

The NISTian, Vol 2, Issue 8, September, 2000

From the Director

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new faculty: Biswajit Bhattacharya, Susanta Das, Rabindra Shial. Also I welcome lab supervisors and instructors: Satyajit Pal, Debasish Sahoo and Farida A. Ali.

Dr. Sukant Mohapatra, Chairman of the Board of Governors who visited NIST in January was immensely impressed with the strides made by our students in the academic and cultural spheres. Similar views were echoed by Dr. Nalini Rath of IBM Research, NJ, Purna Mohanty of APPLE Computers, CA, USA and Dr. Dheeraj Sanghi of Department of Computer Science, IIT, Kanpur.

The NIST garden is in full bloom this spring and is becoming the hottest photo spot on campus. Work is in full speed for the Cafeteria building which is scheduled to be ready by September to welcome the next batch of NISTians. Wonder if any of you have visited the ROCK GARDEN behind the store room !!

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Happy Springtime !!

THE CRIB OF SUCCOR (KAMAL MISRA)

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.---John 3:16

The flustered conscience of a decrepit, yet perfectly articulate human being would be gaping vacuously at this adage that emanates spontaneously from every nook and corner of the universe. "Who is that old fashioned brat shouting like a Mahapandit? Kuch filmi dialogue maar na yaar, yeh ghisa pita item baahar phenk!", fulminates one of my classmates. Albeit his blustering had no effect on me, I came across a bevy of intricate question marks. Deep down the crevasse of conventional human behavior, there prevails some demonic attributes that stir up the much abhorred, yet irrepressible inquisition about the entity of the Almighty. Is the atheistic overtone of the fiendish underworld predominating over the infallible divinity of Mother Earth? Are we falling prey to the atrocious pagans donning the garb of our mentors, implicitly coercing us towards artificial satisfaction?

Jesus, where are you? You gave away your life to annihilate the misery of these ungrateful terrestrials. In return they are replenishing your land with gore and guts, consecrating (We know how pure we are!!) your soil by ripping off the clothes of your daughters, doing rock'n'roll around the burning carcasses of their brothers (I'm a Hindu, I should despise Christians, shouldn't I!? Who cares for burning cadavers!?). I detest being a conformist; instead I should try to inculcate some maverick specimens inside my cerebrum. After all Shahrukh with his Khan bhais and Madonna didi are my eternal gods and goddess. I'll try to expunge all my inherent virtues that I acquired while interacting with a hostile ambience in my childhood. Yes Jesus, I promise to spurn all offers that will instill in me an aura of resipiscence. I have no qualms in metamorphosing myself into a rustic, ill-mannered, uncouth fellow blurting out unsavory expletives. This will be the greatest achievement of this millenium.

The visibly enticing conjurer claps and Presto!, a rabbit hops out of his hat. Clever tricks!! Are they not? But Jesus, my 'sorcery' will have class of its own. I'll clap and all the good people will vanish, forever. That will pave the way for Satan The Great, who will perform shamanistic rituals so as to perpetuate his authority on this soil. Well, until now you are tolerating my folly. I know, time has come for you to put on the mantle of vishwavatar. Didn't I use to chant Satyameva Jayate in my childhood? I want you to demonstrate its real meaning, so that the universe will understand your existence. You have to exterminate Satan as well as me in the ultimate Armageddon. Why did I do all these things? I wanted to be executed by your hands for I aspired to slip into your CRIB OF SUCCOUR, the place of the spiritual consummation. Eventually the world will again sing, "But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we are still sinners, Christ for us." -Romans 5:8

EXAM PHOBIA (DEBASISH MISHRA)

As the day draws nearer and nearer,
The days and nights seem shorter'n'shorter;
I wish, the exams wouldn't come so quickly,
I wish to sleep a little longer.
At last the day of inquisition emerges,
In everybody's mind, fear and tension merges;

With students talking even in their sleep,
As minutes go by, our hope surges.
Some want to pass, while some want to top,
But I want the critical days to pass without a stop;
At last the exam ends but the cycle continues,
It would go on and on without any fullstops.

KHALIS (ANITA SAHU)

It was the night of Diwali, but the mood was not at all festive. Owing it all to the insanity of the Baath party leader and the adamant Occidents, we were caught up in the most sizzling war of the decade. Being amidst the heavy shelling and bombing for almost four days, not a morsel had entered my groaning and growling stomach. All I could see were sullen faces caught up in the miseries of their own. Parents contemplated plans for evacuation, small kids wondered as to why they couldn't play outside anymore or why they had to sleep in the dark, adolescents who were neither too innocent nor too mature, only prayed for the dawn to dawn when life would return to normal. Life had lost all its charm but certainly not its purpose.

There was still a person amidst us who wore the most benign smile even in the moment of crisis, or was it the situation that made the smile all the more benign, I can't say for sure. A large gas mask dangling around his neck, Khalis (the camp manager) patrolled the Hind camp (our abode then) to check for any inevitably unprecedented event. Khalis was six feet something tall with a girth half that figure. He had great difficulty in carrying himself around. Maybe because of his awkward stature he was spared from joining the army.

As the days passed by and there being no sign of reconciliation, the atmosphere grew more diabolical. Something had to be done and it had to be done quickly. All eyes turned towards Khalis for some consolation. It was his foremost duty to evacuate the expatriates to a safer location. There was no place in the country that was not prone to missile attacks. This gave Khalis enough reasons to worry. Not only his job but also his dignity was at stake. He was in a fix. Just as he went inside his cabin to get some sleep, there was a loud noise of shattering glass. We all gathered around to see as to what had happened. A petrol pump which was hardly 25km from the camp had been bombed. This was the final blow to everybody's guts. One question was raised in unison-"What would have happened if the bomb had missed its target by a few nanoseconds?"

Khalis, without consulting the higher authorities, ordered for two vans. That very evening we were evacuated to a place called Baccuba (50km from the Iranian border). Here I chanced to meet the remaining Khalis family. His wife was a docile little creature. She prayed five times a day for her son's life who was serving in the army, fighting somewhere in the desert. Khalis's younger son played with the rifle all day long. He too wished to join the army someday like his elder brother. That evening everybody slept peacefully except Khalis.

Various vexatious thoughts burdened his mind. He knew well that we couldn't make it on our own to the Iranian border. We had to be deported back to the country but none of us had enough dough to get back to our homeland. Khalis, very carefully contemplated his next move. Next morning, I was woken up by the commotion outside. When I went outside to have a look, there was utter chaos reining the corridor. Khalis was not to be found anywhere. He was missing! It was almost dusk but still no sign of Khalis. Everybody became very anxious. Then we saw our van turning sharply inside the courtyard and to everybody's relief, Khalis opened the door. He looked happy and satisfied. On inquiring, we were told that he had been to the city to fetch the legal papers and the required money for us to get past the Iranian border. We couldn't have asked for more and we couldn't have gotten more. There was so much to say but words escaped us. Everybody went to their respective rooms without being given any verbal instructions cause we knew well as to what was to be done next.

The bags were packed immediately. Then we were on our way to the much-awaited destination. There was a latent sense of relief and guilt. Relieved, because there would be no more fear (not of dying, but of losing the loved ones) and guilty, because many more deaths (of the unknowns) couldn't be averted.

After a long and silent journey, we finally reached our destination. There I stood, between nothing, belonging to nowhere, in the no man's land. I turned around to take a last look at Khalis who stood helplessly behind the barred gate. "Just a mote in the eye", he said wiping off his tears. What accolade he got for his nobility, I will never know. But he left an insignia to remember him by all my life-MY LIFE!

THE INSIDIOUS STICK (PRAKASH KUMAR SAHU)

What do top filmstars, underworld vandals and most NISTians have in common? Nothing much really, except for the stick (pun unintended) that defines style. It is one of those male bastions that men still guard jealously and get sensitive about, where female criticism is concerned. A man is known by the size and smell (rather aroma) of his cigarette.

It's about the compelling innocence, impeccability and purity of tobacco leaves rolled firmly together into a vestal work of art that can excite the senses. Few other fashionable things can give us that level of excitement. Yes! It's about the cigarette. With its flimsy lustre, soft-to-touch body, delicate taste, exquisite aroma and luminous flame of bluish grey smoke, cigarette is at once calming and tumultuous, pious and extravagant.

Why do young people take to smoking? Psychological studies show that it's an emotional need and not the enjoyment factor that draws teenagers to the habit. It is one of those who feel inadequate in sports, studies or talent who use it as an instant way of feeling smart, confident and becoming the cynosure of all eyes. They think that by smoking they would make up for their shortcomings.

And why do NISTians take to smoking? To find out the answer you'll have to make a dash for the nearby shops during a break-time, one fine morning and you'll surely find a herd of incorrigible smokers sans smoking etiquette. The faddists flaunt of the stick-that-defines-style, instead of quietly puffing at them as generations of cigarette aficionados have done. You'll be suddenly imposed to envisage that the disgorging Palur Hills is going to emulate mount Vesuvius.

Excerpts from an interview with some guys at the close-to-NIST shops. The common question was "Why do you smoke?"

Mr. A: It's a symbol of virility...or a means of social elevation.

Mr. B: They're civilized, contemplative. They encourage a certain fidelity of spirit. A commitment to individuality that helps make a man restrained and discerning (then breaks into a song)-"With a cigarette in my hand I feel like a man..."

Mr. X: (In a stentorian voice) Hey! What a silly question...(and continues after a while) yahaan aakar aur kuch karne ke liye bacha hai kya!?

Mr. Y: Like all faithful friends, they are extremely demanding.

Mr. Z: I really don't know (with a flushed expression). I've been trying to quit, but no use.

Of course some are really trying hard to quit the habit but all their efforts are in vain. Their years of friendship (with the stick) don't allow them to do that. Once you shake hand with this friend, it creeps upon you (reminds one of parasites) and takes hold so subtly, insidiously and inconspicuously that you feel perfectly healthy until the first crucial symptom appears and then it shakes you as well.

My theory says that cigarette lifestyle is all about sports, travel, fashion, fine food and all those other things that take life beyond the ordinary. It's about feeling rich, powerful and looking down at the poor, virtuous fools of the world. A cigarette clamped between Marlon Brando's teeth or pressed between the lips of a Ratan Tata or a Dhirubhai Ambani makes more sense than that flaunted by our Rams & Rahims. Frankly there aren't much NISTians or even Indians for that matter, who can curl an aristocratic lip and blow out expensive blue smoke.

That's what cigarette is all about. I don't believe, they can be in any way superior to a wooden stick or a pipe. After all smoke is a smoke...Right!? And CANCER is CANCER.

STUDENT LIFE (Ms. FARIDA ASHRAF ALI)

Wohi to ek waqt tha,
Umar bhi mere saath thi.
Khule asmaan ki panchhi thi,
Azaad udti phirti thi.
Khatm ho gayi 'student life',
Khatm ho gayi khushiyaan saari.
Gum ho gaye dost saare,
Gum ho gayi hasi bhi meri.
Ab zindagi main hai who aag,
Jahaan tapaana hai apne aapko.
Aa pahunchha hai aisa mode,
Jahaan tarashna hai apne aapko.

LOOK NO FURTHER (HARSWETA KAR)

Media perpetuates myths. One myth that puzzles me these days is about the 'complete man' syndrome-He who is a yuppie manager, chats with his secretary and takes the kids to the park on Sundays to buy balloons and fly kites. What more...he plays the cello and wears classy business suits in shades of gray and green. This man dresses for the next

millenium. Cotton and cotton blends like khaki and stone for a contemporary look, light iron fabric for a crisp look throughout the day and full cut thighs for comfort and ease of movement (courtesy-Van Heusen). This 'superman' makes delicious breakfasts (with the help of his li'l daughter, of course!) and serves his wife as soon as she opens her eyes. Then he is off to a great start---a two mile jog, a 10 minute workout, a brisk shower...eases into a yellow-black textured shirt and tan trousers, signs contracts in his office (always a winner, remember!?) and then comes back to pick up his son from the school-doesn't even scold him when he gets 19 in Mathematics or 20 in English (He's driving his new Esteem, you see!). With youngsters, he'll be a buddy, but not a disciplinarian. They'll probably love to confide in him, because he'll seldom be shocked or harsh in his judgement. He knows how to love without smothering

These men are a breed apart. Where are these men who have all the 'super' qualities? Do they only exist on paper...in the pages of double spread ads? I want to know where can I meet him!? Or for that matter, the 'superwoman' who not only cooks a colorful meal (only with permitted colors) of mutton and pulao with masala that even mother-in-law approves (the ever-fastidious one), makes fluffy puris that are the envy of the neighbours, but also drives a Cielo to work, wears chiffon sarees, has her own credit card and looks chic even in the adverse circumstances. She can handle almost any profession a man can handle, from stockbroking to real estate and can also turn a nice ankle or profile in strictly feminine occupations like modeling and acting Her collection of dresses puts even Ritu Kumar's festive-wear, look like out-of-fashion. She's the ever versatile---the complete woman. She rises heads and shoulders above the rest (with her silky, bouncing hair), makes her home look like the latest upholstery collection and looks stunning on her husband's birthday. She's a superb hostess when her husband brings his boss home for dinner. She'll be so gracious and charming; he'll never want to leave (thus making her husband get the much-wanted promotion). Anyone who happens to be standing in her bright sunlight feels the warmth. She's the ever mesmerizing, bubbly and effervescent woman, even though she's a mother of two - a boy and a girl (the complete and perfect family).

The way this superwoman handles her life can put a juggler to shame. Responsible housewife, avant-garde architect, gracious hostess and an active club member. She smiles at you even when her son's clothes get dirty (all for an overfriendly dog) or when her daughter complains about the single pimple on her left cheek. Nothing is too good for her family. When her child sneezes, he'll get plopped into bed and have Iodex rubbed on his nose and chest. She still manages to wear satin in delicate shades or georgette crepes of vibrant colors and her hair can smell of fragrant cologne (All the time looking coy. Wow!! What a lady!)

A very famous man (a bachelor)-unnamed due to obvious reasons...when asked what kind of girl he was in search of replied,"I want a woman who has the qualities of a little girl and a young lady in the same body, very understanding, open minded and tolerant person because I tend to loose my marbles off and on. A short conversation with her and a man should instantly relax. She should be like an ocean-sometimes spiritual, sometimes sensual, sometimes fierce, sometimes serene and sometimes divine. She will be my superwoman with one more important task - that of loving me and only me forever (one hell of a possessive guy)". As such this man has not yet found his superwoman and is still waiting for the right woman (He himself is a 30+ addict).

Where are these perfect men and women and their even more angelic children who announce that they've come first in class only because 'mummy' gave them the right drinking chocolate? And why should we aspire to be these flawless human beings? In any case, I prefer a human being who falls short of being complete. I have friends who can't make fluffy puris, but I never loved them anyway (taking into consideration that I can't even make myself a glass of nimboopaani). Why should we so eagerly desire to become perfect? The future is a limitless expanse of possibilities for the bravest and the best. As the world gets smaller with every click of the mouse button, only those with all the answers will emerge victorious. So why don't we aspire to be the persons that we really are and not clones of someone else's? No one's perfect but everybody is special in their own way and that's what makes them different. We don't need to change ourselves to please others. Let the world accept us for what we are. SO, GET REAL, BE YOURSELVES

SILENCE (MANORANJAN MISHRA)

Dreams never come true;
And when last nights dream never
came true, your hot, heavy,
humid eyes were buried by you,
under the soft silk silence
of the quiet pillow cover.
A helpless melting of emotions
drizzled over your skin,
warmed in the youthful fragrance
radiated by you last night.
Desires wait for no season to cross-breed,
they grow in multiple manifestation

even in infertile thoughts harvesting
perennial waves of sorrow.
When you reach out your hands,
passionately enough to hold colours
of long craving possession lying
cuddled on your unsaturated lap
then, of course,
you find slowly the uncaptured
cloud drifting afar, to another
sky escaping the rain.
which drained your eyes
last night and you walk
with your back to the dusk where
desires like dreams never come true.

SURVIVING WOMEN (PIJUSH GUPTA)

The world is full of care, much like unto a bubble,
Women and care and care and women,
And women and care and trouble.

-- Nathaniel Ward

A woman is a great creation of the Creator: she is more like nature. That's why we refer to nature in the feminine gender. She has compassion, love and benevolence. Women are a superior race. They are so versatile, resilient and definitely more powerful in their thoughts and... Hey! Hey! Hey! What am I doing!? I am sorry, I never wanted the article to take this direction. You see, that's the problem with this kind of column, especially in the first half when the writer is forced to mix the sacred with the profane, women (rather girls) with goodness. Maybe changing the paragraph will help.

Now, I feel a lot better. Regular readers of my column (you poor souls, you) may have noticed that my last two articles were highly insinuating and annoyed a lot of people but then if you can't annoy somebody with what you write, then there's little point in writing. Now in this issue I am up to annoy an entire species - girls. So if you are not a misogynist, you may exit now or else go on. Some time back a girl had the audacity to remark that I had ruined her image by just talking with her (Don't believe me!? Neither did I!). Her remark blasted the living daylights out of me and in response all I could do was to churn out so many sorries, that would have made Bill Clinton (the perpetually 'sorry man') look like an angel in comparison. I was very hurt then and I'm still sore now. This is the only way I can get back at her (considering how big a 'paper tiger' I am). Lawrence Durrell said, "There are only three things to be done with women: you can love them, you can suffer for them or you can turn them into literature" and that's just what I am doing now.

Girls are one of the most self-centered creatures to have walked on the face of the planet (now I'm getting real caustic). Their universal motto is "A friend (male) who isn't in need is my friend indeed". You can always depend on them---to depend on you (just find out how many girls were helped in their Graphics project by boys). They only like you if you dislike the same people that they dislike.

I got a call from a guy I know named Max. It was a cry for help. Max is a brilliant student, but sometimes even successful people, when they are in need, have to reach out to their friends, and I'm proud to consider Max a friend, even though for my 20th birthday he gave me some kind of reptile egg, which thank heavens never hatched. It took some effort for him to overcome his masculine pride and tell me what was on his mind. It was something that I believe is on the mind of a lot of guys although they cannot always admit it. "How to accost a girl?", he asked. I was stumped by his query at that time but now I have the answer (Boy! How many times have I accosted a girl!?). So here I go then.

Focus is important. It starts with stalking your subject in the study center during free time but you can always bunk classes for her. Park yourself near the railings. It helps to have an obliging friend around you to strike or at least pretend to strike a conversation with you. But you know where to keep your eyes on---don't you? Wait for sometime after you subject has gone into the study center and taken her seat. Then casually walk in along with your friend (keep talking to your friend as if you're discussing an important case---if you have nothing to talk, keep asking his name and roll number). Don't look at her until you're directly in front of her. Once there, look with an expression of pleasant surprise and say 'Hi!'. Don't overdo it. It is important not to look too eager (if necessary, practice in front of mirror). If your friend is really a true friend, he will suffer from a temporary bout of toothache or tonsillitis and will have great difficulty in speaking.

Experts have found out myriad ways to break the ice. You can start by asking about the optional courses (i.e., not

compulsory). Research has shown that computers and weather are the best things to start with. Your true friend should nod and laugh at appropriate moments. Once outside the study center your true friend should have something to eat or visit the loo. Since your friend is not there, you can ask her, "How about a walk?" If you are the proactive types (I really envy them.) you can say, "Come, let's go for a walk?"

As any expert would tell you, a good strategy should always have a backup (preferably backups of backups). It is possible that fate intervenes and the closest you could sit to her was diagonally opposite corner of the study center. If you are not sure of your timing, it is better to err on the side of safety. Exit the room before she does. Read all the notices/posters/graffiti till you get them by heart. This charade would be necessary only in the initial stages. If things go as planned, you can directly ask her out for a walk and then it is a matter of being at the right place at the right time.

Considerable effort and time has been spent to find the answer to the question, "What do people talk, sitting in the study center?" And the answer is a mixed bag. There is no single correct answer, but many possibilities. You can start with her family tree. Great grandfathers are passe but grandfathers and fathers are certainly in. Sources have confirmed that it is safe to explore up to the second cousin of maternal uncle. Don't forget to ask about her brothers and sisters. If you discover a mutual friend-nothing like it. Feign ignorance (partial or full) but not disinterest on subjects she likes. That would give her something to talk about. Hang on to her words, as you would, if you were suspended to a rope from the roof of a ten-story building. You can afford to relax when things settle down a bit. If she is 'senti' about the dogs on the campus, pat them once in a while in front of her even if you hate the rabid mongrels.

The next step is to go out for lunch or dinner (chalk off dinner if she stays in hostel). Go by the rules of the blue-book which says, "On Sundays, students can go for shopping, etc, and/or meet relatives only between 10am and 2pm. This is extended to 4pm on the second Sunday of every month". If nothing works, then kill the warden. You may or may not need any excuses. If you do need an excuse, be imaginative. That way even if you are caught, at least she will appreciate your sense of humour. You can say, "The mess food is getting stale (which is true) or you could say, "It is my real birthday, different from my certified birthday (which is probably false)". Beg, borrow or steal a bike...a scooter might be a big let down. But then the road to success is not always so long. People have taken short cuts.

The suggestions are by no means complete, but then love is supposed to be never ending and so are the methods to achieve it. Experiment and innovate and one day you'll surely discover it. Couples have confirmed that it is the process, which is more interesting than the end.

Ever since my analytical column began, the response has been encouraging. I discovered that there are actually people who read this little box of words every issue. So if this column does get read by the people who care (I'm getting real 'senti' now), I'd like to use it to make one small request, from one who means well: don't let the girls make an ape out of you. Don't let their snide comments bother you. Don't let them control your lives. No I'm not a MCP (and that doesn't stand for Microsoft Certified Professional, nincompoops!). I'm not saying that boys are angels-incarnate but but I cringe when I see a girl take advantage of a boy.

After all is said and done, I must admit that there are exceptions. Girls! If it's so, and you'd like to 'drop me a line' or write a counter article, so that I can see your side of the story, you can forget it as Shobha De has done your bit and as it is, I'm running late. My new girlfriend will kill me for being late. By the way, can any of you lend me your bike...

This article is the outcome of 30 months of intense theoretical and practical research on the topic by the author. EDITORIAL STATUTORY WARNING: Depending on personal differences, these strategies may not be completely beneficial to the safety of your bones.

EDITORIAL

As usual, the NISTian continues to appear at sporadic intervals with no discernible pattern in the dates of the issues. There are just too many factors affecting the production of an issue of the NISTian - the holiday schedule, exams or the absence of exams, festivals, tidal patterns, rainfall patterns ... The only way I know that it is time for another issue is when Pijush makes an appearance in my office and says "Let's take out a notice!"

This issue of the NISTian holds the distinction of being the first to be put on the Web! Yes sir! We are going on to the WWW channel (as soon as Satyajit Sarangi gets hold of this doc file)!

A few words about the articles in this issue. Kamal Misra angst is indeed impressive but I would be ecstatic if he condescended to cerebrate and converse in the language of plebeian mortals like me.

Then, we have an Urdu poem, transliterated in English, adding spice to the magazine. This is a contribution from Ms. Farida A. Ali who has recently joined the NIST family.

The analysis of the "complete man" and "perfect woman" by Harsweta accompanied by its compelling collage of commercials was amusing in a gentle sort of manner.

Then, we have a war story, some musings and some poems. I am always surprised by the sad overtones in the articles submitted for the NISTian. Looking at NISTians, no one could ever guess at this darker side of their emotions or the way they handle these emotions by turning them into positive motivation.

I do not want to risk my bones by commenting on Pijush's takeoff on Shobha De's "Surviving Men". The essay speaks for itself (rather loudly)! No comments!

This time I thought I will use the space in the NISTian to do a little bit of sermonizing. So, here we go!

Sermon for the 1st year students - They don't need one! Good riddance of the whole bunch for a few weeks. The only problem has been irate parents who cannot tolerate the untimely presence of their sons/daughters at home and keep asking "Why did you send them home?" The implied insinuation being that "We pay you to keep them out of our hair."

Sermon for 2nd year students - Following Dr. Ajit Panda's model of the fluctuations of your batch activities, we are once again seeing a sudden rise in unwanted activities. Please resist and desist if you do not want to have unfriendly encounters with the friendly members of the DC who may listen sympathetically to your pleas to send you home. You parents may not want you back right now.

We still have no news of 3rd semester examinations but we are trying to find out.

Sermon for the Seniors - I know that you are in no mood for a sermon of any kind from any one. Exams not being held, uncertainty about summer training, the placement scenario - are all extremely disheartening and frustrating for young students who want answers to every question. I am sorry that none of us has the answers to all the questions but we are committed to working hard for you guys!

Ha! Ha! Fantasy! Dream statements! - you say. I won't argue against that.

Nothing will be achieved - you believe. I won't argue against that.

The Institute will not do anything for us - you assert. I won't argue against that.

I will not argue because none of us has the answers but we - the Institute, and every one of its staff and faculty - have been trying and will continue to try our very best to help you get a good deal in this sea of uncertainties. My only problem arises when some of you start believing that it is our beholden duty to help you and when you raucously demand your nonexistent rights to be get canned solutions to ALL your problems from the Institute. The Institute's obligation in such matters is only a moral one and not an official one.

Some of you fail to see this and take up a unnecessarily hostile anti-establishment stance against the Institute. No one is going to fault the Institute if it fails to solve 100% of your problems. Let's get that right! The Institute's contract is merely to provide you four years of education and nothing more. Whatever else has to be done, you have to work to get it done. The Institute will support your efforts but cannot do all the work for you.

Then there are others who belong to the "I-am-helpless" category. These students believe that it is for the Institute to do everything for them. "I am totally helpless and, therefore, the Institute must do everything for me including telling me what are my ambitions and finding a spouse for me." Sorry! It can't be done. Unless you have some ideas and goals of your own and you are willing to work towards them, no one can help you.

Finally, there is the class of airy dreamers. "What do you want to do?" "Join the IAS or join the IIMs or go to the USA" "Are you doing something to get to these places?" "No!" These students believe that, without doing any work (because work is so boring and smart people don't work!), they will suddenly find themselves in their dream position by some magical means. The bad news for these people is that there is no magic wand in this world!

All these problems are very depressing to a generation which is used to closed problems. Every movie must have an ending. Every soap opera must have an ending. But life is all about handling open-ended problems where even the problem statement may not be given to you! We have to continue to adapt ourselves to the uncertainties surrounding us and strive to make the best of any situation that we may find ourselves in.