

2.LOST SPRING:STORIES OF STOLEN CHILDHOOD By Anees Jung

Gist of the lesson:

- ✓ The author examines and analyses the impoverished conditions and traditions that condemn children to a life of exploitation these children are denied an education and forced into hardships early in their lives.
- ✓ The writer encounters Saheb - a rag picker whose parents have left behind the life of poverty in Dhaka to earn a living in Delhi.
- ✓ His family like many other families of rag pickers lives in Seemapuri. They do not have other identification other than a ration card.
- ✓ The children do not go to school and they are excited at the prospect of finding a coin or even a ten rupee note for rummaging in the garbage.
- ✓ It is the only way of earning the life they live in impoverished conditions but are resigned
- ✓ to their fate.
- ✓ The writer is pained to see Saheb, a rag picker whose name means the ruler of earth, lose the spark of childhood and roams barefooted with his friends.
- ✓ From morning to noon the author encounters him in a tea stall and is paid Rs. 800 He sadly realizes that he is no longer his own master and this loss of identity weighs heavily on his tender shoulders.
- ✓ The author then tells about another victim, Mukesh who wants to be a motor mechanic.

- ✓ Hailing from Firozabad, the centre of India's bangle making and glass blowing industry, he has always worked in the glass making industry.
- ✓ His family like the others there do not know that it is illegal for children to work in such close proximity to furnaces, in such high temperatures.
- ✓ They are exposed to various health hazards like losing their eyesight as they work in abysmal conditions, in dark and dingy cells.
- ✓ Mukesh's father is blind as were his father and grandfather before him.
- ✓ They lead a hand to mouth existence as they are caught in the vicious web of the money lenders, middlemen, police and the traditions
- ✓ So burdened are the bangle makers of Firozabad that they have lost their ability to dream unlike Mukesh who dreams of driving a car.

SOLVED QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What does Saheb do for living? Why?
Saheb is a rag picker. His family has left the life of poverty behind in Dhaka in to pursue their dream of finding a better life. The children like him have no access to Education and are forced into rag picking
2. "Saheb is no longer his own master", says the writer. What does she mean?
The writer means that having accepted the job with the tea-stall, Saheb has lost the independence that he enjoyed as a rag picker, even though he was poor. Although he will now be able to supplement the family income, it will be at the cost of his freedom, which is difficult, binding and unfair for someone so young.
3. Why did people migrate from the village in Dhaka to Delhi ?
Better education, job opportunities and living conditions.
4. What trade does the family of Mukesh follow? Why does the writer feel that it will be difficult for Mukesh to break away from this tradition?

Engaged in bangle making-difficult to break away from this trade. He belongs to the caste of bangle makers His family is caught in the web of saukars, the middlemen, policemen, politicians and bureaucrats, from which there is no escape.

5. What does garbage symbolize for the adults and children?
Adults –means of earning a livelihood. Children –wrapped in wonder, magical

LONG ANSWER QUESTION

1. 'Lost Spring', is a sad commentary on the political system of our country that condemns thousands of people to a life of abject poverty. Comment.
Saheb, optimistic and enthusiastic—prospect of finding gold in garbage—likes going to school but no opportunity—freedom and joy of childhood to burdens of job at tea-stall.

Mukesh, born at Firozabad (bangle maker)—works under inhuman condition—dark room, hot furnaces—caught in web of poverty—vicious circle of sahlukars, policemen, politicians, bureaucrats and moneylenders—resigned to fate—unaware of child labour act—stifled initiation and hope—lose eyesight before becoming adults.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

- a. What does the title of the story 'Lost Spring' imply?
- b. Where has Saheb come from and why?
- c. How is Saheb's name full of irony?
- d. "Promises made to poor children are never kept." Explain with examples from the lesson.
- e. Mention the hazards of working in the bangle industry.
- f. Do you think Mukesh will realize his dream of becoming a car mechanic?
- g. 'His dreams loom like a mirage'. Whose dreams are being referred to and why are they compared to a mirage?
- h. 'Together they have imposed the baggage on the child that he cannot put down.' Who do 'they' refer to? What is the 'baggage' and why can the child not get rid of it?
- i. How is Mukesh's attitude to his situation different from that of his family?
- j. Why does the author describe children of slums as partners in survival?
- k. How has being born in the caste of bangle makers become both a destiny and a curse?

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Like all children of his age, Saheb also had many hopes and dreams. Do you think children like Saheb are able to fulfill their dreams?
 2. Politicians exploit all people and situations to their own benefit. Comment, keeping in view the situation of refugees in Seemapuri.
 3. Saheb wants to blossom and bloom but is nipped in the bud. Elaborate.
 4. 'Saheb and Mukesh are brothers in penury and suffering.' Discuss.
6. **Value Based Question:** Answer the following in about 100 words. 5

Mukesh says "I will be a motor mechanic. I will learn to drive a car."

Not only setting a goal, but having a clear idea about the means to reach the goal and pursuing it with strong determination and commitment are essential to achieve success. Based on this realization, write an email to your younger brother, a boarding school student, making him aware of the need for setting realistic goal and planning ways to reach it with strong determination and commitment.