

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF FOREST MANAGEMENT

ALMA MATTERS

INAUGURAL EDITION NOVEMBER '20

**STORY IN
FOCUS**

Alumni Association

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF IIFM

ALMA MATTERS

THE OFFICIAL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF IIFM

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Hello Friends.

The Alumni Association of Indian Institute of Forest Management (AA) presents the inaugural issue of our newsletter "Alma Matters". It aspires to reminiscence the effervescence of our wonderful community, the camaraderie & nostalgia among us, and the concern for our alma mater. "Alma Matters" will reach you the first Saturday of each month.

This issue presents the introduction about the digital footprint of AA through its web site, interesting recounts of alumni: the navigation through a first job, the memories from the campus, the genesis and vision of the AA and the activities of AA in the past few months.

Recently, the proposition of government to disengage with IIFM has initiated a lot of curiosity among the students and alumni. We have reacted differently, questioned differently, proposed varied course of action but what is common, is concern for our alma mater. There are immense curiosity about what actually led for the proposition of disengagement, whether the disengagement will pave the way for some improvement, the appropriateness of the deemed university status, and the suitability of the three year disengagement model. We look forward to detailed analysis on this matter in next edition of the Newsletter.

"Alma Matters" solicits your views, contributions, suggestions and inputs to make the Newsletter more vibrant and interesting.

Happy reading

AVINASH KUMAR (EDITOR)

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" Here's to the nights that turned into mornings with the friends that turned into family."

FROM THE DESK OF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT



“

Dear Alumni, Greetings!

It gives me immense pleasure to present the inaugural issue of "Alma Matters" the much awaited newsletter of the Alumni Association of IIFM. At the outset, I must acknowledge the dedication and hard work of the Editorial Board in conceptualizing, preparing and launching this first issue within the envisaged timelines. The newsletter resonates with the spirit of IIFM Alumni and a reason to reconnect with our alma mater.

Let me take this opportunity to summarize the evolution of Alumni Association of IIFM.

Well, History's most grandiose accomplishments sometimes have most banal origins, so is the genesis of our Alumni Association. The genesis of AA dates back to 2016-17 when some Alumni expressed the need to reconnect the Alumni on one platform. The idea was well supported by IIFM and Alumni Network Committee (ANC) which led to development of blueprint of AA by 2018. In January 2019, AA was registered and then after the general election, the first board assumed responsibilities in April 2020.

The Alumni Association is mandated "to encourage alumni to participate actively in the IIFM community, to foster alumni interactions and networking, to volunteer, to create new ways for alumni to stay connected to the IIFM, and to contribute in the growth of the IIFM."

Personally for me, it is an honour and joy to serve as first elected president of AA of over 2,000 alumni. The work of AA began in a consultative mode and will always remain so. In the first six months of formal office, the Alumni Association has undertaken work on several new initiatives to elevate the service we bring to IIFMites and enhance connectivity among us. As you read the Newsletter, we are almost ready to launch our "Digital Platform" which would connect and reconnect the alumni.

Functioning of AA has also coincided with a tough time witnessed globally i.e. COVID-19 pandemic. It has been affecting the normal lifestyle and the students of current batch also bear the brunt. They struggled in terms of resources to continue online classes. AA immediately swung into action and pooled necessary resources and supported the students.

At this time when we all are waiting for relief from pandemic, a news about proposed disengagement of government from IIFM created ripples. The news had knee-jerk reaction from the alumni with varied interpretations and opinions. While some are sceptical about sustainability of IIFM in absence of government support, many opine this could open new avenues. More clarity is expected to come in the coming days as we understand and discuss more about it. AA will collate the thoughts of Alumni on this matter and approach to IIFM with expression to be on the side of the institute.

We all will agree that Alumni Association needs a wider reach among us. Ahead of time, and notwithstanding the fund constraints we have, I am committed to drive elimination of paid membership based model of Association and explore newer ways of sustained income. To expand the reach of AA globally across 100 cities, we are conceptualizing creation of "City Chapters" having fair representations from local IIFMites. If some other variables fall in line, we will create a "Seed Fund" for Incubating and Funding Entrepreneurship among IIFMites. So watch out, a lot is on the anvil...!

IIFMites seldom agree on a single issue. We are known to differ. Our differences stem from the diversity we have in our thoughts and experiences. Your Alumni Association beckons your diverse thoughts, experiences and skills for shaping the future of this organization so as to create the largest binding force for IIFM Community. I therefore request you to join the community of volunteers and contribute through your thoughts, skills and expertise in making AA a robust organization. You are welcome!

*After all, we all take pride in proclaiming – "IIFM के लिए कुछ भी"
Have a wonderful reading!*

Yours truly,

ASHISH MISHRA

President, Alumni Association of IIFM

WEBSITE TEAM

- Himanshu Yadav PFM 2019-21
- Rajnish Kumar Singh PFM 2019-21
- Arindam Das PFM 2020-22
- Sanket Sawwalakhe PFM 2020-22
- Sourabh Rohit PFM 2020-22
- Sudip Samanta PFM 2020-22
- Utkarsh Shukla PFM 2020-22
- Dipak Jha(Team Lead)PFM 1998-00
- Ashish Mishra PFM 1993-95

TAKING AA TO THE CLOUDS: THE DIGITAL FOOTPRINT OF OUR AA

DIPAK JHA, PFM 1998-2000



The credibility of an organization today is more strongly reflected in its online footprint than in anything else. For the IIFM Alumni Association (AA) which, by very definition is a formal, organized effort to bring together multiple generations of geographically distributed IIFMites under one platform, the need for a representative website cannot be understated. It serves as a mouthpiece for an organization of this kind, with content on its pages almost accurately standing for “collective thoughts” or at least as near as one can get to the concept.

As the association comes into being, the above ideas, for obviously inherent reasons have led to a strong pitch for not just an adequately representative website but an entire, futuristic, digital platform that can potentially encapsulate all kinds of active and passive communication both amongst members and with the rest of the world. The vision is to create a central platform for all of the association’s cyber needs which includes, but is not necessarily limited to blogging, online chats, video-based interactions, e-commerce transactions (to the extent required), member registrations, online payments, invoice generation etc. It is expected that going forward, the platform will seamlessly integrate with multiple channels of interaction including mobile devices and social media, besides the ubiquitous web browsers. To ensure the digital platform remains fit for purpose in the years to come, the technical team spearheading its creation

has agreed to a rather futuristic architecture both in terms of the physical infrastructure and the software artifacts being chosen to support it. Amazon Web Services (AWS), the strongest player in the arena of cloud technologies has been chosen as our provider for the infrastructure needed for the platform. The platform itself is being developed to have a dynamic Content Management System (CMS) right from its inception such that platform administrators get to easily publish or alter content without having to tinker with the underlying code base. Another interesting feature of the platform, which also aligns it quite well with modern trends, is its ability to support “RESTful APIs” (Application Programming Interface). Technically, APIs may be seen as the drivers behind integration of a platform with other systems including mobile apps and therefore the AA digital platform may undoubtedly be considered as 100% compatible with iOS and Android apps, as and when we chose to roll them out in the future.

The time this report is being written, the platform is already in a state of active development. A team of enthusiastic content creators, drawn from the current student batches of IIFM is keenly contributing to our “staging” area in AWS, gradually giving shape to what should be an interesting, initial version of our web site. Work is definitely in progress and with an immense sense of excitement; we do look forward to present our very own website and digital platform to you very soon.

यादों के झरोखे से

UNLEARNING AND LEARNING AT IIFM: MY MEMOIRS

SHAKEB NABI, PFM
1996-98



In life, oftentimes events happen incidentally. The opportunity to study at IIFM and subsequently adopt the development sector happened that way for me. Coming from a humble family background from Bihar, natural vocations for us used to be farming or aspiring for a government job. Selection at IIFM was construed by the family as a gateway to a decent job in the Forest Department. When they realized that I would end up joining a grass root NGO, they could not immediately accept the situation and tried to convince me to join some MNC, following one of my seniors (of IIFM from Patna) who had joined Coke. Well, I listened to my soul and never tried for any MNC during placements.

After selection at IIFM, I came to Bhopal, the second city visited by me outside Bihar. Campus life was very different than the lifestyle I was used to but it was interesting. It took me some time to realize that my wardrobe needed a serious change to suit to the elegance of a management college. Oh Somu, my roommate, thank you so much for being generous enough to allow me to access to your wardrobe with branded clothes and deodorants. On hindsight, I realize that I might have over accessed your wardrobe but you were tolerant enough. Honestly, with changed attire, it was a transmogrification for me.

On academics front, I performed decently, though I learnt more outside the classroom interacting with everyone that includes faculties, batch-mates and even campus guards. Cricket was my other passion in the campus. One can confirm from Tiwari ji and Balmukund, the caretakers of hostel, that while my batch-mates were busy preparing for exam, I used to perfect my cover drives in the cricket ground. My Emotional Quotient (EQ) always preceded during my stay at IIFM and has helped me become what I am today.

I was known among my batch-mates for breaking ground rules. I always had duplicate keys of motor bikes of my batch-mates and in addition to helping me, it also helped them sometimes when they lost their original keys. Supporting the mess committee members in buying items had been rewarding enough for the weekend parties.

A lot of water has flown within the bridge since passing out from IIFM and now I have completed 22 years in the Development Sector and serving as Country Representative ICCO (<https://www.icco-cooperation.org/nl/>) in Bangladesh.

Lot more to share but would like to stop here for the next opportunity to relive the memories during my next visit to the campus.



EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY: MY FIRST JOB AFTER IIFM

SHASHI PRABHAKAR, PFM 2013-15

After spending a grand time at IIFM, the time came to bid adieu and it brought a lot of excitement and at the same time nervousness to get placement of choice. My choice was to start my career from Bihar and Bihar Rural Livelihood Promotion Society (BRLPS) was an unambiguous choice for me. Well, sometimes expectations and reality do not match and BRLPS did not come for campus interview that year. It was Day 4 and I was already jittery with apprehension of not being able to get job in Bihar. Fortunately, an Alumnus Indrajeet (Head of M & E cell CARE India) came to campus. CARE India was working on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) in Bihar with support from Bill and Milinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). The interview at CARE India helped me realize my expectation to start my professional journey from Bihar. The last minutes guidance from Advait Sir to brush up the basic concepts with respect to P-value and other concepts

was supportive enough to clear the interview for the position of District Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Officer at Samastipur. Samastipur is a small city 90 kilometers from Patna. The job gave an overview of the state of public health in Bihar and the approach towards the Millenium Development Goal (MDG) in terms of Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR). The learning of the use of advanced data in public health and its use in decision making at policy level was a big professional gain. While my first job was away from my expectation of joining BRLPS but I am grateful to the experience and knowledge I gained which has proven immensely helpful in my present profile of Senior Project Manager for Centre for Health Informatics (CHI), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). This is for all my dear juniors, sometimes achievement may not match the expectations but putting heart and soul in your first job help you get to the path of success, cheers!!



AN YEAR IN A PREMIERE INSTITUTE

**BULBULI SAHOO (M.PHIL. 2012-13)
PROGRAM MANAGER, FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY (FES)**

After having worked some years in the development sector, I decided to take a break and pursue further study that brought me to IIFM in 2012.

When I reached IIFM in June 2012 to pursue an M.Phil in Natural Resource Management I was excited about my second innings as a student. I took some time and quite some effort readjusting and getting accustomed to my life as a student but the beautiful campus, the great batch-mates, and the numerous campus activities made it fun. It made worth my excitement about reverting to student life. A skit that our batch had performed on the occasion of Independence Day (a completely new experience for me) and the batch fieldtrip to Nepal are much cherished memories.

The one year at the course made me realize that irrespective of your age or your past roles, the instinct of student life strongly resurfaces and impacts your behavior. I remember, once Dr. Arvind Vijalwan sir was teaching agro-forestry in the class, we kept chatting and laughing, and he kept getting angrier and warned us a couple of times, but we continued with our chit-chat.

The course enriched understanding of my work and has helped me relate to my work experience more meaningfully.

The precious life-time friendships, the academic inputs, the interactions with faculty, the constant chirping of birds while strolling around the lush green campus makes for beautiful memories of my days at the IIFM campus. In those bouts of nostalgia, I always ardently plan for a visit to IIFM.

Bulbuli Sahoo lives in Bhubaneswar and works as a Program Manager with Foundation For Ecological Security (FES)



CAMPUS EVENTS OF THE MONTH

UMANG



Umang, the Cultural Club of Indian Institute of Forest Management organized Mask Painting Competition along with Nature and Photography Club on 7th October, 2020. This wildlife week we tried to blend creativity with emotions and asked participants to show their artwork on theme 'Lockdown effect on Wildlife'. They were given weeklong time to portray their creativity on mask and on the event day asked to explain their back-story in front of judges. Both the judges were alumni of IIFM from batch 2018-20 Ms. Ananya Sarathe and Ms. Nityasri Manasa Challa.

Out of 12 participants top three were selected by combining judges scores and audience votes. Winners were chosen on the basis of creativity, artwork and back story.

Christi Kesh won the competition, Samiksha Bagdi and Avinash B H stood second and third position respectively.

E-COALESCENCE'20

'Coalescence' is the annual two-day flagship business conclave which, every year, engages various stakeholders- eminent industry and corporate professionals, academicians, researchers, & entrepreneurs, in a bid to coalesce the brilliant minds and encourage knowledge and experience sharing amongst, established professionals and the future change-makers. The theme for Coalescence-2019 was "SDGs and Sustainable Practices". The focus areas were sustainable business Practices, the role of data & technology in policy-making and governance, Sustainable Development Goals, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Green ventures.

At this time of COVID-19 crisis, E-Coalescence'20 seeks to engage with the erudite stake-holders on the role of corporate responsibility towards the environment and people, government policies that should focus on development and environmental protection, entrepreneurship in sustainable options and green business initiatives. E-Coalescence'20 will also witness various events on the themes of ESG reporting, Supply Chain Problems and Sustainability Assessment of projects/events. The dates for E-Coalescence'20 are the 6th, 7th and 8th of November, 2020.

ANC SAAKSHATKAR

Alumni Network Committee wishes to celebrate the journey of our renowned alumni. We tend forward to share their experiences and achievements that they have gained in their respective industry.

Therefore, ANC has decided to start a new series, ANC SAAKSHATKAR , where we Interview IIFM alumni from different fields and sectors. Through such interactions we believe that the current batches will get to learn more about our Alumni diaspora.

EXPRESSIONS FROM THE CURRENT BATCH 2019-21

HELPING HAND OF THE AA FOR THE STUDENTS OF PASSING OUT BATCH

**Shaon Roy,
PFM2019-21**

Many students from the current batch belong to the rural part of the country, the biggest problem they had to face while taking online classes was poor internet connectivity. With online classes sometimes running up to six hours a day, many students had no option but to move to a rented place in a nearby city, thereby increasing their monthly expenditure. Others, who didn't have the option to move to a nearby city, had to expend a large amount of money to set up internet facilities at their homes. Apart from the usual internet issues, a few of the students were also struggling due to frequent power cuts. There were students who were struggling with assignment deadlines due to the unavailability of a laptop. Purchasing a new one was out of the question as their family business was among one of those many businesses that suffered huge losses due to the pandemic. The Alumni Association financially assisted ten students from the current batch. The financial aid was provided to help students with the purchase of power banks, pay room rents, set-up internet facilities at home, disburse the loan amount to a student to help pay the final year fee on time, and with the purchase of essentials like laptops.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART - EXPRESSIONS OF PASSING OUT BATCH FOR THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION!

**Rohira Himanshu, Summer Internship Coordinator,
PFM 2019-21**

Mr. Narayana Murthy had once said that 'Nobody is bothered about an institution more than its alumni' and IIFM is no exception. The Alumni Association (AA) of IIFM has extended the helping hand towards the students of 2019-21 batch when it mattered a lot for them. Internship is one of the very important components of the PFM course. Unfortunately, the crisis of COVID-19 disturbed the prospects of internship in most of the institutes including IIFM. We recall with lots of gratitude that at the time when half of our batch-mates were waiting for internship opportunities after losing many, it was our Alumni who came to rescue and ensured that each one of us is on board. Dr. Ujjal Sharma and my team always had this belief about our Alumni they will sail us through from this problem and were right. Ultimately, we were ready for our amazing internships well within the schedule, at a time when other premium B-schools continued struggling to start the internships on time. It is often said that 'A tree's beauty lies in its branches, but its strength lies in its roots' and you guys proved that it is indeed true.

We are thankful to have this committed and loving community of alumni that stands by us no matter what. At the risk of sounding cheesy and melodramatic... Jahapana tussi great ho..tohfa kabul karo..!

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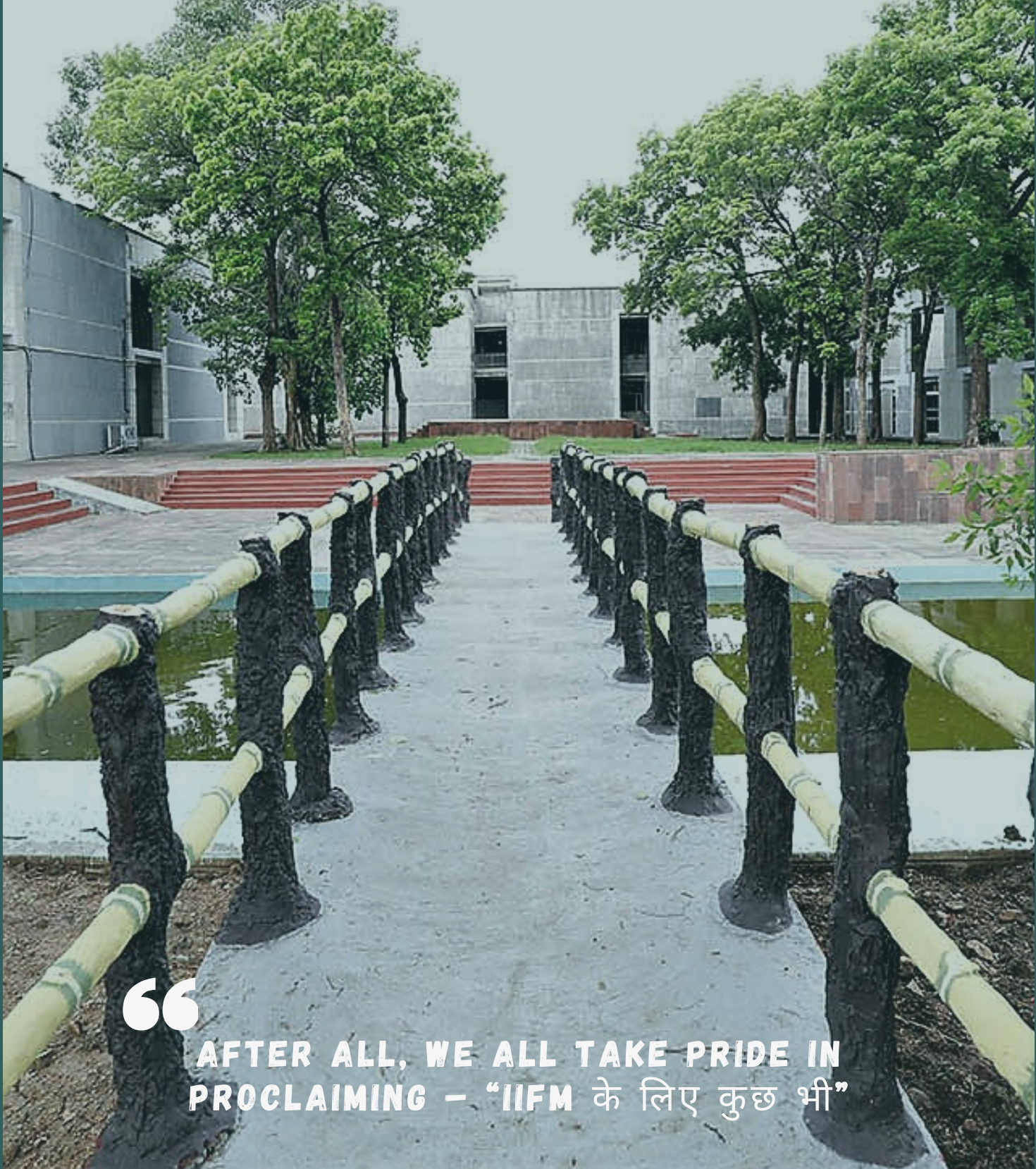
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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF FOREST MANAGEMENT



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**AFTER ALL, WE ALL TAKE PRIDE IN
PROCLAIMING – “IIFM के लिए कुछ भी”**