



INSTITUT DE FRANCE
Académie des sciences



MARDI 13 DÉCEMBRE 2016

**À 14h30 en grande salle des séances de l'Académie des sciences
23 Quai de Conti - 75006 Paris**

COOPERATION AND CONFLICT IN A TROPICAL INSECT SOCIETY

WOLFF RAMANUJAN LECTURE



Centre for Ecological Sciences & Centre for Contemporary Studies
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Raghavendra GADAGKAR

Raghavendra Gadagkar has established an active school of research in the area of Animal Behaviour, Ecology and Evolution at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. The evolution of social life in animals is a major theme of his research. He has published 290 articles and two books - Survival Strategies and The Social Biology of Ropalidia marginata, both published by Harvard University Press, USA. He is President of the Indian National Science Academy. As the Founder Chair of the Centre for Contemporary Studies, he aims to forge meaningful interaction between the natural and human sciences.



Photo: Heritamba Varghese



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Many insects such as ants, bees and wasps organize themselves into societies with sophisticated organization, communication and division of labour, paralleling and sometimes surpassing our own societies. We therefore have a natural curiosity to understand how these tiny insects can achieve such feats of social organization. What are the rules that govern their lives and how does a bee or a wasp know what to do when? How do they balance the opposing forces of cooperation and conflict that must be inevitable in their social life? In this talk I will illustrate the efforts of my research group to understand the workings of the primitively eusocial wasp *Ropalidia marginata* in peninsular India. My goal will not merely be to convey the product of our research but even more to describe the process of our science, our methodology and the logic that drives our experiments and interpretations. I will conclude by reflecting on what we can learn from insect societies and argue that understanding insect societies helps us to reflect on how and why we live our lives the way we do and thus to better understand ourselves.

Entrée libre sur inscription préalable (attention nombre de places limité)

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