

# Satyajit Ray & his contributions

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**In news :** The 51st International Film Festival of India will pay rich tributes to the legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray

This was announced during the Golden Jubilee edition of IFFI in 2019, by Shri Amit Khare, Secretary, Ministry of I&B, as part of the Centenary celebrations of Satyajit Ray.

## About the Satyajit Ray(1921-1992) and his contributions

- He was born on May 2nd 1921 in Calcutta, India
- He has a Bengali motion-picture director, writer, and illustrator who brought the Indian cinema to world recognition with Pather Panchali (1955; The Song of the Road) and its two sequels, known as the Apu Trilogy.
- Ray directed 36 films, including feature films, documentaries and shorts.
- He was also a fiction writer, publisher, illustrator, calligrapher, music composer, graphic designer and film critic.
- As a director Ray was noted for his humanism, his versatility, and his detailed control over his films and their music.
- He studied at Presidency College, Calcutta's leading college, where he taught in English
- In 1940 his mother persuaded him to attend art school at Santiniketan, Rabindranath Tagore's rural university northwest of Calcutta.
- There Ray, whose interests had been exclusively urban and Western-oriented, was exposed to Indian and other Eastern art and gained a deeper appreciation of both Eastern and Western culture, a harmonious combination that is evident in his films.

- In 1943 he got a job in a British-owned advertising agency, became its art director within a few years, and also worked for a publishing house as a commercial illustrator, becoming a leading Indian typographer and book-jacket designer.
- Among the books he illustrated (1944) was the novel Pather Panchali by Bibhuti Bhushan Banarjee, the cinematic possibilities of which began to intrigue him
- Ray had long been an avid filmgoer, and his deepening interest in the medium inspired his first attempts to write screenplays and his confounding (1947) of the Calcutta Film Society.
- Pather Panchali was completed in 1955 and turned out to be both a commercial and a tremendous critical success, first in Bengal and then in the West following a major award at the 1956 Cannes International Film Festival
- Ray never returned to this saga form, his subsequent films becoming more and more concentrated in time, with an emphasis on psychology rather than conventional narrative.
- He also consciously avoided repeating himself. As a result, his films span an unusually wide gamut of mood, milieu, period, and genre, with comedies, tragedies, romances, musicals, and detective stories treating all classes of Bengali society from the mid-19th to the late 20th century.
- Most of Ray's characters are, however, of average ability and talents—unlike the subjects of his documentary films, which include Rabindranath Tagore (1961) and The Inner Eye (1972).
- It was the inner struggle and corruption of the conscience-stricken person that fascinated Ray; his films primarily concern thought and feeling, rather than action and plot.
- Some of Ray's finest films were based on novels or other works by Rabindranath Tagore, who was the principal creative influence on the director

- The songs composed by Ray for the latter are among his best-known contributions to Bengali culture.
- The motion-picture director also established a parallel career in Bengal as a writer and an illustrator, chiefly for young people. He revived the children's magazine Sandesh (which his grandfather had started in 1913) and edited it until his death in 1992.
- He was one of the filmmakers who initiated the Parallel cinema in Bengal
- Ray was the author of numerous short stories and novellas, and in fact writing, rather than filmmaking, became his main source of income.
- His stories have been translated and published in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere.
- Some of Ray's writings on cinema are collected in Our Films, Their Films (1976).
- His other works include the memoir Yakhana chota chilama (1982; Childhood Days).

### **Do you know?**

### **What is the parallel Indian cinema?**

- Parallel cinema is a film movement in Indian cinema that originated in the state of West Bengal in the 1950s as an alternative to the mainstream commercial Indian cinema, represented especially by popular Hindi cinema, known today as Bollywood.
- It is inspired by Italian Neorealism, Parallel Cinema began just before the French New Wave and Japanese New Wave, and was a precursor to the Indian New Wave of the 1960s. The movement was initially led by Bengali cinema and produced internationally acclaimed filmmakers such as Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak, Tapan Sinha and others.
- It is known for its serious content, realism and naturalism, symbolic elements with a keen eye on the sociopolitical climate of the times, and for the

rejection of inserted dance-and-song routines that are typical of mainstream Indian films.