



Indian Institute of Science Education
and Research Thiruvananthapuram
भारतीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान तिरुवनंतपुरम

Institute Colloquium by

Prof. Sundar Sarukkai

(Founder of Barefoot Philosophers
and formerly at
Centre for Society and Policy, IISc Bangalore)



Discovering the Nature of Science

Wednesday, 01 March 2023

05:00 PM

Kaumudi, Lecture Hall Complex

IISER Thiruvananthapuram



About the Speaker

Prof. Sundar Sarukkai is trained in physics and philosophy, and has a PhD in theoretical particle physics from Purdue University. His work is primarily in the philosophy of the natural and social sciences. He was earlier professor of philosophy at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore as well as the Founding-Director of the Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, Manipal University. Most recently, he was a Visiting Faculty at the Centre for Society and Policy, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He is the founder of *Barefoot Philosophers*, an initiative to take philosophy to students and the general public.

Prof. Sundar Sarukkai 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 two books co-authored with Gopal Guru - *The Cracked Mirror: An Indian Debate on Experience and Theory and Experience*, *Caste and the Everyday Social*. His most recent book is *The Social Life of Democracy* (Seagull, 2022). His book *Philosophy for Children: Thinking, Reading and Writing* has been translated into Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi. He is the Series Editor of Routledge's Science and Technology Studies as well as the Co-Chief Editor of the *Springer Handbook on Logical Thought in India* (2022). His novel, *Following a Prayer*, has just been released this week.

Abstract: Science begins as an attempt to discover truths about Nature. This discovery needed rules and methods of inquiring about nature. But what about Science itself? Today, Science is not as it was when it first began as a discipline. It is now a complex system, defined by the actions of individuals and institutions, as well as the relations between them. How then do we discover the nature of this complex entity? Can it be reduced to simple, old ideas about the nature of Science? The scientific approach to Nature demolished naive beliefs and superstitions about it. So too if we do not have a critical understanding of this complex entity called Science, we will continue to propagate blind beliefs and superstitions about Science. Moreover, Science has a deep and enduring impact not only on society but also on individuals and governments. Thus, it is all the more urgent to find ways to understand the complex nature of Science. Social Sciences and Humanities are the tools for doing this, and their role in bridging the scientific community and the larger society is extremely important. In this talk, I will discuss the role of philosophy, history and sociology in uncovering and discovering the true nature of Science.

