



# POLITICAL SCIENCE & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**STRATEGY DOCUMENT**



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI

## **PSIR Optional:**

**The Roadmap to Excel in UPSC**  
(Understanding the significance of the subject).

## **Syllabus of PSIR and Navigating through PYQs:**

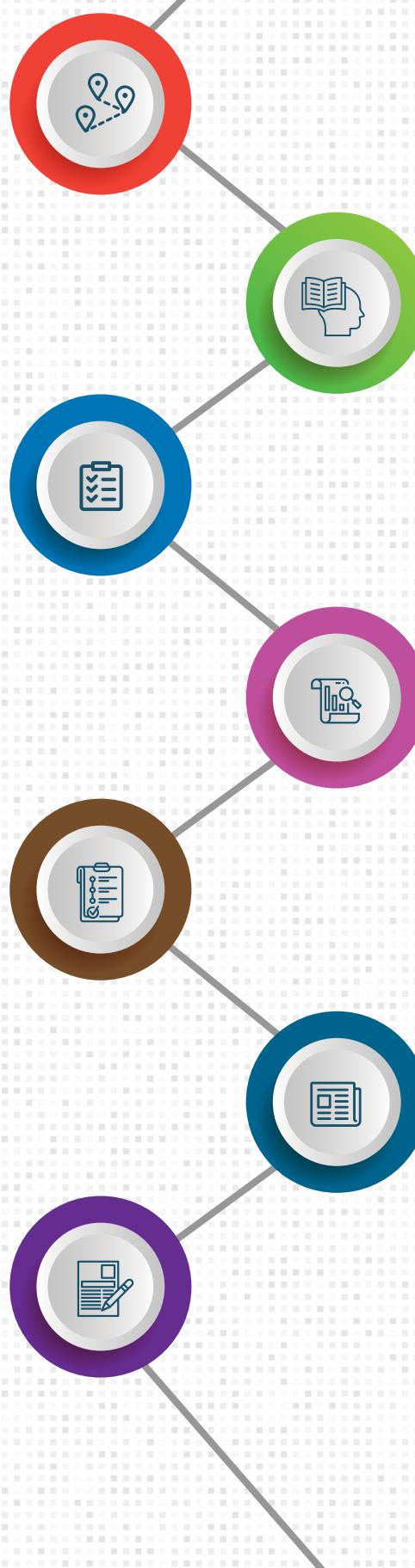
(Decoding the detailed syllabus to identify important areas, repetitions, pattern, and current trend).

## **Strategizing the Preparation:**

(Decoding the detailed syllabus to identify important areas, repetitions, pattern, and current trend).

## **Answer Writing Stage:**

(Taking mock tests and to master time management and analyse your performance to identify the strengths and areas of improvement)



## **Understanding the Scope of the Subject:**

Developing a comprehensive understanding of PSIR as an optional subject, its scope and relevance.

## **Choosing the Right Sources for PSIR Preparation:**

(Choosing the reliable and authoritative study materials, textbooks, live TV debates, research articles, etc. to build a strong foundation).

## **Importance of Current Affairs:**

(a vital pillar of the subject preparation)

## PSIR OPTIONAL: THE ROADMAP TO EXCEL IN UPSC



Navigating the path to becoming a civil servant necessitates strategic decision-making. This is especially true when choosing the most suitable optional subject for the UPSC CSE, which carries a substantial 500 marks out of a total of 2025 marks. Among the numerous alternatives, PSIR stands out as a popular and insightful choice. Aspirants can excel in this discipline with the meticulous guidance and curated resources provided by Vision IAS's seasoned team. The impressive scores of many successful candidates demonstrate the potential of PSIR. The depth and breadth of PSIR, coupled with a well-defined approach and expertise from our mentors, can set the stage for remarkable achievement. Dive into our tailor-made guide to conquer this domain and set the stage for a UPSC triumph.

### WHY CHOOSE PSIR FOR UPSC CSE?

#### Logistical Advantages:

There is ample availability of test series, materials, and reliable sources for thorough preparation.

#### Supplementing Preparation of Other Subjects:

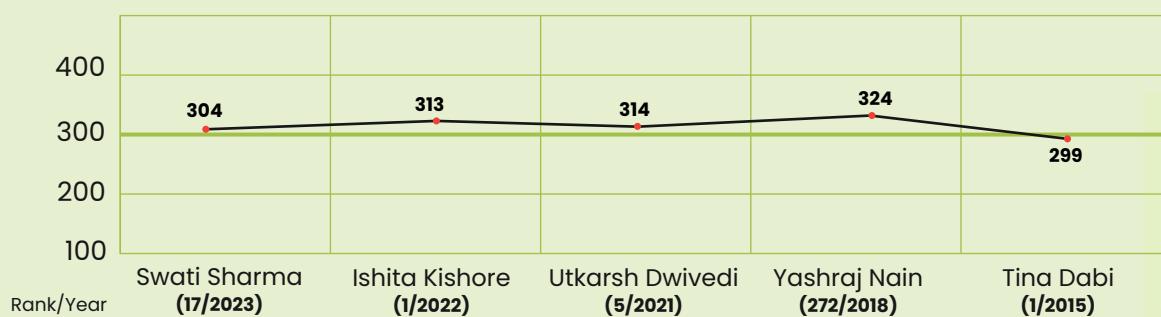
The subject provides a broad understanding of political systems, theories, and international relations, aiding both GS papers and essay writing.

- » Overlap of PSIR with other subjects:
- » World & Modern History, Society (GS1)
- » IR, Polity and Governance (GS2)
- » Contributions of Moral Thinkers (GS4)
- » Essay

#### Consistent Performance:

PSIR consistently yields high scores, with many toppers scoring above 300 marks every year.

#### Name of Toppers, Marks in PSIR, Rank and Year



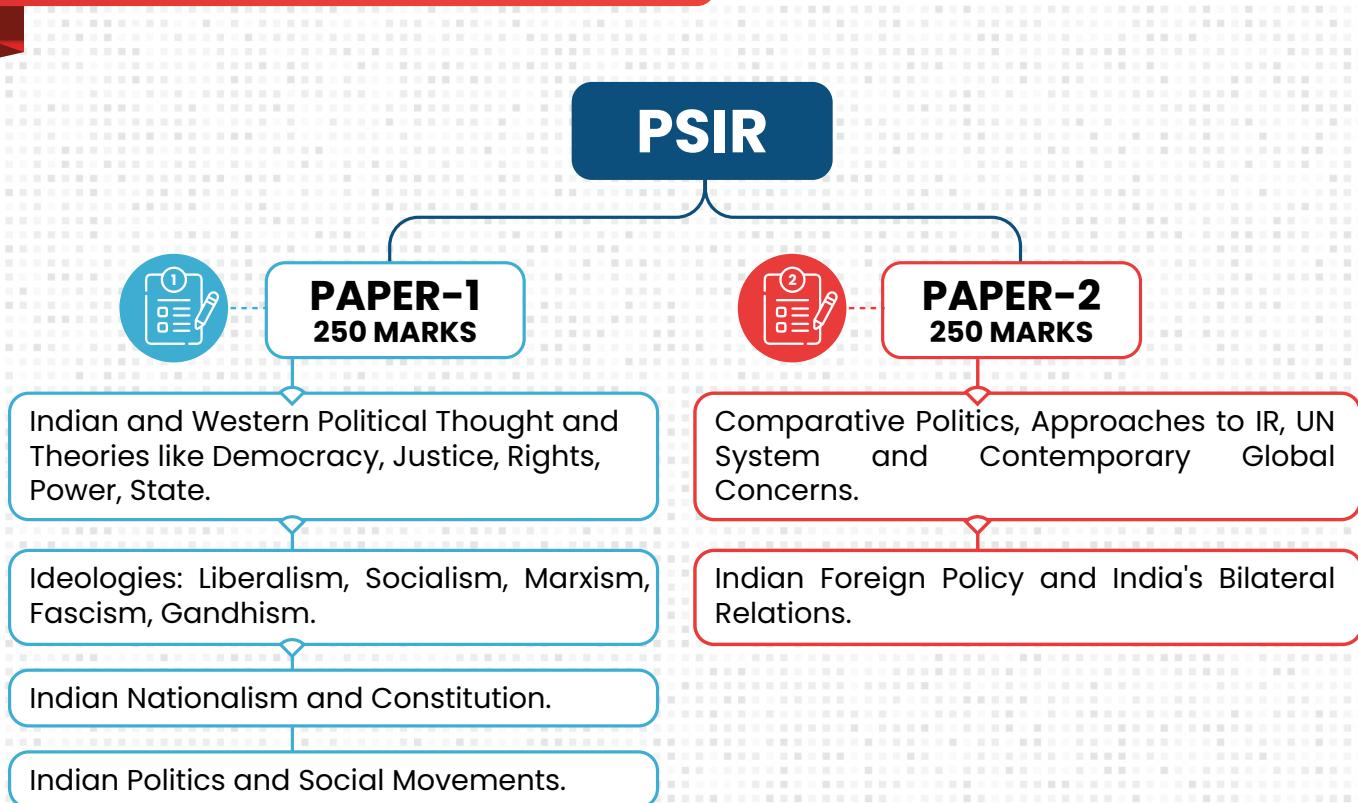
## UNDERSTANDING SCOPE OF THE SUBJECT

Political Science and International Relations (PSIR) is a comprehensive discipline that delves into both **domestic political and socio-economic dynamics** as well as international phenomena. It explores foundational concepts like the **evolution of the state, modern notions of democracy, rights, liberty, equality, and justice**. This study encompasses the **teachings and philosophies of various political thinkers**.

Moreover, PSIR probes the intricate realms of **global politics**. It seeks to understand the dual **nature of inter-state relations**, which can be both **cooperative** and **adversarial**. This domain involves an examination of **comparative politics across nations, foundational theories guiding international relations, and pressing global concerns like terrorism, human rights violations, and environmental challenges**. The multifaceted nature of **global multilateralism**, its broad implications, and minute intricacies are integral to this study.

Furthermore, the subject dives deep into **India's diplomatic principles**, its evolving **foreign policy**, and its **bilateral ties with other nations**. Given its expansive coverage that bridges various disciplines, PSIR stands out as both an intriguing and demanding field of study.

## PSIR SYLLABUS: NAVIGATING THROUGH THE PYQS



# PAPER I (POLITICAL THEORY AND INDIAN POLITICS)

## Paper 1- Section A (Political Theory: Meaning and Approaches)

Topic/ Unit	Previous Year Questions
<b>Political Theory:</b> Meaning and Approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 'Credo of relevance' in post behaviouralism advocates the importance of action science. Analyse. (2023)</li> <li>» Decline of political theory. (2023)</li> <li>» Normative approach in Political Science. (2023)</li> <li>» Systems Approach. (2022)</li> <li>» Examine the importance of behavioural approach in political theory. What led to its decline? (2021)</li> <li>» Trace the evolution of Western Political Thought from ancient to contemporary period. (2020)</li> </ul>
<b>Theories of State:</b> Liberal, Neo-liberal, Marxist, Pluralist, post-colonial, and Feminist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Examine the liberal theory of state in contemporary politics. (2022)</li> <li>» Feminist critique of state. (2021)</li> <li>» Pluralist theory of state. (2019)</li> <li>» Critically examine the neo-liberal theory of State. (2018)</li> </ul>
<b>Justice:</b> Conceptions of justice with special reference to Rawl's theory of justice and its communitarian critiques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Rawls' idea of the 'liberal self' is too individualistic. Explain, in this context, the communitarian critique of Rawls' theory of justice. (2023)</li> <li>» Dr. Ambedkar's idea of social justice leads to 'egalitarian justice' as compared to Rawls' 'justice as fairness' which aims at the notion of 'pure procedural justice'. Comment. (2022)</li> <li>» Examine the entitlement theory of justice. (2022)</li> <li>» How has Rawls enriched the idea of justice in liberalism? (2021)</li> </ul>
<b>Equality:</b> Social, political, and economic; relationship between equality and freedom; Affirmative action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Affirmative Action Policies draw as much strong criticism as strong support. Analyse this statement in the context of equality. (2023)</li> <li>» "Equality of estates caused equality of power, and equality of power is liberty." Comment. (2022)</li> <li>» Equality of outcome as a political idea. (2021)</li> <li>» Equality of opportunity. (2020)</li> </ul>
<b>Rights:</b> Meaning and theories; different kinds of rights; Concept of Human Rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Multicultural perspective on rights. (2023)</li> <li>» Human rights are complex and contested social practice that organises relations between individuals, society and the State. Comment. (2022)</li> <li>» Can there be universal conception of human rights? Give your arguments. (2021)</li> <li>» Discuss the doctrine of 'rights as trumps'. (2020)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Democracy:</b> Classical and contemporary theories; different models of democracy—representative, participatory and deliberative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Success of contemporary democracies lies in the State limiting its own power. (2023)</li> <li>» Elitist theory of democracy denies the possibility of democracy as ‘rule of the people’. Elucidate. (2022)</li> <li>» “Free and fair deliberation is key to the foundation of democracy.” Explain. (2021)</li> <li>» Representative democracy... means the people as a body must be able to control the general direction of government policy. (J. S. Mill). Comment. (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Power:</b> Hegemony, Ideology, and Legitimacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Foucault’s concept of power. (2023)</li> <li>» Bases of Power. (2022)</li> <li>» Examine the nature and meaning of power. (2020)</li> <li>» Explain the relationship between power, authority, and legitimacy. (2019)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Political Ideologies:</b> Liberalism, Socialism, Marxism, Fascism, Gandhism and Feminism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Eurocentrism is both the target and the motive force of the post-colonial political theory. Discuss. (2023)</li> <li>» Fascism represents an ambivalent stand towards parliamentary democracy. Explain. (2023)</li> <li>» Factors like community, culture and nation weaken the hegemony of neo-liberalism today. Discuss. (2022)</li> <li>» Political ideology is primarily concerned with the allocation and utilization of Power.” Comment. (2021)</li> <li>» Liberalism as a revolutionary idea. (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indian Political Thought:</b> Dharam shastra, Arthashastra and Buddhist Traditions; Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Sri Aurobindo, M. K. Gandhi, B. R. Ambedkar, M. N. Roy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Sri Aurobindo’s idea of swaraj has deep significance in the Indian social, political, and cultural theory. Analyse. (2023)</li> <li>» Buddhist thought on Dhamma facilitates the emancipation of political action. Explain. (2023)</li> <li>» “When a nation becomes devoid of arts and learning, it invites poverty.” (Sir Syed Ahmad Khan). In the light of this statement, assess the role of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as a reformer in modern India. (2021)</li> <li>» “When a nation becomes devoid of arts and learning, it invites poverty.” (Sir Syed Ahmad Khan). In the light of this statement, assess the role of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as a reformer in modern India. (2021)</li> <li>» Explain the sources of ancient Indian political thought. (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Western Political Thought:</b> Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, John S. Mill, Marx, Gramsci, Hannah Arendt.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» “The legal subordination of one sex to another is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human development.” (JS Mill). Comment. (2023)</li> <li>» State of nature as state of war. (2023)</li> <li>» Locke’s Social Contract. (2022)</li> <li>» J. S. Mill’s ideas on women suffrage. (2021)</li> <li>» Explain the Aristotelian view of politics. To what extent do you think it has contributed to the development of modern-day constitutional democracies? (2021)</li> </ul>

## Paper 1- Section B (Indian Government and Politics)

Topic/ Unit	Previous Year Questions
<b>Indian Nationalism:</b> Constitutionalism to Mass Satyagraha, Non-cooperation, Various Movements, Perspectives on Indian Nationalism (Liberal, Marxist, Socialist, Radical humanist, and Dalit).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Dr. Ambedkar's clarion call, "Educate, Agitate and Organize", strategizes the Dalit movement towards achieving civil liberty. Discuss. (2023)</li> <li>» Satyagraha and Indian Nationalism. (2023)</li> <li>» Analyse the workers' movement in India in the pre-Independence period. (2022)</li> <li>» Analyse the Marxist perspective of the nature of Indian National Movement. (2021)</li> <li>» Role of socialists in Indian National Movement. (2020)</li> <li>» Trace the role of militant and revolutionary movements in Indian national movement. (2020)</li> </ul>
<b>Making of Indian Constitution and Salient Features of Indian Constitution:</b> Legacies of British Rule, Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Judicial Review, Basic structure doctrine, Principal organs of Union and states.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The main goal of the Fundamental Duties in the Indian Constitution is to generate civic responsibility among the citizens. Explain. (2023)</li> <li>» The Constitution of India is the 'cornerstone of a nation' (Granville Austin). Analyse. (2023)</li> <li>» Imprint of the British Constitution on the Indian Constitution. (2023)</li> <li>» The Preamble of the Indian Constitution reflects itself as a 'social contract'. Elucidate. (2022)</li> <li>» "The Constitution makers faced the great task of forging a common national identity in the face of unparalleled social and cultural diversity in India." Comment. (2021)</li> </ul>
<b>Judiciary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Do you agree that over the years the Supreme Court has become a forum for policy evolution? Justify your answer. (2023)</li> <li>» The Doctrine of Basic Structure of the Constitution has enhanced the power of judicial review of the Supreme Court. Examine. (2022)</li> </ul>
<b>Grassroots Democracy:</b> Panchayati Raj and Municipal Government; Significance of 73rd and 74th Amendments; Grassroot movements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Discuss the major provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act. Do you think that the Act remains an 'unfulfilled dream'? Argue case. (2023)</li> <li>» Functions of District Planning Committee. (2023)</li> <li>» Electoral behaviour of voters is governed more by the social and economic factors than the political factors. Explain. (2022)</li> <li>» Do you think that despite having significant limitations the Panchayati Raj institutions have strengthened the process of democratic decentralization? Give your views. (2021)</li> <li>» To what extent has 73rd and 74th amendments of the Indian Constitution enhanced women's empowerment? (2020)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Statutory Institutions/ Commissions:</b></p> <p>Election Commission, Comptroller and Auditor General, Finance Commission, UPSC, NCSC, NCST, National Commission for Women; NHRC, National Commission for Minorities, NCBC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» How does NITI Aayog as a 'policy think tank with shared vision' visualize the reorganization of planning in India? Justify your answer. (2023)</li> <li>» National Commission for Minorities. (2023)</li> <li>» How far is the National Commission for Backward Classes an empowered body? Assess its role in the context of rising demand for backwardness among dominant communities. (2022)</li> <li>» Discuss the policy initiatives of the Fourteenth Finance Commission aimed towards promoting and strengthening agricultural development in India. (2021)</li> <li>» Examine the role and functioning of the Election Commission of India and the Comptroller and Auditor General in the last two decades. (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Federalism:</b></p> <p>Constitutional provisions; changing nature of centre-state relations; integrationist tendencies and regional aspirations; inter-state disputes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Does the actual working of Indian federalism conform to the centralizing tendencies in Indian polity? Give reasons for your answer. (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the composition and functions of the Inter-State Council. To what extent has this body been successful in achieving its objectives? (2022)</li> <li>» Do you think that there has been a gradual shift in the basis on which the demands for the creation of new States have been raised in different regions of India? Explain. (2021)</li> <li>» Does the functioning of the federalism in India tend to make it appear as a unitary state in practice? (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Planning and Economic development:</b></p> <p>Nehruvian and Gandhian perspectives; Role of planning and public sector; Green Revolution, land reforms and agrarian relations; liberalization and economic reforms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What explains India's modest improvements in social development outcomes even as the rate of growth has accelerated since the initiation of economic reforms? (2021)</li> <li>» 'Liberalisation of Indian Economy has not been accompanied with adequate reforms.' Comment. (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Caste, Religion and Ethnicity in Indian Politics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The rise of caste politics is to be attributed to both regional aspirations and electoral manifestations. Comment. (2023)</li> <li>» Ethnicity is the underlying cause which poses a great challenge in the resolution of the problems in the North-East region of India. Comment. (2022)</li> <li>» Explain how caste as a social category is also becoming a political category in the democratic politics of India. (2021)</li> <li>» Examine the role of religion in Indian Electoral Politics in the contemporary times. (2020)</li> </ul>

<b>Party System:</b>  National and regional political parties, ideological and social bases of parties; Patterns of coalition politics; Pressure groups, trends in electoral behaviour; changing socio-economic profile of Legislators.	» The decade 1989–1999 has created an epochal shift in the Indian party system at the national level. Identify the major national trends in the party system during this era. (2023) » Electoral behaviour of voters is governed more by the social and economic factors than the political factors. Explain. (2022) » “The Indian party system is shaped by a complex interaction of the country’s federal structure, electoral system and social cleavages.” Explain. (2021) » The success of electoral democracy can partly be attributed to the status and role of the Election Commission of India.” Explain. (2021) » To what extent has the inadequate intra-party democracy affected the functioning of Indian Democracy? (2020)
<b>Social Movement:</b>  Civil liberties and human rights movements; women’s movements; environmentalist movements.	» Environmentalism of the poor. (2023) » High concentration of economic activities and consumption patterns in post-liberalisation period has led to the failure of environmental movements in India. Elucidate. (2022) » Examine the nature of the civil liberty movement in India. (2020) » Write a short note on the significance of the Chipko Movement. (2019)

## PAPER II (COMPARATIVE POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS)

### Paper 2- Section A (Comparative Political Analysis and International Politics)

Topic/ Unit	Previous Year Questions
<b>Comparative politics, States in Comparative Perspective, Politics of Representation and Participation.</b>	» What are the crucial functions of empirical political theory in Comparative Politics? (2023) » What are the difficulties faced by a political theorist in comparing the States? (2023) » How does democratic politics construct citizenship? (2023) » Discuss the main limitations of the comparative method to the study of Political Science. (2022) » How has the electoral democracy augmented the participation of people in the democratic process? (2022) » Discuss the role of social movements in strengthening the democratic processes in developing societies. (2022) » Discuss the political economic approach to the comparative analysis of politics. (2022)

<p><b>Globalisation:</b> Responses from developed and developing societies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Critically examine the impact of Globalisation on the developing countries of the world. (2023)</li> <li>» What are the main challenges faced by the developing countries in the era of globalisation? (2022)</li> <li>» What is globalisation? Why is there an intense debate about globalisation and its consequences? (2021)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Approaches to the Study of IR:</b> Idealist, Realist, Marxist, Functionalist and Systems theory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What do you mean by offensive and defensive realism? (2023)</li> <li>» In what ways does the functionalist approach in international relations help in maintaining peace and order in global politics? (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the commonalities between the Marxist and Realist approach to the study of International Politics. (2022)</li> <li>» "Marxist approach to the study of international relations has lost its relevance in the post-cold war era." Comment. (2021)</li> <li>» Discuss the emergence of neo-realism and its basic tenets. (2021)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Concepts in IR:</b> National interest, security, and power; Balance of power and deterrence; Transnational actors and collective security; World capitalist economy and globalisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» National Interest is an essentially contested concept. Comment. (2022)</li> <li>» Discuss the conceptual dimensions of collective security. (2022)</li> <li>» What is 'complex interdependence'? Discuss the role of transnational actors in the international system. (2021)</li> <li>» Explain the concept of balance of power. What are the various techniques of maintaining balance of power? (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Changing International Political Order and Evolution of International Economic System:</b> Rise of superpowers, Arms race, Cold war, Bipolarity, NAM and its relevance, Collapse of Soviet Union, Unipolarity and USA.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Discuss the various constraints on American hegemony today. Which of these are likely to become more prominent in the future? (2023)</li> <li>» "During the Cold War, the Non-Aligned Movement tried to become a Third force' in World Politics, but failed because it was too large and unwieldy." Discuss. (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the relevance of the normative ethos of the Non-Aligned Movement in magnifying India's soft power in pursuit of her national interest. (2023)</li> <li>» Critically examine the rise of People's Republic of China (PRC) as a great power and its implications on Asian Political order. (2022)</li> <li>» Identify and evaluate the reasons for deadlock in the WTO negotiations on fisheries between the developing and developed countries. (2022)</li> <li>» Critically examine the decline of the United States of America as a hegemon and its implications for the changing international political order. (2021)</li> <li>» Explain the significance and importance of the demand raised by the developing countries for a New International Economic Order (NIEO). Are they likely to achieve their objectives of NIEO in foreseeable future? (2020)</li> </ul>

<p><b>UN</b>            (Envisaged role and actual record; Specialized UN agencies- aims and functioning; need for UN reforms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What is the structure and functions of International Court of Justice? (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the structure and functions of UN Security Council. (2023)</li> <li>» Describe the composition of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Discuss its voluntary jurisdiction. (2022)</li> <li>» What measures have been undertaken by the United Nations for its reforms? (2021)</li> <li>» Enumerate the challenges in the operation of the principles related to collective security in the UN Charter. (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regionalisation of World Politics:</b>            EU, ASEAN, APEC, SAARC, NAFTA.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Account for the rise of European Union as a highly influential regional organisation. (2023)</li> <li>» How does the regime change and political crisis in Myanmar threaten regional security and peace? (2023)</li> <li>» Explain the success of ASEAN as a regional organisation. (2021)</li> <li>» Russian-Ukraine crisis has cast a dark shadow on the energy needs of the member states of the European Union (EU). Comment. (2022)</li> <li>» Critically analyse the role of ASEAN in the promotion of regional peace and security through economic cooperation and trade. (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Contemporary Global Concerns:</b>            Democracy, human rights, environment, gender justice terrorism, nuclear proliferation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Narrate the various ways in which rapid environmental degradation is posing a serious threat to human security. Illustrate your answer with suitable examples. (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the efficacy of global conventions to combat international terrorism. (2022)</li> <li>» Discuss the five proposals made by India in the recent COP-26 conference held in Glasgow. (2021)</li> <li>» Examine the role of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other major efforts by the UN to address the global environmental crisis. (2020)</li> <li>» Discuss the importance of personal data protection in the context of human rights. (2019)</li> </ul>

## Paper 2- Section B (India and the World)

Topic/ Unit	Previous Year Questions
<b>Indian Foreign Policy:</b> Determinants of foreign policy; the institutions of policy making; Continuity and change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Explain the major features of India's Foreign Policy in the 21st century. (2023)</li> <li>» What are the external determinants of the Foreign Policy of a State? (2023)</li> <li>» Peaceful co-existence remains the cornerstone of India's foreign policy. Comment. (2022)</li> <li>» Discuss the role of public diplomacy in the enhancement of India's global standing. (2022)</li> <li>» Explain the philosophical foundations of India's foreign policy. (2021)</li> <li>» Describe the structure and function of the National Security Council of India. What role does it play in the formulation of Indian foreign policy? (2020)</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Alignment Movement:</b> India's Contribution to the Non-Alignment Movement Different phases; Current role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» "Non-alignment was little more than a rational strategy on the part of a materially weak India to maximize its interests with a bipolar distribution of global power." Comment. (2021)</li> <li>» Compare and contrast Non-Alignment 1.0 with Non-Alignment 2.0. (2019)</li> <li>» 'Non-alignment' has been the basic principle of India's foreign policy since independence. Discuss its relevance in the contemporary context. (2015)</li> </ul>
<b>India and South Asia:</b> Regional cooperation, SAFTA, India's Look East Policy, Impediments and Border conflicts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Why do ethnic conflicts and urgencies continue to remain major impediments to regional cooperation in South Asia? (2023)</li> <li>» What are the reasons for lack of 'regionness' in South Asia? (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the ways and means to realise greater economic co-operation among the Member States of South Asia. (2022)</li> <li>» Discuss the ways and means to realise greater economic co-operation among the Member States of South Asia. (2022)</li> <li>» What are the implications of 'Look-East' Policy on the north-eastern region of India? (2022)</li> <li>» Why is South Asia considered as the world's politically and economically least integrated region? Explain. (2021)</li> </ul>

<p><b>India and the Global South:</b> Relations with Africa and Latin America; Leadership role in the demand for NIEO and WTO negotiations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What diplomatic steps has India taken to articulate the interests of the Global South in International Politics? (2023)</li> <li>» Why is the compromise reached at WTO regarding the Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing not a Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver? (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the major drivers of India's interests in Africa. (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the relevance of the demand for New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the present era of globalisation. (2022)</li> <li>» Identify the drivers of India's new interest in Africa. (2021)</li> <li>» Explain India's position on the waiver of intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines in WTO. (2021)</li> </ul>
<p><b>India and the Global Centres of Power:</b> USA, EU, Japan, China, and Russia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) performs an important role in India's strategic balancing act to withstand the dominance of China in Asia. Discuss. (2023)</li> <li>» Arms trade, economic ties and congruent geo-political interests are no longer the three pillars of India-Russia relationship in the emerging strategic context. Comment. (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the reasons behind India's refusal to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). (2022)</li> <li>» Explain the significance of Basic Exchange and Co-operation Agreement (BECA) for Indo-US strategic relations. (2022)</li> <li>» How does the recent takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban impact India's strategic interests? (2021)</li> <li>» "Relations between India and Russia are rooted in history mutual trust/and mutually beneficial cooperation.' Discuss. (2021)</li> <li>» Write about the growing significance of QUAD. (2021)</li> </ul>
<p><b>India and the UN System:</b> Role in UN Peace-keeping; Demand for Permanent Seat in the Security Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Discuss the importance of India's role in UN peacekeeping operations as a ground for its claim to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the "Sustainable Development Goals' as set by the United Nations. (2021)</li> <li>» Describe the structure and function of the National Security Council of India. What role does it play in the formulation of Indian foreign policy? (2020)</li> <li>» Analyse the recent trends in India's role in the UN peacekeeping operations. (2019)</li> </ul>
<p><b>India and the Nuclear Question:</b> Changing perceptions and policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» "India's Nuclear policy is deeply influenced by its cultural beliefs and the pragmatic approach of its foreign policy." Discuss. (2023)</li> <li>» Discuss the reasons behind India's refusal to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). (2022)</li> <li>» Examine the evolution of India's role in the global nuclear order. (2021)</li> <li>» Discuss the efficacy of India's 'no first use' policy (nuclear weapons) in the context of the evolving strategic challenges from its neighbours. (2020)</li> </ul>

## **Recent developments in Indian Foreign Policy:**

India's position on the recent crises in Afghanistan, Iraq and West Asia, growing relations with US and Israel; Vision of a new world order.

- » Discuss the significance of "West Asia Quad" in the light of India's 'Look West policy'. (2023)
- » What steps has India taken to regain its foothold in Afghanistan since the Taliban has taken over the country in August 2021? (2023)
- » What are the challenges and limitations in India - Iran relations? (2023)
- » Critically examine the major factors responsible for a turnaround in the trajectory of India's foreign policy in the post-cold period. (2022)
- » How does India-Israel bilateral ties reflect the autonomy of India's foreign policy choices? (2022)
- » How does the recent takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban impact India's strategic interests? (2021)
- » Discuss India's vision of a New World order in the 21st century. (2022)

## **THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ANALYSING PYQS**



### **Repetitive Themes:**

Many questions are based on recurring themes (e.g., Hobbes' view on the State of nature, NAM, EU, Satyagraha, Centre-State Relations). Understanding and preparing these repetitive themes are crucial.



### **Predictable Areas:**

Questions often follow conventional or traditional lines. Key areas, such as JS Mill, Hobbes, Aurobindo, social movements, statutory/constitutional bodies, and features of the Indian Constitution, are predictable. Focusing on these areas can improve preparation. Further, some important themes may not appear every year (e.g., Marxist approach to IR, India's vision of a new world order). Preparing these themes for the following year can be an effective and intelligent approach.



### **Challenging Questions:**

While most questions are easy to moderate, some are relatively difficult (e.g., Eurocentrism and post-colonialism, ICJ, District planning committee). Practicing PYQs helps in tackling these tough questions effectively.



### **Multiple Questions on Single Topics:**

Certain topics, like Non-Alignment Movement and Political Theory, often have multiple questions in a single year. Deep preparation of these areas is beneficial.



## Dynamic and Application-Based Questions:

Questions linking theoretical concepts with current affairs (e.g., environmental degradation and human security) are common. Staying updated with contemporary issues is essential.



## Predicting Probable Questions:

By analysing previous year questions and relevant contemporary developments, one can predict upcoming UPSC exam questions. This highlights the importance of studying past papers and staying updated with current affairs. Linking recent developments with the questions is crucial. For example, recent "Supreme Court judgment in Electoral Bonds Case" and "Role of Election Commission of India in conducting free and fair elections" are important topics from 2024 CSE-Mains perspective.

Hence, reviewing the previous year's questions (PYQs) for PSIR is a pivotal part of exam preparation. It aids in delineating the scope of study and constructing a solid foundation. Furthermore, it assists in recognizing the nature of questions and discerning the emerging trends and patterns in which questions are formulated.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT SOURCES FOR PSIR PREPARATION

Following points should be kept in mind while referring to various sources for PSIR:

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT SOURCES FOR PSIR SUBJECT



#### Decoding the Syllabus:

Decoding the syllabus prescribed by UPSC helps you understand what's important, prioritize topics, and choose the right study materials. It's crucial for finding exam-relevant content and prepping effectively.



#### Selective Reading for Clarity:

Recognize that reading every book cover to cover is not necessary. Prioritize clarity by referring to various source materials. Utilize textbooks, academic articles, research papers, and case studies to gain multifaceted insights into each concept. This approach enhances understanding and facilitates critical analysis.



#### Diversify Your Sources

Diversify sources; avoid single reliance. Multiple reputable inputs enrich knowledge, deepen understanding. Blend primary texts, renowned authors, contemporary analyses for a comprehensive viewpoint.

**Given below is a detailed analysis of various sources, and the particular concepts that can be covered through particular sources:**

Paper 1: Section A	Topics to be covered
» Political Theory: An Introduction (by Andrew Heywood and Clayton Chin)	Concepts like 'Political Theory', Approaches to Political Theory
» Political Ideologies by Andrew Heywood (Important)	Political Theory and Political Ideologies
» An Introduction to Political Theory by OP Gauba (Optional)	Concepts Like Liberty, Equality, Rights, Equality, Justice, Power, etc.
» Western Political Thought: From Socrates to the age of Ideologies by Brian R. Nelson	Western Political Thinkers (Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, etc.)
» Indian Political Thought by VR Mehta	Indian Political Thinkers (Kautilya, Aurobindo, Gandhi, etc.)

Paper 1: Section B	Topics to be covered
» Modern Indian Political Thought and Indian Government and Politics by Bidyut Chakraborty	For Debates on Constitutional and Democratic Governance, Constitutional History
» Introduction to the Constitution of India by DD Basu	Constitution of India, Its Features, and Various Functions
» From Plassey to Partition and After by Shekhar Bandopadhyay	For understanding the political aspect of Freedom Struggle, Various Perspectives on National Movement, Constitutional History.
» India's Struggle for Independence by Bipan Chandra	Understanding the history of Indian freedom Struggle.
» The Oxford Companion to Politics in India (Neerja Gopal Jayal and Pratap Bhanu Mehta)	For debates on Parliamentary Democracy, Judiciary, Local Governance.
» Democracy and its Discontents: India's Growing Crisis of Governmentality by Atul Kohli	Issues of Caste, Religion, Ethnicity, and various debates related to it.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| » Rethinking Public Institution in India by Devesh Kapur, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, and Milan Vaishnav | Various Constitutional and Statutory Institutions, their role, and functions. |
|--|---|

**Online Sources for Current Affairs:**

- » Economic and Political Weekly
- » Centre for Policy Research Website
- » Articles published in The Hindu, Indian Express

(Note: These sources are important for Section B of paper 1 to cover contemporary events and debates.)

Paper 2: Section A	Topics to be covered
» The Globalisation of World Politics by John Baylis, Patricia Owens, and Steve Smith	For theories of international relations, related debates, criticisms, Changing International Political Order. Contemporary Global Concerns (Human Rights, Terrorism, Environmental Issues, etc).
» Global Politics by Andrew Heywood	To have overall understanding of how Global Politics work (this book needs to be covered cover by cover). Key Concepts in International Relations, international and regional organisations theories and debates.
» MA Political Science Material (IGNOU) and Andrew Heywood's Global Politics	Contemporary Global Concerns and other miscellaneous topics.
» Comparative Politics by JC Johari » Comparative Politics by Tapan Biswal	State in comparative perspective, approaches to comparative politics, social movements, Politics of Representation and Participation.
» Governing Globalisation: Issues and Institutions by Deepak Nayyar	Globalisation: Responses from developed and developing societies.
» <b>Online Resources:</b> Journal Articles published by Council for Foreign Affairs, Newspaper Articles	To cover various contemporary global events, and academic debates related to them. Linking current events adds value by contextualizing topics, aiding understanding, and adding value to the answer.

Paper 2: Section B	Topics to be covered
» Challenges and Strategies: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy by Rajiv Sikri	For overall understanding of Indian foreign policy, history and factors effecting it
» Oxford Handbook of India's Foreign Policy by David Malone, C Raja Mohan and Srinath Raghavan	Indian Foreign Policy: Determinants of Foreign Policy; the Institutions of Policy Making; Continuity and change.
» Indian Foreign Policy: An Overview by Harsh V. Pant » The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World S. Jaishankar	India's relations vis-a vis various countries, nuclear question and associated debates, India's approach towards Global Multilateralism.
<b>For Section B of Paper 2, which predominantly encompasses dynamic and current aspects, a consistent and selective approach to reading is essential, specifically focusing on International Relations. The following sources offer a pathway to enriching your answers and grasping the scholarly dialogues surrounding contemporary events:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Online platforms such as Carnegie India, Brookings India, ORF, IDSA, Project Syndicate, and The Economist serve as valuable resources.</li> <li>» In-Depth Newspaper Articles: Global Affairs and Diplomacy</li> <li>» Insightful Magazine: World Focus</li> <li>» Engaging in television debates on platforms like Sansad TV, The Print, and Firstpost enhances your exposure to varied perspectives.</li> </ul>	

## STRATEGIZING THE PREPARATION

Many selected candidates have scored **more than 300 marks in the PSIR**. Though sounds a tough challenge, it is a feasible task to cross the 300 marks barrier with a thorough understanding of PSIR subject, comprehensive analysis of the syllabus, insights from past years' questions papers, and appropriate study resources. Further, it requires to frame a **personalized strategy** for each paper and each section in Paper 1 and Paper 2. Each section in PSIR demands a unique approach to tackle the diverse topics and address the demands of various static and dynamic questions.

In this section, we will delve into the specifics of customizing your preparation, tailoring it to your strengths and weaknesses, and aligning it with the changing trends in the UPSC exam.

### General Strategy for PSIR Subject Preparation

- » **Develop Conceptual Clarity on Topics:** In PSIR, there are numerous concepts or theories which need conceptual clarity. For example, while studying **Base-Superstructure Model of Karl Marx**, one should have understanding of the context, meaning of base/ superstructures, relationship of base (economy) with superstructures (religion, culture, politics, etc.), etc.
- » **Adopting scholarly approach:** Scholarly approach in PSIR requires command over topics and perspectives of various authors. Answers should cite thinkers like Franz Fanon, Deepak Nayyar,

Jagdish Bhagwati to present multiple viewpoints. For example, discussing globalization's impact on developing nations necessitates incorporating diverse scholarly opinions. (Refer the side box)

- » **Value addition through recent examples, data and case studies:** These elements would help in substantiating arguments as well as providing illustrations about particular topic. For instance, while discussing **role of social media**, student can highlight the role of Facebook, Twitter, etc. and **Cambridge Analytica' report**.
- » **Building interlinkages between the topics:** In PSIR, every topic in each section is interlinked in some or other way. So, identifying and building these linkages is one of the most important aspects in PSIR answer writing. For instance, when studying the topics like "**Role of religion in politics**", one should try to link the concept with current events role of religion, ideology, etc. (ex- PM of India inaugurating the new parliament building with the help of traditional and religious rituals).
- » Moreover, one can also use **catchy lines** or quotes from newspaper articles and write them in notes for easy revision. Such lines can be used directly in writing introductions or conclusions.

- » **Using diagrams, maps, flowcharts, etc. in the answers:** Certain innovative tools need to be incorporated in the answers for improving presentation aspects. For instance, the students can always draw a map while writing an answer on topics like- **Chinese Belt and Road initiative** or can draw the diagram of **Gramsci's model of Integral State**.
- » **Varying perspectives:** Mentioning a single thinker to is often insufficient to write a comprehensive answer and addressing the demands. Study different thinkers and their perspectives related to a topic. Note down them, revise them and use in the answers. For instance, **Theory of Political Obligation- views of Aristotle, Marxists, Hobbes, Locke, and Hegel** will make the answer comprehensive.

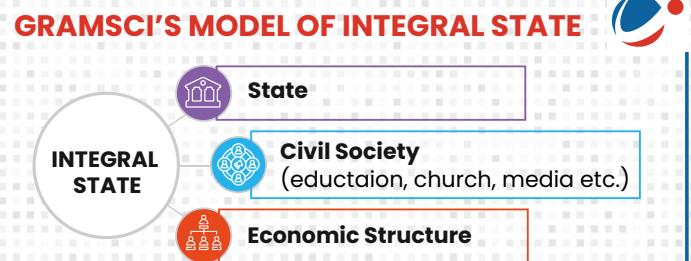
As we embark on the journey of preparing for PSIR, it is imperative to adhere to certain subject and topic specific requirements that will pave the way for scoring high marks in the exam.

These key elements will guide you in effectively mastering the PSIR subject and achieving success in the UPSC examination.

**Having gone through the general strategy points, we will now go into individual sections for specific interventions required.**

*The revolutionary leader Babu Binda Ghosh in his article "Red Samps for the old" criticised the moderate approach of the congress. He along with his brother Bardha Kumar*

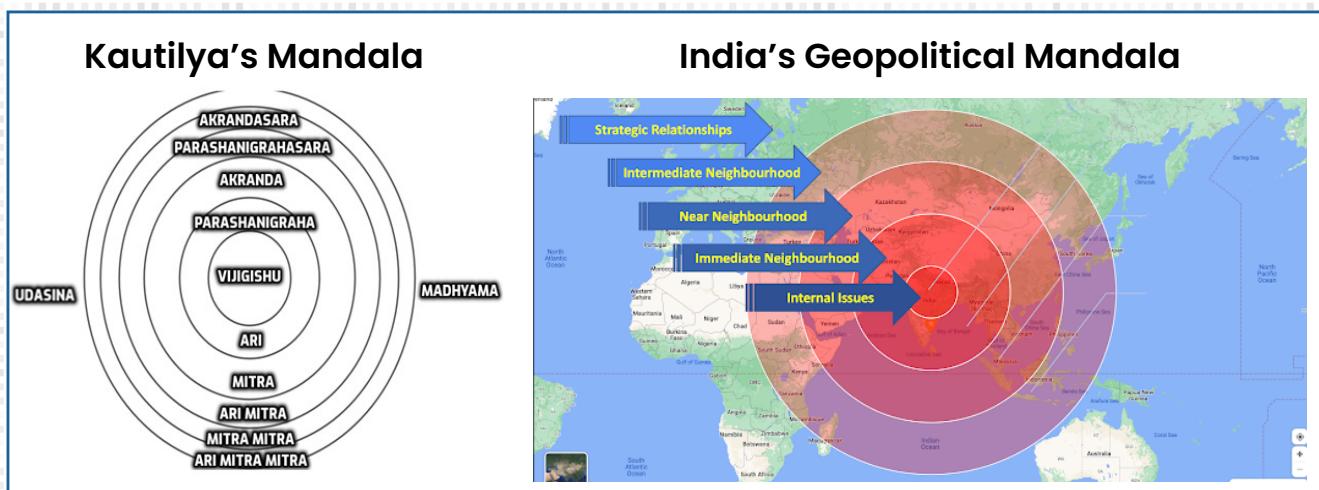
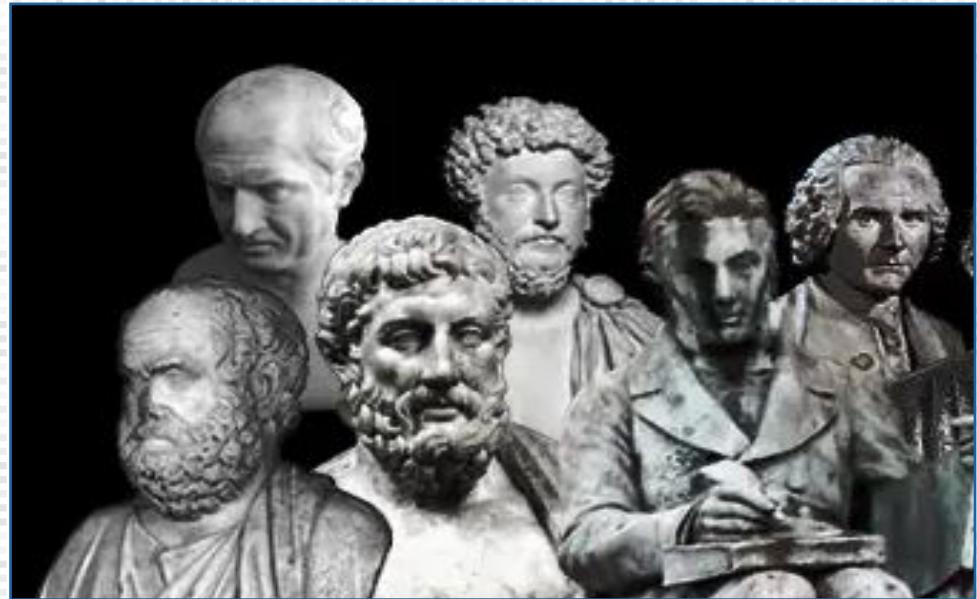
**Utkarsh Dwivedi, Rank-5, 2021**



## **STRATEGY FOR PSIR PAPER 1- SECTION A: IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

The Section A of Paper 1 is considered as highly scoring section. Moreover, the syllabus is largely static, small and can be revised with relative ease. So, if this section is prepared thoroughly, it can provide more output with lesser efforts.

- This section is considered as **core** of the PSIR subject. The Approaches, Ideologies, Theories, and thoughts of thinkers have applications in every section of Paper 1 and 2. For instance, thoughts of **Machiavelli and Hobbes** are applied in **Realist school of International Relations**.
  - Though the section A is largely static, yet we have to relate these thoughts with contemporary issues. For instance, **Kautilya's Mandal theory** can be related with the **contemporary foreign policy decisions**.
  - While going through various resources or reference books, try to make notes separately important quotes, views or some perspectives of the thinkers or scholars. For instance, **views of Nettleship on Plato's work** to appreciate the thoughts of Plato.
  - Some important news articles or book reviews can be identified and noted down in the notebook which can be used to substantiate or strengthen our arguments. For instance, the key findings or central arguments of **Thomas Picketty** in his book- "**Capital in the Twenty First Century**" and used in topics such as Socialism and Capitalism.



# STRATEGY FOR PSIR PAPER 1- SECTION B: IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Broadly, the section B of PSIR Paper 1 can be broadly divided into 3 parts- **Indian Nationalism and Constitution, Indian Politics and Social Movements.**

This section is largely of dynamic nature, and current issues constitute an important part of the preparation. Apart from the above mentioned broader PSIR strategy, following guidelines can be considered while preparing the topics.



- » **Indian Nationalism:** This section is largely static in nature. In this part, the students have to identify important scholars belonging to different schools like **Bipin Chandra, Shekhar Bandopadhyay, Anil Seal (Cambridge School)**, etc. and note down their perspectives.
- » **Polity or Constitution:** Though the syllabus has some overlap with GS Paper 2, yet the approach is slightly different. Here as well a student needs to have good hold over perspectives of scholars or authors along with relevant case laws. For instance, while studying the topics like **Decline of Parliament**, students must identify and collect different perspectives like **view of Lord Bryce on Parliament, Christophe Jaffrelot**, etc. Here, the students also have to follow the **newspapers** regularly as this section is highly dynamic. (**Refer the side box**)
- » **Society/ Social Movements:** While studying the topics like Civil liberties and human rights movements, women's movements, etc., a student must take note of various NGOs, civil society organisations, important movements (ex- **MeToo Movement, LGBTQ Movement**, etc.) and relevant case laws.
- » **Connecting the Topic with Broader Principles:** For instance, while discussing the issues associated with the **institution of Governor**, try to connect the topic with the broader principles of Constitution such as **Federalism**.
- » **Relevance of Reports or Recommendations of Commissions:** The committee or Commission recommendations are highly relevant while studying issues or suggestions or reforms. For instance, the Recommendations of 2nd ARC report are highly recommended, and students must study those recommendations. Ex-**2<sup>nd</sup> ARC Report** suggests repealing **Official Secrets Act** for effective implementation of **RTI Act, 2005**.
- » **Use of statistics or data:** Use of data becomes pertinent especially when we study the topics like **Electoral behaviour, Changing socio-economic profile of legislators, Performance of Parliament**, etc.

EXCERPT | INDIA | POLITICS

## The decline of parliament

Under the BJP's rule, India's legislature is gradually ceasing to be a place for debate.

CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT | Nov 04, 2021

In any democracy, parliaments are the institutions where the two mainstays of democratic culture that Levitsky and Ziblatt mention in their book— “mutual toleration and institutional forbearance”—are supposed to flourish, for the simple reason that the opposition is also represented in these aptly named representative assemblies. But such values can only materialize if parliament remains an important institution whose rules are respected by the executive.

## STRATEGY FOR PSIR PAPER II- SECTION A: IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION AND GUIDELINES

Approach is similar to Strategy for Section A (Paper 1) for most of the topics such as Comparative politics, Globalisation, Approaches to study of IR, etc. For the rest part of the syllabus, following guidelines should also be considered.

- » **Regionalisation of World Politics:** This unit requires slightly different approach. Here students need to collect basic facts such as members of **APEC** or **NAFTA**, contribution of a bloc (like NAFTA) to world GDP, share in world population, economic growth of a particular bloc, etc. in order to highlight the significance of the regional grouping.
- » **Contemporary Global Concerns (Democracy, human rights, environment, etc.) and Politics of Representation:** This unit is highly dynamic, and students need to go through the PYQs and read multiple sources for collection of relevant information or content. Every year the questions are of diverse and applied nature, so it requires special attention. For instance, the question "**How does democratic politics construct citizenship?**" (2023) requires linkage with theory of citizenship as well as current events (Citizenship Amendment Act) for effectively addressing the demand of the question. Also, it is important to note down important initiatives of India at domestic as well as international level (ex- **Steps by India in context of nuclear proliferation**).
- » **Using Contemporary examples:** For instance, while studying the theories like **Complex Interdependence and Cob-Web Model**, student must try to apply those theories and link with current developments such as **Formation of QUAD or developments in Indo-Pacific Region**.



COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## STRATEGY FOR PSIR PAPER II- SECTION B: IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION AND GUIDELINES

Section B of PSIR Paper 2 is completely dynamic and involves contemporary discussion. In order to approach the Section B of Paper 2, following guidelines can be considered.

- » **Evolution of Bilateral Relationship:** Here the students need to have understanding of



history of India's bilateral relations as well as knowledge of contemporary developments. For instance, when we study India's **relationship with Russia**, one needs to have good hold over **historical evolution and developments** in phases. The phases would include pre-independence, 1947 to 1971, 1971–1991, 1992–1998, and 1998 onwards.

- » **Importance of Facts and data:** The students are also expected to have **basic statistics or data** while substantiating the arguments. For instance, under the unit **India and UN System**, when we argue for **India's role in UN Peace Keeping Operations**, we need to mention the data such as India's participation in number of operations, number of soldiers deployed, etc.
- » **Using maps, diagrams, etc.:** The students can also **practice and draw maps** while studying the topics such as **China's String of Pearls Strategy or Belt and Road Initiative, Developments in Indo-Pacific region, Indo-Afghan Relations**, etc. (**Refer the side box**)
- » **Critical Analysis:** The students are also expected to study differing perspectives of different scholars or authors. For instance, while studying the topic like **Foreign Policy Making**, the students can take note of views of scholars like **Farid Zakaria, Randall Schweller**, etc. so that they can use those views while making notes as well as writing the answers. (**Refer the side box**)
- » **Use of Key Words:** The students need to have good amount of hold over the key words such as **balance of power, status quoist power, national security, changing world order, geopolitics, geoconomics**, etc. For example, a sample statement by **EAM Jaishankar** can help us understand how the keywords can be used in Section B of PSIR Paper 2.

founding the movement: "The world today has moved on from what the NAM founding leaders faced in Bandung in 1955. The scales of global geo-political balance have shifted, and continue to do so, propelled by forces of globalisation and transformational technological progress. Long-held assumption and alignments rooted in the legacies of colonialism and the ideology of the Cold War are making way for new configurations and partnerships."

**Words of EAM S. Jaishankar**

- » **Importance of Current Affairs:** Current affairs constitute a crucial component of PSIR Paper 2 (Section B). Most of the topics under Section B (Developments at Bilateral, Multilateral and Global levels) can be covered through the newspaper articles and websites of Think-tanks like ORF, IDSA, etc.

The most ancient and long-standing alliance has always made Afghanistan an important subject of mutual interest for India and Iran. Comment. (15 Marks)

Afghanistan has always been the central node for Great Games, starting with geographical contestation between UK and Russia in nineteenth century, US and USSR in twentieth century and has currently become a theatre of geopolitics after the withdrawal of US.

Robert D Kaplan has called Afghanistan as "A strategically important strategic location of Afghanistan".

Utkarsh Dwivedi, Rank-5, 2021

According to Neoclassical scholars like Farid Zakaria and Randall Schweller, actors too play an important role in foreign policy making. Since the Home Minister and the Prime Minister's Office is an important stakeholder from organizing events like Howdy Modi, Namaste Trump, PM Modi...

Utkarsh Dwivedi, Rank-5, 2021

# NOTES MAKING STRATEGY

Making notes for PSIR optional helps organize information, enhances understanding, and allows quick revision. It aids in focusing on key points, integrating current affairs, and improving answer writing skills by fostering clear and structured articulation of ideas.

- » **Comprehensive and Concise:** Create detailed notes covering names of relevant Political Scientists (including critics), their important work and central arguments and relevant quotes. (Refer the side box)
- » **Source consolidation:** Relevant content from various sources can be consolidated at one place to avoid scattering of information and revise the content with ease. Digital applications like **Evernote**, **Onenote**, etc. can be of great help.
- » **Balanced Analysis:** Balanced analysis demonstrates critical thinking, enhances credibility, and shows depth of knowledge. It prepares you for debates by considering all aspects of a topic comprehensively.
- » **Value addition techniques:** Various innovative tools like diagrams (Arendt's conceptual triad of labour, work, and action), maps (especially in IR), flow charts and infographics (in IGP), etc.
- » **Interlinkages:** Interlinkages between the topics and sections can be developed and mentioned in the notes for easy revisions. Such interlinkages can be used directly in the answers. For instance, when we study the topics like **National Interest** or **National Security**, we can cite the linkages between **thoughts of Kautilya (Arthashastra- Saptanga or Mandal Theory)** and **School of Realism**.
- » **Developing mind-maps:** While preparing the notes, students can develop mind-maps in which they can build a framework/ structure, show interlinkages and key pointers. (Refer the side box)
- » **Differentiating Optional and GS:** Given the substantial overlap between the topics covered in Section 2 of both papers and the broader General Studies (GS) syllabus of the mains exam, it becomes imperative to establish a clear distinction between approaches for the Optional

## PLATO

Relevant Quote:

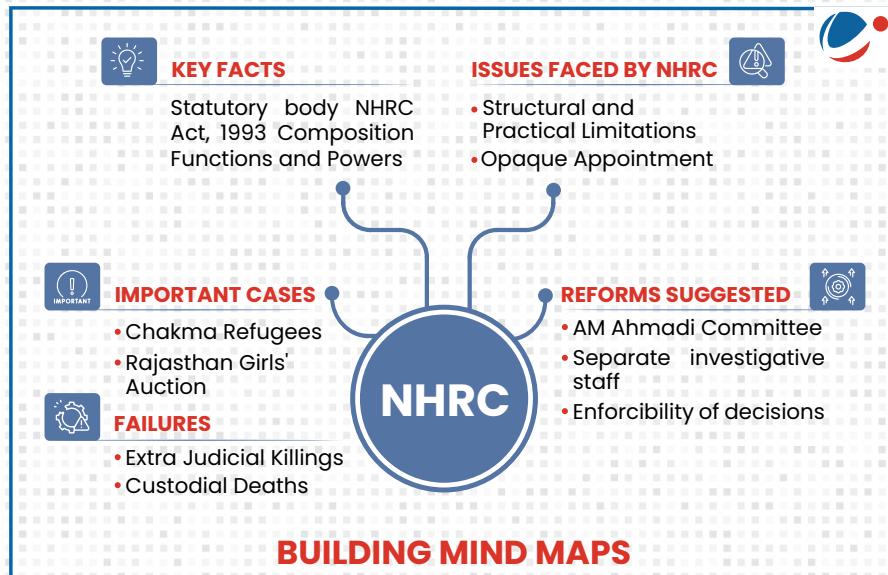
### Nettleship on Plato's Republic (Appreciating work of Plato)

"Republic may be regarded not only as philosophical work, but a treatise on social and political reform. It is written in the spirit of a man not only reflecting on human life but intensely anxious to reform and revolutionise it".

### Sinclair on Plato (Criticism)

"Plato's estimate of human race is at once incredibly low incredibly high...between the wisdom of the low and docility of the rest, the human race has never been so exalted or so abused".

### Relevant Quotes of Thinkers or Scholars



**and GS subjects.**

- » In this context, greater emphasis will be directed towards cultivating a **descriptive, analytical, and scholarly dimension** within the discussions.
- » For instance, while addressing the **intricacies of India-China relations**, we need to include **specific references** such as **authoritative literature, renowned scholars, and think-tank articles** (like ORF, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, etc.).
- » Furthermore, the **incorporation of various schools of thought, backed by the insights of scholars, serves as a crucial mechanism for bringing objectivity into the answers**. This is especially vital in the realm of PSIR, where questions often carry distinct opinions. Including debates from various viewpoints helps in framing more comprehensive and balanced answers.

In my notes I tried to incorporate the views of the scholars like PB Mehta, Upendra Baxi, etc. and important lines from the newspaper editorials. Also, I tried to prepare critical analysis with balanced approach. Further, the notes should be concise and with clear understanding.

**SWATI SHARMA**

AIR 17 (CSE 2023), PSIR- 304 Marks



## IMPORTANCE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

Current affairs are crucial in PSIR subject as they form a vital pillar of preparation by providing real-time examples, enhancing understanding of contemporary issues, and helping in analysing political and global dynamics effectively. The current developments in the social, political, and legal arena can act as a guiding light for identifying certain exam relevant topics.

For instance, after every General Elections, topics such **Socio-economic profile of legislators, electoral behaviour of voters**, etc. become more important.

### Linking Contemporary Developments with Theories:

In Section A of both papers, even though the concepts seem static, it is advisable to establish connections between these foundational ideas and current events.



For instance, in Paper 1 (Section A), when elucidating concepts such as Democracy and Human Rights, it's prudent to draw parallels with ongoing contemporary occurrences, such as the Refugee Crisis. By doing so, a bridge is formed between enduring concepts and real-time happenings, enhancing the contextual understanding.



Likewise, in Paper 2, when delving into concepts like National Interest and Theories of International Relations, it is valuable to establish links with pertinent global geopolitical incidents. For instance, the Russia-Ukraine War and India's Foreign Policy in relation to China can serve as illustrative cases. This practice serves to integrate the theories with live global dynamics, thereby fostering a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter.

Thus, the approach involves linking classic theoretical concepts with contemporary realities. By doing this, one not only enriches the comprehension of static ideas but also demonstrates their relevance and applicability in the ever-evolving world, ultimately leading to a more holistic and insightful exploration of the subject matter.

## ANSWER WRITING STAGE

Given its importance, many successful candidates and mentors emphasize the need to start answer writing practice early in one's preparation journey and to do it regularly. It helps in enhancing **analytical and communication skills, articulation of ideas, and time management**.

Making it a habit to write and review answers can significantly enhance one's chances of scoring high in the UPSC Mains examination.

In this context, following are the few guidelines:



### Analysis of PYQs:

Once you've reviewed specific concepts from your notes, it's crucial to conduct an analysis of Previous Year Questions (PYQs) to identify question patterns. Develop a mental framework to approach these questions effectively. After studying the concepts, attempt one or two PYQs to gauge your comprehension level. This practice not only validates your understanding but also aids in refining your problem-solving techniques.



### Mock Test Phase:

After practicing and analysing previous years' question papers and gaining conceptual clarity, the next crucial stage is the practicing mock test. For this, one can start with sectional tests first, and then gradually come to paper wise full-length tests. Consistent practice of mock tests not just boosts confidence and but reduces the anxiety levels before the UPSC Mains Exam.

Mock tests help in simulating the actual UPSC exam environment and enable candidates to gauge their preparedness.



## Understanding the Weakness:

Getting answers of the mock tests evaluated by the subject experts helps us identify the strengths and weaknesses in the answers as well as our approach. Feedback and suggestions from the subject experts aid in rectifying the mistakes and improving the answer writing skills. If the weak areas are due to the lack of content, then value addition needs to be done in the class notes.



## Benchmarking Against Toppers' Answers:

Comparing your answers with those of toppers can be an effective learning strategy. Study and observe the approaches used for introductions, conclusions, structure, and critical analysis. Try to adopt these elements and incorporate them to enhance your answers effectively. This strategy helps master answer writing by learning from successful approaches.



## Mastering Time Management:

Mock tests enhance the time management skills, provide a glimpse of the actual exam's time constraints, and avoid last minute rush.

Thus, mock tests practice and analysis helps us in fine-tuning our preparation and optimize the performance on the final day.

## CONCLUDING REMARK

In conclusion, **the strategy for PSIR optional subject preparation** in the UPSC exam plays a pivotal role in determining your success. By following the **comprehensive strategies** outlined in this guide, aspirants can undertake a **structured study plan** that covers all critical areas. It can help you **score well, showcase your expertise, and maintain motivation** throughout the preparation journey. A balanced and well-executed strategy increases your chances of securing a good rank and fulfilling your aspirations of becoming a civil servant. We, at **Vision IAS**, hope that this comprehensive strategy guide will prove highly valuable for all the UPSC aspirants with PSIR Optional Subject in their preparation journey.

# Heartiest *Congratulations*

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to all Successful Candidates

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**Anmol  
Rathore**



**Nausheen**



**Aishwaryam  
Prajapati**

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in **CSE 2022**



**Ishita  
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**Garima  
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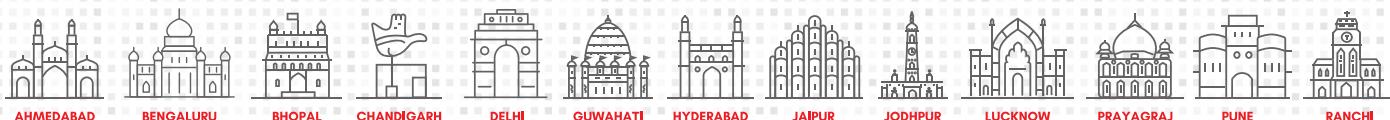
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RANCHI