



Azim Premji University Colloquium Series

"Remembering Anupam Mishra: A Faithful Clerk of Ordinary People"

Speaker

Sopan Joshi, Ramachandra Guha and S. Vishwanath

Date: March 24, 2017 (Friday)

Time: 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm

Venue: Seminar Hall, 10th Floor, Pixel A, Azim Premji University

About the Discussion

On 19th December 2016, Anupam Mishra breathed his last at a New Delhi hospital after an 11-month battle with cancer. He is best known for his 1993 book, *Aaj Bhi Khare Hain Talab* (Lakes are still Standing 1993). This book is a lively and exhaustively researched account of how communities managed water across the country. It has been translated into 19 languages, and has sold well over 100,000 copies. He joined the Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi in 1969 as an apprentice in research and publications unit. During 1972-74, he was part of Gandhian leader Jay Prakash Narayan's three-member team that engaged with rebels and dacoits in the Chambal Valley, and persuaded them to surrender. In 1973, he travelled to the villages of Chamoli district in the Himalaya, where ordinary village women had launched a struggle against commercial logging. He was among the earliest chroniclers of what came to be called the Chipko movement. The early 1980s drew him to Bikaner in western Rajasthan, where social activists were rallying to protect common pastures. These travels gave him a close understanding of how communities harvest rainwater and prosper in the Thar desert. His other popular book, *Rajasthan Ki Rajat Boondein* (Radiant Raindrops of Rajasthan 1995), is an in-depth illustration of how ordinary desert folk have valued and collected each raindrop. An understated man with a deep sense of social relations and a remarkable aesthetic sensibility, Anupam Mishra continues to live in memories of his colleagues and hundreds of friends and collaborators. At this memorial event, three of his co-travelers will trace the elements of his writing and his work.

About the Speakers

Sopan Joshi worked closely with Anupam Mishra over a long period and is currently a research fellow at the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi. In July 2016, Gandhi Peace Foundation published his book, *Jal Thal Mal*.

Ramachandra Guha wrote his Ph D dissertation on the environmental history of the region that mobilized the celebrated resistance against commercial tree felling, *Chipko*. As an academic who along with Prof Madhav Gadgil charted out the environmental history discipline in India, Guha has deeply engaged with Gandhi environmental thinkers and movements.

S. Vishwanath echoes the research and writing that Anupam Mishra began. Popularly known as zenrainman, Vishwanath has an avid interest in tracing the communities that engaged with open wells. Trained as a civil engineer, Vishwanath now works on water and sanitation management and governance issues in urban and rural India with equal ease and teaches an elective course on Water at Azim Premji University.