

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Q.	fill the details here
Name	Gaurav Agrawal
Rank in CSE-2013	1
Roll No.	249085
Age	29
Total attempts in CSE	2
Optional Subject	Economics
Medium chosen for Mains answers	English
Schooling medium	English
College medium	English
Home town/city	Jaipur
Work-experience if any	3.5 years in Investment Banking. Presently in IPS.
Details of other competitive exams, including success/failures	AIR 45, IITJEE 2001. CAT 2005 percentile 99.80
Details of coaching, mock tests, postal material for any competitive exam (if used)	<p>Vision IAS and Synergy test series useful.</p> <p>Baliyan history optional classroom coaching useful, but don't rely solely on it.</p> <p>Attended mock interviews at various places and found them useful.</p> <p>Attended classroom coaching at Vajiram, Sriram, Lalwani's Axiom and found them to be a total waste of my time and left soon / didn't attend classes.</p>
service preference #1, 2 and 3	IAS > IPS > IRS
state cadre preference (top3)	Rajasthan > MP > Gujarat

EDUCATION

	fill the details here
% in class 10	88.2

% in class 12	85.6
Schooling (Medium)	English
Graduation course and %	Computer Sc. & Engg. 6.8/10. Multiple F's and degree Extended.
Name of college, city, passing out year	IIT Kanpur, 2005
Post-graduation	IIM Lucknow, MBA in Finance 9.25 / 10. Gold Medal
Any other professional courses	
Hobbies & Extra curricular	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blogging 2. Following macroeconomy 3. Jogging

INTRODUCTION

Q. Tell us something about yourself, your family, when and why did you enter in this field of competitive exams?

ELECTRONIC VS PAPER MATERIAL

Q. In recent times, there is spur in electronic material- blogs, sites, pdfs, RSS-feeds. Many aspirants feel bogged down by this information overload. So, how much do you rely on electronic material and how much on the paper material (Books, newspapers)? If possible narrate a typical day in your studylife. What is your style of preparation (e.g. I continue making notes no matter what I'm reading, I just read multiple times but don't maintain notes, I make mindmaps on computer ...or xyz style)

More than 60% of preparation today has to come from internet. Role of books is decreasing. Hindu is of prime importance now. No typical day. I maintain notes.

TEMPO AND STYLE

Q. People know what books and syllabus points are to be prepared. But most of them lack consistency in their preparation. So, how do you keep study momentum going on? How do you fight against the mood swings and distractions?

Inner strengths.

STRUGGLE OF A SENIOR PLAYER

(Answer only if you're a senior player.)

After 1-2 failures in any competitive exam, a phase of mental saturation comes. The person knows the booklist, he knows what is necessary to succeed. But it doesn't yield result. The armchair 'experts' would point out UPSC is 'testing' emotional intelligence of the candidate or UPSC wants to break the backs of senior players, daily conspiracy theories on orkut.....Not to mention all the emotional struggle-against those irritating neighbors and relatives who keep asking your mother "*aap kaa betaa kya karta hai*" (What does you son/daughter do?)

MY question are two:

Q1. How did you survive through this mental prison and what're your words of wisdom to other senior players? If any specific inspirational incident(s), please share.

Only one thing. While preparing for the next attempt, don't begin in blind and just repeat what you did earlier, because that obviously failed. Instead, sit down, analyze, find your weaknesses and work to improve those weaknesses mainly.

Q2. What went wrong in your previous attempt? What changes did you make in this current attempt?

Please find out about it in detail here...

<http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2014/03/16/upsc-gs-mains-how-to-improve-answer-writing/>

WORKING PROFESSIONAL

If you're a working professional, share some tips on how to manage studies with job

PRELIMS (CSAT) GENERAL STUDIES

Topic	strategy/booklist/comment
History Ancient	I had history optional last year.
History Medieval	I had history optional last year.
History Modern (Freedom Struggle)	Shekhar Bandopadhyay and Bipin Chandra books
Culture society	I had history optional last year.
Polity (theory + current)	DD Basu

Economy (theory + current)	I had economics optional.
Science (theory + current)	9 th and 10 th class NCERT and Vajiram notes.
Environment (theory + current)	Please read my blog post for this. http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2014/07/08/culture-snt-envt/
geography physical	11 th and 12 th class NCERT, Goh Che Leong, Vajiram notes.
geography India	11 th and 12 th class NCERT, Goh Che Leong, Vajiram notes.
geography world	11 th and 12 th class NCERT, Goh Che Leong, Vajiram notes.
other national/international current affairs	Newspaper and internet.
Schemes, Policy & Filler Stuff	Newspaper and internet.

Q. Any observation / comments / tips about GS prelim 2013 paper?

PRELIMS (CSAT) APTITUDE

Topic	strategy / booklist
Maths	Didn't prepare.
reasoning	Didn't prepare.
comprehension	Didn't prepare.
Decision Making	Didn't prepare.

Q. Any observation / comments / tips about GS Aptitude 2013 paper.

Can't comment here as didn't prepare for this.

PRELIM ACCURACY

Q1. Did you attend any 'mock tests'? do you think they're necessary for success?

Yes. Yes absolutely necessary.

Q2. Approximate no. of attempted answers vs. correct answers. in CSAT-2013

Don't remember as didn't analyze this year's paper after coming back.

	attempted Q.	correct (Expected)
GS		
aptitude		

Q3. Your score in prelim (when UPSC uploads it please mail me your score)

My Prelims marks

Paper 1 (GS): 121.34 / 200

Paper 2 (CAT): 182.50 / 200

Total: 304 / 400

MAINS: COMPULSORY LANGUAGE PAPER

Compulsory language paper	Your preparation strategy / booklist?
English paper	None
your regional language	None

Q2.other observations / tips / comments on the length / difficulty level of compulsory language papers in CSE-2013

None

MAINS: ESSAY

Q1. How did you prepare for the essay paper?

Analyzed my mistakes from previous year and improved upon them. Details can be found here...

<http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2014/06/23/improving-essay-writing/>

Q2. Which among the following essay did you write? What key points did you include in it?

1. Be the change you want to see in others (Gandhi)
2. Is the Colonial mentality hindering India's Success?
3. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) along with GDH (Gross Domestic Happiness) would be the right indices for judging the wellbeing of a country
4. Science and technology is the panacea for the growth and security of the nation.

Attempted the Essay on S&T. Key points can be found here...

<http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2013/12/07/essay-science/>

MAINS GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 1 TO 4

I've created a table, so you can quickly point out what you referred. Alternatively you can write a separate standalone "Strategy" article in a wordfile.

Please note that while reading the coaching material, we will find that 90% of the topics are repetitive and useless if we have read the books. So skip those 90% and quickly read the remaining useful 10% only.

GENERAL STUDIES (MAINS) PAPER 1

Requests while you fill up the following tables

1. apart from your book/resource list, also comment on your own strategy after mains-2013 (e.g. after exam I realized that I shouldn't have prepared xyz topic in so much detail, I couldn't finish xyz syllabus topics properly before exam, I had expected UPSC to ask xyz from but they asked abc.....etc.etc.etc.) [Same request for each table given below for gs2, gs3, gs4]
2. If you used "internet" as source of preparation in xyz, then provide website name as and where possible.
3. Since mains-2013 had new syllabus and many people relied on Xerox of some coaching notes. so If you used such resource, please attest comment on quality e.g. "it was too deep, but I did only selective study/ It did not cover xyz. OR its quality was not upto the mark, so I suggest future players to avoid it and use ABC instead.....etc.."

Anyways, here starts the list:

Topic	How did you prepare?
culture	Multiple sources, mentioned here http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2014/07/08/culture-snt-envt/
Indian history	Shekhar Bandopadhyay – From Plassey to Partition, Bipin Chandra (both freedom struggle and since independence)
world history	Baliyan's history optional classnotes. Also read Europe Since Napoleon for history optional last year.
post-independence India	Mentioned above. Most of the questions asked were common knowledge which we develop from school time via newspapers

	and stories.
Indian society	Everybody knows everything. Skipped.
role of women, poverty etc.	Everybody knows everything. Skipped.
globalization on Indian society	Everybody knows everything. Skipped.
communalism, regionalism, secularism	Everybody knows everything. Skipped.
world geo physical	Had some basic idea. Got some coaching notes of Baliyan and Vajiram. Read some topics from Savinder Singh's book. Prepared cyclones from IMD website.
resource distribution	Skipped.
factors for industrial location	Skipped. Most of it is common sense.
earthquake tsunami etc	NCERT, Savinder Singh.
impact on flora-fauna	Skipped.

GENERAL STUDIES (MAINS) PAPER 2

Topic	How Did You Prepare?
Indian Constitution, devolution, dispute redressal etc.	DD Basu
comparing Constitution with world	Basic comparison everybody knows. So skipped.
parliament, state Legislatures	DD Basu, Puncchi Commission and 2 nd ARC reports.
executive-judiciary	DD Basu and also current issues.
ministries departments	Skipped
pressure group, informal asso.	2 nd ARC report. But too general a topic, everybody knows everything.
Representation of people's act	Current issues (SC rulings had come on this issue)
various bodies: Constitutional, statutory..	Internet based study, Wikipedia, expert opinion. Basically find the composition etc. of the body. Powers, functions etc. mostly same. Weaknesses and strengths also mostly same. Refer to my notes here.
NGO, SHG etc	Everybody knows everything. Still studied 2 nd ARC

	report for core issues.
welfare schemes, bodies	Vajiram came out with a public pdf analyzing various schemes.
social sector, health, edu, HRD	Follow current issues
governance, transparency, accountability	2 nd ARC report
e-governance	2 nd ARC report
role of civil service	2 nd ARC report
India & neighbors	Newspapers and internet
bilateral/global grouping	Newspapers and internet
effect of foreign country policies on Indian interest	Newspapers and internet
diaspora	Newspapers and internet
international bodies- structure mandate	Newspapers and internet

GENERAL STUDIES (MAINS) PAPER 3

Topic	How Did You Prepare?
Indian economy, resource mobilization	Everything under the sun comes under it. What to prepare.
inclusive growth	Everybody knows everything.
budgeting	I read 2 nd ARC report on Financial Management. But obviously question asked was from somewhere else and I had no idea. But still one should read it to cover basic stock issues in the topic like accrual budgeting, other types of budget etc. Additionally I think one should read the budget carefully and watch out for any interesting term in it.
major crops, irrigation	Report titled "State of Indian Agriculture" presented in parliament in March / April 2012.
agro produce – storage, marketing	APMC Acts, direct marketing, e-marketing initiatives, FDI in retail, schemes of the ministry, Mega food park scheme, National Food Processing Missin etc. All this can be found on internet.
e-technology for famers	Internet.

farm subsidies, MSP	From economics optional background. Understand what are the issues with farm subsidies and MSPs. See what leading economists are saying about these. Read a few papers from CACP website.
PDS, buffer, food security	CACP website, FSB, internet based study totally.
technology mission	Internet.
animal rearing economics	Couldn't prepare except for whatever is given in State of Indian Agriculture Report, 2012.
food processing	Mentioned above in storage, marketing topic.
land reforms	Prepared it as a part of economics optional. You can see my notes. Bhoodan and Gramdan I saw from Mrunal.
liberalization	Internet, newspapers
Infra	Internet, newspapers
investment models	Internet, newspapers
science-tech day to day life	Coaching material, but all of it was useless.
Indian achievements in sci-tech	Skipped
awareness in IT, space, biotech, nano, IPR	Tried to follow current developments. For all effective purposes, skipped.
environmental impact assessment	Skipped. Everybody knows everything.
Disaster Management	2 nd ARC report. CAG report on the topic.
non state actors, internal security	2 nd ARC and Puncchi Commission reports covering tribal councils, 5 th and 6 th schedule issues, PESA, FRA etc.
internal security – role of media, social networking site	Too general, everybody knows everything. Just keep following current issues.
cyber security	Skipped. Everybody knows everything.
money laundering	Skipped. Everybody knows everything.
border Management	Skipped. Everybody knows everything.
organized crime, terrorism	Skipped mostly. Read some discussion on anti-terror law in 2 nd ARC report. Everybody knows everything.

security agencies- structure mandate	Some Wikipedia based study, but mostly skipped. Everybody knows everything.
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GENERAL STUDIES 4: ETHICS, INTEGRITY, APTITUDE

Topic	How Did You Prepare?
ethics and interface, family, society and all the <i>hathodaa</i> topics	Too general topics. Everybody knows everything about these topics. Most important question in this topic is what is the role of family / society in framing morality / ethics.
attitude, moral influence etc.	Sriram, Baliyan and Vajiram material available in photocopy shops for basic definitions.
civil service: integrity, impartiality, tolerance to weak etc	Vajiram and Baliyan material available in photocopy shops. Nolan committee report. 2 nd ARC report.
emotional intelligence, its use in governance	Sriram material for basic definitions. Too general topic, everybody knows everything about it. One important question is role of EI in administration.
moral thinkers of India and world	How many thinkers did you prepare? Mostly skipped it. Tried to remember a few thinkers from Baliyan's and Sriram's notes but found it couldn't be done.
ethics in pub.ad, accountability, laws, rules etc.	2 nd ARC report. Everybody knows everything.
corporate governance	Important topics I thought here were recent Company law, Sebi recommendations. But they didn't ask these. Otherwise this is too general a topic and everybody knows everything.
probity in governance, work culture	Everybody knows everything.
citizen charter, ethics code, work culture etc.	2 nd ARC reports on ethics and governance.
challenges of corruption	2 nd ARC report on ethics.
case studies on above topics	Bring it on approach.

Any other comments, word of wisdom after going through the mains-2013.

In case studies, I always tried to analyze each option from a theoretical perspective. I used to take an option and see what the 4-5 school of ethics say about it and then try to come to an acceptable ethical decision.

GS4 ETHICS CASE STUDY ANSWERS IN MAINS 2013

Q. in GS4 ethics papers, please give a sketchy overview of your case study answers:

Sorry don't remember. But my vision ias mock tests where I attempted such case studies can be seen here... <http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2014/06/23/upsc-ias-prep-vision-ias-answer-scripts-gaurav-agrawal/>

Case	your approach/ keypoints
1: RTI: To hide or not to hide	
2: Engineer: Bogus flyover vs deadline	
3: Child Labourers in Sivakasi	
4: Nepotism in Job recruitment	
5: Leaking information	
6: Narrate one incident in your life when you were faced with such crisis of conscience and how you resolved the same.	

MAINS ANSWER-WRITING?

Q. How was your experience with the 'fixed space' answer sheet?

It's a trap. Don't fall to the temptation of filling the entire space.

Q. Did you write answers in bullet points or in paragraphs? Some players (who cleared mains and got interview call letter) were claiming that they wrote entire paper in bullet points, so it doesn't matter....whether examiner is asking 'examine, comment, discuss or xyz'....simply write in bullets and points.

Bullet points with proper headings, sub headings, underlining. And who says we can't comment / discuss in points or while analyzing can't present our thoughts in points. In comment / discuss / analyze kind of questions, simply give all positive points, then given all negative points and then give way forward. Or say take up an issue as a point sub heading, do its pros and cons analysis and then move on to next point sub heading. Bottom line is, use your own brain and communicate in a way you feel to be the best. Don't rely blindly on coachingwallahs.

Q. Did you follow the “introduction-body-conclusion” format? because some mains-qualified candidates claim they simply wrote the points they could recall within the time, instead of bothering with proper introduction and conclusion.

Yes. I too wrote almost all my answers in points but still I gave a proper introduction, proper headings and sub-headings and then a conclusion. The main bulk of the answer was in points. I don't think why the tradeoff mentioned in the second half of your question should arise.

Q. In GS papers, Since UPSC came with those 100 and 200 words questions. What was your approach in the exam (I wrote all, I only focused on the questions where I could answer perfectly, I just not to high quality points to reach the word limit etc.) Because the UPSC aspirant Community is *divided* over what counts as a ‘good’ paper. Some experts claim you should attempt all- even if it involves “making up” an answer with filler lines, some claim attempt only those questions you know perfectly. Where do you stand on this? [Based on your experience and of your seniors/buddies]

Extremes in public life are mostly bad and one has to do a balancing act. Same applies to your question above. I would only say, have faith in your judgment, apply your mind, rely on intuition on what to attempt and what not. Exam condition is so dynamic, can't apply any rigid formula there. I simply attempted questions I 'felt' I should attempt.

Q. How many marks worth questions did you skip/couldn't finish in the GS papers?

GS (Mains paper)	Couldn't finish __ mark. + comments on any weird questions that you attempted wrongly (e.g. some listed wrong names under foreign freedom fighters)
GS1	10 marks
GS2	10 marks
GS3	60 marks
GS4	10 marks

Q5. Did you use highlighters / sketchpens in your answers?

No

Q6. Did you draw any diagram in any paper? (e.g. in GS1 Geography)

No, wanted to but couldn't

Q7. If yes, Did you draw diagrams with pencil or pen?

NA

Q8. Did you use ruler to draw the lines in diagram? Or did you just make it by hand?

NA

Q9. You wrote the answer in blue pen or black pen?

Blue gel pen

(**Mrunal** – since readers keep mailing such queries, therefore I'm asking the topper to clear all the air haha.)

MAINS OPTIONAL SUBJECT

Q1. First the essential book/resource list. (Also mention which one is the "Base book" for covering the theory? + Whatever comments you've for a particular book e.g. "my seniors said read xyz book but I found that ABC book was better". "xyz topic not given properly in this book, so prepare from xyz website or book..." OR and so on.)

Economics was my optional. Please read my blog post on this where I have covered this in great detail.
http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2014/06/26/eco_optional/

This is a list of reading material arrived after a lot of painstaking trial and errors.

There are many topics which required study of many research papers and internet articles. So obviously can't mention a single source for them. But I used to take whatever I found useful from there and make my own notes which can be found here.

<http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2014/06/18/upscnotesgauravagrawal/>

Q2. How much of internet-research / current affairs is necessary for this optional? OR can one simply rely on the books and be done with this subject?

Paper 1 can be done mostly by books. Paper 2 is 80% internet based.

Q3. How many months did it take to finish the core optional syllabus?

3 months for the first time where I could study the other optional as well as GS along with Economics.

Q4. How many days/ weeks before the exam, you started answer writing practice?

Around 2 months.

Q5. Do you maintain self-notes for revision of optional? In which format- electronic or paper?

Yes, electronic. All uploaded on my blog.

Q6. Your observation about the difficulty level of 2013 mains vs previous papers. And what precautions / rectifications are necessary in the future strategy for given optional subject?

I think there was a quantum jump in the difficulty level from previous mains. There was a question in paper 1 I still can't even understand to this day. But thankfully, the system of choices saved me. Precautions etc. I have mentioned in my blog post on economics.

Q7. How much did you skip OR couldn't answer properly, in the optional paper?

optional paper	Couldn't finish __ mark. + comments on any weird questions
Paper I	Around 14 marks
paper II	Around 8 marks

Q8. (Only if pub.ad or geography) would you advice any interested party (new player) to pick this optional? Nowadays wind seems to be flowing towards sociology and political science. Some senior players advice new players not to pick them given the scaling and odd questions. What's your take on this?

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Q1. How did you prepare for the interview? Particularly college graduation subjects related questions?

First, would like to clarify the myth that UPSC interview is only of 275 marks i.e. 10-15%. The real weight of the interview is at least 40%. The reasons are: a) UPSC has developed a habit of giving very less marks in mains. This is a relative exam and only difference of marks between us and others matters. Naturally if low marks are given in written, then difference of marks from others which we can have by performing well in written will be less. b) Only candidates clearing mains can give interview. So whatever little difference in marks was there in mains gets reduced even further (as the difference in marks among the mains successful candidates would be less than the difference in the entire set). On the other hand, interview marks come only after this mains cutoff stage and there is a full range of marks given in interviews. So the difference in marks arising out of interview can be great leading to its increased effective weight.

So neglect interview only at your own peril! And also unlike what many say interview is not purely 'luck' based. *Barring few exceptional cases, most of the interviews contain questions 90% of which can be predicted and prepared well in advance!* Wait for my blog post on interviews.

- Subject: College graduation subject (Computer Sc.) didn't have much relevance for me as I had done a lot of things after college. So I had done only very basic preparation of IT – current happenings and some theoretical aspects. My main field was economics which was running through my entire DAF (in hobby,

job related to eco, optional eco, MBA done in finance – most people relate finance with economics). And economics is a subject where unless we meet an economist in the panel, the interview would be on current economic issues only. So decided to skip the theoretical portions and prepare only the current macroeconomic issues. We were facing high inflation and low growth, stalled projects, land acquisition issues etc. And a new government was there. So it was natural to expect questions on it and so I prepared these issues. Since economics was my main area, so I had to speak like an economist. Nothing less was expected. So remembered some key data related to IIP, WPI, CPI, GDP numbers etc. Developed mind maps containing 6-7 points on Why high inflation and Why low growth. The thing is in such issues everybody knows everything, but I had to speak like an economist. So from the first sentence itself, my understanding should be visible. This is possible only when we prepare these questions beforehand and not think about them for the first time in the interview itself. I have these mind maps on paper, so will upload scanned images on my blog post so that readers can get a clearer idea of what I am talking about.

- Home state: Had prepared it last year as well, so this year mostly revised it and prepared some current issues (like refinery, jaipur metro, drug trafficking, socio economic scenario). Mostly internet based study particularly Wikipedia. For Rajput and modern history, read a book used in RAS history optional apart from internet.

- Home district: I was brought up in Jaipur so prepared a few aspects of Jaipur (tourism places, economic activities, present problems etc.). But I was born in Bharatpur. In the summary sheet, only place of birth comes, so preparing place of birth is more important than preparing 'home' district. I prepared Bharatpur history, economy, tourism places, Keoladeo park, Salim Ali, ornithology etc. Mostly Wikipedia based study.

- Job: I was trading financial derivatives at Citi. Most important thing for me was naturally financial crisis. I know a great deal about financial crisis naturally having seen it from the middle of it all, but when it comes to explaining it in 2-3 sentences, prior preparation is needed. So I prepared it and it was asked in the beginning questions itself last year. Then I also prepared history of Citi and its mergers, Salomon Brothers, John Meriwether, LTCM etc. Some preparation related to Vikram Pandit and Corbatt.

- IPS: Had to study a lot about this topic this year as it was completely new. Prepared police reforms (studied all commissions setup since British era, watched Aamir Khan's show, read many articles on internet) then prepared mind maps of 5-6 points to speak on various possible questions on police and bureaucracy reforms. Basically in such topics everybody knows everything. What matters is how we speak in first 2-3 sentences. However, they couldn't find out I was already into IPS (as it was there in the DAF but not summary sheet from where they were asking), so no questions asked. Will upload the scanned copies of these mind maps in my blogpost.

- Why IAS after IPS, IIM, IIT, Investment Banking: Spent a lot of time preparing this. Prepared it from all possible angles I could think. Came up with realistic answers. In both interviews, this was the first question asked.

- Other DAF things: Prepared everything mentioned in the DAF. Will cover these in the blog post where I will upload my DAF and cover each issue.

- Current affairs: Current affairs preparation for interview is different from preparation for mains. Basically people who are taking our interview are not preparing themselves. So they will only remember 'masala' news and not the boring committees and legislations etc. So have to cover masala news for interview and develop our own opinion on all such news items.

Q2. Did you attend any mock interviews by coaching classes? How were they similar / different than official interview? Do you believe it is necessary to attend such mock interviews?

Yes. They were very helpful for me as I was cutout for private sector interviews, not UPSC interview. UPSC interview requires different kind of mannerisms and body language and this is what I learnt from mocks. Then I also got to know my weakness areas on which I worked. However, don't rely blindly on whatever they say, apply your own mind before changing / preparing something.

Q3. What did you wear? Some experts say coat is must, some say tie is must, and some say black shoes must. What attire did you pick up?

The sole purpose of the attire should be that it doesn't get noticed. I wore a shirt, trousers and a tie. Black shoes, clean shaved.

Q4. Where did you stay for the interview? (Hotel / friend's home ..) and what books/material did you bring for the 'revision before interview'?

My friend's place. Revised some of my online notes and mind maps.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Q1. Who was the chairman of you interview board?

Dr. Kilemsungla

Q2. How long was the interview?

May be around 20-25 mins

Q3. Why do you want to join civil service? Why don't you continue in your graduation field? Social service can be done from private sector too. [Since I don't know whether they ask you this question or not. But if they had asked- what will be your reply?]

1st question asked of me... and given in my transcript.

<http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2014/05/31/upsc-interview-2014/>

Q4. Please narrate your entire interview- what questions did they ask and what did you reply and other pleasant or uncomfortable experiences during the interview. (Earlier some toppers only tell me their question but not their answer. I would appreciate if you give both Question + your original answers)

<http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2014/05/31/upsc-interview-2014/>

Q5. Was your interview on the expected lines of what you had prepared or did they ask you totally unexpected questions? Was it a stress interview, did they ask any uncomfortable questions? If yes, how did you handle it?

Most of it was expected.

Q6. Any side details about technicalities like "make sure you bring xyz document or do xyz thing, or you'll face problem"?

None

Q7. Any word of wisdom / observations about medical checkup?

None

CSE-2013 MARKSHEET

Q1. please attach both prelim and final marksheet.

My Prelims marks

Paper 1 (GS): 121.34 / 200

Paper 2 (CAT): 182.50 / 200

Total: 304 / 400

Mains marks (<http://thesupermanreturns.wordpress.com/2014/06/20/my-upsc-marks-cse-2013/>)

Essay: 135 / 250

GS 1: 85 / 250

GS 2: 63 / 250

GS 3: 88 / 250

GS 4: 102 / 250

Total GS: 338 / 1000

Optional (Economics)

Economics 1: 134 / 250

Economics 2: 162 / 250

Total Economics: 296 / 500

Total Written: 769 / 1750

Interview (Dr. Kilemsungla board): 206 / 275

Total: 975 / 2025

Q2. After looking at the marksheet, suppose you had to prepare again next time, what changes will you make in your studies?

Would sit down and try to figure out how to score more in GS. Would consult few more people, also join test series to seek feedback.

CAREER BACKUP

Q1. If you were not selected, what was your career backup plan?

Continued with IPS, Rajasthan cadre.

Q2. when were you going to “execute” that backup plan? (e.g. after __ failed attempts/ after I cross __ age/after dad retires/ etc.)

After the result.

VIEWS ON UPSC REFORMS

What are your views on following issues?

Q. Optional subjects should be removed altogether. The present stalemate is helping no-one, except coaching-owners, book publishers.

I don't subscribe to the so called 'level playing field' theory that removing optional ensures level playing field. How can it be a level playing field when you force an engineer to study history as well as a history student to study history? Is this level playing field or the scenario when everybody can study his/her strength?

Q. Despite what UPSC has done in recent years, it has failed to curb the nuisance of Delhi's coaching factories. In fact it's increased under the new syllabus in 2013. Let's face it, most candidates who gave Mains-2013 have relied on (authentic OR Xeroxed) coaching notes because there was hardly any time left to prepare so many topics in such short time. This system work against an individual preparing from far-away area, without any financial resources, high-speed internet or *contacts* in Delhi.

Don't agree with this. Coachingwallahs thrive when question papers are static and same things are repeated year after year. UPSC, on the other hand, has made their paper very dynamic in last 2-3 years. Now the 'bookish' questions have reduced greatly and analyze types have increased. No longer are they asking questions where information is the key determinant (even in the prelims). What matters is one's opinion and analysis. This cannot be found in any single place / book and internet has to be referred to. Most coachingwallahs are stagnant and old and are unwilling to change with times. Classroom coachings have become a waste of time. Only 10% of what they teach is perhaps relevant. Instead of attending their classes and wasting time on that 90% useless thing, better to just buy their notes from photocopy shops and study the 10%. Coachings take 6 months to teach what one can study in 2 months and are of inferior quality.

Q. Half-merger of IFoS with CSE is a bad move because it has raised the cutoffs for players who're solely dedicated to IFoS only (and not to IAS/IPS). Adding salt to the wounds, many who had applied for both jobs, cleared the prelims- they did not even bother to appear in all the papers of Mains-IFoS. (RTI revealed this).

No comments.

Q. UPSC should disclose official prelim answerkey and cutoffs, immediately after prelim is over, instead of postponing it till interview phase is over.

Yes. In fact should also reveal individual's marks along with his / her prelims result.

Q. UPSC should be conducted online like IBPS and CAT exam to shorten the duration of exam.

Invariably that is the direction one has to move in. But people are not ready for it presently.

Q. If you are made the UPSC chairman, what other reforms would you initiate for the civil service exam?

Transparency Related Matters

- Provide scanned copies of answer sheets.
- Release all marks of each candidate at each stage.
- Give a tentative window of result declaration beforehand.

Quality of Exam

- Divide GS into more papers and ensure that only a historian is checking history answers, geographer is checking geography answers, foreign policy experts are checking IR answers and so on. In the present system, a single person is checking entire GS paper which has 3-4 subjects and this hampers quality of examination seriously.

INSECURITY ABOUT PROFILE

Q. Many candidates prepare sincerely but constantly live under fear about 'profile insecurity'. I'm not from a big college, I'm not from English medium, and I don't have work-experience. What if they ask some stressful questions in the interview about this? Did you suffer from such insecurities? What is your message to these candidates?

No such insecurities. On the other hand, I suffered from the insecurity that given my exceptional background, the interview board may take me as arrogant and confused even before the interview begins.

WISDOM

Q. Through this struggle and success, what have you learned? What is the wisdom of life and competition? What is Your message to the new aspirants?

Learnt that there are always conflicting perspectives of things and one has to appreciate both. Also life is not like sciences, but social sciences. $2 + 2$ may not be equal to 4. One has to accept what it is and move on.

Q. Many hardworking candidates have failed in Mains/Interview of CSE-2013. They're feeling cynical, hopeless and depressed- what is your message to them?

Of course tighten your seat belts and get going. But don't just blindly repeat what you did because obviously it didn't work. See where your mistakes might have been and improve them.

CREDIT: FRIENDS/FAMILY

Q. Behind every topper are many people who stood by during those uncertain times when he/she was merely an 'aspirant'. Would you like to tell the world, who were those people in your case? Any specific incidence that you would like to share with the readers?

My family.

BOGUS MARKETING PROPAGANDA

Q. You are well aware of the sacred rule - the last question must be about self-marketing. So, *Did you use Mrunal.org for your preparation and if yes, how did it help you?* And you can even reply "No". I'll still publish your answer without tempering, unlike those competitive magazines.

Yes, in fact question on bhodan movement I had read from mrunal only. But not a regular follower as its not a user friendly site.

Q. Any reform / suggestion for improving this site?

Please make it structured and easy to read. I have tried to read it many times but always find it difficult to see.