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Patriarchal Conditioning as Cultural Pedagogy: Learning Subordination in Easterine Kire's "A Terrible Matriarchy and A Respectable Woman"

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ABSTRACT

Patriarchal conditioning of women in Naga society operates as a permeating cultural pedagogy that shapes gendered identities from childhood. Drawing on the feminist ideas of Gerda Lerner, Carole Pateman, and Sylvia Walby, this research aims to comprehend how patriarchy in Naga society is historically produced, politically institutionalised, and structurally embedded across household, economy, sexuality, and culture. A close reading of A Terrible Matriarchy (2007) and A Respectable Woman (2019) by Easterine Kire uncovers how these structures of patriarchy operate through repetitive everyday practices rather than overt coercion. By underscoring the micro-processes of patriarchal conditioning, the study argues that patriarchy functions as a comprehensive social process.

Keywords: *Patriarchy, Patriarchal Conditioning, Naga Society, Gender, Subordination, Culture, Pedagogy.*

I. Introduction

Patriarchy, as a social system of gender dominance and subordination, does not perpetuate itself through coercion and legalism; rather, it does so most effectively through cultural conditioning in every sphere of social life from a very young age. Patriarchal societies in which tradition and cultural practices have inculcated the value of gender dominance view it as natural, necessary, and even moral. This study examines the concept of patriarchy in Naga society as a complex social phenomenon, rather than a simplistic expression of male dominance.

Feminist theory is well aware that patriarchy is neither global in scope nor biologically predetermined. Theories of patriarchy, developed by feminist scholars such as Gerda Lerner, Carole Pateman, and Sylvia Walby, have demonstrated that patriarchy is a socially constructed structure that manifests itself institutionally, for example, in the family, the legal system, the economy, culture, and the state. However, even though these approaches to understanding patriarchy are enormously significant for a critical analysis of the macro-level of patriarchal structures, in the micro-spaces of daily life, the manifestations of patriarchy seem to emerge primarily at the level of the family, food, education, the body, and the marital relationship.

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Patriarchy takes an idiosyncratic form in the context of the Naga social formation; it has been influenced by rules and regulations that govern the community and cultural practices that date back to earlier times and condition people of both sexes from a young age to behave in a certain way. Girls are brought up to behave in a certain male-dominated way, while boys are given special treatment, autonomy, and privileges. Patriarchy has never been presented in the context of male authority alone; rather, matriarchs of the household often assume responsibility for propounding patriarchy itself. Therefore, the patriarchal role itself has been dispersed, naturalised, and legitimised in the context of the Naga society.

The literary works of Easterine Kire offer a window through which we can understand the workings of these patriarchal conditioning mechanisms. Focusing on oral memory, domestic realism, the texts of Kire demonstrate how patriarchal domination manifests via the sharing of food, the lack of education opportunities, economic marginalisation, the lack of knowledge of the biology of women, the lack of participation in decision-making roles, and a focus on marriage and reproduction as a source of patriarchal power and authority over women.

II. Etymology and Historical Development of The Concept of Patriarchy

The word patriarchy is etymologically derived from the Greek word ‘patriarkhes’ that literally translates into ‘rule of the father,’ (Saini) as it is comprised of ‘patria,’ meaning ‘family’ or ‘lineage,’ and ‘archy,’ meaning ‘rule’ or ‘authority.’ Patriarchy, in its early sense, was essentially confined to family life or lineage. This concept rested on the idea that men dominated women, children, and property in family life. This idea was also highly linked to family relationships in which the line of descent, inheritance, or family lineage was traced through the ‘male line’ so that patriarchal authority was embedded at the very basis of family life.

However, historically speaking, patriarchy was not initially used as a concept of secular and social science thought. Its original recorded application, from as early as the seventeenth century, was mainly associated with religious and ecclesiastical power. It was mainly terminology that referred to religious or Christian leadership positions such as bishops, patriarchs, and church officials generally, who were considered “fathers” of the church from a religious viewpoint. Here, patriarchy refers to moral stature, care, and divine mandate but not specifically gender domination.

With the course of time, the term patriarchy came to evolve to an extent that it not only encompassed the religious or familial context in which the term was used initially but also came to represent other social or political dynamics. Furthermore, as the pattern or dynamics of society came to gain shape with political authority becoming more institutionalised, the patriarchal concept also came to transcend the familial or family sphere and came to encapsulate the realms or dimensions of law, governing, or property.

The term’s first use dates back to 1632. Over time, the meaning and application of the term evolved; it started to be used to describe social structures in which male authority stretched from family into the domains of politics. Merriam Webster notes this shift and mentions that patriarchy denotes:

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"…a social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or the family the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line; but broadly: control by men of a disproportionately large scale of power" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Modern feminist studies have further challenged simplistic appraisals of patriarchy as the "rule of the father." This undercuts the dynamic and intricate character of patriarchal societies that embrace cultural, legislative, and economic actions as well as symbolic practice. Patriarchy, as such, is not actually an authority or single entity, but rather an ensemble of social relationships that foreground masculinity and undermine femininity.

A major change of point of view concerning the nature of patriarchy is marked by the work of Gerda Lerner, who questions the notion that the subordination of women is a 'natural' or 'universal' phenomenon. Therefore, in her seminal work, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, Lerner rethinks the nature of patriarchy as a historical phenomenon that was created through particular historical processes of social, economic, and political development, rather than due to biological differences or innate abilities of men.

Lerner describes patriarchy as "the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general" (Lerner 239). However, a crucial part of her theory exercises what she calls a punctuated evolutionary development, arguing that patriarchy did not come about instantaneously but developed over a period of time. In her book, she suggests patriarchy resulted from the early Mesopotamian societies, where women's sexuality, fertility, and labour power were all usurped by men. This process, she states, took approximately two and a half centuries or so, with historical dates running from approximately 3100 to 600 BCE (Lerner 8).

Lerner stresses on two key fundamental processes at the root of the formation of patriarchy. First, women were reduced to property through the expropriation of their sexuality and reproductive capability. Marriage, concubinage, and sexual control were means by which women's bodies were controlled to ensure proper male heirs and transmit property through male lines. Second, such control was legitimised and reproduced through the creation of judicial and religious ideology that naturalised male superiority and rendered the subordination of women morally right and socially imperative. In that way, patriarchy became institutionalised not only in material relations but also in ideological frameworks that came to structure shared belief systems.

Another crucial aspect involved here is Lerner's discussion of the naturalisation of women's subordination, wherein she criticises the biological determinism, which assumes gender inequality to be both inevitable and connected with women's reproduction roles; instead, she attempts to prove the reality of women's subordination as having been created through historical processes, wherein the autonomy of women gradually came to be restricted, and simultaneously, the control and power of men over society grew.

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Lerner's theorisation is most apt in the study of patriarchal conditioning in Naga society, where the subordination of women is continually validated by appeals to tradition, culture, and custom. Under her framework, patriarchy can be analysed, not as a timeless cultural essence, but as a system that has been institutionalised and naturalised through generations. By bringing history to the forefront, Lerner offers a critical lens through which the daily practices reproduced in Easterine Kire's stories-food control, education, sexuality, and marriage can be evaluated as part of a larger historical process rather than as isolated cultural practices.

III. Political and Economic Reconfigurations of Patriarchy

Gerda Lerner grounds patriarchy in the historical process of the ancient world, but feminist political thought in the modern world has reassessed the way patriarchal power maintains itself in democratic societies. A notable contribution in this context is the one by Carole Pateman, who undertook a substantial critique of liberal democratic theory. She contends that the often-cited tradition of the "social contract" theorists, such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, cannot be said to have been arrived at in a vacuum, away from the underlying principles of a "sexual contract" in which men dominated women politically as well as sexually.

Carol Pateman reframes patriarchy in the context of social network: Patriarchy is succeeded by "Fraternal patriarchy, whereby the brotherhood of men … entered the notorious social contract in which they gained rights as citizens which women and others were denied" (Pateman qtd. in Boloji). Her reworking of patriarchy is particularly important because she shifts the discussion from private/domestic authority to political authority and citizenship. In *The Sexual Contract* she argues that traditional political theory—especially the notion of social contract developed by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau—was never a neutral argument among equals. Instead, it was a gendered contract. The so-called transition from patriarchal rules of father to modern liberal democracy did not abolish male dominance; it merely recognised it into a "fraternal patriarchy" (Pateman 94).

In this form, men ceased to be subordinated to the singular authority of the father, but they collectively consolidated power in the brotherhood of men. Thus, the social contract that supposedly marked the dawn of freedom was, in Pateman's view, simultaneously a sexual contract, guaranteeing men's political and sexual access to women while denying women equal personhood (Pateman 6–7). Scholars such as Sylvia Federici and Nancy Fraser have built on this insight, demonstrating how capitalist and neoliberal systems continue to rely on the gendered division of labour and the unpaid reproductive work of women, thereby reinforcing new forms of "fraternal domination" (Federici 27–29; Fraser 225).

The concept of marriage is very significant in the analysis of Pateman. She refers to the oppressive nature of marriage as a contract wherein the rights of women over their sexuality have been ceded to their male counterparts. As a result, marriages enforce a condition of dependence on men on the part of women. Potentially, even if the contract of marriage is a voluntary one, the necessarily unequal relationship is one wherein the woman is perceived only as an "object" of the contract and not the "author" of the same (Pateman 119), thereby underlining the gender basis on which contemporary civil society is built.

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IV. Patriarchy as Structural and Institutional Power

Moreover, the trajectories of the theories developed by Gerda Lerner and Carole Pateman converge in emphasising that patriarchy cannot be seen as the authority of men over women or the family over its members. It is essential to note that what has emerged from the various theories is the understanding of patriarchy as a structure in which social life is divided across several spheres simultaneously. It is not restricted to the household or the state but is seen through the interrelation of the family, the economic system, and the culture. It is essential to note that patriarchy is seen as a web of relationships in which power is exercised over the distribution of resources and authority.

In her work *Theorizing Patriarchy* (1990), Walby attempts to get away from simple definitions of patriarchies as only "the rule of the father" and, instead, attempts to think about patriarchies as a whole network through which the subordination of women is constituted and reproduced (Walby 20). Walby's work is significant as she tries to think about patriarchies not as a single institution, but as a network formed out of a series of social relations in various spheres of society. Walby defines patriarchy as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women" (20). Her framework is significant as it is able to encompass elements of stability as well as change because, according to her, patriarchy does not remain static; rather, they change from private to public while still holding on to its core logic.

Walby points out six significant structures through which patriarchal power exists. They include the patriarchal mode of household production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and cultural institutions (Walby 20-21). Each of these structures exists as a site where gender inequality becomes normalised. What is more striking about these structures is that they do not operate merely as separate entities; they reinforce one another.

The first form identified by Walby is the patriarchal mode of household production. Walby argued that this is one of the most long-lasting features of subordination for women. According to Walby, unpaid work done by women within the family is exploited within the family and provides the foundation for the wider system of male dominance (Walby 25). Domestic work, including cooking, cleaning, caring for children, and emotional work, is made invisible and naturalised as 'femininity' itself, as opposed to wage work. According to Walby, at the household level, patriarchy benefits men in that the unpaid work of the woman supplies the economic base for the household and the wider economy by maintaining the workforce at no cost to the employer (Walby 25-26). This essentially positions the woman as dependent, as her work is valued only insofar as it is entirely without reward.

Such a view finds strong resonance with socialist feminism, especially with Heidi Hartmann's argument that patriarchy and capitalism function as a "dual system", with the unpaid household labour of women providing a subsidy to capital and a male-dominance to the family (Hartmann 14). It is important to note that the home is not simply a neutral space but has strong dimensions of economic power relations.

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According to Walby, patriarchy in employment takes the forms of occupational segregation, different levels of pay, and limitations to promotion, which disadvantage women (Walby 31). While women are found in low-paid, insecure, or part-time jobs, men hold the positions of power and control of the economy. However, this division of labour is neither arbitrary nor random but has a structural purpose, namely to limit women's access to power and economic independence.

Walby argues that patriarchy differs from capitalism and yet interacts to an extent with it. The implication here is that while capitalism can thrive on cheap women's labour, women's movement and power in the workplace remain hindered by patriarchy. The result is a dual mechanism of exploitation: women's labour is economically utilised yet politically marginalised. Paid work, therefore, does not automatically guarantee liberation; it often reproduces gender hierarchy in new forms. The result is a dual mechanism of exploitation: women's labour is economically utilised yet politically marginalised. Paid work, therefore, does not automatically guarantee liberation; it often reproduces gender hierarchy in new forms.

The state is not an impartial entity, as it has been constructed as patriarchal in nature (Walby 43). The history of law has been one that has denied women any form of property, political, or civil rights. The law may attempt to grant women formal equality, yet it has often failed to protect them from violence and discrimination. The state enforces patriarchy via frameworks of policies that address women as dependents, caregivers, or moral beings, as delineated from women as autonomous citizens. Thus, the extension of patriarchal power and influence in the government, law, and welfare sectors, as opposed to domestic spheres defined by inequality.

From the perspective of Walby, male violence is one form of patriarchy's structural organisation, which has shaped itself into an efficient technique of control, and not just criminal acts (Walby, 49). Domestic violence, sexual harassment, and assault control and shape the movement, conduct, and presence of women in public places. The hostility of violence is continuously felt, and women tend to be controlled, though violence is not exercised. Violence operates not merely as physical harm but as a pervasive threat that sustains male dominance.

Walby suggests that sexuality is socially placed as being favourable to male sexuality while controlling female behaviour (Walby 36). Heterosexuality is idealised as the norm, while female sexuality is closely monitored in terms of moral imposition. Female sexuality is placed as an object of control, surveillance, and honour. Thus, sexuality is created as a form of politics instead of being understood as private if one looks at the imposition of chastity on female sexuality while closely controlling female reproduction for family honour and lineage.

Walby notes that cultural institutions are one of six interlocking structures that reproduce and sustain patriarchy. Cultural institutions, including religion, education, media, and literature, are the institutions that establish the prevailing symbolic order in society and delimit appropriate gender roles. They are not simply reflections of social norms; they act as sites of meaning production and reinforcement. Communications, rituals, moral codes, narratives, and representation in cultural institutions dictate how people should behave and give the impression that behaviour is natural. As Walby notes, cultural institutions "naturalise women's subordination as a legitimate or a moral or

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even a divine act" (Walby 25-26). For example, religious doctrine outlines women's duties of obedience and sacrifice; education seeks to redirect girls to less prestigious subjects; and popular media depicts women's behaviour as being passive or nurturing and that men must drive the action, and they come second. Cultural institutions offer ideological justification for women's status by making patriarchy seem like an unquestionable natural state.

V. From Structure to Lived Reality: Reading Patriarchal Conditioning Through Easterine Kire

Had patriarchy in Naga culture been perfunctorily embedded solely within the framework of dominant males, the longer survival rate of this practice would be more intelligible. Yet, in the fiction of Easterine Kire, patriarchy succeeds not through spectacular performances of conditioning, but through substantive and repetitive conditioning. These acts discipline the body, regulate desire, shape temporality, and fragment solidarity. Patriarchy appears not as an occasional force but as a pedagogy—a system that trains girls into becoming compliant women.

In the Naga communities, the distribution of food among the little boys and girls of the family becomes a medium through which patriarchal values are internalised and reinforced from early childhood. A greater amount of food and the best portions of the meat, like the leg pieces, are always reserved for the boys. When little Lieno wanted to consume the leg piece, she was immediately warned by Grandmother: "...that portion is always for boys. Girls must eat other portions" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy* 1).

The connection between preference, affection and food is clearly evident in the young female narrator's longing:

"I sat close to him (Pete) when he got more meat so that he could slip me the pieces he didn't want to eat anymore. Oh, at those times, how I so wished I were a boy then, Grandmother would love me and take me on her lap and give me all the meat I wanted to eat" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy* 15).

The fact that the sister had to wait for her brother's leftovers signifies the subordinated position of women in the household. The association between masculinity and abundance becomes internalised, leading little Lieno to equate masculinity with both material privileges and affection from family. Grandmother's command to "Eat slowly, girl; otherwise, one would think we never fed you good food" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy* 26) holds an educational effect on appetite itself. Desire for food becomes a sin. Femininity equates with self-denial. The body learns before the mind. This may be patriarchal conditioning in its most personal sense: hunger is politicised.

Resistance to the education of women in the stories by Kire is not grounded in ignorance, but rather follows from anxiety within the structure. Grandmother Vibano's remark, "I really do not approve of girls getting educated. It only makes them get fancy notions about themselves" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy* 22), indicates the anxiety deriving from the fear of interiority itself as reflexivity opposes the patriarchal hierarchy. What emerges here is a politics of temporality. Boys inhabit the present; girls are prepared for a predetermined future—marriage, service, obedience. Lieno's mother pleads for her daughter's stability, yet her voice is dismissed: "She's too young to be of much help yet" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy* 9). The girl's immediate well-being is secondary to her long-term utility.

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"School was the best thing that could have ever happened to me… I did not complain because I liked school much" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy* 30). In contrast with the home environment, where Lieno becomes exposed to oppression and discipline, the school offers a creative space and acknowledges hard work: In school, however, good behaviour and effort were always praised and rewarded, unlike grandmother's treatment of the girls at home. Creativity was also encouraged. In this context, the school is an alternative space to patriarchal power, where individual expression is encouraged, and equality is accessible. Denying education is thus a patriarchal strategy of limiting possible futures. Patriarchy does not merely control women's present; it colonises their time.

Financial deprivation serves as an essential instrument of patriarchal dominance, consistently perpetuating the subjugation of women throughout the world, and Nagaland is no exception. The denial of even minimal financial resources to girls ensures that patriarchal systems maintain their ongoing reliance on the domestic economy, thereby constraining their independence. This intentional restriction of financial assets not only hinders immediate decision-making but also limits the potential to envision alternative futures that lie beyond the confines of patriarchal power. Grandmother's refusal to grant even small allowances exemplifies this:

"Grandmother did not believe that I should be given a little pocket money like the other children" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy* 39).

Grandmother's resentment towards allowing pocket money is a mere reflection of her personal stinginess, but also of her ideological disapproval. Money in this context is a symbol of rebellion; to provide girls with financial freedom is considered to be spoiling the women because it threatens their subjugation to patriarchal authority.

Perhaps the most insidious conditioning occurs through the regulation of knowledge about female biology. Menstruation is shrouded in euphemism: "the curse" and "monthly guests" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy* 123). Bano cautions Lieno that once a girl "has started to bleed, then she should be very careful" (125). Biological transition is framed as risk, not knowledge. While Lieno's nightmare of "the classroom was filling up with blood" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy* 126) evokes the mental impact of epistemic deprivation, ignorance breeds fear. Fear begets compliance. The female body becomes a site of suspicion. Rather than empowering girls with knowledge, patriarchy constructs biology as shame. Silence is not the absence; silence is control. The unspeakability of menstruation actually alienates females from their bodies.

The patriarchal foundations of marriage are laid bare in *A Respectable Woman.* Kevi's mother bluntly states about married women:

"Once she is married, we regard her as the property of her husband" (Kire, *A Respectable Woman* 103).

The quote illustrates how marriage places women in the position of property rather than as self-contained individuals. Their movement away from the natal family is represented as a cultural expectation that has been naturalised: women must leave their parents, siblings and childhood house to enter their husband's household and subsequently experience what is almost referred to as

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domestic slavery. As the narrator explains, this change in life was more of a coffin of sorts and an entrance into "a life of slavery" for the honour of being someone's wife (Kire, *A Respectable Woman* 105)

This patriarchal structure of marriage requires a complete restructuring of the Naga women, for which apparently, they were conditioned from childhood. Menon calls it a "violent reshaping" of a woman's identity:

"Women have to learn to remake themselves completely, but even more significant is that the entire period of their lives before this singular event of marriage is spent in anticipating and preparing for this specific future, from choice of career and job options to learning to be adaptable from early girlhood" (Menon 43).

This change is best illustrated in Beinuo's experience. She was previously a working woman with ambitions to save money and construct her own house:

"She used to work as a Lower Division Clerk at the Deputy Commissioner's office. She had a plan to save money and build her own house, but she couldn't because of her marriage" (Kire, *A Respectable Woman* 120).

Marriage channelled Beinuo's ambition into domestic work and patriarchal obligation, erasing her individuality. She was desperate yet futile attempts to become the perfect wife that her in-laws wanted. She changed her actions, way of doing things and all her preferences. Kevi observed this sudden shift in Beinuo's behaviour, who kept on saying "that's not the way my mother-in-law does it" or "Meselhou doesn't like it that way" (Kire, *A Respectable Woman* 121). Beinuo's trajectory illustrates how conditioning culminates in self-erasure. Marriage does not simply alter her residence; it restructures her interiority.

The most striking feature of Kire's representation is that patriarchal enforcement frequently occurs through women. Grandmother Vibano's authority produces constant surveillance:

"It was the way Grandmother made us all feel that we were constantly being watched" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy* 65).

Her insistence that "No man in my day has ever fetched water" (Kire, *A Terrible Matriarchy*3) reinforces gendered labour divisions not through male command but through inherited tradition. Patriarchy becomes intergenerational pedagogy. Sino and Leno's eviction of Bano further demonstrates how women, lacking independent power bases, compete horizontally rather than challenge vertically. Patriarchy fragments solidarity to ensure its survival. This is patriarchy without visible patriarchs—structural, dispersed, internalised.

VI. Conclusion

Patriarchy is neither biologically predetermined nor culturally incidental. It is historically produced, politically institutionalised, and it is mediated through intersecting social structures that penetrate all arenas of household, economy, sexuality, state, and culture. When these theoretical formulations are brought into dialogue with the fiction of Easterine Kire, patriarchy in Naga society is not conceived of as monolithic male dominance, but as a total social process reproduced through quotidian conditioning.

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Lerner's argument that patriarchy has historically been created by the expropriation of women's sexuality and labour finds narrative form in Kire's presentation of marriage and reproduction: women occupy the role of lineage and honour holders, while male sexuality is comparatively unregulated. Pateman's "sexual contract" is visible in cultural logic that, once married, women are assumed to belong to their husband's household group and their identity is subsumed by kinship relations. Sexuality is subsumed by cultural norms of shame, and cultural institutions reinforce obedience as cultural tradition.

While these theories of Pateman, Lerner and Walby enlighten us on the structural aspects of patriarchy, Kire's works let us look closely into how patriarchy is experienced, lived, and internalised. The most important finding of the research is that patriarchy is experienced in Naga society as a structural pedagogy. It is not just about instruction or obligation. Conditioning is initiated when the girls are still young, before they ever experience marriage, which enforces subordination. With the deprivation of food, girls are taught to control their consumption. With the withholding of emotions, girls are taught to link obedience with being loved. Through inadequate education and economic resources, girls are taught that their aspirations are governed. With the deliberate withholding of information about menstruation, girls are taught to mistrust their own bodies. Before marriage, girls are already taught the behaviours that will lead to subordination.

Patriarchal authority in Naga society is diffused. It does not rely solely on overt male domination. Women characters such as Grandmother Vibano demonstrate how patriarchal norms are transmitted intergenerationally through Naga women themselves. Authority within the domestic sphere becomes a conduit for reinforcing tradition rather than dismantling it. This dispersal complicates simplistic binaries of oppressor and oppressed and underscores the durability of patriarchy as a relational system sustained through habituation and internalisation.

In Naga society, patriarchy operates through conditioning. Thus, it is essentially learned. Women are not born with the nature of submission. They are forced to acquire it through repeated instructions and punishments in case of noncompliance. Subordination precedes formal institutions and prepares women to inhabit them without overt coercion. This understanding also shifts the emphasis from patriarchy as hierarchy to patriarchy as formation.

The implication of this shift is enormous. If patriarchal norms are learned, they are not ontologically fixed. They are the products of history and culture and are hence contingent. Kire's writing points towards this possibility. Lieno's and Keviuno's intellectual awakening through education, their reflective narrative consciousness, and moments of subtle discomfort signal that awareness persists within constraint. Resistance in these texts is not a dramatic rupture but a gradual recognition. It is effective, interior, and partial. Yet it is precisely within such awareness that transformation becomes conceivable.

Patriarchy, thus, is not inevitable. It is a system learned through practice, enforced through culture, and reproduced through generations, not only by men but mostly by women in Naga culture. However, it must be remembered that what is learned—even when deeply internalised— is always subject to challenge, reimagination, and unlearning.

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