



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

**MAURITIUS
EXAMINATIONS
SYNDICATE**

**NCE 2024
Social and Modern Studies**

Subject code: N570

EXAMINERS' REPORT

April 2025

Key Messages

- Candidates are advised to attempt all questions in the question paper.
- Candidates should pay attention to the command word in the question. 'Name', 'List', 'Give', 'Describe' or 'Explain' indicates the kind of answer and the level of elaboration expected by examiners.
- In SMS, it is important to know the exact definitions of key concepts, such as 'population density', 'import substitution strategy', 'migration', and 'push and pull factors'.
- It is important to remember key dates related to key historical events, especially when it comes to the independence of Mauritius and the struggle for the recognition of the Sovereignty of the Republic of Mauritius over the Chagos archipelago.

General Comments

Performance in the SMS paper of 2024 was noticeably lower than in 2023. Candidates scored higher marks in Section A, which consisted mostly of lower-order questions assessing knowledge and understanding of basic concepts in SMS. MCQs, fill-in-the-blanks with options provided, and True/False type questions were also better attempted than open-ended questions. Questions which were supported with visual aids were also generally well done.

However, candidates' scripts showed that they had difficulty addressing higher order questions which required analysis and application of their knowledge to given contexts or situations. The quality of responses produced in Section B was often disappointing. In addition, candidates' poor command of English language also impeded upon their ability to convey their understanding. It was noteworthy that some candidates displayed a good level of understanding in Section A, but left many questions unanswered in Section B. It is also worth pointing out that candidates often failed to score full marks in structured questions as their answers were often vague and lacked precision.

It is worth highlighting that Question 3 (b), where candidates were expected to remember specific years corresponding to historical events related to the history of the Chagos Archipelagos, proved to be challenging to many.

Specific Comments

Question 1

Question 1 carries a total of 17 marks and is divided into two parts. Part A consists of 10 **Multiple Choice Questions** and Part B consists of a **True/False** exercise of 7 marks.

This question tests basic knowledge of candidates and was well attempted by most candidates, regardless of their overall performance in the whole paper.

Part A

Most of the candidates responded successfully to items (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (i). Items (a), (g), (h) and (j) proved problematic to some candidates.

Item A The answer expected was **C, 1992**. Many candidates successfully recognised '1992' as the year in which Mauritius became a Republic. Some chose 1968, showing confusion between the date when Mauritius became independent and the date it became a Republic.

Item B was well answered by most candidates who correctly chose 18 years (**answer B**) as the voting age in Mauritius. The common wrong answer was 16 years old, which is the authorised legal age for work in Mauritius.

Item C was well-attempted generally. Most candidates successfully recognised 'Waste' (**answer D**) as an example of output in the production process in a factory.

Item D While most candidates easily recognised 'Tourism' (**answer D**) as being part of the tertiary sector, a few incorrectly chose fishing.

Item E Most candidates successfully recognised 'Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam' (**answer C**) as the leader of the Independence Party in 1967.

Item F Many candidates correctly chose 'Ile de Sable' (**answer B**) as the name given to Tromelin by the French in 1722. A few wrongly chose 'Ile Bourbon', showing confusion between Tromelin and Réunion island.

Item G Many students had difficulty identifying the events occurring in 1977 in Mauritius. While many did acknowledge *Introduction of free secondary education* (**answer C**) as the correct answer, a few incorrectly chose *Strike of secondary school students*. Given that the dates of these two events are very close, students are often confused. This shows that students are unable to understand that the Strike in 1975 was linked to the introduction of free secondary education.

Item H proved to be more challenging for candidates. Students had to identify factors which **were not** impacts of industrialisation in Mauritius. The correct answer for this question was '*Increased death rate*' (**answer C**). Many candidates chose answer B (Reduced birth rate) or answer D (Change in the family structure).

Item I was successfully tackled by most, with candidates correctly identifying 'China' (Option B) as supporting Mauritius in developing the Jin Fei Smart City.

Item J Candidates were asked to identify why children were provided with milk and vitamins in the 1960s in Mauritius. While most candidates correctly identified '*They suffered from malnutrition*', a few chose '*They suffered from malaria*' showing some confusion about the reason why children were provided with milk.

Part B

On the whole, candidates did well in this **True/False** exercise. Some had difficulty with Items (c), (d) and (e).

- (a) Candidates were asked whether a welfare state adopts social measures to reduce poverty, which is **TRUE**.
- (b) Candidates were asked whether senior citizens had to pay bus fares. The answer is **FALSE**
- (c) This question asked whether France claimed sovereignty over the island of Tromelin, which is **TRUE**
- (d) Candidates had to answer whether Rodrigues had only one health centre. The answer is **FALSE**.
- (e) Candidates were asked if the PMSD wanted integration with Britain in 1968, which is **TRUE**
- (f) Candidates had to identify whether it was the Central Housing Authority (CHA) that collects taxes in Mauritius – the answer is **FALSE**
- (g) Candidates were asked if the population of Mauritius increased between 1940 and 1970 – the answer is **TRUE**

Question 2

Question 2 carried a total of 11 marks and was divided into two parts.

Part(a) consists of 5 open-ended questions based on the media. Candidates generally did very well in this part question. Few candidates described the pictures instead of answering the questions, leading to a loss of marks.

- Item 1:** Most candidates identified key ideas such as ease and speed of communication and the idea of eliminating distance in communication to show social media changed how people communicate.
- Item 2:** Most candidates mentioned relevant ideas such as keeping people informed, sharing information, and giving advice before a natural disaster.
- Item 3:** Most candidates provided examples such as online learning and doing research through the internet to explain the importance of media in learning.
- Item 4:** Many candidates mentioned the influence of the media on food habits, such as the media's influence on people's choice of vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods.
- Item 5:** Candidates provided examples of changing leisure activities such as spending more time watching television, surfing the internet, and online gaming.

Part (b) comprised a matching exercise and short-answer questions on the topic of regional organisations.

For item (i), the logo of the United Nations (UN) was correctly identified by most candidates. However, some confused the logo of the OIF with that of the IOC.

For item (ii), the most commonly identified organisations were the *SADC* and the *AU*. A few candidates incorrectly gave examples of regional organisations that had been provided in the previous part.

Item (iii) was poorly attempted by most candidates. They mostly provided vague answers such as *receiving help* or *support from other countries*, which lacked precision and could not be given credit.

QUESTION 3

This question carried a total of 11 marks and comprised 2 parts, part (a) and part (b).

Part (a) consisted of 6 items and carried 6 marks. Candidates had to complete each sentence with the correct word. Three options were provided within brackets for each item.

This part was relatively well done by the majority of candidates. However, the following items posed difficulty to some candidates:

For item (i), some candidates chose 'factories' instead of 'fields'.

For item (iii), some candidates chose 'size' instead of 'structure'.

For item (iv), some candidates chose 'textiles' instead of 'sugar'.

For item (vi), some candidates chose '18' instead of '16'.

Part (b) carried 5 marks. It consisted of a matching exercise where candidates had to match dates with the corresponding historical events related to the excision and fight for the return to Mauritius of the Chagos Archipelago.

An important number of candidates struggled with this question. Linking dates to historical events of the Chagos Archipelago was beyond the reach of many. Students are encouraged to apply their knowledge of French and English colonisation and the fight for independence to remember the key dates in relation to the Chagos Archipelago.

QUESTION 4

Part A

Question 4 carried a total of 6 marks and was divided into Part sections (a) and (b). Part A was a matching-type question. Candidates were expected to match each picture of a specific family type to its corresponding definition in Column B for a maximum mark of 4 marks. This exercise was generally well-attempted.

This question assessed basic knowledge on the topic of family, and was correctly attempted by most candidates. Candidates who failed to score full marks on this question showed confusion between the “Traditional Extended family” and the “Modified Extended Family”. It was also observed that many candidates confused between pictures of the reconstituted families and nuclear families.

Attention is brought to the fact that students regularly overwrite on their first answer and this makes it difficult for examiners to know what exactly they intended to write. This practice is strongly discouraged.

Part (b) assessed knowledge of two main functions of the family for a total of 2 marks. Each correct answer carried one mark. This part question was satisfactorily done by the majority of candidates.

Some candidates confused between functions and types of families. Many candidates did not recall the functions of the family. However, they managed to score partial marks by describing some of the functions of the family in simple terms. Some candidates struggled to properly identify the appropriate terms to describe the function of the family. Others lost marks by being too vague or too descriptive. Correct answers included “*Provided us a place to live*” or “*helped us students to learn the social order*”. One-word answers like: *Love, Care, Respect* were considered incorrect as they lacked precision. Answers that were given full credit included “*For reproduction*”; “*For emotional support*”, “*For protection*” and “*For safety and security*”.

Question 5

Question 5 carried a total of 5 marks and comprised two parts. It was based on the topic of historical ties with European countries.

Part (a) was a fill-in-the-blank exercise. For item (i) most candidates correctly identified France as a major trading partner of Mauritius.

Item (ii) required candidates to identify two other European countries that have historical ties with Mauritius. This question was not attempted by many candidates. Other candidates incorrectly identified non-European countries such as India and China.

In part (b), candidates were required to describe two ways the French Development Agency (AFD) helped Mauritius in its development. Few candidates attempted this part question. A common wrong answer in this part was *learning of and the promotion of the French language in Mauritius*. *The setting up of the Alliance Française* was often incorrectly mentioned by candidates.

QUESTION 6

This question carried a total of 11 marks and consisted of two part-questions.

Part Question (a)

This part comprised two questions and carried two marks each. It was based on the sugar industry in the 1960s.

For item (i) candidates had to write about how the revenue obtained from the sugar industry was used. Only few students were able to attempt this question successfully. Many candidates scored partial marks as they provided examples instead of explanations as answers.

For item (ii) candidates were required to name two factors that affected the sugar industry in the 1960s. Many candidates struggled with this item. Common incorrect answers included *unemployment* and *people refused to work in the sugar industry as it was a seasonal job*. Moreover, many candidates were confused between factors affecting the sugar industry and the obstacles to the economic development of the country. The expected answers were *Fluctuating prices in the world market*, *Rising wage of workers* and *Unfavourable climatic conditions*.

Part Question (b) was based on the obstacles to the economic development of the country in the 1960s and 1970s. **Item (i)** carried 3 marks. For this item, candidates were required to name three obstacles that the country faced. This question was well attempted by most candidates, with *scarcity of natural resources*, *small domestic market*, *shortage of management and technical skills*, *insufficient funds for investment purposes*, *distance from the foreign market*, and *distance from source of raw materials* all being acceptable answers.

However, a few candidates failed to score the maximum marks in this question as they provided incorrect answers such as *unemployment*, *cyclones* and *housing*.

Item (ii) carried 4 marks. For this item, candidates had to describe two main factors that facilitated the economic growth of our country after independence. Acceptable answers included *favourable human capital*, *rise in life expectancy*, *cultural diversity*, *trade openness*, *a good financial system*, *high investment in health institutions* and *high investment in educational institutions*. Most candidates scored only partial marks on this question as they were often vague in their answers and were not precise enough.

Question 7

Question 7 was on the topic of the Import Substitution Strategy adopted by the Government in the early 1960s. It was divided into parts a, b, c and d for a total of 12 marks.

Part (a) carried 2 marks and required two reasons as to why the government adopted the ISI strategy in the early 1960's. Correct answers included *To encourage local entrepreneurs, To create local products to reduce import, and to increase self- sufficiency.* Common wrong answers included the following: *To obtain resources by importing goods to start industrialisation* and *To receive more money.*

Part (b) assessed knowledge of two import substitution factories that were set up in the 1960's in Mauritius, for two marks. Many candidates did not understand the question properly and gave answers that were not connected to the question at all. Many candidates left this part question unanswered as well. For example, they wrongly gave *raw materials; EPZ or indentured labourers* as answers when the expected answers were *Micro Jewel Ltd; Oil & Refineries Ltd* etc.

Part (c) was a question for 2 marks requiring one reason explaining why the import substitution policy was not a success. Many candidates were unable to answer this part question properly. Many others scored only a partial mark. The expected answer was *The number of industries set up remained limited.* Examples of incorrect answers included *Self sufficiency did not increase, there were many obstacles that Mauritius could not face.* Examples of responses that only scored a partial mark included *It did not contribute to the creation of many jobs* and *It did not create employment.*

Part question (d) was divided into two interrelated questions. Item (i) asked for two advantages offered by Mauritius to attract investors in the EPZ for one mark for each correct answer proposed. Item (ii) required an explanation why the factors mentioned in item (i) attracted investors, for two marks each.

To score the two marks in item (ii), candidates needed to explain why the advantage mentioned in item (i) was attractive for investors. Most candidates struggled to do so satisfactorily. Some candidates properly identified an advantage in item (i) but only described it, without explaining how it benefits the investors. There were frequent cases where candidates described an advantage unrelated to the answer they gave to item (i) (for e.g, mentioning accessibility in item (i) and explaining it with political stability in item (ii)). Credit could not be given to such answers,

Question 8

Question 8 carried a total of 9 marks and required candidates to, firstly, **explain** three forces driving social change, namely; (a) Social Movements, (b) Environmental Change, and (c) Technological Innovations, providing the correct definitions. Secondly, candidates were required to give an **example** of each.

This proved to be a challenging question to many candidates. Stronger candidates were able to come up with the correct definitions and examples, scoring full marks. Other candidates were not able to properly explain the terms and obtained partial marks or no marks. It was encouraging to see that more able candidates were able to provide correct examples of the three forces.

Item (a) The correct answer was *social movements are purposeful organised groups motivated to work towards a common goal*. Many students failed to explain the term 'Social Movements' and mostly provided incomplete or wrong answers.

Stronger candidates were able to come up with correct examples of social movements, with 'Students Strikes and Workers' Protests commonly provided as answers. It should be stressed that candidates were asked about specific names of social movements. Consequently, answers such as 'protests', 'protestations', 'manifestations' were not accepted as these were not the names of any particular social movement.

This item showed that many candidates had difficulty remembering the definition of key concepts in SMS.

Item (b) The correct answer was *'Environmental change are changing weather patterns and climate that increasingly affect the daily lives of people everywhere.'*

Most candidates provided answers that earned partial marks only because the element of change was not shown. Many were not able to show how changing weather patterns bring about changes in people's lives. A common wrong answer was *Changes in environment*.

Some good examples of Environmental Change were *'Climate Change', 'Global Warming', 'Stronger/more frequent cyclones', 'Flash Floods'*. On the other hand, only *'cyclone'* was not a correct example as cyclones have always occurred. Some candidates incorrectly wrote about the consequences (*'Waste Sorting', 'No Plastic Bag'*) of Environmental Change instead of examples.

Item (c) The correct answer was *'Technological Innovations are changes in technology that have completely changed the way people meet, learn, work, play and travel'*

Many candidates failed to define the term and merely gave examples of Technological Innovations. Others gave partial answers without showing the element of change.

Most candidates came up with a range of good examples for Technological Innovations. Answers such as, *'Mobile Phones', 'Smart phones', 'Metro', 'Internet'*, were the most common answers. On the other hand, answers such as *'phones', 'trains'* and *'cars'* were not accepted as they have existed for a very long time. Other wrong answers were *'New Communications'* or *'New ways of Communications.'*

Question 9 (9 marks)

Question 9 was based on Population Studies – distribution and density. The question carried a total of 9 marks and comprised three parts. It was noted that many candidates did not attempt this question at all.

Item (a) carried 2 marks and candidates had to define (i) the study of population and how it changes over time for 1 mark and (ii) the number of people per unit area for 1 mark.

Many candidates failed to answer *demography* for item (i). *Demographic Transition* was also accepted as answer but not *Demographic Transition Model*.

For item (ii), the expected answer was *Population density*. For this part also, many candidates failed to give the correct answer, at times limiting themselves to *density*, which could not be given credit.

Question Part (b) carried 4 marks. Candidates had to give two reasons to explain why it was important to study changes in population structures over time. This was poorly attempted by many candidates as many of them focused on Birth rate and Death rate and number of people in a country which was wrong when trying to explain changes in population structure. Population structure illustrated by Population pyramids can offer insights on the percentage of different age groups and gender ratio, which in turn can help governments decide on allocation of resources for the future. Data can be used from the pyramid for present and future and prediction for the needs of the population and can also be compared with other countries as different types of pyramid refer to different stages of the Demographic Transition Model.

Question Part (c) carried 3 marks and was divided into 2 parts. For part (i), candidates had to name a region besides a mountainous region where population size is small. Very few candidates were able to name another region such as desert areas, barren land, marshy land, forested areas or even cold arid areas. Many candidates wrongly named villages of Mauritius or simply wrote village/ ghost village.

In Part 9 (ii) candidates had to give an explanation as to why the population size was small in such areas. Candidates who were able to identify a region in part one easily explained how different factors such as unfavorable weather conditions, lack of economic facilities and unproductiveness of land resulted in a small population size. A noticeable number of candidates did not even attempt this part of the question.

Question 10 (9 marks)

This question carried a total of 9 marks and was based on Migration and factors affecting migration.

In part (a), candidates had to differentiate between internal and international migration . Many candidates failed to properly define the term internal migration as they did not mention that it occurs within a country. Many limited their answer to *movement from town to town* or *from village to town*. On the other hand, some candidates successfully explained that international migration is when people move to another country. As a result, many candidates obtained only partial marks.

For part (b), candidates had to define the term 'immigrant'. It carried 2 marks. Most candidates failed to recognize that immigrants are people coming or moving into a country. Many answers were limited to a person leaving a country which defines the term emigrant rather than immigrant.

Part (c) was divided into 2 parts. It carried 5 marks. In item (i), for 1 mark, candidates had to name the factors that force people to leave a region. Most candidates correctly identified *Push factors*.

In part (ii) candidates had to describe two factors that can force people to leave a region. Many candidates limited their answer to one-word answers like *too hot / too cold*. This resulted in obtaining only partial marks, as a description was required.