

Short-Answer Questions

Q.1. Why does the author say that the bangle makers are caught in a vicious web?

[CBSE (AI) 2010]

Ans. The author says that bangle makers are caught in a vicious web because they are not able to form co-operative societies for their betterment and are forced to follow and obey sahuks and policemen.

Q.2. Who is Mukesh? What is his dream?

[CBSE Delhi 2012]

Ans. Mukesh is the son of a poor bangle maker of Firozabad. He dreams of becoming a motor mechanic and a car driver. In fact, he insists on becoming his own master.

Q.3. Why could the bangle-makers not organise themselves into a co-operative?

[CBSE (AI) 2012]

Ans. Most of the young bangle-makers have fallen into the trap of the middlemen. They are also afraid of the police. They know that the police will haul them up, beat them and drag to jail for doing something illegal. There is no leader among them to help them see things differently.

Q.4. What does the writer mean when she says, 'Saheb is no longer his own master'?

[CBSE Delhi 2009]

Ans. The writer meant that till Saheb was a ragpicker, he was a carefree boy, who would work, have time for himself and enjoy the work he was doing. But from the time he started working in a stall with others supervising his work, he changed. He had to become responsible and could not be free like earlier. He was no longer his own master.

Q.5. What does the title 'Lost Spring' convey?

[CBSE (AI) 2009]

Ans. Spring is associated with childhood. Like spring, a child blooms in childhood. However abject poverty and thoughtless traditions result in the loss of child-like innocence and much needed education. Millions of children like Saheb and Mukesh lose the spring in their lives because they are compelled to do hazardous work to provide a living for their family and themselves. Thus the title brings out the dejected life of the child labourers and their deprivation of the blessings of childhood.

Q.6. What is the condition of the children working in the glass furnaces of Firozabad?

Ans. More than 20,000 children illegally work in the glass blowing factories in Firozabad. They work around furnaces in high temperature to weld glasses. They work in dingy cells without light and air. Their eyes are adjusted more to “the dark than to the light outside”. They work all day long. Many of them lose their eyesight before they become adults.

Q.7. Why don't the younger ones of the bangle makers do anything else?

Ans. The years of mind numbing and hard toil kills the desire of making new attempts to improve their condition and the ability to dream. In Firozabad, doing any other work needs rebellion, strong will and the determination of the bangle makers to do something go along with the family tradition because of lack of awareness, education and opportunities.

Q.8. What did garbage mean to the children of Seemapuri and to their parents?

[CBSE (AI) 2015]

Ans. For elders of Seemapuri, since they are ragpickers, garbage is a means of survival. However to the children of Seemapuri, garbage is wrapped in wonder. Sometimes they expect to find a coin, which raises their hope of finding more.

Q.9. What does Saheb look for in the garbage dumps?

[CBSE (AI) 2015]

Ans. Saheb looks for some silver coin or currency note. It is as valuable as gold for him.

Q.10. “It is his karam, his destiny”. What is Mukesh's family's attitude towards their situation?

[CBSE (AI) 2015]

Ans. Mukesh's grandmother regards it as their destiny. She says that they were born in the caste of bangle-makers and have seen nothing but bangles in their lives. Mukesh's

family had mutely accepted it as their destiny and had stopped taking any initiative to change their fate.

Q.11. How is the bangle industry of Firozabad a curse for the bangle makers?

[CBSE Delhi 2016]

Ans. Men have to work in dingy cells without air and light. As a result, they lose the brightness of their eyes and go blind with the dust from polishing the glass bangles. They are also exploited by moneylenders, police, bureaucrats and politicians. They live in a state of intense poverty and have to go without food for days. Therefore it is a curse for them.

Q.12. Describe the irony in Saheb's name.

[CBSE (AI) 2015]

Ans. Saheb's full name is Saheb-e-Alam which means 'Lord of the Universe'. But in stark contrast to his name, Saheb is poverty stricken, barefoot, homeless rag picker who scrounges the garbage dumps of Delhi for his livelihood. His name is in total contrast to his very existence and is thus ironical.

Q.13. What does the reference to chappals in 'Lost Spring' tell us about the economic condition of the rag pickers?

[CBSE (AI) 2016]

Ans. The rag pickers were extremely poor. They did not have any money to buy chappals. They were poor and impoverished. They lived a hand-to-mouth existence. They were exploited and had no other work to do. They did not have a house to live in too.

Long-Answer Questions

Q.1. Grinding poverty and tradition condemn the children of ragpickers or 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?

[CBSE (F) 2013]

Ans. It is not only the grinding poverty but also tradition that condemns the children of ragpickers or bangle makers to live a life of exploitation. On one side is the family, trapped in poverty and burdened by stigma of the caste they are born in, on the other side they are trapped in the vicious circle of inhuman Sahukars, the middlemen, the policemen, the so called keepers of law, the bureaucrats and the politicians. All of them have created a situation, from which there is no way out. The trapped do not have the guts to break out of it. Mukesh, in fact is like a ray of hope with his dreams of becoming a motor mechanic. He wants to opt out of the existing profession of his forefathers. He has resolved to start a new job as a motor mechanic. The long distance to the garage where he will learn the work of a motor mechanic does not deter him. He is prepared to walk. But he is firm. He symbolises the youth of his clan. If this persists, the day is not far when a new generation will bring brightness and hope to the dark and dingy homes of these poverty-ridden workers.

Q.2. How is Mukesh more ambitious in life than Saheb? Give a reasoned answer.

[CBSE (F) 2013]

OR

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

[CBSE Delhi 2015]

Ans. Mukesh is definitely more ambitious than Saheb. Unlike most of his friends in Firozabad, Mukesh did not want to follow the profession of making bangles. No one else could dare to think of breaking the conventional style of living. Mukesh dreamt of becoming a motor-mechanic. He had already decided to go to a garage and learn about cars. Though the garage was a long way from his home, he was prepared to walk that distance. He insisted on becoming his own master.

Saheb, on the other hand had sacrificed his freedom as a ragpicker to take up a salaried job that would pay him 800 rupees and give him all his meals. Now he was no longer his own master. He had lost his carefree look (which he had when he was a

ragpicker). The can that he carried seemed heavier than the bag he carried as a ragpicker, for this job was not to his liking.

Q.3. The barefoot ragpickers of Seemapuri live on the periphery of Delhi yet, metaphorically speaking, miles away from it. Comment.

[CBSE (AI) 2009C, CBSE (F) 2013]

Ans. The barefoot ragpickers of Seemapuri live on the periphery of Delhi yet, metaphorically speaking, miles away from it, sums up the true condition of the ragpickers of Seemapuri. Seemapuri is a slum area, which houses approximately 10,000 ragpickers. They live in mud houses with roofs of tin and tarpaulin. There is no sewage, drainage or running water. They came here from Bangladesh in 1971 and have been living here ever since without any identity of their own or permits, but they have ration cards and their names figure in the voter's list. Women wear tattered saris. Survival in Seemapuri means ragpicking. This is an example of the gross negligence and apathy of the Delhi Government. It has failed to do anything for them. Though Seemapuri is so close to Delhi, almost on its periphery, but the glitter and glamour, advantages like education, proper facilities for living a clean and decent life are beyond the reach of these slum dwellers of Seemapuri, which is so close to Delhi yet so far.

Q.4. The bangle makers of Firozabad make beautiful bangles and make everyone happy but they live and die in squalor. Elaborate.

[CBSE Delhi 2010]

Ans. The bangle makers of Firozabad live in utter poverty, generation after generation. They believe that they are the people who are destined to work as glass banglemakers. They make beautiful bangles for women but they live in the dark. The workers have to look at the hot bright furnaces while polishing bangles. While welding pieces of coloured glass into bangles they have no other option but are forced to sit near flickering lamps. Hence, they are forced to stay in dark room huts and their eyes are not in a position to see the daylight outside. They become blind quite early in life. They are in a vicious circle tossed around by moneylenders, middlemen and politicians. Instead of helping them, the law enforcing authorities only prey on them.

Q.5. Give a brief account of the life and activities of people like Saheb-e-Alam settled in Seemapuri.

[CBSE Delhi 2011]

Ans. Saheb is a poor boy belonging to a refugee family from Bangladesh. His family came to Delhi and settled in the trans-Yamuna area called Seemapuri. Here they have no work to do. They pick garbage for their livelihood. Saheb also, like others, looks and searches the garbage dumps for some coins. They leave their houses in the morning with a bag on their back to collect something from the garbage. They remain barefoot. It has become their habit not to wear any footwear. The families like Saheb's left behind a

life of abject poverty in flood-hit areas of Bangladesh and came to India. They move to big cities in the hope of getting some work. In the absence of work, they begin rag picking.

Q.6. 'Lost Spring' explains the grinding poverty and traditions that condemn thousands of people to a life of abject poverty. Do you agree? Why/Why not?

[CBSE (AI) 2011]

Ans. Yes, I fully agree that 'Lost Spring' explains abject poverty. Saheb-e-Alam came along with his family from Bangladesh to Delhi. His family settled on the banks of the Yamuna river. Here, they have no work to do and no house to live in. So they began the work of rag-picking. His family lives a hand-to-mouth existence. Thus this lesson deals with the plight of street children like Saheb-e-Alam, and Mukesh of Firozabad working in a glass bangle factory. The children of such families are forced to labour early in life and denied the opportunities of going to school. These children are trapped in the vicious circle of social stigma, tradition, poverty and exploitation. Thus the title of the story rightly explains and brings out the depravity of child labour in our country.

Q.7. What contrast do you notice between the colour of the bangles and the atmosphere of the place where these bangles are made?

Ans. The dusty streets of Firozabad, the bangle making district, are overflowing with garbage and the stink is overwhelming. The hovels where the bangle makers dwell have walls that are crumbling down, with unstable doors and no windows. The conditions are so terrible that families of humans and animals live together. The drabness and lack of colour in the lives of these people contrast starkly with the colour of the bangles which lie everywhere—"sunny gold, paddy green, royal blue, pink, purple, every colour born out of the seven colours of the rainbow". The unhappiness and tedium in the lives of the bangle makers contrasts the joy and merriment that their bangles will bring to the women who will buy and wear them.

Q.8. What did the writer see when Mukesh took her to his home?

Ans. The writer realised that it was a slum area. The lanes were stinking and were choked with garbage. The homes looked like hovels. Their walls were crumbling. The doors were wobbly, with no windows. The homes were crowded with humans and animals living together. Mukesh's home looked like a half-built shack. In one of its parts, a firewood stove had a large vessel on it. A frail young woman cooked the evening meal. She was the wife of Mukesh's elder brother. As Mukesh's father came in, she brought her veil closer to her face. The old man was a poor bangle maker. Even after long years of hard labour, he had been unable to renovate his house. He was unable to send his two sons to school. Mukesh's grandmother was also there. Her husband had become blind with dust from the polishing of glass bangles.

Q.9. Describe the difficulties the bangle makers of Firozabad have to face in their lives.

OR

Describe the circumstances which keep the workers in the bangle industry in poverty.

[CBSE Delhi 2015]

Ans. The bangle-makers of Firozabad live in utter poverty generation after generation. They believe that they are the people who are destined to work as glass bangle-makers. They make beautiful bangles for women but they live in dark. The workers have to look at the hot bright furnaces while polishing bangles. While welding pieces of coloured glass into bangles they have no other option but are forced to sit near flickering lamps. Hence, they are forced to stay in a dark room and their eyes are not in a position to see the daylight outside. They become blind even before they become adults. Their life is embroiled in a web that is created the moneylenders, middlemen and politicians. Instead of helping them, the law enforcing authorities only prey upon their misfortunes.

Q.10. In the lesson 'Lost Spring', Saheb and Mukesh are deprived of their childhood pleasures and education. Noble Peace prize winners Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai have been fighting for the rights of the children. Motivated by these activists, you write an article on the topic, 'Evils of child labour and denial of Education'. You are Mahesh/Malvika. Write your article in about 125-150 words.

Ans.

EVILS OF CHILD LABOUR AND DENIAL OF EDUCATION

By– Malvika

Child labour has been a major problem not only in India but in all the developing countries. It is a great social problem.

We often find children working in dhabas, factories, tea-stalls, fields and homes. They often become ragpickers and street performers. All this deprives children of a normal, carefree childhood. Schooling becomes a distant dream and a perpetual state of poverty becomes a reality. Dreams become a mirage.

Child labour is often borne out of the need for survival. Often the reason is to increase the income of a poor family. Industries often employ children under 14, in the hope of reducing the labour cost in their organisation.

In a developed society where every citizen counts and all citizens have to have proper education, health care support, games and entertainment, a child with less or absolutely no education finds it hard to survive.

Taking up a small job as a domestic help or in a restaurant for a nominal salary of ₹ 750-1800 per month, does not leave a child with enough time for primary and secondary education. All this renders a child completely illiterate, unskilled and perhaps unhealthy.

Free education should be provided to poor children to motivate their parents to send them to school. The government should come forward with schemes for upliftment of the poor and unemployed. This will take away the burden of earning their livelihood from the tender shoulders of poor children. Hence, no child should be engaged as labourers, both from a legal point of view as well in the interest of the child's future.

Q.11. “*But promises like mine abound... in their bleak world.*”

Saheb and others like him spend their life on unfulfilled promises. One role that the youth can play to improve their conditions is by volunteering in programmes like, ‘Each one Teach one’.

You are Vibha Raghunathan, the Head Girl of Bal Vidyalaya, Rohtak. You and some other students of the school are touched by the plight of the slum kids, who would love to be educated but can't because of poor economic conditions. You and your friends wish to make a difference by teaching these kids. Draft a notice not exceeding 50 words, making an appeal for generous help and inviting other students for the same purpose.

Ans.

NOTICE

Bal Vidyalaya, Rohtak

May 11, 2017

EACH ONE TEACH ONE

A school trip every Sunday is being planned to the nearby slums. The purpose is to teach the slum children. Those who are interested in being a part of this noble cause can attend a meeting at 4:00 pm on Tuesday, June 2, 2017 at the school auditorium. All are welcome.

Vibha Raghunathan

(Vibha Raghunathan)

Head Girl