

S. N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences

series of talks on

Illustrious Indian Scientists in Pre-independence Era



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Silver Jubilee Hall



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Title of the Talk

Homi J. Bhabha, Colossus, a timeless icon

Abstract

Affectionate, sensitive and elegant, humourous and dynamic, Dr. Homi J. Bhabha had the unique capacity to enhance the intensity of life with panache and fastidiousness. He was keen on maintaining a very high standard. A polymath, he never compromised with quality. To understand Homi Bhabha and his multi-dimensional personality, it is important to examine his upbringing in a wealthy, cultured and highly educated Parsi family. Western classical music as well as Hindusthani classical music, paintings by Hussain, Ara and at the same time Epstein's bust of Einstein, aesthetics and beauty in both engineering and theoretical physics a keen environmentalist, lover of trees and flowers Bhabha was also a keen painter. Tata Institute of fundamental research is the greatest monument of Bhabha's personality. I have never come across any research institution in the world which is also a veritable art gallery. Hussain, a young starving bill board painter in Bombay was commissioned to paint the wall of the mezzanine floor and stayed on for more than two months.

In his early years in Cambridge Bhabha, the theoretical physicist discovered "Bhabha scattering" with the unique feature of taking into account exchange effect, unique at that time, through the annihilation of the electron and proton pair, immediately followed by pair production. It was a remarkable breakthrough at the time. From a theoretical physicist he turned to a cosmic ray balloonist a most brave jump for anyone. Later, "Bhabha Heitler" theory was a landmark theory. Being a trained engineer with a first from Cambridge, he was at ease with engineering as well. He more or less designed the various engineering contraptions of TIFR as well as the famous Bhabha "look" at BARC.

Over the years, the elegance and style has gone down somewhat, but one can feel in one's bone the beauty and elegance of yesteryears. I feel, he wanted to emphasize two points. India is no less than Cambridge or Princeton and that beautiful surroundings is essential for the best creative work. Well, he proved right, again and again. Leonardo-de-Vinchi of India still remains inspiring only if we care to listen.

The Speaker



Prof. Bikash Chandra Sinha
INSA Senior Scientist

Professor Bikash Sinha is an eminent Indian physicist, active in the fields of nuclear physics and high energy physics. He obtained his TRIPOS from the Cambridge University in Natural Science in 1967 and obtained his Ph.D. from London University in 1970 and D.Sc. in 1981.

His noteworthy contributions include the use of density dependent nucleon-nucleon interactions, mean free path of nucleons in nuclei, and response of nucleus to incident single particles and imaginary part of optical model potential. His other works include discovery of limits of survival probability of quark nuggets from the early universe. He established a theoretical and experimental group at VECC and SINP for the study of quark gluon plasma. He has published more than 300 papers.

Professor Bikash Sinha served as the director of the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics and Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre from November 1992 to June 2009. He also served as a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Prime Minister of India from 2005 to 2013. Professor Sinha was bestowed with several awards, to name a few: SN Bose Birth Centenary Award (1994), Padma Shree award (2001), Padma Bhushan award (2010), Alexander von Humboldt Research Award (2005). He was also elected as a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences (India), Allahabad (1993), the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (2002) and Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore (2004).