

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

International GCSE
Bangladesh Studies
History and Culture
4BN0_01

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General comments

There was a slight increase in the entry figure this year compared to 2012 which was encouraging and the standard of work presented this year by candidates was comparable to that of last year. All the candidates answered the required three questions and few if any displayed signs of problems relating to time or rubric infringement.

As with last year, most candidates tended to write about the topics/characters/events listed in the question rather than focussing on the question posed. The content suggested in the question is merely there to guide candidates rather than be prescriptive and few candidates used their other material. The most popular questions were 5 and 6.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1

There were few good attempts at question 1 in which candidates could explain the contributions of Bakhtiyar Khalji, Sufis and Hossain Shah in enabling Islam to become the dominant religion in Bengal. Most answers tended to be descriptive with little emphasis in the way of explanation of how these individuals contributed to the development of Islam in Bengal.

Question 2

Question 2 was also a question that attracted few and mainly narrative responses. The question required candidates to explain why the Mughal Empire found difficulty in gaining control of all of Bengal. Aspects suggested in the question included the rule of Nawabs, the geography of East Bengal and revolts by zamindars. Most candidates were to describe some of these aspects but there was little or no explanation of these or other aspects of their knowledge of the period.

Question 3

There were few responses to this question on the role of Warren Hastings in British rule of Bengal. The facts relating to finance, administration and justice during his administration were well known but most responses were descriptive of the factors involved rather than addressing the importance of the changes to British rule in Bengal.

Question 4

This was a rarely answered question on the growth of demands for Indian independence after the First World War. Although the detail of the role of the Montague-Chelmsford reforms, the Amritsar massacre and the Khilafat Movement were well known, attempts in relating these factors to the reasons for the demands for Indian independence were less good.

Question 5

There were some good attempts at this popular question. Many candidates attempted to explain the factors that included the establishment of the post of Governor-General, Urdu and the weaknesses of the Constituent Assembly relating to the reasons for the opposition to the policies of Jinnah after 1947. These were well known topics and there was some good evidence of very well prepared candidates who tended to score highly.

Question 6

There were a number of very good responses to this popular question on the reasons why relations between East and West Pakistan broke down in the years 1970 to 1971. This was one of the very few questions whereby candidates used other knowledge rather than rely on the factors given in the question. Again there were some high scoring answers where well prepared candidates were able to explain the reasons for the breakdown of relations.

Question 7

There were a few attempts at question 7 which was concerned with the development of agriculture, industry and transport in Bangladesh since 1975. Answers were inevitably descriptive and a number of facts were known by those candidates who chose the question. However there were few well answered responses.

Question 8

A few candidates answered question 8 on the importance of Begum Sufia Kamal in relation to Bangladesh culture and those that did provided an often descriptive account of her writings, media and social ideas rather than comment on her importance in these areas.

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