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OFFICIAL STUDENT  
MEDIA BODY OF IITR

## Gender and sexuality at R

We present insights gained from an extensive survey conducted to gauge the atmosphere at IITR with regards to ideas about Gender and Sexuality.

## All About Paper Publishing

A veteran of undergraduate research helps the Uninitiated traverse the intimidating world of scientific journals and conferences

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**ANUSHRUTI**

**GENDER AND  
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**PAPER PUBLISHING  
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# FROM THE EDITOR

Twenty-five years ago, a concerned denizen of Roorkee approached the warden of Govind Bhawan, seeking permission to print and distribute pamphlets in the Bhawan, warning residents to Watch Out! for snakes. At least that's what the origin story we've been told goes like. Notwithstanding the credibility of the same, over the years, the tree that is Watch Out! has mushroomed and branched out - clawing like a rabid cat at the bottomless surfaces of journalism and editorial writing - and there is a forest to cover yet. The foundational roots of this tree, however, can be found all the way back in that rumoured origin story - a ceaseless, unassuming concern for the campus and an infallible sense of journalistic responsibility. Well, we like to think that's true.

Just a few years back, Watch Out! was a self-funded, self-proclaimed media body, barely knocking at the doors of large-scale information dissemination, investigative journalism and research-based, thought-provoking, abstract editorial writing. Fast forward three years, and well, we're still infants. As the official student media body of the campus, we're still grabbing at greasy rails in the darkness whilst trying not to slip off of any mossy footholds. We've ventured beyond previously imagined journalistic and editorial horizons. Over the last 2 years, we have been instrumental in highlighting issues plaguing the campus, and have become more critical of the elected SAC - whether it's in the form of reviews, interviews or debates. Our online initiatives like the Intern or Research Diaries fall under neither broad category - they serve to inform, educate and assist the populace of Roorkee in making responsible and well thought-out career choices. We have also attempted at mimicking editorial giants like The New Yorker and Vanity Fair by approaching editorial writing in a much more organised, research-dependent way - this is part of our effort to expand the scope of thought of the citizens of Roorkee by arming them with ideas, theories and philosophies from around the world, that do not directly pertain to the campus. Roorkee can become an insipid mess of stress and deadlines, and we hope the reader can accompany us as we swim in the deepest oceans of our minds with our heads in the clouds, hoping that just for a moment, it all feels a tiny bit brighter.

Over the years, we've been told how it sometimes requires one to squint to distinguish between us (the student media body) and a notice board. With the kind of work we have indulged in over the last few years, we sincerely hope this distinction does not require squinting. It merely requires one to step out of one's hostel - nay, room - to bear witness to the fact that our campus, while scintillating and delightful, is riddled with issues that need addressal. While we are just as much Roorkee Chest Thumpers as the guy next door, we are also amongst the first few to highlight problems faced by the campus populace. In this sense, Watch Out! can very crudely be considered as a tool for grievance redressal, although we strongly recommend you not tell us that.

We believe that the path to effective redressal involves every member of IIT Roorkee to be well informed about the happenings on the campus and to have the means to get their voices heard. To put this into effect, Watch Out! invites guest editorials from the student populace on a regular basis. We urge you (our readers) to write to us or reach us out through our Facebook page if you (they) want to bring our attention to an issue or wish to contribute to our guest editorials.

In this silver anniversary edition of Watch Out!, we proudly present to you a carefully hand-picked, curated, marinated and barbecued basket-case consisting of juicy investigative journalistic pieces, creative flourishes in the form of editorials, and delightfully profound guest editorials.



# añushruti

Nestled in a silent corner right at the entrance of IIT Roorkee, Anushruti- Academy for the Deaf was established on November 11, 1989 at IIT Roorkee (the erstwhile University of Roorkee). Originally founded as the Roorkee School for the Deaf by Prof. S. C. Handa, a professor at the Department of Civil Engineering, it was later renamed to Anushruti. The word 'Anushruti' is an amalgamation of 'anu'(small) and 'shru-ti'(sound), and throughout its altruistic journey of 29 years, Anushruti has been actively engaged in the nurturance of children with hearing impairments. It started operations with Mrs. Handa being the first president and their son being the first student.



One of the primest and noblest social initiatives of IIT Roorkee, it is the first such organisation catering to the hearing-impaired to be based within an institute of national importance. Watch Out spoke to Mrs. Parvati Pandey and Dr. Tashi Nautiyal about the philosophy behind the school, its functioning and about help it could use from students of the institute.

### The philosophy behind Anushruti

Formed with the motivation to help children born with aural impediments adjust and rejoin mainstream society, the school is dedicated to bringing such people under its ambit.

For an unattended hearing impaired child, the process of learning and comprehending unfamiliar concepts is a daunting task. Having their faculty to hear and articulate words underwhelmed leads to a multitude of cognitive barriers, ranging from limited vocabularies to an inability to grasp complicated sentences. Another pressing concern is the prevalent lack of understanding and diagnosis of these problems by parents. Because hearing issues aren't obvious and readily identifiable, they often go unnoticed and ignored until it's too late, exacerbating them. These issues necessitate interventionist measures to adapt and change educational techniques so that the development of these children is ensured to be at par with the mainstream. This is where specialised schools come into the picture.

Anushruti has taken up the initiative of providing free assistance to these children at the tender avenue of pre-primary school, where the impact of adaptive education is most profound. The school provides full fledged educa-

tion, ranging from pre-nursery to class 8, upto which it is registered. Due to the students' unique requirements, they are also supported through class X and XII if the institution is approached. The school also functions to provide a moral and emotional support system to its beneficiaries, catering also to the students who have graduated from the school for their professional and personal needs.

Anushruti is also engaged in providing free diagnostic, audiometric and speech therapy facilities to the community. The intention is to develop a centre which may provide free diagnostic and therapeutic consultancy regarding aural and oral problems to the proximate demographic of people residing in nearby areas. The audiologist-cum-speech therapists associated with Anushruti, working in tandem with interns from the Himalayan Hospital, Jolly Grant, are agents that actuate this humanitarian vision.

### Methodology

**A) Admission process** The process begins with the filling of an application form, made available free-of-cost at the school's office. Awareness for the same is generated by educational drives, visits to areas to make people cognizant and by personal reference of students who might benefit from the architecture of the system put in place by the school. In supplement to these awareness drives, volunteers from NSS, IIT Roorkee also intimate the school's authorities about students which can be helped by the school. Prospective students and their kin then have a direct interaction with the school's team, intended for comprehensive evaluation of the prospectus and informing their parents about Anushruti's philosophy and

methodology. As these students are primarily from impoverished and destitute backgrounds, the team tries to make hesitant parents assured and comprehensive of the holistic development actuated by the school. Their apprehension regarding transport, funds, future scope etc. are accommodated and placated via intensive counselling sessions to ensure that support and help reaches those who direly need it.

### B) Integration into the school

Grade-appropriate knowledge of subjects are tested via standard tests, whereas short selection tests are deployed for audiological and psychological evaluation, according to which classes are allotted temporarily. The student's dexterity, adaptability and comfort in the classes' environment are assessed before their teaching scheme is finalised.

### C) Teaching scheme

The institution relies on modern technology and methods to help these children learn better. Standard speech and auditory equipment is complimented by computer-aided speech development systems. (Loop Induction System, Electronic Learning Wheel to name a few.) Communication is built on oral-aural techniques with supplementary usage of sign language. These techniques are used with the aim of holistically developing the student by providing mediums to engage in multifarious activities like art, craft and poetry parallel to routine education. These efforts are realised by skill and vocational development workshops covering dramatics, choreography, computer education, apparel designing, accessory designing and miming among other fields. Primary education follows a specifically crafted syllabus tailored to the esoteric requirements of the





students. The rest of the school's curriculum is based on NCERT guidelines.

#### Milestones

At the time of writing, 88 students are enrolled in the school, coming from nearby localities such as Deoband, Roorkee, Saharanpur, Shamli and Muzaffarnagar. The farthest serviced location is 120 KM from the school, with the child using public transport to travel the distance with their parent as an escort. So far, a total of 286 students have registered in the institution, whereas the efforts to provide audiometric evaluations and counselling have benefitted 4940 individuals. Students have participated in a multitude of sports events including The Regional Abilympics (Organized by the National Abilympic Association of India, New Delhi), and have showcased commendable talent in regional and district cultural competitions, with participation in national events as well.

#### Community based- financial model

The school is structured as a community based establishment, with most of its finances being sourced from donations. Though it began as a social initiative of IIT

Roorkee, the institute doesn't have formal financial obligations to the school. In their stead, IIT-R facilitates these benefactions by making them 100% tax-free (under Section 80-G) if made through the Institute Registrar. Anyone can contribute financially to the school's cause via this channel. Companies, industrialists and enterprises that visit Roorkee during Thomso and Cognizance also often donate to the school as a part of different fundraising initiatives. Rallies and deaf-awareness events bring to focus the requirements of hearing impaired children and encourage the community to contribute in some way to the upheaval of these children so that they can have a shot at a luminous future. Being independent from the governmental machinery enables efficient utilisation of collected funds and ensures that they are wholly channeled to the students in need.

#### Administrative structure

A team of dedicated teachers and educators trained and specialised in interacting with hearing impaired children are involved in Anushruti's endeavours. The teachers don't function on a fixed time table as the curriculum of





primary education for these students varies and is different from regular students. On the administrative front, the Director, IIT Roorkee is a patron while the Vice-President, Manager, Joint-Manager and Treasurer are faculty members of the institute. The constitution of Anushruti has been drafted by personnel from IITR and was ratified by the Board of Governors. The Managerial Committee is required to submit the the annual reports and audited balance sheets to IITR.

#### Relations with IIT-R

The community of IIT is also actively engaged with the school's working. Certain faculty members have 'adopted' students; the expenses incurred as part of the child's education are borne by them. Coaches from the institute also interact and guide students having a penchant for sports. As mentioned previously, students from NSS contribute by intimating the school about students that can be helped. Moreover, the Department of Management Studies organizes the annual 'Deaf Awareness Week-BHOR' every September. On one occasion, students from the Architecture Department visited the school interacted with the pupils who had a gala time forging new friendships.

The school motivates IIT Roorkee students / faculty to undertake research on the development of latest technologies to develop assertive devices and other educational teaching aids, various software's, teaching learning material and appliances to help educate and train hearing impaired children.

Through an in-school gift shop, the school also engages in selling a variety of artistic creations from its students such greeting cards, dolls, toys

and a whole paraphernalia of gorgeous objects. These works are available for purchase by anyone who wants to contribute, they need only reach the school via the designated contact number.

The school will greatly benefit from technical inputs from IIT-R's community, which include volunteerism to take these children under tutelage and assist the school in its endeavours. The school is always on the lookout for such people, and anyone who wants to lend a helping hand towards making the world a brighter and more jubilant place for these children just have to bring their motivations to the notice of the school .





# Gender & Sexuality

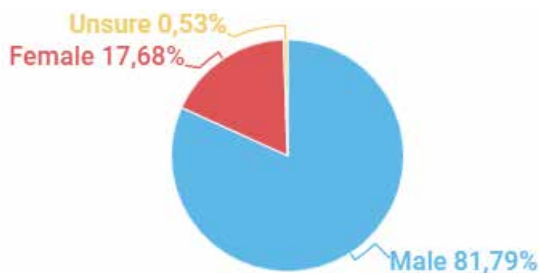
at IIT Roorkee

With the dissolution of Article 377, the LGBTQ movement has been gaining momentum nationally and this provided Watch Out! with an impetus to appraise the climate of the campus with respect to gender sensitisation and awareness about gender and sexuality. This is not to claim that the authors have their heads wrapped around these concepts as well, but given how the media and the internet- which the survey revealed to be the primary source of information for the student community of R- abounds with information, news and articles engaging with these concepts, we wanted to make an attempt to provide an accessible guide to getting at least conversant with these ideas.

We also express our deep appreciation for the individuals who sent us anonymous memoirs that are extremely relevant today, more so in the context of the ideas this article engages with.



## What gender do you identify as?



Sex refers to physical or physiological differences between males and females, including both primary sex characteristics (the reproductive system) and secondary characteristics such as height and muscularity.

Human beings have 23 pairs of chromosomes, one of the pairs, the "Sex Chromosomes" unilaterally determine the sex of a person.

## What does gender mean?

Briefly, gender is a term that refers to social or cultural distinctions associated with being male or female. It is the social construct employed in how we approach the differentiation between the sexes. The term social construct implies an idea or notion that appears to be natural and obvious to people who accept it but may or may not represent objective reality, so it remains largely an invention or artifice of a given society in order to function in a certain way.

To understand this better, it helps to look at the application of stereotypes within a culture. For instance, take the color pink. It connotes femininity and is associated with effeminacy, but this is a construct or manufactured belief that has arisen only very recently. Gender coding people by the use of color became in vogue only in the latter half of the 19th century. Till as recently as two centuries ago, it was perfectly masculine for a man to wear a pink silk suit with floral embroidery, and the color was seen as connoting ferocity, valour and masculinity.

Gender identity is the extent to which one identifies as being either masculine or feminine. It is based on an individual's self-conception of being male or female based on their association with masculine or feminine gender roles of their culture.

Children learn at a young age that there are distinct expectations for boys and girls. Cross-cultural studies reveal that children are aware of gender roles by age two or three. These gender roles are acquired these via socialisation, a process in which people learn to behave in a particular way as dictated by societal values, beliefs, and attitudes, influenced by Family, Education, Peer groups and Mass Media.

A person might accept or reject the gender and hence the gender role assigned to them.

Transgenders are individuals who identify with the role that is the incongruent or oblique to their biological sex. Transgender males, for example, have such a strong emotional and psychological connection to the feminine aspects of society that they identify their gender as female.

Transexuals are transgender individuals who wish to alter their bodies through medical interventions such as surgery and hormonal therapy—so that their physical being is better aligned with their gender identity. It pays to look at an example.

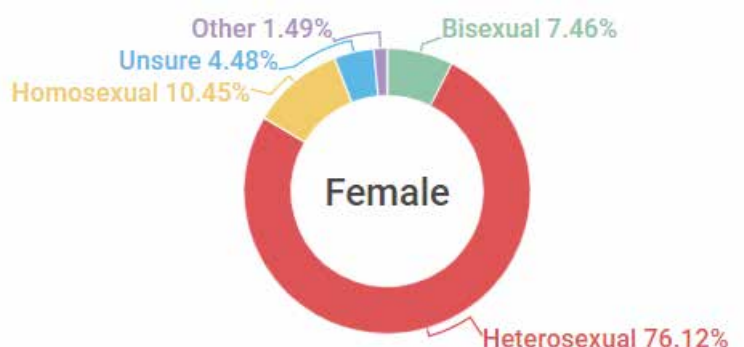
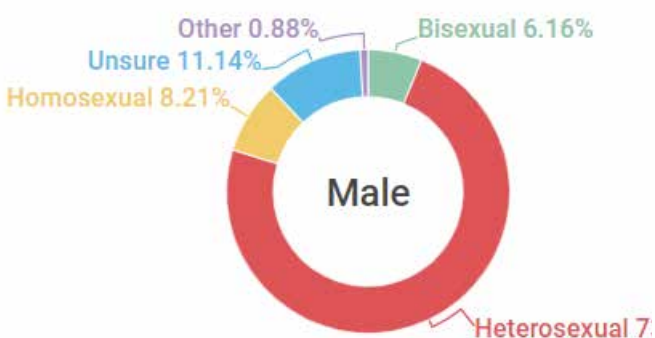
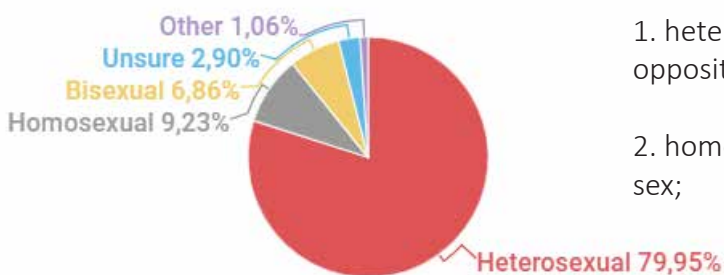
Not all transgender individuals choose to alter their bodies: many will maintain their original anatomy but may present themselves to society as the opposite gender.

It is important to note that people who cross-dress, or wear clothing that is traditionally assigned to opposite gender, are not necessarily transgender. Cross-dressing is typically a form of self-expression, entertainment, or personal style, not necessarily an expression against one's assigned gender.

## 2 What is your Sexual Orientation?

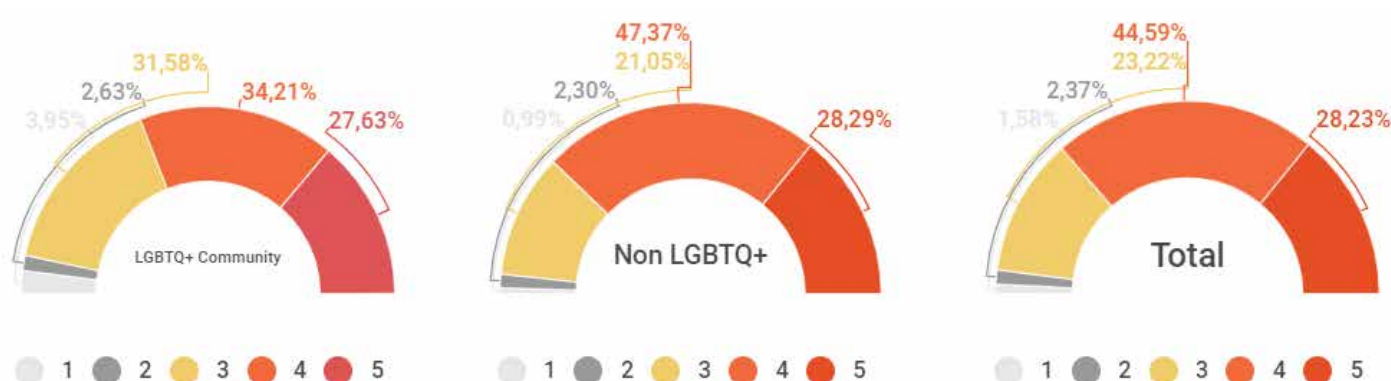
Sexual orientation refers to a person's emotional and sexual attraction to a particular sex (male or female). Sexual orientation is typically divided into four categories:

1. heterosexuality, the attraction to individuals of the opposite sex;
2. homosexuality, the attraction to individuals of one's own sex;
3. bisexuality, the attraction to individuals of either sex; and
4. Asexuality, the absence of attraction to either sex.



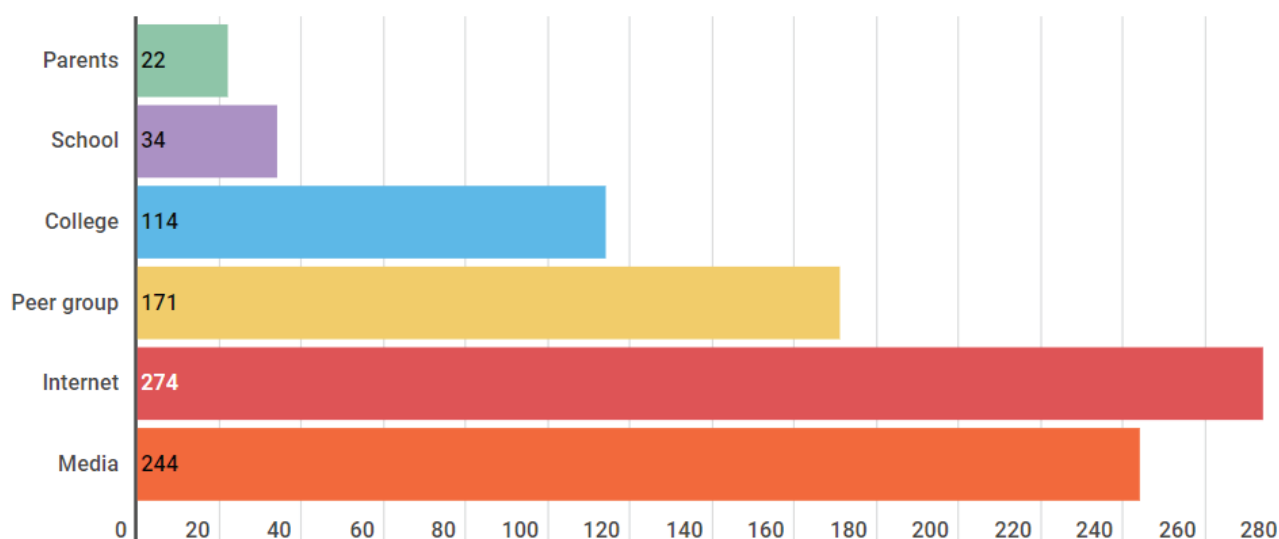
These are just the four broad categories and sexuality is not limited to them at all ( bi-curious, aromantic, pansexual etc). Clellan Ford and Frank Beach's classic anthropological survey, *Patterns of Sexual Behaviour* (1952), documented the huge diversity of same-sex relations in dozens of tribal societies on every continent. They also demonstrated that most non-western cultures seem to have accepted, and sometimes even venerated and ritualised, homosexuals. In many native American tribes, for example, this sexual difference was deemed to be evocative of spiritual and supernatural powers. The prestigious role of tribal shaman was often reserved for these "sexual others". A simple google search results in many such accounts of cultures rooted in antiquity that have been environments where every identity was respected and in some cases, outliers of the norms were celebrated with verdant pomp.

### 3 How well informed about the concepts of gender, sex and sexual orientation would you say you are? (1 being the least, 5 being the most)



It's fair to assume that respondents whose response was 4 or 5 (72.82%) consider themselves well informed. (A classification that we employ later in the article)

### 4 Where do your Ideas about the LGBTQ+ ( lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer +) community come from?

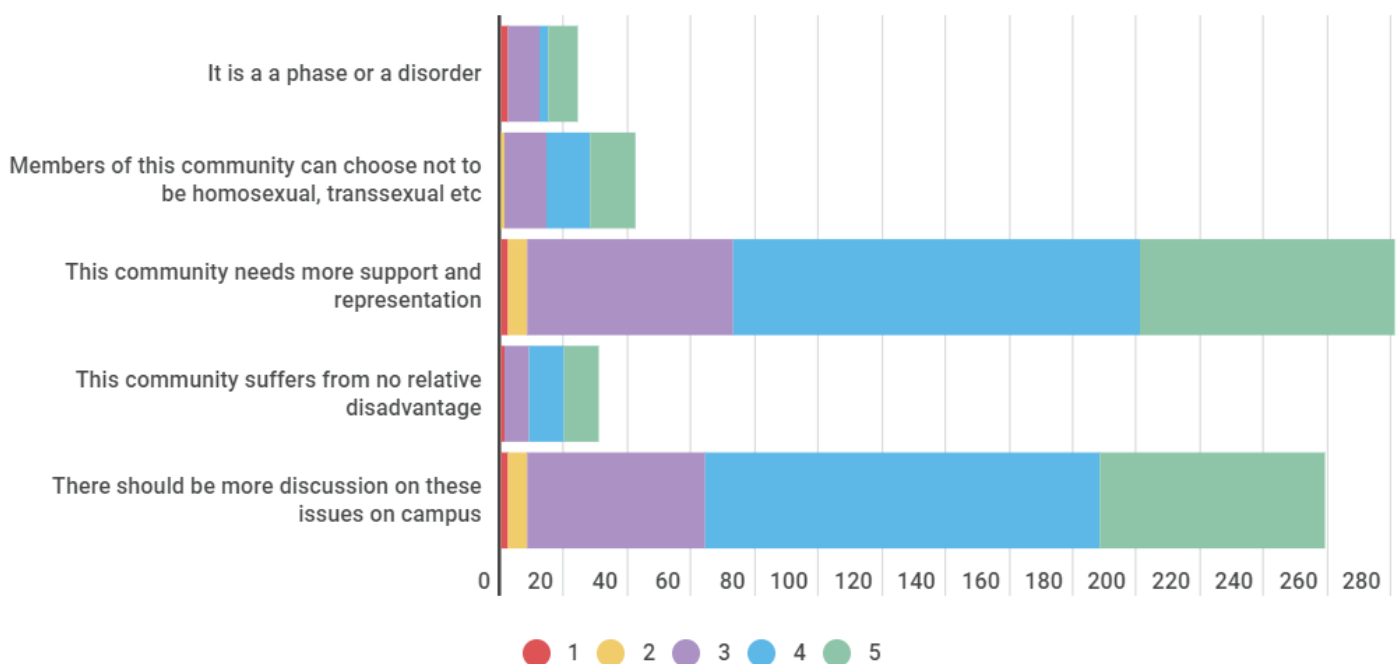


Parents (5.8%) were the least popular sources of information about LGBTQ+ community, this can be assumed to indicate the lack of conversation in Indian households regarding these issues.

Schools (8.97%) were next in line for being the least popular source of information. Indian schools fall short in ensuring proper discourse needed, which leads to fettered acknowledgement of identities that exist outside established norms. In the absence of any awareness, access to avenues to deal with confusions, discomfort or dysphoria with one's identity are severed and many individuals find themselves trying to fit in to expectations that might feel claustrophobic and stifling. Coupled with the (mostly) negative/ stereotypical portrayal of the LGBTQ+ movies in the Indian media, the absence of any formal source of information can lead to severe distress and self-blaming. These societal traits shed light on a heteronormative nature, i.e. a society that supports heterosexuality as a norm (Consider that homosexuals are often asked, "When did you know you were gay?" but heterosexuals are rarely asked, "When did you know that you were straight?").

64.38% of respondents rely on media to mould their opinions in the context within which this article exists. As mentioned previously, the media is an important factor in forming biases and shaping public opinion. To put in perspective why there is uproar regarding representation of females along with minorities in Hollywood, we can employ a small set of criteria to qualitatively assess inclusivity. (consider when someone appraises colleges based on the success of its alumni. If one comes to know that a particular institution isn't represented by its graduates at positions of importance and responsibility, it is labelled as being deficient in some way as compared to well-represented colleges. Similarly, seeing a distinguished alumna of IIT Roorkee doing well provides us reference as to what we have the potential to achieve. In the absence of its representation in the mainstream, a community can find itself lacking in confidence and falling prey to detrimental sneers and jibes subjected to them claiming that they are inferior in some way).

## 5 Select the statements(s) which best describe your views on the issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community-



(The numbers below the graph indicates self-evaluated level awareness from Question 3)



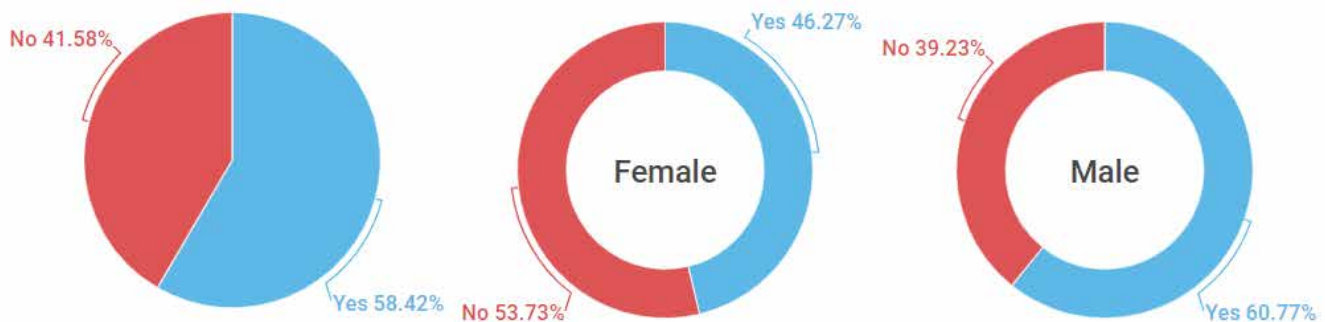
Do you think gender is a spectrum, with some people lying in between the binary of male and female?



19.74% of respondents answered with a no.

The dichotomous view of gender (the notion that one is either male or female) is specific to certain cultures and is not universal. In some cultures, gender is viewed as fluid. Samoan culture accepts what they refer to as a “third gender”, Fa’afafine, which translates as “the way of the woman,” is a term used to describe individuals who are born biologically male but embody both masculine and feminine traits. Fa’afafines are considered an important part of Samoan culture. Individuals from other cultures may mislabel them as homosexuals because fa’afafines have a varied sexual life that may include men or women.

Have you ever used the words 'gay', 'lesbian', 'girlish' etc. in any derogatory form?



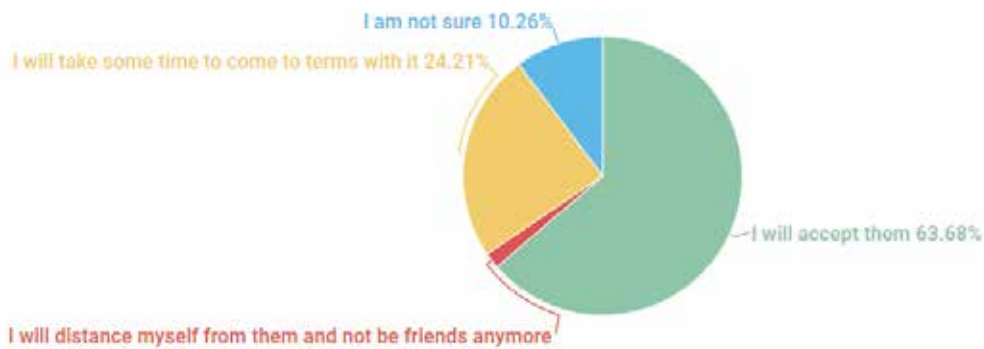
A majority of respondents agreed to have used these words in a derogatory form in some point of their college life. We believe the number to be even higher since a lot of people don't actually realise that they're indulging in this casual bigotry and it is inherently problematic, even if meant in light humour. The female respondents (46.27%) were found to be less inclined towards this name calling and gender-based insulting than their male counterparts (60.77%). Respondents from the LGBTQ+ community as well as those who agreed that the community is disadvantaged also accepted partaking in this, showcasing how deep-rooted these stereotypes about gender assigned roles really are.

## 8 Do you consider yourself expressing the gender/sexual identity you feel the most comfortable with?



42.1% of the members of the LGBTQ community reply in the negative as compared to 4% of non-LGBTQ+.

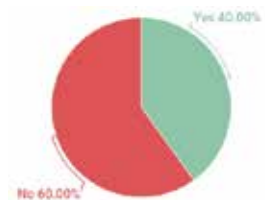
## 9 If a friend comes out to you (that is confides in you about their true gender/sexual identity), what will your first reaction be?



Only 1.84% of the respondents will be unaccepting. This is lesser than the percentage of people who believe that being non-binary is a disease or a phase, which suggests that people who are under informed regarding these issues aren't necessarily homophobes and labelling them as one can be counterproductive. As we mentioned previously, this calls for conversation of dissemination of information regarding these ideas.

However, if a large majority of people still indulge in gender-biased insults etc, a person will feel dissuaded from confiding in them or in being their true selves.

## 10 Have you experienced any disadvantages because of your gender/sexual identity?



40% of the total respondents claimed that they had faced disadvantages because of their gender/sexual identity. With the skewed gender ratio on campus acting as the cause, 46.27% of the female respondents accepted to have faced disadvantages because of their gender. While the same for male respon

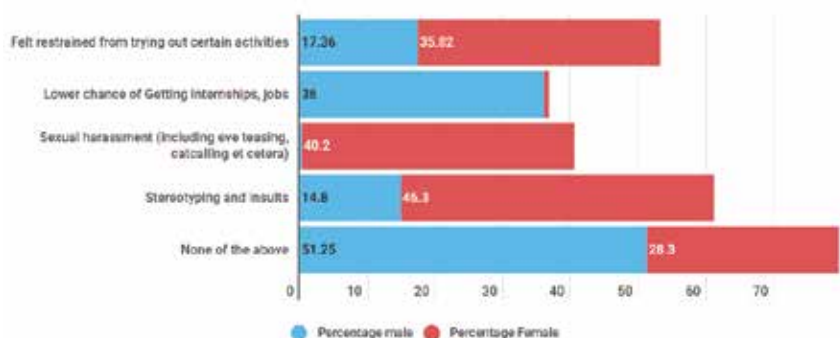


dents also was significant at 38.66%, this can be attributed to the fact that a wave of dissent towards campus group prevails strongly in the campus, with complaints of gender profiling in recruitments at the apex.

Most of the LGBTQ+ community continues to remain in the closet, and only 42.11% people agreed that their sexuality had been an impediment to them during their time in the institute.

# 11

## What problems have you experienced because of your gender/ sexual identity?



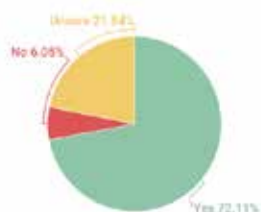
A Considerably larger percentage of females felt restrained from trying out certain activities(35.82), harassment(40.2%), and were subject to stereotyping and insults (46.3) than males (17.36%, 0.32% and 14.8) respectively.

17.36% (or 54) men felt restrained in trying out certain activities. This could be, in part, attributed to a culture of “Toxic Masculinity”.

For decades, we used terms like “macho,” “red-blooded” or “machismo” to describe the kind of hulking masculinity that men were, on some level, expected to aspire to. And if someone dared to question or oppose this view they had their “masculinity” questioned.

# 12

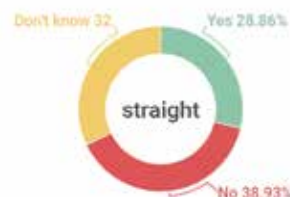
## Would you be comfortable around a member of LGBTQ+ community?



93.95% of the respondents responded positively.

# 13

## Do you think there is a place on campus you can reach out to for support and assistance with regards to issues with your sexuality and/ or mental well being?

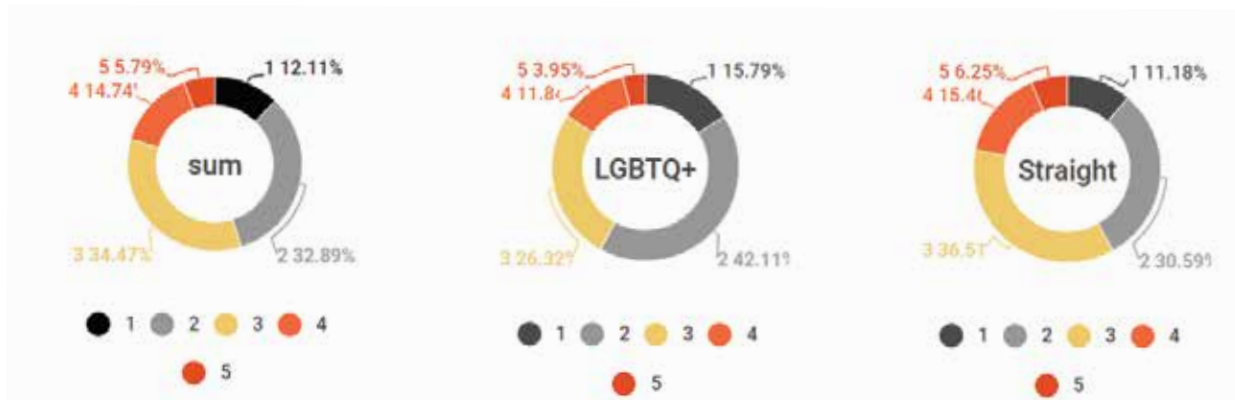


Only 17.11% of the members of the LGTBQ replied with a yes, which is alarming given that 42.1% find themselves unable to express the identity they feel most comfortable with.

The lack of avenues to reach out to for assistance impacts everyone, with a total of 43.58% responding negatively.

# 14

On a scale of 1-5 how welcoming is IITR for students of the LGBTQ+ community? (1 being least welcoming and 5 being the most)



As apparent from the graph, a larger fraction of non-binary students feel that Roorkee is unwelcoming (responses ranging from 1-2) than straight students. An important observation here is that the most vulnerable stakeholder here is the former : even if straight students believe that the campus is progressive, it doesn't necessarily lead to the non-binary students feeling comfortable until they feel the same way.

## Conclusion

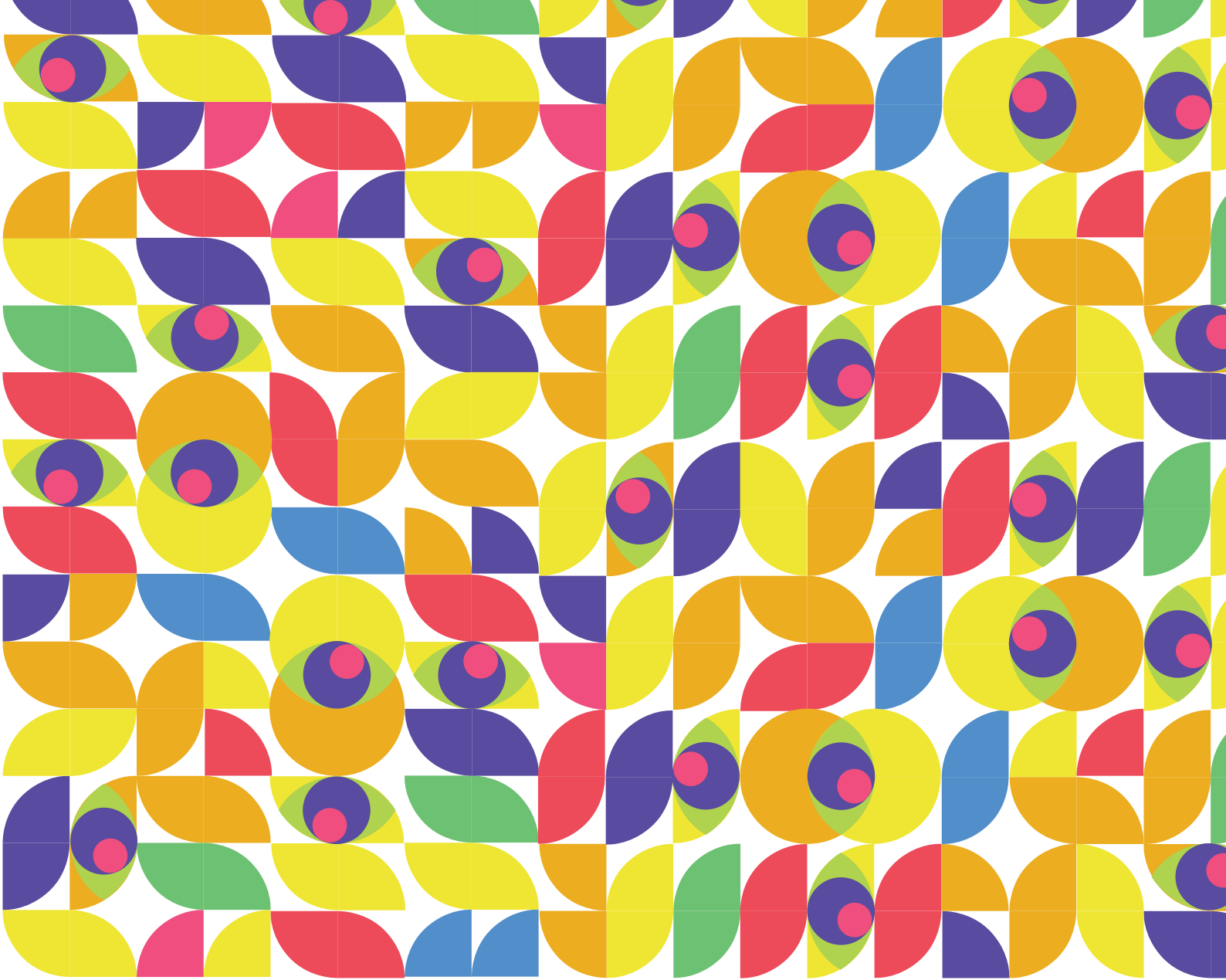
This article barely scratches the surface of these concepts, and is intended to serve as a stepping stone towards more conversation. It is a bold assertion to claim that anyone understands these ideas completely, and we know better than to do the same here. The research that was put in to write this article also made us aware of notions we had no idea about.

As apparent from the results, we need to start taking steps towards a cultural shift in making the campus welcoming and supportive for students of all identities. 45% of the respondents feel Roorkee is unwelcoming to LGBTQ+ students, and 43.58% believe that the campus is devoid of any avenue to reach out to for support and assistance regarding their sexuality and/ or mental well being.

However, it is heartening to note that 87.89% of the respondents said that they will be supportive and accepting if someone comes out to them and more than 70% want more discussions on these issues within the campus. A large number of respondents expressed a sincere desire to contribute in ensuring gender sensitization on campus via their responses to the subjective questions of the survey. Some even mentioned realising how casual use of derogatory terms is problematic while answering the questionnaire.

The road to inclusivity and removal of antiquated beliefs is a long and arduous one. Nevertheless, being open to conversation and harboring a desire to change ideas that we subconsciously imbibe from our environment goes a long way in making a positive change. Nobody should have to feel ashamed in being who they are, nobody should have to suffer in isolation under the trepidations of being outcasted. Help is always just around the corner, even though everyday might feel like an uphill climb amidst a cacophony of self-doubt and anxiety.

There is always somebody willing to listen.



I am writing this article to address certain myths that I have every so often been presented with while being consulted by peers who were interested in publishing their research work. I have had the opportunity to present my own work at three top conferences now, within the field of embedded systems, data compression, and sensors, while having published a journal paper too. Please note that this article is bound to be heavily biased by my own personal experiences, for academic communities have highly variable publication routines. For e.g., while conferences garner a lot of reputation in circuit branches (possibly more so than journals), this may not be the case in natural sciences, which highly regard journal publications. So, to begin with, there are several cycles involved in publishing one's work. **B**uilding a manuscript Your article/research paper is supposed to be a well-drafted manuscript that, succinctly but **B** descriptively, demonstrates the problem statement studied, the solution proposed, and the contributions made. This manuscript is to be submitted for review, thereafter. **C**hoosing a platform to publish Broadly, one can publish via three platforms: (a) preprints; (b) conferences; (c) **C** journals. I give brief descriptions about the three in this paragraph, but elucidate further details on choosing the exact venue in a later part of the article. Preprints are not technically publications, but an early body of work that you find promising. The idea here is to either mark your problem territory or unveil solutions/problems that require attention from the community. ArXiv is the most popular preprint platform and most certainly an academic's newsboard. Conferences are generally the platform of choice if your work has gained a certain level of maturity, such as if you define a problem and in part solve it. Finally, the old school, high-prestige publications are journal papers, which usually carry a lot of lustre with them. These papers are heavily scrutinized by several reviewers before publication. **P**eer review In most conferences/journals, one's submission is assigned 3-4 reviewers who assess the novelty, plausibility, and clarity of your work, thereby scoring it on a predefined scale. These reviewers strive to find achievements and

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# ALL ABOUT PAPER PUBLISHING

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loopholes within your research, which you may be given a chance to address. I say "may", for reviews can lead to either direct publications or rebuttals. In the former situation, reviewer comments are unveiled to you and, if the review score is high, your paper is accepted for publication directly. It is now at your discretion to modify your paper as per reviewer comments. For e.g., say a reviewer said the caption of figure 2 is unclear and is vital to understanding the paper. In this case, it would be a good idea to change the caption. However, note that one is not allowed to perform significant changes to the paper. For e.g., if you have found an optimization technique to improve your algorithm's speedup from 2x to 3x, you are not allowed to modify your paper towards the same. The idea here is to convince the reviewer but since the paper has already been accepted, it cannot be reviewed again. In case significant changes are found, the paper is rejected. **R**ebuttals (the latter situation) The pipeline towards acceptance decision varies from venue to venue. In most top **R** conferences and journals, however, one is given a chance to address the limitations found by reviewers. Certain venues allow for one to update the paper to address the reviewer comments, while others ask for limited text (<500 words, typically) responses. The idea here is to convince why the reviewer why your assumptions are correct or why the supposed limitation may not actually cover your target domain. Also, if you do think that the reviewer is right with his analysis, save some electrons and just thank the reviewers. **F**inally, the review/rebuttal process culminates in the publication of your work. Now, having described the general **F** idea, let me talk about certain specifics that I find important for people to know.

**F**aculty involvement Something that simply confounds me is the opinion that one needs a professor to be affiliated with one's paper in order to publish work.

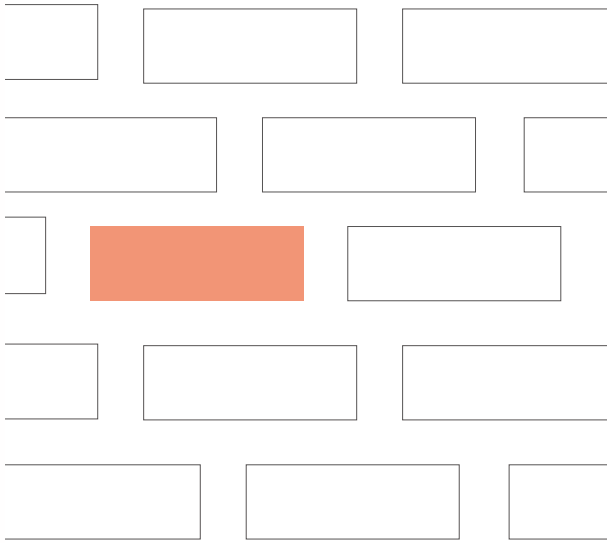
This is an absurd notion. You can publish alone, with your friends, with your grandparents, with your friend's grand parents—whosoever you want, truly. In general, however, the authors of a piece of work will be the people who have contributed to it in some way. If the contribution is not significant, then such people are conventionally mentioned in the acknowledgement. **T**he lust of journal publications The publication cycle for journals is excruciatingly long, to the point where certain journals even take a year or two to go from review to publication stage. I am personally a heretic when it comes to journal publications, for these long winded time windows can actually become the bottleneck of scientific progress. **P**ublishing half-cooked ideas to conferences The following especially applies to circuit branches. This maligned **P**notion for conferences has become a rather old-school opinion. In actuality, the competitiveness of conferences has risen to such high degrees that unless you have significant contributions to unveil, publishing in conferences is really hard. Further, the amount of content expected to be published in a top international conference paper in certain fields is several folds more exhaustive than that of a journal. Such communities have essentially accepted the limitations of journal publications and are progressing towards more dynamic and fast-paced publication cycles. One could argue that this adulterates the content quality, but there's enough empirical proof that indicates otherwise. **D**o not publish for the sake of it This point cannot be stressed enough. Students interested in pursuing academic **D**careers are usually hounding towards getting themselves published; however, a publication at an unrecognized platform can be worse than no publication. Strive for top venues and settle for suboptimal ones if you have to, but do not publish for the sake of it. All this said and done, an important point that I haven't yet addressed is how to choose a platform to publish. Say you want to publish your work at a conference, then a good idea would be to find high H5-index conferences within your field at Google Scholar Metrics. You can find a relevant category on the website to find a suitable venue for your work. H5-index

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// EKDEEP SINGH  
LUBANA

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describes how many papers have had at least as many citations, in the last 5 years, at that venue. This isn't an ideal metric to test a conference's competitiveness, but certainly a metric that correlates well. Journals are usually evaluated by impact factors, than H5-index. I wouldn't think too much about the metrics, frankly. The idea is simply to find a list of top venues. Thereafter, you go through some publications from previous years at that venue and try to determine if your work fits in well. Remember, the idea of publication is not just to unveil your contributions, but also to take feedback to improve your work. **L**astly, some pointers specifically on conferences. While journal publications are carried out through the comfort of **L**one's home/workplace, conferences demand traveling to a venue and presenting your work. Presentations can either be oral or poster. Oral presentations are usually much fewer than poster presentations and typically involve a 15-20 minute talk by one of the authors, followed by a 2-5 minute questioning round. Don't worry if you feel too shy to ask questions to the presenter amongst a hall filled with several luminaires from your field (evil wink), for presentation sessions are usually followed by coffee breaks and allow enough time for one to interact with authors of the papers that one finds interesting. But, there's also a lot of really good free food available during these breaks, so do make sure you really have something worthwhile to give up all of that for. That said, your presentation really, really needs to be remarkable. Your presentation is you getting a chance to pitch your work to investors, who may choose to read your paper, take up your work, build upon/around it, cite you, make you popular, and get you a Nobel/Turing/Abel/other field-specific counterparts of the darn medal. **N**ow, due to societal obligations, I am expected to conclude this article, but, frankly, I do not have a conclusion. **N**Therefore, peace out. :)



outside

indroneil  
kanungo

the wall.

**H**umans are today the most dominant species on the planet and it wasn't always the case. It is because we happened to develop a unique evolutionary advantage: our ability to socialize and communicate complex ideas using a language. In prehistoric times, this is what helped us gain the strategic advantage over creatures with superior speed, agility, claws and teeth. And today it helps us with much more than that.

One way it significantly improves our lives, that we usually take for granted, is that we have not only the ability to learn from our mistakes, but also from the mistakes of anyone, anywhere on the planet, alive or otherwise.

In that spirit, I would like to share with you guys the mistakes I've made, and the things that I learnt from them, so you can avoid them.

For reasons that are too personal, I was severely depressed through my second until about the middle of my fourth year. And as far as we know, depression is more common today than has ever been.

It's my opinion that a good part of the reason is how capitalism forces us to go against our natural instincts to cooperate among ourselves, and requires us to compete against the same friends that we would rather help cheat in an exam.

Our entire economy and the education system is based around that same principle of competition. But regardless of the reasons, you have to live with it. When I look back at myself 5 years ago, I see a person who could have succeeded in any of the fields he desired. I had a really nice social life. I was pretty good at physics, math, coding, chess, badminton, music and I could have chosen to excel at any of those but instead what I did was to lie on my bed all day, staring at the ceiling, contemplating ways to kill myself.

It's impossible to imagine a better version of yourself when you're in that state. You feel that you're a burden to everyone.

As a result, all your attempts at convincing yourself to get help or to reach out to your friends will be in vain. This of course only makes it worse.

But if there's one thing I could say to that person, I'd tell him to seek therapy or psychiatric help without a second thought. It's easy to forget that no matter how "sentient", you are really just a very complicated arrangement of atoms, and tiny things like talking about some stuff to the right person, or the right chemicals in your bloodstream, can have a drastic effect on your mood.

Yes, life is very unfair, and some people start far ahead of an average person in terms of their probability of ending up successful. It's like a gift that they get from nature. On the other hand are people who the way I see it, owe a great price to the universe the moment they're born. And the interesting extension of this idea is that the price that you owe nature, it shall redeem.



//  
 “There’s no right  
 way to live life.”



One way or another. And therapy is often the easiest way to clear your debt. So you could pay for it with money, or you could do what I did instead and pay for it with your career, 5 years of your time and most importantly, your mental well-being. So before you say it, no. You’re not “too smart for therapy”.

I should have probably started with this. But as some of you may know already, I haven’t really graduated. I have dropped out of college as I didn’t think the time and the effort I’d have to give in order to get a degree would be worth it, and I hope I will not be proven wrong.

I am going to pursue a career as a full-time musician. I have joined a music school in Mumbai and will be staying there for the foreseeable future. Deciding what I had to do was rather easy for me because all of the other options had been destroyed.

But most of you people reading this likely do not have their lives as “sorted out” as mine so I think you could use some help. Through most of your life and especially in your college, you will struggle to please a certain set of people around you. It could be your parents, relatives, your teachers, employers, friends or

maybe just yourself. Life is easy as long as you can please every one of those at the same time. But here’s the thing : after a certain point, you can’t. That point typically comes around adolescence. And I think it should be the objective of your college life to figure out, who it is that you want to please.

You should keep in mind that there are no wrong answers here. There’s no right way to live life. But not having an answer could make your life potentially difficult in the future. Not that you asked, but I have found my answer. I have realized that I want to try my best to make myself happy irrespective of whether the other people in the list disapprove.

Writing and listening to good music is something that makes me very happy and if you haven’t already, I think you should try to figure out what that thing is which you enjoy just as much. Your college life is a very critical time of your life.

The tiniest of your actions have enormous, unpredictable consequences. So choose your actions carefully, think before you speak, and don’t do drugs kids.

Say it, NO, you're not "too smart for therapy"



// graphic credit

Erassery Byju Anandu Gopal



# The moral bankruptcy of giving birth

*If children were brought into the world by an act of pure reason alone, would the human race continue to exist? Would not a man rather have so much sympathy with the coming generation as to spare it the burden of existence, or at any rate not take it upon himself to impose that burden upon it in cold blood?*

*-Arthur Schopenhauer*



The author of the critically acclaimed study in philosophy “The World as Will and Representation” speaks here of the anti-natalist stand. This moral/philosophical standpoint posits that it is morally impermissible to procreate and give birth. This editorial aims neither to criticise nor condone this philosophy, but to clear its nebulous representation that plagues popular media.

A tranquil, almost languid warmth, gushes through our innards at the mention of life – a silent agreement to the fact that it has a certain inherent value that is enough to warrant its sacredness. This notion is fortified by how religion – the invisible thread of beliefs that dictates our moral compass – generally places life at an olympian pedestal and consecrates it as a divine creation that mankind is unqualified to take in its own hands. This bleeds into the laws that shape the tramlines of how an ideal citizen should behave within society, a few demonstrative examples being the debate around euthanasia, capital punishment, abortion et cetera. The sanctity of an inalienable right to life, the ramifications of violating that right and the apotheosis of the human spirit have been indoctrinated into us by a multitude of factors that function similarly. Murdering is the ultimate sin, loss of life is a catastrophe. Mothers are revered as life-givers and the act of childbirth is the ultimate purpose that provides completeness to an individual’s stay in the cosmos.

Given how it has become instinctive to buy into this belief, it becomes imperative to take a moment to ask ourselves ‘WHY?’. David Benatar voices:-

“Creating new people, by having babies, is so much a part of human life that it is rarely thought even to require a justification. Indeed, most people do not even think about whether they should or should not make a baby. They just make one. In other words, procreation is usually the consequence of sex rather than the result of a decision to bring people into existence. Those who do indeed decide to have a child might do so for any number of reasons, but among these reasons cannot be the interests of the potential child. One can never have a child for that child’s sake.”

This inquiry motivated cliques of people to look into the true nature and quality of human life as they appraised it. One of these philosophies that has gained traction right now is anti-natalism. A blanket claim associated with the anti-natalist sentiment is the idea that the one guaranteed way to protect your child from suffering is to not give it birth in the first place.

Those espousing this idea generally invoke the ethical theory of negative utilitarianism, which gives greater weight to a reduction in human suffering than an effort to maximise happiness. For an illustration, R. Ninian Smart presents that negative utilitarianism would entail that a ruler who is able to instantly and painlessly destroy the human race would have a duty to do so. This is again contingent on the belief that human life is miserable, one of the characterisation(s) of which is called the ‘terminality of being’. A human being is affected by three types of friction: physical pain (in the form of illnesses and catastrophes to which it is perennially exposed); discouragement (encompassing phenomena such as lack of will, fatigue, meaninglessness and depression); and “moral impediment”( the incapability of humans to be altruistically ethical in all circumstances, a consequence of conflicting self interests in attempts to survive).

In the case of assuming the generalisation that life assumes the binary of being miserable or not miserable, a decision theory matrix provides us with 4 case-scenarios for the existence of a chubby little boy called Jeff, who would've been thrust into this world if his parents procreated-

	Scenario A (Jeff exists)	Scenario B (Jeff never exists)
Life is pain	(1) Presence of pain (sucks)	(2) Absence of pain (great)
Life is nice	(3) Presence of pleasure (nice)	(4) Absence of pleasure (Not bad)

**1)** Jeff navigates through life with the joys of ice-cream, watching cat videos, and a stable family while dealing with depression, injuries, stepping on lego pyramids and anxiety- the weighted average of which assigns his life a red stamp of being miserable. He has desires: spiritual needs which reality is unable to satisfy. He silently suppresses those desires to shield himself from the pain and ends up in a frigid unfeeling numbness. He still exists only because he limits his awareness of what that reality actually entails. Jeff's existence amounts to a tangled network of defense mechanisms, which can be observed in his everyday behavior patterns. He was too easily forgotten for anyone to care when and how he died. This Jeff arouses our pity and his story is turned into a Netflix Original.

**2, 4)** Jeff isn't born and remains a fictional kid with a copter hat that makes us smile for the purpose of this article.

**3)** Let's here assume the absolute best of case 3. Jeff is born with a jawline that will cut through stone. He learns all languages across all species before he is in kindergarten and proceeds to amuse himself by creating one of his own. He has never not been euphoric: lady luck is his accomplice and all of the metaphoric oceans between him and his desires part to his whim. He looks like a million bucks even after stuffing his 80kg muscular frame with a tub of nutella that is processed immaculately by his ungodly metabolism. We don't like this Jeff.

**Case 1** is problematic and it seems morally

incongruous to force this situation on someone- It is wrong to create someone so that they can try to make their life bearable by struggling against the difficult and oppressive situation we place them in. It seems more reasonable simply not to put them in the situation to which they will have to react, when its results are always uncertain.

**Case 3** on the face of it feels like a desirable situation, as someone is leading a fulfilling and joyous life, and by refraining from procreation we preclude someone's pleasure. Therein lies the catch: the absence of pleasure is not bad unless there is somebody for whom this absence is a deprivation. If there isn't a 5-year old to snatch an ice-cream sandwich from, nobody goes home crying. Case 4 doesn't have a Jeff for which the absence of this happiness is a deprivation and hence, the anti-natalist stand doesn't suffer from the aforementioned quandary.

**Case 2** doesn't have our protagonist Jake, because he is but the thought-child of hypothetical anti-natalist parents. Nobody has to suffer.

Hence, if we look across the first column in a world with Jeff, the first situation is terribly abhorrent while the second isn't a moral necessity. That is, we have a moral obligation to refrain from creating unhappy people, and we have no moral impetus to generate happy ones.

Here, it's prudent to pause and note that life in general lies between the two extremes of pain and pleasure. However these arguments can be applied nevertheless.

Another crucial aspect of the ethos of giving birth is the consent of a future Jeff. It isn't feasible to educate an unborn person about the myriad possibilities his life might end up being like and then to obtain his informed consent to be brought into this world. For this very reason, Julio Cabrera argues that procreation is the violation of autonomy gullible Jeff, who might have opted to not be born had he been fully aware of the human situation and the ordeals associated with existence. So says Ashleel Singh-

“However one need not believe that coming into existence is always an overall harm in order to favour an anti-natal perspective; one need only believe that it is morally problematic to inflict serious, preventable harms upon others without their consent.”

If one does not desist from having children, one can hardly expect one's descendants to do so. This would have been fine and dandy had our society allowed people to have an opt-out from the world that they felt was nasty to them, but that choice is killed by the ostracization and social sanctioning an individual harboring these thoughts is bombarded with. We are forced to live and be responsible for the happiness of others when we might barely have our own heads above water.

A gentle reminder from the authors is necessary here that none of this amounts to rampant suicide, genocide and murder for the very reason that the arguments made are on the morality of giving birth, and not the morality of choosing to continue one's existence.

The natural course of the anti-natalist utopia will be rapid extinction of the human race. In the cosmic scale of things, humans are a hairy enclosure of a soup of organs and gooey innards just like the diabolical rat that your mom calls a 'shaitan'. Our species' termination can't be objectively justified to be a bad thing. All of the importance we attach to life is a belief that we have agreed to hold, and it isn't possible to either prove or disprove it.

However, from the vantage point of an exoplanet-inhabiting green sentient sludge, humans have wrecked nature and led to the extinction of millions of species. After having been abused by mankind with reckless abandon for a morbidly long time, the Earth could really use a divorce.

But there's a saving grace, albeit not an absolving one. Society is rife with weird notions of morality. A person spending 50 lakhs on a luxury car ( which he doesn't need to subsist) instead of channeling funds to saving hundreds of children who die of starvation is perfectly acceptable. That is to say, at the end of it all, it seems that it's best to trust our inner conscience when taking calls on the morality of an action. If birthing a mini-them is someone's jam, the anti-natalist is no one to whine.



*DOGGIE*  
*DOGGIE*  
**WHAT**  
**NOW**  
**!????!??**

DOG MANACE  
@ IITROORKEE

AUTUMN ISSUE  
BIG STORY

For some time now, cases of individuals being hounded or bit by stray dogs within the campus have been piling up. A meeting of the 'Dog Menace Committee' was convened on the 15th of April to address these issues. Watch Out got in touch with Professor Gargi Singh and K.P. Singh, Chief Security Officer to cut through the noise and try to understand the measures taken, their degree of success and the impediments encountered in the same. A link to the minutes of the meeting of the Dog Menace Committee has been provided at the bottom. Readers are also encouraged to go through a previous article on the issue by WatchOut.



## The Menace

### Chew you up, spit you out

They may be fuzzy, cuddly, floofy, smooshy balls of cotton candy or even scrawny, terrifying howling scoundrels, but the one unifying feature of all dogs is their need to gnaw and bite at anything they fancy, and as observed from the recent cases of dog bites reported in the campus, students are often at the receiving end. Dog bites are at the very core of the menace surrounding dogs. Fortunately, we haven't had any cases of rabies- yet. Aggression amongst dogs is very frequent near certain perilous locations and depending on how unfortunate someone is, this aggression can quickly be directed towards them.

Another qualm that is voiced is how the presence of aggressive dogs effectively hijacks certain routes and forces pedestrians to take alternative paths. Seeing your favourite road being patrolled by a growling four-legged single-headed Cerberus that can outrun you (even if armed with Reebok's Ultra Speed 2.0 Running shoes) is not quite appealing.

### Poopity Doop

The sight of trash strewn across the corridor, coupled with the mellow fragrance of poop in the air has been long established to be not the best start to the day. And who wouldn't want to share the water cooler with a pupper? The start of a new plague has never been easier.

*"There are "good" dogs, there are "bad" dogs, I was bitten by a "bad" dog. I don't want the campus to be dog-free, just we must have some kind of check on dogs."*

### Student Opinions

Spending a quality Sunday evening on the SAC discussion forum reveals how the student populace is fractured in their opinions about how to deal with our furry friends/adversaries. Some call for complete ousting of all dogs while some classify them as being 'good' and 'bad' and want the naughty ones to face the thunder. Another segment believes that a possible truce between the two species can be reached if the students are more cautious and compassionate in how they deal with these animals. Since dogs don't have access to Eduroam's password, their needs are posited by sympathizers who are soon



labelled as 'dog-lovers'. However, a pervading commonality across all such segments is an uproar that the administration is not taking sufficient measures to address the problem at hand.

*"Every dog menace incident is dealt with" "Every dog menace incident is dealt with"*

### Initial Measures and Their Ineffectiveness

Earlier, dogs that were identified as hell-raisers were thrown out of the campus, but it was soon found that displacing an animal from its place of birth was illegal; hence this measure had to be put on hold indefinitely.



According to AWBI (Animal Welfare Board of India) and WHO recommendations, sterilization is the most effective way of controlling the stray dog population. Adhering to the same, the administration invited "Human Society International" to start a sterilization drive across the campus which aimed to inhibit 125 dogs from breeding. The outcome of the drive was favourable in the short run- the number of dogs didn't increase in the following mating season. However, in the next mating season, there was an unforeseen increment in their population. It was found out that only about 50% of the aimed dogs were actually sterilized in the drive earlier, leaving the rest to mate to their heart's content.

### **Roorkee Cares and the Biodiversity Problem**

Professor Gargi Singh started Roorkee Cares with the aim of caring for various animals in R-Land. They have rescued and helped dogs, squirrels, endangered birds etc. Campus junta is known to be engaged in the activities of Roorkee Cares. In Surat, the population of hell-raising dogs was culled by massive, large-scale poisoning. The city was soon tormented with the plague. Dogs keep the rodent population in check who in turn keep the snake population in check. Large scale killing of any species is harmful in the long run- we would do well to not mess with the ecosystem of any locality.

### **Recent Measures**

**Animal Birth Control Programme:** The second phase of sterilization has been initiated. Now, the dogs will be sterilised and vaccinated. A hard timeline has been set and is expected to be followed through (May 2019). The recently hired security agency has been instructed to carry out the sterilization drive in collaboration with RAAHAT NGO as their first job. Also, the dogs from outside the campus will be captured and pushed out of the campus boundaries. Any of the injured dogs will be taken to Dehradun for their proper treatment and possibly, adoption.

**Identification of the dogs:** According to a circular issued by the Animal Welfare Board of India, stray dogs cannot be beaten or driven away from their localities. They can however, be sterilised, immunized, and released back into the same area in accordance with the Animal Birth Control programme. The Dog Menace Committee, in their meeting on 15th April 2019, decided to use collar belts to distinguish between campus dogs and dogs that didn't belong. On further deliberation, it was concluded that the campus dogs were smart enough to remove these collar belts.

Instead, the identification of campus dogs is being done by cutting a 'V' shape on the ear lobe of the dogs. The stated procedure is internationally recognised. The dogs that will henceforward be identified as "new" can then be shown the door since their birthplace would not be within the walls of the campus.

**Door to door garbage collection:** The administration has taken measures to ensure door to door garbage collection from all the faculty families residing inside the campus. The waste food (especially non-vegetarian food) attracted dogs and nourished them. Dog menace has gone down in the areas where efficient garbage disposal systems are in place.

**Securing the gates:** Gates that are permanently shut see no influx of external dogs, it is the functional ones that let the dogs in. Keeping the same in mind, the Chief Security Officer has increased the security near the functional gates of the campus. The Institute Engineer has been actively working to resolve this problem and a change is expected to be visible soon.

**Dog Shelters:** The Nagar Nigam, upon the request of the administration, has planned to make a dog shelter around 5-8 km outside the campus. This shelter will harbour the castaway canines and will cater to all their needs.





*"We fear what we don't understand,  
and we destroy what we  
fear"*

### **In-Hostel Measures:**

Ban on Feeding of Stray dogs inside the Hostel: This decision was taken keeping the students who fear dogs in mind. According to the administration, "If the dogs don't get food in the hostel, they will go someplace else in search of food".

Water coolers in Bhawans have been enclosed/raised to prevent dogs/monkeys drinking from them. Ceramic water bowls of Roorkee Cares will be placed around the campus. This measure is expected to safeguard the water coolers. Students and guards fill up these bowls every day.

The counsel of the Experts: Prof. Anindita Bindra (ISR Kolkata), a canine expert and researcher, is being called to the campus to present a neutral perspective. She will be talking to the Dean Administration, the Dog Menace Committee and will give a detailed analysis of what else needs to be done. A canine behaviourist from Norway is also being invited to do the same. Two canine trainers had been invited in the past as well. During their stay here, they conducted personality tests for dogs and identified them as 'Skittish', not 'Aggressive'. Residents of IITR have been known to thrash dogs and this forms a big part of the reason why campus dogs are skittish.

### **Our Two-Cents**

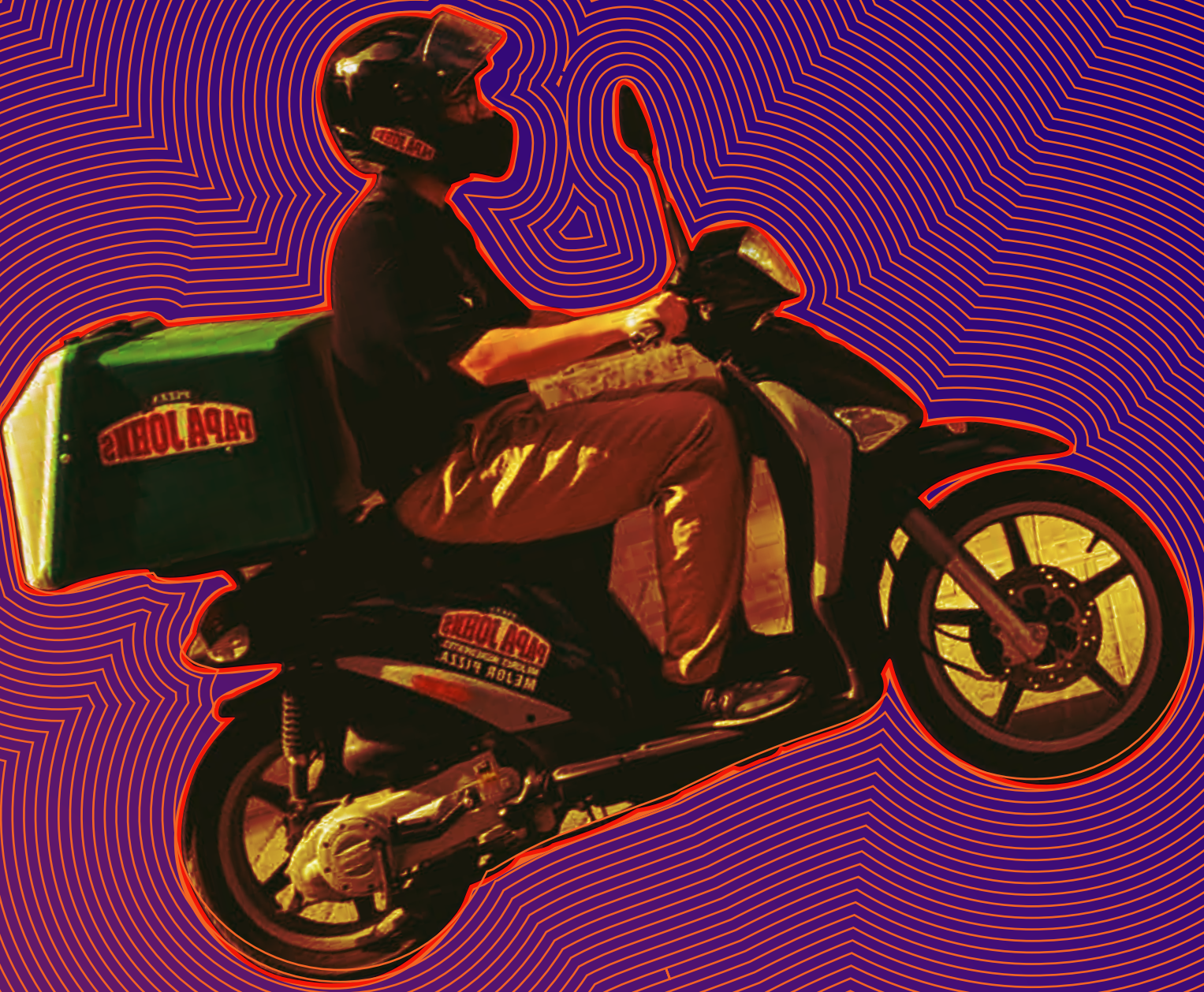
A Dog becomes skittish and aggressive for a host of reasons. It might be protecting its family and territory from trespassers, it might be scared, lonely, angry or it might just be having a bad day. However, it is also true that students do at times provoke and ill-treat them as well over prolonged periods of time. These dogs are usually very afraid of humans and tend to sprint, bite and run away when they happen to spot someone moving alone in their area.

This issue can be dealt with if the dogs are treated properly. The campus has a lot of therapeutic dogs – Mr. Chattu, Ms. (Mrs.?) Rampyari etc. that live harmoniously alongside the more evolved homo sapiens of the campus. They are properly taken care of and usually enjoy human company. It is possible to make the skittish stray dogs therapeutic as well by feeding and caring for them regularly, if their translocation encounters impenetrable hurdles.

The Dog Menace Committee meets every month, so any rule/initiatives which may have loopholes are expected to be revamped. Roorkee's pup fiction will need an active contribution from the campus junta to have a happy and warm ending.

FOOD,  
BLACKMAIL  
AND UNEASY  
BODY  
CAVITIES  
AN

UNEXPECTED  
MOVEMENT  
ON THE RISE  
IN R.



The first few weeks in R-land often tend to be overwhelming. In these days of ecstasy, the “quality” of mess food is quite easy to overlook. But after the three days it takes for the euphoria to wear out, it becomes increasingly clear with each passing day that sustaining oneself exclusively off the mess food is a daunting task, to say the least. Rumour has it that the delicacies served in RJB tend to depreciate further in flavour as time passes but the credibility of such statements remains dubious. While the canteens and eateries around the campus provide viable alternatives, most of them either lack the satisfaction of a full meal or aren't cheap enough to not offset your budget.

Given these circumstances, food delivery services like Zomato and Swiggy, in addition to being a suspiciously convenient way to smuggle stuff into the campus, are also an imperative facility for blokes that want a cheap satisfying meal from time to time but feel like a 10 minute walk to the campus gate is too much work. However, all such wet dreams were shattered when the administration issued an ordinance restricting the entry of delivery bois into the campus. With this tyrannical precept in place, Bhawan residents now have to travel all the way to a campus gate(which may or may not be the one closest to their humble abode) to collect their order on a scorching sunday afternoon.

A GB dweller was quoted saying“This is the worst thing to happen to the Campus since the Lipstick brouhaha of 2010”

But underneath all the dissent and general dysphoria surrounding this decision, lie the makings of a what can only be described as a nefarious smuggling syndicate of sorts constituted by food delivery services as a means of retaliation. As Watch Out decided to probe further into this, we discovered something much more sinister than what we initially expected.

It seems that in order to meet the expectations of IITR students- their primary source of revenue in Roorkee-The food delivery consortium has decided to collude with insiders, i.e, fellow students of yours, to establish what is now being called Guide to Groceries, or GTG for Short.

GTG is an underground network of campus mules that have been coaxed,bribed,blackmailed or voodooed by these capitalistic food transporting conglomerates into doing their dirty work, i.e, peddling the deliverables from campus gates to bhawans for the convenience of previously dissatisfied folks.

Though they tend to be extremely secretive and suspiciously loyal towards the syndicate, WatchOut managed to get in contact with one of these “victims” and arrange a brief interview under the stipulation that their name be kept a secret.

Enthusiastic WONA reporter : So how exactly were you strategmed into becoming a nutrition mule for the armada of vespas with swollen behinds?

Trapped kid: It all started with a seemingly innocuous text that I got, offering an internship with one of the aforementioned firms. My chances of landing an intern had been extremely slim at that point and it seemed like something I couldn't afford to miss. So I put aside my bong and texted back with a 'Y'. It was a downward spiral from that point on, and I can't really pinpoint what my breaking point was. Maybe it was when I realized that the employee-special app they had me install on my devices was actually a keylogger...or maybe it was the first time they asked me to shove a packet up a place that's only meant to be treated nicely, but at this point, it doesn't really matter. The workload's light enough and the money's decent.

Slightly worried WONA reporter : Does that mean you're content with what you're doing? Do you not feel duped by these evil malefactors?

Trapped(?) kid: Not really, and I wouldn't really call them evil. My boss is an ass, yes, but is that

really such a shocker? I also have to tolerate a mild lingering discomfort in the region where my legs meet, but it's something I can live with.

The interview then came to an ill-timed end as the kid had to leave for picking up another order. “Got to Go. Duty Calls” were his final words as he walked away.

Watch Out therefore concluded that the administrators of GTG have managed to condition their victims beyond recognition, making them believe they actually liked doing their dirty work. We therefore decided to dig deeper into what tactics had been deployed to achieve this level of behavioral conditioning. Research however, came to a standstill after our theories about mind control started to seem unreasonable, leaving us with only one option, contacting an insider to get a look at this situation from the other side.

WONA: Tell us something about your job

Well, delivering food is our main job. Though we provide service to all of Roorkee, IITR is the prime hotspot. We get a lot of delivery requests throughout the day. and the thing is, to get a bonus, we need to minimize the number of rejects. than the normal food and it takes us to places.

And honestly speaking, considering all the hype around IIT, people here are not very bright. Once a girl from KB asked me on the spot, to alter her order. Part of my daily routine is dealing with these whippersnappers who apparently don't understand the concept of "no cancellations" trying to cancel or worse, alter their order after I've been waiting a good ten minutes for them to collect it. It can sometimes be quite hard to contain myself and stop the altercation from turning into a fistfight. On top of that, these blokes aren't generous, either. They just keep asking for "IIT Discount". And that is after the 50% discount they already have. Sometimes they order food from the same restaurant they are sitting in. And don't even get me started on how lazy they are. It was not enough to get food up to their bhawan gates. Now they want it up to their rooms, shoved up their...

**WONA:** Alright, alright. We get that you are fed up with your job. And now there are more reasons for that. You aren't allowed to enter the campus now. What's all that about?

**Delivery Boi:** Ah well, I don't know. Maybe peeps at the admin wing thought that students were skipping mess too often or something like that. So they invalidated our ID cards which are necessary to get entry into campus. Now those brats need to come up to the college gates to get food, which leads to more rejected orders. And that's taken its toll on the job ie. delivering food and you know, stuff. (He said this followed by a series of eerie and visibly awkward winks)

What stuff? Well, you can say it is food too. Sustenance of the soul, and if I may, it's better than the normal food and it takes us to places. It's like...

**Lubricous WONA reporter :** And where do you get this sustenance of soul?

*\*This question was asked solely for research purposes and the answer is to remain undisclosed until the interviewer's wake from a deep slumber they fell into shortly after the interview concluded.*

A vice-style dive into this rabbit hole, among other worrying revelations, shows how alarmingly easy it is to influence students of R into doing stuff that's less than virtuous. Estimates suggest as many as 70 students- give or take one- are currently trapped in this vortex. It could be your classmates, your roommate or even you. If you happen to know/suspect anyone stuck in this nefarious business, feel free to reach out at iamamulepleasehelpme@gmail.com. Your speaking up could save someone's career or more. Just know that sometimes it takes more courage to ask for help than to act alone but it's always worth it. The only mistake you can make is to not reach out.



In Conversation with

# DR. SUBRA SURESH

October 9, 2018

Dr. Subra Suresh is the president of Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU). He has served as the Director of the US government's National Science Foundation, Dean of the School of Engineering at MIT and President of Carnegie Mellon University. He was invited as Chief Guest at the Convocation '18, where Watch Out had the honour of interviewing him. Here are some excerpts from the interview.



While you majored in Mechanical Engineering as an undergraduate, you went ahead to specialize in Material Sciences and Metallurgy. Could you highlight some of the barriers in multidisciplinary higher education system in India? What could be done to remove these?

The barriers between Mechanical

Engineering and Metallurgy are very small. I did not have a degree in material sciences, but my work naturally went in that direction. Eventually, I was made the head of the material science department at MIT for 6 years.

However, transitioning between any two other disciplines might not be as

easy. I also tried going towards bioengineering, and that was more difficult. The coursework in my time was great in all respects, except that they didn't have any biology, which made getting into it a little harder.

On the contrary, if you consider thermodynamic machines and cycles, we are looking at liquid-vapor systems,



while in material sciences we usually look at solid-liquid systems. The basic underlying thermodynamic principles are the same, so it's not that difficult to move around.

These problems exist in the United States too. If you are a mechanical engineering student, it is somewhat difficult to move to Material Sciences, either at the undergraduate or the masters' level.

While it might be tougher for the undergraduates in the US colleges to change their disciplines, don't the students get 1-2 semesters to decide their major?

This does not happen in all universities. At MIT, the first year is common for everybody. So, you can decide between engineering or neuroscience or business after your first year. But there are still a lot of universities in the US wherein you get into engineering like mechanical engineering, like at the IITs, and there is a provision to switch your major like I did, from Electrical to Mechanical.

Recently we did an article on professor evaluation forms (the mechanic by which students assess the professors after every semester through a feedback form). We saw that a lot of professors were getting negative responses from the students, and yet, no action was taken, which was (naturally) a great cause of frustration among students. We tried to identify the issues leading to this, and we saw that there were mainly two primary issues: firstly that a lot of professors prefer research over teaching and secondly that often they are forced to teach courses that are not a part of their own field of research. How do universities in Singapore deal with this issue?

There's been a shift, at least in the US system and also in NTU, Singapore that I have been emphasizing. In a top research university, you cannot have a divide between teaching and research. Teaching and research have to go hand in hand. So, in some of the top universities in the US, some of the most accomplished researchers also teach freshmen. I think it takes a lot of commitment and passion.

Perhaps in some of the US universities 40 years back, it was that if you were a great researcher but had no interest in teaching, you could go about it without any problem. But today teaching has become one of the criteria, even though it might not be the only criterion, and the institute should emphasize that. At NTU, one thing that I have done as a president is offered the deans lecture opportunities. I am also teaching a masters' level program voluntarily. I think one of the appealing things about being at a university is the interaction with the young minds and that's the exciting part.

You have played an important role in increasing the representation of minorities and women in education in the US. What suggestions would you give to the institutes in India, considering the ongoing debate regarding affirmative action to increase female representation in IITs?

I don't know about the Indian Government's rules, but I can only speak from the US perspective. The motivation behind this is the following. In most of

the countries women occupy 50% of the population and hence 50% of the talent pool. The proportion of women in the population might be less for some countries because of the government policies, but mostly they occupy roughly half the population. In the US about 70% of the top ranking students in high school are girls, and both in public and private schools, and they also do well in mathematics and science and so forth. If they are not represented in engineering, then we are losing out on the top talent. Areas like computer science, mechanical engineering are in need of representation of women. In areas like computer science, 18% of the first year students across the country are girls. Women play such an important role in the 21st century, and we cannot have such a small representation. So we did some experiments at MIT, and I think the key things are, at least from our perspective, that we try not to do it through quotas, but instead through something more sustainable in the long term. You need role models; you need professors for women who are good role models for students. Secondly, you have to do extra work to attract talent. When we admit students, they get offers from many different universities. I would offer to make personally call and talk to students whom the departments felt would be a good fit for the university, and it worked. It worked for both genders, but it worked better for women. So, I think there are things we can do, scholarships are one way, and role models and mentoring are very important too.

In the media, we often hear about how there's a lot of aspects in which IITs have yet to catch up with foreign institutes, given that IITs are not really well placed in terms of the rankings- let's say things like the research culture and flexibility of the curriculum. But, from your own experience at IIT Madras, do you think that there's some 'USP' of IITs that differentiates it from foreign universities?

I graduated a long time ago. IITs today are very different from the IITs back then. At that time, there were only a small number of students, and we pretty much got to know most of them. Besides, our course was for 5 years, so that's one extra year we had of living together in the hostels. All of them are the top students from the country, and you develop an amazing bond with them. There's nothing like the bond you develop essentially throughout the 5 years of growing together. At that time, there was not a lot of research being done at the IITs compared to today. The research culture wasn't developed. We did a lot of projects but they weren't research projects. And there weren't a lot of startups like we have today. There was no internet either, it was a completely different world.

One of the reasons why IITs are not amongst the top ranked universities globally is that most of them are mostly based on research metrics. IITs are best known for attracting top students to get a degree who then they go on to do whatever they want. But, I feel it's going to take time. It requires research support from the government. It requires young faculty members. It's going to take some time to catch up with the world rankings (and there is a lot to catch up on). It is based on research, how many papers you publish, who reads them, how many patents you make, etc. It depends on the faculty, so if

the faculty doesn't travel abroad nobody is going to know about them. Another metric is internationalisation of the campus, how many foreign students are there at the campus, how many foreign faculty is there on the campus. In NTU, for example, we have 1500 faculty, of which 70% are non Singaporeans. We have 10,000 postgraduate students, two-thirds of them are non Singaporeans. So it's mostly foreign talent. So we have 55 Germans doing full time PhD at NTU. Germany has a lot of good universities so I think that's another factor. The IITs are making an effort but it's going to take some time and that has nothing to do with the quality of the institution.

Most of the young professors have done their doctorates and post- doctorates abroad and have been largely successful. In your opinion, should students look to complete their higher education in India itself, or should they look towards foreign universities?

I think it is very healthy if students do their PhDs elsewhere. Even if they are of Indian-origin and want to come back here for patriotic reasons or family reasons, India has to make it attractive for them by giving them competitive offers, because if they are really good, they will get better offers elsewhere.

Is there any way in which we can promote collaborations between the industry and the researchers, at least in India?

In NTU, on campus there is this concept of corporate labs. We have companies like Rolls-Royce, BMW, Alibaba which come on campus to do research with us. Students get to work with them. Something like that can be implemented in India as well. If not in a town like Roorkee, it can be done in the bigger cities. In NTU, we have 23000 students across the 4 years, and we send 80% of them abroad for a semester, to get foreign exposure. We also want foreign students to come. As we speak, there are 250 students from Sweden on our campus and almost an equal number of students from NTU are in Sweden.

The National Science Foundation which you were heading in the US, has no comparable analogue in India. However, there are a plethora of research funds funded by different ministries/institutes. Which model do you think is better?

The US model is pretty remarkable. It all started after the second world war. There isn't a single agency. There are many agencies. So there's the National Institutes of Health, whose mission is to address diseases. So half of the research is done internally and its organised by disease classes, like National Institute of Cancer, National Institute of Mental Health etc. Then you have NASA for air and space, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA), the US Geological Survey and so on.

But what was missing in all of this is the inherent curiosity in research. These were all applications of science. It was argued in the 1950's that the economy depends on fundamental research and that basic research is best done at universities, where you have the luxury of thinking long-term. Not only are you training young minds for the future, you're tapping into their enthusiasm to create new ideas.

These universities would work closely with the industry and the government, and that it was the government's responsibility to fund them. This is what created the National Science Foundation. The NSF's mission is to fund the best people on the best ideas. Leave them alone, so they can develop their ideas. Since 1950, 240 American Nobel Prize winners have had some portion of their Nobel Prize winning work funded by the NSF. That's the return. We don't ask them what's the commercial value of their research.

On a closing note, you've mentored a lot of students over the years. Is there any advice you would like to give to the students of IITR, more specifically to the students who're getting convocated?

When there is so much societal pressure, people look at getting a degree from an IIT, or any university as a piece of paper which helps you get a job, hopefully a very high paying job. If that's the reason all of us are striving for a university education, I think we're missing the point. It is something much grander than this. It's not just about going to classes and getting a diploma, it's much more than this. And now you guys have many more opportunities than I did through technology. You have access to so much more information, from anywhere in the world. Besides, the IIT brand carries a lot of weight, and not just in India. I would advise you to make the most of that.

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