

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

International GCSE  
Bangladesh Studies (4BN0\_02)  
Land, People & Economy

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This was the first examination of the new International GCSE specification. Basically, the subject content is the same as for the preceding O-level qualification in Bangladesh Studies. For the candidates, however, there was one notable change, namely that the examination paper had to be answered in a book with lined allocations to the individual parts of each question. This does not seem to have caused the candidates any noticeable difficulties. Indeed, it may have had at least one beneficial impact, namely that the candidates generally paid better attention to the final part of each question.

There was an increase in the size of this year's candidature. Once again, the paper proved to be a good discriminator with the overall performance ranging from the distinctly under-prepared and 'out of their depth' to the well-prepared and commendably competent.

## **SECTION A**

**Q1**, the compulsory question, seeks to test the candidate's more general knowledge of Bangladesh. In Part (a)(iv) there was some uncertainty as to the resource being extracted at D, namely mineral sands. The actual extent of Bangladesh prompted some unlikely responses to Part (b)(i). Few candidates were able to provide a correct answer to (c)(i), but, in contrast, most were able to make some valid points in (c)(ii) and (d)(i) and (ii).

## **SECTION B**

The two optional questions in this section proved to be of equal popularity. In **Q2(a)**, the location of the largest gas-field was known only to a minority of candidates, but responses to (a)(i) and (iii) were general sound, particularly the grasp of the 'non-renewable' concept. Part (b) does not seem to have caused any difficulties; indeed, most candidates were able to cite a number of reasons for the deforestation of Bangladesh in (ii). Similarly, in (c), except that there was an inclination to list valid reasons (often by means of bullet points) rather than 'explain' those reasons.

Many of the answers to all three parts of **Q3a** were worryingly insecure. This was compensated somewhat by the quality of response to both parts of (b). Part (c) may have been something of a 'gift' question to many candidates. It would seem that the gift was gratefully received and rewarded by some commendably good work.

## **SECTION C**

Candidate choice in this Section was more or less evenly divided between the two questions. Reading what the graph in part (a)(i) showed was correctly undertaken by the majority of candidates attempting **Q4**. In (ii) the root cause of the fall in the birth rate was given by all as being down to a wider practice of birth control, but only a few went on to probe why this was so, namely improved access to contraceptives and the growing realisation of the benefits of smaller families. In (iii) most answers stopped short after citing improved healthcare as the basic reason. Neglected elements of explanation included better housing conditions, hygiene and diet. Few showed a sound grasp of the concept of 'population density', but

the responses to (ii) were more secure. Most candidates saw the diversity of Bangladeshi society in (c) in terms of personal wealth. A few were alive to the ethnic dimension.

In **Q5(a)**, whilst most candidates read off the correct value from the graph in (i), few were able to identify a valid measure of urbanisation. In (iii), some candidates were only prepared to offer one way - rural-urban migration. Answers to (b)(i) were largely coined in terms of push factors, whilst in (ii) the awareness of the benefits of emigration for family members remaining in Bangladesh often extended beyond just remittances. Answers to (c) were all too often nothing more than lists of challenges (albeit valid ones). Supporting reasons were rarely given.

## **SECTION D**

In this Section, candidate choice favoured Q7 rather than Q6. In **Q6(a)(i)** the supreme ranking of the ready-made garments industry was understood by all, but few had anything to offer in terms of other ways of possibly measuring the relative importance of industries in (ii). Not all candidates were secure in their understanding of what qualify as non-renewable raw materials, as evident in the frequent citation of the jute industry. The work in both parts of (b) was generally sound, whilst in (c) candidates seemed reasonably well informed about possible ways of raising manufacturing output in Bangladesh.

In **Q7(a)(i)** most candidates read off the correct value for the tertiary sector's share of the workforce and were able to cite an appropriate activity in (ii). In (iii) whilst there was general appreciation that the tertiary sector increases in importance with development, few understood the other dimension of change, namely an increase in the diversity of activities within the sector. In (b)(i) there was some division of opinion as to what is Bangladesh's most important mode of transport. It did not matter whether it was claimed to be road or water transport, as long as there was some supportive reasoning. Some responses of (ii) were rather blinkered seeing the importance of transport being mainly about the movement of either people or goods rather than both. In (c) too many candidates were content simply to point out the country's negative trade balance. Little attention was paid to the content of exports and imports.

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