**APPENDIX**

*Brief Storylines of Important Films Used in This Study*

**CHARULATA**

The representation of the nineteenth century *Bhadramahila* gets perhaps, the best manifestation in this film in terms of her aspirations and the actual state in liberal minded Bengali middle class family. Based on the Tagore’s story ‘Nastanir’, in the film *Charu* is the wife of *Bhupati* who represents the reformist Bengali *Bhadralok*, who believes in moderate constitutional politics and influenced by the British western life style. Believing in moderate liberal politics he feels that criticism is the best policy to correct government actions without being disloyal. From this understanding he started to publish an English newspaper ‘Sentinel’ which deals with mainly political affairs and policies of the colonial government. To successfully run the newspaper, he devotes his money, labour and time. For that he cannot give sufficient time to his wife in a day. As a wife of such a liberal person *Charu*, as the film portrays cannot be called a liberated being. Because of the ‘*purdah*’ system she is not allowed to go outside of the home. But like a normal human being she also wants to get the taste of public life. She tries to see the outside world by peeping through windows. However, she does not have any agony about the fact that *Bhupati* does not have any time for her; rather as traditional devoted wife she thinks that he is doing something noble for which he would be renowned in society. Otherwise she fulfils all other qualities, corresponding to her status as a middle class woman. She could read and understand the novels of Bankimchandra and according to her husband she has the talent of writing. She knows modern housewifery, good in stitching and tailoring that signifies her artistic sense, above all she has cultivated mind.

But after all she is the captive wife who does not have any appearance in the public sphere. At this stage, *Amal* comes into their family, who happens to be her brother-in-law and also in the life of *Charu*. *Amal* has a tremendous passion for poetry and literature like *Charu*. Within a very short span they become good friends and for *Charu,*
Amal becomes the only person with whom she can share her emotion, feelings and even her desire. Knowing their closeness, Bhupati tells Amal to inspire Charu to write as she has that talent, so Amal starts to do that. But this news makes Charu annoyed as she thought that what Amal’s doing is because of their sheer closeness between them. As Amal is able to publish one of his article in a magazine, so that to prove herself before Amal, Charu also writes and it is published. This mutual competition between them is the expression of their growing emotional affinities by which they want to share their value for each other. The importance of this relationship is somewhat different for both of them. For Charu, it is more valuable than Amal, as he represents the outside world as he is not part of that family, he is an outsider. Amal, for Charu is not another man in her life but a new world where she can find her personality. Here we should remember that Charu’s writing which chiefly expresses herself is part of that process when newly educated women in nineteenth century Bengal fashioned their agony, desire, above all their position in the family, through their writings.

The turning point of the film is, when the manager of the Bhupati’s newspaper, who happens to be the brother of Charu, cheats him and flees. No doubt it is a great shock for Bhupati, not because he loses money but he loses faith on human beings. Hearing this news Amal suddenly feels that he is also betraying him by having a relationship with his wife. The next day he leaves their home. After the incident Bhupati and Charu go to Puri to holiday and there Bhupati decides to re-establish the newspaper but this time the paper would be bi-lingual, one in English and another in Bengali, following the advice of Charu. Returning to Kolkata in their home Bhupati finds the letter of Amal and gives it to Charu. While reading the letter, she breaks down crying. Then Bhupati realizes the actual relation between them and also about the vacuum which has taken place in their relationship which can never be filled up. At the end of the film we find the never ending distance between Charu and Bhupati.
Another portrayal of nineteenth century Bhadramahila is the film ‘Strir Patra’. It is a film again based on Tagore’s short story where Mrinal is the main protagonist around whom the story revolves. ‘Strir Patra’, begins with a scene where Mrinal’s aunt-in-law comes to her room and blesses her by saying that she should be like a Sati-Lakshmi and bring prosperity to the family. Mrinal is a younger daughter-in-law of a typical higher middle class family possessing a huge property and business. Very recently their business opportunities have been improved so her elder brother-in-law thinks it is due to the good fortune of Mrinal that new deals and business relations have taken place which did not happen in case of the of the elder daughter-in-law. Rather her brother cheated them. But beyond her identity as wife and daughter-in-law of the family, she has her own world of writing where she finds her own identity. It is her world of emancipation as a woman. Whatever be the quality of her writing, for people that constitutes a space for her. Apart from her other family members she has her own brother, Sarat who now studies in Ripon College, Kolkata. This college was one of the centres of political movement against the British colonial rule. Ironically, Mrinal’s family, her husband and his elder brother are closer to the colonial British authority and dislike the Swadeshis. Knowing that his brother-in-law has taken admission in Ripon College, Mrinal’s husband warns him not to get involved in political activities. But ultimately he not only joins politics but becomes an active member of the revolutionary armed struggle. All of this being known to Mrinal.

Mrinal, after a certain period of her marriage becomes pregnant but a miscarriage takes place. After that there is no chance for a second pregnancy for her. A conflict arises when an orphan girl, related to her elder sister-in-law’s paternal home, appears in their family as her brothers have driven her out from their home. From this point the story begins to take into a different course. Bindu, that orphan girl is not welcomed in the family; her sister-in-law also is not able to help her by providing shelter. Only Mrinal comes to the rescue and it is her initiative by which Bindu starts to live in the family. For this act Mrinal faces tough resistance from her husband and her elder brother-in-law. As she has defied their decision to send the girl to her brothers her status reduced from the ‘Goddess’ of the home to the mere maid servant, even the allotted money for her own
expenditure is stopped. Her husband, to drive her out from their family accuses Bindu for stealing a golden necklace which actually was taken by her brother Sarat, for his revolutionary activities. Finally they arrange for her marriage but that would not take place in their house but at the place of the bridegroom. Ultimately that bridegroom is found to be a lunatic and Bindu flees from there and again comes to Mrinal. Mrinal tries her best to support the cause of this orphan girl. But when Bindu’s in-laws are come to their house to take her back, she fails to do anything for her. She understands that while remaining in her family it is not possible to provide support to Bindu. So, lying to her husband that she is going to Puri on pilgrimage with her aunt-in-law, she leaves the home and directs her brother Sarat to find Bindu and bring her back to her.

Her brother comes back but without Bindu because she has committed suicide. Hearing the news, Mrinal takes the firm decision not to go back to her family in Calcutta. The death of Bindu makes her aware of the real value of women in family and society. In a letter to her husband she says that apparently she does not have any complaint against him as he is free from all forms of bad qualities and manners, which was abundant in many men. Even for his brother, whatever is his personal life, she does not have any personal grudge over him. Still, they have all contributed to the death of an innocent girl and in this way have disregarded the value of women. After leaving the family she is not going commit suicide rather she would go to live a new life beyond the confinements of family.

**GHARE-BAIRE**

Ironically all four renowned films, representing nineteenth century Bengali society and family system are based on Tagore’s writings. ‘Charulata’ and ‘Strir Patra’ are based on Tagore’s short stories, ‘Ghare-Baire’ based on his novel, which got cinematic expression again by the director Satyajit Ray, following his classic ‘Charulata’. But compared to the background of ‘Charulata’ which was set in terms of the modernization period in the second half of nineteenth century Bengal, ‘Ghare-Baire’ is set with the background of nationalism in Bengal as it influenced the middle class’ domestic world. The film is constituted by three main characters which are connected to
each other in terms of their inter-personal relationships. The film also tries to uphold the character of Bimala as the most important figure around which other two main characters revolve. In the film, Bimala is the wife of Nikhilesh who is a zamindar but unlike other swadeshi minded neighbouring landlords, he is not a supporter of the militant movements of the swadeshi age. The third character is Sandip, who portrays the opposite image of Nikhilesh, being a nationalist swadeshi leader, having a strong personality and motivation.

In the first scene we see that Bimala who is in andarmahal, is learning western music from an English lady teacher, and we get to know that she also learns English behaviour and modern housewifery. She is also aware of the swadeshi nationalist movement as a result of the partition of Bengal in 1905. It has been possible for because Nikhilesh, her husband is liberal, moderate and highly educated, believing in a reformist ideology. That is why he wants Bimala to appear in public (bahir) and realise her true autonomy. She appears in public for the first time with her husband to meet Sandip, who has come there for his nationalist campaign. After this meeting, Bimala is greatly influenced by Sandip and she starts to compare his husband’s attitude and personality with that of him who represented an aggressive form of masculinity. Now her husband Nikhilesh seems to her as calm, which is quite against the spirit of swadeshi movement. Steadily Bimala and Sandip become close which is first realised by Bimala’s sister-in-law who is a widow and spending the traditional life. Nikhilesh also comes to know whatever is going on between them but he never says anything to his wife as he believes in women’s autonomy and subjectivity. Ultimately when Bimala realises that she is wrong she comes back to Nikhilesh but it is too late as the next morning Nikhilesh is killed while trying to stop communal riot in his area.

It is not that Nikhilesh does not believe in the swadeshi movement. In fact he thought about a swadeshi programme much before the swadeshi nationalist movement in 1905. As part of that programme, he set-up a swadeshi factory but everything failed very soon and people ridiculed him. His swadeshi programme did not believe in boycott and negative propaganda which the swadeshi movement had incorporated in its later phase. He realizes that the nature of this movement cannot be pro-people because it is based on highly emotive spirit where nation is symbolized as mother Goddess, signified by the
nationalist helm ‘Bandemataram’ but the absence of any substantive affirmative programme. Even, because of the influence of Hinduism in swadeshi movement, Muslims in large sections do not participate in it. As the swadeshi product is substandard and also costly, for common people it cannot be affordable. In Nikhillesh’s area most of the people are poor Muslims and they cannot buy swadeshi products. What Sandip wants like other landlords, Nikhillesh should order his subjects to stop business with the British products in markets. When he rejects to do that, Sandip begins to use other means which involves force and creates communal tensions in that area, which lead into acute communal violence in which Nikhillesh loses his life.

Sandip somehow escapes from this situation though he is the main figure behind all kinds of complications which culminates into a serious communal riot. As the film shows that despite of the fact that Sandip is a fire brand leader of nationalist movement but he basically is a narrow-minded, power hungry person who keeps his self-interest above everything else. Whatever he does in the garb of nationalist politics, is not to serve the country but to pursue power. He thinks that there is no point to consider that since ‘it is my birth place so that it is my country but when I will able to exercise my power over it, only then I will call it is my country.’ Having this kind of programme in mind, he uses Bimala by making passionate love with her and ultimately Bimala gets exploited. Sandip, as Nikhillesh observes, portrays Bimala in a gorgeous manner, called ‘Makshi Rani’, corresponding to the Goddess image of the nation which is bound to be attractive to women and Bimala easily falls in it. Though, following the nature of nationalist politics he does not provide scope for her to appear in the public political space. Finally he leaves the place but his activities violate the sanctity of the private while providing no scope for public participation. In a way the film reflects the tension between the two forms of masculinities – the liberal and aggressive – which affected the nationalist swadeshi movement. Though, in reality the movement was totally influenced by the form of aggressive masculinity.
**CHOKHER BALI**

Based on Rabindranath Tagore’s novel, directed by Rituparno Ghosh, this film is another attempt to represent nineteenth century domestic world. In the film there are four main characters, *Mahendra, Ashalata, Bihari, and above all Binodini*. According to the narrative *Mahendra’s* mother *Rajlakshmi* wants that her son who is a medical student should marry *Binodini*. *Binodini* is the daughter of the neighbour of *Rajlakshmi’s* ancestral village home. She learned English from an English lady teacher so *Rajlakshmi* thinks that she would be the perfect choice for her highly educated son, *Mahendra*. But *Mahendra* rejects marrying her and *Binodini* is married off somewhere else. Within a year she becomes a widow and returns to her village home. On the other hand *Mahendra* chooses a lady who had been primarily chosen for his friend *Bihari*, but since *Mahendra* likes her, he ultimately marries the girl, *Ashalata*.

But *Asha* is traditional, without education as she believes that if women learn, they would definitely turn out to be widows. She does not even know how to maintain family responsibilities as a result *Rajlakshmi* gets annoyed with her. Dissatisfied with her inability to manage the household, her mother-in-law leaves the house goes to her village home where *Binodini* looks after her and she laments that if she would be her own daughter-in-law, everything would become nice. While returning to Calcutta, she brings *Binodini* with her. Though, apparently *Mahendra* is satisfied with his so called traditional illiterate wife but with the arrival of *Binodini* things begin to change. As *Binodini* is educated, knows modern housewifery and has a cultivated mind, at first tries to teach *Ashalata* how to maintain her home as a modern housewife. Very soon they become good friends. But *Mahendra* gets attracted towards her and they get involved in passionate love. To know about their relationship *Asha* with her aunt *Annapurna* leave the home and go to Kashi. *Binodini* stays in their home but one day *Rajlakshmi* tells *Mahendra* if *Binodini* does not leave the home she would not live there for a moment which shows her sense of justice in favour of her daughter-in-law in spite of her inability to maintain the household according to modern life. So *Binodini* leaves their house and goes to *Bihari’s* place for shelter.
What is interesting is that Binodini asks Bihari to marry her which is not acceptable to him. Binodini realises, since Asha went to Kashi, leaving her home that made him sympathetic to her that is why she promises that Asha would get back her due recognition and Mahendra could go back to her as she will leave from Mahendra’s life. Binodini goes back to her village but the next morning Mahendra arrives there. But Binodini wants to go in Bihari’s house. When Mahendra informs her that Bihari has gone to Kashi then Binodini wants to go there and she demands a promise from Mahendra that he will bring her to Bihari.

Meanwhile, while living in Kashi, Annapurna, becomes aware that Asha is pregnant. She starts celebrating because it is a ritual which should be performed for pregnant woman Binodini also in Kashi, finds Asha and Annapurna. Seeing Asha she understands that she is going to be a mother. The next day she notices Bihari who at that time examines an old man who has just died. Bihari enquires for Mahendra because his mother Rajlakshmi passed away on the last Saturday. Bihari also informs Asha and Annapurna about her death. So Mahendra comes back along with Asha. Bihari proposes Binodini for marriage which she sees as the price for her as she brings back Asha her husband. But Binodini in the next morning leaves Kashi by writing a letter for Asha, her friend which Bihari brings to her. When Asha asks for her where about Bihari replies he has tried to find her in every possible places but he failed. Somehow, as Bihari feels, Binodini finds another India where she now lives. But it is quite clear that the relationship between Asha and Mahendra cannot be normal as it was. What Asha tells Bihari metaphorically that whatever attempts are made by you, partition of Bengal cannot be resisted because there is no meaning to save what is to be broken. Like her home which is already broken but attempts are made to save it. Finally it must be remembered that Asha may be illiterate but she has a great sense of self-respect that is why she left her home after knowing of the relationship between her husband and Binodini. This aspect of her character stands above Binodini’s powerful presence in the film.
MAHANAGAR

To understand the changing scenario of the Bengali middle class family and women in post-partition / post-independent era, this film is, perhaps the most important cinematic document, made by again Satyajit Ray. The unique aspect of the film is the tension between the old values and the new circumstances and needs. The film is constituted by two main characters Arati and Subrato who is the husband. Subrato is a clerk in a private bank. But he has a big family – his old parents, sister, wife and a small son. To maintain such a big family he works hard but is still unable to manage everything. Another earning member is the need for them. In this situation Arati offers to get a job and applies for the post of a sales girl in a reputed firm. Finally she gets the job.

But her father-in-law does not accept it whole heartedly though he, under Subrato’s insistence, gives her permission for the work. On the first day of work she faces several unhappy situations. Her son who never spends a moment without his mother, starts crying as he gets to know that his mother would go to outside for long hours. While going to office she could not resist thinking about her family, son to whom she could not take care for going to work. Considering about her nature of work she becomes nervous as she was at the time of her marriage. Although Subrato allows her wife work but he believes that a woman’s place is in the home so after a couple of days, he begins to feel that Arati has become different. When she gets her first month’s salary and tells him about the incentives, he gets more anxious. She brings fruits and sweets for her father-in-law and wants to give some money but he tells her that he could accept fruits but not money as he is too old to change, though he is not going to oppose what they wish to do. Even when she gives her mother-in-law her favourite spice she urges her that at least she should respect her father-in-law rather to look after her as she thinks that now she would not respect him as head of the family.

That very day Arati informs her husband that her boss tells her that she is doing good job. This news worries him as he feels that his wife going to be exploited by her boss. Soon he tells her to quit the job as he will arrange another part-time job. But when she is going to submit her resignation, Subrato informs her by telephone in her office that he has lost his job due to bank failure. Now Arati remains as the only earning member of
their family who maintains all financial responsibilities. This situation is more suffocative for Subrato because in Bengali middle class family it is very uncommon that the wife earns for the family and the husband sits idle at home. But her job gradually makes Arati more confident about her own potentialities; it turns her identity from the wife of Subrato Mazumdar to Arati Mazumdar as an independent being.

Her participation in public life helps her to identify herself with her fellow women colleagues. The most important aspect is the growing consciousness among these working women about their needs and requirements. That is why when one of the colleagues gets dismissed by her boss and appointed Arati’s husband in place of her, she does not mind to oppose it. Because it is not the question of her interest but it is a matter of their collective identity which is violated by this act. It is basically a film of those women who find their place in public domain in changing circumstances among other fellow women.

**PRATIDWANDI**

How the middle class, as a distinct group in Bengali society, responds to the changing circumstances in the post-partition era? This question is dealt by Satyajit Ray in this film which represents the changing nature of the Bengali middle class. This film is set with the background of the radical Naxalite movement of 70’s in Bengal where Sidhartha, the leading character, like many other Bengali youth, is unemployed and honestly trying to find some kind of job. We find that he is going to appear for an interview travelling in an overcrowded bus. But like many other educated youths of his age, he believes that the greatest event of last decade is the Vietnam War against America, not the moon landing. He tells it even to the interview board. In terms of his qualification he is an ordinary B. Sc. Graduate, though once he was the student of medical college. But after his father’s death he quit the college after two years and passed out as an ordinary graduate. In fact the film starts with his father’s death. Coming back to that interview board since he prefers Vietnam War over moon landing, the members of the board consider him as communist. After that interview when he sits in a tea stall, he
meets Nareshda who is known to him offers him the job of a medical representative, to which he reluctantly listens.

Her sister Sutapa is the only earning member for the family as she works in a private firm. While talking about his sister’s job he comments to his friends that it is now quite easy for women to get job as they belong to weaker sex. But coming back to home he finds a strange situation because a lady, who happens to be the wife of his sister’s boss, comes to their home to complain about the relationship between Sutapa and her husband. Even on that day Sutapa returns home late at night and informs Sidhartha that after the office she went to see her boss’s new house in Narendrapur with other two persons. She is bound to do this because from the next month she will be the P. A. which means a two hundred rupees increment. Hearing this news Sidhartha feels that her boss is trying to take advantage of her. The next morning he goes to her boss’s house and tells him that due to workload, his sister is suffering from strain, so she wants to quit the job. But the boss replies that it would be better for him to get a job for himself, rather to pressurize his sister to leave her job and for that he is ready to help him. In the evening he goes to a restaurant with his friend and from there to a call girl’s house without knowing the consequences. Before happening something wrong he comes out from there. While returning home he meets Keya in a surprising manner. Standing in front of the house she calls him from the open road to repair the electrical fuse of their house since she is along in that moment she could not call anyone else. She fears the darkness. On her request Sidhartha repairs the fuse and in exchange she invites him to come the next evening to their home for tea. Back to his home her sister Sutapa informs him that she would go for modelling and shows him western ball dance. Suddenly Sidhartha identifies her with the image of that call girl. Seeing all this things, dejected Sidhartha remarks to his sister that she has changed.

But somehow, a relationship develops between him and Keya. Keya is suffering from the depression as her father is going to marry her aunt which she cannot tolerate as she will not replace her mother by someone else. They spend an evening together where she makes it clear that if Sidhartha does not find job in Calcutta she would go back to Delhi. The following day Sidhartha appears in another interview but there he finds no minimum arrangements for the interview candidates, no adequate seats, only one fan
running that being obviously insufficient for near about seventy five candidates. Sidhartha first protests verbally but the authorities pay no attention to him, finally he reacts violently. As a result the possibility of getting a job ends there. He comes to Balurghat by taking the job of a medical representative. There surprisingly, he hears the same bird’s call near a crematorium, which he heard many years ago in his childhood. He tried to find that bird in Calcutta but in vain. The film reflects the declining state of Bengali middle class who now cannot depend on much more prestigious and secured government jobs because like Sidhartha, situation forces them to find job beyond their status and security. But on the other hand despite of this situation the middle class desperately wants to maintain the sanctity of their women. That is why Sidhartha tells his sister’s boss about her dissatisfaction over the job so that she would not lose her sanctity.

JANA ARANYA

Economic necessity plays more important role than one’s sanctity and if conflict arises between them the first will definitely get preference over the second. This is the message which Ray tries to reflect in the film. The film starts with a scene of an examination hall where the main character Somenath is busy in writing his script as a student of history honours. In the next scene we see that the examiner is not able to read his paper because of his small hand writing. The result is he does not get honours and completes his B.A. as a passed graduate. Hearing about his result, his father becomes surprised. Somenath is not a poor student that he cannot get honours; moreover, history is his favourite subject. He wants to take every measure to correct this error, even wants to meet the Vice-Chancellor. But his elder son Bhombol tells him that all these are meaningless as it is the system. That very day Somenath faces another tragedy in his life. In the evening his fiancé tells him that she is going to marry a man, who is a doctor, under the pressure of her family members. They feel that Somenath is too young and he needs some more time to be established. So there is no meaning to wait for him for an uncertain period. As a result she finally decides to get married and informs him thus. Since her decision hurts his ego Somenath tells that he has missed first class just for
seven marks and from the next month he would get a job with starting salary of Rs. 350. But his lover does not change her decision and she leaves from her life.

From the next day he starts to fill application forms for job but he even does not get any chance to appear in interviews. After eight months he appears in the only interview, but fails to satisfy the authority as they ask him about the weight of moon that is totally irrelevant in terms of the job for which he has applied for. Then he suddenly finds Bishuda, whom Somenath knows for couple of time. He advises Somenath to start the business of order supply. When he tells about it to his father he gives sanction for it but very reluctantly as there is no one in their family who runs business. Slowly day by day he gains experience about how to run such business. But the turning point in his life emerges when for getting a big deal he needs to send girl to the purchasing officer of the company in a hotel for his enjoyment. Here he faces a real tension because as his middle class background does not allow such unethical thing. But since he cannot loss this order for his future, he ultimately makes up his mind to do it.

To get a call girl he visits several places with a person, called Natabar Mitra, but the girl, whom he finally finds is surprising for him. The girl is none other than his classmate Sukumar’s sister Kauna who otherwise known in the world of prostitution as Juthika. To see her, because of his moral values Somenath tells that he will give her money and there is no need to go into the hotel for his client. But it is unacceptable for her because it is her profession which is not a matter of one day. Juthika goes to the hotel though Somenath pays her much more than her usual rate. Before leaving her to his client he asks for his friend Sukumar who is now a taxi driver. After returning home he tells his father and sister-in-law that he has got the order. But perhaps they understand what he has done wrong for it, they remain silent. Somenath also, losing his old values, does not seem to be happy, even after getting that much desired order. This is the story of ‘Jana Aranya’ which makes the impression that the Bengali middle class, in changing circumstances does not believe in the sanctity of their women in general, which is also the sign of their declining moral values.
Perhaps the film which absolutely shatters the middle class values and the image of Bhadramahila, as done by the director Aparna Sen, is the film ‘Parama’. It not only the question the hypocrisy of middle class society but the question of women’s identity with her sexuality as the sexual emancipation is a part of her identity. Beginning with the event of Durgapuja of Chowdhury family where Parama is the youngest daughter-in-law, we find her gorgeous look that is somewhat similar to the image of Goddess. In that occasion of Durgapuja, we also find, along with other family members, a young photographer Rahul and his assistant Sarah who have come from America. Rahul happens to be the friend of Parama’s nephew. He takes photo images of Durgapuja and also of Parama. But what is Parama’s identity, Sarah, who is an American girl, asks them because someone calls her kakima, another mamima and she is confused about what really she is. When Parama asks to call her kakima, Sarah accepts it and also asks to Rahul to do that but he refuses as Parama is not his kakima. For him she is only Parama.

Parama along with husband, mother-in-law and children live in her husband’s office flat. She has a daughter and two sons. Her husband Bhaskar Chowdhury is a top executive of a company who frequently visits many places as part of office tour. In the home we see that while attending breakfast, Parama gives her husband his garlic pearls and holds of milk as her younger son Tutul’s mouth before he leaves for school. Even during Durgapuja of Chowdhury family, she has to look everything, from keeping the items of ‘bhoga’ to giving pills to her mother-in-law, among other activities. Back to the breakfast table where she attends her husband and children, his nephew Bubu informs her husband by phone that his friend Rahul, that famous photographer who has made photography of their Durgapuja, will come to Calcutta to get some photographic images of traditional Indian housewife and for that he chooses Parama as an ideal model. Her husband does not put any objection of it and her mother-in-law also agrees on her photo shooting. To what extent she performs the role of traditional housewife that is evident from the fact that she is doing swing job for the family members, maintains day to day family expenses. At the time of lunch Parama attends her mother-in-law who has suffered two major heart attacks. Beyond the family, she has a small friend-circle,
constituted by Sheila, Anjali, Arati and Maya. Among them Sheila what we shall find later is the closest friend of Parama who supports her in every problem. In the film these four friends meet at the occasion of their reunion when Arati, now NRI has come to Calcutta for a short period. There Parama informs them about her photography by Rahul which becomes the point of discussion among them.

As it has been fixed, Rahul comes to their flat to take photographs of Parama, who symbolizes traditional Indian housewife. From morning to afternoon he takes different kinds of images of her. Most notable is the scene where Parama and Rahul sitting on the dining table, Parama biting off a green chili, taking water, a fish-bone out of her mouth, her throat as she drinks water, removing a strand of hair from her face with the back of her hand. But they encounter with each other for the first time when Rahul asks for using ‘alta’ on her feet and she is trying to do it but when she says that it is quite difficult to do it by her own, Rahul suddenly comes and takes her feet into his arm to help her. That is the moment from which Parama begins to feel closeness with Rahul. Before that Rahul was not at all significant for her because he never treats her as ‘Kakima’ like her nephew or other cousin, despite of being much younger than Parama. Realizing that something would go for wrong Parama tells Bubu, her nephew that she is not interested for Rahul’s photography. But Rahul comes in that day also and asks to go outside for the Kalighat Temple then to Vidyasagar setu. From the Vidyasagar Setu Parama looks at the city and suddenly she starts to recite a poetry of Achinto Kumar Sengupta. After that Rahul and Parama visit her parental home where her mother’s attends them. In remembering her childhood memory, Parama tells Rahul about Sudhapishi who was a child widow later she involved with an affair and as a result because of the social ostracism and family pressure, she ultimately became mad. But Parama sometimes sees her in her dreams. From that day and place the ‘strange’ love story between Parama and Rahul actually begins.

It is a coincidence that on that same day Bhaskar Chowdhury, Parama’s husband goes to Bombay for couple of days. Despite of Parama’s attraction towards Rahul she tries to keep away from him, but she cannot do that. Her relation with in many ways seems to be radical, quite a new thing for a Bengali middle class woman. Because we must remember here that Rahul is a friend of her nephew and in that sense much younger
than her. A middle aged woman having a relationship with a much younger man is uncommon for not only a Bengali woman but even for any Indian woman as a whole. According to the common practice wife should be younger than her lover or husband. What is more significant that sexuality plays the most desired role at least for Parama in this relationship that implies women’s sexual emancipation is closely related with women’s identity. The expression of her sexuality also indicates about the suppression of women’s sexuality in middle class family which happens in case of Parama. Even it was happened to her Sudhapishi who still comes into Parama’s dream and asking for open the chain of the door that could free her from the suppression of her desire. Actually from the moment of Rahul’s emergence in Parama’s life she uses to see Sudhapi aki too frequently in her dream who is crying for freeing her from the closed door.

Apart from the sexual desire, her lost self is identified with the name of a particular tree which she cannot remember now, even after trying for many times. Unfortunately her sexual expression, as part of the identity, for Rahul nothing but her physical beauty and he takes photographs of her physical beauty though he had come to take photographs of an Indian housewife. He publishes those sensational photographs in the ‘Life’ magazine which incidentally reaches to her husband. Within a moment her world has been changed. From the status of a Goddess, she becomes the whore and becomes isolated in her own home. Rahul also goes back abroad and after that there is no news of him. For Parama, now there is no way to go but to end her life and she attempts to commit suicide. But somehow she is saved and doctors try to bring back her in normal course of action but she is now a completely a different person who wants to realize her own self. That is why when Sheila brings newspaper clipping that carries the news of Rahul but Parama remains uninquisitive. Rather she requests Sheila to find out a job for her but she finds no better job than an-across-the-counter sales job at a modest salary of Rs. 600 per month in the Khadi Gramodyog. Her husband vehemently reacts about the news the she would go to accept this job. Suddenly she remembers the name of that tree, identified with her, which is Shyam Kanchan and her daughter ultimately acknowledges her feelings as a self conscious being.

In the film, Sheila is balanced and an interesting counterpart to Parama. Sheila is on the one hand so good in housework and cooking, also good at stitching and tailoring.
But with all this qualities of a good housewife, she is divorcee. Most important sign of her behaviour, that is also uncommon at least for Bengali women, that she smokes cigarettes. She runs a spastic school and to establish the school she has done lot of struggle. That is why when her husband got transferred to Bombay, she decided to get separated from him, and even their son is brought up in boarding school. In a sense Sheila is not part of the image of ideal housewife who sacrifices everything for husband and family. Rather for her commitment to the spastic school, she prefers to sacrifice her husband and son. But for Parama she is the only one who always provides support her from the beginning to the end and Sheila is the person who arranges for the job which not so lucrative in terms of money but definitely can work to find out Parama’s quest for identity. Perhaps it will be not wrong to say that Sheila is the person who actually represents the director’s viewpoint regarding the question of identity of middle class Bengali women.

**SWET PATHARER THALA**

Bandana Mukherjee is the wife of Abhijit Mukherjee and the daughter-in-law of a traditional family. As a custodian of traditional values, Bandana’s father-in-law considers family prestige is above of everything else and to maintain that he can make any of sacrifice. But her husband is different, he is liberal minded and does not believe in meaningless rituals and customs which are mainly performed by women. Under his inspiration she can think about life beyond all kinds of social custom and social sanction. The first encounter between the tradition and liberal views is takes place when the younger son of the family chooses a sub-caste girl for marriage. In favour of his decision, Bandana openly comes out against her father-in-law and tries to pursue him to accept his son’s decision. But as family prestige is the most precious thing for him, he does not change his view. As a result the younger son of the family leaves the house. But Abhijit secretly helps him and personally makes arrangements for his marriage with that girl and a new home for them. But unfortunately, this man leaves Bandana very soon as he dies in an accident. After her husband’s death the other family members first deprive her from everything that belonged to her husband which was her natural claim. Then they force her
to perform all rituals, which every Bengali widow does, in the name of family tradition. Sometimes she protests against this behaviour but still she lives with them.

But her uncle, witnessing her situation after her husband’s death, in that family, takes her with him along with her little son. Fortunately she gets a job in her husband’s office but there also she faces criticism from her women colleagues because her official post is higher than theirs. In the meantime she loses her uncle also. Now she is alone in this world but she has to maintain her responsibilities to bring up her son *Abhirup*. She seems to be quite successful as her son is now a student of economic honours and also learning painting. Even he has his girl-friend who is a daughter of a well-being family but seems to be unfit for being a daughter-in-law of *Bandana Mukherjee*. When *Rup’s* (*Abhirup’s* nick name) art teacher *Sudipto Sarkar* who considers him like his own son, comes to their home with an offer of portraying the image of *Bandana* for his next exhibition -- which is also very curious for her son, as he wants to see his mother from another’s eyes -- the story turns towards different course. By his sketch he tries to capture different expression of her personality as it is today. But in portraying her he imagines *Bandana* as an old mother. When *Abhirup’s* girl friend and her mother hear the news of painting of *Bandana* as done by *Sudipto*, she informs *Rup* about the adverse criticism in society which is not good for his reputation. *Abhirup* was going to learn drawing in *Sudipto’s* house in every Saturday but after his affairs with *Titli* (the girl friend) he becomes irregular. *Sudipto* comes to *Bandana’s* house to know about him but *Bandana* tells him, she also knows that *Abhirup* is going to his house to study painting. Not only *Bandana* becomes surprised to realize that her son tells lies to her about his drawing class. On the other hand because of remarks made by *Titli’s* mother, *Abhirup* becomes suspected on the real intention of *Sudipto* and in that very day he finds him in their drawing room after returning home. In that situation he misbehaves with him which is very shocking for *Bandana* also. Witnessing this sudden change in his son, *Bandana* becomes shocked and falls ill in the office. But being a non-member of that family, *Sudipto* plays the main role to cure her and because of his care and affection *Bandana* recovers soon.

When she recovered she went to *Sudipto’s* house along with her sister-in-law to express her gratitude about what he has done in her illness. *Sudipto* is living alone
because he is unmarried. Sudipto proposes to portray another picture and he assures that this time it would be perfect in terms of Bandana’s own self-perception about herself. So another portray has been made of Bandana. As another woman, her sister-in-law confirms about their growing closeness and Sudipto also tells Bandana about his feeling. But Abhirup does not accept their relationship so that Bandana after his marriage with Titli and gives them about everything whatever she has, including his father’s share in their joint family and leaves the home. She goes to an orphan school, though Sudipto finds her but she requests him not to press her for going back to home, even not to tell Abhirup and her sister-in-law about her address as she somehow settles with these orphan boys. The most important aspect of the film while representing Bandana as a progressive minded woman who does not maintain absurd rituals and customs, she cannot able to portray her image of motherhood as she fails to marry for the second time, with Sudipto. In that case her motherhood image will be violated to her son which is far beyond acceptance for Bandana.

**UNISHE APRIL**

It is a film about the relationship between mother and her daughter, Sarojini Gupta and Aditi. The film starts with a scene where Aditi’s father Manish has died, who happens to be doctor, and relatives are coming to their house. But everyone talks about his wife’s absence and some relatives even criticize her for paynig virtually no attention of her family, husband and daughter. She is always busy with her dancing career. Obviously, Sarojini Gupta is a famous internationally acclaimed classical dancer. After eighteen years later of that incident, now Aditi becomes a doctor, she living in Delhi and comes to Calcutta for a couple of days. The film actually is based on the whole day of events in their life and incidentally the day is again the nineteenth April, her father’s death anniversary.

But Sarojini somehow forgets about the day. Rather it is a special day for her as she gets the news of her Sangeet Natak Academy Award which P.T.I. informs. She wants to celebrate the day but it is the day her father’s death anniversary, so Aditi refuses to be part of it. When she lost her father she was then just eight years old. From that time till now she identifies herself with only her father in her world; there is no other one but him.
On the other hand she deeply feels that her mother is self-centred person who is interested only about career and is not serious about her familial responsibilities. Even she considers, her father’s death is primarily due to the negligence of her mother who never made any understanding with her husband. As a result mother and daughter living in two exclusive worlds mutually separated from each other.

But in that day Aditi faces a major tragedy of her life. She receives phone call from Delhi and it is the call of her boyfriend Sudipto, who also is a doctor, informs her about his inability to marry her because his family does not want that their son’s wife should be the daughter of a dancer. But after her father, sudipto is the only hope in her life for which she could make all sacrifices including her profession as a doctor. So, this news put her in nowhere situation and she becomes ever depressed in her life. Unaware about what happens with her daughter, Sarojini decides to go Madras to see her dance teacher along with her friend Somenath. On hearing it Aditi asks her maid, whom she considers like her own mother, to bring some sleeping pills. After the lunch when her mother goes for the airport to get the flight for Madras she advises her maid to go to her sister’s house at Tollygunge to see her son for whom Aditi has prescribed medicines by phone. She also tells her that there is no need to come back at night as she would not do the dinner at night.

Alone in the house, she receives phone calls from the newspaper office, who want to know about her mother’s award which she declines to comment. At the outside, the rainstorm is yet to be started but suddenly one of the students of her mother comes to congratulate her with flower-bouquet. Aditi attends her and tells her that she should write a letter for her teacher. When rainstorm starts Aditi expresses her concern about how she is going to back her home which for that lady appears something like her teacher who equally is concerned about her students and Aditi is no exception from her mother. She informs Aditi that Sorojini is suffering from knee pain for couple of days. After she leaving their house Aditi goes back to her home meanwhile there is electricity failure because of the rainstorm. In a candle light she writes her suicidal note. But when she is going to commit suicide her mother comes back to home as their flight does not take off and is cancelled.
After the dinner while coming to her daughter’s room Sarojini finds the suicidal note and suddenly she feels that it is her good fortune as she comes back otherwise she would lose her daughter forever. Eighteen years ago she was lost her husband in that same way when she went to Madras. She seeks the answer for Aditi’s attempt to suicide and her daughter informs her about her break up with Sudip. But Sarojini feels that because of it Aditi could not take the decision to end her life as she has been brought up and becomes a doctor obviously, not for committing suicide. Sarojini tells her that a doctor’s job is to save lives, not do otherwise, but Aditi replies her by saying that no one has done anything for her to become doctor as she wishes for it, like her father. Angry with her reply, Sarojini further tells her that to become a doctor she has provided her her best schools and colleges. Suddenly she realizes that it is Nineteenth April and the irony is, in case of her father she went to Madras when he was dying, today also nineteenth and if her flight would take off at the right time for Madras, she would loss her only daughter. But for Aditi, if her father was alive, he would do that same thing. It is the beginning of the much desired encounter between mother and daughter by which Aditi gets to know that her mother wanted to perform her role as other Bengali housewives, even for that she sacrificed her dancing at the height of her career. But that could not relief her husband from his complexities. She has understood that for her husband, less successful in life, his daughter is the only means where he could win over his wife. That’s why he became too close to her daughter and her mother became too much aloof of her. Now Aditi realizes her mother’s pain and dissatisfaction in life. But Aditi also desperately seeks her mother’s affection. When both of them are clear to each other, the mother-daughter relation back to the normal course. The next morning Sudip again call her, and now Aditi takes the phone with having more confidence and attitude because she has the support of her mother, in every step.

ANU

Apparently ‘Anu’ is a political film mainly set up at the background of Naxalite movement of 70’s in Bengal. But at the same time the film represents the stereotype image which most of the men still inherently cherish. The film begins with a scene of a school in a small town, far away from Calcutta. The scene portrays the students, returning
to their home after the school and in the teacher’s room, a girl student comes to Ananya (Anu) to inform her that her mother has come to meet her. Anu meets her to give her daughter’s love letter from a boy which is injurious to her future. The mother of that student gives her thanks for the information about her daughter. Coming back to home she finds a letter which brings happy news for her because the letter carries the news about Sugoto, for whom she is waiting for a long time and remains unmarried. Sugoto was arrested eight years ago as a political prisoner, after that there is no news of him. To get more information about him Anu comes to Calcutta to meet Bharatda, Sugoto’s old friend. He tells her that most probably Sugoto at present is in Mednapore jail. He assures her to get the correct information about him. Bharat was the old comrade who now runs a paper whose circulation, according to his opinion, is satisfactory. As she comes to Calcutta, Bharat asks her whether she will go to meet her parents or not. Anu replies him that she comes here to get the news of Sugoto, not for anything else. She does not meet them because when she was raped by some hooligans as she had involved in political movement under Sugoto, she had been abandoned by the society even was intolerable for her parents also. They wished that she should be died instead of living such a shameful life. Ultimately she left Calcutta by taking the job of school teacher and has come to a district town. Her close friend Mahua also does not maintain any relation with her because her husband not allows doing that as she was raped and socially ostracized.

As government finally withdraws all case against political prisoners, so that Sugoto has been released from jail. After the long years of waiting Anu sees Sugoto and she takes him to her place. Meanwhile to go for the station from jail, as she tells Sugoto to marry her and he does it without having any social sanction and gathering. To come in her home from Calcutta, Sugoto, after dinner tells her about how did he spend in jail and face inhuman torture by the police. But when Sugoto is going to physically intimate with his wife Anu, he finds those signs of physical torture during her rape. Anu tells him about that incident and Sugoto surprisingly remains silent. The second day also when at night Sugoto and Anu become close to each other again to see her sign of torture in her body he restricts himself. To see this behaviour Anu thinks that perhaps due to police torture in jail Sugoto losses his sexual power. In her school, that girl Sreyashi, whose love letter has been found by Anu, suddenly becomes pregnant but that boy, who is responsible for it
because of his affluent family background, refuses to play his duty. Ultimately that girl commits suicide. After the condolence meeting at school for that girl when *Anu* comes back to home she finds the diary of *Sugoto* which carries the day to day experience of him. After reading couple of pages, she finally finds that *Sugoto* writes that he does not accept the fact of her incident of rape. What he feels that just for maintaining his livelihood he spends days with a woman who has lost her sexual infidelity to other. In one word *Sugoto* cannot accept a woman who has lost her sanctity. *Anu* realizes that *Sugoto* has lost his own values what he used to believe. Because it was the same *Sugoto* who told her about the real significance of social customs which aimed at to the subordination of women. Though after coming out of jail *Anu* realizes for the first time that gradually *Sugoto* was losing his revolutionary spirit but she never thought that it was related with his understanding on chastity about *Anu* as she had been the victim of rape. He tells *Bharat* that she could wait for another thousand tears for *Sugoto* to whom she loved, who told her about the need to social change, not for men but for women also. Actually the fate of her student *Sreyashi* who has committed suicide because of the betrayal by her boyfriend seems to be quite similar to *Anu* as she has also lost the faith on whom she totally depended. The film in this way represents the hypocrisy of Bengali middle class who visibly reflecting their revolutionary image but maintain the traditional views about women where her chastity is still the precious ornament.

**PAROMMITAR EK DIN**

This is another film about relationships by the director Aparna Sen, but in this film, the relationship is between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. It is very interesting that the relationship between them is the relation between a less educated mother-in-law suffering from traditional values and highly educated daughter-in-law, believing in modern values. This film is based on Paromita’s reminiscence about her old family where she got married but now she is no one of this family as she has separated from *Biresh*. She reminds her past life on the occasion of obsequies of *Sanaka* who once happened to be her mother-in-law. *Paromita* was the wife of younger son of *Sanaka*, and came to their family which is traditional in their day to day life. But at the night of their
wedding reception, Paromita realized the differences between herself and Biresh as he came in home at that night in drunken condition.

In that family apart from her husband and mother-in-law, there was her father-in-law, elder brother-in-law, his wife and children, there was another person, who is mentally retarded, her sister-in-law, Khuku. Her father-in-law used to visit different places due to their family business and most of time in a month he left out of home. But there was another man, Manimama, who is related to her mother-in-law in terms of her parental village home, frequently visited their home. In the first instance of their meeting we find that Sanaka gives him money for his treatment. With having hesitation, he takes that money from Sanaka. The first instance towards the intimate relationship between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law was an unhappy incident between the couple where, as a stereotype Bengali man Biresh accused her for being responsible for birth of their spastic son. In that moment Sanaka comes to rescue her by criticizing her son’s attitude over Paromita. While feeding her son, in another day Khuku became furious but Paromita realized that for couple of days Sanaka had forgotten to give her medicine, so that she herself took the responsibility of it. Manimama as usual visited their home in afternoon and with whom Paromita became easy as she felt that with his arrival, her mother-in-law was feeling better as she suffered from loneliness in the stage of her menopause. But this thing, for a traditional minded person Biresh, was not good for a daughter-in-law to talk about elders, especially talk about menopause, and change in life. After some days her elder brother-in-law left the home to his office flat.

Suddenly, in an accident her father-in-law Promothesh dies. Surprisingly, after this incident Paromita and Sanaka were more close and intimate with each other. Free from all kinds of authority Sanaka wished to go her old days when she was fling kite, doing fishing. Even Sanaka noticed that Paromita also writes poetry. Meanwhile the relationship between Biresh and herself was downing as he wanted another attempt for their second issue because her son cannot be normal for ever. But Paromita refused it even the scene also showed that she was not interested to physical relationship with him. Sanaka and Paromita admitted their son Bablu to a spastic school and there she met with Rajeev Sribastava, who is a documentary film maker, was doing a feature on that school. Through conversation with Rajeev we get to know that Paromita is a master’s degree
holder from Jadavpur University in Mass communication while pursued her honours graduation in Comparative literature. Knowing about her educational qualification Rajeev proposed to do a job in an advertising agency and requesting her to suggest a name for the film which he made for the spastic school, Paromita did it. This short introduction was the beginning of their mutual attraction that at least Sanaka realized. After some days Bablu died and now Paromita who works in a advertising agency, there is no need to maintain a dead relation with her husband. When she informed Sanaka about their divorce, she replied that from the beginning she knew that their relation would not be lasted for a long time. Paromita said that virtually there was no emotional bond between them. Again Sanaka replied that every marriage could not be happy, even her own marriage was also not happy but still she maintained it for a long time with her husband. Sanaka advised her that there would be no guarantee about that Rajeev would make her happy because men could not do make. In her parental home she was the most loving sister of her brothers but after her marriage she became the maid of the house. She disclosed the fact that even Manida, to whom she loved from the very beginning, if he could have the courage to say it just for once, she could sacrifice everything and went with him. She also clarified that as a mother-in-law she made no restriction on Paromita to maintain relation with Rajeev, but Paromita remained firm in her decision to leave the home. Sanaka ultimately told her not to leave her home in words of entreaty. Because after her there would be no one with whom she could talk except her mentally ill daughter. But as a modern woman of late twentieth century she did not pay any attention to her request. She married Rajeev and they have become a happy couple.

Paromita after a certain period comes to that house to attend Sanaka after the doctor’s advice to call her in because of her serious condition. She found like her, Biresh also married for a second time, but as a younger daughter-in-law of Sanaka, she did not know anything her room she again started to perform her duties like her old daughter-in-law, though now she is no one of her. Till her death she performed her duties as a most devoted daughter-in-law of the family. Even at the day of Sanaka’s obsequil ceremony she managed Khuku who still; considers her as ‘choto boudi’. Khuku is in the film is unspoken Paromita because she could tell so many things very honestly to everyone which could tell Manimama that he also wants to love her mother which in reality is true.
Back to that day of obsequial ceremony, after spending the whole day and remembering everything of her past life is the best reverence for her to Sanaka who was more of a friend than mother-in-law. Now, it is the time for her to go back to her new world and Rajeev comes to take off her. Though, it is a time for Paromita to take care about herself, as she is going to be a mother for second moment but this time it will be the child of Rajeev, not Biresh. The film portrays a kind of world where there is no much difference between mother and daughter-in-law. Both are equal in terms of their pain, agony, desire. But since Paromita is much more ahead than in terms of education and other requirements so she is able to shape her life according to her own wish. This film is the indication about the future of Bengali middle class family and its changing nature, in the era of rapid changes of the world. The interesting aspect of the film is, it does not hold the sanctity of marriage but at the same time portraying relationship beyond any formal bonding in terms of family.

**HEMANTER PAKHI**

What is the state of Bengali housewife in the end of twentieth century ‘Hemantar pakhi’ portrayed this aspect in its narrative. Based on Suchitra Bhattachariyya’s novel, the narrative represents a middle aged housewife, Aditi, wife of Supratim Mazumdar and the mother of his two sons. Her husband Supratim is a sales manager in Lotus India Company, her elder son studies in St. Xavier’s college in third year and her younger son studies in the first year. Almost for twenty-five years, she performs her duties as a devoted wife and sacrificed mother. But with the arrival of Hemenmama, the course of her life has been changed. Hemenmama or Hemendra Narayan Mallick is the old friend of her maternal uncle who frequently visited their home along with her uncle before the marriage. Belonged to the literary world, this Manimama was the first person who praised Aditi for her writing. But after her marriage Aditi has lost the touch from her writing which Hemenmama considers as the most precious quality of her that cannot be found among everyone. After Aditi’s marriage, Hemenmama also went to North Bengal and there he joined at a school as teacher. After the retirement he now is settled in Calcutta and comes to Aditi’s house to know about how she is. But when he knows that
Aditi is not writing after her marriage because of her responsibilities towards her family, he begins to inspire her so that she could start her writing for once again. It is not easy for her to get back her talent of writing but because of his inspiration Aditi again initiates writing and wrote a story which she reads in a literary gathering. Slowly she establishes herself as a writer; even in a popular magazine her writing has been published.

Her husband, initially, if not inspires her but does not put much objection about her writing, though he often ridicules on her talent, later when he finds that because of the writing she is not fully performed her duties as she has done in past. Her sons also become dissatisfied with her as she is not able to do whatever she was doing to perform her duties towards them. On the other hand as a writer she finds that her husband is not as ideal as she thought even her sons do not follow values which she has taught them.

Ultimately one day Supratim tells to Hemenmama about his wife’s inability to pursue her own writing as he has planned for herself. Within a moment Aditi’s world has been shattered. In the film there is another important character, Sujata, who happens to be Aditi’s college friend and they meet after a long time. While talking about herself, Sujata tells her that to fulfil her dream she became a lawyer but after her marriage she had to leave it. After marriage she could not satisfy both her family and her senior lawyer. Moreover she became a mother. In that situation there was no choice but to put an end to her career. After that she does a job in Eastern Railway but there too she faces criticism from her colleagues as she is not sincere to her job. Even she is not very happy with herself despite of being financially independent. Because to balance her family and work, everyday from the very morning she uses to prepare her husband and daughter’s tiffin, fulfilling other household duties, and then hurriedly having some food, she goes to office in a overcrowded bus. But she cannot lose this job because she has to contribute to her family. Now, she feels that her job is the only support for her own identity. She makes it very clear that still, in society women could enjoy liberty to that extent, what is granted by men. If any woman cannot accept it, she has to remain alone, which is not possible for most of them, even not for Aditi. That’s why Aditi accepts what her husband did against her writing. This is the film which gives us enough impression about the fact that whatever the changes have been taken place in our society, men is no longer accept women’s other image beyond wife and mother, particularly in Bengali society.
**TEEN EKKE TEEN**

The film is about three young women who have their own dreams in life. *Maya* is a Kabadi player and wants to form Kabadi School. *Alo* is struggling with her acting career, wants to be a famous actress. And *Mukti* is a master degree holder in commerce, she wishes to set business jointly with *Alo* and *Maya* in fact they start business with the product of pickle. Meanwhile *Mukti* and *Maya* get married but it does not mean that they become complete housewives like other girls, sacrificing their dreams. They keep their dreams alive but soon their individual dreams begin to be shattered as *Maya* fails to get the land for her Kabadi school and *Alo* in spite of her acting talent does not get the chance to act. Their only hope now this business through which they could fulfil their individual dreams. *Mukti* first asks for money from her husband *Manikchand*, who is by nature a stingy person, but somehow agrees to give them money but with interest. But unfortunately it is not happened as that very bank, where he deposited his money, becomes insolvent. Now it is a time for them to find out other banks or financial institutions who could give them loan. But everywhere their application is rejected. For bank officials, women cannot run business successfully and to know about their product of pickle, someone among them compares it with cowdung cake. For another bank official, women should involve themselves in family to play the role of mother and wife that will be better for the entire society, even a woman official tells them that it would be absurd for them to establish business. But the greatest insult they face when an official comments that though women are doing other works, but business is not in their blood. Then from the newspaper report he further comments that a scientist is going to prove that women are sub-species.

Disappointed from all sections *Mukti* decides to do bank robbery to arrange their money. She chalks out plan for it and to do it *Maya* learns karate and *Alo* gets the training of car driving. But in the meantime *Alo* gets the opportunity to act in a serial under a handsome director *Kunal* who once selected her but did not get chance as the heroine had been fixed by the back door channel. Incidentally the shooting date is coincided with the date of their planned back robbery. The story takes different course when four terrorists
planned for similar kind of robbery in the same bank with same date and same time. Before those terrorists enter into the bank and when these three girls reach there, they also become hostages by them. But instead of surrender they challenge them and like any courageous man they capture those robbers after prolonged struggle. They save near about rupees ten crores but refuse to accept government reward. In a press conference they describe what happened with them when they asked for bank loan for their business by different bank officials. From that press conference they demand their full right as human being like any other normal person. People accept their appeal and later we find that from everywhere people send them money for contributing their business. This is the film which has been made in comedy mode but it represents in light manner the attitude of society to women who want to do something new, even in new millennium. Their heroism even difficult to accept for a reporter who before their press conference tries his best to find out that whether they saved the robbery or it was just an eye wash. As a representative of men world it is not very easy for him that women being qualified in terms of masculine code as they did by capturing terrorists. People also accept their competency for business when they showed masculine qualities which was not happened before that event of robbery.

OTHER FILMS

SAT PAKE BANDHA

Sukhendu is a poor college teacher, living with her aunt who brought up him after his mother’s death, like her own son. Sukhendu is the only hope for her because there is no one in this world for this widow except him. While going to college, one day in overcrowded bus, he takes a ladies seat beside a woman. She is Archana, studying in college; it was his first encounter with her. He meets for the second time with her at a party in his student’s house because of his good result in examination. Archana along with her mother and sister were invited. But there he involved a bit of argument with her mother on the issue of the role of a private tutor over the future of student. But surprisingly his argument with her mother attract Archana about Sukhendu, instead of
dislike him. Some days later, Archana, while going to her college, sees Sukhendu waiting at the bus stop and she requests him to come in her car, so that he could present in college much earlier. For the first time both of them talk about each other. While in conversation Sukhendu informs Archana that he used to be the student of her father as he was the principal of the college where Sukhendu studied. Another day to go somewhere else, their car is stopped at due rain and water logging in the city. Incidentally seeing them in this condition Sukhendu comes up and after introducing himself to her father, he helps them. Later, one day to know their well being Sukhendu directly comes to their house and after his departure Archana’s father decides to give her elder daughter Archana for marriage with him. Though her mother does not accept this marriage.

After the marriage, there is no such problem between Sukhendu and Archana, in that poor family. Archana, like any other Bengali girl, adjusts herself happily as a housewife of Sukhendu. Even she does not pursue her study for master degree. But her mother who never accepts Sukhendu as her son-in-law starts to intervene in their family matters and decisions. For a self-respected person like him, it could not be tolerated for a long time and after certain period distance has taken place between them. Realizing the tension between them Sukhendu’s aunt decides to go Kashi and live there. Ultimately Sukhendu and Archana become separated. But that does not mean that Archana forgets him. Trying to come out from depression she once again starts her unfinished course of master degree. She completes her M.A. with a first class. Meanwhile her younger sister Baruna’s marriage has been fixed. So her mother proposes her, along with her brother, to marry for a second time with her selected boy which Archana not only rejects but accuses her mother for being responsible for her break up. But on the very moment of her sister’s marriage the holy uttering from the Veda – ‘So you are my wife- eternal’. She remembers her own wedding with Sukhendu who also took this same uttering for her. She could not resist herself to go and meet Sukhendu. Unfortunately, she does not find him as he left the home, service and country. Now, in her life there is nothing but the endless waiting for Sukhendu which is stronger than any other bond between the husband and wife. Finally she leaves her home and comes to another district town by taking the job of a school teacher. Actually the story is the typical portray of a middle class woman whose world does not go beyond marriage and family, except that her life seems to be meaningless.
That’s why despite of knowing that there is no importance of her in Sukhendu’s life she still waiting for her like any devoted wife though their relation has been formally ended.

**DAHAN**

This film is the first attempt to address this question: what is the nature of violence against women within family, at least in Bengali cinema by the director Rituparno Ghosh. This film successfully represents in its narrative the violence against women, whether in public or private, is equally vulnerable for her. There is no secure place like family which we normally believe. The story is about two women, Romita Chowdhury and Srabona Sarkar. Romita is the wife of Palash Chowdhury and living with his other family members, father, mother, elder sister-in-law and her daughter. The elder brother of her husband lives in Jharia due to his service. On the other hand Srabona is unmarried, though she has her boyfriend Tunir, living with her parents and she is a school teacher. She frequently visits her grandmother who lives in an old age home. One day evening while coming back at home from shopping Romita faces molestation and physical abuse by some eve teasers, when Palash comes to rescue her he is also beaten by them. That moment Srabona is coming back from her grandmother’s place, comes to save her. Though both Romita and Srabona are wounded but still they lodge complain against those eve teasers. After this heroic performance Srabona becomes famous and press takes this issue in favour of her heroism which culminates in her image as a courageous woman in everywhere from her school to different social organizations. But for Romita, the entire news report about that incident has created big problem as everyone becomes curious to know about it, including her relatives. This is a kind of mental trauma for her. To Palash, his wife is the point of discussion and from his locality to his office people asked in different way, whether she has been raped by them or not, whether Romita knows them or not. Even they ask whether Romita had an affair with one of them or not. Unfortunately Palash because of such comments starts to believe all this things and suspects about her affair with someone before her marriage. Family tensions and conflicts frequently begin to take place between them. As a result at one night during a mutual argument among each other Palash to maintain full control and establish his
domination over her first physically abuses her and against her consent he involves with her in sexual intercourse as if he wants to wash out every sign of molestation done by those eve teasers. But in this way he involves with marital rape against his own wife. By this act Palash remains no exception in the eyes of Romita than those persons who have molested her in the open road. Meanwhile those accuses persons are arrested and Palash and Srabona identify them by going in the police station.

On the other hand Tunir advises Srabona not to involve herself for the court case against those persons who assaulted Romita. He also tells her that all those are coming from rich families, could easily be released. Actually one of accuser’s fathers is the close friend of his boss who would like to send him for overseas posting in America. Tunir wants to get that so he tries to pursue Srabona for closing this chapter. Because of the adverse comments family members of Romita also do not want to appear in the court for this case as that would be more harmful for their family prestige. Ultimately when Srabona decides that despite of the opposition of her parents and her boyfriend Tunir, she would fight for the justice for Romita. But in the court Romita refuses to recognize accused persons and Srabona’s witness is proved to be wrong. All arrested persons are released. Out of the court Romita’s father tells Srabona that to save her family Romita has no other option. After the whole event Romita decides to go to her elder sister in Canada though Palash and Romita formally not separates but it is clear that their relationship is virtually dead. Besides Srabona and Romita there is another woman in the film Trina whose marriage has been fixed with Rohit, one of the accused persons. After this event she does not want to marry him but for her parents it is just an accident and they would be soon released. They also said that if she broke the marriage she would be proved as disloyal to him. But somehow Trina identifies herself with Romita. This problem of loyalty also is faced by Srabona who could not decide that she should marry Tunir or not. Here her grandmother tells her that it cannot be thought that to whom we love they should be free from all limitations and vices. That was not happened even for herself, while leaving life with her grandfather. It is not possible to find only good things in every individual. So it would be wrong for Srabona to reject Tunir as he did not support her for the court case because of his career and self interest. Perhaps what her grandmother says that is the most valuable observation of human nature. But for women
the harsh reality is that whether private or public, both places are equally dominated by men. For that reason Srabona could not reject Tunir, otherwise she has to live alone like Romita, separated from both worlds. To decide to go to Canada actually means leaving her family and public world where she could freely and easily move.

**JUGANTO**

It is a film about two highly intelligent, talented individuals, Dipak and Anusua who happens to be husband and wife. They got married seventeen years ago. When the film opens we see that Dipak is waiting in a small-town station to receive his wife, Anusua because they have planned to spend some days in an obscure fishing village. Actually seventeen years ago, they spent their honeymoon in this village. So this village has its own significance in their life. By profession Dipak works in an advertising agency in a high position, for that he lives in Mumbai. On the other hand, Anusua is an Odissi dancer who is committed to her dance academy in Bhubaneswar and she uses to live there. As they living in two different places they could see each other in a year, indeed they meet once in eighteen month, hardly is able to maintain contact with each other. Naturally, the question of mutual care and affection are far away to be found between them. It is quite difficult for them to get back that same feeling and warmness which they lose in this long seventeen years as they busy to maintain their career. The meeting in the place of their honeymoon is another attempt to build their old relation in a new spirit and affection.

Seventeen years ago Dipak and Anusua got married, before that they knew each other for a long time. In a sense they have the love marriage. Soon both got involved in their own worlds as Anusua pursued her dancing career and Dipak became busy in his world of advertisement. But to pursue her dance career and to establish her dancing career she started to compromise with her values. That’s why she accepted the demand of the local politician who asked her to cut out the focus on hunger and poverty from her dance ballet. But her cousin brother who was a dedicated activist worked in that region and ultimately because of his activity, he has been murdered by the hands of hooligans. She made the greatest compromise in her life when she aborts her child to go in
Bangalore for her dance programme. Though Anusua later tells Dipak that every woman wants to be mother but what she wanted to plan for it. But once she rejected child she never become a mother for the second time. Slowly their relationship deteriorating, they gradually distancing from one another. Surprisingly Anusua from the beginning believes and performs rituals and other customs which she still maintains. What is unacceptable for Dipak that Anusua for pursuing her career lost her boldness and changed her nature.

Coming back to that fishing village where they come for couple of days to spend their holidays. After taking bath in the sea, Anusua tells Dipak that it will be better if she does not do swim because the water is not seems to be suitable for her. For Dipak, it is something strange for Anusua who once could talk with the sea. Dipak realizes that she has lost that feeling by which Anusua could hear what the sea says. While walking together in the seaside at the night of ‘Kojagory’ festival, in a very intimate moment Dipak tells her that he has resigned from his job because she cannot live in a world which is based on falsehood and pretensions. But this news does not delight her as she replies that he should think for a second time to leave such a job with high salary. Within a moment Dipak understands that Anusua has changed forever. For him Anusua becomes as old as this Earth who has no spirit, spontaneity which she had once. In the last scene we find that Dipak despite of not knowing how to swim runs towards the sea and Anu cries out to him to come back. One of the fishermen, who brought out a procession of fireworks and torches, throws a live torch into the sea. The sea catches fire which symbolizes the never ending distance between the man, who wants to get back his lost spirit and liveliness, with a woman who changed herself for ever and lost every human spirit for her own career and compromises with her values. The film has been directed by Aparna Sen but in this film while portraying the image of Anusua and Dipak she has been influenced by the middle class values. For this reason, she somehow criticizes Anusua for her life-style and her priority of dancing career. On the other hand as a director she seems to be quite sympathetic towards Dipak. What is interesting that unlike Parama and Paromitar Ek Din where she rejected the middle class behaviour and beliefs. She practically celebrates middle class outlook regarding family and traditional husband-wife relationship, at least in this film.