



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In Bangladesh Studies (4BN0) Paper 02

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General Comments:

- Candidates are required to answer all questions in the paper.
- Candidates usually wrote appropriate amounts for their responses within the spaces provided.
- The majority of this year's candidate cohort appeared well prepared for the examination in terms of their knowledge, understanding and willingness to confront questions.
- There was little evidence of candidates being unable to complete the paper in the allocated time.
- It was again heartening to see that there were very few candidates that didn't attempt questions.
- Most candidates wrote answers in clear paragraphs with very few adopting simple lists of points that had been an issue raised with responses from the previous specification.
- Where questions in the paper were structured so that candidates should provide a number of responses in a question, for example, 'two factors', this structure was usually followed by candidates.
- This paper included questions with the command words 'assess' and 'evaluate'. Most candidates recognised the command word in the question and made an attempt to shape their answer using this. It was encouraging to see that candidates seemed well prepared for approaching questions with these different command words and would often summarise their arguments.

Section 1 A focuses on the Physical Environment.

For 1a(i) most candidates recognised the correct feature of the tropical cyclone. For a(ii) the majority of candidates were able to provide a suitable factor that can result in the formation of a tropical cyclone. Although there were some candidates who provided features or impacts of the cyclone instead. For (b) many candidates were successfully able to identify two primary impacts of earthquakes in Bangladesh. The most common answers focused on destruction of buildings and infrastructure. There were some candidates who were confused with secondary impacts.

In part (c) candidates were generally able to explain a case of the formation of the Ganges delta with ideas expressed around the deposition of sediment. Although there was some confusion with the formation of earthquakes rather than the delta. In these 3 marks explain mark questions candidates need to provide sufficient development of their explanation to reach the full 3 marks. Where candidates started with deposition of sediment, they tended to do this demonstrating good geographical knowledge about delta formation.

For part (d) candidates were required to use a resource which provided to suggest environmental impacts of exploiting mangrove forests. Candidates displayed excellent knowledge of the impacts of exploiting mangroves. Common responses focused on deforestation linked to reduced biodiversity and habitat loss as well as reduced protection from storm surges. Many candidates also made links to broader environmental impacts such as climate change.

In part (e) candidates were required to explain how international agencies have responded to flood events in Bangladesh. Many candidates did not always focus their responses on international agencies but would instead explain more about government responses without reference to international agencies which prevented them from achieving the higher marks. Some candidates also used a significant part of the answer space to explain the impacts of flood events before moving onto how the responses. This reduced the amount of the answer that candidates included that was focused on the question. However, some candidates had very detailed responses explaining how specific international agencies responded to particular events, showing a very good understanding of these issues.

For part (f) the command word 'assess' required candidates to consider why expanding the use of renewable energy resources is more important than expanding non-renewable energy resources in Bangladesh. The command word 'assess' requires candidates to consider a number of reasons and give an explanation of the reasons felt to be the most important. The majority of candidates took the approach to argue that expanding renewable energy was important to ensure future energy security and to reduce carbon emissions which contribute to climate change. The stronger responses tended to start with a statement which outlined their main reason. Candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of the importance of renewable but also non-renewable resources in Bangladesh and were often able to include references to specific energy sources in their answers. Some candidates would start with an assessment and return to it at the end in a summative statement, while others included assessment as they went through the response. Both strategies were effective for this question. It was encouraging to see that the majority of candidates tried to include some assessment in their response even if it was basic. Weaker answers tended to explain the difference between renewable and non-renewable energy.

Section B focuses on the Human Environment

For 2a(i) most candidates recognised the correct value by adding the values in the table correctly. For a(ii) the majority of candidates were able to provide a correct definition of remittances. Although there were some responses which were too vague mentioning payments, or they were confused with exports.

For (b) many candidates were able to successfully state two reasons why people work in informal services in Bangladesh. A few candidates were a little bit too vague by just stating 'jobs', but most had two clear reasons.

In part (c) candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the challenges facing the railway transport system in Bangladesh. Candidates were generally able to develop their responses more effectively to access the full 3 marks. There were clear explanations about the challenges related to old railway lines, population growth, lack of network density, and lack of maintenance.

For part (d) candidates were required to use a resource to suggest two ways that food security can be improved in Bangladesh. There were 2 marks available for each way. Candidates often provided responses which would have been worthy of several marks demonstrating they clearly understand issues related to food security. Candidates took a range of approaches in terms of increasing the production of food internally but also adding to supplies from other countries too, as well as more generally strategies around reducing food waste.

In part (e) candidates were required to explain secondary sector industries affect the environment of Bangladesh. In general, there were some very responses here with many candidates provided very detailed responses about specific industries and a range of the ways these impact the environment. A common detailed response was about the brick kiln or textile industries. Many candidates recognised the different scales of how these industries affect the environment, at the local, national and global level.

For part (f) the command word 'assess' required candidates to consider the importance of improvements in communication technology for the economic development of Bangladesh. The command word 'assess' requires candidates to consider a number of reasons and give an explanation of the reasons felt to be the most important. Some candidates did not focus enough on communication technologies but considered other forms of technology, for example in agriculture or industry. Candidates who began with an explicit focus on communication technologies tended to access the higher levels of marks. There were fewer named examples provided in this question, compared to other 8-mark questions in this paper. Although candidates did tend to provide well-structured responses, often with a summary statement at the end.

Section C focuses on Challenges for Bangladesh

For 3a(i) most candidates identified the correct birth rate for 2010 using the figure. For a(ii) the majority of candidates were able to define the term natural increase. Although there were some vague responses and being part of things 'increasing naturally' without reference to birth or death rates.

For (b) most candidates were able to successfully state two ways to measure development of Bangladesh with the most common responses being linked to HDI or GDP.

In part (c) candidates demonstrated a good understanding of how the government supports rural communities in Bangladesh. Most candidates provided detailed responses showing a good sequence of ideas. Many candidates identified efforts related to education which increased skill, which increased potential to access better jobs and as a consequence escape poverty. Many candidates also provided examples which demonstrated clear understanding of the issues being discussed.

For part (d) candidates were required to population pyramids for 1990 and 2020 to suggest reasons for the changes in the population structure of Bangladesh. Many candidates were able to successfully suggest two reasons. Common responses tended to focus on improved access to improved healthcare services as well as factors related to reduced birth rates. Many candidates used evidence from the population pyramids to identify the specific changes they were referring to. It was encouraging to see candidates using the resources provided as a basis for their response.

In part (e) candidates were required to explain how human activity in Bangladesh contributes to climate change. There were some very strong responses to this question demonstrating the candidates had a very good awareness of how human activity is contributing to climate change. Candidates were often reaching the higher levels in this question with detailed explanation of ideas related to production of greenhouse gases, deforestation, and the consumption of resources. Occasionally candidates would spend the first part of the answer explaining why Bangladesh was vulnerable to climate change before moving on to how it contributes, but this was only a few candidates.

For part (f) the command word 'evaluates' required candidates to consider success of bottom-up strategies in improving the lives of people living in cities in Bangladesh. The command word 'evaluate' requires candidates to come to a conclusion/judgement which needs to be supported with an evidence-based argument. The majority of candidates took the stance that bottom-up strategies were successful. Responses here tended to be the weakest of the 8 mark extended responses. Many candidates did not seem to understand what bottom-up strategies were which mean their evaluations were quite weak. A lot of candidates talked about top-down strategies related to infrastructure development. Some of the strongest answers focused on NGO efforts to support local businesses and microfinance and the specific improvements this made to lives in specific cities.

Most responses began with evaluative statements at the beginning of responses, as well as those with clear conclusions, but unfortunately due to the vague or incorrect focus of the responses this prevented many from reaching the higher levels.

