

ASET Forum of TIFR

Lesser known but equally important Indian Physicists –

Part 1: B.B. Ray and S.K. Mitra

by Dr. Rajinder Singh (Physics Didactic and Public Understanding of Science,
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Indian history of physics is dominated by the Nobel Laureate C.V. Raman (1888-1970), M.N. Saha (1893-1956), S.N. Bose (1894-1974), and Homi J. Bhabha (1909-1966). ‘To look over the edge’, about a decade ago, Dr. Rajinder Singh started a project under the title “lesser known but equally important Indian scientists.” Under the project, he wrote on S.K. Mitra (1890-1963), B.B. Ray (1894-1944), D.M. Bose (1885-1975), K. Banerjee (1900-1975), S.C. Sirkar (1898-1983), and S.R. Khastgir (1898-1973). With S.C. Roy (formerly Editor-in-Chief of Science and Culture). He also wrote on N.R. Sen (1894-1963), Bibha Chowdhuri (1913-1991), Purnima Sinha (1927-2015), and S.D. Chatterjee (1909-1995). The extended version of Bibha Chowdhuri’s biography was published by the TIFR.

As all the above-mentioned biographies are published in Germany, thus, in some Indian circles, the above-published work is not well known. In the present communication the speaker will give a scant review of the life and science of S.K. Mitra (founder of the Institute of Radio Physics and Electronics, University of Calcutta) and B.B. Ray (Creator of the X-Ray Laboratory at the University of Calcutta); two of C.V. Raman’s students; and M.N. Saha’s ‘friends’.

R. Singh did B.Sc. and B.Ed. from the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, and thereafter taught in a school in Jalandhar. On proceeding to Germany, he did ‘Diplom-Physik’ (five years degree course) at the University of Oldenburg, and wrote a thesis on “Characteristics of Solar Radiation Photovoltaic Pyranometers Licor 200SZ and Matrix 1G”. He obtained D.Sc. from the University of Hamburg on his thesis titled “Nobel Laureate C.V. Raman’s work on light scattering”, which was published in 2004.

Presently, he continues to teach Physics to school students and does research on the History of Science in the Research Group-Physics Education and Science Communication, Physics Institute, University of Oldenburg.

To initiate a lecture series on the occasion of “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (75th Anniversary of Indian Independence)” he was invited by the Indian National Science Academy to deliver an Online lecture on “Bibha Chowdhuri”. During his three-week visit to India in July-August 2022, his lectures on different topics were hosted by the Punjab State Council for Science & Technology in collaboration with the State Council of Educational Research & Training, Panjab University, Chandigarh, IIT Ropar, IIT Delhi, IISER Mohali & Society of the Promotion of Science and Technology of India and Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (for more details see, <https://www.rajindersinghdr.hpage.com/confernces-etc.html>).

Friday, December 16, 2022 at 4 p.m.

YouTube Live Link: <https://youtu.be/UBjoiQKLBj8>



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