

# A Medley of Memories—The Manipal Experience

A year ago, as I stepped across the threshold of high school and into the daunting world of college, I remember feeling nervous, yet excited for the life that lay ahead. Most of all, I was just relieved that the constant worry and sleepless nights caused due to the 12th entrance exams were finally over. None of my cousins or relatives had ever studied in Manipal so it was unfamiliar territory for me. My family was hesitant to send me away to a different state for college but I decided to take a leap of faith and step out of my comfort zone. After a tearful farewell with my parents, I reluctantly walked back to my hostel, anxious about the new journey I was about to begin. I was so focused on what I was leaving behind that I did not anticipate all the new experiences and situations I would encounter.

The first week went by in a blur—attending orientations about our branch and eagerly exploring the sprawling campus. The food courts had surprisingly better quality food than what I expected in any engineering college and the Student Plaza was the perfect example of the melting pot of cultures that Manipal was known for. Taking long walks till the VGT grounds with the cool breeze on my face became my respite after a long and tiring day.



The New Lecture Hall and Innovation Centre in MIT, Manipal

I had taken a triple sharing room in Block 1 which was the oldest block and known for being true to the fabled hostel life. I was initially worried about the common bathroom which our entire floor shared but the cleaning staff made sure to clean it properly thrice a day. Living in a hostel also made me realise the value of something as simple as doing your laundry. Simple tasks like waking up for a class on time and remembering to punch in our fingerprint before our in-time make up some of the fondest memories that I share with my hostel friends.

Despite the initial awkwardness with my roommates and the people in my class, I started getting more and more comfortable with them. It may seem like a daunting task to find your place in college, but one should remember that we are all in the same boat. Somewhere between sharing food, playing card games, random midnight jamming sessions, and even pulling all-nighters a day before the exams to complete the vast syllabus; our group of friends became inseparable. There were regular pangs of homesickness once classes began but they soon became more of a bittersweet ache, as we looked forward to going back home at the end of the semester.



The panoramic view from End Point, a popular tourist attraction in Manipal

For students who come from bustling metropolitan cities, the peace and tranquillity of Manipal make it seem like a world of its own. The clear blue skies and sunsets which paint the heavens in a kaleidoscope of colours, all make you want to kick back and chill.

There is no dearth of variety when it comes to student clubs and projects—both technical and non-technical. Joining one provides ample opportunities of pursuing what you love, and in the process, getting to know the seniors and shouldering responsibilities.



The Yellow Diary performing at Revels'20. (Image credits: Rajat Shenoy)

The entire college is humming with energy and enthusiasm as the campus comes alive with a flurry of activities before and during the fest. It's an emotion which can only be felt rather than described. The true experience of what Manipal is like comes to the forefront during two college fests—Techtatva in the odd semester and Revels, the cultural fest, in the even semester. It will be an unforgettable and amazing experience for freshers. You will feel the pulse of what Manipal stands for during those four magical days and nights. Since during the days of the fests, only morning classes will be held, many of you will be tempted to grab the opportunity to book your tickets to go back home. Pro tip—don't do so, as you wouldn't want to miss the eclectic vibe of the college during this time. There will be innumerable opportunities to showcase and nurture your talents like open mic nights, and various other competitions during the fests and workshops organized by individual clubs throughout the semester.

As I look back after a year, I am grateful for the amazing experiences which have truly shaped me as a person. First-year seems like a blur of adjusting to college life with assignments, labs, exams, fests, parties blending seamlessly one after the other. I remember entering college nervous yet brimming with anticipation for the journey I was about to experience and ending my first year as a more independent, responsible and hopefully wiser person. My first year in Manipal was an experience like no other. Countless memories were made which I will forever hold close to my heart and remember fondly for years to come.

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