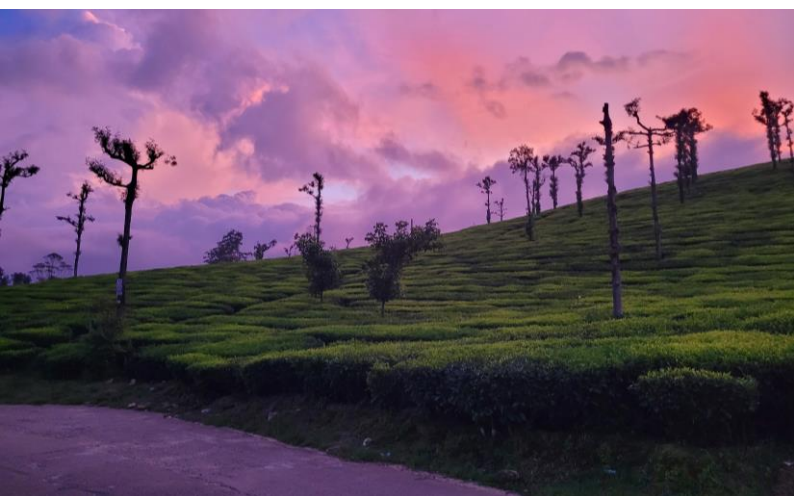


Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore – India

01.09.22 – 30.11.22

Via IAESTE I had the opportunity to do a 3 months Internship in Coimbatore, India, as a part of my bachelors degree in physics in Heidelberg. The city is part of India's south-most state: Tamil Nadu and is located perfectly to take weekend trips to either coast as it is located quite central. The local IAESTE committee was very helpful and welcoming. I was told that pre Covid there were many interns (up to 20) at the same time in Karunya. During my stay, we were always 2-4 Interns, with me staying the longest.

After arriving in Coimbatore I was able to choose between three engineering projects. None of these was the exact project I applied for, possibly due to a misunderstanding on the receiving universities' part, but the projects were engaging nonetheless. After choosing I was given a rough draft of the project: a solar powered desalination plant, split into three sections. I was supposed to design and properly size it to sustain a household's or village's water needs. For that, I had to develop/integrate theoretical models into a python routine to simulate the heat transfer in a solar powered desalination plant. Thus I had to do a lot of literature research by myself to come up with all the necessary equations. Overall my internship was very independent, but I had the opportunity to discuss with my supervisor from time to time how my work was going. Even though I had some difficulty as my study area is physics, he was mostly satisfied with what I was doing and encouraged me to continue.



As I spent three full months on the internship I had the opportunity to travel a lot. Every weekend me and the other interns chose a travel destination and took an overnight bus/train (with proper beds!) and spent one night there. During most time of the year there will be quite a few holidays to also utilize for travelling. It was easily possible to take leave to extend these holidays until the weekends for me and I was even able to do a 9 day journey once. Sadly making journeys with the local students is difficult due to strict curfews and other regulations.



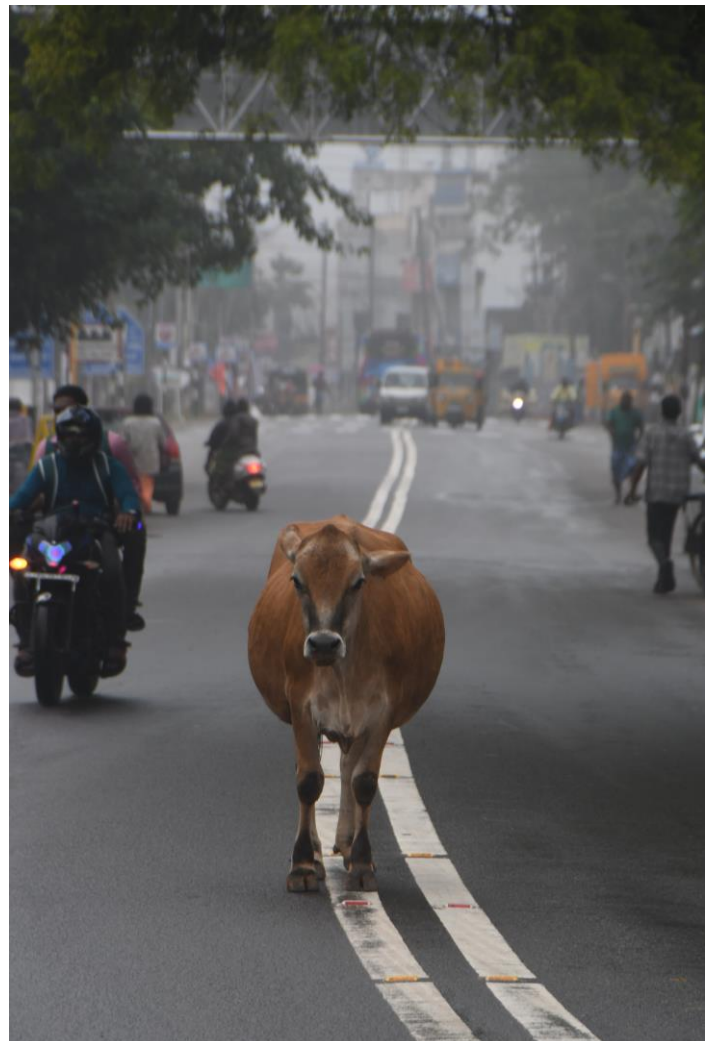
The culture in India is quite different from the one that I know from Germany, so adjusting took a little time. But everyone I met was very welcoming and helpful towards me and I did enjoy spending time with the people. As south India has many different languages spoken, most people were able to speak fairly good English, so communication was quite easy.

Difficulties and Tips

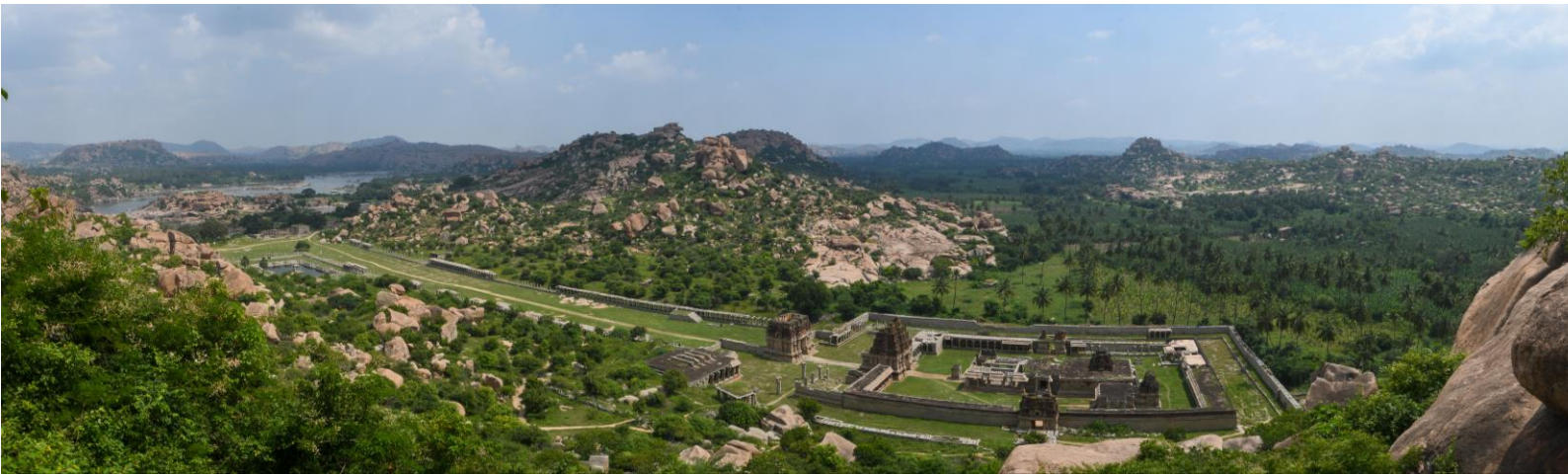
The biggest difficulty for me was payment. For many of the night busses (available on e.g. 'makemytrip') no payment is possible with european credit cards, thus we always had to kindly ask some of the students of the IAESTE LC to help us out, which they did. Furthermore even for trains, ticket payment ('IRCTC' website) can be difficult. In the beginning, it worked for me (MasterCard) but that payment option seems to be no longer available. Another intern with a 'DKB' VISA card could pay via Razorpay and PayU, but those are (most likely) blocked by my bank. In essence, talk to your bank before coming here about such payment possibilities, nonetheless it can be frustrating.

Once successfully paid and booked the (night) trains (class '3AC', '2AC') are quite comfortable as you are provided with bed sheets and a pillow. Trains should be booked at least 2 weeks in advance. For spontaneous journeys, there is also the 'TATKAL' option to buy tickets on the day before the journey.

I did not think that people would be so helpful and welcoming towards me. Furthermore, I did not expect the number of people asking me to pose with them for taking a selfie, most likely due to my light hair and skin colour...



I was surprised by the food. While the meals are very delicious and there is also quite a variety of street food it became boring after a few weeks. This was due to the (for me) very similar taste between many of the dishes.



Conclusion

India is an amazing country to travel around and explore its history and to try the many local dishes. Furthermore, travel is quite cheap. In the cities, life is quite hectic and the traffic is very loud as many people honk constantly with extra loud (after-market) horns. Furthermore, in the public busses, the staff communicates with whistles which lead to multiple hours of ringing in my ears after I left the bus. Not all buses are that loud but many are, so earplugs became a valuable asset of mine. The travelling itself is quite stressful with that many people and noise, nonetheless I did always enjoy it and the final destinations are totally worth it! One can see amazing landscapes, architecture and experience a very colourful and diverse country!

