

Life as a Junior Research Fellow at Laboratory for Biomaterials, MRC, IISc - Jeyapriya T J



Initially drawn to the field of tissue engineering after completing a project on hydrogels during my master's studies at IIT Bombay, I eagerly joined the lab, driven by a deep curiosity to explore the intricate biophysical cues that shape cell differentiation. Little did I know that my decision to embark on this journey would lead to a transformative period of growth, not only in terms of my research skills but also in various other aspects of my life.

During my time in the lab, I had the extraordinary privilege of witnessing and experiencing the profound impact of Prof. Basu's exceptional leadership firsthand. His unwavering commitment to motivating and inspiring others to become better leaders was palpable, as he consistently strove to bring out the best in each individual within his kingdom. Leading by example and providing countless opportunities for personal and professional advancement, he created an environment that fostered growth, empowerment, and collaboration.

Under Prof. Basu's guidance, I witnessed a significant improvement in my writing and presentation skills. He not only provided invaluable feedback and guidance but also instilled in me a keen understanding of the importance of effectively conveying research findings. The stark contrast between the initial draft and the final version of my first publication in *Acta Biomaterialia* was a testament to his dedication and expertise. Through his mentorship, I gained a deep appreciation for the art of crafting impactful scientific papers, realizing the power of meticulous attention to detail in ensuring the effective dissemination of research.

Furthermore, my time in the lab presented me with numerous first-time experiences that pushed me outside of my comfort zone and propelled my personal growth. Mentoring younger researchers, like Pragya and Rajeswari, allowed me to guide and inspire others, fostering a sense of fulfillment and responsibility. Forming my first-ever international friendship, Mike and subsequently Praneeth, broadened my horizons and cultivated cultural exchange, expanding my perspective on both personal and professional levels. The opportunity to publish papers and contribute to the organization of a conclave provided invaluable insights into the processes that underpin scientific collaboration and the dissemination of knowledge. Prof. Basu's unwavering belief in my abilities and his constant guidance throughout these experiences enabled me to realize my untapped potential and discover aspects of myself that I had never envisioned.

One remarkable aspect of the lab was its highly collaborative nature, which nurtured an environment of shared knowledge, innovation, and growth. Working closely with mentors like Gowtham and Soumitra, who hailed from diverse backgrounds in materials science and chemistry, respectively, I was exposed to different perspectives and gained a holistic understanding of the dynamic field of biomaterials. Their unwavering dedication and willingness to assist me, even amidst their own busy schedules, served as a constant source of motivation, inspiring me to push my boundaries and excel in the projects I was involved in.

Moreover, the lab fostered a supportive and nurturing community, fostering lifelong friendships with Remya, Bijay, Dharmendra, Garga, and others. The invaluable advice and assistance from my seniors and colleagues, and their unwavering support, knowledge-sharing, and willingness to lend a helping hand whenever needed created a collaborative and nurturing environment within the lab.

While my time in the lab was filled with invaluable experiences and personal growth, I am eternally grateful for Prof. Basu's constant support and unwavering belief in my abilities. His leadership and mentorship have left an indelible mark on my personal and professional growth, shaping me into a more confident and resilient individual.

The flow of knowledge, collaboration, and inspiration that permeated the lab has had a lasting impact on my journey. I am now equipped with a diverse skill set, expanded horizons, and a network of lifelong connections. The profound influence of this transformative period will continue to shape my future endeavors, and I will forever cherish the remarkable experiences and personal growth I attained within the lab's nurturing and empowering environment.