

IIT Bombay is organising an Institute Colloquium on Friday, August 19, 2011. The details are as follows:



Speaker **Prof. Sharachchandra Lele**
Senior Fellow and Convenor
Centre for Environment & Development
Ahoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment
Bangalore

Title : **Interdisciplinarity in Environmental Research: How the Social is intertwined with the Technical ?**

Day & Date : Friday, August 19, 2011

Time : 5.15 p.m.

Venue : Lecture Hall No. 22, Second Floor, VMCC

All are invited.

Abstract: The environmental crisis is arguably one of the most pressing challenges faced by humanity in its history. But most of us who accept this proposition and wish to do something about it do not pause to reflect on how we think about the environmental problem, how we understand it. As in other situations, we pay lip service to the need for ‘interdisciplinary approaches’ or ‘integration’, and then move quickly to present our pet, narrow solutions. But bridging the divide between the natural/physical sciences and the social sciences and humanities, as also the divide between research and action, is easier said than done. Starting by unpacking the notion of an “environmental problem”, the speaker offers a four-dimensional framework of values, theory, methods and institutions through which one can understand the barriers to interdisciplinarity in environmental research and problem-solving. Examples drawn from research on forests and water resources are used to illustrate these barriers. Awareness of these barriers can facilitate individual, collective, and institutional attempts to carry out interdisciplinary environmental research in particular, and also provide pointers to integrated problem-solving in general.

About the Speaker: Prof. Sharachchandra (Sharad) Lele got a B.Tech. in Electrical Engineering from IIT Bombay (1984) but decided that environmental studies was more exciting and socially relevant. So he did an M.S. on the environmental impacts of large dams at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (1987) and then a Ph.D. in Energy and Resources from the University of California, Berkeley (1993), focusing on forest use in the Western Ghats. He worked at the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment, and Security, Oakland and at the Tata Energy Research Institute, before co-founding the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Environment and Development, which recently merged with ATREE, an environmental research institute in Bangalore.