

A ROADSIDE STAND

Robert Frost

About the Poet

Robert Frost is a highly acclaimed American poet of the twentieth century. He wrote about characters, people and landscapes. In the poem, Frost presents the pathetic conditions of the poor deprived people. He has done this with pitiless clarity and with deep sympathy and humanity. Everyone pretends to be their benefactor but are actually 'greedy good-doers'.

Poem Outline

The poem is deeply moving, as it vividly depicts the plight and the complex dynamics that influence simple rural folk. It tells the sad plight of economically underfed rural people who are often fooled by the cunning people who are responsible for their pathetic existence. The poet cannot bear their sadness; so he sympathises with them.

Stanza 1

The little old house was out with a little new shed
 In front at the edge of the road where the traffic sped,
 A roadside stand that too pathetically pled,
 It would not be fair to say for a dole of bread,
 But for some of the money, the cash, whose flow supports
 The flower of cities from sinking and withering faint.
 The polished traffic passed with a mind ahead,
 Or if ever aside a moment, then out of sorts
 At having the landscape marred with the artless paint
 Of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned wrong
 Offered for sale wild berries in wooden quarts,
 Or crook-necked golden squash with silver warts,
 Or beauty rest in a beautiful mountain scene,
 You have the money, but if you want to be mean,
 Why keep your money (this crossly) and go along.

Explanation On the roadside there is an old house which has an extended shed. This shed is towards the edge of the road. The owners have made this towards the edge so that the fast moving vehicles speeding by may notice and stop there to buy the food and refreshments sold there.

This shed made a pitiable sight, it almost seemed as if it was begging for food but that was not so. Rather it was made so that the rich people who passed by the shed in their beautiful cars would stop there and buy something, so that some cash would flow into the hands of the owners, who then would be able to buy some of the things that are sold in the city.

The poor feel that the money the rich spend to adorn their gardens with flowers can be used to better the lot of the less privileged. But, the rich people passed by without paying any attention to the shed. If anyone cared to stop, it was only due to

the irritation at the paint and decor in poor taste that was marring the picturesque scenery of the area. Also, the shed had a board on which the word STAND was painted such that the letters S and N were written in reverse, displaying the carelessness of the local people. This shed sold wild berries in wooden boxes and gourds with twisted necks and silver lumps on them.

Besides these things, the place also offered a stay in the scenic surroundings. However, the travellers felt that these poorly kept stands spoiled the pristine beauty of the landscape. The rich who passed by the place had the money but had no desire to spend it. They wanted to keep the money with themselves.

Stanza 2 The hurt to the scenery wouldn't be my complaint
So much as the trusting sorrow of what is unsaid:
Here far from the city we make our roadside stand
And ask for some city money to feel in hand
To try if it will not make our being expand,
And give us the life of the moving-pictures' promise
That the party in power is said to be keeping from us.

Explanation The poet does not want to accuse the rustics of marring the beauty of the landscape. He is more worried about the untold pain that unsaid words cause to the faith of the people belonging to the countryside. The rustics have installed a roadside stand so far away in the countryside just to earn some hard cash.

They long to have a comfortable lifestyle as depicted in movies. They hope against hope that the city citizens may fulfil the promise of giving them economic independence although it was within the purview of the party in power to do so.

Stanza 3 It is in the news that all these pitiful kin
Are to be bought out and mercifully gathered in
To live in villages, next to the theatre and the store,
Where they won't have to think for themselves anymore,
While greedy good-doers, beneficent beasts of prey,
Swarm over their lives enforcing benefits
That are calculated to soothe them out of their wits,
And by teaching them how to sleep they sleep all day,
Destroy their sleeping at night the ancient way.

Explanation It is in the news that these countryside folk are to be relocated in the villages where they will have all comforts. They will enjoy privileges of the theatre and the local store just like their urban counterparts. So busy will be these people in enjoying these comforts that they will have no time to think about themselves or fight for their rights.

The 'haves' are called 'beasts of prey' because, in the garb of benefits that they will provide to the rustics, they will exploit them no end. Later the privileged ones will easily forget the promises they made, leaving these poor people more impoverished.

Stanza 4 Sometimes I feel myself I can hardly bear
The thought of so much childish longing in vain,
The sadness that lurks near the open window there,
That waits all day in almost open prayer
For the squeal of brakes, the sound of a stopping car,
Of all the thousand selfish cars that pass,
Just one to inquire what a farmer's prices are.
And one did stop, but only to plow up grass
In using the yard to back and turn around;
And another to ask the way to where it was bound;
And another to ask could they sell it a gallon of gas
They couldn't (this crossly); they had none, didn't it see?

Explanation The poet is very disturbed and feels very helpless when he sees their childish longing for money which is never fulfilled. These people keep their windows open all day as if in prayer waiting desperately and uselessly for someone to stop at the stand. Sadness at their disappointment can be noticed all around the place when no one stops there. Out of thousands of cars passing by, just one stopped only to inquire the prices of things sold there. Another stopped just to use the backyard of the place to reverse their car.

Yet another stopped just to inquire about the directions for where it wanted to go. The fourth stopped to know if they could sell them a gallon of gas (petrol). The farmer grumbles in an angry manner that they could see for themselves that it was not sold there. Actually, the country people are upset over the callous attitude of city dwellers. Moreover, it shows the contrast between the thinking of the city denizens and the stark reality of the rural people.

Stanza 5 No, in country money, the country scale of gain,
 The requisite lift of spirit has never been found,
 Or so the voice of the country seems to complain,
 I can't help owning the great relief it would be
 To put these people at one stroke out of their pain.
 And then next day as I come back into the sane,
 I wonder how I should like you to come to me
 And offer to put me gently out of my pain.

Explanation Finally the poet bemoans that the spirit to scale new heights to break the shackles of economic dependency is not present in the rustics. That is why they do not stop complaining against the economic inequalities. The poet strongly feels that the countryside people should be freed from the pain of poverty and deprivation. Next morning when the poet gains his senses, he wonders what if someone else thinks in the same manner for him so that he is gently relieved from his pain and agony of seeing the miserable condition of these people.

WORD MEANINGS

The given page numbers correspond to the pages in the NCERT textbook.

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pathetically pled	—	pitifully begs
dole	—	donation
polished traffic	—	well off and sophisticated city dwellers who pass by
artless paint of quarts	—	poorly painted containers
crook-necked silver warts	—	twisted-necked silver lumps on them
hurt to the scenery	—	harm caused to the natural scenery

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trusting sorrow	—	The rural people trust their rich brothers in cities to help them, but feel sad when their trust is breached by the city people through their indifference.
moving-pictures'	—	films
beneficent beasts of prey	—	Men in power are beasts of prey in the garb of benefactors. They exploit common people for their vested interests.
selfish cars	—	selfish owners of the cars

NCERT FOLDER

Before you Read

Have you ever stopped at a roadside stand? What have you observed there?

Ans Yes, I have stopped at such places while motoring on highways. They are owned by poor people who live in the countryside near to the highway. Generally they sell local produce such as foodstuffs, fruits or items of daily use. The quality varies from stand to stand and you can bargain for reducing the quoted price if you want to really buy something from them.

Think it Out

1 The city folk who drove through the countryside hardly paid any heed to the roadside stand or to the people who ran it. If at all they did, it was to complain. Which lines bring this out? What was their complaint about?

Ans The following lines bring out the complaining attitude of the city people who drove by the shed in the countryside.

'..... then out of sorts'

At having the landscape marred with the artless paint.
'Of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned wrong'.

The complaint of these passers-by was that the artless paint was spoiling the pristine beauty of the landscape. They were displeased that the board out there had signs of N and S pointing in the wrong directions. Moreover, they were critical of wild berries being sold in wooden containers.

2 What was the plea of the folk who had put up the roadside stand? Delhi 2013, 2011, 2008

Ans The folks who had put up the roadside stand wanted the passers-by to stop and buy the berries or the squash which they sold so that they could have some ready cash, with which they could improve their lot and better their miserable lives.

3 The government and other social service agencies appear to help the poor rural people, but actually do them no good. Pick out the words and phrases that the poet uses to show their double standards.

Ans The government and the party which is in power were least interested in the welfare of these poor rural people. Even the social service agencies were doing nothing for them. They have their own vested interests. The words and phrases which show their double standards are 'greedy good doers', 'beneficent beasts of prey', 'swam over their lives', 'enforcing benefits', 'calculated', 'to soothe them out of their wits.'

4 What is the 'childish longing' that the poet refers to? Why is it 'vain'? Delhi 2010

Ans 'Childish longing' literally means to want and wait for something without putting logic on it. The longing is, in a way, innocent also. Similarly, the poet refers to the longing of the people running the roadside stand as childish because they are always waiting for prospective customers. They keep their windows open to attract customers and become sad when nobody turns up. They hope that some car will stop there but their waiting goes in 'vain' when they see that people come either to turn their cars or to ask where the way goes.

5 Which lines tell us about the insufferable pain that the poet feels at the thought of the plight of the rural poor?

Ans The poet intensely feels that all the miserable pain from which the poor rustics suffer must be removed at one stroke. The following lines express his feelings.

'I can't help owning the great relief it would be,
To put these people at one stroke out of their pain'.

EXAM PRACTICE

Ⓢ MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1 Whom does the poem concern?

- (a) Owners of the roadside stand
- (b) Rich and affluent people
- (c) Poor people
- (d) Beggars

Ans (c) Poor people

2 "I wonder how I should like you to come to me
And offer to put me gently out of my pain."

The tone of the poem by the end, as depicted
by the given lines is

- (a) frustrated
- (b) commanding
- (c) introspective
- (d) emotional

Ans (d) emotional

3 The poem brings the issue unequal progress
and development between

- (a) rich and poor people
- (b) cities and villages
- (c) different countries
- (d) Both (b) and (c)

Ans (b) cities and villages

4 Choose the option that correctly categorises
the given literary devices as per the given
analogy.

selfish cars : :: : metaphor

- (a) personification; polished traffic
- (b) transferred epithet; trusting sorrow
- (c) metaphor; pitiful kin
- (d) oxymoron; greedy good-doers

Ans (b) transferred epithet; trusting sorrow

5 Choose the option that correctly mentions the
complaints made by the poet through this
poem.

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1. The rich people drive carelessly on the road hitting the poor people on purpose.
2. The city-dwellers remain highly insensitive and offhand towards the poor people.
3. The urban people are unable to understand the struggles of the impoverished people.
4. The goods are not being bought by the wealthy people even at discounted rates.

- (a) 1, 2
- (b) 2, 3
- (c) 3, 4
- (d) 1, 4

Ans (b) 2, 3

6 Based on your reading of the poem, choose the option that correctly lays out the difference between the city-dwellers and the countryside people.

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	City dwellers	Countryside people
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unaware • casual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greedy • concerned

	City dwellers	Countryside people
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indifferent • grumpy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suffering • disappointed

	City dwellers	Countryside people
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short-tempered • materialistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • optimistic • savage

	City dwellers	Countryside people
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stressed • dismissing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protesting • objectionable

- (a) Option 1
- (b) Option 2
- (c) Option 3
- (d) Option 4

Ans (b) Option 2

7 Pick the option with the slogan that is likely to be used by a person selling at the roadside stand.

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Slogan 1	Slogan 2
Men and women in equality; a road to dignity.	By the people and for the people.

Slogan 3	Slogan 4
I see humans but no humanity.	Corruption, corruption, you leave my country. That's all I pray!

- (a) Slogan 1
- (b) Slogan 2
- (c) Slogan 3
- (d) Slogan 4

Ans (c) Slogan 3

8 Why was roadside stand built?

- (a) So that people can wait there
- (b) To make it a bus stop
- (c) To earn money from polished city traffic
- (d) To give directions to the people

Ans (c) To earn money from polished city traffic

9 What is the childish longing that the poet refers to?

- (a) Travel the city malls
- (b) Travel the city showrooms
- (c) Interact with city people
- (d) Hope of getting some financial help from the polished city traffic

Ans (d) Hope of getting some financial help from the polished city traffic

10 Who are beasts of prey in the poem?

- (a) The government officials
- (b) The city folk
- (c) Rural folk
- (d) The people who stop at the Roadside stand

Ans (b) The city folk

EXTRACT BASED QUESTIONS

Read the extract given below and answer the following questions by choosing the correct option.

1 "The little old house was out with a little new shed
In front at the edge of the road where the traffic sped,
A roadside stand that too pathetically pled,
It would not be fair to say for a dole of bread,
But for some of the money, the cash, whose flow supports
The flower of cities from sinking and withering faint."
Delhi 2009 (Modified)

- (i) Where was the new shed put up?
 - (a) Behind the house
 - (b) In front of the house
 - (c) Besides the house
 - (d) At the door of the house
- (ii) Who are referred to as 'the power of cities'?
 - (a) The poor people
 - (b) The elite class
 - (c) Village people
 - (d) People living in cities
- (iii) The word in the extract 'withering' means.
 - (a) Decay
 - (b) Admire
 - (c) Encourage
 - (d) Intended
- (iv) Identify the figure of speech used in these lines, 'polished traffic'.
 - (a) Metaphor
 - (b) Simile
 - (c) Transferred Epithet
 - (d) Alliteration
- (v) What does the poet tell us about the power of money?

(vi) What presumption does the given extract highlight about the city people?

- Ans (i) (b) In front of the house
(ii) (b) The elite class
(iii) (a) Decay
(iv) (c) Transferred Epithet
(v) According to the poet, money has become so powerful in the present world that it is essential for maintaining one's life. Even rural people today are striving for money and not for food.
(vi) The given extract highlights the presumption made by the poet that the city people have a lot of money and thus, they live a fulfilling life.

2 "A roadside stand that too pathetically pled,
It would not be fair to say for a dole of bread,
But for some of the money, the cash, whose flow supports
The flower of cities from sinking and withering faint."

- (i) Why is it unfair to say that these people are begging for a 'dole of bread'?
 - (a) As they are unreasonably begging for money
 - (b) Because they have something to sell
 - (c) They are beggars
 - (d) As they shamelessly beg for bread
- (ii) 'Pathetically pled' in the extract implies
 - (a) the plead of the owner to stop the passerbys
 - (b) to steal some money by the travellers
 - (c) they plead to the rich city dwellers to buy something
 - (d) to sell breads to the passerbys
- (iii) The poor people look at the city money for their
 - (a) survival and betterment
 - (b) sorrow and misery
 - (c) growth and opportunity
 - (d) well being
- (iv) The figure of speech used in last line "the flower of cities from sinking and withering faint" is
 - (a) Alliteration
 - (b) Simile
 - (c) Personification
 - (d) Metaphor
- (v) What is the tone of the poet in the given lines?
- (vi) As a reader, what do you feel about the owners of the Roadside stand?

- Ans (i) (b) Because they have something to sell
(ii) (c) the plead to the rich city dwellers to buy something
(iii) (a) survival and betterment

- (iv) (d) Metaphor
- (v) The tone of the poet in the given lines is despairing.
- (vi) As the reader, I feel sad and sympathetic for the impoverished condition of the owners of the Roadside stand.

3 "Offered for sale wild berries in wooden quarts,
Or crook-necked golden squash with silver warts,
Or beauty rest in a beautiful mountain scene,
You have the money, but if you want to be mean,
Why keep your money (this crossly) and go along."

(i) What articles are 'offered for sale' at the stand?

- (a) Wooden containers of wild berries
- (b) Golden squash or gourd
- (c) Paintings of mountain scenery
- (d) Both (a) and (b)

(ii) What is the meaning of "beauty rest in a beautiful mountain scene"?

- (a) Scenic painting made by owner
- (b) The view at the back of the house
- (c) Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder
- (d) The beautiful landscape of the old house

(iii) What do the poor people of the roadside stand feel when city people decline to buy anything?

- (a) They feel happy and cheerful
- (b) They feel dejected and angry
- (c) They feel cheated
- (d) They feel to have a scuffle with city dwellers

(iv) What qualities of the offered articles make them unfit for sale?

- (a) The articles were wild
- (b) They lacked polished look
- (c) They were cheap
- (d) Both (a) and (b)

(v) What impression do the city people have on the rural farmers?

(vi) Why is 'this crossly' given in brackets?

- Ans**
- (i) (d) Both (a) and (b)
 - (ii) (a) Scenic painting made by owner
 - (iii) (b) They feel dejected and angry
 - (iv) (d) Both (a) and (b)
 - (v) The rural farmers feel that the city people are mean and miserly.
 - (vi) The phrase 'This Crossly' is given in brackets to highlight and emphasise on the cruel nature of city people.

4 "The hurt to the scenery wouldn't be my complaint
So much as the trusting sorrow of what is unsaid:

Here far from the city we make our roadside stand

And ask for some city money to feel in hand
To try if it will not make our being expand,
And give us the life of the moving-pictures' promise

That the party in power is said to be keeping from us."

(i) Who made the roadside stand and where?

- (a) City people, near their homes
- (b) Villagers, at their courtyards
- (c) Poor people, far from the city
- (d) Local people, on the mountains

(ii) Who wanted to feel the money in their hands?

- (a) City people
- (b) Wealthy citizens of the city
- (c) Rural people
- (d) Affluent people

(iii) What was the promise made by the government?

- (a) To give a lavishing home to local people of the village
- (b) To provide basic drinking and water facility
- (c) To provide subsidy to the poor
- (d) To give a comfortable life to the poor people

(iv) In the extract, 'hurt to the scenery' implies

- (a) the mismatching paint of the roadside stand
- (b) harm caused to the natural scenery
- (c) the painting of the mountains
- (d) Both (a) and (b)

(v) Explain the reference to 'moving pictures promise.'

(vi) Do you think that the promise made by the government was fulfilled?

- Ans**
- (i) (c) Poor people, far from the city
 - (ii) (c) Rural people
 - (iii) (d) To give a comfortable life to the poor people
 - (iv) (b) harm caused to the natural scenery
 - (v) The moving pictures promises refer to the scenes of upliftment and financial betterment that they see in films and movies.
 - (vi) No, I do not think that the promise made by the government was fulfilled.

5 "It is in the news that all these pitiful kin
Are to be bought out and mercifully
gathered in
To live in villages, next to the theatre
and the store,
Where they won't have to think for
themselves anymore,
While greedy good-doers, beneficent beasts of
prey,
Swarm over their lives enforcing benefits
That are calculated to soothe them out of
their wits,"

(i) Who is going to exploit the rural people?

- (a) City dwellers (b) politicians
(c) Government (d) Both (b) and (c)

(ii) Identify the figure of speech.

- (a) Oxymoron (b) Alliteration
(c) Metaphor (d) Both (a) and (b)

(iii) The phrase in the extract 'greedy
good-doers' implies

- (a) the people who work for betterment of poor
(b) politicians who are well aware of their
duties
(c) selfish people who also raise false hopes
(d) Both (a) and (b)

(iv) 'Beast of prey' means

- (a) men in power who exploit others
(b) politicians in lurch of money
(c) animal that hunts other animals
(d) killing people for personal benefit

(v) What does the government official do for
the village rural people?

(vi) Does the poet appreciate the news of
betterment of the rural people?

- Ans (i) (d) Both (b) and (c)
(ii) (d) Both (b) and (c)
(iii) (c) selfish people who also raise false hopes
(iv) (a) men in power who exploit others
(v) The poet, mockingly, remarks that the
government officials constructs stores and
theatres in villages so that people forget about
the promises made to them.
(vi) No, the poet does not appreciate the news of
betterment of the rural people because he
knows that in future the promises and the
news will come out to be false breaking the
hopes of the rural people.

6 "Sometimes I feel myself I can hardly bear
The thought of so much childish longing in
vain,

The sadness that lurks near the open window
there,
That waits all day in almost open prayer
For the squeal of brakes, the sound of a
stopping car,"

(i) What can't the poet tolerate?

- (a) The farmers dashed hopes
(b) The travellers not stopping at the stand
(c) The poor condition of village
(d) Attitude of the rich people

(ii) Identify the figure of speech.

- (a) Metaphor (b) Alliteration
(c) Personification (d) Simile

(iii) The word in the extract 'squeal' means

- (a) fawning (b) misery
(c) hide (d) scream

(iv) What is the prayer of the villager sitting at
open window?

- (a) A generous traveller to stop at the stand
(b) To sell something
(c) A good amount to dwindle their distress
(d) All of the above

(v) Why does the poet call the longing for
money 'a childish longing'?

(vi) What does the 'squeal of brakes, the sound
of stopping car' indicate?

- Ans (i) (a) The farmers dashed hopes
(ii) (c) Personification
(iii) (d) scream
(iv) (d) All of the above
(v) The poet calls the longing for money 'a
childish longing' because the people of the
roadside stand innocently hope that someone
will give them money. However, all their
longing is in vain because hardly anyone visits
them. People don't even stop to ask for prices
of things.
(vi) The 'squeal of brakes, the sound of stopping
car' indicates the hope of getting money and
livelihood.

7 No, in country money, the country scale of
gain,
The requisite lift of spirit has never been
found,
Or so the voice of the country seems to
complain,
I can't help owning the great relief it would be
To put these people at one stroke out of their
pain.
And then next day as
I come back into the sane, I wonder how

I should like you to come to me
And offer to put me gently out of my pain.

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- (i) The 'country money' contextually here refers to
- money kept aside for the rural development.
 - wealth accumulated by the whole country.
 - meagre income earned by the countryside people.
 - riches collected by the ancestral farmers over time.

- (ii) Pick the option that mentions elements justifying monetary aspect as the 'requisite lift of spirit'.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| 1. confidence | 2. ego |
| 3. self-esteem | 4. status |
| 5. fame | |
- (a) 1, 2, 4 (b) 2, 4, 5
(c) 1, 3, 4 (d) 1, 3, 5

- (iii) Choose the correct option with respect to the two statements given below.

Statement 1 The poet is agitated and depressed.

Statement 2 The poet realises the futility of his thought about giving up.

- Statement 1 can be inferred but Statement 2 cannot be inferred.
- Statement 1 cannot be inferred but Statement 2 can be inferred.
- Statement 1 and Statement 2 can be inferred.
- Statement 1 and Statement 2 cannot be inferred.

- (iv) Choose the option that correctly paraphrases the given lines from the above extract.

"I can't help owning the great relief it would be to put these people at one stroke out of their pain."

- The poet wants to kill the impoverished people.
- The poet feels that death is better than living such a miserable life.
- The poet wants to eliminate poverty from the society.
- The poet states that it is important that these people become rich.

- (v) Do you think that the poet blames the poor people for their lack of spirit to better their economic condition?

- (vi) Who can help the rural people?

Ans (i) (c) meagre income earned by the countryside people.

(ii) (d) 1, 3, 5

(iii) (b) Statement 1 cannot be inferred but Statement 2 can be inferred.

(iv) (b) The poet feels that death is better than living such a miserable life.

(v) We cannot really state that the poet blames the poor people for their lack of spirit to better their economic condition. But he does bemoan the lack of such a spirit.

(vi) According to the poet, the government, the city people and the influential people can help the rural people in bettering their conditions.

© SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1 Why didn't the 'polished traffic' stop at the roadside stand?

Ans The city people who passed by the roadside stand, labelled as 'polished traffic' by the poet, did not stop at the roadside stand as they were self-centred and their minds were restless with greed for money and ambitions for great profits in their business.

2 What is the 'childish longing' that the poet refers to? Why is it 'vain'?

Ans The poor people's uncertain and futile expectation for the city money is the childish longing. It is in vain as the rich city people do not have the generosity to help them.

3 Why does Robert Frost sympathise with the rural poor and is anguished at the plight of the stand owners? Why?

Ans The poet, Robert Frost, is anguished at the plight of the stand owner because the cars do stop occasionally, but the passengers have their own selfish motives to achieve.

4 Why are the cars called 'selfish'?

Ans The poet uses a transferred epithet here. He actually means to say that the owners of the cars just pass by without a thought for the plight of the stall owners.

5 Why can't the poet bear the childish longing of the poor people?

Ans The poet is a true humanitarian who is genuinely concerned for the poor people's misfortunes. He wants a solution for their poverty. But seeing how childish their longings are, the poet feels it unbearable.

6 What are the two significant roles of money in the lives of the poor people?

Ans Money is the measuring scale of growth for the village people. They estimate their economic growth by means of the small amount of money at hand. Similarly, money is necessary for a villager to feel confident. He feels a 'lift of spirit' with money in reach.

7 *What is the childish longing of the poor people? Why is it in vain?*

Ans The poor people's uncertain and futile expectation for the city money is the childish longing. It is in vain as the rich city people do not have the generosity to help them. They are not bothered about the miserable life led by the villagers.

8 *Near the end of the poem, why does the poet seek an unrealistic solution for the poor people's distress even though earlier he had blamed them for their 'childish longing in vain'?*

Ans The poet, unlike the greedy good-doers, genuinely wishes to get the poor people out of their pain, poverty and endless miseries. However, he is saddened by observing that there is no one to help them come out of their poverty. This helplessness drives the poet to seek an unrealistic solution for the poor people's misery.

9 *Though money holds the same value everywhere, the poet draws a distinction between city money and country money. Elaborate. CBSE Question Bank 2021*

Ans Though money holds the same value everywhere, the poet draws a distinction between city money and country money. City money for the poet means living a life of luxury and fulfillment. However, Country money is the money needed for survival.

10 *The roadside stand and the moving cars are a contrast around which the entire poem is woven. Expound. CBSE Question Bank 2021*

Ans It is true that the roadside stand and the moving cars are a contrast around which the entire poem is woven. Throughout the poem, we are made to understand the conditions, hopes and desires of the roadside stand. The owners of the roadside stand want money to earn their survival and hope for the city dwellers to help them. But in contrast to their hope are the moving cars in which the city dwellers come and show their cruelty and miserliness. They do not stop at the shop but when they do, they express irritation or have some other selfish motive. They overlook the pitiable condition of the stand and move on.

11 *Comment on the significance of the symbol of the car in the poem. CBSE Question Bank 2021*

Ans In the poem, the moving cars are to be seen from two perspectives. They are a symbol of hope of getting money for survival for the rural people. The rural people want the cars to stop and buy their produce. This will earn them a livelihood. But, at the same time, it represents

the cruelty and selfish attitudes of the city people who live a luxurious life in comparison to the rural people but do not have any kindness or compassion in them.

12 *Does the poet reach a conclusive solution for the issue at hand? Discuss.*

Ans No, the poet does not reach a conclusive end in the poem. We, as readers, know that the poet identifies himself with the villagers and would want to be relieved of the pain of poverty at once. But this is not the solution to the problem, he had posed in the poem.

© LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1 *How does Robert Frost, the poet, bring out in this poem that progress and development is unequal between the cities and the villages leading to feelings of distress and unhappiness among the rural people?*

Ans Robert Frost, in his poems, usually focuses on the theme of human tragedies and fears and their ultimate acceptance or their solution. In 'A Roadside Stand', he deals with the lives of poor deprived people of the villages with a clarity that is perceptive and at the same time portrays his deepest sympathies and his feelings of humanity. In this poem, the poet describes the feelings of the owners of a roadside shed who seem to wait interminably for the motorists passing in their shiny cars, to stop and buy something from what has been displayed there for sale. They long for the cash that is a symbol of poverty alleviation in their lives of deprivation. It appears to be a vain hope, however, because nobody buys anything.

The poet is outraged at the callous attitude of the government, the civic authorities and the social service agencies who appear to help them but actually end up harming them. The news says that these poor people are to be relocated to the vicinity of the towns and that they will be well looked after. However, the poet regards this as a great disservice to the people who will be thus robbed of their voices, their freedom and the ability to find solutions to their problems.

2 *What is expected to happen to the rural folk when they are relocated to live near the cities, as expected by the poet?*

Ans A new relocation plan for these poor villagers is in the news. Through the pretence of giving them the comforts of urban life, these simple folk will be forcefully uprooted from their land and made to live inside the urban limits, where they will have the theatres and malls to entertain them.

But no one has bothered to take their consent for this move, nor has studied how disoriented the village folk will feel in their new location. By sweet-talking the gullible rural folk, the land sharks will fleece them of their ancestral lands and condemn them to live in the urban centres. Such trickery will never be found out and the villagers will painfully struggle to adjust to the new methods of earning a living in an urban environment.

Undoubtedly, the change will bring them misery. Their simple lifestyle will be destroyed, and in their new surroundings, they will 'lose sleep', implying that life will become riddled with difficulties. On the other hand, the manipulators and the wolves in the garb of benefactors will enjoy their lives in more luxury.

3 How does the poet represent the pathetic state of mind of the people who run the roadside stand?

Ans Robert Frost, in his poem, 'A Roadside Stand', has very clearly understood the plight of the people living in rural areas. The city folk who drove through the countryside hardly pay any heed to the roadside stand or to the people who run it. However, the poet has urged that balanced development of both the rural and urban areas is necessary.

At the roadside stand the poor villagers wait all day for any of the sophisticated city motorists passing on the road to stop for a while and buy what the rural people have displayed for sale. However, hardly any of the cars stop there. Even those who stop do not buy any of the wares displayed, so that no cash is earned by the rural folk. Thus, the rural folks' sorrow is visible on their faces. They feel that their 'childish longing' has gone in vain.

It appears as if the city people are not co-operating in raising the financial status of the rural folk. Instead, some of the politicians and other agencies are looking for calculated benefits by relocating them in urban areas and taking over their land. Even then, the poet hopes for some miracle to happen so that the villagers' pain is removed. In turn, it will also remove the insufferable pain for them which the poet is feeling.

4 Imagine a car stops and actually buys from the roadside stand. Keeping in mind the reaction you think the peasants would have, write a diary entry as the farmer describing not only your immediate experience but also your after-thoughts on being able to earn 'city-money'. You may begin this way:

Wednesday, 2nd March XX

9 PM

We had an unexpectedly good day today!...

CBSE Question Bank 2021

Ans Wednesday, 2nd March XX

9 PM

We had an unexpectedly good day today! After months, we made a sale. Somebody bought the entire produce. Before this, we all waited and waited everyday for someone to stop, someone to just buy something. But this never happened. People only stopped to ask for directions or some other thing. It all changed today.

A burly looking man bought the entire harvest and even asked me to sell everyday's harvest to him. Initially I was shocked when he asked me to sell. Its expected for this never happened.

But I had to be quick and make a sale. Finally I had money in my hand. I could buy food, proper clothes and all other requirement for my family. The money I earned was enough for a few days. I am excited and hopeful that this day repeats and we are never out of money.

A thankful Farmer

5 Imagine a child from the farmer's family migrates to the city for their education. As the child, write back to your family telling them whether you would or would not want to turn into a city-person. Use the context of the poem "A Roadside Stand" in mind to pen down this letter. You may begin this way: 12, Davidson County

23 January 'XX

Dear mom

I have been thinking about the roadside stall lately. Now that I find myself surrounded by city-people all the time, I think.....

With love

Jennifer

CBSE Question Bank 2021

Ans 23 January 'XX

Dear mom

I have been thinking about the roadside stall lately. Now that I find myself surrounded by city-people all the time, I think that these city people are too haughty as you had said. They are always grumbling and irritated by ugly things. Just yesterday I heard a girl talking about our roadside stand. When I asked her perspective, all she did was complain. For her, her own needs and desires were important. She even had the audacity to call our stand useless. I was going to shout on her but realised that I am not like them and would never be like the city people. I will always help everyone financially and never be mean and cruel to anyone.

With love

Jennifer

SELF ASSESSMENT

Ⓒ MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1 Why are the city people called beasts of prey?

- (a) Because of their selfishness and tendency to dupe others for it.
- (b) Because they are well-dressed.
- (c) They know how to earn money.
- (d) They want to befool the rural folk out of their rights.

2 What is the open prayer from near the open window?

- (a) For money to fall from the sky.
- (b) for more number of people to stop.
- (c) for getting money from the government.
- (d) for the sound of coming cars to stop at the road stand to help the owner to earn money from them.

3 What tone does the poet use in the poem?

- (a) Angry
- (b) Sympathetic
- (c) Resentment
- (d) Both (b) and (c)

Ⓒ EXTRACT BASED QUESTION

Read the extract given below and answer the following questions by choosing the correct option.

1 "Or beauty rest in a beautiful mountain scene,
You have the money, but if you want to be mean,
Why keep your money (this crossly) and go along.
The hurt to the scenery wouldn't be my complaint
So much as the trusting sorrow of what is unsaid:"

(i) What attraction does the place offer?

- (a) The beauty of the village
- (b) Scenic painting
- (c) Roadside stand
- (d) The local food and articles

(ii) What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

- (a) aaab
- (b) baba
- (c) baab
- (d) abab

(iii) What should one do if one wants to be mean?

- (a) Do not help countryside people for their living
- (b) Keep the money with yourself
- (c) Be extravagant
- (d) Both (a) and (b)

(iv) What is meant by 'trusting sorrow of what is unsaid'?

- (a) Trusting the fake promises of rich people and rulling parties
- (b) Trusting the villagers
- (c) Hope of selling their articles
- (d) Earning some hard cash

(v) What will be the author's complaint?

(vi) Explain 'trusting sorrow'.

Ⓒ SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions in 40-50 words.

- 1 What are the usual complaints made by the city men when they stop at the roadside stand?
- 2 What do the poor people of the roadside stand feel when the city men decline from buying anything?
- 3 Do you think the 'good news' for the poor people mentioned in line 23 of the poem ever came true? Why?
- 4 Why are the poor people angry with the city men when they ask for gas?

Ⓒ LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions in 120-150 words.

- 1 The poet sympathises with the rural poor. How has this sentiment been expressed at different in the poem?
- 2 "The economic well-being of a country depends on a balanced development of the villages and the cities." Discuss.