

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH KUMAR ASHISH, IPS - BATCH 2012

Civil Services Examinations always has been famed for its impressive stiffness but extraordinary inclusiveness in selection process among the aspirants. This Interview section exemplify one of its glory once again. Mr Ashis Kumar, who has been selected for IPS batch, 2012 surprised all by revealing that he was the first candidate to be selected with French Literature as an Optional Subject. Even though belonging to one of the most backward district Jamui in Bihar, his visionary and mission oriented approach to life and career leads a marvelous inspiring road for future generation and struggling aspirants also.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Congratulations and wishes for your success.

Kumar Ashish: Thanks a lot.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: How do you feel now after achieving your goal?

Kumar Ashish: It is like a dream coming true. Feelings cannot be expressed in words.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Why Civil Services?

Kumar Ashish: Getting into the Indian Civil Services was a childhood dream for me ever since I was guided by my elder brothers Shri. Sanjay Kumar (ASM, Western Railways, Ujjain) and Major (Dr.) Mukesh Kumar (Army Hospital, Bikaner) about the immense potential held by the Bureaucracy to bring social changes in the Nation. My desire to bring smiles on the faces of people by effectively discharging the duty as a Civil Servant was further accentuated after meeting the then DM of my District, Jamui (Bihar) Shri Rajit Punhani, (IAS) in 1997 during a quiz contest in which he gave me the First prize.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Do you think one should have a fall back option or he/she should pursue his/her dreams of Civil Services single minded?

Kumar Ashish: Yes, according to me, UPSC preparation should rightly be backed by a fall back option. I had one in academics. I was teaching French for graduation classes in French Center at JNU, New Delhi for the last two years.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: When did you first think about Civil Services as your career choice?

Kumar Ashish: It was in 1994 when I thought first about civil services as career.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Please tell us about your family background. How did your family members support you while you were preparing for Civil Services.

Kumar Ashish: I come from a rural middle class family from Sikandra, District Jamui, Bihar. Since I am the youngest in my family, I got immense support from my family and I was fortunate that there was no family compulsion of acquiring a Job/ marriage at early age. So, I could keep preparing sans any distraction.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: May we please know your education and the educational institutions you attended?

Kumar Ashish: After completion of my 10th (Sri Krishna Vidyalaya, Sikandra) and 12th (Dhanraj Singh College, Sikandra) from Bihar, I came to JNU, New Delhi with an aim to complete my Graduation and to start the preparation of UPSC. However, I learnt a Foreign language FRENCH in which I pursued my BA, MA, Mphil and now pursuing Ph D. In 2006, I



got the opportunity to travel to France as a part of our study programme. I utilized that one academic year period of my sojourn to develop a better understanding of French Language and Literature.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Once decided, how did you go for preparation along with normal study schedules?

Kumar Ashish: It started with a deep desire to clear this examination. I was very much involved in my academic studies (M.Phil and Ph.D in French) and extra-curricular activities at JNU. So, managing my time was a tough task. Nevertheless, where there is a will, there is a way. Therefore, I tried my best to keep a fine balance between all three.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: When did you go for your first attempt and in which attempt did you get selected?

Kumar Ashish: It was my second attempt of writing Mains examination. Earlier to this, I wrote exam in 2009 when I had reached up to the Interview Stage.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: There has been a change in Preliminaries. Optional has been removed & CSAT has been introduced. What is your opinion about CSAT?

Kumar Ashish: People should take these changes for good. CSAT has brought all the candidates on equal footing. Now, one has to score in both the papers in order to qualify for the Mains. Expertise of any particular subject is not going to help you much. Although it has created some difficulties for Hindi medium students but in due course of time, they will overcome this hurdle as well.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: What are the implications of the CSAT, as the aptitude of the candidate will be tested at the very first stage?

Kumar Ashish: Through CSAT, UPSC is trying to judge the aptitude of candidates at the very first level. It would help them to identify and select only those candidates who can really be proved Assets for Indian Civil Services.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: How did you choose your Optional Subjects for the Mains Examination? Any



Kumar Ashish celebrating his success with parents

suggestions for our readers.?

Kumar Ashish: My optional subjects were Geography and Literature of French Language. Choice of Geography was related to my affinity towards this subject since my childhood. Besides, French literature was chosen as I have done my higher studies (BA, MA, M.Phil, Ph.D) in this language from JNU. So, it was a natural choice despite being the fact that there was no success from this subject till now and there was not a single material available in the market for French Literature.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Your strategy for preparation of Mains Examinations.

Kumar Ashish: One has to believe that there is no short cut to success. Each one has to labor hard in order to get success. I used to study for 10-12 hours each day. I divided my time into three slots a day- 4 hours for Geography, 4-6 hours for GS and 2 hours for French.

For my first Optional Geography, I took help from my friend Rakesh Ranjan. In fact, Rakesh Ranjan's inspiration prompted me to choose Geography as my first Optional Subject. Mapping and colorful sketches fetched me good marks in this subject. Taking Geography as a Subject also helped me immensely in GS paper-I besides it also paid me great dividend when my Interview was with Dr K K Paul Board who asked me lots of questions on Indian Geography.

For French Literature:

I got no help for preparation of my second Paper i.e. Literature of French Language as no material is available anywhere. Perhaps, I am the first candidate to get into the Indian Police Service through French Literature in UPSC's history. I relied solely on my class notes at JNU, Internet and Wikipedia. I am grateful to my Mentor cum Guide Prof. Kiran Chaudhry of the French Center, JNU who with her cheerful smile has always encouraged me to excel in this field. I am also thankful to all my teachers at CFFS, JNU who have taught me French language since 2001.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Please suggest some books to our readers for G.S. Mains and Optional Subjects opted by you.

Kumar Ashish: For Geography-Physical Geography by Savindra Singh and Strahler & Strahler.

Indian Geography by Khullar, Geographical Thought-Human Geography- Geographical Theories and Models by Dr. Majid Hussain.

Khullar's Geography for Main Exam. RS Agrawal for Math CSAT

Chanakya Civil Services Today: How to prepare for Interview?

Kumar Ashish: Interview preparation is not a work of extempore vision. Its preparation should start right from now onwards. Since it is an assessment of your personality,

so one should be quite careful since the beginning of UPSC preparation. Try to improve your personality by taking up some good habits like morning walk/ jogging. Practice at least one hobby regularly and be truthful to yourself. Changes should be made from within and it should be gradual and steady.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Some of the interesting questions asked during Interview?

Kumar Ashish: Questions related to French Literature/ philosophy/ cinema were interesting.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: What is your opinion about Chanakya's Interview Guidance Program?

Kumar Ashish: For Interview, I joined Chanakya's Interview Guidance Programme under the esteemed guidance of SuccessGuru AK Mishra Sir, which proved fruitful to come out with flying colors in the Final List. As in my earlier attempt, I scored very less in Interview So this time I wanted to touch each and every aspect of Interview Preparation. Hence, I came to Mishra Sir's experienced and visionary Institute that helped me to frame my answers with confidence.

Appearing in Chanakya's Mock Interviews at Jaypee Siddharth in true conditions of UPSC Interview Board made me acquainted with the actual ambience of UPSC's Interview Room that too with experienced and reverend members of Indian Civil Services and other faculties. Personal interactive sessions with Mishra Sir and his special tips of personality development and handling the pressure inside the Interview Room paved the way to my success. I shall always remain grateful to him and Chanakya IAS Academy for directing me to the path of success. **In my opinion Chanakya IAS Academy under the esteemed guidance and direction of SuccessGuru A K Mishra sir is the most professionally managed institute for preparation of all the three stages of the Civil Services Examinations. Here there is special focus on inculcating administrative traits and development of necessary soft skills in candidates from beginning through Art Of Success seminars and workshops of A K Mishra Sir in which seasoned bureaucrats and successful candidates also share their experiences. It's the unique feature of this Academy.**

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Please comment upon the frequent change of optional subjects amongst students.

Kumar Ashish: This could be avoided to the maximum possible extent as one has to go through deep into a subject and it is not an easy task to change frequently subjects and grasp all the required information each time. Despite I could not clear the exam in 2010, I did not change my subjects and I appeared next time with the same set of subjects and qualified.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: How did you take the essay



Kumar Ashish sharing his experiences with future aspirants section in the Mains examination?

Kumar Ashish: Essay reflects your thinking and presentation skills. It also requires the sound knowledge of the area in which you are going to write an essay. I had chosen to write on "Indian Cinema- reflection of society".

Chanakya Civil Services Today: How did you prepare G.S. for both Prelims and Mains?

Kumar Ashish: An article is written for the same in this edition of Chanakya Civil Services Today.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Do you feel any need of giving more importance to the Interview than the Written Examinations or vice-versa?

Kumar Ashish: No, present system is fair enough.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Does choosing of medium of examination play any role for appearing successfully in CSE?

Kumar Ashish: No, only if you have earnest desire to succeed. Otherwise, many will find many lame excuses.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: How did you manage the stress that you might have faced during the preparation period?

Kumar Ashish: Ups and downs are part and parcels of life. One has to make a fine balance between them.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: May you please tell us something about the time management tactics during the preparations?

Kumar Ashish: Everyone has different tactics for time management. Do study at least for 10-12 hours a day. Divide your time for different subjects. Give more time on the area where you are weak. Practice-sets and Mock- tests could be of great help.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Please suggest some tips about how to utilize the resources in the newspapers and magazines?

Kumar Ashish: A good national newspaper and a magazine must be followed for Current Affairs. Some may make notes of newspaper but it depends upon how much time you can

devote to newspaper. I personally felt that noting down points from newspaper was a tedious job. If we can get a better compilation of Current Affairs from the market then why to waste our precious time on cuttings and jotting down the points?

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Is the preparation of Civil Services Examinations different from that of University Examinations?

Kumar Ashish: Certainly yes. That is why, after completion of University exams, one has to appear in CSE conducted by UPSC.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Do you think that a Civil Services aspirant should begin his/ her preparation while pursuing Graduation?

Kumar Ashish: Sooner the better. Graduation years are the best years where one can build a sound base of Optional Subjects for this exam and can also get good hold on General Studies.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: How does a coaching institute play important role in Civil Services Exam preparation?

Kumar Ashish: It provides all quality materials in a compiled form that can save time and keep the aspirant oriented towards the prime target.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Your role as a Civil Servant, anything in particular you would like to do.?

Kumar Ashish: As an IPS, I would like to sensitize the Police towards the problems of our people. An empowered society could only come up when it has a good support of Police. In addition, I would try to fill the gap between common public and police. A criminal should fear the Police while a good citizen should cheer the Police.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: What opinion do you have about contribution of Chanakya IAS Academy towards Civil Services?

Kumar Ashish: Chanakya IAS Academy has produced more than 2200 *Chandraguptas* for this country. This is an immense contribution from Shri. AK Mishra Sir towards the Steel frame of Indian democracy. Almost each region/state has a DM or SP who has been a Chanakya Alumni.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Group studies or lone study, what is your experience?

Kumar Ashish: I preferred lone study as in group study I

often got confused about various ideas. Sometimes, group discussions were quite fruitful.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Did you have any enabling influence or paralyzing influence during the course of preparation?

Kumar Ashish: No.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Food regime during examination.

Kumar Ashish: I followed a simple vegetarian food regime, as one should not take any risk during examination.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Sleeping pattern during examination. ?



Kumar Ashish: During examination, I used to do two things only- either Reading or Sleeping. I used to sleep in installments and power naps.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Exercise – Yoga etc.?

Kumar Ashish: During exams, try to avoid if you are not a regular one. Any type of sprain/fracture could be

disastrous. In addition, you can save that time for sleeping or reading.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Your interest and hobbies.?

Kumar Ashish: Travelling, listening to hindi music, quizzing and playing chess.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Any suggestions or words of wisdom to our dear readers.?

Kumar Ashish: “Sapne dekhiyen, sapne wo nahi jo aap raat mein sote hue dekhte hain, sapne wo jo aap din mein jaagte hue dekhte hain aur sapne wo jo aapko raaton mein sone nahi dete!” Former President Abdul Kalam .

Dreams do come true. Dream to contribute your part towards the development of our society. There is no short cut to success. One has to sweat hard with a lot of patience and smart approach. Not all are lucky to get success in their very first Attempt! Hence, one should not lose faith in himself. An intelligent hard work with utmost dedication is never left without being rewarded... All the best for your endeavor.

Chanakya Civil Services Today: Thank you Sir for such a delightful interview, our readers would definitely be benefitted by your words. All the best Sir.

Kumar Ashish: Thank you.

