

CHAPTER - 3

The Working Woman: The Domains Dominated

“Think out of the box and achieve new heights. Question conventional wisdom and live your dreams”- the seemingly mantra of the new generation according to the columnist Swati Khanwalkar [2014] seems fit specially for the woman of today who has not only moved out of the ‘home’ to the world [Kakar,2009:66] breaking out of the traditional moulds, but is also exploring hitherto uncharted territories by women. When it is the matter of career, not only are the women very clear about their career options and choices, they are there on the scene with the changed attitudes, perceptions and outlooks, all ready to pursue the career of their choices with full conviction and commitment.

Earlier when the women were confined to only homes and family oriented roles, there was no thought about them as ‘working women’. Gradually they began to move out of those strict boundaries, came in contact with the outside world and started working. But still the jobs and fields they chose were actually not their own choices. They were rather the ‘works’ that were given to them, keeping in mind their delicate femininity and their maternal and wifely roles back home.

Their talent, creativity and capabilities were neither thought of nor given any weightage or space since it could subvert the whole hold of patriarchy over them. So women continued to work with whatever options were available to them until this new life with all its options and avenues opened the floodgates for them. And now there is no stopping. The modern generation of women has realized its own potentials and they are coming up with such varied choices that the traditionalists must never have even thought of. Along with choosing the traditional options, there certainly are the women who are ready to take the risks and choose the offbeat careers also. Such women are confident of their inherent talents, their own capabilities, convictions and commitment and desire the success, where their self-motivation plays a remarkable role.

All this reality has got translated to screen and the present chapter is going to focus on some such films that portray their female protagonists as career women who are into the fields of their own choice, with full sincerity and honesty and undoubtedly the hope and desire to be successful. These are the women who with all their feminine virtues and emotionality know where to mark the boundaries between their ‘work’ and ‘relationships’. They work when they work and they work not just to work, but rather to prove their potentials and worth and more importantly, to prove to the

patriarchy and hence all around them that by approaching the hitherto unvisited domains, they are not only coming out of the conventional cocoons set for them, but are also preparing their fraternity to take their own decisions and to recognize their unexplored potentials. Doing so, they are setting a path for the distinctive transformation of women.

Band Baja Baaraat (2010), directed by Maneesh Sharma, is the first film taken for analysis. It is mainly the story of Shruti Kakkar (Anushka Sharma), a young smart ambitious girl from a middle class Delhi household and Bittoo Sharma (Ranveer Singh) who has no real aim in life. Shruti is focused and determined with pre-planned ambitions and her goals in life are well laid out by the time she reaches her final year of college. She wants to set up a business of wedding planning as she wishes to be the best wedding planner of India. Bittoo, on the other hand, is also a final year student of Delhi University but he whiles away his life having fun with his buddies and somehow passes the exams. A chance meeting brings the two of them together on a tumultuous journey where they become friends and then partners in the business of wedding planning. Their business and friendship face the ups and downs of lavish Delhi weddings. They fight, separate but come together finally not only in business but in life also, accepting each other as their life-partners.

The film opens with a song picturising parallelly the men and women enjoying life and having fun. The very first scene shows Shruti as a bold girl taking to task an eve teaser. It is important, however, to observe that she is shown doing some work also: pasting some pictures in an album, thinking of some plans, which in a way try to prove her as a woman who along with being open and frank towards life is concerned about her future also and is trying to plan everything beforehand. The background song is significant to portray the life of youngsters who want to live life to the full, have infinite dreams and also infinite plans to fulfill them:

*“Tarkeebain, tarkeebain, kitni hain tarkeebain
Tarkeebain, tarkeebain, apni hain tarkeebain
Satrangi sapne hain atrangi tarkeebain”*

(Plans, plans, how many plans

Plans, plans, our own plans

We have seven colour dreams and various colour plans).

Shruti and Bittoo meet first at a marriage where Shruti is a part of the wedding planning team and Bittoo actually is there only to eat fraudulently. Shruti gets suspicious of him and calls it her duty to be beware of the people who come only to eat when actually they don't belong to any of the families associated with the marriage. Bittoo tries his best to manage smartly and escape Shruti's catching eyes but Shruti argues a lot with him calling him "*bhukkad*" (glutton).

Afterwards, Bittoo tries to know her whereabouts and gets the information that she studies at Kirorimal College, Delhi and lives at Janakpuri. He chases her and once in a bus, he meets her and asks if she remembers him. In the situation, Shruti's stern face is noticeable when she bluntly says to him: "*Bhukkad, Kya chahiye*"? (Glutton, What do you want?). Here also, it is important to observe that Shruti is busy in some calculations when Bittoo starts talking to her. That again puts her before us as a woman who is taking care of her future by planning it thoroughly. She is so much concerned about her own career that she outrightly sidelines all those things that might interrupt her growth in life. When Bittoo offers to gift her a CD he has made specially of her dance at the wedding function, where they had met, she bluntly says:

"Line maar raha hai! Try bhi na kariyo. Mere paas nahi hai love-shov ke liye time".

(Flirting me! Don't even try. I don't have time for love etc.)

Bittoo is clever and practical enough to tell Shruti that he wants only to befriend her. Shruti accepts the CD but when Bittoo suggests her to send that as a sample of her talent to some talent hunting reality show, she again gets blunt to tell him that she has already decided what she has to do in her life. So she doesn't need any such platform as Bittoo is talking about:

"Indian idol meri jooti pe. Mai apna khud ka business start karne wali hun. Bas third year ke exam ho jaayen."

(To hell with Indian Idol. I am going to start my own business. Just waiting for the third year exams to finish.)

She tells Bittoo that she wishes and is determined to become a ‘wedding planner’. And in this context, Bittoo’s question “*Ye kya hota hai?* (What is it?)” puts before us Shruti and Bittoo in a sharp contrast where Shruti is shown to be a bold, awakened and aware girl who knows what to do career wise whereas Bittoo is a careless, irresponsible boy, totally unaware of career opportunities and is least bothered about even the need to get settled in life.

Shruti is shown to be so confident that she thinks of becoming the best wedding planner, not only of Delhi but of the whole India. And she is shown to be so clever and organized that she has researched all the business opportunities and has arrived at a profession that is going to survive in all situations. When Bittoo calls her choice of business “*achchha*” (good), she blurts out enthusiastically:

“Achchha! Best business hai. Karina, Katrina ki teen filmen pit jaayen to vo out, par recession ho ya inflation, shaadiyan to hoti rahengi na! Log unme laakhon, karodon kharchte rahenge na! Aur saari planning ke liye kaun chaahiye?”

(Good! It is the best business. Karina and Katrina will be out once three of their films flop but marriages will keep happening whether it is recession or inflation. People will keep investing lakhs and crores in them. And who is needed for all the planning?)

Bittoo’s immediate reply is “*wedding planner*”. Shruti has planned to the extent of choosing even the name of her company which according to her choice, is going to be ‘*Shaadi Mubaarak*’ (Happy Marriage). Shruti shows Bittoo the whole album she has made out of her ideas, imagination and certainly the market demands. When Bittoo makes fun of her planning, she snubs him reminding him that he himself wastes a lot of his own time and makes fun of those who make efforts. She parodies how he utters the word ‘business’. “*Pare hat, ‘business’ tak to bolna nahi aata.*” (Get aside. You don’t even know how to pronounce ‘business’). Bittoo actually speaks the word ‘business’ as ‘binness’. Just the two meetings with Shruti are enough to prove her attitude as a tough girl. But desiring to meet her again, Bittoo says;

“Thank you to tu bolne se rahi. Bread pakoda hi khila diyo”

(You will never say thank you. Promise to make me eat at least a bread pakora).

And Shruti's frank reply is that she has to study a lot. So she will meet him only after exams.

The exams get over and she comes back home happily thinking of beginning her already planned venture of 'Shaadi Mubaarak'. But as she enters, she sees an aunt of hers who is there with a marriage proposal for her. All her family members want her to get married first and then think of her business. In the context, what Shruti says portrays not only her as a determined girl completely aware of her priorities in life but also the harsh social realities that victimize a woman even in the name of marriage. The expectations of the family of husband are too many and the individuality of a woman is curbed there and then. Aware of all these social realities, Shruti wants to get settled first and become financially independent and mentally more empowered. She wants to think of marriage only once she is able to establish her very own venture 'Shaadi Mubaarak'. She doesn't want to allow any kind of hindrance in her project and decides to postpone her marriage also for the same reason. Her words put the social reality in a very clear manner:

"Shaadi ke baad saasu sasura peechhhe padenge pota-poti, pota-poti. Pati ji ke muh pe lag jaayega taala. Saal bhar me bachcha, fir ek aur. Baitho ji tusi ghar pe. Life bhar mummy ban ke dolti rahun! Kar lungi naa shaadi. Aap hi ki marzi se kar lungi. Par Shaadi Mubaarak banane ke baad. Dekho abhi bees ki hi to hun. 5 saal de do mujhe, pachcheesven birthday pe kara dena shaadi chaahе Shaadi Mubaarak bane ya na bane."

(After marriage, the mother-in-law and father-in-law will be after me for their grand-children. The husband will not speak anything at all. One child in one year and they will demand one more then. One has to sit back at home then. You want me to roam throughout the life remaining just a mother! I will marry. I will marry according to your choice. But after the establishment of Shaadi Mubaarak. Look I am only twenty now. Give me 5 years. Fix my marriage on my 25th

birthday whether I am able to get ‘Shaadi Mubarak’ established or not.)

Shruti’s awareness of her age and otherwise the significance of age in one’s life is important. Moreover, she wishes to exercise her own right on herself as an individual by asking her parents to give her 5 years to try for her dream profession. Shruti’s words clearly express her desire to marry also but she is shown to be decisive when it is her life and refuses to be trapped into mere stereotypical roles of a daughter-in-law, wife or mother with no identity of her own self.

Shruti is clear about her decision and it is significant and nice to observe that her father also supports her decision. He tells his sister:

“Aap keh do ladke se 5 saal wait kar sakta hai to kar le warna best of luck.”

(You tell the boy to wait for 5 years if he can, otherwise best of luck).

When the exams are over, Bittoo’s friend is shown to leave for further studies. Shruti has already decided what she has to do. It is only Bittoo who has not even thought about his career. His family members come to take him back. He belongs to a farmer family in Saharanpur who have sugarcane fields. But Bittoo is unwilling to go back to village and join the family profession of agriculture. Simply in order to escape from his family, he lies to his father that he has started a business of ‘wedding planning’. And immediately after saying this, it strikes him that he can really be Shruti’s partner. He shares this idea with his friend and the following conversation between the two friends is important to understand Shruti again as a bold woman and Bittoo as a timid man :

Bittoo : Yaar Papa ji se jaan chhudaane ke chakkar me kya idea aaya hai! Partnership karunga us Janakpuri ke saath.

Friend : Mujhe to laga tu bau ji ko goli de raha hai.

Bittoo : Kyon! Problem kya hai. Laakhon ka turnover hai...

Friend : Muh tod degi Shruti Kakkar tera.

Bittoo : Line maarunga to todegi na. Na vo interested hai is scene me na mai. Partnership maang raha hun bas.

Friend : Per Shaadi Mubaarak to uska idea hai. Tujhe kyon karne degi vo apne saath partnership?

Bittoo : Kyo nahi karne degi? (arrogantly)

Nahi karne degi? (timidly)

(Bittoo : What an idea has come to me while getting out of the trap of my father! I'll do partnership with that Janakpuri. (he calls Shruti so since she is a resident of Janakpuri).

Friend : I thought you were fooling your father.

Bittoo : Why! What is the problem? It's a turnover of lakhs.

Friend : Shruti Kakkar will kill you.

Bittoo : She will kill me when I flirt on her. Neither she nor I am interested in this scene. I am asking only for partnership.

Friend : But 'Shaadi Mubaarak' is her idea. Why will she have a partnership with you?

Bittoo : Why not? (arrogantly)

Will she not allow me to be her partner? (timidly)

Bittoo's state of being arrogant and timid at the same time actually portrays the reality that he can behave impulsively and arrogantly, (being a man with the patriarchal mindset) but is actually less confident which makes him timid in front of the confident Shruti whose confidence is a result of her hard work and planning, where Bittoo has not even thought of any suitable career for himself, what to say about planning and working out.

Bittoo however, dares to meet Shruti and requests her to take him as her partner. Shruti's reply in this context is a further demonstration of her boldness, confidence and decision making. She is a woman who doesn't want to get trapped even in a friendship with a boy. She wants to avoid the 'complications of partnership'. So she says, 'no' to Bittoo. On Bittoo's further request and claim to be a friend, she makes it clear that she wants to do her business without any partner, and that she doesn't want to even think about a male partner. The scene in the context is very interesting, again showing the contrast between Bittoo and Shruti. On the one hand, it is Bittoo's helplessness who finally begs to Shruti for making him her partner or even secretary or assistant or even peon. On the other, it is Shruti, completely confident of

herself and clear about her stand in regard to her well planned business which she wishes to begin. It is later that she allows Bittoo to be with her but there again it is solely her decision. Initially she rejects every request of Bittoo and when he pleads in the name of friendship, “*Friend hai na tu meri!*” (Aren’t you my friend!), Shruti’s clear reply is :

“Aaj friend hai kal I love you bol dega. Mere ko koi emotional syaapa nahi chaahiye. Business start karna hai bus aur business ka first rule: Jiske saath vyaapar karo, uske saath kabhi na pyar karo. Pyaar- vyaapar ki jodi kabhi nahi baiithati. Naa. Mai to single hi best hun”.

(You are friend today, and you will propose me tomorrow. I don’t want any emotional drama. I have to just start the business and the first rule of business is : Don’t love your business partner... The relationship of love and business doesn’t go. No. It’s good to be single.)

Thus setting her priorities clearly, Shruti wants to focus on her career first. So despite Bittoo’s promise of not going beyond friendship, she is not ready to trust him and gets up to go. Moreover, she is very clear about who to work with. She wants to work initially with some established planners for the sake of her own experience and learning. And there comes the choice between Annu auntie and Chanda Narang. She knows the gap between the two. According to her, Annu auntie is only for small investments and for Janakpuri marriages. (Janakpuri symbolises the middle class people who are not able to invest much for marriages.) Being very ambitious, Shruti wishes to work with Chanda Narang with whom people invest crores. Even the bridegroom comes in helicopter and the commission of wedding planner itself is one to one and half crore. She expresses her ambition to Bittoo:

“Chanda madam ke saath kaam karungi, badaa kaam seekhne ko milega. High class contacts me rahungi”

(I will work with Chanda madam and will get the opportunity to learn big. I will be able to stay in high class contacts).

Very enthusiastic Shruti goes to see Chanda Narang. Despite her unwillingness, Bittoo follows her. He too wants to meet Chanda Narang but Shruti silences him. In a short while however, Shruti realizes the neglect she has to face there. She is about to leave when the situation changes suddenly. Actually Chanda Narang needs a man to handle certain things and she asks Bittoo to work for her. But Bittoo refuses to come without Shruti and convinces Chanda for Shruti's capabilities. Chanda finally agrees to take both of them but on the condition of paying the salary for one person only. Bittoo agrees and since Shruti has no other option for herself, she too agrees to work with Bittoo taking this opportunity as her first step towards the fulfillment of her dreams.

They start working with Chanda Narang, but very soon Shruti understands Chanda's fraudulent business strategies. For Shruti, Chanda is a "*cheat*" whereas Bittoo calls it "*business sense*". Shruti's statement "*Meri company me ye kabhi nahi hoga.*" (This will never happen in my company) puts her before us as an honest person also who will be committed to fair dealings with her clients once she is in her own business. Then a situation comes where Chanda blames Bittoo and Shruti for actually her own mis-managements. She humiliates them both publically calling them even "*morones, lazy and idiot*". She threatens to fire them and sensing the reality of their future, Bittoo and Shruti accept the dismissal there and then. Bittoo encourages Shruti to leave this work and then, it is Shruti who initiates to call him her "*partner*" and they leave the venue assertively. Throwing the uniform cap to Chanda, Shruti's words "*Milte hain. Market me.*" (Let us meet in the market.) are expressive of Shruti's brilliant level of confidence and her unflinching attitude.

Here starts the struggle of Shruti to get work for herself. She goes to a Janakpuri family who are going to have a marriage function. The person refuses to take any help due to his low economic budget but when Shruti convinces him to arrange everything within his budget, he agrees to give the responsibility to her. Bittoo is shown however doubtful and rather scared of getting all the arrangements done within the stipulated budget but Shruti is absolutely fearless and rather confident as she says to Bittoo.

"Yahi to challenge hai. Dekhen kitna chalta hai tera dimaag".

(This is the challenge. Let us see how much your brain works.)

So, it is a challenge to both of them actually. Even here Bittoo tries to save money by arranging electricity fraudulently but no logic works before Shruti's honesty. Even the florist Maqsood who used to work with Chanda Narang joins Shruti, all is due to her honest attitude. The first wedding plan, therefore, goes wonderfully. Thereafter, Shruti takes a shop on rent and sets up an office there. The main display board of their office is important to watch where they put the name of their company '*Shaadi Mubaarak*', and Shruti's name is written on the top and Bittoo's name can be seen below hers. They move on with their company and when they finish planning 26 marriages, Bittoo asks Shruti about her future plan. Very clearly and unhesitatingly, Shruti tells him that she will wait for three more years till she gets 25 and then she will get settled in a marriage and family of her parents' choice. Bittoo, however, is worried about the future of their company. He wants to rise more high but Shruti, despite being very ambitious, wants to be patient and thinks of rising step by step. Bittoo still motivates her to rise high, think of *Sainik Farms* marriages. (*Sainik Farms* symbolises the high class family marriages.) Bittoo suggests her to observe Chanda Narang's working style. They do the same and in the process, are able to impress a couple who has already booked Chanda Narang for their marriage. The couple finally assigns its work to them and they are able to work for their first '*Sainik Farm*' venture. They are able to complete their work successfully and get two crores for it which they celebrate with their whole team. After the celebration is over, Shruti and Bittoo are alone in the office. Happy over her success, Shruti wishes to share it with Bittoo and gets intimate to him. Initially hesitant, Bittoo also comes forward and they make love. They sleep together and when they get up, it is strange to see that Bittoo is quiet and stunned due to what happened between them while Shruti is quite normal and very happy. For her, all is a reflection of her happy state of mind. She is neither nervous, nor confused. Bittoo's nervousness, however, and his noticing the changes in Shruti (Shruti makes tea for him for the first time and also calls him "*tum*" instead of her usual "*tu*") however, puts before us again the stereotypes of society where a man is not able to digest the truth of the situation that a woman can initiate love making. And if she ever initiates and gets involved, it takes him directly to just one thought that she is willing to marry him. 'Sex' as has been discussed in earlier chapters also, is a taboo in our society, specially before marriage.

Bittoo, on his side, however gets involved with Shruti sexually with no overt feelings of love for her. But he is worried about hurting Shruti if she has by chance taken it seriously. He acknowledges that it is Shruti who has given him work, made him a good person, so he can't hurt her at least.

Shruti, however, feels herself more close to Bittoo after getting sexually close to him. But the social training of Bittoo with the pre-conceived notion of 'the relationship of sex and marriage' makes him uncomfortable when Shruti is around. Shruti not only asks him why he has been behaving so strangely but also moves forward to tell him that he should not feel scared after the episode of 'love making' between them:

“Jo kuchh humaare beech hua, ho hi gaya. Ghabraa mat. Mai teri baakiyon jaisi nahi hun jo chep ho jaati hain. Fir tu unse bhaagta firta hai. Humaare beech jo hua usse I've no problem.”

(Whatever happened between us, has happened. Don't panic. I am not like others who run after you and then you keep escaping them. I have no problem with what happened between us.)

Shruti's words relieve Bittoo of all his worries. In this conversation, however there is one thing quite noticeable which puts Bittoo and Shruti at two extremes, regarding 'sex'. For Bittoo, 'sex' is sex only with no feelings of love or attachment involved. And for Shruti, it is not just the physical act of sex but rather an expression of her happiness which she shared with Bittoo by getting physically intimate to him. It is only after getting intimate that she realizes her attachment also to him. For Bittoo, it was only a “kaand” (a mishappening), a “mistake” and “bevakoofti” (a foolish act), as he himself expresses to Shruti, where as for Shruti, it was a lovely act of sharing and attachment.

That is why Shruti cries at her own helplessness when Bittoo doesn't understand her state of mind. Bittoo goes out for some work and Shruti talks to herself:

“Ullu ki pathi, gadhi, fool, rulebook follow kar rahi thee na. Kyon fansi emotional chakkar me? Dobaara fansi na Shruti, muh tod dunga

tera. Ab rona nahi hai. Ek ansoo nahi behna chaahiye. Stop.”

(Stupid! fool! You were following rule book. No! Why did you get trapped in emotions? I'll kill you if you get trapped again. Now you don't have to cry. Not even a single tear should flow. Stop.)

Bittoo's words remind her of her own foolishness of falling in love that might hinder her professional growth. So despite getting emotional, she decides to check her emotions for the sake of her professional advancement and gets back to normalcy.

She gets another assignment and there happens a severe quarrel between her and Bittoo due to some mismanagement at that function. Both blame each other and Shruti rigidly tells Bittoo that their partnership is over. Abusing each other, they separate and divide everything that belongs to their joint business. It is important to notice that it was Shruti's decision to say yes to partnership with Bittoo and now it is again her decision to break the partnership. Bittoo starts his own company named 'Happy Wedding' but both of them suffer due to the separation of their joint venture. People want them to work together or else they are not ready to give them work. On request of Maqsood bhai (their florist), they get ready to work for one marriage only. So, Bittoo has to come to Shruti's office where she sets up a separate portion for him. But here also it is Shruti who dictates all the conditions, and the important condition here is that they won't interfere in each other's work.

The wedding, however, goes successful and after that Bittoo requests Shruti to let him be back again with her. Shruti's reply is a blunt 'no'. Then she tells him that she is going to marry Chetan (a man of her parents' choice) after two months, and will settle in Dubai with him. Bittoo is shocked to know this. A conversation takes place between them that portrays Bittoo before us as an irrational, impractical fool and Shruti as a perfectly practical and rational woman who knows how to choose and who to choose for herself as a husband. (It is later, however, that the whole situation takes a twist. Yet there also, it is Shruti who holds the sway). She tells Bittoo that she is marrying Chetan since he is "*ekdum correct banda*" (perfectly correct man) for her. He is "*educated*" and "*sophisticated*". Moreover, he doesn't have any problem with her business, that is her chances of maintaining her business are bright even after marriage. (It is important to mention here that in Indian situations, it often happens

that husbands are reluctant to allow their wives to do any work except the household job which is inclusive of the rearing of kids. So Shruti's choice here is correct from that point of view also as she wishes to carry on with her business and is particular about this aspect while choosing her husband also).

Bittoo in his shocked state loses control over himself. It is only then that he realizes that he also loves Shruti and is therefore, unable to accept the reality of her prospective marriage. He becomes aggressive and even misbehaves also out of his frustrated state of mind. He doesn't allow Shruti to even talk to Chetan. He insists on Shruti to admit that she had also started loving him and that he is marrying Chetan only to revenge upon Bittoo who had then ignored her feelings. He even disconnects the phone call from Chetan and then they have an argument over the issue of love, marriage and revenge.

It is true that Shruti had fallen in love with Bittoo but she controlled her feelings when she saw Bittoo not understanding them and also for the sake of her profession. She never thought of 'revenge' as Bittoo presumes. But when Bittoo misbehaves and pressurises her to confess that she had fallen in love and out of revenge, she was marrying Chetan, and after disconnecting the phone call from Chetan, doesn't give the phone back to Shruti which she has been demanding back from him, Shruti slaps Bittoo and speaks angrily:

“Bas, bahut ho gayaa. Tere ko lagtaa hai ye saara world tere chaaron side chakkar lagaata hai. Haan? Tera answer! Teri punishment! Shaadi kar rahi hun mere apne liye. Mere safe secure future ke liye. Mere mummy papa ke liye..... Aise aadmi se shaadi kar rahi hun jo mere liye ekdum correct life- partner hai, jiske saath mai khush rahungi. Haan, ho gayi thee mistake, ho gaya thaa tere se pyaar. Shruti Kakkar business ki rule book ghot ke baithi thee. Sab plan ke mutabik. Plan dimaag se bana thaa, dil ki counting ki nahi. Ho gaya pyaar. Tujhe nahi hua to nahi hua. Uske liye badla thodi leti firungi. Teri tarah bachchi nahi hun mai.

(It is enough. Do you think that the whole world revolves around you? Your answer! Your punishment! I am marrying for my own sake, for

my own safe secure future, for my parents... I am marrying a man who is a perfectly correct life-partner for me with whom I'll remain happy. Yes, I had committed a mistake. I had fallen in love with you. Shruti Kakkar had crammed the rule book of business. Every thing was according to the plan. Plan was made by brain and heart was not counted. I fell in love. It's okay that you didn't feel love. I will not go on seeking revenge for that. I am not as immature as you.)

These words put Shruti before us a sensible woman who knows what decisions she has to take regarding her life. She accepts that she had fallen in love but then she makes this also clear that she is mature enough not to be revengeful for Bittoo simply because he didn't feel the same for her.

Bittoo is shocked to know the reality and immediately takes the decision to disclose all the reality to Chetan. He finds it important to confess his own feeling of love to Shruti before it is too late. Therefore, he calls Chetan to tell him about his own feelings of love for Shruti. Chetan informs Shruti about this and in a very angry tone, Shruti asks Bittoo how he could dare to do that and asks him to tell clearly to her what he had told Chetan. And Bittoo confesses his love at the same time accepting that he was stupid and fool, not to have confessed it earlier for the fear that love would spoil their business. Bittoo admits that he has not been able to enjoy life without Shruti. Then Shruti also realises that she too won't be able to adjust with Chetan once she knows about Bittoo's love for her. And the scene is remarkable for the decisive and bold attitude of Shruti who doesn't hesitate even for a second to call Chetan and tell him that she has sorted her things out and so has to cancel her marriage with him. Chetan calls Shruti to ask him further about Bittoo and her relationship and she says:

"Mai Bittoo ke saath partnership kar rahi hun. Is baar pakki waali. Usne kuchh ulta seedha kiyo to mai uski taang tod dunggi. Ab obviously meri tumhaari shaadi to cancel."

(I am doing partnership with Bittoo. This time it's going to be permanent. I will kill him if he does something wrong....now obviously my marriage with you stands cancelled.)

So, Shruti is bold enough not only to announce the cancellation of her marriage with Chetan just on phone but also to make it clear that she won't tolerate Bittoo also if he does something wrong.

In the very next scene, she herself initiates to hug Bittoo and kisses him. A call comes from her team who inform her that her client wants to meet her immediately for some urgent reason. The scene is remarkable again to put before us Shruti as a woman who is emotional and loving and at the same time quick and bold in her decisions who never allows her emotions to overpower her reason or even her profession. Bittoo doesn't want Shruti to leave him in that intimate moment but she kisses him and takes his leave, since for her, it is also important that her clients shouldn't suffer because of her personal life. And the last scene shows Shruti and Bittoo getting married.

The whole film is thus a portrayal of Shruti Kakkar as a bold, decisive, honest and sincere woman full of emotions who wants to live life on her own terms. Her personality is an example of a woman who is very particular about her choices be it the career or the life partner. She wishes to choose her life partner according to her own needs, desires and requirements but in her priority list, her career and specifically the profession of her own choice come first and she is able to strike a remarkable balance between the career and the life partner. She lives and wishes to live beyond the trap of conventional family roles where the family is given priority above all and a woman ceases to exist because of that. For her, family too is important but she is not ready to be subdued just in the name of family and relationships. So she emerges as a successful wedding planner who is successful in other aspects of life also, being able to understand and assert her own discretionary powers.

The next film for study is *Players (2012)*, directed by the duo Abbas Mustan. It is basically a thriller. The mastermind Charlie Mascarenhas (Abhishek Bachchan) and his accomplice Riya (Bipasha Basu) are one of the greatest pair of thieves in India. A friend of Charlie, Raj (Aftab Shivdasani) is killed by the Russian mafia. At Raj's funeral, his wife gives Charlie a CD containing information about the transfer of gold by train from Russia to Romania. Charlie decides to rob the train with the help of imprisoned Victor Braganza (Vinod Khanna) who is actually his guide in the field of theft and robbery etc. They hire a team of criminals to join them in the robbery. The

group includes Spider (Neil Nitin Mukesh), who is a world-class hacker, an explosives expert Bilal Bashir (Sikander Kher), a prosthetic makeup artist Sunny (Omi Vaidya), an illusionist Ronnie (Bobby Deol) and Riya too as an automobile expert besides her expertise in theft.

Charlie is having an affair with Victor's daughter, Naina (Sonam Kapoor), who knows nothing about her father and Charlie's criminal activities. The group devises a plan to rob the Russian train in the slickest way possible. The robbery is executed successfully. However while celebrating, Spider double crosses the gang and tries to flee with all of the gold. Spider is stopped by Ronnie, who is then shot multiple times by Spider's assassins. Ronnie as well as Riya are killed. Charlie, Bilal and Sunny manage to escape after Spider blows up the location and flees with the gold. Charlie calls Victor to tell him about the robbery, but Naina overhears the conversation. At the same time, Victor is murdered by Spider's assassins. Naina decides to cut all contact with Charlie, holding him responsible for all that happens. Over the course of a year, Charlie is able to convince Naina that they wanted to steal the gold so that they could help achieve Victor's dream of building a big orphanage. Naina understands this a little later and then teams up with Charlie to exact revenge on Spider. In New Zealand they discover that Riya is still alive and living there. She explains that she also wanted revenge on Spider and provides Charlie's team with the information about Spider's residence. Unaware of her plans, Charlie trusts Riya and realizes later that she is working for Spider. Spider tries to move the gold to another country, but Charlie's team, using three large trucks and, by hacking into the traffic system, take the gold and hide it inside three mini cars. Just as they are about to leave New Zealand, they are caught by Spider and it is confirmed that Riya was working with Spider all along.

Spider tries to force the team to hand over the gold and uses Riya for the purpose. He betrays Riya and threatens to kill her. Before Charlie can reveal the real location of the gold, Riya shoots herself and Spider stabs Charlie. Spider tries to escape, but Sunny and Bilal stop him and beat him up badly. Naina, who wants revenge for the death of Victor, shoots Spider thrice. As the four leave the scene, Spider makes a final call to the Russian mafia and tells them that Charlie has stolen Russian gold. The Mafia stop them to check the cars but they are found to be empty.

It is revealed later that they were made out of the actual gold itself. In the end, Bilal opens a car dealership business, Sunny becomes a theatre actor, Charlie and Naina open Victor's dream orphanage and Charlie raises Ronnie's daughter as his own.

Players, a film about the 'players' of a team of selected robbers and their 'game' is no less significantly a film about the two women also, who being a part of this team play their game very boldly and successfully. One of them is already a professional thief and the other joins them due to some specific situations that arise to make her join them. The present point of focus is how audaciously and confidently they prove themselves in their respective professions and the work they undertake.

The film begins with a planned robbery in a jewellery showroom and the masterminds are Charlie and Riya. The very first scene portrays Riya as a modern confident woman where her whole body language is a reflection of her bold spirits. The robbery is successful and the manner in which she executes the robbery is marvellous enough to understand how smartly she conducts the tasks she undertakes.

The next scene shows Raj becoming a victim to the enemy's plot but before he dies, he leaves a message for his wife to give a parcel to Charlie. Charlie collects it from her and comes to know of the Romanian gold and the whole project of its being sent (under strict security measures) from Russia to Romania. Raj gives all this information via a CD that Charlie collects from his wife, and he asks Charlie to plan the robbery but cautions him to make a team of the best players to win this. Raj himself had planned it but he took the risk of doing it alone and was trapped by the Russian Mafia and got killed. Naina's entry in the film is wonderful. While Charlie is watching the CD on his laptop, it gets hung and the message that appears is "*Naina Virus Alert*". So the message itself announces the entry of Naina who hacks Charlie's computer and the very moment proves the skill of Naina who, as we come to know in her conversation with Charlie, is a "*masters in Computer with a gold medal*". She has specialized in "*ethical hacking*" and wants to convey to her friend Charlie (who is actually her father's Chartered Accountant overtly) about the completion of her course and her coming back. But instead of calling Charlie directly, she hacks his computer that forces him to call her. When Charlie calls her to ask if she has again hacked his computer, she says in a very bold, hot and provocative voice:

“Ab kya karen Charlie! Ek yahi to tareeka hai tumse phone karwaane ka”.

(Now what to do Charlie! This is the only way to get you call me.)

The scene is important to understand Naina who, rather than being simple and submissive, is a woman of guts who knows how to make people come to her. Charlie never initiates to call her but she knows the trick and uses it often to make him contact her. She is driving the car while talking to Charlie and the immediate scene shows her handling the eve-teasers in a bold manner. The adventurous manner in which she drives the car to save herself and mock at the eve-teasers portrays not only her skill of driving the car but her over all confidence and boldness. Even her body language, when she raises her finger up (as a symbol of victory) to show it those men who were trying to tease her, is indicative of her audacity.

Charlie meets Victor dada (who is in prison) to discuss the robbery and his need of the best players for this plan. Victor Dada is actually father of Naina, who has promised his daughter that he would never choose the path of crime to earn money. He rather gives to Charlie some money which he has earned honestly in prison, to give to Naina. So Victor is reluctant to help Charlie for this. But Victor’s own dream of establishing an orphanage tempts him also, as for that he needs a lot of money which can’t be earned honestly in the short span of his life. Befooling the prison officers, who now trust Victor’s nobility and honesty, he arranges for Charlie some of the best persons required for the gold robbery that Charlie wishes to plan.

Charlie comes out of the prison where Naina is waiting outside. She asks him about her father and his ‘promise’ and Charlie hands over to her the money Victor has sent for her, as his first honest earning. From the beginning, Naina has been projected as a hard core woman who is fearless and uninhibitive. But here she is shown crying to see the money that is indicative of her father’s fulfillment of the promise given to her. And Charlie, unbelieving her asks if she is crying:

“Charlie : Tum ro rahi ho!

Naina (wiping her tears) : Nahi, mai nahi ro rahi.

Charlie : Yes, you are crying.”

(Charlie : You are crying!

Naina : No, I am not crying.

Charlie: Yes, you are crying.)

The hitherto hard core girl accepts that she is crying and hugs Charlie in that emotional moment. Her tears in this situation are expressive only of her soft feminine self and not her weakness in any manner. Her own statement of denial regarding her tears expresses that she can't cry unless it is something that may move her feminine spirits. And the next moment, she is the same bold Naina who doesn't hesitate to tell Charlie that since she is there, everybody would need to meet her father via her only:

“3 weeks – Uske baad papa aur mai. Agar unke CA ko bhi milna hai na to appointment mere through lena padega. Okay”.

(3 weeks - after that Papa and me. Even his CA will have to seek appointment via me if he wants to meet him. Okay.)

The father is going to get released from prison after three weeks and Naina announces in advance her hold on even her father's life.

Victor introduces the 'players' to Charlie. One is Bilal Bashir- the explosives expert, then Sunny Mehra- the master of prosthetics and make up, and Ronnie- the illusionist (who has actually stopped doing magic shows for some reason but is ready to work for Victor presently). The manner in which Riya is introduced is different but important for her identity as an expert in her field and also for her being a 'woman' significantly who uses her feminine form also, expertly and comfortably, to attain her goals. Victor introduces her as a *“part time automobile expert and full time artist humaari tarah. Duniya me shayad hi koi aisa mard hai jo iske charm ke aage tik sake.”* (Part time automobile expert and full time artist like us. There is hardly any man in the world who may resist the temptations of her charm.) And Victor refers to her recent theft where she had used her charms to win and steal all of the seventh richest man of South Asia. So Riya has been presented to us, significantly as a *“full time artist”* whose art is basically to lure others, befool others or betray others, all for her personal benefit. And the film proceeds to show her artistry in a variety of ways.

After Riya, Victor talks of Spider, who is the best hacker of the world. They need him certainly for their plan but Spider is actually hard to be traced. Nobody knows who he is and where he lives. But he needs to be looked out, as according to Victor, *“there is no alternative for the best”*.

Charlie and the team are worried about searching Spider for one of their projects, as they tell Naina. Actually the whole plan of robbery is hidden from Naina as Victor doesn't want her to know about his involvement in any such plan. Looking at their need to find Spider, Naina reveals that 'Spider' was her thesis project when she was doing her masters in ethical hacking. She tells them that she can help them searching for Spider. And she is successful in tracing him via her skills of using internet. They get to know that he is an Indian and get his postal address in Goa. But Spider himself being a hacking expert, gets an alert signal on his system. He becomes cautious and tries to escape the team of Charlie by changing over into a pizza delivery boy, but is finally trapped by them. Initially he refuses to accept that he is Spider but then admits his identity on seeing the whole plan of gold robbery. (It is however revealed later that Spider's plans surpass even Charlie's).

The gold is to be sent via train from Victory Palace of the Czar of Russia to Romania. The plan of robbery has to begin. Riya uses her automobile skills for settings in a train which they hire trickily for a film shoot, which actually is to be run on a parallel track to the train containing gold. More than that, the Czar is needed to be trapped so that his face mask can be made and somebody may wear it to impersonate him. And again it is Riya who, with her charms has to lure the Czar and trap him. She is successful in doing this with dancing a sexy provocative dance that makes her irresistible to the Czar. He takes her to his personal room and Riya has to be more tricky to save herself from getting sexually assaulted. She tricks him into singing a song for her and meanwhile mixes some sedative drug in his drink. So before he is able to actually violate her sexually, he faints. Sunny Mehra is already hidden there, who scales all of his face to make a mask. Charlie wears this mask and takes all the risk to enter his palace, come out, act like him and then go to the train, fixing a camera there secretly, and get the code of the lock (which his team notes via the hidden camera). On one side, the train containing gold is ready to move from Russia and, on the other, Charlie's plan is ready to be executed. The train running

parallel to the Russian train is managed by the illusionist Ronnie who plans it in such a way that the Russian soldiers can see only their own train moving and are unable to see the other train running parallel to them. The team is able to transfer the gold to its own train. Towards the end, however, an accident takes place which disconnects both the trains but Charlie is still able to manage and complete the plan. Finally they reach a place which is different from Charlie's exit plan.

Meanwhile Charlie calls Victor to tell him about the success of their robbery but Naina overhears it. She gets angry with Victor over breaking his promise of not getting involved any more in any mission of dishonest earning. Victor wants to explain to her his real mission of establishing an orphanage and his need of money for that but despite all his requests to let him explain, Naina doesn't listen to him. All of a sudden, Victor realises that he is in danger. Some unknown people attack him and kill him right in front of Naina. The only words Victor is able to speak to Naina in his last moments are:

“Sorry beti. Maine tumhe diya hua promise tod diya. Mai kuchh aisa karna chaahta tha taaki tum jab bhi mere bare me socho, tumhe fakhra ho, fakhra ho beti”.

(Sorry daughter, I have broken the promise given to you. I wanted to do some such thing that you might feel proud whenever you think of me.)

Victor dies and Naina is unable to understand anything.

Parallel to Victor's death, in another scene, the players are all together after the execution of robbery. And a sudden situation makes clear to us that all are in the trap of Spider. He tells them that he already knew about the gold and it was his plan to trap Charlie and his team to use them for his purpose which he actually did. Spider intends to take away all the gold. He informs them of Victor's murder also which he had already planned. A fight ensues between Charlie's team and Spider's gang. All escape safe somehow except Ronnie who is shot dead by Spider. Even Riya is shot but she is saved which is revealed later.

Charlie comes to meet Naina and tries to make her understand that Spider is responsible for Victor's death. But Naina is bent upon holding Charlie himself responsible for all. Somehow Charlie is able to convey to Naina Victor's plan for opening India's best orphanage so that nobody may have to choose the path of crime for his livelihood. Naina then recalls Victor's last words. Charlie leaves saying:

“And trust me Naina. Victor dada ka sapna mai pooraa karunga”

(And trust me Naina. I'll fulfill the dream of Victor dada).

Charlie and his team go to the graveyard to express their gratitude for Victor and also their promise to fulfill his dream. Naina reaches there and her very entry and her words mark her role which can be seen in the following part of the film:

“Mere papa ke sapne ko tum akele pooraa nahi karoge. Aur ek baat Charlie. Spider se papa ki maut aur gold ka hisaab mai lungi”.

(You alone will not fulfill the dream of my father. And one more thing Charlie. From Spider, I'll take account of my father's death and the gold.)

Her spirits can be understood in the way she aggressively expresses her wish to revenge upon Spider and holding the collar of Charlie, says *“Aakhiri crown tak ka hisaab”* (The account till the last crown.)

There begins the role of Naina importantly as a woman, as a daughter, as a professional who uses all her talents for the fulfillment of her sole aim, that is, the end of Spider. Naina becomes an important part of the whole team who uses her expertise in 'hacking' to trace Spider. With the help of one gold brick which Charlie had with him (this brick was the last brick which accidentally was left with Charlie), they approach a gold dealer trickily and Naina is there with all her systems to trace Spider via a phone call. Unfortunately the call disconnects and she is not able to trace the exact location of Spider. However, they come to know that he is somewhere in Wellington. It is a big problem then how to find him in such a big city. They plan to search the files and records of that gold dealer which is quite a risky task. But Naina takes that risk and goes with Charlie, and is able to get some information via a video

footage. They get to know about a lady who works for Spider. They follow her but at one check post, they have to stop and the lady escapes. The situation again proves Naina's guts when she lures a man to use him and his car to follow that lady. She offers to make herself available to that man and the man (interested in sex only) follows Naina's directions to move his car. Before he is able to realize Naina's intentions, she asks him to stop the car. The man asks: "*You want to do it here!*" And Naina's reply is: "*In your dreams baby*". Naina is able to see the location of Spider's mansion. Naina uses this man for her own benefit in such a carefree, bold and uninhibitive manner that we are able to understand her as a woman who can go to any limit to fulfill her goal, with all courage and determination.

And her determined self doesn't stop here. Bilal is ready to make a device to detect the location of gold in Spider's palace which he calls 'Web'. Naina is there ready to make the software to operate that device. Meanwhile the team happens to see Riya. They are shocked to see her alive and follow her to know about her being saved and her present life. Riya tells them that she too wants to take revenge from Spider but he stays in such a high-tech security that it is difficult to approach him. She however tells them that every night, a new woman from city's night clubs goes to him. The team can't trust any woman to do their job, that too in the city of Spider himself. Naina again comes forward to take this risk and go to Spider as according to her logic, she is the only person in the team whom Spider doesn't recognize. Riya expressing her concern for Naina's safety advises that she shouldn't take such a big risk. But Naina is bent upon doing anything to approach Spider. To Riya's words "*Tum jaanati nahi tum kya kar rahi ho.*" (You don't know what you are doing), Naina's aggressive reply is: "*Mai jaanti hun mai kya kar rahi hun, agar tumhare pass isse better alternative hai to bata do. Agar nahi hai then just stay out of it*". (I know what I am doing. Tell me if you have any better alternative than this. If not, just stay out of it.)

Posing as a professional bar dancer of a night club, Naina goes to Spider's web and dances a provocative dance to lure him. The hidden camera in the heel of her sandals is able to send Charlie all the activities going on in the mansion where she is with Spider. She is somehow able to throw her sandal out of the door which Spider closes finally to be with her in solitude. Charlie is able to trace the location of gold in

his web but then there is a twist which reveals that Spider already knows about Charlie's plan. Naina is in his trap but Charlie's team is able to save her somehow. It is too unsafe to be in Spider's trap yet Naina doesn't lose her confidence. When Spider speaks disrespectfully for her father, Naina slaps him forcefully, saying: "*Aage se mere papa ka naam lo to izzat se lena.* (Speak my father's name with respect now onwards.) Her boldness and confidence get a spark when she says: "*Shukra kar ye mera left hand thaa*" (Be thankful that it was my left hand.) This statement is actually symbolic of not only her physical but mental strength as well. It indicates that it was just the beginning and she has in store much more strength to tackle a man like Spider.

After this, Charlie plans to inform the Russian mafia about this gold as he says his aim was not gold but 'revenge' this time. And if they themselves can't achieve gold, they can at least fulfill their revenge by depriving Spider also of gold. Riya resists it and leaves them immediately. Afterwards she is shown close to Spider which is again a twist in the story. She is actually a partner to Spider and is helping him to get for herself a share of gold.

Charlie again makes a plan to steal the gold that Spider plans to send away before the arrival of Russian mafia. All the players are given their specific roles. Naina is again given an interesting and challenging role that she accepts and executes bravely. Actually she has to hack the traffic system so that there would be a traffic jam and Charlie may manage to stop Spider's vehicle carrying gold, in order to execute his own plan to steal it. Naina is successful in jamming the traffic which proves not only her mastery of the course in computers she has done, but also her clever and manipulative mind with which she does it practically on road. And it portrays Naina before us as a woman who is competent to fulfill any and every role given to her. She is not the meek submissive woman in a daughter's or beloved's role to follow obediently and unquestioningly what society and relationships demand of her. She takes her own decisions and follows them courageously and with a lot of determination.

While taking away gold from Spider's web, they are trapped again just before their final exit. There is an interesting situation again where we are again able to see the audacious Naina. When Charlie is at the gun point of Pamila, Spider's assistant,

Naina hits her strongly and Charlie is saved. Naina's words spoken with the expressions of comfort, satisfaction, pride and victory "*Ye thaa mera right hand.*" (This was my right hand.) portray her before us as a woman who knows her potentials and where and how to use them.

Charlie steals the gold and escapes but at one point, he is stopped by Spider who actually knew Charlie's plan and specifically exit plan via Riya who was actually his partner but overtly working with Charlie. Spider exposes Riya before Charlie and his team to everyone's shock. To Charlie's question, "*Kyon kiya aisa?*" (Why did you do this?), Riya's reply is enough to put her before us as a clever and opportunist woman who works with expertise but it is for her own benefit finally:

"Choice nahi thee mere paas Charlie. Kya karti! Ek besahaara ladki jise duniya se akele ladna thaa, apne aur apne boodhe maa baap ke sapne poore karne the. Aisi koi story sunana chaahte the na tum! Bull Shit! Sach to ye hai that I always wanted to be with the winner. Aur Moscow ke us club me us raat I found my winner".

(I had no choice Charlie. What could I do! A desolate woman who had to fight with the world alone and fulfill the dreams of hers and her old parents. You wanted to hear some such story. No! Bull Shit! The truth is that I always wanted to be with the winner. And I found my winner that night in that Moscow Club.)

Riya refers to Spider who she could believe for his trickiness and sharp mindedness so as to win the whole game. And the night club at Moscow which she refers to is important for us to know her as a smart, confident, cunning and clever woman to surpass even Spider's cleverness. Very clearly she had proven to Spider that she too was smart to know the scheme of Spider which he was trying to hide from others. And Spider had to make her his partner in robbing all the gold off. Very confidently and with no inhibition or guilt at all, she expresses her justification to Charlie for her action and decision and more importantly the desire to get the gold:

"Kehne ko to mere paas choice thee tumhe Spider ka plan batane ki lekin Spider ke bagair mission impossible aur fir mujhe kya milta-ZERO – zero".

(Although I had the choice to tell you the plan of Spider but the mission was impossible without him. And otherwise what would I have got Z E R O—zero.)

So, it is Riya's decision to betray Charlie and be with Spider. She is portrayed not as a woman who succumbs to emotions and loses everything. She has been portrayed rather as a woman who understands the pros and cons of every situation and takes decisions accordingly, putting to priority her own benefits and profits. She thus chooses Spider, although later in the film, we see that she repents on her decision. But that repentance is not for Charlie but again for her ownself as her decision makes her lose everything. Actually Spider has been doing and planning everything exclusively for his personal benefit and he used Riya also for that purpose which she could not however, understand, despite all her cleverness of mind. Towards the end, Spider puts her at his gun point, again for the sake of the gold which is now in Charlie's possession. Charlie is ready to tell him about the gold rather than letting Riya die like that. It makes Riya realize that she took the wrong decision. While the verbal fight ensues between Charlie and Spider, Riya triggers the revolver which Spider has already aimed at her, and she dies. Before dying, her words to Charlie are:

“Sorry Charlie! Us waqt mere paas choice nahi thee par ab thee”

(Sorry Charlie! I had no choice at that time but this time I had it.)

Her words overtly expressive of her guilt and sense of sorry are actually important to be understood as expressive of her ambition which surpasses everything. The past she refers to was the moment when she desired gold only, with no thought for Charlie. She had no choice because she didn't want to think about any choice except the 'gold'. And when she refers to the present where she preferred to die, it is important to understand her state of mind rather than her state of emotions. She is able to say sorry to Charlie but she chooses to die not because of her guilt for betraying Charlie for gold, but rather because she is left with 'zero', since her choice and decision to *“be with the winner”* has actually betrayed her own self. So she lives for her own self and chooses to die also for the sake of her own satisfaction, her own honour and her own self as a woman who has got all the right on her own life. She

doesn't allow anyone to impose anything on her. She acts, lives, enjoys, celebrates for herself and dies also for her own self.

On the other side, we have Naina with a killing feeling of revenge in her. After a terrible fight between Spider and Charlie, Charlie leaves Spider for Naina. She points the revolver at him, but the tears in her eyes may betray us for a moment. Even Spider also is shown not to bother her as he stands up and turns to go in his wounded state, taking the tears of Naina to be her 'weak emotions'. But the next moment reveals the reality of her tears. Naina has been a daughter who always wanted her father to leave the world of crime and lead a simple and honest life. But situations force her to adopt the path of crime herself. However, it is not for any evil purpose but rather for fulfilling her father's dream to open an orphanage and also for taking revenge of her father's murder that she enters the world of crime. The tears thus express only her love for her father and her compulsion to hold the revolver to kill somebody. But she is not as weak as Spider considers her. She shoots him at last recalling the moments when her father was shot dead in front of her eyes, and avenges herself. And so a professional in ethical hacking, uses her profession and skill to its full to plan and fulfill the whole game initiated by her father.

Riya too as an automobile expert and professional thief, does her best to gain primarily for herself. Both these women in the film are the examples of stereotypes subverted who choose the unconventional professions and remain in the unconventional roles also choosing everything in life, according to their own self and for their own selves.

Page 3(2012), directed by Madhur Bhandarkar, the next film taken up for analysis talks about the lives of celebrities and stars that adorn the third page of newspaper. The film reveals the hypocrisy, superficiality and shallowness that lie underneath. Madhavi Sharma (Konkona Sen Sharma) comes to Mumbai to seek a job in journalism which is her dream profession. Her boss Deepak Suri (Boman Irani) gives her the task of reporting celebrity news. She begins her journey in the glitzy and glamorous world of celebrity lifestyle working on 'Page 3'. Her roommate Pearl Sequiera (Sandhya Mridul) is an outspoken air hostess. Gayatri Sachdeva (Tara Sharma) joins them later. Gayatri is an aspiring actress and gets involved with a leading actor, Rohit Kumar (Bikram Saluja). When she tells him that she is pregnant

with his baby, he suggests she has an abortion. Depressed and shattered, she unsuccessfully tries to commit suicide and, in the process, loses her unborn child. Meanwhile, Pearl marries a wealthy old man and moves to the United States. Madhavi plans to expose Rohit by writing an article on his relationship with Gayatri, but her editor kills the article, and she is forced to apologize to Rohit.

Madhavi finds out that her boyfriend is [gay](#), when she finds him in bed with her best friend, Abhijeet (Rehaan Engineer). Madhavi soon realises that the glamorous world of celebrity life is not as glamorous as it seems and she starts feeling disillusioned with it. She requests her boss to assign her to a different field and lands on the 'Crime Beat' with Vinayak Mane (Atul Kulkarni). She accompanies Vinayak and learns how to cover different kinds of crime news.

Once Vinayak is out of city and Madhavi takes charge of crime news. She gets an information about the trafficking of kids. Police inspector Bhonsle (Upendra Limaye) conducts a raid and arrests Karan Thapar (Nair Abdullah), who abuses those kids sexually. Bhonsle finds other corporate personalities also involved in the same. Madhavi captures the whole story with photo shoot, asks this new item to be the headline for the next day's news edition, and hands out all the details to her boss. He promises to take serious note of the issue and do his best but the same night he meets with the newspaper owner, who is the best friend of Mr. Thapar (from whom his paper receives major advertisements and other event coverage contracts). Fearing major loss to his business, the owner declines to publish the news, and wants Madhavi to be dismissed from the job.

Madhavi gets another job with a news company and moves on. Meanwhile Gayatri returns to Mumbai, adopts the life style of the city needed for her dream profession, and gets cast in a movie. The focus of the present study is the character of Madhavi who chooses her profession out of her own choice and struggles to carve out her identity as a committed journalist.

The film begins with a meeting of a team of an Event Management Company and Mr. Hiren Sangvi (Kurush Deboo), an NRI who has come from America to India for some business. He wishes to throw a party as he wants to develop links with rich and famous people. He is convinced by the team that they will arrange such a party that he will get recognition among celebrities. He is also assured that they will

manage to make him appear on ‘Page 3’ also which will be a big help in his aim. The head of this team Nupur says:

“Ek baar aapki photo ‘Page 3’ par aa gayi, that’s a very big achievement Mr. Sangvi.”

(That’s a very big achievement Mr. Sangvi if your photo appears on ‘Page 3’ just once.)

‘Page 3’ is the coloured page of a newspaper where appear all the happenings of the celebrity world. Madhavi is a famous journalist who covers ‘Page 3’ and Nupur calls her to inform about this party so that she may come to cover it. Madhavi reaches the party venue and covers it as usual. She is one such reporter who has chosen journalism as her own choice and wishes to excel in this field but she wants to do some meaningful journalism. She belongs to Bangalore basically and has got settled in Mumbai to pursue her dream profession. She comes back from the party and her background voice puts before us her experience in this field. She remains busy throughout, reaches home late at night, covering those high class parties, then has to write about them in the day, doing otherwise her office work also. She shares that this daily routine makes her tired but still she is happy as this is what she always wanted to do. This profession is her personal choice, as she utters:

“Rozaana parties cover karna, der raat ghar lautana, subah un parties ke baare me likhna, thak jaati hun lekin khush hun. Hamesha journalist hi bananaa chaahati thee mai.”

(To cover the parties daily, returning home late night, writing about those parties in the morning- I get tired but am happy. I always wanted to become a journalist.)

Madhavi is just six months old in this profession but knows how to assert herself in her field. Madhavi prefers to do ‘Page 3’ not because she likes the glittering world of celebrities but because she gets the opportunity to know some genuinely deserving persons present among those celebrities. She wishes to write about the people who are talented and committed and still struggling to get their talent recognized. Once she writes about a struggling painter which her boss rejects as he

doesn't find it of any significance. He wants her to write about the achievers and not the losers:

“See Madhavi, apne readers ke liye rich and famous ki life style ke bare me likho, not about some loser painter jiski achievements zero hon.”

(See Madhavi, do write about the life style of some rich and famous people for your readers, not about some loser painter whose achievements are zero.)

Madhavi argues a lot with her boss in this regard and her colleagues say:

“Dekho Madhavi ko. Abhi join kare 6 mahine nahi hue aur boss se kaise argue kar rahi hai!”

(Look at Madhavi. It's not even six months when she joined and how she is arguing with the boss!)

Madhavi argues only to assert her point about the need to write about the people who struggle hard in their life to achieve success. And the result of her argument with boss is that she is allowed to write at least about those people who have struggled a lot but are successful now, as the boss Deepak Suri says:

“Aage se aise logon ke bare me likho jinki life me bahut saare zeros hon lekin unki cheque books me nahi.”

(Now onwards, write about those people whose lives might have several zeros but not their cheque books.)

Madhavi meets a girl Gayatri Sachdeva (Tara Sharma) in a party and then in the train. She comes to know that Gayatri has come from Delhi with an ambition to become an actress. She is learning classical dance also to complement her talent of acting and wishes to do some performance oriented roles. She has no contacts in Mumbai except for the man who she calls her secretary and who takes her to the celebrity parties to make her meet people of the film world. But this man is not much reliable as he doesn't do anything fruitful for her. Gayatri is in search of a residing

place also and Madhavi offers her to stay with them where she lives with her friend Pearl who is an air-hostess. Gayatri accepts the offer.

Once Madhavi has to interview a famous film actor Rohit Kumar. She fixes the time with him and reaches the venue where Rohit is shooting for the role of a police inspector in the film. ACP Uday Yadav is there to train Rohit how to handle a revolver. Uday Yadav is a person who Madhavi often sees at 'Page 3' parties and he too recognizes Madhavi. He is happy that Madhavi often makes him appear on 'Page 3' but instead of complementing him for anything, Madhavi just conveys that she is forced to do that as he is always there. Madhavi is shown bold enough to convey her heart truly. Immediately after the shoot, Rohit too, in a state of excitement, asks Madhavi if she could judge the difference between him and the real cop. And Madhavi's spontaneous reply is:

"Yes. You haven't faced the real bullets."

So Madhavi is everywhere in her real self : bold and truthful.

Being in Mumbai, Madhavi has understood the city and its culture very well. She sees Gayatri struggling to get a film and facing a lot of harassment in the process, due to the lack of her contacts over there. Madhavi offers her to accompany her where she might use her links to get Gayatri any film:

"Gayatri, Ye Bombay hai. Yahaan contacts ke binaa kaam nahi hota."

(This is Bombay, Gayatri. Here the work doesn't get done without contacts.)

Madhavi takes Gayatri to meet Rohit who promises to help her. Gayatri tells Rohit about her desire to begin her career with the films of Charu Mohanty (Pradeep Velankar) who, in her opinion, is a good film maker, as he makes films on relevant and meaningful social issues.

Gayatri goes to Charu Mohanty with the reference of Rohit but is shocked to realize that Charu Mohanty's real self is quite contrary to his public image. He makes films on woman liberation and empowerment but is actually a womanizer himself. He exploits the aspiring actresses and tries to assault Gayatri also but she resists his

moves and comes back in a state of shock and despair. Madhavi gets to know this. She immediately calls Rohit and asks him to do something in this regard. And then tries to console Gayatri to forget all that has happened. Pearl has been hearing all this awhile and intervenes to snub both Madhavi as well as Gayatri. She asks them to identify their talents and work accordingly with no compromises of any kind. Pearl here works as an agency to motivate her friends to accept the reality and get practical and strong if they wish to be successful in life.

Anjali Thapar (Soni Razdan) is the wife of a rich industrialist Karan Thapar who runs a Children Home which is funded by her husband. Anjali doesn't like the pomp and show of 'Page 3' parties but she has to be there because of her husband. She is more happy and contented with what she does for children at Children's Home. With her ambition to do the meaningful journalism, Madhavi goes to meet Anjali and interviews her regarding her Children's Home. Anjali shares all her experiences with children telling Madhavi that she finds it a socially relevant and meaningful work. Madhavi writes her story focusing more on her social work but when the story is published, Madhavi is agitated at the fact that the story is not there according to her focus. The editing of the story is done in such a way that the actual significance of Anjali's role in her Children's Home is lost. Madhavi however, doesn't hesitate to convey her feelings to her boss about 'cutting the interview'. She tells him that she is feeling bad since she had worked hard on it. She even goes to the concerned editor and scolds her saying, *"You just reduced her (Anjali Thapar) to a social butterfly."* The woman concerned, instead of apologizing, asks Madhavi if she hasn't been paid for the story. This is enough to put Madhavi on fire. For Madhavi, journalism is not a mere profession where she has to work to just get paid for it. Her earlier arguments with her boss are ample evidence that she wants to pursue journalism thereby understanding and proving all its meaningfulness. And her outburst in the context is an outcome of the same feelings:

"Yahi to problem hai. All we think about is money. I don't know what would happen to journalism."

(This is the problem. All we think about is money. I don't know what would happen to journalism.)

Vinayak Mane is another journalist in her office who works for 'Crime Beat' and is considered a bold and committed journalist in his field, covering real crime scenes and helping even police to arrest the culprits. He laughs at Madhavi's outburst saying:

"Kisne kahaa aapse ki aap journalist hain! 'Page 3' ke column me yahi likhti hain na aap : Kiski party me kaun gaya, kiske saath gaya, kiske saath lauta, kisne kya khaaya, kya piya, kya pehna, kya nahi pehna! Miss Madhavi Sharma, ise entertainment kehte hain, na ki journalism. Hmm."

(Who said that you are a journalist! This is what you write in the column of 'Page 3' : who goes in whose party, with who, returns with who, who ate what, drink what, wore what and what not! Miss Madhavi Sharma, this is called entertainment, not journalism. Hmm.)

Overtly it might appear that Vinayak is making fun of Madhavi's sincerity, but taken positively, even Vinayak works as an agent to make Madhavi realize her hidden potentials. She desires to do in journalism something of social relevance and her experience of Anjali's story (the cutting mainly) combined with Vinayak's comments is a reminder to her that she perhaps needs to change the field, within the journalism itself.

Meanwhile Gayatri gets physically involved with Rohit and gets pregnant as a consequence. Afterwards Rohit starts ignoring her and knowing about her pregnancy, asks her to get the child aborted. Gayatri, not infact expecting this response from Rohit, slits her wrists in despair. Madhavi and Pearl take her to a hospital where they get her admitted with the intervention of the ACP Uday who is by chance already there with Vinayak Mane for some criminal case. Madhavi thanks Vinayak for the help and asks him how come he was there. Vinayak doesn't leave the chance to make Madhavi remind and realize again her own potentialities and capabilities, as he says:

"Aisi jagahon par hi asli stories milti hain, 'Page 3' parties me nahi."

(One finds real stories at such places, not at 'Page 3' parties.)

Vinayak's comment is shown to make Madhavi feel offended overtly but is an eye-opener in fact, which encourages Madhavi to be more bold and realistic in her profession.

Gayatri is saved but Pearl and Madhavi come to know about the child (which could not be saved) she was carrying. They are shocked to know that it was Rohit's. Pearl's role is important even in this situation who asks Madhavi not to contact Rohit and wishes for Gayatri to come to senses and understand the ways of the world. Gayatri however, loses courage and returns to Delhi leaving the film line. It is later in the film that we see her again but in a changed form with a different mindset this time. Madhavi is not able to resist anymore and decides to publish an article exposing Rohit Kumar. She publishes an article titled "*Top Star Uses and Abuses Upcoming Actress*" where she tells the whole story of Rohit and Gayatri without naming them in the story. And she does it without informing her boss.

The story creates an uproar all around. A meeting is called where Madhavi is scolded for the story. The boss gives various reasons to prove Madhavi wrong and it is decided by management that Madhavi will have to say sorry to Rohit Kumar. The main reason here is that Rohit is a big public figure and the newspaper company wants him to come for their award function. Madhavi is shocked at this humiliation but her boss comes to her refuge only to the extent that he accompanies her to approach Rohit and say sorry there. Madhavi's sorry is reluctant. After that, she has to go to cover the news of Anjali Thapar's sudden death. The whole situation that Madhavi observes there is disgusting to her, where nobody seems to be bothered about the 'death' but their own interests only. The hypocrisy and pretensions of high class society make her feel so disappointed and disgusted that she refuses to write about Anjali's funeral, to the shock of her boss. Not believing her, he asks her again to write 500 words as usual. But she again refuses saying that she is sick of writing about that culture and life of hypocrisy. Deepak Suri is shocked at her reply and asks angrily what else she wants to write, and her reply then is : "*Just something that is more meaningful.*" She makes it clear to her boss that she would not be doing 'Page 3' anymore : "*I don't want to do Page 3.*" She has tears in her eyes at that moment but they are not the symbols of her weakness. They rather express her pain and agony at not being able to do something convincing for her own self. Deepak Suri being a

comparatively sensible person realizes her stubbornness and takes her to Vinayak. He wants her to work with Vinayak to get trained for crime reporting, which perhaps may satisfy her urge to do 'meaningful journalism'.

Here Deepak Suri is shown to support her only because he feels that it will provide her a respite from present stressing situations. On the other side, Vinayak feels that her being with him might create problems for his own reporting. It is the same Vinayak who used to make fun of 'Page 3' reporting and is now hesitant to let Madhavi join him when she has left the 'entertainment'. Deepak convinces Vinayak telling him that Madhavi would not be able to stay in 'Crime Beat' as she has got used to 'Page 3'. So Vinayak should feel relaxed as Deepak says :

"She is a party person. Chaar din me laut aayegi".

(She is a party person and will come back in four days.)

Madhavi however, proves both of them wrong. She starts working with Vinayak learning how to work and collect news on crime. She has a boyfriend Tarun (Jai Kalra) who is a model. He doesn't like this decision of hers to leave 'Page 3' and work for 'Crime Beat' but Madhavi remains firm at her decision and Tarun has to support her for that. While working with Vinayak, she meets Pratima Bhawe, one of the real social workers among celebrities. Vinayak makes her meet the informer Munna also where she gets to know the importance of the informer in that field.

Once Madhavi is at a site of bomb blast covering the incident with Vinayak when she gets a phone call from her boss Deepak Suri. The reporter for 'Page 3' is ill and the boss wants Madhavi to cover it. Madhavi resists as she is covering the blast but on boss's insistence and orders, she has to leave that site and go to cover the party.

She reaches the party, meets people who she hasn't met for quite some time since she left 'Page 3' and is shocked to see ACP Uday Yadav there. As a responsible journalist, she doesn't hesitate to question his presence at the party when he should have been in his jurisdiction in the situation of tension all around, due to blast. ACP feels embarrassed when Madhavi asks him the exact number of wounded and killed persons. To defend himself in the situation, ACP asks Madhavi to accept life as it goes on in Mumbai. And in response to that, what Madhavi says is an eye-opener not

only for the police commissioner but also for all those who are bothered only about their publicity and give a damn to all the pains and agonies of the sufferers otherwise:

“ACP : Hey! Come on Madhavi. Life goes on. That’s the spirit of Mumbai.

Madhavi : Aapko Mumbai ki spirit jaanani hai na to aapko blast ki site par hona chahiye thaa. Dekhna chaahiye thaa ki log ek doosre ki madad kaise kar rahe the. Par aap kaise samjhenge! Aap to khud hi high spirits me hain. (She looks at his wine glass.)... But don’t worry. Blast me jo mare, unki photo chhape ya na chhape, aapki photo zaroor chhapegi ‘Page 3’ me.

(ACP : Hey! Come on Madhavi. Life goes on. That’s the spirit of Mumbai.

Madhavi : You should have been at the site of blast if you want to know the spirit of Mumbai. You should have seen how people were helping each other. But how would you understand! You yourself are in high spirits.(She looks at his wine glass.)...But don’t worry. The photo of the blast victims may appear or not but your picture will certainly appear on ‘Page 3’.)

ACP’s face expressions give the impression that Madhavi’s words have made him realize his responsibility. So while covering ‘Page 3’ again, Madhavi doesn’t leave any opportunity to endorse the social and human causes and concerns.

Once Madhavi gets an information from Munna (the informer) about the trafficking of kids. With Pratima ji, she approaches the police inspector Bhonsle and the suspected venue is raided by the police. They get hold of 18 kids and as per the information, 10 still remain missing. On inquiring more from the culprit in their custody, they come to know that those kids have been left at Mud Island, Bungalow No. 16. The specific address disturbs Bhonsle and he refuses to go with the excuse that he doesn’t have search warrant. Actually Mud Island is the residing place of rich celebrities and Bhonsle knows they are all corrupt people with political and

bureaucratic links. But when Pratima ji refers to Magistrate Joshi who will help them in getting search warrant, and Madhavi insists on saving the life of those innocent kids, Bhonsle decides to go.

The target venue is raided and they are shocked to see those innocent kids being abused sexually by not only the famous Karan Thapar (whose wife used to run the Children's Home) but other persons also of different ages. The whole situation is moving and shocking and Madhavi immediately calls Deepak Suri to stop the press and tells him that there is something very important for which she wants to meet him. She meets him in the office with her photographer and hands over to him the pictures of the site. Deepak appreciates Madhavi for those pictures and calls it "good work". He praises even the photographer for those "nice shots". Afterwards, he asks them to go back and assures them to handle that himself. Trusting him, Madhavi goes back happily.

Karan Thapar is a man of influence and Bhonsle is forced to leave him when he gets a call from a VIP Mr. Kadamb. On the other hand, Deepak is called by his boss Mirchandani in the same regard. Deepak himself wants the story to be published as he finds Thapar to be a 'sick man' who should be exposed in the interest of humanity in general. But he is snubbed by Mirchandani for this intention. Mirchandani makes it clear to Deepak that Thapar Group of Companies is a big group which gives to their company a big amount of money for ads and then they are very influential people. So Mirchandani does not want to do anything against them. On a phone call from Mr. Kadamb, even Mirchandani assures him that "*everything is under control*". He even asks Deepak to fire Madhavi for this reporting. Despite the request and insistence of Deepak for not firing Madhavi, as she is really a "*good journalist*", Mirchandani has nothing to say except "*Fire the bitch. Use nikaal do.*" [Kick her out.]

Next morning, Madhavi checks the newspaper but when she finds no news of Mud Island which she had covered, she goes to the boss's cabin and asks him the reason. Deepak himself is sad at the reality but he remains silent and hands over to Madhavi her dismissal letter. Madhavi is in a great shock and tells Deepak that she always trusted him for supporting her and doesn't hesitate to ask even at that moment

as why he did all that when he himself knew it was about the lives of those little kids. She is in tears and utters:

“This not done Sir, This is not done. Maine socha at least aap mera saath doge. Maine aap pe bharosa kiya thaa Sir. Ye un chhote-chhote bachchon ki zindagi ka sawaal thaa and you know that. Why? Aapne aisa kyon kiya?”

(This is not done Sir. I thought at least you would support me. I trusted you sir. It was the question of the life of those little kids and you know that. Why? Why did you do that?)

Suri has nothing to say except that *“It was a good story Madhavi. Good story.”* Madhavi goes out and Deepak himself is shown crying as he understands Madhavi’s agony and his own helplessness in the situation that he could neither save Madhavi’s job and self-esteem, nor could bring a good and true story out for the readers.

It is important to note here that Madhavi’s dismissal is not her defeat. She is fired only because she becomes a victim to the whole corrupt system where people lead hypocritical lives and nobody dares to reveal the reality. She at least dares but perhaps doesn’t understand the complexities of the whole system and the practical aspects of journalism which again Vinayak Mane makes her realize and understand. And it is not only Madhavi who is a victim, even people like Deepak are no less victims. The only difference is that Deepak knows the practical realities which Madhavi might take time to realize. And despite all this, Deepak feels bad for his own helplessness. Madhavi leaves the office.

She is shattered and shocked by this reality of her life. She is so innocent that she could never think about this outcome of her honesty and daring. Vinayak comes to meet her when she says that she will search some other job than journalism. Madhavi is ready to leave her dream profession for the simple reason that it is not allowing her the scope to do something meaningful in the field of her choice and she feels more hurt when she realizes that her talent, honesty, sincerity and commitment towards journalism don’t get any recognition or recommendation. But Vinayak comes

as her saviour who teaches her how to face reality and more importantly how to tell the reality. Their conversation is interesting and important in the context:

“Vinayak : Sach se bhaagna aasaan hota hai Madhavi. Uska saamana karna mushkil hota hai.

Madhavi : Sach hi to bataana chaah rahi thee mai par koi sunanaa hi Nahi chaahata.

Vinayak : Aisa nahi hai. Sach sunanaa chaahate hain log.

Madhavi : Lekin bataayen kaise. Thapar ki story to poori tarah se dabaa di gayi na!

Vinayak : Kyonki galati tumhaari thee.

Madhavi : Kyon?

Vinayak : Jis tarah bedhadak tumne story cover ki, ye galat thaa aur doosra ye ki saare saboot de diye. Apne liye ek bhi bachaakar nahi rakha. Kyon bharosa kiya logon par Madhavi. Are system to dabaana chaahega na!

(He tells Madhavi that Anjali Thapar died for the same reason, as she had come to know about her husband's abuse of children, that too, of her own Children's Home.)

Madhavi sachchai ko bataana zaroori hai lekin vo kis tareeke se batai jaaye, ye samajh lena usse bhi zyaada zaroori hai. Imaandaari ke sath-sath samajhdaari ka hona zaroori hai. We have to be in the system to change the system.”

(Vinayak : It's easy to escape truth Madhavi rather than facing it.

Madhavi : I wanted to tell the truth only but nobody wants to know.

Vinayak : It's not like that. People want to hear truth.

Madhavi : But how to tell. Thapar's story was completely killed.

Vinayak : Because it was your fault.

Madhavi : Why?

Vinayak : Firstly the manner in which you covered the story daringly was wrong and secondly it was wrong that you gave away all the evidences. You didn't save even a single one for

yourself. Why did you trust people Madhavi? The system would always like to hide the facts. Madhavi it is important to tell the truth but to understand the manner of telling that is more important. It is necessary to be sensible along with being honest. We have to be in the system to change the system.)

Vinayak is able to convince Madhavi for trusting her capabilities and be clever and practical at the same time. She goes for an interview in an another news company where she doesn't get her desired 'Crime Beat' but the editor offers her a job for 'Page 3' which according to him is best suited for her, as he knows about her experience in that field. After a bit of reluctance, Madhavi joins the company for 'Page 3'. She goes to cover a party where she meets Gayatri in an altogether changed form and is shown smoking, drinking and dancing in the party with no hangovers. Then Charu Mohanty comes there and Gayatri tells Madhavi that she is doing Charu's next film. It shocks Madhavi a bit as it is the same Gayatri who had rejected the advances of Charu Mohanty in the past. But now she says boldly to Madhavi:

"Don't look so shocked. Mere paas aur koi raasta hi nahi thaa and I really don't regret it."

(Don't look so shocked. I had no other way out and I really don't regret it.)

So Gayatri adopts a practical outlook in order to achieve her aims. And their friend Pearl also marries an aged industrialist and gets settled in New York.

The film ends with an interesting scene. The party is going on and Madhavi's new boss enters the venue. He sees Madhavi coming out and asks why is she going back when the party has just begun. Madhavi's reply is *"Jee, mere liye party khatm ho gayi."* (The party has furnished for me Sir). Even Madhavi's short stay at the 'Page 3' party is symbolic of her victory. Her earlier experience at such parties has taught her enough what to cover and how to cover these parties. Moreover, Vinayak's advice is with her and she has learnt the art of covering the 'significant' in less time and with cleverness of mind.

Madhavi's story is that of a woman who joins her dream profession; works hard for it with full devotion and dedication; wishes to do something meaningful in her profession and; following that desire of hers, asserts herself at every point but finally falls a victim to the corrupt system and loses her job. But she doesn't stop there. The setbacks make her more progressive. She learns more about herself, her profession and practical realities of life. Vinayak and Pearl become the agents to make her mentally empowered. The film ends at a point whence begins her new journey of journalism and life as well.

The another film for study is *Naach (2004)*, directed by Ram Gopal Varma. It is the story of Abhinav (Abhishek Bachchan) and Rewa (Antara Mali) who are two, middle-class citizens in the big city of Mumbai. Both are trying to get a breakthrough in their individual professions. Abhinav wants to be an actor and is ready to fulfill his ambition at any cost and condition. Rewa wants to be a choreographer but refuses to conform. Both meet, fall in love and spend some intimate moments together.

Abhinav gets his first film offer and things get better. He offers to help Rewa also get some film but Rewa refuses his help and wants to make it on her own. Believing in Bollywood conventions and working accordingly, Abhinav becomes a big star. Rewa gets her first offer to choreograph but the director wants to approach Abhinav through her. Eventually both of them drift apart and break up.

Rewa finally gets a genuine offer to choreography by Diwakar (Ritesh Deshmukh), who really likes her style and work and is ready to trust her talent and potential. Rewa not only choreographs for his music album but dances also herself at his request. The video is greatly successful and Rewa becomes a big star, and is soon given the offer to work with Abhinav. The rest of the film focuses on how Abhinav and Rewa are able to put their differences aside and get back together.

The film begins in an interesting manner. The female protagonist Rewa is sitting on a pavement on roadside, thinking only about *naach* (dance), singing and even dancing on the road. The rain is pouring down, people are running away here and there to shelter themselves from rain and Rewa is busy in dancing: carefree, enthusiastic, ecstatic, enjoying the moment to its full. The situation is unrealistic otherwise but very symbolic from the point of view of Rewa for whom dance is everything: her life, her breath force, a part of her very being. And the passion that we

see in her for dance is consistent throughout the film despite all the difficulties she faces while struggling to get herself established as a dance director. She sees dance in a completely different way, much ahead of the common prevalent notion of dance. The words of the song are significant to understand the whole personality of Rewa, in connection with her passion for dance:

*“Naach bhi naachata hai
Naach nahi to kya hai
Saanson se kya rishta
Yahi to hai saans
Awaara mann me hai, mann ki udan me hai naach
Saare jeevan me hai, taaron tarang me hai naach
Maine paaya hai
Mera saaya hai
Rag-rag me shaamil kan-kan me shaamil hai naach”*

(The dance also dances
What exists if not dance
What is the relation to breath
This itself is breath
The dance is in the vagabond mind, in the flight of mind
The dance is in the whole life, in the wave of every string
I have found
It is my shadow
It is in the every vein and every pore of me.)

Even the next scene is very interesting whose importance is actually realized later. Abhinav is an aspiring actor and Rewa, an aspiring dance director. Both are struggling to get work in their respective fields. The scene shows both of them coming to the same place for interview. But the way they get ready for the interview is actually a portrayal of their different personalities with different mindsets, different priorities and different choices. Rewa gets up in the morning, does her exercise session, rehearses for her dance and then gets ready to move out. The way she manages her time shows her passion and commitment towards dance. On the other side, it is Abhi who gets up, sips his morning tea/coffee in a relaxed mood, then

bathes and gets ready and goes to catch the bus. Abhi is shown to wait for the bus and Rewa is already in the bus, who is not shown to wait. This also is reflection on the importance of time in the lives and minds of both. The whole attitude of Rewa reflects her confidence and in case of Abhi, it seems to be the over-confidence.

Both face their respective interviews. Rewa is given a chance to prove herself at Shyam Productions by preparing a dance on the music she is given. Abhi is clearly rejected as he doesn't know how to dance beside acting. But he accepts his rejection with no grudges as he claims to understand the demands of the film industry. He rather gets ambitious to learn dance. Abhi and Rewa travel in the same bus while coming back from their interviews and happen to talk where they get to know about each other's ambitions in life. Abhi tells Rewa about his inability to dance and asks Rewa if she can teach her. Rewa refuses initially, telling him that she doesn't teach dance.

Abhi goes to another director who observes him very keenly and then calls him 'perfect'. Abhi is told to take a screen test and the producer is convinced but there again comes the issue of complementing acting with dance. And Abhi seeks two weeks time for that.

On the other side, Rewa gets back to the same director and asks him to do some changes in the music so that she may compose the dance. But her request is turned down very bluntly and rather rudely. Her talent is challenged on the ground of experience but Rewa too is adamant not to work on that music. So she comes out of the director's office immediately, refusing to follow him unconditionally.

Abhi contacts Rewa and requests her to teach him dance. She agrees however, on his insistence and when Abhi comes to her place and sees her dancing, he is completely mesmerized. Seeing her, Abhi says that he would never be able to dance like her. Rewa gets serious and says, "*Mujhe vo shabd pasand nahi hai.*" (I don't like that word). She talks about the word 'no' which Abhi uses for his felt inability to dance like Rewa. Rewa's dislike of the word 'no' significantly reveals her as a brave and bold woman who is optimistic about everything in life. Moreover, the story of her own life that she tells Abhi is a revelation of her determination. She belongs to Goa and tells Abhi that her parents were not interested in what she wanted to do. So she

left home and came to Mumbai to settle in a profession of her own choice. Abhi tells that his parents are no more and he is there in Mumbai to fulfill his dream of becoming an actor. But unlike Rewa, he is keen to become an actor, not because he likes acting but because he knows that he can earn fame and money via acting and he is ready to accept and compromise with anything to get success in this profession.

“Mai actor isliye bananaa chaahata hun kyunki mujhe bahut naam kamaana hai aur uske saath paisa bhi. To meri bhalai isi me hai ki mai jald se jald vo samajh lun jo chaltaa hai aur use apnaa lun.”

(I want to become actor because I wish to earn fame as well as money. Therefore, it would be better for me to understand and accept what goes in the industry.)

Rewa, on the other hand, is very particular about her choices and priorities. She is not ready to compromise with her passion of dancing and her ambition to become a dance director. She is particular about her own conditions of working on a music of her own choice. She gets a part time job in a computer firm and tells Abhi that she needs a job to fulfill her basic financial needs. But she won't go for a full time job other than dancing, since she needs to save time certainly for her dance if it is some other job.

One day Abhi comes with a proposal from a big reputed company and wants Rewa to accept it but she refuses it on the ground that she doesn't want to work for the sake of working only. Money and fame are not her priorities. She doesn't want to dance also just for the sake of dancing. Dance is her passion. She feels it, she loves it and she wishes to dance only when everything associated with that particular dance is according to what she has in her mind, regarding her very important *naach* (dance). She says to Abhi:

“Abhi tum janate ho mai kaam paane ke liye kaam nahi karti..... Mai yahaan paisa ya shohrat kamaane nahi aayi. Aur naach! Agar mai sirf naach karna chaahati to Goa me bhi kar leti. Mai naach ko jis roop me dekhna chaahati hun, vo sirf filmon me mumkin hai.”

(Abhi you know I don't work just for the sake of getting a work. I have not come here to earn money or fame. And dance! I would have done it in Goa itself had I desired to dance only. The way I wish to see dance is possible in films only.)

Rewa wishes to make dance her profession but is not ready to succumb to the pressures of the film industry. She rather wants the industry to see dance from her perspective. Abhi is doubtful if the industry needs something new. But Rewa is confident that the industry needs innovation. The only problem, according to her is that they are not able to see 'dance' as she sees it:

“Abhi : Tumhe lagta hai ki in logon ko tumhaara nayaapan chaahiye?

Rewa : Aisa nahi hai ki unko nahi chaahiye. Bas vo meri nazar se dekh nahi paate. Unko dikhaana, samjhaana meri zimmedaari hai”.

(Abhi : Do you think these people need your innovativeness?)

Rewa : It's not that they don't need it. The only thing is that they are Not able to see from my eyes. It's my responsibility to make them see and understand.)

So, Rewa is not only aware of her own responsibility towards her passion but confident also of her success in her desired field. She trains Abhi for a dance which his director watches. He is impressed with Rewa's style and originality and gives her a music CD asking her to work on it. Rewa likes the music and Abhi is happy to know that. Both of them enjoy and celebrate this happiness together. Abhi confesses his love also to Rewa. They get back to Rewa's house and the situation there makes Abhi initiate intimacy to Rewa. Reading Abhi's desire and realizing her own too, Rewa gets involved with him unhesitatingly and they make love.

Very soon, Abhi's director tells him that he can't let Rewa work with him since the heroine of the film wants to work with the director of her choice (who actually is a famous dance director). Abhi feels very disappointed to know this. He requests the director to trust Rewa's talent at least once but the director himself is a person who is dependent on the links of famous stars. So he can't allow Rewa to

work. He rather makes Abhi realize that he too has got break because of such famous personalities in the industry:

“Abhi, tum ek baat samjho. Industry sirf talent par nahi chalti. Choreographer Shaheen Khan bahut hi ordinary hai magar uski networking bahut strong hai... Producers ko lagta hai ki uske hone se product ki value bahut badh jaati hai. Aur super star Ayesha ki bahut achchhi dost hai vo aur in sab ki wajah se ye pehla break mila hai mujhe aur tumhe bhi.”

(Abhi, do understand one thing. Industry does not go by talent alone. Choreographer Shaheen Khan is very ordinary but her networking is very strong..... Producers feel that her presence increases the value of the product. And she is a good friend of super star Ayesha. And you and me have got this first break due to people like these.)

This statement of the director is ironically true of the film industry where the networking dominates and true talent gets no recognition. Abhi is at a loss how to tell Rewa about all this. He goes to meet Rewa and she judges this stress. On being asked the reason of his stress, Abhi tells her that she has been rejected. Before Abhi is able to tell her the reason why she has been replaced by some other dance director, she silences him saying:

“Mujhe nahi sunana. Agar vo mujhe nahi chaahate to nahi chaahate. Unke problems se mera koi lena dena nahi hai.”

(I don't want to listen. It's okay that they don't want me. I have nothing to do with their problems.)

So Rewa is bothered only about her acceptance. She doesn't want to bother the reasons for her rejection since she is confident of her talent and creativity. Moreover, she is very practical also. When Abhi says that he too would leave the film if they don't accept Rewa, she snubs him severely:

“Don't talk nonsense Abhi, Humaara kaam apni jagah hai aur hum apni jagah. Dono ko milao mat”.

(Don't talk nonsense Abhi. Keep our work and ourselves separate.
Don't mix the two.)

So despite a bit of her disappointment and the realization of the demands and reality of the film industry, she doesn't want Abhi to take emotional decisions. She herself is adamant to move forward only on her own conditions but she doesn't want to hinder the progress of Abhi if he gets a break in his desired profession.

Since Rewa feels sad also at her rejection, she wishes to stay alone for a while for the sake of her own piece of mind. Abhi wishes to be with her in that moment, but she asks him to leave her alone:

“Mai thodi der akeli rehna chaahati hun.”

(I want to be alone for a while.)

Rewa thus knows the importance of her personal space and doesn't hesitate to demand it too. Abhi and Rewa start living together afterwards.

Abhi's film gets successful and he becomes a famous actor. Rewa is still in her struggling phase. She gets a call from a producer Rakesh. He gives her a film script and the music CD. Rewa promises to come prepared to him once she has listened to the song. During this conversation, Rakesh asks her if she knows Abhi and tells her that he wants Abhi to do this film. He, infact, wants Rewa to approach Abhi for that and insists on her to convince Abhi for this. But Rewa is a woman of principles. She believes and wants to believe only in herself. She is very clear about her role and work and more importantly, the decorum of her own identity and status. So she tells Rakesh clearly:

“Sir, Actor tak script pahunchaana mera kaam nahi hai”.

(Sir, It's not my job to take the script to the actor).

Rewa is very sure of herself and her own talent and passion for dance.

Rewa tells Abhi that the producer actually wants Abhi to work for the film and all he wants from her is to approach Abhi for that. Abhi is ready to approach him for Rewa's sake but Rewa is so self respecting that she doesn't want anybody's help to

get work. She is determined to work only when people are ready to understand and see dance from her perspective and doesn't want any recommendations or contacts to be the ladders of her success. She wants recognition of her own talent first. The following conversation is important to understand her personality not only in contrast to Abhi, who is bothered only about success, name and fame, but also as Rewa herself, as a woman of substance and self respect:

“Abhi, mujhe kisi ki madad ki zarurat nahi hai. Mai ek baar keh rahi hun, fir nahi kahungi. Mai aisi koi bhi film sign nahi karungi jo tumhaare recommendations aur tumhaare contacts par based ho. Not now, not ever.”

(Abhi, I don't need anybody's help. I am saying it only once and will not repeat it. I'll not sign any film that is based on your recommendations and contacts. Not now, not ever.)

Abhi gets agitated and wants Rewa to understand the situations of the film industry where the producers have to work according to the demand and choice of the audience and for them, their commercial interest is of prime importance. Rewa, on the other hand, asks Abhi very coolly to forget all, but in his agitated mood, he speaks very harshly to her. To Abhi, Rewa's attitude is of arrogance and self-praise, but even here Rewa is not at fault. She doesn't blame or condemn anybody. She talks only about her ambition, her passion and her principles, which Abhi is unable to understand at that very moment. Very clearly she tells him:

“Abhi, mai apni baat kar rahi hun. Doosron ki nahi”

(Abhi, I am talking about myself, not others).

Rewa doesn't want to argue with Abhi anymore as he speaks arrogantly only of his own success, name and fame, with no respect for Rewa's feelings and ideals. He rather calls her a fool:

“Mai aaj kaamyaab hun kyonki mai tumhaari tarah bewakoof nahi hun. Usoolon ki vajah se bhookhe marne ki koi khwaahish nahi hai meri. On the contrary, mere pass bahut naam aur paisa hai aaj”.

(I am successful today because I am not a fool like you. I don't have any desire to starve for the sake of principles. On the contrary, I have a lot of name and money today.)

Rewa gets down of the car and moves on alone. Abhi calls her only once and then turns back. The whole scene and conversation that takes place between Abhi and Rewa is very remarkable to put before us the portrait of Rewa who, despite all rejection and failures, is quiet and balanced in her behaviour, capable of maintaining her grace despite all odds.

Rewa stops meeting Abhi or even picking up his phone calls. She again meets a director but comes back empty handed not because she is rejected but because she doesn't like his odd and vulgar attitude. This again puts her before us as a woman who honours her own self. She however, is frustrated at the attitude of society. And her dance in the rain at this moment is an expression of her pent-up angst for the whole society. The lyrics of the song reveal her state of mind perfectly:

*“Rakt ka hai ye fawwaara
Din raat firta awaara maara
Dilwaalon ne kaha hai awaara
Manmauji bolte sharaara
Naach.... dikhaata naach.... daraata naach
Behosh naach, bechein naach, bura naach
Bemisaal naach, mehaktaa naach, jhanaktaa naach
Zehreela naach.”*

(It is the fountain of blood
Wandering day and night
The loving people call it vagabond
Other self-indulging people call it spark of life
Dance.. showing dance...scary dance
Senseless dance, restless dance, bad dance.
Unique dance, fragrant dance
Venomous dance...)

All the adjectives used for dance cover a wide range of human emotions and physical states which aptly describe Rewa's oneness with dance.

Rewa gets an opportunity to meet Diwakar, who is the son of the owner of a big music industry. She meets him and tells him about her ambition to do something different. When Diwakar gets curious to know Rewa's concept of 'alag' (different), Rewa's reply explains not only the importance of a music video's existence but is also symbolic of the importance of her own self, her own existence, not only in her own eyes, but also in the eyes of others as well:

“Mai ye nahi keh rahi hun ki alag hona chaahiye. Mai ye keh rahi hun ki sahi hona chaahiye. Har gaane ki apni ek raftaar hoti hai. Har naach ki apni ek wajah. Ye raftaar aur ye wajah hum taya nahi karte. Ye gaana khud taye karta hai aur apna vajoood banaata hai. Isi tarah aapke music video ka bhi ek vajoood hona chaahiye”.

(I am not saying that it should be different. I am saying that it should be correct. Every song has a speed of its own and every dance has a reason. We don't decide this speed or reason. The song decides it itself and frames its own existence. The same way your music video too should have an existence of its own.)

Diwakar asks if there is any guarantee that audience would like what she thinks and Rewa unhesitatingly tells him that she can't give any guarantee. Diwakar is the first person to acknowledge Rewa's mind and he tells her: *“Tumhaari soch bahut alag hai aur aage bhi.”*(Your thinking is very different and much ahead.) He is ready to accept and trust Rewa's sense of respect and understanding towards dance, although he doesn't understand completely what Rewa actually says about dance and music:

“Mai ye nahi keh sakta ki mujhe poori tarah samajh aaya ki tum kya kar rahi ho lekin itna samajh gayaa ki naach ke liye tumhaara respect, tumhaari soch, tumhaari samajh mujhse kahin zyaada hai.”

(I can't say that I have completely understood what you are saying but I have understood this at least that your respect, thinking and understanding for dance is more than mine.)

Rewa begins the rehearsals for Diwakar's music video. He watches her rehearsals very keenly and realizes that no other girl can do justice to the dance that Rewa wants to be done. So he offers Rewa to dance herself if she wants the things to be perfect. After a bit of reluctance, Rewa accepts the offer and the music video is released with Rewa being the lead dancer.

The very first scene of the video is a leap forward which is symbolic of Rewa's first step towards success. Her whole dance and the lyrics are a volatile expression of her deep desired ambition where the dance may stir the whole world out of its passivity and inaction:

“Naach naach ke duniya hila de.

Sadiyon se thamaa thamaa sa lagtaa hai saara jahaan.

Is sthirta se aandhi bankar ek khyaal se utha dhuaan ki tu..... naach naach ke duniya hila de.”

(Dance and dance and stir the world.

For centuries, the entire world seems not to have moved.

With this stillness, you blow the smoke like a typhoon from an idea....Dance and dance and stir the world.)

This video titled 'Naach' becomes a grand success. After this, once Abhi happens to meet Rewa in a restaurant where she is sitting with Diwakar. Abhi's jealousy due to Rewa's proximity with Diwakar makes him uncomfortable and he returns back. But he goes straight to Rewa's house and waits for her to come back. Rewa returns and offers him to have coffee with her. Abhi congratulates her for the success of her video, feels sorry too, expresses his love again for Rewa and requests her to forget all that had mishappened between them. But before Abhi is able to speak more, Rewa says:

“Jao Abhi. I think you should leave.”

(Go Abhi. I think you should leave).

Rewa thus is not a weak woman to succumb to soft emotions specially when she is able to realize and judge that Abhi is speaking everything either out of his jealousy or his arrogance of being successful.

Diwakar starts a film with Abhi and Rewa. Rewa's priority has been her work always. So she works in proximity with Diwakar for that reason but it intensifies Abhi's jealousy and anger, as he feels possessive about Rewa. As a consequence, he misbehaves with Diwakar. Abhi is shown bothered even about Rewa's skimpy clothes in various situations, specially when Diwakar is around. And this is an example of our social situations where a man himself does everyyhing but wants the woman to behave according to his whims. Rewa however, is not worried about anything as she bothers only the 'dance' and nothing else is of any importance to her and moreover, she dresses confidently according to the demand of the dance.

One day Abhi leaves the shooting set all of a sudden without even informing Diwakar or Rewa. This shows the height of his immaturity, insensibility and also jealousy. Diwakar remains confused at Abhi's attitude. So he goes with Rewa to ask him the reason of his changed or rather agitated behavior. Abhi refuses to tell the reason and bluntly denies to work for Diwakar any more. Moreover, he offers to pay for the loss incurred on Diwakar due to him. Finally Rewa has to come to the front who says to Abhi:

"How can you be such professional Abhi! Abhi maine tumhe pehle bhi kaha tha humara kaam apni jagah hai, hum apni jagah. Dono ko milao mat."

(How can you be such professional Abhi! Abhi, I had asked you earlier also to keep ourselves and our work separate. Don't mix the two.)

Abhi's outburst comes in the form of his confession of the feeling of jealousy on seeing Rewa and Diwakar together. He confesses his love again to Rewa. He accepts that he has got enough in life he wished for but still he feels unhappy since he doesn't possess Rewa, his love. And then taking on him all the blame for the worsened situation among all of them, he expresses his wish to leave the film.

Rewa expresses her own love for Abhi but at the same time makes this also clear that she never wanted the arrogant Abhi to be back. But now she is able to see the same simple Abhi back, after a lot of time gap:

“Abhi jab hum mile the, tab tum mujhe theek usi tarah dekh paaye the jaise mai hun aur yahi wajah thee tumhaare pyaar ki. Aur maine tumse pyaar isliye kiya kyonki tum mere bare me vo sab kuchh samajh paaye jo aur log nahi samajh paye. Lekin us din gaadi me... tumhaari kamyabi bol rahi thee. Aur us din jab tum mujhe badhai dene aaye the, tab bhi tumhaari kamyabi bol rahi thee”

(Abhi, when you had met me, you were able to see me right as I am and this was the reason of your love too. And I too loved you because you were able to understand all that about me which others could not. But that day in the car... it was your success that was speaking out... And that day again it was your success speaking when you had come to congratulate me.)

Rewa refers to all the moments whenever she got the opportunity to observe and understand different aspects of Abhi’s personality. It reveals her own personality too which is capable of understanding life and persons in their various moods, and take the important decisions of life accordingly.

Rewa accepts Abhi back only when she herself feels convinced of his attitude and feelings towards her. Her profession and ambition still stand separate from her personal life, and she expects and desires Abhi too to understand and honour this distinction.

So Rewa stands successful as a dance director performing her dances herself. And this is the profession of her own choice which is the result of her own talent which she has always been confident of; the determination that makes her stick to her own priorities; the patience that makes her bear all the failures and rejections gracefully; the hard work and commitment that maintain her passion for dance. Rewa’s most important mantra of success is her trust and respect for her own self.

No One Killed Jessica (2011), directed by Raj Kumar Gupta, the next film for analysis is based on the true story of Jessica Lal, a Delhi based model and restaurant owner who was shot in 1999 at a New Delhi restaurant by Manu Sharma, the son of an influential Cabinet minister Vinod Sharma.

The story goes as follows. Jessica Lal (Myra Karn), alongwith actor and model Vikram Jai Singh (Neil Bhoopalam) is closing the bar at the restaurant when Manish Bhardwaj (Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub) approaches her with two of his friends. They ask her for drinks and Jessica refuses to serve as the bar has been closed. Manish insists on getting drinks and Jessica is adamant on her stand. Irritated by Jessica's refusal, Manish shoots her fatally. The subsequent investigation and trial are stymied by Manish's family who do not hesitate to use their political, financial and law enforcement connections to intimidate, coerce and bribe the majority of witnesses to the crime. The case becomes an uneven battle between Jessica's ordinary family (specially her sister Sabrina) and Manish's high powered family, and the result is that after a number of years spent in trial, the final decision comes in favour of Manish and he, alongwith his friends, is acquitted, due to the lack of sufficient evidence. Sabrina Lal (Vidya Balan) loses all hope and withdraws herself completely from this case, after her mother dies due to the same and her father remains on bed.

But then a fiery reporter Meera Gaity (Rani Mukherji) takes up this case, considering it to be her moral responsibility to get justice to Jessica as she deserves what has been denied to her. The situations and events take a turn. Meera uses all her tactics to get the case re-opened and struggles a lot to get Sabrina back to it. Challenging the decision of lower court, the case is accepted by the higher court and the final decision comes in favour of Jessica, and Manish is given life imprisonment. So Jessica and Sabrina get the justice finally but it is the grit and guts of Meera specifically who makes it complete.

The films begins with a background voice describing the Delhi of 1999. This is a voice of a news reporter Meera whose personality and role is the focus of the present analysis.

The scene shifts to Sabrina who is sleeping at that time. A phone call comes to inform her that her sister Jessica has been shot. Sabrina immediately moves to the venue where her sister was. She reaches and comes to know that she was shot by a

man just because she refused to serve him the drinks. The man forced her and even abused her to get the drinks but Jessica was bold enough to refuse and the result was that the man shot her. Jessica is immediately taken to the hospital but she dies in the way. She pays her life for her boldness and Sabrina fights for her a legal battle in order to get justice and get the culprits punished. The film moves around this story. Various characters come and go but among all those, there is one character which catches our attention for its dynamism and determination. This is Meera.

Meera is completely committed to her profession. Her work is at her priority and even her own personal life is secondary to her for that matter. Once her father calls her and expresses his concern about her marriage. At that time, she is driving to office and her reply is:

“Dad, yahaan boy friend banaane ki fursat nahi hai aur aap saat fere lene ki baat kar rahe hoOk dad, now don't bore me. I have to go there. Bye. Love you.”

(Dad you are talking about my marriage and here I am too busy to even make a boy friend.... Ok dad, now don't bore me. I have to go there. Bye. Love you.)

Meera is thus shown having all control on her own life. Her own father appears boring to her when the issue is of no interest to her.

Meera has recently returned from the Kargil war location where she had gone for the coverage. Kargil war is won by India and Meera wins the admiration of every one at her office. She is given a warm welcome with a huge applause on her return. Thanking every one, she moves to Gaurav Kapoor (Satyadeep Misra), her immediate boss, to talk about something important. Even Gaurav thinks that she would ask for some reward or extra benefit for her Kargil war reporting. But she proves him wrong by telling him that what she needs then is *“my (her) new assignment”*. Gaurav's question *“Kya karna chaahogi?”* (What would you like to do?) also puts Meera before us as not only a committed and sincere reporter but also a person of guts who works according to her choice. Moreover, she recognizes her own worth and doesn't hesitate in expressing that. Gaurav offers her to work on Jessica Lall murder case which she rejects calling it a simple open and shut case, as there are so many witnesses of that

murder and according to her, the culprit will certainly be punished. She says that she deserves a better case according to her profile. The conversation between Gaurav and her is interesting:

“Meera : I think I deserve a much bigger and better story.

Gaurav : Come on Meera ji. Ab aap ki profile ko match karne ke liye India is not going to fight another war.

Meera : Thank you Gaurav Singh. Meine apne aap ko war correspondent declare nahi kiya hai. Lekin mujhe aisa kyun lag raha hai ki jaan boojh ke mere profile ko lower kiya jaa raha hai.

Gaurav : Hi, You are such a bitch Meera. You know that !

Meera : Of course I do.”

(Meera : I think I deserve a much bigger and better story.

Gaurav : Come on Meera ji. India is not going to fight another war just to match your profile.

Meera : Thank you Gaurav Singh. I have not declared myself as a war correspondent. But why do I feel that my profile is being lowered deliberately.

Gaurav : Hi, You are such a bitch Meera. You know that !

Meera : Of course I do.)

So Meera recognizes her own self very clearly and doesn't mind Gaurav's use of the word “*bitch*” for her. Instead of taking it derogatively, she in fact, takes it as a compliment for her courage and conviction.

Meera refuses to take up the case of Jessica Lall. On the other hand, Sabrina's fight begins. With the help of some eye witnesses, she lodges an F.I.R. at the police station against Manish Bhardwaj (the main culprit) and his friends who shot Jessica dead. At the very onset, the police inspector cautions Sabrina of the influence of Bhardwaj family and the crude reality of the whole system (Manish is the son of a Cabinet Minister in Haryana.). But Sabrina is confident as she believes the three hundred witnesses to speak for her. The inspector interrogates all of them and only seven of them confess having seen Jessica being shot. Sabrina is still hopeful of getting justice and moves forward to fight the case.

The police is not able to recover the murder weapon. Then one of the two bullets found from the murder site is changed and the police shows its helplessness. The inspector then asks Sabrina to approach DCP to save the case at its present state. The DCP assures her to look into the case but nothing fruitful is actually done.

The next scene again shifts to Meera. This is an important situation again to prove Meera's commitment towards her work. She is shown in an intimate situation with her boy friend kissing him passionately. Her phone rings and she starts looking for her phone. She receives the call and gets to know that it is something important at her office. She decides to go, leaving everything there and then. The boy friend is shocked to know that Meera can leave him like that. He resists her taking leave but she is determined to go, as it is about her work:

“Meera : I have to go now.

Boyfriend : Now ! You can't do this.

Meera : Of course I can. It's a free country.

(Meera leaves the love making midway even when she herself is in a very passionate and aroused state. She dresses up to go.)

Boyfriend : What are you doing ?

Meera : Going .

Boyfriend: What am I supposed to do?

Meera : Fly solo.”

Meera switches on the light to say the last sentence to her boyfriend and then switches it off. It is symbolic to understand that she has neither regrets nor hesitation to utter these words to her boyfriend. The situation is a complete subversion of the stereotypical love making situation where the woman is only the object and has to follow the desires and directions of the man. Being still unmarried, it is Meera's own decision to go for love making with her boyfriend and then leaving it for the sake of her profession and priorities in life is again her own decision. She is not the meek woman to fall a prey to the desires of man. She is rather liberal to express as well as fulfill her own desires; and daring as well as determined to set and follow her priorities in life.

The very next moment Meera can be seen on T.V. reading the news of a plane that has been hijacked. This is the assignment that she is supposed to undertake for

which she left even her boyfriend at a very passionate moment. Gaurav holds an emergency meeting at the office regarding the hijacked plane. Meera is very enthusiastic to handle this case and wants all of her colleagues to help and support her for this. One of her colleagues Aditi (Maanvi Gagtoo), however expresses her concern for Jessica Lall murder case which Meera ignores and tells Aditi bluntly that she can go on with that case if she is interested but from Meera's side it is complete 'no'. The hijacking case soon gets over as the government compromises with the terrorists. Meera is going back home when she sees Sabrina who has come there for a T.V. interview. Meera goes to say hello to her but is not shown interested in her case.

Meera is at home when Sabrina's interview is telecasted. Meera's television is on and during interview, Sabrina talks about the promise she has given to her sister Jessica and herself. She says: "*Jab tak use insaaf nahi milta, mein roungi nahi.*" (I will not cry till she gets justice.) Meera hears this while sipping her coffee and immediately switches off the T.V. irritatingly. Her state of remaining unmoved at Sabrina's situation and even switching off the T.V. at such an emotional utterance by Sabrina are again a comment on her personality and attitude. Meera is a hard core woman who decides and does everything putting herself at the priority. If she feels interested in some case, she can go to any extent to pursue that but if she is not, nobody can make her do that. Three different situations have already been discussed which show three men as her father, her boss and her boyfriend, failing to convince her to work according to their will. They rather have to accept Meera as she is, with all excellence or eccentricities.

The hearing of Jessica Lall murder case begins. All the eye witnesses refuse to have seen anything. Manish's family hire the best criminal lawyer and pressurize all the eye witnesses in different ways, to give their statements in such a way that Manish may be proved innocent. The case goes on. After some years, the decision of this case comes and the irony is that all the convicts are freed since their crime is not proved. This is the case of victory of power and corruption over the life of a commoner.

The news makes Meera feel led down. Long back, she had refused to take this case as she felt it had no weight in it, with such a large number of eye witnesses. She had taken it as a case which would close very soon, relying on those witnesses and the judicial system as well. But now she realizes that the case which ran for a long time

has closed at a very crude note. She feels that she needs to take up this case and try to get justice for Jessica. This is nothing new for Meera that she takes an another impulsive moment to decide to work on this case. She immediately moves from her house, leaving her coffee midway and approaches Gaurav, with not her request but in fact her decision, to take up this case. Gaurav refuses with his own logics but Meera chases him till he allows her to take up this case. The following situation is not only interesting but important also to see Meera once more in her daring and determined form. She asks in the office and Gaurav says 'no' and leaves the office. She runs after him but the lift goes. She runs down the stairs with her sandals in her hand, reaches the parking lot and stops right in front of Gaurav's car, when he is about to go. The following conversation takes place between them:

“Meera : I want to do this.

Gaurav : Shayad tumhe upar samajh nahi aaya celebrity I spelled it out for you- No. NO

Meera : FO

Gaurav: Vo to tab kaha thaa celebrity jab tumhaare liye ye open and shut case thaa. Ab kya hua?

Meera : Because he got away with the damn it he shouldn't have. That bastard should be in jail and not at the next happening party. Usne maara hai- ye tumhe pata hai, mujhe pata hai, 300 witnesses ko pata hai, aadhe India ko pata hai and he still got away with it.

Gaurav : And no one gives a damn Meera. Isme ab koi story nahi hai. Court ne bhi END ka board laga diya hai. So good night. See you.”

(Gaurav sits in the car again to go but Meera sits on the bumper of the car and does not let him go. She wants him to listen to her.)

(Gaurav : Perhaps you didn't understand it celebrity when I spelled it out for you upstairs - No. NO

Meera : FO.

Gaurav : It was then celebrity when it was an open and shut case for you. What has happened now?

Meera : Because he got away with the damn it he shouldn't have. That bastard should be in jail and not at the next happening party. You and me know that he has killed. 300 witnesses know. Half of India knows and he still got away with it.

Gaurav : And no one gives a damn Meera. There is no story left in it now. Even court has put a board of END. So good night. See you.)

(Gaurav sits in the car again to go but Meera sits on the bumper of the car and does not let him go. She wants him to listen to her.)

“Meera : Don't be prick. I want to do this.

Gaurav : Kyon ??

Meera : Because justice has been denied. You can live with it. I will not.

Gaurav : Ye journalisim kam aur activism zyaada hai, okay. Humaara kaam hai public ke saamne opinions aur khabren pahunchaana, insaaf dilaana nahi.

Meera : Oh Come on Gaurav. Kai baar to hum apna profile banaane ke chakkar mein kai stories banaate hain. Sahi kya hai galat kya hai hum sochate tak nahi. Let's face it. Aisa maine tumne bade-badon ne kiya hai. Ek mauka mil raha hai galat ko sahi karne ka aur at least ek koshish karne ka. Come on Gaurav we owe it to ourselves as journalists and more importantly as human beings.

Gaurav : Stop being so dramatic Meera.

Meera : I am not being dramatic. Par shayad ab dramatics ki zarurat hai.

(She sits more firmly on the bumper)

So here it is. Ya to tum mujhe ye story karne do or else fire me.”

(Meera : Don't be a prick. I want to do this.

Gaurav : Why ??

Meera : Because justice has been denied. You can live with it. I will not.

Gaurav : This seems to be activism more than journalism. Our work is only to provide people with opinions and news, and not to provide them justice.

Meera : Oh come on Gaurav! So often we make stories just to make our profiles. We don't even think about what is right and what is wrong. Let's face it. This is what I, you, and even the big ones have done. We are getting an opportunity to set right what is wrong and try at least once. Come on Gaurav. We owe it to ourselves as journalists and more importantly as human beings.

Gaurav : Stop being so dramatic Meera.

Meera : I am not being dramatic. But now dramatics is needed perhaps.....So here it is. Either you allow me to do this story or else fire me.)

Gaurav is still confused about the case as he doesn't feel any hope in that. But Meera is so determined and confident to handle this case that she tells all her plans to Gaurav and is able to make him allow her to do that.

So Meera starts working on the case. Firstly she needs Aditi. It is the same colleague who has always been interested in the case of Jessica Lall murder. With the help of Aditi, she traps Vikram Jai Singh, a friend of Jessica and the main eye witness of her murder who refused in the court of having seen anything and escaped the questions of Sabrina's lawyer on the ground that he didn't know Hindi. Aditi takes an interview of Vikram (he is a model and an actor too) as herself a film maker where she makes him speak in Hindi for some film dialogues. During the conversation, Aditi makes him confess also the reason of his refusal at the court and the whole interview is recorded and telecasted on the T.V. channel.

Next Meera calls another witness in the voice of Sabrina and makes him confess what he saw and why he refused in the court. This conversation is also

recorded and telecasted. There is another person who took even some money from Sabrina to speak in her favour but still turned hostile during the court hearing. Meera makes him also admit that he refused because he went in favour of those (Manish and his friends) who gave him more money. All these confession are telecasted regularly. Meera doesn't spare the police while covering this case. She regularly questions the role and duty of police. This makes the concerned police inspector feel guilty and as a result, he anonymously provides to Meera the recorded version of the conversation he had with Manish in the prison. While interrogation, Manish had confessed that he had shot Jessica because she had refused to give him the drinks and was adamant despite insistence of Manish. This conversation is also telecasted and Gaurav calls all this "*explosive*".

Meera announces a campaign "*Justice for Jessica*" and seeks public opinion in that regard via smses and phone calls. And they get a huge response from the public. From the T.V., Meera appeals that the case should be re-opened in the court, for the sake of giving justice to Jessica. And she gets a copy of the press release from the High Court in that regard. The High Court decides to send a suo-motu notice to the police and seek explanation as why the convicts were set free. This is a big development in the case.

Next Meera gets an sms for a proposed candle march for the sake of Jessica. She propagates it via her channel and appeals to the public to participate for this event. All this while, one thing which doesn't happen in the favour of Meera is that Sabrina shows no reaction towards Meera's efforts. Meera tries to contact her telephonically but she doesn't respond. Sabrina's mother had passed away after the court's final decision came against them. Her father has been in hospital since then. She struggled a lot to get justice for Jessica but all the witnesses went hostile. So she feels fed up of all this which has completely spoilt her life. She wants to forget all this and move on in life. So she doesn't take any interest in the struggle of Meera even when it is for her sister's sake. When Meera reaches her home to talk to her, Sabrina refuses to participate in that case. They argue a lot. Sabrina also gets stubborn but it is Meera finally who wins her confidence referring to the struggle of the public of India who is now with her. Sabrina starts looking away and stops arguing with Meera to make her believe that she is not interested in that case

anymore. But Meera is more stubborn a woman who never loses heart, as she says assertively:

“Don’t look away Sabrina. Look at me and you better listen to me. All the work that you have done will mean nothing. This is not the time to give up. This is the time to give back to those son of the bitches This is not about how you feel sweetheart. This is about Jessica and you better understand that. Candle light kal sham ko 5 baje hai aur tumhe vahan aana hoga. (Candle light is at 5 p.m. tomorrow and you will have to come there.) and I am not leaving till you say yes.”

Meera’s words make Sabrina think of Jessica and the justice that she deserves. She goes to the inside room and looking at the picture of Jessica recalls an incident when Jessica had taken to task some eave teasers and asked her also to learn how to fight in order to protect herself. Jessica had said *“Ladna seekh le tu”*. (You need to learn how to fight) So despite all her reluctance to move further on in Jessica’s case, she decides to fight not only for herself but also for Jessica. She informs her father also about her participation in the candle march.

Manish’s father resigns from his ministerial post. The High Court accepts the appeal against the judgment of the lower court and the case is put on the ‘fast track’ also. Finally the Supreme Court gives the decision in Jessica’s favour and Manish and his friends are punished with life imprisonment and four years imprisonment respectively. Sabrina’s father passes away meanwhile but towards the end, she is shown as an independent woman running her own travel agency.

The story revolves around Jessica’s murder and Sabrina’s battle for justice for Jessica’s sake. Sabrina loses but the case is re-opened and she wins finally. But more than Sabrina, this is the victory of Meera who chooses the same case which she herself had rejected; gets conscious of her duty and responsibility as a journalist; argues hard with her boss to take the case at the stage when it is almost a shut case; is able to convince the boss with her grit and determination; and struggles and manipulates also very hard to expose the convicts; appeals to the court to re-open it; and turns the whole case in Jessica’s favour. And Meera is victorious not only in winning the case for Jessica but also for herself being an alert, aware, awakened and

assertive woman who pursues her profession perfectly and leads her life vivaciously, taking all in her stride.

Diary Of A Butterfly (2012), directed by Vinod Mukhi, the next film for study is the story of an ambitious girl who would do anything to climb the ladder of success in her profession as a fashion designer. Gul (Udita Goswami) starts her journey for success from her home town Jaipur. She is hungry for success, so she decides to go to the city of dreams, Mumbai. When she is leaving for Mumbai, her mother Shobha (Rati Agnihotri) gives her a diary. She wants Gul to maintain a diary, jotting down the day's happenings in it. The mother feels that it would serve as a mirror of Gul's life. She gives her a calendar also, on which there are some knowledgeable lines written.

Gul joins the Fashion House of Vivek (Harsh Chhaya) and stays with her friends Piya (Sneha Belani) who works as an accountant in the same Fashion House, and with Carol (Sofia Hayat) who is an owner of a Spa. Gul soon complains to her boss about Adi (Ronny Jhutti), her senior who seeks sexual favours from her for okaying her designs. This is her way of getting back at Adi with whom she had slept to get her designs approved by the boss Vivek. She soon becomes Vivek's favourite employee and is promoted, but stabs him in the back when she gets a far more lucrative job offer from his competitor, Ravi Bajaj (Aryan Vaid). Before long, she ditches Ravi Bajaj too to join Xavier (Rajesh Khattar), the owner of a very reputed fashion house Umbrella Creations.

When Gul starts her journey in Mumbai, she forgets each and every relationship in the thirst for success. She uses people as stairs in her journey of life in order to reach the top. But when she reaches the peak, she finds out that while running for success, she has hurt many people knowingly or sometimes even without any intention. She had abused many people who tried to correct her and now currently she has nobody to celebrate her newfound success. When she decides to correct all the mistakes she has made in the past, that is, to apologize to each and everyone she has hurt, she is shocked to see the negative response of the people that she decides to stay the way she is. She also refuses to listen to her mother's advice because she thinks that the diary itself made her weak and trapped her in emotions. She gets rid of the diary and the calendar by destroying them and goes her own way of success, aspiring for even more of it.

The film begins with a confident woman on the drive. She reaches the sea-side, gets down the car with a red diary in her hand. She looks at the diary once, opens it, tears the pages apart and throws them in the water. While doing this, her face clearly expresses the angst, the reason of which we understand later in the film. Tearing all the pages, she finally throws the diary into water and turns back. The turning back shows her as a happy and confident woman who has left behind something that was of no value for her. The rest of the film is in flashback. And '72 days' time is significant to note as it denotes the time span a woman has taken to take her own decisions in life which lead her to success and then there is no looking back. She sees only 'forward', with no room in her thoughts for any backward motion.

Gul is at her home and one of her boy friends Aran (Rajeev Singh) calls who wants to meet her as he claims to love her. But Gul is irritated to hear that and makes it clear to him that she doesn't want to even think about love as this is just useless issue for her and that she would prefer to focus on her career rather. She tells him :

“Aran tumhe achchhe se pata hai mujhe ye ishq-vishq pyaar mohabbat jaisi faaltu cheezon ke liye koi time nahi hai. I am focussed on my career man. Isliye mai Jaipur chhodkar Mumbai jaa rahi hun.”

(Aran you know very well that I don't have time for useless things like love etc. I am focussed on my career man and that is why I am leaving Jaipur for Mumbai.)

Aran plans a party for her farewell but she is shown neither happy nor exited over this. Aran wants her to come for the party and talks to her in a commanding tone asking her to come. Gul's spontaneous reply is : *“Kuchh log intezaar karne ke liye hi paida hote hain.”* (Some people are born to wait.) She goes, not because Aran is waiting, but because she herself decides to go. Her attitude makes it clear that she is not ready to be dictated by anyone. She goes for the party, enjoys it and is finally seen in bed with Aran. Aran gets emotional at the thought of Gul leaving for Mumbai and requests her to cancel her plan. But Gul is not ready to compromise with her career and dreams, as she says:

*“Gul : No way Aran. Mumbai is my dream city. Aur tumhe to pata hai
Piya ne mere liye kitni achchhi job dhoondhi hai. Mai ye
oppourtunity thukra nahi sakti.*

Aran : Aur mujhe thukra sakti ho!

*Gul : Aran, raaste musaafir ko manzil tak pahunchaane ke liye hote
hain, rokne ke liye nahi. Samajhe!*

Aran : Mai sirf tumhaare liye ek raasta hun?

Gul : Manzil bhi to nahi ho!

(Gul : No way Aran. Mumbai is my dream city. And you know what a
nice job Piya has searched for me. I cannot ignore this
opportunity.

Aran : And you can ignore me!

Gul : Aran, the paths are to take the traveller to the destination, not to
obstruct him/her. Understood!

Aran : Am I just a path for you?

Gul : You are not destination either!)

Thus right from the beginning, Gul is very clear about her priorities.

Gul finally leaves for Mumbai and the mother goes to see her off. In the way
there comes a phone call and Gul disconnects it. Mother asks if it was any “*wrong
number*” but Gul’s reply is “*No mom, wrong person.*” Even here, Gul’s reply is
important to understand her attitude towards people and her decision to talk to them
according to her own discretion and liking. Mother tells her about the father’s worries
and asks her to change her life-style but Gul’s instant reply is : “*I am not a kid
anymore.*” which again reflects her independent attitude.

Gul reaches Mumbai and is in car with her friends. There again comes a phone
call from Aran and she again disconnects it, laughingly telling her friends about him
as “*do ghante pehle to mera boy friend thaa*”. (He was my boyfriend two hours ago.)
Even this reply and attitude for her boyfriend reveals not only her progressive outlook
but also her hold and right on her own life, as she doesn’t want to be taken for granted
by anyone.

Gul wants to celebrate her arrival in Mumbai. So the friends go together for a party and enjoy and come home completely drunk. In the morning, it is her first day at office and she is supposed to reach at 10. But she is late although she wants to be punctual regarding time. As per her mother's instructions and liking, she writes the diary about her first day experience at office. But it is important to observe that she herself is not much interested in it.

“Ye diary mai sirf isliye likh rahi hum kyonki meri mom chaahati hai ki mai ek diary likhun. Office me aaj mera pehla din.”

(I am writing this diary only because my mother wants me to write a diary. My first day at office.)

A few days later, her friends plan to go for a movie but she refuses as she has to work on some important press-conference. It is the same Gul who believes in living every moment to its full, but now refuses the opportunity to enjoy the movie. This portrays Gul before us as an ambitious girl who wants to progress in life. And she knows not only the importance of time but is also aware of the priorities she needs to set to utilize the time to its best use.

Gul's boss wants her to go for the press conference of Umbrella Creations. This is a fashion house of big repute which is going to work with Indian designers for the first time. Moreover, they have announced that they will give the continuous ten year contract to the designer who wins their orders. It is not easy to get this contract yet Gul's boss is confident that they will get the orders and Gul wants to do her best to fetch those orders.

Back home is a situation which is interesting again to understand Gul's priorities, choices and ambitions in life. Actually she stays at a friend Carol's house where three of these friends (Gul, Piya and Carol) stay together. One day Carol asks Gul to do some re-arrangement of the furniture but Gul refuses bluntly saying:

“It's not my job....ye sab kaam to Jaipur me bhi mere naukar kar lete the. Mai Mumbai bada banana ke liye aayi hun. Chhoti si life me bahut bade kaam karne hain. Bahut aage badnaa hai.”

(It is not my job...Even at Jaipur, my servants used to do all this. I have come to Mumbai to become big. There are big works to do in this short life. I have to move too ahead.)

Carol tells Piya that Gul's attitude and life-style is very confusing to her and Gul expresses her ambitions even more clearly:

“Carol : Piya, ye mujhe Gul ka style samajh nahi aa raha hai.

Gul : Aayega, aayega Carol. Jab mera tumse bhi badaa ghar hoga, gaadi hogi aur 25 naukar hongee na, sab samajh me aayega.”

(Carol : Piya, I am unable to understand Gul's style.

Gul : You will understand Carol. You will. When I have a house bigger than yours, have a car and 25 servants, you will understand everything.)

Therefore Gul is not only ambitious but quite confident also of her success as she believes in her own talents and potentials.

Gul works hard to prepare the sketches and designs for Umbrella Creations project. But when she gives them to Adi (her senior colleague), he makes fun of her designs and doesn't let them reach the boss. On being asked by boss about Gul's designs, he tells her that her designs are not worth sending. Moreover, when boss asks him to dismiss Gul if she doesn't possess any talent, Adi asks the boss to do it himself. Gul overhears all this and decides to leave office. She is however, upset at the attitude of her colleague and boss who don't recognize and appreciate her talent. She comes back home and shares it with her friends. They are shocked to know the reality but Gul doesn't lose heart and accepts it as a challenge rather.

She goes to a restaurant with Piya and calls Adi there. After a while, she leaves with Adi to go to some other place as she has already a plan in her mind. She provokes Adi and indulges with him in sexual act. Adi feels so pleased with Gul that the next day he shows Gul's designs to boss with all praise for her. This is the same Adi who had tried his best to get Gul's designs rejected but now he himself presents her designs to the boss telling him that it was his fault that he couldn't realize Gul's talent well in time:

“Boss : Ye tumne taiyaar kiye?”

Adi : Nahi, Gul ne.

Boss : Tum to keh rahe the use kuchh nahi aata.

Adi : Nahi, use bahut kuchh aata hai. Actually maine uske talent ko samajhane me galati ki.”

(Boss : Have you prepared these?)

Adi : No, Gul has.

Boss : But you had told me that she doesn't know anything.

Adi : No, she knows a lot. Actually it was my fault not to understand her talent.)

So all is result of Gul's presence of mind as well as 'body' which she uses unhesitatingly to get success in her ventures.

Later Gul Joins Piya in gym who asks her where she was the whole night. Gul feels her that she has somehow saved her job. Piya is astonished to know this and wants to know how she has done that and Gul tells her that she just showed her 'work' the previous night and will get a promotion very soon:

“Kal raat ko maine apna kaam dikhaaya. I'll be promoting soon.”

(I showed my work yester night. I'll be promoting soon.)

Gul's word “kaam” (work) stands for both : the work (which she puts in to make the designs) and 'sex' (which she uses to tempt and trap Adi to make him take her talent forward).

One day Gul meets Ravi Bajaj in a restaurant when she is there with her friend Piya. He is their rival in business and has already challenged them regarding the orders of Umbrella Creations. She sits with him for a while and their conversation is significant to understand Gul's personality as Bajaj puts it:

“Bajaj : Mai jaanata hun tumhaari khaasiyat kya hai. Umbrella Creations ka kaam tumhi handle kar rahi ho na!

Gul : Yes Mr. Bajaj.

Bajaj : Tum me aur mujhme ek cheez common hai. A hunger for success. I can sense that, aur vahi hunger mai tum me dekh raha hun. You want to be very very successful. Nothing wrong with that. Fark sirf ye hai ki you work too hard. Meri ek philosophy hai : partyhard and work smart.

(Bajaj : I know your speciality. You are handling the work of Umbrella Creations?)

Gul : Yes Mr Bajaj.

Bajaj : There is one thing common between you and me. A hunger for success. I can sense that and I see the same hunger in you. You want to be very very successful. Nothing wrong with that. The only difference is that you work too hard. My philosophy is this : Party hard and work smart.)

Bajaj offers Gul to join his company and get him the contract of Umbrella Creations. He promises to give her in return a “*dream house*”, a “*dream car*” and a salary of her choice. Gul thanks him for the offer and tells him that she needs some time to think about it.

The next morning she reaches office and Adi comes to her cabin. Taking Gul for granted, he starts touching her body but she resists and complains to the boss about it. Adi is called and scolded severely by the boss Vivek. Adi tries to make Vivek understand Gul’s cleverness but Vivek is not ready to listen to him. Telling him that he knows all his schemes, Vivek fires Adi from the job. Out of his own experience, Adi wishes to tell Vivek that he shouldn’t trust Gul but since Vivek doesn’t trust Adi now, Adi leaves, but warns Vivek to be beware of Gul : “*Apko ye samajhane me waqt lagega ki kaun khilaadi hai our vo bhi shatranj ka.*” (You will take time to understand who is the player, and that too, of chess.)

The whole situation between Gul and Adi is interesting and important to observe. This is the instance of a man exploiting a woman and creating hurdles in her growth since he knows her potentials which can obstruct his own growth. But then the situation reverses and the woman uses her body to come out of the trap of the man, at the same time trapping the man himself to her use and benefit. A woman’s body has

long been used by men for their sexual gratification, where woman has always been the 'object' for them. Gul is the woman who subverts the whole myth of woman being the object. She becomes very much the 'subject' who uses her body with her own will and intention to achieve her aim. In the process, it is Adi who becomes the object and falls into Gul's trap of body. He gets her designs approved by the boss but is not allowed by Gul to take her body for granted. Gul infact uses Adi upto the end only which she needs, and then kicks him off like a useless waste. And she is not regretful of what she does.

Gul's friends talk to her about all this and she unhesitatingly puts forward her aims, ambitions and achievements. The following conversation between Gul and Carol is important to understand not only Gul but Carol also, alongwith the social approval or disapproval of a woman's move as well as the social reminders to woman to remind her to adhere to her prescribed limits:

*“Carol : Piya ne mujhe bataaya ki you slept with Adi sirf naukari
bachane ke liye. Kaisi ladhi hai yaar!*

Gul : Talented.

Carol : Kisi ke saath raat bitaana tujhe talent ka kaam lagta hai!

*Gul : Of course! Piya ko dekh le Carol. 5 saal se accounts ka job kar
rahi hai. Jahaan se shuru kiya thaa, abhi bhi vahin hai. Mujhe
dekh, itni jaldi creative director ban gayi hun!*

Carol : Magar iske liye kitna girnaa padaa tujhe!

Gul : Bade apne nazar me hon to chhota hona padta hai.

Carol : Teri chemistry meri samajh se baahar hai.....

*Bahut unchi udaan bhar rahi hai. Bahut jaldi zameen par
aayegi.”*

(Carol : Piya told me that you slept with Adi just to save your job.

What kind of girl you are!

Gul : Talented.

Carol : You find it talented to spend a night with some one!

Gul : Of course! Look at Piya Carol. She has been in accounts job for
5 years. She is at the same place whence she had started. Look
at me, how soon have I become creative director!

Carol : But how much you had to fall down for this!

Gul : We need to be small when the target is big.

Carol : Your chemistry is beyond my understanding.....You are flying too high. You will fall on earth very soon.)

Carol's words, in a sense, question what Gul has done. Her criticism of Gul's ambitions is actually a kind of social reminder that the film director has tried to convey via her, when she predicts the consequences of Gul's actions. But Gul, at the same time, is shown carefree and confident who gives a damn to all the social norms when it is about her own ambitions, growth and success. She is ready to even fall for the sake of rising and for her, it is infact, not a 'fall' but only a 'step' further towards her success, which she uses as a ladder.

Meanwhile Vivek gets the information that Ravi Bajaj has got the contract of Umbrella Creations. He comes to office in an angry mood and snubs Gul for that and gets rude enough to ask her to leave the office. Gul neither stops nor questions or gives any clarification but leaves immediately and reaches straight to Ravi Bajaj's house. There only it becomes clear that she has worked for him actually. So Gul moves one more step ahead and gets (as promised by Bajaj) a car, and a bungalow and a second car also as a surprise. This car is specifically for her outings other than the official work.

Gul is shown happy to get all this. And it appears implicit that she has got this all also using the talent of her mind as well as her body. Bajaj's words in the context, immediately after Gul leaves (taking the keys of her cars and bungalows) have deliberately been used by the director to make the audience curious to know what happens to Gul in future. He says:

*“Khuda kare ki bahut jald hosh aaye tujhe
Tera Guru na lekar doob jaaye tujhe.”*

(May God make you come to senses soon.

May your teacher not make you drown.)

The words “*hosh aaye tujhe*” are again a kind of social reminder for all women who try to trespass the moral norms set by the society. In this situation, what

is ironical is that a man is happy to use the woman to his favour but is not ready to accept that he too can be used by the woman for her benefit. And if the woman is successful in that, he certainly wants her to get punished.

Gul on the other side is very happy and shares her achievements with her friends. She shifts to her new bungalow and calls her mother to give her this good news. The mother is happy but concerned also for her as she is progressing too fast. She conveys her concern with the hope that Gul is not doing anything wrong. The father however, clearly says: "*Mujhe kuchh achchha nahi lag raha. It's too much too soon.*" (I don't feel good. It's too much too soon.)

On the one hand, it shows the love and caring attitude of mother but on the other, the concern of the mother is expressive of doubt that the patriarchal society has ingrained in the minds of all. No one is able to accept or rather digest the reality of a woman's fast progress, and people often associate it with her use of wrong means to achieve this. And the only wrong in the minds of people is the 'use' of her 'body'. Chastity is a concept which has fixed a woman's boundaries despite the fact that there are no boundaries for a man who is equally a party with whom the woman gets involved. It is one of the most powerful yet invisible cultural fetters that have enslaved woman for ages since the dawn of patriarchy. But Gul debunks all the boundaries and demythicizing the whole concept of chastity, uses her body unhesitatingly, not for the pleasure of men but more importantly for her own pleasure which she achieves out of the fulfillment of her ambitions in life.

Meanwhile Carol attempts suicide after her boy friend Akaash misbehaves and gets violent with her. Gul had already asked Carol to leave Akaash and think positively about her own right on her life. Piya calls Gul to reach the hospital urgently. She reaches there but refuses to stay with Carol since according to her, Carol is not worth her sympathy as she doesn't honour her own life. Gul finally comes back from the hospital, leaving Piya alone with Carol.

Gul becomes the managing director in Bajaj's company. Adi comes for an interview there, completely unaware of Gul's status over there. Gul is in a position to make Adi realize that he wanted to kick Gul out but now she can do the same to him. Although Adi is humiliated severely, yet he warns Gul for her over-ambitiousness and

says that she would fall soon. Gul is shown a bit worried at his words but here it can be said that despite portraying her as a brave and determined woman, the director has deliberately portrayed her ‘worry’ also just in order to put before us the impact of social pressures on a woman. Then it is up to the woman whether she succumbs to those pressures or not.

Gul leaves her cabin after Adi goes and overhears what other colleagues in the office talk about her. They make fun of Bajaj and Gul too:

*“One colleague : Bajaj sahib ka naya formula! Jiske aashiq hue vo
M.D. ban gayi. Business ka business aur aashiqui ki
aashiqui.*

*Second one : Aur apni M.D. sahibaa ka formula! Har phool ka ras
choos rahi nai. Usha naam Gul nahi butterfly hona
chaahiye.*

Third one : Yaar, ye to ek sochi samjhi successful scheme hai.”

(One colleague : The new formula of Mr. Bajaj! The woman whoever
he loves becomes the M.D.. It’s business
and love at the same time.

Second one : And the formula of our new M.D.! She is sucking
the juice of every flower. She should have been
named butterfly instead of Gul.

Third one : Friend, this is a well planned successful scheme.)

All these comments disturb her a lot. She goes back home, reflects upon herself, her mother’s advice, her relationships and realizes that she has spoilt a lot and repents over all that she has lost with time. She decides to work upon all those spoilt relationships and patch every thing up :

*“Mujhe lagta hai mujse kuchh galatiyaan hui hain aur kuchh rishte
bigad gaye hain. Mai sabse pehle bigade hue rishton ko banaane ki
koshish karungi kyonki mom ne ek din kaha thaa : “Mistake is a single
page in a part of life but relation is a complete book. So don’t lose a
full book for a single page.”*

(I feel I have committed some mistakes and some relationships have gone bad. First of all, I would try to make over those spoilt relationships because my mother had said once: “Mistake is a single page in a part of life but relation is a complete book. So don’t lose a full book for a single page.”)

This situation is one more example of the social warnings that are time and again given to a woman who violates the social codes of conduct. And Gul is shown to try mending all her relationships. That is another issue that she realizes and decides something else even in the process of mending her ways.

She goes to meet Carol first in hospital but is upset and rather angry to see Akaash with her. It is the same man who had forced Carol to attempt suicide and Gul snubs Carol for allowing him to be with her again. But Carol calls it her personal matter and gets rude with Gul asking her to leave. Gul does leave but says:

“Insaan ko life me itni galatiyaan nahi karni chaahiye ki pencil se Pehle rubber khatm ko jaaye. Maine bhi kuchh galti ki thee. Isliye Maafi maangna chaahati thee tumse. But you know it’s not worth it.”

(One should not commit so much mistakes in life that the eraser might finish before the pencil. I had committed certain mistakes. Therefore I wanted to feel sorry to you. But you know it’s not worth it.)

Then Gul goes to meet Piya to say sorry for her misbehaviour with her. She is but shocked to see Adi there in an intimate situation with Piya. Piya snubs Gul for kicking Adi off without even trying to understand what Adi had done to Gul. She too asks Gul to leave. Gul leaves with the following words which put her more strongly as a person who realizes her mistakes, tries to mend them, but at the same time realizes one more fact that everybody doesn’t deserve a ‘sorry’. So she should not be repentant every time. It’s others also who could be equally responsible for the spoilt relationships:

“Actually manzil tak pahunchane ka junoon thaa mujhe aur jin logon ki nazar manzil par hoti hai, vo raaston par dhyaan nahi dete. Par aaj

maine socha ki maine inhi raaston par bahut logon ka dil dukhaaya hai. Maafi maangna chaahati thee mai tumse par ab ehssaas hua tum log to is laayak hi nahi ho.”

(Actually I was passionate to reach the destination and those who look at the destination don't bother the paths. But today I thought that I have hurt a lot of people treading on these paths. So I wanted to feel sorry but now I realize that you are not worth it.)

She leaves Piya's house and then calls her old friend Aran who she believes to love her still. Aran is shown to be sympathetic towards Gul and comes to Mumbai for her sake. But he too ditches her. Gul is upset at the attitude of all her friends. But still she doesn't stop anywhere. Then she thinks about the calendar and the diary given by her mother. The calendar with all the good lines written on it seems futile to Gul when she faces life in its crude form. So she flushes it off in the toilet. Looking at the diary she feels that she won't be able to write it any more. The diary in fact seems to her to become a weakness for the diary writer who gets lost in memories and becomes weak as a consequence. Gul on her part, doesn't want to get weak in any manner and so she decides to stop diary writing:

“Ye diary ab mujhe bechain karne lagi hai. Ye bhare hue kaale panne mujhe kaali andheri raaton ki tarah lagte hain aur ye khaali safed panne chamakte hue ujaale hi tarah mehsoos hote hain. Maine mummy se vaayada kiya thaa ki mai diary likhungi taaki yaadon se judi rahun par mujhe lagta hai vaadon me aur yaadon me zaraa sa fark hota hai. Vaade insaan todta hai aur yaaden insaan ko hi tod deti hain. Mujhe apne aapko tootne se bachaane ke liye ye diary likhna band karna padega.”

(This diary has now started making me restless. These filled black pages look like dark black nights and I feel these blank white pages like the shining day. I had promised my mother that I would write diary so that I may be connected to memories but I realize there is a very slight difference between promises and memories. Promises are

broken by man and the memories shatter the man himself. I will have to stop diary writing in order to save myself from being shattered.)

She calls her mother to inform her that she won't be writing diary anymore. The mother asks the reason for the same and Gul's reply is that she cannot allow any thing to make her feel weak and sad:

“Mom jin diary ke pannon par mai kabhi khushi ke pal likha karti thee, ab vahi panne mujhe dukh dena chaahate hain, aansun dena chaahate hain aur aisa mai hone nahi dunggi.”

(Mother, the pages of diary on which I used to write my happy moments, now want to give me pain and tears, and I will never let that happen.)

The mother gets worried and tries to convince Gul in this regard but Gul is adamant to stop diary writing. Finally mother asks Gul to come back home but Gul says:

“Mai vaapas nahi aa sakti mom. Abhi to maine aage badne ke liye raasta banaana shuru kiya hai aur jis raaste par mai chal rahi hun vo manzil par jaake hi khatm hoga. Abhi to mujhe bahut aage jaana hai mom. Mai jab diary lik rahi thee mujhe ehsas hua ki raaste simat gaye hain aur maine waqt ko kaid kar liya hai. Ab mai is diary se chhutkaara paakar waqt ko azaad karna chaahati hun.”

(I cannot come back mother. I have just started making my way to go ahead and the path I am treading on will finish when it reaches the destination. I need to go much ahead mother. When I was writing diary, I realized that the paths have got narrow and I have imprisoned the time. Now I want to set the time free by getting rid of this diary.)

She goes to throw away the diary in the sea and this is the scene where the film had started.

The next scene shows her in the office of Umbrella Creations itself, which clearly is an evidence of her growth. The scene is interesting as it shows the boss coming to inform Gul about the arrival of some delegates when Gul is busy getting her nails painted. The situation is an important one to show how Gul dominates her boss too, relying on her own guts and convictions:

“Boss : I would appreciate agar tum office ko office ki tarah treat karo kisi saloon ki tarah nahi.

Gul : Well, office ka matlab hota hai business aur business ka matlab hai profit. And as long as I get you profit, I think you should be least bothered ki mai nail paint lagaun, lipstick lagaun ya dance karun- Right!

Boss : Right! Right!”

(Boss : I would appreciate if you treat office like an office and not like a saloon.

Gul : Well, office means business and business means profit. And as long as I get you profit, I think you should be least bothered about whether I apply nail paint or lipstick or even dance. Right!

Boss : Right! Right!)

This attitude of Gul and the following song challenge the whole notion of the ‘prescribed limits’ for women. The lyrics of the song fit in the whole context where Gul questions the liberty taken by men and takes liberty for herself discarding all the limits:

*“Duniya ke jue me humne daav maara
Palate sarae paase badle har nazaara
Thodi si humaare hisse aayi duniya
Hum jab-jab bhi jeete humse haari duniya
Tum karo to kuchh nahi
Humne kar diya kahin
To hungaama ho gaya.”*

(We played the gamble of life.
Everything changed, every scene changed.
A bit of the world came to our side.
The world lost whenever we won.
It's nothing when you do.
But if we did by chance,
Then it was uproar all around.)

While Gul is dancing with her colleagues, the boss comes with two Japanese delegates. He introduces them and Gul to each other and asks her to take them to the conference room. While they proceed towards the conference room, one of these delegates asks Gul if she has ever been to Japan. And her confident reply is:

“Ab aap mil gaye to vo bhi jaldi dekh lenge.”

(I will see that (Japan) soon now since I have met you.)

Gul therefore is not ready to stop at any point. Her statement regarding her visit to Japan is expressive of not only her never-ending ambitions and dreams but also her daring to fulfill them. Gul wants to be at the top in her profession and for that she doesn't hesitate to use her own body and charms as well. Her talent and creativity get recognition and she becomes a successful woman in the field of fashion designing. Moreover, she is happy with what she achieves, with no after thoughts or regrets for the means she uses to achieve her targets. So Gul's character is important to be understood as that of a woman whose priorities in life are already fixed and she adheres to them. The social pressures try to obstruct her in different manners but she doesn't succumb to them and treads on her self- chosen path to progress.

Besides the specific films taken up for this chapter, it is important to mention that the two roles of working women have already been discussed in the first chapter, although the orientation of the chapter was different. The role of Naina (Gul Panag) in the film *Turning 30 (2011)* is an example of a liberal minded working woman who works with all her sincerity. The projects she undertakes in office and the targets she fulfills are all manifestations of her creativity as well as commitment. She faces the jealousy and rivalry of her colleagues and is even fired as a result of their conspiracy.

But the way she lodges the case in court against the harassment by her boss, and the coming of the final decision in her favour are again evidences of her grit and determination with which she fulfills every task that she undertakes. Her creative writing and the publication of her book add feathers to her cap, thereby proving that she is a woman who excels in all fields.

Akira Rai (Anushka Sharma) in the film *Jab Tak Hai Jaan (2012)*, as a documentary film maker, is another example of a vivacious woman who enjoys her profession and lives every moment of it, proving it to be a domain of her interest and inclination. The way she takes risks to shoot for extra-ordinary situations; the challenges she accepts to get her ambitions fulfilled; the daring she shows to fulfill her tasks; are enough evidence to understand her as infact a ‘woman’ who ‘works’ and lives her work.

This chapter has taken up those films that portray women in different professions. The focus has been on their characters and personalities with special attention to their professions and how do they fare in them. Almost all of the characters taken for study are the examples of women who are not ‘working women’ actually but the ‘women who work’, not for the sake of working only, but for the cause of living and justifying their professions. They are very much the women who have their families but instead of falling into stereotypical womanly roles and choosing the typed professions also, these are the women who have chosen their professions according to their own choices and priorities. They choose their terrains and not only tread them with tremendous zeal but also dominate those domains. Their work is their priority. Nothing can hinder their growth, be it their parents, their boyfriends, their husbands or the society in general. They do what they wish to do. They don’t let them be dictated by any social or familial norms. They are very sure of their own creativities and potentialities, and they go ahead, uninhibited and unhindered, in all the fields and prove themselves. In this manner, these ‘reel’ women portray the metamorphosis that has taken place in the lives of women who have not only moved out of the four walls of home but are into different professions working out their challenges boldly.

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