

## Chapter Analysis

Question Type & Marks	Year					
	2016		2017		2018	
	D	OD	D	OD	D	OD
SA	-	3	-	-	-	-
LA	-	-	1	1	1	1

## Introduction :

This unit presents autobiographical accounts of the lives of two women writers. Both of them belong to marginalised communities. Both the women look back on their childhood. The first account is by an American Indian woman born in the late Nineteenth Century; the second is by a contemporary Tamil Dalit writer.

In 'The Cutting of My Long Hair', Zitkala Sa describes how mercilessly her long and beautiful hair was forcefully cut. She was dragged out. She cried and resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. She was tied fast in a chair but didn't submit. No one came for help and not a soul consoled her.

In 'We Too Are Human Beings', Bama describes how Indian society is ridden with the evil of untouchability. 'Bama' herself experienced it. She is upset by the inhuman attitude and treatment of the people belonging to the 'higher' castes towards the people of the 'lower' castes.

## Summary :

### I. The Cutting of my Long Hair—Zitkala-Sa

#### 1. First Day in the Land of Apples

The first day in the land of apples was a bitter-cold one. The ground was covered with snow; the trees were bare. The sound of the bell and the clatter of shoes were annoying to sensitive ears. People murmured in an unknown tongue. The narrator's soul had lost her peace and freedom. But all was useless.

#### 2. Indian Girls in Shingled Hair

A pale-faced woman came up after them. The girls were marching into the dining room. These were Indian girls in stiff shoes and closely clinging dresses. The boys entered through the opposite door. She was feeling very uncomfortable. A small bell rang. She pulled her chair and sat on it. But she noticed that all others were standing. She felt confused. The second bell was sounded. All were seated at last. She caught the eyes of a pale-faced woman upon her. She was keenly watched by the strange woman. The third bell was sounded. Everyone picked up their knife and fork and began eating.

#### 3. Her Friend gives her a Terrible Warning

Late in the morning, the narrator's friend Judewin gave her a terrible warning. She had overheard the pale-faced woman talk. They were talking about cutting her long, heavy hair. Among her people, short hair was worn by mourners. Shingled hair was worn by cowards. Judewin decided to submit but the narrator rebelled. She decided not to submit but to struggle.

#### 4. Her Long Hair Shingled

She disappeared. She came in a large room with three white beds in it. She crawled under the bed and hid herself. She heard the footsteps nearby. The steps were quickened. The voices grew louder. They looked under the bed. She was dragged out. She was carried down the stairs and tied-fast to a chair. She faced extreme indignities. Her long hair was shingled like that of a coward ! No one came to comfort her. Now, she was only one of the many little animals driven by a herder.

## II. We too are Human Beings — Bama

### 1. Walking Home From School

The narrator was in the third class. She hadn't yet heard people speak openly of untouchability. But she had already seen, felt, experienced and been humiliated by what it was. The distance from her school to home could be covered in ten minutes. But she took from half an hour to an hour to reach there. She watched all the fun and games that were going on. She saw performing monkeys. She saw the snake charmer displaying his snakes. The other attractions were : The Maariyaata temple; The Pongal celebrations; The statue of Gandhiji and the sweet and snack stalls. She could go on and on. Everything stopped her and attracted her attention.

### 2. Entertainments and Performances

Political parties would arrive. They cried through their mikes. Then, there might be a street play or a puppet show or a stunt performance. Some or the other entertainment was always going on. There were the coffee clubs in the bazaar. She would see people chopping onions or almonds blown down by the wind. All these sights stopped her from going home. Then, she would see people selling vegetables, fruits and sweets.

### 3. Food Packet held not by Hands but by its String

One day the narrator saw that a threshing floor had been set up near her street. The landlord sat there watching the proceedings. Then, an elder of their street came along from the bazaar. He was carrying a small packet. It contained something like vadai or green banana bhaji. He came along holding out the packet by its string without touching it. The elder went straight to the landlord. He bowed low and extended the packet towards him. The landlord opened it and began to eat. She went home and told the story in all its comic detail. She fell about with laughter but Annan (elder brother) was not amused. He told her that the man was not being funny. He was from a low caste. He couldn't touch the food packet.

### 4. The Incident makes her Angry

When she heard it, she felt terribly sad. It was disgusting. She felt so much provoked and angry that she wanted to touch those vadais herself straightway. She wondered why poor people showed respect and bowed before such cruel persons. The rich forget that others are also human beings.

### 5. Education Gives Dignity and Respect

Annan told the narrator that they were born in a community of "low caste" people. They were never given any honour or dignity or respect. If they study and make progress, they can throw away these indignities. If they are learned, then people will come to them of their own accord. The words Annan spoke to her that day made a very deep impression on her. She studied hard and stood first in her class. Many people became her friends.

## Short Answer Type Questions

[2 marks each]

(Answer the following questions in about 30-40 words each.)

Q. 1. How did Zitkala-Sa's first day in the land of apples begin ?

[Outside Delhi Set II, 2016]

Ans. Value Points

- bitter cold day, snow covered ground
- large bell rang for breakfast
- annoying clatter of shoes disturbed peace
- constant clash of harsh noises and an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue
- marched into dining room
- were given tight fitting clothes which Zitkala-Sa found immodest

(Any two)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2016] 2

OR

Zitkala's first day in the land of apples was a bad experience for her. She was made to wear clothes which she considered immodest. The army like discipline followed at the dining table left her embarrassed. On that day, her long hair was shingled even after cries and protests from her.

[Topper's Answer 2016]

**Detailed Answer :** Her first day in the land of apples was full of embarrassment and indignities. It was a bitter cold day and the ground was covered with snow. A large bell rang for breakfast and everybody moved towards the dining hall. The annoying clatter of shoes disturbed the place. Before entering the dining room, she was given tight fitting clothes which she found immodest. They took away the blanket wrapped around her and Zitkala-Sa felt embarrassed.

**Q. 2. At the dining table, why did Zitkala-Sa begin to cry when others started eating ?**

[Outside Delhi Set I, 2016]

**Ans. Value Points**

- fixed procedure for breakfast
- first bell to pull the chairs
- at second bell all had to sit down
- at third bell, all started eating with forks and knives, she felt out of place started crying

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2016] 2

**Detailed Answer :** Zitkala-Sa cried at the table because she was very embarrassed. She did not know the practices involved while eating. When the first bell was sounded everyone pulled their chairs. She did too. But while everyone was waiting for the second bell to ring in order to sit and start eating, she sat down on the first bell itself. This made her feel embarrassed and she started crying.

**Q. 3. Why was Zitkala-Sa in tears on the first day in the land of apples ?**

[Outside Delhi Set II, 2014]

**Ans. Value Points :** The new environment / cultural shock / unknown tongue / strict regimen unknown to her like eating by formula, squeaking shoes, news about cutting her hair.

(Any two)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

**Detailed Answer :** Zitkala-Sa was in tears on the first day in the land of apples because her cloak had been taken away from her. She was further informed by her friend that they would cut her long, heavy hair. Zitkala-Sa resisted but her hair was forcefully cut and she felt insulted.

**Q. 4. According to Zitkala-Sa, what does 'eating by formula' mean ?**

[Outside Delhi Set III, 2016]

**Ans. Value Points**

- not used to eating by formula (sat down when others stood up and vice versa)
- disturbed by noise and bedlam of languages
- Matron staring at her
- felt out of place / embarrassed

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2016] 2

**Detailed Answer :** When Zitkala-Sa was admitted in the Carlisle Indian School, she faced a number of rules that the students had to follow. One of them was the manner of eating. There were three bells which were rung before the students were allowed to start eating. Being a natural being, Zitkala-Sa could not digest the meaning of these polished manners which were alien to her culture.

### Commonly Made Error

- Most of the students are not aware of the meaning of the phrase and give incorrect answer.

### Answering Tips

- The rules followed for beginning the meal need to be covered here.

**Q. 5. Why did Zitkala – Sa not want her hair to be cut short ?**

[CBSE, SQP, 2014-15]

**Ans. Value Points :**

- Hair cut by enemies of unskilled captured warriors
- short hair worn by mourners
- shingled hair by cowards - indecent, undignified.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014-15] 2

**Detailed Answer :** Zitkala-Sa did not want her hair to be cut short because her mother had told her that shingled hair was worn by unskilled warriors who were captured and short hair was worn by mourners. She felt indecent and undignified.

**Q. 6. Why was the girl tied to a chair ?**

[CBSE, SQP-II, 2012]

**Ans.** The girl was tied to a chair because she refused to accept their decision. They wanted to cut her long hair and she felt insulted because of this. 2

**Q. 7. Mention any two reasons because of which it would take thirty minutes to an hour for Bama to reach home ?**

[CBSE, SQP, 2012]

OR

**How long would it take for Bama to walk home from school and why ?**

[Comptt., Delhi Set-I, II & III, 2011]

**Ans.** It would take Bama thirty minutes to an hour to reach home because she would watch all the fun and games that were going on the road. She would look at the shops and the bazaars. She would also look at the snake charmers and the monkey performing. 2

**Q. 8. Why did Bama reach home late after school ?**

[Comptt., Outside Delhi Set II, 2015]

OR

**What made Bama return home invariably late from school ?**

[Comptt., Outside Delhi Set-I, II & III, 2012]

OR

**What were the articles in the stalls and shops that fascinated Bama on her way back from school ?**

[Outside Delhi Set-I & II, 2013]

OR

**Which activities of the people would Bama watch keenly in the bazaar ?**

[Outside Delhi Set-III, 2013]

**Ans.** Street plays or a puppet show or a stunt performance, arrival of political parties and their speeches through mikes, coffee clubs in bazaar, the chopping of onions or almonds being blown away by the winds, all these activities fascinated Bama on her way back from school. 2

**Q. 9. What comic incident did Bama narrate to her brother ? Why was he not amused ?**

[Foreign, 2014]

**Ans. Value Points :**

- the manner in which the elderly man was walking holding the packet with a string, looking very funny
- her brother was not amused for he knew the harsh reality of caste discrimination faced by the people of his community

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

**Detailed Answer :** Bama told her brother about the incident of an elderly man who was walking holding the packet with a string which seemed to be very funny.

Her brother was not amused for he knew the harsh reality of caste discrimination faced by the people of his community.

#### Commonly Made Error

- Some students fail to answer the second part of the question.

#### Answering Tips

- The students must read the question thoroughly before proceeding with the answer.

**Q. 10. Which words of her brother made a deep impression on Bama ? [HOTS] [Delhi, Set-I, 2014]**

OR

**What did Bama's brother want her to do ? Why ?**

[Comptt., Outside Delhi Set-II, 2017]

**Ans. Value Points :**

- wanted Bama to study hard and come first
- only through education she could overcome racial discrimination

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

**Detailed Answer :** When Bama appraised her brother about an incident, her brother told her that they were born in a community of 'low caste' people and so were not given any honour, dignity or respect. They could throw away these indignities if they study, make progress and become learned. These words had a deep and lasting impression on Bama and she started studying very hard and stood first in the class.

**Q. 11. What is common between Zitkala Sa and Bama ? [HOTS] [Comptt., Delhi & Outside Delhi, 2014]**

**Ans. Value Points :** Both women came from marginalised communities, victims of discrimination, protested against injustice, scarred by social injustice in early childhood, both became writers and used their education to fight against discrimination and injustice.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

**Detailed Answer :** Zitkala Sa and Bama both came from marginalized communities. They both were the victims of discrimination and protested against social injustice which they both faced during their childhood. They both became writers and used their education to fight against discrimination and social injustice.

**Q. 12. What were the indignities that Zitkala-Sa had to suffer for being from a marginalized community?**

[SQP 2018-19]

**Ans. Value Points :**

- tossed around like a wooden puppet
- humiliated like a coward
- was treated like an animal and had none to comfort her

[CBSE Marking Scheme 2018-19]

**Detailed Answer :** Zitkala Sa had to suffer many indignities on account of belonging to marginalised community. She had been stared at, she had been thrown here and there like a puppet, her blanket and moccasins had been taken from her, she had to wear tight fitting clothes and finally her hair was shingled. She felt she had lost her freedom. She wanted to go back to her mother. 2

**Q. 13. How could Bama rise above indignities ?**

[Comptt., Delhi Set-I, II & III, 2012]

**Ans.** Bama was deeply hurt by the untouchability rampant in her society and she rose above indignities by studying hard and standing first in her class. This made many people her friends. 2

#### Commonly Made Error

- Most of the students fail to understand the question.

#### Answering Tips

- The success of Bama and its consequence need to be covered here.

## Long Answer Type Questions

[6 marks each]

(Answer the following questions in about 125-150 words.)

**Q. 1. What were Zitkala Sa's experiences on the first day in the land of apples ?**

[Comptt., Outside Delhi Set-I, 2014]

**Ans.** It was Zitkala-Sa's first day in the land of apples. She was an American-Indian who had been brought there. She had two unpleasant experiences.

She had to face an embarrassing position in the dining room as she didn't know the eating pattern that was followed there. When a large bell rang, she marched into the dining room along with the other Indian girls. A small bell was tapped. Each of the pupils drew a chair from under the table. She thought they were going to eat. So she pulled out her chair and slipped into it. When she looked

around, she found that she alone was seated while the rest were standing. She found herself in an embarrassing position.

Then, she got the shocking news that they were going to shingle her long, heavy hair. She was in a great panic. When nobody was noticing her, she crept up to the stairs. She hid herself in an empty room under the bed. But she was found out. She was dragged out and brought downstairs. She was tied fast to a chair. Her hair was shingled. She cried but no one came to her rescue. 6

**Q. 2. What activities did Bama witness on her way back from school ?**

[Comptt., Outside Delhi Set-I, 2014]

**Ans.** Bama watched all the fun and games in the streets. There was a performing monkey. Then, there was the snake charmer. There was the cyclist who had not got off his bike for three days. There were the spinning wheels. The Maariyaata temple was a great attraction. There were all sorts of shops and stalls. There was a hunter gypsy with a lemur in a cage, people selling needles, clay pots and instruments for cleaning ears.

There would be some political party arranging mikes. At times, there was a puppet or a magic show. There were the coffee clubs in the bazaar.

Some people could be seen sitting in front of the shops chopping onions. Then, according to the season, there would be people selling fruits, sweets, tasty fried snacks, payasam, halwa, boiled tamarind seeds and iced lollies. 6

**Q. 3. How did the scene, she saw in the market place, change Bama's life ?** [Comptt., Delhi Set I, 2015]

OR

In India, the so-called lower castes have been treated cruelly for a long time. Who advised Bama to fight against this prejudice, when and how ? [Outside Delhi Set-I, II & III, 2017]

**Ans. Value Points** : Bama was a victim of social discrimination and realization comes later.

**Who advised** : Annan, Bama's elder brother

**When** : She narrated in all comic detail the manner in which the elderly man from their street carried the food packet.

– Annan revealed the reason/behaviour of higher caste people towards the untouchables.

Bama, agitated, felt sorry and miserable

**How** : Annan advised her to study hard-education, key to community honour/dignity/overcome caste bias (Any other relevant point)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 6

India has a long history in which the lower castes have been treated cruelly. They have been made to live separate from society and are often thought of as 'untouchables' as 'dirty'. They are thus subjected to a poor treatment by the society. Similarly, Bama had seen an important elder of her community fetching vadais for his master in a comical manner. He was holding the packet only by the string and ~~also~~ held it away from himself. This sight made Bama want to double up with laughter. When she recounted this to her elder brother, ~~Annan~~ Annan, he explained to her that this was because their caste was considered untouchable. He explained to her that

against this prejudice was to study, learn and succeed. He told her that if she worked hard and became successful, people would flock to and want to associate themselves with her. This was the only way to earn dignity and respect.

**Q. 4. What was the incident watched by Bama in her street ? How was she affected by it ?**

**OR**

**For a long time we have been treating certain castes with a prejudice. What did Bama see which made her realise this injustice ?**

*[Foreign Set-I, II, III, 2017]*

**Ans. Value Points :** — Bama – saw an elder of their street coming from the bazaar  
— was carrying small packet by its string without touching it  
— the packet was handed to the landlord  
— she felt like laughing  
— told this to her brother (Annan)  
— brother told her about untouchability  
— shocked, upset, did not want to laugh anymore, felt sad & infuriated.

*[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 6*

**Detailed Answer :** One day Bama was walking home from school, when she came to a street where she saw the landlord seated on a piece of sacking spread over a stone ledge. He was watching the proceedings of threshing. Just then, she saw an elder of their street coming along from the direction of the bazaar. He was holding out a packet of vadai by its string, without touching it. He was walking in such a ludicrous manner that she could not help laughing. He went straight up to the landlord, bowed low and extended the packet towards him. The landlord opened the packet and began to eat the vadais.

She was too young to understand why the man carried the packet like that. She told the whole incident to her elder brother. He explained to her that everybody believed that they were upper caste than that particular man and they were from the lower caste and therefore, must not touch the people of their community. If they did, then the upper caste would consider themselves be polluted. This is when Bama realised the injustice done to certain castes. She felt very sad to hear this. She was filled with rage. She wanted to rebel against the caste system which made the distinction between human beings. They too were human beings. Then, why should they bow and cringe before these other people.

**Q. 5. It may take a long time for oppression to be resisted, but the seeds of rebellion are sowed early in life. How did Zitkala-Sa face oppression as a child and how did she overcome it?**

*[Delhi / Outside Delhi 2018]*

**Ans. Value Points :**

- Bama – saw an elder of their street coming from the bazaar
- childhood experience makes a mark – sweet / bitter
- oppression / suppression / exploitation
- her childhood courage to face atrocities / bullying
- cutting of hair and her resistance
- became a universal name although belonged to a marginalized community

- faced it in a spirited manner
- resisted by hiding under bed
- kicked / scratched widely / cried aloud / shook her head
- lost her spirit after hair was cut
- seeds of rebellion sown
- struggled, triumphed- criticised the system / dogma / life of a native American

**(Any other relevant point)**

**(Any six points)**

*[CBSE Marking Scheme 2018] 6*

**Detailed Answer :** Children are much more sensitive and observant than the adults. They see, hear, and feel whatever is happening around them. They are quick to notice any deviation from the normal. Zitkala-Sa shows that she has the seed of rebellion at a tender age. Her friend Judwin tells her that the authorities will cut her long, heavy hair and she will have to submit as the authorities were stronger than her. But Zitkala-Sa rebels and declares that she will not submit. And, she does carry out her resolution. She hides herself to foil their attempt. When she is detected to be hiding under the bed, she is dragged out. She kept resisting by scratching and kicking them wildly. But, she was overpowered and tied to a chair. She doesn't take things lying down and instead keeps resisting. The spark of rebellion is not put out even by the oppression.

**Q. 6. What are the similarities in the lives of Bama and Zitkala-Sa though they belong to different cultures ?**

*[Outside Delhi Set-I, 2009]*

**OR**

**The two accounts that you have read above are based on two distant cultures. What is the commonality of theme found in both of them ?**

**Ans.** 'Memories of Childhood' presents two autobiographical episodes. Both are from the lives of women. The first account is by an American Indian woman born in the late nineteenth century. The second episode is narrated by a contemporary Tamil Dalit writer. But the women belong to two different cultures. Gertrude Simmons Bonnin describes the shameful treatment that red native Indians meet at the hands of the white people. On the other hand, "Bama" narrates how the people of 'high' castes don't consider the people of 'low' castes as human beings.

The first common feature of both the writings is that both the episodes describe the sufferings of two women. Both the women are from 'marginalised communities'. Native Indians don't get respect, dignity and importance in America. They are marginalised and sidelined. The white people suffer from racial prejudices. They force the minorities to follow their traits, traditions and whims. The poor Indian girl in 'The Cutting of My Long Hair' is dragged out, tied to a chair and her long and heavy hair was shingled. No one helped or even consoled her. She lost her identity. She was now one of the many little animals driven by

a herder. Similarly, the girl in 'We Too Are Human Beings' is upset by the curse of untouchability. What they share is the cruel discrimination and adverse situations faced by both of them and how they both educated themselves and brought forward their accounts in the form of telling the whole world what they faced through their stories.

6

#### Commonly Made Error

- Many students know the characteristics of the personalities of Zitkala and Bama but fail to relate the two.

#### Answering Tips

- The commonalities between the personalities of Zitkala and Bama are the answer to the question.

**Q. 7. Untouchability is not only a crime, it is inhuman too. Why and how did Bama decide to fight against it ? [HOTS] [Delhi Set-I/II/III, 2017]**

#### Ans. Value Points :

- Bama enraged when she learnt that they were not allowed to touch food of upper class people as they believed that it would get polluted
- on the advice of her brother, she decided to study hard, stood first
- as a result- upper class people befriended her

(Any other relevant point)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 6

**Detailed Answer :** Bama was in school when she first came to know of the social discrimination faced by the people of her community. On her way back home from school, she saw an elderly man carrying a small packet containing some eatables; he was holding it by its strings and not at all touching it. She found it funny at first but, soon, was shocked to know from her brother that it was a form of discrimination the people of their community had to face because they were Dalits.

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AniketSha\_official telegram