



CITATION

For the Conferment of the
Distinguished Alumni Award
on

Prof. Sugata Mitra

Prof. Sugata Mitra received his M.Sc. and Ph.D. Degrees in Physics from IIT Delhi in 1975 and 1978 respectively.

Prof. Mitra is currently a Professor of Educational Technology at the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University, UK.

After his Ph.D. in Solid State Physics from IIT Delhi, Prof. Mitra went on to do research in energy storage systems, first at the Centre for Energy Studies at the IIT and then at the Technische Universität, Vienna, Austria. Prof. Mitra's research has led to many scientific advances including a new design for zinc-chlorine batteries, the understanding that the structure of organic molecules determine their function more than the constituent atoms, why the human sense organs are located where they are, and that simulated neural networks can help decipher the mechanisms of Alzheimer's disease.

Prof. Mitra's interest in computer networking led him towards the emerging systems in printing in the 1980s. He set up India's first local area network based newspaper publishing system in 1984 and was amongst the first people in the world to invent Voluntary Perception Recording (a continuously variable voting machine) and a hyperlinked computing environment, several years ahead of the Internet.

His work at NIIT created the first curricula and pedagogy for that organisation, followed by years of research on learning styles, learning devices, multimedia and new methods of learning. He is credited with more than 25 inventions in the area of cognitive science and educational technology.

Prof. Mitra is the instigator of the Hole in the Wall (HIW) experiment, where in the year 1999 a computer was embedded within a wall in an Indian slum at Kalkaji, Delhi and children were allowed to freely use it. The experiment proved that children could be taught computers very easily without any formal training, which Prof. Mitra termed as Minimally Invasive Education (MIE). Vikas Swarup's debut novel that went on to become the Oscar winning movie of 2009 - Slumdog Millionaire – was, in fact, inspired by the Hole in the Wall experiment.

He was conferred the prestigious Dewang Mehta Award for Innovation in Information Technology in the year 2005. Amongst many other awards, he was awarded the \$1 million TED Prize in 2013.

In honouring Prof. Sugata Mitra, IIT Delhi recognizes the outstanding contributions made by him in Public Service. Through his achievements, Prof. Sugata Mitra has brought glory to the name of the Institute.