

Field Report of Paul Thorsch

I did my research internship from 06.10.2012 to 31.01.2013 at the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK). Kanpur is a big town in the district of Uttar Pradesh, which is located in central north of India near the river Ganges.



In the beginning I noticed the presence of security personnel all over the campus and even in front of each hall of residence was one guard checking the students. All people who are working on the campus live there too. That includes approximately 6,000 students, all academics and professors with their families, the security personnel and staff. With three primary schools, two markets and a Health Centre, the campus was like a small town. Conspicuous for me was the fact that only one out of ten halls was available for women.

I had a room in the Visitor Hostel, which was a hall for short-term visitors. For that reason I had a room with better facilities than those available in the normal halls. There I met six other foreign students which were studying for two semesters at IITK and who supported me in my adaption phase on the campus.

Together with Indian colleagues, my task was to implement a project on screen printed electronic devices. For this purpose we had a laboratory with new machines as well as a clean room. It sometimes happened that we had delays, because of problems of material deliveries, which slowed down the project completely. Nevertheless, I am very pleased with the results.

On my free weekends I could do some little trips to the surroundings of Kanpur from time to time: I rode by bicycle to the Ganges, drove by car to Lucknow – the capital city of the district of Uttar Pradesh – and Agra – to see Taj Mahal.

Cab riding was an adventure by itself. The streets were overcrowded with people, bicyclists, rickshaws, motorcyclists, cars, trucks, and, to my big surprise, with all kinds of animals.

Cows, buffaloes, pigs and dogs are equal road users.



For the aspect of culture the campus had a lot to offer for its students. IITK has two student activity centers, several sport fields, stadiums and in front of the auditorium there is a big festival ground with a stage. Multiple times during my stay there were competitions between the diverse IITs which took place in Kanpur on the campus.

Another highlight during my stay was the participation in three weddings of my work colleagues.

In conclusion, I can say that the stay was very impressive for me. I got to know a highly technological India with a very ambitious academic elite. But on the opposite side, in front of the campus gates, there were people who were excluded from society and had to live on the streets.

India will remain in my mind with its amazingly friendly, interested and helpful people, many impressions and great experiences for a very long time.



For more detailed explanations on the topics I have briefly introduced here, feel free to contact me at paul.thorsch@s2010.tu-chemnitz.de.