NCE 2021-2022
GRADE 9
Social and Modern Studies

Subject code: N570

EXAMINERS' REPORT

July 2023

Key messages

- Read instructions carefully.
- Read all questions carefully and pay attention of the command verbs and key words.
- Attempt all questions, especially multiple choice questions, fill in the blanks items, completion of sentences and matching type questions, where words are provided.
- Avoid partial reading of short answer questions. This may lead to irrelevant answers.
- For an open-ended question, check if the answer is given in the same context as the question.

General comments

The NCE 2021-2022 Assessment paper for Social and Modern Studies (SMS) was set on the complete Grade 9 Teaching and Learning Syllabus. It catered both for the regular programme Grade 9 candidates and the extended programme Grade 9+ candidates. The overall performance of candidates on the SMS paper was good with a pass rate of 90.7%.

Candidates fared well on the various objective type questions and 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 items and very short answer questions. Like the previous year, it was noted that throughout the question paper, candidates performed generally well on questions which were based on pictures, maps, tables, graphs and diagrams. Despite the relatively good performance in **Section A** , it should be noted with some concern that many candidates had difficulties with the 'true or false' items related to the Map of Agalega.

The high percentage of blank scripts for **Section B** suggests that candidates had difficulties when attempting structured short answer questions which assessed specific learning outcomes on major topics. Many candidates attempted to write only one-word answers to open ended questions in **Section B**, which demonstrated their reluctance to write complete sentences in this Section.

Social and Modern Studies (SMS) as a subject, aims at promoting an integrated approach in learning about contemporary society and social change. For example, it is important to understand the demographic changes that have occurred in Mauritius since 1900. This provides candidates with learning opportunities to have a better historical, geographical, economic, social, cultural and political approach in the subject.

It is also important for candidates to learn the definition of the welfare state and to give examples of facilities provided by the welfare state. At a higher level, it is important to make a clear distinction between welfare facilities provided by the state and features of the welfare state, i.e. what the welfare state aims to achieve, its objectives and how it strives to achieve them.

To conclude, it should be pointed out that questions which required recall of basic definitions and analysis or application of concepts, however direct and simple, were out of reach of many candidates. These candidates showed difficulties in basic retention and organisation of knowledge. Unfortunately, that level was not reached due partly or largely to their lack of competence and confidence in the use of language skills in the subject.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1

Question 1 carried a total of 16 marks. It was divided into two parts. Part A consisted of 8 multiple-choice items and Part B of 8 statements whereby the candidate was expected to state whether they were "True" or "False".

This question assessed basic knowledge in Social and Modern Studies. It was appropriately attempted by most candidates regardless of their overall performance on the whole paper.

Part A

Most candidates correctly answered MCQ items (a), (b), (c) and (e).

The correct answer for item (a) was option **D**, Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo. Some candidates wrongly chose option **C**, Sir John Shaw Rennie, who was the first governor of independent Mauritius.

For item (b), some candidates did not circle the correct answer, option **C**, probably because they might have been more familiar with the name of Jeetoo Hospital instead of the Civil Hospital while referring to the largest hospital in Port- Louis. In fact, contextually in 1967, the hospital was known as Civil Hospital.

Item (c) was well answered by candidates. It assessed the ability to identify an output from a factory. Option **D**, waste, was the correct answer.

Item (e) was set on Rodrigues. The focus was on the period of the 1970s. Some candidates overlooked that key information and selected answer **D**, "Tourism" instead of answer **A**, "Fishing".

However, for items (d), (f), (g) and (h), it was noted that candidates tended too often to pick and choose answers at random. This indicates a serious limited knowledge of basic facts in the political history of Mauritius, its sovereignty claims over its territories which were past dependencies and developments in international relations since independence.

For item (d), many candidates did not choose option **C,** Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, who led the Independence Party for the General Elections of 1967. For item (f), many candidates did not choose the 'Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate (PMSD)', option **D**, as the political party which wanted integration with Britain at that time. Candidates would have probably more easily remembered SSR as the leader of the Labour Party. Yet, it should be stressed that independence was achieved by the political action of the Independence Party which was formed by a coalition of three political parties, namely the Labour Party, the Independent Forward Bloc (IFB) and the Comité d'Action Musulman (CAM).

For item (g), many candidates circled option **C**, the Cote D'Or Multi-sports Complex, or option **D**, the SSR International Airport at Plaisance, whereas the project which was implemented with the support of the Indian Government was the ENT Hospital at Vacoas, option **A**.

For item (h), some candidates chose "England" (option **A**) instead of "France" (option **B**) concerning the co-management of the Island of Tromelin, it should be stressed that Mauritius claims sovereignty over the island of Tromelin.

Part B

Part B comprised 8 True or False items on the islands of Agalega. Each item carried one mark. Candidates were asked to study **Map 1** which showed the main features on the islands of Agalega before deciding whether each statement was true or false.

Performance varied between candidates who applied map reading skills and basic reasoning skills and those who lacked such skills. To make an informed decision each time, candidates had to rely on the application of geographical knowledge and reasoning to the context of small islands of the Republic such as Agalega.

Item (a) was well attempted. Most candidates knew that Agalega consists of two islands and not four. Many candidates could score the mark with the help of the map.

For item (b), some candidates thought that the statement 'La Fourche is the administrative centre of Agalega' is true while the correct answer is the village of Vingt Cinq. The location of the village of Vingt Cinq could have been one of the factors for it to become the main settlement in Agalega.

For item (c), many candidates knew that the population of Agalega was 300 people. Again here, geographical reasoning could have also helped to deduce the answer, given the size of the islands using the scale.

For item (d), most candidates agreed with the statement that the main crop grown in Agalega is indeed coconut.

Item (e): Many candidates were aware that the people of Agalega grow vegetables for their own use. Vegetables are highly perishable goods which cannot be readily imported to Agalega. Therefore, subsistence agriculture is an important activity of the people.

For item (f), some candidates confused the existence of a health centre with a big hospital and could therefore not provide the correct answer. In fact, there is no hospital in Agalega.

Item (g) turned out to be rather difficult probably because many candidates did not recall what copra is and that it is a product obtained from coconut meant mainly for exportation

to Mauritius. Copra is the dried, white flesh of the coconut from which coconut oil is extracted. Traditionally, the coconuts are sun-dried, especially for export, before the oil, also known as coconut oil, is extracted.

For item (h), most candidates correctly answered that the statement 'Agalega has a university' is false.

Question 2

Question 2 carried a total of 11 marks and comprised two parts.

Candidates generally did well in both parts.

Part question (a) was based on the economic activities in Mauritius. Candidates were required to write down the economic activity corresponding to each picture by choosing from the list of words provided.

Although this part was generally well answered, a few candidates confused pictures 1 and 2 that showed the ICT & BPO and the banking sector respectively.

Part question (b) was a 'fill in the blanks' exercise with five items on the Chagos Archipelago. Candidates were required to choose the correct word (or year) from two words/years given in brackets. It carried a total of 6 marks.

Item 1: It proved quite easy for candidates who correctly identified coconuts as the main product carried to Ile de France.

Item 2: Most candidates were aware that the Chagossians built their own thatched houses.

Item 3: It was well attempted. Most candidates knew that the Chagossians reared chicken for their consumption.

Item 4: There was some confusion for this item. Some candidates assumed that the Chagos Archipelago was separated from Mauritius at the time of independence in 1968 instead of 1965.

Item 5:　　Some candidates opted for Peros Banhos as the island on which the USA built a military base, instead of Diego Garcia.

QUESTION 3

Question 3 assessed knowledge of changes in Mauritian society due to the process of industrialisation. It carried a total of 8 marks and comprised 4 parts.　Each part was provided with a set of two pictures showing specific changes. Candidates were expected to study the changes carefully and to fill in the blanks in two sentences starting with 'Long ago' and 'Nowadays' with the appropriate words out of a choice of two given in brackets.

Candidates performed well on this question. However, weaker candidates often confused "straw" and "concrete" houses for part (a) and "extended" and "nuclear" families for part (c).

Question 4 (8 marks)

Question 4 also carried a total of 8 marks and comprised two parts.

Both parts were set on the topic 'media' using simple question formats: matching type and fill-in-the-blanks with words supplied. Both parts were well-answered by the candidates.

Part question (a)

This part question was a matching exercise showing 4 pictures of different media. It carried a total of 4 marks. Candidates had to match each picture in Column 1 to the media it represents in Column 2. This proved to be among the easiest questions with very few wrong answers. Picture A depicted *Television Broadcast*; Picture B showed *Newspapers*; Picture C showed *Social Media* and Picture D *Radio Broadcast*. It is to be noted that some candidates did not fill the answer grid provided below. However, they were not penalised when they had correctly matched Column 1 to Column 2.

Part question (b)

For this part question, 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.

Item 1: It was generally well answered. But, weaker candidates wrote only 'natural' or 'disasters' instead of 'natural disasters.

Item 2: Many candidates performed well and they could identify 'learning' as the correct answer.

Item 3: This question was well attempted by most candidates and they opted for 'leisure' as the right answer.

Item 4: Most candidates were able to choose 'opinions' as the correct answer.

Question 5 (9 marks)

This question assessed the ability to show knowledge and understanding of historical and contemporary links which Mauritius has with other countries. It carried a total of 9 marks.

Part (a) was based on Map **3** showing Mauritius and three countries in Europe, Africa and Asia respectively from which people came to settle in the past. Part (b) aimed to assess the ability to show how Mauritius has benefitted from maintaining its links with France after independence

Part (a): Candidates had to identify countries 1, 2 and 3 on Map 3 from which people came to Mauritius in the past. It carried 3 marks. Candidates had a lot of difficulties identifying the three countries shaded on the map from a list of six countries.

Very few candidates were able to score maximum marks for this part question. Many wrongly identified Country 1 as Britain; Country 2 as China and Country 3 as Madagascar. Some candidates named only 2 countries despite the list of words provided.

Part (b): Four marks were allocated to Part (b), two marks for each benefit and its description. Most candidates answered this part satisfactorily. The most common answer was 'facilities provided for higher education'. Other common and widely accepted answers were based on external trade and facilities provided and how the 'Agence Française de Development' (AFD) provides assistance on different projects in Mauritius. Despite the wide range of answers, many candidates focused on 'Alliance Française' which was a wrong answer, unless a relevant description was provided together.

Section B

For the NCE 2021- 2022 assessment, the percentage of candidates that left Section B completely unattempted was quite surprising.

Question 6

It carried a total of 8 marks and comprised three-part questions.

Part question (a) proved to be quite challenging to candidates although they were only required to write one relevant word for each item. Candidates also provided rather poor economic descriptions in their answers to part questions (b) and (c). This was one of the major weaknesses noted in their performance.

Part question (a)

It was a 'Fill in the blanks' exercise about the obstacles that hindered the economic development of Mauritius in the 1960s. It comprised four items and carried a total of 4 marks.

Item 1   Low achievers could not link the word scarcity with 'resources'. Instead they used the word 'natural' as a clue and wrote the word 'disaster'.

Item 2   Most candidates correctly identified the word 'domestic', showing that they understood well that small domestic market was an economic obstacle at that time.

Item 3   This item was well answered, except for a few candidates who wrote the word 'super' before the word 'markets'.

Item 4   Most candidates wrote words such as 'finance', 'businesses' and 'infrastructure' instead of writing 'development'.

Part question (b) required candidates to describe the economic prediction made by Meade in the 1960s. It carried two marks.

Many candidates found this part difficult. Instead of writing about the predicted economic failure/collapse of the Mauritian economy, candidates described the reasons for the predicted economic failure such as high population growth and poverty.

Part question (c) required candidates to describe one important measure taken by the government to overcome the economic difficulties Mauritius faced in the 1960s. Possible

measures included diversification and increased engagement in the industrialisation process. Two marks were allocated for this part.

This question was poorly answered by many candidates. Although some candidates were able to identify one important measure, they failed to provide a reasonable description of the measure identified. Other candidates mentioned free education and provision of jobs, without any description.

QUESTION 7

This question carried 9 marks and consisted of two parts.

Part question (a) consisted of a short text about the rapid economic growth of Mauritius by the end of the 20th century. This was termed the 'Mauritian Miracle' and was due to many factors.

This part question comprised 2 items. It carried a total of 5 marks.

Part question (b) was set on the topic 'forces driving social change' using a tabular form.

Table 1 showed two forces driving social change, namely social movement and environmental change. For each force driving social change, candidates were required to give one example and its consequence.

Part question (a)

Item (i) required candidates to choose the correct answer from the brackets. Most candidates successfully attempted this question.

For item (ii), candidates were required to name four factors which have facilitated the 'Mauritian Miracle'. They showed a marked difficulty in listing the factors which have facilitated the 'Mauritian Miracle'. Many of them confused the term factors with reasons.

There were many one word answers and several candidates mentioned only two factors.

Part question (b)

Part question (b) required candidates to give an appropriate example for a social movement and an environmental change and then describe one consequence for each example identified.

Many candidates could not attempt this question due to a poor understanding of what they were required to do. For example, for the force driving social change 1, social movement, candidates were required to give one example of such a movement and how it brought a particular social change, in other words, its social consequences.

A clear difficulty was the inability of many candidates to differentiate between examples and consequences.

Candidates were also not always able to consistently match the examples they had identified with its consequences.

Some candidates did not make a clear distinction between changes driven by social movement and those driven by environmental change.

One example of a social movement driving Social Change can be the "Suffragette Movement" and its consequence, the promotion of equal gender rights/rights to vote to women etc.

Another example is "The Civil Society Protest after the Shipwreck of the Wakashio/ Mauritius Oil Spills" and its consequences can be to promote democratic action (social activism)/ more freedom of information and expression/ more social justice/ money compensation to fishermen for the loss of revenue/ increased political consciousness. Open opportunities to transform (local) policies or politics can also be example of a consequence.

One example of the Environmental Change as one force driving social change can be Global Warming or Beach Erosion and the corresponding consequences can be Climate Change/setting up of coordination plans/dedicated government departments or the Planting of Mangroves respectively.

Some candidates gave the "Metro Express" as one example of environmental change whereas it is considered as one example of technological or infrastructural change. The consequence given was therefore also irrelevant.

Question 8

It carried a total of 11 marks. There were four-part questions. Parts (a) and (b) consisted of two items each.

Many candidates, more especially the low achievers, did not attempt this question at all.

Many candidates who attempted the question showed a poor knowledge and understanding of the topic assessed, 'the Welfare State'.

Part question (a)

Item (i) required candidates to give a definition of a welfare state. It was generally well answered by candidates who attempted to give a definition.

Yet, some candidates used words like "help" and "protection" to define 'Welfare State' and were able to score only 1 mark instead of 2 marks.

For item (ii), candidates were required to name two welfare facilities provided to the people in the Republic of Mauritius.

Many candidates confused 'welfare facilities' with 'welfare features. Many candidates also proposed "Free transport" and 'Housing facilities' without specifying categories of people/citizen who are eligible to benefit from these facilities; they did not score any mark for such answers.

Part question (b)

Item (i): Many candidates had difficulty to define accurately the term "Tax". They only defined it as an amount deducted from products or a value added tax (VAT) on commodities and thus could not score full marks.

In other cases, candidates failed to include key words like "mandatory" or "compulsory" in their definition or either described "Tax" as "income tax" or "indirect tax".

Some others confused "Tax" with "loans".

Item (ii): The institution that collects taxes in Mauritius is the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA). Examples of wrong answers given by candidates were: MIE, MCB, Bank, Government, CEB, Mauritius Revenue Association, Mauritius Reef Authority.

Part question (c)

This question was set on one feature of the welfare state and it proved to be quite challenging for the majority of the candidates. Only a few were able to provide an elaborate explanation of what is meant by "bridging the gap between the rich and the poor". Most responses were quite superficial and evasive. One good explanation was 'to reduce the inequalities/disparities in income/standards of living/access to basic amenities between the rich and the poor'.

Part question (d)

Candidates were asked to give two other features of the welfare state. This was also not satisfactorily attempted by many candidates mainly because they had a limited understanding of the question being asked. They frequently confused 'welfare features' with 'welfare facilities' this time.

- Expected answers were, for example, "A form of government which acts to promote or bring about the well- being for individuals, group or entire population", to score a full mark.
- For a partial mark, an example of expected answers would have been "A welfare state is helping the citizen" or "A welfare state provides benefits/ facilities"
- Examples of answers that would have scored no mark would have been "A welfare state that benefits our society" or "Get protection".

Question 9 (9 marks)

This question carried a total of 9 marks. It was based on Mauritius and its contemporary links with international organisations. It was well attempted in general.

Part question (a)

For item (i), candidates had to write the full form of COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa). It carried 2 marks. This was well attempted mainly by the high achieving candidates but proved to be somewhat difficult for low achievers. Many candidates obtained only partial marks as they were unable to write the full form of this organisation completely.

Item (ii) required candidates to name another member country of the COMESA. This sub-question carried 1 mark and was well answered by many candidates who gave answers such as 'Seychelles', 'Madagascar' and 'Kenya'. However, a few candidates wrote 'Mauritius'.

Part question (b)

Candidates had to name two other international organisations of which Mauritius is a member. It carried 2 marks. This question was well attempted by most candidates. They were able to give answers such as 'IOC', 'IORA', 'UN', 'IOF', 'SADC' and 'AU'. Only a few candidates wrote 'COMESA' as an answer.

Part question (c)

Part question (c) carried 4 marks. Candidates had to give two reasons why it is important for Mauritius to be a member of international organisations. Many candidates attempted this question satisfactorily with answers such as 'to support education, training and research', 'to promote projects in various fields', 'to promote peace, security and stability

to improve economic development' and 'to facilitate and improve the movement of goods, services, capital and labour'. However, a few candidates gave only partial answers for which they only scored partial marks.

Question 10 (13 marks)

This question carried a total of 13 marks. Sub-question 1 was based on the distribution of population in Mauritius, Sub-questions 2 and 3 focused on demographic changes in the island of Mauritius.

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

Sub-question 1

Part question (a) carried four marks. It was based on the statement that 'In Mauritius, the population tends to be concentrated in some regions. Candidates were asked to give two reasons why Port Louis and Plaines Wilhems are the most densely populated districts in Mauritius.

Many candidates focused their answer on Port Louis being the capital and did not elaborate further to get more marks. Some candidates were able to describe the various facilities available in these two districts. Other good responses included the advantages of the climate in each district and the relative size/ area/relief of the districts.

For part question (b), candidates were asked to give two reasons why people are forced to leave their home country and migrate to other countries. Many candidates could not attempt this question properly. The focus was mainly on the push factors. Candidates suggested a lot of pull factors for their answers. Answers which fetched full two marks included the following, but were not restricted only to, war, natural calamities such as droughts, floods, famine, diseases, etc.

Sub-question 2

This sub-question was well attempted by the better candidates who correctly identified better health and medical care and more hospitals as one of the reasons for the decrease in the death rate in Mauritius in the 1950s. One-word answers such as 'hospital' was not acceptable as a reason for the decrease in death rate in the 1950s.

Sub question 3

This sub-question was based on the verbal stimulus "Mauritius is experiencing an ageing population".

Part question (a): Candidates were required to define the term 'ageing population'. The majority of candidates were able to define this term as a population consisting of more old/elderly people.

Part question (b): Candidates were asked to give one socio- economic consequence of an ageing population. Many candidates did not attempt to answer this part question. This item was within the reach of the better candidates only and described the economic problems such as a larger amount of money as pensions, provision of healthcare/ construction of homes for the elderly.