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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

NEPALI

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 3202/01

Paper 1

General comments

Performance on this Paper varied widely. While a small number of outstanding candidates performed exceptionally well in all sections, there were some general patterns of strengths and weaknesses across the different questions. Most candidates were clearly most comfortable with **Section A**, the short compositions in Nepali, which accounts for 50 of the total 100 marks. The two translations (**Section B**), however, presented most candidates with certain difficulties, which are outlined in detail below. The final reading comprehension (**Section C**) proved most challenging to candidates, with many candidates' performance falling well below the levels they had achieved in the earlier sections.

Most candidates conformed to the instructions on the cover and the rubrics, answering the correct number of questions in the correct way. However, while only a very small number of candidates made errors in conforming to the question rubric, it appears that a significant minority of candidates did not manage their time appropriately and were unable to complete all sections or all questions.

A fair number of candidates exhibited a poor grasp of basic Nepali spelling and grammar as well as an apparent lack of experience in thinking and writing with originality in the compositions (**Section A**) and a general carelessness in reading and responding to the question. Overall, marks in all sections were awarded primarily for correct spelling, correct use of grammar, and secondarily for imaginative use of language and originality of thought. Those candidates who performed best generally proved themselves in all of these areas.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

In marking the compositions in Nepali, accuracy of spelling and grammar was the main criterion in awarding marks. Credit was also given for imaginative use of language, originality of thought (i.e. avoidance of clichés) and for the structure of essays (i.e. for writing an essay that has a beginning and comes to a conclusion).

A few candidates took the fairly specific composition titles as an opportunity to reproduce lengthy textbook-style passages. For example, a large number of responses to **(c)** (किसानको जीवन) repeated strikingly similar ideas and phrases, such as describing the farmer as अन्नदाता and emphasising at length the importance of farming in sustaining everyone by providing food to the nation. Similarly, many candidates used **(a)** (एउटा गाउँको वर्णन) to recite various general points about villages in Nepal (most starting with some variant of "नेपाल गाउँ नै गाउँले भरिएको देश हो ...") without addressing the aim of this composition, namely the description of a particular village. Some of the best responses managed to combine an original angle on the question with descriptive language and a clear structure, producing compositions that were not only grammatically correct but which were also interesting and highly readable.

Section B

Question 2

As this is an examination in Nepali, candidates were not judged on the quality of their English as much as their understanding of the original text. Their translations did, however, have to be into comprehensible English, however many minor mistakes their English might contain.

The majority of candidates displayed a basic grasp of all the main points in the text, but there were some weaknesses displayed by some candidates. Overall, only a small handful of candidates managed to spell 'Gujarat' correctly, which (although it did not affect their mark) reflects rather poorly on their general knowledge. More importantly, some general awareness might have helped candidates to remember that पश्चिम means 'west' ('east', 'north' and 'south' appeared almost as frequently as the correct translation) and to realise that statements such as 'she walked six miles from Bhojpur to Gujarat' (a common mistranslation) do not make sense. Very few candidates indeed were able to render the common terms सदरमुकाम and गाविस into correct English. Almost no candidates managed to translate the phrase "सदरमुकाम भोजपुरदेखि ६ कोस पश्चिम कोट गाविस-८ की मायादेवी श्रेष्ठ".

Question 3

Marks for the translation from English into Nepali were awarded primarily for the accuracy of the translation and the standard of Nepali grammar, spelling, etc. (as outlined in the general comments above).

Although some of the sentences in the original passage were challenging, many candidates made commendable efforts to render their essential sense into Nepali. Where they could not find the precise synonyms required, most candidates made worthwhile efforts to paraphrase. Candidates often had more difficulty where appropriate syntax in Nepali would have to differ significantly from that in English. In such cases, only the better candidates rendered entire sentences, with sub-clauses, as coherent and fluent units in Nepali rather than trying to string together individual phrases in the same order as they appeared in the original text. Complex sentences which contained multiple clauses proved difficult for the majority of candidates and only the best candidates managed to render them with elegance to produce a natural-sounding Nepali translation.

Candidates had particular trouble translating the phrase 'mental asylum', with answers ranging from the colloquial (but acceptable) पागलखाना to more rather far-fetched efforts such as दिमागी अस्पताल or even मानसिक शरणार्थी शिविर. Again, some candidates displayed a lack of general knowledge, which was not penalised in itself but contributed to many errors in translation. Thus, most candidates rendered 'Patna' as पाटन rather than पटना. Many candidates insisted on labelling the CE dates in the English original as विक्रम संवत् in Nepali, thus moving Devkota's life back to the nineteenth century. Most candidates also seemed unaware of the meaning of 'crumble' and so translated it as 'start' or 'become severe', guesses which made sense in the context of the sentence but which basic general knowledge would have indicated were incorrect.

Section C

Candidates were expected to demonstrate that they understood the text well and that they could back up their opinions with reasoned, well-written arguments and without quoting long passages verbatim from the text. This section proved the most difficult for most candidates, a large number of whom seemed poorly prepared to take on an exercise of this kind. Weak responses to this section tended to indicate a lack of familiarity with the type of response required in a reading comprehension exercise. A significant number of candidates failed to answer the questions but instead latched onto one or two key words in the questions and then copied sentences directly from the text that they thought might be relevant. Such responses scored poorly, if at all. The best candidates, however, were perhaps at their most impressive in this section, as they used it to demonstrate not only their understanding of the text but also their ability to tackle questions, marshal arguments, use examples and illustrations, and also express their own opinions and provide supporting evidence for their conclusions.

Question 4

Candidates should have produced an accurate own-words summary of the author's complaints about the modern pronunciation of Nepali. As with other questions, a sizeable minority of candidates chose simply to copy one or more sentences from the passage itself without any comment. At the other extreme, some candidates made good general answers about the author's point of view but neglected to cite any of the many specific examples from the passage that would have illustrated the general answer.

Question 5

The best candidates detailed the different potential reasons that the passage had raised for linguistic changes, for example the influence of Bengali, Urdu or English, the role played by westernisation in general and media targeted at the youth market, or the effect of styles of speech of influential figures in society, from pop stars to ministers. The better answers covered some of these points while the weaker answers often fixed on a certain part of the passage and copied text rather than attempting to answer the question.

Question 6

Candidates were asked to evaluate the extent to which particular examples back up the author's argument. However, a large number of candidates reproduced a few of the author's examples with many appending a terse comment such as "यी उदाहरणहरू सार्थक छन्" which made little effort at the analysis called for by the question. Ideally, candidates could have detailed the various examples cited by the author and assessed how appropriate and meaningful each one was. Candidates might then have concluded that some were more telling than others, that some were strikingly true and others perhaps more questionable. Whatever the candidate's personal judgement on these issues, various individual examples should have been addressed and individual assessments of their validity offered. A significant number of responses were either very general or failed altogether to offer an evaluation of the type required.

Question 7

Candidates could have answered this question as a simple 'yes' or 'no' but should have backed up their answer with appropriate argumentation and illustration. This question was apparently the most challenging for many candidates, who seemed not to understand its purpose at all. The question asked whether what the author had seen as decline could also be interpreted as progress. In other words, it invited candidates to comment on whether language change was necessarily a negative process or whether there could also be positive aspects to some of the developments about which the author had complained. Only a tiny proportion of candidates grasped the point of this question and responded appropriately; others tended to latch onto the word प्रगति and assumed that they were being asked to comment on how progress could be made and wrote in very general terms on the preservation of language and national culture, which bore no relation to the question.