



REVIEW OF RESEARCH

ISSN: 2249-894X

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631(UIF)

VOLUME - 15 | ISSUE - 11 | AUGUST - 2026



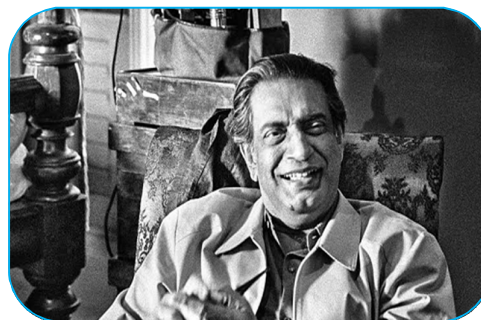
SATYAJIT RAY'S FILM & EDUCATIONAL VALUES: A CRITICAL STUDY

Dr. Akhtar Hossain

**Assistant Professor & HOD, Department of Education,
Nabagram Amar Chand Kundu College,
Affiliated to kalyani University, West Bengal, India.**

ABSTRACT

Since long time cinema has become an influential force in education, emotional development and cultural preservation. The power of cinema is reflective and transformative educational tool especially in the hands of master story teller like Satyajit Ray. His famous trilogy Apu comprising *pathar panchali*(1955), *aparajita*(1956), *Apu sansar* (1959) is a deeply humanistic depictions of life's trial and triumphs covering educational values not through direct pedagogy but through nuanced story telling character evolution and emotional resonance. This study explores how Roy's film becomes fertile ground for value education and how Apu's journey mirrors the important educational values such as empathy, sympathy, resilience, moral development, and self-realization. The core of value based education lies the principles that learning is not confined to the textbook or classroom well. It is a lifelong process that is inculcated through daily experiences, relationship and reflection. The present study adopted a descriptive qualitative research methodology, ideally suited for analysing the nuanced portrayal of educational values in cinematic texts.



KEYWORDS: value education, cinema, *pathar panchali*(1955), *aparajita*(1956), *Apu sansar* (1959).

1. INTRODUCTION

The medium of cinema has long transcended the realm of entertainment to become an influential force in education, emotional development, and cultural preservation. This chapter begins with a profound acknowledgment of cinema's power as a reflective and transformative educational tool, especially in the hands of a master storyteller like Satyajit Ray. His renowned Apu Trilogy comprising *Pathar Panchali* (1955), *Aparajito* (1956), and *Apur Sansar* (1959) is a deeply humanistic depiction of life's trials and triumphs, capturing educational values not through direct pedagogy, but through nuanced storytelling, character evolution, and emotional resonance. This chapter explores how Ray's films become fertile grounds for value education and how Apu's journey mirrors essential educational themes such as empathy, resilience, moral development, and self-realization. At the heart of value-based education lies the principle that learning is not confined to textbooks or classroom walls it is a life-long process woven through daily experiences, relationships, and reflective practices. In Ray's cinematic universe, learning happens in the quiet moments of struggle, in familial bonds, in the moral dilemmas his characters face, and in the small triumphs of human dignity. *Pathar Panchali*, the opening of the trilogy, introduces us to the rural village of Nischindipur and the innocent world of Apu and his sister Durga. Through their eyes, we witness how poverty, beauty, love, and loss co-exist, shaping a consciousness that is more sensitive, observant, and thoughtful. The child's innocent questions, the mother's anxious scolding, the father's poetic aspirations all serve as mediums through which value education is transmitted.

Educational value here is neither didactic nor overt. Instead, Ray uses realism to portray moments that evoke ethical reflection: Durga stealing fruit and being scolded, Apu's first encounter with formal education, the quiet death of loved ones. These scenes force the viewer into a contemplative state, asking them to consider not only the characters' actions but their moral and emotional implications. The simplicity of the rural backdrop is contrasted with the complexity of human emotion, illustrating how value education is embedded in lived experiences. The character of Sarbajaya, Apu's mother, is a striking representation of endurance and moral strength traits essential to value-based living. Her resilience despite social judgment, her care despite limited means, and her internal conflict between discipline and affection offer rich ground for ethical discourse.

As Apu matures in *Aparajito*, the values he absorbs are tested against new backdrops: urban education, intellectual ambition, and personal freedom. This stage of the trilogy underscores the educational value of autonomy, aspiration, and the emotional costs that come with progress. Ray subtly comments on the tension between traditional expectations and modernity, between familial obligation and self-actualization. The film portrays Apu's transformation from a wide-eyed village boy to a contemplative student in Calcutta, but it does not glorify ambition at the cost of empathy. Instead, it insists on a holistic education one that integrates emotional intelligence, gratitude, and ethical responsibility. Sarbajaya's solitude and eventual death, juxtaposed with Apu's academic success, serve as a somber reminder that education devoid of values like empathy and connectedness can lead to alienation. Apu's journey in *Apur Sansar* provides the most mature articulation of educational values. Here, Apu is no longer just a learner but also a teacher albeit an unwilling one at first. Marriage, fatherhood, loss, and reconciliation become the new curriculum of his life. The tragedy of Aparna's death and Apu's subsequent detachment from society demonstrate how grief can derail one's ethical compass. Yet it is through his eventual return to his son Kajal that Apu embraces the value of responsibility, forgiveness, and renewal. His reunion with his son is not only a personal redemption but a powerful illustration of value re-incorporation how education is not linear, and how growth often comes from failure and reflection. Throughout the Apu Trilogy, Ray constructs a philosophical narrative where the education of the soul is paramount. The films urge us to look beyond literacy and academic achievement toward a more expansive view of learning one that includes moral sensitivity, cultural empathy, social responsibility.

Insights by conducting a deep analysis of dialogues, character arcs, and key cinematic elements in each film, linking them to established theories of value education. It references contemporary research such as Nandy (2024), Mukhopadhyay (2024), and Kar (1985), whose works highlight the educational significance of cultural narratives. These studies provide academic grounding to the idea that films like Ray's can serve as pedagogical tools, capable of fostering values that are not only taught but felt and internalized.

In today's educational context, where value crises are often cited as causes of social breakdown from bullying and dishonesty to selfishness and apathy Ray's humanistic films offer a compelling alternative. They provide a mirror to society and a map for ethical living. By using film as a medium for value education, educators and parents can tap into the emotional engagement and visual storytelling that cinema uniquely offers. As seen in studies by Cardullo (2019) and Sharma (2021), Ray's work blends realism with poetic symbolism, making it both relatable and thought-provoking.

Each film in the trilogy presents unique sets of educational values. Drawing from authentic examples and human interactions in the films, the following sections will analyse the core themes of honesty, empathy, self-confidence, resilience, loyalty, and moral reasoning. It will explore how characters, especially Apu, evolve in their moral understanding and how these evolutions can inform our own educational practices today. Ultimately, this chapter aims to reaffirm that values is most impactful when it touches the heart, stirs the soul, and invites introspection precisely what Ray's trilogy accomplishes. It will be evident that *Pather Panchali*, *Aparajito*, and *Apur Sansar* are not just films but life lessons rendered in frames. They speak to viewers across generations, urging us to rethink what it means to be educated not just in knowledge, but in character. This understanding aligns with the modern goals of holistic education, where personal, emotional, and ethical development are seen as integral to academic learning. Ray's cinematic masterpiece becomes not just a cultural artefact, but a

timeless curriculum on humanity, making the case for integrating arts and narrative storytelling into contemporary education. Through Apu's eyes, we see not just the world, but ourselves and the values we carry forward into it.

1.1 RATIONAL OF THE STUDY

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the role of educational values in cinema. While many studies focus on moral or psychological aspects of films, the specific educational values embedded within them are often overlooked. This study aims to analyse the educational values presented in the Apu Trilogy, with a special focus on the protagonist Apu. The rationale for selecting this topic lies in the trilogy's rich portrayal of human learning, emotional development, and intellectual growth.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this research is " **SATYAJIT RAY'S FILMS AND VALUE EDUCATION: A CRITICAL STUDY**"

1.3 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERM USED

1.3.1 Educational values

Educational value is about whether a learning experience is meaningful, impactful, and contributes to an individual becoming a well-rounded, knowledgeable, and responsible human being who can thrive both personally and contribute to a better society. It's not just about what is taught, but how it shapes a person.

1.3.2 Satyajit Ray's selected films

In this study films are *Pather Panchali* (1955), *Aparajito* (1956) and *Apur Sansar* (1959). Globally recognized as The Apu Trilogy.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To identify the educational values in *Pather panchali* film.
- To identify the educational values in *Aparajito* film.
- To identify the educational values in *Apur sansar* film
- To analyse the role of the protagonist Apu in promoting educational values throughout the Apu trilogy.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

- Which educational values are depicted in Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*?
- Which types educational values presented in *Aparajito*?
- What educational values are expressed through the narrative and characters in *Apur Sansar*?
- In what ways does the protagonist Apu embody and promote educational values throughout the Apu Trilogy?

1.5 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Selected Films:

This study will be confined to three specific films directed by Satyajit Ray *Pather Panchali* (1955), *Aparajito* (1956), and *Apur Sansar* (1959). Other films by Ray or films by different directors will not be included in this analysis.

1.5.2 Research theme:

The research will specifically analyse the themes of educational values, Other philosophical or sociological concepts outside these themes will not be addressed in this study.

1.5.3 Values:

This study will primarily focus on educational values showed on the Apu trilogy

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study adopted a descriptive qualitative research methodology, ideally suited for analysing the nuanced portrayal of educational values in cinematic texts. Given the interpretive nature of the research objective, the study did not rely on statistical or quantitative data but rather on a deep, contextual exploration of the narrative, visual, and emotional elements embedded in the Apu trilogy. The Apu trilogy is the primary source of data by multiple viewings of the motion picture to ensure a thorough understanding of both the overt and subtle messages conveyed through dialogue and gesture. The process involved a systematic analysis of key scenes and dialogues, with a focus on identifying moments where the core educational values such as honesty, bravery, self-confidence, loyalty, love, respect, friendliness, and purity were evident through character actions and narrative progression. These scenes were then coded and classified based on the nature of the value portrayed. Particular attention was given to non-verbal, emotional transitions, and visual storytelling elements, which often carry as much pedagogical weight as spoken words in Ray's minimalistic yet expressive cinematic style.

3. MAJOR FINDING

The study explores various educational values depicted throughout The Apu Trilogy, highlighting how informal and formal learning experiences shape Apu's character and contribute to his growth.

In Pather Panchali, Apu's informal learning in a poverty-stricken rural village is emphasized. Despite limited access to formal schooling, his intellectual development is nurtured by his scholar father, Harihar, who envisions Apu's education. Everyday experiences like interactions with neighbours and explorations of nature teach Apu and Durga resilience and resourcefulness. The film teaches through observation, silence, sorrow, and simplicity, conveying values like honesty, bravery, loyalty, love, and moral strength formed outside of traditional classrooms. The film also explores themes of intergenerational respect and moral responsibility through characters like Indir Thakrun and Sarbajaya, who embodies dignity and moral uprightness.

Aparajito focuses on Apu's transformation through formal education and intellectual pursuit. After Harihar's death, Apu's mother expresses concern about his lack of schooling, but Apu himself develops a strong desire to attend a "good school". His academic success, culminating in a scholarship to study in Kolkata, becomes a central conflict with his mother's emotional dependence. The headmaster's mentorship encourages critical inquiry and a global perspective, urging Apu to "broaden your mind" and shed superstition, preparing him for a modern intellectual life. This film emphasizes education's transformative capacity, liberating individuals from traditional constraints and aiding in societal changes. Values such as respect for education, responsibility, curiosity, self-confidence, determination, parental love, sacrifice, friendship, and cultural learning are depicted.

In Apur Sansar, Apu is an aspiring writer in Calcutta, committed to lifelong learning through artistic expression. His novel reflects autobiographical themes and a focus on shedding superstition and embracing rationality. Despite financial hardship, Apu maintains his intellectual freedom. His marriage to Aparna brings joy and a new dimension to his life, initially causing him to set aside his novel. Aparna's sudden death leads Apu into despair, prompting his withdrawal from society and abandonment of his novel. The film explores the value of emotional bravery, the courage to face loss, and the painful journey toward healing and acceptance. Apu's eventual acceptance of his son, Kajal, signifies his emotional graduation and the re-education he receives through love and reconciliation. Apur Sansar emphasizes that education is found in love, loss, choice, silence, and reconciliation, rather than being limited to books or schools.

Overall, Apu's journey throughout the trilogy demonstrates the role of the protagonist in promoting educational values. He exhibits innate curiosity, a desire for formal education, academic diligence, ambition, self-reliance, perseverance, independence, creative expression, rationality, critical

thought, and self-actualization. His experiences highlight the transformative potential of education as a lifelong process of internal growth and human values, extending beyond academic achievement.

4. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

The study suggests that movies, particularly classic Indian films like Satyajit Ray's works, can be effective media for delivering educational values to children. This is crucial in a modern context where parents may focus less on teaching values, and educational institutions often prioritize academic learning, leading to a decline in educational values among children. Movies offer a practical and economical way for parents to impart educational values and to monitor their children, as many children spend significant time watching movies. Furthermore, films can serve as visual aids, making learning processes, especially abstract concepts or difficult-to-explain processes, faster and easier to remember than solely reading or listening. By analysing films with compelling moral stories, teachers can successfully instil positive values in their students, increasing the impact and relatability of learning.

5. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

While this study attempts to explore the educational values embedded in Satyajit Ray's Apu Trilogy, there are certain limitations that must be acknowledged.

First, the analysis is primarily interpretative in nature, relying heavily on the researcher's perspective to draw connections between cinematic narratives and educational theories. As such, subjective interpretations may differ from viewer to viewer, and this may limit the universal applicability of the conclusions drawn.

Second, the study is confined to a textual and cinematic analysis of three films, and does not include empirical data such as interviews, surveys, or classroom-based observations to validate how these films impact learners or educators in real-life educational settings. This narrows the scope of the study's practical implications.

Third, the cultural and linguistic specificity of the films, being deeply rooted in Bengali socio-cultural contexts, may pose challenges for generalizing the educational messages to diverse global or even pan-Indian audiences unfamiliar with the nuances of the region's traditions, language, and aesthetics.

Fourth, due to constraints of time and academic space, the study does not explore the broader body of Satyajit Ray's cinematic work, which may also contain rich educational insights. Focusing solely on The Apu Trilogy provides depth but limits the exploration of Ray's wider contributions to education through film.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The present study explored the educational values embedded within the iconic films of Satyajit Ray's (Apu Trilogy) *Pather Panchali* (1955), *Aparajito* (1956), and *Apur Sansar* (1959). Through a qualitative and interpretive lens, the research aimed to identify and analyse how essential human values such as *honesty, bravery, self-confidence, purity, loyalty, respect, love, and friendliness* are conveyed through cinematic language, character development, and emotional storytelling.

The trilogy, a masterwork of Indian cinema, transcends time and geography to present education as a lived, emotional, and ethical journey rather than a solely academic pursuit. Apu's evolution from a wide-eyed child in *Pather Panchali*, through his intellectual awakening in *Aparajito*, to his emotional maturity and moral responsibility in *Apur Sansar*, mirrors a deeply educational narrative. His experiences marked by loss, learning, love, and redemption demonstrate how education occurs beyond the classroom, shaped by life's joys and tragedies.

This study revealed that Ray's films are not merely artistic or aesthetic creations but powerful pedagogical tools. The subtle expressions of parental sacrifice, the resilience of rural families, the integrity of friendships, and the eventual acceptance of personal responsibility offer profound moral instruction. Characters in these films live by values that are often unspoken yet deeply felt, and it is this silent pedagogy that creates the most lasting educational impressions.

Moreover, the research reinforces the idea that films, especially those rooted in realism and humanism, serve as mirrors of society and windows to moral consciousness. They offer nuanced spaces where viewers, especially students, can reflect on ethical choices, emotional resilience, and cultural heritage. The trilogy thus becomes not just a cinematic experience, but a narrative curriculum rich with ethical dilemmas, personal growth, and character-building lessons.

In conclusion, Satyajit Ray's Apu Trilogy stands as a visual embodiment of value education. It teaches not through instruction, but through empathy, experience, and emotion. As the educational world grapples with how to best instil values in younger generations, Ray's films offer a timeless, accessible, and emotionally resonant answer: educational values must be felt, lived, and remembered not merely taught. The trilogy reaffirms that the most profound education is not confined to syllabi, but found in the stories we live, the relationships we nurture, and the humanity we carry forward.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Banerjee, A. (2017). *Sociological elements in Satyajit Ray's films*. Buruni.
https://www.academia.edu/31046984/SOCIOLOGICAL_ELEMENTS_IN_SATYAJIT_RAYS_FILM
2. Bhattacharya, D. (2001). *Shishu o kishorder manashik bikashe Satyajit Rayer sahitya o shilpokarmer bhumika* [The role of Satyajit Ray's literature and artistic works in the mental development of children and adolescents] (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kalyani). University of Kalyani.
<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/240870>
3. Cardullo, R. J. (2019). Pather Panchali and the cinema of Satyajit Ray, re-viewed. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 17(1), 81–94.<https://doi.org/10.1080/14746689.2019.1585618>
4. Cooper, D. (1991). Review: *Satyajit Ray: A Study of His Films* by Ben Nyce. *Film Quarterly*, 44(4), 44–46. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1212777>
5. Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
6. Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
7. Dasgupta, D., & Chakrabarti, A. (2024). Satyajit Ray as a documentarian: A study on Rabindranath Tagore and Sukumar Ray. *ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 5(1).
<https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.1395>
8. Dharmanayaka, G. V. (2018). Modernity and gender mobility in Satyajit Ray Films: A study of *Mahanagar* (1964). *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 6(1), 6–8.
<https://www.questjournals.org/jrhss/papers/vol6-issue1/B610608.pdf>
9. Etimes.In. (2023, June 9). *The timeless relevance of Satyajit Ray's films*. *The Times of India*.
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/bengali/movies/news/the-timeless-relevance-of-satyajit-rays-films/articleshow/99116047.cms>
10. Eyre, R., & Eyre, L. (1993). *Teaching your children values*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
11. Mimar, T. (2013). Social values and value education. *5th World Conference on Educational Science – WCES*. <http://booksc.org>
12. Misra, A. (1992). Satyajit Ray's films: Precarious social-individual balance. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1052–1054.
13. Mukhopadhyay, P. (2024). Satyajit Ray's versatile creativity in children's literature and his persistent impact on young minds. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 9(2), 050–055. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.92.9>
14. Nandy, A. (2024). An existential journey: Finding meaning through the existential crisis of Apu in *The Apu Trilogy* by Satyajit Ray. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(2).
<https://doi.org/10.25215/1202.033>
15. Parmar, K. K., & Jha, A. (2024). Exploring the impact of value education: A comprehensive analysis. *Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary*, 9(6), 322–325.
<https://doi.org/10.31305/rrijm.2024.v09.n06.039>
17. Poe, V. A., & B. J. (2022, July 30). *The exquisite films of Satyajit Ray, cinema's great humanist. Under the Paving Stones*.

18. <https://underthepavingstones.com/2022/07/28/the-exquisite-films-of-satyajit-ray-cinemas-great-humanist/>
19. Robinson, A. (2004). *Satyajit Ray: The inner eye*. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755699896>
20. Shankar, R. (2023). Class, gender and race: The portrayal of power relationships in Satyajit Ray's films. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 11(3), 18–23. <https://www.questjournals.org>
21. Sharma, N. (2021). Satyajit Ray's *The Apu Trilogy*: Understanding patriarchal modernity and women's role in colonial Bengal. *Media Watch*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.15655/mw/2021/v12i2/160148>
22. Sinha, J. (2023). The representation of class conflict in cinema and violation of the fundamental rights: A study in the context of Satyajit Ray's "Sadgati." *Journal of Communication and Management*, 2(1), 33–39. <https://doi.org/10.58966/jcm2023216>
23. Talukdar, M. S., & Akash, Z. H. (2023). The traditional Bengali culture in Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*: From the perspective of Oscar Lewis' culture of poverty. *Journal of English Studies (JES)*, 1(1), 51–57. ISUCRDP, Dhaka.
24. Piaget, J. (1976). Piaget's theory (pp. 11-23). Springer Berlin Heidelberg. Wikipedia contributors. (2024, July 22). *Values education*. *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Values_education