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A Study on the Portrayal of Tagore's Women through Rituporno Ghosh's Lens with special reference to *Chokher Bali* and *Noukadubi*

1. Introduction

What is important to discuss here is that in present scenario, cinema is considered as the mirror who serves the society, with advancement of technology and digitally upgradation of everything, cinema has up-to-dated itself to run along this competitive digital world. Audio-visual medium has been playing such a pivotal role in creating and shaping public opinions about the contemporary world that film-makers and other audio-visual producers have taken charge of experimenting with the periodic creations and create an expression about the characters, notions, beliefs, customs and most importantly society as a whole. It has never been an easy task to bring out the true essence of that period into the celluloid by the film-makers, but they have invested their efforts, hard-work and time to cultivate that expression in the silver-screen to make the contemporary society more inclusive, to make the contemporary society proud of their preceding period and most importantly to map 'an understanding how much they have progressed from the period they have been talking about'.

1.1. Feminism & Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore have continuously experimented with his writings time and again, he has been criticized, he has been praised at times for providing various angles to a storyline going against the time or with the time. In doing so, he has experimented with different 'isms' present in the society. His portrayal with different 'isms' has made him the legend, where he is standing today. His experimentation with the expression of Feminism has always called for bravery and ahead of his times by the critics and researchers. His portrayal of women characters in his short stories and novels make us realize one thing for sure, and that is his portrayal of women ahead of time. He created them to protest, sometimes vehemently and at times silently to show the idealistic world that is needed in the society. From the time immemorial, (or later Vedic age to be precisely), women have enjoyed a lower stratum of life as compared to men. The hetero-normative expressions of the society have constantly put the women's lives at stake for the better portrayal of masculinity ¹and hence, when it comes to brave portrayal of women in literature it calls for defying of the so-called rituals and customs that are socially acceptable but idealistically embarrassing and insult for the womanhood as a whole. Therefore, portrayal of womanhood in the pages of early 20th century calls for a brave step to take. His perspective continuously dwindled between conservatism and radicalism, thus in some of his stories a

¹ By Somdatta Mondal "Was Tagore a Feminist? Re-evaluating selected fiction and their Adaptations.". Wiley Online Library, Journal: Literature Compass, Vol 12.

marginalized or illiterate woman overcomes hurdles to raise her voice, while in others, she is compelled to conform to patriarchal boundaries. Thus, he was confused might not be afraid with his women characters and therefore, his portrayals are often haphazard and disbalanced in a same novel or a short story.

1.2. Works of Rituparno Ghosh on Feminism

Very few film-makers have tried to provide an all-totally different portrayal of the women characters created by Tagore, defying the original portrayal in which Tagore has painted them. It is indeed a brave step and calls for a brave screenplay because unlike a novel which is even though exposed to mass but not widely enjoyed by the mass due to its own restrictions, cinema has comparatively less restrictions and therefore, it is widely spread among the mass and calls for praise or criticize from the mass-audience. Rituparno Ghosh is one of those film-makers who have defied the portrayal of women by Tagore and added his own expressions that are amalgamation of post-colonial feminism and women emancipation that has been subalternized by various other contemporary movements from both social context as well as film movements. Taking the cinematic liberty to a new range he had used the medium of films to make womanhood more inclusive, sexuality as an identity and female expression more modern in its outlook. However, his portrayal has also faced disbalances, strike confusion and that is why this study has aimed to map the portrayal of Tagore's women through Rituparno Ghosh's lens with special reference to *Chokher Bali* and *Noukadubi*.

1.3. Why *Chokher Bali* and *Noukadubi*?

The construction of a feminine approach has been always experimented by Rituparno Ghosh. His sense of womanhood was expressive and different from other film-makers. The reason behind selecting *Chokher Bali* and *Noukadubi* is that both are inspired from Tagore's novel with the same name and revolve around the politics of the home, portrays the individual struggle within the domestic space to negotiate the conventions of traditional joint family and work through the everyday intricacies of marital and extra-marital relationships. Alison Macdonald in his research paper² compared and studied the combination of both 'Narrative' structure and 'bodily work'. He suggests that Ghosh draws upon the widely understood and recognised notions of 'body work' at strategic moments to represent women within an alternative visual framework. This emphasis on the body also falls in line with notions of the role of bodily appearance in film whereby "showing becomes a way of saying the unsayable"³. MacDougall (2006) argues that the body provides a knowledge of being which emphasises the usefulness of the body as a visual communicator in revealing meaning to the audience alongside or in many cases separate from the meaning communicated through. dialogue. *Chokher Bali* ("sand in the eye") is an adaptation of the novel by Rabindranath Tagore and is based in a colonial setting between 1902 and 1905. Macdonald mentions that the two themes of this film are the constraining nature of social roles assigned to women and the lack of socially sanctioned space for the expression of feminine subjectivity outside of these roles. Unlike

² By Macdonald, A 2009, 'Real' and 'Imagined' women: A feminist reading of Rituparno Ghosh's Films, pp. 08.

³ By MacDougall, D 2006, *Ethnography and the Senses: The Corporeal Image* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

commercial cinema, where women are represented in such a way that they become objects of the male gaze (Mulvey 1975)⁴, Ghosh displaces this gaze by presenting the 'female' gaze so that Binodini becomes the voyeur; it is through her eyes and from her gaze that we become involved in her struggle.

The appeal of Rabindranath Tagore's *Noukadubi* to Ghosh is quite evident. The narrative conceit of the boatwreck that, unbeknownst to the parties involved, engenders an accidental exchange of marriage partners, denatures the institution of marital arrangements in an unique manner.⁵ The imaginary marriage in *Noukadubi* engenders three interlocking secrets. First, Ramesh conceals his actions to Hemnolini and her family. And then, as found out that Kamala is not really his wife, the very fact that he holds out tangible hope of uniting once again with his beloved Hem prevents him narrating to her his tangled story. Secondly, Ramesh conceals his love for Hem from Kamala. Thirdly, Ramesh harbours another secret, the most important of all. He leaves Kamala in the dark about the fact that she is not actually married to him. His motives for this are entirely honourable; he wants to preserve Kamala from dishonour and shame and in the meantime search for her missing husband. Here, there is a marked difference in treatment between novel and film, in which Ghosh have attempted to prepare a feminine construct through his characters, which this study is aiming to address.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The paper aims to understand how Rituparno Ghosh have tried to establish the portrayal of the female characters from Rabindranath Tagore's Novel 'Chokher Bali' & 'Noukadubi' and how he has deviated from the actual storyline of Tagore's novel in order to add a feministic angle to both the films. The purpose here is to understand how Rituparno Ghosh have portrayed the female characters from Tagore's novel namely *Noukadubi* and *Chokher Bali*, defying the main storyline from the actual novel in order to establish his feministic powerful angle through his women characters. To fulfil the purpose of the study, the article also tries to understand the expression of feminism has been expressed in the two movies mainly through: feminism expression amidst sexuality and self-esteem in *Chokher Bali* and feminism expression through love and sacrifice in *Noukadubi*.

The paper also takes into account the use of dialogues that helped Ghosh to establish the powerful portrayal of his women characters. Along with dialogues, the selection of characters from Tagore's original piece of writing and eliminating the contradictory characters that opposes feminism, because he could not compromise with his protagonist's powerful message on womanhood has been studied and discussed in this paper. Hence, the purpose of the paper largely relies on the relevance and establishment of the female characters in its contemporary times, without compromising the feministic approach in his cinema.

1.5. Methodology

The topic of this paper belongs to the study area of: Visual narratives, Comparison of a Textual expression & Audio-visual expression, Film-studies, Film appreciation, Gender & Media, Gender and Literature, Comparison of Colonial & Post-Colonial portrayal of Women.

⁴ By Mulvey, L 1975, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'. pp.6-18

⁵ By Allen, R 2015, 'Closeted Desires and Open Secrets'. Pp. 162-165.

The methods used to undertake the study of this paper are an amalgamation of more than one method. It first involves case study of two actual literary text penned down by Rabindranath Tagore- *Chokher Bali* and *Noukadubi*. This is followed by case study of two films by Rituparno Ghosh- *Chokher Bali* and *Noukadubi*. Followed by this, the paper involved focus group discussion among the film enthusiasts and film-makers. Lastly, to bind the paper tightly, the study involved interview from the experts and faculties of the respective field.

The target group for carrying out the research includes: Journalism & Mass-communication students, film-studies & film Appreciation students, amateur film-makers, academicians of film-studies.

Selection of samples inherits both films as a text and as Visual narrative- *Chokher Bali* and *Noukadubi* I have particularly selected these two films to represent a contrasting portrayal of women character and what Ghosh tried to convey through feminism. *Chokher Bali*, inspired from Tagore's novel with the same name is actually a portrayal of two women character Binodini (played by Aishwarya Rai, then) a literate, English-educated independent widow and Ashalata (played by Raima Sen) an illiterate, conventional housewife of 1900s. Ghosh provided a soulful perspective in portraying the character of Binodini, that established how Ghosh tried to make justice with the character of Binodini, as far her self-esteem is concerned, thereby giving the film a powerful feministic angle.

In *Noukadubi*, it is the selection of characters that made Ghosh to establish a feministic angle to this film's storyline. The paper tries to identify how the character of Kamala and Hemnolini in the movie has come out of their limitations and lived life by taking decisions on their own terms.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Literature & Feminism

Rabindranath Tagore created many nuanced female characters which became symbols of Women emancipation that can be seen as a prototype figure in present century as well. The question is how these characters are relatable even now? Scholarly readings try to emphasize on those stories of Tagore that profess strong feminist values that also includes certain cinematic adaptations, representing the same. They try to bring out how Tagore's feminist beliefs and his treatment of feminine characters were not consistent throughout the course of his writing. Mondal (2015) writes that His perspective continuously dwindled between conservatism and radicalism, thus in some of his stories a marginalized or illiterate woman overcomes hurdles to raise her voice, while in others, she is compelled to conform to patriarchal boundaries. Mondal (2015) also discusses that the film adaptations inspired from Tagore's novels portrays the modern-day relevance of Tagore's expression in relation to a woman's societal position, often based on a biased gendered role and at the same time she embodies the ambivalent attitude to women that is evident in today's society. Speaking about literary feminism, Behtash & Sajjadi (2012) discusses about the politics of women's authorship and the representation of women's condition within literature. The canon tried to develop and uncover a female tradition of writing intending to interpret their writings in a way that it will not be lost or ignored by the male point of view. Above all, it will resist sexism in literature. Tracing feminism in literature of contemporary times, Mishra (2013) mentions about post-

colonial feminism with special reference to western feminism. Post – colonial feminism is a critique of the homogenizing tendencies of Western Feminism. Contrary to western feminism, Post-colonial Feminism as a new feather wishes to bring into light the typicality of problems of women of the third world nations (Mishra,2013). Mishra (2013) focuses that heterogeneity is the key theme of post-colonial feminism. Post-colonial feminine writers are not interested in dismantling family order, custom & tradition. The paper concludes that post-colonial feminists raise their voice for women emancipation that is subalternized by social, cultural or economic structures across the world.

2.2. Feminism & Indian Cinema

It is always a useful medium to see film as an archive to explore depictions of female subjectivity, because it is useful in searching the new ways of conceptualizing the everyday experience of women in the past. Sarkar (2012) in her paper analyses the women-centric films of Indian Cinema, where women have challenged the norms without regretting their decisions in the cinema. Along with this, it delved into the differences in the perspective of male and female directors, and how their gender affected the portrayal of women, who played the central characters in these films. Sircar (2015) argues that women's identity has now been begun to be carved out as singular individuals who do not need a man's name and identity to survive and sustain in society. This opening up of the Indian women, by deconstructing and reconstructing the images in the Indian visual narratives also implies the broadening of the minds of the Indian audience with time. The changing cinematic gender representations are highly symbolic because they ultimately reflect the actual Indian society. The basic point which was intended to be made was that, the representations of women on film in the contemporary times have essentially been centred on feminist lines; with the altering roles of women and their sexual orientations and desires being projected as explicit and natural, which was not a trend visible in earlier Indian cinema. However, Sil (2012) argues that the idea of women's position was subject to various interpretations of leading philosophers in western intellectual tradition. Sil (2012) takes into consideration the middle-class women, portrayed in Bengali cinema which reveals that it refrained from seriously engaging with the question of women's identity but tried to accommodate middle class women's desires and other aspirations within the space of family and familial relations. No doubt, the conforming attitude of media and film help to sustain the traditional male perception about women in society. Contrary to such considerations, Roy & Sengupta (2014) focuses on four of Aparna Sen's films: *36 Chowringhee Lane*, *Mr and Mrs Iyer*, *Paromitar Ekdin* and *15 Park Avenue*, which locates a gradual progression in the emergent agencies of the leading women characters in the context of feminist movements in India. Roy & Sengupta (2014) argued in the paper that Sen's polyvocal feminist lens includes the pluralistic identities of women in India including different affiliations of class, ethnicity, religion and educational background, which actually makes Sen a feminist film-maker whose inclusive perspective extends her regional identity. Quigley (2018) opines that film is a fruitful archive to imagine how women might have experienced and expressed their dissatisfaction with gender-normative roles within the patriarchal family setting. Quigley (2018) mentions that Satyajit Ray creates a dialogue between the competing discourses of the dominant representation of women in the colonial context, and an alternative discourse in silence. According to the researcher, Ray made a contemporary statement through his films (mainly in

Devi and *Charulata*) about the treatment and objectification of women as archetypes of femininity.

2.3. Feminism & Rituparno Ghosh

Ghosh's films made a mark in launching an acrid critique of hetero-patriarchy, often revealing the reality behind apparently happy marriages, romantic relationships and familial equations. He problematized notions of compulsory heterosexuality and monogamy. Macdonald (2009) focuses that Ghosh's representation of women lies in the fact that he does not deny modernity because his characters confront traditional values and struggle to negotiate the 'visibility' and 'invisibility' of their positions and roles in society that are only present precisely because a complex interaction exists between the values of tradition and modernity; the very interaction that many, albeit older Bollywood films tend to ignore. Ghosh's protagonists constantly re-interpret restrictive traditional ideologies and thus challenge the fact that traditional expectations made of women in modern society are unrealistic. Bakshi, Datta & Dasgupta (2015) discusses Rituparno Ghosh as an iconic feminist film-maker and queer-cultural figure. Bakshi, Datta & Dasgupta (2015) argued that Tagore's sensibility and philosophy was imbued all in his films and how he shocked his middle-class audience through his transgressive discourses.

3. Findings & Analysis

3.1. Adapting Periodical Literary works in Contemporary times: Understanding the characters and their social background

In the traditional Indian society, the idea of women is strictly connected to her duty and her devotion to the man. The idealised roles allowed to women are mainly two: wife and mother. This idealistic representation is connected with the concept of "honour" of the family that the women is supposed to preserve and to hand down. It is the devotion of the wife, that after a while as she becomes the mother, which guarantees the respectability of the family. This social and familiar role of the women has a strong religious connotation.

The dynamics between man and woman that we can observe in Indian movies are basically constructed in function of the male figure. The various roles that the actress interprets are always created around the needs and the point of view of the male. Both the holy wife and mistress are basically stereotyping to which sexuality is attributed from outside, from the man's look. The woman exists because the man exists, she acts to satisfy the man's needs and so she mostly becomes an icon with rigid and repetitive characteristics.⁶

This is where, Rituparno Ghosh has actually attempted to serve his audience what womanhood actually stands for through his number of films. Ghosh's films made a mark in launching an acrid critique of hetero-patriarchy, often revealing the reality behind apparently happy marriages, romantic relationships and familial equations. He problematized notions of compulsory heterosexuality and monogamy. His films time and again question a woman's lack of agency within the hetero-patriarchal family and the nation-state at large. His female protagonists struggle hard to throw off the mantle of patriarchal repression, often abandoning

⁶ By Martino Cipriani in 'Gender and sexuality in Indian films', page 3.

the seeming security of the home and romantic relationships⁷. Speaking about the two novels, which is the sample of my study it is to understand how Binodini and Ashalata from *Chokher Bali* and Hemnolini and Kamala from *Noukadubi* from the novel of Tagore has been brought into the celluloid establishing a different or maybe a more matured sketch of these female protagonists.

“Rituparno Ghosh negotiates gender identities and the way gender plays out in Bengali society and by extension in Indian society. Like any creative filmmaker he interprets characters from literature in a timeless fashion. In the sense that while he stays true to the period in which Tagore sets his stories, Ghosh presents them through a modern lens.”- Uma Vangal, Interview taken by the researcher dated 3rd May 2020.

Coming to the minute detailing of the cinema *Chokher Bali*, it is important to understand that how Ghosh has brought the characters to his audience within two to three hours from a novel of two-hundred pages. “*Chokher Bali*” deals with complicated relationships between four pivotal Characters of the novel- lustful relationship between Binodini, a young widow and Mahendra, a spoilt son of a zamindar family; a thorny relationship between two friend Binodini and Ashalata, Mahendra’s wife; and conflicting relationship between Binodini and Bihari, Mahendra’s best friend. The novel is a masterpiece in articulating human emotions, be it love, lust, pure affection, unquenched sexual desires and more. The two women characters are presented as foil to each other.

“The cinematic expressions in both the films have somehow enriched the novels of Tagore. One of the problems with Tagore’s writing is that he had always tried to write a novel in poetic manner instead of writing it as narrative or post-narrative. Also, for Tagore there was the problem of tense, as far as his novels were concerned. Thus, the characters’ “then” and “now” becomes problematic to understand. Ghosh has tried to portray it as first-person narrative end; Ghosh has assigned timeline to both the movies which will give the researcher a free-hand in doing character sketch of the characters from both the novel, which was somehow not possible if one takes reference from the novel”. -Anjanabha Roy, Panelist of Focus Group Discussion held on 18th April 2020.

Even though the social background has not been changed much by Ghosh while adapting from the novel, but the point is that he spoke more than the novel and this is possible because Ghosh tried matured the background such as he assigned the time and space to the storyline. *Chokher Bali* starts on the day of Swami Vivekananda’s Death, therefore the audience is able to understand the plot which is indispensably necessary for a periodic film, whereas in the novel Tagore does not mentions about the time and space, this gives his readers a trouble to understand with the tense of the novel and thereby it becomes tough to imagine that about which period, Tagore is actually speaking.

⁷ By Sangeeta Datta, Kaustav Bakshi & Rohit K Dasgupta in ‘THE WORLD OF RITUPARNO GHOSH: TEXTS, CONTEXTS AND TRANSGRESSIONS’, Page 5

“The crux of film adaptation is to understand that not everything is translatable from words to sights and sounds. So, what one should explore is what Ghosh framed and what is left un-framed. I think the visual aesthetics of both film adaptations is premised upon the classic melodramatic mode. The study of the mise-en scene especially the décor, lights, costumes and close-ups choreographed with dialogues will open the window onto the melodramatic world of the films.” - Dr. Rajdeep Roy, Interview taken by the researcher on 8th May 2020.

For *Noukadubi*, the movie was set in the 1920s the time period was different from the novel as Hemnolini admires the songs of Tagore & it refers to the Bhowal Sanyasi case which created a sensation in the 1920s.

And as far as the characterisation of each of the character is concerned, both Tagore and Ghosh have been confused with what they wanted to say, while Hemnolini from *Noukadubi* personifies a well-educated, well grown-up lady Kamala’s character has been portrayed in a doom light, almost illiterate, don’t know how to sit in a ‘Bhodro’ somaj (Goodmen’s Society), don’t take the name of her Husband and so on. The disbalance between the characters have landed the audience in utter confusion that in order to show-case urban-rural divide, why both of them have landed in disbalancing the characterisation of the female protagonists.

Meanwhile, Ramesh and Nalinaksha is not shown in the disbalanced light of rural-urban divide, neither Nalinaksha has been shown as ‘Probashi’ Bengali. Thus, even though Ghosh has not made any differences in the social background as such, but with the selection of characters, minutely detailing with them and most-importantly assigning the time and space, he added the essence to the novels.

Thus, it is an acceptable fact that when the literary works have been adapted to cinematic world, certain changes were made taking into account the visual aesthetics, sound, mise-en-scenes and many more. It is easier to state some facts about the characters with the help of the cinematic expressions, and it is there Ghosh has actually mastered the skill, matured the plot and taken the charge of the entire story-telling. His structuralist analysis of the novel and in the same-way portraying the cinema according to three-act structure (for *Noukadubi*) and four-act structure (for *Chokher Bali*) made the projection much better than what the novel projected.

Moreover, it is post-colonial narrative structure that has empowered Ghosh to speak freely even about a periodic film. On the other hand, Tagore’s circumstances belong to colonial period and therefore, he has his own restrictions. He belonged to Brahma samaj, and therefore he might have hesitated to write radically about the thinking of brahmins of the early 20th century.

“A reader is free to imagine while reading the novel, but while adapting into the cinema, the imagination becomes limited. According to the director, Badal Sarkar’s Ram Shyam Jadu (1961), an adaptation of Tom Dick Harry from European context to Bengal’s context brings a cultural distinct. Thus, ‘Contextualizing the storyline’ is very important as far as adaptation of periodic literary works to contemporary times is concerned.” – Ankan Roy, Panelist of Focus Group Discussion held on 18th April 2020.

3.2. Chokher Bali -The Wish of a Widow

Over the time, *Chokher Bali* has been interpreted from various angles, it has been analysed from a numerous perspective. *Chokher Bali* has been an amalgamation of various emotions from household friendship to extra-marital affair, but most importantly Tagore have portrayed a protesting character through Binodini, a well-educated Bengali Bhadrakol widow, brought up by with English education.

Tagore's Binodini had lost her enlightened father and was married off by her widowed mother to a household in the suburbs. Ashalata in the novel was an orphaned pile on to her affluent Uncle. Not much was told of their social background except their lack of an affluent father to lend the support that an early 20th century Bengali woman would need.

However, Ghosh implicitly focuses on Binodini's loss of social consequence in the dimmed-out room of her in law's place where her erstwhile teacher visits her. The elderly nun comments on her lack of jacket or any other form of underclothing and also how it is different from her father's house, prompting her to deftly cover herself with the edge of her saree. Moreover, Ghosh's early portrayal of Asha is as if meant to be in a stark contrast to Binodini's refinement. Asha is comfortable in her lack of the 'modern' refinement, is forever dubbed as the poor orphaned misfit to Mahendra's household. Ghosh has deliberately created a social schism (not only an intellectual one) between Binodini and Asha, which Tagore might not have intended.

In the beginning, it is seen that Binodini was rejected by both Mahendra and Behari and by turn of events, she starts living with Mahendra and Ashalata. As the women bond over time, Binodini comes across the marital bliss which Ashalata was enjoying, she could see her unquenched thirst being celebrated by Mahendra. Thus, she decides to indulge herself in the dangerous game of passion and adultery. Binodini being a widow decides to live her life on her own terms. She has no true love for Mahendra, but still becomes the other woman in a peaceful household. This action can be due to two motives, firstly, she was taking revenge on Mahendra for rejecting her and secondly, becoming a widow at a tender age. Binodini couldn't enjoy the marital bliss and affections of her Husband.

The minute she realises the attraction her body, sexuality and sensuousness have for the men, Binodini proceeds to revel in that. She moves from Mahendra to Bihari, she already exercises the choice to find happiness and wealth. When she leverages that to get to marry her, she moves into the role of a greedy vengeful woman who does not want to settle for the role of the secret lover/mistress. The storyline does not necessarily see her so much as seeking revenge than asserting her individuality and identity as her choice. – Dr. Uma Vangal, Interview taken by the researcher on 3rd May 2020.

Binodini was intelligent enough to know that she alone cannot stand against the society, as her final action proves. Revenge might not be her central concern then, survival probably is. Binodini's psychological turmoil are unresolved and we can only wonder at that.

“Opportunism, bitterness, female agency, patriarchal social structure, social discrimination and oppression, sexual frustration is much ahead of revenge as a thematic concern. In fact, revenge is never put in as the central preoccupation with Binodini. And even if we consider it as one, who is she taking the revenge from? The society? Mahendra? Behari? Rajlakshmi? Certainly not Asha, because she is more of a tool and an object of jealousy than an object of revenge. They are eyesores to each other. And Binodini, as a young needy widow, is an eyesore to the society.” – Dr. Debastuti Dasgupta, interview taken by the researcher on 25th April 2020.

Binodini's character is lonely and puzzled by the rules of the society and inner turmoil of her desires. She was in search of her own identity, the identity that described her sexuality. Ghosh brought out this turmoil on-screen successfully. His story-telling made his audience realise that Binodini deserved much better than what she was given by the society. The cinema also successfully carved out the turmoil Rituparno Ghosh was going through in himself, as he could not compromise with the fact that an upright and independent woman like Binodini will have to compromise with the conservative norms of society. The continuous reference in the cinema towards the widow remarriage act by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, actually personify the protests against those norms and asks to rethink about the unquenched thirsts of a young widow. Ghosh continuously tried to bring out the point that Binodini being a woman of depth and knowledge, she wanted more from life.

“The paramount expression of Chokher Bali according to me is the blurring of the sexual identity, i.e., when a woman expresses her sexual desire outside her marriage, it is often portrayed as filthy, but Chokher Bali marks a departure from that vulgar expression.” – Sanchari Ganguly, Panelist of the Focus Group Discussion held on 18th April 2020.

However, as a whole I could not agree with the total character sketch of Binodini, painted by Ghosh. He was so much conscious with each detailing of Binodini, then towards the end when Binodini asked Behari to marry her, or keep her as a domestic maid brought the inner-confusion of Ghosh under the spotlight.

Sitting in 2003, from a 21st century perspective, Ghosh's Binodini who was much ahead of her time, such compromise with the social status is beyond explanation. However, in the end when She abandons Behari after his marriage proposal, is something to praise Ghosh's imagination and adaptation from the novel. This abandonment again personifies the protesting character of Binodini, that Ghosh has imagined about.

Thus, it can be concluded that Ghosh's *Chokher Bali* is different from what Tagore painted in his *Chokher Bali* novel. For Ghosh, Binodini was much more than just an eyesore. He re-imagined the character, and made his audience re-think the character sketch of Binodini, though with utter confusion he tried to bring the undertone of protest through the character of Binodini. Ghosh chose to portray Binodini as an eyesore to Ashalata as well as to the society, but by living the life in her own terms, alike the other widows of that time who remained eyesore to the society and waited till their last breath for the so-called salvation. Ghosh chose to make Binodini a lady who shall protest towards the meaningless societal norms such as prohibition of drinking tea by the Bengali widows etc and bring a new ray of expression among the widows. Lastly, when Binodini writes to Asha about the partition of Bengal and mentions about the 'Desh' (literally meaning Nation), she actually stated the world of widows and married, the world of love and lust, the world of eye-soothers and eye-sores.

“Women like Binodini may not have happy ending but they teach us a very important lesson that we shouldn't let other decide our destiny. It is important that we choose our own path, our own life”- Monideepa Mitra, (Panelist of Focus Group Discussion held on 23rd April, 2020.

3.3. Noukadubi - The Expressions of Separation

The film ‘*Noukadubi*’ starts with the Rabindra-Sangit ‘*Khelaghor bandhte esechi*’ which sets the very essence of the cinema and brings the cinema into an identifiable period of time, around 1920s. *Noukadubi*, when wrote by Tagore did not specifically talks about any feministic approach as such. The novel is more about the tragedy and finding of settlement by Ramesh and Kamala. However, when we see the cinema *Noukadubi*, it is completely different, probably that is why Ghosh has mentioned it as ‘Inspired by Rabindranath Tagore’ rather than mentioning his name as the writer. Ghosh has exercised a free-hand in taking out cinematic liberty as far as the characterisation and contextualisation of the characters ‘Hemnolini’ and ‘Kamala’ are concerned.

“Kamala’s character who is pretty much silent in the whole film is a representative of the rural construct, where a woman is dependent on her family and have to be married off in order to have a secure future. A marriage which is supposed to be based on love & mutual understanding is based on social dilemma.” – Suruchi Das, Panelist of the Focus Group Discussion held on 23rd April 2020.

However, Ghosh disappointed as far as the characterisation of Kamala is concerned. Walking on the footsteps of Tagore, he visualised Kamala and did not even attempted to bring a change in characterisation of Kamala. Kamala, somewhat like Asha from *Chokher Bali* is naïve, innocent and inexperienced, but aspires to be an experienced and established in household chores. In order to completely paint a village inexperienced newly-married girl, Ghosh failed to contextualise her. Hemnolini, on the other hand has been carrier of the feminine outlook in the cinema, from the very beginning as she knows how to drape a saree in Modern style, speaks English, and speaks freely about her dreams, passion and her admiration towards Tagore. Hemnolini’s character is good natured, well-educated, poised and calm. Her love for Ramesh is pure and probably borne out of similar taste.

Further, when we speak about the movie *Noukadubi*’s theme and expression of different relations, it can be seen that Ghosh has tried to mature the characters of the novel, but at the same time ruthlessly failed in doing so. In order to show the helplessness of Kamala, he has continuously disbalanced the character sketch of Kamala, even though he makes Kamala learn new things and shows her eagerness to study Shakuntala, also her weirdness whenever Ramesh corrected her spelling mistakes everything was a constant effort to improve the character of Kamala but all proved to be futile.

“Rituparno Ghosh while assigning the character of Kamala, has taken the period into consideration, while assigning the character of Hemnolini, has not given preference to the period, leading to a sheer disbalance among the feminine outlook of the film.” – Anjanabha Roy, Panelist of the Focus Group Discussion held on 18th April 2020.

Both the women characters are subdued of their destinies and an imposed social hurdle. In the film, Hemnolini’s character has refinement, education but still somehow devoid of what she really wants. On the other hand, Kamala’s character which is well subdued although, men in the film are not dominating and believe in liberty. Ghosh have used destiny as a separate character in the movie that drives the narrative from the beginning to the end. The complexity of romantic relationships come alive onscreen. For example, the way Hemnolini refers to the

conversations between her father and her dead mother's portrait. The references point to an undying love that exists even after many years of her mother's passing.

“Hemnolini has been brought up by a progressive father who made no differentiation between his son and her. Also, he asks her if she has someone in mind as a life partner. Similarly, Kamala while revelling in the freedom she has while living with Ramesh is introspecting on what is truly a family and will I suspect not settle for any false notes in her married life. Even if she does her duty unfailingly, she also knows that she can demand an equal investment from her partner.”- Dr. Uma Vangal, Interview taken by Researcher on 3rd May 2020.

Richard Allen⁸ once mentioned in his article that Rituparno Ghosh invited us to think that in the novel, *Noukadubi*, Tagore imagined a scenario where his marriage, the marriage between the learned older man and the naive semi-educated child, turned out to be a fiction, and where Kadambari (Rabindranath Tagore's real-life Sister-in-law) was available for him to marry and realise his true desire. At the same time, he also imagines the arranged marriage being happily consummated with the right man, Nalinaksha. Actually, it seems, Tagore remained in a state of emotional isolation throughout his life that he wrote about poignantly. According to his biographers, Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson, his relationship to his wife was distant. He did not remarry after her death, nor, it seems, did he enter into any other intimate relationships during the course of his long life. In remaking *Noukadubi* as a work that is about Rabindranath and the love of Rabindranath, it is as if Rituparno, the auteur, declares his own emotional and spiritual connection to the author, at once identifying with him in his isolation, but also affirming his allegiance to the power of art itself to transcend that isolation.

Thus, it can be concluded that *Noukadubi* holds within the twin narrative of the experience of pain and separation for the two women. They forgive the men they love and fall into a supposedly comfortable role that society dictates. But since their knowledge that this love and 'duty' is so fragile that they will have more expectations of the men in their life.

While they realise ideal femininity, they also then realise that the ideal man too exists. The sari for them too takes on a metaphoric role as the embodiment of boundaries imposed by society to stifle the woman within its folds, as opposed to the individual woman who negotiates her space.

3.4. Mapping the importance of dialogues

Dialogues are the direct communication, that the film-maker choose when he tries to make a statement through his film. It is unlike the mise-en-scene of a film, which is encrypted by the film-maker and often decrypted by the film critics and film-observants. However, it is often understood that when film-makers fail to portray through cinematic language, they take the help of dialogues and hence one who applies the trick to convey through cinematic language, has mastered the art of film-making. But sometimes, it is important to take the help

⁸ By Allen, R 2015, 'Closeted Desires and Open Secrets'. Pp. 162-165.

of the dialogues so that the film-makers could take a stand about what they tried to convey, in case the audience goes off-track.

Therefore, even after attempting to speak through cinematic language, Ghosh has taken the help of dialogues to inform his audience and made a statement through his films. However, one must understand that the dialogues which Ghosh have used may seem to be of simple weightage if we understand it from today's perspective. Thus, in order to understand the depth of the dialogues, one always must take the period into consideration. In the film *Chokher Bali*, Ghosh tried to exhibit the sense of feminism through a number of dialogues, one of them is when Binodini asks Mahendra "If I refuse to compromise or allow you to cross the boundaries dictated by society, what will you and he says the reason I come to you is because with you there are no boundaries a supposed to my wife. She challenges him to hold her hand and take her out on the street, she calls him out for his double standards."

Also, at the end with Behari, when she says "how can you who do not understand the agony suffered by a young widow, how can you be a human being". Thus, using the medium of dialogues, Ghosh creates the character of Binodini, a remarkable character in many senses- she is a widow who is fully aware of her insatiate sexual desires and also of her intellect and wisdom of worldly affairs. She yearns for love and longingness from the two men and is envious of Mahendra's happy conjugal relationship with his wife Asha.

Chokher Bali is about a rage of a young widow, who finds ruthless rituals and societal norms have taken away every bliss from her life, and left her rest of the life only for mourning. Once in the film, when she was cutting the veggies in the kitchen, she hears about Behari's marriage and accidentally cuts her finger, Annapurna says "Will you be able to change your fate by cutting down the finger?" the dialogue was so metaphorically hard-hitting that to answer, Binodini was left speechless mourning about her destiny. This constant struggle with her inner self, her desires and her unquenched marital bliss has been beautifully portrayed here.

Ashalata when starts living in Kashi, away from her Husband Mahendra, along with her maternal aunt Annapurna, once she says in the ashrama, "the life of a widow is much better than a married girl whose husband has an extra-marital affair. It is a life of embarrassment & insult for the girl for her entire life". This shows a departure from Tagore's Ashalata, who remains naïve and immature throughout the novel, but Ghosh has nurtured the character with dialogues and expression in order to make the character of Ashalata, a matured one.

Noukadubi, as written by Ghosh has been enlightened with a feminine outlook, apart from the boat-wreck which actually sets in a chain of events. On one hand as it speaks about the unforgiving nature of the historical time period, when one was not even able to see their probable bride's or groom's faces prior to marriage it also speaks that how ruthless it is to understand women as a weaker one when it comes to deciding her life partner.

In one of the sequences, Ghosh taking reference from Rabindra Dance-drama Shanpochan mentions through the character of Hemnolini to Ramesh in a letter, "I shall send my Veena for the marriage like the kings and heroes of earlier period, so that you can marry them first, accept them and then me." Statements like this made by Ghosh has set the mood of the entire cinema that it is not only going to be a tragic story of a boat-wreck aftermath, but much ahead of one's imagination.

Secondly, it is the dialogue by Kamala when she talks to Ramesh. "Which family is the true one? The lie that we lived? Or the true one?" For it was the *khelaghor*'.

This questioning by Kamala marks the departure from Tagore's imagined Kamala and personifies Ghosh's Imagined Kamala, who was self-sufficient enough to find her own husband, who was lost in the boat-wreck tragedy. Thus, with the help of dialogues Ghosh added depth to his cinematic language. He empowered his mise-en-scene and shaped the structure of the cinema to bring out the best projection possible out of it.

"The make-believe home that Kamala shared with Ramesh that had been so true for her. It offered her space for the first time to express herself and her love for Ramesh. And when she says is this not my life now when it comes to the question of serving and servitude as the wife's duty." - Dr. Uma Vangal, Interview taken by the Researcher on 3rd May 2020.

3.5. Interpreting Rabindranath Tagore's Women from Rituparno Ghosh's angle of Womanhood

Binodini is a metaphor for awakening of repressed sexuality of women in traditional Indian society. Located as a character breaking out of the "antahpur" in a way, she embodies emancipation and the product of the struggle between Hindu orthodoxy and British Liberalism. She is the 'western' educated, who challenges the milieu in which she resides.

"Though Tagore had a lot of empathy for widows and this novel was written almost half a century after the passing of the Widow Remarriage Act of 1957 there were not much sympathy towards widows and though Binodini had been portrayed to be caring she also had a dark side to her character." - Prof. Srijita Chakravarti, Interview taken by the researcher on 3rd May 2020.

I think the power or strength, which are strangely very patriarchal expressions, or in other words, the depth, the complexity, the humanity a character like Binodini embodies, is not depended on what she did or did not with the male characters, Tagore realised the injustice in the sense that by making her renounce the world of sensuous physicality he disempowers her. Her embracing a life of a sanyasini, she gives in to the pressures of a patriarchal expectation of women who are submissive and accept their lot as prescribed by men. It is not her triumphs in the power structure, but the acknowledgement and gallant acceptance not in the sense of submission but in terms of consciousness of her vulnerabilities and insecurities, her human condition, which requires incredible 'strength' only a woman like Binodini can muster, this is what Ghosh felt for Binodini and therefore expressed the same through the character of Binodini.

"I think Ghosh's focus was more on framing the entire narrative from Binodini's perspective, as opposed to Tagore, who uses a humanistic approach. That makes it crucial to her realisation that she can break the chains of not just patriarchy or feudalism but also her own mind and restrictive choices between two men who love her for her body and her elusive status as a widow" - Dr. Uma Vangal, Interview taken by the Researcher on 3rd May 2020.

Binodini could not stand with the fact that both men cared for Asha and she was devoid of all attention. She is one of the few female characters in Bengali literature who did not fear to get embraced even if society supported suppressing of sexual urges of widows. She is the 'emergent' woman who has a mind and a heart of her own. Breaking the shackles of

widowhood, and expressing her desires she pursues and is pursued by two men. Ghosh believed that both Tagore and He possessed a womanhood in them, and when both of them work on same plane, the conflict is unavoidable. And that's what happened in *Chokher Bali*. Ghosh designed the character of Binodini in such a way that she shall get the freedom of not being judged by the society and therefore, she will not have to beg before Ashalata. However, this exposure has led to injustice of *Chokher Bali* as a novel.

Chokher Bali is a much more matured attempt of Rituparno Ghosh, but it cannot be categorized as a justification the novel. He had given so much importance to freedom, independence and expression of Binodini, that he could easily name the cinema as 'Binodini' rather than giving the title of 'Chokher Bali.' - Atmadeep Bhattacharya, Panelist of Focus Group Discussion held on 18th April 2020.

Ashalata is again another example of disbalanced portrayal of Ghosh. The attempt he took to establish a character like Binodini, even half of its attempt is not evident for Ashalata. Her innocence, her inexperience, her calmness and most importantly her friendly nature towards Bali, her appeal of understanding a widow's pain when she quarrelled with Behari and Mahendra for taunting Binodini wearing the jewellery makes her an amalgamation of what society wants as – 'house-wife' (not a home-maker).

Rajlakshmi personifies the real Bengali Bhadrakal widow of that period, who is not happy with her daughter-in-law, always frustrated with household chores, gets angry with each small quarrel in the household. Ghosh personifies Rajlakshmi as the widows, who hold incredible power and agency in Bengali households. And they feature recurrently as crucial characters in Bengali literature. The type or stereotype of the widow as manipulative—is juxtaposed with caring, religious goddesses in the Bengali male fantasies. However, the idea of 'widow' is premised upon the absence or lack of the 'male' represented through husband, property, love etc. however, using the tea-drinking sequence Ghosh has conveyed an important message, and that is how desperately these women (widows of that period) have tried to come out of the shackles of meaningless societal norms, only imposed mercilessly for the widows only. On the other hand, when Asha comes to know about the illegit relation between Binodini and Mahendra, the caring nature of Rajlakshmi was a portrayal of a womanhood, motherhood much ahead of the widowhood, under which she was burdened with.

Tagore has female characters with minds of their own, recognises that women have desires and needs and expectations of a relationship and the men in their lives is already way ahead of the times. When Tagore penned down this Novel, it was the turn of the century, when social reform is slowly beginning to happen in India through the activism of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and many more, and the freedom movement, the Feudal families still held on to the traditional values and beliefs regarding gender roles in society. Thus, shadows of such circumstances are unavoidable in the writings of Tagore at that time.

Kamala is a rustic, literate yet not enlightened, the quintessential domestic wife of a regular Bengali household while Hemnolini is Tagore's version of an enlightened early 20th century Bengali gentle maiden. She is cultured, refined, sheltered and innocent, though not uninformed.

"The Sati woman metaphor here was the ideal but not realistic in the time of the novel." - Dr. Debastuti Dasgupta, Interview taken by the Researcher on 25th April 2020

Hemoloni's ultimate acceptance of Ramesh's actions and choosing their union is an implicit acceptance of how the society wishes her to act. Kamala in her horror of finding that she has been cohabiting with somebody other than her husband, and her determined effort to find and submit to her husband, is not unlike the mythological heroines' tribulations to honour the traditional sanctity of marital ties. Though Kamala's intense shame in finding out the reality of her boat-wreck is concurrent to the ideas of the time, yet her deliberate escape from the house instead of asking for help and seeking her own way to her husband, is ahead of its time.

3.6. Rituparno Ghosh's attempt in establishing Relevant female characters for Contemporary Times

The ending of Rituparno Ghosh's *Chokher Bali* is quite significant and relevant to contemporary society, at least what he was trying to convey. Ghosh's ending of *Chokher Bali* was intriguing. The nightmarish moment of the dead widow cremating and the crazed pregnant young widow abandoned in the Ghats of Varanasi, creates a mood of time, which Binodini, with all her defiance to the time and the injustice that her society has meted out to her, cannot deny. Bihari, with all his good will could not have blotted out the centuries of social conditioning which regulates Binodini's life choices. She ultimately chooses her nurture rather than her natural primal urge to better her life and seek permanence. Binodini in the film recognized the ephemerality of moment's desire and chose to step away, an act more transcendental though not dissimilar to what Tagore's Binodini did in returning to her in laws. Though not conforming to societal norms, Binodini is never shown as a radical feminist. Her feminism is conceived and presented as the slowly emerging awareness that women are flawed but embrace their imperfections and desires in a self-conscious manner.

"Ghosh, in not creating a wholly incongruous and anachronistic (though not illegal, as Widow Remarriage Act was already in place) union between Bihari and Binodini, is deferring to Tagore, who probably questioned the Act itself as one which needs social sanction as well as awareness of how just the existence of a law will not eradicate eons of social conditioning". - Dr. Debastuti Dasgupta, Interview taken by the Researcher on 25th April 2020.

"In a world where men were calling the shots and deciding when and how the women may engage in relationships, express their desires and exist as merely vessels to satisfy the male ego, Binodini holds her own and negotiates her desires and life choices on her own terms." - Purbita Bhattacharjee, Panelist of Focus Group Discussion held on 23rd April 2020.

In contemporary society, a woman's choice and her ability to shape her own destiny is paramount. In that sense, Ghosh's *Chokher Bali* is progressive and allows the woman choice. In every film of his, Ghosh explores female identity, sexuality and search for individual space and her need to negotiate the world around her on her own terms. They find ways to materialise the range of feminist thinking within the restrictive world they live in, or the situations they find themselves in, by refusing to quietly accept their fate and question the constraints imposed on them and finding their peace with a fierceness unlike women who submit themselves to rules and societal expectations.

The deviation is of course that she simply disappears in the film. In a way this is far more empowering for Binodini. Her discovery of her own sexuality and sensuous hold over the men in her life seems like she holds some agency. But she is in a way again trapped in the world of two men who are trapped in their own illusion of owning the forbidden fruit. She is in away expected to fit in with their boundaries and the society's in many ways. Her only escape was to renounce her own sexuality and self-esteem." - Dr. Uma Vangal, Interview taken by Researcher on 3rd May 2020.

In *Chokher Bali* and *Noukadubi*, Rituparno Ghosh once again draws a connecting thread with his other women characters. If we try to draw parallels between the various characters created by Ghosh, we find that every character of him has a pain & grievances, especially his female characters. And therefore, all his characters are somehow protesting by nature. Some protests violently & radically, while some does it silently. They are somehow the sketches of Rituparno's ownself to teach the society a lesson. Be it Binodini from *Chokher Bali* or Hemnolini from *Noukadubi* or his other works, Ghosh attempted in creating aesthetically beautiful characters to narrate a satire to the society, to show the mirror.

“Binodini is more conflicted, less secured and much less sheltered than Hemnalini. They have different social backgrounds and different concerns regarding life. However, I found certain similarity with the conflicts of the character of Radhika in Shab Charitra Kalpanik and Srimati and Deepti's lives in Abohoman. While Radhika, within the securities of her privileges, questions the vagaries of her poet husband has certain similarities with Hemnalini, the tussle between the cultured Deepti and the opportunist yet gifted Srimati for Aniket's love has certain parallels with the Chokher Bali duo.” – Dr. Debastuti Dasgupta, Interview taken by the Researcher on 25th April 2020.

Ghosh's 'Rabindrik' or Tagorean sensibility was something he continuously experimented with his protagonists, especially the one who is inexperienced and incompetent as per the standards of the society. For characterisation of both Ashalata and Kamala he followed the footprints of Tagore and disheartened his audience with utter disbalance in portraying the character. As Tagore believed that these two characters are immature and underestimated in every household decision when taken, Ghosh did the exactly same, probably he was confused and as every human psychology has an inclination towards a particular character, Ghosh was confused with their contextualisation of character, thereby he was not inclined towards Asha's and Kamala's character sketch.

“Both Ashalata and Kamala get inducted in their marital homes and accept things there, but not without voicing their opinions quietly before that. Kaberi in Dosar might be distantly comparable who was often threatened with divorce but ultimately is overpowered by the wife in her & cannot resist fulfilling her duties towards her husband at the time of crisis.”- Dr. Debastuti Dasgupta, interview Taken by the Researcher on 25th April,2020.

Homogenous in Tagore's work, the women/Female bodies indulge in the mundane acts of domesticity – they sew, they sing, they read, they watch life pass by. Even the acts of dressing, the keys at the end of the saree to signify a female matriarch, the sindoor to signify a married woman, the white of the widows etc are recurring visual motifs and the tedium of expectations on their shoulders. Ghosh repurposes these very acts to show us their interior minds that are perhaps questioning and thinking and as they discover their own self/identity. The jewels and rich sarees then begin to take on significance as symbols of redemption, escape and rebellion. The sari the turns into a pushing against the invisible bonds and ties that hold women down.

Ashalata and Kamala have certain similarities. They are less refined, more domesticated, yet both have degrees of moral steeliness about the sanctity of marriage and making silent demands for that.

But it would be sheer injustice if I do not mention about his attempts. He gave a slice of liberty to both these character towards the ending of the cinema, whereby Asha leaves her in-laws' house and Kamala leaves Ramesh's house by taking decisions of their own, without

informing Mahendra and Ramesh respectively. Thus, it can be mentioned that both Ashalata as well as Kamala were painted by Ghosh in such a colour that both of them knew the possibilities of other ways of family life.

4. Conclusion

As the study aimed to address the portrayal of women by Rituparno Ghosh, defying the actual storyline of Tagore's novel, the conclusion landed with the help of the case study of the two films mainly, *Chokher Bali* and *Noukadubi*, Focus Group Discussion with the movie-enthusiasts and students of Mass communication & Journalism and finally interview with the Professors of Film-studies, Women-studies and researchers from the field of film studies.

The study has aimed to map the feminine construct of Rituparno Ghosh in his films, with special reference to the novels of Tagore, in which he experimented with the periodical feminine construct, expressed different facets of womanhood and most importantly touched the sensitive chords of social aspects that have been a burden to women since time immemorial.

He probably brought every women character of Tagore from both the novel, in front of a question, i.e., how far women have progressed in the society and what is their outlook towards the society. Keeping this question in mind he has continuously attempted to carve out his women characters, who are often multi-layered, but protesting (like Rabindranath Tagore's creation), but a more matured one than what Tagore left behind in his creation. Tagore's creation was taken into next level, nurtured them with expressions and dialogues and tested them from the socio-cultural angle of the contemporary times. What is beautiful about these portrayals is, it is introspective by nature. Taking the reference from the chapter 6.4, it can be mentioned that the character of Ashalata from the movie *Chokher Bali*, who has been initially shown as a young, naïve, incompetent newly married woman has been so matured by the end of the movie, that she claims that it is embarrassment and insult for her marriage that her husband has been involved in an extra-marital relationship. Also, the way Binodini has been portrayed in the film *Binodini* is completely different from what Tagore have assigned to Binodini. Ghosh narrated the cinema in such a way that as if he was telling a story from Binodini's perspective, a perspective that has developed from a life of a widow who chose to deny the society-imposed rituals and norms upon her, created her own terms of leading the life and most importantly who challenged and defied everything for the sake of self-esteem and self-importance. However, at times the undertone of Rituparno Ghosh's own confusion came into being which has been clearly evident in the cinema also. Even if Binodini has been portrayed as a woman ahead of her time, but at the time when she left Mahendra's house and asked for a shelter from Behari, she was even ready to serve him as a maid, this remained unclear and confusing as far as the character sketch of Binodini is concerned. She has continuously carried the undertone of protest within herself but her this act confuses the audience as far as the portrayal of her character Binodini is concerned.

The common link between *Chokher Bali* and *Noukadubi*, keeping in mind the feminine construct of Ghosh is that he had created characters who have silently without a single weapon have denied to bury down their esteem and walked in the path of protest for the sake of their self-esteem.

Noukadubi is a story that has a lot more to tell than Boat-wreck and the tragedy revolving around it. It is a story of two young women who are trying to search for their better-

halves but struggled to give importance their opinions, their self-esteem and their expressions of love. The pain of separation in the eyes of both Hemnolini and Kamala has been beautifully portrayed every time they have spoken about their love interest in the film, yet they have not compromised with the self-esteem. While Hemnolini portrayed the independence of an educated, literate, from well-to-do family but struggled for the love and union of her soulmate Ramesh irrespective of continuous pressure from her brother and his friend (as mentioned in the novel), Ghosh eliminated those nuances of the character to establish the powerful feminine construct of Hemnolini. On the other hand, Kamala has been portrayed by Ghosh absolutely different from what Tagore has assigned to Kamala in his novel. Ghosh made her self-reliant and the moment she came to know the truth about her marriage, she went beside the banks of river Ganges, to which she was earlier afraid, and thereby Ghosh matures the character of Kamala. Even though she is almost uneducated but not illiterate, her eagerness to study Shakuntala and other literary works in the cinema Noukadubi has helped to draw conclusion about the deviation Rituparno Ghosh has marked from the original storyline of Rabindranath Tagore.

Thus, in conclusion it can be mentioned that Rituparno Ghosh have attempted to establish meaningful feminine construct that shall have relevance to contemporary times, taking references from the periodic cinema so that he could provide an all-totally different mapping of progression of feministic approach, keeping in mind the post-colonial western approach of feminism, that has been trending all over the world. His attempt was more inclusive in nature, more mature character sketch than the novel and a striking deviation from Tagore's novel to establish a strong feminine appeal to his audience.

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