

Freshman Year – A Kaleidoscopic Transition into Adulthood

The sky was a dome of endless blue, fading to black. Clouds spread across a large expanse, coughing out water droplets in a veritable deluge. We were left drenched; our umbrellas had gotten flipped inside out. With sodden clothes, we reached the hostel, where my parents helped me drag and drop my luggage into my homely little room. In the next few months, I learned that unforeseen downpours are common in Manipal, and it is most prudent to keep sturdy umbrellas on hand.



Courtesy: The Photography Club, Manipal

After unpacking, an emotional farewell with my parents inevitably took place. Subsequently, my roommate arrived, and I heaved a sigh of relief at the chance to entertain companionship in an intimidating new place. We explored campus that day, visiting places like the Kamath Book Store (to buy

our second-hand books), the food court, and KC (a regular haunt for students when it existed, with multi-purpose shops, a canteen, and impromptu performances galore).

On our first day, we were nervous wrecks, setting an alarm for five in the morning. Having solely donned school-uniforms in recent memory, we had no idea what appropriate attire would entail here. Feeling overtly self-conscious, we wobbled our way over to NLH, the New Lecture Hall, where all first year classes were, and are held.



Courtesy: The Photography Club, Manipal

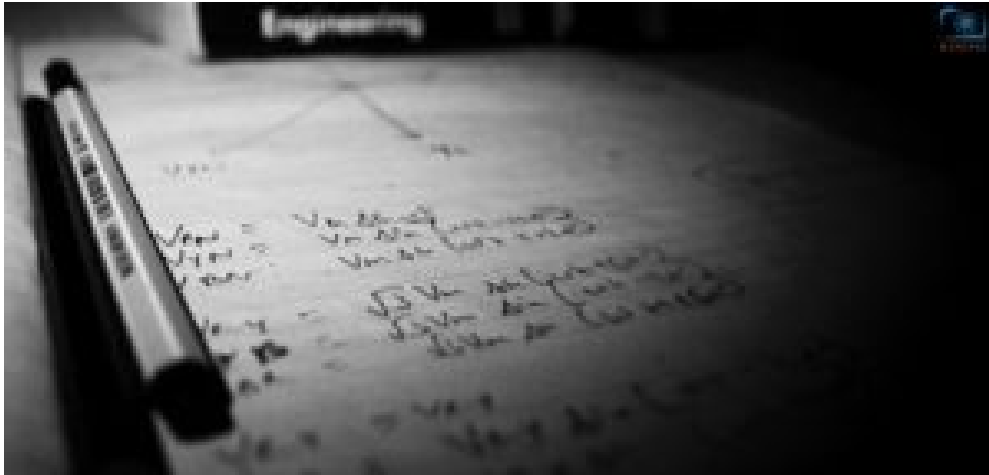
After having walked into three classrooms (none of which were mine), I finally made my way into the one which was. The girls had instinctively gathered into two rows in a class of roughly ninety students. We introduced ourselves, and let the chatty ones take the lead in our newly found friendships. The professors experimented with icebreakers, asking us where we were from and where we wanted to be, and about our goals and aspirations. All in all, it was quite uneventful, and I was glad I made it back to my room in one piece.

The first memorable experience that I had in first year was

TechTatva, the technical fest of the college where, for four days, the college was positively buzzing with activity. The moment classes ended, students would stream out, tags swinging about their necks, and go about their duties. A cornucopia of events took place in every nook and corner of campus, with miniature racing tracks on the way to NLH, food stalls selling gola, rolls, sweet corn, and an abundance of info desks at KC. First year volunteers would swarm around, accosting anything with two legs to participate in their events.

Revels, MIT's cultural fest, took place in the 'even' semester. This time around, students were taken up with double the enthusiasm, music or dance performances and street plays would spring up in front of IC, LA (Library Auditorium), or the Quadrangle. Celebrities ranging from magicians, comedians to musicians visited the college to add to the glamour.

As the year went on, my roommate and I progressed from waking up at five in the morning to waking up ten minutes before classes, from attending all classes religiously to calculating how many classes we could miss while retaining the seventy five percent par, and from doing our laundry on time to procrastinating till it was soaked in water for a week. Despite the languor, we were kept on our toes due to recurring assignments, sessional tests, and club work. I have learned that it is of utmost importance to join technical or non-technical clubs in college. Besides honing your skills in your field of interest and giving you a sense of responsibility, it becomes a means of interacting with seniors, whom you can learn the tricks of the trade from.



Courtesy: The Photography Club, Manipal

Before the academic exertion reaches its peak, there are a considerable number of places in and around Manipal that ought to be visited. The Manipal Lake is suitable for a pleasurable walk early in the mornings, End Point is good for a game of dodgeball and there are numerous, beautiful beaches where you can witness dusk rapidly falling over the seas.

Initially, you might feel lonely in the crowd, as if you do not belong. You might feel the lack of an agreeable niche that you could potentially settle into. I'd say, give it time. Staying away from home will afford you overwhelming freedom, you will have to look out for yourself, and make decisions based on what you think is right. Manipal is a place that offers innumerable opportunities that need to be seized, a place where creativity flows with passion, and where dreams come true. It builds people and eventually becomes a part of them, a part that everyone nourishes. It is up to you to bear the torch as you move forthwith.