

Social Entrepreneurship–Enactus Manipal

The MIT Post was in conversation with *Nikhil Kumar*, a third-year MIT student who is the President of the Manipal Chapter of Enactus and *Pratiksha Das*, the Joint Secretary of Enactus.

Could you tell us a bit about your club?

Enactus is an international organisation and is present on almost every campus. It focuses mainly on social entrepreneurship, i.e., business ideas having a powerful social impact. I'll make it simpler—let us take an example of a footwear company that uses renewable plastic to make soles of the said footwear, hence having a strong social impact. The success of this company will not be evaluated based on the number of products sold but on the amount of renewable plastic used to make the products.

How should one prepare to join Enactus?

To join Enactus, one needs to have an innovative mindset, a passion for entrepreneurship, and a will to make a social impact. Other than that, various innate skills like those concerning logical reasoning and analytical prowess are required; one just needs to build upon them. Rest can be acquired while being a part of this club itself.

How has your experience in the club been so far?

As Enactus has just opened one of its chapters in MIT, I do not have much to say about it. I will, instead, focus on my experience in social entrepreneurship in general. When I was in my second year of college, the second wave of covid took on the entire country by storm and lockdown was imposed. During

that period, I was a part of a social initiative where I worked on supplying oxygen cylinders to the needy. I also started a social drive called Meally, which involved collecting a month's ration and providing food to the daily wage labourers, who had lost their jobs owing to the pandemic. Having come from a defence background, I have always been taught to give back to society, and as we all know, engineers are creative individuals. Hence, it would be great to use our innovative mindset to do something for the people.

I know that going specifically into social entrepreneurship while in college will not stand good with many students because it does not result in instant gratification. However, it will actually prove to be beneficial in the long run as it helps improve entrepreneurship skills while creating a social impact, which will persist for a long time.

What is your position on the board?

I am working in the PR team while he, the other interviewee, is the co-founder and President of the club. We are still figuring out the different positions, but the divisions would mostly be like any other club.

What kind of events are you planning to organise?

As of now, the Enactus Global body is planning two international events. In India, these events will be handled by the Enactus India body. Last year, the event was called "Race for the Oceans", wherein one had to present an idea to solve the problems of aquatic life depletion, ocean pollution, or any other similar concepts. We are still waiting for the topic of this year. Usually, Enactus follows the 17 SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals, so depending on that, we will formulate our business model and present it in the international championship that happens every year.

How is Enactus different from other clubs?

In Enactus, your work directly affects the people involved. I will give you an example: the Enactus SRCC body went in and around Delhi to identify the people who made copper utensils. Due to the pandemic, the businesses of these individuals had been drastically affected. Enactus helped them collaborate with and sell their utensils to ITCs, Taj and other premium hotels. Within a year, they got revenue of over twenty-two lakhs, which solely went to the local workers. Our sole mission is to help others, and we are looking for people with a similar mindset.

Even in Manipal, we have seen how all shops and the entire economy collapses as soon as students leave, due to a variety of reasons. We aim to have a sustainable business model running that would ensure that irrespective of whether there are students in Manipal or not, the businesses will continue functioning.

We are looking forward to getting to know people who actually want to make a difference and want to learn how entrepreneurship works. There is a lot of hype about entrepreneurship and how it works, but people do not really understand how to go about it. We are looking to recruit people who believe in building something and like working in a team. The change that we are going to make will really make an impact.

Are you looking for any prior experience in the new applicants?

A lot of it is about how people talk during the interview, just like any other club recruitment that happens in Manipal. We have a slight addition to our recruitment process, where we look at what is going on in the back of people's minds when we have the recruitment interview, apart from an individual written round.

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