

The Desexualized Queer Body: A Cinematic Discourse from the North East

Dr. Saba Anish

Assistant Professor, Dept of English, J.B.College (Autonomous)
(saba.jb@rediffmail.com)

Abstract

The narrative of the queer body vis-à-vis popular representation has remained a debatable issue both in academics and elsewhere. In spite of much socio-cultural and political clamours for the queer body, representation of the same in its various manifestations has almost invariably been biased and marginalized. When it comes to mainstream Bollywood, the scenario is even more deplorable, as the most popular version of the transgender has never gone beyond the stereotyped projection of the *hijra*. Except for a negligible attempt in Bollywood, the queer body has mostly been sexualized as the other. Projected as the deviant, the queer body has not only been marginalized, but also politicized as a threat to heteronormative standards. Challenging this mainstream trend of rendering the queer body invisible, are a few bold cinematic attempts from the North East. This paper attempts to critically analyze two such films from the North East: *Fireflies: Jonaki Porua* (2019), directed by Prakash Deka from Assam and *Eina Khankhiba Natte (It's Not My Choice)* (2015) by Manipuri filmmaker Priyakanta Laishram. Portraying the psycho-sexual, social and cultural hindrances faced by a transgender from a realistic perspective, both the films challenge the mainstream trend of sexualizing and thereby annihilating the queer. The lead roles in both the films are played by real life transgenders who enact on screen their real life's journeys towards a new sexual orientation.

Keywords: queer body, marginalization, threatening heteronormativity, North East cinema, sexual orientation.