

UPSC SOCIOLOGY OPTIONAL SYLLABUS 2026



Complete Syllabus
Paper I & Paper II



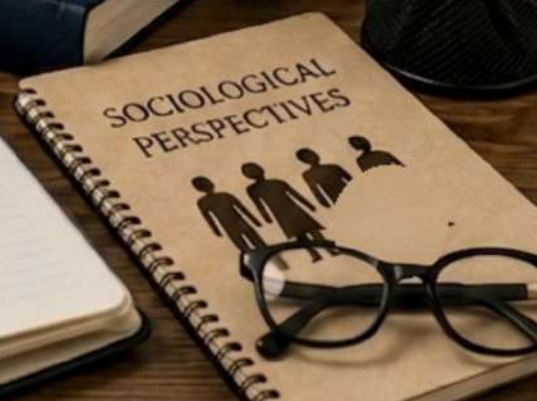
Detailed Topics
Unit-wise Breakdown



Exam Pattern
Marks & Structure



Preparation Tips
Strategy & Resources



SOCIOLOGY SYLLABUS

Paper I

FUNDAMENTALS OF SOCIOLOGY

1. Sociology - The Discipline:

- a) Modernity and social changes in Europe and emergence of Sociology.
- b) Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences.
- c) Sociology and common sense.

2. Sociology as Science:

- a) Science, scientific method and critique.
- b) Major theoretical strands of research methodology.
- c) Positivism and its critique.
- d) Fact value and objectivity.
- e) Non-positivist methodologies.

3. Research Methods and Analysis:

- a) Qualitative and quantitative methods.
- b) Techniques of data collection.
- c) Variables, sampling, hypothesis, reliability and validity.

4. Sociological Thinkers:

- a) Karl Marx - Historical materialism, mode of production, alienation, class struggle.
- b) Emile Durkheim - Division of labour, social fact, suicide, religion and society.
- c) Max Weber - Social action, ideal types, authority, bureaucracy, protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.
- d) Talcott Parsons - Social system, pattern variables.
- e) Robert K. Merton - Latent and manifest functions, conformity and deviance, reference groups.
- f) Mead - Self and identity.

5. Stratification and Mobility :

- a) Concepts - equality, inequality, hierarchy, exclusion, poverty and deprivation.
- b) Theories of social stratification - Structural functionalist theory, Marxist theory, Weberian theory.
- c) Dimensions - Social stratification of class, status groups, gender, ethnicity and race.

- d) Social mobility - open and closed systems, types of mobility, sources and causes of mobility.

6. Works and Economic Life :

- a) Social organisation of work in different types of society - slave society, feudal society, industrial capitalist society.
- b) Formal and informal organisation of work.
- c) Labour and society.

7. Politics and Society:

- a) Sociological theories of power.
- b) Power elite, bureaucracy, pressure groups and political parties.
- c) Nation, state, citizenship, democracy, civil society, ideology.
- d) Protest, agitation, social movements, collective action, revolution.

8. Religion and Society :

- a) Sociological theories of religion.
- b) Types of religious practices: animism, monism, pluralism, sects, cults.
- c) Religion in modern society: religion and science, secularisation, religious revivalism, fundamentalism.

9. Systems of Kinship:

- a) Family, household, marriage.
- b) Types and forms of family.
- c) Lineage and descent.
- d) Patriarchy and sexual division of labour.
- e) Contemporary trends.

10. Social Change in Modern Society :

- a) Sociological theories of social change.
- b) Development and dependency.
- c) Agents of social change.
- d) Education and social change.
- e) Science, technology and social change.

Paper II

INDIAN SOCIETY : STRUCTURE AND CHANGE

A. Introducing Indian Society :

(i) Perspectives on the Study of Indian Society :

- a) Indology (G.S. Ghure).
- b) Structural functionalism (M. N. Srinivas).
- c) Marxist sociology (A. R. Desai).

(ii) Impact of colonial rule on Indian society :

- a) Social background of Indian nationalism.
- b) Modernization of Indian tradition.
- c) Protests and movements during the colonial period.
- d) Social reforms.

B. Social Structure:

(i) Rural and Agrarian Social Structure:

- a) The idea of Indian village and village studies.
- b) Agrarian social structure—evolution of land tenure system, land reforms.

(ii) Caste System:

- a) Perspectives on the study of caste systems: G. S. Ghurye, M. N. Srinivas, Louis Dumont, Andre Beteille.
- b) Features of caste system.
- c) Untouchability-forms and perspectives

(iii) Tribal Communities in India:

- a) Definitional problems.
- b) Geographical spread.
- c) Colonial policies and tribes.
- d) Issues of integration and autonomy.

(iv) Social Classes in India:

- a) Agrarian class structure.
- b) Industrial class structure.
- c) Middle classes in India.

(v) Systems of Kinship in India:

- a) Lineage and descent in India.
- b) Types of kinship systems.
- c) Family and marriage in India.
- d) Household dimensions of the family.
- e) Patriarchy, entitlements and sexual division of labour.

(vi) Religion and Society :

- a) Religious communities in India.
- b) Problems of religious minorities.

C. Social Changes in India:

(i) Visions of Social Change in India:

- a) Idea of development planning and mixed economy.
- b) Constitution, law and social change.
- c) Education and social change.

(ii) Rural and Agrarian Transformation in India:

- a) Programmes of rural development, Community Development Programme, cooperatives, poverty alleviation schemes.
- b) Green revolution and social change.
- c) Changing modes of production in Indian agriculture.
- d) Problems of rural labour, bondage, migration.

(iii) Industrialization and Urbanisation in India:

- a) Evolution of modern industry in India.
- b) Growth of urban settlements in India.
- c) Working class: structure, growth, class mobilisation.
- d) Informal sector, child labour.
- e) Slums and deprivation in urban areas.

(iv) Politics and Society :

- a) Nation, democracy and citizenship.
- b) Political parties, pressure groups, social and political elite.
- c) Regionalism and decentralisation of power.
- d) Secularization.

(v) Social Movements in Modern India :

- a) Peasants and farmers movements.
- b) Women's movement.
- c) Backward classes & Dalit movements.
- d) Environmental movements.
- e) Ethnicity and Identity movements.

(vi) Population Dynamics :

- a) Population size, growth, composition and distribution.
- b) Components of population growth: birth, death, migration.
- c) Population Policy and family planning.
- d) Emerging issues: ageing, sex ratios, child and infant mortality, reproductive health.

(vii) Challenges of Social Transformation :

- a) Crisis of development : displacement, environmental problems and sustainability.
- b) Poverty, deprivation and inequalities.
- c) Violence against women.
- d) Caste conflicts.
- e) Ethnic conflicts, communalism, religious revivalism.
- f) Illiteracy and disparities in education