

BANGLADESH STUDIES

Paper 0449/01
History and Culture of Bangladesh

Key messages

- Candidates are advised to read the questions carefully.
- Candidates should choose questions where they can answer most of the sections, and not be put off by a short answer question that they cannot answer.
- Where a question asks candidates to explain, candidates should use their knowledge to answer the question.

General comments

Candidates overall seemed to be well prepared for the examination. This examination requires candidates to select information to answer short answer questions, to demonstrate sound and relevant factual knowledge, and to construct historical narratives in three essays and historical explanations in five essays. They are asked to consider the relative importance or impact of the factors featuring in each of the narratives. Many candidates did this very well, using strong, appropriate and supported information to keep their answers relevant to the question. Some candidates wrote answers with appropriate factual knowledge and made some attempt to use it to develop their answers, but did not keep to the point or added lengthy descriptions that were not appropriate to the question. Many candidates were well prepared for one or two questions and showed their ability to apply their knowledge to their answers to the questions. Very few candidates struggled to demonstrate any depth of knowledge or the ability to keep to the question at all. Few candidates successfully constructed historical explanations for each of the essay questions that required explanations. Some candidates described the given factor in the question and did not address the question.

Candidates overall had a depth of knowledge available for use in all questions and the ability to select appropriate information. However, candidates should select questions where they can answer all parts. Some candidates selected questions based on their ability to answer the part **(a)** questions, but struggled to answer parts **(b)** or **(c)** of the question in depth. Many candidates seemed to find the short answer questions difficult.

Candidates should read questions carefully. Many candidates did not respond appropriately to **Question 4(c)** about the outcomes of the War of Independence.

Most candidates answered **Question 1(c)(i)** successfully. Candidates were careful to keep to the specific points of the question and, therefore, allowed time to answer other questions.

To score well on part **(a)** and **(b)(i)** questions, candidates need to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the factors that are asked for, specific to the topic or dates given. They should focus on the topic of the question, avoiding detail that does not fit the question.

To score well on part **(b)(ii)** and **(c)** questions, candidates should take care to read the questions fully and apply their knowledge. They must also address all the question instructions within their answers. The questions require candidates to either 'Explain the reasons...', or 'Explain the impact...', or 'Explain why...', and they need to make sure that they have done so. Where the question asks about changes in arts and culture in a period, for example, answers offering only political change, or changes in arts and culture in different periods, will not gain marks.

More candidates than usual were able to justify a conclusion to part **(c)(ii)** in the optional questions. They found the options possible and worthy of consideration.

There were very few rubric errors. Few candidates did not complete the examination.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was the compulsory question on the paper and was attempted by all candidates. Please note that due to an issue with question **1(a)(i)**, full marks have been awarded to all candidates for this question in order that no candidate will be disadvantaged. Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge in their part **(a)** answers. There were many very strong answers which gave detailed information about Kazi Nazrul Islam's life and work. Some candidates considered the impact of his work as asked for in part **(b)(ii)**, considering the importance of the awards he was given to the perceived importance of Bangladesh internationally, and the impact of his work during the struggle for independence. Candidates were well prepared to address the developments of the modern phase of the Bangla language; some bringing together style and words to reach the higher mark levels. Candidates were able to describe festivals during the twentieth century, selecting often festivals that served a purpose, e.g. to bring together people of different faiths. Many candidates explained their importance to our understanding of where the modern Bangla language has come from, or the place of festivals in developing understanding in those without literary skills. If the modern phase of the Bangla language is taken as an example, candidates could have started a paragraph in **Question 1(c)(i)** by saying: 'it shows us how words from other languages, e.g. English and Sanskrit, have come into our spoken and written language'. **Question 1(c)(ii)** would follow on by saying that such words help people of Bangladesh to understand the importance of other cultures in the development of Bangladesh. About festivals, a paragraph might begin: 'We can learn from festivals of the twentieth century about how people sought fun and enjoyment'. **Question 1(c)(ii)** might follow this by saying that books tell us of political events, while festivals show us how Bangladesh has sought to maintain a respect for its cultural mix.

Most candidates gave a detailed answer to at least one part of the question. Most identified a more important factor, though many needed to also offer a reason for their choice. Some explained how festivals are useful today as a source of information about a life so different from our own, or indeed, a life that exists still in parts of Bangladesh. The modern phase of the Bangla language shows how Bangla became accepted as a formal method of communication, rather than a verbal colloquial form without formal acceptance.

Question 2

This was a very popular question, attempted by almost all candidates. The short answer questions were not answered well consistently. Most candidates understood archaeology and applied their knowledge to considering what remains could show us. A significant number understood how south-east Bengal became wealthy through sea trade and associated industries. Most candidates were aware of how Sena rule replaced the Palas and of how the Varman dynasty grew to control their area. The best answers focused on how difficult it is to rule, as opposed to capturing land, and they looked at the difficulties of unseating a dynasty and imposing rule. Some were very well argued.

Question 3

This was the most popular question. The short answer questions were not answered well consistently. Most candidates understood the importance of winning the right to trade from Jahangir. The element of amazement came from surprise at his treatment, as well as about the scale of artwork and the scale of dignitary involvement in the Court of Jahangir.

There was impressive detail in most answers to **Question 3(c)(i)**. Candidates showed awareness of how Islam Khan improved his forces and understood the role of diplomacy in dividing opposing forces up to enable more effective attacks. Best part **(c)(ii)** answers considered the relative cost of men and money, war and diplomacy, in the short and long term. Most concluded that, even with successful diplomacy, things change, and wars still are called for, so the expense of preparation must be borne.

Question 4

About a quarter of candidates chose to answer this question, many showing strong levels of understanding of the British Period. Candidates demonstrated a clear view of how the British impacted on the lives of local people in the given period. The work of missionaries outside teaching was less well known, but still achieving 3 or 4 marks was common, the final mark often taking health work into account. The higher marks achieved for these parts of the question more than offset the lower marks that were commonly earned from **Question 4(c)(i)**. **Question 4(c)(i)** was the cause of confusion for some candidates who misread the question; 'outcome' not being interpreted as was intended. Candidates who answered the question as it was set justified either factor as the more important.

BANGLADESH STUDIES

Paper 0449/02
Environment and Development of
Bangladesh

Key messages

- To gain maximum marks, candidates should focus on the command words and mark allocation to answer the question set. There is rarely little to be gained by writing beyond the confines of the allocated answer space.
- To save time and answer space, candidates should avoid repeating the wording of the question at the start of their answer.
- In the judgement section, at the end of each question (iii), candidates should avoid repeating their comments in (i) and (ii) and instead develop their earlier points and make additional arguments for supporting statements A and/or B.

General comments

- The majority of candidates performed well and attained high marks on this paper.
- The rubric instructions were followed very well and there was little evidence that candidates were unable to complete the examination within the 90 minutes allowed.
- Candidates' knowledge of their own country was very good.
- Most candidates scored maximum marks for plotting the graphs.
- Candidates were also very good at graph/data interpretation. Few simply repeated the statistics, and most wrote clear comparative statements when required to do so.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was not popular and proved to be the most difficult question on the paper for many of the candidates who chose to answer it. Candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of their own country as shown by their answers to the map **Questions (i) to (v)**. Only the energy source (iv), natural gas, was unknown by some candidates.

- (a) (i) and (ii) The hydrographs, Fig. 1.2 and Fig. 1.3, were correctly interpreted by the majority of candidates.
- (iii) Candidates who compared the hydrographs shown on Fig. 1.3 were more successful than those who tried to explain the differences.
- (iv) Candidates who focused on deforestation (how it reduces interception and infiltration, increases surface run off and washes soil into river channels, so reducing channel capacity) scored well on this question.
- (v) Many candidates were able to describe and explain how factors such as cyclones, low lying land, global warming, monsoon rains and increasing urban areas, can also cause flooding in Bangladesh.
- (b) There were many neat, detailed, accurate labelled diagrams of thunderstorm rainfall.

- (c) Candidates showed a good understanding of the different benefits of short-term and long-term responses to flooding in Bangladesh. Candidates who chose to deal with both points of view in part (iii) tended to have more to say than those who did not.

Question 2

This question was the least popular question and proved to be quite difficult for some candidates.

- (a) (i) Candidates who used Fig. 2.1 to describe two advantages for Bangladesh of investing in the hydro-electric power project scored better than those who used their knowledge of HEP to state two advantages of HEP.
- (ii) Candidates who added clear labels such as 'heavy rain', 'steep hills' and 'fast flowing river' scored well, while those who simply answered 'rain', 'river' and 'hills' were less successful.
- (b) (i) Most candidates could name two sources of biomass.
- (ii) The disadvantages of using biomass include deforestation, atmospheric pollution and the lack of cow dung for fertiliser, but these disadvantages were not widely known.
- (c) (i) Sustainable development was generally clearly defined.
- (ii) The divided bar graph was almost always completed very neatly and accurately.
- (iii) Most candidates knew that 'domestic' was referring to households, so correctly stated different domestic uses of water, unlike those who described the use of water for agriculture or industry.
- (iv) Candidates who developed their answers gained full marks for this question. Those who listed a range of different ways in which Bangladesh has improved its domestic water supply did not gain maximum marks because the question stated 'explain two ways'.
- (d) Candidates demonstrated a very good knowledge of both water pollution in (i) and air pollution in (ii) and its impacts on people in Bangladesh. Those who developed their arguments in (iii) rather than repeated them, managed to gain full marks.

Question 3

This was a very popular question, which was generally well answered.

- (a) (i) Bangladesh was correctly identified as the country with the highest life expectancy by almost all candidates.
- (ii) Most candidates could make the link between access to a doctor and the incidence of TB to correctly answer 'Myanmar'.
- (iii) There were many good attempts to use the data provided to explain why it is difficult to decide which country has the highest level of development. Others used their knowledge of development indicators to tackle this question successfully.
- (iv) A variety of alternative development indicators were stated. Vague answers such as poverty and education were not credited, nor were indicators lifted from the table as the question stated 'other'.
- (b) There were many excellent explanations of how Bangladesh is continuing to improve education within the country. The more detail candidates gave, within the confines of the answer space, the more likely they were to gain full marks. Those who listed a variety of ways, but did not explain them, only gained two of the four marks available for this question.
- (c) (i) Most candidates were very good at using dates from the graph to describe the 'main' changes in the detection rate of TB. Some spent too much time and effort on adopting a year-by-year approach, often running out of space.

- (ii) Knowledge of disease control was often excellent. Explanations of a number of different methods relating to specific diseases were required to gain all the six marks available for this question.
- (d) The issue of how to improve health care in Bangladesh was very well understood by many candidates. Clear arguments were given in (i) why investment in private health care could be the best way to improve health care in Bangladesh. Candidates also pointed out in (ii) that private health care is expensive and is not accessible to the poor and those in rural areas, so it is not a solution for the majority of Bangladesh's population.

Too much repetition in part (iii) meant candidates did not always gain the 3 marks available. The best responses gave clear, detailed reasons and used facts to back up their opinions.

Question 4

This question was not popular, but was very well answered by those candidates who did attempt it.

- (a) (i) Candidates who extracted relevant information from the text, Fig. 4.1, scored well compared to those who used their own knowledge. As always, candidates need to read the question very carefully.
- (ii) Candidates who described the relief, soil, temperature and rainfall conditions required for growing rice easily gained full marks for this question. Vague answers such as 'it needs enough sunshine, water, fertile soil and adequate temperature' gained little if any credit.
- (iii) Candidates were very knowledgeable about different ways that Bangladesh has increased its food production. Those who gained full marks described and then explained three different ways of increasing food production. Weaker candidates listed a host of different ways but did not explain how each method increased production, so only scored 3 out of the 6 marks available.
- (b) (i) Most candidates correctly described the crop as mustard or oil seed, and noted the presence of bees or honey production.
- (ii) A variety of problems 'faced' by farmers were clearly described. A few candidates included problems 'caused' by farmers which were not creditworthy in this question.
- (c) Some candidates used their general knowledge to answer this question and lost focus. Those who used knowledge taught in lessons and included both advantages and disadvantages scored much better.
- (d) This question was about agriculture. Most candidates gave strong arguments in (i) to support increasing crop yield and crop diversity, and clearly understood how this could help the future economic development of Bangladesh. In (ii) many focused on 'protecting the environment' and did not link it to 'when developing Bangladesh's agriculture', so missed the focus of the question.

The best responses explained the benefits of each approach and then expanded in detail the reasons for their choice of A or B. Some candidates made a good case for the need for both.

Question 5

This question was very popular and provided many excellent responses.

- (a) (i) The photograph shows coloured silk threads so any answers relating to silk, dying or threads were accepted. More general answers such as garment industry or weaving were not credited.
- (ii) A wide variety of other types of cottage industry were correctly named.
- (iii) Most candidates were able to describe in detail the differences between cottage and large-scale industry so quickly gained full marks for this question.
- (b) (i) The majority of candidates correctly defined the informal sector as the grey economy, not regulated by government, where no taxes are paid.

- (ii) Answers demonstrated a good understanding of why so many people work in the 'informal sector' in Bangladesh.
- (c) (i) The bar chart was almost always completed neatly and accurately.
- (ii) Candidates who used comparative terms such as higher, lower, more and less, easily gained full marks for this question. A few weaker candidates merely listed the percentages in different countries or did not compare Bangladesh with India and Myanmar.
- (d) Many strong arguments were given in (i) to support cottage industry and small-scale industry to reduce poverty further in Bangladesh. Similarly, candidates were able to explain in (ii) how improving roads and electricity provision in rural areas could further reduce poverty.

In (iii) some candidates gave well balanced answers which considered both statements and expanded on their earlier points or gave additional arguments. Those who merely repeated the points made in support of statement A or B struggled to gain any additional marks.