

IITK 2018 diary

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1. I was invited to IIT Kanpur to deliver a talk at the Excellence Academic Awards Ceremony. The program was organized by Dr. Mohit Law, an Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering who is also the chairperson of Senate Scholarship and Prizes Committee (SSPC).
2. The Awards Ceremony takes place once a year and is meant to award certificates and cash prizes to the toppers and very high grade point achievers of all branches and of different years. About 450+ students participated in the ceremony and were in my lecture held in L19 auditorium on 6th April 2018.
3. I was surprised to receive the invitation but Dr. Mohit told me that students wanted me to come and they had also suggested [that I talk on my life story and how IITK education helped me](#) take the decision of doing something very different with my life. On this issue I was [also interviewed for IITK community radio service](#).
4. Dr. Mohit and his team had meticulously planned the event which included a dinner with deans and his team on 5th April in the Visitor's Hostel, an interaction with students in L2 lecture hall on 6th April morning and the ceremony on the 6th afternoon at 4 p.m.
5. The [agenda of my visit to IITK for the ceremony is here](#).
6. The interaction with the students both in L2 and over lunches and dinners (about 7-8 students had meals with me in the Guest House) was very pleasant and fruitful though I wish the students had exhibited more energy and curiosity. In my various interactions with IIT students in different campuses (in March, I was the Chief Guest

of Ignite 2018 event in IIT Gandhinagar) I have found that the students do not show much enthusiasm in asking questions or interacting. Even other professors from foreign countries whom I met in the IITs also lamented this lack of curiosity and enthusiasm.

7. The bright students of IITs who are young should be bubbling with energy at this age. Their lack of interest and curiosity is a cause for concern. Curiosity and energy are the prime movers of innovation and if our brightest students do not innovate then the future of the country is not very bright.
8. IIT Kanpur however seems to have gotten the bug of innovation and entrepreneurship of different kind! Inside the swimming pool complex I saw people selling swimming trunks and other swimming gear. Also there are good number of *thelas* at the corner of Hall III selling fruits, chats and also other eateries. I have a feeling that very soon the hostel areas will resemble Chowpatty Beach of Mumbai which is full of *thelas* selling eateries. In my last visit in 2016 I had also seen a roadside bicycle shop in front of Hall I selling all different sorts of bicycles. This time I did not see the shop.
9. The campus has good number of electric rickshaws plying on the road – a good sign for pollution control. I felt sad at having missed the bus on this issue. I wanted to introduce them on the campus in mid 2000s but the then Director and the administration did not show any interest. In fact we were ready to give 4-5 e-rickshaws free of cost to IITK but somehow the administration did not accept them.
10. I also saw a couple of fully motorized electric three-wheelers for physically handicapped persons. All these rickshaws are manufactured in Kanpur and sold at a subsidized price to handicapped students in IITK campus.

11. After my talk I had a pleasant meeting with Dr. Manindra Agrawal, the acting Director of IITK and Dr. B. V. Phani, Dean of DORA.
12. IIT Kanpur during April was hot and dry, but because of the greenery and trees it was pleasant campus to walk around.
13. Because of large number of trees, IITK campus also gets a huge amount of leaf litter. Instead of composting it the litter is taken in tractor trailers and dumped outside. It is such a waste of good material which could be used as a fertilizer for lawns and trees.
14. After my IITK visit I spent the weekend in Lucknow my former hometown. The whole town was dug up because of Metro construction work so it was chaos with traffic jams and dust and noise pollution. Why a small town like Lucknow needs a Metro beats me. I guess the netas and politicians get brownie points in such mega construction projects.

Photos



AKR giving lecture



Certificate distribution



Dr. Mohit Law (the tallest guy) and his team. Second from left is Dr. Manindra Agrawal (acting Director of IITK).

E rickshaw on campus roads



E-handicap rickshaw



Road in front of Guest house



Eatery thelas near Hall III

[HOME](#)

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