

## The Story of Suffragettes' Campaign as Reflected in *Suffragette*: A Film Directed By Sarah Gavron (Feminist Literary Criticism)

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### ABSTRACT

*This research analyzes about the suffragettes' story in campaigning women's suffrage as reflected in Suffragette film. The purposes of this research are to explain bad treatments over women in male – dominated society, to describe the struggles of the suffragettes in suffragettes' campaign pursuing the "votes for women" and the related history facts toward suffragettes' campaign. In analyzing the research, the writer uses feminist literary criticism and some supporting theories. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The data is formed in words and pictures. The data is analyzed through four procedures: identifying, classifying, analyzing and making conclusion. The results of this research are bad treatments over women in male – dominated society: women's stereotyping, inequality in the workplace, and women's subordination in marriage. Later, the writer finds out the struggle and the suffering of these women in campaigning women's suffrage: consciousness – raising, peaceful campaign, and militant campaign; the last, the writer finds some related history facts toward suffragettes' campaign as reflected in Suffragette film.*

**Key words:** *Struggle, Suffering, Suffragette, Women's suffrage campaign, Feminism, History*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Women of today have acquired equality as human in society as they can get education and position in public sphere both socially and politically. As in politics, some women have proved that they can be president, prime minister or stateswomen. However, this might not be happened women cannot be participated in election as candidates or giving vote that it was not the case more than a century ago where in many nations, women's suffrage was granted before universal suffrage, so women from certain classes or races were still unable to vote. In the nineteenth century, it was assumed that women did not need the vote because their husbands would take responsibility in political matters.

The oppression of women and the struggle to end it can be traced through the literature as literature is a product of human life. Historically, women authors have to struggle hard to be heard as

Fetterly in Guerin (2005:223) has bluntly pointed out, "Literature is political," and its politics "is male." Gratefully, at the present time, women can speak up loudly through their literary works. Literature can be the reminder of the struggles and inspiration for women such as through the main female characters who are brave, strong, and independent. Among the genres of literary works, Film is as one of the renowned literary works. it conveys verbally through the dialog and visually through the action and it makes film as an interesting media of literature works because the watcher can imagine clearly and easily about the literary works.

One of the literary works that portray about the seldom- part history of the struggle of getting women's suffrage especially in Britain is *Suffragette* film. *Suffragette* is British historical period drama film about women's suffrage in the United Kingdom, the film is produced, directed, written and main starred by

British women. Suffragette is a label for the more militant activists in the women's suffrage movement, in particular members of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Apparently, they are fighting for the vote, but in certainty they are fighting for far more. They are fighting to be recognized as citizens of some value, to be able to vote, to say about their working conditions, to have legal rights, to be counted and this *Suffragette* film deal with.

*Suffragette* film contains feminist and historical issues as the mid-nineteenth until the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a patriarchal male society and female dependence, with women struggling to attain social equality. The history of patriarchy exposes a diversity of injustices for women. According to Tong (2009:3), patriarchal society uses a rigid gender role to ensure that women are passive (affectionate, obedient, responsive and sympathetic, cheerful, kind, friendly) and men are active (strong, aggressive, curious, ambitious, full of plans, responsible, rationality, ability to control emotion, and competitive) where as feminism is an umbrella term for a diversity of views about injustices against women it relates to the belief of the equality for women and ends all kinds of injustices over women because of their sex and people who believe and practice feminism are called feminist. According to Tyson (2006: 83), feminist criticism in literature examines the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women.

*Suffragette* film uses fiction to explore women's history, it is not firmly accurate. It bends history around central people and events, but the film is still rooted in the history of the women's suffrage movement. Gavron (2015:986) mentions that the making of the film is collaborated with some experts in the history of women's suffrage and also get

the access to folders of unpublished letters in the library of the Museum of London.

Referring to the facts above, the writer argues that it is necessary to analyze *Suffragette* film through feminist literary criticism as Suffragette's campaign is an important piece of history that most people of today do not know. The film helps us to know that women's suffrage is not something naturally down to the ruling class's innate decency, but there is history and fight behind it as women before us suffered just so we could vote. It can be a reminder for women who do not bother to vote and a representation of women who never give up and never surrender. Then, the writer expects the research will have a contribution in enriching the research of feminism and history of literature. The writer wants to analyze the struggle and the history of suffragettes' campaign in *Suffragette* film. The writer carries out a research entitled *The Story of Suffragettes' Campaign as Reflected in Suffragette: A Film By Sarah Gavron (Feminist Literary Criticism)*

## II. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

In writing this research, the writer uses descriptive qualitative research method which means an descriptive analysis and qualitative is not in numbers as Punch (1998:3) states that Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers. It is also supported by Creswell (1994:45) states that a qualitative study is defined inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, holistic picture, and formed with words.

Qualitative research aims to describe the phenomena process, meaning, and understanding through words or pictures. This research uses qualitative method because the data of this research is formed in words and pictures and described the phenomena of feminist and historical aspects of the suffragettes' campaign in *Suffragette* film. This method is applied through two techniques:

### a. Collecting the Data

In collecting the data, the writer uses library research. Nawawi (as cited in Nisfandy, 2011: 25) states that in library research, the research activity is conducted by gathering the data from various literatures. The literature used is not limited only on the books but also can be a documentary material, magazine, newspaper, and the other written data, law, principle, opinion etc which can be used to analyze the investigated problem.

The writer uses library research to get information and to collect data by selecting written sources which are relevant to the topic that the writer analyzes. After that, data would be observed the important and relevant data. Then, write down the data. All these steps are applied in this research, as follows:

1. Watching *Suffragette* film by Sarah Gavron several times and understanding the film.
2. Finding out the important data and identifying the relevant sources that can support the data.
3. Writing down or making note about some data that refers to feminist and historical aspects.

### b. Analyzing the Data

After collecting the data, the writer analyzes the data by using some procedures. They are:

#### 1. Identifying

The writer identifies the data both from the primary data: *Suffragette*, a film directed by Sarah Gavron and secondary data: books, journals, articles, and other sources. Here, the writer identifies the content of the film which relates with research object which are bad treatments over women in male – dominated society, the struggles of the suffragette in suffragettes' campaign pursuing the "votes for women", the related history facts toward suffragettes' campaign as reflected in *Suffragette* film.

#### 2. Classifying

The writer classifies the data found *Suffragette* film, for instance, the scenes and the dialogues of the feminist and historical issues of the suffragettes' campaign in *Suffragette* film. Moreover, the writer also classifies books, theories, and journal which suit the research.

#### 3. Analyzing

The writer analyzes the scenes feminist and historical issues of the suffragettes' campaign in *Suffragette* film and the secondary data such as the journals and articles related to research object

#### 4. Making conclusion

The last step, the writer makes the conclusion and suggestion of all data about feminist and historical aspects of the suffragette campaign in *Suffragette* film from all the steps above to make this research obviously.

## III. RESULT

In this research, the data is reported in writing. The writer uses informal method to present the research because the data that analyze in the form of word based on the finding is presented through natural language and not in artificial language.

The writer presents as an introduction outlining the background of the problem that relates with *Suffragette* film, identification of the problems then in order to avoid excessively large discussions, based on the identification of the problem, the writer has limit to discuss only about several problems and formulated these problems through three research questions:

1. How bad treatments are over women in male – dominated society as reflected in *Suffragette* film?
2. How are the struggles of the suffragettes in suffragettes' campaign pursuing the "votes for women" as reflected in *Suffragette* film?
3. How the related history facts toward suffragettes' campaign are reflected in *Suffragette* film?

Afterward the writer decides the purpose of the research, and ends with the

systematic of writing in this research. In method of the research, the writer will outline in depth of studies. Furthermore, the writer will discuss some data that refers to feminist and historical aspects based on the research questions.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The writer explains the finding of research as found in *Suffragette* Film by Sarah Gavron. This research analyzes The Story of Suffragettes' Campaign as Reflected in *Suffragette* film as a representation of gender inequality between women and patriarchal system in society using feminist literary criticism.

Furthermore, in analyzing the film, the writer finds the data and discusses to clarify the data that focuses on the discussion of three points: 1. bad treatments over women in male – dominated society, 2. the struggles of the suffragette in suffragettes' campaign pursuing the “votes for women” and 3. Related history facts toward suffragette campaign as reflected in *Suffragette* film.

##### 4.1. Bad treatments over women in male – dominated society

For years, women are oppressed in many ways because of their sex and regarded as second sex in the society. The male dominated society relates to the patriarchal. In a patriarchal system, men have the power as superior, dominate social systems, and have authority over women and children.

Sultana (2011:8) makes few examples of bad treatments over women in men dominated society: burden of household work on women, lack of educational opportunities and freedom, wife battering, male control over women, sexual harassment in workplace, lack of inheritance or property rights for women and etc. The followings are some brief explanations of those kinds bad treatments over women in male dominated society.

Phenomena of bad treatments over women in male dominated can be traced

through the history. It is also portrayed in *Suffragette* film where the main cause of the women's suffrage is the existing of inequality that women get in this male dominated society. The writer finds some bad treatments that are committed to the women in *Suffragette* film by men dominated society, as follows:

##### 4.1.1. Women's Stereotyping

Stereotype is an oversimplified and conventional view of typing persons or thing. Then, a gender stereotyping is characteristics based on gender as Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2014:1) mentions that gender stereotyping is a generalized view or preconception about attributes, or characteristics that have to be possessed by women and men or the roles that are or should be performed by men and women.

The superiority of men can oppress women politically, economically, psychologically and physically as portrayed in *Suffragette* film. Women's subordination occurs because of the wrong women's stereotyping as dependent, incapable intellectually and physically than men, so they should be inferior. These stereotypes make women incapable functioning in the public and private sphere such as in politics. It also portrayed through voice over in the *Suffragette* film:

**Situation:** voice over of some anti – women's suffrage male politician, it is illustrated using montage film editing (a technique of juxtaposition of separate shots to create into a sequence)

Politician 1 : *Women do not have the calmness of temperament or the balance of mind to exercise judgement in political affairs* [chattering].

Politician 2 : *If we allow women to vote, it will mean the loss of social structure. Women are well represented by their fathers, brothers, husbands* [chattering].

Politician 3 : *Once the vote was given, it would be impossible to stop at this. Women would then demand the right of becoming MPs, cabinet ministers, judges* [chattering].  
 ( 00.01.35 – 00.02.03)

The dialogue above conveys some arguments against the women's suffrage in Britain. It shows the prejudice of anti-women's suffrage politicians in against the women's suffrage by mentioning wrong even harmful stereotyping of women as incapable intellectually and physically than men. The bad treatment can be seen in how men view women at the time and treat them based on the view (stereotype).

The politician 1's voice over shows the subordination of women and harmful stereotypes as women are passive, inferior, emotional creatures and not suitable in political affairs because women can make a decision as men did. These opposed women's suffrage politicians at the time regards women are unfits creature for direct competition with men.

Then, the politician 2's voice offer insists that women traditionally represented as the inferior gender, a passive object that cannot survive on its own and already represented by men in her family (giving vote). It means that women's vote as well as her voice is not considered necessary. Moreover, giving dependency to women is regarded changing the system that works. Women's suffrage will make an avowal that women are equal with men and absolutely this male dominated society cannot allow it. It is also breaking the social structure where men regarded fit in public sphere and women fit in domestic.

Last, the politician 3's voice over's clarify the reason of the harmful stereotyping which is fear. Fear and sexism are the reason of the wrong stereotypes of women that anti-women's suffrage male politicians give against the granting women the vote. Paglia (1991:15)

argues that men do not hate women but fear them. Then, suffrage politicians can be called as sexist male. Sexism is also linked with gender stereotypes. Sexist males do not hate women, they still admire women as an intimate and family relation, but their admiration does not include appreciation and respect as they still discriminate women.

In parliamentary elections, it needs votes to get such political positions which are core positions in running a government and if women get the vote right then the door is already opened for them to propose women in the elections because they already counted. Then, elected women will fight for more women rights that seem favour women than men such as for position of power (MPs, cabinet ministers, and judges). Sexist male will not easily allowed as for them women does not suit in active part especially in the maintenance of law and order. When women get the vote or occupations that supposed to men sphere, women are regarded not respect men as superior and the protector.

#### 4.1.2. Inequality in The Work Place

*Suffragette* film focus on the WSPU members which are called Suffragettes in campaigning women's suffrage especially through working class perspective so that campaign of women's suffrage in *Suffragette* also portray the bad treatments over women in the workplace.

Inequality in workplace based on gender can be called job segregation. Hartmann (1976:139) states that it is rooted from the combination of radical feminist and Marxist feminism with the impact of capitalist system on the segregation of the labour. The forms of inequality in the work place could be the hazardous working condition, wage gap, work hours, and also sexual harassment as portrayed in *Suffragette* film:

**Situation:** Maud delivers her testimony about women suffrage from working's women perspective at the House of

Commons in front of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George.

Mr. Lloyd George : Your mother worked at the laundry?

Maud : [Silence for a while] *From when she was fourteen. She'd strap me on her back or under the copper vats if I'd sleep. All the women did it who had babies then.*

Mr. Lloyd George : Your employer allowed that?

Maud : *He'd have you back as soon as you could.*

Mr. Lloyd George : He?

Maud : Mr. Taylor

Mr. Lloyd George : And does your mother still work at the laundry?

Maud : [Shaking head] She died when I was four. [Nods, Hesitates, Yet Mr. Lloyd George's Silence, Quietly Provokes Her On] *Vat tipped, scalded her.*

Mr. Lloyd George : [visibly unsettled] What of your father?

Maud : [shrugs] Don't know him.

Mr. Lloyd George : And you worked for Mr. Taylor-

Maud : *part time from when I was seven, full time from when I was twelve. Don't need much schooling to launder shirts. I was good at collars, steaming the fine lacing. Got the hands for it. I was made head washer at seventeen. Forewoman at twenty. Twenty four now so-*

Mr. Lloyd George : You're young to have such a position.

Maud : *Laundry work's a short life if you're a woman.*

Mr. Lloyd George : And why is that?

Mr. Lloyd George

Maud : *You get your aches and your chest cough, crushed fingers. Leg ulcers, burns, headaches from the gas. We had one girl last year poisoned. Can't work again. Ruined her lungs.*

Mr. Lloyd George : And your pay?

Mr. Lloyd George

Maud : *We get thirteen shillings a week, sir. For a man it's nineteen and we work a third more the hours. They're outside most days on deliveries so at least they're in the fresh air.*

00.19.33 – 00.21.54

From the dialog above, it shows that the occupation as a laundress has been going on for generations. Maud's mother started to work in young age like the other laundress. For laundresses with babies as Maud's mothers has double hard work. Absolutely, they have to their basic unpaid works or in Marxist terms it is called reproductive labour often defined to include cooking, cleaning and raising children (Vogel, 2013).

Hazardous condition in her workplace is also the issue that Maud's deliver in her testimony. She starts about the death of her mother by saying "*Vat tipped, scalded her (mother)*". The laundry at the time absolutely is different with the laundry today. In now days, laundry factory with the improved safety and health awareness; advanced technology uses sophisticated washing machine where more than 100 years ago as portrayed in *Suffragette* laundry house still using an old-fashioned and hazardous machine

She already worked there since she was seven years old. It is really not safe for kids to work there with all the hot water, fume and steam, but as an orphan without education she only has a limit choice and the employer tends to take children worker for maximize the profits as these children would be low wages. Maud stresses again how dangerous the condition of her workplace by saying that "*Laundry work's a short life if you're a woman.*" The laundry house could make health hazards which is caused by using of hot water and chemicals which can be addictive with incorrect and over limits of usage. The exposures of chemicals and fume in almost

closed building without proper ventilation can endanger these laundresses. Whilst, laundryman work in delivery of the laundry clothes so they often work outside the building and get the *fresh air* and their working hours shorter than the women.

Job's segregation is gender pay gap. According to Foubert in Kagitci (2013:92) defines that gender pay gap is the difference between the average pay of male and female employees. In UK the act of equal pay was passed in 1970, under Equal Pay Act though it had to wait until 1983(the Equal Pay Amendment Regulations) for a legal entitlement to equal pay for work of equal value.

Maud mentions gender pay gap in her workplace that women get 13 shillings a week and men get 19 shillings. Moreover, women works three hours more and also in hazardous work condition than men and these women workers have important role in laundry. Women already gendered in domestic labour could weaken the position of women as the wage labor in workplace, their labor is uncompensated or obtain low wage in labor market because their earning regarded unskilled than men in labor market.

#### 4.1.3. Women Subordination in Marriage

Traditional British common law discriminated married women. Under the legal doctrine of marital unity, it was called *coverture* or the “unity principle. Wojtczak (2009) concludes that the subordination of women in marriage includes: property, brutality and custody or parental rights of children and these forms of subordination of women in marriage are portrayed in *Suffragette* film as one of the issues of bad treatment over women in male dominated society, as follow:

**Situation:** Some Suffragettes are caught in riots courtyard of House of Commons. Among them are Maud and Mrs. Alice Haughton. Mrs. Haughton is wife of an MP, Mr. Benedict Haughton.

Mr. Benedict Haughton : [stands at the counter, hurriedly writing a cheque, about to hand it to the Police Officer] How much is bail?

Police : Two pounds, sir.

Mrs. Alice Haughton : No, *Benedict, you must bail all the women. I cannot be the only one to go free. Benedict please-* [snatches the cheque out of his hands, reaching for a pencil.]

Mr. Haughton : *I will not.*

Mrs. Haughton : [asks the Police Officer] How much is the sum?

Police : Two pounds, each.

Mrs. Alice Haughton : *Twelve pounds to release all the women. Please sign it.*

Mr. Haughton : [silent]

Mrs. Haughton : *It's my money. My money.*

Mr. Benedict Haughton : [Turns on Alice gripping her tightly by the arm.] *But you're my wife. And you'll act like a wife. I have humoured you Alice, thus far but... this is an outrage.* [turns on the officer] Thank you. [straightens his coat, nods to the Police Officer and then waiting, turning to Alice] Come on.

**00.30.48 – 00.31.30**

Married women has no right in property even though upper class women could enjoy the some inheritance property, but under the *coverture* they do not own it and it is still controlled by the husband and the wife could not use the property without her husband's approval. Under the *coverture*, wife has no right neither of her husband's wage nor her wage. Upon marriage a woman's assets became her husband's property and so did her labor and future earning as if she earned wages outside the home, those wages belonged to him; she could not make contracts without his approval (Cott, 2002).

The subordination of married women in using her own property is portrayed above where Mrs. Haughton and upper class suffragette begs to her husband to write a cheque to free all women. When he refuses, she protests “*It’s my money. My money.*” He still refuses, merely manhandles her out of the room. Mr. Haughton is an MP who actually an anti – suffragette. He kept silent enough about her wife activities in suffragette, but by the caught of his wife then he thinks it is already out of the limits. Furthermore, he reminds her wife about her position as a wife then he should obey her husband as the protector and the ruler no matter what “*you’re my wife. And you’ll act like a wife.*” Mrs. Alice Haughton may not be spending the night in police custody, but she is not free either.

Married woman does not only lost her rights for all the property that she has before the marriage, but also the property that she earned or inherited during the marriage such as her wages also belong to her husband.

#### **4.2. The Struggles of The Suffragettes In Suffragettes’ Campaign Pursuing The “Votes For Women” as Reflected In Suffragette Film.**

The male dominated society creates culture and social structure that oppressed women in many spheres. How these women could speak up to change the law and society that oppressed them, when they are kept powerless and voiceless.

It is unbelievable to make the oppressors will admit their dominance and change the system without some forms of struggle against the barriers and forces as Douglass (as cited in Zack, 2016:145) states that If there is no struggle there is no progress; Power concedes nothing without a demand it never did and it never will.

Nevertheless, women were far from passive recipients of this oppression. It is what *Suffragette* film wants to portray about. It portrays the dark and powerful

journey of the suffragettes’ (Militant members of WSPU) fight in campaign for the “ votes for women” in United Kingdom. They are fighting to be recognized as citizens of some value, to be able to vote, to say about their working conditions, to have legal rights, to be counted and this *Suffragette* film deal with. In campaigning the “ votes for women”, Suffragettes do everything that they could in their struggles and they have endured pain and made a lot of sacrifices in their struggles, as follows:

##### **4.2.1. Consciousness-raising**

By gaining feminist consciousness, women will have strength and motivation to challenge the patriarchal forces that they receive and struggle for themselves and their rights. Lerner (as cited in Nutsukpo, 2017:19) defines feminist consciousness thus: 1. The awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group and that, as member of such a group, they have suffered wrongs; 2. the recognition that their condition of subordination is not natural, but socially determined; 3. the development of a sense of sisterhood; 4. the autonomous definition by women of their goals and strategies for changing their condition; and 5. the development of an alternative vision of the future.

**Situation:** After rendered homeless, Maud is back to her works. She ignores everyone include her employer, Mr. Taylor who tries to humiliate, intimidate and sexually harass her.

Mr. Taylor : [laying newspaper down at ironing press next to her, silently turning the pages-] Mrs Pankhurst’s undesirables. It’s not a bad photograph, though.

Maud : [seeing the newspaper with the surveillance photos]

Mr. Taylor : I might cut it out. Put it on my wall. I want you out, Maud. [his hand around Maud’s back, leaning into her ear, one of his

hand flat on the ironing press]  
After everything I done for you.

Maud : [*angry until-*] *And how I've paid for it... [reaching for a scalding iron, slamming it down. It lands hard on Taylor's hand-]*

Mr. Taylor : [blood curdling scream, echoing across laundry hall]

Maud : [hurrying out, clocking the shocked stares of the other]

Male laundry : [going to Taylor's aid] [shouting at onlookers] What you looking at? Call the police! Don't let her go.

**00.19.33 – 00.21.54**

Mr. Taylor humiliates and tries to seduce her. He asks her to leave his activism and back to what she used to be which is be a good worker and good doll. Maud is his favorite worker. It is not only because she is naturally having good ability in laundry work, but also she ever once being his object to satisfy his sexual urges. Actually, they are a lot of Maud's fellow worker mostly women near to them, but they all keep silent like it is something common and absolutely they are lost sense of sisterhood. It is a dirty open secret that the boss is a sex offender, but no one wants to challenge Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Taylor threat her to remember what he has done to her such giving her job when she is actually a young – lone orphan. Maud used to be a doll just likes other female worker around her, lack of consciousness that they believe they are naturally subordinate, powerless and voiceless. However, her consciousness leads her to fight back. She is not the same woman that she used to be. She rebukes Mr. Taylor's by answering "*And how I've paid for it...*". It is clear that even though she is given job by Mr. Taylor, but she has to pay it with heavy price as she is sexually harassed; paid with low wages and has to see how Mr. Taylor preys Maggie. She cannot hold that anymore. She is filled with anger at the way she has been treated. She does not only show it by

words, but her fight is continuous with deeds as she sues revenge when she burns Mr. Taylor's hand with a hot flat iron *reaching for a scalding iron, slamming it down. It lands hard on Taylor's hand.* Then, Mr. Taylor perfectly knows she is not his doll anymore and it could be a reminder for him to think twice about putting his hands on other women.

Maud bravely beats the monster. She might do not know what happen to her next. She might lose her job, when she is already rendered homeless by her husband. It will emphasize more the negative stigma of society that she already has. Where society regards her as something they called shame of being unladylike behavior and more over she might be prisoned, she perfectly knows is that she is free from the monster and his prison.

#### **4.2.2. Peaceful Campaign**

There are two forms in suffragettes' campaign pursuing the "votes for women" which are peaceful and militant campaign. Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and its member suffragettes are mostly known for their militant activism, but they do peaceful campaign too. According to Purvis (2016:2), in its early years the WSPU engaged in peaceful agitation, but all to no effect; there was little newspaper coverage of their events and the issue did not grab the eye of parliament and with the broken promises of the parliament, they are going to be more militant.

*Suffragette* film also shows the peaceful campaign where these women struggle by giving testimony in the House of Commons and peaceful protesting. It can be seen from the data below:

**Situation:** A MP's wife, Mrs. Alice Haughton is giving an announcement to the laundresses that PM, Mr. Herbert Asquith agree to let labour women giving testimony. She persuades these women to participate and chooses one of them to deliver the testimony.

Mrs. Alice Haughton : [standing addressing a growing crowd of laundresses] It is men who have all legal rights over our children. It is men who control our economic existence. It is men who hold the deeds to our property. *and the Prime Minister, Mr Asquith, has agreed to a hearing of testimonies of working women up and down the country. We have an opportunity to demonstrate that as women are equal to men in their labours, so they should be equal to men in their right to vote. This is your moment to come forward and speak up. I will choose one person from this laundry to deliver their testimony at the House of Commons. It will be heard by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Lloyd George.*

Mrs. Coleman : [calling and affronting] No one cares, love.

Mrs. Violet Miller : Some of us do, Mrs Coleman, so shut your bleedin' cake hole.

#### 00.08.45 – 09.03.34

The dialogue shows the strategy of peaceful campaign by suffragette in *Suffragette* film, which is started by Mrs. Alice Haughton's speech to encourage women workers to support the cause and asking one of them to give testimony.

Mrs. Haughton is a suffragette from upper class that she is born from well off family and married to a Member of Parliament, Mr. Benedict Haughton. She as suffragettes takes part in seeking and giving information about the parliament. With her position and connections, she and other suffragettes might lobby the Member of Parliament to

let these women giving their testimony in strengthen their cause. It shows a slight hope when the Prime Minister Mr. Herbert Asquith agrees to let the working women giving their testimony.

The giving testimony by the working class could reveal about their working condition and women's suffrage from women working perspective. It also reinforces to pass the legal rights of women's suffrage. Women not just a reproductive labour, but they also could labour in job market too. It is time from these exploited women worker "*to come forward and speak up*" to challenge the status quo. But, just like a typical patriarchy society, women participation in changing their condition by gaining their rights is unacceptable. In contrast, the women's subordination is unconsciously believed as something common in this male-dominated society both by men and women. So, when there is an activism to challenge this system, it would be unappreciated and ridiculed.

#### 4.2.3. Militant Campaign

The failed of peacefully campaigning, these brave and bawdy women had been made desperate by broken promises from the Government, and repression by the press, they become determined with "deeds not words" in campaigning votes for women. The story of militant campaign as portrayed in *Suffragette* film.

**Situation:** A crowd of suffragettes gather in hearing Mrs. Pankhurst's speech. It will be the first time she is appeared for months. Police will be on alert to arrest her. Police's intelligence confirms this meeting is a growing intention to retaliate against the government.

Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst : My friends. In spite of His Majesty's Government I am here tonight. I know the sacrifices you have made to be here. Many of you, I know, are estranged from the lives you once had. Yet I feel

your spirit tonight. [her eyes travel over the sea of women's faces, all social classes gathered together] *For fifty years we have laboured peacefully to secure the vote for women. We have been ridiculed, battered and ignored. Now we have realized that deeds and sacrifice must be the order of the day. We are fighting for a time when every little girl born into the world will have an equal chance with her brothers. Never underestimate the power we women have to define our own destinies. We do not want to be law breakers, we want to be law makers. If we must go to prison to obtain the vote, let it be the windows of government not the bodies of women that shall be broken. Be militant. Each of you in your own way. Those of you who can break windows, break them. Those of you who can further attack the sacred idol of property, do so. We have been left with no alternative but to defy this government.*

suffragette : [cheering, foot stomping,]  
s  
Police : [push into the crowd]  
Mrs. : *I incite this meeting, and all Emmeline Pankhurst : the women in Britain, to rebellion! I would rather be a rebel than a slave!*

Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst is the leader of Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Her devotion in fighting for women's right especially in women's suffrage inspires all the suffragettes. Due to the rejected of the bill and these women would putting the strategy on the meeting with Mrs. Pankhurst. Her speech above conveys some important issues in changing the campaign to be more militant which are the reasons and the strategies.

Due to the failed peaceful campaign, Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst is out of hiding. She arranges meeting with suffragette's branches, one of the branches is east London where Maud involved.

Mrs. Pankhurst mentions lots of the reason for the cause and their campaign to be more militant. Five decades the cause of women's suffrage is campaigned peacefully, but Their cause is considered lack of reason rather than important. The worse is the endless broken promises that given by the parliament. The rejected of voting rights bill amendment is the momentum to arouse the campaign to be more militant. Waking up the society, they wanted to be heard and they are not willing their campaign being ignored any longer. Then, Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst orders in campaigning with deeds rather than words.

Through the vote right, women are counted. Even though it is not directly that women will be one of the law makers, but they can choose who will be the law makers. So, the parliament members will give more attention to hear what women's want as they need to win these women's vote. All these time they are treated as human with no options just follow. Later, women can be one of those law makers and fights for more women's rights. It opens the better future for women. Mrs. Pankhurst fights back the wrong stereotyped of women and stirs up the strength of these women that they have power to decide their own destiny.

The laws are injustice to these women. For fifty years they are campaigning with respect for the law, but it seems women are not respected by the law in return. In other scene, Mrs. Violet ever argues about respecting the law as she says to Maud "*Strangle what's respectable. You want me to respect the law, then make the law respectable*" (00.10.07 – 00.10.12). They just want a radical transformation of women's subordination in law. If these men law makers could not make it so that women who should make it as she says "*We do*

*not want to be law breakers, we want to be law makers.*” She argues women in this campaign have suffered lots and now they have to fight back *“If we must go to prison to obtain the vote, let it be the windows of government not the bodies of women that shall be broken.”*

Being ignored and hurt in peaceful campaign, she declares that their fight would be formed in militant way *“I incite this meeting, and all the women in Britain, to rebellion!”* She lets them to be militant in their own way and the forms of militant campaign that she exemplified in her speech are breaking windows or further attack on significant property. Their deeds are absolutely unlawful, but she argues that the law and government are injustice at the first place *“We have been left with no alternative but to defy this government.”* Later, she closes her speech by saying that *“I incite this meeting, and all the women in Britain, to rebellion! I would rather be a rebel than a slave!”* She calls for a national campaign of civil disobedience. She argues that it is better to be rebel and unlawful rather than respected a law where a law itself respects and treats them just as slaves.

#### **4.3. Related History Facts toward Suffragette Campaign as Reflected In *Suffragette* Film**

The history of suffragette is rarely to be told before those lots of people do not know about it. Then, considering the long and the complexity of history of women’s suffrage, *Suffragette* film is just a snapshot in history, could not portray the entire story. As Seabourne (2016:117) states that *“clearly, however, it is not realistic to expect one film to cover all aspects of the story of the struggle for women’s suffrage”*

*Suffragette* films attempts to explore the history of these women in a film. *Suffragette* film uses fiction to explore women’s history so that it is not firmly accurate. It bends history around central people and events, but the film is

still rooted in the history of the women’s suffrage movement. *Suffragette* film uses fiction to explore women’s history, the subordinating of women in some spheres, the lack of rights and the dramatic fight of suffragette members in campaigning the Votes for Woman.

Therefore, the writer found several history facts and events that could be related with the *Suffragette* film include Arguments for and against Women’s Suffrage, the end of Peaceful Campaign: Black Friday, Broken Promises and Police Brutality, Militant Campaign: Property Damage, Prison and Martyrdom. One of the history events that is portrayed in *Suffragette* film is the martyrdom of Emily Wilding Davison as the film is ended with actual footage from Miss Emily Wilding Davison’s funeral where on her flowered coffin, it is written *“All she has she gave for others”*.

*“June 04, 1913, Emily Wilding Davidson, prompted by a desire to gain publicity for women's suffrage went to the Derby, rushed out on to the racecourse, grabbed the reins of the King's horse and tried to stop the race. She was unsuccessful, died of head injuries a few days later and was mourned as the first suffragette martyr”*

(Remy-Hébert, 2011).

*Suffragette* film sets over a comparatively short period of time and it ends before women get the vote, the Director has her own reason why she does as she says in interview with *Bust* (2015) that *“We chose to end it where we did because as with many political movements, it essentially ended in negotiation. We wanted to show the lengths to which the women went. We didn’t want to wrap it up neatly. We wanted to end on a moment that was profound.”* Then the film ends with archive footage of Emily Wilding Davison’s funeral.

Emily Wilding Davison was born in London in 1872. She had studied at Royal Holloway College and at Oxford

University. In 1906, she joined the WSPU. Three years later she gave up her job as a teacher and went to work full-time for the suffragette movement. She was frequently imprisoned about nine times and endured forty nine force feeding. Her attending at Epsom Derby was purely her initiative to get more public attention and show how serious the cause was. Actually, her mission and death were debatable whether she died in suicide or accident. Emily Davison might not commit suicide and her death was an accident. Then, about the mission, she might want to unfurl the WSPU purple white and green (purple symbolised dignity, white purity, and green hope) long scarf by attach it on the king horse or she might just wanted to waving flag to stop the race. Despite of that, Emily Wilding Davison had made a big publicity that people all over the world could read about it. She is known as the martyr and honored of her lifelong dedication on women's suffragette until today. She was a determined one for the cause under her favourite motto "*Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God.*"

Emily Davison among the antis also regarded as ingenious even she was actually educated. Despite of that, Emily Davison might be a hazardous risk taker, but how about those educated men who actually ingenious with their narrow mind, wrong and harmful stereotyped women. Moreover, those ironically women who lacked of feminist consciousness and commonly with their subordinate, then they declined their own rights. These antis see narrowly to the outrageous of Suffragettes militancy, but they also should saw the reason and the background that underlaid their agitation.

The using of militancy campaign by suffragette was controversial and debatable. But, despite the extreme of their campaign, their campaign successfully brought the huge publicity and attention on votes for women. Their determination and suffering in their campaign also

consciousness to the public that their cause of votes for women was a serious case while for previous decades the cause was considered merely comical case and should be ignored and at least with their militancy campaign it was proved that the government could not ignore these votes for women campaign.

## V. CONCLUSION

After analyzing *Suffragette* film by Sarah Gavron as discussed in previous chapter, the writer finds that the film portrays feminist issues. The film explores the historical movement in United Kingdom, struggle in campaigning women's suffrage by the Suffragettes, militant activists under Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) organization."

The film portrays the moment where men still have complete domination. Thus, the writer concludes some bad treatments that women have to endure in male dominated society as portrayed in *Suffragette* film into three classifications. They are women's stereotyping, inequality in the workplace (hazardous working condition, wage gap, work hours, and sexual harassment), and women's subordination in marriage (lack of property rights, lack of custody over their children and wife beating). Later, the writer finds out the struggle and the suffering of these women in campaigning women's suffrage. It is divided into three classifications: consciousness – raising, peaceful campaign, and militant campaign (breaking windows' shops, bombing pillar boxes, cutting telegraph wires and an arson attack). The last, the film actually uses fiction in exploring the movement and somehow it lacks of accuracy in time, but it still has relevancies with the historical event and still inspired and based on the actual history of suffragettes' campaign. Therefore, the writer concludes some related history facts toward suffragettes' campaign as reflected in *Suffragette* film which includes the arguments for and

against women's suffrage until the martyrdom of Emily Wilding Davison.

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