

BANGLADESH STUDIES

Paper 0449/01

History and Culture of Bangladesh

General Comments

The high level of performance noted in the last two year's papers was maintained in this year's paper, despite a significant increase in the number of candidates. It continues to be a delight to mark scripts where candidates have such a good understanding of the cultural and political history of their country. Few candidates lacked the knowledge to answer the questions set, though some do seem to lack the time to do so. In most cases, this is the result of over-lengthy responses to the first few questions, thus seriously reducing the time available for the final answer.

It is worth repeating the advice given in last year's report on ensuring that direct and focused responses are given to the questions to ensure that time demands (which are significant on this paper) do not result in under-performance. Candidates should avoid writing out the questions or answering the **part (a)** questions in full sentences. Indeed, on **Question 1** it is sufficient to give just the letter of the alternative chosen. This practice, together with the avoidance of irrelevant detail in the **part (c)** questions, should help candidates to ensure that three questions are completed in full. It remains the case, however, that the vast majority of candidates are able to complete the paper and to provide impressive amounts of detail to support their answers.

Specific Questions

Question 1

Candidates continue to be well-prepared for the compulsory question on the culture and heritage of Bangladesh. **Part (a)** produced a large number of full marks, though some candidates did confuse Lalon Shah with Alaol in **part (ai)**.

In **Part (b)**, some candidates wrote at great length about the various periods of history and the architecture from those periods. Such answers were able to score up to 5 marks in Level 2, but in order to reach the top level candidates were expected to show an understanding of how the architecture has contributed to Bangladeshi culture, or at least reflects the cultural norms of the period being discussed.

For example the answer:

"From the above it is clear how architecture has contributed to the development of Bangladeshi culture. For example, the mosques during the Sultanate and Mughal period showed the attitude of the Muslim rulers as reflected in the luxurious villa in the Pundranagara clearly depicts the lifestyle of the time, is clearly doing more than just describing well known examples of high quality architecture.

In **Part (c)** candidates also receive highest reward when able to compare the relative importance of the three choices provided. There was an impressive knowledge of the work of Jasimuddin, Rabindranath Tagore and Zainul Abedin, but as in previous years, candidates often talked of what was important about their work and then repeated this information at the end of the question. To reach the highest level candidates need to find a means by which they can compare the contribution of the individuals, rather than just consider their work in isolation. The following conclusion did so:

Rabindranath Tagore made the greatest contribution. He contributed in many sectors unlike Zainul Abedin and Jasimuddin. For example, he wrote stories, poems, novels as mentioned earlier, but Jasimuddin wrote only poems based on rural life. Moreover, he even composed songs, which neither of the other two did, and last of all, he was even an amateur painter!

Whatever, the accuracy of the evaluation, the candidate is to be congratulated for rising above a straight description of the three exponents' work and significance.

Question 2

Part (a) was again well answered, with no individual question causing consistent difficulty. As stated last year, the **part (b)** questions provide the opportunity for candidates to select and repeat relevant information (**part bi**) and to show an understanding of causation (**part bii**). On **part (bi)** all candidates have to do is list five facts to score 5 marks. On **part (bii)**, they are required to identify and explain two reasons. It is interesting to note that few candidates followed the advice given last year to begin an answer with 'One reason why ... and ... Another reason why'.

Part 2 (bi) caused few problems and the majority of candidates were able to write knowledgeably on the Sufis. **Part 2 (bii)** proved a little trickier with candidates not always able to identify two reasons for Lakshamana Sena's claim to greatness. Where this was done well, answers tended to concentrate on his skills as a warrior and his patronage of the Arts at court.

In **Part (c)** candidates had little difficulty explaining the importance of the three choices given but, as in **Question 1**, were not always able to compare their relative importance. This was necessary to be marked in the highest level.

Question 3

This question proved very much to the candidates' liking, though **part (c)** did reveal one of the few areas where candidates seemed to lack knowledge.

Whilst there were some candidates who confused Palashi with Panipat, **Part (a)** was well-answered. **Part (b)** revealed a very thorough knowledge of Aurangzeb's fight for the succession and of the reasons for his unpopularity, (though answers tended to concentrate on his religious conservatism at the expense of his Deccan policy and its consequences.)

Part (c) required candidates to address both sides of a hypothesis and here some fell short. There were many answers which blamed Jahangir for allowing the British in, though most saw the weaknesses of the Moghuls' declining military expertise and internal divisions as significant factors. It was surprising that more candidates were not able to talk about British military and technological advances or their use of divide and rule tactics to exploit the lack of unity in the Indian ranks.

Question 4

Candidates did not generally select this question to answer and, when they did, they did not score as highly as on the other two questions in this section of the paper.

In **Part (a)** few candidates knew that Hardinge was the Viceroy who partitioned Bengal or that CR Das persuaded Muslim leaders to sign the 1923 Bengal Pact. In **Part (bi)**, knowledge of the Nehru report was impressive and marks were generally high. However, few candidates were able to discuss in **Part (bii)** how the Cabinet Mission aimed to settle differences within India, to get the British out of India as soon as possible, or to protect the minorities. Instead, often candidates resorted to the story of post-war events.

Good answers to **Part (c)** were also rare and it appears that only weaker candidates chose to answer this question. There were almost no attempts to consider the relative importance of the three factors so marks were low.

BANGLADESH STUDIES

Paper 0449/02

Environment and Development of Bangladesh

General

Choice of questions tended to vary by Centre but overall **Questions 3** and **4** proved the most popular. **Question one** was the least popular but there was no pattern of some questions being more difficult than others. The distribution of marks was similar across all five questions.

Most candidates managed to complete three questions in the time available with only slight evidence of a few candidates rushing towards the end of their third question.

Some general points of guidance for candidates are:

- Use the mark allocations as a rough guide to how much to write. Some candidates wrote excellent and detailed answers to questions where a maximum of two marks could be awarded. Conversely a brief answer is unlikely to score high marks for a question with three or four marks available.
- Look carefully at all parts of a question before choosing it. Particularly with **Questions 3** and **4** some candidates scored well for the first parts of the question but then had little knowledge or understanding to demonstrate when it came to sections about education or industry.
- Try to avoid vague generalisations such as 'foreign investment will (or will not) help Bangladesh to develop'. On its own, this shows little understanding. The important aspect is to say how and why there is a link with development.
- For the last section of each question, which assesses the objective of judgement and decision making, candidates can score marks for saying what they do not agree with as well as for writing their reasons for what they do agree with.

Some extracts from candidates' scripts have been included in the report. They are identified in *italics*. These are intended to show the sort of responses that gained good marks. They are NOT in any way intended to be perfect or definitive answers and may well include some inaccuracies and weaknesses.

Question 1

This question was only answered by around one-quarter of candidates, but amongst these there were some very good answers showing a sound knowledge and understanding of the topic. There were very few weak answers here. **Part (a)** presented no difficulties to candidates if they had the knowledge required.

With **part (b)**, it was encouraging to see candidates being more precise than in the previous year about describing distributions. It was not an easy distribution to describe but for those who used compass directions and names of rivers and/or provinces, full marks could be earned. Whilst most could explain area F's unsuitability for agriculture, many struggled with G. Most referred to the Sylhet Hills but, oddly, then said there were mainly tea plantations, which is of course a type of agriculture. References to the dangers of soil erosion, difficulty of providing water all year round and very heavy rainfall were some of the points given which achieved the second mark.

For **part (c)**, most could give evidence for both the 'greatest resource' and the 'greatest hazard'. A few simply referred to flooding in **part (ii)** without mentioning the damage that can be caused. Two examples of answers to **part (iii)** are given below:

The best way of reducing the hazard would be:

- *Building embankments on the banks of the rivers so that the river water does not enter the locality.*
- *Building dams on the river so that river water can be held back during times of flood. In this way, no harm would be caused.*
- *Planting flood resistant crops so that there is no food shortage due to flooding.*
- *Doing afforestation and reforestation, as it will help in reducing floods.*

Although the third bullet point needed an example or other elaboration to be worth a mark, this was a good answer.

I think building sluice gates or dams to hold back the water would be the best way. This is because:

1. *Water from the rivers can be held back during times of flood.*
2. *Excess water can be kept in the dams or reservoirs.*
3. *Water will not be able to enter the land and wash away houses.*
4. *It would prevent the dams in the surrounding countries to release water in rainy seasons and cause floods in Bangladesh.*

Points 1 and 2 are really a development of the main statement but overall this was also a sound answer.

Question 2

As stated for **Question 1**, candidates showed improved skills in describing distributions. Good answers referred to south and southeast along with references to coasts, Bay of Bengal and parts of specified divisions. Weaker answers tended to give a list of names of places affected. **Part (ii)** was also answered well, although weaker answers did not distinguish between areas A and B and the different types of damage. There were many excellent answers to **part (iii)** with some very good diagrams. For **part (iv)**, most candidates referred to the warming of the water in the Bay of Bengal and the increased likelihood of cyclones forming. For both marks, candidates either elaborated upon this point or referred to the potentially greater reach of cyclones with rising sea levels.

For **part (b)**, many showed a good knowledge and understanding although for (ii) some just repeated words from **part (i)** without giving any explanation. A good answer gaining full marks is given here:

On hot sunny days, the air above the earth is heated (W). They (sic) expand and start to rise (X). As they rise, the temperature falls and they cool down. (Y). The water vapour condenses and forms large cumulonimbus clouds (Z). The vapour then forms drops of water, which come down on earth as rain. This also gives rise to thunderstorms., which causes heavy rainfall, strong winds and hail.

Whilst far from perfect, this answer did show understanding of the basic processes. There was a wide variety of evidence quoted in **parts (i)** and **(ii)** for **part (c)**, with candidates then either developing their answers for **part (iii)** or giving additional evidence. Either approach could lead to the award of four marks. It should be noted however that candidates are not credited twice for the same answer if there is no development. The following answer agreeing with the statement achieved 3 marks:

I agree with the statement. Bangladesh can do very little to lessen the impacts of cyclones. Because the cyclonic surges are so devastating that there is nothing to withstand the onrush of huge waves of water. Bangladesh is a country of low flat terrain with poorly built houses. So it is likely to be affected by cyclones. Absence of efficient warning systems for the development of a sudden natural calamity over sea proves the fact that Bangladesh can do little to lessen the effects of cyclone. If the final point about warning systems had been elaborated more clearly, it would have achieved an additional point.

Another response, this time arguing against the statement just achieved full marks:

No, I do not agree with the statement. Without building expensive sluice gates to hold back water, reforestation of the mangrove forest can be done. The areas affected by cyclones can be declared uninhabitable. In addition, an early warning system can be developed.

Other candidates achieved high marks for developing one point such as the early warning system and its benefits and drawbacks.

Question 3

This was a very popular question but some candidates had a much better understanding of population than of education.

Whilst most had little difficulty with **(a) parts (i)** and **(ii)**, some lost marks by not including 'millions' or even 'm' in their answers. Some may have read the wrong age bar as they mentioned '9 million' for both males and females.

For full marks in **part (iii)**, candidates had to refer to working population or dependent population as well as the obvious 'children, adult and old age'. Most referred to the largest and smallest groups and the pattern of decreasing group size with increasing age. **Part (iv)** proved challenging to some. Good answers referred to the moving up of existing age groups. Weaker answers just referred in general to population change. Marks

were awarded for reference to increasing life expectancy linked to better health care and declining death rates. Reference to both 'how' and 'why', as stated in the question, was required for full marks.

For **part (b)**, most showed a good understanding of NGOs although weaker answers wrote about them in general rather than in relation to education. **Part (iii)** instructed candidates to use Fig. 6, but some answers never referred to it. Those who did noted that 89% of children were currently being educated, and that by 2015 many of these children would become adults.

Part (c) led to some very generalised (and thus weak) responses, but also some very well argued responses. Good answers referred to private Schools being mainly in urban areas and dependant on fees whilst government Schools could cover the whole country and could be free or charge low fees. Answers which just referred to private or government Schools being 'better' did not gain many marks as it was necessary to state in what ways they might be better or more appropriate. The following answers cover a number of relevant points and are typical of high scoring candidates:

I think the best way to improve education is to increase the number of government funded Schools. Because these Schools teach the children without payment so this is a great advantage of the poor rural people. These Schools provide food rations and clothes to attract people to the School. They also teach about the importance of education and make the education compulsory. Also it ensures greater participation of girls and working children in the School so I think that by developing the quality of government funded Schools, the education of Bangladesh will be improved.

I think statement A is the best because teachers in private Schools are better paid so the number of good well qualified teachers increases. There are also better facilities and equipment for the children to learn. The government has not got the funds to provide this level of School for everyone so middle class families will choose to pay for their children to go to private Schools. The NGOs are very good at providing education to children in rural areas and to poor children who can not afford to pay.

Question 4

Most answered the easy first two parts correctly, but some failed to get both marks for **(a) part (iii)** due to lack of precision. Whilst it is accepted that many industries could be small scale, just naming 'clothes', 'garages' or 'jute' was not enough to get a mark. Good answers to **part (iv)** referred to provision of employment to many people especially women, the earning of foreign exchange, the need for relatively low level skills, large amounts of capital not needed, low wages compared to some countries so garments could be competitively priced etc. Weaker answers tended just to focus on the availability of jobs. The following answer is succinct and achieved all 4 marks:

Garment industry enjoyed phenomenal growth in Bangladesh. This because the garment industry depends on simple technology and labour without state support to achieve international competitiveness. The garment industry provides lower wages but it employs more workers because it is labour intensive. The garments produced can be exported for foreign exchange which can be invested in machinery.

Part (b) produced some excellent answers but also some rather rambling and vague ones. A wide variety of responses was credited provided they were clear and answered the question. The following answer, although containing some weaknesses, achieved full marks:

Government: In a developing country, entrepreneurs lack the knowledge of technology and legal systems to compete in the international market. The state can assist them or encourage them to produce better products. Without state support, the entrepreneurs are unlikely to find loans from the financial sector.

Private investments: As the banks remain unwilling to support the enterprises, the private investments are the only likely way to get funds for enterprises to invest in potentially profitable projects.

Multinational companies: These are the only ways that Bangladesh can gain foreign exchange. Foreign exchange is necessary to get more advanced technology and machinery as well as produce more and better products.

For **part (c)**, it was pleasing to see that most candidates did make genuine comparisons rather than separate accounts for each country. Good answers made comments on the extent of the differences and similarities whereas weaker ones gave factual comparisons without comment. One of the striking features of the data, which was only commented on by a small number of high scoring candidates, was the similarity of the growth rates despite very different amounts of foreign investment.

Part (d) provided a good test of the depth of understanding of this part of the syllabus. It is an example of where candidates scored marks by writing about why they disagreed with one statement, as why they agreed with the other. The following example for **part (iii)** achieved four marks.

I agree with statement A most. In a developing country like Bangladesh, the only source of funding in the financial sectors. But they are unwilling to lend money because of the historical 'bad debt'. The private investments are staying away due to political uncertainty and lack of state support. Therefore the only chance of finding funds is through foreign investment. Enterprises can invest the money to employ more workers, buy more raw materials and import better machinery. These can help to increase the quality and productivity of the enterprise and thus adds more value to the economy.

Question 5

This was not one of the most popular answers, but those who did choose it showed a sound understanding of the topic. Most could give good descriptions of the changes for **(a) parts (i) and (ii)**, although some failed to be specific about dates.

The one common weakness with **part (b)(i)** was to write 'green revolution' without giving any detail of what that entailed. The following answer to **part (b)(ii)** achieved all three marks.

Three ways are: 1 Use of fertilizers to increase soil fertility. 2 Application of new technology like use of power pumps, tractors etc. 3 Development of agricultural infrastructure like flood control systems, roads, bridges, etc.

Part (c)(i) was answered well by those who used compass points, names of divisions and/or districts. Candidates generally wrote well about arsenic pollution although weaker answers were muddled about how arsenic was released from the rocks. Arsenic from wooden poles and as a result of excessive use of pesticides was better understood.

Weaker answers to **(d) part (iii)** often made the assumption that larger farms were more efficient without giving any reasons. Stronger answers recognised that whilst more machinery could be used on large farms, this would not necessarily produce more crops or higher yields. Most recognised that there would be employment issues with larger farms with potential additions to the numbers of landless and unemployed. Some wrote about the benefits and problems with both types of farm, which is a valid approach. The following answer, which focused only on statement B, was awarded full marks:

The best way forward is statement B. This is because land scarcity means most land is sub divided into smaller plots which are owned by many people. And so focusing on such small plots will give greater success. Also, since small plots can be distributed among many farmers, the output and profit will be enjoyed by a larger population base. It also means that many people can be employed as there is less mechanisation reducing unemployment.