

AN OBSERVATION ON ENGINEERING ADMISSION: CHOOSING THE RIGHT INSTITUTION

Dr Rajesh Bojan

ABSTRACT

When the season of admission is open for Engineering institutions across the nation, both parents and students experience chaos and crisis that inevitably force them to settle at a place or a course that they least expected. Not many enjoy the honour of being in the right place for the right career. I have been in this field for over a decade and witnessed the plight of such parents and their children batch after batch. Admission is not as complicated as we think if we are prepared for the occasion well in advance. This article is a product of my observations in the field and the suggestions are only from a personal point of view. The purpose of writing this article is to educate both parents and students about getting prepared for the process well in advance so that people seeking admissions can have clarity on what to look for and establish some control of the situation, therefore, avoiding unnecessary expenditure.

Keywords: admission, engineering institutions, college admission, engineering

INTRODUCTION

Everyone aspires to study at reputed institutions. Unfortunately, if a student does not meet the merit criteria, it will be quite difficult to grab an opportunity at Tier 1 institutions unless your parent is in the position to pay the unaccountable capitation to the institute. Parents with financial capacity are ready to blindly pour in lacs not knowing the fact that it is just a ransom for the brand name and it has nothing to do with the quality of education. Many a time, I have personally felt uncomfortable as a parent to see schools collecting exorbitant fees at the primary level. The majority of us who are now at the age of thirty or forty are undeniably the products of normal schools at least during the first few years of our schooling. I wonder how on earth the culture of world-class education at the KG level has popped up from nowhere and why parents believe in these false advertisements that claim to provide world-class education? It is a sad truth that most parents fail to understand the actual need and only take into account the infrastructure and the environment as prime factors to finalise an institute for admission. I am not denying the truth that the environment plays an important role to shape the individual but, it is crucial to understand that environment alone is not everything for the huge investment you will be making.

Education is a service to society and it has to progress and prosper the lives of the people. While some institutions maintain academic standards matching the competitiveness of the industry, others only play gimmicks adopting catchy terminologies as part of their marketing strategies to mint money through admissions. In fact, not everything is as advertised, so, parents should be in a position to differentiate the real from the unreal.

BY INTEREST AND NOT BY FORCE

Shockingly, about sixty percent of students opting for Engineering study in a class are enrolled due to compulsions and lack of interest in the domain of engineering. Parents are making this terrible mistake of forcing their children to take up things against their will. While few students may be in a position to take it positively and turn out to be successful, others will become mere engineering graduates with no real knowledge whatsoever. Is such education by force worthy of the investment? Parents must think.

SETTING A STAGE

Students are equally responsible for the admission decisions in a family. Not all parents are aware of the Engineering industry and the evolving technologies. In such scenarios, it ought to be the child who should take the responsibility of explaining to his parent the scope and advantages of enrolling in a specific department. This is not rocket science and a student need not walk for miles searching for information. A student needs to know where his interest lies. Contrary to the past, the modern generation has access to everything at the tips of their fingers. Students have to spend sufficient time learning about the field that they want to study and once they get a clear idea it is vital for them to sit for a discussion with their parents and elaborate to them on the choice and how they think it will impact their lives. Changes in career track are usually not considered favourable, so, it is always wise to choose a field with caution and ensure that mastery is attained. Students should assist their parents in helping them understand their interests and objectives and respect in turn their suggestions as well.

AVOID AGENTS FOR ADMISSION

When it comes to the selection of the right institution, try to stay away from admission agents because most of them function purely on business motives. They take big commissions for putting students' careers at risk. Please note that it is impossible to change how the system works, but it is possible to control our actions at our convenience. Let your actions determine where you have to land up. Do your research. The best way is to reach out to the institutions directly and communicate with them in

person. Students should be mature enough to handle such things on their own and seek help from people who value their life and happiness. Develop a mindset to always reach out to such people in case of help.

CHOOSE A DOMAIN BASED ON YOUR INTEREST

The next major thing that people confuse a lot is the choice of study. I always believe that every subject has its value. Will you ever consider that History and Archaeology are outdated? Never. Each domain keeps evolving and opportunities always exist. Subject-mastery predominantly rests with the learners, how a student learns determines how sound he or she is both at knowledge and skills. Students need to identify the domain they are passionate about and engage in conversations with people who are experts in the field because they can provide first-hand exposure of the field. Now, this is where social media plays a major role. Connect and discuss with current students of any engineering institutions on platforms like Instagram or Facebook. LinkedIn can be a great place to network with professionals in the field. The first thing that a student must learn is that they should know how to approach people appropriately.

ASSESS FACULTY STRENGTH

The next major factor that parents and students have to consider when seeking admission is of the strength and quality of the teaching faculty. It has become very common to see current postgraduate students of the same institutions serving temporarily or appointed as faculty in the departments. Is it a strategy to refrain from hiring experienced and qualified candidates so to not spend any substantial amount? When the aim is only to keep the show running, qualification matters least. Parents when visiting the colleges for admission, must speak voluntarily to the concerned department faculty to know more about their status of employment, period of service, qualifications etc. Parents will be able to deduce important information from such conversations.

THE ROLE OF SALARY

Teachers, especially in the private sector of India are undervalued and unlike corporate positions have zero benefits. Learning about the salary package and retention of the teaching faculty can be immensely helpful to get an idea on the standards of the institution. Well qualified and skilled teachers are always in demand and such people will opt to stay only at institutions where they are paid and treated well. If the institutions are compromising on the payment standards, experienced and expert faculty will quit sooner or later. Think of certain private organisations that value their employees, pay them well and retain them for long, will anyone miss the chance of being part of such workplace? Most teachers are

willing to work beyond their regular routine provided they are given the opportunity to grow professionally and financially. If institutions cannot keep up this to the benefit and satisfaction of their employees, heavy loss of retention will be a recurring phenomenon year after year. It is advisable that parents must have an eye on this factor as well.

TRAINING AND PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Campus placement opportunities are a major factor when it comes to choosing an institution. Parents should validate the authenticity of the placement data provided by the college. Exclusivity does not exist when it comes to opportunities. Every student is trained in a similar fashion as per the need and expectations of the industry and are lined up for the interviews as per the eligibility criteria. Unless students put in extra efforts besides what the college offers, there is less chance to avail a decent offer. It is much better to speak to current final year students of the respective department to get a clear and honest idea about the placement activities of the college. Please ensure to take note of information like number of top core companies that have offered on-campus and off-campus opportunities, highest ctc, department-specific recruitment, direct or internship-based hiring etc. What I have furnished here is only an outline, there are several factors to focus when it comes to evaluating placements.

ACCREDITATION AND RANKING

Besides, accredited institutions are always one step ahead of the institutions that are yet to be recognised. Accreditation ensures that an institute meets the quality standards. Notably, being accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) is considered as an assurance of the quality of the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the institution. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an overall accreditation of the institution assessing parameters like education, research, innovation, governance, infrastructure etc. Additionally, the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) also plays an important role in the ranking of institutions. It is important to have some basic knowledge of these aspects when shortlisting an institution for admission.

CONCLUSION

Taking the heavy competition into consideration, every institution is trying its best to provide the best picture of their services. It is my humble request that parents must be aware of all the fundamental things discussed in this article and find time to discuss about these in detail with their children. It is not my intention to find fault with any institution or process, my only objective was to mirror my observations so that it could help few in taking bright decisions for the betterment of their career.