

BANGLADESH STUDIES

Paper 7094/01

History and Culture of Bangladesh

General comments

It was pleasing to see the impressive standard established in this new specification maintained into its second year. It was apparent that Centres had read the examination report for the first year and acted upon it. As a consequence, many of the flaws in technique mentioned previously were no longer common.

There was a significant improvement in the candidates' ability to select relevant factual information to support their arguments and to avoid telling the Examiners everything they knew about a particular topic or person. Under these circumstances, it was no surprise to see that vast majority of candidates appeared to complete the paper without having to rush their final answers.

This more skilful handling of factual support was most apparent on the low-tariff part **(b)** questions, where it seems that candidates have quickly grasped that it is quality, rather than quantity which determines the mark.

It is still of value, however, to reinforce several of the points made last year to assist teachers in preparing their candidates:

- On part **(a)** questions, there is no need for answers to be in full sentences. Examiners are looking for no more than the letter of the correct alternative (in **Question 1**), or a brief (one word, if possible) answer in **Question 2-4**.
- In part **(b)(i)** of **Question 2-4**, one mark is awarded for each explained fact up to a maximum of five marks. Full marks can, therefore, be gained by writing five sentences each explaining a single fact.
- In part **(b)(ii)** of **Question 2-4**, candidates are asked to provide reasons for an event. To reach the top level candidates have to explain more than one reason. In other words, full marks can be awarded if two reasons are well explained. Candidates may like to explain, perhaps, three reasons, but an answer of around half a side stating '*The first reason for ... was.... A second reason for... was...*' is both focused and showing good technique. If the reasons are valid and explained, then full marks would be awarded.

Individual Questions

Question 1

Candidates are obviously very familiar with the first section and it was not uncommon to see full marks gained in part **(a)**. There were many thoughtful answers on the importance of drama and dance, with most explaining that drama has a very old tradition in Bangladesh, but is still highly important today, particularly as a result of theatre groups and Dhaka University. The importance of dance in social and cultural life was also well-explained.

Part **(c)** produced a wide variety of answers. Some candidates argued that Aloal's prolific writing and unique style made his contribution the most significant; others felt that the universal appeal of Lalon Shah's spiritual songs (and his influence on other great cultural figures, such as Tagore) lead to a greater contribution. Perhaps, surprisingly, the majority concluded that the most important contribution was made by Jasimuddin, as reflected in the many honours he won. As stated last year, it is not the choice which candidates make that is important, but the argument produced in support which earns reward. Teachers and candidates should note, however, that merely completing an answer with '*So I feel that Jasimuddin's contribution was more important than Aloal's or Lalon Shah's*' is not making a comparison. Answers needed to explain what it was that Jasimuddin did which was more important than the identified contribution of both Aloal and Lalon Shah.

Question 2

This question was both popular and well-answered. Part **(a)** caused few difficulties (though a significant number did not know that it was Nader Shah who plundered Delhi in 1739). Answers to part **(b)(i)** were generally sound and part **(b)(ii)** was very well-answered (though there was sometimes more detail of weaknesses than explanation of how they contributed to the downfall). Part **(c)** saw an almost even split between those who regarded the weak army as the most important reason for the decline of the empire and those who blamed it on the British. Surprisingly, very few thought the strong opposition within India was important.

Question 3

The arrival of the British is a well-known topic and this question provided few problems for candidates. Part **(a)** saw a significant number of full marks and part **(b)(i)** was particularly well-answered. It was disappointing, however, to see so many candidates in part **(b)(ii)** describing what happened at the Battle of Palashi, rather than explaining why the British won it. Two supported reasons (perhaps, lack of commitment by the Nawab's allies and British perseverance?) would have sufficed. Part **(c)** produced some very good answers, though many seemed reluctant to give credence to the idea that the British presence could have brought an improvement.

Question 4

As last year, this was the least popular optional question and tended to produce lower scores. Whilst part **(a)** proved to be very straightforward, parts **(b)(i)** and **(b)(ii)** were not well-answered. In part **(c)**, most argued that the most important factor was economic disparity, though some felt administrative and political disparity was to blame. The mass uprising was then usually seen as a consequence of those disparities.

BANGLADESH STUDIES

Paper 7094/02

Environment and Development of Bangladesh

General comments

The questions answered were generally of a good standard, exhibiting satisfactory all round knowledge. No particular question scored more highly than any of the others; nor was any question low scoring. The main downfall for some candidates was a lack of in depth knowledge and not enough thought given to explanations and effectiveness of measures, both negative and positive. There was also a tendency for some to write in lists and bullet points with no explanation given.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was the least popular of the questions, making up only 13% of the answers, but responses were reasonable.

- (a) (i) The idea of temperature was well known with many accurate comments on it needing to be over 27°C. There was very little comment on the fact that it needed an area of low pressure to develop.
- (ii) The idea of warm air rising, evaporation, cooling and condensing was well understood, but the idea of cold air being drawn in in a spiralling manner and then sinking was rarely expressed.
- (iii) There was a general misconception that the eye of the storm was the most violent instead of being calm with no rain. The term 'characteristics' was not always understood - some described the formation of the eye or the damage caused.
- (b) (i) On the whole, the description of and the explanation of the causes of a storm surge were accurate.
- (ii) There was good knowledge of short and long term effects, but the answers, on the whole, did not explain the effects the flooding had on the people. There would be a blanket statement that crops were destroyed, but little development about hunger; or that roads were destroyed without how it affected the people – either in evacuating the area or hindering the distribution of aid.
- (c) Good descriptions of methods used to reduce coastal flooding, but more thought needed to have been given on how effective they might be, or not. The drawbacks to measures provide a valid answer. The question asked about coastal flooding, linking it to the previous questions, but there were answers relating to river floods and the building of dams.

Question 2

This question was the second most popular of the questions, making up 25% of the answers.

- (a) (i) There was accurate reading of the population structure with good understanding of the causes of the large percentage under 15 years, including comments on the lower percentage in the 0 - 4 years age group.
- (ii) There was a good understanding of the reasons for the much lower percentage over 60 years of age, especially descriptions of the poor accessibility to health care for this age group.
- (b) A comprehensive understanding of the difficulties posed by a high dependency ratio, particularly the high young dependents. The most common answers were on the need for more schools and health facilities.

- (c) (i) A mixture of responses were given for this question. Whilst many calculated accurately there were two common errors. Some calculated the differences in the birth rates for the two years whilst others just added up the figures for each year.
- (ii) This part of the question was well answered with the vast majority scoring full marks.
- (d) Often excellent answers were given for this question with sound knowledge of the three sectors involved in providing health care, and the improvements made in particular fields. Both the positive and negative aspects were covered in describing the effectiveness of the health care provided by the three sectors.

Question 3

This was not a popular question, making up 15% of the answers.

- (a) (i) All candidates understood natural inputs and were accurate in the temperatures and rainfall figures quoted.
- (ii) The idea of processes was not well understood. Answers needed to detail the building or repairing of bunds, sowing seeds by hand, transplanting seedlings, etc.
- (b) There was a good general knowledge on the Green Revolution, but answers tended to lack detail in comments on its effectiveness. Too many made vague comments on 'better crops' with no reference to higher yields, or 'better soil' and no mention of fertility. This was an example of a question that was sometimes answered by just making a list of methods used and no explanation as to their effectiveness.
- (c) (i) Accurate use of the graphs for describing the trends. The majority of candidates often dealt with each year describing the ups and downs of production whereas the fluctuating trend would have been an adequate description.
- (ii) The domestic use of the oils was well known, but not many candidates gave examples of their uses in industries.
- (iii) An understanding of the climatic conditions for rabi crops was weak with many mentioning high temperatures and high rainfall.

Question 4

This was the most popular of the questions, making up 32% of the answers. Only three candidates did not answer this question.

- (a) (i) A good understanding of the economic sectors, particularly the secondary and tertiary sectors. Some gave a limited answer for the primary sector by only mentioning agriculture.
- (ii) Accurate reading of the graph was displayed.
- (b) (i) On the whole this was answered well, although some just quoted the figures for each country which did not adequately describe the trends.
- (ii) This question demonstrated a good understanding of the industrial growth in Bangladesh and what needs to be done in order for it to improve further. The ideas of liberalisation, opening up markets and the growth of the garment industry were well documented. The improvements needed were well developed, from political stability to loans and foreign investment.
- (c) (i) Good use was made of the map and the question was thoroughly answered.
- (ii) This question was not comprehensively answered as many named vague uses of gas, but did not then go on to explain how it was important to Bangladesh's development. There were vague references to use in power or industry without expanding this, i.e. electricity generation or as raw material for fertilisers. The fact that it reduced the import bill was well known.
- (iii) Again, often only sketchy answers were given, with little detail, particularly of the difficult weather associated with tropical storms that make it hazardous to extract gas from off-shore fields.

Question 5

This was the second most popular of the questions, making up 25% of the answers.

- (a) (i)** Well answered, with good use of the statistics given.
- (ii)** On the whole, reasonable interpretation was offered, with most candidates scoring well on the rising life expectancy and how the improvement in health care, nutrition, etc. has indicated a rise in the level of development of Bangladesh.
- (b)** The idea of poverty and the inability to purchase food was expressed very well. Other reasons for a low calorie intake, such as the shortage of food due to floods, etc., were, however, ignored.
- (c) (i)** Once again, there was good interpretation of the graph. More was needed than just to quote the figures for each sector, but most explained the general declining pattern.
- (ii)** This question was well answered, particularly with reference to increasing schools in rural areas and encouraging girls to attend school.
- (iii)** Again a reasonably answered question, especially with reference to the cost of the private sector and the success in increasing literacy levels in rural areas.