Abstract:

A rare confluence of forces makes this decade decisive. Growing populations and rising prosperity are driving unprecedented demand for energy, water, food, and other natural resources, and with it, waste. Climate-related hazards, environmental pollution and the loss of biodiversity are intensifying, with mounting costs to public health. AI is enabling automation at massive scale, and geopolitics is reshaping the supply chains for energy, water, food and materials. Where these forces collide, extrapolating from the past will not work. The choices a country or community makes now will shape not only its own future but the world's.

The way forward is innovation suited to the context and rules of the 21st century. Innovation needs three things: new knowledge, people educated and equipped to use it, and a thriving ecosystem that is both collaborative and competitive. With its scale, talent, and ambition, India is uniquely placed to show what this looks like. Drawing on concrete examples, this talk will show how innovation can turn the sustainability challenge into the defining opportunity of our time.