



ANALYSIS & APPROCH: IAS PHILOSOPHY MAINS PAPER 2010

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Philosophy is one of the popular optional subjects for the civil services examination. Infact, strategically, it is one of the safest subjects for the said exam. It can help in developing candidate's perspective and approach in the essay paper and also in the personality test. It is often seen that philosophy is considered as an abstract subjects which do not have any practical relevance . But this is not correct as Philosophy is very analytical and speculative which makes it very interesting. It has become very popular in last decade as some outstanding results like Pradip Rajpuruhit (CSE 2004), Govind Jaiswal (CSE 2006), Kiran Kaushal (CSE 2008), Prakash Maurya (CSE 2009), Aditya Singh (CSE 2010 of Vision IAS Institute under Anoop Kumar Singh) were in limelight with Philosophy as optional subject.

Analysis of Philosophy syllabus:-

The syllabus of Philosophy is more clear and is also brief in comparison with the syllabus of other subjects. Three months are enough for systematically studying the whole subject. It is said that, skill of writing a good essay plays a key role in the merit list. Philosophy can be helping element in this regard also. In the subject matter of Philosophy, gender equality, Sarvodya, Secularism, Religion and Mortality, Democracy, Existentialism etc. are studied. This provides a bundle of good and effective thoughts and sufficient amount of facts for writing essay in a refined and logical manner. It is noteworthy that atleast one philosophical or ethical essay is asked every year in civil services (Mains) exam.

Philosophy is a subject of ideas. Here ideas are interlinked with each other. So, comparative study in Philosophy makes it easy to understand. Like other subjects, Philosophy also has two papers. Each paper consists of two parts – Sections A and B.

Paper – 1

Section A: Western Philosophy

On the basis of development of thoughts, this can be divided into 3 {three} stages.

They are

- 1] Greek Philosophy** - Plato and Aristotle.
- 2] Modern Western Philosophy** - Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant and Hegel.
- 3] Contemporary Western Philosophy** - Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein, Ayer, Husserl, Sartre, Quine, Strawson.

Section B : Indian Philosophy

As far as Indian Philosophy is concerned, nine schools of thought are in the syllabus along with Aurobindo's Philosophy of integral yoga.

Paper – 2

Section A : Socio – Political Philosophy

In this part, we have 10 {ten} topics which include social and political ideas, sovereignty, individual and state, forms of Government, political ideologies, humanism, secularism, multiculturalism, crime and punishment, development and social progress, gender discrimination, caste discrimination.

Section B : Philosophy of Religion

This part of the second paper is "Philosophy of Religion" in which the theories related to Religion are comparatively analyzed by studying both Indian and Western philosophies. It has ten topics – notions of God, Proofs for God's existence, problem of evil, soul, reason, revelation and faith, religious experiences, religion without God, religion and morality, Problem of absolute truth, religious language.

Methodology : How to study in respect of changing trends with an analysis of 2010 (Mains) paper

For preparing Philosophy, extensive study and conceptual grasp should be made. For answering its questions, one should have deep knowledge of all its parts and should develop the ability of on-spot smartness during exams. This is because Philosophy has a systematic development. Any Philosopher first refutes the other ideas and then argues in the support of his own thought. So far making one's answer a critical one, one must be well acquainted with the previous ideas and the later ideas. This can only make one's answer in the right direction and according to the question.

Observations from 2010 Paper (Mains)

There has been a great change in the 2010 Mains Paper in terms of replacing the descriptive and straightforward questions by comparative, analytical ones and different tail-parts are added in a particular question. So, intelligent time-management is very crucial. Now, opinion based questions, relating application to theory linking multiple aspects of an issue and interlinking issues to contemporary developments and evolving landscapes have been asked as seen in Mains 2009 and 2010 (Philosophy, Part 2 : Section A). So, mains exam has become creative and innovative and throws new changes making it more dynamically challenging than as it was in previous days.

Apart from these, the following changes in 2010 year's mains paper can be observed

First, applied nature.

Second, lengthy (more number of questions for same marks). So, speed has to be increased in writing the paper in the Exam Hall.

Third, 60 markers have taken a backseat – more 30 + 30 or 20 + 20 + 20 questions.

Fourth, in questions 1 and 5 which are compulsory in both papers 1 and 2, a new category of questions with marks $4 * 15 = 60$ (150 words limit) is introduced. Till 2009, the old pattern of $20 * 3 = 60$ marks (200 words limit) in these questions have been followed. Moreover, in 2010 paper, all short notes are asked to be attempted without any choices, unlike in earlier years.

Distribution of Marks

Paper 1 : Section A

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Marks</i>
1.	Greek Philosophy	15
2.	Modern Western Philosophy	110
3.	Contemporary Western Philosophy	115

Section B

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Marks</i>
1.	Vedanta	60
2.	Buddhism	70
3.	Jainism	30
4.	Aurobindo's Philosophy	15
5.	Nyaya	65
6.	Samkhya	15
7.	Carvaka	20

Topics not given :-

In Paper – 1 (Section A) :-

No Questions were asked from Plato, Descartes, Locke, Hegel, Russell, Later Wittgenstein, Quine chapters.

In Section B :-

Schools of Buddhism, Vaishesika, Yoga, Mimamsa – these topics were not asked.

Paper – 2 : Section A

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Marks</i>
1.	Liberty and equality	15
2.	Sovereignty – Kautilya, Bodin	35
3.	Individual and State	35
4.	Forms of Government Democracy	20
5.	Political ideologies - Socialism	20
6.	Humanism and social progress	15
7.	Crime and punishment – capital punishment, genocide	40
8.	Gender discrimination	40
9.	Caste discrimination	20

Section B

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Marks</i>
1.	Religion without God	15
2.	Problem of evil	15
3.	Soul – rebirth, liberation	75
4.	Proofs for God's existence – contingent , causal, teleological	60
5.	Religion and morality	15
6.	Religious experience	20
7.	Religious language	20
8.	Problem of absolute truth, religious pluralism	20

Topics not given

In Paper – 2 : Section A :-

No questions on justice, Austin and Laski's theories of sovereignty, monarchy, theocracy, anarchism, Marxism, secularism, multiculturalism, corruption, Gandhi and Ambedkar's views on caste discrimination.

In Section B :-

No questions on faith, reason, revelation, theories of religious language, Vedantic conception of moksha.

Conclusion – Focus for Mains 2011

After thorough analysis of 2010 (Mains) Philosophy Paper, we can say that, the areas which are not touched should be given due weightage along with given ones in 2011 Mains. Comparative analysis of the topics as given in 2009 and 2010 papers should also be followed. Thus, to conclude, we can say that, one's accumulated knowledge, presentation style, examples, reference and relevance within the prescribed word limit can help to get good marks (350+) in Philosophy Paper in Mains (written) Examination.

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