



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

**MAURITIUS
EXAMINATIONS
SYNDICATE**

**NCE 2023 GRADE 9
SOCIAL & MODERN STUDIES**

Subject code: N570

EXAMINER'S REPORT

April 2024

Key messages

- Candidates should read instructions and questions carefully. They need to pay special attention to the command verbs and key words.
- Candidates should try to attempt all questions, especially multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks items, completion of sentences and matching type questions, where words are provided.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The NCE 2023 Assessment paper for Social and Modern Studies (SMS) was set on the whole Grade 9 Teaching and Learning Syllabus. It catered both for the regular programme Grade 9 candidates and the Grade 9+ candidates of the Extended Programme. The overall performance of candidates on the SMS paper was good with a pass rate of 98.5 %.

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 years, it was noted that throughout the question paper, candidates performed generally well on questions which were based on pictures, maps, tables, graphs and diagrams.

The high percentage of blank scripts for Section B suggests that candidates had difficulties when attempting structured short-answer questions. Many candidates wrote only one-word answers to open-ended questions in Section B, which demonstrated a lack of confidence when attempting this part of the question paper.

Social and Modern Studies (SMS) as a subject, aims at promoting an integrated approach in learning about the contemporary society and social change. 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 during different time periods.

To conclude, it should be pointed out that questions which require recall of basic definitions and analysis or application of concepts were out of reach of many candidates. These candidates showed difficulties in basic retention and organisation of knowledge. 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.

QUESTION 1

Question 1 carried a total of 12 marks and was divided into two parts. Part A comprised 7 multiple-choice-questions and Part B consisted of a matching exercise of 5 marks. This question assessed basic knowledge of the syllabus content and was successfully attempted by most candidates regardless of their overall performance of the whole paper. Most of the candidates responded correctly to items (a), (c), (d) and (e). Items (b), (f) and (g) proved to be relatively challenging.

Specific Comments

The answer expected for **item (a)** was B, most candidates successfully recognised 1968 as the year in which Mauritius became independent.

For **item (b)**, many candidates recognised France as the country which co-manages the island of Tromelin with Mauritius. Some candidates chose India which was probably due to the ongoing works in Agalega Islands by India.

Item (c) was mostly well answered by candidates. Candidates correctly chose Rodrigues – Option D as the correct dependency of Mauritius.

Item (d) was also a very scoring question. They easily recognised that Agalega consisted of two islands.

Item (e) was based on the country from which indentured labourers came to Mauritius. The majority of candidates were able to answer this question and correctly identify answer B; India.

Item (f) proved to be more challenging for candidates. The correct answer for this question was 16 years - Option A. Many candidates answered C, 18 years which refers to young adults.

Item (g) revealed a lack of knowledge regarding political parties. A good majority of candidates gave the correct answer which was Sir Gaetan Duval.

Part B was a popular question in which candidates' performance was excellent. They could match the different abbreviations to the name of the correct organisation.

QUESTION 2

It carried a total of 7 marks and consisted of two parts. Both parts were generally well attempted by the majority of candidates. **Part (a)** was based on pictures depicting the changing roles of men and women in the society and candidates had to match each picture to its corresponding description.

Picture 1 was correctly identified as men and women having equal voting rights.

Picture 2 showed household tasks as a shared responsibility.

Picture 3 showed men and women having equal job opportunities.

Picture 4 was correctly identified as girls and boys having equal access to education.

Part (b) consisted of three pictures showing projects that were financed by other nations. Candidates were required to name the projects based on the pictures provided.

Picture 1: It proved to be quite easy for candidates who correctly identified Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport.

Picture 2: Most candidates correctly identified the Plaza Theatre of Rose Hill although a few candidates wrongly identified this picture as the ENT hospital.

Picture 3: Most candidates easily recognized the Multi-sports Complex of Cote D'or.

QUESTION 3

This question carried a total of 11 marks and comprised 2 parts. **Part (a)** consisted of a matching exercise showing 5 pictures of different types of media. This was one of the most popular items where candidates scored well. Most candidates were able to score the maximum 5 marks.

The first picture showed a laptop; second picture newspapers; third picture a mobile phone; fourth picture a television and last picture a billboard.

Part (b) was a TRUE/FALSE exercise. Most candidates correctly identified the statements as True or False.

- (i) This item was based on the strong historical ties of Mauritius with India and the statement was TRUE.
- (ii) Candidates had to recall the socio-economic condition of the people living in the 1960s. The answer was TRUE
- (iii) This sub question was based on geographical knowledge about Port- Louis being as being the least densely populated district of Mauritius. This statement was FALSE.
- (iv) The statement that students pay bus fare to go to school was FALSE.
- (v) Candidates had to identify the MRA as the institution which collects taxes in Mauritius and the answer was TRUE.
- (vi) Candidates had to recognize that unity is important for a society to function properly and the answer was TRUE.

QUESTION 4

Question 4 was on 7 marks. A map showing the various islands forming the Chagos Archipelagos was provided. Candidates were expected to use the map to tick the correct answers.

For part question **(a)**, a few candidates wrongly selected Egmont Islands instead of Diego Garcia and failed to score the mark.

For part question **(b)** most candidates could identify United States of America as the correct answer.

Candidates found part **(c)** rather challenging and failed to recall the name of Chagos Archipelago as the Oil Islands.

Part **(d)** and **(e)** pose some difficulties. Here, it was observed that candidates failed to read instructions carefully. Attention of students should be drawn to the fact that words are indicated in bold to emphasise on the requirements of the questions. For both parts where two answers were required, many candidates provided only one answer and scored only one mark.

For part **(d)**, the two correct answers were Mauritius and Seychelles. Expected answers for part **(e)** were Salted fish and Copra products.

QUESTION 5

Question 5 comprises four different parts with a total of 13 marks. The items were mainly objective-type ones.

In part **(a)**, candidates were given a list of the different types of family from which they were required to allocate the correct type of family to the appropriate picture. This was among the best scoring question of the 2023 NCE paper. Candidates were awarded 1 mark for each correct answer. For the few who failed to score the maximum marks, the main confusion was between extended and nuclear family.

In part **(b)**, candidates were expected to complete sentences by choosing the correct word in brackets. It was observed that many candidates failed to score the maximum marks.

For **(b) (i)** the correct answer was ‘fewer’ and in rare cases candidates chose ‘more’.

The common mistake was in **(b)(ii)**, where candidates opted for immigrants instead of refugees.

Most candidates correctly selected as answer ‘reproduce’ for **(b) (iii)** as the function of the family.

Likewise, for **(b) (iv)**, candidates rightly selected ‘fields’ as a good answer for the type of work mainly done by women long ago.

In part **(b)(v)**, most candidates selected “concrete’ which describe the type of houses in which most people are living in nowadays.

Part **(c)** consisted of a table showing the number of working women in Mauritius from 1995 to 2015. Candidates were expected to study the table and answer the questions. On a general note, it was observed that candidates were able to transfer the data from the table to the various questions. This is a positive point in response to one of the major NCF objectives related to weaving value-based inquiry approach meant to lead young people to address social issues objectively and scientifically.

In part (c) (i), candidates had to find the number of women working in the 1995. Most candidates identified '180500' as the correct answer.

In part (c) (ii), a choice of words was given. The expected answer was 'decreased' for the working women from 2000 and 2005.

Candidates gave 2005 as the correct answer for part (c) (iii).

Candidates had no difficulty in identifying the highest number of working women in Mauritius and scored the mark for writing '2015' which was the correct answer.

Part (d) was about the industry which expanded rapidly in the 1980s in Mauritius. While the correct answer was 'Textile Industry', some candidates wrongly selected 'Sugar Industry'.

QUESTION 6

This question carried a total of 10 marks and comprised three sub parts. The question was based on cyclones that affected Mauritius in the 1960s and their impacts on the island. Parts (a) and (b) were based on pictures showing the tracks of cyclone Alix and cyclone Carol respectively. Part (c) assessed candidates' ability to describe the types of damage that cyclones may cause to the environment.

Part (a)

Candidates were required to identify the names of the cyclones shown in each picture. This part was well attempted by almost all candidates.

Part (b)

Students were required to suggest two reasons why cyclone Carol caused more damage than cyclone Alix. Many students could relate the damage caused by cyclone Carol to its trajectory. They also made the comparison between the highest gusts of both cyclones and concluded that cyclone Carol was more destructive. However, some students provided vague answers such as 'Carol was more powerful/stronger /faster or more violent than Alix', without any comparison to highest gusts of each cyclone.

Part (c)

Few candidates described the impact of cyclones on the environment such as beach erosion, uprooting of trees and destruction of crops. One-word answers were common in this part. Many candidates confused the environmental impact of cyclones with global warming and climate change.

QUESTION 7

This question carried a total of 11 marks. It comprised part (a) and part (b). Part (a) consisted of four items where candidates were required to study Table 2 on the changes in average life expectancy for Mauritius and the world from 2000 to 2020.

Part (a)

Item 1: This question carried 1 mark and proved to be relatively easy. The majority of candidates correctly identified the average life expectancy in Mauritius in 2020 as 74 years. It should be stressed that candidates must clearly mention (years). Some answers also contained mathematical calculations, which were unnecessary in this case.

Item 2: Most candidates correctly identified *'higher'* as the answer.

Item 3: This question required candidates to give two reasons for the constant increase of the average life expectancy in Mauritius. It carried 4 marks, with 2 marks for each reason given. Most candidates were able to answer this question. Common answers related to awareness about healthy living/life style. However, many candidates seemed to have confused 'increase of the average life expectancy' with 'increase in population and provided answers such as *'Higher birth rate'* or *'People reproduce a lot/have more babies.'* which did not score any marks.

Item 4: This question required candidates to identify the main cause of death in Mauritius between 2000 and 2020. It was noted that many candidates wrongly chose *'malaria'* instead of *'diabetes'*. One possible explanation is that they may not have considered the part 'for the period 2000 to 2020'.

Part B

Most candidates understood this question and provided a range of answers which related to how industrialisation brought about social change. It carried 4 marks, with 2 marks for each reason described.

A variety of correct answers were provided and focused on how industrialisation changed the lives of people. Some candidates also acknowledged the negative aspects of industrialisation. These answers were awarded marks if there were proper descriptions provided. Answers such as ‘*pollution*’, ‘*deforestation*’ were considered as partially correct.

It is to be noted that a few candidates wrote ‘*people have jobs*’ instead of ‘*people have more/new jobs opportunities*’ or ‘*new job opportunities were created*’.

A few candidates confused between the impact of industrialisation and job opportunities for women. They provided answers such as ‘*women obtained jobs*’, ‘*women were allowed to work*’, ‘*women obtained the right to work and vote*’. Attention is to be drawn to the fact that women have been working even before industrialisation. Consequently, the above answers were not awarded marks.

QUESTION 8

Question 8 required candidates to recall some concepts as well as reflect on one issue. Part (a) (ii) and (b) proved to be challenging.

Part (a) required candidates to give the definition of a Welfare State. The expected answer was: “*a welfare state is a system of government that provides benefits for supporting its citizens basically those in need*”. Many candidates gave partial answers and scored only 1 mark for only mentioning, for example, ‘*facilities provided by government*’ without referring ‘*to the well-being of the citizen/population.*’ Rather weak responses were noted. Many candidates showed difficulties in explaining how and why the welfare state operates and besides resorted merely to giving its features. Few others mentioned measures instead of defining the Welfare State and could not score any mark. Many candidates were not able to express their ideas clearly and could not score full or even partial mark.

In part **(a) (ii)**, candidates were required to list down two welfare measures taken in Mauritius during 1960s and 1970s. Examples of correct answers were:

Free secondary education; free health care services; introduction of a National Pension Scheme; more primary schools; building of low-cost houses; vaccination and other health care programmes in school; setting up of the Mauritius Family Planning Association and ‘Action Familiale’.

Many candidates did not score the mark for writing only free education. It is to be noted that free education from pre- primary to tertiary level has been from 2016 till now. Likewise, same applied for writing free bus fare; or free housing without giving further information.

Many candidates could not differentiate between the welfare measures during 1960s- 1970s and during 2016 - 2019.

Other examples of wrong answers were:

- Setting up of more secondary school instead of free secondary school
- Free primary schools instead of setting up of more primary schools

The word “more” led many students to score partial mark.

Part **(b)** was 2 marks where candidates could not differentiate between measures of 1960s and 1970s and those measures of the 2016s and 2019s. Common mistakes included unspecific measures or incomplete answers such as ‘free textbooks’ instead of ‘free textbooks from Grade1 to Grade 9’ or ‘free SC and HSC exam fee’ failing to specify at “first attempt”.

Other irrelevant answers were:

- Old age pension
- Free transport
- Free hospitals
- Free secondary education
- Better/ more health

There has been a recent update in the minimum wage and some candidates gave the latest one which does not fall in the welfare measures taken between 2016 and 2019. These candidates could not score their marks. It was observed that whilst candidates were familiar with welfare measures, relating the measures to specific period posed some difficulties.

Part (c) was about waste sorting as an example of collective behavior. Candidates were required to reflect on two positive consequences of waste sorting. This part was wrongly attempted by many candidates. The main difficulty was confusing between the term ‘consequences’ and the terms ‘causes’ and ‘features’.

It was observed that the majority of candidates did not understand the concept of “waste sorting” and ended up giving disadvantages associated to waste/ pollution to the environment that led them to score no mark.

Some candidates also wrote on global warming or climate change without relating the idea to waste sorting. The correct answers that led to full marks were:

- Facilitates recycling, re-using and reducing/ the 3 R’s
- Helps reduce pollution
- Facilitates composting.

QUESTION 9

The question carried a total of 10 marks and comprised three sub parts. It was observed that many candidates did not attempt this question.

Part (a) carried 2 marks and was based on the obstacles Mauritius had to face in the 1960s and 1970s. Candidates were required to give two obstacles that Mauritius had to overcome to address economic problems during that period. Very few candidates could give the correct answers. Many candidates gave factors which affected the Mauritian sugar industry and hence could not score marks.

Other incorrect answers were:

- Fluctuating prices in the world market
- Over dependence on sugar industry

- Rise in unemployment

Part **(b)** required candidates to give two incentives that Mauritius offered to investors in the E.P.Z. This was well-attempted mainly by the high ability candidates but proved to be somewhat difficult for the low achievers. Many candidates mentioned ‘No tax’ instead of tax exemptions.

Part **(c)** carried 6 marks and candidates had to describe three factors that facilitated the ‘Mauritian Miracle’. Many candidates did not attempt this question. It was observed that only high achievers could give the correct descriptions. It was also noted that many candidates gave wrong answers such as ‘Deforestation’ and ‘Unfavourable human capital’

QUESTION 10

This question carried a total of 11 marks and part **(a)** was based on the distribution of population in some regions. Part **(b)** depicted the picture of a desert whereas part **(c)** showed a graph of the population pyramid of a small village in Rodrigues. Overall the candidates performed well in this question which assessed understanding on the topic ‘Population Studies’.

Part **(a)** was based on the distribution of population in some regions which have low and high densities of population. Many candidates failed to define the term ‘population density’ and to mention that it is the number of people living per km².

For **(a) (ii)**, candidates had to describe two factors that attract people to settle in a region. This was a well-answered question. Most candidates showed good knowledge of pull factors although the majority focused on human factors. Physical factors such as availability of water, good climate, good soil and flat relief were rarely provided by candidates.

For part **(b)**, the majority of candidates were able to respond correctly to this question and easily identified the extreme heat which causes less people to live in hot desert areas. Some candidates also mentioned about the lack of water in these regions.

Part **(c)** showed an incomplete graph with the population pyramid of a small village in Rodrigues Island. Most candidates were able to correctly identify the population of women aged 65 and above. For the second part, some candidates found it challenging to complete the graph by showing 300 males for the 0-14 year’s age group. Some candidates drew only half of the bar graph.