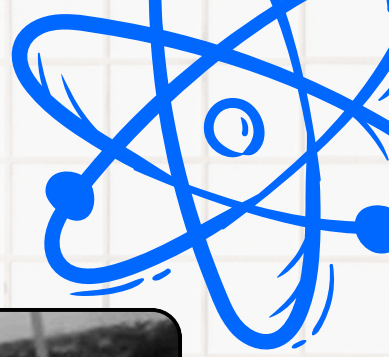


Vikram Ambalal Sarabhai



Dr. Vikram Ambalal Sarabhai (August 12, 1919 – December 30, 1971) was an Indian physicist and astronomer, widely regarded as the Father of the Indian Space Programme. His vision and leadership laid the foundation for India's space research activities and the development of nuclear power in the country.



Early life and education :

- Born in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, into an affluent industrial family.
- Educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he completed his tripos in Natural Sciences.
- Due to the outbreak of World War II, he returned to India and pursued research under Nobel laureate Sir C.V. Raman at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.
- His PhD work, "Time Distribution of Cosmic Rays," was published in 1942.

Contributions to science and technology :

- Founder of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO): Sarabhai was instrumental in convincing the Indian government of the importance of a national space program and founded ISRO in 1969.
- Pioneer in Space Research: He initiated space research activities in India, emphasizing self-reliance and developing capabilities to build and launch satellites for various applications like communication, remote sensing, and meteorology.
- Established Key Institutions: Sarabhai was a great institution builder, founding the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad, the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad (in collaboration with other industrialists), and the Community Science Centre.
- Atomic Energy Commission: He served as Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission after the death of Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha.
- Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE): His dialogue with NASA led to the SITE project (1975–1976), aiming to use satellite television for educational purposes in remote villages.
- Aryabhata: Sarabhai started the project to build India's first satellite, Aryabhata, launched in 1975 from a Russian cosmodrome.

Legacy and recognition :

- Known as the "Father of the Indian Space Program".
- Honored with the Padma Bhushan in 1966 and the Padma Vibhushan (posthumously) in 1972.
- The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram is named in his honor.
- A Moon Crater in the Sea of Serenity was named the Dr. Sarabhai Crater in 1974.

Sarabhai's vision was that space technology was not merely about rockets and satellites but about applying advanced technologies to solve the real problems faced by people and society in a developing nation like India. His work laid the groundwork for India's subsequent achievements in space exploration and technology. He died suddenly at the age of 52 in 1971.

