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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in Pakistan Studies (4PA0/02)

Paper 2: The Land, People and Resources of
Pakistan

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General Introduction

The majority of candidates were well prepared for this paper and were able to apply their knowledge of the land and people of Pakistan to answer the specific questions. Many candidates demonstrated detailed and relevant knowledge and were able to use a wide range of geographical terms.

A number of general points were observed. A small number of candidates wrote generic answers to questions that required specific references to Pakistan and therefore could not be awarded the higher mark band, particularly as responses to the six mark questions. Some candidates provided lists of points or used bullet points and this affected the coherency of the answer and prevented the development of a full explanation. A few candidates wrote much more than was necessary for the shorter answer sections but then failed to provide detail for the longer questions. This might be rectified by improved examination technique. However, as stated the knowledge and understanding displayed by many candidates was often good.

Question 1

The expectation is that most candidates will perform well with this question and be able to show a sound general knowledge of the geography of Pakistan. The majority of candidates were able to gain between seven to nine marks, with only a few achieving all twelve marks. The most common errors tended to be answers to the multiple-choice questions, especially those associated with population data.

Question 2

This was a popular question and produced some confident and detailed answers in sections 2a ii and iii.

Section 2b

Candidates frequently included descriptions of afforestation and how trees can bind the roots in the soil, as well as trees being planted to intercept rainfall so that the soil is not washed away as easily. A few answers mentioned the use of contour ploughing and were able to effectively explain how this might reduce soil erosion.

Section 2c

Few answers defined the term bonded labour; however, understanding of the concept was usually implicit. Better answers were able to explore the link between bonded labour usually and debt which was often inherited. Very few candidates demonstrated knowledge of the Bonded Labour System Act in 1992, but made reference to how bonded labour was culturally accepted as a reason for its continued use. A number of answers focused on how it was 'a tradition'. A few candidates confused bonded labour with labour in the cottage industries or with cheap labour or unskilled labour.

Question 3

This was also a popular question; however, knowledge of the specific requirements for rice cultivation was very variable. Some candidates stated that rice needs to be grown in water several metres deep.

Section 3aiii

Rice was usually acknowledged as an important export crop which might contribute to addressing the negative balance of trade. Some answers also discussed that rice production reduced the necessity of importing rice, if it could all be produced in Pakistan which is economically beneficial.

Section 3b

The majority of candidates stated that it is the young men who are leaving the rural areas to go and work in urban areas. This means that the size of the labour force in rural areas has declined, which in turn means that fewer crops can be grown and reduces the amount of agricultural work that can be carried out. Many candidates indicated that this creates either a gender imbalance, or a generational imbalance – either way reducing the amount of work that can be done in rural areas, particularly as it is usually the skilled workers who have left. Sometimes candidates explored the effect of migration on urban areas, rather than rural, missing the key instruction from the question. A few answers took a positive view that the young men working in the urban areas have more highly paid jobs which would mean that they can send remittances back to the rural areas so that the rest of the family has a better quality of life than if the men had stayed.

Section 3c

The majority of candidates focused on the need to reduce the negative balance of trade, and on the potential to improve the economy which would in turn have an impact on the quality of life. There was often recognition that the government had to rely on overseas aid and that increasing manufacturing and industry might be a method to increase GDP which could reduce this reliance on aid. It was also recognised that the trade imbalance means Pakistan does not have funds to put into all the regions of the country or to address issues such as health, education and transport. Few candidates were able to indicate the scale of debt or trade imbalance.

Question 4

A considerable number of candidates attempted this question. Section 4a ii was particularly well answered and some excellent responses outlining the improvements in education and medicines that have helped to reduce infant mortality.

Section 4b

There was a general misunderstanding about what could be considered to be class differences. Rather than class as such, most candidates focused on the differences between rich and poorer people. The most common response was that lower classes tend to have fewer opportunities. Answers frequently explored how rich people have access to a better quality of life while poor people live in poverty, have fewer opportunities, poor services and lower paid jobs, and how this causes tension with the richer people. Fewer candidates identified that segregation exists between the classes and that there tended to be class differences separating urban and rural areas.

Section 4c

Most candidates included both human and physical factors which resulted in this being one of the better answered questions in the paper. Many candidates took a systematic approach, explaining the development levels of the different areas ranging from the remote areas of the North West to the densely populated cities. Transport networks and the lack of them as a consequence of limited government investment were usually identified as the most important human factors. It was commented that development of networks was most advanced around cities and industry. Mountains, desert environments and fertile soils were the most frequently discussed physical factors. Some candidates attempted to link human and physical factors e.g. rich fertile soil around the river has meant higher levels of development as this is where funds have been focused.

Question 5

This was one of the better answered questions and candidates showed some excellent knowledge and understanding. However, the term sphere of influence was only correctly identified in a very few responses.

Section 5b

Many candidates discussed how transport is important to improve Pakistan's ability to move goods around the country in order to increase the potential to manufacture goods, which could then increase exports which could improve the balance of trade. A number of candidates were optimistic that if transport networks could be improved then both domestic and international tourism and business could be improved across the country, and not just in the cities.

Section 5c

Candidates usually focused on how the cottage and craft industries allow a greater proportion of the population to work, particularly women in the rural areas. Many answers also focused on how Pakistan has developed an international reputation for some items such as carpets, textiles and footballs, and there is now demand for these items which do not require much capital investment. Fewer responses commented on the importance of cottage and craft industries to Pakistan's balance of trade or economic development.

Question 6

This was a popular question and candidates were able to write in detail, the sections on environmental pollution were particularly well known.

Section Q6b

This section was generally well understood and known by candidates and explanations of waterlogging and salinity were the two most common responses.

Section Q6c

The majority of answers described the 'Green Revolution' but did not always relate this to increased agricultural production. The increased use of HYVs, pesticides and herbicides often discussed by the better candidates who were

able to name particular crops and describe how their production had been increased by the use of such innovations.

Question 7

A number of candidates attempted this question. Section aiii tended to cause some confusion, with candidates describing food supplies in general rather than nutrition.

Section7b

This section was well answered, with candidates' answers focused on the quality of life. Most candidates concentrated on direct comparisons between the areas; for example, more jobs, less jobs, higher income, lower income, better or worse education and health care provision and so on. A small number of candidates focused on the slightly more sophisticated concepts of the environmental differences such as a better quality of life due to less pollution in rural areas.

Section7c

There were a number of answers which listed different factors with a little development, therefore limiting the marks which could be awarded. Most candidates were able to provide an overview of the pattern of the country with named regions, although the reasons given tended to be generic such as hilly or lower relief. More specific details about the regions are needed to fully explain the variations in population density. Weaker candidates made comments such as 'the climate also affects the distribution of the population' without giving specific details, therefore limiting the level that could be awarded.

Question 8

This was the least popular question on the paper and was generally poorly answered by candidates, who lacked both understanding and knowledge of the sections of the specification covered. Renewable and non-renewable resources and the importance of the latter to Pakistan were, however, well known.

Section8b

There was a general lack of knowledge about soil formation. Where marks were awarded these were usually for descriptions of weathered material and the breaking down of vegetation.

Section8c

The relatively few candidates that attempted this section tended to discuss conditions resulting in the formation of the storms or the impacts of heavy rain and flooding on Pakistan. This section of the specification was very poorly understood.