

Incredible India

KAUTILYA
COUNCIL



INTERNATIONAL
SUMMER SCHOOL
NEW DELHI

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INTERNATIONAL
SUMMER SCHOOL
NEW DELHI

BRIDGES

A STUDENT-LED

REVIEW

OF THE

2017 SESSION



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O V E R V I E W

The *International Summer School, New Delhi* (ISS, www.issnewdelhi.in) is an intensive, six-week academic programme that brings together students from all over the world over the course of a summer in the national capital of India – the world's largest democracy and one of its fastest growing major economies.

The programme is convened annually under the banner of the Government's acclaimed **Incredible India** campaign and with the crucial support of the **Ministry of External Affairs** (MEA).

The ISS aims at promoting international goodwill and cross-cultural dialogue amongst promising young individuals, developing their potential as future leaders in government, business and civil society. With India as a study model, it offers undergraduate course modules and experiences that introduce the students to a range of issues and debates that are shaping contemporary developing societies.

With around 40 students representing over 20 different countries and some of the world's leading universities, the programme successfully concluded its fourth session on Friday 4th August 2017 after six weeks of lectures, seminars, workshops, excursions, cultural experiences and volunteering activities.

Course modules at the ISS include Indian Politics, The Indian Economy, Indian Sociology and Indian History. The faculty delivering lectures as part of these modules come from institutions such as JNU, Delhi University, Ambedkar University and the South Asian University, among others. A fifth module, Fieldwork, allows students to engage with India through workshops and a volunteer experience, building on the knowledge gained from the other four modules.

The academic syllabus at the ISS is supplemented by seminars scheduled throughout the programme where students are able to interact with eminent speakers on topics that are relevant to the nation and its people. A short course on the Hindi language at a beginner's level is also part of the programme. Visits to sites that showcase India's rich culture and heritage are also planned over the course of the programme, including excursions to Agra and Jaipur.

Since 2013, we have successfully held five sessions of the ISS. In this time, the programme has had representation from countries such as Japan, Mexico, South Africa, the United States of America (USA), China, the Philippines, Syria, Australia, Turkey, Italy, Morocco, Germany, Malaysia, Denmark, Iran, Turkmenistan, Thailand, the United Kingdom (UK), Bangladesh, Colombia, Uzbekistan, Iraq, the Kingdom of Bhutan, Tajikistan, Singapore, Fiji, Yemen, Nigeria, Nepal, Lao PDR, Norway, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Afghanistan and Indonesia, apart from students originating from different states and regions of India.

Many of these participants have been students at some of the top institutions of the world with which the ISS has formal collaborations and/or arrangements in place, with the *University of California*, the *University of Oxford*, the *University of Tokyo*, *National University of Singapore*, the *University of Adelaide* and the *Royal University of Bhutan* being just a few among them.

The ISS is also the beneficiary of crucial assistance from the Ministry of External Affairs in the form of country or region-specific scholarships, including ten India-ASEAN Goodwill Scholarships that are facilitated by the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. Additionally, the India-Bhutan Foundation and the High Commission of India in Dhaka extend their kind support in order to establish scholarships for two students each from Bhutan and Bangladesh, respectively.

2017 Academic Course Coordinators :

Politics - **Dr Adnan Farouqui**, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Economics - **Dr Arindam Banerjee**, Associate Professor, School of Liberal Studies, AUD

History - **Dr Ruchika Sharma**, Gargi College, University of Delhi

Sociology - **Juanita Kakoty**, Documentation and Communication Specialist, Apne Aap Women Worldwide; Associate Editor, Antyajaa: Indian Journal of Women and Social Change

The first part of this review, titled *Bridges* by the students keeping in mind the connections they were able to form with one another, is arranged in chronological order; you can follow the orange timeline on the left to retrace the steps our students took during their time here in New Delhi. The second part of this review contains the students' personal reflections on their experience of ISS interspersed with acknowledgements and words of gratitude for our various sources of guidance & support.

TIMELINE

Tuesday 27th June

First day of lectures

For the 2017 session of the International Summer School, the academic venue was the Convention Centre at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).



Lecture given by Prof. A. K. Shiva Kumar

On the first day of lectures, Prof. A. K. Shiva Kumar opened up our economics series with a critical assessment of human development in India. Prof. Kumar is a development economist at Harvard University, the Indian School of Business, and Ashoka University.



Thursday 29th June

Meal in Majnu-ka-tilla

Doing a bit of exploring, students headed to Majnu-ka-tilla - a Tibetan colony in Delhi - to see some Buddhist temples and eat some delicious Tibetan food!



Photo credits: Nate Wong

Friday 30th June

Lecture given by Sohail Hashmi

Sohail Hashmi is a historian and filmmaker, who regularly gives walking tours of Delhi, and is regarded as an authority on the city's history. He gave a talk entitled 'Syncretic Culture in India', using architectural examples as a lens through which to understand the rich and varied history of the country. This included a discussion of how particular motifs and architectural features - such as domes and lotus flowers - arose, spread, and what they represented. It was a talk that proved invaluable the next day...



Our first tour of Delhi included trips to Red Fort, Raj Ghat, India Gate, and Lotus Temple.



Tuesday 4th July

Lecture given by Dr. Ananya Vajpeyi

Dr. Ananya Vajpeyi came to deliver a lecture in our sociology series. She is an award-winning author and Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. She spoke on the life and work of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, in a talk entitled 'The Difficulty of Being Equal: Dr. Ambedkar and his Struggle with India'.



Some students out with the Deputy Director of ISS, Khalid Jaleel, enjoying some Afghani food.



Wednesday 5th July

Visit to Gurudwara Bangla Sahib

On one of their evenings off, a few students took a visit to the Sikh Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, seeing the religious diversity that they had been learning about in the classroom first hand.



Amidst the lectures, cultural visits, and general hectic atmosphere of Delhi, students still managed to find some time here and there to relax



Our second tour of Delhi included trips to Qutub Minar, the Railway Museum, the National Museum, and Akshardham. We were joined by our History course coordinator, Dr Ruchika Sharma, from Gargi College, University of Delhi, and her colleague from Lady Sriram College, Dr Vijayant Jumar Singh, who gave us a guided tour of the Qutub Minar Complex



Tuesday 11th July

Hindi Lessons with Shammi Gabriel

As part of the academic programme of ISS, students take a beginners course in Hindi, taught by Shammi Gabriel. Four weeks is of course not long enough to master a language, but it gave us the confidence to take taxis, haggle at markets, and chat with people while we were out and about.

Shukriya Shammi!



A popular destination for dinner was one of the many state houses here in Delhi. They offer a chance to taste some of the many varies cuisines of India. Here they are at Bihar Niwas.



Wednesday 12th July

Lecture given by Aparna Sanyal

We had a lecture in our sociology series from award winning documentary filmmaker, Aparna Sanyal, who gave a talk entitled 'Stories from the Margins: When Mainstream Notions of "Mental Illness" are Challenged'



Thursday 13th July

Lecture Given by Suhasini Haidar

The following day, the Diplomatic Editor of *The Hindu*, Suhasini Haidar, delivered a lecture in our politics series on 'Contemporary Trends in India's Foreign Policy'.



An evening out spent celebrating the birthday of one of our students.



The International Summer School was invited to the headquarters of WWF-India, for a special interaction with its Secretary General and CEO, Ravi Singh, and his team. A presentation on the different work that the WWF does in India was followed by a question and answer session. As well as being of interest in its own right, the interaction fit in well with the broader theme of sustainability that had been present throughout the academic course.



The beautiful Taj Mahal in Agra attracts thousands of visitors from all over the world. Our students were no exception, and a trip to India didn't feel complete without a selfie in front of the country's most iconic landmark.



After a lecture on culture and sustainable development, given by a representative from *5waraj*, students were encouraged to deliver presentations on their own cultures, understood through the '5 D's' of Dialects, Diet, Dress, Dwellings and Dances. The presentations were both enlightening and entertaining, including live singing and dancing performances. It was enriching for students to not only learn about India, but also about each other and their respective cultures.



Tuesday 18th July

Interaction with Prof. C. Mahapatra, the Rector of JNU

Students listened to a brief talk by Prof. C. Mahapatra, the Rector of JNU, who expressed his delight in another session of ISS being hosted by the university, and shared a hopeful and encouraging message for the future: ISS students not only have the future ahead of them, but it is theirs to change.



Career guidance and assessment with CogitoHub

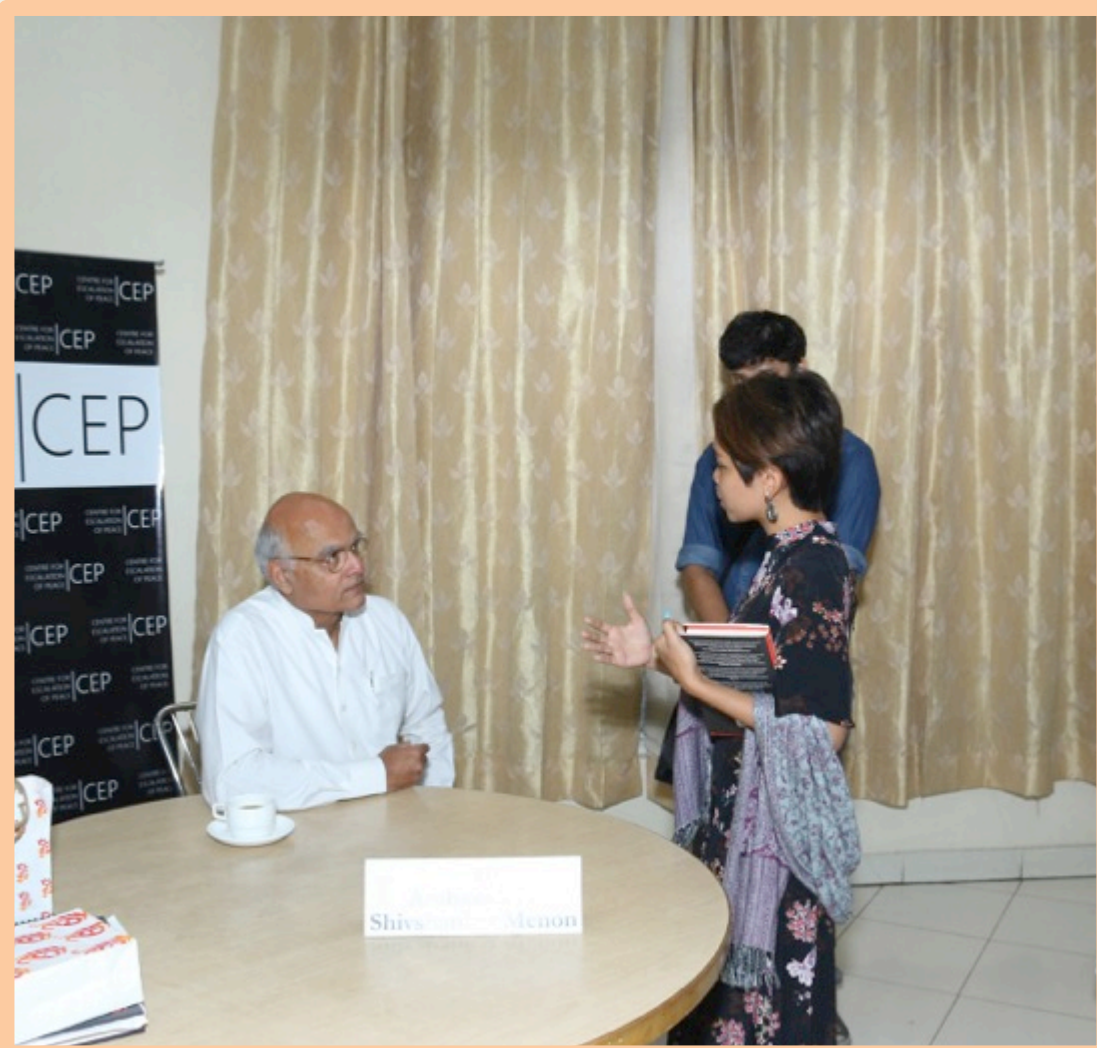
CogitoHub is a company that uses predictive analytics, advanced algorithms and machine learning to produce tailor-made career guidance for students. This was the first time that CogitoHub has collaborated with ISS, as they seek to expand their target audience to include university level students. After completing a questionnaire on their personality, ambitions, and motivations, students were sent a bespoke analysis of their results, including advice and recommendations on future careers.

CogitoHUB

ISS students find all sorts of ways to enjoy their free time!



Ambassador Shivshankar Menon was formerly the National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of India prior to which - after a career spanning three decades in the Indian Foreign Service - he served as India's Foreign Secretary. Late last year he released a book called *Choices: Inside the Making of India's Foreign Policy*. The ISS organised a book discussion where there were in addition to students of its 2017 session another 50 students from leading Delhi universities, professionals and academics with interests in foreign policy, and journalists.



ISS students visited the headquarters of NITI Aayog, the Government of India's policy-think tank overseeing investment and economic policy. Mr Yaduvendra Mathur, the Addl. Secretary, fielded questions about the organisations work, and the challenges that India faces.



सत्यमेव जयते

नीति आयोग

National Institution for Transforming India

The ISS 2017 boy band... Coming soon to a record store near you!



The International Summer School would not be possible without the generous support it receives from the Ministry of External Affairs. As such, we were delighted to be invited to the Ministry to meet Col. Sandeep Puri, Director of the ASEAN Multilateral Division. Students were encouraged to share their experiences of the programme, many of them thanking the Ministry for its continued support, and all taking stock of the things they had learnt, the experiences they had, and the friends they had made along the way.



Friday 21st July

Special interaction with Junaid Kamal Ahmad

Nearing the end of their academic programme, ISS students were kindly invited to the World Bank Office, to meet and interact with the Country Director for India, Mr Junaid Kamal Ahmad. Taking what they had learnt in the classroom, students questioned Mr Ahmad on major issues such as poverty, education, and climate change, which prompted a lively discussion of the different approaches - including the World Bank's - of tackling these challenges.



THE WORLD BANK

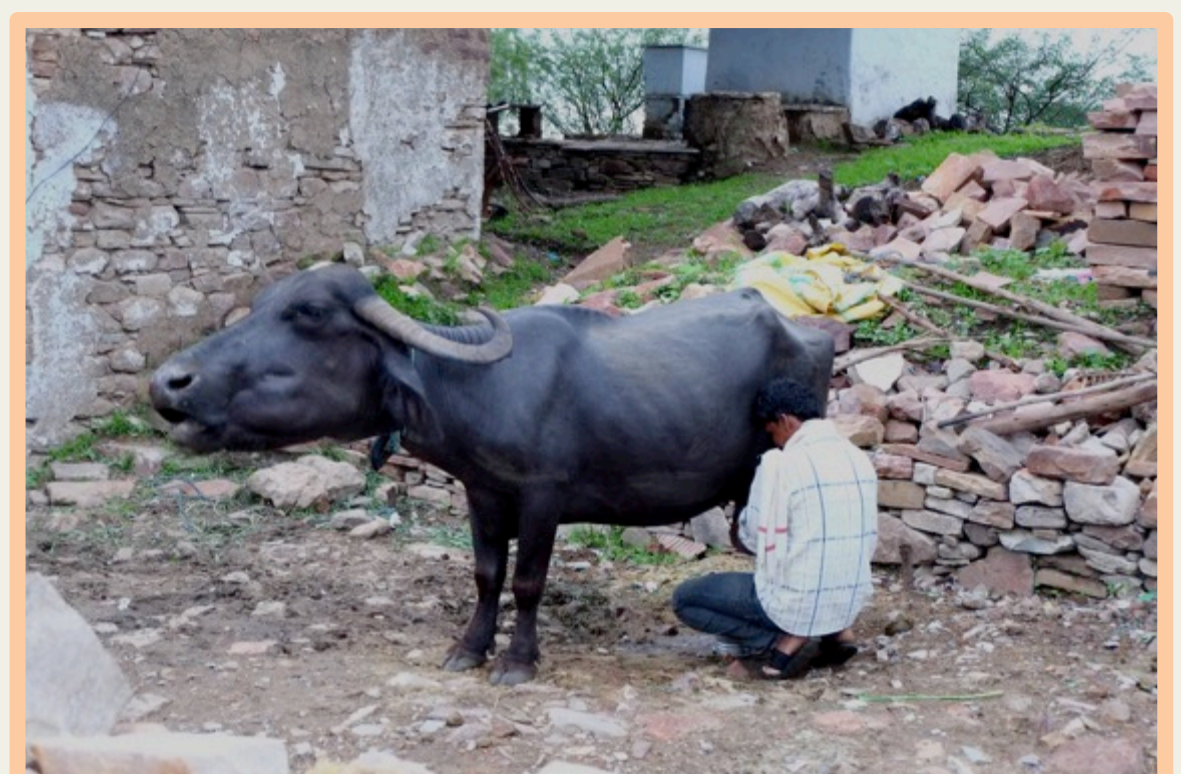
It felt like it had gone by in the blink of an eye, but after four weeks, the academic session of ISS 2017 came to a close. Representatives from different embassies and high commissions were invited to the Farewell High Tea where Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra, Rector of JNU gave the Keynote Address. The students - looking stunning in their traditional formal attire - were awarded certificates of completion. It was an emotional goodbye to those who were leaving, as we looked ahead to the coming fieldwork in Jhalawar.



After taking the sleeper train - our first experience of Indian Railways for many of us - we arrived in Jhalawar, some still sleepier than others. We settled into our new accommodation, and following lunch and an orientation session, headed out to see Gagrion Fort. Local historian and writer Mr. Lalit Sharma was our knowledgeable guide, informing us about the incredible hilltop stronghold we were meandering through. That evening, we visited a local Sufi Dargah to hear qawwali and interact the people we met there.



The number of animals we encountered in Jhalawar was certainly higher than in Delhi. Cows and water buffalo assert their right of way on the roads!



Monday 24th July

First day of school

An integral part of the fieldwork experience with Ritinjali was volunteering in local schools. Our group was divided in two and sent separately to SSS Khanpuria and Pallavan School, where we led classes with fun and educational interactive games. This formed one part of our programme in Jhalawar, the overall aim of which was to understand the culture and society that we were being hosted in - through dialogue with the people who lived there. Hence, the time we spent out of the schools was used to meet various members of the community, and talk to them, with the eventual aim of producing a report-cum-blog to record our thoughts and findings.



Tuesday 25th July

Visit to music school

After another morning in the schools, and meeting more local people afterwards, we spent our evening visiting a local music school, Rajky Sangeet Vidhyalay. In the day, the building functions as a normal state school, but in the evenings, doors are opened to all members of the community, to take lessons in both traditional and modern music. The school currently has around 90 students enrolled, ranging from small schoolchildren, to professional dentists. We were given a taste of some Rajasthani music and dancing, and were invited to join in.



Continuing with our project, we spent the morning meeting people in the Munderi and Patpadia villages, being welcomed into their homes, and listening to them explain their ways of life, their livelihoods, and their hopes and dreams for the future. In the afternoon, we were taken to Khadi Gram Udyog, a cotton textile hand-loom workshop, run by women. The production of textiles and fabrics is an important part of the local economy, and after being shown around the workshop, some of us tried our hand at weaving, while others bought blankets and pillowcases to take home with them.



Thursday morning saw us back to school. This time, we all went to SSS Dungargaon, another state school in the area. Once again, we played some educational games with the children, leaving enough time at the end of the class to play some more fun games like kabaddi, and exchange some dance routines!



Eddie teaching a class the Macarena

Visit to Vive Kanand Organic Farm

Later that day, we were guests at the Vive Kanand Organic Farm, which also acts as a research centre. Once there, Dr. Madhusudan Acharya, a representative of an organisation of organic farmers, and Hukamchand Patidar, himself the owner of the farm, gave us a talk on the process of organic farming, and the vast benefits that can be reaped from organic methods. We had a question and answer session - in which we were assured that India's food demand could be met completely organically - and then given a tour of the farm. One of our students, Philip, liked it so much that he asked to come back and work on the farm for a while after the programme ended.



No chance to sleep in on Saturday morning - we were off bright and early to Kolvi Caves, a 2500 year old Buddhist monastic complex carved into the side of a hilltop. As we explored the caves, we were offered some stunning views of the Rajasthan landscape. In the evening, students continued to work on their projects, in groups of four or five.



Sunday 30th July

After a tiring week of volunteering, interacting, and simply soaking up life in Jhalawar, students gave presentations of their blogs. In this way, we consolidated all of the experiences that we had had throughout the fieldwork experience - the sights we had seen, the food we had eaten, and most importantly the conversations we had. Some of the blogs that were produced can be found below:

- <https://issjhalawar.wordpress.com/2017/07/30/occupations-and-livelihoods/>
- <https://shanti-jhalawar.blogspot.in/>
- <https://ajulyinjhalawar.wordpress.com/>
- <https://cojhalawar.wordpress.com/>

Monday 31st July

Departure from Jhalawar to Jaipur

We had a farewell lunch, thanked the staff for our excellent accommodation and delicious food, and set off on our journey to Jaipur. Some eleven hours later, we arrived bleary-eyed and ready for a good night's sleep.

Tuesday 1st August

First tour of Jaipur

On our first day in Jaipur, we visited Jantar Mantar astronomical observatory (where we saw the world's largest stone sundial), the City Palace - including the astounding armoury - before finishing off with some shopping in the city's sprawling markets.



Our second tour of Jaipur took us to the incredible Amber Fort and Palace. A bit of free time in the afternoon was spent by some students doing a bit of exploring on their own, and others doing more shopping! In the evening, we went to Chokhi Dhani - an exhibition of Rajasthani culture in the form of a theme park, with live performances of music and dance, camel and elephant rides, and a delicious traditional meal.



We returned to Delhi, and with many tears, hugs, and heartfelt words, we said goodbye to one another.



STUDENT EXPERIENCES

UCEAPTM UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA EDUCATION ABROAD PROGRAM

The International Summer School has, over the years, had a very special relationship with the **University of California** whereby students from across the various UC campuses attend the programme as part of a system-wide collaboration which also facilitates the transfer of credits. We would like to extend special thanks to the Regional Director, Dr. Mary McMahon, Ms. Amy Frohlich, International Program Specialist, Ms. Ciara Ristig, Program Advisor and others at UCEAP who make this all possible.

Trinity Morton

USA - University of California, Berkeley



I learned an incredible amount about India through the interdisciplinary lectures. Each one further complicated my understanding of the diverse country and culture, and appropriately left me with as many questions as answers. The fieldwork term in Jhalawar was a unique opportunity to speak to local people about their own lives and experiences, which is not something I could have done on my own as a non-Hindi speaker.

The fieldwork brought life and relevance to what I had learned in the classroom. To me, however, the best part of the program was being able to connect with and learn from the other international students. It was not just an opportunity to learn about India, but about 20 different nations and cultures. I did not anticipate how tight-knit our group would become before the start of the program, and experiencing India alongside such amazing and diverse people made the whole trip a truly memorable one.



Emmanuelle J. Aruta

USA - University of California, Riverside



Being a “people-person,” referring to my love for the characters of the world, I could not escape the inevitable in allowing a larger role than average for my experience to be determined by the people enrolled in the program along with me. That said, India itself is so overwhelming in every aspect, such that driving from one neighborhood to the next is an experience in its own.

ISS and India has given me so many surprises, not just externally but internally as well. India has taken my breath away so many times and it was such a blessing to be part of this program, where I was taken to so many world organizations and tourist destinations. A perfect mix of fun and business. Therefore I would describe my experience with ISS New Delhi to be incredible and epistomically transformative.





In the time spent studying in India, I learn many things, academically it was challenging but enlightening. I will always remember the first class we had about politics. I felt lost for a bit, until I realized that through the experiences of Sudhanva Deshpande a filmmaker, one can learn more about the Indian communities and their struggles that simply reading books. All is reflected in theatre, politics, religion, society, etc. This taught me to look in the embedded message of all things presented to us, no matter the setting.

Furthermore and one of the most important discoveries in my summer adventure, was the simplicity and humility of a people living in one of the most complex society I ever experience, the Indian society.

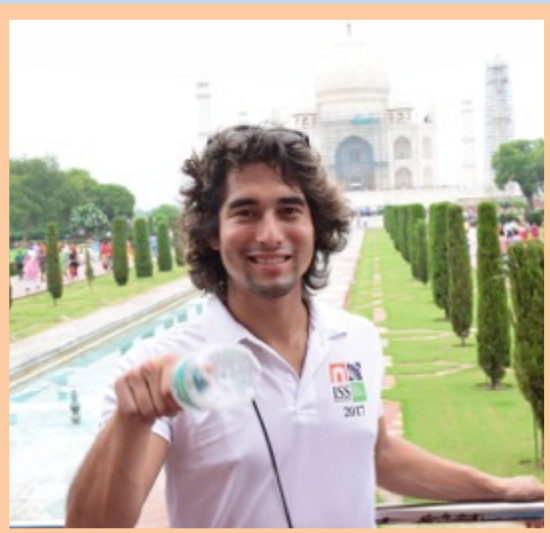
In the Indigo Houses in Jhawalar, the owner told us that "the house teach humility by having to bend-down every time the low arch of the entrance is crossed." Furthermore, the ability to serve and take responsibility of the people, taking care of their daily tasks without overthinking or feelings of unfairness, made me realize the kind of society I want to live in.

In addition, I will always remember the international community that took part of the program, the diversity of backgrounds and ideologies made of the ISS, the best academic experience I had until now. I enjoyed the company and friendship of people from 20 different countries!

Thank you ISS, New Delhi!



Philip Yuji Brazina



Before coming to India, I knew nothing of its history, politics, or culture. My plan was to have an open mind and no expectations. I tried to live as I would in my own country by keeping up with martial arts practice and swimming. The heat and busy schedule had tired me. However, I came out feeling like I now have a strong base knowledge of India. Now I can dig deeper.

In Jhalawar, we visited an organic farm which is operated by a yogi. I have decided to return there. I am on the train back there now. I hope to learn about traditional farming techniques, traditional medicine, and perhaps how it all relates to his yogic philosophy. Great experience and great experiences to come.



Karina Callejas



India has blessed me in every sense of the word. This trip has changed the way I look at the world, at people, and even at myself. I have been intellectually stimulated, culturally enriched, and socially emerged.

Every interaction I had--whether it was with a local, a Rajasthani, or a school child, impacted me in more ways than I could have ever imagined. Sharing this experience with individuals from all over the world was even more inspiring. I mean, in order to want to study and live in India for a summer, you must be pretty cool right?





My student experience here in India is characterized by three different aspects of the trip: the academic portion, the interaction with locals, and the sharing of these experiences with my fellow students.

The academic portion allowed me to understand the political, religious, cultural, social and economic workings behind this complex country. While no single discipline can fully explain the depth of what is happening in India, a variety of lectures exploring these perspectives gave me a more holistic and more complete understanding of the nuanced issues in an old country transforming in the midst of modernity.

Appropriately following the academic portion, were the interactions with the locals of Jhalawar which gave me insight that cannot be learned in a classroom. I was equipped with very important knowledge about India from the lectures; this allowed me to get a better grasp of what I was searching for during interactions with locals. Working with students from private and public schools, interviewing local families, exploring what farmers did and what they struggled...it was a moving and magical way to get to know India.

Lastly, I cannot forget the strong bonds I made with the people that studied and explored alongside me. It was important to see India not only from my lens, but from the lens of others from different countries and backgrounds. It was truly emotional and fulfilling.

Jiddou Krishnamurti Sirker

USA/Nicaragua -University of California, San Diego



For years I dreamed of coming to India. As someone of Indian ancestry, I have been completely disconnected from that side of my heritage. Growing up in a Nicaraguan household, I constantly rejected my Indian roots. Entering college provided me opportunities that I wouldn't otherwise have access to due to living below the U.S. Federal Poverty Line.

I am thankful to the universe and my family's resilience for bringing to college where I got this opportunity. Despite having traveler's diarrhea aka "Delhi belly," I gained so much more than wisdom and weight. All the amazing people I met have a special place in my heart. I thank ISS staff, interns, and students for their blessing cultural exchange.



The **Ministry of External Affairs** (MEA) -- through the efforts of the ASEAN-ML Division in New Delhi and the Indian Mission to the ASEAN -- continues to provide the *India-ASEAN Goodwill Scholarships* to ten outstanding young students from across the ASEAN nations to enable their participation in the ISS.

The Scholarships were coordinated by the **ASEAN Secretariat** in Jakarta with approval from and the esteemed guidance of the *Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY)*.

Special thanks must go to the then Secretary (East) in the MEA, Ambassador Anil Wadhwa whose initial support was crucial establishing these scholarships; Ambassador Preeti Saran, Secretary (East), who continues to support the programme and has even taken time out in the past to meet with ISS students; Ambassador Suresh K. Reddy at the Indian Mission to the ASEAN; Ambassador Pooja Kapur, the then JS (ASEAN ML) who was instrumental in institutionalizing the Scholarships; Mr. Anurag Bhushan, JS (ASEAN ML); Col. Sandeep Puri, Director (ASEAN ML), who met with the students this year; and Mr. RS Bagga at the ASEAN ML Division in New Delhi as well as Mr. DK Srivastava & Mr. Rakesh Upadhyay at the Indian Mission to the ASEAN in Jakarta who coordinated the process with the ASEAN Secretariat and various Indian Missions.

The ten students below were the recipients of these Scholarships in 2017.

Chou Eang Kim

Cam bod ia - Paññāsāstra University of Cam bod ia



It's been such a great experience to join this program! This is my first time in India, I really enjoyed it here especially the people, the food, and the landscape in Jhalawar. Studying at JNU gave me better understanding about India society, traditional practices, and ways of life. I really want to have street Roti again if I have chance to come back here. Luckily, I never have Delhi Belly or Rajasthan Belly.



Uswatunisa

Indo nesia - Islam ic State University Banten



When I got the subject of History from lecturers at JNU then visited each shrine in India, I like to be irrevocably immersed to the medieval century of Hindu Empires and trace it as if it is still engraved deeply in their inscriptions. India has become one of the historical entities of the universe, where every inscription is like living stone which has been brought down to the earth from the heaven. The Culture seems to be conjugated with the historical identity.

Oh, yea, don't ask me about the food, I just want to say, it took much time to understand what 'the masala' is and become such a complicated thing when you found masala in your burger and your favorite chips!



Pavina Ouansysomphou

Lao PDR - National University of Laos



I would like to say that this is my greatest experience that I have had. Before I came here many of my friends said and asked me "why do you choose to go India?" In my mind at that time I thought that it's interesting and I like adventure. But what I have gained from here it more than my expectation. I have learnt more on a word "life". There were many good feelings that came through my mind during my stay here and it has changed some of my attitudes. All of my big smiles that happened here are from my heart and it shows how I am happy to be with all of my friends coming from different part of our world. Thank you





Being a part of ISS 2017 family is such a blessing that I always be thankful for. It enables me to know talented youths from more than 20 different countries and gives me opportunity to exchange thoughts and experiences about India and also my own country along together with them. During the four weeks of lectures and tours in Delhi, I have got a lot of valuable knowledge about Indian politics, history, economic and culture. By that I could know how India possesses great opportunity for advancement and I'm grateful to be able to witness this very moment.



Moreover, the fieldwork in Rajahstan was also an amazing experience that I always cherish for many years to come. All the landscape, buildings, animals, food, people, outfits, and lifestyles; it all leaves a moral value that truly assist me to grow up as a person. Despite of all the apprehensive conditions witnessed in Jhalawar in terms of education, environment and social communal life, I can still feel warmth and happy just by seeing its colorful faces. The children innocence and spirit, to live their life to their fullest completely broaden my horizon and taught me to always be grateful for what I have. ISS is definitely an eye- and-heart-opening journey for me.

Mish a H a l i l i B o r b o n



The ISS program in its entirety has been a perfect venue of interaction and exchange. As a student of History and Asian Studies, I came to India wanting to see how the things I've learned about India in school measured up to the country's realities. I arrived to New Delhi with the agenda of finding connections between Southeast Asian traditions and their roots in Indic civilization. That agenda has been fulfilled tenfold.

I walk away feeling privileged to know India not only through the nuanced and in-depth lectures given by some of the country's top academics, but also through the shared experiences outside of the classroom with the 30 or so other young people that I was with on this trip. I'm especially proud to touch base with the incredible young students from Southeast Asia and South Asia, who through their engagement and dialogue have enriched my experience. I think, beyond the nexus of the past and the present, the most important connections are they ones we build for the future.

I fly home from New Delhi with a sense of accomplishment from the intense four-week academic course, with spectacular pictures of the Taj Mahal and the Amber Fort, and with stories from Jhalawar juxtaposed with stories from Nicaragua, from Dhaka, from Assam, Delhi, and Kerala, from Riverside, California, from Mexico, from Oxford, England, from Thimpu, from Siem Reap, Cambodia, from Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and from Laos. The friendships nurtured by the ISS program speak highly of an overall positive experience. May the things we've learned this summer light the paths we take in life, and, who knows, perchance one day our roads may cross again.



C a n d r a A n d i k a



Being one of the participants for International Summer School 2017 is one of the best experiences, that I will cherish forever.





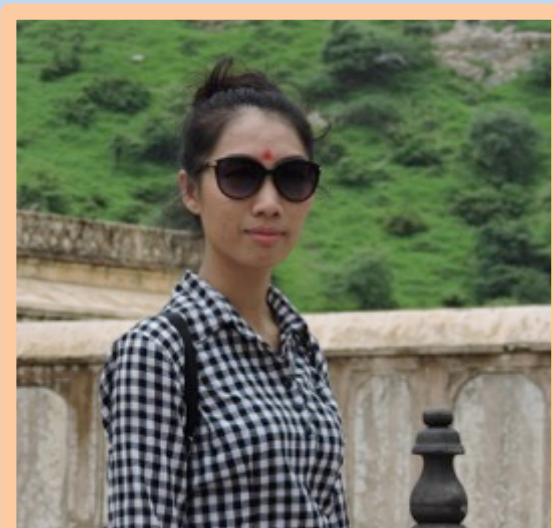
After spending almost 6 weeks in India, I found a new love for a different side of India from the former ideas we had, only have been exposed to the Emerging of Indian economy. Now we have comprehensive picture of Indian history, sociology and politic. We have been fortunate enough to have a very intimate interaction with the communities throughout Rajasthan, being welcomed into local homes, temples and schools. There are a lot of differences on India perspective that I got from this program.



My first visit to India last year was amazing but ISS 2017 brought me to a stunning knowledge about India. Since the first day of lecture I was amazed by the fact about the diversity in culture, language and society in India. It becomes cooler when I learned my favorite subject which is economy. There is one thought on my mind "what a great nation". This country is experiencing a lot of problem in social discrimination, caste problem and religious sensitivity. But surprisingly their economy still growing very well, a very stable politic running and still solving the problem one by one.

Apart from it, I got the most valuable gifts which friends from 20 countries in the world. It can't be paid by anything. Six weeks are not a short time to spend with them. They are full of joy, kindness, smart, fun, all of them. Now I have family all around the world.

Thippavan Thongphachanh



Before I came to India I did don't know everything about India (I just knew only the Taj Mahal and the Buddha was born here). So, for the lecture class in JNU I love learning about Indian history. It was really interesting to be studying and staying in Delhi, which has its own amazing history. So wonderful! For food I like "chicken curry" and "paneer" a lot.



When I was in Rajasthan, doing the field work in Jhalawar, I had a great time with the children at government school and Palavan school. I was so happy with them, and they wanted to know about my country: the best place to stay, what kind of the animals there are in Laos and things like that. Unfortunately when I left I never got to say goodbye and have a big hug together with the students. I'm gonna miss them so much! When we met Indian families, they welcomed me, smiling and then gave me some food to eat, showed me how to cook "Davaty", and made me some handna. I will always remember Tina, who showed me these things.

Everything here make me fall in love India especially because it was the place where I made the best friendships. I have sisters and brothers from different countries, some that before I didn't know at all. We were studying, eating, sleepy and hanging out all the time. Six weeks in India is a long time, but for me it felt so short!

Thank you so much. Hopefully I will come to India again someday. Love you guys and see you when I see you!



India has always been a place of intrigue to me – and hence, when news of being able to visit and learn more about this vast country presented itself, I jumped at the opportunity – and I dare say it has been a most fulfilling and exciting one. Lecturers from a spectrum of backgrounds were brought together to teach us on the various aspects of India.

Besides learning about the diverse traditions and heritage of my host country was the great privilege of being able to meet like-minded friends from all over the world – which I believe is the single most important takeaway from this programme. Indeed, the most lasting of friendships are forged in the unlikeliest of places – and I am blessed to have found many here.



Muhamm ad Hafiz Ali Umar



It was a great honour for me to be a part of this program. ISS has brought a new perspective, particularly on India and the world as well. The lectures impressed me, how India with its diversity can be united in a one nation, I would say that India is really Incredible.

Furthermore, the field work was absolutely exciting, I was really enjoying every single moment in Rajasthan. Thanks so much for ISS, it will be one of the unforgettable moments in my life!



The International Summer School has a long and continued relationship with the **University of Tokyo**, and gives special thanks to Mr. Hiroshi Yoshino, Director, The University of Tokyo (India Office) for being among the first to support the programme.

Kanako Noto



I was happy with many aspects of this program, but it was definitely the friends I met here that made my experience so special. It was very cool to learn with, teach with, sleep with, and eat with people from countries I'd never seen anyone from before.

It was a pleasant surprise to see how much we share in common as young and international-minded students. I also loved how everyone was willing to learn about each other's country and enjoy the differences. It gave me a little more hope for the future to know there are so many positive, intelligent and aspirational people all over the world in our generation! And of course India is so rich in culture and history with amazing cuisine, you don't want to miss this opportunity!



東京大学
THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO



Royal University of Bhutan

The **India-Bhutan Foundation** – established by the Indian Embassy in Thimphu and the Royal Bhutanese Embassy in New Delhi – has, since 2013, been supporting the participation of two students from the Royal University of Bhutan at the ISS. Gratitude is owed to Ambassador Jaideep Sarkar for consenting to continue this support in 2017. In previous years, such support was initiated by Ambassador VP Haran and then institutionalized under Ambassador Gautam Bambawale during their respective terms as the Ambassador of India in Thimphu. Maj. Gen. V. Namgyel, Ambassador of Bhutan to India, has also, in his capacity as Co-Chair of the IBF, been supportive of these efforts throughout the five years. Mrs. Neetu M. Bhagotia has been there throughout in a key coordinating role in her capacity as Secretary of IBF over the past few years.

Special thanks also go to Dasho Nidup Dorji, Vice Chancellor of the **Royal University of Bhutan**, as the International Summer School continues to take on these Bhutanese students, and foster goodwill between India and Bhutan.

Pem a Gyeltshen

Bhutan - Royal University of Bhutan



As I was one of the participants in ISS 2017, it was a great opportunity for me to introduce my small country to the outside world. Though my country is very small by geographical position and by its populations, however, to the outside world my country is known as the peaceful country (Paradise) and people as the peace loving in the world. Over many other programmes in ISS, I think this was very important for me because I could share some of my country's view and its importance to the outside world. Although Bhutan is very small country in the world, it has rich diversity in its culture and tradition. During my presentation, I tried to make my friends active and alert by performing my traditional songs and dances.

It was an enthralling moment for my friends and also to me. It was not only my presentation but also people from different countries across the globe presented their countries. Every country has its unique culture and tradition that contributes beauty and unique identity to each individuals. From this presentation I can conclude that, it is very important for each individual in the world to preserve and promote the beautiful culture and tradition that exist in different parts of the world today.

TASHI DELEK!



Royal University of Bhutan

Kinley Choden

Bhutan - Royal University of Bhutan



My six weeks experience in India has been nothing but great. The four weeks lecture helped me understand enhance my knowledge of India. The weekend's trip to some of the most historical sites holds a special place in my heart. Two weeks field experience in Jhalawar helped me connect with the local people and it has helped me grow as a person. Before I even noticed it was time to say good bye to some really amazing people I have ever known. This trip has helped me find friends with whom I want to be friends forever. Thank you ISS 2017!



Royal University of Bhutan

Lukas Beckerhinn

Austria - Oriel College, Oxford



My experience as a student at ISS has been a really great one and I would encourage anyone considering it to take part. I particularly enjoyed the fieldwork component of the program, as it allowed me to deepen the understanding acquired in the academic part through genuine and fascinating interactions. I am happy to say that I feel like the program has allowed me to develop real insights into India as a country, even if one of those insights was that you cannot possibly understand a place like this in two months, maybe ever.



However, ISS is probably the closest you can get and the fact that I did my learning alongside other curious students from all over the world definitely made the whole experience much more enjoyable. Now that the program has come to an end, it is hard to say goodbye but I can take solace in the fact that I will always have many amazing memories to look back on.

Marie Ducroizet-Boitaud

France - Somerville College, Oxford



I've had an amazingly enriching experience at ISS for the past 6 weeks. I found myself learning almost as much about India as I was learning about Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mexico amongst many other nations represented by the students here. Interacting with people from all over the world also helped consider different points of view as I learned about another culture, and I'm incredibly grateful for this opportunity.



If I could take home one thing from the programme, it would be how valuable personal interactions are to understand a place. I enjoyed the first four weeks of lectures, which covered a wide variety of topics. These were often presented from a different perspective from what I was used to, coming from a Western country, which was eye-opening. These lectures gave me the information necessary to fully appreciate the weeks of fieldwork. But I found those last two weeks the most enriching of the programme, because as we visited people's homes, schools, and work places, we got to know what life in India (or at least in the Jhalawar region) was like, in a way no textbook could teach. I don't claim I now know India, but I can say that with every chat around a cup of chai I've had in a local's home, I've discovered new aspects of it. I learned that there's so much to learn from the people around you.



My two months here in India with the International Summer School have been some of the most enlivening, enlightening, and quite simply incredible months of my life. A four week academic programme that has India as its topic is always only going to be a glimpse into the nature of such a rich and varied nation. But nonetheless it was engaging and incredibly informative, managing to approach something that felt both well-rounded and in-depth.

To be learning about these things, whilst immersed in the heart of the country itself, was amazing. I'd perhaps go as far to say that I learnt more out of the lecture hall than I did in it. The sights, sounds, smells, tastes, were somewhat overwhelming at first, but looking back, I've had a wonderful opportunity to drown myself in one of the most fascinating and diverse cultures anywhere on earth.

Finally, it would all have been nothing without the people who make ISS. I've met some of the most inspiring people on this trip, who have taught me an incredible amount - about themselves, and about myself. I hope some of them will be friends for life, and I thank everyone for making this such an amazing trip.



The **University of Adelaide** continues to associate each year with the International Summer School, and we give special thanks to **Prof. Purnendra Jain** of the Department of Asian Studies.

Gabrielle Jeffs

Australia - University of Adelaide



From the outset, I was impressed by the ISS New Delhi program! Beginning with the professionalism and organisation of the administration staff during my preparation to leave Australia, I had confidence in the immersive experience ahead of me in India. Arriving into the hot and humid climate of Delhi at Indira Gandhi International Airport, the following taxi journey weaving and dodging systematically through chaotic traffic and passing roadside stalls was an overwhelming first experience. I was eager to get to know my roommate and the other like-minded students who have hailed from various corners of the globe for the same opportunity to extend our knowledge and intrigue of India.

From an in-country perspective through immersing ourselves both academically in the lecture theatre and culturally during structured tours of Delhi and Agra and afternoons spent exploring local markets and cuisines, we experienced a great taste of the diversity that is India. I was also proud to be afforded the opportunity to represent and share my own cultural identity and learn about traditions, dances and other cultural aspects of my fellow students' home countries during the Swaraj program and in our free time. I am confident that all participants of this programme have experienced personal growth, and come away equipped with a new perspective, greater cross-cultural understanding and a substantial friendship base.

Thank you, ISS, for supporting the development of young people and strengthening a cooperative relationship for a like-minded network to expand ideas and visions for sustainable world relationships.





The International Summer School 2017 was my best learning experience. I have learned immensely. The academic platform of four weeks gave me insights on various aspects of Indian politics, history, economy and social realities. Engaging with the discussions in the class gave me alternative bent to ponder upon certain concepts and realities.

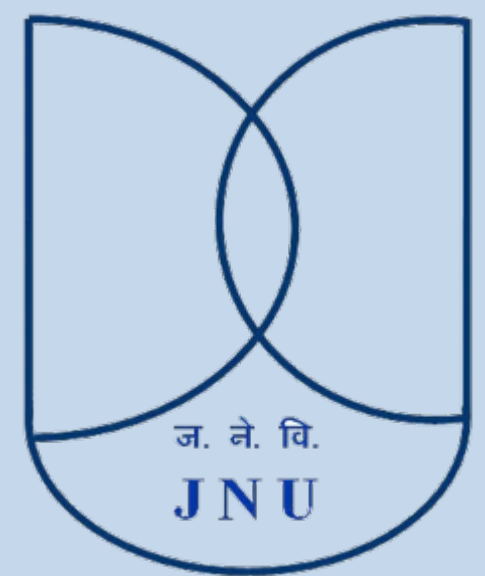
The fieldwork with Ritinjali opened up a Pandora of praxis for me. Working in groups showed me importance of an individual and team spirit. Overall, there was an inter-cultural dialogue. There was a constant outpouring of ideas. I connected myself richly with the discussion I have had with the brilliant minds from twenty different countries. It was an immense pleasure for me being a part of a group which catered people from different corners of the world.

Truly this summer school was an excellent engagement for me.



ISS had been a great learning experience for me in the sense that it has been a great platform for me to observe how people from various countries participating in the program project or represent their country, an area of my research interest, especially those of lecturers in the class.

Apart from this, the program introduced me to a lot of different topics that I was not familiar with and is interesting. Overall, it has been a great learning experience from the lectures and off the lectures and would like to express my gratitude to the organizer for the opportunity, and other participants for a great month.





High Commission of India
Dhaka, Bangladesh

The **High Commission of India in Dhaka** has been supporting the participation of two students from the Bangladesh at the ISS. We thank them for their involvement with ISS – particularly Mr. Harsh V. Shringla, High Commissioner of India in Dhaka, for his consent in extending this support; Dr. Adarsh Swaika, the Dy. High Commissioner; and Mr. Jishnu P. Mukherjee, First Secretary (Education) who has been a key figure in coordinating the process.

Fatim a Tuj Joh ora Nazia

Bangladesh - Asian University for Women



As a citizen of one of the neighboring countries of India, Bangladesh, I was always curious to learn more about this incredibly diverse country. Fortunately, I got the chance to learn about its distinctly enriched culture, community, history, heritage, economy and development very diligently as a participant of International Summer School New Delhi. My journey at ISS was more like a lovely dream that gave me the chance to make friends from all over the world and to learn about their cultures as well. With my fellow ISS participants, I have enjoyed attending the lectures of the distinguished lecturers at the beautiful JNU campus, loved the visits to different historical sites and relished the crazy shopping experiences at Sarojini Nagar Market and at Jaipur. Adding to that, I have also loved tasting the traditional food items of different states of India.

Apart from all of these, the most interesting experience for me was being identified as an Indian by the local people. Wherever I have been, my command over Hindi has always confused the local people about my nationality. Since language was not a barrier for me to communicate, interacting with people, learning more about their lives, culture, and food habits was very fascinating for me while working as a volunteer for Ritinjali. Hence, I have loved interacting with people and have enjoyed their cordial hospitality.

While attending ISS, every single day was full of new experiences for me that have given me so much insight. The offered courses were related to my minor, Development Studies, and have helped me to closely learn about the various development initiatives taken by India. These have helped me to acquire expertise to analyze the situation of my country in terms of development. While learning about all these things, I have made memories for a lifetime to cherish. To sum up, I must say that India is truly incredible and my journey was amazing. I wish to visit this country again.





Preconceptions about a certain place, people or polity can be precarious. We spin a fabric of reality based on our own surroundings, and often we end up with a cocoon that folds our eyes.

India, the land of diversity within diversities, is often seen as the aspiring state on its way to become a rightful contender in the global order by fulfilling its pledge to the “tryst with destiny,” as Jawaharlal Nehru had eloquently expressed. But one has to bear in mind that such a construction of the superficial level and the internal realities of the people who make up the heart of India may have their differences.

What the International Summer School, New Delhi has taught me is to keep an open mind for these seemingly contradictory realities, and to get out of the cocoon of my own construction. I am grateful to this experience in particular for letting me know about India not just with my own senses but also with a shared bonding with others, from India and beyond. It gives me immense joy to think of my friends from around the world with whom I have shared a wonderful journey, and hopefully this is a sign of many more good things to come.

To all my friends: till we meet again, Shukriya! Thanks for everything!



I am Sabrina, from Bangladesh, and an ISS 2017 participant. As a Bangladeshi, all my life I have been learning about Indian history as we share the same history until 1947, when India separated into two parts based on religion named India and Pakistan. Bangladesh was with Pakistan as we have Muslim majority, and major number of Hindu people left in India. Finally in 1971, Bangladesh achieved its independence from Pakistan, and here we are, a proud different nation.

Though I have learned about history of India, its kings, queens, castles, monuments made in their periods, as my own history, but I have never seen any of those as almost all of them are in India. Participating in ISS was important to me because its academic classes refreshed my mind about those high school history from Indian's point of view, and more importantly I got to see all the historical places which was an exciting part of ISS. Apart from Indian history, I have learned and experienced diverse Indian cultures, castes, foods, dresses, dialects, dwellings, and so on.

Last but not the least, staying with ISS participants from different countries for six long weeks, and learning about their cultural experiences has made my ISS experience a valuable one.



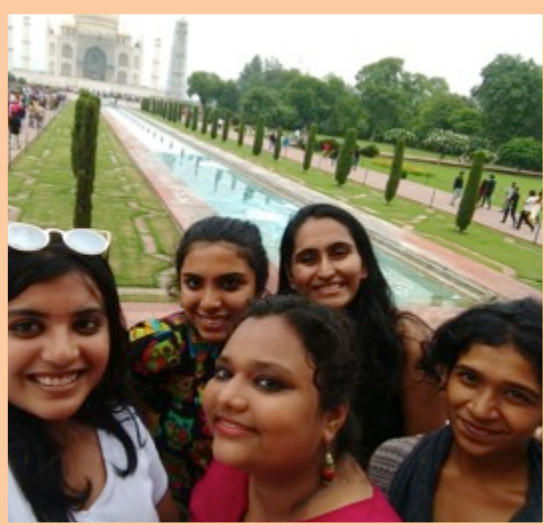


Being attracted by her fascinating culture, I was here in India with ISS, having an amazing time. The past six weeks, will undoubtedly be one of my most unforgettable moment in life. 4 weeks in JNU, having lectures together with those brilliant students and lecturers, bring me to the door of India, the country that is unbelievably rich in culture.

The 4-week is intense but fruitful, offering me a new lens to see, not only India, but also the world, which is a lot more than a place where you and me are living. Another two weeks in Jhalawa, provides me a shapely different experience. Being in touch with locals in this small town, enables me to experience, the diversity and colours of this lovely country, in person. Thank you ISS for providing me such an unexpectedly great time.



Vasundhara Dev Prakash Kanoria



While applying for this program I was very apprehensive about the course structure and syllabus. Being a law student from India I felt that since this course is targeted at International students it might present a very introductory picture of India. But this course is a beautiful blend of both basic and nuanced understanding of India.

What sets apart this summer school for me is the different perspectives that one gets on every issue like comparing caste and its realities in India with racism in the USA. In this summer school I was lucky enough to meet a great bunch of people who were truly interested in the various issues of India. So I am very thankful to have been given an opportunity to be a part of this summer school.



Kudrat Wadhwa

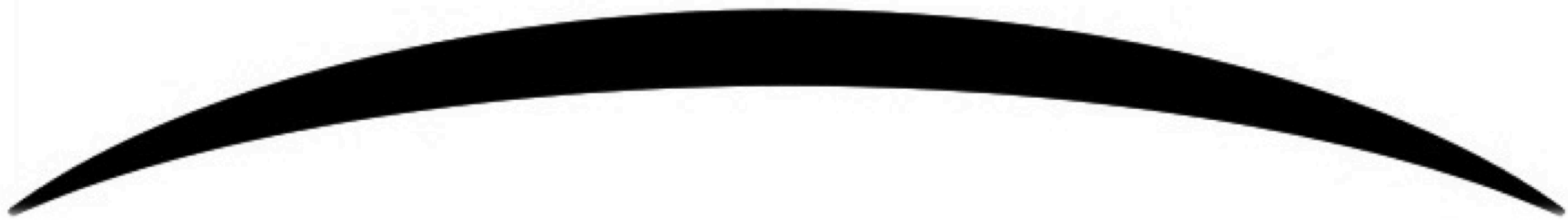


My favourite part about this program was by far the engaging lecturers who came from a variety of backgrounds. We not only had extremely gifted professors but also fantastic filmmakers, theatre practitioners, architects, artists and so on. I loved how I was able to connect material that I was learning in class with the sites that we visited. It was mind-boggling to see how the Qutub Minar is formed of Jain and Hindu temple remnants with only the faces of human and animal figures scratched off. I now also notice the Pitcher Pitcher Coconut symbol at almost all (Hindu Muslim, and Sikh!) religious and historical sites I visit. AMAZED!!!





BRIDGES



Special thanks for the production of this review go to Aidan Balfe, Kanako Noto, Diya L. Mehra and Karina Callejas.

Edited by Amjad Ali Khan, Founding Director of the International Summer School, New Delhi.



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