



Pearson

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

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

Paper 2: The Land, People and Economy of
Bangladesh

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General Comments

This was the seventh and penultimate examination of the current IGCSE specification. The number of candidates showed an increase on last year's total. The overall quality of the performance matched that of last year's cohort, so there was a significant proportion of candidates at the top end, i.e. those achieving an A grade. Equally heartening, the 'tail' was less in evidence. In short, the large majority of this year's candidate cohort appeared well prepared for the examination in terms of their knowledge, understanding and willingness to confront the questions.

Candidates now seem to be able to cope well with the answer-book format, and our judgement of the lined space allocations to individual question parts seems again to have been about right. Indeed, only one candidate attached an additional sheet. Nor was there 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 part (c) of Questions 2 to 7 an allocation of their time and effort commensurate with its value of 6 marks. There is still scope for improvement here with too many candidates responding in the form of either simple lists or detached notes. Candidates should remain alive to the distinction between the commands 'describe' and 'explain'.

Despite the advice given in last year's report, there are still candidates who think that there is merit to be gained from attempting all seven questions on the examination paper. It is important that students should continue to be reminded of the folly of such a strategy.

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 well. In (a), there was some uncertainty about the resource - i.e. natural gas in (iii), while in (iv) a fair number of candidates thought that the answer was 'mangrove'. Did they really think this was the Sundarbans? A common mistake in (c)(i) was to claim that the main mode was river transport, rather than shipping by sea. There were no recurrent errors in the responses to (b) and (d).

Question 2

Question 2 in Section B was significantly less popular than Question 3, but nonetheless was mainly soundly answered. In (b) some candidates appeared not to understand the meaning of 'location', i.e. the situation of Bangladesh relative to the wider world. Answers to (c) needed to be more

alive to the distinction between renewable and non-renewable resources. Clearly, the need for careful management is more acute in the case of non-renewables.

Question 3

Question 3 was both popular and generally well answered. A noticeable number of candidates appeared not to know the essential characteristics of flash floods in (a)(ii). Sound knowledge was displayed in the answers to (a)(iii) and both parts of (b). A slight problem in (c) was that many candidates failed to notice the 'or' in the wording of the question and chose to write more broadly about both. Also, too many seemed unaware of the request to 'explain' as distinct from 'describe'.

Section 4

In Section C, question 4 proved overwhelmingly more popular than Question 5. In (a)(ii) the demographic reasons (i.e. natural increase and rural-urban migration) were too often neglected. Instead, the suggested reasons were rather vague and loosely of an economic nature. In (b)(ii) infant mortality was generally well understood, but a significant number related the number of infant deaths to the total population rather than per 1000 live births. Candidates had plenty of write about in (c) but there was a tendency simply to list or note problems randomly.

Question 5

The relatively few answers to question 5 were mostly satisfactory to parts (a) and (b), except possibly in (a)(ii) where no candidate mentioned the contribution made by aid organisations. As in question 4, the same trait was noticeable in (c) namely to produce random lists, or notes of different social inequalities. The focus of many was on gender and the polarised distribution of wealth, but ethnicity did get a limited airing.

Question 6

In Section D, there was a fairly equal patronage of the two questions on offer. In question 6(a)(ii), most candidates failed to draw attention to the type of area favoured for the growing of jute, i.e. the flood plains. Instead, there were laboured descriptions of the jute distribution in terms of map locations. It was worrying in (a)(iii) that many confused southwest with southeast and consequently wrote about the Sundarbans mangrove. Even those, who wrote about the correct forests often failed to make the point that the forest has survived because the land is unsuited to agriculture. In (c) there was the recurrent tendency to resort to lists and notes. Furthermore, candidates were unwilling to 'explain'.

Question 7

In question 7, candidates coped well with (a), but there was some uncertainty in (b)(i) about 'per capita income', particularly its derivation, while in (ii) there was more than a hint of guesswork. Candidates had plenty to write about in (c), but as in the previous question, the emphasis was on description to the neglect of 'explain'. There was plenty of scope for a better ordering of points.