

JEEVIKA

South Asia Livelihood Documentary Festival

Synopses of Short listed Films in 2007

GENERAL CATEGORY

1. I am the Very Beautiful

(I'm the Very Beautiful / Bengali / DV Cam / 1:00:00/ 31-10-06 / Mumbai & Kolkata / Mr Shyamal Kumar Karmakar)

The film follows a man-woman relationship, the woman incidentally being an "international" bar singer by profession and the man a film maker and also, the director of the film.

If a human being is the best plot, then Ranu is one thick plot. Over the past six years of filming, she has moved from one relation to another, from one home and even on country to another. After an extremely modest upbringing in a refugee family, an abduction, a child, suicide attempts and many failed relationships later, Ranu is a total contrast to Shyamal who is well educated, well to do and of course, well respected.

Where Ranu's predicament as a poor exploited beer bar singer "inspire" a film maker to make a film, the filming of six odd years makes it quite clear that she knows her way around in the "male world". In a life, full of men & stories, the director is being just one among the many. But the relationship grows with the film as the two accept each other despite moral archetypes and the film ultimately turns out to be a sign of their trust and respect for each other as human being.

The film is a compassionate view of the struggles and dreams of a woman perceived as an outcaste and also in which the film maker dares to bare his own dilemmas.

2. The Lost Water

(The Lost Water / Gujarati & Hindi / Mini DV / 0:45:15 / Mar-07 / Little Rann of Kutch / Mr Dakxin Nandlal Bajarange)

India is 3rd largest salt producing country in the world. Gujarat contributes almost 70% of total salt production in India and Little Rann of Kutch (LRK) contributes almost 60% of total salt production in Gujarat. But, as per Wild Life Act and Wild Ass sanctuary LRK is producing salt illegal and now 'Agariyas' (Salt producer community) are illegal in their ancestral land where they have been producing 'Vadagrih' salt since centuries which consider good edible salt. LRK Salt use to trade in MP, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan...Right now giant salt produce companies are using sea salt for their salt products so LRK salt is being irrelevant. State is ignoring to this area. People who are working in Salt Pan are facing lots physical and mental health hazards. They don't having a drinking water facility which is all of us basic human rights. They have to purchase water from salt traders or Hindustan Salt Limited Co. Due to having saline water to drink them having lots health hazards. There have to work constantly in 18 to 24 hydro bumo density saline under water without any safety kits. Death ratio in LRK is so high due to accidents, tuberculoses, blindness and many other dangerous health diseases. Only in Kharaghoda village there are 437 widows. They have to work in extreme hot and cold seasons. They could not get green vegetable while they use to work in LRK so almost Agariyas are malnutrition. There is vast wage and rate discrimination in Salt Plant by salt traders. At the ends of the year, Agariyas have to do a debt for next season. Due to Wild Ass Sanctuary now all the Agariyas are illegal in their forefathers land...Hindustan Salt Limited Co. is now going to shut down which is a oldest government salt company and now this co. not use to buy salt from Agariyas and Agariyas have to sale their salt to private traders who gave them minimum rates.

Life for livelihood in LRK is so hazardous. They are fight for their basic human rights to have a drinking water, for rights on under water and for their ancestral land which is their Motherland.

Agariyas are forcing to go out from LRK by Wild Ass Sanctuary authorities. There is threat that 150,000 salt workers will be unemployed and they having uncertain future.

3. SERUPPU (Footwear)

(Seruppu (Footwear) / Tamil/Mini DV / 1:14:00 / 02-12-06 / Tirudi / Mr Amudhan R P)

This is a socio-cultural documentary on the lives of catholic Arundhatiyars (Dalits / harijans/ untouchables) of Dharmanathapuram, an old slum located at the heart of Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu a southern state of India.

The people of Dharmanathapuram are involved in making footwear, one of the traditional occupations of a dalit with in Indian caste based society.

According to the presidential order 1950: para3, by the Union Government of India, dalits or the people from the lower caste in Indian caste system who do not follow Hindu religion (or those converted to Christianity or Islam) are not considered Schedule Caste (as any other Hindu dalits); and they do not have access to the reservations for jobs or in educational institutions or other support mechanism that otherwise are available to the Schedule Caste according to the Indian constitution.

Besides the upper caste Hindus who have converted to Christianity also follow their caste based practices such as discrimination, exclusiveness, unsociability and at times violence against their fellow Christians who happens to be dalits.

This film brings upon the discrimination and struggle faced by the catholic Arundhatiyars of Dharmanathapuram who also face stiff competition in the economic grounds as mechanization in the footwear manufacturing continues to grow in the era of globalization.

4. STATUES ALSO LIVE

(Statues Also Live/French/DV Cam/0:10:00/31-Jul-06/Paris, France/ Mr Abhijeet Deshpande)

When the entire world today is moving in an unimaginable and unmatched pace, here is a man who decides to remain 'still'. Like every statue in the beautiful city of Paris, this statue also has a story to tell...

5. MAID IN LEBANON

(Maid in Lebanon / English & Arabic / DVD / 0:26:00 / January 2006 / Sri Lanka + Lebanon / Mr. Carol Mansour)

Thousands of Asian women leave their homes each year to work as maids in the Arab World with the hope of securing a better economic future. Yet since their experiences are hidden behind closed doors, little is known of the fears & struggles they face while they are abroad.

Tracing women's' journey from Sri Lanka to Lebanon, this film exposes the little known world of the domestic migrant workers. While some are able to succeed, many do not. Rather their dreams are shattered in exploitative and abusive situations. In their own voices these women reveal cases of torture, rape, physical & mental abuse and non-payment of wages.

The documentary provides an insightful and sensitive look into the lives of these migrant workers with interviews from family members, employers, hiring agents and specialist in the field. It explores the question of why women migrate, why they often return to the Middle East multiple times, and why abuses occur.

6. KIRAN, THE JUNKYARD DEALER

(Kiran the Junkyard / Hindi / DiGi Beta / 0:07:30 / 30-12-06 / Bihar / Mr Vikash Nowlakha)

"You find diamond in the dirtiest places and let me tell you this- no work is dirty work. With my junkyard I have created a business that has changes my family's life – unlike me my children will finish school".

Kiran Devi is a junkyard dealer and a serial entrepreneur in Patna, Bihar. Kiran opened a junkyard business in her backyard with a loan from a micro-credit organisation called Niddan; she also bought a fleet of rickshaws and hired nine men to work for her. And Kiran is not done yet; in the time she is left she sells saris and cow dung cakes as cooking fuel. Now Kiran's children go to school and support the entire family. Kiran who grew up in Bapunagar village of Patna district in Bihar is 24 years old.

Kiran is a Girl Star- Girl Stars are young women and girls who have changed their lives by going to school. Girl Star is created by Going to School, a non-profit media trust in India, and supported by UNICEF. Girl Stars target audience is girls in India age 10 to 16 at risk from dropping out school, their families and decision makers in their lives.

Kiran's film is a fast edit roller coaster ride through a junkyard where fast deals are made through mobile phone calls. Kiran lives in her junkyard and manages a team of nine men. Kiran is a serial entrepreneur. She not only runs a junkyard but also a fleet of rickshaws, sells saris in the wedding seasons and sells cow dung cake when there is shortage of cooking gas.

7. Birodhabhash (Oxymoron)

(Birodhabhash (Oxymoron) / Bengali / Mini DV / 0:32:28 / Kolkata, Birbhom, Bolepur / Mr Anindya Dey)

Life is full of contradictions; life got rhythm when this continuous process of contradictory things keeps on flowing into the deep of the soul. 'Oxymoron' is a story of a rural folk artist, who wants to live only with music, but belly don't understand music so well. So a continuous struggle keeps him on his toe to balance his love for music and the reality. The film is all about this, the Life, the Passion and the tough Reality the artist face.

8. THE RIGHT TO SURVIVE

(The Right to Survive - Turtle Conservation and Fisheries Livelihoods / English / DV Cam / 0:52:00 / Oct-06 / Orissa Coast, India / Ms Rita Banerji / Ms Shilpi Sharma)

Each year the eastern coast of India witnesses a truly spectacular occurrence of nature-the arrival en masse of hundreds of thousands of olive ridley turtles in the coastal region of the state of Orrisa. Last year, for instance, an estimated 240,000 adult olive ridleys congregated at Rushikulya on the Orrisa coast to breed. Coincidentally the breeding season also happens to be the peak fishing season in orrisa, one of the poorest state of India. Thousands of fishing families rely on this season to fish, and around 70,000 fish workers are entirely dependent on Orrisa's coastal fisheries for their livelihoods.

As the pressure to conserve ecosystems and their resources rises steadily all over the world, so have conflicts between conservations imperatives and livelihood interests of the communities that interact with these ecosystems. This film discusses these issues. By taking an intense look at the concerns revolving around turtle conservation and the protection of the livelihoods of traditional fishing communities, it offers some insights into the dilemmas facing the various stakeholders and attempts to provide a solution for tomorrow.

9. Whose Forest?

(Whose Forest? (Adavi Evarikosam) / Telugu / Hindi / DV Cam / 0:53:00 / 2006 / Andhra Pradesh / Mr Shriprakash)

With the growing crisis of forest degradation across India, participatory approaches have been proposed by the Indian Forest Policy of 1988 and JFM Notification of 1990. The AP Joint Forest Management project, supported by a World Bank loan (US\$77.4m) lasted from 1994

to 2000, forming thousands of Vana Samrakshana Samithis (Village Forest Protection Committees). A second phase began in 2002 promoting so-called 'Community Forest Management', for which the World Bank sanctioned a further loan (\$108m). Have tribal people's aspirations been fulfilled through these projects? Have their historical grievances been addressed? Are Adivasi's forest-based livelihoods now improved and more secure? This film looks at the ground realities of the implementation of participatory forest management in the state. Conflict between forest department and the indigenous people has long history; Government came to pacify their anger with various projects this film looking in to such a project in AP which is funded by World Bank.

10. The Fight to Dance

(*The Fight to Dance / English & Hindi / HDV / 0:29:05 / Mumbai / Mr Anish Patel*)

It is a half-hour observational documentary that follows the struggle of Mumbai's dance-bar community. The documentary focuses on the struggles faced by former "dance-bar girls" who have been rendered unemployed overnight by the Maharashtra state government's decision to ban dancing in bars where liquor is served in 2005. The film focuses on three such ex-bar-dancers and follows their personal struggles as they actively try to overturn the State government's ban and encourage other bar dancers to come forward and demand their right to earn a living. The film is a positive tale of female empowerment and 'informal' leadership

11. GALI

(*Gali / English / DVD / 0:17:00 / 23-05-05 / Kolkata / Mr Paresh Hazra*)

Numerous people come to Kolkata to seek their fortunes. Many have found themselves and many have lost in and within Galis of this city. Galis are one of the most interesting places to study the people and the city for what they stand- Bihari milkmaids, rickshaw wallas carrying passengers, a boy who has lost his parents frantically looking for them, a girl running away with her lover and young men carrying a dead body to be cremated dancing and jubilating, two policeman walking down these paths with huge bellies rubbing tobacco. You could also find gailis within Galis here; they contour into heavily curved paths where your shoulders touch both walls. The characters of these walls speak a different language, different slogans, different symbols, ultimately only the skeleton of certain characteristics of a few people and their ideas are left.

12. Bahuroopi-(A man with thousand faces)

(*Bahuroopi (A Man with Thousand Faces) / Gujarati / Mini DV / 0:18:00 / Nov - Dec. - 2006 / Gujarat / Mr Manish S Dave*)

This documentary deals with the dying folk art *Bahuroopi*. It is a folk art flourished in Gujarat and Rajasthan- mainly to entertain the country people. *Bahuroopi* is an artist who puts various guises and acts accordingly, the tribe of these artists is also called *Bahuroopi*. In ancient times when there were limited entertainment resources, the *Bahuroopis* catered the mass and made their life full of hue. This art blossomed under the patronage of royal courts for centuries.

There are various views regarding the origin of *Bahuroopi* tradition. But it is assumed that the *Vedic* chants in rhythm and beats found in *samveda* gave rise to the folk arts of *Ramleela* and *Pretleela*. The *bahuroopi* is a part of *ramleela*. According to folk songs *Shiva* disguised himself as cobbler and carried a pair red shoe to deceive *Parvati*. He relished his favorite food from *Parvati's* hands. This myth suggests that the originator of this art is *lord Shiva* himself.

There are total 52 numbers of *veshas* (one for each week for 52 weeks of a calendar year). The *Bahuroopi* of Gujarat are mainly from Rajasthan; they belong to a community called *Shri Gaud Brahmins*. At present it is very difficult to find a *Bahuroopi* who can perform all the 52 *veshas*. Nowadays they hardly perform 7-8 *veshas*. They choose an area for performance and perform 7-8 *veshas* and at the end of *veshas* collect fund. Earlier they used to perform at

night but now they perform in day time. With rise of media like TV, cinema, internet post independence period, the art of *Bahuroopi* is almost on the verge of decay. Now *bahuroopi* performance is very rare. It is no exaggeration to say that the art has started singing the swan's song.

This documentary showcases the *Bahuroopi* artists, their performance along with their interviews; supported by the inputs and interviews by experts and researchers of folk art.

13. AMBI JIJI'S RETIREMENT

(Ambi Jiji's Retirement / Garo / DVC Pro / 0:28:00 / 10-09-06 / West Garo Hills, Meghalaya / Ms Nandini Bedi)

Ambi Jiji always planted her crops on soil on which forests have been burnt. At the end of each year, this 'jhum' field would be abandoned and left to regenerate into forest and a new one burnt. When Jiji was a young woman, she didn't need to buy food.

Now Jiji is about to retire. Chekjak, her daughter has been converting her jhum fields to orchards. Waljak, another daughter, continues to depend on jhumming with very little returns. Chekjak and other villagers' orchard produce give them cash and food security. Waljak's jhum field cannot meet her food needs.

Through the women, we see the passing of a way of life in a remote village in Meghalaya

14. Behind the Glitterati

(Behind the Glitterati / Hindi / Mini DV / 0:10:15 / Nov - Dec. - 2006 / Kashmir & Meerut / Zehru Nissa Shah / Namdeikim Kipgen / Mr Danish Khan)

The film attempts to document the current problems in bat making industry in Kashmir and in addition the problems created and faced by outside valley manufacturers. It vividly proves how the "blanket bans" affect the livelihood of thousands and worsen the case under consideration.

The film has been shot in the district Anantnag and Srinagar of Kashmir and at Meerut. It records the testimony of manufacturers in both the states regarding the exchange of wood and money happening under the garbs. It targets policymakers, officials concerned with the industries and commerce, NGOs working on livelihood issues and the general audience

15. Casting Shadows

(Casting Shadows / Hindi / Mini DV / 0:25:00 / 30-05-07 / Mumbai / Ms Nayantara C. Kotian)

Set in the heart of the B-grade industry in Mumbai, 'Casting shadows' takes a look at the unusual lives of two look-alikes. A contrast to one another in age, ideals and personalities these two men have nothing in common save the alias they share, that of the greatest star in Indian cinema history, Amitabh Bachchan...

16. The Lake of Despair

(The Lake of Despair / English / DV / 0:31:00 / 09-08-06 / Kashmir / Mr Snehasis Das)

Shikaras (House Boats) have lost their glory and the owners of houseboats have been suffering for the last 15 years because of militancy in Kashmir. Tourist inflow trickled down because of the terrorist activity in Kashmir. Above all, the environmental degradation of lakes and rivers in Kashmir is alarming. Lakes are shrinking because of encroachments. Giving special focus to the community of the *Hanjees*, the film justifies few characters and how they sustained their livelihood during a troubled span of 15 years. Taking their example, the film tries to portray the present state of Kashmir.

17. NEW DELHI Pvt. Ltd.

(New Delhi Private Limited / Hindi & English / DV / 0:37:00 / 05-Jul-06 / Delhi / Mr. Ravinder S Randhawa)

An attempt to capture the city of Delhi as it gets systematically refashioned to become a world class space, a productive site of neo-liberal regime. Urban scape is being reconfigured to facilitate entry and transaction of global capital, most emphatically visible in the proliferation of giant transnational corporations, ostentatious malls, high rise housing and commercial centers, expensive metros and flyovers.

As the space gets takeover, it has to be thoroughly and urgently purged of those who have toiled to built it, thereby resulting in rampant and brutal destruction of their shelter and livelihood, this process is systematically being planned in the larger framework provided by the neo-liberal regime, and executed by the state-judiciary nexus. What emerges is a desirable, commodified, privatized, cordoned city space that comes at a 'cost' and therefore only for those who can 'afford' it.

18. Trailblazing

(Trailblazing: The Women of Nepal's Trekking Industry / English / Mini DV / 0:24:00 / Jan-05/ Nepal, Pokhava / Ms Lisa Hoffe)

Trailblazing documents the pioneering spirit and determination of the fledgling few women trekking guides in Nepal who work, not only in a heavily male-dominated adventure tourism industry, but who also live in a conservative mountain culture. The story centers around three sisters of the Chhetri family, who operate the first and only female-owned trekking agency in a highly competitive adventure tourism market in Nepal. The Chhetri Sisters saw a need for female guides when women travelers to Nepal repeatedly asked why no women were available to guide them. The high demand for female guides prompted the sisters to train approximately 20 to 25 young Nepali women each year to build capacity for women in the industry. This is also a first in Nepal.

19. Anita the Beekeeper

(Anita the Beekeeper / Hindi / DiGI Beta / 0:07:30 / D-06 / Bihar /Mr Vikash Nowlakha)

Anita the Beekeeper 'I like beekeeping; I can run a business, earn money and study at the same time.

Anita Kumari is a beekeeper in Bihar, India. When Anita was young, her parents did not want her to go to school, but Anita longed so much to go to school that she knew she had to find a way to pay for her education. Anita saw men in her village-keeping bees and decided to give it a try. Anita saved enough money from teaching other children to buy two queen bees and begin her beekeeping business. Today, Anita has over 100 boxes of bees; she makes her own honey, goes to college on her bicycle and is still only 17 years old.

Anita is a Girl Star - Girl Stars are young women and girls who have changed their lives by going to School. Girl Stars was created by Going to School, a nonprofit media trust in India, and supported by UNICEF. Girl Stars target audience is girls in India age 10 to 16 at risk from dropping out of school, their families and decision makers in their lives.

Anita's film is beautifully filmed in rural Bihar with large trees, and slanting light caught just after the rain. Anita wears fairy wings, and clay piggy banks hang from trees. This is the story of Anita in the present day, with simultaneous re-telling of the story as if she was also five years old. Anita's story is a triumph for not only does she enroll herself in school, she finds a way to pay for her education twice - once by teaching other children, and the second time, by becoming Bihar's first woman beekeeper. Anita is studying for an English Literature degree and she has made her parents promise not to arrange her marriage until she has completed her college degree.

Students Category

1. Ganesha

(Ganesha / Hindi / 4:03 / 0:15:00 / Apr-06 / Barabanki, U.P / Ms Rita & Mr. Mohan)

This film is an autobiography of an old model village vehicle named 'Ganesha'. It is a viewpoint of this vehicle that the village-lives around it. 'Ganesha' itself consider as non-detachable part of the village, Barabanki of Uttar Pradesh. It sees the world around, it interprets with the lives of people and also feels the flow of days. It feels isolation as it become old and as young generations (of vehicles) replace it ways. It is also a story of everything gets old and goes back to the stage of permanent rest.

2. Baarah Mann Ki Bhuban

(Baarah Mann ki Dhoban / English / Mini DV / 0:16:22 / Apr-07 / Delhi / Ms. Vrinda Kapoor & Nitesh Bhatia)

This film revolves around the bioscope as a means of livelihood in Delhi and the prevailing conditions of the community of bioscope workers. It also tells a brief history of bioscope and that it was the first form of moving pictures in India. The film tends to highlight the present decline of the bioscope workers in Delhi and the role of the authorities like NDMC, police officials and NGOs on them. Finally it also infuses array of hope for the bioscope by giving knowledge of electronic bioscope to the audience and the role of certain NGOs in its promotion indirectly. It also highlights the enthusiasm of the few existing bioscope workers in the instrument who consider it as a unique and interesting art form.

3. Prakash Travelling Cinema

(Prakash Traveling Cinema / Hindi / Mini DV / 0:14:00 / 12-02-06 / Ahmedabad, Gujarat / Ms Megha Lakhani)

It attempts to capture the spirit of an age old medium of entertainment through a bioscope film projector owned by two friends who share a deep friendship, unceasing optimism and most of all an undying passion for their traveling cinema. The documentary takes you through their lives on street where they walk around the city lugging their antique traveling cinema, which they lovingly refer to as the "lorry" and lure the people into watching glimpse of the movies which the cinema has to offer. A stiff competition from movie theatre, television & technology has pushed this medium to the brink of extinction. Yet this sole traveling cinema has been able to dodge these hardships and continues to roll the path undeterred. Prakash Traveling Cinema is simply just a subject employed actually explore those innate tendencies of human nature and constantly fuel unfathomable emotions such inspiration, hope and endurance, that tend to survive even when all odds are against them.

4. Mandai

(Mandai / Marathi / Mini DVD / 0:13:43 / 01-11-06 / Pune / Ms. Radhika Murthy & Mr Robert Stoeger)

The film is about impression of Mandai- the vibrant market place in the heart of Pune city; home and workplace to many people selling considerable variety of goods. The film shows their lives set in the atmosphere of the market for an entire day from early morning to late at night. A brief trip to the modern malls in the city highlights the contrasting ways of the life and Livelihood of Selling and Shopping prevalent in the city and everywhere in India today.

5. Sirf Aag Se Nahi

(Sirf Aag Se Nahi (Struggle Beyond fire) / Hindi / Mini DV / 0:50:00 / 30-05-07 / Delhi / Mr Prince Shadwal)

Whether it is an accidental break of fire or arson wherever is the blaze, they are there, fighting against fire, to save lives & property of human being. They are fireman. Occasionally

they have to fight for something the deadly blaze & rescue the human life but perpetually they are destined to get into unwanted skirmishes of the odds of their own life.

It has taken in all 50 minutes for the film makers to infinite plights of the people in the occupied in the job of fire fighting. Most of the dare devil blaze extinguishers are migrants to this mega civilization of Delhi from rural areas and small townships. Their destiny has dropped them amidst fire while they were in search of livelihood.

The film endeavors to depict that by their courageous act, tireless spirit, the external burst of blaze can be plummeted but the fire set in their internal being in their psyche, in their routine life, can never be cooled down.

Though the interaction with the subjects of the film FIREMAN and a few scenes, the film focuses over the agonies of their life as in human working hours, lack of amenities at the place of living and inadequate facilities of fire fighting, their unheeded family and uncared state of their own health. The objective of the movie is to raise the voice in favor of the plight of FIREMAN through LIVELIHOOD.

6. All About Our Mothers

(All About our Mothers / English & Hindi / Mini DV / 0:44:00 / 15-08-6 / Delhi / Mr. Kuber Sharma & Mr Manak Matiyani)

When we grow up, our families are our world. As we are growing, we tend to see through the world with the eyes of our families. Our sensibilities are defined by those of our family.

ALL ABOUT OUR MOTHERS is a personal documentary, the film is a portrait of the mothers of the two directors. An exploration of gender positions in their own families, it looks at their family histories in the backdrop of larger developments in the women's movement and the leftist ideology.

From being a quirky portrait of their families and growing up experiences, the film moves to deeper issues of women's spaces and freedom within the family.

Looking at the mother's through the eyes of their sons, the film examines, to what extent they are shaped and directed by their gender. Growing up memories and reflections on the past and present reveal deep-set resentments and unfulfilled desires that many women might not even realize exist. What comes out is the gaps in memory and differences in accounts of "family matters" that reveal stories that remained untold, and ones that could not be written.

ALL ABOUT OUR MOTHERS is a film about families, and it is not just a deeply personal film, but also is a broadly political one. It tells our stories, the stories of our mothers, the stories of our families. But then we look at the surrounding politics that subconsciously always altered us.

Weren't our mothers taking a stand when they stepped out of their husband's house to the workplace? Did it come to them naturally as their mothers in turn have been workingwomen? Is it necessary for them to publicly speak out for their rights?

In the film we are looking at our mothers not just as mothers but also as women. Do we think that that as women they have less choices than their sons do. Or what if they were born in our generations? How different they would have been if they had more options in life?

A film on one's family is the easiest and the hardest film to make. The directors might have easy access to decades of research and insight in to their families, but it is equally tough to come out with those family insights to the public. Too many things are coincide red scandalous, and too many. Things too personal to be shared with the audience. But they all have to come out for the story to be understood. All the pieces have to be put together in the jigsaw and this is what we are trying to attempt in this film.

7. Bagher Bachcha (The Tiger's Cub)

(Bagher Bachcha (The Tiger's Cub) / Bengali / Mini DV / 0:23:21 / S-06 / Kolkata / Mr Bishnu Dev Halder)

The film is a testimony of the horror and adventure of the life of a ten-year-old kid, Shyamol Bagh, who had been living in the Railway stations, in the city of Kolkata. He has been in and out of an NGO run Night Shelter ('Home') in the past but wishes to stay permanently in the 'Home' this time for a better future and is undergoing vocational training for the last 15 days...

The voice of the protagonist is the voice in the film as it takes a journey through his past, to his present and his possible future. The film deftly travels through his past days of adventure, drugs and crime in the platforms of one of the major railway stations in India.

He fondly remembers his loving grandfather who died in an accident; narrates in detail, how his alcoholic abusive father died a sudden death... He talks of his demanding mother who remarried after his father's death, and the circumstances that forced him to run away from home.

His grandmother and his step-grandfather stay in the city and take shelter at night in a roadside shop. His mother, who works as a maid in the city, stays in the outskirts of the city in a rented house with her second husband and her other sons. She reveals that Shyamol's real father is still alive and that Shyamol was only few days old when they got separated. She dreams of having a house of her own some day where she can provide shelter to Shyamol and her other children...

A progressive, fast developing civilized society... A humdrum metro, moving each day towards unparalleled modernity... huge buildings, large designs, big ideas – and somewhere amongst it all – Shyamol, who too dreams of having a house of his own and staying together with his entire family, struggles to survive and find his own little feet... and thousands more like him... on the streets of the 'new' Kolkata, the City of Joy...