

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of The Research

The world is divided into two different sides; it consists of the good and bad. There will always be contradictory and conflicting perspectives of people when they see something. In this research, it is related to the values of norms, traditions, and gender roles of Indian women in the works by Jhumpa Lahiri. As a female author, Lahiri in her works entitled *The Lowland*, creates a story about the representation of an Indian woman who has the pursuit of self actualization.

Based on Maslow (1943) he defines self actualization as “The desire for self-fulfillment, namely the tendency for him [the individual] to become actualized in what he is potentially” (5). In this case, it means that self actualization is a desire for an Indian woman to recognize and show own potential ability in order to gain a self-fulfillment.

India has become one of the countries, which has the biggest population in the world. Besides, India is also known as a country that holds norms, traditions, and cultures as an important thing. Yet, we cannot ignore the fact that India was one of the countries, which was colonized. So undeniably, India gets influenced by the culture and tradition of the colonizer. Moreover, these can affect their perspectives of values in terms of norms, traditions, and gender roles, especially as seen in the female major character of the novel.

According to Nehru (1989), the change from traditional to be modern will be in contact with values of traditions and cultures of India (291). It can be said that,

the changes from traditional to the modern inevitably will affect cultural values of Indian people, especially in terms of norms, traditions, and gender roles as well. Furthermore, modern person could also be defined as a person who advocates or practices a departure from traditional styles or values to the modern one. In this research, the writer tries to examine the definition of those three elements.

First, Timasheff (1952) mentions that “Norms is a rule or standard that governs our behaviours in the social situations in which we act and operate” (2). It means that norms have a role as guideline of how an individual ought to behave and supposed to be along with values at the same time.

Second, Graburn (2001) claims that “ Tradition was the name given to those cultural features which, in situations of change, were to be continued to be handed on, thought about, preserved and not lost” (1). It can be said that, tradition is the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation. Furthermore, Graburn says there is a term of *normlessness* or *anomie* that define as

A sense of detachment from existing social norms or rules, mostly society functions in an orderly fashion. At those moments people have little commitment to shared norms and lack societal guidelines for personal conducts. They are inclined to pursue their private preferences without regard to the interest of the society as a whole. (7)

In other words, *normlessness* could be defined as the condition of people who breakdown the social standards and values of behaviours.

Third, Lindsey (2010) emphasizes that role is the expected behaviour associated with a status. Roles are performed according to social norms, shared

rules that guide people's behaviour in specific situations (2). For example, females and males, mothers and fathers, and daughters and sons, are all status with different normative role requirements attached to them. In addition, the status of mother calls for expected roles involving love, nurturing, self-sacrifice, home-making and availability.

In this research, the writer interested in analyzing *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri. Jhumpa Lahiri is a reputable American-Indian female author. Nilanjana Sudheshna Lahiri is later known as Jhumpa Lahiri was born on July 11, 1967, in London, England, to mother Tapati and father Amar, a Bengali couple who immigrated to the United Kingdom from Calcutta, India. Lahiri's father, a university librarian, was opted to relocate to the United States for work, eventually settling in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, when she was still a small child.

Jhumpa Lahiri published her debut *Interpreter of Maladies*, in 1999, which won the Pulitzer Prize. Her short stories becoming the No. 1 *New York Times* best-seller entitled *Unaccustomed Earth*. She won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize Award for Fiction, and her first novel, *The Namesake* (2003), was adapted into the popular film with the same name. She was a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, appointed by U.S President, Barack Obama. Her book *The Lowland*, published in 2013, was a nominee for The Man Booker Prize and The National Award for Fiction.

*The Lowland* tells a story about Gauri as a different girl from her common society at the time. Gauri described as a girl who is not really interacted with her

surroundings. She is a kind of girl who is really into books and philosophy. She breaks the norms and traditions of common Indian woman who loves jewelry and sari. Moreover, she is a kind of girl who prefers to pursue her personal dreams in education and being an independent woman rather than to bear the burden of tradition as a woman in India. In her second marriage with Subhash, she moves to America and get a chance to finally pursue her personal interests in academic life. America is becoming a place for Gauri to reach her self-actualization.

Furthermore, as the focus of analysis, the writer wants to investigate the conflicting values of self actualization of Gauri as an Indian woman to be an Indian immigrant woman in terms of norms, traditions and gender roles. The writer assumes that there are the contradictory understanding of norms, traditions and gender roles of an Indian woman to be the Indian immigrant woman that exists and reflects on Gauri's life. The writer will also explain and show how Gauri, on some occasions, breaks those three things above.

To put into perspectives, *The Ethic of Care* by Carol Gilligan is reliable to analyze Gauri's case. In addition, the reason of this research is based on some references, there are several researches conducted regarding the conflicting values, yet the researches are still limited by the short analysis, most of the conflicting analyses are still distracted by other things such as long explanation about Diaspora journey of the character and crisis identity. So at the end, they do not talk much about the conflicting values that contradicting in their findings, that supposed to be the main topic of the research based on their concern on the titles.

Therefore, the writer proposes to conduct a research entitled *The Conflicting Values of Self Actualization as an Immigrant Woman in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland*.

## 1.2 Identification of Problem

I argue that Gauri as the main character experiences conflicting values of self actualization as an Indian woman who transforms into an Indian immigrant woman in terms of norms, traditions and gender roles. In *The Lowland*, Lahiri tries to show the transformation of an Indian woman who lives in India to be an Indian immigrant woman who migrate to America that is represented by character Gauri. Yet, there are a lot of difficulties that she has to face either to follow her personal dreams to free from the tradition in India and pursue education or to bear the burden of an Indian woman who lives in India and value her roles as a mother and wife. Hence, she decides to pursue her personal dreams and becoming an Indian Immigrant woman instead of bearing the tradition as an Indian woman who lives in India.

## 1.3 The Scope of the Research

The analysis will only focus on Gauri as female major character and her contradictory thought of the conflicting values of her self-actualization that are represented as Indian woman who lives in India to be an Indian immigrant woman in terms of norms, traditions and gender roles. Although there are other female characters in the novel, yet this research would only analyze Gauri's case.

Moreover, in this research, the writer does not relate the problem of Gauri with other Indian women in reality.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

This research will answer the following Questions:

1. How does Lahiri represent the life of Indian women who lives in India?
2. How does Lahiri reflect the life of Indian women who migrate to America and pursue their self-actualization?
3. How does the novel show the conflicting values of self actualization of Gauri as an Indian woman who transforms to the Indian immigrant woman in America?

#### 1.5 Objective of the Research

This research will examine about the conflicting values of self actualization of an Indian woman who lives in India and transforms to be the Indian immigrant woman who lives in America. Specifically, this research will:

1. describe the traditional values of Indian woman who lives in India that are represented through Gauri's character.
2. represent the life Indian woman who lives in America after pursuing her self-actualization that are represented through Gauri's character.
3. investigate the conflicting values of self actualization of Gauri as seen through the novel.

## 1.6 Review of Related Studies

Research has shown that the contradictory of characterisation are exists in several works in literature. Ahirwar (2015) describes the conflicting behaviours of all important characters in *The Lowland* novel. He examined how the behaviour of characters could be contradicted to each other in the similar situation. He finds that all the important characters in the novel have their own preferences prior to any other thing and are quite aware of the consequences of their acts. But his research only described about the conflicting behaviours of important characters in a short analysis for each character. He does not elaborate and give the explanation of the conflicting behaviours that is contradictory to one another with enough analyses.

Studies also show that behaviour of characters could be changed based on several conditions that contradicted with the previous characters' behaviour. Aravind (2014) talks about conflicting condition of the life of marriage in the short stories *A Temporary Matter* by Jhumpa Lahiri. The focus of his research is the condition that happens in their marriage life after their baby born died.

He only elaborates about the conflicting situations of character in the novel with a simple focus on the marriage life condition. He does not start to align the analysis with several factors that influence its condition of the marriage such as the inability to communicate; express feeling of love, concern and care. He only mentions it along the journal.

Moreover, he also talks about the conflicting condition in the story *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine* by Jhumpa Lahiri. He finds the conflicting condition between the fact and the story inside the novel. The Indians and Pakistanis remain enemy seen from the respective of geographical locations yet his findings mention the part of the story which throws light that Indians and Pakistanis outside their respective geographical locations are no enemies, but friends. However, there were no continuity about the explanation of the conflicting condition between Indians and Pakistanis. He just gives the description of the story with no further explanations about the conflicts inside the novel.

Researches on more journals and books have echoed these findings. Dhivyapriya and Jagadeswari (2013), study about different novels from two Indian writers; Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee. They critically discover about the contrary characterization between those two novels. At first, they talk about the interesting conflicts of Indian writing that covers every continent and part of the world. The results of the research mentioned above have given us several conclusive ideas on how the Indian writers spell out their opinions and ideas into the novel. However, the title of the article is about comparing two works of Indian writer, yet from the article we are only introduced with character of Gogol from *The Namesake*. From the researches above, it can be concluded that it is common to analyze the conflicts of a story or novel yet most of the researches are still limited by the short analysis, most of the conflicting analysis are still distracted by other things such as long explanation about Diaspora journey of the character and the crisis identity. So at the end, they did not talk



much about the conflicts in their articles that supposed to be the main topic of the article based on their concern on the titles. The writer believes that the conflicting analysis supposed to be focused on the conflicts itself with an enough analysis regarding the topic about the conflicts along with enough explanation that relate to the object based on the main concern that state on the title, without being distracted by other topics.

In 2016, Shintia Ariska described about the diasporic Journey in *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri. She critically claims Gauri as female major character suffers from schizoid personality disorder. In addition, She found that America as a place for Gauri to heal her trauma. She argues that Gauri finally becomes a better person after she leaves India and becomes an immigrant in the United States. However, the writer tends to believe that by moving to America Gauri is not transformed to be a better person, yet she started to be selfish by ignoring her role as a mother and a wife by abandoning her family and prefer to pursue her own happiness. The writer believes that actually Lahiri wants to show to the reader that Gauri can still reach her dreams without abandoning her family and her nature role as a woman.

### **1.7 Theoretical Frameworks**

This research could be analyzed from feminist criticism, particularly *The Ethic of Care* by Carol Gilligan in Care-Focused Feminism as a precise approach to be applied in this research. Since, in this research the writer tries to investigate the conflicting values of self actualization of an Indian woman who transform herself

into an Indian Immigrant woman along with several norms, traditions, and gender roles that has been broken by her as an Indian woman.

According to Louis Tyson in her book *Critical Theory Today* (2006), "...feminist criticism examines the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforces and undermines the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women" (100). This criticism concerns with the marginalization of women under patriarchal system. It makes women tend to seek for equality as similar as men.

In addition, According to Tong (2009) in *Feminist Thought : A More Comprehensive Introduction* mentions that,

Care-Focused Feminists offer various explanations for *why* societies label some values, virtues, and traits female, or feminine, and others male, or masculine. Some of these explanations focus on men's and women's separate biologies, others on men's and women's diverging psychosexual development paths, and still others on the ways in which societies systematically shapes men's and women's distinct identities and behaviours. But whatever their explanation for men's and women's contrasting gender identities, care-focused feminist regard women's capacity for care as human's strength rather than a human weakness. (163)

It can be said that, Care-Focused Feminism emphasizes that there are fundamental, biological differences between men and women, and that women should celebrate these differences. Moreover, Care-Focused Feminism advocate for equally valuing of "female" occupations: respecting child care in the home, for instance,

and paying so that it is economically viable; respecting "female" values of care and working to balance a culture that overvalues "male" values of aggression; etc.

Furthermore, in applying the theory, the writer conducts the analysis by using Care-Focused Feminism proposed by Carol Gilligan called The ethic of Care.

Gilligan in her book *A Different Voice* (1982) argues about women's conceptions of self and of morality. She came up with Gilligan's stages of The Ethic of Care.

Gilligan's Stages of The Ethic of Care	
Stage	Goal
Preconventional	Goal is individual survival
Transition is from selfishness –to- responsibility to others	
Conventional	Self sacrifice is goodness
Transition is from goodness – to – truth that she is a person too	
Postconventional	Principle of nonviolence: do not hurt others or self.

In preconventional stage, woman is only care for themselves in order to ensure survival. "I think survival is one of the first thing in lives and that people fight for" (493). In this phase, the person's attitude is considered selfish. Then the first transition is from selfishness to responsibility to others. "The transitional issue is one of attachment or connection to others" (493). In this transition, a person starts to see the connection between themselves and others. In order to be able to care for another, one must first be able to care responsibly for oneself.

In conventional, the goal is a self sacrifice is goodness. A person starts to show more care to other people. “At this second stage, moral judgement comes to rely on shared norms and expectations” (495). In this stage, woman started to value her role and responsibility as a mother and a wife. Moreover, a woman started to want a child and don’t believe in abortions. “I just wanted the child and I really don’t believe in abortions” (496). Gilligan points out that prospective motherhood often brings a change in self-concept. Nature has made it difficult for a pregnant woman to feel detached from her fetus, the father, or from other mothers. With a new sense of connectedness, a woman may begin an internal dialogue contrasting the selfishness of a willful decision and the responsibility of moral choice. The second transition, from goodness to truth. In this transitional phase, tensions between the responsibility of caring for others and caring for self are faced. “The woman begins to ask whether it is selfish or responsible, moral or immoral, to include her own needs within the compass of her care and concern.” (498). In postconventional, the principle of nonviolence exists. A woman is expected to do not hurt others or self. In this stage, a woman starts to care of herself and others. In addition, by balancing in value herself and others, she also starts not to hurt others or herself. On the other hand, those three stages also measure the moral development of women.

In addition, According to Toril Moi in *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (1985), Elaine Showalter divides *gynocriticism* into four types, they are biological, linguistic, psychological and also cultural. “The feminist critic, in other words, should attend to historical, Anthropological, psychological and

sociological aspects of female text; in short, it would seem, to everything but the text as a signifying process” (76).

Toril Moi also states that in the article “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness” Showalters aims to reshowing the four models approaches in Gynocriticism; biological approaches which exposes how women interprets the female body in the text, language approach focuses on the differences of men and women linguistically, psychoanalytic explores about what are the factors which influence women’s writing, and cultural approach sees how the society influence and shape women’s writing (77). based on the explanation above, the writer tries to apply *Gynocriticism* to prove that Lahiri tries to gives her perspectives about how A woman suppose to be in society nowadays, especially Indian woman.

Moreover, the writer also finds other secondary sources that considered and thought can support the analysis in terms of feminist criticism. The book is written by The Rockefeller Foundation and supported by The World Bank entitled *On Norms and Agency*. This book reveals conversations about gender equality with women and men in 20 Countries. It also discusses about the power of social norms, gender roles, beliefs about one’s own capacity, and assets, as well as communities and countries, determine the opportunities available to women and men—and their ability to take advantage of them. It also reveals about gender norms and ideal images of good wife, good husband, good girl and boy at the same time.

### **1.8 Methods of the research**

In collecting data for this research, the writer applies library research method by reading several related books to support this analysis. The primary data are The Conflicting Values of Self Actualization in terms of norms, traditions and gender roles and the primary source of data is a novel entitled *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri. The other is the secondary data, which is obtained and collected from books, articles, modules, journals, or essays which support the research and also data that are browsed from the internet to find other relevant sources.

In analyzing data for this research, the writer reads and analyses the primary data along with the primary source deeply by using Care-Focused Feminism point of view by Carol Gilligan called *The Ethic of Care*. The writer puts the idea of Gilligan's Stages of *The Ethic of Care* to be the guideline to analyze the conflicting values of self actualization of an Indian woman who transforms into an Indian immigrant woman in terms of norms, traditions, and gender roles. In addition, the writer tries to explain how Lahiri as an author represent the conflicting values of Indian female character who transforms into Indian immigrant woman.

Moreover, the writer also analyzes the gender roles that portrayed in the novel. The writer tries to analyze and describe the failure role of Indian woman as a wife, mother, and daughter in-law. The insights that gained through this idea are supported by several books that provide the information in terms of gender roles, norms, and tradition. In analyzing data as the second step, the writer practices qualitative analysis that puts an interest in meaning, perspective and understanding.

The writer presents the data in the form of descriptive analysis. The writer presents the analysis descriptively about the conflicting values of self actualization in terms of norms, tradition and gender roles of Indian woman who transforms into Indian immigrant woman which is captured by Gauri as female major character in *The Lowland*.

