

James Carpenter
Summary and Reflection on Tata Motors Internship, Summer 2016
Aug. 16, 2016

Overall my time at Tata Motors has been fulfilling and educational. I work under Mr. S.D. Pundlik, Senior Legal Manager stationed at the Pimpri Plant just outside of Pune, Maharashtra; previous interns have been at the Bombay House in Mumbai.

The climate in Pune is mild and pleasant; although I have not spent much time in Mumbai I have been told by past interns and locals that it experiences torrential downpours during the monsoon season. This is the first year that Tata has placed a U.S. intern at the Pimpri Plant; on reasoning that while Mumbai provided a sufficient program, it was very corporate in nature. Further justification for placing me in Pune is that it provides an “authentic” experience of the day-to-day life of a Tata employee. I do like working at this location but see what is meant when this plant is described as traditional or authentic. For those who have worked in a business or corporate counsel setting before, Pune is much different. Due to the nature of the work here, mainly heavy commercial and passenger vehicle manufacturing, the culture is more factory-style than most corporate attorneys may be accustomed to. Each of the hundreds of employees, whether manufacturing line or office workers, clock in and out at a punch clock and work regulated shifts. Legal takes the “general shift” from 8:30 a.m. to 5:40 p.m. There is not much of a choice to stay late at the plant; when the whistle blows at 5:40, it is time to clock out and get on a bus to join the massive caravan out the plant gates. This does take some getting used to as I have been one to stay working late nights if a job needs to get done; but over time, a routine establishes.

Lodging is provided by the company at the Tata Guest house. This is a very nice high rise apartment complex where Tata has purchased several flats for its temporary employees and guests. The staff is kind and accommodating perhaps to a level that many Americans may not be familiar or comfortable with, i.e. daily cooking and cleaning. However, in India this type of service is not uncommon and quite often a family will have one or two servants in the home to assist in daily chores and cooking.

The legal team at Tata Motors is vast, but the Pimpri plant runs a lighter operation with only 3 full-time attorneys under Mr. Pundlik. The day-to-day tasks normally involve employment and labor issues; worker’s compensation, insurance claims due to on-site injuries, and employee disputes. One or two attorneys travel regularly into Pune for hearings. While I have assisted in this process, my main assignment has been to summarize and analyze the newly enacted Indian Insolvency and Bankruptcy Act and compare it to the U.S. and U.K. systems. While a bankruptcy court and a set code is status quo in the U.S., the concept of a unified Indian code is very novel as the current system is fragmented and understaffed. My research has kept me busy since I arrived, and, while challenging at times, I have learned a great deal through the process about both Indian and U.S. law.

My time in India has been well spent. Aside from venturing around Pune and Mumbai, weekends have been spent traveling to Bangalore, Delhi and Agra to see various sites and attractions. The many regional differences have made each trip unique. Almost everyone here is welcoming and just as curious and eager to learn about American culture as I am to learn of theirs. The Tata Motors internship has provided excellent exposure to the many aspects of a position in corporate counsel, as well as a unique and memorable experience of a diverse country with a rich history.