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# 'Go to MIT; industrialise India'

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Ahmedabad: It may surprise many that the first group of Indians who got the chance of studying at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US, between the 1920s and 1930s belonged to a small princely state in Kathiawar, Bhavnagar.

Professor Ross Bassett, an associate professor of department of History, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina will be in Ahmedabad on March 14 and will deliver a lecture on 'MIT Trained Swadeshi: MIT and Indian Nationalism, 1880-1947' at the Ahmedabad Management Association.

In fact, Bhavnagar, represented less than two percent of Indian population back then, but produced almost half the Indians who earned degrees from MIT in the 1930s, stated professor Bassett in a recently published paper. "This concentration in Bhavnagar was further heightened in the family of a lifelong friend of Mahatma Gandhi, Devchand Parekh, a lawyer by profession," claims professor Bassett. Parekh had just returned from Cambridge, in 1897, when he met the famous economist Alfred Marshall. The latter counselled Devchand that Indians should not be going to Britain to study liberal arts; instead they should go to America - specifically to MIT - to study engineering, and then return to India to set up industries that would improve the Indian standard of living.

Parekh went to US in 1893, visited MIT, and began a correspondence with MIT officials to receive catalogues. He had a vision of a technological India built around Indians trained at MIT. He influenced his son as well as his brothers Mulchand, Hemchand and Vallabhdas to send their children to MIT. This way Devchand's sons Vasu and Manu, along with their cousins Kanti and Rasik made it to MIT. While the two daughters of Vallabhdas Parekh, Chandan Parekh Kalelkar and Kamala Parekh Shah studied at Boston University. All the cousins lived in the same flat.

