CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The multiple mixed methods of Ethnographic Content Analysis, survey and in-depth interview have analysed the transwomen representations in Tamil films and their social exclusion. The significant findings and conclusion are presented in this chapter.

5.1 FINDINGS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTENT ANALYSIS

The Ethnographic Content Analysis identified that there was a very small number of films have represented transwomen verbally and visually for forty years, which has annihilated transwomen symbolically in the world of films. However, there was a significant increase in the frequencies of the films representing transwomen and the transwomen characters from one decade to another, and from the past to present.

Most of the transwomen characters were represented as either extras or group dancers without any significance to the story of the film. The male actors have mostly performed the transwomen character and they were left unnamed and their religious identity was Hindu. The transwomen were mostly represented at streets and roads and their occupations were not specified. The transwomen were represented mostly in hyper-feminine dresses with jewels, big Bindi, flower, hyper-make up and plaited hair to look more feminine, and often in the male female mixed dresses to indicate their transgression. The performance of typical trans clapping and the mixed voice of male and female were represented as a short cut, a simplification and an
ordering to inform as an easy-to-understand form that the particular character is a transwoman.

The transwomen were referred in different types of derogative terms, all types of characters including the protagonist to abuse and ridicule. The cultural identities, community life, traditions and rituals of transwomen were almost absent. All types of characters including the protagonist abuse verbally and sexually, and impose physical violence on transwomen. The sound effects and background music were used mostly as motifs to ridicule transwomen. The transmisogyny gaze and transphobia were significantly disseminated through narrative conventions.

Notably, the transwomen were represented in six stereotypes: Transwoman Farce, Transwoman Mother Farce, Transwoman Monster Farce, Transwoman Mother, Transwoman Monster Mother, Transwoman Monster. However, Transwoman farce was the most popular stereotypic representation of transwomen character that justified the Transmisogyny and Transphobia as humour through famous actors.

Most of the transwoman farce characters were represented in the songs than the comic scenes. Notably, all the transwoman farce characters were left unnamed and two dimensional as incidental and had no significance in the story. The transwomen were represented as objects of verbal and sexual abuse and physical violence just to produce humour out of their suffering. Consequently, the transwomen were appeared hyper-feminine and comic, behaved ridiculous and erotic through the gestures and voice. The transmisogyny and transphobia were emphasised through verbal and sexual abuse and physical violence on transwomen and were romanticised and justified as humour through celebrity actors.
The transwoman mother farce characters are dynamic to be ridiculed for their expressions of femininity, and as well as emphasized through their admirable and dedicated service to the hegemonic class. Accordingly, transwoman mother farce characters face the transmisogyny and to be trans-pathetic. Moreover, they are the three-dimensional characters designed to have active participation in the progress of narrative rather than just a passive comedian.

In addition to the farce, mother farce, the transwomen were ridiculed by representing them as monstrous characters in the monster farce. The transwoman monster farce characters were normally represented as tempters along antagonist, and they fulfil the need of humour and behave monstrously. They involve in the plots and narratives significantly even they ridiculed other and themselves. While the transwoman farce characters were represented along the protagonist as the objects of ridicule or ridiculing other characters, they have been represented as monsters and tempters to hang along the antagonist for supporting and serving to the antagonist. Transwomen were represented as the mental patient, sex maniacs, rapists, bad omen and the tool to sexual threat the people troubling. However, they ridicule themselves and humour were manipulated from the suffering state of transwomen instead of expressing sympathy out of it.

The representation of transwoman mother emphasised the motherhood of the transwomen as serving to the gender-normative people particularly the protagonist. However, they were sympathized as noble victims by their sacrifice instead of discussing their real life issues and considering fundamental rights. In addition to the representation of vulnerability, challenging the social exclusion issues and empowering of transwomen was represented very rarely.
While emphasising as mother and sympathising as a victim by representing their vulnerabilities in the heteronormative society, the transwomen were represented conversely with monstrous characteristics as Monster mother. The transwomen characters happened to involve in illegal activities, they express their motherhood also to become the transwoman monster mothers.

The transwomen were represented to behave completely monstrous in order to oppose protagonist and support the antagonist. They were represented as just monsters in nature, murderers, and psychopaths and the transphobia were disseminated through such monstrous representation. In addition, the transwomen were represented inaccurately against the medical phenomenon of transgenderism and transwomen community traditions and history.

The overall representations of the transwomen were ridiculing, sympathizing, exaggerating and sensationalising transwomen. The stereotypes could have a negative impact on the attitudes of the audience towards transwomen, which could root to the dynamic and multidimensional issues of Social Exclusion.

5.2 FINDINGS OF SURVEY

There are more transwomen in young age are visible in society. However, there is a fear of coming out and identify as transwoman due to the fear of discrimination, social exclusion and loss of heteronormative privileges. Those hide their transwomen identity enjoy all the privileges of cisgender people. However, they often encounter abuse and harassment due to their feminine gestures and behaviours, which are unconsciously expressed.

Transwomen were drop out at high school level due to their transwoman identity while male identified people have a chance of getting the
higher education. The transwomen suffer from various social exclusion issues starting from family exclusion, denial and discrimination of education and employment, and thus they are forced to involve in sex work and begging and earn very less because of their transwomen identity. The family acceptance is very rare and large numbers of transwomen are excluded from family and abandoned in streets, and they do not get affiliated to and get guidance from transgender welfare organizations. People refer transwomen with various derogative terms such as Ombothu, Pottai, Ussu and Ali. However, transwomen prefer to be termed as Thirunangai.

Transwomen frequently watch films either in theatre or TV, and they like transwomen characters to be represented in films. However, films represent transwomen mostly in songs and comedies and thematically ridicule and sympathise as exotic and dangerous people. Films disseminate various derogative terms such as Ombothu, Pottai and Ussu to refer transwomen. The stereotypic gestures and verbal and visual motifs of clapping, bright makeup, colourful dress and masculine voice represent as a shortcut and simplifications to recognise the transwoman identity of the character. The representations of transwomen are mostly negative, sympathising and sensationalising the transwomen identity comparing to social reality. The transwomen feel unhappy for the misrepresentations. However they inactive to organise to question, object and seek justice against such misrepresentations in public space.

Transwomen are misrepresented for the purpose of entertainment to get business profit, and the film directors are responsible for misrepresentations. The negative and misrepresentations of transwomen increase from the past to present and creates negative impacts among transwomen and cisgender people accordingly.
The misrepresentations play a significant role on the social exclusion of transwomen. They encounter discriminations mostly in public places and feel that the verbal and physical abuses are due to the misrepresentations of films. While the level of satisfaction towards representations of transwomen increases, the level of social inclusion also increases. A specific law should be provided to avoid the misrepresentations and ensure the fair representation in films, and the filmmakers and general people should be sensitised over the issues and rights of transwomen properly.

5.3 FINDINGS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

The experts collectively state that the humiliation and discrimination against transgender children start from their family members and friends. Notably, the lack of family support and bullying make transgender students to drop out from school. Consequently, they are forced towards sex work and begging to live a least quality of life when excluded from their family. In addition, police criminalises transwomen through false accusation and medical professionals stigmatise them. They are simply alienated and their fundamental rights are denied and but society expects them to be muted. But the government agencies and welfare organizations are incompetent to protect them and save their dignity.

The representations of transwomen either verbal or visual are added in films needlessly and appear incidentally for the purpose of comic relief. Transwomen were represented mostly in songs and comedies as sexual objects for voyeuristic pleasure and as humorous, exotic, pitied and dangerous for the business profit and entertainment. Tamil cinema had disseminated the derogative terms such as Ali, Ombothu, Pottai and Ussu to represent the transwomen. The gestures and verbal representations like clapping, mixed-voice, bright makeup and colourful dress are represented stereotypically to
identify and label transwomen and provide as short cut and simplification to the audience.

The negative characterisation, derogative terming and other misrepresentations of transwomen create fear of transwomen among the audience and have a significant influence on social exclusion issues of transwomen. The misrepresentations affect transwomen and the general people, and the ridicule, abuse and sexual harassment of film world reflect and disrespect transwomen in the real world.

Film directors justify the misrepresentations as they represent what they see in real life. However, the responsibility lacks among them as the misrepresentations influence general people to abuse and discriminate transwomen. Then transwomen behave violently to protect them. While the misrepresentations make transwomen more vulnerable to encounter discriminations from family, friends, work place, police officials, medical service and denial of other public services and their sufferings could not be justified. Male actors mostly perform the transwomen characters and the characters appear more masculine naturally. While they were known comedy actors, the comic intention behind the particular character is informed to the audience and set their mind that transwomen are meant to ridicule and abuse verbally and sexually.

Filmmakers sympathise transwomen to express their sufferings. However such representation should question the suffering not to justify them. Directors are the most responsible for any representation, and they often choose to misrepresent powerless people like transwomen in order to produce humour while they are incapable and insufficient in creativity. Transwomen are considered as spectacles and the influence of representation on the attitude of cisgender are ignored. As cinema constructs the reality on screen, it constructs the wrong identity about transwomen as reality among
the audience. However, cinema can be one of the reasons for the social exclusion of transwomen but it is not the primary cause.

The representation of transwomen in Tamil films increased as well the abuses and discriminations of transwomen in real life have also increased. Television channels, particularly the channels dedicated to film comedies, telecast misrepresentations of transwomen repeatedly as comedy and it influences the family members to reject the transwoman identity of their transgender children and exclude them from family.

Transwomen community object misrepresentations and the justice is always denied as they are the minority and there is not enough support from general public like they organize and protest against misrepresentations of other social identities like caste and religion. The filmmakers need to study about the marginal people and sensational identities before representing in the films. If the films emphasise transwomen, the attitudes of general people towards transwomen would change in society accordingly.

The experts pointed out that cinema can be one of the reasons for the social exclusion of transwomen but it is not the primary cause. However, along with the self-responsibility of filmmakers, a representative from transwomen community need to be appointed to the Central Board of Film Certification to monitor the transwomen representations. The actors and transwomen who choose to play a transwoman role need to be more careful and responsible when accepting and performing in a film. Moreover, the television channels need to ensure the internal censor before telecasting misrepresentations of transwomen. The social and medical phenomenon of transwomen should be included in school curricula and the students should be sensitised over the rights and issues of transwomen and alternative sexual and gender identities.
5.4 CONCLUSION

This research clearly indicated the ways in which the representations of transwomen in Tamil cinema have played a role in developing the visibility of transwomen and maintaining the heteronormativity in mainstream society. There is symbolic annihilation for transwomen in Tamil cinema in which they were ignored, trivialised and condemned comparing to cisgender people. The issues and indeed representations of transwomen are largely absent in Tamil cinema. The Tamil films have misrepresented transwomen in many forms and stereotyped them for years.

Particularly, transwoman farce is the most popular stereotype representation of transwomen character that justified the transmisogyny and transphobia as humour through celebrity actors. While such scenes, which are ridiculing transwomen are repeatedly telecasted in various 24/7 Tamil comedy channels and repeatedly viewed by the audience at all ages to affect their attitudes towards transwomen. Thus, the influence on the attitudes doesn't end until the theatre viewers but extended to homes to lead them to transmisogyny and transphobia. As the misrepresentations reach television audiences, the commercial success of the film gets the chances of the remake in neighbouring states and reaches the audiences of those states. The established comedians performed the transwoman farce and provide a pre-opinion that the transwoman is comic and need not be considered seriously. Thus, spreading stereotypes of transwoman farce sensationally through celebrities contributes to the maintenance of heteronormativity and the spread of transmisogyny and transphobia in society.

Moreover, the stereotypical representation sympathizes transwomen instead of discussing their real-life issues and considering fundamental rights of transwomen to live equally. Thus, it clearly suggests
that transwomen are not fit to live a normal life like male or female of this society and they should die for others. Most importantly, transwomen were represented as a mental patient, sex maniacs, rapists, bad omen, the tool to sexual threat innocents, masculine, violent, anti social, criminals, and must be crucified. However, they ridicule themselves, and humour was manipulated from the suffering state of transwomen instead of expressing sympathy out of it. This could create transphobia, the fear of transwomen among people. The overall representations are more ridiculing, sympathizing, exaggeration and sensationalising the transwomen. The stereotypes could have a negative impact on the attitudes of the audience towards transwomen and audience could generalize transwomen with reference to such misrepresentations of cinema, could lead transwomen to face dynamic and multidimensional issues of social exclusion.

The interpretation and perception of the transwomen support the influential role of film representations of transwomen those propagate and maintain the heteronormativity in society and the ways they significantly affect their lives. The misrepresentations of films directly affect the attitudes of viewers, result in transphobia and social exclusion of transwomen. Consequently, there is a fear of social exclusion among transwomen and many are not ready to come out and identify as a transwoman. Irrespective of disclosed gender identity, both male-identified and transwoman are always encounter verbal abuse. Relatively family exclusion leads to education denial, occupational hazards and less income happened only for those who are identified as transwoman. However, the male-identified transwoman have a higher quality of life while more than half of the transwomen are involved in sex work and begging for their livelihood. Thus, the gender identity and family exclusion plays a key role in the education and occupational level of a transwoman as the cinema has more impact on transwomen and cisgender.
When transwomen encounter various social exclusion issues, largely believe that due to the misrepresentations of Tamil films. Thus, the transwomen representation of Tamil films reflects the view of the dominant group and ignores the expressions and lives of transwomen. Such control of communication makes transwomen community to be muted. Consequently, this unequal power relationship drives to the multidimensional social exclusion of transgender community in Tamil Nadu.

Thus, this research concludes that Tamil cinema underrepresented, misrepresented and stereotyped the image of transwomen, and played a significant role on their social exclusion. The filmmakers and the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) are primary responsible for misrepresenting transwomen. The protests against misrepresentations of Tamil cinema were not initiated against any of the films released while transwomen were not organised and voiceless. The time has been changing since the transwomen gather in streets to protest when a film released with offensive misrepresentations and start to seek justice through law. However, as the father of modern India Dr Ambedkar (2003) once said ‘so long as do not achieve social liberty, whatever the freedom is provided by the law is not is not avail to you’. Hence, the collective understanding and support from family, government agencies, media and general people are necessary to include the transwomen into mainstream society with equal rights and full participation in social, cultural, economic and political institutions.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Transwomen community face multiple forms of social exclusion at various dimensions and phases in society. Consequently, the suggestions for appropriate measures in various institutional contexts at micro and macro levels are presented as follows.
5.5.1 Suggestions

1. Filmmakers should be sensitised over the historical, sociological and cultural existence of transwomen, the contemporary visibility and empowerment and the legal recognition of transwomen.

2. Filmmakers should provide space to transwomen in films equal to cisgender people and the transwomen characters should be represented with importance in the plot, not as extras, and the dissemination of stereotypes should be avoided. The more anthropologically sensitive approach is expected from filmmakers on the subject discussing the issues of transwomen lives, relationships and culture.

3. Television programmes having previous misrepresentations of transwomen should be censored internally by the television organizations.

4. Since the short film movement become more visible and more issues are focused, the young filmmakers should discuss the issues of transwomen community in their films. In addition, transwomen need to be trained to make short films and documentaries through workshops to express their issues to the society.

5. Film festivals devoted to sexual minorities such as Rainbow Film Festival to be organized in the media organizations and academic departments focusing the issues of transwomen.

6. The Cinematograph Act should be reframed focusing contemporary scenario and appropriate provisions should be added and a representative from transwomen community
should be appointed to ensure neutrality in examining the films representing transwomen and sexual minority communities.

7. The transwomen should be enumerated in the census with clear and appropriate categories and their accurate population must be determined all over the country, and the policies and schemes should be developed and implemented accordingly for safeguarding the rights and inclusion of transwomen community.

8. The discriminatory legislations such as section 377 of the IPC which criminalize the same sex acts and behaviours between consenting adults should be repealed. The Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act, 1956 should be reformed clearly to treat those engaged in sex work.

9. The same sex marriages should be legally recognized and all the legal benefits, which are provided to the heterosexual couple, should be provided.

10. The procedures for the enrolment of transwomen identity in government documents such as voter ID, ration card, driving license and passport should be made easier to the transwomen.

11. The rights and facilities to access the public spaces such as transports, theatres, parks, hotels and public toilets should be appropriately ensured.

12. The reservations in education, employment, government welfare schemes and central and state legislature including panchayats should be provided to transwomen as given to SC/ST people and women.

13. The training for entrepreneurship should be given to transwomen to involve in self-employment skillfully. The
financial support for the community-based organizations of the transwomen should be extended.

14. The peer-based support programs should be developed in schools and colleges to provide psychological consultations for transgender students to accept and live in the new gender and to decrease the risk of suicides. The transgender students who drop out from school should be re-admitted in schools and a discrimination free educational environment should be ensured.

15. The Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) and the post-operative therapies such as vaginoplasty and voice therapy should be made available at free of cost at the government hospitals.

16. The Medical Council of India should issue guidelines to ensure the non-judgmental and non-discriminatory healthcare services to the transwomen. The healthcare providers should be sensitized accordingly and the resources should be made available to them to facilitate the high-quality health care for transwomen.

17. The curriculum of medical education should be including the elimination of the belief that the transsexualism as a mental disorder or a disease.

18. The police officials at all levels should be sensitised about the rights of transwomen through workshops and discussions conducted by queer and human rights activists to treat transwomen equally to the general public.

19. The legal procedures regarding transwomen should be transparent in the police administration and the legal
consultation and support to get justice against grievances should be provided at free of cost.

20. The protection and safety in police custody and prison should be ensured and the transwomen should not be imprisoned along male prisoners to prevent abuse, harassment, rape and physical violence.

21. The accurate information, resources and guidelines on the issues and rights of transwomen should be made easily available to the public and disseminated through popular media to safeguard the rights and inclusion of transwomen.

22. An inclusive sex-education program about sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and behaviour should be included as part of the school curricula to avoid the bias of the heterosexuality.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

1. Studies need to be carried out on the representation of transwomen in alternative mediums such as short films and documentaries, television, radio, print and online mediums.

2. Explorative studies should be carried out on the representation of transgender man (FTM) in mainstream cinema and other mediums.

3. Studies on the representation of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) identities in cinema and other mediums need to be carried out.

4. Studies on the representativeness and empowerment of LGBT communities in media and other social institutions need to be carried out.