

2. LOST SPRING-Anees Jung

Anees Jung, a famous story writer utters destitution of ragpickers of Seemapuri and bangle makers of Firozabad. It sensitises the readers to step forward to save the spring (childhood) of beautiful human life so that many children would be able to avail the opportunities to realize their dreams.

Points to Remember

Saheb-e-Alam

- name means – lord of the universe
- but earns living by rag-picking
- lives in Seemapuri
- walks barefoot

Living conditions in Seema Puri

- on the outskirts of Delhi, yet miles away from it, home of 10,000 rag pickers
- make their living by rag-picking
- food and survival more important than an identity
- garbage to them is gold because it is a means of survival

Mukesh

- the bangle maker of Firozabad
- high temperature
- dreams of being a motor mechanic, wants to break the lineage

Hazards of Working in Glass Bangle Factory

- work place – small and dingy
- long working hours in front of hot furnaces
- boys and girls assist parents in the dim light of flickering oil lamps.
- eyes more adjusted to dark than light.
- dust from polishing bangles affect their eyes, skin and health
- exploited by money lenders, police, bureaucrats, politicians.
- fear of being ill-treated by police.
- live in a state of intense poverty.

- live in stinky lanes
- over crowded place with humans and animals.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What is the irony in the name "Saheb-e-Alam"?

Ans. 'Saheb-e-Alam' means the 'Lord of the Universe' but Saheb was oblivious of what it meant. Contrary to what his name represented, he roamed the streets with his friends, an army of barefooted boys scrounging in the garbage heaps to make both ends meet.

2. Why have the ragpickers settled in Seemapuri?

Ans. Several families like Saheb have been the victims of nature's fury. They left Dhaka after storms swept away their fields and houses and settled in seemapuri.

3. Is Saheb happy working at the tea stall? Explain.

Ans. Saheb is not happy working at the tea stall. Even though he is paid more and given his meals, but he is no longer his own master. The steel cansister seem to be heavier than the plastic bag. He has lost his carefree look.

Additional Questions :

1. Garbage is gold for ragpickers. How?
2. Describe the living conditions in seemapuri
3. What does the tittle 'Lost spring' convey?
4. From where did saheb get a pair of shoes?
5. What was out of reach for Saheb?
6. What is Mukesh's family attitude towards their situation?
7. 'Mukesh insists of being his own master' How ?
8. Briefly describe the working conditions of the bangle making units of Firozabad?
9. Why can't the bangle makers organise themselves into a co-operative?

LONG-ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Explain the significance of the title 'Lost Spring'.
 - Spring is the season of optimism and hope. It symbolises life.
 - unfortunately, millions of children in our country waste their childhood in ragpicking and other hazardous industries.
 - the joys of childhood, the vibrance of spring is lost either in the garbage or in dingy cells with furnaces.
 - the grinding poverty and traditions condemn these children to a life of exploitation.
 - they see very little hope of escaping from their impoverished life of misery & deprivation.
 - moreover, years of mind-numbing toil have killed all initiative and the ability to dream.
 - they are entangled in a spiral that moves from poverty to apathy to greed and injustice.

Question for Practice

1. Explain the lesson 'Lost Spring' is a realistic portrayal of the lives of the street children.
2. Compare and contrast the characters of Saheb and Mukesh.
3. Poverty is a vicious circle for poor slum dwellers and bangle makers. Comment in the light of 'Lost Spring.'
4. Little children have to work at the age of their mental and physical development. Write an article on 'Child labour - A Blot on Society'.
5. What change did Anees Jung see in saheb when she saw him standing by the gate of the neighborhood club?
6. Mukesh finds himself caught between two district words. How do they affect his life and that of the other bangle makers?

Reference of Context

If he knew its meaning — lord of the universe — he would have a hard time believing it. 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.

1. What does "its " refer to in the first line ?
2. Why does "he" roam on the streets ?
3. What has enabled the author recognize "each of them" ?
4. Why does the author compare the "army of barefoot boys to birds ?