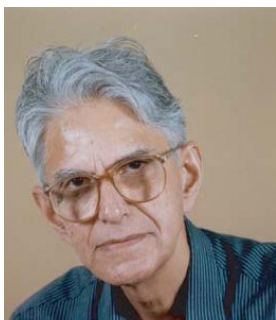


Obaid Siddiqi



Obaid Siddiqi was born in Basti, Uttar Pradesh, India on 07 January 1932 as the son of Mr. M. A. Qadeer Siddiqi and Mrs. Umme Kulsum in a family of great scholars of India. Obaid (as he is lovingly called by his present and past students) of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and National Center for Biological Sciences (NCBS) grew up in a highly secular and intellectual environment. In his youth, He aspired to become a professional photographer and but later his mind by the teachings of his uncle. He obtained his masters degree from Aligarh Muslim University in 1953. He served as lecturer in Aligarh Muslim University during the period of 1954-1957. He then joined as research scholar in the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Delhi and stayed there during the period of 1957-1958. However, Obaid completed his PhD from the Department of Genetics, University of Glasgow, UK in 1961. Obaid did his post-doctoral studies in Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, USA as Lallor Foundation Fellow during 1961 and at the Pennsylvania University, USA during 1961-1962. With Garen, during his post-doctoral studies, Obaid discovered the suppressor of 'nonsense' mutations, which led to the elucidation of chain-terminating triplets in protein synthesis. Obaid did some of the early experiments which show that recombinant bacteria inherit labeled DNA of biparental origin. He was invited by Homi Bhaba in 1962, Director of Tata Institute of Fundamental Institute (TIFR), Bombay to develop a modern biology department which later became well known as the Molecular Biology Unit. Obaid joined as Fellow in TIFR and became Associate Professor, Professor, and Eminent Professor very quickly with excellent research outputs coming from his hard work and dedication for science. Obaid recruited top class scientists for TIFR. He has been a source of inspiration for all the students and always encouraged faculties to work with the highest degree of academic freedom possible in India. Obaid then took up the challenge of establishing National Center

for Biological Sciences at Bangalore (a branch of TIFR) and served there as founder director till 1993. Obaid has held many distinguished positions worldwide during his long illustrious career as scientist. He was awarded highest Indian civil honor 'Padma Bhushan' for his achievement and contribution to Indian and international science. He was a Visiting Associate at the department of Biophysics, Yale University in 1966. He was a Visiting Professor at California Institute of Technology, USA in 1968 and during 1970-1971. He was a Gosney Fellow during the period of 1972-1973. He served as Sherman Fairchild Distinguished Scholar during 1981-1982 and in 1986; He is also an honorary Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bangalore. He also served as Senior Associate at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. Obaid was elected Fellow of The Royal Society of London, Indian National Science Academy (INSA), Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), Maharashtra Academy of Sciences, Foreign Associateship of the National Academy of Sciences, USA. Obaid received Bhatnagar Award in 1976; Padma Bhushan in 1984; Birla Smarak Kosh National Award in 1989; Goyal Prize in 1991; INSA Aryabhata Medal in 1992; Life membership of Clare Hall; Honorary D. Sc. from Aligarh University, Banaras Hindu University and Jamia Hamdard University for his lifetime contribution in molecular and behavioral genetics. Obaid's earlier research in 1950s and early '60s at TIFR covered areas like microbial genetics and but later he concentrated on genetic neurobiology. At TIFR, he demonstrated that DNA transfer can be associated from replication and that recombinants arise from unreplicated DNA. In early seventies, Obaid worked with legendary molecular and behavioral geneticist, Prof. Seymour Benzer at Caltech, USA and turned to behavioral genetics and neurobiology of fruit fly, *Drosophila melanogaster*. Obaid at Caltech and at TIFR carried out pioneering research on neurobiology of taste and smell perception in the fruitfly. This area of research opened up the prospect of integrated genetic and neurobiological study of chemosensory perception. Obaid was elected as fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences in 1968 and served in the council during the period of 1974-1991. He served as Vice-President and President of Academy during 1983-1985 and 1986-1988 respectively.

Obaid married Asiya, a well-known historian and retired professor of the University of Bombay. They have two sons and two daughters. One of his sons, Dr. Imran Siddiqi is currently serving as a researcher at the prestigious Center for cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) at Hyderabad. An eloquent teacher and an excellent writer of science, Obaid currently serves as Honorary Professor of the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore, India. Obaid always lived his life as full time researcher and till now his laboratory is highly active in frontier areas of science.

Prof. Siddiqi visited Indian Statistical Institute on 24 January 1989 to deliver the annual Convocation Address, entitled, “Genes and brain circuits”. Later he served as a member in the search committee for Director in 2005.

Obaid has mentored a large number of students as graduate students as well as short term trainees. Later many of them have emerged as scientific leaders in the national as well as international arena. Some of the names are Prof. John Carlson of Yale University, R. N. Singh, Vijay Sarthi, Satpal Singh, Sheela Dhonde, Veronica Rodrigues, Kavita Arora, Rashid Mistry, Anil Gupta, Swati Joshi, Champakali Ayyub, V. C. Jayaram, Shahid Siddiqi, Zia-ur Rahman and Sudipta Saraswati.

In addition to a highly thoughtful person in scientific life, Obaid is an avid lover of sports, literature and classic music. He has contributed to the science movement of India enormously and has written a large number of articles for popularization of science in India. Is students remember him as a doyen of Indian science and people who have had chances to interact with Obaid in their student life often wonders-whether Indian science will ever get such an innocent and broad minded genius again?

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