

ISSUE 12 • MARCH 2019

TFS POSTALE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY THE FLEET STREET,
STUDENT MEDIA BODY OF IIT PALAKKAD

CHAT WITH THE GOLD MEDALLISTS #INTERIITTECH

Prasanna puts forward
his thoughts and a
chat with the winning
team

THANK YOU

TFS Thanks all the
Editors and
Correspondents from
the Senior year for
their support and
contribution to the
growth of TFS as we
see it today

DR. SANTHAKUMAR

Dr. Santhakumar shares
his journey to IIT Pkd
and his experiences

TRANSIT CAMPUS

First month at transit
campus, so far so good

DR. JASINE SHARES

Dr. Jasine Babu brings
our attention to our
conceptualization of
trans-women

FAREWELL NOTE

Greetings!

Welcome to TFS POSTALE, the monthly newsletter of The Fleet Street. Conceptualized during the summer break of 2016 by the first batch of students under the mentorship of Prof. Valsa Kumar sir, The Fleet Street from being under the mentorship of a faculty member to becoming a truly independent media body, we have come a long way. We published our first article in the form of a special edition- The first inter branch sports meet in February 2017. The first issue of TFS Postale was released on the 19th of April, 2017. The journey has been smooth so far. We have released 11 issues of our monthly newsletter and numerous special editions.

It is time for a big change. The institute has now completed one cycle- where its soon going to witness its first batch of students graduating.

We extend our sincere thanks to all the 4th year students who worked at TFS and anchored it firmly for the coming years and hope to replicate the work and keep the legacy alive. We wish you all, the very best for your future endeavors. You all would be dearly missed.

We take this opportunity to introduce our new editorial board who would take up the baton and lead TFS henceforth. They are Shruti Umat, Navaneeth M Nambiar and Gregory Paul T. We wish them the very best for their tenure.

Regards

The former editorial team

Ishita, Prasanna, Somasekharan, Roshan

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THE FLEET STREET

The official student media body of IIT Palakkad

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2019

instiinsights

by Ruchi Rinkle and Navaneeth M Nambiar

During the past month the campus has been bustling with activity. From a flurry of research talks to workshops to faculty recruitment to an annual intra college sports meet, a lot has happened during the past couple of months.

January 2019

- **EBSB: 30th January 2019**

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, an initiative under the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD), is organised at central institutions across India to bring forth the cultures, traditions, customs and practices of various states across India. It aims at spreading unity among different sections of our population. As part of the event, the students have organised various programmes during the semester.

- *Rajasthan and Assam:*

The students from the states of Rajasthan and Assam showcased various customs and famous tourist locations of the other state including the Rajasthani Ghoomar and an Assami dance. There was also a short drama presented on the great warrior Prithviraj Chauhan giving the audience a glimpse of his life.

February 2019

- **ACE quiz and interaction with Prof Mathews : 12th February 2019**

The Association of Civil Engineers (ACE) organized a quiz on 12th February 2019. Several of the students from third year and fourth year civil and mechanical engineering participated in the event. The quiz competition was made more special with Prof. Mathews who interacted with the students.

- **Shift to transit campus: 16th February 2019**

All the second years and third year students were shifted to the newly established Transit campus. The first year NSS students did a commendable job as they helped immensely during the shifting procedure. After the shift, only the first and fourth years and some of the PhD students remain in the Ahalia Temporary campus.

- **Visit to Thrissur Fest: 16th February 2019**

The Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Education (KSCSTE) jointly with Kerala Technical University (KTU) had organized KTU Techfest 2019, a state level engineering exhibition of shortlisted B.Tech projects, hosted at Government Engineering College, Thrissur on 16th February 2019. The projects exhibited by other engineering students were impressive, interesting and showcased many integrated theoretical concepts applied in real life to solve many complicated problem statements.

- **Bird Count: 17th February 2019**

IIT Palakkad along with NCBS organised a bird count on 17th February 2019. The event was part of The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) and gave good opportunity to introduce students to birding and had experts who came and explained about different types of birds. This event helped create a great change in students' ideas regarding birds and imminent danger of extinction they face.

- **Battle of Bands: 23rd February 2019**

Vadya Music Club conducted the Battle of Bands tournament, a first-of-its-kind event wherein members of the Vadya club along with new talent teamed up to perform as four bands who competed for glory. The event was well acclaimed and was considered a grand success as a whole.

- **Workshops and seminars :**

- Institute Colloquium by Prof. Ravi Subrahmanyam (Director, Raman Research Institute) was organized on 6th February 2019. He spoke about the design and construction of telescopes that will allow for further exploration into the history of our universe.

March 2019

- **Kadambini:**

Kadambini, the Women's Forum of IIT Palakkad, aims at bringing together the institute community and spreading general awareness on women's rights and nurturing an active open community. The forum has been named after Dr. Kadambini Ganguly, the first female graduate from India during British Raj, who went on to become the first female physician trained in western medicine from South Asia.

As part of International Women's Day, Kadambini organised an evening program which was filled with different students and faculties sharing their views. The event was also interactive with quizzes in between the programme. There was also a Poster Design Competition organised on the theme "A Woman whom I admire" in which Adrian McDonald, Final year-CSE, won the first position.

On 20th March 2019, there was a talk by Dr. A K Jayasree on "Women's Movements and Diverse Perspectives". Dr. Jayasree is a famous gender activist. She described the various Movements on Gender rights of Women and LGBT in Kerala that have occurred over the years and shared her views on the same.

- **Student's Wellness and Counselling Centre:**

- *Talk on Relationships: 13th March 2019*

A session was taken by Ashfak Ahamed P.C and Arya Aravind, resident clinical psychologists of the institute. The session stressed on the importance of nurturing healthy relationships, focusing mainly on friendship and romantic relationships. The session was interactive and had participation from the faculty, students, research scholars and lab staff.

- **EBSB:**

- *Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, and Manipur: 20th March 2019*

Students performed the famous Zeliang Butterfly dance of Nagaland and presented the song *Sangai* of Manipur. There was also a performance of the Shiv Tandav, one of the famous dance forms in Madhya Pradesh. A play was also presented which covered major historic and cultural landmarks of Madhya Pradesh.

- **Sportacus 2019: 16th-17th March 2019**

Taking cues from the success of the intra college sports meet (highlights being the virtual money based auction system to buy athletes) conducted last year, the much awaited Intra College Sports Meet for this semester was conducted in similar fashion with some rules being revamped. Much like the previous year, students formed Franchises that chose players for each sport in an Auction. The event was conducted during the weekend of 16th-17th March 2019. The four franchises, namely Thunderhawks, Spartans, Phoenix and Dementors, put forth an impressive battle for two days at the end of which Team Phoenix rose to grab the title of winner of the season. The standout mention is the energy and enthusiasm with which the girls came out and played on the field. Arguably, this is the first time IIT Palakkad has witnessed a large participation of women in sports events indicating a healthy gender representation. Kudos to the sports council !

- **Extra Mural Lectures (EML) :**

The EML team has had two well renowned professionals as part of the Extra Mural Lectures for this semester.

- *The Art and Science of Creating Illusions, 13th March 2019*

Magician Pradeep Houdino, Founder of Magic World, Kozhikode, put forth an interactive session with the IIT Palakkad community. The entire talk switched between general methods of deceptions magicians use and simple demonstrations wherein some of the acts were revealed to the audience.

- *Data and its discontents - Political economy of disinformation, 20th March 2019*

Renowned Indian journalist Paranjoy Guha Thakurta addressed the members of the institute on his views on how the ever growing connected world has changed over the years, how people access information and how media presents news to its

audiences around the globe, including India. He talked about how opinions and fake news have blurred what has been presented to the people.

- **Holi Celebrations 2k19: 21st March 2019**

The annual Holi festival celebration was held on the morning of 21st March 2019 with all its pomp and glory. Conducted at the Ahalia Temporary Campus, the celebrations saw active participation from the student community in coming together to spread joy in this festival of colours. Apart from the usual colours and joy, Thandai, a Holi-special drink, was also served for the students on behalf of the Mess.

- **Workshops and seminars :**

- Prof. Mustafizur Rahman, of NUS Singapore and Director, Mikrotools Pte. Ltd., Singapore gave a talk on “How to be a Successful Engineer” on 13th March 2019.
 - A one-day workshop on “Antennas for Modern Wireless and Remote Sensing Applications” was conducted on the 23rd March at the transit campus in association with the IEEE-Kerala Palakkad chapter. The speakers included professors and eminent scientists from various reputed organizations like ISRO (VSSC), IIST, Institute of Radio Physics and Electronics and IIT Palakkad, specializing in the field of Microwave and RF communication. The lecture hours demonstrated the present work going on and the future trends in the field. There was also a workshop conducted on familiarization with the CST software by industry professionals.
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transitquips

by Purav Ghanshyam Kothiya

It's about one month since the shift took place. Students express their views on their stay at the transit campus. Many have found it exciting and are coping with the new environment quickly. Though there are few drawbacks, it seems so far so good.



Picture Credits: Shwetank Verma

"The Transit Campus has brought a good change in the environment. The rooms are spacious and comfortable. A slight change in the taste due to changes in the mess hall is a relief. The best thing about the new hostel is the hill view being relatively closer. It's a nice hangout spot. But the change has some fallouts too. Our sports practice has suffered due to the increased travel time. The payment method in the canteen is not very feasible. The campus has a lively and refreshing atmosphere. We are sure post the final touches, living here will be a great experience."

- *Manas Sanjay*

"The campus is beautiful with charming surroundings. However, there are certain drawbacks too. At noon, the west-bound rooms, especially at Brindavani, become extremely hot, making it difficult to live in. The previous campus had attached bathrooms which was an added advantage. But in the end, living in our own campus is a matter of joy and pride."

- *Raghav Tiwari*

"Things have changed a lot for the better. I can't see the windmill every day, but we have a wonderful sunset point. Shifting to transit campus is not as bad as I thought it would be. The bedrooms are the best. Due to the construction, the place is a bit polluted and everyone is still adjusting to the food but I love how close the hostel is to the academic building because now I don't have to get up very early to attend lectures."

- *Muskaan Maheshwari compares both campuses*

"The classroom ambience is conducive to study. The hostel rooms are spacious and have better lighting facilities. We go to the hill in our leisure time. It refreshes our mind and body. Above everything else, it's ours!"

- *Banka Govinda*

"It took me sometime to get used to the new campus. My sports schedule was affected a lot. It was tough to go for volleyball and badminton practice."

- *Tawwa Chaitanya Reddy's initial struggle*

"I think the Institute has taken care of all the basic needs of the students. Personally, I feel the students should be more mature and should develop a positive attitude towards the Institute so that we can all work together for a better tomorrow."

- *Abhishek Bagri*

"I am extremely happy at the new campus. The best thing - two awesome roomies. I think all the students handled the shift pretty well and thank god we shifted! The mess is still a problem. But I'm sure we will make it better soon."

- *Gopu Krishnan M*

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incidents

By Dr. Jasine Babu

Incident 1 :

I was on a beach-side with a friend, after a weekend dinner outing. As we were sitting there and chatting, a beautiful owl came and sat on a lamppost in front of us.

It was white in colour and we were amused because it looked different from the kind we see usually.

After a while, two youngsters, around 20-25 years of age, came passing by and the creature attracted them too. Suddenly, one of them took a stone and was about to throw it at the owl.

We were surprised and annoyed and shouted, "Hey guys, what is your problem?".

They dropped the stone but in another minute managed to still shoo away the owl.

Incident 2 :

A month later, again we both were at the same beach, around the same time.

I was telling my friend, "You see there, two lamp posts from us, those two persons sitting there are probably trans-women".

"How do you know?"

"We crossed each other near the wash area and happened to exchange a couple of words. They looked so dignified and polite, you know! Don't look at them now, they might feel we are observing them!"

Five minutes passed. They seemed to have caught the attention of some more people around.

Some groups of youngsters were staring at them from a close distance.

The two seemed to ignore everyone else and were chatting with each other.

I told my friend again "They look confident. They have come here, not just to be scared and leave".

Just another five minutes passed. The starers were still there. Now, three youngsters went and sat very close to the two.

One person even entered into a conversation with them and they seemed to reply comfortably.

Some vague thought passed my mind and I asked, "Are they disturbing the two? May be they are".

"May be they are not. They seem to be comfortably chatting with them".

"Oh! May be they are all friends. But, that may not be the case. Should we intervene?".

"What if the others assault us? They are physically more powerful than us".

"They cannot assault us, it is a public place, isn't it?"

"You can't say. Also, what if we are imagining the problem and there isn't any?"

"I don't know".

By the time we were arguing about, the two suddenly seemed to be upset and angry with the person sitting next to them and they suddenly left the place in a hurry.

They had a scooter parked nearby. They didn't spend another minute at the beach.

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goldmedallistsofiitpkd

#interiit_tech_meet2k18

By Gregory Paul T and Irene Casmir

OVERVIEW

The first medal for IIT Palakkad came in the grandest form of a Gold in the 7th Inter IIT Tech Meet held at Bombay. The event in which the team participated was the TCTD challenge. The problem statement for this year's challenge was to design farm tools which reduce drudgery and provide intelligent automation. The team of seven freshmen and a senior worked on automating pesticide spraying. The solution was appreciated for its simplicity and novelty.

TFS got an opportunity to have a casual chat with the team. The following is the transcript of the same. The team braved against all odds to rise up. Congratulations to team on their feat. This achievement is sure to change the outlook of IIT Palakkad students towards projects and hope this would be a source of inspiration to many.

“Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve”



The group being awarded at the Institute Day for their remarkable achievement in Inter IIT bagging the first gold medal for IIT Palakkad

INTERVIEW

With Prasanna:

How do you feel the tech culture at IIT Palakkad has changed in the four years you've been here?

During my initial days here, most of us (at least me) didn't even know what an Arduino was. Today's world is growing fast. I see a huge difference between the level of exposure that my batch had and what the 2018 batch has to various things. When my batch first came here, living here was a much bigger issue than to do a project - to attend classes daily, to wake up in the morning, to take bath without hot water, to somehow manage our way back to the hostel in the absence of street lights, no wifi. More importantly, there was no guidance, someone to tell us what needs to be done and to show us that it is indeed possible to do it. So at that point in time, situation did not facilitate a tech culture. But, it slowly started changing in the next two years. The EE lab was set up in the current state only when I was in the third semester. My second and third years of stay here were more towards figuring out what to do. Of course, there were quite a few false starts. By the end of the third year (too late though), I figured out that there was a vicious cycle going on. You

have three weeks for preparing for quiz 1. Then you relax for one week after quiz 1. Then you cry over your papers for one week, then you start preparing for quiz 2, write quiz 2, cry over the quiz 2 papers. Then start preparing for the lab exams and end sem. And, the semester is over! Where do you do a project?

As a fourth-year student, how did you manage time to undertake a project, in spite of your busy schedule?

I am not good at time management. I just abuse time. I just borrow time from my next day, borrow time from my sleep and do things. So I didn't manage time well, but I chose this project as my priority. Everyone has many things to do. I chose to spend more time on it and we made it.

In your slam book *Adios Amigos*, 50% weightage each is given to projects and electives. Why?

If I keep doing academics and writing quizzes, when do I make projects? You're not going to get a job or placement or whatever you want because of good CGPA. Good CGPA is indicative of discipline and nothing more. Do projects.

Everyone knows that you are interested in research. What are you researching on?

I am not going to lie that I am researching on anything. I am just wasting my time here at IIT Palakkad! I have a few more days here. Then good bye IIT Palakkad.

So no memories, no regrets. Are you happy to leave?

Yes. More than happy. I am grateful to IIT Palakkad to have made me what I am today. I will do my best to contribute back to every wing of this institute, from wherever I am, if possible, as a visiting faculty too.

Where do you see yourself without science or engineering?

I would be an innovator in that case. I don't confine myself to one thing. I do calligraphy. Even though I am not great at it but I'm decent. I play football. I am not bad but a reasonably good goalkeeper. I write whenever I wish to. I am not confined to the boundaries of Electrical engineering. I like engineering. I like trekking if there are good people around. I like to camp. I like walking.

Have you taken your tech meet team for trekking or do you have any such plans?

No. I am not in a physical state for trekking.

With the entire team:

I heard that you went for field surveys with many farmers before beginning this project. Can you explain that?

Priyanka: Using few personal connections, we contacted a few farmers and asked them the problems they face. We got a variety of problems. The agricultural area is filled with problems that can be solved by technological solutions. We spoke to them throughout the course of the project and used their feedback to make our product better.

How far did you go for surveying? Was it just in and around Palakkad?

Priyanka: Those were just talks on the phone. We didn't actually go anywhere. We had only 15 days. So we couldn't travel anywhere. The farmers we contacted were from different places too.

Did you decide on the project based on the problems? How was the decision process?

Sai Vamsi: We chose the one with the maximum number of points (problem intensity). We had two or three night-outs. We sat together. We had multiple brainstorming sessions.

Vamsi, you described working on this project "a subtle hell but at the same time it was fun too". Can you explain that?

Sai Vamsi: First issue was the time constraint. We had to complete a one or two month project in just fifteen days. We had to work a lot. We got to learn a lot of things. We had some time off from the project. That was fun-filled.

Nishalini: A feeling of homesickness started attacking us after a while. The very first week, we were very enthusiastic about the project. After one week, homesickness started mounting. That also added to Vamsi's description of subtle hell.

What do you think was the toughest part of the project?

Nishalini: Initially, the productivity level was low. It was stressful. We had pressure since we had less time and had to do more.

Prasanna: One major problem was things not being available. We traveled to Coimbatore, seven times!

Nishalini: We had to split our work. We ourselves had to go and purchase everything. We had to go to each and every shop, explain things to them and we also took suggestions from them. Many a time it had happened that we came without buying anything.

Prasanna: We didn't know exactly what would work. We were trying out things. Like, we bought one motor, tested it and then bought the other motors. IIT Palakkad should consider some way of making such things available to the students. Otherwise, administration shouldn't expect students to build big projects.

This is the first medal of IIT Palakkad in any Inter IIT competition. How does that feel?

Raswanth: It was a distant dream of ours. We wanted to get it. But we were not sure whether we would actually get it.

Nishalini: Only thing that was in our mind was to put in our efforts and see what happens.

Yogesh: What I considered more important than the prize is the knowledge I gained when I was trying to solve the problems.

How do you feel of Prasanna as a mentor in this group? Was he more like a friend or a leader?

Yogesh: Both. When we go outside, he'll be more like a friend. When in the team, he'll be the leader.

Raswanth: To get things ready in fifteen days, he did what he had to do.

Did you guys feel that your medal changed the perspective about the third generation IITs outside?

Priyanka: We saw the surprise in other IITs when the result was out. Third generation IITs are actually catching up.

Yogesh: It's more like a proof to show that third generation IITs are no more inferior to the first generation IITs.

Prasanna: Think of the scale of the projects brought by other IITs. IIT Madras came up with a drone for the same purpose i.e. for pesticide spraying. It costed around Rs. 4.3 lakhs! They printed carbon fibre for it! The product we put forth costed around Rs. 18,000. The project which won the second place, from IIT Roorkee, was a solid build which should've been built over years. The team was led by probably a PhD student whom the rest of the team addressed to as sir even on the stage.

Other IITs have an edge. But not having an edge was our advantage.

Priyanka: We didn't have many resources or funds. So we tried to be resourceful and use whatever there was in the best way possible. That proved to be a valuable thing.

What do you think made your project better?

Raswanth: Providing an intelligent solution for that price range was the scoring thing for our project.

Priyanka: Our product is meant for farmers. They can't spend lot of money on expensive equipment. And for that, we were able to provide an affordable solution. Most of the other IITs had a solution which costed a minimum of Rs. 30,000. Almost every other project had some aspect of machine learning.

Prasanna: Those are technology driven solutions. They just pumped in technology. We just couldn't afford to put a raspberry pi, as the budget allocated was Rs. 20,000.

Ajay, how was your experience working on this project?

Ajay: Initially there were many hurdles. We had to concentrate on the design. There were many parts - navigation, structure, spraying. We had to concentrate equally on all these. We worked together so that we could contribute well.

Ajay, was this your first time working on a project?

Ajay: This is my first project. It gave me huge interest in learning more about Arduino and other similar technologies.

Do you think that you got enough support from the Institute?

Sai Vamsi: The CNC was not working. That could have saved a lot of time for us.

Prasanna: The CFI doesn't have a hammer! That apart, Dr. Arvind, Mr. Samuel and Mr. Ananthu were instrumental in giving us timely advice in different aspects. If we had access to more facilities we would've probably won by a better margin and made the product more finished than it is.

Do you think the situation will improve in the next year?

Prasanna: Hopefully. Even though everyone has been shifted to the transit campus, they are going to air condition the CFI!

Members who went to Bombay, what was your favourite part of the stay in IIT Bombay?

Raswanth: I missed it but I wish I was a part of it when the felicitation happened. I was on my way back. I got a call saying that we won.

Prasanna: The number of times he cross-checked the news of our victory...!

Raswanth: I got a call from the Technical Secretary, saying that we actually won. Only then I could believe it.

How big or small was your victory?

Priyankka: We were seven points ahead of Roorkee.

Prasanna: We got a total of 229 out of 300. Roorkee had a total of 222.

Going to the Inter IIT Tech Meet as first-years, how did you feel the general attitude towards you was?

Raswanth: There were some events that were going on like the Engineering Conclave. There were mainly second years and one of them asked us where we were from and we said IIT Palakkad, first-years. He asked me if they even let first years participate. He was shocked to see us there.

Nishalini: To whoever we told that we are working on a project for the Inter IIT Tech Meet, they were shocked. "First years? How did the college even allow you to participate?". I think since the student community at IIT Palakkad is small, we got an opportunity like this.

Priyankka: No hierarchy. So we didn't have to cross any hierarchy to participate.

Seeing the way IIT Bombay had conducted such a meet, what do you think we can learn from it?

Raswanth: Inter IIT Tech Meet happened right after IIT Bombay's Techfest. Still they managed to put up a good show. It was well organised. Though the participation was less, events happened the way they had planned them to be. That, I think, we should learn.

To other first-years, who may not be sure of whether they want to do a project, any advice as such?

Priyankka: What helped us was a senior. We had someone who actually told us how to do things. Talk to seniors. Get to know what they are doing.

Madhav: For people who want to go with projects, find two or three people who are interested. Find someone to help you. You can't learn everything by yourself.

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meet**the**faculty

DR SANTHAKUMAR MOHAN

by **Teena Roy** and **Vaisakh M**

OVERVIEW

Dr. Santhakumar Mohan got his PhD (Robotics and Control) from IIT Madras in 2010. From June 2010 to March 2011, he worked as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at National Institute of Technology, Calicut (NITC). He then worked as a world-class university (WCU) postdoctoral fellow at Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), Daejeon (Republic of Korea). In addition to this, he received the prestigious Brain Korea 21 (BK21) Post-doctoral fellowship with the same Institute from September 2011 to March 2012. In 2012, he joined as a faculty member at IIT Indore. Dr. Santhakumar is presently holding visiting faculty positions at IISc Bangalore, RWTH Aachen (Germany) and ECN (France). His active research areas include underwater vehicles and underwater manipulators (design and control), parallel robotic platforms, assistive robots, field and service robots, intelligent motion control, and dynamic modelling and control of dynamic systems. Furthermore, he has received the Outstanding Young Scientist Award for the year 2014 from Korea Robotics Society, Alexander von Humboldt (AvH) Fellowship (2016–2017), and European Master on Advanced Robotics Plus (EMARO+) fellowship (2018-2019). He has published more than 100 articles in various journals and conference proceedings.



INTERVIEW

Describe your journey to IIT Palakkad. Is there any particular reason you chose IITPKD?

There are actually very specific things apart from my family. I have a passion to work at new firms/institutes and to involve in developing new ideas. I strive for change every 5 years or so. It was a lot of firsts for me - I was the first student of my PhD supervisor, I was also the first postdoctoral research scholar for my lab. At IIT Indore, I was the only faculty who worked in Robotics. I take these up as challenges and give it my best.

Another reason is the close proximity of IIT Palakkad to my hometown (near Coimbatore). I was acquainted with some of the professors working here even before I joined this institute, like Prof. Job Kurian. I have known them since my days at IIT Madras. During one of our conversations, one of the professors invited me to join IIT Palakkad, citing that it was passionate people that the institute needed. Hence, I applied and after a tough fight, I got selected. I am hoping for many energetic problem statements to shoot up as I work here.

Your research areas include robotics, motion control, underwater vehicles, mechanism (design and analysis) and manipulator systems. How did you develop an interest in these topics and how did you build upon your interests?

When I was in my junior year of B.Tech, some of us were interested in developing our own build set-up of robotic platform (which is a mobile manipulator in our technical term). We thought of developing an exploration robot because it was the time when intense research had started on developing rovers and we were fascinated by it. This is when I realised that my skills related to mechanisms and physics were very good. Then I had a chance to work with a Professor at IIT Madras who gave me a problem statement on underwater robots which is totally different from ground-based robots that I was familiar with. Later on I interacted with other Professors and students and understood that I could develop the necessary components on my own; I didn't have to use any readymade components to test my control scheme and I could develop a prototype from scratch. I realised that I could stick with the mechanical aspects of robotics. So I began to concentrate on motion mechanics. Also, in case any need arises, I have collaborators from different fields.

You were the cornerstone of CRC (Centre for Robotics and Control), IIT Indore. Can you tell us more about CRC?

I joined IIT Indore when its first batch was in their senior year. There were no faculty working on robotics or controlled motion. I felt that the mechanical engineering students should get to know about controlled motion and related fields. So I had an initial idea to start a lab solely for controlled motion. But then the Director of IIT Indore suggested a lab focusing on both robotics and controlled motion. In the next 2 years, nearly 10 new members joined IIT Indore whose research areas included robotics and controlled motion and so, this idea that I had was realised as CRC, Centre for Robotics and Control. It has received a good response from the undergraduate students as well.

Do you have any similar plans for our institute?

I interacted with some faculty members and came to know that there is already a Centre for Innovation (CSquare) in our institute. I can collaborate with them. I talked to some of the students

who are involved in robotics and controlled motion. I am thinking of establishing a SAFE (**S**ervice **A**ssistive **F**ield **E**ntertainment) Robotics Lab. The aim would be to develop safe robots that could be deployed for purposes that are more domestic and service oriented, rather than industrial. I have already put a proposal to our Director and he is positive about it. Now we have to obtain funds and space for setting up the lab.

You have 4 ongoing projects. You are a regular faculty here at IIT Palakkad and also a visiting faculty at PSG College, Coimbatore. How do you manage your time and balance between your academic and personal life?

Back in IIT Indore, I could manage my time better. But now, I need to devote more time to my personal life. Fortunately, I have comparatively less workload here. There I had a full course and a full lab (each course has a lab at IIT Indore); but here I have only one subject and one lab. Also I don't have a research student working with me yet. So, I am relatively free. In the case of PSG too, I go only once a month. For me, its managing the international connections that is harder. I have 7 to 8 collaborators and everyone would be looking for some kind of collaborative work. On such occasions, it's hard to make things on time.

Did you acquire this disciplined life in your BTech life?

During my B.Tech years, people used to call me a robo because I was very systematic and regular in my work; I was a sportsperson and my jogging style too was very systematic. But I was majorly inspired by my Professors in IIT Madras. My professors were very particular about time. Then I went to Germany. There I saw a lot of professionalism, be it the student or the faculty. So I acquired these habits from the environments I lived in.

What do you like the most and the least about IIT Palakkad?

What I like the most about IIT Palakkad is its democratic outlook; every student and faculty member has got their own view. This is not the case with all other institutes. The least I like is the scheduling of class hours. The slot system is very efficient but the shuttling between the temporary and the transit campuses feels a bit odd. I lose about an hour and a half each day in this process. This is, I feel, just an initial hiccup. Apart from that, I like the students as well.

What are your hobbies? Outside the college how do you spend your time?

Earlier, I used to play soccer and hockey a lot. During my years as a research scholar, I started spending more time playing cricket. I used to play for a cricket club. I used to listen to melodies and read a lot as well but after joining college, due to the tight schedule, I lost the habit of reading.

What is your dream for IIT Palakkad?

IIT Palakkad need not be the number one in the world but I wish our institute to be the number one in South India. This is my dream.

What is your philosophy for life?

I believe we should accept things as they are. If we don't, regret would fill our minds and it would always feel like a burden. While I was in Korea, I was offered the post of a research engineer by Airbus as well as another opportunity to be a regular faculty at KAIST, South Korea. But ultimately, it was IIT Indore where I joined as a faculty member. Initially, I regretted the decision but looking back, I had a really prosperous time at IIT Indore. It was at IIT Indore where I got the opportunity to receive an appreciation from Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam. I also won many other awards, including two big fellowships (Humboldt fellowship and EMARO+ fellowship) during my time at IIT Indore. So, accept things as they are.

What do you think are the expectations of industries from the students?

I was a part of the TPO (Training and Placement Office) earlier, so I can give you a brief idea about that. We felt that students are reciting the faculty. When the teacher gives a question, the students try to repeat whatever the teacher has written on the board and that is not engineering ! We have to think over the concept and feel it. Once we have that feeling, then we can easily fill the industry needs. We have to study the science behind the things. The current education system is trying to recite whatever is given by the scientist or what is in the books.

What advice do you have for our students?

We are the decision makers of ourselves. We should understand what our heart desires and should work so as to attain satisfaction, not considering monetary gains. Being the first research scholar in robotics at IIT Madras, I had no seniors for support, no research facilities; I had to develop problem statements and build things on my own. The first few batches of IIT Palakkad too would have to go through similar difficulties, but these hardships would make us more flexible. We would be able to handle any situation with ease.

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thecollector'spiece

by Gregory Paul T

Eleanor and Park by Rainbow Rowell

Eleanor and Park is the story of two seemingly different teenagers who fall in love. Eleanor is the kind of person who, by normal standards, will be called weird. Park is a half-Korean boy who prefers not to be associated with anything abnormal. Their first encounter certainly reflects this chasm in personalities. Park is forced to give up the seat next to him to the girl in weird clothes who was about to cry. The transformation from enmity to friendship to actual teenage love is depicted quite beautifully in this novel.

The situation at home is also quite different for both of our protagonists.

They both face their share of problems with Park struggling for his father's approval and Eleanor living in constant fear of her stepfather. Park's parents show the ideal love story of two people from different parts of the world who are perfect for each other. Being ex-military, Park's dad had what one could call a 'manly man' vision for his son. Park couldn't handle the stress of being in the shadow of his brother. As the story progresses, we realise that we come to appreciate many of Park's father's qualities, but we still wish that he would accept his son for who he is.

Eleanor's home, on the other hand, is undoubtedly worse. Having to share a room with her siblings, she lives in fear of her step-father's temper. From the beginning, it was clear that he was a character we would love to hate. This was a man whom we would, at the end of the story, happily torture. An antagonist so well-written, that I felt more and more disgusted with him as the story went on. Clearly enemy number one, it was impossible to understand why Eleanor's mom still put up with him.

The interactions of Eleanor and Park are certainly the highlight of this novel. This novel is filled with many 'aww' moments including the time they shared their first comic books to 'they're just batteries' (No, I'm not explaining that. Read for yourself and find out). Park has a few 'knight in



shining armour' moments wherein he rushes to defend Eleanor. And Eleanor takes care of Park in so many little ways. The way they feel towards each other is brought out in many cute quotes.

"Eleanor was right. She never looked nice. She looked like art, and art wasn't supposed to look nice; it was supposed to make you feel something."

"He made her feel like more than the sum of her parts."

In the end, it's a gripping story of how love can heal all that's wrong with us in this world or at least provide a momentary escape. It's a story of two teenagers who take matters into their own hands and is definitely worth a read.

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