

# Examiners' Report January 2008

GCE O Level

## Bangladesh Studies (7038)

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# Bangladesh Studies Paper 1 History and Culture

## General comments

The standard of work presented this year by candidates was broadly comparable to that of last year with an entry figure of almost half that of January 2007. All the candidates answered the required three questions and few displayed any sign of problems with the requirements of the examination especially relating to time. There were no rubric errors.

As with last year, most candidates tended to write about the topics / characters / events listed in the question rather than focussing on the question being posed. The content suggested in the question is there to guide candidates rather than be prescriptive.

## Comments on individual questions

### Section 1

There were several good attempts at question 1 in which most candidates were able to address the reasons why Islam became the dominant religion in Bengal with reference to Bakhtiyar Khalji, Sufis and Ilyas Shah. However, most answers tended to be descriptive with little in the way of explanation of the way these factors contributed to the spread of Islam.

There were no answers to question 2.

### Section 2

Question 3 was a popular question and one that was done well. The question required candidates to give reasons why the Mughal Empire found difficulty in gaining control of all of Bengal with reference to the Bara-Bhuiyans, the geography of East Bengal and the revolts of zamindars. Most candidates were able to score well on this question with a good level of detail shown. Answers were generally accurate and the facts were well known.

Few candidates answered question 4 and those that did produced weak and generalised answers.

### Section 3

No candidates answered question 5 on Warren Hastings and there were only a few responses to question 6 on the Permanent Settlement, Titu Mir and the Indigo Revolt. Most of these responses were descriptive and failed to address their importance in the growth of opposition to British rule in Bengal.

### Section 4

There were no responses to the questions set in this Section.

## Section 5

This was a popular Section from which to select questions and one that saw a number of good answers to both questions. Question 9 on the reasons why opposition grew to the policies of the Pakistan government saw some accurate and knowledgeable answers that addressed the requirements of the question. There was a good level of detail and some high scoring answers. Question 10, whilst not as popular as question 9, also saw some good responses with a good level of detail that addressed the changing relations between East and West Pakistan after 1966. However, these answers were largely narrative and produced little to explain why the events listed were important to these changing relations. As a result, marks were lower than the those gained in the previous question.

## Section 6

There were a few good responses to question 11 in this section. The question required candidates to give reasons why relations between East and West Pakistan grew worse between 1969 and 1970. Candidates were able to provide a good level of detail on Yahya Khan, the cyclone of 1970 and the National Assembly elections but were narrative rather than relating these to the reasons for the worsening relationship between the two sides.

There were no responses to question 12.

## Section 7

There were a few attempts at question 13 which was concerned with the increase in the number of political parties in Bangladesh since 1975. Again some answers contained an appropriate level of detail that addressed the question and scored well.

There were no answers to question 14.

## Section 8

Few candidates answered question 15 on Kazi Nazul Islam or Begum Sufia Kamal in relation to Bangla culture and those that did provided a descriptive account of their role rather than address their importance to culture.

Good responses to question 16 were produced by those candidates that answered it. The detail offered on Hill Tracts and the UN Mother Tongue Day was good although less so on Mughal architecture. However, few candidates related the information to explain their importance to the heritage and culture of Bangladesh.

## Bangladesh Studies Paper 2 Land, People and Economy

### General Comments

A feature of the overall performance on this paper was its wide differentiation. It was heartening to find, as in the June 2007 examination, not only a good number of candidates at the top end of the scale, but that they outnumbered those towards the other end who were manifestly unprepared for the examination. Again, in terms of advice on how to improve future performance, candidates should be advised not to stint the amount of time they devote to the mark-rich part (c) of all questions. With 6 marks on offer, candidates should be prepared to write more than they do at present (current averages are about 10 lines).

### Comments on individual questions

#### Section A

Question 1, the compulsory question, seeks to test the candidate's more general knowledge of Bangladesh. On reflection, it has to be admitted that part (a) might have encouraged some guesswork, but in general the answers to (i), (ii) and (v) were the most accurate. In (b)(i) the distinction appeared to be generally understood, but too many were content to give two separate definitions rather than focus on any differences. The value of flood plains was well understood. In (c) some candidates confused the Green Revolution with moves to create a 'greener' world i.e. reducing greenhouse gas emissions and global warming.

#### Section B

Questions 2 and 3 were equally popular. Perhaps of all the questions on this paper, question 2 produced the most consistent performance. In question 2(a) candidates coped quite well with all parts; it was (iii) and the reversal of trends that offered the stiffest test. The value of Bangladesh's rivers was well understood in (b) and so too the downside - shared ownership with India, seasonality of flows, multiple use, pollution, etc. Good work was in plentiful supply in the responses to part (c).

In question 3(a), virtually all candidates knew the source area of cyclones in (i), but few understood the mechanism involved in (ii), whilst surprisingly in (iii) a significant number of answers referred only to the hazard of high winds and not torrential rain and flooding. Sound work was much in evidence in parts (b) and (c). In the latter, it was heartening to see that candidates grasped that people also contribute to the incidence of landslides.

## Section C

Again, the two questions in this section received roughly equal patronage. In question 4(a)(i) most correctly identified infant mortality as showing the greatest change, and in (iv) that natural increase had increased, albeit only by a small margin. Credible reasons were forthcoming in (ii) and it was heartening to find that in (iv) most grasped the inverse nature of the relationship between the death rate and life expectancy. In part (b)(i) the meaning of population density was widely understood, but in (ii) too many candidates confined their explanations to physical factors. Some mature work was evident in answers to (c) and it was encouraging to find candidates aware of some of the significant factors contributing to the persistence of poverty.

In question 5 responses to (a)(i) correctly identified Dhaka, but it is worrying that in (ii) so few knew about the industries of these two cities, particularly of Chittagong. In (iii), most candidates were able to come up with only one reason, namely the centrality of Dhaka with respect to the rest of the country. In (b)(i) the notion of 'temporary' migration was generally well grasped, but very few candidates mentioned that such migration is work-related i.e. the 'economic' bit was ignored. The value of remittances was understood in (ii), but most candidates were at a loss to identify a valid disadvantage of this type of migration e.g. the temporary loss of more able / skilled workers; 'temporary' frequently becomes 'permanent', etc.

## Section D

More candidates chose question 7 in preference to question 6. Those few who tackled the latter seemed to cope well with the demands of the question, being well informed about Bangladesh's foreign trade in part (a) and its cottage industries in (c).

In question 7 (a)(i) the initials GDP were familiar to almost all the candidates, but too many failed to correctly identify in (ii) that the greatest change had occurred in the primary sector. Where the answer to (ii) was wrong, marks were salvaged in parts (iii) and (iv) to ensure no candidate suffered a heavy 'treble' penalty. Some good understanding was shown in part (b), but most responses to (c) needed to be more explicit about the link between good transport and development.

## O Level Bangladesh Studies 7038 Grade Boundaries

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	59	49	40	35	27

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