

1. Gender issues have always been important component of essay paper. UPSC has maintained the same trend of asking question on this issue. Lot of media discourse these days are linking development with women empowerment, hence question on this theme was expected. Theme gave sociology (optional paper) an advantage. Beyond other languages, aspirants with Hindi language are at an advantage in such questions, as more elaborated explanation is given in Hindi beyond jargonized “English” statements.
2. Unlike previous questions, candidates trying to comprehend question only in “Hindi” are at disadvantage, because basically this is an English quotation and hence interpretation of quotation in Hindi is difficult. Last year aspirants were forced to write a compulsory essay on philosophy, but this year only this theme is solely philosophy based, so aspirants speculating too much about the nature of essays are at clear disadvantage.
3. Earlier such direct general studies type essays were asked a lot. So UPSC has reintroduced an old trend. People not revising Laxmikanth for Mains (General Studies paper 2) would have heavily suffered.
4. UPSC has every year asked essay on “linking sociology with economics”. Topic was heavily expected as current government has focused on innovation as an important component of its strategy in every government scheme related with socio-economic spheres.
5. Essay was expected last year as well. UPSC in essay as well as other papers of Mains (Even prelims) is asking questions from current affairs themes which have originated beyond last 12 months. Candidates who chose public administration as optional subject (Partly political science as well) need to remember that overdose of optional knowledge at times is also counterproductive in essays.
6. Every year science and technology theme is coming up. Internet this time has secured lot of media eyeballs. UPSC is looking for the candidates who have understanding of modern education, hence science and technology becomes an important component every year in essay paper. UPSC always asks about futuristic repercussions of simple debatable themes like internet.
7. Non employment growth is a major theme in Indian economics for the last decade. Theme was highly predicted as 25 years of LPG reforms have finished. Again a theme where pure economics is linked to social sector (i.e., jobs)
8. Most expected question for this year. People having knowledge of current affairs would have easily attempted this question. When whole nation is debating on a theme it becomes important for UPSC to check whether an aspirant has required inquisitiveness about burning current affairs themes.

Overall Analysis

1. Every year UPSC is giving questions to check the core ethical values of civil servants (Example question number 2).
2. Our country is moving towards 'pro growth' economy, hence maximum emphasis will always be on current affairs based economics. Same trend will be seen in years to come (Example question number 4, 7 and 8).
3. Basically UPSC needs candidates having views on burning socio-economic themes.
4. Distribution of topics across optional was good, though a clear and expected favor towards Sociology and Economics was present (for right reasons as well, as an administrator has foremost duty of socio-economic welfare).
5. 2 Essays format in 1000-1200 words is here to stay, where all four topics for current affairs would be from current affairs.