

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Stereotypes of virginity is the focus of my study. Virginity is a presumption to someone who has never had sex. Technically, virginity is connected with hymen in the cervix. Raveenthiran (2009) explains that hymen is a bloodless membrane at the vagina opening. When hymen tears, it will not bleed significantly. Hymen is very thin and elastic; and every woman has it differently (Kencanawati & Shaluhayah, 2013). It can tear as a result of physical activity such as riding horse and cycling, as well as a result of sexual activity. Therefore, Raveenthiran (2009) says that believing intact hymen as a proof of virginity is unfounded,

Violent penile penetration leading to minor laceration of vaginal wall rather than that of hymen appears to be responsible for “blood stained bed-sheets”. Therefore, promoting the concept of intact hymen as a sign of virginity is nothing but perpetuation of myth (p. 224)

With regard to virginity, there is a common belief among Indonesians that a woman is considered a virgin when she bleeds when she is having her first sexual intercourse as it indicates that the hymen is still intact (Kencanawati & Shaluhayah, 2013). The bleeding in a woman’s first night which is an indication of virginity becomes very significant for Indonesian women to prove that they are virtuous. Nevertheless, Kencanawati & Shaluhayah say that bleeding at the first sexual intercourse is “a myth that was developed by our ancestors;” (p. 6). In the past, women have always been required to maintain their purity, so for those who have lost their virginity will be marked as a bad woman (Setiajid, 2016).

Not only in Indonesia, Cinthio (2015) explains that in Sweden, the ‘tightness’ of the vagina is an indication of virginity as well as a woman’s interest in sex. If the woman’s vagina is not

‘tight inside’ then her virginity is questioned. Similarly, if the woman is too keen or too interested in sex, then she is considered experienced in sex. Cinthio (2015) writes that teenagers in Sweden admit that virginity is very important because it is a point of reference for women, and the only thing that is important for their family he says “They have told me that only female virginity is charged with significance, that female chastity—as opposed to male—is visible and can be controlled, and that only the girls’ virginity is of importance to the family” (p. 178). With regards to virginity, Setiajid (2016) raises issues of patriarchy culture. He mentions that the demand of virginity for single woman has been passed down through cultural tradition, and people believe that virginity is set by men and not by women. In short, women are denied of their rights to decide their virginity.

In this thesis the writer concentrates on the belief, or stereotype to be exact, of adolescents in Semarang, about virginity. According to a research conducted by PKBI (*Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia*), there were 60% of Indonesian adolescents who believe that virginity can be seen from a girl’s physical characteristic (Kencanawati & Shaluhiyah, 2013). The adolescents believe that the color of women’s nipples, the way women walk, and the shape of their hips show whether the girls are virgins or not (Kencanawati & Shaluhiyah, 2013), disregarding the fact that women’s body shapes and characteristics are different from one another. In this study, the writer wants to find out whether similar stereotyped beliefs with virginity exist among the writer’s friends, adolescents living in Semarang and what their responses to the stereotypes.

1.2 Field of the Study

This research is related to the field of gender studies, especially on gender inequality

1.3 Scope of the Study

This thesis focuses on how virginity-related stereotypes are believed by Semarang adolescents. This thesis is written based on the idea of gender inequality.

1.4 Problem Formulation

1. What are the stereotypes of virginity which are believed by adolescents in Semarang?
2. What is Semarang adolescents' response on the virginity stereotypes?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the stereotypes of virginity which are believed by adolescents in Semarang
2. To know Semarang adolescents' response on virginity stereotypes of virginity for adolescents in Semarang

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to open the mind of the readers about stereotypes existed in the society on virginity that discriminate and marginalize women. It is expected that the readers can learn that most of those stereotypes are false. The writer also hopes that the data obtained in this study can be used for further research on beliefs on women and men in the society so that the stereotypes regarding women and men which lead to discrimination can be eliminated

1.7 Definition of Term

a. Virginity

Virginity is part of the female cycle of life. A virgin is someone who's never had sex, but it is not as simple as it seems. For some people having penis inside the vagina sex for the first time is how you lose the virginity. But some people think that when you give birth that is how you lose the virginity. The definition of

virginity is complicated, and it is up to the readers to decide what they believe in (Hastrup K, 1978).

b. Hymen

Hymen is a membrane, partially closing the external vaginal opening (Aa & Mo, 2012). As written in Raveenthiran's journal, hymen is a thin layer that is located at the opening of the vagina. Some people are born with very little hymenal layer that it seems like they do not have a hymen at all, but some people are born with elastic hymen; so even though they had given birth, their hymen are still on. The hymen can be stretched open the first-time women have vaginal sex, which might cause bleeding, but this does not happen to everyone (2009)

c. Stereotypes

An image or idea of a particular type of person thing. According to Bernstein, Roy, Srull, & Wicken's in the journal of Gender Stereotype and Instructors' Leadership, stereotype is an impression or schema of a group of people. Usually, stereotype focused on a observable such as gender, age, education, and race. (Walumbwa & Ojode, 2000)

