

Meet Indian genius who founded first pharma company of India, he is called 'Father of...'

He was one of the first 'modern' Indian chemical researchers and also worked as a teacher.

In British India, several Indian geniuses achieved much in their lives despite fewer facilities. After their initial study in India, they moved abroad for higher education on scholarship. One such person was Prafulla Chandra Ray, a chemist and an industrialist who founded India's first pharmaceutical company -- Bengal Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals. He was also a teacher and one of the first 'modern' Indian chemical researchers. Ray also established the first modern Indian research school in Chemistry and is regarded as the Father of Indian Chemistry.

Born in 1861 in Bengal Presidency in British India (now in Bangladesh), he was the author of 'A History of Hindu Chemistry'. He graduated from the University of Calcutta in 1879. Ray was only 21 when he came to UK. In 1882, Prafulla won a scholarship to Edinburgh University, UK and gained another degree in 1885. He was also awarded a DSc. in 1887 and the 'Hope Prize' for his thesis on 'Conjugated Sulphates of the Copper-Magnesium Group'. This allowed him to work on his research for a further period of one year after completion of his doctorate. The Royal Society of Chemistry honoured his life and work with the first ever Chemical Landmark Plaque outside Europe.

Ray returned to India (Calcutta) in 1888 and then joined Presidency College as an assistant professor of Chemistry in 1889. He also worked at Calcutta University. Ray established a research laboratory and researched with a group of students. He published around 150 research papers during his lifetime. He remained a bachelor throughout his life and retired becoming professor emeritus in 1936 at 75. He died on 16 June 1944 at the age of 82.

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