

Placements 2009- an Exhaustive Analysis

In this first part of the placements analysis, Vineet analyzes if CPI is the deciding criterion for placements, in a survey covering 5 years.

We wanted to study the correlation between a good academic performance and the success rate in placements. The most concise and widely accepted measure of academic performance is the CPI, and so we used it as the 'comparison variable'.

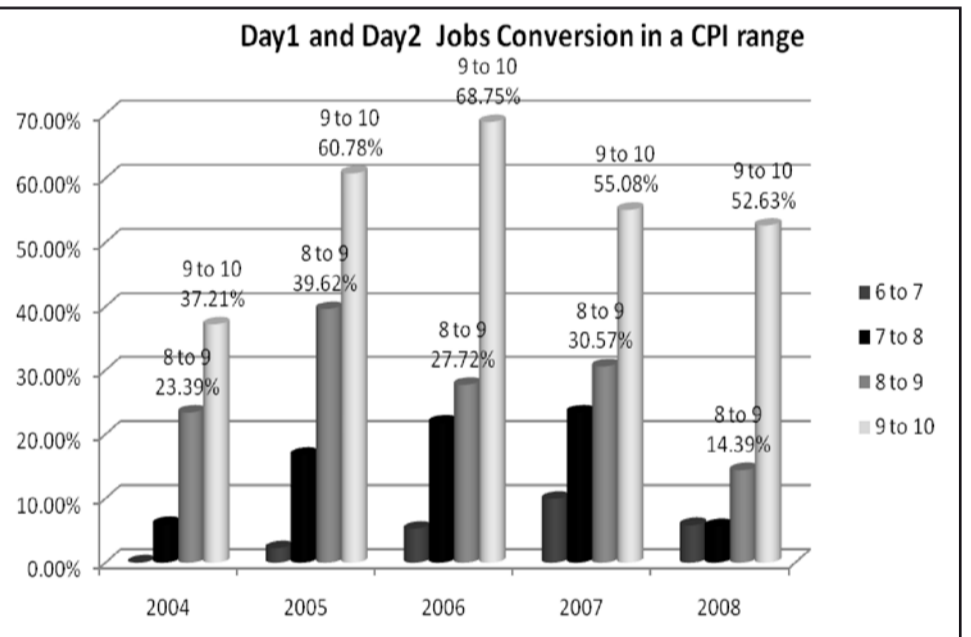
In order to avoid biases in our study we decided that we would perform our analysis for the past four placement seasons. This would also help us in observing the trend of this correlation, if there was any!

We decided to analyze the résumés of students who were placed on the very first two days of each placement season. The first two days' placement slots are always occupied by reputed companies and they are very serious about the quality of new recruits. These companies thus handpick only the best from the lot.

We divided the acquired CPI data of students among four broad groups. These groups were the CPI ranges of 6 to 7, 7 to 8, 8 to 9 and 9 to 10. We calculated the percentage of the total number of students placed in first two days, for each of the above four groups. Our analysis has been presented in the form of Pie Charts.

We observed that for almost each year more than half the total number of students placed within the first two days had a CPI above 8. This fraction was the highest in 2004 at 85% and then averaged at around 55% through the years 2005 to 2008. That was encouraging but not enlightening. It appeared that the only conclusion we could derive from this analysis was that the average CPI of all students placed on first two days is only slightly higher than the average CPI of all the students participating in placements for a particular year.

Certainly there was much more than that. All of us believe that there are a very few students with a CPI greater than 9. In order to verify this we acquired the CPI of all students participating in the placements each year and analyzed the distribution across the four pre-defined CPI groups. Our findings have been presented as a histogram.

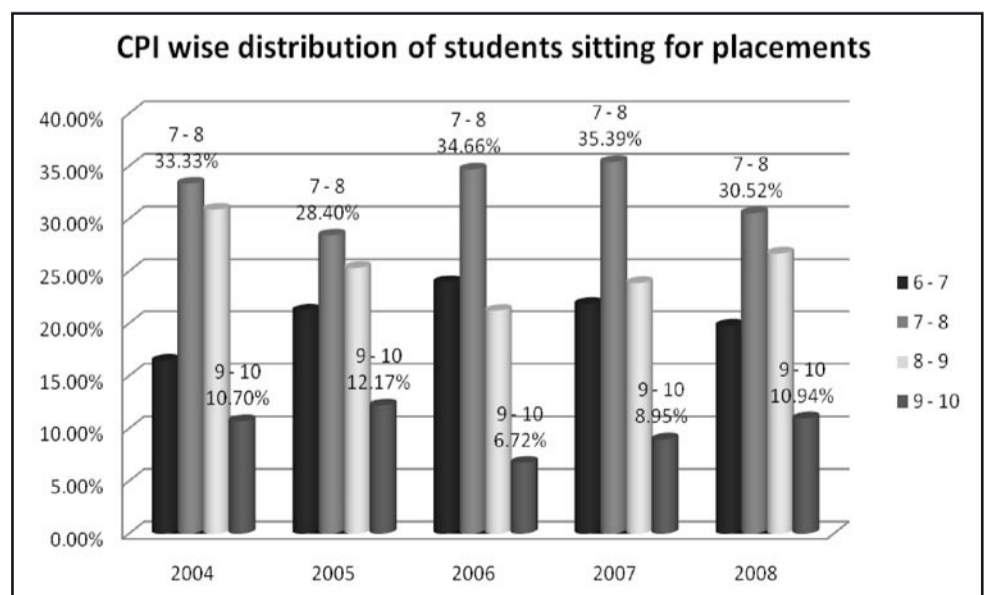
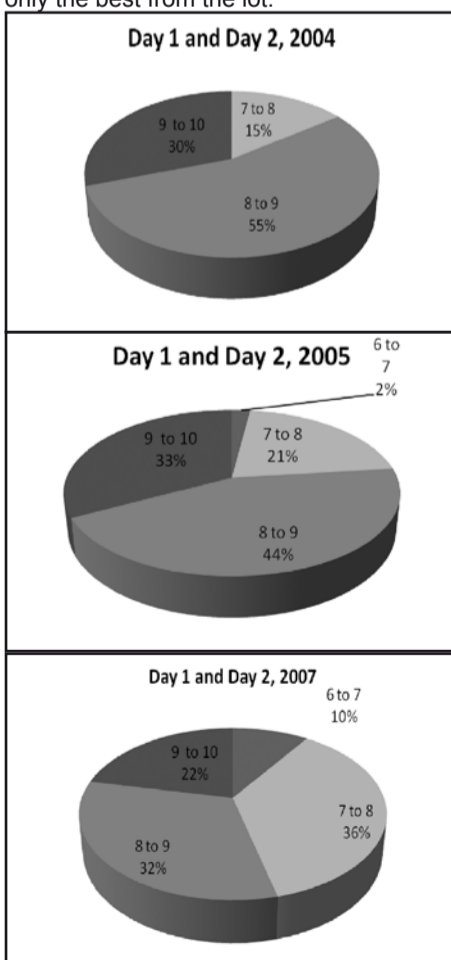


You can see that we have a close to normal distribution for each year. The number of students with their CPI below 8 simply outweighs the number of students with a CPI above 8. Also, the number of students with CPI greater than 9 is the least among the four CPI groups.

It is quite intuitive after all this analysis that the students falling into the higher CPI bracket are the ones who easily get a job within the first two days. We confirmed this

using 'conversion-ratios'. The 'conversion-ratio' here is defined as the number of students in a certain CPI group who were placed within the first two days expressed as a percentage of total number of students in the same group. We have presented these 'conversion-ratios' for each of the four groups as a histogram.

(Contd. on page 2...)



Placements

(Contd. from page 1)

After having analyzed the Day 1 and Day 2 placements for the past four seasons we felt that it was important for us to analyze the 'good' companies' shortlists as well. This would help us in affirming that good academic performance does play a key role in a student's success irrespective of the type of firm. In that case, we can be certain that there isn't a hidden factor which has been systematically affecting the success of students with high CPI and bypassing our analysis.

Given the large number of companies visiting IIT Bombay each year, it was not feasible and logical to analyze each and every shortlist. We had to form our own subset of companies whose shortlist would serve as an ideal proxy for the shortlist of other firms. The companies we selected were BCG and McKinsey. It's true that these companies are highly selective and only the best among the best can make it to their shortlists. Also, it would seem that these won't reflect the actual trends in shortlists. But we had pretty strong reasons to select these two companies. First and foremost, McKinsey and BCG have consistently been the first ones to recruit, for last 5 years. Thus, they are the first to release a shortlist of students and their shortlist is never compromised in terms of numbers and quality of students. Secondly, we also analyzed the types of jobs the shortlisted people ended up with. Our findings have

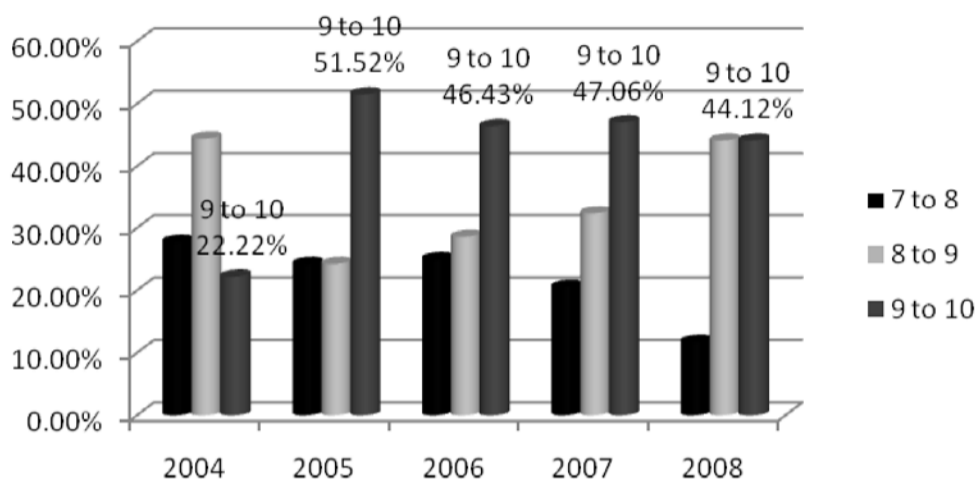
been presented in the following histogram. We found out that all the shortlisted students ended up being placed within the first two days and more than 85% of them got into some of the best companies. This is sufficient to prove that the shortlists are good proxies for the shortlists of all other good companies. Thirdly, it is obvious that technical companies would like to recruit candidates with good academic performance. Our analysis would be useful if we can prove that same is the case with even non-technical companies. McKinsey and BCG being management consulting firms are the best representatives of such non

technical firms. We combined the shortlists of McKinsey and BCG and analyzed students' résumés for the last four years. The students were distributed into three CPI groups: 7 to 8, 8 to 9 and 9 to 10. Our findings have been presented in the form of a histogram. It is quite obvious that except for the year 2004, almost half of the total number of students shortlisted in both these companies have been from the top CPI group of 9 to 10. Besides, for all the past years we had the number of people in the lower CPI bracket of 7 to 8 consistently lower than the number of students with CPI greater than 8. In the year 2004, BCG visited the IITB campus for the first time and that partly explains the deviation from the trend that has

We also reviewed the résumés of candidates to make sure that CPI is indeed the key factor which has been the reason for this observed bias. We have tabulated some sample key résumé points of candidates in the lower CPI bracket for the year 2005.

Similarly for all four years we found that all the shortlisted students with CPI less than 8 had an extraordinary extracurricular record. Thus it proves that there has to be something in a student's resume that overcompensates for the average academic performance.

BCG and Mckinsey Shortlist Analysis



To summarise:

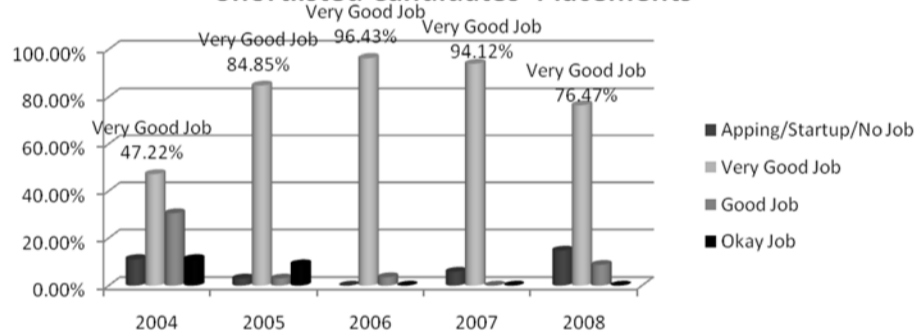
An analysis of the BCG and Mckinsey shortlists shows that over the years both these companies have preferred to interview students with good academic records. Given the normal distribution of students across the broad CPI groups, as seen previously, we can again say that the students in high CPI groups have a significantly higher probability of making it through the shortlists of 'good' companies as represented by the shortlist of Mckinsey and BCG.

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technical firms. We combined the shortlists of McKinsey and BCG and analyzed students' résumés

been visible in the years 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Shortlisted Candidates' Placements



Year 2005		
Candidate 1 7 < CPI < 7.5	ITC Summer Intern with PPO	Core-Group Member, Mood I
Candidate 2 7 < CPI < 7.5	GSHA	Manager, Techfest
Candidate 3 7.5 < CPI < 8	GS Cultural Affairs	Core-Group Member, Mood I
Candidate 4 7 < CPI < 7.5	GS Hostel	Inter IIT Gold Medalist
Candidate 5 7.5 < CPI < 8	IPhO GOLD medalist	Core-Group Member, Mood I

The PG Cult Fest: First Time Ever!

While UG participation in cultural events is always more than satisfactory, there is now finally an incentive for the PGs to come out and do their thing!

There is no doubt that IIT spends humungous amounts of resources and funds for alternative pursuits and extra curricular activities. But are they actually uniformly distributed among all students? Or are they concentrated with just some groups of people? One such allocation can be seen in the Cultural Affairs on campus. Undoubtedly, the Institute has excelled in the cultural dimension this year. The blend of extracurricular activities on the campus is widespread with a large list of achievements to mention. But due to various reasons PGs have not been able to exhibit the cultural side of themselves in the way UGs do. Of course, most of these reasons are a genuine concern, such as lack of time, lack of Awareness, Inertia of participation, preferential hostel allocation and many more.

Motivation

In order to address the aforementioned issues the Institute Cultural Council has come up with the idea of a PG Cultural Festival exclusively for the PGs of the institute. This will be an interdepartmental competition since PGs tend to have more of the departmental spirit as opposed to the hostel spirit. It will cover all the seven cultural genres: Debating, Literary arts, Fine arts, Music, Dance, Film and Photography and

Dramatics.

It is being held on the same lines as PG sports which has achieved great success in the past years not only in terms of getting the PGs into the gymkhana but also in terms of producing players for the Inter-IIT. The aim is the same: to search for people with talent who don't come out because of one reason or the other.

The aim is NOT to increase the already existing gap between UGs and PGs but is rather to provide a platform for interested students to showcase their talent and to bring them to the mainstream of cultural activities in the institute. It is merely a platform.

At this point it is worth mentioning that PG majority hostels (1, 11, 12, Tansa) have shown a very good performance in the GC this year. There was a time when both hostel 12 and 11 were at the top 5 of the GC tally. Hostel 11 is still leading the GC at the 3rd position. In many competitions like IDL and Goonj and in the FA Genre, these hostels have proved their capability. The institute cultural council wants to tap this newly found enthusiasm of the PG students. Supplementary steps like the PG cultural Database and workshops in PG hostels etc

are being taken.

Structure

The institute is divided into twenty one departments. These departments will compete with each other in events across all the seven cultural genres and the winning department will be awarded a cultural championship. Also, this year, the points obtained from PG Sports and PG Cult will be clubbed and the department with the overall highest score will be awarded an overall championship.

Organizing Teams

In order to reach out to the people in the best possible way, a team of 9 coordinators has been formed who along with the institute cultural secretaries will take care of different events in the festival. Apart from them, each department has a PG sports and Cult representative.

Events

The competition will happen in two phases. In the first phase, the majority of events are from the non-performing arts (speaking, literary arts, fine arts and photography) while the second phase will consist of per-

forming arts (dramatics, dance, music and fashion).

Conclusion

Whoever you are, there is a platform for you to showcase their talent in one area or the other. This is the essence of IIT. The event could be the perfect avenue to interact with people, spend quality time with your department mates and expose yourself to different cultural activities in what could possibly be your last academic stop. Here's calling all of you to contribute in one way or the other. Be sure to duly register with your PG Cult & Sports Representatives or mail pgcult2009@gmail.com. More details can be found at <http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~cultural/pgcult2009/>.

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ACADEMICS

In which range does your CPI fall?

The average CPI of the batch is 7.4. While this is not the lowest in recent years it is also certainly nowhere near the highest. This would point away from the general perception that the quality of students coming in is decreasing by the year. Demographic classification of CPIs showed that students from big cities like Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Bombay outperformed students from smaller towns by nearly one grade point average (8.0 versus 7.0). An indication, perhaps, of the similarities between school structure and our own academic structure, presuming larger cities have better schools as well.

In which Department are you? In which department (including your own as an option) would you like to be?

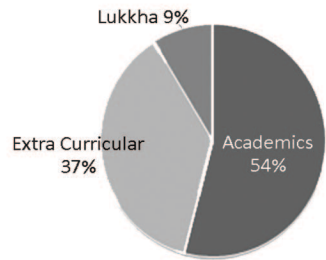
Respondents were also asked about the department they would most like to be in, given a choice. Electrical Engineering was the most preferred destination for students from other departments, followed closely by Computer Science and Engineering. A general swing towards EE has been observed even in JEE counseling among the top rankers over the last few years, and this is only further testimony to the fact.

However CSE boasted of 100 % satisfaction, with no CSE freshie wanting to be in another department. Electrical Engineering and Engineering Physics came next with hardly 1 or 2 students from these departments listing a department other than their own as the place they would most like to be in. In what would come as a big surprise to most, Civil Engineering freshies were most dissatisfied with their own department with more than 50 % being desirous of changing their branch. As a destination M.Sc Chem was the least preferred.

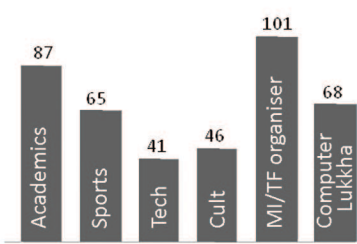
LIFESTYLE & ACTIVITIES

What did you think would be your main activity before coming here?

More than half the respondents felt they would be occupied primarily with academics. While this does not come as a big surprise, seeing as JEE is a prerogative of the academically inclined, it is surprising that nearly a tenth said that they had come to IIT with leisure on their mind. This is a clear indication of the fact that IIT is considered by many to be the end of the road as opposed to a platform for future achievements.

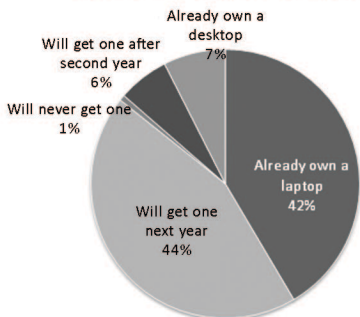


What activities are you involved in?



The number of freshies working as MI/TF organisers (a staggering 101 out of 149) exceeds the number of freshies involved in any other extra-curricular activity by 20%. Now the question arises - what makes MI and TF so popular (even as compared to previous years) among the freshies? Most freshies were extremely impressed by the orientation, and feel that MI and TF kept themselves in the public eye with innovative events like Khoon Chala, Nexus and the KK concert.

When will you get a computer?



Technical activities initially attracted a lot of freshies; more than 300 participated in the first event. However, the numbers and the interest has declined since, as can be seen from the graph.

About half the freshies surveyed felt that the tradition of birthday bumps should continue. Only 43% of the sample size owns a bicycle - a definite decrease from previous years. This could be attributed to the improved internal transport system.

OFFBEAT

A few freshies, when asked how IITB had differed from their expectations, had rather interesting answers:

"Machaomax!!! Yomaxx!!! Infi maje maxx!!! God maxx!!!"

"100% ulta"

"why shud i write if u r not going to print it..."

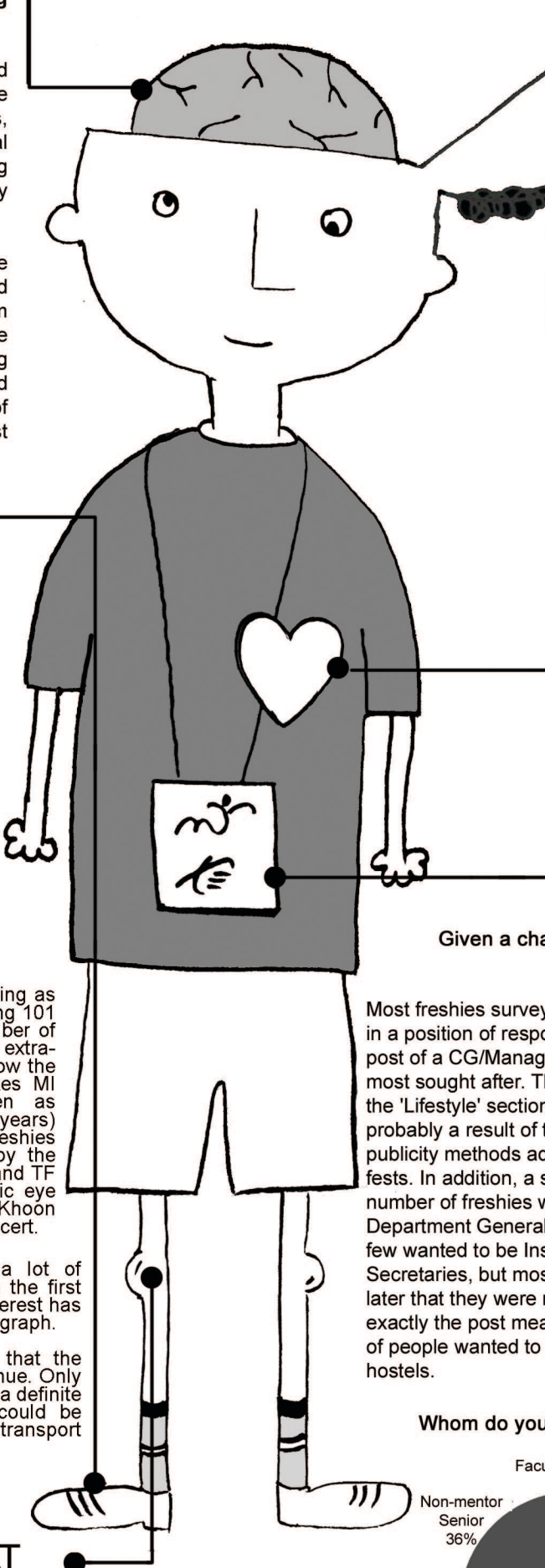
I expected better rooms, atleast 2 tables and 2 cupboards if we were to share rooms. but the room is very small and its not comfortable. Also the toilets and bathrooms are very less."

"i thought it's like a heaven but this is not hell."

Last week, InsighT conducted a survey of the freshie batch to determine their aspirations, interests, activities and experience of IITB so far. We've presented the main results on this page. We've grouped the questions into four main categories; the questions in each category are either stated at the beginning of the category or written as the titles of graphs. The fifth section has a few amusing responses that we got.

The whole survey, with all the questions and detailed analysis of each answer, is up on the InsighT website. Let's cut to a quick snapshot of the freshie batch of 2008-09. Mukund, Mukul, Ayush, Ishan, Akhil, Siddharth, Saideep, Nidhi & Eeshan bring you the New kids on the block.

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU KID



HOSTEL

An analysis of 148 first year students shows that a majority of students (71%) have opted to stay in their current hostel if given a chance.

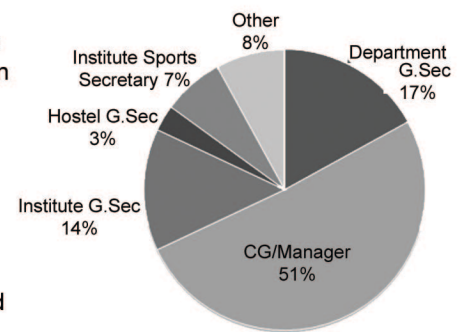
However, a break down of the data on hostel basis reveals that the trend is not uniform. First year hostel 2 students are most dissatisfied with their hostel, while hostel 3 freshies are most content. From H2, more than 46 percent of the students would choose to move out of the hostel. One of the biggest factors for this situation seems to be the general discontent freshies have with their seniors in H2, with problems like the fact that they are yet to have a freshie night. Also, there is a perception among freshies that the Hostel 3 mess offers the best food, which largely explains why nearly 93% of freshies opted to stay there. A surprisingly large population (30%) of all the H10 freshies surveyed would opt to move to some other hostel next year.

With reference to the perceived decline in hostel spirit, the seniors need not really worry, as nearly 57% of the freshies claim that they would work for their hostel even if no one asks them to.

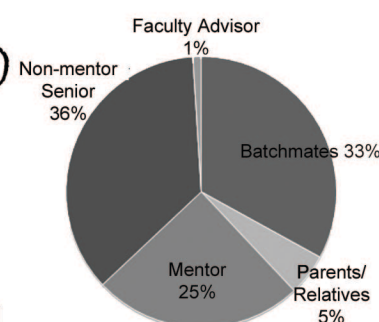
HEROES

Given a chance, what would be your preferred post in third/fourth year?

Most freshies surveyed were interested in a position of responsibility, with the post of a CG/Manager easily being the most sought after. This, as discussed in the 'Lifestyle' section on the left, is probably a result of the innovative publicity methods adopted by these fests. In addition, a surprisingly large number of freshies wanted to become Department General Secretaries. Very few wanted to be Institute General Secretaries, but most respondents said later that they were not sure what exactly the post meant. Again, only 3% of people wanted to hold a PoR in their hostels.



Whom do you consult for fundae?



Most freshies prefer to consult their own batchmates for advice. Only 1/4th regularly consult their mentors, but this is probably due more to the fact that most mentors live in different hostels from their mentees than to a problem with the mentor programme itself.

On the occasion of its Golden Jubilee, IIT Madras welcomed all the other IITs for the 44th Inter-IIT Sports Meet this year. After the successful Inter IIT Aquatics Meet from 6th to 9th October 2008, the cyclone that inundated Chennai made the organizing committee of IIT Madras toy with the idea of altogether cancelling the sports meet.

However, they decided otherwise and went on to hold some events at venues outside the campus making the 44th Inter-IIT Sports Meet a grand success. This was a very memorable Sports Meet as the new IIT's also exhibited enthusiasm and sportsmanship and participated in some events.

With the advent of the six new IITs, some of the logistical issues raised were changes in scheduling of events, the duration of the sports meet and accommodation for the increased number of participants. A committee will be set up in August 2009 to deal with these issues and decide the format of the next annual meet to be held at IIT Kanpur.

It was a historic win for IIT Bombay this year as we won both the Men's and the Women's General Championships. In the past, IIT Madras has always won the Inter-IIT General Championship on home ground.

In the past, IIT Madras has always won the Inter-IIT General Championship at home

To add to this, the simmering rivalry between IIT Madras and IIT Bombay made this an even more dramatic victory. The March Past carried points towards the General Championship this year and saw more discipline and attendance as compared to the previous years. In fact, the IIT Bombay contingent marched all the way from the hostel to the field as Contingent Leader Mohit Gupta was determined to bring the March Past Trophy home.

The dates of the meet were changed from 15th - 21st December to 11th - 17th December. The senior players who were sitting for placements were in a fix but the Director, Dean of Student Affairs and Chairman, Sports came to the rescue by providing flight tickets for 15 final year students to participate in the sports meet. It was also commendable that these students who were not placed in the wake of the economic recession set aside their worries and showed sheer commitment by going to IIT Madras.

Cricket

Jha Sir: Cricket Coach

"IIT Bombay has won after a long time thanks to a dedicated effort by our new part-time coach Raju Sidke as well as good captaincy by Kartik Dalal."

Practice makes perfect. The idea this time around was to put together a young team picked purely on the basis of performance and where players were not distinguished on IIT seniority levels.

A historic tie was seen in the League match of Madras vs. Bombay where Sudarshan played a gutsy knock even after taking a blow on the forehead. The match was a tie.



Athletics

Yadav Sir : Athletics

"Discipline is instilled in the Athletics Team through the



at 2 PM

year and is the key reason for the consistency of the team. With next year's team already raring to go, daily gymming and practices have already begun."

Due to rains, the athletics field at IITM was ruined and events had to be conducted outside the campus at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. As the availability of the stadium was limited, events were compressed to four days instead of the usual six day duration. The athletes were sapped after a diet of only fruits and chocolates until events got over everyday. Even under these adverse conditions, our team outperformed other

teams by a huge margin. IIT Bombay won the Gold for the third consecutive time, a first in the history of Inter IIT Athletics.

The Gold medal in the 4x400m Relay was also IITB's first since 2000. Yet again, long distance races proved to be IITB's major asset contributing 25 points to the total score - 72. Khem Raj (3 Golds, 1 Silver) and Mukesh (2 Golds, 2 Silvers, 1 Bronze) scored 13 points each. In throws, Goutham bagged 2 Silver Medals in spite of his injured leg. Alok jumped very well to bag 2 Silvers and 1 Bronze. The arrival of Drolia (1 Gold, 1 Silver) at IITM despite his placements was a major boost to IITB's confidence!

Hockey

Appaji Sir: Hockey

"The strategy this year was to have strong goalkeepers. 3 goalkeepers were trained but the strategy failed. The team was strong but luck was not on our side."

The first match was against IITK where IITB took the lead and managed to keep the ball in IITK's half for most of the time. Unfortunately, IITB missed the penalty stroke and lost that game 1-2. The team, even after losing the first match did not lose heart. In the match against IITD, though they got many chances to score, IITB was not able to convert them and lost that

match 2-3. The team is far from disheartened; instead, they are confident and determined to win the Gold next year.

Basketball

The Girls saw victory with a Silver Medal after many years. The Boys were defending their cup and emerged jubilant. The Final Match against IITM was easily the closest match IITB played in the entire tournament. They were down by 14 points in the first quarter. Then, with some strong rebounding and good post play, they managed to draw level in the fourth quar-

ter. With two minutes left and the scores level at 42-42, rookie point guard Utkarsh handled the ball extremely well and put in 4 crucial points giving IIT Bombay a 48 - 42 victory.

Tennis

Reddy Sir : Tennis "The Tennis scene of IIT Bombay is going great with more and more students showing enthusiasm. However, we will need at least one more instructor/trainer to efficiently tap the talent and enthusiasm of our students."

The IITB boys won the Silver medal (something they have been doing for the past 3 years) while the girls climbed a rung ahead bagging the Gold medal. This year, the tennis was a team event for the girls unlike last year when it was an individual event. It did not contribute to the total points tally but will be counted as part of the Women's General Championship next year.

Untimely renovation of the tennis courts at IIT Madras forced all the tennis matches at Inter IIT onto the courts of the Anna University Campus. Added to this, the extremely hot weather conditions made a round match against IIT Delhi a real battle stretching from eight in the morning to

four in the evening. Nevertheless, it remained a sweet and sweaty memory with that match resulting in a win for IIT Bombay. Arjun, an unbeaten player, deserves a special mention.

Football

Jha Sir : Football

"IITB is the best team on paper. Despite injuries, our boys performed very well. The other teams got close only because of the new conditions in Chennai."

This year, the football scene at Inter IIT has been as rewarding as it has been thrilling. Bagging the Gold in a sport which garners perhaps the maximum attention from IITians is no mean task in itself. The finals of the football match between IITB and IITM was a tight one that eventually went into penalties. During one such penalty kick, the overzealous referee was running backward and while doing so tripped, fell down and rolled over a few times. This helped break the tension that had gripped the gathered crowd. After two penalty hits from each team, we were 2 points down. Even out of such a situation, we managed to

come out victorious. The very vibrant captain, Akash Gandhi, strongly feels that both the coaches Aman Sir and Jha Sir deserve special mentions for their excellent training.

Volleyball

Backed by good team spirit and commitment IITB bagged the Bronze medal this year. As always, Naveen Crasta, a PG student, one of our star players, gathered a lot of attention with his inspirational force and unmatched passion for the game. This main spiker's silent off-field persona and on-field aggression make him the favourite among volleyball fans. In the very first match against IITD, IITB won the match 3-1 despite Naveen's absence. This win gave all the players a strong boost in confidence.

Weightlifting

A high degree of discipline through the year, meticulous training by the coaches, Yadav Sir and Vijay Sir, and the sincere efforts from the Institute Weight Lifting Secretary Akhilesh and Captain Tojesh saw the IITB team bag the overall gold medal in weightlifting. A team of 8 students, 7 students bagged a medal each (3 gold, 3 silver and 1 bronze) scoring a record breaking 25 points out of a maximum of 45 points. In fact, IITB's performance in Weightlifting received a standing ovation at the closing ceremony. The entire team looks forward to more enthusiastic students taking up weightlifting as a sport.

Aquatics and Waterpolo

The IIT Bombay Men's team won the Gold Medal in Swimming. IITB had close competition from IITM this

Women's Champion of the last three years, Akanksha Gupta (of IITK) in four out of five events, taking the trophy for the Best Female Swimmer.

Having practiced much harder this year as compared to previous years, IIT Bombay was very disappointed to end up fourth in the Men's Waterpolo event. IITB's league consisted of Kanpur and Kharagpur. The first match up against Kanpur was a very tough one with IITB losing narrowly (9-7). They went on to beat Kharagpur comfortably (10-2). This was a particularly satisfying victory to them since they lost to Kharagpur the same scoreline last year. Kumar Abhishek was the top scorer for IIT Bombay in the waterpolo competition.

Badminton

The IITB Women's team was by far the best, winning all the matches in straight sets. Sharada, a freshie, certainly strengthened IITB's position, along with the experienced Sukhada and Aayasha, as she defeated the previous year's champion from IIT Madras. The final against IIT Delhi, which was expected to be a tough one, turned out to be a cakewalk. All in all, it was a smooth road to the gold - something which has never happened in the last decade!

As for the Men's team, the road to the semi-final was rougher than last year but they managed to defeat Kanpur. Prateek Mittal specially flew in to Chennai despite his Tech-fest preparation for the semi-finals and the finals. Kunal, the new player in the

team, held up the badminton tradition of winning along with Srikant. This well deserved win completes the hat-trick for the

Men's team!

Table Tennis

Coach Speak - Sengupta Sir

"The venue for Table Tennis in IIT Madras was not as spacious as IIT Bombay and the table was slow but our teams still performed very well."

This year, the Women's team won a Silver Medal after three years of Bronze medals. A nail biting match be-

This section isn't about the victories and the efforts but more on the anecdotes and incidents that dotted our trip to Southern India.

Train journeys can provide for humorous incidents, and this one was no exception, from ducking into one's sheets on sighting a eunuch to several hours of playing mafia, teen patti and poker. (this author would like to declare that he did not lose any money during the above mentioned activities; in fact, nobody played for money.) After nearly 24 hours of the train journey, we alighted at the station in Madras and from there our adventures in maddu-land began. Our first meal in Chennai was at the mess. Needless to say the food was horrible, similar in class to the food in H4 but altogether different in look and substance. And that was the high point in our messing adventures. Nearly every meal had South Indian food (which I'm sure would have tasted good had it been cooked elsewhere) and this prompted several light-hearted conspiracy theories, the foremost one being that the food was purposely badly cooked so that we would go for our matches underfed and malnourished, hence decreasing our chance of victory.

From the third day onwards, most teams drifted towards the nearby mall for food. Several teams learnt rudimentary Tamil, but none of those words

tween Kharagpur and Bombay in the Semis saw Vrinda and Palak outshine the experienced KGP girls who had been winning Golds and Silvers for the past four years. The format for Girl's table tennis was modified this year, and featured two singles and one doubles match.

The Men's team won a Bronze this year with Nikhil Pande, the IT team's most seasoned player flying down to Chennai amidst placements. Arnab, the IT Captain, played coolly and walked away with several victories. The team felt that there was a need for more match practice and sound technical guidance during the camp. With National Level Players in four other IIT's, the challenge is even more daunting in the coming years.

Chess

For the first time at the Inter IIT Sports Meet, Chess

Sarwesh Paradkar (Swimmer of the Meet for the 5th year in a row) bagged five gold medals this year, set four new records and completed a magnificent tally of 50 gold medals over the last five years at the Inter IIT Aquatics Competitions

was introduced as a Demo Game. It will be on trial for the next three years. IIT Bombay got the Silver Medal with three rated players out of the team of Yash, Vishal, Ashwin and Sachin.

We are the Champions...again!

With relentless support from the Institute, massive efforts on the part of Rohit Drolia, the General Secretary, Sports Affairs and all the Institute Sports Secretaries, bringing home the Men's General Championship trophy for the second year in a row and winning the Women's General Championship simultaneously made it a jubilant victory for IIT Bombay. Here's wishing the IIT Bombay Sports contingent a historic triumph once again next year.

THE 44TH INTER IIT SPORTS MEET

Aishwarya, Rahul and Sri Teja recount in triumphant detail, the circumstances of IITB's victory at Inter-IIT 2008

team, held up the badminton tradition of winning along with Srikant. This well deserved win completes the hat-trick for the

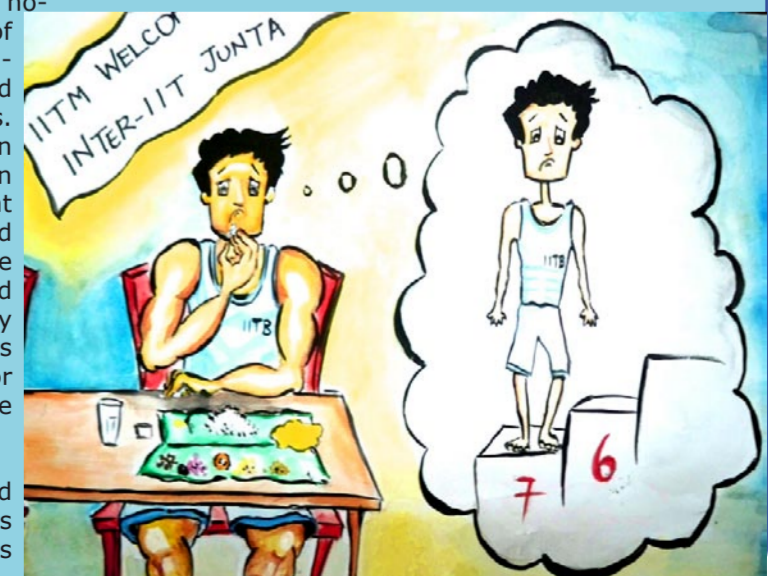
The rooms where the teams stayed in IIT Madras were luxurious but traveling within the huge wooded campus was a challenge.

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was awesome because of the final result, and also due to the immense fun we all had.

-Siddhartha Das (Cartoon by Srivathsan)

Chuckles



MI had a flying start as the pre-MI hoopla did a great job of stoking interest and creating a hullabaloo amongst the students, both within and without, through many more pre MI events than the years before. There was a social streak to MI, with blood donation camps being run for a week. Getting Baskin and Robbins as well as BJC to name one of their products after MI was a master stroke in increasing publicity as was the "Live Your Passion" campaign which highlighted the 8 large events that offered as prizes once-in-a-lifetime opportunities like a direct entry into the regional round of the Pantaloons Femina Miss India competition, acting and dance academy entries, recording opportunities and



more. The Daily Noise (newsletter) revamped itself as a website and notice board phenomenon, and made a lot of noise indeed. There was a Radio Mirchi sponsored MI party that saw many people attending but sadly didn't prove to be much of a hit. All in all, MI stayed very alive and visible in the months leading up to December.

MOOD INDIGO RETROSPECTIVE

Aishwarya Sharma, Tannishtha, Aaysha and Manas review the Mood Indigo that was...

Come December and by the looks of the posters and website one thought the campus was going to turn retro. However, incorporating the theme into the ambience has always been a challenge for MI, and it proved insurmountable this time around as well. There really wasn't anything retro per se about the décor of the whole of the Institute and, besides the vintage car exhibition, nothing too retro about anything else either. We would've liked it if at least the volunteers wore hippie-er large beads around their necks!

What was very visible though was that security was considerably stepped up with double the number of guards and barricades. And nobody was complaining. Call it post-26/11 over-cautiousness but most revelers preferred being safe than sorry. The overall security arrangements were looked at favorably by most. The drop in overall publicity campaigns were also perhaps a post 26/11 fallout – because advertisements and hoardings were much fewer in number than previous years. The java-app institute maps and SMS updates that were sent to everyone about MI last year were missed. The food was more plentiful and very drool-worthy this time, but was however a tad pricy – 'tis the price one pays for taste, one supposes.

The schedule this MI was tremendously jam-packed. There was a marked overdose of events which led to an inevitable clashing, a cause which wasn't aided by instances of incorrect data on the handouts and the website. The events themselves though, by and large, did not disappoint.

Competitions: Solo Impromptu, Mantra and Livewire as always got the biggest crowds, which were kept screaming in delight through the whole day without a glitch. Some of the Fine Arts events were quite innovative, such as sponge modeling. One act play saw some brilliant entries. Spectacular, Spectacular – a flagship dance and drama event – also saw many wonderful entries but most thought the judging wasn't up to the mark. Judging was an issue with the flagship speaking event – parliamentary debate - as well, because the criteria used for the eliminations finally did not match what was communicated to the participants earlier.

Overall, most competitions happened with an almost clinical precision, had cheering audiences and there very few delays in events and getting one's winnings was also an equally smooth process – quite a marvelous feat. One intriguing thing though is that the coordinators in-charge of a particular event took part in the event themselves. Now we know MI makes the rules and everything, but is this fair?

Informals: The biggest coup of Informals this year was organizing a beauty pageant for the first time in MI with the winners getting entry into the regional selection round of Femina Miss India. It lived up to its expectations in terms of audience but didn't manage to enchant. They did a fantastic job of revamping the structure of the treasure hunt and packaging it in the form of Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) which scored well among the participants, as did AOE (Age of Empires for the uninitiated) Alive. Sadly though, the highs of last year such as Maze and Casino were a huge disappointment. The structure for the maze was there but the venue didn't evidence a single event. Casino was firstly delayed by more than an hour and after that the coordinators of the event weren't familiar with some of the rules.



Another flagship event, MIMW, proved to be an anticlimax. It was one of the best in recent years up to the finals but the finals were catastrophic. There was a bit of a tussle during prize distribution as well with winners having to argue to receive their justly won booty.

Horizons and Afternites: As the name suggests, MI did try to reach new 'horizons' by introducing some very innovative and entertaining workshops. If you were lucky enough to attend some of those, you always had something to take away with you. Like say the food appreciation workshop where all participants got free lunch or the perfumery workshop where free samples of the best-selling fragrance of the year (apparently) were given out. For the people young at heart, there was the 'Laws of Attraction' workshop giving an insight into the art of flirting. The congo-playing and the ambigram-making workshops were a big hit with scores of people registering for it. Indeed a welcome and a refreshing change from the previous year! The interactive sessions, however, were a tad dry. Barring a few ones, the classrooms were almost empty with volunteers themselves being called in to fill them up.

The afternites provided some eagerly sought respite for people weary after a long day of events – or were meant to, at least. The first after-nite, the NoFit State Circus, was a bit of a blemish on the organizational and crowd management skills of the people in charge, as things were very close to getting out of hand, and is something we hope is a onetime oversight. However, the Laughter Lyric was very well received, as the crowd was in splits throughout, as laughter, wrapped in classic poetry, proved to be the best medicine. Essentially, barring a few untoward incidents, the MI loyalists reveled in their nocturnal selves!

Pronites: Daunted by the insanely long, serpentine lines for the pronites? Not the MI team, as they managed to smoothly allow the masses in, without compromising on security in any way. Once in though, people likened themselves to sardines packed, which makes us wonder – do the number of passes handed out exceed the capacity of the OAT? Issues like the screened objects conveniently disappearing, and the somewhat presumptuous nature of the security team were repeatedly cited. A notable first was having two artistes perform on a given nite, be it Ensiferum +



Mother Jane, or Indian Ocean + Rabbi, as they took turns to enthrall the swelling crowd. The former did that to perfection – the latter, not so much, with people accusing Rabbi of trying to promote his new album, instead of playing his more well known songs. Does the quantity vs. quality adage hold here? We love the wider choice, but an hour is barely enough time to connect with the audience, plus the abrupt break as the performers switch places pulls the crowd's enthusiasm back to ground zero.

Originally slated for Kavita Sheth, Mrigya and Dr. L Subramaniam, the Classical Night saw a slight change, as Roop Kumar Rathod performed instead, and won the hearts of those present, reflecting very well on the MI team's error handling abilities, as their contingency plan in case an artiste cancelled was executed really well. Sonu Nigam's performance was by far the most anticipated among all age groups, with MI members being pestered for countless passes countless times during the day. A pro-nite which lived up to its billing of a Popular Nite, with fireworks providing the perfect finale!

It was a very innovative MoodI which held much promise, however most felt it lacked a certain punch as there were quite a few organizational issues in various events. These, ladies and gentlemen, were the highs and lows of Mood Indigo 2008. Keep an eye on the Insight Bulletin Boards for more!

(Manas and Tannishtha are 4th and 5th year students of the Department of Aerospace. Aishwarya is a 3rd year student of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Aaysha is a 3rd year student of the MEMS Department. They can be contacted at manasrakh@iitb.ac.in, tannishtha@iitb.ac.in, bonny.sharma@iitb.ac.in and aaysha@iitb.ac.in, respectively)

Call it wanderlust, but drawn by the prospect of studying and exploring different cultures in countries abroad, an increasing number of students (See Statistics Box) have begun giving serious thought to applying for a semester exchange program. The foreign universities that participate via inking MoUs and working with the Dean IR's office, are widely acknowledged in specific disciplines of engineering, adding incentive as one is confident of gaining academically as well, making it a holistic learning experience.

COURSE SELECTION

One aspect of the application process that requires careful handling is the selection and approval of courses to be taken in the chosen university for that semester. After discussing one's options among the courses floated (available on the university's website) with a Faculty Advisor, the list of matching compulsory core courses has to be submitted for approval to the DUGC, and consequently, the UGAPEC – a procedure that going by past experience is rather long and testing. The electives, one is free to choose from and register at the host university. A significant caveat is that non-equivalent core courses have to be dropped then, and completed in subsequent semesters on returning by overloading them or self-study, making certain universities more suited for specific disciplines, like Purdue for ME, or Rice for CSE, as these additional credit completion woes are minimized.

OTHER QUESTIONS

Several questions arise, about transfer of credits, and the expenditure involved. Says Siddhartha Bagaria, currently at Rice: "Seeing as how universities abroad mostly have a different scale of grading, credit mapping for transfer is usually done on the basis of formal contact hours and course contents. Almost all matters concerning credit transfer are handled by DUGC in conjunction with the Academic Office". What should bring some cheer is the collective opinion that acing courses abroad is a whole lot simpler! Apropos expenses, the MoUs signed stipulate the waiving of tuition fees at the host university, with students having to pay their semester fees at IIT only. Other expenses, broken up broadly into travel, accommodation, food and insurance vary with the program, and have to be borne by the student. As an estimate, the Dean IR's office pegs it at about Rs 2 to 2.5 lacs, with financial ability for expenses up to USD \$ 9500 needed to be shown at the time of application. A silver lining is that these costs can be defrayed by obtaining RAships/TAs if a professor agrees to take you on, leaving you, however, with little free time for anything

Student Exchange Programs

Fascinated by the idea of spending a semester abroad? Akhil, Mukund and Aishwarya help you get started.



else. Some have it better. Namrata Bandekar, who was at NUS, says: "I received a scholarship of 850 SGD per month and a full compensation of airfare. One can easily manage to live within the scholarship money." To offer some perspective, Purdue's semester tuition fee is around \$12,000 ≈ Rs. 6 lacs, meaning a more significant amount has been negated. Is the experience worth the expenditure? That's for one to decide.

UNIVERSITIES ABROAD

There were specific features of universities abroad that our students felt were noteworthy, right from more organized labs to better infrastructural facilities. "Academic freedom" was stressed upon, as there's no rigid semester-wise course plan for students. Students are advised on the general requirements of getting a degree from the university and specific requirements for a particular major. Student sincerity is another stark difference, as bunking and sleeping in class is virtually non-existent, and the "honor code" is religiously followed. Surprisingly, none of them was too reluctant to return. Guess there's no place like home!

SUMMER INTERNSHIP? SEMESTER EXCHANGE?

Need help deciding between a summer internship and a full-blown semester exchange? "In a summer internship, student only needs to work (industry or research) but in an exchange program student does courses. Both are very different.", feels Vignesh K, who was at Purdue, and continues, "Students would choose summer internships over exchange program as (1) They don't have to spend from their pockets (2) They are getting paid in summer internships (3) Also reasons concerning app-ing, summer internships carry more value due to the work done and recommendation letters. Research-wise, summer internships are better, as they provide greater insight, helping you decide whether you see a career in that field." There is a flip side, however. In summer internships, one tends to stick with a small group of one's lab mates, whereas a semester exchange allows you to interact with hundreds of students with diverse backgrounds – essentially, living a regular college life in a different cultural setting. The prospect of choosing and learning from a variety of electives, including

on one's justification of what one learned from and contributed to in either.

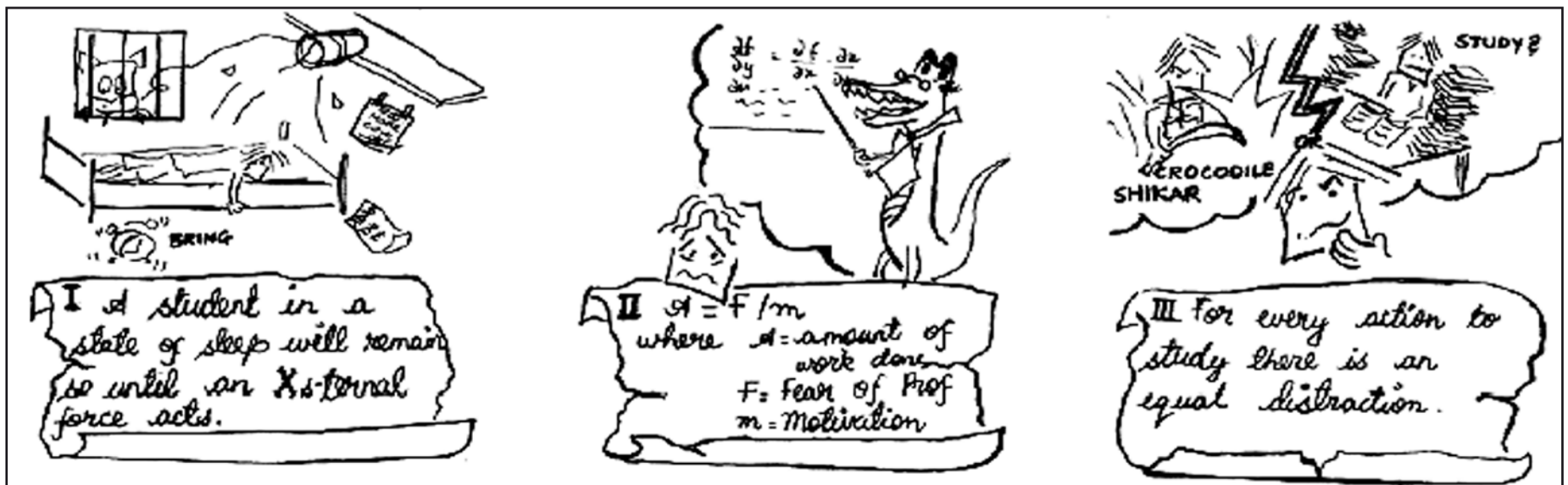
FINALLY,

Spending a semester abroad does make one more socially aware, and more confident of voicing one's views, but exposure to foreign sensibilities hasn't had too significant an impact towards readying them for work in today's increasingly global scenario, feel the concerned alumni. The Dean IR's office maintains adequate contact with our students throughout the semester via email, coordinating with the International Relations Office of the host institution. However, there are no prospective tie-ups in the pipeline currently, and no move to increase exchanges. For those who wish to pursue higher studies in the US, specifically, students applying for a J1 exchange student visa (different from the normal J1 visa) are exempted from the "two year rule". So, all set to pack your bags? Make sure you tick everything on the checklist provided!

Checklist

1. Be sure you WANT to participate in an exchange program. It involves a lot of effort and sometimes money.
2. Ask your FacAd and your guide about their opinions. Their co-operation is helpful.
3. Go to the AIR office to find out the latest status of agreements with universities and collect general information.
4. Choose a university based on your preferences and the courses they will be offering in the semester/year you will be there.
5. Enquire about the application process with the host university.
6. Formulate a list of courses which you are willing to take there and file an application to the DUGC through the FacAd.
7. Forward the approved application to the AIR office. They will take care from there.
8. Complete the application process on the host university side.
9. Asides like visa, health data, insurance, tickets, living arrangements, etc

One From the Archives- Newton's Laws by VVD



THE LEISURE PAGE wishes you a very happy new year

At the leisure page, we believe in giving you helpful content. Also, we are all advanced degree-holders in astrology. So we thought we could use our knowledge to help you - our first item below predicts how the year ahead will be for you depending on the New Year resolutions you took. The rest of the page features a collection of lists. You can find more material on each item on our webpage: <http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~insight/leisure.html>. Happy reading!



The Leisure Page Do-It-Yourself
Horrorscope

On the left is our version of the *kundli*. To use it, all you have to do is tick the shapes and note down the numbers corresponding to resolutions you would like to make for 2009. At the end, just use the key below to check what future has been decided for you by the numbers you have chosen.

- ➔ If you have ticked the shape marked 11, you will gain at least 20 kilos
- ➔ If you have ticked 9, you will forget all the English you know
- ➔ If you have ticked 6, you will die within a year
- ➔ If you have ticked 1, *scope!*
- ➔ If you have ticked 8, *aukaat!*

- ➔ If you have ticked 4, you will probably end up with an SPI of 6. If you have ticked 3, you can again expect an SPI of 6
- ➔ If you have ticked both 3 and 4, ouch!
- ➔ If you have ticked both 1 and 6, you will die hungry and thirsty.
- ➔ If you have ticked 6 and 9, you will definitely die hungry, alone and friendless
- ➔ If you have ticked 6 and 12, you will surely break up (even before dying) in two months or after 3 visits to the mess, whichever comes first
- ➔ If you have ticked both 6 and 11, you've made a wise choice, since 6 automatically implies 11. Of course, you will lose much more than ten kilos and (eventually) also your life, but that's OK, isn't it?

- ➔ If you have ticked 2 and 9, you've just wasted your time. Who did you think would be willing to lend you money anyway, after you became a regular reader of InsIghT?
- ➔ If you have ticked 9 and 12, please check your entry; this is clearly logically impossible
- ➔ If you ticked both 2 and 12, we wish you luck for your part-time fundraising career as a robber
- ➔ If you have ticked 3, 8 and 9, we recommend that you hire bodyguards to protect you from other IITians
- ➔ If you have ticked 5, 10 and 12, *sorry rahega*

More kundlis up on our webpage: <http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~insight/leisure.html>

Final year course selection criteria

1. Slots (not 8.30-10.30, not 2-5, not 5-8)
2. Prof (peaceful grader, no attendance, no projects or assignments, no quizzes, no midsem and no endsem)
3. No. of 9 pointers registered (none)
4. No. of DDs registered (since they still have motivation to fight) (only below 6 CPI allowed)
5. No. of females (maximum - source of daydreams)
6. If endsem, slot 9 onwards shouldn't be taken, as you'll have the exam after everyone else has finished theirs
7. Last priority - course name and content

7 effects of MI

1. The CGs get a lifetime supply of shampoos, deodorants and toothpastes for their entire wing
2. The direction signs to venues disappear mysteriously on the third day, and resurface during Techfest and E-Summit.
3. The Organizing Team gets screwed, while everyone else ...
4. People realize that the phone numbers of girls they procured during MI belong to a South Indian fisherman, a private psychiatrist and the girl's boyfriend
5. You run scared at the sight of a pack of Bingo, and punch the next guy who offers you Pepsi
6. Before MI, coordinators go missing from shack. After MI CGs go permanently missing from shack
7. The period witnesses a sudden spike in second hand footwear sale in and around Powai

Murphy's Law as applied to IITB

1. Every *tumtum* is always going in the opposite direction
2. On the day five of your wingies get placed, a gala dinner is announced in the mess
3. Five of your wingies get placed on the same day
4. The sex ratio is 1:16
5. The day you get a pink slip is the only day a prof does not take attendance
6. On the day you reach class at 8:25, the class is cancelled

Top 9 mistakes of the freshie life

1. Not putting up a fight for a girl in my batch thinking I can do better outside.
2. Thinking that the study room and library are meant for study and that the shack is only for coffee.
3. Going to the one night salsa class - with my roommate
4. Choosing a GPO id like - smart_engineer@iitb.ac.in
5. Creating fake IDs of the girls of my batch and using them to fool another guy sitting in the same comp room.
6. The belief that Orkut is omnipotent, omnipresent and is the virtual manifestation of the wishing well.
7. Resolving never to give bumps to others on their birthday, till the day my birthday arrives...
8. Thinking that cheering for my hostel in GC events is the path to nirvana.
9. Being born in 1990

Top things you'll get to hear during PAF

1. *Jis tarah tumhare ghar mein behen ki shaadi hoti hai, usi tarah is hostel mein PAF hota hai*
2. *Saal mein midsem endsem do baar aate hain, PAF ek hi baar aata hai*
3. *Jo tum workshop mein seekhte ho, use practically apply karna zaroori hai*
4. *H10 aur H11 ki bandiyan PAF mein sirf prod dekhti hain*
5. *CGs/Managers bhi PAF karke MI/TF bhool jate hain*
6. *Hostel hi sab kuchh hota hai*
7. *Kaisa lagega tumhein jab koi fiftie aake neeche bamboo kaat-ta hai??*
8. *Agar ek bamboo bhi theek se nahi kaatoge to poore PAF ka katega.*

For this edition of the leisure page, you can blame: Shreyas Sagri, Eeshan Malhotra, Raveesh Vyas, Nikunj Jha, Arvind Singh and Kumar Aakash

<http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~insight/leisure.html>

An oft-echoed phrase on everyone's tongue on campus is that "hostel culture is dying". Is it really dying, or is it just hollow mess-table conversation? Let's take a deeper look at the issue. First, what does hostel culture really mean? Is it the ability to live socially with different kinds of people, the enthusiasm about participation in GC events, or the interaction between and among batches (even the batches that have passed out) or collectively working for a greater cause together? We believe it's all three together and a lot more.

The exhaustive experience at world-class educational institutions is definitely much more than academic. Nandan Nilekani claims he is where he is today because of what he learnt outside the classroom at IIT Bombay. Is our hostel culture, as defined above, the best-possible environment to nurture the young leaders of tomorrow? Could we make it better? We studied the Western ideas of fraternities and sororities, or honour societies, and believe we could adapt certain best-practices to further benefit ourselves.

What is an honour society?

The most prominent difference between honour societies and hostels is that the former are nationwide. That establishes a countrywide fraternity of people from simi-

From Hostels to Honour Societies

Tarun, Manas and Niranjana examine what corresponds to our hostels and other societies in Universities abroad

lar backgrounds, believing in similar ideals and aiming for similar goals, constantly interacting with and learning from different people. The IITs, on the other hand, even though extremely similar, have nearly zero interaction with each other, at least at the student level – even though there is so much we could learn from each other. This isn't logistically very difficult either. One particular hostel from each IIT could pledge a future of academic, cultural and social collaboration – creating a nationwide fraternity of like-minded intellectuals. Interaction through the internet, self-governance and infrastructural resources all go for the idea. Collaborative academic projects, collectively working for a social cause and creating a wider alumni network become much easier to conceive and implement. Entrepreneurship cells of various IITs have already taken the initiative to collaborate; and there is no reason why hostels can't do the same, provided they are open to the idea and have some common goals that they can work for together.

Examples

If lack of exposure to Indian issues is the only problem, associations of hostels with Indian NGOs could be arranged. Most honour societies make it a point to keep their member students aware of the harsh realities of life by associating themselves with some charitable organisation or the other. In fact there are some fraternities that have converted themselves to licensed charitable organisations to devote themselves to the cause of untreatable diseases, social issues and the like. Coming back all the way, the primary reason why the IITs were set up was to cater to the needs of Indian industry and society. If lack of exposure to Indian issues is the only hurdle, associations of hostels with Indian NGOs could be the difference between brain drain and a booming Indian industry powered by IITians. With reference to the work being currently done by the CTARA department and various other NGOs, hostels could pledge to cooperate and work with such initiatives – doing what engineers do best, but with different motivations. There is no doubt that greater numbers can achieve much greater things in this field.

Lessons

One of the most important suggestions we have in relevance to IIT is that of reinvigorating our hostel-alumni networks. Some hostel properties in the West are actually owned by alumni organisations. At times IIT alumni have complained of not having direct contact with what they end up sponsoring. In fact, that is probably the reason why they have called for individual funds that they can contribute to, rather than a single IIT Bombay alumni fund. They demand to know where exactly the money is going, for obvious reasons. Ownership, hence, could be the ice breaker for increased alumni activism in the workings of the hostel, and then the institute. Once that is established, maintaining alumni networks follows naturally. Although the idea may look infeasible when we think of the government-run set-up at IIT Bombay, it may as well prove to be the turning point for achieving absolute autonomy – something that the IITs have always craved.

Tarun Mathur is a fourth year student of the Mechanical Engineering Department, and Manas Rachh and Niranjana Parab are third year students of the Aerospace Engineering Department. They can be contacted at mathur_tarun@iitb.ac.in, manasrachh@iitb.ac.in and niranjana@iitb.ac.in)

Temporary Dwellers

Mohit, Harish and Anasuya find out what's with the large number of temporary settlements mushrooming all over the campus

Of late, the large swathes of land which existed between hostels 13 and 7 as well as the one behind H5 seem to have been taken over by makeshift structures reminiscent of a certain civil engineering wonder called a *jhuggi*. We decided to probe the issue.

The Official Position

These two settlements, as Dean (Planning), Prof. R. K. Malik, states, house workers who've been working on the various construction projects going on around the institute. "As per the law, we are required to provide housing close to the construction site for workers, especially the migratory ones who come from far-off places. They were earlier provided housing behind the Convocation Hall but that is out of bounds now with the Legacy Park (Kshitij) having come up."

Basic issues: sanitation, healthcare, electricity. Both the settlements have been provided with a metered electricity connection each and a metered water connection. Toilets have been constructed close by in both areas. As for healthcare, the officials affix the duty to the contractor but the labourers tell us that they are on their own should any of them fall ill.

The settlements

The two settlements house about 600 inmates, 300 each. Within the settlement there are divisions with all the labourers under one contractor living in one division and so on. Specifically, most of them have been working on the H10 extension project, the new Swimming Pool and the Civil Annex. The workers do not stay here for longer than 18 months, even though the settlements have existed for some time now. One of them tells us that the swimming pool might take upto a year but the other two have a deadline of April and would be completed by then.

Another issue more relevant in the present context has been that of security. "Each member of these hutments is given an I-card and security records are maintained – name, address, and the contractor he/she is working under. These settlements follow a lot of strict norms, e.g. density of population, sanitation, etc. Proper background

checks, including nationality, etc. are carried out before employing them for the job", Prof. Malik assures us - a fact which we cross-checked with the residents of the hutments.

Possible problems

What about illegal activities such as child labour or begging? Says Prof. Malik, "Most of the residents of the settlement are labourers living alone. We do not allow dependents, except women with young children. It is ensured that the children are not older than about 10 years of age which generally prevents child-labour." No one can deny, however, that begging is rampant on campus. Prof. Malik says that begging is plainly not allowed and any such incident should be reported to the Superintending Engineer (SE).

A more contentious issue has been the one involving slums on the other side of the pipeline. Legally, the land belongs to IIT. However, the squatters have been living there for at least 25 years now. There are 130 families. They are generally very hostile to IIT authorities and arm themselves with knives and sticks every time they visit. The best the IIT authorities can do is make sure no new families settle down which, Prof. Malik says, they have managed. However, under the MOU signed by IITB and MMRDA, in exchange for surrendering the land near the Main Gate (for road widening), the MMRDA will:

- 1) Remove the slums across the pipeline and rehabilitate them with the SRA (Slum Rehabilitation Authority).
- 2) Build a flyover from H6 across the pipeline to improve accessibility. Work on this has already begun.

The trees near the Main Gate/YP have been cut already. But IITB is not allowing the boundary wall to be broken until the slums are cleared. So, it is likely that the slums will go in 2-3 months. All of us would have to bear some inconvenience for some time as it is a necessary evil. Prof. Malik assures us that the Institute is doing whatever it can to minimise it.

Industry and Engineering

Rajat talks about the need for engineering education that prepares students for the industry

It's no secret now that the interest for core engineering is rapidly decreasing, not only in the IITs but nationwide. This is an alarming concern not only for academicians and the Indian Industry but even for the sanctity of engineering as a challenging and respected profession in India. It's easy to point fingers at the system and not do anything about it. A SWAT analysis of what exactly needs to be redressed to improve the status quo is required.

What's going wrong?

1. Quality of teaching across engineering colleges is very variable - Teachers now resort to convenient options of just teaching and giving instruction as per requirements as a formality. The stress on core concepts is being compromised by rote learning.

2. Structured learning is absent – Engineering colleges train students to be 'walking-talking-encyclopaediae' as opposed to those who can go to the source of information, come out of it and apply it practically to real-life applications.

3. Influence of Non-Core Companies – Salaries are the biggest draw for students these days (and why not?). Investment banks and consultancy firms come right on top of placements taking the 'cream' and thereby influencing juniors to take up non-technical jobs for lucrative salaries.

4. Outdated curriculum – Current courses don't address present industrial requirements. The syllabi concentrate largely on analysis but fail to address factors like creative synthesis, innovation and design, some very important components in all streams of engineering.

Solutions:

1. Accountability – We have more engineers graduating every year than the population of a few countries! Yet only handfuls are employable. Engineering colleges today train students in a way by which they stop learning after they get jobs. Should they just throw their students out on the streets to fend for themselves? The univer-

sity must be held responsible for producing inept engineers and must have stronger mechanisms to ensure engineering expertise before awarding graduation.

2. Familiarization with the industry – It is imperative for the engineering colleges as a whole to know what is currently happening in the industry and what it needs. Some companies spend lakhs of rupees on training programmes for fresh graduates. Continuous Practical Training programmes for students as well as faculty can help mould teaching methodologies and learning tailor-made to industry requirements. Provisions for internships right from first year can be arranged for to enhance learning from the industry at the early going.

3. Industry-integrated projects and courses – There is a dearth of courses running in our institute that amalgamate industry exposure with academic learning. Lectures and interactive sessions with relevant industry experts can be arranged. Real-time industry problems could form bases for course projects, examinations and seminars.

Unless we stop talking about the need for quality technical education and start implementing some of the solutions above, our situation will only deteriorate.

One thing that may indicate a brighter future is the fact that people are definitely waking up to the problem; Techfest had a panel debate on this very topic, and it is sure that there is awareness of the problem. What is dangerous, however, is if we keep talking about the problems. We need action.

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Powai Lake: The Beginning of the End?

Powai Lake, spread-

Revi-
tali-
zation

ing across an impressive 370 acres, built in 1891 by a Parsi merchant, has been one of the hallmark symbols of IIT Bombay since the institute's inception. The mother of the Mithi river, it is a lake located smack in the middle of a fast burgeoning urban land and at a significant elevation from ground level making it a unique kind of hanging lake, according to Prof. Shyam Asolekar, Head of the Centre for Environmental Sciences and Engineering (CESE).

Until the early 80s not a single weed marred the margins of Powai Lake. However, constant exposure to heavy metal pollution from industries, traffic exhausts and domestic wastes has shrunk the lake's borders and disturbed its ecosystem balance. Also a sudden change in land use pattern around the lake, development of the Hiranandani area and removal of hills has led to a lot of silt deposition in the lake.

Even IIT used to deposit its treated sewage wastes into the lake until September 2000, when the fast deteriorating condition of the lake forced BMC to immediately put a cap on all deposition into the lake. Currently the lake receives pollutants mainly from non point sources like hutments, markets and traffic around the lake. Industrial chemicals now no longer find their way into the lake after the plugging of all major point sources by BMC.

The lake is a property of the BMC and technically IIT is not responsible for its cleanliness. However, there have been many efforts from the Institute's side and even students themselves to clean up the lake. In December 2005, a 'Powai Lake

Project' was launched by the batch of 1980 and an estimated amount of USD 200,000 was donated by the alumni. However, though it was started with much enthusiasm, the plan failed to have a major impact on the lake's level of pollution.

The Chitale committee appointed to investigate the reasons behind the July 26, 2005 flood deluge in Mumbai recommended the fixing of gates for the Powai and Vihar lakes. That still remains to be done. Prof Asolekar says the main reason behind the inability of the BMC/MMRDA in handling Powai Lake's pollution is their lack of understanding of marine ecology. Constructing walls around a lake prevents fresh rainwater from running into the lake which is its main water source.

It is disheartening to report that it is a Herculean task now to restore the lake to its former glory. Prof. Asolekar is of the firm opinion that this is the beginning of the end for our lake. The breathtaking view from the terraces of Hostel 13 might soon transform into nothing more than a row of hutments and random gullies built over what has been the only spot for generations of students to relax and recuperate from the hectic life at IIT.

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Teach For India

Prashant Khandelwal talks about a movement that could change the nation and your career

Teach For India is a national program that aims to eliminate educational inequity from India by placing India's most outstanding young people in low-income schools to teach for two years. In June 2009, 100 Fellows will be selected and placed in Mumbai and Pune.

Teach For India, part of a global movement with a presence in more than 10 countries, was launched in 2008 after drafting a blueprint with McKinsey & Company. It is inspired and supported by Teach For America (www.teachforamerica.org) in the U.S., which since 1990 has successfully recruited from colleges like Princeton, Harvard and Yale.

Teach for India is unique in that it gives young graduates a chance to simultaneously help society and further their own professional career. This is clearly seen in the details of the model: recruits are provided with intensive training and leadership development; they are given full-time, paid, teaching positions for two years; throughout the programme, partnerships are built to ensure Fellows have a clear pathway to leadership after the fellowship. If you've always wanted to make a difference, this is your best chance.

Teach For India partners include the biggest companies and premier educational institutions. Partnerships can include both secondments to TFI, deferments of offers with companies for two years and post fellowship recruitment of alumni (including reservation of seats). Some of the TFI partners include:

Corporates: Aditya Birla Group, Axis Bank, Citigroup, Forbes Marshall, Godrej, HDFC, Hindustan Unilever Ltd., ICICI, McKinsey & Co., Tata Group, Thermax, Times of India

Graduate Schools: The Indian School of Business (ISB), SP Jain Institute of Management and Research

To apply for the Teach For India Fellowship, visit this website: www.teachforindia.org. The deadline for sending in your applications is February 4, 2009. For more information, please email garima@teachforindia.org.

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Jaago Re!

Rahul, Tannishtha and Mohit analyze why one should vote, and demystify the process related to registration

If an award is ever given out to the 'most cliched, passable excuse' everytime things do not go according to individualistic or societal plans, 'blaming the government' would win hands down. The beauty and burden of democracy is that it gives people a chance and responsibility to do something rather than, say, just sit and write articles.

For example, you can light candles and walk down polished roads wearing polished shoes like celebrities who are actually social workers, farmers or Gods in disguise. You can also write op-eds in leading journals using highly 'GRE-tesque' words. Further, you can approach a Rang De Basanti-sh attitude and actually, literally, go for the kill. Or you can vote. The concept is that every person has the right to exercise his/her grievances in a simple and apparently effective way. Vote for or against the group that has caused you happiness or hurt. Is it really that simple? Well, no.

It is like this. I do not concede that everyone in this country has the country's best interest implicit in their decisions. Even if they do, they do not have the numbers on their side to make any sort of difference. I am not being skeptical, I am being realistic. And if the reality seems grim, well, that is just the way it is. You cannot cause a real difference just by sitting at home, reading about policies and going and casting your 'informed vote' on the day. What matters is to convince others about your ideas and gain acceptance within them first, then get a majority of people to vote on the issue you want to address and then bring about the required change. Imagine an election within an election. We can find a lot of people in this country who may have the heart, but neither the mind nor the voice to bring about a positive change in the way things work. And each of these people have to first win millions of elections within the election. And only then can their opinions find true volume.

So if you think why you should vote, well, it is not to exercise your right or to bring about change. It is either to be the whisper which works towards being the voice that eventually brings about the change or to be a mere bait in the whole process. Because unless you strive to take part in and win the small elections within the election, you will never win in democracy.

Voting 101

There are many helpful sites that deal with FAQ's related to voting (www.jaagore.com) and with details of the ongoing elections (www.indian-elections.com) Here we present some very basic information related to elections and voting.

Eligibility - Who?

You need to be an Indian Citizen of age greater than 18 as of the 1st of January of the year of elections (1st January 2009 in case of this year) and have to have been resid-

ing in the constituency you wish to register at least for 6 months.

Registration - What and Why?

Registration is not a one time process. Whenever you move to a different locality or city/town, if you stay there for more than 6 months you should register again at the new place. One can exercise one's franchise only from one location. Once registered, one can vote in local body elections, state elections and assembly elections. In the case of Mumbai, these would refer to BMC - the local body, and Maharashtra as the state.

Registration - How?

For registering for voting one needs a filled out registration form, address proof and age proof. The registration form has been made simple by www.jaagore.com. Just create a login, fill in their form and they will email you a PDF of the registration form. The address proof may be obtained from the Institute Dean/Registrar or even the hall manager. A number of documents serve as age proof; for example the birth certificate and the matriculation certificate.

Registration - Where?

Since most of us stay on campus for at least 4-5 years it makes sense that we register to vote here. One is also free to register from one's native place of residence but then the chances of missing elections are higher. You can find out which parliamentary and assembly constituency you belong to from jaagore.com and submit your filled out registration form at the address they provide.

Voting - How?

Be informed: Once registered with jaagore.com, they can send you alerts regarding all election news. Read newspapers and websites. Documents: You are eligible to have a voters I-card once registered. However you have apply separately for it and it is not mandatory to have one. To vote, all you need is your name on the electoral list of your polling booth and an identity proof document.

Voting - When?

[Jaagore.com](http://jaagore.com) can keep you updated about election dates and your polling booth locations. In general, all major newspapers and news channels keep you updated on the dates and you can find the latest voter list for your polling booth at the office of your Electoral Registration Officer (ERO). For many states, you can find the voter lists online at the website of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO).

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