

## **LOST SPRING**

**– Anees Jung**

### **Gist**

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.

### **EXTRACT BASED QUESTIONS:**

A. After months of knowing him, I ask him his name. “Saheb-e-Alam,” he announces. He does not know what it means. 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. The author asks the name of Saheb after months of knowing him. This suggests that ....
  - a. She does not care about barefoot rag-pickers who live in a slum dwelling
  - b. She has been waiting for the right opportunity
  - c. Names are insignificant for her as she is more interested in their problems & their solutions
  - d. It is difficult for her to remember so many names together

2. Which of the following is not rightly matched?
  - a. Name of Saheb-e-alam : irony
  - b. An army of barefoot boys: Anaphora
  - c. Boys who appear like morning birds : Simile
  - d. I ask him his name : Alliteration
3. Why is the author interested in these barefoot rag -pickers?
  - a. She will write a book about such children & earn money
  - b. She will gain popularity by publishing their story in a newspaper
  - c. She will attract the attention of the authorities towards their problems
  - d. She is moved by the plight of these unfortunate children
4. The author's interaction with these children reflects her ....
  - (i) Empathy
  - (ii) Professionalism
  - (iii) Cleverness
  - (iv) Compassion
  - a. Only 2
  - b. Only 1 & 3
  - c. Only 1 & 4
  - d. Only 2, 3 & 4

B. My acquaintance with the barefoot rag-pickers 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 rag-pickers. 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. Food is more important for survival than an identity.

1. In which of the following sentences can the word 'squatters' replace the highlighted words?
  - a. The police have been ordered to help the refugees from the flooded districts.
  - b. The court has refused to stay the eviction of illegal occupants from the Public Park.
  - c. Tourists without a valid Visa are being ordered to leave immediately.
  - d. People who defecate in open have been heavily penalized
2. How is Seemapuri miles away from Delhi?
  - a. It is indeed many miles away from Delhi geographically

- b. Delhi has ultra-modern infrastructure & state-of-the-art facilities while Seemapuri lacks even the basic amenities like sewage & potable water
- c. Delhi is a hugely populated city while Seemapuri is a small wilderness
- d. Delhi is very dirty & diseased while Seemapuri is clean & green

3. Choose the correct option with reference to the two statements given below:

**Statement 1:** Name on voter list enables the rag-pickers to buy grain

**Statement 2:** Rag-pickers do not mind the lack of facilities & dirt as long as they get food

- a. Statement 1 is true but Statement 2 is false.
  - b. Statement 1 is false but Statement 2 is true.
  - c. Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 cannot be inferred.
  - d. Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 can be inferred.
4. For the people of Seemapuri, rag-picking is their source of livelihood. Which of the following phrases can't replace the underlined words?
- a. Sweat, blood & tears
  - b. Staff of life
  - c. Bread & butter
  - d. Walk of life

C. She is the wife of Mukesh's elder brother. Not much older in years, she has begun to command respect as the 'bahu', the daughter-in-law of the house, already in charge of three men — her husband, Mukesh and their father. When the older man enters, she gently withdraws behind the broken wall and brings her veil closer to her face. As custom demands, daughters-in-law must veil their faces before male elders. In this case the elder is an impoverished bangle maker. Despite long years of hard labour, first as a tailor, then a bangle maker, he has failed to renovate a house, send his two sons to school. All he has managed to do is teach them what he knows — the art of making bangles.

1. Daughters-in-law must veil their faces before male elders. This custom reflects ....
- a. Prejudice
  - b. Stereotype
  - c. Logic
  - d. Necessity

2. Choose the correct option with reference to the two statements given below:

**Assertion:** Mukesh's father has been a successful professional

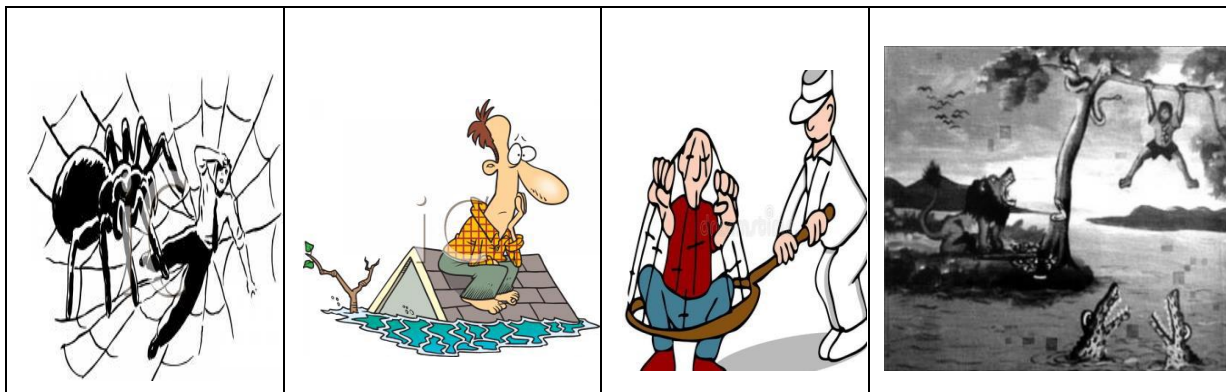
**Reason:** He has been able to renovate his house & send his sons to school.

- a. Both A & R are correct. R is the correct explanation of A
- b. Both A & R are correct. R is not the correct explanation of A
- c. A is correct, R is wrong

- d. Neither A nor R is correct
- 3. The wife of Mukesh's elder brother is .....
  - a. Submissive & servile
  - b. Magnanimous & prudent
  - c. Respectful & courteous
  - d. Defiant & rebellious
- 4. In which of the following sentences can the underlined words not be replaced by 'impoverished'?
  - a. She is the leader of the ritzy women in her plush locality.
  - b. He has become bankrupt after heavy losses in business.
  - c. This Diwali, we are making some provisions for pauperized people.
  - d. She has married a skint man but she is perfectly happy.

D. "Why not organize yourselves into a cooperative?" I ask a group of young men who have fallen into the vicious circle of middlemen who trapped their fathers and forefathers. "Even if we get organized, we are the ones who will be hauled up by the police, beaten and dragged to jail for doing something illegal," they say. There is no leader among them, no one who could help them see things differently. Their fathers are as tired as they are. They talk endlessly in a spiral that moves from poverty to apathy to greed and to injustice.

- 1. Which of the following pairs of word-meaning is not rightly matched?
  - a. Apathy: lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern
  - b. Vicious: deliberately cruel or violent
  - c. Hauled up: To Push sb/ sth away
  - d. Greed: avarice
- 2. Their fathers are as tired as they are. This suggest that ...
  - a. The youth have surrendered before their oppressors & accepted their fate
  - b. The youth have followed the footsteps of their parents & resigned to their destiny
  - c. The youth have no energy & enthusiasm to struggle against their oppressors
  - d. Youth do not get proper nutrition due to poverty which exhausts them easily
- 3. Which of the following pictures describes the situation of the bangle makers the best?



- a. Picture 1
  - b. Picture 2
  - c. Picture 3
  - d. Picture 4
4. Choose the correct option with reference to the two statements given below:

**Assertion:** The police haul up the youth if they make a union.

**Reason:** The policemen are very efficient & arrest the wrong-doers promptly.

- a. Both A & R are correct. R is the correct explanation of A
- b. Both A & R are correct. R is not the correct explanation of A
- c. A is correct , R is wrong
- d. Neither A nor R is correct

### SHORT ANS. TYPE QUESTIONS-SOLVED 30-40 WORDS.

1. Who was Saheb? What did he do for a living?

Ans. Saheb was a rag picker of Seemapuri and had migrated from Bangladesh in 1971. Besides rag-picking, he used to look for gold in the garbage dumps of the big city for a living.

2. What did living in Seemapuri actually mean?

Ans. Living in Seemapuri meant being subjected to extreme poverty. People had lived there for thirty years without an identity, without permit, only concentrating on the matter of food.

3. What does Anees Jung attempt to bring out in her story 'Lost Spring'?

Ans. Anees Jung wants to show the grinding poverty, traditions and circumstances which compel and condemn the children to a life full of misery and exploitation

4. What is illegal that none of the bangle makers of Firozabad know?

Ans. The bangle makers do not know that employing children in bangle-making is illegal. If the law is enforced strictly 20,000 children will be released from working at hot furnaces with high temperatures.

5. Why do the bangle-makers fail to organise themselves into a co-operative?

Ans. The young bangle-makers have fallen into the vicious traps of middlemen. They are afraid of the police. Moreover, there is no leader among them to help them see things differently. Even their fathers at home are tired.

### **SHORT ANS. TYPE (30-40 WORDS.) QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE.**

Q 1. What was Saheb's full name? What is ironical about it?

Q 2. Anees Jung says 'Saheb is no longer his own master? What does she mean?

Q 3. 'Seemapuri is on the periphery of Delhi yet miles away from it metaphorically'. What does the writer mean by this?

Q 4. Which two distinct worlds of the bangle makers does Anees Jung see?

Q 5. 'His dreams loom like a mirage'. Whose dreams are being referred here and why are they compared to a mirage?

### **LONG ANS. TYPE QUESTIONS (ABOUT 125 WORDS) SOLVED**

Q1. Comment on the hardships of the bangle makers of Firozabad with special emphasis on the forces that conspire against them and obstruct their progress.

Ans. Life and poverty are synonymous for the bangle makers of Firozabad. For generations these people have been engaged in this trade working around hot furnaces with high temperatures. In spite of hard labour throughout the day, some of them have to sleep with empty and aching stomachs

Poverty and hunger, social customs and traditions stigma of caste and the intrigues of powerful lobby that thrive on their labours combine to keep them poor, uneducated and hungry. The money lenders, the middlemen, the policemen, the keepers of law, the bureaucrats and the politicians all are responsible for their abject poverty. They fail to organise themselves into cooperative due to lack of a leader. They can talk but not act to improve their lot.

Q2. 'Saheb is no longer his own master Mukesh insists on being his own master'. Discuss with reference to 'Lost Spring'.

Ans.

(i) Saheb a young rag-picker from Seemapuri.

- (ii) looking for gold in garbage dumps for survival
- (iii) Roams the streets with his friends an army of barefoot soldiers.
- (iv) Poor, hungry but free like morning birds.
- (v) Gets a job at a tea stall and has a regular income food no problem..
- (vi) But no longer his own master. lost the carefree look.
- (vii) Works for longer hours - exploitation makes him sad.
- (viii) Mukesh, son of poor bangle maker of Firozabad.
- (ix) No school education due to poverty.
- (x) Dreams of being a motor mechanic.
- (xi) Wants to drive a car.
- (xii) Insists on being his own master in-spite of unfavourable conditions.

**Q3.** Describe the plight of child workers of Firozabad, who are exposed to the worst health hazards.

- (i) Ans. Firozabad - bangle making town.
- (ii) Besides the grown ups, over 20,000 children illegally engaged in bangle making.
- (iii) No body cares for the law in Firozabad.
- (iv) Employment of children in glass and bangle industry continuous unabated.
- (v) Children working in exceptionally high temperatures in dingy dark rooms.
- (vi) Eyes adjusted more to dark than the light outside.
- (vii) Many losing eyesight before becoming adults.
- (viii) Mind numbing toil killing all dreams and hopes of child workers.

### **Questions 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