

DIPANKAR SARKAR

Dipankar Sarkar was a class apart. He was a self-made man. Despite his diminutive size, he was a tall man in many ways.

He was born in August 1965. When he was 9 months old, his biological mother died in a kerosene stove accident. Before he could understand the beauty of life, his life had taken a vicious turn - his childhood was full of hardship.

He joined St. Mary's School in 1970 and when the Kendriya Vidyalaya opened in RDSO Colony in 1972, he along with many of us shifted to this school.

Dipankar always excelled in studies. He always stood first in the Class, despite all the restrictions and limitations. We lived in an era of limited resources, but for Dipankar things were worse. No meeting of friends outside, no sports, no games, no entertainment, no comics, no going out of the house after school and no resources for doing project works.

Tis hardship did not deter him. It made him stronger. Excellence in studies came naturally to him. We never aimed for the first position - It was reserved for him. The fight was always for the second and third positions and we didn't mind that - such was his unassailable position. In fact, we introduced ourselves in the school and colony as Dipankar Sarkar's class fellows. His deep understanding of all the subjects was legendary. I remember one instance - In Class X, our Chemistry teacher Mrs. Santhanam was shocked and thrilled when he picked up the word 'dimerization' from the book and asked her, "What does this mean?" We had all glossed over it, dismissing it as something meaningless and insignificant. She went on to explain monomers, dimers and polymers. Mere presence of Dipankar brought out the best out of everyone - teachers and students both. Such was his genius that he once surprised the Physics teacher by asking questions on Raman Effect.

Class 12 was challenging for many of us as we had clear the competitive exams. He had only the regular school textbooks to read, while many of us had access to expensive reference books like the two volumes on Physics by Resnick and Haliday. We had access to coaching materials but he had none of those luxuries. Occasionally, he would borrow some of these reference books from us for a day or two, read it and give it back. We had emotional support from family and he did not have that too.

Despite all odds, he excelled. He cleared the IIT JEE with no resources. He did better than all others in the Class. His rank was in the 300s and he joined Mechanical Engineering at IIT Kanpur.

IIT Kanpur was the best IIT in those days and he blossomed further. He enjoyed his freedom but remained focused on learning more and more.

He graduated from IIT Kanpur in 1987 and started working at Godrej and Boyce in Mumbai. A few years in Mumbai and he garnered some resources to move to US for higher studies. It was those early days when Software was still in its nascency. He flourished and grew into an excellent Software Engineer.

He was a genius. He was working on Hadoop, which is a technology for data transfer from one to many without choking the provider servers. He also had a few patents to his credit.

He was married and lived in Saratoga, California with his wife, daughter and son. He was a strong family man and always strove to give the best to his family. He always had a very strong bond with all his school

friends. They were more than family to him. One of our classmates was at Ahmedabad when he experienced earthquake tremors and Dipankar who called him up within 10 minutes.

He was always keen to meet old friends and was the person behind the first Yahoo Group of the Class. He was also an active participant in the reunions that we had.

He died of diabetes related complications this February. However, his legacy is alive, it will always be. He was definitely a big man, a self-made man. We will always miss him.