

Examiners' Report

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in Bangladesh Studies (4BN0)

Paper 2: The Land, People and
Economy of Bangladesh

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Introduction

This was the fourth examination of the 'new' IGCSE specification and the number of candidates was roughly the same as in previous years. What was particularly encouraging about the overall performance this year was the proportional increase in the number of candidates at the top end, i.e. those achieving an A grade.

Candidates seem to have been well trained to cope with the answer-book format, and our judgement of the lined space allocations to individual question parts seems to have been about right. Only a couple of candidates had to resort to additional sheets of paper. However, in contrast and as in previous years, a significant number of candidates left an undue number of lines unfilled in the part (c)s of questions.

Candidates need to be reminded that rarely will a few lines of response warrant the award of Level 3 marks, i.e. 5 or 6. As suggested in previous reports, one suspects that such candidates may be guilty of running out of time when it has come to this final part of a question.

Question 1

This question is compulsory and seeks to test the candidate's general knowledge of Bangladesh - its land, people and economy. In general, the question was tackled quite well, but it is necessary to point account some recurrent errors.

Question 1 (a)(i)-(iii)

In (a)(i) India was often cited rather than Myanmar, whilst in (iii) candidates were content to just state the Chittagong Hills rather than give the name of the highest peak.

Question 1(b)

In (b)(i) there were some wild guesses about the size of Bangladesh's population.

Question 1(c)

In (c) there was a tendency to give rather general indicators of development (e.g. industrialisation, declining rate of population growth) rather than the more specific and windily used criteria such as life expectancy, literacy and daily calorie intake.

Question 1(d)

A recurrent error in (d)(i) was the belief that the UK and USA were the two top designations for Bangladeshi migrant workers rather than Saudi Arabia and

Malaysia. But most were well informed about the possible benefits of these outflows of workers.

Question 2(a)(i)-(iii)

This was much the more popular. In (a)(i) most correctly identified Sylhet; in (a)(ii) many just cited sudden heavy or intense rainfall but failed to mention the important factors of steep and/or bare slopes; in (a)(iii) candidates had no difficulties in coming up with a natural hazard not shown in Figure 1.

Question 2(b)(i)-(ii)

In (b)(i) it was surprising how few candidates were aware of the characteristics of a monsoon climate and yet they are living with it year in, year out. There was much guesswork or confusion when tackling (b)(ii).

Question 2(c)

In (c) most showed a reasonable awareness of what is being done to cope with flooding, but relatively few candidates distinguished between the two aspects of the question, namely damage to property, etc. and human casualties.

Question 3

Although Q3 was a minority choice, on the whole it was well answered. Some may have struggled a bit with the three parts of (a), but most were well prepared to deal with (b) and (c). In short, some encouraging responses here.

Question 4

In Section 3, it was Q4 which tempted fewer takers. The simple arithmetic task in (a)(i) defeated most, but responses to (a)(ii), (iii) and (iv) were generally satisfactory. In (b)(i) only a few candidates understood the meaning of 'infant mortality', but were altogether more familiar with the two components of population represented by a population pyramid. There were some good responses to (c).

Most focused on the rich-poor divide and to a lesser extent on the gender and urban-rural divides.

Question 5

A problem in (a)(i) of Question 5 was that many candidates failed to do what was required, namely to analyse what was shown in Figure 4. The understanding of 'urbanisation' in (a)(ii) remains insecure, in that it involves more than just rural-urban migration, while responses to (a)(iii) were marked by bald statements such as 'jobs', 'transport' and 'medical facilities' rather than the identification of processes, such as the growth of the secondary and tertiary sectors. Candidates seemed altogether more comfortable when dealing with

(b)(i) and (ii) and were certainly well aware of a range of urban problems in(c). Again some good work here.

Question 6

In Section 4, there was again uneven patronage of the two questions on offer. There was only minority interest in Q6, but generally the performance was satisfactory. Candidates seemed reasonably well informed about the Green Revolution in (a)(i)(ii) and (iii) and cottage industries in (b)(ii). In (c) not many went any further than pointing out the benefits of manufacturing in the context of trade (reducing imports and boosting exports). Other aspects of its importance, such as job creation, regular wages and reduction of reliance on agriculture, were rather neglected.

Question 7

Candidates were not short of ideas in parts (a)(i), (ii) and (iii) of Q7. In (b)(i) there seemed to be no difficulty in suggesting a relevant tertiary sector activity, but (ii) some confusion prevailed about the links between the tertiary sector (its size and GDP importance) and economic development. There was altogether sounder work on show in the answers to (c). As with Question 6(c), some candidates confined their attention to international trade, and in this instance needed to broaden their perspective to such aspects as TNC investment in Bangladesh, aid, tourism and remittances.

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