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6. Who am I? - A Self Profile

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13. Group Discussion Fundamentals

14. Sample Case Studies

## Who Am I ? - A Self Profile

### Scoring and Interpretation Sheet

#### SCORING SCHEME

Some personality dimensions are mentioned below. Each set is relevant to the respective question

(A, B, C and D).

Take a look at **each** of the dimensions. **Give yourself 1 mark** in case you feel that the dimension **is present at least once** in your answer. In case it is present **more than once**, **give yourself an extra mark** for every such occasion. In case the dimension is **not present** in your answer, then **do not give yourself any mark** at all.

For example, take dimension **number 4**, i.e. **concern for family**. If it **appears only once** in your answer, **give yourself 1 mark**. If it **appears twice**, then **give yourself 2 marks** and in case it **does not appear at all**, then **do not mark yourself** on that dimension.

At the end, **add up your total score** on all dimensions and measure yourself on the scoring key. The scores are of discreet type: 1 indicates the presence of that dimension and 0 the absence. Absent dimensions need to be developed upon and present dimensions need to be strengthened further.

#### **Question A Motivation**(Minimum 3, Good 4, Very good >4)

**1. External:** Statement indicating a person's concern for a larger goal or a goal beyond his own needs/direct abilities.

Examples are:

- I want to serve my country.
- I want to serve humanity.
- I am to fulfill the will of God
- I want to help people in need

## /. Personal Effectiveness Scale

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- I want to serve my country.
- I want to serve humanity.
- I am to fulfill the will of God
- I want to help people in need
- I want to research to find a cure for cancer to help all those dying.

**2. Concern for personal excellence:** Statement indicating the need and desire to achieve something unique, those having long-term involvement or standards of efficiency and excellence, or those indicating competition with others.

Examples are:

- I want to become a doctor.
- I increased the profits of the company.
- I am worried about the low return on my capital.

- I want to do research to find a cure for cancer because no one else has done so far

**3. Concern for influence:** Statements indicating the writer's need or wish to change things, situations or people.

Examples are:

- I want to improve the educational system.
- I want to change the society.
- I am guiding people in my company.

**4. Concern for family:** Statements showing the need or desire of the writer to do something for parents, brothers, sisters and other members of the family. Even references to them showing concern are scored.

Examples are:

- I want to help my father in his old age.
- I am worried about my brother.
- I brought up my younger brothers after my father's death.

**5. Concern for others and society:** Statements indicating the concern of the writer for other people and society at large.

Examples are:

- I want to donate my eyes for the blind after my death.
- Poverty pains me.
- I am working on plans to provide better welfare services for my staff.

**Question B Self-Awareness (Minimum 3, Good 4, Very good >4)**

**6. Awareness of personal strength:** Statements indicating the strengths of the writer.

Examples are:

- I am a good student.
- I am strong in mathematics.
- I am known for my technical knowledge and insight.

**7. Awareness of personal weakness:** Statement indicating the writer's limitations or weaknesses.

Examples are:

- I am poor in health.
- My English is weak.

- I am short-tempered.

**8. Awareness of achievement:** Statements indicating past achievements of the writer.

Examples are:

- I scored very high marks in the examination.
- I developed the control system for the company.
- I won several prizes.
- I increased the profits of the company.

**9. Concern for self-development:** Statements indicating the desire of the writer, and his plans to do something for his further growth and development.

Examples:

- I am planning to improve my English.
- I want to gain experience through visits to other units.
- I want to control my impulsiveness.

**Question C Proactivity** (Minimum 2, Good 3, Very good >3)

**10. Internal locus of control:** Statements showing that the writer himself can do something about a problem.

Examples are:

- With my hard work and determination, I hope to overcome this difficulty.
- I am pretty sure that I can convince him.

**11. Proactive orientation:** Statement indicating that the writer wants to solve problems, confront situations and take the initiative in understanding and analysing a situation rather than running away.

Examples are:

- I met each of the persons involved in the conflict to understand the course of the conflict.
- When I was not allowed to import the raw material, I toured the district to explore what else could be used as a substitute.

**12. Resource utilization:** Statements showing the writer's desire, and his tendency, to make use of the facilities and resources he sees outside his capabilities in doing tasks or accomplishing/setting goals.

Examples are:

- I joined classes to improve my English.

- I took a loan from the bank.
- I consulted the extension officer to discuss my plans.

**Question D Action Orientation (Minimum 2, Good 3, Very good >3)**

**13. Self-discipline:** Statements showing that the writer is working hard, takes steps to get focussed/organised, prioritises and spends long hours on work, postpones immediate gratification (having sacrificed short term gains for long term pursuit) etc.

Examples:

- I work about fourteen hours a day.
- I postponed my marriage because I was busy in setting up the unit.
- I worked hard.

**14. Planning orientation:** Statements showing that the writer is involved in some plans for which he is taking some steps.

Examples are:

- I am studying biology to become a doctor.
- I am preparing to learn accountancy so that when business grows I can manage it properly.

- I am planning to expand my business to twice its present size.

**15. Future orientation:** Statements talking about the future in terms of visualizing and setting goals, or those indicating future plans, decisions involving considerations of future event, gain or change. Such statements use the future tense.

Examples are:

- I shall start a new business as soon as I am relieved of my present job.
- I shall marry her in June.
- I hope to expand the present factory.

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## Personal Details Form

Personal Details	
Full Name:	Date of Birth:
Address:	City:
State:	Zip Code:
Phone:	Mobile:
Email:	
Emergency Contact:	
Name:	Relationship:
Address:	City:
State:	Zip Code:
Employment Information:	
Current Job Title:	Employer:
Address:	City:
State:	Zip Code:
Education Background:	
Level:	Subject:

**Details of Call received**

S. No.	Name of Institute	Interview / GD Date
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

**Hobbies/Interests/Co curricular activities :****Family Background:**

Relationship	Name	Educational qualification	Occupation (including designation, company, nature of job)



## Stage-2 Process of Top B-Schools

S.No.	College	Course	GD	PI	WAT/AWT/WSAT/ Essay Writing	GE	Extempore
1	IIM Ahmedabad	PGPM	x	✓ (50%)	✓ (10%)	x	x
		ABM		✓ (10%)	✓ (40%)	x	x
2	IIM Bangalore	PGP	x	✓ (30%)	✓ (10%)	x	x
3	IIM Calcutta	PGP	x	✓ (48%)	✓ (10%)	x	x
4	IIM Lucknow	PGPM	x	✓ (40%)	✓ (10%)	x	x
		PGP-ABM	x	✓ (40%)	✓ (10%)	x	x
5	IIM Indore	PGP	x	✓ (40%)	✓ (20%)	x	x
6	IIM Kozhikode	PGP	✓	✓ (45%)	✓ (15%)	x	x
7	IIM Shillong	PGP	✓	✓	✓	x	x
8	FMS, Delhi	MBA	✓ (10%)	✓ (15%)	x	x	✓ (5%)
9	SPJIMR, Mumbai	PGDM	x		✓	x	x
10	MDI, Gurgaon	PGPM/PGP-HRM			✓ (30%)	x	x
11	XLRI, BM	PGDM (BM)	✓	✓	x	x	x
12	XLRI, HRM	PGDM (HRM)	✓	✓	x	x	x
13	XIM, Bhubaneshwar	MBA	✓	✓	✓	x	x
14	NITIE, Mumbai	PGDIM/PGDISEM	✓	✓	x	x	x
15	SJMSOM, IIT Bombay	M.Mgmt.	x	✓ (30%)	✓ (Combined 10%)		
16	DMS, IIT Delhi	MBA	✓	✓	x	x	x

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1	IIM Ahmedabad	PGPM	x	✓ (50%)	✓ (10%)	x	x
		ABM	✓ (10%)	✓ (40%)	x	x	x
2	IIM Bangalore	PGP	x	✓ (30%)	✓ (10%)	x	x
3	IIM Calcutta	PGP	x	✓ (48%)	✓ (10%)	x	x
4	IIM Lucknow	PGPM	x	✓ (40%)	✓ (10%)	x	x
		PGP-ABM	x	✓ (40%)	✓ (10%)	x	x
5	IIM Indore	PGP	x	✓ (40%)	✓ (20%)	x	x
6	IIM Kozhikode	PGP	✓	✓ (45%)	✓ (15%)	x	x
7	IIM Shillong	PGP	✓	✓	✓	x	x
8	FMS, Delhi	MBA	✓ (10%)	✓ (15%)	x	x	✓ (5%)
9	SPJIMR, Mumbai	PGDM	x		✓	x	x
10	MDI, Gurgaon	PGPM/PGP-HRM			✓ (30%)	x	x
11	XLRI, BM	PGDM (BM)	✓	✓	x	x	x
12	XLRI, HRM	PGDM (HRM)	✓	✓	x	x	x
13	XIM, Bhubaneshwar	MBA	✓	✓	✓	x	x
14	NITIE, Mumbai	PGDIM/PGDISEM	✓	✓	x	x	x
15	SJMSOM, IIT Bombay	M.Mgmt.	x	✓ (30%)	✓ (Combined 10%)		
16	DMS, IIT Delhi	MBA	✓	✓	x	x	x

17	IIFT, Delhi	MBA - IB	✓	✓	✓	x	x
18	JBIMS, Mumbai (based on 2017)	MMS	✓ (20%)	✓ (60%)		✓ (20%)	x
19	NMIMS, Mumbai	PGDM	✓ (CD)	✓	x	x	x
20	TISS - HRM	MA - HRM	✓	✓	✓	x	x
21	IRMA, Anand	PGPRM	x	✓	x	✓	x
22	MICA, Ahmedabad	PGDM-C	x	✓	x	✓	x
23	SIBM, Pune	MBA	x	✓	✓	✓	x
24	SCMHRD, Pune	MBA	x	✓	✓	✓	x
25	IMT, Ghaziabad	PGDM	x	✓	✓	✓	x

## PDP Map

Before we begin our journey through the second stage of the entrance process, let us take a very brief look at the important components of your preparation. May the force be with you!

**1. Your PDP Handbook:** This little book is going to be your bible for the next few months. The knowledge, insight and wisdom in this book are going to guide you infallibly through the second stage of the entrance process and onwards to your success. So read this book thoroughly, follow the instructions and prepare accordingly. And don't be stinting in your efforts; remember you are only walking to your own success.

**2. Who am I - your self-profile:** No, you are not suffering from amnesia, either total or partial. But, if you wish to be the don of the nation, if you wish to strike fear in the hearts of those who dare interview you, then you must first look into your soul (shake yourself a bit if you can't see it at first glance, it must be in some out of the way corner), tabulate what you see there and then write the greatest story ever in the world - the story of YOU. There is only one of YOU in the whole wide world and every interview panel wants to know more about this exotic specie. Thus, you need to be well prepared to talk about yourself and that preparation will begin with a glance into your soul. So start peeking, don't be shy and in this book, we have presented some templates to guide you through the tortuous journey through the darkest corridors of your soul. We will ensure that you do not lose your way on this journey even though your soul may be unfamiliar and labyrinthine.

**3. PDP VITAL ELEMENTS:** Now, be a good child and don't forget to take your vitamins. These booster shots will hold you in good stead through the second stage and will be an invaluable asset to you. It will add that special punch to your performance and will be the secret spark that will set you apart from the wannabes. These audio visual sessions include:

- Interview Concepts Session
- Interview viewing Session
- GD concepts session
- Business & Economic Affairs primer
- Current Affairs primer
- Management Orientation Session

**4. Personal Interviews:** Practice makes a man perfect and we are certainly not gonna let up on you till we make you perfect. Accordingly, you will get to face at least two mock interviews in the course of your Personality Development Programme. These mock interviews will give you the flavour of the real thing and will be an important component of your preparation in the run-up to your actual Personal Interviews. So prepare well for these, make a note of the feedback and use it to improve further. One very important point to be noted here is that your answers should be unique. Don't copy other people's answers or prepare cut and dried answers with a group of friends. Such artificial answers get caught out very easily and leave a bad impression on the

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interview panel. Your panelists will be professionals who may have interviewed thousands of people before you. So trying to bluff any interview panel with artificial or thoughtless answers is a loser's gamble. So don't chicken out and seek shortcuts. The effort you put in your preparation will bear fruit and yield great results. So don't short sell yourself.

**5. Group Discussion and other Group Processes:** Ok, so you are a superstar but have you let that get to your head. As Kipling said, "If you can talk with crowds and yet keep your virtue, or walk with kings and not lose the common touch, yours is the earth and everything that's in it and - which is more - you will be a man, my son". While the Personal Interview tests your personality in and of itself, Group Processes test your ability to work in a team. The important thing here is to be yourself, no more and no less. You are not required to lead the group and bend them to your line of thought, nor are you required to submit to the group and bow to the common belief. Be assertive but not aggressive. Be rational but not mechanical. Trust in your ideas and your way of thinking but do not close yourself to other people's thoughts and ideas. Contribute but do not seek to control. Do this and you will have shown that you are a man to be reckoned with.

## Your Next Step to Success

### Congratulations!

You are through with the first stage of the selection process. Your preparation for the written tests should be over by now and you may have appeared for most, if not all, the written tests that you had applied for. That's one small step and a giant leap towards realizing your dreams and goals. Already you must be tingling with anticipation at what awaits you in the next round. So let's not spend any more time thinking about the first stage, about what could have happened and did not, about what could have been and was not. Instead, think of the positives and focus on what you did right. For now, we have an exciting journey ahead, planning and preparing for the next stage of the selection process. So let's begin already.

### The Two-Step Dance

Ah, this is so exciting, where do we begin!

Well, let's begin at the beginning.

In the beginning, there was only dark. And then God created light. And then He created MAN. MAN expanded to create societies and thus MANagement. And then MAN created schools to teach MANagement to the next generations. And the schools conducted entrance tests and mystified students with gobbledegook. And so MAN created Career Launcher to help students out.....J

Well, on the theme of entrance tests, the first question that comes to every student's mind is, why should there be a two-stage selection process. Is not the written test itself sufficient to differentiate between students and decide who gets selected and who gets otherwise? So why should there be two stages to the selection process?

The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind. There are two kinds of skills that are essential for working well in any system; the one is core competency and the other are interpersonal skills. Written tests typically check only your core competency. They do not test your interpersonal skills at all. Are you able to think logically and think on your feet? Are you able to work accurately under pressure? And are you better at these than most of your fellow competitors? These are the things that are revealed by your performance in the written tests. These tests do not reveal your interpersonal skills at all. Are you good at communicating your thoughts and ideas to others? And even more importantly, are you good at grasping other people's ideas and thoughts? And when you share your views with others do you present them in a pleasant manner or are your words like a NATO air strike - spreading death, destruction, desolation, depression and dejection? Do your words act like oil on troubled waters or has the world known no peace since you learned how to speak? The short answer is: of course you are good at interpersonal skills – haven't you been talking to others since the time you started speaking – to your parents, siblings, friends, relatives, neighbors, teachers, shopkeepers, salesmen, doctors, nurses, drivers.....

And are you not the apple of everyone's eyes? Except nurses, that is .....they poke everyone with those injection things.

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And are you not the apple of everyone's eyes? Except nurses, that is .....they poke everyone with those injection things.

So, worry not overmuch about the second stage of your selection process. This is one area for which you have been preparing since the beginning of your life. Acing this process is going to be a cakewalk for you (unless nurses are sitting on the panel that judges you). All that you really need to do at this stage is understand the various processes and fine-tune and polish your answers so that you are able to convey your pleasing ideas in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Savvy!?

### **The Second Stage De-mystified**

What are the various tests that may come your way in this second stage of your journey to eternal glory and success? Before you start dusting, polishing and fine-tuning your answers, let us know about the various tests that typically entertain aspirants at this stage. In subsequent sections, we will look at each of these tests in great detail so that it becomes easy to ace them. For now, we will take a brief overview of these tests.

## The Interview

The most common test that appears at this stage. And the easiest one too. The interview tests your maturity, your knowledge, your opinions, your way of thinking and your ability to express these.

Core area questions will typically ask you about your future plans, your goals, and your self-perception. Such questions will test your maturity, your focus in life and your clarity in thought.

Questions on academics (freshers can especially expect some of these) test your knowledge and your ability to convey the same. Have you been sincere in your academics or did you spend more time in the college canteen than in your classroom? You may also be asked a few questions about developments and innovations related to your branch of study (science and engineering students may typically get more such questions than those from other backgrounds).

People with some work experience may typically expect fewer questions about academics and more about their job itself. The purpose of such questions is to see if you were merely drawing a salary or were actually working. Further questions may also ask you about the latest developments in your field of work, the impact of these and your expectations of future developments.

General Knowledge questions test your awareness of the great big world outside. To a certain extent, they also test your way of thinking. Are you too caught up in yourself and

not very interested in the rest of the world or are you aware of the glorious and inglorious goings on outside your immediate circle? Do you spend more time daily on facebook or on news sites and newspapers? In other words, are you a mature citizen or are you still wet behind the ears?

## The Group Discussion

Another very common test. Albeit, one that is rather out of favor with institutes these days and is appearing less and less often.

The group discussion primarily tests you on two parameters; your way of thinking and your ability to communicate your thoughts in a team. What is additionally revealed, sometimes, is your awareness of the outside world.

A typical group discussion will have between 8 to 15 participants. A topic will be given to the group and the participants will be given between 2 to 10 minutes to think about the topic. This is followed by a discussion lasting anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes. Sometimes, the panel may ask the group to arrive at a conclusion. In some cases, at the end of the group discussion, the panel also asks some or all the participants to summarize the GD or present their views on the topic in about one minute's time. Additionally, participants may be asked to write down their views on the topic or to write down a summary of the discussion and then submit it to the panel.

The topic given to a group for discussion can vary dramatically. While some topics are related to current affairs, others may be more philosophical and still others may actually be abstract in nature. Irrespective of the nature of the topic and the structure of

the process, the key to good performance in a group discussion is good behaviour & attitude and a logical way of thinking.

### Writing Task

Essay writing tests are gaining popularity among institutes. With more and more institutes opting for these each year, it is imperative that you are well versed in this challenge.

As already mentioned, many institutes will ask you to write about the group discussion that you have just participated in. Apart from these writing tasks, some institutes will also give you a stand-alone writing task. For this task, you will be given a topic - the topic may be in the form of a question or may be a simple statement - and asked to write a small essay on the same. Typically, the expected length of the essay will be around 400 to 500 words. The topic, once again, may be related to current affairs or be philosophical in nature.

While such writing tasks primarily check your way of thinking, they also check your grasp of current affairs and your communication skills. A good essay should reveal good knowledge of the subject. Further, the student's opinion should be logically justifiable and the essay should have a coherent and concise structure.

### The Armoury

So, now that you are aware of the various tests and their requirements, let us take a look at the tools that are essential to perform well in the second stage of the entrance

process.

As we have seen, questions and tasks in this stage will generally test you on the following areas:

1. Academic background
2. Work experience
3. Current Affairs / General Knowledge
4. Core areas

Accordingly, you should be strong in these areas in order to ace the second stage processes.

### Academic Background

Be very well prepared for questions pertaining to your academic background. These are the subjects that you have studied for 3 to 4 years. Hence, a sincere candidate is expected to be prepared for at least basic questions from these areas. Even if you feel that you will not be able to prepare for all the subjects that you studied during your graduation, at least identify a few subjects that you were really good at or that you really liked. And prepare for questions that may come from those areas. In your interview, you can always guide the panel to these areas.

Freshers, in particular, need to be well versed with subjects from their academic background. Further, do ensure that you remember everything about the project or summer internship that you may have done. Revisit these and revise if in doubt. It is worth repeating that a sincere candidate is definitely expected to be good in his own areas. So you should be sufficiently well prepared to handle most questions from these areas.

### Work Experience

Just as a good candidate is expected to be ready with answers to questions related to his / her academics, they are also expected to be very comfortable with questions related to their work. After all, if you have been doing something daily for the last few months, you will be expected to be able to talk about it very well.

Take a notebook. Jot down the things that you regularly do at your workplace. Visualise the role you play in the company's business. And most importantly, be very thorough with your company's business. It is extremely important that you are fully prepared with these details.

### Current Affairs / General Knowledge

While every normal person is expected to be knowledgeable about their own areas, they are also expected to have some interest in the outside world. And that interest is reflected in your knowledge of current affairs. An ignorant citizen cannot be a very productive citizen. Thus, it is absolutely imperative that you are well aware of the major developments around the world and especially in India. Further, you need to be well up

on latest developments in your areas of interest. Such areas will include those related to your academics, to your work and to your hobbies and extra curricular activities. For e.g. if you have graduated in physics, you may get questions about latest developments in physics, about the current Nobel Prize winners in physics and so on. Sometimes, you may also be asked for your opinion of the impact that some of latest developments may be expected to have. Similarly, if you mention that Chess is your hobby, you may get questions about the current Chess World Champion, about the results of the current Grandmaster level tournament, etc. One student had mentioned that he was a chess player and the captain of his college chess team. He was shown a position in a game (at the endgame stage) on a PDA and asked to decide what White should play on the next move in his IIM Bangalore interview!

The point is that you should expect to be asked a lot of questions from your own areas. A complete candidate is expected to be well versed in his or own areas. Ignorance in other areas may be forgivable; there is no justification for ignorance or lack of preparation in own areas. Be very, very, very thorough in your own areas. Such effort will hold you in good stead and grace you with success.

### Core Areas

Know yourself and you will know the universe, thus spoke our ancestors. A mature person will have good self-awareness. Further, such a person will have defined his goals, prioritised accordingly and planned out his future path. This self-awareness and planning for oneself is tested through questions on your core areas. While questions like "tell me your strengths and/or weaknesses", "why should we select you", "why

should we reject you", etc. test your self-awareness, questions such as "why have you opted for MBA", "how does MBA fit into your goals/career choice", "where do you see yourself 5 or 10 or 20 years down the line", etc. test your planning for the future and by extension your focus in life.

While such questions may appear deadly at first glance, they are actually the easiest ones possible. No one knows you better than you do. So how can anyone upstage you, unsettle you, with questions about yourself. All you need to do is choose a place where you are not likely to be disturbed for at least 30 mins to 1 hour. This place may be your room, a public garden, a metro station, a train station, even a food court at a mall! But you should be alone, undisturbed and focussed. And no staring at girls - that will get in the way of focus, girls can be rather distracting. After that, list out your strengths, weaknesses in a small chart. Next, in a flowchart, map out your plan for your career. In your IMF, charts have been provided in a subsequent section to guide you in this task. And if you want a second opinion, you can even ask some of your friends, relatives, teachers, maid, driver, etc. to list out your strengths and weaknesses as they see it. After this small task, you are ready to handle all questions on your core areas.

### The Final Word

Now that you are aware of the various questions, tasks, processes, tests that you may encounter in the second stage of your selection process, you know that you have nothing to fear about at all. A little bit of preparation is all that you need to polish your answers and fine-tune them. Put in that small effort and success will be yours. And remember always that it is YOUR selection process. In the second stage processes, no

one is looking to reject you; rather, they are looking for you to give them reasons to select you. And if you put in that little bit of preparation as suggested here, you will do exactly that.

Bon Voyage! Onwards to your success!

## General Perceptions regarding Second Stage Processes

What is the first thought that comes to your mind the moment you hear the term Personal Interview? What do you feel when you think of Group Discussion - eager anticipation, delight, or numbness? Would you volunteer to participate in a Group Discussion or be an interviewee?

To a lesser or greater degree, we are all afraid of the unknown. And the second stage processes used by various B-schools do appear strange and unknown to many students. Accordingly, these processes also frighten a lot of students. Some common myths about these processes add to this fear factor. Further, some genuine concerns also trouble students. But, the secret to performing well at any task or in any challenge lies in self-belief, thorough preparation and confidence. So let us look at some common concerns and issues that worry students and understand how we can overcome these challenges.

### Issues and Concerns

#### Am I special?

Many students feel that they need to prove that they are special or different in order to get selected for admission to a top B-school. They feel that they need to prove that they have great leadership skills or that they have been outstanding all their life.

But this perception is far from the truth. The 19 IIMs alone take about 4000 students per year. The top - 25 (not including the IIMs) B-schools take approximately another 7000 students. How many of these 10,000 students can be special and different? If all

10,000 of these students were to be special, different and outstanding leaders, then perhaps we would run out of sufficient followers for these leaders! We would be flooded with Bill Gateses and Richard Bransons! So, don't worry; a B-school does not need that all of its students should be Bill Gates - you are good enough. All you need, in order to get selected to your dream institute, is to be yourself - warts and all. Nobody in the world is perfect; everyone has some or the other flaws. But, overall, if you are a good person and if you prepare well, nothing can stop you from getting into the school of your choice.

#### Other students may be better than I am.

Another very common concern. Many students feel that their competition may be superior to them and hence they are likely to have a difficult time during their GD and PI. This kind of thinking makes them under-confident. Self-doubt flagellates them. Am I good enough to get selected? Such questions hault them.

The simple answer to such questions is yes; you are good enough to be selected for your dream institute. You appeared for the written test and beat back tens of thousands of other aspirants to get an invite to the second round of the bout. Thus, you have already proven that you belong here, that you have the capability to go all the way, that you deserve that 3<sup>rd</sup> seat near the window in the first classroom of your dream school.

A little bit of self-doubt is actually good for us and every intelligent person does have such doubts. It is only a very arrogant person who will never doubt himself at all. Just as you are concerned that the competition may be too good for you, your competition is also worried that you may be too good for them! Just as you think that the competition

may eat you up, your competitors are also suspicious of your aptitude and appetite and its implications for their chances. So don't let self-doubt slow you down. The little bit of self-doubt that is good for us drives us to greater effort and hence brings out our best. So use this feeling of doubt to ensure that you prepare harder, drive yourself more and do not leave out any little bit of preparation possible. You are as good, as capable and as deserving of a seat as any of the other aspirants invited for the second round. The differentiator between aspirants in this round is only going to be their preparation;

those who prepare thoroughly will definitely succeed in getting selected. So put in that little extra effort and success will be yours. Build up your strength areas and eliminate any weaknesses ruthlessly. That is all that you need to do.

#### **I am shy or I get nervous or I speak little.**

These are also common concerns that students have. And these too are not really meaningful. While speaking to a stranger everyone gets somewhat nervous, that is only natural. Every body feels reticent when they have to communicate with a stranger. And speaking less, instead of being a liability, is more often than not an asset, for it indicates that the person is intelligent, thoughtful and introspective rather than someone who speaks thoughtlessly.

So don't worry too much about these basic things. You will surely be able to speak as much as is necessary for you get your thoughts, ideas, opinions and facts and figures across. Focus on your preparation so that you have the answers all the foreseeable questions. After that, you have nothing whatsoever to worry about.

#### **My communication skills are weak or I am not good at spoken English.**

This is also an issue that many students face. And this is a valid concern. If you are able to communicate better, it will definitely be an asset to you. It will definitely increase your chances of getting selected. So don't waste time thinking about this! Instead, if you feel that there is a lot of scope for improvement of your communication skills, then start working towards that improvement right away.

**Step 1:** Stand in front of a mirror and read aloud the entire editorial section of your favourite newspaper. Do this every single day till your GD / PI is over. Reading aloud will give you practice of speaking while doing it in front of a mirror will give you more confidence in your speaking ability and will help remove any kind of hesitation that you may have towards speaking in English. Along with this, you can practice speaking on some GD or Extempore topics as well.

**Step 2:** Listen to newsreaders on TV channels. Internalize the pronunciation that they use. Do not imbibe artificial or fake foreign accents though; instead learn from those whose speech is free of any accent.

**Step 3:** Make it a point to only speak in English from now onwards till the date of your last GD / PI. Pull your ears every time you accidentally use any other language. Or tell your friends about your project and ask them to be alert for any such deviant behavior from you and to pull your ears every time you err thus. Surely, your friends will not miss any opportunity to pull your enticing, captivating, enchanting, tempting ears and thus, will ensure that you stay on the straight and true path and keep practicing your English-speaking.

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Just try these very simple methods consistently and rigorously and you will find a substantial improvement in your communication skills.

### Finally!

So, we have seen some of the common concerns about second stage processes that befuddle, mesmerize and terrorize students. We also saw that most of them are not meaningful and the ones that are, are curable with due effort and proper preparation. So worry not, my friend. Charge on, waste not a single minute, start your preparation from this very moment and success will kiss your brow.

Carpe diem, Carpe mundi!

(Seize the moment, seize the world!)

## Who Am I ? - A Self Profile

### WHO AM I ?

Think about yourself and write roughly two pages (about 400 words) about yourself in the four different segments given below. You may take forty minutes for this. Be truthful. This will help us to understand you better and accordingly arrive at an appropriate plan to facilitate your development.

A. The major/significant changes that have happened in your life so far. Bring out the people, purposes, goals and other reasons that have caused these significant changes/ decisions. What are the goals you have set for yourself? What do you want to achieve? Tell us about your dreams.

B. Tell us about yourself as a person - as a professional, a friend, a son/daughter. Explore the important facets of your life and tell us what you are really good at and where you need to improve yourself. Give us examples of various aspects in which you felt you needed to develop yourself. What have you done about those aspects?

C. Describe how you typically respond to problems facing you. These problems could be in any sphere of your life. Give examples of situations where you took charge of a difficult situation and resolved it.

D. What are the goals that you have set for yourself in the past? How have you gone about achieving them? What lessons have you learnt from these

that you could apply to your further pursuit of future goals? Do you believe that your efforts influence the results you achieve in your life?

## Who Am I ? - A Self Profile

### Scoring and Interpretation Sheet

#### SCORING SCHEME

Some personality dimensions are mentioned below. Each set is relevant to the respective question

(A, B, C and D).

Take a look at **each** of the dimensions. **Give yourself 1 mark** in case you feel that the dimension is **present at least once** in your answer. In case it is present **more than once**, **give yourself an extra mark** for every such occasion. In case the dimension is **not present** in your answer, then **do not give yourself any mark** at all.

For example, take dimension **number 4**, i.e. **concern for family**. If it **appears only once** in your answer, **give yourself 1 mark**. If it **appears twice**, then **give yourself 2 marks** and in case it **does not appear at all**, then **do not mark yourself** on that dimension.

At the end, **add up your total score** on all dimensions and measure yourself on the scoring key. The scores are of discreet type: 1 indicates the presence of that dimension and 0 the absence. Absent dimensions need to be developed upon and present dimensions need to be strengthened further.

#### **Question A Motivation**(Minimum 3, Good 4, Very good >4)

**1. External:** Statement indicating a person's concern for a larger goal or a goal beyond his own needs/direct abilities.

Examples are:

- I want to serve my country.
- I want to serve humanity.
- I am to fulfill the will of God
- I want to help people in need
- I want to research to find a cure for cancer to help all those dying.

**2. Concern for personal excellence:** Statement indicating the need and desire to achieve something unique, those having long-term involvement or standards of efficiency and excellence, or those indicating competition with others.

Examples are:

- I want to become a doctor.
- I increased the profits of the company.
- I am worried about the low return on my capital.

- I want to do research to find a cure for cancer because no one else has done so far

**3. Concern for influence:** Statements indicating the writer's need or wish to change things, situations or people.

Examples are:

- I want to improve the educational system.
- I want to change the society.
- I am guiding people in my company.

**4. Concern for family:** Statements showing the need or desire of the writer to do something for parents, brothers, sisters and other members of the family. Even references to them showing concern are scored.

Examples are:

- I want to help my father in his old age.
- I am worried about my brother.
- I brought up my younger brothers after my father's death.

**5. Concern for others and society:** Statements indicating the concern of the writer for other people and society at large.

Examples are:

- I want to donate my eyes for the blind after my death.
- Poverty pains me.
- I am working on plans to provide better welfare services for my staff.

**Question B Self-Awareness (Minimum 3, Good 4, Very good >4)**

**6. Awareness of personal strength:** Statements indicating the strengths of the writer.

Examples are:

- I am a good student.
- I am strong in mathematics.
- I am known for my technical knowledge and insight.

**7. Awareness of personal weakness:** Statement indicating the writer's limitations or weaknesses.

Examples are:

- I am poor in health.
- My English is weak.

- I am short-tempered.

**8. Awareness of achievement:** Statements indicating past achievements of the writer.

Examples are:

- I scored very high marks in the examination.
- I developed the control system for the company.
- I won several prizes.
- I increased the profits of the company.

**9. Concern for self-development:** Statements indicating the desire of the writer, and his plans to do something for his further growth and development.

Examples:

- I am planning to improve my English.
- I want to gain experience through visits to other units.
- I want to control my impulsiveness.

**Question C Proactivity** (Minimum 2, Good 3, Very good >3)

**10. Internal locus of control:** Statements showing that the writer himself can do something about a problem.

Examples are:

- With my hard work and determination, I hope to overcome this difficulty.
- I am pretty sure that I can convince him.

**11. Proactive orientation:** Statement indicating that the writer wants to solve problems, confront situations and take the initiative in understanding and analysing a situation rather than running away.

Examples are:

- I met each of the persons involved in the conflict to understand the course of the conflict.
- When I was not allowed to import the raw material, I toured the district to explore what else could be used as a substitute.

**12. Resource utilization:** Statements showing the writer's desire, and his tendency, to make use of the facilities and resources he sees outside his capabilities in doing tasks or accomplishing/setting goals.

Examples are:

- I joined classes to improve my English.

- I took a loan from the bank.
- I consulted the extension officer to discuss my plans.

**Question D Action Orientation (Minimum 2, Good 3, Very good >3)**

**13. Self-discipline:** Statements showing that the writer is working hard, takes steps to get focussed/organised, prioritises and spends long hours on work, postpones immediate gratification (having sacrificed short term gains for long term pursuit) etc.

Examples:

- I work about fourteen hours a day.
- I postponed my marriage because I was busy in setting up the unit.
- I worked hard.

**14. Planning orientation:** Statements showing that the writer is involved in some plans for which he is taking some steps.

Examples are:

- I am studying biology to become a doctor.
- I am preparing to learn accountancy so that when business grows I can manage it properly.

- I am planning to expand my business to twice its present size.

**15. Future orientation:** Statements talking about the future in terms of visualizing and setting goals, or those indicating future plans, decisions involving considerations of future event, gain or change. Such statements use the future tense.

Examples are:

- I shall start a new business as soon as I am relieved of my present job.
- I shall marry her in June.
- I hope to expand the present factory.

### Personal Efficacy : Who Am I?

**Scoring Table**

A	<b>Motivation</b>	(Min 3, Good 4, VG >4)
1	External Motivation	
2	Concern for personal excellence	
3	Concern for influence	
4	Concern for family	
5	Concern for others and society	
<i>Sub-Total for Motivation</i>		
B	<b>Self-Awareness</b>	(Min 3, Good 4, VG >4)
6	Personal strength	
7	Personal weakness	
8	Achievement	
9	Self-development	
<i>Sub-Total for Self-Awareness</i>		
C	<b>Proactivity</b>	(Min 2, Good 3, VG >3)
10	Internal locus of control	
11	Proactive orientation	
12	Resource Utilization	
<i>Sub-Total for Proactivity</i>		

D	<b>Action Orientation</b>	(Min 2, Good 3, VG >3)
13	Self-discipline	
14	Planning orientation	
15	Future orientation	
<i>Sub-Total for Action Orientation</i>		
<b>Total for Personal Efficacy (A+B+C+D)</b>		

**Total score for personal efficacy:**

10 Minimum: A person, who scored 10 or less, needs significant attention on self-development and un-scored dimensions of each set.

12 Good: A person, who scored 12, has opportunity for improvement on the dimensions not scored such that the whole segment becomes the person's strength.

>12 Very Good: A person, who scored more than 12, is a confident person with a strong sense

of adequacy. There is always room for improvement, though, by solidifying on every segment with special focus on un-scored dimensions.

**Note:** It is possible that though the dimensions may not have been reflected in the essay, the said dimension may be an attribute the individual displays in real life. Please think hard about yourself and then decide whether to list the dimension in your development plan. At this point you could also look at the segments other than where

D	Action Orientation	(Min 2, Good 3, VG >3)
13	Self-discipline	
14	Planning orientation	
15	Future orientation	
	<i>Sub-Total for Action Orientation</i>	
	<b>Total for Personal Efficacy (A+B+C+D)</b>	

the dimension should have been present to see if that dimension is demonstrated there. If it is, then the score needs to be added to the correct segment.

#### Total score for personal efficacy:

10 Minimum: A person, who scored 10 or less, needs significant attention on self-development and un-scored dimensions of each set.

12 Good: A person, who scored 12, has opportunity for improvement on the dimensions not scored such that the whole segment becomes the person's strength.

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**Personal Effectiveness Scale****Name:****Role:****Organization:****Date:**

This test is for your own use. So be frank in your responses.

Read each statement given below and indicate on the left-hand blank space how much it is true of your behavior, by using the following guidelines:

*Write '4' if it is most characteristic of you, or if you always or most often behave or feel this way.*

*Write '3' if it is fairly true of you, or you quite often behave or feel this way.*

*Write '2' if it is somewhat true in your case.*

*Write '1' if it is not true of you, or if you only occasionally feel or behave this way.*

*Write '0' if it is not at all characteristic of you, or you seldom feel or behave this way.*

..... 1. I find it difficult to be frank with people unless I know them very well.

..... 2. I listen carefully to others opinions about my behavior.

..... 3. I tend to say things that turn out to be out of place.

..... 4. Generally, I hesitate to express my feelings to others.

..... 5. When someone directly tells me how he feels about my behavior, I tend to close up and stop listening.

..... 6. On hindsight, I regret why I said something tactlessly.

..... 7. I am quite quick and strong in expressing my opinions in a group or to a person, even if this may be unacceptable to them.

..... 8. I take steps to find out how my behavior has been perceived by the person with whom I have been interacting.

..... 9. I deliberately observe how a person will take what I am going to tell him and accordingly communicate to him.

..... 10. When someone discusses his problems, I do not spontaneously share my experiences and personal problems of a similar nature with him.

..... 11. If someone criticizes me I hear him at the time but do not bother myself about it later.

..... 12. I fail to pick up cues about others' feelings and reactions when I am involved in an argument or a conversation.

..... 2. I listen carefully to others opinions about my behavior.

..... 3. I tend to say things that turn out to be out of place.

..... 4. Generally, I hesitate to express my feelings to others.

..... 5. When someone directly tells me how he feels about my behavior, I tend to close up and stop listening.

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..... 10. When someone discusses his problems, I do not spontaneously share my experiences and personal problems of a similar nature with him.

..... 11. If someone criticizes me I hear him at the time but do not bother myself about it later.

..... 12. I fail to pick up cues about others' feelings and reactions when I am involved in an argument or a conversation.

..... 13. I enjoy talking with others about my personal concerns and matters.

..... 14. I value what people have to say about my style, behavior, etc.

..... 15. I am often surprised to discover to be (or told) that people were put off, bored or annoyed when I thought they were enjoying interacting with me.

**Score Sheet**

A. Enter your responses below, after reversing for (\*) marked ones and for other item: enter your original response.

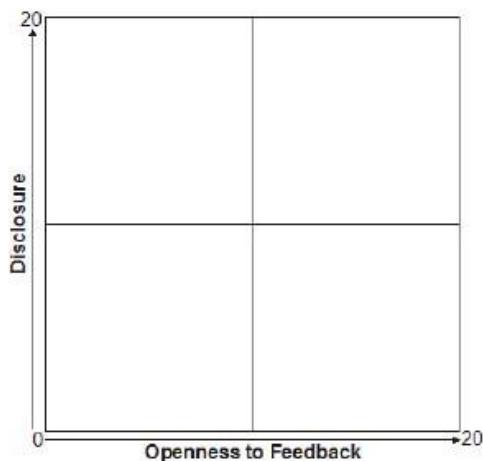
Original response 0 1 2 3 4

Reversed response 4 3 2 1 0

Item	Response	Item	Response	Item	Response
*1		2		*3	.....
*4		*5		*6	.....
7		8		9	.....
*10		*11	.....	*12	.....
13		14	.....	*15	.....
Total	.....	.....			.....
	Self-disclosure		Openness to feedback		Perceptiveness

B. Write L or H in the parenthesis against each of the three total scores - if the total score is 12 or below, write L; if the score is above 12, write H.

Category	Self-disclosure	Openness to feedback	Perceptiveness
Effective	High	High	High
Insensitive	High	High	Low
Egocentric	High	Low	Low
Dogmatic	High	Low	High
Secretive	Low	High	High
Task-obsessed	Low	High	Low
Lonely Empathic Ineffective	Low	Low	High
	Low	Low	Low

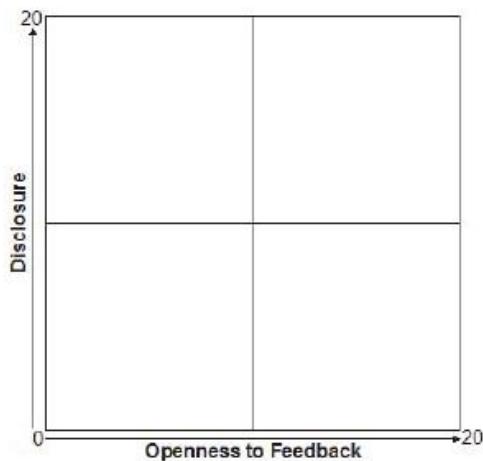
**Personal Effectiveness Scale**

	Category	Self-disclosure	Openness to feedback	Perceptiveness
1	Effective	High	High	High
2	Ininsensitive	High	High	Low
3	Egocentric	High	Low	Low
4	Dogmatic	High	Low	High
5	Secretive	Low	High	High
6	Task-obsessed	Low	High	Low
7	Lonely Empathic	Low	Low	High
8	Ineffective	Low	Low	Low

In the above diagram, mark your scores that you got in the exercise on Person Effectiveness.

Notice the box that depicts your arena.

Personal Effectiveness Scale



### Interpretation of Personal Effectiveness Scale

While trying to understand the different personality types that are brought out by the Personal Effectiveness Scale, it is very important for us not to blame ourselves and feel miserable. Whatever we are is an outcome of our context - institutions, organizations, family and social surroundings. The more important thing to understand as we embark on this journey is that this provides us with an opportunity that very few human beings have which is to understand ourselves as we are and then working towards improving ourselves.

These are the Personality Types according to PE Scale

Category	Self-disclosure	Openness to feedback	Perceptiveness
1. Effective	High	High	High
2. Insensitive	High	High	Low
3. Egocentric	High	Low	Low
4. Dogmatic	High	Low	High
5. Secretive	Low	High	High
6. Task-obsessed	Low	High	Low
7. Lonely Empathetic	Low	Low	High
8. Ineffective	Low	Low	Low

**1. Effective:** As indicated by the scoring, an effective person has the right mix of attributes that would contribute to his effectiveness in interpersonal situations. This person has high

self-disclosure. He values his own self and is comfortable with opening up with significant others in his life. This builds very good relationships. Others feel he trusts them. He has balanced view of his self-capabilities and recognizes others' strengths and respects other views and hence is receptive to feedback. He is very sensitive to situations and people's motives. This combined with strong belief in his own opinions make him analytical and perceptive.

#### Scope for development:

There is a terrific opportunity for such a person to increase scores on all aspects above and to maximize the arena of effectiveness. Such a person has to become more trusting and sharing.

**2. Insensitive:** An insensitive person is a confident person who is secure in seeking feedback as well as in sharing about himself. He trusts people. What prevents such a person from being optimally effective is revealed in the Perceptiveness score. A low score here implies that the person may not be very effective in selecting what feedback to accept and implement and what to reject. On the other hand such a person may also be insensitive in situations and people in sharing about himself. Such a person is likely to be used by people and/or sometimes disliked because of being not conscious of situations, for cracking jokes at the wrong time etc. He tends to be a "bull in a china shop". Such a person also loses somewhat from truly benefiting from feedback because he is non-selective. Such a person is likely to be sub-optimally observant and dysfunctional in a situation where he has expected to be spontaneous.

#### Scope for development:

Such a person needs to improve his observation skill of people and situations. Such a person may need to tell himself to hold his impulse to react; and absorb the context before acting. He/she also needs to evaluate the relative merit of feedback before acting on it. It may also be required for such a person to be more evaluative of the people he is dealing with.

**3. Egocentric:** Such a person typically cares little about what others think about an issue or a situation or others' feelings in general. He holds an unduly high opinion of his own views and capabilities and doesn't in general respect others' views and skills. As consequence such a person is not liked. People would work with or for such a person only under compulsion. Such a person is very likely to have few genuine friends. People would normally be wary of airing their opinions to him and this in turn contributes to his misplaced self-concept. This means the person is unlikely to be a good team member or leader (more likely to be a dictator). This also would have far reaching repercussions on quality of personal relationships.

#### Scope for development:

Such a person needs to immediately throw out this misplaced self-concept of being a superior person. He must also understand that to be liked and respected by others he also needs to build his credibility by demonstrating that he respects others. Being respected by others is a very important facet of effectiveness as a person because the overall outcome improves significantly when people do something out of willingness.

**4. Dogmatic:** Such a person is very secure in sharing because he is very perceptive about the context and is a good judge of people and situations. However a Dogmatic person typically has difficulty in accepting other's opinion because he considers his ability to analyze superior than anyone else's. He may feel small in accepting others' views even though others may be right. In doing so the person is not helping his cause of being effective because others may see it as unreasonable and may also feel disrespected.

#### Scope for development

It is very important for such a person to change his/her mindset. While one must stand up for one's views. One cannot be rigid. In the end the task is to arrive at a consensus. The individual must commit himself to this objective and deal with differing opinions on merit. Such objectivity will help him to be flexible on his own views.

**5. Secretive:** Such people miss a huge opportunity of building trusting relationships - by not being open and sharing with others. It is difficult to say what prevents them from opening up more. It could be because of misplaced lessons learned from not-so-good experiences of the past, or it could be because of their social environment. For one reason or the other such people are highly uncomfortable sharing and opening up with others. This in itself creates mistrust and lack of credibility.

#### Scope for development

Such people have an excellent opportunity to explore the world by sharing and trusting others, provided they open up. They have to realise that sometimes others may misuse their trust, but it won't always happen. Such people need to trust their own judgment.

people's motives and demands of situations. They need to have a good ability to analyze and observe.

**6. Task-obsessed:** Such people typically are shy of assuming any visible role in an interpersonal setting. They may do a great job of the work given to them but almost never stop to think and ponder. They also accept views and feedback given to them at face value without an analysis of its merits. Such people are typically the invisible contributors to accomplishment of goals. They are present in a corner often knowing that they knew what someone else said but did not say it quick enough. Roles are assigned to such people and they do a very good job based on the directions given to them.

#### Scope for development

The suggestions for such people are simple - just speak out, even if you feel that you won't be adding much of value. Sometimes, speaking out itself carries value. Speak out and get used to the sound of your voice and to others listening to you. Such people should also make a conscious effort to analyze and observe things. This helps forming opinions and having views.

**7. Lonely Empathetic:** Such people often sit through everything, understanding everything but not contributing. There could be many reasons why this happens but it is important to understand that not being open to sharing about self leads to lack of strong relationships. Further, because one has not built strong relationships, one doesn't seek feedback. They should realize that it won't be given automatically. They are caught in a vicious loop. There is a great chance that such people are not even noticed.

#### Scope for development

It is very important for such people, in their own interest to make things happen. This will make people sit up and take notice of them. On the other hand, such people should go out of the way to seek feedback. Just break the self-imposed limitations and see the miracles that gradually start happening to you!

**8. Ineffective:** Most of what has been said in case of Lonely Empathetic applies.

#### Scope for development

It is suggested that such people start the socializing process in very conducive environments like the family. They should seek to explore themselves, by sharing and by soliciting feedback; first, with relations of compulsion (like Husband-Wife, Father-Son etc). This will help in building confidence before they can go out to seek to explore in other interpersonal situations.

**Loco Inventory****Name:****Role:****Organization:****Date:**

Given below are some statements that show how people experience their organizations. There are no right or wrong answers. Read each statement and indicate the extent to which you feel that way, based on your experience in the organization. Use the following key in indicating your rating. Mark it on the left-hand side of the each statement.

*"Before we get on with this session, there a few words that need clarification. "Organization" refers to company if you are working or college if you are studying. "Senior" is boss in office, or your teacher in college or parent at home."*

Write '4' if you strongly feel this way

Write '3' if you generally feel this way

Write '2' if you somewhat feel this way (and somewhat not)

Write '1' if you slightly feel this way

Write '0' if you hardly or never feel this.

- ..... 1. I can largely determine what matters to me in the organization.
- ..... 2. The course of my career largely depends on me.
- ..... 3. My success or failure depends mostly on the amount of effort I put in.
- ..... 4. The persons who are important control most matters in the organization.
- ..... 5. To a large extent, my career depends on my seniors.
- ..... 6. My effectiveness in this organization is mostly determined by senior people.
- ..... 7. The organization one joins or the job one gets are to a large extent, accidental happenings.
- ..... 8. One's career is to a great extent, a matter of chance.
- ..... 9. Success of a person depends on the breaks or chances he (she) gets.
- ..... 10. Successful completion of assignments is mainly due to my detailed planning and hard work.
- ..... 11. Being liked by seniors or making a good impression usually influence promotion decisions.
- ..... 12. Getting rewards in the organization is a matter of luck.
- ..... 13. Success of one's plans is, to a large extent, a matter of luck.

..... 14. Getting promotion largely depends on my being in the right place at the right time.

..... 15. Senior person's preference determines who would be rewarded in the organization.

..... 16. My success, to a large extent, depends on my competence and hard work.

..... 17. How much I am liked in the organization depends on my seniors.

..... 18. It is a matter of luck that people listen to me.

..... 19. If my seniors do not like me, I probably would not succeed in this organization.

..... 20. Usually I am responsible for getting, or not getting, rewards.

..... 21. My success or failure is mostly a matter of luck.

..... 22. My success or failure depends mostly on those who work with me.

..... 23. My promotion in the organization depends mostly on my ability and effort.

..... 24. My experience is that most things in the organization are beyond one's control.

..... 25. I can work hard enough to get my suggestions accepted in the organization.

..... 26. I am acceptable to others in my organization because I am lucky.

..... 27. Generally, I determine what happens to me in the organization.

..... 28. My acceptability to others will depend on my behavior with them.

..... 29. My ideas get accepted if I make them fit with the desires of my seniors.

..... 30. Pressure groups are more powerful (and control things) in the organization than individual employees.

The numbers below correspond to the item numbers in the Locus of Control Inventory, Transfer the ratings by writing them in the appropriate blanks below. Then total the ratings that are transferred to each column.

Item	Rating	Item	Rating	Item	Rating
1	.....	4	.....	7	.....
2	.....	5	.....	8	.....
3	.....	6	.....	9	.....
10	.....	11	.....	12	.....
16	.....	15	.....	13	.....
20	.....	17	.....	14	.....
23	.....	19	.....	18	.....
25	.....	22	.....	21	.....
27	.....	29	.....	24	.....
28	.....	30	.....	26	.....
Total (I)	.....	EO	.....	EL	.....

I/EO = \_\_\_\_\_ ; I/EL = \_\_\_\_\_ ; I/(EO + EL) = \_\_\_\_\_.

## I. Interpretation of scores - I, EO, EL

### 1. Internality (I)

(a) Individuals with a score of **33 or above** are very confident of themselves. They believe in their abilities, but sometimes may not be able to assess the contingencies and difficulties that might come in their way of achieving goals. They can be unrealistic and may blame themselves for any failure.

(b) Individuals with a score of **29 to 32** show high trust in their abilities and will mostly put these to effective use to achieve goals.

(c) Individuals with a score of **22 to 28** are somewhere in between, with moderate trust in themselves and their abilities, at the same time not taking the blame of failure totally on themselves, but attributing it to contingencies and luck.

(d) Individuals with a score of **18 to 21** do not believe in themselves and need to take feedback from others to evaluate their strengths.

(e) Individuals with a score of **17 or less** fail to put to use their full potential and do not rely on their efforts to achieve goals.

**2. Externality Others (EO)** means the degree to which individuals rely on significant others (boss, peers and subordinates) for their success/failure.

(a) Individuals with a score of **30 or above**, reveal their dysfunctional dependence

on significant others.

(b) Individuals with a score of **21 to 29** show a realistic dependence on significant others.

(c) Individuals with a score of **17 to 20** exhibit independent orientation.

(d) Individuals with a score of **16 or below** would exhibit a counter-dependent orientation.

### 3. Externality Luck (EL)

(a) Individuals with a score of **10 or below** may not be able to tackle frustration when unforeseen contingencies or situations come their way. This might affect them in the achievement of goals.

(b) Individuals with a score of **11 to 20** are more likely to tackle such frustration, as they do not completely believe in the power of luck, fate, and/or chance. As such individuals exhibit a moderate level of externality luck, they are able to handle such unforeseen situations better than individuals with an EL score of 10 or below.

(c) Individuals with a score of **21 to 30** are likely to attribute failure/ success to luck, fate, and/or chance; and mostly handle unforeseen situations with a "not my fault" attitude.

## II. Interpretation of Ratio Analysis (between internal scores and external scores)

Scores can also be interpreted on the basis of ratio calculation. Three types of ratios are calculated, viz., I/EO, I/EL and I/(EO+EL). Here the rule is 'higher the ratio, the better'. For instance,

if  $I/EO > 1$ , it shows that the individual exhibits a high level of internal orientation. In the same manner, if  $I/EO < 1$ , the individual exhibits a low level of internal orientation.

**1.** If  $I/EO > 1$ , the individuals exhibit a higher level of internality than externality (others). This means that they believe in their inner abilities and attribute their success/failure to their own capabilities, rather than the influence of their boss, peers and subordinates. They believe that they can largely determine what matters to them and believe that most of the times, they alone are responsible for their success/failure. Believing in the power of 'self' to achieve success in the organisation is their *mantra*. Their competence and hard work are the two primary determinants of their performance in any endeavour.

**2.** If  $I/EL > 1$ , the individuals yet again exhibit a higher level of internality than externality (luck). This means that they believe in their inner abilities and attribute their success/failure to their own capabilities, rather than luck, chance and/or fate. They can largely determine what matters to them and believe that most of the times, they alone are responsible for their success/failure. This shows a 'never-say-die' attitude towards difficult and tenuous tasks and also their readiness to defer gratification. They are likely to be receptive to nouveau information and are more observant.

**3.** If  $I/(EO + EL)$  calculated is less than 1, contrary to the observation in the first and second ratios, it brings to the fore a higher level of externality (others & luck) than internality.

## Why do I exist? Finding purpose and meaning in life - IKIGAI

Every year, for the last couple of decades, I have been meeting youth at CL Educate as well as across the country on my travels, while working with various institutions; most of the youth keep wondering what they want to do in life, while a few are enamored of a particular career, course or institution for what they have heard about these as "holds promise", "Zindagi banjayegi" etc. The thought process or plan, of most of the youth is usually short term, on the basis of 'financial returns - salary' or lifestyle it affords.

The real mozo happens only when one finds his purpose for existence. As Late Dr. Abdul Kalam said, "Dreams are not those one sees in his sleep, but those that do not allow one to sleep." Indeed, when one knows his purpose and meaning of life, it is a celebration. You live, breathe, eat, drink, think and sleep for that very purpose.

I have been pre-occupied with this thought of - How do I facilitate the youth to arrive at their purpose - thinking purposeful and doing purposeful. While I created a framework on facilitating the youth to think through, I came across this concept from a Japanese philosophy - IKIGAI! In this short note I am bringing various interesting frameworks that could be of value in finding one's own purpose for life and working towards realizing that infinite potential that exists within. This will also enable you to work on making your profile compelling, that reflects in your thoughts and actions, helps you to leave lasting impression in any face to face interaction.

### IKIGAI - Purpose and Meaning of Life

**Ikigai** is a Japanese concept meaning "a reason for being". Everyone, according to the Japanese, has an **ikigai**. Finding it requires a deep and often lengthy search of self. Such a search is regarded as being very important, since it is believed that discovery of one's *ikigai* brings satisfaction and meaning to life. Examples include work, hobbies and raising children.

The term *ikigai* compounds two Japanese words: *iki* meaning "life; alive" and *kai* (sequentially voiced as *gai*), "(an) effect; (a) result; (a) fruit; (a) worth; (a) use; (a) benefit; (no, little) avail" "a reason for living [being alive]; a meaning for [to] life; what [something which] makes life worth living; a *raison d'être*".

In the culture of Okinawa, *ikigai* is thought of as "a reason to get up in the morning"; that is, a reason to enjoy life. In a TED Talk, Dan Buettner suggested *ikigai* as one of the reasons people in the area had such long lives.

The word *ikigai* is usually used to indicate the source of value in one's life or the things that make one's life worthwhile. Secondly, the word is used to refer to mental and spiritual circumstances under which individuals feel that their lives are valuable. It's not necessarily linked to one's economic status or the present state of society. Even if a person feels that the present is dark, but they have a goal in mind, they may feel *ikigai*. Behaviours that make us feel *ikigai* are not actions which we are forced to take—these are natural and spontaneous actions.

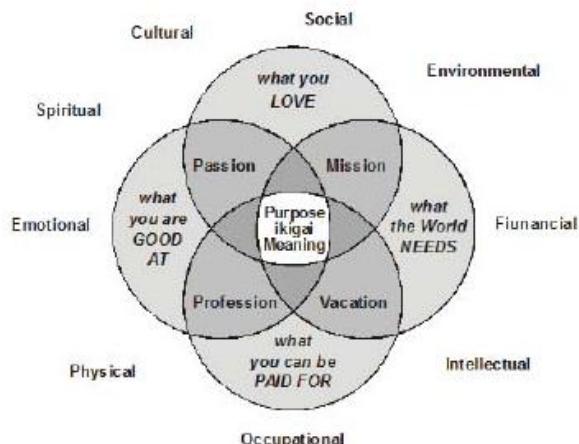
In the article named *Ikigai – jibun no kanosei, kaikasaseru katei* ("Ikigai: the process of allowing the self's possibilities to blossom") Kobayashi Tsukasa says that "people can feel real *ikigai* only when, on the basis of personal maturity, the satisfaction of various

desires, love and happiness, encounters with others, and a sense of the value of life, they proceed toward self-realization." The very self-realization that Abraham Maslow also spoke about in his seminal work "Hierarchy of needs", that we will talk about later or in another article, as a frame work to build ones profile.

We're trying to find our **passion**; Our purpose; What makes our lives worthwhile and will give us that joy on a daily basis.

An important distinction is that Ikigai doesn't strictly mean your **career** or your economic status, but it is representative of all aspects of your life: physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural, social, professional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational and so on. It is the culmination of your life as a whole.

Moreover, Ikigai is not forced; rather it is something we are willing to do. These are natural actions and behaviors. We're not trying to become something we are not.



### How Do You Achieve Ikigai?

Ikigai can be achieved by answering four distinct questions.

#### 1. What do you love?

Irrespective of all other factors, what are the things you love to do, without limiting by telling yourself how trivial it is. You probably are aware of these already, though you may not know what to do with them quite yet. If you're not sure, try asking yourself, "**What can you not 'not do'?**"

This question is getting to the heart of who you are and what you're all about. What are the things that you love, that you do repeatedly, that you always come back to? What is the thing that you can get lost in for hours on end, without even noticing, without even having food and sleep? The thing that doesn't feel like work; The thing that infuses infinite energy; thing that makes you feel alive.

The thing you can not 'not do'?

We may not have taken the time to notice these parts of our life before, but when you ask these sorts of questions, they come to the fore. You may be staring that skill or idea or field in the face, but simply never thought of it in that way. You just have to notice.

## 2. What are you good at?

Finally, everyone typically has some traits or skills that they excel at. They may not like it or want to pursue it, but if you look at yourself, you have inherent strengths, as well as weaknesses.

If you don't enjoy your talents, it may be a matter of applying them differently. If that doesn't work, the beautiful thing is that you can become good, if not great, at a lot of things. Putting in the time and effort is key and can even be easy, when you're working to get good at the things you love.

## 3. What does the world need?

A lot when you think about it. In our own cities and countryside in India, to half way across the world, there are a lot of problems to be solved - clean air, food, housing,

energy, water conservation, sanitation, waste management, transportation, connectivity, financial access, education, skills, livelihood, human excellence etc. If you can find one that interests you, then explore the advances in that domain, where is the world heading, how a few people are making a big difference - read about it, watch on Youtube, TED and other sources to be aware and to guide you.

These first two questions I think are the core of finding Ikigai. They build the foundation for the next two questions because they are a bit more flexible.

## 4. What can you be paid for?

Pretty much anything. You just need to find people who need what are you capable of, what good are you good at, passionate about or what are you selling. You may have to get a bit creative, but there's something of value within the things you love and what the world needs. You just have to seek it out.

Putting these together allow you to find different parts of yourself. Understanding what you love and what you're good at leads you to passion. On the other hand, finding what the world needs and what you can be paid for identifies your vocation.

The intersection of all of these is where you achieve Ikigai. Of course this isn't something that happens over night. It takes many of us years or our entire lifetime just to realize our passion, so I can only imagine finding your Ikigai would be that much more difficult.

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Even so, it's the ultimate form of self-actualization and a worthy one at that. Hopefully these questions can help you start to discover where you should be going to achieve your own reason for being.

So the question is, are you excited to wake up tomorrow?

Visit [www.sreeni.org](http://www.sreeni.org) for a detailed article on Ikigai

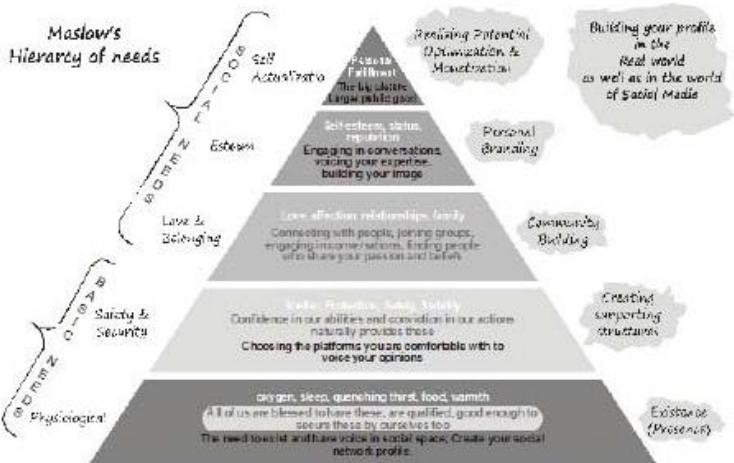
Happy Ikigai-ying! ;)

## Building Self, Creating Impact, Enriching Profile

Most of us, in our youth, are enamored of the world around us that is always enticing with its glitters and sparkles. We have so much within! We hardly invest time to think about our self, not to talk of action. It is time each one of us starts doing.

We are all powerful. We can be winners. We can impact big time. We have enough examples around us - from the Prime Minister of the country to very many inspiring people from all walks of life, who are in a continuous pursuit of realizing their purpose, chasing every goal of theirs, passionately. Each one of us can be one such. The last article, 'Ikigai', initiates the exercise of finding our purpose and meaning of life. In this article, I am going to share about building our 'Self', while contributing to the context we are in, which in turn enriches our profile.

Let us look at the Abraham Maslow's seminal work on 'self', hierarchy of needs. John Antonio brought it into social media context. I am creating a framework that is built upon these.



Every being goes through these phases, termed as hierarchy of human needs \_

- Physiological needs - Oxygen(air), sleep, quenching thirst and hunger, clothing
- Safety and Security needs - Shelter, Protection from vagaries of weather, to safety and stability in life
- Belonging - love, affection, relationships and family provide the emotional needs
- Esteem - Enhancing and demonstrating Capabilities that builds self-esteem, reputation and status

#### e. Self-actualization - Personal fulfillment, in the process contributing to larger good

Physiological and Safety needs are termed as basic needs - that of survival; while the needs of Belonging, Esteem and Self-actualization are termed as social needs. As one quenches the lower level needs, one starts thinking about the next higher level need. The journey is un-ending while it is incredibly enriching too.

We grow in the process, while we keep pushing our boundaries, discovering our unknown self. More we push, greater is the realization and impact we cause and higher is the enrichment.

Each one of us, educated, is fortunate to have our basic needs - especially the physiological needs and to a great extent, the safety needs, fulfilled by our family and well wishers. Yes, with self-doubts that question our own capabilities, we may fall short on career or emotional stability. We can equip ourselves to overcome these shortcomings with positivity. Believe in our own selves, have confidence in our abilities and have conviction in our actions. We need to work on our state of mind, constantly, to be positive and purposeful.

#### Cycle of Excellence



Our thoughts are all powerful. Our positive thoughts influence the language, the words we use. Repeated use of the energizing words brings about the compelling action. Compelling actions will result in impactful outcomes, which reinforce the confidence and positive frame of mind. This cycle of excellence is unending. It is transformational. This fuels our journey to realize the infinite potential within.

*[In this frame of positivity, it makes imminent sense to establish our profile in the social space - social media - the presence in the virtual space of this ever evolving connected world. Most of us are present in a few of these destinations like Facebook or Instagram to name a few, for fun mostly by sharing some interesting happenings in the form of stories or photos or videos. It is time we think of being in each of these spaces, with all the purposefulness that shall add to our ever evolving self, to aid our realization of the larger picture and public good.]*

Once we get on to the cycle of excellence, fuelled by our purposefulness, the social context that we are in, can add that much more. Our family, friends and relationships

can give the strength and confidence to head towards our larger vision. In this pursuit, we can connect with people or groups, bodies who work in our space of interest. The engaging conversations with people who share our beliefs and passions builds our community affiliations, that can further reinforce our purposeful and our journey. List out our passions and interests, and look out for people or bodies with whom we can engage to build your journey. Stretch yourselves and reach out, get involved. We need to consciously build these connects and affiliations.

*[These affiliations and connects can be further fuelled by being alive and kicking on the social media, in the current context. The social media has the power to make connects in an unimaginable way. It is a double edged sword, and certainly depends on how we put it to use. If used wisely, it can make a big difference to our journey, in the process enriching our profile.]*

*Think of building your own website or a blog on one of the platforms like wordpress, which is very easy to handle. Be on LinkedIn that enables you to connect with professionals in your area of work. Get onto Twitter to follow people, institutions and journals of eminence while sharing your thoughts too. Start engaging and interacting with the connects in a purposeful way. Slowly build your web presence that can build your community and affiliations.]*

As you become active in various spaces, engaging with people and involved in activities, voicing your thoughts and opinions while helping others also to grow in the process of your growing, the journey will start becoming more meaningful. This brings more opportunities, more doors open to push your boundaries and to realize greater

possibilities and potentials. In the process, knowingly or unknowingly, your brand building is happening.

*[Continue to share your learning on your website or blog as a regular process of self-growth. In the connected world, you will be surprised how you create new connections with strangers and friends, who are on their path of excellence; who feel that you resonate with their thoughts and journey. It adds the domino effect to your growth, evolution and excellence. Many an entrepreneurial journey thus began]*

As you continue on this journey, you will reach new heights, of course not without a lot of struggles. The struggles are part of every success story. As someone said, "Overnight success is a result of twenty years of slogging." The struggles actually help you realize that you are more capable and you are on the path to realize the higher goals that you have set for yourself, the big picture will continue to refine itself. Your mission of realizing your potential and goals, will certainly be aided by the profile that you have been building on the social media in more ways than you had ever imagined.

#### **4P FRAMEWORK for showcasing your PROFILE**

I shall wind up this article with a 4P framework to share your profile. Kindly dig deep and explore on each of these dimensions to give insights into who you are and will be. Work towards enriching each of these dimensions, by creating opportunities or taking advantage of one.

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Purpose	Professional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing of your larger vision and purpose conveys your outlook towards life. It conveys the direction you are heading and how your past or present connects to the future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning/knowledge - Share the schools that you have attended and every degree or certification that you may have; other courses that you might have pursued beyond your graduation or academic requirements.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutions, employers and employees alike will enjoy seeing what goals a person has. Let these goals be both career oriented and personally oriented, such as scuba dive, rock climbing, music or blogging, shayan....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills are important because they show Institutions / Employers and networking connections why they should connect with you. They showcase why you would be an asset to the institution/company and to the person. Skills can include leadership, management, organization, communication, hard work and</li> </ul>

Passions	Public Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interests and passions give people a feel of who you are as an individual. This makes people connect to you as a person on a personal level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is an opportunity for you to stand apart from other candidates because many people overlook this dimension.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This also shows you being a keen learner who is not afraid of exploring the unknown;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share personally meaningful values, important ones - such as innovation, health, fitness, responsibility, success, challenges or intellect, and share instances of demonstration</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a very balanced individual with avenues to reduce stress and rejuvenate oneself to be on the path of purposefulness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List your experience and contribution to any form charity work or public good.</li> </ul>

Believe in yourselves. Build your profile. Enjoy the journey of realizing your larger purpose.

## Who Am I - Building Your Profile

Describe some incidents in your life that you remember / look back on often.

List some attributes (at least three) of yours that you are really proud of.

Describe some instances where these attributes helped you achieve a good outcome.

List a few areas (at least three) where you believe that you need to improve.

Describe some instances where you could have achieved more if you had been better in the above-mentioned areas.

Starting with the earliest, list out, in a chronological sequence, all formal or non-formal education and learning that you have gained from.

List all extracurricular activities that you have ever participated in. Also mention any and all awards that you may have won for these. (Mention all activities and events that you participated in even if you do not have a certificate for a particular activity / event / prize/ award.)

List your hobbies, areas of interest. Also mention any and all awards that you may have won for these.

Describe the major changes that have happened in your life so far. Mention the people, purposes, goals and other dreams that have caused these significant changes/ decisions.

Describe the future developments in your life as you foresee them. These developments may be related to your education and career or personal life, etc. There is no constraint on which area of your life is affected by the development.

Describe all that you have done in order to realize the changes that you mentioned in the previous question.

Now you are ready to handle the formal questions regarding your core areas. Do note that the purpose of the next few questions is to help you prepare for any question that you may face in an interview or in an application form. Thus, there will be many questions in this list which will be variants of each other or which may be just restatements of each other. This will ensure that your practice is thorough and that you are not thrown off track merely by a different variation of a question.

### Questions regarding your Personal Attributes:

1. Tell us about yourself. / Introduce yourself. / Describe yourself.
2. What are your strengths? Mention at least three.
3. Give examples of incidents where each of these skills has helped you.
4. What are your weaknesses? Mention at least three.
5. What have you done in order to improve on your weak areas?
6. Give examples of incidents where each of these weaknesses has hurt you.

7. Why should you be selected for your dream institute?
8. Why should you be rejected and denied admission to your dream B-school?
9. Describe how you typically respond to problems facing you.
10. Give examples of situations where you took charge of a difficult situation and resolved it.
11. What are the significant goals that you have set for yourself in the past?
12. What were the significant challenges that you faced in realizing these goals?
13. How did you overcome these challenges and achieve your goal?
14. What lessons did you learn from these?
15. Describe one incident or event where you showed leadership skills.
16. Describe one incident or event where you initially stumbled, but eventually recovered and were able to achieve your objectives.
17. Describe one incident or event in your life which you most regret. Also explain why you regret it. If you were given the opportunity to re-live that incident, what would you do differently and why?
18. Do you believe that your future depends on you / your efforts more than on others?
19. What extracurricular activities have you participated in?
20. Why did you choose these activities?
21. How do you spend your spare time? / Apart from your studies, what areas interest you?
22. Why did you choose these areas? / How do these areas impact your career objectives? / How do these choices influence you as a person?
23. Who is your idol / role model? Why do you admire him / her?
24. Mention some things that you dislike about your role model. Why do you dislike these?
25. In what way (s) are you similar to your role model?
26. In what way (s) do you differ from your role model?
27. What do you want to be remembered as?

**Questions regarding your Goals:**

28. Why do you want to go for an MBA?
29. How will an MBA help you achieve your career objectives?
30. Have you ever considered going abroad for your MBA? Why?

31. What are the goals that you have set for yourself?
32. What are the obstacles towards realizing your goals?
33. How do you plan to go about achieving your goals?
34. What are your career goals?
35. What is your biggest dream in life?
36. Apart from your primary goal, what other dreams/desires do you have?
37. What will you do if you do not achieve your primary goal?
38. What will you do if you are not selected to any B-school this year?
39. Besides MBA, which other areas interest you? Why?
40. If you could not do an MBA, what will you do?

**Past Performance:**

41. Explain/ Justify your academic performance.
42. Which is your favorite subject?
43. Why have you not decided to study further in your own area?
44. Considering your academic performance, are you capable of learning further?

## Interview Fundamentals

The interview is a vital component of the second stage processes for entrance to B-schools. Practically every single B-school uses interviews to judge candidates before selecting them. While most B-schools use the standard Personal Interview, a very few also (or solely) use the Group Interview. An interview is a great way for a panel to assess candidates face-to-face. At the same time, candidates have far greater control over the process - and thus, the outcome - in an interview than in a written test.

In a written test you typically get a fixed set of questions and you have to simply attempt to solve as many of them as you can in the allotted time. You do not have any control over which questions you are asked. In an interview, on the other hand, you can guide the interviewer(s) and so decide which questions you are asked. In the following sections, we will see how this technique can be used to get the most out of an interview, along with other important concepts relevant to interviews.

### Anatomy of an Interview

What is an interview?

An interview is a face-to-face meeting, especially for the purpose of obtaining a statement or for assessing the qualities of a candidate. It can have two objectives:

(a) To obtain a statement or opinion, as is done when film stars are interviewed to get their views on any particular role, or when the Prime Minister is interviewed to get information on the result of his discussion with another political leader.

(b) To assess a person for his/her suitability for a job or for admissions to educational institutions, etc.

Your interview, of course, will come under the second category mentioned above. But do note that there is no reason for it to be substantially different from the first kind of interview. It is our own fear and concern about the result that leads to a feeling that a selection interview is likely to be more grueling than a media interview. Content wise though, there is no reason for a selection to be different from a media interview. Even in a media interview, the interviewee may be asked about his or her background. Similarly, they will be asked about their opinion on various issues. And if the interviewee has not prepared well, then they may have to apologize to the interviewer and admit that they do not have any clue about the question. And remember that they may have to do this live on national television. In a selection interview, on the other hand, only the panel members will be observing you. Think of the group interviews that presidential candidates have to give on television networks in the US. Imagine the dread that those candidates must have of interviews - the whole world watching every gesture, listening on to every word and every opponent and media critic just waiting to rip into any mistake by the candidate. A whole career may hinge upon one mistake by the candidate. Compared to those, surely your interview is a bed of roses.

Do note, also, that the purpose of an interview is to select candidates, not to reject them. A written test is a cut and dried test given to everyone. The best performers at this level typically go on to the next stage while the others are left out. The written test papers are not designed to suit each candidate; all must compete in the same arena. The purpose and therefore, structure of an interview is entirely different. A science

graduate may be asked questions on science but will certainly not be asked questions pertaining to deeper points from the arts or from philosophy and so on. Similarly, a candidate with a background in the arts can expect questions from those fields rather than any other. So an interview is designed to suit each candidate's strengths and gives maximum opportunity to each candidate to perform well and to convince the panel that the candidate should be selected.

In light of the above, it should be absolutely clear that the key to tackling interviews well lies in preparing thoroughly and maintaining composure. Do not think that an interview is some strange phenomenon; know that it is, essentially, no different from a regular conversation - a conversation with people whom you are meeting for the first time in your life. And these people are only interested in knowing you, not someone else. Hence, you simply need to identify who you are, what are the salient points about you that may interest someone else. And then work on those points, revisit, revise and fine tune your answers. Also, your preparation for your interview will put you in a good frame of mind right away. Once you know that you are ready for most, if not all, questions that you are likely to be asked, you will start to look forward to interviews, rather than being apprehensive of them. And this composure will further help you in giving a good performance in your interview.

#### **Preparing for your Interview:**

So you have seen that in your interview, the panel will only seek to know you. Therefore, before you do a good job of presenting yourself to them, you must first recognize yourself. Identify the relevant points about you that may interest someone

and practice how you wish to elaborate on those points, describe and present those points to someone. Some of the areas about you that will typically attract a panel's interest and thus, their questions, are described here along with suggestions on how to go about preparing for the same. You must ensure that you do justice to yourself on these points. Your effort and preparation will certainly bear fruit and success will be the due reward for the sweat on your brow.

#### **Core Area Questions**

Such questions are primarily asked in order to test the maturity and focus of a candidate. How well does a candidate know himself or herself? Does the candidate regularly analyze himself or herself? Or are they living in a fool's paradise? Is the candidate focused on his or her future and has a clear and coherent path charted out? These are the things that are revealed by questions on a candidate's core areas.

Tell me about yourself. What are your strengths and/or weaknesses? Where do you see yourself some years down the line? Why have you opted for an MBA? These are some of the most typical questions that are asked of candidates and the purpose of such questions, as mentioned above, is to test a candidate's self-awareness and introspection and by extension, their maturity and focus. Your answers to these questions will also reveal your clarity in thought. Your answers to such questions must therefore be precise and coherent.

Draw up the flowcharts and complete the self-awareness matrix provided to you in this IMF. After this, do go on to the Who am I - self-profiler and complete this. Think of the questions that will arise from your answers to these questions. This effort will ensure

that you are able to tackle these questions with the utmost ease and will be able to present a good picture of yourself. This will have a positive impact in your interview and will work in your favour. Your mock interviews will cover these areas as well and will reveal if your answers can be improved further.

### **Academics / Work Experience**

These are the things that you have been doing for the last few years of your life. Such questions reveal your level of sincerity. Did you merely study for the sake of getting a degree or were you genuinely interested in the subjects that you learned? Were you only working on paper or were you a motivated employee of your organization? Good answers to these questions are absolutely critical. A sincere candidate is expected to be able to answer such questions easily without any preparation at all. After all, if you have been doing something daily for the last few years of your life, do you really need to prepare in order to talk about it? Hence, it is vital that you revisit these areas and revise thoroughly in order to ensure that you have not forgotten something and are able to handle such questions easily.

As regards your academics, try to revise the basics of the various subjects that you have studied in your graduation. Go back to your textbooks and refresh your knowledge, definitions, formulae, concepts and other related issues. At the very least, identify a few subjects that you really liked and prepare for the basics in those subjects. This way even if you get a question from another subject that you are unable to answer, you can use the opportunity to guide the panel to your area of interest (lead the interviewers) and point out those areas that you are prepared for. During your graduation, if you have

done some significant project or internship in some area, then you must prepare very thoroughly on those areas. This is the bare minimum that is expected of any candidate.

Similarly, if you have any work experience, be very thorough as regards your job profile, the business area of your company, the typical profile of your clients/ customers (if any). Try to have a clear picture of the impact of your work in your company's overall business model. It is expected that a dedicated employee will know these basic facts. An interviewer judges your ability to perform on future tasks on the basis of your past performance. Thus, it is vital that you should be prepared for such questions so that you come across as a sincere and dedicated candidate.

Further, do read up about latest developments in your field of specialization. Think about their possible impact on your field in future. Such knowledge will portray you as a motivated candidate who is genuinely interested in his/ her career choice. This is particularly true for candidates from a scientific or technical field of study/ work, though people from other backgrounds may also get such questions.

### **General Knowledge - Current Affairs**

And that brings us to current affairs. You must be well aware of the important developments at the national as well as the international level. Further, considering that you have opted for MBA programs, it is to be expected that you will be aware of the latest developments in the fields of business and economics. Your current affairs awareness reveals you to be a sincere candidate genuinely interested in the fields that you have opted for. So be very thorough in your preparations for questions regarding current affairs and business and economics. It will also help if you read up about some

basic terms in economics. Do note that it is not at all necessary that every interviewer will ask you questions from these areas or that all interviewees will be asked questions from these areas. But if you are asked questions related to these areas then your preparation will hold you in good stead. Your strong and clear answers will count in your favor and will show you in a good light. So be very thorough in your preparation for these areas.

Ideally, you should be reading at least one general newspaper and one business newspaper everyday. Further, we provide you with regular updates on general knowledge and will also provide you audio-visual sessions on general knowledge and business affairs. Make it a point to go through these sincerely. In addition to this, the more you read, the better prepared you will be.

Further, as mentioned above, you should be well aware of latest developments related to your own field of study or work. Also, read about latest developments related to your areas of interest. For e.g. if you are interested in cricket, do know about the results of some of the latest tournaments, particularly those in which your favourite team has played. Similarly, it will help to know the statistics of your favourite players. If you are interested in literature, make it a point that you know about the winners of significant awards in recent times. Knowledge of these will show you to be genuinely interested in the fields that you claim to be attracted to.

### **Hobbies, Extra curriculars, Achievements**

These are typically related to areas separate from your field of study or work. As such, they are additional facets of your personality. Good answers to questions related to

such areas will ensure that you do not come across as a candidate who is making false claims. So be very thorough about the points that you mention under these headings. Revise your resume once if you have to.

Further, carry all certificates in support of your claims to your interview, even if they are only certificates of participation. Carry any and all additional proofs that you may have. For e.g. if you write poems as a hobby, carry your personal diary or notebook with some of your poems. If sketching or painting is your hobby, you may carry some of your sketches or paintings with you. If you do not have certificates for some area, do not worry too much about it. You can always carry along any additional proof of your interest. Similarly, if you are genuinely interested in some area, then your answers to questions related to those areas will always reveal that interest. So do not worry too much if you lack certificates for some of your activities.

### **About the Institute**

Last but definitely not the least. Questions related to this can often be the dealmaker or breaker. Between two equally good candidates, the one who is more interested in joining a particular institute will definitely get preference over the one with only passing interest. So do prepare to justify your interest in the program and institute that you have applied for.

Read up about the institute before you go for its interview. Also read up about the program that you have applied for. See how all these fit into your overall career objectives. How will getting an MBA from this institute help you achieve your career objectives? How will this program help you realize your career goals? You should be

able to give well thought out answers to these questions. So prepare well on these fundamentals and you will be sure to clear your interview with flying colours.

### Tips for the Interview

Now that you know which areas you need to prepare on, let us also look at some general tips for interviews.

#### 1. Entering the room

- Prior to entering the interview room, adjust your attire so that it falls well.
- Take permission before entering the room by saying, 'May I come in Sir/Madam?'
- If the door was closed before you entered, make sure you shut the door behind you softly.
- Face the panel and greet them confidently.
- If the members of the interview board want to shake hands, then offer a firm grip, maintaining eye contact, and smile gently.
- Seek permission to sit down. If the interviewers are standing, wait for them to sit down before you sit.
- An alert interviewee would diffuse the tense situation with light-hearted humor and immediately set a rapport with the interviewers. (But don't tell them a joke!).

#### 2. Lead the interview

A good interviewee would be quick to settle and begin to lead the interviewers. Tell me about yourself, this is a typical question that is very often asked at the beginning of an interview. Do ensure that in your answer you mention salient points that attract the interviewer's attention. This will ensure that you will possibly get questions related to those points. Thus, your preparation will bear fruit and you will have a far better chance to show yourself in a good light. Similarly, if you do not know the answer to a question, take the opportunity to also tell the panel about some other area that you are interested in. This will again give the panel the opportunity to move to an area that you are more comfortable with. For e.g. if you mention that cricket is your favourite sport, you may be asked about Don Bradman's batting figures. If you do not know the answer to this, you can always mention that Tendulkar is your favourite cricketer (or any other depending on your choice). This will give the panel the chance to ask you about Tendulkar's figures instead and will give you an additional opportunity to show your knowledge of the game.

#### 3. Enthusiasm

The interviewer normally pays more attention if you display enthusiasm in whatever you say. This enthusiasm comes across in the energetic way you put forward your ideas. You should maintain a cheerful disposition throughout the interview as a pleasant countenance holds the interviewers' interest.

#### 4. Be brief

Brevity is the hallmark of a good communicator. It is recommended that you volunteer information, but this must be done in a lucid and to-the-point manner. An over-talkative or verbose person is instantly disliked and misjudged.

## **5. Don't bluff**

If you do not know the answer to a question, it is better to acknowledge it, rather than trying to bluff your way through it. The interviewer will respect your honesty. In our experience, the interviewers immediately take a stance of grilling a candidate if they suspect him or her of lying.

## **6. Humour**

A little humour or wit thrown in the discussion occasionally enables the interviewer to look at the pleasant side of your personality. If it does not come naturally do not contrive it. Injecting humour in a situation doesn't mean that you should keep telling jokes. It means to make a passing comment that, perhaps, makes the interviewer smile.

## **7. Interviewer fatigue**

Most of the interviews are conducted throughout the day which generally exhausts the interviewers. A little humor as a starter can ease their fatigued minds and arouse their waning interest. However, if you do not have the knack of humor, it is better not to get into it.

## **8. Be well-mannered**

The way you conduct yourself reflects your upbringing and your culture. It is good to project an air of humility. Over confidence is often misinterpreted by interviewers as arrogance and / or thoughtlessness. Polite statements are recommended.

## **9. Avoid slangs**

During an interview, slangs will probably not be understood, and certainly not appreciated. Your communication needs to be as formal and explicit as possible.

## **10. Be poised**

Your posture during the interview is very important as it says a lot about your personality. Mannerisms such as playing with your tie, theatrical gesticulations, shaking legs or sitting with arms slung over back of adjoining chair must be avoided. It is vital to be conscious of your posture and gesticulations as you are being noticed and judged all through the interview.

## **11. Ask questions if necessary**

Many interviewees believe that an interview is a one-way street, the hapless 'victim' struggling to be selected and the 'all powerful' being in whose hands lies the destiny of the interviewee. It is a myth. You may ask a question/clarify information if necessary. It is quite in order and much appreciated by interviewers.

## **12. Eye contact**

You must maintain eye contact with the panel, all through the interview. This shows your self-confidence and honesty. Many interviewees, while answering, tend to look away. This conveys that you are concealing your own anxiety, fear and lack of confidence. Maintaining an eye contact is a difficult process. As the circumstances in an interview are different, the value of eye contact is tremendous in making a positive impact.

#### **13. Listen carefully**

It is imperative for you to listen carefully to the questions being asked. If a question is not clear you should seek clarification before making any statement. Seeking clarification is far better than giving an irrelevant answer. It is very annoying for interviewers when an interviewee misinterprets the questions, and answers by saying something which is irrelevant.

#### **14. Be yourself**

Many interviewees adopt a stance which is not their natural self. It is annoying for interviewers when a candidate launches into an accent which he or she cannot sustain consistently through the interview or adopt mannerisms that are inconsistent with his/her personality. Interviewers appreciate a genuine person rather than somebody who tries to pretend.

#### **15. Guard against:**

A candidate must guard against the following:

- Poor physical projection
- Lack of courtesy and manners
- Being over aggressive
- Dishonesty
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Lack of eye contact
- Lack of knowledge
- Being non-punctual
- Extreme opinions
- Superficial answers
- Bluffing
- Casual approach

#### **16. Interviewers are human too!! Hence, know the interviewer**

Most of you would be interested in knowing what interviewers are like. All interviewers are different as they have different personalities with different values, cultural backgrounds and thought processes. Not all interviewers are trained in the skill of

interviewing; hence, their styles vary largely. The major challenge that all interviewers face is that of selecting the right person.

Some of the qualities of the interviewers are given below:

1. A good interviewer strives for continuous growth and competence in the art of interviewing. He approaches the task through inquiry, seeking new and better ways to interview.
2. In the course of an interview, the interviewer learns from the candidates' new ideas and concepts, and constantly evaluates them.
3. The interviewer too prepares for the interview. He updates himself/herself with the latest knowledge on the discipline for which the interview is taking place. He/she does not want to look like a fool in front of the candidate and knows what questions he or she should ask.
4. The interviewer is extremely cautious about making judgements on the qualities of a candidate that are objective.
5. The interviewer is conscious of being a representative of the institute. He/she would like to project a positive image of the organization.
6. The interviewer is very comfortable about telling a candidate that why he/she is rejected. He takes into account the feelings of hurt and rejection of the unsuccessful candidate.

7. The interviewer believes that knowledge is more important for success than academic qualification.

8. The interviewer wants the interviewee to volunteer information, but wishes to retain the right to stop the interviewee from carrying on talking.

Most candidates are unaware of the above characteristics. Knowledge of these will give you the confidence that the interviewer you are dealing with is also a human being and not an object of awe and fear.

There are many interviewers who have a dominant stance in the process of interviews. These may be classified as:

### **1. The Braggart**

He loves talking about his own achievements and experiences. He has an overwhelming need to prove his self-worth.

**Suggested approach:** An interviewee is, thus, his 'captive audience'. He learns very little about the interviewee. It is best to listen to him but use your own right to offer information about yourself.

### **2. The Persecutor**

He regards the interviewee as a whipping board. He is persecuted by others and, in turn, persecutes the hapless candidate by asking questions which he knows cannot be answered. He prides himself in persecuting the interviewee.

**Suggested approach:** In such a case, humility is the best stance to take but politely assert yourself in telling him what you know.

### 3. The Dreamer

He is the one who will let the interviewee do all the talking. He punctuates the proceeding with brief questions. He sometimes appears distracted as though he is thinking of something else. He may not maintain eye contact. Probably, he has trained his mind to simultaneously ponder upon your communication as well as think of something else. More often, he is fully concentrating on what is being said by the interviewee.

**Suggested approach:** You must respond to this type of interviewer by saying as much as you can. You will have to 'sell' yourself in order to make an impression on him.

### 4. The Professor

He has the patronizing air of one who is a know-all. He gives those supercilious smiles that have a discomforting effect on the interviewee. His questions will be perfect. He would, however, like to end the interview by giving advice and counsel.

**Suggested approach:** Show genuine interest in his advice and acknowledge it.

### 5. The Programmer

He approaches the interview as though it was a programme with a defined schedule. He has decided precisely what he wants to know and would have, more often than not, written down his questions. It is best to answer the questions in a to the point and lucid manner.

**Suggested approach:** He would like answers given in a logical form; hence, it is best to give point-wise answers.

### 6. The Friend

He has a very open and casual style. He may get very personal and crack a number of jokes. In spite of the light-hearted atmosphere he or she very often gets to know a lot about you.

**Suggested approach:** Respond to his friendliness with poise and balance; smile and acknowledge his humour.

### 7. The Harassed

He is the person who is not organized. He will be often distracted by phone calls, giving instructions or reading a memo. He asks you questions but his mind is elsewhere.

**Suggested approach:** You have to capture his attention, so that he focuses on you and your answers.

Managing yourself effectively under all circumstances is critical to your success. Know that you yourself are as much an architect of a good interview as the panel. You will

enjoy the experience and perform better with this perspective.

### Typical Questions

In order to complete our understanding and preparation for interviews let us now look at some typical questions which sometimes unsettle candidates.

#### **Tell me about yourself.**

This is a very general question in which you can say almost anything about yourself. Prepare well for this question so that you can tell about those things which are important such as your basic details, personality traits, achievements, aspirations, motivations and ambitions. Remember that a two-sentence answer will only convey how little there is to know about you. You should be able to say a lot without being verbose or self-opinionated. The answer should be such that it gives a definite direction to the interview.

#### **What are your strengths and weaknesses?**

This is a question that has stumped many an interviewee. It is asked to ascertain how much you know about yourself, since a person who knows oneself well is likely to be more effective in life. Many interviewees find it difficult to express their strengths and weaknesses. Interviewees try to give a weakness that will not jeopardize their chances in the interview. Interviewers view statements of weaknesses as being very disarming. So prepare well in advance as to what your strengths and weaknesses are and how you intend to improve on your weaknesses.

#### **Tell us about your family background.**

This question is asked by interviewers in order to determine the social, cultural, religious and economic milieu you have come from. It gives the interviewer a clue about your attitude and values. The best approach for such a question is to bring out not only the facts of parentage and background but also some of the good principles they have taught you. Mention family values. Most interviewees simply mention their father's name and occupation. They may sometimes tell about their brothers and sisters with special emphasis of those who may have done well in life.

#### **Why did you choose your particular field of specialization?**

This question is asked to get to know your attitude and personal qualities and to understand if you have a flair for the subject or not. It is advisable at this point to link your personality traits with the requirement of the specialization. For example, you may say, "I choose to be in marketing/sales job because I am an extrovert and love travelling. I like meeting people and this field of specialization gives me the opportunity to do so."

#### **Why do you consider yourself suitable for a seat?**

The panel is concerned whether you have the requisite knowledge, skills and attitude that they are looking for in the prospective candidate. They are also concerned with your personal profile, which includes your psychological and emotional make up, upbringing, values and motivation.

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The panel is concerned whether you have the requisite knowledge, skills and attitude that they are looking for in the prospective candidate. They are also concerned with your personal profile, which includes your psychological and emotional make up, upbringing, values and motivation.

These are some questions which candidates often find rather challenging. But with better understanding and thorough preparation your interview should be a cakewalk for you.

## Group Discussion Fundamentals

Group Discussions are among the most popular tools used for evaluating candidates in the second stage of the selection process for most B-schools. The Personal Interview is the only tool more popular with B-schools than GDs. Thus, it is essential that we understand the GD process, its requirements and expectations from participants and so, are well-prepared to take on these.

### What is a GD?

In a typical GD, a group of participants will be given a topic and asked to discuss it for about 10 to 30 minutes. The number of participants will vary from 8 to 15. Many variations to this common theme are possible. Sometimes the topic given to you will be a caselet that you will be asked to analyze and then give solutions for. Sometimes each participant will be asked to play a particular role in the discussion. The group may be asked to choose their own topic and discuss it. The group may be asked to choose a leader as well. While normally you will not be asked to necessarily come to a conclusion, in some cases the group may be told at the very beginning to come to a conclusion.

At the end of the group discussion, the panel may sometimes call upon each participant one by one in a random order and ask them to summarize the discussion or present their own views on the topic in about 1 minute. Sometimes the panel may ask you write about the topic at the end of the discussion while at times, participants are asked to write about the topic at the very beginning and the discussion proceeds only after this.

### Why are GDs so popular?

Irrespective of the particular variation used by a panel, the essential characteristic of a GD remains constant - an unmoderated discussion by a group of participants. This process allows the panelists to quickly judge a group of participants on their interpersonal skills and their way of thinking. Some topics also reveal the level of awareness that a candidate has about the outside world. Topics related to current affairs are able to reveal this attribute quite clearly. While the written tests only reveal the aptitude of a candidate, a GD focuses the spotlight on the candidate's interpersonal skills. Even an interview only reveals what a candidate is all by himself; it does not reveal much about the candidate's ability to work in a team. Thus, a GD tests candidates on areas not covered by other processes.

As we saw above, panelists will be looking to understand your way of thinking and get a measure of your interpersonal skills through your participation in a GD. The content that you bring to a GD reveals your way of thinking while the way you present your content reveals your interpersonal skills. The key to good performance in a GD is to seek a balance between the two. Introducing a lot of good content but being ham handed with others and chopping their points is a sure way to indicate a lack of interpersonal skills. Similarly, not speaking at all and only listening to others will indicate that the candidate is possibly short of ideas on the topic and may even be completely clueless about the topic. Thus, do not focus on only one of these at the expense of the other. Instead, seek the perfect balance between the two. Present your points to the group and at the same time give others too the chance to share their points. Listen attentively when others are speaking; your listening skills will be a good

asset to you in a GD. If you listen well to others, they will also respond to that and listen to you in turn when you speak.

### Critical Success Factors in a GD

Now that we have understood what a panel seeks to measure through a GD, it should be very easy to understand the critical success factors in a GD.

#### Cognitive Skills

The most important aspect of your contribution to a GD is the quality of the content that you introduce. This itself will depend on two factors, your knowledge and understanding of the topic and your logical reasoning. If you are well read and already have some idea about the topic assigned to you then naturally you will find it easier to present good points in the ensuing discussion on that topic. At the same time, you will need to be able to think logically in order to decide which parameters are relevant to the topic and then to properly arrange your thoughts before you present them to the group. This is especially relevant when participating

in a GD where the topic assigned is abstract in nature. Consider, for e.g., a topic like "Red is black". What should be the proper parameters for discussing a topic like this.

In general, when you are assigned any topic, you may use some of the following points to generate relevant content:

- 1) Your nation and its people

- 2) The economy of the country
- 3) The need for economic growth
- 4) The degree of poverty in the country
- 5) Social issues in the country such as casteism, women's upliftment, minority issues
- 6) Need for justice
- 7) Morality
- 8) Environmental concerns
- 9) Youth issues
- 10) Fundamental rights and the constitution of the country

Similarly, for topics on an international scale, the same points can be used but on a global scale rather than purely on a national scale. If we look at the topic "Red is black" for e.g., red can be taken as a symbol of Maoists and communists. Thus, you can discuss their claims of representing the poor and also the violence and terrorism that some of them have unleashed. Similarly, if you have a topic like "Should fashion shows be banned", you may discuss the freedoms granted by the constitution as well as the need for upholding morality in the country. If you are assigned a topic like "Should SEZs be banned", you can similarly talk about the imperative for economic growth in the country as well as farmer's and other landowner's rights.

Please note though that these points are only indicative and you may be able to generate more such points yourself.

### Personality and Communication Skills

These too are critical to success in a GD. Generating good content on a topic is one thing. You must also be able to present that content properly to the group. Clarity of thought and good content will ensure that your points make a positive impact in the GD. But it is your interpersonal skills that will ensure that you are well received by the group and that you are able to present your points to the group.

Qualities such as rapport-building, attitude, listening skills will be a tremendous asset when you participate in a GD. When someone else is speaking do maintain eye contact with them; it will indicate that you are listening to the speaker and he will be more likely to listen to you when you speak. Similarly, be very polite when you disagree with someone. Excessive rudeness will fetch a similar response from other participants and will make your task that much more difficult.

### Types of Group Discussions

Let us now look at the different variations that typically appear in Group Discussions.

#### Structured (or default) GD

This is the kind of GD that you will most commonly encounter in your selection process. In such GDs, a topic of discussion is assigned to a group and they are asked to discuss the topic for about 10 to 20 minutes. Typically, no other instruction is given.

There is no leader appointed for the group and the brief may or may not include anything but the topic for discussion.

#### Unstructured GD

In such GDs participants will not be given any clear instructions. The panel will observe how the discussion among the participants evolves and they may expect that the group will achieve some objective(s) during the course or by the end of the GD. Such objectives may encompass (but not be limited to) activities like choosing the topic for discussion, appointing a group leader or a chairman, etc.

#### Case Study

The pedagogy at many B-schools is two-pronged. On the one hand, there is theoretical learning and on the other hand, case studies and / or various games are used to teach (and to test a student's grasp of) concepts and their application. A few B-schools also use case studies in their second stage processes. This allows them to test the logical thinking and the problem solving ability of participating candidates. In such case studies, candidates are given a brief decision problem, typically in less than a page. Participants are judged on the way they analyze the problem, discuss it, and the way they search for solutions. Such case studies do not test candidates on their knowledge base; instead, the participants' way of thinking is tested. All candidates are given equal information about the case and then they are expected to use their problem solving skills to come up with solutions.

As we have seen, panelists in case studies are primarily interested in judging a candidate's logical thinking and problem solving skills. Thus, the ideal participant in a case study should quickly analyze the given information and seek to identify the real problem. After this, you should look at alternative solutions to that problem and then select the most appropriate alternative. Do note that it is critical that you are able to logically justify why the alternative recommended is the best in your opinion.

In any case study, the most critical skill required is to understand the difference between a 'cause' and a 'symptom'. Let us take a medical case to drive the point home. A doctor makes the following observations about a patient: Fever: 102° F; body ache; fluctuating temperatures during the course of a day; chills (and in the month of June !!); headache; no appetite, etc. Now, what is the problem? Simple. Isn't it? Is temperature or fever the problem? You, as a doctor, know that a medicine called PCM is an antipyretic (brings the fever down); another medicine called IBP treats body, and headaches. You have given that to the patient and sent him away.

Unfortunately, he returns after two days. And more critical too!! There has been some relief for a while after taking the medication, but not a permanent solution. What is the problem?

Further tests and more in-depth analysis reveal that these observations are, in fact, symptoms of a disease called 'typhoid'. Now the cause of the problem is the bacteria called 'Salmonella Typhi'. And these are mere manifestation of that problem. In other words, what is readily seen with little or superficial examination is often a symptom of the disease and not the disease itself.

Taking this analogy to a business situation, fall in sales or productivity at the plant is seldom a problem. After in depth analysis, lack of employee motivation or low customer-engagement, etc., may be identified as the underlying cause of the problem. They have to be addressed to achieve a long-term solution. Short-term solutions provide only symptomatic relief.

### **Consensus GD**

Generally in Group Discussions, the task given to participants is open-ended. Unless specified by the panel at the outset, the group is not expected to arrive at a consensus. On the other hand, in a few cases, the panel asks the candidates to come to a consensus.

For example: Your group is a high-power committee appointed by the Govt. of India. The stated purpose of the committee is to give recommendations to improve delivery of financial support given by the various wings of the government to people living in rural areas.

For such GDs, the correct approach may be similar to that for a case study. You need to identify the problem (disease diagnosis) first. This becomes the most crucial step to offering 'the right medicine' as it were. Once the problem identification is done, it is easy to formulate and recommend solutions.

### **Role Play**

Instead of 'natural GDs', in some cases, the group is given a specific situation and each participant is given a particular role to play. These can be quite complex since each

participant is on a different footing.

For example: A dream cruise is organised by Career Launcher for eminent personalities on a dream island of 'Cholukari'. The eminent personalities are Mother Teresa, Bill Clinton, King Akbar, Pele, Michael Jackson, Marilyn Monroe, Sachin Tendulkar, Saddam Hussein and Thomas Edison. Unfortunately, the ship 'Titanic' hits an iceberg and starts sinking. Only three people can be saved due to shortage of wooden planks and lack of time. Who should be saved, and in what sequence?

### Tips for Role Play

In such cases, you must completely step into the role and your reasoning should be consistent with the role that you have assumed. You could use the case study type framework for decision-making. The participation, in this specific case, needs to appreciate the gravity of the situation and generate appropriate reasoning to facilitate decision making for the group. Quite expectedly, such discussions tend to get chaotic.

### Tips for selection of topic for discussion and Chairman

#### Selecting a Topic

In such GDs, the evaluators give the group the task of selecting the topic and then discussing that topic for a specified length of time. Think of the most suitable approach to do it, whether by all participants suggesting topics and one selected randomly, or by participants suggesting different areas that could be discussed and rationale given for the final selection.

Some of the criteria that you could use for selection of a topic could be:

- a. The topic should be general in nature so that all group members are able to speak on it.
- b. It should be interesting so that it motivates everyone to be involved in the discussion.
- c. It should be topical, i.e. it should be current so that it is relevant to today's situation.
- d. It should be such that a discussion is possible, i.e. at least two points of view can emerge.

#### Selecting a Chairman

Selecting a chairperson is a discussion in itself. Sometimes, a group is given the task of selecting a chairperson before the discussion on the topic begins. Do not brush this aside as an unimportant formality since you are in a hurry to get on with the actual topic. Selecting a chairperson in a group is as important as discussing the topic. The evaluators give certain weight to the process used to select the chairperson since that also involves intra group dynamics. A group in a hurry to select the chairperson often ends up making a poor decision. Avoid random voting and arbitrary methods such as choosing the first member who puts forth his name. There should be some logic in your selection approach.

Some useful guidelines for selecting a Chairman are:

- a. The group should first discuss and understand the role of the chairperson.

- b. The qualities the chairperson should possess must be highlighted.
- c. Participants interested in becoming the chairperson can then introduce themselves, and try to convince the others that they possess these qualities.
- d. The group can then select the most suitable candidate.
- e. You may feel that there will never be enough time for this, and that it will interfere with time available to discuss the topic. However, the process itself gives the evaluators enough information about each participant.

Do note that a chairperson is a leader and not just a gatekeeper. Wanting to be the chairperson is a high risk high-return strategy. The chairperson will be in the spotlight, but handling the chairperson's role effectively isn't easy. Not volunteering for this position need not reflect poorly on you. Do what you feel comfortable with because volunteering for a role with which you are uncomfortable could be disastrous.

The role of a chairperson is to:

- Initiate the discussion, i.e. define the topic and lay down the structure.
- Ensure that the discussion is proceeding in the right direction.
- Contribute by introducing new points or bringing up a new relevant aspect so as to add value to the discussion.

- Encourage group participation, and allow free exchange of thoughts and ideas, provided they are relevant.
- Maintain decorum during the discussion.
- Summarize and conclude if possible, after attempting to reach a consensus.

Avoid falling into the trap of a chairperson being just a gatekeeper telling other participants when to speak and when not to. Once a chairperson has been selected, it would be advisable for the other participants to respect that position and let him/her start and anchor the discussion.

#### **Other issues in GDs:**

##### **1. Be Natural**

The best mantra is - "be your natural self". Do not manufacture artificial responses. See a GD as just an extension of any other situation you encounter in normal routine.

##### **2. Must Speak**

The first principle in a Group Discussion is that you must speak. Before you start speaking, think through the major issues in the topic. Jot down points on the paper or mentally work out a framework for analysis. Start speaking only when you have understood and analysed the topic. If another participant has started the discussion even before you have read and understood the topic, you could try to ask the person to

wait while you finish analysing the topic. It may be better to continue with your analysis while listening to what is being said, and to speak only when you are ready.

If you do not understand the topic, ask the group what the topic means and accept your ignorance, or else wait, maybe the meaning will become clear after a few minutes of the discussion. Avoid speaking in turn as it leads to an unnatural discussion. A Group Discussion involves a free flowing exchange of ideas among the participants. Any suggestion of order such as speaking in turn is not acceptable. Speaking in turn leads to an unnatural and disjointed discussion. Further, such a GD becomes an awkward one and invariably has lots of lapses of silence since participants have nothing to say when their turn comes. Setting a strategy or order in a Group Discussion doesn't work - it only leads to chaos.

### 3. Opening and Closing

Opening a discussion is a high-risk high return strategy. The opening speaker is the person who is likely to get the maximum uninterrupted time since most of the other participants would be still trying to understand the basic issues of the topic. If in the opening speaker makes rational observations, he will get the credit as he opened the discussion and took the group in the right direction.

On the other hand, if he goes in the wrong direction, he may be marked as a person who speaks without thinking, just for the sake of speaking. He may also be marked as someone who leads the group in the wrong direction and does not make a positive contribution to the group. Thus, you should speak first only if you have enough sensible things to say. Otherwise keep silent and let someone else start.

Try and summarize the discussion at the end. In the summary do not merely restate your point of view; but also accommodate dissenting viewpoints. Mention if the group did not reach a consensus, but remember not to force a consensus unless asked by the evaluators. Forcing a consensus will backfire, and may end up working against you. It could project you as a pushy person who is not interested in genuinely analysing the issue but one who is only desperately trying to reach a conclusion even if it is unsatisfactory.

### 4. Entry Strategies

Since you have to ensure that you speak in a GD, it is imperative that you identify the way to enter the discussion. It becomes difficult to get a chance to speak when a number of people are involved and such a situation is highly likely to prevail during the actual Group Discussion.

A few guidelines will show you how you could interject in a loud Group Discussion:

- a. Enter the troughs - Every Group Discussion has its highs and lows. Wait for the lows, and time your interjection then. However, it has been observed in some Group Discussions that if one waits for the lows he/ she would never get to speak. Group Discussions like that are really loud, where even the lows are very high. So you have to enter at a low that is relative to the atmosphere of a particular GD.
- b. Enter after a person has made his point - the success of our interjection depends not only on our assertiveness but also on the receptiveness of others. If you interject when someone else has just begun speaking, it is unlikely that he will let you have your way

and vice versa. Don't wait too long or you may lose the opportunity. Remember that you have only a few minutes at hand.

c. Enter with a supportive statement - a useful way of starting your interjection is by supporting a point that has just been made. People will let you speak if they think you agree with them. Try to begin by saying something positive about the other person's opinion.

d. Enter by increasing volume - The most natural way of entering when you find that others are not listening is to raise your voice. This may not be the smartest way of interjecting, but it could work sometimes. Identify silent members. Invite them if time permits and try to make an impact on them. You must be as loud as the situation demands. To be effective, however, you will have to combine this tool with some of the others we have mentioned, as it is unlikely to succeed on its own.

#### **5. Ways to make a meaningful impact:**

a. Generate supportive data: Use facts, examples and illustrations in the Group Discussion to add value. You should be very sure of the validity of any statistic you quote. Since, if you mention a wrong figure, someone else in the group could point out the mistake and it would reflect poorly on you. A fact or a statistic can only support a point you are making. So do not quote a fact and let it hang in the air. Follow it up with some sort of inference or conclusion that can be drawn from it.

b. Be an active listener: Carefully listen to others' contributions in order to avoid pitfalls. It is very important to listen at every stage of the discussion, as it will benefit

you in the following ways:

- Prevent you from repeating something already discussed.
- Give you new areas to think about since a participant may have introduced an excellent point, which you had not thought of.
- Help you take the discussion forward from where another participant has left.
- Help you understand a topic of which you were ignorant before others explained it.

c. Be assertive, not aggressive: Truth is that successful people are assertive. They are not aggressive. An assertive person is someone who puts forward his point politely, firmly, objectively and persuasively. He does not offend others by his style. An aggressive person on the other hand tries to dominate others. He raises his voice, does not listen, does not seek to understand other people's points of view. Hence, ensure that you do not become aggressive. Do not get emotionally involved in the arguments. Do not take it as a personal affront if others disagree with you.

d. Make friends, not foes: Make friends to ensure that your arguments get a positive response from the group. Building friends means getting people on your side and ensuring that they are receptive to your arguments. Use the time you have before the process by making friends with others. Establish eye contact with all the members of the group when you speak. This will involve others in what you are saying and will give you an idea that who all in the group are receptive to your arguments. Direct more of

your arguments to the people who are in agreement with you. You will find that they will reciprocate when their turn comes.

e. Speak clearly, speak sense, and also let others speak.

Ensure that:

- Your voice is audible and clear and that you are speaking at the correct pace - neither too fast nor too slow.
- Your contribution is relevant and made at the appropriate time.
- You listen to others, let them speak and are not too aggressive. However, this does not mean that you should only let others speak. You must let them speak and also speak yourself.

f. Quality of content: The quality of what you have said and the impact that it has had on the group is what counts. Influence the group by providing it direction, by highlighting crucial issues and putting forth persuasive and cogent arguments. There is no formula to calculate the right duration of participation in a Group Discussion. In a fifteen-minute Group Discussion in which there are twelve participants, if you are able to speak for two minutes spread across four of five occasions it should be enough.

g. Identify the ways to add value to a Group Discussion. Following guidelines may be helpful:

- Laying out the structure which facilitates discussion.

- Your analysis which throws light on a particular issue.
- Introducing new points, statistics or other information on the topic.
- Giving examples to illustrate certain aspects clearly.
- Attempting to make the discussion meaningful, so that you carry the discussion forward.
- Ensuring that the contribution you make adds substance and content.
- Ensuring that you are not going off at a tangent to the discussion.
- Summarizing, if time permits or if you are asked to do so.

h. Share your reasoning first: Do not express your stand initially. Note down the major issues and remember not to jump to conclusions. Instead, arrive at a stand only after sufficiently analyzing the issue. Begin to speak only after examining all the issues. Remember, you are being evaluated on how you think and not on what you think.

i. Summarize: Summarize the Group Discussion briefly, highlighting just the main points discussed. Participants are often asked to write a summary to check whether:

- the candidate has good listening skills or not.
- he possesses the ability to filter through a mass of information and focus on the most important points of the discussion.

- the candidate states the arguments of other participants apart from his own in the summary.
- the candidate can write in a concise manner.

j. Body language: Do not be too conscious of your body language. Spend more time working on your participation in the discussion rather than on body language. Do not slouch in your chair, stretch your legs out, fidget or keep shaking your legs, play with your pen or any other object and do not point at others. Sit upright and alert and use normal gestures. Do not block your neighbours by bending too far forward in order to be heard.

k. Make eye contact with your group members while you speak. Look at everyone in the group when you speak; this does not mean that you should appear shifty-eyed and keep moving from person to person, but give the impression that you are addressing everyone. Avoid staring at just one person or looking down or up while speaking. Similarly, while listening to someone else, look directly at him and not on the ground or at the ceiling.

## 6. Some Don'ts

- a. You should be oblivious of the evaluators. Avoid making eye contact with the evaluators during the GD and do not address them. Seek any clarification, if needed, from the evaluators about the topic, right in the beginning.
- b. Avoid speaking in turn as it leads to an unnatural discussion.

- c. Do not take a vote on a topic.
- d. You must never take a vote on a topic. Decisions have to be arrived at, by discussion and consensus.

It has been observed that participants who have attempted to take votes on a topic have ended up looking foolish. Most of the time, other participants in the group will not even allow you to proceed with the process of conducting a vote on the subject.

## 7. Different roles that participants play in a GD

In a group discussion, the participants end up playing certain roles that may be akin to some roles that we are used to in our real lives. Each role carries certain strong connotations - both positive as well as negative. While benefits from positive connotations would accrue to you, too much of entrenchment in any single role with no mobility could prove negative. Let's briefly look at some of these roles:

### a. *The professor*

The professor plays the role of an intellectual in the group. He would be the one who generates new ideas and adds dimensions to the discussion. His strength is his knowledge and its application. His limitation is his preoccupation with the topic and lower involvement with the people in the group.

### b. *The salesman*

A salesman's strengths are his persuasiveness and reasoning skills. The opinion building of the group as a whole rests largely with him. He possesses strong people skills and builds good rapport with the group. His limitation could be low quality content. Original points raised by him maybe lower in which case the group might resist his candidature for the position of 'group leader'.

*c. The gatekeeper*

A gatekeeper's role is important to maintain order in the group. He is preoccupied with directing the group process such as controlling entry and exit of participants. His contribution is seen positively in a discussion on a controversial topic that generates heated participation. His content is generally low.

*d. The timekeeper*

A timekeeper's role is very important to meet time commitments made to the panel especially in consensus group discussions. His preoccupation is with the task vis-à-vis available time. He keeps reminding the group to progress and not get stuck with one issue. This is a desirable role for the group if it is played in conjunction with some other roles and not singularly.

*e. The butcher*

He is most welcome in a group that has one or two aggressive elements in it. He benefits the group by quelling the aggression of the aggressive members. However, it is

evident that the role he dons is because he perceives threat from those members and not necessarily because he feels the urge to benefit the group.

*f. The spectator or the passenger*

The spectator is involved in the proceedings though plays a limited role. His contribution is very limited and does not affect the outcome of the group task. The passenger, on the other hand, is purely incidental to the journey. His interest lies in reaching the destination.

*g. The Ideal Role*

Each role stated above (and some not mentioned) adds value to the GD in one way or the other. However, strong entrenchment in any single role throughout the GD could limit your performance. What is more important to do well is to show "Situational Leadership." You must work to achieve an ability to move across these roles as per the demand of the situation. Anyone seen to be performing more than three roles will positively make a strong impact on the panel. Thus, in a nutshell, mobility is the key.

## Sample Case Studies

Here is a sample analysis of a case study. You could use this as a template for case analysis

### La Shampoo

Introduced in 1975 and targeted for women between 15 and 30, LA Shampoo (conditioner) had a stylish image and immediately became popular. The product quickly advanced from a strong regional presence to a solid 4% share of the Indian market, a position held steadily for about 14 years. The basic ingredients and packaging of LA Shampoo had been modified several times over the years but the look remained essentially unchanged. And its slogan 'for the look and feel of France' had stayed the same since its launch. In 1992, the product showed a descent but the company didn't address the problem until a year ago when it named Rina as the brand manager.

At first, Rina called for a new packaging design. The advertisement agency headed by Alyque backed her up and developed a modest new-look campaign. This repackaging caused a lot of tension in the marketing set-up of the company.

Most of the people associated with LA Shampoo had been in the company for years and could not imagine anything other than a slight variation on the tall blue plastic bottles with the beige label and cursive lettering.

In fact, the re-packaging - a wider bottle, yellow label with sharper lettering, had no impact on sales since its introduction eight months ago. The numbers continued to decline. Rina wondered if many customers had noticed the change. She analyzed the competing brands, all newer than LA Shampoo, all starting to grab market share. They seemed to have no consistent recipe for success, at-least none that Rina could discern. Some claimed to be "green products", charged a premium and made out like bandits. One touted a "low price"! and sold huge quantities. LA Shampoo had always been a high quality product and 20% more expensive than its nearest competitor and its marketing strategy other than the packaging redesign had remained consistent over the years. LA Shampoo had always sold on image and the French mystique, although it was clear that the message was not working anymore.

Bleary eyed Rina left the office and slowly walked, deep in thought towards her car. What is the need of the day to reverse the trend of LA Shampoo sales?

## Analysis of "LA Shampoo" Case

### Situation Analysis

#### *Company/Brand*

- Passive marketing strategy
- Brand image stuck in the past.
- Declining sales, market share erosion
- Customers no longer identify with this brand or its image statement 'for the look & feel of France'

- Rapidly changing environment
- Greater exposure to global happenings through media/communication explosion.
- Exposure to international brands & marketing.
- "Sales" focus shifted to "marketing" focus and customer orientation.

#### *Competition*

- More brands meaning lower market share for each brand (fragmented market share)

- Brands positioned distinctly for each segment - large & small giving rise to "niche" players e.g. "Green" products.

#### *Customer*

- Personal product brands are "life style" products in the sense that they make a statement on the task/personality of its user.
- Customer choice is varied e.g. shampoo with or without conditioner, with vitamin, for dry/oily hair etc.
- Price is important but not the only criterion.

**Problem Definition:** Marketing out of step with changing customer tastes.  
(Symptoms: Declining sales and loss of market share)

#### **Objectives:**

- Retain market share in the short term (4%) and
- Improve market share and brand image in the long term (i.e. 6% in 5 years)

#### **Criteria for Evaluation of Alternatives**

1. Increase in sales (in short term)
2. Increase in market share

3. Brand image
4. Costs involved in implementing the alternatives (in order or priority)

### Generate Alternatives

- Alternative 1: Re-launch 'La Shampoo' as an umbrella brand with a number of variants to suit

individual customer's tastes (e.g. shampoo + Conditioner, for various types of hair etc.)

- Alternative 2: Refurbish the image of 'La Shampoo' through new name/new positioning. Use

a market survey to identify key propositions that appeal to end users.

### Evaluate Alternatives

#### Alternative 1:

- Involves launching various brand extensions. In a cluttered market, each extension could be expected to appeal to a certain segment.
- Sales are likely to increase with market share. Brand image will remain diffused because it will mean different things to different people. Costs involved are likely to be lower than for alternative 2.

#### Alternative 2 :

- Will have greatest impact on long term 'Brand image'.
- Will take longer to implement this alternative.
- Costs involved are higher.
- Sales and market share will increase in the medium term.
- But in the short term, sales are likely to decline.

### Recommendations:

#### Alternative 2:

Since the brand has undergone many improvements since 1985, it is recommended that a full blown effort is launched to revamp its image (half-hearted efforts may not reap designed benefits).

It is assumed that the company has the necessary fund to sustain a campaign over (say) 12 months, even if there are no significant improvements in Sales/Market share or image.

### Short Term Action Plan

- Market survey
- New positioning based on market survey

- Will have greatest impact on long term 'Brand image'.
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**Recommendations:****Alternative 2:**

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**Short Term Action Plan**

- Market survey
- New positioning based on market survey

- New product launch
- Advertisement campaign

**Long term action plan**

R & D to continuously improve the product quality and packaging.

Here are a couple of Sample cases. Please write down the analysis to check your assimilation of the approach to a case analysis.

## A few more case studies for practice

### Case Study - 1

Whirlpool is a major manufacturer of washing machines in the United States of America. It has subsidiaries and sub-contractors who make some of the parts for the final product. One of these companies, Whirlpool Corporation, has a plant located in Michigan State that turns metal rods into washing machine parts.

The plant is not a high-tech state-of-the-art facility, but only a small, old fashioned tooling and planting shop. The company employs 265 workers. Because of low productivity, the company was even considering closing the plant. The company also did not want to invest additional capital to upgrade the technology. It did, however, revamp the manufacturing process and held training workshops for the workers to improve the quality of product. However, the productivity per man-hour remained low, the rate of defective parts in the production remained high and the employee morale remained generally low.

Then the company decided to introduce a profit-sharing plan, whereby the workers would be encouraged to improve upon productivity as well as the quality of the product and they would share in the extra costs saved or extra profits earned.

Even though the workers were skeptical when the programme was initiated, they negotiated a gains sharing formula that was suitable to both the management and the workers. It was agreed that there would be no increase in base pay, but the worker's

share in the additional bonuses would be proportional to the savings achieved. Since the inception of the programme, the productivity has improved 19% to 110.6 units per worker as against 92.8 units per worker prior to this programme. Similarly, the number of defective parts has decreased from as high as 837 per million down to only 10 per million. During this time, the total worker pay increased by around 12 per cent.

The workers have become so involved that they themselves keep looking for ways to cut costs. For example, one group of workers has been involved in finding ways to recycle the oil used to cool and lubricate machines. If these efforts are successful, the workers feel that they can save an additional \$41,000 a year — that can be shared amongst them.

Even though the programme has been successful, some workers are unhappy that the gains are shared by all workers equally and this inhibits individual motivation. They feel that some unproductive workers are being benefited because of some highly productive workers and this arrangement does not seem equitable to them.

1. Do you think gains-sharing programmes serve as motivators for workers as individuals?
2. Should the management continue with the current manufacturing facilities or should it invest capital in upgrading the technology of production?
3. What can the management do about the unproductive workers who are getting the same benefit as the productive workers?

### Case Study - 2

Mahadev Srinivas is the environmental compliance manager for a small leather tannery in Kolkata. He is currently faced with the dilemma whether or not to spend money on new technology that will reduce the level of a particular toxin in the waste water that flows out of the back of the factory into the Hoogli River.

The factory's emission levels are already within legal limits. However, Srinivas knows that environmental regulations for this particular toxin are lagging behind scientific evidence. In fact, a scientist from the Jawaharlal Nehru University had been quoted in 'The Statesman' recently, saying that if emission levels stayed at this level, the fish in the Hoogli River in the area might soon have to be declared unsafe for human consumption.

Further, if companies in the region don't engage in some self-regulation on this issue, there is reason to fear that the government — backed by public opinion — may force companies to begin using the new technology, and may also begin requiring monthly emission level reports (which would be both expensive and time consuming).

But the company's environmental compliance budget is tight. Asking for this new technology to be installed would put Mahadev's department over-budget, and could jeopardize the company's ability to show a profit this year.

1. Should Mahadev push for an immediate installation of the technology?

Why?

2. What could be the motive of the company to delay such installation?

3. Why might the companies in this region prefer for the government to impose new regulations?

### Case Study - 3

Raj Patel has a well-known agency known as the 'Head Hunters,' that finds suitable executives to fill high level positions with major companies. He had a dilemma that kept his mind occupied while he was driving one day to visit one of his clients in the outskirts of Delhi.

His client, Usha Shah, a middle aged lady had been an executive in a multinational company dealing in telecommunications. During restructuring of the company, she was laid off. Although exhibiting tremendous managerial and executive capabilities, she was daunted by the whole business of starting all over again. She was not married, and was taking care of her elderly parents; that meant that she could not look for a job outside of Delhi. This constraint made it more challenging for her to find a suitable job.

It has been nearly two months since she has been out of the job and she is under considerable stress. She approached Raj Patel who had many contacts to help her find a job consistent with her background and experience. On the way to visit Usha, Raj thought of a conversation he had the previous day with another of his client,

Prem Singh. Mr. Singh had left a company with a good pay package and was working with Raj Patel to find another job. As it happened, Mr. Singh located two or three opportunities, one of which he was not really interested in pursuing. He had found this job through a friend who came to know that this company, Batra International, was looking for a new executive to fill in a position vacated by someone who had retired. Mr. Singh discussed this position with Mr. Patel but also told him that he had an equally good offer from an export company in Ludhiana, where his extended family lived and he wanted to go there.

Mr. Patel felt that this job that Mr. Singh was not interested in, would be most suitable for Usha. However, a conflict raged in his mind. He felt that if someone has come to him with a promising lead that person owned the information and it should be treated confidentially. However, Mr. Singh had already turned the position down and hence it was available to anybody else. He wondered if he should share this information with Usha or should just let it go and hope that she will find out about this position on her own through.

The closer Raj came to Usha's house, the more agonizing the decision became. It was not clear to him if sharing this information with Usha would be a breach of confidentiality or helping Usha at this critical stage in her life would fit into high moral grounds. After all Mr. Singh had made it clear to him that he did not want that job.

He said to himself, 'I do not know what to do!'

What do you think about this internal conflict going within Raj Patel? What would you advise him? Give your reasons.

#### Case Study - 4

It was Herodotus who originally decided not only that 'custom is king', but also that custom should be king, respected over other considerations. Today, further anthropological research has uncovered a few more constants. We can draw up a sort of 'customary guide to living', to trump things like the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

After all, ethics is bound up with the network of rights and duties each member of the Community owes to each other. What better way, then, than to distil from the long history of human society a few basic ethical tenets - and to start from these in our search for the good life?

The customary guide to human rights:

1. We assert the fundamental right to torture and kill other people in all sorts of ingenious and cruel ways.
2. We assert the inalienable right to own slaves and declare now that some people are fit only to be slaves.
3. We assert the right to take away the little that is available with the poor and the wretched and to fill the coffers of the rich.

4. And demand the right to punish all those who go against the commonly accepted beliefs and practices.

Of course, as declarations go, it's not very long yet - but it's certainly a step in the right direction. Or is it a step backwards?

### Case Study - 5

Surjit Singh's family has a large chicken farm in the outskirts of Chandigarh. The family has been in business for two generations and employs about sixty persons. The business has been very successful over the years and has expanded to twice its size in the last five years. Surjit's father has been running the business. He is a strict disciplinarian who controls the workers with an iron hand. Even though he is quite considerate about the workers' welfare, he is very strict about punctuality and productivity.

Surjit is an only son who is academically very bright. After completing his bachelor's degree in commerce from Punjab University, Chandigarh, he gets selected for management studies at one of the premier institutes in the country in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, about 700 kilometers from Chandigarh. He completes the degree in two years and gets two very lucrative job offers from multinational companies. Before accepting any of these jobs, he decides to consult his father.

His father gets very upset to know that Surjit is thinking of taking up a job elsewhere, in place of joining the highly profitable family business. He expresses his concern to his son and tells him clearly that since he is the only son, it is important for him to

join the family business; otherwise the business could not continue because he is feeling jaded and is looking forward to his son joining him and sharing some of his burdens and responsibilities. Furthermore, there are other issues as well. His parents are coaxing him by saying that they are getting old and need the emotional support of their only son's presence.

What would be your advice to Surjit?

## Essay Writing Concepts

Ok, enough about speaking. Now lets look at writing for a change. Increasingly, various B-schools are introducing writing tasks in their second stage selection processes. This is a significant change since earlier second stage processes were almost exclusively based on speaking oriented tests only. So let us understand writing tasks and their purpose and look at some ways to excel at these.

### Writing Tasks Demystified

As part of your writing task, you will be given a topic or a paragraph and asked to write about it in about 300-400 words. In some cases, you may even be given a particular situation and asked to write down what you would do in that situation (Situation Analysis). Such writing tasks may be stand-alone (i.e. you only need to write on the given topic/ paragraph) or they may be just one step in a larger process (for e.g. in some institutes, you may be asked to write your views on a topic and then asked to participate in Group Discussion on the same topic). The topic of the writing task (essay) may be something related to current affairs, for e.g. a topic like "Rising Food Prices: Rich man's meat, Poor man's poison" or "21<sup>st</sup> century: Time for India to take her rightful place". Or, the topic may be related to a social issue such as "Casteism: boon or bane". The topic may also be philosophical in nature, such as "Leisure is the peak of civilization". Or the topic may require a historical perspective, for e.g. "Colonialism was a boon for enslaved countries".

Irrespective of the nature of the topic, your basic task remains the same. Read the given material and write on it in about 300 to 400 words. Typically, you will get about 20 minutes for the task. An ideal response should contain a logical analysis of the topic and the conclusion or solution/remedy suggested should be meaningful/justifiable and should follow from the analysis. A good way to structure your essay is to devote the first paragraph to the introduction, use the last paragraph for the conclusion, while the body of the essay should be used to explain the logic on which you have based your conclusion. While the topic of the essay or situation assigned to you will reflect in the content of your response, the structure of your essay may not change at all. Such a structure will also help you arrange your thoughts in the proper order and thus, may make your work easier. Please do note though that you may well derive your own structure as well. The structure presented here, while being very precise and useful, need not constrain you. Feel free to present your thoughts in different structures of your choice; also, you may feel that you can better tackle a particular topic with a different structure.

### Why Writing Task?

Why is it that some B-schools have started using writing tasks? How are these tasks different from, say, Group Discussions or Group Tasks?

A writing task allows the panel to test you very comprehensively on three parameters:

- a) Your knowledge of a particular event/issue or your ability to grasp things

- b) Your way of thinking
- c) Your ability to express yourself.

A Group Discussion or Group Task is ideal to judge your interpersonal skills. But, in the ensuing melee, it gets rather difficult to judge each candidate on their knowledge base and their ability to think logically. A typical Group Discussion or Group Task will have around 10 participants and may have anywhere between 10 to 20 minutes, which means that per candidate, there are hardly more than 1 to 2 mins available. In a Group Discussion, even these 1 to 2 mins will not be available to any candidate without interruption. A typical candidate in a Group Discussion will speak about 5 to 8 times for anywhere between 5 to 15 seconds on each occasion. Thus, it will be very difficult, if not outright impossible, for any participant in a Group discussion to display all of their knowledge and logical thinking. A writing task on the other hand, while not judging your interpersonal skills at all, gives you an open field to display your knowledge, your way of thinking and your skill at expressing yourself. Thus, more and more B-schools are opting for writing tasks instead of Group Discussions/Tasks. Every B-school conducts a personal interview anyway and your speaking skills and interpersonal skills do get tested there. Hence, a writing task is a good complement to interviews since your knowledge and way of thinking are tested in greater depth through writing tasks.

#### **Types of Writing Tasks:**

So now that you have understood the basic concept behind writing tasks and the proper way of tackling these, let us plunge deeper and study the various kinds of

topics that you may get here. This will help you get the maximum out of the opportunity presented to you.

**1. Descriptive Essay:** For e.g., topics like "Write about your best friend in 300 words", "Describe your home town", "Describe the Anna Hazare led movement for the Lokpal Bill", "Describe the impact of the sub-prime crisis". Such topics are purely descriptive in nature. You need to describe some thing or event or chain of events in such topics. Such topics (largely) do not test your way of thinking at all; rather they test your knowledge base and ability to express yourself.

**Example:** Write an essay describing the caste system.

**Introduction:** Introduce what a caste system is.

Supporting paragraphs:

1. Describe where it still exists
2. Describe the way it is depicted today, its backwardness, invisible threat to the social fabric, the sufferings and pain it causes, the political imbroglio, examples- the destruction of villages, subjugation of the lower caste by the upper caste across the country.
3. How we can merge the caste society into the class society - education, law and order, family planning and sanitation, privileges accorded to SC/ST.

Summary paragraph: A call for greater understanding to their social plight with a better late than never message.

**2. Compare and Contrast Essay:** For e.g., topics like "Economic Prosperity vs. Rural Empowerment: India's growth story is a dichotomy in terms", "Appease Pakistan vs. Support Afghanistan: India's foreign policy faces a hobson's choice today". Such topics require you to not merely describe one issue or topic but to actually describe two items - that too on relevant parameters (for comparison) – and then to suggest which is better or at least to say with strong justification that there is no dominant solution but rather that both options have significant problems associated with them. Therefore, while such topics do give you a bigger challenge than the descriptive ones, they also provide you with a lot more content than descriptive topics. Your biggest challenge with such topics may be to fit all you want to say into the word limit assigned. So, for such essay topics, cut out everything irrelevant and just focus on the relevant points.

**Example:** Write an essay to decide where emphasis should be - the defense budget or the poverty eradication budget.

**Introduction:** Introduce the two subjects (in the essay house) with a hint that a conflict is going to ensue.

Supporting paragraphs:

1. Compare the exigencies of both areas. First, poverty as half the country lives on less than a dollar a day. India cannot afford this large divide as the vote banks

promise the earth to the population. We cannot worry about star wars when there is hardly any food in the belly.

2. Defense needs are vital to our very existence, surrounded as we are with hostile neighbors and threats of impending wars. Daily border issues with Pakistan, Bangladesh, and China.

3. Strive to achieve preponderance towards one area while assuring that the other is not sacrificed - a negotiating paragraph. Show the win-win situation.

Summary paragraph: Make a political statement to conclude with.

**3. Sequence Essay:** For e.g., topics like "Describe the economic cycle", "Describe a journey that you recently made", "Describe the sub-prime crisis", etc. Such topics require you to describe a chain of events or series of interlinked developments. Fundamentally, such essays are a sub-genre of descriptive essays only. The difference is only that in this case you will typically be describing a chronological sequence of events rather than just one event or thing. A good essay for such topics will need to describe the events in the correct order starting with the earliest event.

**Example:** Write an essay describing the economic cycle

**Introduction:** Introduce the term economics' and its relevance to society.

Supporting paragraphs:

1. Describe an economic cycle elaborately with the role of households, firm, factor of production, circulation of money, employment and such other issues.

2. Discuss the booms and depressions with special mention of the bubble economy and the IT depression.

3. Discuss related aspects of the stock exchange - is it a symptom or a cause?

Summary paragraph: How we can control the economy - Obama measures and what the future looks like.

**4. Explanatory Essay:** For e.g., topics like "Why did the sub-prime crisis occur: Lessons for India", "Kashmir is a complex challenge", "Poverty Alleviation: A blueprint for the future", etc. Such topics require you to explain a situation/ issue or a problem and then give solutions. Again, you will typically not run out of content on such topics. Brevity therefore, is again vital to do justice to such topics. You will, ideally, need to introduce the topic, then describe the cause and effect linkages and then describe the appropriate/ ideal solution.

**Example:** Write an essay explaining why so many marriages are on the rocks?

**Introduction:** The situation today, maybe started off with a case of a divorce, explore the causes of erosion in commitment.

Supporting paragraphs:

1. The hectic lifestyle and compromising on values - maybe office affairs.

2. The shortsightedness of instant decisions and the futility of putting self before family. Discuss where things can be improved to make marriages last.

Summary paragraph: An example, perhaps, of how Hillary stood by Bill Clinton and how things change for the better.

**5. Evaluatory Essay:** For e.g., "Is the Jan Lokpal Bill the answer to India's corruption woes", "Will the draft National Telecom Policy be acceptable to all concerned", "Is the national defense doctrine in tune with the challenges that India faces", "Should Rahul Gandhi become the prime minister of India", etc. Such topics require you to evaluate some topic or issue, i.e. make judgments about certain policies, approaches, methods, processes or people. The most important thing, in answering such topics is to choose the parameters on which to base your analysis or judgment. If the parameters are chosen logically, then evaluating the topic becomes a cakewalk straightforward. A good response to such a topic should start with a basic introduction of the topic (possibly including at least one line that talks about the relevance of the issue). The subsequent paragraph may introduce all the relevant parameters for evaluating the topic and should explain why those parameters are relevant. Next, you can present your evaluation of the topic on each of the parameters. The concluding paragraph should essentially summarize the evaluation presented (the overall judgment). Another approach might be to describe one parameter, explain its relevance, evaluate the topic on that parameter and then repeat this with the next relevant parameter in the subsequent paragraph and so on. The concluding paragraph will again provide the overall summary and the final judgment or stand taken.

**Example:** Write an essay evaluating the importance of the examination pattern of grading.

**Introduction:** Give your judgment on whether the prevalent evaluation system is important and indispensable.

Supporting paragraphs:

Explain the ill effects of pure academics and the lack of an overall groomed personality with extra-curricular activities and selfless approach, probably the narrow choice of career goals

Explain the importance of case studies, field surveys and live projects.

Explain how a child has to sacrifice talents at the altar of grades. Remember that teachers are evaluating this so add that exams are important to inculcate competitive spirit and the learning pattern to assimilate class inputs.

Summary paragraph: Conclude with an overall judgment about how a comprehensive evaluation system can be established taking into account a child's excellence in fields both within and outside the classroom periphery.

**Mastering Essay Writing:** How to write like an ace?

Now that we have seen the various kinds of topics that appear in the various tests, let us also look at the process of writing essays. Knowledge of this process will give you

the appropriate framework with which you can tackle any essay topic and this will help you write good essays.

#### Steps to write an Essay:

1. Organize your thoughts. Don't just rush in and start writing the moment you finish reading a given topic. Instead take a few minutes to organize your thoughts. Decide what the topic requires you to focus on and therefore, what should be the main points that you cover in the essay. Decide how you wish to introduce the topic. For judgmental essays, decide which way you want to lean or if you wish to be neutral.

2. Brain-storm. Start adding more points, examples, facts, etc. in order to flesh out your essay and drive home your points. Add to the basic points that you thought of the moment you saw the topic. Your points should logically add up and build towards your conclusion.

3. Create a framework for your essay. Mentally, mark out the road map for your essay, beginning with the introduction, the main idea, the supporting ideas and finally ending with the conclusion. This will form the skeleton for your essay, so to speak.

4. Now, write down the essay itself. Only after you have finished planning out your essay and are satisfied with what it looks like, should you actually start writing down your essay.

5. Revisit, check, edit, submit. Ensure that your essay is free of errors, whether grammatical, typographical or logical.

#### **Introduction of an essay:**

First impression, they say, is the last impression. So ensure that the beginning of your essay is eye-catching. An interesting fact, an anecdote, a quotation or a dialogue or definition can be used to highlight your opening salvo. Ensure that you end the first paragraph with your main idea so that you can build on it in the body of your essay. This will also ensure that your first paragraph is properly linked to the rest of the essay and does not hang untidily.

#### **The Body:**

The body of your essay should build on the base that you have presented in your introductory paragraph. Thus, supporting ideas that add to your main idea and provide support for the conclusion should come in this section. When you set about organizing your thoughts and preparing the basic framework for your essay, you must have listed out some core points. In this section, you must elaborate on those points. Introduce a point and then expand on it. Each main point may take up a separate paragraph. Do ensure that each point is thoroughly explained and each paragraph complete in itself. A reader should not think that a particular point or paragraph is irrelevant to the topic or incomplete. While word limits will cause you to write in brief and will not let you expand any point too much, you also need to ensure that you do justice to each point that you mention.

Along with this, you also need to ensure that there is a good flow from one paragraph to another. Use transition words between paragraphs in order to ensure that each new paragraph is linked to the previous one. Such words used at the beginning and the end of your paragraphs will ensure that there is a good flow between the paragraphs and will enhance the readability of your essay.

#### **The Conclusion:**

As all good things come to an end, so must your essay. See to it that no point is left hanging anywhere in your essay. And all the paragraphs that you have used and all the points that you have presented add on to your conclusion. Thus, your conclusion may briefly summarize the main points of your essay. You may weigh the various points that you have presented in your essay and show which ones are stronger. You may recapitulate some of your main points and ideas in this paragraph. After this, you can end with your

personal opinion or judgment. You may also present an appropriate plan of action. The conclusion is the logical end of your essay and thus, it must be justified by the points that you have mentioned in your essay.

#### **Sample Essay**

Now that we have understood what a good essay comprises of, let us look at a sample essay to round off our learning. Please note that this sample essay is only presented in order to show proper organization of points in a ideas in a logical manner. You should always use your own points and ideas in an essay.

## 1. A dog is a man's best friend

"A dog is a man's best friend." That common saying may contain some truth, but dogs are not the only animal friend whose companionship people enjoy. For many people, a cat is their best friend. Despite what dog lovers may believe, cats make excellent house pets.

In the first place, people enjoy the companionship of cats. Many cats are affectionate. They will snuggle up and ask to be petted, or scratched under the chin. Who can resist a purring cat? If they're not feeling affectionate, cats are generally quite playful. They love to chase balls and feathers, or just about anything dangling from a string. They especially enjoy playing when their owners are participating in the game. Contrary to popular opinion, cats can be trained. Using rewards and punishments, just like with a dog, a cat can be trained to avoid unwanted behavior or perform tricks. Cats will even fetch!

In the second place, cats are civilized members of the household. Unlike dogs, cats do not bark or make other loud noises. Most cats don't even meow very often. They generally lead a quiet existence. Cats also don't often have "accidents." Mother cats train their kittens to use the litter box, and most cats will use it without fail from that time on. Even stray cats usually understand the concept when shown the box and will use it regularly. Cats do have claws, and owners must make provision for this. A tall scratching post in a favorite cat area of the house will often keep the cat content to leave the furniture alone. As a last resort, of course, cats can be declawed.

Lastly, one of the most attractive features of cats as house pets is their ease of care. Cats do not have to be walked. They get plenty of exercise in the house as they play, and they do their business in the litter box. Cleaning a litter box is a quick, painless procedure. Cats also take care of their own grooming. Bathing a cat is almost never necessary because under ordinary circumstances, cats clean themselves. Cats are more particular about personal cleanliness than people are. In addition, cats can be left home alone for a few hours without fear. Unlike some pets, most cats will not destroy the furnishings when left alone. They are content to go about their usual activities until their owners return.

Cats are low maintenance, civilized companions. People who have small living quarters or less time for pet care should appreciate these characteristics of cats. However, many people who have plenty of space and time still opt to have a cat because they love the cat personality. In many ways, cats are the ideal house pet.

## 2. Work smarter not just harder - IIM - Kozhikode

William Somerset Maugham once wrote a story in which he discussed the lives of two brothers. The elder brother was a proverbial hardworking person whereas the younger one was the polar opposite. However, at the end, the elder one was left with a steady but meager fortune. At the same time, the younger one, with one stroke of luck, was left with a vast fortune. Besides the apparent sarcasm inherent to any Maughamian world, the story does teach a lesson on the distinction between hard work and smart work. There are many reasons why one needs to maintain a healthy

balance between the two in order to achieve one's true potential in the modern world.

It's the era of maverick. Thinking out of the box is considered to be the norm of the day. Take the example of Flipkart. When nobody in India, not even the giant Amazon, thought of exploring the vast potential of e-commerce, two mavericks found a way to capture this vast market. It proves that there is always a way out for the one who dares to take risks.

In today's world the society is governed by constant technological innovation. The trend keeps changing at an alarming rate. Take the example of Microsoft. It remained enclosed in its cocoon and Android

captured the cell phone market. The proverbial turtle can't win this race. It's the age of the hare. Hence, one needs to adapt to the norm of the day.

Hard work will always remain in fashion. Smart work can be a propeller but not a substitute to hard work. If one keeps in mind this rule of nature, one will surely win the race of life.

### **3. Cultural policing is a necessary evil - IIM - Kozhikode**

We live in strange times. Charles Dickens called it "the best of the times...The worst of the times..." in his seminal novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. Humans have achieved phenomenal growth in the realm of technology. Globalization has blurred the geographical boundaries. As a consequence, moral codes of the developed nations

have invaded other countries. Many countries are in the midst of an existential dilemma. They are unable to adapt or redefine their cultural codes in the face of such rapid change. Cultural policing is a Frankenstein monster that has raised its head in the middle of this pandemonium.

Cultural policing is defined as an act of using violence and other such methods to protect or impose one's "cultural values". Advocates of cultural policing are partly justified. The Law is not adequate to ensure the protection of culture and values at all times. Hence, sometimes, people need to take steps to ensure that their culture is unharmed.

However, the biggest challenge is to define the word culture. Take the case of India. It's not a homogeneous nation but a combination of nation states. What is acceptable as a common cultural practice in North India may not be acceptable in South India. Many political and religious outfits have arrogated the duty of protecting the "Indian Culture". However, their behavior mostly resembles that of a bunch of ruffians working for a commonly misguided cause. The question remains. Can their acts be condoned?

Many incidents where young couples becoming targets of such miscreants have been reported. Once a Christian priest and his two young kids were burnt alive. All in the name of protecting one's religion. Such incidents can't be forgiven.

What every country needs is a clearly written Constitutional code. One needs an effective police force. The Law and order must be maintained at any cost. It must be

the duty of the Police to do the policing. No one can be allowed to take the law into one's hand. Cultural policing is an evil and evil can never be necessary.

#### **4. Any kind of violence is unacceptable - IIM L**

Gandhi once said that "An eye for an eye will turn the world blind." No other proverb can capture the need of the day in a better manner. We live in the epoch of intolerance. Humans wracking havoc on fellow humans has become shockingly commonplace. There is an urgent need to define acceptable behavior in this world.

Off late, there have been incidents of shocking intolerance. Syria is going through a tough humanitarian crisis. The plight of the Iraqis is unprecedented in the country's history. Words will never be enough to condemn the atrocities committed by the ISIS. Terrorism is a global menace. There is no doubt that it needs to be dealt with a firm hand.

However, we must look at the other side of the coin. The above mentioned acts of violence must be controlled. But we must not forget that another kind of violence is slowly contaminating our civilization. It's the violence disguised as retribution. It's the justified violence. Not many months ago there was an incident in Assam. A man who was accused of rape was kidnapped from the prison and lynched to death in full public glare. It's yet to be confirmed whether the man was actually guilty of the crime he had been accused of. This Taliban like justice system is a dangerous practice. It cuts through the very fabric of our civilization. No civilized society has place for such heinous behavior. Justice must be served. But not at the cost of our humanitarian

values. Violence, May it be triggered by any cause, justified or otherwise, must not be condoned at any cost. It must be dealt with strictly.

The public sentiment sometimes makes us forget the very values that make us humans in the first place. Acts of violence in the name of religion, caste, creed, or any other excuse, must be condemned. Any kind of violence is unacceptable. These are not acts of retribution or revenge. These are criminal

acts. They must be treated as such. They must be fought the same way as any other form of violence is fought. That's the only way to secure our civilization.

#### **5. Suggest ways to improve government schools (and thus the education system) in India - IIM - Calcutta**

Something is drastically wrong with a system when the Judiciary has to intervene and pass a judgement making it mandatory for the children of government officials to enrol in government run schools (the Allahabad High Court order in August 2015). The Court gave this unprecedeted decision in an attempt to improve the appalling conditions besmirching our government run schools. This raises some serious concerns regarding the future of the education system in India.

Some of the main problems that our government schools face are lack of vocational training, lack of competent teachers, increase in drop-out rate, an obsolete pedagogy, lack of infrastructure, and, most importantly, an apathetic government structure. This rut has run so deep that any question of remedy or recovery requires a systematic change in our education as well as bureaucratic policies.

Firstly, the policy to select teachers must be changed drastically. Some months ago, a national news channel ran a sting operation that exposed the pathetic "spelling skill" of some government school teachers in Bihar. However, no action has been taken by the state government against those teachers who couldn't even spell a word like 'Apple' correctly. There has to be a clear distinction between 'qualified' and 'competent' teachers. A rigorous and transparent selection process will surely help improve the quality of education being imparted in the government schools.

Secondly, the government must take steps to curb rampant corruption in our education system. Last year, an audit team found that two government schools in the Malkangiri district of Odisha existed only on paper. Charges of corruption in the implementation of the Midday meal scheme have become a routine affair. The government must take immediate and stringent steps to tackle these problems which will improve the system.

Thirdly, the issue of infrastructure development has to be tackled on a priority basis. The government can take help of corporate houses, NGOs, and other such bodies to arrange the necessary funds to make sure that the children attending government schools get the same kind of exposure that the students attending private schools with exorbitant fees are able to afford. There is a colossal gap between the skill set developed by students in government schools and that by students in private schools. A child, no matter how brilliant he is, from a government school hardly ever gets a fair chance to compete against his private school counterpart. This division has to be eliminated.

Despite all such problems, many government school children have achieved tremendous feats in last few years. We repeatedly get news of children from underprivileged background achieving high ranks in competitive examinations like IIT-JEE. The model of "Super 30" in Bihar can serve as a guiding light. If the government wants to save our rapidly depleting standard of education, it must start with a complete overhaul of our government school structure and its governance.

**6. The enrolment in the education system is high but the education level is low. What according to you are the reasons for this and how would you correct this? - IIM - Calcutta**

"The educated differ from the uneducated as much as the living differ from the dead", said Aristotle. The importance of education in the evolution and sustenance of any society cannot be denied. The leaders of independent India realized this and devoted significant legal and financial means to the education sector in India. The eleventh five-year plan of India (2007-2012) put special emphasis on the improvement of the education sector in India. The Indian Government has launched several literacy campaigns like the Sarva Shiksha Avyan (Literacy for all movement) and incentive schemes like the mid day Meal Scheme. In fact, the Indian parliament made Right to Education a fundamental right too. All these attempts were made with the aim of increasing the enrolment in our educational institutes and improving our educational standards. These attempts have definitely yielded some positive results. The enrolment in our schools and colleges has increased significantly. However, whether this has resulted in an improvement in our

education level is another question. As we aim to become the next superpower of the world, we must introspect and analyse this grave situation.

Many studies conducted by reputed HR organizations have found that the majority of the Indian youth is unemployable. The Indian youngsters are talented, determined, and bright. However the kind of education they receive doesn't do justice to their potential. Most of our educational institutes can't compete with their international counterparts. May it be the infrastructure, updated curriculum, quality of teachers, quality of research work undertaken, or the use of technology as a tool to boost learning, our institutes lag far behind. There are many reasons behind this and we need to tackle these issues if we aspire to become a world leader.

Firstly, we must redefine our goals of education. Education has many socio-economic aspirations. It helps in completing the socialization process. It acts as a catalyst to transmit the central and cultural heritage. It helps in forming the social personality of a child. However, instead of focusing on these central goals, our education institutes simply encourage a "get marks at any cost" culture among students. Healthy competition is always welcome. However, a society can't evolve constructively if it emphasizes only on marks and equates them with holistic personality development. Students must be encouraged to achieve high scores but only if those scores reflect their true potential. Many so called "high achievers" with staggering marks in their school level examinations do miserably in aptitude and psycho-metric tests. Thus, we must re-evaluate and revamp our educational policies.

Secondly, we need to improve our infrastructure. The importance of technology as a tool can no longer be sidelined. Our government schools suffer the most in this regard. Rampant corruption and bureaucratic apathy are just some of the many problems that need to be tackled on a priority basis. Our institutes must focus on hiring competent teachers rather than qualified teachers. Only competent teachers can do justice to the potential of the students. Degrees are not enough. The teachers must go through a stringent selection process which tests their teaching aptitude and commitment to the profession. There should be periodic evaluation and refresher programmes.

Thirdly, the government must keep a close eye on the day to day functioning of the educational institutes. Their international rankings must be taken seriously. The institutes must be encouraged and given incentives to conduct quality research programmes. No one advocates an infringement of the autonomy of our educational institutes. But the government can help them in an advisory and supervisory capacity.

These are some of the many steps that our government needs to take in order to improve the appalling condition of our education system. It will surely require a long term strategy, sustained effort, a huge financial investment, and, most importantly, meticulous implementation of the policies by our government. Then we can surely achieve the goals of an enlightened India by 2025 as envisaged by our late President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam who, incidentally, identified himself, first and foremost, as a teacher.

## 7. Effect of internet on Education - IIM - Calcutta

"Google can bring you back 100,000 answers. A librarian can bring you back the right one", this line by renowned blogger and writer Neil Gaiman raises a significant issue that threatens to skyrocket into a global sociological crisis. The internet, which acted as the main catalyst of the Information revolution, has now assumed the status of the proverbial double edged sword. The pervasiveness of technology has significantly affected many areas of society positively, including the area of education. Today's students have not only computers to aid their schoolwork but also Internet to propel their research work. The modern day educators too use technology to enhance the usefulness of their lessons. However, sociologist and academicians are divided in their overall evaluation of the efficacy of internet as an educational aid.

The major concern of academicians regarding the issue under discussion is the mushrooming of "experts" on the internet. There is no censorship or fact-checking available on the internet. The fact checking process is extremely tedious. Hence, young students accept any information they receive on the internet as the truth. There are many instances of erroneous data being served in the guise of bona fide knowledge on the internet. A young child is an easy prey to such sites. Hence, the role of the educators and parents becomes even more crucial. They must keep a strict watch and they must help the students identify trustworthy sites to gather information.

The second concern is the disease of distraction. T.S. Eliot once joked that he had been "distracted from distraction by distraction". This is true in case of today's children too. Modern day parents encourage their children to utilise their time constructively in the pursuit of more information and

knowledge. However, the internet has so many distractions available to the students that the young kids hardly ever realise the vicious cycle of hyperlinks and related pages. The many sites available on internet can also negatively impact the cognitive and social skills of the youngsters. Many researchers have repeatedly warned us off the pitfalls of virtual existence. Social skills, team building skills, and overall personality development require actual inter personal communication. Twitter, FaceBook, and other such social media sites have mostly helped us in developing a highly anti-social or asocial existence. This has to be checked if we have to evolve as a civilization.

Another major blemish of internet is the culture of plagiarism. Indian educators are yet to learn how to navigate the different search engines. Hence, many students in our country routinely purloin information from the internet and present them as personal research work. This habit is not limited to only students. Plagiarism freezes our intellectual growth. Finding information from the internet and reproducing the related ideas will not help us in developing our individual independent decision making skills. Hence, teachers and parents must take steps to counter this practice of copy and paste.

Despite its many drawbacks, the positive impact of internet on education cannot be denied. Education is a tool to impart human values. Internet has helped globalization to reach the academia. Youngsters are now more exposed to global culture and values. Thus, internet has enhanced our process of education by bringing the educators and students on one global platform. Students can now access education regardless of their class, race, or geographic barriers. However, a more stringent supervision can enable our youngsters to utilize internet as an educational tool more effectively.

#### **8. The best way to destroy your enemy is to make him/her your friend - IIM - Kozhikode**

This oft-repeated quotation owes its origin to the famous line by Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president of the USA. Lincoln famously uttered, "I destroy my enemies when I make them my friends", in response to criticism levelled against him during the American civil war when he, the leader of the North, had espoused the benevolent treatment of the Southern rebels. The quotation can have multiple interpretations. However, all these interpretations have considerable relevance in today's capricious global parlance.

The first interpretation is more prosaic and lexical. What Lincoln meant by the statement is that all humans are governed by the same set of psychological factors. Each human being is innately compassionate. When one learns to treat one's enemies with compassion, one is able to turn that enemy into a friend. Thus, the enemy is destroyed and a friend is created. Today the world is on the verge of a

dangerous polarization on religious grounds. The Paris attack is another manifestation of this threat. An effective way of defying this is the path of love and compassion. Instead of treating the misguided terrorists as enemies, the nations of the world can come together in embracing their problems as basic human issues. Thus, the terrorists or anti-social elements may repent and realize their errors. The world will surely turn into a better place if this can be achieved. However, this strategy is a long term one and it requires patience, perseverance, and united effort.

There exists another slightly more diabolical interpretation of this line. Treating one's enemies as one's friends will give one a strategic advantage. When one befriends one's enemies, one is more likely to learn the flaws and weaknesses of those enemies. This will help one to formulate the right strategy to defeat and destroy them. All one needs to do is to wait for the right opportunity and then attack the enemy. In such a battle, an enemy posing as a friend has all the advantages. There is a saying: "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer". This is definitely a shrewd approach in terms of military counter attack. However, it involves a lot of risks. One must follow this approach only if one is a shrewd judge of risks.

What Lincoln precisely meant by these lines remains a mystery. He never elaborated but an analysis of his life story does favour the first interpretation. He, after all, championed the cause of the abolition of slavery in the USA. First and foremost, Lincoln was a humanist. Hence, the first interpretation is more likely to be closer to his intention.

**9. Government has adopted route of ordinance to enact or modify laws.  
What is government justification for this and what is your opinion - IIM Calcutta**

The Monsoon session of the Indian Parliament was washed out without accomplishing anything meaningful. When the whole world is going through an economically capricious time, a bill like GST (Goods and Service Tax) becomes the need of the hour. Yet our esteemed and astute parliamentarians

deemed their petty personal grudges superior to our national interest. Hence, the entire Monsoon session witnessed only political drama and no governance. Hence, it makes sense that the government is taking the route of ordinance to enact or modify laws. However, this issue requires a few more points.

Article 123 of the Constitution enables the President of India to promulgate an ordinance if neither of the Houses of the Parliament is in session and "circumstances exist, which render it *necessary* for him to take *immediate action*". Every ordinance has to be laid before Parliament, and ceases to exist six weeks from the end of the next session of the Parliament. Since the Constitution mandates that Parliament be called into session at least once every six months, ordinances have a *de facto* expiration period of approximately seven and a half months. Article 213 gives the same power to the Governor of a State. However, the government can re-promulgate an ordinance. This is the basic rule regarding the ordinance route.

The present Modi government enacted around 8 ordinances in the first year of its rule too. Many thinkers attributed it to the willingness of the government to get out

economy back on track. When one looks at the strength of the present government one is tempted to forgive the ordinance culture. A democratically elected government with more than 282 members in the Lok Sabha (the elected house) was held ransom by the members of the Rajya Sabha (the non-elected house) over non-issues like Lalit Modi and IPL case. Were these matters more important than the financial health of the country? Hence, the government had no other option except taking the route of ordinance. However, in matters where constitutional amendment becomes necessary i.e. the land acquisition bill, the government is still helpless.

These are some of the obvious reasons why the present government can be forgiven for the over use of ordinances. The previous UPA government enacted many ordinances despite being in majority in both the houses. The most crucial among these was the ordinance which facilitated the Coal Scam. But the present government must be cautious. An ordinance raj never augurs well for the democratic fabric of a nation. The present government must use ordinances sparingly. It is the duty of the government to convince both the houses. Mr. Modi can't always put the onus on the opposition. An extended winter session may help get the government back to business of running the country. The present government must find a middle path while dealing with the opposition and ruling with ordinances.

**10. How effective have campaigns like Swacch Bharat and Make in India been? \_SIBM Pune**

Lao Tzu had said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. In the same spirit PM Modi, spearheaded the launch of the Swacch Bharat mission and

the Make in India campaign, as two of the most powerful systemic change inducing projects, right in the infancy of his tenure as a PM.

He announced the Make in India campaign in his Independence Day speech. And, viola! A mere forty-one days later at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, he declared the launch of India's most ambitious plan till date, one that outlined a system design that would boost manufacturing in the country. Powerful Indian business magnates were present at this meeting, thus confirming both their support and their involvement. The MII program targets the transformation of India into a global business centre, as its goal. And to this end, it aims at building an effective physical infrastructure as well as improving the market of a digital network in the country. Starting from satellites to submarines, cars to software, pharmaceuticals to ports and paper to power, the program has an incredibly wide range of coverage.

Although global investors have openly criticized the prevalence of bureaucratic red tape as well as circuitous application procedures that often lead to unnecessary waste of time and resources, foreign investment caps in construction are to be eased to enable greater foreign brand involvement, especially in ventures like the Smart Cities project. And though India was ranked 134 /189 in the World Bank's ease of doing business index, this ranking is already on its way up.

The building of six submarines are to be in India at the cost of fifty thousand crores (in rupees); India's fourth largest cell phone maker, Lava, shifting its base from China to India; plans of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles to manufacture SUVs, in India and China's Trina Solar (manufacturer of photovoltaic modules) setting up its units in India are

all just a few of the examples of the MII project in motion. The Swacch Bharat Abhiyan on the other hand is more of a civilian driven mission than a bureaucratic initiative. It was launched on Oct 2, 2014 and aims to improve the sanitation of the country by making toilets and otherwise facilitating the proper disposal of solid waste. It thus aims to construct 12cr

toilets across the country and have allotted 1.96 lc cr rupees, for the same. Despite problems such as lack of public bins; overflowing public bins; underpaid, understaffed cleaning departments; lack of accountability; poor waste disposal; negligent disciplinary actions against people who litter, this project is inching its way ahead.

Yet considering the infancy of both the said projects and the way they are being carried forward, it wouldn't be unfair to say that they have both proven reasonably effective.

## **11. Doing away with Planning Commission: Implications for India Inc. - IIM Kozhikode**

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor is it the most intelligent. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change" Charles Darwin had said. In the same vein, any practice that has run its course, and is not serving the purpose it was meant to anymore, should be stopped then and there, without much hesitation. The Planning Commission was established in tune with article 39 of the constitution which is a part of directive principles of state policy. But it has now entered an era of co-operative and competitive federalism. And its role as a mediator between the

Center and the State governments has, therefore, become jeopardized. Several factors are responsible for it having reached this juncture. Factors such as the taking over of jobs meant to be carried out by other bodies like the finance commission and central ministries that has made the PC unduly stretch out its realm of control. Also, accusations of imposing uniform norms and guidelines through CSS (centrally-sponsored schemes) and a procrustean approach by the commission has come to be resented by many state governments. Originally, with the PC in place, the Centre used to transfer resources to states through the finance commission and the central ministries. But this has now become a major irritant in the Indian federal structure for the said reasons. It can be observed that the CSS system itself has suffered due to lack of versatility, which has also affected the fiscal space. The government should take part in planning economic activities only to a certain extent and not more. He way Soviet Russia wilted away is a case in point, that illustrates this idea.

Although on the upside, the PC acts as the voice of the states at the centre and aids helps in impartial fund distribution amongst the different segments of the society. The poor have nevertheless only been increasing in number. Almost to the point that the PC has now been reduced to an apology making body, that tries to paper over the faulty decision making on part of the government. And the way governments change within a five year window period that the PC follows, frequent and radical policymaking changes are nearly unavoidable.

Therefore the decision to do away with the PC, is a good one. One that will make India more investor-friendly. Also, the PMO in consultation with the States and,

perhaps, subject matter experts can very well carry on with the work that was, heretofore, intended for the PC.

## 12. Is MBA becoming irrelevant? - IIM Bangalore

As world renowned sport-star Yogi Berra once said, "In theory there is no difference between theory and practice, but in practice there is", so it goes with the master of business administration (MBA) degree and its practical worth.

The MBA was born as a consequence of the search for scientific methods of management, thereby making way for universities to train top-level company executives early in the twentieth Century, once the United States had begun to industrialize.

But years later, it is not uncommon for one to question its validity at the present juncture. Long back, in the 1950s a popular report funded by the Ford Foundation censured the degree for being almost useless. Similarly, *Business Week* reported, in the late twentieth century, that firms were ruing "the inability of newly minted MBAs to communicate, their overreliance on mathematical techniques of management and [their] expectations of becoming chairman in four weeks". The whole world witnessed what happened in the early twenty first century when global economy got struck by economic debacles, such as Enron and Lehman Brothers, which were both run by alumni of prestigious business schools.

Yet it is one of the most popular post-graduate courses, world over. The main reason for such popularity is undeniably the monetary perks the degree entails, almost by

default. Countries such as the US and the UK boast of MBA colleges that can make you avail of double (in some cases, triple) the salaries that you currently draw, irrespective of your present field of work. And although an MBA might not help you gain an insider perspective of the various departments of a firm, it does equip you to become a better informed supervisor.

However, the fees that reputed B-Schools charge is itself a major deterrent to those who wish to pursue the course. Thus, making it more of an elite-friendly degree. Also, start-ups are increasingly unwilling to hire MBA graduates because the leadership and interpersonal skills that successful entrepreneurs really use cannot be taught in classrooms, as such.

So, to sum things up, one can say that the MBA degree in itself does not guarantee any success in entrepreneurial / executive aspects of a business venture. To that extent, it is merely a piece of paper. But when combined with ample experiential knowledge and honing of interpersonal skills, it can act like a catalyst to growth and development of businesses.

### **13. Intolerance in India: a myth or a reality? - IIM Lucknow**

'The highest result of education is tolerance', Hellen Keller had once observed. And this sentiment is recalled only in utter vain, in the face of all the intolerance generated atrocities we see happening around us, these days. Starting with racist intolerance to religious intolerance, cases of heinous cruelties perpetrated in the name of religion, caste and nation seem to be on the rise.

Whether it be banning of the works of Taslima Nasreen and Salman Rushdie or the mob lynching of a man in Dadri (because he had allegedly consumed beef), the incidents propelled by anger and hatred towards those expressing disagreeable views or those practicing a different religious custom seem to be cropping up across the country.

In a country where people belonging to diverse racial, ethnic, communal, linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds have co-existed for centuries now, an attitude of 'intolerance' clearly has dire consequences. Although, it is human to feel the heat of accommodative friction while adjusting with norms completely unlike what one is used to and accepting individuals who are much different from oneself, the magnitude of the cruelties observed in incidents caused by such intolerance, suggests such reactions are not human anymore, they are bestial. And if education truly does inculcate tolerance, then perhaps, we are far from having achieved a nation of educated individuals.

Artists returning awards conferred upon them by the government in protest against 'rising communal intolerance' and cases such as the Sikh riots of 1984, Ayodhya 1992, Godhra 2002. Although Articles 29 and 30 constitutionally protect the language, script and culture of minorities and give them the right to establish educational institutions of their choice, show that there still is heavy discontent on part of the minorities that needs to be addressed. And so, in cases such as Aruna Roy vs Union of India (2002) and S.R. Bommai vs Union of India (1994), the Supreme Court promptly declared secularism to be part of the basic structure of our Constitution; Muslims constitute about 13.4 per cent of India's population. And in

several states, Christians comprise a high proportion of the population. Article 25 of our Constitution confers on all persons, including non-citizens, a fundamental right to freely profess, practice and propagate their religion — a right that is exercised effectively to convert people to another faith every day, yet religious disputes abound all over.

Intolerance, no doubt, exists. But whether it has increased in the recent times or not and whether differential importance is accorded to individual cases by the media, cannot be definitively determined.

#### **14. Is India world's bright spot? - IIM Ahmedabad**

The world economy is now going through a time of heightened risk and uncertainty. Despite eight years having passed since the global economic downturn, it yet remains slow and phlegmatic. Whether it will ever get better or not and whether it will become sound again, can be only speculated on. India, however, seems to be one of the only accelerating factors in this otherwise slow-moving economy.

What with the fallout of Brexit, India is now under the spotlight of international expectations. The last estimate of global growth hinged precariously at the level of 2.4 percent and most countries across Europe need severe structural reforms to get back to running a reasonably stable economy. It is in such a situation that investments become indispensably important yet it is precisely such a situation that makes potential investors both wary and therefore reluctant. Thus in the absence of any radical event, prices of commodities will likely remain the same, and this includes prices of oil, as well.

The Japanese yen is already paying negative interest rates, as is the German euro. And now the US has joined this list, too. And as a direct consequence, access to capital for developing countries, becomes an issue of alarming concern. Yet, India has managed an exceptional level of foreign direct investments, in comparison to other developing countries. And this makes it immune to the dipping interest rates of global currencies.

Poised to grow around 7.5 per cent this year and perhaps even higher next year, the Indian stock market has been impacted only temporarily by the Brexit. And this is a clear indicator of very high market resilience. Something that might not have shown up until just half of a decade ago.

With ample investments now being made in Technology, in all the areas that are key to productivity growth such as: solar power, artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing. India is on its way to making the right use of its biggest strength: manpower. And being a services-oriented economy it can be much more effective than it is. But for that, every single young person has to be able to compete in the digital world. Thereby with intelligent investment in manpower harnessing (including child development), India is indeed placed at quite a privileged point, from the perspective of global economy.

#### **15. Legalize betting in cricket and make the game corruption free. - IIM Kozhikode**

Despite several efforts, with the police unearthing the latest IPL betting scandal, it is clear that the anti-corruption units of both the ICC and the individual Boards have

been largely ineffective. The reasons and motivations behind betting in cricket in India are manifold. But the fact remains that betting in cricket has persisted through the ages despite it being illegal. There is always that one person who will find a way to beat the system and carry out that which the law forbids. This applies not just to betting in cricket but to a lot of other activities deemed illegal, too. Take the example of the time when beer was illegal in America during prohibition. There was illegal-drinking all around the country, and the mafia had begun to thrive. No doubt, all things illegal cannot be made legal, simply because a few people continue practicing them on the sly. But if it is possible to systematize something that is currently considered illegal but yet has a ceaselessly prolific presence, we should consider doing so.

It is legal to practice betting in horse racing. And more and more people are suggesting the same be implemented in cricket, as well. One of the reasons for corruption in the game is the huge gap in the earnings of top players and the relatively junior professionals. When such junior players don't get paid much money, it's becomes very tempting for them to accept the attractive offers made by the bookies. When you see people like Kevin Pietersen getting paid about \$2 million if they play the entire series, and the others on the same team earn relatively meager amounts, they become heavily susceptible to corruption.

Also, this problem seems to surface more often in the Asian Region than elsewhere. Because cricket, as a sport, is way more popular in this region than it is anywhere else in the world. There are millions of people involved in each match and match related events, too. Thus expecting to curb betting by nabbing each and every single

bookie, is next to impossible. And the only solution that remains, is to bring in legal order into the picture, which will ensure that that which is happening already happens in a more organized, civic-friendly and responsible way.

## Personality Assessment Round Process Details (2016-2018 Batch)

By now, you must be quite familiar with the different processes that various B-schools use in the second round of their selection program. Let us now look at some individual institutes to get a better grasp of the mechanism they use in order to select the best candidates. Please note that institutes do keep tinkering with their selection processes from time-to-time. Therefore, this list can only help you understand all the stages that an institute has used for selection in recent years with specific focus on last year's method. However, please remember that it is quite likely that in subsequent years, an institute may use radically different processes as well.

**Note:** The figures given in brackets represent the weightage of the respective Round. For eg: For AWT of IIM Ahmedabad (10) refers to 10% weightage at the time of final score calculation by IIM Ahmedabad.

### IIM Ahmedabad:

#### **Process:**

**PGPM:** Academic Writing Test (AWT) (10%) + Personal Interview (50%)

**ABM:** Group Discussion + Personal Interview

**Academic Writing Test (AWT):** The candidates were given 1 minute to think and 10 minutes to write on the topic. Most of the topics were either general in nature or related to current affairs. Some of the topics given to the candidates were \_

"Bharat Ratna should not be given posthumously",

"CAG is slowing down progress in India's telecom and mining sector",

"Obsession with constant research by smartphone companies has had a serious effect on our social life.",

"It is advisable to raise the legal drinking age limit to 25 years for responsible drinking.",

"2014 General elections will be a watershed for Indian democracy."

**Group Discussion:** Group Discussions happen only for the ABM program. Usually, the Group Discussions involved case studies. Candidates were typically given a few minutes to read the case study and prepare their points. At the end of the discussion, candidates had to write a summary of the discussion. Case studies varied from one on pharmaceuticals to another one on fashion industry in India.

**Personal Interview:** Personal interviews were conducted after completion of the essay writing task / Group Discussion and, generally, lasted for about 15-20 minutes. In this round, candidates were interviewed by panels of two members each. Those with prior work experience were asked detailed questions pertaining to their experience and their company's business, its market share, growth prospects, industry prospects,

turnover, etc. Some candidates were also asked in-depth questions pertaining to their job profile and how their previous educational qualifications were being utilized in their current job profile. Candidates with no work experience were generally asked questions relevant to their academic background while a few candidates with prior work experience were also asked questions related to subjects from their academic background. Interestingly, almost all the candidates were asked a few questions from Mathematics as well. The questions related to Mathematics were primarily from areas like probability, distribution curves, statistics, etc. The candidates were also questioned about their hobbies and were expected to have an in-depth knowledge about them. Some candidates were also asked questions about the essay written by them. Specifically for ABM, candidates were asked questions regarding agriculture and why they wanted to join the ABM program.

#### **IIM Bangalore:**

**Process:** Essay Writing Task (10%) + Personal Interview (30%)

**Essay Writing:** The candidates were given 10 minutes to think about the given topic and 20 minutes to write on the topic. Most of the topics were related to current affairs. The candidates were required to do a thorough analysis of the topic and in some cases, from a particular point of view. Some of the topics given to the candidates were \_

"Is crime rate in urban India high mainly due to economic disparities?",

"The world is in social, economic and political turmoil. Any suggestions to improve.",

"Recently a law has been passed to ban A-rated films on television. Why do you think this decision has been taken?"

"Education degree should come with an expiry date"

"Democracy made a glorious comeback as the catchword of the revolution"

"Are shortages artificially created in India? Surplus production and still people starve! Lot of graduates but a lot of workforce shortage"

**Personal Interview:** Each interview panel comprised three members - two professors and one alumnus of the institute. The interviews were mostly very general in nature. Candidates were asked questions pertaining to various aspects of their CV and SOP (Statement of Purpose) and the panel was typically quite pleasant and friendly. The interviews usually started with the panelists asking the candidates to talk about themselves. Some of the candidates were asked about current developments involving their company or industry. Some of them were also asked analytical questions on issues surrounding their industry / area of work. Typically, most of the candidates were asked a few questions regarding what they had written in their SOPs.

#### **IIM Calcutta:**

**Process:** Written Ability Test (10%) + Personal Interview (48%)

**Written Ability Test:** Candidates were allotted 15 minutes to write on the topic. The word limit for the essay was 200 words. The topics given were general in nature and

typically required analysis of an issue. Some of the topics given to the candidates were

"Why Indian scientists are going abroad for study and work? Give reasons. Suggest some ways to improve this situation",

"What could be the reasons for disproportionately low number of women in top managerial positions. How can this issue be solved?"

"Corruption in sports committees and government interference are degrading the quality of sports in India. Elaborate and provide remedies.",

"The television media focuses more on violence, disaster and negative news. Why is it so?",

"What are your views on FDI in retail?"

"Casteism & Religion in Politics"

"Future of English Education in India in the face of existing conflict"

**Personal Interview:** Mostly, panels which interviewed the candidates had three members. The interviews were largely general in nature. Most of the candidates were asked questions pertaining to various aspects of their CV. Some of them were asked in-depth questions about their subjects or areas of interest. Several candidates were asked detailed questions about their prior work-experience and their reasons for

choosing to pursue an MBA. At least one question on mathematics & its application can be expected.

#### **IIM Lucknow:**

##### **Process:**

**PGPM:** Essay Writing Task (10%) + Personal Interview (40%)

**PGP-ABM:** Essay Writing Task (10%) + Personal Interview (40%)

**Essay Writing:** Candidates were allotted 15 minutes to write on the assigned topic. The word limit for the essay was 200 words. The topics given were philosophical / abstract. Some of the topics given to candidates were \_

"Fame and riches are fleeting, stupidity is eternal",

"A great city should not be confused with a populous one",

"Engine is the heart of an airplane and the pilot is its soul",

"Being poor and independent at the same time is impossible".

**Personal Interview:** Panels comprising two members interviewed candidates. The interviews were very general in nature and often focused primarily on the candidate's goals and aims, as well as past experiences. Detailed questions related to area of work / job profile were common as were questions related to one's subjects of study while

pursuing graduation. Many candidates were asked about their decision to pursue MBA and the candidates who had applied for ABM were asked about their reasons for opting for ABM. Candidates were also asked questions pertaining to various aspects of their CV. While most of the interviews lasted for about 20-25 minutes, some candidates reported very brief interviews of just about 8-10 minutes.

#### IIM Indore:

**Process:** Written Ability Test (20%) + Personal Interview (40%)

**Written Ability Test:** Candidates were allotted 30 minutes to write on the given topic. The word limit for the essay was 300 words. The topics given were very general and analytical in nature. Some of the topics given to the candidates were \_

"Today's popular TV serials depict a life different from normal life. Is it a form of escapism or just for entertainment?",

"How does migration of people into other countries affect nationalism and patriotism?",

"With so many mergers and acquisitions by big business houses in India, is there any future for small scale enterprises in the country? Suggest ways to help out small scale enterprises.",

"Despite advances in medical science, progress is slow. Should research knowledge be shared with other scientists or should it be a closely guarded secret?"

"Leadership crisis in India which leader (dead or alive) you would like to bring back to Indian politics to save the country."

"Industrialization has brought up an irreparable damage.... is it too late for us to go back from here."

**Personal Interview:** The candidates were interviewed by a panel of three members. The interviews often focused primarily on a candidate's academic background. Detailed questions related to the candidate's subjects of study while pursuing graduation were asked to almost all candidates, even those who had more than two years of prior work experience. Candidates with work experience were generally asked detailed questions about their job profile. Some candidates were queried on their decision to quit their job and pursue an MBA. Quite a few candidates were also asked questions about their hobbies and extracurricular activities while some were also asked questions about current affairs, specifically questions related to the budget. Interviews typically lasted for about 25 to 35 minutes.

#### IIM Kozhikode:

**Process:** Group Discussion/Essay Writing Task (15%) + Personal Interview (45%)

**Group Discussion:** The Group Discussion was held immediately before the essay writing. The topic was the same as the Essay writing task. Each group comprised 10-12 candidates. The groups were given 15 minutes to discuss the topic.

**Essay Writing:** Candidates were allotted 45 minutes to write on the given topic. The word limit for the essay was 500 words. Some topics given were philosophical while the others were from General Awareness. Some of the topics were \_

"South Asia should have common currency like Europe?",

"I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everyone",

"Forgive your enemies but don't forget their names",

"Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence".

"Rising Oil & Gas Prices"

"Emergence of NGOs as independent bodies is questionable merit"

**Personal Interview:** Panels comprising two members interviewed the candidates. The interviews did not have a set pattern; rather, they were more panel-dependent. While some candidates reported that their interviews were very general in nature and focused on their goals and aims, others reported that their interviews comprised only current affairs questions. Some candidates even reported that they were asked questions pertaining to their academic background only. Interviews generally were 20-30 minutes long.

#### **IIM Shillong:**

**Process:** Writing Skills Ability Test (WSAT) + Personal Interview + Group Discussion(GD)

**WSAT:** It is for the first time that IIM Shillong has introduced WSAT as a part of their selection procedure. It is expected to be similar to the WAT that is conducted at the other IIMs.

**Personal Interview:** A panel, typically comprising three members, interviewed candidates. The panelists were reported to be very pleasant. The interviews generally focused on current affairs and the candidate's academic background. Questions on current affairs were asked in order to get the candidate's opinions on various issues and these opinions were then thoroughly discussed. At times, these questions were also based on the interest areas mentioned by candidates in their resume. A few candidates with prior work experience were also questioned in detail about the nature and technical aspect of their work. Some candidates were also asked ethical questions, like \_

"What is the difference between right and wrong?",

"Is it right for the pharma companies to give gifts to medical practitioners?".

Interviews typically lasted for about 20 to 30 minutes.

#### **New IIMs Joint Process:**

The six new IIMs coordinating the PA process 2016, viz., Kashipur, Raipur, Ranchi, Rohtak, Trichy and Udaipur, are together likely to call candidates for the PA process

about 10-12 times (or more if decided so later) their total number of seats. In addition to the six IIMs mentioned above, IIMs at Amritsar, Sambalpur, Vishakapatnam and Bodh Gaya are also likely to join the combined PI & WAT process. In case of additional IIMs joining the process, candidates would be informed accordingly. However, in case any of the six older IIMs (Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Calcutta, Indore, Kozhikode and Lucknow) are willing to share their PA scores with the six new IIMs, wherever new IIMs shortlist is common with the sharing older IIMs, the common candidates will not be required to appear for PA process separately with the new IIMs. The common candidates will be intimated in due course of time, on the names of older IIMs sharing PA scores with the new IIMs.

**Process:** Writing Ability Test (WAT) + Personal Interview

**Essay Writing:** For this task, candidates were allotted 20 minutes to write on the given topic and the word limit was 300 words. The topics given were very general in nature, like \_

"MBA, B.Tech are gearing up with the market. Are the courses like Literature, Sociology, etc. irrelevant in education today? Give your opinion",

"What if a business chooses to focus on the bottom of the pyramid? Is innovation really necessary for the growth of a business?",

"Social networking strengthens relationships but also makes youngsters lonely."

**Personal Interview:** Interviews were conducted after completion of the essay

writing task. Candidates were interviewed by a panel of two members. The interviews were largely pleasant and stress-free. Different candidates were asked different kinds of questions; there was no set pattern to the interviews. While some of the candidates with prior work experience were asked detailed questions pertaining to their experience, including details about their company; other candidates were primarily asked questions pertaining to their goals and ambitions. Questions such as how do subjects from your graduation help you in your job, etc. were also asked. Some candidates were also asked questions related to their academic background, their hobbies and even the effects of the most recent budget.

**FMS, Delhi:**

**Process:** Group Discussion(10%) + Extempore(5%) + Personal Interview(15%)

**Group Discussion:** Group discussions typically lasted for about 14 minutes. Each group was given one minute to think before the discussion began and one minute to conclude the discussion. Every group comprised 10 to 15 candidates. The topics given to the candidates for discussion were general in nature. Some of them were \_

"Formal education stems the free spirit.",

"Should sting operations be carried out?",

"Morals and values are on the decline in India".

**Extempore:** The extempore was typically conducted at the start of the personal interview. Candidates were given their topic and 1 minute to speak on it. No

preparation time was given. A stopwatch was kept on a table in front of the candidate so that he / she could keep a tab on the time. Topics allotted to the candidates were general in nature and many of them were given topics that were somewhat related to their work. For e.g., a candidate, who had worked in the Oil and Gas sector, was given the topic "Energy sector in India" Another candidate, who had work experience in the field of Data Analytics and had qualified for the Maths Olympiad, was asked to speak about "Infinity".

**Personal Interview:** Typically, interviews were quite brief and continued for about 5 minutes. Most of them were conducted by a panel of three interviewers. The interviews were quite general in nature. Questions primarily dealt with current affairs and / or hobbies and interest areas mentioned by candidates in their forms. A few candidates reported that they were also queried about their ambitions and future plans.

#### SPJIMR, Mumbai:

**Process:** Psychometric Test + Written Communication Test + 2 Group Interviews

**Psychometric Test:** This is the first task of the process. There were 30 questions in the test and 10 minutes were allotted for the same. Several students reported that they were unable to answer all the questions in the given time. Questions were based on personal preferences. For e.g., one of the questions was - "I feel very comfortable talking to strangers". The options were 'Completely agree', 'Somewhat agree', 'Somewhat disagree' and 'Completely disagree'. The candidates were asked to give explanations for their answers to 6 of the 30 questions.

**Written Communication Test:** This is very similar to WAT. It was introduced last year.

**Group Interview 1 and 2:** Typically, candidates reported that there were three members in the panel for the first interview and two members in the second interview. The number of candidates in each group varied from 5 to 8. Each interview lasted for about 45 minutes. Only those candidates who cleared the first interview were called for the second Group Interview. There was no set pattern for either interview. In the first Group Interview, general questions were asked about the candidate, his reasons for doing an MBA, his hobbies and their link with his desired specialization, etc. In fact, a few candidates reported that in their interviews, a small group discussion was also conducted. The topics were mostly general in nature and

based on current affairs. Most of the interviews were pleasant while a few candidates reported that their second interview was stressful. In the second interview, some candidates were asked to justify the answers given by them in the psychometric test. Some candidates were also asked questions on ethics. Both the interviews were typically of 20-30 minutes duration. Group Interview II only happens if you qualify Group Interview 1.

#### MDI, Gurgaon:

**Process:** Group Discussion + Personal Interview + Writing ability Test(WAT)

**Group Discussion:** Typically, around 12 to 15 candidates participated in each group discussion and they were given around 15 minutes for the discussion. Additionally, 3 minutes were given to the group to think about the topic. At the end of every discussion, each candidate was asked to summarize what all had been discussed. Further, all the candidates were asked if they wanted to say something more on the topic. In some groups, candidates were also asked to write down a conclusion of the discussion at the end. Topics for the discussion were very general in nature, like \_

"Certainty of justice is more important than severity of punishment.",

"Does Reservation in Higher Education hamper the real purpose of Education?",

"Should religious teachings be taught in our schools to inculcate better values in students?"

**Personal Interview:** Generally, a panel consisting of two members interviewed the candidates while a few candidates reported that there was only one interviewer in their case. The average interview lasted for around 10 minutes. However, there were some students who reported that their interview went on for 30 minutes and some others said that theirs lasted hardly 5 minutes. The interviews were quite pleasant and were very general in nature. Candidates were typically queried about their opinions on various issues of current affairs. In many cases, candidates were also queried on the topic that was given to them for their group discussion. Candidates with work experience were also asked questions related to their job profile and the industry they were in.

### XLRI :

#### 1. BM

**Process:** Group Discussion + Personal Interview

**Group Discussion:** Candidates, in a group of 12, were allotted 25 minutes to discuss the topic. Of the 25 minutes, 2 minutes were given at the beginning to think on the topic and 2 minutes at the end to summarize the discussion. The topics given were general in nature. Some of the topics were \_

"Indian IT Industry is a low cost, cheap labour and low tech industry.",

"Family owned shops can never be enterprises.",

"Managers can't become leaders in business, politics and society".

**Personal Interview:** Panels comprising three members conducted interviews for the XLRI - BM course. The interviews did not have a set pattern. Some candidates were asked several questions pertaining to their subjects of study during graduation while other candidates were mostly asked questions about their goals and ambitions. Current affairs and general knowledge questions were asked in several interviews. Some of the candidates were also asked questions related to their hobbies. Some candidates stated that they were primarily asked questions related to their SOP, GD or their XAT essay; while others said that they were asked technical questions relevant to their academic background or questions regarding their work experience. All the interviews lasted for about 20-30 minutes.

## 2. HRM

**Process:** Group Discussion + Personal Interview

**Group Discussion / Group Exercise:** A topic was given and 7-8 factors / solutions for the same were provided which had to be ranked on an individual level. The objective of the discussion / exercise was to convince the group to have the same ranking as your personal ranking. The groups were allotted 2 minutes to think and 10-15 minutes for the discussion. Topics for the Group Discussion were typically general in nature. Some of the topics given to the candidates were \_

"How can Indian politics be improved?",

"Foreign Multinationals are better than Indian Companies.",

"Imagination vs. Hard-work".

**Personal Interview:** Candidates were interviewed by a panel comprising three members. The interviews lasted for about 20 minutes and were more like casual discussions and covered quite a broad range of topics including why HRM instead of BM. Candidates were asked questions regarding various points from their background. Some candidates were asked about their schools, colleges, hobbies and even their family backgrounds. Questions relevant to the candidate's academic background or job profile were also asked in a few cases.

**XIM, Bhubaneshwar:**

**Process:** Essay Writing + Personal Interview + Group Discussion(GD)

**Essay Writing:** XIMB used to have GD + Summaries till two years back. This time they are going to have WAT. The topics given for the discussions till last year were philosophical in nature. Some of the topics given were \_

"Euthanasia - To do or not",

"Will women empowerment lead to social development?",

"You are your own best friend and your worst enemy."

**Personal Interview:** Candidates were typically interviewed by panels comprising three members each. Interviews were generally around 10 to 20 minutes long but a few candidates reported being interviewed for almost 30 minutes. The interviews were quite pleasant. Candidates were extensively questioned on current affairs and general knowledge. Most of the candidates were asked why they wish to pursue HRM. A few candidates were asked questions pertinent to their undergraduate studies while a few candidates were also queried about their job profile in some detail. Some candidates were also questioned on their hobbies and areas of interest.

**NITIE, Mumbai:**

**Process:** Group Discussion + Personal Interview

**Group Discussion:** Each of the groups for the discussion comprised 7-10 candidates. Typically, each discussion lasted for 15 to 20 minutes with 2 minutes being given in the beginning for thinking about the topic and about 2 minutes in the end to conclude or summarize the discussion. The topics given to the candidates were general in nature. Some of the topics given were \_

"Will India always stay behind China?",

"Customer is the King' is still a myth in India",

"CSR is a myth or reality?",

"Was Budget 2013 disappointing?"

**Personal Interview:** Typically, interviews were conducted by panels comprising 3 to 4 members. While some interviews were about 20-25 minutes long, some finished in about 5 minutes. The interviews did not

follow any set pattern. While some of the candidates were largely queried only on current affairs and general knowledge topics, many candidates were queried on the nature of their work. Some candidates were also asked technical questions related to their academic background. A few candidates were asked questions related to their family background as well.

**SJMSOM, IIT Bombay:**

**Process:** Writing Skills (10%) + Personal Interview (30%)

**Writing Skills:** This was the first task and the candidates were given 30 minutes to finish the task. Each candidate was given a topic on which he/she had to write an essay of about 200-250 words. In addition to this, they were also given a passage which had to be summarized in about 50 words. Both the questions had equal weight in the selection process. The topics were related to business affairs and were analytical in nature. Some of the topics given for the essay were \_

"Will congestion tax actually lead to decongestion",

"Is a business strategy required in an ever changing world",

"Would imposition of extra tax on the super-rich slow down India's economic growth?"

The passages for summary were extracts from either the financial section of newspapers or business magazines.

**Personal Interview:** Interviews were typically conducted by a panel comprising 3 members. Each interview was about 15 to 25 minutes long. The interviews did not have a set pattern. While many of the candidates reported that they were asked a lot of questions related to their subjects of study during graduation, many candidates also reported that they were asked questions about the technical aspects of their job. Some candidates also reported that they were asked in detail about their industry, their company's businesses and competitiveness, etc. A few

candidates reported that they were asked questions on general awareness and a few candidates were asked to speak for 2 minutes on a socio-economic topic related to India. The candidates were given 30 seconds to organize their thoughts before they had to speak and the topics either came up during the interview or the candidates were asked to give a preference. Some of the topics given were \_

"Dangerously low literacy levels in rural India",

"Condition of Indian Agriculture",

"Land acquisition is good".

#### DMS, IIT Delhi:

**Process:** Group Discussion + Personal Interview

**Group Discussion:** Each Group Discussion lasted for about 10 to 15 minutes. Each group comprised 12 to 15 candidates. The topics given were general in nature. Some of the topics given were \_

"Social Security in India",

"How to reduce crime in the country?",

"Are women better managers than men",

"Demographic dividend of India".

**Personal Interview:** Panels comprising 2 to 4 members conducted the interviews. The interviews were generally 15 to 20 minutes long. Most of the interviews were quite pleasant and friendly. The interviews did not have a set pattern in terms of nature of questions asked, though many candidates reported that they were asked at least a few technical questions related to their subjects of study during graduation. Many candidates also reported that they were asked in detail about their goals and ambitions and were specifically queried about their reasons for choosing to pursue an MBA. Some candidates were also asked basic questions about their work experience.

#### IIFT, Delhi:

**Process:** Essay Writing Task + Group Discussion + Personal Interview

**Essay Writing:** For this task, candidates were given 20 minutes to write a 300-word essay on a given topic. Some of the topics were \_

"Indo - US Diplomatic Ties and way forward.",

"Polar Vortex and Cold weather: Does it disprove Global warming?",

"Is India better equipped to handle natural disasters?",

"Continuation of IPL for promotion of sports in India".

**Group Discussion:** Each group in the discussion round consisted of about 10 candidates. Typically, the groups were allowed a time of 5 minutes to think on the topic. Each candidate was then given 1.5-2 minutes to present his / her views on the topic. This was followed by an open discussion by everyone in the group. Overall, a group discussion lasted for around 20 to 30 minutes. Some of the topics that were given for discussion were –

"Are MNCs better than Indian Companies",

"Metropolitan cities are getting burdened under their own weigh",

"Are Indian children more oriented towards being followers rather than leaders?",

"Is it justifiable to judge a juvenile just on age and not on the nature of crime?".

**Personal Interview:** Interviews, typically, were 10 to 15 minutes long, though a few candidates had reported even shorter ones. Each interview was conducted by a panel consisting of two to three members. Most of the interviews were general in nature and the panelists were quite friendly. Candidates were asked their opinions on issues relating to current affairs and general knowledge. Many candidates were also asked about their goals and aims. In a few cases, candidates with prior work experience were asked, in detail, about the nature of their work and about the industry they worked in. In a few cases, some questions pertaining to the candidate's academic background were also asked.

### JBIMS, Mumbai

**Process:** Group Discussion + Personal Interview + Group Exercise

For 2016-18, the shortlisted candidates will have to appear for an in-person assessment that may consist of a group activity, personal interview and written ability test in Mumbai.

**Group Discussion:** Typically, each group comprised 10-12 candidates. The groups were given two topics and based on their preference, one of the topics was accepted for the Group Discussion. The groups were allotted 2 minutes to think about the topic and 15 minutes for the discussion. In some groups, each candidate was asked to conclude the discussion in one sentence. The topics given to the groups were general in nature. Some of the topics given were - "Use of drugs in sports is justified",

"India cannot afford to host extravagant sports events like Olympics",

"Sting operations - should they be banned?",

"Management v/s Administration".

**Personal Interview:** Each panel typically comprised 2 members. Interviews usually lasted for 10-15 minutes. The interviews did not have a set pattern and some candidates reported that their interview was more like a general discussion. A few candidates were extensively questioned about subjects related to their

academic background. Some candidates were questioned about current affairs while a few were questioned about their choice of college, career choice, etc.

#### **NMIMS, Mumbai:**

**Process:** Case Discussion + Personal Interview

**Group Discussion:** Each group consisted of about 10 candidates. Typically, each discussion lasted for 20 minutes. The group was given 2 minutes for thinking about the topic. In some of the discussions, around 5 minutes before the end of the discussion, the panel informed the candidates about how much time was left. The topics given to the candidates were general in nature. Further, the topics described some situation / scenario and the candidates were required to speak on the given situation. Some of the topics were \_

"Outsourcing vs. in-house modification of a new system",

"Partnership agreement"

One of the topics for Case Discussion was - Ethical Dilemma of 'Personal Profits vs. Social Responsibility'.

**Personal Interview:** Interview panels typically consisted of 2 to 3 members. Most of the interviews were about 15 to 20 minutes long. The interviews were quite pleasant and friendly and similar to discussions. The interviews did not follow any set pattern. Candidates were largely queried only on current affairs

and general knowledge topics. A few candidates were also asked basic questions relevant to their academic background and a few were questioned on their opinions regarding the ethics involved in certain situations.

#### **TISS - HRM**

**Process:** Essay Writing Task / Pre-Interview Test + Personal Interview + Group Discussion

**Essay Writing / Pre-Interview Test:** Each candidate was allotted 35 minutes for writing an essay on the given topic. Two topics were given to each candidate and he / she had to select one of the topics and write an essay on that. The topics given were general and analytical in nature. Some of the topics given were \_

"Wage differentials across different sectors and locations",

"Role of B-schools in producing truly global leaders",

"Your biggest enemy is fear of the unknown",

"The future belongs to those who predict the possibilities before they become obvious",

"Globalization and employment: India in comparison with the developed countries",

"Reservations and Population - Boon or Bane".

**Personal Interview:** Personal Interviews were typically conducted by panels comprising three members. Generally, interviews were around 20 minutes long. Many of the candidates reported that they were extensively queried on their reasons for choosing the Human Resource Management field and their reasons for choosing TISS. Some of the candidates reported that they were queried only about the points that they had mentioned in their forms.

#### **IRMA, Anand:**

**Process:** Admission Test + Group Activity + Personal Interview

**Admission Test:** All applicants for IRMA Admissions have to additionally appear for "Issues of Social Concern" test (online)

**Personal Interview:** Interviews were typically conducted by two member panels and were generally about 20 to 30 minutes long. Most of the candidates were queried on the information in their form, their knowledge of current affairs and about why they wished to join IRMA. Many candidates were also asked to link their subjects of study during graduation or their work profile to the rural areas and to explain how they can benefit rural areas. A few candidates were also questioned on their academic background.

#### **MICA, Ahmedabad:**

**Process:** Group Exercise + Personal Interview

**Group Exercise:** Groups were allotted 30 minutes time for the Group Exercise (GE). Typically, each group comprised around 6 candidates. In the GE, the group was given a topic / task and was asked to implement / execute the task in a stipulated time. Typically, 20-25 minutes were allotted for execution of the task and 5-10 minutes for presentation of what had been done by the team.

Some of the tasks given for the group exercise were-

1. Present campaigns for 5 animal contestants. This is to introduce democracy in the jungle and end the lion's dictatorship.
2. Street play aimed at rural audience, theme was preventing female feticide.
3. Choose a brand ambassador for HP laser jet printer and create a jingle for the same.
4. Enact a satirical TV news channel where the anchor could be anybody from a baba to a dancer.

**Personal Interview:** Interviews were conducted by panels of three people. Most of the interviews were around 20 to 25 minutes long. Many of the candidates were asked about their reasons for joining MICA and were also asked technical as well as general knowledge questions related to marketing. Candidates were asked questions regarding their SOP and were also asked about their goals and ambitions and areas of interest. A few of the candidates were also given certain tasks to perform during their interview. For example,

designing an advertisement, writing a poem, etc. Some candidates were also asked questions related to their academic background. At the end of the day, two lists were released. One was the spot offers list which had the names of the candidates who were given a spot admission to the college. The second list was a merit-cum-wait list which was combined and finalized at the end of the whole process. Candidates were admitted based on their ranking in this consolidated list.

#### **SIBM, Pune:**

**Process:** Group Discussion (GD) + Group Task (GT) + Personal Interview (PI)

The process begins with the Personal Interviews of all the candidates. This was followed by the Group Discussion (GD) and the Group Task (GT).

**Group Task:** The candidates are divided into groups for the GDs. The same group performs a particular task that needs a good amount of strategy and cohesion between the team members. One of the group tasks from the previous years has been something wherein 10 members of the group had to stand on just 2 bricks for 15 seconds.

#### **SCMHRD, Pune:**

**Process:** WAT + Group Discussion + Personal Interview

**Group Discussion:** There were two rounds of GDs. Each of these GDs was of 10-15 minutes each. First one was based on a caselet while the next one was

based on a video that was shown to the group.

**WAT:** The students had to write two essays of 300 words each within 30 minutes. One of these was based on a topic while the other one was based on a picture shown to the students.

**Personal Interview:** The panel consists of two members. The interviews were extremely smooth and lasted for about 10-15 minutes. The questions were asked mostly on the candidate's work experience and his academics.

#### **IMT, Ghaziabad:**

**Process:** WAT + Personal Interview + Group Exercise

**WAT:** Each candidate was allotted 30 minutes for writing an essay on the given topic. The topics given were general and analytical in nature. Some topics from the last few years are \_

"Is only RBI responsible for curbing inflation in India?",

"Security Cameras and Privacy" and

"Financial inclusion makes economic policies unstable".

**Personal Interview:** Typically, panels comprising two members conducted the interviews. Interviews were around 15 to 20 minutes long. The interviews were pleasant and friendly. Candidates were largely questioned on their goals

and ambitions. Current affairs and general knowledge questions related to the candidates' subjects of study during graduation or pertaining to the candidates' personal interest areas were also asked. A few candidates reported that they were asked academic questions related to their graduation subjects. Some candidates were asked about their work experience and why they wish to leave their job and go for an MBA.

### **GIM**

**Process:** Group Discussion + Personal Interview

**Group Discussion:** Each of the groups comprised 7 to 10 candidates. Groups were allotted 1 minute to think about the topic. After this, each candidate was given 20 seconds for an opening remark. Then, the group had to discuss the topic for around 10 to 15 minutes. After this, each of the candidates was given 20 seconds for a closing remark. Subsequently, candidates were given 10 minutes to write on the topic. In this write-up of 250 words, they could choose to summarize the discussion or write their own views on the topic. Some of the topics given were \_

"Is the India growth story over?",

"Is reservation for women a good idea?",

"MBA is a must to succeed in the commercial world",

"What is your realistic view / vision of industries in India in 2025/2026?"

**Personal Interview:** Typically, two member panels conducted the interviews and the panel for group discussion and interview was the same. Each interview was around 15 to 20 minutes long, though a few candidates said that their interview ended in just 5 minutes. Candidates were typically queried on why they wish to study in GIM and why GIM should choose them. Some of the candidates were asked about their personal background, hobbies, areas of interest, goals and ambitions. Some candidates were also asked about their workplace and job profile. A few candidates were asked current affairs questions as well.

### **K.J. Somaiva Institute of Management Studies and Research (SIMSR), Mumbai**

**Process:** Case Based Group Discussion + Personal Interview

**SOP:** The candidates were required to write the answers to two questions as a part of this round. The first question was about the strengths, assets and liabilities of a candidate and the second question was regarding the choice of management as a career and their long term goals. A total of 15 minutes was provided to the candidates for this round. There was no word limit.

**Case Analysis:** In the case analysis round, a caselet was given along with two questions to each candidate. Candidates had to write the answers to the questions in 20 minutes. Some of the topics were \_

"CSR",

"Advertisement in today's world",

"Employee engagement measures in Google" and

"Lean in - empowerment of women".

"What can we do to promote Indians?",

"Does India need more managers or entrepreneurs?" and

"Importance of small scale and large scale industry in India".

**Personal Interview:** Each panel typically consisted of 2 members. Interviews usually lasted about 20-30 minutes. Candidates with work experience were asked basic questions about their job profile and the industry they worked in. Some of the candidates were asked questions pertaining to their candidate profile form and current affairs. Some candidates were described a situation and were asked how the candidate

would react to the situation while some were asked to mention a difficult situation they faced and how they overcame it. Some candidates were also asked why they wanted to join SIMSR and about the subjects studied during their graduation.

**Extempore:** An extempore was also part of the Interview process. The candidates were given two topics out of which one had to be chosen and were asked to speak on it. Some of the topics given were—

"Can the world afford to ignore India?",

"Drug addiction among youth",

## My Encounters - Interviews

My Encounters is an endeavour to keep you updated with the experiences that students have had at the various B Schools. It is a compilation of the experiences of CLites from different backgrounds. These encounters are not necessarily of last year. These span over the past few years. We hope this would give you a good insight of what you are likely to experience on the D-day.

**Note:** *Comments with in brackets are the observations of the students regarding the behaviour, response, nature etc. of the interviewers.*

### 1) @ IIM - A

#### Interview:

There were two gentlemen (A and B)

**A:** Tell us something about BlackRock.

**Me:** I explained how it is the largest asset management firm in the world

**B:** (smiling) That's a copybook answer. Let's get you out of your comfort zone. By the way, which coaching center?

**Me:** CL

**A:** Explain what is asset management?

**Me:** Explained

**A:** So how does BlackRock earn money?

**Me:** I told them about the various businesses that we are in. I explained how we earn money.

**A:** Tell me more about the enterprise suite of the applications that you talked about.

**Me:** Explained that as well.

**A:** How is taxation done for asset management?

**Me:** I thought a bit about this but told them that I didn't know about this.

**B:** (Laughing) finally we have reached the point where you are uncomfortable.

**Me:** (I smiled).

**B:** (They took my AWT and asked me as to why I had written that Bharat Ratna should be given only to the birth centenary)

**Me:** Explained why I wrote that and gave explanations for it. They seemed satisfied when I said that all the freedom fighters should be given Bharat Ratna but people should not go on asking for Bharat Ratna for people like our rulers. I mentioned Qutub-ud-din Aibak somewhere over here.

**B:** When was he the ruler of India?

**Me:** In the 1100s.

**B:** Are you sure?

**Me:** Yes, they were followed by the Khiljis, Tughlaqs and the rest (This is where things started going downhill)

**B:** Name 3 Tughlaq rulers.

**Me:** Sir, I only know about the most famous or the infamous ones (mentioned Mohammad bin Tughlaq here).

**B:** Why was he infamous?

**Me:** The policies that he had were brilliant but were far ahead of their time. (Started explaining about the capital change and somehow said that the capital must be in the center of the kingdom)

**B:** Don't you think Delhi was in the center of his kingdom?

**Me:** (Suddenly remembering) yes sir. The southern states had their own rulers at that time.

**B:** Can you name some dynasties in South India at that time?

**Me:** I'm not sure about that time. But I can name some dynasties from south India. (Mentioned the Cholas in TN and the Cheras in Kerala)

**B:** You still have two states left.

**Me:** For AP I can't remember the name of the dynasty but I remember the name of a member of his court.

**B:** Who?

**Me:** Tenali Raman

**B:** I think the person you are looking for is Krishna Deva Raya. Where was his capital?

**Me:** Not sure. I think it was somewhere near Vijayawada.

**B:** Vijaynagar is what you are looking for.

**A:** What are your other interests?

**Me:** Guitar and Football

**B:** Name 4 players of the current Indian national team

**Me:** (Struggled a bit but ended up giving 4 names)

**B:** Ok. Subrata Paul played for which city in the ISL?

**Me:** Mumbai.

**B:** Sure?

**Me:** Yes sir

**B:** Ok tell me the name of one more.

**Me:** (I thought a lot but could not answer)

**B:** You look like somebody who could tell me the entire 15 members of the England team

**Me:** (smiled at that)

**B:** Take a chocolate.

**Me:** Thanks sir

## 2) @ IIM - A

" I was the 2nd person to be interviewed and the 1st girl was offered a toffee as she left".

**Panel:** What does it mean if we give an interviewee a sweet at the end of the interview?

**Me:** I think its just random, sir. You're not sending any message through it.

**Panel:** If I go from Bombay to London to New York and back to Bombay, which are the major water bodies that I will pass?

**Me:** Sir, do I have to name the rivers as well?

**Panel:** Laughs - no, then there will be too many water bodies.

**Me:** Mediterranean sea, Caspian sea, Atlantic ocean, Pacific ocean, Indian ocean and Bay of Bengal.

**Panel:** What about as your leaving Bombay?

**Me:** Arabian sea

**Panel:** Name a river which flows into the Arabian sea and one that flows into the Bay of Bengal

**Me:** Bay of Bengal will be Ganga. (On Arabian sea, I ventured some guesses).

**Panel:** Name a dam, which will help xyz states?

**Me:** Thought for a moment - Sir, if I had four options I am sure I would pick the right one.

**Panel:** (After seeing the form) why was there a dip in your performance in the 2nd year of college?

**Me:** Sir, the dip in performance was in the first and second year. Explained reexamination.

However I made a major turn around in the third year when I did well in my college academics. I worked part time and did well in the CAT Exam.

**Panel:** What was your favorite subject?

**Me:** Financial Accounting and Marketing.

**Panel:** (Questions on depreciation, straight line, WDV, depreciation of software, principals of accounting etc.) Why is it that an item might not appear in books but is still physically in existence?

**Me:** (Explained pure theory questions well. Got stuck on application questions.)

**Panel:** Tell us the proof of Pythagoras Theorem?

**Me:** (I gave a wrong answer. Said something, which gets proved through Pythagoras rather than other way round.)

**Panel:** So you are very passionate about basketball?

**Me:** Sir, I've played it through school and college. And in school, it was my first priority after my studies.

**Panel:** (Question on some player.)

**Me:** (I had never heard of him, accepted my ignorance.)

**Panel:** So you play it and don't watch it?

**Me:** Yes sir.

**Panel:** What have you learnt from basketball from a management perspective?

**Me:** There are occasions when you have to give up personal glory for the success of team, and limit your contribution to passes rather than shots.

Secondly, there can be a turn around at any moment, so we should not lose heart when things are not going our way and if we are winning again we should not take things for granted.

#### **Our Analysis:**

This was a potentially challenging interview but the candidate handled the questions well. His answers showed that he had prepared well for questions on general affairs.

#### **3) @ IIM - A**

The candidate before me had a long interview (close to 30 minutes). I was the second to go in for the PI. There were two panelists. I will call them P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>. Both the professors were chilled out. There was absolutely no stress.

**P<sub>2</sub>:** (Got my folder from me but did not open it).

**P<sub>1</sub>:** So you work.

**Me:** Yes sir. I have been working with .....for 18 months as an Associate DBA and my daily responsibilities include Space Monitoring, Object Creation, Object Migration, Schema refreshes and Troubleshooting Generic issues.

**P<sub>1</sub>:** Can you draw a chart of what you do at work

**Me:** (I did not know what exactly he was looking for. So explained about my work.)

**P1:** You work for an internal customer. Is it US-based? What is the structure?

**Me:** I said that the division is split into 2 parts - FMR for North American Businesses and FIL for serving other parts of the world. (As I was speaking P1 was drawing an organizational structure chart.)

**P2:** Can you help P1 with the chart?

**P1:** Yes, tell me where you fit in the organization

**Me:** (Drew the structure, explained where I come in and also talked a few lines about the general business.)

(I was hoping that he would ask about the various businesses. I used a lot of financial terms; I thought he would at least ask me to explain them. I said in addition to the financial services biz, my company is into many other businesses as well. He did not ask me to elaborate on any of these.)

We had a discussion about the work and interactions with customers. This went on for 3-4 minutes. P1 was of the view that my work is pretty ordinary and I have no role. I said that when the databases are running fine, we have to monitor and run checks. But when there are production issues we play a critical role. Business continuity is important. If a production database is down, it will impact our customers and the ensuing financial loss could be huge.

**P1:** What is a development database? How do you make changes to the databases?  
(Before this we had talked about what a production database is)

**Me:** (Explained)

**P2:** Explain more about your day-to-day activities

**Me:** (Explained)

**P2:** They are all already scheduled?

**Me:** Yes. We have a lot of scheduled activity and there are ad-hoc issues at times. Scheduled weekly activity will be on Fridays or weekends. We are prepared for that.

**P2:** You have done a course named "Resource management techniques" what is it?

**Me:** It is actually "Operations research".

**P2:** What did you study in this course?

**Me:** Simplex, Game Theory, PERT CPM.....

**P2:** What is the application of simplex

**Me:** (I had no clue and I said so.)

**P2:** Game theory?

**Me:** I explained how behavior can be analyzed and how we can decide on the action to take based on the scenario.

**P2:** Give me one specific application. (He pushed a sheet of paper across).

**Me:** I could think of nothing else but Prisoners Dilemma.

**P2:** Explain Prisoner's Dilemma

**Me:** Suppose that there are 2 prisoners A and B. The police has little or no evidence. So A and B are held in separate cells. A doesn't know what B is going to do. B doesn't know what A is going to do. In such a scenario, A will assume the worst and think B will turn approver. So A will agree to give evidence against B. Similarly with B.

**P2:** I did not get the whole thing. Can you repeat?

**Me:** (I repeated the whole thing more clearly. I explained that A doesn't know what B is going to do. So, he will think if B turns approver while he maintains silence, then he will be punished and B will escape. On the other hand, if B were to remain silent and A turns approver, A can escape. So, in most cases thinking along similar lines both A and B will turn approver. But, had both of them remained silent, both of them could have escaped.

**P2:** But you are just giving me a story, where does game theory come in

**Me:** I said that Prisoners Dilemma is a Game Theory problem.

**P2:** (Just laughed)

**P2:** Your undergraduate marks are quite low though you have good scores till Std 12th.

**Me:** I was in the top 5 in tenth and 12th. I was in top 20 in UG. I was not very concerned with grades and was involved in a lot of extra curricular activities.

**P1:** What were these extra curricular activities exactly?

**Me:** I was a coordinator for placements and the secretary for the cultural club. I have organized placement related training for my batch mates and juniors. I have also gone to few companies to make placement related presentations.

**P1:** Good

**P2:** No A's or S'. Only B C D (S is grade for 90+. A is for 80+) .Its been 7 years since you were a good student. Will you be able to learn?

**Me:** I said that in UG I did not realize the importance of marks. Now I know that it is very important. Also, after coming to work, I learnt to prioritize and balance my interests.

P2 and P1 looked at each other and said that's it.

I was about to leave. P2 said, you are from Tamil Nadu right, let me ask you something. What's your view on the LTTE Issue?

**Me:** I said that in India we equate the LTTE with the Tamils. LTTE is only a smaller aspect of the problem. The Tamils have been oppressed for a long time. In opposing or fighting a militant outfit, we should not forget the humanitarian issues involving a lot of civilians. In India, parties have taken strong stances and are not prepared for any kind of compromise. So India is not in a position to mediate. The UN should intervene and call for a ceasefire.

**P1:** The LTTE is still fighting. Don't you think that LTTE should be destroyed first and then we can have all this?

**Me:** Destroying the LTTE may not be possible. Youngsters today are growing up watching this. Tomorrow, they will also take up arms. So possibly that's not the right solution. The fight will not end but will only change forms. International organizations should convince Sri Lanka to announce a ceasefire and ask Sri Lanka to invest in social infrastructure in the Tamil areas as a start.

**P1:** What should India do? Oppose LTTE?

**Me:** Yes, but should support the Tamils

**P1:** That is fine.

**P2:** decided to take a look at my folder. He just flipped through the folder for a few seconds. Then he smiled and asked me to take a toffee.

#### Our Analysis:

Overall, this was a good interview though there was certainly some scope for improvement. While the candidate was able to answer most of the questions reasonably well, he could have prepared better on his academic background. Apart from this, his interview was quite good. He also expressed maturity in thought through good answers on the LTTE - Sri Lanka issue.

#### 4) @ IIM - B

"I was second person to be interviewed. There were two panelists. One of them was looking at my certificates while the other started asking questions."

**P1:** So you like history? (I had referred to Rome, Nero and Marie Antoinette in the GD)

**Me:** Not really. It was my least favorite subject in school.

**P1:** Did you read any history book before coming here?

**Me:** No, sir.

**P1:** So you read newspapers and books? (I had mentioned reading as a hobby)

**Me:** I try to keep in touch, sir.

**P1:** What magazines do you read?

**Me:** India today, Week, Business World.

**P1:** Who is the head of India Today?

**Me:** Mr. Aroon Poorie

**P1:** Are you sure? Then who is Prabhu Chawla?

**Me:** I am not sure, sir. He might be a supervisor or something related but I know that Aroon Poorie got some award recently for longest standing editor of a weekly.

**P1:** Times of India launched a paper recently. Can you name it?

**Me:** I don't know, sir.

**P1:** Do you watch news channels a lot?

**Me:** I try to be in touch, sir.

**P1:** Which was the news channel launched recently?

**Me:** Times Now

**P1:** Who is behind it?

**Me:** Don't know, sir.

**P1:** The Times Group?

**Me:** Might be. But I am not sure, sir.

(Note P2 enters into the picture as well)

**P2:** Tell me, do you think doing a management right now will really help you? In the class we will be talking about ..... (he took some names I didn't know) and you won't know what we are talking about.

**Me:** I will work hard, sir. Read a lot and try to get into things as much as possible.

**P2:** So you think that by reading a lot you will be able to understand?

**Me:** Besides reading, interactions with faculty and other students will inculcate learning.

Moreover, since you yourself take people without work experience in your course, there must be some logic behind it.

**P2:** But don't you think that by working for some time you will learn a lot about corporate culture?

**Me:** No, sir. Right now, I don't have any preconceived notions and it will be easier for me to learn. If I work in the corporate world, I may develop certain biases. Moreover, the value addition I get from an IIM now will be immense. If I work for 3 years, I may not be looking at an IIM, I might be looking at Harvard. (Both laugh at it)

**P2:** So you have done your engineering from a private college?

**Me:** Yes, sir.

**P2:** Why not a Government College?

**Me:** Sir, that time I was not aiming for a Government College. I was aiming for a good private college and this was a decent one so I took admission in it.

**P2:** You were not aiming for a Govt. College! (looks at me in disbelief)

**Me:** Yes, sir. At that time, my philosophy in life was that the best things in life are free. I felt that all those people who studied and worked hard were frittering their life away.

**P1:** So, you didn't study for CAT?

**Me:** No, sir. I did.

**P1:** How long?

**Me:** 6-8 months

**P1:** Then what happened to your philosophy of enjoying life and not working hard?

**Me:** Sir, by then my philosophy had changed and I realised that mediocrity breeds and fosters mediocrity. If I wanted to be the best, then I had to be with the best, and to be with the best, one really needs to work hard.

**P1:** Ok. What subjects did you like in Engineering?

**Me:** Micro Processors and Computer Networks.

**P1:** What is the latest Micro Processors released?

**Me:** I think AMD Thurion... (He shrugged as if he didn't know.)

**Me:** Yes sir, I even saw an ad of it on a billboard a couple of days ago.

**P1:** So what did you have in your syllabus?

**Me:** We had 8086 and 8051 Micro Processors and Micro Chips.

**P1:** So what is 8086?

**Me:** It is a 16 bit Micro Processor with a 16 data bus and a 16 bit address bus.

**P2:** Ok! what is Stereotyping?

**Me:** (I got confused, the question came from no where). It is the mindset that this sort of people, or that sort of cultural group is only capable of a particular type of behaviour or attitude. It is getting the idea that they are not capable of anything else.

**P2:** So tell me what is the stereotype that the PWG (Peoples War Group) cadres have of the MNCs and IT people?

**Me:** (WHAAAATTTT?????) Pardon me sir...??

**P2:** (He repeated the question)

**Me:** I think they must have the idea that these people must be, you know, skimming the cream, not doing any work. But I don't really know sir, I've never been a member (I tried to smile).

**P2:** (he did not reciprocate the smile) But you should have an opinion?

**Me:** Yes sir, but they are not really active in our region... the closest we ever came to hearing about them was when they attacked Chandrababu Naidu's convoy...

**P2:** Ok, thanks. Good luck.

#### **Our Analysis:**

This interview is a classic example of what can potentially happen if a candidate is not thoroughly prepared. He had mentioned reading as a hobby but in the interview, he was not able to answer questions on general affairs and thus came across as a very under prepared and possibly insincere person.

#### **5) @ IIM - B**

"I arrived at Shangri La at 1pm, quite early and devoured a full plate of biscuits (as usual I hadn't eaten anything for breakfast). I was chatting with people. I was acquainted with four of them, thanks to the CL boot camp and the Pagalguy website. I read the newspaper for a while and chatted with those who had their interviews in the morning but didn't get to know anything in particular. I was feeling weird because every girl in there wore a business suit and I was the only one clad in Indian apparel. At 2.30 pm, the panelists came inside. There were 2 panels for the interviews, with two faculty in each. One teaches operations at IIMB, the second teaches Entrepreneurship, the third teaches Systems and the fourth was an expert in Finance.

They read out the list, much to my chagrin I was the last one.

My turn came at 6.05 pm. It was a funny interview. They were laughing at everything. I must have

looked funny. I was laughing as well. I entered the room, wished them and sat down."

**P1:** Ah! A Doctor! I love Doctors! I want diversity at IIMB. But it doesn't make any sense. Yashaswi, why? Why do you want to waste your Medical education?

**Me:** I want to be the best that I can be, I feel that I will be able to achieve a lot more and also give back a lot more to the society post an MBA degree.

**P1:** Do you know how you have answered Yashaswi? Do you watch those contests where women dance in nice clothes?

**Me:** I squealed - Sir, Miss World...

**P1:** Yes, Miss World. Do you watch it Yashaswi? Your answer is like that. A philanthropic mission after getting the best. I ask you what do you know about health systems in India? Do you know anything?

**Me:** Yes Sir, I know a lot.

**P1:** (interrupting) Have you been to rural areas, Yashaswi? You said you want to go....

**Me:** I told them about my research and the VC was pleased.

**P1:** So, you know a lot. eh? Why don't you just go ahead and open it now?

**Me:** .....

(All this time the young man was continuously smiling, staring at me)

**P1:** So, in that case study, did you guys arrive at one conclusion? As you have written in the summary.

**Me:** Yes, sir. As a group we did arrive at the conclusion that the gold medal should not be awarded to the student.

**P1:** Will you give the gold medal to him?

**Me:** Sir, I'll get an enquiry done.....

**P1:** (interrupting) The enquiry revealed nothing. Now will you?

**Me:** I'll talk to him.

**P2:** What if the student doesn't like you?

**Me:** No, Sir. I think he copied.

**P1:** But nothing has been proved.

**Me:** But Sir, the recruitment company.....

**P1:** They are a fraud company. They are lying. Now will you?

**Me:** Sir, I'll get an enquiry done.....

**P2:** (interrupting) My dear girl, enquiry revealed nothing.

**Me:** No Sir, of the company. (they laughed)

**P1:** Now, Yashaswi, finally, will you give him the gold medal or not?

**Me:** (firmly) No, Sir. I will not.

**P1:** Can't he have your 'benefit of doubt'?

**Me:** No, Sir. He won't.

**P1:** Aren't you an adamant little girl, Yashaswi? You are an angry young woman. Are you getting angry, Yashaswi?

**Me:** No, Sir. I'm not.

**P1:** You are.

**Me:** No, Sir. I'm not.

**P1:** So, finally tell me why wouldn't you give him the medal since you have no proof?

**Me:** Sir, because I truly feel so.

**P2:** What do you truly feel? That you are an adamant little girl and an angry young woman? (They both laughed and I too joined)

**Me:** No, Sir. That I won't give him the medal.

(They both laughed again. My professors had written in the letters of reference that I lose temper)

**P1:** Why do you get angry, Yashaswi?

**Me:** Sir, I don't get angry. I just like to express in a firm manner.

**P1:** Ok, Yashaswi. What do you think of Nikita? Did she summarize well? What did you talk to her about.

**Me:** .....

**P2:** (finally)

And what did others tell you? How are we taking interviews? Did you talk?

**Me:** I told them particularly about Abhishek's experience.

**P1:** You knew him. Did you?

**Me:** I did, sir, through pagalguy.com.

**P1:** Did you go to the bootcamp?

**Me:** I did, sir.

**P1:** So, what else you did you want to answer?

**P2:** (interrupting) Yashaswi, how good are you at Maths? Lots of Maths is done at IIMB.

(I was given a problem, I calculated the wrong answer as usual and he laughed)

**P1:** You know, Yashaswi, I give this problem to every Doctor and every one arrives at the same wrong answer.

(I said nothing)

**P1:** Are you tired, Yashaswi? You must be used to coming in the last.... due to your name.

**Me:** Well Sir, It is too late to change my name.

(They laughed.....very loud)

**P1:** je ne comprendre pas Francais (I don't understand French)

**Me:** (I mumbled something...He laughed)

**P2:** Do you have any questions for us?

**Me:** (finally taking control) Yes Sir. I was wondering why you aren't asking me to recite one of my poems as I'm a state level champion in poetry.

They laughed again. I was wondering if I looked funny or my hair was done badly.....

**P1:** Ok, go ahead.

**Me:** .....

**P1:** That's very nice Yashaswi. You write well.

**Me:** (very pleased) Sir, shall I read out another one?

(They laughed.....)

**P1:** Ok, go ahead..

**Me:** .....

**P1:** Wow! That was a very good one, Yashaswi. You seem to be a poet and a social worker and a doctor...

**Me:** Sir, the 3rd one?

(they laughed.....)

**P1:** Ok.....

**P1:** (interrupting) Yashaswi, your family is a miracle. One brother at IIMA and the other from IIMC. Why do you want to come to B?

**Me:** I think that would balance out the whole situation.

**P1:** How absurd... give me a different answer. What differentiated you from your brothers?

**Me:** .....

**P1:** (persisted) why "B" Yashaswi?

**P1:** Thank you very much Yashaswi.....

**Me:** Thank you, Sirs.

#### **Our Analysis:**

This was a very interesting interview. The panel were interested in judging the personality of the candidate rather than the knowledge level. The candidate handled the situation well, though a bit less rigidity may have been better.

#### **6) @ IIM - B**

"Our Panel had Mr. Dr. Mathew J Manimala (Organisational Behavior & Human Resource Management), Mr. Raghavan Srinivasan (Finance and Control)."

**(Here the two panelists are referred to as S and M respectively)**

**S:** Come in, and give me your file.

(He took my certificate file and was going through it.)

**M:** Come in Tejas, have a seat.

**Me:** (I Nodded, smiled at both of them, said hello and sat down)

(I don't know but I was highly exuberant and smiling throughout the interview.

It could be the effect of the previous night that I didn't sleep a wink. I was calm and was not getting worried.)

**M:** Tejas, your profile shows you have been interested in Science so why Business.

You have written that you want to have a business of your own.

**Me:** Sir, I have always been interested in business and now after watching so many projects taking off and so many entrepreneurs making it. I feel excited after my summer training. I did my summers in a firm manufacturing Methyl Salicylate.

**M:** Methyl Salicylate? Is it a pharmaceutical product? Was that a pharmaceutical firm?

**Me:** No, sir. It is a chemical unit. Methyl Salicylate, is a constituent of most pain balms and creams, used in 10 % strength and although it is replaced by Diclofenacit, it is still used in numerous preparations. That unit was setup by a lady, who is a chemical engineer.

Being a housewife, she could not give sufficient time for it. She even had to close the unit down after Chinese goods flooded the market and yet, she didn't compromise on

quality and was able to get going again. I am going to give my full energy to my business and therefore I feel confident that I will make it.

**M:** So, have you decided about the business you are going to run?

**Me:** No, sir. I haven't been able to make up my mind. I guess I will take up the Methyl Salicylate thing. The market has the scope for another player. And with the pharma business faring so well ...

**M:** How are the pharma businesses doing?

**Me:** Sir, they have been making hay and the sun has been shining on them throughout.

They have come up with so many different strategies - there is the generics market, R&D collaborations, acquisitions and the like.

**M:** What strategies have they come up with?

**Me:** Sir, they have come up with so many strategies...

First, there is the **generics** market, something we have been doing for long. The companies have gained a global foothold. **Dr. Reddy's** acquired **Betapharm** in Europe, **Mylan** acquired **Docpharma**. But there's so much competition in the generics market, the day **Bayer** lost patent for Ciprofloxacin four firms launched generic copies and the prices went down by **80%**. There's a lot of competition here particularly from other players like the Israeli **Teva**. Soon companies are expected to cater to 1/3rd of generics market by 2010. Then, there is the field of **Biogenetics**.

They are products derived from animal sources for e.g. Insulin. These are considered more effective and are also more costly. Obviously, there's more money to be made in there. We are already at the forefront with **Biocon** leading the group.

Then there are the **R&D partnerships**, for e.g., there is **Rheoscience** a Danish company which has its expertise in Obesity. They have tied up with an Indian company **Connexios**. This is funded by **N.S.Raghavan**. Now Connexios has its expertise in molecular biology and computation. So, these two have come together. Then, there are firms like **Jubilant Organosys** which have identified certain metabolic pathways, documented the information and developed expertise in it.

**S:** What do you know about Glenmark?

**Me:** I don't know anything about that individual company except that it does well in the stock market. **Aventis** is the leader though.

**S:** What do you know about Merck? That's a big company, right?

**Me:** Yes Sir, they are a very big firm. They were in a big controversy regarding a drug for arth arthr... - the disease of joint pains (S helps me - arthritis)..Yes Sir, **Vioxx**...the drug was reported to increase the risk of heart diseases for prolonged users. The drug was a multi-billion dollar one and caused a big controversy.

**S:** That was a COX 2 inhibitor, right?

**Me:** Yes, sir.

**S:** So what is COX 2? Are all cox 2 drugs dangerous?

**Me:** Sir, every drug targets certain proteins involved in the disease formation. Cox 2 is the mechanism involved in pain generation. Certain old drugs targeted another pathway, while most new ones target both. Most Cox 2 drugs have major side effects. Diclofenac has been found toxic in animals. Nimusulide is banned in about 33 countries.

**M :** But, it is used here.

**Me:** Yes, sir. Dr. Reddy's sell it as Nise. So, these drugs have side-effects but are not dangerous as such. (After a pause) Sir, I remembered one model I particularly liked..

(Mellowed me to speak) Sir, Advinus, no ...Dishman, a Gujarat based firm acquired Carbogen, a big generics manufacturer in Europe and another company Amcis, in Canada, which manufactures highly potent drugs. So when a company approaches them the European firm manufactures the drug for phase 1, 2 of clinical trials and if they need the drug further. Amcis does it in later stages and if they need some cheap manufacturing, the Gujarat facility comes in, since we manufacture it the cheapest. After these acquisitions, they have been getting more clients. I was particularly fascinated by this model.

**S:** Tejas, what do you think of the Drug price control act? Should it be there?

**Me:** Yes, I think it should be there. Sir, as in the case of the recent controversy, Novartis has an anti-leukemia drug Gleevec which costs 1,20,000 while the generic

drug costs 8000. Therefore, a consumer can benefit from such a rule.

**S:** Do you know that in the R&D section of all pharma giants there are many Finance people? Can you tell why...?

**Me:** Sir, if I'm not mistaken it's the report by **Bain and Company** which stated that last year the pharma majors invested **39 billion \$** in research, that's more than 5 times the turnover of their Indian pharmaceutical industry and yet they could patent only **20-25** drugs. It is estimated that about **1.7 billion \$** are spent to launch a new drug 1/4th of which is spent in clinical trials alone; and for every 1000 new molecules that a company identifies only 1 ends up hitting the marker, so they need the finance people.

**M:** You are very good at Pharma. What do you like besides Pharma?

**Me:** Sir, I like watching movies. I'm very passionate about watching Hollywood and foreign language movies.

**M:** So, who are your favorite actors?

**Me:** Sir, I have no favorite actors. I have favorite directors.

**M:** Who are your favorite directors ?

**Me:** Sir, I have enjoyed watching Kubrick and Kurosawa.

**M:** That's good. So, which movies do you see?

**Me:** Sir, when a movie is available I usually read about it on IMDb , the critique by Roger Ebert who's a Pulitzer prize winning critic (M nodding strongly). And after getting to know enough about it, if I feel like it, I watch it.

**M:** Since you are so passionate about it and enjoy reading the critiques about it, won't you ever direct one?

**Me:** Sir, so far I have enjoyed watching movies. Never tried my hand at making one or any part of it. There's an alumnus of my college Mr. L.C.Singh who founded Nihilent Technologies, worked at it for 20-25 yrs and produced a movie Benaras. So I might do that but I can't say for sure.

**M :** But you won't direct one. Just produce one.

**Me:** Yes Sir.

**S:** Small and medium size firms in America use Hollywood style of marketing.  
What is that?

**Me:** Sir, I'm not aware of that.

**S :** Think...

**Me:** Sir, I saw a movie in which...

**S:** No. What do you understand by Hollywood style of marketing?

**M**e : Sir, very aggressive marketing and product placement.

**S**: Not that...

**M**e: Sir, I don't know.

**S**: What they do is - recover profits from the distributor and it is the distributor who then takes the responsibility.

**M**e: Sir, I knew that it's the big studios with deep pockets that mostly do the marketing

**S**: So can this be done for pharmaceuticals?

**M**e: No sir, it would not be proper. For films it's fine. But Pharma has potentially harmful drugs...so it's not feasible.

**S**: Can India manufacture any drug if it wants to?

**M**e: Sir, not under ordinary circumstances but if there's an emergency epidemic-like condition then the country can. WTO has the provision of 'compulsory licenses' to deal with that. As it happened in the case of Avian flu, it was considered to be an epidemic.

**S**: Don't you think that the Avian flu was highly exaggerated? How many deaths have actually occurred by this flu?

**M**e: Sir, I don't know the exact number but I think they were very few.

**S**: And how many die of Malaria everyday?

**M**e: Sir, many die.

**S**: Then don't you think the Pharma companies exaggerated the problem?

**M**e: Sir, we tend to equate Pharma companies with the devil but our perception is shaped by the media.

**S**: Do you know how many died in the Spanish flu of the 1920's?

**M**e: Sir, I don't know that, but if I have to make a guess, probably hundreds of thousands?

**S**: Noooo

**M**e: Sir, considering that there weren't any antibiotics back then and that the flu spread by air, I made the guess. (M is smiling)

**S**: Do you know any decade in Indian history when the Indian population actually decreased?

**M**e: No, sir. I do not know that.

**S**: That's all. (M agreed)

**M**e: (They turned to me) Sir, I have a request. Would you please tell me your names and the Subjects you teach? Sir, I have forgotten that.

**M**: I teach Entrepreneurship.

S: I teach Finance.

(Thanked them and left)

### Our Analysis:

The candidate displayed good knowledge of the pharmaceutical sector. However, he also displayed some ignorance in other areas. Further, the candidate could have been more mature in his assessment of the role played by pharmaceutical companies in shaping our perception.

### 7) @ IIM - B GD/PI

**Case Discussion:** It was supposed to be a case discussion with 8 candidates but only 6 were present. The 6 candidates present comprised of 5 males and 1 female. I was the only non-engineer amongst the 6. 3 of us were freshers and the remaining three had work-ex. Two of the freshers were from IIT Mumbai. The remaining three engineers were from NIT's. One of the guys had a work-ex of 30 months. The lady and I had a work-ex of 17 months. We got enough time to introduce ourselves, which helped in the discussion that followed.

**Case Intro:** It was a case study about a Milk Company Alum which had appointed our group as advisors to advise them regarding the positioning of their products. The company had two options - to position their products on "Cool Platform" or to position their products on "Healthy Platform". We as a group were entrusted with the task of devising a strategy for Alum Ltd in their endeavour to succeed in the above project. We

were given 10 mins to think about the case and write down our points on the back of the page containing the case.

**Actual Discussion:** The duration was 15 minutes. Since there were only 6 candidates, there was absolutely no chance of a fish market sort of situation. A typical gentlemanly discussion commenced. Moreover, 2 guys entered in the discussion just once and as a result it was effectively a 14-minute discussion involving 4 candidates including me. I entered 7-8 times, was responsible for giving structure to the GD, was the only one to come up with examples to substantiate my points, talked about the costing and pricing issues, the utility of Market Research, the pros and cons of positioning Alum's products as "Cool" or "Healthy" and finally made the group agree that a strategy combining both the platforms is needed to succeed. I also talked about the inverse relationship between price and demand and carried forward the points of two of the candidates besides coming up with my own unique points 5-6 times. However, we as a group did falter, as the remaining three active members were not interested in devising a strategy. As a result, we didn't have a concrete solution in place by the time the case ended. Overall, it was a decent GD, lots of content but lack of structured strategy to substantiate our points. My performance was good but I could have taken an initiative in devising a strategy.

**Summary Writing:** Once the case discussion was over, we were given a piece of paper to write a summary of the GD. We were told very clearly that the summary should not be what we thought of but should be what the group thought. We were given 15 minutes for the same and clearly told that our summary should not exceed the allotted space for the same i.e. 15 lines. We all finished in about 10 minutes, as we were all too eager to

rush out after such a long process. We submitted the case and the summary sheet and left the room after we were told that we shall be called in 1 by 1 after 10 minutes for the interview in the same order in which our names were called out for the GD.

**Interview:** I was the first candidate to be called for the interview. A senior prof (about 50 years of age with curly hair resembling Girish Karnad ! ) came out and asked me to accompany him into the room. I greeted him and went inside to find another prof (about 45 years of age, wearing specs) waiting for me. I greeted him and he asked me to sit down. I will refer to the prof with curly hair as P<sub>1</sub> & the other prof as P<sub>2</sub>. P<sub>1</sub> sat on the left hand side and P<sub>2</sub> on the right hand side.

**Me:** Good Afternoon Sir

**P<sub>2</sub>:** Good Afternoon, please sit down.

**Me:** Thank You sir.

P<sub>1</sub> took my file which I had kept on the table and started going through it slowly. P<sub>2</sub> decided to start the interview.

**P<sub>2</sub>:** Quickly tell me something about yourself.

**Me:** I spoke for about a minute, talked about my job, my CA rank, my hobbies, my background and my USP - ability to bounce back from the worst of circumstances.

**P<sub>2</sub>:** Please elaborate on your ability to bounce back as mentioned by you.

**Me:** I spoke about the project in my MT period which went wrong-my first failure-how I overcame that-changed everyone's perception from being dubbed a good for nothing MT to that of an efficient performer-my never say die attitude which helped me get the challenging role of direct taxation manager which involves leading a team of 4 persons. P<sub>1</sub> looked at me while I was speaking for 15 seconds and then resumed surfing through my certificates.

**P<sub>2</sub>:** What other areas do you enjoy working in besides taxation and why?

**Me:** Apart from taxation, I like accounts & costing, the reason being these two areas, apart from taxation, directly affect Company's bottom line - you can actually see your individual and your team's contribution through these functions in the company's profits.

**P<sub>2</sub>:** In costing there is a concept of ABC Costing; do you remember it?

**Me:** Yes sir.

**P<sub>2</sub>:** There is a concept of value added and non-value added activity...

**Me:** (I thought that the question was over) Sir, do you want me to explain the value added and non-value added concepts?

**P<sub>2</sub>:** Let me complete my question.

**Me:** Sorry for interrupting you sir.

**P2:** That's all right. I would like you to explain the concept of value added and non-value added activity in business with an example.

**Me:** Since I work in taxation, I will give examples from taxation only as taxation also involves costs. An example of a non-value added activity would be complying with statutory guidelines imposed by tax authorities. They have to be complied anyways, not much value addition involved on your part. An example of a value added activity would be working on complex tax issues involving Transfer Pricing matters.

**P2:** I would like you to explain to me the meaning of a Value Adding activity.

**Me:** I explained it from the pricing point of view - an activity for which the consumer is willing to pay more - he sees the same as an additional advantage for which he is willing to pay a price.

**P2:** That's from the pricing point of view; explain from the cost point of view as well.

**Me:** An activity which can be foregone without adversely affecting the utility or quality of the final product.

**P2:** So, is complying with statutory guidelines an activity which can be dispensed with?

**Me:** No sir, I think I made a mistake.

**P2:** No issues.

**P1:** (Smiling) You are a CA with gross salary in excess of 75k p.m. Have you actually calculated your payback period?

**Me:** Is it necessary to evaluate everything in terms of money?

**P1:** (Didn't speak for 5 seconds) Then looked at P2 and said "Not really, but a CA should have calculated his payback period. Haven't you done so?"

**Me:** No Sir, but I can calculate it right away.

**P1:** What will be the costs involved?

**Me:** Three costs: - 1) 2 years of salary 2) fees at IIMB 3) Loss of two years of managerial work ex

**P1:** Then what will be your payback period?

**Me:** (Thought for 5 seconds)- 3 years.

**P1:** What sort of a role are you looking at after passing out from IIMB?

**Me:** I would be keen to get into research analysis or a role in fund management.

**P1:** Why?

**Me:** I am interested in investing in Indian Stock markets and working in a function which I enjoy will give me a lot of satisfaction.

**P1:** And if you get into a research analysis role in an NGO, your payback period will go beyond 12-15 yrs, right?

**Me:** Yes sir that is possible.

**P1:** Still you would like to go for an MBA from IIMs?

**Me:** Yes sir, because I believe an MBA degree from IIMB should not be equated with money. I feel if an MBA from IIMB allows me an opportunity to get into a role which I enjoy, which gives me the necessary job satisfaction, in such a case, money ceases to be an important factor.

**P1:** Ok, if you were made the Finance Minister, what would be your first priority?

**Me:** My first & foremost priority will be to curb inflation.

**P1:** How would you do so?

**Me:** Inflation is the situation arising as a result of too much money chasing too few goods. So the measures need to come from both the demand and the supply side. On the supply front, efforts need to be made to increase production of goods and services through better technology and techniques of production. On the demand front, the monetary measures like increase in Repo rate need to be supplemented by Fiscal measures on the part of the Govt.

**P2:** The U.S. suffered from depression in the 1930's. How did it overcome that? Give answers that a CA should give, not the answers of an English Literature Student.

**Me:** Ok sir, the US did so by increasing the purchasing power of people.

**P1:** How?

**P2:** Tell me frankly, do you actually know the answer?

**Me:** (Thought for 5 seconds, then said) No Sir.

**P2:** Then say that, there is no need to be fearful of admitting the same.

**Me:** Yes sir.

**P1:** Ok, what else.

**Me:** I would focus on tackling the unemployment problem.

**P2:** How?

**Me:** By greater investment in industries which require a large number of workers like handlooms, infrastructure...

**P2:** Are you aware about the status of handlooms today?

**Me:** Yes sir.

**P2:** You still maintain what you said?

**Me:** Yes sir.

**P1:** What is the approximate number of persons involved in any infrastructure project - say building roads on a highway - ratio between labour and machinery?

**Me:** I agree that any such project involves heavy machinery but it does involve a lot of manpower as well. Moreover, that is one area where lots of unemployed workers can be absorbed considering the huge scope for infrastructure development today.

**P1:** Why do u want to go for an MBA degree when you are already a manager?

**Me:** (Gave my standard answer. Also said that since I wish to become an entrepreneur at a later stage of my career, I feel an MBA degree would provide me the vision and direction to identify the right business opportunity.)

**P1:** So what sort of a role are you looking at?

**Me:** (Gave my prepared answer. Moreover, I said that an MBA degree from the IIMs gives you a good start, after that what will actually matter is your performance. I am looking at an MBA degree from IIMB to kick-start my career in my interest area.)

**P1:** Why IIMB?

**Me:** I talked about its excellent faculty and its location advantage which would enable me to learn not only from the faculty within the institute but also from persons working in the industry - stressed on learning by experience - put my point across as to why will I opt for IIMB irrespective of any other calls that I may get.

**P1:** Ok, Thank You. You can leave now.

**Me:** Thank You sir.

The Interview lasted about 40 min. Overall, a nice interview. It could have been better, but still no regrets.

#### **Our Analysis:**

A very good interview again. The candidate was able to answer most questions well and also displayed maturity and thoughtfulness through his answers. While a few basics pertaining to his academic subjects could have been better prepared for, there was nothing else questionable about this interview.

## 8) @ IIM – C

My Profile B.tech(IT) 2013 pass out with 3+ experience 2.5 in Infosys Bangalore and Rest in Genpact Gurgaon

**WAT Topic:** It is suggested to use university faculty, students, education institutes to improve digital finance literacy. would it be effective and what other means you could suggest for achieving that?

Panel D5, I was the first one to be interviewed, But went to washroom after WAT and by the time I came back interview already started :p

This made me all nervous, took 10 15 long breaths.

The interview started 2:15 entered room with form and document folder in one hand and bag in another (don't know why I carried bag inside)

**Disclaimer:** it was mainly related to my work/hobbies/personal stuff so you can skip reading it if you are looking for some possible questions

Greeted them good afternoon with a big smile.

3 panelist from left to right:

P1: Male in Early 30s most probable alumni

P2: Mam may be in the late 40s

P3: Seemed like IIMC professor in early 60s

P2: Tell us about yourself apart from what is mentioned in form

Me: Told about my birthplace a village on banks of Yamuna river in Faridabad, she thought it is in UP. told no it's in Haryana

P2: Asked what Faridabad is famous for

Me: Talked about mechanical and electrical manufacturing industries, Sonu Nigam then continued my intro told about how I was a Hindi medium student and then got selected in JNV and was a crucial point in my life to change to English medium school.

Talked about my passion for reading, told how I enjoy coordinating events; was a placement coordinator in college and also part of a event committee in the current organization talked about how I was interested in MBBS and cleared CBSE PMT Prelims and was waitlisted in mains

She asked then how engineering happened, explained personal reasons.

P3: Asked about my work in Infosys, what I did there

Me: Explained about how I was part of analytics unit and what my role was as a campaign coordinator

P3: Asked what I do in my current organization

Me: Explained both technical and business aspect

P3: Both seems similar why changed job

Me: Explained how I was part of telecom now wanted to increase breadth in my work so switched to Banking and finance domain

P3: Why not internal job change

Me: Told how projects were not available

P2: What difference do you find between telecom and basic

Me: Explained 3 points difference about products, services and per customer value and few other things, here I pitched in about my interest in marketing and how I wanted to start my own venture.

P2: Have you taken any MOOC courses on marketing

Me: Told about no I haven't, I have taken some technical courses.

P1: Since you are part of KPO industry what changes in current world can affect this Indian industry

Me: Talked about how automation can kill jobs gave an example of few automation projects in my current job role

P1: Anything else

Me: Talked about some intelligent tools for marketing

P1: Something on technical related to current changes

P2: Like what is happening in France

Me: I was like what happened in France, but our industry is based on USA UK mainly.

P3: She said yes I meant to say USA UK

Me: I talked about trump's protectionist policies and Brexit and how can these impact our jobs.(  
2 3 mins discussion)

p1, p2 Seemed satisfied after this

P3: Asked about reading what do I like to read. Last book I read

Me: Currently reading Th autobiography of a yogi, completed the Moon and the Sixpence before that (p3 smiled on hearing this book)

P3: Tell me its story and why you find it interesting

Me: Told, also told how Thinking Fast and slow was my fav book

P2: Asked about it's Author

Me: explained who he was and how he won the noble prize for his work in behavioral economics

P2: Asked about book and why it is named fast and slow then there was some 3 4 mins discussion on it about 2 systems of mind and how biases are formed. She asked me to explain few experiments from that book explained few examples of Present Bias and Loss Aversion Bias etc.

P1: Your interview is over

Me: ???

P3: According to this book, we have biases so just when you entered we had decided and your interview was over at that time only.

Me: But Sir, that's the benefit of reading this book that we can be aware of our biases and we can change our decisions, so I think my interview is not over yet.

All started laughing

P2: It's all serious reading any light stuff, you have mentioned detective novels in your form fantasy novels.

P3: Have you read Tolkien

Me: Told I have watched movies but I have read Belgariad series by David Eddings talked about Sherlock Holmes and Hercules Poirot. mentioned how I started reading with Hindi novels.

P2: Do you read Hindi novels now or do you know anyone in your circle who reads.

Me: No

P2: Why and why do you think it is happening, and how can it be improved

Me: Explained how no of English speakers are more all over the world so chances of exposure are more. Also, movies are being made on novels which in turn increase their sale, talked about Harry Potter movies and its book sales after that. Also talked about how Amish Tripathi promoted his movie by releasing teasers and trailers along with movies. Told how innovative marketing and rewards system for Hindi and other regional books can help them. Also talked about they should be promoted more in the curriculum.

P3: But is it necessary at all to promote them or revive them, why not let things take a natural course and how today speaking English fluently is considered a mark of intelligence.

Me: Talked about how rich our history and culture is and to write them in books can provide so many different perspectives and knowledge. And how they can be effectively translated into native language only not English. I gave some examples here, how essence get lost in translation.

They seemed satisfied here.

P1: Any previous attempts of cat

Me: Told how I screwed last year in DILR with 66 percentile

P3: Any questions here

Me: Sir no questions but I wanted to talk about why I really want to do MBA.I talked about my dream of opening a school for underprivileged children.

When they asked me the reason why I wanted to do that. I told them about my personal struggles and how that has inspired me.( got really passionate/emotional here)

They asked that you can do that without an MBA

Told them since it would be a nonprofit, so I need money and for that, i want to start my own marketing services firm and I need an MBA to land a good marketing job.

P3: You have achieved a lot in your life and you should be proud of yourself.

Said goodbyes.

The interview took 30 Minutes.

"There was a 2 member panel comprising an old man (P1) who looked quite active and a young man (P 2) who was generally watching."

P1: What is the controversy regarding the recent Hyderabad airport?

Me: Answered (I think I was Ok !!)

P1: What do you prefer? There should definitely be a local sentiment involved. Give examples of Mumbai and Calcutta airports.

Me: Difficult question, but definitely a local sentiment exists.

P1: [while looking at the certificates] So you have qualified in Mathematics Olympiad?

Me: Yes, sir. Twice.

P1: Take a number say 10. what happens when its repeated square root is calculated using a calculator?

Me: Its value reduces, ends in 1.

P1: Why?

Me: Limited calculator memory.

9) @ IIM – C

P1: No... No... Even if we use pen and paper, it will end in 1 only. It has nothing to do with memory or anything.

Me: May be 1 is like some stable point, therefore ends in 1.

P1: [Gave some theory I didn't remember] Now take 0.2, if we repeatedly calculate its square root, it will end in?

Me: 1

P1: Why should it end in 1 only and not other values?

Me: (Said something, yet not convincing)

P1: What are your favorite subjects?

Me: Digital Electronics.

P1: Why should we go for Neural Networks?

Me: (I said something regarding learning ability of neural network and some practical application.)

P1: Did you have Maths in engineering?

Me: Yes.

P1: What did you study?

Me: Matrices, etc.

P1: What is the difference between matrix and determinant?

Me: (Answered)

P1: Did you have statistics in Engineering?

Me: No, sir.

P1: You must have studied it for CAT?

Me: Not required. Studied mean, median, mode in school.

P1: That must have evaporated by now. What do you do in spare time?

Me: Play age of Empires.

P1: Why not sports?

Me: Not much time available. Commuting takes 3 – 4 hrs. everyday.

P1: You had a subject on T.V in your course?

Me: Yes, sir.

P2: What is HDTV?

Me: Not much idea. It is Digital in nature with a better resolution.

P2: What is resolution?

Me: The smallest element which can be represented.

P2: What is that smallest element called?

Me: Pixel.

P1: Take your certificates and leave.

Me: Thank you.

#### Our Analysis:

The panel started the interview with the candidate's core area and persisted with strength areas of the candidate. The candidate displayed good proficiency in these areas.

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The interview was conducted by two male and one female professor (F). One of the males had a laid back attitude (L) and other was acting all serious and quiet. (Q)

F invited me in. A few jokes relating to Amitabh Bachchan were made on my height.

L: What is your height?

Me: 6'4" sir. My father is 6'3" so I got the genes from him.

F: Irrespective of everything I would like to congratulate you for being from a non B.Tech background. We need more diversity in our campus.

Q: He is not an engineer?

F: He is from a science background, Hindu college.

Me: (I thanked ma'am for the compliment)

I had written in my SOP about films and film production

L: This year which movie has received the highest number of Oscar nominations?

Me: I think it is The Grand Budapest Hotel sir.

L: No, please think again.

Me: Then it has to be The Birdman

L and Q both nodded in affirmation.

L: Which according to you is the most iconic scene that you can remember in a movie?

Me: Sir I would like to talk about Interstellar where the protagonist gets trapped in the fourth dimension. I explained this scene and its different interpretations.

L: How many times have you seen it?

Me: Sir, twice

L: Tell me some other scene from a movie which has not released recently?

Me: Dark Knight, where Joker is interrogated by Batman (and explained the scene further)

Q: Tell me about Neo Noir cinema and does Grand Budapest Hotel come in the Neo Noir category?

Me: I talked about the genre and about how it is related to crime and thrill. I told them that why according to me Grand Budapest Hotel was more on the comical side.

L: Why did it earn so many nominations?

Me: Sir Wes Anderson has written a terrific screenplay and he has provided a comical aspect to the grave conditions depicted in the movie with the backdrop of the Russian revolution and poverty. The fragility of human life has been shown.

L: Do you watch Japanese cinema?

Me: Yes sir, I am familiar with Japanese work of Akira Kurosawa and Yasujiro Ozu.

In the middle of the conversation

Q: Do you consider yourself special?

Me: Yes

L: Have you seen Satyajit Ray's work?

In the meantime F was looking through my mark sheets of X and XII and was talking to Q about them.

Me: Sir I have his movies with me but I haven't watched them yet.

L: Why? Is it because he was an old Indian guy who died so who cares?

Me: No sir, in fact he is the only Indian director who has won the Academy award and even Akira Kurosawa has cited him as a major influence in his works. It's just that there are a lot of movies and I haven't watched his movies yet.

F: Why Chemistry?

Me: Ma'am, I took Engineering coaching in class XII and during that period I realized that I will not be a good Engineer because the level of academics was above my competence. I did well in the AIEEE exam and got a call from NSIT but decided to opt out of counseling. I wanted time to explore myself and I was good in Organic Chemistry during my school time and I thought that I can manage a distinction during graduation.

Q: Why is water special?

Me: Sir it is an odorless colorless liquid and different temperature scales are based on the melting and boiling point of water.

L: But cows can sense the odor of water from miles away. So you are wrong here.

Me: Sir I apologize for my mistake, I was talking from the human perspective.

Q: (Asked about the triple point of water)

Me: Sir it is 0.01 degree Celsius

L interrupted and said to only ask me about Organic Chemistry since I liked it in my school days. Then Q made some remark about hydrogen and they started laughing. I was calm and composed and kept a light smile on my face.

L: Draw and explain the phase diagram of water?

Me: (I tried to think about it for a few seconds then replied that I don't remember it)

F: Why IIM Calcutta? (and then made a joke that we are asking about water because there are so many lakes in our campus)

Me: Talked about sports and entertainment marketing management elective course over there and about people from Yash Raj Films and 20th Century Fox coming for lecture sessions and to offer internships. I also talked about the film club of IIM Calcutta, Cinema Paradise.

F: Its name is based on the movie Paradise. Have you watched it?

Me: No ma'am

Q: But every college has these film clubs

Me: No sir, IIM Ahmedabad doesn't have one.

F: What have you been doing after college?

Me: Ma'am I have been preparing for the CAT exam for the past six months

F: Which coaching?

Me: Career Launcher

L: Which branch?

Me: Satya Niketan sir

L: MBA and MFA, why dual degree? Don't you think you'll be overqualified?

Me: No ma'am, I don't think there is such a thing as overqualified in life. Currently, I may not have a well laid out plan about how I'm going to get the finance for my production house etc. but I want to do an MBA so that I can understand the various processes like finance marketing distribution. I would then like to work for two years and then go for a more concentrated application in form of an MFA degree.

F: If you don't make it to a B-school this year, will you go for a job or pack your stuff and head to Mumbai like a filmy guy?

Me: I gave a smile and said that I want to see myself in the entertainment industry. I told them that I will prepare for FTII Pune and work my way from there.

I was gesticulating my answer when F saw the ring on my finger and asked about it.

Me: Ma'am it was given to me by my mother, she is a bit superstitious.

L: So the ring is working for you, what is your aim in life? *Ladki, Naukri ya IIM Calcutta?*

Me: I gave a smile and said that my aim in life is not IIM Calcutta but my career

Q made a remark about my ring bearing resemblance to the green lantern and they laughed.

L: *Agar emerald se kuch nahi hua to red lagaoge kya* for becoming a producer?

Me: (with a smile) sir I am wearing this ring because it keeps my mother happy.

I had written in my profile that I was the discipline captain of my school

F: What is a Discipline Captain?

Me: Ma'am in my school he is the in charge of all the prefects and is entrusted with the security of various annual functions and festivals.

L: Ye to mamao ka bhi mama hai and they started laughing

F: The interview is over thank you.

They offered me a candy in the end.

## 11) IIM Calcutta

There were 3 panellists

P1 - a young smart man in his 30s

P2 and P3 in their 50s

P1: So Varun introduce yourself please

**Me:** I talked about myself, family, internship, cricket and travelling

**P1:** I do not have much idea about how to relate engineering and management consulting. Is there anything like engineering consulting?

**Me:** Yes sir there is. If I do designing for any construction firm, it will be engineering consulting but the broader term would be business consulting because construction business is also business after all.

**P2:** How has the construction practises changed nowadays?

**Me:** I told them about a glass bridge in China and about fibre reinforced concrete. Also, I talked about earthquake resistant and green buildings (read about them after my Lucknow interview).

**P1:** So Varun you have excellent academic records, I want u to solve a question for me.

Maximise  $x^2 + y^2$  subject to a linear constraint. Is it a linear programming problem?

**Me:** Yes sir it is because the constraint is linear.

**P1:** Are you sure?

**Me:** Quickly realised my mistake and corrected it by saying that the objective function is not linear. Therefore it isn't. Linear problems are solved by simplex method (said intentionally).

**P1:** Since u have mentioned simplex please explain how it works.

**Me:** I explained correctly. I was also asked 3-4 tricky questions on it but I answered them accurately

**P2:** Why is it called simplex?

**Me:** Sir may be its because it is simple (I smiled)

**P1:** You are from IIT Roorkee. Are u supposed to give such an answer?

**Me:** Sorry sir, but I really don't know. Talked about asking the usage of simplex from my IIT-R professor.

**P1:** Have u heard about the river interlinking project which was being talked about a lot in 2014. Mention its advantages and disadvantages.

**Me:** Explained in detailed and they were very much convinced by the answer. I deliberately mentioned about Amsterdam and its canals while answering.

**P2:** Since u have mentioned Amsterdam. Tell me why does it have so many canals?

**Me:** Sir I have been there and people told me that it is and was for trade purposes and majority of the trade is through the waterways.

**P2:** Do u know anything else about it?

**Me:** In what context?

P2: Amsterdam is below sea level and there was a dam built over river Amstel and that is why it has been named so.

Me: Yes sir I have been to the spot in central Amsterdam and it is 2 m below the sea level.

All through this time P3 was reading my form.

P3: So Varun you are a cricketer and have captained your school team. What do you do?

Me: I am a right handed batsman and a medium fast bowler. I also bowl leg spin.

P3: So u do everything else than wicket keeping? Smiles.

Me: Smiled yes sir.

P3: There were talks about a different kind of bat 5 years before what was it?

Me: Are u talking about the mongoose bat?

P3: Yes.

Me: Sir it's a small sized bat used in t-20s for big hitting. First used by Hayden and Symonds . I made a figure showing the size difference.

P3: What is the width of a conventional bat?

Me: The maximum length is 980 mm and length to width ration would be.

P3: That is correct leave it. Tell me why is the mongoose bat useful? You are an engineer sell it to me in terms of its design.

Me: It is thicker. The conventional bat is thinner at the top while mongoose is uniform so the ball can be hit hard from all parts of the bat.

P3: But doesn't it have lesser surface area? So a player will have problems.

Me: Showed where the sweet spot lies on a conventional bat and told him that a professional player anyways hits the ball from the middle, so lesser area won't bother him. Rather long handle would be better for gripping and the centre of mass of the bat shifts towards the bottom centre of the bat. This is why a golf stick or hockey stick is used for big hitting.

Seemed convinced.

P1: Why does a ball swing?

Me: Explained the idea of rough side smooth side, rough side rubbed on trousers to make it shine air drag etc.

P1: Answer like an IITian. Everyone know about rough and smooth sides.

Me: Sir the air when it strikes the shiny surface makes laminar boundary conditions with the surface while unable to do so on the rougher side. This creates a velocity difference and hence a

drag

P1: How do u ball an out-swinger to a right hand batsman?

Me: (I didn't know but I knew that even the panellist dint know). Sir keep the shiny side leftwards and the ball swings away from the right hander.

P1: Why does the ball swing much in Scotland?

Me: Because of overcast conditions .

P1: Why so?

Me: Same physics, more humidity damp pitch .

P3: How many students are there in your batch.

Me: Sir 1100.

P3: How many for MBA?

Me: According to their CAT score around 25. But 15 would be really interested.

P3: How many for research abroad?

Me: Very few , maybe 3-4 in my branch out of 135.

Panel:

Okay, thank you

Me: Sir I have a question. IIM C is referred to as the best institution in the country for finance. What is the reason? The faculty, the students u take, do u see for maths and finance knowledge or has it something to do with the foundation?

P2: Of course we have the best professors and we really do take brilliant students. IIM Calcutta is very good at a number of things. Finance is just one of them.

## 12) @ IIM – L

"There were two people in the panel P1and P2."

P2: Tell me something about your self. Can I take a look at your file?

Me: Yes, sir. Sorry, sir, my file is a bit heavy (I smiled very innocently).

P1: (smiled looking at the file in P2's hands) is there anything inside which is making it heavy?

Me: (smiled) Sir, my academics are pretty heavy.

P2: Ok, tell me something about yourself.

**Me:** Sir, I hope you remember what I said earlier about myself. (when I was talking both were not even looking at me, one was going through my file with certificates and other was looking at my IIML form. As soon as I said radio programme... I was interrupted by P2)

**P2:** What kind of programme?

**Me:** One of them was a live programme where I chatted with the host and we played songs for the listeners.

**P2:** How long was programme?

**Me:** 1/2 hour

**P2:** How many other people were there with the host?

**Me:** I was the only one with the host.

**P1:** Tell me about your family. What do your parents do?

**Me:** (I told him about my parents and their profession)

**P1:** Do you think it is necessary for an interviewer to ask a candidate about his family?

**Me:** Yes, sir. I feel that how a person is today is influenced by his family right from childhood, for e.g. in my case my mother is an entrepreneur and I have seen the importance of being financially independent and this has strongly influenced me to strive towards my goal.

**P1:** So you mean to say that if a person is coming from a poor family, should we reject him?

**Me:** (I was stumped) No, sir. I think that family background cannot be the sole criteria for a person's selection or rejection.

**P1:** So do you think it is totally an unnecessary question?

**Me:** (I was cornered but managed a smile). I think it is not an unnecessary question. It helps an interviewer to understand the candidate better, and if the family influence has been good, it adds to his or her credentials.

**P2:** Your mother is an entrepreneur. What is Venture Capitalism?

**Me:** I had no clue. (I smiled helplessly and said there is nothing about Venture Capitalism in our syllabus.)

**P2:** You would have read somewhere about it. Do you read newspapers?

**Me:** (I acted as if I was trying hard to remember.) Sir, I did come across it somewhere but am just not able to recollect it now.

**P2:** Think for the first and the last time.

**P2:** Do you at least know about capitalism?

**Me:** Sir, capitalism is that in which a person sets up his industry with profit as the main motive.

P2: (He was not happy with the answer.) But is not shareholders welfare their main motive?

Me: I think the people who set up the industry do have the major shares so their welfare does amount to their profit.

P1: Do you read news paper? Which one?

Me: Times of India

P1: Any other?

Me: Occasionally, The Hindu.

P1: Why Times of India? Why not Hindu?

P2: (Sarcastically with a twinkle in his eye) Is it because Times is more colourful?

Me: No, sir. It is just that TOI was the first newspaper I started reading and I continued with it.

P2: What is virtual memory?

Me: It is a memory that does not really exist.

P2: Are you sure?

Me: (smiled apologetically) Sorry, sir. I am not very sure.

P1: What is Circuit analysis (Subject in 2nd year)?

Me: (I told him that in it we analyse a circuit using Kirchoff's laws, Thevenins Theorem.)

P1: What is a circuit? I am new to this. Can you educate me on this ?

Me: (I said something which I don't recall now but they looked satisfied.)

P1: How come you don't have any subject on Business or Finance? All Engineers have it.

Do you have it?

Me: No, sir. We don't have it.

P2: What did you study in Engineering Economics?

Me: (I told them the brief syllabus)

P1: Why is it called Engineering Economics?

Me: (I told them that this subject gets us close to the industry.) Being an Engineer we need to work in an industry where factors like demand supply are important and thus very relevant subject. (also, pointed that this is the only subject)

P2: Differentiate between voltage and EMF?

Me: (I gave the correct answer)

P1: Recently, Supreme Court gave a judgment regarding marriages. Can you recall it?

Me: Yes, sir. It was for the compulsory registration of all marriages.

P1: So what do you think about it? What has been its impact?

Me: Sir, I think it is a very positive decision. It will help in cases where husband marries again and does not provide alimony to his first wife. NRI boys come and marry and then leave their wives. These women are helpless to claim their rights as the marriage is not registered. This judgment will help them as well.

P1: Do you want to help women?

Me: Sir, as a citizen everybody has a responsibility to help suffering women.

P1: You being an educated woman yourself how would you help other women.

Me: Sir, what I'm doing right now or what I can do?

P2: What you can do?

Me: I would probably start off a school for house-maids. Most of us have maids at home who are illiterate. I could educate them and increase their awareness and would explain to them that they should report the harassment by their husband other related issues.

P1: You may leave.

Me: Thank you sir.

#### Our Analysis:

The candidate displayed maturity and expressed thoughtful opinions throughout the interview. Better preparation on subjects from the academic background would have helped the candidate.

### 13) @ IIM – I

"There was a 2 member panel. They started questions even before I took my seat."

P1: So Mr. Bansal, you are from Electronics and Communications Engineering

Me: Yes, Sir.

P1: In lay man's terms, explain me the difference between analog and digital.

Me: (Answered)

P1: When you are saying Digital is restrictive, then how is it good?

Me: Simplicity of circuit, etc.

P1: You know a picture. Isn't it? How do you transfer a picture electronically?

Me: We break the picture into smaller parts, then transfer each part separately.

P1: How come we get the exact picture back after it reaches its destination?

Me: Usually packets are associated with a number and they are arranged in serial order.

P1: [Asked some questions on this topic only]

Me: (Answered to his satisfaction)

P1: Have you heard of the term Sensor, what is it?

Me: (Said something)

P1: Do you find some in this room?

Me: (Said something, not a convincing reply)

P1: Do you find some change after congress came into power?

Me: Change is bound to occur due to different Ideologies of parties, etc.

P2: Who is the Vice President of India?

Me: Mr. Shekhawat.

P2: Who is the Prime Minister of India?

Me: Mr. Manmohan Singh.

P2 : Who is the President of India?

Me: Mr. A.P.J. Kalam.

P2: Who is CM of West Bengal?

Me: Mr. Bhattacharya.

P2: Who is the CM of your state?

Me: (Answered)

(Interviewer 2 stops and Interviewer 1 takes over)

P1: What do you do in spare time?

Me: Read books (listed some authors)

P2: What is the similarity in writing between Mario Puzo and Ayn Rand?

Me: (Could not find anything. Gave up after a minute or so.)

P2: Who is the Prime Minister of India?

Me: Mr. Manmohan Singh.

P2 : Who is the President of India?

Me: Mr. A.P.J. Kalam.

P2: Who is CM of West Bengal?

Me: Mr. Bhattacharya.

P2: Who is the CM of your state?

Me: (Answered)

(Interviewer 2 stops and Interviewer 1 takes over)

P1: What do you do in spare time?

Me: Read books (listed some authors)

P2: What is the similarity in writing between Mario Puzo and Ayn Rand?

Me: (Could not find anything. Gave up after a minute or so.)

P1: Check your certificates and leave

Me: (Checking certificates and about to leave

But, before I could ...)

P1: Tell Me, how do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

Me: An Entrepreneur, field not decided.

(I left)

[Interview lasted for approx. 20 minutes]

#### Our Analysis:

The candidate was well prepared. This reflected in his thorough answers to the panel. There was hardly anything that the candidate could have done any better.

## 14) @ IIM – I GD/PI

**Group Discussion:** There were three panels of two panelists each. We were taken to a separate room where the GD & PI was supposed to take place by Panel 1.

**Case Discussion:** The Case was about a person who has admitted his friend for an emergency surgery but the hospital refuses to operate till cash is deposited. Largely on the grounds of MunnaBhai MBBS - where Sanjay Dutt questions whether complying with rules and regulations and filling up the form is more important than saving anyone's life. We were supposed to think about it and write our views on the paper within 5 minutes. Then we were asked to start the discussion.

**Actual Discussion:** The duration was 12-13 minutes. I entered 5-6 times and gave 4-5 new points. I think my performance was pretty good. I thought that I was definitely one of the top 2 performers in the GD. We were asked to write a summary in 5 minutes. I wrote most of the points but couldn't complete the final sentence of my summary.

**Interview:** I was the 5th candidate to be called for the interview. I greeted the professors and they asked me to sit down. I will refer to the prof who sat on left hand side as P1 & the other prof as P2.

**Me:** Good Morning Sir

**P2:** Good Morning, sit down.

**Me:** Thank You sir

**P2:** Open your certificates & show them to P2.

**Me:** Sure sir

**P2:** Tell us something about yourself.

**Me:** (I started off with my mugged up answer but was stopped after the first line).

**P2:** Start from your birth.

**Me:** (I started with the same but was interrupted after 3 lines).

**P2:** So did you do your entire schooling from Ahmedabad?

**Me:** No Sir, I was in Delhi for four years - from Class VII to Class X.

**P2:** So what difference did you find between Delhi Students and Ahmedabad Students? Are Delhi students more competitive?

**Me:** (Thought for 5 seconds) Yes, there is. It has got largely to do with the fact that Ahmedabad is a predominantly business hub whereas Delhi has more of a corporate culture because of the presence of so many corporates in and around Delhi.

**P2:** Why aren't there any CBSE schools in Delhi?

**Me:** There are only 6 CBSE schools in Delhi which includes three Kendriya Vidyalayas.

**P2:** And what is the difference between CBSE and Delhi Board?

**Me:** It is almost the same-there is a very slight difference in the level of English.

**P2:** How?

**Me:** Delhi Board's English is slightly tougher.

**P2:** Tougher?

**Me:** Yes Sir.

**P2:** Continue with your description.

**Me:** (I spoke for the next 1 minute.)

**P2:** So you handle Direct Tax, tell me the reason why Reliance pays so little tax despite earning such huge profits?

**Me:** Sir, IT Act provides for certain exemptions under sections 10A,10B, 80 IA,IB,IC etc. As such I am not tracking Reliance but I guess it must be taking benefit under these sections.

**P2:** Reliance has a unit in Patalganga and Jamnagar which don't fall under those exemptions.

**Me:** Sir, the Jamnagar unit has been hived off into Reliance Petroleum Limited.

**P2:** No, I am talking about Reliance before the demerger.

**Me:** Sir, as such I am not sure, but many corporates do go for a lot of window-dressing so as to pay low taxes. In Reliance's case, when the dispute between the Ambani brothers came to light, it was discovered that Reliance shareholding is through a network of 25,000 investment companies. Maybe, it has got to do with this but since I have not studied much about Reliance, so I am not really sure.

**P1:** (Taking over from P2 by handing him my certificates file). What is the concept behind a company's registration in Mauritius?

**Me:** (I explained about Mauritius being a tax haven. Companies escape paying taxes both in India and Mauritius.)

**P1:** What are the types of Direct Taxes in India at present?

**Me:** Income Tax and Wealth Tax.

**P1:** What about Estate Duty?

**Me:** It is no longer in existence.

**P1:** What are the canons of taxation?

Me: Pardon me sir

P1: (He spelt the word).

Me: Sorry sir, I don't know.

P1: In case I inherit something from my father, will I be required to pay any tax?

Me: No tax is payable on inheritance but tax will be payable on the profit made when the inherited property is sold.

P1: What is LLP?

Me: Sir, what is the full form?

P1: Limited Liability Partnership-have you heard of it?

Me: Yes sir. (I explained the concept of LLP.)

P1: Why should one opt for an LLP instead of a Partnership or a Private Limited Co?

Me: (I explained the advantage of LLP over Private Limited Company and a Partnership. Brought out the concept of reward sharing by making the person responsible for management - a partner in the firm's profits, while limiting his risks through limited liability.)

P1: Ok, Explain the difference between a shareholder and a Director?

Me: (I explained this easily.).

P1: What is the responsibility of a director?

Me: To guide a Company ahead besides taking care of the interests of all the interested parties like shareholders, creditors etc.

P1: What is an interested director?

Me: A director having more than 10% holding in a Company.

P1: Explain to me the difference between Doctrine of Constructive Notice and Doctrine of Indoor Management.

Me: Sir, I have studied it but I am not able to recall it right now.

P1: What is SOX? You are a CA, you must be aware of it.

Me: I haven't heard about it before.

P1: (He told me the full form, then asked me sternly). Haven't you heard this term before?

Me: No Sir.

P1: What is SEBI?

Me: (I was able to answer this well.)

P1: What do you understand by the term fiduciary?

Me: Genuine or Utmost Good Faith.

P1: Explain to me the meaning of a fiduciary relationship.

Me: (I explained this as well).

P1: Give me an example of the same.

Me: Doctor-patient, Lawyer-client, and Father-son.

P1: Is Father-son relationship a fiduciary relationship?

Me: Yes sir.

P1: In a lawyer-client relationship, who is a fiduciary?

Me: The lawyer.

P1: Why?

Me: I explained this too.

P1: Give me the Latin word for fiduciary relationship.

Me: I am sorry sir. I do not recall this.

P1: Explain the concept of ultra-vires.

Me: I explained that it implies null and void.

P1: Give an example.

Me: (Given with reference to the Companies Act.)

P1: Explain the difference between Prospectus and Statement in Lieu of Prospectus.

Me: (Gave the definitions and 1 difference. Started with the second one but couldn't complete it properly.)

P1: Explain the difference between Certificate of Incorporation and Certificate to Commence Business.

Me: (I was able to explain this.)

P1: So you mean to say a Private Limited Company needs no certificate to commence business.

Me: Yes sir.

P1: Ok, now I already have a certificate of incorporation, what do I need to fulfill to get a certificate to commence business?

Me: (I explained the role of promoters, memorandum and articles of association & application to ROC for the same.)

P2: On going through your certificates, I saw that you had given XAT as well and you have identical scores in both CAT and XAT. Explain the difference between CAT and XAT.

Me: Sir, before giving ... (I was interrupted in between).

P2: Give us the difference between the sections.

Me: I am coming to it sir. Before giving the exams, it was perceived that XAT VA is tougher than CAT VA. However, this year's paper proved it wrong.

P2: So was this year's VA tough?

Me: Yes sir, it was.

P2: What makes you say so?

Me: This year's CAT paper had an element of surprise in it. The questions asked were not something on which the coaching classes normally prepare you. This along with the close answer choices and the pressure situation made it even tougher. But I still found XAT to be slightly tougher.

P2: Why?

Me: Sir, it had too many RC's - 5 of them - very time consuming and difficult to crack as well.

P2: What else?

Me: In XAT, Quantitative Aptitude was more about Mathematical Reasoning. In CAT, questions were more straightforward and simpler.

P2: And DI?

Me: Both had caselets - only difference was that in CAT, each caselet had 5 questions whereas in XAT, a caselet didn't carry more than 3-4 questions.

P2: (Looking at P1) Ok, you can leave now.

Me: (Looked at both of them) & said Thank You.

The interview had lasted 25 minutes. This was a totally different interview - more about Company Law, a subject with which I am not very comfortable. I felt that my performance was below average. Still, it is better not to lose hope. Keeping my fingers crossed as always.

#### Our Analysis:

This interview was more of a mixed bag. The candidate should have prepared better on his academic areas. Questions from other areas were handled gracefully.

## 15) @ IIM – I GD/PI

### Case for discussion:

Ramcharan was looking into the problems that he was facing. He was reading the resignation letter of Sarah. She was the 4th experienced worker who was leaving the job.

His father and his uncle Radheshyam were the 'Karta' of the joint family. Ramcharan, Ramdev and Leeladhar were siblings and Radheshyam had just one daughter Radha. They had a big ancestral home and 20 acres of cultivable land on the banks of a small river. Radheshyam was a teacher and traded in agro-based products like wheat.

Ramcharan was a fresh graduate from college when Radheshyam had suggested to him to go for a career in IT but Ramcharan wanted to start his own cashew-processing unit. So without any prior experience in the corporate world he started his own business. He required experienced people and so he hired them at high pay and also arranged for their families to be moved. He started with two varieties of cashew (medium and high end). For the first two years he was able to make good profit and so he was able to procure bank loans to buy new machines. He was thinking of expanding the unit to a cold storage and mango-jelly processing unit.

Recently due to high produce of cashew all types of processed cashew's value reduced by 20%. The price fell to a level where he was having difficulty in meeting his expenses as well. So he had to cut down on the routine maintenance of the machines. Moreover not-so-reliable supply of electricity from the electricity board was also resulting in loss of productivity. For this the

consultants advised using generators for electricity. There were some high-end technicians in the company and they were also asking for a raise in pay.

His brother Ramdev had completed his MCA and was getting an admission in one of the top 20 universities in US. He expected the joint family to take care of his educational expenses. Radheshyam was thinking of marrying Radha to an IT consultant who belonged to the same place and was doing well. Also, from the last two years Radheshyam was not making any profits in his business. At this time, he thought that the prices of wheat have reached an all time low and it is the time to invest in wheat and store stocks of wheat.

In her exit interview Sarah told Ramcharan that her son was doing well as an IT engineer and he did not want Sarah to work here anymore. This echoed the same thing even other workers who left the job had said. What should Ramcharan do?

Discussion: The GD was a fish market for the first 10 mins and quite peaceful after that. I think I did quite well. I started the GD and gave it a direction, pitched in a lot of times and gave quite a few original points. I was satisfied with my performance.

I was the first one to be interviewed. I will call the panelists P1 and P2.

I asked for permission to enter the room and I wished them.

P1: So, How are you doing?

Me: Fine sir, Thank you.

P1: So you are doing your B. Tech?

Me: Yes sir.

P1: You want to shift to management?

Me: Yes sir.

P1: Why?

Me: Sir, I think the possibility of leading and guiding businesses excites me. It'll give me high levels of accountability and responsibility which I cherish. I believe that I am a natural leader and have it in me to give vision and lead the fortunes of a company. At an appropriate time in future, I would also like to set up my own venture.

P1: What are the qualities which make a good leader? Why do you call yourself a good leader?

Me: Sir, a leader should have qualities like 1) vision (elaborated) 2) he should be good himself (elaborated) 3) inspirational (elaborated). Then spoke about how I fulfill these qualities. How I was elected coordinator for my college fest, a 1.5 million INR event. Then spoke about the challenges I faced during the fest and how I handled them.

P1: What is network security?

Me: Talked about the definition of network security and what are the different types of security issues: 1) impersonation (elaborated) 2) interception (elaborated) 3) viruses.

P1: How do you make sure that a network is secure?

Me: Talked about asymmetric and symmetric cryptographic algorithms. I elaborated on the differences between the two, which is used in which situation and why.

P1: But are they effective? Whatever is available in the market today?

Me: To a fair extent, sir. Then I spoke about RSA, RC4, DES, SDES, AES and how they are being used today.

P1: Then what is a virus?

Me: Sir a code written to make sure that the computer program performs in an ineffective way.

P1: Can you name a famous virus?

Me: Sir, Y2K.

P1: (Cuts me) No, no.

Me: Sir, the "I love you" virus. It was started in Thailand in 2000. (I elaborated on it.)

P1: Ok. Now tell me something about database management systems.

Me: Spoke about what is db and dbms. Then spoke about issues facing a database, distributed databases, database admin's role etc.

P1: What is a relational database?

Me: (I defined this.)

P1: Ok.

Now P2 took over.

P2: What is globalization?

Me: (I gave the definition, the types of globalization - economic, cultural, social etc. and elaborated on each. I also gave examples like western culture affecting countries in Asia etc.)

P2: What are the types of economic globalizations?

Me: Sir 1) Trade, imports and exports (elaborated) 2) FDI, when a company invests (elaborated) 3) Joint ventures between companies. Gave the example of Vodafone Essar. 4) Acquisitions (elaborated with the example of Tata-Corus acquisition).

P2: How many people in India are below the poverty line?

Me: Sir, according to one dollar a day definition around 30%.

P2: What is the FDI cap in telecom in India?

Me: 74% sir.

P2: Banking?

Me: (I was not sure.) Sir, 49%.

P2: Insurance?

Me: Sir its been raised to 49% by the cabinet.

P2: (Asked me about some economic term.)

Me: No idea, sir.

Back to P1

P1: What do you know about IIM Indore?

Me: (I spoke about the vision of IIM Indore- thought leadership, world class entrepreneurs, managerial excellence, social awareness etc. Then I spoke about the logo of IIM Indore, what it mean etc. I also mentioned that it started in 1998 and spoke about integrity, excellence etc.)

(All smiles)

P1: (smiling) So you've gone through the site?

Me: Yes sir.

P1: What did you find special about IIM Indore?

Me: Sir, the fact that it stresses and fosters thought leadership. It is in sync with the vision in life I have for myself. I spoke about how I wanted to be an entrepreneur. I also spoke about Iris, and the other fests of IIM Indore.

(All smiles again)

P1: Do you know someone in IIM Indore?

Me: Yes sir and named him. I spoke about Indore 360 - the mentor system and how it has helped me.

P1: Why have you been moving from one state to another?

Me: (I spoke about how my family moved from Ranchi to Vizag for personal reasons, then about why I moved to Puttaparthi (spoke about Satya Sai Baba) for my 10th and 12th, then about why I dropped a year for JEE, then about my engineering in Hyderabad.)

P1: Ok. What does your dad do?

Me: Sir, business.

P1: What business?

Me: (I answered.)

Both look at each other.

"Ok thank you. Please take your certificates".

Me: Thank you sir. Good day sir.

Overall, the profs were pretty cool. I enjoyed my first GD/PI experience.

#### Our Analysis:

This was definitely a good interview. The candidate was well prepared and this was visible through his answers. He also gave appropriate answers to questions on his career choices.

### 16) @ IIM – K

"I was the last person in my group to be interviewed. There were two panelists. The gist of my interview is as follows..."

P1: Your institute is Amity. Is the trouble over?

Me: I explained that problem was with Amity University, while my University was Indraprastha, so no problem existed for my institute ever.

P1: You have done a course in Mechanical and Automation Engineering. What does that mean?

**Me:** I have done a major in Mechanical and have done a basic course in Automation. So I am good at Mechanical and aware of the basics of Automation as applicable to Mechanical Engineering.

**P1:** Your marksheets shows so many subjects, is it a potpourri?

**Me:** No, sir. My course covers all aspects of Mechanical ranging from Production Engineering to Automobile Mechanics. Along with that, I have also done courses in Automation. But my Mechanical Engineering aspects and subjects are complete. All else I have done over and above that.

(Then Panelist 1 asked about a project I had done on Braking Systems. I answered and I think I answered very very well. Since I had actually done the project, I was able to explain everything in great detail and by the end both panelists looked very impressed.)

**P2:** Where is Kozhikode?

**Me:** Sir, Calicut - in the wonderful state of Kerala.

**P2:** More specifically?

**Me:** 200 km from Cochin, overnight train to Kanyakumari.

**P2:** (laughs) Good. South of Kochin or north?

**Me:** North

**P2:** Good. Who was Chairman of the Drafting Commission of the Constitution?

**Me:** Mr. B.R.Ambedkar

**P2:** Mr?

**Me:** Dr.

**P2:** (laughs) What do you know of the preamble?

**Me :** (I answered correctly. Then more questions on the constitution and government followed...like What is a republic?; How is the president elected?; Is there a weight given to the votes of MLAs?; In 1 minute speak on India 2020; How can agriculture do better?)

Then the panelists moved to more general questions: Are you a native of Delhi?; Who designed it?; When was Delhi designed?; Where was Lutyens from?)

#### Our Analysis:

The candidate showed good preparation as well as good awareness level. Accordingly, this was a good interview.

17) @ IIM – K

**P1:** Tell me something about yourself?

Me: (I gave him my standard prepared answer)

P1: What's Markov Process?

Me: Not really sure, sir, but it's a process where to find the estimate of the present step you just update the estimate of the previous step, thus making it faster and simpler.

P1: What random processes have you studied in electronics?

Me: I don't remember in subjects, but we used a similar concept in our projects. (I explained my project)

P1: Ok, good.

P1: So what is orthogonality?

Me: Orthogonality of vectors, sir? (Told him something. Talked of inner product of vectors.)

P1: I don't understand. What is inner product?

Me: (Explained it to him with an example)

P1: Where do you use these?

Me: CDMA. Explained how it works and importance of orthogonality in it.

P1: So if I generate this vector, how would I know if its orthogonal?

Me: I don't know, sir.

P1: So it's just random?

Me: no, I am sure there is some method but I cannot recall.

P1: Ok, good.

(Then he looks at P2 and asks him to take over)

P2: What do you know bout the Naxalite women?

Me: Not much really, sir.

P2: You mean you don't know anything about what happens in your state? (I am from AP)

Me: I know something about the Naxalites, but that's what I read from the paper. I do not know role of women in it.

P2: You mean to say, things that happen around the country is not important to you?

Me: No, sir. It's not like that but I do not know much about Naxalites.

P2: What kind of organization do you want to set up? (I had mentioned it in my form)

Me: (I explained)

P2: What have you done in this regard?

Me: (I told him; apparently he was not satisfied)

P2: You are 21 years old and you say you feel strongly about this, how come you haven't done nothing substantial about it?

Me: (I told him that I didn't have the money to do anything now.)

P2: Okay who has made this file? (All certificates were neatly arranged with a printed note for the extracurricular ones)

Me: My mother and I, sir.

P2: What does she do?

Me: (I told him)

P2: (Looks at the other guy for approval and says) Ok, thank you. You may leave.

#### Our Analysis:

The candidate should have prepared better and should have been more aware of developments in his native state. He was quite honest when answering about his file.

## 18) @ IIM – K GD/PI

**GD/Case study details:** It was a 50 word paragraph on whether a person has the right to end his life at the time when he reaches a stage where he is crippled by chronic diseases and is unable to perform basic things like eating, walking, etc. At such a stage, what should be the role of his relatives, doctors & lawyers?

Number of students in Group: 11

Time duration: 13-14 mins

#### Interview Details

No of Panel Members - 2 (Let's refer to them as P1 & P2)

There used to be a gap of 5-7 mins between the end of one interview and the start of the other in which the panelists went through the profile of the next candidate.

**Over all observation:** It was an 18-20 minute process in which I was questioned about my recent job profile, college subjects & basic Maths. One of the panelists was asking the questions and the other was observing. Initially the questions were such that it lowered my confidence & morale after which they started asking basic conceptual questions regarding college subjects & basic Maths.

#### Questions asked -

P1: So, you are currently working with Career Launcher?

Me: Yes Sir.

P1: But CL has its own B-school, then why don't you join it?

Me: Yes Sir, but this school is quite new and is just one year old. It is not at a stage where it can be compared to the IIMs.

P1: Ok, forget it. (I was about to give more reasons but was interrupted by him)

P1: So you are here to take the GDPI experience so that you go out and teach your students how to prepare for it? What is your plan?

Me: No Sir, getting into IIMs is one of my dreams and a career goal. I am here to clear the crucial stage of GD/PI so that I can be a part of IIMK.

P1: (Still suspicious) May I see your mobile phone?

Me: (I was bit confused, does he want to see the model of my mobile phone? I do carry the very basic one available in the market) Sure Sir, I took it out of my pocket and presented it to him.

P1: So it is switched off? (He was suspicious if there is a recording going on)

Me: Yes Sir. (Well, it is a code of conduct for an interview)

P2: Why have you moved down the ladder? You were getting higher remuneration, - almost double, in your previous organization, then why did you join CL at a lower package? (In the mean time P1 started going through my certificates)

Me: Sir, in my previous organization, I was to be shifted to Shanghai for next 1.5 years for a project but this time I was resolute that I will clear CAT and get into the IIMs. So I thought that I must leave the organization, as my objectives were not in line with those of the organization. I thought this move might create a catapult effect for me and till now the decision has paid well.

P1: Hey, where is your relieving letter when you moved from your first organization to second?

Me: Sir, I didn't get the opportunity to collect it.

P1: It means that we can't consider your first two years of experience.

Me: But Sir, I have the appointment letter of my first organization as well as the appointment letter of the second also.

P1: But it doesn't reflect your continuity. Maybe you left the first after just two months. How do we know?

Me: Sir, I didn't give a thought to it but I assure you that I'll produce it soon.

P1: (Now sternly) You need to send the letter within the next 7 days to IIM K.

Me: Sir, I'll make sure that I send it within the next 2 days.

P2: Were there any lay offs in your previous organization? (They still appeared to be suspicious of my strange career move.)

Me: (In a flash) No Sir, in fact there are no such speculations even till date.

P1: Tell us about your favorite subjects in college?

Me: Sir, Production Engineering.

P1: Any other

Me: Sir, Power plant engineering.

P1: Any other

Me: Sir, I.C Engines.

P1: Draw all the components of the I.C. Engines within the next one-minute.

Me: (I started drawing but the moment I made the spark plug, I was asked a question.)

P1: Do all I.C. Engines have a spark plug?

Me: No Sir, I was detailing the most popular 4 stroke, S.I. Engine but the Combustion Ignition engine doesn't have a spark plug rather has a fuel injector.

P1: Ok, continue

Me: I reached the crankshaft then was again interrupted

P1: What is a crankshaft?

Me: Sir, crankshaft is a terminal or a link which transfers the linear motion of the piston to the power train.

P1: What is a power train?

Me: Sir, the power train consists of all the components which are used to convert the chemical energy of the fuel to rotational energy of the tires. The power train includes engine, transmission, differentials, drive shafts, roller bearings and tires.

P1: Are you in touch with Mathematics?

Me: Sir, I am preparing Maths content for Regional MBA courses so I am very much in touch with Maths.

P1: What are the topics which you cover?

Me: Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Mensuration, Probability, etc.

P1: Ok, write the expansion of log.

Me: I expanded it.

P1: Write all the rules of log.

Me: (I started but he immediately interrupted.)

P1: Are these laws or rules?

Me: Sir, I am not sure.

P1: What is the difference between rules and laws?

Me: Sorry Sir, I am not aware of it.

P1: How will you prepare a good content when you don't know the difference between rules and laws?

Me: Sir, I'll make sure that I learn such things.

P1: Ok, continue.

Me: I wrote 3 to 4 more rules then he stopped me again.

P1: What is the rule for  $\log(a+b)$ ?

Me: Sir, as such there is no defined rule for  $\log(a+b)$ .

P1: Why?

Me: Sir, log is an operator used for multiplication and division of large and small numbers by converting these multiplication and division to addition and subtraction which is easier to do. But as such a rule for addition or subtraction wouldn't serve any mathematical purpose.

P1: Tell me the first derivative of  $\log(a+b)$ .

Me: Sir, with respect to?

P1: With respect to x.

Me: Sir, since 'a' and 'b' are not the function of x, hence  $\log(a+b)$  will be treated as constant, hence derivative of  $\log(a+b)$  w.r.t x will be zero.

P1: (Sternly) Are you confident?

Me: I am very confident Sir?

P1: What if  $a+b=x$ ?

Me: Then, we'll get the derivative as  $1/(a+b)$

P1: Tell the integral of  $\log(a+b)$ .

Me: Sir, with respect to?

P1: With respect to x.

Me: Sir, since 'a' and 'b' are not the function of x, hence  $\log(a+b)$  will be treated as a constant, hence integral of  $\log(a+b)$  w.r.t x will be  $x * \log(a+b) + \text{constant } c$ .

P1: Okay, do you want to ask anything from us?

Me: No Sir, I clarified most of my doubts from my mentor in IIM K.

Me: Sir, one thing. Can you please give me the address as to where do I need to send the relieving letter from my first organization?

P1: Well, you don't need to send it.

Me: Ok Sir.

P1: Thank You

Me: Thank You.

#### Our Analysis:

This was a different interview. The panel first checked the candidate's intent. After this, the interview was normal. The candidate was able to answer most questions and was, largely, not lacking in any area.

## 19) @ XLRI

### Work Experience:

Career Launcher India Ltd. / Content Editor / 2 yrs

Very few extra-curricular and certificates.

Venue : Ashoka Hotel, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi

There were 3 people in the Panel (referred to as L, M and R )

L: Left Panelist – T. A. S. Vijayaraghavan (Operations Management and Information Systems)

M: Middle Panelist – Ashish K. Pani (Information Systems)

R: Right Panelist – Paul Fernandes (Business Ethics and Economics)

Me: Interviewee – Kapil Khurana

(Reached the venue at 8:50. R got out of the interview room and called my name first. Interview started at 8:55. L took my file and started checking my certificates.)

R: (Checking my XLRI details already with them) Hi, Kapil. Tell us something about yourself. How was your day?

Me: Sir, the day has been fine so far. I am Kapil Khurana. I did my B.Sc in Computer Science from College of Vocational Studies in 2004 and since then, I have been working with Career Launcher India Ltd as a content editor. My hobbies include solving mathematical puzzles and writing into my daily diary.

L: So you work with CL. What do you teach?

Me: Sir, I am working as a content editor. My job responsibilities include developing Mock CATs and Mock XAT; the papers students take as part of their preparation for MBA entrance examinations. I also develop other full length tests, books and supporting study material.

L: How do you develop the questions? I mean, from where do you get the questions?

Me: Sir, the questions for Mocks are all developed anew. We research the content of actual papers of these entrance examinations and develop the questions according to their patterns and level of difficulty. We are a team of 6 people responsible for the content of quant and data interpretation sections. Supposing a Mock XAT is to be developed then its specification sheet is prepared as a first step which specifies how many questions each developer has to develop. For example, it would say that I have to develop 3 questions on algebra and 2 questions on geometry. The same would be specified for each of the other developers and consequently, a complete Mock paper gets ready. That paper goes through 2 stages of editing and after that and for most of these tests, the final stage of editing is performed by me.

M: Is it only for CAT?

Me: No, sir. Our MBA preparation course covers all national level and almost all regional level MBA entrance tests. Exams like CAT, XAT, FMS, IIFT, SNAP are covered.

M: How do you get questions for the papers which are not given to the students?

Me: Sir, for the entrance examinations like CAT and IIFT, the paper is handed over to the aspirants. But yes, examinations like XAT and FMS do not release their question booklets. In that case, our faculty who sit for these exams and actually recall the questions as much as they can. In this manner, we get most of the content of these papers and based on this content, we develop our future papers.

L: (interrupting) Do you get the full paper by this practice?

Me: No, sir. It is a memory based paper. So how could it be full!! But yes, we get almost 50% of the content of the paper.

M: How many people from CL write XAT for this purpose?

Me: Sir, usually 10 to 15 people write this exam. Even for CAT this is the number. But for regional exams like CET, the number of people writing it is 3-4.

M: Which entrance paper do you rate the best among CAT, XAT and SNAP?

Me: Sir, I would be taking the latest exams for this comparison. And to tell you honestly, it has been XAT which came as the most balanced paper among all of them. It was an ideal paper which grilled students on all the test-taking strategies of an aspirant and had a justified mix of questions from all areas. CAT's verbal section has been debated this year due to its ambiguity and SNAP has always been a controversial paper since it started due to its errors and unfriendliness.

L: (with a skeptic eye) Do you prepare students for interviews as well?

Me: Yes, sir. Our Personality Development programme called PDP is a powerful programme which prepares students for B-school and other day to day interviews.

L: So, do you tell them what to speak in an IIM interview and what to speak in XLRI interview?

Me: No, sir. PDP is essentially a personality development programme. We believe that if you acquaint any person with his innate personality and relate it with the experiences he has had, he would be equipped to handle any interview or group tasks because interviews are nothing but a reflection of one's personality. Thus, this programme is useful for them not only for all the B-school interviews but for their general conduct in their life as well.

M: Recently the government was considering having only one exam for all. How will it affect the aspirants? What could be the advantages/disadvantages?

Me: Sir, at one point of time, the government was considering having 5 national level MBA entrance examinations viz. CAT, XAT, ATMA, MAT and JMET. And, yes, you are right, it was a

consideration to have only one exam also, which didn't see the light of the day. The advantages could be that the aspirants will be able to manage their time towards their final year studies and their job and will not have to go through the hassles of having so many entrance exams and preparing for them individually. The disadvantages could be that if any aspirant is not able to perform well in that single exam due to his bad day or some other unfortunate reason, his one full year would be wasted. (I answered this question very confidently.)

M: What are CL's annual revenues?

Me: 70 cr

M: And how many centers are there?

Me: Sir, 67 CL centers all over India and some business partner locations which keep on increasing/decreasing on a daily basis. So, I do not have the exact data for this.

M: Recently an Indian was chosen for the post of UN general secretary. Can you tell us his name?

Me: Yes sir, he was Mr. Shashi Tharoor. He couldn't win the seat.

M: So what exactly happened?

Me: Sir, I do not have much knowledge, except that he was Mr. Shashi Tharoor. The name is all that I know.

L: What are your views about the latest budget? (I liked the maturity of XL because instead of asking what they knew, they were interested in my opinions. I realised it later in their next question.)

Me: (iterating what I knew) Sir, Education cess has been hiked from 2% to 3%.

L: (interrupting) No, we are interested in knowing which aspect has affected you the most?

Me: Sir, the income tax slabs.

L: So tell us something about it.

Me: Sir, the base limit of exemption has been hiked from 1 lakh to 1.10 lakhs.

L: But that's hardly any increment?

Me: Yes, sir, I agree with you.

L: It would be sucked by the Education cess which has been hiked?

Me: Even more, sir. You charge your mobile regularly and the service tax that you pay would be 12.36% instead of 12.24%. Not only that, sir, you would be paying it for all the services that you avail. (pause). So, not a people's budget sir.

(everybody nodded in agreement... as if they too wanted to kick Chidambaram for this)

L: What are your views about the Indian economy? How do you rate it? (again asking for my views. I did not do the same mistake of misinterpretation here)

Me: Sir, I think the economy of India is doing fine. The GDP is growing at 9.2% annually according to the latest budget.

L: (interrupting) But what about the 6% inflation?

Me: Yes, sir, the inflation is offsetting the growth and the government has said that it is taking measures to bring it down to an acceptable 5 – 5.5%.

L: 5.5% is not acceptable. It is high. Isn't it low for Japan?

Me: (confidently) Sir, Japan is a developed economy and even US for that matter. GDP growth in US is hardly 2% which is justified for a developed economy. But for a developing nation like India, some amount of inflation is necessary. (I wanted to elaborate why inflation is necessary by pointing that price stagnation would result in drain of all raw material and services....but was interrupted by R. I surrendered because this is the first time R. spoke.)

R: (finally speaking... sounded like monologue) No, any inflation is bad for any economy.

(I didn't speak anything.)

(In my resume the first line was about my ambition in life. So, some grilling on it).

(Supply chain – operations – logistics etc. Answered all of them with illustrations and experiences.)

L: Do you know about Chinese postman problem?

Me: No, sir, not even heard about it.

L: Travelling salesman problem?

Me: Yes, sir. I read it in my graduation in Operation Research. Suppose you have to travel to various cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Baroda etc. for interviews. Then your path should be chosen so that you visit each of these cities and your distance travelled or the cost is minimum.

L: Hmm...

L: Kapil, why are your graduation marks so low?

Me: Sir, I have about 70% marks in 10th and 12th and about 60% in graduation. Academically I have been an average performer. It would be hard for me to justify why I am having average marks. Crests and Troughs happen in everybody's life as such.

L: But here in BM programme you are required to study rigorously. Seeing your marks, it is unlikely that you would be able to sustain yourself in this rigour!! (all 3 of them started talking and smiling among themselves about the low marks)

Me: (in a slightly high voice) Sir, not really though. (reverting back to my normal soft voice because they became silent) I wasn't able to score well in my graduation. It doesn't necessarily hint that I would continue to score low even in my higher studies. In my resume, you can see that I have performed exceptionally well in my company and was declared the role model for my post. I got a rating of 5 on 5 indicating role model. This is an honour given to only 12 out of 400+ employees of Career Launcher. On account of that, I was taken for an outbound trip with the chairman of the company in December this year.

R: Ok Kapil, if you do not have anything to ask from us, please sign on this sheet.

L: (while I was signing) Have you got a call from PMIR?

Me: (while signing) No, sir. I could not get the call for PMIR.

(pause...)

L: Overall, I respect your frankness.

Me: Thank you, sir.

Me: (after having signed) Sir...

(L understood that I wanted to ask something and encouraged me to ask)

Me: Sir, can you please tell me what is your profile and which subjects you teach?

L: You are CL's employee. So, I think you can guess.

Me: In that case it is OK sir... (I did not even say sorry ... how rude of me!!)

(no questions on essay, no question on strength/weakness.)

#### Our Analysis:

Overall, the candidate performed well. He answered questions maturely and displayed good awareness. Asking for the panel's profile was not necessary and could have been avoided.

### 20) @ XLRI

P1: Hello, Kartheek. Where are you from?

Me: Hyderabad, sir.

P1: What are you doing there?

Me: Working with TCS.

P1: How long have you been working with TCS?

Me: 18 Months, sir.

P1: 18 months, hmm... that's a long time Kartheek. Tell me, we have been interviewing so many people from TCS, why is it that so many people had been coming from TCS.

Me: (with a question mark face) There is no reason as such, it might just be seasonal, that this year, a lot of people had turned up from TCS.

P1: No, it's not that way. I am telling you that, every year, 60% come from TCS and 30% come from Infosys and say 10% come from Wipro, why do you think this is happening?

Me: There is nothing we can deduce from it, sir, maybe it's just that so many people have cleared the test.

P1: Oh!! Why would so many people clear the test?

Me: It might be that so many people are writing the exam.

P1: Why would so many people write the exam?

Me: (silent for a while) I cannot say anything for sure, sir.

P1: How many people are there in TCS?

Me: around 90,000, sir.

P1: How many people are there in Infosys?

Me: around 60,000, sir.

P1: Isn't that the reason why so many people are coming from TCS?

Me: yes, sir, that is one of the reasons.

P1: Oh.. One of the reasons? Anyway, have you been to XLRI Interview earlier Kartheek?

Me: yes, sir. I had been here before last year, but I was taking the exam since three years.

P1: Oh, is it? What is the change from last year to this year?

Me: Nothing.

P1: Oh, is it? Then we did a mistake by not selecting you?

Me: No, sir. It's just that a question goes wrong here and there.

P1: Ok, so what shall I ask you?

Me: (Silent for a while) You can ask me about my interests.

P1: Why should I ask you about your interests?

Me: Because , if I do well at my interests, I should be doing well in MBA also which is one of my interests (in a not so confident voice)

P1: I will not ask you about your interests, I will ask you about Indian History. Tell me something about Indian History.

Me: There was freedom movement after the British entered India after 1600-

P1: No, Freedom movement is recent history, I want much older ones.

Me: Ok, it starts with Indus Valley civilization, they were supposed to be a very organized and had occupations like pottery. They had good learning centres –

P1: What are those learning centres called?

Me: Sorry, I don't remember.

P1: Ok, continue..

Me: Aryans came down to southern parts of India during this civilization.

P1: What do you mean by "came down"? They fell down?

Me: No, sir. I meant they came from northern parts to south.

P1: Oh, that means, down from up. Ok, continue.

Me: After that, there were Mughals .

P1: Oh, Mughals came after the Indus Valley?

Me: No, sir, but these are two prominent periods of Indian history that I remember.

P1: Ok, when was the Indus valley civilization?

Me: I do not know, sir.

P1: When did the mughals come?

Me: I do not know, sir.

P1: You can guess, we don't want you to give the exact year, just give us the century at least.

Me: Is it the 17th century? (confirming)

P1: 17th century !!!! Is it?

Me: Oh, sorry, Britishers were already there, it might be the 12th century.

P1: 12th century!!!! Just tell us when was the Battle of Panipat?

Me: I am sorry I do not know, sir.

P1: You can guess the century.

Me: I am sorry, I have no Idea sir.

P1: Ok leave it. India is a multi religious society, isn't it? What do you think are the threats for us internally and externally?

Me: Internally, India has a lot of religions, but the religious harmony is going down day by day..

P1: Why is it that it's happening now, religions were there from earlier times also?

Me: At one time, we were trying to project our national identity, now as we are growing, we are looking for a more narrowed identity like that based on religion. And other than that, there is a large difference in the levels of people. Though we claim that the economy is growing, it is not spread equally, rich are becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer...

P1: Ok, you mean income disparity levels, do you know something called HDI?

Me: Yes, sir. Human Development Index.

P1: What is our position in that?

Me: It's 127, I think, sir.

P1: Out of?

Me: I don't know exactly, might be 250 sir.

P1: That's good , isn't it, 127/250.

Me: No, sir. I think that's way low, given our huge population and the human and natural resources we have. And we have a great pool of intellectual capital which is not yet put to use totally and...

P1: You are using right words without any proper cohesive logic isn't it? I mean, at least, that's what I can make out from your talk.

Me: No, sir, I wouldn't say I don't have any logic, but it might only seem like that because I am not able to give you facts and figures. I am better with qualitative analysis rather than quantitative analysis.

P1: you don't need to give the exact numbers, but you can say something like the lower 10 percentile etc.. anyway, you said you are into qualitative analysis, what is content analysis?

Me: I never came across this, sir, but if I could guess, maybe, content analysis is something like reading something and categorizing the whole content under headings and subheadings. Or if you are talking to someone, judging him and categorizing his traits.

P2: What is your rank in Engineering?

Me: I was 2nd ranker, sir.

P2: out of?

Me: 50.

P2: 94.1 in intermediate in Andhra Pradesh is kind of low, isn't it? You have an average of 96, I think.

Me: It's comparatively low, sir, but it's not so bad, and as far as my education in intermediate education goes, it was very good.

P2: Why do you want to leave TCS?

Me: I am not leaving TCS, I am only going for a better option.

P1: Aah!! Who will tell you these answers! I mean does anyone tell you that these answers are the right ones and you tell it irrespective of what happens.

Me: Sir, I understand that these will seem stereotyped answers, but it's true with my case as I had been doing pretty well with TCS.

P1: Oh! You get a certificate of appreciation and you tell that you are doing good at work?

Me: No, sir, I have been doing good in extra-curricular also –

P1: haan... that's ok, you can answer him ..

P2: Does Systems engineer have anything to do with Mechanical Engineering?

Me: No, sir. They call it systems engineer in TCS, as we are not just software engineers, we provide business solutions for our clients.

P2: You have shifted from Mechanical to IT, any particular reason?

Me: No, sir. It's my first job on campus. But I was very good at programming in my engineering; I handled the whole IT part of our project.

P2: Ok, what is the rupee dollar conversion rate now?

Me: It's around 44 rupees per dollar.

P2: Suppose the government re-evaluates the rupee, what would happen to our businesses in India?

Me: Sir, I believe, we cannot change the value of the rupee just like that. It will be determined by the exports, imports and the gold reserves etc.

P2: That's been a norm long ago, not now. Even in that case, assume that the government can change it as it likes, what would happen?

Me: I don't know if it would increase or decrease.

P2: Let's say that the rupee strengthens.

Me: Ok, then may be the businesses in India would also grow strong, especially businesses like the software ones, which have a lot of exports to America, will gain a lot as the rupee strengthens.

P2: (with an Are-u-crazy look on his face) Then why is it that the software companies are asking the government not to re-evaluate the rupee?

Me: Oh, is it... then, it might be that there might be a problem in finance from the other side, i.e. from the client side in America. It might be that their foreign taxation policies would lead to more losses for the company that is outsourcing. And it might be that the Indian companies might become costly for the American companies and they might shift their businesses to another country with cheaper labour. Honestly speaking, I am guessing all this as I don't have any idea about re-evaluation of rupee.

P2: Ok.

P3: Tell me what is the difference between petrol and diesel car?

Me: (gave some normal and mechanical engineering fundas, not so convincing ones)

P3: Ok, one simple case, why do you think that all cars have engine at front not at rear?

Me: I think it is to accommodate the fuel tank in the rear, so that there is less damage during accidents (no reaction in the panel, I continued with vague fundae), or maybe, it is to accommodate the differential etc...

P1: Then where does an Auto Rickshaw have its fuel tank and engine?

Me: Both are in the rear.

P1: Why so?

Me: If the design of the body permits, you can accommodate it in the rear.

P1: Ok, do you have any questions for us?

Me: No, sir. Thank you.

#### Our Analysis:

The panel seemed interested in checking the personality of the candidate. Accordingly, he was asked a very wide-ranging set of questions. The candidate showed good temperament.

#### 21) @ IIFT Delhi

Panel of 3 professors (2 women professors (A & B) + 1 other person(C))

C: Do you think should we compete with China or should we collaborate with China?

Me: I don't think we can compete with China in manufacturing. Right now, we should collaborate with them. Only after building our own infrastructure we can think of perhaps

competing with them (I started talking about how much deeply entrenched manufacturing is in China and talked about India's services sector)

**B:** How do you think we can collaborate?

**Me:** China can provide us with the manufacturing expertise (Then I talked about how India and China can help each other out in sectors they are strong in. This will also help us in increasing our trade with each other)

**C:** If you had an option to choose between China and Japan to trade with, which one would you choose?

**Me:** China. It is a bigger economy. Its population is high. So whatever it requires from India will be required in a much bigger quantity than what Japan requires. India will receive higher remittances from China. Hence I would go with China

**A:** You are a photographer. You are selling your photograph to a person outside the country. You are accepting money in a foreign currency. Is that legal

**Me:** (I wasn't sure about this. I gave the example of how Indian IT companies accept money from their clients and thus deduced that it must be legal for me to accept money in a foreign currency)

**A:** What section of trade would you put this transaction in?

**Me:** International Trade

**A:** I asked which section?

**Me:** I'm not aware of any sections so I don't know the answer to this.

**A:** When you are selling a photograph - is it a good or a service?

**Me:** It depends on the situation. If I'm selling a portrait or some monument's photograph, I would regard that as a good. In case let's say I'm selling it to some news agency for covering news, I would say it is a service.

**A to B:** Ma'am, now you can ask.

**B:** It's ok. (End of the interview)

## 22) IIFT Delhi

**P1 :** 2 panelists both male

**P1:** So tell us something about your work and acads Told.

**P1:** Why mba intl business?

**Me:** because there isn't anything like domestic business these days. Every business has to take into account global perspective.

A business has to be globally competitive to be successful.

P1: So who formulates foreign trade policy for India

Me: I am not really sure but my most logical guess would be Ministry of Trade and Commerce.

P1: What was the export in \$ of India last year?

Me: Sorry sir I don't remember the value. I know the export items and trade partners but can't recall the exact value.

P1: You don't know the basics of trade why did you come for an interview here?

Me: Sorry, Sir I can't recall these now. I only happened to check the trade deficit for India.

P1: So, what do you know about world trade?

Me: Told about WTO, Doha round, Agricultural subsidy India's stand, Trade facilitation agreement, India-US negotiations, Nairobi round

P1: Recently Modi visited Gurgaon with Hollande. What was the occasion?

Me: Told, International Solar Alliance

When and where was it announced?

Me: Not sure. I guess should be Paris Climate Summit.

You are right about almost everything still not confident. That's not good.

Me: Sir, actually he goes to so many places and delivers nearly same speech almost everywhere really difficult to remember what was announced where.

Both of them started laughing. P2 for the first time showed some expression.

P2: Don't worry he isn't going anywhere this year.

Me: (Smiled.) I read he is planning to go to Africa.

P2: CAT score and what other calls?

Me: Told.

P1: So IMT G must be most viable for you as you r from ghaziabad only

Me: Said I would have to live in a hostel anyway. And my father is in a transferable job so maybe the family won't be in gzb for long.

P2: Do you follow stock market?

Me: not really Sir.

P2: Read today's paper?

Me: Didn't get a chance. Read a few articles on the app.

P2: Okay so what did you read?

Me: Taking a cue from previous question I said about sensex losing a lot of points

P2: What is the reason for this crash?

Me: stock mkt all abt investor confidence. Banks declaring NPAs and global slowdown (don't know if I was right)

P2: What does the RBI do?

Me: Told.

P2: Anything in news regarding commercial banks?

Me: Told about NPAs and gloomy balance sheets.

P2: So Rajan is your role model. What did he do before he became governor?

Me: Told he was a professor. Couldn't remember the college name (Damn!)

You should have known he is your role model.

Me: I know Sir but simply can't recall. It starts with B..

P2: At least the country you must remember

Yes Sir, he was in the US.

Are you sure it wasn't Cambridge?

Yes Sir sure.

P1: What does JSS stand for?

Me: Told.

P1: Okay thank you

### 23) @ XLRI

(Panel of 3)

Panel: What is Data Warehousing?

Me: (gave answer)

Panel: Why do I need it?

Me: (replied)

Panel: I can build reports by pulling data from many sources, why do I need it?

Me: Because that is not efficient. Those databases are not built for such applications.

Panel: What is a materialized view?

Me: (answered)

(not very convincing answers but did ok here)

Panel : Tell me of any ad in recent times you liked.

Me: (couldn't think of much) Sir, the recent Nike ad...where they play cricket in traffic

Panel : Why so?

Me: It's a very different and creative ad.

Panel : What do you mean by creative?

Me: Something which is new and hasn't been thought of in that manner.

Panel : Is jumping on buildings creative, like in Krish?

Me: No, sir...it's not a very original idea, as it has been shown a lot in many movies.

Panel : What business paper do you read? Do you read every day?

Me: Economic Times, as much time as I get.

Panel : What is Budget Deficit?

Me: Sir, I don't know the exact figure now (wondering if he asked for definition or the figure)

Panel : What is inflation?

Me: (answered)

Panel: If price of a foodstuff decreases, can inflation come down?

Me: Yes, because its based on a basket of products, the others can go up.

Panel : What if all prices come down, then can inflation go up?

Me: No, sir.

Panel : What does it mean when I say that correlation between 2 products is 3?

Me: It means if price of A goes up, then price of B is also expected to go up

Panel : Can correlation be 3??!!

Me: Sorry, sir...I meant it in a positive context, correlation has to be between -1 and 1 L

Panel : Tell me two products that are not correlated.

Me: (after thinking...) Urad dal and umbrella.

Panel : (grilled me on that...)

Me: (said I can't think of any other combination)

Panel: What is a private limited company?

Me: In case the company crashes, then the BoDs or CEO is not liable to compensate the shareholders their losses...(partly correct..partly wrong..)

Panel : Tell me about GE, when was it established? Businesses of GE?

Me: It was established about 1309 yrs back by Thomas Edison (then named all businesses with some difficulty but correctly)

Panel : Which business does GE Aviation come under?

Me: (answered correctly)

Panel : Compare Jack Welch and Jeff Immelt, who is better?

Me: They cannot be compared, they had different challenges, but both are equally good.

Our Analysis:

The candidate was well prepared and therefore, the interview did not leave much to be desired. He also showed good awareness.

#### 24) @ S.P. Jain, Mumbai

(The Dean and the Finance head along with a student formed the panel, it was a group interview)

(They initially asked us to give a 1-minute brief on ourselves and later questioned everybody for 15 mins each in the decreasing order of time taken to summarize oneself. I had taken just about 1 min in describing myself and hence was the last one to be questioned.)

Dean – D; Fin head – F; Student – S

D: You are a President's Scout. What is that?

Me: (Explained about Scouting movement in India and its relevance)

D: What learnings did you get from being a Scout?

Me: (Explained) Service to country, Society....

D: What all activities did you do? Why isn't Scouts Popular?

Me: (Explained though not very convincingly)

D: What is BRIC?

Me: Brazil, Russia, India & China.

D: Its relevance in today's world?

Me: (Explained that the international trade relating to these is on a hike, quality human resources available, large investment destinations)

D: What is PPP?

Me: Purchasing Power Parity is one. The other is Public Private Partnership.

D: I'm speaking about the former. What do you mean by that?

Me: (I gave some unconvincing reply)

D: What are the sales volumes in your territory in Tamilnadu? What has been the hike in numbers since you first took over that territory?

Me: (It immediately clicked that he's trying to relate growth in sales to PP in my territory).

Explained him that due to huge investments in the region, Chennai is bringing lot of liquidity in markets, PP increase among people etc. leading to hike in sales figures.

D: Why are investments increasing?

Me: Various parameters like talent available, cheap labour, Port in the vicinity, auto ancillaries in nearby area, etc.

D: Okay.

F: So, Mr. Phani you are from Sales & Marketing and would like to shift to Finance. Why?

Me: (Gave justification)

F: Comment, "MUL's strategy has gone for a toss"

Me: I explained.... (justified it partly and negated the statement with examples for both stances taken.)

F: Why Finance? (Few more questions were posed, unable to recollect them)

Me: Gave some funda.... (They weren't convinced totally though)

F: Why should I prefer you over a Finance background friend of yours?

**Me:** My current exposure in Sales has given me an opportunity to monitor closely 5 small enterprises. I assume Finance to be the most important aspect of any business. My knowledge in Finance over the next 2 years would put me in good stead to assume a role of greater responsibility in an organisation or perhaps start a firm on my own.

**F, D:** Thank you.

**S:** Please sit in the lounge; I'll guide you from there.

(The interview for the group was for about 90mins. I participated in discussions for over 15 mins)

#### Our Analysis:

This was a good interview. The candidate was able to answer most of the questions implying that he had prepared well and had good general awareness.

### 25) @ NITIE, Mumbai

(The interview panel consisted of four gentlemen. I was asked to quickly introduce myself - stuff like why MBA and why NITIE only. Then followed the questions)

**P1:** Why do you want to do MBA?

**Me :** (A great deal of debate on this -my shifting from Mechanical Engg. to TCS then to MBA)

**P2:** What field of Business Administration are you interested in?

**Me:** Sir, it is too early to take a call on this. I would be in a better position to decide on this once I am through with my MBA.

**P2:** No, Pavan, in fact it is too late because you are an engineer, and have been working for almost 2 years.

**Me:** (I, having no choice, said) Consulting.

**P3:** Consulting in?

**Me:** Marketing related issues.

**P1:** Okay then, rank the following parameters in your own order- Brand, Price, Quality, and after sales service. (As I was thinking a bit on this, the panelist 4 asked me to do it impromptu.)

**Me:** Quality, Brand, Price and then after sales service.

**P4:** What is an FMCG?

**Me:** Fast Moving Consumer Goods, sir.

**P4:** Does the above ranking hold good for FMCGs also?

P2: What field of Business Administration are you interested in?

Me: Sir, it is too early to take a call on this. I would be in a better position to decide on this once I am through with my MBA.

P2: No, Pavan, in fact it is too late because you are an engineer, and have been working for almost 2 years.

Me: (I, having no choice, said) Consulting

P3: Consulting in?

Me: Marketing related issues.

P1: Okay then, rank the following parameters in your own order- Brand, Price, Quality, and after sales service. (As I was thinking a bit on this, the panelist 4 asked me to do it impromptu.)

Me: Quality, Brand, Price and then after sales service.

P4: What is an FMCG?

Me: Fast Moving Consumer Goods, sir.

P4: Does the above ranking hold good for FMCGs also?

Me: No sir, because we don't talk about after sales service here. Rather, it's about promotion of the product. So it's going to be product, price, place and promotion.

P4: Thank you, Mr. Pavan.

Me: My pleasure, sirs.

#### Our Analysis:

The candidate could have performed better in this interview. He was not well prepared for questions pertaining to his core areas. He would have come across as a more mature and thoughtful candidate had he been able to answer these questions better.

## 26) @ NMIMS

(Panel was of 2 persons - An old lady Professor (L) and an elderly professor (M))

L: (As soon as I entered) Hello Maitreyee!! Good Morning!!

Me: Good Morning, ma'am. Good Morning, sir...

M: Please take a seat...

Me: Thank you, sir.

L: Maitreyee, haan, what does it mean?

Me: It means being born with the values inherited directly through God Himself...

L: Ok...So you know whose name it was - now or before?

Me: Ma'am, it was name of the wife of a great sage in the Vedic times and she herself was also a great sage.

L: Anything else about her?

Me: (oops! so she knows it!!) She was also a great mathematician. (Hoping she won't ask me about Maths)

M: All this time looked at my bio-sketch and job description) Hmm... tell me about yourself...

Me: (Told him the answer which I had prepared for about hobbies, studies, plus points, certificates and awards. Left out the minus points coolly)

L: (with a naughty smile) So you solve Sudoku? (Looked like she was also hooked to it)

Me: Yes, ma'am...

L: So how long does it take for you to complete it?

Me: Ma'am, it depends on the difficulty level...For an easy one about 2 mins.

L: So did you enter the Times Sudoku competition....

Me: No, ma'am...

M: What is this ....you worked for 1 year and you are already a Programmer analyst? Don't people generally get the designation of an analyst after 4-5 years...?

Me: Sir, that was the designation given to us after we got confirmed. We had joined as Programmer Analyst Trainees. The designation of a Business Analyst is the one which is got after 4-5 years...

M: Ok, so what did you have to do in your job?

**Me:** Sir, it was mainly coding using HTML for the web pages and a little bit of testing - to check if everything is going on fine.

**L:** (interrupting) You said you learnt Kuchipudi for 10 years. You don't want to take up dance as a profession?

**Me:** No, ma'am, for me dance is a hobby. I wouldn't want to take the pleasure out of it being a hobby because if I have to start practising at some fixed time daily I will surely get frustrated with it.

**L:** (Seemed very intent on my hobbies) When did you learn glass painting?

**Me:** In my seventh standard summer vacation when I had gone to a summer camp.

**L:** What was your first painting?

**Me:** A yellow duckling with orange feet and beak and a pink bow....

**L:** Do you read any books?

**Me:** Yes, ma'am...Mostly its fiction...Robin Cook, Agatha Christie and a few others...I also read The Week and Business Today (Hope she doesn't ask question from last years issues...)

**L:** You don't read non-fiction?

**Me:** I do read them but it is mostly fiction....I have read "Roots" which is non-fiction, Lee Iacocca's autobiography, The Goal etc.

**L:** What newspapers do you read?

**Me:** I read The Times of India and browse through The Economic Times and The Hindu on the net....

**L:** Ok, thank you.

**M:** Thank you.

**Me:** Thank you (and left...)

#### Our Analysis:

The interviewers were more interested in assessing the candidate's personality rather than the knowledge base. The candidate answered the questions well and would have come across as a pleasant and forthcoming person.

#### 27) @ TAPMI

(When I entered the faculty level interview there were three people in the panel. Two were professors and one was their alumni. )

**Panel:** So you have a heavy percentile of 98.

**Me:** (Just smiled)

**Panel:** Oh, so you are working as an Asst. Manager in Maruti Udyog Limited in the New Business Initiative department in a franchisee model establishment. Gosh, tell me Ravi how much salary you get? Why an MBA now, after all this is what you get to do.

**Me:** Sir, one candid admission, I have resigned from Maruti 1 month back.

**Panel:** (Stunned) Why?

**Me:** Sir, basically I worked in that department under Sales and Marketing for 7 months leading 3 dealerships to their targets in North India. All of a sudden two people were absorbed at a higher level in my department and the department did not need so many for dealership management. So they put me under training and asked me to wait for some time. One day, when I questioned how long I had to be in training they told me one to two years at least. I was not enjoying the training department at all and after 3 months in it I could take it no more and quit that for a new job as a Business Development Executive in a software company in Hyderabad.

**Panel:** You should have waited for that time. What's wrong?

**Me:** Sir, but after having a dynamic exposure of leading three dealerships, I was looking for more learning when all of a sudden I was put in training. I did not want to do this job as I was teaching the same stuff again and again for 3 months. They were very contrasting opportunities.

**Panel :** How would you rate Maruti's marketing experience, Maruti's training experience and your current job?

**Me:** I will rate them as:

1. Maruti's Marketing
2. Current job since I am just into it but have a scope to learn as the company is small
3. Training at Maruti

**Panel:** Why an MBA?

**Me:** It helps me in understanding Business Administration and choosing my career path.

**Panel:** Ok. So which subject are you good at?

**Me:** I am reasonably good at Operations Research. I did my engineering project in it where we fetched around 50 lacs saving for a firm.

**Panel:** Oh which firm was it?

**Me:** It was Super Olefins in Jeedimetla, a polythene company.

**Panel:** Explain your project.

Me: (I gave them a brief exposure on my project)

Panel: Ok. Now define linear programming for us and demonstrate a model where you've applied it or seen in your life.

Me: (Gave him an example of production of Maruti 800 and Omni and defined with a basic equation.)

Panel: How do you solve them in a computer?

Me: We have software like TORA.

Panel: What if you have a fresh computer with no software?

Me: I will try it in Simplex.

Panel: No no... but I want you to do it in system.

Me: Don't know, sir.

Panel: Can we use Excel?

Me: Sir I am not well versed with Excel.

Panel: (They gave me a brief on the magical tool Excel for around 3 minutes.)

Panel: So you do your own psychology analyzing as you mentioned.

Me: Yes, sir. I do it through Yahoo messenger.

Panel: How do you do?

Me: Have a set of questions before which I ensure that I know how many people the candidate is speaking to while chatting with me. And I analyze it by the time he/she takes for each reply, correctness in spellings grammar and sentences and also usage of expressions.

Panel: Ok but what if the other person is misleading you?

Me: If he misleads me into giving a wrong analysis, it is for him to lose.

Panel: How much was your success?

Me: I can say around 70 percentage, sir.

Panel: How did you measure it?

Me: No hard and fast rules. Out of every 10 people I definitely found at least 7 guys satisfied with my analysis.

Panel: What is the advantage of not looking at your candidate?

**Me:** It helps in avoiding bias. When I don't look at my candidate it helps me in thinking freely and answering objectively.

**Panel:** Excellent. Well defended.

**Panel:** So you keep blogging?

**Me:** Yes, sir. I have written about politics & philosophy and these days I am writing on Driving ethics.

**Panel:** Driving ethics like?

**Me:** Avoiding high beam lights while driving.

**Panel:** What's wrong in it?

**Me:** When you do not have street lights there is nothing wrong but when you have them you should avoid it. Because it causes temporary blinding to people especially the two wheelers who are not well protected, they run the highest risk.

**Panel:** (Gives a satisfied smile) Any questions?

**Me:** (Asked about TAPMI's distance from Industry etc.)

Director Level Interview (Three old people make me seated in a sofa in a dark room)

**Panel:** So you have 98 %ile, what calls do you have?

**Me:** I have them from NITIE, MICA, and TAPMI, sir.

**Panel:** Ok. So it seems you shifted companies. Why?

**Me:** (Told him the story again)

**Panel:** All these Andhras are mad of IT and America.

**Me:** (Just smile and said, that wasn't the case)

(He cuts me short)

**Panel:** You must have given GRE. (Looking at my nod) What was your score?

**Me:** Sir, it was 1330.

**Panel:** Oh, looks to be a bad score that's why you must have thought about an MBA.

**Me:** No, sir, but it was good enough to fetch me a seat in America. I always wanted to do an MBA.

**Panel:** Ok, so when have you given CAT earlier to this?

**Me:** Sir in 2004; got only 88 percentile.

**Panel:** Bas, that's it. Haha so he must have put in three years effort in getting 98 (before I could answer)

Anyway, call the next guy

(That's it overall. It was a mixed experience at TAPMI)

#### **Our Analysis:**

The panel was assessing the candidate's maturity level, thought process and personality. He performed well giving detailed and thoughtful answers.

### **28) Goa Institute of Management, Goa (GIM):**

#### **Pre GD:**

In Bangalore center, we were to sit in a lounge on the ground floor near reception and when the time came, panel members were to come out and call us for GD. On this day, there were around 24 people, divided into 2 groups of 12 each. There were two panelists on my panel, to be referred to as P1 and P2.

P1 came to the place where we are sitting and called out a few names and asked us to follow her into the GD hall. P2 introduced himself and the other panelist and spoke about the process. There was to be 1 min to think. Then there was to be 1 opening statement given by first person

to speak, followed by 7 – 8 mins of discussion with 1 concluding statement to be made by the last person to speak. This was to be followed by an essay of not more than 200-250 words on the same topic as the Group Discussion itself.

#### **GD Topic:**

"Governance in India has reached a new low". There are 9 people (3 are absent) in our group with a lone lady. The seating arrangement was good and chairs are comfortable. It was a good GD as the topic was a general one. People talked about scams, role of media, and failure of Govt. etc. Though it was not a fish market, I could not enter the discussion apart from opening and closing statements. I tried 2-3 times but failed. In the remaining time, I was more of listener than a speaker. I definitely performed better at writing the essay than at speaking in the GD.

**PI:** The arrangement was according to XAT IDs. I was the 4th one to be interviewed. The panel consisted of the same two people who conducted GD (P1 and P2).

**P2:** Give me your file

**Me:** (I gave it).

**P2:** Tell me about yourself

**Me:** (I started with a low voice but was interrupted by P2 and asked to speak a little louder)

**Me:** (I again started and spoke about my family background, a little about academics, how I was

selected for my current company and the nature of my work. Here I used a term called "Management profile".)

Till now P1 was seeing my file. After hearing the above word, she asked me to explain about the word

Me: (I explained this).

P1: (More questions on that followed).

Me: (I explained all of this and in between I told them that I am interested in HR and spoke about how I got interested in that and what I wanted to do in future. So here I mostly covered the questions Why MBA? Why HR?)

P1: Tell us about 3 HR policies which differentiate your organization from competitors.

Me: (I described this).

P1: (More questions on that).

Me: (I answered them well).

P1: If you are the HR head of your company, which is the one thing that you would want to improve?

Me: (I answered this question fluently).

P1: Why?

Me: (I explained and substantiated my answer).

P1: If you are selected into HR, which section of HR would you want to work with?

Me: (I told them this and before she could ask why, I gave the explanation for this also).

P1 seemed satisfied. I was feeling happy as I was questioned more about my strengths like HR. But then came the bouncer.

Till then, P2 was only observing me. Once P1 looked satisfied, P2 took over and started asking questions.

P2: So, you are a Mechanical Engineer (they had the sheet which we had filled during GIM registration), so tell me how the AC in this hall works?

Me: (I was completely lost but I answered a little before P2 interrupted).

P2: Why did you shift from Mechanical to IT?

Me: (I explained).

P2: (Back to technical again) What are fins and what will they do?

Me: (I said something).

**P2:** What is a compressor?

**Me:** It is used to increase the pressure

**P2:** What is the use of a compressor in an AC?

**Me:** I don't know sir. Actually I know the basic working and usage of AC but not the internal details. (I also spoke about the difference between an AC and a Cooler. P2 did not seem satisfied).

**P2:** Ok. Tell me about Heat Exchangers

**Me:** Sir, frankly speaking I have lost complete touch of it, as the nature of my work is different.

**P2:** (More grilling on that).

**Me:** (Somehow answered but not at all satisfactorily).

During this technical questioning, P1 was smiling. Finally, after thoroughly defeating me in Acads, P2 asked P1 if there were any more questions. She said no. Then both of them said that they are finished with the interview and asked me to leave. The interview took around 20 minutes. Actually I have to look at my interview in 2 parts. Part 1 was only questions by P1 and Part 2 by P2. I gave a decent performance in part 1 with many details about HR.

#### Any other points:

Regarding the documents that need to be carried, carry all originals. The panelists will have a

look at those. Regarding the dress code, you should be in formal wear.

#### Our Analysis:

This was another candidate who would have gained a lot if he had prepared better on his academic background. The candidate was able to answer questions related to his career choices, etc. Had he prepared better on academics, this could have been an ideal interview.

### 29) Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai (TISS):

Applied courses: Only HRM & LR

There were four panels for GD and three panels for PI generally. The panel that conducts GD may or may not be there for PI. All the process happened in the Academic building in new campus. We had to sit in a classroom where seniors gave a small presentation about TISS for 30- 40 mins and answered queries from aspirants. After this, the GD process started. All the groups which started simultaneously had the same GD topic.

GD: It was a case study based one. My group had 8 people and it was a peaceful GD as panelists had mentioned that negative marks would be awarded for aggressive behavior. My GD nemesis continued and I could not contribute much. Just spoke a sentence and before I could complete it, others had interrupted. My suggestion is that you should write points in the sheet that they give and write your reg. number also. I should have done this but poor me, this point struck me only after the GD was over. This may be helpful if you don't talk much and panelists want to see what you have written. I am not sure whether this will work or not, but give it a try.

**PI:** My panel was Panel 3 and there were 3 panelists (to be referred to as P1, P2 and P3).

My PI lasted for around 25min. One funny thing to be noticed was that out of 20 people who went to Panel 3, there were around 8-9 people from Infosys. I was the third one and this is how the PI went:

**P1:** So, where do you work?

**Me:** (Answered)

**P1:** Is it similar to ABC (another unit in the company).

**Me:** (I answered and gave sufficient explanation).

**P1:** So what exactly do you do?

**Me:** (I explained in detail for 3-4 minutes. The good thing was that they never interrupted me in between).

**P3:** (Described some incidents which happened inside the company and asked for an explanation).

**Me:** (I answered and then there was some cross questioning on this by P1 and P2).

**P2:** (Some personal questions from the form regarding my family).

**Me:** (I answered in detail).

**P3:** Have you read any books on HR?

**Me:** (I answered and described those books).

**P1:** (Asked something about Ph.D without MA degree).

**Me:** (I gave my opinion about that and said that I will consider this after my Masters degree).

**P1:** No issues. Just wanted to check if you have any interest in that

**P3:** (Some questions related to my work)

**Me:** (I answered all of them).

**P1:** You are a mechanical engineer?

**Me:** Yes sir

**P1:** Smiled and nodded his head.

**Me:** (Inside: Thank god. No questions related to acads).

**P3:** Gave some scenarios in training my unit and asked for my opinions

Me: I told him with some examples from my work

P3: Ok. We are done.

Me: Sir, if you don't mind I have one question. May I ask?

P3: Yes

Me: Asked the question which I had prepared

P2 and P3:

Answered and some discussion for 4-5 minutes happened on that.

Me: Thank you sir and ma'm for the explanation

P3: Ok. You can leave now

This was a good interview. You could drive the interview to your strengths easily as they gave ample time during PI. Most of them never interrupted in the middle. Questions basically followed from answers given. The panel was checking what the candidate knows, rather than what the candidate does not.

Our Analysis:

This was a very pleasant interview. The panel was not attempting to test the student's knowledge. Instead, they were assessing the maturity level and personality of the candidate.

### 30) TISS-HRM

There were three panellists. Two gentlemen (P1,P2) and a lady(P3). They asked me questions in turns. The previous interviewee was grilled on technical questions on engineering

P1: Please sit down. Introduce yourself. Tell us something which is not mentioned in the form.

Me: (Started introducing myself, wherein I told them that I was born in Secunderabad, Telangana)

P2: You are from Telangana?

Me: No, Sir. Born in Telangana. Parents are in the army, so raised around the country.

P1: So, you are staying in Delhi? Can you compare Delhi, Telangana and Himachal Pradesh for me?

Me: Well, essentially the people are the same everywhere. (I was cutoff in between)

P1: No. I want to hear something else. Could you then tell me what the problems are in these areas?

**Me:** (Mentioned about the dismal state of farmers in Telangana, unemployment and lack of industrialisation in Himachal and overpopulation and improper infrastructure in Delhi. Mentioned something about formal and informal sector as well)

**P1:** (Was nodding the whole while) So, supposing you are the HR manager of an organisation and you have different groups of people under you, that being permanent employees, non-permanent employees and workers from Himachal who have migrated due to lack of employment. They are not happy with the wages and that is affecting their work. What would you do about it?

**Me:** I would ask the different worker groups to nominate a group of five people. I would then meet up with them, discuss their problems and arrive at a broad consensus.

**P1:** Now, I'll ask you an easy question. Who is the CM of Telangana and what is the colour of their state party symbol?

**Me:** (I got confused between the CM's of Telangana and A.P, and I told them that I was confused because they have similar sounding names. Didn't know the colour of the state party symbol)

**P1:** How long were you there in Telangana?

**Me:** Till the time I was 6 months old. My father got transferred after that. (Thankfully the first panelist ended his questionnaire there)

**P2:** So, what is the full form of EEE?

**Me:** Told

**P2:** (I think he was planning to ask me some electrical related questions.. Before he could put in a word, I spoke up..)

**Me:** Sir, please don't ask me questions from electrical as I am not very good at it.

(They all started laughing)

**P2:** Why? You spent four years in college didn't you?

**Me:** I did, Sir. But, I changed my stream post engineering as I did not like it enough to pursue it further.

**P2:** (He asked me questions on my post graduation course, which is political science. I managed to answer those questions fairly)

**P3:** So, have you heard of ILO?

**Me:** I know it stands for International Labour Organisation.

**P3:** Do you know anything about the summits?

**Me:** No, Ma'am.

P3: Nothing at all?

Me: No, Ma'am. I have never read about it.

P3: Ok. Some organisations hire people for short time basis and some for a long term basis. Could you give me an example of which companies would do so?

Me: Hire and Fire companies would be IT firms. And for long term basis, companies which are household names (I got this word after thinking for quite a while) would try to keep employees for a long term basis to inspire loyalty towards the company.

P3: What do you think the HR policy of a company should be like?

Me: (Elaborated on ethics, morals, virtues)

P3: Do, you know any company which is known for its HR policy?

Me: Not exactly Ma'am, but on a related line TATA is known for pursuing ethical standards of behaviour in all spheres.(I then compared TATA and Reliance)

P3: All right. Thank you.

### 31) Xavier's Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar (XIMB):

There were 3 people in the panel. I was the fifth person to be called in.

Me: Good morning sirs.

P2: Good morning. Would you give me your file?

Me: Yes sir. (And gave the file)

P2: Could you tell us something about yourself?

Me: I started and spoke for around 1 min before being interrupted by P2.

P2: Ok. You are a trained DRR (Disaster Recovery Representative) in your company. So what would you do to prevent the yesterday's calamity in Japan?

Me: I explained to him to that I was trained to vacate the building where I work.

P2: So for this incident of bigger magnitude, you have not been trained?

Me: Yes sir

P2: Why did you not speak a single word in GD?

Me: I explained that my performance in the GD was not at all good and gave some information about the normal use of GDs.

P3: Ok, consider this situation. I am poor man; I could afford only Refrigerator but not AC. So to cool my room, I will open my fridge door. Will it cool the room?

**Me:** (Inside: I am gone. How nicely he has asked a technical question.) No sir. It won't cool the room

**P3:** Why? When it can cool the items inside the fridge, why not the room?

**Me:** I gave him some explanation and he cross-questioned on that. I gave some answers but not very convincing ones.

**P3:** Ok leave it. Which law of thermodynamics works inside fridge?

**Me:** It's first law sir and gave him an explanation.

**P3:** He did not agree to that and said that I was completely wrong.

**Me:** Sir, as far as I know, it is correct sir. I might have made a mistake, as it has been almost 3 years since I studied that subject.

**P3:** (sarcastically) Just after 3 yrs, you are saying this. What will happen after 30yrs?

**Me:** I gave some more information regarding the nature of my work, etc.

**P3:** What exactly do you do in your company?

**Me:** I answered this.

**P3:** (sarcastically) Any one can do that. The work which you do does not require any skills.

**Me:** No sir. I tend to disagree

**P3:** (sarcastically) Oh. Then explain one situation where you have to use all your knowledge and skills.

**Me:** I answered this. But he did not look very convinced

**P1:** Ok. You are from Andhra. I will say that the agriculture sector is Andhra is highly developed. What is your comment on it?

**Me:** I said that it is not highly developed. Many areas are still suffering from drought conditions and also brought the Telangana issue.

**P3:** Asked me about Telangana movement.

**Me:** I explained about it for 1min.

**P3:** So you support the movement?

**Me:** Yes sir and gave him the reason.

**P1:** Are you from Telangana?

**Me:** No sir. I am from Rayalaseema.

**P2:** Fine. We are done with our questions. Do you have anything to ask?

**Me:** Asked about the withdrawal of HR as a special course.

**P2:** Explained and had some discussion on that for 1 min.

**P2:** Ok. You can leave now.

**Me:** Thank you sirs.

It went for around 20min. P3 stressed me but I think I have maintained my composure.

#### **Our Analysis:**

The candidate should have prepared better for questions pertaining to his academic background. He performed reasonably well on questions pertaining to other areas.

### **32) Loyola Institute of Business**

#### **Administration, Chennai (LIBA):**

Here is my experience with LIBA.

#### **Pre-GD:**

We had to wait in one conference room and had to fill one form with our 10th, 12th, graduation, PG and Work-ex (if applicable) details. Also we had to attach all the docs as mentioned in the

call letter. One of the faculty members gave a brief description about LIBA and told us about the faculty, placements, results etc.

#### **GD:**

There were 3 faculty members and they acted as GD moderators as well. There were 14 people in my group. We were to sit in a semi circular order. The process was 2 mins to think, 12 mins to discuss and 5 mins to write summary.

The topic was "India would not mind losing to England, but they do against Pakistan". The topic was a very general one and most of them spoke well. I was waiting for my chance to speak when suddenly the moderator stopped the discussion and asked the people who had not spoken till then to speak. I took the chance and explained my point. One more person, who had not spoken till then, also spoke after me. Then the moderator rang the bell and we started writing the summary.

#### **Points to be noted while writing the summary:**

We were asked to not write in bullet points; instead we were to write in paragraphs. The second thing is that we were not to write our view - we were asked to write the summary of the GD i.e. whatever was discussed in the GD.

#### **PI:**

Most of the interviews were of 5-10 min duration. The same faculty members were there for PI as well.

**P1:** When did you speak in the GD? (As already told, I spoke only when they gave a chance)

**Me:** Gave my answer and they started smiling

**P2:** Give me your documents.

**Me:** I gave those.

**P2:** Tell me about yourself

**Me:** (I spoke for about 4-5minutes and stressed more on my interest in HR).

**P3:** Your salary is XXX, so why do you want to do MBA?

**Me:** I answered that I want to work in HR and explained the reasons behind my choice.

**P3:** Why LIBA?

**Me:** I answered this well.

**P3:** Do you have any other calls?

**Me:** I answered in the affirmative and explained why I applied to those colleges.

**P2:** Is the interview over for XXX College? (I answered that I prefer XXX College which offers separate course in HR)

**Me:** I answered and gave her my preference of colleges that I want to join.

**P2:** Any questions that you have for us?

**Me:** I asked a few questions about HR profiles during placements

That's it. The interview was over in 10 mins max. By their expressions, I thought that they were not satisfied as I stressed more on HR and I just kept on talking about my job. Anyways that's what I wanted to convey and I got a chance to speak about the Why HR question. I am pretty much satisfied with my experience.

#### Our Analysis:

This was a brief and pleasant interview. The panel was assessing the maturity level of the candidate. The candidate answered these questions satisfactorily.

For more experiences in interviews and information keep track of CL SIS.

## My Encounters - GDs and Case Studies

Most GDs have participants ranging from 8 to 12. However, in some cases the number could be far higher and there have been instances of 20 plus students in a GD.

**Here is a list of GD topics that have appeared over the last few years in the various Institutes**

- ⦿ Foreign Institution such as Harvard should be allowed to set up their regional branches in India.
- ⦿ Consumerism in India, its growth and implications.
- ⦿ Should there be regulations on print media?
- ⦿ Are space programs necessary when there are other basic problems to address?
- ⦿ Management Institutions are nothing but placement agencies.
- ⦿ A corrupt politician is more dangerous than corrupt businessmen.
- ⦿ Is the Censor Board doing its job properly?
- ⦿ Only educated individuals (at least bachelor's degree) should be allowed to contest in elections.
- ⦿ Should attempt to commit suicide be considered a crime?

- ⦿ I am what I read.
- ⦿ Virtual Tourism would eventually replace real tourism.
- ⦿ Effectiveness of celebrity marketing.
- ⦿ More than 85% of the students in Management Institutes are engineers. So, is doing engineering a waste of time?
- ⦿ The no. of crimes committed by school going children is increasing in the U.S. Do you think that these acts are inspired from criminal television programs where one can easily learn various methods of committing a crime?
- ⦿ Major cities of the world remain warm even after sun set. Is earth approaching its end? What can be done to overcome this?
- ⦿ IT revolution has done more harm than good to India!
- ⦿ In India, students graduating from college should serve two years in the army
- ⦿ Television in India is turning people to watchers than doers
- ⦿ Should GD/PI be a part of selection process in management schools?
- ⦿ Medical research on animals is immoral and should be banned
- ⦿ India's population is not really a problem, but an opportunity

- ⦿ Should India stop participating in the Olympics if there is no hope of winning a medal
- ⦿ The government should stop funding the IITs and the IIMs, and instead divert the funds to primary education
- ⦿ Profit is the only business of business
- ⦿ India should be reorganized into smaller states
- ⦿ Growth and integrity are poles apart
- ⦿ Managerial skills learnt from classroom can never match those learnt from experience
- ⦿ Should India stop participating in the Olympics if there is no hope of winning a medal
- ⦿ The government should stop funding the IITs and the IIMs, and instead divert the funds to primary education
- ⦿ Profit is the only business of business
- ⦿ India should be reorganized into smaller states
- ⦿ Growth and integrity are poles apart
- ⦿ Managerial skills learnt from classroom can never match those learnt from experience
- ⦿ Government should reduce defense expenditure and spend more on social sector
- ⦿ The UN has not served any purpose in the last decade
- ⦿ Religion is a private matter and should be no concern of the state
- ⦿ Prohibition does not serve its purpose
- ⦿ Marxism is still relevant in a globalised economy
- ⦿ India's growth rate is bridging the gap between rich and poor
- ⦿ In democracy, autonomy is a myth
- ⦿ Competition and not cooperation is important in life
- ⦿ Industrial growth in the next millennium will depend a lot on how we tackle the environmental issues
- ⦿ Food comes first, ethics later
- ⦿ In India, democracy is nothing but politicised monarchy
- ⦿ New Delhi should not be the capital of India
- ⦿ Industrial growth and environmental care do not happen hand in hand

- ⌚ TV commercials should be banned
- ⌚ To survive in the civilized world one needs to be hypocrite
- ⌚ Money is the sixth sense without which one cannot enjoy the other five
- ⌚ Advanced mathematics has no value in life
- ⌚ Efficiency and corruption go hand in hand
- ⌚ Welcome back Socialism!
- ⌚ Active Judiciary is a threat to democracy
- ⌚ The threat of violence is necessary for peace and harmony
- ⌚ Economic liberation has helped only the rich become richer
- ⌚ Can IT sustain India's economic development?
- ⌚ The rise of regional political parties is a threat to the unity of India
- ⌚ Education system should be privatized
- ⌚ To gain international recognition should India develop more lethal weapons?
- ⌚ In business all processes can be reduced to 3 things - Product, Profit & People
- ⌚ Knowledge is the awareness of one's ignorance
- ⌚ Virtue has its own reward
- ⌚ The job of a manager is to do the right things or to do things rightly
- ⌚ Coke and Pepsi should be driven out
- ⌚ Can religion be kept out of politics?
- ⌚ Religious fundamentalism is more dangerous than regionalism
- ⌚ Consumerism is the cause of corruption
- ⌚ India-Pakistan relation - has reached a point of no return
- ⌚ 'Tryst with destiny' - has India redeemed its pledge?
- ⌚ Is India ready for e-commerce
- ⌚ Has the time come to eradicate the nuclear weapons?
- ⌚ All education should be exclusively provided by the government
- ⌚ Should media have freedom of expression?
- ⌚ Impact of globalization on environment
- ⌚ One of the lessons of history is that nothing is often the good thing to do and always the clever thing to say

- ⦿ Sting Journalism is good for India
- ⦿ "Wisdom comes from experience. To gain experience, one must learn things and examine things from different points of view. To look things from diverse points, one must have a free mind. To attain peace of mind, one must be patient."
- ⦿ Cyberspace - Different Personalities & how it affects us?
- ⦿ The IT boom and the growing pressure on Indian cities because of it
- ⦿ Government intervention in education system - Should higher education be privatized?
- ⦿ Today leaders are emphasizing more on their party's ideology, rather than doing concrete work...
- ⦿ Science and not rhetoric underpins the National Policy
- ⦿ Human rights impedes economic program
- ⦿ Women empowerment is the basis for social development
- ⦿ Subsidies for higher studies should go
- ⦿ Interlinking of rivers - A threat to the economy and ecological balance?
- ⦿ Democracy is not right or needed for good governance
- ⦿ Over commercialization of cricket is destroying other sports in India
- ⦿ IT in rural development is more of a hype than reality
- ⦿ Should India host Olympics?
- ⦿ Benefits of professional integrity
- ⦿ Bilateralism vs. multilateralism
- ⦿ Ecology and tourism
- ⦿ The most wonderful thing in life is its termination!
- ⦿ Why are the best B-schools located in US?
- ⦿ Modern cinema is a boon to the Indian society
- ⦿ Reservation is necessary for social transformation
- ⦿ Education or empowerment leads to a quicker progress
- ⦿ India will never become a superpower
- ⦿ Extravagance in marriages is socially a bad behaviour
- ⦿ Impact of internet on Indian society
- ⦿ Everything in this world is *Maya*

- ⦿ Women are the torch bearers of India in 21st century
- ⦿ Is globalization a threat to Indian culture?
- ⦿ Economic reforms make rich people richer and poor people poorer
- ⦿ B-School education is only affordable to rich people
- ⦿ Cine - stars are best applicants for politics
- ⦿ Is India truly shining?
- ⦿ 33% Women reservation in parliament
- ⦿ US \$ is no longer a stable currency
- ⦿ The impact of Internet on Indian society
- ⦿ The parliamentary form of democracy has failed in India
- ⦿ Consumer satisfaction should be achieved at any cost
- ⦿ Managers do not add value to the society
- ⦿ Democracy is the only way to a sustained economic growth
- ⦿ Should youth indulge in politics?
- ⦿ Liberalization in 1991 was a forced one
- ⦿ Democracy is a luxury in India
- ⦿ Bigger the dams, bigger the troubles. Indo-Pak differences are so deep-rooted that Kashmir is only being used as an excuse
- ⦿ Violence is the prerequisite for progress
- ⦿ Underdevelopment - Fate, Mismanagement or Oppression?
- ⦿ Our country needs more technocrats and less managers
- ⦿ Management Education is a luxury for a poor country like India
- ⦿ Ends justify the means
- ⦿ Is war with Pakistan inevitable?
- ⦿ Will computerization make a robot of all human beings?
- ⦿ Women make better bosses than men
- ⦿ Do computers dehumanize society?
- ⦿ Greed is an essential human quality
- ⦿ Success comes not so much by solving problems as by exploiting opportunities
- ⦿ All higher education in India should be privatized

- ⦿ What will the present budget be like?
- ⦿ Management education should make job seekers job creators
- ⦿ To prevent India from disintegrating, more autonomy should be given to the states
- ⦿ Talk of social responsibility in the private sector is sheer hypocrisy
- ⦿ Political crisis and the Indian economy
- ⦿ Corruption is an economic lubricant, and hence, may not be all that bad
- ⦿ The Indian economy is in shambles/ is poised for a great boom
- ⦿ GDs as a means of selection by the IIMs are a farce
- ⦿ Is greed an essential human quality?
- ⦿ Pollution control is a luxury for India
- ⦿ Engineers joining management is a national waste
- ⦿ The pen is mightier than the sword, but fanaticism is the mightiest of all
- ⦿ Has the Indian political structure outlived its utility?
- ⦿ No one studies for an MBA, everyone studies for a job
- ⦿ Means are more important than ends

- ⦿ Parliamentary democracy is an obstacle in the path of growth of the Indian nation
- ⦿ Do we need graduate engineers at all?

#### **There are a few "different" experiences like this one**

⦿ "As the days went past, Jonathan found himself thinking time and time again of the Earth from which he had come. If he had known there just a tenth, just a hundredth, of what he knew here, how much more life would have meant! He stood on the sand and fell to wondering if there was a gull back there who might be struggling to break out of his limits, to see the meaning of flight beyond a way of travel to get a breadcrumb from a rowboat. Perhaps there might even have been one made Outcast for speaking his truth in the face of the Flock. And the more Jonathan practiced his kindness lessons, and the more he worked to know the nature of love, the more he wanted to go back to Earth. For, in spite of his lonely past, Jonathan Seagull was born to be an instructor, and his own way of demonstrating love was to give something of the truth that he had seen to a gull who asked only a chance to see truth for himself. (It was an extract from Jonathan Livingston Seagull by Richard Bach.)

(There were no instructions beside this extract.)

#### **My Encounters - Case Studies**

1. Ramakanth was an IIT student who joins a helmet manufacturing company. For a year, he has been working in the technical department. The helmet manufacturing company has been in existence for nearly 25 years and is registering losses for the past

2-3 years. Its product which is ISI certified is losing market share to local companies that produce cheap helmets without an ISI mark. Recently, the government makes the wearing of helmets compulsorily and the company finds it a great opportunity to make profits. Meanwhile Ramakanth is shifted to Testing department. Once Ramakanth decides to test the helmets himself and finds that 6 out of 10 helmets were substandard. He reports his findings to his superior who assures him of taking necessary action. However nothing happens for the next 2-3 days and on checking the records, he finds all the products are cleared. He approaches the MD of the company, Anand, and explains to him his findings. Anand tells Ramakanth not to be too concerned and look after his work.

What should Ramakanth do?

2. Dinesh is a manager of Tastewell Allnite Pizza which has two outlets. A group of 7 college students helps him run the place. He's on good terms with them. The bonus system for the manager is such that the lesser the amount of unused food the more the bonus. Unused food also includes extra food given away free, food that gets wasted due to wrong ingredients, burnt food, food which is eaten by the employees etc. Dinesh is very friendly with his employees and turns a blind eye to their casual attitude, and does not report the frequent free extra toppings and pizza's they give away and eat themselves. Now, for about six consecutive months Dinesh notices his bonus is going down. On consulting with his chief, he is told that he has to do something about the efficiency of his operation. Dinesh goes to his employees and tells them that from now on, employees shall not be allowed to give away free food to their friends, eat whatever they wanted etc. They are to be rationed to one medium pizza and one 500 ml coke per

day. The next month instead of the percentage of unused food decreasing, it increases and two of his best employees quit and join a rival outlet, which pays less than Tastewell.

What should Dinesh do?

3. There is a Technical institute WIMWI. The batch size is 200. All have been placed in campus interviews. Mostly MNCs recruit from the Institute and average salary is Rs. 40 Lakh in MNCs and 3 Lakh in Indian companies. Ibrahim is the head of Media Council and has to prepare a press release.

The Ministry of MaPower (MMP) is of the opinion that the institute is catering to MNCs and not to its mandate of providing Quality Professionals to Indian Industry. The institute is subsidized by Government. Ministry wants inquiry. If Ibrahim quotes the exact salaries and the fact that major recruiters are MNCs the ministry will raise hue and cry. If he does not then recruitment may suffer next year.

What should Ibrahim do?

4. Mr. X started a company to manufacture pump set and after few years he also opened its subsidiary for smooth operations. He also appointed a factory manager to look after the same company. Later on he converted the subsidiary unit into a manufacturing unit. After some time, when he investigated the various operations and accounts, he was shocked as he found some manipulation. Actually the Factory manager sold out entire scrap and distributed the fund raised among the workers.

Consequently, he sacked the Factory manager and appointed a new one. Because of this action workers stopped working and went on strike.

What will you do if you were in place of Mr. X?

5. A Milk and Milk products company, BBL is in existence for 28 years and has a good customer base, supports many employees and villagers by purchasing their milk, etc. One Mr. Kalakotwala with over 20 years experience in related field recently joins it as its CEO and Mr. John again with good work experience join it as its inspection officer. After 6 months of their joining the company, there was a complaint that products of their company had larva, bacteria in them and a raid had been ordered. When Mr. Kalakotwala heard of this, he asks John who assures that the authorities will find nothing wrong. During the raid, the officials found that the products had manufacturing date printed on the carton 3 months later than they were actually manufactured. The officials also seized some 27,000 liters of milk from the factory. A press conference is scheduled for next day morning. Mr. Kalakotwala is worried.

How should he handle the situation and what should he tell the press?

6. In a company called X, a woman is facing some problem as she is the only working member in her home. She takes frequent leaves and is quite insincere in her work. She is not able to deliver quality in her work. Her husband is idle and does not support her and asks her to continue her job. She does kitchen work, takes care of her kids and also works in the office.

You are the manger of this company. How will you solve her problem?

7. Dr. Atul Bhatia has done MBBS and then an MBA from a B-school in Indore. He is working in a pharmaceutical company in the Marketing department. The job involves lots of travelling. Problems start when his travelling schedules are haphazardly organized, e.g. from Mumbai to Delhi to Chennai to Chandigarh to Bangalore to Kolkata. Then, his office premises are also used by a charitable organization supported by the management, since it feels that he is not using the office for more than a week in a month. Rest of the time, he is travelling and hence, he can sit outside along with the secretaries. Finally, he's not invited to an important meeting in Chennai and when he tries to call up, they don't respond properly.

"What should Atul do?

8. Deepak is a young guy who recently joins a publishing company. He gets the idea of bringing out books on Indian Mythology, conducts market research and finds that the proposal has a good potential. He refers this to his superior Mr. Gopi who also likes the idea. But the MD of the company doesn't like the idea and no action is taken. Two years later Gopi becomes the MD of the company and decides to implement the idea and also to give a promotion to Deepak. Deepak now has a different idea. He believes that the books would be outdated within 5 years and hence an internet edition would be preferable. However, Deepak is afraid that his boss may not like the idea and this may even effect his promotion.

What should Deepak do?

9. Toofan plateau has not been getting rains for the last couple of years and the surrounding villages have been suffering from drought, though a perennial river flows

eight kilometers away from the inhabitation. Government proposes to build a dam across the river to harness the flow for the betterment of the plateau. But the dam is likely to submerge eight villages and an age-old much revered temple of goddess Durga who the villagers believe blesses the plateau. The villagers are against the submergence of the temple.

How to resolve the issue?

10. In an institute AIM, the Students' Council decides to provide students with stationery and hosiery items at a reduced price. In the first month, they make a profit of Rs. 300 on sales of Rs. 3,500. Subsequently, the council decides to open the store for all the members of the institute. For this, it has to buy goods for which it makes a down payment of Rs.15,000 and another Rs. 10,000 to be made subsequently. It borrows Rs. 8000 at 18% p.a. from a financial organization. A part of the students then decide to boycott the council doubting its intentions. The Students' Council has stocks worth Rs. 13,500 left unsold.

What measures would you suggest to deal with the present crisis?

11. Savitri is a 38 yr. old woman who has 2 children. She works in a cottage industry with 20 other women. She makes baskets in the cooperative and earns Rs.1000/month. She was looking for alternative ways of making a little more money. She knew how to make a special kind of pickle. She bought the required stuff - Lemon 7 kg at a total cost of Rs.30, 1.5 l of oil at Rs.90, 40, 200 gm. bottles at Rs.20, miscellaneous ingredients (ginger, garlic etc.) at Rs.57. She had an earning of Rs.203 from this

venture. She used to sell these bottles at Rs. 10/bottle when market price for such pickle was Rs.16.

Since she was handpicking her ingredients, her quality was also maintained. A friend told her that if she did this exercise just 4 times a month then she would be able to earn more than what she is presently earning with her basket trade. An NGO heard about her pickle and offered her a loan of Rs.15000 to set up pickle making unit plus a Rs. 5000 grant. Should Savitri accept this offer?

12. You are working as PR head for XM. It is valued as one of the most valuable privately owned start-ups in the world. At the same time, XM is losing credibility due to repeated rumors of bad practices and safety issues. Recently, XM is accused of unscrupulous recruitment tactics. A competitor alleged that XM had recruited a team of independent contractors who create accounts with XM's competitors' serviceswith the purpose of luring their employees. A contractor earned commission for successfully recruiting a new employee for XM. What should XM do?

### List of frequently asked interview questions

A compilation of some of the questions asked in the interviews of various B-schools in recent years, grouped according to the student's Background

#### B. COM

1. Questions on Income Tax - specifically, treatment of Capital gains.
2. Should limited liability clause be abrogated?
3. Prepare a profit and loss account and a balance sheet.
4. Define operating profit, gross profit, net profit, cost of goods sold, cost of sales? Explain the accounting treatment of commission on sales?
5. Differentiate commerce, trade and business.
6. Comment on the new EXIM policy.
7. Comment on India's exit policy.
8. What is zero base budgeting?
9. What are disclosure norms?
10. When should a firm be shut down?

11. What constitutes insider trading and why is it wrong?
12. What are the principles of accounts? What does  $dy/dx$  mean? What is a point of influx?
13. What is capital account convertibility?
14. What is double entry accounting? Define in layman's terms.
15. What is 'single entry'?
16. Explain the entry for unpaid / accrued interest. Where would the corresponding double entry be reflected?
17. What are the principles of costing? If I had a factory and wanted to undertake a costing exercise, how would I go about it?
18. What is break-even analysis?
19. Give examples of fixed, variable and semi-variable costs?
20. What is net present value?
21. What is internal rate of return?
22. If I gave you Rs. 1,00,000 for a year @ 15%, p.a. what would you do with it?
23. What is sunk cost?

24. What is the difference between accounts and finance?
25. Assets are shown in the balance sheet at cost - less depreciation. If the market value of the asset is higher, is this not a misrepresentation? What accounting concept is involved in this?
26. Define working capital ratio, acid test ratio, proprietary ratio. What is the ideal acid test ratio?
27. Is a bank loan a current liability?
28. What are the things you will look for in a balance sheet if you are analyzing the performance of a company?
29. What is the difference between owned and borrowed capital? For a company with a long gestation period, which type of capital is better?
30. What is capital gearing ratio?
31. What is costing?
32. What is marginal costing? What are its applications?
33. After an asset has been fully depreciated, how should its cost be allocated to the product?
34. Draw the various cost curves. Is the fixed cost curve always downward sloping?
35. What is the difference between preference shares and equity shares?
36. What is working capital? How would you manage a company with high working capital requirements?
37. What are direct and indirect taxes? When was excise started? What is a presumptive tax?
38. What is discounted cash flow? How is it used? Why is depreciation not deducted from profit after tax for the purposes of discounting?
39. What is transfer pricing?
40. Define SLR and CRR. What is the difference between the two?
41. Apart from shares and debentures, in what ways can funds be raised from the public?
42. What is a brand? Can there be brands in the service sector? Name three product categories which have better sales in rural areas than in urban areas.
43. What do you understand by 'Value for Money'? What is India's BOP figure for the last quarter?
44. What is the Gold Bond Scheme? Why was it introduced? Don't you think that this scheme will encourage black marketing? If your neighbor converts his black money into white money through this Gold Bond Scheme, what will your reaction be?

45. What is MOD-VAT, CENVAT, professional tax, corporation tax? Differentiate between excise and customs duty.
47. What is to be done to improve the BOP situation?
48. What is the difference between growth and development?
49. Where does India figure in world trade?
50. What is the difference between IMF and World Bank? Name some projects that the World Bank has taken up in India?
51. Which is the largest company in the world / in India? Which do you think is a better index of measuring size - profits, sales or assets?
52. Difference between cash and funds. Define break-even point and plot it on a graph.
53. What does a chartered accountant do?
54. What is meant by legal entity of a company? Can a shareholder be an employee / creditor of a company?
55. What is the maximum number of companies a chartered accountant can audit? In a CA firm, if there are 20 partners, how many companies can be audited? .
56. What is full convertibility? Who will gain from it - exporters or importers?
57. Are banks allowed to buy / sell shares in India?
58. What is the difference between finance and accounts, shares and debentures?
59. What does the ISI mark stand for?
60. What is rupee convertibility?
61. What is black money? Who has worked on it?
62. What are transfer earnings?
63. What do you mean by trade account?
64. What is the effect of depreciation on the balance sheet and a P&L a/c (cash flow)? What is working capital? How do you control the flow of stocks?
65. Different tools used in capital budgeting. Which is the best? What is NPV, IRR? Can there be more than one IRR? When can IRR and NPV methods contradict? What is a cash flow?
66. Differentiate between fiscal, revenue and budgetary deficits.
67. Can net worth of a company be negative? When? Name a company that has negative net worth?
68. Can a layman understand the financial position of a company from a balance sheet? What is the role of SEBI?
69. Does marginal costing increase the range of products? Why / How? Explain.

70. What is the MRTP Act? How do you define monopolistic trade practices and restrictive trade practices?
71. Suppose a doctor purchased a car a year ago for a certain amount and sold it today for a Rs. 15,000 profit. How will it be treated for income tax purposes if the doctor had used the car for professional purposes and if he had used it for personal purposes?
72. Draw the demand curve for petroleum products considering that their demand has been continuously growing in spite of a high rate of rise in their prices.
73. When will deficits not be harmful (budget deficits, fiscal deficits)?
74. What is annuity? When is present value more than future value?
75. What are the various items of information required for calculation under the net present value method of capital budgeting?

#### B.Sc. (All Streams)

1. Draw a parabola and a hyperbola. What are their equations? What is Lagrange's theorem? (Maths)
2. What is the difference between a Sigma and a Pi bond? (Chemistry)
3. How can you use economics in mathematics?
4. What is so interesting about coordinate geometry applications?
5. What is modern physics?
6. What is Heisenberg's uncertainty principle?
7. What is wave theory?
8. What is the difference between C and Pascal?
9. What is standard deviation?
10. Questions on A Brief History of Time by Stephen Hawking were asked.
11. What is real analysis? A couple of questions on real analysis were asked?
12. What is Boyle's law?
13. How do you relate botany, law, management and computers?
14. What is an ester and how is it formed?
15. What is Lagrangian multiplier?
16. What is chromatography?
17. What is SHM (simple harmonic motion)? Give a differential equation for SHM.
18. What are the different types of integration / questions related to maxima, minima. How do you find maxima, minima at the saddle point (where the second differential also comes out to be zero)?

19. What is wave physics? A particle is bombarded in an evacuated chamber. After bombardment, its mass is found to be reduced. How do you explain this?
20. Imagine a door with a push back valve. When this door is opened, will there be an energy change? What is the energy when it is being pulled, kept open and allowed to close? (Physics)
21. Have you heard of Feynman or Bohr? (Physics)
22. Why are you shifting from physics to management? (Physics)
23. Does pressure increase or decrease with consumption? Why? Explain scientifically. (Physics)
24. What is the temperature at which ice and water coexist? Explain critical point. (Chemistry)
25. Have you studied organic chemistry? When and at what level? (Chemistry)
26. What is the branch of physics that interests you most? Why? (Physics)
27. What is total internal reflection? (Physics)
28. What is Darwin's theory of evolution? How is it different from other theories? Explain evolution as per Darwin's theory. (Biology)
29. What is Archimedes principle? What is the density of ice? (Physics)
30. Draw the graph of  $Y = |x|$  (Maths.)
31. How do soaps and detergents work? Why can you not use detergents for your skin? (Chemistry)
32. Application of Mendelism to management? (Biology)
33. Is  $\text{Co}_2$  organic or inorganic? Why? (Chemistry)
34. What is carbonic acid? Draw its structure. What are the properties that it should have according to its structure? (Chemistry)
35. Explain the structure of carbon monoxide. (Chemistry)
36. What is milk, a mixture or a colloidal solution? What is the major constituent of milk? How can you separate proteins from milk? (Chemistry)
37. What is solvent extraction? (Chemistry)
38. Draw the structures of benzene and hexane and explain the differences between them? (Chemistry)
39. What are aromatic compounds? What do you mean by the term 'aromatic'? (Chemistry)
40. What are non-metals? Name any one? (Chemistry)
41. What is a crystal lattice? Name one metal that has a crystalline structure. (Physics)

42. What is a nitration reaction? Explain the nitration of benzene? (Chemistry)
43. What is the difference in the principle behind a discus throw and a javelin throw? (Physics)
44. What are superconductors? Why are they not used commonly? Why are they important? (Physics)
45. What is the green house effect and what is it due to? (Chemistry)
46. If a hole is dug through earth and a body is dropped through it, what will happen? (Physics)
47. Why does the moon not fall to the earth? (Physics)
48. What is a bit? (Computer)
49. What are Mendel's laws? (Biology)
50. What is hybridization? (Chemistry)
51. Should we use bio-pesticides? (Biology)
52. What is Einstein's contribution to quantum mechanics? Explain the photo-electric effect. (Physics)
53. How does an air-conditioner work? With which branch of study is it associated? (Physics)
54. How does an aeroplane gain height? (Physics)
55. What is entropy? (Chemistry)
56. How does a cricket ball spin? (Physics)
57. What is probability? What is the probability of your selection? (Maths.)
58. Explain the latest theory about the model of the atom. (Physics)
59. What is regression? When is it not applicable? What is the connection between arithmetic mean, geometric mean, and harmonic mean? (Maths.)
60. What is fiber optics? What are ultrasonic waves? How are they produced? What are their common uses? List all the waves in the electromagnetic spectrum. (Physics)
61. What is summation? Suppose 30 people shake hands among themselves in a party, what is the total number of handshakes made? (Maths.)
62. What is hypothesis? What is null hypothesis? (Maths.)
63. How does an electric tube function? Why is the tube milky? What is the similarity between a tube and the ice in the Himalayas? (Physics)
64. What are random variables? Give two types of random variables. (Maths.)
65. Explain the difference between discrete distributions and continuous distributions. (Maths.)

66. Explain the probability of the distribution function of a binomial distribution; derive mean and variance for binomial distribution. (Maths.)
67. Explain the measures of central tendency, mean, median and mode (Maths.)
68. Explain Poisson's ratio. (Maths.)
69. What is a differential equation? (Maths.)
70. What is variance? How do you measure standard deviation? (Maths.)
71. Differentiate  $x^2 + e^x$  (Maths.)
72. If  $x + y = 20$ ,  $xy = 240$ , what is  $x - y$ ? (Maths.)
73. Differentiate  $2x^2$  (Maths.)
74. What are permutation, combination, and binomial coefficient? (Maths.)
75. A coin is tossed. What is the probability of getting heads? What are the assumptions in predicting the probability? (Maths.)
76. Integrate  $\sin x^2$ . (Maths.)
77. Can you name a distribution whose mean, mode, and median coincide? (Maths.)
- Agriculture**
1. What is contour bunding? What is gully plugging?
2. Raw material availability for food processing is seasonal. How would you increase its profitability?
3. What is your present job?
4. What is the present state of the fertilizer industry in the country? In what way has subsidy affected the industry? What would be the impact of its withdrawal? Are our plants competitive? How has fertilizer application been affected by recent policy changes? If you were to choose a good environment for your fertilizer industry, what would you expect from the government?
5. What is laterite soil? Where is it found? What is a colloid?
6. You are from an agriculture background, so let's see how much mathematics you know. What is the meaning of first and second derivatives?
7. What do you mean by limit of a function?
8. What is the difference between entomology and etymology? Can you give the etymology of entomology?
9. What if mutation occurs in a biological pest control agent and it starts eating human beings?
10. If you were made the advisor to the Minister of Agriculture, what recommendations would you make? Should subsidies be given to farmers?

11. What is an organic fertilizer? Why are they better than chemical fertilizers? Name any firm that produces organic fertilizers.

**B. A****Political Science**

1. Define political science.
2. What do you mean by applied politics?
3. Define referendum.
4. What is the difference between the parliamentary and presidential forms of government? Which do you think is more suitable for India's needs?
5. Who is your favorite political scientist?
6. Is the Indian economy still a mixed economy? How many kinds of economies do you know?
7. What is a hung parliament? How is it different from a minority government?
8. How is the President of India elected?
9. How many kinds of taxes are there in India?
10. Define socialism.

**Sociology**

1. Explain the difference between psychology, sociology, and social psychology.
2. Describe Max Weber's treatise on Protestant Ethic.
3. How will you implement class theory?
4. Define existentialism.
5. Comment on Emile Durkheim's contribution to sociological thought.
6. Differentiate between the studies of the British working class by Weber and Marx.
7. What is the relationship between sociology and management?
8. What are the trends in Indian sociology?

**Economics**

1. How do economic theories help in creating value in real world?
2. Define economics of scale.
3. Define economics of scope.
4. Make a break-even point diagram.
5. What is the GDP of India?

6. Give the equation of a straight curve.
7. What is Linear programming?
8. How will economics help in becoming a good manager?
9. Derive the consumer's demand curve from his preferences.
10. Differentiate between normal goods and Giffen goods.
11. What subjects do you have in 3<sup>rd</sup> year economics?
12. Discuss the theory of money.
13. What are the determinants of the money multiplier?
14. What is elasticity of demand? What is marginal utility?
15. How will you link call money rates and exchange rates?
16. Compare monetary and fiscal policy. How are they related?
17. What does RBI do?
18. What is shadow pricing?
19. Draw the Hicks-Allen price-substitution effect.
20. If *Say's law* holds true, would we need marketing managers?
21. What is devaluation? Why is it not improving our country's export performance?
22. How would the study of microeconomics help in management?
23. How is the interest rate determined in a free market?
24. What is opportunity cost?
25. What is the parallel economy?
26. What major works in microeconomics were developed in the 1930s and by whom?
27. What is a perfect market? What is demand and supply, its equilibrium and why is it significant?
28. What are demand and supply curves?
29. What is Pareto optimality? What is indifference curve? What is welfare economics? How can utility be maximized? How can welfare be maximized - for an individual and for a society? Explain output maximization? What are MPL and MPK? How are inputs allocated?
30. What is classical economics?
31. What do you think went wrong with the Mahalanobis plan?
32. What is Giffen's Paradox?

33. What is perfect competition? How is price determined under perfect competition?

### Management

1. What is meant by PM&IR? What is the difference between motivation and morale? Are motivation and manipulation the same?
2. If you're the consultant to the MD of Dunlop, what methods will you suggest to improve the condition of the company in the next 10 years?
3. What is your favorite subject in finance?
4. What is an option?
5. I am an Indian MNC with operations in Hong Kong and Singapore. How do I hedge my transnational risk?
6. What is the difference between a forward and a future?
7. What is the job of a manager?
8. What is the job of a VP?
9. Suggest a strategy for a furniture manufacturer.
10. What is a responsibility center? How is it different from a cost center?

### Engineering

1. What are the fundamentals of mechanical engineering?
2. What is an exponential function?
3. State Newton's third law.
4. What are the basic parameters of thyristor design?
5. Why are you shifting from engineering? Some questions on heat transfer and fluid dynamics were asked.
6. What do you know about DC transmission? What is transmission loss? How can it be reduced?
7. What are the fundamentals of Refrigeration and air-conditioning? Some questions on manufacturing machines were asked.
8. How do optical fibers work? Differentiate between data and voice transmission.
9. Compare mobile and landline phones (PSTN). Why is the noise in international calls less?
10. State the basic principles of the microwave oven, electric fan, AC & refrigerator.
11. What are differential equations? State Kramer's rule.
12. What do you mean by protocol?

13. Define neural networks.
14. How does a shock absorber work? What are the advantages of a front wheel drive?
15. What is the best shape for the fins of a fan? Can you design one now?
16. What is an auto-cycle? What is a diesel cycle?
17. Differentiate between entropy and enthalpy.
18. Why are transmission losses so high in India? What should be done to reduce them?
19. Describe the various form of electrical energy storage. What are the applications of each?
20. Can you suggest a plan / strategy in broad terms to bridge the shortage of power in the country?
21. What is a HVDC transmission?
22. Differentiate between electrical and electronic engineering.
23. How do you explain the concept of energy, potential energy, and kinetic energy to a small child?
24. What are the different networks available in India for data transmission?
25. Differentiate between ROM and RAM?
26. What are the essential files needed to boot a computer?
27. Which is the latest microprocessor?
28. How many types of viruses do you know? Suppose a virus infected the floppy inserted into a drive, when does the computer get infected? Name some anti-viruses.
29. Convert 121 into binary.
30. What is entropy?
31. What is a polynomial-time algorithm and what is a Heuristic algorithm?
32. What is RDX? Suppose you were asked to go about bombing 10-14 places in Bombay, how would you go about it? What kind of detonating mechanism would you use?
33. Why did we adopt 230V system for domestic consumers whereas in the US all home appliances are rated to operate on 110V? What are the advantages / disadvantages of the two voltage systems?
34. Tell us something about CAD?
35. What is industrial engineering?
36. What is ABC analysis? What is OR? What is queuing? What is LAN? What is PC, PC / AT? What are analog and digital computers? Explain them to a layman.

37. What is frequency modulation (FM)? What have you studied in communication?
38. What is white noise?
39. Tell us about the bus system of microprocessor 8085.
40. How does a compact disc work?
41. What are an actuator and manipulator (in robotics)?
42. What is Boolean logic, flip flop?
43. Draw diesel cycles. Differentiate between two-stroke and four-stroke engines. What is octane number?
44. How are the cylinders of a Maruti car balanced, though it has a three-cylinder engine?
45. What is HVDC? What is a corona? Which motor is used in a fan and why? Where would you use a DC motor?
46. How can a spider walk on a vertical wall while we cannot?
47. What is PLC? How do you find the maxima of a function?
48. Give an example of a discrete function. Draw a graph of  $y = \tan x$ .
49. Differentiate between chemistry and chemical engineering without using technical terms.
50. There is a box divided into two sections by a movable membrane. Both sides are at NTP. On one side, a chemical has been placed and it starts evaporating. What will happen to the membrane? How long will it move? Will it move at a constant speed or varying speed? How do you term this process?
51. What is an operating system? Explain it to a layman?
52. How does a computer start?
53. What happens when a computer is booted? What are the various types of OS? List their relative merits?
54. What is object oriented programming? Name two OOP languages?
55. What is static binding? What is dynamic binding?
56. What is RDX? What is the structure of phenol? What does it look like in the lab? What about 99.9% phenol?
57. Differentiate between distributed and parallel processing.
58. What is analysis in civil engineering?
59. What are the specific parameters we look for in the analysis of a structure?

60. What is allowable, compressive, tensile stress in steel and concrete?
61. How are seismic waves modeled for design purpose?
62. What is a Fourier series? How is it applied to harmonics?
63. What are real and imaginary numbers? Why are imaginary numbers used?
64. Do you like to solve puzzles? (On answering "yes")

Imagine a truck, with a rectangular box type container closed from all sides - airtight, with pigeons in it (assume that pigeons were live). There is a driver and cleaner. The truck is going from place A to B where it comes across a bridge. Since the bridge is weak and it will not be able to bear the weight, the cleaner goes to the back and starts banging on the container. This would make pigeons fly within the space available in the container. Hence, the truck would become lighter. Then the truck can cross the bridge.

- (i) Do you agree / disagree? Why? Explain.
- (ii) What difference will it make if container is not air tight, etc.
65. Differentiate between AM and FM? What is superconductivity?
66. Differentiate between front and rear wheel drive in automobiles.
67. What are rotary engines? How are they different from the normal engines?
68. What are crossbar switches? Are they electromechanical or electronic?

69. What is push, pull, Kanban, CONWIP? (Production control related questions)
70. What is a geo-stationary satellite? What is its opposite? What are the uses of both of the above?
71. What is the use of a differential in a vehicle? Why is it not used in a bullock cart? Describe the working of a refrigerator and its physical principles. (Joule-Thompson effect)
72. What do you know about Hardness numbers? How are they measured?
73. What are cellular phones? How do they work? How are the calls routed?
74. An engineer says that there can be a three-stroke engine. Make a drawing of it and explain its working?
75. What is a discrete function; continuous function; limit?
76. What are the different parts of a generator? (Questions on transmission voltages)
77. Why does a single-phase induction motor need a starting condenser?
78. Define RDBMS? Why are RDBMS packages preferred to languages?
79. What is an IC engine? Give an example of an external combustion engine? What is a 100 cc engine? How does cylinder capacity affect engine performance?
80. Describe in detail the architecture and working of an 8088 microprocessor?

81. Why are digital signals used in communication?

82. What is the second law of thermodynamics? Give its physical significance. Do you think Darwin's theory of evolution follows this law? What is Bernoulli's equation? Give two examples where it is used. What is the difference between liquid, slurry and a suspension?

83. How does a fax work?

84. What is MIS? Which companies in India use MIS?

85. What is flexible manufacturing system (FMS)?

#### Career Objective

1. Why do you want to do MBA?

2. What are your short-term goals and long-term goals?

3. Discuss the role played by an MBA in society?

4. In depth questions on why one wants to do a specialized course in HRD.

5. Why XLRI over other institutes? What do you think of us?

#### General Questions

1. Questions on hobbies and weaknesses.

2. How can you succeed in the corporate world with these weaknesses?

3. Who is the minister of defense, education, etc.?

4. What are the problems facing India? Suggest solutions.

5. What is the fundamental difference between a manager and an entrepreneur?

6. Given a choice, in which company would you like to work.

7. What is theology?

8. What do you like to read?

9. What do you know about Aksai Chin?

10. What is tautology?

11. Compare and contrast Gandhi and Bose's philosophy and apply it to personnel management. Mention five most ethical companies in India.

12. Differentiate between materialism and consumerism.

13. What is the similarity between Mathematics and Social science? Define social service. Is Maths a social science?

14. If you're the advisor to the DGP of UP, what steps will you take to improve the negative image of the police among the people? If you make a TV serial on police, what

- will it be like?
15. What are the characteristics of a typical DU student?
16. Which other institutes have given you calls? Which one will you finally take up if your get selected to all of them?
17. What have you been doing since appearing for CAT?
18. Three minute extempore on public schools in India.
19. How will you market computers?
20. Discuss the major schools of Indian philosophy.
21. What is the source of river Nile?
22. Where are Tirupati and Sriharikota located?
23. How did your interview at other institutes go?
24. Who is Tiger Woods?
25. Is Rabri Devi educated? Differentiate between educated and knowledgeable?
26. What are genes?
27. Who is your idol?
28. How many seats did Congress win in Bihar and Haryana in the recently concluded elections?
29. What are the reasons for the economic backwardness in Bihar?
30. How does information technology help in chemical engineering?
31. Who do you think is an unemployed person?
32. In depth questions on budget were asked.
33. After showing a photo of Mahatma Gandhi, questions on his philosophy (Ahimsa) were asked.
34. After showing a photograph of a stranger the panel asked, what questions do you think that the person in the photograph would have asked?
35. Who benefits from MTV culture and who loses? Is Goa a state?
36. Compare the High Court and the Supreme Court.
37. Summarize this interview in two sentences.
38. Define poverty line, GDP and per capita income.
39. What are the three richest and three poorest states of the country?
40. How will you start a new business in Gujarat?

41. Justify your gap year.
42. What subjects would you like to be quizzed on?

### Work Experience

1. What are you doing now?
2. What is your work experience?
3. What did you do in the mineral water industry?
4. Which areas did you cover in marketing?
5. Who were your target consumers?
6. How did you sell your goods to them?
7. Name a few towns in West Bengal?
8. How are the standards set in your industry?
9. Did your product conform to any standards?
10. Convert PPM to percent?
11. How would you do a market survey?
12. How will you choose your target consumers?

13. How can you increase extraction of oil from the current 30% to 40%?
14. What are the different kinds of instruments used in your industry? What is their working principle?

**Note:** The list of the questions given here is not exhaustive. Remember the questions that the panel is likely to pose are entirely dependent on your ability to lead the interview.

### Feedback Form : Group Tasks (GDs etc.)

*(To be filled by the candidate immediately after the session)*

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

S. No.	Parameters for Evaluation	Feedback
1	Comprehension of Idea, Relevance of Contribution	
2	Idea Generation/ Creativity	
3	Analytical Ability/ Reasoning Skills	
4	Facts/ Examples/ Statistics	
5	Goal Clarity/ Focus on Topic	
6	Motivation/ Proactive Participation	
7	Team Membership/ Accommodation/ Tolerance	

8	Attitude/ Assertion/ Leadership	
9	Confidence/ Leadership Skills	
10	Communication - Delivery/ Structure	
11	Body Language	
12	Any Other (Please Mention)	

**\*\* Please make a note of the feedback on this form.**

Include the feedback of both the facilitator and your peers.

### Feedback Form : Personal Interview

*(To be filled by the panel)*

Rate the candidate: (1) Bad (2) Average (3) Good (4) Excellent

S. No.	Parameter	Rating	Comments
1	Confidence		
2	Knowledge (Academics / Work Ex.)		
3	Knowledge (General Awareness)		
4	Goal Clarity (Career Goals)		
5	Uniqueness (Why me?)		
6	Spontaneity / Enthusiasm		
7	Communication Skills		
8	(Any Other-Please Mention)		

1. What are the strengths & weakness that you observed?
2. Did you find the candidate's pitch impressive? (Please substantiate)
3. What are your recommendations to the candidate?
4. Instructions to the next panel -

Start time: \_\_\_\_\_ Panel members:

End time: \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

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(Faculty to tear this and deposit at the center.)

Name of the student : ..... Centre : .....

PDP batch: ..... Interview conducted by: .....

Time of interview: .....

### PDP Feedback Form

I. Please rate PDP on a scale of 1 to 5 on the following parameters (put tick marks)

(1) Poor (2) Needs improvement (3) Satisfactory (4) Good (5) Excellent

a. Improved my personality  1  2  3  4  5

b. Offered individual attention  1  2  3  4  5

c. Increased comfort with

(i) GD  1  2  3  4  5

(ii) Interview  1  2  3  4  5

(iii) Case study  1  2  3  4  5

d. Guided me to improve subject expertise  1  2  3  4  5

e. Any other (please specify).....  1 2 3 4 5

Please rate the faculty on a scale of 1 to 5 on the following parameters.

(1) Poor (2) Average (3) Satisfactory (4) Good (5) Excellent

Name of the faculty	Quality of feedback	Communication and listening ability	Individual attention	Time management	Overall

a)

b)

c)

**Note:** Please detach the feedback form and return it to the centre for PDP appraisal and improvement.

II. Please tick your satisfaction level with PDP  1 2 3 4 5

compared to your expectations.

(1) Disappointing (2) Below average (3) Good (4) High (5) Very high

III. Please list down the areas where the PDP needs improvement. Give specific

suggestions to improve PDP for the future batches. (Use the back of this sheet, if required)