HINDUISM

Paper 9487/01
Written Paper 1

Key messages

- Read the question carefully and follow the instructions.
- In **part (c)** questions, marks are awarded for evaluation and analysis so make sure that a variety of viewpoints are considered and discussed.
- It is not necessary to spend time defining key terms or giving their etymology.
- It is not necessary to write an introductory paragraph before addressing the question.
- In **part (c)** questions, it is useful to finish with a paragraph that directly addresses the question.
- In **part (a)** questions that ask candidates to summarise a passage, it is not necessary to offer an opinion on the content or to introduce material from outside the content.

General comments

Most candidates were able to complete the paper in the time allowed and few candidates attempted to answer more questions than required. Where there were rubric errors, it was often because the candidate omitted one part of a question. **Questions 1** and **3** were the most popular questions, closely followed by **Question 2**. **Question 4** was the least popular.

Candidates need to remember to address the question directly. This was particularly evident in both **part (b)** and **part (c)** responses, where answers sometimes showed good knowledge, but discussion was not related closely enough to the question.

Some candidates chose to answer questions in reverse order, starting with **part (c)** and then addressing **part (b)** and **part (a)**. While there is technically no reason not to do this, and while it is understandable that they should wish to tackle the parts with the highest marks first, this is not necessarily the best method, since the questions are structured so as to progress an idea or train of thought, meaning that answering **part (a)** and **part (b)** first might well be helpful for candidates in gathering their ideas and structuring their responses to **part (c)**.

It was noticeable that many candidates included Buddhism and Jainism in their responses where this was not specifically required by the question. This is very rarely helpful as this material is usually irrelevant and so does not attract any marks.

Candidates should avoid spending time defining terms used in the question. A response that focuses clearly on the question will demonstrate understanding of these terms, and long definitions use up valuable time without gaining additional marks. In particular, there is no need to repeat the same material in different parts of the same questions. Long Sanskrit or scriptural quotations should also be avoided unless their relevance to the question is explained, or they are clearly used as part of an argument.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This question was popular. Candidates generally displayed good subject knowledge, particularly on **part (b)** and **part (c)**.

(a) This was the weakest part of **Question 1** in terms of responses. Many candidates made the distinction between one being general values and ethics used in everyday life, while the other was defined as 'religion' and said to be eternal, but not all got this the right way around. Once this basic distinction had been made, many responses became vague, and the differences between the two were often unclear. Some responses took one or the other as synonymous with svadharma leading to some confusion. Descriptions of Sadharana Dharma tended to be more accurate and detailed than those of Sanatana Dharma. There were some responses that were both accurate and detailed.

(b) This question was focused on the significance of the concept of adharma, rather than asking for a description of adharma. The majority of responses correctly stated that adharma was the opposite of dharma or defined it as unrighteousness, but then went on to either give a list of examples of adharmic behaviour from the Epics, or to list the adharmic actions that they see around them in society. This approach did gain some credit, as by definition it describes the effect of adharma on society, however, these responses were not able to access the higher levels as they were purely descriptive and did not directly address the question. Stronger responses focused on the role of increasing adharma in the Maha Yuga and the fact that adharma leads to being trapped in samsara. Some candidates considered adharma as the opposite of dharma in the wider sense than just righteousness and suggested that it led to chaos and a breakdown in the cosmic order, leading to avatars descending to redress the balance. Some looked at the varnashrama system, suggesting that what was adharma for one person might be dharma for another in different circumstances, making it more than an issue of pure morality in the modern sense of the word.

(c) Candidates often had a detailed knowledge of the purusharthas; however, there was a tendency to give a detailed description of them with little further comment. This approach limited candidates as it did not address the question. Most responses agreed with the statement, but did not clearly explain why. Several pointed out correctly that artha and kama can become unrighteousness very easily if not carried out according to dharma, while others pointed out that things other than the purusharthas might also be required for a righteous life. These approaches allowed for some discussion, but again did not address the question, which was whether all were required for a righteous life. Stronger responses pointed out that artha and kama are only appropriate to the grihastha ashrama and that not all Hindus choose to enter this ashrama with some, such as Shankara, who is widely regarded as a holy man and therefore to have led a righteous life, never accessing these purusharthas, so disproving the statement. Many responses effectively equated living a righteous life with achieving moksha, thus meaning that they did not discuss the issue of whether artha was required to uphold society and was therefore necessary for a righteous life but might not be necessary for moksha.

Question 2

Generally, **Question 2** was less well answered than **Question 1**. Candidates found this form of **part (a)** question challenging and many did not demonstrate a strong understanding of rita.

(a) This style of **part (a)** requires candidates to summarise clearly what the passage says. They are not required to elaborate or comment widely, to agree or disagree, or to write a commentary on the general subject. In this case, the majority of candidates wrote a great deal about dharma in general, often going into great detail about different types of dharma but did not directly address the question. Candidates also found the idea in the passage that aspects of dharma can change challenging. They are reminded that they are not required to agree or disagree with this, merely to note that this is what the passage claims.

(b) There were some excellent responses to this question, and it was the best answered part of **Question 2**, however, the majority of responses were descriptive and did not directly address the question. Candidates tended to have a detailed and extensive knowledge about Sita, and less, but still plenty of knowledge about Draupadi. Many responses focused on 'telling the story', rather than directly addressing the question or relating it specifically to sthri dharma. Candidates explained in great detail the ways in which Sita could be seen as the ideal wife, or woman, but did not relate this specifically to sthri dharma in many cases. Candidates were aware of the differences in temperament and approach between Sita and Draupadi, and did not generally suggest that Draupadi did not follow sthri dharma, saying that she supported her husbands. However, candidates were generally not able to explain Draupadi's actions in terms of sthri dharma, usually simply saying that she was a good role model for modern women without explaining why.

(c)   The majority of candidates were not able to show what was meant by rita, and a significant number of candidates instead wrote everything they knew about dharma instead. This did not address the question and so limited candidates' ability to access higher levels. Some candidates commented that rita had something to do with nature but were not able to connect that idea to the terms of the question. Some wrote in general terms about what the foundation of dharma might be.

Section B

Question 3

This question was the most popular and mostly very well answered.

(a)   This was generally well answered. Almost all the candidates knew that one was related to liberation on death and the other to liberation while still living, although a significant minority confused the two. There were some excellent descriptions of the characteristics of a jivan mukti, and examples of both types were given, although certain individuals, such as Shabri and Shankara were often given as examples of by different candidates.

(b)   Most candidates were able to give a fairly accurate and detailed account of the different paths to moksha, and some added details such as the money and cat analogies. However, very few candidates directly addressed the question. Most simply stated that Hinduism has four (or more) paths to liberation as a fact, with no further elaboration. Some explained that the different margas were related to different temperaments, which was a starting point, but needed further explanation to directly link it to the question. The strongest responses explained that various Hindu scriptures seem to speak about different ways of reaching moksha, and that Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita very explicitly states that there are different paths that are suited to different people. Building on this, several candidates suggested that the different paths are suited to different varnas. Some candidates discussed the teachings of different gurus, or that since people could be seen to have reached moksha via different routes (such as Shankara through jnana and Shabri through bhakti) it must be possible to get there through different routes. While it is possible to include a detailed description of the margas in a good response to this question, it is not necessary. The knowledge that is being targeted here is more about what the scriptures say about the margas and how people have used that information, as well as different approaches in Hinduism to the relationship between Brahman and atman and how this relates to moksha.

(c)   This question was generally well answered and was the strongest response to a **part (c)** on the paper. The majority of candidates were able to argue that maya is illusion and some gave a very clear and detailed explanation of why scholars such as Shankara believed that it trapped people in samsara. However, a significant number of candidates stated that maya meant illusion, but did not show any understanding beyond this of the mechanism by which it keeps people trapped in samsara. Most said that it makes people attached to material things leading to adharma but were not able to convincingly explain how or why this should be. Some were aware that in some darshanas maya has a positive aspect, and could even help in achieving moksha, but were not able to clearly explain how or why this might be. However, the majority of candidates were able to offer a second point of view, suggesting that maya is not the only thing that prevents liberation. This was sometimes confused, as some candidates argued that illusion or ignorance also links to samsara, without being able to explain the connection between ignorance and maya effectively. Many candidates also suggested that quite apart from maya, karma also served to keep people tied to samsara, as any karma from previous lives must be used up before an individual can escape samsara, even if they have achieved jnana. This meant that most candidates were able to clearly offer different evidenced points of view and access the higher levels.

Question 4

This was the least popular question on the paper, and in general was not well answered, with **part (c)** proving challenging.

(a)   This was the best answered part of the question, although some candidates gave an account of several different types of karma rather than focusing on prarabdha karma as the question required. Many candidates gave a general response that explained that good karma leads to a good rebirth, while bad karma leads to a bad rebirth, which gained some credit, although to access the higher levels candidates needed to be specific about how prarabdha karma specifically affects the current rebirth.

(b)   Some responses described all four margas in some detail. Others concentrated on Bhakti in particular, often in great detail, but did not specifically address the question of why someone might choose this in preference to another path. Stronger responses suggested that Bhakti is often considered to be an easier path, or that it is accessible to those who might be unable to access other margas, such as women or those of the lower castes. Some suggested that it might not be a matter of choosing Bhakti as some might have been raised in a darshana or even in a family where Bhakti is considered to be normative. Again, it was possible to score highly without giving much detail about the Bhakti marga itself.

(c)   This part of the question was not well answered. Some candidates were not able to show what is meant by Raja marga, and answered instead on Raja dharma, discussing whether or not kings and rulers needed to be concerned about how they behaved. Those candidates that did know what was meant by Raja marga generally equated it with meditation and suggested that people are not carrying out actions while meditating so do not need to be concerned about them. Very few candidates appreciated that the focus of the question was the role of karma in the other margas and the extent to which nishkama applies to those on a different path. Very few responses discussed the benefits of jnana as compared to karma, which was the idea at the centre of this question. Some described how meditation leads to moksha and also how karma does, but without making any connection at all between the two ideas.

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Key messages

Most candidates demonstrated some relevant knowledge and some ability to select relevant aspects in response to the key areas of study. The application of knowledge to a specific question was generally less evident. Many responses were descriptive, even when the question required explanation or evaluation.

To improve upon application of knowledge to ensure that responses are focused on the question set, it might be helpful to consider:

The importance of command words; different command words entail different uses of knowledge and candidates need to recognise these very different demands. Addressing the question that has been asked begins with understanding what words such as '*summarise*', '*explain*' and '*discuss*' means in terms of how knowledge is used and displayed.

The nature of a discussion in evaluation (**part c**) questions; there is no correct or expected conclusion to these questions and no requirement to offer and justify opposing views on the issue. However, there is a requirement to discuss and to evaluate the differing perspectives that arise in order to reach or justify a conclusion. One-sided arguments or responses which simply describe the issue are unlikely to reach the higher level of marks.

General comments

Responses consisting of all the knowledge from an entire topic area were seen less often than in previous series, with candidates attempting to select only the material that was relevant for the question. Fewer candidates demonstrated a clear ability to use and apply the material to the question, especially in response to the **part (b)** and **part (c)** questions. This is an important skill as it allows candidates to access the higher levels.

Overall, there were very few rubric errors. Most candidates also attempted all parts of the questions that they selected with few responses left unfinished.

Questions 2 and **4** were the most popular questions overall. **Question 3** was the least popular question.

Some candidates chose to address the question sections in reverse order, answering **part (c)** first, then **part (b)** and then **part (a)**. Whilst this does not affect the way in which marks are awarded, it is worth noting that the parts of these questions are conceptually related to one another, with the structure intended to enable a candidate to progress from a purely descriptive response in **part (a)** to an evaluative one in **part (c)**. The ideas and material introduced in **part (a)** connect to **parts (b)** and **(c)**. Candidates working backwards from **part (c)** might therefore create a greater challenge.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) This question was generally soundly answered, with most candidates recognising the key term 'Brahmanas' as an element of Vedic writings and making some points about material relating to rituals. Those responses which did not attain a higher level of marks generally did so because they described the structure and relationship of the Vedas in general. This material was often correct,

but it could not contribute to an answer to this question. A minority of responses read the question as asking about brahmins and the varna system and so did not gain credit.

(b)   This question elicited a lot of knowledge about the structure of the Vedas, often repeated from **part (a)**. Some identified a number of Upanishads by name and described their contents while others described the role of the Upanishads in general in the development of Hindu philosophy. Very few responses explicitly considered the matter of the relative importance of Vedic writings beyond a concluding sentence declaring that the importance of the Upanishads had been demonstrated; since very few responses included any explicit consideration of how texts might be used or valued – or any other factor relating to perceived importance – these declarations were not generally supported by the evidence of the response.

(c)   Responses to this question tended to open with a description of the Vedas, usually each of the four in turn, followed by the observation that they are clearly of equal importance. Little justification was given for this statement in most responses; however, the strongest examples did then undermine the claim by outlining reasons why the importance or relevance of the Atharva Veda might be contested. Only a small number of responses offered a conclusion to the question asked and discussion was limited.

Question 2

(a)   Almost all candidates demonstrated familiarity with the two texts named in the question. A small number confused the Bhagavad Gita with the Ramayana and some presented the Mahabharata as contained within the Bhagavad Gita rather than the other way around. Explicit consideration of the difference between the texts was less common; when it was identified, the focus was usually on the difference between smriti and shruti texts. Some candidates wrote about stylistic differences, given the dialogic form of the Bhagavad Gita.

(b)   Responses to this question tended to open with the declaration that the Bhagavad Gita contains everything that is in the Vedas, although explanation of how this might be so given the vastly disparate size of these texts was limited and the idea of a summary not often explored. Some responses moved from this opening to a description of all the areas that are covered by the Vedas, concluding each paragraph with the observation that the Bhagavad Gita says all this as well; others did this in reverse, describing the contents of the Bhagavad Gita and noting that all this is also in the Vedas. Generally detailed knowledge was displayed of one text but not the other and the concept of a summary was not usually addressed.

(c)   Responses to this question were generally able to state a position on the issue – usually a disagreement with the claim – and this was credited. However, most of the responses followed this statement with a description of the Bhagavad Gita along with descriptions of other texts and the statement that these were also important. Most responses implied a reason for this importance in the descriptive statements about what Hindus might learn from each text, but some answers were limited by the absence of any explicit discussion or critique. A small number of responses used material from other sections of the syllabus to good effect, identifying ISKCON as a Hindu religious movement that gives the Bhagavad Gita primacy.

Section B

Question 3

(a)   Most responses were able to give a correct definition for one of the terms, but the distinction between the two concepts was often not clear. The best responses were able to connect one term with concepts of nirguna Brahman and the other with saguna Brahman and some went on to connect this with philosophical schools of thought.

(b)   All responses were able to connect the concept of ishvara with the concept of saguna Brahman and some linked this to a school of Vedanta, although not always correctly. Development beyond this was unusual with more extended responses deviating from the question into descriptions of how liberation is attained through ishvara or different bhakti traditions within Hinduism.

(c)   Most candidates recognised that this question was asking about dualist views on liberation; some gave a descriptive account of all three Vedantas while others chose two of them. Responses were mostly descriptive however, with no clear conclusion or position on the issue being given. There

were also responses that did not identify Vedanta as relevant at all, instead giving descriptions of the four margas or writing in general terms about what liberation is and/or why it is important in Hinduism.

Question 4

(a)   Responses demonstrated extensive knowledge of Vaishnavism overall but much of it was not relevant to the question, which asked for beliefs about God. Responses were often extensive descriptions of belief, practice and metaphysics.

(b)   Most responses correctly identified Smartism as the tradition concerned with devotion to multiple deities, but knowledge of the tradition rarely went beyond that. Responses tended to include detailed descriptions of the other traditions named for study on the syllabus together with an observation that all these are concerned with one deity only – a broadly correct but limited response to the question asked.

(c)   This question did not often elicit discussion. Candidates demonstrated a broad range of knowledge about Shiva and about Shaivite forms of worship but consideration of how accessible such worship is was commonly limited to the observation that no one is banned from offering devotion to any deity.

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Key messages

- Read the question carefully and follow the instructions.
- In evaluation questions marks are awarded for evaluation and analysis so make sure that a variety of viewpoints are considered and discussed.
- It is not necessary to spend time defining key terms or giving their etymology, or to repeat material already given in another part of the question.
- It is useful to finish with a paragraph that directly addresses the question.
- Material on Buddhism and Jainism will not be credited unless it is specifically required by the question.

General comments

Most candidates were able to complete the paper in the time allowed and very few candidates attempted to answer more questions than required. In *Section A*, **Question 1** was more popular than **Question 2**. In *Section B*, **Question 3** was more popular than **Question 4**.

Many responses gave detailed and accurate knowledge around the general subject of the question, rather than selecting the elements that were most relevant and relating them specifically to the question that had been asked.

Candidates should avoid spending time defining terms used in the question. A response that focuses clearly on the question will demonstrate understanding of these terms, and long definitions use up valuable time without gaining additional marks. In particular, there is no need to repeat the same material in different parts of the same questions. Long Sanskrit or scriptural quotations should also be avoided unless their relevance to the question is explained, or they are clearly used as part of an argument. Furthermore, a general introduction to the topic is not required. For example, if a question asks about Dvaita Vedanta, it is not necessary to write a detailed introduction explaining all of the Vedanta darshanas in detail.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Responses did not show a sound understanding of the topic of Samkhya philosophy.

(a)   In general, subject knowledge of Samkhya philosophy was not strong. Candidates who did have good knowledge tended to describe the process of creation in Samkhya in depth, and did not clearly relate this to the question. Candidates generally understood that kaivalya could be equated with liberation or moksha, but few provided a comprehensive account of liberation in this philosophy. The stronger responses focused on the importance of 'discriminative knowledge' and suggested that this could be found through the study of scripture, or through a guru, but few were able to explain what 'discriminative knowledge' might mean in this context. Some candidates were aware that it was connected to an awareness of the difference between Purusha and Prakriti, but crucially did not go on to explain that kaivalya is dependent on identifying with Purusha rather than Prakriti. Very few responses suggested that within Samkhya thought, Ashtanga Yoga is seen as a method to achieve kaivalya by promoting practices that take the awareness away from the material world of Prakriti and focus it on pure consciousness, beyond the modifications of the mind that are associated with Prakriti. A significant minority of candidates had clearly confused Samkhya with

Advaita and argued that the way to achieve kaivalya was through the merging of the atman with Brahman.

(b)   Candidates generally fared better with this question than they did with **part (a)**, with most able to explain that the means of creation (which is relevant here in a way that it is not in **part (a)**) leaves no need for a divine being. However, some responses then went on to contradict this, by equating Purusha with God. Better responses suggested that Samkhya is not theistic since it has no place for a saguna Brahman or for bhakti, unlike the other theistic traditions, but suggested that since it is based on the Vedas, which are not atheistic, the idea of divinity of some sort cannot be entirely absent. Some responses did point out that while Samkhya may be non-theistic, Ashtanga Yoga, with which it is closely associated, is not. Where candidates were able to give these different viewpoints with some discussion and depth of understanding, marks in Level 3 were not uncommon, but few responses were genuinely discursive or evaluative. A significant minority of responses were confused about Samkhya in general and argued for a nirguna perspective in Samkhya that is actually associated with Advaita Vedanta.

Question 2

This question was generally answered soundly with most candidates demonstrating at least a basic understanding of Dvaita philosophy, although some candidates included some discussion of Advaita in their response which was not asked for. Candidates tended to give generalised responses, rather than addressing the focus of the questions.

(a)   Most candidates demonstrated a reasonable understanding of Dvaita thought, and almost all were able to class it as 'dualistic' although they often found it challenging to explain exactly what this meant. Some candidates gave a generalised account of everything they knew about Dvaita, which did gain some credit, but limited them to the lower levels, no matter how accurate or detailed it was since it was not developed in relation to the question, and did not address most aspects of the question. Stronger responses focused on the dualistic nature of the tradition, explaining the absolute and eternal difference between jivas and Brahman; however, few then concentrated on the nature of the universe by including Jagat in their response. The strongest responses talked about the five fundamental differences, with the best responses explaining why the universe is seen as dualistic, despite the fact that it contains three distinct types of thing (Brahman, jiva and jagat).

(b)   Many candidates repeated much of the material about Dvaita that they had used in **part (a)**, which was not always relevant. Many responses gave a detailed account of everything they knew about Dvaita, but without concentrating on the focus of the question which was the nature of Brahman. Many candidates gave a reasonable account of both Dvaita and Vishistadvaita but were not able to specifically compare the concepts of Brahman and show clear understanding of this aspect. Most responses did explain what the two systems had in common (an idea of Brahman as Saguna and associated with Vishnu as Ishvara, who could grant grace to his followers) but were not able to explain the differences. Most seemed to understand that in Dvaita thought Brahman is eternally and totally distinct from the universe and the atman, while for Vishistadvaita this was not quite the case, but often they did not explain how or why. Some candidates gave accounts of Dvaita and Advaita and then went on to compare both with Advaita, which was not relevant to the question and therefore not creditworthy.

Section B

Question 3

Candidates generally demonstrated good knowledge of the life of Gandhi and the particular campaigns with which he was involved during his life. However, responses were not always selective, with many candidates writing everything they could about Gandhi with no focus on the various influences from which he drew. Most were able to identify ahimsa and satyagraha as the most significant ethical values on which Gandhi based his life, and many were able to locate ahimsa within Hindu Vedic and scriptural sources. Candidates found satyagraha more challenging. They correctly translated Satya as truth, but equated this with 'telling the truth' in a simplistic sense that did not really capture Gandhi's thinking. A significant number of candidates seemed to think that Gandhi's mother was a Jain, which is not accurate, although her thinking was influenced by Jainism. Most were aware that Jainism and Christianity were influences on Gandhi, with several mentioning the Sermon on the Mount in particular.

Several candidates took the statement in the question as a truism and suggesting that Gandhi's ethics were not routed in Hinduism at all. An interesting and unexpected response from some candidates, which was credited, was to describe the ethical faults that have been widely attributed to Gandhi and then explain that these things have no basis in Hinduism, effectively suggesting that Gandhi's personal ethics, rather than his ethical teaching were not based in Hinduism. This was seen as a fair way to read the question, and so it was credited as a valid viewpoint. However, very few responses were genuinely discursive, and few tried to evaluate the contribution of different religious viewpoints to Gandhi's views. Candidates found it challenging to find a clear source for Gandhi's values within Hinduism. Very few suggested that Gandhi took values such as ahimsa out of very specific contexts within Hinduism and applied them generally as being central to all aspects of Hinduism.

Question 4

Candidates found this question very challenging with many giving short, generalised and sometimes inaccurate accounts of the Advaita position. While most candidates mentioned the analogy of the snake and the rope, and most explained that it was to do with maya and ignorance and that when the light came on the snake was revealed to be a rope, very few were able to accurately explain what this meant in terms of Advaita teachings. In the absence of any other relevant information, detailed accounts of Advaita teaching were limited to Level 2. Stronger responses discussed the connection between Shankara and Smarta, suggesting that his significance in the modern world was intensified by this.

Candidates did not really engage with the issue of significance in the modern world, and a very significant number of responses did little more than give an account of Advaita philosophy, suggesting that it is significant in the modern world as it offers a route to moksha, with no further comment. Stronger responses suggested that theistic traditions or Vedantas that engage with Saguna Brahman have more significance in the modern world as they are more accessible in the Kali Yuga and at a time of increasing materialism where people do not have the time to engage with the jnana marga. Very few candidates wrote about the influence of Shankara's teachings on the Arya and Brahmo Samaj movements and hence, via the reform movements, on modern Hinduism; and very few mentioned Vivekananda, or the extent to which Advaita influenced his thinking, which in turn influenced the way that Hinduism is seen and understood throughout the world.

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Key messages

Questions in **Section A** are given in two parts, **(a)** and **(b)**. These two parts are related to one another, with **part (a)** requiring a demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the question asked and **part (b)** requiring an evaluative discussion of a point or issue raised in the question. The **Section B** questions demand both of these elements within a single essay.

Most candidates clearly have significant knowledge of Hinduism and are sometimes able to select from this pool of knowledge material relevant to the question that has been asked. However, this is often set out in a descriptive style so that the question itself is addressed only by implication. This limits the marks available for the response as the level descriptors are concerned with how fully and clearly the question has been answered.

To improve this, it may be helpful to consider the following:

How to approach examination questions: candidates are usually able to identify key terms within the question but seem less sure on what they are being asked to do with these terms or concepts. Understanding of the demand entailed in the different command words used would help candidates grasp the question as a whole. Responses can then be structured around that specific requirement rather than simply describing each key term in depth.

The nature of a discussion in **part (c)** evaluation questions; there is no correct or expected conclusion to these questions and no requirement to offer and justify opposing views on the issue. However, there is a requirement to discuss and to evaluate differing perspectives that arise so that a conclusion can be made and justified. One-sided arguments or responses which simply describe the issue are unlikely to reach the higher level of marks.

The role of a conclusion in **part (c)** evaluation questions; a conclusion is the part of a response which offers a definite position on the question asked. This does not need to be the final paragraph, although it often is, but it does need to be justified with some reference to why this view is considered the better one. Including a conclusion which reflects on the points made in the discussion can be a useful way to ensure that the response answers the question that has been asked.

General comments

Most candidates demonstrated a broad range of relevant knowledge and were able to identify the relevant topic area for the questions they chose. There was also increased evidence of selection of knowledge, with fewer responses consisting of a description of the entire topic area. However, application of the knowledge to the specific question asked was more limited and responses were often entirely descriptive. Some responses were also very brief; while short responses can be entirely focused on the question and demonstrate a good depth of understanding it is unlikely that very short responses will be able to fulfil the requirements of a 30 mark question.

Candidates appeared familiar with the rubric of the exam. There were few candidates attempting more than the necessary number of questions and most attempted all parts of the questions they selected. Some responses were very brief, but most appeared to be finished, suggesting appropriate use of the examination time.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

A number of responses to both questions in this section included a significant amount of material about M K Gandhi; while his work has some relevance for **Question 1(b)**, the reasons for his inclusion elsewhere were not clear.

Question 1

(a) Most responses demonstrated familiarity with both the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj although the focus tended to be on the founders of these organisations rather than the groups themselves. In most responses, the focus was more general than the question required, with a generalised summary of social evils to which the founders of these groups objected. Some responses went into great depth on women's rights and made very little mention of caste at all. It is also worth noting that an account of the problems and the observation that reformers fought to change them is not the same as an account of their work; detail about what was actually done on the issue was rarely present in any depth.

(b) Most responses to this question implied a stance on the issue by observing that the idealised system of varna can be and has been corrupted in practice in the real world. This meant that many such responses were not wholly descriptive, although discussion of the different views was not common.

Question 2

(a) Most candidates responding to this question were aware that the concern was with an area of teaching, rather than practice, with descriptions of practice being mostly saved for **part (b)**. However, selection beyond that point was less common and the majority of responses were a holistic description of all teachings of Sathya Sai International Organisation, often accompanied by a biography of Sai Baba. While these responses did contain some relevant material, there were only limited attempts to apply the knowledge to the question that was asked. A minority of candidates attempted to contrast teachings of the Sathya Sai International Organisation with those of ISKCON, despite the question focusing on the former.

(b) Responses included much description of both charity work and religious practice but there was also usually an attempt at a conclusion, most commonly suggesting that since both elements exist one cannot be more important than the other. Comparison with ISKCON was also seen in some of these responses and could be considered relevant if an explicit attempt were made to use that comparison to address the question asked. However, many responses that took this approach did not refer to the terms of the question and if there was a conclusion, it was concerned with how alike these two movements are.

Section B

Question 3

This question was generally well answered. Most candidates were able to identify a range of relevant evidence of the practice of Hinduism outside of India and to explicitly state that the fact of such practice demonstrates it is not an impossibility. The strongest responses showed attempts to consider how practice outside India might differ from that within it, ranging across issues including community support, accessibility of places for worship and the attitudes of surrounding non-Hindu cultures. Responses to this question commonly included an explicit conclusion.

Question 4

Candidates choosing this question often wrote extensive answers giving an account of the work and biography of all social reformers referenced in the syllabus. These descriptions tended to present the issues the reformers worked on as being wholly solved by them with the implication that there is no longer a need for social reform because all the problems have been removed. This was sometimes explicitly stated but rarely challenged or critiqued with contemporary examples of social issues.