

UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination, 2026
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) In what ways do class and caste intersect and overlap in shaping social structure? (10 marks)
- (b) Critically examine the position of women in the informal economy. (10 marks)
- (c) Discuss the role of geographical factors in social change and development. (10 marks)
- (d) Although sociology, as a subject of study, overarches all disciplines in social sciences yet it maintains its distinctiveness. Comment. (10 marks)
- (e) Explain in brief the relationship between social movement, collective action and revolution in bringing about social and political changes. (10 marks)

Q2.

- (a) Describe the impact of capitalist mode of production on society. (20 marks)
- (b) Differentiate between social hierarchy and social exclusion and substantiate your answer with reference to the caste system. (20 marks)
- (c) 'Data without theory is blind and theory without data is empty.' Comment. (10 marks)

Q3.

- (a) Discuss the relationship between religion and science in modern society. Do they necessarily remain in conflict? (20 marks)
- (b) Is 'interpretativism' more effective than 'positivism' in analysing social reality? Discuss. (20 marks)
- (c) How does Émile Durkheim conceptualize religion as a 'social fact'? Explain. (10 marks)

Q4.

- (a) Elaborate major sociological theories of power. How do power elite shape the political process in modern societies? (20 marks)
- (b) Evaluate the socio-economic impacts of migration on rural households. (20 marks)
- (c) 'The methods of sociology are inadequate in understanding the complex social phenomena.' Discuss. (10 marks)

SECTION B

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

- (a) The major challenge for sociology researchers is to analyze social reality objectively. Critically analyze. (10 marks)
- (b) Explain the concept of 'definition of the situation' and its significance in sociology. (10 marks)
- (c) In what way the concept of 'patriarchal bargain' be applied to the institution of marriage? Comment. (10 marks)

- (d) How does Max Weber's 'theory of authority' shape bureaucracy? Analyse. (10 marks)
- (e) How do different theories explain social dimensions of social movements? Discuss. (10 marks)

Q6.

- (a) Discuss the intellectual origins of sociology and the historical antecedents of its evolution as a distinct field of study. (20 marks)
- (b) Critically analyse the mode of production debate from different perspectives. (20 marks)
- (c) How does the rise of new 'cults' and 'sects' influence intercaste relations? (10 marks)

Q7.

- (a) Compare and critically assess 'the grounded theory' with 'theory-driven research method' in sociology. (20 marks)
- (b) According to Weber how do class, status and power interact to produce and sustain social inequality? (20 marks)
- (c) Compare the social organisation of work in industrial capitalism and platform capitalism. (10 marks)

Q8.

- (a) How are the concepts of nation, state and citizenship interrelated in a democracy? Elaborate. (20 marks)
- (b) Critically evaluate the relevance of the cyclical theory of social change in understanding contemporary societies. (20 marks)
- (c) Discuss the significance and limitations of 'intersectionality' in social research. (10 marks)