

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

Ans- Saheb is a ragpicker and is looking for gold in the garbage dumps. Garbage is wrapped in wonder for him. Sometimes he finds a rupee even a ten rupee note or a silver coin too.

Saheb has come from Dhaka Bangladesh in 1971. Now he is living in Seemapuri, a place on the periphery of Delhi.

2. What explanation does the author offer for the children not wearing footwear?

Ans- One explanation offered by the author is that it has become a tradition for them to stay barefoot. It is not lack of money but the author wonders if this is only an excuse to explain away a perpetual state of poverty. The author also remembers the story of a poor boy who prayed to the goddess for a pair of shoes. The lack of money is the most valid explanation. When Saheb gets a pair of shoes he does wear them.

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

Ans- No, Saheb does not seem to be happy working at the tea-stall. He is no longer his own master. He has lost his carefree look. The steel canister seems heavier than the plastic bag he would carry so lightly over his shoulder. The bag was his own. The canister belongs to the man who owns the tea shop.

4. What makes the city of Firozabad famous?

Ans- The city of Firozabad is famous for its bangles. Every other family in Firozabad is engaged in Bangle making. It is one of the centres of India's glass blowing industry. Families have spent generations making bangles, working around furnaces, welding glass for the women in the land.

5. Mention the hazards of working in the glass bangles industry.

Ans- They have to face many health hazards by working in the glass bangles industry. They go blind with the dust from polishing the glass of bangles. They often end up losing eyesight before they become adults. The furnaces have very high temperature and therefore, it is too dangerous for eyes.

6. How is Mukesh's attitude to his situation different from that of his family?

Ans- Mukesh belongs to a family of bangle makers but he has not at all attraction for bangle making. He wants to be his own master. He wants to be a motor mechanic. He will go to a garage and learn, though the garage is far away from his home.

7. What forces conspire to keep the workers in the Bengal industry of Firozabad in poverty?

Ans- Rightly analysis by Anees Jung that there are two distinct worlds operating in Firozabad. One of the family, caught in a web of poverty, burdened by the stigma of cast in which they are born ; the other a vicious circle of the sahuksars, the middleman, the policeman, the keepers of law, the bureaucrats and the politicians. Together under their eyes 20,000 children work illegally in glass furnaces with high temperatures. If the young get themselves organised they are hauled up by the police, beaten and dragged to jail for doing something illegal. Years of mind numbing toil has killed all initiative and the ability to dream. Powerful people keep the workers in bangle industry completely helpless and poor.

8. How in your opinion, can Mukesh realise his dream?

Ans- Mukesh is the son of a poor bangle maker of Firozabad. The Bangle-makers of Firozabad are condemned to lead a life of poverty, misery and exploitation. In my opinion, Mukesh can realise his dream by daring to change his profession. Most of the young men of Firozabad have no initiative or ability to dream but Mukesh is an exception. He has the capacity to take courage and break from the traditional family occupation. He insists on being his own master by becoming a motor mechanic. He can realise his dream by joining a garage and learn the job of repairing cars and driving them. For this, he will get a licence only when he clears the driving test after that he can join any travel agency as a driver.

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

Ans- No denying, that the glass bangle industry has many health hazards. It employs about 20,000 children of tender ages. It is fully illegal to employ young children in hazardous industry but certain forces like middleman, money lenders, police and politicians combine to entrap the poor workers. They work in dingy cells without air and light and also work in the glass furnaces with high temperature. 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. Even the dust from polishing the glass of bangles adversely affects the eyes and even adults go blind. By working in the glass furnaces with high temperature affects on the skin also. Thus, such type of job involved prove risky to the health of the workers.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Q 1. Mukesh wants to learn to become a motor mechanic by

- (a) finding a tutor
- (b) going to a garage to learn
- (c) by reading books
- (d) by joining a school

Q 2. What bothers the author most about the bangle makers?

- (a) the stigma of poverty and caste

- (b) the affluence of the landlords
(c) the behaviour of the factory owners
(d) the labour laws
- Q 3. "One wonders if he has achieved what many have failed to achieve in their lifetime. He has a roof over his head"; these lines were said in reference to the condition of**
(a) the elderly woman's old husband
(b) Mukesh's father
(c) the bangle factory owner
(d) Mukesh's elder brother
- Q 4. Which of the objects below best serves as a symbol of an Indian woman's 'suhag'?**
(a) bindi (b) sindoor
(c) bangles (d) henna-dyed hands
- Q 5. Sunny-gold, paddy green, royal blue, pink, purple, every colour born out of the seven colours of the rainbow. What is this a reference to?**
(a) clothes (b) birds
(c) bangles (d) bindis
- Q 6. What was the profession of Mukesh's father before he became a bangle-maker?**
(a) tailor (b) carpenter
(c) plumber (d) Mason
- Q 7. The frail woman in Mukesh's house is his**
(a) mother (b) elder brother's wife
(c) wife (d) niece
- Q 8. If laws were to be enforced, it would bring about change and relief in the lives of about**
(a) ten thousand children
(b) twenty thousand children
(c) hundred children
(d) a thousand children
- Q 9. Bangle industry flourishes in the town of**
(a) Ferozepur (b) Firozabad
(c) Ferozgarh (d) Farukhabad
- Q 10. Mukesh belonged to a family of**
(a) farmers (b) rag-pickers
(c) bangle makers (d) motor mechanics
- Q 11. One day, Saheb was seen by the author, watching some young men playing**
(a) cricket (b) tennis
(c) hockey (d) soccer
- Q 12. According to the author, rag picking has become, over the years, a**
(a) profession (b) fine art
(c) tradition (d) culture
- Q 13. The rag pickers have no identity, but they have**
(a) permits (b) passports
(c) ration cards (d) licenses
- Q 14. The colony of ragpickers is situated in**
(a) the south of Delhi (b) Mongolpuri
(c) Jehangirpuri (d) Seemapuri
- Q 15. What did the man from Udupi pray for, when he was young?**
(a) a pair of trousers (b) a pair of shoes
(c) a few friends
(d) an opportunity to study in a school
- Q 16. One explanation which the author gets about children choosing to remain barefoot is**
(a) they have no money
(b) tradition
(c) no matching pairs
(d) like to wear only chappals
- Q 17. 'Is your school ready? Who asked this question?**
(a) Saheb's mother (b) Saheb's friends
(c) the author (d) Saheb
- Q 18. What were Saheb and his family looking for in Delhi?**
(a) dollars (b) rupees
(c) pounds (d) gold
- Q 19. Saheb's home, before Delhi, was in**
(a) Bengal (b) Orissa
(c) Dhaka (d) Bihar
- Q 20. 'Why do you do this?' This question was asked by the author to**
(a) the bangle sellers (b) Mahesh
(c) Saheb (d) Saheb's mother

ANSWER KEY

1- b, 2- a, 3- a, 4- c, 5- c, 6- a, 7- b, 8- b, 9- b, 10- c, 11- b, 12- b, 13- c, 14- d, 15- b, 16- b, 17- d, 18- d, 19- c, 20- c