

## Gender-Based Discrimination in "Tears of the Giraffe" by Alexander McCall Smith: A Qualitative Analysis

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### *Abstract*

*The aim of this study was to analyze the issue of gender-based discrimination in the novel Tears of the Giraffe by Alexander McCall Smith (2022). The novel portrays female characters who have been humiliated in the social environment. The data was analyzed through words and quotations by Judith Butler (1999) on gender performativity. This study used qualitative methods to analyze and reveal the situation of gender-based discrimination that is enforced by society, particularly against females. The results of this study showed distinct differences in the roles assigned to females and males. Roles and attributes are categorized differently based on what is considered appropriate for both genders. By making female characters the second gender, the novel represents gender-based discrimination against females where their roles are unfavorable in the house, workplace, and social life. Moreover, This study showed the struggle of females as a response to facing gender-based discrimination by breaking the stereotype of females as body owners and the second gender.*

**Keywords:** *female, gender-based discrimination, male, stereotype*

### **A. Introduction**

Gender is created through social and cultural processes that differentiate between masculinity and femininity. Masculinity is associated with male, while femininity is associated with female. According to Blackstone (2003), the term gender refers to characteristics, values, and meanings that become the attribute of different sexes. Community perceptions socially make standards on the role, behavior, attributes, and identity of a person in society. Gender is a socially constructed term for existing attitudes, activities, roles, and traits that are considered appropriate for men and women (Shastri, 2014). Thus, gender-based discrimination is unequal treatment between female and male which can have a significant impact on an individual's life. Gender-based discrimination can occur anywhere, including in the workplace, family, education, and other areas of life. According to Mozumder (2022), Gender discrimination refers to any situation in which a person is denied an opportunity and loss their fundamental rights on the basis of their gender. Beauvoir (1949) says that the reproductive and domestic role is confined to women with no guaranteed to equal dignity. It shows that there is gender discrimination in the family where there has been a gap in differences that corner women since childhood. It has a bad impact on individuals who experience it, especially female.

The female position is less profitable in getting rights and opportunities. Females, As part of society, have a significant role in life. According to Wolf (1990), females

have many different way to clarify becoming females because male have a lot easier. females find it difficult to show their power. There are some studies which state that females cannot be compared with males. Unfortunately, numerous females are facing discrimination in areas such as decision-making and positions of authority. Female, with all their dynamics, seems to be a source of inspiration never-ending. Many forms of studies that discuss female issues are something that often happens compared to issues that address male issues. The problem here is that females relatively have a lot of difficulties in finding their existence as someone who has the same rights as others. The female who want to find their existence are sometimes seen as a form of resistance by some people who are still surrounded by thoughts that consider females weak.

The phenomenon of gender-based discrimination is highly relevant in today's society around the world, particularly in Africa. There are still many cases that show gender-based discrimination. One of them happened to a female runner named Carter Semennyia from South Africa. She was banned from participating in the world athletics championships by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) because she had high testosterone. This hormone is in the male category, so Carter's biological sexual identity is doubtful. According to the Gender in Geopolitics Institute (GGI) post, Carter himself had to take medication to lower his testosterone levels (Lord Debard, 2020). That shows the treatment experienced by the cement charter. Carter was considered to be different from other females, so her space for activities as a female was limited.

Literary works discuss a lot about female characters. Literary works are the media used by the author to convey his ideas. According to Wardhani (2016), Literary work is not merely beautiful words, but also it represents a success work which presents strength, energy, and values of life through the stories in it. As a medium, literary works become a bridge that connects the thoughts of the author to readers. In the relationship between the author and the reader, works of literature occupy different roles. In addition to playing a role in the process of transfer of information from author to reader, literary works also play a role that describes a society that can in the form of interactions that exist between all the characters.

The characters in literary work that are often used as objects of discrimination are women. One of them is the novel *Tears of the Giraffe*. The novel talks about the life of a female detective named Mma Ramotswe. She will marry a mechanic named Mr. Matekoni. Mr. Matekoni had a maid who did not like Mma Ramotswe because Mma Ramotswe was independent and strict. The maid refused Mma Ramotswe's presence. She planned to slander Mma Ramotswe by having people bring prohibited weapons into Mma Ramotswe's house to be imprisoned. However, it turned out that the person sent by the maid put her sharp weapon into the maid's house, so the maid was the one who was arrested by the police. Mama Rowste returned to carrying out her duties as a detective safely in dealing with other problems.

In this storyline, there are many words that describe gender-based discrimination, so it needs to be studied. This study has relevance to the current condition of female characters, where discrimination is very common in our environment. By knowing and understanding the problem, awareness of the potential for discrimination can be reduced. Referring to all the explanations above, the issue chosen for this study is Gender-based Discrimination Portrayed in Tears of the Giraffe..

## **B. Method**

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore and analyze gender-based discrimination as portrayed in the novel "Tears of the Giraffe." Qualitative research is chosen for its ability to delve into complex social phenomena and understand the nuances of gender dynamics within literary works. Data collection involves a comprehensive analysis of the novel's text, focusing on passages that depict instances of discrimination against female characters. The analysis is guided by thematic coding to identify recurring patterns and themes related to gender discrimination. Additionally, secondary sources are consulted to provide context and theoretical frameworks for interpreting the findings. The research aims to shed light on the prevalence and impact of gender-based discrimination in literature, offering insights into societal attitudes and fostering awareness of gender inequality issues..

## **C. Findings and Discussion**

In this study, there is an analysis of the words and dialogue of the characters in the story to present the problem formulation in chapter one. This study also added a plot synopsis to introduce the discussion of gender-based discrimination portrayed in Tears of the Giraffe and the protagonist struggle in dealing with gender-based discrimination in Tears of the Giraffe.

Mma Ramotswe was Botswana's number one female detective. She could establish a detective agency in a society that still favors the patriarchal system. She believed that everyone can be of benefit to others, even if she is a female. Mma Ramotswe had some complicated cases. She had to face a maid, a jeweler, and a lecturer who belittle the position of female resulting in discrimination. During her investigation, she also has to live his personal life, which she begins to arrange with Mr. J.L.B Matekoni, a mechanic. All of these problems are finally resolved. Mma Ramotswe felt a sense of peace after these cases were resolved. She bought a typical Botswana basket with little dots representing giraffe tears. She gave the basket to her friend, she told the meaning of the giraffe's tears was that giraffes had nothing to give but tears. It means we could give something to others.

### **1. The Portrayal of Gender-Based Discrimination in Tears of the Giraffe**

Tears of the Giraffe illustrates the issue of gender-based discrimination. Here many cases show the relationship between males and females, but this relationship has an imbalance that causes discrimination. In the novel, there are four cases of gender-based discrimination: unfavorable role of females in the house, unfavorable

role of females in the workplaces, and unfavorable role of females in the social life. Thus, gender-based discrimination was analyzed based on three significant cases.

### **1.1 Unfavorable Role of Females in the House**

The role of females in the house is always unfavorable as always associated with domestic affairs. It happens when Mma Ramotswe saw the dirty yard near her fiancé's house. Here there is a narrative conveyed by the author to explain the stereotypes that exist in the area.

"In traditional Botswana society, Keeping the yard in good order was a woman's responsibility, and she would certainly not wish to be associated with a yard like this" (Smith, 2003, p.7).

The quotation above highlights the issue of gender-based discrimination that persists in society due to traditional beliefs. This tradition contains elements of hatred against females. Females are always associated with cleanliness. Maintaining cleanliness is only imposed on females in Botswana. If the yard is dirty, only females will be blamed. In contrast, males are free from these demands. In other words, social stereotypes about females regarding their duties and functions have been regulated long ago. The stigma of females doing housework makes their roles different from those of males. This is detrimental to females because, as fellow human beings, males can also do this, but females only bear it.

"Men never worried about cleaning and polishing, and provided they were well fed they were very introblesome employers" (Smith, 2003, p.94)

The quotation above also shows that the obligation to clean the house is imposed on females. Males do not care about the messy situation in their house. They will still relax with the delicious food made for them. He only protest if the food is not good, but it does not matter when the house is messy. They feel that their work is only outside the home, while house chores is not their job. The stigma about males as breadwinners in the public sector while females in the domestic industry make males free from caring for the house, such as cleanliness, making males feel they are not responsible for cleanliness. This makes them the masters of their homes. In contrast, females are in charge of serving him. If there is a problem with the house, they will protest without helping to solve it. That means there is gender-based discrimination against females.

Another quotation that shows gender-based discrimination is seen when Mr. Matekoni shows off his lazy maid.

"If all women in Botswana were like that, our men would have died a long time ago" (Smith, 2003, p.10).

The quotation above addressed to female who cook the same food every day. She was considered unable to cook, so the public perspective ostracized her. These words

show that there is a perspective in society that females must be able to cook. If do not do that, the male will become extinct. Females should feed differently to serve males and for males' health. Females were considered unable to cook if they only cooked the same thing daily, which was detrimental to male health. These words also show that a man will not cook for himself if no one makes food for him, so he will starve to death and become extinct. Cooking is one of the activities carried out for survival by males or females, so this skill can be mastered by all genders. But this assumption does not apply in the social environment. Stigma in the social environment makes the kitchen a females's responsibility. If a female can not cook, it is considered a failure to become a woman. That means that there is discrimination for females that are coercive in house life so that females are not free to make their own choices. These quotations contain the meaning that females are associated with domestic work which created gender-based discrimination.

In domestic life, the task of maintaining the integrity of the family is also borne by females. The perception of females being unable to look after their husbands if their husbands go to another female is still a justification without seeing the mistakes of males. That was shown in Mrs. Curtin's conversation with Mma Ramotswe. "It was promotion, after all, and if it was a cure for restlessness then I thought it was preferable for his to have an affair with another woman, which is the other way that cures their restlessness. You know how it is, Mma, when men realize that they are no longer young. They panic, and they look for a younger woman who will convince them that they are still men" (Smith, 2003, p.26)

The quotation describe that the husband of Mrs. Curtin gets a promotion in a region in Africa. Mrs. Curtin has no choice but to ban it because the decision is in the control of the male. Mrs. Curtin sees the positive side of this in that he will avoid the perspective of a female who fights her husband and maintains her relationship so that her husband does not have an affair. In the prevailing stigma in society, males will go to other females when they feel restless. In the wife's position, she will be considered a failure to take care of her husband. She is considered problematic, so males seek happiness in other females. Males make females outside the home as sexual objects for their own satisfaction. Males who are getting older will use females as objects to restore their confidence as real males in a sexual context. Males will feel proud if they can get satisfaction from their pride. Males will panic and worry because they do not get what they want. That means females have been controlled for the benefit of males. Females are in a position as part of the effort to please, not to enjoy pleasure. This shows an attempt to demean the existence of females as human beings. It means Mrs. Curtin experienced discrimination in the house.

"Once women are married to men, they start to complain. It is a well-known fact. Ask any married man" (Smith, 2003, p.154).

The quotation above cornered married females. Females are considered to be troublesome because they complain a lot. This perception has the support of many

males. However, this fact is only seen from the male side. The fact that females also often get complaints from males is not mentioned. This shows that males are selfish because only females are guilty, even though females complain because males bother females. The social construction that the position of males is above females makes them not want to be governed by females. A female's duty is to serve her, so this quote makes a female's position humiliated because it is not permissible to complain when a male makes mistakes in domestic life.

## **1.2 Unfavorable Role of Females in the Workplace**

Gender-based discrimination that occurs in the workplace, such as the position of female is considered lower than male in the workplace happens when females want to prove their abilities outside of housework. Mma Ramotswe was belittled at work because of her female gender. A female is considered incompetent to do difficult work in the social environment.

"Mrs. Curtin put down her mug and wiped her hand against the side of her khaki trousers. Then let me tell you, she said, Why is an American woman is sitting in your office in Botswana. Then, at the end of what I have to say, you can say either yes or no. It will be that simple. Either yes or no" (Smith, 2003, p.24).

The quotation above showed the situation in the room where Mrs. Curtin sat in khakis with Mma Ramotswe. Mrs. Curtin put down her cup in such a bad mood that she no longer enjoyed his drink. She went on to say that she doubted Mma Ramotswe as a female detective. She asked Mma Ramotswe why an American woman was sitting in the Botswana office. The meaning of the question she wanted to convey was that her who had come from America was hesitant to approach Mma Ramotswe; She did not really trust her. After convincing herself to come to the office, she didn't want to be turned down. Mma Ramotswe had to help find her son and make her believe that a female detective in Botswana could be relied upon. This shows that a female who works and has her own office is so foreign to herself and some people there. Usually, the detective is a job for males. In addition, females usually work under males. The existence of this view is the reason for limiting females' abilities so that females are considered unproductive at work so that females are considered unable to stand on their own feet.

Gender-based discrimination also can be seen when Mma Ramotswe talked with females who started their careers and managed to occupy quite good positions, Mma Ramotswe flattered and said:

"You have done very well. It's not easy for women. Men expect us to do all the work and then they take the best jobs. It is not easy to be a successful lady" (Smith, 2003, p.64).

The quotation above shows that it is not easy to be a working female. No matter how hard females work, males will always occupy a higher position. Females are not

given equal opportunities to work. Females are considered not to be successful in leading high jobs. Males will continue to make women work under them and will not allow themselves to be led by female. That's because, in the construction of gender, the position of females is below male. The stigma of weak females continues to stick so that when females lead, males feel they have no self-esteem because they are led by females who are considered weak. Individuals should be given equal opportunities to compete for positions based on their abilities, regardless of their gender background. Unfortunately, females often experience discrimination despite working just as hard as their male counterparts. This inequality can lead to a lack of appreciation for their efforts, while males may receive greater recognition for their work. It's essential to recognize that every person deserves the chance to succeed based on merit, not gender.

The receptionist informed Mma Ramotswe that Dr. Ranta had a history of mistreating females. Unfortunately, nobody could confront him as he was too powerful and intimidating.

"Why can people not touch him? Asked Mma Ramotswe. The girls themselves are too frightened to speak, said the woman. And his colleagues all have something to hide themselves. You know what these places are like" (Smith, 2003, p.177).

The quotation above describes a situation where sexual harassment towards women is rampant, and they cannot defend themselves. This is because those around them protect each other, as they have shared secrets. The social construction of gender views one gender as superior while the other party is inferior. It causes oppression and discrimination against females. Males feel entitled to do anything to females, while females cannot fight back. An environment that ignores this bad treatment causes the victim to close herself off. Stereotyped victims of sexual harassment do not have the courage to report what they receive because they are still being blamed, such as the sight of a female who seduces a male by wearing revealing clothes. This makes people think the victim deserves this treatment. Blaming the victim's attire for sexual harassment is not justified. It is essential to understand that harassment can happen regardless of how a person dresses. This makes females feel increasingly powerless because they were born as a female gender, and they do not have a voice over their rights.

In the workplace, male demeaning females also occur in the form of sexual harassment. It was shown when Mma Ramotswe wanted to find evidence that Dr. Harassing Ranta, the receptionist, said, "She is called Angel. She did nothing, and she got away with it. Male get away with it, don't they? Every time" (Smith, 2003, p.178)

Angel is a female who was also sexually assaulted by a male but couldn't tell anyone. Males will always escape, while females will always be disadvantaged. Males still dominate female. Females are considered weak without being able to refuse or

fight. If they resist, the man will threaten so that the female will be afraid. It is a way to control a female so that she does not tell anyone about the bad treatment she has received. It means that there is discrimination against women and men in power in the workplace so they can take advantage of women who do not have a voice to defend themselves.

In workplace, gender-based discrimination also can be seen when females have their standards to be accepted and privileged. Generally, in work, employees are selected based on ability and intelligence. This does not apply to females.

"She could not understand why this should be so. Some of the other women who got very much worse marks than she did - sometimes as low as 51 percent (the barest of passes) received good offers whereas she (who had achieved the almost inconceivable mark of 97 percent) received nothing. How could this be?" (Smith, p. 106).

The quotation above said by a female character named Mma Matsuki when telling her past. It is very difficult to get a job even though she is a smart girl. It can be seen from his exam results that he scored 97. She was confused because his friends in his class were beautiful, and it was easier for them to get jobs in big offices. The world of work is the final part after taking a long education. A diploma with a good grade is an asset to get a good rating because it is considered competent at work. This is refuted by the facts. The existence of beauty standards in work is prioritized over the ability of academic values to cause gender-based discrimination.

"Men choose women for jobs, on the basis of their looks. They choose the beautiful ones and give them jobs. To the others, they say: we are very sorry. There is a world recession, and in a world recession there are only enough jobs for beautiful girls. That is the effect of a world recession. It is all economics" (Smith, 2003, p.106).

The quotation shows that companies make beauty standards that females must have to get a job. No value element in learning is more important than appearance. A beautiful woman will be more appreciated and easily accepted anywhere. The world of work for females is only for beautiful females. Meanwhile, people who do not have a pretty face will be given various reasons not to accept it. This will close a female's ability to work. When physical beauty is an expression of birth or based on economic factors, it is unfair to impose the same standard on every working woman. In the end, beauty becomes a privilege that only a few people have. It also causes a woman to feel excluded, shunned, and even feel ashamed of her own physical condition or appearance, even with the rules of beauty standards. Females tend to believe and believe that beauty is the main point that a woman must have.

" . . . she could not disguise the fact that she was a dark girl in a world where light-coloured girls with heavily applied red lipstick had everything at their disposal. That was the ultimate, inescapable truth that no amount of wishful thinking, no amount of expensive creams and lotions, could change. The fun in this life, the good



job, the rich husbands, were not a matter of merit and hard work, but were a matter of brute, unshifting biology” (Smith, 2003, p.107).

The quotation above shows that being beautiful means getting whatever you want, such as The fun in this life, the good job, and the rich husbands. These things will be very easy to get. A beautiful woman is depicted with fair skin due to biological factors, plus the use of expensive lipsticks, creams, and lotions that make everything blend together into an undeniable beauty. Meanwhile, ugly females are depicted with dark skin, where expensive lipsticks, creams, and lotions are not helpful. The comparison of beauty is produced by the expectations of males for females. Males want a female with fair skin and red lips to symbolize beauty. Meanwhile, females with dark skin who do not have red lips are considered ugliness. Comparison between light and dark skin is not a problem if directed at males. However, if the comparison is directed toward females, it becomes problematic. It makes females with dark skin and who are not beautiful feel ostracized. Ugly females will find it difficult to find pleasant things. Ugly females also do not get equal rights at work. In the end, life will be difficult if you become an ugly female. The point is that women will get anything including jobs easily by changing their appearance to be beautiful.

"She had applied hair-straightener and had pulled and tugged at it, but it had remained completely uncooperative. And her skin, too, had resisted the creams that she had applied to it, . . ." (Smith, 2003, p.107).

The quotation above shows that females do many things to be beautiful, like doing hair straighteners and wearing creams. They repaired her entire body from skin, face, and hair. Females compete to change themselves to be beautiful to meet the standards desired by male. When she does not succeed in beautifying herself, she will blame herself. They feel like a failure and feel left out at work when they become ugly females. That means showing the existence of gender-based discrimination that corners females in beauty in workplace.

The female sex occupies the second or lower position compared to the male sex. Because of this, females are considered second-class humans and become sexual objects. The male also shows their position to be higher than females, such as making themselves family leaders and job leaders. According to Butler (1998), if gender attributes, however, are not expressive but performative, then these attributes effectively constitute the identity they are said to express or reveal. These attributes reveal the position held by males. Males make choices for their families and abuse women as if to show their power. Females who only keep silent when they are belittled for their abilities and don't dare to voice the harassment they experience show closure because they are powerless to fight back. This incident highlighted females as victims of discrimination.

### **1.3 Unfavorable Role of Female in the Social Life**

Unfavorable role in the social life is a problem for females. Females should not be too fat or too thin. It looked when Mma Ramotswe was looked down upon for being fat. The maid of Mr. Matekoni said:

"You're finished too if you marry this fat woman. She will break your bed. You will surely die very quickly. This is the end for you" (Smith, 2003, p.13)

The quotation above describe the maid feeling did not like the presence of Mma Ramotswe because she didn't want Mr. Matekoni to marry her. She uttered words that physically isolated Mma Ramotswe so that her mistress would not marry her. She thinks a man should not marry a fat woman so that his bed is not damaged. If a woman can't maintain her weight, then she will destroy things around her. Fat females will narrow the space they occupy, making it difficult for others. Fat females will also be considered lazy because of their weight which makes them unable to move freely. This will be problematic because of the stigma of females associated with domestic affairs. Females will find it difficult to serve and interfere with household chores. In other words, unlike males, fat females are considered to make it difficult for males to marry. Fat males are considered a sign of prosperity and success in life. Fat males are considered to have a lot of money, so they can buy healthy food that makes them fat. This shows the difference in stigma resulting from fat males and fat females. This stigma only corners females, making it difficult for females to get a partner.

Another quotation that explains gender-based discrimination can be seen when Mma Ramotswe was buying a ring. Ring sellers say:

"A fat woman cannot wear a tiny ring" (Smith, 2003, p.53).

The quotation above shows the displeasure of ring sellers serving fat women. He felt it was a mistake to cater to fat women who only bought too small rings. He thinks fat females don't deserve to wear rings with tiny diamonds because they don't match their large body size. In society that lives in that environment only respect females with big diamonds. society judges the value of a females by how big the diamond she wears. In this case, it can be seen that a woman's physical appearance influences the way people treat her. These quotes show the existence of female body standards in society. Fat women will get ridiculed as fat people are usually lazy, greedy, and destroy things around them.

In social life, females are required to be a mom. It can be seen when Mma Makutsi gives information about the incident she saw at the church.

"On Sunday they had gone to church and a woman had fainted during one of the hymns. Her sister had helped to revive her and they had made her some tea in the hall at the side of the church. The woman was too fat, she said, and the heat had been too much for her, but she had recovered quickly and had drunk four cups of tea. She was a female from the north, she said, and she had twelve children up in Francistown " (Smith, 2003, p.20).

The quotation describes a time and situation where two sisters found a woman passed out in church while singing hymns on a Sunday. The woman's condition was too fat and felt hot, so when she realized she drank a lot of water. She is also a woman from the north who has twelve children. She chose to have many children because the views of the people there required females to have many offspring. Society does not care about the impact on a woman if she gives birth to many children. They do not care about the economic condition of the family. They also do not care about the development of children. They only care about the stigma when having many children means being successful as a wife because it gives birth to many generations. However, in this case, the woman from Francisco received a bad impact because she followed the stigma in society. Her condition weakened because he was too tired to care for many children alone.

Females have always been the object of attention to applying ideal standards in society. When Mr. Matekoni heard the boys talk while laughing, they said, "You're too thin! You're not eating enough meat! A girl like you needs more meat so she can have lots of children!" (Smith, 2003, p.36).

The quotation above contains ridicule of thin female. Thin females are considered undernourished. The emaciation is also considered to interfere with the biological system as someone who gives birth to thin female offspring is considered to need help from eating meat which is considered to help the fertility of the reproductive system. It means that there is a stigma that females who are too thin will find it difficult to have children. Thin females are considered to cause problems in their biological function, where the female gender is created to give birth to children. It also has an impact on the loss of social function as a females who gives birth to her husband's offspring. These quotes show that the stereotypes that have developed in society about women who have to have children continue to occur. If pregnancy never occurs, married life is called into question. females who did not have children were considered infertile and not good females.

## **2. The Protagonist Struggle in Dealing with Gender-Based Discrimination in Tears of the Giraffe**

Mma Ramotswe is the protagonist in the novel *Tears of the Giraffe*. She observes views that are detrimental to females around her, so she wants to change that perception. The protagonist struggle to gender-based discrimination can be seen in two incidents there breaking stereotype females as body owners and breaking stereotype females as the second gender.

### **2.1 Breaking Stereotype Females as Body Owners**

Mma Ramotswe confirm to other people that there was no need to follow the tradition of having many children as a female. She believed that educating herself and others on having the freedom to choose what to do with their bodies was the correct decision. Rejecting the culture of having many children happens when Mma Ramotswe talked to Mma Makutsi.

"That it too much, said Mma Ramotswe. In these modern days, it is not a good thing to have twelve children. The government should tell people to stop after six. Six is enough, or maybe seven or eight if you can afford to feed that many" (Smith, 2003, p.20).

The quotation above shows the resistance of Mma Ramotswe as someone who lives a modern life. She does not agree that females are required to have many children. If the ratio of having children was more than ten, then Mma Ramotswe stopped at six or seven. The stigma about having many children of fortune should not make females have to have many children. Having many children is a big responsibility for both parents. But often, it is only imposed on females. Taking care of children is fully borne by females. If a child grows up to be someone with a problem, then the one to blame is the mother. The mother of the child is said to be incompetent in caring for the child. That means females have an important role in caring for children. Thus, females should not be forced to have many children so they can focus on caring for one another. Females have full rights over their bodies. Because having many children changes the shape of the body, this will be a problem for females too. Females will be blamed for being unable to take care of their bodies, so it triggers males not to feel at home. This shows that there are other problems that females will face if they have many children. Therefore, Mma Ramotswe voiced that females had the right to decide to have a few children.

Mma Ramotswe rejected the Tradition of using large diamonds to suit societal views. It happens when the environment values females with large diamond rings, but Mma Ramotswe prefers small ones. "Mma Ramotswe decided to intervene. I do not a big ring, she said firmly. I am not a lady to wear a big ring. I was hoping for a small ring" (Smith, 2003, p.54)

This quotation showed a refusal of Mma Ramotswe to follow the views of society around her. In their environment, females will be more respected and honored if they wear rings with large diamonds, so females will compete to wear large diamonds and then show them off. But Mma Ramotswe was not like that. She prefers a smaller diamond ring. She showed the conviction that she could do as she pleased. She also does not let social views limit her from doing something. Mma Ramotswe continued, "I do not care. This diamond is going to be for me" (Smith, 2003, p.54). It was another assertion by Mma Ramotswe to tell people that she didn't care about people's perspectives. If she is going to wear it, then it is his right to choose what she wants.

## **2.2 Breaking Stereotype Females as the Second Gender**

Mma Ramotswe showed a power female by refusing to negotiate with discriminators. When Mma Ramotswe was taunted with the word fat woman by his fiancé's maid, she immediately said firmly, "The maid would have to go" (Smith, 2003, p.13)

The quotation above is said to stop the maid from Mr. Matekoni. The maid refused Mma Ramotswe's presence. The maid physically isolated Mma Ramotswe. She feels innocent because she only respects Mr. Matekoni. She feels fellow female can bring each other down because they have the same position. Mma Ramotswe showed her power as a female. She fires the servant. She proves her position as a woman is equal to the men in the house. She proves that she has the right to take decisions in the house. Mma Ramotswe showed that she was not a weak female to be underestimated. She also wants to teach a lesson that words that can harm others also harm her.

"I shall come at eight. Not every woman will in what you tell her to do, you know" (Smith, 2003, p.185)

The quotation above is an expression of Mma Ramotswe's bravery towards a man. Previously Dr. Ranta asked to meet Mma Ramotswe at ten. However, Mma Ramotswe chose to meet him at eight o'clock. Mma Raotswe wasn't busy, but she didn't want to follow dr. Ranta. It was the first step to show that Mma Ramotswe's position as a female could not be underestimated. She points out that not all females will obey dr. Ranta. Usually, dr. Ranta felt like he had complete control over females and felt that girls wouldn't dare to go against him. but Mma Ramotswe changed his perception of females.

"His pride was hurt, he realized. He had been cornered and by a woman, too; a stinging humiliation for a womaniser" (Smith, 2003, p. 199)

The quotation above shows Mma Ramotswe's awareness when she saw Dr. Ranta turn unkind to Mma Ramotswe. Mma Ramotswe had managed to threaten him into following her. The stigma in society that the position of males is higher than that of females leads to gender inequality so that males will feel superior to females, as Dr. Ranta did. So, when Mma Ramotswe fought against her, it made her feel that her pride was being insulted. Dr. Ranta didn't accept being threatened by a woman. He did not expect females to corner him. He was used to having control over females, but Mma Ramotswe changed that view. Mma Ramotswe's courage to face Dr. Ranta taught him that girls could fight boys. In gender equality, the position of females cannot be lowered by males. When Mma Ramotswe managed to get Dr. Ranta but couldn't do anything about it, it meant that females had power in dealing with discriminatory actors.

"Well, Dr. Ranta. I think that you're a man who has lied to a lot of people, particularly, I think, to women. Now something has happened to you before. A woman has lied to you and you have fallen for it entirely. You will not like that, but maybe it will teach you what it is to be manipulated" (Smith, 2003, p.204).

The quotation shows that Mma Ramotswe illustrates how she repaid Dr. Ranta to many females. Dr. Ranta liked to trick people into getting what he wanted, especially females, who were his main target. That's because females are easy to

deceive and can't do anything to fight back. By cheating, he can make females fall into his trap. He even committed sexual harassment with his powers. With the factor of his work position and social position as a man being higher, females cannot defend themselves. Thus, Mma Ramotswe retaliated by doing the same to Dr. Ranta, as Dr. Ranta told many females, by lying to her.

"I know about Angel and the examination paper. I have a statement back in my office. I can pull the chair from under you know, right now. What would you do in Gaborone as an unemployed university lecturer, Rra?" (Smith, 2003, p.183-184).

She convinced Dr. Ranta said he had proof of what he did to Angel. She used those words as a threat to make Dr. Ranta feel scared. She lied to Dr. Ranta because he didn't really have any proof. After successfully deceiving Dr. Ranta, until Ranta finished getting the information he wanted, Mma Ramotswe said honestly that she had lied to Dr. Ranta. After knowing this, he was very angry but could not do anything about it. Mma Ramotswe thought that after some time, Dr. Ranta was about to realize his mistake. By feeling the same way as the victim felt, there would be a possibility that he would feel guilty. Thus, one can see Mma Ramotswe's courage in facing Dr. Ranta has many meanings. She teaches discriminatory perpetrators a lesson so that they regret their actions and will not repeat them. She also proved her position as a female cannot be humbled.

"when they returned, Carla and the American women were sitting side by side and there was peacefulness, even joy, in the older woman's expression which told Mma Ramotswe that what she had intended had indeed been achieved" (Smith, p.217)

The quotation shows that a female from America is happy with the result that Mma Ramotswe gave her. Previously she doubted that the female detective could solve her problem because she had sought help from the police and male detectives she trusted, but to no avail. The effort that went into giving Mma Ramotswe the success that working male could not achieve made a difference to female in America. Mma Ramotswe showed that even though she was a female, she could be relied upon at work..

#### **D. Conclusion**

This novel highlights gender-based discrimination, contrasting the roles of men and women as per Butler's theory (1999). Females face societal bias, depicted through their unfavorable roles in the home, workplace, and social settings. They're confined to domestic duties, subordinated at work, and stereotyped socially. The protagonist challenges this discrimination by empowering herself and others to decide on childbirth freely and rejecting the notion of women as the weaker sex. Thus, the story exposes gender inequality and the protagonist's efforts to defy stereotypes, ultimately portraying the prevalence of gender-based discrimination.

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