

BANGLADESH STUDIES

<p>Paper 7094/01 History and Culture of Bangladesh</p>
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Key messages

Candidates should read the questions carefully.

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

Where a question asks candidates to explain, candidates should support their answers using their contextual knowledge.

Part (c)(ii) questions require candidates to reflect on their response to **part (c)(i)** questions to draw a supported conclusion.

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 drifted away from the point of the question or wrote lengthy descriptions that were not appropriate to the question. Many candidates were well prepared for at least two questions and showed their ability to apply sound knowledge to their answers. Very few candidates were unable to demonstrate greater depth of knowledge. Most candidates successfully constructed some historical explanations; however, some candidates described the given topic in the question without addressing the question itself.

Candidates should read questions carefully. Candidates struggled with the question about the way Britain's rule of the subcontinent changed under Lord Cornwallis (**3(b)(ii)**); this was a question testing the structure of government, rather than the rules of taxation.

To score well on **parts (a)** and **(b)(i)** questions, candidates need to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the factors that are asked about, specific to the topic or dates given. They should focus on the topic of the question and avoid detail that does not fit into the question.

To score well on the **parts (b)(ii)** and **(c)** questions, candidates need to focus their knowledge to provide balanced and complete answers. These are questions asking *Explain the reasons...* or *Explain the impact...* or *Explain why...* and responses should lead to these questions being addressed.

Many candidates were able to justify a conclusion to at least one **part (c)(ii)** in the optional questions. The best responses were produced by reflecting on a 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)** responses. There were many strong answers that gave detailed information about Lalon Shah's contribution to art and culture in Bangladesh in **part (b)(i)**. Most candidates were able to consider the importance of Begum Rokeya in the lives of women, as asked for in **part (b)(ii)**, often explaining the significance of her literature, her school and her organisation. In **part (c)(i)**, candidates were able to consider appropriate fairs and festivals and how these inform cultural understanding. Many candidates were able to explain how specific festivals support cultural development in Bangladesh, allowing them to successfully develop an answer that addressed their importance to our understanding of how people lived in the past ((**c)(ii)**).

All three of the optional questions were found attractive by candidates and all saw some strong answers produced.

Question 2

This was the most popular of the optional questions, with the majority of candidates attempting it. The short-answer questions (**part (a)**) were mostly answered quite well. Many candidates demonstrated some understanding of life and work in the Maurya Empire, mostly taking details from what was known of internal and international trade, especially of cotton, in **(b)(i)**. A significant number of candidates understood why the Gupta Period is known as the Golden Age, but few demonstrated knowledge of the contributions to science and mathematics during that time ((**b)(ii)**). Most candidates explained clearly the importance of these Pala leaders to the growth of an empire in Bengal ((**c)(i)**). Some answers in **part (c)(ii)** were well constructed by using evidence from (**c)(i)** to produce a justified conclusion.

Question 3

This was the least popular question of the optional questions, with fewer candidates attempting it than either Question 2 or 4, and candidates did find the short-answer **part (a)** questions slightly more challenging. Although there were some good answers to these, the Charter Act, the answer to **(a)(iii)**, was less well known. Most candidates knew some reasons for Britain's interest in the subcontinent ((**b)(i)**), however few got beyond taxes and zamindars in their responses to **(b)(ii)**. There was impressive detail to be found in many of the answers to **(c)(i)**, with candidates demonstrating sound knowledge of the Fakir-Sanyasi Movement and the Faraizi Movement and clearly explaining the various difficulties they each caused the British. The best **part (c)(ii)** answers considered how these movements related to British attempts to overcome the threats.

Question 4

This was another popular question with many strong answers; it was clear that candidates were well informed on the topic of Bengal in the twentieth century. Candidates did especially well in their responses to the short-answer questions (**part (a)**). Most candidates demonstrated clear knowledge of the aims of the United Front and some reasons why it failed to meet its objectives in **(b)(i)** and **(b)(ii)**. **Question 4(c)(i)** was answered with considerable detail about the Language Movement and the Mass Uprising. Candidates showed good understanding of the importance of language to the crisis, as well as the importance of Sheikh Mujib's arrest. There were some very well-reasoned reflections on how the movements damaged relations, resulting in some strongly supported evaluations of their impact on Bangladesh's independence in **(c)(ii)**.

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Key messages

- In some questions, candidates needed to demonstrate specific knowledge. For example, in **Question 3(b)(i)**, most candidates gained one mark for stating 'hilly' and a few gained a second mark for 'sandy, loamy soil'. Generally, candidates would benefit from having more specific content knowledge to answer questions like this.
- In the judgement and decision-making questions, for example, **Question 2(d)**, stronger candidates demonstrated the ability to express opinions, reach a decision and support this decision with arguments. Weaker responses tended to repeat information already given in **(i)** and **(ii)**.

General comments

- Candidates were particularly good at the skills-based questions where they needed to complete graphs, extract data or interpret information.
- Candidates' knowledge of difficult topics such as monsoon rain formation, difficulties of increasing cash crop production, and the social and economic developments needed to increase per capita income, were generally good.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was the least popular question on the paper and candidates found certain parts quite difficult.

- (a)** Most candidates could identify the main rivers of Bangladesh shown in Fig. 1.1.
- (b)(i)** Most candidates used the satellite photograph of the Jamuna River to draw a clear sketch of a braided river. Some did not add labels to identify the main features.
- (ii)** There were several vague explanations of braiding. 'Explain' means that candidates need to give reasons why.
- (iii)** Candidates clearly understood the difficulties faced by people who live close to braided rivers.
- (c)(i)** Candidates answered this question very competently. Most identified the main changes shown on the line graph and used data to support their description. Weaker responses included year-by-year descriptions which were not supported with data from Fig. 1.3.
- (ii)** Few candidates fully understood the impacts of a changing rural population. The strongest responses included both negative and positive impacts.
- (d)** The judgement and decision-making questions require candidates to present clear arguments about different ways to achieve rural development. The strongest responses briefly explained one advantage of each approach in **(i)** and **(ii)**; in **(iii)**, they expanded in detail the reasons for their choice of either providing more electricity and building more roads or providing better education and health care. Some candidates made a good case for the need for both. In **(iii)**, weaker responses merely repeated their points made in support of providing more electricity and building more roads, or providing better education and health care.

Question 2

Few candidates chose this question; those who did answered it well.

- (a) The climate graph of Dhaka posed few problems for candidates who were able to extract the correct information in the skills **Questions (i), (ii) and (iii)**. For part **(iv)**, some candidates gave a month-by-month list of the data from Fig. 2.1, rather than a description of high rainfall and high temperature supported by data from the climate graph.
- (b)(i) Many candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge of why the summer monsoon rains occur in Bangladesh. Weaker responses were able to use Fig. 2.2 to make some valid points.
- (ii) Most candidates clearly described the benefits and problems of monsoon rains for people in Bangladesh: they wrote at length on this subject and included many valid points.
- (c) There were a range of responses for **Questions (i) and (ii)** on biogas. Candidates either clearly knew what biomass is or tried to use the information in Fig. 2.3 to suggest a definition. Similarly, in **(ii)**, those who knew how biogas is produced quickly gained the marks available and those who did not know, merely described what the diagram showed.
- (d) Most candidates showed a good knowledge and understanding of the issues relating to increasing Bangladesh's energy supply. They made logical, clear arguments in **(i)** to explain why biogas could play a key role in increasing Bangladesh's energy supply and in **(ii)** to explain why greater use of natural gas and oil is key to increasing Bangladesh's energy supply. In **(iii)**, stronger responses developed their earlier points and gave additional arguments; weaker responses included too much repetition of points already made in **(i)** and **(ii)**.

Question 3

This popular question was the one that candidates found the most difficult.

- (a)(i) Many candidates did not clearly understand the term *subsistence farming*.
- (ii) Most candidates answered this skills question well to describe the crop calendar for Aman rice in Fig. 3.1.
- (iii) Many candidates could not name a method of irrigation used by rice farmers in Bangladesh, nor did they attempt a description. It is important that candidates attempt all parts of questions.
- (b)(i) Most candidates completed the bar graph in Fig. 3.2 accurately.
- (ii) Most candidates could name an area that is important for tea production in Bangladesh.
- (iii) Stronger responses gave several detailed points outlining the environmental reasons why some areas in Bangladesh are suitable for tea production. Weaker responses vaguely mentioned factors such as good soil, enough rainfall and the right temperature.
- (iv) This question was generally well answered by candidates: they demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of the difficulties of trying to increase the production of tea and other cash crops in Bangladesh.
- (c) This skills question required candidates to compare tea imports and exports in Bangladesh. Stronger responses compared the imports and exports at different dates. Some weaker responses wrote about the imports then the exports, and therefore lacked a direct comparison.
- (d) In **(i)** and **(ii)**, most candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the need to produce more food crops for Bangladeshi people and the benefits of producing more cash crops for industry and export; they made logical, clear arguments. In **(iii)**, rather than developing their earlier points and giving additional arguments, weaker responses often repeated points already made in **(i)** and **(ii)**.

Question 4

This was the most popular question and there were many excellent responses.

- (a) Most candidates interpreted the population pyramid in Fig. 4.1 very well: they could extract the correct information for (i), (ii) and (iii) but the term *pattern* in (iv) caused confusion for some candidates. Weaker responses misunderstood the change to the old dependant category in (v). Stronger responses realised that this group of people would increase in number as death rates fell and life expectancy increased: they included many detailed reasons to explain these changes.
- (b)(i) Most candidates were able to give examples of jobs in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.
- (ii) Most candidates completed the compound bar graph of employment structure in Fig. 4.2 very well. It is important that candidates use a sharp pencil and ruler for graph completion questions and that the shading on the graph replicates that shown in the key. An eraser is also very helpful to correct mistakes.
- (iii) This question required candidates to give a reason for the change in employment, not state what the change was.
- (iv) This question required candidates to know that the primary sector is labour intensive and produces low-value goods; therefore, despite accounting for 38% of employment in Bangladesh, it only generates 12% of GDP.
- (c) These judgement and decision-making questions produced some excellent attempts by candidates to express their opinions, reach a decision and support their decision with arguments. Most candidates presented a clear argument in (i) to describe why creating jobs in the manufacturing industry should be the priority and in (ii) why creating jobs in the service sector should be the priority. Stronger responses differentiated between the formal and informal service sectors and expressed a clear decision in (iii), supported by developing their earlier points and presenting additional arguments; weaker responses merely repeated their earlier points.

Question 5

This was a very popular question and it was answered well.

- (a) Most candidates were able to answer the skills questions based on the scatter graph in Fig. 5.1. They could extract data in (i), plot data accurately in (ii) and interpret the graph correctly by making the right choices in (iv). Many candidates did not attempt part (iii).
- (b) Several candidates did not clearly define the term *per capita income* in (i). In (ii), candidates were asked to outline the social and economic developments needed to increase per capita income: they offered a wide variety of valid points which demonstrated a good understanding of these issues and included some detailed responses. The number of answer lines available is an indication to candidates of how much they should write. Bullet points should be discouraged and instead candidates should develop their points.
- (c) Most candidates were able to handle the choropleth map well in Fig. 5.2, demonstrating once again the strength of their skills.
- (d) Most candidates gave a detailed definition of NGOs in (i). The many excellent responses to (ii) showed that candidates were able to give detailed accounts of the role of NGOs in helping to improve education in Bangladesh. The strongest responses included examples and focused on the question set.
- (e) These questions at the end of each section are designed to allow candidates to express opinions, reach a decision and support their decision with arguments. Candidates could argue for improved secondary education or more universities as the most important for the continued economic development of Bangladesh. Either route was an equally valid response so long as they supported their decision with sound arguments in favour of and against improved secondary education or more universities as a development strategy in (i) and (ii), then in (iii) elaborated and gave additional arguments to support their decision.