

UPSC Interview Script: Anudeep Durishetty, AIR 1, UPSC CSE 2017

Candidate: Anudeep Durishetty

Rank: AIR 1, UPSC Civil Services Examination 2017

Board: Retd. Air Marshal Ajit Bhonsle

Date: 21 February 2018

Session: Afternoon

Duration: Around 30–35 minutes

Marks Awarded: 176

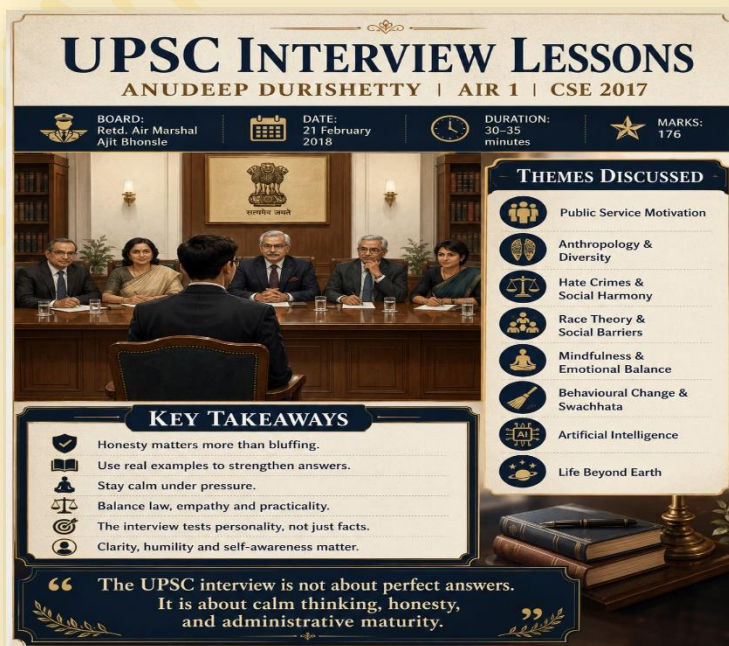
The UPSC Personality Test is not merely a test of knowledge. It is a test of composure, clarity of thought, honesty, emotional maturity and administrative suitability.

Anudeep Durishetty's interview is a useful example because it shows that even a top ranker may face nervousness, pauses, difficult questions and moments of uncertainty. What matters is not perfection, but how calmly and honestly a candidate handles pressure.

His interview began with a reassuring note from the Chairman, who told him that the questions would be simple and that there were no absolutely right or wrong answers. The board wanted to assess his suitability for the civil services in the next thirty minutes.

Chairman's Opening Interaction

The Chairman first asked **Anudeep** whether he was happy to be there. Anudeep replied respectfully that it was a rare opportunity to interact with such an experienced panel.



UPSC INTERVIEW LESSONS
ANUDEEP DURISHETTY | AIR 1 | CSE 2017

BOARD: Retd. Air Marshal Ajit Bhonsle | DATE: 21 February 2018 | DURATION: 30–35 minutes | MARKS: 176

THEMES DISCUSSED

- Public Service Motivation
- Anthropology & Diversity
- Hate Crimes & Social Harmony
- Race Theory & Social Barriers
- Mindfulness & Emotional Balance
- Behavioural Change & Swachhata
- Artificial Intelligence
- Life Beyond Earth

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Honesty matters more than bluffing.
- Use real examples to strengthen answers.
- Stay calm under pressure.
- Balance law, empathy and practicality.
- The interview tests personality, not just facts.
- Clarity, humility and self-awareness matter.

“ The UPSC interview is not about perfect answers. It is about calm thinking, honesty, and administrative maturity. ”

The Chairman then noticed that Anudeep had received recognition as a sharpshooter during his IRS training. Anudeep explained that during training at **NISA**, officer trainees were taught drill, physical training, weapon handling and weapon safety. At the end of the training, he was selected as the best officer trainee of his batch.

When asked about the qualities of a good shooter, **Anudeep answered** in a practical and disciplined manner. He said that a shooter should never point the muzzle at anything that is not intended to be shot. The finger must remain away from the trigger until the sights are properly aligned with the target. He also added that smooth trigger operation, proper breathing control and calmness are important for accuracy.

This answer reflected discipline, safety awareness and attention to detail.

Member 1: Identity, Anthropology and Civil Services

The first member began by asking whether “**Durishetty**” was his first name or surname. Anudeep clarified that Durishetty was his surname and Anudeep was his first name.

The member then moved to his academic background. He observed that Anudeep had studied engineering but had chosen Anthropology as his optional subject. Instead of directly asking why he chose Anthropology, the member asked him about the origin of people in India.

Anudeep paused and answered carefully. He said that one view suggests that Ancestral Southern Indians were among the earlier inhabitants of the subcontinent. Later, different waves of migration from Europe and Central Asian regions contributed to the genetic composition of Indian society. Another view, based on **mitochondrial DNA studies**, argues that the genetic difference between northern and southern populations may not be very large. Therefore, the issue is still debated.

When asked about the entry of Mongols, Tibetans and Chinese-related groups into North-East India, Anudeep honestly admitted that he was not aware of the specific details.

This was an important moment in the interview. Instead of guessing or giving a vague answer, he accepted his limitation.

The member then asked about his service background. Anudeep clarified that he had completed his IRS training and was working as an Assistant Commissioner of GST in Hyderabad.

When asked why he wanted to move from IRS to IAS, Anudeep gave a thoughtful answer. He said that as an **IRS officer**, he had already experienced the satisfaction of doing meaningful public work. Recovering taxes from defaulters or processing refunds for exporters gave him a sense of contribution to the public exchequer, which ultimately supports schools, hospitals and public

welfare. However, he believed that the **IAS** would provide a wider field of work, larger responsibility and greater opportunity for public impact.

Member 1: Hate Crimes and Administrative Response

The member then asked about hate crimes. Anudeep defined hate crime as a crime motivated by hostility towards a person's identity, such as caste, religion, race or community.

When asked why hate crimes are increasing globally, he pointed to social media as one important reason. According to him, digital platforms often create echo chambers, increase polarisation and strengthen extreme opinions.

The member then placed him in an administrative situation: as a Deputy Commissioner, how would he prevent such incidents?

Anudeep answered with two broad approaches. First, the law must be implemented effectively so that people understand that hate crimes will not be tolerated in a civilised society. Strong investigation, prosecution and conviction can create deterrence. Second, administration must promote social trust through dialogue among communities. Meetings of community leaders, joint celebrations of festivals and local confidence-building measures can reduce mistrust and prevent tensions.

This answer showed both law-and-order orientation and social sensitivity.

Member 2: Race Theory and Social Barriers

The second member asked him about race theory. **Anudeep** could not immediately recall the exact theoretical framework and accepted that he did not know the specific postulates. However, when encouraged to share his general understanding, he explained that race theory historically treated race not only as a biological category but also wrongly associated it with cultural qualities such as intelligence or character.

The member then said that modern science has challenged such ideas and shown that human beings are not fundamentally divided into superior or inferior races.

Anudeep agreed and clarified his position. He said that physical differences among human groups developed mainly due to factors such as migration, isolation, geography and limited gene flow. These biological differences do not prove any superiority or inferiority in intelligence, morality or ability. In essence, all humans share common ancestry, and humanity is one.

The discussion then moved to racial discrimination as a social barrier. The member asked what other social barriers exist in India. Anudeep mentioned caste, gender and religion as major social barriers in Indian society.

When asked how these barriers can be reduced, Anudeep gave a two-fold answer. First, progressive laws must be implemented sincerely and opportunities must be made available to disadvantaged groups. Second, children should be taught the value of unity and social harmony from an early age. He emphasised that people may differ in language, customs, rituals and traditions, but they remain equal human beings.

When asked at what stage such values should be introduced, he said that value formation begins even before formal schooling. Family, early childhood experiences and primary education all play a major role in shaping a person's social outlook.

Member 2: Aspirations of Indian Youth

The member then asked what Indian youth are aspiring for. Anudeep identified three major aspirations.

First, youth want formal employment. A stable job does not transform only one person's life; it also supports the family dependent on that person.

Second, youth, especially in rural India, have innovative potential but need better opportunities, platforms and support systems.

Third, young people want efficient public services, such as good roads, electricity, transparent administration and corruption-free governance.

This answer connected employment, innovation and governance with India's demographic dividend.

Member 3: Mindfulness Meditation and Personal Growth

The third member asked about mindfulness meditation, which Anudeep had mentioned as an interest.

Anudeep explained that mindfulness meditation means training the mind to remain attentive to the present moment. It involves awareness of breath, thoughts, feelings, sounds and bodily sensations.

He added a personal dimension to the answer. Earlier, he would get carried away by emotions such as anger, sadness or anxiety. Meditation helped him become more balanced. It improved him not only as a person but also as a civil servant.

When asked how meditation helped him professionally, Anudeep compared his earlier work experience with his later administrative work. At Google, he sometimes felt stressed during strict deadlines and worried about whether he would complete the task. Later, as an IRS officer,

meditation helped him remain focused on the present work rather than worrying about the past or future.

The member then asked whether effective work is simply about doing tasks on time, and where meditation fits into it.

Anudeep answered that every task involves hurdles. What matters is the mindset with which a person handles those hurdles. Meditation helps build focus, determination and commitment. It trains a person to remain present and steady despite pressure.

Member 3: Change, Swachhata and Behavioural Transformation

The member then asked a long and challenging question on change. He argued that change is difficult and sometimes almost impossible. Even after Mahatma Gandhi's emphasis on cleanliness, India still needed a massive government programme like Swachh Bharat to promote toilet usage and sanitation.

Anudeep respectfully disagreed. He said that change is difficult, but not impossible. Human beings can change through experience, learning, incentives and education.

He supported his answer with an example from his own office. During Swachhata Pakhwada, he noticed that the office premises had unused furniture and scrap material. Instead of doing everything alone, he formed sub-committees under superintendents and assigned responsibility. Within a few weeks, the scrap was removed as per procedure. Appreciation letters were also given to officers who contributed. As a result, he observed a positive change in the attitude of staff towards cleanliness.

The member then asked whether incentives are the only way to bring change.

Anudeep clarified that incentives are useful, but not sufficient. Behavioural change also requires awareness, evidence, education and reason. For example, giving money for toilet construction is important, but people must also understand how sanitation improves health and dignity.

The member further asked how one can convince a person who does not accept that he has any flaw.

Anudeep replied that no person is perfect and attitudes are not fixed permanently. With evidence, education, reason and experience, mindsets can be changed over time.

This portion of the interview tested his optimism, administrative experience and understanding of behavioural change.

Member 4: Father, Google and Career Motivation

The fourth member asked Anudeep about his father, whom he had mentioned as an inspiration.

Anudeep said that his father came from a humble background in a remote village. Despite difficult circumstances, he worked hard, improved his life and ensured that Anudeep received a good education. His father's struggle, values and commitment remained a lasting inspiration for him.

The member then asked why he left Google, which is considered a model employer, and chose civil services.

Anudeep replied that his career choices were guided by one question: where could he do impactful and meaningful work? At Google, he enjoyed working on products that affected millions of users across the world. Later, he realised that the civil services offered a similar, and perhaps deeper, opportunity to affect people's lives directly through governance and public service.

Member 4: Artificial Intelligence and Future of Work

The member then asked why he was interested in Artificial Intelligence.

Anudeep said that intelligence is humanity's most powerful resource. It is what has made human beings the dominant species on Earth. If humans are now creating artificial entities with intelligent abilities, the consequences can be significant. This made AI a fascinating and important subject for him.

When asked whether AI may overtake human intelligence in the future and whether that would be desirable, he gave a balanced answer. He said that AI would certainly become more capable in areas like image recognition, pattern recognition and medical diagnosis. However, it would be difficult for AI to replace human qualities such as empathy, compassion, care and physical interaction.

Therefore, India should reorient programmes like Skill India and Make in India towards skills that are less likely to be replaced by AI in the near future.

Member 4: Intelligent Life Beyond Earth

The discussion then shifted to the possibility of intelligent life outside Earth.

Anudeep referred to the Fermi Paradox. He explained that the universe contains billions of galaxies and each galaxy contains billions of planets. Even with conservative estimates, there may be a large number of Earth-like planets. Therefore, he believed that intelligent life may exist somewhere beyond Earth.

When asked whether humans should try to contact alien civilizations, especially since Stephen Hawking had warned against it, Anudeep gave an optimistic response. He said that humans are explorers by nature. He believed that discovering another civilization would be exciting and meaningful.

Chairman's Closing Remarks

The Chairman concluded by appreciating the idea that learning and change are lifelong processes. He said that people must continuously try to improve themselves and become better than they were yesterday.

Anudeep agreed respectfully.

The interview then ended. Anudeep thanked the Chairman, the lady member and the other members before leaving the room.

Key Takeaways for UPSC Aspirants

1. Honesty matters more than forced answers.
When Anudeep did not know something, he clearly said that he was not aware. This is better than guessing.
2. Personal examples strengthen answers.
His Swachhata Pakhwada example made his answer practical and credible.
3. Administrative answers need both law and society.
In the hate crime question, he spoke about deterrence as well as community trust-building.
4. Balanced thinking is important.
On AI, race theory, social barriers and change, he avoided extreme positions and gave mature, balanced answers.
5. The board tests personality, not just facts.
The interview tested his calmness, adaptability, self-awareness, values and decision-making.
6. UPSC interview is a conversation.
The best answers are clear, respectful, grounded and connected with real-life experience.

Anudeep Durishetty's interview shows that a successful [UPSC Personality Test](#) does not require perfect answers to every question. It requires honesty, composure, clarity, humility and the ability to think like a future administrator.

His performance reflected a combination of knowledge, self-awareness, public service motivation and emotional maturity. That is why this interview remains an important learning resource for **UPSC aspirants**.