

Indian Scientist

Prafulla Chandra Ray

The Father of Indian Chemistry



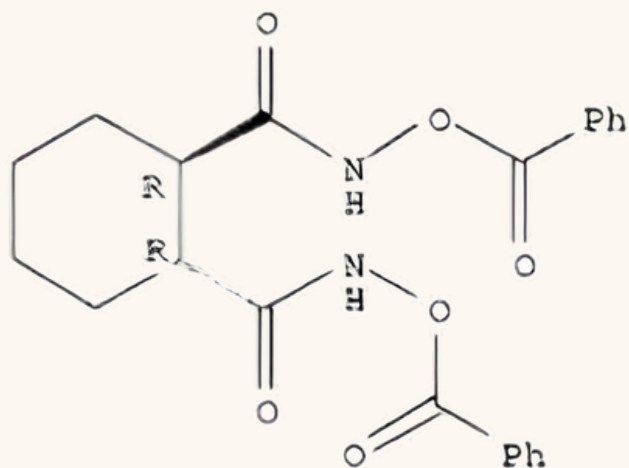
(August 2, 1861 – June 16, 1944)

In the history of Indian science, few figures are as legendary as **Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray**. A pioneering **chemist, mathematician, and educator**, Ray was born in Bengal (now Bangladesh) and received his higher education at the University of Edinburgh, UK. He didn't just study chemistry; he used it to ignite a spirit of self-reliance in a pre-independent India.

Pioneering Contributions

Ray's most famous scientific breakthrough was the discovery of **Mercurous Nitrite** in 1896, a stable compound that had previously eluded chemists worldwide. This discovery put India back on the map of global chemical research.

However, his greatest contribution was his vision for "Industrial India."



He believed that science should not stay locked in a lab; it should create jobs and health. To prove this, he founded **Bengal Chemicals & Pharmaceutical Works**, India's first pharmaceutical company.

Starting with just a few hundred rupees, he transformed it into a massive industry that provided affordable medicines to millions.

Achievements and Leadership

Known as an "**Acharya**" (a great teacher), Ray mentored a generation of brilliant Indian scientists, including Satyendra Nath Bose and Meghnad Saha. His leadership was defined by **frugality and patriotism**. He lived a simple life, donating most of his salary to support poor students and scientific research.

He was also a dedicated historian of science, authoring the monumental book **A History of Hindu Chemistry**, which documented the advanced metallurgical and chemical knowledge of ancient India for the world to see.

Honours and Recognitions

His immense contributions earned him high international and national regard:

- **Knight Bachelor** (1919)
- **Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire (CIE)** (1912)
- **First President of the Indian Chemical Society** (1924)

Prafulla Chandra Ray remains an inspiration for every young scientist because he proved that innovation is most powerful when it serves the people and builds a nation's economy.