



IAS Gurukul

Sociology Optional For UPSC CSE



by Pranay Aggarwal Sir

STUDY MATERIAL

UPSC Sociology Optional 2025 Paper I Previous Year Questions

Previous Year Questions · Paper I · 2025

<https://www.iasgurukul.com>

+91 9999693744 · +91 7042745191

mail@iasgurukul.com

UPSC Sociology Optional 2025 Paper I Previous Year Questions

Previous Year Questions · Paper I · 2025

SECTION—A

1. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each (10x5=50)

(a)

What is common sense? How are common knowledge and sociology related to each other? Explain.

10 Marks · Sociology the Discipline · Sociology and common sense

(b)

What is the relationship (similarities and differences) between sociology and history in terms of their area of study and methodology? Discuss

10 Marks · Sociology the Discipline · Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences

(c)

What is a variable in social research? What are their different types? Elaborate

10 Marks · Research Methods & Analysis · Variables, sampling, hypothesis, reliability and validity

(d)

Can Merton's reference group theory be relevant in understanding identity making' in digital world? Explain

10 Marks · Sociological Thinkers · Robert K Merton

(e)

Is the social stratification theory gender-blind? Elucidate

10 Marks · Stratification and Mobility · Theories of social stratification- Structural functionalist theory, Marxist theory, Weberian theory.

2.

(a)

20 marks

What is positivism? Critically analyze the major arguments against it.

20 Marks · Sociology As Science · Major theoretical strands of research methodology

(b)

20 marks

Highlight the main features of historical materialism as propounded by Marx. How far is this theory relevant in understanding contemporary societies? Explain.

20 Marks · Sociological Thinkers · Karl Marx- Historical Materialism, mode of production, alienation, class struggle.

(c)

10 marks

What do you mean by reliability? Discuss the importance of reliability in social science research.

10 Marks · Research Methods & Analysis · Variables, sampling, hypothesis, reliability and validity

3.

(a)

20 marks

Compare capability deprivation approach with that of social capital deprivation in understanding chronic poverty.

20 Marks · Stratification and Mobility · Concepts- equality, inequality, hierarchy, exclusion, poverty and deprivation

(b)

20 marks

Are pressure groups a threat to or a necessary element of democracy? Explain with suitable illustrations.

20 Marks · Politics and Society · Power elite, bureaucracy, pressure groups, and political parties.

(c)

10 marks

What is hypothesis? Critically evaluate the significance of hypothesis in social research.

10 Marks · Research Methods & Analysis · Variables, sampling, hypothesis, reliability and validity

4.

(a)

20 marks

Give an account of the recent trends of marriage in the Indian context. How are these different from traditional practices?

20 Marks · System of Kinship · Family, household, marriage

(b)

20 marks

What would you identify as the similarities and differences in the elite theories of Mosca, Michels and Pareto? Discuss their main/crucial issues.

20 Marks · Politics and Society · Power elite, bureaucracy, pressure groups, and political parties.

(c)

10 marks

Critically analyze the sociological significance of informal sectors in the economy of developing societies.

10 Marks · Works and Economic Life · Formal and informal organisation of work

SECTION—B

5. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each (10x5=50)

(a)

In what way is the scope of sociology unique? Explain.

10 Marks · Sociology the Discipline · Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences

(b)

Does the structural-functionalist perspective on social stratification promote a status quo? Give reasons for your answer.

10 Marks · Stratification and Mobility · Theories of social stratification- Structural functionalist theory, Marxist theory, Weberian theory.

(c)

Do you think that formal workspaces are free of gender bias? Argue your case

10 Marks · Works and Economic Life · Formal and informal organisation of work

(d)

How does Weber's Verstehen address the objectivity-subjectivity debate in sociology.

10 Marks · Sociological Thinkers · Max Weber- Social action, ideal types, authority, bureaucracy, protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism

(e)

To what extent can education and skill development be an agent of social change? Critically analyze.

10 Marks · Education System & Social change · Education and social change

6.

(a)

20 marks

What is science? Do you think that the methods used in natural sciences can be applied to sociology?

Give reasons for your answer.

20 Marks · Sociology As Science · Science, scientific method and critique.

(b)

20 marks

What do you understand by gender-based domestic division of labour? Is it undergoing a change in the wake of increasing participation of women in formal employment? Clarify your answer with illustrations

20 Marks · System of Kinship · Patriarchy and sexual division of labour

(c)

10 marks

How can you assess the significance of social movements in the digital era? Explain.

10 Marks · Politics and Society · Protest, agitation, social movements, collective action, revolution.

7.

(a)

20 marks

What is sampling in the context of social research? Discuss different forms of sampling with their relative advantages and disadvantages.

20 Marks · Research Methods & Analysis · Variables, sampling, hypothesis, reliability and validity

(b)

20 marks

How do Marx, Weber and Durkheim differ in understanding religion? Explain

20 Marks · Sociological Thinkers · Emile Durkheim- Division of labour, social fact, suicide, religion and society.

(c)

10 marks

What is the nature of relationship between science and religion in modern society? Analyze with suitable examples.

10 Marks · Religion and Society · Religion in modern society: religion and science, secularization, religious revivalism, fundamentalism.

8.

(a)

20 marks

What do you understand by sustainable development? Discuss the elements of sustainable development as proposed in the UNDP's Sustainable Development Goals Report-2015.

20 Marks · Education System & Social change · Development and dependency

(b)

20 marks

grassroot level social changes? Discuss.

20 Marks · Politics and Society · How do Civil Society Organizations' such as NGOs' and Self-Help Groups' contribute to

(c)

10 marks

In what way does queer kinship challenge the traditional kinship system? Substantiate by giving illustrations.

10 Marks · System of Kinship · Family, household, marriage
