CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter addresses the methodology comprising of research design and appropriate methods to investigate the research problem and establishes the theoretical framework that determines interrelated concepts and theories.

3.1 METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research is to investigate the representations of transwomen in Tamil cinema and their social exclusion in Tamil Nadu. An extensive research design had developed for addressing the aim of the research and the objectives to examine the representation and perception of film texts.

3.1.1 Research Design and Method

As Knafl & Howard (1984) state different research purposes require different research designs and analysis techniques. The objectives of this study had necessitated multiple mixed methods of collecting or analysing data from the quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Accordingly, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed from mainstream Tamil films, transwomen viewers and experts. The relevance and applicability of any particular procedure will, of course, depend entirely on the data to be analysed and the particular purposes and preferences of the researcher (Dey 1993). The triangulation approach, which was tested for reliability and validity among the variables with a variety of methods, was the
best approach for this study. The methods triangulated in this study were Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA), Survey and In-depth Interview.

3.1.2 Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA)

Ethnographic Content Analysis proposed by David Altheid (1987) was adopted to analyse the narrative conventions of the representation of transwomen in films. Content analysis is generally defined as a detailed and systematic analysis of the contents for identifying themes and patterns (Leedy & Ormrod 2001). Ethnography refers to the description of people and their culture to develop insights into a specific culture provides a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). However, many characteristics of ethnographic approach applied to content analysis to produce ethnographic content analysis, which defined as the reflexive analysis of documents. Altheide (1987) explains that Ethnographic Content Analysis or ECA consists of reflexive movement between concept development, sampling, data collection, data coding, data analysis, and interpretation. However, ECA used to document and understand the communication of meaning, as well as to verify theoretical relationships.

This research was intended to explore verbal, visual, behavioural patterns, themes, or biases of transwomen representations in film content. ECA approach was used in this study to generate insight (Stewart 1998) on the ways transwomen were represented in mainstream Tamil films released between 1977 and 2016. The meaning and significance of the representations depend on the researcher’s focus and the researcher’s eyes and questions transform the information in the documents into data.
3.1.2.1 Quantitative Phase

The quantitative phase of ECA facilitated to analyse the manifest content of the film. Analysing for the appearance of a particular word or content in the textual material is referred to as manifest content analysis (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999). The data were gathered from a sample of representative films through exclusively developed coding protocol and trusted heavily on scientific methods rather than subjective judgment or personal observation. The manifest meaning of film content was produced through measuring the significant meaning of specific variables and developing the statistical descriptions from the quantitative data.

Quantitative protocol of coding, data collection and analysis

Coding is the process of examining the raw qualitative visual data in the form of verbal representations, non-verbal representations including production elements and assigning codes to them. The coding scheme of Lewins, Taylor & Gibbs (2005), was followed to identify and name each code. A list of phenomena consisting behaviours, events, activities, strategies, states, meanings, participation, relationships, conditions, consequences and settings are deeply noted. The ethnographic connotations of personal, social and cultural characteristics of transwomen community of Tamil Nadu found in literature review were compared with the existing coding scheme of phenomena at each stage of the coding process and they were included. However, the new codes are compared with codebook or master list in which all the codes are developed to use and added to an appropriate category or added with newly created category when each time an appropriate code is encountered.

The relationships between categories are identified and formed as groups and sub-groups to create a web of meaning among codes. Finally, the coding scheme was refined according to the form and content of Tamil
cinema and cultural identity of Tamil. A coding book where all variable measures fully explained was prepared and the coding sheet was readily available. All the films were viewed through Final Cut Pro, a Non-Linear editing software and all the representations of transwomen were identified. Then each representation has reviewed at least thrice and did the coding by referring the coding book. The time schedule for the coding was three months. Analysis of data was done statistically using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Spot-checking was done for validation. Then the data was analysed and the descriptive and inferential statistics of the representations of transwomen in films over a period were obtained. The quantitative approach of ECA was appropriately accomplished and an objective and statistically valid results were produced.

3.1.2.2 Qualitative Phase

The latent meaning of transwomen stereotypes in the form of verbal and non-verbal representations was studied in the qualitative approach. In qualitative studies, the investigator is central to the research (Altheide 1987). Ethnographic content analysis of texts and practices focuses on the analysis of social and cultural context according to theoretical perspective of the study. As Foucault (1973) and Gilman (1985) state, films can be considered as texts for the study of stereotypes. Representations of film often have been deconstructed to investigate stereotypical representations of groups based on race and gender (Bogle 1989). In order to analyse the stereotypes, the character analysis and narrative structure were comprised and the explorative and explanatory description of transwomen representation of each film were studied comprehensively.

The three preliminary transwomen stereotypes identified from the literature of transwomen representation in mainstream films were transwoman Farce, transwoman mother and transwoman monster (Ryan 2009; Miller 2012). However, the transwomen stereotypes were extended to three more
after quantitative analysis of the form and content of the transwomen representations. Moreover, the ways that three transgender gazes: trans misogynistic, trans phobic and trans Pathetic gazes represented in each stereotype were analysed.

**Qualitative Protocol of Transwomen Stereotypes**

The protocol of stereotypic representations of transwomen included the examination of the following elements: The analysis was primarily concentrated on the representation of transwomen, and it was not considering the totality of the film when the specific representation was not related to the totality of the film. The brief description of the representation and foreshadow in the representation. The representation of motif, diegetic and non-diegetic sound, symbol or gesture such as a clapping, that sets a tone or mood for the representation. The detailed description of the characterisation of transwomen in the scene, plot and totality, the time and space given to the transwoman character in the film, the significance of the character and the relationship with other characters. The execution of the scene and usage of the production elements in the representation was analysed along the general credit and descriptive information about the film.

However, the researcher is the instrument during data collection, analysis and interpretation in ECA (Altheide 1987). The structured data collection was done based on the protocol combined with ethnographic characteristics that supported a theoretically informed account of film content. Analysis and interpretation of representations were interwoven throughout the plot or scene narrative. Additional questions that arose during early data collection were incorporated as part of the protocol. The specific narrative conventions and visual codes of each stereotypic representation were studied in each film by analysing all the elements interconnected with space and time and cause and effect.
3.1.2.3 Population and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling method was adopted and the films had at least a representation transwomen either verbal or visual were included in the sample. The earliest film that represented transwoman and available to view was Paalaabishegam, which was released in 1977. Accordingly, 59 notable films represented transwoman released since 1977 to 2016 were selected for the sample, and the total period of study was 40 years. Some of the films were represented transwomen and not available for viewing on either DVD or on the Internet were excluded.

The mainstream films were only considered in order to narrow the scope of this study to a performable task and other genres of films including silent films, experimental/art films, short films and documentaries were excluded from consideration, because they were difficult in tracking and obtaining, and they are relatively smaller and less mainstream audience. Mainstream Tamil cinema industry produced more than 5000 films since silent era and an average of 120 films per year (Anandan 2005; CBFC 2015). It’s not possible to view all the films and identify films representing transwomen. The ethnographic content analysis of stereotypic representation was scheduled and completed between July 2016 and December 2016 through the Non-Linear editing software Final Cut Pro.

3.1.3 Survey

Survey generally used to discover a phenomenon either as the cross sectional or longitudinal. Cross sectional survey was used in this study to explore the perception of the representation of transwomen in Tamil Cinema among transwomen of Tamil Nadu. A questionnaire was designed based on literature review of transwomen representations, the social exclusion framework and issues identified in various media. The questionnaire comprehensively developed in order to explore the critical relationship
between film representation transwomen and their social exclusion issues in Tamil Nadu.

3.1.3.1 Determining Sample Size

There was no exact population data of transwomen available in India until 2011 census as they were enumerated under either male or female category in previous censuses (Nanda 1996). The data of transwomen was included under Male category in the primary data of the census 2011, and the separate data of transgender people has been obtained for educational purpose in 2014. Accordingly, the census of India stated that the population of transgender people in India is 4,87,803 and in Tamil Nadu is 22,364. Despite the fact that all the other gender variant people like FTM and MSM also enumerated under transgender category. However, the activists estimate the numbers to be six to seven times higher.

While the population of transgender people in Tamil Nadu is 22,364 at 95% confidence level and 4.76% confidence interval then the statistically arrived sample size is 416. Since the population of transwomen of Tamil Nadu was not usually residing at a place permanently due to various social, cultural and economic issues. It was very difficult to meet them, schedule the data collection and availability of transwomen at their place was not assumable. This situation decreased even the sample size of the pilot study and was more difficult to accomplish. Hence, the purposive sampling was adopted in this study.

3.1.3.2 Data Collection

The survey was aimed to explore the interpretation and perception of mainstream Tamil films. The inaccessibility of the transwomen could decrease the sample size, distribution and representativeness of the sample. The transwomen who are not attached with organizations are naturally more
vulnerable than people enrolled with organizations are. The inclusion of studying them might create awareness among them about this issue and educate them as well. However, the opinions of the transwomen those are attached to their organizations were gathered and studied in In-depth Interview. Hence, the data collection was done through purposive sampling from the transwomen participated in the Koovagam festival of Koovagam village, Vilupuram District, Tamil Nadu from 07.05.2017 to 11.05.2017. The transwomen were stayed in Vilupuram town and gathered in Koovagam village for this exclusive religious festival were easily accessible and more purposive for sampling. The survey questionnaires were administered face to face from the sample of 416 respondents from transwomen community and the quantitative data were collected.

3.1.4 In-depth Interview

The In-depth Interview is a qualitative research method used to pursue in-depth individual interviews from a small number of respondents about an idea or a topic to attain information of both a factual and a meaning level (Kvale 1996; McNamara 1999). In-depth interviews offer more comprehensive information than the information derived from surveys when accompanying along other methods. The in-depth interviews of the potential experts were carried out individually as most of them were not accessible and felt uncomfortable to participate and express views openly in focus group discussions, and their perspectives were gathered.

Ethnographic Content Analysis studied the representations of transwomen in each film in the sample through quantitative and qualitative analysis. The survey explored the collective opinions of transwomen on the relationship between transwomen representations in Tamil Cinema and their social exclusion issues. The interview designed on the ground of the comprehensive analysis of the results of Ethnographic Content Analysis and
Survey. The interviews were conducted with the experts actively involved in the development of transgender community of Tamil Nadu. The stakeholders or the respondents were transgender activists, actors, writers and filmmakers.

The interviews were scheduled from 15\textsuperscript{th} of May to 31\textsuperscript{st} of May 2017 according to the convenient appointment of interviewees after the completion of ECA of Films have done. The semi-structured interview was carried out in face-to-face and two-way communication through conversational approach and guide approach. The suggestions and measures of experts for the fair representation of transwomen in Tamil cinema and the inclusion of transwomen community were presented comprehensively.

3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework determines interrelated concepts and theories that provide a conceptual understanding of the problem, measurement and theoretical relationships of research. The theoretical approaches of this research are Heteronormativity, Social exclusion, Representation, Stereotype and Transgender Gaze to understand the ways transwomen characters are represented in films and the interpretation and impact of the transwomen community.

3.2.1 Heteronormativity

Social groups are generally formed by shared similar characteristics and organized by power relations among the groups in society. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people (LGBT) are considered as sexual minorities in the heterosexual society. The concept of sexual minority is a constructive political power that is beneficial to organize and achieve rights in the heteronormative society. The heterosexuals generally deny the rights of sexual minorities in society as their same-sex behaviours are considered as incurable disease and crime. Heterosexuality refers the sexual behaviour...
between the individuals of opposite sex or gender, and it defines the gender binary (APA 2013). Heterosexuality is institutionalised as a coherent, constant, and universal practice (Richardson 1998, 2000) and it preserved by the reproductive function of heterosexuals through social institutions like marriage and family as the natural way of life. Heteronormativity naturalises the heterosexuality as the default position of individuals (Warner 1993) and those deviate from heterosexuality are marginalized and excluded. Heteronormativity excludes transwomen, as they are a threat to heteronormativity because of their deviant gender identity.

The discrimination against the lesbian, Gay and Bisexual communities based on sexual orientation is generally defined as Heterosexism. Heterosexism is a system of power that holds heterosexuality as normal sexuality (Griffin et al. 2007) that marginalizes people in all the social institutions based on their sexual orientations (Curriculum 2009). The discriminations against the members of transwomen community are sometimes referred by Heterosexism. Moreover, the individual and collective terms referring sexual and gender minorities vary by culture and dialect. The ideology of heteronormativity functions as a system of social exclusion based on sexuality and gender identity of individuals of society similar to caste and class.

The gender-transgression and transgender identity deconstruct the binary ‘Male and Female’ genders (Alexander 2005) and their horizontal movement between binary genders (Stryker & Whittle 2006) hold their transgender identity in question (Roen 2001). The binary gender system produces strong psychological and social boundaries and constructs the systems of dominance and hierarchy in society. The desires, actions and the identical characteristics of transgender identity and other non-binary gender roles and sexual orientations are marginalised and socially excluded (Seidman
1995). The ideology of heteronormativity disseminated into all the social institutions from family, public spaces, government establishments, workplace and popular culture like cinema.

### 3.2.2 Social Exclusion

The equal rights and opportunities for certain individuals and groups are often denied based on sex, gender, caste, race, class, religion, language and other identities in society. Any individual or a group deviates from the institutionalised norms and practices of society generally subject to face exclusion. Many groups face social exclusion globally and generally referred with the power relations causing poverty. In India, the people considered as lower castes are discriminated historically in social, cultural and economic domains based on caste system. Similarly, transwomen face multiple forms of exclusion at every path of their lives and considered as the easy targets of verbal and sexual abuse and hate crimes from all the sections of heteronormative society like many other marginalised communities.

Social exclusion was originated in French as a political concept during the 1960s and widely adopted in Europe as a fundamental idea for policy making. Social exclusion briefly defined as rupture of social bonds (Haan 2001 & Silver 2011). The social bond encompasses the social relations and integration, institutions, identities of belonging and social cohesion. The rupture of the social bond can be any form (Ravaud & Stiker 2001). However, the definition and conceptualization of the term social exclusion vary according to the phenomena referred.

Social exclusion offers distinctive interpretations for the reasons and solutions of inequality (Silver 1994; Beall 2002; Levitas 2005; Shaban 2011), and it appears in many ways and the versatility of idea and its reach should be recognized (Sen 2000). The general characteristics of social
exclusion are multidimensional, dynamic and relational aspects that cause negative consequences in the lives of individuals and social groups. Silver (1994) states that the causes of the dimensions of social exclusion can be in various directions and reinforce the impact of one another. Estivill (2003) also noted that relatively distinct factors result in the social exclusion, which has the impact on individuals, groups.

Shaban (2011) summarise that the inequality arises in social, cultural, economic and political dimensions in daily life. The dynamical aspect refers the varying and interactive characteristic of social exclusion in which the experiences of social exclusion are not equally shared to the social groups at different dimensions of time and place (Mathieson et al. 2008). The relational aspect of social exclusion emphasises the significance of power relationships where the dominant group keeps and need of the comparing and considering others, whether he/she is socially excluded (Sen 2000). Hence, the social exclusion can be comprehensively conceptualised as a multi-dimensional, dynamic and relational process that causes inequality among individuals and groups in economic, political, social and cultural participations at different levels.

The Social Exclusion Framework of United Nations Development Program identifies various social exclusions of transwomen in India, which include, exclusion from social and cultural participation, exclusion from economy, exclusion from employment and livelihood opportunities, exclusion from politics & citizen participation, restricted access to collectivization, restricted rights of citizenship, restricted participation in decision-making processes and exclusion from family and society (UNDP 2010).

Transwomen of South India have no the cultural importance as they do in north India, where they involve in sex work and begging for the living. In order to promote transwomen rights and end prejudice and discrimination
at micro and macro levels, must intervene through individual level efforts and structural (law/policy) changes (Herek 2007; Parker & Aggleton 2003).

3.2.3 Representation

Communication is fundamental to understand the world and organize environments, which encompasses images, gestures, objects and spoken and written language. Representation is the dominant and contemporary system of meaning making in communication and a key to study culture. Representation plays the role of the message in a communication process and it often tries to express reality through constructed and determined codes of meaning. The media messages may seem real, however, they never simply present the world directly. They are always a construction, a re-presentation, rather than a transparent window onto the real (Branstan & Stafford 2006).

Representation can be defined as a process of presenting an image of something in order to communicate ideas or tell a story (Benshoff & Griffin 2004). Hall (1997) states three primary layers of representation: Reflective- the imitative representation of reality, Intentional- intended meaning of the creator and the constructionist-the representation through a medium like cinema. While these layers are significant to analyse a specific representation, the reality of the objects in the representations is based on their historical contexts and modes of understanding.

The central issue in representation is that of substitution: it is widely understood as the process of standing in for someone or something or acting as a substitute for the ‘real thing’ (Webb 2009). The objective of analysing representation is to understand how it can influence public understanding and attitudes. The meaning in the film is not created by the arrangement of elements; the audience produces the meaning (Turner 2012).
However, the meaning significantly varies from the intended meaning encoded by the director. The audience has cultural knowledge and experience about the text and constructs own new meaning from the arrangement of elements in the text.

3.2.4 Stereotype

People observe the environment and are influenced by others particularly media, and they create stereotypes and adopt cognitively. The stereotypes are generally based on traditional norms, which are hard to change and adopted in the process of socialization.

In 1922, Walter Lippmann introduced the term ‘stereotype’ to refer to the typical picture that comes to mind when thinking about a particular social group when discussing the formation and manipulation of public opinion in his book ‘Public Opinion’ (Lippmann 1922). While analysing about the impact of media in shaping people’s thoughts and actions, Lippmann endeavoured to rationalize the ways images appear spontaneously in mind as a simplification of something or somebody lives in the second-hand world. He thought that the sense about an event, which is not experienced is the sense aroused by the mental image of that event. Subsequently, he states that the way things are in the real world is often not the same as the images that exist in the minds of individuals within a given society, yet the dominant group perpetuates the inaccurate images. Lippmann (1922) defined stereotype as a “distorted picture or image in a person’s mind, not based on personal experience, but derived culturally.” Subsequently, Lippmann states that the social, political, and economic motivations drive the formation of stereotypes and transmitted from one generation to the next, they become universal and hard to change.
Stereotypes are the categories of generalizations and function separately. Stereotypes are created through the lack of knowledge, inaccurate opinions and substituted thoughts and they lead to misjudgment about certain people or situations and end in discrimination. Stereotypes affect opinions and thoughts, and affect the behaviours. The simplistic representations of the stereotypes define the understanding of the audience. Stereotyping is generally considered a process of categorization that in most cases imply a negative evaluation of the group.

Richard Dyer (1999) states that stereotype functions as an ordering, a short cut, a way of referring and an expression of ‘our’ values and beliefs. According to Dyer (1999) stereotypes serve to order our reality through generalities, patterning and typing, in an easy-to-understand form and are an essential part of making sense of the world and society. As simplifications stereotypes act as 'short cuts' to meaning. It implies knowledge of a complex social structure (Perkins 1979). Stereotypes act as a way of referring to the world to serve to naturalize the power relations in society; they have a hegemonic function. Finally, stereotypes have the status of consensus, not the beliefs based upon reality but ideas, which reflect the distribution of power in society, an expression of ’our’ values and beliefs (Dyer 1999).

Film manipulates the process of communication by employing images and influences the audience greater. When the representations of characters are the same in one film after another, viewers come to unconsciously accept stereotypes (Swan et al. 1998). From the detail studies of Ryan (2009) and Miller (2012), the transwomen representations in cinema sensationally distribute stereotypes of transwomen and distort reality to maintain the heteronormativity through celebrated cinema actors in society (Kermode 2010). Subsequently, transwomen stereotypical representations
reflect in everyday life and become ‘natural way of life’ in a hetero normative environment.

Conceptually, stereotypes in cinema or media reinforce the dominant ideology of attitudes and behaviours based on traditional norms against minorities and perpetuating rigid and negative representations, which positions them inferior and powerless in society. The analysis of such ideological implications can provide an understanding whether stereotypes are the symptoms of existing social relations or effective element of the politics of representation (King 2011).

3.2.5 Transgender Gaze

The construction of reality in film and viewing are discussed by many film theorists. As the ways audience decode the messages and understand the meanings, the construction of meaning also suggested by the film. The gaze or look refers the ways people or things represented in the visual medium and the perspectives of the viewers towards the representations. Gaze is originally the term of film theory and used by media theorists in general. Laura Mulvey proposed the term male gaze to refer the voyeuristic pleasure of men by looking at women (Evans & Gamman 1995). Mulvey’s gaze discourses the ways film provides the audience to look at the characters in specific ways. Mulvey’s gaze declares that the male character receives voyeuristic pleasure by looking at or being looked at and controls the gaze in film. The gaze of popular cinema is not only male but also heterosexual Steve Neale (1983).

Judith Halberstam (2005) interpreted Mulvey’s male gaze and proposed the term transgender gaze in her seminal work ‘In a queer time and place: Transgender bodies, subcultural lives’ in which Halberstam analysed the representations of transgender bodies in contemporary art forms and
visual representations of transgender in *Crying Game* and *Boys Don't Cry*. Halberstam focused on the characters and the viewers not fit into the binary gender in the transgender gaze. Halberstam claims that the transgender gaze functions by imposing the audience to look at transwoman character and rewind the film narrative to understand the identity of the transwoman character or constructs a gaze that does not refer either the male or female gazes (Halberstam 2005). The discussions of Mulvey and Halberstam on male gaze and transgender gaze are extended and identified three transgender gazes: trans-misogynistic, trans-phobic, and trans-pathetic.

Trans-misogyny refers the ridicule or dismissal of a transwoman not simply for lacking to fit into the proposed gender norms, but for her/his expressions of femininity (Sereno 2007). The trans feminist theorist Julia Serano proposed the term transmisogyny from transphobia and misogyny in her book ‘Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity’ in 2007. Trans-misogyny primarily defines the inferiority of femaleness or femininity and its existence for the benefit of maleness or masculinity. While men are considered as superior to women for their masculinity in the ‘male-centred gender hierarchy’, the transwomen perceived as a threat. The transwomen encounter more discriminations than transmen (Grant Jaime et al. 2011), and the hate crimes against transwomen and their murders are the acts of culturally held power and dominance male power and masculinity (Butler 2015). Accordingly, the ways transwomen represented in media are the visible example of trans-misogyny (Sereno 2007).

The term transphobia originated from transgender and phobia in order to refer the fear of transgender people. Transphobia considered as an extension of homophobia and misogyny (Norton 1997) and originated through heteronormativity (Serano 2007). Transphobia generally defined as a
fear, disgust, anger, aversion, stereotyping and discrimination against transgender people and individuals deviate from traditional norms by appearances and/or behaviours (Whittle 2006; Nagoshi et al. 2008). Transphobia positions individuals as perpetrators and victims, disciplines them according to social norms and excludes or includes in society. However, the transphobic gaze primarily functions with the power of perpetrator/victim relationship and disciplining according to social norms. Whittle (2006) states that transphobia can be direct and indirect. The intentional or unintentional actions because of ignorance or negligence of the transwoman’s identity are in-direct transphobia. Direct Transphobia refers the obvious harm on transwoman based on his/her gender identity and expressions that challenge the heterosexual norms. Direct Transphobia believes that gender deviant people are less than human which causes various discriminations, emotional and physical hurt and hate crimes.

A trans-pathetic gaze refers the sympathy over transgender people for their efforts to deviate from and challenge heteronormative standards. The pathetic transwomen characters insist that they are women trapped in men’s bodies. They reflect that they are passive and harmless and their identity and appearance often ridiculed for laugh. Eventually, the pathetic transwomen characters designed to authenticate that the transwomen are truly men and are uncovered and punished they perceive the femininity.

Hence, the theoretical conceptualizations of Heteronormativity, Social exclusion, Representation, Stereotype and Transgender Gaze primarily guide to understand the ways transwomen characters are constructed in film representations and the interpretation and impact of transwomen.