

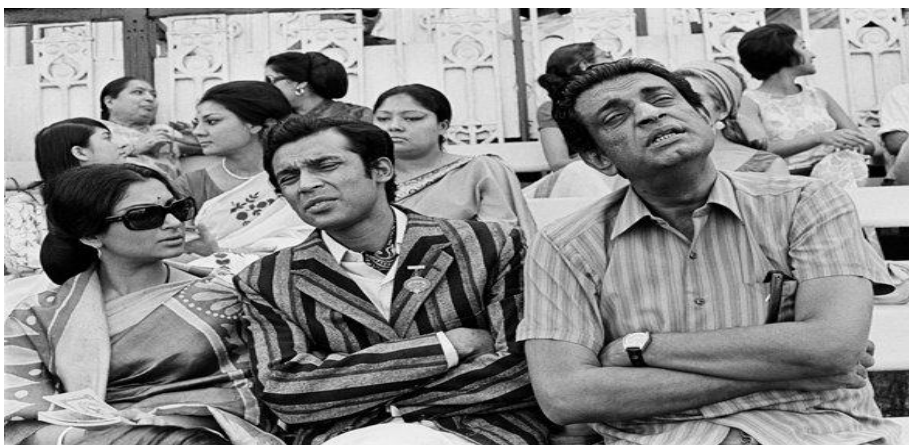
ENTERTAINMENT

#BigInterview! Barun Chanda: ‘Seemabaddha’ gave me the label of Satyajit Ray’s actor till my last breath

Sankha Ghosh | [TIMESOFINDIA.COM](https://timesofindia.com) | Jun 6, 2021, 08:00 IST

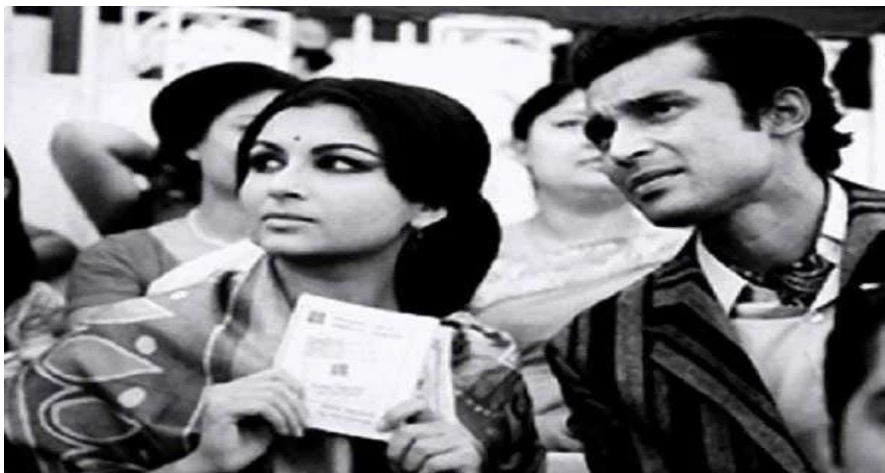


Barun Chanda who played one of the leads in ‘Seemabaddha’ Satyajit Ray’s indictment of the corporate rat race and twisted ethical calls still remembers almost all the experience he had with the auteur during the shooting. ‘Seemabaddha’, the cult classic completes its golden jubilee this year. In this week’s Big Interview, ETimes speaks to the veteran actor as he shares anecdotes from the shooting floors and tells us why the film is still relevant in today’s society. Excerpts... Tell us about your first encounter with Satyajit Ray.



After this incident in 1969, how did you manage to bag Seemabaddha?

Seemabaddha is completing 50 years this year. Do you think the film resonates with the current society? I think the situation today is much worse than what we see in the film. In Seemabaddha, Shyamal was deeply hurt by the manipulation, for compromising on his moral stance. Today, if I ask my son, who is a director of an IT company, he would laugh at me and say, 'This happens every day. The compromise, the easy way out for avoiding a hefty penalty, is an everyday business. People today would laugh at Shyamal and say, 'Why is he crying like a stupid fool?' By today's standards, the unethical corporate practice shown in Seemabaddha is nothing. Today, people would happily kill others for material and corporate gain.



How do you remember Satyajit Ray?

I still remember him as one of the greatest men I've ever met. He is far beyond the best director I've ever come across. I am currently writing a full book on what exactly made him such a great man. Deep down, it still hurts that he did not offer me any other film. I keep dreaming that he's called me over to offer me a role. Of course, it hurts... (pauses).

What was your biggest takeaway from Seemabaddha?

People still stop me on the streets and say, ‘I have seen you in Seemabaddha. You remain our young-day hero. We always try to emulate your style, stance, the way you walk and the way you talk in that movie.’ That is my biggest takeaway from the film. Someone once asked Ray, ‘How much money did you make from Pather Panchali?’ He turned around and said, ‘Nothing. The West Bengal government got all the money. And I got all the fame.’ That would be my answer for Seemabaddha. The fact remains that monetary gain is immaterial. The fame that the film gave me is everlasting. It gave me the label of Ray’s actor till my last breath. My actor friend Pradip Mukherjee of Jana Aranya says, ‘Barunda, we are the last of the Mohicans.’ He says this all the time.

Tell us about the first incident that you recall from the shooting of Seemabaddha.

We shot the first leg, the film’s beginning, in Patna. Ray always used to shoot chronologically so that the characters could grow with the shoot. In the scene where I was in a hurry to go for the interview on a bicycle, it suddenly occurred to me that my character should be anxiously looking at the watch. I did so. Babu (Sandip Ray who was there with Satyajit in an open jeep with the camera that was following the bicycle) later told me that Ray was very impressed. He apparently muttered, ‘Bah, besh dilo toh’. He appreciated my thinking-acting and that is the best takeaway from the shooting experience.



After all these years of enjoying a successful film career, do you have any regrets?

The only time I thought I could have changed my mind was for the film 'Mohonar Dikey'(1982), a slightly better than the run-of-the-mill. It was a very good meaty role for me and for some personal reasons I said no. When I look back I feel, maybe that was one film I could have said yes to because I would have been able to act with Aparna Sen.

You had played Sonakshi Sinha's father, the zamindar in 'Lootera'. What made you say yes to the role? Filmmaker Vikramaditya Motwane sent someone to scout for a character to benefit the role. A few days after the audition, I got a call from a woman who said: 'Hi, this is Deepa, Vikramaditya's mother. My son thinks you are the zamindar. What do you want for the role? Don't waste time, come right over to Mumbai, you've got to try on your costumes'. It was a challenge because I had to work on my Hindi accent. But then, what comes easily to you stops being a challenge and there's no fun in that

You are also well-known for writing quite a few Bengali adult crime thrillers. How did it start?



I always preferred crime thrillers. Interestingly, in Bengali, almost all the well-known writers, including Satyajit Ray have created their masterpieces for the adolescents-young generation. You can't find any sex, or woman like the character 'Kakababu' who never falls in love. He doesn't have a woman in his life! That's really incredible. If you ask me I would have loved to play Kakababu on the big screen! So the idea came to my mind that this is one area in which Bengali literature is missing – the adult crime thrillers. That's how it all started.

So what defines Barun Chanda?

I generally oscillate between acting and writing. Acting gives me some kind of hype. Even reading out can sometimes give you a temporary hype when people just come and hold you by their hand and admit that your literary works have moved them to tears.

Reference

https://m.timesofindia.com/entertainment/bengali/movies/biginterview-barun-chanda-seemabaddha-gave-me-the-label-of-satyajit-rays-actor-till-my-last-breath/amp_articleshow/83199775.cms