

Manipal Institute of Technology, Karnataka, India 10.2021-12.2021

As part of a German Indian IAESTE exchange I did an eight-week internship in Manipal, Karnataka as part of my Master's degree in Molecular Biotechnology in Heidelberg. Due to Corona the original start of this internship was moved from June to October. But luckily everything worked out in the end, also thanks to the great support from the local IAESTE committee. The city Manipal is located near the western coast and more than half of its relatively small population of only 50.000 people are students including many internationals. Therefore, Manipal has a lot of small and big shops, Cafes, Restaurants, bars, and clubs. And if you are looking for a bigger city, Udupi, with a population of about 800,000, is reached within 10 minutes by bus and directly behind Udupi are several beautiful beaches.



I worked at the Manipal Institute of Technology (MIT) in the department of biomedical engineering. It is part of the Manipal University (MAHE). I had my own project that I worked on with the help of my supervisor who was doing his PhD. My project was about mathematical modelling of drug release profiles from different cross-linked biodegradable hydrogels. The final application would then be a wound dressing that continuously releases drugs that promote the healing process.



My supervisor and I both met regularly with the professor and discussed new results and possible next steps. Both the professor and my supervisor were always very friendly, helpful, and open to contributing my own ideas to the project. Since the project started with my internship

it took a lot of time, but the weekends were usually free to explore Manipal and nearby places.

Overall, I gained some more knowledge about the biophysical chemistry of polymers with application in medicine.

My accommodation in the international hostels was completely organized by the local committee in Manipal and additionally, it was totally free. I stayed in the international student hostel with my own room, which was only a 15-minute walk from the university. However, there are also many auto rickshaws in Manipal that take you to campus in less than 5 minutes for the equivalent of 35 cents. In my room I had a desk, a bed, seating options, a basic kitchen line and my own bathroom. Since these rooms do not have a cooker top or oven, we met up with friends and went out for every meal which is nice considering the delicious Indian kitchen for so little money. There are many cafeterias, food courts, cafes, and restaurants all over MIT campus and the campus where I stayed.

Manipal University has a huge sports center that is called Marena. It has a great gym, lots of different sports grounds and even a swimming pool.

But what really made this internship special is the incredible local IAESTE committee. With around 70 students for different posts and tasks they usually host about 180 IAESTE interns every year, at least before Corona.

This year we were only 3 interns that were able to come to Manipal, from Tunisia, Bangladesh, and me.



Travelling was limited due to Corona, but still possible for smaller day trips. No matter where you go, everyone is willing to help you and English is usually completely sufficient to communicate. The local committee managed to constantly plan trips and get-togethers for us interns despite the restrictions caused by Corona. Examples for these events are a group



hiking, kayaking, a trip to the near rainforest or a farewell party. They also took us to many precious temples, of which there are a lot in India, and tell us about their culture and the 32 million different gods.

Because there are so many gods, almost every day is a festival in India,



somewhere. During Diwali, a big, one weeklong festival of lights, most streets in Manipal were colorfully decorated with lights or small lamps.



There is a saying in the Hindu religion that translates as "the guest is God", and you really feel this hospitality. I always experienced open and very friendly people in and around Manipal, which helped me a lot in making new friends in the hostel, when going out and during the internship. Everybody is interested in where you come from and how you like it in their country. Topic number one usually is food. If you haven't tried it yet you most probably get invited to try it with them. It took a couple of weeks to fully get used to Indian food, but it was always so delicious.

Manipal is a relatively quiet and organized place, which makes it quite easy for a foreigner to get into this completely different culture and way of living.

Overall, I really enjoyed my stay here in Manipal and gained many unique experiences.