



Indian Institute of Science Education
and Research Thiruvananthapuram
भारतीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान तिरुवनंतपुरम

Institute Colloquium by
Prof. Raghavendra Gadagkar
CES, IISc Bangalore



Can We Understand an Insect Society?

Monday, 12 February 2024

05:00 PM

Bhaskara, Lecture Hall Complex

IISER Thiruvananthapuram



About the Speaker

Prof. Raghavendra Gadagkar is an honorary professor at the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, India, who studies evolution of social behaviour using eusocial insects, for example, *Ropalidia marginata*, a locally common wasp as a model.

He was the president of the Indian National Science Academy. His book, *Survival Strategies*, has been translated into Chinese and Korean. He uses simple language to explain recent advances in behavioural ecology and sociobiology to a general audience. He has also written a more technical book, *The Social Biology of Ropalidia marginata: Towards understanding the evolution of eusociality*, which puts together over twenty years of his research about the evolution of eusociality.

Since 2002 he has been a non-resident permanent fellow at the German Institute of Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. In 2006 Prof. Gadagkar became one of the very few Indian scientists to be elected as a Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences, USA. He has won numerous awards for his contributions to science research including Cross of the Order of Merit (Germany) in 2015, the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award in Biology in 1993 and the TWAS Prize in 1999.

He holds a number of other academic positions. He is the founding chairman of the Centre for Contemporary Studies, IISc, Bangalore. He is an honorary professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research and at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata. He is a chairman of Research Council for History of Science, Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi. He was elected as a member of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina in July 2012.

Abstract of the talk:

Many species of insects, such as ants, bees, wasps and termites, organize themselves into societies, resembling, and in some ways surpassing, human societies. Can we as humans understand these insect societies? He and his students have attempted to interrogate one such insect society, the Indian paper wasp *Ropalidia marginata*. He will describe their observational and experimental methods and results. He wishes that the audience decides whether his group has gained any significant understanding of the workings of this remarkable insect society.

