

Report

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Partner University: IIT Madras

City/Country: Chennai, India

Year: 2010

MA/BA:

Student Research Project: "German and Indian Public Private Partnerships – A comparison of road projects"

1. Preparation (planning, organisation and application at the partner university)

Preparation was relatively easy, but it took some time. The contact to my Indian supervisors was made quite fast. They took care of my local administration and gave me advice what to prepare in advance.

Still in Germany, I booked a flight and got a travel document and an Indian visa at the Indian embassy (2 days). For all the immunisations you have to allow a lot of extra time. In my case it took me 4 months to get all the necessary immunisations, because you have to wait a few weeks before getting the next one. Some other things that are essential in your travel equipment: a big backpack to travel through India, a mosquito net (chemical protection means like creams from Germany do not help at all), a very thin cotton sleeping bag and a wide first-aid kit (fever, diarrhoea, malaria, iodine).

2. Journey (organisation, costs)

The journey from Frankfurt/Main via Abu Dhabi to Chennai did not cause any trouble. As my supervisor told me, I got a taxi ticket at the airport, said "ti IIT Inside" and arrived at the campus. My contact person welcomed me there and helped me for the next days with the organisation of my stay (flat, registration, bike, etc.).

Preparations were a bit more expensive, but living in India is therefore very cheap. It is good to learn trading quickly, because for Europeans everything is more expensive.

Flight: ca. 500 Euro

Visa: ca. 100 EUR

Miscellaneous equipment: (backpack, sleeping bag, mattress): ca. 500 EUR

Immunisations and medication: ca. 600 Euro

Semester fees (room, internet, 3 meals p.d.): 40 EUR p.m.

30 days of travelling through India (ca. 5000 km) incl. Train, flight, hotel, meals and all other costs ca. 1000 EUR.

Train rides traversing the country (ca. 2000km) cost normally not more than 10 EUR

3. Accommodation (costs, kind of accommodation, etc.)

I paid 240 Euro for six months of rent in a student hostel including access to the Internet and three meals in the canteen per day. The interior is quite simple and I had to buy a mattress by my own.

4. Partner University

a. Studying (courses, projects, schedule)

I was writing a Student Research Project with the title "German and Indian Public Private Partnerships – A comparison of road projects".

I had an Indian supervisor, a PhD Student, who was helping me with all the administration.

b. Support of the Partner University (international office and faculty/chair)

A lot of students and the whole chair were very helpful with every questions I got. Especially my two supervisors supported me completely. On one hand they spent a lot of time for helping me. On the other hand their requirements for my research project were very high. They provided a personal workplace for me.

c. Language courses at the Partner University

As long as I were enrolled at the IIT, I had the chance to visit all kinds of lectures. I took advantage of these possibilities and got a Six-Sigma-Green Belt and i visited a lecture named "Lean-Management".

d. University facilities (library, computer labs, etc.)

Everything is quite bureaucratic. You have to be patient or just get to know the right people and then waiting periods will shorten from three days to half an hour. After a lot of effort and complications, because one of the forms got lost, one form was filled out incorrect and the ATMs were not working, I managed to transfer the money for my room, got a student identity card, registered myself at the local authorities and got a card for the canteen. Especially the registration for the countless sport offers requires a lot of time and patience.

In general the university offers comprehensive facilities e.g some supermarkets, a swimming pool, several sports fields, a haircutter, tailors, a travel agency, a café and much more.

The campus is huge and you get lost quite easily. It took me some time to get an overview of the area and to orientate myself. The campus is situated in a national park and therefore you will meet some dears, monkeys day by day. You have to close the doors if you do not want a monkey letting off steam in your room.

SAARANG - the festival at IITM (they say it is the biggest in South India) counts as one of the highlights at the university. You can participate in workshops and

competitions or just visit concerts and one of the countless food stands. People from all over the country come to this festival. Smoking and drinking alcohol are forbidden in general on the campus and on the festival, too.

5. Living (city/country, culture, food, communicating, jobs, etc.)

Chennai is a world for its own: colourful, loud and lively. The standard of living is compared to Europe quite low.

One of the most exciting and special aspects is probably the food. There are two kinds of taste in India: hot or extremely sweet. The meals in the canteen are quite good, but it is a bit monotonous: rice with 1 to 3 vegetable sauces, cucumbers and onions. Who does not like rice can choose something made of dough. There is no meat in the canteen.

I liked especially the wide choice of exotic and fresh fruits, e.g. bananas, pineapples, papayas, coconuts and a lot of fruits I did not even know before.

Of course I travelled a lot - an activity for which India is perfect for. There is beautiful nature, the beach and a lot of religious places. Riding on a bus costs almost nothing.

6. Summary (best and/or worst experience, final words or advices to your fellow students)

India is a country that you definitely have to visit - a country full of contrasts. It was a completely new and wonderful experience, to be guest in such an unknown world. As a European I needed approximately 3 months to get used to the manners and this life style.

I saw and experienced a lot of things, that would have never happened to me in the Western civilisation. This implies negative (e.g. poorness, suffering, illness, smell), but also a lot of positive impressions (e.g. nature, people. Freedom, food, animals, adventures etc.)

It was the best decision ever to visit India and I gathered so much worthwhile experiences, I would never want to miss ever again.