



Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman

Sir C. V. Raman (1888-1970)

Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman was born at Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu on 7 November 1888. His father was a lecturer in mathematics and physics so from the very beginning he was immersed in an academic atmosphere. Raman's academic brilliance was established at a very young age. He finished his secondary school education at the tender age of thirteen and entered the Mrs. A.V.N. College at Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Two years later he moved to the prestigious Presidency College in Chennai.

When he was fifteen, he topped his class to receive his B.A. degree with honours in Physics and English. Raman continued his studies at the Presidency College and when he was barely eighteen, graduated at the top of his class and received his M.A. degree with honours.

Raman joined the Indian Audit and Accounts Service and was appointed the Assistant Accountant General in the Finance Department in Kolkata. In Kolkata, he sustained his interest in science by working in the laboratory of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, in his spare time studying the physics of stringed instruments and Indian drums.

In 1917, Raman gave up his government job to become the Sir Taraknath Palit Professor of Physics at the Science College of University of Calcutta (1917-33). He made enormous contributions to research in the areas of vibration, sound, musical instruments, ultrasonics, diffraction, photoelectricity, colloidal particles, X-ray diffraction, magnetron, dielectrics, etc. In particular, his work on the scattering of light during this period brought him world-wide recognition.

In 1924 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London and a year later was honoured with the prestigious Hughes medal from the Royal Society. Four years later, at the joint meeting of the South Indian Science Association and the Science Club of Central College, Bangalore, he announced his discovery of what is now known as the *Raman Effect*.

He was knighted in 1929, and in 1930, became the first Asian scientist to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics for his discoveries relating to the scattering of light (the Raman Effect). In 1934, he became the Director of the newly established Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore, where he remained till his retirement. After retirement, he established the Raman Research Institute at Bangalore, where he served as the Director. The Government of India conferred upon him its highest award, the Bharat Ratna in 1954.