



## **Talk: Towards the Definition of Liberal Education in the 21st Century**

Speaker:  
Prof Sanjoy Mitter

Date / Time:  
October 25, 2013 - 4:00pm - 5:30pm

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

### Abstract:

There is a profound change taking place in the world driven by the technologies of Communication, Control and Computation and the resulting transformation in the processes of production. This results in the formation of a global economy where the fortunes of one country is inexorably linked to the economic and social conditions in the rest of the world. The idea of the physical world being linked to an information world is a reality. What is the definition of an educated person in this new world ? What is the role of the university and university education in the 21st century? I would like to argue that the main discussion in India about higher education has been in the areas of science, engineering and management and discussion of an examination of a liberal undergraduate education in the universities has been notably lacking. This needs to change for social, economic and intellectual reasons. This talk is a small contribution towards initiation of such a debate.

### A Note on the Speaker:

Sanjoy K. Mitter received his Ph.D. degree from the Imperial College of Science and Technology in 1965. He taught at Case Western Reserve University from 1965 to 1969. He joined MIT in 1969 where he has been a Professor of Electrical Engineering since 1973. He was the Director of the MIT Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems from 1981 to 1999. He has also been a Professor of Mathematics at the Scuola Normale, Pisa, Italy from 1986 to 1996. He has held visiting positions at Imperial College, London; University of Groningen, Holland; INRIA, France; Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, India and ETH, Zürich, Switzerland; and several American universities. Professor Mitter will be the Ulam Scholar at Los Alamos National Laboratories in April 2012 and the John von Neumann Visiting Professor in Mathematics at the Technical University of Munich, Germany from May-June 2012. He was awarded the AACC Richard E. Bellman Control Heritage Award for 2007. He was the McKay Professor at the University of California, Berkeley in March 2000, and held the Russell-Severance-Springer Chair in Fall 2003. He is a Fellow of the IEEE and a Member of the

National Academy of Engineering. He is the winner of the 2000 IEEE Control Systems Award. He was elected a Foreign Member of Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in 2003. In 1988, he was elected to the National Academy of Engineering. His current research interests are Communication and Control in a Networked Environment, the relationship of Statistical and Quantum Physics to Information Theory and Control and Autonomy and Adaptiveness for Integrative Organization.