

IIT Gandhinagar stresses on travelling, building toys so that students gain more practical knowledge

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After travelling across the country for six weeks, a group of students from the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar

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(IIT-GN) shared their experiences at the campus recently. The group of 16 students formed six groups to cover the length and breadth of the country through the “Explorer’s Fellowship” of IIT-GN.

The fellowship, started this year, aims to expose the students to the country’s diversity so that they can understand the its traditions and ground realities, learn from them and become better decision makers. The fellowship amount goes up to Rs 50000 per student. IIT-GN faculty and dean of students Prof Jaison Manjaly said, “The fellowship will enable students to see, experience and connect to different cultures, people and geographic patterns of the country.”

One of the students who traveled through the fellowship said, “We travelled for 6 weeks in more than 10 states. From an engineer’s perspective we saw many problems that can be solved through simple ways. Some of the issues like road safety, delay in railways, landslides, lack of sustainable bridges, roads and architecture grabbed out attention.”

IIT-GN is known for coming up with unique initiatives, that takes it from being a premiere institute to a more accessible one, especially for the children. For instance, the workshop called 'Toys from Trash' was conducted to reinforce the knowledge of science and mathematics among school students.



A traditional charkha that spins electric energy and flutes made of straws were some of the toys that 200 school students fascinated upon. The workshop was conducted by Manish Jain, an IIT Kanpur graduate who is dedicated to popularizing science and mathematics in schools. He explained the basic principles of science through toys which were made from everyday items such as cycle tubes, spokes, magnets, pens, drinking straws, compact disc etc. The hand-made toys, explained concepts of gravitation, levitation, centrifugal and centripetal forces, Waves, Magnetism, electricity, lattice structures, mathematical models etc.



Students at the workshop.

Faculty at IIT-GN Prof Shivkumar Jolad who was one of the coordinators of the workshop said, “The issue in the teaching methods in schools is that most of the students are taught mathematical equations but how these equations work, or what do they look like are not demonstrated to them with practical methods.”

He added, “It is a long term goal that we are aiming at. If the country needs good researchers in science and technology, we need to strengthen the basic understanding of science among the school students through such innovative concept teaching methods.”