The Assamese *Dāk-vacanas* highlight men and women also from different angles as matters of its particular concern. The intensity of the concern can be understood from the fact that quite a good number of chapters have been devoted to specifically deal with men and women respectively in respect of their vice and virtues. Our endeavour will be to derive out the total picture of both men and women coupled with the social attitude towards them.

I. Men As Reflected in the *Dāk-vacanas*

The published collections of *Dāk-vacanas* contain two to four chapters about men in specific with the contents like (I) *Kupuruṣa lakṣana* (symptoms of bad man), (II) *Supuruṣa lakṣana* (symptoms of a good man) and (III) *Puruṣar sāmudrik lakṣana* (chiromancy about man) of course with some want of uniformity. The want of uniformity is seen in the fact that the chapters *Supuruṣ(ar) lakṣana* and *Puruṣar sāmudrik lakṣana* are not common in all the collections. However, the chapter *Kupuruṣa lakṣana* is common in all the collections of course with variation in length i.e., number of sayings.

Besides these men-specific chapters, some sayings concerning man or men only are found in scattered manner in other chapters also, e.g.,
(i) 

\[ \text{brāhmanar pītṛ deva arccana} / \]
\[ \text{kṣetriyaganar juddha karana} // \]
\[ \text{nrpatisabar prajā pālana} / \]
\[ \text{bājśyar bānijya dhan ārjana} // \]
\[ \text{suḍrār swadharmā niti sebana} // ^1 \]

— The (caste-bound) specific duties of men respectively are, for the Brahmins to worship the gods and the forefathers, for the Kṣatriyas to go to war, for the kings to look after their subjects, for the Bājshyas to earn wealth undertaking trade and commerce and for the Südras to serve the rest.—

(ii) 

\[ \text{narar laghu lebleboyā} / ^2 \]

— A chilly-talker is an worse man.-------

(iii) 

\[ \text{bhāl po naṣta gel nusdhile bāpat} // ^3 \] etc.

— A good son spoils himself without taking advice from his father.----

These specific chapters and the scattered sayings may give us an idea regarding men. The appellations of the two chapters viz. Supuruṣa lakṣaṇa and Kupuruṣa lakṣaṇa indicate that men may be categorized into two distinct categories as good and bad and features of both the categories had been described in the respective chapters. The meanings

2. Ibid: P.23, maxim-92, ch.iti prakaraṇa.
of the terms supuruṣa and kupurṣa instead of good and bad men respectively can be construed as fortunate and unfortunate or auspicious and ominous as well, as per the context of the sayings. The basis of thus classifying the menfolk are the physical omens and the habitual behaviour. Both are considered to be of equal importance. The examples given below will clarify the contention:

I. Physical omen:
(i) of kupurṣa—
śetā krṣṇa hoy lom yāhār /
sito dukh pāi kahilo sār // 4
— It is the essence said: pale black hairs over the body herald sufferings for one.—
(ii) of supuruṣa—
kāpākāpi jār māthār kes /
puṣurṣar laksan āti bises // 5 etc.
— Curly hairs on the head is a specifically auspicious symptom for a man.—

II. Habitual behaviour:
(i) of kupurṣa—
hutāh kare bhojanar belā /
daridra cin tār ḍāke kahilā // 6
— One who becomes greedy at the time of meal, ḍāk says, it is one's symptom of becoming poor.—

(ii) of *supuruṣa*——

\[
alpa \text{āhār jār nīḍrā khin /} \\
sīto \text{purusar laksanar cīn} //^{7} \text{etc.}
\]

— Small quantity of food and light sleep are the auspicious symptoms of man. —

While habitual behaviour is a reasonable basis for assessing the personality of a man either as good or bad, it is seen minimised by focussing as bound-to-be consequences for the planetary influences as told in the sayings:

\[
nīj \text{kāhini stri purusar laksan sār /} \\
kahanta ḍāke kari bicār // \\
nānā prakāre kari uddhār / \\
grahagati gan kari bicār //^{8}
\]

— As per his own story (experience), Ṣāk tells about the vital symptoms of men and women, trying in many ways to understand the impact of the planets, all these are told.—

Since the human deeds irrespective of good or bad are thus considered as the outcome of planetary influences, there remained hardly any scope to praise or blame the people (male) concerned for anything done by them. It was given to understand particularly in respect of evil deeds of men that these were in fact beyond the control of human will or capability, because the planets keep them pre-destined. Therefore, the evil deeds propelled by habitual degeneration are only commented alike mostly alongwith proclaiming the believed consequences there

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7. Sarma, N.C.:op-cit, P.87, maxim-10
8. Loc-cit, maxim 1-2
to with a view to desisting other people from these. In case of physical omens, both auspicious and ominous, the motive was to make people aware of them since it was important to understand a man while to establish a relation or strike a deal with. The symptoms of habitual behaviour and the physical omens were believed to have been the indicators of fortune (or misfortune) and psychological set-up of people by the fatalist folk. Therefore, the sayings upheld a lenient and rather a sympathetic view to men even in case of undesired behaviour or deeds where stringent social censure should have been a befitting action. The crimes or offences committed were regarded as sins leaving the action of punishing the sinners to the hands of destiny. It is thus said that the people committing the sins like raping a minor girl or indulging in coition with a menstruating woman, etc. would be deserted by Lakṣmī (the goddess of wealth and fortune), would suffer in many ways in this life and would certainly reach the hell after death. Likewise, the people waging war against the king (rājadroha) and against their teachers (gurudroha) would fall in the worst division of the hell (rūrova naraka). Thus the society kept itself away from putting any active social deterrent to the erring men upholding the principles of leniency and sympathy in utmost forms.

Because of these principles of leniency and sympathy the men-folk have been shown the way of virtue which one can find in attaining control over the humanly passions:

10. Ibid: P.45, maxim - 40
bhakta guru viśṇunām nicine /  
kihar bale chay śatru jine //

— If one does not know the devotees, the teacher and the names of the God (Viśṇunām), how can one conquer the six enemies (i.e., the six passions namely lust, anger, avarice, love, pride and envy) ?—

This is a sympathetic teaching of the Neo-vaishnavite cult that one can earn salvation only by attaining control over the six enemies (ie., the six passions). Attainment of the said control can materialise only when one realises the charisma of the name of the God (Viśṇu) with the help of the guru (the religious teacher) and practices this with the company of noble devotees. But nothing has been said about those who do not follow the said path. The leniency principle on the other hand keeps the way open even for an worse sinner to a virtuous life by a very simple process as the following saying indicates :—

jata mahāpāp sakale kare /  
paradhan paranārik hare //  
yadi sito gaṅgāśnān kare /  
sakale pātek tāhār hare //

— All the worse sins like theft, treason, abduction (of other's wife) etc. can be washed away if the sinner takes a holy dip in the Ganges.—

11. Ibid: P.29, maxim-2  
12. Sarma, N.C.; op-cit, P.7, maxims 20-21
The *supurusa lakṣana* and the *kupurusa lakṣana* together present an Idealism - Realism dichotomy in respect of the character of the menfolk. While the *supurusa lakṣanas* are an ideal in aggregate to long for, the realistic situation was that most of the menfolk were far away from it indulging in gratification of the unrefined passionate urges giving rise to various sinful works. Without the prevalence of such a situation the concept of various sins and crimes could not have developed and the wise sermons to keep away from these or undo them would not have evolved. Hence, the society for its wellbeing needed a conversion of the menfolk from *kupurusa* to *supurusa* and the principles of leniency and sympathy were expected to facilitate the said conversion.

II. Women As Reflected in the *Ḍāk-Vacanas*:

The published collections of *Ḍāk-Vacanas* contain two to five chapters dealing with the womenfolk in specific with contents like:

1. *Strīr lakṣana* (Symptoms of a bride),
2. *Gṛhini lakṣana* (Symptoms of a house - wife),
3. *Kulasinī strīr lakṣana* (Symptoms of an ominous woman),
4. *Sulakṣinī strīr lakṣana* (Symptoms of an auspicious woman), and
5. *Strīr śāmudrik lakṣana* (Chiromancy about women).

Like the chapters on the menfolk as mentioned above, the chapters on women also bear some want of uniformity amongst different collections in respect of their names and numbers and of course in their length too. Although unlike the chapters on men there is not a
single uniform chapter on women available in all the three collections so far the name is concerned, there are however uniformities in theme and attitude.

Besides these women-specific chapters, there are plenty of women-centric maxims scattered in other chapters. We prefer to cite only three of them as examples from three different chapters.

(i)  *tirir mitā suthāni* /14
--- Women with well-built physique are pleasant.—

(ii)  *parihara jubati nite behtāi hāt* /15
— Avoid a damsel who always roams around the market.—

(iii)  *besyā nāri sundari kanyā/ jātrākāle isab dhanyā* /16 etc.
— A whore and a lovely damsel -- all are auspicious (if seen) at the start of a move.—

All these women-specific chapters and the scattered women-centric maxims together present a perceptible picture of the life of the womenfolk and the social attitude towards them.

The chapter *Strīr lakṣana* /17 concentrates only on the ominous physical portents of a maid which could be the vital reasons of her

13. (ed.) N.C. Sarma; H. Barman and D. Dutta
15. Ibid : P. 41. maxim- 4; ch: Parityāga kathana
16. Ibid : P, 76. maxim- 10; ch: Yātrā lakṣana
rejection as bride. The chapter reveals that the process of mutual selection between a marriagable boy and a marriagable girl was not there since the monopolistic privilege was accorded only to the menfolk in general and the would-be groom in particular, as said — āpuniye cāiba cakṣu bhari and-bhāl manda lakṣana cāti i tebese kanyā sudhiba jāi / / 18. Thus the womenfolk were made a subject of pity or mercy to the menfolk for no fault of their own. The expression used to mean the rejection of a bride for unfortunate ugly growth of her limbs is not only humiliating rather inhumanly, when said --

mechā kaṇkāl uphandā hiyā /
sei chowālik phālīṅgik diyā // 19

— A damsel having to happen with fat waist and swollen breasts, be sold out to a phālīṅgi (i.e., a Muslim who carries on business on cattle) —

The chapters Gṛhini lakṣana and Nārīr lakṣana in the edition of N.C. Sarma deal elaborately with the vices and virtues of a housewife. The chapter Gṛhini lakṣana found in the edition of D. Dutta contains only nine maxims which are devoted to the discussion of the virtues only, while in the edition of H. Barman such kind of chapter is not found. But regarding the vices and virtues of housewives two independent chapters namely Kulākṣaṇīyā strīr kathā and Sulakṣaṇīyā strīr lakṣana are presented and D. Dutta also followed the same in excess of presenting Strī lakṣana and Gṛhini lakṣana. Thus D. Dutta

18. Ibid: P. 27 (maxims unnumbered in this collection)
19. Ibid: P. 28
appears to be extravagant in arranging the chapters. However, we can take an account of some of the important virtues and vices of women as described in the maxims to get an idea of the social attitude towards them.

Besides the physical portents needing to be auspicious in all respects, the behavioural features to be treated as remarkable virtues were unqualified obligation, service and devotion to their husbands irrespective of their personalities; obliging the mother-in-law’s authority in all respects of household works; maintaining a servile life with tight-lipped politeness to pronounce no hard word even in adversity accepting the married life always to keep wet with tears and with no liberty to smile or laugh etc. These are only few virtues of women which speak volumes of the partisan social attitude in general and man’s attitude in particular towards the womenhood. Again the reasonable manners and behaviours like sleeping in day-time becoming angry on being beaten by the husband, weeping and shedding tears even in compelling situations doing something confidently in own capacity (without asking the seniors and the superiors), touching salt in dish, showing any interest in fine arts

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   & Dutta, D: op-cit, P.29 maxim (numbered by us)- 5
23. Dutta,D.: op-cit P.36 maxim (numbered by us)- 71
25. Barman: Loc-cit,
27. Ibid: P. 51. maxim- 44
like songs and dances etc., were regarded as vices or ominous features (kulaksan) which reaffirm the aforesaid partisan attitude. The difference of the attitude is quite clear even in granting a small comfort like daytime sleep. While it is granted to the men-folk in an oblique manner in the saying ----

\[ \text{strik saṅgate lajyā dinate śowe /} \]

\[ \text{dukhā hajyā sito narake paray}// \]

— One who sleeps in day-time taking his wife in company ---- becoming distressed he falls in the hell ---- (i.e., nothing is wrong if one male alone sleeps in daytime).—

the women-folk have been straightly debarred from it, as:

\[ \text{yijani dibasat nidrā yāy /} \]

\[ \text{dāke bole tāik mane nāsādhe //} \]

— The woman who sleeps in daytime, --- Ḍāk says, she is not longed for.—

Physical torture on women was an order of the day, for the general principle --- astrak śil tirik kil\[32\] offered the menfolk unrestricted

29. Ibid. P. 50, maxims 16-17, & P. 52, maxim- 39
30. Ibid: Pp. 44-45, maxims 32-33
31. Ibid: P. 52, maxims 43-44
32. Ibid: P. 40, maxim- 131 [ Translated as: On a stone your knife sharpen / Tame with blows a woman // - Goswami, P.: Folk- Literature of Assam (1965, P.70)]
authority to physical roughness over the womenfolk and the same was fortified by the characteristics of virtuous women not to protest about this since a woman going angry on being beaten by her husband (swāmī mārīle rāg dekhuvāi) was branded as a bad or ominous (kulakṣanīyā) woman. A woman to be regarded as a virtuous housewife had to maintain her stance in the family like a maid-servant as said — namra huyā thāke jehen dāsi and the ones devoid of the considered virtues because of ugly growth of their limbs like kurkutā muri mecekā pīṭhi and unpleasant manners like — ulati - pālati melak dṛṣṭī — are said to accord only with a servant's treatment—dhān khundābā, ānābā pānī — and never to accept as wives.

The lot of the women folk therefore, particularly in the prime of their life-time was as that of maid-servants irrespective of they being good (sulakṣanīyā) or bad (kulakṣanīyā). Further, the society in general at least ideally indulged in the practice of Sati, i.e., dying co-death on the funeral pyre of the husband for a virtuous or chaste woman upholding the principle — tebese sati swāmi sañge jāī.

This is the picture of the womanhood and the social attitude towards it. The women with the so-called virtues as mentioned above have been praised levishly and advised to maintain them with utmost care and faith - rākhibā biswāse kari jatan. But the ones with the so

33. Ibid: P.52, maxim 43-43
36. Ibid: P. 91, maxims 40-41
37. Ibid : P. 23, maxim- 94
& Barman, H. op-cit, P.37, maxim- 88
- called vices have been severely criticised, condemned and advised to other than treating like servants and 'tame with blows' even to desert \(^39\), drive out of the home \(^40\) and sell out (to a \(phālīngi\) \(^41\). This last prescription of selling a girl or a woman indicates that the practice of slave-trade particularly on women was current in the society.

It is clearly felt that while describing about the women, the two classes of them mentioned as good and bad have been upheld as so rigid that unlike in the case of men, the society saw no possibility of reformation of the bad type, i.e., a bad woman would always remain bad and could no way reform herself to a good woman. The principles of leniency and sympathy upheld in the case of men offering scope of reformation have not been extended to the womenfolk and therefore, the prescriptions could be so drastic like to 'keep as servant', 'tame with blows', 'drive out, desert' and 'sell out' etc. We see one reason of this discrimination lying in the position of the narrators and of the subjects (i.e., the targeted folk). It can be realised in the sayings that the men-folk only is the narrator in describing both men and women, hence the discriminations are conspicuous. Had the womenfolk been the narrator, the picture could have been just reverse. This probability is seen as a reality in the women's response discussed later on. The ready reality however, exhibits the thrust for social supremacy of the menfolk over the womenfolk putting them into a severe oppression which indicates bitter social relations between the two sexes. It transpires from the

\(^{39}\) Ibid: P. 35, maxim-31; 
\(^{34}\) & Dutta, D.: op-cit, P.33, maxim (numbered by us) -34 
\(^{40}\) Sarma, N.C., op-cit. P.33, maxims-12, 14, 18, 35 & 52 etc. 
\(^{41}\) Ibid: P. 40, maxim-78; P. 90, maxim -21 etc.
sayings that the Assamese society at that time attained a stage of extreme male domination at the cost of the feminine interests in both social and domestic spheres of life. The extreme male domination against the subdued womenhood indicates of a transition of the society consequent upon a transformation of the social order from matriliney to patriliney. It seems that the rights and liberties of the womenfolk enjoyed in the matrilineal order had just been lost to the menfolk for the said transformation. The womenfolk found themselves cornered in a male dominated society which grew jubilant with the transformation and the menfolk as victor began to uphold the very critical view about women. We have a few reasons to uphold this opinion.

(I) The known women's vice-hunt of the sayings 42 is interestingly marked with a specification. The concerned sayings are very critical about women only in respect of according them with the marital status. In other respects, the female sex irrespective of their quality has been praised very liberally and treated at par with the male sex as the following sayings indicate:

(1) besyā nāri sundari kanyā /
     jātrā kāle isab dhanyā // 43

— A whore, a lovely damsel - all are auspicious (if seen) at the start of a move.—

   (ii) Anamιyā Jana Sāhitya [(Hesiod āru Dāk puruṣ)
43. Sarma, N.C.: op-cit, P. 76, maxim- 10
(2)  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pitr mātrā nīte name caran /} \\
\text{dāke bolanta sārthak jivan /} \\
\text{sāthi boccarat bole āi /} \\
\text{āsārdh śrāvanat dohe gāi /} \\
\end{align*}
\]

.................\(^{44}\)

---Who offers salutations at the feet of the parents daily with devotion, who has his mother to address at the age of sixty, who milks cow in the months of āsārdh and śrāvan, he is a fortunate man.---

But to accept as a bride, the minutest possible scrutiny was conducted in quest of the virtues or auspicious portents (sulakṣan) of a girl along with her dynastic purities. While the unsatisfactory ones were condemned in bitter language apart from refusing, to obtain a virtuous girl, her father or parents were tantalized or provoked to offer the girl on marriage with the sayings like: ---

(1)  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sonār tulya kanyādān /} \\
\text{dāke bole tār swargat thān /}^{45}
\end{align*}
\]

---Offering a girl (on marriage) is as good as donating a piece of gold. One, by doing it earns a place for himself in the heaven.---

44. Ibid: P. 11, maxim- 2-3
45. Ibid: P. 6, maxim- 13
— In the rainy season he who lives in a house the roofs of which leak water through, and he who keeps his youthful daughter at home (i.e., without giving her on marriage) are sure to face defeat in litigation.—

(II) The womenfolk were bestowed with some rights and authority on the household affairs or family matters in their ripe old age only when they turned mother-in-laws particularly to exercise those over their young daughter-in-laws, as said:

(1) 
\[
\text{śāśut nupusi karma nakare} / \\
\text{tāir jānā lakṣmi gṛha nācāre /}^{47}
\]

— Lakṣmi never leaves the home of a house-wife who does not do anything without asking her mother-in-law.—

(2) 
\[
\text{māche garakā pācali khābā} / \\
\text{śāhuc garakā bowāri bābā /}^{48} \text{ etc.}
\]

— Eat a curry trampled on by fish, get served by a wife trampled on by her mother-in-law.—

46. Ibid : P. 14, maxims - 20-21
These sayings are aimed at training the young housewives by the experienced mother-in-laws in their own plight. It seems to have been a tactical effort to tackle women by women only for which women could be critical of women. The mystery behind the incredible popularity of the sayings critical of women even amongst the womenfolk itself 49 lies in this self against self position of them, very tactfully composed by the menfolk in the transformed patrilineal society.

Our inference is that, in the pretransformed matrilineal order of the society, the womenfolk by virtue of marriage earned the authority of the household and being equipped with the right of lineage might have exercised the authority over the menfolk to the bitterness of the latter. Therefore in the transformed order, the menfolk became very critical of women and careful in according them with marital status along with curbing their rights and authority to the possible extent if not to avenge the bitterness, at least to guard their own interests.

(III) ḍāk's paternal grand mother's inconveniences to receive Mihirmuni as a guest in absence of the male members of the family, as the legend says (gharat nāi munih lok / kenkaj bāpā sudhim tok) 50 indicate how the womenfolk lost their rights and authority even on the petty family matters. Mihirmuni for being an outsider unable to know the condition of the female members in a family, kept insisting on the old lady who ultimately had to concede. But she had to prepare her

49. Baura, A.C. : ḍāk bhole śunā upāy (Introduction) P.1
arguments to accord him the reception which indicate her dilemma for crossing her limits: gadhulir atithi sākṣāt ṭīwar/ atithi nusudhili kihar ghar //51 All these substantiate to the presumption of the said social transformation.

(IV) The anthropologists also believe that though the date could not be ascertained, the Assamese society attained the present patrilineal order following a transformation from the matrilineal one consequent upon the migration of the Aryans to this region 52. It is otherwise believed by some scholars particularly about the erstwhile Assamese society as the background of the sayings that perhaps having established contacts with the patrilineal Hindu society of the Western or Northern India characterised by fast growth of casteism which also earned remarkable progress in agriculture, the Assamese society also attained patrilineal form following a transformation from the matrilineal one 53. Further, expanding the background from Assam to India and observing the intact women's liberty that of Non-Aryan India for being mostly matriarchal in form, gradually getting extinct in the aryansed India for emerging patriarchal following the transformation, it is logically inferred that the sayings of Ḍāk are the creation of the aryansed India as well as of aryansed Assam 54. Therefore it can be held that the migration of the Aryans caused the social transformation from matriliney to patriliney and this transformation further caused the society to uphold the said critical view on women creating congenial atmosphere to compose the sayings accordingly.

51. Loc-cit. verse no. 9
Here may come the question of the women's response to such a change. In the text of the sayings no such response as can generally be expected, has been recorded. But in the legend of Ḍāk's birth\(^{55}\) the women's response is quite perceptible. Because of the fact that a woman or at least a feminist having taken the position of the narrator, other than criticising men's worth and attitude, the women's attitude towards the transformation has been asserted. Here it is the women describing both women and men.

(I) First of all, the menfolk have been projected as an worthless lot particularly in respect of biological capability in love making against the artful expertise of the womenfolk. The concerned metaphorical description goes like:

\[
\text{lehir tiri pañcarāg buje} / \\
\text{bhaiddār dāmrāi bina śīnge yuje} \text{ ll} \quad \text{\textsuperscript{56}}
\]

— The women of the village Lehi know the five kinds (or five stages) of love. The young bull of Bhaiddā (a layman) fights without horns.—

Here, the words dāmrā and śīnge have been used metaphorically. While dāmrā denotes menfolk in general and the impotents in particular, śīnge denotes the masculine vitality, i.e., an erected penis capable for coition. (An erected penis somewhat resembles a horn of a young


\(^{56}\) Ibid : P.1, verse no. 2
Here we are reminded of the information of the American folk society where a stork is presumed as a symbol of masculinity for its long legs and the long bill. Without taking the second line of the verse along with the metaphors into consideration, the first line had been erroneously explained as indicating the women's expertise in music. The Assamese word *rāg* even though in one sense denotes the primary modes of music (numbering six in total and thirty six in their inferior forms together called *chay rāg chaytriś rāgini*) at the same time it also denotes *love, affection, desire, pleasure* etc., and different words relating to *love* have been formed in connection with different prefixes like *anurāg, pūrbarāg, birāg* etc. According to the Hindu *śāstras* there are five forms or stages of love. While the word *rāg* refers to music the number associated to it is more likely to be *six* in stead of *five*. The context of the concerned verse also is in no way related to music, rather distinctly related to lovemaking or copulation resulting in *Dāk*’s birth as a *kṣetraja santān*. Therefore the context of the verse and the number associated to the word *rāg* (i.e., *pañcarāg*) together indicating the reference as lovemaking, the verse in whole vindicates the women’s disgust about the men’s biological incapability. The statement is general in form although the particular case was of *Dāk*’s foster-father’s impotency causing his wife to remain issueless till Mihirmuni was accepted by her in the form of *Niyoga* as per her mother-in-law’s order: *beṣār kapāle nāhike po / atithi puji chali kolāt lo //*. Besides this biological incapability, the men’s worth

60. Barman, H.: op-cit. P.2, verse- 12
in day-to-day activities also had been ridiculed in the projection of the seven brother's ignorance about bunching the reaped thatches (gāyan bāndhile howe dāṅgar saru / kenekaj gāyan samān karo II)\(^61\) which was done away with the advice of the new born Ḍāk.

These descriptions telling about the men's incapabilities, generalisation of certain individual's incapabilities to the whole, disrespectful attribute like bhaidār dāmrah etc, vindicate the disgustful attitude of the womenfolk to the menfolk and their attitude in the transformed social situation. To speak in brief, the so called superiority of the menfolk to dominate the womenfolk manifested through the sayings has been ridiculed by these descriptions.

(II) Secondly, by the old lady (Ḍāk's paternal grandmother) exercising her authority to order the youngest daughter-in-law to beget a progeny from the guest (Mihirmuni) i.e., to opt for Niyoga and the daughter-in-law infact doing so calling forth no challenge nor any contradiction to it from the menfolk, a remnant of the matriarchal society-women's rights and liberties have been asserted.

(III) Thirdly, the most important feature of a patrilineal society, the father's right over the children has been thoroughly negated and reversely, by redoubtledly asserting the mother's right through the metaphorical arguments between Ḍāk and Mihirmuni, the son and the father respectively in the legend\(^62\), the recurrency of the lost matrilinecy has been at least ideally upheld or professed. We are tempted to cite the

\(^{61}\) Ibid : P.4, verse- 40
\(^{62}\) Ibid : Pp. 5-6, verses 52-70
last one of the four sets of arguments as a specimen, the most clear one in nature, establishing the mother's right over the children as prominent feature of matriliney:

\[ \text{dāke bole lawari yāy ṭu garu jāk /} \\
\text{dekhīyā dāke sudhīlā tāk //} \\
\text{kār dhenu kār brāsav jāk ?} \\
\text{powāli jagilē kone niba tāk ?} \\
\text{śuniyā muni bolanta cāi /} \\
\text{tok jiniba nowāro mai //} \text{61} \\
\]

— Seeing a herd of cattle running on mating urge Ḍāk asked: the cow and the bulls belonged to different owners. The cow would conceive and on birth of a calf who would own that? Listening to the question the saint admitted that he could not defeat him (i.e., Ḍāk) —

Nothing can be more clear assertion of the mother's right over the children as the strongest possible pointer of matriliney than the following proclamation of the learned saint Mihirmuni following his defeat to the tender aged Ḍāk in advocacy of patriliney:

\[ \text{māṭṛr lagat tumi kariyo bās /} \\
\text{ājir parā tor erilo āś //} \text{64} \\
\]

63. Ibid : P.6, verses 66-68
64. Ibid : P.6, verse- 70
— Live with your mother; I have given up the hope on you from today.—

Dāk's age and expertise in the said pleading are particularly noteworthy for the motive to assert the mother's right as so common a matter that even a child was well aware of that.

(IV) Moreover, even though in metaphorical language, still notable is that a father has been described as a lifeless object or inanimate something (i.e., jaḍa) with a motive to deny the patrilineal rights and authority by the tongue of none other than the learned saint Mihirmuni as --- muni bole jaḍar cetanā nāi.65

These are the women's response or attitude to the said social transformation. But the patrilocal design of the family and the very stern and critical male attitude towards the womenhood curbing almost all the women's rights and liberties reducing them to an oppressed lot definitely ascertain that the partiliney stood firm in its acute and overwhelming form reducing the matriliney to its extinction. The women's response perceptible in the said legend was therefore the mere manifestation of their repressed feelings since they failed to undo the transformation detrimental to their interests. Therefore, there occurs the difference between the sayings and the legend in reflection of men and women.

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65. Ibid : P.5, verse- 54 , Also kindly see P. 6, verses- 60 & 65