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An Interview with Dr. Saha, Professor IIT Delhi

[Interviews](#) | [Surbhi Bhatia](#) | August 19, 2009 at 10:00 pm



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Dr. Subir Kumar Saha is a professor in the Mechanical Department of IIT [Delhi](#). He is the founder of the [Robotics Club](#) in IIT [Delhi](#). He has also written a [book](#) 'Introduction To Robotics' and developed a software named 'Roboanalyzer'. The Robotics Club was incepted in IITD in 2003. He can be credited with taking robotics to the students and popularising it. Let's hear from him about the club and about Robotics in IITD and India.

VP: What took so long for a Robotics Club to come up at IIT?

Dr. Saha: What do you mean by so long? We had Robotics activities in the institute since 1980s. It was only 2003 onwards the IIT [Delhi](#) students started participating in the Robocon (the biggest national robotics activity) competitions. They decided to do it formally through/via the Robotics Club. Within this period (1980-2003) I am aware of TRYST (the technical festival of IIT [Delhi](#)) conducting robotics competitions. Besides, many students of IIT [Delhi](#) were participating in several robotics competitions around the country.

VP: In what activities is the club involved?

Dr. Saha: The club mainly participates in the Robocon competition, which requires almost 7-8 months preparation. The members organize workshops for the freshers and encourages/supports other students to take part in other smaller robotic competitions.

VP: Do you plan to have any collaboration with the industry?

Dr. Saha: We (the Robotics Club) already have a collaboration. Every year we get sensors worth lakhs from IFM India. We are also open to other industrial partners.

VP: What would you suggest to students who're just starting out? How should they approach?

Dr. Saha: They should look for a competition and start preparing for it. Many times it is difficult to decide what to do and where to start. Why to spend time on that? Take the objectives from a defined competition. Then, look for its solutions.

VP: You've also written a book on Robotics. Tell us something about it.

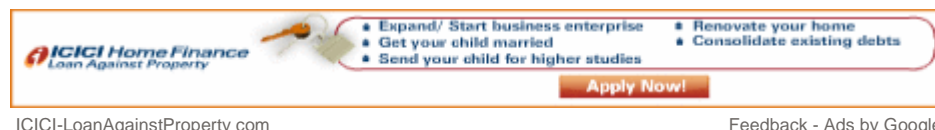
Dr. Saha: The book is written to make Indian students proud of their INDIAN teachers. It took me about nine years to complete. Now, I am happy that it is out. The first reprint is out within a year. Thanks to the readers, who made it happen. For more on the book one may visit, <http://www.mhhe.com/saha/robotics>. The book has an appendix on students' projects as well as a brief description on Robocon activities carried out by IIT [Delhi](#) students.

VP: Also tell us about Roboanalyzer.

Dr. Saha: Roboanalyzer is a Robot Dynamics software to make the learning of Robot Dynamics easy. This topic is not taught in most of the engineering colleges (at least in India). Through this software I want students to understand the physics of robots rather than understanding its underlying equations unless they are required for the research/analyses purposes. We want to make it a 'service software,' i.e., the user pays for the number of analyses he or she performs. For example, if one needs 100 analyses to complete an assignment, he or she buys materials for those analyses only costing (may be) 100xRs. 10 = Rs. 1000. This way the software is available cheap, day and night (without worrying whether the lab. is open or not), and also the updates are available even if it is used after one year or so. For more visit, <http://www.roboanalyzer.org>.

VP: Robotics has evolved a lot and is still involving. Where does India stand? Which are the institutes here involved in high level research in this field?

Dr. Saha: India is at the leading edge of this subject as more and more companies are adopting automation, and more and more institutes are teaching and carrying out research in this area. There are even schools in India to exposes their students to Robotics through workshops and hobby clubs.



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