Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in Pakistan Studies (4PA0)

Paper 2: The Land, People and
Resources of Pakistan

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General Comments

Over-all candidates continued to show an impressive knowledge of the geography of Pakistan.

There were very few rubric errors this year, and the majority of candidates correctly answered question one (compulsory) and three other questions for a choice of seven. In the optional section (questions two to eight); questions two, three, four and six were the more popular. There was very little evidence that candidates failed to complete the paper in the time allowed.

A small number of candidates extended their answers beyond the spaces provided. This needs to be clearly indicated by the use of terms such as 'continued' or, 'see page…'

Question 1

This is a section composed of either questions requiring one or two word answers or multiple choice questions. 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. There appeared to be fewer errors this year, and a number of candidates were able to reach ten or eleven marks for this section. In general, a majority demonstrated a very sound knowledge of Pakistan, particularly the names of a mountain pass between Pakistan and Afghanistan and that of the new seaport opened in 2007. The most common error, as in the past, tended to be about mineral resources and relatively few candidates knew that limestone is a major raw material. Naming Pakistan's main export was also problematic for some candidates.

Question 2

This was a popular question and was answered well by the majority of candidates. Candidates showed skill in accurately completing the rainfall graph for Lahore and were able to describe how rainfall at Karachi varies throughout the year, using evidence from the table and graph to support their answers. The majority of candidates were able to give some sound explanations of why Lahore receives so much rainfall in July and August, but relatively few developed their answers in enough detail to obtain all the four marks available. Details such as the source of moisture (the Bay of Bengal) and the direction that the monsoon winds take would have strengthened answers. In section b, candidates were asked to explain the effects that flooding can have on the economy of Pakistan. It was important that the impact on the economy, at local, regional or national level or all three was addressed in the answer and that the focus was clearly on Pakistan.

There were a large number of very generic answers such as this extract; 'Flooding has disadvantages because it destroys the buildings and homes which is a big loss for the families who cannot afford this and deaths,…increase in death rate during times of flooding.' Such answers might be improved by reference to an actual named flood and some indication of the value of the losses.

Question 3

This was also a popular question. The majority of candidates were able to name the tectonic plate on which most of Pakistan is located, and define the earthquake related terms 'epicentre' and 'focus'. Most candidates were able to explain why earthquakes occur in Pakistan, but the answers frequently lacked the detail required to gain full marks. Surprisingly few answers supplied the key factors. The following is an example of an excellent answer:

'Whilst most of Pakistan is on the Indian Plate, sizeable areas (Kashmir, for example) are along the edge of the Eurasian Plate, the two plates are constantly pushing against each other in a converging boundary. The seismic activity in the region, responsible for the Himalayas, can result in devastating earthquakes.'

The majority of candidates were able to give very sound details of the effects that earthquakes, such as the one in Kashmir in 2005, have on the people affected. However most of the answers tended to be generic rather than showing knowledge of Pakistan. This was also true of section (b) where candidates were asked to explain the causes of environmental pollution in Pakistan. Many of the answers tended to give several, descriptive points such as 'non-filtered smoke from industries/factories releases harmful gases into the atmosphere.' Such answers can be improved by naming specific gases emitted and locations in Pakistan and by increasing the depth of explanation.

Question 4

Question 4 was also a popular question and tended to be well answered by the majority of candidates. Candidates showed skill in accurately completing the population graphs and interpreting the patterns shown by their completed Figure 3(a). Candidates were less secure when suggesting reasons why the North-West Frontier Province has such a small urban population. Explanations tended to be limited to reasons such as 'there are less job opportunities in the urban regions.' Very few considered or explained the impact of physical factors such as climate or relief, or economic factors such as lack of investment in infrastructure in this region.

In section (b) candidates were asked to explain the differences between urban and rural life in Pakistan. They were advised that 'references to named areas will help your answer'. Most candidates gave very sound, if somewhat generic, descriptions of the differences between the areas and reached the middle level for this question. Relatively few provided detailed reasons for the differences the described or named specific areas despite being able to use information from Figure 3 and the previous question about the NWFP.

Question 5

This was a slightly less popular question. Candidates once again showed considerable skill when completing the graphs showing literacy for selected provinces in Pakistan. They were then asked to describe two other possible indicators of welfare. Many candidates simply named two indicators without giving any additional information and therefore could not be awarded full marks for this section. They were then asked to suggest reasons for this lack of literacy

data for the Northern Areas (Gilgit). Many candidates tried to answer this question by explaining the reasons for low levels of literacy rather than for the lack of data.

In section (b) candidates were required to explain the problems caused by class differences and social inequalities in Pakistan. Once again, answers tended to be generic rather than specifically focused on Pakistan, and many candidates described the differences in class or social groups in Pakistan rather than trying to give reasons for these differences. The following extract is typical of many descriptive answers which reached the middle mark band, but which would have been improved by the inclusion of explanation and better focus on the question asked:

 'The upper 20% of upper class people has created this difference by showing others they are much better than them. Due to this they don't socialise with other classes……. Because of class differences Pakistan is divided into different parts and everybody is working for his own benefit.'

Question 6

The majority of candidates were able to complete the pie chart using the data in Figure 5(b) and describe the distribution of cotton-growing areas shown in Figure 5(a). The ability to describe the agricultural methods used in the growing of cotton proved very variable. Some candidates were able to give highly detailed accounts of sowing, irrigation methods, pest control and harvesting, but others appeared very confused about the cultivation of this highly important crop. For example, one candidate wrote that:

'Cotton can be grown in greenhouses where all the requirements for its development are found. Cotton plants must be handled carefully or they will fly away with the wind. Cotton plants should get the proper amount of water, sunlight, air and soil.'

Centres are reminded that the specification specifically asks candidates to be familiar with the methods of production of a number of crops.

In section (c) candidates were asked to explain the problems caused by irrigation in Pakistan. This part of the question produced some excellent answers were candidates considered the loss of water by inefficient methods, soil derogation due to water table variations and increased salinity and the impacts of water way pollution. Some candidates, however, described the problems with very little explanation of the resulting impacts, and therefore restricted their answers to the middle mark band.

Question 7

This was a less popular question in which the candidates were asked to describe the distribution of the main rail network, based on a map. Many excellent answers were seen which included both the areas served by the network, comments about the concentration in specific areas and the lack of train lines to

the more remote provinces. Most candidates were able to suggest a number of reasons why Pakistan's rail network is in need of improvement, with lack of investment being the main cause given. In the four mark answer section, candidates were asked to describe the main factors, other than transport, influencing the location of manufacturing in Pakistan. This question required more than a generic knowledge of manufacturing location and needed to be focused on Pakistan to reach the higher marking levels. Some candidates failed to read the question correctly and explained in detail why transport is significant in the location of manufacturing industries.

In section (b) candidates were required to explain how craft and cottage industries contribute to the economy of Pakistan. Many candidates gave excellent descriptions of the importance of named craft and cottage industries and most were able to link the answers to either the local, regional or national economy. The better responses tended to include at least two of these economic scales as illustrated by this extract; 'The goods produced domestically are frequently exported, such as handmade rugs, which increases the GDP and Pakistan earns foreign exchange by exporting them. Hence the living standards of the people in the rural areas where the rugs are made also increase.'

Question 8

This was one of the less popular questions but tended to be well answered by the candidates who attempted this question. The majority of answers showed an excellent knowledge of the main commodities being imported by Pakistan. Most candidates were able to explain why Pakistan has a trade deficit, although some failed to develop their answers beyond stating that the value of exports is less than that of imports.

In section (b) candidates were asked to describe the possible future sources of energy in Pakistan. This question again required specific rather than generic knowledge of sources of energy and candidates were expected to make reference to actual proposed or possible schemes in Pakistan or other specific factors. The following extract indicates the type of response which reached the higher mark bands:

 'Natural gas which is found in the Baluchistan plateau which can be used for many different purposes like industries and automobiles, can be developed in the future. Furthermore Pakistan has about 9.5 hours of sunlight a day so there is the possibility of large scale solar energy production which would help industrial development.'

Grade Boundaries

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