



Indian  
Institute of  
Science

# IISc's role in World War II

World War II raged from 1939-1945, and as a British colony, India had to provide manpower and resources to the war. IISc contributed to the war effort too, by training skilled artisans (such as electricians, carpenters and machinists), providing land to the military, and by conducting research and manufacturing items for military and industrial use.



A 1943 photograph of students of the Department of Electrical Technology standing before a 300-watt transmitter that they designed and fabricated for the Royal Air Force, for communication with London during World War II.

Sir M Visvesvaraya, who was President of IISc's Court during from 1938 to 1947, believed strongly that IISc needed to focus more on applied research, and saw the war as an opportunity to do just that. "Our failure to take advantage of the present opportunity to give a fillip to industries will mean a tragic waste of a chance which occurs only once in several generations," he told the Court in his opening speech in 1941.



IISc's Department of Aeronautical Engineering was set up in 1942, and worked with Hindustan Aircraft Limited to repair and maintain British and American war planes. When the war began, IISc only had four departments. By the end of the war, it had added courses in Aeronautical Engineering and Internal Combustion Engineering, and had plans to significantly expand its courses in Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering, and create new departments such as that of Metallurgy.

Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar, the Maharaja of Mysore, on a visit to the Department of Electrical Technology. Before the war, shortage of funds meant that the Institute hadn't been able to expand its focus from pure to applied research. During the war, increased grants from the governments of Mysore, Bombay and Hyderabad, as well as the Government of India, made this possible.

