

MONDAY

# COLLOQUIUM

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How evolution may explain why you are reading this

Ullasa Kodandaramaiah (IISER, Thiruvananthapuram)

2 Dec 2024 (Monday) | 16:00 Hrs (Tea / Coffee 15:45 Hrs) | Venue: TIFRH Auditorium

*'Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution'*

- Theodosius Dobzhansky

We are familiar with the idea of evolution, or Darwinian evolution as it is often referred to. I will begin with a primer on the basic principles of biological evolution - selection, drift, adaptations, fitness, etc. I will briefly discuss how life on earth began and diversified, with the role of natural selection highlighted by a few striking examples of adaptations. I will then talk about many aspects of what we humans do – including giving seminars and listening to them – that can easily be explained in terms of maximizing fitness. I also draw parallels between biological evolution and other types of evolution – focussing on language and cuisine – to talk about how the principles of biological evolution are broadly applicable to the world we live in, not just biology. Towards the end, based solely on the concept of fitness, I will make a simple, easily testable, prediction about behaviour of the people in the audience. By the end of the talk, a listener should be able to appreciate the meaning behind the title of the talk.