

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of The Study

Prostitution refers to a practice or occupation of engaging in sexual activity with someone for payment (oxford 1148). In his dictionary *Salim's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*, Peter Salim defines prostitution as a misapplication of skill, talent and so on (1040). The word "misapplication" above means that by working as a prostitute, we are not using our skill or ability well, instead of using it in a wrong way. It is one of social phenomena that spread abroad in the society because that profession has known since a long time ago. This is proven by many writings about it from time to time.

Prostitution is categorized as sex work. It involves the exchange of sexual services, performances, or products for material compensation. It includes activities of direct physical contact between buyers and sellers (Ronald 1). Prostitution is a bad attitude which will cause the bad impacts for their lives. The impacts have been giving the anxiety for society by their presents and the venereal disease caused by sexual intercourse done with men. Prostitution has been phenomena happened everywhere and it has been known by society since long time ago until today. It is proven by many reports about it in many regions, cities and countries.

Prostitution viewed as something negative or bad by society in Indonesia because prostitutes were selling or renting their bodies to other men for earning money. Even though it was a profession, but it is far from good impression so that people say that there was negative aspect inside (Weitzer 28). Prostitutes are also viewed as the scum of society which their existences make people are fidgety. On the contrary, their existences are also needed, means that the existences of prostitutes are able to channelize the human sexual needs, especially for men because without prostitution, the violation crime of women will increase.

Someone who works as a whore of course has thought many times to choose this profession. Prostitutes have their own reasons why they choose this profession since it causes the bad impact for their selves and people around them. There are many reasons which drive the prostitutes in choosing the profession, one of them is economic reason; women come from lower-class background who have no income for their survival, so that many women from this community choose to work as a whore or prostitute for their survival. Other reason is for their pleasure; they do that because they enjoy having sexual intimate with men and also will earn much money and want to get more satisfaction sexually (Russel 3).

Mass media such as television, radio and newspaper have given the explanation about the life of prostitutes. Various actions have been doing by the government in solving this problem; such as doing a repressive action by giving punishment for those who as the prostitutes. The fact that prostitution cannot be omitted but increased

over time. The prostitutes are not only from adults, but also many adolescents work as prostitutes.

Prostitution also happened during the period of Victorian era. Based on the medical journal *The Lancet* estimated that “one house in every sixty houses in London was a brothel and one female in every sixteen (all ages) was as a whore” (qtd. in Russel 3). For the case, there were more than six thousand brothels in London and about eighty thousand prostitutes. Large portion of them were under twenty one years of age, in addition the majority of victims had been started to enter the occupation at an early age, but few of them from the upper classes (3). It had shown that prostitution in Victorian period was growing increasingly.

Most of prostitutes in Victorian era came from lower-class who they were employed by under upper-class men. The upper-class men or women became the mistresses for the brothels they kept. According to Amy Greene in her article *Fallen Women* said that “The upper-class men or women would persuade the lower-class women to employ them in their brothels as a whore, it was not only women who came from a lower –class background, but also the women who away from their homes then sold them into prostitution” (1). The brothel-keepers applied the young prostitutes in their houses through the agency of the procurer. Procurer was a pander provided many young females to sell to the brothel-keepers. Another way done by the brothel-keeper to get the young victims was by going to the town then gave the work offer to the girl, it frequently with the consent from their parents, under pretense of procuring for them some respectable service of occupation in London. On their

arrival in town they were taken to the house of the brothel-keeper, where they impossible to come back home. Rarely these young women came back to their families; it was because the mistress never allowed them to be alone in public (2). As stated by Susan Kent that young females come from lower classes often being the subject to great injustice, oppression and cruelty (68).

Amy Greene further stated that one of the causes why prostitution increased in Victorian era was because of the economic reason. Lower-class women did not become prostitutes because they wanted to, but they chose to work as a whore was for their survival (1). In her article *Prostitution of Young Female In London*, Thaddeus Russel stated that lower-class women who had no option to get income for their survival so that they entered the profession that was most deplorable. After entered upon this occupation, they generally gave up themselves and though repented the step they had taken and lived in misery (2).

In *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England*, Paula Bartley stated " in 1860 there was a prevention done to eradicate prostitution from English society, the attempts of preventions were through discussion of attempts in reforming moral, the campaign of the social purists, and also through a close study of the Ladies' Association which tried to educate society morally" (6). There was also a social organization established in 1837 and exclusively devoted themselves to the reclamation of young females that have fallen into prostitution, or been exposed to it, by closing down the places where the young females had been encouraged to sin and degradation (Russel 3). There was another institution that active in children education

named *nursery governesses*. It responsible for the education of both boys and girls until they reached the age of eight. The duties of *nursery governesses* were the teaching of reading and writing. The attempts had done by some organization above proved us that people try to improve society moral and rid prostitution from England society. They revealed that prostitution is not a good profession for women.

Prostitution which became a social problem happened during Victorian made an Irish playwright, who also a socialist, George Bernard Shaw sympathy with his social condition. George Bernard Shaw was an Irish playwright who had written many literary works and other books. His first writing in literary work was prose, he had written five novels; one of them entitled *Immaturity*. But after that he wrote many literary works, literary criticism, journalism and essays. Shaw had written more than sixty plays during his life time. He was the only one of Irish playwright who has won two awards both a Nobel Prize in Literature (1925) and an Oscar (1938) for his contributions to literature included his writing of a literary criticism and for his work on the film *pygmalion* (Lisa 14).

In writing a literary work, George Bernard Shaw always concerned with the social issues into his works (Lisa 16). One of his literary works which addressed the social issue was a play entitled "*Mrs. Warren's Profession*". A play concerns with the social problem faced by Victorian England at the time; it was prostitution happened around Victorian society. Shaw said that "*Mrs. Warren's Profession* written to draw attention to the truth that prostitution is not caused by female depravity and male licentiousness, but simple by underpaying, undervaluing and overworking

women who the poorest of them are forced to take a way of prostitution in order to keep body and soul together” (18).

There was another study of *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* which focused upon Shaw’s critical attitude toward New Women in some of his plays. Stefanie (2012) wrote a literary research entitled *Ambivalence toward the New Women in the plays of George Bernard Shaw*. In her study, she analyzed three of his plays; *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* (1893), *Major Barbara* (1905) and *Getting Married* (1908). These three plays are Shaw’s work which depicted as New Women. The term New Women from Shaw as his sympathy toward the social condition of women in nineteenth-century London. Shaw was a playwright who very much concerned with women’s right. The image of New Women he depicts in his plays is his expectation for women to be an independent women; women who able to work as they please and appropriate with their ability. Her analysis of *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* stated that the character of Mrs. Warren as the image for condition of women in nineteenth century whereas Mrs. Warren’s daughter (Vivie) as Shaw’s expectation of women in his society or known as New Women. Vivie depicts as an educated woman who graduated from Cambridge University.

*Mrs. Warren’s Profession* had written in 1893 coincided with the writing of *The Philander*. In 1906, the play performed privately but did not receive a public production until 1925 (Lisa 4). The play takes prostitution as the social problem described by the author which it faced by the main character during her life. As a main character in the story, Mrs. Warren takes a job as a sexual worker or prostitutes.

She actually does not like to do the profession but because she has a difficult life, it forces her to work as a prostitute. Briefly, prostitution is not her own choice; she does that profession because she has no alternative choice for her survival. As the conversation done between Mrs. Warren and her daughter, Vivie in the story:

“Do you think I was brought up like you (Miss. Vivie)? Able to pick and choose my own way of life? Do you think I did what I did because I liked it, or though it right, or wouldn't rather have gone to college and been a lady if I'd had the chance?” (Act II).

Based on the conversation above, could be seen that Mrs. Warren is difficult and unable to pick a chance for her future since she comes from a lower class background. Her circumstance that makes her has no a chance to be what she wants forces her to turn into a prostitute to earn a lot of money and suffice her daily needs. The social problem describes in the story which makes the writer interested to study about, so that the writer take the social issue put in this play to be analyzed furthermore.

We know that prostitution was a phenomenon which has been happened since long time ago till now. The social issue of prostitution is depicted in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* makes the writer interested in analyzing deeply why prostitution became a choice for women in Victorian era to earn money especially for a lower-class woman who has financial difficulty, is no there another alternative for them in choosing a right profession and how prostitution happens during Victorian era so that it influences the author in writing this play.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

By giving literary background, the writer would like to dig up some problems as follows:

1. Who was Mrs. Warren in the story?
2. What is the reason Mrs. Warren turn into a prostitute?
3. What does Shaw's view of prostitution happen in Victorian era?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the study is to answer the questions above, therefore the writer would like to:

1. Find out who Mrs. Warren was in the story.
2. Analyze the reasons Mrs. Warren turn into a prostitute.
3. Show Shaw's view of prostitution happened in Victorian England.

## **1.4 Scope and Limitation**

In conducting this study, the writer analyzes only on the character in the play and will be limited to the character of Mrs. Warren, as a woman who described by Shaw ever has difficult life and her circumstance does not give her the opportunities to become what she wants. So that this study more focuses on Mrs. Warren's life before she becomes a prostitute until she success in running the business.



### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The important thing from a study or an analysis that the study has to contain a knowledge that is useful to the reader and the student who wants to write a thesis. In the study, the writer hopes that by analyzing what influence woman in choosing prostitution as her profession like why Mrs. Warren turn into a whore and how Mrs. Warren's life after success in running the business, it will give a benefit to the students who wants to learn of Shaw's works. The writer also hopes that this study will give more information about social phenomena of prostitution happened in Victorian England that represented throughout *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and what Shaw's idea of prostitution itself since it be an important aspect in this study. Moreover, the writer wants this thesis to be useful for students who wants to write a thesis literary as their references.

### **1.6 Method of the Study**

The method is used in this study is library research. Therefore the writer makes good use of some books including the play itself as the primary source, book, articles, journals, and online book resources. In presenting the analysis, the writer mainly uses descriptive method. Descriptive method attempts to describe, explain and interpret of a phenomenon of interest (Bhattacharjee 16). It means that by using the research method, we obtain the phenomena or problem we concern to discuss and describe it. Bhattacharjee further states that descriptive method examines and answer the what, where and when of a phenomena (17).

The outline of the analysis follows the following steps below:

1. Read the drama intensively.
2. Collecting the data by investigating the reason for women in choosing prostitution as her profession in the story.
3. Provide the historical facts of prostitution happened in Victorian period and what women reason to choose prostitution as their profession.
4. Show the author's idea of prostitution itself so that he wrote a drama represented a social condition of Victorian England.
5. Make a conclusion of the analysis.

### **1.7 Definition of Key**

**Prostitution** : In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, prostitution is defined as the practice of engaging in relatively in discriminate sexual activity, in general with individual also other than a spouse or friend, in exchanging for immediate payment in money or other valuable (733). Sheila Jeffrey states that prostitution constitutes sexual violence against women in and itself (qtd. in Weitzer 28).

**Prostitute** : In *Encyclopeadia Britannica*, stated that prostitutes maybe of either sex and may hire their bodies for heterosexual or homosexual activity, but most prostitutes have been among females with males as the clients (733). It further explained that female prostitutes are very often economically disadvantaged and are usually unmarried

and lack skills to support themselves (733). Health hazard to female prostitutes include venereal diseases, acquired through discriminate sexual contact and in some subcultures, drug abuse (Kathleen 20).

**Brothel** : a building where men can go to pay to have sex with the prostitutes (Collins cobuild dictionary 173).

**Victorian Era:** The historical era in England under the reign of Queen Victoria from 20 June 1837 until her death in 22 January 1901 (Abrams, Harpham 379). It was a time of rapid economic and social changes during English period.