

REPRESENTATION OF LIBERATION WAR IN THE FILMS OF 90s

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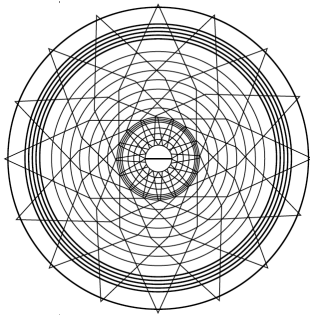
Abstract:

In the history of Bangladesh, the liberation War of 1971 is an unforgettable period. Through the bloody struggle of nine months their independence is achieved, which simultaneously contains the spirit of Bengali spirit, love and patriotism towards the motherland. Bangladeshi people participated in the spirit of love and extreme sacrifice from every sphere of society for the motherland and Bengali language. In addition to other mass media, film is an equally important medium and in films there is a great deal of effort to uncover the vital role of creating ideas and consciousness among people about the liberation War. With this in mind, this study tried to find out, how the films conceptualise the spirit and history of the liberation War in the 90s after two decades of freedom. This study has been conducted taking three feature films of the 90s based on the liberation war. Adopting the content analysis method, the study aimed to answer two questions- 'How do the films of the 90s represent the liberation War of Bangladesh?'; and, 'To portray the history of the liberation war, what kind of content and contexts have been used in these films?' The results showed that the films of the nineties signify the jana-itihās of Bangladesh by attaining the concept of the liberation War in a distinctive way. With symbolic representation of the war and cultural contexts, these films signify the jana-itihās of Bangladesh for passing information from generation to generation.

Keywords: Liberation War, representation, 90s film, jana-itihās, generation.

Introduction

Bangladesh is a country that was created from a war in 1971. Like most other countries, the independence of Bangladesh did not come easily. Lots of movements, sacrifice, bloodshed and misery made possible the freedom of the country on 16th December 1971.



The liberation War of Bangladesh began on 26th March 1971 and ended on 16th December 1971. The armed struggle was the culmination of a series of events, situations and issues contributing to the progressively deteriorating relations between East and West Pakistan. The questions of land reforms, state language, inter-wing economic and administrative disparities, provincial autonomy, the defence of East Pakistan and many other consequential questions had been straining the relations between the two wings of Pakistan ever since independence of the country from Britain in 1947 (Banglapedia, 2015).

After the Partition in 1947, Bangladesh suffered from being a part of Pakistan. Being East Pakistan from the beginning, it had to face discrimination in every sphere, so the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971 seems to be a logical conclusion of the Bengali nationalist movement that started soon after the formation of Pakistan in 1947. The movement, based on the nationalistic aspirations of the Bengalis living in erstwhile East Pakistan, was fuelled by the continuous neglect of Bengalis and their interests by the Pakistani rulers (Jamal, 2008: 6).

In '71, a volatile situation exploded when the Pakistani rulers chose confrontation instead of negotiation. They deploy armed forces and started mass killing, to suppress the struggle of the Bengalis to achieve self-rule. As mentioned by Ahmed Abdullah Jamal (2008), the indiscriminate use of military force by the Pakistan Army, which was initiated on the March 25, 1971 served as the immediate cause of the Bangladesh war of liberation.

After suffering from extreme disparity and negligence the Bengalis fought back in '71. Under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the people of the whole country became united for freedom. In the liberation war of Bangladesh the people from every sphere spontaneously participated with everything they had. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the absolute leader of East Pakistan at the time, gave the memorable speech on 7th March, 1971 and declared the freedom of Bangladesh: "This struggle is the struggle for freedom; this struggle is the struggle for independence". After the mass killings of 25th March, the Bengalis resisted against the brutality of the ruling Pakistanis.

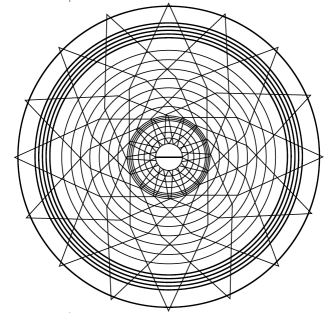
At that time, the mass media of Bangladesh also raised their voice against the genocide and suppressing activities of Pakistan. Being one of the cultural mediums, film was also a weapon to fight for the rights of the people. Film is as much an expression of culture as any other art medium like literature, painting and theatre: they all express the thought and sentiments (anything mental or spiritual) held in common by a group of people (Barrett, 1989: 14).

To blow up the consciousness among Bengalis against their oppressors, Zahir Raihan made the famous film, *Jibon Theke Neya*. This film got released prior to the war, a timeless classic directed by Raihan. Inspired by events surrounding the mass uprising of 1969, this movie still falls under the category of movies that represent the true spirit of independence. In the movie filled with ironies, Raihan used the metaphor of a family to unmask the hypocrisies and oppression of those clinging to power (Shazu, 2017).

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In 1971 after the mass killings by the Pakistani Army, Zahir Raihan made a documentary named *Stop Genocide* (1971). The documentary was made to get the attention of the world towards the extreme violence in this land by the Pakistani authority. Under Raihan's leadership during the war, a number of young filmmakers used cameras as a tool of war.

In the post-war period, *Ora Egaro Jon* (1972) was the first film that was made on the content of the war. Directed by Chashi Nazrul Islam, the film portrays the experiences of some movie-loving youths during the liberation War. The roles in the film were played by real Freedom Fighters (Shazu, 2017).

But soon after the liberation war finished, suddenly the numbers of liberation war-based movies were decreasing decade to decade. In the 70s, 80s and in 90s there were contemporary commercial themes which became the dominant topics of films. These films were made by targeting the young, urban people and their issues, such as; love, relationships and social problems. Mostly, the commercial themes attracted the film directors to gain a profit and the maximum audience. Again, Indian movies inspired our filmmakers to appeal to the mass audience and their appeal.

In the 70's, due to the failure of the mainstream Bangladeshi movies to speak just for the commercial vein, a new trend came into place to overcome the situation, which were mostly called off-beat or alternative and independent films; where the filmmakers boldly reject the conventional schemes or elements to appeal to the audience. It can be said from the historical point of view of Bangladesh, that after the liberation war, in a new and destroyed country, it was very difficult for the film industry to flourish as a medium. Then there came some directors who played a vital role in its establishment.

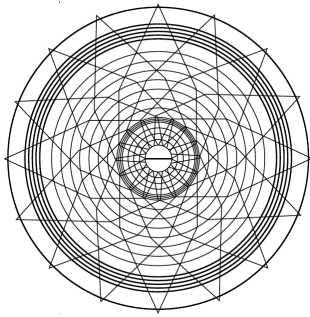
Over time, modern and post-modern concepts soon demolished the consciousness of society and Bangla cinemas also started to replicate this scenario. Therefore it is very important to uncover how the films of the nineties portrayed the jana-itihās of the liberation war two decades after the war. So, in this study, the researcher aimed to find out the perspective of the films of the 90s and how they represent the liberation war of Bangladesh.

Literature Review

Here, related articles and research papers have been used as literature review to define the focus of this study.

In an article on 'film medium' (Chalachitra Maddam), Mirza Tarekul Kader writes that, after the liberation war, a new and distinctive trend grew in the film industry of Bangladesh. Here, the most influencing element was the liberation war; the spirit of the 1971 liberation war, post-war cultural-political changes- generally, the films made by Zahir Raihan or the documentaries made with his leadership have a great impact to build up a new trend in the film industry of Bangladesh (Kader, 2007: 595).

Tanvir Mokammel, who has made several films on the war including *Nadir Naam Modhumoti*, *Rabeya* and *Jibondhuli* said, it is vital that one feels the struggle of 1971 in order to illustrate it on screen. However, Mokammel also admits that making such films



is not an easy task. According to the director, there are two kinds of challenges—first, to recreate the past from 40 years ago and second, to portray the battle scenes trustworthily, in making such films (New Age, 2014).

In 'Framing Pain as Spectacle: the Aesthetics of Wartime Films of Bangladesh', Fahmida Akhter writes, care-worn images become synonymous with women, as if they have no nationalist sentiment, except being worried about themselves and their children's lives (Akhter, 2014: 47).

In the paper, 'Screening War: Gender, Sexuality and Nationhood in Cinematic Representation of liberation War in Bangladesh', Afroza Bulbul (2011) examines the representation strategies of the liberation war of Bangladesh and also discusses how the issues of gender within that war narrative have been represented in Bangladeshi movies using ten movies from mainstream and independent films. Taking Stuart Hall's theories of representation as a broader theoretical background, the study analyses how the war has stereotypically been represented within the dichotomous representation of self-vs. other, and how the national identity was represented according to the identity of dominant communities of Bangladesh overlooking the existences of 'other' groups (Bulbul, 2011: viii).

Fahmida Akhter, writes a paper on the film *Jibon Thekey Neya*. Akhter writes; following melodramatic mode, this film also employs gender relations and issues of a family to explain nation-state ideology. Again, Raihan employs the pattern of creating contrasts, offering disruptions in the illusionistic nature of melodrama. Thus he extends a critical involvement of the audience (Akhter, 2014: 299).

Kaberi Gayen (Gayen, 2015) wrote a paper on 'Women, War and Cinema: Construction of Women in the liberation War Films of Bangladesh'. To understand the construction of women in the war films of Bangladesh, Gayen analysed 26 full length and seven short feature films. Results showed that, though women had multifaceted roles in the war, the films of Bangladesh were no exception to representing women as passive rape victims and commercialising rape. Women were never represented as freedom fighters.

Nayanika Mookherjee (2002), who did her doctoral thesis on the liberation war of Bangladesh finds the media's representation strategy gendered. She argues that the depictions of horrors of rape and raped women in the media are predominantly a victim who is muted by the trauma of the war and going through a consequent suffering – physical, social, emotional (Mookherjee, 2002, cited in Bulbul, 2011: 13).

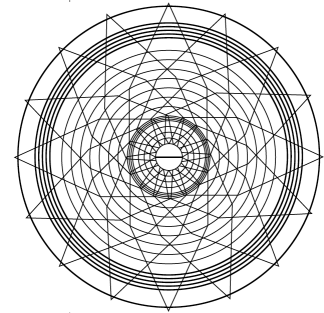
During the nine months of the war, the Pakistani army with the assistance of local Bengali collaborators (i.e. Razakars, Al-bodor, Al-shams, and Shanti Bahini) killed 300,000 (Mookherjee, 2006) men and women from all walks of life, and raped about 200,000 women and girls (Ibid). After the independence, the then government declared all raped women of 1971 as Birangona (War Heroines). This was an attempt to reduce the social ostracism of rape toward the women and enable their smooth social re-absorption (Mookherjee, 2006 cited in Bulbul, 2011: 2).

Zotto (2002) reveals that traditionalism, commercialism and nationalism inform mainstream media, contributing to a gendered coverage of war. Women are seen as

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passive victims rather than activists and combatants (Zotto, 2002, cited in Bulbul, 2011: 13).

So, keeping in mind these related literatures, the study has been conducted to identify the role of 90s film to spread the consciousness of our struggle of war and the aftermath from generation to generation.

Objectives of the Research

The Objectives of the research are:

- To find out how the films of the 90s represent the liberation war of Bangladesh.
- To identify to what extent the history of the liberation war is represented in the content and contexts of these films.

Research Questions

This research has been conducted with two research questions:

1. How the films of 90s represent the liberation war of Bangladesh?
2. To portray the history of liberation war what kind of content and contexts have been used in these films?

Data and Method

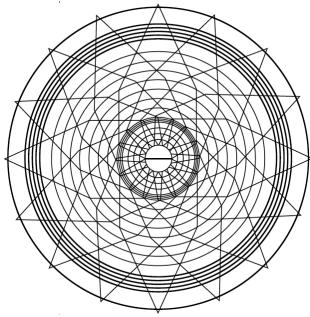
For the research presented in this paper, data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are the main sources of data collection. Through the participant observation method, data has been collected from selected samples. In secondary sources, related books, newspaper articles, research articles and journals are included.

Observation means examining or scrutinising something with definite purpose. It is a method whereby the knowledge and understandings are drawn through the use of sense organs (Aminuzzaman, 2011: 133). This data collection method is classified into two parts: A) participant observation, and B) non-participant observation.

This research adopted method A; the participant observation method. Here the researcher collected qualitative data by observing the sampled films.

This research followed the content analysis method to analyse the data. It is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. Researchers quantify and analyse the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of which these are a part (Aminuzzaman, 2011: 65-66).

From the films of the 90s, three (03) films have been selected for purposive sampling. After the liberation war in 1971, gradually the number of films based on the



spirit of the 1971 war, becomes less from decade to decade. So, to identify the pattern of messages that these films delivered is very important.

The codes and images of the selected films have been analysed with the concept of Representation Theory. The films are:

1) *Ekattorer Jishu* (1993), directed by Nasiruddin Yousuff; the film received three national awards for best dialogue.

2) *Nadir Nam Modhumoti* (1995), directed by Tanvir Mokammel; the film received three national awards including best story, best dialogue and best song.

3) *Hangor Nodi Grenade* (1997), directed by Chashi Nazrul Islam; the film received national awards including best story, best director and best actress.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts Stuart Hall's Representation Theory. According to Stuart Hall (1997), 'representation' means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people (Hall, 1997: 15).

Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things (1997: 15).

Hall (1997: 15) states that, there are three approaches to representation – reflective (language simply reflects a meaning which already exists out there in the world of objects, people and events), intentional (language expresses only what the speaker or writer or painter intended), and constructionist (meaning constructed in and through language).

The constructivist or constructionist approach acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix the meaning in language. Things don't mean: we construct meaning, using representational systems- concepts and signs (Hall, 1997: 25).

A constructionist approach does not deny the existence of the material world. However, it is not the material world which conveys meaning: it is the language system or whatever system we are using to represent our concepts. It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others (Hall, 1997: 25).

In this study the selected films' texts have been analysed, applying the concept of the constructionist approach of representation theory.

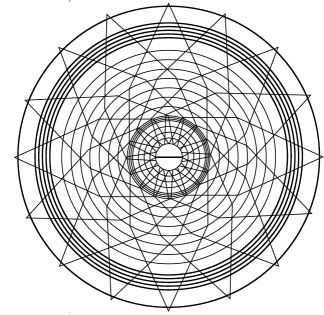
Findings and Discussion

In the 90s, most of the Bangladeshi films were dominated by mainstream commercial topics. In this era, the trend of Bangla mainstream commercial film had changed, and they were very much influenced by commercial Indian Hindi films. Eventually, they were directly copied from the Indian popular commercial Hindi films

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full with action, dancing, songs and jokes. At the same time, 90s film acquired some new directors and actors. Intellectual directors such as: Tanvir Mokammel, Tareque Masud, Morshedul Islam, Humayun Ahmed, Nasiruddin Yousuff, Akhtaruzzaman and Mustafizur Rahman made some critically and internationally acclaimed films at that time.

In the 90s, beside the mainstream film making, three intellectual filmmakers; Nasiruddin Yousuff, Tanvir Mokammel and Chashi Nazrul Islam used their skills and technique to tell the history of the liberation war of Bangladesh. These three filmmakers took a big challenge to represent the true facts of war on the big screen due to lack of technical support and budgetary restrictions. They represented the spirit and consciousness of the liberation war with different contents and contexts positively in these films. They portrayed various cultural codes in these three films of the 90s (Ekattorer Jishu:1993, Nadir Nam Modhumoti:1995, Hangor Nodi Grenade:1997) in a positive way.

They portrayed the history of the liberation war in these films using various signs and symbols regarding the war, for example, the speech of 7th March by the father of the nation, the songs of Sadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, the radio news of the then political conflict, blood, visuals of genocide, the refugees seeking a secured place, the image of freedom fighters, and posturing and slogans against the Pakistani army

Nasiruddin Yousuff, Tanvir Mokammel and Chashi Nazrul Islam critically represented the history of the liberation war of Bangladesh in their films (Ekattorer Jishu:1993, Nadir Nam Modhumoti:1995, Hangor Nodi Grenade:1997), in order for the next generation to know and visualise the history of Bangladesh accurately. Due to lack of technical support and budget they took a big challenge in trying to inform their audience of how their ancestors had sacrificed almost everything for the sake of the independence of the country.

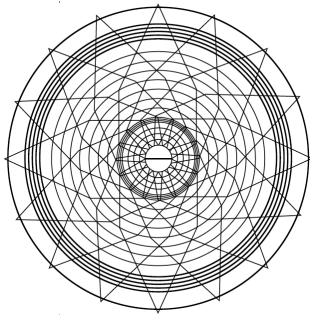
However, it's almost 46 years, but still as a Bengali our moral dignity and respect towards the freedom fighters and the women who lost their respect is still absent. To fulfil the expectations of martyrs and freedom fighters, they tried to visualise the real history of the liberation war critically and internationally.

Reflection on Rural Bangladesh

A film is a very diverse collection of visual, aural and graphic signs, which the viewer works to perceive as meaningful, using his or her knowledge of codes and conventions (Bignell, 2002: 194).

In these three movies of the 90s, the filmmakers attempted to draw the natural beauty from the then Bangladesh. By signifying the simplicity of nature, its people this beauty is reflected. The three films also portrayed the immense beauty of Bangladesh. Ekattorer Jishu, signifies the inner beauty of a village where everyone lives beyond the border of ideological and religious concepts.

Being an independent filmmaker, Tanvir Mokammel always portrays the rural beauty of Bangladesh through his films. Bangladesh and the common Bengalis are



always the main content of his film. In his first feature film Nadir Nam Modhumoti, Tanvir Mokkaamel brings out the changing lifespan of people like the river Modhumoti.

Akira Kurosawa, the distinguished filmmaker states that, there is something that might be called cinematic beauty. It can only be expressed in a film, and it must be present for that film to be a moving work. When it is very well expressed, one experiences a particularly deep emotion while watching that film (Nastasi, 2014). For representing the gruesomeness of the Pakistani Authority, these films drew the utmost beautiful Bangladesh in every angle with the necessary sound and music.

Humanizing the war

In the film Hangor Nodi Grenade, the autistic child Rais is the reason for his parents' panic and worry. What will happen to this weak, deaf and dumb boy- it makes his mother sad and she cries every time she thinks about it. And when the liberation war occurs, his mother thinks of him not being a fighter like Salim and Kalim. But at last, when the Pakistani soldiers came to their house to search for freedom fighters, Buri as a mother brings her autistic son to save the fighters. Thus, in a society where there is always pressure for everyone to struggle and fight for their own rights, the filmmaker shows a different outlook on how the mothers sacrificed their beloved children for the country.

Satyajit Ray, the famous Bengali filmmaker also wanted to make a film based on Selina Hossain's novel "Hangor Nodi Grenade". However, this didn't happen for various reasons, including disturbed political conditions after the assassination of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu. Eventually, five years after Ray died in 1992, Bangladeshi director Chashi Nazrul Islam made a film based on the novel in 1997 (Mallick, 2018).

Meaning is constructed on the basis of the spectator's continual adjustment and testing of codes rather than simply 'reading off' a meaning from the text (Bignell, 1998: 192). Tanvir Mokkaamel as a filmmaker tried to represent how the human relationship resembles the river 'Modhumati'. In the first scene of the movie the protagonist Bachchu tries to hunt birds with a gun. When the gun was just before Motaleb, he says, 'the main thing is to aim properly. Hold the barrel straight, and then target the object'. The compassionate Bachchu's attitude changes with passing time because of the ill motives of his father.

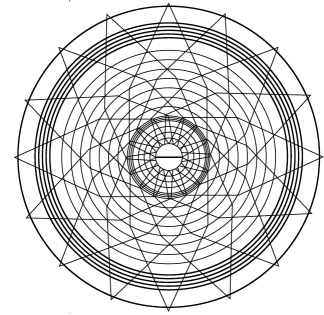
As Tanvir Mokkaamel describes this film, Motaleb Mollah, spurred by the title Chairman conferred upon him by the wily Pakistani captain, continued to create havoc on the people around. With his gradual moral degradation, Motaleb developed a carnal desire for Shanti. Then one day Motaleb's retainers killed the teacher Amulya Chakrabarty, and Motaleb forced Shanti to marry him (Mokkaamel, n.d).

In this film, the protagonist, Bachchu, had an emotional relationship with Motaleb. Although he is not his biological father, he still loves him a lot. When Bachchu becomes a guerrilla fighter to fight for his country, the whole scenario changes.

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Motaleb loses his son's love to his cruelty and lust for power. Bachchu recalls his childhood sweet memories with his father. In the climax, when the other fighters hesitate to attack Motaleb, he takes a gun and secretly comes to his father, and shoots him when he wakes up.

In the code of the guerrillas, the penalty of a collaborator was the death sentence. But as Motaleb was Bachchu's father, his comrades were procrastinating. Then one evening, Bachchu himself took a decision and crossed the river Modhumoti with a dinghy and a rifle and with a determined sense of mission (Mokammel, n.d).

In Ekattorer Jishu, the old Desmond held strong love for Jishu, The God. He tries to understand everything resembling the description from the Bible. So, when his dear one Haripad is killed by the Pakistani Army, he was discomposed. Again, when the refugees came for shelter he expressed empathy with the conversation with his father. Again, in the film, one of the young victims from the refugees cried and shouted the whole night for his dead friends and soul mates.

Reflection of Freedom fighters

In 1971, the common people of Bangladesh took part in the war of liberation. The war films of the 90s strongly resemble this.

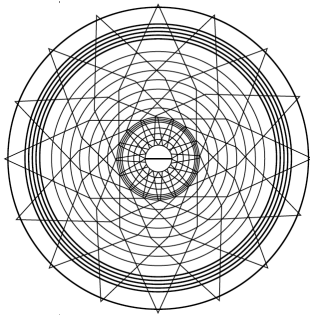
The French theorist Christian Metz (1975) proposed that cinema differs from other art forms in that it deploys vision, sound, movement and syntagmatic arrangement all at once, and offers perceptions which are all of absent things, rather than of present ones (Bignell, 2002: 184). In three films, the freedom fighters were the signifier through which the liberation war is presented.

Meaning is constantly being produced and exchanged in every personal and social interaction in which we take part. Meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity, of who we are and with whom we 'belong'- so it is tied up with questions of how culture is used to mark out and maintain identity within and different between groups (Hall, 1997: 3).

So, to give the impression of what a freedom fighter 'is', these films try to portray a certain image of a fighter. This is image is someone who is determined, intelligent, full of passion, cares and loves for their country and has the courage to sacrifice their own life. The teacher in Ekattorer Jishu is such a person, and again in Nadir Nam Modhumoti, the director tried to represent the concept of freedom fighters, where Bachchu, Akhter, the teacher and all the young fighters fight for their country.

In Nadir Nam Modhumoti, the intimate relationship between a father and son changes with time. Before the liberation war everything was normal, until the Pakistani Army came to the village. But when muktibahini killed the village chairman, eventually Motaleb became the chairman. He demonstrated his love for power and lust, killing the noble teacher Amullya, and showing his desire for the young Hindu widow Shanti.

Bachchu, the young freedom fighter had a strong emotional attachment with his father. But when he knew being the chairman Motaleb started torturing people he feel embarrassed. Here in the film the character chacha represents a person who is



intelligent and .Who tries to aware the conscience of greedy Motaleb and advises him time to time.

The common people of Bangladesh have a strong emotional attachment with the liberation war, and the films always try to reflect this. In an interview, the actor of Hangor Nodi Grenade, Masud Parvez said, 'I have an inference that not all of our freedom fighters had, flung into the war by virtue of patriotism. Some took part in the struggle owing to their ideology, some fought back as the spunk of revenge was burning inside and some took up arms just deifying the summons of Bangabandhu' (Datta, 2018).

Director Chashi Nazrul Islam made Ora Egarojon, Shongram and Hangor Nodi Grenade. In an interview with the newspaper New Age, he admits the challenges in producing war films in Bangladesh. According to him, 'I was a freedom fighter and it is always a joy to deal with the sacrifices and glory of the war in my films,' and he also mentioned that one needs to have honesty and dedication to history to portray it genuinely (New age, 2014).

Representation of Liberation war

'Victory to Bengal (Joi Bangla)', these two words represent the spirit of independent Bangladesh very deeply. In 1971 it was the ultimate song, anthem or theme which has the power to heat the bloods of all Bengalis towards the tough path of freedom.

The liberation war is the most memorable event in the history of Bangladesh, so to determine the real character of liberation war films uses a different pattern. In Ekattorer Jishu, the village people make conversation in a tea stall about the political agitation of the country, and they talk about the current situation in Dhaka in 1971 and agree to go to war.

The film Ekattorer Jishu, is dedicated to the memory of the martyrs of the liberation fighters of Bangladesh during 1971. Being a freedom fighter, director Nasiruddin Yousuff tries to uphold the concept of the liberation war in a different and realistic way, by drawing from themes from the Bible. From the historical-cultural point of view the common Bengalis always live together beyond their various religious ideology and thinking.

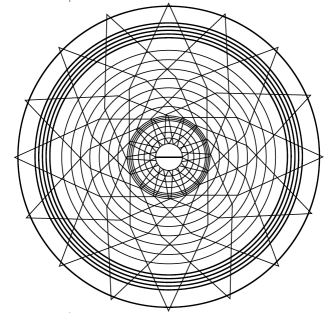
In this film as the head of the church, the Father always criticises and neglects Desmond for his lack of knowledge, thoughts and perceptions about the political perspectives of the then country. Being a polite person, Desmond loves to think everything from his heart; so when Haripad, the fisherman dies from the bullets of Pakistanis, he is filled with grief and sadness. Again, when the migrants came to the area for shelter, the Father hesitated to help, even though he wanted to help. Finally, the teacher makes the Father understand the situation.

In Ekattorer Jishu, Nasiruddin Ussuf tried to reflect the scenarios for how the situation in the country deteriorated and turned into a war. The people got agitated and wanted to fight for freedom, which is shown by the characters of two fishermen;

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Haripad and Khetro. Again, Ussuf shows how the people united for a war, where in the film in the village market, the situation seems tense and full of protests.

Umberto Eco (1977) stated that, far from cinema using fragments of reality in order to build its representations; all images require the operation of cultural codes in order to signify. Eco believed that conventions embedded in society were the precondition for signification (Bignell, 2002: 191-192).

In *Ekattorer Jishu*, the protagonist of the film symbolises everything with the Bible. But the real world and situation is more than this concept. Losing everything, Desmond finds himself within the young freedom fighters who fight for their country, believing in freedom without any fear of death. The director uses the symbolic situation when the Pakistani soldiers hanged without mercy the three fighters, resembling the crucified Jishu.

To portray the history of the liberation war, these films symbolically used war based documents, such as the speech of 7th March by the father of the nation, the songs of *Sadhin Bangla Betar Kendra*, the radio news of the then political conflict, blood, visuals of genocide, visuals of charging bayonets, torturing women, the refugees coming for a secured place, the image of freedom fighters, posturing and slogans against the Pakistani army.

However, the war scenes were not represented realistically. Lack of knowledge about technology and visualisation makes these scenes look unrealistic and artificial.

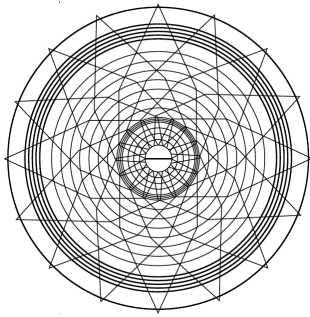
Being critical of his own work, in an interview, Tanvir Mokammel stated, 'In my first liberation war based film *Nadir Nam Modhumoti*, the action scenes do not look credible enough as we did not get any support from the Bangladesh Army to portray scenes from the battlefield realistically. But in the latest film *Jibondhuli*, we received the support' (New age, 2014).

According to Chashi Nazrul Islam, 'Many people have the idea that making a film in 1971 requires fighting scenes engaging explosions, tanks, machine guns and lots of soldiers; however, it is a wrong assumption'; and added that a war-based film can also deal with the psychological and social dilemmas of war victims rather than battlefield scenes (New age, 2014).

Women, only the victim of war

The value of signs in films depends on the social context pertaining at the time the film was made, at the time the film is seen, and by whom it is seen. The codes and conventions which enable the viewer to make sense of the film will change and evolve, and the viewer will decode the meanings of film narratives by invoking his or her experience of his or her own culture, including the film conventions circulating in that culture as well as codes of expression recognised from 'natural' social behaviour (Bignell, 2002: 196-197).

Only men were the freedom fighters, and women never perceived the war and its various impacts. They were just the victims of the war. These stereotypical concepts



often represent the reality in a straight way, whereas in reality, women also participated in the war to sacrifice their own respect and loved ones.

This is seen in Selina Hossain's novel *Hangor Nodi Grenade*, based on the character Buri. But without thinking about the autistic child Buri's character does not flourish much. The director and writer only tried to portray the protagonist as like Jahanara Imam. So, when Buri's two son- Salim and kalim were busy with discussing the political unrest and taking preparations to go for a war. That time whenever Salim's wife Ramiza or Buri asks anything about their weird behavior they answer it in hasty manner. They even told that, you are just women and you will not understand the situation of the country.

The film *Ekattorer Jishu* does not have any influential female characters. In *Nodir Nam Modhumoti*, there are no female characters other than Bachchu's mother who have any voice. The girl whom Bachchu likes becomes 'abnormal' after being victimised in the war.

Although Selina defines herself talking about the novel, 'Hangor Nodi Grenade', Selina explains how she creates paradoxes in her novel as well as its visual aspects. In the novel, a mother hands over her son to the Pakistani army during the liberation War to save an entire village from their attack. "The story is based on a real event. It portrays a valiant mother who sacrifices her son with this belief that it is better to sacrifice one life than perish thousands" (Mir, 2018).

Conclusion

In the world, there is not a single country that got freedom from oppressors without fighting for its own right. Bangladesh is no different from this. And in 1971 in the battlefield, film was also a massive weapon in fighting against oppressors. It is a visual documentation of the war and the various incidents that occurred in that time. To keep records and to pass the history from generation to generation, film is always considered a vital tool.

In the 90s, besides the mainstream film making, few filmmakers used their skill and technique to tell the history of the liberation war of Bangladesh. Although it was a big challenge for the filmmakers to represent the concept of war on the big screen due to lack of technological knowledge and budgetary restrictions, a few film makers still took that challenge to represent the spirit and consciousness of the liberation war with different contents and contexts. To represent the liberation war of Bangladesh the films of the 90s use various cultural codes.

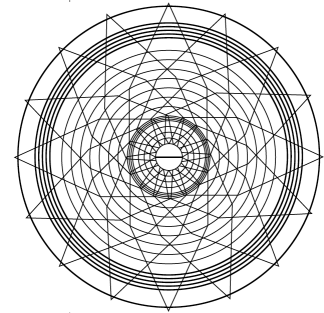
To portray the history of the liberation war these films used various signs and symbols regarding the war. These include, the speech of 7th March by the father of the nation, the songs of *Sadhin Bangla Betar Kendra*, the radio news of the then political conflict, blood, visuals of genocide, the refugees seeking a secure place, the image of freedom fighters, and posturing and slogans against the Pakistani army.

It is very important for the next generation to know and visualise the history of Bangladesh. Here, film is a useful medium to inform them how our ancestors had

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sacrificed almost everything for the sake of the independence of the country. However, it's almost 46 years but still as a Bengali our moral dignity and respect towards the freedom fighters and the women who lost their respect is still absent. To fulfil the expectations of our martyrs and freedom fighters we need to know the real history and have a love for the country.

Recommendations

- In Bangladesh the archiving process of different documents related to the liberation war is not fully developed, so the footage of the films was bad. It was difficult to visualise the imagery for the research work.
- Many films on the liberation war such as *Ekhono Onek Rat* (1997) by Khan Ataur Rahman are unavailable. It was difficult to find available samples for the research.
- For secondary data, it was difficult to find the related books on the topic as most of the literature is either based on the interviews, representation of women or about the war. But the representation of the 1971 liberation war in Bangladeshi films is not portrayed fully in these materials.
- It would be more appropriate if there were more film samples. But the duration of this work and the availability of liberation based films was a big reason for the inability.

Ekattorer Jishu or Jesus `71 (1993)

Credits:

Director – Nasiruddin Yousuff.

Producer – David Proner

Production & Distribution – Anupam Chitrayan Trust

Story – Shahriar Kabir

Screenplay & Dialogue – Nasiruddin Yousuff

Music – Shimul Yousuff.

Format – 35mm.

Color – colorful

Runtime – 100 min.

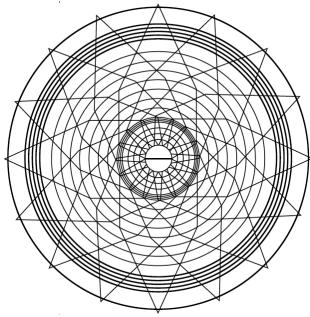
Country – Bangladesh

Language – Bangla

Cast: Pijush Bandopadhyaya, Humayun Faridi, Sharmilee Florence Gaines.

Nadir Nam Modhumoti or The River Named Modhumoti (1995)

Credits:



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Script & Direction – Tanvir Mokammel

Production – kino Eye Films

Art– Manjare Shamim

Photography – Anwar Hossain

Editing – Mahadeb Shi

Music – Syed Shabab Ali Arzoo

Cinematography– Anwar Hossain

Format – 16mm.

Color – colorful

Runtime – 130 minutes

Country – Bangladesh

Language – Bangla

Cast: Aly Zaker, Touqir Ahmed, Raisul Islam Asad, Sara Zaker, Ayesha Akhter, Afsana Mimi, Abul Khair, Aminul Haque Chowdhury, Vaswar Banerjee, Jayanta Chatterjee, K.S. Feroze and others.

Hangor Nodi Grenade or The Mother (1997)

Credits:

Director – Chashi Nazrul Islam

Production & Distribution – Chashi Chalachchitra

Story – Selina Hossain

Screenplay – Chashi Nazrul Islam

Dialogue – Selina Hossain

Editing – Syed Mohammad Murad

Art – Chashi Nazrul Islam

Cinematography – Z.H. Mintu

Music – Sheikh Sadi Khan

Lyricist – Munshi Wadud

Format – 35mm.

Color – colorful

Runtime – 113 min.

Country – Bangladesh

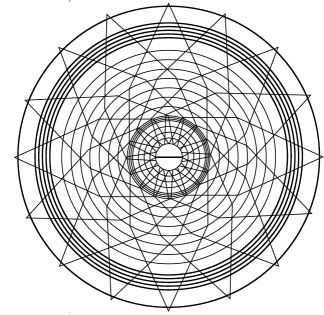
Language – Bangla

Cast: Sucharita, Sohel Rana, Aruna Biswas, Wasimul Bari Rajib, Shaukat Akbar, Sharmili Ahmed, Nasir Khan, Chashi Nazrul Islam

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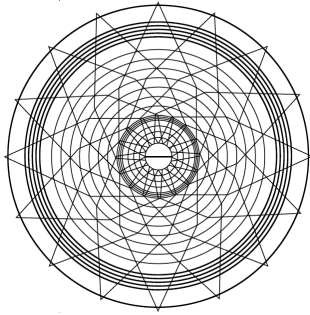
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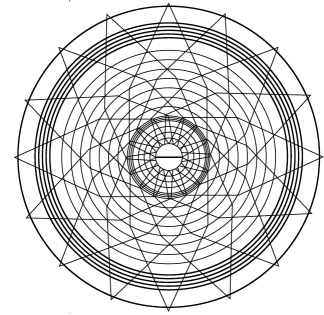
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Appendix I

Ekattorer Jishu (1993)

Summary:

A village nearby a mofussil where all the villagers lived happily and lead their lives. Soon after, the Pakistani soldiers enter into the villages and start killing brutally, their lives become hell and full of grief. In this time a church authority gives shelter and cares for the village people. After some time for safety and security the Father of the church leaves the place with the sisters.

However, one of the clergymen, Desmond refuses to flee and stays there with a dumb and helpless little girl whom he finds when the refugees come. After the war started between the Bangladeshi freedom fighters and the Pakistani military, the whole village was burnt by the Pakistanis. Desmond started to give shelter to the young fighters, but when the Pakistani soldiers got the news that in the church reside the freedom fighters, (Muktijodda's), they came there to search for them. Finding three fighters, they beat them and charge with their bayonets and eventually kill them all. At the end, three of them were hanged by the soldiers just like Jesus, the God of Christians. But still, Desmond hopes for the young fighters to come here again.

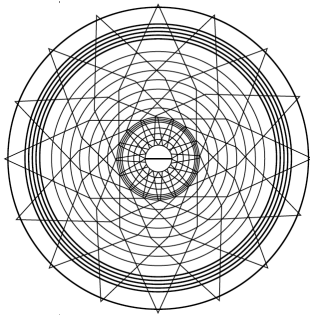
Appendix II

Nadir Nam Madhumati (1995)

Summary:

Rasulpur is a village that is situated on the banks of the river Modhumoti. In this village there lives a young fellow, Bachchu. Bachchu is the son of the local mullah and Muslim league leader, Motaleb. In the village there was an idealist Brahmin teacher, Amulya Chakrabarty, who lived with his widow daughter Shanti. Amulya has stayed in Bangladesh even after the partition in 1947 and the riots in 1964. He has great influence on Bachchu.

Gradually the political environment changes with time and the movement for independent Bangladesh begins. With senior Friend Akhter, Bacchu decides to fight for the freedom of the country, so he runs away from the house. He joins the freedom fighters. The village chairman Khaleque brings the Pakistani military to the village to save Pakistan and Islam; that's why the muktibahini kills him. Then Bachchu's father becomes the chairman of the village and enhances support for Pakistan. Becoming the chairman, he starts to use the political environment to develop his property and power. He even destroys Amulya's family by killing him brutally with the army and tries to fulfil his sexual desire by raping Shanti. However, Shanti convinces him to marry to protect her chastity. Motaleb's first wife gets angry with his unethical activities and leaves the house. Then Motaleb tries to contact



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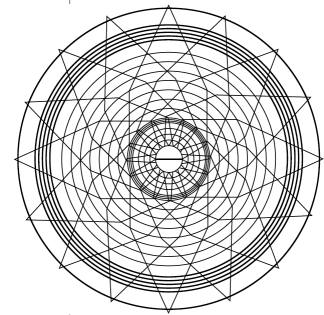
Bacchu and asks him to come back and join him. In the climax the trust and love between Bacchu and his father decreases. While his team was hesitating to attack in the village, all alone Bachchu goes to the village at night and kills his father with a gun.

Appendix III

Hangor Nodi Grenade (1997)

Summary:

Buri, is a brave and distinct girl within the village people. For her weird name her friends always make fun of her. She wants to be free without any control. She speaks wisely but for her childish behaviour her family always worries about her. Suddenly, after her father's death she was married to an aged widower, Gofur Mia, who has two children already. After marriage, the life and thoughts of Buri suddenly change. She starts to take responsibility and maintains the family, being the mother of Salim and Kalim. But after sometime due to the mockery of the village people she wants to be the mother of her own child. Unfortunately, her own child Rais, is born autistic, which makes the couple worry about his future. When the war started in 1971, the Pakistani military came into their village to search for freedom fighters. Being a mother she gave shelter to the young fighters and at the end sacrifices Rais's life to save them.



РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ ОСВОБОДИТЕЛЬНОЙ ВОЙНЫ В ФИЛЬМАХ 90-Х ГОДОВ

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Аннотация:

Освободительная война 1971 года – это незабываемый период в истории Бангладеш. В течение девяти месяцев в кровавой борьбе достигается независимость, которая одновременно содержит в себе Бенгальский дух, любовь к Родине и патриотизм. Всех сферы общества народа Бангладеш с любовью и самопожертвованием принимали в ней участие в борьбе за Родину и бенгальский язык. Среди прочих медиа кино является не менее важным, и в фильмах прилагается много усилий, чтобы раскрыть важную роль создания идей и представлений об освободительной войне. Данное исследование показывает, как фильмы после двух десятилетий свободы представляют дух и историю освободительной войны в 90-е годы. Это исследование было проведено с использованием трех художественных фильмов 90-х годов об освободительной войне. Используя метод контент-анализа, исследование было направлено на ответ на два вопроса: как фильмы 90-х годов представляют освободительную войну Бангладеш? Какое содержание и контекст были использованы в этих фильмах для изображения истории освободительной войны? Результаты показали, что фильмы девяностых годов подобны эпическим произведениям в Бангладеш, достигая концепции освободительной войны особым образом. С их символическими изображениями войны и культурных контекстов, эти фильмы подобны эпическим произведениям Бангладеш, которые используются для передачи информации из поколения в поколение.

Ключевые слова: освободительная война, репрезентация, фильмы 90-х, эпические произведения, поколения