

# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Women have a variety of needs that must be fulfilled in order to achieve complete well-being. Maslow, in his Hierarchy of Needs, states that humans have five levels of needs: physiological needs (such as food, water, and sex), safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). These needs are also experienced by women, both in their personal lives and within the household (Firth, 2020). However, in reality, women often face various obstacles in fulfilling these needs. Many women are subjected to patriarchal norms that limit their freedom of movement, whether economically, socially, or emotionally (Mariechild, 2024). Common global issues faced by women include subordination within the household, discrimination in the workplace, and restrictions in expressing their sexual and emotional needs (Mansour, 2017).

Within the institution of marriage, the hierarchy of women's needs becomes even more apparent. A wife not only requires financial security but also love respect, fulfillment of biological needs, and the opportunity to become a mother (Nugraheni, 2015). Unfortunately, in many cases, these needs are often neglected. Women are expected to perform domestic duties without any guarantee that their own needs will be met (Rohima, 2013).

In patriarchal societies, the fulfillment of women's needs is considered secondary, while loyalty and devotion to the husband are seen as primary obligations.

The novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D. H. Lawrence portrays the hierarchy of a woman's needs through the character of Connie. Connie is an aristocrat married to Clifford Chatterley, a man who becomes paralyzed and impotent after the war. At the beginning of their marriage, Connie's basic needs as a wife— financial security and social status—are fulfilled. However, over time, the higher-level needs in Maslow's hierarchy begin to be neglected. Connie feels lonely, unloved, and sexually unfulfilled. She says, —She was lonely. She was empty. Life had become a sort of desert for her! (Lawrence, 1928). This shows that although basic needs such as shelter and social status were met, her needs for love, esteem, and biological fulfillment were left unaddressed.

The novel also illustrates that sexual needs are not merely about physical pleasure but are a vital part of a woman's emotional and mental balance (Mansour,2017). Connie's relationship with Mellor, the gamekeeper from the working class, depicts her attempt to fulfill the needs she cannot obtain from her husband: genuine love, respect, and liberating sexuality. The desire to have a child also emerges in the story, reinforcing Connie's position as a woman who not only wants to be a wife in the formal sense but also a mother who plays an essential role in continuing the family line (Donovan, 2000).

From a Marxist perspective, Connie's issues are not merely personal needs but are rooted in class and power imbalances. Clifford, as an aristocrat, represents the ruling class that views women as part of the property that must conform to social rules (Rohima, 2013).

Even when Clifford suggests that Connie have a child with another man, it is not for Connie's happiness but for the sake of his own lineage emphasizing

how women's bodies become tools within an oppressive class system (Mansour,2017). Marxist feminism holds that women's liberation can only be achieved if this oppressive class structure is dismantled. Connie ultimately chooses to leave Clifford and live with Mellors, a decision that reflects a rebellion against the restrictive class and gender structures.

Through this novel, Lawrence not only portrays the challenges women face within marriage but also voices a critique of the social structures that imprison women's basic needs and rights. This analysis remains relevant in understanding that the issues Connie faces reflect problems still experienced by many women today (Mariechild, 2024).

This research is highly relevant to the field of English Literature because it offers a critical analysis of one of the most controversial and influential novels of the twentieth century, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence. The novel is not only a literary masterpiece but also a rich text for exploring issues of gender, class, and power—central themes in literary studies. By examining the novel through the lens of Marxism and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, this research contributes to the ongoing scholarly conversation about the intersection of literature, ideology, and social structure.

In English Literature, critical approaches such as Marxism and feminist criticism are essential tools for understanding how literary texts reflect, reinforce, or challenge social norms and power relations. This study applies these theoretical frameworks to reveal deeper meanings in the novel, particularly regarding the portrayal of women's needs and the impact of class oppression. Such analysis not only enriches our understanding of Lawrence's work but also

demonstrates how literature can be a medium for social critique and transformation.

Gap in Previous Research: Although *Lady Chatterley's Lover* has been widely studied, there are still limited analyses that combine Marxist criticism with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to specifically examine the hierarchy of women's needs within the novel. This unique approach offers fresh insights into both the text and the theoretical frameworks.

Contemporary Relevance: The issues faced by Connie—such as the neglect of women's emotional, sexual, and self-actualization needs—remain highly relevant today. By analyzing these issues in a classic literary work, the research highlights the persistence of gender and class oppression, making the study significant for modern readers and scholars.

## **1.2 Problem of the Study**

The research problems are formulated as follows:

1. How does the novel portray the hierarchy of women's needs as a wife?
2. How does a Marxist perspective explain female issues through the character of Connie?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Based on the problems, the objective of this study was:

1. To analyze how *Lady Chatterley's Lover* portrayed the hierarchy of women's needs, particularly in the role of a wife, through the character of Connie.

2. To examine the portrayal of women's issues through Connie using a Marxist literary perspective.
3. To explore how the hierarchy of women's needs was represented through the Connie Experiences and development as a central character.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This research is expected to provide the following contributions:

1. **Theoretical significance:** This study contributes to literary criticism, particularly in understanding women's issues through the Marxist approach and the application of the theory of human needs (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs).
2. **Practical significance:** This study may serve as a reference for students and researchers interested in gender and literary studies, particularly in analyzing how gender inequality and class conflicts are portrayed in literary works. It aims to enrich the teaching of English literature, especially on topics related to women's issues.

#### **1.5 Limitation of the Study**

This research is limited to the analysis of:

1. **The portrayal of women's needs** specifically as a wife based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1943).
2. **The interpretation of female issues** using **Marxist literary criticism**, particularly how class and gender oppression affect Connie's life and decisions.

3. The study does not analyze other characters in depth unless they significantly support the analysis of Connie's needs and the Marxist themes relevant to her experiences.

