

## Determination needed to achieve - V. Nandakumar IRS



True inspirational Civil Services Topper 2004 – Shri V. Nandakumar

His mobile phone keeps ringing non-stop. In the weekends, the calls are mostly from students seeking guidance on higher education and the Civil Services examination. An all-India topper in the UPSC examination in the Geography paper in 2004, the 35-year-old loves to demystify things, ride his bike, take photographs, sing, paint and draw. A school dropout, Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax V. Nandakumar spoke about his dreams of school, college and joining the Civil Services.

Though very slender in frame, he holds the attention of a large group of students with his talk. “When I talk to students, I tell them not to feel envious of those who have made it in life. Nothing is easy. It requires a lot of determination, training and a dream to achieve what you want,” V. Nandakumar said.

The ability to adapt to situations, courage to face the odds and the urge to achieve helped him when circumstances forced him to discontinue schooling after Standard 6. He worked at a mechanic shed, a photocopy shop and even sold lottery tickets.

“Though initially I liked being out of school with no homework or examinations, I started missing it all after sometime. I used to see my friends going to school while I would be working. A friend and neighbour Amalraj told me about taking exams as a private candidate after which I worked and studied simultaneously. I completed school at the same time as my former classmates,” he said.

As he had completed his schooling as a private student, no college would take him in. Then a friend told him about the government Dr. Ambedkar Arts and Science College in Vyasarpadi, where he joined the BA English Literature course. “When I joined, I was unable to frame proper sentences in English. But, at the end of the 3rd year, I was the only student to get through in my entire batch.”

While doing his masters at Presidency College, it was again another friend who told him that the Civil Services exam was a competitive exam. “Along with a group of friends, I

prepared for the examination. After my PG, I took the TNPSC Group II and Group I exams and got through. But I chose the Civil Services instead,” he explained.

Having a penchant to do things differently, as winners always do, he was the first to use caricatures, cartoons and plenty of pictorial representations in his answer sheets. “I never used any additional answer sheets,” Mr. Nandakumar recalled.

Preparing for the Civil Services gave him an opportunity to think and connect all that he learns with daily life. “When I learn something, I put it in my own words. Education should make us think,” said the IRS officer, who is now aspiring for the Indian Foreign Service. He has given his exam and is awaiting his results. “It is my father's dream and mine too.” (Courtesy : The Hindu dated – 27.02.2010)

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