

HINDUISM

Paper 2055/01

Paper 1

General Comments

Candidates were tested to display skills showing levels of maturity and comprehension expected from an “O” level candidate after studying the various topics prescribed in the syllabus. Most of the questions set demanded skills useful to bring one’s own interpretation of chapters under study rather than having too much dependence on School or teachers’ notes. There were some scripts of a very high standard. An overall improvement in style, structure and presentation of works was noted in some scripts.

Familiarity with the syllabus was satisfactory; in some sections excellent answers displaying higher cognitive skills were observed. However, for some candidates of average capabilities, essays were less competent relying more on superficial knowledge of the topics examined. Scripts also showed that some candidates had a preference for a particular topic over the others. Many scripts showed a balanced view.

Recalling relevant points is one of the assessment objectives and so it is important for candidates to read the questions carefully. Explanation and the use of symbolism (when appropriate) are also important. When it comes to interpretation and analysis, above average candidates excelled on themes or topics for religious and ethical responses. Candidates should be able to refer to key concepts. Essays displayed more general tendencies without focusing on important views, concepts or ideals expected in the essays/answers.

As in the past, questions on the Upanishad and Ramacharitamanas from **Section A** were popular and in **Section B**, the all three questions were quite popular. In **Section C Question 9** was the least understood while in **Section D Questions 11** and **12** were attempted but were not of a high standard. Candidates should be aware of the number of questions they need to answer and that they need to answer at least one question from each section.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

‘They thought ours, indeed, is this victory and ours, indeed, is this greatness.’ (Kena Upanishad 3.1)

Explain

- and (a) how three Vedic gods found out that they were mistaken
(b) why this story is called an allegory.

This question was quite popular. As expected, the first part (a) was skillfully answered by the majority of candidates; the second part was not so well done. High-quality answers came from candidates who had studied the text and developed facts which showed maturity.

Better answers for part (b) could have included some of the following: meaning of allegory, moral insights that can be drawn, personality of 3 gods and Uma and the idea of non-duality.

Question 2

In what ways can Krishna’s advice to Arjuna on the battlefield help modern Hindus to make the right moral decisions?

This was not a popular question and there was a lot of narrative in answers. The main part of question “help modern Hindus to make the right moral decisions” was completely ignored. Candidates could have brought in contemporary issues/arguments like – lack of professional ethics, attachment, living for personal gains and the battle field representing the world.

Question 3

'In the Ramacharitamans, Tulsidas's aim is to show that Rama is God and should be worshipped with sincere devotion (bhakti).'

Discuss, giving examples from the text you have studied.

This was a question that most candidates did well. The best answers showed knowledge of Tulsidas and his teachings, the importance on Ramacharitamans, bhakti and the personality, and both Kewat and Shabari.

Question 4

- (a) **Describe and explain the significance of three iconographic features of the god Shiva.**
and (b) **Explain why the presence of an image (murti) in homes and mandirs (temples) is important to many Hindus.**

Like question one, the first part was attempted well. Candidates were successful in exploring with fairness the iconographic features associated with Shiva. However, part (b) again was not done well. Better answers for part (b) could have included some of the following: a visual image evokes attitudes of devotion and inspires noble thoughts, it can be used to bring the family members together and to have a "darshan" of God with special puja or aarti.

Question 5

'Festivals exist to remind the community of its past and inspire it for the future.'

Discuss this view, referring to the celebration of one Hindu Festival as it is held today.

Ideas associated with the festivities were good but festivals existing to remind the community of its past and inspire for the future was either missed or ignored. A question like this needs to be explored from various angles – secularized setting today, festivals are becoming religiously less significant, and the roles of mass-media and theatre could have been relevant here.

Question 6

'Devotion to God can give the worshipper courage in times of difficulty.'

Discuss with reference to the qualities of either the god Ganesha or the goddess Durga.

There were some good answers to this question. A good answer could have referred to how prayers and supplications of the troubled and those in despair can help the devotees to face difficulties.

Question 7

'All sections of Hindu society depend on the grihastha (householder).'

To what extent do you agree, and why?

This question was attempted in a far better way than the two other questions in this section. Good answers managed to highlight some interesting views. Better answers could have included some of the following: moral and physical training from Bhramacharya ashrama – scope for maturity in raising a stable family - how the three other ashramas largely depend on it and the place of charitable works in the institution of a family.

Question 8

Explain Hindu teaching on

- and (a) moksha as the final goal of human life
(b) right action as dependent on dharma.

The basic views related to purusharthas were known to candidates but answers lacked relevant information on moksha including nature, place and importance of jivan and videha mukti, they explained its place only. It is important that candidates read the questions carefully. Part (b) "right action as dependent on dharma" was poorly answered. Materials from set texts could have been appropriate in this context.

Question 9

Discuss the significance for modern Hindus of the ceremonies

- either (a) when a marriage takes place
or (b) when someone dies

In this question, many candidates lost precious amount of time answering both (a) and (b) when only one had to be attempted. Most of the features of either Vivaha or Antyeshthi were not included in answers. Better answers could have referred to Kanyadaan, saptapadi, Shilarohan and similar views. Details of the Antyeshthi samskara were not clearly discussed. The new trends in cremation are important features today and could have been referred to in answers.

Question 10

Explain why Swami Dayananda Saraswati wanted to change Hindu thinking about

- and (a) idol worship
(b) the caste system.

It was somewhat interesting to note that many candidates came up with strong and valid arguments in part (a) giving details for his distaste for idol worship. With regards to part (b), although candidates were able to produce their understanding of the caste system better answers could have had more details about education, the sacred thread ceremony and such other actions undertaken by Swami Dayananda.

Question 11

'Hindu women in modern times owe much to the achievements of Rammohan Roy.'

Discuss.

This question demanded interpretation and appreciation of Roy's achievement in upgrading the life of Hindu women. Some candidates produced good answers outlining views associated with the idea but not all candidates wrote about his reforms on polygamy, inheritance of rights and freedom of movements. Some answers were of a good standard.

Question 12

'The way to social justice is through service (seva) to humanity.'

Illustrate how this belief was shown in the life of either Ramakrishna Paramahansa or M.K. Gandhi.

This was the most unpopular question on the paper. Those who did answer ignored the question.