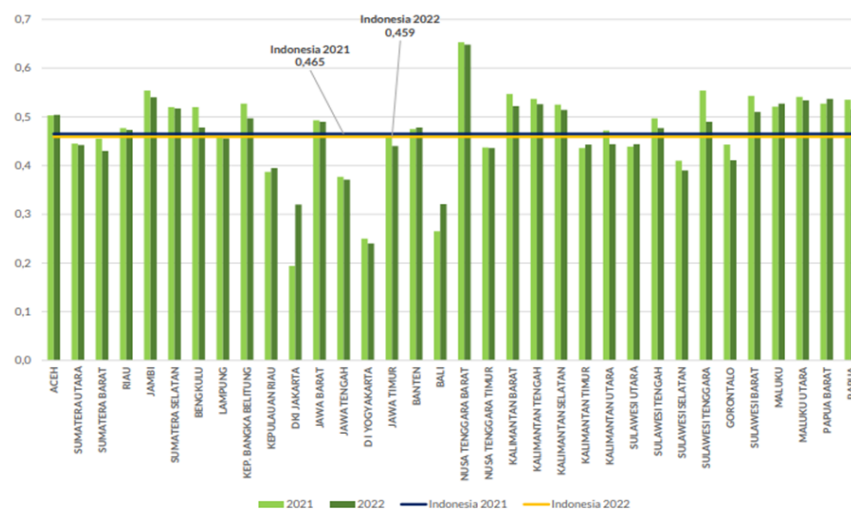


Figure 1. 1 Graph of Gender Inequality Index in each province in Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022)

Based on data from the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) in 2022, the development of the gender inequality index in each Indonesian province showed a good decline in the level of gender inequality in Indonesia. The lowest gender inequality is in DI Yogyakarta with a value of 0,240 followed by DKI Jakarta which has a value of (0,320), and continued with Bali (0,321). When viewed graphically, there are 25 provinces that have succeeded in reducing the number of gender inequality in Indonesia. DKI Jakarta, which has the second lowest gender inequality rate, did not experience a graphical decrease in 2021-2022, indicating an increase in the value of gender inequality in several provinces in Indonesia. Some provisions in Indonesia that experienced a decrease in the value of gender inequality, especially the Sulawesi region, were caused by improvements in the dimensions of reproductive health and improvements in the dimensions of women's empowerment. In general, Indonesia has a decrease in the value of gender inequality from 0,465 in 2021 to 0459.

Toba Batak society is heavily influenced by the patriarchal system, where men hold primary power and women are often in a subordinate position. This system is accepted through cultural beliefs and rituals that consider men superior to women (Naibaho, 2024). In this context, Dalihan Na Tolu emerges as a traditional kinship system that emphasizes respect for male relatives. Women are often limited to roles such as “parhobas,” meaning servants for family events (Sinurat, 2024). This reflects the social structure that dominates gender interactions and roles among the Toba Batak community, where traditions and cultural norms further reinforce the subordinate position of women in various aspects of life.

Women in Toba Batak society often experience unfair treatment in the distribution of inheritance, which results in them having less access to resources and economic opportunities (Dewi, 2020). This injustice reflects the existence of cultural norms that are unfavorable to women, and reinforces gender inequality in terms of wealth and fulfilling life needs. In addition, women are also excluded from leadership roles in the community. Entrenched patriarchal systems limit the possibilities for women to assume positions of power and influence, reducing their contribution to important decision-making. These inequities in inheritance and leadership demonstrate the challenges women face in fighting for their rights and accessing equal opportunities within society.

Gender inequality is often displayed in various media such as books, television and movies. Movies are a very complicated type of audio-visual mass media. Apart from being an information tool, it is an artistic medium that can be used for political, propaganda and entertainment purposes. On the other hand, movies are not only a means of entertainment, but also an important tool in conveying social messages and cultural values (Dewanta, 2020). In addition, movies are often a mirror for the dominant culture and values in society.

The double burden is one of the manifestations of gender inequality that often occurs in patriarchal societies. In this system, women are expected to carry out domestic roles, such as taking care of the household and caring for children, while still working or contributing economically. This double burden is often not accompanied by an equal division of responsibilities between men and women in the family, reflecting the subordination of women's roles (Hidayati, 2015). In a patriarchal culture, social construction places women in a lower position than men, leading to injustice in various aspects of life. This double burden is not only detrimental to women physically, as they have to work harder, but also emotionally, as women often face social pressure to meet prescribed role standards (Halizah, 2023).

Research by Yuliana (2018) in Bontobahari, Bulukumba Regency, showed that women in the community face a significant double burden, but they also have an important role in finding work and supporting the family economy. This study used descriptive qualitative methods with interviews and observations as data collection methods. The double burden can affect women's psychological and physical well-being as well as the balance between their work and personal lives. Research shows that double burden can lead to stress, fatigue, and decreased mental well-being. Some recommended solutions to address the double burden include the provision of social and economic support, as well as the active role of the government and society in creating an environment that supports work-life balance.

This phenomenon is relevant to study in the context of media representations, such as the movie *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, which depicts traditional Batak family dynamics. Through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, this research will explore how the signs and myths in this movie represent gender inequality, especially the double burden experienced by women, as part of a critique of patriarchal culture.

The value contained in a movie is crucial because generally the content in a movie is a reflection of human life in their daily lives (Xavier, 2023). Movies have become a cultural product of the image and creativity of movie actors. This is based on the function of movie which is not only as a medium of entertainment, but serves as a means of conveying cultural messages. Through movies, a lot of information about culture is obtained. Whether it is the culture of its people or a completely foreign culture. Movies are therefore understood as cultural representations (Supiarza et al., 2020).

Movie as a popular medium has the power to shape people's perceptions and understanding of various issues, including issues related to gender. However, in the context of the movie industry, the representation of women is often a complex and controversial subject and is often influenced by inherent gender stereotypes. Female characters in movies are often only presented in limited roles, such as roles as sexual objects, housewives, or simply

complementary male characters that can illustrate the gender inequality that is still inherent in culture and creative industries (Larasati & Adiyanto, 2023).

The world of cinema in Indonesia has many production houses, one of which is Imajinari. Imajinari's first work was the movie *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* directed by Bene Dion Rajagukguk. This movie tells the story of the twists and turns of life in a Batak family. In short, this movie tells the story of Mr. Domu and Mak Domu who try to get their three children who are migrating to come home to attend a traditional celebration. However, when the three sons refuse, Mr. Domu and Mak Domu make a plan to pretend to be divorced so that their children will come home.

The movie “*Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*” was chosen as the subject of study because it is one of the most popular movies in Indonesian cinema. *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* was released on June 2, 2022 and was able to reach 2,866,661 viewers. *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* is the fourth highest grossing movie of 2022 in theaters (Annur, 2022). First place for viewing on Netflix Indonesia for the October-November 2022 period. Another award obtained was winning the Gunung trophy at the Indonesian Journalist Movie Festival as a nominee for the comedy movie genre.

In addition, from various scenes in this movie, there are representations of gender inequality against women. *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* has an appropriate message if it is related to the issue of gender inequality because there are many differences in rights between female and male characters (Larasati & Adiyanto, 2023). Scenes in *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* show that male characters can freely direct and have a career and migrate while female characters are only followers and are not allowed to migrate because they are considered to violate tradition (Febriyani & Yulianti, 2023).

The phenomenon of gender inequality in this movie is mainly reflected in the different expectations given to boys and girls in Batak families. Boys are considered more important in continuing the family clan and often get a heavier burden of responsibility, especially in terms of family success and honor. Girls, on the other hand, are often seen as individuals who will follow their husbands and are more tied to domestic roles, although this is not always explicitly shown. This division of roles exposes the different values that parents place on their children, where boys are given more priority in aspects of the family, while girls' roles and contributions tend to be undervalued. The movie highlights how this inequality can lead to conflict and feelings of discomfort within the family, as well as displaying a subtle criticism of gender stereotypes that exist in society.

This research focuses on analyzing the forms of gender inequality against women in the movie “*Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*”. This inequality is considered important because it reflects the gender gap that still exists in Indonesia, especially in the context of gender violence that often

befalls women. The analysis of the signs that appear in the movie uses Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. Semiotics is the study of all things related to signs (Santoso, 2003). Barthes proposed the concept of two-stage interpretation (Wibowo, 2018). Roland Barthes' semiotics is considered suitable for analyzing movies because movies have connotation and denotation meanings to dig deeper into how signs represent meaning and reality. Scene from the movie 'Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap' that contains gender inequality.

The selection of Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis method in this research is because semiotics offers an in-depth approach to understanding the signs and meanings contained in the movie "Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap." In the context of stark gender inequality in Toba Batak society, where men dominate power and women are often in subordinate positions, Barthes' semiotic analysis allows researchers to explore two layers of meaning: denotation, which refers to the literal meaning of images and scenes, and connotation, which includes more complex social and cultural interpretations. Through this method, researchers can explore how movies not only reflect social reality but also serve as a tool to defend or criticize existing cultural norms. Thus, this analysis will help reveal how the representation of women in movies can create society's perception of gender roles and inequality, as well as identify myths that support the patriarchal system. Barthes' approach is also relevant as it has been used in other studies to highlight gender issues, providing a strong basis for further analysis of women's portrayal and inequality in the same context.

In a previous study by Larasati (2023) on the movie Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap, it was revealed that the representation of patriarchal ideology in this movie is evident through the character of Mr. Domu, who wants his children to follow the path he determines, reflecting an authoritarian attitude that is closely related to male dominance. Patriarchal symbolism appears in various scenes, such as Mr. Domu's gestures that often put his hands on his waist when speaking, dominant expressions through eye contact, and conversations filled with absolute orders towards his wife and children. Women in the movie, such as Mak Domu, are portrayed as submissive, even to harmful orders, while Sarma, as the only daughter, is forced to sacrifice her dreams to fulfill the expectations of her father and brother. Discrimination against women, such as the prohibition of migrating, is the main focus that hinders Sarma's freedom until she dares to express her wishes.

Furthermore, research conducted by Patria (2024) on the movie Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap, revealed that each scene emphasizes the importance of openness and honesty in the family, which is essential for maintaining harmony between family members. Good communication between parents and children, as well as caring for each other's feelings, are at the core of healthy relationships. The movie also underscores the value of supporting and respecting

individual change, including in the context of gender. While patriarchy often places women in a subordinate position, the movie shows the importance of respecting individual choices, both male and female, even if they go against traditional values. By highlighting forgiveness and effective communication as keys to reconciliation in broken relationships, the movie invites viewers to listen with empathy and provide support to one another. Thus, *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* not only conveys a moral message of honesty, support and understanding within the family, but also implicitly criticizes gender inequality by encouraging open dialogue and equality in decision-making, which in turn can strengthen relationships and create more solid bonds among family members, regardless of gender.

Semiotics research has been done before using different movies. The research is a journal with the title “Representation of Gender Injustice Against Women in the Movie *Marlina the Killer in Four Acts* (Ronald Barthes Semiotics Analysis) by Putri Pratiwi Adiningsih (2019). The purpose of the study was to describe the representation of gender injustice against women in the movie “*Marlina the Killer in Four Acts*”. The research method used is Roland Barthes semiotic analysis. The results obtained are gender injustice against women represented through four forms, namely marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence and a patriarchal system that is maintained in culture and women who live in a patriarchal environment must be able to protect themselves.

The next research is a journal with the title “Semiotics Analysis of Patriarchal Culture in *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* Movie” by Saqina et al (2023) the purpose of the study is to find out how the meaning and representation of the role of patriarchal culture in *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* Movie. The research method used is Charles Sanders Pierce’s semiotic analysis. The results obtained are that this movie illustrates the social meaning of patriarchal culture through 10 scenes that show the role of male-centered society in the family. Charles Sanders Pierce’s semiotic analysis is used to understand the movie’s depiction, which displays the conflict between individual longing and family desire.

The conclusion of these studies shows that *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* significantly portrays patriarchal ideology and gender inequality through Mr. Domu’s authoritarian character and strict control over his family members. While the movie highlights the challenges women face, such as discrimination and subordination, it also underlines the importance of open communication, support and respect for individual choices to create harmonious family relationships. Other research into this movie and *Marlina the Killer in Four Acts* adds that despite strong representations of patriarchy, there is a push for recognition of individual rights and a shift towards gender equality. Overall, the movie not only presents a critique of existing

patriarchal structures, but also invites viewers to consider the importance of dialog and understanding in solving gender issues in the family.

1.2 Research Background

Based on the background that has been described, this research focuses on analyze the representation of gender inequality, especially the practice of double burden on female characters through the movie Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the research focus that has been described, the following problem identification is obtained: “How is the representation of gender inequality, especially the practice of double burden on female characters through the movie Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap?”

1.4 Research Objectives

Based on the identification of problems that have been obtained, this research has a purpose, sure: To Find out the representation of gender inequality, especially the practice of double burden on female characters through the movie Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap?

1.5 Research Benefits

With this research, it is hoped that it can provide various benefits, including the following:

1.5.1 Theoretical Benefits

This research is expected to contribute to the development of semiotic theory in the context of analyzing gender representation in media, especially in movie media. By analyzing how the symbols and signs in Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap represent women, this research is expected to open new insights into the complexity of gender meaning formation in a visual context.

1.5.2 Practical Benefits

- a. For student, this research is expected to provide insight into semiotic analysis and gender representation in the media, especially in movies. In addition, this research can be a foundation for further knowledge development and research in the fields of gender, popular culture and media studies.
- b. For interested parties, this research is expected to be the basis for developing guidelines or policies in moviemaking that are more inclusive and sensitive to issues of gender equality. In addition, a deeper understanding of gender stereotypes in movies can also help in education and efforts to fight for gender equality in society more broadly.

1.6 Research Time and Period

The research time is described in the table as follows

Table 1. 1
Research Time and Period

No	Activity	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT
1	Search for topics and propose research titles						
2	Formulate and identify research problems						
3	Watching and analyzing movies						
4	Data collection						
5	Preparation of Thesis Proposal Chapter I to Chapter III						
6	Thesis Proposal Seminar						