

"Lost Spring" Question Answer

Textual questions:

Q1. What is Saheb looking for in the garbage dumps? Where is he and where has he come from?

A. Saheb is a ragpicker and he looks for valuable items of day to day life in the garbage dumps, which can be sold or reused by them. Sometimes he finds a silver coin, even a ten rupee note in the garbage. As there is always hope of finding more, he searches through the garbage.

He is in Seemapuri, a place located in the outskirts of Delhi. Saheb has come from Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Q2. What explanations does the author offer for the children not wearing footwear?

A. The author comes across many shoeless ragpicker children in her neighbourhood. According to her, one explanation of this state of being barefoot is that it is a tradition among the people of his community. However, the author quickly mentions that calling it a tradition could be just a means of justification of the extreme state of poverty where they are unable to afford footwear and other basic necessities.

Q3. Is Saheb happy working at the tea-stall? Explain.

A. No. Saheb seems not to be happy working at the tea stall. Though he is paid 800 rupees and all his meals, he seems to have lost his freedom. His face has lost his carefree look that he had when he was working as a ragpicker. The steel canister seems heavier than the plastic bag he used to carry. He is no longer his own master but a mere servant at the tea-stall where the owner of the stall control all his movements.

Q4. What makes the city of Firozabad famous?

A. Firozabad is famous for the glass bangles produced in the city. The place is known as the centre of India's glass-blowing industry.

Q5. Mention the hazards of working in the glass bangles industry.

A. The bangle makers face many problems while working in the glass-blowing industry. They have to work with furnaces with high temperature in dark dingy cells without proper facility of air and light. The dust from polishing the bangles is injurious to eyes. The people, especially children working in the industry often lose their eyesight before they become adults. Their eyes are more adjusted to the dark than to the light outside. Apart from that people also suffer from lung and heart diseases later in their lives after working at the hot environment.

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

A. Mukesh dares to dream and has a way out of his situation. He aspires to become a motor mechanic. On the other hand, his family is too tired and scared to do something to come out of their grim situation.

Understanding the text:

Q1. What could be some of the reasons for the migration of people from villages to cities?

A. People migrate from villages to cities in search of a better life. They want to earn money so that they can lead a good life and rear their children in a better way. As cities have more opportunities for work, this makes them migrate from the villages to the big cities.

Q2. Would you agree that promises made to poor children are rarely kept? Why do you think this happens in the incidents narrated in the text?

A. Yes, I agree that the promises made to poor children are rarely kept. In the story the writer jokingly offers the rag picker boy to join a school that she would open. In fact, she does not intend to open a school. She speaks mindlessly but the boy takes it to be true and later asks her if the school has opened. There are many such hollow promises in the boy's life because the person who makes the promise never intends to fulfil it.

Q3. What forces conspire to keep the workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad in poverty?

A. The writer tells us that the bangle makers of Firozabad are poverty-stricken. They are burdened by the fact of the particular caste in which they are born i.e., the caste of bangle makers. They have to continue the traditional profession. Further, the society has formed a harsh circle around them. The sahuikars, middlemen, policemen, law keepers, officers and politicians altogether form a barrier around them and tie them in the grip of poverty. They cannot escape from it.

Q4. How, in your opinion, can Mukesh realise his dream?

A. Mukesh dares to dream and wants to become a motor mechanic. He wants to drive cars too. He has taken the initial step by aspiring to do something different from the family business. I think that Mukesh can realize his dream with determination and hard work.

Q5. Mention the hazards of working in the glass bangles industry.

A. See answer to question no. 5 in the previous section.

Q6. Why should child labour be eliminated and how?

A. Forcing a child to work is a crime. This is so in order to prevent exploitation of children. If forced to work, Children cannot enjoy their childhood. They cannot get proper education. Also, when they are forced into hazardous works, they get ailments at a young age. This destroys their future. Their parents overlook all these facts as they need money. So, the government has to become proactive and take measures to check child labour and enforce the law strictly.

Possible questions:

Q1. Who was Saheb? What was his full name? What was the irony about his name?

A. Saheb was a poor ragpicker. His full name was Saheb-e-Alam. The meaning of his full name was the lord of the universe. But the poor boy had no economic assistance to fulfill his basic needs.

like food, shelter, clothes and other necessities like basic education. Thus there was a deep irony in his name, and as the author said that it would be hard for him to believe it.

Q2. What has Saheb's mother told him about their coming to the big city?

A. Saheb's mother told him that their home used to be in the green fields of Dhaka. There were many storms which swept away their homes and fields. As they did not have enough to survive, they left their country and came to the big city looking for livelihood.

Q3. Where have the people living in Seemapuri come from? Why do not they want to go back?

A. The people living in Seemapuri have come from Dhaka, Bangladesh. Though the land is beautiful and has rivers and green fields, their homes and fields have been destroyed by frequent storms. They get no food to feed themselves and their children. Therefore they do not want to go back to the same state where they cannot feed their family well.

Q4. What does garbage mean for the elders and the children in Seemapuri? Or

"Garbage to them is gold." Why does the author say so about the ragpickers.

A. Garbage to the elders is gold as it helps them earning their daily bread. It means a roof over their heads. For them it is a means of survival. But for the children it is even more. For them, it is a thing wrapped in wonder as they sometimes find a silver coin or a ten rupee note in the garbage. They find enough reason to scrounge through the garbage cans.

Q5. What kind of locality does Mukesh live in?

A. Mukesh lives in a very dirty locality. The lanes of that locality are stinking as they are choked with garbage. The homes look like hovels. Their walls are crumbling and they have wobbly doors and there are no windows. The houses are so small that men and animals live in them together.

Q6. What does Mukesh's grandmother say about her husband?

A.Mukesh's grandmother says that her husband belonged to a family of bangle makers. She calls it a god-given lineage. It could not be broken. Her husband went blind with the dust from the polishing of bangles. She calls it his "karma" or destiny.

Q7. Why do not the poor bangle makers organise themselves into a co-operative?

A.The poor bangle makers do not organise themselves into a co-operative because of the cruel circle of the middlemen. They do not let them to form a co-operative. They use their money as a power and put police after them. They are caught and beaten by the police. They are put into the jail on false charges of illegal acts. The poor bangle makers also have no leader to guide them.

Q8.How does the author describe Seemapuri, a place on the periphery of Delhi?

A.Seemapuri is a slum area, a place situated on the periphery of Delhi. There are about 10,000 ragpickers live there. They live in houses that are mere structures of mud which have roofs of tin and tarpaulin. There is no sewage, drainage or running water facility available in Seemapuri. The people who live here came from Bangladesh in 1971 have no identity card or permits. But they have ration cards which allow them to have their names on the voters' list. The people living in Seemapuri live in a very pathetic condition where they are mostly dependent on ragpicking as the source of their income.

Q9.Write a brief note on the town of Firozabad.

A.Firozabad is a town in India. It is famous for its bangles. Every other family here is engaged in making bangles. It is the centre of India's glass-blowing industry. The families living in Firozabad have been working around glass furnaces for generations. They weld glass and make bangles which are used by women of the country where these people have always been very poor. They have to work in high temperatures in dingy cells without proper ventilation. There are around 20,000 children working in the glass blowing industry where they have to work all day in those dark places. Because of this reason, their eyes get more adjusted to the dark than to the light outside and many of them lose their eyesight even before they become adults. The poor bangle makers

lead a miserable life. They are exploited by the middlemen, policemen, sahkars, bureaucrats and politicians.

Q10. What does the title "Lost Spring" convey?

A.Spring is a season which symbolises youth and happiness. The poets have used the term spring to convey a happy state or a person during his youth. Youth is considered to be happiest phase of human life. But here in the lesson, the writer has described the stories of children belonging to two areas of India where they are living in a pathetic condition and are deprived of the basic necessities like- food, cloth and shelter. They are engaged in different petty jobs which provide them very little money with which they try to survive. They are too poor to avail basic education unlike children of their age. Thus through the title "Lost Spring" the writer wants to convey the dark and dreary life of the slum- dwellers like Saheb and Mukesh.