

Life at IIT: Some Musings **- Mohit Garg**

“*Gyanam Parmam Dhyeyam*” – “Knowledge is the supreme goal”, reads the IIT Bombay motto. Knowledge of the self, knowledge of your surroundings, knowledge of the environment, knowledge of the world... knowledge of life, of work... physical, emotional, mental and spiritual knowledge... knowledge, yes, that one thing that differentiates people, that one thing that no one can steal from you... Knowledge or *Gyan* is what an IIT education promises you... and your journey has begun...

I prepared for IIT-JEE for two years (my Class XI-XII) and secured a rank of 394 in IIT-JEE 2000. Two years of hard work had paid off... but life changed completely for me. I reached IIT Bombay with lots of hopes, expectations and of course many prejudices – many of which were blown apart when I saw the room that I had to share with my roommate. I mean, it was barely enough for one person and to think that you would be sharing it with someone was torture (Don't worry, things are better now, everyone gets a single room)! Nevertheless, I had to manage and I learnt the first lesson – not to waste too much time in complaining about things and quickly getting to work to the best of my ability.

I was soon faced with the problems of living in a hostel and the first month was indeed very turbulent. No, it wasn't ragging that took me off (there was not much of it anyways), but the struggle to create a personal space for myself in a totally new place outside home did take its toll on me and I even broke down one day and asked my parents to take me away from there! Saner thoughts prevailed and I decided to fight the problems. Soon, all the hiccups were settled and I made some of the most wonderful friends and thoroughly enjoyed the first year of my stay. Needless to say, being regular meant that studies were also going well and that gave an added impetus to everything around me.

In the second year when we were allotted new hostels and the started attending classes in our department. It was then, that the true meaning of engineering dawned upon me and I began to relish and enjoy the numerous new things that I learnt in the classrooms. Of course, I participated in a host of extra curricular activities and was amazed at the opportunities of self-growth that they offered. Life was indeed on an upswing.

Thereafter, things got more and more hectic with the academic load increasing by leaps and bounds. I still cherish some of the sleepless nights which we spent working in the labs for projects, competitions and various other activities. Things culminated in the final year with my project which enabled me to define a problem on my own and attempt a solution to it. It was one of the most learning experiences of my life.

Today, I stand at the threshold of a new life, of a new world wherein I will take up a job and work. It is difficult to believe, but my student life has ended (for the time being at least!). The last five years have seen a lot of changes in me... I have grown both as an individual – within myself as well as a social being. This place has not only given me the

technical knowledge required to start my career, it has also contributed tremendously in my personal growth.

One thing that any good college does to you is to bring you in contact with great individuals -- people who have made a mark in their fields. I always made it a point to try my best to attend the talks and lectures by various such personalities who visited our college. It is important for us to learn from them and their experiences. Inspiration is something which we all constantly need in life. Inspiration is self-motivating. Listening to these people can be invigorating to say the least. This thing dawned upon me only at the end of my third year but I did make sincere attempts to follow this principle after that. I still remember feeling exalted after interacting with Prof. H. C. Verma whose book I had read during my JEE days.

Another thing that my college taught me was the need to give in a full effort every time in everything that we do. Half-hearted attempts are not acceptable. This small realisation has helped me overcome many moments of self-doubt.

I urge you to ask yourself this question: What is your commitment towards whatever you are doing? What is your commitment towards your short-term/long-term aim(s) in life?

Your immediate aim is IIT-JEE. It is not difficult, it has been done by people like you before, you have the ability, you can and will get through with flying colours... just remember "No Half-Measures". As one of my JEE teachers used to say that for you at this time, "*IIT-JEE is not everything, it is the ONLY thing.*"

"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached"

-- Swami Vivekananda