

As I sit down to write this AWL, I wonder what it should be - a collection of memories that we can look back at 15 years later (with shoutouts to the relevant people in parentheses), a list of practical advice for juniors (and more importantly - for myself in the future), or simply a philosophical rant about the nature of life at IITK which no one but me will be interested in. I couldn't make up my mind, so I'm simply going to have a bit of everything in here. Before we begin, I need to set the theme - a big overarching idea I have had about IITK is that it is a microcosm of life in general. From the first year - your childhood where you come into this new world, all the way to the final year, which is kind of like retirement - where you prioritize creating memories with the people who matter the most. In the time between these two extremes I have seen a lot - becoming Y21 ka mama by popular vote (rigged tha election), having a near miss with SSAC, making new friends, losing old ones, and even getting impaled! (long story) Looking back, I can't point out a period of time and say, oh this was a good semester - and vice versa. What I have observed is that my entire time here has been full of moments: both good and bad. Proudly, I can say that I love each of those moments to bits, and would do it all over again in a heartbeat. What follows is my attempt to gather those moments in one place and reflect on them a bit as I leave this intense, wonderful, emotionally draining, and horizon-expanding place.

I came to IITK determined to "do something big" - although I am now of the opinion that the "do something" part is more important than the "big" part. From the first day onwards, I was in awe of the sheer diversity of people at this place, and wanted to talk to as many as I could.



*"In loving memory of Suyash's CSE branch-change dreams,
Short-lived but beautiful, may you forever rest in peace"*

Nov. 2020 - Dec. 2020
(Pictures unrelated)

From the fateful first MTH101 quiz results, academics quickly took a back seat - where it has firmly remained in place ever since, despite repeated disgruntled protests. Interacting with people online was hard, it was like playing a game of chess where you can only see half the board. Still, there were some pretty awesome moments - winning the online book club scavenger hunt, an anime quiz where we were shocked to meet a senior who had scored an 11 SPI, and spending hours upon hours shitposting on whatsapp groups with friends. E-cell was also a special experience - getting to listen to (and interact with) these amazing people who were working on big, impactful ventures. It went beyond campus events too - through E-cell I also got involved in organizing COVID relief resources online, in an effort led by an alum. There were some other things - club recruitments, random quizzes and the like which seemed like the end of the world at the time but hardly matter in hindsight. Increasingly, I have come to feel that my time in this world is finite - and I would rather devote my time to activities and people that will stick around for the long run. By the time the first semester had ended, I had collected all pass grades - A, B, C, and D (over time I have also added E, F and the newly minted "I" to this list).

Satti God^[a]

/ˈsʌtti: ɡɒd/

INFORMAL, maybe EXPLETIVE

Noun

1. (someone) who, despite not being interested in academics still is a **chaapu** in his career, hobbies, and social life
2. **ironic usage:** (someone) who does none of the above, but dreams about it constantly.



*Spoiler: No one actually ever becomes a Satti God -
But even merely striving for it is still a noble act.*

From somewhere in the second year onwards I was determined to rise in station from being just a satti to becoming a “satti god”. Of course, continued disinterest in academics had its consequences. I remember calling home on the last day of the fourth semester - after almost failing multiple courses. I was on my H5 roof, crying and telling my mother that I simply could not do EE any more: the nervous breakdown which is part of the Universal Batti Experience™. I pray to God that coming batches don’t have to go through the same. It was simply rock bottom for me - on top of a turbulent personal life. I owe it to my wingies, family and the friends that stuck around (shout out to Parikshit, Gitika, et al.) that I made it out in one piece. I was glad to be adapting to a post-covid world, even though I will kind of miss watching movies on discord (hello Bansal, Gaurang). In fact, even my taste in films has Vox behind it: I read an AWL by a senior (Shivam Mandloi, Y16). He put me on to the best East Asian cinema, and I still have a small chat with him when I watch a new Korean masterpiece. Just a testament to the kinds of amazing people you can find at IITK, simply by reaching out. Reaching out also helped me a lot when I was looking for internships. I think it was a natural progression, from a tired secy databasing for Outreach AR work to an intern-horny sophomore having short phone calls with people off of linkedin.

Talking to such a diverse set of people made me realize what a big place the world truly is, and that I needed to take charge of my own career. I wouldn’t recommend going off campus to all juniors - It takes a lot out of you. I remember

sitting all alone in a corner at a friend's GPL, depressed about my efforts not returning anything. At the time, Ashutosh offered me his earphones and sat down next to me, to listen to Nirvana together - and it helped a huge lot.

*"If you only read the books that everyone else is reading,
You can only think what everyone else is thinking.*

- Murakami Haruki"

- Suyash Mallik



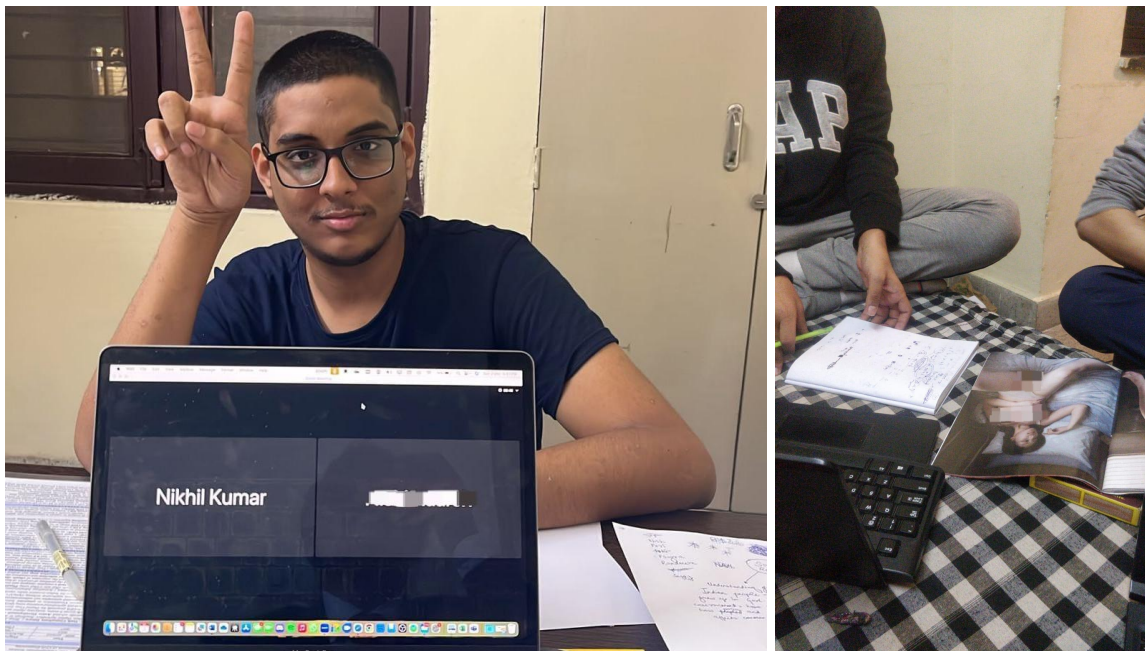
We used to have a "three person rule": At all times one person in the room would be studying, one would be sleeping and the last (usually me) would be wasting time.

If you're trying to do anything which lies outside the $(\text{mean} + \text{s.d.})$ ^{Ojha, 2021} at IITK, you need to ensure that you have a loving support system - no one succeeds alone. Eventually, I found an awesome internship off campus, and celebrating with my friends was a great experience. Sometimes taking big bets and chasing after moon shots pays off. The third year was a bit different - I focused a lot on landing my next intern, but also found myself caught in a stream of new experiences. This was the time when I played Pokemon in EE381 labs, danced in the rain with wingies, was with someone special, and got introduced to "recreational usage" and Malayalam cinema - both by quite different people. I also got back into reading big time - now I think college is an apt time to explore books and build your taste. Being a BCS leader was also amazing, and I'm grateful to have the kind of bonding with our team that wasn't possible during the COVID era. Big shoutout to Saurabh, for being generally awesome - and the Y21

leaders (should I start calling you ex-coordies now?) for keeping the dream alive. This year also marked our first offline galaxy, which was a blur of Stings and Advances and no sleep - it was a breathtaking moment when me and Varad were able to deliver the winning performance in our AniSoc event, after days of screaming our asses off at each other in Japanese.

A digression, titled “On doing your own thing”:

If you are a current student reading this: This is your sign to please, please get off your ass, go out there and start doing things. Not out of FOMO because some random ass PoR holder is doing it to build their consulting profile, but for the sheer adventure of experimenting with different fields and finding out what you want to do for the next few years. It doesn't even have to be something with career returns, or something which will make you popular amongst your peers - please just go and find something you can be obsessed with, and which forces you to grow in your capabilities.

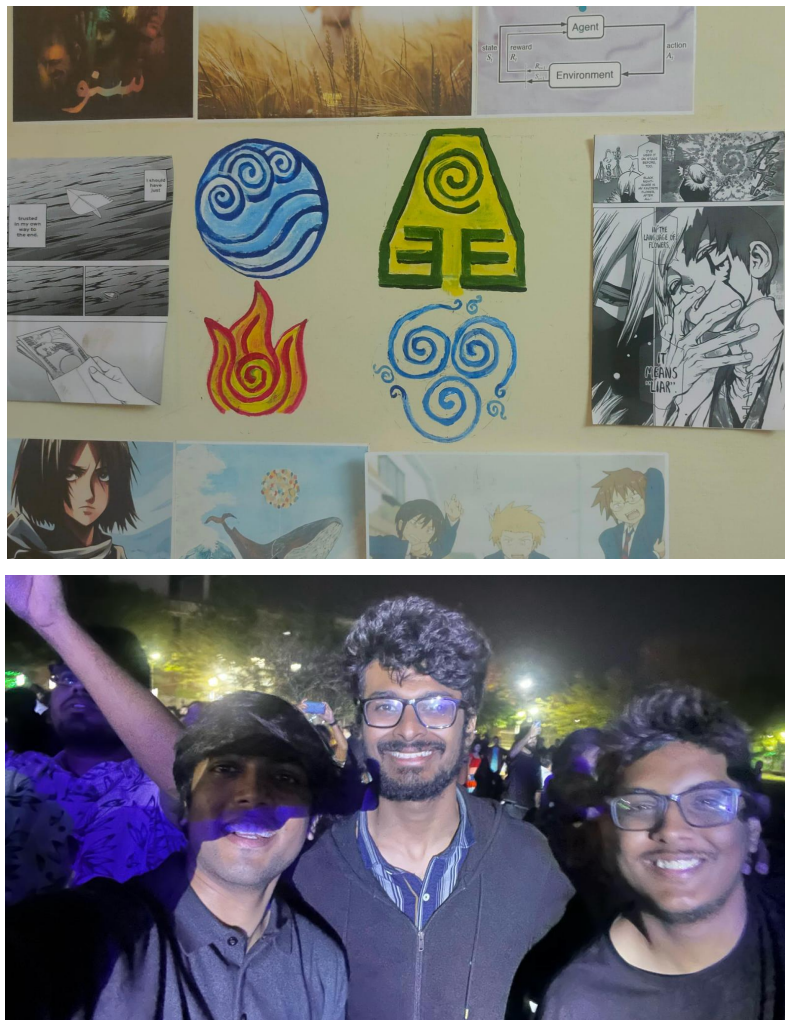


Placement arc: on the right, you can see two determined young Y20s diligently prepping for SDE.

Back to the narrative.

By the final year, the atmosphere had changed. For one, seeing Y19s graduate had made us realize that *this was it*. I had a PPO, so I had a lot of time to sit and

reflect on what I want to do next, and how I have changed as a person over the last 4 years. Pretentious philosophizing aside, we managed to have great moments: spending hours playing dumb video games on Prakhar's laptop - now available with 4 player mode!



An excerpt from my H9 wall, and a picture from the last fest.

Other highlights: convincing each other that somehow it would be a very “neat” idea to party the night before a midsem; helping people out with probability and trading games in the weeks leading up to placements. These things might not seem like a lot, but when every moment is imbued with the sense of an ending, you get nostalgic for them even if only a few weeks have passed. Placements was chaos: after spending days running around pushing resumes, adjusting suits and ties, and taking mock interviews - watching *your* people get placed is a feeling which resonates with the very core of the soul. We made many memories

after that as well, e.g. when we went on an amazing trekking trip smack in the middle of the ongoing semester. I'll also never forget this one day where we "ate a sandwich" and spent hours looking (and laughing) at the flowers in H9 quad at peak springtime noon. Our entire wing went from people who had never danced before to gyrating feverishly in front of a crowd of hundreds at DE '24. In a batch of almost 1200 people, you are bound to touch others' lives more often than you expect - meeting so many people and saying goodbye has made me realize this.



Yes, this 144p thing was the best picture I could find which included both Parikshit and Bansal.

As I end this, I need to remind you that this campus is made up of the people who reside in it. We pass down 'culture' as a sort of genetic memory but it is up to you to take pride in the parts of IITK you admire and change the ones that you don't. 'IITK culture' is not a monolithic thing: it is as much in Hall Jihad as it is in night-out bulla sessions - with an SG who taught us street smarts in addition to career advice and IITK history (Thanks, Gaurav). It is there in tinkering about late at night with your club, as well as in 14 people in a double room doing a DC assignment together. It shows up even when a Y6 alum makes you do "tubelight" in front of his 2 year old child. Most of all, it is in the people you will encounter in this wild 4-5 year ride: and if you are able to build deep relationships with these people - you have certainly succeeded in making your mark on IITK culture.



The last picture at IITK. This wing and these friends >>>

*This AWL was brought to you by Inadequol, the miracle drug which makes you constantly feel like you are not living up to your potential. The best way to achieve all your wildest dreams and live the perfect life!**

**side effects may include broken friendships, trouble sleeping, and constantly spending your life comparing yourself with your peers. For legal reasons, this is humorous, and definitely not a call for help.*

Honorable mentions:

Great profs - Shubham Sahay, Syed Feroz, Sandip Tiwari, Suchitra Mathur

8 hour rule awardees - Ayush Kumar, Nishithaarsh Umrao, Jatin Chauhan

To my bacche:

It was an epic run, I have literally seen all of you grow and mature right before my eyes, and also learnt some things from you. Stay in touch after I leave.



Appendix A - an explanation of the Satti God lifestyle:

An insight from IITK - it is a constant struggle of balancing between finding your interests and investing in building depth in them. Both extremes are sub-optimal for your growth as well as your sanity. This applies to career, hobbies as well as your relationships with other people. You will often find that the balance you have created might be different from what is expected of you, or even what you expect of yourself. In these cases **it is *always* worth it to take a shot on yourself, even if later on things don't work out the way you expected them to.** After every "it's so over" comes a phase of "we're so back", and then the cycle repeats. The reason I have emphasized the *Satti God lifestyle* here, is not because it is glamorous to ditch your acads and sit around doing nothing instead. On the contrary, remaining a satti via lack of effort does actively make your life harder in a lot of ways - and in the best case, should be avoided. However, what being a satti god entails also is the following:

1. It makes you a very resourceful person - finding ways to succeed at a disadvantage.
2. Teaches you to think for yourself, instead of blindly following the crowd.
3. Gives you immense self-belief, because you get a lot of practice in taking bets on yourself, working hard on them, and occasionally winning them.