

HINDUISM

Paper 9487/01
Written Paper

Key messages

It is important that candidates read the questions carefully and answer the specific question that has been asked, rather than writing on the general subject on which the question is based.

Marks on part (c) are awarded for evaluation not just knowledge so it is particularly important that candidates address the question focus and offer a variety of answers with justification to each one.

Teachers would be advised to refer to the Level Descriptors in the Mark Scheme when preparing candidates for the exam. Candidates should not spend too much time defining each term in detail, unless this is necessary to the question, but rather spend as much of their response as possible directly addressing the question.

General comments

There were only 11 papers entered in this session, which makes it difficult to draw overall conclusions. Marks ranged from 49 to 17 out of a possible 60. In **Section A**, only 3 candidates attempted **Question 1**, with the remaining 8 opting for **Question 2**. In **Section B**, 4 candidates attempted **Question 3**, **Question 4**, and **7**. As previously stated, however, with such low entries, it is impossible to draw conclusions about the relative perceived difficulty of the different questions.

There were few rubric errors, with most candidates attempting all three parts of their chosen questions. Candidates generally had sufficient time to complete the questions. However, only some candidates achieved the higher levels because their responses focused on the general topic rather than on the specific question that had been asked. This was especially noticeable in part (c) questions, where many candidates wrote on the general topic, referring only briefly to the question in their conclusion. This generally meant that the mark was limited to level 1 as only one possible response to the question was given. To rise above level 2, a clear conclusion that referred to a previous discussion on different viewpoints was required. For this reason, many candidates who had good knowledge of the topic gained relatively low marks. This trend was often repeated in part (b) questions where good knowledge was in evidence, but candidates failed to address the question focus. Candidates appeared to be very keen to bring Buddhism and Jainism into their responses, even though none of the questions in this paper required any discussion of Buddhism or Jainism. References to Buddhism and Jainism were not relevant and so were not credited but often took up significant space and time, which would have been better spent elsewhere. This material will be credited Only when a question explicitly asks candidates to refer to non-Hindu religious traditions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This question was only attempted by 3 out of 11 candidates, making it difficult to draw clear conclusions. In all 3 parts, there often needed to be more precise focus on the specific question that had been asked. Candidates use 'ontological' and 'prescriptive' or 'descriptive and prescriptive' to describe dharma. This is acceptable; however, as these are not normative uses of the words, candidates need to be very clear about what they mean by these terms in relation to dharma. Candidates seemed to be under the impression that sthree dharma includes ideas about how men should treat women, which is not technically accurate.

- (a) Most candidates could offer valid definitions of dharma and kama, although one response confused kama with karma. Descriptions of dharma were usually detailed, while those of kama were less so. Responses tended to define both terms and leave it at that or to state that both are purusharthas that lead to moksha. One response stated that kama was a lower order purushartha while dharma was a higher one. None discussed the idea that kama should be enjoyed within the bounds of dharma in order for it not to become a barrier to moksha.
- (b) Candidates tended to approach this question by describing the different categories of dharma and by saying that dharma changes from time to time and from person to person. None attempted to explain that an individual might have to choose between equally valid forms of dharma during their lifetime. One response misunderstood the question and explained why it is difficult to live a moral lifestyle if one is attached to material possessions.
- (c) Responses to this question tended to be quite vague. Most responses, again, described different types of dharma, particularly varnashramadharma, although only one specifically stated that this only applied to men. One response suggested that confusion might be introduced because of differing gender identities in modern times, but disappointingly, did not elaborate on or develop this idea further. In two responses, the emphasis was on whether everyone should follow the same dharma and not on gender. None of the responses got to the heart of the question and discussed whether sthree dharma was an appropriate concept. One did explain about sthree dharma as a concept, but no evaluation was apparent.

Question 2

8 out of 12 candidates attempted this question. Again, several candidates did not focus on the specific question but spent most of the question defining dharma or telling the story. Stronger responses were closely focussed on the question, and in part C evaluated different points of view. Having said this, **Question 2** was generally well answered. Candidates had the required knowledge, and many applied it successfully.

- (a) There were some strong responses to this question. Weaker responses tended to compare jati with varna. While this approach was valid, it tended to lead to candidates spending too long defining varna, often merely saying that jati was a corrupted form of varna. The question could be answered purely with a description of jati, with no reference to varna. Most candidates were able to achieve reasonable marks on this question.
- (b) Most candidates chose to answer this question with regard to either Rama or Arjuna, both of which were appropriate examples. The most common issues with the responses were either that they spent a significant proportion of the response describing what is meant by dharma; or that they told the stories of Rama or Arjuna in detail but without a specific focus on why there was a conflict in dharma. Responses might have suggested that Krishna said that Arjuna's reasons for not wanting to fight was cowardly or selfish, but without explaining where, exactly, the conflict arose between different types of dharma. However, there were some good responses to the question, that discussed the specific types of dharma that came into conflict.
- (c) There was a tendency for candidates to spend much of their time defining varnashramadharma in detail which left insufficient time to fully discuss the question. Many of the discussions were based on the idea that as a matter of fact varnashramadharma is not followed in the modern world, rather than on an evaluative discussion of whether or not it should be. Stronger responses discussed the possibility that varnashrama could be seen as restrictive or oppressive in the modern world, or that it was impractical. Issues of persecution based on gender and varna were also raised. Against this, candidates argued that varnashrama was divinely ordained and therefore timeless, and that it was human corruption of the system that led to inequality and suffering. Some suggested that it was psychologically beneficial as everyone had a place in society and was supported. Generally, this question was well answered by most who attempted it, with many achieving level 3 and above.

Section B

Question 3

Question 3 was the least popular in **Section B** with 4 candidates attempting it. It was disappointing that candidates did not seem to notice that the three parts of the question were connected and formed a single chain of thought designed to 'lead' candidates through the question. Thus, even those that gave a good definition of sakama in part (a) did not develop this thought to contrast it with nishkama in part (b), which would have been a sound approach to the question.

- (a) Of the 4 responses to this question, two candidates gave strong responses gaining 5 and 4 marks respectively. Both candidates understood the term and were able to explain it. The remaining two responses were weaker. Both candidates were under the impression that sakama karma related to the karma that resulted from small day-to-day actions that had little overall significance, such as stepping on an ant. It was slightly worrying to see this response from more than one candidate.
- (b) All candidates who attempted this question understood the issues involved. All used the analogy of bronze and gold handcuffs accurately and understood that karma bound a person into samsara, even if it was good karma. The differentiation in marks came largely from the amount of detail and explanation in the response. Few of the candidates who attempted the question developed the ideas in part (a) to discuss the difference in sakama and nishkama karma for liberation, using Krishna's argument that action is inevitable, and that what matters is the degree of attachment that a person has towards the results or rewards of that action. Candidates had a tendency to spend time defining the different kinds of karma, rather than focusing specifically on the question.
- (c) There were some thoughtful responses to this question, with candidates suggesting that good actions followed the example of Krishna who should be an object of devotion and love, and so a role model, quite apart from the teleological value of good actions. Some contrasted doing good actions with the need to fulfil dharma, but, did not offer an analysis of the degree to which the two were or were not connected. Whether dharmic actions were or were not necessarily good actions would have formed a fruitful discussion, but this opportunity was not taken. Weaker responses largely ignored the question focus and instead concentrated on different ways to attain moksha. There was often an acknowledgement that good actions produced good karma which, unless gained without attachment, was not 'good' as it led to being trapped in samsara. This was a useful development of part (b), but tended to be stated rather than developed or discussed. One response considered that the attainment of jnana as a route to moksha was more important. There was more of a direct engagement with the question in stronger responses than in previous years, but responses still tend to lack detail and critical engagement.

Question 4

This was the more popular question in **Section B** with 7 out of 11 candidates attempting it. Most achieved reasonable marks with one or two strong responses. There was, once again, a tendency to introduce Buddhism and Jainism, which is not relevant unless specifically asked for in the question. There was a widespread misconception that Shankara taught that the grace of Ishvara is required for liberation, which is not accurate.

- (a) 4 out of 7 candidates who attempted this question gained full marks. However, weaker responses concentrated on how to achieve moksha, rather than on the various ways in which it can be defined or understood, which was not the focus of the question. Stronger responses looked at what is liberated, and from what, in relationship, to different Hindu schools. These responses also considered what happens to the liberated atman, whether it retains individual existence or not.
- (b) Only one response to this question achieved level 4, with three in level 2 and 2 in level 3. Weaker responses tended to suggest alternatives to jnana (such as bhakti) as a means to moksha, or to provide an overview of different paths to moksha, which was not relevant to the question. Others gave a detailed account of the Advaita philosophy, but without focusing on or explaining in detail the significance and role of jnana. Most responses gave a good account of the parable of the snake and the rope, but did not clearly explain the role of jnana in overcoming maya.

- (c) There were two level 4 responses to the question, which genuinely engaged in a discussion about whether or not moksha can be achieved through one's own efforts. Arguments included the need for guidance from a teacher or a guru, and the need for the grace of Krishna. Some suggested that liberation through one's own efforts is possible according to Shankara, through the cultivation of jnana; however, that this was sufficiently difficult to be impossible for most people. One or two responses mentioned the idea of pre-destination in Dvaita philosophy, although this was not widely understood. Weaker responses often tended to refer to soteriologies of Buddhism and Jainism, which are of no relevance to this question. There seemed to be a general misconception that Shankara taught that the grace of the Ishvara is necessary in order to gain jnana (and thus the realisation that Ishvara is illusory). This is not accurate.

HINDUISM

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Key messages

Marks are given to responses in relation to how well the response addresses the specific question that has been asked. This means that higher level responses includes an appropriate selection of the material studied which is then effectively applied to the question. Most candidates were certainly familiar with the key terms and concepts named in the question and demonstrated understanding of these. However, this often took the form of a descriptive recounting all material from that topic or section of syllabus. This is likely to result in a lot of repeated material across different sections of a single question and it limits the marks available for demonstrating understanding of the specific question.

To develop the ability to address questions more directly it might be useful to consider:

The importance of command words and that different command words have very different meanings. Therefore, answering the question effectively requires a clear understanding of the command words and their meaning in terms of how knowledge is used and displayed.

How a written answer is effectively structured is crucial. Evaluation or discussion questions can be challenging to do effectively within exam time constraints if time is taken up with extended descriptive material at the beginning; knowledge and understanding can be effectively demonstrated through confident discussion and the use of material within that. It can also be useful, with questions requiring more extended responses (parts **(b)** and **(c)**), that there is regular reference to the question throughout as a means of structuring the responses and a reminder to remain focussed.

Repetition, i.e. writing the same answer twice, is likely to indicate a problem with either understanding the question or applying the material. It is not that the same material cannot be relevant, but simply repeating what was written in a previous response is unlikely to gain higher marks.

General comments

Entry for this session was small. However, most candidates demonstrated a good range of relevant knowledge for their chosen questions. As noted above, the skills of selecting from a broad topic and applying to a specific question were less universally evident, and responses were often summaries of an entire topic area or showed a significant repetition of material from a response to an earlier section of the question. Candidates appeared familiar with the exam rubric, with most attempting the correct number of questions and offering responses to all parts of the questions they chose. Questions 1 and 3 were the most popular choices, with Question 2 being the least popular choice.

Most candidates did well on the **(a)** parts, which ask for a descriptive account of some knowledge. The **(b)** parts, which require specific explanation and/or application of knowledge, and the **(c)** part evaluation questions were often less well answered with a common approach being to focus on a single key term from the question without considering the demand of the question in relation to the command word or to the context in which that term is used in the question.

Some candidates chose to address the question sections in reverse order, answering part **(c)** first, then **(b)** and then **(a)**. There is nothing in the rubric to prevent this and, since each response is marked separately with different descriptors for **(a)**, **(b)** and **(c)** questions, it does not automatically make a difference to the marks given. However, it is worth noting that the parts of these questions are conceptually related so that **(b)** and **(c)** connect to ideas and material raised in **(a)**, enabling progression from a purely descriptive response in part **(a)** to an evaluative one in part **(c)**. Candidates working backwards from **(c)** might therefore be creating greater challenge for themselves.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates gained some of the available marks for this question, as they could identify both the Bhagavad Gita and the Mahabharata as sacred texts within the category of the Epics. Most could also identify some differences between them, which wasn't quite what the question required but which did yield some relevant material. Very few candidates referred to the Bhagavad Gita as being wholly contained within the Mahabharata.
- (b) All the responses to this question demonstrated detailed knowledge of the story in the Ramayana and of the two central characters of Rama and Sita. Most responses were also able to identify these two characters as being, in general terms, perfect examples of dharma. However, the question asks about the influence of such examples in the lives of ordinary Hindus and this element was often missing from responses. The most thorough responses were able to identify that most Hindus live very different lives and have very different dharma than Rama and Sita, but that their example can still have relevance in relation to accepting hardships created by doing one's duty. A few responses made reference to other characters, for example Hanuman and his influence on Hindus following the bhakti marga.
- (c) In general, this question was well answered, with responses being able to give an account of both shruti and smriti texts and to use this to offer an argument in relation to the claim made in the question.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates were aware of the meaning of astika as accepting the authority of the Vedas and so had the core knowledge for this question. Some found it a challenge to develop the response beyond this point however, tending to describe the structure of the Vedas rather than exploring how Hindu traditions have used these authoritative texts.
- (b) This was generally answered quite well, with candidates showing familiarity with the idea that the Vedas consist of different kinds of text and awareness of how the Upanishads have influenced contemporary Hinduism. Because of the approach taken to part (a), there was often some repetition across the two parts where the repeated material was of greater relevance for this part (b) section.
- (c) This question proved challenging. Candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the multiplicity of texts within Hinduism and the different forms and structures of these but often this knowledge was unrelated to the question of how significant personal engagement with text is to Hindu practice. There was often no clear conclusion to the question itself, instead the existence of many texts was taken to amply demonstrate that the written word is important – which is not what the question is about - with no reference to personal reading or the role or use of these texts.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) While this was a popular choice it was not answered particularly well for the most part. Some responses presented Smartism as being synonymous with Advaita Vedanta and gave a description of that philosophy as a whole while others focused on describing a specific belief connected with Advaita. Very few demonstrated knowledge of Smartism as theistic tradition with unique practices of worship.
- (b) This question was often answered very well, with secure understanding of the two key terms and explicit explanation of the difference between them in the context of Hinduism.
- (c) Many responses appeared much less confident with the concept of polytheism than with monism and monotheism. The absence of knowledge about Smarta practices evident from part (a) responses also impacted on answers to this section, since it is these practices, for example panchayatana puja, which give the appearance of polytheism and thus open the way for a

discussion of the underlying philosophy. Some responses tended to take the claim made in the question as self-evidently false and, in place of a discussion of this, offered additional descriptive material on Advaita Vedanta.

Question 4

- (a) While almost all candidates choosing this question were aware of literal translations for sat, chit, ananda, many did not expand beyond giving these as three discrete terms. Top level marks required demonstrating knowledge beyond this to show understanding of the terms as a collective concept relating to the experience of Brahman.
- (b) Responses to this question varied greatly with some showing good depth of knowledge and understanding of the connection between concepts of Brahman and the worship of individual deity which constitutes murti puja and some choosing to describe either the concept of Brahman or the practice of murti puja without much reference to the other.
- (c) Most responses dealt with this question well, considering Brahman as an over-arching concept that is beyond simple or singular descriptions. Many candidates used the concepts of nirguna Brahman and saguna Brahman to good effect for this question, recognising that the human need to be able to relate to the divine and the inherent nature of divinity might not be easy to reconcile.

HINDUISM

<p>Paper 9487/03 Written Paper</p>
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Key messages

Candidates must answer the specific question that has been asked to access the highest levels. Knowledge must be applied to the question and used in a discussion and/or evaluation of the question. Highly detailed knowledge of the general topic will not access the higher levels

General comments

In **Section A**, many more candidates opted for Question 2 than **Question 1**. It is not immediately obvious why this should be, as both questions are rooted firmly in the specification. Performance and knowledge were stronger in **Question 2**, but an overall conclusion was difficult to reach as there were so few responses to **Question 1** for comparison. However, candidates had limited ideas about the teachings of Gandhi beyond ahimsa. Overall, responses to **Section B** were strong, with most responses at level 4 and above with most candidates using evaluation and analysis in their responses. This was very encouraging.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Only 3 of the total 12 candidates for this paper answered question 1, making it difficult to reach an overall conclusion. However, candidates generally knew and understood the material well and could use it as the basis of explanation and argument. Nevertheless, responses were often superficial and did not explain or 'unpack' the material sufficiently. Teachings and points of view were stated rather than developed. In both (a) and (b), candidates tended to spend time explaining who Gandhi was, sometimes giving the same introduction to both parts (a) and (b), which was not needed.

- (a) All responses fell within Level 2, beginning with an introduction explaining who Gandhi was, which was not strictly necessary. Again, all responses identified ahimsa as Gandhi's key ethical point, and one response linked this to vegetarianism. The other responses defined it as non-violence in general but did not develop this link to the actions or teachings of Gandhi, such as satyagraha. All identified 'Love your neighbour' as a key teaching of Jesus, which could be linked to ahimsa, but did not go on to explain how this worked within Christian ethics or explicitly how it related to ahimsa. However, two responses did identify the teaching about not judging others from the Sermon on the Mount, but this was stated rather than explained, and no attempt was made to explain how not judging others could be explicitly applied to the ethics and teachings of Gandhi. Responses would have gained higher levels by explaining in greater detail exactly how the teachings identified could be applied to Gandhi. For example, not judging could have been applied to Gandhi's ideas of equality, although this is not explicitly how it was used in Christianity. Also, the concept of loving one's neighbour could be applied to the ideas of non-violent protest. None of the responses mentioned the idea of loving enemies and persecutors, which was more directly applicable to Gandhi. Generally, responses were sound but lacked explanation and development.

- (b) Again, candidates were correct in their core ideas but needed to develop these further to gain the highest levels. The strongest response (Level 4) argued that Gandhi represented ahimsa as central to all forms of Hinduism in all circumstances and as the 'highest dharma' that could lead to moksha. However, the Bhagavad Gita clarifies that violence is sometimes demanded of Hindus, particularly Kshatriyas, as central to their dharma. Furthermore, despite Gandhi's insistence on vegetarianism, eating meat is presented as normal in the Epics, and provision is made in the Vedas for animal sacrifice. This, the response suggests, gives the impression to outsiders that Hinduism has a status in Hinduism that it does not have. This was a sound approach, which could have been developed further by discussing the extent to which Gandhi's ethics were those of Brahminism rather than of Hinduism more widely. Another response suggested that ahimsa has been too closely tied to Gandhi, whereas, in fact, it originates in the Gita and the teachings of Krishna. This can be contested and does not directly address the question. None of the responses focussed on how Gandhi's teachings might affect non-Hindus. For example, the fact that Gandhi became a celebrity in Britain and was instrumental in setting up the Vegetarian Society specifically gave non-Hindus in Britain the idea that vegetarianism was normative in Hinduism. Weaker responses lacked focused critical arguments around the specific question that had been asked. An evaluative response might have suggested that Gandhi influenced rather than described normative Hinduism; for example, vegetarianism became more widespread due to his teachings.

Question 2

This was by far the more popular question in **Section A**. There was a wide range of marks gained, and most candidates had a sound knowledge. Many responses showed a good understanding and development of the question and how parts (a) and (b) were connected. It is difficult to compare how well candidates performed between **Questions 1** and **2** as so few attempted **Question 1**. However, performance on **Question 2** showed evidence of good subject knowledge and understanding of the question.

- (a) The weakest responses to this question focused on the construction of the Vedas rather than on the ways in which Hindus and Jains related to them. Some candidates gave proportionately little information on Jainism, concentrating on Hindus and saying only that Jains rejected the Vedas. The strongest responses demonstrated that despite the wide variation in both belief and practice in Hinduism, all forms are firmly rooted in the Vedas. Some also described the ways in which the Vedas have influenced cultural life in India, contributing to the performing arts as well as to belief systems. Strong responses also looked at the reasons for Jain rejection of the Vedas, which they may believe to be superstitious and rooted in violence such as animal sacrifice.
- (b) Generally speaking, candidates performed better on part (b) than on part (a), being less inclined to give factual and descriptive responses rather than focus on the question. Responses did contain some factual errors, such as the claim that bhakti was important within Jainism. Still, most candidates understood the fundamental differences between Hindu and Jain ideas of liberation and focused on the fact that Jainism is non-theistic. Stronger responses compared different Hindu ideas about liberation with Jainism, concluding that some, such as Samkhya, have more in common with it than others, although fundamental differences remain. Weaknesses, again, included the tendency to describe different approaches to liberation without assessing the degree to which they were similar or different, for example, that both ideas were rooted in karma but that Hinduism and Jainism had very different ideas about what karma is and how it works.

Section B

Question 3

Of the 6 responses to this question, half were level 4 or above, showing evidence of evaluation, which is encouraging. Candidates were generally able to discuss what is meant by a religion and the extent to which Hinduism could be said to fulfil those criteria. All argued convincingly that Hinduism is best understood as a religion. The strongest responses were able to use scholarly definitions of religion, such as that by Ninian Smart, showing how Hinduism possesses an ethical system, narrative mythology, and ritual. Candidates needed to be clearer on what is meant by culture. The strongest responses linked a definition of culture to Geertz, concluding that it was a symbolic system comprised of literature, music, architecture, food and so on. Most responses, however, referred only tangentially to culture and seemed to assume that to refer to Hinduism as a cultural identity was an insult as its ethical and philosophical system, along with its belief in deity, made it a religion, which is 'more' than a cultural identity. The strongest responses suggested that the two were fundamentally inseparable and fed into each other. Some responses questioned whether Hinduism

could be described as a religion given its considerable diversity of belief and practice – and concluded that it is best described as a plural religion. This was a valid approach but did tend to neglect the aspect of cultural identity, which was fundamental to the question, and this did limit the mark awarded. To achieve a mark higher than level 2, discussing more than one point of view was necessary.

Question 4

This question was well answered, with all responses at level 4 or above and 4 at level 5. This means all candidates who attempted this question included successful evaluation in their responses. Candidates showed a high level of detailed knowledge, which they could apply effectively to the question. Most responses conflated puja with bhakti and discussed the degree to which a Hindu can achieve moksha through their own efforts. This was a valid approach, although more attention could have been paid to the ritual elements of puja. The strongest approaches compared different traditions within Hinduism and discussed the role that puja and bhakti played within each. There did seem to be some misunderstanding around Madhva's ideas around predestination and that Shankara believed that the grace of Ishvara is necessary for moksha.

Some responses followed the formula of using 'this is a strong/weak argument because...'. This is not particularly helpful as it tends to link to simplistic arguments related to scripture and 'logic', which do not really get to the heart of the issues. An alternative approach would be to draw out any weaknesses in the arguments that are used. Phrases such as 'one weakness with this approach' or 'another way of looking at this might be' might be useful. Overall, however, responses to this question were extremely encouraging.

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Key messages

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To develop the ability to address questions more directly it might be useful to consider:

The importance of command words and that different command words have very different meanings. Therefore, answering the question effectively requires a clear understanding of the command words and their meaning in terms of how knowledge is used and displayed.

How a written answer is effectively structured is crucial. Evaluation or discussion questions can be challenging to do effectively within exam time constraints if time is taken up with extended descriptive material at the beginning; analysis and evaluation can be incorporated into such description and understanding can be effectively demonstrated from the outset by using material in a discursive way. For example, making a relevant, supported point and then countering that point shows an ability to address differing sides of an argument and also demonstrates both knowledge and understanding of what creates and underlies those perspectives.

It can also be useful to ensure regular reference back to the question throughout as a means of structuring the responses and a reminder to remain focussed.

General comments

Entry for this session was small. However, most candidates demonstrated a good range of relevant knowledge for their chosen questions. As noted above, the skills of selecting from a broad topic and applying to a specific question were less universally evident, and responses were often summaries of an entire topic area or showed a significant repetition of material from a response to an earlier section of the question. Candidates appeared familiar with the exam rubric, with most attempting the correct number of questions and offering responses to all parts of the questions they chose. Questions **1** and **3** were the most popular choices.

Some candidates chose to address the question sections (in Section A of the paper) in reverse order, answering part **(b)** first and then part **(a)**. Some also answered the Section B question in between the **(a)** and **(b)** parts of their Section A choice. There is nothing in the rubric to prevent this and, since each response is marked separately with different descriptors, it does not automatically make a difference to the marks given. However, it is worth noting that the parts of these questions are conceptually related so that a response to part **(b)** can connect to and build upon ideas and material raised in the response to part **(a)**. Candidates working backwards might therefore be creating greater challenge for themselves.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) While this was a popular choice of question it also appeared a challenging one. Most responses offered a literal definition of 'Hindutva' as 'Hinduness' but many built from this to present Hindutva as an effective synonym with Sanatana Dharma, which suggests a limited understanding of both concepts and the various contexts in which they developed their contemporary meaning. Where the influence of Hindutva was considered, it was almost exclusively done in relation to riots and other criminal activity related to tension between Hindu and Muslim communities in the UK; this tended to be a sociological focus of limited depth, offering a summary of how Hindus might feel when their religion is named in the news in connection with such activities.
- (b) Some responses were able to contrast political and religious stances and/or uses of the term Hindu. Overall, this question was dealt with most effectively where the part (a) response had not presented Hindutva and Sanatana Dharma as describing the same thing; if that assumption is considered an unequivocal truth, then this question is self-evidently untrue, with no real requirement for discussion. Since the question exists to elicit discussion, this is an unlikely approach.

Question 2

- (a) This question was generally well answered with responses demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the complex inter-relations of the concepts of varna and jati and some of the ways in which these influence social structures. Some responses drifted into discussion of whether caste discrimination was justifiable/ethical and/or whether the system as it exists today is 'really' Hindu or not; this was not required by the question and so did not add to the marks achieved.
- (b) This question was also well answered with most responses showing understanding of the work of both Ambedkar and Gandhi and drawing some explicit comparisons between them.

Section B

Question 3

This was a popular and generally well answered question. Most responses showed good knowledge of both the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and the Sathya Sai International Organisation and were able to make explicit comparisons between them. Most responses were more concerned with difference than similarity, but while the question required consideration of both, there was no requirement to address both aspects in equal depth.

Question 4

This question was well answered in general, with most responses choosing to consider the importance of shared cultural values and social norms concerning the practice of religion. Hindu religious practice was, for the most part, presented in quite a restricted way, with a narrow focus on the ability to access a temple for puja. This was relevant, although sometimes lacking in depth. This approach was generally used with more generic ideas, such as community celebration for festivals and the need for cultural understanding around customs associated with death.

A minority of responses focused on new religious movements within Hinduism. This was not necessarily inappropriate, but to be relevant, some account of the conditions and contexts to which the founders of these movements were responding was needed.