

REPORT ON WEBINAR ON

“MULTIPLE CAREER PATHS FOR ENGINEERS IN PUBLIC SERVICES, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION”

Vignan’s Civil Services Academy was an initiative at VFSTR geared towards providing skills to students who are interested in pursuing careers in public service. Through this initiative, VFSTR is addressing the needs of its student community in a couple of ways. Firstly, VFSTR is located in a primarily rural area and is proud of delivering education to the students of this region. In spite of being an educational giant in this region, VFSTR recognised the lack of opportunities for students who would like to pursue training for top-tier competitive exams viz., UPSC, APPSC, and other State Public Services Commission. Most of the coaching and training institutions fulfilling this need are located in major urban centres such as Hyderabad, New Delhi, or Bengaluru; and the opportunity to attend these expensive coaching centres is quite far removed for our students at VFSTR. So, one of the aims of Vignan’s Civil Services Academy is to bring much needed resources to the door steps of our students, who are otherwise deprived of these opportunities due to a geographical disadvantage. Secondly, there is a growing desire to pursue careers in public service among the students from STEM disciplines. Since majority of our students from VFSTR are in the STEM fields, this initiative of Vignan’s Civil Services Academy is calibrated to providing this added resource to our students.

Towards this endeavor, each year Vignan’s Civil Services Academy organises orientation session for the first year students to make them aware of this opportunity their providing and how to reap the optimum benefits from this program. This year the orientation webinar took place on 13-07-2021 and we had the privilege of having Mr. Vinay G. B., who is the founder and director of Insights IAS, Bengaluru. The webinar commenced with a welcome note and Introduction of the Speaker by Mr. Wiggins Baka, Coordinator, Civil Services Training, VFSTR. Mr. Vinay G.B., Speaker, set the floor for the session by giving an overview of the level of competition in UPSC Civil Services Examination. He quoted that there are mainly three services (IAS, IPS and IFS) that most of the CSE aspirants aspire to become, thus requires the successful candidate to score in the top few hundreds to achieve it. He suggested students to utilise the opportunity of using Economically Weaker Section reservation if applicable to get into the desired service.

Mr. Vinay then briefed about the structure and pattern of the Preliminary examination. On an average a candidate is expected to get 60 questions correct in General Studies paper and 66 marks in CSAT to clear the prelims. The CSAT paper is of qualifying nature and is considered easy for Engineering students who undergo Placement trainings. As for the General Studies Paper in Prelims, he highlighted that, it is easy for students who have followed an inquisitive approach of learning along with newspaper reading from their school days, to clear the first level. For explaining about the method of studying, Mr. Vinay used the example of Chalukyan art and explained that the students need to be curious to know about the forms, future, influence and philosophy of the art instead of places or personality.

The speaker described the structure and pattern of Mains examination that has nine papers. As for the optional subjects to be chosen by the candidate, he mentioned the common choices of engineering students such as their core engineering subject, physics and mathematics. He encouraged students to choose their core engineering subject as optional only when they are quite confident to solve the level of questions asked in UPSC Mains. The other popular optional subjects mentioned were political science, sociology, anthropology, geography, public administration, psychology, philosophy, history and literature. There are five General Studies paper consisting of 250 marks each. The first paper is Essay where a candidate has to write two essays in three hours. Following this the speaker explained the components of rest four General Studies papers. The Compulsory

English paper and Compulsory Indian language paper are both qualifying in nature. The entire mains exam is for 1750 marks and a student expecting the first rank has to score about 900 plus out of 1750 marks. He recommended a score of 190 plus in the personality test, third stage, out of 275 marks. He explained the Personality test procedure. The interview panel would comprise of five members including one UPSC member and four experts from various fields. The interview focuses on finding the candidates ability to think, integrity, humbleness, confidence level, problem solving skills and communication skills not his or her knowledge which has already been tested in the last two levels of the examination.

Mr. Vinay gave suggestions, tips and guidance to the students for preparing for the civil services examination. He asked the current students to focus on strengthening their basics by studying NCERT class sixth to twelfth social science textbooks and class sixth to class ninth Science textbook thoroughly. It is possible for an UPSC aspirant to clear the state level Public Services examination provided he or she followed the syllabus. In this era of internet, aspirant should smartly choose their source after getting guidance from coaching institutes or previous toppers. Once the basics are strong it is easy for them to construct a proper answer in mains, as mains is completely application oriented. The aspirant should constantly update Current Affairs. The next tip given by the speaker was to enhance one's writing skills. A student with below average academic performance can also crack this examination given his or her consistency and persistence in preparation. In addition to these suggestions, the speaker mentioned about having the right reason to prepare for the exam which acts as motivation in later stage and also improves the personality of the individual. An aspirant can start building his or her appropriate personality along with knowledge right from college while interacting with fellow students or faculty. This would help in scoring high, about 200 plus marks, in his personality test. He concluded the session by quoting that *consistency* and *guidance* are the key for clearing this exam.

This session was followed by the question and answer session that was open to the participants. The first question raised was on balancing the academics with civil services preparation. Answering this the speaker suggested a method of focusing one year on basics along with academics, then from the next year revision of already prepared basics plus current affairs and final year should focus on optional. Answering a question on motivation to prepare for the exam, Mr. Vinay advocated four ways of motivation. First, personal motivation of each individual as a result of their own experience, Second, the thought of becoming a role model to the next generation, third, believing that everyone can improve their abilities through consistency and fourthly, a candidate should be away from distractions. He urged the students not to give an attempt when they are not thoroughly prepared just for experience sake. A candidate should attempt the civil services exam only when he or she is confident of clearing the exam based on their experience in mock tests and successful completion of optional subject. For practicing answer writing, he advised students to start with answering the questions at the end of NCERT books and then even starting a blog. Responding to the question on planning for UPSC preparation, he recommended three to four months for optional preparation. He suggested three to four hours each for preparing static part, optional and current affairs on a regular day of preparation. He further added that the key is applying the knowledge you gained in solving the question paper; as only reading will not provide with any benefit. Students also asked about any pertinent online resources that can aid them in preparing for CSE, to which Mr. Vinay pointed to Insights IAS website that provides with free material for the aspirants. With the conclusion of this Q&A session, Prof. AllamneniSharada, Head Humanities, lauded Mr. Vinay on his crisp and direct presentation. She hoped that our students will benefit and be motivated to join Vignan's Civil Services Academy. Mr. Raghava Rao, Head Training & Placement, also joined in thanking the speaker, congratulating the Civil Services Academy for consistently doing a great job in organising opportune webinars, and the participants for showing such an overwhelming interest in this event. Mr. Wiggins Bakka concluded the session with a vote of thanks to the speaker and his

organization Insights IAS, Dean T&P Dr. Vijaya Say Krishna, Head T&P Mr. C. Raghava Rao, Head Humanities Prof. AllamneniSharada, all the colleagues at Vignan Civil Services Academy, and all the participants for making this webinar a successful event.