

## Of Exclusivity And Generality...

*Angshuman Bagchi*

**Second yearite:** *“Yo, fresher guess my state!”*

**First Fresher:** *“Hmmm... solid!”*

**Second yearite:** *“Tadi... aa! Ok tell me yours.”*

**First Fresher:** *“Sir, Tamil Nadu!”*

**Second yearite:** *“So you’re an artist!”*

**Second Fresher:** *“Sir, Andhra Pradesh!”*

**Second yearite:** *“So you fancy yourself to be the safe guarder of campus sanctity!”*

**Third Fresher:** *“Sir, West Bengal!”*

**Second yearite:** *“So you’re a bong, EPC is for you!”*

If the above labelling procedure irks you then read on. While fortunately this is not the case in all the student organisations, it is prevalent. The above organisation has been mentioned only as a hypothetical example and I do not mean any ill will towards it. However, it just goes to exemplify the fact that entry into many clubs, departments and nominated bodies is based on rather flimsy grounds. It is true that in many organisations entry is not based on interest or merit but instead on a certain attitude, place of origin or the way in which a person speaks. So, you get into Department Z if you possess a high CQ, read coolness quotient. Another department recruits a fresher only if he possesses a “studdier than thou attitude!” One can argue that you need to find someone with a mindset that gels into

the existing mindset of the department so that it functions smoothly. However, it seems at times that certain organisations try to inculcate this attitude amongst their members, so that almost the whole organisation reeks of it. So, try to put yourself in a fresher’s shoes. Ask yourself how you were selected into your particular club (excluding DOSA) and you might get an answer. Of course there are exceptions, which have another mode of selection where they conduct auditions and admit members. In such cases one can safely say that entry is based on merit and interest. It is only the organisations where you don’t require well-defined skills that have ambiguous recruitment policies. Why can’t we have a system where freshers are initially exposed to all the organisations and their work and hence get to know at least where they can go? This can then be followed by more informal interactions and unbiased selection procedures by the organisations themselves. I am not trying to give a magic formula for selection. What I am trying to say is that a fresher should not get into a department/club just because he has a city/state/school senior in it or he is from a particular part of India. At least there should be some thought given to this. If it is, I will consider myself successful.

A case in point is the nomination into the various nominated bodies, namely



*mirror, mirror on our world...*



EC, CRC and CRAC. These organisations are present to put a check on all elected representatives and they are indeed doing a good job. However since these organisations possess a good deal of power and at times do have a final say in things, one wonders what is the nomination procedure of these bodies. An outgoing member usually nominates you and once nominated, you remain in that body for the rest of your BITSian life. However, how and based on what criteria a certain person is nominated remains a mystery for the GBM at large. Maybe it should.

There is a rumour doing the rounds that to be a member of these bodies you have to be the member of a particular department. I do not know how true this is. However such a rumour existing is indicative of lack of transparency. The argument that capable people remain only in a certain set of the BITSian population is as weird as it sounds. For example, nominations to the senate of BITS were hitherto restricted to the Presidential coterie. Things changed this year. Nominations were called for and an interview was conducted to select the candidates. This ensured that the process itself was crystal clear. A lot can be debated about the modus operandi and functionality; however do not forget that ultimately everyone should be answerable to the GBM. Moreover, since transparency is the buzzword nowadays, why not so in this case?

But for whom all this blah blah...? The average BITSian is a hard-to-describe

entity. Till now his existence has been assumed to be one of utter indifference to campus activities. I hope that the last year has been an eye opener for him.

Of late, one has been observing a disturbing trend. Some BITSians have been overtly zealous in performing their duties (in an organisational sense). In doing so they at times stoop to being rude to fellow BITSians. And this trend is spilling over to other organisations as well. While I have no right to comment on personal interactions, people who hold some office should not behave childishly and abuse their positions. If to assert authority it is necessary to be peremptory then I just hope that the 'above average' BITSian accredits the 'average' with more maturity. After all, we all are BITSians, and more importantly, students. I suppose we are all equal irrespective of being a member of some organisation or not. Hope BITS does not turn out to be another Orwellian animal farm with some BITSians 'more equal than others'.

