INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Beyond the Transaction

Careers, Business Development & the Business of SME Payments — MBA Seminar Series Report

1	4-Party	7	100+
Distinguished Alumnus Speaker	Payment Model Explained	Themes Covered	Students in Attendance

Introduction

On 14th August 2026, the MBA (Day) Programme at IISWBM hosted Mr. Siddharth Pande, a proud alumnus of the Institute's 1999-2001 batch. The seminar wove together two threads that rarely get taught in the same room: the technical architecture behind everyday digital payments, and the practical, often unglamorous work of building a career in corporate India and beyond.

Rather than a one-way lecture, the session unfolded as a conversation - moving from how a card swipe or a UPI transfer actually clears behind the scenes, to how a fresh management graduate should think about their first ten years at work. The result was a session that grounded abstract fintech concepts in Mr. Pande's own field experience across India and South-East Asia.

THE SPEAKER

Siddharth Pande

Alumnus, IISWBM MBA Batch of 1999-2001, returning to share two decades of experience building payment businesses across Asia with the current MBA (Day) cohort.

Objectives of the Session

. **Demystify the payments industry -** Why friction-fee payments stay hidden to drive exponential growth.

. **Four-party model -** How customers , issuers, merchants, and networks collaborate to clear every transaction.

. **Regulatory change -** How evolving policies on UPI merchant charges impact the payments ecosystem.

. **Career strategies -** When to switch companies for rapid growth versus staying to build deep equity.

. **Career Geography-** how proximity to a company's headquarters and willingness to relocate shape access to opportunity.

. **Core Soft Skills-** self-presentation, communication, personal branding and resilience as the connective tissue of a corporate career.

Session Highlights

The discussion ranged across seven broad themes. Insights below draw on both the technical walkthrough of the payments business and the career guidance Mr. Pande shared through the course of the seminar.

1. Payments: An Industry Built to Be Invisible

A recurring idea anchored the session: payments work best when nobody notices them. Money should move safely and securely in the background, without the end user ever having to think about the mechanics. Counter-intuitively, this invisibility is exactly what has made payments one of the fastest-growing industries in the world - the entire value proposition rests on trust, speed and security rather than visibility.

> *"The best payments infrastructure is the one you never think about."*
> — Session theme, paraphrased

2. UPI, Merchant Charges & a Shifting Regulatory Landscape

UPI remains free to use, but a recent 2026 bill grants the government the legal authority to introduce merchant charges (MDR) in the future.

3. Field Lessons: Geography as a Career Variable

Diverse field experience builds adaptability, but positioning yourself near a company's headquarters maximizes networking and long-term career growth.

4. Two Career Strategies, Two Different Decades

Career planning was framed as evolving in phases:

- **Early career (roughly the first ten years):** switching organisations more frequently can pay off, since external moves often command a pay premium over internal progression.
- **Later career:** staying with a single organisation can build stability, credibility and consistency - provided the right roles and internal opportunities are actively pursued.

A related point: a person's college and academic domain matter more at the start of a career. Within the corporate world, these lines blur - roles increasingly overlap across domains, and with the right opportunities, professionals move fluidly between them.

5. AI, Personal Branding & the Discipline of Communication

Critically evaluate AI outputs to maintain your own clear voice, and actively use networks like LinkedIn to build strategic visibility.

6. The Soft Skills That Carry a Corporate Career

Corporate success relies heavily on self-presentation, clear communication, consistency, basic fraud awareness, and a thick-skinned resilience to criticism.

Glimpses of the Seminar

A full house, an engaged floor, and a speaker who kept the room talking - a look back at the afternoon in pictures.

Mr. Pande opens the session on payment ecosystems

The floor stays engaged through the session

A full house at the IISWBM seminar hall

A question from the floor on career strategy

Students and faculty with Mr. Siddharth Pande at the close of the seminar

Key Takeaways

. Payments succeed by staying invisible - safety, security and reliability matter more than visibility, which is exactly what makes the sector one of the fastest-growing in the world.

. The four-party model - Issuer, Consumer, Merchant and Network — is the backbone of every card or UPI transaction, with the network's core job being to guarantee success on both sides.

. Regulatory change is underway for UPI: government now holds the legal power to introduce merchant charges in future, though none has been imposed yet.

. Career location matters - proximity to a company's HQ can compound into more networking, exposure and salary growth over time.

. Career strategy should evolve: prioritise mobility and pay early on, prioritise stability once the right roles are secured.

. Field exposure across diverse geographies builds the kind of adaptability that classroom learning alone cannot.

. AI is a valuable tool, but professionals must retain their own judgement, verify its output, and communicate their conclusions with clarity.

. Personal branding - especially on platforms like LinkedIn - is now a legitimate career-growth lever, not an afterthought.

. Soft skills - self-presentation, communication, consistency and resilience - are as critical to corporate success as technical or domain expertise.

Conclusion

The seminar offered MBA (Day) students a well-rounded view of the payments and financial technology space - one that connected the technical machinery of B2B payment networks like Mastercard and UPI with grounded, real-world career advice. It underscored that success in this fast-growing industry rests not only on understanding how money moves safely and efficiently, but on how professionals position themselves: through clear communication, adaptability, resilience, and a willingness to keep learning.

Staying alert to regulatory shifts such as the evolving rules around UPI merchant charges, and pairing domain expertise with strong soft skills, emerged as the throughline for a successful career in business development, payments and financial technology. IISWBM thanks Mr. Siddharth Pande for generously sharing his time, field experience, and candour with the current batch.