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Searching for the quintessential India

IIT-Gn's 10-day programme, India Ki Khoj, is an effort to present India in a new light

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India is a land that can be explored in ways uncountable. A land that has intrigued the West with its inherent culture and values, heritage and tradition. Twenty students of IIT Gandhinagar and Caltech University are on one such expedition. The students are participating in 'India-Ki-Khoj: In Search of Society, Culture, Economy, Science, Technology and Beyond' — a unique 10-day course at IIT-Gn.

The programme, conceptualised by professors Rita Kothari and Jaison Manjaly, is spread over 10 days with a host of reputed writers, authors and entrepreneurs as resource persons. The course aims at providing overseas students a reflection into the past, present and future of Ahmedabad through academic lectures and field visits. On day one, historian Sir Howard Spodek, author Suchitra Sheth and classical vocalist Viraj Amar took lectures.

On Friday, the participants learnt a thing or two about advertising and branding from Santosh Desai, CEO of Future Brands, who is also a writer, columnist, advertising expert and brand consultant. Desai's sessions on 'Brand India: Culture and Market in India Today' and 'India Post Liberalisation: Market, Class and Identity', were an insight into consumer mindsets of the past and the present. The talk was supported by famous advertisements like Hamara Bajaj and the first Pepsi ad launched in the country. Providing a clear picture of how India is projecting itself as Brand India, Desai said, "It has a mainstream impression of a country being seen as a marketable product. It is a substitute for 'India's image'."

The programme continues till December 21 with interesting sessions with Sandeep Pandey, Suguna Ramanathan, Sadiq Noor Pathan, Harmony Singaporita and Anand Patwardhan. There is also a performance by artists Mazhar Mutwa and group from Kutch on December 18.



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