2.1.4 Discovery of Protons and Neutrons

Electrical discharge carried out in the modified cathode ray tube led to the discovery of **canal rays** carrying positively charged particles. The characteristics of these positively charged particles are listed below.

(i)   Unlike cathode rays, mass of positively charged particles depends upon the nature of gas present in the cathode ray tube. These are simply the positively charged gaseous ions.

(ii) The charge to mass ratio of the particles depends on the gas from which these originate.

(iii) Some of the positively charged particles carry a multiple of the fundamental unit of electrical charge.

(iv) The behaviour of these particles in the magnetic or electrical field is opposite to that observed for electron or cathode rays.

The smallest and lightest positive ion was obtained from hydrogen and was called **proton**. This positively charged particle was characterised in 1919. Later, a need was felt for the presence of electrically neutral particle as one of the constituent of atom. These particles were discovered by Chadwick (1932) by bombarding a thin sheet of beryllium by α-particles. When electrically neutral particles having a mass slightly greater than that of protons were emitted. He named these particles as **neutrons**. The important properties of all these fundamental particles are given in Table 2.1.

2.2 ATOMIC MODELS

Observations obtained from the experiments mentioned in the previous sections have suggested that Dalton's indivisible atom is composed of sub-atomic particles carrying positive and negative charges. The major problems before the scientists after the discovery of sub-atomic particles were:

● to account for the stability of atom,

● to compare the behaviour of elements in terms of both physical and chemical properties,

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Millikan's Oil Drop Method

In this method, oil droplets in the form of mist, produced by the atomiser, were allowed to enter through a tiny hole in the upper plate of electrical condenser. The downward motion of these droplets was viewed through the telescope, equipped with a micrometer eye piece. By measuring the rate of fall of these droplets, Millikan was able to measure the mass of oil droplets. The air inside the chamber was ionized by passing a beam of X-rays through it. The electrical charge on these oil droplets was acquired by collisions with gaseous ions. The fall of these charged oil droplets can be retarded, accelerated or made stationary depending upon the charge on the droplets and the polarity and strength of the voltage applied to the plate. By carefully measuring the effects of electrical field strength on the motion of oil droplets, Millikan concluded that the magnitude of electrical charge, q, on the droplets is always an integral multiple of the electrical charge, e, that is, $q = n$ e, where n = 1, 2, 3... .
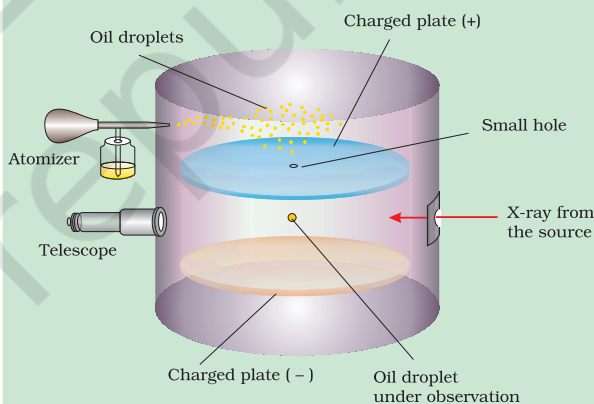
Fig. 2.3 *The Millikan oil drop apparatus for measuring charge 'e'. In chamber, the forces acting on oil drop are: gravitational, electrostatic due to electrical field and a viscous drag force when the oil drop is moving.*

● to explain the formation of different kinds of molecules by the combination of different atoms and,

● to understand the origin and nature of the characteristics of electromagnetic radiation absorbed or emitted by atoms.

Table 2.1 Properties of Fundamental Particles

Name	Symbol	Absolute charge/C	Relative charge	Mass/kg	Mass/u	Approx. mass/u
Electron	e	$-1.602176 \times 10^{-19}$	-1	9.109382×10^{-31}	0.00054	0
Proton	p	$+1.602176 \times 10^{-19}$	$+1$	$1.6726216 \times 10^{-27}$	1.00727	1
Neutron	n	0	0	1.674927×10^{-27}	1.00867	1

Different atomic models were proposed to explain the distributions of these charged particles in an atom. Although some of these models were not able to explain the stability of atoms, two of these models, one proposed by J.J. Thomson and the other proposed by Ernest Rutherford are discussed below.

2.2.1 Thomson Model of Atom

J. J. Thomson, in 1898, proposed that an atom possesses a spherical shape (radius approximately 10^{-10} m) in which the positive charge is uniformly distributed. The electrons are embedded into it in such a manner as to give the most stable electrostatic arrangement (Fig. 2.4). Many different names are given to this model, for example, **plum pudding, raisin pudding or watermelon.** This model can be
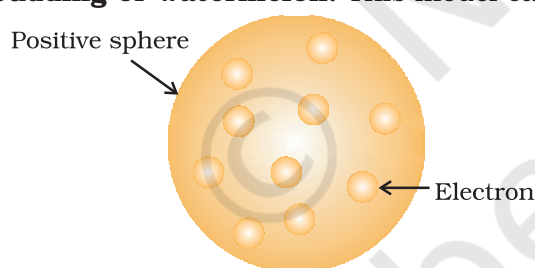
Fig.2.4 Thomson model of atom

visualised as a pudding or watermelon of positive charge with plums or seeds (electrons) embedded into it. *An important feature of this model is that the mass of the atom is assumed to be uniformly distributed over the atom.* Although this model was able to explain the overall neutrality of the atom, but was not consistent with the results of later experiments. Thomson was awarded Nobel Prize for physics in 1906, for his theoretical and experimental investigations on the conduction of electricity by gases.

In the later half of the nineteenth century different kinds of rays were discovered, besides those mentioned earlier. Wilhalm Röentgen (1845-1923) in 1895 showed that when electrons strike a material in the cathode ray tubes, produce rays which can cause fluorescence in the fluorescent materials placed outside the cathode ray tubes. Since Röentgen did not know the nature of the radiation, he named them X-rays and the name is still carried on. It was noticed that X-rays are produced effectively when electrons strike the dense metal anode, called targets. These are not deflected by the electric and magnetic fields and have a very high penetrating power through the matter and that is the reason that these rays are used to study the interior of the objects. These rays are of very short wavelengths (~0.1 nm) and possess electro-magnetic character (Section 2.3.1).

Henri Becqueral (1852-1908) observed that there are certain elements which emit radiation on their own and named this phenomenon as **radioactivity** and the elements known as **radioactive elements.** This field was developed by Marie Curie, Piere Curie, Rutherford and Fredrick Soddy. It was observed that three kinds of rays i.e., α, β- and γ-rays are emitted. Rutherford found that α-rays consists of high energy particles carrying two units of positive charge and four unit of atomic mass. He concluded that α- particles are helium

nuclei as when α- particles combined with two electrons yielded helium gas. β-rays are negatively charged particles similar to electrons. The γ-rays are high energy radiations like X-rays, are neutral in nature and do not consist of particles. As regards penetrating power, α-particles are the least, followed by β-rays (100 times that of α–particles) and γ-rays (1000 times of that α-particles).

2.2.2　Rutherford's Nuclear Model of Atom

Rutherford and his students (Hans Geiger and Ernest Marsden) bombarded very thin gold foil with α–particles. Rutherford's famous **α–particle scattering experiment** is
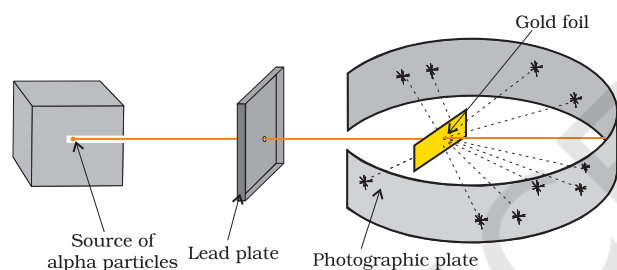
A. *Rutherford's scattering experiment*
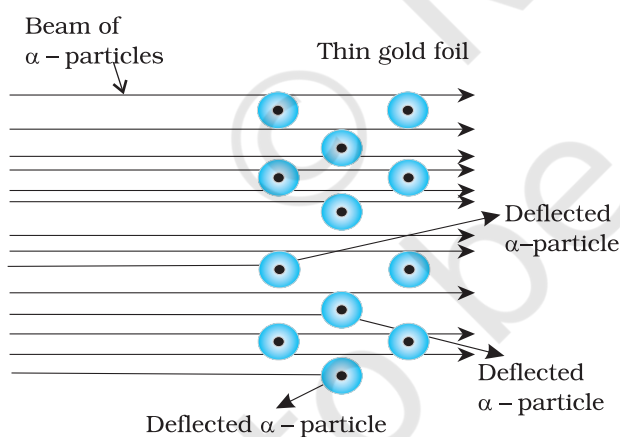
B. *Schematic molecular view of the gold foil*

Fig. 2.5 *Schematic view of Rutherford's scattering experiment. When a beam of alpha (α) particles is "shot" at a thin gold foil, most of them pass through without much effect. Some, however, are deflected.*

represented in Fig. 2.5. A stream of high energy α–particles from a radioactive source was directed at a thin foil (thickness ~ 100 nm) of gold metal. The thin gold foil had a circular fluorescent zinc sulphide screen around it. Whenever α–particles struck the screen, a tiny flash of light was produced at that point.

The results of scattering experiment were quite unexpected. According to Thomson model of atom, the mass of each gold atom in the foil should have been spread evenly over the entire atom, and α– particles had enough energy to pass directly through such a uniform distribution of mass. It was expected that the particles would slow down and change directions only by a small angles as they passed through the foil. It was observed that:

(i) most of the α–particles passed through the gold foil undeflected.

(ii) a small fraction of the α–particles was deflected by small angles.

(iii) a very few α–particles (~1 in 20,000) bounced back, that is, were deflected by nearly 180°.

On the basis of the observations, Rutherford drew the following conclusions regarding the structure of atom:

(i) Most of the space in the atom is empty as most of the α–particles passed through the foil undeflected.

(ii) A few positively charged α–particles were deflected. The deflection must be due to enormous repulsive force showing that the positive charge of the atom is not spread throughout the atom as Thomson had presumed. The positive charge has to be concentrated in a very small volume that repelled and deflected the positively charged α–particles.

(iii) Calculations by Rutherford showed that the volume occupied by the nucleus is negligibly small as compared to the total volume of the atom. The radius of the atom is about 10^{-10} m, while that of nucleus is 10^{-15} m. One can appreciate this difference in size by realising that if