

## AN INTRODUCTION TO IAS

Becoming an IAS officer is the dream for many Indians. In fact, it is one of India's most prestigious and highly respected Job designations. But it is not an easy task to crack this **Indian Administrative Services (IAS)** examination. Just as it is said "Rome was not built in a day" the preparation needed for cracking the preliminary exam alone takes years of dedication and perseverance. The IAS examination is conducted every year by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) of India. It is conducted in two stages: the preliminary and the main examinations respectively. The *preliminary exam* which is the initial screening examination is conducted for three hours and consist of multiple choice questions on various relevant topics. Aspirants who clear the preliminary exam alone are allowed to appear for the *Main Examination* and this comprises of some nine papers.

**Paper I** is for 300 marks and focuses on the proficiency on the regional languages chosen from the ascribed list of languages.

**Paper II** tests the proficiency in the English language and it is for 30 marks.

**Paper III** involves the essay writing section where the allotted score is 200 marks.

All the current affairs and general studies are accommodated in **Paper IV and V** and the total marks allotted is 300. While the remaining four **papers VI to IX** comprise questions from the subject chosen over a list of 20 optional papers:

The list of optional papers provided by the UPSC are as follows:

1. Geology
2. Electrical Engineering
3. Commerce
4. Economics

5. Indian History
6. Law
7. Medical Science
8. Philosophy
9. Mathematics
10. Mechanical Engineering
11. Physics
12. Political Science
13. Sociology
14. Statistics
15. Psychology
16. Public Administration
17. Zoology
18. Civil Engineering
19. Veterinary Science
20. Geography

Candidates who successfully clear the Main exam need to appear for a final interview where their capabilities and capacity are assessed by a panel of eminent officers. These may include an evaluation of one's acumen, attention, aspects of judgment, honesty, integrity and leadership qualities. Thus there is a humongous spectrum of knowledge and skills that need to be developed even before attempting the IAS exam. Many candidates in an effort to crack this exam enroll themselves with some coaching centers but sadly many drop out on the way. In our state of Tamil Nadu, there are multiple such academies that coach aspirants for appearing in this exam.

[Chinmaya IAS Coaching Center in Chennai](#) tops its cadre and also among the best of choice amidst candidates. This coaching center prepares its students with very high standard materials and people who themselves have good experience with the conduit of these examinations. To help these dreamers live their dream, the candidates are well groomed to tackle both the subjective challenges during the exams as well as the soft skills challenges of

the interview phase. In addition to this, to ensure that the aspirants successfully reach their goal, they are kept motivated throughout their journey.

### **How to choose an optional subject for IAS mains from the list provided by the UPSC?**

The civil service examination consists of seven papers that carry 1750 marks in total. Paper VI and VII of the civil service examination conducted by the UPSC are the optional paper 1 and 2 for which the candidates are asked to select a single common subject from the list offered. Each of these exams is conducted for 3 hours and they count for 250 marks each. This segment is for testing the subjective knowledge of the candidate and his/her capability to apply them as required.

These optional subjects were, until recently, the major deciding factors for an aspirant for clearing the IAS exam. Since 2013 UPSC has reduced the optional papers from 2 to 1. Since then, these have seen a slack as a deciding factor, yet they play a critical role in boosting the candidate's score when they are chosen appropriately. Hence cracking the civil service exam also depends on the careful and logical selection of the optional subjects based on the candidates subject matter strengths, interests and of course the time available.

#### *How To Choose The best Optional subject?*

Every candidate is unique and furnishes distinct caliber, mental capacity, technical strength, and subject interests. Their academic background may be varied which also motivates their interests. Hence choosing the best optional subject cannot be generalized. What may suit one candidate may not be close to another candidate's subjective interests.

The following points may help you in getting an idea of what and how to select.

## **1. Check the statistics**

As there are more than 20 subjects, the preferences shown by aspirants may vary. There are multiple statistical surveys that have been conducted by various sources and the results highlight Geography, History, Psychology, Public Administration, Sociology as some of the most preferred subjects. But these need not be always the scoring options at the same time the subject of your personal interest. Moreover, the stats just provide a simple idea that these subjects are EASY to tackle.

## **2. Ask yourself**

At times the stats may not interest you and you may think of another subject in mind. In such a situation take a paper, list out all the 26 subjects and question yourself on whether you know a particular subject. If it doesn't ring a bell then it is not in your option. Strike it off. Repeat until you are left with a considerable smaller list of 3-4 subjects that you are very familiar with.

## **3. Skim the syllabus**

Once you have a rough idea on the subjects from the statistics check for the syllabus. The syllabus for the listed subjects are provided in depth in the UPSC application notification or you can also find them at the **Chinmaya IAS coaching** site that discusses this topic. Doing so would give a general idea on subject matter that would interest you more. But understand this is not a new venture that you may be interested in so sticking to what you already know may speed up your preparation process. A simple tip here would be to select some subject that you have already studied and enjoyed doing so, it may be from your Under graduation or Masters or at your school.

## **4. Availability of the resources needed**

The third important factor is the availability of materials. It is important to prepare for IAS exams, one needs to cover a vast syllabus. Having appropriate material that may help in-depth understanding as well as to skim through at the nick of exam time is of at most importance. There are scores of books available on selective subjects that are highly preferred by candidates. The Chinmaya IAS coaching center also possesses carefully prepared material for these optional subjects at its discretion. Some are even tailored as per the needs of its students.

## **5. Consider your timeline**

This is one very crucial factor for any IAS aspirant. Some may be willing to spend more than a year for preparing while some especially those that are working would have a few months to spare. So think clearly on how much time you are ready to spend on exam preparation. Here you need to consider the extent of the syllabus and the material available as well as your present state of knowledge. At this point don't forget that you have other papers that you equally need to concentrate so put that into your timeline as well. Now analyze for yourself if you can accommodate all of these within your time limit.

## **6. Self - study or Coaching**

Having completed all the above tasks you may by now have a clear idea on whether you can study by yourself or need extra support for cracking the IAS. Of course, it is a tedious process but clearing the civil service is very rewarding and worth every effort that you choose to put through. In case you opt for getting extra support select a good coaching center. Chinmaya IAS coaching center has a very good reputation and is located in the city of Chennai. It furnishes highly qualified teachers who take up their students dreams as their own and help their students to achieve their goals.

These six points are not the only considerable factors but are supposed to give the candidates a push in the right direction while selecting the optional subject. In case you do not want to take the risk of selecting any subject by yourself due to lack of experience or any other reasons still you have a point at your discretion. Skip the first five points and consider just the sixth one. Get enrolled in a coaching center and forget about all the nitty-gritty things just for taking your decisions. Yet doing a small homework may give you better clarity and confidence in your choices as it is you who are finally going to appear for the examination.

### **Tips and Tricks to crack UPSC Preliminary exam this 2019**

Have you decided to become an IAS officer? Well, you have taken the first step towards your life's most rewarding decision. As the preliminary exam notification are already out and the dates are closing by, you may want to start to gear up your preparation pace. To introduce you to the prelims. examination; it is

- Only the initial screening phase
- Involves 2 paper comprising of multiple choice objective questions
- Paper I is on general knowledge and current affairs
- Paper II comprises of aptitude, communication and the related
- Total mark allocated is 400
- Conducted for 2-hours

To facilitate your learning journey we give you some important tips and tricks.

- Do the SWOT

The syllabus covered for both the papers are vast. So the attention that needs to be given is also higher. Initially try to reason with yourself on your current status and list the subjects under the following :

1. Strength: What subjects you are really strong and the concepts are at the tip of your tongue,
2. Weakness: Those subject you have studied but you find it very difficult to workout i.e your weakness.
3. Opportunities: Which subjects you already possess some idea and there is an opportunity to know more.
4. Threat: Which are the subjects that you absolutely have no idea about but they are of paramount importance.

- Prioritize

Now that you have an understanding of your awareness on the varied subject areas, you need to prioritize on which subject you need to concentrate more and which ones you just need to brush up. So based on that you give a ranking for each subject on your list. Based on the subject priority that you have given, decide upon the time that you could spend on a weekly basis. This is important as you need to concentrate on various subjects and that too within a short span of time.

- Set a timeline

As it said 'early bird catches its prey', start your preparations early. Now you already have a clear strategically prepared plan on what subject to study and how to study, you need to set a timeline within which you have to complete a particular subject. However, this may not be applicable to current affairs as it may keep on updating. But make sure you give a good amount of time to read the newspapers and other information sources over a fixed time every day. Collect materials from trusted sources for all the subjects, you can also avail these services from IAS coaching centers with years of experience.

- Set right your sleep cycle

Don't worry you are already in the right track so make sure you are vigilant but relaxed. Get adequate 6-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep each day. This will,

in the long run, help you think quicker and sharper. This is also a proven way to keep our mental as well as physical strength throughout.

- Eat healthily and work out

Remember food plays a major role in this crucial time as a sound mind also needs good food. So eat a lot of healthy food that is easily digestible and absorbable by your body. Include a lot of iron and vitamin rich food like spinach, legumes etc that boost your immunity at the same time keep your brain at its top gear. Exercise is also a must as it helps you in concentrating better and keeping up the preparation pace in the longer run.

- Positive thinking

One can never say enough of this “positive thinking”. Ask any IAS topper the first thing they would suggest is to have a positive attitude towards life and its happening. It is not just a coincidence, because a mind that thinks positive already creates a map of the present situation and sets the path to reach its final goal. It tries to pull all the positive energy around it in order to achieve this final goal that it has set to itself.

These are just a few steps that you could do to by yourself for meeting your exams heads on. You can also take help from good IAS coaching centers like the Chinmaya IAS coaching center that provides a well structured approach towards preparing and cracking the prelims. as well as the mains. They also have very good infrastructure and materials that would amplify the speed of achieving your goal. All the best for realizing your dream of becoming an IAS.

### **Tips for IAS interview preparation**

Appearing for the civil service IAS interview itself is an achievement to be proud of. If you are at this stage you have already achieved three fourth of your success. You must have been preparing for a pretty long period with sheer determination to crack the exam and interview side by side. Once again each candidate is unique and the suitable preparation strategy may vary based on their individual capability. We suggest you some last minute preparation steps to lead you through the interview process.

## **The interview process:**

The final interview is a direct face to face meeting with the concerned authority. Just like any other interview process you would have to face a group of expert panel comprising of 5 to 6 members usually. They are mostly selected from a varied background like psychology, education etc. With the UPSC chairperson preceding over the interview process one can expect questions from any part of the information provided in your form. Do not feel that this is for grilling you. Their intention is to bring the best out of you and assess your individual qualities like stress handling, subject knowledge, innovative thinking, in-depth analytical skills, commitment, honesty, patience etc.

## **What to focus during interview preparation**

While preparing for IAS interviews one need to focus on a varied topics linked to each and every piece of information that you have written in your mains form. So start with your own family background, your birthplace and some significant facts about it, your parents profession. If you have worked earlier prepare a good amount of related details like the company, its achievement, your contribution towards its development, any specific achievement or incident where you have shown your leadership skills etc.

In case you have mentioned a hobby or a sport in your form then do prepare sufficiently on the same. Concentrate on current affairs a lot, starting from and significant award winners, sports, politics, even on current movies and related trends.

The baseline is; know every point that you have mentioned in your mains form to its minutest details supplement it with current affairs and events of repute.

## **Attitude building**

Attitude is a very important aspect to be inculcated within you for succeeding in the interview. Be polite and honest in case you do not know the answer for a question, do not make up stories to fill in the gap. Instead just frankly let them know that you do not know pretending to know would only put you down in the eyes of the interviewers. The same in case you have answered up

to your satisfaction but the interviewer says it otherwise, in such situation keep your calm and have your stand. Show your firmness and ownership for your thoughts and actions. Finally, whatever the situation is, be diplomatic in your answers, be polite to thank them for the opportunity and keep a hearty smile throughout the interview.

### **Practice through the mock interviews**

Attend as many mock interviews as you can. Take the online practice interviews, or have your family members or friends ask questions. You can also opt to join any IAS coaching centres where they would provide mock interviews on a regular basis. The best thing about it is that your interview fear would eventually fade away. You can also take guidance from the coaching centers how to present yourselves, on communicating your thoughts in a positive manner etc. It would certainly be helpful not just with the preparation but also with managing time.

Last but not the least do consider fixing your interview wear at an earlier point of time.

### **Interview Attire**

Appearance for the interview is equally very important. You are of course expected to dress up in formal attire for your interview. Male candidates could wear a suit with a tie while female candidates may wear a neat saree or a salwar. Above all wear what makes you feel confident as well as comfortable. Just make sure that the colour is more pleasant and fit for the occasion.

### **How to stay focused throughout the IAS preparation**

Preparing for IAS is a humongous task that involves hours of continuous preparation. Unfortunately, our human mind gets distracted easily and very frequently. It may be said that if one really has the drive and dedication then he/she may be capable of bringing continuous focus, but in reality it is a difficult thing to achieve. Moreover, when the brain gets stressed its capability to take in, assimilate and store information reduces. However, for IAS preparation one needs to keep up a consistent work pace in a progressive

manner. We could suggest the following tips to stay focused during the preparatory phase

### **Set up a study area**

First things first, if you want to stay focused for a longer time, set our work area in a conducive manner. Select a room that is well ventilated and has good lighting. If it is even noise free to some extent you are ready to gain a lot throughout. Have a shelf or even a large box to keep all the books and notes that you may use while studying and that too within your hands reach. And above everything keep your place tidy.

### **Set a time table**

There are multiple subjects that you need to study each day. The best way to keep a consistent learning progress is by making a time table. As goes the saying “Eat the frog first thing in the morning”, start with the subject that you need to focus more and as the day progresses chart the subjects that needs lighter preparation towards the end of the day.

### **Develop a routine**

With the environment and work schedule set on the right track half of distractions could be tackled. But until you set a routine for yourselves, it would be very difficult to follow the timetable. So try to get a good solid sleep of 6 to 8 hours each day. Try waking up at the same time each at the same time as early the better. Try to incorporate some good cardio like jumping rope or jogging. Once you get your heart pumping you may get a kick start for the day physically. Do not underestimate the power of meditation. Once your exercise is done complete it with at least 15 minutes of meditation to keep your mental fitness. Spend the last 10 minutes of the night in meditation as well. You may see the change in your health and level of concentration in a little over a week.

## **Follow a healthy diet**

Eat a balanced diet, it helps you in keeping your mind and body healthy. Include large portions of leafy greens, vegetables and fruits, good amount of nuts and sprouts. Try limiting junk food as well as over eating. Remember there is a lot of time to be spent sitting on that chair of yours so eat light to help your slowed metabolism.

## **Care to take a break**

Studying for long hours can stress you tremendously so remember to take a short break now and then. Try hanging out with friends and family take up a hobby or simply go for a walk. When you feel your ready to jump in again start back. Taking a break would help keep you interest level high and continuous.

## **Practice**

Keeping up with the routine may be difficult initially but as you confidently move forward with a few weeks you may get a hold of it. So don't lose heart at your initial struggle keep working towards achieving your daily goals. To help you concentrate initially try setting a timer for 20 to 25 minutes and in that duration keep reading without distraction. Slowly increase this time through practice.

Keep your positive outlook and practice every day in a steady pace. Do not forget to take the mock test and interview at a regular interval. As the exam dates get closer do the mocks more frequently while sticking to you study routine. Surely you would succeed with all the hard and smart work that you have put in.