

Topper's Talk with Aditi Varshney (Rank 57)

1st June, 2023 at 1:00 PM

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION ABOUT HERSELF AND HER JOURNEY (01:28 PM)

- She is an online student.
- She got this rank in the first attempt.
- She focussed more on self-analysis.
- After Prelims, she did not have enough time to prepare for mains.

PRELIMS STRATEGY (01:30 PM)

- The questions were more from current affairs.
- She scored 104 in prelims.
- When you find that Prelims is getting difficult, It will be difficult for everyone either.
- So, do not get feared for Prelims.
- Full-Fledged one and half months of preparation is more than enough.
- The static portion cannot be ignored.
- Focus on the important portions and can make notes out of it.
- Continuous revision is very important.
- When you finish off one subject and switch to another may lead you to forget the first one.
- What you can do is divide your day into three slots with multiple subjects.
- This will make the content interdisciplinary.
- Don't go for a lot of sources.
- For current affairs, UPSC is mostly asking questions from repeated news.
- If you read a certain new term in the newspaper, write it somewhere in a synoptic way.
- Try to attempt mock test.
- Prefer more self-analysis.
- You yourself are capable to customise the preparation by yourself.
- **CSAT:**
- Although maths is becoming difficult, you should give due importance to maths.
- Try to attempt comprehension first.
- Try not to get stuck with the difficult questions.

MAINS (01:44 PM)

- You have additional subjects for the mains.
- Optional is the maker of your mains score.
- Get the hold on your optional.
- The syllabus is very important for the mains.
- Because when you know each and every topic of mains, it is easy to decide which topics to do it.
- You need to revise everything, before going for answer writing.
- Don't get demotivated if you are not writing good answers in the beginning.
- Try to improve upon those answers.
- One should not miss out on answer writing and revision after you have consolidated the content.
- She started giving 3 hours test and then two tests per day.
- How to differentiate your answers with others?
- When you make your static notes, leave some space to add the information.
- **Originality** is what counts in mains because it gives a positive impact to the examiner.
- If you are able to give 3-4 examples your answers will be more than enough.
- Don't write a lot in answers.
- Just pick and choose five important points.
- Write less but to the point.
- All subjects are inter-connected.
- Connect the dots between different subjects.
- For example, How weather forecasting will affect people.
- One should link it to tourism, and disasters.
- One should link it to how this will affect the people, economy, polity, etc.
- Newspaper is the best source for mains.
- Instead of focussing on perfection, try to give your 100%.

ESSAY (02:03 PM)

- The questions are getting philosophical.
- Few things that you need to keep in mind:
- Accept the fact that philosophical essays will come in exams.
- Give more time to read the things.
- Refer to Topper's answer sheets but do not copy them.
- It's okay to write different examples as long as it connects with the topic.
- Add on more diversity rather than writing one thing in detail.
- Write short sentences with short paragraphs.
- Time management is very important for essay.

OPTIONAL (02:11 PM)

- Choose the subject that interest you.
- It depends on how much comfortable you are with that subject.
- **Sociology:**
- She graduated with sociology and did not refer to any standard books or coaching because she is well aware about the basics.
- Keep the syllabus in front of you and start picking up each topic and make notes for it.
- She gave the high number of mock tests for optional.

PRELIMS (02:17 PM)

- PYQs are very important.
- The questions on S&T are getting more current-oriented.
- Just try to know what to study, how much to study, and capitalise on the strength.

QUESTION-ANSWER SESSION (02:19 PM)

- **Q. Which material you have referred to?:**
- She has prepared from home itself and referred test- series of Vision IAS along with Abhyaas.
- **Q. What have you done between the prelims and CSAT paper?**
- One should not freak out in between that time.
- Try to be calm during that time.
- **Q. Source for sociology current affairs?:**
- She referred to the newspaper.
- There is no one source for it.
- **Q. How you have handled the changed pattern of questions?:**
- The pattern changes for everyone.
- The cut-off will be low by itself.
- Just focus on newspaper and monthly magazines.
- **Q. How to manage time during Pre- exam?:**
- Whenever she has done mocks, she tried to cover it within 45 minutes.
- In the first reading, she used to do those questions which she knows.
- She used to focus thoroughly which she has not read in the first round.
- Her sweet spot for attempting the questions was 80-85.
- Leave those questions in which you do not have any idea.
- It is very important to prioritise what to answer and what not to.
- **Q. What to write in Conclusion?:**
- Address each part of the question thoroughly.
- The solution is very necessary to give.
- The conclusion should be futuristic and optimistic.
- There should be a forward-looking approach to conclusions.
- **Q. How did you manage note-making in that limited time?:**
- She used to focus more on efficiency.
- She gave 15 days for note-making.
- You should know your speed and capacity for note-making.
- **Q. How do you manage your time in the starting phase of preparation?:**
- It really depends on you as a person.
- She used to keep targets.
- But just make sure that you decide on the targets.
- **Q. What about the days when you do not want to study?:**
- She used to take breaks when it becomes very exhausting.
- When you are taking breaks from your studies, just try to do something else apart from UPSC.
- Try to start your day with the easy things.
- **Q. What was your revision strategy?:**
- It varies from Prelims and mains.
- For Prelims, She used to keep one weekly target.
- For Mains, She has organised notes in very synoptic ways in such a way that she was able to revise her notes within one hour.

- **Q. What about the comprehension part?:**
- Attempt comprehension of the past 10 years.
- Or join the test series and apply for different mocks.
- **Q. What about the maths part?:**
- Just see strong topics from the index and make sure they are asked in Prelims.
- Refer Reference book and complete it topic-wise.
- **Q. What was your mindset between Prelims and Mains?:**
- You should give your 100%.
- When you give your heart and soul to the preparation, you will not regret it.
- **Q. How much important is the DAF?:**
- The interviewers know you only through your DAF.
- Fill out the DAF where you will be able to face questions from the interviewer.
- In her achievements, she has mentioned the prizes with respect to her hobby of painting.
- **Q. What about Plan B?:**
- She cannot imagine herself in any other place except this civil Service.
- **What do you regret about not getting the first rank?:**
- She said that she should not have taken so much pressure and stress.
- Try to be confident and have faith in yourself.
- **Q. What is your source of history?:**
- She took notes from different coachings and compiled those notes.
- **Q. Please tell briefly about your optional?:**
- She has referred to her personal notes.
- Feedback in the test series has helped her a lot.
- **Q. Do you make notes in a digital manner or offline manner?:**
- For different subjects, it varies.
- For example, For the environment, you can make digital notes.
- For History, offline notes will do.
- **Q. How much time you have given to your preparation?:**
- In three years of graduation, she has her basics cleared.
- Two-three months are very crucial for this exam.
- **Q. How to develop an interest in sociology as optional?:**
- You may sometimes feel boredom reading it.
- The interest here means that looking forward to new things and basics have been cleared.
- **Q. Tell about your UPSC interview?:**
- In reality, the interview is more cordial.
- The question was asked on Green Revolution 2.0.
- Economic liberalisation 2.0 Question was asked.
- Another Question on Wetland Day and Urbanisation.
- The quote of Mahatma Gandhi, "How moral Courage is more important than physical courage."
- **Q. What about Anthropology?:**
- It is similar to sociology.
- Thoroughly cover the syllabus.
- It is not that much current-oriented.
- The key is about recalling.
- Try to give more mocks.
- Just try to make synoptic notes.

- **Q. How to recall a newspaper after 2-3 days?:**
- It is not possible to make notes from the newspaper.
- For example, If she gets Greenwashing as term.
- She keeps one paper while reading the newspaper and writes just key terms.
- If she finds some very good editorial she used to cut that article.

The topper's talk has been completed.