CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION
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6.1 The Central Findings of the Study

The present study Exploring Youth: A Sociological Study of Bangla Bands is significant due to many reasons. It is an exploratory study of the relationship between youth and a particular genre of music. It has established the fact that popular music is an expression of the sentiments of the young generation. It is a vehicle of their emotions and passions. At the same time music becomes a medium of earning their livelihood.

The main body of the study has been divided into three major components namely the definition and History of band music in Bengal, Decoding the lyrics of the Bangla band, and Performance and its nature, especially the live on stage performance of the bands. Before we summarize the main points of the research it is necessary to mention that the three chapters show a trajectory through which band music has traversed in Bengal. It had begun mainly as a medium of protest by the alienated youth — protest against the mainstream Bengali film songs but today the bands have given in to the demands of consumerist culture which has been mainly indicated through their live performances. It is true that the decision to take up music as a profession is radical in itself. To give in to the demands of the consumer culture is nothing very surprising because they have to maintain their sustenance through music which is only possible if they update their mode of presentation through the use of technology.

When they began their journey as musicians they were highly inspired by people like Kabir Suman, Gautam Chattopadhyay and Maqsudool Haq. Simultaneously the socio-cultural scenario in the country and the state had nourished a ground ripe for the emergence of band music in Bengal in the 1990s. There was the confluence of factors like failure of the Bengali cinema to cater to the taste of the Bengali middle class, inroads of the satellite television in
India and hence in Bengal, emergence of FM channels, and emergence of cassette culture and resultant rise of localized audio companies like Asha audio who provided an institutional support base to the bands and the increasing frequency of college fests in and around Kolkata providing the Bands their much-required stages to perform.

The genre of music which was born as a result of coming together of so many factors was predominantly promoted by the youth. It is useful to mention here that in the course of the research we have defined youth as the category of people who fall in the age group of fifteen to thirty years and have a lifestyle which is mainly consumerist by nature. These youth also belonged to the middle class background given their training in institutionalized education. The gender composition of the bands is interesting in the sense that with the exception of one or two, most of the bands have male members as their main proponents. The absence of women in the bands has been rooted in the existing capitalist patriarchal set up in the contemporary Bengali society. The fact that youth is an ambiguous and heterogenous category and that its nature has been changing over all times and contexts have not been overlooked.

Band has been defined as musical activities pursued collectively. This is nothing unique in Bengal given the tradition of Nagar-sangkirtan by Chaitanya and kabiyal songs (songs by the poets). Even the tradition of Gono sangeet during the IPTA movement is an instance of collective singing. The band as we understand it today can be said to be a change in the form of the above mode of singing. It can be said that today the bands use western principles of music in their composition and presentation. The language in which they compose and present their songs is Bengali and according to the band members, Bengal is the platform where the themes of the songs have been based. They first want to change the Bengali society and then think of changing the entire world marked by inequalities and problems.
Moving on to the next chapter on *lyrics* of the Bangla bands, my aim was to capture the principal traits of youth in contemporary Bengal. The image of the youth has been thematized under three heads namely Bengali youth's confrontation with the western values, critical temperament of the youth and romantic and idealistic frame of mind. The aforementioned categories are overlapping and not separate and distinct. They also point to the ambiguous and heterogeneous nature of today's young generation. It has been found that contradictory values are present in them. On the one hand they are rational and opportunist justifying their stand in life, on the other they are idealistic and critical of the existing social anomalies and want a change in the social order. The presence of this contradictory value system makes them interesting and worthy of sociological analysis.

The chapter on *performance* primarily deals with the onstage performances of the bands and locates their major components. Simultaneously it has also been shown how the principles of capitalist market have dominated the performances of the bands. The amount of money the members of the established bands demand for their performances to the predominance of sponsors in the programmes all indicate to the process of commodification of this genre of music. The live performances provide a platform through which the band members market their product — the songs. The technological innovations in the programmes are aids to this process of commodification. The consumers of band music have also been a subject of discussion in the chapter and it has been shown how actively they participate in the performances of the bands making it worthy of observation. Most of the audiences of band music are young college and university going students and they participate in the performances by singing and dancing. Sometimes the young fans can initiate trouble in the programmes if their demands are overlooked by the organizers or the performers. Most noteworthy in the performances is the
presence of women in the audiences. This is quite in contrast to the fact that as performers women are largely absent.

The theme of the relationship between Bangla band music and youth has not only thrown light on the nature of contemporary youth but has also addressed the larger issue of social change in Bengali cultural life as a result of globalization and its associated cultural impact. There is also the revelation of the interface between commerce and aesthetics, an interaction between global and local cultural traits and the gender inequalities prevalent in the contemporary society. Together, they have made the study worthy of sociological attention and analysis.

6.2 Limitations of the Present Study

The present research had aimed to study the phenomenon of band music in Bengal. It had aimed to explore the historical specificity of Bangla band music and its point of convergence and divergence from the western context. A review of the western situation had been made. It has been found that in the west and in some other places popular music in the form of band music have been a medium of youth expression of discontentment and anger against the existing political and social conditions. For instance if we consider the case of rock n roll music, it has been seen how it had emerged in response to the socio-political and cultural conditions in America and Britain. The instance of rock n roll is consciously adopted because most of the Bangla bands call themselves to be rock bands. The emergence of the Bangla band music has also been due to youth anger and frustration. The frustration here resulted mostly from the failure of the Bengali cultural ream especially music which failed to co-opt the voices of the youth in its purview. The radicalism of the youth is common in both the contexts and their expression also found a medium through music, but as far as the reasons for emergence is concerned, both had been specific. In both
the contexts, it is the young generation who are the main protagonists of the band music. Their background in terms of gender and class has already been discussed before. There has been found a predominance of male members in this genre of music as far as constitution of band is concerned. The band members can be located in the category of the middle class. This is because it has been found in the course of the study that the members of the Bangla band have received formalized and institutionalized education, which according to Andre Beteille is an indicator of being in the urban middle class. Most of them have been students of colleges and universities in and around Kolkata when they started their own bands. Their class position has also been understood from the lifestyle they lead and the dresses they wear. In the case of rock n roll music in America and Britain, we find a similar inclusion of the middle class youth (Bennett 2001).

The lyrics of the Bangla band music have touched upon the larger issues of exploitation of people, war, gender (though in limited scale), social change, love, consumerism, globalization and the like. The issues mentioned have a similarity with that of the issues explored in the process of review of the international scenario of popular music especially rock n roll. But it must be remembered that the band members give local flavor to the issues when they write the songs in the context of the Bengali society. I had aimed to study the nature of performance of the bands and the interplay of commerce and aesthetics in this particular genre of music. I have been able to observe the live performances of the bands and have marked the important components of performance. In the process I have pointed out the market responsive strategies which the band members have adopted to make their product saleable. Here in the role of technology, medium to publicize their live performances, the uses of new media and the social networking sites has been enormous. With the inroads of corporate sponsorship into the live performances of the bands, there has been an interface between commerce and aesthetics in this genre of music. The
consumers of music also constitute an important category to explore in the present study. It has been found that it is the youth mainly who are the admirers of this particular realm of music, though people of all age groups listen to some bands like Chandrabindoo and Bhoomi. The youth who consume this music are mostly (almost 93% according to the survey) found to be students of college and universities with the exception of one or two who are employed. The two who are employed, it has been mentioned before, are engineer and teacher by profession. Hence it would not be wrong to infer that the consumers of this particular music are predominantly the middle class youth. This is interesting because many of the songs of the Bangla bands speak of the downtrodden and marginalized sections of the society like the rickshaw pullers, boat sailors, farmers and sex workers (though in a very limited scale). This reveals the radical nature of the youth and their ability for developing empathy for the oppressed groups of people.

The study also suffers from some limitations. The major hindrance in the path of the study has been the lack of co-operation on the part of the band members. They have been too busy to provide interviews, so I had to depend mostly on secondary data in the form of interviews published in magazines and newspapers and on the official websites of the bands. There has also been a serious dearth of written data on the Bangla bands. This points to the lack of academic works on the concerned subject. I had to derive the concepts of research depending mostly on the works of popular music in the west. In the course of the research it has been found that our neighbouring country Bangladesh has a well-established background of Bangla bands. In the present study fleeting references of Bangladesh and its bands have appeared. A well-established research of the Bangladeshi band music scenario remains outside the scope of the present study due to lack of time. Therefore exploring the band music scenario in Bangladesh remains to be a predominant research interest to be taken up in future.
An exhaustive list of the bands is also difficult to obtain. This problem is more acute in the case of the new and struggling bands whose names are not available anywhere systematically. At times some of their names have been obtained from the programmes on band competition telecast on television or published in newspapers but that is not enough. Probably many bands remained unknown. In the case of the established bands the names have been obtained from the newspapers and television programmes but even then all of them could not be included in the present study due to lack of availability of data. Since the list of the Bangla bands remained inconclusive, therefore the list of the songs also remained incomplete. A sample of only about one hundred eighty songs has been collected and not all have been analyzed due to the lack of time. The lyrics of the songs have been decoded and interpreted. In doing this there has been a possibility of the subjective interpretation of the researcher. The views of the band members and the consumers have not been included in the study. The band members whom I interviewed refused to comment on the lyrics and stated that they prefer to keep the interpretation of the lyrics on those who listen to the songs. The study has limitations as far as the method of selecting the respondents is concerned. Here, as in the case of the bands and the songs, the principles of non-probability sampling have been applied to select the respondents. An in-depth account of the reaction of the larger audience to this particular genre of music has not been taken into account. This has been done purposely to delimit the scope of the study. Besides, the live performances have only been the source of observation. Due to lack of time the recorded performances have not been dealt with in detail. With all the shortcomings of the present study, it can be concluded that it had been taken up and pursued with honesty and sincerity. The shortcomings show the way to further research which can be taken up in the area.
6.3 Band Members' diversified Interests

In the concluding note it is worthy to discuss the present scenario of the band members. Many members of the established bands have diversified their interests and have entered into the realm of film music. This is ironical to a certain extent because they had started of their journey as musicians in protest of the music making in the films. At present it is the film industry where they have entered as lyricists, composer, actors and playback singers. The band Chandrabindoo has composed the songs for the film Gosai Baganer Bhoot (The Ghosts in the Garden of Gosai), directed by Nitish Ray (2011). Anindya and Chandril have written the lyrics of the film Antaheen (The Endless Wait), directed by Aniruddha RoyChoudhury (2009). They have won the National Award for the same in the year 2010. Anindya has also acted in films like Subho Muharat (Good Beginning, 2003) and Satyanweshi (One Who Searches Truth, 2013) based on the detective novel of the famous Bengali novelist Sarodindu Bandopadhyay. Both the films have been directed by the Bengali film director late Rituporno Ghosh. Siddhartha of Cactus has composed songs for the film Namte Namte (Going Down) directed by Rana Basu (2013). The film Muktodhara (Freeflowing) directed by Nandita Roy and Shiboprasad Mukhopadhyay (2012) has Surojit of the band Bhoomi as the music director and play back singer. Anindya Bose of Shohor and Paras Pathar fame has acted in the film Room number 103 by Aniket Chattopadhyay (2012) and Meghey Dhaka Tara (The Cloud Capped Star) by director Kamaleshwar Mukherjee (2013). Ex- Paras Pathar member Samidh Mukherjee has turned singer and composer in Bengali films (The Times of India, 2011). Rupam Islam of the band Fossils had composed the music for the film Mahanagar @ Kolkata (Metropolis @ Kolkata), directed by the director Sumon Mukhopadhyay (2010) and had also play backed in it. He had won the National award as best singer in the year 2010. Besides, Soumitro Roy of Bhoomi has also scored for a Bengali play directed by the renowned playwright, actor and director Manoj Mitra (The
Times of India, 2011). Subhojit, the lead singer of the band Laxmichhara has shifted base in Mumbai to try his luck as a playback singer. He has play backed for the film Agent Vinod directed by Sriram Raghavan (The Times of India, 2012). These are just a few of the innumerable instances which show how the band members have entered into the film industry. A possible explanation for this diversification can be a decline in the popularity of Bangla bands in the Bengali music scenario. The issue of piracy (The Times of India, 2011) in the music industry can be one of the possible reasons for this decline in popularity. The sale of albums of the bands might suffer a setback as many other forms of music. There has also been a change in the nature of films from that of the decade of eighties. The decade of eighties, it has already been pointed out, has been one where Bengali films had the working classes as their target audience. But in the nineties and at present the Bengali films (some of which has been mentioned above) focus on contemporary urban problems like divorce, break up of relationships, gay and lesbian relations, high level of aspirations of the middle class and so on. These films also have urban living as their backdrop. More over the directors of these films like late Rituporno Ghosh, Srijit Mukhopadhyay, Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, Kamaleshwar Mukhopadhyay, Nandita Ray and Shiboprasad Mukhopadhyay to name a few have come from a similar background with that of the band members. Hence it has been possible for the band members to have identified with these directors and with the issues of the Bengali movies that these directors make. The result is that contemporary Bengali film music probably has achieved a new meaning due to the inclusion of the band members in different capacities. It has opened up for them new opportunities to experiment upon.

Apart from his band Rupam Islam also composes music for his solo albums. Two such albums are No Honyote (Indestructible, 2010) and Nishkromon (Departure, 2011) released by the audio company Sa Re Ga Ma. Surojit has opened a page in the Face book (social networking site) named
Surojit O Bondhura (Surojit and Friends) where he invites poetries from a wide range of people like technologists, teachers, journalists, students and homemakers and the like and plans to shape them into songs and use them in his forthcoming films (The Times of India, 2012). These are instances to show how the band members have started coming out of the form called 'band' and trying to establish themselves as individual performers. Besides, as has been mentioned before, the members appear on television in different programmes and advertisements. This is an instance of the ambivalence of the middle class. On the one hand the middle classes are vocal and active about the social anomalies. On the other hand they are ever ready to take advantage of the contemporary social and cultural changes as a result of economic liberalization in the Indian society (Ray and Baviskar 2011). These diversifications and innovations on the part of band members have opened up new and further areas of research in the realm of Bengali music industry and in a larger context about the middle classes in India.

Endnotes

1. It has been found in the course of the research that many band members like Rupam Islam, Anindya Chattopadhyay and Soumitro have their own cars. Siddhartha's father is a doctor and he himself is a doctor, Soumitro's mother is a teacher. Rupam Islam has written in one of his books (Islam 2012) that he has been on vacation to Darjeeling. Chandril and Anindya have been spotted at a city Coffee shop to interact with music lovers (The Times of India 2012). These instances show that the band members belong to the middle class.