

## MARNI'S STRUGGLE AGAINST GENDER INEQUALITY IN OKKY MADASARI'S *THE YEARS OF THE VOICELESS*

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### Abstrak

*The Years of The Voiceless* menceritakan tentang seorang perempuan Jawa buta huruf yang berjuang melawan ketidaksetaraan gender untuk kebebasannya di masyarakat Patriarki. Marni adalah karakter utama dalam novel yang mampu mengubah hidupnya melalui mobilitas sosial dari orang termiskin menjadi orang terkaya di desanya. Marni melawan ketidaksetaraan gender dengan mematahkan stereotip negatif pada perempuan yang kemudian membawanya pada kemandirian. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan ketidaksetaraan gender pada novel tersebut dan mengungkap perjuangan Marni dalam melawan ketidaksetaraan gender pada *The Years of The Voiceless*. Pendekatan penelitian ini dibagi menjadi tiga bagian: sumber data, pengumpulan data, dan analisis data. Data tersebut diperoleh dari kalimat, ungkapan, dan kejadian dari *The Years of The Voiceless*. Menggunakan data kualitatif, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *The Years of The Voiceless* mengungkapkan penderitaan yang dialami oleh Marni dalam menghadapi stereotip negatif, subordinasi, marginalisasi, dan kekerasan terhadap perempuan. Dia diremehkan oleh lingkungannya, khususnya ketika dia ingin bekerja dan mendapatkan uang. Tetapi, melalui mimpinya untuk memiliki sebuah bra, dia mampu meningkatkan kesadarannya yang menjadikannya seorang perempuan yang mandiri.

**Kata Kunci:** ketidaksetaraan gender, feminisme, patriarki, perjuangan

### Abstract

*The Years of The Voiceless* tells about an illiterate Javanese woman who struggles against gender inequality for independence in a patriarchal society. Marni is the main character of the novel who is able to change her life through her social mobility from the poorest to become the richest person in her village. Marni against gender inequality by breaking the negative stereotypes towards women that bring her into independency. The purpose of the study are depicting gender inequality in Okky Madasari's *The Years of The Voiceless* and revealing Marni's struggle against gender inequality in Okky Madasari's *The Years of The Voiceless*. The approach of this study is divided into three parts: source data, data collecting, and data analysis. The data was derived from sentences, utterances, and events from *The Years of The Voiceless*. Using qualitative data, this research shows that *The Years of The Voiceless* reveals adversities faced by Marni from negative stereotypes, subordination, marginalization, and violence against women. She is underestimated by her society, especially when she wants to work and earn money. Yet, by her dream of having a bra, she could gain her awareness that brings her to become an independent woman.

**Keywords:** gender inequality, feminism, patriarchy, struggle

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality refers to women who are subordinate to men in any aspect of life. (Lorber, 2010) states that the form of gender inequality can be different depending on economic structure and social organization in a certain community, as well as the culture of any particular group within the society. The forms of gender inequality can be found in society that adheres to the patriarchal system. The word 'patriarchy' is originally from the word 'patriarch' which means the rule of the father.

This term is used to describe a specific situation where male can be dominated in a family. According to (Bahsin, 2000), the word patriarchy refers to male superiority, to power relationships in which women are dominated by men, and to a system in which women are kept subordinate in various ways. Moreover, (Walby, 1990) defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, exploit, and oppress women. Thus, patriarchy is a social system in which men are considered as the main power holders and dominate over women in

many aspects of life such as social rights, property, control, political leadership roles, and moral authority (Anggraeni et al., 2022).

Javanese culture adheres to the patriarchal system in society. "In Javanese culture that adheres to the paternalistic conception where men are highly respected and favored by their masculinity, meanwhile, the role of women with their femininity are only considered as a compliment or subordinate to men " (Fachrani, 2015). Javanese culture positioned women as lower than men. Moreover, (Darwin, 1999) explains that in Javanese culture, women are considered as the objects or property of men in which comparable to *pusoko* (power), *griyo* (house), *bondo* (treasure), *turonggo* (car), and *kukilo* (pets or birds). It implies that women do not have equal space in the male dominant society. Traditionally, Javanese women have a specific character in social life according to Javanese cultures, such as calm, polite, faithful, and prioritizing harmony (Muhmad Pirus & Nurahmawati, 2020). Meanwhile, as a wife, Javanese women will be a *konco wingking* which means friend in behind, she relies her life (body and soul) on her husband's hand. In other words, *konco wingking* is someone who stands behind, it is positioned women lower and less significant. It shows that there is a form of inequality towards women in Javanese culture.

In analyzing gender inequality in Okky Madasari's *The Years of The Voiceless*, the researcher applied the theory of Gender Inequality proposed by Judith Lorber. According to Lorber, the term gender inequality concerns to a situation where there is an inequality within the social organization and social-economic structure of a society based on gender. As (Lorber, 2010) states that women are often paid lower than men for the same or equal work, even women, they cannot reach the top or higher position than men because their chances frequently get blocked. Moreover, girls are getting less education than boys from the same social class. According to (Lorber, 2010), around two-thirds of the world who are illiterate are women. It is another form of gender inequality in education. Likewise, some cases such as sexual exploitation and violence against women are part of gender inequality. Gender inequality is obvious when there is a gender role gap in work. In fact, social and cultural institutions tend to support gender inequality through social systems, religion, and law (Lorber, 2010). Therefore, it can be concluded that the main point of gender inequality is a system within the society's structure instead of individual problems.

The perspective of feminism can help to describe the women's struggle in society not only in the form of inequality but also stereotypes of women. According to

(Lorber, 2010) feminism is a part of a movement with the basic purpose is equality between men and women. However, it is necessary to mention that feminism is not an effort of rebellion against men, yet feminism is a struggle for the things that are not owned by women in general, such as their equality with men and autonomy to determine what is good for men in many ways. (Tampubolon & Satria, 2021) states that feminist are a women's movement that rejects everything which is considered inappropriate for women and degraded by the majority culture in any aspect of life such as education, politics, economics, and social life in general. Moreover, (Fakih, 1996) states that the movement of feminism is a struggle concerned with transforming an unfair system within society to reach justice for both men and women.

*The Years of the Voiceless* is a translation of a novel entitled *Entrok* written by Okky Madasari which tells about the life of an illiterate Javanese woman who is facing various problems in her life related to the inequality based on gender in patriarchal society. Marni is a young Javanese woman who has a dream to buy a bra. From the simple dream of having a bra, it triggered Marni to take some unconventional jobs which some of them usually done by men, such as becoming a market porter which is stereotypical of men's job. After reaching her dream of having a bra, not stopping there, Marni saw the opportunity to be more than a market porter, she decided to use the rest of her money to sell household daily needs or become a traveling vendor. Marni starts to offer her merchandise from one house to another house.

Then, Marni married Teja and they became traveling vendors together. In this case, Teja helps Marni to carry a big sack which means that they can sell more stuff. Moreover, Marni starts a new profession as a money leader as her side job. Becoming a money leader is more profitable than becoming a travel vendor, Marni decides to continue the new profession to earn more money. However, Marni is labeled as a loan shark and a bloodsucker artist, even some people think that Marni has *tuyul* (a spirit in the form of a child that steals money for its owner). As the profit of becoming a travel vendor and money leader, Marni buys lands planted with sugarcane and she has so many male workers. Marni is a poor illiterate woman, the daughter of a cassava peeler now become the richest person in her village.

According to the background of the research, this study focused on gender inequality in Okky Madasari's *The Years of The Voiceless* and Marni's struggle against gender inequality in Okky Madasari's *The Years of The Voiceless*. Furthermore, the concept of struggle by Marni is different from how women commonly do. If women commonly accept the reality, of being subordinated and

limited by social construction but Marni bravely breaks the traditional stereotypes because she has a dream to be reached, she wants freedom and also lifts her degree as a woman. That is why this novel was used by some researchers in their studies.

The previous study about struggle is written by Agbogidi Faith (Faith, 2020) entitled *Manifestation of the Struggle against Gender Inequality in the Perspective of Ezaigbo Akachi Adimora's House of Symbols*. They analyzed women's struggle against gender inequality to liberate themselves from such oppression. Besides that, this study also describes African women's experiences in a distinct patriarchal system. Another previous study of literary works entitled Gender Emancipation in Male-Dominated Jobs in Okky Madasari's *The Years of The Voiceless* by Ratna Asmarani (Asmarani, 2017). This research analyzes *The Years of The Voiceless* using a feminist approach. The result shows that the social construction of male-dominated jobs can be deconstructed by strong-willed women. On the contrary, this research uses a different approach to disclose how the character applies the concept of struggle against gender inequality.

## METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research method that consist of collecting and analyzing the data. According to (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009) qualitative research has a purpose of descriptive. The main element of qualitative research is people's interpretation. Thus, its products are in the form of description. The data of this research are in the form of words, phrases, clauses and sentences embedded in Okky Madasari's *The Years of The Voiceless*.

The data source of this study is Okky Madasari's *The Years of The Voiceless* published in 2013. The data used are the words, phrases, clauses and sentences related to the gender inequality issues and struggles against gender inequality by the main character in patriarchal society which are embedded in the novel.

First, close reading is chosen to collect the data. For the first variable, the researcher focused on gender inequality issues within the novel in the form of utterances, sentences, and events. Moreover, the second variable in which social construction is derived from analyzing the social condition in the novel. The researcher also uses a variety of sources related to the topic discussed, including papers, journals, articles, books, and other research materials. These data can assist the researcher in analyzing the issue. To analyze the data, the researcher starts by understanding the novel related to the meaning of gender inequality and its theory. Then, examining the data from *The Years of The Voiceless* and trying to implement the

theory in the novel. After these steps, the researcher reviews all the data analysis and concludes it.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Gender Inequality in the Years of the Voiceless

Gender inequality is a result of the persistent discrimination of one group of people based on gender and it manifests itself differently according to race, politics, country, and economic situation. According to (Fakih, 1996) some conditions that have put women in a disadvantageous position above have also spawned various forms of gender inequality which are manifested in forms of stereotypes, marginalization, subordination, and violence against women.

#### 3.1.1 Negative Stereotypes

The first type of gender inequality is stereotypes. A stereotype is a form of gender inequality that discriminates against something or limits the space for one gender that develops in society (Fakih, 1996). Marni is a young girl who has a dream to buy a bra. As a grown woman, she needs to cover up her breasts because she does not feel comfortable, whenever she runs, her breasts would bounce. Marni needs money to buy a bra, so she has to get a job. Unfortunately, female workers like Marni and her mother are paid with food. Since a bra must be bought with money, Marni decides to join the group of market porters. A market porter is someone who carries the vendor's or buyer's goods which is stereotypically considered a male job because it needs strong physical power. In the novel describe it,

"Ni, you must be kidding. There's no such thing as a female porter. You're just not strong enough. Forget about it. Women should stick to easy jobs, like peeling cassavas." P. (30)

From the quotation above, "...You're just not strong enough..." shows that there is evidence to explain the form of gender inequality in the novel. According to (Fakih, 1996) stereotypes towards one gender that develops in society can limit a person or group of people from doing something. It can be seen as gender stereotypes that limit Marni from being a market porter, Teja considers that Marni is not strong enough to be a porter because Marni is a woman. In connection to (Eagly & Wood, 2016), defines a gender stereotype as a belief that society believes and holds about the differences between man and woman. Women are identified as feminine, while men are identified as masculine. Femininity provides a social pattern instead of a biological one, the society decides what women are such as weak, emotional, irrational, and sensitive.

Another quotation that includes stereotypes as one of the types of gender inequality is also described in the novel. *"It's not a question of being strong or not, Nduk. It's a question of being improper or not. Women don't work as porters"* p. (31). The sentence 'women don't work as porters' as mentioned in the quotation above indicates that there is a form of gender stereotypes within society. Javanese culture positioned women in a domestic place, *dapur* (kitchen), *sumur* (wells), and *kasur* (matters). It means that Javanese women do not have the right to work or earn money by themselves. Therefore, if a Javanese women does a job, especially an unconventional job, such as becoming a market porter. They consider odd or taboo things.

### 3.1.2 Subordination

The second type of gender inequality is subordination. Perspectives based on gender can lead to women's subordination. The man's domination over women is one form of subordination (Fakih, 1996). For instance, a verbal actions did by Old Man Noto indicates that the Javanese women in *The Years of The Voiceless* were male-dominated. In other words, women tend to be controlled by men. It can be proved from the novel's narratives revealing Old Man Noto's attempts in dominating Marni. Here is the excerpt describing such control of the male over the female characters of the novel.

"Old Man Noto didn't make fun of my wanting to be a porter. It was strange because he seemed like the kind of person who would balk at such an idea and bring up the matter of prosperity. But all he did was remind me not to push myself too hard and to know my place. He said it was a woman's lot to not have much strength and not able to work very hard" p. (33)

Further on Old Man Noto clearly uses his dominance to make Marni down. Clearly, this quotation shows how Old Man Noto is domineering Marni and weakens her position as a woman. It is shown in Marni's words *"But all he did was remind me not to push myself too hard and to know my place. He said it was a women's lot to not have much strength and not be able to work very hard"* p. (33) The quotation above illustrates how patriarchal oppression and subordination experienced by the female character in the novel.

### 3.1.3 Marginalization

Marginalization is one of the gender inequalities that exist in society. There are many forms of marginalization, such as poverty, exploitation, and eviction (Fakih, 1996). In *the Years of the Voiceless*, there is some form of marginalization caused by traditional norms and customs.

In this novel, it is portrayed that women who work as cassava peelers are paid with cassava, while men are paid with money.

"I didn't talk about the bra with Simbok. I just told her that I wanted to help her peel the cassava and hopefully make a little money. She told me I wouldn't get any money. That was the custom at the market. The women were paid with food, while the men were paid in cash" P. (20).

From the quotation above, it can be seen that there is an inequality in paid of work between men and women. This condition is detrimental to women. Since Javanese adhere to patriarchal culture, it suppresses and marginalizes the women's movement. The patriarchal system is an obstacle for Javanese women to achieve equal status and roles as a man. Inequality paid in work is also described in the novel.

"It was too bad there are no women workers because I would have liked to pay them as much as I paid the men. The same amount, not less just because they were women, and certainly not with cassavas. But there were no women among the cane cutters. That was a job for men. Women only planted rice and picked peanuts. But try to ask how much they earned. Not more than 300 a day, certainly" P. (96).

The quotation above shows that there is an inequality in paid of work between men and women and also the gender-determined division of labor. Women have a different treatment than men about the right to work, especially in Patriarchal society (Az Zahra, 2015). Women are considered breadwinners, which makes their salary only part of men's salary. Moreover, in the village women only do work such as planting rice and picking peanuts. Customs and traditions perpetuated the process of marginalization of women. However, these conditions harm women in many aspects, especially inhibiting women to reach their goals.

### 3.1.4 Violence against Women

Another form of inequality based on gender in this novel is violence against women. (Fakih, 1996) states that there are many forms of actions which categorized as violence based on gender, they are rape, physical assault, torture of genital organs, prostitution, pornography, forced sterilization of family planning programs, covert violence, and sexual harassment.

In this novel, there is a violence in the form of physical attacks in the family. It happens when Simbok is sick and is beaten by her husband because there is no food.

"I have a hazy memory of him beating her because she had a fever and couldn't go to the market. If she didn't go, we wouldn't have anything to eat. And all he did was just waiting for the food. He was like a crazed dog when he was hungry. Yes, he was a crazed dog. Only a crazed dog would bite his sick wife, I was terrified back then. I hid behind a door and cried. He left after beating her, and he never returned" P. (16)

The quotation above shows that Simbok experienced violence in the form of physical attacks by her husband just because she cannot go to the market because she is sick. This kind of action should not be done by man, especially a husband and a father. However, the incident caused trauma for Marni and Simbok. Judith Lorber in her book *Gender Inequality and Feminist Theory* states that sexual exploitation and violence against women are part of gender inequality. Women are vulnerable to rape, beatings, and murder even often by their husbands or boyfriends.

"But at the same time, the stories always struck fear in me, a fear of men and getting married. Why get married if all it led to was suffering? That's what I told Teja when asked me to marry him. He proposed to me in front of the market, just as the sun peeped shyly over the horizon, as I was waiting for the farmers to bring vegetables" P. (43)

The quotation above reveals the effect of violence against women which causes trauma for Marni. The incident did by her father and also the stories from wives who their husbands having an affair make Marni fear of men. It makes Marni think that there is only suffering when it deals with a man.

### **3.2 Marni's Struggle against Gender Inequality Revealed in Okky Madasari's *The Years of The Voiceless***

By understanding the result of the analysis, focusing on gender inequalities in *The Years of The Voiceless* found in the novel, the researcher also wants to present the main result of the study relating to how the main character's struggle towards gender inequality. Marni, based on the story as the main character of the novel, is described as a Javanese woman who is illiterate, poor, and suffering. Therefore, it really supports her in establishing her idea and opinion towards gender inequalities and how they should behave at that time.

In this case, most of Marni's struggle towards gender inequalities concludes in two points, they are her refusal against negative stereotypes of women and her struggle against the subordination of women. The idea of Marni's struggles against the inequalities based on gender in *The*

*Years of The Voiceless* is according to Judith Lorber explains that as a political movement, the goal of feminism is to make women and men more equal socially, culturally, and legally.

#### **3.2.1 Marni's Struggle against Negative Stereotypes**

In *The Years of The Voiceless* by Okky Madasari, the struggle for independence is shaped by individual preference and by social, historical, and expectation. In this case, Marni is forced by circumstances to be an independent young woman who has to work to fulfill her needs, to get what she needs, and to reach her dream of having a bra.

"I began crying. My jaw clamped shut and I couldn't say a word. I left their home disappointed and angry. That was the day that I realize I couldn't depend on everyone to give me what I wanted, even if they were family" P. (17)

The day Marni realizes that she cannot rely on anyone, even to her family, she decides to work and earn money herself so that she can get what she wants, a bra. However, her desire of having a bra leads her to be independent.

"...I just told her that I wanted to help her peel the cassavas and hopefully make a little money. She told me I wouldn't get any money..." P. (20).

Unfortunately, the custom at the market, women are paid with food. This condition harms women because they would not get money if they do not have a man in their family. However, the dream of having a bra leads Marni to be independent. Thus, in finding her identity through her independence, Marni encounters her dream of having a bra. Her struggle for independence against gender inequality in her society is proven by breaking negative stereotypes towards women which limit women's freedom to reach their dream. She does not want to pay by cassavas anymore, so she works as a market porter which is stereotyped as a man's job. In the novel described it:

"Ni, you must be kidding. There's no such thing as a female porter. You're just not strong enough. Forget about it. Women should stick to easy jobs, like peeling cassavas."

"I'm strong Kang. I usually carry baskets, even sacks. I also carry baskets from home to the market. It's only weak people who can't carry them."

"But it's just not done, Ni. At this market, no women work as porters."

"But I want to, Kang. I need money. I don't want to get paid with cassavas anymore." P. (30).

The dream of having a bra has a very important role in helping to find Marni's identity as a woman who is against male domination starts from her realization that she cannot rely on anyone and break the negative stereotypes towards women so she can work and get money. As the quote above states that Marni has the courage to take a decision to work as a market porter, even though people around her do not support her. Marni's dream of having a bra is one trigger for Marni can handle and fight the negative stereotypes towards women at that time.

Most men consider that women are different and incapable do well as men do because of the fact that men are the superior gender, meanwhile, in fact, women are also capable of doing many things just like men including the work that involves physical power. In this case, the Narratives in the novel prove that women can do many things that need physical power.

"I laughed inside when he said that. He had a point though, in that there were no female porters at the market, and that it was heavy work that required a lot of strength. Here, the women only did light work, like peeling cassavas, husking rice, or grinding coffee beans. But it was a different story once they got back home. They had to do all chores, like walking long distances uphill and down to fetch water. The weight of a full pail of water was the same as a full sack of cassavas." P. (33)

This quote shows Marni's awareness that women are capable of doing what men do, but it is restricted by the custom of a patriarchal society where women are positioned in domestic activities. However, this idea leads Marni to believe that women and men are equal. Thus, what old man Noto said to her failed to dominate and weaken Marni. It won't stop Marni from working as a market porter and reaching her dream of having a bra. It implies that Marni was succeeded to break the negatives stereotypes towards woman.

### **3.2.2 Marni's Struggle against Subordination of Women**

Marni was born in a poor family. She is illiterate and obviously, she does not get an education in her life. However, she struggles to earn money so that she could have a better life. Even though she is an uneducated woman yet she is aware of the importance of getting an education. The novel described it.

"She always repeats the same stories and says her wish is that her own child can get a proper education and a proper

job. She would pay whatever it took just so that could go to school, even if she had to struggle to get the money."

The speaker of the quote above is Marni's daughter, Rahayu. This quote shows how Marni struggles to earn money so that her daughter can get a proper education. Marni always taught Rahayu to pray and be a smart girl.

"...I didn't know the difference between state and private. If it was a matter of the money for my daughter's education, that was not a problem. All that mattered was that she should get a degree. But because she said she really wanted to go to a state university, I spent all my nights praying that she would be accepted into university of her choice. And as always, my prayers were answered and Rahayu was accepted into a state university" P. (118)

This is another evidence that shows how Marni aware about how important to get a proper education. She would spent all her money for Rahayu's education so that she can get a degree. It is a way to lift up women's degree through education.

*"But never mind, all the mattered was that she should grow to be smart person and get a job so that she wouldn't have to struggle like her mother"* p. (97). This quote shows that Marni won't her daughter to experienced such struggles she did. She want her daughter to be an independent woman. Women have to get an education and get a job so that they do not need anyone to fulfill their needs and to reach their dream in life.

### **3.2.3 Marni's Struggle against Marginalization**

The inequality paid of work is one impact that appeared because some marginalization which happens towards women especially female character in this novel. It is a social phenomenon where a minority or subgroup is disqualified. The novel shows that women experienced exploitation which marginalized them in the society.

"Mrs. Dimah was right. No matter who I worked for at the market, I was always paid with food. Besides, there were not many vendors like Mrs. Dimah who needed hired help" P. (27)

This quotation can identify that inequality paid of work based on gender is a social system which always harms women because they cannot earn any money. However, Marni's struggle against marginalization is by breaking the negative stereotype that women are not capable to work as men. If she keep working as a cassava peelers, she would not earn any money.

"I left after I got the information I was looking for. I came back home satisfied and in high spirits. I was happy, simply because I had new hope. The rest of the day seemed to drag on. I couldn't wait to get the market, to be a porter and start earning some money. I would finally get my bra" P. (31)

The quotation above shows that her struggle against marginalization on women in this novel is triggered by her dream of having a bra. She was succeed to break the negative stereotype that women are not capable to work as men. Marni's creative mind and courage bring her to be more than a market porter.

"I am going to be trader, Mbok. I'm going to buy all kinds of things and sell them. Just like Mrs. Dimah."  
"Oh, Nduk, you know Mrs. Dimah is an ace at trading. She always manages to sell out."  
"I can do it too, Mbok. I'll start slow" P. (38)

This evidence shows how Marni empowered herself to beyond the limitation that encage her. Marni's bravery to starts a new profession as a travel vendor bring her into prosperity where she can earn more money.

"I was nobody too. Just the child of a poor person living day to day on cassavas. For my efforts peeling cassavas, I was paid with cassavas. I had no dream handed down to me from my parents except to be able to eat each day. But I had hopes and dreams. At the very least to have a bra. With that one hope, I could do anything. From peeling cassavas, I became a porter. And now here I was, trudging from house to house beneath the blazing sun to sell what little produce I had" P. (41)

As a women who live in patriarchal society, it is not easy for Marni to reach this position. Marni's struggle is so hard to gain money because what truly she facing is social system where women are always placed in domestic placed. She is underestimated by her environment at first, just because that women should know their place, yet Marni proves that they are wrong. A women are capable of doing anything as long as they believe they can and have hopes.

"The workers sat around me, pouring tea into cups. I stood there among all those men, about to pay them. Simbok, look at your daughter now. We used to work so hard, earning only cassavas and never money, just because we were women. Now look, look at your daughter standing proud and paying these men. Each one got 700 from my own pocket" P. (96)

This evidence shows the good results of Marni's struggle against marginalization in her society. As a women, she can lift up her social mobility from the poorest women become the richest person on her village. From paid only with cassavas just because she is a women, now she could paid those men with her own money.

### **3.2.4 Marni's Struggle against Violence on Women**

Besides doing the three previous struggles, Marni also struggles against the trauma because her mother experienced physical attacks by her father when she was a child. And also the fact that most of men are having an affair at that time, she often get the story from her customers that is their husband has a mistress or had married another women.

"But at the same, the stories always stuck fear in me, fear of men and getting married. Why get married if all it led to was suffering? That's why I told Teja when he asked me to marry him. He proposed to me in front of the market, just as the sun peeped shyly over the horizon, as I was waiting for the farmers to bring vegetables" P. (43)

Marni does not want her children experienced what she went through in her life. It is clearly describes in the novel "I was just afraid that all the stories I'd heard would happen to me some day. I was afraid that my children would go through the same experience I went through of having a father who wasn't there and a mother who was ignorant and poor" P. (43)

Marni's struggle against violence on women is to stop what she experienced in the past on her and become a better mother. She is willing to do anything so that her daughter can live a better life. "*When Rahayu was born, everything was for her, for her school, for starting life later on, so that her life was not as hard as mine.*"

### **CONCLUSION**

In this study, the researcher examines how gender inequality is portrayed and Marni's struggle against gender inequality in Okky Madasari's *The Years of The Voiceless*. The researcher applies a feminist approach to identify how inequality is based on gender. *The Years of the Voiceless* revealed four points of struggle, they struggle against negative stereotypes, refuse the subordination of women, struggle against marginalization, and struggle against violence on women.

As a result of analyzing the novel, it is found that there are many forms of gender inequalities, such as negative stereotypes, subordination, marginalization, and

violence on women. Okky Madasari has provided the reader with gender inequality in patriarchal culture throughout the story exposed on *Marni*. First is the negative stereotypes of women. The idea of women are perceived as weak and fragile, so they have to rely their life on men (their husbands). The second point is subordination, where women are positioned under men. The effect of negative stereotypes leads to inequality right of work for women. However, it subordinates women because they cannot work as men do. The third point is marginalization, a form of marginalization described by the novel that can be found in the way of the law of the market where women are paid with food while men are paid with cash. This inequality paid of work obviously indicated the marginalization of women. And the last is violence on women. It is experienced by Marni's mother where she get physical attack by her husband.

In addition, how Marni faces all her miserable life starting from the day that she cannot rely on anyone to fulfill her needs. Marni's struggle against gender inequality explained how she struggles with negative stereotypes of women, she breaks the negative stereotypes by working an unconventional job. Another Marni's struggle is against subordination by giving her daughter a proper education. She works very hard to earn money so that her daughter can get higher education and get a job so that she can be an independent woman and live her better life. Third, Marni's struggle against marginalization explained how she starts work as a market porter and other profession that lead her into prosperity. It bring her to the situation where she can pay those men workers instead of being paid with cassavas. And her last struggle against violence on women is that stop all of the violence she experienced on her, and become a better mother for her daughter.

Moreover, after knowing about Marni's struggle against gender inequality through this study, the researcher concludes that Marni succeeded in breaking the negative stereotypes on women, refuse subordination and marginalization on women through her hard work. Marni was the model of feminism who is giving us the idea that women can be independent, a woman are capable of doing what men do and women deserve a freedom.

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