



# Y-Point

*the webZINE of the IIT Bombay Alumni Association*

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सु. पां. सुखात्मे

निदेशक एवं

प्राध्यापक, यांत्रिकी अभियांत्रिकी

**S. P. Sukhatme**

Director and

Professor of Mechanical Engineering

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

July 20,1998

"Dear Alumni,

The summer has ended and the monsoon is in full swing here in Mumbai. Our admissions process is over both for the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and through the last week streams of new students have been entering the campus. The entrants seem to look younger every year. (The real fact is that I am getting older). Instruction has commenced today.

As usual, our Convocation was held in the second week of July. This year, 871 students received their degrees. Those of you who may have attended your own Convocation ceremony years ago will find the Convocation now to be a more colourful function organised with an attention to detail and precision. The black gowns (representing a Western tradition) are gone and there are many more changes. I shall not tell you more. You will need to come here and see the ceremony yourself.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

(Suhas P.Sukhatme)

**Editorial**  
**The IITian Diaspora**

[by Ram V. Kelkar \(B. Tech. \(EE\) 80 / H2\)](#)  
Editor-in-Chief, Y-Point

As I was penning these words, I received an e-mail from an alumnus, who was writing in from Deir Ez Zor, located near Damascus, Syria. Which of his wing mates from Hostel 7 would have ever guessed that one of them would be in Syria ? Or for that matter, in Barbados, Canberra, or Nairobi ? While the NRI waves continue to cascade across the globe, the leading edge especially in major cities and in corporate and professional circles continues to be us IITians.

It is common knowledge that for IITians from the San Francisco Bay Area, where I used to live at one time, you cannot possibly go even a hundred yards without bumping into a fellow IITian, quite possibly even a batchmate. Stories of Treasure Hunts in the AMD building are probably exaggerated, but hearing IIT lingo like "boss, hajjar, and fundas" is not unusual even on Manhattan trading room floors. Even more surprising is the wide range of professions that we have ended up in outside of the world of engineering ... management consulting, investment banking and trading, retail businesses, even someone in the New Delhi Police Department !

Given how well positioned IITians are in organizations across the globe, I firmly believe that we IITians can - and should - improve our networking so that we can help each other in our professional careers. It is important to ensure that networking does not result in people being harassed for jobs or for buying some unwanted product. However, networking done in an appropriate manner can help all of us achieve more in our careers. The example we need to emulate is the Harvard or Wharton alumni organizations, which use their Alumni Directories to effectively build such networks.

Speaking of Wharton, I noticed in my current issue of the Wharton Alumni Magazine that the Class of 1998 alone raised close to \$200,000 amongst 650 graduating students, and two Taiwanese alumni contributed \$10 million for a new facility. Our goals are far more modest ... even \$100 from each of us per year could easily raise over \$200-250,000 if we also ensure that our employers match the contributions. Please take a moment to send in your tax deductible contributions to the IIT Bombay Heritage Fund. All it takes is a check and a first-class stamp ... the address is Treasurer, [IIT Bombay Heritage Fund](#), 10489 Rampart Avenue, Cupertino, CA 95014. While we may not raise millions like Wharton, let us at least raise a quarter million by year-end 1998 ...



Interview

**Bharat Desai (BTech EE 75 / Hostel 8)**

**- Founder of Syntel**

*by Vijay Anand (BTech EE 75 / H8)*

Troy, Michigan

**Q: Do you plan to write an autobiography ? What would it's title be?**

A: I have no plans to write an autobiography. [I pushed for the title, anyway]. I might call it "Journey through life"

**Q: What was your favourite "daru" in IIT? What about now? (Mosambi Narangi Jai!)**

A: In IIT : double Ghoda - remember that ?? Now : Red wines / Microbrews

**Q: What was your biggest mistake?**

A: I didn't work hard at IIT, and wasn't serious about my studies. It could have helped sharpen my mind, and built discipline and focus. I also ignored physical development.

**Q: What was your best decision?**

A: To marry Neerja. She has been a great partner, and a soul mate.

**Q: What were some of the set backs you had to overcome on the road to success?**

A: Far, far too many to list -- there are setbacks at every step !

**Q: What does your success allow you to do that you couldn't do before?**

A: It gives freedom of choice, and removes constraints. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau says, "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains.". I have not exercised these options although they are available. I would like to travel on leisure, and keep in touch with friends.

**Q: What are your favourite comic strips?**

A: Doonesbury and Cathy.

**Q: What's your golf handicap? What other sports do you play? Who was your greatest opponent?**

A: I have not measured it, but it is in the high 2-digits. I tore my ligaments skiing this year, but I'm getting back to Tennis. I had the privilege of playing Bridge with Jeff Meckstroh and Paul Solloway.

**Q: Where did you earn your FIRST paycheck, and how did you celebrate?**

A: At Tata Consultancy Services (1975), my salary was Rs. 769. I blew Rs.25 on a Bridge book.

**Q: Who were the 3 most influential people in your life ?**

[Note: before this interview, I had spoken with BD's wife, Neerja. She had indicated that if her name was NOT on this list, BD would suffer untold injuries to tender parts of his anatomy]

A:

1. The Principal at St. Xaviers High School, Ahmedabad
2. Mom
3. Neerja [ Whew! .. Tender parts stay intact]

**Q: If you were to write about your IIT days, what would you emphasize ?**

A: Homo's class, not having sufficient girls around the campus, trip to Indochina

**Closing comments from BD:**

IIT and India have given us a tremendous start in life. IIT gave us education and camaraderie. . We need to stay in touch with each other, and give back.

[BD has contributed to the IIT Bombay Heritage Fund, funded several business projects at IIT, and sponsored bridge teams]

**Closing Comments from BD's friends**

Mashru: BD maintains grueling schedules, often working 16 hours a day. I used to receive telephone calls from BD at 2AM routinely. As Syntel crossed \$30M, \$50M and \$100M in revenue, we urged BD to take life easy. BD stayed on his path and has continued to lead Syntel during the steep growth period. Congratulation, BD.

Kannu: (Criticism of the Interviewer)..This is not the BD I know (or you know). Too sanitized...I think you need an apprenticeship with "Baba wawa".

Vijay's Answer: The BD you and I know would scandalize too many people, and I probably would not be permitted to print it.

Anil Kshirsagar: ...It was his "risk-taker" character which helped him found his company and succeed in it.

Article

## **A Dummy's Guide to Marrying an IITian**

by Hemendra Godbole

San Jose, CA

Editor's Note : Hemen's article is just a peek into Dr.Balaji's "A dummy's guide to marrying an IITian" \_\_\_\_\_

As I was strolling down University Avenue the other day, a glitzy title caught my eye. I am talking books, not the titles that were walking about. In a corner, lay "A dummy's guide to marrying an IITian" by one Dr.Balaji.

As Dogbert once said - Creativity is very close to dementia. If a person has pierced ears, that is a creative person. If he has no ear, that is dementia. I scrutinize the waitress's ears - few get offended that way, and it helps to know if your espresso was shaken, not stirred by a creative person. So how is this related to the book I had picked up ? To the untrained eye, there is no connection. But since I am dealing with creative IITians here, I am sure they will find some relationship between espresso and marrying an IITian, given that there was a pretty woman involved in there someplace.

So. If I were to let the cat out of the bag in terms of details from the book, I would be offending Dr.Balaji. And as any denizen of the hallowed H4 in the early 80's knows, offending Dr.Balaji (registered trade mark) is not a good thing. However, being a true blue-blooded IITian, I need to prove that I am no dummy (you are if you bought the book, or married an IITian), and hence, I will make some expert observations here. For details, write to Dr.Balaji at [Balaji@hotmale.com](mailto:Balaji@hotmale.com).

This is a useful book, especially if you are either related or contemplating a relationship with an IITian. Dr.B is an insightful person, and perhaps a brilliant marketing tactician. He announces up front, that the IITian species is further divided into the male, the female, the male-that-marries-an-IITian-female, and the IITian-male-that-marries-an-IITian-female subspecies. However, the focus of this book is entirely on the first male-IITian, paving the way for a "Bowling Alley" runaway strategy by hitting the other sub-species in later books.

Since this is a dummy's guide, it is assumed that the male-IITian will marry anyone that appeals to his ego. Over the years, I have realized that the female species is not only the stronger sex, but has this uncanny ability to control the males by massaging their egos and pretending to be relatively-dummier - if you get my drift. That explains, for example, shopping for a "Casablanca" video for \$185 and responding to a stunned husband with the ir-refutable logic : "But honey! (or whatever endearment you are used to from AnnaH to Munni-ke-papa), it was on SALE!". The lesser known fact, is that all ridiculously high-priced items are put on SALE by female marketing managers that are secretly in league with your wife, so that, the female-marketing managers can make a killing at your expense, and in turn, stun their spouses by buying even more expensive fur coats since it was on ... you guessed it ! ... SALE.

Never mind. By pretending to never have a mind, it is trivial to get your IITian husband to say never mind. My respect for Dr.B had begun to grow dramatically as I thumbed through his pages. The earlier chapters deal with the ritual of courting an IITian. There are several timeless gems in there. For example, Dr.B suggests using "Oh!GOD! Calculus is so easy for you. You must be a brain" for starters. Actually, usage of the line above should be used periodically (its engine oil to a car, regardless of the age of the car). Most IITians did not really know how to solve Calculus. They relied heavily on a few genuine "toppers" to show them how it was done, and then went out

into the world claiming they knew the secret salsa. Occasionally, the IITian might get a bit ruffled. Especially if he thinks you are "dating him", empties his coffers to take you out for dinner and you spend the next weekend with your boyfriend in Goa. No fear. Call the IITian later, let him eat up the whole enchilada that he will pay for, sprinkled with more of the same salsa. Suggest that you light up enveloped in the halo of his intellect. And then walk out with a teaser saying, "Oh! You will never understand my real feelings - I wish I could write them out as an integral for you". That will divert his anger into attempting to really formulate such an integral. Watch him sweat that one. He will be so taken up with this new challenge, that you could continue seeing your boyfriend while he pleads his case to his "topper". However, he will never actually \*ask\* the topper - that would be too demeaning to his ego. (This trait is later manifested by his inability to ask for directions while being completely lost, and to continue driving with a purposeful look).

What ? Who replaced that creative waitress with a demented owner now ? Ah! his threatening look is nothing more than transmitting a moron-code to me announcing that they are closing for the day. As the cool 1:00am breeze swept me back into reality, I began to wonder if Dr.B was really a genius or merely pandering to an impressionable and large set of customers with his title. Was he really making a mockery of the "creme de la creme" of the great Indian intelligentsia ? Would his book be a grand success ? DOES HIS ADVICE REALLY WORK ???

As I gunned the engine, my pager lit up with a message reminding me to bring home some roses. Now why would my wife send me such a direct message at 1:00am while on my way home ? I had the answer to both my questions as I pulled into my garage, and chanced on one of the last pages in Dr.B's book. The text read :

"Tell your SO to bring home roses on special occasions. Do not expect an IITian to remember such occasions since a date is a linear entity and hence, meant for lesser mortals to solve".

Guess it must be her birthday today !

Wild Discovery

The Day of the Leopard

by Ms. Suranga Date

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**News report** : Leopard sighted on IIT Campus

After a gap of six years, a leopard (perhaps a family of them) has been sighted on campus. Just before the Convocation on July 11, 1998, a full-grown leopard darted in front of the car in which Prof. Sahasrabudhe was travelling. Location - near the Guest House, also near the Director's residence. Time - 1:00 AM. Students in Hostel 3 also claim to have noticed the aftermath of an animal having picked up a dog as its meal.

[Uday N. Gaitonde](#), reporting in the [IIT Bombay Message Board](#)

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Dark clouds fogging the top of the IIT Hill, winds howling, some of the older palm trees on campus, bending in the face of the wind, water gushing around in torrents, in the various ditches dug by Estate office in a highly creative manner; scooters and cars revving through the water logged areas on the road near Hostel 10, much to the unrestrained delight of school children returning home, feet splashing in the puddles; the original inhabitants of the campus, The Cows, hanging around in groups, in the Institute corridor-- they choose their places well.... the arch (Dnyanam, Paramam, Dhyeyam), foyer of LT, hanging around ever so cool, looking longingly at the Central library from the corridor, casting (sniff,sniff) disdainful looks at those Dogs, who did they think they were, barking like that,and staring sullenly from department entrances.....

Its tiffin time, and there is a great scrape of unmatched Hawaii chappals towards the hostels; The rain has let up a bit, and it is not unusual to see freshers puffing back from their maiden venture to Y-p to buy, brooms, buckets, taking a break to watch the advanced swimmers doing their stuff at the pool, resting their tired limbs..("Aaj tak life me mai itna chala nahi... khana kitne baje ? Chaalo yaar, 8:30 ko jayenge")....motor cycles vroom around heading back to the hostels, not less than 3 guys per vehicle, their headlights reflecting off the wet roads, burping across the speed breakers; and you see some freshie junta clustered around a notice board near Convo.

What's the buzz here ? No ... this is not about ragging. Its about a leopard. Yes, you heard it right. Just what we always wanted - a leopard ! Besides the cream of the country's young folks, IIT now attracts leopards, thanks to the still verdant campus, a storybook lake, and unrestrained deforestation and civil construction northwest of Powai, that has denied a natural habitat to this master of speed .

IIT Security recently put an all points Circular on Campus,and we thought you would enjoy reading that :

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**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY,BOMBAY**

## **SECURITY SECTION**

**No. SO/F-25/98 16th July,1998**

### **C I R C U L A R**

**To: All Campus residents.**

#### **SIGHTING OF LEOPARD IN THE CAMPUS**

Residents of the campus may recall previous Circulars issued on the subject cited above. Leopard / leopardess were seen recently at various places in the campus during the last few days. All out efforts are being made to ensure that leopard is trapped.

However, from past experience, it is seen that though a trap was placed for 3 weeks at various places in the campus, the leopard was not attracted to the cage since a lot of stray dogs are available on the campus.

For the purpose of precautionary measures, campus residents are requested to observe the following.

1. To shout loudly for help on sighting leopard.
2. Not to provoke the animal by stone throwing or attempting to hit it with anything.
3. Not to take photograph, nor should the animal be followed or make provocative gestures.
4. If the cubs are sighted,do not indulge in any provocation what-so-ever, as the leopard/leopardess accompanying the cubs can be highly dangerous.
5. Not to allow samll children unaccompanied by adults to move around during night for according to the newspaper,few minor children were killed by leopard when they were alone or sleeping outside.
6. Not to sleep outside, and doors & windows should be secured.
7. Lonely and dark stretches of roads should be avoided at night.
8. When dogs bark or run frantically at night, it may be taken as warning of leopard's presence nearby.
9. Leopard is afraid of lights and cracker bursts. Hence it is advisable to carry a torch and flick it around while moving at night.
10. Do not rear livestock such as cows, goat and fowls, as they attract leopard.
11. In case of a pet dog, it should be kept indoors at night.

The Institute has also approached the authorities concerned to remove / scare away the leopards. This section will be bursting crackers during nights. Hence do not panic on hearing sounds of crackers.

**SECURITY OFFICER**

## TechFest 1998

by The TechFest Group ([techfest@cc.iitb.ac.in](mailto:techfest@cc.iitb.ac.in))

<http://www.iitb.ac.in/techfest>

### TECHFEST'98 (24 - 25 January) ...a look back

Techfest'98, the first all-India technology festival of the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, proved to be a giant step towards the discovery of the essence of technology. It brought the industry and academia, the two components that make technology the vibrant field that it is, on a common platform. This was a rebirth of a similar idea, TECHNOFAIR which was held in '85-'86.

The organising committee of Techfest'98 had been working on the conceptualisation and logistics of the event for over eight months before the festival, to ensure the achievement of their objectives. With productive resources such as the enthusiasm of the country's leading students, a tremendous international reputation, state-of-the-art infrastructure, 600 acres of area and a history of organisational accomplishments, Techfest'98 promised to be a success in all aspects.

The festival was attended by over 3000 students (excluding IITians) from all over the country, over 30 leading companies and organisations, and around 500 faculty members of India's foremost institution, on each of the two days of the festival. Over 300 students from colleges outside Mumbai were accommodated in-campus for the duration of the festival.

AMD, one of the leading chip manufacturers of the world (K-6 fame) and our Chief Sponsor entered into the Indian market with Techfest'98. The Indian Express Group, Press Sponsors of the festival, helped the event reach a wide range of participants from all parts of India, with their vast coverage in newspapers, magazines and other periodicals. Radiostar, the Radio Sponsor, popularised the festival with regular broadcasts on the air. Besides, Techfest'98 attracted several companies as sponsors for numerous events and as exhibitors in 'The Infotech Show' (Industrial Exhibition).

#### THE EVENTS:

#### THE LECTURE SERIES:

This event included lectures by eminent personalities, either in person, or via a videoconference. The speakers in this popular event were

\* Prof. U R Rao, Chairman of the Pay Commission and ex-Chairman of ISRO, he currently holds an international post in the United Nations (UN).

\* Prof. Jayant Narlikar, the popular astrophysicist and scientist of world renown, captivated the audience with the simplicity with which he presented the enigmatic topic of astronomy.

\* Prof. D B Phatak, the Infotech consultant to top I-T companies in the Silicon Valley and emerging Indian software firms and Dean of Resource Development & Planning.

The above three lectures were held in the Convocation Hall with an attendance of over 2000. The other two lectures were in the form of a videoconference held in the Lecture Theatre, and were simultaneously telecast to the Convocation Hall, to accommodate a larger audience.

The speakers were :

\* Mr. Mark Lunsford, a marketing executive of AMD.

\* Mr. Sam Pitroda, the father of Telecommunication in India, currently the chairman of World-Tel

and former advisor to the PM, Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi. His inspirational lecture was covered widely in the press and is remembered by all its attendees.

All the lectures were followed by a lengthy and enthusiastic Question-Answer session. Mr. Nani Palkhivala and Prof. Yash Pal, although having consented to speak, could not make it to the show due to unavoidable health restrictions.

**THE INFOTECH SHOW:** The theme for the exhibition was the fast growing field of Infotech. Leading companies from India, as well as some companies from Silicon Valley participated. The list of participants is as follows:

- \* Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)
- \* AT&T Corp.
- \* Datapro Infoworld Limited
- \* Express Computer and IT People
- \* Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB)
- \* KLA-Tencor Corp., California.
- \* NCR Corp.
- \* Onspec India Computer Automation
- \* Persistent Systems Private Limited (PSPL)
- \* Silicon Automation Systems (SAS)
- \* Sybase India Limited
- \* Syntel Software Private Limited
- \* Tata Infotech Limited (TIL)
- \* Tata Liebert Limited (TLL)
- \* Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL)

The companies exhibited many revolutionary products in global information technology and made full use of this unique opportunity for human resource development.

**COMPETITIONS:** "Technology is fun" was the message of the competitions.

\* Pre-defined problems, which were posted to the colleges all over the nation two months in advance, allowed the participants to prepare their entries in the best possible way. Problems were framed and judged by the faculty members of IIT Bombay. The open design contest received phenomenal entries and 10 groups of two went home with cash prizes totalling twenty thousand rupees. The winning entry of the open software contest impressed the judges to such an extent that it has been put to use by the Computer Science & Engg. Dept. of IIT Bombay. The Siemens gripper design, Siemens 'Spectacles for the blind' and MBT windmill design contests were flooded with entries from numerous enthusiastic participants. These entries were of very high quality and were much appreciated by the judges and the sponsors.

\* On-the-spot contests included, among others, the AT&T Science and Technology Olympiad and Cadburys' "Googly: design a dispenser" contest". The Olympiad saw an astonishing figure of 300 participants in the elimination rounds. Six teams made it to the finals, which made use of stunning Java software, developed by the organisers themselves. It also used high-resolution, audio-visual multimedia clips and a totally computerised scoring system. The Googly dispenser contest was conducted with the idea that the entries received could be practically implemented. The contest was indeed a success in this respect, since Cadburys' has taken up the ideas put forth in the event. AT&T and Cadburys' were extremely pleased with the event and were highly appreciative of the festival in their correspondence.

**WORKSHOPS:**

- \* The Onward Novell Internet workshop was conducted by the students association of the

Computer Science and Engineering Department of IITB. Although there were 250 participants, the huge computer labs of IIT allowed a computer for every 2 participants, where a practical session was held in the form of a treasure hunt. The live Java demonstrations mesmerised the participants.

\* The Informix Astronomy workshop was jointly organised by renowned organisations such as AAA, JVP Poona, Nehru Planetarium and the Nehru Science Centre who actually transported a miniature planetarium to the campus for demonstrations. The stargazing session at night, the astro-photography exhibition and all-day movie shows were amazingly crowded and organisers were loaded with tons of interesting queries.

\* The Aeromodelling workshop was conducted by the Indian Academy of Model Aeronautics (IAMA), an organisation, which has had two international shows of aircraft models. 150 high-fliers built their own miniature aeroplanes using professional kits supplied to them by IAMA. The workshops were heavily overbooked with registrations flooding in from all corners through email, snail mail, on-line registrations, letters and faxes.

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) atomic energy exhibition: The atomic and nuclear energy department of the government of India exhibited their latest breakthroughs. They revealed a lot of interesting information regarding the Indian nuclear research programme and India's nuclear capabilities. The functioning of nuclear reactors, usage of nuclear energy and computer simulations of atomic chain reactions were demonstrated by the BARC officials.

Techfest'98 was a spectacular success in achieving its objectives. For future Techfests to carry the same impact, they must be as dynamic as the technology that they idolise, the thought process must continue. Through successive editions of Techfest, we hope to achieve the broader aim of making a better India.

#### TECHFEST'99....IT'S COMING

Building on the foundation laid by Techfest'98, in '99 we plan to broaden the scope of the festival and present technology in the form we will actually encounter it when we enter industry. Keeping this in mind, we plan to include concepts such as entrepreneurship and finance. Also to demonstrate hi-tech entertainment at its best, we plan to introduce TECHNOHOLIX'99 at the spacious SAC enclosure after dark.

Exhibitions this year will be based on electronics and aviation. The luminaries who have already agreed to be a part of TF'99 include Dr. Narayan Murthy of Infosys Tech. Ltd. , Mr. Chandrakant Sampat, rated by Business India as the top investor in the nation. Mr. Vallabh Bhanshali, a partner in Enam Financial Consultants, and one of the nations top brokers. Invites have also been sent to Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Mr. Bill Gates of Microsoft, Dr. Amar Bose of Bose Sound Systems, and Prof. Roger Penrose of Oxford. We students plan to make TF'99 really big...with an estimated budget of 45 lakhs...and a man-power of 500 students and staff. So, as you see, we believe that this idea of Techfest has great potential.

We believe that you, the alumni of this great Institute who are now at the forefront of research and industry will be able to grasp the significance and need of such a festival even better than us. We would like your guidance and support to drive this endeavour to new heights. We would be only too glad to have any kind of input from you about the idea and its implementation. We would love to have your participation in popularising Techfest, as we are hoping for international participation, especially for the on-line competitions. With your co-operation, we would like to leave a lasting legacy for future batches of IITians to build on.

Please feel free to contact us at :

email : [techfest@cc.iitb.ac.in](mailto:techfest@cc.iitb.ac.in)

Address : Techfest'99, Students' Gymkhana, IIT Bombay, Powai, Mumbai 76.

Telephone : (91-22) 576 8947/8

Visit us at : <http://www.iitb.ac.in/techfest>

***India Today, June 6, 1998***

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## **Top 10 Colleges of India**

**As colleges across the country gird up to take in another batch of students, an India Today- ORG- MARG poll identifies the centres of excellence.**

**By Vijay Jung Thapa**

It's that first step towards adulthood -- and it is bewildering in its complexity. Enter any college campus at this time of the year and confusion smacks you between the eyes: red, brick buildings that look alike, over-crowded corridors, harassed counsellors, a variety of multi-coloured forms to fill and cafeterias that smell of stale food. The college world seems to swirl in an indifferent haze.



Let's face it -- trying to get into any old college in India isn't a problem. After all, there are 232 universities with about 9,500 colleges to choose from. But in a world where competition begins from kindergarten, students scurry around looking for the best colleges because of the gnawing fear that an incorrect choice could ruin their future. Identifying India's best colleges in various fields, however, is a difficult process. Simply because there are no established, authentic system to rate them, and anyway trying to assess quality is as simple as particle physics. In the West, colleges try and stand out, emphasising their uniqueness, trying hard to sell themselves. But here, instead of being provided with concrete and calibrated facts, students have to rely on myth, rumour and half-truths. It makes admission a nightmarish experience.

Last year, India Today made the first landmark attempt to identify the centres of excellence by ranking the country's top 10 institutions of higher learning. We had then commissioned ORG-MARG to speak to 145 principals in 10 major cities and bring out a list that identified the top 10 colleges of the country irrespective of the various fields. It was easy to see that we hadn't gone wrong. All of them were exceptional colleges whose styles of functioning are imitated, ideas adopted and examples followed.

This year the process has been refined further. ORG-MARG broke up the entire process of assessment into two phases. The first was an exploratory phase where a selected bunch of principals/head of departments were asked to work out attributes on which to evaluate colleges, the relative importance of each attribute and a list of colleges which they felt were the best in India.

These were then analysed to shortlist the right set of attributes, to calculate importance of scores for these attributes and work out colleges of national stature. Instead of just limiting the poll to general/medical and engineering courses, like the one last year, the general category was broken into arts/science and commerce, and even included law as a category. Care was taken to include specialised attributes for various fields like "kind of patients the hospital attracts" in medicine and "provision of legal practical training" in law. Finally, in the second phase, the net was cast wide and 300 principals (twice last year's number) and heads of departments were polled on a detailed questionnaire to work out the best colleges of 1998.

Let's hope it goes far in helping you to choose, instead of just getting chosen.

THE TOPPERS
<b>Arts:</b> St Stephen's, Delhi
<b>Science:</b> St Stephen's, Delhi
<b>Commerce:</b> SRCC, Delhi
<b>Engineering:</b> IIT, Kanpur IIT, Mumbai
<b>Medicine:</b> AIIMS, Delhi
<b>Law:</b> National School of Law, Bangalore

## THE METHODOLOGY

The India Today-ORG-MARG poll was held in 10 cities -- Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Patna, Ahmedabad and Pune. It was conducted over three days -- June 18, 19 and 22 -- among principals, vice-principals, deans and head of departments. The respondents contacted were 300. They were asked to evaluate each college on each attribute on a scale of 1 to 10. Overall ratings for each college were then calculated depending upon the average rating which the college got on each attribute and the importance of each attribute.

## KEY CRITERIA

The principals, heads of department and senior professors were first asked to list the attributes which they felt were important for a student to consider before he or she chose a college. The respondents were then asked what they felt the relative importance of each attribute was. This was done by asking all of them to distribute 100 points across all the attributes they mentioned. An average was then worked out to get what is called "an importance score" for each attribute.

## ARTS

### On top of the class

### A consistent work culture makes St. Stephen's an attractive bet

#### ST STEPHEN'S, DELHI

Established: 1881 Seats: 350  
Cut-off: Arts 75%, Eco 87%  
Best Course: BA Eco (Hon)  
Address: Delhi University,  
New Delhi -- 110 007  
Phone: +11-7257271

If ever accosted at a party and asked "Were you at college?", the chances are that you are not really being asked about your educational qualifications. You are being asked, "Were you in St Stephen's?" To the Stephanian, St Stephen's is not merely a college, it is the college.

Perhaps the last repository of the Oxbridge culture in India, St Stephen's has often been accused of being a finishing school, a networking society and even a dilettante's paradise. Of course, it is all these. But underneath the public school veneer lurks a fierce work culture and competitive spirit. Stephanians love understating the atmosphere of excellence that permeates the college's corridors, but are nevertheless very conscious of it. With one difference: excellence is not measured in academic achievement alone.

#### Presidency, Calcutta

Established: 1818 Seats: 500  
Cut-off: 60% with entrance test  
Address: 86, College Street

#### St Xavier's, Calcutta

Established: 1860 Seats: 600  
Cut-off: 60% with entrance test

#### Christian College, Chennai

Established: 1837 Seats: 250  
Address: Tambaram; 600059

#### (TIE) St Xavier's, Mumbai

Established: 1869 Seats: 300  
Cut-off: 74%

#### St Joseph's, Bangalore

Established: 1882 Seats: 250  
Cut-off: 72%

#### (TIE) Loyola, Chennai

Established: 1925 Seats: 100  
Cut-off: 80%  
Website: www.loyolacollege.edu

#### Presidency, Chennai

Established: 1840 Seats: 800  
Cut-off: 72%  
Address: Kamarajar Rd., 60005

#### Brabourne, Calcutta

Established: 1932  
Cut-off: 60% with 55% in Eng.  
No admission test

#### Ferguson College, Pune

Established: 1890s Seats: 400  
Address: FC Road, Deccan Gymkhana

This may be why the college comes alive after the formal teaching is over. When every day at least six of the two dozen or so societies -- ranging from the Shakespeare Society, the Wodehouse Society and the Informal Discussion Group -- meet. As Principal Anil Wilson puts it, "That's when the real education starts." There are day scholars and boarders, but in the college hierarchy "gentlemen (and, since last year, ladies) in residence" are the brahmins. And "residence" spawns its own sub-culture and breed of snobbery.

So too does the admission policy that dictates an interview even if the student has the requisite cut-off percentage. The idea is to select the right kind of student who fits into the Stephanian ethos. Every year there are protests in Delhi University about this unique admission policy, every year St Stephen's has its way.

A college catering to the sciences, economics and the humanities, St Stephen's has a distinct liberal arts bias. The extensive college library, for example, is not narrowly academic. It boasts a large section stocking fiction and even a rare collection of books on cricket. The college's ambience forces a student to be aware of much more than his subject. A successful Stephanian is never (at least openly) a swot. The prized attributes are versatility, articulation and even glibness. In the lottery of Indian life, being a Stephanian is like winning the first prize.

Since St Stephen's has topped this category too, we profile Presidency, Calcutta, which came a close second in the science as well as the arts category.

## SCIENCE

### ST STEPHEN'S, DELHI

To the initiated, the world is divided into two castes: Presidencians and parvenus. From the cradle of the Bengal Renaissance to the nursery of the Green Card aspirant. In the 180 years it has been around, Presidency College has meant many things to many people. To successive generations of Calcutta's elite, however, one of its attributes has remained constant: it is the place where you acquire that lifelong chip on the shoulder. The college itself shoulders much history. As Hindu College (it was renamed in 1876), it facilitated Derozio's radicalism. Now it is known as the alma mater of Amartya Sen, the Presidency boy who may still win the Nobel Prize.

Along with economics, its history and, for a time, English literature faculties gave that extra edge to the Presidency mystique. Willy nilly, they have obscured the science courses. Physics and chemistry courses may be commonplace; Presidency's geology department was a pioneer. The college offers coveted seats in a variety of bio-sciences, statistics, maths.

The college has suffered since the Left Front Government took office in 1977. An indiscriminate transfer policy has deprived it of some of its most valued teachers. Nevertheless, examination results

#### Presidency, Calcutta

Established: 1818 Seats: 500  
Cut-off: 60% with entrance test  
Best course: Bsc Economics

#### St Xavier's, Mumbai

Established: 1860 Seats: 600  
Cut-off: 80%

#### Presidency, Chennai

Established: 1840 Seats: 800  
Phone No: +44-8544894

#### LSR, Delhi

Established: 1956 Seats: 600  
Cut-off: 88%  
Best Course: BA Psychology

#### St Xavier's, Calcutta

Established: 1860 Seats: 840  
Cut-off: 70% with entrance test

#### (TIE) Hindu, Delhi

Established: 1899 Seats: 400  
Cut-off: 90%  
Best Course: Bsc Chemistry

#### Brabourne, Calcutta

Established: 1932  
Cut-off: 60% with 55% in Eng

#### MT Carmel, Bangalore

Established: 1947 Seats: 370  
Cut-off: 88%

#### St Joseph's, Bangalore

Established: 1882 Seats: 476  
Cut-off: 88%

have not slipped over the years. It takes a little more than petulance to displace a tradition of excellence.

## **MEDICINE**

**A sure shot for sloggers**

**More patients, better exposure make a difference**

### **AIIMS, DELHI**

Established: 1956 Seats: 50

Cut-off: Entrance Exam

Website: [www.aiims.edu](http://www.aiims.edu)

Address: Ansari Nagar,

New Delhi -- 110 029

Phone: +11-6864851

AIIMS is like an oversized railway station. Thousands of sick people -- some say 3,000 a day -- seeking salvation journey here from every corner of India. Set up in 1956 primarily for research and to provide tertiary care, it is the nation's premier medical institution.

The institute offers the best undergraduate courses in medicine, and for this the constant inflow of patients is a boon to students. "Our research, patient care and the education we provide are our strengths," says orthopaedician P. K. Dave, the director and one of the institute's first alumni. Fifty students are admitted each year after a rigorous written examination. That this number has stayed constant is a virtue. It has a lot to do with the quality of education that AIIMS provides. This small bunch of students gets total attention and the best opportunities to learn.

AIIMS lacks very little. Funding is generous, with at least Rs 60 crore-Rs 65 crore pouring in each year as research grants. Most faculty members are active researchers, and the highest number of research publications -- 135-150 papers a year -- in any medical teaching institution in the country are produced here. And excellence walks every corridor, for some of India's finest doctors work at AIIMS. They are involved with heart, kidney and cornea transplant programmes, among other things. Hectic best defines a student's life here, yet a gymnasium, tennis court, swimming pool and library offer respite after a hard day.

What sets AIIMS apart is the commitment of faculty members and students. Senior professors earn much less than colleagues who practise in the private health sector. Yet, they do not complain. All the expertise that they gather over the years is passed on to the students. No surprise that only the best students make it to AIIMS every year.

### **CMC, Vellore**

Established: 1937 Seats: 60

Cut-off: Common entrance test

Address: Begayam, 632002

### **Jipmer, Pondicherry**

Established: 1823 Seats: 75

Cut-off: 85%

Known For: MD general medicine

### **Kem, Mumbai**

Cut-off: 96.6%

Known For: PG in cardiac

### **Kasturba Medical College**

Established: 1953 Seats: 350

Cut-off: Entrance test

Address: Madhavnagar, Mumbai

### **IIT, Delhi**

### **BITS, Pilani**

Established: 1946 Seats: 300

Cut-off: 95%

### **Roorkee Engineering College**

Established: 1847 Seats: 600

Known for: Civil Engineering

### **REC, Surathkal**

Established: 1960 Seats: 200

Cut-off: Common entrance test

Website: [www.krec.ernet.in](http://www.krec.ernet.in)

## ENGINEERING

### Innovative Learning

#### The IIT's score with their academic flexibility

#### (TIE) IIT KANPUR

##### IITPOWAI

Established: 1960 Seats: 2,150

Cut-off: Joint entrance exam

Best course: Computer Science

Address: P.O. IIT,

Kanpur -- 208 016

Phone: +512-590151

IIT Kanpur's success stems from its successful dismantling of hierarchy. Senior professors often attend specialised classes taught by young assistant professors; course contents are often modified after student feedbacks. Classes have been known to close at 4:30 to take advantage of the winter sun. Students bask in the warmth, kick a ball and return to class late in the evening. No surprise then that eight of the top 10 joint engineering exam entrants of 1997 chose otherwise sleepy Kanpur.

IIT Powai's academic flexibility isn't any less. It recently started a rigorous five-year simultaneous degree for a B Tech with an M Tech -- a programme for students who aspire to be on the cutting edge of high technology. Innovation abounds. The famous Mood Indigo apart, this year will see the start of a technofest featuring virtual intercontinental scientific debates. There was also a table-top soccer match -- between robots.

#### VJTI, Mumbai

Established: 1888 Seats: 600

Cut-off: 98%

Known for: electronics eng

#### Jadavpur University

Established: 1906 Seats: 800

Known for: Computer eng

#### Loyola, Chennai

Established: 1925 Seats: 100

Cut-off: 80%

#### St Joseph's (Com), Bangalore

Established: 1972 Seats: 200

Cut-off: 70-80%

#### (TIE) St Xavier's, Calcutta

Established: 1860 Seats: 350

Cut-off: 60% with entrance test

#### Hindu, Delhi

Established: 1899 Seats: 400

Cut-off: 85%

#### MT Carmel, Bangalore

Established: 1947 Seats: 330

Cut-off: 86% for commerce

#### (TIE) Christian College, Chennai

Established: 1837 Seats: 250 (arts), 50 (commerce)

Address: Tambaram, 600059

#### Podar, Mumbai

Established: 1941 Seats: 800

Cut-off: 83%

Address: Matunga, 400019

#### (TIE) Ruparel college, Mumbai

Established: 1952 Seats: 300

## COMMERCE

Cut-off: 78%

Address: Matunga, 400016

### Charting a new course

#### **Ravenshaw, Cuttack**

Established: 1876 Seats: 256

### A faculty and campus for top accountants

Cut-off: 65%

Known for: exceptional faculty

#### **SRCC, DELHI**

Established: 1926 Seats: 405

Cut-off(97): 89%

Best course: B Com (Hon)

Address: University of Delhi,

New Delhi -- 110 007

Phone: +11-7257905

Whenever you think of commerce, think of us -- it's a maxim that SRCC lays claim to. And successfully too. Every 18 something youngster in the country who has commerce in his heart, it follows, will have SRCC imprinted in his brain. But it isn't easy getting into the only real niche college (offering courses in commerce and economics) in Delhi.

Beginning from a small bungalow in Delhi's Daryaganj, SRCC was envisaged as a college that would provide the best talent to the top industrial houses of the country. Today, as the college functions from a sprawling campus in Delhi University, that concept still holds true. Says Principal J.L. Gupta: "We still give the country great chartered accountants. But now our students are making it big even in the bureaucracy." SRCC is perhaps the only college in the country which boasts of a placement cell that attracts as many blue-chip companies as any business school.

The college's eminence has made the management ambitious. On top of its agenda is a first-rate autonomous business school. All the resources are in place. It's just a matter of realising a dream -- one, the management hopes, will coincide with the college's platinum jubilee in 2001.

## LAW

### Courting experience

### A faculty and campus for top accountants

#### **NLSIU, BANGALORE**

Established: 1987 Seats: 80

Cut-off: Entrance Exam

e-mail: registrar@nls.ernet.in

Address: P.O. Box 7201, Nagarbhavi, Bangalore -- 560 072

Phone: +80-3213160

For an institute with a small history -- it was established in 1987 -- the NLSIU has a large reputation. An admiring evaluation came recently from a visiting international peer group, who noted: "The school has already established an enviable reputation in India and internationally as a unique, innovative and multi-functional institution." Situated 14 km from Bangalore, the NLSIU's tony, breezy campus is alive with energetic discussion. When the school's budding lawyers voyage to inter-college debates, not surprisingly they often win. The student body is interesting in its diversity, beckoning more students from outside Karnataka And the faculty has impressive visiting professors as like senior advocate Soli Sorabjee, former chief justice Y.V. Chandrachud and members of the House of Lords.

A major accomplishment, lauded even by the international team, has been NLSIU's successful experimentation with an integrated curriculum -- the blending of social science subjects with the study of law. No wonder the school can claim to be the Harvard of the East.

Other law colleges have not been listed

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### Letter to Alumni from the [Dean of Resource Development](#)

July 21, 1998

Hi friends,

This is my first formal message since taking over from Deepak Phatak as Dean (Resource Development). Thanks to your enthusiastic responses and Deepak Phatak's efforts, I believe the Heritage Fund has made an excellent beginning. Of course, as the bard said 'it is miles to go before we sleep'.

Our first priority, at IIT Bombay, is setting up of a responsive Alumni Office. We have done all the paper work and advertised for a dynamic young person who hopefully will help set up a quick response system through effective interaction with various Institute functionaries. We hope to have such a person in place by early October '98.

A second (though not in terms of importance) task is to address the issue concerning the Institute library. Towards the end of '97 when we finalized the Journal subscriptions, our bill was about Rs. 22 million and the rupee was hovering a little over 35 to the dollar. The position today is that we need to pay nearly Rs. 43 to a dollar, and this could go up to Rs. 45, by the time we finalize subscriptions for 1999. This would entail either a 30% increase in Journal subscription costs, or a corresponding reduction in the number of Journals.

I am pursuing this matter with contacts in Indian Industry to see how they can help, but right now the Indian Industry is in bad shape. We are pursuing vigorously the matter of networking amongst Institutions in Bombay as well as other IITs - but the impact will necessarily be slow and modest. The third option would be to request you all to look into this. Depending on the size of the Corpus you have created under the Heritage Fund, you may consider using regular proceeds from an endowment created for the specific purpose, towards subscription to selected rather expensive journals [ for example - Chemical Abstracts (\$19565), Tetrahedron (\$9862), IEEE Transaction (\$18855), Journal of Applied Polymer Science (\$9305), Physical Review (\$10,500) ].

We contribute to around 330 journals, in the subscription ranges as indicated below. Even individual Alumni could consider making annual journal subscriptions, depending on their capacity to contribute. These steps will insulate us from the downward slide of the rupee against the currencies of relevance.

A third task is to set up a professionalized resource generation system. The points made by Ram Kelkar in one of his edits in Y- Point are very valid and we will pursue the suggestions further. We propose to develop a structured system to raise resources from Industry, and we have located useful databases in this context.

I guess I should stop here for the time being and revert to you later. Let me take this opportunity to thank you for your concern for your Alma mater and your enthusiastic responses. We have

already retained the services of an investment consultant vis-a-vis our Corpus Fund.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

**(S.L. Narayana Murthy)** [DEANRD@iitb.ac.in](mailto:DEANRD@iitb.ac.in)

#### Some Information on Journal Subscriptions

110 Journals with annual subscription ranging from \$200 - 500  
98 Journals with annual subscription ranging from \$501 - 1000  
17 Journals with annual subscription ranging from \$1001 - 2000  
94 Journals with annual subscription ranging from \$2001 - 5000  
8 Journals with annual subscription ranging from \$5001 - 10000  
and 3 Journals with annual subscription above \$10000