HINDUISM

Paper 2055/01
Paper 1

Key messages

-   Candidates need to understand and acknowledge the command word being used such as 'how' or 'why'
-   Candidates need to refer to the mark allocation to gauge the amount of time and depth their answers should contain
-   Question that contained more exploitation and critical discussion generally gained the higher marks.

General comments

This year candidates, of all abilities, seemed to do well. All sections were attempted; candidates therefore found the paper accessible and demonstrated good time management. Most candidates followed the instructions correctly. Part questions carrying 10 marks were mostly presented in essay-type compared to a list down response as in the previous year. Candidates managed to give the correct answers to questions leading to 1–5 marks. However, some candidates still overlooked the marks allotted for those parts of questions using command key words such as 'explain why', 'describe how' and 'describe one'. It was pleasing to see that good answers for part **(d)** were not limited to a particular section of the paper. Cross-references were made to the other sections of the paper and to Paper 2 as well. Many candidates displayed a variety of viewpoints with critical engagement, relevant evidence and independent ideas where they were awarded the highest marks. Some answers were however limited since the focus was either on the narrative part of the question or on the general topic.

Section A

Question 1 was more popular. It was also more successfully attempted compared to **Question 2**.

Question 1

Part **(a) (i)** was a scoring question but candidates provided a variety of names of deities holding the trident based on personal experiences and acquaintance such as 'Lakshmi', 'Kartikeya', 'Vishnu' and 'Kali'. Part **(a) (i)** was answered well with most candidates correctly answering the question. Part **(a) (ii)** also was awarded marks for panoply of responses like creation, preservation, destruction, and 5 elements. In part **(b)** candidates were able to outline the correct story about the rivalry between Ganesha and Kartikeya. Part **(c)** was an 'explain why' question and candidates who demonstrated a good account of the depth of the issues raised in the question scored the highest marks compared to those who displayed a purely descriptive answer. Good answers in part **(d)** of the question were able to make a stand on the statement and explored arguments showing how Durga inspires Hindu women as a role model as mother for her children, as an obedient wife, as shakti to face challenges of life along with differing views showing Saraswati, Lakshmi and Kali as inspiring figures too. Candidates scoring low and average marks focused on the iconographic features of Durga and her worship as a popular event among women.

Question 2

In **Question 2**, parts **(a) (i)** and **(ii)** were awarded marks accordingly for the right meaning and naming of one of the Trimurti. Candidates scored marks in part **(b)** for giving valid descriptions of Durga shown in a murti. However, part **(c)** candidates could improve their answer and achieve higher marks need to focus on the command word 'explain' rather than divert their answers and focus on the description of the Trimurti instead.

A good attempt was also noted displaying the relationship between the gods and their representation as the Ultimate. In part **(d)** candidates who were able to understand the wording of the question showed the importance of Kartikeya along with other gods using a good variety of viewpoints with evidences. However, candidates who dealt with the general topic on Kartikeya without addressing the question obtained lower marks.

Section B

Both questions were answered well with candidates achieving a wide range of marks.

Question 3

Part **(b)**, candidates who were able to outline one story about Vamana with detail and development scored higher marks compared to those highlighting about the Avatar in general. In part **(c)**, most of the candidates gave a good attempt to explain what Hindus learn from the story of Narasimha. Those candidates who wrote vaguely on the story gained lower marks. The responses for part **(d)** which gained the highest marks consisted of viewpoints supported with evidences and critical engagement, thus, showing a balance. Those candidates who needed to improve their answers did not either sustain their arguments or lacked differing views. A list of human and animal avatars, were described instead with little to no evaluation.

Question 4

Candidates were able to answer parts **(a)** and **(b)** well. However, for part **(c)**, where candidates were expected to explain what Hindus can learn from the companions of Ram, the responses varied. Some candidates wrote on one teaching with details and development and were awarded higher marks whereas responses given in list form on the companions without details and development scored average and low marks. For part **(d)** those candidates who focused only on avatars as the best way to learn about God, giving a list rather that discussing the issue gained lower marks. On the other hand, most candidates were able to discuss the issue raised in the question. Good answers supported that scriptures, meditation, Karma Yoga are also alternatives to reach God.

Section C

Both questions in this section were equally popular among candidates.

Question 5

For part **Question 5 (a) (i)** and **(ii)**, candidates were awarded marks for valid responses like lamps, Rangoli, image of Goddess Lakshmi, to mention a few, including the correct reasons for placing these things outside their home at Divali. The three family activities that take place at Ganesha Chaturthi were also presented correctly in part **(b)**. In part **(c),** candidates who scored highest marks were able to explain why Hindus might celebrate Divali in different ways with a high level of detail and development. Those who concentrated on the description of the festival were awarded lower marks. Many good answers were noted in part **(d)** with an attempt to make a balance of the importance of festivals in both children's and adults' life. Typical answers relating festivals to either children or adults without evidence and critical engagement scored lower marks.

Question 6

Question 6 part **(a) (i)** expected candidates to write the meaning of the term 'Maha Shivaratri'. Most candidates succeeded, but marks were also given to candidates writing about the night/festival/day of Shiva. Similarly, for part **(a) (ii)**, marks were given to candidates mentioning at night, 'Phalgun Maas' along with February and March. However, many answers were related to the story explaining the origin of Maha Shivaratri, which obviously gained no mark. Parts **(b)** and **(c)** were well attempted mainly by higher achieving candidates. Most candidates had no difficulty understanding part **(d)**. A good attempt to answer the question included a variety of viewpoints referring to other festivals as important as Maha Shivratri with a good evaluation of the arguments presented. However, mere description of the celebration and narration of the stories related to Maha Shivratri scored low marks.

HINDUISM

Key messages

- Candidates need to understand and acknowledge the command word being used such as 'how' or 'why'
- Candidates need to refer to the mark allocation to gauge the amount of time and depth their answers should contain
- Question that contained more exploitation and critical discussion generally gained the higher marks.

General comments

It must be noted that a number of candidates did not focus on the command key words in the questions and wrote lengthy answers for parts **(a)**, **(b)** and **(c)** and therefore could not attain the higher marks. Full marks were awarded to those answers which focused on the demand of the questions. For parts **(c)** and **(d)**, many responses required more focus and many answer included irrelevant material. Many candidates wrote on general topics rather than addressing the questions. Good attempts were not limited to narrations or descriptions, but were rather engaged in explanations, discussions, critical analysis, evaluation, differing viewpoints with relevant evidences.

Section A

Both **Questions 1** and **2** were evenly answered by candidates.

Question 1

Question 1(a) was a popular question. Most candidates who answered the question found it accessible. Some candidates however wrote about the actions of the birds rather than writing what they represent and were not credited with marks. Part **(b)** expected candidates to write about the teachings of atman according to Mundaka Upanishad; those candidates who referred to the teachings of the Upanishad tended to gain the maximum marks available. For part **(c)**, most candidates chose to deal with the general topic related to Truth and Brahman rather than addressing the question. Full marks were awarded to candidates who gave a comprehensive account of the depth of the topic raised in the question. Part **(d)** expected candidates to explore the question with critical engagement throughout the answer giving a balance to explore other sources of knowledge about Brahman. Good answers provided space for this with independent ideas and evidences from the syllabus. Low marks were awarded to those who focused on narration of the allegories on Brahman in the Upanishads they have studied.

Question 2

For part **(a)** most candidates were able to identify Jnana and Karma as the two yoga's discussed in the Bhagavad Gita chapter III. Many candidates tackled part **(b)** in a general way but disregarded the text i.e. the Bhagavad Gita. However, good answers involved the relevant description of one teaching about desire with development and example. In part **(c)** the majority of candidates were able to show the difference between the two roads of perfection and average marks were awarded. Those who could explain how the two roads are different but leading to the same destination gained higher marks. Part **(d)** gave space to wider application and evaluation skills showing Bhakti and other paths leading to God. Answers which were confined only to the stories of Shabri and Hanuman in the Ramacharitmanas with lengthy narration gained average marks. The more successful answers were able to argue in favour of the statement while focusing on other paths as equally best ways to reach God.

Section B

This section was within the reach of candidates as both questions were attempted successfully.

Question 3

Part **(a)** was easier as candidates were able to name one of the four ashramas and its relation to life. However, some candidates wrote a lengthy description in part **(a) (ii)** instead of one or two words answer. In part **(b)**, though some candidates were successful in gaining full marks by describing the Upanayan samskara, some wrote on Namakaran lengthily listing other samskaras thus showing confusion and irrelevance. Part **(c)** was correctly answered by many candidates who explained how Dharma is related to other Purusharthas. Full marks were awarded to those who gave a high level of detail and development of the Purusharthas regulated by dharma eventually leading to Moksha. However, some ambiguous responses were noted, e.g. 'Kama' described as action in relation to Dharma (duty). Candidates who focused on describing the four Purusharthas without relating to the question scored low marks. Part **(d)** gave room to candidates to bring independent ideas based on personal observations. Good answers gave a balanced response, providing arguments for and against the statement, like the relevance of the ideals of Ashramas in modern society and how and why some of the stages of life are not practised today. However, answers confined to the full description of the four Ashramas were unable to gain full marks and generally received only low marks.

Question 4

In part **(a)** candidates could easily name two Varnas and scored full marks. In part **(b)** those candidates who ignored the word 'role' of the Samskaras only received low marks. Instead lengthy answers were given describing the Samskaras. Full marks were awarded to responses including purification, direction of life, and physical, mental and spiritual growth. Good attempts in part **(c)** highlighted and explained how the Varnas, be it traditional or modern social classification, have affected the modern Hindu society. There was much confusion for some candidates who wrote on Ashramas in this part of the question. For part **(d)**, most candidates wrote a detailed description of all the Samskaras and scored low marks. The Antyeshti Samskara was discussed as concluding aspect of the question, however candidates who were able to understand the issue raised in the question, showed critical engagement throughout their discussion, by giving points like the scientific reason of cremation, the importance of liberation and the reality of birth, death and rebirth gained the highest marks. A balanced response highlighting equal importance of other Samskaras apart from the Antyeshti Samskara, also gained high marks.

Section C

In **Question 5**, responses were generally confusing or irrelevant. In this section, **Question 6** was popular and candidates expressed themselves well.

For part **(a)** most candidates managed to write the correct names asked but there were responses mentioning only parents, brother, Rama, Krishna and Kali for which marks were not allotted. For part **(b)**, answers were confusing as many candidates wrote about the vision of Kali after the various religious experiences of Ramakrishna which was not relevant. Those who focused on the first vision with development and example gained highest marks. Part **(c)** of the question was not generally high scoring for candidates. Few candidates managed to explain how Ramakrishna had an influence on the life of Swami Vivekananda. Most answers comprised of the religious experiences of Ramakrishna along with a brief sentence on Swami Vivekananda mentioning him as the disciple. The good responses in part **(d)** managed to agree with the statement and provided arguments how and why Ramakrishna was not interested in social reforms. Discussions also included some of his social reforms that were implicit in his life style and religious reforms. The remainder showed the popularity of reformers like Swami Dayanand and Ram Mohun Roy as greater social reformers overlooking the works of Ramakrishna in social fields like emancipation of women and rejection of caste system.

Question 6

For part **(a)**, most candidates managed to give the correct answer. While society/congregation/house/association of God/Brahman were the ideal answers, candidates also wrote sentences to explain the meaning of the term 'Brahmo Samaj' including prayer/gathering/intellectual place. Marks were not awarded for this. For part **(a) (ii)**, some gave the name of Swami Dayanand as founder of Brahmo Samaj instead of Ram Mohun Roy. For part **(b)** higher marks were awarded to candidates who were

able to describe and develop as an example one social issue the Brahmo Samaj worked to change. However, some candidates did not pay attention to the word 'one' and provided a list of social issues for which full marks were not awarded. In part **(c)**, candidates who scored the highest marks were able explain why the Brahmo Samaj rejected many traditional practices. Many candidates engaged instead in describing the traditional practices and the reforms of Swami Dayanand leading to irrelevant answers. The statement in part **(d)** expected candidates to give a balanced response mentioning the impact of Brahmo Samaj on certain fields and how it did not work in other fields and places of India. Those candidates who wrote in this direction mentioning the evidences related to the lasting and less influence of Brahmo Samaj scored higher marks than those describing the reforms of Ram Mohun Roy. However, some responses which focused only on the lasting influence Arya Samaj has led to average marks.