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**Abstract**

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) are among the most prestigious technical institutes in India (and perhaps in the world) for undergraduate engineering education. Admission to an IIT is viewed by many Indians as a passport to success, prosperity, prestige, and possibly moving to Western countries for higher studies and/or jobs. This paper examines whether (i) access to the IITs is open to students irrespective of their socioeconomic status; (ii) students' satisfaction, once they enter an IIT, is conditioned by their socioeconomic status; and (iii) students' attitudes towards their future plans are influenced by their socioeconomic status. The paper is based on a survey conducted with nearly 260 students at two out of five original IITs in 2007-2008. Findings reveal that access to the IITs, satisfaction at the IITs, and future plans after the IITs are strongly correlated to students' socioeconomic status. Even though admission to the IITs is based on an entrance examination, most of its students are from the socially and economically well-off families. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Varma, Roli, E-Mail: varna@unm.edu