

UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination, 2025
SOCIOLOGY (OPTIONAL) PAPER I

Time allowed: Three hours | Maximum marks: 250

Question Nos. 1 and 5 are compulsory. Out of the remaining, answer any THREE, selecting at least ONE from each section. Marks for each question are indicated against it.

SECTION A

Q1. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each: 10×5=50

- (a) What is common sense? How are common knowledge and sociology related to each other? Explain. (10 marks)
- (b) What is the relationship (similarities and differences) between sociology and history in terms of their area of study and methodology? Discuss. (10 marks)
- (c) What is a variable in social research? What are their different types? Elaborate. (10 marks)
- (d) Can Merton's reference group theory be relevant in understanding 'identity making' in digital world? Explain. (10 marks)
- (e) Is the social stratification theory gender-blind? Elucidate. (10 marks)

Q2.

- (a) What is positivism? Critically analyze the major arguments against it. (20 marks)
- (b) Highlight the main features of historical materialism as propounded by Marx. How far is this theory relevant in understanding contemporary societies? Explain. (20 marks)
- (c) What do you mean by reliability? Discuss the importance of reliability in social science research. (10 marks)

Q3.

- (a) Compare capability deprivation approach with that of social capital deprivation in understanding chronic poverty. (20 marks)
- (b) Are pressure groups a threat to or a necessary element of democracy? Explain with suitable illustrations. (20 marks)
- (c) What is hypothesis? Critically evaluate the significance of hypothesis in social research. (10 marks)

Q4.

- (a) Give an account of the recent trends of marriage in the Indian context. How are these different from traditional practices? (20 marks)
- (b) 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)
- (c) Critically analyze the sociological significance of informal sector in the economy of developing societies. (10 marks)

SECTION B

Q5. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each: 10×5=50

- (a) In what way is the scope of sociology unique? Explain. (10 marks)
- (b) Does the structural-functionalist perspective on social stratification promote a status quo? Give reasons for your answer. (10 marks)

- (c) Do you think that the formal workspaces are free of gender bias? Argue your case. (10 marks)
- (d) How does Weber's Verstehen address the objectivity-subjectivity debate in sociology? (10 marks)
- (e) To what extent can education and skill development be an agent of social change? Critically analyze. (10 marks)

Q6.

- (a) 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)
- (b) 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)
- (c) How can you assess the significance of social movements in the digital era? Explain. (10 marks)

Q7.

- (a) What is sampling in the context of social research? Discuss different forms of sampling with their relative advantages and disadvantages. (20 marks)
- (b) How do theories of Marx, Weber and Durkheim differ in understanding religion? Explain. (20 marks)
- (c) What is the nature of relationship between science and religion in modern society? Analyze with suitable examples. (10 marks)

Q8.

- (a) 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)
- (b) How do 'Civil Society Organizations' such as 'NGOs' and 'Self-Help Groups' contribute to grassroot level social changes? Discuss. (20 marks)
- (c) In what way does queer kinship challenge the traditional kinship system? Substantiate by giving illustrations. (10 marks)