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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2019

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Bangladesh Studies (4BN1) Paper 01
(History & Culture of Bangladesh)

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1 General comments

There was a pleasing increase in the entry figure for this new-look examination this year compared to 2018. All the candidates answered the required three questions and few if any displayed signs of problems relating to time or rubric infringement.

Even though the examination has changed many candidates still tend to write about or describe the topics/characters/events listed in question parts c and d rather than focussing on the question posed. The new style part d question gave the candidate topics on which to use in their answer together with a statement that they should also use information of their own. Unfortunately, few candidates did. It is hoped that following this examination Centres will take note of the new style question and prepare future candidates to make good attempts to answer the question fully.

2 Comments on individual questions

Question 1

Most candidates were able to score 2 marks for question 1b on the ways that Cyclone Bhola affected the local population in 1970. Many candidates were able to describe or identify some of the reasons why Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became unpopular but answers gave little emphasis in the way of **explanation** of why. As a result, many answers were limited to a level 2 mark. The Canal Water Dispute was a well-known topic and along with the additional material of the Indian control of the headworks and the refugee issue, most candidates were able to make an attempt at explaining their answers. However few candidates went beyond the topics stated in the question as requested. As a result the maximum mark achieved was usually limited at the top of level 3.

Question 2

Question 2 was a popular question, which required candidates to answer questions on Bengal. The achievements of Hussain Shahi usually attracted 2 marks but the question on why the Sufis gained so many converts to Islam was not so well done. It was clear that candidates had a good knowledge of Sufis and Sufism but the question was specific in asking for reasons on why the gained converts. As a result high marks were not forthcoming from a majority of candidates who merely described all they knew about Sufis. There was a good knowledge regarding the Pala and Sena dynasties and in

particular the achievements of Dharmapala and Laksmanasena. There was lots of description but mixed with genuine attempts to answer the question. However few candidates went beyond these two individuals by using their own knowledge and as result a top level 3 mark was the maximum that candidates were achieving.

Question 3

This was also a popular question on the Mughal Empire. Most candidates were able to identify the reasons why the East India Company became involved in the sub-continent with most candidates scoring up to 2 marks. A large number of candidates displayed good knowledge on the work of Sher Shah but fewer on his actual achievements. As a result most answers were limited to a mark within level 2. Shaista Khan was also a well-known individual with many candidates able to consider the achievements of his military conquests together with his construction projects at home. However most candidates did not go further than these topics and as a result, again a mark at the top end of level 3 was the maximum achieved.

Question 4

Candidates had to answer questions on Bengal under British rule. Part 4b on the features of Bengal Renaissance was well known with many maximum marks achieved. Attempts to answer 4c on the reasons why Lord Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Settlement were not well done and a low level 2 mark was a common one. Clearly this was not a well-known topic. There were some good attempts to answer the question on the reasons for the War of Independence. The Greased Cartridge incident was very well known but supplementary topics including the sepoys discontent and the imposition of English as a foreign language were not covered well. There was scant evidence of using candidates' own knowledge to explain further reasons for the conflict and a top level 3 mark was the maximum achieved.

Question 5

This was a popular question on the topic 'on the road to partition.' However the question was not answered well. Few candidates could state two terms of the Indian Councils Act of 1909 (5b) or why the Government of India Act of 1935 was a turning point in Hindu-Muslim relations (5c.) As a result marks achieved were not high. More surprisingly attempts to answer question 5d were poor. It was expected that a well-known topic as Congress Rule would have been a high scoring question but it seemed that few candidates were able to get to grips with it. Bande Matram, the nationalistic Hindu song and anti-Muslim riots were often ignored and irrelevant information was brought into candidates' answers. Even when candidates did address the topics given there was little explanation as to why these were disliked by Muslims.

Question 6

This question asked candidates to answer questions on 'Bangladesh - the establishing the new country.' Begum Rokeya (6b) was well known and attracted 2 marks usually. Most candidates knew of the work of General Ziaur Rahman and were able to explain why he brought about stability in Bangladesh. There were some top-level marks awarded for this question. However question 6d on the contribution of Bangladesh to world organisations including the United Nations and the Commonwealth were not answered well. It was clear that many candidates' knowledge of this topic was of sufficient depth to score highly and as a result marks were usually limited to level 2.

