

# Examiners' Report

Summer 2012

GCE Religious Studies (6RS04)  
Paper 1E Hinduism

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## Introduction

It is clear that very many candidates worked hard in their preparation for this paper, including evidence of wider reading around the topics. Many showed evidence of commendable study skills. This included the ability to focus explicitly on the demands of the question, structuring their answers in a clear coherent manner and marshalling arguments into a critical evaluation.

Very few candidates attempted to fuse parts (a) and (b) together whereas in previous years, this approach led some candidates to pay insufficient attention to the various demands of AO2 (Assessment Objective 2).

The main focus in all the levels for the mark scheme of AO1 (Assessment Objective 1) relates to an understanding of the passage. Candidates had different methods for examining part (a). For example, two popular methods were:

- (i) to work their way systematically through the extract and link it to other scholars, and
- (ii) to select relevant material from the Smart material as a whole and relate this to the passage.

These various methods have been credit worthy and have produced some very good answers. However, as with other methods, these could have potential problems:

- (i) sometimes a close analysis of the text became a simple and basic comprehension exercise rather than the means of placing the Smart material in any meaningful context or showing evidence of analysis, and
- (ii) occasionally some candidates, by summarising Smart as a whole, may pay scant attention to the selected passage.

It must be noted that there is no predictable pattern in the choice of selected texts however over the life time of the specification all the three texts will be used.

One of the purposes of this unit is to enable candidates to develop skills in textual analysis. There are important outcomes for candidates, including transferable skills across a range of enterprises, involving careful attention to detail, evidence and reason and also preparation for university work. In addition, this unit provides an opportunity for candidates to reflect upon and debate the implication of their studies of religion.

## Question 1

### AO1 features of good quality

- Evidence of excellent work with confident understanding. For example, some provided the theoretical basis for Smart's approach.
- Examination of the passage in breadth and detail such as links between Smart's dimensions and a variety of examples in Hinduism.
- Specific ideas/points of view raised by Smart being addressed. For example, some candidates focused on key areas such as the interaction between the social, ethical, mythological and doctrinal dimensions.
- Creative use of material from their other studies of Hinduism in the units 6RS01 and 6RS03 and where appropriate 6RS02.
- Using the extract as a spring board to showcase their wider knowledge. For example, some candidates incorporated ideas about caste from Vedic times, during the Hindu renaissance and present. These were proficient in their use of key terms. Some mentioned the Law of Manu and how it has been adapted to social conditions in India. Candidates used Shruti and Smriti texts such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana to support their answers.
- Clarity in the conclusion that cohered with the rest of the answer.

### Examples of AO1 work that require improvement

- Generalised views on Hinduism without specific reference to the selected passage. For example, some focused on ideas about atman and Brahman and avoided the selected passage.
- Some examples of AO1 were shorter than the AO2 material although there are more marks available for AO1.
- Evidence of candidates using a generic response to Smart which provided only incidental information on the extract itself.

### AO2 features of good quality

- Good critical analysis reflecting an evident ability to think through the implications of the passage. Some discussed critical scholarship on Smart and his methods. For example, some questioned whether a definition of religion is possible or even useful.
- Some included scholarly debates about social issues in India, such as sati, female infanticide together with reference to key figures such as Dr Ambedkar. In addition, some debated the views of Durkheim in this context.
- In response to the question 'Do you agree with the ideas expressed?' the stronger responses presented their own opinions and located these within their wider areas of study. They referred to scholarly opinion, debating and constructing a valid and well justified argument. These showed a thoughtful understanding of alternative and challenging views and ideas.
- Ability to debate implications for understanding both religion and human experience. There were interesting discussions about karma in this context.

### Examples of AO2 work that require improvement

- Some candidates answered AO2 in the same manner as AO1 with little evidence of evaluation. Some stated personal opinions and presented little evidence of justifying their ideas.

- Part (b) was sometimes too short and descriptive rather than evaluative.
- Some short answers omitted either implications for understanding religion or understanding human experience or both.
- Sometimes using paragraphs not linked together.

**Example 1**

The AO2 part of this answer represented a vigorous debate around some of Smart's key ideas and points of view. The candidate made effective use of their studies of Hinduism and produced a high quality answer.

**Example 2**

The AO1 part of this answer represented good practice. The candidate focused on the social dimension as indicated in the passage. The candidate made good use of their studies in Hinduism to illustrate a range of topics related to the social dimension. The candidate structured this part around the topics of caste, dharma, ashramas and varnashramadharma.

### Example 1

(a) In the 'Religious Experience of Mankind', ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> Smart discusses what ~~constitutes~~ constitutes a religion. There is much debate about whether Marxism or Humanism are religions or not, as they contain similar aspects associated with religion. Smart, thereby, goes on to say that religions have six dimensions which make them possible to be religions. These are ritual, mythological, doctrinal, ethical, social and experiential dimensions. Marxism has many ~~rituals, social~~ aspects of those dimensions as they contain ceremonies and beliefs, but the most important dimension - the experiential dimension, is lacking, and it is this one that underpins all others, and shows Marxism to not be a religion. The experiential refers to religious experience that an individual may undergo. It is this experience that gives meaning to all other

dimensions. The ritual dimension is about ritual ~~being~~ which can be very complex - as seen in Mass in Christianity and pilgrimage/Hajj in Islam to a simple prayer - this is also like the ~~ex~~ excessive Vedic sacrifices and Krishna saying that even a simple flower - 'I take with joy'. ~~The myth~~ However, this can become an empty shell and just done for the sake of it - with no meaning behind it. The mythological dimension talks about myths in religion [not true/false but stories]. ~~The doctrinal talks about a system~~ such as the creation stories or even historical myths such as Arjuna's dilemma where Krishna reveals himself in the Bhagavad Gita. The doctrinal talks about a system of beliefs. Ethical dimension talks about the ethical code that gives structure to an individual and society - such as the 10 commandments in Christianity and the Quran/shar'iah,

stating the morals such as 'Do not kill'. This is also seen in Hinduism in the Bhagavad Gita which states that you must do your own duty but renounce the rewards. It differs from Western religions as everyone has their own duty according to their varna (caste) and ashrama (stage in life). The social dimension shows that religions are organisations/institutions and so don't just have a system of beliefs. There is a social difference. Smart does recognise a similarity with the ethical dimension as it is the ethics that determine social aspects of society for example, in the United Kingdom the laws of Christianity have been adopted for society → these determine the social aspects of society. On the other hand, it could be said that the ethics can be influenced by the social aspects. This can be seen in the UK, where religious belief is mixed and so perhaps ~~everyone~~<sup>people</sup> in

This society don't care for the Christian ways of life. There could be atheists who want to have an abortion or be homosexuals - these are not allowed in Christianity and Islam, but the laws have now been changed to satisfy everyone within society to bring social cohesion. Smart claims that the difference between the ethical and social is that the social is the way that a religion is institutionalised, ~~which~~ and the effects it has on society through the ethical institutions/teaching. This can be seen in with the Shariah in Islam as it is an ethical teaching code and socially it is applied to wrong doers → adultery is wrong [shown in ethical code] so the punishment is stoning to death [shown social]. The doctrinal, mythological and ethical dimensions show ~~how~~ claims of men's lives shaped and the nature of the ~~re~~invisible world, whilst the social dimension shows how their lives are shaped.

For example, a Jewish man can ~~follow~~ read myths about Moses and what he expects from Jews. He can follow this throughout his life through prayer, ~~the~~ Bar Mitzvah, circumcision etc. Likewise, after hearing Krishna in the ~~the~~ Bhagavad Gita say to Arjuna who has a dilemma of killing his cousins in a battle who are against him, that he must do his caste duty. In Hinduism, the Ramashramadhharma (coined by Gandhi) shows the beliefs in Hinduism ~~to~~ and then can be practiced. You do your duty according to your caste and stage in life. So if you are a ~~best~~ student in Brahmin caste, you will learn all that is needed to fulfil your duty in this area.

It must be known that all dimensions including the social are underpinned by the experiential dimension. Perhaps this is

Why Smart called his book 'The Religious Experience of Man-kind' - to show how important ~~the~~ religious experience is. Without it, there will be no meaning behind social dimension - Religious Experience, contact with God may remind you ~~that~~ your reason for maintaining social cohesion → in Christianity → 'love thy neighbour' and these will all lead to eternal life / the invisible world - When Krishna says 'do your duty but renounce the rewards' - he means to work but selflessly, but this is hard as it can lead to eternal life.

It must be remembered that Ninian Smart does not ~~talk~~ ~~ab~~ judge the beliefs at any time, he is just commenting on what is believed.

16] ~~The main argument~~ The main implication for social cohesion is the discussion of whether there is a clear distinction between the ethical and social dimensions. Some would disagree, and believe them to be too similar. Ethics are the laws for society and for social cohesion → laws stating that murder is wrong are showing that you should not murder → so people in society will not do this. There is no need for a social dimension as it can be incorporated ~~with~~ into the ethical dimension. ~~How~~ However, I disagree with this line of argument and believe that there is a distinction between the ethical and social dimension. This is that the ethical dimension shows that <sup>which</sup> must be done / obeyed and the social dimension shows how this must be done in practice. This is because it gives clear structure to human lives.

which is greatly treasured. The ethics are not enough, it is the social which shows how the ethics will be put into practice. The Katha Upanishads show the story of Nachiketa who asks Yama for the ~~best~~ way to attain ~~self~~ eternal life. The Upanishads are different to other holy books as they are more philosophical - they are seen as a social as they focus on the individual more than society in itself and a more spiritual - this shows the way to attain eternal life - as well as what to do. Nachiketa realises that you must lead an austere life and focus only on your inner search for yourself. However, the Bhagavad Gita do show a more social aspect as they include the society, as they must work in it and with other people. It is clear that religions seem to be more institutionalised and the implications for this are that there seems to be a hierarchy

-ical structure within many religions. This is evident in Christianity with the Pope and bishops and archbishops and then the ~~many~~ ordinary Christians. The social structure is maintained and dictated by those at the top of the system. ~~This is~~ There is evidence of this in Tsarist Russia in the late 1800's to early 1900's, where the Tsar, who was believed to have been appointed by God, would be driven through crowds of people who had posters of him and were weeping of happiness in seeing him - he keeps them in line by telling them he was appointed by God - therefore keeping the social structure maintained, as the tsar would get all benefits and riches, whilst the peasants would live in harsh conditions. This is also shown in ~~the tsar~~ Hinduism with the caste system showing what ~~is~~ your duty is - Brahman is a priest, and so this keeps them privileged, whilst the

shudras stay at the bottom. The implications for the caste system ~~is~~ in social cohesion are dismal as untouchability was brought about which gave higher castes the means to feel superior and discriminate them - this should not in theory have happened, but people in society carried it out - showing that socially, there can be wrong interpretations, but overall, I believe that the social dimension so many reformers tried to get rid of untouchability such as Ramakrishna, Gandhi, Saraswati etc, and so there is obviously a knowledge for what is actually right - socially this can be seen. So overall I believe the implications for the social dimensions are that it is ~~com~~ different from ethical dimension as it is important to know how to carry ~~these~~ <sup>out</sup> rules. However, it does need the experiential dimension to give ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> reason and meaning. It is a very important aspect of religion as we must ~~live with other people~~ <sup>live with other people</sup> it is hard for everyone to live an austere life.

TOTAL FOR PAPER 1E = 50 MARKS



## Example 2

2a) Smart begins by explaining that religions are more than 'systems of belief' but are actually organisations. It cannot be said that there is not a social element to religions, as religion gives a guideline to acceptable social behaviors and typically brings people together, as seen by communal worship. The social dimension is just one of the six dimensions mentioned in General Religion but has a large part in the relationship with the ethical dimension. This is noted by Smart, who points out that the social shape of a religion is determined by 'religious and ethical ideals and practices'. This is evident in societies that are governed by religious laws, particularly Islamic countries, which are largely based on the Sharia law, giving a guide to the people.

However, Smart notes a distinction between the two dimensions. Smart notes how the social dimension, through being institutionalised, affects the community.

This was evident in the ~~Christian~~ Britain during the war, at a time when many turned to Christianity. However, the main ~~example~~ example of ~~religious~~ religious influence affecting the social world of its believers is the caste system within Hinduism. The caste system affects a Hindu's life as it guides their entire future, their ability to worship, the conditions they find themselves in and the respect that they are ~~not~~ given. Everyone has a part in the caste system and it is generated within religious books, such as the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna explains that he generates it and everyone is <sup>partial</sup> party to it. However, the caste system, at its very basic is simply a class hierarchy. Gandhi was a believer in the caste system, believing it gave everybody a part to play and made their positions seem worthwhile. The part of dhama is ~~also~~

another vital <sup>aspect</sup> ~~part~~ in the social dimension of religion, ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> Hinduism. Dharma has many meanings but is largely translated as duty and refers to the way that everyone, from any caste, has a duty. For a warrior caste, this might mean going to fight, as seen in Arjuna's Dilemma in the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna tells Arjuna that not following his duty will have negative consequences. Doing duty means work and, according to Krishna, this is what leads to salvation. Working is more important than work as it keeps society running smoothly and gives everyone a purpose.

Ashramas ~~to~~ play an important part in the social aspect of Hinduism and provide a fine example of how religion affects the social world and community. The ashramas translates as the life stages of individuals. It ~~begins with~~ The ashramas are seen as having an highly important part in regards life as it gives the

aims. For example, a person in a Brahmin ~~status~~ ~~and~~ caste at the student ashrama would be expected to learn, both at school and about the religion. Once they reach the final stage, it will be expected for them to take an austere path and renounce the rewards of work. ~~It~~

Dharma, caste and ashrama all come together to create varnashramadharma. This was a term first coined by Gandhi. Varnashramadharma means following your caste, life stage and duty and in doing so, salvation shall be achieved. This has various religious meanings but is very important in the social aspect of religion.

In ~~doing~~ these ~~the~~ followers of varnashramadharma, a person is fulfilling their most important duty, which will affect the running of society.

The treatment of women in society was little ~~social~~ religious bearing but it's social reactions have been great. Practices such as

Sati and enforced widowhood have been condemned by many reformers, particularly Gandhi and ~~Rabindranath~~ Saradwati.

Romesh Chandra Chatterjee is particularly against the negative treatment of women, believing them to be an incarnation of Kali, a goddess ~~to~~ he was devoted to.

Smart finishes by declaring that the social dimension shapes men's lives by negating claims. This is proven by the ~~case~~ case, dhama, the ashramas and womanashramadharma and the treatment of women.

b) To a large extent, I do agree with most of the ideas expressed by Hindu Smart in the explanation of the social dimension. Religion gives a clear ~~very~~ guidance to social attitudes and the way society is run and the laws of society are after based on religious laws. This is true for most religions, such as Britain basing original laws on the 10 Commandments.



do so or if someone else is more able to do it. It has the negative effect of having a genius in the lowest caste, unable to fulfill their ~~own~~ ~~purpose~~ potential and going to waste. This can be seen through Ambedkar, an untouchable who travelled to London and became a doctor. However, when returning to India, he found himself shunned due to his untouchable roots.

Varnashramadharma has the added criticism of being far too rigid and allowing no room for flexibility or individuality. There is only one set, greatly unchanging path to follow and no chance of social mobility. This is still religiously justified as the ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ is believed that should not be able to move due to having their place.

Smart is correct in stating how religious ideals influence society but it seems to ignore the fact

that this creates religious justification for negative actions and prejudice. Islamic terrorists use religion as justification, despite the vast majority of Muslims strongly disagreeing and condemning their actions, which shows how religious teachings can be interpreted to the most extreme consequences. The implications of the social dimension is that there needs to be a separate guidance, away from religious background. This will create a general dimension away from any negative action that could then fall back on religious beliefs.

To conclude, I ~~cannot~~ ~~the~~ agree with the ideas expressed. The social dimension has a large effect and is especially important when paired with the ethical dimension as it helps create a better understanding of religion for human and religious experience.

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