

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Religious Studies
(5RS06/01)

Unit 6: Religion and Life Based on
a Study of Hinduism

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Question 1(a) was mostly answered correctly although there were some partially correct answers and very few incorrect answers given. In 1(b) although many candidates were able to give two basic reasons for why unanswered prayers proved or disproved God's existence stronger candidates were able to give two developed reasons. Some candidates used three or four reasons to illustrate their answer; unfortunately only two reasons could be credited. Part (c) was a question about how reading the Bhagavad Gita may lead to belief on God. This answer was attempted by candidates of all abilities and was answered well by most candidates. Candidates were able to explore the various ways in which the Bhagavad Gita may lead to belief in God. The part (d) question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether natural evil is proof that God did not create the world. Most candidates were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in (d)(i). Most candidates referred to Hinduism, which did enable them to achieve marks across both parts of the question, although it would have been acceptable to use non-Hindu views in one of the sections, while still ensuring there was still reference to Hinduism in either part (i) or part (ii).

For question 2(a) most candidates correctly defined dharma. Most answers were correct; there were a few incorrect answers and a few partially correct answers. In 2(b) although many candidates were able to give two basic reasons for whether they thought miracles had happened, it was only more able candidates that managed to give two developed reasons. Some candidates used three or four reasons to illustrate their answer; unfortunately only two reasons could be credited. Part (c) was well answered by nearly all candidates, who were able to explain how the architecture and symbols of the mandir may lead to, or support, belief in God. The part (d) question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether the media helps people believe in God. Most candidates were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in (i). A large number of candidates were also able to construct counter arguments. However some candidates did not refer to Hinduism in either part of the answer which meant that they only gained three out of the possible six marks.

As a glossary definition question, question 3(a) was very well answered by candidates; the majority of candidates who attempted it were awarded full marks. Question 3(b) asked whether candidates thought life after death was impossible. The questions were attempted by candidates of all abilities. Although many candidates were able to give two basic reasons for whether they thought life after death was possible or not possible, it was only higher level answers that managed to give developed reasons. Some candidates used three or four reasons to illustrate their answer unfortunately only two reasons could be credited. Candidates need to be prepared to expand on the simple reasons they give in part (b) questions as this is the only way to achieve full marks on this type of question. Part (c) was well answered by many candidates and many candidates gained full marks by stating four brief reasons as to why euthanasia is a controversial issue. Some candidates wrote far more than the question required and gave up to eight

brief reasons or four developed reasons. This impacted negatively on their section four answers where they appeared to run out of time.

In part (d) the question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether the media should be able to criticise what religions say about matters of life and death. Most candidates were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in (d)(i) and a large number of candidates were also able to construct counter arguments. However some candidates did not refer to Hinduism in either part of the answer which meant that they only gained three out of the possible six marks.

In question 4(a) this glossary definition was not answered fully correctly by many candidates. Many candidates gave examples of the paranormal rather than defining the key word, which resulted in many partially correct answers. Candidates were usually able to state their own opinion and then give at least two reasons for this opinion in question 4(b). Candidates answering this question tended to get two marks for two simple reasons. However, some were able to develop their answers and gain full marks. Part (c) asked why some Hindus accept abortion. Although many candidates answered this question well some candidates had strong anti-abortion opinions and wrote about this rather than stating reasons why some Hindus accept abortion, highlighting the need to read the question carefully. Like 3(c), some candidates wrote far more than the question required and gave up to eight brief reasons or four developed reasons. These candidates often appeared to run out of time which impacted negatively on their section four answers. Most candidates responded well to the layout of the part (d) question and were able to state their own opinion on euthanasia and give reasons for it in (i) and then give an alternative opinion in (ii).

In question 5(a) this glossary definition was known by a large number of candidates, most candidates were awarded full marks. Part (b) was generally answered well and many candidates were able to give developed reasons from personal experience having attended a mandir as a child. Part (c) was not answered well by several candidates. Many candidates gave general answers that described the issue of divorce rather than explaining reasons why attitudes towards divorce had changed in the UK. Again most candidates responded well to the layout of the (d) question and were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in (i) and then give an alternative opinion in (ii). Many candidates were able to give detailed Hindu reasons for why they thought sex should and should not be allowed outside marriage.

Although question 6(a) was generally answered well, some candidates often forgot to mention that the mother, father and children had to live together and therefore some answers were only partially correct. Part (b) was well answered and many candidates were able to give two reasons as to whether Hindus should accept homosexuality. The more able candidates were able to develop their reasons and gain the high marks. Part (c) was well answered by the majority of candidates, who were able to give several reasons for why many Hindus accept contraception. This part (d) question caused a few problems for some candidates, most were able to give three reasons backing their view in (i) and three reasons for an alternative view in (ii) about whether attitudes to divorces had changed, most candidates were

able to refer to Hinduism in (d) (i) or / and (d) (ii), which allowed them to gain the higher marks for this question.

Most candidates knew the glossary definition for sexism in question 7(a). This question generally gained full marks. Part (b) was not well answered by many candidates as they confused the key words multi- faith and multi ethnic, despite both words being glossary terms. Therefore many candidates answers did not answer the set question and most of what they wrote did not answer the question. Part (c) was a question about community cohesion that was attempted by candidates of all abilities. However many candidates did not seem to have an understanding of the term community cohesion despite it being a glossary term. Therefore many candidates were unable to answer this question well. Where candidates had an understanding of the key term the candidates answered well and were often able to give comprehensive explanations about Hindu religious charities that had helped people. Some candidates left this question blank especially those that had written more than was required in earlier sections of the paper. The part (d) question needed candidates to evaluate a statement about whether the racial harmony was possible in the UK. Most candidates were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in (i). A large number of candidates were also able to construct counter arguments, although some candidates confused racial harmony with religious harmony.

In question 8, most candidates who answered part (a) gained full marks. The language used also suggested that the glossary definition had been learnt by a large number of candidates. In part (b) most candidates were able to state their own opinion as to why they thought religious people should try and convert other people to their religion. Many candidates had strong opinions on this and this enabled them to develop their reason. This part (c) question was not generally well answered by candidates. Most candidates were unsure of the key term multi - ethnic, despite this being a glossary term. Many candidates confused the term multi ethnic with multi-faith and therefore did not answer the set question. Some candidates left this question blank especially those which had written more than was required in earlier sections of the paper. In answer to part (d) many candidates were unsure of what the term community cohesion meant and therefore many candidates struggled to answer the set question.

Summary

Candidates generally seemed well prepared by schools and produced some very interesting and mature answers to the questions posed. This indicated that they had not only studied the topics but importantly they had linked them to their own life and the world that they live in.

Some general points can be made on how best to answer the various question types:

- Part (a) questions ask for either a definition or examples and learning the glossary definitions is one way to achieve full marks on this question.

- Part (b) questions only need one opinion (the candidate's) backed by two developed reasons. To gain full marks candidates should give two developed reasons, rather than simple reasons. One way of approaching this is for candidates to give their reason, write two separate reasons for it, each in a distinct paragraph and to develop each of the reasons with an example or a quote.
- Part (c) questions are 'Explain why...' or 'Explain how...' questions, and are testing AO1. Candidates can gain the higher mark within the level by writing coherently and therefore meeting the Quality of Written Communication descriptor.
- Part (d) questions are divided into two parts: (d)(i) asks the candidates to give their own opinion backed by reasons and (d)(ii) requires an alternative opinion backed by reasons; one of the reasons used in the whole of (d) must refer to Hinduism otherwise the candidate cannot go beyond 3 marks for the whole of (d).
- There is a choice of two questions per section, each as four sub-questions. Candidates can either attempt the sub-questions in the top questions (odd numbers) or the sub-questions in the bottom question (even numbered). Candidates who choose questions from a mixture of the top and bottom questions will not be able to access full marks for the question.
- The number of lines given is more than adequate for candidates to achieve maximum marks. Any candidate who needs extra space can use that space allocated to other questions as long as they clearly indicate on their paper that this is what they have done.
- Candidates should be encouraged to spend about twenty minutes per question leaving ten minutes to check through work at the ends of the paper.

This year there were 4 extra marks added for spelling punctuation and grammar. There were 4 marks added to section one 'Believing in God'. Information on this has been sent to all centres.

Teachers who would like to learn more about the specification and this year's examination in particular should attend one of the online Edexcel insets which can be booked through the Edexcel website. Specific queries can be answered through Ask the Expert which is also found on the Edexcel website.

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