

## Important Guidelines for Civil Services Aspirants

By



Prof P.S. Panneerselvam, Retd Principal

The **Jeywin Publications** welcome you all, the cream of the youth of India, for having decided to take the Examinations. We provide below the most important guidelines for making your dream come true, so that you can earn the palm-branch of a Civil Service in the Indian Administrative Cadre.

You have to take two streams of written examinations:

- a) *Preliminary Examinations* --- normally held in the month of May every year.
- b) *Mains Examinations* --- normally held during the months of October – December every year.

The Preliminary Examinations consist of two Papers,

- i) **General Studies Paper.** This Paper is compulsory for all Candidates.
- ii) **One Optional Paper.** There are 23 Optional Papers allotted, out of which you have to take one Optional Paper. Here, Anthropology and Management are not given as Optionals.

In both the Papers, the questions will be of *Objective* and *Structured* in nature. At the end of each question, four *responses* will be given and you have to select only one response, which is the correct one. Sometimes, of the four responses, three may be correct and the fourth response may be indicative of this. In this case, you have to necessarily select the fourth response.

In the case of Preliminary *General Studies*, there will be 150 questions, having 1 mark each. The total time allotted is 2 hours (120 minutes). For each wrong response, the negative mark is 0.333. Pertaining to the Preliminary *Optional Paper*, there will be 120 questions, each having 2.5 marks. Here, the time allotted is 2 hours (120 minutes). The negative mark for a wrong response is 0.833.

In its December 2009 issue, the renowned journal *Pratiyogita Darpan* has given us a well-researched article written by Atul Kapoor (*Workhard to Lock your Share in the Pie*), dealing with the general architecture of Civil Services Examinations. A perusal of the article reveals that the total number of vacancies in the Civil Services would range normally from 400 to 600 each year. The number of vacancies notified at the time of calling for Applications for Civil Services may subsequently be increased.

The Applicants for these vacancies may number more than three lakhs. For example, in the year 2006, the total number of vacancies were 533 and for this, a total of 383983 candidates applied, and finally 175202 persons wrote the Preliminary Examinations. Of these, 7,488 persons were qualified for the Main Examinations. Among these, 1426 candidates were called for Interview, and eventually 474 candidates earned the honour of getting into Indian Civil Services.

To further enlighten our *Premium Users* on the process of IAS Selection, we reproduce below the Table, as given by Atul Kapoor.

<b>Number of Candidates who Applied, Appeared and Qualified at the Civil Services (Preliminary) Exam., 2006</b>										
<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Comm-unity</b>	<b>Applied</b>			<b>Appeared</b>			<b>Qualified</b>		
		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
1.	S.C.	81,198	29,863	1,62,133	41,729	10,673	51,802	1,053	110	1,163
2.	S.T.	30,979	7,900	38,912	14,905	3,575	18,480	560	57	617
3.	OBC	88,817	22,115	1,11,031	48,631	11,500	60,131	2,618	173	2,791
4.	General	94,969	36,746	1,31,907	47,936	17,454	65,390	2,854	341	3,195
<b>Total</b>		2,95,963	87,624	3,83,983	1,53,201	42,602	1,95,803	7,085	681	7,766
*Gender wise data in respect of 396 candidates who applied but did not qualify, are not included in the break-up.										

Thus, the above Table points out the fact that 1,95,803 candidates appeared for the Preliminary Examinations, and of these, 7,766 candidates were qualified to appear for the Main Exams. Here, the proportion is 3,83,983: 7,766 or 2.022% in the total. This means, for 100 candidates appearing for the Preliminary Examinations, 2 Candidates alone qualify for the Mains Exams.

This fact should be analyzed in the light of the negative marks assigned to each wrong response in both the Papers in the Preliminary Exams. Suppose a Candidate gives *three wrong responses* in General Studies Paper, he will be losing 0.999 marks in total and some 60 Candidates are likely to overtake him in the Final Ranking List. Likewise, when a Candidate makes two wrong responses in the Optional Paper, he loses 1.666 marks and, here, he will be overtaken by nearly 100 Candidates in the Final Ranking List. Candidates, therefore, have to be extra-careful in answering the questions in the Preliminary Examinations. It would be staggering and highly unfortunate indeed, if a Candidate is losing over 10 marks in each of the Papers by giving wrong responses. The Candidate, therefore, has to be meticulously careful and extra-cautious in picking out the right responses in both the Papers.

Also we should remember that no clear-cut Syllabus is given to the Subjects notified in the General Studies Paper. In the case of Optional Papers also, no well-defined Syllabus is prescribed. The Candidate, therefore, has to examine the nature, the general tenor, and the implicit Subject-domain of the questions found in the last five years Question Paper sets in the two Papers. He has to prepare for Exams, accordingly.

Still, like all Competitive Examinations, the Preliminary Exams will also be having a few surprises. *Unpredictability* of questions is the hall mark of any Competitive Examinations, held for higher post and offices. Unexpected questions / questions on the most recent events and issues of National and International significance, might pop up in the Question Papers. To avoid such uncertainties, a Candidate should always be in the habit of reading a few standard News Papers, Journals, and Standard Books on the Subjects, regularly.

Besides this, he should be in the habit of taking short notes in a set of Research Index Cards, each card being given to a particular theme or issue, as is normally done by a Ph.D. Research Student. The Candidates should also constantly revise and update in the Index Cards recent developments in the topics and issues of importance. Such a practice will make him totally prepared for writing the Preliminary Examinations most successfully, by reducing his / her chances of obtaining negative marks. More than that five or six Candidates can join together once in a week, and have a short discussion on various topics they have so far studied.

Last but not least, a Candidate should always be psychologically motivated and should develop a win-win mental attitude. Such a mental attitude, requires that a Candidate be positive and hopeful in all the endeavors he undertakes. No negative attitude or inferiority complex, disbelief or underestimation of his capability, be entertained by him at any time.

Immense belief in his own capability, unassailable faith in himself -- the marks of self-confidence -- are the surest pathways to success in any effort. Add to this are *will* and *determination*, and an undying *passion* for achieving one's goal, whatever be the odds.

The Youth of India, as the author of *Imagining India* Nandan Nilekeni says, possess these positive attitudes in a very large measure. You, our dear Candidate, possess such positive qualities and we are sure you will come out of the Civil Services Examinations, in flying colours.

Thanking You

***Wish You All Luck***