

# My Dream Destination

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What's the best thing that could happen to an engineering graduate from a third-tier college? Admission to the prestigious IITs. It's like a second chance for students like us who failed to get into IIT for their bachelor degree. And as Pete Rose rightly said, "If somebody is gracious enough to give me a second chance, I won't need a third." And hence I buckled up to tackle the challenges & prove my mettle once again in engineering. Every engineering aspirant dreams of going to the IITs, and here I was, going to live the dream of a million students. And that dream became a reality as I gazed upon the iconic hostels of IIT Hyderabad as soon as I got down from the bus. "I made it!", I thought to myself; little did I know, the adventure had just begun.

Going to the lecture hall for the first time is exciting, as one finally gets to see those NPTEL lectures in real-time, which we only stream on YouTube to pass our undergraduate exams. Thanks to the fractal academic course structure at IITH, everyone is free to choose any subject as an elective, along with a few mandatory ones. The confusion begins when you attend your first lecture. And then you see yourself surrounded by BTech & PhDs; some are keenly writing notes, while others are just listening to the professor and raising doubts & that too without even lifting a pen, and the third kind, which you don't see in class because they skipped the classes. "How would I keep up with them?", I murmured when I saw my fellow batch mate smiling at me because he was thinking the same thing. Time passes, and we adapt to the academic environment. One of the biggest myths was thinking that all the IITians must be nerds. And boy, was I wrong! After the classes used to end for the day, students usually dispersed in every direction. There is a rush to reach the sports ground and take the first turn. Some pick up their musical instruments, and the jamming session begins.

Some just prefer to take a calm walk around the campus, enjoying the beautiful sunset.

There is a diverse group of students, and you just feel lucky to be here. Rounding back to academics, the faculty here is fantastic, young & dynamic in nature. Professors don't expect you to be an expert on the basics when you enrol in the course. Yet it doesn't stop them from taking up the most complex topics and explaining them with grace. Yes, the pressure is there for MTechs as compared to other streams, but when you see your 20-something other batch mates suffering in silence, you just tidy up, knock up your collars and get to studying, and before you know it, you well accustomed to the schedule. Although that doesn't mean that we don't have that pre-exam night hustle, who are we to break the age-old tradition? All we have to do is make sure the topper finishes his part a day before and is open to our doubts/questions. That was all about coursework. What separates us from the undergrads, and IITs from IIITs is the heavy amount of research we are exposed to. Our curriculum is designed so as to give equal importance to our master's thesis. And hence we learn the art of managing time while juggling our thesis work and placement preparation. Some of us are already hardcore coders, while some are exposed to competitive coding for the first time. But as I said again, as long as you've 20-something batch mates grinding hours in and out with you, the pain actually reveals itself to be a pleasure in hindsight.

There exists one of the most underrated aspects that is almost overlooked in every guy's mention. No, it's not the faculty, quality of education and especially how amazing Machine Learning culture is, not the radiant hostels freezing us on hot summer days. It's a friendship. You get a batch of friends that span the entire India; sometimes, it gets quite difficult to find two guys from the same state. And yet this bunch of misfits, even whose native language might differ, fits it stronger together than even a bunch of Legos. And yes, we develop crushes too. What better place is there where you can find beauty and brains coexisting in a human form? We work hard, but we party harder. We go out and eat at dhabas around the campus. And this bond is not just limited to M.Techs. We're in good sync with bachelors and PhDs as well. We compete with them in classes; who's to stop us from competing with them in sports or just about anything? We do everything hand in hand. You meet a wide variety of people, from far places, yet I bet there's going to be a lot of manly tears when it's our last day at this campus. Sure, some will stay in touch, and there'll be promises of meeting once every year. Don't know how'd that happen, but I'm sure we'll leave with a bucket load of memories, that'll be cherished as one of the absolutely fantastic phases of our lives, MTech@IITH