2026 Edition

NEWSLETTER

Vox Populi

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Let's Talk Sex

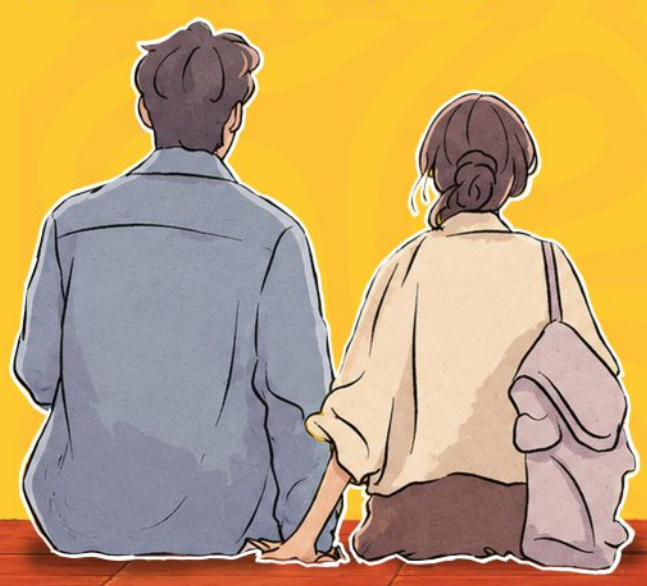
Breaking down what consent really means in real situations

It's 2 AM after a fest night. Two people are laughing, talking, maybe flirting. One thinks the moment is right; the other isn't sure. On college campuses, especially during late-night hangouts, end tenure parties, and high-energy fests, the line between comfort, curiosity, and pressure often blurs. In moments like these, assumptions quietly step in where communication should be.

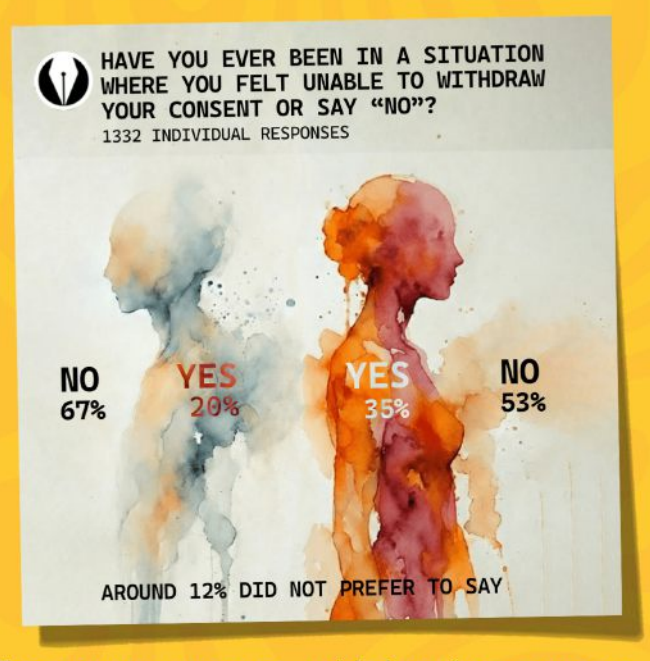
Consent isn't just about avoiding a "wrong move." It's about whether an interaction is built on trust, respect, and mutual clarity.

Our campus-wide anonymous survey drew 1,404 responses. A large majority identified as male (76%), about one in five as female (22%), and a small share chose other identities. In this small excerpt from our article, we present our findings with an objective lens, focusing on awareness levels, perceptions, and experiences rather than rushing to definitive conclusions.

Sexual consent is a clear, explicit, and voluntary agreement between all parties to engage in a specific sexual activity. For consent to be valid, every person involved must have the capacity to consent, must be fully informed about what the activity involves, and must give their agreement freely, without any form of pressure, fear, or manipulation.



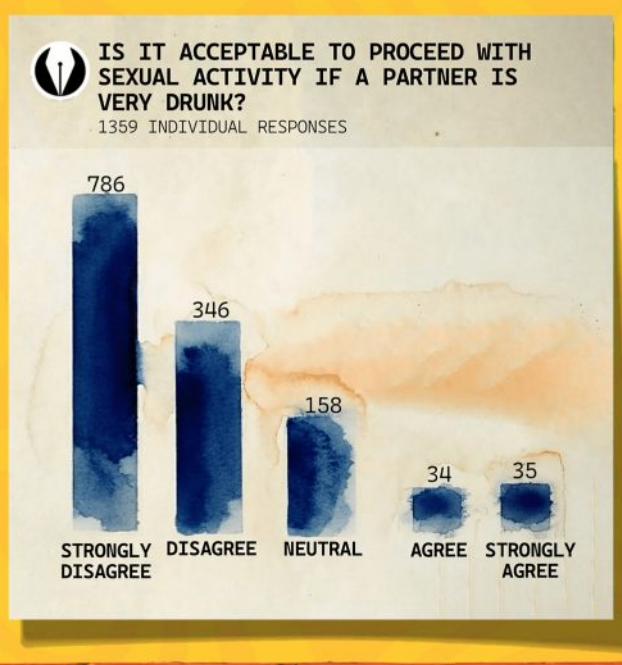
While about one in five male respondents (20.4%) reported being in situations where they felt unable to withdraw consent or say "no," this figure rises sharply among women, with over one in three female respondents (34.9%) reporting the same experience.



For many women, withdrawing consent is weighed against fears of escalation, judgment, or being blamed for "leading someone on." When one group has to calculate the cost of saying no more than another, consent stops being just a personal choice and becomes a structural problem.

Alcohol and Consent: When Capacity is Compromised

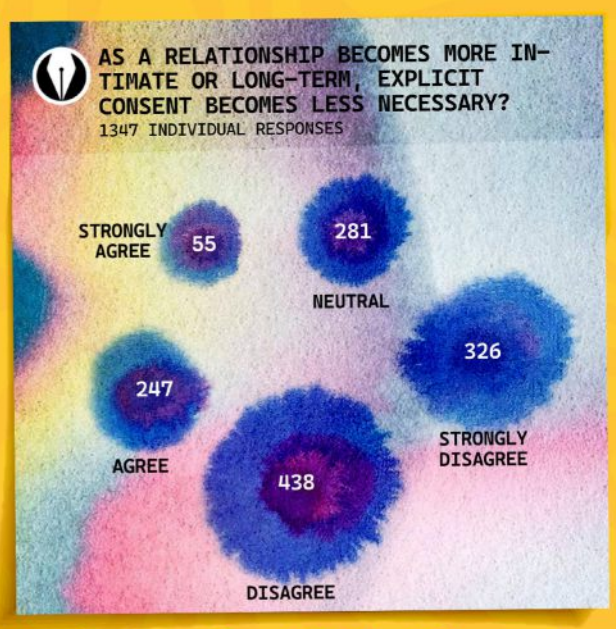
Alcohol impairs judgment, awareness, and the ability to communicate boundaries, making any consent given under such conditions neither informed nor reliable. Even if consent was given earlier, intoxication can reduce a person's capacity to continue consenting.





Even though a majority (66.5%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea that it is acceptable to persuade a partner after they have said "no", 12.4% agreed or strongly agreed, and 19.8% remained neutral, suggesting that a minority still view persuasion as acceptable or are uncertain about how firm a "no" must be.

Similarly, when asked whether explicit consent becomes less necessary in long-term or intimate relationships, 57.5% disagreed, reinforcing that consent remains essential regardless of relationship status. Yet the presence of agreement and neutrality indicates that assumptions persist particularly in familiar settings.



Understanding Digital Consent

In today's world, where relationships, conversations, and intimacy often unfold through screens, digital consent is just as important as physical consent. Digital consent refers to a person's clear, voluntary, and informed ability to share, capture, store, or distribute any form of personal or intimate content online. As technology becomes deeply embedded in our relationships, respecting digital boundaries is essential for safety, dignity, and trust online.

Conclusion

Building a culture of consent means asking instead of assuming, stopping instead of persuading, and respecting "no" in every form. It means creating environments where changing one's mind is safe, expected, and respected.



Quiz ki KAHANI

The semester begins. Schedules are dispersed, timetables are screenshotted. There's a rising sense of responsibility. With some optimism, you ask around for reference books, perhaps make some use of your P.K. Kelkar library access, maybe buy some hefty tomes off of Amazon. You're supposed to study this time. And study you will with pride, you're just a few months past JEE, no?

You pack your bags (or your scattered attention span if you're one of those that doesn't take bags) and march to your first class. You've never paid more attention to quiz dates, ATTENDANCE CRITERIA and exam weightages... oh no.

Teaching has begun. Your attention slips in and out of the classroom. Is it really your fault that your wingies all arrived yesterday? Such droopy eyelids.. and such winding talk. In due course of time, the process doesn't even refresh itself. You exit the LHC in the evening with even less information in your brain than when you entered in the morning.The day you came back to your room for a quick nap between classes and decided to skip the next one, something changed. Life has never quite been the same since, Who knew one tiny decision could feel so liberating?

Assuring yourself that there is a cushion of time, you dissolve into a number of smaller activities that chime for your attention. When it comes to studying though, there's always something or the other in the way. The all-nighter yapping about nothing at all, but somehow everything; the canteen run that turned into a quest; club work that was discussed way more than it should have been.

Then the quiz, which you had been very sigma about for like two seconds when classes hadn't started, tumbles from the sky and drops into your hands. You convince yourself that you'll study for it starting tomorrow. There's a birthday and you really need to be at the OAT smearing cake right now. Two days is enough. Or one really, there isn't that much syllabus actually if you skip the right chapters.

The day before the war arrives. You've picked your battlefield, a nice, secluded, air conditioned place where you won't be able to peek into the computers of other warriors and feel terrible about your own preparation. Oops. Should have known this prof doesn't send answers to assignments. You look through the pictures of the board you took during many a sleepy tutorial.

They're so useless they might as well be a shaky picture of your foot taken accidentally. You start speedrunning the tutorials with ChatGPT and Gemini.

Another option you have is contacting your local wing nerd tonight. This person has God's gift: the ability to explain a concept at the dawn of quiz day, with words so much better than the prof ever spoke.

And finally the D-Day arrives. You wish your wingies luck and march towards the Lecture Hall, trying to convince yourself that you finally understand what ε and δ have been up to all this time. As soon as you receive the paper you start scanning for the least terrifying question and start scribbling whatever makes sense, occasionally looking around and wondering how everyone else is writing so much.Before you can figure out whether anything you have written is actually correct, time is up.

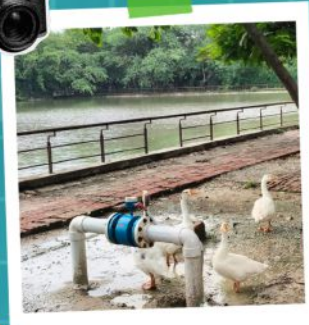
The Quiz is finally over, and you walk out trying to make sense with whatever just happened.It went badly, there is no doubt about that, but the fact that you could solve one or two questions (albeit partially) feels like a miracle.

Back in your wing, there is an unspoken, collective consensus that nobody will talk about what just happened. You'll grab a drink at Mama Mio, sleep it off, maybe try better next time. There is always the midsem,and the endsem, and the sem after that.











SPOT THE PLACE



Fresher's BUCKET LIST

- ☐ Pull an all-nighter and watchthe sunrise.
- ☐ Go cycling in the rain.
- ☐ Climb atop the DJAC roof.
- ☐ Go for a late night food run at chowpatti.
- ☐ Study in the library till closing time.
- ☐ Unwind with friends at OAT stairs .
- ☐ Explore a new part of the campus.
- ☐ Cheer for your hall during an inter-hall event.
- ☐ Get told off by sis guards.



CAMPUS HISTORY
PROTESTS



Campus History: Stories of Protest at IIT Kanpur (1969–1984)

1969: The First Student Strike at IITK

The first student strike in IIT Kanpur's history occurred in 1969, lasting a day or two. It was led by Anil Agarwal, then President of the Student Gymkhana, who later became a prominent environmentalist. The strike stemmed from multiple grievances, including perceived preferential treatment of American faculty members' children and growing anti-U.S. sentiment due to the Vietnam War. Additionally, some postgraduate students with Naxalite sympathies fueled discontent by writing slogans like "Chairman Mao is our chairman" on campus roads. When these students were made to scrub the slogans off, it further aggravated tensions.

A second wave of student unrest followed in the summer of 1969 when students demanded the postponement of their mathematics exam after the death of India's President, Dr. Zakir Hussain, as the government had declared a seven-day mourning period. The administration allowed students to choose between taking the exam immediately or after the summer break. Some students who took the exam as scheduled benefited from lenient grading, while those who postponed it faced a tougher test.

1971: The First Karamchari Strike

In October 1971, IIT Kanpur witnessed its first-ever karamchari (worker) strike. At that time, nearly 700 workers remained on daily wage contracts despite meeting the criteria for permanent employment. Also, the permanent workers had no fixed norms for regularizations, promotions, or any incentives. After repeated failed negotiations with the administration, the IIT Kanpur Karamchari Sangathan launched the strike, effectively bringing campus operations to a standstill. For three days, 25-27 Oct,1971, there was a complete blackout on campus as electricity and water were shut off. This disruption forced the students and the faculty to take notice, drawing them into the ongoing struggle. The agitation persisted for two years before the matter was finally resolved.

September 1978: Protest Against Appointment of DOAA

In September 1978, IITK students staged a two-day protest against the appointment of the Dean of Academic Affairs (DOAA) without any student consultation. This move was seen as part of a larger effort to sideline student participation in institutional decisions, disregarding the strong track record of student responsibility.

Led by Student Gymkhana President Suresh Lodha (now a Professor of Computer Science at UCSC) and Student Senate Convener Sanjeev Bhar gava (formerly a Professor at IIT Kanpur), the Gymkhana organized a silent procession and a two-day class boycott. The protest opposed both the creation of the DOAA post and the appointment of Dr. M.M. Oberoi as the first DOAA.

Though the appointment was not reversed, the protest was a significant assertion of student rights, reinforcing the demand for student consultation in key administrative decisions.

1982-83: Protests Against the Drawing Hall Construction

In 1982-83, administration's plan to build a Drawing Hall (for course TA101: Engineering Drawing) between the FB and the LH-Complex was shelved after strong protests from students and faculty. So, the walkway (behind L7), which would have been otherwise extended across the lawn meeting near the T-junction linking the WL, FB and Library, still remains unfinished and with a dead-end.

1984: Anti-Sikh Violence Reaches IITK

Following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards in 1984, riots erupted across the country, and IIT Kanpur was not spared from the turmoil.

One day, trucks carrying local rioters arrived at the IITK main gate, demanding entry. The security guards, led by an elderly Nepali sentry, initially refused to let them in, citing the absence of official orders. However, the mob eventually forced its way inside on foot, as the guards refused to raise the boom for the trucks. The rioters, young men dressed in pyjamas, kurtas, and gamchas, armed with lathis, quickly spread out across the campus. Their targets were Sikh families and the Gurudwara.

Reports from students later revealed a particularly harrowing incident: a Sikh professor, who was caught off guard in his own home, armed himself with a sword in a desperate attempt to protect his family. The mob, incited by shouts of "maaro saale ko", prepared to attack. However, the gang leader intervened, pulling out a katta (a country-made pistol), and ordered his men to move on to the Gurudwara, which was broken into, vandalized, and set on fire.

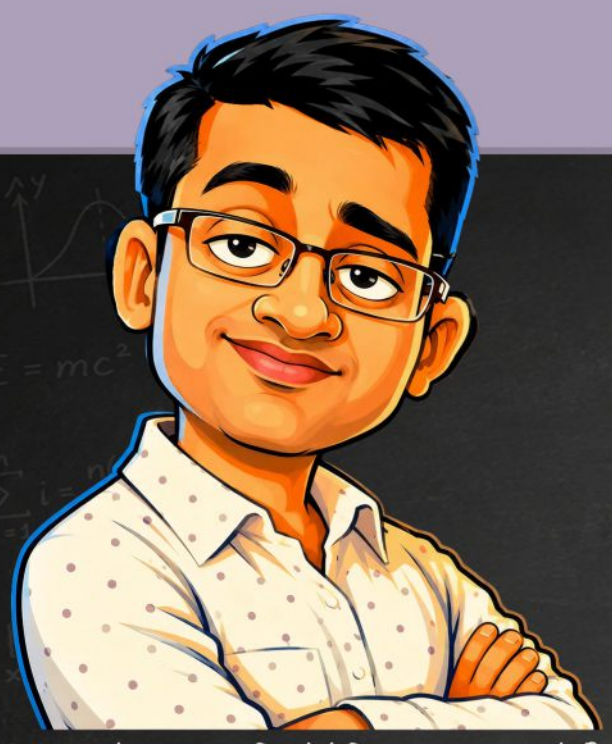
This violent episode was a stark reminder that even an academic institution like IIT Kanpur was not immune to the larger socio-political chaos engulfing the nation.

On January 19, 2024, thousands of students gathered at L20 Ground, boycotting classes in protest against three student suicides within a month. They demanded systemic changes and accountability from the administration. Some of their demands were accepted that very night. Terminations were put on hold, a student nominee was added to the ICC. Open Houses were scheduled in seven days. In the evening, students also held a candle march to OAT, remembering the lives they had lost.



Given what's happening in the country currently , its important to know that IITK also protests and has called for measures time & time again. This protest was a reminder of what students can do when they come together, refuse to accept the status quo, and demand answers from those in power.





CANDID CONVERATIONS

TUSHAR SANDHAN

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Join us in this part of Candid Conversations, with Professor Tushar Sandhan from the Department of Electrical Engineering. We explore his journey from being a backbencher by height in Maharashtra to becoming the legendary note-taker of IIT Guwahati, his years navigating culture shocks in South India and Seoul while working in corporate R&D at Samsung, and his belief that students should be masters of AI, and not slaves to it.

Q: If we were to go back in time and peek into your high school classroom, where would we find you sitting? Front or back?

A: I used to sit at the back because of my height. During high school, seating was arranged according to height. Shorter students were made to sit in the front because all the benches were on the same level. Unlike lecture halls, where visibility is clear from anywhere, a taller student sitting in front would block the view of the board for those behind. Teachers arranged students in ascending order of height—the shortest in the front, then the next, and so on—so the last bench was the one left for the tallest students.

After coming to IIT, I made a mistake once. I skipped breakfast and went to a lecture early. The classroom is usually empty at 8 AM, so if you reach by around 7:45, it is completely empty. Typically, you either arrive around 8:15 or 8:20 after breakfast, or you skip breakfast and go early. Since the classroom was empty, I sat in the third or fourth row of the large lecture hall, which is almost like the first row. After sitting there a few times, other students started joining nearby, friendships formed, and I ended up sitting there regularly.

That is why I continued sitting there throughout the first year. Gradually, I realized I did not like sitting in the front. Later, because of my spectacles, I chose the first row but at the corner. So you would usually find me sitting somewhere in the corner.

Q: Are you aware of the current campus lingo used by students? Is there any slang term you've heard recently that confused you?

A: Only a few, perhaps. I am not on Instagram or Facebook. I have moved away from social media platforms. My students are my social media. Whatever is happening, they forward a variety of things to me.

I know a few student lingos—for example, electrical engineering students are called "batti." If I learn more such terms, I might start using them in class. Students may even create a new lingo for me as a professor.

Q: ESC201 Memes: After the ESC201 EndSem, we could see a lot of memes being circulated among the students. What was your reaction to the student body's response to the examination?

A: My initial reaction was, "Was it me?" Some of the pictures I saw portrayed me as Shiva. That made me think, maybe it really is me, and if I ever lose this job, this could be my next role. There is not much dialogue involved anyway. I already speak for an hour during my lectures. I had seen a few episodes during my childhood where Shiva speaks only when everyone is in trouble and comes to him asking for a boon. That is exactly what happens in class as well.

Coming back to your question, as long as students keep things professional, I am completely fine with it. If the jokes or memes are healthy and respectful, that is good. After all, I taught them how to make memes in the last class of ESC, so I cannot really be upset about that.

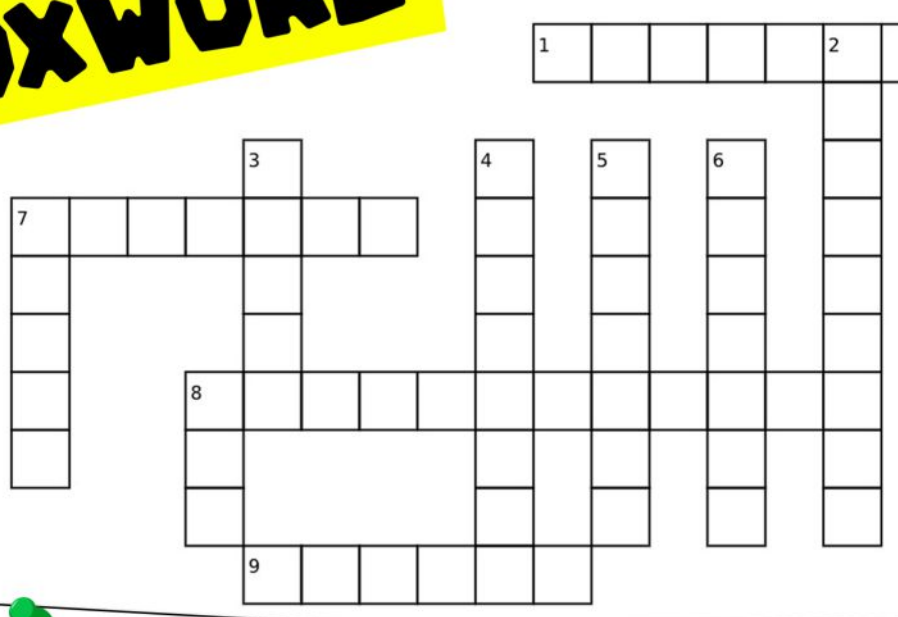
Q: If you were to write a book about your life so far, what would you title it?

A: A title? For a book? Why would anyone write a book about me, or why would I write one about myself? Books are usually written about people who have done great things. I consider myself quite small—like an atom, anu.

Anu-sandhan means research, which is the foundation of India. There is the Anusandhan Research Foundation, ANRF. If you take my surname, Sandhan, and attach Anu to it, it becomes Anusandhan. My daughter's name is also Anu, and she, too, could be called Anusandhan. That name suits her well.

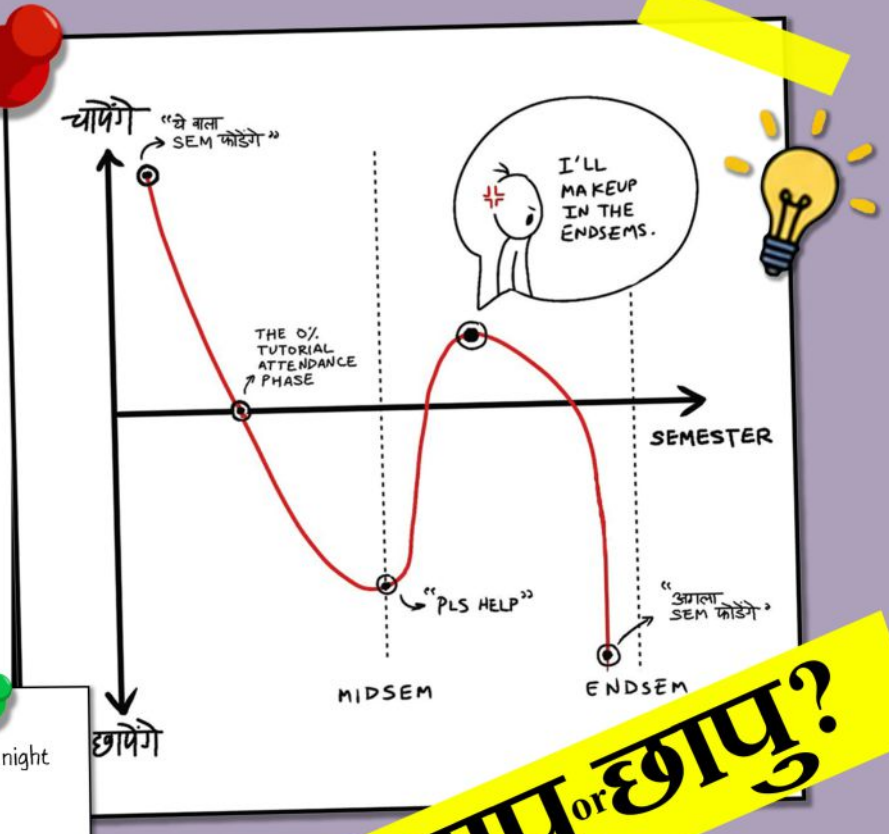
There is nothing grand inside this idea—it is just anu, the smallest unit. It begins there and ends there. Perhaps that is it. Maybe what you are creating now is my entire biography.

VOXWORD



Across:
1. Some nights round the year being here feels like VIP access
7. The tiresome interface which holds your academic assets
8. Where script meets spotlight with dance and bards
9. All rounders dominating everything

Down:
2. Where sleep is an urban legend and robots rule the night
3. The persona every IITian avoids turning into
4. Some legend of the past is revealed here
5. Premium air-conditioned sleep centre during exams
6. The man, the myth, the legend which helps you soar high
7. The ultimate test of friendship and bluff during 8AM lecture
8. The sacred Bible of a course



चापु or छापु?



NAVIGATING BARRIERS

A DEEP DIVE INTO DISABILITY SUPPORT ON CAMPUS

To realise the support system available for differently-abled persons on our campus, we at Vox Populi, investigated key challenges the system faces through an investigative report.The responses highlighted areas for improvement in maintenance, accessibility, academic inclusion, and institutional engagement.

Established in 2017, the Cell for Differently-Abled Persons (CDAP) at IIT Kanpur supports students with both visible and invisible disabilities. The cell was reconstituted on February 1, 2024, for a term of three years. It consists of a coordinator and two faculty members, 2 staff members, four student representatives (2 UG and 2 PG) and 3 section representatives.

Campus Accessibility and Infrastructure Challenges

Many students pointed out that spaces like the Open Air Theatre (OAT) and Lecture Hall Complexes (LHCs) are still not fully accessible. In response, Ma'am Ritika(CDAP official) stated, "A survey of all buildings is conducted annually, and necessary changes are forwarded to the Dean of Infrastructure and Planning (DOIP). However, participation by differently abled students in the survey remains limited."

CDAP's end-term report, prepared by Supritum(student nominee of CDAP for the 2024–25 tenure) , mentioned that the library section representative raised accessibility concerns regarding the library building during a CDAP committee meeting. He proposed constructing a wheelchair-accessible ramp and installing a modernized lift with braille integration to support SwDs, however no action has followed.

In their response, the CDAP authorities acknowledged that IIT Kanpur is committed to making the campus accessible for all and. However, they noted that infrastructure modifications are constrained because the library is a heritage building, which severely restricts structural changes. A functional lift was installed at the OAT by the Institute Works Department, in order to make rooms of the New SAC accessible. When the issue of the extended period for the installation of a lift within the Open Air Theatre (OAT) was raised, authorities acknowledged that infrastructure built decades ago poses challenges in implementing accessibility improvements and that student-led initiatives are warmly acknowledged and have been crucial in pushing for these changes.

Funding Constraints

The cell operates within a limited budget, but the administration tries to provide support within its capacity. The cell has sought funding from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, which have helped procure electric wheelchairs, assistive devices, and specialized software for visually impaired students.

Shruti (the other student nominee) mentioned that despite her efforts, many requests such as recorded lectures, hearing aids, accessibility devices and dictation tools remain unmet due to funding limitations.

Academic Inclusion

Students also raised concerns about the Physical Education (PE) curriculum.

Some reported having to wait long hours in extreme weather for classes and expressed frustration over the lack of proper written-exam seating arrangements and proper desks. According to CDAP, special seating arrangements are made available on student requests.

The CDAP end-term report noted that the CDAP committee raised the issue of PE111 and PE112 courses being inaccessible to differently abled students.The committee resolved to explore alternatives such as yoga, citing its mental health benefits, but no action followed despite assurances of contacting the SPEC Chairman.

Placement-Related Concerns

A Y20 student reported that SPO members forgot to provide necessary accommodations during internship and placement season. Ma'am Ritika stated that the Student Placement Office (SPO) is sensitized to the needs of differently abled students and holds discussions with the SPO Chair to address concerns. For the past months, SPO has been actively working to support differently abled students. Measures include:

Setting up a dedicated room near Kargil Chowk for activities like written tests and group discussions, especially for students unable to access midnight venues like NCL or LHC.

Conducting a special placement drive for differently abled students who have not yet been placed.

Appointing an OPC to connect with companies for DAP recruitment.

Despite SPO's support, there are challenges like miscommunication between companies and HR managers where HR is often unaware of the DAP category. Technical issues and standardized criteria often result in indifferently abled students not meeting cutoffs.

CAMPUS MAP



UNDERSTANDING THE MENTAL ROADBLOCKS

In 2018, Vox Populi conducted a campus-wide survey to understand student mental health, gathering 1,105 responses from UG and PG residents. We looked at how common these issues were, what was causing them, and whether campus support was actually helping.

At the time, students in the survey acknowledged the prevalence of mental health issues in our campus. Faculty reactions were split: Prof. Sandeep Shukla, then Head of CSE, warned that the situation was reaching epidemic levels, while Prof. Nandini Nilakantan, then Head of ICS(now CMHW),argued the numbers were blown out of proportion due to hype and misunderstanding.

We also looked at reasons separately for PhD and non-PhD students. Among non-PhD students, academic pressure, peer pressure, loneliness and existential crises emerged among other reasons. However, the then DOAA described academic stress as a punching bag for broader problems. Among PhD students, student-faculty relations, research isolations, future uncertainty, and program length were reported as common causes.

When it came to support, nearly half of the respondents had reached out for help, and rated their experience of institute counsellors an average of just 2.10 out of 5. Others who didn't reach out felt no one could help them or showed mistrust in the system entirely.

Mrs. Sharmishtha Chakraborty, former Institute Counsellor, welcomed the growing willingness of the students to speak up in the survey as a positive step and concluded that such revelations of the survey calls for an introspection from the institute side.

Eight years have passed since that survey, and the campus has evolved. We are revisiting this survey today to understand how things have changed, what has improved, and where we still fall short.

Your experiences matter immensely in shaping a safer and more empathetic community for all of us. Please take a few minutes to scan the QR code below and fill the survey.



FOOD REVIEW



Naughty Blender

SMOKY VEG BURGER:
Crunchy lettuce goodness, smoky paneer topped with tangy sauces and fresh onions; cure the blues and bless the tastebuds!



CHOCOLATE WAFFLES WITH ICECREAM:
This nutella waffle adding ice cream ,arguably (yes,we're the ones arguing) the best on campus will be the perfect munchy (wink , wink).

Naughty Blender



Burger Singh

CHEESY COINS:
Crispy on the outside with a warm, oozy cheese center perfect for an evening snack.



Aladdin

SHAWARMA CHICKEN SANDWICH:
A perfect combination of Shawarma and with grilled sandwich. Its not just a sandwich, its a flavour wrap tour.



Starbucks

CHOCOLATE CHIP FRAPPUCCINO:
Creamy, but not too sweet, soft chocochips in every sip, with a subtle coffee flavour that complements the chocolate. Must-try!



Subway

VEG SHAMMI RICE BOWL :
A bowl full of missed opportunities and uninspired veggies.Could have used a better combination of veggies.

Chief Ed's Pick



CCD

SIGNATURE COLD COFFEE:
Crunchy , dark who? You'll forget all your aver age frappes at ccd after this but keep your fingers crossed because 9/10 days its isnt available

Dear Y26s,
Congratulations on making it through your first few months at IITK (trust me, you've barely scratched the surface). By now, some of you might be homesick, while others may have already found a new home here.Somewhere along this long journey, you'll encounter experiences that would leave you thinking a little harder, questioning your own biases. After all, how could the campus be free of the hierarchies and power structures that shape the rest of society?
When you encounter these asymmetries, acknowledge them for what they are, and then decide where you stand. You may wonder whether you or your voice holds any power or meaning, but you'd be surprised how much they do, when you decide to speak up. But the most important thing is- always question !

Enough of our two cents, this is the part of the script where we're supposed to tell you what Vox is, what we do, and why you might (potentially) join us. Vox Populi is IIT Kanpur's student journalism body. WE INVESTIGATE, WE WRITE, WE REPORT- through writing, design, videos, comics, and more- on issues that concern the campus community, be it students, workers, or faculty. We exercise the power to directly question both the Student's Gymkhana and the administration, deriving our power directly from you people, the voice of the people.
Michel Foucault said, "Where there is power, there is resistance"
And our form of resistance is to document realities and speak truth to power.

And thus on a parting note we will leave you with this surprise from us - The Newsletter. . If you're interested in what we do or simply just a creative fella interested in design, writing, comics or anything remotely concerning art , please consider joining Vox Populi.
You have four gloriously tumultuous years ahead of you, make the most of it as life after college is quite simply a scam

Yours,
Manya Dixit
Rohan Sawlani
Chief Editors, Vox Populi

WE ARE RECRUITING



Apply here to be a CGM