



13.0 HINDU RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (315)

In the year 2007 KCSE examination, Hindu Religious Education (HRE) was tested in two papers. *Paper 1 (315/1)* consisted of six essay questions and candidates were required to answer five. The paper tested the content areas of *Attributes of Paramatma, Manifestations of Paramatma, Scriptures, Principles of Dharma and Yoga*. *Paper 2 (315/2)* also consisted of six essay questions of which candidates were required to answer five. Paper 2 (315/2) tested the content areas of *Rites and Rituals, Utsav, Law of Karma, Places Pilgrimage, Historical Development and Hindu Heritage*.

Both papers 1 (315/1) and 2 (315/2) were marked out of maximum of 100 marks each and the time allocation for each of the papers was 2 hours and 30 minutes (2½hr). Each question in both papers carried a maximum of 20 marks.

The questions in the HRE examination were set to test candidates' knowledge of the factual materials relevant to each of the topics contained in the HRE secondary education syllabus, understanding of the meaning and interpretation of each of the topics, ability of candidates to express themselves on the basis of evidence, arguments, appreciation and evaluation of materials studied in each topic, ability to analyze and synthesize materials studied in each topic and ability to respond and apply the religious, moral and social issues raised in each topic.

The questions were also meant to give candidates across the various ranges of abilities the opportunity to show what they knew, understood, and could do.

13.1 GENERAL CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE

Table 16 below shows the performance in HRE (315) in the last four years.

Table 16: Candidates' Overall Performance in HRE in the Last Four Years

Year	Paper	Candidates	Maximum	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
2004	1		100	43.33	11.49
	2		100	49.40	9.44
	Overall	15	200	92.73	18.00
2005	1		100	54.87	21.17
	2		100	51.13	14.02
	Overall	15	200	106.00	32.00
2006	1		100	59.23	8.27
	2		100	59.62	10.14
	Overall	13	200	118.85	16.00
2007	1		100	45.29	17.36
	2		100	51.57	19.26
	Overall	07	200	96.86	35.00

The following observations can be made from the table above:

13.1.1 There was a considerable drop in the candidates' general performance in the year 2007 as compared to the year 2006.

13.1.2 The candidature dropped from 13 candidates in the year 2006 to only 07 in the year 2007.

This report analyses the candidates' general performance in the year 2007 KCSE HRE examination papers paying special attention to the questions where the candidates' performance was relatively poor. An attempt has been made to highlight possible causes of the poor performance. The report also gives samples of the expected responses and makes suggestions to teachers with the hope of helping them evaluate and improve their methods and approaches in the teaching of HRE in order to further improve the candidates' performance in the subject in the future.

13.2 PAPER 1 (315/1)

The questions in which candidates' performance was relatively poor in the year 2007 KCSE HRE Paper 1 (315/1) examination were Questions 2 (a), 4 (c) and 6 (b).

Question 2 (a)

Describe the role of Lord Vishnu in *Vaman Avatar*.

The question was set on the avatars (incarnations) of Lord Vishnu (Form 3 syllabus under Manifestations of Paramatma). The question expected that the candidates knew what Lord Vishnu did in each of the nine avatars (the tenth is expected in future). The question required the candidates to describe Lord Vishnu's role in Vaman Avatar. This is the fifth avatar when Lord Vishnu appeared as a dwarf.

Weaknesses

Candidates were not able to identify the particular avatar given in the question. Individual candidates chose to describe Lord Vishnu's role in any avatar of their choice rather than the one given in the question. Some candidates even attempted to describe the events of the ten avatars.

Expected Responses

- Vaman was born in answer to the prayer of Aditi and Sage Kashyap for deliverance of the Devas, heaven and earth from the oppression of King Bali.
- Vaman went to King Bali's yajna dressed as a Brahmin and was welcomed by the king.
- King Bali asked Vaman to name his daskshina.
- Vaman asked for 3 strides of land which Bali granted.
- As soon as the dakshina was granted, Vaman changed from a dwarf into a gigantic form.
- In the first stride, Vaman covered the heavens.
- In the second stride, he covered the earth.
- In the third stride, he put his foot on Bali's head and pushed him to the netherland/underworld/Patal.
- Vaman made Bali the ruler of Patal.
- The third step symbolized the removal of Bali's ego.

Question 4 (c)

Identify the qualities of Bhishma in the Mahabharata Epic and give examples of how he demonstrated them.

This question was on the scriptures. The question expected the candidates to be familiar with the character and activities of Bhishma, the commander-in-chief of the Kauravas during the battle of Kurukshetra.

Weaknesses

Candidates gave the qualities of Bhishma but did not give examples of how he demonstrated those qualities.

Expected Responses

- *Selflessness/generosity* : he sacrificed his own happiness for the sake of his father's happiness by remaining a bachelor all his life.
- *Wisdom*: gave discourses to Arjun and his brothers on the duties of a ruler, duties of subjects to the state, warfare, judiciary and civil duties.
- *Patriotism*: sided with Kauravas who were the rulers even when they were wrong.
- *Loyalty* : remained loyal to the rulers and respected authority.
- *Moral strength*: resisted Ambika's advances for marriage.
- *Steadfastness*: kept his vow not to marry as promised to his step mother's father (fisherman).
- *Respect* : respected all women; did not raise any weapon against them (Shikandi).
- *Forbearance*: he stayed on a bed of arrows for six months to work out his Karmas and shed off his tainted blood.

Question 6 (b)

Describe the role of *Prarthana* in attaining *Moksha*.

The question was on Yoga. The question required the candidates to describe the role of *Prarthana* in attaining *Moksha*.

Weaknesses

The candidates' responses showed that they could not relate/connect *Prarthana* with the attainment of *Moksha*. They simply gave a definition of *Prarthana*.

Expected Responses

- Brings a person closer to Partmatma.
- Activates purity, piety and compassion.
- Activates universal love.
- Reduces vices.
- Increases virtues.
- Develops faith in God
- Gives inner strength to face challenges
- Brings spiritual upliftment
- Brings inner peace and bliss.

13.3 PAPER 2 (315/2)

The questions in which candidates' performance was relatively poor in the year 2007 KCSE HRE Paper 2 (315/2) examination were Questions 1 (c), 5 (a) and (b).

Question 1 (c)

Name the components of a Jain Swastika and explain what each symbolises.

The question was set on the Jain Swastika. The question expected the candidates to state the components of the Jain Swastika and then explain what each symbolizes.

Weaknesses

Whereas the candidates stated the four components of the Jain Swastika, they failed to point out what each of those components symbolizes/represents.

Expected Responses

- *Lines*: 4 directions, 4 Purushatha (Dharma, Artha, Kaam and Moksha).
- *4 sides turning in wards* : go within in contemplation/self analysis.
- *Three dots*: Triratna - right knowledge, right faith, right conduct.
- *The crescent*: Place where the enlightened souls experience a state of permanent bliss/siddha sthan.
- *The dot in the crescent* :Siddha, enlightened soul

Question 5

- a. Give reasons why *Bhakti* cult became popular during the medieval period (1000 AD to 1750 AD).
- b. Identify the factors that helped in the spread of Buddhism during the rule of King Ashok.

Question 5 (comprising of part a and b) was the most unpopular question in this paper. The question was on historical development of Hinduism.

Weaknesses

Candidates did not have enough facts to answer the question. One is left wondering whether the topic, *Historic Development* was not neglected during teaching. Teachers are advised to adequately cover all the topics of the syllabus during teaching.

Expected Responses

- (a)
- Bhakti or devotion to a personal God appealed to the masses.
 - It prescribed an easy way to attaining Moksha.
 - It encouraged building of temples for various deities – made easy for Bhaktas to visit temples.
 - Bhaktas like Meerabai, Narshi, Mehta Tukaram, Soordas composed devotional songs – Bhajans which appealed to the devotees and helped to popularize Bhakti.
 - These songs were sung in temples as well as in open air gatherings/Satsang and individually.
 - All classes of people joined in Bhakti cult.
 - The Sikh Adi Granth also advocated Bhakti as a major way to salvation.
 - Rites and rituals helped devotees to establish a personal relationship with Paramatma.
 - Devotees worshipped Paramatma in any form desired.
 - The Puran stories depicted Rama and Krishna in human form which appealed to the masses.
 - In Bhakti, devotees worked out their emotions which helped in mental purification.
 - Devotees could have visions of Paramatma in several forms.
 - Miracles strengthened the belief and trust in Paramatma.
 - Paramatma was perceived as personal.

(b)

- King Ashok advocated non-violence for the followers of Buddhism.
- Accepted equality of all people and this made Buddhism attractive to the masses.
- Rejected rites and rituals, which were Brahmins prerogative.
- Advocated the middle path
- Gave royal assent and patronage to Buddhism.
- Gave financial assistance.
- Prepared and sponsored missionaries to spread Buddhism far and wide.
- Encouraged reading of Buddhist scriptures.
- Erected shrines, stupas for Buddha.
- Encouraged pilgrimage to these places.
- Built Vihar halls for monks to live, preach and teach in.
- Encouraged Indian art.
- Transformed Buddhism into a universal religion – spread to Ceylon, Japan, Nepal and Tibet.
- Sponsored council at Patliputra to spread Buddhist teachings.