

HINDUISM

Paper 2055/01
Hindu Gods and Festivals

Key messages

- Candidates need to be able to understand the key words or phrases in the questions to be able to address the requirements of the question.
- Candidates need to be able to argue for and against the given statement in **part (d)** questions.

General comments

Most candidates attempted three questions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to name the relationship between Ganesha and Kartikeya as brothers or siblings.
- (ii) 'Gives blessings/knowledge' or 'removes obstacles' were the popular answers.
- (b) Most candidates were able to outline the meaning of Durga's animal vehicle, and different meanings were given.
- (c) Many candidates were able to explain how the features of a murti of Kartikeya teach Hindus about his nature.
- (d) Many candidates were able to discuss why Ganesha is worshipped by all devotees and not just students.

Question 2

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to give one feature of a murti of Brahma, such as holding a book, or wearing white clothes.
- (ii) Many candidates were able to give the meaning of that feature.
- (b) Most candidates were able to outline the connection between Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, relating to their roles as creator, preserver, and destroyer, respectively.
- (c) Many candidates were able to connect stories about Durga with the latter's attributes.
- (d) Many candidates were able to explain how murtis depict gods. Some candidates contradicted this statement by discussing the impersonal aspect of God.

Question 3

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to name Rama as the avatar of Vishnu, who is considered the perfect man, Purushottam.

- (ii) Many candidates were able to give the correct answer of fourteen years.
- (b) Most candidates were able to describe an event that led to Vishnu becoming an avatar due to an excess of evil over good.
- (c) Many candidates were able to explain how an avatar of Vishnu is a manifestation of God that a Hindu might particularly relate to.
- (d) Answers were mainly one-sided. A few candidates were able to bring out the flawed characters of human avatars that are more relatable to ordinary people.

Question 4

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to name the avatar Narsimha.
 - (ii) Most candidates were able to name one task of Narsimha, such as to protect Prahlad or to kill Hiranyakashipu.
- (b) Many candidates outlined stories about Krishna's childhood rather than his adulthood.
- (c) Most candidates were able to link the attributes of Krishna to his role as an avatar, killing Kansa and the teacher of the Bhagavad Gita.
- (d) Candidates were able to agree with the view that stories about animal avatars like Matsya/Kurma are only meant for entertainment, while also challenging the statement by explaining how the animal incarnations have emerged to save humanity.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates were able to give two devotional practices during Divali, such as worship, sharing sweets and lighting lamps.
- (b) Most candidates were able to give three beliefs associated with Divali, such as Rama's return from exile, victory of good over evil or victory of light over darkness.
- (c) Most candidates were able to explain the celebration of Cavadi by different communities or in different parts of the world.
- (d) Many candidates supported the statement by explaining that sacrifice in terms of worship and fasting is a central theme during Hindu festivals. Very good responses included challenging the statement by revealing how Hindus entertain themselves during festivals.

Question 6

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to provide one correct answer such as pilgrimage, making of kanwars, or worship of the linga.
 - (ii) Most candidates were able to name one celebration, such as the birthday of Ganesh or visarjan.
- (b) Most candidates were able to outline how a Hindu might celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi, such as worship of Ganesh for 10 days, or observe the visarjan.
- (c) Most candidates were able to highlight the positive outcomes of celebrating Divali, which makes it such a popular festival for Hindus. For instance, victory of light over darkness and unity among people in the community.
- (d) Generally, candidates were able to answer this question well. On one side, they explained the importance of prayers and fasting during festivals. On the other side, they contradicted the statement by depicting how some Hindus gravitate more towards the benefits that such festivals generate in society.

HINDUISM

Paper 2055/02
Scriptures, Ethics and Hindu Life

Key messages

- Candidates should learn to identify the different keywords to address the requirements of the question.
- Candidates should be able to argue for and against the given statement in **part (d)** questions.

General comments

Candidates need to understand what the questions are asking, particularly **part (d)** questions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to name 'Swetaketu' as the person learning about the nature of the self in the Chandogya Upanishad.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to outline the father-son relationship between Swetaketu and his teacher.
- (b) Most candidates were able to outline the example of the rivers in the Chandogya Upanishad.
- (c) Most candidates were able to explain action and knowledge as two separate concepts, but few were able to expound on how the Bhagavad Gita Chapter III connects knowledge and action.
- (d) Most answers were one-sided. A few candidates were able to refute the statement by focussing on additional knowledge contained in other scriptures that teach Hindus about their religion.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates were able to state two forms of devotion.
- (b) Most candidates were able to outline what happens in the section of the Kishkinda Kanda.
- (c) Candidates provided mainly a descriptive answer on the salt-in-water analogy in the Chandogya Upanishad. Some were able to expound on the meaning of this analogy.
- (d) Candidates generally focussed on karma, and the essence of the question was overlooked.

Question 3

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to name Kshatriya as the varna that has the duty of ruling society. Answers like 'king' or 'Rajanya' were also accepted.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to name the grihastha ashrama as the correct answer.
- (b) Most candidates were able to relate ashramas to the different stages of life.
- (c) Most candidates could merge the concept of the purusharthas and ashramas. They could provide an understanding of both. A few candidates were able to explain that the sannyasa ashrama is a stage of renunciation and is not connected to kama.

- (d) Answers focussed mainly on varna being important for all Hindus without implicitly linking it to the modern world.

Question 4

- (a) (i) Candidates who mentioned any of the four ashramas were credited.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to name one thing a student can learn with their guru.
- (b) Most candidates were able to describe the traditional duties of the shudra varna in society.
- (c) Most candidates were able to explain how the brahmacharya ashrama prepares the individual to attain his ultimate goal.
- (d) Answers were mainly descriptive with respect to the different samskaras. A few candidates were able to argue that most samskaras are seen as unimportant in the modern context.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates were able to state two reformers who founded samajs, such as Swami Dayananda and Ram Mohan Roy.
- (b) Most candidates were able to give three areas of social concern for M.K. Gandhi.
- (c) Answers were mainly descriptive with respect to the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. A few candidates were able to discuss his influence.
- (d) A few candidates were able to provide relevant answers that considered whether social reforms were separate from religion or not.

Question 6

- (a) Most candidates were able to give two concepts, such as truth, non-violence, satyagraha, and vegetarianism.
- (b) Many candidates generally outlined the view of one Hindu reformer on the education of children.
- (c) Most candidates identified sati as a social and religious evil and that it was a persistent issue that different reformers tried to fight against.
- (d) Answers were mainly focussed on the social and religious reforms of reformers but did not link the reforms to the reformers' personal experiences. Many answers demonstrated one side of the argument.