

BANGLADESH STUDIES

Paper 7094/01
History and Culture of Bangladesh

Key messages

Candidates should read the questions carefully.

Candidates should choose questions where they can answer most of the sections, and not be put off by a short answer question that they cannot answer.

Where a question asks candidates to explain, candidates should use their knowledge to answer the question.

Part (c)(ii) questions require answers that reflect on the answers provided in **part (c)(i)** answers.

General comments

Candidates overall seemed to be well prepared for the examination. This examination requires candidates to select information to answer short answer questions, to demonstrate sound and relevant factual knowledge and to construct historical narratives in three essays and historical explanations in five essays. They are asked to consider the relative importance or impact of the factors featuring in each of the narratives. Many candidates did this very well, using strong, appropriate, supported information to keep their answers relevant to the question. Very few candidates failed to keep to the point of the question or wrote lengthy descriptions that were not appropriate to the question. Many candidates were well prepared for one or two questions and showed their ability to apply their knowledge to their answers to the questions. Very few candidates were unable to demonstrate any depth of knowledge. Most candidates successfully constructed some historical explanations. Some candidates described the given factor in the question, rather than directly addressing the question.

Candidates overall were found to have a depth of knowledge available for use in all questions and the ability to select appropriate information. However, candidates should be advised to select questions which have all parts which they are able to answer as a small number of candidates ignored the second or third parts of some of the questions. Some candidates selected questions based on their ability to answer the **Part a** questions, but were then unable to answer **parts b** or **c** of the question in depth. This year, that number was smaller as many candidates seemed to find the short answer questions difficult.

Candidates should read questions carefully. Many candidates did not respond appropriately to the question about the Outcomes of the War of Independence.

Most candidates were able to write specific answers to **Question 1ci** that used an appropriate amount of time during the exam. As a result, answers to other questions were better thought out and were answered in greater depth than in earlier years.

To score well on **Part a** and **bi** questions, candidates need to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the factors that are asked for, specific to the topic or dates given. They should focus on the topic of the question, avoiding detail that does not fit into the questions.

To score well on the **Part bii** and **c** questions candidates need to address their knowledge to answer the questions. These are questions asking *Explain the reasons...* or *Explain the impact...* or *Explain why...* and answers should lead to these questions being answered. Candidates should take care to read the questions fully. Where the question asks about changes in arts and culture in a period, answers offering only political change, or changes in arts and culture in different periods, will not be awarded marks.

More candidates than usual were able to justify a conclusion to at least one **part cii** in the optional questions. They found the options possible and worthy of consideration by reflecting on the balanced answer provided in **part (c)(i)**.

There were very few rubric errors. Few candidates did not complete the examination.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was the compulsory question on the paper and was attempted by all candidates. Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge in their **Part a** answers. There were many very strong answers which gave detailed information about Begum Rokeya's life and work. Some candidates were able to consider the impact of her work as asked for in **Part bii**, considering the importance of the rewards she was able to give to the people of Bangladesh, and the impact of her work during her own lifetime and since. Candidates were well prepared to consider folk culture, some able to bring together old and new to reach highest levels of marks. Candidates were able to describe religious and cultural festivals, often selecting festivals that served a purpose e.g. to bring together people of different faiths. Many candidates developed an answer that explained their importance to our understanding and rehearsal of folk culture, or the place of festivals in developing understanding in those without literary skills or training, or for economic benefit. If folk culture is taken as an example, candidates could have started a paragraph in **Question 1ci** by saying: it shows us how skills from the past e.g. in pottery making or basket weaving are able to be shared with urban dwellers today. **Question cii** would follow on by saying that this enable uneducated and illiterate rural dwellers to make economic progress in their lives. About festivals, a paragraph might begin: We can learn from festivals of the twentieth century about how people sought fun and enjoyment and cultural integration. **Question cii** might follow this by saying that festivals show us how Bangladesh has sought to maintain a respect for its cultural mix.

Most candidates were able to give a detailed answer to at least one part of the question. Most candidates were able to identify a more important factor, though some then were unable to offer a reason for their choice. Some were able to explain how festivals are useful today as a source of information about a life so different from our own, or indeed, a life that exists still in parts of Bangladesh. Folk culture shows how our lives have developed from those simpler times, but how we need to respect and recognise how people from rural areas still make a living by selling their wares both at home and abroad.

All three of the optional questions were found attractive by candidates.

Question 2

The short answer questions were mostly answered quite well, except for **Question 2aiii** where most candidates either omitted the BC or made a guess at an answer. Most candidates demonstrated understanding of life during the Mauryan Empire. A significant number understood aspects of the role of the Guptas, but fewer were able to focus on the changes they made in how Bengal was ruled. Most candidates were aware of both written evidence of life in early Bengal and evidence gathered from what is known about trade. The best answers focused on specifics that named or identified people, wrote about and what they taught us, in general and about trade. Some were very well argued, using evidence that enabled a justified conclusion in **Part 2cii**.

Question 3

The short answer questions were consistently well answered. Most candidates understood the interactions between the Mughals and the Marathas, but many candidates did not reflect on what this meant about relationships. **Question 3bii** saw candidates focus answers on the impact of wars on administration, and on how taxation was gathered. Some candidates used knowledge of later Mughal rulers well, developing points about how the army was neglected or how spending was not controlled. There was some impressive detail to be found in most answers of **Question 3ci**, candidates showing awareness of the role of the navy in Bengal and of how trading was established and developed between the EIC and the Mughals. The best **Part cii** answers considered the relative importance of trade and the establishment of power in the short and longer term in answering this question. Most concluded that, even with a successful navy, it was trade that was the driving force and trade that enabled the commissioning of a naval force.

Question 4

It was encouraging to read so many well-informed answers to a question on Bengal in the twentieth century. The short answer questions were well answered. Candidates demonstrated a clear knowledge of interactions between President Ayub Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The election results of 1970 were clearly well understood, but some candidates were less clear about how this led into **Question 4ci**. **Question 4ci** was the cause of confusion for some candidates who misread the question, general answers about unity replacing details about who made up the freedom fighters and how they armed themselves, or the role of President Mujibur Rahman in co-ordinating action. Some candidates repeated information about the role of India in both sections of **Question ci**. Very well explained reflections of the impact of each resulted in strongly supported evaluations in **Question 4cii**.

BANGLADESH STUDIES

Paper 7094/02
Environment and Development
of Bangladesh

Key messages

- Maximum success is achieved by those candidates who focus on the command words and mark allocations in order to answer the questions set within the confines of the answer space.
- The more detail candidates give, within the confines of the answer space, the more likely they are to gain full marks. Lists of very brief bullet points are to be avoided.
- In examinations candidates do not need to repeat the question at the start of their answer.
- In the judgement section, at the end of each question, candidates should develop, not repeat their reasons for supporting statements A and/or B.

General comments

- Candidates displayed an excellent command of the English language and sound knowledge of the environment and development of Bangladesh.
- In particular, candidates demonstrated excellent locational knowledge of Bangladesh, they could describe locations and distributions using not only compass directions and named regions but also division and district names.
- The resource-based skills questions were also answered particularly well, both the graph completion and graph analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was the least popular but was answered very well by those candidates who attempted it.

- (a) (i) The vast majority of candidates were able to describe the location of the hill areas in Bangladesh.
- (ii) Candidates who described the relief, geology, soils, drainage, fauna and flora of the hill areas soon reached maximum marks, compared to those who merely described the relief.
- (b) (i) Almost all candidates were able to put the correct words into the boxes on Fig. 1.2, a diagram of a lowland river and delta.
- (ii) Step-by-step explanations of how a delta is formed easily gained full marks for this question but a number of candidates' answers included descriptions of the appearance of deltas which could not be credited.
- (iii) Candidates' knowledge of Bangladesh rivers was excellent.
- (c) (i) Most candidates were able to accurately plot and shade the divided bar for inland and marine fishing.
- (ii) A minority of candidates knew why fish thrive in the Bay of Bengal.

- (d) A very good knowledge of the benefits of trawlers was evident in (i). In (ii) candidates were knowledgeable about aquaculture but did not always focus on the question set, which was how aquaculture could increase fish production. The best responses explained briefly one advantage of each approach and then in (iii) expanded, in detail, the reasons for their choice of either A or B. Some candidates made a good case for the need for both.

Candidates who merely repeated the points made in support of statement A or B struggled to gain any additional marks in (iii).

Question 2

A popular, well-answered question in which candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the monsoon climate and drought in Bangladesh.

- (a) (i) Few candidates correctly defined a monsoon climate as one that experiences heavy summer rainfall due to a seasonal change in the prevailing wind.
- (ii) Candidates who used the information provided in Fig. 2.1 were able to give a detailed explanation of monsoon rainfall in Bangladesh. Some candidates ignored the stimulus and instead described depression or thunderstorm rainfall.
- (b) (i) Candidates who described the main temperature changes as shown by the line graph easily gained full marks for this question. Some candidates wasted time and effort by describing the temperature month by month, and others included rainfall as well.
- (ii) The graph was usually completed very accurately. Candidates should always be prepared to complete graphs as part of this examination. They should use a sharp HB pencil and ruler to plot graphs.
- (c) (i) Fig. 2.3 showed areas of moderate and severe drought. Few candidates focused on the word 'severe' in (ii) so wrote a general definition of drought.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to describe in detail the location of areas of severe drought in Bangladesh, giving not only regions but also division names.
- (iii) The main causes of drought were well explained by the majority of candidates.
- (d) Generally, this question included too many **pull** factors. The best candidates referred to specific problems in the countryside that cause people to move to cities.
- (e) Candidates were very knowledgeable about the problems caused by drought and the benefits of the monsoon for rural areas. In (iii) some candidates also pointed out the problems caused by the monsoon. However, too much repetition of points already made in parts (i) and (ii) meant candidates did not always gain the 3 marks available by giving clear, detailed reasons using facts to back up their opinions.

Question 3

This question was not very popular and parts of it proved to be quite challenging for those candidates who attempted it.

- (a) (i) There were many excellent descriptions of the distribution of coal mining areas in Bangladesh.
- (ii) Good answers stated that coal is used in Bangladesh to generate electricity or coal is used for industries such as: steel production, cement manufacture, brick making or the chemical industry. Vague answers such as 'coal is used for energy or industry' were not credited.
- (b) (i) The vast majority of candidates used Fig. 3.1 to accurately describe the location of the Sundarbans mangrove forest as being in Kulna division, in the south west of Bangladesh.
- (ii) Candidates who focused only on the mangrove trees struggled to gain all 4 marks available for this question about the physical characteristics of the Sundarbans, compared to those who also included details about the climate and relief.

- (c) (i) Bengal tigers and Ganges river dolphins were easily identified from the newspaper article in Fig. 3.2 as the two species under threat in the Sundarbans.
- (ii) There were a number of detailed explanations of how the development of power stations causes air, noise, water and land pollution. There were no marks for merely stating or describing the types of pollution as this question required candidates to explain how they were caused.
- (iii) Some candidates were able to explain how climate change and agriculture are causing serious threats to the Sundarbans mangrove forest. For example, climate change will cause an increase in temperature due to Global warming, which will cause more cyclones, and raising sea levels by 2–3 metres by 2050, which will submerge the Sundarbans.
- (d) The divided bar graph was usually completed neatly and accurately.
- (e) There were some good suggestions as to why the development of coal and renewables could guarantee the future energy supply of Bangladesh. However, too much repetition in part (iii), rather than giving additional points for and against each approach, meant candidates did not always gain the 3 marks available for supporting statement A or B.

Question 4

A popular, well-answered question in which candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of landlessness, poverty and development indicators.

- (a) (i) Candidates who understood that this question was about the **causes** of landlessness explained how population growth, land ownership and inheritance could cause land to be sub-divided to the point where it is too small to support the owner's family. Some candidates also explained how land could be seized or destroyed by erosion.
- (ii) The immediate consequences of becoming landless, such as loss of job and home, lack of food, poverty and how this leads to rural–urban migration were well known. Some candidates wrote at length about the consequences of rural–urban migration which was not required for this particular question.
- (b) Almost all candidates who attempted this question were able to complete the bar graph. A few candidates failed to attempt this easy question.
- (c) (i) The graph was very well interpreted by the vast majority of candidates, they were able to identify the main changes. Those who adopted a year-by-year approach wasted time and effort and often ran out of space.
- (ii) Candidates understood the benefits of continued economic growth in reducing poverty and improving quality of life. Better responses had developed answers which quickly scored full marks for this question. Weaker responses tended to repeat ideas rather than elaborate on them.
- (d) (i) The majority of candidates correctly stated that the number of mobile phone users far outnumbered the number of active internet users.
- (ii) Most candidates stated that the numbers of both mobile phone and internet users would increase but found it difficult to use the data to support their answer. Only 83% own a mobile phone and considerably fewer, only 39% are active internet users, therefore both are likely to increase with active internet users increasing faster so that the gap between mobile phone users and active internet users would be likely to decrease in the future.
- (e) Some candidates clearly understood the need for more formal sector jobs in Bangladesh and gave sound reasons why job creation should be the top development priority. Others argued coherently why education should be the top development priority. Despite this topic being generally well understood, in (iii) many candidates tended to repeat themselves or write vague comments about 'contributing to the economy' or 'increasing development'. Candidates who argued the case for both job creation and improving education often provided well-argued responses in (iii).

Question 5

This was by far the most popular question which produced many excellent answers.

- (a) (i) The pie graph was mostly completed very accurately.
- (ii) A tricky question as candidates needed to suggest both benefits and problems of continued population growth. Many candidates managed to achieve full marks by including a variety of detailed problems and at least some reference to the benefits of a growing workforce or talent pool.
- (b) (i) Many candidates knew that natural increase is calculated by subtracting the death rate from the birth rate.
- (ii) A challenging question requiring candidates to compare growth rates, but it was generally answered very well. Candidates who used comparative phrases such as: 'more'; 'faster'; 'and higher'; quickly gained the marks available. Some weaker responses listed the percentages in different countries and years but did not really make a comparison.
- (iii) The reasons why Bangladesh's population growth has decreased were expressed well by those candidates who focused on falling birth rates. They easily gained all 5 marks for this question by writing well-developed and detailed answers to explain why birth rates have fallen in Bangladesh. Those who tried to tackle the question by writing about death rates found it much more challenging.
- (c) (i) The informal sector was clearly defined as very low value-added activities that are not formally regulated by the government.
- (ii) Numerous examples of jobs in the informal service sector were given in answer to this relatively straightforward question. Candidates who gave examples of informal jobs in the primary or secondary sector missed out on the 2 marks available.
- (d) The role of the informal sector in Bangladesh was understood well by the majority of candidates. Those who compared the informal sector to the benefits of jobs in the formal sector did particularly well on this question unlike those who merely tried to support the statement provided.

The best responses explained in detail the benefits and disadvantages of having a large number of jobs in the informal sector and then expanded in detail the reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the statement.

Almost all candidates completed the examination paper in the time allowed.