



VESIT  
Connect

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polling companies.

To compile the national and state rankings, C fore field researchers interviewed faculty and final year students of engineering institutes countrywide and industry representatives, asking them to rate engineering institutes on following nine parameters

1. Leadership / Governance Quality.
2. Faculty Welfare and Development.
3. Competency of Faculty.
4. Curriculum and pedagogy.
5. Industry Interface.
6. Research and Innovation.
7. Infrastructure and Facilities.
8. Placements.
9. Value for Money.

Further, the interviewees were also asked to assign weightage to each parameter. The scores awarded by respondents under each parameter were totaled for the purpose of final ratings and ranking.

V.E.S. Institute of Technology (VESIT) has earned the FIRST RANK in Maharashtra State and among the Top 100 Engineering Colleges in India, V.E. S. Institute of Technology (VESIT) has secured the 29th Rank.

# TED<sup>x</sup>VESIT Preparation

-Hiten Makhiija

In recent years, cultural and social events have gained a drastic importance in building a fraternity. Also, the main aim of creating a community is to bring people who share common interests together. Ted talks are one of the ways of achieving that goal. And to build one such faction, our college has come up with our very own TEDx event.

The very first obstacle that the team had to tackle was acquiring a TEDx licence. That, by itself was a 3-4 month long process. When an institution applies for a licence, they are asked to fill a 5-6 pages long form. Once the form had been filled, there came interviews, solicitation of extra details, live web-cam sessions and a lot more. Once we were licensed, we got about a year to conduct the event.

Then arose the biggest challenge - The theme. What should it be? After a lot of brainstorming, our TedxVESIT team brewed up the idea : "There's always a way". The TEDxVESIT team then had to divide themselves into groups to prepare for the actual event-

**The Curation Team:** To get Speakers.

**The Management Team:** To manage the working of the event.

**Operations Team:** Supplies, resources and equipment that will be required for the event .

**Creatives Team:** To create an ambience that best suits the theme.

**Production Team:** To capture each and every moment of the event and publicise the event.

We all, at some point in time, have been through anxiety and depression and to keep our apprehension in check is the sole purpose of the event. The event has a

## VESIT First Rank in Maharashtra by Education World

EducationWorld is India's first education-focused magazine. Education World conducted a survey of India's Top 100 Universities, Engineering Institutes, B-Schools and Arts, Science & Commerce Colleges. Educationworld also has complied national and state rankings.

Education World India Private Engineering Institutes Rankings 2018-19 survey was conducted by the Delhi-based Centre for Forecasting and Research Pvt. Ltd (C fore, estb. 2000), one of the country's premier market research and public opinion

### Top 100 Private Engineering Institutes league table

Rank	2016	2017	2018	Institute Name	Leadership governance quality (20)	Faculty welfare & development (20)	Competence of faculty (20)	Curriculum & pedagogy (20)	Industry Interface (20)	Research and Innovation (20)	Infrastructure and facilities (20)	Placement (20)	Value for money (20)	TOTAL SCORE (200)	NIRF 2018 Rank
1	1	1	1	Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani	161	166	311	224	282	246	288	183	176	2937	17
2	3	2	2	International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Hyderabad	158	163	318	225	281	256	285	182	174	2935	38
3	2	3	3	Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT)	157	167	309	216	265	289	284	174	170	2931	16
4	5	4	4	Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala	161	162	305	215	277	260	287	178	168	2913	20
5	4	5	5	Manipal Institute of Technology	168	161	303	263	275	248	283	171	169	1973	39
6	6	6	6	PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore	163	162	313	217	281	260	289	176	172	1973	29
7	10	7	7	Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information & Communication Technology, Gandhinagar	156	160	307	223	280	170	285	177	157	1915	181-190
8	9	8	8	SSM College of Engineering, Kalavakkam, Chennai	157	156	304	212	267	215	279	153	161	1885	NR
9	8	9	9	RV College of Engineering, Bangalore	154	157	306	214	278	168	273	178	155	1883	58
10	7	10	10	Birla Institute of Technology (BIT), Mesra (Ranchi)	148	158	302	199	278	194	288	173	167	1879	26
11	13	11	11	SASTRA (Deemed University), Thanjavur	158	155	303	201	257	247	269	153	146	1872	33
12	12	12	12	PES University, Bangalore	153	154	299	210	263	194	277	164	152	1866	87
13	15	13	13	Shri Nidar University, Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP	158	155	287	201	248	214	277	146	144	1828	NR
14	NR	13	14	Coimbatore Institute of Technology	151	150	296	200	262	207	259	155	147	1827	62
15	20	15	15	College of Engineering, SRM Institute of Science & Technology, Chennai	148	146	301	191	263	249	279	134	124	1827	46
16	10	14	16	Amrita School of Engineering, Coimbatore	141	145	271	211	278	257	263	135	125	1824	NR
17	12	17	17	BITS, Pilani-Hyderabad Campus	153	148	299	210	269	190	253	154	144	1820	NR
18	19	19	18	JSS Mahatma Jyoti Baबाji Jayachamarajendra College of Engineering, Mysore	155	150	302	200	252	189	266	151	154	1819	NR
19	16	18	19	Thiagarajar College of Engineering, Madurai	148	144	289	197	268	199	271	155	141	1812	39
20	31	24	19	Chalanyo Bhanthi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad	146	147	291	187	263	243	258	140	139	1812	101-150
21	17	19	21	BMS College of Engineering, Bangalore	150	145	301	210	261	174	272	145	153	1811	67
22	22	27	22	BITS, Pilani-Goa Campus	148	143	291	195	267	183	281	151	151	1810	NR
23	21	30	23	Jaypee Institute of Information Technology, Noida	147	146	294	217	208	179	276	157	145	1769	70
24	28	22	24	Sathyabama Institute of Science & Technology, Chennai	138	132	269	176	249	251	261	149	132	1757	37
25	14	21	25	Amity School of Engineering and Technology, Noida	147	145	266	187	251	226	266	136	131	1755	34
26	33	19	26	JSS Academy of Technical Education, Noida	141	144	291	205	258	189	272	141	134	1753	151-200
27	10	23	27	International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Bangalore	147	141	292	196	261	155	255	165	136	1748	NR
28	25	32	28	The LNM Institute of Information Technology, Jaipur	149	143	278	202	221	147	270	147	130	1746	NR
29	34	26	29	Uvekar and Education Society's Institute of Technology, Mumbai	144	146	289	207	255	164	255	145	137	1742	NR

Article in Education World, May 2018



TED<sup>x</sup>VESIT Long shot

lot to offer to people who are suffering through perturbation and it aims to make them understand that life just doesn't end in an engineering college. In fact, it's the beginning of a new life.

We, at VESITConnect wish the very best for the TEDx Tribe!

# General Secretary bids a Goodbye

-Shruti Bondre

**A**s **Shardul Malvankar**, VESIT General Secretary for the year 2017-18 bids goodbye to his term and life as a student at VESIT, our reporter catches him at his pensive moment. Following are the excerpts from his chronicles about life at VESIT :

There are two kinds of people in the world-The ones who enjoy the success and the ones who enjoy the journey towards the success. I was one of the people who enjoy the journey- My astonishing Journey from being a Direct-Second Year Engineering student to Deputy Cultural Secretary and then "The General Secretary".

I joined this college as a Direct-Second Year Student in the Electronics Branch. By the time I joined, Praxis-The Technical Event, had already concluded. I was new to everything and hence in my first year in this college, I just took time to understand the societies and the events. At the end of the 4th semester, I appeared for the Praxis Interviews and became a part of the organizing committee. In the 3rd year, I was elected as the Cultural In-charge of my class and then I became The Deputy Cultural Secretary.

The most memorable moment in my college life will definitely be the day I was appointed as the General Secretary. It was one of the most emotional moments. I was sharing the Dias with our Professors. There Umrikar Sir gave me a really warm hug and a good smile. All the efforts that my friends and I had put in had paid off really well. Before the elections, it was going to be me or a very close friend, Ayush, for the elections. We knew one of us would have to step down. We had a mutual understanding. Then we were informed that Nitin Pandit was also contesting. He was a tough competitor as he had a lot of achievements. The campaigning was the most interesting and challenging part as it was going to decide our fate. My friends had put in a lot of hard work and helped me with all the campaigning. We got a chance to interact with a lot of students, many of whom were the ones we had never met. It was a great learning opportunity.



**Shardul Malvankar**

We all know that, getting a job is challenging. But what comes after, is more challenging. I was appointed as the General Secretary and challenges started pouring in. The most important of them being was to get PRAXIS back to its form, which was cut down. Designing and Managing PRAXIS taught me a lot of management skills. Maybe a General Secretary shouldn't have to know all the details about the council, but I made sure that I was always there for my council members. This year, the Sports Secretary had to step down, and so I was handed over with the responsibility of the Sports Council. One of the greatest achievements was to start the BEST Bus Services from Kurla Railway Station to the College for the students. Bringing TED to our college was yet another achievement.

Being the General Secretary shaped my personality in various ways. I knew I could multi-task, but being the GS made me push through my barriers and get the work done. It helped me with patience. Yet, I knew my responsibilities. I made sure that I give in my 100% for each and every event and that I was personally present for each event.

General Secretary is a position of responsibility. It comes with authority and its own challenges. Our Institution is a reputed one with a culture one must abide by. I would say that as the General Secretary, one must always follow one's dreams and give their best shot to achieve it. Don't hesitate from taking a bold move because you will succeed only when you dare to achieve. Give your best to the College because you can learn a great deal of things. And most importantly, "Never Stop. Just keep Growing".

## VESIT Voice

-Gayatri Belapurkar

**G**reetings, readers! The month of May, along with its scorching heat, came with the added heatwave of the dreaded end-semester exams. This issue brings you some respite and takes those stressed minds on a joyride. We have here some interesting news and experiences that might have slipped your attention. Although May was harsh and evil for most VESITian's, the news of our college being ranked first in Maharashtra State by Education World induced smiles and a huge sense of pride in the minds of all. The month also witnessed all the hustle and bustle going on around TEDx, the first of its kind event in VESIT. With so much excitement in the air, it is incredibly difficult to stay aloof. In this issue, we present to you a few insights and experiences of the General Secretary, Shardul Malvankar, as he bids us all a goodbye. To pay respect and heartfelt gratitude towards the constant hero in our lives, our loving and caring mothers, we have brought Mother's Day from the perspective of a son, complete with the anecdotes of his toddler years. The students of VESIT are expanding their boundaries and exploring new lands. The Students' Speak section of this month brings inputs from a variety of students and their stories on how they conquered and achieved feats where they had set their minds to. A student of VESIT shares tips and gives advice to all his successors on the way to triumph over GRE. Another student recites his journey towards becoming a solo traveller and why it is something everyone should experience at least once in their lives. A girl gives us a peek into her life as she narrates her story of a trip to the United States of America, while another brings us something fun from the gatekeepers and watchmen of VESIT and the struggles they face while trying to keep the campus safe and student-friendly. All in all, this issue is a small pack of entertainment which holds up our pledge to assiduous reporting.

## 'VESIT Connect' Team

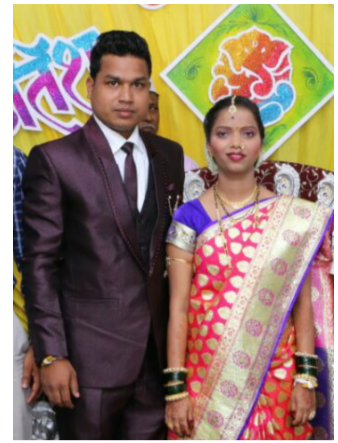
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*Everything we do is designed, whether we're producing a magazine, a website, or a bridge. Design is really the creative invention that designs everything.*

-Henry Petroski

# Wedding Bells

The month of May rings in the wedding bells for Mr. Nitesh Prakash Sangare, Junior Clerk in the administration office at VESIT, where he ties the knot with Sayali Sudhakar Warase on 28th April 2018 at Balaji Mangal Karyalay in Ratnagiri. VESITConnect congratulates the newly wedded couple and wishes them a happy married life.



**Nitesh and Sayali Sangare  
on their wedding day.**

*A great marriage is not when the perfect couples comes together . It's when an imperfect couple learns to enjoy their difference .*

**-Dave Meurer**

# Mother's Day

*-Aadi Fernandes*

Mother's day is celebrated in the second week of May worldwide, typically on the second Sunday of the month. This day honours the most selfless person on the planet. She comes first to your mind when you hear the word pure love. This day is not only dedicated to the mother's who gave birth to us, but also to the fathers, the teachers, guardians or any other person who acted as a mother for many of us.

This day is very special as we get to return a small percentage of the love to our mother. The day will make our mother feel really special, because after all she is the most special one. Putting aside her dreams and wants, she will always prioritize our happiness and comfort over everything.

Well, for some, their mother would be their father, for some it would be their teacher, or sister or probably a guardian or someone else. But no matter what, the one who stands by your side through thick and thin, who selflessly gives up all their joy just to make you happy, whose ultimate aim is to make you successful in life, is your mother.

She will stay up late at night because we are not feeling well, even though they have work the following day. She will always make sure that she cooks the food that you love to eat. She tries to give you everything that you ask for, even if it is at the cost of something that she wants. She will always make sure that you have the best of everything, even if she cannot enjoy the same facility. She is the definition of pure love, something that is impossible to find anywhere else. No matter what you have done, she will always want to protect you even if that means putting her own safety on the line. She may cry but will never show you her tears, because she never wants you to feel burdened with her problems. Even the , she will try the level best to take your problems on her head and solve it, just so that you have a smooth life.

No article will ever be enough to describe a mother's love. Because trying to describe their love and sacrifices is like describing all the species of organisms in the ocean, it's endless. If I were to write a book, all the pages would be filled with love, pure unending love, the tale of a superhero who never wears a cape, but protects us from everything that comes across.

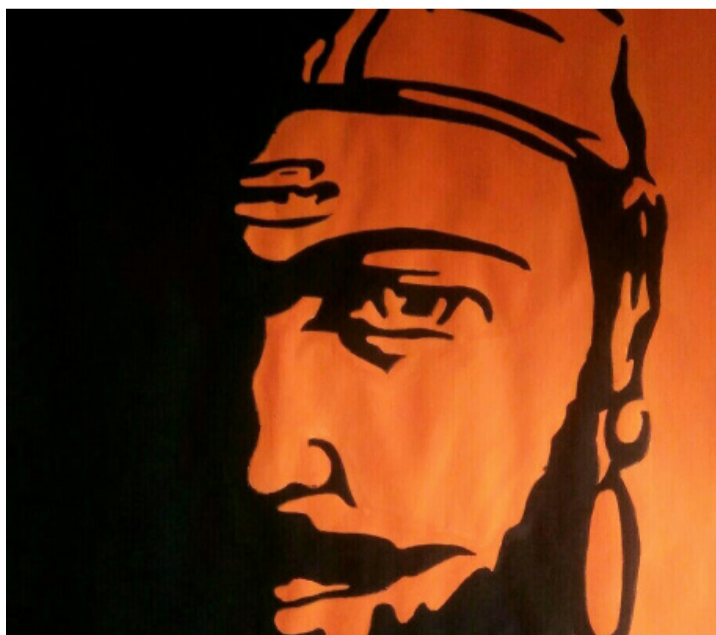


**Mother's love**

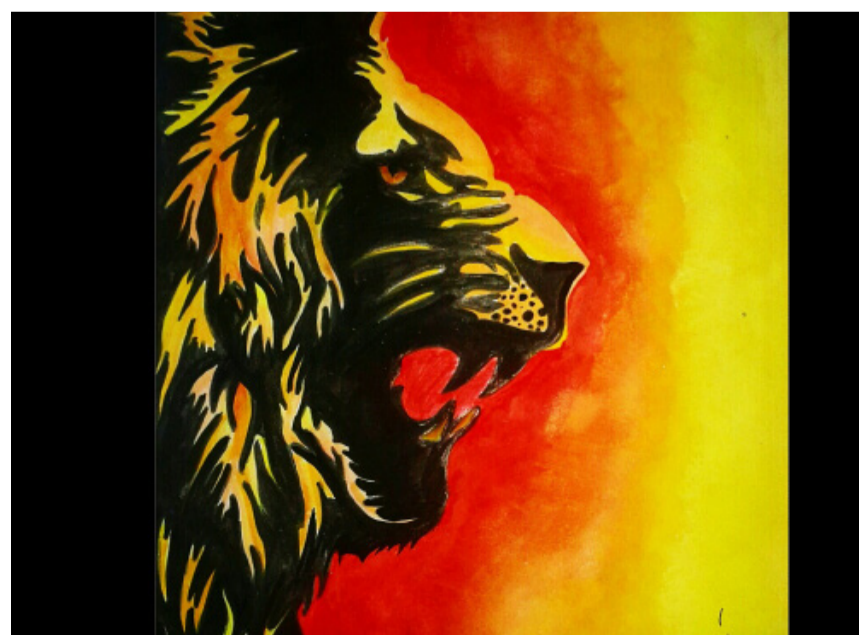
There are a plethora of memories that shows my mother's love towards me. My personal favorite is when I was 3 years old and my Dad was out for a business trip. For some reason the only thing I liked eating was palak. But that day my mom made some other vegetable. I said "Mamma I want palak" in a very disheartening tone. I was not a stubborn kid but still my mom went down at 9:30, when the markets were closing and bought spinach and cooked it for me. The most beautiful thing about this is that Mom could have just forced me to eat, and I would have. But no, she gave in the infants wish to have palak. This and many such special memories are something that I will cherish forever and ever.

This Mother's day, may no one feel like they do not have a mother to thank, because, you always have someone who cares about you more than you can ever comprehend. Do yourself a favor and go and just say thanks to your mother everyday. Why should mother's day be the only day you thank her? That word which you utter in a few seconds will make her day and put a smile across her face, afterall, doesn't that angel deserve every bit of happiness the world has to offer?

# Musings and Expressions



**-Shivani Birwadkar(D6A)**



**-Namrata Ramchandani(D14B)**

# An Engineer's Guide to the GRE

-Murlidhar Sharma(D20)

It's that time of the year when many senior year (final year) students have started preparing for the GRE and looking for admissions into universities abroad. Meanwhile, the students of junior year (3rd year) and sophomore year (2nd year) are wondering whether they should pursue their Masters abroad or not. Through this article, I try to break down the preparation process for the Graduate Record Examination, from an Engineer's perspective, once the decision to pursue a Masters abroad is made.

## About the GRE

The GRE is a standardized test that is a compulsory requirement for admission in most graduate schools abroad, except a few Universities in Canada, for a variety of graduate courses. The examination has six sections, out of which one is experimental and the marks for the same are not considered in your final result. These sections are:

### Analytical Writing Assessment(AWA)

#### Issue Essay

#### Argument Essay

#### Verbal Sections\*2

#### Quants Sections\*2

#### Experimental Section(Either Verbal or Quants)

In the exam, the AWA section is followed by the 5 Verbal and Quants section, one of which at random will be experimental, so the student answers that section just like the other ones. The experimental section contains new questions which help the ETS, the organisation which conducts the GRE, to standardize the difficulty of test for the future. Before starting the preparation for GRE, it is important to visit the ETS websites' GRE General Test Page and check the syllabus for each of the sections and the FAQs section to learn more about the test. One should also check the relative grading scale of the exam and check the profiles of students admitted to their dream University to decide a target score to be achieved.

## The Quants Section

GRE Quants tests the basic mathematical knowledge and reasoning skills and generally is very easy for an Engineering student, except some Diploma students who find Mathematics particularly tough. The syllabus involves foundational mathematics that we have learnt in school and some topics of statistics covered in junior college. The questions are very similar to the ones asked in aptitude tests conducted during placements in college. The difficulty that most people have in the GRE Quants section is solving the questions with a timer ticking in a corner on the screen. Such situations often cause "silly mistakes" which could have been easily avoided if there was no time-crunch involved. The key to improving your quants score is resilient and consistent practice, through practice questions based on each topic and practice tests. You will commit some stupid mistakes but you can improve by just keeping track of such mistakes in order to avoid them in the future. Practices like these will ensure that you commit every possible mistake during the preparation phase and do well in the exam by avoiding them.

## The Verbal Section

Verbal section tests the reading and reasoning abilities along with vocabulary to ensure that a person is well equipped for graduate courses abroad. There are text completion, sentence equivalence, reading comprehension questions in each verbal section. Reading Comprehension(RC) questions account for almost half the verbal section, wherein questions are based on a passage given. The questions can be based on critical thinking and also on the vocabulary involved in the passage. Text completion(TC) questions are 'fill in the blanks' questions with one, two or three blanks and test your vocabulary and sentence structure analysis. Sentence equivalence questions test the verbal reasoning skills as one has to analyse a sentence and derive conclusions based on it or find other sentences among the option with the same meaning. Reading the questions carefully is the most important thing in the verbal section. You can practice the RCs on readtheory.org, and improve your vocabulary on vocabulary.com. Improving your vocabulary is a must for GRE and takes at least 5-6 months to learn the suggested 1000+ words. There are many apps to help aid in the process but using the words in day-to-day life is the key to mastering them for the exam.

## The AWA Section

There are two essays to be written in the AWA section: Issue essay and Argument essay. For the Issue essay, a simple statement is given and for the Argument essay, an entire passage is given to read and analyse along with instructions to frame the essay within a time limit of 30 min. AWA section tests the writing skills as well as vocabulary because the prospective graduate students are expected to write technical papers in the future. The ideal way to prepare for the AWA section is to write essays regularly and incorporate the new words learn for the Verbal section.

## Final Thoughts

The GRE is a relatively easy exam for any Engineer as we use the Mathematics which is a part of the GRE syllabus, regularly in our lives. The Verbal section is dreaded by many in India and is a bit difficult, but the courses we opt for after GRE, do not expect us to have 160+ in the Verbal section. A 150+ or even a 145+ in some cases is enough to get a good college as we are expected to have a 160+ score in Quants. With enough practice, both these are relatively easy goals to achieve and a 4+ AWA score is also good enough for almost all colleges. So approach the exam with confidence in your abilities and dedicate time for practicing regularly to ensure you get a good score!



Murlidhar Sharma

# The Port Of Freedom

-Saumya Kulkarni

The ferry to Ellis Island and Liberty State Park leaves in 15 minutes," the man standing at the pier on the Hudson River announced. I was excited about meeting Lady Liberty but it was the first time I heard about Ellis Island.

We entered the museum in Ellis Island with the Statue of Liberty looming behind it. We were greeted by a pile of heavy iron trunks stacked behind a taped area. The trunks were used by few of the millions of immigrants that came to the United States between the 1890s to the 1950s. Ellis Island served as a port for the ships carrying the immigrants.

The East wing of the Museum comprised of the information about the immigrants. Many personal items like combs, clothes and diaries were on display. What came as a big surprise to us was that even the passports of the immigrants coming to the States were framed! We saw an Indian passport from the 1920s in which the nationality of the person was stated as a British subject.

American officials had carefully documented details of each and every person entering the port. It was written in their swirly cursive handwriting in neat columns, in hundreds of notebooks. The museum also had provision for people to locate their families in the register. I was amazed at the fact that they cared enough to preserve these things, even after so many decades and managed to turn it into a tourist hotspot. The museum had sections where you could actually listen to the immigrants' conversations while they were huddled together in the ships.

Despite having had more than eight million immigrants entering America, through the foot of the Statue of Liberty, the Americans managed to document everyone. I was amazed at the fact that they turned everything into a museum and did not let the island rot on its own. According to me, the habit of documentation has been one of the main reasons why the West flourished. Although they have an advantage of lesser population compared to us, the Americans taught us the importance of organization.

"To Liberty State Park, everyone!" the man shouted. I snapped out of the trance at the museum and boarded the ferry to meet the most acclaimed monument in the world.



The Museum in Ellis Island

# The journey towards becoming a solo traveller

-Rajpreet Singh Bhengura (D15)

*“To travel is to take a journey into yourself”*

I believe that each person is beautiful in his own way, we just need to see ourselves, others and this world with the right perspective. All of us are bounded to the same old routine. A small child is bounded by 7 hours of school and then study. A college student has the added concern of his/her social life and attendance. An adult struggles to maintain his/her job or business. That’s around the time when we start getting woven into a clumsy and impenetrable web of responsibilities and stop living our life to the fullest possible.

I was an average student in my school, stuck up in my mundane routine, never too bothered about studies. In the end few things kicked me in and I scored well in 10th. After suddenly scoring well in 10th, my parents’ expectations were raised. I managed to secure the 1st position in my junior college and landed in VESIT. I have always loved travelling to new places. I used to travel a lot with my friends. I try seizing every slightest opportunity to travel. I have biked my way to Lonavala and Matheran with my friends. Whenever I travel, my soul does a little tap dance. This feeling inspires me to explore more places, talk to the locals there and lose myself in their culture and stories of faith.

Soon enough, the first year of engineering was over. Wanderlust took over and I travelled with two friends of mine to Rajasthan. I remember getting permission on the pretext of attending the engagement of a friend’s relative. After the engagement we three were on our own. We travelled to Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and then finally to Jaipur. It was quite an exhausting trip. We traveled to many historic Forts, one of them being Bhangarh Fort. I recall staring in awe at the spooky yet beautiful place. We also travelled to the border of India and Pakistan.



Rajpreet Singh & Pradyumn Gupta

It was second year of college, my soul carved for something new. Being a risk taker, I was enthralled on hearing about Kalavantin, which is supposedly one of the most dangerous fortresses to trek. I knew then and there that I was going to go see the apex of this fort. I asked many friends to join me for the trek, but nobody heeded in. No one wanted to take the risk, especially during the off-season, with the scorching sun on top of their heads in the month of May. They had their point and I had mine. I was crestfallen for a while and decided to do it all alone. So there it was, my first ever challenging trek to a fortress in the wrong season. I somehow reached the place and started regretting my decision there itself. There was no one around me except an insect with a creepy sound. I started the trek. I was shocked to see a village at the base of the fortress. There was no internet and a very weak signal there. I took a break there and while eating I spoke to the people living there. They thought of life to be boring in that village. They had to travel all the way down to bring anything. A resident said to me, “You come here, leaving behind your daily life; and we come to your city, leaving behind our daily life.” It was in that moment that I realized how we all tend to take everything for granted. All the things we have, our family, our friends, our home, food we have and our lives. We envy those who are better-off than us, but seldom do we think and help the underprivileged. Our wants keep us motivated to reach greater heights, but we should never forget being grateful for the things that we have. That villager, standing there, going about his day as usual, unknowingly taught me one of the biggest lessons of life.

I started the real trek which goes through a very dense forest. There was no way out from that forest and I was already way too far to stop. I somehow reached the base of the fort and I had to do rock climbing to get to the steps. That mountain has carved steps, They are called as “Stairs to heaven.” Indeed they were stairs to heaven. One mistake and I’d go straight to heaven. But I was determined to not die there, not that day. Breathing heavily, I reached the top, but I couldn’t climb the last 15ft high straight patch of rock. I was on top of the world (quite literally) for having reached there alive. That was one of the best moments of my life. No one was to be seen for miles. A big mountain range such as this, left unexplored by the masses. I had few questions about life. The sky, mountains, trees, water, nature, all have their own way of responding to you and all you questions. All you have to do is ask. The trek was formidable and it gave me a new confidence. From that point I knew what to do whenever I feel like I needed a break.



One of the enthralling shots taken by Rajpreet

My first trek made me bold enough to travel anywhere alone. I started trekking regularly after that. Some of my odysseys are :  
Kalsubai Peak (Maharashtra’s highest Peak)  
Matheran (I covered all the points in a day, walking 22 km, alone)  
Mahuli Fort (The highest peak in Thane. It was one of the most difficult treks.)  
Lohagad Fort

Recently I revisited the fort that has moulded me into the person that I am, Kalavantin Durg. And this time I did manage to climb the 15ft rocky patch and reach the top.  
Travelling alone induces a sense of serenity in me. Sometimes, we miraculously receive the answers we’ve been seeking and are left with experiences that feed our soul.



A snapshot from Rajpreet’s other travels



Rajpreet at the peak of the climb

# Street smartness of little one

-Naren Khatwani(D2B)

(This story is the winning entry of the event Fanmade Tales held during VESLit week.)

*“People wish being a little kid with no stress, worries or care in the world”*

Most of the people who have this wish are none other than corporate employees. Such was the couple Mikes and Tanya who needed a small break from their hectic work life and it happened so that their parents had arranged a surprise trip to a nearby hill station. Mikes and Tanya were overwhelmed by that surprise and decided to take some days off from work and relax. The next day they left for the trip and they were accompanied with their experienced car driver Purshotam. They were accompanied by Purshotam as he had been serving their family for past 15 years and was just like a member of their family. Purshotam drove them to the nearest hill station which was 5 hours away from their city. On the way they did some sightseeing and reached to their resort to spend the next 5 days

Mikes and Tanya were enjoying their mini vacation as they were free from all the work pressure and stress. On the last day they decided to visit a lake nearby as it was just a little detour on their way back home. In order to check out the correct route they were relying on their smartphone's GPS but as the lake was in the interior of a jungle, they had lost their GPS connectivity and started asking the local people for directions.

They saw some sign boards indicating the direction towards the lake but after travelling for about 20km and having no sign boards, no GPS connectivity they thought they were lost.

They were hoping to see a passer by and ask them for direction but there was no one around. Suddenly when they took a sharp turn they saw 2 small kids out of nowhere. They both got scared at first but then they realized that they were just small kids. Mikes lowered the window and the kid then asked him would he like to purchase some mangoes. The kid was accompanied by a small girl. Mikes told the kid they he didn't need the mangoes as he had already purchased some from the local market. Purshotam interrupted their conversation and asked the kid for directions to the lake as they were lost. The kid immediately put forth a condition in front of Mikes that he will be telling them the directions to the lake only if they purchased 10 mangoes from him. Mikes, Tanya and Purshotam were surprised to see the kid negotiate with them for selling some mangoes. As Purshotam knew the regional language he tried to negotiate with the kid thinking the kid might feel Purshotam belonged to the same region but the kid had some awesome street smartness. He remained firm and didn't tell them directions, frustrated Tanya told the kid that they didn't need his help and they can find their own way to the lake. The kid replied “You can't go to the lake without taking directions from me as there is no one nearby” As they had no other choice Mikes purchased 10 mangoes from him and what they got to know from the kid that they were just 10 minutes away from the lake.

In order to avoid Tanya getting angry on the small kid Mikes asked Purshotam to proceed towards the lake. The view of the lake made Tanya forget all the worries. But Mikes was not enjoying the wonderful lake view and was about thinking something. This was noted by Tanya and she asked Mikes what was he thinking. Mikes told Tanya that he was thinking about the small kid's smart behavior and how he must have learned the business tactics. As Tanya was much calm Mikes explained Tanya that they could help the kid for his further education as he was smart. Without wasting more time they rushed to the spot where they had met the small kid and they saw the kid was still there with the small girl. Mikes and Tanya got down from their vehicle and asked the kid about his education and family.

The kid replied by saying that he was currently studying in class 6 of the school in the nearby village and was selling mangoes. In order to earn some money which he would be using to pay the school fees for her little sister's education. Tanya and Mikes were speechless watching the small kid's wish to study and make her small sister educated as he knew education could make his family life better and a bit comfortable. Mikes and Tanya asked the kid to lead him to this house as they wanted to meet his parents. Mikes and Tanya were then taken to a nearby village by the kid where they saw that his parents were facing many problems to sell mangoes as there were not means of transport other than bullock carts. Those bullock carts were not meant for transportation of goods from the village to nearby city.

Mikes and Tanya realized that had not asked the small kid's name. They then came to know that the kid's name was “Shubham”. Mikes being a wealthy person decided to use his wealth for a good cause and helped Shubham's family buy a small jeep which would help them transport goods to the nearby city. Mikes also helped Shubham and his small sister by contributing financially for their education and decided to help them till they would stand on their own legs and earn something. By this time 3 days had passed and Mikes and Tanya were not able to leave the village as they had developed some kind of emotional bonding with Shubham's family.

But they had their job commitments too and because of that they had to bid goodbye to Shubham and his family. After returning back and continuing their respective corporate jobs Mikes and Tanya were still not able to forget the experience they had in their mini vacation. They also narrated this to their parents who were proud of their children.

Mikes and Tanya then decided that they would visit Shubham every 2 months and see his progress. After some time Mikes and Tanya had left their job and thinking about many more children like Shubham they created an NGO for the betterment of children who were unable to get basic education and girls who were denied the basic right to education just because people thought they were not capable of doing anything. Over the years Shubham after completing his graduation and his graduation also helped Mikes and Tanya with their social cause. Shubham also became a famous blogger and a blog in which he mentioned about girl child education by explaining the quote of William Goodwill “I think women are foolish to pretend they are equal to men, they are far superior and always have been” in a great way.

After that Shubham thanked Mikes and Tanya for how they helped him and his family to have a better future and teaching everyone has the potential to do something great. It's just the fire that's to be ignited...

Tanya and Mikes were thankful of their parents who arranged a trip to a nearby hill station whose motive was just to relax but it turned out to be a fight towards a social cause.....

The End

At the end I just want to say that there are many Shubhams that exist in all round the globe its just that people ignore them. People don't understand it's the basic education that can change a person's life and make it better. Its said that gift a child with a toy he will thank you for a period of a week or so but gift a child with education and he will thank you for your whole life and will also be inspired to help other children in need.

Its us who can visualize or turn how people around us will be in the future.

(Characters are from Permanent roommates)

Mikes-A corporate employee

Tanya-Mikes's wife who is also a corporate employee

Purshotam-Driver

# VESIT Diaries

-Aishwarya Sahoo & Yash Keskar

**S**hridhar Lokanathan is a VESIT alumnus of the Batch of 2015 from the Department of Instrumentation. He currently is the President and Founder of the NGO “WeCHANGE” which was his brainchild and which he set up along with fellow VESITians. The NGO aims at providing quality education to underprivileged and economically backward students in Mumbai and Thane. His immense contribution towards the development of the society is a great source of inspiration for the students of VESIT. He works as an engineer with Thyssenkrupp Industrial Solutions India Pvt. Ltd. He lives in Thane with his parents and grandmother.

Let's take a look at the life of this gentleman who took up this work along with the conventional 9 to 5 job and mustered the courage to accomplish something extraordinary.

## Q1: Please share something about your experiences in the college, particularly with SORT.?

I was never a part of the SoRT council. But during the SoRT week, the SoRT in-charge would require help from a lot of people, so I would always try my best to work from outside. I always had a passion to do something for the society. But I wanted to do things on my own terms and wanted to help those sections who had been neglected previously.

## Q2: Tell us how did the idea of WeCHANGE turn into a reality?

Once, one of my juniors, Sampada and I were discussing hypothetically about what our NGO would have as an agenda. After discussing things out, I was reminded of this one line of Swami Vivekanand-“The right time to start anything is now”. That line shook me up and made me wonder “why was I not doing anything immediately?”. There were bound to be many challenges and difficulties but the least I could do was give this idea a shot. That was when we coined the term - weCHANGE - Care, Help, Acknowledge, Nurture, Grow and Enlighten. Two people from VESIT along with me visited the Siddhivinayak temple right after our exams on December 17, 2014, and we kept our thinking tanks active on the shore. We thought about doing something about education because we knew the lack of education was the root cause of all problems, just seconding lack of awareness. We all were college students, so we didn't have monetary strength, that's why in the given time, the most we could do was in the field of education.



**Shridhar Lokanathan**

The very next day, I happened to meet another junior and told him that I wanted to contribute in the field of education. He introduced me to a school in Thane which might need help from the society for the upliftment of its students. I visited the school and asked them what way he wanted us to help them. He told me that the school would get funds but didn't have any volunteers. That clicked into place—we could go there after the college hours to teach the students. I started with English. I was shocked to learn that a seventh standard student couldn't recite the alphabet properly. When we saw that this was the state of affairs, we knew the actual condition of the school would be poor. Our initial goal was to manage these students who were notorious and from a very poor family background, having a lot of issues as their parents weren't willing to spend money on their education. That's when it dawned upon us, the idea of using visuals for their education and the process of learning; we started using models, videos, illustrations to make it interesting for the students. We used to take our laptops because the school didn't have PCs. The kids were really intrigued when they saw computers for the first time, so it worked really well for us. We did this from December 2014 to 2016. After working for a year, we were in a dilemma, whether to register ourselves as an official NGO or not. Without the official registration, we wouldn't be able to raise funds. However, at the same time once you register - you've a lot of administration work, and an office became a prerequisite. But finally we got ourselves registered in February 2016.

After one and a half month, when we reviewed our work, we realized whatever we had done was undoubtedly good but was just the first level with short-term impact. What we wanted was a self-sustainable solution. In the school, we were helping the students, but the problem was the students would pay their undivided attention only till the time we were with them. That was when we started working towards larger goals like preparing their curriculum, working on their intrinsic values, underlying topics like the importance of education, and building a trust factor with them. We took various projects among which one of them was Shiksha—where we don't just work on students' curriculum but also on the extra-curricular activities, along with proper counseling, and the other aspects of complete education. The school was only till seventh grade. We couldn't give up on the students then. We decided that we would keep in touch with them and also sponsor their further schooling. Before sponsoring their education, we would check their background so that the opportunity doesn't go to a non-deserving candidate.

Another aspect is that the members of the helping committee should also be motivated so that they don't fall prey to some emotional disturbances after visiting places. So we conduct motivational sessions for all the members as well. We also connected our NGO to Kshamta—a girls' remand home, Home Revise (similar to Navneet) which provides us with audio video teaching

modules as per the Board syllabus and Ekta Niradhar Sangh, Kamshet which works for orphans above the age of 18. The Constitution of India does not speak for orphans above 18, so right after they turn 18, they are thrown out from orphanages without any proper exposure to the outside world. This year, we had a one-day fest named Mela along with several art workshops. We had kids who made artifacts and handicrafts on their own, and we made them sell those in order to develop a sense of responsibility and ownership among them along with the process of enjoying themselves in the fest. The money which was raised during this was used in the kids' education. Mela had an event called KridaYoga which was a combination of Yoga and games. It also had a room where grooming sessions were conducted, there were dance sessions, workshops, selfie booths, etc. After the fest was over, the kids were handed a drawing book, pencils, paints. This gesture from our side was met with a warm response by the parents who at one point of time were skeptical about leaving their kids alone outside. This built a bridge of trust between us and the kids' parents. Once, we took some students with us to the seashore at Marine Lines but were startled by the fact that they didn't even know what a sea was. They had hardly walked out of their shanties and slums to visit places and see the world. It's wonderful how something that might be an everyday reality for us may bring smiles on the faces of someone so young. We also started conducting weekly Yoga lectures in the schools affiliated with our NGO.

VESIT played an important role in this because this was the place where it all started; a huge chunk of members out of 200 are from VESIT and the teachers also helped us through different facets. People have found happiness in bringing a positive change in others' lives. Bringing smiles on the kids' face, being their role-models as they always look up to you, being a helping hand in their overall development—this is how we've learned to experience happiness. Our strong point is that other NGOs may have money, but we have people where 90% are youth who embrace every challenge with a fighting spirit. We burn our fingers sometimes too as some of our collaborations have really been bitter but we learn from such incidents and move on.

## Q3: How do you manage all these social activities along with your personal life?

That's the real challenge. Initially, I used to take a lot of things upon me. After the 9 to 5 routine, I would do new things and even at weekends, I would work for different activities. But since the demand was ever-increasing, this was not going to be enough. So what we did first was to involve people and share responsibilities between us. Being in social work means giving commitment selflessly, without thinking about money. These things have to come from inside, they cannot be forced onto one. So what we started to do was have leaders in different groups. Leadership would bring them motivation after any event conducted by them was successful. Now we have made this a structured thing—so now the NGO can work even without me. For anything to be successful, the institute should be organized and secondly, there should be passion. After working daily from 9 to 5 with some text documents, it doesn't give me the sense of satisfaction, unlike my social activ-

ities. What exactly does it contribute to the people of my own country? But at the same time when I meet someone from 6 to 10 who tells me stories of their social work, it brings me incomparable happiness, because somewhere, I know that Abdul Kalam's dream of 2020 is getting fulfilled. We now have more youth who are contributing towards our nation. The 6 to 10 time may be spent out of the home but is the real stress-buster for me. And frankly, in this line, I've also seen miracles happening. We believe that when you do good work, and when you have good intentions the universe will act in your favor and everything good happens. Once during my college life, I was traveling by train when I met a person who overheard my conversation on phone and asked me about it. Now, he is working with me for the welfare of the society. Another good example was that once in a school, where a small girl from my society studied, they had a teacher who said asked them to not bring chocolates or gifts on birthdays. Instead, they would celebrate it in a social way. Around the same time, we had a collection drive going on which was widely publicized on different social media. One of our member posted this on the society group and the girl's mother got to know about it. They helped us in the drive and also donated funds for weCHANGE. Now, when this girl went to school after vacation, and the teacher asked her why she didn't bring chocolates and she came to know that the girl had helped our organization. It is indeed praiseworthy and marvelous how even two-year olds are helping us; this is the reason why we never leave any opportunity to make it easier for a person to reach us. Sampada, our deputy, for example, whenever finds anyone spitting on the road or throwing garbage—always tries to make them understand why it's important to keep the environment clean. This is how we always try to get into youth's skin. Today's youth have this sensitivity for working towards the society which is really good and is helping us in the process of spreading awareness.

**Q4: What are the changes in you as a person after committing your life for social activities?**

The biggest change would be that I have become more responsible as a person. Also, there was a time when we didn't have funds. We stopped eating outside and going out for movies to save every single paisa. So financially also, we became more responsible of social work is that if you give more, you get more. You learn to sacrifice. Also, all these little things bring changes in your corporate life too. You become more humble and understanding. So this is how not just me but all the members in our NGO have changed as individuals.

**Q5: How do you get associated with an NGO or open your own NGO? What are the things we should keep in mind?**

There was this girl in VESIT's IT department named Nidhi who has now started her own NGO based on IT assistance and an online platform for other NGOs to sell their products. Grishma, another member of our NGO did MBA after engineering and is developing a business model for all the social entrepreneurs. Starting your own NGO is a perfectly good idea but you should also take it forward because you know people would rely on you, and so, you should have a sense of responsibility towards them. Social work is not an individual's cup of tea, so the person should have a very good group of people who are ready to support him/her. The first thing is to make a very strong team. For a year or two, do all your homework, and later get yourself registered officially if you want. Those who want to join existing NGOs should check the NGO's background, check if there's corruption inside the NGO or if they're commercializing the entire thing. Your approach towards everything should be clear so that the people for whom you're working become self-sustainable. And obviously, you should have the passion to work for an NGO who do the work at the ground level.

**Q6: How to get financial and technological funds?**

That is a tricky thing to do. You never approach people by asking them to give a lump sum to donate. You need to realize first that small contributions also make a huge difference that every drop in the ocean counts. You should try to get into the skin of the person, psychoanalyze them and make them understand how the money amount though small, is still beneficial and brings happiness to so many people belonging to backward background. Don't have very high aims initially, because it always begins with such little things.

Talking about technological aspects, the first thing you can do is use your own engineering skills for the betterment of society. Use whatever you've learnt in your four years for social work. For example, IT engineers can provide IT support. Another important aspect is the legal aspect. Whenever you get yourself registered, please try to understand which act you're getting your NGO registered under, because some of the acts are very old. But as a citizen of this country, you should always abide by these laws.

**Q7: Many children from the poor economic background might be differently abled and special. What does your NGO do for them?**

The kids from the slum may look normal on the outside, but it's very difficult to get under their skin. We have dealt with a girl who was sexually harassed many times. A lady in our group, who could easily read faces analyzed that the girl was going through some major social turmoil. We also met a boy during our counseling in Kamshek where we found that he had hallucinations. The first step in your line of action should be that you try to understand their pain and fears by talking and listening to them. Many-a-times, they would require medical tests, a psychiatrist and a counselor. We have also worked with a mentally challenged boy named Vignesh who used to make malas. What he made was really good, so we affiliated with SoRT VESIT to make them sell those. The students bought 50 malas, and that is how the SoRT department also helped us. However, Vignesh didn't keep the money for himself, his mother gave it to us and told us to use it for a good cause. The fact that people from all kinds of backgrounds are helping us tide through everything brings us utmost satisfaction. The key is to not treat the specially-abled people differently. Inclusiveness only can help and uplift them.

**Q8: Any message for the VESIT students?**

First of all, I would say that VESIT is full of opportunities—we have arts, social work, technology, everything. So make use of it in some social work. In the corporate world too, only 10% to 15% of your technical knowledge matters. What really matters is whether you are a good human being. Our institution gives us all the support to compete in the big world outside; make use of it. Do good for others, and trust me, you'll get more in return.