



## ANALYSIS & APPROCH: IAS SOCIOLOGY MAINS PAPER 2010

- Ms. Smita Parashar ( Expert of Sociology )

The Sociology paper in the Civil Services (Mains) Examination, 2010, evoked a near universal response of being 'vague', 'off-beat' and 'lengthy', by a majority of the aspirants. Keeping in line, with the "changed-pattern", in other optional subjects and General Studies, Sociology did leave a number of students, feeling dissatisfied with their performance and a bit with their preparation. However, the paper it can be said was simply an attempt to test a student's '**sociological understanding**' of contemporary issues.

In a bid to help aspirants, with Sociology optional, to better understand the 'demands' of the paper and accordingly prepare themselves better for the coming examination, an analysis of Sociology Paper I, II (Mains), 2010 has been undertaken.

The Analysis has been done along three important **dimensions**;

1. The shift in the **area/portions** of the **syllabus**, from which the questions were formulated.
2. The change in the **manner** the **questions** were asked, as compared to previous years.
3. The **format** of the paper, in terms of the distribution of questions.

### PAPER-I

**DIMENSION 1:** The shift in the **area/portions** of the **syllabus**, from which the questions were formulated

2010, sociology question paper, saw a maximum number of questions being asked from Unit 6. WORKS AND ECONOMIC LIFE. (105 Marks), where as no single question was asked from the unit in 2009.

This however does not reflect the capacity of the examiner to surprise students, rather is a reflection of the fact that Sociology, being a 'study of society', the paper would have questions more from areas, which have an increasing relevance in today's life. For ex. Economic Sub-system and its growing influence in the contemporary society and the problems and opportunities associated with it.

Q.3.(a) *Work in capitalism is reduced.....* (30)

The question deals with the fast spreading phenomena of 'alienation' and 'commodification' of labour in today's increasingly money-driven society, in the back-ground of a globalizing economy. At the same time, as a result of the pervasive spread of technology, there is now greater scope for

‘specialisation of labour’ allowing it to be engaged in creatively-fulfilling work, in the ever increasing sub sectors of the economy.

Q.5.(a) **Feminisation of labour.....** (15)

The question requires greater emphasis on the phenomena of ‘migration’ and its impact on the rural and urban economy. Also the status of women, with regard to levels of literacy and acquisition of technical skills vis-à-vis their position in the economic system.

Similarly, **Unit 7** POLITICS AND SOCIETY, had a total of around 75 marks allotted to it this year, as compared to around 40 marks in 2009.

The rest of the Units did not vary much in terms of weightage of marks allotted to them.

<b>PAPER-I</b>			
<b>(Topics)</b>	<b>Marks (2010)</b>	<b>Marks (2009)</b>	
1. SOCIOLOGY – THE DISCIPLINE	30	20	
2. SOCIOLOGY – AS SCIENCE	30	50	
3. RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYSIS	30	30	
4. SOCIOLOGICAL THINKERS	90	160	
5. STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY	60	30	
6. WORKS AND ECONOMIC LIFE	105	—	
7. POLITICS AND SOCIETY	75	40	
8. RELIGION AND SOCIETY	60	80	
9. SYSTEMS OF KINSHIP	15	80	
10. SOCIAL CHANGE IN MODERN SOCIETY	15	30	

The seemingly most important section of Paper I; **Unit 4**, SOCIOLOGICAL THINKERS did see a decline in terms of marks allotted to it. However, this being a **core** area of Sociology, does not reflect much, besides the liberty awarded to the examiner, to bring about certain variations in the paper, every year. Sociological thinkers, forms the “intellectual base” of sociological knowledge, which helps in understanding the different units (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) in the correct perspective. It also can be applied in Paper II, where and when required.

**DIMENSION 2 :**The ‘manner’ of framing questions, saw a ‘**marked shift**’ from those of previous years.

The direct, straight forward questions generally quite common in sociology paper, were almost conspicuous by their absence.

2009. Q.1(c). **Comparison between sociology and Economics.**

2010 Q.2(a). **Sociology without history is.....Elaborate.**

Most importantly, the questions were **applied** questions. The questions require the students to do some out-of-the-box thinking and at the same time, steer clear of the danger of sounding too

general. Current relevant examples along with some thinkers view, need to be carefully balanced. For e.g.:

Q.2.(b) **Examine the social dimensions**..... (30)

This question requires emphasis on the social dimensions of religious revivalism/fundamentalism, in the context of globalization:

- Fast paced pervasive social-change in all spheres of life and inability of few sections to keep pace with it , resulting in their desire to go back to the days of relative ‘ stability ’ and ‘ uniformity ’ – Religious Fundamentalism
- Growing ‘cultural hegemony’ of the popular culture of the western society, leading to feelings of insecurity among certain sections and groups – Religious Fundamentalism
- Growing disparities, in the life-style of different classes and groups in society. The increasing affluence of certain sections fuelling feelings of relative – deprivation – Religious Revivalism
- Phenomena of ‘de-secularisation’ , as seen in the growing number of cults and sects, in modern times, despite the growing influence of science and technology : Religious Revivalism
- Post-modernist thinkers.

The **application aspect** was also greatly evident in the “selection of topics” from the different units. There was greater emphasis on contemporary issues , concepts, rather than just the theories.

#### **SOCIAL CHANGE:**

2009 Q.6(a). Comment on the critics charge that Immanuel Wallerstein’s dependency theory is simplistic and wrong.

2010 Q.7(b). Analyze the social dimensions of displacement..... .

#### **POLITICS AND SOCIETY:**

2009 Q.5(a). C.W. Mill’s Power Elite.

Q.5(d). Structure of a Social Movement.

2010 Q.5(b). Identity Politics

Q.8(a). Evaluate how civil society and democracy.....

#### **SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY:**

2009 Q.3(b). What are the reasons for calling Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore’s theory of social stratification, a functional theory.

2010 Q.1(d). Ethnicity and development.

Q.4 (b). Examine how open and closed systems of stratification.....societies.

The questions from Unit 3, RESEARCH METHODS, would to an extent, always remain a little unpredictable, as the sub-topic – ‘Qualitative and quantitative methods’; is a broad and encompassing one.

**Q.1(a). Content Analysis.**

This is a research tool in Social sciences. It is a quantitative methodology. It is often used to bring greater objectivity as opposed to evaluation of any kind of data.

**DIMENSION 3:** The **format** of the paper, in terms of the distribution of questions.

The greatest challenge, however, lay in the **'format / pattern'** of the paper. The questions had been distributed in such a manner, that aspirants can now ill-afford to do selective preparation.

Q.2. SOCIOLOGY – THE DISCIPLINE + RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Q.3. THINKERS + STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY

Q.7. POLITICS AND SOCIETY + SOCIAL CHANGE + WORKS AND ECONOMIC LIFE.

Q.8. POLITICS AND SOCIETY + THINKERS

Moreover, whatever little scope there remains to be selective, that gets little narrowed down, considering the manner in which many questions have been framed or posed. Where familiarity with a topic and the ability to handle a particular question, cannot be considered to be one and the same thing.

Above all, a complete coverage of the syllabus, helps in developing an in-depth knowledge of the subject, gives conceptual clarity which would go a long way in enhancing the quality of the answers written by the student in the examination.

## PAPER-II

**DIMENSION 1:** The shift in the **area/portions** of the **syllabus**, from which the questions were formulated.

In Paper-II, one can easily conclude from the distribution of marks, that with slight variations, within the **3 sections**, broadly the weightage given to each section remained the same, as compared to the previous year.

### PAPER-II

	2010 ( Marks )	2009 ( Marks )
<b>A. INDIAN SOCIETY:</b>		
(i) Perspectives on the Study of Indian Society	50	80
(ii) Impact of Colonial Rule on Indian Society	20	20
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	70	100
<b>B. SOCIAL STRUCTURE:</b>		
(i) Rural and Agrarian Social Structure	30	—
(ii) Caste System	80	30
(iii) Tribal Communities in India	—	—
(iv) Social Classes in India	—	20
(v) Systems of Kinship in India	20	60
(vi) Religion and Society	20	30
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	150	140
<b>C. SOCIAL CHANGES IN INDIA:</b>		
(i) Visions of Social Change in India	—	20
(ii) Rural and Agrarian Transformation in India	—	50
(iii) Industrialization and Urbanisation in India	80	50
(iv) Politics and Society	50	—
(v) Social Movements in Modern India	50	30
(vi) Population Dynamics	50	50
(vii) Challenges of Social Transformation	30	60
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	260	260

The sub-unit; **Perspectives** on the study of Indian society, is an important one, similar to ‘Sociological Thinkers’ in Paper I. An understanding of the Perspective and the Thinkers, under them is important to handle questions from this section and as well as some application of it may be required in **Unit B: Social Structure** and **Unit C: Social Change**, if necessary.

**Q.4(b). How far the structure functional..... Indian society. (30)**

The question required an analysis of the utility and limitations of the structural functional perspective in understanding changes:

- The structural – functional perspective with its emphasis on ‘complex social relationships’ and ‘functions’ performed by different sub-systems of the society, can be helpful in studying the ‘changing role-relationships’ and also the ‘changing’ functions of different social structures of the Indian society; e.g. villages; caste; class; kinship; political structure.
- The initiator of this perspective in Indian sociology, M.N. Srinivas’ methodology of ‘field-study’, has further helped in understanding the ‘processes’ of social change occurring at different levels of village studies, caste relationships.
- The Perspective (M.N. Srinivas) has contributed ‘Concepts’ like Westernisation, Sanskritisation, Modernisation, in understanding the nature of social change, in contemporary Indian society.

**Limitations:**

- However, the perspective mainly sheds light on social changes occurring at the ‘micro-level’ and not ‘macro-level’ changes.
- It is difficult to ‘generalize’ the findings on the whole of the Indian society.
- The perspective with its emphasis on ‘functions’ over-looks completely the role of ‘conflict’ in the form of movement / protests in bringing about social-change.

In **Unit B**, Social structure, no questions from the sub-unit; Tribal communities in Indian society, have been asked in the past two years. However, it should not lead to neglect or overlooking of the topic, as the topic is very contemporary, due to issues of displacement and environment involved.

In **Unit C**, Social change; almost equal importance has been given to the different sub-units and the aggregate of marks allotted to the Unit is maximum, as compared to the other two units. This again is a reflection of the fact that ‘social-change’ is an important and core area of study, in Sociology. And Indian society being in a ‘stage of transition’, changes occurring in different segments of the Indian society, demands special attention and focus from a student of sociology.

**DIMENSION 2 :**The 'manner' of framing questions, saw a 'marked shift' from those of Previous years.

As far as the 'framing' of the questions are concerned, questions in Paper II, have always been, 'implicitly', more on the applied side. And that exercise, continued this year too.

**Q.5(a). Factors responsible for increasing..... Separate states. 20.**

This question deals with the growing phenomena of 'regionalism' fuelled by factors like;

- Backwardness of certain regions leading to feelings of 'exclusion' and 'deprivation' among people of those region – Telengana.
- Cultural affinity – Harit Pradesh, Uttaranchal.
- Ethnic Identity – Bodoland, Gorkhaland
- Tribal Identity – Jharkhand.
- Inter – regional disparity on the rise due to certain neo-liberal policies of the political system leading to feelings of 'relative-deprivation' among certain sections.

**Q.2(b). Linkages between Patriarchy and honour-killings.**

The question requires linking-up of the two concepts patriarchy and honour-killing.

- Patriarchy is an entrenched value in the cultural system of Indian society, which defines the boundaries of behaviour, customs, beliefs, values and norms to be followed by the women in Indian society.
- Honour-killing is a form of violence against women. Acceptance of violence in different forms against womenis, a corollary of patriarchal values, at times.
- Transgression of these boundaries by women in changing social-cultural milieu, co-existence of tradition and modernity can broadly be the factors behind honour-killing in Indian society.

Again the 'manner' in which the questions were framed, the greatest challenge remains to write an answer with a sociological perspective and not to sound too general in one's approach.

**Q.8(b). Highlight the important.....of inter-caste conflict in India.**

This question should emphasise on four important dimensions of inter-caste conflict in India;

- Exploitation, deprivation, subordination
  - upper castes vs lower castes ( mainly schedule castes)
- Assertion by upper castes
  - upper castes vs intermediate castes mainly upper backwards (y Brahmins, Rajputs, Bhumihars against Yadavs, Kurmi - Bihar, U.P.)
- Caste-class nexus
  - castes conflicts mainly linked to land – ownership in rural areas. E.g. M.C.C. in rural parts of Bihar against upper castes (land-owning castes).
- Castes acting a pressure-group
  - In the context of democracy and competition for economic opportunities, to acquire political and economic power.

**DIMENSION 3:** The **format** of the paper, in terms of the distribution of questions.

Considering the current 'pattern/format' of the paper, an aspirant cannot afford to be selective in preparation. As was evident, a question mostly included questions from two sections combined. Besides, understanding Indian sociology without reading the Indian sociological thinkers, Indian social structure and social change would only leave 'gaps' in one's knowledge base.

In an overall analysis of the Sociology 2010 ( Mains ) paper , one can say that the ' issues' / ' topics' were basically those with which we are all mostly familiar with , as aspirants of Civil Services , but only need to look at them with a ' sociological perspective'.

This 'sociological perspective' comes unconsciously to an aspirant, who has covered the syllabus well, has understood the concepts properly and can most importantly analyze the questions well.

All that needs to be done is to read basic books of Sociology, a reading of all the topics in the syllabus so that one is aware of all the concepts and practice writing answers which would in the course of time , organise and consolidate the knowledge. This would greatly enhance the ability of the aspirant to deal with any 'shift/change of pattern' in the forthcoming examination.

- 
- **Sociology IAS Mains: Topic wise reference Book & Syllabus**  
Download PDF file (5 Pages) : <http://tinyurl.com/32qpjna>
  - **Sociology IAS Mains: Useful Resource (Key Books, Question Trend Analysis & Strategy – Guidelines)**  
Link at: <http://wp.me/p49IH-1dk>
  - **Interactive Sociology Mains Test Series 2011 under the Guidance of expert**  
Download Programme Structure: <http://wp.me/p49IH-1u6>
  - **Interactive Sociology Mains Study Material under the guidance of expert**  
Download detail at : <http://bit.ly/cpWPPo>
- 

## INTERACTIVE DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMME

### [ STUDY MATERIAL & MAINS TEST SERIES ]

*UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF EXPERTS (Expert Guidance, Feedback & Discussion)*

# General Studies

# Sociology

# Public Administration

# Geography

# Philosophy

# Psychology

# Hindi Lit.

REGISTRATION OPEN

**-THE TEAM VISION IAS -**

Contact No. : 09650617807 , 09968029039

Email : [ajay\\_uor@yahoo.com](mailto:ajay_uor@yahoo.com)