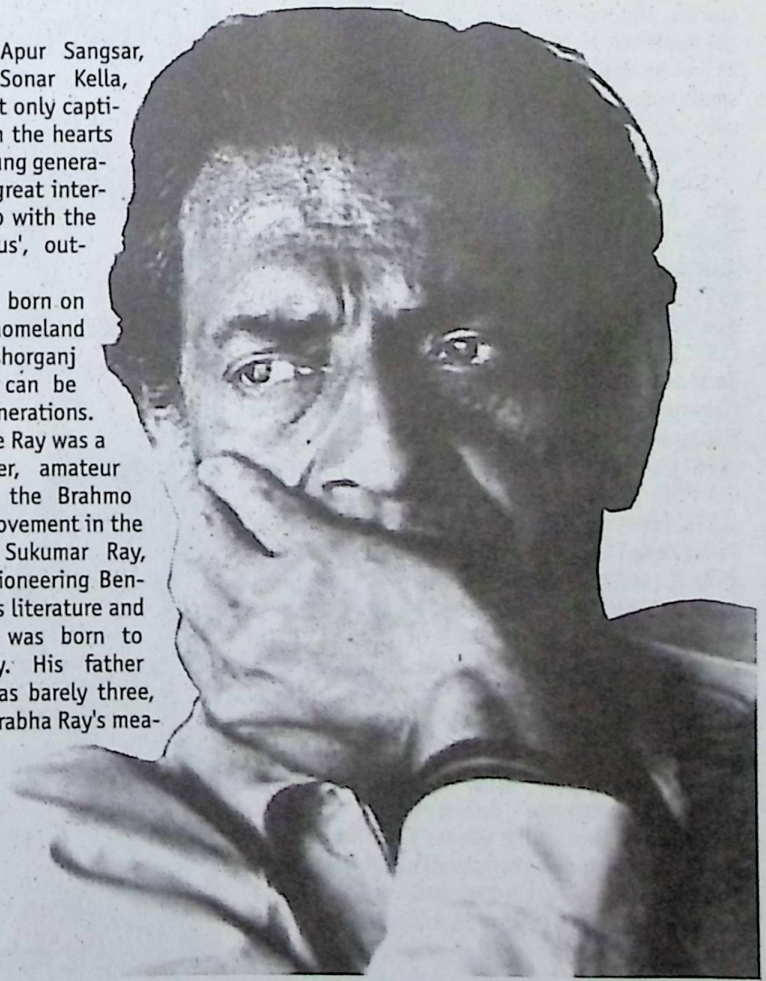
Knowing Satyajit Ray through his films

Dr. Kalpana Bhowmik

"I will remain alive in the hearts of each and every person." Looking at his picture it makes me feel that may be this is what he believed about himself. His appearance gives the image of a man with strong ambition and a belief in himself.

In 1977, the renowned movie 'Pather Panchali' first introduced me with Satyajit Ray. What a heart-touching movie it is! I have seen this movie a number of times. And each time I watch it, a single word escapes my mouth---'outstanding!'

Not only 'Pather Panchali' but all his movies are extraordinary, for example: Apur Sangsar, Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne', Sonar Kella, Aranyer Din Ratri, etc. They not only captivate the adults, but also touch the hearts of the young ones. Even the young generation watches his movies with great interest. And all his viewers end up with the comments- 'amazing', 'fabulous', outstanding; etc.



This eminent individual was born on May 2, 1921, in Kolkata. His homeland was in Mashua village, in Khshorganj (Bangladesh). Ray's ancestry can be traced back for at least ten generations. His grandfather Upendrakishore Ray was a writer, illustrator, philosopher, amateur astronomer and a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, a religious and social movement in the nineteenth century Bengal. Sukumar Ray, Upendrakishore's son, was a pioneering Bengali writer of rhymes, children's literature and illustrator and a critic. He was born to Sukumar and Suprabha Ray. His father Sukumar Ray died when he was barely three, and the family survived on Suprabha Ray's meagre income.

Ray studied at Ballygunge Government High School, Kolkata, and then completed his BA (Hons.) in Economics at Presidency College of the Calcutta University. His interest was always in fine arts, and later he joined Santiniketan to study arts. He began his career as a commercial artist. He founded Kolkata's first film society in 1947 and made his first film 'Pather Panchali' (1955) while working at an advertising agency.

In 1949, Ray got married to Bijoya Das. The couple had a son, Sandeep, who is now a film director.

Satyajit Ray's skill was multifarious. He was a renowned writer, producer, director, screenwriter, composer and a graphic designer as well.