

Rituparno Ghosh's Films: Portrayal of Subjugation and Sufferings of Women

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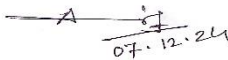
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This thesis paper is submitted to the Department of English, Daffodil International University, Dhaka in partial fulfilment to the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in English.

Certification of Completion

This certifies that Shapa Kamal Nupur, a student at Daffodil International University with ID number 211-10-2347 in the English Department, completed a thesis paper under my supervision titled Rituparno Ghosh's films: Portrayal of subjugation and suffering of women. This pupil is regarded as sincere and diligent. She has worked very hard at her job. This essay is a genuine and unique work of literature. I suggest that Daffodil International University's English Department give it additional praise. I hope she succeeds in all of his future pursuits.



07.12.21

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Declaration

I am Shapa Kamal Nupur. I am declaring that I have accomplished the research on "Rituparno Ghosh's Film: Portrayal of Subjugation and Sufferings of Women" having the guideline from my supervisor. I have read the guidelines for project paper submission given by the Department of English of Daffodil International University, and I have followed all conditions. During the inquiry on the character of Havisham, I have searched various relevant and essential sources like pdfs and books that are added in my reference section. This project is completed during the fall semester of 2024, under the guidance of Md. Ariful Islam Laskar, sir, who is the assistant professor of the Department of English at Daffodil International University.

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Abstract

Film is a lens. Through this moving image, history, culture, moral issues, ethics, and beliefs of a society can be measured. This paper investigates women's sufferings, exploitation, their troubles, and their mind set up in patriarchal society by employing feminist and psychoanalytic perspectives. Rituparno Ghosh is an Indian director who portrays women's subjugation in his film. These films are often controversial because of Ghosh's transgressive narratives. Ghosh makes "*Bariwali*"(2000), "*Dahan*" (1997), and "*Unishe April*(1994) films, and they have shared common themes like desolation, women's repressed desire, oppression, marginalization, and mind set up. Ghosh's films closely scrutinize masculine power over women's feelings and needs. Gender plays an important role in exploring the exploitation in these films. Social expectations, the impact of patriarchal society, and women facing identity crises—these are continuously used in Ghosh's films, which makes him an auteur director. The outcome of this paper is women's progression from restricted social code.

Keywords: Film, Patriarchal society, Marginalization, feminism .

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Research Methodology

This paper will examine Rituparno Ghosh films *Bariwali*, *Dahan*, and *Unishe April* to explore women's oppression in cinema. This paper is developed by using a qualitative research approach. In data collection, I have already mentioned three names of movies; this is my primary source of information. For secondary sources of information, Rituparno Ghosh: Cinema, Gender, and Art book and online resources. This paper mainly examines feminist theory, including Laura Mulvey's male gaze theory and objectification of women. Using Laura Mulvey's Male Gaze Theory to Critique Patriarchal Dominance in the film industry. Besides, Freudian psychoanalysis and Albert Bandura's Social learning Theory will be applied to visualize the women's mind set, and. This paper is focused on character development, narrative style, themes, and storylines of movies.

Literature Review

Alison Macdonald's research paper, *Real and Imagined Women: A Feminist Reading of Rituparno Ghosh's Films*, tried to show the complexity of women's limited role in cinema. Rituparno Ghosh's challenging representation of women's roles in movies. Rituparno's non-acceptance view of objectification. Discuss the idea about good or bad mothers in Ghosh's films.

Exploitation, victimhood, and gendered performance in Rituparno Ghosh's *Bariwali*, Rohit K. Dasgupta and Tanmayee Banerjee, had tried to portray women's emotional sufferings in patriarchal society.

Infidelity to True Story and Novel: Locating the Auteur in Rituparno Ghosh's Dahan, Akaitab Mukherjee wanted to show Rituparno's rejections of patriarchal norms and support women's liberation.

Research Findings

This paper reveals Rituparno Ghosh's challenging movement to break societal norms. In *Bariwali*, *Dahan*, and *Unishe April* he tries to depict women's issues. Ghosh represent some underrepresented issues like marital rape, expectational motherhood, emotional abusiveness. Some distinctive features of Ghosh's film have been highlighted in this paper which makes his film unique. Ghosh frequently shows, in his movies, women's sufferings in a relationship, they are confined in their own thoughts, their long-term torment Ghosh repeatedly shows in his movies.

Introduction

Rituparno Ghosh is one of the foremost directors of India and directs many women-centered films. Ghosh, through his narrative techniques, tries to change the societal perspective about women's strength by progressing the women's situation. Rituparno Ghosh is different from traditional film directors. Indian film was male-dominated. They gave their first priority to the male audience, and females were the secondary audience. Ghosh draws the female character from his feminine point of view. Directors like Satyajit Ray, Shyam Benegal, Rituparno Ghosh, and others break the film industry's prejudices. Rituparno Ghosh expresses his feminine mentality. In one interview with Kaustav Bakshi Ghosh, he revealed that he lent his voice only to female protagonists in films like *Chokher Bali*, *Dosar*, and *Noukadubi* (Datta and et al. 95).

This paper deals with Ghosh's three films, "*Bariwali*" (2000), "*Dahan*" (1997), and "*Unishe April*" (1994). These all are adapted. "*Bariwali* (The Lady of the House)" Rituparno Ghosh wrote this story as a short fiction *Sananda* for the Bengali women's magazine, which he adapted into a film. *Dahan* was adapted from Bengali novelist Suchitra Bhattacharya's novel with the same title. *Unishe April* was adapted from the film "*Autumn Sonata*" (1978) directed by Ingmar Bergman. Ghosh focuses on female issues, in *Bariwali*, shows women like Banalata (Kiron Kher) and Shudeshna (Roopa Ganguli) how they are exploited by men. Deepankar (Chiranjeev), through his character, displays the patriarchal society. In addition, this film portrays women's emotional vulnerability. In *Dahan*, it shows the sexual harassment of the housewife (Rituparno Sengupta), and society blames the victim and how her position was changed overnight in her in-laws' family because of one accident. *Unishe April*, shows in patriarchal society women's sacrifice is natural and they are never appreciated.

All of his films give a message to society. His works play like a wake-up call for the people. The tune of his movies seems to reflect Ghosh's feminist point of view and his mental state against the gender role stereotype. His films have highlighted the main theme of the first and second feminist movements. In the first wave of feminism, they fought for women's rights, and in the second wave of feminism, the central concern was media representation of women. Although the central focus of Ghosh's movie is feminist, even his films can be analyzed with a

psychoanalytic feminist perspective. Psychoanalysis encompasses are unconsciousness, consciousness, dream analysis, and the Oedipus complex, and these terms are closely connected with gender, sexuality, and complex familial relationships, which are the key points of his film.

Objectives:

- 1.To explore biased media in feminist perspective.
2. Ghosh's feminist view by his films.
3. To examine women's representation in Indian cinema.

Research Questions:

1. How have women been portrayed in Indian films since long ago?
2. How Rituparno challenged the traditional media?
3. Can psychological barriers be an obstacle for women?

Research Limitations:

This study has focused on Rituparno's three selected movies and excluded his others movies that are also female centric. It cannot explain Ghosh's camera angles or framing techniques. This paper does not deeply explore psychoanalysis.

Chapter 1: Challenging the conventional Portrayal of Women in Indian Cinema:

Women subjugation has been going on for a long time. Men have made them superior and they have been maintaining a master slavery relationship with women. They technically kept women to rely on them and consider women as Other. This Other means they are different from men. (Beauvoir 193-194). The impact of this traditional style women's subjugation of society was seen in movies as well as in real life. Ghosh raised questions on women subjugation through his many films, namely *Unishe April* (1994), *Dahan* (1998), *Bariwali* (2000), *Titli* (2002), *Chokher Bali* (2003), *Shubho Mahurat* (2003) etc. Sangeeta Datta and Rohit K Dasgupta argue that "In film after film, Ghosh attributes to his female protagonists an agency or reflects on the lack of it and makes them question their subordinate status. He vociferously challenges the accepted dynamics of power equations between men and women, parents and children, and straight and queer people".

1.1 History:

The Indian film industry started its journey in 1913. The Indian film industry is known as Bollywood. The first full length film released in 1913, named *Raja Harishchandra* directed by Dadasaheb Phalke. In feminist perspective, Indian cinema portrayed gender dynamic, women's submission, oppression, subordination to men from the beginning. In the first Indian cinema this was also a male centric film. People accept this gender dynamic hence it is challenging to someone to break the rules. From 1913 to 1950, dozens of cinemas were male centric and those were commercially also successful. From 1960 in the film industry, a little bit changed came to the cinema Institute because of the second wave of feminism. The second wave (1960-1970), mainly dealt with women equality in every area. The central concern was MEDIA representation of women, as a false image of women stereotypes which damage women's self-perception and limit their social roles (Jackson and et al. 213).

The concept of "feminism" came to India by Western education in the Colonial period. So, the meaning of feminism is different in India from Western countries and Indian people could not accept the concept of feminism. Raja Ram Mohon Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar were the pioneers of feminism in India. In the 19th century came feminist Savitribai Phule. They contributed to establish women rights and equalities in society. In silver screen some filmmakers

try to establish gender equality. The first women centered film *Mother India* (1957) directed by Mehbooba Khan, Satyajit Ray films *Mahanagar* (1963), *Charulata* (1964), Shayem Benegal films are *Bhumika* (1977), *Zubeidaa* (2001) limited amount of films are released those are based on women's rights and freedom. In India, against 400 movies come out 3 or 4 of the female centric films, which is not enough to influence societal norms. In the beginning, these movies could not find a place in audience mind because these movies were out of the traditional genre. In traditional movies women's roles were limited; they acted as mother, daughter, sister, wife and they could not play any significant role. Almost every movies of this era, the hero was the main figure of a movie. He has to take the responsibility of his family, protect the heroines from danger. Heroes were portrayed as a "Macho Man". *Kismet* (1943), *Andaz* (1949), *Dastan* (1950), *Devdas* (1955), *Do Bighhazamin* (1953), *Mugaddar Ka Sikandar* (1978), *Mirch Masala* (1980), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), *Dil to Pagal Hai* (1997), *Bibi no 1* (1999), *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001) these are some famous and commercially successful films and these show the ideal form of patriarchy.

Indian film always shows girls/heroines coming from lower class or lower middle class, they have to depend on someone to survive. Again, women were seen in front of the screen in the form of an ideal wife wearing sari, Sankha in hand, siddur on forehead, which are symbols of a married woman as well as portrayed their tradition. Again, there was a dress code for widows, white sarees were their only clothes. They were not present in any worship or ceremony. Because they were considered inauspicious.

1.2 Movie Analysis :

Rituparno's female characters came from the upper or upper middle class. Rituparno has shown a middle-class family's problems so all kinds of spectators could not relate the story with them. "Ghosh's greatest joy was to throw a group of middle and upper middle-class characters into a tightly controlled domestic eco- system in which they were tested, tensions would mount, passions would play their turn, and the possibilities of subtle melodrama were to be fully realized" (Datta and et al. 108). He stands against the tradition where female characters obviously came from lower class or lower middle-class families. They had no power due to their financial

weakness. They must have depended on some man for sustenance. On the other hand, patriarchal society used this opportunity to exploit girls. "*Ankur*"(1974) directed by Shayam Benegal through the character of Laxmi (Shabana Azmi) shows women's marginalization. Laxmi was exploited by her landlord Surya (Anant Nag) Which she could understand but Laxmi could not say anything due to the urge of livelihood. When Laxmi's husband Kishtaya (Sadhu Meher) absent for few days Surya took that chance made a physical relation with Laxmi. She was the maid of Saury' and Surya already married another woman but Surya made a physical relation with Laxmi. This film only shows one way of how women are exploited in patriarchal society. Conventional cinema always depicts techniques to keep women oppressed. Rituparno breaks the chain and fights against slavery and establishes women. Rituparno tries to push the boundaries through his narrative techniques.

Through the character of Sarojini (Aparna Sen) in the *Unishe April* movie, Ghosh protested the customs of this society. Sarojini plays the role of a widowed woman but Sarojini does not care about the social norms. Ghosh breaks stereotypical rules by a widow character. Sarojini is a powerful female character portrayed by Rituparno. She is abandoned from her family but she never gives up rather she makes herself stronger. Here it can be coded of one Rabindra Sangeet that is:

যদি তোর ডাক শুনে কেউ না আসে তবে একলা চলো রে

যদি তোর ডাক শুনে কেউ না আসে তবে একলা চলো রে

তবে একলা চলো, একলা চলো, একলা চলো, একলা চলো রে

তবে একলা চলো, একলা চলো, একলা চলো, একলা চলো রে

If they pay no heed to your call, walk on your own.

Walk alone, walk alone, walk alone, walk all alone.

If none speaks, o wretched one,

If all turn their face away and cower in silence. (Translated by Suman Roy)

The theme of this song is reflected on Sarojini's character, who does not need anyone's support. Rituparno is influenced by Rabindranath Tagore in quest for women's freedom. They both are searching for the idea of humanism and its close associated with the quest for freedom. Rituparno tries to give freedom through his movies. Tagore and Ghosh understood freedom in social, cultural, political, metaphysical and artistic terms (Datta and et al. 50-51).

By creating Romita's (Rituparna Sengupta) character Rituparna Ghosh has tried to portray a dynamic role of a female character in his film "*Dahan*". It is Ghosh's another step against the traditional film industry. In traditional film, women could not play dynamic roles; rather they are given flat character roles. There was no development of their characters, they remained the same form from the beginning to the end of the film. In feminist perspective, flat character based on stereotypes. Women were never presented as main characters. In the course of the film, the development of his character is clearly visible. This movie is started by a female voiceover, who was Romita audience can see a few times later. Where she is writing a letter to her sister. The summary of the letter is, she informed her sister will not send a letter at her old address and she is trying to adapt herself with this new environment. In the ending part of the film where she has mentioned that she wants to go Canada because she needs a break. By analyzing these two letters this can easily say, Romita's resistance for patriarchal society. Jhinuk (Indrani Halder) another significant character of this movie, who is active against patriarchal society from the beginning part of the film. Jhinuk and her boyfriend (Sanjeev Dasgupta) have a very good relationship from the beginning. But at the end of the film, Jhinuk's reluctance to marry shows that Jhinuk is rejecting male control. Jhinuk's grandmother (Suchitra Mitra), who has expressed her opposition to society's norms by preferring her own will. After her husband died she has chosen a place of residence and rejects her son's proposal to live with them.

The survival story of Banalata is different from everyone else. Who did not have any kind of family and relatives were also distant which the audience could get to know through letters. There were only two servants in the house to help him. Banalata in the *Bariwali* movie who has played a courageous role against the patriarchal society. Banalata has accepted the social law which is

imposed on her. Banalata does not give up because of her loneliness, emotional vulnerability; rather she has used them as tools against oppression.

Rituparno Challenged the Society, he established the female characters in the society where they were deprived.

Chapter 2: Ghosh Films: Women Sufferings for Individual Awareness:

This chapter will focus how Rituparno challenged social norms and ideas and it will explain his target to build societal consciousness. Media can quickly influence people's conceptions. In one interview with Kaustav Bakshi, Ghosh revealed how his response changed after watching the film *Jalsaghar* on television, which made him read the film in a new light. "*Unishe April*" which is largely inspired by this film (Datta et al. 109). He proficiently represents women's issues like their psychological state, sufferings and sacrifices. Rituparna Sengupta said with Times of Indian in one interview that, "Perhaps he understood women's sensitivities more than us. He knew their emotional nuances like the back of his hand. When he was showing me how to play Romita (Rituparno's character in *Dahan*) I could clearly see her in his expressions".

Ghosh talked about things that are tabooed in society and women are uncomfortable to discuss like domestic violence, a constructed form of motherhood, emotional exploitation by men.

2.1 Marital Rape:

According to Susan Brownmiller, "To a woman the definition of rape is fairly simple. A sexual invasion of the body by force, an incursion into the private, personal inner space without consent—in short, an internal assault from one of several avenues and by one of several methods—constitutes a deliberate violation of emotional, physical and rational integrity and is a hostile, degrading act of violence that deserves the name of rape" (Brownmiller 376). The same in the case of Rituparno Ghosh's *Dahan* film. Romita who is victim of rape after marriage. In this scene from the film, Romita and her husband Palash were engaged in an argument. At one point, Palash physically tortured her and when Romita tried to resist, she faced domestic violence. The conversation between them:

Romita: আমার গায়ে হাত দিবা না...আমার ভাল্লাগেনা।।। (Do not touch me.... I Do not like it.)

Palash: বেশ করবো, বেশ করবো। আমার নিজের খাটে আমার নিজের বউয়ের গায়ে হাত দিবো তাতে কার বাপের কি? (I will do what I want with my wife on my bed).

Romita was raped by palash when she was mentally and physically unstable. By palash way of talking it is clearly shown of patriarchal mindset. Palash's way of talking that is claiming Romita is his property as the bed, so he does not need any content to do anything with Romita. Rape is a practice by men to demonstrate their masculine power over women. If there is a relationship between the rapist and the victim, the victim does not raise her voice against him and has little chance to defend herself from this violence, such a relationship is marriage. Romita took legal action for her molestation but she could not file a complaint against her husband. Because, the people of the society do not consider marital rape as a crime rather consider it as husband's rights even also Romita. Albert Bandura is a psychologist, who gives the idea about Social learning theory (SLT). By this theory he has informed us that human's behavior, attitude or beliefs are shaped or influenced by the environment. People's personality is formed by what they observe from their surroundings. In Indian people or this society do not consider marital rape as a crime. As a result, Romita does not thinks to take step against domestic violence. In Indian law there are no punishment regarding martial rape so, in a sense this is not a crime than how Romita has complaint against her husband?

After marriage the husband considers his wife as his property. In 1736 British judge Sir Matthew Hale said that women are the contractual property of their husband so they can do anything with their wife. These western attitudes or beliefs were transferred to India through Colonialism. More than 52 countries criminalized marital rape and 36 countries across the world do not recognize marital rape as a crime. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh also consider it is not a crime. This is why marital rape is still not considered a crime in India.

A proof of how profound the effects of domestic violence can be found in the film *Agni Sakshi*. *Agni Sakshi (1996)* directed by Partho Ghosh. Madhu (Manisha Koirala) who was married to Suraj Kapoor (Jackie Shroff) but her first husband was Bishwanath (Nana Patekar). Madhu changed her identity to get rid from Vishnath torture. Vishnath slapped Madhu on her birthday because she asked about his friends and she could not meet with her father. In this scene, Vishnath said to her father when she crossed her father's house door, from that time she has become his property, now he has no rights on his daughter. By this it is clear how women lost their family

and self identity after their marriage. This film represents the marital trauma and domestic violence of women.

2.2 Social Exceptional Motherhood:

On the onset of this part, it will explain the term "expectational motherhood". It is hard to define what social expectational motherhood is; however, it can be referred to in a broader sense as what people want towards a mother. According to our society, a mother must love her child selflessly and sacrifice everything for the sake of her offspring.

Unishe April shows a complex relationship between mother (Sarojini) and daughter (Aditi). This cinema does not focus on traditional mother and daughter bonding. There is not any warmth, positivity or supportive nature in their relationship. Rituparno's another movie *Title* (2002), which represents a good relationship between mother and daughter. For *Title* (Konkona Sen Sharma), her mother is her best friend. Giving birth to a child is considered a natural process. Adrienne Rich, claimed that patriarchal society considers motherhood a natural way, and a mother has no other identity. Simone de Beauvoir also said motherhood for a woman is a "natural vocation" (Beauvoir 597). Patriarchal society uses this as a weapon to oppress women.

Sarojini, who has taken steps against the society, tried to create self-identity. A woman can be a mother, a daughter, a sister and a wife. In a patriarchal society, after being a mother, a woman experiences an identity crisis. Society erases or neglects the true self of a woman. Sarojini has rejected societal norms. Hence, she suffered emotionally. Sarojini has prioritized her ID. Sigmund Freud proposed three states of personality forms: id, ego, and superego. In the Id stage when someone takes the decision they do not have the awareness of consequence. She just follows her Id without concern about the consequence. She ignores social codes and norms; as a result, she has suffered. In the ending part of the movie "*Unishe April*," Sarojini has confessed that marriage, being a mother, and maintaining a family are not for her; rather her dance and a lonely lifestyle are more suitable for her than these sorts of familial relationships. By this confession of Sarojini, Rituparno has tried to show how male-dominated society dominates women and imposes on them what they do not want. Sarojini was bound to maintain this, and when she disobeyed the society, sufferings started from there.

In terms of good or bad mothers, undoubtedly according to our society, Sarojini is a bad mother. Society considers a mother as caregiver and a working mother can never be a good mother. DeLatt and Bauman (2016) state that many employers believe that mothering and paid work exist in opposition to one another; mothers must choose between good parenting or being a good employee. Aditi does not like her mother's profession. For this, they cannot spend time together, which is one of the main reasons to create distance between mother and daughter relationships. Aditi's relationship is also broken with her boyfriend because of her mother's profession. A working mother faces disrespect in many ways, but Sarojini seems to endure even greater humiliation because she is a dancer.

Mother can manage both; this concept is not appropriate for this society. Many people in society, including Rituparno, have taken initiatives to improve the condition of mothers. one ad that was released on Mother's Day 2022 with the hashtag #shecancarryboth. This ad showed that our society made it obvious that a mother can only be a mother. It is kind of unimaginable according to our society, for a woman to be a mother as well as a working lady. A mother can work if she wishes, or she can choose to fulfill her responsibilities as a mother—it solely depends on her. Society has no rights to impose any decision on them.

2.3 Emotional Abusiveness:

In a patriarchal society, the oppression of females continues to exist such as emotional exploitation of women (Kafa 2010). In male-centric society girls are abused in various ways, emotional abusiveness is one of them. It can take place in any relationship and any gender of people can be emotionally abused. In patriarchal society, girls are emotionally abused more than boys. According to a World Health Organization report on VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls), 30% of women globally who are 15 years of age or older have experienced male violence. This emotional abusiveness, it makes non- equal relationships. It is also called the 'Silent epidemic' because people do not discuss this. Hence, it is spreaded from one generation to another generation.

In *Bariwali* film through two female characters Rituparno Ghosh has portrayed how girls are emotionally exploited by that person whom she loves. Banalata (kiran kher) and Sudeshna

(Sudipta Chakrabarty) they both are victims of patriarchal dominance, they are exploited by Dipankar and both allow him to oppress them. The movie shows how the emotions of girls are abused and exploited in the society through the characters of Banalata and Sudeshna. Banalata is the sole heir of the Zamindar family. Unexpectedly, her future husband died before her marriage and Banalata never married. The financial sufferings of girls are not seen who own property in a male-dominated society. Women who own a home or piece of land are much less likely to experience ongoing and chronic physical and psychological abuse. But the scenes of emotional exploitation of girls are seen and this is portrayed in film by Banalata.

Dreams originated in the unconscious part of the human mind, over which humans have no control. Banalata has repressed any attraction or sexual desire for physical intimacy that she feels towards the opposite sex. Her repressed desire which is revealed to the audience through dreams. Banalata's sexual desire or desire for physical intimacy increases after seeing Dipankar. Because before Dipankar came, she had never been so close to a man. The director has put several dream scenes in this movie. The appearance of pigeons in a dream basically indicates the impatience of the union of Banalata with the partner. In the first dream there were some pigeons on the bed. Color grading is a crucial factor in the media. The usage of the "red" color by the director in Banalata's second dream essentially alludes to the need for wilderness.

Dipankar plays a major role in Banalata's emotional abusiveness. Dipankar comes to Banalata's house to make a film. Dipankar senses Banalata's interest in him and takes advantage of this. Banalata is a very conservative character, which is clearly understood in the movie. But on Dipankar's request, she agreed to play a role in Dipankar's film. Banalata crosses all borders to save Dipankar from harm. She feels uncomfortable coming in front of the camera because she is not a professional artist. She has faced the burden to memorize the script. At the end of the film, it is revealed the part is cut that was played by Banalata in Dipankar's movie without Banalata's acknowledgement. Banalata is informed by a letter. After hearing this, Banalata is emotionally broken that is shown by the last shot Banalata's returning to a life of solitude. Another woman Sudeshna who is also exploited by Dipankar. Dipankar and Sudeshna had a relationship after break out their relation still Dipankar manipulated her emotionally. This is revealed when

Sudeshna talked with her hair dresser, Sudeshna said Dipankar knew that I would never defy his proposal. He did not ask her for her concern, rather he asked for her available dates.

A common theme in both *Bariwali* and *English Vinglish* films is emotional abusiveness. Gauri Shinde is the director of *English Vinglish* (2012) movie. Shashi Godbole (Sridevi) who, manages a business while caring for her entire family, although Shashi is humiliated by her own family members because she could not speak English, her husband and children ignore her. She (Sapna Godbole) will be embarrassed in front of her friends because her mother does not speak English. Her husband seldom talks to her, believing that she is unqualified to speak to him. According to these two movies, society or a woman's family will always attempt to oppress her, regardless of her status.

Chapter 3: How Ghosh Films are Different from Other Films:

Rituparno is called an auteur director because he directs his movies like a writer. He does not accept the conventional film feature in his movie. Rather, he directs films according to his choice, and he has confessed this in one interview. Rituparno uses some features that make him different from others.

3.1 Objectification is Disrupted by Ghosh:

Women are objectified in cinema, Laura Mulvey claims in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in 1975. In this essay, Mulvey criticizes how cinema portrays women and women's bodies in an objectified way. Laura Mulvey mentioned 'male gaze' in the same essay for the first time. In the concept of 'male gaze', she explains how women are represented in mainstream media as men want to see them.

In 'male gaze' theory, she highlights how women play a passive role in cinema and women are depersonalized in the media. She believes women are "the bearer of the meaning and not the maker of meaning."

According to the Geena Davis Institute, in 2017, Bollywood inequality on-screen time. It can differ gender-wise; male actors get 68.5% of screen time, and female actors get only 31.5% of screen time. For this time the female characters are shown; they are represented sexually and play a passive role. There are some directors who reject objectification of women in cinema. Rituparno Ghosh is one of them. The screen timing of women is different in the analysis of Rituparno films. The whole time of Ghosh's films is worked on to portray women's matters, struggles, journeys towards liberation and progression. I have already talked about *Bariwali*, *Dahan*, and *Unishe April* are films that are made to be women-centric.

Objectification of women it's an unwritten tradition in Bollywood. From big-budget cinema to advertisements in every sectors in this industry, women objectification is seen. In Bollywood it is a must to have an item song for a film; this tradition comes from a very early time in Bollywood history. The Indian film industry presents women in this way because they want to catch the male audience. They present women in a sexual way, which makes eroticism in the male audience's

mind. In item songs, camera angles are focused on some selected body parts, and this is pleasurable for a male audience.

One of the main reasons for this narrative style is to get commercial success. For big-budget cinema, it is obvious to have an item song. Some names of item songs are 'Oo Antava Mawa (*Pushpa*), 'Munni Badnam Hui (*Dabangg*), 'Fevicol Se' (*Dabang*) Baby Doll (*Ragini MMS2*), and Aaj Ki Raat (*Stree 2*). These songs are not related to the story; these are the unnecessary portrayal of women and women on screen, which is actually normalizing the women's sexual abusiveness.

Rituparno has portrayed women as Durga. According to Hindu culture, Durga is the most powerful Devi. She has 108 names, and every name has a different significance. Durga is the symbol of power, strength, protection, etc. Her name is closely associated with war, as she has fought against the devils to establish truth. In Hinduism there are several myths of Durga's war. Rituparno presents his female character as another version of Durga. Banalata (*Bariwali*), Ramita, Jhinuk, and Jhinuk's grandmother (*Dahan*) and Sarojini (*Unishe April*) are these characters who are fighting against patriarchal dominance.

3.2 Representation of Relationship:

Rituparno shows the complexity of human relationships. *Dahan* and *Dosar* (2006): By these two films, Ghosh shows the complexity in conjugal life. In *Unishe April*, the portrayal of the mother-daughter relationship is another type of complexity.

One of the most innovative parts of Ghosh's films is that he always gives a supportive character to a female victim character. Which shows women sisterhood as well as women's strong bonding with another woman. This bonding gives them relief from the patriarchal world. In *Dahan* Romita's sister-in-law, whose name is not mentioned and who is the only person in her in-law's family who supports her after her harassment. In the movie *Bariwali*, Malati supports Banalata in every single situation. In *Unishe April*, Boya, who takes care of Mithu (Aditi). She consoles Mithu in every bad situation. From the very beginning of the film, Boya supports Mithu. Rituparno skillfully depicts the real-life scenario in his movie.

Cultural feminism places a strong emphasis on appreciating women's fundamental differences, including their capacity for caring, collaboration, and relationship-building. In his films, Rituparno has emphasized the ideas of cultural feminism by showing how one woman may help another overcome obstacles and forge bonds. Ghosh emphasizes the nature of women's supporting conduct and comments this trait through the example of one lady lending a hand to another. For instance, despite only meeting once, Romita and Jhinuk had a close relationship in the film *Dahan*. Rituparno stated in an interview that he purposefully made Romita only encounter Jhinuk once in the film *Dahan*. He wanted to portray the character of female interactions through this.

3.3 Space for Audience:

Rituparno has ended his films at an open ended point where the audience are free to give a conclusion as they want. *Bariwali*, *Dahan*, and *Unishe April*: these films do not carry any specific ending. The movie *Bariwali* ends at a point where it is unclear whether Banalata will forget about Dipankar and return to her previous life or continue as she is. In the movie *Dahan* as well the audience does not see a conclusive ending. Will Romita truly establish herself as independent, or what will ultimately be Jhinuk's decision will she marry or not? Similarly, the ending of *Unishe April* leaves it uncertain whether the cold war between the mother and daughter will truly be resolved? Rituparno rejects the traditional way of female portrayal and rather represents many aspects in his films, which makes him different and gives his feminist view on media.

Chapter 4: Conclusion:

This study has analyzed the subjugation of women in films from the beginning of the Indian film industry to the present. In almost all of his films, he has portrayed the real condition of women. Therefore, his films can be considered counter-cinema. Through his films, Rituparno moved beyond gender bias and focused on gender equality, which was unconventional and broke away from traditional norms. He presented the biased media as a tool for establishing women's rights.

He has highlighted sensitive aspects of women's lives that society, families, and even women themselves often avoid discussing. Going beyond the opinions of most people, he portrayed unique facets of women's lives. The very aspects that are often considered signs of women's vulnerability were presented by Rituparno as sources of strength for them.

Rituparno Ghosh, through his films, shows different stages of a girl's life, like single women, married women, spinsters, and widows. At every stage of life, girls are ruled by boys. Everyone has to take the challenge to save themselves from this exploitation; if individuality is retained, it must be resisted. Rituparno has very skillfully framed this in his films and made her feminist point. Rituparno Ghosh has framed women's issues in film or media from her feminist point of view. Ghosh not only represented women's oppressed situation, women's development was also sketched in his movie. He shows how women have overcome societal and psychological barriers. He has repeatedly used the same features in his cinema, which made the representation of women in his films distinct

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