My Summer In India

Working in India was an eye opening experience. My life had completely changed in every single regard. By simply disembarking on the plane I could see the differences between the United States and India. I was fearful at first, yet all of my fears went away and all of a sound I had been immersed in Indian culture.

Traveling anywhere in India is always a hassle. Getting to the factory sometimes was an hour and half struggle with the slowly inching traffic and the usually incompetent Uber drivers. I often found myself in a heated argument where neither the driver nor I spoke the same language. Yet once I got to the factory it was always fun. I had free range over the discarded roofing supplies and I tinkered and experimented the different ways ReMaterials could use them. Yet the most amount of fun was working on site.

Working on site brought all the exciting elements and all the cultural differences of India in one place. I had a personal view on how people lived in a world completely alien to my own. The way people constructed things especially in the slum communities felt very amatuer. There were times where I felt a someone who was experienced with legos could build a better than some of the masons in India. In order to install a ReMaterials roof me and my team had to remove the existing roof, construct a minor step wall to create a slope, and then attach our roof. The process was easy enough but there were always problems that held us up. Not only was I learning actual skills like how to make cement but also more discrete skills like how to fit a square roof on a not so square room. I also learned how to get things done without being able to speak to my coworkers. In a mixture of sign language and pointing we had little difficulty building a roof or anything. With a little patience anything can be done.

As one could expect India was culturally different than the United States. Men and women my age were already married and expecting children. I met one girl who was married when she was only sixteen. While I had always heard about this witnessing it in real life was quite intimidating. Many thought I was married and a few had concluded that my intern was my wife. Another thing I found interesting was that everyone was quite flexible even into old age. The way they live requires them to be able to sit and bend in many positions that Americans would find uncomfortable. If I could have brought one cultural thing back to the United States it would be the Indian’s use of color and spice. Everything is so colorful and flavorful. In India every sari is a colorful mosaic.

By the time I had gotten used to Indian culture I had to return home. I was happy to return home and sad to be leaving India. I really enjoyed all the friendships that I made and the places I went. I hope my time there really made an impact on some of the people there.