



# BITSAA NCR-Delhi 2017



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## Restoring Old Glory of BIT Sindri

Arunaditya Sahay

### Background

BIT's logo, which was adopted by the first Director, Deshpande, has inscription "Niyatam Kuru Karma Tvam" (Bhagwat Geeta Chapter 3: Verse 8). It means perform your prescribed duty." In fact, our logo was great motivator for us all. Deshpande himself practiced "Niyatam Kuru Karma Tvam" every moment of his life, more so as the Director of BIT, Sindri. This was the reason why BIT, which was established in 1949 shot up to glory and became one of the pioneering engineering institute of the country. Students passing out from the first batch itself were very sought after. I had joined the institute leaving the option of IIT, Kharagpur and so did quite a few of our batch mate. IIT, Kharagpur, though established 2 years later in the year 1951 still did not have many required labs. Students from there used to come to our institute for some of their lab work. One such lab visited by not only IIT, Kharagpur, the first IIT to have come up, but also some other institutions was Atkinson High Tension Lab.

### Growth & decline

BIT grew from height to greater heights continuously under the leadership of Deshpande. Starting with Mechanical and Electrical Engineering branches, it went on adding civil, Metallurgy, Production, Chemical, and Tele Communications branches during his regime that lasted till early 1961 when we were about to complete our 3rd year. Shock wave had gone down our spines thinking what will be our future. Dr. J.P. Choudhary, Head of mechanical Engineering, had taken over from him but whole BIT community felt something missing. Dr. Choudhary could not fill the void left by the earlier Director. The decline had started which continued for long. The alumni felt restless but could do nothing. Some bold steps taken by the alumni to restore BIT's old glory did not bear any fruit as the incumbent Director felt threatened and the state bureaucrats did not want to loose their grip on the Institution.

### Fresh Air & Thought

With the coming in of Prof. (Dr.) D.K. Singh, who is an alumni of 1984 batch as the new Director and fresh push by alumni from all over the world, a ray of hope has again emerged for restoring the old glory of the institute. True, none can replace Deshpande and his vision but united we can certainly make some contribution. He used to tell, "one has to grow up in an organization - from engineer to manager to leader to developer of leaders'. Though we were studying engineering, he always advised us, "you people are nation builders". No doubt, the present leader of the Institute has to arrange for the best education, research and consultancy but he has also to go beyond in terms of creating thought leaders in respective fields of study. Apart from imparting education, we require BIT to do research that benefits the industry and the nation in the long term. Not only it needs to induct good people into BIT but take up consultancy work to solve industry problems. Both student and faculty

need to learn techniques to get on with organized teams and learn to look at things in a larger, organizational perspective in the 5 year degree program and beyond at master and doctoral levels.

## The Actions to be Taken

The new leadership in BIT needs to look at the governance structure at first. The board should constitute of luminaries in engineering and technology which must include at least one or two alumni of eminence who can contribute to the agenda of 'restoration of old glory.' The state science and technology department, whose objective needs be to assist BIT in making it one of the leading institutes of the country and later worldwide, should be at arm's length providing support rather than interfering in day to day activity. The Board, in line with the recent cabinet decision, should be empowered to appoint and remove Director who should be the bonafide leader of the institute and an active member of the board. The board constitution should be such that apart from giving guidance in engineering and technology, it should also provide expertise in general management, finance and administration.

The structure of the organization needs to be changed to provide authority which is always coupled with responsibility for all functions that BIT needs to undertake. The Director should not be left at the mercy of various state government departments like PWD and Health departments. The internal structure and delegation needs to be revisited. Faculty needs to be taken out of the syndrome that 'if I spend on the development of my department (even though within the budget), enquiry may be initiated against me. The internal confidence building measures are a must. An environment of trust and confidence needs to be built.

Having set right the governance and the structure, the institute needs to revisit its Vision, Mission and Goals, which, to me, appears perfunctory. I have myself conducted Vision, Mission Values and Goals exercise both in companies and academic institutions and can help BIT in revisiting the same. Whereas Vision and Mission gives directions, the goals need to be specific. In this exercise all stakeholders need to participate and once finalized everyone must own and act in line with the stated Vision, Mission, Values and Goals,

Once the dreams of BIT are explicitly known to all, the means to achieve it needs to be worked out. In recent past, a report, as sought by the S & T department of the government was sent on November 26, 2016 in which BIT had requested for infrastructure development as well as more manpower. The students' count had gone up from 1,442 in 2000-2001 to 3,344 in that year (2016), but the infrastructure remained the same — be it buildings, classrooms, labs or hostels. Faculty members, technical staff and grade III staff, too, had remained same. These initiatives, at best, can be said short term plans. What is needed is a long term plan which charts the way for achieving the dreams to be stated in Vision and Mission. Walt Disney rightly said, "If you can dream it, you can do it."

Let me come to hardware side of the actions. Despite large 162 ha campus, the facilities are inadequate. The buildings, when I visited, were in dilapidated condition. Maintenance is totally inadequate. Algae and small plants growing in the buildings, leakages in the toilets, taps and flushes not working were common in most of the buildings. In some of the labs and workshops, I observed some of the equipments to be the same what we had used during our study during 1958-62. The existing 26 hostels can only accommodate around 2,000

students. Many more hostels (five for boys and two for girls — with 300 beds each projected) are needed. Further, new buildings with latest facilities are required for new departments. These requirements need to be fulfilled by going vertical rather than expanding on the ground and destroying ecology. There is crying requirement for additional facilities and upgrading of the existing facilities for which funds are required. Release of funds alone will not solve the problem. Knowledge of latest equipments and instruments are required. Special equipments are required for M.Tech and Ph.D work. Even in this area, alumni could be of great help.

I recall Saharpura, Goshala and FCI very well. We were so well connected with this community environment. No institute exists in vacuum. The institute affects the surroundings and the surroundings affect the institute. We had lot of cultural and sports ties with the community. The same needs to be rebuilt to create a healthy environment in which education, research and consultancy can prosper. The teaching and research needs to go beyond classrooms into factories and community. There could be many more things stated but the space is limited, so I will stop here making my end comment as 'there is urgent need for making a new dream and then making the dream come true'.

