

HINDUISM

Paper 2055/01

Paper 1

General Comments

It was observed that **Questions 3, 4, 5, 10 and 11** were very popular. Many candidates showed their competence in the areas studied. Good candidates expressed themselves confidently, displaying a highly detailed and accurate knowledge of texts, themes and concepts. Their answers demonstrated confidence and mastery of what had been studied. They also indexed coherent and perfect display of analytical skills. As stressed in the past reports, candidates are expected to include in their answers, independent ideas and personal opinions, but very few such answers were found.

Candidates should not spend time in giving too many details on myths, legends, stories or biographical data which do not help to earn the higher levels. Arguments presented by candidates need to be connected to the demands of the questions.

The above average candidates responded well to some questions exploring key features whereas the below average candidates had a tendency to write simple and narrative answers.

Specific Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

The set texts allow candidates to study key philosophical terms/concepts and comment on them liberally. It was a popular one in this section. Some scripts contained well-written answers. The following are some comments:

- (a) The question was excellently attempted by most candidates allowing them in many cases to obtain higher levels.
- (b) Although 'that art thou' – (TatTwamAsi) is a popular saying of the Upanishadic traditions, many candidates found it rather difficult to explain its importance. Candidates should be familiar with the key terms: Brahman and Atman, they have to explain their meaning and the Upanishads emphasis on non-duality or oneness. Weaker candidates wrote two or three lines on this part without going deeper into the subject matter.
- (c) It was also noted that many candidates happened to refer to the analogies of the 'Bee and Honey' and 'Iron and Gold' instead of 'Rivers and Sea', 'Salt and Water', Nyagrodha tree, etc. It is important for learners to study the prescribed set texts and especially the correct contents of the syllabus.

Question 2

This was attempted by only a few candidates. They preferred to write on the setting of the text. Many paraphrased the text. The question demanded candidates to demonstrate their knowledge about the importance of: Nishkama Karma (selfless actions); Swadharma (self-allotted duty) and responsibilities of Arjuna as a Kshatriya. Only one or two of these three aspects were developed.

Question 3

This was the most popular question in the whole paper. Good candidates were able to express their views on the personality and qualities of the ferryman as a devotee and Rama's divinity. However, candidates used too much information about Rama as an avatara in their answer.

Section B

Many candidates obtained high levels in this section and answers were of an excellent quality, especially for **Question 4**. Answers to **Question 6** were not so good.

Question 4

This was a very popular question. Most answers outlined and examined the relevant key features allowing them to score high levels. Candidates wrote about Shiva, his worship and his popularity in the Hindu triad.

Question 5

Candidates produced relevant material in connection with the worship of Ganesh but did not address the question directly. Very often almost the same material was produced in both sections. Candidates could have examined Ganesh Chaturthi in Mauritius as a national festival.

Question 6

Part (a) needed an exploration of the celebrations, preparation, making of clay images, offerings made, the processions, and immersion. Most answers were of an excellent level.

For part (b) a few explored the 'significance of Chaturthi' which needed to include the joy experienced in the celebration by the family and community, it is an occasion to display piety and the spirit of togetherness.

Question 7

Many candidates wrote about Kali without referring to Durga or some were confused between these two and treated them as the same. It was expected that candidates would explore the different aspects of Durga by including the 'fear' element like 'difficult to approach, deep respect, devotion to Durga, thankfulness for deliverance from evil, prayer for protection, etc.' Had the answers contained the above arguments about Durga in her various aspects, candidates could have achieved higher levels. It is important not to forget that Durga is considered one of the manifestations of Kali.

Section C

The questions set were satisfactorily attempted. Candidates displayed good knowledge of the different features of the topics on which questions were set. Candidate's responses to the argumentative elements in the questions set were less evident.

Question 8

This was a question which allowed independent thinking on any of the four purusharthas. Candidates discussed the nature, characteristics and significance of dharma in a reasonable way. Some could identify dharma as playing an important role in the use of Kama and Artha. Good candidates did argue that 'duty mindedness' is important in the Varnashrama Dharma. The concept of 'Dharma' was discussed rather superficially but a few answers produced relevant discussions on dharma in relationship to Kama and Artha.

Question 9

This was a question that needed to be examined in the context of the Varna Dharma but most answers confined themselves to its main features. The following points are worth pointing out:

- (a) The 'Twice-born' was interpreted to be associated with the Upanayana Samskara, rather than with being given the privileges of the sacred thread and the ability to read scriptures. Although hinted at here and there, further details of the duties associated with Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Shudras were expected from candidates.

- (b) This part of the question asked for a debate about the difference between Varna and Sramana. Candidates showed a fair amount of knowledge but only a few could discuss the problems of the caste system. Candidates may have explored how new life-styles, mind-set and urbanisation, for example, helped to help with the caste system.

Question 10

This question was attempted by many candidates who described the four ashramas fairly well. Unfortunately, they were not able to show how Hinduism demands involvement in social service, care, the need to withdraw from basic activities and to be engaged in community work. Only the best answers were able to show how elderly people need care, support and affection.

Section D

All the questions set in this section asked candidates to assess the works of the reformers. Many of them were successful in discussing the achievements of R.M. Roy and S. Dayananda Saraswati but answers on Gandhi were not so well done.

Question 11

Good answers were written for this question. Most of the key ideas associated with his reforms were underlined correctly.

Question 12

This question was answered showing reasonable arguments proving that S. Dayananda was successful in bringing reforms. "Back to the Vedas" was mentioned by only a few, while the "Laws of Manu" were not mentioned at all.

Question 13

A few candidates answered this question on M.K. Gandhi. This question asked for an estimation of not only his lifestyle but also why Indians had to opt for non-violence. In fact, candidates could have referred to his ashram, spinning wheel, khadi, his readiness to accept the low-caste, civil disobedience and even vegetarianism.