

THE GARBAGE BIN

The Silk Cotton tree was more than 200 years old. Magnificent, dignified, and serene, with fresh green leaves gently swaying in the wind. The morning breeze was cool and birds were scampering here and there, chirping loudly. Even before I could soak in the vibrancy and serenity of the moment, a loud piercing horn (that is typical of a large diesel bus) with its the engine roaring, invaded me.

As I turned away from this living ancient tree, I saw what seemed to be the neatly sawed off trunk of a large tree. I was a little shocked at first but realized that this was an imitation made of tin! A garbage-bin saying 'please use me'. As I walked along getting deeply impacted by the many glorious old trees in the Lal Bhag Botanical Gardens, I noticed that almost every one of these great trees had been privileged to have a particularly ugly garbage-bin in front of it.

The favourite bin was the sawed off trunk, the next most frequent was a box painted in a strange blue, adorned with an ugly painting of a tree! Then there were these man sized monkeys dressed like a cross between a WOG and a clown. The paradox disturbed me greatly.

"Where had mankind gone wrong" I thought, "we have created a world with so much waste, so many reminders of our power to destroy. We see the effects of this wrong turn all around us, but we don't know what the wrong turn is, do we?"

There was a scrap of the morning paper floating by '142 species of flora and fauna facing extinction in Karnataka' it screamed. As I was sorting out these thoughts and the serendipitous bits of floating papers, I walked out of the park; A small oasis of dignity and beauty in an urban sprawl. A large 'garbage creating space' where any thing not marked, 'buy me, use me, throw me out (into the garbage bin saying please use me)' is not valued, it is not part of GDP, our new god!