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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

NEPALI

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 3202/01

Paper 1

General comments

Candidates generally performed strongly in **Section A** (composition in Nepali) while most candidates had more difficulty with translations into and out of Nepali (**Section B**) and with the reading comprehension (**Section C**). While a few candidates produced answers in fluent and correct Nepali, the majority were weak in basic spelling and grammar. Some candidates were not able to spell the most simple and common words or providing the correct verbal endings for standard verbs. Most candidates used *hrasva* and *dirgha ikar* and *ukar* (short and long /i/ and /u/ vowel signs) almost interchangeably and were similarly confused on the correct use of *halant*, *anusvara* and *chandrabindu* signs. Most candidates also made frequent mistakes with word-breaks and seemed unaware of fundamental conventions such as that postpositions are joined together with the word they are affixed to and are not written separately. These are all issues of basic functional literacy and candidates cannot be credited for failings such as these. Apart from correct spelling and grammar candidates are also given credit for imaginative use of language and for originality of thought. Some candidates made good use of sayings and proverbs to illustrate points, deployed a range of adjectives and adverbs and demonstrated their ability to use more colloquial and more formal registers of language in appropriate contexts. Where candidates had more difficulty was in the later sections, where poor performances were perhaps caused by a lack of familiarity with the exam rubric and the type of answers required.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates opted to write on the topic of “why do tourists come to Nepal” and most answers were competent. Those candidates who used this question as an opportunity simply to recycle passages learned by rote about Nepal’s various qualities, without relating them to the question and explaining more clearly their relevance to tourism, did not score as well as those who addressed the question more directly and offered a range of possible answers. Some of the more wide-ranging responses also raised interesting points such as the attraction to tourists of low prices and the effect of the conflict on tourist confidence. Many candidates also opted to write on “it is good to be important but it is important to be good”, generally to good effect. Once again, those who were able to introduce more original arguments or examples to their writing gained a slight advantage over those who stuck to reciting standard textbook passages on morality. Some candidates also made interesting use of personal references. Among the many responses to “a conversation between two mothers” were some entertaining, and occasionally cleverly humorous, dialogues; other candidates preferred to introduce serious questions of childcare and education. Most responses demonstrated sensitivity and social awareness and the best were very impressive. Among the candidates who took on the topic of Nepal’s politics there was a great diversity in approaches and skill, with the better responses managing to be thought-provoking as well as carefully structured. The question of Nepali and Hindi’s relationship was more challenging but gave candidates the opportunity to take on a multi-faceted issue which related not only to language but also to national identity and sentiment.

Section B

Question 2

Many candidates had difficulty with the translation from Nepali into English. Problems with understanding the original text were clearly compounded by most candidates' poor English. In any translation exercise it is important to produce a response which, even if the original is not fully understood, is readable and makes sense. Most candidates, however, included many sentences that not only failed to reflect the Nepali original but that were unintelligible in English. As is natural for those who have not had much practice in translating, most candidates were inclined to attempt literal translations, retaining the structure and word order of Nepali sentences, despite the fact that this results in stilted and awkward English. Better responses managed to produce more natural language and, crucially, get across the basic sense of the text even if there were minor inaccuracies. Most candidates had trouble with certain specific terms such as *daman*, *bahubhaskhik*, *prativedan* and *anshik*. The language of the original was quite technical so a certain number of such difficulties was to be expected and was not harshly penalised.

Question 3

Most candidates managed to make reasonable sense of the English to Nepali translation but there was a wide gap between the strongest and weakest responses. At the outset, the failure of most candidates to realise that the narrator was a woman led to incorrect verbal endings in the first sentences. This may indicate a failure to have read the whole passage in advance: it is important that candidates should understand the importance of making a full reading before starting to translate if they wish to avoid such errors. Where many candidates had trouble was when they tried to provide literal translations to long sentences whose natural structure in Nepali would be very different to that in English.

Section C

A large number of candidates seemed unfamiliar with the basic conventions of reading comprehension and in particular with the fact that in answering questions they are expected to use their own words as far as possible (as is clearly stated in the guidance on the exam paper itself) rather than to search the text for appropriate sentences to copy in full. Copying large chunks of text only indicates that a candidate has a vague idea that they are relevant but does not demonstrate comprehension. Candidates should demonstrate that they have understood the text well and can back up their opinion of it with reasoned, well-written arguments. The content of answers is obviously critical but it is also important that they should be presented in coherent, grammatically correct Nepali. The candidates who performed best demonstrated not only a mature understanding of the text and an ability to respond directly to questions with well-supported opinions but also phrased their answers in clear, accurate language.

Question 4

Candidates should have given an accurate own-words summary of Vijaya Acharya's achievement. This should include a description of the position she has attained, the work she is engaged in, the studies she is also maintaining and the reasons why, given her sex and age, this is remarkable. Most candidates only mentioned one or two of these points.

Question 5

Candidates were asked whether or not Vijaya Acharya was in favour of a reservation system for women in the civil service. Unfortunately, only a very few candidates were able to demonstrate that they understood the meaning of the term *arakshan* while most misinterpreted it and therefore gave inaccurate or illogical answers. Most candidates assumed that *arakshan* referred to some system which favoured male entrants and encouraged discrimination against women rather than understanding that Acharya's objection was more subtle: that reservations would bring more women into the civil service but that they would probably not be capable of competing with men who had entered through the normal competitive route.

Question 6

Candidates were required to produce an accurate own-words summary of Acharya's friends' question about her decision to enter the civil service. This entailed using their imagination to expand upon the possible reasons for her friends posing such a question. Stronger candidates offered a range of possible reasons, such as the view among younger people that the civil service is a poorly remunerated and low status occupation compared to private sector jobs, that Acharya had wanted to be a doctor so seemed to have made a radical change by entering government service, and that her friends were surprised she was willing to enter a traditional male-dominated work environment and face the ensuing challenges.

Question 7

Candidates were asked about Acharya's views on women's representation in the civil service and whether low representation was a problem for the country. The better responses not only gave an accurate own-words explanation of Acharya's thoughts but used this as a basis for adducing further reasoning on the relationship between women's participation in civil service and other employment sectors and the country's overall development and modernisation.