



Helping IIT Goa Attain Excellence

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Unable to locate at the two earlier proposed sites owing to opposition by locals, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Goa seems to be going ahead well at its location at the Cotarli village of the Sanguem taluka. One of the grounds of opposition at the earlier two sites was that the IIT campus would be like an island of 'outsiders', bringing no benefits to the local population. There was also fear expressed that the IIT would drain natural resources like water, causing environmental degradation and shortages for people. Fully aware of the popular sensitivity, IIT Goa has made plans to make local people stakeholders in the project. To begin with, the plans are aimed at dispelling notions of negative effect on the livelihood of local residents. The campus would be set up on 320 acres of land, not a very big area. In bigger states IIT campuses are spread over an area of 500 acres and above. The Union Ministry for Human Resource Development has recently communicated to IIT Goa its approval for the land earmarked in the Sanguem taluka for the institution campus. The transfer of the land by the state government to the institution is expected to be completed by September 2018. Thereafter the architectural plans would be prepared in consultation with its mentor institution, IIT-Bombay. The work on construction of the campus is likely to be set in motion by year end. Despite having a smaller area IIT Goa would have hostels for undergraduate students, but those seeking master and doctoral degrees would be lodged outside the campus in rental accommodation provided by local residents.

Earlier the government had selected land at Loliem in the Canacona taluka and Keri in the Ponda taluka but local people rose in opposition, forcing the government to look elsewhere. The people living in the neighbourhood of the finalized IIT site at the Cortali village in the Sanguem taluka have not raised any issues with the campus. This is probably because they expect to benefit from the outsourcing of services and facilities by the IIT, beginning with rental accommodation. The IIT board could also take supplies from the local people for their messes. The IIT campus would create opportunities to the local people for opening retail stores and restaurants in the neighbourhood to cater to students and staff. The campus would thus give impetus to the local economy. Local infrastructure would be developed with the coming of the IIT. The location of the top engineering institution would change the look of the village and also give a new sense of identity to the local population who can feel proud to be living close to such a reputed temple of learning. The IIT management has promised to create an

environmental-friendly campus. The waste generated on the campus will be handled internally, with low stress on the municipality/panchayat or the neighbourhood. If IIT Goa does what it promises, the people of Cotarli and of villages around will surely lend a helping hand in the campus getting up on its feet.

IIT Goa should try to hire as many local candidates as possible in different job categories. The state government should oversee that the claims of deserving local candidates are not ignored by IIT Goa. Let us hope IIT Goa has excellent faculties and acquires a reputation matching that of other IITs. Excellent faculties would motivate Goans who qualify for IIT study in their home state. Students get into IITs entirely on merit, though certain percentages of seats are reserved for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes. Two years ago Manohar Parrikar suggested 50 per cent reservation for Goan students at NIT (National Institute of Technology) Goa at Farmagudi, which was accepted by the central government. However, the central government decided that Goa would share the 50 per cent quota with Union Territories such as Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli. The central government accepted Parrikar's suggestion that Goa be given 40 per cent of the total number of seats, the remaining 10 per cent going to Union Territories. In case, seats remained vacant within the 10 per cent reserved category for Union Territories, they would go to Goan students. However, admissions to IIT Goa are going to be made entirely on the basis of merit. IITs have maintained their excellence largely owing to the fact that its management has been in the hands of professionals, and also to the fact that successive governments, no matter of which party, have kept their hands off them. Goan students have been doing well in IIT entrance examinations. In the coming years, we are sure IIT Goa will have a good number of Goan students.