



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print);2321-3108 (online)

RACE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN TSITSIDANGAREMBGA'S *THE BOOK OF NOT*

P.LINCY

Assistant Professor

Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore



ABSTRACT

Race against Discrimination details racism and the discrimination faced by Tambudzai in Sacred Heart's College in *The Book of Not*. The novel is analysed with McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory of Motivation to bring out the motivational factors of the protagonist Tambu. It highlights on the willpower and fighting spirit of Tambu, in spite of racist discrimination that prevailed in the society.

Keywords: Racism- McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory of Motivation- motivating factors of the protagonist.

Tsitsi Dangarembga a novelist and playwright was born in 1959 in Mutoko, a town in Rhodesia now called Zimbabwe. She studied medicine at Cambridge University. But she was not able to complete her studies. She studied Psychology at the University of Harare. While studying she also worked as a copywriter for a marketing agency. She was also a member in the drama club sponsored by the University. Later she wrote many plays and was into production at the University of Harare.

The Book of Not (2006) is a sequel to *Nervous Conditions*, following the growth of Tambu in the Young Ladies College of the Sacred Heart on winning a scholarship. The novel is set in the pre-Independence of Rhodesia, the whole nation picturizes the image of war and bloodshed. Tambu faces lots of racial discrimination in the college and she callously recollects the horrific incident that happened in her village, with the loss of her sister's leg and also the experience near death of her uncle Babamukuru. In the college, even though, she excels in her studies she did not get the O level as it was backed by a white girl, Tracey. And in the latter part of the novel when Tambu goes on to work in the advertising agency, another British colleague gets

the award for the work done by her, and the company earned several contracts because of that. And the readers can also see Tambu's contribution to the war by knitting for British soldiers during her college days.

Racism can be defined as the process of subordinating a group of people and having control over that group, where one group is considered to be superior and the other inferior to them. The superior sector dominates the inferior on the basis of class, caste, colour differences. It can also be defined as the system of oppression or discrimination on the basis of the race's superiority over the other. Racism stems from discrimination against the people based on their characteristics. Racism rose and became a part of the dominant ideology of society in the context of the African slave trade at the dawn of capitalism in 1500 and 1600.

In the novel, Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Hearts was run by the Christian missionary where they wanted their students to follow certain norms, the principal of the college Sister Emmanuel wanted everyone to assemble in church every morning wearing black scarf. When the day was over the students were to follow certain rules,

Finally, the day was over. We had supper, followed by prep and recreation, then we went back to the dormitories to change. We said prayers out on Saint Ignatius' corridor. We lined up and knelt in our nightclothes in the long grey tiled hall, where the night lights shone with a soft orange glow, having been turned down to low. (*The Book of Not* 47)

During the assembly it was a rule that the Africans should not stand along with British as it was said, "your skin and theirs should not come in contact" (50). The person standing behind the African should be blacks if they step on the British people unknowingly they will be sent to principal. Even the shadows of them should not intermingle between each other. It was because of this reason Tambu always stands in front of Ntombi. In certain cases if British students do not create a problem then the Africans can stand. Once Tambu stamped Tracey during the assembly, Tambu got scared but to her surprise Tracey smiled at her without considering it.

I was praying Ntombi would come quickly from the dormitories and stand behind me. That way the agony of fear of bumping into a white girl who stood behind you if anyone moved suddenly would be her's not mine. We spent a lot of time consumed by this kind of terror. We didn't speak of it amongst ourselves. It was all too humiliating, but the horror of it gnawed within us. (59)

Studying in scholarship for those six students were provided with low facilities, there was no proper toilets however the students managed to use it. In spite of that, Sister Emmanuel called them and warned them for having spoilt their sewage system and bringing them more expenditure.

In one incident Tambu wanted to use the toilet urgently but their dormitory was far away that she had to use the British students' toilet where everything seemed to be neat and comfortable. There was the smell of jasmine spread throughout the toilets, She did not know how to flush the water. Later she was knocked by matron asking her to open the door and she threatened her that she would be complaining to principal for going against the rules. Because of this reason she feared that she would get

black mark that would affect getting the O level trophy.

The author brings out same race discrimination or internalized racism in the novel. In the African dormitory there was no unity among them. When Tambu was disturbed by war incidents when the sister asked questions in class she could not answer but tears rolled down her eyes. Instead of Tambu, Ntombi answered voluntarily, this incident arose anger in Tambu's mind later she knew that it was a wrong decision. Mostly there was fight between Tambu and Ntombi, it was because Ntombi feared that Tambu would give up supporting Rhodesia because of her fascination towards British. During evening refreshments every student should line up in each floor they would give biscuits depending upon the form. Patience was not given in the lower class form, Tracey gave her one but Patience refused it instead Tambu in order to make her happy got the biscuit. This became a big issue in the dormitory and all the girls were against Tambu and fight arose between Ntombi and Tambu, they started to hit each other as a result Tambu was bleeding in nose and Ntombi's eyes swelled. Fight among the same dormitory brought a wrong notion in front of British students because they thought Africans were not united. Tambu felt more alienated because even her own dormitory girls did not like her nor helped her in difficult situations.

In spite of Racism, Tambu was motivated by certain factors to achieve her goal, this can be analysed through McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory of Motivation. David McClelland is an eminent American psychological theorist, well known for his needs theory that brought him fame with many prestigious awards. He proclaims that an individual's needs are obtained through their life's experience. This theory has three categories they are, need for achievement, need for affiliation and need for power. He says that, "regardless of our gender, culture or age, we all have three motivating drivers, and one of these will be our dominant motivating driver. This dominant motivator is largely dependent on our culture and life experience". (*Arab British Academy*)

Need for Achievement, people who have high need for achievement would always surpass in

their goals in a realistic way. They try to avoid both low and high risks because they consider low risks as easily attainable goal through shortcuts is not valuable. Higher risks comes through chances than one's own effort, they try to achieve through moderate pace. They also wanted feedback to improve their work and mostly try to be alone or with other achievers. In Need for Affiliation, person who has high need for affiliation should have a good relationship with each other and the other people should also accept them. The person is motivated by their friendly circle. Generally the person obeys and agrees with other people. In Need for Power, there are two types of power, personal and institutional. Personal power makes the person gains more power over others in every situation. Institutional power is to consolidate others efforts to earn more profit for the institution.

In Need for Achievement, Tambu's main desire in her life is to become a refined person through education and to create an identity on her own. Tambu's life was not a bed of roses she passed through lots of problems inspite all one thing that made her happy was her education where she wanted to prove herself. After joining Sacred Hearts College, Tambu knew her responsibility of getting outstanding results in her academics to reach her goal. Tambu was very attentive and did not get distracted by other entertainments. The motivating factor was the remembrance of her uncle's efforts by whom she reached this level. The trophy's beauty and the fame that Tambu would get if she excels in her exams flashed in her dreams, those dreams became the driving factor of motivation. Further sister Emma's generosity of giving extra quotas was another factor that made her to work hard for the seat, if she loses in her academics then the opportunity will be given to someone else. As she was aiming for the Best O Level Trophy she turned into a disciplined, punctual student who started knitting scarfs and contributed to the European fighters. Moreover she was very affectionate to her family. The attachment towards them also made her to trace her goals in order to make her family proud. Even when she was working for an article in her office, she worked with the aim of bringing laurels to her family. Mostly she tried to avoid risks (i.e.) she

could have achieved her goal by studying in Mission school, but she wanted to study and get identified in a high grade institute. The monthly exams gave her feedback of her position in her academics. Most of the times she tried to be alone.

Need for Affiliation, Tambu tried to be friends with all students both British and natives but she had to face lots of problem because of that. First she was scared of British people later became friends with Tracey this was not liked by her dormitory and everybody was opposing her for her attitude.

In Need for Power, Tambu did not gain any power personally but it can be explained that Tambu worked hard to gain the power so that she would bring glories to her country. Thus the theory explains that with the need for achievement Tambu was motivated to her goal inspite of glitches.

The author has brought out the aspects of racism through the character Tambu. The discrimination prevails not only between native Africans and British but also within their community and in their family. If a person in life faces failure all the side then they would lose hope to lead their life. But Tambu, eventhough facing lots of obstacles in life, had developed the attitude of learning through the failure. She never gave up easily, even at the end of the novel, when she was left desperate at home, hostel and work place she was bold to face the challenging world.

Despite being discriminated in both the places, home and outside. Tambu was able to prove herself. Her chance to go to school happened to her only after brother's demises. The discrimination did not stop there but continued in school when she was deceived the trophy in studies. In the work place too her hard work was not recognized but she did not stop excelling in her job. Though dumb found in the end of the novel, Tambu's race against discrimination never ends in the sequels.

In *The Book of Not*, the author has used memories and dreams in order to recapture the fearful incident or the happiest incident in Tambu's life. Dreams of Tambu was based on her attainment of goal, she dreams of getting the trophy with her name imprinted on it that brings smiles on her parents and uncle who were seated down the stage.

Memories were very haunting to Tambu, when she was in class the memories of her sisters torn leg that was hanging on the tree top often reminded her. That was the major disturbance for Tambu in her life.

The Rhodesian people are undergoing discrimination either because of their gender or through racism. Both the factors stand as a hindrance for their growth in life and in one way or the other it coincides with each other. In both the cases people suffer mental and physical torture. Discrimination in gender occurs because of man's superiority over woman whereas in racism it is minority superiority over the majority. When traced back to the ancient times Racism was a predominant issue where many people lost life. Frequency of war was always present but at present the percentage has reduced but not stopped. Same way there was not so many people who concentrated on gender issues but in modern time's gender studies has become a vast area of study as it brings into consideration both the genders.

Experience makes a person to learn from his mistakes and make them more courageous than they was before. The person through his fights and experiences overcomes his difficulties and achieves his goal. They should not be a coward getting suppressed rather face it to lead a happy life in the fourth coming days. Life is just like sailing in a boat where it faces many ice-burgs in between its journey. The captain struggles to reach its destination, same way Tambu's life was not a bed of roses but she took it as a challenge and crossed the path.

Works Cited

Dangarembga, Tsitsi. *The Book of Not: A Novel*. Banbury: Ayebia Clarke Pub, 2006. Print.

"David McClelland - Biography, Books and Theories." *Famous Psychologists - List, Biographies and Theories*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 July. 2016.

Fredrickson, George M. "RACE - The Power of an Illusion .Background Readings PBS." *PBS: Public Broadcasting Service*. N.p., 2003. Web. 5 June. 2016.

"McClelland's Theory of Needs." *Arab British Academy for Higher Education*. N.p., n.d. PDF file.