

# K. S. Krishnan, much more than a scientist

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Hindu

By Our Science Correspondent

BANGALORE, July 27.

The President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, is to be the chief guest at the birth centenary celebrations of the distinguished physicist, Prof. K. S. Krishnan, being organised by the National Institute of Advanced Studies here on Tuesday.

"He is a great scientist but something much more. He is a perfect citizen, a whole man with an integrated personality," Pandit Nehru had commented on K. S. Krishnan's 60th birthday.

Prof. Krishnan collaborated with C. V. Raman on the scattering of light by liquids, leading to the discovery of the "Raman Effect" and a Nobel Prize for Raman himself. Raman was later to write that if the Nobel Prize had been based on the record of the year 1928 alone, instead of the entire body of work done at Calcutta from 1921 onwards, Krishnan would have shared the Prize.

He was a reader in Physics in the University of Dacca (now in Bangladesh) and then became the first Mahendralal Sircar Professor of Physics at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science at Calcutta. His work on the magnetic and optical properties of crystals won him international recognition and he became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1940.

He became a member of India's Board of Scientific and Industrial Research, the precursor of today's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), in 1942. In 1947, he became the first Director of the National Physical Laboratory at Delhi.

Prof. Krishnan became a member of the newly founded Atomic Energy Commission in 1948.

The Commission then consisted of just three members, the other two being Homi Bhabha himself and S. S. Bhatnagar, the member-secretary. The Union Government made him a National Professor in 1958 and he was the recipient of the first Bhatnagar Memorial Award instituted by the CSIR.

Prof. Krishnan was a vice-president of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics.

He was a founder-member of the International Union of Crystallography. He was the chief guest at the 1955 annual meeting of the U. S. National Academy of Sciences and elected a Foreign Associate of the Academy the following year.

Prof. Krishnan was also involved in the peace movement. "It is good to have the strength of a giant but barbarous to use it like a giant," he said during a radio broadcast.

Kariamanikkam Srinivasa Krishnan was born on December 4, 1898, in the village of Watrap in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.

After matriculation, he studied at American College, Madurai, and then at the Madras Christian College from where he took the B. A. degree in Physics. Attracted by the fame of C. V. Raman, he enrolled for M.Sc. classes at the University College of Science at Calcutta where Raman lectured regularly.

Apart from his love of science, Prof. Krishnan was a scholar of Sanskrit and Tamil literature, something he had inherited from his father. K. S. Krishnan died in 1961.