



QUESTION BANK – LOST SPRING
Sub: ENGLISH

Class: XII

SUMMARY-

The first part tells the author's impressions regarding the life of poor rag pickers. The rag pickers have come from Dhaka. Furthermore, the settlement of the rag pickers is in the area of Seemapuri. Destruction has come in their fields and homes due to the storms. They had come to the big city in the hope of finding living there. However, the reality was, in fact, painful for them and they had to face many hardships. They are certainly poor and lack various resources.

The writer watches Saheb every morning as he scrounges for "gold" in the neighbourhood. The means of survival for these rag pickers is the garbage. Furthermore, for the children, it is a wondrous thing. The children are able to find a coin or two from it. These people have ambitions and desires. The problem is that they do not know the way to make them possible. There are quite a few things that they are unable to reach. Later Saheb joins a tea stall where there is a possibility for him to earn 800 Rupees and all the meals. However, this job has deprived him of his freedom. As such their condition is pretty hopeless and full of misery.

The second part explores the life of Mukesh. Mukesh is a boy who belongs to the family of Bangle-makers. Firozabad is famous for its amazing glass-blowing industry. There is an engagement of nearly 20,000 children in this particular business. Furthermore, no one over there understands or respects the law that forbids child labour. Moreover, the living condition, as well as the working environment, are both horrendous.

These children live in dreary cells. Also, they work close to hot furnaces. This is certainly very dangerous as it makes these children blind when they enter adulthood. Furthermore, these children have to deal with the pressure of debt. Moreover, they are unable to think of a solution to solve this problem. There is no way for these children to come out of this trap.

The policemen, bureaucrats, middlemen, and politicians will all hinder their way of progress. The women in the household consider it to be their destiny or fate. As a result of such thinking, they just follow the established tradition. There is something different about Mukesh. He is not like the rest of the folk there. This is because Mukesh has big dreams. He has a desire to become a motor mechanic in future. The garage is far away from where he lives but he has the determination to walk.

Theme of the Lesson

- **Child Labor:** The story focuses on the exploitation of children in both rag-picking and the glass-blowing industry. It reveals how children are pushed into labor instead of enjoying a childhood and education.
- **Poverty and Social Injustice:** The author emphasizes how poverty drives children into dangerous and exploitative work. The system of poverty is shown to trap these children, preventing them from breaking free.
- **Lost Childhood:** The most prominent theme is the loss of childhood, as these children are deprived of basic rights such as education and safety, which hinders their emotional and intellectual development.

RTC/ COMPETENCY BASED QUESTIONS

1. My acquaintance with the barefoot ragpickers leads me to Seemapuri, a place on the periphery of Delhi yet miles away from it, metaphorically. Those who live here are squatters who came from Bangladesh back in 1971. Saheb's family is among them. Seemapuri was then a wilderness. It still is, but it is no longer empty. In structures of mud, with roofs of tin and tarpaulin, devoid of sewage, drainage or running water, live 10,000 ragpickers. They have lived here for more than thirty years without an identity, without permits but with ration cards that get their names on voters' lists and enable them to buy grain.

1. "a place on the periphery of Delhi yet miles away from it" means –

- i. Seemapuri is not in Delhi
- ii. Seemapuri is in Delhi
- iii. Seemapuri is different from the rest of Delhi
- iv. Seemapuri is near Delhi

a. i, ii, iii, iv

b. ii, iii

c. i, ii

d. iii, iv

A. b

2. Find a synonym of outskirts

A. Periphery

3. Which of the following best describes a squatter?

a. One who lives on a land not belonging to him

b. One who sits cross legged

c. One who spends all the money he has

d. None of these

A. a

4. Why do they have only ration cards ?

A. The ragpickers aim at mere survival and so the authorities provide them ration cards through which they get cheap ration. Other than that, these people never ask for any permit or identity card.

5. Find a synonym of without

A. Devoid

2. . And survival in Seemapuri means rag-picking. 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.

1. What 'more' does the garbage mean for the children?

A. It proves to be a means to fulfil their desires by providing torn shoes, a coin, old clothes and other such wonders.

2. Why is ragpicking an art?

A. Ragpicking is an art because the ragpicker should have an eye to search the valuable things in a heap of garbage

3. "It is their daily bread, a roof over their heads, even if it is a leaking roof." This statement means

1. The roof is made of garbage

2. The bread is made of recycled garbage

3. They earn money for bread by selling things found in the garbage

a. 1, 2, 3

b. 1 only

c. 3 only

d. None of these

A. c

3. . 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.

1. Mirage here means _____

a. An aeroplane

b. A hope that cannot be achieved

c. An image seen in hot weather in the deserts

d. none of these

A. b

2. Why every other family in Firozabad is engaged in making bangles?

a. They don't know any other work

b. Firozabad is the centre of India's glass-blowing industry

c. They don't dare do anything else

d. All of these

A. D

3. Why does the author say that "making bangles for all the women in the land it seems"?

A. She says this because in Firozabad numerous glass bangles are made. It appears that all the women buy and wear bangles made here.

4. Find a synonym of fireplace.

A. Furnace

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Seemapuri (is) a place on the periphery of Delhi yet miles away from it metaphorically. Justify this statement.

Ans. Geographically, Seemapuri is a place on the outskirts of Delhi. It houses migrants from Bangladesh, who earn their living as rag pickers. A run-down place that lacks amenities of sewage, drainage, or running water, it is unlike the life of glitter and glamour in Delhi.

2. Through the years rag picking has acquired the 'proportion of a fine art'

in Seemapuri. Justify the statement.

Ans. The means of survival of the migrants of Bangladesh in Seemapuri is rag picking. Garbage to them is gold. Like a fine art that has no end in appealing to the sense of beauty, the rag pickers scrounging the garbage is a never-ending process which provides them their daily bread day after day.

3. Does rag picking mean the same thing for parents and children? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans. No, rag picking is not the same for parents and children. For the elders, rag-picking is a necessary evil-the only means of survival as it provides them their daily bread. On the other hand, the children view the garbage as a mine of gold. They marvel at what they might find in the garbage dumps. A chance finding of a currency note or a coin thrills them beyond imagination and provides them hope of finding more.

4. Why was not Saheb happy on getting a job?

Ans. Saheb was not happy on getting a job in a tea stall for a salary of Rs.800/- per month as he lost his freedom. He had to carry the stall owner's steel canister in place of his bag. He has lost his carefree look. He was now no longer his own master.

5. Why don't the bangle makers of Firozabad organise themselves?

Ans. The bangle makers are trapped in the vicious circle of middlemen and police. If they organise a co-operative, they will be hauled up, beaten and dragged to jail by the police for doing something illegal. There is no leader to help them out of their misery. They are the victims of greed and injustice.

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

Ans. Unlike his parents who sifted through the garbage dumps for their survival, Saheb took it to be a treasure trove, wondrous and magical. He sometimes chanced upon a coin and hoped to find more. He was not only looking for the yellow metal but anything valuable like money, clothes, shoes, etc. He lived in Seemapuri. He had come from Bangladesh in 1971.

7. What explanations does the author offer for the children not wearing footwear?

Ans. The author disagreed with the usual explanation that is offered for the children going barefoot as a part of tradition. She felt it was only an excuse for the lack of money. They could not afford shoes as they lived in 'a perpetual state of poverty'.

8. What makes the city of Firozabad famous?

Ans. Firozabad was famous for its bangles. Most families in Firozabad are engaged in making bangles. They work in the glass blowing industry, welding glass and making

bangles.

9. Mention the hazards of working in the glass bangle industry?

Ans. Bangles are manufactured in glass furnaces with high temperatures, in dingy cells without air or light. As a consequence, the children who slog away in dark rooms close to the hot furnaces, often lose the brightness of their eyes, even their vision.

10. What is the theme of ‘Lost Spring’?

Ans. This lesson highlights the author’s concern about the miserable condition in which the poor children live and work. It creates an awareness in the minds of the readers about the social responsibilities that we as citizens have in providing a healthy atmosphere for the children to grow into complete individuals.

11. ‘Savita is a symbol of innocence and efficiency’. Comment.

Ans. Savita is a young girl. She wears a drab pink dress. She solders pieces of glass. Her hands move mechanically like the tongs of a machine. She is innocent and does not understand the sanctity of the bangles that she’s making. She’s very efficient in her work.

12. Bring out the irony in Saheb’s name.

Ans. Saheb’s name is Saheb-e-Alam. It means lord of the universe. Ironically, he is a rag-picker who’s poverty stricken, barefoot and homeless. He scrounges the garbage dumps to eke out a livelihood but rarely gets a full meal to eat. Thus, his name is a contrast to his existence.

13. What forces conspire to keep the workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad in poverty?

Ans. Lack of education and awareness, stigma of being born in the caste of bangle makers, vicious nexus of Shahukars, middlemen, politicians and the police who suppress and oppress the bangle makers and keep them in poverty. Their low spirits, dormant initiative, fear of being beaten and dragged to jail, absence of awareness and leadership only make matters worse for them.

14. Why does the author describe children of the slums as partners in survival?

Ans. Children in Seemapuri are off springs of homeless rag pickers. Due to extreme poverty, their parents are unable to provide for them and so they end up picking rags at an early age for their survival and as support to their families.

15. How does Mukesh’s grandmother view the family occupation of bangle making and its poverty?

Ans. She views it as the destiny of her family members. Her husband’s blindness, their misfortune and impoverished condition – she feels, are ordained by destiny. Years of deprivation and suffering have made her accept everything stoically in the name of karma or fate.

16. Being born in the caste of bangle makers become both a destiny and a curse. Elaborate.

Ans. Many people in India follow a rigid caste system. Being born in a caste of bangle makers in the city of Firozabad is both a destiny and a curse. By virtue of their birth,

extreme poverty, lack of education and opportunity, they have taken up the profession of bangle making at an early age. Their destiny becomes a curse as once in this profession, they're in the grip of a vicious circle. All doors close on them and in a short span of time they end up losing their spirit as well as their eyesight.

17. Describe the atmosphere in glass furnaces. How can working there affect the young children?

Ans. Glass furnaces of Firozabad are ill-lit, ill-ventilated, unhygienic and dingy hovels. Working for long hours in these hot furnaces with high temperatures bends the backs of young children, leads to loss of vision at an early age and makes them old before their time.

18. Why are the people of Firozabad averse to cooperative movement? Ans. Generations of family subservience to middlemen, combined with lack of education, awareness and acute poverty has broken the spirit of the younger generations also. They fear that organizing themselves into a cooperative movement will only make them bear the wrath of police. They lack a leader and are aware that the vicious nexus of sahkars, middlemen, politicians and police will not allow the cooperative movement to take shape.

Additional Short Answer Questions:

1. Where does the narrator encounter Saheb every morning?
2. Explain the use of literary devices in the sentence, "An army of barefoot boys who appear like the morning birds and disappear at noon".
3. Why do slums like Seemapuri, mushroom around big cities?
4. Despite being refugees how do people in Seemapuri have ration cards?
5. Why does the author describe children of the slums as 'partners in survival'?
6. Describe the condition of children in slums considering the author's perception of them as 'partners in survival'.
7. Saheb wanted to be the master of his own destiny. Comment.
8. How are the tennis shoes a dream-come-true for Saheb?
9. Describe the atmosphere in glass furnaces. How can working there affect the young children?
10. Is Mukesh's sister-in-law's life different from that of Mukesh's?
11. What has Mukesh's father achieved in life despite years of hard back-breaking labour?
12. Describe the contrast that Anees Jung brings out between Saheb and the son of the priest.
13. 'Survival in Seemapuri means rag picking'. Elucidate.
14. Why can't the bangle-makers break their 'God-given lineage'?
15. 'Little has moved with time in Firozabad' says Anees Jung. Why does she say so?
16. 'I see two distinct worlds...' says Anees Jung. Draw a contrast between the two.
17. Justify the title 'Lost Spring'.

Long Answer Questions:

1. **For most women, bangles are dreams in glass but for bangle makers of Firozabad they are a vicious circle they cannot wriggle out of. Comment.**

Bangles – red, green, blue, yellow etc. are a symbol of ‘suhaag’ and auspiciousness in marriage in our country since centuries. In today’s world, they are also a fashion statement for the young and old women alike. These glass bangles of varied hues adorning a woman’s wrist provide not only a visual treat but also music of their own. These bangles spread joy and happiness in the lives of women. But ironically little do these women realize that the makers of these beautiful bangles themselves lead a miserable life. After nearly 60 years of independence, Firozabad, the hub of the bangle industry is an underdeveloped, backward town with neither any infra- structure nor basic amenities. The town resembles a dumping ground. The glass furnaces where workers make bangles are ill-lit and ill-ventilated, dingy hovels with high temperatures. People here do not even get one frugal meal a day. To add to the misery, all of them lose their eyesight at a young age and live in a dark world for the rest of their lives.

2. **‘The beauty of the glass bangles of Firozabad contrasts with the misery of people who produce them.’ Mention the hazards of working in the glass bangle industry. Discuss the endless spiral of poverty, apathy, greed and injustice present there.**

The lesson ‘Lost Spring’ describes the apathy of the bangle-makers on two planes. Firstly, it is the plight of the street children forced into labour early in life and denied the opportunity of studying in schools. Secondly, the glass industry has its own hazards. The employment of very young children in the pathetic working conditions is illegal. Over and above, it is the apathy and callousness of society and the political class to the sufferings of the poor that makes us sympathetic towards these bangle makers. They work in glass furnaces with high temperatures. Their dingy cells have no light, no ventilation. Children work in these extreme conditions while welding pieces of coloured glass to make bangles. Their eyes are more adjusted to the dark than to the light outside. They often lose their eyesight at a young age.

The other reason for which the poverty- stricken bangle makers suffer is because of the exploitation at the hands of the middlemen and politicians. They do not work to bring an improvement in their conditions, instead they get brutally beaten up by the police. They are unable to organize themselves. Hence, their life is full of sufferings both physical and emotional.

3. **“But promises like mine abound in every corner of his bleak world.”
What does the writer mean?**

The writer, Anees Jung, met Saheb every morning looking for money in the garbage. Saheb confessed that he scrounged the rubbish heaps as he had nothing better to do. He longed to go to school but there was not one in the neighbourhood. When Anees asked him casually that if she started a school, would he join, he consented very gladly. In fact, he was so enamoured with the idea that a few days later he asked her if her school was ready. Anees was embarrassed at having made a promise that she was not serious about. She felt that most people made promises to children like

him that were neverfulfilled.

- 4. What change do you find in Saheb's life when he stops rag-picking and starts working at a tea-stall?**
 5. Describe the bangle makers of Firozabad. How does the vicious circle of the sahlukars and middlemen never allow them to come out of a web of poverty?
 6. How, in your opinion, can Mukesh realize his dream?
 7. Why should child labour be eliminated and how?
 8. Like all children of his age, Saheb also has many hopes and dreams. Do you think children like Saheb are able to fulfill their dreams? Why?
 9. Slums are the ugly underbelly of all big cities the world over. Describe the contrasting world of 'haves' and 'have-nots' treading these two worlds.
 10. Politicians exploit all people and situations to their benefit. Comment, keeping in view the situation of refugees in Seemapuri.
 11. Why is Mukesh's dream of learning to drive a car likened to a mirage?
 12. What is a Cooperative movement? Why does Anees suggest to bangle makers to form a cooperative?
 13. Why does a young child of a bangle maker accept his destiny without question or rebellion?
 14. The author observes that 'daring is not part of the children's growing up'. What does this tell you about the mental suppression and apathy among the children?
 15. Describe the author's visit to Mukesh's house.
 16. "Saheb and Mukesh are brothers in penury and suffering." Discuss.
 17. How is Mukesh more ambitious in life than Saheb? Give a reasoned answer.
-