“You are the first cohort from our college, go out there and show them your metal”

Said the Dean of Thapar University when I started my journey as a third-year student at Trinity College Dublin transferred from Thapar University. For a meek submissive guy from a small city in Punjab this place called Ireland was sure going to present some challenges.

This was the very first time I found myself out of my comfort zone. My motivation was, ‘learning’ be it from curriculum or from my interaction with people of different nationalities. For example Did you know that there is a popular Brazilian TV show that depicts caste system in India (Caminho das Índias)?, or How semantic web would empower the Euro 2020 goals ?. There were times when I found myself clueless on how to behave and what to take along as a gift when I visit my Irish friend’s family home.

One of the hardest lessons I learnt was the European independent attitude. Although, I had friends but I was on my own when there was any chore outside of academics. Back in India I would have taken all my friends to help me with whatever work.

I still remember that day of my entrepreneurship course when we had to pitch. It was my second week and the pitch was voluntary. Somehow, I gathered the courage to pitch. To my surprise my idea was among the two ideas selected. I got a chance to form a team. Our team of 15 students worked together for a semester. One important thing I learnt was that Europeans do not like to be micromanaged. I mended my ways to manage the team. Each member picked up tasks from the bucket voluntarily and completed it. This opportunity helped me gain a lot of leadership insights.

I enjoyed the curriculum as it promoted originality and practicality. My Irish friends and I used to slog long hours in labs completing assignments, coming up with unique solutions. This was different because back in India there always used to be just one correct answer to each question. In Trinity, assignments were more like open ended questions which force you to think deep.

The learning went on and the 2 years passed by in the blink of an eye. I set out to achieve a good academic score but achieved something bigger by becoming a diverse person. This journey taught me how to live independently, how to mix up with and learn from people of different cultures, how to lead a team and think out of the box. This is something that I can contribute to ISB.