

CSE 2020:

Name: Anil Basak

State: Bihar (Kishanganj district)

Date of Personality Test (PT): 06th August, 2021; 2nd to go (Forenoon)

Chairperson (CP): Sujata Mehta Madam

Medium of PT: Hindi (actually it was Hinglish)

Venue: UPSC Bhawan

Optional: Mathematics

Graduation: Civil Engineering , IIT Delhi- 2018

Hobby: Playing Cricket

Work: IRS IT-2020 (on Extraordinary Leave till December 2021)

PT Experience:

No questions on IRS IT, Cricket, IIT Delhi and Bihar

My PT Room was not that big (it was roughly a 20 feet x 20 feet room). Hence, there was no mic in the room. The members were separated from each other by about 6 feet.

Room door was already open. I entered the room wearing a face-shield, mask and hand gloves (provided by UPSC). All the members were also wearing masks throughout the interview (only 2 members removed their masks while asking questions during the interview).

Greeted the Chairperson and then other 4 Members (1 lady and 3 gentlemen).

CP said that I may remove my face-shield if I want. I removed the face-shield and kept it on the table in front of me. However, I was wearing the mask throughout the PT (The candidate just before me was scolded by the board for removing the mask without the permission of the board).

CP then showed me two passport size photographs and asked whether it was me (However, she didn't ask me to remove the mask to verify me). I said , "yes Madam".

Trivia: These are the photographs submitted by us during document verification on the date of PT and the Board writes our PT marks at the backside of the photographs.

Chairperson (CP):

1. Introduce yourself by giving details about your education and work.
2. What are the ideals in the Preamble along with 'Justice'?
3. Arrange the four ideals as per their importance and also give reasons for the same. (I said , "Madam, 1. Justice 2. Equality 3. Liberty 4. Fraternity")
4. Shouldn't Equality be placed before Justice? (I said if there is Justice then there will be Equality)

5. Define Liberty and Fraternity.
 6. Is there Justice in India?
 7. Difference between Law and Justice? (I said Law is the means and Justice is the end).
 8. Section 498A of IPC is there. We have the burden of proof on the accused. So, you think Section 498A is doing justice? (Question about Sec 498A came up randomly. I never mentioned any keyword like IPC or Sec 498A etc.)
 I said, "The Supreme Court has said...."
 CP: No, forget about the Supreme Court. Tell us your opinion.
 (I said yes Madam Sec 498A is doing justice because there are crimes against women in India like domestic violence. So we need Sec 498A dealing with cruelty by husband and his relatives.)
 CP cut me short at this point and said thank you and passed the baton to Member 1.

Member 1:

1. So we were talking about Justice. In India there are huge pendencies in Courts. You know that Justice delayed is Justice denied. Don't you think in India Justice is denied?
 2. Now assume you are the Law Secretary of India. How will you solve the problem of judicial pendencies?
 3. Suppose you are made the Collector of a district. There is a welfare scheme which is to be implemented. The local politician in the district is asking you to post two of his known officers at a particular posting where there is scope for corruption. What will you do? (2-3 follow up questions like don't you think if there is some corruption then everyone will be happy as the scheme would be implemented easily. I said that means is also important and corruption ultimately hurts the common man the most.
 The member continued his follow up questions and stopped only when I said, "if I am the DC then it will my responsibility to ensure corruption free administration and hence I will deny the request by the politician")

Member 2:

1. Have you heard of a place in Jharkhand which is famous for cybercrimes? (I said, "Yes Sir. It is Jamtara")
 2. You must have seen that Jamtara serial? (I said, "Yes Sir"). So, despite having low literacy, why are the youths there engaged in cyber crimes?
 3. If you are made the SP of Jamtara district how will you tackle such cyber crimes? (Then 2-3 follow up questions)
 4. You must have seen in the serial that the local politician was also involved in the cyber crimes. As the SP of the district how will you handle the local politician?
 5. What are the different types of soils in India?
 6. What is topsoil? (I said, "Sir, the top part of the soil is topsoil". He smiled and said, "That is obvious. Tell me the importance of topsoil for agricultural growth.")
 7. Suppose you have to make a dam in the Himalayas. What all things will you keep in mind as a Civil Engineer?
 8. What are normal distribution, Poisson distribution and XYZ distribution (I am unable to recall XYZ)?

(I said, "Sir, I know only about normal distribution.")

9. Normal distribution symmetrical or not?

Member 3 (Lady member):

1. What is this research award mentioned in your DAF?

2. Tell me two of your weaknesses which may go against you as a civil servant?

(Second weakness I mentioned was regarding lack of life skills like 'driving', 'cooking' etc.)

3. No, but cooking will not affect civil services. I was asking about those weaknesses which will adversely affect you being in civil services.

At this moment before I could answer, CP said, "Yes, cooking is also important." She cut the member short and passed the baton to Member 4 (This was done probably because Member 3 didn't have much time as around 10-12 minutes were taken by Member 2)

Member 4:

1. Name three Indians who got the Nobel Prize?

2. Who got the Nobel prize in mathematics recently? (I said, "Sir, in mathematics there is no Nobel Prize but we have the equivalent as Abel Prize")

3. Isn't it the Fields Medal? (I said, "Sir, some consider the Fields Medal as the Nobel Prize. However, Abel Prize is specifically created as an equivalent of Nobel Prize in Mathematics")

4. Okay which Indian got it? (I said, "Sir, I know about the Indian origin people who got Fields Medal")

5. Okay tell the names?

6. Tell us how mathematical modelling is used in administration?

7. What is the use of mathematics in economics?

8. Another question was related to how you will use mathematics when there is a land which is spread over two districts? (I couldn't understand the exact question. The member immediately moved to another question).

9. Why do people after being selected in the civil services forget their friends and stop being humble?

CP:

1. Okay. Do you want us to ask you anything else? (I said, "No Madam. Thank you. I think most of the areas are sufficiently covered".)

CP then said, "your interview is over. Please take the head-shield with you before leaving."

I thanked the CP and then the other 4 members and left the room.

P.S. :

1. When I came out of the room, the lady candidate whose interview was next to me said that my interview was too long. I nodded and wished her good luck.

2. Finally I got 187 marks in the PT when the results were declared in September.

CSE 2019:

Board: Smita Nagaraj Ma'am.

Medium of PT: English

Venue: UPSC Bhawan

Date: 11th March, 2020. Afternoon Slot.

Duration of the interview: 25 minutes (approx.). Third to go.

Graduation: Civil Engineering, IIT Delhi-2018.

Hobbies: Following Cricket and Teaching

Optional: Mathematics

Home State: Bihar (Kishanganj district)

*No questions asked on hobbies and optional.

Chairman Ma'am:

1. Are you working?
2. So you come from an IIT. IITs have become elite institutions and are also associated with brand value. This has led to neglect of other higher educational institutions. Your view? (In the answer, one of the points I mentioned was about the NPTEL initiative of IITs which is benefitting other college students as well. Member 4 will pick up NPTEL related questions later)
3. You came to IIT because of its brand value? Isn't it?
4. You could have gone for research had research been branded like the IITs. So don't you think branding plays an important role in your decision making?
4. People join Civil Services because of brand value. Your opinion?
(I tried to highlight the good work of Civil Servants and how they inspired me. Also I said Civil Services is a 'lucrative' career option. Member 4 will pick this up later)
5. Tell me one civil servant who inspired you?

Member 1:

1. (*Very technical question on current affairs and I said I don't know.)
2. Difference between toughness and resilience? (Civil Engineering question. Chairman Ma'am will pick this up at the end)
3. When toughness approaches resilience? (He asked me something related to the elastic properties of material. I couldn't understand the question clearly. I replied that I don't know).
4. Why are we promoting Electric Vehicles (EVs) in India?
5. Challenges in EV adoption? (First point I said was the import dependence of EV batteries on China)
6. Suppose we somehow get EV batteries at low cost. What other challenges are there?

7. Do you know something about the storage capacity of an EV battery? Isn't it important for EV adoption?
8. How long does an EV battery last?
9. Is your district an aspirational district? (I said no. But the adjoining districts- Purnia and Araria are aspirational districts)
10. What is the Aspirational District Programme?

M2: (Bihar related questions)

- 1,2,3. (*Three questions on recent developments in Bihar. I said, "I don't know" on the trot.)
4. What are the main issues in Bihar?
5. The problems that you mentioned are there since decades. Still the situation has not changed. So the Civil Services have failed?
6. There are many Civil Servants produced by Bihar. But most of them don't want to be in Bihar. Will you work in Bihar?
(I said this is my first choice)
7. You would be working because of local contacts in Bihar. Isn't it?
8. Problem of illegal gun manufacturing in Bihar. Isn't it prevalent?
9. Which act the State Government brought to tackle illegal gun manufacturing?

M3 (This member was always in disagreement mode):

1. Problems created by digital giants (like Facebook) in India?
2. What are cyber crimes?
3. Is the government doing enough to prevent them?
4. Hacking done by one country on other countries. How should India respond?
5. International efforts on Cybersecurity?
(I said Budapest Convention. This time he agreed with me. Probably because this was his last question)

M4:

1. Why is data called the new oil?
2. How data is oil for an automobile?
3. What should India do to harness the benefits of the data revolution?
4. Why should we promote online education?
5. Do you think that online courses as in NPTEL can replace the conventional courses taught in colleges?
6. Problems with NPTEL courses?
7. Why is Civil Services lucrative to you? (One of the point I mentioned in the answer was public interaction)
8. However there will hardly be any public interaction in Indian Defence Estate Service. Then how would you justify your answer?

Chairman Ma'am:

1. Which quality would you prefer: toughness or resilience?
(I said both)
2. No, No. Choose one of the two? (I said toughness)
3. She said she would have chosen resilience.
(I said that for me toughness is important as it allows me to absorb the negative energy associated with failure. Ma'am if someone chooses resilience I am fine with it)
4. Okay you are fine with it. Thank you. Your interview is over.

At last M1 told the answer to question no. 3 asked by him. I thanked him for the answer. Thanked the other members and left.

*Overall the Board was cordial.

P.S. : I got 160 marks in this Personality Test.