

HINDUISM

Paper 2055/01

Paper 1

General comments

There was some excellent works in some areas of the syllabus. Answers from the Upanishad, Ramacharitamanas, gods, goddesses, festivals and Arya Samaj displayed maturity of thoughts and in these areas many scored good marks. Where description or narration was required, many were outstanding. Critical views, analyses, coherence and application were, however, observed only in some scripts.

Many were unable to distinguish between Kama and Karma, and so lost marks. Many also wrote on Durga Puja rather than Mother Durga.

Many did not answer five answers. Candidates need guidance and training in this. Careful reading and understanding of question would also help candidates to produce better results.

Finally, candidates also need to number each question and also fill in the grid on the front cover of the answer booklet showing which questions they have answered, as instructed.

Section A

This section introduces candidates to the most significant philosophical, literary and mythological works of Hinduism. Candidates are given a hint of issues associated with Hinduism which are still viewed with merits by Hindus and non-Hindus as well. Candidates are required to elucidate, analyse, apply and appreciate:

- the philosophy of the Upanishads, their imagery, allegory and symbolism;
- key concepts like jnana, karma and bhakti characterizing the rich literary works within Hinduism;
- the universality of the texts and teachings under study.

Question 1

This was well attempted by most. They expressed themselves clearly with understanding of the text and story, but explanation of the allegory was not clearly defined by many. Some major ideas like the use of knowledge and advaita, in line with the philosophy of the Upanishads, are necessary to score top marks.

Question 2

This was rarely attempted. The second part was better dealt with, perhaps because students have been more exposed to the idea of karma in the Gita rather than jnana. Those who wrote on Gita tried to focus on the dialogue, war, personality of Krishna, Arjuna, nishkama karma. Some might have done better considering whether knowledge is not for everyone, is superior and works for obtaining God's favour.

Question 3

Candidates successfully and beautifully wrote on the boatman and Shabari. In many scripts, the idea of bhakti was not well analysed. They were able to show the uselessness of caste barriers, status and other negative features. Tulsidas opens the idea of bhakti to all by showing that even the poorest and most unworthy members of society can bring an acceptable offering.

SECTION B

Candidates study here the transition from Nirguna to Saguna, considering symbolical features associated with different forms of the Ultimate Reality and the festivals of popular Hinduism.

Question 4

The word 'compare' was mostly ignored, but there were many excellent studies of iconographic features.

Question 5

It was the most popular answer of this section and was relatively well answered by the majority of the candidates. The question demands an emphasis on the festival's significance which only a few could argue well, showing the significance of the different symbols and rites involved.

Question 6

Candidates did well in this question with a mastery of the life and teachings of Krishna as an avatara. Their works were appreciated for the large canvas of idea ranging from his childhood episodes to his sermons in the Gita. Some even referred to the descriptions given by Surdas with great confidence. Basically, Krishna appeals to different groups of worshippers all considered as devotees.

SECTION C

This section is based on the rich ethical traditions of Hinduism and how the richness of Hinduism can be applied in the modern context. If **Q8** was relatively well answered, performance in **Q7 & Q8** showed that candidates had not been prepared for such questions. Essays on Ashramas, Varnas and Purusharthas were too descriptive. Many confused ashramas with homes.

Question 7

This question seemed to pose the most problems. Those who tried to argue, were unable to give the best views needed for such a question, however, examiners were not disappointed with the way some candidates expressed their views. They successfully presented ideas in view of changes going on in the modern set up with emphasis on how young generations look for their parents and new challenges for them.

Question 8

Candidates' were able to show the evils of untouchability, caste-barriers and the works of reformers in this regard. They also argued in favour of action rather than birth as the criteria for one's status in the society.

Question 9

Knowledge of the purusharthas was well presented. Fair understanding of artha and kama were clearly expressed. Their essence in the life of Hindus was declared to be very important. Good candidates even spoke of artha and kama in the modern context. In fact, both have to be seen in the context of responsible adult life and are not licensing avarice or promiscuous behaviour.

SECTION D

This section completes study of historical, mythological and philosophical developments in Hinduism. Candidates consider how Hinduism has come across new challenges. Historical personalities like R M Roy, S Dayananda, Ramakrishna Paramhansa and M. K Gandhi had the task of re-visiting Hindu values, religion and spirituality under threats coming from various directions.

Question 10

The life and teachings of Ramakrishna were well-known and many wrote beautifully. They did not, however, pay attention to "challenged Hindus to think about religion in new ways." Such issues are very important and needed to be taken into consideration to score high marks. The challenge was in tune with the spirit of the age and Hinduism came to terms with the needs of that age.

Question 11

Many excellent answers were produced – well done.

Question 12

Many made serious attempts to write well and achieved good marks. They highlighted many features related to his life such as untouchability, cow protection, civil disobedience.