

## No fun being a PhD scholar

### Scholarship Fund: 18,000; Scholars' Life Spartan

Prashanth G N | TNN

Bangalore: No pubbing, multiplexing or theatre jaunts. Keep a tight leash on all spend and coast through the Rs 18,000-a-month scholarship as a PhD student in tech city, that otherwise pays 50k, 100k and more for techies.

In the expensive times we live, no salary is good enough and yet, engineering PhD scholars even in elite institutions like IISc have to make do with Rs 18,000 fellowship a month and basic science PhDs with Rs 16,000, living a spartan life in a city known for its vibrant entertainment

options. Engineering PhDs were earlier given Rs 14,000, while basic science PhDs were given Rs 12,000. The raise to Rs 18,000 and Rs 16,000 is thanks to the initiative of the HR department, under pressure from students and faculty.

What can one do with Rs 18,000 as a Phd scholar in Bangalore? Not much. Of the fellowship, an IISc scholar has to meet Rs 2,000 as mess expense, Rs 500 as hostel fee, Rs 12,600 as annual fee — which is Rs 1,050 monthly. Sreedhar K, PhD scholar, points to an expenditure pattern. "Of Rs 18,000, many of us save Rs 4,000-5,000 to send home. Many are sole earners or have loans. In the remaining Rs 13,000-14,000, miscellaneous fees account for approximately Rs 5,000. We have Rs 7,000-Rs 8,000 left from which we have to save and also match Bangalore's lifestyle." "There are some who may do weekend outings, but the pattern is to stay on campus as most needs are met here. Just one weekend can mean an average expense of Rs 1,000 — two pints and a meal. Over four weekends, this would mean Rs 4,000. Stretch the pubbing and eating even a bit, and another cool Rs 1,000 is out. Where's the question of saving?" he asks.

They stick to the campus cafeteria. No tea bars — a regular "feel-good urban lifestyle" is not their cup of tea because even the tea is too expensive.

#### HOW THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

What PhD scholars get is no match to what employed colleagues get. My friends earn Rs 1 lakh and more a month as employees. For us, there is absolutely no question of owning a car. I can't take a housing loan, I can't have fancy music systems, I can't go to restaurants every weekend, or buy a two-wheeler. If you don't indulge in anything outside campus and stick to the mess, campus coffee shop and cafeteria, you can scrape through with the fellowship. — **Rishi R | PHD STUDENT**

Engg PhD fellowship <b>Rs 18,000</b>	<b>EXPENSES (In Rs)</b>	<b>Weekend Outing</b>
	Hostel 500	Pubbing and eating 1,200-1,400 per person
	Mess 200	Theatre 50-150
Basic sciences fellowship <b>Rs 16,000</b>	Annual fee 12,600	Multiplex 200-250
	Health insurance 1,000	Coffee 80-150
	Family savings 4,000	Day trip 800-1,000
	Remaining 7,000	

