



Mains 2013 Question Paper analysis

UPSC CIVILS MAINS exam was concluded on 8th December 2013. It was more or less came out to be test of candidate's capacity to analyze the issues in very short time and also put them on paper in restricted words. Many seems to be performed very well in this exam. A deeper analysis says that the candidates answered most of the questions peripherally. But UPSC expects an answer at a deeper level of analysis as can be seen from the focused nature of the questions.

Let us now discuss the question papers in a more comprehensive way.

Firstly, let us discuss the changes in the pattern of asking questions. The optional papers were more or less in a similar pattern, when compared to last year's papers. Earlier till 2012, there used to be a combination of questions like 2 markers, 5 markers, 10 markers and 20 markers. The 2 markers and 5 markers used to be of informative nature. These questions do not require any analysis. But the 20 and 25 markers used to be of analytical nature.

In this year's paper, almost all the questions are of analytical nature. In General Studies papers, UPSC followed a uniform pattern. These papers comprised of 25 questions of 200 words each and each question carries 10 marks, and all the questions are compulsory. So, a candidate has to write 5000 words in 3 hours. So, it is very difficult for a candidate to finish the entire paper in the stipulated time. And it is clearly mentioned in the question paper that the content is more important than the no. of words. So, a candidate should not try to attempt all the questions in haste. Instead, he/she has to first analyze the complete paper and then decide which questions have to be attempted, and then has to start writing answers. So, the decision making ability of the candidate comes into picture. This is very much needed in the present day administration, as an administrator has to take decisions, which have an impact on the common man. So, UPSC tried to judge the decision making ability of the candidates by giving the paper in a lengthy manner and at the same time, by framing the paper in such a way that almost all the questions are familiar to an average candidate.

This paper also requires a lot of analysis and a good understanding of various concepts, though it seems to be of basic level. The paper was more of a generalist nature, unlike the specialist nature. That is, this paper requires an interlinking approach. That is, a candidate has to be interlink various issues, like social issues to economic issues to national issues to political issues etc. An administrator is a generalist, who apply his mind and think in various dimensions and take a decision. He/she has to assess the impacts of the decision he/she takes on the people, environment, economy, polity, region etc. So, UPSC is trying to imbibe candidates who has a generalist view, by asking questions in that manner.

One more aspect in this paper is that subjectivity of the evaluator comes into picture in this Year's paper. This is because all the questions were of analytical nature and a candidate has to provide his own reasons and solutions, which may or may not be acceptable to the evaluator. None of the questions are of informative nature, and so no question has a standard answer. There is no unique answer to any question.

Now, let us look into the individual papers of General Studies, Essay and Optional.

Firstly, the General Studies comprises of four papers in the Main examination.

General Studies Paper 1 comprises of subjects- World History, Indian History, Indian culture, India after independence, Social Issues, World Geography and Indian Geography. Almost all the questions in this paper seems

to be of subjective nature, but most of the questions have current relevance. There were questions related to land reforms, developments after independence, social issues etc. These topics can be observed daily in the newspapers. For example, the land rehabilitation bill is in news for many days. And questions were asked on land reforms. So, a candidate has to keep abreast of the day to day happenings and should have the ability to link those issues with the subjects learnt. Almost all the components are covered in equal weightage.

General Studies Paper 2 comprises of Polity and Governance, International relations, Bilateral and multilateral relations, International organizations etc. Almost all the questions are of analytical nature and requires a lot of analysis and reasoning. These questions have current relevance. So, these questions have to be answered by linking the current issues with the subject knowledge. Most of the questions are not straightforward and the keywords like elucidate, comment and analyze have appeared. These questions need to be analyzed carefully and the candidate has to decide which questions he/she need to answer, instead of hastily writing down all the answers. In this paper, questions related to decentralization of powers, Section 66A of IT act, 13th Finance Commission, Mid day meal scheme etc were asked. All these are in news over a period of time.

Topic wise split of questions is as follows:

1. Polity(80 marks)- Indian Constitution(40M), Federalism(30M), Statutory bodies(10m)
2. Planning/Development- Welfare Schemes(50M), NGO/SHG/Pressure Group(20M)
3. Transparency/Good Governance(20m)
4. IR/Diplomacy(80M)- Neighbours(60m), Policies of countries(10M) and International Organizations(10m)

General Studies Paper 3 comprises of topics like Economy, Agro and Food Processing, Environment, Disaster management, Science and Technology and Internal security.

Topic wise split of this year's paper is as follows:

1. Economy(60M)
2. Agro and Food Processing(50M)
3. Environment+Disaster Management(45m)
4. Science and Technology(45m)
5. Internal Security(50M)

Questions were asked on topics of current relevance. For example, a question on the topic of WTO- food security issue. This has been in news for quite a long time. Similarly, some science and technology questions on recent innovations like 3D Printing, Biometric authentication were asked. Questions related to Internal Security were also asked which have a current relevance. For example, a question on cyber security was asked. This topic is in news always. So, candidates have to be thorough with the recent happenings, latest innovations and have to relate these with the subject matter.

General Studies Paper 4 comprises of topics related to Ethics, Integrity and aptitude.

Topic wise split of this paper is as follows:

1. Theory/definitions(125m)- Terminology based questions(35M), Personal Opinion based(40m), Quote based questions(50m).
2. Case Studies(125m).

The case studies were classified into two types.

1. Case studies, where options are clearly given in the question. Here, the candidates are asked to evaluate each of these options available and suggest what course of action the candidate has to get into the boots of the person involved, as per the case study in the situation and analyze the options available.

2. Case studies, where options are not given in the question. Here, the candidates are asked to make out the options available to them in that particular situation, and then analyze the merits and the demerits of the options available and then finally suggest the option which the candidate would adopt by citing reasons.

So, in this paper, UPSC is testing the decision making ability of the candidate and his moral and ethical dimension along with his integrity. The candidate has to analyze the case study meticulously and then has to choose the option available before him/her keeping in mind the ground realities. So, ultimately, the candidate has to choose the most practical solution, through his intellectual, moral, ethical qualities. So, UPSC can make out the quality and nature of the candidate based on this paper.

Then comes the **General Essay paper**. There is not much change in the pattern of the essay paper, when compared to that of last year's. Four topics were asked, out of which the candidate has to choose one. All the topics were general. The only change is that UPSC has mentioned the maximum word limit of 2500 words.

The optional papers' pattern was more or less similar to that of the last year's. Almost all the optionals are on the same par, with respect to the difficulty level of the paper. So, let's hope there would be no scaling this time.

So, a proper road map has to be followed to succeed in this examination. To start with, candidates have to read NCERT books to have a clarity on the basics of various subjects. Along with this, the following reference books have to be read:

- India 2013 – Publication Division, Govt. of India
- Economic Survey 2012-2013
- India's Struggle For Independence – Bipan Chandra
- India after Independence- Bipin Chandra
- The Indian Economy – Sanjiv Verma
- Indian Polity for Civil Services Examinations 4th Edition – Laxmikanth
- Geography of India- Majid Hussain
- India's Foreign Policy – Muchkund Dubey
- Challenge And Strategy : Rethinking India's Foreign Policy – Rajiv Sikri
- Ethics In Governance
- Mastering Modern World History – New Edition – Norman Lowe
- Facts of Indian Culture – Spectrum Publications

In addition to these, a candidate has to keep abreast of the recent happenings around through reading newspapers and magazines. The current affairs have to be linked to the subjects learnt. Some of the magazines to be followed are Yojana, Kurukshetra and Economic and Political weekly.

This examination requires a lot of writing practice. So, a candidate has to practice writing answers on a regular basis. There has to be interlinking of various topics. The syllabus should not be compartmentalized like History, Polity, Economy, International issues, National issues, Social issues etc. A candidate has to link all these subjects while studying and has to analyze each and every aspect meticulously.

Planning is very important to succeed in this examination. Planning when combined with its implementation leads to success. Preparation has to be consistent throughout with a regular study of 6-7 hours a day. So, preparation has to be sustainable to achieve results sustainably in all the three stages of this examination.
