Final Report

For the following time period:
1. September – 15. February

Sascha Roßmann
Elberhausen 1
42499 Hueckeswagen

Country: India
State: Karnataka
City: Bangalore

Praxissemesterstelle
Robert Bosch India Ltd.
123, Industrial Layout,
Hosur Road, Koromangala,
Bangalore 560095
Tel. 91-80 5711673
Fax 91-80 2992192
My name is Sascha Roßmann and I am studying „Applied Business and Technic“ at the Märkischen Fachhochschule in Hagen. I had had many contacts regarding India in my friendcircle, in the school and had developed an interest for this country. I planned to make a practical training in any case abroad in order to improve my English, sample practical experience and see another culture. Besides, it would help me to extend the ability for managing and arranging things. Because of this, I applied for a scholarship from CDG for India.

After I had obtained the confirmation being a participant of the CDG program, I started to search of an appropriate company in India. I visited the CeBit fair to contact a wide range of companies. The company Bosch had one stall and the person in charge for personnel recruitment contacted Robert Bosch India Ltd. They responded and offered a project „Cost Monitoring by SAP R/3“. I agreed and sent my contract forms per Mail to India. The whole procedure took two months which is very short. Actually, those companies that are a subsidiary from a german company are independent and the decisions are made decentrally which means you have to contact mostly the company in India and not in Germany. This fact creates some problems in respect of finding a company for a practical training. I recommend to start early with your searching then the communication will be facing you some difficulties. Besides searching for a job, you should immediately start with vaccinations because some vaccinations have to be done at least three months in advance.

While the potential dangers can seem quite frightening, in reality few travellers experience anything more than upset stomachs.

The incurring costs are between 200 DM and 500 DM depending on the range of vaccinations. Necessarily, you should be vaccinated for Hepatitis A, the most
common acquired disease after diarrhoea, Havrix 1440 is a vaccination which provides long-term immunity. Typhoid is an important vaccination where hygiene is an acute problem. Of course, everybody should have Diphtheria, a fatal throat infection and Tetanus, a serious sore infection, as standard vaccinations. A further helpful vaccination is against Meninogococcal Meningitis, it is transmitted like a cold but leads already after some hours to death. Hepatitis B is spread by blood or sexual activity and should be taken as precaution if blood transfusions are required. A other standard vaccination is polio that is easily transmitted. Rabies is only required for those who are planning to make safaris, adventure travels or trekking tours. I had skipped off the vaccination for malaria because the medicine can influence you mentally very much and combined with the different conditions in the country it can become a hurdle. Instead, I bought a specific medicine which you have to take immediately in case if you notice effects indicating a malaria infection.

For India a visa is compulsory and I acquired it one day before my departure because the expire date is related to the acquire date. I tried to acquire a visa for one entire year, but they didn’t grant that. You can get problems if you have to extend the visa within India. Perhaps, a visit to a neighbouring country is necessary to get a new visa when it isn’t possible to extend in India. The costs are approximately 60 DM. I am recommending to bring along some european food like soups, bread, ham or something else in order that you can get used to the indian food slowly. Additionally, tape, thread and needle, paste, leash and not to forget the mosquito net. In Bangalore especially, many mosquitos exist. In the winter time that is in Bangalore from October till January you don’t have to cope with clouds of mosquitos, but at the end of January and February where
summer time starts, increasingly mosquitos are coming up. I didn’t use a mosquito net during the winter time at all. Apart from that, the danger to get a malaria contagion is in Bangalore not alarming because the local existing mosquito specie is not the typical dangerous breed for malaria like the mosquitos in Goa. If you buy some Autan spray, you are secured for the winter time. But you can get special plugs with an insecticide that has the same effect like a mosquito net.

I am recommending to sign up a travel insurance that encompasses all possible medical concerns. Comparatively cheap and affordable is the DKV (Deutsche Krankenversicherung AG), it is charging for the first insurance year 31,33 DM (included USA 62,66 DM).

As preparation, I had read much about the country, such as politics, religions, customs, habits, possible difficulties to be faced, characteristics, history. I experience that it has been helping me now to understand the people and my daily environment. In my opinion, it is especially necessary to know something about the religion then almost every act in the daily life of an Indian is conjuncted indirectly with their religion.

For studying, I recommend the following book even though it is rather expensive:

Title: India
Publisher: Lonely Planet
ISBN: 0-86442-491-4
Price: $ 25.95
In this book you find everything that is required for a trip through India and it is filled by information given from travellers. It is divided in chapters each representing a state of India.

There are no countries on earth that have to offer a variety like India and that in every aspect. India is as vast as it is crowded, as luxurious as squalid.

In the following some information about India and the State Karnataka where Bangalore is located. Very briefly, India is a triangle with the top formed by the mighty Himalayan mountain chain. Southerly is the flat Ganges basin. In the north-west the capital city Delhi with its tourist attractions like Agra with Taj Mahal, Varanasi and the holy Ganges. In the north-east part the metropol Calcutta which seems to sum up all indian problems and is teeming of traffic means and human beings. South of this northern plain the Deccan plateau rises and further south find the conservative Hindus because this region has been least altered by outside influences.

India has a total area of 3287263 sq km. It is divided up into 25 states (Karnataka is one of these) and seven union territories like Delhi. India has the second largest population in the world with 970 million people, only exceeded by China with 1.125 billion people. The country is still very rural, only approximately 300 million people live in urban regions. India is overwhelmingly Hindu, but there are also a large number of other religions.

These so-called minorities include 110 million Muslims, with it India is the country with largest number of muslims in the world. Christians number about 23 million encompassing catholics and protestans, Sikhs 19 million, Buddhists 7 million and Jains 4.7 million.
There are about 800000 schools in the country. The literacy rate is 54% nationally. Generally, women are less educated than men, in figures, the literacy rate for women is 39% whereas of the men is 64%. Karnataka is one of the most educated states in India that is expressed by the queue of students residing there. The so-called caste system is one of the strangest characteristics of the country and is handled by citizens differently. As higher as the education level of an individual as less as he pays attention to the old classification system. But there are still conservative people who try to express in the profession through their position their background or to oppress colleagues from lower castes. It has been replaced continually by the industrialization and the adequately importing of the thinking from the western hemisphere. Furthermore, India is undergoing a overwhelming process of change and as a visitor sometimes you are under the impression that the society can’t absorb and assimilate their customs and habits that fast as they or driving powers in the business world want.

The huge amount of languages encountered in India is unique, roughly 1600 languages and vernaculars. At your work place, you meet the problem in any case, the only eligible language to retain full communication is English. In the Indian constitution 18 languages have been fixed, but even the seemingly official language Hindi is spoken not from all people. Especially, in the south of India you meet people who don’t know Hindi, that can be traced back to national conflict between north and south in India. In spite of English as usual means of communication, you won’t be able to converse because of illiterate people meeting in your daily life.

Due to the enormous variety in climate and landscape you find a astonishing wide range of plants and animals. India is merely renowned for its tigers,
elephants and rhinoceros. Conservation projects have established sanctuaries to preserve a number of unique breeds for their extinction like the Indian Cheetah.

**Karnataka at a Glance:**

- **Population:** 48.6 million
- **Area:** 191773 sq km
- **Capital:** Bangalore
- **Main Language:** Kannada
- **Literacy rate:** 56%
- **Best time to go:** September to February

Bangalore has a population of 5.2 million people and it is called the Silicon Valley of India. You get the impression that everybody you meet is a software engineer, even though that is not the case, the statistic deviates not much from that. Downtown you feel similar to the cities of the western hemisphere because this city has absorbed due to western-oriented industry and his above-average rate of young people a plenty of customs, habits and characteristics from the modern-fashioned world.

It is not necessary to put to many clothes in your suitcase because the most visitors of India come with more baggage back and the clothes are really cheap. In terms of money, it is senseful to bring dollars along which you can exchange at every bank at once, but also D-Mark can be exchanged without any problems. In addition to cash, traveller's cheques are helpful. At the beginning of my practical training exchange rate was 1:23 (1 DM is equal to 23 Rupees), but recently the Euro decreased against the dollar, therefore the D-Mark indirectly decreased as well, with it the actual exchange rate is 1:21 (1 DM is equal to 23
Rupees) After I had exhausted cash and traveller cheques, I used credit card (Visa card) to make withdrawals without any difficulties.

Generally, all flights arrive in Bombay. If you continue from Bombay to another city in India, you will encounter the problem to come from the international airport to the domestic airport. It would helpful when you please your company to arrange a transfer otherwise you could be stuck in some problems like to be cheated from a cab driver by a huge fare or he will make a sightseeing tour through Bombay. Unless you use the shuttles offered by the airport for affordable fees.

In the first days, I had some difficulties with tiredness because of the jet-lack and another reason is that Bangalore is stationed 3500 metre above sea level. It took some time to leave this tiredness. Further, I had the so-called culture shock because of all impressions and pictures my eyes captured and it took at least two weeks to cope with all the impressions. One of the most peculiar things are the overcrowded roads and steady ongoing, which is very strenuous for an European. The roads are teeming with bullock carts, rikshaws, people, cabs, lorries, cattle crossing the street regardless of traffic. If you follow European traffic rules you would remain on the sidewalk the next few hours with the urgent desire to cross the road. Going on the roads of India can be dangerous and you shouldn’t think that an Indian will slow down when you cross the road. There exist many rules but nobody is following. If you are involved in an accident and you got injured you can only hope that somebody will help you, so I want to advise against underestimating the danger of daily traffic. Besides that, visiting an Indian hospital isn’t worthwhile to strive for. Everything what you see is different in the comparison to european customs and habits.
In your daily you will use most probably the famous rikshaws. If you speak with citizens of Bangalore, then you come to know that they are proud of explaining that there is a law which directs rikshaw drivers to go by metre (2.8 Rs per kilometre). In reality, it is difficult to find a person who, how so often, is following the law. I tried as far as possible to avoid to support rikshaw drives who are requiring vast amounts. For example, I had a incident that a rikshaw driver agreed to transport me by metre, after I entered he denied. The law is saying once you entered the rikshaw driver has to transport you. I insisted that he shall go with the comment: „I won’t get out of your rikshaw because you have to follow the law!“ He said: “Go to your country there you can follow the law!“ This comment strengthened me to impose myself. After ten minutes sitting in his rikshaw and a very emotional discussion he took finally to my destination. I intended also to give rikshaw drivers who were very correct more then the required fee and pleased them to continue, because my conclusion was that to behave as such would be the most helpful mean to change something in this system.

Understanding the differences in terms of customs and habits is not possible in a half year at all. I am avoiding comparisons in my daily life between Germany and India because it caused automatically a negative impression of India in my mind at the beginning. Not only that, it will also involve you in many discussions because you will depict Germany very well and India more worse, of course, the Indians starts defending themselves. Additionally, you confirm their image of an typical colonialist who seems to know everything better. If you are a person who gives punctuality a high importance, the Indian will try to set you right. Agreeing a date is sometimes like gambling and when you point out
the delay, they don’t feel any guilt. Even though, it is strenuous to bring up the persons, with whom you are together, to punctuality. You should do it, even your indian friends will appreciate it after a time.

As mentioned earlier, you should be careful with the indian food. The indian food is normally very spicy and a german intestine isn’t used to it, so it is sensible to switch over slowly. Also, you should only consume mineral water and not the piping water that they offer you in every common restaurant. Even the so-called acqua water that proceeded a cleaning procedure should be avoided as it doesn’t extract the bacteria. Indians don’t use toilet paper and you have the option if you want to follow their custom. For instance, this fact results that an Indian doesn’t use the left hand for eating or hand-shaking.

Many natives are interested to get information about Germany and Europe. Sometimes it happens that a foreign person comes to shake your hand because he wants to touch a white man at least once. In the first weeks, I wasn’t able to work efficiently because many hours were devoted entertainments with my colleagues. But it is very helpful to get known the people and to find friends, last but not least to overcome the normal homesickness. I learnt many things about their culture through these entertainments. In addition, it contributes to your English knowledge. At the beginning, it is really tough to understand the English of the Indians because of their peculiar accent which can’t be compared with the typical British English. Unfortunately, they are claiming that Germans don’t speak English very well generally, as more as they appreciate you if you can communicate with them properly. In turn, not all Indians speak English and the literacy rate is still very high.
In the first days, I obtained my own work place in the company and many formal things had to be done. I met a very nice company with extremely good facilities. Globally it is now well recognized that competitive advantage can be obtained by using India as a source for software development and support. Recognizing this, the idea of using MICO as a software service provider to Bosch worldwide crystallized in 1990. From a small beginning as a part of MICO, providing onsite software support to Bosch Divisions in 1990, it is now a team of more than 570 software professionals as a full fledged software division of Robert Bosch India Limited. Robert Bosch India Limited (RBIN) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Robert Bosch GmbH, Germany. The Software division of RBIN focuses on providing integrated software solutions for the Bosch Group worldwide. This subsidiary of Bosch develops mainly software for all Bosch customers in the entire world but also for third-party customers. The company has a rich blend of expertise in Automotive, Business, Industrial and Telecom applications. The expertise exists in leading-edge technology areas of embedded systems, real-time systems, client server and web-based applications. Recently the company was bestowed the award for the best stall and software product at the „IT.com“ in Bangalore. The company competes with a wide range of software companies within Bangalore. Almost every second educated youth is an software engineer and this market is flourishing like any other branch.

I was assigned within the company to the SAP department and as mentioned my project was „Cost Monitoring“. The SAP R/3 System is ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software that enables a company to automate and integrate the complex structure of business processes with the goal of an increased
efficiency through the usage of idle resources. This department encompasses approximately fifteen persons who are divided in a technical and functional group. The functional group is responsible for all Customizing of the SAP R/3 System within Bosch. Actually, this group had been performing for one month the implementation of SAP System in MICO, one of India’s big companies with ten thousand employees. The technical group performs all programming requirements in ABAP/4 that have to be done to adjust the SAP System to the specific company requirements. I could have been assigned the functional group but I didn’t join the implementation group for MICO Industries. The objective of Bosch India Ltd. is to capture and visualize the costs incurring during a software development project with the help of the SAP System.

We used the Controlling Module and the Project System Module to capture the project costs within the System. We modeled the processes in the System in order to show the management how this objective with SAP could be achieved. We adjusted the parameters of the System according to the requirements.

Initially, I introduced myself and also long discussions belonged to the daily agenda. As I worked in several other companies comparing the German work culture and Indian culture was very interesting. By observing the Indian colleagues, I noticed that they used to have intense relationships with each another. On the one hand, it improves the work climate but on the other hand, for instance, if a project team is created and colleagues have to work together who don’t like each other, they won’t be in the position to do any productive work. In Germany, at the work place we are reserved and very formal, sometimes we are renowned for our impersonality, but the advantage is that there is no barrier that hinders to perform productive work and cooperation, even
though the colleagues hate each other. In such situation, in India no cooperation is possible at all.

A further aspect, the Indians are chatting a lot with their colleagues because they treat them as friends and exchange events and emotions. Germans are very concentrated during their work and aim at finishing the task. Indians prefer to talk and as compensation they stay till late in the evening hours in the office, because, anyway, at home there is nothing to do, whereas Germans maintain a remarkable number of activities after their working hours. Indians are staying in their spare time with relatives or parents together or, I had almost forgotten the most important, watching TV or taking a stroll for a movie.

Indians like to do a lot of politics, especially in organizations or institutes that results in a amazingly slow decision process, it at all a decision will be arrived. There had been many other situations that a European has to get used to it. For example, a typical regularly event is that there are power-cuts and you suddenly can’t perform your activities, e.g. you would like to take a shower and for warm water you have to wait. Basically, you have to be prepared to reschedule your activities at any time.

I lived with four Indians together for four months and had so the opportunity to get a intense lesson of the indian culture. Finally, I am impressed of this country and the variety in every aspect, further, I don’t regret every week that I spent in India and I am grateful for all experiences which I could make, as well, especially for the funds provided by CDG to collect the experiences.

Regards,
Sascha Roßmann