



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2019

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Bangladesh Studies (4BN1) Paper 02
(The Land, People and Economy of Bangladesh)

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General Comments:

- This was the first examination of the new IGCSE specification.
- 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 questions.
- Candidates usually wrote appropriate amounts for their responses with very few that needed additional sheets for their answers.
- There was little evidence of candidates being unable to complete the paper in the allocated time.
- Unlike in previous series for the previous specification it was heartening to see that there were very few candidates that didn't attempt questions.
- Most candidates wrote answers in clear paragraphs with very few adopting a simple list of points that had been an issue raised with responses in the previous specification.
- Where questions in the paper were structured so that candidates should provide a number of responses in a question, for example 'two factors' this structure was usually followed by candidates.
- This paper included questions with the command words 'assess' and 'evaluate'. Most candidates recognised the command word in the question and made some attempt to shape their answer using this. It was encouraging to see that candidates were prepared for approaching questions that required them to make judgements about different topics in the specification.
- Unlike the previous specification candidates no longer have the choice of questions, so there were no issues about candidates completing more questions than required.

Section A focuses on the Physical Environment.

For 1a(i) most candidates recognised the correct ecosystem from the map, and for **a(ii)** the majority of candidates recognised a relevant characteristic focusing mainly on the types of trees that would be present. **For (b)** candidates most commonly referred to high rainfall as a characteristic of the southwest monsoon, and the months it would usually occur.

In **part (c)** candidates would often identify the movement of tectonic plates to form the Himalayan mountains, although at times the process by which this occurred was confused. There were however many candidates who

correctly identified the tectonic plates involved and explain how this led to the formation of the mountains.

For **part (d)** candidates showed good knowledge of why Bangladesh's coastline is frequently damaged by storm surges, focusing on the geography of the Bay of Bengal and how this amplifies storm surges, low lying land and the lack of effective coastal management. Few candidates referred to increased vulnerability due to removal of mangroves.

In **part (e)** candidates were required to explain why one natural resource is being exploited in Bangladesh. A large proportion of candidates chose forests or fish as their resource to explain, and in most of these cases were effective at doing so. There was also a number of answers that focused on water, but these answers tended to struggle to explain further than just an increasing population. The stronger answers tended to write about forests, identifying a range of reasons why they were exploited and displaying good knowledge of particular forest areas, and their features.

For **part (f)** the command word 'assess' required candidates to make judgements about measures implemented by Bangladesh's government to reduce the impacts of river flooding. It was encouraging to see that many candidates appeared to understand the requirement of this command word providing some comments about how effective measures were. Even the shorter answers that provided less details about measures still tended to provide some kind of assessment, even if somewhat basic. The stronger answers took a systematic approach explaining a measure implemented, and then making an assessment of how effective it was, and providing a summary comment. Candidates generally displayed good knowledge of different measures used to try and reduce the impacts of river flooding. Some candidates who did not perform so well spent much of their answer describing why flooding was a challenge for Bangladesh, leaving less room to focus on the assessment of measures used.

Section B and Question 2 focused on the Human Environment. **For (i)** most candidates were able to interpret the graph correctly although candidates appeared to find **a(ii)** more challenging with a wide range of calculations being made.

Most candidates correctly identified challenges for Bangladesh's transport system in **part (b)**. For **part (c)** candidates usually recognised the potential impacts of Bangladesh's reliance on imported energy, although some

candidates did not recognise the command to only explain one impact, providing a list of potential impacts rather than just explaining one.

In part (d) candidates showed a good understanding of the factors that affect the distribution of rice farming in Bangladesh. While the majority of candidates who scored marks in this question chose to focus on climate, fertility of the soil or water availability in their answers there were also many candidates chose to focus on human factors that influence the distribution such as availability of labour, access to transport for export.

In part (e) were often able to effectively explain strategies used to increase agricultural output often focusing on HYVs and fertilizers. The stronger answers took a systematic approach to their answers explaining at least two different strategies used and how they increased agricultural impact with details that showed they had a sound understanding of the topic.

Part (f) required candidates to evaluate the impact of globalisation on Bangladesh's economic development. The evaluate command word was clearly observed by many candidates. Many candidates provided a balanced answer providing details of the positive and negative impacts of globalisation with an evaluative comment at the end such as 'globalisation has been a double-edged sword while giving short term gains, it has also produced long term problems'. Some candidates included evaluative statements throughout the answer. Both strategies were effective for this question. It was encouraging to see that the evaluate command word did not phase many candidates. Although there were also candidates who providing descriptions of globalisation processes which distracted answers from focusing on the impacts. Weaker answers also tended to just describe a series of impacts in simple statements without making a judgement about whether this was positive or negative.

Section C and Question 3 focused on Challenges for Bangladesh

For 3(a)(ii) candidates usually scored here, most commonly identifying improved healthcare as a factor that causes the rise in life expectancy. For 3(a)(iii) there seems to be some confusion over what quality of life measures that comprise the HDI. Where candidates did score it was usually referring to per capita income. A wide range of other 'quality of life' measures were referred to, but not those that are related to the HDI.

For (b) candidates clearly recognised challenges affecting Bangladesh's rural population, often focusing on changes to population due to rural-

urban migration. Sometimes candidates would write about more than one challenge. Candidates should be reminded to look carefully at the question. **In part (c)** candidates usually focused on human factors that affect population distribution such as the availability of jobs, and the range of facilities that are available in urban settlements. Few candidates acknowledged the range of physical factors that would also have been valid answer.

For part (d) candidates showed a good awareness of the potential impacts of climate change on the environment of Bangladesh with many answers focusing around sea level rise and the potential for more extreme weather events. Some candidates chose to focus on one issue and explore the range of impacts this may have had, or they chose to write about a range of different issues and the potential impacts, both were valid approaches to this question, responding to the 'explain' command word.

The final question **part (e)** required candidates to assess the effectiveness of government strategies for responding to challenges of living in large urban areas like Dhaka. Candidates often wrote very detailed responses covering a range of challenges. Many candidates took the position that most government strategies have been unsuccessful because the challenges remain present, there were some answered that were a little more nuanced recognising some improvements based on the strategies, although overall more efforts were needed. It was encouraging to see that candidates would often make judgments about if these strategies were effective responding the 'assess' command word in the question. Some candidates chose to make a summary statement at the end of the answer to say if the challenges were effective or not, while others tended to make these assessments as they worked through the strategies. Weaker answers tended to just focus on the challenges facing large urban areas rather than considering the strategies that had been implemented. There were also some candidates who focused more on NGO efforts with no links to government strategies.

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