

Indian Scientist Obaid Siddiqi

Padma Vibhushan in 2006 and Padma Bhushan in 1984



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Imagine a world where we can unravel the very instructions that make us who we are—our genes! That's the extraordinary realm of Professor Obaid Siddiqi, a true pioneer of Indian biology and genetics whose groundbreaking work put India on the global map of neuroscience!

Dr. Siddiqi's journey took him from an early education in India to a Ph.D. at the University of Glasgow. He didn't just stop there; he collaborated with scientific giants like Alan Garen and Seymour Benzer, leading to discoveries that changed how we see the world.

His Superpowers in Science

- **Cracking the Genetic Code:** Imagine finding the "stop" signs in our body's instruction manual! Early in his career, Dr. Siddiqi helped uncover "nonsense mutations," which were crucial for understanding how our genes tell cells to build proteins.

• Unlocking Brain Secrets with Fruit Flies

His most famous work involved tiny fruit flies (*Drosophila*). By studying their genes and behaviour, he discovered "temperature-sensitive paralytic mutants." This breakthrough was like finding a secret switch to control neural activity, opening up the entire field of neurogenetics! His work revealed how genes influence our senses, like taste and smell.

Building a Scientific Powerhouse

Dr. Siddiqi wasn't just a brilliant researcher; he was an incredible institution builder.

- In 1962, he founded the **Molecular Biology Unit at TIFR in Mumbai**, a major step for modern biology in India.
- Later, in 1992, he established and led the renowned **National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) in Bangalore**. These institutions became hubs for scientific excellence, shaping generations of Indian scientists.

Awards and Legacy

For his immense contributions, Dr. Siddiqi received India's second-highest civilian honor, the **Padma Vibhushan (2006)**, and the **Padma Bhushan (1984)**, along with the prestigious **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize**. He was also elected a **Fellow of the Royal Society (UK)** and a **Member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences**, recognizing his international stature.