

Quarterly BITSians: Subodh Karnik CEO ATA Airlines &
World Famous Economist Pingali Prabhu

The BITSAA Edition

Sandpaper [2.0]

BITS Pilani Alumni Magazine, SUMMER 2007



Brain Gain

Considering going back
to India *for good*?

Advice from BITSians
who have done it all.

BITS-Pilani Hyderabad Campus BITSian Entrepreneurs
 Community Notes from Dubai

<http://sandpaper.bitsaa.org>

MY FIRST EDITORIAL

BY ASHISH GARG ('97-'01 INSTRU)

I have waited for this moment for four years. To write my first Editorial. And it's finally here. And now I don't know what to write. Call it writer's block. I am stuck. You know what; it's easier if I just tell you my Sandpaper story.

I joined the Sandpaper Team in 2003. Mukul Chawla took me out to lunch at Macaroni's Grill and recruited me to the Sandpaper team. I did. Didn't know what I wanted to do in the team but just wanted an association with the BITSAA magazine. My very first article for SandP2 May 2003 issue was an interview with the Person of the Month, Vinod Agarwal. Then onwards I took on all possible tasks that are needed to produce a magazine of Sandpaper's quality twice a year. Interviews, articles, production, technology, graphics, sponsorships as well as recruitment to the Sandpaper Team. I loved all that I did until now when I have to write my first Editorial. The block becomes bigger. Let me try to tell you something about our cover story.

The cover story for this issue is titled "Brain Gain". If you grew up in India in the 80's and 90's you might have heard about Brain Drain. Brain Drain was cited as one of the reasons for India's backwardness. The brilliant minds left the country for a better life and never come back. Alike a lot of other BITSians I left India in 2001 in search of a

"better" life. The Internet bubble had just burst. The US economy was in the dumps. But the Indian economy was gathering momentum.

Mid 2002 I bumped into executives from Texas Instruments Bangalore office who were recruiting in the Silicon Valley. They were here to hire engineers and middle management who had just been laid off. 2002 and 2003 saw a lot of Indians go back to India. This was Reverse Brain Drain.

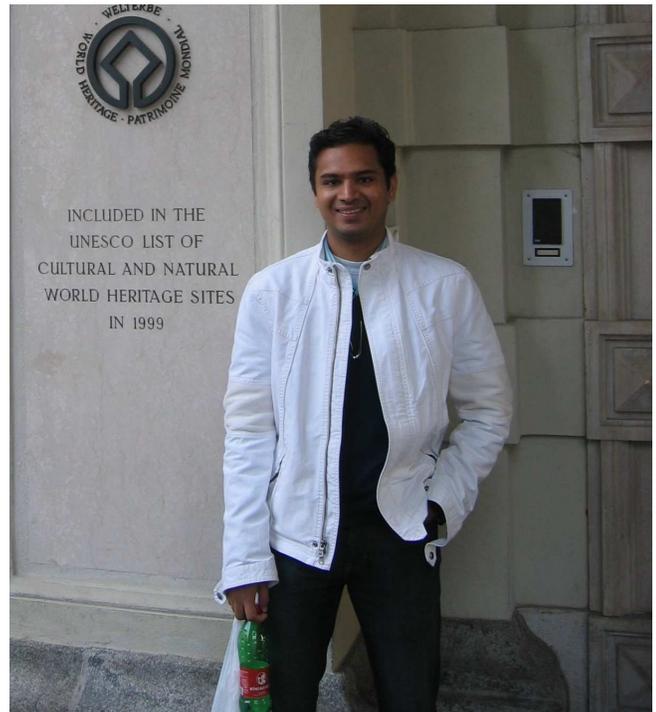
What is happening now is unlike anything that India. The economy is booming. GDP is growing at 10%. CEO salaries are hitting the skies. Career opportunities are abound. Non Resident Indians (NRIs) are returning to India in plane loads for the same reason they left years ago: A better life. Undeterred by Chennai's heat, Bangalore's traffic and Gurgaon's pollution. This is Brain Gain.

The Sandpaper team is a virtual team with real people. The team spreads over three continents, six countries and twenty cities. Most of us have never met each other. We know each

other's name; sometimes we know how the team members look like (and sometime how they sound). Period. The entire magazine is produced over the Internet. The Team recently added members from the BITS Pilani Dubai. Starting this issue the readers will get latest news from the Dubai campus and the Middle East. Another extension to Sandpaper's global footprint.

Do you have a writer or an artist hidden somewhere inside you? Or you don't think you can write very well but still want to be part of this team? Send us an email. We will welcome you so long you bring your passion along, Pilani style.

Ashish Garg in 2006



Sandpaper [2.0]

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Issue Highlights

- ❖ Cover Story: Brain Gain
- ❖ Feature Story: BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad Campus
- ❖ New Section "Notes from Dubai". Latest news from the BITS Pilani Dubai campus

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Sandpaper 2.0 is created by a global team with members spanning seven countries in four continents. It's a great place to gain organizational leadership experience, network with the alumni community and enhance your writing skills.

Please send your articles, nominations for Quarterly BITSian, letters to the editor, feedback and requests to join the team to: garg@bitsaa.org

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BITSAA SANDPAPER VISION

Focus on the BITSian community - alumni, students and administration.

Build a close knit BITSian **community** by promoting

Increase BITS brand equity

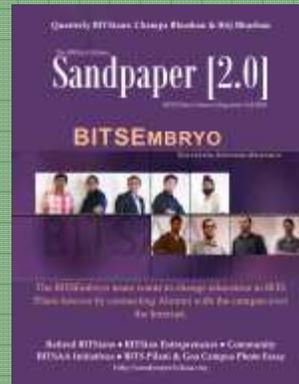
participation, evoking feelings of nostalgia, **pride** and

An emphasis on building engagement through awareness and debate

connectedness by keeping everyone in the community **informed**.

Our news, achievements in academics, business and in the community. What's happening at BITS and at BITSAA chapters around the world

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BACK TO THE FUTURE: THOUGHTS ON A RETURN

BY DILIP D'SOUZA (DCUBED) ('76-'81 EEE)

Fifteen years and counting now, the question that Dilip is most often asked is: why did he come back to India? He tells us why...

Fifteen years and counting now, the question that I am most often asked is: why did you come back to India? That's because after just over ten years in the States, yes, I returned to India in early 1992. I had a house, a good job, a (probably) bright future professionally, a green card, a handsome Rhodesian Ridgeback named Shaka, a car I loved that I drove all over the country, plenty of good friends. Why did I "give it all up" (not my phrase, but often thrown at me) to make a life anew in India? Hey, and why did I also "give up" that green card (which I did in 1998)?

The most honest answer I have is "I don't know." But there are times when I've tried to explain it to myself, so let me try here.

First of all, I did not return because I was unhappy in the US, or didn't like living there. I had a good life in America, and I still enjoy going back to visit every couple of years. In many ways, that country is like a second home to me. Friends, opportunity, intellectual stimulation, comforts, music -- I had all those in excellent measure in America.

Yet here's the thing: for several years in the States, I had been feeling a vague and growing disquiet. Whether at Brown University where I studied for my MS (Computer Science)

after BITS, or at my jobs -- I didn't do too badly, but not too well either. Always, just enough to get by. At work, I was recognized for something one year; laid off the next; found another job, boom, just like that. Aimless that way, I muddled through five jobs in eight years. It just came easy.

Maybe too easy. Nothing in my life really pushed me; I wasn't pushing myself.



And that itself was getting me uneasy. Something inside murmured words I could ignore only so long: you're comfortable, but where's the passion? Excellence? Determination? Exhilaration?

In the end, I think that's what decided the issue. I wanted more of a challenge from life. I wanted to be closer to people and issues I cared about. In my early '30s by then, I was still single, and thus knew I could make the move back to India most easily right then, in that window.

So I did just that.

Sure, I had to get rid of the house, much of my furniture and knick-knacks, but that was the easy stuff.

The really difficult thing was saying goodbye to Shaka (I left him with my sister), and to many close friends. But it all happened, and I took the chance to go backpacking in Africa for some months by myself, and in February 1992, I was in Bombay. India: Home again after some 15 years. Home for

the last 15 years now. Where I want to be.

Though actually, there's plenty to dislike in India. The xenophobia and prickly nationalism I sometimes sense; the laxness of law and order; the state of education; and much more.

Yet in a perhaps perverse way, those are also some of the reasons I stay on here. For all those things and many others, this is the world's most fascinating country by far. Where else, when else, would I have the chance to live in and watch a country change as much as India is doing? Politically, socially, economically, traumatically, not always for the better: India is going through

convulsions unlike anything before. And that's been happening essentially through the 15 years I've been back. Living through that, learning about my country through that, has been arguably the most satisfying experience of my life. I would not "give it up" for anything. (Maybe my dog).

So for others who considering the move back to India, I offer this one thought only: think about the attitude you bring back with you.

What do I mean by that? Well, some years ago I met a man who was returning to the US just three months – three months! – after he moved back to India. "Why are you returning," I asked him. His answer was, and I swear this is verbatim and I swear he was

absolutely serious: "You don't get good orange juice here."

Even though you do get all kinds of OJ here now, I suspect this particular man would still find it impossible to stay here. Because if you come to India -- or anywhere -- expecting to evaluate your life, for good or bad, by such things as OJ ... well, what can I say, perhaps you are best served staying right where you are.

But if you move back to India -- or, indeed, move to any place in the world -- with eyes and mind open, willing to treat problem and opportunity alike, looking to learn and grow; if you move back with that attitude, you'll make a fine life here.

And what's more, I'd love to meet you. Don't worry, I'll bring the OJ.

Udit Prakash Rai (25th Ranker IAS)

Hometown: Gorakhpur

BITS Batch: 1999

Degree: Instru (1st year), CS (2nd year), EEE (3rd, 4th year)

First job: ST Micro, Noida

Why IAS? For me IAS has been always a dream since I was a kid.

I am fascinated with the change you can bring in the lives of millions by being an IAS officer. As a coordinator of various district machinery, be it Law, Order, or Revenue, the challenges and diversity in the job is more than any other job.

My IAS Interviewer was Madam CHOKILA IYER (first woman foreign secretary of Government of India). She was very cool and helpful. She made me comfortable and asked questions about Pilani and Gorakhpur. Later on, the interview drifted towards current topics like Naxalism, Cricket, and the environment.

The IAS exam is not an exam of an individual, but it is the exam of the whole family. Stick to it with zeal. Have belief in GOD and in your parents.



BRAIN GAIN

BY RAJESH ANANTHARAMAN ('00-'04 EEE) AND DILEEPAN NARAYANAN ('00-'04 MECH)

India is booming. GDP growth is at 10%. CEO salaries are hitting the skies. Career opportunities are abound. Non Resident Indians (NRIs) are returning to India in plane loads for the same reason they left years ago: A better life. *Brain Drain*, cited as one of the reasons for India's backwardness, has been reversed into *Brain Gain*.

But is the move from abroad to India really that easy? Does everyone really find a "better life" back in India? Here are some first-hand experiences from BITSians who have gone back to India "for good". Including advice on what you should watch about before you start packing your bags.



With world economies becoming truly global and mobility across the world rapidly on the increase, movement patterns of intelligentsia from developing nations to developed ones and vice-versa are undergoing significant changes. India is a classic witness to these changes. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed

the start of a pronounced migration of skilled professionals – or knowledge workers, as they are called today – from India to Europe and America, and the

1990s saw this phenomenon assume staggering proportions. To put the impact of this phenomenon, dubbed the 'Brain Drain', into perspective, the Indian diaspora has some 20

million people worldwide who generate an annual income equal to 35 percent of India's gross domestic product. The NRI community, popularly referred to as Envoys of Enterprise, account for an economic



output of about \$400 billion (Rs 19,20,000 crore) (courtesy: International Studies Association, 2005). A study in 1994 had estimated that out of the annual output of highly qualified young men and women in India, 7.3 per cent in engineering, 2.8 per cent in medicine and 2.1 per cent in the natural sciences move to other countries in search of better earnings and conditions of work than would be available in India (courtesy: The Hindu). This information points to a staggering increase over the past 13 years.

But the advent of the 21st century has seen

India, along with China and Japan, become a major source of intellectual capital in the world. Global corporations are moving in the direction of outsourcing jobs to India and this has opened up floodgates of opportunities to Indians. Increasing opportunities back home, better socio-cultural identity, and a greater sense of community amongst today's Indian diaspora has meant that more and more NRIs are thinking about moving back to India. With global economies

being better connected today, the worldwide Indian population is more dynamic than ever. This has led to the formation of the concept of 'Brain Gain' or 'reverse Brain Drain': the return of the diaspora contributing to the development of the sending country.

While increasingly dynamic flows in work, revenue and mobility today mean that Brain Drain and Brain Gain cannot be

categories, it is fair to conjecture that the number of expatriate Indians moving back to India is on the rise. Sustained economic growth in India, favorable outsourcing strategies of multinational corporations and increasing wages for skilled workers, coupled with tougher US immigration laws and reduced H1B caps have been instrumental in accentuating this trend.

One of the major choices that an

Indian abroad has to make is whether he/she wants to settle down abroad or go back to India. Career opportunities available, preferred lifestyle and social circles, and future prospects usually tilt the scales one way or the other.

BITSians, along with IITians and graduates of other top Indian universities, form the crème-de-la-crème of Indian intelligentsia; the number of BITSians returning to India



compartmentalized into rigid

to contribute in different capacities makes for an interesting study. BITSAA Sandpaper profiled 7 BITSians who made the choice to return to India. A number of questions were put forward to them regarding their decision. The different perspectives obtained from the interviews make for interesting reading.

1. Driving factors behind the departure from India

Traditionally, Indians have emigrated from the country for various reasons – marriage,



higher studies, jobs, etc. – and BITSians are no different. Be it an MS degree, an MBA degree, an investment banking job or marriage, opportunities abroad are immense and exploring these avenues has taken people far from the shores of the land where they were born. There are, of course, the adventurous among us who want to leave just “to find out if Columbus was really right about the world being round,” as an anonymous BITSian professed, in a humorous yet profound manner.

From a career point of view, learning from different cultures, new experiences and broadening of ones skill set are usually what one looks forward to while pursuing a life abroad. Of course, the Indian marriage system contributes a lot to the emigration of Indians, many of whom get married to NRIs and start a family in various countries around the world. Of the BITSians interviewed, 30% left because of marriage, 60% left for higher studies and 10% left to directly pursue a job.

2. Situations and conditions conducive for the return home

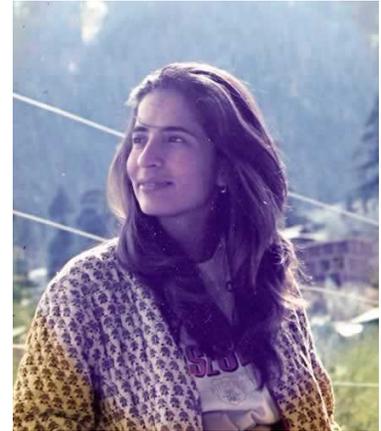
One of the primary causes for BITSians returning home in recent times has been the

booming job market in India. Many exciting new job opportunities, startups and business ventures have sprouted in India, especially in Bangalore and Pune, prompting many to come back and tap into this opportunity.

Using the experience gained abroad to leverage an exciting job or looking for something radical and new in the vibrant business environment is what draws many back home. Another viable career option people are looking at back home is academia.

“We decided to go back in December 2004,” says Anupama Lakshmanan. “We moved back [at the] end of May 2005. My husband wanted to move to academia from the industry and he felt that the move/funding would be smoother/better in India. My motivation was that I got an exciting job opportunity with a wireless startup. I had spent frustrating 8 months looking for a job in the US. When I did get offers they involved some compromise or the other - it wasn't in my area of expertise or it involved relocation to some other part of the US - which meant uprooting my husband and our infant daughter.” Anupama L. is a BITSian who left India in 2001 after her marriage, and went

to live in the SF bay area with her husband. She did her MS in San Jose State University, and soon after the question of moving back cropped up. Currently, she and her husband live on IISc campus at Bangalore, where her husband works.



Shuchi Grover

The other primary reason for returning home is family. For some, the close proximity to family and the support received in times of need, like pregnancy and child birth, are enough reasons to return home. For others, raising a family in an Indian environment is important, and once certain career goals are achieved abroad, they return to India to bring up their family. Although family is not usually the sole factor in making a decision to return to India, it is a major contributor. “We came back in May, 1994,” says an anonymous BITSian. “My wife was keen that we raise our family here. So, a year after our daughter was born and we had both finished collecting various degrees, I realized that that was the time to go back or get trapped into chasing the American Dream.”

There is another section of BITSians who believed that their ultimate destination was always back at home. “Returning to India was always in the back of our minds; [it was] a matter of when not why,” says Shuchi Grover, a 1984 batch dualite. Shuchi and her husband, Shivram, are both BITSians who had very successful careers abroad. They both did their



Master's in CS at CWRU, Cleveland, and started their own business venture before it got acquired in 2000. Shivram then went on to get an MBA degree at MIT and Shuchi got her MS in Education at Harvard, before they decided to move back. "[Moving back to India] sort of flowed very naturally in the scheme of things. We did not feel there was anything keeping us in the US after our successful entrepreneurial run, and our fulfilling academic experiences in the Harvard/MIT corridor." Currently, Shivram runs a microventure fund in Bangalore and Shuchi is an educational technology consultant in Bangalore.

3. Apprehensions and problems associated with the move back

Despite the economic boom and the general improvement in Indian society, there are still many issues that returning BITSians have to contend with.

Bureaucracy, inefficiency and corruption rampant in the government as well as in the general Indian society are primary reasons for frustration. These factors also contribute to long delays in setting up businesses and homes, which can be frustrating for people used to the efficiency of these processes abroad. "It took us six weeks to relocate three precious phone lines to our new offices across town in 1994 because we would not give 'ghoos'," says an anonymous BITSian. "We just wore them out. The ITO accused us of 'havalā' because we reported a large amount of legitimate foreign earnings."

Pollution, traffic and general squalor add to the aggravation of people used to cleaner, less polluted environments abroad.

"Stepping out in Bangalore traffic is a nightmare," concludes Shuchi, a sentiment echoed by many others also.

There is also the aspect of less access to open spaces, museums, outdoor hiking environments, etc. which one tends to get used to when living abroad. These are not usually major concerns but are things which BITSians miss out on once they return. "While in the US my friends and I used to trek (and do other outdoor activity) quite often nearby, that has almost stopped here. While I am not saying that it is impossible to do those things here (in fact Karnataka is a good place for such stuff) it requires relatively more effort on our part to make that happen. So it boils down to how much we want and put in that much more effort," says Hemanthkumar Sivaraj. "We miss museums and other places to take the kids to. There really are no good parks, playgrounds or museum-like environments where you can spend a few hours with kids in the evening or on the weekend," admitted Shuchi, voicing her concern.

Like any other family looking to move, there are always apprehensions about healthcare and education for the children. "The only apprehension I had was finding quality child-care for my then infant daughter," reflects Anupama L. "She was 11 months old when we moved back. We found a good place; there were also plenty of options."



For some, there is the problem of fitting in with the rapidly-changing cosmopolitan society. "Socially, the kids have found it a little hard to adjust here. We've found it hard to adjust to the conspicuous display of wealth among the well heeled. The International School has kids from well-to-do families who don't seem to share the same values as us. Kids are largely brasher and more aggressive here than those our boys interacted with in the US (in their school or outside). There are not many opportunities for kids to interact with kids from other backgrounds," rues Shuchi.

Career-wise too, moving back does not always present the right opportunities immediately. Job satisfaction is a major apprehension of all returning BITSians and not all immediately land up in jobs they like.

Anupama Madhu left India for Boston in 2000 after her marriage. After doing her MS from Boston University, she and her husband decided to return to India in order to tap into the job market. "How both of us were going to find the jobs which we want/like was our biggest apprehension [when moving back]. Since the job market was good, we landed in good ones," says Anupama M.

Another BITSian, Hemanthkumar Sivaraj, voiced similar concerns: “My main apprehension was to do with job satisfaction and career growth. Though I was joining Intel in Bangalore and my manager had assured me that the job done here is on par with what is done in the US centers, I have to admit I was a little skeptical at first. But thankfully I was satisfied with the job I was doing here and career growth opportunities available.” Hemanthkumar left India to do MS in CS at the University of Utah in 2000 and returned to India to pursue a job. Currently, he works at Intel’s Development Center in Bangalore.

4. The dynamic and spiritual way of Indian life: a reason to stay!

For many, the positives gained from the move outweigh the setbacks faced. The vibrant business climate, the ever vibrant social atmosphere and closeness to family seem to compensate for all the problems returning BITSians have to deal with. Of course, household assistance and fresher and tastier food seem to significantly help the decision too!

The lively social environment in India is summed up nicely by Anupama L, “[The social environment is] vibrant, lively. Maybe because we live in campus housing, but there’s always someone popping in and out or we just wander into neighbors’ houses for chit-chat. This happens even on weekdays after I get back from work.”

The rapidly growing business environment and immense opportunities in India are also great pluses. “The vibrant business climate, so much to be

fixed here, hence the huge opportunity across all sectors ahead; the quality of talent our people; the beauty of our women,” are among the list of things which an anonymous BITSian liked about present-day India.

And of course there is the cultural and ethnic angle to the NRI-returned Indian family scenario. “I love that the kids eat much fresher food here – daily cooked fresh meals and chappatis, less foods with preservatives (we even make



fresh pasta and pesto sauces at home now). That they can play outside all year round is also great. The kids are learning Indian history in school, and culture outside. And what’s more: kids are in tune with Bollywood songs! There is more homogeneity in life inside our home and outside than it was in the US,” reflects Shuchi.

Many of the returnees have an emotional investment in the move too. The majority of the BITSians interviewed said that they saw no reason to ever leave India again. “This is a little tough to explain but here goes. It feels like I have a lot of freedom in India. For example, if I wanted to start some kind of business I would be able to obtain the finance and the moral and physical support for it,” says Anupama L. Another BITSian sums up this feeling succinctly, “I would not

live anywhere else in the world today. In India, my soul is at sea level.”

5. The Indian dream: not everybody’s dream come true

As seen in the previous section, BITSians return to India for a slew of reasons. But some soon find out that moving back home is not exactly the fairy tale they had hoped it would be. Major issues like infrastructure –



mainly water and electricity – and inflexibility of the Indian corporate culture

push some towards rethinking their decision.

Madhuri is a 1995 batch dualite who came to the US in 2000 to pursue a MIS degree in UIC. She and her husband decided to go back to India in 2004 on a trial basis, mainly because of the booming job market in India and closeness to family. They, however, left again after 1.5 years because of various obstacles they faced back home.

“[My] frustration [was] with Indian corporate culture where ‘number of years of work ex’ is paramount. A person’s value in a company is purely judged by the number of years of work experience listed on the resume. [I had] gotten the career leverage at the ‘strategy’ position in India [when I arrived]. [But I] hit the ceiling after that because of ‘work ex’ issue.”

Also, some find it hard to adjust to the social makeup and increasingly unmanageable water and electricity problems in the long term. “Electricity and Water were BIG

problems,” says Madhuri. “[It was also] tough to find other married couples with the same wavelength.”

6. A piece of advice

There have been many recent developments in India which have prompted NRIs from considering a move back home. But ultimately, there is no right answer when it comes to what will work for the entire BITSian NRI community. There are both pros and cons for staying in India as well as for staying abroad and they have to be weighed against each other based on individual priorities. But one thing is certain: “Brain Gain” or the return of BITSian diaspora is a real phenomenon and it will be interesting to see where this trend leads India and the global Indian community into the future.

When asked to give their advice to fellow BITSians about moving back to India, the

interviewees had some golden nuggets to offer. Listed below are excerpts from their quotes:

Karthik cautions against romanticism, “Don’t take a romantic decision. It’s not about motherland etc. Do not let go interesting career opportunities. Weigh options. Life might not be easy when you go back. Make sure that you weigh negatives and ensure that there are positives that you can take.”

Anupama Lakshmanan categorically states, “They should move back. It’s great. Just don’t raise house prices in Bangalore!”

Hemanthkumar, Madhuri and Shuchi call for a balanced and pragmatic outlook towards the whole idea:

Heku: “I’d say it’s all in the mind (as are most things!); once you are mentally prepared other things fall into place. I’d suggest to think hard about the pros and cons (as

they apply to you) if you plan to move back to India and then decide objectively.”

Madhuri Vutha: “Don’t look at salary as the only measure to go back. Your salary might sound high but cost of living has gone up substantially. There are no salary norms in India. It’s very ad-hoc. What sounds high to you right now might seem low the moment you hear your co-worker’s salary”

Shuchi Grover: “There is NO clear answer to the question ‘which is better?’ There are pros and cons to living in India, as there are to living in the US or elsewhere. You cannot quantify everything that contributes to the quality of life of you and your family, so it’s just a matter of what works for you (and your family). “

But none could have summed it up as well as Anon, who emphatically remarked, “Don’t think; just do it!”

Brain Gain: BITSians who moved back to India “for good”

BITSian	Reason for Leaving India	I moved to	What did I do?	Why and When did I come back?	Now I am in
Anupama Lakshmanan	Marriage	SF bay area in 2001	MS at San Jose State University	Career opportunities in academia and startups, 2004	IISc, Bangalore; Husband in academia, Anupama in wireless startup
Anupama Madhu	Marriage	Boston in 2000	MS at Boston University	Closer to Family, 2003	Bangalore
Shuchi Grover	Marriage	London in 1990	Own business venture with husband	Home Sweet Home, 2003	Bangalore; Husband, Shivram has private micro venture fund, Shuchi is an educational technology consultant
Hemanthkumar Sivaraj	Masters	Utah in 2000	MS CS at University of Utah	Bangalore Intel’s Job, 2004	Bangalore; Work at Intel’s Bangalore Development Center
Madhuri Vutha	Masters	UIC in 2000	MIS degree	Tap into job market, 2004 Moved back to US after 1.5 years because of infrastructure problems and corporate culture incompatibility	US
Karthik. Krishna	Overseas Job	Deutsche Bank in 2001	Worked	Investment prospects in fast growing companies in India and South Asia;	N/A
Anonymous	Masters	US in 1983	MS in CS	Raise Family, 1994	Mumbai

BITS PILANI HYDERABAD CAMPUS

BY ABHIT KALSOTRA ('00-'04 A7)

When it opens its doors for student enrollment in 2008, the “BITS Pilani Hyderabad” campus will mark a turning point in the history of BITS Pilani. For some souls who took a tortuous ride from Delhi to Pilani in Haryana Roadways buses, their wish has been finally granted. Albeit a bit late. BITS will finally have a campus in a major Metropolitan city in India.

Sandpaper team's Abhit Kalsotra traveled to Hyderabad to see (and hear) what is really happening at ground “B”.

TILL last millennium when you were oscillating between bus stop numbers 30 to 34 of ISBT to catch the bus to Pilani, didn't you wish that BITS had other campuses where you didn't have to go through the torture of Haryana Roadways buses for 7+ hours before reaching your other home?

Your wish has been granted. Albeit a bit late. BITS Pilani announced in 2006 that a new BITS campus will open at Hyderabad soon. Bye bye Haryana Roadways. Hello AP Express (or probably for the same price, Deccan Airways)!

The beginning of this millennium has seen BITS Pilani campuses being added one after the other. The second BITS campus was started overseas in Middle East (Dubai) in 2001. This was quickly followed with the third campus

in Goa in 2004 and now the Hi-Tech city of India, Hyderabad will be home to the fourth BITS



campus. The idea for BITS-Pilani Hyderabad campus is not new. The Andhra Pradesh government had been pushing the BITS Pilani Administration to open a campus in Hyderabad for more than 10 years. After the successful launch of the Goa campus, Diro and co.

visited the Hi-Tech city in Jan 2006 to discuss with the modalities of the establishment of the newest campus

with the Andhra Pradesh government. Needless to say the Chief Minister Dr. Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy was thrilled.

With an eager government behind them, the BITS Pilani Administration made quick progress. Potential campus sites were visited, a 200-acre plot at Shameerpet was chosen and the land was bought. The ground-breaking ceremony followed soon after on the 30th of March 2007.

BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus will have a built-up area of around 1.5 lakh square meters. Its located 25 KM from the airport on

Karimnagar highway, at Jawahar Nagar near Shameerpet with ICICI Knowledge Park, NALSAR Law University and few Bio tech parks in its vicinity.

Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Dr. Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy laid the Foundation stone for BITS Pilani

FEATURE | BITS Pilani Alumni Magazine

Hyderabad campus on 28th April 2007 in the presence of Dr. K.K Birla, Chancellor BITS Pilani, the Diro and other faculty. Several ministers of AP Government, several echelons of BITS Pilani, Goa and Dubai campuses; students and Alumni of BITS Pilani witnessed the Foundation stone ceremony.

The Chief Minister in his speech on the occasion thanked Dr. K.K Birla for establishing a campus of BITS Pilani at Hyderabad and remarked that "It's a dream come true for us, and I am highly glad about it. I on behalf of Andhra Pradesh Government will do anything and everything to make all the efforts of BITS Pilani easy for building the campus in Hyderabad. Also BITS Pilani has to pay around Rs. 3 crores to HUDA (Hyderabad Urban Development Authority) towards statutory charges, and I make sure that the amount will be waived off for BITS Pilani. I am sure this project will become the historical contribution to Andhra Pradesh where Birla

Planetarium, Birla Museum and other research establishments in the city have become the cynosure of all eyes".

The total budget for BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus is estimated to be around Rs. 270 Crores and is expected to be raised through internal accruals and bank loans. Suresh Goel & Associates, New Delhi are architecting the BITS Pilani Hyderabad Campus along with IVRCL Infrastructure & Projects Ltd, Hyderabad Contractors.

The BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus will have a complete air conditioned monolithic three storied building with all the engineering, science departments and administrative departments. The campus will have a theatre complex, library, auditorium, Student's Activity centre, Guest House, shopping complex, medical centre, students' hostels, faculty residences, dining halls.

BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus is targeting to complete its 1st phase of the construction by June 2008,



Prof. S Venkateshwaran at the BITS Hyderabad Bhoomi Pujan

and they are thinking of starting the session from the year 2008-2009. All the phases of the construction would be completed by 2011-2012. The management has decided to offer admissions to 600 students for the 2008-2009 academic year by considering BITSAT score. Initially the BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus is only targeting at undergraduate programs. But Dr. V. S. Rao who is slated to be the first Director of the Hyderabad campus perceives that very soon industry supported & fully product based research post graduate programs which would be totally interdisciplinary in nature.

(Left) BITS Pilani Hyderabad Campus, Boys Hostel Design



Quick Facts: BITS Pilani Hyderabad Campus



Total Budget: Rs. 270 Crores
Location: Jawahar Nagar near Shameerpet
Distance to Airport: 25 Km
In the vicinity: ICICI Knowledge Park, NALSAR Law University and few Biotech parks
Total Build Up Area: 1.5 lakh square meters
Architects: Suresh Goel & Associates, New Delhi
Construction: IVRCL Infrastructure & Projects Ltd, Hyderabad

Key Dates

Ground Breaking: 26th March 2007
1st Phase Complete: June 2008
1st Batch Admission: August 2008
All Phases Complete: 2011-2012

First Batch

Number of Students: 600

Admission Method: BITSAT Score

Programs Offered:	B.E (Hons) (A Group)	M.Sc. (B Group)	M.Sc (Tech) (C Group)
	Chemical	Biology	Information Systems
	Civil	Chemistry	
	Electrical & Electronics	Math	
	Mechanical	Economics	
	Computer Science	Physics	
	Electronics & Instrumentation		
	B. Pharmacy		

FROM THE DIRO'S DESK

Dr. V S Rao talks about the BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus. How will it be different (and similar) to other BITS Pilani campuses.

Why Hyderabad?

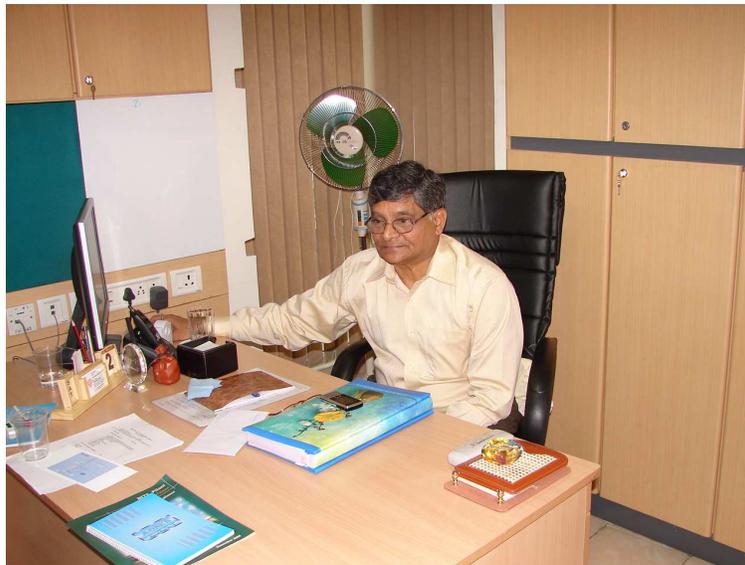
Dr. V S Rao-> Campus in a metropolitan city with a cosmopolitan character is essential for any universities to grow nowadays. Around 70,000 students appear for BITSAT every year while we admit only about 1400. There is room for more campuses as we are still missing a lot of very good students. If we don't do this then any mediocre institute will take advantage of this and gobble up the

deserving students. So we decided to launch another campus in a cosmopolitan city.

One of the reasons why we chose Hyderabad was the constant push from Andhra Government for more than a decade to open another BITS Pilani campus in Hyderabad. In Andhra Pradesh there is political consensus as far BITS Pilani is concerned and all political parties are really very keen in developing relations with BITS Pilani.

The AP Government had promised to give land free of

cost to BITS Pilani, though BITS decided to pay nominal price for the land. Also the government has been showing great concern for the infrastructure like building good



(Above) Dr. V S Rao (Director BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus) in his chamber at BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus Office in Ameerpet

roads to reach Hyderabad campus, in getting the environmental clearance from the central government, which usually takes about a year. Also cooperation by various departments of state for developing BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus is exemplary.

Would BITS Pilani Hyderabad eclipse the mother campus's image because of Pilani's remoteness?

Dr. V S Rao-> There is certainly an advantage of a

campus in any city because most of the faculty will certainly prefer cities. From that stand point, Pilani the mother campus can have a disadvantage, but other than that I don't find there is any harm.

All the BITS Pilani campuses are one single entity unlike IIT's that are viewed as separate institutes. As far as BITS Pilani campuses are concerned, all its campuses represent one single institute, same student quality as well as same curriculum. That's why the string "BITS Pilani" comes in the names of all its campuses in spite of their different campus

locations. So irrespective of what name any of the campuses is gaining, it is actually adding to BITS Pilani's kitty. And I don't perceive that it will affect the interest of mother campus Pilani.

How will BITS Hyderabad campus promote Research and Entrepreneurial programs?

Dr. V S Rao-> I am keen in building Research and Entrepreneurial Park in BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus, where various companies can open their respective labs for their product based research. And Alumni can really help us in approaching various

companies for their research labs. The creativity of student and faculty can be harnessed to support the product based research for various companies. The students can benefit with stipend, and at the same time these projects can carry different units depending upon the quantum of work by the students in respective projects.

How are you going to market BITS Pilani Hyderabad to improve the visibility of BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus among people?

Dr. V. S Rao-> This is one area where we really need to improve, by tradition we never publicized, and still enjoyed the top accolades for decades. But now the time has come to talk about us in order to compete. Many other private institutes are putting efforts in publicizing. There are times, when many brilliant students from remote areas, are not at all aware of BITS Pilani.

Alumni should not only become the eyes and ears of BITS Pilani but also become the mouthpiece of

BITS Pilani to propagate the BITS Pilani sound waves every where. Here BITS Alumni can really help in spreading BITS Brand name everywhere, and where ever they go. Suppose an alumnus has started some venture at his/her native place, he/she should blog about his/her Alma Mater, speak to local magazines, local newspapers, local channels, local coaching institutes about BITS Pilani and its other campuses.

With the shortage of good faculty in India, how will you attract, recruit and retain good faculty for BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus?

Dr. V S Rao-> The mechanism to recruit the faculty for Hyderabad campus will be same as followed for BITS Pilani and its other campuses. But the future recruitment process would be dynamic, proactive and non bureaucratic.

I am also thinking of part time faculty, contract based faculty, visiting faculty and outsourcing faculty positions to the industry for a particular course for a

month or may be it can be extended to a semester, depending upon his/her availability.

In view of this socio-economic situation, the good universities are laboring hard to attract good faculty because of the fatty salaries the industry is offering. As I have already mentioned, I am very keen in opening Research and Entrepreneurial Park in BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus, and the faculty will be benefited with extra salary from the companies in providing support to their research projects.

This way I can not only pull good faculty from India but also from abroad, the people who want to relocate back to India, and by providing such infrastructure to them in BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus.

Also I am thinking of providing every faculty the academic freedom to do a research of their own interest in the respective course, which will be formally accepted by his/her peers and

(Below) Onsite at the BITS Pilani Hyderabad Campus at Campus site Shameerpet. The campus is about 25 Km away from the Airport.



vice versa.

How about collaboration with foreign universities?

Dr. V S Rao-> BITS has already has collaboration with many foreign universities. We have signed MOU's with universities like York University in Canada, George Mason University, Iowa State

University, Kansas State University etc. Also we are thinking of having an alliance with the Indian School of Business (ISB), and I am sure ISB will show interest in partnering with us.

Will students be allowed to enroll as Day-Scholars?

Dr. V S Rao-> I believe in full residential campus with a cosmopolitan nature. I would prefer every body to stay on campus, because there is a lot of learning that can take place outside the class rooms but within the campus. Also I don't want anything undesirable to enter the campus from outside.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

BY DR. V S RAO

Ways in which the Alumni can contribute to the BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus.

AT the outset, let me thank all Alumni for the support they have been giving us in the past two decades in vital projects like BITS CONNECT and establishing projects in CEL.

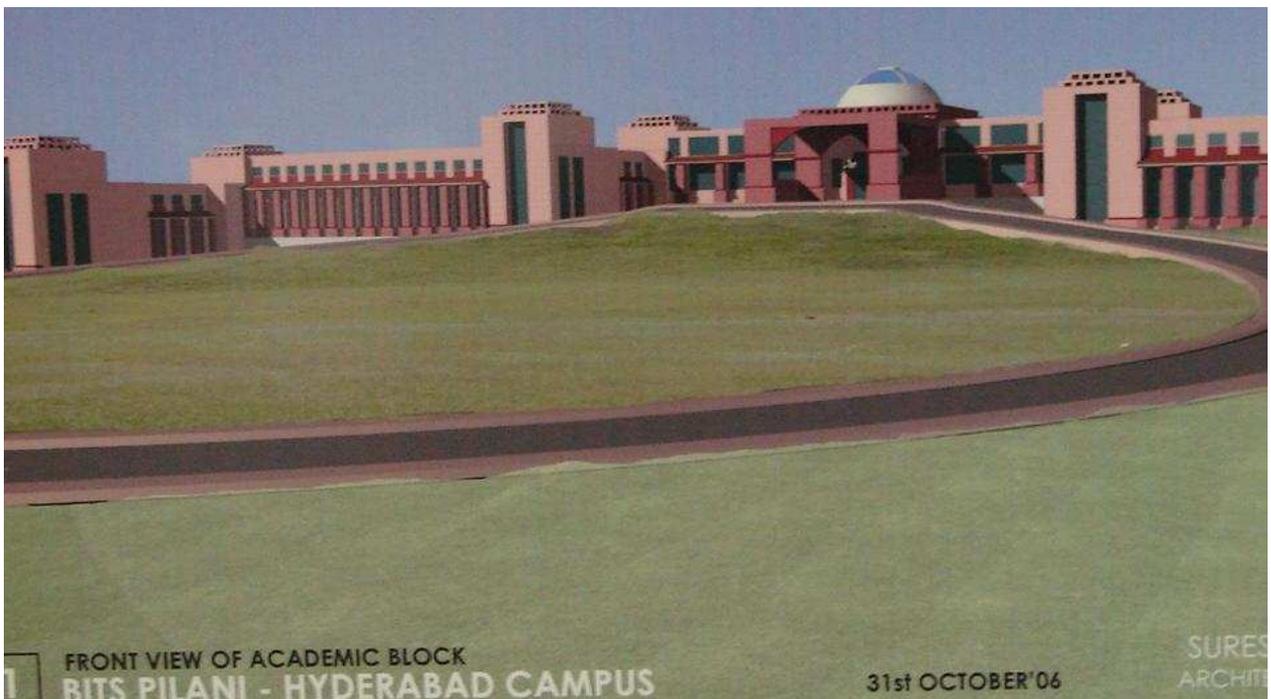
Apart from this I must acknowledge the excellent support which I have got from Alumni for expanding our PS (Practice Schools) program in terms of Number of Stations,

facilities provided, stipends and Internationalization. There has been an exponential expansion of centers within India and abroad from 30 to 200 plus companies during my tenure and stipends from 3k to 35k. There has been a great growth in the number of opportunities for students to go abroad and carry out the PS program.

Appeal for Hyderabad campus

I request all Alumni` to become a part and parcel in building the

campus, by giving inputs which are necessary in making the campus world class. We appreciate all kinds of efforts from Alumni whether in the field of academics, "BITS Pilani" image building, and involvement in various events and essentially for their constructive contributions for campuses. The other area where Alumni can help is to approach agencies and various research oriented organizations to raise funds for the BITS Pilani Hyderabad Campus.



FRONT VIEW OF ACADEMIC BLOCK
BITS PILANI - HYDERABAD CAMPUS

31st OCTOBER'06

SURESH
ARCHITECTS

Alumni need to pitch in to source faculty to the new campus. It would be great if Alumni themselves can contribute by acting as adjunct faculty, they can come on sabbaticals which can vary from a week to a semester. Even if the Alumni has no prior teaching experience but has done good research work in an area, of which he/she wants to share a part with BITS Pilani Hyderabad students, we will be more than pleased to welcome them.

Along with their own contribution, Alumni can also help to source international faculty. Having stayed in diverse places, graduated from different universities and worked under varied Professors, Alumni should make use of their contacts to suggest, recommend and encourage the overseas Professors for BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus. They should be encouraged to come to Hyderabad to give guest lectures. In case of difficulty, giving offline lectures can always be arranged for as it happens with BITSEmbryo in Pilani.

I also appeal to you to participate in development of research and entrepreneurial park in BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus. For example, a recent Professional Development Centre was set up in Bangalore in area of Microelectronics, with the help of BITS Alumni Vinod Agarwal and Rajendra Kare. I initiated this center which is

called "SEMINDIA" and is run by Atul Gupta as Incharge. Professor Krishna Saraswat, Department of Electrical Engineering Stanford University and other BITSians gave lectures in Professional development centre.

More Professors and Alumni should collaborate with on-campus faculty helping them to get sponsored projects. There would be areas where Alumni have expertise and on-campus faculty does not have. In such a situation, a collaborative research proposal say with Dr Krishna Saraswat, stands most likely to get funds and sponsorship.

More Alumni should come forward to establish several endowed chairs. Recently a BITSian, Mr. Manoj Saxena has contacted me to start a chair for Entrepreneurship encouragement. My target is to have a minimum of five such endowed chairs in the next five years. These endowed chairs will attract faculty and have more provisions of extra salary and chance to travel between India and abroad. In this way I can pull good faculty for the campus.

When I talked about sabbaticals earlier, I want Alumni to come also for a very informal talk, no specific need of any slides, lecture or preparation. Your very presence on campus with students motivates and inspires them a lot.

We also have to create a development fund, which can receive money through consultancy and some very well off Alumni. This fund would be

used for infrastructure, research or for travel arrangements for overseas faculty. Relocation allowance encourages many to come forward, participate and exchange knowledge with students resulting in more internationalization of our campus academic curriculum.

Moreover the funds can also be used to provide bursary to needy students in BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus. I have a vision and I want to share with every Alumni "Every student who avails this scholarship should promise (by word of mouth) that when he/she gets settled pecuniarily, he/she would contribute again to the bursary by sponsoring at least one student, if not more. The process would make the fund more sustainable.

Taking advantage of the industry and institute interface compared to any other institute, we should make a sort of dynamic equilibrium between academics and world of work. For example I could manage HP research fellowships which offered a stipend of 40k, which attracted bright students for research. The current trend of going to companies of more pay can be reduced and the cream can be brought to focus on research. More of research fellowships would attract good students and faculty, as he/she would avail good money and continence grant for international conferences.

I am also an Alumni (Laughing), whatever I spoke pertains to me too. I promise to represent BITS Alumni and take the responsibility to bring this campus to the zenith leveraging my 35 years experience in Pilani.

How YOU can contribute to the BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus - Prof V. S. Rao

Provide Inputs

- Tell us what we can do different.
- We want to be the best. You are the best. Guide us.

Spread the Word About the New Campus

- You are the best brand ambassadors BITS can ever get.

Faculty Recruitment

- Use your contacts to suggest, recommend and encourage the overseas Professors for BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus.
- Associate yourself as an Adjunct Faculty. Come on sabbaticals that can vary from a week to a semester.
- Encouraged to come to Hyderabad to give guest lectures.
- In case of difficulty, giving offline lectures can always be arranged for as it happens with BITS Embryo in Pilani.

Sponsor Endowments and Awards

- These endowed chairs will attract faculty by providing extra salary provisions.
- These endowments will also provide funds for Faculty' International travel

Participate in R&D, Entrepreneurship

- Setup Professional Development Centers that can be partly or fully funded by your companies.
- Collaborate on Research and Development projects
- Write joint research proposals with Professors and Students on the campus
- Help us establish a dynamic equilibrium between academics and world of work.

Contribute to the Campus Development Fund

- The Fund can receive money through consultancy and benevolent Alumni.
- This fund would be used for infrastructure, research or for travel arrangements for overseas faculty. Relocation allowance encourages many to come forward, participate and exchange knowledge with students resulting in more internationalization of our campus academic curriculum.

Just Come and See Us

- No slideware or preparation required. Your very presence on campus with students motivates and inspires them a lot.

ENTREPRENEUR'S CORNER

BY SAUGATA CHATTERJEE ("SOGGY") ('95-'99 CS)

Sandpaper profiles the hottest BITSian Startups.

VIGICOMM INC. - SUMEET SURI

Sumeet Suri (95B4A3..) realized something was missing in his professional life after four years of working at Qualcomm as an engineer. Even though things were going well and he and his team had successfully created a product from concept to launch and got recognition for it. He didn't like being far away from the top of the food chain, didn't want to do an MBA and decided that what he really wanted to do was to start out on his own.

But he was still waiting for his big "idea", the technology niche gap that was missing from the

Sumeet Suri ('95) – Founder and CEO, VigiComm



market that he (and his partners) could fill to address existing demand.



The missing need that he identified was a solution that addressed the reliability problems in emergency communications. The need for such a solution was evidently on display during Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast of the USA and the South East Asian *tsunami*. Reliable emergency communication is an important key to handling crisis better, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Defense (DoD) were looking for ways to fix

this problem. With the idea to address this need in mind, Sumeet and his partners founded VigiComm.

VigiComm patented solutions that offer real-time emergency communications, which are scalable (city block or spread across the country), location-specific and disaster tolerant. VigiComm's solutions effectively integrate government authorities with citizens under crisis. Currently VigiComm is working with DoD and DHS for a nationwide deployment.

"In 5 years I hope to retire, travel, play golf and drink some good red wine", says Sumeet jokingly. Actually he hopes that VigiComm will be completely self-executing and acquired by some big time defense contractor. He wants to move on and start his own venture capital firm at that time.

Sumeet's advice to wannabe entrepreneurs: "Starting a company is not easy. It requires a tremendous amount of patience. The first step is to validate your business model. It might be a great idea but is it something that the market wants? Be innovative. Keep it simple, stupid (KISS). Get customer validation. And have a lot of patience and perseverance".

APEX DECISIONS INC.



3 out of the 5 top executives at Apex Decisions, Inc., a strategy company based in Minnesota, are BITSians (the other two are IITians). The company was founded in 2001 by Dr. Subhash Gupta (BITS 72-76) and its promise is a "guarantee" to its clients that their gross margins will increase by at least 8% and revenues by at least 4% if they use APEX's solution. With a client list that includes Yahoo and Guess, Apex has had the chance to

prove their claims on a big and varied stage so far.

At its core, the company has great faith in good science leading to better solutions. Subhash has a Ph.D. in Physics from Columbia University, and Vibhu Kalyan, the VP of business development, another BITSian who graduated in 1977, has a Ph.D. in EEE from Carnegie Mellon University, so this bias towards the scientific way is perhaps understandable. The science in Apex Decisions is contributed by an exceptional team that has decades of experience in developing statistical thought and delivering decision systems.

In a nutshell, Apex provides the following tools and services for their clients in the retail industry:

- Proprietary tools that allow them to rapidly detect business patterns and measure the impact on sales-based decisions like Markdown level, Promotional price discount, Promotion tactics such as TV advertisement, mass

Dr. Subhash Gupta ('72), Founder and CEO, APEX Decisions



mailings, feature presentation, newspaper inserts etc.

- Processes to automatically monitor decisions and their impact
- Tools for measuring benefits in a pilot situation by leveraging the monitoring process
- Data analysis tools to identify anomalies (outliers) and data deficiencies
- Techniques for measuring and exploiting uncertainty in decision-making
- Proprietary optimization methods that use the results of data analysis to produce business decisions.

TOLMOLBOL



(CONTRIBUTED BY AMIT THAKRAL, COFOUNDER)

How do you get to know your neighborhood?

With tolmolbol.com, an innovative Indian Web 2.0 product launched by Pennywise Solutions, getting to know your neighborhood has become not just easy but a whole lot of fun. On tolmolbol.com, people anywhere in India can find

and locate dependable, peer-

reviewed businesses from over 500 different service categories. Apart from writing reviews, members can share tips and experiences, communicate upcoming events and place classified ads. tolmolbol also provides readily downloadable SMS (sponsored by SMSCountry.com) for users to transfer information regarding business addresses, event details and classified ads onto their mobile phones for free.

Each tolmolbol.com member can connect or create a local community based on the same principles they use to build a circle of real-world friends. This network can grow exponentially when your friends connect to their friends. Further, a member can share his or her personal interests and friends will be able to compliment and share private messages with each other. They can also let others know of things like which swimming pool they go to, which restaurant they had dinner the previous night or their favorite local DVD parlors.

tolmolbol provides a platform for the community to share useful feedback with service providers and for each city-zen to make an informed decision regarding local businesses. The local question and answer feature, named "Bol", makes it easy for users to ask questions to and receive help from the community. Whether you are looking for a guitar class in your area or you want to find to know how best to snag a date, you can holler out to your community for help.

Another nifty feature on tolmolbol is the advanced local search capability. Users can locate trusted businesses and service providers by semantic keywords and by area. For example, users can intuitively search for dosas in Banjara Hills,

So, the next time you want to find out the best pubs in your city or want to voice your feedback on a service you received or want to know what retail outlets your friends have been to recently, be sure to log on to tolmolbol.com!

The tolmolbol team:

1st row L to R: Anand Morzaria, Amit Thakral, Venkat Polana, Avtar Purewal

2nd row L to R: Ananth Vyas, Rithesh Prasad, Anshuman Dimri, Pavan Pochu

CEL- BITSAA

BY BADHRI VARANASI ('99-'03 CS)

An update on the BITSAA's CEL Center For Entrepreneurial Learning activities.

AFTER the phenomenal success of the 2006 lecture series, CEL-BITSAA (formerly Plan E) launched the next round of talks in 2007.

The 2007 'season' was kicked off on Feb 3, 2007 with a talk on *Intrapreneurship* by Dinesh Ramanathan (87B4A7), EVP at Cypress Semiconductor. The term *Intrapreneurship*, entrepreneurship within the confines of a large company, is best highlighted by

Dinesh's meteoric rise within the corporate ladder.

During his talk, Dinesh underscored the importance of planning in one's career and advised young BITSians to always make and work toward a three year plan with well defined targets. He also spoke in favor of trying out multiple roles within an organization to avoid stagnation and to build a diverse skill set.

The next session was a Business Plan Workshop held on Feb 25, 2007. The workshop had three speakers, Venture Capitalists Ajay Chopra and Vijay Parikh and

Madan Bellam, CEO of Teracare. They presented several tips on how to structure a business plan and moved on to provide their expert advice on how best to approach VCs for funding requests. Several budding BITSian entrepreneurs in the Silicon Valley had their questions answered from this vastly experienced panel.

On March 24 2007, CEL-BITSAA conducted its first experiment of live video conferencing with the BITSAA Hyderabad Chapter. This was made possible by using Sierra Atlantic's facilities in Fremont, CA and Hyderabad India. Raju

BITSIAN ENTREPRENEURS

BITS Pilani Alumni Magazine

Reddy, CEO of Sierra Atlantic and Amar Kapadia, founder of Aarohi communications spoke about their experiences with managing early stage off-shore R&D. It was clear from their talks that VCs increasingly expect some level of off-shoring to take advantage of the cost savings and to tap into the talent pool in emerging economies like India and China.

In view of the increasing interest in an MBA as a career option among BITSians, CEL-BITSAA conducted an MBA Admissions session on May 13 2007. BITS Alumni Anand Krishnan (Haas), Tarun Desikan (Stanford) and Ishmeet Singh (Kellogg) spoke about their respective applications and highlighted their positives and negatives. For many attendees, this talk was an eye-opener of sorts as it provided insightful information on preparation for MBA admissions, life during an MBA and career opportunities post-MBA.

In the next few months, CEL-

BITSAA plans to conduct more talks on interesting issues like Social Entrepreneurship by the

Himani Apte (2000A7) and Pradheep Elango (2000A7).



Vijay Parikh explains a subtle point during the CEL-BITSAA Business Plan Workshop

CEO of Craigslist, Intellectual Property by a top Silicon Valley lawyer and on financial management in a startup. The events this year are organized by Badhri Varanasi (1999A7),

Dr. Rajiv Gupta's ('76) Robopsy Wins MIT \$100K Biz Plan Contest

Dr. Rajiv Gupta's company Robopsy, which has invented a robotic device to assist radiologists performing tumor biopsies, was a joint winner at MIT \$100K. This remote, *telerobotic* needle insertion system helps in targeting potentially malignant lesions during CT Image Guided tumor biopsy and ablation procedures. The device is very small and can fit into the MRI or CT along with the patient. Consisting primarily of plastic, it is also low cost and disposable.

Dr. Rajiv Gupta, '76 graduate from BITS, is a prolific inventor. He is redefining himself again, just as he did when he redefined himself as a medical doctor after working for 10 years as an engineer. Sandpaper has carried an extensive interview with him in the past, and readers are encouraged to read the excerpts from that interview at http://sandpaper.bitsaa.org/08_general/mummies.html

Sudip Jain (IAS) Wins UW Biz Plan Competition

Sudeep Jain, a BITSian IAS officer on sabbatical in Seattle, has won the first prize in the University of Washington's Business Plan competition.

Sudeep and his team wrote a plan for a company called Index, which would solve a supply chain problem for numerous farmers in India by connecting sellers with buyers using mobile phone technology.



MBNITE & OTHER STORIES



Sugar, Spice and Everything nice...

BY NAINA ('00 A7)

MB NITE

EVERY guy in BITS wanted to go the one place they were not allowed to go to: Meera Bhavan. And there was only one night when they could enter the premises - MB nite. Each first year girl could invite only one boy and around this time, every girl in first year became quite popular - after all they had the power of the "invite".

Guys came up with all sorts of ways to wangle an invitation. Some first year boys invited the girls to their bhavans nites. That way, the girl was obliged to invite them back. Some guys managed to make sure that the department girls HAD TO invite department boys. This happened at my department and hence my invite was gone and so was my sudden popularity.

All the girls from my department got together for a meeting. At this meeting it was decided that we would all wear sarees. I managed to find something that Maa had packed at the bottom of some bag and got it ironed. On the day of MB nite, my room mate was bitten by a dog and I was busy running to and fro to the Med C.

I was late for MB nite. I had no clue that I had ended up inviting. I rushed to my room

and changed and haphazardly reached the dusty area in front of the mess. All the first year folks from my department were there. The boys were all looking delighted. They were part of the elite lot who had managed to get



entry into this female bastion.

The girls on the other hand looked abashed. Red faced. I wasn't sure what was going on. I wanted an ice candy. That was more important to me than the mystery of the red faces. Finally I grabbed a lolly and settled down and asked the boy next to me, "Why do all the girls look so embarrassed."

He grinned back at me, delight written all over his face. "They just came to know that wearing a saree on MB nite means announcing to the world that you are committed to the guy you have invited." I quickly

turned into one of the red-faced ones.

The Man

Apparently the BITS students were not the only guys who wanted to enter MB. Even other Pilani residents found the place alluring. This was confirmed one fine day in my second year when we were studying for a test.

I looked out of the first floor window and saw a lot of people walking about MB around midnight with flash lights et al. I was very alarmed and quickly walked out into the corridor to announce the strange happenings at midnight to my wingees. But the hostel superintendent stole my thunder by announcing on the PA system,

"GIRLS. ATTENTION GIRLS. There is a MAN, I repeat, THERE IS A MAN inside MB. Please check your rooms and bathrooms..."

There was immediate bedlam. All the girls got excited, the faint hearted ones screamed, the brave hearts found brooms and other weapons and descended on the "rooms and bathrooms". People looked under all the beds and into all the loos. There was much ado and it was pretty exciting.

Many reported having seen this famous "Man in MB". Some claimed he was wearing a blue shirt. Some remembered green dungarees and some thought he



was quite mad. There was agreement on only one thing about this man. His areas of interest were universally acknowledged to be scaring girls and stealing dustbins. Yes, you read right...dustbins.

Many dustbins were reported stolen. Even those girls who had no dustbins claimed the man had stolen the dustbins. Kiran Didi and the bhaiyas were put on high alert. The PA system kept blaring late into the night.

Alas, no man was caught.

People and Beauty

There were lots of strange visitors at MB. And of course the strangest ones arrived without invitation: Hundreds of bees descended upon MB one fine morning. All attempts to chase them away failed and so finally the PA system was brought into use again.

"All girls leave the bees block. And go into other blocks. Everyone switch off the lights."

This announcement, like most other *important announcements" blared over the system at least 100 times. Finally all of us managed to find



shelter and hide in some other block.

A girl from Kashmir, another from Punjab, me (from Assam) took shelter in a room which belonged to a girl from a small village in TN. We found and lit a candle and got into a huddle and bent our heads over our books.

The PA system blared again, "GIRLS. It has been brought to our notice that girls are lighting candles inside their rooms. PLEASE PUT THEM OUT."

We blew out the candle. Suddenly, lighting a candle had become a crime. We heard noises of girls giggling and talking in other rooms. There was silence in ours. The darkness and the quiet seemed to drag.

It was then that I suggested singing songs. All of us sang a song in our respective regional

languages. Then we sang songs from each others regions which had been translated into Hindi. And time just flew. We sang and laughed and talked. Then we remembered the only song which had all our languages. In a jovial mood, we all sang our parts. And then we all sang together, "Mile Suur Mera

Tumhara, to Suur bane Humara....."

This became my most beautiful memory of Meera Bhavan and of BITS too.

EDITORS COMMENT:

A combination of haha, hoho, ohhhhh and hmmm. Nice reading aint it folks. I especially liked the first story and the last one.

I still remember my first ever MBnrite. I was seriously stunned and overwhelmed. Am sure many guys would have their own memories about what they felt when they stepped into the chamber of secrets in BITS.

There was a man in MB!?! Huh! I gotta meet this guy sometime. He is possibly the CEO of some company right now. Smart and daring bugger. But then, naaaahhhh....dustbins of all things! To every man his own (quirk) I guess...

Arun Maharajan
(1999-2003, E&I)

REARVIEW

BY ABHIT ('00 A7)



FOUR years passed in a village called Pilani and finally before you know it, an honors degree in Computer Science. Sometimes it had occurred to me "What the hell am I doing here?" I am sorry if it sounds like blasphemy, but it's true. The answer to this question remained a mystery throughout my stint at Pilani. But that mystery remained no more when it was time to bid adieu to my alma mater "BITS Pilani", and especially to my dear wingees.

I was a bubbly teenager when I landed in BITS. Teenager is the right term as some of us didn't even know how to use the razor. Some of us were quite mature enough though to throng along with the crowd for the popular lectures. Ok, maybe some of you disagree with that. But it was quite an experience.

There were times when we B-Boys (so we called ourselves Every BITSian wing has its own fundas, so what's in a name!) used to flow and meander all over the desert which was our campus during OASIS, and got envious of "outsti" college girls. It really was a desert out there you know and when someone spots an oasis in female form, such reactions are but common. One of the Nawaabs from sixes, Thula's yorkers, Toyka's catches, Kekadde's keeping & gate calls, head strong Uncle's

Steps taken forwards, but sleepwaking back again...

Lucknow even used to claim "Abe yaar kaash maine St Stephen join kiya hota.... Aish to kii hoti...."

Every one had his own reason to crib about the place initially. Some said it's too far away from their native, some added the climate was really hard to get used to, some complained about the ubiquitous test series (that's something which most keep complaining about till the very end! No surprises!). Some even complained about the paint schemes of the bhavans. I made a hat-trick in my first semester. Naaah, am not talking of test topping or wickets in wing cricket. But I went home three times in a span of four and a half months. Of course, back home I

had to hear long lectures about my actions from my dad...every time.

Four years is a long time and before one knows it, it's gone into the history books. As much as I hated to admit later on, there was definitely a lot to remember. Did any one forget that thing they call wing cricket, Thermodynamics tension, the lathe machine and its darling keepers, Sky lawns, MT-1, Mime Club, Controlz sessions, MechSol tests (where different shaped beams plunged into our happiness and beat it out of shape), MT-II, seeking Nitwit and Samy (every wing does have its own gods...they were ours!) before tests for solutions, that fight over ego, Macho's

What else but Wing Cricket!! Howzat!!



mimicry, those leg pulling session, birthday bumps, those late night ANC sessions and discussing nothing but shit, Shankar wing, Kapoor's Singapore fried rice, Macho's window pane that I broke with my hand and the Repree compree which was ruined thus, Thula who made a mess of the SV mess, PS-1, VK wing, that BhoSodiumSulphate, those night outs for Grover, Milds, Samchat, Diablo II, Cricket 2002, CueClub that triviality, that bread board, Guruz viva and his words "You have to face serious consequences in this course", Paintbrush and Wordpad Assignment, three missionary and three cannibals problem, Midway, Palam Singh egg fried rice, that DBMS Assignment, PLCC monster and that ruthless booting program, Cache that me , Uncle and Kekadda designed in 30 minutes for ACO, that pauperizing session, Nitwit Olympus, WorldCup 2003, those beer session during the chilly gusty winter nights, that BardriNath Baba, Daru sessions, breaking the window of one

poor little guy late in the night, French bid, Least Count, Signatures, finally filling the scrap books, the night of 29th April 2004, and that final hug before we parted.

In spite of all the initial cribbing and complaints, these four years (five for some) is what I can truly call a life, a kind of heaven. There is no better word to describe it other than "BITS Pilani".

Still remember the time when I did not like Pilani, and many a time I used to think when I would escape from the place forever. But never did I ever imagine that after passing out, I would have a painting of BITS Pilani hung up in my cube at work. Amen.

The author is all generosity. CSA farewell day, 2004.



EDITORS COMMENT:

When I was editing this article, it was quite obvious to me that this was written with some passion and loads of feeling.

I was carried away into a hazy and wavy past when I was reading this. As my wingies were mostly from the computer science background, I could even make sense of all those A7 terms. Those brought back some memories of my time in the wing by itself. I apologise in case some of you did not understand those terms, but I let them stay to give the author the sense of satisfaction that he deserves.

Finally, I am sure most people including our parents and other friends would have their sweetest memories connected to their first ever college experience. The BITS Pilani experience is all the more special to us because of its unique location, atmosphere, flavour, camaraderie, aura and rusticity.

There is no doubt in the following statement which I believe holds good for all BITSians.

You may take a BITSian out of BITS but you can never take BITS out of a BITSian.

Arun Maharajan
(1999-2003, E&I)

THE SOCIAL QUOTIENT

BY ANINDITA DUTTA ('03 BIO & CS)
SINDHU ANAND ('03 BIO & EEE)

Pilani is alike a lot of other villages in India. Plagued with illiteracy and unemployment. BITSians are trying to change that by giving back to their local community in multiple ways. Charity begins at home.

What seems, to many of us as a nondescript village in one corner of the country, Pilani is in fact a well-accomplished town as compared to the hundreds of villages that surrounds it. Just like any other village in India illiteracy, unemployment plagues these villages as well. In an effort to reach out to these hapless people, the students of BITS Pilani, through initiatives such as My India, NSS and CEL, have taken it upon themselves to spread literacy and create opportunities for employment in these villages. This article captures the work done by the Rural Entrepreneurial Division of the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (CEL). An article on MY INDIA under the "BITSians in Community" section tells another inspiring story of BITSians giving back to their local community.

GARINDA PROJECT: Driven by the Rural Entrepreneurial Division (RED) of CEL

How it all started:

A vocational training centre was established in Garinda by NSS-BITS, Pilani under the 'Gyan Ganga' project in 2004. Work started in September. The women, registered in the centre, were taught sewing and *Dari* making. Initially about 80 women had

turned up. The productivity of the women was very low and as time passed the number of women working, decreased. Also this wasn't a very sustainable activity because *daris* didn't have a very good market in Pilani. Therefore the CEL team decided to shift the product focus to newspaper bags, which had a steady demand in the BITS consumers' cooperative store, Akshay.

GARINDA project aims to build a self-sustained women's cooperative in rural Pilani, and has two major objectives:

1. To create entrepreneurs from among the women folk in rural Pilani
2. To build a replicable model of building a cooperative business unit in a rural setup.

What it lead to: A group of 21 women, who had hardly ventured out of their village before, now manufacture newspaper bags and sell it to the Consumers' Cooperative store at BITS, under the brand name of PARAMPARA. They call themselves the "Saraswati Women's Cooperative". Diversification in terms of products and markets is also in the agenda.

Implementation model:

Phase-I: Identifying a group of women and engaging them in an income generation activity to build the foundation of the cooperative. Phase I of the project was accomplished in Aug-Dec '06. The outcome has been the creation of a women's group in a village called Garinda (10 kms from Pilani) that manufactures newspaper bags for the BITS consumers' cooperative store.

Phase-II: Building a self sustained cooperative around the group. This is the phase at which RED is currently engaging in.

Phase-III: Bringing in microfinance into the cooperative.

Future Plans:

Having laid the foundations, the CEL team now plans to focus on developing the group to a stage where the entire

newspaper bag activity is run independently by the women themselves. Their role will now be restricted to providing resources to the group in terms of information, networking, training and the like. To achieve this end, they have the following activities lined up:

1. Research on alternative economic activities
2. Building a resource base that can be tapped into
3. Case study on cooperatives
4. Workshops

FIRST CITIZEN OF INDIA COMES TO BITS PILANI

BY SANDEEP GANGAKHEDKAR ('05 EEE)

Rumors about the President of India, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam visiting the BITS Pilani campus have been doing rounds for more than a year. Dr. Kalam finally made his long-due trip to Pilani on the 29th of March 2007. In his characteristic style he won the hearts of many on the campus.

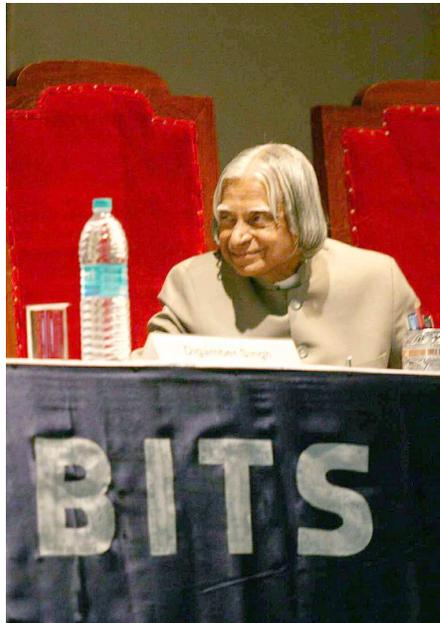
BITS Pilani, 29th March 2007

A typical lazy Pilani afternoon. Sweltering heat. Life at a standstill. A huge motorcade of patrol vehicles, vans and motorbikes zips past through the stark lanes of the campus, catching the odd BITSian by surprise, if not shock. The frequent appearance of submachine gun-toting policemen around the campus draws hushed whispers from the BITSian bystanders. The buzz around is that the President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam is visiting BITS Pilani. Some are excited, others nonplussed, many indifferent. As the evening approaches, a list of people permitted to attend the President's address is drawn up and displayed. The randomly generated list makes four out of every eleven BITSians the privileged ones. The first question that pops up into the mind is "Why?" - The purpose of the President's visit leaves many perplexed. Some say it's regarding the reservation issue, some feel it's a clandestine operation he's discussing with the top faculty. Rumors spread like wildfire, how typical of BITS!

BITS Pilani, 30th March. D-Day

A half-working day, overjoyed students, resurfaced roads, a refurbished auditorium, freshly painted sign-boards, streets devoid

of vehicles (cycles included). In short, a completely transformed campus. The copter lands at 2.30 pm at the Birla Gliding Club. The presidential motorcade is waiting to whisk the President straight to the BITS library and the BITSAT center it houses. This is followed



by an address to the faculty and students at the auditorium. Elaborate security arrangements have been made – every student in the vicinity has his ID card on him. He has been instructed to go straight to his pre allotted seat. The order and discipline is impressive, especially by BITSian standards. The President speaks at length on “convergence of technologies”. To quote him, “Technology is a non-linear tool

which can effect fundamental changes in economic competitiveness”. He speaks specifically of advances in the field of nanotechnology. The difference is that much of his talk is from a product perspective-gas-flow induced voltage generator, drug delivery systems, Microwave production units and the like. All these have a definite social edge, a common underlying motive of national development. President Kalam dwells on various international partnerships and JV's – The BRAHMOS Missile Project, the pan-African e-network. The former in particular rekindles the dwindling interest levels of the mildly enthralled crowd. His Excellency urges BITS Pilani to go to the next level by building a full-fledged Virtual University. An “equitable access to the best resources” is the prime advantage of this scheme and will go a long way in propelling BITS to the topmost echelons of global technological research. The President concludes by stressing the importance of a good character and moral values in a scientific and rapidly evolving world. An interactive session with the students is the highlight of the day, where some insightful questions are fired by the BITSians to the President. The visit of the President of India himself - certainly a golden moment in the history of BITS, Pilani.

RINGING GROOVES OF CHANGE

BY NILANJANA BHATTACHARYA ('06 PHY)

SINDHU ANAND ('03 BIO & EEE)

The BITS Pilani campus is seeing a spate of new clubs being formed each year. Read an update on the society of Automotive Engineers and the Wall Street Club.

Last two years Pilani has witnessed sweeping changes in Campus demographics and the BITSian culture that one thought could never change is undergoing a sort of metamorphosis. The older generation currently in Pilani have been witness to it all, from the old dusty *refli* to an architectural marvel that is the now not so new *centli*, from our rusty crumbling SUB to swanky SAC with amphitheatre, squash courts and airy department rooms, from no internet access to NEURON, the virtual controller of BITSian existence, to Mal becoming a guys Bhavan thanks to the sudden onslaught of the fairer sex on Campus to MB becoming a Guys Bhavan due to the slump in the number of girls, courtesy BITSAT! One of the new changes attributed to the differing tastes of the new BITSAT batches has been the spurt of new clubs in Pilani. Here we present some of them that kicked up a lot of dust and have some astonishing number of members right from day one.

SAE

SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) was introduced in BITS last sem. It is different from the other clubs in that it is not funded by the Institute and postholders are ordained by SAE international. The club is affiliated to the Delhi branch of SAE. Already about 420 members strong, it is quite active and is

making its presence felt. A team of third-yearites are entering the mini Baja car competition, which is a competition of international level, sponsored by Lombardini who's also providing the engine for the competition. As regards the aviation part, the club was involved in building several aeromodels during Apogee involving about 50 to 60 people. In addition they hosted an airshow at the Birla Gliding Club. Their future plans include taking part in more competitions, organizing lectures on aviation and getting lecturers from actual industries in Gurgaon.

WALL STREET CLUB (WSC)

With a view to building Brand BITS in the finance world and making students more 'money-aware', the Wall Street Club has been started on campus of BITS, Pilani. It all started over coffee in the Sky lawns of BITS, Pilani where they would discuss stocks and the legends in the market. The idea of a club hit them and soon, the only one of its kind for an undergraduate college, the Wall Street Club was born. Its inaugural meeting drew unprecedented response with 250 odd people (some standing) in the lecture hall on a Saturday evening. The idea of the Wall Street Club is to Enrich, Empower and Explore. Enrich through the series of lectures called Stockopedia- lectures taken by distinguished Alumni like Vivek Paul of Texas Pacific Group and Madhusudan Somani, the

rising star of finance world who has changed the fortunes of Yes Bank. The Alumni lectures are delivered through live streaming and will cover the concepts of stock market in a bottom up approach. Basics of building a profitable portfolio will be imparted to all members. After the Enrichment course is over, the Empowerment phase comes in through Questus- the first and only student mutual fund. This is where students have fun, learn and earn. Explore is about conducting research on which stocks to pick for the mutual fund. Other plans on the sidelines include attracting investment bankers to BITS for placements and setting up an investment lab like foreign B-schools. WSC is a revolutionary new idea that has the potential to take campuses across the country by storm and inspire a whole generation of young students who want to 'beat the street'. It will also equip students with managerial and analytical skills. The club and later its mutual fund's portfolio will be completely managed by students. Students will be divided into core groups, each of which will analyze a particular sector. The club has released the first issue of its newsletter called 'The Street Freak'.



GOAN GRANDIOSE

BY TANAYA SRIVASTAVA ('05 EEE)

GOWRI THAMPI ('05 ECO EEE)

In this modern world of 9 to 9 jobs, work pressures and hectic life, we all need time to relax and recharge our batteries and what better than a well-deserved holiday. Goa fits into one's dream of the perfect getaway for reasons abound. Sizzling sands, frothy brine water, sky-scraping coconut trees, exotic Goan cuisine and of course, Feni (the ultimate Goan export for which it is said – "You don't realize how strong it is until you get up!!") make Goa the place to be in at all times of the year. The coastline of Goa is dotted with sun soaked beaches. Although it's hard to handpick a few out of the so many amazing beaches in Goa, the most popular ones among the tourists are Calangutte, Palolam, Baga, Vagator, Anjuna and Colva beach (which also happens to be the second longest beach in India

Water sports like parasailing, snorkeling, scuba-diving and kayaking available at select beaches are added attractions. Go-karting tracks at Verna and Madgaon also draw in many



people. For the lovers of the aesthetic beauty of a sunset, Colva beach is the ideal place.

One can quietly watch the sun slowly go down the horizon, its crimson aura serenading the sky, the ocean and the observer alike. Here one can let go of all worries, relax and soak in the beauty of the nature.

Situated on the western coast of India, between Maharashtra and Karnataka, Goa was a Portugese colony till 1961 and in 1987 it became a part of the Union of India. Nevertheless Goa remains proud of its Portugese legacy, evident from the life and the culture of the Goans who love conversing in French (the official language of Goa is Konkani) and are also the ultimate football fanatics. During the World Cup and UEFA Cup matches Goa turns into a mini Portugal with people rooting for Luis Figo and Cristiano Ronaldo!!

Night life in Goa is exciting with beach parties being very common. The crowd – nationality, ethnicity and ages no bar – hit the dance floors in the beach and swing and gyrate to Bacardi Blast and Kingfisher Club. The sand, the ocean, the stars, the moonlight and the people truly are a spectacle!! And if one doesn't want the hard

rock or club music, one can always sit quietly on the beach and strum a guitar to the music of Eric Bana.

The richness of lakes, SUMMERS, rivers and waterfalls akin to the Mayam Lake, Kesarval SUMMERS and



Dudh Sagar Waterfalls in Goa

the Dudh Sagar make Goa a perfect paradise for tourists. Twenty percent of Goa is a wildlife protected area. The beautiful jungles along the Western Ghats, well preserved by concerned citizens in the form of sanctuaries like the Bhagwan Mahavir bird sanctuary and the Bondla national park are also home to a large species of birds and animals. The sunset and the full moon cruise on the Mandovi River amidst the scenic surroundings replete with music and dance is indeed a most exhilarating experience.

The Goan cuisine is a perfect blend of the past and the present and is notable for its Portuguese influence. Dishes such as Rachleiado, Caldeirada and Cabidela reflect this. Prominent vegetarian dishes are Mergolho, which is made from pumpkin, papaya and breadfruit curry. Goa is famous for its sea-food, the classic dish being fish curry and rice. Kingfish figures prominently on the menu along with Pomfret, Doumer, Shark, Tuna and Mackerel. Among the excellent shellfish available are crabs, prawns and lobster. Other sea-food include squid and mussels. Liquor is sold here at the cheapest rate one can get in India. Feni, vodka, wine, rum, beer – you name it and Goa has it, that too at very affordable rates and minimal export duty to be paid.

Goa is the perfect **holiday destination** not just for the party animals. The unexplored and untouched parts of Goa are abodes of serenity and quietude. Old Goa along with its churches is a world heritage site. The breathtaking beauty of these churches has to be seen to be believed. The Old Portuguese churches famous for their baroque styled architecture and ornate altars are an integral part of Goa's religious, cultural and social framework. These structures are not just edifices of white sandstone; each mural has a mystery and story behind it. Several among them especially the Basilica of Bom Jesus where the body of St. Francis Xavier has been preserved for the past 455 years are important for Christians all over the world.

The heroic preservation of the shrines of Goa from Portuguese persecution makes Goa a popular pilgrim spot as well. The celebrated Mangesh temple in Priol and the shrine of Shanta Durga (Goddess of peace) are some of the few relics that have withstood the ravages of



invaders. Other bustling tourist spots are the forts. The Fort of Aguada, once an underground prison and the Chapora Fort (made famous in the movie Dil Chahta Hai) are the most prominent.

A typical Goan likes to live a laid-back life far from the maddening race for money. For a Goan it's the quality of life that matters most. The FM in Goa still plays good old pop and jazz music like Elvis Presley, Beatles and Tina Turner in the primetime. The general demeanor of the Goans is polite and friendly. Goans are a merry lot - the festivals, the fairs and the carnivals add colour to their lives. Both Hindu and Christian festivals like Christmas, Feast of St. Francis Xavier and Shigmotsav are celebrated with pomp and cheer by the citizens

who are secular in the true sense of the word.

Nevertheless, **Goa is one of the most progressive states of India** as regards education, gender equality, civic sense and general social living standards. The towns of Goa are a blend of tradition and modernity. The major towns are the state capital Panjim, Mapusa, Margao, Canacona, Vasco, Ponda and

Interior of Basilica of Bom Jesus, 17th century Church complex, Old Goa

Old Goa. Goa is one of the most important naval ports of India with the INS Vikrant stationed here to guard the west coast of the country. It is one of the most important ports in this part of Asia. Cargo worth crores of rupees is exported and imported everyday from the Goan harbors. Big business houses like the Salagaoncars have been here since a long time. More and more companies are looking at Goa as a probable destination after the saturation in first tier cities like Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, etc. The Government of Goa is trying to bring IT in Goa and enhance the manufacturing capability of the state without disrupting the fragile eco-system. Goa already boasts of a world-class international airport and the state is well-connected by roads and the Konkan railway network. Looking at the ample opportunities available here and the hard-working and enterprising attitude of the people, the future can only get brighter...

In this heavenly atmosphere, on the banks of the River Zuari lies BITS, Pilani – Goa Campus. So dear alumni, do come here and meet us, know more about us and also have the time of your life!!! – Students of Goa Campus

creativity transcending new frontiers. A hi-tech treasure hunt called the *BITS Positioning System* had the techies on their toes. With India Inc. on the highroad of development, BITSians can't be far behind. Biz wizards made their mark in *Age of Entrepreneurs, Innova, V-Stock and Corporate Debate*. The challenge in *Innova* was to come up with a plan for a rain water harvesting system in the campus. On the other hand *V-Stock*, the virtual stock market left the computer center looking like a part of the BSE !!

Paper Presentation and Open Showcase

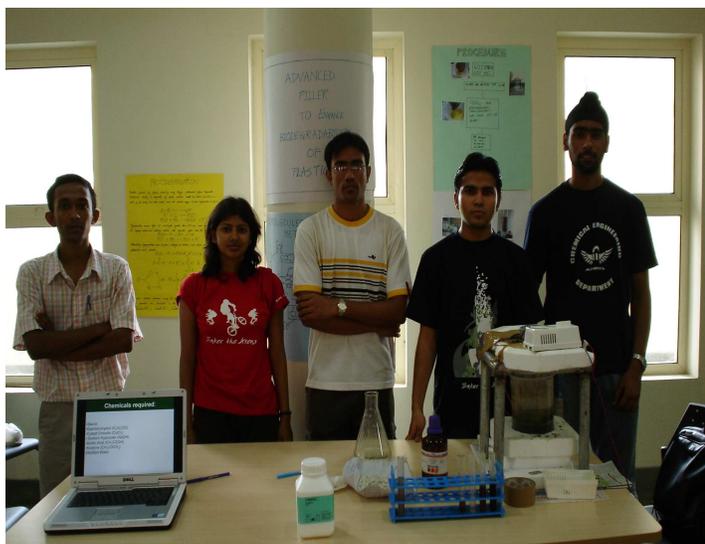
running through all the three days of the fest gave the participants a chance to make their mark in any field of their choice. Exhibits included energy saving initiatives like charging your phone with solar and sound energy (charge as you speak!!). Classrooms were converted to Discipline Stalls where each discipline showed how fun they could be with limitless enjoyment in the form of puzzles and games. *Sector 52* - the gaming event - saw team Virtuosity from BITS-Dubai walk off with the honors. *Microsoft* and *iTRIX* conducted Workshops to teach fundamentals of robot design and building. An engineering astronomy workshop introduced fundamental astronomy and night sky observation. Quark wasn't without its share of fun and energy either. A DJ night gave the young innovators a chance to let their hair down and enjoy the Goan night. The LASER show organized by the

Council of Student Affairs was noteworthy.

Above all, Quark provided the students of BITS, Pilani Goa campus with an opportunity to meet their counterparts from all over the country, to share ideas and build relations that would foster the creation of the much talked about knowledge society in India. It was a wonderful learning experience intermixed with fun at all levels. Quark '08

Innovative Student Projects in Quark, 2007

would surely be a tech-fest to



watch out for..

University Days: A novel idea of Sun Microsystems is an initiative to spread awareness among students on issues like "Open Source." Hosted by the students of BITS Pilani, Goa Campus for students from all over the state it was the first of its kind in Goa. In tune with this idea, there was a talk by Mr. Simon Ritter of the core programming team at Sun Microsystems on "Looking at the horizon: The Participation Age". This was immediately followed by some interactive demo sessions of simple bots

using Java SE which enthralled the audience and kept them at their feet. "OS of the Future: Solaris 10" - this was covered by Mr. Peter Karlsson, senior product specialist, after which Mr. Jeevan Ramakrishna, developer in the Sun Grid team, took over with "Grid computing and the various features of SUN Grid Engine". Mr. Ritter then demonstrated the power of *NetBeans* by using it to build a small mobile application in just twenty minutes!! The event was wrapped up with lunch and informal discussions between the students

and Mr. Jeevan. The stupendous success of this event is attributed to the Evangelists and Mr. Naveen Asrani of Sun Microsystems.

Radioactive

Experience: The 63rd BRNS-IANCAS NATIONAL WORKSHOP on Radiochemistry and Applications of Radioisotopes in Science was organized between

January 20-28, 2007 by Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (BRNS) and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai in collaboration with the Biological Sciences Group, BITS, Pilani – Goa Campus. The aim of this workshop was to popularize radiochemistry and the usefulness of isotope applications in the fields of molecular biology, biotechnology and its various applications in industry, agriculture, physical sciences and health care. This workshop provided a forum for mutual interaction between scientists, faculty members and students of

technical institutions and professionals and gave a hands-on training on handling of radioactive isotopes and carrying measurements. A team of senior scientists from BRNS-IANCAS, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai and guest experts conducted the training programs. The patron was Prof. T C Goel, Director, Goa Campus and the event was coordinated by Prof. S.K. Ray, Biological Sciences Group. The training program was conducted as per the guidelines and norms prescribed by IANCAS. 15 lectures were covered during the workshop, including Introduction to Radioactivity, Nuclear structure and stability, Interaction of radiation with matter, Radiation detection, Neutron Activation Analysis and Isotopes in health care.

BITSians SHINING: BITS, Pilani – Goa Campus is certainly exploring new horizons and redefining them each passing day!. The team of Gaurav Paruthi, Roshan Sumbaly, Abhishek Kumar, and Shubham Malhotra from BITS, Pilani - Goa Campus stood 2nd in the national level finals of the *Imagine Cup*. Their team, named G.R.A.S, was among the top 11 teams selected in the software designing category from colleges across India. In keeping with the theme “*technology makes education better*”, these guys designed a GRID based interactive Artificially Intelligent interface named *eduGRID* - a cluster of computers running an Artificially Intelligent program that answers the queries of students and teachers alike, through two-way conversation between the user and the bot. *eduGRID* can be a great tool for

educating blind people and those living in rural areas, simultaneously meeting the shortage of qualified teachers in the face of exploding population; in fact it can be a solution for the shortage of teachers itself!! *Implementation of eduGRID on the campus is also being planned.* In 2005, Ishan Shukla, another BITSian was the runner-up in the short film category of the Imagine Cup held in Yokohama, Japan in the year 2005.

This year, not only Quark got national; BITSians won many laurels in the techfests held in different colleges across the country. In IIT – Bombay Techfest, held from 26th – 28th January, 2007, BITS, Pilani – Goa Campus finished an astounding 4th among 600 colleges in Asia!! Students won prizes in Radio Sport, Software Designing, CRO 2.0 and Quiz. In IIT – Delhi techfest called Tryst’07, students of BITS won in Chaos, Technopreneurship

and Poster Presentation events. The next stop was Engineer’07 – the annual technological fair at NIT Surathkal, where the students of BITS, Pilani – Goa Campus stood 1st in Automata, 1st in Transporter, 2nd in Perfect Machine and 3rd in Foxhunt. A bigger contingent of students than last year went to our sister campus at Pilani for Apogee (20th – 25th March, 2007) where they won in events like Code Jam, Quiz and Paper Presentation. In addition to these, students of the Goa Campus shone their way through the techfests at IIT - Kanpur (Techkriti), IIT – Kharagpur (Kshitij), NIT Nagpur (Axis) and the National Science Fest at St. Stephen’s (Delhi), earning laurels for BITS.

But at the end of the day, it wasn’t just about the laurels won – the exposure and experience gained by the students will surely stand them in good stead.

Gaurav, Roshan, Abhishek and Shubham stood second in National Level Finals of Imagine Cup



Bringing Noise To Action

Like the emergence of a Phoenix from the ashes, Waves erupted from the minute speck of land which harbors the educational heart of Goa... the aura was one of celebration, the attitude was one of competence and serenity was a long forgotten word. The biggest cultural extravaganza for college students in Goa – WAVES - had begun.

The Theme: Urban Chaos

As the theme clearly suggests, *DJ'ing* (music), *Breaking and Poppin'* (dance), *Graffiti writing* (arts), and *emceeing* (literary) were the tools of expression in an event which was characteristic of the fast spreading *Hip Hop* culture. Each day and each event was unique and every competitor unleashed her creativity in an attempt to win over the crowd. However, it wasn't only the competitions that were enthralling. At the close of each day events had been planned to add to the electrifying atmosphere. On the first day, the crowd witnessed the display of music skills by several college Rock Bands. The following day, DJ Sasha from Bangalore shook up the dance floor by playing 2 hours of adrenaline pumping music. On the final day, three professional rock groups stormed the crowd with their blazing guitars, blistering vocals and sensational drumming. Half Step Down, Bhayanak Maut, and Mother Jane left the crowd gasping for breath (head banging and moshing) and hungry for more.

The spotlight at the awards ceremony was stolen by the hosts with Goa Medical College as a close second. But Waves wasn't just about fighting it out for the top honors...Urban chaos sure did live up to its name and one and sundry had a taste of its heady mix of creativity, music and energy.

Hutch

www.bits-goa.ac.in/waves07
waves07@bits-goa.ac.in

9, 10, 11th March

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BRIDGING THE GAP- TEAM BITSAA, ITS FORMATION & FUNCTIONS

BY SHOUNAK SEN SHARMA ('06 CHEMICAL)

The diversity of the BITS Alumni is remarkable. All over the globe, BITSians are conquering and like influential leaders, laying down new roads. This diversity, however, is unified through the BITS Alumni Association. The faculty and students of BITS, Pilani-Goa Campus in its efforts to tap into this diversity found it prudent to form a representative body which would be entrusted the task of looking into alumni and student interests. With help from Mr. Ashish Garg, steps have been undertaken for achieving the same, the first being the formation of 'Team BITSAA'. With the foundation firmly in place, it is only a matter of time before the campus has full-fledged involvement in the alumni matters.

The Trigger: Mr Ashish Garg's Visit

When Ashish Garg, (Strategic Marketing Manager, Cypress Semiconductors) came over to visit the campus. The purpose of his visit was to set up a PSoC lab in the campus, first of its kind in India. He ended up achieving quite a lot more than

that and also won quite a few fans among the BITSians. His dynamic personality enthralled students everywhere, be it the lab session with electronics students, dinner with the BITSAA team or the lecture on career options. The visit of Ashish Garg left back a lot for the students to live



Full house!!!(Ashish's lecture) "Fear not my fellow warriors. BITSians are lions. They fight and succeed and their names live on forever and ever..."

up to but the students too weren't too far back in returning the favor. The feeling of nostalgia is more intoxicating and addictive than any drug in the world and the students with the hospitality and warmth extended made sure he left with a bag full of just that. The consequence was the formation of Team BITSAA, a new chapter in Campus History.

Every individual dreams of making it big in their respective fields but only some actually get to reap the benefits of their hard work and dedication. Proper guidance has a major hand in this quest. The Alumni plays a key role in this process. Team BITSAA has been formed with the sole purpose of acting as a

missing link between the students of BITS, Pilani-Goa Campus and the Alumni. Being the first of its kind, this committee was brought into existence through a rigorous selection procedure. The response from the students was startling and eventually, the committee was formed, consisting of the most creative and skillful minds on campus. Amongst the various functions of this club are organizing and managing lectures by the alumni and handling visits by ex-

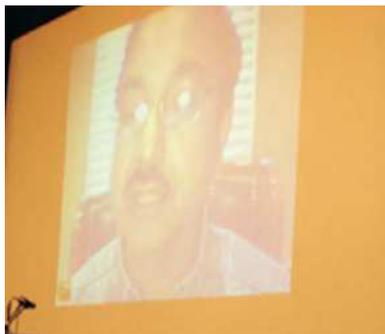
BITSians to the campus. Matters pertaining to intra campus publicity are also taken care of by the team.

19 days into the New Year, this esteemed committee was given the stamp of assurance by Dr. L.K. Maheshwari. This landmark was accompanied by an intriguing speech by the Director, BITS, Pilani Campus himself on the flexibility of the BITS system and the priorities

of a student in life. A wave of approval swiveled across the Audi as he boldly concluded his session with the words “Aim high, dream high and you will surely succeed.”

Embryo at BITS, Pilani – Goa Campus

The day after that, Team BITSAA was given a taste of what they would be dealing with by their first event initiated by **BITS EMBRYO**. This was the beginning of the new series of online lectures without missing the components of EMBRYO at Pilani campus. Vice Chancellor Prof.L.K.Maheshwari was also



Mr.Ramankutty during the lecture

present during the first session. Mr. Jayan Ramankutty, an ex-BITSian based in California, delivered a lecture titled ‘Entrepreneurship- a food for thought.’ But it was no ordinary lecture. The first of its kind in the Goa Campus, Mr. Ramankutty spread his words of wisdom through video conferencing. The audience stumbled and stammered as the white screen flickered and within seconds, the face of the US based entrepreneur stared back at them. Embryo Goa which began under the BITSAA Banner is now moving over to have its independent existence independent of BITSAA. The student volunteers and participants greatly value the contribution of all its alumni

speakers and the encouragement of the Embryo Core Team Members especially Mr Shashikant Khandelwal, Mr Mayur Shah, Mr Gurpreet Singh and Mr Adarsh Sreekumar. It is indeed an honor to be able to interact with such visionaries and be a part of their team.

Many more lectures were organized under the banner of *Embryo*. Mr.Anupam Mathur, Mr.Vivek Paul, Mr.Deepak Kapur and Mr.Karthick Narayanan were the others who shared their knowledge with us.

The metamorphosis: Noticeable increase in frequency of alumni visits to campus.

Dilip D’Souza: By profession, a free lance writer and by heart, very magnanimous with plenty to talk about, the former chief editor of Sandpaper holds the distinction being the first alumni member to deliver a lecture on our campus. For a man who thinks “programming and writing involve the same level of creativity”, the fact that he is a software engineer turned writer, is not surprising.

Sarath Babu: Currently heading the successful Ahmedabad based catering



company ‘Food King’; his is an inspirational rag to riches life story. The journey from the

slums of urban Ahmedabad to the air-conditioned office of a well to do entrepreneur is indeed a commendable one. His lecture, which dealt primarily with his life story, was well received by the students with several standing ovations. *Sarath Babu: “To do something for myself, my family, and society-that is my motivation”*

C.N.Ramesh: A 1974 Bits Pilani graduate, now working as Human Resource Dean at Goa Institute of Management, Mr. Ramesh set foot on our campus to inaugurate the ‘Career



Development Cell.’ He was also a panelist for the discussion on ‘women’s issues’ during the inaugural ceremony.

Mr.Vivek Ladha: A student of ’78 EEE is currently an MD of Lark Non Ferrous Metals in Goa. He has the unique distinction of having seen the campus being setup in front of him. He is also an Adjunct Professor in the Mechanical Engineering Department at BITS, Pilani- Goa Campus.

Mr.Adarsh Sreekumar: His visit was of special interest due to the fact that he works at Microsoft, a dream company for many. Another attraction was his brother Mr.Anuroop Sreekumar, working as Business

NOTES FROM GOA

BITS Pilani Alumni Magazine

Analyst at McKinsey who accompanied him. Their talk was mainly oriented towards how to get into Microsoft or McKinsey

Mr. Adarsh & Mr. Anuroop with director... "collaborative culture at BITS Goa cannot be seen in any institution in India... It's more like a family" along with the importance of aiming for a

B-school in US after a few years of work experience. Their inspiring words truly raised the BITSian spirit high.

While the dream of bridging the gap between the new campus and the Alumni is en route to fruition, it is evident that further increase in interaction between

the two only be advantageous in this quest.

"Team BITSAA invites you to visit us at Goa Campus. Please send us a mail at bitsaa@bits-go.ac.in when you plan to come in. Also check out our activities at <http://www.bits-go.ac.in/bitsaa>"



[HTTP://WWW.BITS360.COM](http://www.bits360.com)

BY – AALAP TRIPATHY (04' EEE)

Home Radar Snapshot Forum

BITS 360^o Beta

HIDE WAYPOINTS

CENTRAL LAWN

The central lawn is the most aesthetic piece of work on the campus. Its provides an enchanting view of the whole campus - the main institute building in the front and the Boys' and Girls' hostels on either side. It also has access to wireless internet

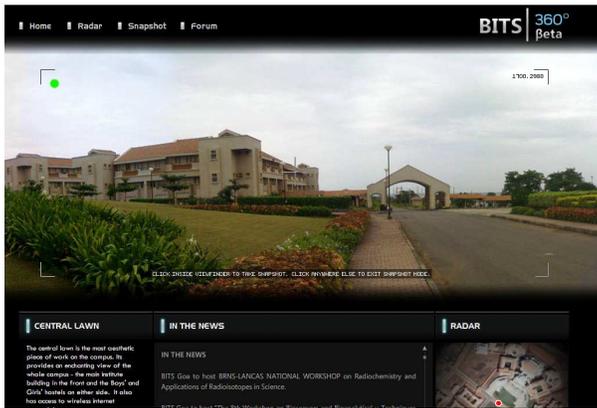
IN THE NEWS

IN THE NEWS

BITS Goa to host BRNS-LANCAS NATIONAL WORKSHOP on Radiochemistry and Applications of Radioisotopes in Science.

BITS Goa to host "The 8th Workshop on Biosensors and Bioanalytical Techniques"

RADAR



Radar Feature



Making customized walkthroughs



CD Based Distribution



Developed by Abhinav Asthana & Abhimanyu Vatsya, CSD, BITS Pilani Goa Campus. This is a comprehensive solution that enables institutions to showcase their campus, infrastructure and facilities using 360° completely controllable panoramic views. Environment both indoors and outdoors can be captured in graphic detail. It is also being marketed as a commercial product.

BITS PILANI-DUBAI, AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE BITS DUBAI SANDPAPER TEAM

BITS, Pilani – Dubai

(BPD), was established in Dubai in September 2000, in response to the growing need for quality engineering education among the residents of the Middle East.

Since its inception, BPD has maintained the same high standards in its academic programs as its parent campus. Success in creating dynamic professionals with an outstanding technical knowledge and an all-round personality has made BITS, Pilani-Dubai a name to reckon with for quality technical education, in a short span of seven years.

BPD not only attracts students from the Gulf countries but also from India. There are also students from countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Kenya and Tanzania.

The Institute has constantly strengthened its faculty base and the faculty strength has grown sizably in the last seven years, not only in number, but also in quality. The Campus offers state-of-the-art facilities and infrastructure with laboratories and workshops of international

standards equipped with the latest machines and devices.

BPD has its very own Practice School program in the UAE which has been running successfully for seven years now.

the region, the prestigious Association of distinguished Professional Engineers from around the world. Currently it has 200 student members who actively participate in several international conferences and events.



BPD has also signed MOUs with American Universities for Twinning Programs, Joint Research, Preferential Admission for BITS Students to Master's and Doctoral programs. The universities are:

- Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
- University of Maryland, College Park
- Iowa State University, Iowa
- Kansas State University, Kansas
- University at Buffalo - The State University of New York
- George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

BPD has one of the largest student branches of the IEEE in

The BITS, Pilani – Dubai campus has attracted a lot of interest from several dignitaries who want to learn more about the transformation that BPD is bringing to engineering education in the Middle East. Visitors to the BPD include President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, Shri. Sudeep Banerjee, Secretary, Department of

Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of HRD, Government of India, Shri. Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairman, University Grants Commission, Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohd bin Rashid al Maktoum, Chairman, Tecom Zone, H.E. Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, Minister of Economy and Planning, Govt of UAE, Dr. Sam Pitroda, Vice-Chancellors of various Indian Universities.

With the Dubai center, BITS Pilani became the first Indian University with an International footprint. By ensuring quality in Education and all-round development, the BITS Pilani Dubai center and its graduates are already making a mark in the Middle East. The success of

BPD has not gone unnoticed. The BITS Pilani Administration has received numerous requests from countries in Africa and Asia to establish more such

campuses outside India. Another first for BITS Pilani.

The Sandpaper Team urges BITSians to visit the BITS Pilani Dubai campus to

meet the students and share stories. Your very presence will inspire the students to strive harder to become what BITS Pilani made us.

BSF: BITS SPORTS FESTIVAL

BY PIYUSH SINGH & THE BITS DUBAI SANDPAPER TEAM

FOUR years ago the Sports Committee of the Institute decided that there was scope for an inter-university sports event. There were no major inter-university sports events in the UAE until this point of time. This led to the first 'BITS Sports Festival' in the 2004. The majority of the competitions, except for Chess and Table Tennis, were held outside the campus. The event was a great success and has become an annual phenomenon ever since.

Now in its fourth year the 'BITS Sports Festival' or 'BSF' as it is referred to, is the biggest event

of its kind in the UAE in terms of the number of competitive events, participating universities as well as students. Not only has the BSF set the standard for other sports events to follow but has also redefined university sports in the UAE.

BSF 2007 was held between the 8th and 18th of March. It drew together more than five hundred participants for seven sporting events: Cricket, Badminton, Football, Table Tennis, Volleyball, Chess and Throwball.

The participating colleges themselves were a who's who of the top universities on the UAE circuit and included the

American University of Sharjah, Gulf Medical College, University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD), Manipal University, Emirates College of Management & Information Technology, Shaheed Zulfakir Ali Bhutto Institute of Science & Technology, Al Ghurair University, London City College and the Emirates Aviation College amongst others.

The badminton and football events kickstarted the festival with fierce competition from the get-go. Over the next ten days everyone was treated to some truly fantastic encounters with the hosts leading the way in almost every department. In fact the inspired performance put in by the BITS contingent meant that we finished either first or second in all but one discipline out of the eleven that were conducted for both girls and boys.

Guess who won the final overall trophy. BPD.



STEPMOTHER

BY MEENAKSHI CHATTERJEE ('05 PHY AND EEE)

My marriage was a boon to my parents. Why wouldn't it? I was thirty years already, my beauty waning every passing year, and with the prices rising; my father feared the worst about my dowry.

"A big girl sitting on my head! God knows when someone will marry her!" My father grumbled every day.

"She is earning, she is intelligent. Have faith, our daughter will get married." My mother's comforting words fell on deaf ears.

I knew why my dad was so upset. It was the dowry. In the small illiterate town in India from where I am, dowry was a norm. Every bride's family paid a price to the groom for marrying her. The more qualified the groom, or more aged the bride – the dowry got higher. I wasn't Miss Universe, and anyways even she would have had to pay if she was from this town! No wonder then that my father was so disgruntled.

Many men came and went. Some said I was too old, some said I was over-qualified, others didn't find me pretty and some didn't like the idea of me earning a living. Women in my town are never encouraged to work outside. Their sole purpose in life is to find a husband, rear his children and then die. When born they are commanded by their father, then husband and finally their son. That's the end of their story. My destiny would

have been the same had I not decided to be independent. I wanted to earn my own living. I don't know where from I got these notions of self-sufficiency and

"Welcome to your paradise, bride", an old lady crooned from the side. I smiled back at her. Clutched to her saree, was a wide-eyed boy who looked at me with awe and amazement. I later found out that he was my son, my step-son.

independence, but I was glad I got them. I wasn't a burden to my parents.

The man who married me saw me once. He was forty and this was his second marriage. A widower with a six year old son, his marriage was more for his family, than for himself. I knew all this when I met him in presence of an entourage of elders.

Arranged marriage is a novel concept in India. Guy meets girl in presence of relatives, sees her once, asks her a few mundane questions and departs with a promise to follow-up.

Usually if the man is pleased with that half an hour encounter, he lets everyone know. The girl's opinion is usually not sought – after all she is incompetent to plan her future. The marriage is fixed, dowry is exchanged and they live their life

together ever after! (Divorce is an unknown term.)

My case was no different except the fact that my groom was doing it the second time. Every ritual of the marriage seemed a repetition for him and he soon lost interest. He had no excitement for his marriage and neither did I. Only my parents were happy.

When I first stepped into his house, I was welcomed by a handful of relatives.

"Welcome to your paradise, bride", an old lady crooned from the side. I smiled back at her. Clutched to her saree, was a wide-eyed boy who looked at me with awe and amazement. I later found out that he was my son, my step-son.

Rahul was six years old. He lost his mother when he was four. I saw her picture hanging on the wall of our bedroom. It was a black and white wedding photograph. A smiling young woman beside a young happy man. The picture glowed with their happiness. In comparison my wedding picture looked boring and



lifeless. The same young man looked disinterested and I looked old.

On our first night together I got to know everything about my husband. He came into the decorated room and without any preamble began speaking. “Shakunthala was a devoted wife to me. I hope you know that.” I nodded my head at the mention of his first wife. “Her death has left a permanent void- I will never forget her. Rahul is very young, he needs a mother and your mother-in-law needed someone to take care of the household and hence you are here. I have no desire for anyone. Shakunthala can not be replaced.”

There was a pause in his monologue but the silence was so absolute that I felt it stretched for an eon. “I have no expectations as a wife from you but I want you to be a caring mother to Rahul. He should never feel the loss of Shakunthala.”

With that my husband picked up his pillow, his quilt and left. He didn't care to look at my decorated face, my lined black eyes, my quivering red lips – nothing! I spent the rest of my wedding night sitting motionless on my decorated bed. Even the roses tied to my bedpost seemed to mock my being.

It was anger that gripped my heart first. What sin did I commit that I was no wife but a baby-sitter? Didn't I deserve a caring husband, my own family saw how my husband doted on his kid. I saw them hugging each

and a healthy married life? I knew I did but life just wasn't fair.

Early next morning my married life began. With the rising sun, I rose from my bed. Cooking, cleaning, washing and then running to my work. I helped fill lunch boxes for my husband and Rahul. I helped Rahul pack his



bag for his school. In all that I did, I noticed how Rahul avoided me. I noticed him staring at me, maybe with anger. I just stared back. He wasn't my son, and what reason did I have to pamper his every whim?

My husband did as much as he could himself. I could see him placing miles and miles of distance between us. Everything was formal. He talked to me as a stranger would. It just made me gnaw with pain within. My friends at work came to congratulate me. They didn't know it was hardly a marriage. “You finally got married, huh? I am sure your parents would be really happy. What with your age and no looks.....” someone from the side stopped Susheela from other – their world complete in themselves. I wasn't a part of it.

completing her sentence. She didn't have to finish it, she had said enough. I didn't bother to reply.

When I returned in the evening, I found Rahul already at home. He looked at me, then at my bag and back at me. Was he expecting something? “Is there something you want to tell me, Rahul?”

“Nothing!”, and with that he ran away. I noticed that Rahul didn't call me mother. Nothing, I had no name. I felt bitter. I had no children; my husband was not interested in having one with me, and here I was saddled with someone else's child who was just a burden. My bitterness quickly gave way to anger and I

stomped off to my room. When my husband returned, he brought chocolates with him. “Rahul, come see what's dad got for you!”

I saw the joy in Rahul's eyes, as he

I learnt to live without love in a household I couldn't call home. I learnt to work for “my family” without any expectations. I learnt to see a man, called my husband, treat me like a total stranger.

came prancing from his room to grab the chocolates that my husband held. I

Days went by like that. I learnt to live without love in a

household I couldn't call home. I learnt to work for "my family" without any expectations. I learnt to see a man, called my husband, treat me like a total stranger.

One evening as I was returning from office, I found Rahul being bullied by the neighborhood boys. They were beating him up badly. He was bleeding from the nose and his small frame was no match for the big boys. Despite myself I yelled.

"Hey! Leave him alone. Leave him alone, you shameless brutes!"

My yelling and a few random slaps, made my point clear.

As the other kids ran away, Rahul stood there, bruised and sobbing. I kneeled down and touched him on the shoulder.

"It's ok Rahul. Boys don't cry. They won't beat you again, be strong. I shall tell your dad and

he will do something. Don't worry."

Without warning, Rahul hugged me. His small hands grasped my neck and his tears wet my blouse. His sobs almost muffled his next words.

"Mommy, don't leave. Don't leave me again."

I hugged him back. Rahul had called me "Mommy". For a long time passer-bys saw a small child clinging to the bosom of a young woman.

That evening we walked back home, hand in hand.

When my husband returned from work, his son mentioned me.

"Mommy saved me today dad. She scared away the bullies from beating me!" Saying thus he smiled brilliantly in my direction and ran to my legs.

My husband didn't expect Rahul to be so articulate about me. He

looked at me, and for the first time I saw something more than formality in his eyes. He got up and walked slowly in my direction.

"Malini.....thank you. Take care of my Rahul. You will won't you?"

With that my husband touched my hand gently. I looked into his eyes and I suddenly saw what I always wanted to see. A future. I saw myself, a little girl in my arms, I saw my Rahul dancing around his new sister and I saw my husband, happy at my side. The picture was perfect – my family!

When I looked at Rahul, I realized what I was missing in my life. His love had transformed me from a step-mother to a mother. I was married at last!

20 YEARS LATER

BY ANURADHA GUPTA (86 MMS)

BIT'Sians; how

distant it all seems.

Starry eyed and out to conquer

The world was at our feet,
Nothing could ever stand in our way,

We always felt upbeat.

How distant it all seems,
Simple pleasures, books,
labs, assignments and submissions

Head in the clouds cycling to campus

Classes, Jal T, the library,
Companies, academics,
achievement and success,

Product launches,
innovation, touring,



It was all about us...

Ex-BIT'Sians; how distant even that seems,

As many of us reinvent the wheel,

The purpose, the path, the questioning

And there are others that do us proud;

On the straight path to what was my old definition of success;

I've almost forgotten what that was,

I confess...

How distant it all seems,
The joyous 9 to 9 routine,

Number crunching, brand strategies, market shares,

Agency meetings, research,
selling dreams,
No time to reflect on who I am,
Ex-BITSian, climbing the
corporate ladder at Levers

A brand manager of soaps and
creams!

How distant it all seems,

And yet, I see,
Ex-BITSians on a million paths,
Writers, artists, social workers,
entrepreneurs,
Who have strayed from the
original dream?
However scary that might seem!

And so, distant though they may
be,

I cherish and embrace the olden
days,
When the rainbow was right
there for me.
I hold onto the courage and
verve being an ex-BITSian gives
me,
As I stray from the path; find
myself...
My truth has to set me free...

A Magic World

By Sivavitha Devarconda

I wish I had a memory charm
With which I would disarm
Every past recollection that could harm
The ones that have nurtured me in their loving arms

If I could send a howler
I would send one such letter
That would remind every rabble-rouser
Not to interfere with my loved ones ever

If I had a port-key
Distance would not matter any
Because I would get through any key
And I could be anywhere with whomever I want to be
Though the miles betwixt us be many

I wish I had a sorcerer's stone
So I would never be alone
For I would share it with my every loved one
And time could part none

I wish life had a little bit of magic
The fact that time will not turn is tragic
Truth is, the making of felix-felicitas was never too specific
A little drop changing one's luck doesn't sound like logic!

But life isn't always about logic
It is about faith and love, ageless and classic
And therein lies a treasure, majestic

Which is life's own little bit of magic

RAINBOW

BY SRIKANTH SRIDHARAN ('01 MECH)

As usual, I had to kick myself out of the bed. The fact that it was a Monday only made things worse. It was always tough to get back to the work-routine after every weekend. It took me sometime to reach the wash room. I was in deep slumber.



I like looking at the mirror quite often and analyze my face. But there was no mirror next to the basin here. It has been six months since I moved to this place and yet I did not find the time to buy one. That I have been busy is true. Was it just a mirror? It was more of laziness. How I longed to see my face on this yet another Monday morning!

The same old white toothpaste stared back. I decided then – I will buy the new sparkling red gel toothpaste next time. The girl in that ad is too pretty. As the chain of thoughts flowed, I finished brushing and moved into the new bean bag that I bought last week. What a feeling it is to read the newspaper sitting

on that! One must try it to believe it. It was then that I felt something was not right with the paper. I remembered the paper's front page being printed in

color in recent times. But today everything was black and white. I wondered if they were mourning the death of Saddam. It was pretty strange for the newspaper to do that. As I opened the sports column, I remembered the Australians were headed for a series sweep. I decided to catch some live action and switched on the TV.

There was a Charlie Chaplin video going on. I just loved that guy - a true genius. Smitten yet again, I watched the video for the next five minutes by when 'The Ashes' thought crossed my mind. I switched to Channel 16 - ESPN. They were showing some old match and the game was in black and white which was weird. As I thought 'it must be Star Sports' and my mind simultaneously processed details on Sir Don Bradman, it struck me. "That player looks like Ricky Ponting!" How? "Ricky Ponting in a classic video?" As I was trying to figure what was happening, I saw the 'LIVE' word under the Channel Logo. It was strange for ESPN to be doing something like that.

The bigger jolt arrived next. My tea, which comes from the stall across the door, was on the table. It was grey. I switched channels frantically and realized - every channel was Black & White! I looked up - the sunlight was there. I couldn't see the usual bright orange of the morning. It was a dark shade of grey. I sank into my chair. I could not see any colors! Refusing to believe, I stepped out into the balcony. The truth laughed at me. Everything around was in varying shades of grey. I was in a black and white world. Except that, all else remained the same.

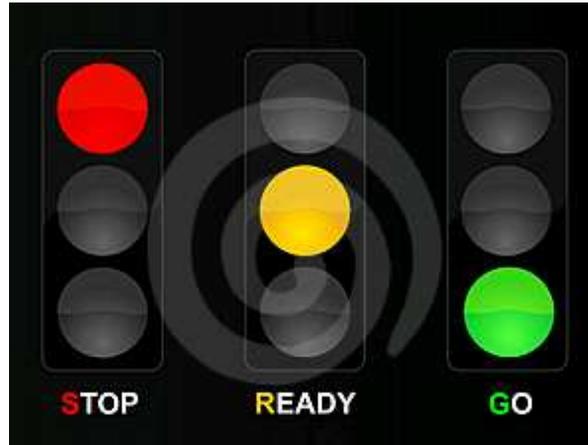
I looked up - the sunlight was there. I couldn't see the usual bright orange of the morning. It was a dark shade of grey. I sank into my chair. I could not see any colors!

I took refuge in my bean bag. I just sat there, possibly for a whole hour. My usual thought chain led me deep into dejection. It wasn't unlike a fairy tale episode - only it wasn't imaginary. I thought about the clear blue sky and the lashing waves that I enjoyed at the beach every evening; water-front fireworks over the impending New Year eve;

the Ferrari and Manchester United red; my faithful companion - the Rubik's cube; nature's most beautiful gift - the rainbow! I wouldn't be able to enjoy any of them again. My thoughts would have carried me farther, if a honking outside didn't break my reverie.

Thirty minutes later, I was riding my bike to work. Everything looked bleak - after all, life was colorless now. Especially when thought about the presentation I had to prepare that day, I shuddered. I was recognized by almost everyone in the office for my crisp, clear but more importantly colorful presentations. What would happen now? How will I handle this? Would I have to look for another job? Would people ever appreciate me again? The thought chain recurred as I stopped at one of those innumerable traffic signals

on my way. This was the last thing I needed to worry



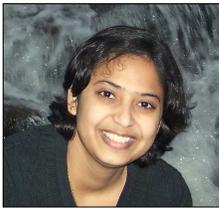
about. I had paid no attention when my friends were discussing the order of lights in a traffic signal - what a dry topic for conversation! But now, it became the most important thing for me in the world! For I could be right next to the stop line in the next signal and wouldn't know when it turned GREEN!

With this challenging task, I looked to my right. Three guys, one after another, arms linked to shoulder and

wearing dark glasses were crossing the signal. The first person deftly identified the bicycle fellow on the road using his walking cane and maneuvered his companions to take a safe way around. He rang the bell on his cane drawing people's attention so that they give way. It was a tough task for a person without eyesight. I followed them step after step and heaved a sigh of relief as they reached the other end. It was an event that hardly lasted thirty seconds. But it kicked something deep down and I looked up with a strange strength. The signal luminescence shifted down and interestingly, I saw an upward arrow brighten up. I smiled and moved on.



HOW LONG IS LONG TERM STRATEGY?



BY MADHURI VUTHA ('95 PHY AND MMS)

HISTORICALLY,

strategy was synonymous with long-term strategy. Long-term planning involved a 7-10 year roadmap towards a company's overall vision and goals. In the last few decades however, this was compressed to a 5-7 year plan. With the explosion of information technology across industries in the 90s, coupled with rising market uncertainties and the need to compete on a global scale, companies looked at short-term strategic initiatives to achieve their long-term financial goals. These initiatives typically ranged between 1-2 years. Today, organizations are constantly evolving their business strategies and are faced with the challenging task of setting the time horizon for their long-term strategy.

Strategies: shrunken shelf-life

Gone are the **Hire-to-Retire** days where one kept their loyalty with their organization, until the day came to collect their retirement funds. In today's fluid IT market, the average length of a software professional between the 22-28 age bracket is under 2 years. And we are already beginning to see this effect in other industries as well.

Take another example, the ITES-BPO sector has seen attrition rates as high as 70% in the last 2 years. A Senior

Manager from a large BPO firm in Bangalore explains, "*Workforce planning has become one the biggest pain-points for HR in the BPO industry. It affects the long-term stability of the company. We train our employees for 3-6 months only to realize that they leave again in 12-15 months or in some cases even earlier.*"

To further analyze the longevity of a strategy, let's take the case of a strategy planning process. As

"3 months is long-term for me. Some people have 5 year plans. I don't even have one year plans. My plans tend to be in the order of a couple of months."

- Linus Torvalds.

described by Kaplan & Norton, organizations need to keep two primary aspects in mind. First, is to align corporate goals, initiatives and metrics, and second, is to align the company's budgeting process with strategy planning. The latter step is to ensure we have the resources to achieve the goals defined. Across the globe, budgeting processes are fairly standardized and the process extends to one year. When the budgeting process spans one year, isn't it reasonable that strategy also spans the same length? Keep in mind, we are now operating in web years, where a **web year** is

equivalent to roughly 3 months of calendar year.

Align internal business process to respond quickly: Excerpts from an interview

In the high-paced online gaming industry, external market factors can act as a huge catalyst or challenger for strategic decisions that a company takes. Todd Walderman, Managing Director of a Europe-based gaming company - Tribeca Tables Ltd, shares his experience and views on strategic risk management. He states that careful STEP analysis plays a vital role in the value creation opportunities of a strategy. He believes that it is pertinent for large organizations to have think tanks in the company who will be able to study market trends and make reasonable buffer for strategic validity. For smaller organizations, this activity is more often than not done by on-the-fly SWAT teams who quickly re-evaluate company strategies in short time-frames. According to Todd, changing market situations are proving to be a constant threat for mid to small sized firms. There is now a compelling need for them to find their 'blue oceans' and other innovative mediums to market. As he states, "*Innovation is the new mantra for survival. And to achieve this, it is important for organizations to stay nimble and adapt quickly as situation demands.*"

“In the 21st century, we are operating in a knowledge-based market, and technology is the least of our concerns. It is often not about the best ideas or the best strategies, but about superior execution of strategies to achieve dominant positions in the core markets. This is probably one of the strong reasons why organizations are now more lean and decentralized so that decision-making can be quicker and the time to market is faster.”

“External factors like political and legal factors play an important role in the growth of the business. Particularly for smaller firms, a small environmental change means a ripple-effect in their stability and sometimes their very existence.”



Todd Walderman, MD
Tribeca Tables Ltd.

Strategy time horizon

The new global marketplace has a major impact on organizations, although the impact and consequence differs from industry to industry. Every mature organization spends considerable time and process to firm up their strategies keeping into consideration internal and external factors. Traditional

analysis instruments like SWOT, BCG and value-chain analysis work perfectly in stable business environments. But in today's unprecedented market, these tools need a face-lift in order to mitigate operating risks. A Harvard Business Online article - 'Strategy under Uncertainty' explains 'Scenario Planning' as one of the more effective tools in decision-making. Companies such as Microsoft and FedEx are excellent examples of taking a weigh-scale approach to strategic alternatives.

The turn-around time for strategy execution has seen a significant shrinkage in their time horizon. As Figure 1 illustrates, the cycles for executing, reviewing and refining of strategy has begun to shrink. What was reviewed in 2-3 years has now reduced to time periods of less than one year. Therefore, to stay competitive, the key is to implement a quick approach to strategy execution and review. Now we're looking at a median time frame of anywhere between 6-18 months for short-term strategy and 2-3 years for long-term strategy.

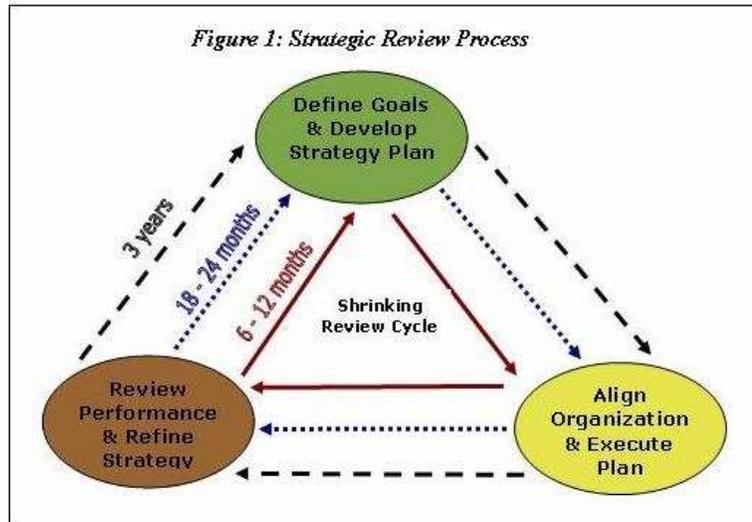
Strategic Review

Most companies conduct periodic monitoring and evaluation of

strategies. Performance is measured on key performance indicators (KPIs) set against organization goals. If goals/ milestones are not met and strategies have not stood the test of time, then it's ready for a mid-term correction or a makeover. With business situations changing by the day, pressure lies on the senior management to battle through and find brighter opportunities to operate. As a result, there is now a corporate mentality to 'do' things in a compressed time-box.

Concluding Remarks

We are now competing in a global economy where ability to execute, evaluate and adapt quickly has become the key differentiator for successful organizations. Irrespective of the strategy time period, a formal and thorough process for strategy development is still recommended. Companies must formulate their short-term and long-term strategies keeping in mind different 'time horizons' and the objectives of each of those. We must continue to nourish the assets and formulate effective strategies that can stand the test of time for a foreseeable future. Having said that, one must also keep in mind that you give reasonable time for strategies to be evaluated. Remember that is always better to do something "strategic" than just do it "faster".



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A STRATEGY CONSULTANT



By Nikhil Kolar

(96-00 A7 @BITS, Pilani, 03-05 MBA @ Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon University)

A brief insight into what to expect from a career in strategy consulting.

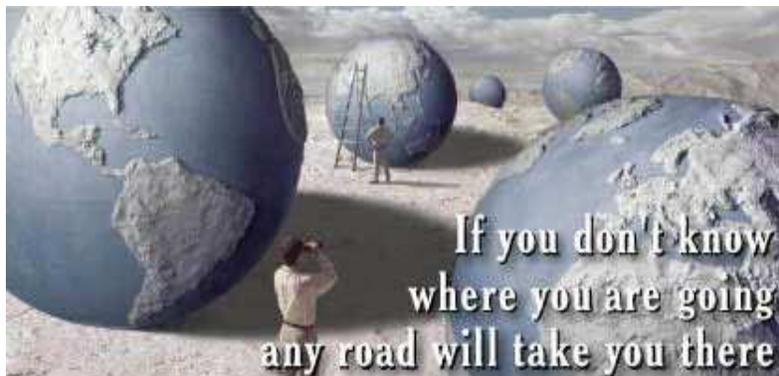
0630 hours: I don't want to wake up yet!

0635 hours: Alright! I am up. Late by 35 mins! Will have to manage going to the gym in the evening now! The email reminds me that I am now in week 4 of the typical 6-8 week project, my previous project lasting 6 months, being an exception.

0745 hours: Breakfast done, I am now in the hotel lobby saying hello to the usuals. The front desk folks know me well now. I am told that I require 30 more nights at their hotel this year to maintain my platinum status. (Simple math reveals that I must have spent 45 days here already!) Well, it figures! As a strategy consultant, I need to travel to where the clients are located. I leave Monday mornings & get back home Thursday evenings, spending 4 days, 3 nights at the client

site. In the process, one accumulates hotel and airline points. A small perk for being away from home so often!

0800 hours: At the client site, getting ready for the weekly



meeting on Wednesdays. This is the day the partner comes in as well. On this project my team consists of 1 Partner (who spends 2 days of the week working on this assignment), 1 principal, 2 senior associates & 3 associates. The size & composition of the team depends on the work to be done & the budget. I have been part of a 35 member team in one of my past projects & in another, I worked with just a principal.

"Such is the pace of change, the growth of uncertainty and the diversity of customer expectations that the major risk to survival is not planning. Strategic Planning helps you manage the future; if you don't manage the future, the future will manage you."

0900 hours: End of the weekly meeting. We reviewed where we stand on the various workstreams, what additional analyses need to be completed & finalized the deck (presentation document) that the

partner will use at her meeting with the company's CEO this afternoon.

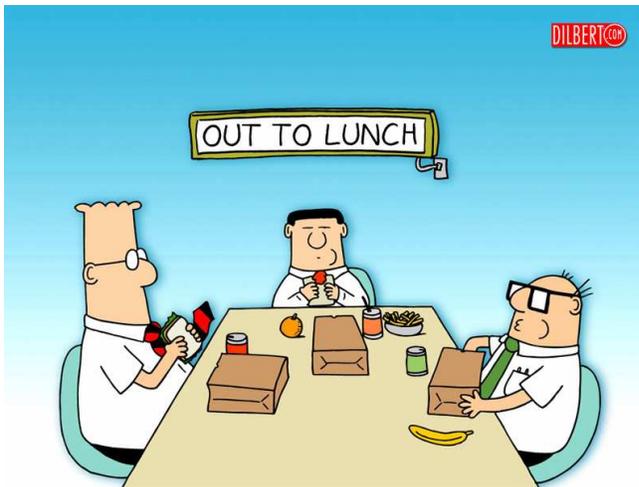
One of the opportunities this job affords is the access to middle to high level management. I have often worked days with senior managers &

presented to CEOs & their executive teams in a number of industries. My first project was with a healthcare firm where we helped the client figure out a growth strategy. This was followed by two stints in automotive: one to help the client reduce operational costs by standardizing their processes, the other being an OEM supplier to figure out a way to increase their working capital by addressing their inventories. Since then, I have worked in energy, media & consumer on multiple projects.

1100 hours: Grab a Cappuccino! Two intensive hours working on building an Excel

model to help the client understand the cost structure of its suppliers. This will allow the client to work with their suppliers to improve manufacturing processes. The savings can then be shared by both. I was required to visit the supplier's manufacturing facilities, do some value stream mapping, identify the various cost buckets and cost drivers. With these details, I will be able to use the model I am building to predict the cost of manufacturing a unit at different volume levels (scale). The client will then work with the suppliers to ensure appropriate order sizes, customization requirements etc.

1105 hours: Back to work! I hope I get this basic model working by lunch time. If I do, I can spend some time later to add macros to automate the process.



1200 hours: Done! Quick lunch at the client cafeteria before I head off to a 12.30 pm meeting with the client lead.

1430 hours: A fruitful meeting! This is the reason why we work at the client site. We need the constant interaction with the

client. The client lead and I spent the last couple of hours planning and developing the framework for his presentation to the CEO tomorrow. He will be presenting the progress we have made over the last few weeks and our next steps. It is a great experience to be able to coach senior managers on how to develop and deliver a message. The communication classes at school are paying off!

1500 hours: Since the last meeting with the client, I have realized that they don't fully realize the significance of the scale curves we developed. I have therefore spent some time trying to develop a small deck that will clearly explain how they should make use of the results of our previous study. I have spent the last 15 minutes sketching out the storyline on paper. I think I should be done with this initial version in another half hour after which the

slides will have to be developed on power-point. I have realized that graphics are a powerful tool to convey a message. Graphs, charts, innovative

visuals...anything is better than just text!

1730 hours: The initial version is ready and the partner likes it. She has suggested a couple of changes to the pages but is very appreciative of the initiative I have taken.

1830 hours: Tonight we dine Turkish! The team is planning on ordering in dinner..... a good change from the Cubano food from yesterday. My deck is ready for primetime. Maybe I should spend sometime now on the Excel model from this morning...

2000 hours: Dinner done. Scrumptious which reminds me...I really should spend sometime developing the interview guide that we will be using to interview other suppliers over the next week. I have been putting it off for some time.

2100 hours: Interview guide is ready. It has been a long day. We will head back to the hotel now.

2130 hours: All packed. I will be checking out of the hotel in the morning and head to the client site with my luggage. Leaving the client site by 4 pm gives me enough time for my 6 pm flight back home! A few more loose ends to tie & set up phone conferences for Friday. (I work from my home office on Fridays.)

2200 hours: Post my-daily-call-home it is now time to read through some of the decks from the other workstreams to ensure that the work they are doing will not complicate our work!



0000 hours: Just realized that I missed going to the gym again! I will start from next week! I promise...zzzzzzzzzz!

CONQUEST 2007 THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CHALLENGE

BY NAKUL JAMADAGNI ('05 CHEMICAL)

At over three editions since its inception, 'Conquest – The Business Challenge' has grown into the flagship event of CEL. CEL which stands for Center for Entrepreneurial Learning is a joint BITSAA-BITS Pilani initiative aimed at foster Entrepreneurship amongst BITSians.

From a small intra-BITS business plan contest in 2004 to an international business challenge in 2007, from 12 BITSian entries in 2004 to 168 entries in 2007, Conquest has witnessed phenomenal growth.

CONQUEST 2007

was conducted in four phases.

PHASE 1: CONQUEST CAMP

Students from universities in India and abroad as well interested individuals with viable commercial ideas submitted the executive summaries of their business plan. 165 entries from 400 different universities and 100 corporate companies were received.

PHASE 2: CONQUEST COLANDER

The business plans were evaluated by the panel of seventeen judges from different industry around the world and six business plans were shortlisted.

PHASE 3: CONQUEST FOCUS

The short listed teams were then introduced to industry Entrepreneurs who electronically mentored them in developing their business plan. The mentoring phase comprises of three different mentorship levels: a tech-sector specific

mentor, a legal advisor and a business model mentor, to help the participants with the various intricacies of their business plan

CONQUEST CAMP ENTRIES

Total Entries	168
From India	156
International	12

covering the most important aspects of such a plan.

PHASE 4: CONQUEST GRAND FINALE

The six finalists were invited to Pilani to go through the final rounds of the 'Business plan presentation' and 'Pitch it to the VC'. The winners are decided thereafter.

CONQUEST GRAND FINALE

The two day long finals was inaugurated by Prof. L.K. Maheshwari followed by interactive and exciting talks by prominent Indian Entrepreneurs.

The first workshop, titled "Starting Up: Taking the Leap" started with Kunwer Sachdev, the founder of Su-

Kam. Kunwer shared some interesting anecdotes from his personal life and startup experience. Manish Vij, Founder of Quasar, took over from Kunwer to share his journey through his ventures Kabadibazaar.com, Zoomtra and Quasar. Subsequently he went on to throw light upon the common mistakes which startups tend to make and how they can be foreseen and tackled.

After a short networking break, the Conquest workshops were back with Amit Ranjan, Founder and New Delhi

Lead of Uzanto which started Slideshare.net and Mindcanvas. He spoke of scaling global web

CONQUEST 2007 FINALISTS

- **IntraGra Retail:** National Institute of Industrial Engineering (NITIE), Mumbai
- **GPS Locatron:** IIT Madras
- **Soltec:** Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Pune
- **Transtrack:** NUS Singapore
- **Shikshaa:** BITS Pilani
- **The Sultans:** Institute for Technology and Management, Mumbai

applications and general challenges faced by web startups. This was followed by an interaction with Ashmeet Sidana, a Venture Capitalist from Foundation Capital, USA. Ashmeet shared several aspects of how VC funding works along with insights into how a great business team is built.



Manish Vij lighting the lamp to inaugurate Conquest 2007.

the evaluation process used to decide the winners of Conquest. The team from NUS Singapore was placed as runners up and VIT Pune came out to be the winners of Conquest 2007.

This year, CEL plans to capitalize on the BITS Alumni network's potential by expanding its panel of judges,

The Grand Finale of Conquest 2007 was held at the BITS auditorium. Vikas Gutgutia, the founder of Ferns and Petals inspired the audience with his startup experience and innovative solutions he had to build to transform his business into an international success. The finale saw the participants give a walking pitch to the audience from the Sky Lawns all the way to the Auditorium. Finally, the judges, Ashmeet Sidana and Sujit Panigrahi shared

CONQUEST 2007 JUDGES

- Ashmeet Sidana
Venture partner: Foundation Capital
- Manish Vij
Co-founder and Business Head: Smile Interactive Technology Group, Quasar Online Media, Zoomtra.com
- Kunwer Sachdev
Founder, Su-kam
- Vikaas Gutgutia
MD: Ferns 'N' Petals Group, Chatak Chaat
- Amit Ranjan
Chief, New Delhi Office: Uzanto, Slideshare.net

mentors, investors, and VC's spanning a spectrum of geographies and domain expertise.

To further its goal of equipping BITSians with the required skills to make impeccable Business Plans and turn them into real-life businesses, CEL is launching '**Epsilon – Intra-BITS Entrepreneurial Business Challenge**' – a program that envisages inviting ideas from students on campus, running the teams through a fun-filled Business Plan Workshop, choosing the best among them and providing them with able mentorship.

Conquest 2007 Winners: SOLTEC, VIT Pune

Founders: Nitish Suri and Abhinay Nagpal

"Soltec is a solar battery powered charger for mobile phones that will put an end to the existing electronic battery chargers forever, away from the hassles of power cuts. We want to start a company that can come up with the products that are clean and useful with the first focus on Soltec"

Conquest 2007 Runners-up: TRANSTRACK, NUS Singapore

Founders: Prashant, Srikanth, Nilesh and Tan Iris

"Transtrack enables Automobile Fleet Operators to find the location and other details about the vehicle real time. Transtrack uses Global Positioning System (GPS) technology, integrated with the GPRS communication to manage multiple vehicles and consignments to multiple locations in real-time"

EDUCATORSLOG.IN

BY ANJUM HUSAIN ('98-'02, E&I)

Educatorslog.in is an online forum, designed as a blog, for those interested in education in India. Founder Shuchi Grover ('89 Physics & CS) started Educatorslog.in in Dec 2006 as a "new-age" forum for Indian educators to share ideas and resources that are relevant to education in India.

EDUCATION,

the word which most of us reading this article simply take for granted, but for diverse and remote corners of this planet have barely to register and sink in. That is one of the goals of EducatorsLog, a place to share various developments in education and teaching methodologies.

Educatorslog.in is an online forum, designed as a community forum (or blog), which is driven by the contributions of those interested in education in India. In other words, the content on educatorslog.in comprises of contributions made by the visitors to the site. People visiting the site may contribute to the content by describing a classroom experience, posing a question to the community, sharing a resource that may be useful to other

teachers in India or an opinion or commentary on the significant issue of Indian education, or even commenting on other users' contributions.

Educatorslog.in was started by Shuchi Grover in December 2006. Here is Shuchi's Educatorslog.in story.

"I've been involved in teacher education since our return to India 4 years ago, with various schools and organizations, in

Bangalore and outside. Most of my training focuses on the effective use of technology through meaningful integration into the curriculum. I've also been assisting the online teacher professional development programs run by Harvard Graduation School of Education (WIDE World). I've enjoyed staying connected through online networks and discussion boards with educators around the world ever since my days as a Masters student at the Harvard

educatorslog.in | building learning communities and sharing resources - Mozilla Firefox

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building learning communities and sharing resources

Connect
Participate in discussions - read, write or comment on educational issues, review educational products and announce events.

Share
Share or find resources relevant to teaching in India, ask for ideas on specific resources for teaching your students or children

Grow
Learn about and from exemplary practices in India, and about teacher education programs to grow as a professional

Learn more > How to get started >

Hot topics:
arvind gupta assessment Autism curriculum Design education english Environmental Education hands-on Hindi India internet learning Literature peace education reading science technology in education writing [more tags](#) >

Frequently Asked Questions
> What can I expect to find at Educatorslog.in?

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Username:
Password:
Sign In | Forgot Password?

Join Now! Connect . Share . Grow

Spotlight
> The Student is an Active Participant in the Learning Process at Riverside School, Ahmedabad

Latest Comments
(learnertransmitter)
> I agree! Recently someone (Meena)
> (Dr. Veronicas Mathias (shuchi)
> Dear Usha, if I as a father (learnertransmitter)
> I am so happy to hear that, (shuchi)

Latest Content
eLogs | resources | programs
> A Class of Thirty
> 100 Beautiful Trees of India
> "Small Science" Curriculum for Elementary School from the Hari Bhakta Center for

Graduate School of Education (where I specialized in Technology in Education).

Ever since blogging became an easy means to share one's thoughts online, I've set up group blogs for teachers to interact with students, and also for all the teacher training programs I've conducted so that teachers have a space to reflect collaboratively and continue conversations even long after the course or training session is over. This helps teachers stay connected, exchange ideas and bridge barriers of distance (I sometime traveled outside Bangalore for running courses). But setting up group blogs is not very intuitive and is centralized (a person starts the blog and "invites" other contributors). I also had teachers who were reading my personal blog ask if they could only comment or write a post too?!

Educatorslog.in was inspired by all these experiences, along with the recognition of the fact that there are no "new-ge" forums for Indian educators to share ideas and resources that are relevant to our education context here, and that there are growing numbers of Indian teachers who have started to turn to the Internet for resources for teaching."

As a teacher or a parent, Educatorslog.in can benefit one in a variety of ways some of them and not limited by include:

- Member groups to share ideas of mutual interest.

- Resources related to education with the site acting as a medium to a vast and potential unlimited audience.

- Teaching tips in narrative form
- Links to web sites and articles that are useful for teaching certain specific topics or general teaching resources
- Audio/video/animations (flash) that can be used in the classroom for teaching
- Tutorials to learn new software that teachers could use.

One of the primary objectives of Educatorslog.in has been to facilitate a sense of community and belonging among the teaching fraternity. Teaching, largely, in most parts of the world has been an isolated activity, where at most teachers within a school or institution bond and discuss ideas. Thus each teaching institution has its share of good and great practices but yet remain within its silo. Educatorslog.in aims at connecting these silos, and forming a network. Thus the best practices of different institutions can be shared upon, and the overall quality of education can be improved upon. That would be satisfying and instantly provide benefits for the students and teachers alike. As one can say, if a methodology is being done well in BITS, why can't an Institution A, adopt the same methodology (for that it has to

know about it first), and that is what educatorslog.in is all about.

Shuchi Grover is an educational technology consultant. A technologist and an educator by training, Shuchi locates her work at the intersection of technology and education. An alumna of Harvard University and a successful entrepreneur, she has over 15 years of experience in the mainstream IT industry as well as educational institutions such as Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard Business School and several K-12 Schools in India and the US. She is now based in Bangalore India.

She has undergraduate degrees in Physics and Computer Science from BITS, an MS in Computer Science from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland and an Ed.M (Technology in Education) from Harvard University.

Shuchi maintains a blog – Education Musings (<http://shuchi-edblog.blogspot.com>) and would love to hear from BITS alums that are in teaching as well as others who are interested at shuchi_grover@post.harvard.edu

MY INDIA ...A MOVEMENT FOR A DEVELOPED NATION

BY SATISH POLISETTI ('02 EEE & MECHANICAL)

It all started with a *lacha* session among few students in BITS hostel. On 12th February, 2005, a notice has come up. It stated – we are determined to change our country's tag from "developing" to "developed", anyone sharing similar ideas, please come to 1211, 8pm. Expectations were low. Maybe ten or fifteen students will show up. Eighty BITSians showed up instead. My INDIA was born.

THE thought was simple – "Let us not blame anyone for the pitiable state of our people, let us start doing something which will ignite a movement in the country's young men and women."

What followed were lots of brainstorming sessions, night outs, ANC sessions, SKY discussions with local rickshawwalahs and finally visits to nearby Bhaans, Raila, Jherli villages.

Four hours of electricity a day, 7-8 children in every home, boys drinking from an age of 8, 135 enrolled in a school and barely 30 kids attending, lack of medical facilities, women dying due to pregnancy problems. The stark realities of Rajasthani villages moved the hearts of our young BITSian warriors.

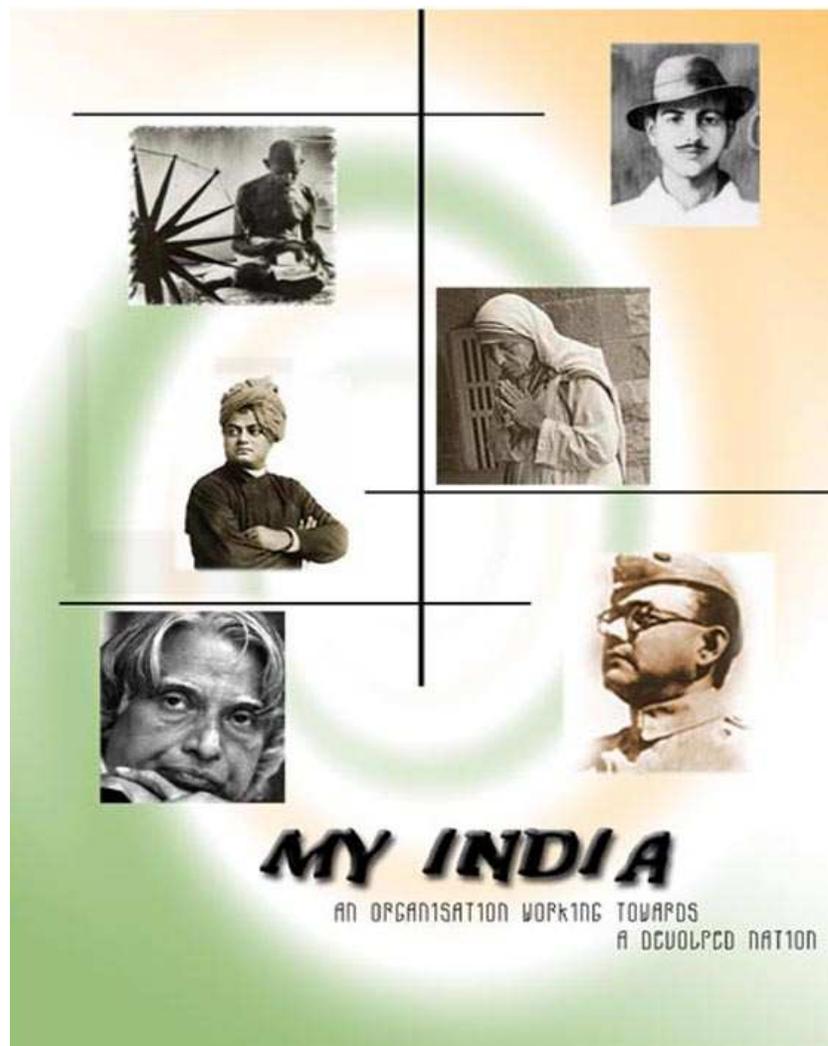
On-going projects...

My INDIA decided to tackle the two major problems in India – illiteracy and poverty by doing projects for Education and Livelihood creation.

Gyan Bodh, Computer literacy programs & Village knowledge centers are the on-going projects under knowledge operations. "Gyan Bodh" is the evening

school run for the under privileged children in different villages Raila, Baans and Gyan Vihar which is just adjacent to the campus. BITSians prepare the teaching material and scientific experiment kits to show them how science works

around them. Computer literacy program is aimed at teaching basics of computers to kids and motivate their pursuit of learning. There are two village knowledge centers in Dandar and Raila, stocked with books for all ages.



Self Help Groups is one of the projects to empower the women financially by starting small-scale businesses. (See insert)

water and power. Stickers with slogans like – “Save Energy, Save Nation” are pasted on all water outlets and electricity boards. “Anti-corruption week” is being planned for

Bhaas and Dhandaar, in Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad, Vijaynagar, Kakinada and Warangal (NIT)). There is one chapter which is being run in Bangalore and some more are

	When	Where	No of beneficiaries	No of BITSians involved
Gyanbodh	Mar-Apr 2005	Sky Lawns	45	27
	Aug-Nov 2005	Gyan Vihar	50	37
	Jan-Apr 2006	Gyan Vihar	60	38
	Jan-Apr 2006	Raila Village	15	10
	Aug-Nov 2006	Gyan Vihar	50	35
	Aug-Nov 2006	Raila Village	30	15
	Jan-Apr 2007	Gyan Vihar	70	>30
	Jan-Apr 2007	Raila Village	15	>5
	Jan-Apr 2007	Baans Village	60	>15
Village Knowledge Center	When	Where	Distance from campus	Initial investment
	Sep, 2005	Dandar	12 Kms	Rs. 18,640
	Apr, 2006	Raila	3 Kms	Rs. 13,000
Self Help Groups	When	Where	No of rural families involved	Business Activity
	Mar, 2006	Raila	10	Tatia (local Handicrafts sold at Oasis, APOGEE)
	Oct, 2006	Baans	13	Dari (mat) making

Events and Campaigns on campus

To inspire BITSians to join the My INDIA movement, My INDIA hosts events like “Engineering Solutions for Villages – E-sol’V” and “Technovision”. These events drive technology in the direction of rural transformation have excellent inputs both in terms of participation and ideas. My INDIA organized “India Quiz” has become the largest crowd puller during APOGEE.

Besides events, “Energy conservation drive” happens on campus periodically to save

implementation from Aug 15th-22nd, 2007 to increase students’ participation in fighting against corruption.

My INDIA Fire spreads Far and Wide

Started by five BITSians in 2005, My INDIA has now spread its wings to 8 different places in the country, with about 500 dedicated student members reaching out many villagers with different projects for education and employment.

Several chapters of My India are in operation in India; in Rajasthani villages like Raila,

being planned at other places especially BITS-Goa.

The ultimate objective is to spread this movement across the whole country and motivate people, especially the young to give back to their communities.



Future projects in the pipeline

A “Scholars cum Community Service Leaders Program” is being planned for the next academic year to provide scholarships to the meritorious, socially committed but financially distressed students in pursuing their professional degrees. A vocational training centre in the village of Dhandaar in Pilani is also on the cards.

Appeal to Alumni...

Dear Seniors,
This is a humble appeal from your juniors. As you know, millions of Indians are grappling with hunger pangs, remaining uneducated, fighting with life everyday. Who will shoulder the responsibility of transforming the lives of such millions?

You have made our country proud by your achievements in the respective fields. We ask you to join your hands with us to take this movement forward.
Yours truly,
My India Juniors



MY INDIA Team with L.K.Maheshwari, Director, BITS-Pilani during APOGEE 2006



You can support the organization by volunteering or by donating for MY INDIA's projects. For more details, please visit, www.bharatnirmaansankalp.org
Email: mayur.myindia@gmail.com

NINASH FOUNDATION

Excerpts from News Release Dated 2nd February 2007

Dr. Ashok Malhotra ('56-'61 ISc, BA, MA) founded the Ninash Foundation in 1996 in the memory of Nina J. Malhotra. Nina was a pre-kindergarten teacher, a social worker, and a counselor.

Ashok is a Gold Medalist holding BA and MA degrees from Birla Arts College, Pilani and an (ISc) Intermediate Science Degree from Birla Science College, Pilani.

The Ninash Foundation recently coordinated the launch of the fourth Indo-International School for impoverished children in Dundlod, Rajasthan.

The new high school consists of 10 rooms constructed as the second story of the original Indo-International School in Dundlod. The school also includes a three-room science wing dedicated to Susan Van Cott of Unadilla New York, whose husband, Craig, provided funding for the rooms.

Since its founding in 1996 by the SUNY-Oneonta Learn and Serve in India program and the Ninash Foundation, the original Indo-International School has grown from 50 children to 350, many of whom are now ready to enter high school. The new high school will allow those students to continue their education in Dundlod.

In the past 10 years, the Ninash Foundation has established four

Indo-International Schools in India--two in Dundlod, one in Mahapura, and one in Kuran--which now serve 650 children and employ more than 20

In Mahapura, the Ninash group celebrated New Year's Eve with local residents and children at the Indo-International Culture Preservation School. With funding provided by Dr. Mimi Koller and Dr. John Koller of New York City, a new artisan's wing is being added to the school to provide training to residents of the village.

Students and teachers from three Oneonta, New York-area schools and one in Arizona have been raising funds to help support the Indo-International Schools. The Mahapura school now includes brass plates that recognize the support provided by the Riverside Elementary School, Center



teachers.

At the school in Kuran, constructed after the devastating earthquakes of 2001, Dr. Malhotra and Ms. Drake dedicated a new science museum, the first ever in the village. They also offered assistance in establishing a library and supplying it with books and a computer.

More information about the Indo-International Schools and the Ninash Foundation is available from Dr. Malhotra at (607) 432-0496 or 436-3220 or on the web at www.ninash.org.

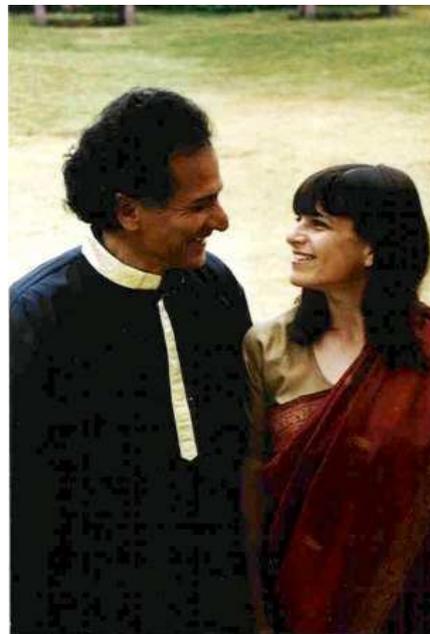
Street Elementary School, Cooperstown Elementary School, and the Gavilan Peak School in Arizona.

During its 21-day visit to India, the Ninash team also explored the possibility of assisting five other established schools that are functioning with minimal resources. The Ninash Foundation adopted the Asha Ka Jharna school, which provides education to handicapped children in the village of Nawalgarh. The foundation will provide funding for a vocational center for the children. The foundation also plans to help the other schools by raising funds for a library, a computer room, a

Ashok Malhotra, the driving force behind Ninash foundation

playground, school supplies, a Project Hunger site, and regular doctor's visits.

A member of the SUNY-Oneonta Philosophy Department since 1967, Ashok Malhotra received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1994 and was promoted to the rank of SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor in 2001.



IF I WERE RAIN

BY SRIKRISHNA S. (OKRI) ('98 - '02 CS)

Okri has been an active volunteer for social causes in India for more than 4 years. In this article Okri discusses the latest community volunteering trends in India. The khadi clad social worker with a cloth bag around his arm is being replaced with the new age social activists, using innovative solutions and technology to overcome social problems.

Last January I got a chance to attend a prestigious award ceremony in Infosys, Bangalore. It was a ceremony to award fellowship to Ashoka's (www.ashoka.org) newly selected fellows from Asia. Ashoka is one of the world's biggest networks of social entrepreneurs and one of my close friends had been recently chosen as a fellow from India.

I reached the huge conference room at Infosys, of the "The World is Flat" fame, almost half hour ahead of schedule. The place was filled with many interesting people from across Asia, working on various kinds of issues. It was great to see the festivity in the whole place and the enthusiasm among the participants. As I spoke to some of the fellows I was stumped by their creativity and

innovativeness in working on issues like livelihood, education, conservation etc. The main attraction for me at the event was speeches by Narayan Murthy and Bill Drayton, the founder of Ashoka, who coined the term *social entrepreneur* in the 80s. I left the event inspired with a sense of enrichment and hope.



ASHOKA
Innovators for the Public

As I drove on Hosur road, the kids at the very next traffic signal reminded me that we still had a long way to go, in almost every cause and every department.

Being involved with social organizations for more than four years, I'm beginning to realize the difference between "doing charity" and "solving the actual problem", more so in India. Many social organizations today are coming of age and are looking to solve issues in very tactical, innovative and scalable ways.

Dream a Dream, an NGO in Bangalore is using well designed life-skills based programs and active volunteering as tools to wipe out discrimination in society.

MAYA, another NGO which started in late 1980s to tackle child labor has today spread its wings across education, livelihood and is in the process of building one of the biggest social enterprises in the country, attracting investors from across the globe!

I met many such organizations during the conference on social entrepreneurship in Mumbai last year, organized by TISS and Skoll Foundation, which clearly

supported this trend. The khadi clad social worker with a cloth bag around his arm is being replaced with the new age social activists, using innovative solutions and technology to overcome social problems. Today's activists are ready to write detailed business plans, pitch to investors and funding agencies, even lobby with the governments and the communities to achieve their goals.



But who are these activists? What kind of people are they? All through these years I've been pleasantly surprised to discover that most of these people

working in the social sector have very little prior experience or academic knowledge of the sector. These are the very same engineers, doctors and bankers like us inspired by that one incident, that one problem that they are passionate about.

The most encouraging thing has been the rise in the number of youngsters entering the sector and leading initiatives. Today, there

are many young people who have chosen their careers in this sector and many others who are giving considerable time to the sector by working part-time or through active volunteering. The booming economy and the high paying day jobs have given the freedom for many to think beyond *contributing to society* by "spending a meaningful weekend with kids" or "donate gifts and crackers for Diwali". People are now looking to volunteer not only their time and money but also their skills and networks to the sector.

For example, Sattva (www.itihis.org.in), our e-magazine dedicated to the social sector of Bangalore is run by a team of 15 volunteers from various backgrounds, including 5 BITSians.

But again, I've come to that next traffic signal and realize that there is still a long way to go. There is a need for more individuals and organizations to contribute in meaningful ways for us to gather that critical mass and outrun the problem. Only then can we hope to stop at a traffic signal without hungry children with dreams in their eyes.

When YouthReach, an NGO in Delhi asked a bunch of kids on the streets what they would do if they were 'rain', twelve year old Rani replied, "If I were rain, I would go where water cannot be found". Thank you Rani, I think I now know where to go!



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION?

BY (LATE) ASHOK VIJAYVERGIYA ('78 MECHANICAL)

Ashok Vijayvergiya writes about the meaning and purpose of Education. He passionately argues that with as times have changed so should the meaning and objective of Education.

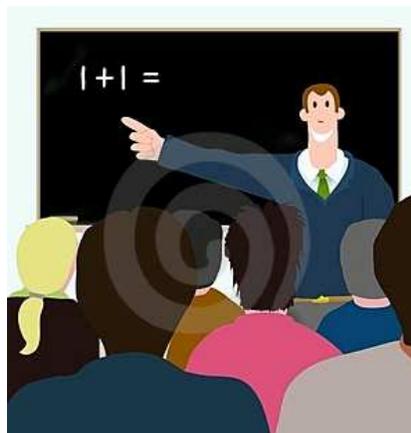
OUR exploration in the field of education has consistently brought to the fore the one irony in the field, the lack of clarity among educators about the purpose of education. Interestingly, this lack of clarity is common across all groups involved in the process of education: administrators, thinkers in education, teachers and the like. Some purposes we could infer were:

- To make them literate. To enable people to read and write and do basic math.
- To make an individual realize his/her potential.
- To make a student capable of understanding what is good or bad for him/her and to differentiate between right and wrong.
- To prepare them for the kind of role/jobs they will be required to do in the future --15-20 years later.
- To make them capable of living a happy and productive life.
- So they can learn more, continue to grow and self-actualize.

Though there is no agreement among educators on the purpose of education, all of them appear sound and useful. Establishing the purpose is important, for it drives the action, keeps people focused as well as provides a rubric for assessing progress.

Assessing is important, if we were to believe Tom Peters, "What gets measured, gets done (achieved)."

What should be the purpose or a



set of purposes for us as a nation? Let us try and look at the issue from different lenses.

We have just completed our Nth election and shown some maturity as a democracy. Education is the bedrock of a healthy democracy. People who are vibrant, sensitive,

Ashok passed away on February 8th 2004. He is missed by his wife Viksita, kids Arun & Richa and his Pilani batchmates.

who can see beyond the election-eve gifts, who can rise above caste and religious considerations and focus on issues, people who are vigilant, who can question and have wider concerns in their focus

actually make democracy deliver. To be able to achieve all of the above, people should have fairly developed analytical thinking, some knowledge of statistics so they can appreciate larger issues, good contextual knowledge, interpersonal sensitivity and a good appreciation of the diversity of our nation. An education process with the above focus will send young people into adult life with a useful awareness of the world they will inhabit.

We are living in the knowledge era. Today, the competitive advantage of a nation is determined, to a great extent, by how well they create, process and utilize knowledge, how well they learn and improve and solve their problems at deeper and deeper levels. This would require people with in-depth knowledge of more than one discipline, a high level of creativity and creative freedom, sensitivity to information and its use and some basic understanding of the use of information technology.



While every person must be aware of his or her rights, he or she should also be aware of some basics that will ensure a healthy and functional life.

This suggests that we must somewhere impart the best available knowledge on areas like personal hygiene, environment, living together, AIDS and other possible epidemics, nutrition, healthy habits and similar concerns. These should be part of basic education.

Increasingly, new fields are emerging, jobs are getting redefined and there is a consequent challenge on individuals to learn quickly and, at times, on their own. The education system should aim to make the person a life-long learner. This ability of "learning to learn" must then be part of our educational effort. Mortimer J. Adler, a famous philosopher, showed his support of this in his statement, "Schooling, in addition to producing competent specialists, should prepare students to go on learning..."

The International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, in its report to UNESCO, envisages as the aim of education, "To ensure the blooming of the human potential and the tapping of talents hidden like treasures in every individual as a 'complete person' in the richness of his/her personality." Now, we can't argue with them, they have been the source of funds for several of our initiatives in education! Even Socrates generally agrees with this purpose. According to him, education is about drawing out what is already within the student. (The word *education* comes from the Latin *e-ducere* meaning "to lead out.")

This perhaps is the highest level as far as the purpose of education can reach. It respects

the individual, looks for what is unique in him and attempts to nurture the same. It is just that, to achieve such a purpose, we will have to dismantle our education thinking and even pull out the

"The central task of education is to implant a will and facility for learning; it should produce not learned but learning people. The truly human society is a learning society, where grandparents, parents, and children are students together."

-- Eric Hoffer

"The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think — rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with the thoughts of other men."

-- Bill Beattie

foundations. Though the twenty-first century has arrived, we are far from even thinking about such a goal.

Education is not just about the mind or learning to read or write, it also needs to cover the body and, as has been pointed out by many, including Gandhiji, the soul. Thus, physical education must be part of regular education and, depending upon the school orientation, something needs to be done about the soul.

For a country like ours, divided along multiple lines, education must serve the purpose of bridging this divide. While we as the inhabitants of the "village" have the responsibility to model such behavior, the education system also can contribute meaningfully in this direction. This is where we encourage them to think above caste and religion, and other such concerns.

When there are so many concerns, the best way to tackle the issue is to look for things that are common and focus on them. If we examine the above set of purposes, the most fundamental, common element comes out to be 'the capability of learning'. This, as a purpose of education, is also supported by several *gurus* and thinkers.

Thus, while the prime purpose of the education process should be to arm children in skills and abilities to learn, other desirable purposes would be development of the physical self and healthy habits. With these, we are equipping them for a healthy and productive life. From these will follow other purposes and also answers to questions such as what to teach and how to teach.

All said and done, these are my views, at times opinionated and at others biased. How then should we decide on what should be the purpose of our education system? For a change, can we have a debate in the Parliament rather than a fight over a choice of CBI or JPC, a debate that brings out the specific concerns of different constituents of our nation and helps in shaping our education priorities and programs?

THE VALUE OF IT

BY DILIP D'SOUZA (DCUBED) ('76-'81 EEE)

DCubed writes about education in India in a moving story about pessimism and hope. DCubed the Pessimist points out how educating the poorest is a daunting challenge for India. But there is hope. Initiatives like Shuchi Grover's Educatorslog.in are taking on a seemingly impossible task.

As a BITS-trained engineer and then computer scientist, I am always delighted by a nugget I often come across. India, the nugget says, invariably with pride, has the world's second largest (maybe now the largest?) pool of qualified engineers and software developers.

It's something, really. Yet call me a pessimist wet blanket if you like - but whenever I come across it, I can't help thinking of another nugget. India also has the world's largest pool of illiterate people. Estimates vary, not least because illiteracy itself is contentiously defined. But whichever way you count, it's clear we have several hundred million illiterate people, somewhere between a third and half of the country.

In effect, you can think of that as the world's largest pool of wasted human talent. So if we have all these software people today, imagine how many more we'd have if we tapped that talent. If we have a dynamic economy today, imagine what kind of supernova economy it could be.

And when I think those perhaps futile thoughts, I also wonder: why is it that a country with so much demonstrated potential seems uninterested in,

indifferent to, educating all its citizens? Why has no smart young entrepreneur, and we have no shortage of those, seen opportunity in this huge education gap, especially at the primary level? Why are we so blind to the value of an education for all Indians?

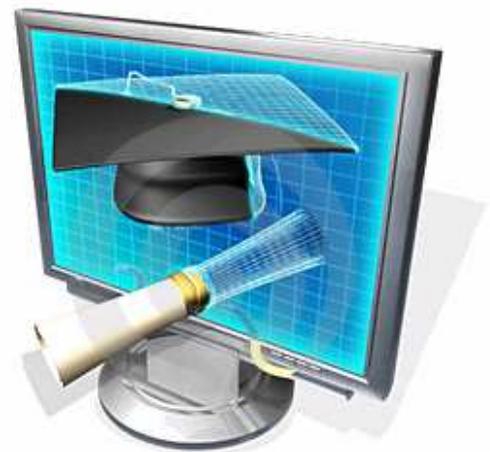
If you look at our Constitution, it was very clear: that document required the Government "to provide free and compulsory primary education within ten years of the framing of the Constitution." That is, by 1960 such primary education should have been in place. Nearly a half century later, despite much rhetoric and many policies, we are nowhere close to that goal. In nearly 60 years as a free country, we have never thought of universal and compulsory primary education as a national priority. Arguably, this began with Jawaharlal Nehru's fascination for higher education, for setting up colleges and universities. Of course this had its own benefits, one of which is the first nugget I began this column with. But

one consequence was the neglect of primary education, and that is probably responsible for the second nugget.

And Nehru's legacy has endured. You might say, it has left half the country behind.

Here are just two examples to indicate the breadth of the impact education, or its lack, has on our country.

By some estimates, about half of India's children - perhaps 80 million, are malnourished, the highest number in the world. (Another interesting pool). In fact, together with our South Asian neighbors, we account for half the world's malnourished



children. As much as a decade ago, a UNICEF report titled "The Progress of Nations" concluded that the routine explanations for this situation -- poverty, low per capita food production, inequality in incomes, even vegetarian diets, don't stand up to scrutiny. Africa shows up significantly worse on some of these counts, but only about 30% of its children are malnourished. Even in Mauritania, the worst African country in this respect, 48% of the children are malnourished, close to our levels, but lower nevertheless.

So what is the reason for

There is enough evidence to show that the most effective way to keep population growth in check is education, and especially education of women.

we add over 20 million more people, an entire Australia and then some, to our numbers. How can we meet the challenges such growth poses, find ways to reduce it?

There is enough evidence to show that the most effective way to keep population growth in

gloom? Is there any good news? Is there a point to this diatribe?

Well, there is. Earlier, I wondered why no entrepreneurs have seen opportunity in education. Admittedly, "no" is a something of an exaggeration. Because often enough I do come across people, not necessarily what we think of as entrepreneurs, who are following a passion in education, making a difference in some way.

There's the American-turned-Indian, Maxine Berntsen in

Phaltan (Satara District,

Education (in India) is a profession with few overt rewards.

Educatorslog.in is an Internet community that promotes good work and best practices, and shares it among others in the country.

malnutrition on the scale we see in our country? The UNICEF report cited several: they add up to what it calls "the quality of child care." A mother may love her children a great deal, but "it is all but impossible for her to provide high quality child care if she herself is poor and oppressed, illiterate and uninformed." In fact, the report says the education of girls is the "key of keys" to fighting widespread malnutrition. This alone will make them more likely to exercise their rights, take a share in decision-making inside and outside the home and be able to raise healthy children who will, in turn, themselves attend school.

Consider our population. Feeding, clothing and housing a billion-plus people is a challenge as it is. But each year,

check is education, and especially education of women. Whichever way you look at it, the more education a woman gets, the fewer babies she produces in her lifetime. There are figures which say that just one year in primary school - get that, just a year - adds nine months to the average age at which a woman marries. One year of schooling: one less potential baby.

Yet here's the bare-bones problem: not enough girls stay in school. Over 90% of them enter primary school; by the time they reach 14, over half of those have dropped out. How can any education goals be reconciled with the millions of Indian girls who vanish from school?

So by now you're wondering, is there more than just doom and

Maharashtra). Her Marathi-medium Kamala Nimbkar Balbhavan in is a school that produces happy, balanced, rounded kids. Almost incidentally, they also do well in school-leaving exams and later in life. There's Neelambari Rao in Bombay. She runs classes that teach young adults spoken English in innovative ways, readying them for the varied opportunities in a growing economy. There's the industrialist I met in Ahmedabad. He runs a successful program that supplements municipal school curricula to make learning more fun for the children. There's Revathi in Nagapattinam. After the *tsunami*, this young filmmaker found several children from a particularly deprived community begging at the bus station. She started a school for

them. It now caters to several dozen of these kids, many of whom may still have been begging had it not been for the school. There are initiatives like Pratham in Bombay, working to put kids in school and keep them there.

And there's a BITS angle too. (Naturally). Shuchi Grover graduated from BITS in 1989 and spent several years in the USA. Among other things, she studied Technology in Education at Harvard, and has worked in teacher education since her return to India. Now she has started educatorslog.in, an online forum for anyone concerned with education in this country. As she wrote to me, it grew from "the fact that there are no 'new-age' forums for Indian educators to share ideas and resources that are relevant to our education context here, and that there are growing numbers of Indian teachers who have started to turn to the Internet for resources for teaching."

Whatever your connection with education in India, as a teacher, a student, a principal, a government official, you can use this space to exchange ideas, discuss issues, share techniques.

Now this Sandpaper column can hardly do justice to all that Shuchi wants to accomplish with the site, and

you should go take a look at it anyway. But I would like to quote here just a few lines from the FAQ, lines that leaped off the screen to grab me:

"educatorslog.in would also like to showcase truly inspiring teachers, schools, school leaders, organizations and their work. In a profession with few overt rewards, let us members of the educatorslog.in community recognize good work and best practices, and share it among others in our country.

Professional growth and development is essential for every profession, and teaching is certainly no exception!"

A major reason for the state of education in India, I have always thought, is the state of teachers. Whether because salaries are low or because teachers don't get the public awe and recognition that industrialists or models do, few people see teaching as an attractive profession. Yet how unfair that is for each of us can

remember teachers who inspired us in one way or another. (Many, of course, at BITS). So I am encouraged by this particular focus at educatorslog.in, this particular attempt to celebrate good teaching.

Yes: there is still a wide educational gap in India that needs filling. But if you thought the first half of this column was pessimistic, initiatives like Revathi's and Neelambari's and Shuchi Grover's actually fill me with hope. For these people are not waiting, like too many of us do, for some mythical government to rouse itself to action. Instead, they identify a need, design a solution, implement it and make a difference. Make lives better.

And if you think about it, that's essentially what BITS, taught us to do. And that might remind you, coming full circle, of the value of an education.



CEO ATA AIRLINES-SUBODH KARNIK

BY MEENAKSHI CHATTERJEE ('00 PHYSICS & EEE)

Subodh Karnik was appointed the President and CEO of ATA Airlines on the 1st of January 2007. Subodh also became the first BITSian-CEO-of-a-US-Airline Quarterly BITSian.

HEARTIEST

congratulations on behalf of the entire BITSian community on being appointed as the CEO and President of ATA Airlines. How are you feeling at the moment?

Thanks. It has been a few months since I assumed the CEO/President position – and it has been too hectic, since then, to realize quite what that means. We have been in the midst of a major fleet acquisition and also a merger with another company – so there has barely been any time to reflect! Also, the Senior Management Team at the company have always worked together very closely – so the change in title has been less impactful than otherwise thought.

He is a Mechanical Engineering graduate from 1976. His wingees and batchmates call him with the BITSian name “Powdrey”!! Meet Sudodh Karnik, CEO, ATA Airlines

Tell us more about ATA Airlines? What is unique about ATA’s principles, plans and management?

ATA is a \$1.8 Billion diversified holding company that participates in three businesses (#1) the regular passenger business – with an exclusive marketing relationship with Southwest Airlines, (#2) the passenger charter business – with a significant emphasis on moving government and military personnel all over the world, and (#3) the freighter charter business.

The GAL (Global Aero Logistics) business model – our mix of airplanes, people, and processes, is uniquely positioned, unlike the typical

large airline – such as American or United - to participate in these diverse business segments in a highly cost-efficient manner

Now that you are the CEO of ATA Airlines how do you plan on expanding ATA while ensuring that the airline provides top-class service to its customers?

Our plan is quite boring- but boring is good! We want to “do more better” – i.e. (firstly) grow the passenger business by leveraging our unique marketing agreement with the world’s largest and most successful carrier, Southwest Airlines;(secondly) take advantage of the pace of world commerce by increasing our penetration in the airfreight charter business; (and thirdly)



maintain our global leadership position in the charter business segment

What percentage of ATA's business comes from charter flights compared to the commercial operations? Is this a growth area for you?

Just over 70% will be passenger and freight charter in the combined GAL. We have "reasonable" growth plans on the passenger charter side of the house – but the big growth is in freighters. This is a global growth area – as evidenced by the number of freighter operators who are starting up and expanding in India

What did you do/study at BITS and which batch did you belong to? And here's something to tickle your memory cells! Do you remember your ID Number?

I got a *tiny-puny* Mechanical Engineering at BITS. My ID number was 76F05960. I was in Krishna Bhavan (Front/T/New) and Ashok Bhavan (New/Pi) – the wing memories are getting a bit hazy.

What are your three best memories of your time at Pilani?

That's a tough one! I guess the longest enduring (and also the one that I participated in for the longest time at BITS) was playing Bridge, most nights, on *Modas* with Chai in Nutan. I don't remember at which storefront anymore. Another weird one was competing for how many flies one could catch with ONE PALM SWIPE – at the PO canteen (I believe no more too!) If I remember right –one day's winner had 16! And the class that made me decide my Major – Professor Raghunath's "Workshop 101"

Do you remember any particular event that you would like to share with us?

Not an event but the realization that I went through the entire college program – including books, tuition, vacations, summer, food – for about Rs. 35,000 (maybe less). That will probably be the most incredible value-for-money experience that will ever happen to me in my lifetime.

We'd love to hear about your activities and some [any?] courses you liked at BITS?

I already mentioned Raghunath and Workshop 101. But I must say that by the time "Transport Phenomena" came along – Mechanical Engineering and I were permanently estranged. But seriously, life at BITS, for me, was this multi-year pleasure cruise – where classes, bridge, tharra, chai, samosas blended into this feeling of being in a hammock with a gentle breeze blowing

Tell us a little about the transition you made from India to the US? What surprised you? What did you like the most and intensely dislike?

I worked for several years in India – before finding my way into the U.S. TCS/TBL and several years at Brooke Bond India Ltd (now part of Unilever I think).

The biggest difference in the environment in the U.S. and India (or the India that I left 20 years ago!) is the physical and mental nearness to people. In India, you are always around people – morning, day and

night. In the U.S. you could spend an entire day – especially on a weekend - without speaking to a soul. It takes a lot of getting used to.

BITSians should consider Indian Aviation Industry as a career option.

"There is more action there than anywhere else in the world. And I don't mean just in the side of the business that the public sees – i.e. airplanes and pilots and crew. There is HUGE work going on in developing maintenance and repair facilities, establishing freighter airlines, airport development, crew training, you name it. It is almost similar to the post-deregulation U.S. in the early 1980s where the industry exploded! I am jealous of all the folks who are participating in the business there! And mind you there will be many bumps in the road as airlines emerge and fail and consolidate. But an airline is a technocrat's dream – operations, marketing, commercial functions all require deep analytical insight. So I encourage BITSians to consider aviation as a career." – Subodh Karnik CEO ATA Airlines

What do you think are the biggest challenges facing BITS today?

I honestly don't know with any level of specificity. However I can hazard a guess that with the fast paced growth in India and the rapid entry of India into the world stage – as an equal participant and not just a service provider to others – the challenge for BITS is to instill in students the confidence that they

will need to face the world as individuals and leaders.

What can BITSians do better/start doing to compete with the world's best?

They seem to be doing a pretty decent job! The intrinsic capability of the students and the overall campus experience is a great start.

What role do you see the alumnus playing in making BITS a world-class institution?

Beyond offering the traditional economic support and being ambassadors at every opportunity – the best thing that alumni can do is to explicitly mentor students and faculty. Providing them with advice, and

– more importantly – avenues for development

Any advice for BITSians?

If I were to start over, I'd want to make sure that I am regarded as the “go to” person in my work area – the person who can always be depended upon to deliver a piece of work – especially in a crunch. And hope to always take the extra few seconds to get to know my colleagues and to thank them for their efforts

Have you ever worked with business professionals from Pilani or even India? How do you rate their skills?

I have to say that, in the past decade at least, I have not noticed anything particularly

good or bad about coworkers, partners, etc. from Pilani or India. Maybe THEREIN lies the compliment. Today, Smith, Sanchez, Sheng, and Subramaniam get valued on their own merits – or at least MOSTLY so.

Have you been back to Pilani since you graduated? If so, how was the visit personally and professionally?

I have NOT been to Pilani after graduation. I was preparing to go for our 25th reunion – but was not able to pull it off because of sudden work pressures. The 76XXX batch has an active Yahoo chatroom though where I have been living vicariously.



Subodh, has 2 boys who are 6 and 8. His life, for the past few years, has revolved around them.

His wife, Bethann, is his former colleague. She was the Chief Marketing Officer at Continental Micronesia – when he was the CFO. She then decided to become a professional black-and-white children's photographer. Her work is available at

www.bethannfrillman.com

DR. PRABHU PINGALI

BY DEEPTHA GANAPATHY ('95-'00 PHY, INSTRU)

Please tell us something about your time at BITS? When did you join BITS and when did you graduate? What degree[s] did you do at BITS?

I graduated from BITS exactly thirty years ago in 1977 with an M.A (Hons) in Economics. I was in the first batch of students to go through a five year integrated program in economics. In those days it was quite unusual to take economics but I guess I came out OK.

What are the three best memories of your time at Pilani?

Mid-night tea breaks in the market; Reflecting on life, on the steps of the Birla Temple; Hanging out in the library (and not necessarily studying).

(I forgot the name of the market, the one where the buses stop) *[Editor's note: Nuthan]*

We'd love to hear about your activities and some [any?] courses you liked at BITS?

I remember being occupied with several extra-curricular activities while I was in Pilani. We had an active debating group and I remember organizing a Inter-University competition called Oasis, not sure if that is still going on.

Heartiest congratulations on your induction into the National Academy of Sciences. Your achievement makes the entire BITSian community proud. What does this mean to you?

Being elected to the US National Academy of Sciences is an enormous recognition of my work by the Science community. It is a particularly unique honor for a non-US citizen. I am very proud to be among the few

Pingali Prabhu L became one of the 72 new members that were inducted to NAS this year. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) is an honorific society of distinguished scholars engaged in scientific and engineering research, dedicated to the furtherance of science and technology and to their use for the general welfare.

Indians that have been elected to the Academy.

What is the charter of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)? How does what you do in the Agriculture and Development Economics Division fit into this charter?

The FAO's mission is to help developing countries achieve food security, the role of my division is to help countries

design and implement food and agriculture policy strategies that enable them to achieve rapid improvements in agricultural productivity and food security.

After finishing your PhD at North Carolina State University what made you decide to work on agriculture in developing nations?

Actually, I started to get interested in agriculture issues when I was still at Pilani. I

spent a summer at ICRISAT [International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics] as a summer intern during my fourth year in BITS and that's when I got hooked on agriculture development and decided to pursue a career in that area. After my Ph.D at NC State I joined the World Bank in Washington DC and

worked on African agricultural development for five years. I then worked in the Philippines for 9 years on Asian rice systems and then in Mexico for six years on South American agriculture. Over the years I have gained an enormous appreciation of the conditions under which small farmers work across the developing world, there are so many similarities despite the great diversity.

Tell us an instance of when you were able to influence government policy in the right direction based on your work.

In the Philippines I conducted a research project in association with a medical doctor that documented the adverse health impacts of pesticide use on rice farmers. We were able to show that when you account for health costs the returns to pesticide use are negative. This study had a huge impact on rice pesticide policies across Asia and resulted in several countries banning the more dangerous chemicals and promoting pest control practices that require little or no pesticides.

What role do you see the alumni playing in making BITS, Pilani a world-class institution?

The BITS Alumni are extremely accomplished individuals and many of them are recognized experts in their fields. BITS could actively seek their input and support for improving the curriculum and help connect BITS graduates to global opportunities. Remember we



Prabhu is happy to contribute but
Prabhu is Director, Agricultural and Development Economics Division, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Rome, Italy

are happy to contribute but

only if we are asked.

Has the BITSAA network been helpful to you? If yes, then how can others get benefit from the network? If no, then how can BITSians build an effective network?

Not really! The BITSAA network is not very active in the area of economics. BITS needs to start recognizing its strengths in fields beyond engineering and science.

Have you ever worked with professionals from Pilani? What are your impressions

of them in terms of leadership skills or technical abilities?

No.

What career/personal advice would you give the student community?

The lesson that I have learnt in my career is that the pursuit of excellence requires a lifetime commitment and consistent hard work.

Have you gone back to Pilani since you graduated? How was the visit personally and professionally?

I have always wanted to but did not get a chance.

What do you read to stay in touch with technology, business other fields that interest you?

I read a lot of economics journals and other professional publications. That's normal since I am still an active researcher and writer. I usually read the Economist on flights. The latest book that I read was: The World is Flat by Thomas Friedman.

What are your hobbies, interests etc.?

My wife and I go on long hikes over the weekends. We usually try to find interesting or historic places and plan hikes around those areas.

BITS2MSPHD

BY THE BITS2MSPHD TEAM

In July 2005, a few BITSians decided to form an online forum to aid all those students aspiring to get an admission into the top-tier Engineering schools for their masters and/or doctorate degrees. More than a year later, this virtual community seems to be growing and going strong, if these numbers are anything to go by! For more information, log onto <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bits2msphd>

Year 2006 saw nearly 72 BITSians (most had admits to at least 5 univs each) take up MS/PhD admits. Notably, most of the admits were to top ranked universities. A landmark achievement was the record number of admits to Stanford 14 (including 1 from BITS Pilani, Dubai) out of which 10 BITSians eventually joined Stanford in Fall 2006. This set the stage for BITSians to apply to better ranked universities and Fall 2007 will witness, 3 BITSians joining Berkeley, 8 joining Stanford, 4-5 joining CMU, 7-8 at Georgia Tech and the list goes on. Worth emphasizing is also the admit scenario from BITS Pilani, Dubai where the students are doing a wonderful job of applying. The students from Dubai campus have also made MS admit into top schools like Cornell, Caltech etc.

However, there is a long way to go and there are numerous plans lined up to take the group

forward. Using BITSEmbryo as a forum to reach on-campus students at Pilani, Goa and Dubai, online sessions to encourage and help BITSians with the nuances of applying are being scheduled. The increasing participation from students of BITS Pilani, Goa is an encouraging sign. The first class of BITS Pilani, Goa is set to

various universities unanimously feel that more BITSians ought to apply to higher ranked universities. From our side, full fledged support for each and every aspect of applying is available. The existing database has useful information about admits over the last few years as well as files that would be of help to those

applying in the coming years. The members are encouraged to keep the databases updated as this is of great help to aspiring students. The BITS2MSPHD team is open to help/suggestions on

various issues. They can be reached by email at bhargavmurty@gmail.com, ksmayur@gmail.com or s.karthikn@yahoo.com

BITS2MSPHD

NUMBER OF MEMBERS = 1085
AVERAGE MESSAGES PER DAY = 12.5
MS/PHD ADMITS IN 2007 = 100
HIGHEST-EVER ADMITS TO STANFORD = 14

graduate in 2008 and special focus to help the first batch with applying has also been planned. Other proposed activities include a full fledged mentoring program to help one-one interaction of alumni with on campus students, forming better database of messages and members etc.

The BITS2MSPHD moderators and alumni pursuing MS/PhD at



VIKRAM PUNJ (1956-2007)

When someone is identified as a natural leader, certain images come to mind. First thoughts are of a no-nonsense, tough-minded, dedicated and disciplined person. Batch 73 and all BITSians mourn the loss of Vikram.

Mr. Vikram Punj was a born manager. He will be remembered as being highly organized, practical and realistic. He was a person who always carried a strong sense of duty with him throughout his life. Possessed with traditional "old school" morals, Vikram was an individual who clearly communicated to those around him just who he was and what he was all about. Everyone acquainted with Vikram knew him as a well-respected man who was a stable force in his community.

Vikram's matter-of-fact attitude about most things was developed during his childhood. As a young boy, Vikram enjoyed being part of teams, and organizations and groups of other kids who shared similar interests. Vikram took part in swimming and boxing. In his spare time he liked having adventures in the outdoors, playing with his eight dogs, or making things, making toy cars. Vikram's

memorable achievements included being at the top of his class.

Vikram's practical work ethic carried over into his college years. His logical mind

distractions of college life. He would tackle an assignment and work through it before moving onto the next project. Vikram's orderly nature gave way to establishing personal study habits and procedures that not

only helped him stay on track but often put him ahead of schedule. He earned his engineering degree from BITS, of Pilani, India in 1978. He also earned his masters in Industrial Engineering from NITI, of Bombay, India. Additionally, he earned his second masters degree in Information Systems and Finance from the London School of Economics on a full scholarship.

Being a hard worker who praised efficiency, Vikram was always striving to make improvements where they were necessary. He was able to analyze situations and problems, keeping everything and everyone on track. In both his personal and professional environments, Vikram upheld his standards. His primary occupation was executive management. He was employed for 25 years in engineering, and management in the telecom and wireless industry. Vikram was a team player who



Vikram Punj was a 1973 batch BITSian. He passed away on May 17, 2007 at San Jose, California. He collapsed while he was jogging. He was cremated on Tuesday May 22, 2007 in San Jose CA

permitted him to work hard without succumbing to the usual

telecom and wireless industry. Vikram was a team player who



Vikram was ever watchful of his children. He worried about them and was deeply concerned for their development as they grew up. Vikram and Taruna were blessed with two children, one daughter, Shaila, and one son, Ajit.

certainly lived out the motto of “give me a job, and I will get it done.”

Vikram passed away on May 17, 2007 at San Jose, California. He collapsed while he was jogging. He is survived by his wife,

Taruna, his children Shaila and Ajit, and his parents Amrikal and Prabha Punj. Services were held at Oak Hill Funeral Home. Vikram was cremated on Tuesday May 22, 2007, and his ashes will be scattered in India.

All who knew him would agree that Vikram was a pillar of the community. He lived his life with his feet firmly on the ground. He had a strong work ethic, was pragmatic in his thoughts and acts, and constantly sought the means for self-improvement. He was willing to share his ideas and knowledge for the benefit of others, so that they could accomplish more in their lives. Mr. Vikram Punj did his best to ensure that his family, friends, loved ones, co-workers, and everyone whose life he touched were given the chance to become a better person.

Vikram we will miss you. You have left a trifle early that makes it so so difficult to accept it. I recall your sunny temperament throughout our 5 year BITS association, be it working on projects together, playing tennis or in conversation. I can hear your hearty laughter as though it was yesterday even though it's over 25 years since we last met.

- Reaction of V Ravichandran, '73 batch

More than reactions can be found at
<http://www.mem.com/display/Tributes.asp?ID=1867255>

VIJAY SINGHAL (1956-2007)

BITSians had to face the tragic loss of a colorful and enthusiastic focal point of Batch '73, Mr. Vijay Singhal.

HE was the chief developer and product strategist for SLIM Technologies, proprietary Supply Chain Modeling & Optimization System. Mr. Singhal has also designed and implemented more than a dozen customized, high-impact optimization systems, including a modeling system for a strategic planning used by the Turkish state petroleum company, a dynamic order sourcing system used for operational planning at Chep USA, a physician scheduling system developed for a health maintenance organization, and many other systems that have solved challenging problems and produced substantial return on clients' investment.

Prior to SLIM Technologies, Mr. Singhal served as a Partner in J.F.

Shapiro Associates, Inc., a company focused on the development, application and support of optimization & decision-support solutions. Mr. Singhal not only played the lead role in developing the company's software and advancing its technology, but also he played a vital role in growing the company. It was the successes of J.F. Shapiro Associates, Inc. that created the

solid foundation for launching SLIM Technologies in 2000.

Mr. Singhal was also a Senior Associate at Resource Management Systems, where his responsibilities included modeling, design and implementation of planning systems. His work concentrated on developing optimization models and solution algorithms for diverse planning problems and imbedding them in decision support software.



Vijay Singhal was a Mechanical Engineering graduate from BITS 1973 batch. He passed away on May 15, 2007 at the age of 51. He was cremated on May 24, 2007, at Cambridge, MA.

While studying for his Master's degree at MIT, Mr. Singhal served as a consultant at the MIT Information Processing Service for SESAME, a large scale mathematical programming system. He was responsible for user assistance, maintenance, and

system documentation. As a research assistant at the Center for Transportation Studies at MIT, he developed and implemented heuristics and algorithms for package routing for United Parcel Service. He also worked as a consultant for GTE Laboratories, developing and implementing a network flow model to analyze companywide procurement of wire cable, and as a Staff Analyst at Enforth Corporation, where he helped design and implement an interactive barge-fleet system for the Department of Sanitation of New York City.

Mr. Singhal received a B.E. (Honors) in Mechanical Engineering from the Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS), Pilani, India in 1978, an M.Eng. in Industrial Engineering and Management from the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, Thailand in 1980, and an M.S. in Operations Research from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1984.

Beloved brother and brother-in-law of Ashok Singhal-Kavita, Sanjay Singhal-Leena, Nita Rohatgi-Hemant and Niloo Rohatgi-Sarvesh and beloved uncle of Ankur Rohatgi.

Relatives and friends all over the world including Amitava Babi Mitra, Naru Narayanan, Nannu Nobis, Ajit Sathaye and Abraham Mammen need to digest this unfortunate loss. The Cremation Service took place on Thursday May 24th at 12:00 noon at the Bigelow Chapel, Mt. Auburn Cemetery, 580 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge.

CLASS NOTES

BY BATCH REPRESENTATIVES

Notes listed by BITS Batch (entering year). For a full listing, please visit the "Classnotes" section of the BITSAA website www.bitsaa.org.

1980's

Shailendra Pratap Jain ('82), popularly known as Shelly graduated with a Chemical Engineering degree from BITS in 1982. He is currently a Marketing Professor at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business in Bloomington, Indiana, USA. His wife Shalini is in the process of starting a PhD in Political Science.

1990's

Shilpa Gupta ('97) and Shashikant Khandelwal ('97) have decided to tie the knot in India on the 11th of July 2007. There is a small reception in Chennai on July 10th and the wedding is on the following day. The main reception is in Nagpur on 14th of July. Shashikant is one of the founders of BITS Embryo Project and a software architect at www.thefind.com.

Srikanth ('97), BITSian name 'Chandee' graduated from BITS with a Mechanical Engineering Degree. After BITS, he rode with the 2001-02 slump before joining Infy ultimately in Jun 2002. He was with Infy till 2006 end Subsequently, he joined NUS Business School, Singapore in Aug 2006. Currently he is interning with IBM GBS.

Vignesh ('97) is a dualite with Economics and Mechanical Engineering. He is currently working with Infosys as a Supply Chain Consultant in Advanced Planning space, Oracle Apps (an enterprise solution unit based out of Bangalore).

Raj Durai Murugan (Thee in short) is a Mechanical Engineering graduate of 97 batch. He is working with Infosys as a supply chain Consultant in Sourcing and

Procurement space. This is also an enterprise solution unit based in Bangalore. He has a 3 yr old son, Rahul.

Meena ('97) is a second semite, an active Dance clubber. After her graduation in Dec 2001, she joined Infosys in June 2002 and got married in July 2003. She is blessed with a baby boy, Jayant who is now 9 months old. Her husband works for Credit Suisse. The couple moved to NJ this February after a 2 year stay in Minnesota. Meena is now working for Toysrus, a client of Infosys.

Narayanan alias Mama ('97C5665) is a Finance graduate. He worked with I-Flex in London till April 2006. That's when he quit the company and joined the MBA program at ISB Hyderabad. He will join Cognizant this June.

NEWS, MASALA AND SPICE

BY VISHAL SANGHVI (94-99 INSTRU & CHEM.) & SAUGATA CHATTERJEE ("SOGGY") (95-99 CS)

Prasad Thammineni wins Joseph P Wharton Award at the Wharton School



The Joseph P. Wharton Award honors the student who best exemplifies the spirit of innovation, leadership and vision that distinguishes The Wharton

School and its graduates. A fellow BITSian, Prasad Thammineni (WG'2007) was nominated and chosen for this award by his fellow Wharton classmates from a pool of over 1600 students. How cool is that!

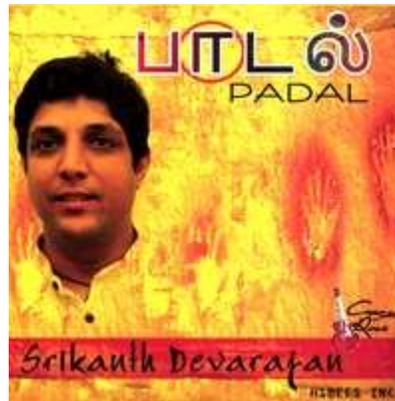
Quarterly BITSian, Pingali Prabhu, Inducted to US National Academy of Sciences (NAS)



Pingali Prabhu L became one of the 72 new members that were inducted to NAS this year. Prabhu is presently Director, Agricultural and Development Economics Division, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Rome, Italy. The National

Academy of Sciences (NAS) is an honorific society of distinguished scholars engaged in scientific and engineering research, dedicated to the furtherance of science and technology and to their use for the general welfare. Read an exclusive interview with Pingali Prabhu in the Quarterly BITSian section of this Sandpaper issue.

BITSians trump H1Bees with pAdal



Shankar Nagarajan and Srivatsa Srinivasan along with composer Srikanth Devarajan released their fourth commercial album titled pAdal. Padal©, which translates to "Songs" in English features 10 tracks in Tamil, ranging from youthful to romantic, humorous and classical songs steeped in culture.

Diljale's ('94 Batch) Give Back to the Community

Early this year, a group of wingees from the 1994 batch

(called Diljale (DJ)) helped 200 Grade 1- through 5 students at Government High School, Rakesra, India get uniforms and shoes, hoping that the kids will have one less thing to worry about this winter. DJs hope to make community giving an annual tradition. Many of us want to help improve our society but are often tied up in our daily lives. But DJs believe that it only takes a small effort to look around you and find ways to help your community. So next time you are in a *laccha* session, think about giving.

Rajesh Hukku ('74 EEE) Wins Stevie Award

Rajesh Hukku added one more award to his already-long list of awards by winning the Stevie Award 2006 for the Best Chairman Category. Stevie awards are the Oscars of the Business World. The Stevie trophy as a 16 inch tall, hand-cast 24-karat gold statuette, holding aloft a crystal pyramid that represents the hierarchy of human needs, a system developed in the 1960s by psychologist Abraham Maslow, who observed that after their basic needs are met, human beings seek the esteem of their peer



