

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING COLLOQUIUM



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(1964-1978)

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING: HOW IT EVOLVED... AND DOES IT HAVE A FUTURE? – WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM DINOSAURS

ABSTRACT

After a brief overview of how knowledge grew from the beginning of mankind, and a brief history of the emergence of engineering and the formation of the IITs, this talk will focus on how the IITK and the mechanical engineering curricula evolved.

The spirit and culture of IITK – its DNA – which used to distinguish it from the other IITs, and perhaps still does – and which helped this Institute weather many storms, was formed during its Golden Years from 1964 to 1970; when Xerox machines, electric typewriters, PCs and laptops, and the internet did not exist. A major differentiator of IITK was its revolutionary curriculum that catalysed a major reform in technical education in India. How this change was conceived and executed, and its impact on IITK professional-year curricula will be addressed.

Times have changed and knowledge, and the speed of communication, is growing at an exponential rate. Has serious thought been given to the consequences of exponential change – what if what we learn today gets outmoded tomorrow? Does our curriculum reflect these changes? Issues for catalysing discussions on future engineering curricula will be raised.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Vijay Stokes was on the IITK ME Faculty from 1964 to 1978, during which he was very actively involved in the development of both the UG and PG curricula, and student governance. He spent the next 24 years at GE's Corporate Research Centre in Schenectady, NY, doing research in several areas. His talk will be coloured by his 38-years in academia and industry.

For over 35 years he has been studying the culture of the area 80 km North of Shimla that he grew up in. This includes characterizing the phonology of, and developing a script for, the local language, and making digital recordings of the three genres of folk music. He has also modernized the apple orchard started by his grandfather in the 1920s.

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