

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in Bangladesh Studies (4BN0/02)

Paper 2: The Land, People and
Economy of Bangladesh

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Introduction

This was the fifth examination of the 'new' iGCSE specification and the number of candidates showed a significant increase on 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. Clearly, this year's candidate cohort was well prepared for the examination in terms of their knowledge, understanding and willingness to confront the questions.

Candidates now seem to well able 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 one candidate had to resort to additional sheets of paper. There was no evidence of candidates being unable to complete the paper in the allocated time. Indeed, it was particularly heartening to see the bulk of candidates giving the part (c) of Questions 2 to 7 a proper allocation of their time and effort commensurate with its value of 6 marks. This was the focus of the greatest improvement in this year's examination performance.

Section 1

Question 1 is compulsory and seeks to test the candidate's general knowledge of Bangladesh - its land, people and economy. In general, the question was tackled well. But there were recurrent weaknesses: few mentioned Sylhet in (a)(ii) and few knew the resource (china clay) in (a)(iv), whilst most worrying was the surprisingly large number of candidates who in (b)(iii) believed that Bangladesh was located in the Southern Hemisphere! Both parts of (c) were well answered.

Section 2

In Section 2, there was an even patronage of two questions. In **Question 2**, all parts of (a) were soundly answered, but in (b)(i) it was most worrying to discover the large number of candidates who believed that Bangladesh was located in the Southern Hemisphere. (b)(ii) seemed to be a step too far for nearly all candidates. Few were able to think beyond the location either being responsible for the monsoon climate and its agricultural benefits, or giving access to the fish resources of the Bay of Bengal. In (c) the best candidates were those who understood that whilst flood plains had their positives, there were some negatives, if only the flood hazard.

In **Question 3** there was generally sound work in all parts of (a). In (b)(i) it was interesting to observe how few candidates mentioned hydro power. For this reason, most answers to (ii) were built on the 'non-renewability' of fossil fuels and their burning causing atmospheric pollution and contributing to global warming.

Section 3

In Section 3, **Question 4** which was the overwhelming choice of candidates. Certainly, the knowledge of these aspects of population seemed well understood. The stronger answers to (c) were those who grasped the two-sided nature of the reasons, namely pushing from rural areas and pulling from cities. Few capped their discussions by pointing out that the outcome of moving to cities proved to be a positive experience for all migrants.

Too few candidates attempted **Question 5** to provide a basis for making comments on general performance. This may have been due to the issue of the homogeneity of Bangladeshi society. In previous examinations, questions about the incidence of poverty have been both popular and well answered.

Section 4

In Section 4, there was again uneven patronage of the two questions on offer. Over three-quarters of the candidates opted for **Question 6**. Most candidates answered all parts of (a) correctly. In (b)(ii) candidates had no difficulty in identifying at least two negatives associated with the pumping of groundwater. Good work was much in evidence in (c), but in some there was a tendency to drift away from the focus on environmental impacts to write more generally about the development of Bangladesh.

In **Question 7(a)(ii)** some were unable to suggest a valid measure other than employment. There were some signs of poor guesswork in (iii). Responses to both parts of (b) were rather general and woolly. In other words, more attention needed to be paid to the 'Why'. Most candidates were to draw attention in (c) to the lack of skills training and the migration of better qualified labour. The exploitation of female and child labour was an issue also known to some.

The substantial improvement in candidate performance noted this year has been most encouraging. Hopefully, that advance will be consolidated in future examinations.

Grade Boundaries

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