



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MANDI

भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान मंडी

# Institute Colloquium

## “Humanising the Sciences”



17<sup>th</sup> October,  
2025



12:00 PM



Auditorium,  
North Campus

**Prof. Sundar Sarukkai**

Philosopher, Author,  
Educator

## Humanising the Sciences

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Prof. Sundar Sarukkai

**Abstract:** The origin of modern science was made possible by removing the human from the discourse of science. But the paradox was that while science became a 'report' of the truths of nature, these truths were articulated by humans using their language and their cognitive capabilities. Along with the notion of method, the claim by Galileo, and the scientists who followed, that mathematics was the *language of nature* was yet another attempt to remove the presence of the human in the sciences. While this erasure was important when European science began, it is no longer tenable today to continue this story. Human interests, as well as social and political desires, have become an integral part of what science is today. As a consequence, human presence pervades the knowledge claims of science right from who and what funds science, utilitarian definitions of nature, as well as the prevalence of synthetic and artificially produced human entities that are now the dominant objects of scientific research. All these have changed the nature and meaning of science from what it was earlier. For a more sustainable future for science, it is therefore necessary to explicitly acknowledge the role of the human, so that we can consciously decide what elements of being human should matter to scientific knowledge. We can begin by understanding both the nature of being human as well as that of science - a task that is best accomplished by philosophy which has the conceptual and methodological tools to undertake this task.

### **Biosketch:**

Prof. Sundar Sarukkai, trained in physics and philosophy, works primarily in the philosophy of the natural and social sciences. He has held positions of professor of philosophy at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Founder-Director of the Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, and Visiting Faculty at the Centre for Society and Policy, Indian Institute of Science. He is the founder of Barefoot Philosophers, an initiative to take philosophy to children and the public. He is the author of the following books: *Translating the World: Science and Language*; *Philosophy of Symmetry*; *Indian Philosophy and Philosophy of Science*; *What is Science?*; *JRD Tata and the Ethics of Philanthropy*, and *The Social Life of Democracy*. He has co-authored two books with Gopal Guru: *The Cracked Mirror: An Indian Debate on Experience and Theory* and *Experience, Caste and the Everyday Social*. His book for children titled *Philosophy for Children: Thinking, Reading, Writing* has been widely translated and is in use in schools. His last two books were critically acclaimed novels, *Following a Prayer* (2023) and *Water Days* (2025). He is the Series Editor of Routledge's *Science and Technology Studies*, as well as the Co-Chief Editor of the *Springer Handbook of Logical Thought in India*. His forthcoming book is an introduction to philosophical thinking titled *Being Human: Becoming Philosophical*. For more details, see

More Information: Please visit the link; <http://www.sundarsarukkai.in>