

## FEMINISM IN PERSPECTIVE OF SATYAJIT RAY'S MOVIE

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**Abstract:** Ray's depiction of women and women centric issues makes for an interesting study. Ray was one of the few filmmakers who made an effort to break stereotypes about women in their films besides raising issues affecting them in modern times. The sensitivity with which Satyajit Ray dealt with women characters in his films was exemplary. Thus, by studying in detail, various aspects of women's portrayal in Ray's films, an understanding can be developed about issues affecting women. The findings will also help in showing a path to filmmakers of today about giving women an equal status in films. Since Ray's movies address feminism, one of the most important social issues which afflict Indian society, it deserves a microscopic introspection to systematically analyze the content of his movies. Ray made his major contributions in exposing Bengali cinema globally, not only as an entertainment platform but also equally as an effective medium to address social and cultural issues including feminism which have contemporary significance. The objectives of this study are to: 1. Examine how Ray's portrayal of women is different from mainstream cinema. 2. Find out what socio-cultural factors influence the manner in which Indian women are projected in Ray's films. 3. Analyze the struggle for social liberation of women as portrayed in Ray's films. The research will help in adding new insights and knowledge to the feminist studies. It would also be beneficial for the women right activists in India and other countries. It will add new vistas to the field of knowledge and would lay the foundation for further research.

**Keywords:** Film And Society, Bengali Society, Bengali Women, Bengali Film, Satyajit Ray's Cinema, Women In Film

**Introduction:** In the nineteenth century new waking of India made new energy among the Indian women and accordingly another social renewal occurred between them. In spite of the fact that *this* renewal was attempted in the initial segment of the nineteenth century however the genuine time of women upliftment was begun from the second 50% of that century. Long standing superstitious women felt that their fate was to acknowledge these conditions with no challenge. Being enclosed with the pervasive superstitious conditions they neglected to tear the-then frameworks albeit a few men were instructed in the initial segment of the nineteenth century. In the initial segment of the nineteenth century with the foundation of Indian society the „Debi“ recorded by Satyajit Ray uncovered the-then pitiable states of women in the general public. Through this „Debi“ film Satyajit Ray needed to passionately strike against religious excitement and superstition when the Western training framework illuminated India then Satyajit attempted to uncover the superstitious men. A change occurred in the second 50% of nineteenth century with respect to the states of women for the reason of spreading instruction among the women through training women class felt the essence of opportunity. They set up emphatically their positions in the families. As of now it was seen that the women attempted to build up their social presence breaking as far as possible. Satyajit Ray attempted to highlight the changing conditions through his „Charulata“ film. Actually „Charu“ of „Charulata“ film was a proficient lady of the second 50% of the nineteenth century. She learnt

how to give significance in their own rights and pride and she had the ability to level with the characteristics of Bhupati or Amal. About the movies of Satyajit Ray film faultfinder Shyam Dua composed that, "Satyajit had depicted Indian women in the milieu of delicate time and space in his movies".

**Feminism and Satyajit Ray:** Satyajit Ray (1921 – 1992), one of the greatest Indian film-makers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had successfully employed the tool of film as a convenient medium to highlight the social and cultural issues in society especially in the Indian context. Ray made his major contributions in exposing Bengali cinema globally, not only as an entertainment platform but also equally as an effective medium to address social and cultural issues including feminism which have contemporary significance. Ray directed 36 films, including feature films, documentaries and shorts. He was a man of multiple talents and made his mark as a fiction writer, publisher, illustrator, calligrapher, music composer, graphic designer and film critic. Ray's films cover an unusually wide range of mood, milieu, period, and genre, with comedies, tragedies, romances, musicals, and detective stories dealing with all classes of Bengali society, from the mid-19th to the late 20th century. Unlike others, his films mainly dealt with the thought and emotions, rather than action and plot. (Paganopoulos, 2013). Ray received many awards at international film festivals and several Indian National Film Awards and an honorary Academy Award at the 64th Academy Awards in 1992. Ray was awarded India's highest award in cinema, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in

1984 and India's highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna in 1992. (Ray, 2013). In the early phase of Indian cinema, women were represented as absolutely "pure" wives through the epical characters or sometimes they were visualized as ideal girlfriends, self-sacrificing mothers, sisters and daughters or they were immoral prostitutes, cabaret dancers, and strippers. "In their traditional exhibitionist role, women were simultaneously looked at and displayed with their appearance, coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they could be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness." (Braudy and Cohen, 2004). But in the mid of 1930's when Indian films were influenced by the Hollywood film patterns, then the word "new women" had been introduced in Indian cinematic context. In the British colonial era, the term "new Woman" referred to modernized women of mixed Indian and Western parentage. In post-colonial period basically in the beginning of 1950's Indian film makers like Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, MrinalSen, Mehmood, Nimai Ghosh, Tapan Sinha etc, redefined and recognized women as 'I am a woman, therefore strong, therefore invincible.' Women were recognized as the part of contemporary socio-economic and political struggles and represented as wives, sisters, lovers, daughters but they justified their identities and existences on screen. Although women characters in Ritwik Ghatak's films were vacillated to find the way out from the subjugations and socio-economic oppression of patriarchal society, Satyajit Ray's women characters were more vocal to express their feelings and anguish against the patriarchal subjugations. Here the women characters were divided in three categories. Firstly in the films like 'Aparajito' (1956), 'Paroshpathar' (1957), 'Jalsaghar' (1958), 'Jana-Aranya' (1975) women characters were represented as differing hostage or visualized from different tinge. Secondly in the films like 'Tinkonya' (1961), 'Devi' (1962), 'Kanchanjangha' (1962), 'Mahanagar' (1963), 'Charulata' (1964), etc there women characters were contemplate to story lines. Finally in the films like 'PatherPanchali' (1955), 'Mahanagar' (1963), 'Simabaddha' (1971), 'Jana Arnya' (1975), etc, women characters were very much spontaneous to resist and overcame the post-colonial socio-economic and political oppressions. In the film 'Devi', the character Dayanayee raised her voice against vested tendencies of patriarchal oppression, where patriarchy forcefully imposed the glory of goddesses on women to recount the gradual crumbling of women in fallacy (Halder 2004). In the films like 'Kanchanjangha' (1962), 'Charulata' (1964), 'Ghare-Baire' (1984) the commotion of relationships between men and women in aristocrat families were highlighted. There women characters elevated their amassed anguish against patriarchal oppression,

dominancy and ignorance, for re-conquering their self-identity, self-respect and empowerment in Bengali upper-class society. Satyajit Ray expressed his admiration for women in our country. He articulated that "What I admire in women are grace, sophistications and intelligence. I hope that I always felt that women are weaker than man only in relation to their physical strength, but they are inferior neither in intellect, nor in mental stamina. And they have hard core of sincerity in them, even when they have been educated into the ways of this wicked world and corrupted which men must lack (Robinson, 2004). Since Ray's movies address feminism, one of the most important social issues which afflict Indian society, it deserves a microscopic introspection to systematically analyze the content of his movies. Some of Ray's excellent films which acclaimed prestigious global and national awards were based on the writings by Rabindranath Tagore who immensely influenced him.

**Feminism movement in India:** Women's rights movements are primarily concerned with making the political, social, and economic status of women equal to that of men and with establishing legislative safeguards against discrimination on the basis of gender. It could be said that Indian women's movements worked for two goals: one, liberation or uplift of women, i.e., reforming social practices so as to enable women to play a more important and constructive role in society; and two, equal rights for men and women, i.e., extension of civil rights enjoyed by men in the political, economic and familial spheres to women also. (Behtash and Sajjadi, 2012).

**Social Upliftment of Women:** Satyajit Ray coordinated the film „Charulata“ embracing the story „Nastanir“ composed by Rabindranath Thakur. Satyajit coordinated the said film basing all alone contemplations despite the fact that the story „Nastanir“ was trailed by Rabindra works. The endeavor of upliftment from the constraints of nineteenth century in one side and on the opposite side pointed consideration towards women's advance helped the film „Charulata“ to achieve its most elevated pinnacle. „Charulata“ was not just a photo of lone women, the economic wellbeing of the second 50% of the nineteenth century and the position of women were envisioned with present day standpoint. Despite the fact that Rabindranath did not give any reasonable thought regarding the season of „Nastanir“ story yet it was assumed that the time was the second 50% of the nineteenth century. Satyajit Ray gave significance on social upliftment of women in his „Charulata“ film in the years of the 80's of the nineteenth century and in the meantime communicated the status of a Indian society of the nineteenth century. In nineteenth century social upliftment of lady's viewpoint took a solid shape after

a discourse conveyed by Justice Fiyar in „Bengal Social Science Association“ corridor. At this meeting Fiyar told that, in the event that you get a kick out of the chance to keep in place the nobility which you had gained, on the off chance that you get a kick out of the chance to forward the country's welfare outside your nation, all things considered please extend your hands to spouses and little girls, and elevate them to your abnormal state. The primary male character of „Charulata“ film western taught Bhupati needed to find in his better half „Charulata“ as a present day instructed lady. What's more, for this Bhupati needed to take assistance from Amal to stir the writer's thoughts inside Charulata. In the nineteenth century Gulam Murshid expounded on lady's contemplations, "the flexibility development of Indian women was begun by the guys". Thus, in the genuine sense, this development was not completely autonomous to make free the women from the part of guys. In inverse, rather to state, the guys began this development to make their own reality somewhat advanced. Despite the fact that the guys sent for women advance to their greatest advantage however it is to be conceded that self intrigue helped in the matter of women' improvement. In the principal half of nineteenth century moves were begun for upliftment of the economic wellbeing of women, in that procedure despite the fact that the subject of women' training was the fundamental protest of the rundown however there was no planning of women' actual instruction before foundation of Bethun School in 1849. In India, the start of women' instruction was begun from the grounds of the Calcutta Female School built up by Bethun and that start was begun just with two young women. In 1854 was the introduction of Charles Wood which was viewed as ascribed significance on women' training. Inside instruction next to each other standard training gained ground in equivalent nature. Normally, before the women the odds of being taught helped Charulata to end up distinctly instructed. In the second 50% of the nineteenth century Charulata got to be distinctly taught because of increment in quantities of instructed man of honor in the general public. In the meantime instruction of Indian writing got to be distinctly successful. Famous social researcher Partho Chattacherjee had composed, "The improvement of an educative writing and showing materials in the Indian dialect without a doubt made conceivable the quit general acknowledgment of formal instruction among white collar class women". In the second 50% of the nineteenth century the compositions of women started to distribute. Not just papers, books and personal arrangements were additionally distributed. Kumudini Ray, Gnanadanandini Debi, Kamini Dutta all these illuminated women in spite of the fact that showed

up yet they couldn't turn out from predominant religious assumptions. In 1861 and 1864 individually in the works in regard of „Hindu Samaje Mohilader Abosthan“ of Bamasundary Debi and Kailash Basini Debi impression of smugness was uncovered. In any case, „Sekeler Katha“ of Nistarinyi Debi was "remarkable in that sense as it is the special case that gave bits of knowledge into the flow of Kulinism and how it influenced families", in that time the Indian women were making inquiries with respect to pervasive social conditions and their position in the general public. In the second 50% of the nineteenth century with the endeavor of social reformers great outcomes were being accessible on women' advance. Around then in the productions of composing by women which made the progression of characteristics in their compositions. The compositions of women were not just restricted their biography. In the second 50% of the nineteenth century in various productions on women their expertness turned out to be more expanded step by step. Concurring Forbes "Formal instruction and especially the advancement of productions proposed for and composed by women gave women a voice". We had seen that in „Charulata“ film a paper composed by Charu in the style of „Biswabandhu“ was distributed in a fundamental magazine of Indian scholarly world. In this unique circumstance, it is to be said Amal couldn't set out to distribute his compositions in „Biswabandhu“ magazine, in light of the fact that in that magazine just popular authors were given degree. Again for the triumph celebration of Liberals (British political gathering) in the place of Bhupati the significance of that magazine and great notoriety of author Charu were presented. The written work of Charu in the style of „my village“ it was shown that the more noteworthy universe of contemplations of women crossed certain breaking points. Actually it is to be said that the free considerations of women inspired strength to cross as far as possible in the second 50% of the nineteenth century. In the second 50% of the nineteenth century through impact of Western instruction a radical change occurred in the work of Indian guys. The guys began to feel the desire to get their spouses as mental friend keeping aside the customary thought with respect to women. The unavoidable consequence of which another section in the adoration life of Indian was acquainted in connection with male and female in the general public. From 60s of the nineteenth century sentimental contemplations impacted the writing as well as individual lives. There is most likely in the 80s of nineteenth century cutting edge instructed women were not impacted in western sentimentalism like guys but rather sentimental contemplations in Indian books affected the women in sentimentalism. This sentimental considered nineteenth century injected

Charulata and intersection the lawful limits it made mental unpredictability. Amal showed up as her life friend in the desolate existence of Charulata. It was unrealistic for Charulata to take mental part in bigger working field of Bhupoti. Her consideration was gathered in Amal. Charu broke early social limits insensibly. Charu adored that male who went with her in a basic a great time. By adoring Amal, Charu found herself recently. Also, properly in this place Satyajit bypassing time communicated the internal qualities, excellence, genuineness and conservativeness of lady's character through continuous results in self existences of women. The fascination of Charulata to Amal was albeit unlawful in purported moral Hindu society yet reasonable, in light of the fact that it opened the fragile stratum of a sentiment slanted personality. The genuine delicacy of a lady's character, insight and enchanting magnificence stayed covered up for connection with Amal and every one of those sentimental awareness were communicated completely. Satyajit really inside every one of these forces, singular freedom and qualities weirdness did not prevent the trustworthiness from claiming women. He never skirted their wellbeing and regular worthy subjects. Or maybe through every one of these things Satyajit found an upliftment of women through in the nineteenth century. Rabindranath composed a letter to Murari Bhadury who was the more youthful sibling of Sisir Kumar Bhadury, the dramatic ace, in the silent age of the movies, "the movies still now complimenting the writing in light of the fact that no explanatory figure couldn't safeguard that with his own particular ability from subjugation." There is most likely in the matter that Satyajit could make free the movies from the bondage of writing. This is to be conceded that in India there were many in entire things inside vision of free women. The immense reason for this that in the first 50% of the nineteenth century the guys being instructed in western training gained ground towards upliftment of women. In another way it is to be said that the developments of women's flexibility in the entire was guided by guys. Lingering behind the conventional traditions no attitude was developed inside Hindu religious women society to move towards upliftment of their conditions. Far beyond that the guys earned the considerations of women's flexibility from western instruction. In this stage the western nations additionally couldn't turn out from paternity. Normally it was unrealistic for Indian guys, albeit instructed in Western training, to level socially by annihilating paternity. In one side religions traditions and in opposite side the social structure represented by guardians, constrained the women to remain in their homes in the main portion of the nineteenth century. Through „Debi“ film Satyajit Ray cheating of

women of this section, trial for forcing insidiousness upon women for satisfying the interests of conventional individuals and to open the unhampered force of paternity, when the western instructed man like Umaprasad additionally admitted to the difficulties of universal individuals. „Charulata“ in spite of the fact that an account of the nineteenth century was more current in attitude. Charu had no hostile personality. The man in whose touch stirred her rest when he didn't concede the duty of enlivening like weaklings, then she held the hands of her significant other; on the grounds that she needed to live in any capacity. A force of her inward personality obviously pushed her to intensity as a profession. Here from customary women hood with the inclination of any social power they took the way of upliftment of innovation. Be that as it may, the time was still far away and hence the means returned from the entryways. Really Satyajit despite the fact that lived in a family climate with Victorian traditions but at the same time knew about all sides of Indian custom and got to be distinctly vivified with present day thoughts of that time. For which he tormented the lady's character as per their own particular markings, he didn't attempt to take after the hints of the profound truth of women hood. The masterful virtuoso of Satyajit Ray lay in his capacity to manage exceptionally delicate topics of aggregate concern yet while never trading off on true to life feel. His movies caught the embodiment of his circumstances and are associated with probably the most notorious minutes in world silver screen. As the film faultfinders have said frequently, Satyajit Ray was 'consistent with his circumstances'. For sure, Ray would impeccably catch in his movies the twentieth century "open" display and individuals in their "private" settings. The ace specialty that Ray dispensed concentrated more on the exchange of different characters on the screen, than the words they talked. The greater part of Ray's movies are naturally basic, yet conveyed profound yet tasteful messages. Despite the fact that he was it could be said a provincial movie producer, Ray's allure went past geological or phonetic outskirts – because of the unavoidable capacity of his specialty to make a linkage between the nearby and the worldwide. Satyajit Ray was additionally well in front of his circumstances. His movies, especially in the vicinity of 1960 and 1985 reflected contemporariness as in while the general public was not yet ready to comprehend a different presence of women other than in connection to men or the battle inborn in such element presences, Ray depicted these pictures effectively in his different stories – be it in Ghare Baire, Pather Panchali or Charulata. However neither of those movies are forcefully women driven or heave disdain against men, nor would they be able to be named as speaking to any one ideological point of



view. Rather, in an extremely unobtrusive way Ray's work demonstrated that for the depiction of women's points of view one need not really undermine the commitments of men. In his movies, female characters were typically cut out with uncommon care. While the Apu Trilogy was basically revolved around the delights and battles of a poor Indian kid called Apu – the arrangement stands genuine just concerning its different characters, which are prevalently female. Ray demonstrated the "yatra" or trip that women make under the look or danger of the male or Indian society. Therefore, Ray's movies were really however not determinately women's activist. This is to support the way that genuine women's liberation maintains women's rights not to the detriment of that of men. The deed that Ray accomplished by perceiving the dualistic way of social establishments as marriage, that frequently frame the bedrock of women's activist contention – is figured in movies as Kanchenjunga versus Apur Sansar. In the main, Ray draws out a light wry perspective of orchestrated relational unions, while in the last mentioned, the sort of marriage that basically sets off Apu's marital life is organized. In this manner, it can be securely said that Satyajit's women's liberation did not take a one-sided, radical position yet. Ray's vision of human connections, in which women constitute a critical part, was not quite the same as his counterparts in the film world. As opposed to attempting to show men and women as equivalents or the inverse, Satyajit demonstrated them as complimentary to each other. His movies as Mahanagar should demonstrate the genuine inquiries and difficulties a lady confronted in her life and how she would discover answers for them – while likewise drawing out the challenges in accommodating different parts of life – family and conventions, with independence and vocation under the suggestions of a quickly evolving society. Women on one hand were depicted as straightforward yet inactively confused; then again, they were effective grapples yet at last defenseless people. While Ray's movies implied something exceptional for women from all financial classes, every one of the women characters in Satyajit's movies were likewise applicable to their recorded and social settings. Charulata demonstrated the duality of the youthful instructed Indian lady who needed to live inside the "private" circle, four-walled home life while around her the world, "the general population" circle was evolving quickly, exhibited by her better half and her brother by marriage. In Mahanagar, Arati comes in moderate contact with the urban culture affected by the leftovers of our 'ex-rulers', the Anglo-Indian Edith. In Pather Panchali, Apur Sansar and Mahanagar, the female characters had a place with lower-working class families however in Devi and Ghare Baire, the characters lived

in Zamindar manors. What's more, in Aranyer Din Ratri, Ray investigated the encounters of both urban upper white collar class and rustic, uneducated women in the background of a tribal hinterland. As Sudhir Kakkar has recorded in his book *Intimate Relations*, business Indian movies have generally depicted women as either a 'body for show', casually known as the 'sight to behold' or the genial, custom bound lady whose sexuality is uncomfortable, and generosity is inadmissible. In any case, purposes behind such a stature of women in the general public were never investigated sociologically to the degree that the gathering of people would be scandalized. Narratively, the Indian control board had at first declined to approve Devi's universal discharge disregarding the way that in that film Ray's representation of the Hindu patriarchal formal conventions and its effect on normal lady was implied not to uncover India as superstitious and in reverse, but rather to demonstrate a "rationalistic" reality showing itself in a more intricate manner. This is to imply that the more self evident certainty method for demonstrating the truth without concentrating on any one approach, viz., traditionalistic or advanced. No person, man or lady, is dependably either dark or white and the acknowledgment was made by Ray that there were hazy areas of perplexity and misperception articulating conduct, something he was not hesitant to appear in his movies. Both Charulata and Ghare Baire represented the quandary women confront between satisfying the local part even with progressively forceful passionate and sexual emotions as they stay disappointed in their relational unions. Then again, Manimalika in Teen Kanya was as genuine as a shaky and psychotic identity joined with material ravenousness would be. In a similar film, Pooty of Samapti exhibited the wild, defiant character a young lady would have before society transforms her into a lady. Ray easily demonstrated the multifaceted lady in both rustic and urban settings – as a mother, a spouse additionally as a leader or an outgoing person. She was not auxiliary to, but rather likewise did not go up against men. The lady is fizzing, and finish in herself. Such depiction of the female character by Satyajit can be credited to his own particular encounters, his authentic recollections of having a place with one of the dynamic Bengali families around then. Being the grandson of Upendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury, the main figure of Brahmo Samaj – Satyajit's point of view was formed by a free, autonomous picture of a lady. Yet, he skillfully perceived and reproduced the vulnerabilities that accompany control, the familial exchange off that accompany monetary freedom. Ray's set of three for kids, however were closefisted in consolidating women's characters – for instance, in the Gupi Bagha or the Feluda Series. His depiction of women was

principally in family life, and around interpersonal connections. One might say, an unmindful inclination towards the men to open and women to private life polarity is highlighted. Regardless, the way that he made movies adequately flexible to suit each group of onlookers, and his particular concentrate on a large number of movies made particularly with women at the focal point of liberation – make for this constrained neediness of representation. The women characters in Satyajit Ray's movies are not flawless women of unchallenged and unquestioning righteousness and this one quality makes his extensive variety of women characters genuine, established and astounding. Dissimilar to the champions who occupy the universe of contemporary well known Indian silver screen, whose character outlines have been treated with more thrift than their skirts, Ray's courageous women are frail, human, defective... (Bhattacharjee2012).

**Conclusion:** Of late, India has seen an increase in the number of cases featuring violence against women. Many experts believe that the way women are depicted in Indian films in today's time is negative and it has played a key role in reinforcing many stereotypes about women. Often women are shown as an object of gratification in Indian films and

this encourages males to treat females unfairly. In films, often a woman is also shown falling in love with a man who stalks her and at times even eve teases her. This type of portrayal of women drives home a wrong message. A male watching such a film thinks if my hero can get a girl by stalking and eve teasing her, why can't I? Amid this backdrop, Ray's depiction of women and women centric issues makes for an interesting study. Ray was one of the few filmmakers who made an effort to break stereotypes about women in their films besides raising issues affecting them in modern times. The sensitivity with which 'Manikda' dealt with women characters in his films was exemplary. Thus, by studying in detail, various aspects of women's portrayal in Ray's films, an understanding can be developed about issues affecting women. The findings will also help in showing a path to filmmakers of today about giving women an equal status in films. The research will help in adding new insights and knowledge to the feminist studies. it would also be beneficial for the women right activists in India and other countries. It will add new vistas to the field of knowledge and would lay the foundation for further research.

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