

Voices from Participants 2024

Visit to Panjab University

Visiting period: September 11-19, 2024

(This text was translated using Google Translate.)

What I learned in terms of training and language at the host university
Through this program, I learned the importance of proactively expressing my opinions and feelings. Many Japanese people, including myself, tend to speak indirectly and passively, but this makes it difficult to convey our doubts and thoughts to the other person, making it difficult to communicate effectively, especially overseas. I learned from the Indian students that it is important to ask questions without hesitation if you are unsure about something after listening to a presentation, and to clearly communicate to the other person if you dislike something.
What I learned about the lifestyle, culture and society of the host country
Actually seeing the lives of the local people, I felt that the gap between rich and poor is very large in India. Some people do desk work in cool air-conditioned rooms, while others make a living by selling ballpoint pens on the street while holding their babies. This time, the program was about SX (Sustainability Transformation), but I felt that in India in particular, a sustainable society cannot be realized unless various social problems associated with environmental issues are simultaneously solved. By actually going to the country in this way, I realized that the perspectives that developing and developed countries should consider environmental issues are very different. In addition, the Indian students were all friendly and considerate, and I was able to experience the warmth of people across borders, which was a very valuable experience.

What I learned in terms of training and language at the host university
On the industrial tour, we visited an electronic parts factory, a textile factory, and a chocolate factory. Every factory placed importance on Japan's "5S" and kaizen, and I felt that Japanese culture was being conveyed there. Also, in terms of language, I spoke with local students and professors in English, so my listening and speaking skills improved.
What I learned about the lifestyle, culture and society of the host country
As I experienced life and culture in India, what particularly made an impression on me was the difference in diet and human relationships. There are many vegetarians in India, and vegetarian meals are the norm. I was worried beforehand that the vegetarian food would make me hungry, but in fact there was a lot of dairy products, and I was able to get enough protein, especially from cheese. In fact, there was a lot of fried food, which sometimes made me feel heavy. After getting used to a vegetarian diet, I will never forget how impressed I was when I tried chicken curry for the first time. Also, in India, the hierarchical relationships seemed stronger than in Japan, with seniors and

teachers being addressed with honorifics such as "sir" and "ma'am." There is a culture of expressing one's opinions clearly, which contrasts with the reserved attitude of Japanese people.

What I learned in terms of training and language at the host university

When I participated in the three industrial tours, I felt like I was able to get a glimpse of both India's momentum of growth and its differences from Japan. While I wanted to emulate the Indian students' proactive attitude of asking questions, I also realized that India is still in the early stages of development and that there are differences from Japan, such as the fact that they take it for granted that they use a large number of people to do their work and that the working environment is not good.

The English spoken in India is relatively idiosyncratic, and I had difficulty understanding it at first. However, I feel that I was able to get used to it through interactions in Japan and communicating in English in India. I also learned a lot from the rich vocabulary of the Indian students, who are studying in English, and their proactive attitude to communication that comes from their national character.

What I learned about the lifestyle, culture and society of the host country

•I realized that Indian life, food, and values are very different from Japan. Rather than eating lunch, people ate sweets (fried foods and chips), and all the food had extreme tastes, either spicy or sweet. Among them, the naan bread, which I'm used to eating in Japan, was very delicious.

•Perhaps because Japanese people seem less wary, the Indian students were very concerned about our every move and where we were. In fact, when we were walking down the street, we could feel the local people's gazes on us and they would talk to us. It made me realize that I had taken peace for granted while living in Japan.

What I learned in terms of training and language at the host university

Through working with Indian students, I learned two important things. The first is the importance of listening carefully to the other person's opinion and accepting it first. Indian students often express their opinions from a different perspective than Japanese people, and sometimes it takes time to understand their intentions and background. However, I felt that the first step to having a constructive discussion is to first listen to the other person's opinion and be willing to accept it. The second is the importance of actively expressing your own opinion. Even if you are not confident in speaking in English, by clearly expressing your opinion, you can show the other person that "I am listening, thinking, and have an opinion." I learned that this proactiveness is important for good communication.

What I learned about the lifestyle, culture and society of the host country

The Indian people were very hospitable to us Japanese. Specifically, they gave us a tour of the campus, introduced us to recommended shops and markets, and hosted dinner at the professor's home. I felt that they had a strong culture of hospitality. I also often saw them sharing small snacks and meals with their friends, which made me feel that their culture was different from that of Japanese people. In terms of food culture, most restaurants have vegetarian menus because there are many vegetarians, and I was surprised to see that even chain restaurants such as McDonald's and Subway had vegetarian menus.

What I learned in terms of training and language at the host university

I learned the importance of rephrasing my message and expressing my desire to get my point across, rather than speaking correct English with good pronunciation.

What I learned about the lifestyle, culture and society of the host country

The people I met in India were all wonderful, cheerful and filled with boundless hospitality, while also showing respect and consideration for one another just like Japanese people.

I also felt that their proactive attitude of immediately speaking up if they had a question or opinion, no matter how many people were in a meeting or presentation, was something that Japanese people should adopt.

