



UPSC 2025 MAINS (OPTIONAL)

SOCIOLOGY- PAPER I

Q1. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each:

(10 x 5 = 50)

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

Q2.

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

Q3.

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



Q4.

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

SECTION B

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

- (a) In what way is the scope of sociology unique? Explain. 10
- (b) Does the structural-functionalist perspective on social stratification promote a status quo? Give reasons for your answer. 10
- (c) Do you think that the formal workspaces are free of gender bias? Argue your case. 10
- (d) How does Weber's Verstehen address the objectivity-subjectivity debate in sociology? 10
- (e) To what extent can education and skill development be an agent of social change? Critically analyze. 10

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



Q7.

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

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