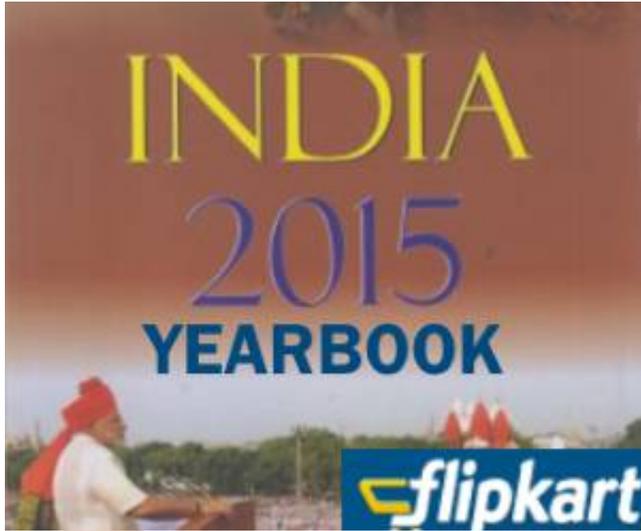


Mrunal (<http://mrunal.org/>)

[Topper's Interview] Neha Yadav (CSE-2013/AIR-24): Sociology optional, Got IFS, ICMR fellowship, Gorakhpur

[motivation \(http://mrunal.org/category/motivation\)](http://mrunal.org/category/motivation) / 6 months Ago



<http://www.flipkart.com/india-2015-english/p/itme3yz8rvpuhgky?>

[pid=9788123019789&affid=mrunalrugm\)](http://www.flipkart.com/india-2015-english/p/itme3yz8rvpuhgky?pid=9788123019789&affid=mrunalrugm)

 India Yearbook 2015

(<http://www.flipkart.com/india-2015-english/p/itme3yz8rvpuhgky?pid=9788123019789&affid=mrunalrugm>)

 भारत यरबुक २०१५

(<http://www.flipkart.com/bharat-2015/p/itme3yz8wsgqgsyn?pid=9788123019765&affid=mrunalrugm>)

1. [IFS Topper Profile](#)
2. [Education](#)

3. [Introduction](#)
4. [Electronic Vs Paper material](#)
5. [Tempo and style](#)
6. [Struggle of a Senior player](#)
7. [Prelims \(CSAT\) General studies](#)
8. [Prelim accuracy](#)
9. [Mains: Compulsory language paper](#)
10. [Mains: Essay](#)
11. [General Studies \(Mains\) paper 1](#)
12. [General studies \(Mains\) paper 2](#)
13. [General studies \(Mains\) Paper 3](#)
14. [General Studies 4: Ethics, Integrity, aptitude](#)
15. [Mains answer-writing?](#)
16. [Mains Optional Subject](#)
17. [Before the interview](#)
18. [During the interview](#)
19. [CSE-2013 Marksheet](#)
20. [Career Backup](#)
21. [Views on UPSC reforms](#)
22. [Insecurity about profile](#)
23. [Wisdom](#)
24. [Credit: Friends/family](#)
25. [BOGUS Marketing Propaganda](#)

Name	Neha Yadav
Rank in CSE-2013	24
Roll No.	531825
Age	26
Total attempts in CSE	2
Optional Subject	Sociology
Medium chosen for Mains answers	English
Schooling medium	English
College medium	English
Home town/city	Gorakhpur, U.P.
Work-experience if any	None
Details of other competitive exams, including success/failures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PMT (Couldn't score a decent Rank)• Research Fellowships (ICMR-JRF, DST-INSPIRE)• Qualified UPPCS Pre 2013-Didn't appear for mains
Details of coaching, mock tests, postal material for any competitive exam (if used)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st attempt : Classroom guidance at Vajiram & Ravi (GS and Optionals)• 2nd attempt : Vision IAS test series for GS and Sociology
service preference #1, 2 and 3	IFS (Service Allotted)>IAS>IPS

state cadre preference (top3)

U.P. , Haryana, M.P.

Education

	fill the details here
% in class 10	79.00
% in class 12	80.60
Schooling (Medium)	English
Graduation course and %	BSc , 77.70
Name of college, city, passing out year	DDU, Gorakhpur University, 2009
Post-graduation	MSc, 2011
Any other professional courses	None
Hobbies & Extra curricular	Debating, Cooking, Reading, Writing

Introduction



Q. Tell us something about yourself, your family, when and why did you enter in this field of competitive exams?

I am born and brought up in Gorakhpur, hold a master's degree in Microbiology. I have 2 siblings, My father has served the IAF and my mother is a homemaker. I was always fascinated by the idea of representing India on the world platform, it's the ultimate privilege for me. I always thought of appearing for the CSE but it was only after getting my MSc degree (2011) it became obvious that I was

never too interested in pursuing research as a career and hence it was my time to chase my dream. I was lucky enough to seek initial guidance from a friend (now senior) who happened to qualify in the same year.

Electronic Vs Paper material

Q. In recent times, there is spur in electronic material- blogs, sites, pdfs, RSS-feeds. Many aspirants feel bogged down by this information overload. So, how much do you rely on electronic material and how much on the paper material (Books, newspapers)? If possible narrate a typical day in your studylife. What is your style of preparation (e.g. I continue making notes no matter what I'm reading, I just read multiple times but don't maintain notes, I make mindmaps on computer ...or xyz style)

I have a habit of reading online for quite some time now, though m a firm believer that ebooks cant replace the actual ones still I find it easier to search and read e-material. So, the answer is YES, my whole preparation revolved around the internet.

1. I used to visit blogs like Mrunal.org, gktoday.in, halfmatnr.com (for ethics case study).
2. Maintained account on Evernote (to maintain my notes, I would just read and save links in respective notebooks. Ease of access makes it a good source to revise) and Feedly (RSS feeds from various sources – AIR news spotlight, newspaper editorials, IDSA, Mrunal, CFR, The Diplomat, PIB etc . used to read from here then save good articles in evernote to revise).
3. I subscribed to few youtube channels and made rough notes while watching these:
4. **for MAINS:** CEC UGC (for Sociology videos and few on Indian art, architecture, history, ethics
5. **for the INTERVIEW:** Rajya Sabha TV (for India's World, Law of the land, the big picture) , Indian Diplomacy by MEA
6. I have relied more on the internet than the books. But I don't promote this way, everyone should choose according to their convenience.
7. I tried covering The Hindu thoroughly, would save the articles in evernote for revision.

A typical day would begin with reading the newspaper, saving articles, reading the topic at hand 2-3 hrs GS, same for the optional, checking feeds for updates, practicing answer writing for 1-2 questions, watching videos of interest.

Tempo and style

Q. People know what books and syllabus points are to be prepared. But most of them lack consistency in their preparation. So, how do you keep study momentum going on? How do you fight against the mood swings and distractions?

I had my share of ups and downs, there were days of no study too, but I promised myself to at least complete the newspaper daily because it's one thing that troubles the most in backlog. To keep the sources minimal I stuck with materials that kept my interest going, for instance - watching videos, reading a less formal article on the internet instead of reading same thing from a book, as long as I could solve a question, it was enough.

It's also very imp to know your strength and weaknesses- I can understand things really well but have problem remembering the basics and facts at times, so to resolve this I used to read things from various sources to get a better understanding, then write down things to remember on flash cards (for eg - census figures, economic data, acts, bills, schemes etc)

I tried to avoid distractions as much as possible, but when encountered with.... used to take few time off, clear the thought, watch LBSNAA FC videos (to remind myself of the goal) and move on.

Struggle of a Senior player

After 1-2 failures in any competitive exam, a phase of mental saturation comes. The person knows the booklist, he knows what is necessary to succeed. But it doesn't yield result. The armchair 'experts' would point out UPSC is 'testing' emotional intelligence of the candidate or UPSC wants to break the backs of senior players, daily conspiracy theories on orkut.....Not to mention all the emotional struggle-against those irritating neighbors and relatives...MY question are two:

Q1. How did you survive through this mental prison and what're your words of wisdom to other senior players? If any specific inspirational incident(s), please share.

I qualified in my 2nd attempt, was too sure in the 1st one (without much preparation), it was shocking and heartbreaking, but thankfully my friends and family came to my rescue and made me realize that my preparation was not enough to make it too the list in that year, there were more deserving candidates than me. Also that results came out on 3rd of May and Pre on 25th I hardly had any time to grief upon, time heals everything.

Q2. What went wrong in your previous attempt? What changes did you make in this current attempt?

Lack of revision and answer writing practice for the mains, I couldn't even complete the syllabus. Even the interview score was not that good because I was quite nervous.

In my current attempt I tried to

- complete the whole syllabus,
- enrolled in a test series for answer writing,
- practiced 5-6 essays.

All this helped me gain confidence.

Prelims (CSAT) General studies

Topic	strategy/booklist/comment
History Ancient	NCERT, TMH Paper 1, Chronicle civil services (CCS)- special editions

History Medieval	-
History Modern (Freedom Struggle)	Bipin Chandra, TMH paper 1
Culture society	Chronicle civil services- special editions on art
Polity (theory + current)	Laxmikant- Indian Polity, PRS Blog, Newspaper
Economy (theory + current)	NCERT, Newspaper, Vajiram booklet on economy, Ramesh Singh- Indian economy
Science (theory + current)	Rajya sabha tv- science reporter, The Hindu
Environment (theory + current)	Gktoday GS manual – environment, Geography NCERT
geography physical	NCERT
geography India	NCERT
geography world	NCERT
other national/international current affairs	The hindu, CCS, Wikipedia
Schemes, Policy & Filler Stuff	PIB, India year book, economic survey, yojana , kurukshetra

Q. Any observation / comments / tips about GS prelim 2013 paper?

Prelims (CSAT) Aptitude

Topic	strategy / booklist
Maths	Cenage Learning- CSAT practice book, Mrunal articles on CSAT

reasoning	same
comprehension	same
Decision Making	same

Q. Any observation / comments / tips about GS Aptitude 2013 paper.

Practice, Practice and Practice

Prelim accuracy

Q1. Did you attend any 'mock tests'? do you think they're necessary for success?

Vajiram and Ravi – didn't help much, I wouldn't say that they are indispensable as long as you practice enough MCQs.

	Marks
GS	80
aptitude	155
Total	235

Mains: Compulsory language paper

Compulsory language paper	Your preparation strategy / booklist?
English paper	Downloaded last year's question paper and read to familiarize

your regional language (Hindi)

Same + practiced writing paragraphs from hindi newspapers to get the flow

Q2.other observations / tips / comments on the length / difficulty level of compulsory language papers in CSE-2013

I wouldn't say that paper was too difficult or lengthy but it was definitely trickier than the last time.

Mains: Essay

Q1. How did you prepare for the essay paper?

I specifically prepared for essay this time, as last time scored just 75 marks due to lack of practice. Practiced 5-6 essays before the exam, atleast tried making the framework for each.

Q2. Which among the following essay did you write? What key points did you include in it?

1. Be the change you want to see in others (Gandhi)
2. Is the Colonial mentality hindering India's Success?
3. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) along with GDH (Gross Domestic Happiness) would be the right indices for judging the wellbeing of a country
4. Science and technology is the panacea for the growth and security of the nation.

Topic : Science and technology is the panacea for the growth and security of the nation.

Started with "S,T and Innovation Policy, 2013", and the preface stating how India desires to become a science n tech superpower in the coming years.

1. Science itself as a sector for development

2. Science n tech as tool for development of other sectors
3. Brief history of science n tech in India, Nehru era, present state, scope of development
4. Examples from developed nations and role of s&t in that – Israel, U.S., France
5. S n T in growth sectors – infrastructure, education, health, medicine, agriculture
6. S n T in Security – internal and external, disaster management
7. Technology as answer to security threat and also a target of attacks, privacy issues, snooping etc
8. Way forward by investment in RnD
9. Conclusion by a patriotic couplet .

General Studies (Mains) paper 1

Topic	How did you prepare?
culture	CCS- special edition on art, Religion from spectrum
Indian history	NCERT, Bipin Chandra
world history	NCERT – 6 th to 10 th
post-independence India	State reorganization and land reforms from Bipin Chandra, 11 th Political science NCERT, a general timeline of post-Independence events from the internet
Indian society	IGNOU- Sociology (had to study for optional)
role of women, poverty etc.	Same + newspaper+ Excellent book series GS 1 (I bought these small books for all the papers just to cover any topic couldn't find anywhere else)
globalization on Indian society	same
communalism,	Same + halfmatr.com

regionalism, secularism	
world geo physical	NCERT + GC Leong
resource distribution	Same
factors for industrial location	Same
earthquake tsunami etc	Wikipedia, youtube animated videos, disaster management edition CCS
impact on flora-fauna	internet

General studies (Mains) paper 2

Topic	How Did You Prepare?
Indian Constitution, devolution, dispute redressal etc.	Laxmikant- Indian polity, vision IAS material
comparing Constitution with world	Laxmikant- Indian polity
parliament, state Legislatures	Same
executive-judiciary	Same
ministries departments	India year book
pressure group, informal asso.	Halfmatr.com, Wikipedia, IGNOU- sociology
Representation of people's act	Wikipedia, visionIAS material
various bodies: Constitutional, statutory..	Same + Laxmikant- governance
NGO, SHG etc	Same + internet

welfare schemes, bodies	Same
social sector, health, edu, HRD	Same
governance, transparency, accountability	Same
e-governance	Yojana special edition on e-gov, 2 nd ARC
role of civil service	Laxmikant – governance + internet
India & neighbors	IGNOU- India and world
bilateral/global grouping	Wikipedia, MEA website
effect of foreign country policies on Indian interest	Rajiv Sikiri – Indian foreign policy
diaspora	CCS – special edition + MEA website
international bodies- structure mandate	Wikipedia

General studies (Mains) Paper 3

Topic	How Did You Prepare?
Indian economy, resource mobilization	Ramesh Singh – indian economy + economic survey + visionias material
inclusive growth	Visionias material + excellent book series paper 2
budgeting	Same + wikipedia
major crops, irrigation	Same + India year book
agro produce – storage, marketing	Same

e-technology for famers	Same
farm subsidies, MSP	Same
PDS, buffer, food security	Same
technology mission	Same
animal rearing economics	Same
food processing	Same + food processing act document + yojana edition
land reforms	Same
liberalization	Same
infra	Same
investment models	Same
science-tech day to day life	CCS – special edition on S&T
Indian achievements in sci-tech	Same + internet
awareness in IT, space, biotech, nano, IPR	Same
environmental impact assessment	Same + wikipedia
Disaster Management	Visionias material + CCS special edition on DM, 2 nd ARC on disaster mgt, editorials from the Uttarakhand incident
non state actors, internal security	Internet + visionias material+ excellent book series paper 3
internal security – role of media, social	

networking site	same
cyber security	same
money laundering	same
border Management	same
organized crime, terrorism	same
security agencies- structure mandate	same

General Studies 4: Ethics, Integrity, aptitude

Topic	How Did You Prepare?
ethics and interface, family, society and all the <i>hathodaa</i> topics	Halfmatr.com + CCS special editions on Paper 4 + visionias material + Wikipedia + interent+ 2 nd ARC – ethics in governance + book on paper 4 (local publication- had all the topics of paper 4)
attitude, moral influence etc.	Same + youtube Mukul Pathak class videos
civil service: integrity, impartiality, tolerance to weak etc	Same
emotional intelligence, its use in governance	Same
moral thinkers of India and world	How many thinkers did you prepare?I read about Mahatma Gandhi and Vivekananda in detail. Rest covered from various special editions

ethics in pub.ad, accountability, laws, rules etc.	same
corporate governance	same
probity in governance, work culture	same
citizen charter, ethics code, work culture etc.	same
challenges of corruption	same
case studies on above topics	Halfmantr.com + CSE special edition

Mains answer-writing?

Q. How was your experience with the 'fixed space' answer sheet?

I focused on completing the answer, wrote mostly in point format, couldn't fill the complete space provided answer for any question.

Q. Did you write answers in bullet points or in paragraphs? Some players (who cleared mains and got interview call letter) were claiming that they wrote entire paper in bullet points, so it doesn't matter....whether examiner is asking 'examine, comment, discuss or xyz'....simply write in bullets and points.

Mainly bullet points, depending on the question. If its descriptive, 5-6 line introduction followed by points and conclude with a small paragraph.

Q. Did you follow the "introduction-body-conclusion" format? because some mains-qualified candidates claim they simply wrote the points they could recall within the time, instead of bothering with proper introduction and conclusion.

I had no 1 best method, it basically depended on the question asked.

Q. In GS papers, Since UPSC came with those 100 and 200 words questions. What was your approach in the exam (I wrote all, I only focused on the questions where I could answer perfectly, I just not to high quality points to reach the word limit etc.) Because the UPSC aspirant Community is *divided* over what counts as a 'good' paper. Some experts claim you should attempt all- even if it involves "making up" an answer with filler lines, some claim attempt only those questions you know perfectly. Where do you stand on this? [Based on your experience and of your seniors/buddies]

I attempted all the question because my main aim was to complete the paper, for the questions I wasn't too sure about wrote limited content mainly in point format.

Q. How many marks worth questions did you skip/couldn't finish in the GS papers?

GS (Mains paper)	Couldn't finish __ marks
GS1	complete
GS2	complete
GS3	Left the abbreviation one
GS4	complete

Q5. Did you use highlighters / sketchpens in your answers?

2 pens : black n blue

Q6. Did you draw any diagram in any paper? (e.g. in GS1 Geography)

Yes, small charts and diagrams

Q7. If yes, Did you draw diagrams with pencil or pen?

Pen

Q8. Did you use ruler to draw the lines in diagram? Or did you just make it by hand?

no

Q9. You wrote the answer in blue pen or black pen?

Mainly blue

(**Mrunal** – since readers keep mailing such queries, therefore I'm asking the topper to clear all the air haha.)

Mains Optional Subject

Q. Booklist and How much of internet-research / current affairs is necessary for this optional? OR can one simply rely on the books and be done with this subject?

Internet was my main source of preparation

Q. How many months did it take to finish the core optional syllabus?

I was preparing both together so can't say exactly, 3 n ½ months should be fine.

Q. How many days/ weeks before the exam, you started answer writing practice?

Just after the prelims I began preparation of this subject.

Q. Do you maintain self-notes for revision of optional? In which format- electronic or paper?

Mostly electronic and few loose papers with scribbled notes

Q.How much did you skip OR couldn't answer properly, in the optional paper?

optional paper	Couldn't finish __ mark. + comments on any weird questions
Paper I	complete
paper II	complete

Before the interview

Q1. How did you prepare for the interview? Particularly college graduation subjects related questions?

I had two months' time (interview was on 3rd June). Collected all the possible questions from various books and interview transcripts, tried penning down all the answers and also practiced them in front of a camera recorder.

Q2. Did you attend any mock interviews by coaching classes? How were they similar / different than official interview? Do you believe it is necessary to attend such mock interviews?

2 mocks at vajiram and ravi, mocks give a simulation.

Q3. What did you wear? Some experts say coat is must, some say tie is must, and some say black shoes must. What attire did you pick up?

Light colored cotton suit

Q4. Where did you stay for the interview? (Hotel / friend's home ...) and what books/material did you bring for the 'revision before interview'?

In Delhi

During the interview

Q1. Who was the chairman of you interview board?

Shri Chattar Singh

Q2. How long was the interview?

20 mins

Date - 3rd June, 2014

Afternoon Session, last candidate to go

Chairman

1. Showed my photo and asked "Is this you?"

2. You like cooking, what type of food do you like to cook?
3. What is your favorite dish? (kadhi and rice)
4. How many types of kadhi do you know?
5. How much time do we need to prepare a kadhi dish?
6. You are a microbiologist...how would you use this knowledge in administration?

Member 1

1. Name some communicable diseases
2. Asked questions about my fellowship (DST-INSPIRE)
3. What steps are being taken to control TB (revised policy)
4. Name one discovery in your field from the british era (Ronald Ross got Noble Prize for discovering Malaria parasite)
5. Where did he discovered this parasite (Calcutta)

Member 2

1. Some govt schemes towards welfare of women and children
2. Do you think that these schemes have worked so far?
3. What further steps do we need to take to ensure better success in this field?
4. Do you support women reservation bill

Member 3

1. Name one famous chef who recently died (Tarla Dalal)
2. She specialized in which cuisine (gujarati, parsi)
3. Parsi population is found mostly in which part of India

4. Why are they concentrated only there
5. Story behind parsi people coming to India
6. If govt fails to fill reserve seats for women due to non availability of desired candidates, who should be blamed.

Member 4

1. Who was Pandit