

BANGLADESH STUDIES

Paper 0449/01

History and Culture of Bangladesh

General Comments

It was pleasing to note that the strong performance shown in the first years of the examination was maintained in this year's O level work and in the first examination for the IGCSE. Candidates had an excellent knowledge of cultural and historical events in Bangladesh and were able to select relevant information to support their arguments.

Most candidates showed a sound examination technique, though all Centres should take note of suggestions made in this report on how to ensure that answers are direct and focused on the question, in order to ensure that time is not wasted. Candidates are asked to answer three questions in one hour thirty minutes and so need to ensure that no time is wasted in, for example, writing out the questions in **Part (a)**, or giving unnecessary background information in **Part (c)**. Only a minority made these technical errors, but they did then cause difficulties in completing the paper within the time allowed.

Specific Questions

Question 1

This question on the culture and heritage of Bangladesh is compulsory and it is apparent that candidates are very well-prepared for it. **Part (a)** was extremely well-known and many candidates scored full marks. Centres should note that Examiners require only the letter of the alternative to be written and there is no need to write out the question or provide answers in full sentences. It is sufficient, for example to write just '(iii) D', rather than '(iii) D: Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for Literature'.

In (b), candidates knew a great deal about Begum Rokeya and many wrote at length about her career and her contribution to the culture of Bangladesh. Such answers covered the reasons why Begum Rokeya is considered to be a major figure, but more successful were those answers which eschewed the biographical approach and instead answered the question directly and used their knowledge to support their answers.

For example, answers which began:

Begum Rokeya is considered to be a major cultural figure because she pioneered education amongst the Muslim women of Bengal and she was at the forefront of the fight for women's rights had identified the contribution made and then just needed to include two sections providing the detailed support for each reason identified. These might begin:

'Begum Rokeya pioneered education amongst the Muslim women of Bengal by ...', and

'She was also important in fighting for women's rights because....'

Such an approach ensures that candidates remain focused and do not provide unnecessary biographical detail. Whilst examiners may be impressed that candidates know the names of Begum Rokeya's brothers, this information does not produce extra marks because it is not related to the question set.

In (c), a similar approach is required to (b), but with highest marks awarded to those candidates who are able to compare the relative importance of the three choices provided. This is an area where candidates are less strong. Many of them were able to provide impressive knowledge of religious festivals, songs and music and literature (though, on occasions, with unnecessary detail on, for example, the development of literature) and most explained the importance of each choice. Such answers were well-rewarded, but top marks were reserved for candidates who could write about the relative importance of the choices. This involved not just stating 'I believe that religious festivals have made the most important contribution because' and then

repeating what had been said about them, but providing an answer which explained why what about religious festivals is more important than the other two choices. Below is how one candidate successfully achieved this in her conclusion:

Literature has obviously played a very important role in helping establish the independent culture of the country and foster a love of modern-day Bangladesh. Songs and music are also important in enabling the people to express many of the cultural traditions of the region (particularly where literacy rates are low), but religious festivals are clearly the most important as they allow the different religions within Bangladesh to maintain their cultural identities. Perhaps most importantly, religious festivals are where both literature and song and music can be practised by a wide cross-section of the people. So although literature and songs are important in themselves, religious festivals are more important in providing a place where they can be celebrated.

Question 2-4

Question 2-4 have a slightly different structure to **Q1**, but much of the guidance given above applies to these questions too.

Part (a) is not multiple choice but, instead, asks candidates for a number of facts related to the information provided in the passage. Again, candidates should note that it is not necessary to write out the question or answer in full sentences. The approach to (c) is identical to that on **Q1**, with candidates required to consider the relative importance or contribution of three choices provided.

Where there is some difference is in (b). Detailed guidance on how to answer these questions is provided in the report on **Q2** but, again, the emphasis is on providing a direct answer and relevant factual support.

Question 2

- (a) This was well answered, though some candidates thought that Shashanka was Muslim and that the Pala king who restored Pala dynastic rule to a firmer footing was Devapala.
- (b) These questions on this section of the paper are designed to do two things:
- (i) This the opportunity for candidates to select and repeat relevant factual information to be rewarded for their knowledge. They are not required to make an argument or develop the information. Five marks are awarded and Examiners are looking for five pieces of factual information to award full marks. The following answer received full marks, and for guidance, where these marks were awarded has been shown:

Mauryan rule was established in Bengal by Emperor Asoka. (1 mark) Under the Mauryas Bengal was probably still divided into different janapadas. (2 marks) Mahasthangarh of Bogra was probably the provincial capital of the region. (3 marks) The western part of Bengal in this period was important because ships sailed from it to the ports of Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. (4 marks) It is believed that the tradition of weaving fine cotton cloth may have started in the Mauryan period (5 marks).

- (ii) This is significantly different in that it does not require candidates to write what they know. Instead it provides the opportunity for them to show their understanding of causation by giving reasons for events or developments. Candidates can score full marks on this question by identifying and explaining two reasons. As a consequence, it is good practice to begin an answer with:

'One reason why ...' and to follow with *'Another reason why ...'*

Such an approach makes clear that two separate reasons are being given. Provided that these arguments are supported with factual knowledge, full marks can be achieved.

In this case, candidates might have considered that the term 'Golden Age' was appropriate because the Gupta period brought prosperity through trade, or that its strong central government brought peace, or that there was religious toleration or artistic excellence. Any two of these reasons explained brought high reward.

- (c) Candidates tended to talk of how Gopala was important because he founded the dynasty and laid foundations for others; Dharmapala was important because of his work in establishing Buddhism

and Devapala was important because he ruled for so long and consolidated relations between the Buddhist kingdoms. Where these statements were supported, high marks were given.

Some argued that Gopala was the most important because without him the dynasty would not have existed, as he brought disunity and chaos to an end. So Dharamapala and Devapala could have achieved without his groundwork. These answers were marked at the top level.

Question 3

Candidates seemed to find this question relatively straightforward. Whilst there were occasional slips in (a), no one single question caused particular difficulties.

- (b) (i) Titu Meer's resistance to the British was well-known and there were many high-scoring answers. In (b)(ii), answers tended to be more on the Fakir-Sanyasi Movement itself rather than the reasons for its support and only a minority of candidates talked of the hatred of British, the disruption caused by famine, the banning of collection of alms or the general peasant discontent as reasons for the popularity of the movement.
- (c) This was well answered, though candidates had some difficulties with 'British social and religious reforms'. What the Examiners were looking for was an argument that the Doctrine of Lapse was an important cause of the war because it offended the Indian princes, that the social and religious reforms were important because they fuelled Indian fears that their religion and way of life were under threat and that the discontent of the sepoys was important because it was the immediate cause of the war.

An example of a top level answer was that the Doctrine of Lapse was the most important cause because it offended those with power and influence. Social and religious changes and sepoy discontent might have come to nothing if the leaders had not been offended.

Question 4

- (a) Although some missed the instruction to provide 'the exact date' in (i), the questions posed few problems for candidates.
- (b) (i) Here, knowledge of the division of the financial and military assets in 1947 was most impressive, though some candidates did bring in irrelevant detail, such as the Canal Water Dispute. As detailed above, all that is required on this question is five basic statements of fact and candidates must realise that there is no need to write at length. Indeed doing so will create time pressures elsewhere on the paper.
- (ii) This was also well answered, though again, there was a tendency to provide unnecessary information (about how the refugee problem had originated) when all that was needed was to explain why it caused difficulties. Examiners were looking for answers identifying as reasons: the size of the problem, the poverty of the new nation and the fact that Pakistan lacked political and administrative development.
- (c) Perhaps unsurprisingly, the issue of a national language was commonly identified as the major problem for the new government. Candidates often explained that although the issue of the national language was resolved in Urdu's favour, the decision had long-term consequences in driving a further wedge between West and East Pakistan. Better candidates also noted that health and education problems were important because they stopped Pakistan's development as a nation, and economic problems were important because they hindered development and also exacerbated ill-feeling among Bengalis.

Best answers often went on to explain how the issue of the national language was most important as it was taken by the people of East Pakistan as a symbol of their oppression - whereas the other factors were more background problems.

BANGLADESH STUDIES

Paper 0449/02

Environment and Development of Bangladesh

General

The cohort continued to increase, with entries from 10 Centres and the first entries from outside Bangladesh. Choices of questions tended to vary by Centre, but there were no questions that proved to be particularly popular or unpopular (**Q3** was the most popular; **Q2** the least). The overall standard remained high, with many demonstrating sound knowledge and understanding.

Candidates' exercise of judgement for the last part of each question showed their ability both to see more than one side to an issue and to make a personal conclusion based on evidence. **Please note that for 2009 there will be a slight change of format to the last part of each question. Instead of asking for two pieces of evidence for each statement or side of an issue, the 2009 paper will only require one piece of evidence for one mark each. However, there will be four marks for the evidence that candidates use to support their judgements in the final part of each question. It is hoped that this will enable candidates to be awarded more marks for the evidence they select to support their judgments.**

The main weakness demonstrated by some candidates was the vagueness and generality of answers when greater precision was required. Where a question asks for an explanation, just listing pieces of information will achieve few marks. This weakness also affected some responses to questions about patterns on maps. When referring, for example, to Chittagong, candidates must make clear whether they are referring to the City, the District or the Division.

Some extracts from scripts have been included below (in *italics*). They are NOT perfect/definitive, and may include inaccuracies, but are offered to teachers to show some types of more successful responses.

Question 1

- (a) (i) A majority recognised the Megna for A and the Tista for B.
- (ii) Answers here showed the lack of precision described above. A reference to 'Chittagong' on its own was not adequate. Those who referred to the Division or Region of the Hill Tracts were awarded the mark. Bandarban Hill Tracts was also awarded a mark.
- (iii) This was again a 'knowledge' question which most knew but some candidates were muddled.
- (iv) Answers were not dependent on correctly answering part (iii) provided it was clear that the candidate was writing about a floodplain or a delta plain. About a third of candidates included a diagram which, provided it was accurate, was a quick way of achieving marks. Weaker answers failed to refer to the role of levees in preventing water returning to the river or to refer to the loss of velocity of a river on meeting the sea in the case of delta formation. The following answer was awarded full marks:

'A flood plain is a flat, low lying area of land on either side of a river channel. It is formed when a river floods and overflows its banks.'

Formation: (1) Meanders migrate downstream. (2) At times of high discharge, the river floods and overflows its banks. (3) Sediments are deposited especially along river banks.(4) Repeated flooding causes another layer of alluvium to be deposited, forming a flood plain. Natural embankments (levees) are also formed as materials are deposited along the river's banks.'

- (b) (i) Whilst generally showing sound skills of map interpretation, some showed a lack of and/or locational knowledge in describing areas. Clear reference to compass points, borders achieved full marks, although many equally accurately referred to the Sunderbans and Chittagong Hill tracts. Reference to the 'area round' or 'hills around' achieved a mark, but on its own was imprecise and so did not.
- (ii) This required more thought than (i) as the areas were not so clear-cut. Again, it was candidates who could refer to the areas as being near named rivers or cities that gained full marks. A mark was also given to those who identified scattered small high-density areas in the North and West.
- (iii) This question required physical features to be linked with population. Most achieved at least one mark, but some were vague. The following answer achieved full marks:

'In coastal areas, the lands are often inundated with tidal water, and flooding often occurs, thus they are scarcely populated.'

The Sunderbans have dangerous wildlife and extremely saline soil which is another reason why it is almost uninhabited.

The hilly areas of Sylhet are used for tea cultivation and are prone to flash floods.'

- (c) Most were well aware of the problems and benefits brought by floods. For the final part, most stated that the problems outweighed the benefits. No marks were given for simply stating A or B. Marks were achieved by explaining reasons for their conclusion, as shown below:

'I support option A as, although floods do bring some good to the country, it does more harm for example:

- floods cause water borne diseases*
 - floods cause the economy to suffer*
 - floods cause lack of food and drinking water etc.*
- Thus floods cause more harm than good.'*

Another example is 'I agree most with the opinion A. Opinion B is only agreeable if the level of flood is not high. Usually in Bangladesh this is not so. The floods are terrible and bring many miseries to the lives of the people. Many people die and suffer severe financial loss.'

Question 2

- (a) (i) 'As with the previous question, the candidates who scored highly were those who had the skills to describe patterns on a map and/or a good knowledge of the different regions of the country. The following achieved all three marks:

*'Some forests are found in the coastal areas (mainly the Sunderbans)
Some forest are found in the Chittagong Hill tracts
Some are also found near the tea gardens in Sylhet and in the Northern parts of the country'*

- (ii) Whilst many named two types of forest and gained two marks, some did not go on to give any description of each type, which lost them any further marks.
- (iii) Those who knew the distribution of forest types scored both marks here.
- (iv) Reference to four uses was required for the two marks. Most referred to uses such as fuel, construction, furniture and paper but credit was also given for reference to the role of forests in the ecosystem and maintaining biodiversity, such as support for wildlife, protection of habitats, prevention of soil erosion, absorption of carbon dioxide, etc.
- (b) (i) Most gained one mark. The following extract shows the sort of response that gained both marks:

'Biomass is referred to as all the organic matter, both plant and animal, on the earth.'

- (ii) A wide variety of answers were possible here with most mentioning crops of various types, trees, urea, buffalo, cattle etc. Some showed lack of understanding by referring to biogas and bio energy.

- (iii) This question required candidates to interpret the diagram and write a description of the processes. Many scored highly here with some bringing in their prior knowledge of bio digesters. Some answers missed out one or more of the processes.
- (c) Candidates handled this question well showing their ability to see both sides to an issue. In support of statement B, many stated that it would be difficult to operate bio digesters on a large scale or in urban areas but few went on to explain why this might be the case.

Examples of evidence for statement A included:

'They are environmentally friendly' and 'They can be used to supply energy for the villages'.

The following is an example of a conclusion:

'I agree with option B as, although biogas digesters are efficiently producing energy, it is not enough for our developing country. It might help people in rural areas, but it would need to be able to produce enough energy for a developed urban city to run on. As a country becomes more developed its demands for energy also rises.'

Question 3

- (a) (i) Most wrote about the loan being to buy chickens and the hen house whilst others referred to the loan being needed to start up a poultry business. Both were accepted for the mark, although just 'to start a business' was not.

- (ii) The following answer achieved the full three marks. No marks were given for reference to 'an alternative to traditional banking' as this was too vague but credit was given both for the targeting of the poor and lack of need for collateral.

'It is an alternative to traditional banking.

- It provides credit and loans to the poor without the need for collateral

- It reduced the exploitation of the poor by moneylenders.'

- (iii) There were some very sound answers about the workings of the Grameen Bank. Weaker answers were either too vague/general or just incorrect.

- (iv) Most were able to see the benefits of the bank, but some failed to refer to **both** Aisha and the wider economy. A sound answer is shown below:

'Micro credit helps people like Aisha and the economy of Bangladesh because Aisha is now more independent as she can earn her own living from the poultry farm. Unemployment decreases as people like Aisha self employ or employ themselves. If many farms start up like Aisha's then less money will be used in importing food and this money can be used in the secondary sector such as buying machines for better production.'

- (b) (i) Most worked this out correctly. Those that did not failed to notice the question referred to 2005.

- (ii) This is quite a demanding question but most candidates clearly showed they understood the difference between 'proportion' and 'amount'.

- (iii) Candidates who chose to write about agriculture tended to score better than those who chose manufacturing. For the former, candidates referred to high yielding seeds, use of fertilisers, new and/or better irrigation methods, improved skills and training etc. For manufacturing some candidates wrote in very general terms but credit was given for describing the role of foreign investment and multi national companies, the growth of the garments industry, the availability of labour, etc. Some concentrated on what should be done to encourage manufacturing industry rather than what had been done.

- (c) Almost all candidates could give plenty of examples of the informal sector. Many included examples for part (i) which asked for an explanation of the informal economy, which did not get credit, though a majority also achieved at least one mark for explanation. The key points being looked for were: the absence of laws or controls on the activity; the lack of any taxes being paid.

- (d) Most could see the benefits in terms of providing employment and reduction in poverty as well as the drawbacks of lack of controls. Many also wrote about this sector diverting labour and skills away from the formal sector. Examples of answers for part (i) included:

*'The informal sector provides employment opportunities
Its a way for the uneducated to earn a living and therefore reduces poverty'*

For part (ii), examples included:

'The people in the informal sector do not pay any taxes'.

'Most people working earn very little and do not have health insurance'.

'Labour could be used more efficiently in high productive jobs.'

Question 4

(a) (i) and (ii) Most interpreted the table of figures correctly.

(iii) Most could name one or two factors, although sometimes these were limited to statistical factors (e.g. birth rate, death rate, natural increase rate for which a maximum one mark was available). Better answers referred to standards of living, levels of education and the role of women.

(iv) Candidates who had listed factors such as 'standard of living' had no problem with this question, but those who had listed, birth rate for example, could give little explanation beyond the obvious.

(b) (i) Most could describe the growth in urbanisation and gave figures to support their statements.

(ii) This was a more demanding question and candidates had to make comparative statements to gain full marks. An example is given below:

'Pakistan has the largest percentage of population in urban areas compared to the three countries. Although Bangladesh is not expected to reach Pakistan's percentage, the rate at which the percentage is increasing in Bangladesh is quite similar to that of Pakistan.'

The rate at which the percentage of people increasing in urban areas of Bangladesh is much higher than that of India. In 2015 it is expected that the gap between the percentages of India and Bangladesh will be very narrow.'

(c) This question about Dhaka had five marks available which allowed some candidates to show their thorough knowledge. Conversely, some gave only brief and often generalised answers which only scored a few marks. Credit was given for both negative or push factors and positive or pull factors. Candidates were not credited twice, however, for the same factor. For example 'Health facilities (r education or jobs) are much better in the city' as well as 'lack of health faculties in the countryside drives people away from rural areas'. The example below gained all 5 marks:

'Dhaka is growing fast because it is an urban area and the capital of Bangladesh. Every year large numbers of people are migrating from the rural areas to Dhaka in search of jobs, better education and standard of living. One main reason for the growth of population is rural to urban migration.'

Another reason is that Dhaka is becoming more improved and developed day by day which means it has good health care facilities, thus the death rates and infant mortality are decreasing.'

(d) Candidates succeeded in giving evidence for and against urban growth, e.g.:

*'It is good for Bangladesh to have cities that are rapidly growing. This is because
- For the cities to grow, many industries and buildings need to be set up. A large number of people are needed for construction and if people come to cities they can provide labour. Later, people are needed to work in organisations that use the buildings. Economy has to develop faster. Primary sector cannot cause this fast Secondary and tertiary sector (industry and services) is required. Cities are the ideal places for these sectors and they must grow.'*

'It is better for Bangladesh if people stay in the countryside. This because:

*- There is too much pressure on cities due to the large population. Many people are not getting water, food, electricity and other necessities of city life.
- An increased population has increased city pollution. This causes hazardous health problems.'*

'I agree with opinion B the most. This is because the urban population of Bangladesh is already very high. Many people coming in the hope of jobs have to remain unemployed, as the city cannot

manage to provide jobs to all. Bangladesh should invest more on development in rural areas so that people remain in the countryside'.

Question 5

- (a) (i) Answers between 0.50 and 0.55 degrees were credited for this part.
- (ii) This provided plenty of scope to describe changes in the rise of global warming over the century. Most identified the major patterns, but weaker answers were either inaccurate or failed to tie changes to dates/time periods.
- (iii) Most read the graph correctly.
- (iv) Successful answers identified the trend for growing industrialisation, with its link to growing demands for energy and transport and the increasing exploitation of resources. A common error was to refer to 'more people' without linking this to, for example, deforestation or need for energy. The following answer was awarded both marks:

'Between 1950 and 2000 only a few industrialised countries were producing the high amount of carbon dioxide that caused the increase in temperature. From 2000 to 2050 most of the developing countries will become industrialised, contributing to an even faster increase in carbon dioxide levels that causes the increase in temperature'.

- (b) Most identified the threats to Bangladesh with answers which explained **how** the changes affected Bangladesh gaining the higher marks. For example the following was awarded six marks:

'- The melting of polar ice caps at the poles and the Himalayan mountains will cause an increase in the sea level.

- So, the increase in sea level will cause the coastal areas of Bangladesh to be submerged.

- Also, as sea levels will be higher, the occurrences of flooding will be higher.

- Cyclones get more powerful if they form on hot water so the strength along with the occurrences of cyclones will be higher when sea level increases.

- If crops are destroyed due to increased temperature, the price of food will increase, resulting in food crises, even famine.

- The increase in temperature may cause many organisms (flora and fauna) to die.

- (c) (i) Most candidates identified carbon dioxide but after that a range of gases were given. Methane and nitrogen oxides were credited. A common error was to refer to sulphur dioxide and CFCs. The latter were also confused with global warming in other parts of answers to **Q5**.
- (ii) Most were able to score marks by using the diagram and applying their knowledge. Many wrote about the sun's rays being reflected, which is not strictly true as the earth first absorbs heat and then radiates it with a different wave length. However, almost all understood the idea of the atmosphere 'trapping' heat and the role of greenhouse gases in increasing the trap's effect. Describing the effects of CFCs on the ozone layer was irrelevant.

- (d) Evidence quoted in support of statement A included the fact that Bangladesh's contribution to global warming is not great and the high costs of trying to minimize the effects of flooding. For statement B, most recognised the serious threats to the country from increased frequency of typhoons, increased dangers of flooding, inundation of the coastal areas etc. In conclusion, most came down on the side of the country needing to take preventative measures, particularly re afforestation and the need to work in partnership with other countries. An example is given here:

'I would advise the government to pass legislation to decrease the emission of greenhouse gases, sign treaties with other countries so that they too decrease their emission of greenhouse gases and educate people about the effects of global warming'.

'Government should start afforestation and re afforestation process in order to decrease the carbon dioxide level in atmosphere which is one of the greenhouse gases'. 'I would advise the government to sign treaties with other countries so that they too decrease their emission of greenhouse gases.'