

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Religious Studies (5RS06)
Paper 01 - Religion and Life Based on
the Study of Hinduism

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Unit 6 Religion and Life based on a Study of Hinduism

Question 1(a) was mostly answered correctly. In 1(b), many candidates were able to give two detailed reasons for why they thought symbols in the mandir did or did not support belief in God. A small minority of candidates used three or four reasons to illustrate their answer, unfortunately only two reasons could be credited. Part (c) asked candidates to explain why evil and suffering may lead some people to not believe in God. This answer was attempted by candidates of all abilities and was answered well by most candidates. The part (d) question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether mystical experience proves that God exists. Most candidates gave their own opinion and gave reasons for it in (d)(i). Many candidates were then able to give a counter argument in (d) (ii).

For question 2(a), most candidates correctly defined agnosticism. In 2(b), although many candidates were able to give two basic reasons for whether they thought reading the Bhagavad Gita does or does not lead to belief in God. Part (c) was well answered by nearly all candidates, who were able to explain how and why a Hindu upbringing may lead to belief in God. A small number of candidates wrote far more than was required and then appeared to run out of time later on in the paper. The part (d) question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether "unanswered prayers show that God exists." The majority of candidates were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in (i). Most candidates were also able to construct counter arguments.

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 euthanasia should be allowed in the UK. The question was attempted by candidates of all abilities. The majority of candidates were able to give two reasons as to whether they thought that euthanasia should or should not be allowed in the UK. Many candidates managed to give a developed answer for at least one of their reasons whilst most able candidates developed both reasons. A small number of candidates used three or four reasons to illustrate their answer and unfortunately only two reasons could be credited. These 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 some people thought the media should be allowed to criticise what religions say about matters of life and death. In part (d), the question required candidates to evaluate a statement, "there is no such thing as life after death." Most candidates stated their own opinion and give reasons for it in (d)(i) and a large number of candidates were also able to construct counter arguments in (d) (ii).

In question 4(a), this glossary definition was answered fully correctly by many candidates. Question 4(b) was well answered by most candidates who gave detailed reasons for why they thought no believers should or should not believe in life after death. Part (c) was well answered by many

candidates and many candidates gained full marks by giving four brief reasons or a fully developed reason as to why most Hindus do not agree with Euthanasia. 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. Most candidates responded well to the layout of the part (d) question and stated their own opinion whether all Hindus should be against abortion in (i) they were then able to 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 as to why they thought attitudes towards divorce had or had not changed in the UK. A small number of candidates gave just one detailed reason as to whether they thought attitudes towards divorce had changed in the UK and some of these answers were repetitive in nature and many of these candidates achieved only 2 out of the 4 possible marks. Part (c) was answered well by most candidates. Many candidates gave four detailed answers, even though they only needed to give four brief reasons to explain why many Hindus accept contraception. The part (d) question needed candidates to evaluate a statement about whether sex outside marriage is always wrong. 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.

Question 6(a) was generally answered well and most candidates gained full marks. Part (b) was well answered and many candidates were able to give two reasons as to whether they thought attitudes towards family life have changed in the UK. The more able candidates were able to develop their reasons and gain the higher marks. Part (c) was well answered by the majority of candidates, who were able to explain why some Hindus accept divorce. In the (di) question candidates were able to state their own opinion and develop their reasons as to why they thought attitudes towards homosexuality had changed and they then gave an alternative opinion in (ii).

Most candidates knew the glossary definition in question 7(a). This question generally gained full marks. Part (b) was well answered by many candidates and many gave two developed reasons for why they thought the government can help community cohesion. Part (c) asked candidates to explain how attitudes towards men and women have changed in the UK. A very small number of 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 religious people should work for racial harmony. A small number of candidates discussed religious harmony rather than racial harmony and did not gain marks because they had not answered the set question. However the majority of 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.

In question 8, most candidates who answered part (a) gained full marks. In part (b), question was not generally well answered by a number of candidates. Many candidates seemed confused by the term racial harmony and confused this with religious harmony. This answer demonstrates the need to insure that candidates have full knowledge of the key words and key topics and meaning on the specification. This part (c) question was generally well answered by candidates. Most candidates were able to give four brief explanations as to why multi- faith society raises issues for religious people. Some candidates left this question blank especially those which had written more than was required in earlier sections of the paper. The part (d) question asked candidates to evaluate a statement about whether men and women have equal right in religion. 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.

Summary

The majority of candidates generally seemed very well prepared by centres and produced some very interesting and insightful 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 developed two 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 end of the paper.

