



# CATKing TISS

## WAT PI Workbook

### Congrats for Getting a TISS Call. How to use this workbook!

This is a consolidation of **24 TISS, WAT PI Experiences**. These are consolidated from various online sources. IIM WAT\* PI happens in Bangalore / Hyderabad / Mumbai.

This Booklet gives you the Candidate Profile also in most cases, for you to understand the Personal Interview and relate to it better.

After reading the entire Document you are required to check on your CATKing IIMWATPI Super 30 Dashboard:

1. Build Your Interview Skills (Videos from IIM and SP Jain Alumni)
2. Functional Dossiers: If you want to pursue an MBA in Marketing, choose that dossier first.
3. SOP / Application Forms (Check out Jagesh Golwala (IIMA), Raj Doshi (IIMA), Jay Gosalia (IIM B))
4. Sample AWT from the dashboard to understand the Structured Approach. WAT / AWT / AWA – All of these are same terms of Writing test assignment conducted across various IIMs.

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## Interview and WAT Experience 1

Background-

10th- 84.2,

12th-79,

grad-70.5(b.tech)- BIT Sindri

CAT 17- 99.15%ile,

XAT- 99.2%ile,

TISS- 74 marks

Work exp- 7 months as Mentor at IMS Learning Resources, Kolkata

Other calls- MDI (both flagship and HRM), XLRI-BM and HRM, New IIMs, IIM Ranchi HR, SIBM Pune, SCMHRD,

Converts till date- MDI, SIBM, SCMHRD, XL- BM (waitlist)

Extra-curricular- Six sigma yellow belt from PMI USA, 5 online courses in marketing and HRM from Wharton, USA,

Guitar certification from Trinity London, Digital marketing internship and other prizes in sports, music and technical events

**Interview location-** Mumbai

**DAF-** So you have to fill a detailed application form after you get the call with basic questions like “WHY HR and TISS” and a “BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH”. You take this with you on the day of the interview. I wrote the eve of the interview so that I wrote whatever came to my mind instantly. My objective was to keep it as honest as possible.

My opening line was “men can suffer from a lack of self-realization as much as they can from a lack of bread”

**WAT:** The essay and GD are on the same topic in TISS. The applicants choose, by mutual cooperation, a topic from the 2 given topics. Our topic was “Strategies for surviving job loss”. Was an expected topic.

Mentioned some points like entrepreneurship, networking, skill development, contingency planning and behavioral aspects for surviving job loss. Made sure to remember the points. My grammar is strong so finished the essay within 5 mins.

**Group discussion:-**

GD started in an unruly manner with a couple of students at one end trying to dominate. As a result everyone started pitching in at the same time, resulting in chaos. The invigilator warned us about disturbing the decorum. Subsequently, I took the initiative to convince each person to speak one by one first and then open the floor for discussion (had seen this process in IIFT GD in 2017). 2-3 people were unhappy with me for this though.

I made the same points as the WAT but quoted data from a Deloitte survey and a KPMG survey that I had read in PEOPLE MATTERS magazine. Also made sure to try to complement other people’s points.

**PI BACKGROUND:**

I had given TISS interview earlier in 2017 and realized that I had given really generic answers the last time. Hence, I had been working on my answers and motivation to be in HRM from end of 2017. Also did a few online courses from University of Minnesota and Wharton B school where I had to submit a Capstone project.

Tried reading HR theory from K.Ashwatthpa but found it to be really antiquated and not pragmatic at all. Only learnt the basic functions, theories like Masolovs hierarchy, hygiene theory. Instead decided to brush up on Labour Laws by reading the PDF from MHRD. Also referred to People matters [Also founded by a TISS alumni J] magazine to remain updated with latest happenings and surveys.

Also tried reading TATA code of conduct and Infosys HR policies and interacted with Senior people in the HR field (met a senior HR from Pidilite) about what the actual work and daily activities and problems in industry.

PI- 3 panelists, two male professors in 50’s P1 and P2 and a Ma’am P3.

I had planned to keep my interview about Labour laws, my home state. Also, normally I would write my university’s name as VBU. But expanded it in the DAF as VINOBA BHAVE university hoping that that they would ask me about it.

P2: So tell me about Vinoba bhava.

Me: <exulting with joy> Rattled off all the data and stats about him that I had mugged up the right before from Wikipedia. Good start.

P2: why HRM?

Me: mentioned my reasons, experiences, engg background in industrial relations and complicity < not directly connected but I managed to draw out a connection based on one paper>. How I shifted from marketing and finance inclination towards this role. Also mentioned an interview of Vineet nayar where he said HRM will be dead soon. And how I perceived it as a challenge.

P2: how did you prepare for this interview?

Me: <couldn't say all that I had done> just said that I was here the last time as well. So just introspected and followed People Matters < mentioned that the founder was a TISS alumni. But couldn't recall the name when they asked>

P2: you are a mentor. How do you prepare your students then?

Me: told them that I tell them the same things and tell them to introspect cause it's a personal journey.

P3: okay so what do you want to discuss on if you haven't prepared? < had come to know this panel was an expert in labour laws.

Me: well ma'am I am very interested in labour laws.

P3: okay tell me about the one you know.

Me: rattled off the names and verbatim details of all the major laws. <had spent a lot of time analyzing and trying to remember them>

Meanwhile P2 was looking uninterested since I was quoting them word by word. Told me to keep it brief. Explained the gist of the law as well.

P3: you mentioned minimum wages act and Industrial disputes act. Were they post-independence or pre independence?

Me: told them. <Industrial disputes question was a trick question. Since it was formed in 1947 itself. But a couple of months before independence.> I could see P1 writing something while I told the laws.

Now P1 started questioning me about engg.

P1: which material does not require coolant during machining?

Me: sir cast iron <right>, carbon fibre <blunder>

A couple of generic engg questions. Mumbled something. Somehow brought up Jharkhand, my home state.

P1: how will you use your background in engg to help unemployment in Jharkhand?

Me: establishment of indigenous plant, better use of resources, blah blah <some data from google>

P2: so tell me about the naxalism problem in Jharkhand. <another home run>

Me: told them about how it was less severe than chattisgarh but how damaging it was. Mentioned the major areas affected, reasons, unemployment, grudge against govt etc. < I had a friend that we called NAXALI <lol> during college. He came from a naxalite prone zone. Had talked to him about it a long time back.

P2: what will you add to TISS if we take you? < I knew times are coming>

Me: blah blah < some random qualities>

P2: so u won't bring a good student in you?

Me: mentioned how I had improved my academic record exponentially after my 2<sup>nd</sup> year in engg and how I knew it is necessary anyways.

P1: that's all. You can go,

Me: smiling profusely and mentioning how happy I was to be there.

VERDICT: converted with merit list

## Interview and WAT Experience 2

Date March 2017

Last interview by Panel 5 on 18th March

Interview Duration 25-30 Minutes

P1 - OB Professor 50+

P2 - Aged Man, more than P1

P3 - Young Vibrant lady

P3- Tell me about yourself (just in brief about your academic and professional background)

I am BTECH graduate in Electronics and Communication working on project in company.

P3-Which city did you study in?

National Capital, Delhi

P3- University? told Awkward Silence, so pitched in myself and start speaking about myself more Started with work experience and spoke for 3+ minutes about achievements at workplace and how I make a difference there. Until now P1 AND P2 are not even looking at me, they both had some parts of my DAF or some other papers and P1 (OB professor) was writing something which increased my heartbeat :D

I moved on from my IT work to my NGO work as an HR recruiter and how did I made some changes there and how I added value to the organization

P2 (Finally talking to me)- You are from Delhi. Tell the names of two houses of Indian Parliament.

Sir, Rajya Sabha which corresponds to House of Lords and Lok Sabha which corresponds to House of Commons of British Parliament.

P2- Tell the names of heads of both the houses and their designation.

Now P1 P2 P3 gazing at me (Don't know why as it wasn't a difficult question)

Took some extra seconds to recall first name of Ms. Sumitra Mahajan, and told about RS also

(P1 P2 looks satisfied)

P1 (finally talking to me)- You are working you must have knowledge about HR functions

Yes, though I don't have firsthand experiences, but I keep reading about HR in general and my company's HR policies and how have they evolved in past decade.

P1- So you must know there are different channels of recruitment, suppose you recruited few people from one channel, tell me TWO METRICS to judge performance of the channel

Yes Sir!

1)Cost to Hire/Days to Hire

I can't name the second quantifiable metric

It can be

2) Employee Engagement

P1- You are not concerned how engaged the new employee is you need to tell that how to judge your hire's efficiency So,I can't name the 2nd metric.

P1- Don't you think his performance in the next cycle can be correlated to the efficiency of hiring?

I just couldn't explain the same.

P3 - What do you think of Skill India?

Its aim is to create a skilled workforce which can help India grow, especially in the manufacturing sector as we have jumped from an agrarian to a service-based economy and have overlooked manufacturing.

Now to compete China, 'Make In India' and 'Skill India' are great initiatives, though I don't remember the figures to back what I am saying.

P3 - I was just about to ask that only (with a smile)

P2 - What do you think of TISS?

TISS is one of the best, the best institute in my opinion, for HRM.

Everybody smiled at each other (felt nervous as if I made a cliché blunder)

P2 - Leave HR, what about other courses?

Sir, not just HR, the QUALITY is the niche of TISS be it the students or be it the professors.

Different courses add up to the value of being at TISS. The Foundation Course distinguishes TISS and make every TISS student an aware and socially responsible professional.

Selection progress is rigorous. I too am sitting here for the third time (not sure if I should have said this or not) (Nervousness of their strange smiles made me forget to talk about FIELD WORK the USP After interview I wanted to kill myself to let go of the question I have been so enthusiastic of throughout the last 4 years and have helped many aspirants love TISS for this)

P2 - Have you heard the term Marginalization?

Just heard of the term (thinking it to be related to Finance) but don't know what does it mean technically.

P2 - Do you know marginal sections of society?

Yes

P2 -Name two of them

Dalits and minorities

P2 - This is it. (Looking towards others) Do you have any questions? They said NO (Looking towards me)? Tired?

Yes being the last one to be interviewed today (with a smile)

P2-But definitely not the least one.

Sir there is one more organization I have worked with. I did not write on DAF (I WONDER WHY I SAID THIS)

Can I take your valuable two more minutes?

P2 - Really Sorry Raman! We are already running short of time.

Not a problem Sir. Thank You!

P2- Go See Mumbai now and explore food (Mentioned this in DAF)

Yes Sir, I will definitely explore new things in Mumbai this evening. Thank You!

Smiling Greetings. Left the room

Verdict: Rejected

### Interview and WAT Experience 3

TISS PIT is a combination of WAT and GD. We were given the same topic for both - something on the lines of – "Steps to be taken to have more women in senior leadership positions.". We were given 15 minutes to write on it. A word limit is usually mentioned.

Once done, we had to discuss the same topic.

My turn for PI came after a long wait and I was second last on the panel. The panel consisted of three members.

Let's call them P1, P2, P3.

P1- Middle aged male,

P2- middle aged female,

P3- slightly younger male.

I greeted and sat down when asked.

P2: Tirtha tell us about yourself in brief.

Me: Told

P1: So why HRM?

Me: Told

P1: You have worked for Pharmaceutical clients. Tell us about their governance and compliance rules and regulations and governing bodies.

Me: answered.

P1: Have you read about the budget? What is the allocation for the healthcare sector?

Now the healthcare budget was a burning issue as the finance minister had declared Ayushman Bharat- the national health insurance scheme, and there were multiple numbers which were quoted.

Me: answered.

P1: are you sure?

Me: thought over it and answered again.

P1: yes you are right (I was wrong earlier)

P2: Tell us about the HR department of your organization

Me: answered

P2: Differentiate between the HR practises amongst the organizations you have worked in.

Me: Answered (I had worked for three organizations)

P2: Now assume 2 industries

Me: Aviation and manufacturing / FMCG

P2: Now what can be the various aspects of HR there?

Me: Learning and development, policy making, talent acquisition and retention

P2: Now differentiate among the mentioned heads with respect to the industries you mentioned above.

Me: answered

P3: You stay in west Bengal. Tell us what work has been done by the current government?

Me: answered

P3: The chief minister made a comment yesterday. Can you tell us what it was?

I answered something she had spoken about 2 days back.

P3: No I am referring to yesterday, this was 2 days back.

Me: Sorry, I am not aware. I am only aware of this.

All: Ok XX, Thank you. You may leave.

I thanked them and left.

Verdict: Converted on first list! P.S.: Though I did not choose to study in TISS, being selected for the coveted MA in HRM course amongst those 67 people was a different high altogether!

## Interview and WAT Experience 4

The process consisted of two rounds.

The first was pre-interview test. I was late by 10 minutes when I entered the PIT hall. As soon as I entered the hall, I was allotted a seat by invigilator. Then I was given a paper which consisted of three questions. Out of three questions, one has to attempt two questions. There was no specific world limits. Each candidate was given 45 minutes. As I entered 10 minutes later, I had only 35 minutes.

The questions were as follows-

- (1) What is Forest Rights Act? Why has it been in news recently?
- (2) Describe different sociological approaches to religion and their impacts on development.
- (3) Critically examine the benefits, impacts and cons of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Though I knew about all the three issues, I find it difficult, how to approach question no 2. I only know about Marxian and Max Weber approaches to religion. I skipped it and attempted the rest questions. I run short of time, wasn't able to complete CSR question completely. In FRA question, I tried to show some legal and political aspects, cited one judgement of Supreme court and took some references from an article (Development and displacement) which I read a year ago.

After submitting my paper I went straight for the interview. After submitting my Detailed Application Form (similar to CV), I was told to wait for my turn. Suddenly someone asked me for water (a girl from Mizoram and a student of ST. Stephens College)

I was allotted slot number 3. After 45 minutes my turn came. I went to the interview room. Three professors were there, two men and a woman. I have seen one of the men professor in several discussions on Rajya Sabha TV.

Let's name the panelists P1, P2 (The person who appeared on Rajya Sabha TV) and P3(Woman professor).

P2- Welcome Nishant.

I- Thank you Sir.

P2- You are an engineering student, passed recently. What excites you to join this course?

I - Just told him about my past experiences (like my father is a Social Science teacher) and how there was an environment of debates, discussions, dialogues right from beginning in my life. I told them about my visits to Bastar, Koraput, Dhanbad, Industrial and tribal belts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh gave me fresh perspectives about the notions of development.

(P1 seems satisfied)

P3- So, do you read any socio-political journal?

I- Yes Ma'am, Economic and Political Weekly.

P3- Ohh, great. So, have you ever read any articles of TISS professors there?

I- Ma'am, I might have read them but I can't remember their names right now (later I come to know that P3 contributes regularly to Economic and Political Weekly).

P1 was just observing me.

P2- Would you name some contributors to EPW magazine?

I- (Very promptly), Anand Teltumbde, Prabhat Patnaik, Sukhdeo Thorat, Suhas Palshikar, Gopal Guru, A Prasanna Kumar.

P1- So, you read articles of Anand Teltumbde. You know he has been facing a lot of troubles for the last few months.

I- Yes Sir, I knew. He was arrested (to be released soon) in connection with Bhima Koregaon Interview and WAT Experience by Pune Police.

P2- Suhas Palshikar wrote about which issues?

I- (I have read 4-5 of his articles recently). So, able to answer the question.

P1- (Suddenly inquired) So, Freedom of Expression should be absolute or not.

I- Told him whatever I knew. Quoted some lines of my favourite poet (Muktibodh).

P2- (Suddenly interrupted him) Why Muktibodh was so pessimistic (P2 quoting some lines of Muktibodh) ?

I- Just tried to answer what I think about Muktibodh and his poetic style.

(Later I come to know that P2 has published a number of works on literary criticism that includes the poetry of Muktibodh too, he was also a member of many committees of GOI and state govts of Bihar, Chattisgarh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra).

P1- How the activities of mining become defining points of conflict and development at some places?

I- (I wasn't expecting such questions) But I cited the incidents from Niyamagiri hills, Thoothikudi protests against Vedanta leading to the death of 12 persons in police firing.

P3- So, what you want to do

I - (In a fix for some seconds, unable to comprehend the question).

(P2 calmed me down)

Then I tried to explain the scope of academic research, CSR, Development Journalism once I will enter this field of study.

(P1 was observing me continuously).

P2- Please ask any questions regarding this place and the course.

I asked two questions regarding the academic scope of Masters in Development Studies.

P1 politely answered all my queries.

P2 offered me candies and P3 asked me to leave after completing all the formalities.

What I observe is that one should be very honest during the interview. They should probe you deeper about your political, social views. They will give you an opportunity to disagree with them. But one should never try to cheat them. They are the doyen of their respective field of study.

Verdict: Converted

## Interview and WAT Experience 5

CONNECT | ASPIRE | TRANSFORM

Before the interview, you are required to fill up Detailed Application Form (DAF). You are required to write your bio sketch. Some of the questions can be,

1. Why TISS?
2. Why this branch (for example, if you have applied for development studies, then why DS and so on..)
3. You are asked questions on your biosketch.
4. Be prepared about role of NGOs in development, advocacy, role of civil society in various issues like Human Rights etc..
5. If you are shifting your stream, eg: from engineering to social sciences, you may expect a question on it.
6. You are asked about your home town, issues pertaining to it. Various social, cultural aspects of your home state.
7. You might be asked about your stand on a particular social, political, economical issue.

Verdict: Converted

You have to be gender sensitive, caste sensitive in your answers. You may sometimes be asked to give solution to a particular issue. But don't worry, the panelists will be very friendly and the interviews are not pressure interviews..

## Interview and WAT Experience 6

P1: Prof. Bino Paul

P2: Prof. Manjula (non-HR professor)

P3: Dr Jagannath Ambagudia (non-HR professor)

P1: Introduce yourself. -- Starts. When I am not done, \*interrupts. \*

P1: What are the responsibilities of a HR manager.

Me: Explained various functions. Interrupts again.

P1: How is the salary of a nurse different from that of a sales person

Me: Explained with reference to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

P3: Why HR after marketing?

Me: Explained the connect between HR and Marketing.

P3: In an age where HR managers are losing job due to automation why are you choosing this course.

Me: (Knew it was a trap question) Talked about how automation would benefit HR

P3: As a HR manager in Nestle you have to destroy Patanjali how would you do so? You have to do this without introducing a new product.

Me: Talked in terms of recruiting brand managers who would identify brand elements of Patanjali and incorporate it into Nestle.

P2: What was the last book you read on Sociology (written this in DAF as my interest)

Me: (did a mistake, explained a Marxian book, TISS as an institution is in general left leaning but its HRM department is right in its orientation. It's pro-corporate and anti-labour Source: Seniors and Alumni). The Power Elite-C. Wright Mills.

P2: Is that Sociology?

Me: (maybe she categorized this book as Political Science, but it is Sociology). Yes Mam.

P2: Okay explain it?

Me: Explained the book and the Marxian perspective that the author is taking.

P1: Thanks. Your Interview is over.

Me: Thanked everyone and left.

Verdict: Straight reject.

## Interview and WAT Experience 7

My CODP PI/PIT Interview and CD Experience

After clearing TISSNET, I was called for Pit&Pi at Mumbai campus on March 2019. In previous blogs some people shared that Pi process was tedious process. But for me it was pretty cool.

**\*\*1.PIT\*\***

Started on time, essay topic given was A) About inexperience marriage B) skill development. Interview Experience study was about social issues.

**\*\*2. PI**

Punctuality at its best. Interview was about 10–15 mins. I was the third person to be interviewed. 3 professors were in the interview panel, 1 old aged men and 1 medium aged men and 1 women. First they asked me to introduce myself. After that I was asked to explain some social and political issues happening in my state. So guys be verse with problems and issues in your state. Because they know issues that going around in your state very well. Nothing was asked from my DAF. It was like a friendly conversation doesn't seemed like an interview. So be cool and answer honestly

Try to justify the reason honestly why u want to pursue the course.

All the best.

Verdict: Rejected

## Interview and WAT Experience 8

Course: M.A. Human Resources and Labour Management

Interview date: 6th March, 2018

Interview venue: TISS, Mumbai

Interview panel: Male professor, mid-30s (M1), Male professor, early 40s (M2), Female professor, early 50s (F3)

I enter the room, greet them. M1 responds. M2 is scribbling on his notepad. F3 is busy in her PC.

M1: Introduce yourself, and why HR. Keep it brief.

Me: Gave a prepared answer. Spoke about my educational background, work experience, qualities, and explained why HR.

M1: Did you read our syllabus?

Me: Yes, sir.

M1: Which subject would you want to specialise in?

\*I realise this could result in me getting questioned on HR subjects. I underplay.\*

Me: Organizational Behaviour interested me after I read up on it from HR magazines. But I think it's too early to decide the subject at this stage. I want to take an informed decision after my first year.

M1: So, what do you do at work?

Me: I function as a Senior Engineer in the Submarine Division at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited. \*At this moment, F3 makes eye contact for the first time. Asks if I work at MDL. I reply in the affirmative. M1 asks me to continue. I explain how I spearhead three functional teams to in the Scorpene submarine project.\*

M1: How exactly do you impact the project?

Me: Sir there are six submarines in the project. Each submarine is built in six parts and joined at a later stage before delivery. I am the Section In-charge of one of the sections of the sixth submarine. So I lead and manage all the teams that are involved in production and outfitting of my section, and am responsible for achieving its monthly targets. My performance directly affects the cycle time of the entire project.

M1: Did you interact with your HR executives?

Me: I had a chance to interact mostly during the induction process.

M1: No, other than the induction process?

Me: I've been in touch with some of them for clarifications on the HR policies. \*Hoping they would ask me about some policies, but they don't.\*

M1: You're in a PSU. What do you think of the HR in your company?

Me: They've been very effective in resolving labour issues given that the company has no history of major labour unrest. They've ensured that the employees are updated with the skills, which I think is one of the reasons why we are the leading shipyard in the country and are able to deliver world-class ships.

M1: What could be the areas of improvement?

Me: In the PSUs, HR needs to broaden its focus from operations to strategy. That way it ceases to remain just a cost centre.

M1: And how does that happen?

Me: HR needs to play an active role in business decisions. Their participation in business meetings is important.

M1: But don't HR professionals already attend business meetings?

Me: They do. But from what I have observed, HR in the PSU sector is still restricted to being a cost centre. With automation taking over the operations, HR needs to realign itself as a business partner. For example, each project in the shipbuilding industry is novel. So every project calls for certain changes in the product realisation process. Work styles change. Work descriptions change. Roles change. Leadership styles change. How we are able to adapt to changes in a constantly evolving industry is subject to the strategic decisions of the HR. \*M1 nods. \*

M1: What are the areas where you think the HR department of your company can be proactive?

Me: Sir, as I said, it needs to realise the importance of this change at the earliest. Only then can the PSU shipyards compete with the privates.

M1: Okay, but what else?

Me (thinks for a while): They need to reduce the gap between the management and the labour force. For example, one of our private competitors has its HR managers conduct monthly feedback visits at the shop-floor. This is something that my company hasn't implemented, and I think, should help in reducing the apprehensions of the workmen about the management, and bring their issues to the forefront.

M1: Okay, two points. What else?

Damn! I realise he is either trying to push further or expecting something I've not yet said. I try to steer the discussion towards my strength.

Me: Sir, PSUs continue to use the bell curve approach for appraisals. This has major disadvantages as it ends up merely categorising the employees in three performance levels. So the approach annual and is result oriented, rather than process oriented. In fact, many companies have already shifted from this method.

M2 jots down something on his notepad.

F3: Who is your GM, HR?

Me: Told.

F3: AGM?

Me: Ma'am, I cannot recall at this moment. \*She almost moves to the next question, when I blurt out the name- Mr. 'A'! \*

F3: But isn't it Mr. B?

Me: \*smiles\* Ma'am, there are multiple AGMs in the HR department. Mr A is one of them.

F3: Okay. So why was there an agitation when the PRP (Performance Related Pay) system was introduced in the PSUs?

Me (No idea. Thinks for a while): Ma'am, it was already in place when I joined...

F3: Yeah, it was introduced six years back. But what do you think could be the reason behind the agitation?

Me: Ma'am, it's a hard truth that there has always been some employees in PSUs who are not inclined to take a lot of initiatives at work. (Wrong use of words. Should have used "complacent"). So when the PRP was introduced, it might have been a shock in a stagnant system, and that probably got them worrying about their... umm...

F3 (nods and helps): Remunerations.

Me: Yes.

F3: How would you rate the HR department of your company out of 5?

Me: I'd give them a 3.5 \*I just ended up being honest. I realised later I could have given them a 4 because the panelists might have been checking how I represent my organisation outside. \*

M2 (finally done with his scribbling): So Soumya, you mentioned the bell curve system and its disadvantages. What are its advantages?

Me: Sir, it helps in identifying the top performers, mid-level performers, and the under-performers. That way, it gives the HR department an idea of which employees it should retain (the top performers). Also, the underperformers can be identified and provided with the required training and development. For the mid-level performers, HR can focus on ways to enhance their performance. \*M2 nods. \*

M2: Okay, we know that not many business school students are interested in taking up a job at a PSU. But suppose you are an HR manager of your present company, and you are at an IIM for recruitment. How will you differentiate your company from the other shipyards?

Me: Explained how it has been the leading shipyard in the country, and the only Indian shipyard that has the infrastructure, experience, and skills to build warships and submarines in tandem. Mentioned the world-class projects in the order book, and the latest developments which differentiate the company from its competitors and ensures that its employees are skilled to the latest industry standards.

M2: Fine, consider a retail company. Its customers have given negative feedback on its social media page. Mr. X is looking forward to applying for a job at this company. He discovers these negative comments about customer service. Will this affect his willingness to join the company?

Me: Sir, since Mr X has gone ahead and checked the comments on social media, he would also have looked for the response from the company. If the company has responded, it would have a positive impact on his willingness to join. Otherwise, it would definitely affect his willingness.

M2: How do you evaluate yourself at work?

F3 cuts in (Looks deep into my eyes as if she can see my soul): What drives you professionally? Fame or money? When would you consider yourself professionally successful?

Me: Ma'am, for the first few years, I'd evaluate myself on the impact of my work on project realisation and how I am able to add value to the teams I am working with. But with more experience, after having functioned in leadership positions, I think ultimately it boils down to how many people I have enabled to do what they wanted to do. \*All nod. M1 follows my hand gestures. \*

F3 and M2 ask some more questions related to my industry and my company in particular. They exchange looks. "Any more questions?" "No, that'll be it."

F3 (starts again): How much work-ex do you have?

Me: 18 months. \*F3 and M1 respond with soul-piercing stares. \*

M1: Okay, do you know the political affiliations of the labour unions in your company?

Me: Sir, I know the names of the unions, but I'm not sure about their political affiliations.

M1: No no, I want the political affiliations (smirks at me)

Me: Named the two I was sure of.

M1: Okay Soumya, thank you.

\*I greet them and leave. \*

Verdict: Rejected.

## Interview and WAT Experience 9

Course: M.A. Human Resources and Labour Management

Date: 11th March 2019

Venue: TISS, Mumbai

PIT: We had to choose one of the two given topics for GD and WAT. The group unanimously agreed to one topic- Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Future Work.

We were given 15 mins to write on the topic in 200 words. The GD began immediately after that. It was a very healthy discussion. I made 4-5 entries with distinct points in each.

Interview Panel: Lady professor (LP), Very senior professor- labour law expert (OP), Young male professor (YP)

I enter, greet the panel, and settle down. YP puts on an indifferent expression.

YP: Introduce yourself. Take us through your education, work experience, and why you decided to pursue HR.

Me: Gave a prepared answer.

OP (visibly frustrated already): What did you do as a part of the bargaining council?

Me: Sir, I am not a part of the bargaining council, but as I said, as a production manager, I have seen the impact of bargaining council negotiations on the shop-floor operatives.

OP: What negotiations?

Me: After the implementation of pay revision for executives, the ...

OP (cuts me...): Pay revision... You are from a PSU? (OP was a very senior professor and I could hardly understand a third of his sentences)

Me: Yes sir. (LP reminds him the name of my company)

OP: Okay, go on.

Me: So the pay revision for operatives was delayed due to some administrative procedures, and the bargaining council was involved in a prolonged negotiation with the HR. The impact of this was tangible on the production floor in terms of motivation and...

OP (cuts me again...): Suppose you are the only officer in the shift and a worker indulges in some misconduct. What will you do if there are no witnesses?

Me: Sir I am sure if I have the information of misconduct there has to be a witness. In Interview Experience I myself would have witnessed it, I would have reported it to the HR Operatives department, and there is a procedure of disciplinary enquiry to be followed. However, our premises are completely CCTV enabled so any misconduct would be in the record.

OP: Full premises?

Me: Sir we have two divisions. Shipbuilding and submarine. The submarine division has been enabled with CCTV; the shipbuilding division is implementing it currently.

OP: Okay, what disciplinary procedure were you talking about?

Me: It involves a preliminary enquiry followed by suspension and a show cause notice. During the enquiry, the witnesses are verified...

OP (cuts me again...): You are returning from office, in a local train. One of your operatives is sitting beside you. You haven't given him overtime today, and he complains and slaps you during the argument. What disciplinary action will you take?

Me: Sir, this incident would have occurred outside the premises of the organisation. I am not sure of the provisions of the law, as in if any misconduct outside the company premises is under the purview of the organisation. But then, a lot of abuse also happens outside the workplace, which is a concern. (The last line was a desperate attempt to drive the conversation away from this topic to harassment at the workplace)

OP (shocked): You were in production and you never handled industrial relations?!

Me: No sir. It is handled by the HR Operatives department. I am responsible for achieving production targets.

OP: It.....purview of the organisation... (unclear)

Me (From what I understand, he's been asking for a yes or no about the given Interview Experience being under the company's purview): Sir, I have not read the law and I am not aw...

YP (helps me understand what OP means to say): No no, he is saying it comes under the purview of the company.

Me (smiles at OP): Okay, thank you for letting me know, sir.

OP: How many employees are there in your company?

Me: Told.

OP: Did you read anything on HR?

Me: I am a regular reader of Peoplematters. Currently, I am reading the book HR Here and Now.

OP: Who is the author?

Me: Mr Ganesh Chella, ... Sorry sir, I am not able to recall the other two names.

YP: Do you know anything about them?

Me: They are HR consultants. One of them is an alumna of TISS Mumbai, and the others are alumni of XLRI Jamshedpur (YP nods)

OP: Which topic do you want to speak about, from the book, or from HR in general?

Me (finally something that I can speak on): Performance Management System.

OP: Good. What do you... (unclear words)...by... performance?

Me: I'm sorry sir, do you want to explain what I understand by performance?

OP (even more frustrated by now): No! What is Performance pay?

Me: It is a pay package that is related to the performance of an employee, based on the extent to which he has achieved his targets.

OP: What is the standard percentage of Performance Pay?

Me: Sir, I am not aware of the standard numbers, but I know how it is calculated in my organisation.

YP: Okay, tell me about the entire PMS in your company.

Me: We have shifted from a yearly rating to a quarterly rating recently. The quarterly KRAs are updated and rated, and the final yearly rating is done in the month of March. The scores are then fitted into a bell curve to determine the performance-related payments. But...

YP (about to cut me short...then stops): Okay continue, but?

Me: I think a better way to do it would be to include a robust feedback mechanism in the PMS. This is where our HR could make a better impact. I also think that the bell curve system is not always suitable.

YP: Why?

Me: It force fits the entire organisation into a curve, whereas the work requirements and constraints of different projects and teams are unique. Multiple projects deal with different supply chain constraints...

YP (cuts me...): No, but there must be bell curves for different levels, right?

Me: Yes sir, each designation has its own bell curve, but each project has employees from multiple designations. That way, one bell curve for each designation still doesn't solve...

YP (cuts me again...): I have a counter question. What if you had a bell curve for each project? Then you can deal with, no?

Me: It would be better than the existing system, but after all the yearly rating system still gives room for a lot of bias. And if the bell curves are based on these ratings, there is a high possibility that the performance in the recent months will dominate over the rest of the year. To avoid this, regular performance check-ins from managers should be implemented. (YP displays no reaction at all.)

YP: What business news are you aware of?

Me: I have read about the impact of the new e-commerce policy clarifications on the industry.

YP: Tell me about it.

Me: I speak about the clarifications on inventory holding, about Amazon reducing its equity in Flipkart to 24%, and Flipkart's way of dealing with it by introducing alpha and beta retailers.

YP: What is the impact on their suppliers?

Me: The registration costs have increased, but it has also created better opportunities for Indian suppliers.

YP: How?

Me: FDI in the retail marketplace through automatic route was 100%, but the marketplaces held inventory from firms they invested in. This reduced consumer prices and reduced the visibility of other Indian suppliers. The new regulations ensure that marketplace entities don't hold control over the inventory. That is likely to create better opportunities for the Indian suppliers. (YP nods)

LP: What do you think is unique about HR in a PSU?

Me: To speak about the positives, the HR policies are driven by employee welfare and security. Equal opportunity for growth is given to women employees...

OP (cuts me): How?

Me: There is a certain percentage of reservation for women employees. It has also resulted in an increase in the number of female leaders in PSUs.

LP: What else?

Me: A major contribution by the HR of PSUs is in CSR initiatives...

YP: What does HR do in CSR?

Me: Apart from enabling business goals through people, HR also has the responsibility to ensure that the organisation contributes to society through CSR. (At this moment I just realise the blunder I made a while back. I recalled that PSUs do not have reservations for women. This is when the stress starts to build up.)

OP: You are building defence ships. What has CSR got to do with that?

Me (Reeling under the pressure): Sir, as a labour-intensive public company, we employ a large portion of the labour market. It is our responsibility to give back to the communities.

OP (impatiently): But what does HR do?

YP: Yeah, any role for HR in CSR?

Me: HR has a strategic role in selecting communities where CSR can be implemented. (I was completely blank by now, in spite of having known of excellent examples to back this vague statement.)

YP: Did you yourself see HR doing anything in CSR? (Raising his hand to stop me as soon as I answer)

Me (smiles): Yes sir, when I volunteered for a CSR project, I had to communicate my willingness to the HR department. So...

YP (nods): Okay, that's it. You may leave.

Me: Thank you. Have a nice day.

YP: You too.

I left the room, shattered. This interview was surely worse than that of the last year, especially towards the end. It might feel like a long one to a reader, but it was done in 15 minutes, which is too short for a typical TISS HRM & LR interview.

Verdict: Converted!

## Interview and WAT Experience 10

My HRM & LR Interview and WAT Experience, March 2017

Last interview by Panel 5 on 18th March

Interview Duration 25-30 Minutes

P1 - OB Professor 50+

P2 - Aged Man, more than P1

P3 - Young Vibrant lady

P3- Tell me about yourself (just in brief about your academic and professional background)

I am BTECH graduate in Electronics and Communication working on \*\*\*\*\* project in \*\*\*\*\* company.

P3-Which city did you study in?

National Capital, Delhi

P3- University?

\*\*\*\*\* told

Awkward Silence, so pitched in myself and start speaking about myself more

- Started with work experience and spoke for 3+ minutes about achievements at workplace and how I make a difference there.
- Until now P1 AND P2 are not even looking at me, they both had some parts of my DAF or some other papers and P1 (OB professor) was writing something which increased my heartbeat :D
- I moved on from my IT work to my NGO work as an HR recruiter and how did I made some changes there and how I added value to the organization

P2 (Finally talking to me)- You are from Delhi. Tell the names of two houses of Indian Parliament.

Sir, Rajya Sabha which corresponds to House of Lords and Lok Sabha which corresponds to House of Commons of British Parliament.

P2- Tell the names of heads of both the houses and their designation.

Now P1 P2 P3 gazing at me (Don't know why as it wasn't a difficult question)

Took some extra seconds to recall first name of Ms. Sumitra Mahajan, and told about RS also

(P1 P2 looks satisfied)

P1 (finally talking to me)- You are working you must have knowledge about HR functions

Yes, though I don't have firsthand experiences, but I keep reading about HR in general and my company's HR policies and how have they evolved in past decade.

P1- So you must know there are different channels of recruitment, suppose you recruited few people from one channel, tell me TWO METRICS to judge performance of the channel

Yes Sir!

1)Cost to Hire/Days to Hire

I can't name the second quantifiable metric

It can be

2) Employee Engagement

P1- You are not concerned how engaged the new employee is you need to tell that how to judge your hire's efficiency

So, I can't name the 2nd metric.

P1- Don't you think his performance in the next cycle can be correlated to the efficiency of hiring?

I just couldn't explain the same.

P3 - What do you think of Skill India?

Its aim is to create a skilled workforce which can help India grow, especially in the manufacturing sector as we have jumped from an agrarian to a service-based economy and have overlooked manufacturing.

Now to compete China, 'Make In India' and 'Skill India' are great initiatives, though I don't remember the figures to back what I am saying.

P3 - I was just about to ask that only (with a smile)

I) Smile

P2 - What do you think of TISS?

TISS is one of the best, the best institute in my opinion, for HRM.

Everybody smiled at each other (felt nervous as if I made a cliché blunder)

P2 - Leave HR, what about other courses?

Sir, not just HR, the QUALITY is the niche of TISS be it the students or be it the professors.

Different courses add up to the value of being at TISS. The Foundation Course distinguishes TISS and make every TISS student an aware and socially responsible professional.

Selection process is rigorous. I too am sitting here for the third time (not sure if I should have said this or not)

(Nervousness of their strange smiles made me forget to talk about FIELD WORK the USP After interview I wanted to kill myself to let go of the question, I have been so enthusiastic of throughout the last 4 years and have helped many aspirants love TISS for this)

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P2 - Have you heard the term Marginalization?

Just heard of the term (thinking it to be related to Finance) but don't know what does it mean technically.

P2 - Do you know marginal sections of society?

Yes

P2 - Name two of them

Dalits and minorities

P2 - This is it. (Looking towards others) Do you have any questions? They said NO

(Looking towards me)? Tired?

Yes being the last one to be interviewed today (with a smile)

P2-But definitely not the least once.

Sir there is one more organization I have worked with. I did not write on DAF (I WONDER WHY I SAID THIS)

Can I take your valuable two more minutes?

P2 - Really Sorry Raman! We are already running short of time.

Not a problem Sir. Thank You!

P2- Go See Mumbai now and explore food (Mentioned this in DAF)

Yes Sir, I will definitely explore new things in Mumbai this evening. Thank You!

Smiling Greetings. Left the room

Verdict: Converted

## Interview and WAT Experience 11

- **Qualification:** B.E. Instrumentation (Mumbai University). Secured 2nd position in the final year of engineering.
- **Work experience:** Accumulated 42 months of work experience, working as a Design Engineer Instruments in a listed Norwegian detailed engineering company named Aker Solutions. (September 2012 to February 2016). Key areas of experience include oil and gas industry, chemical industry and telecom engineering.
- **Result:** Converted the MA in HRM and LR Course at TISS Mumbai

### Topic: Agricultural Issues

(There is proposed voting on the topic and we mutually decide in favour of this topic).

Writing Ability Test (WAT)

The introductory paragraph quoted the data of employment-unemployment survey of NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) regarding the share of agriculture in workforce, vis-a-vis services and industries and juxtaposed with data on GDP contributions of these three sectors and how this situation adds to vagaries of agriculture.

My second paragraph covered the issues in a holistic way, right from input to output. However due to the paucity of time, I made a flowchart to depict the same. Covered issues like fragmentation of land, fertilizer and pesticides, irrigation, loans, insurance, impact of environment on agriculture and vice-versa, storage, market, agriculture and allied sectors, innovation and technology, the feminization of agriculture.

For the third paragraph, I again drew a flowchart in the same life cycle approach about the present steps taken by the government. Eg: PMKSY, PMFBY, NAM, SAMPADA, ICAR and KVK, Rashtriya Gokul Mission, NMSA etc.

In the fourth paragraph, that is the conclusion, I wrote about what more could be done. Wrote this in a point format, one below the other, the different suggestions like the implementation of the recommendation of Swaminathan Aayog, on the lines of green revolution, which gives a boost to the golden, pink and other revolutions, doubling farmers income, payment deficiency system in place of MSP etc.

**P.S.** The WAT was to be written in 200 words only. So, I was well within the word limit and covered the entire topic in a most holistic way. I had written an essay in the UPSC Mains on the same topic, so it helped. However, I don't know about the representation. Because it wasn't like an essay in a paragraph, but contained two flowcharts and data, like a General Studies (GS) answer in UPSC.

## Interview and WAT Experience 12

I started off second. The girl before me was an MBA aspirant and was verbose while communicating and interacting with others. Therefore, when she paused to take a breath after a minute, I immediately chipped in and quoted the data of NSSO survey and inaugurated the topic. Later, I spoke at 6-7 intervals, proposing newer points and adding to the points put forth by members. I also requested the group to discuss the way forward and suggested a few points, which, in my opinion, was the way forward.

**P.S.** The overall GD went well for me. I could put forth all my points besides ensuring that it doesn't turn out to be a monologue. At one or two instances, I felt I interrupted by the other group members. Also, we did not conclude the GD in time but did discuss the way forward. The panel was noting down the points during our Group Discussion. Overall, it was a satisfactory round where my performance was concerned, as there was no chaos and I could make all my important points and could drive the GD).

Personal Interview (PI)

(Last one to enter at 6 pm. Didn't count the exact time, but was interviewed for around 25-30 minutes).

Knocked the door and went inside. Wished the lady first and then the other two gentlemen. Was offered a seat. Thanked them and took the seat.

**Panel of 3: Middle-aged lady (M1), Old aged Gentleman (M2), Young Gentleman (M3)**

**M1:** Please introduce yourself.

**Me:** Told my name and my graduate degree. Informed them that I had secured the second rank in the final year of engineering. Talked extensively about my job profile, the projects that I worked on and about being a part of the engineering improvement program. Spoke of my achievements in the company and about winning the 'Project of the Year' award by London Petroleum Economist. Also spoke about the company being a part of UN Global Compact.

**M1:** Why HR?

**Me:** Gave a brief about pursuing a similar set of activities during engineering; viz; treasure and planning and management committee of the national level society, organised industrial visits and personality development programs for students.

- Interdisciplinary coordination in the company and working on CSR projects.
- A decent level of interaction and rapport with the HR manager of the company.
- Impressed by the diversity in an HR role.
- Was enlightened about Labour Laws.
- Learnt more about HR while preparing for civil services.

**M1:** Have you read any books on HR?

- Spoke of Armstrong's Handbook on HR.
- Also, made it clear that due to the paucity of time, I went through the index and referred blogs and websites like People Matters, SHRM etc.

**M1:** Are you still working with Aker Solutions?

- No, I quit my job in 2016.
- Preparing for civil services since 2016; couldn't make it to the final despite clearing the preliminary round.

**M1:** What was your optional?

**Me:** Philosophy

**M1:** Why Philosophy?

- Talked about how engineering inculcated in me a mathematical way of solving problems and taking a step-by-step approach.
- Correlated it to how philosophy is all about a problem-solving approach taken by philosophers towards life-related problems.

**Observation:** The examiner was continuously writing down something while I was talking. She seemed satisfied with my answers. Didn't ask any cross questions, though I was expecting more questions related to labour laws and People Matters, more questions on my job profile etc).

(Steps in the first gentleman)

**M2:** What kind of an engineer are you?

**Me:** Instrumentation Engineer.

**M2:** Asked a series of technical questions back to back:

- What is a closed loop? (Explained with relevant examples).
- What is an open loop? (Explained with relevant examples).
- What are actuators? Answered and talked about control valve as well, and it's application.
- What are pneumatic signals? (Explained).
- What kind of sensors are used to turn off lights when we step out of the house?

(Initially made a mistake and spoke of motion sensors. Then he started explaining how it cannot be a motion sensor, corrected my mistake and told me about infrared sensors. Seemed satisfied.)

**M2:** Who is your favorite philosopher?

**Me:** I spoke of an Indian philosopher Shankaracharya and his philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. Also added as to how this philosophy can be used to promote religious harmony in the present context.

**M2:** Countered by saying that Indian philosophy is not a philosophy, and instead used some term to describe it. Then went on to ask about a western philosopher that I liked.

**Me:** Spoke about Kant.

**M2:** What do you know about Kant?

**Me:** Spoke of deontological ethics.

**M2:** What else apart from ethics?

**Me:** Tried to drag our conversation to ways and means debate (he rightly pointed it out that this is also part of ethics).

**M2:** What else do you know about Kant?

**Me:** Took a few seconds and talked about mind and SAJ.

**M2:** What's SAJ?

**Me:** Synthetic Apriori Judgment.

**M2:** (Nodded, and said yes, right) What is it? Can you elaborate?

**Me:** Fumbled a bit but told him about how it sought to reconcile to the types of knowledge systems. Used example of 'this is a flower' and 'this is a red flower' and how I distinguished between the two.

**M2:** (Seemed okay/not too satisfied and changed the course of debate).

**M2:** What do you think of the present government?

- Spoke of the difference between a strong government that can take a decision and compared it to coalition government problems.
- Told about good decisions taken in various fields.
- Started off by quoting International Relations (since was well-read on it)
- Explained how we built on neighbourhood first policy from Gujral doctrine. Projects like SAARC satellite. Good relations with the Maldives and it's strategic significance. Good relations with Bhutan and how it helped in Doklam crisis.



**M2:** (Intervened) Why China is blocking India's bid for blacklisting Azhar Masood?

**Me:** Started off with the Belt and Road initiative and sovereignty issues faced by India with CPEC corridor and India's rightful opposition to BRI (as it passes through Gilgit Baltistan Region). Spoke of other issues between India and China like Dalai Lama, Border disputes, Staped visa in Arunachal Pradesh.

**M2:** (Seemed satisfied).

**M2:** What do you think about article 35A. Should it be abolished?

**Me:** Spoke of consultative approach needed to be taken by bringing all stakeholders onboard.

**M2:** Asked who all are the stakeholders?

**Me:** Spoke of Kashmiri political parties, Kashmiri people, Government of India, Indian political parties, social workers and groups working on ground level etc.

**M2:** Kashmiri political parties will ask to not abolish article 35A, then?

**Me:** Linked it to the overall debate of development. Highlighted the issues of Kashmir.

**M2:** (Gave a long argument regarding how developmental policies are not working) and asked how I am saying that development will work, because so far it has not.

**Me:** I tried to answer thinking his argument was over (however he was not finished. He said his argument was not over. I said sorry and he continued). I told him about other issues faced by Kashmir like difficult terrain, snowfall, issues of flood etc.

**M2:** Pointed out that difficult terrain is there in Europe also, then why does Kashmir have a problem?

- Highlighted that after World War 2 Europe has largely been peaceful and it's a single market now. However, in Kashmir there are lots of stakeholders involved like Pak in Gilgit Baltistan (PoK) in the northwest, China in Aksai Chin (on the eastern side), spoke of allegations related to military excesses.
- On a concluding note, pointed out that the development schemes like Nai Roshani to train 1 lakh Kashmiri youth, a scheme by army to take children to school and lastly adopting a three-pronged strategy as suggested by Atal Bihari Vajpayee of Insaniyat, Jhamuriyat and Kashmiriyat to be adopted in future approaches.

**M2:** (Looked alright to me. It was difficult to fathom as to how he received my answers. Asked lots of questions and cross-questions on a variety of topics).

**M3:** You have a very good experience of 3.5 years. Why are you not opting for the TISS Executive HRM course?

**Me:** Went blank for a second. Apologised and said I didn't know.

**M3:** (He got to know that already) then he explained about TISS Executive HRM Course.

**Me:** Thanked him for adding to my knowledge.

P.S. (Could have handled it in a better way).

(Comes in the third gentleman)

**M3:** (Gave a long Interview Experience study mimicking the same situation I was in). You are a boss and you have assigned employees with requisite talent and skillset to a new client. The project is about to begin, and he comes and tells you that he wants to quit for the job to prepare for civil services. What would you do?

- Told him about the idea of business continuity planning in big organizations to take care of such exigencies.
- I also told him about the concept of a notice period, and the time that I would require to find a replacement for him.

**M3:** Forget about the notice period, what else would you do?

**Me:** Said that would try and find someone with a similar skillset within the organisation to take up his position by reshuffling resources. If not, I will venture in the market and hire a new person with the required skillset.

**M3:** (Quite astonished) You will hire from the outside market?

**Me:** Reiterated the answer that first I will look within the organisation, else outside.

Also spoke of how the project handover is done. Gave my own example, and about how we inducted the new person in my place. How we handed over the charge, how all the systems and resources needed were arranged and communicated to.

**M3:** So hiring from outside is one of the choices?

**Me:** Yes, one of the choices.

**M3:** Will you respect the wish of the employees?

**Me:** Yes, I will.

Overall, my TISS Interview Experience 2019 was great and I was on cloud nine after converting TISS HRM Course for the Mumbai Campus.

Verdict: Convert

## Interview and WAT Experience 13

### PIT/GD Topics

1. Increasing Corruption case and their consequences and measures to control.
2. Privatization of Higher Education.

Time Duration: 20 minutes

Panelists: 2

P1: Introduce yourself

C: Gave a brief Introduction

P1: What are your strengths and weakness?

C: Told few giving some real-life experience and also how I am working on my weakness.

P1: Why there is a drop in your grades in higher secondary.

C: Sir I was more concentrating on the entrance exam.

P1: Don't you think you could have got a better grade if had managed both equally.

C: Yes Sir. I should have managed it properly

P1: Why TISS?

C: Told a few things that I knew about TISS.

P1: Few challenges in Indian villages.

C: Lack of Education facilities, Casteism, Gender Discrimination, and Poverty.

P1: What do you think about Casteism?

C: Explained.

P2: If given an opportunity, how would you bring change in any Indian village?

C: By creating awareness and telling the importance of educating women. How letting a woman work helps to improve family's condition etc.

P2: What are your career goals?

C: Explained what I wish to do after the completion of MBA.

P2: Thank you! We are done.

C: Thank you, sir.

TISS Interview and WAT Experience

PIT/GD Topics

Second careers for corporate women dropouts

Empowerment of middle-level managers in an organization

Time Duration: 20 minutes

Panelists: 2

P1: So you are from North-east...Tell us some challenges faced by North-east regions.

C: Sir the major challenges faced by North-east is Unemployment, Lack of Basic Amenities and Lack of Awareness.

P1: How do you overcome these challenges?

C: North-east has rich biodiversity and is the major producer of varieties of flowers, fruits, and herbs which is unique but the farmers are unaware of its international value and importance of branding so creating awareness amongst the farmers is important. Also connecting North-east to the commercial cities of India will prove as an advantage.

P1: Good...you seem well informed.

C: Thank you, sir.

P2: You have work experience in Marketing but why HR?

C: Sir HR and Marketing are closely related. Like for example in marketing, you study customers and in HR it's the employees, in marketing brand loyalty is important and in HR employee loyalty. HR is nothing but Internal Marketing of an organization to its employees.

P2: (with a smile)Tell us the truth. You want to pursue HR because you think it is a simple job where you can earn a lot of money right?

C: HR's job is not simple as he has a double responsibility of serving both the employee and the employer.

P2: What are the qualities of a good HR person?

C: Told 2-3 qualities with elaboration.

P2: If some new technology is introduced in your organization how would you train your employees?

C: Sir I would start with the basic and would tell them the requirement of the introduced technology, how to use it and its advantage over the older one and how it would help them to perform better to provide the required output.

P2: Would you like to ask something?

C: No sir, Thank you.

## Interview and WAT Experience 14

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### PIT/GD Topics

Role of Ethics and Values on organizational performance

The contribution of media towards positive change in society

Time Duration: 20 minutes

Panelists: 2

C: Good morning sir.

P1: Good morning.

P1: (looking at my resume) Why you chose NGO and not a corporate job?

C: Told about my interests in social activities

P1: What is the area of operation of your NGO?

C: Told what it does and how it operates.

P1: Who is the labor minister of India and what was his profile before?

C: Sorry sir, I am not aware.

P2: So you are a chemical engineer? Why not M.tech?

C: Told about my experience at NGO and how it inspired me to take up social work as a career.

P2: Tell me how will you generate employment in rural areas using chemical technology?

C: Told about polymer industry its scope and advantages.

P2: (looking at my resume) You like reading books, which authors have you read?

C: Name a few authors.

P2: Who is the author of wise and otherwise?

C: Sudha Murty.

P2: You read Dan Brown so you might have read The Da Vinci Code?

C: Yes sir.

P2: Why was it controversial?

C: It misrepresented the history of Christianity.

P2: Would you like to ask us something?

C: Asked about activities at TISS.

P2: Thank you.

## Interview and WAT Experience 15

### PIT/GD Topics

1. Diversity in Indian higher education.
2. Corruption harms emerging business.

Time Duration: 20-30 minutes

Panelists: 3

P1: Would you like to tell us something which is not in your resume?

C: Started with an introduction. Told about my likes and dislikes and things I would like to do in my life.

P1: So you would want to try adventure sport. what kind of and why?

C: Told few and explained.

P1: Talk something about your work experience.

C: Told about my role, daily schedule.

P1: Do you love your job?

C: Of course sir

P1: Then why don't you continue with it?

C: Explain how the role does not change my profile.

P2: So why don't you switch?

C: I can switch but the role would more or less remain the same.

P2: What are the roles of HR manager?

C: Mentioned a few roles of HR manager.

P3: What is the organized and unorganized sector?

C: Organised sector are the registered sector with job security and Unorganised sector are the unregistered sector with no job security.

P3: Could you provide us with some examples.

C: Companies like Tata, Reliance, Birla are organized sector and Hotels & Restaurants, Construction companies, Mining industries are unorganized sector.

P3: Thank You! You may leave.

C: Thank you, sir.

## Interview and WAT Experience 16

**Profile:** Bsc (physics-maths double major)

**10/12/Grad/TISS:** 89.6/ 81.08/ 88.5 / 98.68

**Work Ex:** Fresher

**Date:** March 21, 2019(Morning slot)

**Location:** ITC Grand Central, Mumbai

**Course:** HRM

Wat and gd topic: Should smoking be banned as it is injurious to the health?

(15 min for WAT and 20 min for group discussion)

It was a rather well-behaved group, everyone spoke.

### **PI experience:**

3 members in panel 2 males (M1 and M2) and one female(F1).

Me: Greeted them good morning.

M1: So Poorva are you working somewhere?

Me: No Sir, I am still in college as I have double majored.

M1: But why did you double major?

Me: Because I liked both the subjects (Physics and maths).

M1: What do you mean by liking a subject.

Me: To feel a connection with that subject.

M1: So you don't feel a connection with any other subjects?

Me: That isn't the case Sir.

F1: So if not MBA what would have been your next preference.

Me: If I don't make it this year I will get a job and try again next year.

F1: What kind of job?

Me: Spoke about working in IT or coaching center (bad choices I know).

M2: Can you name the mathematician who made it from an Indian village to England and did impeccable research?

Me: Ramanujan Sir.

M2: Who was his research advisor?

Me: Couldn't answer.

M2: What is Schrodinger's cat (saw it on one of my certificates).

Me: Answered.

M2: Is light a wave or particle?

Me: It is both Sir.

M2: Why?

Me: Duality of light.

(A discussion about wave functions and probability followed).

M1: Have you read Brief History of time?

Me: I read it 3 years back. Nowadays I mostly read books on business and fiction.

M1: Recently read business book?

Me: Zero to one.

(A discussion on the book).

M1: Any other non-fiction that you read recently?

Me: The Kite runner (I know I know).

F1: That's a fiction book.

Me: Sorry, I meant Thinking fast and slow.

(Questions on the book).

M1: So why can't we measure the position and speed of a particle at the same time.

Me: Answered.

Interview ended. Got 2 toffees instead of one.

verdict: Converted.

## Interview and WAT Experience 17

**DATE-** 23-03-2019

**TISS Percentile:** 94.07

**Graduation Background:** Bachelor of Engineering in IT

**WAT and GD Topic:** Should capital punishment be made compulsory for crimes against women?

The PI panel consisted of 3 individuals (let us assume them to be P1, P2, P3)

P2 - Which famous personality of India had the same name?

(Indira Gandhi's maiden name was Indira Priyadarshini)

P2 - Who was she?

P2 - What did she do in 1971?

P2 - How would she have reacted in the current scenario? (This question was in reference to the Pulwama terror attack)

P2 - Are you going for MBA HR from XLRI because you didn't get a call for MBA BM? (Cross questioned a lot here)

P1 - In your GD, you said that capital punishment should be made compulsory for crimes against women. Isn't dowry also a crime? Will you carry out a death penalty against the perpetrator?

(I answered that in some cases, the perpetrator can be reformed while in others, the crime is so barbaric that capital punishment is justified)

P1 - How will you decide the severity of the crime and whether a person can be reformed or not?

(Again, a lot of cross questioning took place)

P3 gave me an equation to solve and plot a graph for the same.

P3 - Where do you stay?

P3 - You're from SIES right? How do you reach your college?

P3 - Is the highway outside your college a state highway or a national highway?

P1 - What is the relevance of your final year project?

**Verdict:** Not Selected

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## Interview and WAT Experience 18

### XLRI HRM Interview Experience

**Background:** Engineer (CSE)

**10/12/Grad/Tiss:** 91.2 / 93.8 / 80/ 98.7

**Work Ex:** 30 months in IT

**Date:** March 21, 2019

**Location:** Delhi

**GD and WAT:**

**Topic:** Smoking is injurious to not only the person who smokes but also to the people around him. Should smoking be banned in the country?

We were given 15 minutes to write on the topic followed by a GD of 15 minutes.

### **Interview and WAT Experience (Duration - 15 minutes)**

There were 3 male professors P1, P2 and P3.

**P2** - Who is the India Head of your company?

Describe the work you do

**P1**- (He had a newspaper in his hand)

\*Pointing to the Jet Airways news\*

You must be knowing the details of this issue. Describe the role of an HR in this case

What would you do if you were an employee of the company?

What would you do if you were the CHRO?

There was a long discussion on it

**P3** - (He was going through my file)

Tell me a bit about your extra-curricular activities. Some questions on that.

Tell us something that you think we should have asked?

Overall, it was a good experience and more of a discussion with the panel. All the panelists were very calm and were listening very carefully to what I was answering and cross questioning on that only.

**Verdict:** Converted

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### **Interview and WAT Experience 19**

I had my **TISS HRM** interview in February 2017. The GDPI experience was really interesting because of its uniqueness. TISS holds a group discussion with a batch size of 8–10 students for around 40 minutes (hell lot of time). There were three professors for moderating the group discussion round.

The GD round started with one of the professors writing the topic on the white board. The topic read: “**Diversity at workplace is overstated**”. The discussion went on very well and in an organised manner. But after half an hour, new points stop popping up in your mind so there I took the chance of summarizing the GD and coming to conclusion.

After that we were told to sit in the waiting room and were given psychometric test. It contained around 150 simple questions meant for testing your behavior and personality. Then came PI round. I was the last person in the panel for the interview round. I will try to keep it short and crisp.

## PI round: (GEM Fresher)

There were two male professors (**P1 & P2**) and one female professor (**P3**).

**P1: Have you taken any placement from your college?** (started with this question straightway)

**Me:** Yes. (Told about the company, the kind of work and my profile).

Then there was some cross questioning on my profile and the kind of work I would do there.

**P3: Okay, so you have got a decent profile in your company and seem to be a more of technical guy. Your present profile is quite different from that of HR course that you want to pursue. So why HR?** (question which is a must in HRM interview and for a fresher “**LIFE and DEATH situation**”).

**Me:** Told. (Don't know if they were convinced).

**P2: What is the difference between a leader and a manager?** (question which should be dealt smoothly).

**Me:** Gave a decent answer (according to me) and gave my definition of a “**LEADER**”. Then continued with the difference and gave good examples to support my point.

**P3: Hypothetical situation:** You are an HR Manager and you have gone to a campus for recruitment. There, you met a very meritorious girl and you had made up your mind to take her but during interview, she tells you that she is expecting her first baby. So, she would be actually contributing to the company after 1.5 years. Will you take her now? **(A perfect situational question for an HR Manager)**

**Me:** I was taken aback for a second as answer to this question has to be framed really well as this would act as a **bridge between me and TISS**. Answered the question with an affirmative and gave reasoning for it.

So, this is how my interview ended.

**Verdict: NOT SELECTED.**

## Interview and WAT Experience 20

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I was shortlisted for **TISS (HRM) programme** and had my interview scheduled on 12th March, 2016 at TISS College, Mumbai - Morning Slot

I went to the college on 12th Morning and was made to sit in a waiting room allotted to HRM students. We had 10 people (approx) who had been called for that slot. After almost 30 minutes, we were called into a classroom next to our waiting room and were made to sit in a circular fashion for the GD. We all had to carry a pen and a paper of our own. There were two lecturers of TISS as panelists for our GD-PI process.

### Group Discussion -

One of the panelists wrote the topic for the GD on the board

**“Money is the sole factor for progress and promotion at workplace”** (I do not remember the exact statement but it revolved around how money is the only reason why anyone would want to do well at work).

HRM topics were usually behaviour based as they wanted to test how the HR managers-to-be would deal with common workplace issues. Some other topics for HRM GDs were - gender bias at workplace, should workplace love relationships be banned etc.

For anybody who appeared for this year's GD process would know, this year the entire process for the GD had changed and structured into a pattern of discussion of Pros, Cons, Implementation issues etc. We discussed the situation giving various examples - startups, big firms, their HR policies etc. People also quoted Ayn Rand and some other authors. The panelists were observing us while scribbling something on a sheet as soon as someone made a noteworthy quotation or added a valuable point to the discussion. Overall the GD was peaceful and everybody got ample airtime. I, for one, had no idea how the GD went because the entire pattern change of GDs was baffling for everyone and everybody was struggling to put up their points while sticking to the framework of the GD.

### **Interview-**

We were again made to wait in the waiting room and the panelists gave us all our sequence numbers, the order in which we were going to be called in for the interview. This was going to be my first ever stress interview and little did I know of what was to come. With no expectation and a little dread I decided to face it(As if I had an option :P)

My number was 5th in a group of 10 people.

Let us call the panelists - P1 and P2.

**P1:** Where are you from?

**Me:** Allahabad, Sir

**P1:** Oh thats great, How clean do you think is Allahabad city. What is its ranking in the recent survey of the cleanest cities in India?

**Me:** Sir, I do not know about the ranking but it is a fairly clean and peaceful city, though a lot more needs to be done.

**P1 to P2:** Sir, this ma'am says that Allahabad is a clean city! (With a hint of sarcasm)

**P2:** Woah.. okay .. nice to know any city in India is clean for that matter! (Already looking at me with contempt)

**Me** (Smiling- cuz had no idea what else to do :P)

**P2:** Ok so you are from Infosys, Pune?! and you must have done your training at Infosys, Mysore. Why do you think companies first train their employees?

**Me:** tried to explain how students from different streams, different educational backgrounds come to the same company , so they have to bring them on the same level. Blah Blah

**P2:** So if you are saying that an Electronics Engineer can be at par with a Computer Science engineer, just by getting some 3 months training , then why even bother doing B.Tech.. invest so much money for nothing.. anyway what use is the knowledge that you gained from your college.

**Me:** Tried to explain how you learn a lot more things and personality development and blah blah

**P2:** No, I will take a class 12th student and put him/her into Mysore training and let them work with Infosys. I think the plan would work

**Me:**(Smiling and explaining something) :P

**P1:** Madam (with all the sarcasm and bitterness) what do you think you have written in the form for this question (Pointing towards my form). What do you think you are trying to prove here? We have been interviewing candidates for the past 15 years, what do you think you are signaling here - that you are good at both acads n extra curric...

**Me:** (Calmly): Told him why I wrote, what i wrote and what was my intention for including extra curric in the answer.

**P1:** (Pointing to another question- this time he had triple underlined an answer that he seemingly didnt approve of) Read the question again and read your answer aloud..

**Me:** (Calmly read the answer) Told him reason why I had written that answer. One point that I realised I should have not mentioned as it was redundant, I calmly apologized for it.

**P2:** What do you think is trust? Give me one incident at workplace where you thought you had gained your seniors' trust? Why do you think it was trust? What did you do to earn that trust. Maybe they had no other option.. It wasnt trust..

(He kept on refuting everything that I said)

**Me:**(I was 80% convinced that they did not like me and wanted me to return crying from the room.. so i decided to not lose calm for the one last time :P)

**P1:** Have you read Mahabharatha? Do you follow Krishna? What were his teachings?

**Me:** Gave some fundas around fight for truth and righteousness...

**P1:** So Krishna preached wrong means to attain victory. Would you give up on Ethics, if need be, for the welfare of your firm?

**Me:** Told them how in the past in all such Ethical dilemmas I have chosen Ethics or unethical means

**P1:** But right now you said that you do follow Krishna, then why not follow his teachings?

**Me:** Some funda around how I have my own principles that I follow.

**P1:** If you dont follow unethical means you will never be successful.

(Some more grilling followed)

**Me:** (Now it had been 25 minutes of grilling and I was on the verge of breakdown)

**P1:**(Suddenly started smiling): Okay, relax. The interview is over. Now tell us who gave you more stress.. was it him or me? Your marks wont be affected with this

**me:** (baffled for a sec) Sir, the questioning on ethics was the toughest part for me.

**P2:** (laughing)

**P1:** (To my utter disbelief!!! This gentleman stands up - goes to water filter kept on a table next to ours.. fetches me a glass of water!!!) Relax, nothing to worry, the interview is over.

**Me:** (Thanking him genuinely for the glass of water :))

**P2:** Thank you so much for coming. It was a pleasure to meet you. You have a very charming personality. We liked your enthusiasm and energy. Good to see you.

**Me:** (Still trying to fathom what just happened - Smiled - thanked them, stood up and kept the glass of water back to the next table).

As I moved out I had no idea how the interview had gone because of the contempt, disbelief, sarcasm that I faced for 25 minutes. But the last minute gave me hopes that I might have done something right :)

Verdict: Straight Convert :!!!!

## Interview and WAT Experience 21

Profile:

12th: 86%

10th: 94%

Graduation: 8.45/10 (B.Tech in Chemical Engineering from NIT Durgapur)

Work Ex: 22 months at Reliance Industries Limited.

Out of the 800+ candidates who used interviewed for the programme, I was the 2nd!

Pre-Interview Test (PIT): 9 candidates in my panel.

We asked to write on one of the 2 the topics: Patriarchal Society in India or Labour Unionisation in industries.

3 women and 1 guy pounced as soon they heard the topics and without considering the opinion of the rest decided we go for the former one. Given that International Women's Day was 2 days prior to the PIT/PI Day, opinions/sentiments were heightened on anything that remotely associated to it.

The moderators gave us 20 minutes to write on the topic. I mainly emphasized on how the male members of my family never imposed their say on others. Both men and women sought discussion before taking a decision. I used personal life examples here. Thereafter, I moved to write on the society. How over the years the society had male dominated ( both good and bad) and how the scenes are undergoing transition for the better.

I felt my essay could have been much more organized. I wished I could compose better opinions in those 20 minutes. So, I was determined to make up for it in the Group Discussion.

GD: Again 5–6 individuals pounced right from the word go. They ranted off how women have been oppressed since ages, despite being worshiped as Goddesses. 5 minutes into it, 7 candidates had almost turned it into the proverbial fish market!

I did not speak for the 1st 10 minutes. I was noting down points. And gathering my thoughts. Then I pitched in. I picked up the points from my essay and added some more. I pointed out how we need to stop cynical and complaining about a dominant patriarchal face and work for betterment. I cited 3–4 real life examples of women beating the odds to succeed and how some men has doing their bit for equality.

GD was loud and mumbled in parts. Despite the GD being raucous, the moderators were silent. Many unique points came up. Later on, one who kept their cool and coupled it with valid points made the cut.

PI: 3 professors. (P1, P2, P3)

P1: Tell us about yourself.

I told them my a million times prepared answer which I could rant off hanging upside down from a tree.

P1: (suddenly switching to a deep technical Q) Explain the safety-systems at your plant.

Since I worked in a critical chemical unit, I knew the answer well.

P1 did not seem very impressed.

P1: (asked me situational Qs)

Suppose you are in the shop-floor and you see a worker lazing around, what will you do? Suppose you are a young manager in the manager, what will you do to break the ice with the workers?

I answered all these Qs from personal experiences.

P2: Why HRM?

I told them why HRM will hold a lot importance in coming years and why I would like to be part of that change.

P2: (Taking a cue from P1) You must be knowing cost of installing safety systems is very high. Being an HR, will you approve of it always, given that you are entrusted with keeping the costs down as well?

Me: Definitely, I will approve of it. No matter what. If the system has to be there, it has to be there. No second thoughts. Cost of human life way more than cost to the organisation.

P3: (He was in a grilling mood) Asked a lot of question on ethics. Ranging from why ethics are so important to situational questions on ethics (e.g: Is it alright to lie at times? What will you do if you see malpractices happening in your industry? How did you tackle when people were very rude to you?) He was referring to my answers I had written on Detailed Application Form.

He was toughest to answer to as he had beautiful and flurry of counter-Qs to my answers.

Finally,

P1: What do you think of Donald Trump. Rate him on a scale of 2–5.

Me: Mr. Trump is very whimsical and narrow-minded. On the pretext of being nationalist, he is xenophobic. He is cancelling trade pacts like TPP to protect domestic markets and that's like a child closing eyes to a problem.

Still, I will give him 2/5, as it is early days and it is bit too early to be judgmental.

P2: Do you think the image of Trump is affecting the way the media or people perceive him?

Me: Yes but only initially.

I quoted Lee Kuan Yew, "It's not how you start, it's about how you end." Trump will have to come up with robust policies and decisions to shrug off his critics.

P3 noting down something all this while.

P1: Which other calls do you have? And where will you join?

Me: XLRI, HRM. And if I get both, I will go for TISS as it teaches the nuances of management with a touch of social equity. And also it is in Mumbai, so more exposure.

P1 smiled. The other 2 were expression-less throughout.

I was asked to leave thereafter.

## Interview and WAT Experience 22

Course: M.A. Human Resources and Labour Management

Interview panel: Male professor, mid-30s (M1), Male professor, early 40s (M2), Female professor, early 50s (F3)

I enter the room, greet them. M1 responds. M2 is scribbling on his notepad. F3 is busy in her PC.

M1: Introduce yourself, and why HR. Keep it brief.

Me: Gave a prepared answer. Spoke about my educational background, work experience, qualities, and explained why HR.

M1: Did you read our syllabus?

Me: Yes, sir.

M1: Which subject would you want to specialise in?

\*I realise this could result in me getting questioned on HR subjects. I underplay. \*

Me: Organisational Behaviour interested me after I read up on it from HR magazines. But I think it's too early to decide the subject at this stage. I want to take an informed decision after my first year.

M1: So, what do you do at work?

Me: I function as a Senior Engineer in the Submarine Division at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited. \*At this moment, F3 makes eye contact for the first time. Asks if I work at MDL. I reply in the affirmative. M1 asks me to continue. I explain how I spearhead three functional teams to in the Scorpene submarine project. \*

M1: How exactly do you impact the project?

Me: Sir there are six submarines in the project. Each submarine is built in six parts and joined at a later stage before delivery. I am the Section In-charge of one of the sections of the sixth submarine. So I lead and manage all the teams that are involved in production and outfitting of my section, and am responsible for achieving its monthly targets. My performance directly affects the cycle time of the entire project.

M1: Did you interact with your HR executives?

Me: I had a chance to interact mostly during the induction process.

M1: No, other than the induction process?

Me: I've been in touch with some of them for clarifications on the HR policies. \*Hoping they would ask me about some policies, but they don't. \*

M1: You're in a PSU. What do you think of the HR in your company?

Me: They've been very effective in resolving labour issues given that the company has no history of major labour unrest. They've ensured that the employees are updated with the skills, which I think is one of the reasons why we are the leading shipyard in the country and are able to deliver world-class ships.

M1: What could be the areas of improvement?

Me: In the PSUs, HR needs to broaden its focus from operations to strategy. That way it ceases to remain just a cost centre.

M1: And how does that happen?

Me: HR needs to play an active role in business decisions. Their participation in business meetings is important.

M1: But don't HR professionals already attend business meetings?

Me: They do. But from what I have observed, HR in the PSU sector is still restricted to being a cost centre. With automation taking over the operations, HR needs to realign itself as a business partner. For example, each project in the shipbuilding industry is novel. So every project calls for certain changes in the product realisation process. Work styles change. Work descriptions change. Roles change. Leadership styles change. How we are able to adapt to changes in a constantly evolving industry is subject to the strategic decisions of the HR. \*M1 nods. \*

M1: What are the areas where you think the HR department of your company can be proactive?

Me: Sir, as I said, it needs to realise the importance of this change at the earliest. Only then can the PSU shipyards compete with the privates.

M1: Okay, but what else?

Me (thinks for a while): They need to reduce the gap between the management and the labour force. For example, one of our private competitors has its HR managers conduct monthly feedback visits at the shop-floor. This is something that my company hasn't implemented, and I think, should help in reducing the apprehensions of the workmen about the management, and bring their issues to the forefront.

M1: Okay, two points. What else?

Damn! I realise he is either trying to push further or expecting something I've not yet said. I try to steer the discussion towards my strength.

Me: Sir, PSUs continue to use the bell curve approach for appraisals. This has major disadvantages as it ends up merely categorising the employees in three performance levels. So the approach annual and is result oriented, rather than process oriented. In fact, many companies have already shifted from this method.

M2 jots down something on his notepad.

F3: Who is your GM, HR?

Me: Told.

F3: AGM?

Me: Ma'am, I cannot recall at this moment. \*She almost moves to the next question, when I blurt out the name- Mr. 'A'! \*

F3: But isn't it Mr. B?

Me: \*smiles\* Ma'am, there are multiple AGMs in the HR department. Mr A is one of them.

F3: Okay. So why was there an agitation when the PRP (Performance Related Pay) system was introduced in the PSUs?

Me (No idea. Thinks for a while): Ma'am, it was already in place when I joined...

F3: Yeah, it was introduced six years back. But what do you think could be the reason behind the agitation?

Me: Ma'am, it's a hard truth that there has always been some employees in PSUs who are not inclined to take a lot of initiatives at work. (Wrong use of words. Should have used "complacent"). So when the PRP was introduced, it might have been a shock in a stagnant system, and that probably got them worrying about their... umm...

F3 (nods and helps): Remunerations.

Me: Yes.

F3: How would you rate the HR department of your company out of 5?

Me: I'd give them a 3.5 \*I just ended up being honest. I realised later I could have given them a 4 because the panellists might have been checking how I represent my organisation outside. \*

M2 (finally done with his scribbling): So Soumya, you mentioned the bell curve system and its disadvantages. What are its advantages?

Me: Sir, it helps in identifying the top performers, mid-level performers, and the under-performers. That way, it gives the HR department an idea of which employees it should retain (the top performers). Also, the underperformers can be identified and provided with the required training and development. For the mid-level performers, HR can focus on ways to enhance their performance. \*M2 nods. \*

M2: Okay, we know that not many business school students are interested in taking up a job at a PSU. But suppose you are an HR manager of your present company, and you are at an IIM for recruitment. How will you differentiate your company from the other shipyards?

Me: Explained how it has been the leading shipyard in the country, and the only Indian shipyard that has the infrastructure, experience, and skills to build warships and submarines in tandem. Mentioned the world-class projects in the order book, and the latest developments which differentiate the company from its competitors and ensures that its employees are skilled to the latest industry standards.

M2: Fine, consider a retail company. Its customers have given negative feedback on its social media page. Mr. X is looking forward to applying for a job at this company. He discovers these negative comments about customer service. Will this affect his willingness to join the company?

Me: Sir, since Mr X has gone ahead and checked the comments on social media, he would also have looked for the response from the company. If the company has responded, it would have a positive impact on his willingness to join. Otherwise, it would definitely affect his willingness.

M2: How do you evaluate yourself at work?

F3 cuts in (Looks deep into my eyes as if she can see my soul): What drives you professionally? Fame or money? When would you consider yourself professionally successful?

Me: Ma'am, for the first few years, I'd evaluate myself on the impact of my work on project realisation and how I am able to add value to the teams I am working with. But with more experience, after having functioned in leadership positions, I think ultimately it boils down to how many people I have enabled to do what they wanted to do. \*All nod. M1 follows my hand gestures. \*

F3 and M2 ask some more questions related to my industry and my company in particular. They exchange looks. "Any more questions?" "No, that'll be it."

F3 (starts again): How much work-ex do you have?

Me: 18 months. \*F3 and M1 respond with soul-piercing stares. \*

M1: Okay, do you know the political affiliations of the labour unions in your company?

Me: Sir, I know the names of the unions, but I'm not sure about their political affiliations.

M1: No no, I want the political affiliations (smirks at me)

Me: Named the two I was sure of.

M1: Okay Soumya, thank you.

\*I greet them and leave. \*

Verdict: Rejected.

## Interview and WAT Experience 23

Course: M.A. Human Resources and Labour Management

PIT: We had to choose one of the two given topics for GD and WAT. The group unanimously agreed to one topic- Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Future Work.

We were given 15 mins to write on the topic in 200 words. The GD began immediately after that. It was a very healthy discussion. I made 4-5 entries with distinct points in each.

Interview Panel: Lady professor (LP), Very senior professor- labour law expert (OP), Young male professor (YP)

I enter, greet the panel, and settle down. YP puts on an indifferent expression.

YP: Introduce yourself. Take us through your education, work experience, and why you decided to pursue HR.

Me: Gave a prepared answer.

OP (visibly frustrated already): What did you do as a part of the bargaining council?

Me: Sir, I am not a part of the bargaining council, but as I said, as a production manager, I have seen the impact of bargaining council negotiations on the shop-floor operatives.

OP: What negotiations?

Me: After the implementation of pay revision for executives, the ...

OP (cuts me...): Pay revision... You are from a PSU? (OP was a very senior professor and I could hardly understand a third of his sentences)

Me: Yes sir. (LP reminds him the name of my company)

OP: Okay, go on.

Me: So the pay revision for operatives was delayed due to some administrative procedures, and the bargaining council was involved in a prolonged negotiation with the HR. The impact of this was tangible on the production floor in terms of motivation and...

OP (cuts me again...): Suppose you are the only officer in the shift and a worker indulges in some misconduct. What will you do if there are no witnesses?

Me: Sir I am sure if I have the information of misconduct there has to be a witness. In case I myself would have witnessed it, I would have reported it to the HR Operatives department, and there is a procedure of disciplinary enquiry to be followed. However, our premises are completely CCTV enabled so any misconduct would be in the record.

OP: Full premises?

Me: Sir we have two divisions. Shipbuilding and submarine. The submarine division has been enabled with CCTV, the shipbuilding division is implementing it currently.

OP: Okay, what disciplinary procedure were you talking about?

Me: It involves a preliminary enquiry followed by suspension and a show cause notice. During the enquiry, the witnesses are verified...

OP (cuts me again...): You are returning from office, in a local train. One of your operatives is sitting beside you. You haven't given him overtime today, and he complains and slaps you during the argument. What disciplinary action will you take?

Me: Sir, this incident would have occurred outside the premises of the organisation. I am not sure of the provisions of the law, as in if any misconduct outside the company premises is under the purview of the organisation. But then, a lot of abuse also happens outside the workplace, which is a concern. (The last line was a desperate attempt to drive the conversation away from this topic to harassment at the workplace)

OP (shocked): You were in production and you never handled industrial relations?!

Me: No sir. It is handled by the HR Operatives department. I am responsible for achieving production targets.

OP: It.....purview of the organisation... (unclear)

Me (From what I understand, he's been asking for a yes or no about the given case being under the company's purview): Sir, I have not read the law and I am not aw...

YP (helps me understand what OP means to say): No no, he is saying it comes under the purview of the company.

Me (smiles at OP): Okay, thank you for letting me know, sir.

OP: How many employees are there in your company?

Me: Told.

OP: Did you read anything on HR?

Me: I am a regular reader of Peoplematters. Currently, I am reading the book HR Here and Now.

OP: Who is the author?

Me: Mr Ganesh Chella, ... Sorry sir, I am not able to recall the other two names.

YP: Do you know anything about them?

Me: They are HR consultants. One of them is an alumnus of TISS Mumbai, and the others are alumni of XLRI Jamshedpur (YP nods)

OP: Which topic do you want to speak about, from the book, or from HR in general?

Me (finally something that I can speak on): Performance Management System.

OP: Good. What do you... (unclear words) ...by... performance?

Me: I'm sorry sir, do you want to explain what I understand by performance?

OP (even more frustrated by now): No! What is Performance pay?

Me: It is a pay package that is related to the performance of an employee, based on the extent to which he has achieved his targets.

OP: What is the standard percentage of Performance Pay?

Me: Sir, I am not aware of the standard numbers, but I know how it is calculated in my organisation.

YP: Okay, tell me about the entire PMS in your company.

Me: We have shifted from a yearly rating to a quarterly rating recently. The quarterly KRAs are updated and rated, and the final yearly rating is done in the month of March. The scores are then fitted into a bell curve to determine the performance-related payments. But...

YP (about to cut me short...then stops): Okay continue, but?

Me: I think a better way to do it would be to include a robust feedback mechanism in the PMS. This is where our HR could make a better impact. I also think that the bell curve system is not always suitable.

YP: Why?

Me: It force fits the entire organisation into a curve, whereas the work requirements and constraints of different projects and teams are unique. Multiple projects deal with different supply chain constraints...

YP (cuts me...): No, but there must be bell curves for different levels, right?

Me: Yes sir, each designation has its own bell curve, but each project has employees from multiple designations. That way, one bell curve for each designation still doesn't solve...

YP (cuts me again...): I have a counter question. What if you had a bell curve for each project? Then you can deal with, no?

Me: It would be better than the existing system, but after all the yearly rating system still gives room for a lot of bias. And if the bell curves are based on these ratings, there is a high possibility that the performance in the recent months will dominate over the rest of the year. To avoid this, regular performance check-ins from managers should be implemented. (YP displays no reaction at all.)

YP: What business news are of aware of?

Me: I have read about the impact of the new e-commerce policy clarifications on the industry.

YP: Tell me about it.

Me: I speak about the clarifications on inventory holding, about Amazon reducing its equity in Coultail to 24%, and Flipkart's way of dealing with it by introducing alpha and beta retailers.

YP: What is the impact on their suppliers?

Me: The registrations costs have increased, but it has also created better opportunities for Indian suppliers.

YP: How?

Me: FDI in the retail marketplace through automatic route was 100%, but the marketplaces held inventory from firms they invested in. This reduced consumer prices and reduced the visibility of other Indian suppliers. The new regulations ensure that marketplace entities don't hold control over the inventory. That is likely to create better opportunities for the Indian suppliers. (YP nods)

LP: What do you think is unique about HR in a PSU?

Me: To speak about the positives, the HR policies are driven by employee welfare and security. Equal opportunity for growth is given to women employees...

OP (cuts me): How?

Me: There is a certain percentage of reservation for women employees. It has also resulted in an increase in the number of female leaders in PSUs.

LP: What else?

Me: A major contribution by the HR of PSUs is in CSR initiatives...

YP: What does HR do in CSR?

Me: Apart from enabling business goals through people, HR also has the responsibility to ensure that the organisation contributes to society through CSR. (At this moment I just realise the blunder I made a while back. I recalled that PSUs do not have reservations for women. This is when the stress starts to build up.)

OP: You are building defence ships. What has CSR got to do with that?

Me (Reeling under the pressure): Sir, as a labour-intensive public company, we employ a large portion of the labour market. It is our responsibility to give back to the communities.

OP (impatiently): But what does HR do?

YP: Yeah, any role for HR in CSR?

Me: HR has a strategic role in selecting communities where CSR can be implemented. (I was completely blank by now, in spite of having known of excellent examples to back this vague statement.)

YP: Did you yourself see HR doing anything in CSR? (raising his hand to stop me as soon as I answer)

Me (smiles): Yes sir, when I volunteered for a CSR project, I had to communicate my willingness to the HR department. So...

YP (nods): Okay, that's it. You may leave.

Me: Thank you. Have a nice day.

YP: You too.

I left the room, shattered. This interview was surely worse than that of the last year, especially towards the end. It might feel like a long one to a reader, but it was done in 15 minutes, which is too short for a typical TISS HRM & LR interview.

Verdict: Converted!

## Interview and WAT Experience 24

Profile:

10th- 94.2% (CBSE)

12th- 86.4% (CBSE)

Graduation- 7.13/10 (CGPA), BIT, Mesra

Work Experience- 32 months

DAF

1. Biographical Sketch- I highlighted the significant events in my life and how those events have shaped me as the person I am today. I was honest in my DAF and highlighted the points which would strengthen my candidature.
2. Why HRM- I wrote what motivated me to pursue a career in HR.
3. Why TISS- I stated my set of reasons to join TISS. (What makes it different.)

PIT

Out of the two topics given to our panel, we chose the topic which was related to mitigation of rising environmental pollution.

20 mins were given to write on the above topic- I cited practical day-to-day techniques to reduce pollution (gave few examples of eco-friendly practices being followed in my organization) and also wrote about Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement.

GD- I opened the GD and made my point based on what I wrote in the essay(I tried sticking to what I already wrote). Then the other members in my panel carried forward the discussion, made their points and added different dimensions to it. I entered the GD 4–5 times whenever I found an opportunity to add some valuable point to the discussion. At times, few people tried force-feeding their irrelevant points and deviated from the topic but overall it was a peaceful GD. One or two people who didn't spoke enough in the GD were asked to summarize by the moderators.

PI

I was the second last person in my panel to be interviewed. It was around 4:30 or 5 pm in the evening when my turn came.

The panel had one female and two male professors.

When I entered the room one of the professors was reading my DAF very minutely. I greeted them and they asked me to take a seat. I was elated when the professor said that he was impressed with my biographical sketch.

Then the interview started,

1. I was asked to introduce myself. I introduced myself on the similar lines of what I had mentioned in the DAF.
2. The next question was, why did I wanted to be an HR after pursuing engineering, they wanted to know how this transition was relevant to me and how this course would serve my purpose.
3. Then, I was asked about various other courses that are taught at TISS. (I stumbled in this, couldn't answer properly, though I had seen the name of all the courses taught at TISS a number of times on the website). I kept my calm and hoped to make up for it in the upcoming questions.
4. The next question was about the CSR activities of Tech Mahindra. I told all that I knew, gave the names of various CSR initiatives by Tech Mahindra and how it has affected the society.
5. I was then asked about trade-unions in IT companies, and what opinion I hold in this regard.

6. Coming to current affairs, I was asked about the recent HR issues in news. I supported my answer with two HR controversies. (Tried hard, but couldn't recall more at that time). They asked how I would have handled the controversies and what was my take on that. Then followed few questions from the field of Badminton.
7. Then followed, many scenario-based questions related to the role of an HR manager, which I tried answering the best I could, with my limited knowledge.

**Interviewee Experience:** Overall it was a very good experience, the interviewers gave me ample time to think and answer the questions.

Be authentic in DAF. Why HR and why TISS should be logical and convincing.

Before jumping into writing the essay, thinking for a minute and reorganizing the thoughts saves a lot of time later. Using examples to justify the arguments really helps a lot!

The points made in GD should be relevant to the topic. (It's the quality that matters.)

Being calm and composed in the interview is the key.

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## CATKing IIM WAT PI Schedule 2021-22

DAY	TOPIC	TIME
Monday	Marketing Mondays	10 to 11 pm
Tuesday	Current Affair   Industry Insights (GD/WAT)	10 to 11 pm
Wednesday	How to Crack Interviews	10 to 11 pm
Thursday	How to Crack Case Study/SOP	10 to 11 pm
Friday	Finance Fridays	10 to 11 pm
Saturday	Personal Interview Must Do Questions	10 to 11 pm
Sunday	Concept Builders: GD/WAT	10 to 11 pm

**Note:** This schedule will be followed every week till March. Some variations may be there as per the B-School interview schedule Students will be informed about it in due course.

**For More Details about the CATKing IIM WAT PI Preparation course with IIM A, B, C, L, SPJIMR Mentors, Contact 8999118999 or Visit: <https://www.courses.catking.in/iim-wat-pi-courses/>**