

Media and Women

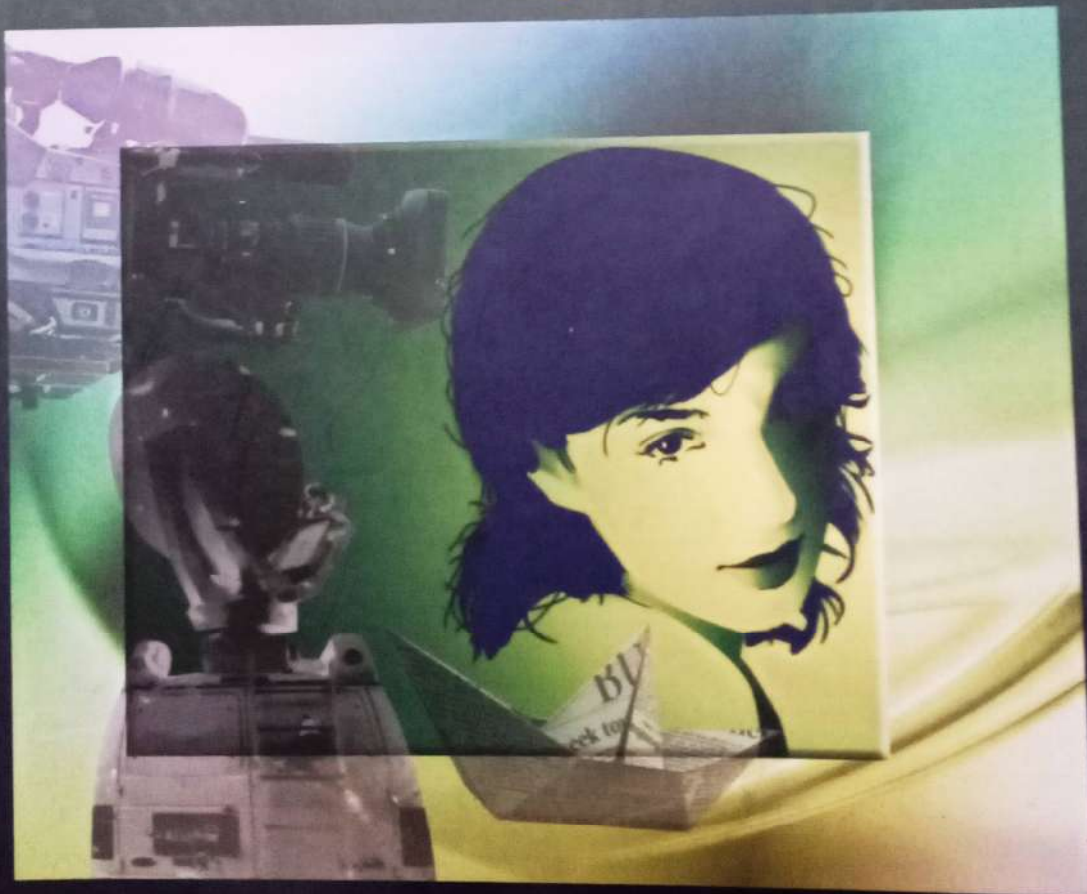
Emerging Perspectives

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Chapter 41

WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN COMMERCIAL ASSAMESE FILMS

Paromita Das and Rashmi Sarmah

Since the birth of the feminist movement women have claimed that they are living in a man's world. The claim continued even in the areas of art and culture apart from the day to day life activities. Hence, how women are presented in media, especially in films, has been an area of debate for long.

In Assamese cinema, though women have been given a high platform many a times, yet most of the commercial films have somehow represented women from the male point of view. Whether the character of the woman protagonist is submissive and oppressed or strong and independent, somehow the male point of view is clearly evident.

To elaborate on this the researcher has taken two very successful commercial films from Assam, *Hiya Diya Niya*, and *Buwari*. While *Buwari* was made in the 1980s, *Hiya Diya Niya* was released in 2000. One thing common about both the films is, in neither of them have any women characters been suppressed or compelled to act in a certain way by any of the male characters. Still, the respective film makers have conveyed their messages very tactfully through the male point of view.

Hiya Diya Niya directed by Munin Barua is a story of class differences and how it influences love, marriage and relationships. The film also revolves around the varied outlook and attitude held by two women of the new generation. It is portrayed through the characters of Momi and Sunita, two friends with contrasting personality.

The central protagonist Momi, is a rich spoiled young urban girl who was engaged to a village boy Deepu, as a child. Momi who prefers western outfit all the time, late nights and partying, and enjoying life to the full in her own way, wants to marry an NRI. She is unaware that now Deepu also lives and works in the US. She and her mother deny the childhood engagement thinking the boy still lives in the village.