

The Triumph against Prejudice with Reference to:

***A Terrible Matriarchy* by Easterine Iralu**



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**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in
Complete Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of
the degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

ENGLISH

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “*Triumph Against Prejudiced with Reference to A Terrible Matriarchy by Easterine Iralu*” is a record of first hand research work done by me during the period of my study in the year 2016- 2017 and that this dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associate ship, Fellowship, or any other similar title and that this dissertation represents my independent work.

Place: Lovely Professional University

Signature of the Candidate

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Certificate

I hereby certify that dissertation entitled “*Triumph Against Prejudiced with Reference to A Terrible Matriarchy by Easterine Iralu*” submitted by Chonglung M Phom for the award of M.A. Degree is a record of research work done by the candidate under my supervision during the period of her study between 2016-2017 and that this dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, or any other similar title and that this dissertation represents my independent work on the part of the candidate.

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Abstract

Nagaland is a male dominated society where man is the head of the family. It is the man who takes important decisions in the society. Inequalities and discrimination faced by women because of the age-old traditions that are still prevalent in the society. This dissertation has explored the restrictions imposed on women by the cultural belief and how the girl child was given less importance than male child. The protagonist, Dielieno is being treated differently than her brother by her grandmother. Only because she is a girl child, she is given less love and more restrictions by her grandmother. This novel “ *A Terrible Matriarchy*” by Easterine Iralu, talks about the Naga society and how a girl child was given less importance than the male child. One might question as to why a woman is ill behaving to the same gender? Or why grandmother is treating Dielieno differently in spite of being women herself? Also, it talks of how the protagonist, in spite of a prejudiced treatment meted by another female, her own grandmother is able to succeed in life by getting good education for herself facing all odds. So, this dissertation is not only about an unfair treatment to girl-child but also, that, women can rise above all odds. Like the protagonist. She need not consider herself as a victim rather the heroine of her own life.

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Introduction

Easterine Kire Iralu, the first English- Naga writer was born on March 1959 in Nagaland, India. She did her early schooling in Kohima, which is the capital city of Nagaland. She completed her PhD in English Literature from Savitribai Phule Pune University. She is a poet, novelist, and writer of children's book who currently lives in northern Norway. Her first job was an Editor in the State Government of Nagaland's Directorate of Information and Publicity. Later years she resigned from that job and started working as a teacher. It was during the course of her teaching that she first published her first poem called *Kelhoukevira*. Easterine kire's works reflect the unpleasant realities of life of Nagaland and the complexities around the colonial atrocities and discrimination. It also reflects the Naga's fighting for their freedom. She herself had a difficult life growing up in Nagaland due to the constant fights that were going on. Many innocent lives were being lost; it got worse as the years went by. Most of her writings reflect those incidents; discrimination, loss of innocent lives, torturing, fighting for freedom. She brings life to the Naga history which was long lost due to the oral narration and less writing. One of her novels, *Mari* was a bestselling novel, which narrates the story of a single mother who after losing her husband in the World War 11 bravely makes the decision to live on with her child and discovers happiness once again. She won 'The Hindu Prize' in 2015, for her work *When the River Sleeps*. Her fiction *Bitter Wormwood* is a story based on real life where the Indo-Naga conflict has changed the lives of the common people in Nagaland.

Easterine Kire's *A Terrible Matriarchy*, this is the story of a girl called Dielienuo who undergoes a hard life because of her grandmother's perspective on girl child. She was the only girl child in the family followed by four brothers named Leto,

Vini, Bulie and Pete. This story revolves around three generations; which is grandmother, mother and the grand daughter, Dielienou. Despite the grandmother's attitude towards Dielienou we come to know in course of novel the reason behind it. There is patriarchy prevalent in this novel and a male child was highly favoured in the family. At the end it all comes to the conclusion that it is the culture and beliefs and the customs associated with it that has made people, who they are. Despite the hard times she had encountered, she came up triumphantly. Though her grandmother was against her education, she completed her studies. Not only did she excel in her studies but she even got a job which secured her future. Grandmother always had a belief that if a girl is educated, she will not have good marriage proposals; as boys consider marrying girls who were good in cooking and household chores. Dielieno proved it wrong as she got several marriage proposals despite of her good education. A girl child was inferior to boy child according to grandmother but Dielieno proved herself that a girl child is also capable of great things. All the rules that were imposed to Dielieno by the grandmother did not go in vain as well. She began to do the household chores along with her studies. Also she learned a lot from grandmother though she was treated in a different manner than her brothers. She was always obedient to what her grandmother asked her to do, hence it produced a good result for her. She reaped good harvest at the end and also proved that a girl child is capable of great things.

Objectives of the Research

1. To analyze the plight of the protagonist in *A Terrible Matriarchy* by Easterine Iralu.

2. To analyze how the culture has deeply affected grandmother and as a result the protagonist was treated indifferently than her older brothers.
3. To reveal how triumphantly Dielieno rose despite of the harsh treatment from her grandmother.
4. To depict what motivated Dielieno to move forward in her life despite of the difficult circumstances.

Research Methodology

A study on, *The Triumph against Prejudiced with reference to A Terrible Matriarchy by Easterine Iralu* will be planned in chapters. Each chapter will discuss a particular text and its issues of struggle will be analyzed and discussed in accordance with guidance from the supervisor. For data collection, the University's libraries of psychology and that of English Language and Literature will be consulted; different data bases like Jstor, EEE online data base, academic.edu, will also be consulted. The method selected for the current study is analytical, qualitative research which is widely accepted. The research will use this method to carry out the research which will bring out the struggle faced by the protagonist in the hands of the grandmother because of the cultural belief. For typing and formatting of the research, the MLA seventh edition format will be followed.

Scope of the Research

The proposed study will explore how Dielieno despite of being prejudiced by her grandmother rose up triumphantly. Dielieno did not rebel back to how she was treated by her grandmother, but despite of it she was obedient and as a result she reaped a

good harvest at the end. Dielieno was treated differently by her grandmother only because she was a girl child. This dissertation will analyze why grandmother was compelled to do so and how Dielieno raised up victoriously despite of it all the circumstances. The study will focus on how Dielieno was encouraged to move forward and what motivated her. It will also explain about how the women are treated differently all around the world.

Literature Review

Nayar in his work on 'the postcolonial picturesque: The Northeast India' discusses about the poetry written by the Northeast writers. He says their poetry discusses about the natural beauty and also it plays the role of displaying the suffering and the cry of the people. It is not just a mere poetry but that it conveys the message of the people. Similarly in the work of Easterine Iralu called '*Genesis*' we see that the poem does not talk only about the women but also the nature. They both merge together and every description about the women is being narrated in comparison with the nature. There is an evident of natural picturesque used in those writings.

Peer, B in his work *India's badlands* talks about the struggle of Kashmir and Nagaland faced by them in order to obtain their independence. He notes that although they shared different histories and legal arrangements with the Indian state, both shared a common desire for independence. He has also mentioned the famous freedom fighter of Nagaland known as Phizo who fought for the freedom of Nagaland. The people of Nagaland had undergone several wars in which they were left wounded in their hearts. However he mentions that the new generation is now seeking non-violent ways to find a better future. Easterine Iralu's novel called *A Naga Village Remembered* was published in 2003. Here she talks about the social and political

history of Nagaland. It clearly showcases the conditions that were prevalent in the Naga society.

Here, by *reviewNE* they wrote about the biography of Easterine Iralu and mentioned some of her works. Iralu is considered as one of the finest story teller from the region and has written several in English including three collections of poetry and short stories. Her works reflect the realities of Naga life and present in her books the social, economic and political problems. Earlier stories were passed on only through oral narration but with the writers like Easterine the Naga culture was brought on to the rest of the world through their writing. Easterine has translated 200 oral poems from her native language into English. Some of her other works includes *Mari and Bitter wormwood*, the former which talks about the true story of a young mother who after losing her fiancé had to raise her child on her own. The latter talks about the indo-Naga conflict. This novel shows the insight on how for decades the Naga people have struggled for freedom.

Rangam in his work wrote about *A Terrible Matriarchy* as how realistic the book has described about the Naga society. The novel is in a first person narrative which makes the novel an elegant part. Dielieno despite of how differently she was treated comparing to her brothers never fight back but gradually manages to pose the quietest interrogations which is to be an eye opener for the rising status of women in Naga society. Dielieno is questioned on every steps that she takes in her life, from the very young age. Dielieno hated the grandmother and so the title of the novel is relevant to it. Easterine work talks about the Naga society and their culture. How people had certain customs and traditions to be followed which continued on for generation to generation. To know the culture of Naga society this book can be read as it mostly talks about the Naga culture and traditions.

CHAPTER ONE

DIELIENO'S FRUSTRATION AND HER REACTION OF POSITIVE APPROACH.

The novel opens up with the line clearly indicating by the narrator saying that grandmother did not like her. Dielieno, the protagonist was the youngest sibling of four elder brothers. She lived a happy life with her family, though they did not have enough food to eat. Until, one night Dielieno heard her father and mother talking about her to be sent to grandmother's house. Dielieno wishes to never to wake up from her sleep, but naturally she wakes up and is eventually sent to her grandmother's house. It was the idea of grandmother which her parents could not refuse. At one time when Dielieno was playing with her uncle by climbing on his shoulder, grandmother threw her anger towards her, claiming that decent girls don't act this way. What more can people expect from a child than play around and giggle, sadly grandmother very much disliked Dielieno to act as such. She is only a child, but was expected of her much more than she could.

Grandmother was very much against the idea of letting the boy child do the household chores or give a helping hand in doing some hard work. Grandmother did not like that her grandsons being sent to fetch water, she told Dielieno mother that it should be the girl child who should be send, rather than the boy child. The mother was given a good lecture on how to raise a girl child. Also, the grandmother explained how a male child is very important in the family. Instead of being asked to do household chores they should be fed properly and taken care of. Grandmother advised Dielieno to be send rather than her brothers to fetch the water and do the household chores.

The male in the family plays a very important role, because it was the male who fights during the war and looks after the safety of the family. They are considered as the one who play a very important role in the family, in protecting the family against the enemy or any harmful things. Earlier there were lots of war that took place and as a result they saw how the male play an important role in terms of protecting the family from the enemies. If a household have enough male in the family, then the whole family is more likely to be saved from the dangers that will befall them. Also, the village which have more male, they were considered as strong and had very less chances to be attacked by the enemy. The other villages feared them and they would not be attacked because of the large number of male in the village. The society has a belief that the female are weak and they cannot contribute much to the safety of the family or they can do nothing to feed the family. All the women in the society are expected to give birth and cook. They are considered as the one who play less important role in the society.

Six months after she lives with grandmother, Dielieno parents come to visit her. They tell grandmother that Dielieno is six years old and needs to go to school. Grandmother was completely against the idea of a girl child being sent to school. She completely disagrees on the idea of Dielieno being send to school and instead she tells her mother that she should be taught household work. She thinks that by getting education, it will only harm their thinking or they will get fancy notions about themselves and forget their place in the family. Instead, grandmother begins to say about what the girl child did in her days. As mentioned in the text,

“In our day,” Grandmother began,” girls did not go to school. We stayed at home and learnt the housework. Then we went to the fields and learnt all the fieldwork as well. That way one never has a problem

with girl-children. They will always be busy at some work or other, too busy to get into trouble. It is all right if boys have a spot of trouble now and then, but with girls, it is different. You would never be able to get rid of her once she had caused trouble. I really do not approve of girls getting educated. It only makes them get fancy notions about themselves and they forget their place in the family.” (23)

Finally, after Dielieno’s father spoke to grandmother about the importance of her being send to school, she agreed. Dielieno is being treated by her grandmother differently than her brothers in every way possible; she saves the best portion of meat for her brothers. She is taught not to question but only to obey everything that the grandmother tells her to do. A girl child is never considered the real member of the family. A girl child was expected to marry, have children, and be able to cook, weave cloth and look after the household. Grandmother makes her feel miserable, though she is just a small child she is expected to do every work in perfect way possible. She is asked to wake up on time and finish her work on time. Grandmother agrees to send Dielieno to school but on one condition, which is to continue staying with her. Grandmother asked her to finish her chores then only go to school, upon which Dielieno finished all her daily work on time.

The first day of the school, Dielieno was dropped by her uncle till the school and also encouraged her to do great in her studies. He made her promise that she would do great and that not to be discouraged by anyone. She was reminded how good and smart girls she is. School was the best thing for Dielieno and her friend, especially for Dielieno who didn’t want to be sent home. Grandmother didn’t want her to go to school, so she tried to make her life even more difficult. However, Dielieno was smart enough to finish her work on time and not miss school. Also,

Dielieno's enthusiasm makes her overcome the obstacles presented to her by grandmother. After school Dielieno was excited to show what she had done in school to her grandmother, but she wasn't interested to take a proper look. Dielieno proved herself to be a bright student among her classmates. Later on she was promoted to higher class without the sessions ending because of her Excellency. Dielieno father came to talk to grandmother about the good performance of Dielieno in the school, but grandmother response was rude. She again questions the education of the girl child, instead of praising her conduct. In the new class that she was promoted, her classmates did not treat her well. However, Dielieno did not complain to her grandmother or Bano because she feared that she would be stopped from going to school. She was ready to go through the difficulties times or the circumstances as long as that can keep her in school.

Dielieno is the only girl child in the family but is treated very differently by her grandmother. Her father too is compelled to ignore because he thinks that grandmother is right in training Dielieno from the very young age. Dielieno was asked to fetch water, clean the house, and feed the chicken and count them at night. She was asked not to miss even one chicken and if she did so, she was asked to redo it over and over again. Some days when one or two went missing, she had to recount them several times and would not go inside the house until she finds them all. There was a night when two chickens went missing and she was asked to count them over and over. Finally she returned to her grandmother saying she had counted them thrice, but couldn't find the missing ones. As given in the text; "You are such a useless girl. If you lose any chicken tomorrow, you will be sleeping in the shed, do you hear me?"(21)

Sadly, the society believes that if one woman commit mistake, the rest are capable of it too. There was one incident in the school where Dielieno teacher had eloped with one of the staff, grandmother upon knowing that was very disappointed. She was angry that a teacher itself is not being modest, what will the outcome of the students be. This incident made her question about the education of Dielieno. Dielienuo had a friend that was not of a well to do family: as well their family had a bad reputation. Grandmother asked her not to befriend her and to stay away from her as she thinks she will be of bad influence to her. She warns her saying that their family is low and she would become like them if she mixes with them. The poor people in the society was also the one who were looked down or shunned, they were considered as being cursed because of their mistakes or their fore fathers. Grandmother is the kind of women who is a keen observer of everything that is going on around her.

Dielienuo is dearly loved by her brothers and they would come to visit her. When grandmother gets visited by her grandsons, she gets overjoyed and orders the best meal possible to be served to them. She gives the best portion of meat to her brothers; the meat also had some certain portion to be served to her brothers. She spoils them in best way possible by giving them money even when they don't ask. She always thinks that they will be the one who will be taking care of her in the coming days and that they play a very important role in the family. She always had the kind of belief that man should be the head of the family and the wife should do whatever the husband asks her to do. She must obey her husband and maintain the family well. It was the job of the man to bring food to the family and the only duty a wife has to do is the household work. Grandmother herself was taught in this way and she expects the same from her daughters and granddaughters. Supposedly, if the

society did not have an inferior thinking between man and women, the world would have been a better place or more peaceful place. Dielieno was saddened at the treatment she receives from her grandmother and would question it. Dielieno was allowed to visit her parents only with valid reasons. Her mother feels her absence in the house and is saddened that at the very young age she had to stay away from her family, but she never verbalizes her feelings.

During the Christmas she was allowed to go home, it was a joyous moment for her. Her family never had enough food to eat, they were not of well to do family. It was only during the Christmas that her mother bakes cakes which were enjoyed by the whole family with great delight. The whole family goes to church on 23rd of December for the white gift service. It was much better going to church without grandmother because she would be watched of her movement. She always get canned back home from moving an inch during church service. Dielieno helped her mother cook food and was praised for being such a great help. They never had enough money; mother had to knit a sweater for her eldest brother which can be worn by the younger ones when it doesn't fit him anymore. Though they get gifts on their birthdays, Christmas is that special day when they get gifts on someone else's birthday. The narrator was pleased to wear new dress on the Christmas day and everybody else did the same on that day.

Dielieno though she was away from her parents at the very young age, she did not receive love and care from her grandmother, which she needed the most. Dielieno's happiness did not last long as she was called back by grandmother and once again her same old routine started. Many incidents happened after the New Year started, her best friend father died. Along with it her brother called Pete died due to lung congestion which drastically affected her family. The most that was affected by

the death of her brother was her older brother Vini; he was behaving differently and also neglected schools. Dielieno too was affected in her studies but she regained from it soon after she realised that it was not good.

Vini started to befriend bad companies and as a result his life was messed up, but grandmother never loved him less. She always offered him money even when he does not ask her. Vini did not come home till late night and mother would be worried because there were armies all around the neighbourhood who were in search of some suspects. The Indian army would pick up any young boys who they come in contact and question them or if possible would beat them up until they utter what they needed to hear. The situation during those times was not good; there was a conflict between the Naga people and the Indian government. Lots of innocent lives were lost due to the social instability that was prevalent.

When the narrator was promoted to seventh standard, the same year grandmother turned 80th and her birthday was celebrated in grand manner with the whole family. With her age grandmother became more forgetful, so Dielieno could make a way out if she overlooked some of her unfinished task. She had to pretend strongly that she had done and that grandmother had forgotten. Despite of heavy work load she never missed to study her lessons, even though grandmother did not approve of it.

As the years went by even the relationship between her two elder brothers and her father began to change; it was all due to the behaviour of Vini which troubled the family. Dielieno wished that everything was like before with Pete not being death. The school environment was changing, the boys in her class started smoking and even the girls were not faring well in exams. A school girl created quite a scandal when she

got married with her science teacher and the school had to debate whether to retain the teacher or not. Unlike other students Dielieno was doing quite well in her studies, which was a positive thing for her. However after the death of her brother Pete, she was affected greatly in her studies. Her family deeply mourned for her death brother, it brought a great distress to the family. Dielieno mother and her brother Vini was the most affected by the death of her brother. Her mother's health deteriorated and Vini completely changed his behaviour, which brought damage to the family. They couldn't contain the feeling from the lost of her brother. Later, she gained her strength to move forward with the help of her love one's support. She resumed gaining good grades and doing well in her life.

During those years the situation was not good in the states, as Indian army was picking young boys and beating them mercilessly. Vini was asked not to stay up late night as the situation was getting worse, Dielieno mother was also worried sick of Vini. After the dead of Pete, Dielieno mother's health has deteriorated and was taking time to heal. The Indian army was against Naga Nationalist Patriots and captured everyone that was involved in it. Some days they even captured innocent civilians if they had an instinct that they too were involved in it. The women were brutally raped and then killed by the Indian army, which created more hatred in the minds of the Naga people towards the Indian army. An incident as such is mentioned in the novel, where Vini tells his brother about how his friend Rocky parents were killed. Rocky father was killed by the Indian army and as well his mother, but the murder of his mother was more horrifying and brutal. Vini tells his brother how rocky mother was raped and then was put a gun in her mouth and shot dead. There were more horrific incidents that took place, which is even uncomfortable to listen or be read in the books which the Naga writers have written. The brutality that the Naga people faced

in the hands of the Indian army is even haunted to this very day in the minds of the Naga people.

The political instability in Nagaland was growing at a very high rate at that time and it affected a lot of people. Vini and his friends for example were drawn to drinking and violence because of the political and social unrest. They began to draw comfort in getting drunk and speaking up their heart out for the freedom their people deserved. They didn't hesitate to beat up people who went against them or tried to stop them. Such was the situation in Nagaland during those times which affected massively to the Naga people. However, it has all been solved now and Nagaland is also a part of India.

With the passing of years Dielieno's brothers had grown older and some of them even hold a job .Dielieno after her final examination had the opportunity to teach at the nursery classes. She finally got her result and was planning for higher studies to which grandmother did not approve. Grandmother thinks that men does not prefer woman who were highly educated but instead prefer woman who knows household works well. Though grandmother was against it, her brother Leto supported her to study in college. She was surprised that grandmother was calm on this matter; it is clearly evident that she loves her grandsons and respects their decision. Dielieno enjoyed her college life which was different from high school.

In the following year, her friend Vimenuo informed her that she is getting married. Dielieno was surprised and asked who the boy was, to her surprise it was none other than her brother Leto. She knew that it was going to be difficult because grandmother disliked Vimenuo family. Leto was now a grown up man with a good job and with lot of marriage proposal; people were shocked as to why he would

choose Vimenuo. After a year they got married without the approval of grandmother and shifted to the new house. The behaviour of her older brother Vini was not getting any better, which disturbed the whole family. The family situation worsened, Dielienuo father called both her brothers for discussion. Her brothers suggested a marriage for Vini in the hope that he would change after his marriage. Finally Vini married a girl from a respectable family and everything seemed to be settling down. Sadly, her brother could not give up his drinking habit and eventually loses his life at the end leaving his wife and son. Vini's wife Nisano and her son were left alone after his death. Grandmother asked Nisano and her son to come and live with her. Nisano agreed and went on to live with grandmother after her husband death. With the advancing years grandmother was not becoming a better person which made Dielienuo angry of her behaviour towards her. One day Dielienuo informed her mother, that her grandmother hated her only because she was a girl and not a boy. Also she narrated how she was treated during her stay in grandmother house. Her mother tried to comfort her and said that she should forgive and forget her grandmother's actions. Her mother narrated her story of her grandmother; due to which she was what she is now.

As a young girl grandmother saw the many sufferings her mother had undergone because she did not have male child. It made her determined that she will not suffer like her mother did. So the grandmother gives more love to the male child than female, Dielienuo mother assures her that her parents love her just like her bothers. Now she was able to forgive her grandmother after what her mother told her. She realised that lack of security made her grandmother what she is. There was sudden news that grandmother has fallen ill and was in a critical situation which shocked all the family members. The news of her grandmother situation spread far

and near and relatives throng about her and attended her. Later, Grandmother was announced death and a funeral service was held, where many people attended. Even after the death of her grandmother, her presence could be felt in the house. When Dielieno was 23 years old, she got a marriage proposal; she found out that it was not her first proposal. Whereas there were three other boys who had asked her hand in marriage but as custom applied, they went and talked with her aunt who talked negative things about her to them. The fourth boy was persistent and decided to talk directly with Dielieno's parents rather than listening to what her aunt has to say. Within six months after the marriage proposal they were married.

Dielieno can be described as a strong woman; even from the very young age she proved to be a responsible woman despite of how poorly she was treated by her grandmother. The harsh treatment did not stop her from pursuing what she wanted in life. She stood strong throughout the difficult times. Even when her family was facing hardship because of her brothers she proved to be the light and the strength for them all. Though she was just a girl like her grandmother addressed her, she proved that she is capable of much greater things and also she proved herself that she could accomplish what was thought impossible by the society for the girl child. She is a great inspiration for the entire woman in the society who is being suppressed in many areas. Dielieno did not get to enjoy her childhood days or live with her parents like any child of her age would. Despite of all the hardship she rose up triumphantly and proved the society wrong about their perceptions on the girl child. At the end of the novel we see that Dielieno gets a job and married off to a well off family son, where she lives happily without any restrictions.

Grandmother's attitude towards Dielieno can be blamed on the cultural belief that the people practise. It was passed on from generation to generation and people

respect the decision that the elders made. There was no question as to why they should go against that or break the traditional rules that were made long time back. Grandmother herself was the victim to the societal norms and traditions. So, it made her into a person that she has become now. She had grown into in and it is difficult for anybody to remove that traditional mindset from her.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CULTURE AS TO WHY HER GRANDMOTHER BEHAVES SO?

The attitude of grandmother towards Dielieno can be understood because the culture brought her up in that thinking. Quoting from the text;

“In our day,” Grandmother began,” girls did not go to school. We stayed at home and learned the housework. Then we went to the fields and learned all the fieldwork as well. That way one never has a problem with girl-children. They will always be busy at some work or other, too busy to get into trouble. It is all right if boys have a spot of trouble now and then, but with girls, it is different. You would never be able to get rid of her once she has caused trouble. I really do not approve of girls getting education. It only makes them get fancy notions about themselves and they forget their place in the family.”

(23)

Grandmother lived in a society where lots of restrictions were laid on girl child. Grandmother saw how the women in the society without the male child underwent. The society looked down on them and considered them as lowly, they were mocked. Grandmother herself went through terrible experiences because her mother did not bore any male child and as a result they were looked down by the society. So, with pain that she went through she made up her mind into believing how the male child played a very important role in the family. With the passing of the generation people’s thinking began to change, like the same way Dielieno parents realized how she played a major role in the family when it was falling apart. The male during earlier times were involved in looking after the village and engage enemy

warriors in warfare. Those household who did not have a male child was considered as barren because there would be only one to protect the family and no one to help the father. That was the reason male child was given more importance in the society.

Since the very age Dielieno was send to live with her grandmother and did not get to stay with her family like any child of her age would. She was asked to behave in the best way possible and was expected highly of her age. She was even deprived of schooling, but was allowed later with a condition. Dielieno felt that only because she is a girl child and was born as one; grandmother disliked her. Grandmother did not call her by name but simply addressed her as 'girl', for which Dielieno was deeply hurt. She was asked to do the household works and was expected to do it without any fault. She had to finish her work before going to the school and was also asked to return home on time without any delay. Some days she comes home late because of extra class, but grandmother did not believe her and was given a good hearing. She was even set restrictions on what kind of friend should she have and which kind of people should she interact. She was watched on every step that she takes and was corrected if it was something grandmother did not like.

Once in a while her uncle comes to visit her grandmother and she would go running to greet him. A child she is, she would sit on his lap but grandmother did not like it and scolded her to act modest. Grandmother believed that a girl child is not important and does not play a major role in the family. Even when the food is served, grandmother always gives the best portion of meat to Dielieno's brothers. She thinks that the boy child should stay healthy and strong enough. Grandmother had a belief that even when she is old, it would be her grandson that would take care of her or bury her. Dielieno was asked not to give more importance in her studies, but in learning the household work because after her marriage these works will be more

useful than the education she is striving for. She is told by her grandmother that the boys do not like the educated girls but rather prefer the one who is good in household work and looks after the family well. She is told that no man would want to marry her and that she would be left alone her whole life.

However, despite of all that she went through in the hands of her grandmother she rose up triumphantly. She excelled in her studies and proved herself more than what people expected her to become. The society thought that the girl child did not play an important role but Dielieno proved herself to be very helpful even when her family was in deep crisis. She was the one who was taking care of the family when her, mother fell ill. Though her grandmother let her finish multiple works before she went to school, it did not affected her studies but rather she did so well that she was promoted to higher class. The restrictions that were set on her did not stop her from pursuing what she wanted. She is a great example to the young girls not to give up their dreams and strive to reach it despite of the circumstances that is around them. She did not let her dreams get wavered with the situations that she was in but excelled despite of it all. Dielieno was asked by her grandmother not to be friend with the poor people but she did so however and got herself a good friend who stayed with her throughout her happy times as well difficult times. She did not choose her friends based on the classes like her cousins did. There was a party that was held on Dielieno's aunt house where all of them were invited and there her cousin neglected her and introduced as one of her mother's far relative. Through here we can see how the upper classes of people were so much concerned of their prestige. Dielieno parents did not have enough to feed their children but tried their best to not keep them hungry. Dielieno knew that her parents never had enough to provide her brothers and she; despite of it all she was a good child and never did ask her parents what they could

not effort. Her uniform itself was extended at the bottom by her mother when it gets short for her. However the circumstances did not discourage her but she was determined to achieve her goal. After Dielieno completed her high school, she wanted to pursue her higher education but grandmother was against it and did not like the idea of her being send to school again. Thankfully her brother tried to persuade her grandmother to let Dielieno continue with her studies. At the end grandmother agrees because of her grandson persuasion. Dielieno continues pursuing her higher education and excel in it greatly. She later gets a job and even gets married to a decent man.

Grandmother's behaviour towards Dielieno can be looked in a lighter way, despite of the bad treatment that she received from grandmother. After one is born into the world, we are controlled or bound by the culture that is around us. There may be various practices that may seem absurd, but in the form of culture it may be considered as right. Likewise the same was with grandmother attitude towards Dielieno; it was culture that made grandmother become who she is. Since the very young grandmother was taught that a male child was more important in the society and that women play a very little important role I the family. Grandmother from the very young age witnessed how the society treated her family only because there was no male child. She was from a family where there was only girl child and people looked down on them. She have seen how her mother was often left to tears because of the fate that she was in. it was nothing wrong to not have male child in the family , but the society made them think they were cursed or they were looked down by the society. They were not respected only because there was o buy child in the family. Having a boy child in the family was everything that a family could wish for. People rejoiced if a wife give birth to a boy child, but if she give birth to a girl child there

was sadness in the family. All this happened only because of the society belief in traditions and culture that was passed on since the old age.

In the novel we see various female characters that were suppressed by the society's belief and tradition. One such character is Dielieno's mother herself, who very much feared grandmother. She was very careful about her actions and behaviour in front of grandmother. She tried to be a good wife and a mother, so that grandmother would not question her. She feared whenever she bought a new shirt and would cover it with a shawl so that grandmother would not see her. Dielieno when being sent to live with grandmother despite of her young age, mother was sad, but she couldn't do anything because it was not right to go against an elder's decision. Bano, on the other hand lived with grandmother since the very young age, she would be mistaken as her daughter if anyone wouldn't know who she is. Bano is the daughter of grandmother's brother. She was asked to live with grandmother because her father remarried. Bano got many marriage proposals, but grandmother rejected saying that they are not suitable suitor for her. So, with the passing of years the proposals died too. Vimenuo was looked down when she was a friend of Dielieno and also when she was to marry Dielieno's brother. She was looked down because she was not from a good family background. Grandmother did not agree on the marriage of Vimenuo and Leto, but at the end they marry despite of her disapproval. Nisano who was the wife of Vini suffered greatly during her married life and also after the death of her husband. After her husband died, according to the culture and traditions, she must leave the house of her in laws. People began to gossip about her not going back to her family even after her husband's death. However it did not affect her, and she continued to live in her in laws along with her son. We see that the women

suffered greatly due to the culture and traditions, but none of them gave up on life despite of the circumstances that was around them.

So, with the culture practices that grandmother was brought in, she imparted the same towards Dielieno. It was the culture that made her who she has become and her outlook on life was also affected by the culture that she was taught in. The writer from the very beginning explained how harsh the grandmother's attitude towards Dielieno was, but during the end she lightens our hatred towards grandmother by explaining how the culture have made her do what she did. All the way it was culture that moulded the behaviour and attitude of the people towards life. Dielieno from the very young age witnessed how her grandmother treated her differently than her older brothers. She had an instinct since the very young age that her grandmother did not like her. Dielieno was not addressed with her name, instead she was called as 'the girl' which she did not like and reminded her grandmother of her name. However, she was not called with her name but just simply 'the girl'. Grandmother lived in a society where the society considered that a male child is more important than the girl child.

Grandmother lived during the age where there were multiple wars that were taking place between the clans. As a result the man was the one who took active part in keeping the family safe and sound. They were the one who fought for the safety of their villages and also in capturing new territories. The men were considered very strong in comparison to women. They were considered capable to do the impossible things, but the women were just looked as weaklings who just look after the family. Women were expected to give birth and look after the house; they were expected to be completely submissive to their husband. Women have to do all the household chores, look after the children, and cook food. If women did not excel in doing the household chores they were looked down because it was the only thing that the

society expected her to do well. So, even in the novel we see how the grandmother is keen in making Dielieno the women society wants.

Grandmother did not care what Dielieno wanted in her life, but only focused on what the society expected her to be. The culture was such that, the women were expected to be good in doing household works and was fit for running the family. Grandmother did not approve when Dielieno wanted to pursue study because she thought that women does not need education. It was a waste of time and energy to invest in studying because women were expected to look after the family. Grandmother believed that women should not invest time in studying, but instead learn household work which will be very helpful when she is married. Grandmother thought education will do no good to women, as she will have the idea of many things and it will only spoil them. Education was seen as a barrier in moulding the girl child in the way society wants. Grandmother herself was not provided education, but was taught how she should run the family by being the good wife and a mother. The fate of the women is like chose by the society because she is expected to do the same things which have been continuing for years. She is expected to behave in a certain ways which will be accepted by the society. There was a school teacher who got pregnant with her colleague; even there the society talked more about the women than the man, when it was the fault of both. The women were expected to be simple and be submissive to their husband without any complaint.

In the general term if we look at it, we see that too much was expected of the women by the society. There were lots of restrictions laid on women, but at the same time too much expected in return. When reading a novel one might question as to why one woman is going against the other women? Why the narrator is being treated in a very different manner than her brothers? However we begin to understand the reason

by the end of the novel. Grandmother herself lived in an environment or a society where she was taught how the male child plays a very important role in the society. She belonged to the family where there were only female child and as a result she saw the pain that the family went through because of how they were treated by the society. So, as she grew older she made a decision to give birth as many male children as possible. The woman that she has become was not the decision she made, but the society made her into it. Had the society given more importance to the girl child like the male child, the outcome would have been different. Even the food that Dielieno was offered by her grandmother was different than her brothers. There was certain portion of meat that was served to her brothers, if she asked for that portion then she would get a scolding from her grandmother. Her brothers were offered anything that they want without any hesitation by grandmother, but if she does the same she would be scolded for it.

Vini, when he started acting reckless and getting involved in bad company, grandmother was the only one who gave whatever he wanted. Even before he asked him anything, grandmother offered him. Such is the love grandmother had for her grandson. After the dead of Vini grandmother was deeply affected by his loss. There were several nights when she would call out his name and Bano had to quieten her down. It took several days for her to believe that Vini was dead and would never come back to life. Grandmother began to grow harsher with the passing of age according to the narrator. Dielieno was expected to finish her work on time and do it perfectly well. Grandmother was a woman who lived according to what the culture expected her to be. She was compelled to become the person that she is. Dielieno tried her best to make her grandmother love her or scold her less by obeying every work that she was assigned to do. She proved to be a strong lady by obeying her

grandmother and also pursuing her passion. Education for girl child was not very essential according to the society belief. However, Dielieno proved that girl child need education just as much as the boy child needs it. She excelled even in the field of study without disappointing her grandmother and her family with her performance.

Even when Dielieno brother died, she stood strong despite of the pain that was caused in the family. Their family was no more the same after her brother died, her mother's health deteriorated, brother changed his behaviour due to the loss that was hard to take, and the relationship between them was no more the same. A sense of emptiness filled their life, but Dielieno was the one who showed much courage by standing strong for her family. She took care of her mother's health and also the whole family by taking over the role of a mother. The lessons that she learned from her grandmother did not prove to be a waste, but instead it helped Dielieno in many ways. She finished her studies and along with it she learned many valuable lessons from her grandmother. Dielieno was optimistic in almost all the circumstances; she was not disheartened that grandmother disliked her. Though she questioned several times why her grandmother behaved that way towards her, she never did let it affect her in pursuing her dreams. She was strong and a visionary girl who pursued her dreams despite of the restriction that was laid on her by her grandmother. Dielieno is a great example to the women in the society, who are suppressed in every way possible. Though she was just a little girl when she was sent off to her grandmother house, she did not waver for how she was treated by her grandmother. From the very young she was persistent in her dreams and excelled it with great handwork. No matter what was on her way she did not give up, but she moved forward believing that her handwork will be paid off someday. She is a great inspiration and through her life we learn a lot. No matter how hard the circumstances may be, we can always choose to stay positive

and achieve our goal. Life is not always like we want it to be, we are born in a certain place where there are customs, religion and traditions. It is those that have great impact on our life. What we see right might be considered wrong by the society, so we are directly or indirectly bound by the culture. Like grandmother she was not born thinking she will treat girl child differently, but it was the society that made her do it. For instance, when a woman is rapped by a man, she is considered as damaged. However, the guy can go and live his life after he serve his term punishment imposed on him. He can marry any women and start his life, but it is not so with the women. She is being look down and no man would want her as their wife. She did not commit any mistake, but the price she pays her whole life. So, we see that justice is not being done to the female in the society. The women in the society are suppressed in various ways; they don't enjoy the freedom that the male enjoy. They have less freedom and more restrictions laid on them. They are expected to behave in the best way possible and be presentable in the eyes of the society. So much is asked of them, but less is given to them in return. Women go into depression because of the restrictions that is being imposed on them by the society. Likewise, the same was the case grandmother, she was brought up in the belief that boy child is more important than the girl child. She has been deeply hurt by how the society treated her family only because there was no boy child in the family. No person is born thinking that they will treat girl and boy child differently, but it is the culture that make them do it. Everyone in the society is directly or indirectly affected by the culture and traditions. No man is free of culture or the traditions that the particular society follow. The cultural practices may differ from one region to the other, but we see that most people are affected by the cultural practices and they follow them. In the end Dielieno comes to understand why her grandmother treated her differently than her brothers. However, through it all

Dielieno rose up triumphantly by excelling in her life and also proved herself no less than her brothers. She serves as a great inspiration to the people around the world.

CHAPTER THREE

THE WAY DIELIENO IS SUCCESSFUL

Dielieno is being treated differently by her grandmother, only because she is a girl child. She is the youngest of the family, but is not treated in a loving manner. From the very young age she was expected to behave modest and start helping in the household work. Age was just a number to her grandmother for a girl child, she was expected to do household chores and behave well. Dielieno was sent off to live with her grandmother at the very age and expected to behave in the best manner possible. Throughout her stay in the grandmother's house she faced lots of difficulties, but it did not let her motivation fall. There is a girl called Bano, who was the daughter of grandmother's brother that lived with her. Bano was the one who made Dielieno stay in grandmother house tolerable. She was the one who guided Dielieno in every work that she was advised to do. Bano helps her in learning and getting used to the kind of lifestyle that grandmother wants. Quoting from the text;

“You are a big girl now, and Bano says you work very well. I am proud of you, Lieno. One day you will understand that it was not such a bad thing for you to go and live with Grandmother.” (50)

Dielieno is being encouraged by various cousins to work hard and excel in her studies and her life. She is reminded of how brave and strong child she is and how capable she is in pursuing her dreams. Though grandmother was against her education, there were many people who supported and encouraged her. Grandmother's attitude towards her saddened her, but she did not let it make her stop studying or pursuing her dreams. The feeling of staying away from her family was hard, but she had to endure it. There was no option left for her than to stay at her

grandmother's house. Her parents could not refuse grandmother's offer because she was elder and it was not appropriate for them to go against her wish. Despite of all circumstances that were around her, she strived to achieve what she wanted in her life.

One time grandfather Sizo, who is the brother of grandmother, came to visit them. He came for some work representing the village people. He said that he wanted to submit application to the Deputy Commissioner about how the harvest has been bad and that the government should take some measures for it. From then on, she realised how her education can be of great help in many ways in the future. Dielieno saw how the village people have placed the responsibility on her grandfather Sizo because he was educated. As young as she was, she understood the importance of education.

The lessons that she learned through her grandmother did not go in vain. Along with her studies she learned to do the household work from her grandmother which proved to be very helpful in the coming days. Dielieno was asked by her grandmother not to befriend with her friend Vimenuo, only because she was from a poor family. Grandmother was class conscious, as she wanted Dielieno to avoid being friends with people of the low class. Vimenuo family was not respected because of their family condition and also her father is always drunk. However, it did not stop Dielieno to be a friend of Vimenuo. Dielieno was a good child who cared for the people of the low class because she knows how hard it is to belong to that class. Her family itself was not of the high class.

There was a cousin of her who was from a well do to family, but they did not have much love for the needy. They did not even care for Dielieno family and her cousin addressed her as a far relative to her friends during one certain party, which

hurt her deeply. Class mattered very much to the people, like to Dielieno's grandmother and her cousins. Grandmother was against Dielieno pursuing her education; she thought that a girl child doesn't need education. Grandmother had a belief that a girl child only needed to learn how to do household chores and to look after the family. Education for a girl child was something which the grandmother disagreed, because she thought education will bring no good to her in the future. Grandmother said that if the girl child gets education she will not get enough marriage proposals and as result she will be left to live alone her whole life. As a result she will be look down by the society. However, all this talk or perception of grandmother towards girl child education did not stop her from pursuing her dreams. Also Dielieno had her family by her side to encourage her in pursuing her dreams. There were times when she would reach home late because of the extra classes she had, but when she was late to get home she would get a beating from her grandmother. Grandmother thought that she was being lazy or wasting time after class playing with her friends. Dielieno was always expected to be punctual in everything that she do and behave in the best way possible.

Dielieno was asked by her grandmother not to talk to the other people about her family issues. There were some few women who would gather in the river banks and discuss the issues of the village or give a running commentary about people's life. She was asked to be careful about this type of women by her grandmother. Dielieno was wise enough to differentiate between a good company and a bad company. She never really created any problem for her parents; it was mostly her brothers who created tension in the family. Even during when her mother was ill, she was the one who took care of the whole family. Also when her brother began to act reckless after the death of her brother Pete, she was strong and it did not let her effect her life like

her brother. She did mourn for some days and also got affected in her studies, but she soon recovered from the loss of her brother when she realised it was doing no good. She stood strong when her family was drowning in sadness and problems. She took care of her sick mother and also took care of household chores; she was just a child, but a responsible daughter. She was praised by her mother for how helpful and thoughtful she has been during the hard times that her family was facing. Even in the field of education she excelled greatly and was even promoted to higher class because of the good performance in the class. Grandmother always tells her to behave in the best way possible and also to do her work on time. She was taught how to do household chores and also how to behave in the best manner. Despite of the harsh treatment that she received from her grandmother, it did not let her give up on her dreams. There was an incident that took place, where Vini was given a good scolding by Dielieno because of his reckless behaviour that let the family worry. She scolded him saying that he was selfish in behaving reckless and has made the life of his family difficult. To which her brother replied that grandmother was right to be against girls getting education because they forget their station in life. We see her brother mentioning about education has negatively impacted the girl child. She was just being truthful about her opinion and raised a voice, but the blame was that she got the courage because she was educated. Also her brother Leto when encouraging Vini to give up his bad habits and to think of his son and a wife mentions that; he wanted a baby boy, but Vini got it. Even through her brother's talk we see how they preferred male child rather than girl child. It is the belief that they have grown and now they are accustomed to the culture of their society. Dielieno had a dream that one day she will have her own job and look after her parents with her own earning. She did not like to be dependent on anybody, but wanted to be able to stand on her own feet. She wanted

to prove to the society that even the girl child is capable of great things. The society looks down on the capability of the girl child; they see them as weak and fragile. For instance, a girl child should not get education because she will look after the family on the future. Also the girl child does not have enough physical strength like the male child. In terms of protecting the family during the wars, the women were seen just as a weakling who cannot protect the family like the man. Also providing the family with the food and shelter, the society thought that it was the work of the male rather than female. Women were portrayed by the society as a weak gender comparing to male. It is the perception of the society that should be changed because the female can achieve as much as the male can. The women are not weak, but the thinking that is infused in their mind by the society that made them feel they are weak. A person's development is always propositional to their way of thinking. Dielieno did not stop to go on pursuing her dreams despite of the attitude that the society have towards girls' education. She was determined and focused on the goal and strived to achieve it despite of the circumstances that as around her. Being optimistic about what you think is better option than being pessimistic about the circumstances. Dielieno outlook towards life was optimistic and as result she achieved great praise in the later years for her achievement. She was saddened for her grandmother attitude towards her, but did not give up in her dreams. Dielieno always questioned the grandmother's attitude towards her; she felt that grandmother hated her because she was a girl child. She wished that she was never born because the treatment that she received from her grandmother was very hurtful for her. However, despite of grandmother always disappointing her, she has her love one's who encouraged her to do better. For instance grandfather Sizo who is the brother of grandmother encouraged her by saying. As mentioned in the text;

“I knew you were a bright girl, I always knew. Now you just keep studying hard this year too and when you have been to school for ten years then you can be a teacher and you will get lots of money and you can build your own house.”(94)

Dielieno throughout her life has seen or experienced hard times, but it did not stop her dreams of becoming someone in life. Dielieno mother mentioned in the end to her that, she is very much amazed at her strength. Even when her brother Pete died she took over the household work and took over the role of her mother at the very young age of eleven. Dielieno mother had realised that women are not weak, but unfortunately grandmother would not see the same because she learned it in her childhood that women had to be dependent on men. It was difficult to unlearn the things that were learned in childhood. As the year goes by people outlook towards girl child changed, but Dielieno despite living in that harsh society did not give up on her dreams. Her family love and care was the one thing that made her to strive for better in life. She had her family who love her unconditionally and supported her in every decision that she made. Her parents did not let her feel less loved than her brothers, but she was loved equally like her brothers by her parents. Their parents made no distinction between the gender differences, but treated them equally. Also when she suggested that she would love to take higher education, her brother was there to convince her grandmother who was against it. Dielieno realised at the end after what her mother told her about how her grandmother was compelled to behave towards her. Grandmother lost her husband and as result she wanted to secure her grandsons loyalty by giving them all the good things even though they didn't ask. She wanted one or more of them to look after her as she is left alone now without her husband. She also did a mistake by loving her grandsons so much, she was more doing more

harm than good. For instance in the case of Vini, he did not stop his drinking habit and as a result he died. This entire time grandmother was trying to buy love, but sadly love can never be brought with a price. Dielieno started to pity her instead of hatred for the treatment that she received. She forgives her grandmother for how she treated her. Towards the end of the novel we come to know that Dielieno gets a job and being proposed by a man who likes her very much. The family agrees to their marriage and finally after six months of the marriage proposal they are married.

Conclusion

The novel talks about the protagonist Dielieno being prejudiced by her grandmother since a very young age. She was given a furtive glance by her grandmother in everything that she did. Her brothers were not allowed to work nor do any household work, but instead grandmother expected Dielieno do to it irrespective of her still being a child. Children of her age would be playing around and enjoying with their family, but Dielieno did not get to do it. Even in the field of education grandmother was against it, thankfully Dielieno's father persuaded and the grandmother agreed. Despite of young age Dielieno was in, grandmother did not excuse her in any ways. She kept on saying that it would benefit Dielieno if she would learn to do the household works, instead of going to school. Education was seen as a barrier by grandmother for a girl child to become a good woman someday. Grandmother even mentioned that if a girl is educated, she would never find a good husband.

All around the world preference for male child is common, whereas less importance is given to girl child. The mindset emanates from what we have been taught since the very young age by our parents or the society. It is not a new thing in the society where women are suppressed and looked down. Much is expected from them, where large section of women is greatly affected by it. Women in the society are expected not to exercise equal rights as man. Various limitations are laid on women in the society. Women have developed instincts about being inferior to man; as a result they limit themselves. It is the women that compromise in many ways. Once when women marries and have a child, she is expected to care for her child. Also for women who do job are compelled to give up and care for the child. The

blame is mostly on the mother if a child grown up to be bad. The society questions the upbringing of a child by a mother, so it is less likely that the blame is on the father. The women are expected to be good at doing household chores and also to be submissive to her husband. There are various religions in this world and also religious practises that follows with it. Women, no matter which religion they belong to; all religions have restrictions laid on them. They are questioned in the way they dress, behave, talk, walk and so on. There are various norms and principles that are expected of women to follow. Women are the victims in many cases; that's all because of how the society view them and how the culture has taught them. The things which are normal for men to do are mostly hard for women. For instance, women walking on the street late at night have the high probability of being kidnapped or worse. The society has portrayed women very poorly since long time back and sadly it is still prevalent to this very day. People mostly questions on women morality and judge them based on it. The vast majority of women all over the world have similar experiences. Women should dispel assuming about being inferior to man; instead they should show to the world that women are capable of great things.

Dielieno was suppressed and discouraged in every way, but she did not give up pursuing her dreams. One would see at the end of the novel that the reason behind grandmother's behaviour towards Dielieno was, because of culture that the society believed and practised since long time back. The novel has so beautifully explained about the struggle faced by the protagonist and how despite of it all she rose up triumphantly. The circumstances did not falter her belief in pursuing what she wanted, but despite of everything she marched on to achieve it. Dielieno not only achieved in her academic sessions, but also learned a lot from her grandmother in the field of household work which proved to be helpful in her life. In the beginning of the novel

we are felt hatred towards grandmother because of her treatment towards Dielieno. However, by the end of the novel we come to pity grandmother and understand her behaviour towards Dielieno. For instance, if Dielieno confined to what her grandmother and the society wanted from her, she would be just an existence. We can learn so much from Dielieno, how she tackled her problems and moved forward. She is a great inspiration to all the women who are being suppressed by the society's belief and culture. There is always a way out no matter how worse the circumstances may be, our outlook towards it matters the most. So, I would like to conclude by saying that no matter how worse the circumstances may seem, we should never give up and strive to achieve it like the protagonist Dielieno have done.

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