A-LEVEL

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

7062/2C: Study of religion and dialogues: Hinduism
Report on the Examination

7062
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Introduction

There were many excellent scripts and some were outstanding. There were maximum-mark answers to each part of each question. In most cases there was clear evidence of very thorough preparation by both teachers and students. Many answers directly responded to the questions set, targeting their information and arguments appropriately. There was no sign that anyone struggled with time allocation, scripts were legible and on the whole, answers were well-organised.

Most AO2 answers were very well-structured and had clear evidence to present both 'for' and 'against' the view presented; however, even in some very well-informed answers, there was often very limited critical analysis and in some cases it was missing altogether. The very frequent use of an essay technique that opened AO2 answers and dialogues with a phrase such as 'I wholeheartedly agree/disagree with this view' did not always match the reasoning that followed, and may have limited the display of critical analysis in the answers. The most effective answers often took a more open approach to argue that there were elements of truth in opposing views before reaching a balanced conclusion.

Section A: Hinduism

Question 1

Part 01.1

Many of the more effective answers focused on the issues identified in the specification such as the challenges to religious truths and moral values from science and secular culture. Such answers were often illustrated with reference to teachings such as creation and evolution, and to moral values associated with the status of women. Many also referred to the impact of western values in India. Some described responses to those challenges rather than the challenges themselves, which meant that their answers were partially irrelevant. Material dealing with the transition of religion from the public to the private sphere was often the least developed. Some answers drew very broadly on material studied throughout the course, while others focused closely on the material specified in the secularisation section of the specification. Either approach was acceptable.

Part 01.2

Some less effective answers repeated information presented in 01.1 as evidence that Hinduism had failed to defend itself against secularisation. They continued to then describe responses from, for example, Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and ISKON as evidence of successful defences without evaluating their success in any way: such responses only partly addressed the question. Some answers also ignored one or more aspects of the 'challenge of secularisation' described in 01.1. For example, much may have been made in the first part of the challenge from science, but included little, or nothing, in this part of the answer about how successfully Hinduism has responded to that challenge. The more successful answers focused on a range of responses and evaluated their success.

Question 2

Part 02.1

There were many well-informed and focused answers to this question. Many traced the evolution of the ashram from a place of intense spiritual practice and study for a male Brahmin through to Ghandi's ashrams to modern day examples, such as those named in the specification. A few

answers did not mention any examples and described the role of the ashram with little awareness of change or development.

Part 02.2

There were some extremely well-informed answers which generally tended to contrast the responses from Vedanta and Hindutva; however, many answers rehearsed evidence in favour and evidence in support with little, or no, critical analysis. Many answers started with a statement such as 'I wholeheartedly agree with this statement' but gave no clear indication in the answer how they would qualify or refute the evidence or argument counting against them. Some did consider how far Hindutva could be considered a political rather than a religious movement, and some considered how far pluralism could be said to represent Hinduism as a whole. Yet some ignored the qualified claim that Hinduism is 'generally positive' and argued for and against the broader view 'it is positive' instead.

Section B: The dialogue between philosophy and Hinduism

Question 3

This was, by far, the more popular of the two questions and there were some excellent answers. Most interpreted the phrase 'believe in Brahman' to mean 'believe that Brahman exists'. While this was acceptable, it removed a whole line of discussion that could have been included in the answer about faith as 'belief in' and the relevance of philosophical enquiry for religious faith of this type. Many answers showed a good understanding of relevant aspects of the concept of Brahman, referred to arguments that identified the creation and 'design' of the universe as evidence for the existence of Brahman. They then applied philosophical criticism of such arguments to the issue. Some also successfully debated the value of evidence from scripture and religious experience.

Some of those who tried to use the problem of evil as an argument that belief in Brahman was not reasonable struggled to make it relevant to Hinduism, and some rehearsed Paley's argument, and Aquinas' cosmological argument, without showing how this style of argument linked to Hindu thinking. Less effective answers rehearsed arguments in support of Brahman's existence, such as the evidence from scripture, but did not comment on or evaluate those arguments. Some very effective answers explored the view that faith is trans-rational, beyond reason, and should be seen as an alternative, and equally valid, perspective on evidence that can be viewed very differently. There were several references to Hare's idea of a Blik in this context.

Question 4

Although this was the less popular of the two questions, there were some very successful answers which were clearly informed about different understandings of religious language and how they could be applied to statements about Brahman. In most answers, the verification and falsification principles were used to argue that the language appeared to be cognitive, but was in fact not, and Hick's idea of eschatological verification was used to argue that the statements were cognitive. Both Hare and Wittgenstein were also often mentioned but not all the answers clearly applied these theories to the issue in question and instead discussed, rather generally, whether the challenges of the verification and falsification principles had been successfully countered. Not all answers appeared to have a firm grasp of the meaning of 'non-cognitive'.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.