

Techies to home in on village life

IIT-Gn gives students unique opportunity to live in a village for 3 to 6 weeks under Gram Fellowship programme that aims to bridge the urban-rural divide; nine BTech students in first batch

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To give students a peek into rural life, Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IIT-Gn) has decided to send budding engineers to villages. Starting this summer, those willing to live in a village for three to six weeks will be provided Gram Fellowship, an initiative to bring urban students close to village life and its problems.

Nine bachelor of technology (BTech) students have evinced interest in taking up the fellowship. Dean (students) Jaison Manjaly said the move aims to bridge the urban-rural divide.

CHANCE TO SEE RURAL INDIA

"Majority of the students in IITs are from metros or large cities and they have hardly had a chance to see rural India. They do not know about village life, its problems and the way villagers live.

"The Gram Fellowship will provide them an opportunity to visit a village in any part of India, live with a family for a minimum of 3 weeks to a maximum of 6 weeks. The students will



IIT-Gn has introduced such a programme for the first time

work or accompany the persons to workplace—be it farming, business or anything," Manjaly said.

The institute believes that during

the stay with the family in the village, the students will not only get exposed to the rural hardships or people's problems, this project may also inspire

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—Jaison Manjaly, Dean (students)



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If students like to address villagers' issues, they will get Rs 25k. The fund can be used to develop product, service or find any solution.

—Sudhir Jain, IIT-Gn Director



address issues faced by the villagers, they will be provided with Rs 25,000. The fund can be used to develop product, service or any solution," said IIT-Gn Director Sudhir Jain.

'FIRST EXPERIENCE'

Rushabh Pravin Desadla (21), one of the students who has opted to visit Hemalkasa village in Maharashtra said that this will be his first experience of living in a village. "I chose this as I want to work with Prakash Amte who works with Madia Goad tribes and other villages apart from setting up an animal park in the village. By working with them, I will be able to understand the problems faced by the villagers and the solutions provided by Amte. This will be a good learning experience," Rushabh said.

UNIQUE PROGRAMME

IIT-Gn has introduced such a programme for the first time. The institute also has a fellowship that enables students to travel to different states for a short span to understand India's rural areas. Gram Fellowship is different as it allows students to stay in a village for longer period of time and work on a project to solve problems faced by villagers.