

CHAPTER 6

VISUAL MEDIA AND WOMEN

The Sixth Chapter analyses the data collected from the Assamese films selected for the study from the period 2000 and 2002. The scenes have been chosen keeping in mind the context of this research to show applying the method of content analysis how the female characters are portrayed. Next, the chapter examining the attitude of visual media towards women also tries to analyse the status and position of women in the Assamese society.

A film, which is also called a movie or cinema or motion pictures, is the series of still or moving images. Films are meant and believed to entertain people by taking its viewers to such a fantasy that is totally different from the real. Media in general and movies in particular are said to be the reflection of the society. Majority of the people in world consciously or unconsciously tend to believe that media have a big socio-cultural influence on the society. So, the manner and the nature of portrayal of women in films reflect the status and position of women in a particular society. In this study two Assamese Films, namely, *Kanyadaan* and *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* have been selected to analyse the portrayal.

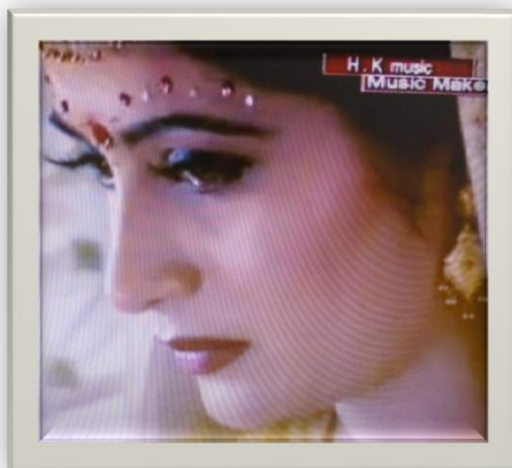
6.1 BRIEF STORIES OF THE FILMS

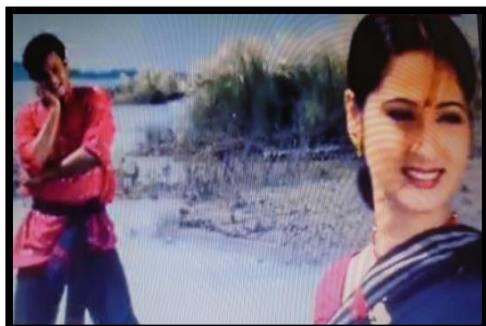


6.1.1 *Kanyaadaan* (Gifting a Virgin Daughter)

Kanyaadaan is a social film based on the story of a joint family comprising four brothers living in a village of Bokulpur away from four hour distance from Guwahati. The elder brother of that Barua family Bijoy (Ajit Nath) and his wife Joya (Mridula Barua) make sacrifices for the family to bind it with unity, love and co-operation, does job as clerk in a govt. office. Next to him, Binanda (Jayanta Das) does job in a Bank, Binay (Bhaskar Bora), who is a professor in profession and the youngest one is Utpal (Jatin Bora). Utpal goes Guwahati for his studies and within this time he has been in love with a girl Rima (Rituparna Kataki), who belong a very rich family of Guwahati city. The story from that particular time starts revolve around the love story of this couple. There are various barriers come in the way of their unification, the rich and poor issues, status maintenance etc. But after lots of struggle having been done, Utpal and Rima get married with having the blessings of both the families.

The Film is directed by Munin Barua and produced by C.S. Narayan and Swaraj Das (Baba). This is written by Munin Barua, Screenplay by Munin Barua. Music is given by Zubeen Garg, Cinematography of Suman Dowerah and edited by A. Srikar Prasad. The film is released on 19th March, 2002.





6.1.2 Cast of the Film

Table 6.1 Cast of the Film

Jatin Bora (Utpal, the Younger Brother of Barua Family)	
Arun Nath (Bijoy, the eldest brother)	Mridula Baruah (Joya, the wife of Bijoy)
Jayanta Das (Binanda, the elder brother)	Madhurima Choudhury (Neera, the wife of Binanda)
Bhaskar Bora (Binoy, the younger brother)	Purabi Sarma (Rubi, the wife of Binoy)
Harekrishna Deka (Phani, the servant)	Chetana Das (Baideo, the neighbour)
Rituparna Katak (Rima, the beloved of Utpal)	Tapan Das (Ranjit Phukan, the police officer)
Manjula Barua (Priti, Rima's mother)	Hadi Alom Bora (Mr. Ranju Choudhury, Rima's father)

6.1.3 *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur (You are mine, only mine)*



This was a story based on friendship, love, cheats and relationship among youths. The male protagonist, Rishiraj Barua (Jubeen Garg) was a college student having lots of friends. Because of his adamant not to bow down in front of bad, injustice and corruption he made some enemies also in the college. He had his girlfriend Tina (Prastuti Parasar) who wanted to be successful model and left him because of her career and made a relationship his enemy Raja (Jatin Bora). Then Pahi (Jerifa Wahid) came to his life, she inspired him to become a great singer of Assam and got married to her. But enmity being continued from the college life with Raja, Raja was always trying to trap Rishi and at last he became successful when he kidnapped Pahi. But Rishi was able to save her life at last. And thus the story ended with creating lots of sensation, emotions regarding love, relationship and cheats.

The Film was directed by Zubeen Garg and produced by Dev Borkataki. Music was given Zubeen Garg himself, and Screenplay by Pabitra Margherita. The film was edited by A. Srikar Prasad and was released in 2000.



6.1.4 Cast of the film

Table 6.2:Cast of the film

Zubeen Garg (Rishiraj Barua)	
Mridula Barua (Rishi's mother)	Niloy Dutta (Niloy,Rishi's friend)
Prastuti Parasar (Tina, Rishi's ex-girlfriend)	Hiranya Deka (Rishi's teacher)
Jerifa Wahid (,Pahi, Rishi's wife)	Purabi Sarma (Rubi, the wife of Binoy)
Nipon Goswami (Biwsajeet Phukan,Pahi's father)	Junu Barua (Pahi's mother)
Pabitra Margherita (Arunabh,Rishi's friend)	Dibyajyoti Das (Salim, Raja's friend)
Nilu Chakrabarti (Rishi's Music Teacher)	Parthapratim Goswami (Partha Rish's friend)
Jatin Bora (Raja)	Jonki Borthakur (Pahi's friend)

6.2 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The following table shows the total frame of the films selected for the study.

Table 6.3: Frame of the films selected for the study

Name of the films	Length of the movies	Women centric films	Total space of women in the films	Songs on women only	Songs on both men-women	Total length of the women pictured songs
Kanyadaan	02:46:26	NO	1:50:02	0	5	00:28:12
TMMM*	02:39:24	NO	1:30:45	0	5	00:35:08

TMM* indicates the film Tumi Mur Mathu Mur

The Table 6.3 shows the length of both the films, *Kanyadaan* and *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* (2:46:26 and 2:39:24 respectively). Both the films were not women-centric films. *Kanyadaan* had dedicated 1:50:02 space for women out of the total timing. The film was a social film picturised on the situations of the joint family where most of the characters are female. But it cannot be categorised as women centric film though it has given maximum time to the women characters. There were no songs picturised especially on women, but both the films had picturised songs on men and women having 5 of each.

The following table and the figure show the total scene and other scenes dedicated to women and other related scenes on women which are important to reach in a justifiable conclusion regarding portrayal of women in Assamese Visual Media.

Table 6.4: Table showing the percentage of different scenes of the selected films, 2000-2002

Row labels	Scenes dedicated to women	Scenes dedicated to men	Others	Total
Kanyadaan	50 52.63	60 52.17	20 41.66	130 50.38
TMMM	45 47.36	55 47.82	28 58.33	128 49.61
Total	95 100	115 100	48 100	258 100

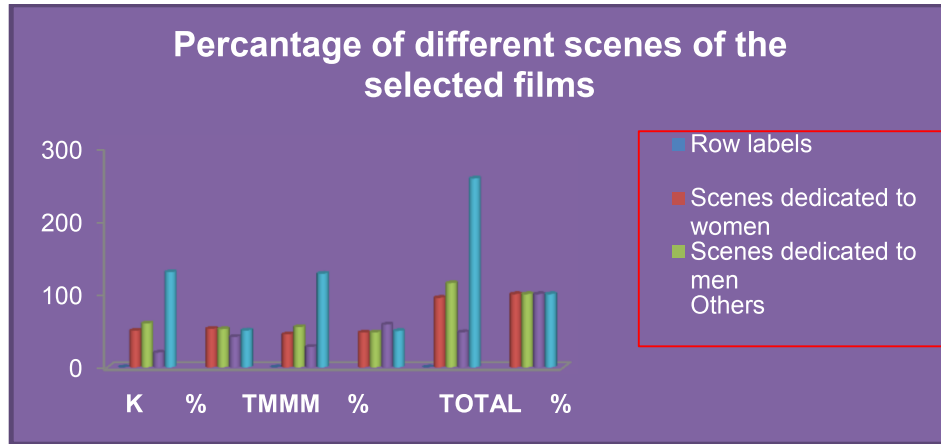


Figure 6.1: Graphical representation of Table 6.4

In the Table 6.4 and Figure 6.1, it is seen that total number of scenes dedicated to women in the film *Kanyadaan* was 50 whereas 45 in *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*. In this regard, *Kanyadaan* stands with 52.63% whereas *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* stands at 47.63%. In the context of scenes dedicated to the men, *Kanyadaan* was also stood higher with 52.17% in comparison to *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* (47.82%).

The following table and the figure display the roles of women characters in both the films.

Table 6.5: Role of women characters

Name of the films	Women are in leading roles	Women are in main supporting role	Women are in supporting role	Total
K.D*	0	1	6	7
TMMM*	0	1	3	4

*K.D: *Kanyadaan*, *TMM: *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*.

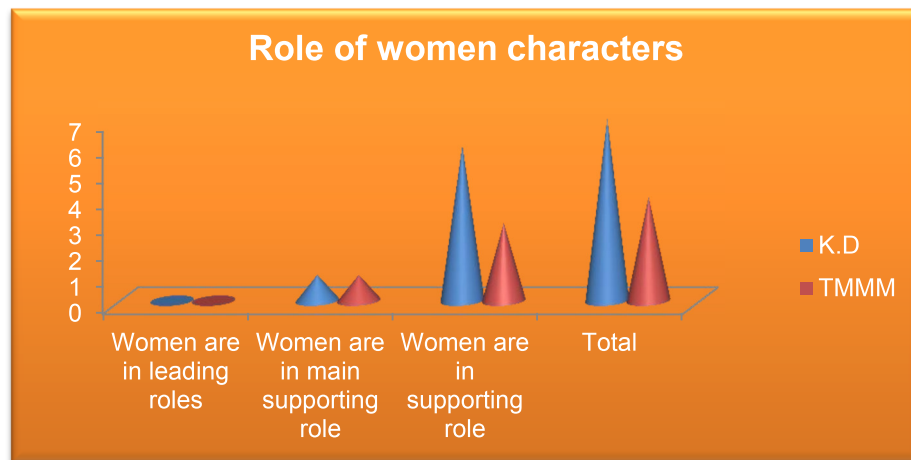


Figure 6.2: Graphical Representation of Table 6.5

The Table 6.5 and the Figure 6.2 show the different types of women characters on screen. Both the movies were male dominating movies. Both the movies had women characters, but not in a leading role. Both of the films have 1 of each women were in main supporting role and regarding supporting role *Kanyadaan* has 6 women characters whereas *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* has 3 characters. In *Kanyadaan*, Jatin Bora (Utpal) played the lead role. Mridula Barua (Joya, Dangar Bou, eldest sister-in-law), Madhurima Kakoti (Neera, Maju Bou, th middle sister-in-law), Purabi Sharma (Rubi, Saru Bou, the younger sister-in-law), Rituparna kataki (Rima, Utpal’s Girl Friend), Chatona Das (Neighbour, Baideo), Madhusmita Saikia (Sabera, Neighbour), Manjula Barua (Preeti, Rima’s mother) played the supporting roles. In *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* Jubeen Garg (Rishiralj Barua) played the protagonist role, Mridula Barua (Rishi’s mother), Jerifa Wahid (Pahi, Girlfriend cum Wife later), Pahi’s mother (Juri Saikia) and Prastuti Parasar (Tina, the lady villain) played the supporting role.

The following table and the figure show the nature of portrayals of women through the different scenes in the selected Assamese films of the period 2000-2002.

Table 6.6: Pattern of portrayals of women in the films

Row Labels	Women as victims	Women in traditional roles	Women as sexy/seductive	Women as soft hearted/stereotyped	Women as decision maker	others	Total
	No. of scenes	No. of scenes	No. of scenes	No. of scenes	No. of scenes	No. of scenes	No. of scenes
Kanyadaan	2 33.33%	42 58.33%	19 45.23%	40 52.63%	4 66.66%	23 41.07%	130 50.38%
Tumi Mur Mathu mur	4 66.66%	30 41.66%	23 54.76%	36 47.36%	2 33.33%	33 58.92%	128 49.61%
Total	6 100	72 100	42 100	76 100	6 100	56 100	258 100

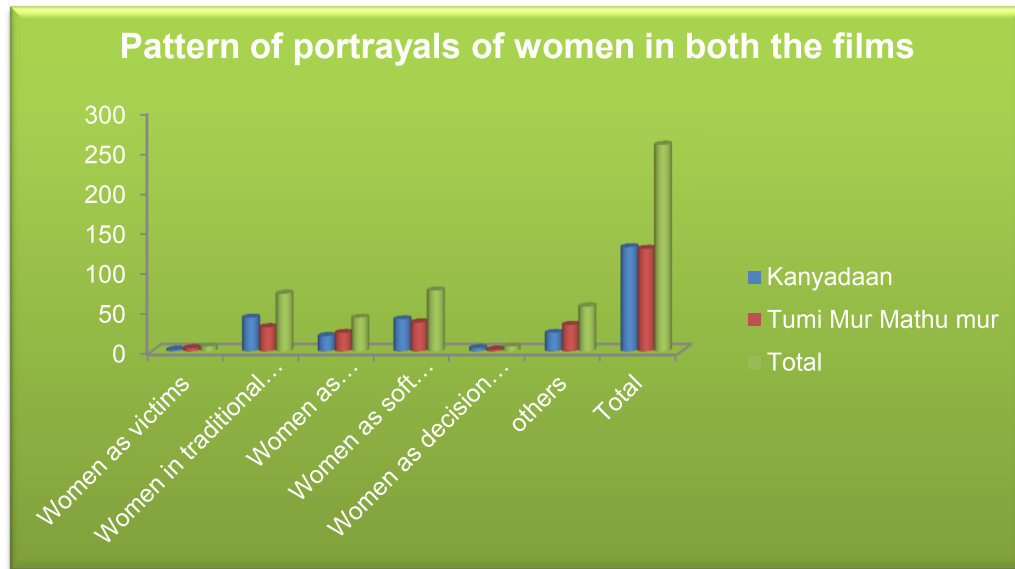


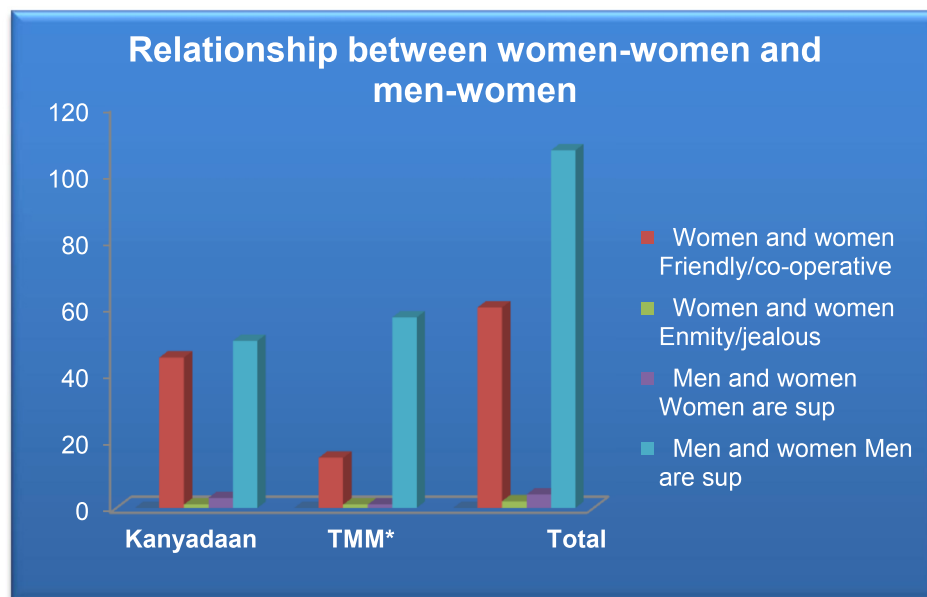
Figure 6.3: Graphical representation of Table 6.6

In Table 6.6 and the figure 6.3 show that, in 2 scenes of *Kanayadaan* women had been shown as victims while *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* was having 4 scenes. 42 scenes were screened in showing women as traditional role models in the film *Kanyadaan* and *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* had screened 30 scenes. In *Kanyadaan*, total 19 scenes were dedicated to showing women as sexy and seductive whereas in *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* dedicated 23 scenes. 40 scenes had been dedicated for presenting women as soft-hearted and in stereotype manner in *Kanyadaan* and 36 scenes in *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*. *Kanyadaan* had dedicated 4 scenes for showing women in decision making role, while 2 scenes could be seen in *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*. And in the “others” category *Kanyadaan* dedicates 23 and *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* dedicated total 33 scenes.

The following table and the figure present the relationship between women and women and men and women shown in both of the films in the particular period of time 2000-2002.

Table 6.7: Table showing the relationship between women- women and men-women shown in both of the films in the particular period of time 2000-2002.

Row labels	Women and women		Men and women		Others	Total
	Friendly /co-operative	Enmity/jealous	Women are sup	Men are sup		
Kanyadaan	45 75%	1 50%	3 75%	50 46.72%	31 38.27%	130 50.38%
Tumi Mur Mathu Mur	15 25%	1 50%	1 25%	57 53.27%	50 61.72%	128 46.61%
Total	60 100	2 100	4 100	107 100	81 100	258 100



**TMM: Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*

Figure 6.4: Graphical Representation of the Table 6.7

The Table 6.7 and the figure 6.4 show the relationship between women-women and women –men characters in both the films. In the film *Kanyadaan*, in 45 scenes women were shown in a friendly and co-operative to each other and in 1 scene as enemy and jealous, Whereas *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* dedicated 15 and 1 scene respectively. Regarding women-men relationship out of the 130 scenes, in 3 scenes women were portrayed as superior on the other hand 50 scenes were dedicated for showing men as superior to women. As far as *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* is concerned, out of 128 scenes, in one (1) scene women were shown as superior whereas 57 scenes portrayed men were superior to women.

The following table and figure show the types of women characters in both the films.

Table 6.8: Types of women character

Types of Characters	Kanyadaan	Tumi Mur Mathu Mur
Wife	6	2
Mother	2	2
Widow+Mother	0	1
Wife+ Mother	2	0
Girl Friend	0	1
Girlfriend/marriage	1	1
Working women	0	0
Model	0	1
Other	0	0
Total	11	8

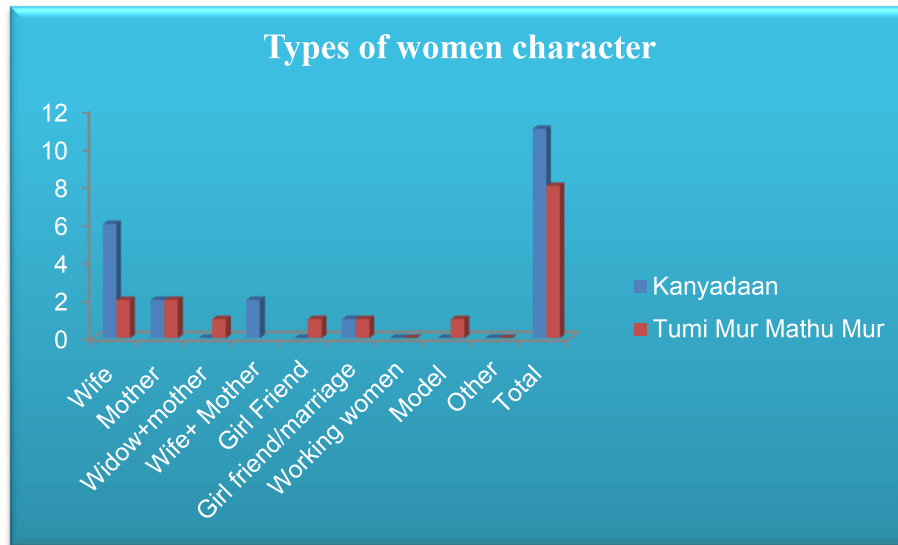


Figure 6.5 Graphical Representation of Table 6.8

The table 6.8 and the Figure 6.5 show the different types of women character showed in the films. In *Kanyadaan* 6 characters played the role of wife and in *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* 2 characters played the role of wife. 2 characters played the role of mother in *Kanyadaan* and in the same manner in *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* had also 2 characters. In *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* one character played the role both as a widow and a mother while no such characters were found in *Kanyadaan*. In *Kanyadaan*, 2 characters played the role of both as wife and mother and no such characters were in *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*. 1 character played the role of as a girlfriend which was found in *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*. Similarly, one character of each film played the role of girlfriend and marriage. No women characters were found as working ladies in both the films. In *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* one character played the role as a model. In

Kanyadaan, Mridula Baruah, Madhurima Kakati, Purabi Sharma, Manjula Barua, Chetona Das and Madhusmita Saikia played a wife role. Mridula Barua and Manjula Barua played Wife+ Mother role. Rituparna kataki played the role of the girl friend of Jatin Bora but in the last scene of the film they got married. In *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*, Pahi's Mother plays the roles of wife and wife+ mother. Mridula Barua plays the role of a widow and widow+ mother roles. Pahi (Jerifa Wahid) and Tina (Prastuti Parasar) played the role of Girlfriend but Pahi (Jerifa Wahid) lastly got married to Rishi (Jubeen Garg), so her role is also included in the girlfriend/marriage in the table. Tina (Prastutui Parasar), the career interested girl shown in the film played the role of a model in the film.

The following table and figure will show the symbolism of non-virtue in both the films.

Table 6.9: Symbolism of Non-virtue (Presence on screen)

Films	Smoking	Drinking Alcohol	Flirting	Sex before marriage	None	Total
Kanyadaan	0	0	0	0	7	7
TMMM	0	1	2	1	2	6

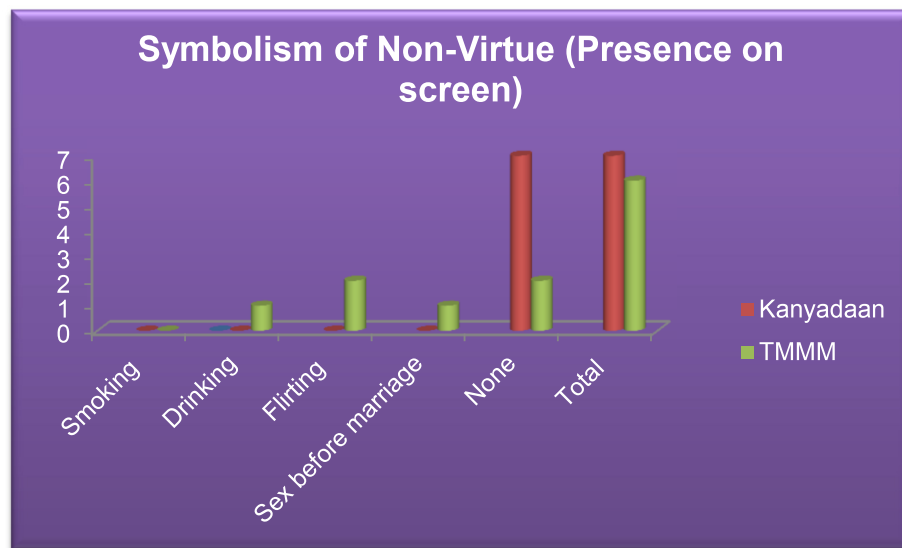


Figure 6.6 Graphical Representation of Table 6.9

The Table 6.9 and the Figure 6.6 show the symbolism of non-virtue shown in the films. In both the films *Kanyadaan* and *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*, all the women characters were presented in traditional cum stereotyped roles, except Pahi (Jerifa

Wahid), who flirts with Rishi in the first half of the film *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* and Tina (Prastuti Parasar), the first girlfriend of Rishi, she left him for making her career and loved with Jatin Bora and lastly she wanted to come back to Rishi again and started flirting with Rishi and she is shown as woman of drinking alcohol and having sex before marriage.

The following table and the figure represent the personality virtues of the women characters in both the films.

Table 6.10: Personality virtues women in cinema

Names of the films	Educated	Decision making	Love	Strong personality	Career Interested	Ritual followed	Not - mentioned
Kanyadaan	2	1	1	0	0	4	2
TMMM	2	0	2	0	1	2	0

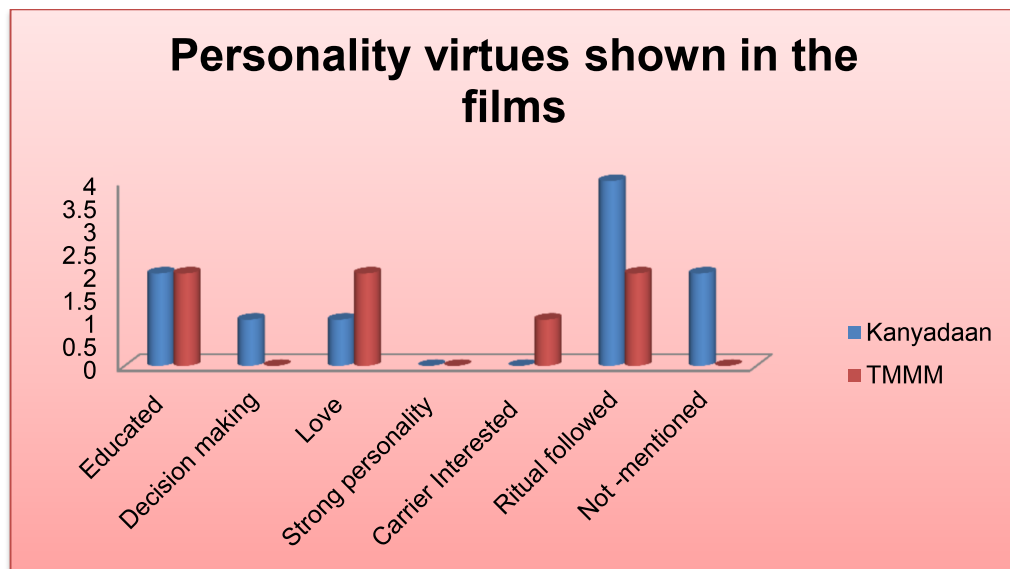


Figure 6.7: Graphical Representation of Table 6.10

The Table 6.10 and the Figure 6.7 show the personality virtues of women in the films. 2 characters of each film had been shown as educated women. In *Kanyadaan* only one character was shown as decision maker whereas no such characters were found in *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*. No women characters were found in both the films having strong personality. In the category of career interested women, only one (1) character found in *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* whereas no such characters found in *Kanayadaan*. In *Kanyadaan*, 4 characters were found as ritual followed women and *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* was having 2 characters. In the first film *Kanyadaan*, Rima (Rituparna Katak) in

the main supporting character, and Preeti, (Manjula Barua) the woman playing the role of her mother shown as educated women and in one scene Preeti was shown as the decision maker of the house. In the film Rituparna Kataki loved Jatin Bora, all the three daughter-in-laws (Mridula Barua, Madhurima Kakati and Purabi Sharma) and the mother of the main supporting role (Manjula Barua) shown as ritual followed women and the virtue of two neighbouring women (Chetona Das and Madhusmita Saikia) was not mentioned in the film. In the second film both the female main supporting role Pahi (Jerifa Wahid) and woman in the supporting role, Tina (Prastuti Parasar) shown as educated women. Pahi (Jerifa Wahid) was in love with Rishi (Jubeen Garg) and Tina (Prastuti Parasar) with Jatin Bora in the film. Tina (Prastuti Parasar) shown as career interested woman in the film. Both the mothers of (Pahi’s mother and Rishi’s Mother) showed as ritual followed women.

The following table and the figure show the costumes used by the women characters in the films.

Table 6.11: Types of costumes used by women characters of the films

Names of films	Traditional	Non-Traditional	Traditional +Non-traditional	Total
Kanyadaan	6	0	1	7
Tumi Mur Mathu Mur	2	1	1	4

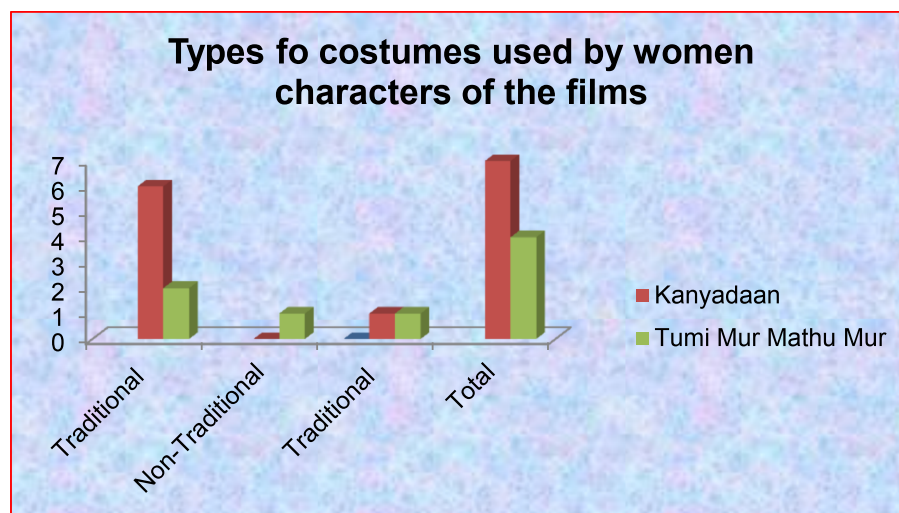


Figure 6.8 Graphical Representation of Table 6.11

The Table 6.11 and the Figure 6.8 show the types of costumes i.e. Traditional, Non-Traditional and Traditional + Non-Traditional. The women characters of *Kanyadaan*

were seen wearing “Assamese Traditional Wear” called “Chadar Mekhela” and other Indian traditional dress such as “Saari”, “Churidar and Dupatta” except Rituparana Kataki, who wore Traditional + Non-Traditional dresses like Jeans, Chadar Mekhela, Churidar, Lahanga-Chunni etc. In *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*, all the women characters wore Mekhela Chadar (Assamese Traditional wear), Pahi (Jerifa Wahid) was seen wearing Traditional + Non-Traditional dresses such as Jeans, Churidar, Saari etc. But Tina (Prastutui Parasar) was seen wearing Non-Traditional dresses like Jeans, shorts etc. in the film.

The following table and the figure show the languages used by the women characters in both the films.

Table 6.12: Languages /wording used by the women characters in the films

Names of the films	Good	Vulgar	Abusing	Mutual	Total
Kanyadaan	7	0	0	0	7
TMMM	3	1	0	1	5

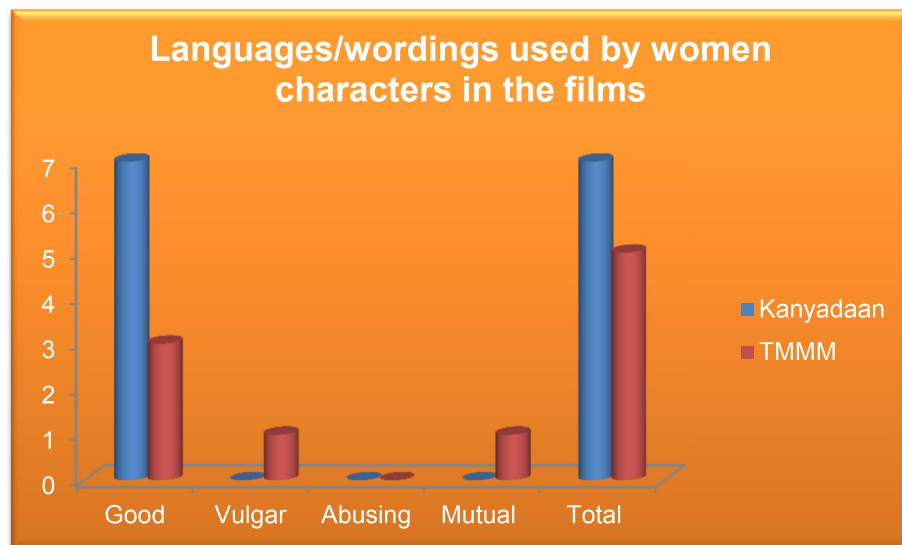


Figure 6.9: Graphical Representation of Table 6.12

Table 6.12 and the Figure 6.9 show the Languages/wordings used by the Female characters in both the films. In *Kanyadaan*, all the women characters were seen using good languages; all women shown in the film were traditional and well behaved. Regarding *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*, it can be said that 3 characters were seen delivering good languages, and 1, i.e. Tina (Prastuti Parasar) using some vulgar words towards

Rishi when she wanted to come back to Rishi’s life once again. But it should be mentioned that she used vulgar words only for Rishi (Jubeen Garg), otherwise she usually, used good languages in the entire film.

The following table and the figure show the economic status of the women characters in both the films.

Table 6.13: Economic Status of women characters of the films

Names of the films	Dependent	Independent	Semi-Dependent	Total
Kanyadaan	6	0	1	7
TMMM	3	0	1	4



Figure 6.10: Graphical Representation of Table 6.13

Table 6.13 and the figure 6.10 show the economic status of the women characters in the films. In *Kanyadaan*, it was seen that all the women were dependent economically on their husbands’ incomes. They were not working women, belonged to a middle class family, doing the house hold works, maintaining the house hold chores etc., except Preeti (Manjula Baruah) who was seen as rich because her father was a rich businessman. After his death, Preeti’s husband was continuing his family business. But she was neither a working woman nor had any connections with the family business because her husband managed everything; she just looked after the family. In *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*, also all the three women characters were seen as dependent on their husbands’ earnings except Tina (Prstutui Parsar) as she was seen as a model by

profession in the first half of the film but in the last half of the film she started to live with Jatin Bora in live-in relationship, in that period of time there was no mention in the film about her career as model and her economic status.

The following table and the figure display the living style of the women characters in the films.

Table 6.14: Living Style of women characters in the films

Names of the films	Marital	Live-in Relationship	Widow	Total
Kanyadaan	7	0	0	7
TMMM	2	1	1	4

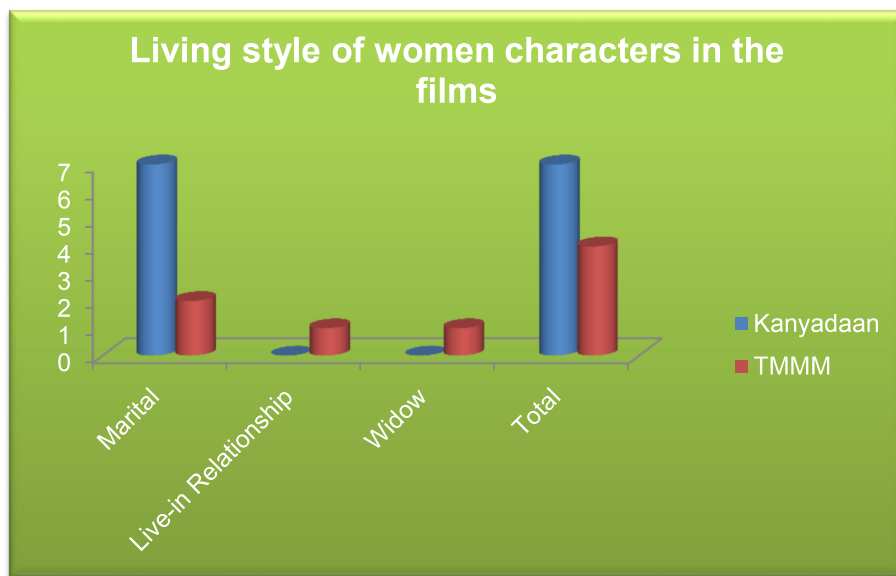


Figure 6.11: Graphical Representation of table 6.14

The table 6.14 and the Figure 6.11 show the living style of the women characters in the films. It was seen that most of the women characters were presented stereotypically. The women characters in *Kanyadaan* were shown as married. All the female characters (7) of *Kanyadaan* were traditional in nature. In *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur 2* characters, Pahi (Jerifa Wahid), and Pahi’s mother had been shown as married. Rishi’s Mother (Mridula Barua) was widow (1) in the film and Tina (Prastuti Parasar) was shown as having live-in relationship (1) with Jatin Bora.

The following table and the figure show the stereotyped representation of the women characters in the films.

Table 6.15: Stereotyped representation of women in the films

Names of the films	Ideal Mother	Ideal wife	Ideal+Non-Ideal wife	The Vamp	Total
Kanyadaan	2	4	1	0	7
TMMM	2	2	0	1	5

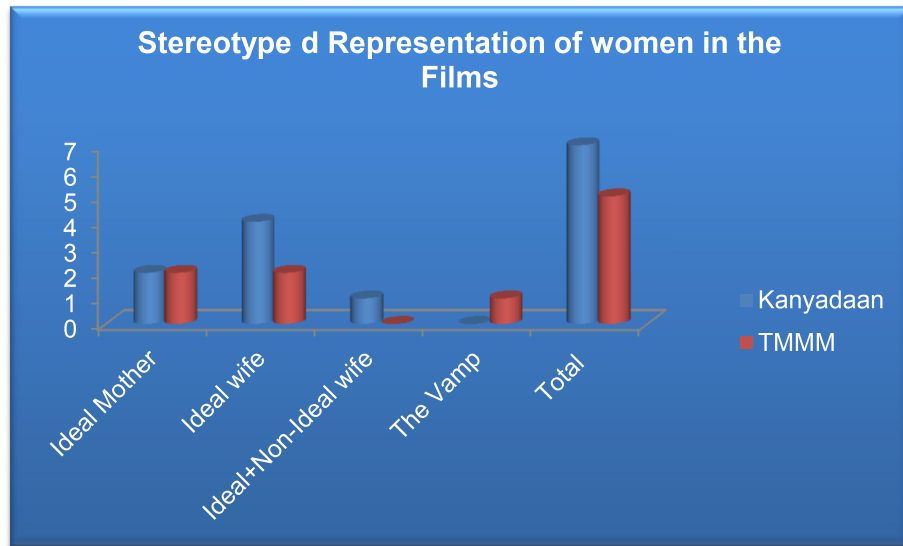


Figure 6.12: Graphical Representation of Table 6.15

Table 6.15 and the figure 6.12 show the domains of representation of women in both the films. In *Kanyadaan* 2 characters Joya (Mridula Barua) who had a girl child in the film and Preeti (Manjula Barua), the mother of Rima (Utpal’s girlfriend) were shown as ideal mother sacrificing for the good of their children, caring for their children at the expense of her happiness. In *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* also, it was seen that 2 characters, Pahi’s Mother, Mrs. Phukan (Junu Barua), and Mrs. Barua (Rishi’s mother) played the roles as ideal mothers having nurturing and caring behaviour for their children. 4 women characters of *Kanayadaan*, Joya (Mridula Barua), Neera (Madhrima Choudhury, Rubi (Purabi Sarma), Baideo (Chetona Das) were portrayed as Ideal wife honouring the family and the husbands. But 1 character in *Kanayadaan* i.e Preeti (Manjula Barua) was seen in both the role of ideal and non-ideal, in some situations she acted like an ideal wife but sometimes, she questioned on her husband’s bad decisions. In *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* also 2 women characters namely Mrs. Phukan (Junu Barua) and Pahi (Jerifa Wahid) can be categorised as idea wives having nurtured care and honour of their husbands. Tina (Prastututi Parasar) can be categorised as Vamp, as she represented an unacceptable behaviour for the society.

6.3 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF ASSAMESE VISUAL MEDIA

Assamese cinema is one of the popular medium of mass entertainment in Assam. They are serving the region from the inception of “*Joymoti*” by Rup Konwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala in 1935. From the period of Agarwala till today, there are thousands of Assamese films have been released in Assam and are entertaining the people irrespective of community or religion or language. The films selected for the study *Kanyadaan* and *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* were released in 2002 and 2000 respectively.

The Indian Film Industry called “Bollywood” is one of the prestigious and alluring industries of the world. According to Butalia (1984), Indian cinema is the single largest medium of communication, which is directly in touch with the masses, and close to 12 million people watch films every week in cinema houses and theatres. (p. 108)¹

But “Bollywood” or in other words Bombay Film industry is criticised as male dominated in terms of the representation of women in the field. Women are still lagging behind in respects of proper footing in the industry and in the quest of proper space for them. According to Ganti (2004),

“Bombay film industry is a male-dominated industry. Women pursuing careers within the industry are primarily either actresses or playback singers. This trend has changed in recent years with women making their mark as choreographers, costume designers, editors and screenwriters but their numbers are still much smaller in comparison to their male counterparts. (p. 94)².

It is criticised for the uni-dimensional nature in producing films. If one analyses the reasons behind this one-dimensionality of the portrayal of women in Bollywood, there appear to be several³:

¹ Cinematic Narrative: The Construction of Dalit Identity in Bollywood (n.d). Retrieved from http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057%2F9781137512819_9 on 15th August, 2016.
http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057%2F9781137512819_9 on 15th August, 2016.

² Women and Cinema (2013). Retrieved from <http://aaadhyaalakshmi.blogspot.in/2013/11/v-behaviorurldefaultvml.html> on 15th August, 2016.

³ Gokhale Madhavi (n.d). The Woman : Portrayal Of Women In The Indian Media [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://iitbwritersbloc.wordpress.com/2013/01/10/the-woman-portrayal-of-women-in-the-indian-media-madhavi-gokhale/> on 15th August, 2016.

1. In the industry, we do not have many women directors, women script-writers, women producers who could give us the liberated version of the modern Indian woman in her own right without commodifying her or depicting her as a sex object. Even an apparently modern director like Farah Kan relays the message that a girl needs to have a complete makeover if she wants her man (Main Hoon Na) or else she does not deserve a second look.
2. Realism does not work at the box office: the glamour quotient does. So it does not matter what the said heroine feels or says – it matters more what she wears, or..... does not wear.
3. Most Bollywood scripts are written for males, by males and aim to project a male story. We have not had a female superwoman after “Fearless Nadia.” We continue to play Janes to our overhyped Tarzans. (But if Kareena Kapoor’s role in “Jab We Met” is an indication of things to come, there is still hope. Her portrayal of the fiery, feisty girl from Bathinda comes as a refreshing change as she forces a bewildered fate-driven hero to change his perspective with sheer force of personality and some chutzpah thrown in!!)
4. Perpetuating traditional images in the entertainment field is a wise business strategy; very few writers have the courage to go where no man has ever gone before. So it was that the image of the long-suffering, doting mother in “Mother India” was perpetuated in countless movies where she was enshrined as a goddess imprisoned by her own love. This echoes the typical tendency of the Indian mind: on the one hand, woman is sanctified, placed on a pedestal and worshipped as Adi Maya; on the other, she is an object of sexual gratification, a body without a mind, a being without a soul. This explains the curious vacillation between reverence and disgust reflected in even those Hindi films made without much thought and creativity.

The Assamese film *Kanyadaan*, which is already been taken for the analysis can also be criticised for the title itself which signifies the oppressions and suppression of women in Hindu society. Hence, the concept of *Kanyadaan* has become the luxuriant subject within the purview of Feminism.

Regarding “KANYADAAN” in terms of Assamese society, it can be said that the title itself is indicating the oppression and suppression of women in Assamese society which indicates women’s secondary or inferior status. It reiterates the Hindutva and rites and rules of it towards society. Kanyadaan supposes to be one of the most vital and pious rituals in Hindu Culture, which is performed in conformity to Vedic Scriptures. ‘*Gift of a girl*’, the literal meaning of Kanyadaan, signifies the custom in which a girl is gifted by a father to a groom. This daan or the Gift is considered as a Mahadaan as per the Hindu custom which has to be performed by the father of a Kanya or a girl. This dutiful act, Kanyadaan is believed to bring fortune and relieve the parents of bride from all the sins. It is well stated in the following passage:

The ritual of Kanya Daan is considered very auspicious in Hindu religion...which is said to bring fortune as well as relief from the sins for the bride’s parents. Kanyadaan means when the father hands over all his rights and duties towards his daughter to her prospective groom. This way the father gives her daughter as a gift to the groom. As per tradition, groom is considered a form of Lord Vishnu. Thus, presenting him gifts is deemed as the greatest honour for the parents of the bride⁴.

The term Kanyadaan is the combination of two words, ‘Kanya’ and ‘Daan’: Kanya means a virgin and Daan means donation. In this, a father hands over his virgin daughter to the groom (considered as Lord Vishnu at the time of marriage). Regarding Hindu marriage it is well stated in the following:

One should marry a woman whose virginity is intact, endowed with auspicious marks, not previously wed by another, dear to one’s heart, of the same varna, not a sapinda, younger than oneself, not diseased, not from the same pravara and gotra, possessing a brother.... (Yajnavalkya Smriti,1.52-55 quoted in Chakravarti:2009 p-28⁵)

⁴Kanyadaan—Donation Of Your Daughter???? Retrieved from <https://anjugandhi.wordpress.com/2009/07/21/kanyadaan-donation-of-your-daughter/> on 15th August, 2016.

⁵ Kannabiran K.:2012 *Tools of Justice: Non-discrimination and the Indian Constitution* retrieved from https://books.google.co.in/books?id=Y_7fCgAAQBAJ&pg=PA126&lpg=PA126&dq= on 15th August, 2016.

6.3.1 Marriage: The “Punya” for the father to gift his virgin daughter to the groom

Having been agglomerated with infinite patience and persistence a woman enters into the threshold of marriage. In this emotional ritual, father places the right hand of the daughter in the right hand of the groom and the mother pours holy water on the palms of bride and the groom. Then, the sacred verses are read out. The father of the bride asks the groom to promise that him that he would help his daughter in accomplishing three significant goals of life that are⁶:

- Dharma
- Artha
- Kama

Once the verses are read, the beloved daughter is given away by the parents to the groom and she becomes responsibility of the groom and his family. According to Hinduism, Kanyadaan is pious as well as an emotional affair in which, the father officially gives away his rights and duties towards his daughter to the groom and kanya becomes the captive of the groom for the whole life⁷.

It’s considered to be a sacred (religious) duty of a father to give away his virgin daughter to other house through marriage and to have the “Punya”. Manusmriti specifies----

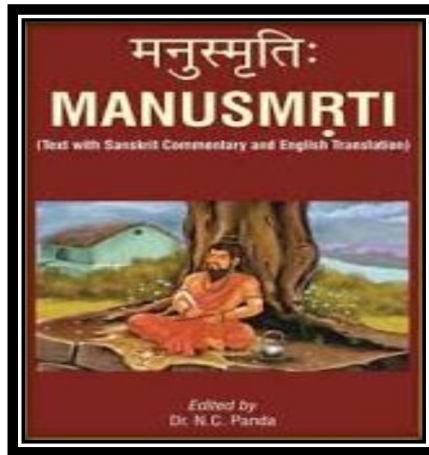


Figure 6.13: Manusmriti

⁶ Gupta A. (2011). Significance of kanyadaan in Hindu Rituals. Retrieved from <http://www.matrimonialsindia.com/blog/significance-of-kanyadaan-in-hindu-rituals.htm> on 15th August, 2016.

⁷ Ibid.

Reprehensible is the father who gives not [his daughter]
in marriage at proper time, reprehensible is the
husband who approaches not [his wife in due season],
and reprehensible is the son who does not
protect his mother after her husband died. (Law no 4)⁸.

From this period a woman has to gone through a “Psychological Uprooting”⁹ as she is shifted from his parental home to her husband’s house where she has to live the entire life maintaining and nurturing house and family emotionally and psychologically. She cuts of all the familiar bonding with her parental home to create a space in her new house. The role of women in Indian culture has rightly been observed in the following---

She [in relation to her husband] is like a mother while cooking
and serving food, secretary while he is working
servant at his feet, courtesan in his bed and earth like
in forbearance¹⁰

It is a quit clear picture regarding women in Indian society is that, she has to live always in a subordinate role sacrificing her identity, freedom, happiness and are being struggling for her own space which is full of respects, justice and equality. She will be known to the world when her bonding established with the male otherwise she has no role to play.

Regarding the space that should be given to women, Virginia Woolf comments on the need for money and a room of her own:

“[...] give her a room of her own and five hundred a year, let her speak her mind and leave out half that she now puts in, and she will write a better book one of these days”. (Woolf 1998: 99)¹¹

⁸ Kanyadaan: Missing the Mother's/Motherland's Lap (n.d). Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/46407/9/09_chapter%203.pdf on 15th August, 2016.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹Theorizing the ‘Woman’s Text’ (n.d). Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/18301/8/08_chapter%202.pdf on 15th August, 2016.

"[...] all I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point - a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction."
(Woolf 1998: 13)¹²

The eighteenth century writer, philosopher, and advocate of women's right, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) in her work *A Vindication on the Rights of Woman* (1792) responded to the educational and political theorists of the eighteenth century who believed that by means of education alone women could attain freedom of the mind and soul. Her argument was based on premise that women are not naturally inferior to men intellectually (as has always been claimed by the androcentric society), and with education, they will be as rational as men¹³.

After the marriage, she is expected to adopt "Sita" like image of purity, chastity and loyalty; she has to suffer until and unless she achieves those qualities in society.

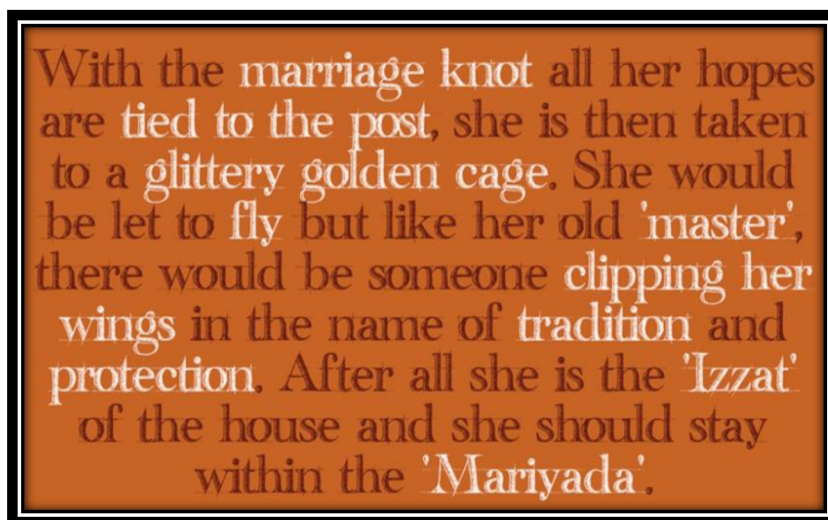


Figure 6.14: Marriage Knot¹⁴

The two choices a woman in today's world has are, either to live, or to live for her. They are all living, but only a grain like minority choose to loosen itself from the norms, customs and behavioural dictum, which are all gender biased. They get education, shelter and food but no freedom. No freedom to do what they aspire, or to stand where they desire. They are allowed to talk but not speak against the immortal

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Theorizing the 'Woman's Text' (n.d). Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/18301/8/08_chapter%202.pdf on 15th August, 2016.

¹⁴ Marriage Knot (n.d). Retrieved from <https://www.google.co.in/search?q=Patriarchy+and+women&num> on 12.06.2015.

customs of the society. After all she is the ‘IZZAT’ of the house and she should stay within the ‘MARYADA’. (Sachvev. A: n.d)¹⁵

Being a woman she is debarred from asserting her identity, she is discouraged to apply her talents, intelligence and skills to any situation though she is having those qualities. Traditionally, a woman is expected or thought of possessing qualities which glorify her as a daughter, wife, mother and mother-in-law. She is expected to be skilled in household work. Society demands women being associated the desired conducts such as obedience, conformity, sacrifice, virtuous, affectionate and so on. A woman usually not expected to deviate from this expected role by the society, any woman who tries to break this patriarchal social authority then she is castigated forever as she is trained from her childhood to **“Accept”** not to **“Demand”**. Laws of Manusmriti says,

*“Her Father protects [her] in childhood, her husband
protects [her] in youth, her sons protect [her] in
old age; a woman is never fit for independence (Law no 3)¹⁶.*

Being captive of her husband, she starts constantly living under control, fear, rebuke and rejection; she always struggles to carve a space for herself in her parental as well as marital home. After acquiring the qualities of a good wife, she prepares herself to bear a child in her womb, for which she will be revered as mother, but not being as a human being.

There is a common metaphor or myth in the Hindu religion that woman is the field or earth into which man puts his seed. To quote—

“...by the sacred tradition the woman is declared to be the soil, the man is declared to be the seed; the production of all corporeal beings (takes place) through the union of the soil with the seed....” (Buhlar, 1964)¹⁷

It is noteworthy that the concept of the female in Hinduism¹⁸ presents an important duality: on the one hand, the woman is fertile, benevolent—the bestower, on the other

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Kanyadaan: Missing the Mother's/Motherland's Lap (n.d). Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/46407/9/09_chapter%203.pdf on 15th August, 2016.

¹⁷ Wadly S. (1988). Women and The Hindu Tradition. In Ghadially Rehana (eds.) Women in Indian Society. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

hand, she is aggressive, malevolent—destroyer. There are two popular statements regarding which characterises women (goddesses) nature thus—in times of prosperity, she indeed is Lakshmi, who bestows prosperity in the homes of men; and in times of misfortune, she herself becomes the goddess of misfortune and brings about ruin.



Figure 6.15: Image of Goddess of Prosperity, Lakshmi¹⁹

These two facets of femaleness provide a cultural logic for it and justify the women's nature based on this duality. On one hand, female is *Shakti* and the other is the *Prakriti* as well. It will be cleared in the following passage:

The female is first of all *SHAKTI* (Energy/power), the energising principle of the universe. The female is also *Prakriti* (Nature)—the undifferentiated Matter of the Universe (Susane Wadley). Nature is the active female counterpart of the cosmic person, *Purusa*, the inactive or male aspect. Moreover, Nature is Matter; the cosmic person is Spirit. But whereas *Prakriti* represents the undifferentiated matter of nature, *Purusa* provides the spirit, which is a structured code. Thus, *Purusa* (cosmic person) is code (differentiated Spirit), as opposed to *Prakriti* which is nature (undifferentiated Matter). They are also known as Brahman and Brahmi, Isvara and Isvari²⁰.

¹⁸ Hinduism is an classical religion, with having the ancient and established textual and authoritative traditions and culture, which is different from Christianity, Islam, or Judaism.

¹⁹ Lakshmi Goddess of Wealth (n.d) [Blog post]. Retrieved from http://www.onlinepuja.org/p/goddess_laxmi.php on 15th August, 2016.

²⁰ Wadly S. (1988). Women and The Hindu Tradition. In Ghadially Rehana (eds.) Women in Indian Society. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

This relationship can be represented diagrammatically thus:

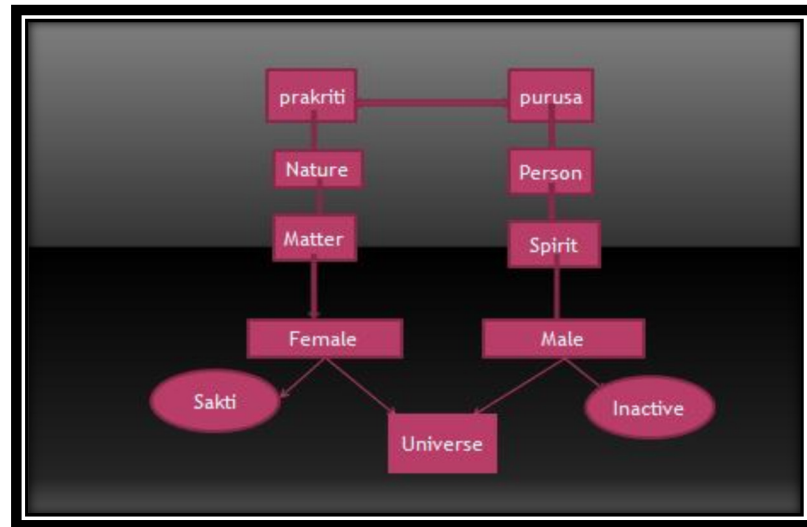


Figure 6.16: Purush and Prakriti

The unity of *Purusa-Prakriti* underlies the beliefs regarding biological conception according to which the male contributes the hard substance to the seed whereas the soft substance, the unstructured parts, from female. So, whichever partner dominated at the time of conception, determines the sex of the child. As a matter of fact, it can be said that, the discrimination had started between male and female on the basis of the concept of the *Prakriti* and *Purusha*²¹. The Laws of Manu speak of the point:

‘On comparing the seed and receptacle, the seed is declared to be more important: for, the offspring of all created being is marked by the characteristics of the seed’. (Buhlar: 1964)²²

Uniting these two facets of femaleness, women are both energy/power and nature (Orter, 1974); and Nature is uncultured. In fact, the Aryan vernacular languages of ancient India are called “*Prakriti*” (‘Un-cultured’ or ‘Natural’), as opposed to the priestly religious language Sanskrit (literally, ‘Cultured’). Uncultured power is dangerous. The equation, Women=Power +Nature= Danger, represents the essence of femaleness as it underlies Hindu religious belief and action about women. The equation summarizes a conception of the world order that explains the woman/goddess as the malevolent, aggressive destroyer. Thus, a popular myth

²¹ Wadly S. (1988). Women and The Hindu Tradition. In Ghadially Rehana (eds.) Women in Indian Society. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

²² Ibid.

prevails on the earth that man should control the dangerous female “Uncultured” power²³, as Lord Shiva did to Kali:

[...] Kali was sent by the gods to kill the demons and she destroyed all of them, having been win she performed savage killing, so the gods frightened and unable to stop her, sent Siva to induce her to desist. Entranced in her bloody rampage and not noticing him, Kali continued killing and dancing. So, Siva lay down at her feet. When eventually Kali was about to step on him, she realised that it was her husband upon whom she was placing her feet—an inexcusable act for the Hindu wife. She stopped her rampage and the earth was saved—because her husband had regained control over her²⁴.



Figure 6.17: Image of Goddess Kali

Comprehending the duel character of females—*Shakti* and *Prakriti*, the women of Hindu religion put under the control of men through the societal norms and culture being based on the concept of *Purusa* and *Prakriti*. So, the norms and guidelines proper female behaviour, especially in the male dominated classical literature, is that men must control women and their power. To quote----

²³ Wadly S. (1988). Women and The Hindu Tradition. In Ghadially Rehana (eds.) Women in Indian Society. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

²⁴ Ibid.

“.....though destitute of virtue or seeking pleasure (elsewhere), or devoid of good qualities, (yet) a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife....” (Laws of Manu)²⁵

“By violating her duty towards her husband, a wife is disgraced in this world; (after death) she enters the womb of a jackal, and is tormented by diseases (the punishment) of her sin.”²⁶

She who controlling her thoughts, words, and deeds, never slights her lord, resides (after death) with her husband (heaven), and is called a virtuous (wife) (Buhler:1964)²⁷.

6.4 COMPARISON BETWEEN *PURUSHA* AND *PRAKRITI*

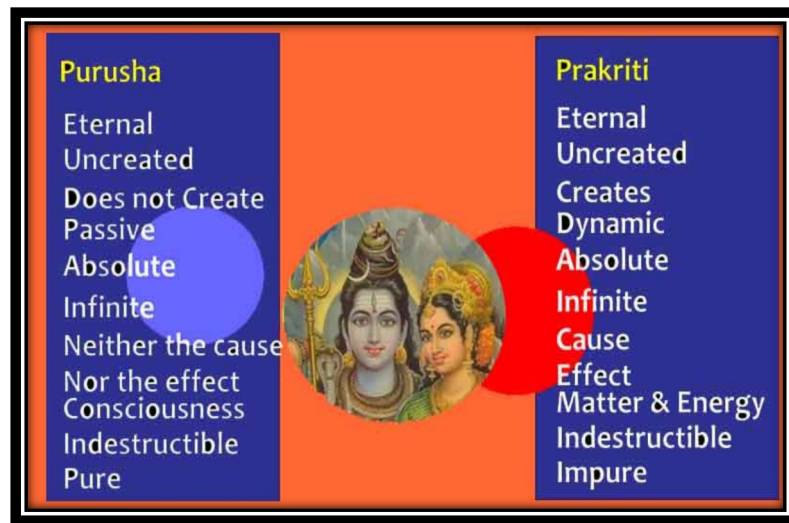


Figure 6.18: Comparisons between *Purusha* and *Prakriti*²⁸

It is noteworthy that in Hinduism, *Prakriti* is considered as a dependent and eternal aspect of *Purusha* (Brahman), which manifests during creation and which is withdrawn at the time of dissolution. However, while Brahman (*Purusha*) is immutable and remains unchanged eternally, *Prakriti* is mutable and undergoes modifications to produce diversity. Another major difference is that while *purusha* is

²⁵ Wadly S. (1988). Women and The Hindu Tradition. In Ghadially Rehana (eds.) Women in Indian Society. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Jayram V. (n.d). The True Meaning of Prakriti in Hinduism. Retrieved from <http://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/essays/the-true-meaning-of-prakriti.asp> on 16 August, 2016.

one indivisible reality, *prakriti* represents a set of eternal realities called the ‘Tattvas’. The Brahman is an independent reality while the *Prakriti* is a dependent reality. *Prakriti* is responsible for the illusion and the sense of duality. All vikarams, (changes) and gunas are possible due to *Prakriti* only. Through the interplay of the gunas, it binds the indwelling *Purusha* to the sense objects and thereby becomes the cause of Its birth in both good and evil wombs. At the physical level, *Prakriti* is the body and the mind (kshetra or the field) with all their constituent parts, while *Purusha* is the indwelling witness Spirit, (kshetragna or the knower of the body), the pure, egoless consciousness that exists beyond the senses and the mind. He is the Witness, the Guide, the Bearer, the Enjoyer, the Great Lord and the Supreme Self.

Women of Assam are no exception. In the name of marriage they are gifted to another house where they have to be suppressed by the husbands or in-laws. They have to spend the entire life serving their families, rearing and bearing children, and depending economically on their husbands. Patriarchal domination over women can be seen in every aspects of women’s lives, economically, politically, social and even in house hold matters also women cannot have the decision making power. In the time of marriage also the groom’s party always put into the superior position comparison to the bride’s family, they take all the important decision regarding the marriage. Women²⁹ are still in the restraints of various traditions, customs, witch hunting, age old superstitions, dowry, purdah system, early marriage, widowhood etc. From birth to their death a woman of Assam is known by the background of a male, it may be father, brother, husband or son: she has no identity of herself.

Nizara Hajarika to discuss and reveal the women’s lives of Assam, gives importance on the writings on women of Assam in the period of Pre-independence which critically analysed the position of women in terms of the restricted “Woman’s Space” in family and society due to the Patriarchal culture. She remarks:

Traditionally, women have always been entrusted with the hegemonically assigned domestic space. They are used to accept this confined space, according to patriarchal dicta, without questioning them. Colonial modernity

²⁹Devi, Dr.M. Tineshwori (2013) Women Status in Assam, Journal of Business Management and Social Science Research, Vol-2, No-1. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.403.2091&rep=rep1&type=pdf> on 16th August, 2016.

and western education precipitated women's realization of their own condition. With their entry into the public sphere, they are conscious of their oppression in various spheres of life. With the spread of western ideology and education and also through their exposure to the public sphere, women began to question the oppression. This resistance was reflected in their speeches and writings. (Hazarika: 2015)³⁰

Hazarika states that through those writings, the then social structure within which women had to survive and adjust can be understood—all these help to estimate the status and position, the limitations and restrictions faced by the Assamese women. Even though the so called male responses were no encouraging and supportive, yet the women writers continued their struggle against the male dominance in the then society. They vehemently challenged the male dominance and advised women to focus on improving their condition and be aware of power politics existed between the two sexes in the patriarchal society. One of the noted women writer in that period is Kamala Rabha, who wrote “Narir Obostha” (Conditions of women) where she presented the age old sufferings as being inferior. She acknowledged the natural justice for both men and women. Rabha observes:

[...] even men know that without an improvement in the condition of women, no nation can prosper. Still irrespective of cities or villages, the fathers and brothers stand as obstacle in the spread of women's education... women have never got the respect that they deserve; men have never given women a respectable place; women have always been endowed with shame, humiliation and torture as a reward of her service, her love, her motherhood and her divinity that she renders to her man... we are human too, and we too need our rights, our education, our ideology and all the arrangements to be called a human.(1929,p.120-121)³¹

Gradually, with the coming of the '*Orunodoi*', there were several women writers came forward to pen down the women issues and conditions of women under the patriarchal society of Assam. One of the most important women writers in this period

³⁰ Hazarika Nijara (2015). Colonial Assam and Women's Writing. Retrieved from <http://feministsindia.com/colonial-assam-and-womens-writing-nizara-hazarika/> on 16th August, 2016.

³¹ Hazarika Nijara (2015). Colonial Assam and Women's Writing. Retrieved from <http://feministsindia.com/colonial-assam-and-womens-writing-nizara-hazarika/> on 16th August, 2016.

is Padmavati Devi Phukanani, who can be rightly considered as the first Assamese women writer. Phukanani published two books, *Sudharmar Upakhyān* (1884) and *Hittasadhika* (1892). It will be cleared in the following:

In her article titled 'Bidhaba', she portrays the pain that Hindu women as widows have to face throughout their lives. "The very word is frightening for any woman primarily because our society inflicts innumerable sufferings in the form of restrictions (do's and don'ts) on widows" (Phukanani 1994: 63). However, even though Phukanani tries to address such women-centric issues she could not really present her observations in a light, which may be considered as being different from the male writings. Phukanani wrote in spite of witnessing the deaths of fifteen out of eighteen children (Buzarbarua 1994: 104)³².

Nalinibala Devi (1898-1977) was one amongst the noted women writers of her time. As a woman writer, though Nalini Bala Devi never challenged the patriarchal norms, prescribed for women or rebelled against women's fate. But it is noteworthy that, out of the patriarchal pressure as being woman in the stringent patriarchal society, Devi could able to find her place in Assamese literature, which was one of the recognised men's domain in a patriarchal society. It is well stated in the following:

[...] Assamese women's writing during the colonial period had created two distinct voices. One voice is the voice of a progressive subject, who talks about women's awareness of their position and status in the society. This voice is heard in women's writings in the journals and periodicals. The other voice is her private voice, which we hear when she takes to writing a novel where she presents the social reality. The women's novels are written within the traditional rubric and tend toward conservatism and didacticism. Moreover, the novel being a new literary genre, there is a conflict between literary inheritance and ideology. However, women's novels present an ambiguity too, where they present women's awareness about their subjectivity

³²Theorizing the 'Woman's Text' (n.d). Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/18301/8/08_chapter%202.pdf on 16th August, 2016.

and identity and this is evident in a subtle manner in the novels written by the Colonial Assamese women.³³

From the Quantitative Analysis of the data of the Film *Kanyadaan*, it has already been revealed that the women characters of this film are portrayed as Traditional and it attributes the stereotyped qualities on women as ideal wife or ideal women or as ideal mother.

In the entire film it was seen that the traditional values, myths, history or in other words the unconscious reflection of the social reality, imbalanced power structure, have been elevated. The female characters were not presented as having intellectual capacity or intelligence to take part in the decision making of the entire house and the family.

Traditional female values, qualities and duties attributed by the society based on religion are listed below ³⁴--

- As a child, to be obedient and respectful to her parents and elders.
- In household life, to serve a worthy husband and treat his friends and relatives with affection. To avoid mixing intimately with other men.
- To be fully conversant in religious principles.
- To be expert in household affairs, and to keep the home clean and well-decorated.
- To dress and decorate herself to please her husband. A wife should avoid dressing up if her husband is away from home.
- To control her greed and passions and to speak truthfully and pleasingly.
- To follow certain *vratas* (vows) such as fasting on days like Ekadasi (the 11th day of the moon).
- To love, protect and nurture children.

³³ Hazarika Dr. Nizara (2015). Colonial Assam and Women's Writing. Retrieved from <http://feministsindia.com/colonial-assam-and-womens-writing-nizara-hazarika/> on 16th August, 2016.

³⁴ Women's Dharma [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://iskconeducationalservices.org/HoH/practice/703.htm> on 16th August, 2016.

- In later life, to dedicate time to spiritual practices and to give counsel to younger family members.



Shot 1: Joya adorning the bride with traditional ornaments



Shot 2: Neera and Joya serving food for the family

In shot 1 Joya (Mridula Barua), the eldest sister-in-law of Utpal (Jatin Bora) is seen as embellishing the bride with traditional ornaments. In shot 2, it is seen the female members of the Barua family serving food for the males. All the four brothers Bijoy, Binanada, Binoy and Utpal are having food served by Neera and Joya. It's a

projection of typical Indian society in general and Assam where wives or the women of a family make food and serve their husbands or other members of the family.



Shot 3: Women are serving food for the family



Shot 4: Neera is showing making food

In most of the scenes (for example shot 3 and 4) in the film it is seen all the female characters doing household chores, maintaining the family, making foods, feeding family and maintaining relationship with the neighbours. As it has already been analysed quantitatively that in *Kanyadaan* the female characters are shown in

Traditional roles and these two photographs are representation of that quantitative analysis of this particular film.

In shot 3, all the brothers are seen having food and the food is served by the female members of the Barua family and it can be said that this picture is the reality of our society where patriarchy dominates in the lives of women in name of father, brother, husband or sons. As Manu says women should never be in independence, should have to be the captives of the males and always be dependent on man in every respects of their lives. In scene 4, Neera (Madhurima Choudhury) is making food for the family and talking to their servant Phani (Hiranya Deka). It is to be mentioned here that though Phani as a servant of Barua family does everything in the house but he is never seen in the kitchen cooking. The following will throw light on it:

The way women are shown in movies these days is hardly different than those before a decade or a few. Women have been shown to consider being an ideal homemaker as the goal of their life. Leaving few exceptions, movies of recent times have hardly shown an ‘ideal woman’ doing anything but being a housewife.³⁵

Most of the characters of this film are shown predominantly in their roles as homemakers, mothers, and wives. They are shown devoting their primary energies to improving their appearances and taking care of homes and people. Julia T. Wood critically states thus:

Women’s role in the home and men’s role outside of it are reinforced by media. Media emphasize men’s independent activities. Most of the times men are shown focussing on work and/or their achievements, reiterating the cultural message that men are supposed to do, perform. Meanwhile women almost invariably focus on their roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers. This illustrates the media’s bias in favour of women who are traditionally feminine and who are not too able, too powerful, or too confident. (Wood: 2014)³⁶.

³⁵ Haresh (2013). Portrayal of Women in Indian Media [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.bellbajao.org/portrayal-of-women-in-indian-media/> on 16th August, 2016.

³⁶ Wood J. (1994). The Gendered Media: The Influence of Media on views of Gender. Retrieved from <https://www1.udel.edu/comm245/readings/GenderedMedia.pdf>.

Family is one of the social institutions through which patriarchy is bred among the individuals. It is a brewery of patriarchal practices, which socializes the individuals to sexually differentiated roles—men as the bread-winners and head of the households while women as the obedient and submissive house-keepers. In this regard, it should be important to read Engels who in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* traces about the existence of equality between the two only classes—men and women in the primitive age; both the classes had equal share in the economic field. But with the discovery of Copper, Tin, Bronze and Iron, and with the appearance of the plough, agriculture enlarges its scope; intensive labour is called for in cleaning woodland and cultivating the fields. Then man has the only recourse to the labour of other men, whom he reduces men to slaves. Gradually, private property appears. Simultaneously, a new class emerges as **Master of slaves and of the earth**. Hence, man becomes the proprietor also of woman. Thus, this can be termed as '*the great historical defeat of the feminine sex*'. Simone De Beauvoir, putting her support on Engels remarks:

[...] the same cause which had assured to woman the prime authority in the house – namely, her restriction to domestic duties – this same cause now assured the domination there of the man; for woman's housework henceforth sank into insignificance in comparison with man's productive labour – the latter as everything, the former a trifling auxiliary. (Beauvoir: 1948)³⁷

So, since the time of that period it gradually becomes the myth that women are the slaves and men are the masters. But Simone de Beauvoir says "Man needs "others" to affirm his existence and to break away from immanence. It is well stated in the following:

Since women do not present themselves as subjects, they have no virile myth in which their prospects are reflected; they have neither religion nor poetry which belongs to them in their own right. It is still through the dreams of men

³⁷ *The Point of View of Historical Materialism* (n.d). Retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/2nd-sex/ch03.htm> on 16th August, 2016.

that they dream. It is the God's fabricated by males which they adore.
(Fallalze: 1998)³⁸



Shot 5: Female characters are serving man



Shot 6: Women are in traditional dress

In these shots (5 and 6) all the women are seen wearing the Assamese traditional dress 'Chadar Mekhla'. In shot 5, Rubi is offering tea to Utpal and Joya is discussing with Utpal about Rima, the beloved of Utpal. In shot 6, all the sister-in-laws of Utpal are able to get the photo of his girlfriend which he hid below his pillow in his bed and they are plotting to trap Utpal to reveal the truth about the girl.

³⁸ Fallaize Elizabeth (1998). *Simone de Beauvoir: A Critical Reader* [e-book]. Retrieved from <https://books.google.co.in/books?isbn=0415147034> on 16th August, 2016.



Shot 7: Joya smearing Sindur in Rima's head



Shot 8: Joya putting ring in Rima's finger



Shot 9: Rima touching feet of the eldest brother after her marriage

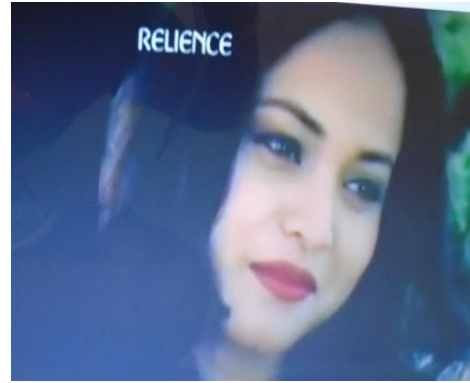
Sindur (Vermilion) plays an important role in Hindu society. It is the symbol of a married woman. In *Kanyadaan* also, in shot 7, the eldest daughter-in-law of Barua Family is putting Sindur in the head of Rima to bind her in the bondages of bindings and sufferings. The sindur symbolises the inferiority and secondary status of women in a family: dependence, inequality become the primary assets of her conjugal life. Once married women have to wear the cover of traditional role pre-destined in her life, and always try making a space for her to feel the transformation from daughter to wife and being adapted to that new role she makes her ready for fetching the new generation and thus passes through stages of daughter, sister, wife, daughter-in-law and mother. Her identity is always known when she is in a relationship with a man.

In *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur (TMMM)*, it is visible that women have been portrayed in stereotypical roles including the role of the vamp, as modern independent, and sometime in case of the main supporting role, as soft hearted, traditional attributing some stereotyped character on them living in the domination of the men and having the happiness in their lives to be secondary.

In the case of Indian society, the Patriarchal view of women has been so convenient over the years for division of labour and accountability of tasks³⁹ and it is important to note here that these norms have gradually become the way of life and cut and dry of the people of India. By degrees, these serve as the foundation for the imbalanced power structure of society. These power structures reinforce the stereotypes and the stereotypes further strengthen the power structure of the very society in turn.



³⁹ Ibid.



Gokulsing & Dissanayake (2004), attribute historical and cultural reasons to the portrayal of women in “stereotypical” roles in Indian films. In traditional Indian society, there were definite and consensual norms of behaviour – that regulated the conduct of women...Sita, immortalized in the Ramayana is the ideal woman, the ideal wife; she is steadfastly loyal to her husband and obeys his wishes unquestioningly... In traditional Indian society... women’s roles were essentially as daughter, wife and mother⁴⁰.

According to Manusmriti which had a profound effect on shaping the morals of Indian society, a female should be subject in childhood to her father, in youth to her husband, and when her husband is dead, to her children...women were given no kind of independence...She is told to be cheerful, efficient in the management of household affairs, fastidious in cleaning utensils, careful with expenses... these norms governed the lives of women in traditional India and they find clear articulation in Indian cinema, especially in popular films. (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2004, p. 78)⁴¹

On one hand, according to the rituals while women are the embodiments of purity and chaste, they can make love affairs as the Radha-Krishna did. Most of the Indian films represent this sort of love relations between the actors. In the earlier period of Indian cinema history women representing the cultural norms were praised and going against those norms society did not accept. It is well stated in the following:

⁴⁰ Nandakumar S. (2011). The Stereotypical Portrayal of Women in Commercial Indian Cinema (Thesis Presented to The Faculty of the Department of Communications University of Houston). Retrieved from <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/uh-ir/bitstream/handle/10657/217/NANDAKUMAR-.pdf?sequence=2> on 16th August, 2016.

⁴¹ Nandakumar S. (2011). The Stereotypical Portrayal of Women in Commercial Indian Cinema (Thesis Presented to The Faculty of the Department of Communications University of Houston). Retrieved from <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/uh-ir/bitstream/handle/10657/217/NANDAKUMAR-.pdf?sequence=2> on 16th August, 2016.

In this context Ganti (2004) writes, in the very early days of cinema when Phalke was beginning to make films, women were not willing to act due to the stigma attached to public performance. Acting, singing or dancing for an audience was associated with prostitutes and courtesans, and so were outside the boundaries of decent society. (p. 114)⁴²

Indian media's role towards the portrayal and projection of women is basically succumbed into the two extreme continuums as 'devi' and 'damned'. As the Indian society is more complex and different than that of west in regard to the perception, projection and acceptability of women in a stringent patriarchal culture, the persona or role model of Indian women revolves around 'devi' and 'damned'. With Feminist Movement of 70's the very question of women's rights, role/status and identity of Indian women in Indian patriarchy were raised and is yet struggling to gain clarity and acceptance of society.

Between these double standard role as 'devi' or blessed and 'damned', Indian women are now experiencing the intense identity crisis and has been narrowed down as secondary and inferior to men. In this regard Jain says (2011, quoted in Sarkar S.:2014)

Indian women representing urban class have been projected as self-independent, empowered, liberated and looking good in terms of "fair and lovely", "thin and sexy", "smart and fashionable" and also financially empowered as projected by media in last two decades. These images has reached largest no of households in India through TV channels and influenced the societal attitudes en-mass and women in particular. On the one hand women are still being exploited, used, victimised seen as an object of desire and second grade citizen in the family and the society as well. Films, television and advertisements all have been reconstructing women image by visual and print—prioritising elegance and beauty (p-53)⁴³.

Hence, as a small fraction of the large Indian society, Assamese society can never be different in terms of societal attitude towards women.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Sarkar Sumita (2014). Media and Women Image: A Feminist Discourse. Journal of Media and Communication Studies, 6(3), pp. 48-58. doi 10.5879/JMCS2014.0384.

The two important female characters of *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* are Tina, the first girl friend of Rishiraj, who wants to be a model, and shown as modern woman with a care free role, as she has nothing to do with social success, home and family or even her own femininity, opting career rather than remaining a house wife and Pahi, the second girlfriend cum wife of Rishi on the other hand has shown as traditional woman accepting the traditional role inserted by the society and culture. Pahi is shown decorating and furnishing her house, accepting all the traditionally attributed stereotype traits as good wife and good daughter-in-law.



Shot 10: Pahi is shown doing morning Prayer



Shot 11: Pahi is touching feet of the music teacher of Rishi

In this two shots—10 and 11 respectively, Pahi is seen as doing the house hold work to be good wife, virtuous woman and good daughter-in-law in the eyes o the society.

In Assamese society a newly married daughter-in-law has to get up early in the morning and should have to do the chores of the house e.g. sweeping the house, making tea, washing the clothes etc. which establish her as a good daughter-in-law and wife. Outside the home, she should have behaved like a virtuous woman to the society. These are the traits of a good woman society expects from a woman, which are stereotype in nature. Undoubtedly, Tumi Mur Mathu Mur also regenerating the same tradition regarding women which proves women to be inferior and subordinate being having no independence.



Shot 12: Tina developing friendship with Raja for her career



Shot 13: Tina falls in love of Raja



Shot 14: Tina start living together with Raja

In the film Tina (Prastutui Parasar) has been shown as modern, independent role or “self cantred” (This word is used in the film by the friend of Rishi for Tina) girl. Tina breaks-up with Rishi for her career and makes relationship with Raja as Raja was assuring her to help for being a famous model. They start living together (Live-In Relationship) and Tina associates Raja in kidnapping Pahi (Jerifa Wahid). Here, Tina is shown as the puppet of Raja, though Tina wants to be independent, but yet she has to depend on Raja for her career and making her life secured. It was conspiracy of Raja to take Tina away from Rishi to get revenge against Rishi, but Tina was not aware of it and she acted the way Raja wanted. Her nature was stereotypically portrayed in the film as modern, independent or in a care free role, but ultimately she was treated like an object for being used by a man for his own business where a woman has nothing to do with that and she has been given the characteristics of a “vamp” of the typical Bollywood films.. Such types of portrayals of women in Films or other media project women as subordinate and inferior, objects of sex and entertainment for the satisfaction of men.

In this regard Mulvey’s “Male Gaze” (1975) perspective on cinema can be served to describing the women’s roles on films being fetching the visual pleasure for the male gaze and in other words women characters are adored in such a way so that it may attract the males. Women characters are chronicled on the experience of the males which is largely based on the socially assigned characteristics or roles being attributed to men and women. Traditionally, males are expected and taught to be tough, active,

aggressive and dominant while women are caring, nurturing and passive and most importantly women have to be sexually attractive and beautiful. So, it's rightly said:

Male characters were described as “powerful, smart, rational, tall and stable” whereas female characters were found to be “attractive, fair, sociable, warm, happy, peaceful, and youthful” (p. 122). Males were more active and independent, smart, and powerful. Women were portrayed as lacking these qualities (Tadesco: 1974 as quoted in Decker:2008, p.9)⁴⁴

The “male gaze,” as she (Mulvey) termed it, assured that films would take the man’s perspective and cater to male patrons, effectively denying woman’s voice and the interests of female audience members. (Decker: 2010, p.11)⁴⁵

In Indian cinema along with the traditional role models such as ideal wives, mothers, the other popular portrayal is the exact opposite characterization, that of the vamp who are often characterised having derogatory fashions, so called sexy dresses and degrading dialogue to deliver. The vamps usually are shown smoking cigarettes, who are open with their sexuality, who flirts everybody and sensual seductive. It is well stated in the following:

She flouts tradition, seeks to imitate Western women...drinks, smokes, visits nightclubs, is quick to fall out of love...portrayed as a morally degraded person...unacceptable for her behavior... punished for it. (Gokulsing & Dissanayake: 2004, p.79)⁴⁶

The difference between the lead actress and the vamp is lies on the fact that lead actresses are regarded as the Madonna who probably behaves, acts according to the patriarchal norms attributed on them, on the other hand vamp are attributed the qualities which are against the socio-cultural norms, but likely to be watched by the males having western outlook. But, in both the cases—be it Madonna or vamp, in

⁴⁴ Decker J.T (2010) The Portrayal of Gender in the Feature-Length Films of Pixar Animation Studios: A Content Analysis. Master of Science. Auburn University. Retrieved from <https://etd.auburn.edu/bitstream/handle/10415/2100/Jonathan%20Decker%20Thesis%20Final.pdf?sequence=2> on 16th August, 2016.

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Nandakumar S. (2011). The Stereotypical Portrayal of Women in Commercial Indian Cinema (Thesis Presented to The Faculty of the Department of Communications University of Houston). Retrieved from <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/uh-ir/bitstream/handle/10657/217/NANDAKUMAR-.pdf?sequence=2> on 16th August, 2016.

reality, is a matter of discussion, are these strong female roles shown on the screen really promoting the gender equality or are they patriarchy in disguise? Though the women characters are seen cooking kitchen wearing the aprons, washing clothes in the bathrooms, or wearing jeans with cigarettes in hand, but other background activities of her personal life, the dialogue she delivers, the behaviour she portrays, symbolise patriarchy objectifying women. It is well stated in the following:

Although both heroines and vamps had many similarities in terms of what they wore and how they danced and how they were objectified on screen, the confines within which they exhibited their sexuality on screen, psychologically demarcated them in the minds of their audience as either being good or bad, moral or immoral. The differences between the heroine and the vamp indicate that the Madonna and the whore complex operate in Indian society. The girlfriend/wife/mother is a Madonna and therefore has to conform to those pure traits while the vamp is a whore and can simply be immoral. (Nandakumar: 2011)⁴⁷

In other words, media's projection of women as objects or things signifies the social and cultural construction of women as "Thing" or "object" due to their "Femaleness" or the "Procreative Power" to give immortality, continuity and purity to the "Male line". Women sexuality is being trapped in so called "Production" which divides women as upper, middle or lower and "Reproduction"(which differentiates women from men) systems of the society facilitating patriarchy in the minds of the general people: patriarchy is plant deep rooted to express, interpret, and define what it means to be men and women. In a research by Gerda Lerner about the Mesopotamian civilisation, she saw that though women were from different economic status and often enjoyed economic independence, still their sexuality was strictly controlled by men—which even can be visualised in every society. Traditional or modern, women must have to be controlled by men—this is the universal norm of society: anyone who goes against it she is labelled as "Desperate" or "Feminist" or "Errant" by the so called patriarchal society.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Besides the religion or socio-cultural norms, there are other factors also can be seen in the scene of the suppression and oppression of women. In modern period globalisation is of such factors whose effects can be seen in each and every women in the world.

In this regard, the most obvious impact seems to be the commoditification of the idea of women to serve the interest of the multinational companies. As is quite often seen in the market economies, the bodies are put to enormous use in order to enhance the sale of the goods and services to the customers. Women are used like just other means of promoting the marketing of certain things. Under such circumstances, the dignity and human rights of the women as a respectful human being in society get eroded. These things become more deplorable in the societies like India where the body of a woman is as pious as anything.

Some of the Feminist Philosophers agree that Globalization has concentrated power in the hands of wealthy nations and corporations and this situation is further leading to the marginalization of women and the global poor, some believe the conditions of globalization has also the power to have new forms of democratic accountability. Gould argues:

[...] participants in transnational associations have equal rights to participate in decisions about their common activities. The Internet and other communication and information technologies, such as open source software and online deliberative forums, can “help to increase both democratic participation and representation in the functioning of transnational institutions”. (Gould: 2009, p.38)⁴⁸

In India today, globalisation has had positive and negative implications within the male dominant society. Women represent the largest group of “Unpaid” workers both in rural and urban areas⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ Feminist Perspectives on Globalization (2014). Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-globalization/> on 17th August, 2016.

⁴⁹ Prabha S. (n.d). Retrieved from <http://www.slideshare.net/shingla/globalisation-its-impact-on-women-workforce> on 17th August, 2016.



Figure 6.19: Globalisation and Women⁵⁰

Globally, proportion of women who are “contributing family workers” is 34.5%, compared to 24.9% of men (ILO, 2008). In India, male casual workers increased from 65% in 1972 to 80% in 2002, female casual workers increased from 89% to 92% over the same period (World Bank, 2008). Studies have found that the burden of poverty falls more heavily on women than a man. The inequality in income and consumption levels between women and men has also been documented. At least, 11% of households in India are supported solely by women’s income and termed as “Female-Headed Households” (FHH)⁵¹.

Besides these, in Indian society, the impact of globalization has been found to be negative in a number of ways on the position of women. In media sector, Globalisation with Market economy system, facilitating the motive of profit, companies busy with competition are using the faces and bodies of beautiful women to popularise their products. These producers always producing lots of products everyday and there is competition everywhere to become the best seller. For this they are using women in a cheap manner whether necessary or not. For example, they are using women in the advertisements of cigarette, man, s underwear, man’s shaving cream etc. They are portraying women wrongly for their own purpose. With the increased numbers of satellite channels, proliferation of American dubbing films, Indian film industry has

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

also involved in the competition in the profit gaining game of globalisation. It is well stated in the following:

The print and electronic media surrounding continues to perpetrate the voyeuristic gaze the film industry of consumer culture. The Indian female star is stories continually objectified as photographs and inside establish her lack of control over her body and her life story. The glamour aspect of the actress is showcased in photo sessions, as she displays different clothes, hairstyles varying colours of contact lenses. The sensational gossip stories override any concern with her professional career and competence.(Datta:2000,p.77)⁵²

Thus, commercialization and commoditification of the women body in the wake of the strengthening of the process of globalization appears to be an obvious side effect which needs to be regulated by the state regulatory bodies or the bodies of the advertisers and broadcasters themselves.

6.5 CONCLUSION

It is worth-mentioning that one cannot ignore the cognitive effects of media contents on human brains. On one hand, media fetch unrealistic socio-cultural and economic conditions of a particular society and, on the other, try to justify the created cultures through their narratives, stories and image construction. The images of men and women might not be the real as feminists say that disparities between men and women are internalised and justified through the socio-cultural beliefs though those are unjust.

Analysing the data of the Assamese films, it can be said that how Assamese Media are showing or portraying women is not real. Sometimes women are portrayed as traditional or sometime modern/independent or in a carefree role. It is exploitative as it reduces women from human being to objects. Because of the sensations created by media on, so called “Ideal women”, men always compare the women of their lives to the ones what they watch in the films or television. Thus, a wrong picture regarding the nature and character of women is generated through these representations. As a result, women become puppets to be abused or in other words recognised as inferior

⁵² Datta S. (2000). Globalisation and Representations of women in Indian cinema. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.457.3215&rep=rep1&type=pdf> on 17th August, 2016.

being in comparison to men. It is revealed that Assamese mass media are in the hands of the male owners and they operate the whole industry for the benefit of a Patriarchal market. Hence, media have become the main instrument for conveying stereotypical, patriarchal and hegemonic values regarding women and femininity. They have been seen as fulfilling the structural needs of patriarchal, democratic and capitalist society by transmitting its distorted and dominant values about women. Many aspects of women's lives and experiences are not being reflected in media properly. The media are simply generating the notions of gender, with its cultural, religious, mythic, and philosophical perspectives which results in unjust and imbalanced power relation between men and women. They are seen reiterating and sowing discriminations in the name of gender and sex.

Lastly, through this entire study on Assamese media, it is found that the Assamese media affirm the cultural domination of men on women through the contents it publish in the forms of articles, editorials, stories and gossiping and through films during 2000-2002.