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Lost Spring

Fastrack Revision

Main Points

- ▶ **Saheb**
 - Occupation – ragpicker
 - Financial condition – poor, barefoot
 - Residence—lives in Seemapuri, Delhi in transit homes
 - Garbage – gold
 - Loves watching tennis
- ▶ **Changes in Saheb's circumstances**
 - Work in tea stall
 - ₹ 800 and meals
 - No longer his own master
 - Lost carefree look, looks sad
- ▶ **Mukesh**
 - Glass bangle maker of Firozabad
 - Ambition – to drive a car, become a motor mechanic
- ▶ **Working conditions**
 - Glass furnaces with high temperature
 - Dingy cells with no air and light
- ▶ **Living conditions**
 - Stinking lanes choked with garbage
 - Crumbling walls
 - Wobbly doors – no windows
 - Animals and humans live together
- ▶ **Mukesh's family**
 - Grandmother, father, elder brother, sister-in-law
 - Father—first a tailor, then a glass bangle maker, could not afford renovation of house or education of children
 - Only had enough to eat
- ▶ **Youngmen of Firozabad**
 - Inherited art
 - Trapped in vicious conditions of middlemen
 - Unwilling to get organised and cooperative for fear of the police
 - Weary of poverty, greed and injustice
- ▶ **Factors/people responsible for their plight**
 - Stigma of caste
 - Poverty
 - Moneylenders, middlemen, policemen, keepers of law and politicians

Summary at a Glance

- ▶ 'Lost Spring' is an excerpt from a book titled *Lost Spring, Stories of Stolen Childhood* authored by Anees Jung, an Indian writer. She analyses the grinding poverty and traditions which condemn these children to a life of exploitation. The story deals with two children in two parts.

Sometimes I Find a Rupee in the Garbage

The author interviews Saheb—a ragpicker who scrounges the garbage heaps for some coins and other things to sustain his living. Saheb lives in Seemapuri with his family which has migrated from Dhaka in Bangladesh. He moves about barefoot, which he attributes to their tradition simply to hide his poverty. The author advises him to go to school. Saheb complains of lack of opportunity and absence of school in his neighbourhood.

Saheb's full name is Saheb-e-Alam which means Lord of the universe. It is ironic. Saheb's being barefoot reminds the author of a priest's barefoot son who wished to have a pair of shoes. After thirty years, the priest's son in Udipi wears shoes—but ragpickers are still shoeless.

Saheb lives in Seemapuri, which ironically is at the periphery of Delhi, the national capital of India, where their living conditions are miserable. Structures of mud with tin and tarpaulin roofs, there is no sewage, drainage or running water. Their only boon is ration cards enabling them to buy grain. Picking garbage earns them daily bread. Ragpicking means fun for children and a means of survival for elders. Saheb picks a job at a tea stall and earns ₹ 800 and all his meals. He appears burdened because he has lost his freedom. He is now a bonded labourer.

I Want to Drive a Car

This part of the story deals with another boy who is also deprived of a carefree, playful childhood—his name is Mukesh. He is a child labourer in a glass factory of Firozabad. Most of the families in Firozabad are engaged in the business of making glass bangles. About 20,000 children work in the glass furnaces of Firozabad. Conditions under which they have to work are very poor. Mukesh takes the author to his dilapidated house, located in narrow lanes. Mukesh's father expresses his inability to change the family conditions, his grandmother regards it their destiny. The author feels that the bangle makers are caught in the vicious circle of pain and misery which has no end.

The author meets the wife of Mukesh's elder brother who covers her face with a veil in front of male members of the family and is the in-charge of cooking. Children of Firozabad are the victims of two worlds: first—they are born in poverty ridden families burdened by stigma of caste; second—victims of a no hope situation—ruled by sahumars, middlemen, policemen, bureaucrats and politicians.



Their desire to dream, dare and do is nipped in childhood. Mukesh is an exception. He aspires to be a motor mechanic. He also realises that dreaming of aeroplanes would be over-reaching himself. Ironically few planes fly over Filrozabad.

Theme

- ▶ The thread that binds the entire story 'Lost Spring'—runs through the miserable plight of street children forced

into labour early in life and denied the opportunity of schooling. Another theme that runs parallel to the major theme is the apathetic attitude of the society and the political figures to these people's misery.

Thus 'Lost Spring' sensitises the reader to the miserable plight of the poorest of the poor and emphasises the urgent need to end the vicious circle of exploitation through education, awareness, cooperative organisation and empowerment.



Practice Exercise



Extract Based Questions

Directions: Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. Unaware of what his name represents, he roams the streets with his friends, an army of barefoot boys who appear like the morning birds and disappear at noon. Over the months, I have come to recognise each of them.

"Why aren't you wearing chappals?" I ask one.

"My mother did not bring them down from the shelf," he answers simply.

"Even if she did, he will throw them off," adds another who is wearing shoes that do not match.

When I comment on it, he shuffles his feet and says nothing. "I want shoes," says a third boy who has never owned a pair all his life. Travelling across the country I have seen children walking barefoot, in cities, on village roads. It is not lack of money but a tradition to stay barefoot, is one explanation. (CBSE SQP 2023-24)

- (a) What is the writer's purpose in allowing the boys to speak for themselves, *via.*, dialogue, as opposed to only a writer's commentary?
- (b) The line, "It is not lack of money but a tradition to stay barefoot" can be best classified as:
 - (i) a fact
 - (ii) an opinion
 - (iii) a theme
 - (iv) a plot point
- (c) Explain any one possible inference that can be drawn from the line, "an army of barefoot boys who appear like the morning birds and disappear at noon".
- (d) Identify the line from the text that bears evidence to the fact that the writer's association with the boys is not a recent one.
- (e) Based on the context provided in the extract, select the most likely comment that the writer would have made, based on the boy's reaction to the mismatched shoes.
 - (i) "Why are your shoes mismatched? That's not a good look."
 - (ii) "Don't worry about your shoes, you can wear a matching pair later."

(iii) "I like your shoes. What matters is that they protect your feet."

(iv) "Have you chosen to mismatch your shoes?"

- (f) Complete the sentence with ONE word.

The phrase "he answers simply", suggests that the boy's response to the writer's question about why he wasn't wearing chappals was

Answers

- (a) The writer's purpose in allowing the boys to speak for themselves, *via.*, dialogue is to give voice to their hopes, dreams and struggles in a way that is immediate and relatable.

Or

The writer's purpose in allowing the boys to speak for themselves, *via.*, dialogue is to add a sense of authenticity and realism to the story.

- (b) (ii) an opinion
 - (c) The inference that can be drawn from the given line is that the boys may belong to poor or marginalised backgrounds and do not have access to proper footwear.
 - (d) The line "Over the months, I have come to recognise each of them." From the text bears evidence to the fact that the writer's association with the boys is not a recent one.
 - (e) (iii) "I like your shoes, What matters is that they protect your feet."
 - (f) straight forward or clear
2. And in dark hutments, next to lines of flames of flickering oil lamps, sit boys and girls with their fathers and mothers, welding pieces of coloured glass into circles of bangles. Their eyes are more adjusted to the dark than to the light outside. That is why they often end up losing their eyesight before they become adults. (CBSE 2023)
 - (a) Complete the sentence with reference to the extract:
Their eyes are more adjusted to the dark than to the light outside because



- (b) Which of the following would NOT be true?
 (i) The hutments were shining and inviting.
 (ii) The children's lives were as bleak as their surrounding.
 (iii) There were no electricity connections.
 (iv) The boys and girls had got used to the dark.
- (c) The bangle workers lose their eyesight before they became adults because:
 (i) they already have poor eyesight.
 (ii) they work in dim light.
 (iii) they are married in childhood.
 (iv) they are malnourished.
- (d) Which of the following most nearly means 'adjusted' in the context of the extract?
 (i) Conditioned (ii) Favoured
 (iii) Accepted (iv) Reconciled
- (e) 'Flickering oil lamps' suggests
- (f) What is the antonym from the extract of the word 'rarely'?

Answers

- (a) they regularly work in dark hutments in flickering dim light
 (b) (i) The hutments were shining and inviting.
 (c) (ii) they work in dim light.
 (d) (i) Conditioned
 (e) the dim light
 (f) Often
3. "Why do you do this?" I ask Saheb whom I encounter every morning scrounging for gold in the garbage dumps of my neighbourhood. Saheb left his home long ago. Set amidst the green fields of Dhaka, his home is not even a distant memory.
- (a) Who is speaking to whom in the first line?
 (i) Saheb, to the narrator
 (ii) Saheb's mother to her son
 (iii) The narrator to Saheb
 (iv) Narrator to the bangle-seller
- (b) 'Why do you do this?' What does the person being asked this question do?
 (i) Raggicking
 (ii) Bangle making
 (iii) Working in front of the furnace
 (iv) Loitering aimlessly
- (c) Saheb's home before coming to Delhi was in
- (d) What does 'encounter' mean in the extract?
 (e) Who is the author?
 (f) What is Saheb's full name?

Answers

- (a) (iii) The narrator to Saheb
 (b) (i) Raggicking
 (c) Dhaka
 (d) In the extract 'encounter' means to meet.

- (e) The name of the author is Anees Jung.
 (f) Saheb's full name is Saheb-e-Alam.
4. There were many storms that swept away their fields and homes, his mother tells him. That's why they left, looking for gold in the big city where he now lives.
- (a) They left their homes because
- (b) What do they do in the big cities?
 (c) Where does 'he' live now?
 (d) What does 'swept away' mean in the extract?
 (e) Who is the writer of the lesson from which the above extract has been taken?
 (i) William Douglas (ii) Alphonse Daudet
 (iii) Kamala Das (iv) Anees Jung
- (f) Whose mother is being referred to?
 (i) Mukesh's (ii) Saheb's
 (iii) The narrator's (iv) None of these

Answers

- (a) their homes were swept away by storms
 (b) They do raggicking in the big cities.
 (c) Now 'he' lives at Seemapuri, a place on the periphery of Delhi.
 (d) In the extract 'swept away' means destroyed.
 (e) (iv) Anees Jung
 (f) (ii) Saheb's
5. "I have nothing else to do," he mutters, looking away. "Go to school." I say glibly, realising immediately how hollow the advice must sound. "There is no school in my neighbourhood. When they build one, I will go." "If I start a school, will you come?" I ask, half-joking. "Yes," he says, smiling broadly. A few days later I see him running up to me. "Is your school ready?" "It takes longer to build a school." I say, embarrassed at having made a promise that was not meant. But promises like mine abound in every corner of his bleak world. (CBSE SQP 2021 Term-I, Modified)
- (a) Saheb's muttering and 'looking away' suggests his
- (b) Of the four meanings of 'glibly', select the option that matches in meaning with its usage in the extract.
 (i) Showing a degree of informality
 (ii) Lacking depth and substance
 (iii) Being insincere and deceitful
 (iv) Speaking with fluency
- (c) Who do you think Saheb is referring to as 'they', in the given sentence?
 "When they build one, I will go".

(d) Select the option that lists the feelings and attitudes corresponding to the following:

(1) I ask half-joking

(2) ...he says, smiling broadly

(i)	(1) part arrogance, part seriousness (2) hesitation
(ii)	(1) part amusement, part irritation (2) submissiveness
(iii)	(1) part concern, part hurt (2) pride
(iv)	(1) part humour, part earnestness (2) self belief

(e) List any two possible reasons why Saheb's world has been called 'bleak'.

(f) Who is 'I' in the first sentence?

Answers

- (a) embarrassment
(b) (ii) Lacking depth and substance
(c) In the given sentence Saheb is referring to the officials.
(d) (ii) (1) part amusement, part irritation
(2) submissiveness
(e) (i) The poor socio-economic conditions.
(ii) The denied opportunities of schooling.
(f) Saheb is 'I' in the first sentence.
6. Food is more important for survival than an identity. "If at the end of the day we can feed our families and go to bed without an aching stomach, we would rather live here than in the fields that gave us no grain," say a group of women in tattered saris when I ask them why they left their beautiful land of green fields and rivers. Wherever they find food, they pitch their tents that become transit homes. Children grow up in them, becoming partners in survival. And survival in Seemapuri means ragpicking. Through the years, it has acquired the proportions of a fine art. Garbage to them is gold. It is their daily bread, a roof over their heads, even if it is a leaking roof. But for a child it is even more. (CBSE SQP 2020-21, Modified)
- (a) The phrase 'transit homes' refer to the dwellings that are
- (b) Identify the figure of speech used in the sentence "Garbage to them is gold".
(i) Hyperbole (ii) Simile
(iii) Synecdoche (iv) Personification
- (c) Choose the term which best matches the statement "Food is more important for survival than an identity".
(i) Immorality (ii) Necessity
(iii) Obligation (iv) Ambition

(d) What does 'acquired the proportions of a fine art' convey?

(e) What does 'tattered' mean?

(f) Give an antonym of 'acquired'.

Answers

- (a) temporary
(b) (i) Hyperbole
(c) (ii) Necessity
(d) It conveys that ragpicking has attained the position of a skill.
(e) 'Tattered' means old and torn.
(f) An antonym of 'acquired' is lost.
7. For one who has walked barefoot, even shoes with a hole is a dream come true. But the game he is watching so intently is out of his reach.
- (a) Who is being talked about?
(b) Why is he wearing shoes with a hole?
(i) He didn't want to get it repaired
(ii) He can't afford to buy a new pair
(iii) He has only one pair of shoes
(iv) None of the above
(c) What game is he watching so intently?
(i) Cricket (ii) Basketball
(iii) Tennis (iv) Football
(d) How did he get the shoes?
(e) The word 'intently' means

Answers

- (a) Saheb is being talked about.
(b) (ii) He can't afford to buy a new pair
(c) (iii) Tennis
(d) Someone gave the shoes to him.
(e) in a way that shows great attention.
(f) The game is out of his reach because he is very poor.
8. This morning, Saheb is on his way to the milk booth. In his hand is a steel canister. "I now work in a tea stall down the road," he says, pointing in the distance.
- (a) Why has Saheb switched over to a tea stall?
(i) He likes to work there
(ii) He earns more than ragpicking
(iii) He enjoys more freedom at tea stall
(iv) None of the above
(b) How much does Saheb earn at the tea stall?
(i) ₹ 500 per month
(ii) ₹ 300 and a meal
(iii) ₹ 800 and all his meals
(iv) None of the above
(c) Steel canister has taken the place of

- (e) To whom does the canister belong?
 (f) Where is Saheb going?

Answers

- (a) (ii) He earns more than ragpicking
 (b) (iii) ₹ 800 and all his meals
 (c) rag bag
 (d) Saheb is not happy at the tea stall. He has lost his freedom.
 (e) The canister belongs to the man who owns the tea shop.
 (f) Saheb is going to the milk booth.
9. Mukesh insists on being his own master. "I will be a motor mechanic," he announces.
 "Do you know anything about cars?" I ask.
 "I will learn to drive a car," he answers, looking straight into my eyes. His dream looms like a mirage amidst the dust of streets that fill his town Firozabad, famous for its bangles. Every other family in Firozabad is engaged in making bangles. It is the centre of India's glass blowing industry where families have spent generations working around furnaces, welding glass, making bangles for all the women in the land it seems.
 Mukesh's family is among them. None of them know that it is illegal for children like him to work in the glass furnaces with high temperatures,.....
 (CBSE 2021 Term-1, Modified)
- (a) What does the author try to convey by the expression 'being his own master'?
- (b) Through the expression "... looking straight into my eyes" the narrator is trying to convey:
 (i) Mukesh displayed no fear in his eyes
 (ii) Mukesh was not feeling shy while speaking to the narrator
 (iii) Mukesh was conversing in a very friendly manner with the narrator
 (iv) Mukesh displayed his courage and determination in expressing his opinion
- (c) 'His dream looms like a mirage.' This indicates
- (d) "None of them know that it is illegal for children to work in glass furnaces." Select the inference in reference to the above statement.
 (i) The children are innocent and do not realise the hardships of life.
 (ii) Their illiteracy and ignorance are exploited by the unscrupulous businessmen.
 (iii) They have no one to support them legally to get out of the situation.
 (iv) The children are ready to work in glass furnaces due to their poverty.
- (e) List any two facts about Firozabad.
 (f) Who is the author?

Answers

- (a) The author tries to convey that Mukesh takes his own decisions.
 (b) (iv) Mukesh displayed his courage and determination in expressing his opinion
 (c) that his dream is illusive and elusive.
 (d) (ii) Their illiteracy and ignorance are exploited by the unscrupulous businessmen.
 (e) (i) Almost all the families are engaged in bangle making.
 (ii) The children work in a hazardous situation.
 (f) Anees Jung is the author.
10. In this case, the elder is an impoverished bangle maker. Despite long years of hard labour, first as a tailor, then a bangle maker, he has failed to renovate a house, send his two sons to school.
- (a) Whom does the impoverished bangle maker refer to?
 (b) What business was he into before being a bangle maker?
 (i) Ragpicker (ii) Tailor
 (iii) Tea stall owner (iv) None of these
 (c) What did he fail to do even after working so hard?
 (i) Could not purchase a house
 (ii) Could not renovate his house
 (iii) Could not send his sons to school
 (iv) Both (ii) and (iii)
 (d) How many men are there in the family?
 (e) Give a word which can replace 'renovate' in the passage.
 (f) Give an antonym of 'impoverished'.

Answers

- (a) The impoverished bangle maker refers to Mukesh's father.
 (b) (ii) Tailor
 (c) (iv) Both (ii) and (iii)
 (d) There are three men in the family.
 (e) A word which can replace 'renovate' is refurbish.
 (f) An antonym of 'impoverished' is wealthy.
11. "Can a God-given lineage ever be broken?" she implies. Born in the caste of bangle makers, they have seen nothing but bangles—in the house, in the yard, in every other house, every other yard, every street in Firozabad.
- (a) What does 'she' refer to in the first line?
 (b) What does 'she' imply?
 (i) Silent acceptance of fate is the only way
 (ii) Destiny can be changed
 (iii) They can change their God given lineage
 (iv) None of the above
 (c) What harm does working in bangle factory cause to the workers?
 (i) Loss of hair (ii) Loss of hearing ability
 (iii) Loss of eyesight (iv) None of these

- (d) From which book of the author this lesson has been taken?
 (e) The word 'imply' means
 (f) What are their eyes adjusted to?

Answers

- (a) In the first line 'she' refers to Mukesh's grandmother.
 (b) (i) Silent acceptance of fate is the only way
 (c) (iii) Loss of eyesight
 (d) This lesson has been taken from the book 'Lost Spring: Stories of Stolen Childhood'.
 (e) to suggest something in an indirect way or without actually saying it.
 (f) Their eyes are more adjusted to the dark than to the light outside.



Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. What is Saheb looking for in the garbage dumps? Where is he and where has he come from?

Ans. Saheb is a ragpicker. He lives at Seemapuri—a place on the periphery of Delhi. He belongs to a Bangladeshi refugee family which migrated to Delhi from Dhaka. He, according to the author, scrounges for gold in garbage. Gold here implies something valuable like silver coin, shoes, currency notes, etc.

Q 2. What reason does Saheb's mother cite to her son for leaving their homeland? What name do we give to such people?

Ans. Saheb's mother who is a Bangladeshi, tells her son that they had to leave their homeland in search of a better life and livelihood as their home and fields were destroyed in various storms which rendered them penniless and homeless. People who leave their homeland country for social, economic or political reasons and seek shelter in other countries are called 'refugees'.

Q 3. What explanation does the author give for the children not wearing footwear?

Ans. The author Anees Jung has come across several other children, besides ragpickers like Saheb, who walk barefoot, during her travels across India. On being asked, they tell her that walking barefoot is their tradition. However, the author believes that in India, staying barefoot is most probably a forced necessity due to perpetual poverty rather than a faithful adherence to an old tradition.

Q 4. What is the full name of Saheb? How is it full of irony?

Ans. Saheb's full name is Saheb-e-Alam. It means 'Lord of the universe'. His name is a complete irony. Saheb is a poverty stricken barefoot, homeless ragpicker who scrounges the garbage dumps of Delhi streets to earn his living. Thus, his name is in total contrast to his very existence and so is deeply ironical.

Q 5. Explain the use of literary devices in the sentence "an army of barefoot boys who appear like the morning birds and disappear at noon."

Ans. There are two examples of literary devices—metaphor and simile. The author uses the metaphor of 'army' to describe the group of ragpicking boys who invade the garbage dumps in the streets of Delhi. Next she uses the simile 'like the morning birds' to describe the manner in which the ragpickers converge on and desert the garbage dumps like the scavenger birds haunting these dumps. Just like the birds, the ragpicking boys are free spirited and enjoy their freedom.

Q 6. Explain how does ragpicking carry two different meanings for children and elders? (CBSE 2015)

Ans. Ragpicking carries two different meanings for children and the elders. For children, garbage is something wrapped in wonder as, sometimes they happen to find a silver coin or a ten rupee note. But for their parents it is a means of earning their livelihood—it is a means of survival for the family.

Q 7. 'Garbage to them is gold'. Why does the author say so about the ragpickers of Seemapuri? (CBSE 2019)

Ans. Garbage is gold to the ragpickers of Seemapuri because sometimes they actually find silver coins or some other valuables. Moreover, by picking rags and selling them for cash they are able to buy food to sustain their families.

Q 8. Why do slums like Seemapuri mushroom around big cities?

Ans. Exodus from neighbouring countries like Nepal and Bangladesh to India and migration from villages to the metropolitan cities within India, in search of livelihood is an endless phenomenon. This migratory population settles on the periphery of big cities and starts doing odd jobs like ragpicking to earn bread for the family. Such illegal settlements abound around all big cities. Dharavi in Mumbai and Seemapuri bordering Delhi are some glaring examples.

Q 9. Despite being refugees, how do people in Seemapuri procure their ration cards?

Ans. The refugee population of Seemapuri represents a large vote bank for the political parties and at some stage these illegal occupants of the government land around cities are provided ration cards to get their names on voter's list, to benefit the political parties in election process.

Q 10. How do squatters of Seemapuri live?

Or

Describe the living conditions of the people of Seemapuri.

Ans. The squatters who come from Bangladesh back in 1971, live in pitiable conditions. They live in structures of mud, with roofs of tin and tarpaulin, devoid of sewage, drainage or running water. Wherever they find food, they pitch their tents which become their transit homes. Children grow up in them and become partners in survival. And survival in Seemapuri means ragpicking.

Q 11. Saheb wanted to be a master of his own destiny. Comment.

Ans. Saheb is fed up with a life of picking rags. He wants to be the master of his own destiny, like children of the affluent families in his neighbourhood. He too wants to go to school and to play (tennis). But the object poverty and the necessity to make both ends meet do not allow him to fulfil his wish. His taking up a job at a tea stall is an attempt to be the master of his destiny. Unfortunately it further enslaves him.

Q 12. How are the tennis shoes a dream come true for Saheb?

Ans. Saheb got a pair of discarded tennis shoes of a rich boy with a hole in one of them. Wearing them hardly bothers him, for one who has walked barefoot, even shoes with a hole, is a dream come true. At least now he can dream of playing tennis with shoes on, whenever he gets a chance.

Q 13. "I go inside when no one is around." Where does Saheb go? Why?

Ans. Saheb goes to the tennis court of a neighbourhood club. Whenever the friendly gatekeeper allows him. He goes there to use the swing when no one is around. However, he has a strong desire to play tennis whenever he could get a chance to do so.

Q 14. Would you agree that promises made to poor children are rarely kept? Why do you think this happens in the incident narrated in the text?

Ans. Yes, the promises made to the poor children are hardly ever kept. Actually when the rich people come across the children from poor section of society, they don't register their presence who they think are the nuisance, when, in the text, the author encourages Saheb to study and offers to open a school, it ignites a spark in him to study but the author was quite casual while making a promise.

Q 15. After reading the chapter 'Lost Spring' we come to the conclusion that Firozabad is an entirely neglected city? Give reasons.

Ans. The author accompanies Mukesh to his home in Firozabad. They walk down stinking lanes choked with garbage, past homes that remain hovels with crumbling walls, wobbly doors, no windows. Moreover, majority of the people in Firozabad are uneducated and poor. Despite a nation wide ban on child labour, there are more than 20,000 children working in the glass furnaces with high temperature.

Q 16. Describe the atmosphere in the glass furnace. How does working in them affect the young children?

Ans. The glass furnaces of Firozabad are not at all well-lit and well-ventilated. These are unhygienic and dingy hovels. Working continuously for hours in these furnaces with high temperatures bends the backs of young children which leads to loss of vision at an early age and makes them old before their time.

Q 17. How does Mukesh's grandmother view the family occupation of bangle making and the resultant poverty?

Ans. Mukesh's grandmother views the occupation of bangle making as sheer destiny of her family. Her husband's blindness, their misfortune and impoverished conditions, she feels, are ordained by Destiny. Years of deprivation and suffering have made her accept everything in the name of karma or fate.

Q 18. Why do you think, being born in the caste of bangle makers has become both a destiny and a curse?

Ans. Being born in the caste of bangle makers is both a destiny and a curse. By virtue of their birth, extreme poverty, lack of education and opportunity, they are bound to take up the profession of bangle making at an early age. Their destiny becomes a curse for them as once in this profession, they are in tight grip of a vicious circle. All doors close on them and within a short span of time they end up losing their spirit and eyesight.

Q 19. Will wearing bangles, that she helps in, making on her wedding day eventually change Savita's life?

Ans. Savita is a child labourer who makes bangles in Firozabad. She is unaware of the auspicious implication of bangles she helps in making. But it is an irony that when she grows up, gets married and wears these bangles, her married status will hardly bring any positive change or auspiciousness in her life. Rather, by the time she gets married, her eyesight might already have started failing her.

Q 20. 'Mukesh is a rebel'. Do you agree? Give reasons in support of your answer.

Ans. Like other children of Firozabad, Mukesh too is born in a poverty hit family in a caste of bangle makers. Likewise, he has also not received any education but instead, he is a child labourer doing mind numbing work in the glass furnaces. But unlike his peers, his fire has not extinguished. Yes, he is a rebel in that sense. He at least dares to dream of a different line of work and wishes to become a motor mechanic.

Q 21. Can Mukesh achieve his dream?

Ans. Mukesh is a totally different guy. He has a vision of his own. Though born in a family of bangle makers, he doesn't seem to succumb to the family profession. He retains a ray of hope in his heart and a fire in his spirit. Yes, he can definitely achieve his dream. When one conceives then only he can achieve. If Mukesh sticks to his dream, no power can stop him from being a motor mechanic.

Q 22. Why could the bangle makers not organise themselves into a cooperative?

Ans. Generations of family subservience to middlemen, combined with lack of education, awareness and acute poverty has broken the spirit of the younger generation also. They are deadly scared of organising themselves into a cooperative. They think by doing so, they will have to bear the wrath of the police. They lack proper leadership also. So, they are aware that the vicious nexus of sahunkars, middlemen, politicians and police would never allow them to form cooperative.

Q 23. Mention any two problems faced by the bangle makers of Firozabad?

Ans. The bangle makers of Firozabad are financially very weak. They can hardly make their both ends meet. They have no money to do anything except making bangles. Secondly the place where they work is unhygienic devoid of sufficient light and air which poses a serious health hazard resulting in the loss of eyesight at an early age.

Q 24. 'Little has moved with time, it seems, in Firozabad'. State any one reason why the writer says this.

(CBSE SQP 2021)

Ans. 'Little has moved with time, it seems in Firozabad'. Anees Jung means by this statement that hardly any progress or development has taken place in Firozabad. Despite years of mind numbing toil of the bangle makers, the families were still living their life in poverty and dissatisfaction. They could not earn enough to be able to build a proper shelter for them or get educated as they all were victims of middlemen and touts.

Q 25. How was Saheb's life at the tea stall? (CBSE 2020)

Ans. Saheb's life at the tea stall was not a carefree one. He had to act according to the master. He was no longer his own master. So, he was not happy even though he earned ₹ 800 and all his meals.

Q 26. "Listening to them, I see two distinct worlds ..." In the context of Mukesh, the bangle maker's son, which two worlds is Anees Jung referring to? (CBSE 2018)

Ans. The first world being referred to here is of the family, which is caught in a web of poverty burdened by the stigma of the caste in which they are born. The second world is a vicious circle of the sahuks, the middlemen, policemen, bureaucrats and politicians.

Q 27. The description of Seemapuri creates a very dismal picture. Explain. (CBSE 2023)

Ans. Seemapuri is on the periphery of Delhi yet it seems miles away from it. Seemapuri has been infamous for its filthy living conditions, poor sanitation and lack of basic amenities. It is densely populated with migrants who come from various parts in search of work. Thus, the description of Seemapuri creates a very dismal picture.



Long Answer Type Questions

Q 1. Grinding poverty and tradition condemn the children of ragpickers and bangle makers to a life of exploitation. Such children are deprived of all opportunities in life. Mukesh who opts out of the existing profession of his forefathers by resolving to start a new job of a motor mechanic symbolises the modern youth. What lesson do we learn from Mukesh's example?

Ans. Besides the grinding poverty, tradition also plays an equal role in condemning the children of ragpickers and bangle makers to lead a life of exploitation. On one side is the family trapped in poverty and burdened by stigma of caste they are born in, on the other side

is a vicious circle of heartless, inhuman Sahuks, the middlemen, the policemen, the so called keepers of law, the bureaucrats and the politicians. All these factors conspire together to weave a web, from which it is almost impossible to get out. Those trapped in this web, don't have the courage to break out of it. Mukesh is like a ray of hope with his clear and confident vision of becoming a motor mechanic. He desires to tread on the untrodden path. The hardships like long distance to the garage. Where he will be going to learn the work of a motor mechanic doesn't deviate him. He is quite firm in his decision. He is prepared to walk the long distance. Mukesh symbolises the youth of his clan. If this persists, the day is not far when a new generation will usher and drag his tribe out from the dark and dingy homes of these poverty stricken workers.

Q 2. The barefoot ragpickers of Seemapuri live on the periphery of Delhi, yet, metaphorically speaking, miles away from it. Comment.

Ans. Seemapuri is on the periphery of Delhi. It forms the border of Delhi. Approximately 10,000 ragpickers live in it. The unhygienic condition they live in, scoffs at the capital city of the country. They live in mud houses with roofs of thatch and tarpaulin, no sewage or drainage system or running water. They have come from Bangladesh as refugees. They hardly have their identity. They do have ration cards which enable them to buy food at cheap rates. Womenfolk wear tattered saris. They survive on picking rags. Such a destitute plight of the ragpickers speaks volumes of the stark negligence and apathy of the Delhi Government which has totally failed to improve their lot. Though Seemapuri is at the periphery of Delhi—so close to Delhi, the advantages such as education, proper living conditions like cleanliness and a decent life style is far far away from their reach.

Q 3. The bangle makers of Firozabad make beautiful bangles and make everyone happy but they live and die in squalor. Elaborate.

Ans. The city of Firozabad is known to be the city of beautiful glass bangles. Every other family is engaged in making bangles. Families have spent generations working around furnaces, with very high temperatures, in dingy cells without air and light. The surroundings they live in are horrible—stinking lanes choked with garbage, homes are the hovels with crumbling walls and wobbly doors with no windows, crowded with families of humans and animals coexisting in a primeval state. They have accepted it as their destiny which can never change. Therefore, they don't even think of changing their profession. Mukesh's father is an impoverished bangle maker who, despite his long years of hard labour, has failed to renovate a house or send his two sons to school. What he has managed to do is teach them the art of bangle making which goes on from one generation to another. So, though they fill the life of other with smiles by making beautiful bangles, they live and die in the squalor.

Q 4. Why do you think child labour should be eliminated and how?

Ans. Children are the leaders of tomorrow. be it India or any other country. Child labour prevails rampant in every corner of India. This is a slur on the forehead of the country. Certainly there is a law banning child labour and stringent punishment exists for anyone who practises it. Despite this law, numerous industries in our country like the bangle industry, tobacco industry, carpet weaving factories, match-stick manufacturing units, firework factories and the agriculture sector, employ young children as they provide cheap labour. Every child has a right to education, child labour should be abolished completely. If the children are suppressed and exploited, a generation is ruined. Think of the future of such nation public awareness, ban on child labour, enforcement of law, compulsory and free education for children upto 14 years of age, vigil by government agencies and N.G.Os will go a long way in eliminating child labour and making our future generation physically, mentally and emotionally liberated.

Q 5. What forces conspire to keep the workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad in poverty? (NCERT)

Ans. The workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad remain in perpetual poverty. Rather they have been living in such a destitute condition for the last many generations. There have not been even the slightest change in their life style. Mukesh's father has worked extremely hard but he has failed to renovate his old crumbling house and send his two sons to school.

Certainly there are forces behind their pitiable plight which keep conspiring to keep the workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad in constant poverty. Lack of education and awareness, stigma of being born in the caste of bangle makers, vicious nexus between the Sahukars, middlemen, politician and police all these suppress and oppress the bangle makers. Together, these factors have imposed the baggage on the child that he cannot put down. And before he is aware, he accepts it as naturally as his father. To do anything different would mean to dare and daring is not a part of his growing up. Besides, if at all they think of organising themselves into a cooperative, they will be hauled up by the police, beaten and dragged to jail for doing something illegal.

Q 6. How is Mukesh more ambitious in life than Saheb? Give a reasoned answer.

Or

How is Mukesh's attitude towards his situation different from that of Saheb? Why? (CBSE 2015)

Ans. Saheb and Mukesh both represent the child labour in our society. Saheb is a ragpicker and Mukesh belongs to a family of bangle makers. If we make a comparison between the two, we find Mukesh more ambitious and daring than Saheb. Saheb finds pleasure in the work he and his parents have been doing, but Mukesh unlike other boys in Firozabad doesn't want to follow the profession of making bangles. No one else could dare to think of breaking the conventional style of living. Mukesh dreams of becoming a motor mechanic. He has already decided to go to a garage and learn about cars. Though the distance to the garage is too long, he is ready to walk through. He is determined to be his own master.

Saheb on the other hand has made a sacrifice of his freedom as a ragpicker and has taken up the job at a tea stall which gives him ₹ 800 and all his meals. But he finds it quite burdensome. The tea canister which he carries seems heavier than the ragbag. He has lost his liberty.

Q 7. What could be some of the reasons for the migration of people from villages to the cities?

Ans. Man survives on three basic needs, food, home and clothing, the world over. People in all countries and societies struggle to fulfil those needs. For some it is quite easy but for others it is a very tough task to make both ends meet. In almost all the metropolitan cities, we witness a continuous influx of migrants from small villages of course their purposes may vary. Some come for higher and better education, some for materialising their dreams, there are still some who come for seeking an identification. In other words, we may say that facilities and opportunities which are absent in the villages, impel people to migrate to the cities.

Social, economic and political environment plays a vital role in their city bound journey. Poverty, lack of facilities and opportunities, oppression and suppression by powers that be, natural calamities like food, famine and personal necessities and tragedies, all contribute to the migration of people from villages to the cities.



Chapter Test

Extract Based Question

Q 1. 'Why not organise yourselves into a cooperative?' I ask a group of young men who have fallen into the vicious circle of middlemen who trapped their fathers and forefathers.

(a) Who is asking whom in the first line?

(b) What does 'I' suggest the young men?

(c) Why can't they form a 'Cooperative'?

- (i) They are trapped by middlemen
- (ii) They are satisfied and happy
- (iii) They are illiterate
- (iv) All of the above

(d) Choose an antonym of 'vicious'.

- (i) Brutal (ii) Fierce
(iii) Gentle (iv) Malicious

(e) A word that can replace 'Forefathers' is

(f) Who is the author of the lesson?

Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 2. Is ragpicking same for the children and the elders? Comment.
- Q 3. What is it that stops the bangle makers organise themselves into a cooperative?

Q 4. Describe the condition of Firozabad in the light of the lesson 'Lost Spring'.

Long Answer Type Questions

- Q 5. How can one interpret the life of the bangle makers?
- Q 6. Give a comparative account of Saheb and Mukesh.