

## IISc as a subcity

Often my relatives and friends outside Bangalore ask me the typical question, “what kind of a place is Bangalore, how frequently do you go out” and so on. My answer to such questions is usually with a hint of apology in my tone “I don’t know much about Bangalore because I have not gone out many times. I mostly stay on the campus.” They are perplexed by this answer, even disdainful sometimes and come to the conclusion that there is a lot of work pressure which inhibits me from going out. That is in fact an erroneous conclusion.

The true reason is that staying in the tranquil environment of IISc seems much more appealing and attractive as compared to going outside to say, MG Road. If you go out anywhere and come back, you immediately appreciate the change once you enter IISc. There is a total absence of chaotic and messy traffic snarls, noisy environment and other dust and pollution that one has to survive through. Instead IISc greets you with the same calm, quiet, peaceful environment that makes you feel as though you have entered a different world. It has an aura that says “Come whatever may happen, I will stay the same, go on at my own steady pace irrespective of the huffing and puffing world outside.”

An iiscian friend of mine once casually said, “we should go out once every month, so that when we come back from outside we will appreciate IISc a lot more”. There is a lot of wisdom in these words. We don’t usually appreciate what we have; only when we lose it we realize its value.

Apart from the tranquil environment there are a lot of other things to be noticed which makes IISc such a great place to live in. There is an amazing amount of flora and fauna in our campus. Probably IISc is one of the few places left where humans and wildlife coexist peacefully (CES people could tell you more about that).

The trees of IISc play a major role in contributing to the tranquility in the campus. For a start, there are so many of them that they encompass entire roads. Look up IISc on Google Earth and all you will find is greenery. The trees do not let you feel the sun if it is a hot sunny day. In case it is raining, you could still walk underneath them because they buffer a large portion of the rain through their leaves. However, if the rain stops and you might be lulled in thinking that you can now go outside, you might be mistaken. A gentle breeze will allow the trees to scatter heavy droplets of buffered rain water upon you and give you a wrong impression that it is raining.

A special mention needs to be given to the birds on the trees that are more than willing to shower their “blessings” on you whether you like it or not. There is a superstition that unless one is blessed by the birds, he/she won’t be able to write his/her thesis. If you are superstitious and are facing a tough time in writing your thesis, go and stand outside the library during six to eight in the evening. You are sure to get blessed. Interestingly, these birds are not wasteful or unintelligent either. They shower their blessings only on the

roads used more by humans, example on the road from the library to Biochemistry department. On other lesser used roads, you won't find them.

Another wonderful thing about IISc is that there is a trust factor implicit over here. Mostly you will find people trusting one another on various issues. Even students who are usually not renowned for their trustworthiness are honest and responsible. Take the example of GymCafe( a popular eating place near Gymkhana). A lot of students go there, order whatever they want, and then drift apart nearby and once they are finally done with the eating they come back and pay the money at the end. There is no supervision, just an innate honesty from the students and trust from the café owner. This kind of culture and trust is usually not prevalent elsewhere.

So, all in all IISc is a special place to be in. Maybe a lot of us need to cherish the time that we have here and appreciate its natural beauty and glory rather than grumbling about its various lacunae (which are usually human-centric). So, the next time someone asks me "what kind of a place is Bangalore", I will answer without any hint of apology "I know nothing of Bangalore, I live in IISc which is a different and beautiful sub-city of its own kind. If you wish to know about IISc, I can give you all the details."