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Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCSE in Religious  
Studies (5RS13/01)

Unit 13: Hinduism

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Question 1(a) was mostly answered correctly. In 1(b) many candidates were able to give two detailed reasons for why they thought Shiva is or is not 'the most important deity'. 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 some Brahman is important to Hindus. This answer was attempted by candidates of all abilities and was answered well by most candidates. A small number of Candidates confused Brahman with Brahma. The part (d) question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether humans are only bodies without souls (atman). 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 Vishnu. 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 samsara is real, 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 and why the trimurti is important to Hindus. However many 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 'Hindus should always do their dharma'. 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.

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 Hindus should read shruti texts. The question was attempted by candidates of all abilities. Although many candidates were able to give two basic reasons for whether they thought Hindus should or should not read shruti texts, 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 the varnas are important to some Hindus. A minority of candidates gave reasons for why they thought the varnas are not important to Hindus, their answers read rather like an evaluative question rather than a knowledge based question, these reason could not be credited as this did not answer the question. In part (d) the question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether some religious holy books are more important than others. 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. 4(b). This question was well answered by most candidates; who gave to detailed reasons for why they thought caste is or is not still important for Hinduism. Part (c) was well answered by many candidates and many candidates gained full marks by stating four brief reasons as to why the Vedas are important for many Hindus. 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. Once again though, a minority of candidates gave reasons for why worshipping in a temple was not important for many Hindus, their answers read rather like an evaluative question rather than a knowledge based question, these reason could not be credited as this did not answer the question. Most candidates responded well to the layout of the part (d) question and stated their own opinion on whether Priests are closer to God than everyone else 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 Divali is the most important Hindu festival. 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 worshipping at home is important for many Hindus. Again most candidates responded well to the layout of the (d) question and were able to state their own opinion and gave reasons for it in (i) and then gave an alternative opinion in (ii).

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 it was important for Hindus to go on pilgrimage to the Ganges. 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 in detail why worshipping in a temple is important for many Hindus. This part (d) was well answered by the majority of candidates, and they were able to state their own opinion and gave reasons for it (i) and then gave an alternative opinion in (ii).

Most candidates knew the glossary definition for Shaddha in question 7(a). This question generally gained full marks. Part (b) was well answered many candidates and many gave two developed reasons for why they thought it was or was not important for Hindus to practice bhakti yoga. Part (c) asked candidates to explain how a Vanaprasthan is important for many Hindus. Some candidates did not know the meaning of the word Vanaprasthan ashrama or muddled the ashrama with one of the other life stages. Therefore these candidates were unable to answer this question well. This emphasises the importance of learning the glossary terms. A 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 cremation is better than burial. 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.

In question 8, some candidates who answered part (a) gained full marks. However, once again some candidates clearly guessed the answer and gained zero marks for an incorrect answer of one that defined a different key word. In part (b) most candidates were able to state their own opinion as to whether they thought karma yoga is important. 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 able to give four brief explanations as to why some Hindus think it is important to relieve suffering and poverty in the UK. A small number of candidates described the work of Hindu charity organisations and did not explain why they thought it was important to relieve poverty, which resulted in them giving a level one, even though they had written a lot and were clearly knowledgeable. This emphasises the fact that candidates must read and answer the set questions carefully. 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 Brahmacharya is the perfect preparation for married life. 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**

Candidates generally seemed very well prepared by schools 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 ends of the paper.

For the second year there were 4 extra marks added for spelling punctuation and grammar. The 4 marks were 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.



