

A summer at Tata Motors in Pune, India - 2017

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Tata Motors, the largest commercial vehicle producer in India, does the bulk of its manufacturing at the Pimpri plant, just outside the city of Pune. Pune, a “small” city of 6 million people, is the cultural center of the state of Maharashtra. At the same time, the city is also experiencing a tech boom. From the perspective of an American, it is bewildering to see a person walking a pack-camel to market along the sidewalks of some of the most intense rush hour I have ever seen. However, this is a part of everyday life in Pune. The weather was hot and humid until the middle of June, when the monsoon season started. During monsoon, the weather cooled to the mid 70’s; put pack a raincoat!

This was the second year that a Wayne Law student worked in the legal department at the Pimpri plant. The guesthouse I stay in was in Aundh, what we would call a “suburb” of Pune. There were a total of 6 men that worked in the guesthouse: 2 chefs and 4 caretakers. The food I was provided was phenomenal, and the chefs seemed to enjoy cooking for a foreigner, asking for my opinion on every meal. The guesthouse is used to accommodate mostly Tata employees from around the country and I had the opportunity to meet, eat and socialize with a lot of different people from different parts of the country. The language barrier is minimal, and I was never asked to share my room with anyone.

Working at Tata was a great experience. I spent my summer researching Indian contract law and comparing it to American law. With India having been an English colony until the mid-20th century, the majority of its laws are based on English common law. Indian contract law is governed at the federal level by the Indian Contract Act of 1872. This made my research rather easy because the bulk of their contract law is within one document. I was also given the opportunity to read, redline, and draft some of the NDAs and Service Agreements that Tata was contemplating. This experience was invaluable since my drafting was proofed by what would be the equivalent of Tata’s General Counsel.

I was also able to spend my time away from the office travelling around Pune, Mumbai, and Delhi. Pune has a lot to offer in the way of restaurants, malls, and pubs. Mumbai is a bustling city. As a foreigner walking down the streets, I was constantly hailed by shop keepers and other tourists. The Gateway of India, Elephant Island, and Marine Drive are some of the hot spots to hit while in the city. My trip to Delhi was guided by a travel agency. I booked flights, hotels, a driver, and tour guides at a great price for a student. The highlight of the trip was spending a night in Agra, the home of the Taj Mahal.

When I came back to the US and began the interview process, the value of this trip really started to show. Every interviewer I sat with wanted to know about my summer in India. Being able to tell a great story from the trip, and tie legal experience in with it, proved invaluable. I would recommend this trip to anyone that is interested in gaining experience in the corporate law field, seeing a very different part of the world, and able to adapt to a completely foreign culture.