

Open Session - I

23 June, 2018

Sociology

Civil Services (Main) Examination

Open Session on Answer Writing



Aditya Mongra @ Professor's Classes

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Dear Candidates, our faculty is highly qualified and experienced,
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In the new pattern of Civil Services Examination, the *mantra* for success

is

***Worry Less About Content
Focus More On Analysis***

***Read Less - Think More
Write Less - Convey More***

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Sociology by Aditya Mongra (Professor's Classes)

in association with DIAS

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Venue: 26/3 (Basement), next to Spectrum Library,
near Madonna Hotel, Old Rajendra Nagar, Delhi-110060

Our Results

Civil Services Examination 2017-18

| | | |
|----------|----------------|--------------------|
| Rank 38 | Aparna Gupta | (Marks: 303 / 500) |
| Rank 90 | Benson S Ninan | (Marks: 305 / 500) |
| Rank 191 | Ankit Yadav | (Marks: 280 / 500) |
| Rank 244 | Harsh Singh | (Marks: 290 / 500) |
| Rank 328 | Apurv Chauhan | (Marks: 270 / 500) |
| Rank 427 | Arun Balgotra | (Marks: 271 / 500) |
| Rank 653 | Abhijeet Yadav | (Marks: 279 / 500) |
| Rank 712 | Shilpa Bhatti | (Marks: 264 / 500) |

Civil Services Examination 2016-17

| | |
|----------|----------------------|
| Rank 86 | Syed Fakhrudin Hamid |
| Rank 438 | Apurv Chauhan |
| Rank 494 | Aparna Gupta |

Civil Services Examination 2015-16

Rank 25 Chandra Mohan Garg

Rank 244 Sonia Nain

Rank 390 Vivek Rathee

and many more.....

Congratulations

&

Best Wishes

Q1. Write a note on 'Modernity and social changes in Europe and emergence of Sociology'.

(10 marks/8 mins)

Dear Candidate, before I give you a model answer for this question, I wish to discuss with you the correct strategy of writing an answer. I call this '**Dialectical Approach**', a term borrowed from Hegel. But before you apply the dialectical approach to a question make sure that you have read that question at least three times and understood it. It is a very common error on the part of the candidates to write in the examination 'what they know' rather 'what has been asked by the examiner.' Hence, the key to score well in this examination is to read the mind of the examiner and accordingly answer the question, meeting the expectations of the examiner. If you do this, you would get marks as per your expectations too.

All you have to do for this is to follow a very simple process. Firstly, read the question carefully and underline the keywords. Secondly, try to understand from which dimension the question has been framed on the topic. This is very important because questions can be framed from multiple dimensions on the same topic. You would have no problem doing this if you sincerely follow the theme-based approach. Thirdly, divide the question into 3-4 logical sub-questions. When you do this, it will not only keep you focused on the main theme but also help you complete the paper in time.

Now, let me share with you something about the structure of your answer. Your answer must be divided in four sections, viz. introduction, thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis.

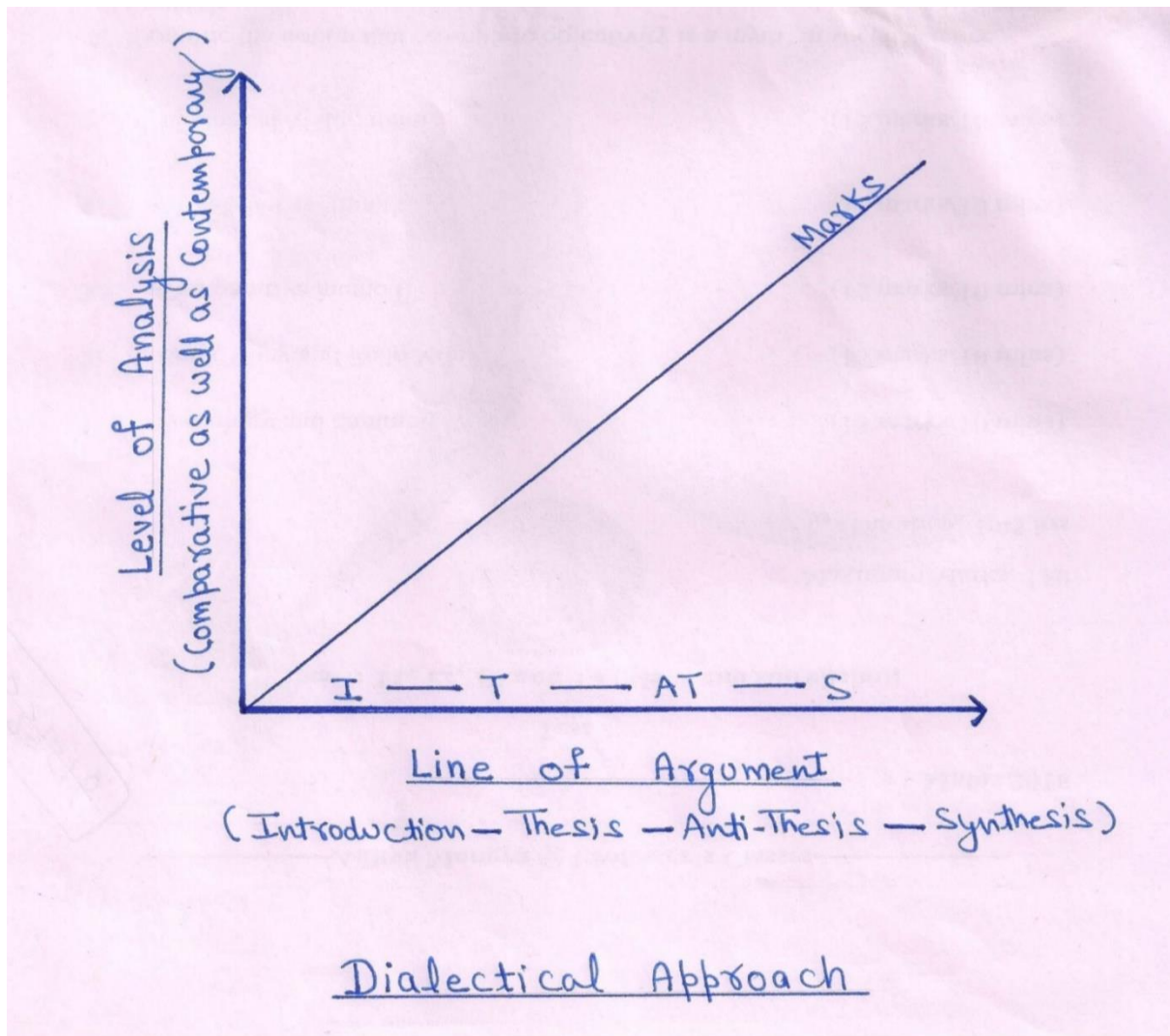
The **Introduction Section** is the most important section of your answer as it introduces yourself as a candidate to the examiner. The examiner forms an image about you and your understanding of the concept just by reading the introduction. Hence, you must start by directly addressing the question, without beating around the bush. By this I mean that given the limitations of Time and Word Limit, please avoid developing the background and glorifying the thinkers. In the introduction, briefly explain the key concept asked in the question. The introduction section should constitute nearly 20 % of the total length of your answer.

The next section is **Thesis**. In this section, you need to elaborate on the concept or theme asked in the question. Here, you must enrich and substantiate your answer by highlighting the works of the scholars and case studies in support of your argument. Depending upon the demand of the question, this section could either be detailed or brief. For example, if the question has keywords like 'Discuss', 'Describe', 'Explain', 'Elaborate', etc., then, the Thesis part must be in detail and Anti-Thesis in brief. On the other hand, if the question has keywords like 'Critically Examine', 'Critically Analyse', etc., then, the Thesis part should be in brief while the Anti-Thesis part should be discussed in detail.

In the **Anti-Thesis Section**, try to present a critique of the main argument asked in the question. By incorporating this in your answer you can convince the examiner that there are other alternative explanations as well. I am sure that the examiner will be impressed by your holistic understanding of the debate and will reward you accordingly. Please note that the length of thesis and anti-thesis sections would depend as per the demand of the question.

Last, but not the least, is the **Synthesis Section** or concluding remarks. Please remember that concluding remarks in your answer reflect your overall understanding of the subject to the examiner. Also note that concluding remarks are not supposed to be your personal opinion about the theme or issue asked in the question. Rather, your concluding remarks must reflect the insight that you have gained as a student of Sociology. Thus, when you write synthesis, make sure it is an academic conclusion rather than personal opinion. Always try to make your Synthesis as contemporary as possible.

*Refer the figure on dialectical approach.



Structure of the Model Answer:

Introduction: Briefly discuss the concept of modernity and the process of social change in Europe that brought about modernity

Thesis: Arguments in favour of the modernization process, viz. the ideas of Enlightenment scholars, with examples

Anti-thesis: Conservative reaction to Enlightenment

Synthesis: Emergence of Sociology as a by-product of the confluence of the two intellectual currents – Enlightenment and Conservatives

Modernity refers to the rational transformation of social, psychological, economic and political aspects of society. The beginning of the process of modernization could be traced back to the late 18th and early 19th century when the socio-economic and political institutions in the Western European society were undergoing drastic transformations due to Industrial and French Revolution.

The newly emerging modern industrial society, however, was a society of paradox. It was a society of hope as well as despair. In socio-economic terms, surplus production and enormous capital accumulation coincided with mass dislocation of the population (enclosure movement), disruption of traditional community bonds, extreme economic exploitation and inequalities. Further, the orthodox religious ideology of the Catholic Church was being challenged by scientific temper and secular outlook, leading to increasing desacralisation of social life. Similarly, on the political front, new liberal ideologies propagating the values of equality, liberty and freedom challenged the divine theory of kingship, and gave rise to the demands for greater political rights, often leading to civil wars and political movements like French Revolution.

Intellectuals responding to these profound changes were divided in their opinion with regard to the nature, impact and direction of such changes. Enlightenment scholars like Rousseau, Montesquieu, Adam Smith, Saint Simon and Auguste Comte had a positive view of the newly emerging social order. They considered such changes as progressive and hence desirable. Whereas, the Conservatives like Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre had a rather skeptic view of these profound and far reaching institutional changes that were taking place in society. They were preoccupied with the concern for social stability and order in the society as the new social order was marked by violent political revolutions, class wars, extreme economic inequalities and widespread misery and poverty.

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Thus, while social conditions created the need for sociology, intellectual conditions provided the means for building sociology as a distinct discipline. It may be said that while the goals of sociology (i.e. to restore social order and harmony) were influenced by the conservative reaction, the means to discover such social laws that govern social order (i.e. through scientific methodology) were largely dictated by enlightenment scholars.

Q2. Write short note on 'Sociology and Common sense'.

(10 marks/8 mins)

Introduction:

- Sociology and common sense – meaning

Thesis:

- Traditional basis of knowledge – common sense – largely speculative, not supported by any systematic body of empirical evidence (for example, religious knowledge) – some common sense propositions are sound, earthy and useful bits of knowledge while others are based on ignorance, prejudice, and mistaken interpretation – common sense is contextual in nature – varies in terms of time and space

Anti-Thesis:

- Sociology is more than common sense because it is largely based on scientific evidence – sociological research verifies and validates common sense ideas – sociological theories are scientific – based on empirical research – facilitate systematic comparison as well as limited prediction – useful in social policy formulation - Example: Dalits or Blacks are poor because they are lazy and intellectually inferior – but sociological research explains their social status in terms of various socio-economic and political factors responsible for their present status

Synthesis:

- Early sociologists distinguished the subject matter of sociology from that of common sense – Positivists focused on the study of social facts (Structural Approach) – which can be subjected to empirical research and hence universal generalizations could be arrived at – ignoring the subjective dimension of human behavior – common sense is contextual and subjective – however, later, approaches like Social Action Approach (Weber) also focused on the subjective or contextual aspect of social reality and suggested that at best limited generalizations only are possible in social sciences
- Both are mutually related – while common sense serves as a source hypothesis in sociological research, sociology, on the other hand, verifies and validates common sense assumptions through empirical research

Q3. Sociology and Anthropology

(10 marks/8 mins)

Introduction:

- Sociology and Anthropology (Social Anthropology)
- Context of emergence

Thesis:

- Initial phase of divergence: Subject matter – Objective – Methodology

Anti-Thesis:

- Later phase of convergence: Subject matter – Methodology
- Factors responsible for convergence – industrialization, urbanization, and globalization

Synthesis:

- Mutual exchange between the two disciplines – social anthropological data and studies have informed sociological theories (for example, Durkheim's study of religion)

Q4. Book View and Field View

(10 marks/8 mins)

Introduction:

- Book view and Field view – meaning

Thesis:

- Book view – advocated by Indologists (G.S. Ghurye, B.K. Sarkar, Radhakamal Mukerjee, Irawati Karve, etc.)
- Indologists claimed that Indian society could be understood only through the concepts, theories and frameworks of Indian civilization – they believed that an examination of the classical texts, manuscripts, archaeological artefacts, etc. should be the starting point for the study of the present
- Especially useful for historical references and data (Content Analysis)

Anti-Thesis:

- M.N. Srinivas was critical of the ‘book-view’ of Indian society – strongly advocated for the ‘field-view’ of Indian society – argued that the book-view gave a distorted picture of society – book-view of Indian society presented an idealized picture of its institutions – the field-view revealed the gap everywhere between ideal and the actual – for example, caste as a closed system vs sanskritisation, varna model of caste system vs jati model, etc. – other limitations of book view: tends to be ideologically biased, represents the views of the dominant class
- Challenges associated with field research in sociology: no ideal field exists, control over extraneous variables difficult, establishing rapport with natives, maintain value-neutrality, need for trained researchers, etc.

Synthesis:

- Both views are complementary to each other – for a comprehensive understanding of social structure as well as social change in society

Q5. Participant Observation

(10 marks/8 mins)

Introduction:

- Meaning – Nature of research method – Origins in social anthropology (Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, etc.)

Thesis:

- Advocated by anti-positivists – to understand human behavior in their natural setting
- Advantages – comprehensive understanding – first-hand information – subjects' point of view – high validity
- Also highlights the gap between ideal and real culture

Anti-Thesis:

- Limitations – though high validity but low reliability – suitable only in smaller group studies – limited generalizations
- Challenges associated – entry into field – rapport-building with the natives – value-bias (nativisation) – time consuming

Synthesis:

- Despite its limitations, it has been highly useful in gaining deeper insights into social life and enriching sociological understanding
- Measures to make it more effective – ensure value-neutrality – cross-check findings with other research methods (Bryman – Triangulation) – trained researchers
- Studies – Malinowski, WF Whyte, Srinivas, Andre Beteille, etc.

Q6. Comparative method

(10 marks/8 mins)

Introduction:

- Comparative method refers to the study of different types of groups and societies in order to determine analytically the factors that lead to similarities and differences in specified patterns of behavior.

Thesis:

- Initially emphasized by positivists – that comparative method is a social science equivalent of experimentation in natural sciences – quasi-experimental method – to arrive at laws that govern social reality – Durkheim advocated the use of comparative method with concomitant variations to arrive at qualitative correlations – Durkheim argued that ‘Comparative sociology is not a special branch of sociology; it is sociology itself’ – Examples: types of suicide, types of societies on the basis of division of labour and solidarity

Anti-Thesis:

- Andre Beteille in his essay ‘Some observations on the comparative method’ argues that there are more sceptics than enthusiasts of comparative method today – Franz Boas objected to the sweeping generalizations made through the use of comparative method, and recommended studies on a more limited geographical scale – Boas stated his preference for ‘historical method’ over and above the comparative method – Evans-Pritchard recommended intensive comparative investigation in a limited area rather than going for universal generalizations – scholars belonging to the phenomenological tradition argue that the application of this method is not as simple as it may appear because social units have different meanings in different societies and thus advocated for limited generalizations (for example, the institution of marriage among hindus and muslims) – Example: Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*

Synthesis:

- However, despite these criticisms and limitations of comparative method, its significance in sociology cannot be undermined. Both, positivists as well as anti-positivists, such as Durkheim and Weber, in their respective works have clearly highlighted the importance of comparative method as a scientific method for sociological enquiry for a comprehensive understanding of social reality.

Q7. Examine the notion that 'complete objectivity is a myth' in social science research. (20 marks/15 mins)

Introduction:

- Objectivity is a 'frame of mind' so that the personal prejudices or preferences of the social scientists do not contaminate the collection and analysis of data. Objectivity is the goal of scientific investigation. Sociology too being a scientific discipline aspires for the goal of objectivity.

Thesis: (in brief)

- Basic assumptions of early sociologists (positivists) about social reality and their objective – subject matter (social facts) and methodology [conceived society as an objective phenomenon, a 'thing' – sociologists should study the way society impacts on individual behaviour – behavior of man, like the behaviour of matter, can be objectively measured – hence emphasized only on the study of those aspects of social behaviour which are relatively patterned and can be objectively studied with the help of data – observations of behaviour based on objective measurement will make it possible to produce statements of cause and effect – **ignored the subjective dimension of human behavior – aimed for universal generalizations**] – for example, Durkheim's study of *Suicide*

Anti-Thesis: (elaborate)

- Non/Anti-positivists questioned the basic assumptions of positivist scholars – reality is dualistic: physical and social – social reality is marked by the presence of '*geist*' (unique meanings, motives and feelings of the individual members of society) – subject matter: social action – methodology: interpretative understanding of human behaviour (Weber: '*Verstehen*' approach) – **hence only limited generalizations possible in social sciences**
- Gunnar Myrdal: "Total objectivity in social sciences is a myth" – subjectivity creeps in at various stages of sociological research (explain) – for example, study of Tepoztlanvillage in Mexico by Robert Redfield and Oscar Lewis – more recently, reflexive sociologists question the possibility as well as the desirability of objectivity in sociology

Synthesis:

- Sociology is a scientific discipline – theories based on rigorous research – but complete objectivity not possible because of the limitations imposed by its unique subject matter which is highly dynamic and diverse – at best contextual objectivity is possible (Prof. T.K. Oommen)

Q8. Reflexive sociology is a radical sociology. Comment.

(20 marks/15 mins)

Introduction:

- What is reflexive sociology? (Alvin W. Gouldner – “The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology”)

Thesis:

- Reflexive sociology emerged as a critique to positivist approach – briefly discuss the positivist assumptions about social reality and their methodology (Methodological Dualism)

Anti-Thesis:

- Reflexive sociology rejected Methodological Dualism (subject-object dichotomy)
- Emphasized on ‘understanding of social reality’ – need for interpretation
- Gouldner argues that the historical mission of sociology is to raise the sociologist’s awareness of himself and his position in the social world – aims at transforming the sociologist’s relation to his work – establish relationship between sociologist as a social scientist and sociologist as a cultural being – a reflexive sociologist must become aware of himself as both as knower and as agent of change
- Reflexive sociology is radical sociology – in contrast to Positivism – rejects subject-object dichotomy – also rejects the view that the goal of sociology is to produce objective truths – instead, reflexive sociology is a moral sociology – as a work ethic it emphasizes on the creative and transformative potential of sociologists – as agents of social change

Synthesis:

- Reflexive sociology, in contemporary times, has provided a refreshing break from the classical approaches. It has further intensified the debate centering around the theoretical orientations and methodological issues in sociological enquiry. Examples of reflexive sociology: Marxist sociology, Subaltern sociology, Feminist Sociology, Environmental Sociology, etc.

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Q9. Discuss the changing nature of the 'field' in anthropological research. (20 marks/15 mins)

Introduction:

- In social sciences, the term 'field' refers to the members of a social group which is the prime object of study for a social scientist. In its early phase, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown laid the foundations of intensive fieldwork among anthropologists in Britain. However, in Indian context, it was M.N. Srinivas who strongly advocated for the 'field-view' of Indian society in place of the 'book-view'.

Thesis: (brief)

- Early social anthropological research was largely concerned with the study of small scale societies in their natural state – hence 'field' came to denote a distinct social group which was to be studied in its unique socio-cultural and geographical setting – methodological dualism (subject – object dichotomy) – the idea of 'otherness' remained remarkably central to early fieldwork researches – Case study by Amory regarding African studies in USA – African American scholars were discouraged from working in Africa – it was argued that they were "too close" to the field and would not manage to be "objective" – Kath Weston, in her study of gay and lesbian communities in USA, too arrived at a similar conclusion

Anti-Thesis: (elaborate)

- Reflexive sociologists Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson questioned the conventional notion of field based on the idea of 'otherness' – emphasized on the need for reconstruction of field and field-work practices in the light of new developments – argued that decolonization, industrialization, and most importantly globalization, accompanied by processes of diffusion and acculturation, have challenged the traditional definition of field and the very idea of a clearly demarcated space of 'otherness' – the idea of field, in terms of a homogenous social group with its unique culture and geographical surroundings, has come to be questioned – today cultural heterogeneity is more common
- Further, 'location' of the field should not merely be seen in geographical sense alone but also in social and political terms – for example, subaltern approach in sociology has significantly contributed towards a better understanding of various socio-economic and political processes in India which were until now largely studied from an elitist perspective - they also question the assumption that only professionally trained observers could collect authentic ethnographic data – for example, Paul Radin in his research found that untrained native research assistants prove to be better sometimes for certain sorts of data collection

Synthesis:

- Thus, reflexivity has significantly contributed in reconstruction of the idea about field and field-work practices in social anthropology. Such a rethinking of the idea of the 'field' coupled with an explicit attentiveness to 'location' might open the way for a different kind of anthropological knowledge and a different kind of anthropological subject.

Q10. Compare and contrast the quantitative research methodology with qualitative research methodology. Which of the two in your opinion is best suited for sociological research? (20 marks/15 mins)

Introduction:

- Meaning of quantitative and qualitative research methodology

Thesis:

- Quantitative research methodology – largely associated with the positivist tradition – positivist scholars believed that methods and procedures of natural sciences could be adopted in sociology
- Features: Social facts – Statistical data – Correlation – Causation – Generalization and Replicability
- Quantitative research methods: survey, questionnaire, structured interview, secondary sources of data, etc.
- Advantages: Extensive research possible – adds more breadth to research – high reliability but low validity
- Example: Durkheim's study of suicide

Anti-Thesis:

- Qualitative research methodology – largely associated with the non-positivist/ anti-positivist / phenomenological tradition – emphasized on the interpretative understanding of social action
- Features: Empathetic description of reality – Contextualism – Emphasis on processual dimension – Flexibility
- Qualitative research methods: participant observation, unstructured interview, focus group, case study method, etc.
- Advantages: Intensive research possible – adds more depth to research - high validity but low reliability
- Example: Malinowski, WF Whyte, Srinivas, Andre Beteille, etc.

Synthesis:

- Both approaches are complementary (Alan Bryman – Triangulation) – Quantitative research methods useful for macro-sociological analysis – Qualitative research methods useful for micro-sociological analysis – combination of both research methods ensures both reliability as well as objectivity

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Q11. Formulate a hypothesis, research design and list the research techniques you would use to understand the influences on marriage choices among young people. (20 marks/15 mins)

Introduction:

- Sociology is a scientific study of society and all phenomena and processes that unfold within it. Sociological theories are thus arrived on the basis of empirical research. Sociological research thus is not a random search for facts but a guided research that begins with defining precisely the objective of the research. A clearly defined and verifiable hypothesis is thus the first step in sociological research which guides and directs sociological research.

Thesis:

- Define hypothesis – operationalize the concepts mentioned in the hypothesis
- Though there could be several factors that may influence the marriage choices of young people such as caste, religion, region, education, career orientation, etc. However, in the light of the research problem stated above, one of the possible hypothesis could be: “Increase in literacy rate is directly proportional to the average marital age” or “Increase in education tends to increase the incidence of inter-caste marriages in India.”
- Formulate a research design: 1. Identification of the field, 2. Sampling method (for a representative sample), 3. Research Techniques (as per field requirements), 4. Cross-check data findings with other research methods (Bryman- Triangulation), 5. Data Analysis (establishing cause-effect relationship), 6. Report writing
- Mention a few sample questions of survey: For example, “What is your name?”, “What is your caste/religion?”, “What are your educational qualifications?”, For marriage, which of the following factors is most important for you?” (caste, religion, education, income, etc.), “At what age would you prefer to get married?” (15-20yrs, 20-25yrs, 25-30yrs, etc.)

Anti-Thesis: -----

Synthesis:

- Sociological findings thus arrived could facilitate the understanding of the complex social reality and contribute significantly in the formulation of social policy and bringing about necessary social reforms.

Dear Candidates, please pay special attention to the names of scholars and examples

in all your answers.

best wishes