

Open Session - II

7 July, 2018

Sociology

Civil Services (Main) Examination

Open Session on Answer Writing



Aditya Mongra @ Professor's Classes

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is

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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. Is it possible to study social phenomenon scientifically? (10 marks/8 mins)

The scientific study of social phenomenon implies that the generalizations arrived about such phenomenon are based on empirical research and stand the tests of objectivity.

Early social theorists, belonging to the positivist tradition (Comte, Spencer and Durkheim), believed that through a scientific study of society, social scientists can discover social laws that govern social order and thus, through corrective social legislation, a stable and harmonic society can be created. Durkheim's *Suicide* is one of the best demonstrations of the scientific study of social phenomenon.

However, anti-positivist scholars such as Weber, reject many of the assumptions of positivism. They argue that the subject matter of the social and natural sciences is fundamentally different. Unlike matter, man has consciousness – meanings, motives and feelings – that make his action meaningful. As a result, the scientific methodology alone would be inadequate for a comprehensive understanding of the social action. Hence, they emphasize on the interpretative understanding of the social action. In his critique of positivist approach, Gunnar Myrdal has also stated that in the social sciences, 'total objectivity is an illusion'. Myrdal argues that sociology at best could aspire for the goal of value-neutrality on the part of the researcher.

Thus, to summarize, it may be argued that though sociology aspires to study the social phenomenon scientifically but on account of its unique subject matter (meaningful social action) sociologists can at best arrive at limited generalization given the dynamism and diversity of social phenomenon.

Q2. Social fact as 'thing'

(10 marks/8 mins)

Introduction:

- Social fact – meaning – relate it with the basic assumptions of Durkheim

Thesis:

- Why Durkheim emphasized on the study social facts?
- Features of social facts – Types of social facts
- Rules regarding observation and explanation of social facts

Anti-Thesis:

- Non-positivist/Anti-positivist's view (particularly Weber) – human behavior is meaningful – Social Action - interpretative understanding (Verstehen) – only limited generalizations possible in social sciences

Synthesis:

- With social fact, Durkheim successfully delineated the subject matter for sociology as distinct from other social sciences - with his study *Suicide* Durkheim successfully demonstrated the application of positivist approach in studying social phenomenon – however, for a comprehensive understanding of social phenomenon, subjective dimension of human behavior must also be taken into account as highlighted by Weber

Q3. Historical Materialism

(10 marks/8 mins)

Introduction:

- Historical Materialism – meaning; in contrast to Hegelian *Dialectical Idealism*

Thesis:

- Historical Materialism – as both perspective as well as methodology – as perspective highlight Marx's emphasis on the role of base in shaping the superstructure of society – as methodology describe the significance of the concept of class and class conflict in Marxian theory of dialectical social change
- hint at the various stages in his theory of social change: Primitive Communism – Ancient Society – Feudal Society – Capitalist Society – Communism

Anti-Thesis:

- Weber criticized Marxian theory for its mono-causal economic determinism and instead argued that superstructure can also influence the base (economic structure) – Dahrendorf also questioned the inevitability of proletarian revolution and talked about decomposition of labour and capital, and institutionalization of conflict

Synthesis:

- Marxian concept of historical materialism has contemporary relevance as both perspective as well as methodology but has only limited applicability as a theory of social change – relevance in understanding the cause of discontent as well revolutionary tendencies in various third world and other societies such as India (naxalism) which are marked by gross economic inequalities – in Indian context, A.R. Desai used Marxian approach in his work *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*

Q4. Write short not on 'Class in itself and class for itself' (10 marks/8 mins)

In his theory of social change, Marx argues that for a successful (revolutionary) transition of society from one stage to another, class in itself must transform into class for itself. A 'class in itself' is simply a social group whose members share the same relationship to the forces of production. But a class in itself transforms into a 'class for itself' when its members have developed class consciousness and class solidarity. In other words, its members realize the real cause of their exploitation (non-ownership of forces of production) as well as the fact that only by collective action they can overthrow the ruling class.

However, Marx's argument that in the capitalist society the processes of homogenization, polarization and pauperization would inevitably transform the proletariat into a class for itself was later challenged and modified by Weber and Dahrendorf. Yet, despite its limitations, 'class' is an important conceptual tool to understand the process of social change, particularly in developing societies like India, which are marked by gross economic disparities. (Words: 160)

Q5. Identify the similarities and differences between Marx's theory of 'alienation' and Durkheim's theory of 'anomie'. (20 marks/15 mins)

Introduction:

- Alienation and Anomie – meaning

Thesis: (similarities)

- Context –both Marx and Durkheim with the help of their concepts were responding to the newly emerging capitalistic society as well as challenges that were associated with it
- Concern – both were concerned with restoring peace and harmony in society – both believed that with the resolution of the problems of alienation and anomie, the social order will be restored in modern society
- Structural approach – both believed that the problems of alienation and anomie are rooted in the social structure of society

Anti-Thesis:(differences)

- Cause – Marx (institution of private property); Durkheim (pathological division of labor)
- Character – Marx (alienation is a permanent feature of all class based societies but reaches its peak in capitalist society); Durkheim (anomie is an aberration, temporary and transitory, manifests only in times of social and economic crises)
- Solution – Marx (alienation can't be resolved with capitalistic framework, institution of private property must be abolished and communal ownership of forces of production must be established); Durkheim ('occupational associations' to harmonise the interests of both owners as well as workers, advocated work ethics and educational reforms)

Synthesis:

- Both concepts are partly relevant in contemporary times – alienation does exist in multiple forms and economic inequality is one of the major factor – but the solution that Marx offered has been discounted by history –anomie too is a useful concept for analyzing social change particularly in the third world societies – but Durkheim's assertion about its temporary nature can also be questioned in the light of perpetual conflict in West Asia and Africa.

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

in all your answers.

best wishes