

HINDUISM

Paper 9014/01

Paper 1

Key Messages

- In order to gain the highest marks, candidates should address the *specific* topic given in each question. Answers which only deal with a topic in general terms cannot gain the highest marks, even if the answer is detailed and factually correct.
- Candidates should study the *specified texts* and not depend solely on general information *about* the texts taken from textbooks or class notes.

General Comments

There was a wide range of response to the questions. Some outstanding work was presented, showing detailed knowledge and intelligent engagement with all aspects of the syllabus. There were a number of candidates who were unable to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of syllabus topics and it would benefit candidates to focus and address the specific wording in the question rather than writing more general responses. It is also important that candidates are able to demonstrate evidence of research or independent reading in their responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most of the answers to this question were fairly well-informed, detailing aspects which could be called 'beneficial' or 'destructive'. Very few candidates, however, noticed the vital word 'only', which invited discussion of the more 'religious' elements in the hymns to the Vedic gods, such as petitions for forgiveness of sins to Varuna.

Question 2

Some candidates did not know what the Brahmanas, as a body of literature, are and what they contain which affected their ability to make a comparison on the theme of 'sacrifice'. The majority of candidates could therefore only be credited for their knowledge of the Purusha Sukta. In these cases marks for this question tended to be low.

Question 3

Answers to this popular question tended to be good or very good, since most candidates were able to discuss the Upanishadic advice to avoid the temptations of 'materialism'. Weaker answers were prone to general statements which tended to ignore well-publicised examples of (individual and group) donations of money and charitable action, for example following a natural disaster. The actual meaning of 'covet' was often misunderstood as 'steal'.

Section B

Question 4

Comparatively few candidates tackled this question, although those who chose it generally produced good answers. The best responses were able to give evidence of having thought about how the teachings might be applicable in contemporary life.

Question 5

This question was popular and in many cases well done. The most perceptive answers identified from the epic's many strands, that jealousy, greed, desire for power, revenge etc. are all perennial causes of conflict. Weaker answers gave too much narrative, which was not required.

Question 6

The question was easily understood as far as the narrative was concerned, but there were few very strong answers. The reason was that usually no 'significance' was identified, except that 'Rama could not go back on his promise to his father'. Certainly some candidates showed that they understood Jabali's comments to be shocking, but often they did not develop their explanations.

Section C

Question 7

A few candidates had studied the Alvares in detail, knowing their names and quoting from their works, so gained high marks. Some of the answers were very thin, however, and showed less evidence of the detailed study of the topic required to achieve the higher marks.

Question 8

Most answers made a good attempt to engage with the question, and showed good understanding of Tulsidas's devotion to Rama. In some cases more could have been said about the power which he attributed to devotional actions, such as repeating the names of Rama.

Question 9

This was a popular question, enabling candidates who had studied the poetry of Surdasa, and understood his devotion to Krishna, to gain high marks. Weaker answers contained general information on Surdasa without considering the main theme of the question.

Section D

Question 10

Although a few candidates were very well-informed, many answers demonstrated that there was little detailed knowledge demonstrated, with some answers based on one or two unsatisfactory sources. Answers would benefit from evidence of good research, preferably from the reformer's own work or at least from a reliable commentary.

Question 11

Answers to this question were similar to question 10, in that whilst there were some very well informed responses, the majority were too general in nature to access the higher marks. More detailed knowledge of the work of Swami Dayananda needed to be demonstrated, alongside a focus on the specific wording of the question. Material for these topics has to be well researched, preferably from the reformer's own work or from a reliable commentary.

Question 12

Too few candidates answered this question for a report to be produced.

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Paper 2

General Comments

On the whole, candidates performed well with some excellent scripts being received indicating very good understanding of the subject matter. Some candidates did not perform as well due to a tendency to provide more general responses rather than responding to the specifics of the question. In a small number of cases, some candidates did not answer five questions which inevitably impacted on their ability to achieve the highest marks.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

Most candidates understood 'gunas' and there were some good answers. A general weakness was taking too long in the answer to get to 'gunas' and therefore spending insufficient time on answering the specifics of the question.

Question 2

Few candidates focused on the real issues in this question. The result was a preponderance of middling marks for fairly good answers on the eight limbs but few answers which really answered the question fully.

Question 3

This question was answered well by most candidates, with some achieving very high marks for mature answers. Stronger responses were able to say more about the nature of *maya*.

Question 4

Although this was one of the less popular topics, candidates produced some very good answers which showed full preparation and understanding.

Question 5

Candidates who were well prepared on Jainism were able to do very well, although once again those candidates who focused on the specifics of the question rather than providing a more general response, achieved the highest marks.

Question 6

Many candidates ignored the actual question and wrote a response about their understanding of Buddhism in general. There were some creditable exceptions, however, where candidates endeavoured to make the connection and provide more focused responses.

Question 7

Answers here tended to be rather superficial and did not really get to grips with the question, candidates therefore did not tend to achieve very well on this question.

Question 8

Candidates' responses tended to be very general and did not always demonstrate a more developed understanding of the topic.

Question 9

Once again there were a number of generic responses which lacked both knowledge and reflection on the nature of Lakshmi and Shakti.

Question 10

This is a familiar area on unity in diversity. It was well tackled by many candidates. Candidates would have achieved higher however if they had focused in on the specific question rather than the wider topic.

Question 11

Marks could be gained from knowledge of the *varnas*, but some candidates missed what is usually an opportunity to tackle a question of vital contemporary importance. The point was understood, but response was sometimes rather brief and lacking in detail.

Question 12

Candidates who made an attempt to engage with the question on the aims of Purusha were rewarded, even if their efforts were rather weak. Again, there were many rather superficial responses which did not demonstrate full understanding of the question.

Question 13

There were some good attempts here, and many candidates were able to demonstrate that they both knew about the concept of *karma* and had thought about the issues.