



*Let the mind manage the body
Que l'esprit gère le corps*

**MAURITIUS
EXAMINATIONS
SYNDICATE**

**NCE 2020-2021
GRADE 9**

Social & Modern Studies

Subject code: N570

Examiners' Report

April 2022

Key Messages

To improve the quality of performance in Social and Modern Studies, candidates should be encouraged to:

- read carefully and understand the meaning of command verbs and key words used in questions (e.g. **name** one organisation or a specialised institution, **name and describe** one function of the family; **name and explain** one advantage or incentive of the EPZ sector);
- develop inquiry skills and the skills of interpretation and analysis in the study of social change, geographical issues and contemporary history;
- identify trends, patterns and relationships in data presented to them in form of graphs, charts, tables and evidence;
- develop a good understanding of historical events and their significance through timelines and historical sources.

General Comments

The first NCE 2020-2021 Assessment paper for Social and Modern Studies (SMS) was set on the 'deloaded' Grade 9 Teaching and Learning Syllabus due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic. The assessment produced a wide range of responses in term of quality and understanding. The overall performance of candidates on the SMS paper was good. The mean mark on the whole paper is 65.3. The median mark is 67 with 50% of the candidates scoring 67 marks and above.

Candidates fared well on the various objective type questions and on items assessing knowledge and understanding. They scored high marks in **Section A** which consisted of multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks questions, matching type exercises, True or False questions and very short answer questions. It was also noted that throughout the question paper, candidates performed generally well on questions which were based on pictures.

Candidates' scripts showed that they had difficulties when attempting structured short answer questions in **Section B**, which assessed specific learning outcomes on important topics. In this section, the questions which assessed students' understanding and their ability to reflect and apply what they have learnt proved to be more challenging than expected. For example, many candidates did not successfully attempt question 8.2 which was on identifying and explaining two advantages and incentives offered to investors in the EPZ sector.

It is therefore noted that there was an over-reliance of candidates on objective type questions with lists of words supplied or options provided and supported with pictures. This may indicate a limited approach in the preparation of this assessment. This could also mean that significant and meaningful learning has not taken place for some students in some core content areas based on the learning outcomes in the Teaching and Learning Syllabus, for example, the advantages and incentives in the EPZ sector, the functions of the family and specialized institutions which have taken up the role of the family. Moreover, the skills of reading and interpreting population graphs and age pyramids were found not to be beyond the reach of most candidates.

The quality of the answers of many candidates on questions assessing such higher order skills which would sustain learning and ensure valuable educational outcomes did not really meet the expectations of examiners. It is important to emphasise that Social and Modern Studies is a new interdisciplinary subject which aims at promoting

an integrated approach in learning about contemporary history, geographical issues, contemporary society and social change. Candidates should be given a range of opportunities to learn and understand the historical, geographical, economic, social, cultural and political aspects referred to in the questions and items. For example, it is important to understand that the textile sector created most jobs in the 1980s whereas the sugar sector was the main economic sector employing most workers in the 1960s and 1970s. Candidates should also make the difference between the salient features related to independence and specific aspects about the republic and how the latter redefines the state of Mauritius, the sovereignty of its people as a nation and over its multi-insular territories.

The skills of graph reading and interpretation in population study should be further encouraged. Class debates are advised to enhance the contribution of open and guided discussion that will help release the discursive potential of learners. Writing answers to open ended questions regularly after one topic is covered will also contribute towards higher attainment. Moreover, the mark allocation should be used as an indication of the level of detail required in the answer; for example, 3 marks are available for Qu 8, 1 (b). This gives some indication of the level of detail required in the answer.

Comments on specific Questions

SECTION A

Question 1

This question carried a total of 14 marks and comprised two parts. It was well attempted by candidates. The mean mark is 10.5.

Part A was a multiple-choice question which carried a total of 8 marks.

Part B was a fill-in the -blanks question based on one map and two pictures to help candidates choose the correct answers. It carried a total of 6 marks.

Question 1 - Part A (8 marks)

Part A comprised 8 multiple-choice items, each carrying one mark. It was well attempted by candidates. However, many candidates did not pay careful attention to the historical contexts of the items such as 1960, time of independence, 1940s, 1980s, and 2020. Chronological understanding is an important historical skill to develop knowledge about economic, social and political change. The table below shows the correct answers for the 8 MCQ items.

Item	Key	Item	Key
1	C	5	B
2	D	6	B
3	B	7	A
4	A	8	C

Item 1 It was generally well answered by candidates. Weaker candidates confused between 1992 (Republic) and 1968 (Independence).

Item 2 It assessed the knowledge about who became the first president of Mauritius. Many candidates could not differentiate between 'President' and 'Prime Minister' and chose Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam instead of Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo.

Item 3 It was well attempted by a vast majority of candidates. They showed good knowledge of the main disease prevailing in the 1940s. Malaria was the expected answer. But option A, 'polio' was also accepted.

Item 4 It was well attempted by most candidates. Some candidates found it difficult to identify the government's priority after the passage of cyclone Alix and Carol. They chose option D, construct more hospitals and health areas.

Item 5 This item assessed candidates' knowledge of the economic state of Mauritius at the time of independence. Many candidates confused between the terms 'developed country' (Option A) and 'underdeveloped country' (Option B). They should have paid more attention to the historical context.

Item 6 This item was correctly answered by many candidates. However, a relatively large number of candidates were not able to recall the correct figure 1.3 million for the population of Mauritius in 2020.

Item 7 This item proved to be quite challenging to candidates. A large number chose the sugar sector instead of the textile sector as the economic sector which created most jobs in the 1980s. Once again, the historical context was an important consideration to answer this item. This indicates that learners did not grasp that the textile sector was in fact a solution to the disadvantages of a monocrop economy and the issue of unemployment.

Item 8 It was well attempted mainly by the high achievers. Other candidates could not identify the other country which also claims sovereignty over the island of Tromelin. The correct answer is France. Knowledge of the claims of Mauritius over its historical dependencies is important to understand the process of decolonisation and territorial integration of the islands and group of islands which form part of the Republic of Mauritius.

Question 1 - Part B (6 marks)

Candidates had to fill in the blanks with correct words after studying 3 pictures - the map of the Chagos Archipelago and pictures showing the student protest of 1975 and houses of workers in rural areas in the 1950s. The map and pictures, as well as the list of words, provided to help candidates to score marks in this part of Question 1. Performance was good on this part question.

Question 2 (9 marks)

Sub-question 1 consisted of a table where candidates had to put a tick (✓) to show the benefits provided by the welfare state and a cross (×) for services not provided. Five marks were allocated to this part of the question.

Although the question proved to be an easy one and was generally well answered, there was some confusion as to how to fill in the table properly. The instruction was not well understood by some candidates. However, they were not penalised for this. Most candidates were able to show that free health care, free education and old age pension are provided by the welfare state of Mauritius but that free air fare and free electricity are not provided by the welfare state.

Sub-question 2 was a True/False question with four items. It carried a total of 4 marks. Candidates did well in this question.

Item 1 It was well attempted. Most candidates were able to recall that SADC countries are the Southern African countries.

Item 2 The majority of candidates was able to recognise that the statement 'climate change will bring a lot of benefits to the world' is false.

Item 3 It proved to be quite easy for candidates as they showed good understanding that 50 years is of age is not the age when people are entitled to receive old pension.

Item 4 It was well attempted. Most candidates knew that the Nelson Mandela Centre promotes African and Creole culture.

Question 3 (9 marks)

The first sub-question showed 5 pictures showing important developments in Mauritius and Rodrigues, which candidates had to match with their correct titles given in a list. It carried five marks. This proved to be the easiest question in Section A with very few wrong answers. Picture 4 depicted a new means of public transport; Picture 5 showed mechanisation in agriculture; Picture 6 showed new infrastructure for water

supply; Picture 7 showed the tourist hotel development on the coast and Picture 8, a sports complex.

In part (a) of sub-question 2, candidates had to name two organizations in Figure 1, apart from SADC of which Mauritius is a member. It carried 2 marks. This part question proved to be rather difficult. A range of answers could have been given. Few candidates were able to obtain one or two marks. Many candidates did not understand the question.

In part (b), candidates had to use their reasoning skills to give a benefit for a country like Mauritius to be a member of such organisations. This proved to be quite challenging. Membership in international organisations brings benefits such as economic, cultural and educational cooperation, technical support in development and environmental protection as well as maintenance of regional and international peace.

Question 4 (7 marks)

In the first part of Question 4, candidates had to fill in the blanks, choosing from a list of words provided. It carried 4 marks. This question proved to be relatively easy, though some candidates confused the terms 'autonomy' and 'constitution'. A few candidates also wrongly chose 'Asia' instead of 'Africa' for the name of the continent which Mauritius forms part geographically.

The second part of Question 4 was a matching exercise which proved to be easy. It carried 3 marks. Candidates correctly matched mass media to communicating information to a large number of people ; democracy to a system of government where people choose their representatives through elections ; and birth rate to the number of live births per thousand of population per year.

It is to be noted that some candidates did not fill the answer grid provided below but were not penalised if they correctly matched items in Column 1 to those in Column 2.

Question 5 (11 marks)

This question was based on the outer islands of the Republic of Mauritius ; Agalega, Chagos Archipelago and Rodrigues.

Sub-question 1 was on Agalega. It carried 4 marks. A map of the islands of Agalega was provided. Candidates performed well in this part. Most candidates were able to correctly identify the size of Agalega (small area of Agalega) as being the major reason behind its small population. In a few cases, candidates proposed reasons like a lack of employment and access to facilities. Candidates also correctly named two economic activities in Agalega; the most common answer being ‘fishing’ and ‘coconut plantation’.

Sub-question 2 showed a picture of Chagossians carrying out a protest against the United Kingdom. It was quite disappointing to see that a large number of candidates did not mention England/UK/Britain or Great Britain in part (a) (i) though they could give a valid reason why the Chagossians were protesting in part (a) (ii). The confusion over the sovereignty rights over Mauritian territories continued in part (b) where the majority of candidates thought that it was England/the UK rather than the USA which has a military base in Diego Garcia. It is important to make the distinction between the role of the UK which stills claims possession of the Chagos Archipelago, in defiance of international law, and that of the USA, which has developed a military base on the atoll of Diego Garcia which it has leased from the UK. A few candidates thought that they had to give the name of the group of islands where Diego Garcia is found and gave the wrong answer ‘Chagos Archipelago’.

Sub-question 3 was about the proposed new runway to be built in Rodrigues. There was confusion about the term ‘runway’, mistaken as a sort of health track or not understood at all.

Part (a): Many candidates answered ‘Port Mathurin’ and even ‘Mont Lubin’ and ‘Pointe Canon’ for the location of the airport in Rodrigues.

Part (b): Since some candidates confused the term ‘runway’ with a health track and could not give its location, they could not give a relevant benefit of the new airport runway for Rodrigues.

SECTION B

Question 6 (12 marks)

Sub-question 1 was a picture comparison question about three ways industrialisation has changed the lives of people in Mauritius. It was quite well attempted by candidates across the ability range who had developed adequately the skills of reading and describing pictures. The pictures gave enough stimuli for candidates to describe their content and provide a comparison. However, candidates should learn to interpret and not only describe pictures to produce high level responses thereby showing deep understanding of the process of social change brought through industrialisation. For example, they could have linked ideas such as the provision of electricity/better housing and its positive impacts on education/learning; creation of jobs in the textile sector and the movement of workers and the unemployed to this new sector; the changes in the commercial sector (retail trade fast disappearing) and supplying a variety of goods in supermarkets to meet the higher demands or changing needs of customers/to satisfy new shopping habits of consumers. Candidates should be encouraged to use terms such as 'compared to' or 'whereas', 'however', etc. Most candidates gained the maximum 6 marks provided for this part of the question.

The two-part questions of sub-question 2, based on the changing role of women, were tackled satisfactorily too. Part (a) about the traditional role of women before industrialisation, was better answered than part (b), where candidates had to describe two ways how industrialisation has changed the role of women. There were quite a few irrelevant answers where candidates wrote about the equal rights of men and women (gender equality) instead of focusing on a description of the changes in the role of women. The same ideas were sometimes repeated leading to the award of partial marks.

Question 7 (9 marks)

Candidates were required to name three types of media in part (a) and to describe three roles that media play in our lives today in part (b). Part (a), which carried 3 marks, proved to be a relatively easy question. It was well answered by most candidates. The best candidates correctly mentioned three types of media (print, broadcast, digital/new age). A large number of candidates gave examples of types of mass media

(newspapers, television/radio; social media/ smartphones/internet). Answers such as Facebook, Instagram etc. are in fact examples of Social media at the same level as radio channels often mentioned by candidates. Nevertheless, despite the fact that these candidates confused types and examples of media, they were awarded full marks if the examples given matched clearly the three types of media.

Some weaknesses were noted in the second part of the question regarding the three roles that media play. Some candidates tended to repeat the informative and learning role of the media in three different ways preventing them from earning full marks.

Question 8 (10 marks)

The first sub-question was based on an extract from a newspaper making mention of James Meade's prediction about the Mauritian economy. It carried 4 marks.

Part (a): Part (a) was generally well answered by candidates. Some candidates wrongly attributed Meade's statement to the writer of the newspaper article, Joseph Stiglitz.

Part (b) carried 3 marks for a full explanation of the reasons Meade was quite pessimistic about the future of development of Mauritius. It proved to be quite difficult. Many candidates relied too much on information in the extract and scored only one or two marks. Some candidates who applied critical thinking to offer a good interpretation of Meade's writing about the future of Mauritius obtained full marks.

The second part of the question was related to the incentives and advantages provided by the EPZ section of Mauritius to attract investors. It carried 6 marks.

The majority of candidates found this part particularly difficult. They could not name one or two advantages or incentives and explain how each one of them helped to attract investors in the EPZ sector in Mauritius. The success of the EPZ sector is the result of a combination of factors, advantages offered by the country and government incentives provided to investors. Many candidates did not even attempt any answer judging by the number scripts where blank spaces were left. This may point to an important learning gap. Examples, visuals, press articles and economic reports could be used to illustrate the advantages and incentives.

Question 9 (9 marks)

In sub-question 1, candidates had to name and describe two functions of the family. It carried 6 marks. This was well attempted mainly by the high achieving candidates but proved to be somewhat difficult for low achievers, many of whom did not attempt it at all. Some candidates confused 'functions' of family with 'types' of family and hence proceeded to describe nuclear, extended and single parent families. A clear understanding and distinction should therefore be made between the concepts 'family type' and 'functions of family'.

Part (a) of sub-question 2 required candidates to name/give one example of a specialised institution which has taken up one function of the family. Part (b) assessed how that institution performs the function of the family. This sub-question was well answered by many candidates who mentioned 'school', 'home' and also 'CDU' and properly described how these institutions function. Other candidates were not able to explain how the institution chosen is actually performing one function of the family. A relatively large number of candidates gave irrelevant answers related to types and functions of families when they attempted this part question.

Question 10 (10 marks)

Overall the candidates did not fare too well in this question which assessed understanding and skills on the topic 'Population Studies'.

Sub-question 1 was a structured short answer question based on a graph showing birth and death rates in Mauritius from 1900 to 2000.

Part(a): Many candidates could not attempt this question properly. Some could not read the graph and others read it improperly. The birth rate was 42 per 1000 in 1960, but many candidates lost marks by stating 41 or writing 42,000.

The graph showed a very steep increase in death rate for the year 1920. For a good explanation, candidates were required to name the Spanish Influenza epidemic instead of naming common diseases or giving general or vague reasons such as a lack of medical facilities.

It was easier for candidates to give reasons why the death rate is low nowadays.

Sub-question 2 was a structured short answer question based on the study of a population pyramid of Mauritius for the year 2016. It was well attempted by the high achievers. But average and low achievers had some difficulties to answer this sub-question. Many candidates who attempted part question b(i) about the difference between the number of persons in the age groups 0-4 and 20-24 years old well could not deduce in part question (b)(ii) that the trend was a decrease in birth rate and hence lost marks. Candidates who could obviously identify the decrease in birth rate gave the correct reasons for such a decrease.

It should be stressed that the study of age pyramids is an important component of the population studies curriculum. If it is properly done, it has the potential to create many learning opportunities to develop critical reasoning and foster analytical skills.