

# UPSC Mains 2014 — All GS Questions

78 Questions across GS Paper I-IV

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## GS-I

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q1. To what extent has the urban planning and culture of the Indus Valley Civilization provided inputs to the present day urbanization? Discuss.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q2. Gandhara sculpture owed as much to the Romans as to the Greeks. Explain.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q3. Taxila university was one of the oldest universities of the world with which were associated a number of renowned learned personalities of different disciplines. Its strategic location caused its fame to flourish, but unlike Nalanda, it is not considered as a university in the modern sense. Discuss.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q4. The third battle of Panipat was fought in 1761. Why were so many empire-shaking battles fought at Panipat?**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q5. Sufis and medieval mystic saints failed to modify either the religious ideas and practices or the outward structure of Hindu/Muslim societies to any appreciable extent. Comment.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q6. Examine critically the various facets of economic policies of the British in India from mid-eighteenth century till independence.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q7. In what ways did the naval mutiny prove to be the last nail in the coffin of British colonial aspirations in India?**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q8. What were the major political, economic and social developments in the world which motivated the anti-colonial struggle in India?**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q9. What were the events that led to the Suez Crisis in 1956? How did it deal a final blow to Britain's self-image as a world power?**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q10. The New Economic Policy - 1921 of Lenin had influenced the policies adopted by India soon after independence. Evaluate.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q11. How does patriarchy impact the position of a middle class working woman in India?**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q12. Why do some of the most prosperous regions of India have an adverse sex ratio for women? Give your arguments.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q13. Should the pursuit of carbon credits and clean development mechanisms set up under UNFCCC be maintained even though there has been a massive slide in the value of a carbon credit? Discuss with respect to India's energy needs for economic growth.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q14. Discuss the various economic and socio-cultural forces that are driving increasing feminization of agriculture in India.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q15. Environmental Impact Assessment studies are increasingly undertaken before a project is cleared by the Government. Discuss the environmental impacts of coal-fired thermal plants located at coal pitheads.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q16. Most of the unusual climatic happenings are explained as an outcome of the El-Nino effect. Do you agree?**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q17. Why are the world's fold mountain systems located along the margins of continents? Bring out the association between the global distribution of fold mountains and the earthquakes and volcanoes.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q18. Explain the formation of thousands of islands in Indonesian and Philippines archipelagos.**

2014 GS-I 5M • 150W

Easy

**Q19. What do you understand by the theory of 'continental drift'? Discuss the prominent evidences in its support. (100 words)**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q20. Bring out the relationship between the shrinking Himalayan glaciers and the symptoms of climate change in the Indian sub-continent.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q21. Major hot deserts in northern hemisphere are located between 20-30 deg N latitudes and on the western side of the continents. Why? (200 words)**

2014 GS-I 5M • 150W

Easy

**Q22(a). Bring out the causes for more frequent occurrence of landslides in the Himalayas than in the Western Ghats. (100 words)**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q23. Account for the change in the spatial pattern of the Iron and Steel industry in the world.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q24. Critically evaluate the various resources of the oceans which can be harnessed to meet the resource crisis in the world.**

2014 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q25. How does India see its place in the economic space of rising natural resource rich Africa?**

## GS-II

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q1. Starting from inventing the 'basic structure' doctrine, the judiciary has played a highly proactive role in ensuring that India develops into a thriving democracy. In light of the statement, evaluate the role played by judicial activism in achieving the ideals of democracy.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q2. Though the federal principle is dominant in our Constitution and that principle is one of its basic features, but it is equally true that federalism under the Indian Constitution leans in favour of a strong Centre, a feature that militates against the concept of strong federalism. Discuss.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q3. The 'Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and its Members' as envisaged in Article 105 of the Constitution leave room for a large number of un-codified and un-enumerated privileges to continue. Assess the reasons for the absence of legal codification of the 'parliamentary privileges'. How can this problem be addressed?**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q4. What do you understand by the concept "freedom of speech and expression"? Does it cover hate speech also? Why do the films in India stand on a slightly different plane from other forms of expression? Discuss.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q5. Instances of President's delay in commuting death sentences has come under public debate as denial of justice. Should there be a time limit specified for the President to accept/reject such petitions? Analyse.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q6. The size of the cabinet should be as big as governmental work justifies and as big as the Prime Minister can manage as a team. How far is the efficacy of a government then inversely related to the size of the cabinet? Discuss.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q7. Though 100 percent FDI is already allowed in non-news media like a trade publication and general entertainment channel, the Government is mulling over the proposal for increased FDI in news media for quite some time. What difference would an increase in FDI make? Critically evaluate the pros and cons.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q8. The setting up of a Rail Tariff Authority to regulate fares will subject the cash strapped Indian Railways to demand subsidy for obligation to operate non-profitable routes and services. Taking into account the experience in the power sector, discuss if the proposed reform is expected to benefit the consumers, the Indian Railways or the private container operators.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q9. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in India can be most effective when its tasks are adequately supported by other mechanisms that ensure the accountability of a government. In light of the above observation assess the role of NHRC as an effective complement to the judiciary and other institutions in promoting and protecting human rights standards.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q10. The penetration of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in rural areas in promoting participation in development programmes is facing socio-cultural hurdles. Examine.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q11. Do government's schemes for up-lifting vulnerable and backward communities by protecting required social resources for them, lead to their exclusion in establishing businesses in urban economies?**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q12. An athlete participates in Olympics for personal triumph and nation's glory; victors are showered with cash incentives by various agencies, on their return. Discuss the merit of state sponsored talent hunt and its cultivation as against the rationale of a reward mechanism as encouragement.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q13. Should the premier institutes like IITs/IIMs be allowed to retain premier status, allowed more academic independence in designing courses and also decide mode/criteria of selection of students. Discuss in light of the growing challenges.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q14. Has the Cadre based Civil Services Organization been the cause of slow change in India? Critically examine.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q15. Two parallel run schemes of the Government, viz. the Aadhaar Card and NPR, one as voluntary and the other as compulsory, have led to debates at national levels and also litigations. On merits, discuss whether or not both schemes need run concurrently. Analyse the potential of the schemes to achieve developmental benefits and equitable growth.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q16. With respect to the South China sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q17. The aim of Information Technology Agreements (ITAs) is to lower all taxes and tariffs on information technology products by signatories to zero. What impact would such agreements have on India's interests?**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q18. Some of the International funding agencies have special terms for economic participation stipulating a substantial component of the aid to be used for sourcing equipment from the leading countries. Discuss on merits of such terms and if, there exists a strong case not to accept such conditions in the Indian context.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q19. India has recently signed to become founding member of New Development Bank (NDB) and also the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). How will the role of the two Banks be different? Discuss the strategic significance of these two Banks for India.**

2014 GS-II 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q20. WTO is an important international institution where decisions taken affect countries in a profound manner. What is the mandate of WTO and how binding are their decisions? Critically analyse India's stand on the latest round of talks on Food security.**

## GS-III

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q1. Normally countries shift from agriculture to industry and then later to services, but India shifted directly from agriculture to services. What are the reasons for the huge growth of services vis-a-vis industry in the country? Can India become a developed country without a strong industrial base?**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q2. "While we flaunt India's demographic dividend, we ignore the dropping rates of employability." What are we missing while doing so? Where will the jobs that India desperately needs come from? Explain.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q3. There is also a point of view that Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) set up under the State Acts have not only impeded the development of agriculture but also have been the cause of food inflation in India. Critically examine.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q4. "In the villages itself no form of credit organization will be suitable except the cooperative society." — All India Rural Credit Survey. Discuss this statement in the background of agricultural finance in India. What constraints and challenges do financial institutions supplying agricultural finance face? How can technology be used to better reach and serve rural clients?**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q5. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 has come into effect from 1st January, 2014. What are the key issues which would get addressed with the Act in place? What implications would it have on industrialization and agriculture in India?**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q7. Explain how Private Public Partnership arrangements, in long gestation infrastructure projects, can transfer unsustainable liabilities to the future. What arrangements need to be put in place to ensure that successive generations' capacities are not compromised?**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q8. National Urban Transport Policy emphasises on 'moving people' instead of 'moving vehicles'. Discuss critically the success of the various strategies of the Government in this regard.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q9. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the defence sector is now set to be liberalized. What influence this is expected to have on Indian defence and economy in the short and long run?**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q14. Drought has been recognized as a disaster in view of its spatial expanse, temporal duration, slow onset and lasting effects on vulnerable sections. With a focus on the September 2010 guidelines from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), discuss the mechanisms for preparedness to deal with likely El Niño and La Niña fallouts in India.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q19. Tropical cyclones are largely confined to South China Sea, Bay of Bengal and Gulf of Mexico. Why?**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Qnull. Capitalism has guided the world economy to unprecedented prosperity. However, it often encourages short-sightedness and contributes to wide disparities between the rich and the poor. In this light, would it be correct to believe and adopt capitalism for bringing inclusive growth in India? Discuss.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q10. Scientific research in Indian universities is declining, because a career in science is not as attractive as are business professions, engineering or administration, and the universities are becoming consumer-oriented. Critically comment.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q11. Can overuse and free availability of antibiotics without Doctor's prescription, be contributors to the emergence of drug-resistant diseases in India? What are the available mechanisms for monitoring and control? Critically discuss the various issues involved.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q12. In a globalized world, Intellectual Property Rights assume significance and are a source of litigation. Broadly distinguish between the terms — Copyrights, Patents and Trade Secrets.**

2014 GS-III 12M • 200W

Medium

**Q13. Should the pursuit of carbon-credits and clean development mechanisms set up under UNFCCC be maintained even though there has been a massive slide in the value of a carbon credit? Discuss with respect to India's energy needs for economic growth.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q16. "The diverse nature of India as a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society is not immune to the impact of radicalism which is seen in her neighbourhood." Discuss along with strategies to be adopted to counter this environment.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q17. International civil aviation laws provide all countries complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above their territory. What do you understand by 'airspace'? What are the implications of these laws on the space above this airspace? Discuss the challenges which this poses and suggest ways to contain the threat.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q18. How does illegal transborder migration pose a threat to India's security? Discuss the strategies to curb this, bringing out the factors which give impetus to such migration.**

2014 GS-III 12.5M • 200W

Medium

**Q20. China and Pakistan have entered into an agreement for development of an economic corridor. What threat does this pose for India's security? Critically examine.**

## GS-IV

2014 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Hard

**Q1(a). All human beings aspire for happiness. Do you agree? What does happiness mean to you? Explain with examples. (150 words)**

(a) All human beings aspire for happiness. Do you agree? What does happiness mean to you? Explain with examples.

(b) What does ethics seek to promote in human life? Why is it all the more important in public administration?

2014 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Hard

**Q2(a). In the context of defence services, 'patriotism' demands readiness to even lay down one's life in protecting the nation. According to you, what does patriotism imply in everyday civil life? Explain with illustrations and justify your answer. (150 words)**

(a) In the context of defence services, 'patriotism' demands readiness to even lay down one's life in protecting the nation. According to you, what does patriotism imply in everyday civil life? Explain with illustrations and justify your answer.

(b) What do you understand by 'probity' in public life? What are the difficulties in practising it in the present times? How can these difficulties be overcome?

2014 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Hard

**Q3(b). "Human beings should always be treated as 'ends' in themselves and never as merely 'means'." Explain the meaning and significance of this statement, giving its implications in the modern techno-economic society. (150 words)**

(a) "Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, but knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful." What do you understand by this statement? Explain your stand with illustrations from the modern context.

(b) "Human beings should always be treated as 'ends' in themselves and never as merely 'means'." Explain the meaning and significance of this statement, giving its implications in the modern techno-economic society.

2014 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Hard

**Q4(b). There is a heavy ethical responsibility on the public servants because they occupy positions of power, handle huge amounts of public funds, and their decisions have wide-ranging impact on society and environment. What steps have you taken to improve your ethical competence to handle such responsibility? (150 words)**

(a) Which eminent personality has inspired you the most in the context of ethical conduct in life? Give the gist of his/her teachings. Giving specific examples, describe how you have been able to apply these teachings for your own ethical development.

(b) There is a heavy ethical responsibility on the public servants because they occupy positions of power, handle huge amounts of public funds, and their decisions have wide-ranging impact on society and environment. What steps have you taken to improve your ethical competence to handle such responsibility?

2014 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Hard

**Q5(b). It is often said that poverty leads to corruption. However, there is no dearth of instances where affluent and powerful people indulge in corruption in a big way. What are the basic causes of corruption among people? Support your answer with examples. (150 words)**

(a) The current society is plagued with widespread trust-deficit. What are the consequences of this situation for personal well-being and for societal well-being? What can you do at the personal level to make yourself trustworthy?

(b) It is often said that poverty leads to corruption. However, there is no dearth of instances where affluent and powerful people indulge in corruption in a big way. What are the basic causes of corruption among people? Support your answer with examples.

2014 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q6. What factors affect the formation of a person's attitude towards social problems? In our society, contrasting attitudes are prevalent about many social problems. What contrasting attitudes do you notice about the caste system in our society? How do you explain the existence of these contrasting attitudes? (150 words)**

2014 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q7. What does 'accountability' mean in the context of public service? What measures can be adopted to ensure individual and collective accountability of public servants? (150 words)**

2014 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q8. We are witnessing increasing instances of sexual violence against women in the country. Despite existing legal provisions against it, the number of such incidences is on the rise. Suggest some innovative measures to tackle this menace. (150 words)**

2014 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

**Q9. Now-a-days, there is an increasing thrust on economic development all around the globe. At the same time, there is also an increasing concern about environmental degradation caused by development. Many a time, we face a direct conflict between developmental activity and environmental quality. It is neither feasible to stop or curtail the developmental process, nor is it advisable to keep degrading the environment, as it threatens our very survival. Discuss some feasible strategies which could be adopted to eliminate this conflict and which could lead to sustainable development. (250 words)**

2014 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

**Q10. Suppose one of your close friends, who is also aspiring for civil services, comes to you for discussing some of the issues related to ethical conduct in public service. He raises the following points:**

**(i) In the present times, when unethical environment is quite prevalent, individual attempts to stick to ethical principles may cause a lot of problems in one's career. It may also cause hardship to the family members as well as risk to one's life. Why should we not be pragmatic and follow the path of least resistance, and be happy with doing whatever good we can?**

**(ii) When so many people are adopting wrong means and are grossly harming the system, what difference would it make if only a small minority tries to be ethical? They are going to be rather ineffective and are bound to get frustrated.**

**(iii) If we become fussy about ethical considerations, will it not hamper the economic progress of our country? After all, in the present age of high competition, we cannot afford to be left behind in the race of development.**

**(iv) It is understandable that we should not get involved in grossly unethical practices, but giving and accepting small gratifications and doing small favours increases everybody's motivation. It also makes the system more efficient. What is wrong in adopting such practices? Critically analyse the above viewpoints. On the basis of this analysis, what will be your advice to your friend? (250 words)**

2014 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

**Q11. You are a no-nonsense, honest officer. You have been transferred to a remote district to head a department that is notorious for its inefficiency and callousness. You find that the main cause of the poor state of affairs is the indiscipline of a section of employees. They do not work themselves and also disrupt the working of others. You first warned the troublemakers to mend their ways or else face disciplinary action. When the warning had little effect, you issued a show-cause notice to the ringleaders. As a retaliatory measure, these troublemakers instigated a woman employee amongst them to file a complaint of sexual harassment against you with the Women's Commission. The Commission promptly seeks your explanation. The matter is also publicised in the media to embarrass you further.**

Some of the options to handle this situation could be as follows:

- (i) Give your explanation to the Commission and go soft on the disciplinary action.
- (ii) Ignore the Commission and proceed firmly with the disciplinary action.
- (iii) Brief your higher-ups, seek directions from them and act accordingly.

Suggest any other possible option(s). Evaluate all of them and suggest the best course of action, giving your reasons for it. (250 words)

2014 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

**Q12. Suppose you are the CEO of a company that manufactures specialised electronic equipment used by a government department. You have submitted your bid for supplying this equipment to the department. Both the quality and the cost of your offer are better than those of the competitors. Yet the concerned officer is demanding an undue favour from you in the form of a bribe to process the order in your favour. The order is very important for your company as well as for your own career. Refusal to pay the bribe may result in the order going to your competitor and could also lead to blacklisting of your firm.**

What are the options available to you? Which option would you adopt and why? Evaluate each option on merits and demerits and justify the course of action you propose to take. (250 words)

2014 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

**Q13. Rameshwar successfully cleared the prestigious civil services examination and was excited about the opportunity that he would get through the civil services to serve the country. However, soon after joining the services, he realized that things are not as rosy as he had imagined.**

He found a number of malpractices prevailing in the department assigned to him. For example, funds under various schemes and grants were being misappropriated. The official facilities were frequently being used for personal needs by the officers and staff. After some time, he noticed that the process of recruiting the staff was also not up to the mark. Prospective candidates were required to write an examination in which a lot of cheating was going on. Some candidates were provided external help in the examination. Rameshwar brought these incidents to the notice of his seniors. However, he was advised to keep his eyes, ears and mouth shut and ignore all these things which were taking place with the connivance of the higher-ups. Rameshwar felt highly disillusioned and uncomfortable. He comes to you seeking your advice.

Indicate various options that you think are available in this situation. How would you help him to evaluate these options and choose the most appropriate path to be adopted? (250 words)

2014 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

**Q14. In our country, the migration of rural people to towns and cities is increasing drastically. This is causing serious problems both in the rural as well as in the urban areas. In fact, things are becoming really unmanageable. Can you analyze this problem in detail and indicate not only the socio-economic but also the emotional and attitudinal factors responsible for this problem? Also, distinctly bring out why—**

- (a) educated rural youth are trying to shift to urban areas;**
- (b) landless poor people are migrating to urban slums;**
- (c) even some farmers are selling off their land and trying to settle in urban areas taking up petty jobs.**

**What feasible steps can you suggest which will be effective in controlling this serious problem of our country? (250 words)**

- (a) educated rural youth are trying to shift to urban areas
- (b) landless poor people are migrating to urban slums
- (c) even some farmers are selling off their land and trying to settle in urban areas taking up petty jobs