A05 Indian Literature (full note)

Readings on Indian literature (University of Calicut)

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Readings on Indian Literatures

1

Poem

Small Towns and the River

Mamang Dai

INTRO

Mamang Dai is a poet, novelist and journalist from Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh. She was born into the Adi tribe, one of the most populous groups of indigenous peoples in Arunachal Pradesh.

Mamang Dai received Sahitya Akademi Award in 2017 for her novel *The Black Hill*. She was also awarded Padma Shri in 2011.

BACKGROUND

The poem, *Small Towns and the River,* is to be read in the background of the never-ending tensions between the natives and the migrants from other parts of India. The violent clashes often lead to massive bloodshed which is a regular feature.

SUMMARY

Small Towns and the River by Mamang Dai is a poem about life, death and mortality contrasted with immortality and eternal bliss.

First, the poem presents a dusty and gloomy picture of small towns. Days are filled with life and death. Only rituals are permanent.

Then she feels that the river has a soul. The river grieves in summer. It knows its origin and end. It also knows that water is immortal.

The poet remembers her happy childhood. But life in the small town is full of anxiety for the future. However, death also brings in hope and optimism at least in the life after life. There they can walk with the gods.

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ESSAY

Q. "Life and death, life and death/ only the rituals are permanent." Comment on the eternity of nature in contrast to the temporality of human existence discussed in the poem.

Mamang Dai is an Indian poet, novelist and journalist from Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh. In the poem, *Small Towns and the River*, she portrays the eternity of nature in contrast to the impermanence of human existence.

The poet says that “small towns" remind her of death. Her hometown lies calmly amidst the trees. It is the same in summer and winter, dusty and windy. In small towns, each day brings in news of someone’s death that makes people sad. Days are all about life and death. Life is short-lived; only the rituals are permanent.

The river has a soul. In summer, it cuts through the land like a “torrent of grief”. Sometimes the river seems to hold its breath to look for a land of fish and stars. From the first drop of rain on the dry earth and the mist on the mountaintops, it crosses the town. The river knows that water is immortal.

The happy pictures of childhood contrast with the anxiety of small towns for the future. The dead are placed pointing west and they shed off the burden of life. When the soul rises, it will walk into the golden east, the house of the sun. This hope revives the poet with new energy. Life is like the sunlight that warms the cool bamboo. In small towns by the river, she wants to walk with the gods. Death also brings in hope and optimism for a better life after life.

The poem highlights the impermanent nature of human life. However, the beauty of the poem is born when it is contrasted with the eternity and permanence of nature.

SHORT ANSWER

1. What does the poet mean by "dreadful silence"?

The silence is due to the death of someone. The death is a dreadful reminder of the impermanent and mortal nature of human life. This is what the poet means by “dreadful silence”.

2. "The river has a soul." What does the poet mean by this expression?

According to the poet, the river has a soul; it is a living being. In summer, with very little water, it cuts through the land like “a torrent of grief.” Sometimes it seems to hold its breath to look for a land of fish and stars. The river knows that water is immortal.

3. Why "the dead are placed pointing west"?

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The dead are placed pointing west because when the soul rises, it will walk into the golden east, the house of the sun. The poet means that the human soul is immortal.

4. Comment on the expression "torrent of grief."

The poet says that, in summer, the river cuts through the land like “a torrent of grief”. It is a metaphor that portrays the flow of the river as the outpouring of grief.

5. Do you think the poem ends with an optimistic note? If yes, give reasons.

The poet says that in small towns by the river, they all want to walk with gods, in eternal bliss. Death also brings in hope for a better life after life. The poem ends with an optimistic note.

6. Why do "the small towns grow with anxiety for the future"?

The small towns grow anxious about the future. It is anxiety about death that is sure to come to everyone in the near future.

7. Explain the expression "sad wreath of tuberoses."

It is sadness associated with funeral. The “sadness” of the occasion is transferred to “wreath”. It is an example of the figure of speech, ‘transferred epithet”.

PARAGRAPH

8. Comment on the elements of Pantheism in the poem.

‘Pantheism’ is a doctrine that identifies God with the universe. It regards universe as a manifestation of God. The poet, like the people of her tribe, believes in the philosophy of Pantheism. To her, Nature is alive with spirits, “a living presence”. Mountains, rivers and trees are worshipped. Dai says that "The river has a soul". In summer, it cuts through the land like “a torrent of grief”. The poet says that sometimes the river seems to hold its breath to look for a land of fish and stars. The river knows that water is immortal. Mamang Dai says, “In small towns by the river, we all want to walk with the gods.”

9. Discuss the literary devices used in the poem.

In the poem, *Small Towns and the River,* Mamang Dai uses several literary devices. In the first stanza, the “hometown” is personified. Most of the lines are connected by the device called ‘enjambment’. In the expression, “sad wreath of tuberoses”, the poet uses the device called “transferred epithet”. The sadness of the occasion is transferred to the wreath. When the poet says, the river “cuts through the land like a torrent of grief”, he uses a ‘simile’ for comparison, and a ‘metaphor’ in “torrent of grief”. In the expression, “mist on the mountaintops”, there is ‘alliteration’, in the repetition of “m” sound. The line, “The river has a soul” is used as a ‘refrain’.

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10. Comment on the mood of the poem that highlights the sadness and stagnancy of the human world in contrast to the vigour and movement of the natural world.

Small Towns and the River by Mamang Dai presents a dusty and gloomy picture of small towns that remind her of death. In small towns, each day brings in news of someone's death that makes people sad. Days are all about life and death. In contrast, the poet also depicts the vigour of the river that flows by the towns. The river has a soul. In summer, it cuts through the land like "torrent of grief". Sometimes the river seems to hold its breath to look for a land of fish and stars. In this way, the poem highlights the sadness and stagnancy of the human world in contrast to the vigour and movement of the natural world. The mood changes from sadness to hope and optimism in the end.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

2

Poem

Dream: Midnight

Sridala Swami

ESSAY

Discuss how the poem voices out the absurdities of contemporary life where everything is defined by power and autonomy?

Sridala Swami is a poet from Hyderabad. The poem, 'Dream: Midnight', depicts the fragmented thoughts of a mother about her son. It also talks about the absurdities of contemporary life where everything is defined by power and autonomy.

The poem portrays the trauma of a mother who is struggling to save her twelve-year-old son from an illegal execution by drowning. The child is sitting in front of her as if he has just come out of a shower. He is cold and shivering. The mother is in a hurry to hide him from the outside world at least behind a cardboard wall. Like every mother, she says that her son is innocent.

The mother asks how they planned her child's execution. She wonders if they were pirates. If so, whether they made him walk the plank, or he walked off the edge like a fool. She says she cannot believe in execution by drowning because it is not civilised. But there weren't men lined up, rifles pointed at the boy who came up for air.

The mother hopes that her son will escape from drowning. She gave him wings but he used them to come home. She says twelve is too young to be thinking of nests. It is also too old for a son and his mother. So, he cannot be drowned though he can no longer fly. He can dream of flight and perhaps that is enough to bring him out of the water.

The poem ends with an optimistic note, pointing to the power of human imagination. There is also the hope of humanity towards a new world order that is free from power and fear.

SHORT ANSWER

1. Who is the speaker of the poem, 'Dream: Midnight'?

The speaker is a mother who is struggling to save her twelve-year-old son from an illegal execution by drowning.

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2. "I have no time to hold him or release the grief that held me." Why does the speaker say so?

The mother is in a hurry to hide her son from the outside world at least behind a cardboard wall.

3. "It is not civilised. It is not how we live where we live." What is the uncivilised act that frightens the speaker?

Execution by drowning is the uncivilised act that frightens the speaker.

4. What are the doubts that rule the speaker's psyche about the ordeals that her son is going to face while being captured?

The speaker wonders if those who planned her child's execution were pirates. If so, whether they made him walk the plank, or he walked off the edge like a fool.

5. Do you think the poem ends with an optimistic note? If yes, give reasons.

The mother says that her son can dream of flight and perhaps that is enough to bring him out of the water. The poem ends with an optimistic note, pointing to the power of human imagination.

PARAGRAPH

6. Discuss how the speaker in the poem voices out the fear of getting captured.

The speaker in the poem, 'Dream: Midnight', voices out the fear of her child getting captured. The child is twelve and is to be executed by drowning. However, he escapes. Now he is sitting in front of the mother as if he has just come out of a shower. He is cold and shivering. The mother is in a hurry to hide him from the outside world at least behind a cardboard wall. The people know that he is here but they greet him as if he had never left. The mother says she does not know what he did. Like every mother, she says, "My son is innocent."

7. Write a note on the tone of optimism with which the poem ends.

The poem, 'Dream: Midnight', by Sridala Swami portrays the trauma of a mother who is struggling to save her twelve-year-old son from an illegal execution by drowning. The mother hopes that her son will escape from drowning. She gave him wings but he used them to come home. She says twelve is too young to be thinking of nests. It is also too old for a son and his mother. So, he cannot be drowned though he can no longer fly. He can dream of flight and perhaps that is enough to bring him out of the water. The poem ends with an optimistic note, pointing to the power of human imagination.

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8. Discuss the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that lingers throughout the poem.

The poem, 'Dream: Midnight', by Sridala Swami portrays the trauma of a mother who is struggling to save her twelve-year-old son from an illegal execution by drowning. An atmosphere of fear and uncertainty lingers throughout the poem. The child is sitting in front of the mother as if he has just come out of a shower. He is cold and shivering. The mother is in a hurry to hide him from the outside world at least behind a cardboard wall. She wonders if those who planned her child's execution were pirates. She says she cannot believe in execution by drowning because it is not civilised.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

3

Poem

What would you do?

Omprakash Valmiki

INTRO

Omprakash Valmiki (1950-2013) is a renowned writer and poet. He is well known for his autobiography, *Joothan* (1997), which is considered as a milestone in Dalit Literature. The book describes his own life as a Dalit.

The poem, 'What Would You Do', depicts the pain, hurt, poverty and humiliation of the untouchables. It questions the dehumanising laws that are imposed upon Dalits by the upper castes. The poet revolts against the age-old injustices that Dalits experience in the society.

ESSAY 1

Q. Discuss the poem "What would you do?" as a rebellion against the age-old inequalities experienced by Dalits.

Omprakash Valmiki is a renowned writer and poet. The poem, 'What would you do?', is a rebellion against the age-old inequalities experienced by Dalits.

The poem is made up of nine rhetorical questions with "What would you do?". The question is repeated like a refrain at the end of a variety of situations in which Dalits are demoralised, beaten up, abused, and insulted in public. The poet asks if, you are thrown out of your village, you cannot draw drinking water from the well, you are made to do hard work without wages, you are given leavings to eat, what would you do?

If you are told to drag away animal carcasses and carry away the filth of a whole family, you are denied the fruits of education, you cannot write upon paper Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, you have to live in a shabby mud-hut in sun and rain, you are told to sleep in knee-deep water, and you have to battle with hunger, what would you do?

If you have to send your newly-wed women to the landlord's mansion on the first night, your women are told to become devdasis, and made prostitutes, you are denied your own land, and you, at every step, are reminded of how insignificant your race is, what would you do? In this way, the poet challenges the self-proclaimed "descendant of the Gods"

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(Brahmins) to live the life of a Dalit. He also revolts against the age-old injustices that Dalits experience in the society.

It is a poem of resistance in which Valmiki questions the validity of the caste system. He makes a strong protest against the social and cultural hegemony of the upper caste Hindus based on exploitation and oppression.

SHORT ANSWER

1. Why are Dalits denied their land, according to the poet?

According to the poet, Dalits are denied their land in the name of religion. Manu Smriti denies ownership of land to Sudra.

2. Who is called 'descendant of the gods' by the poet? Why?

Brahmins are called the “descendant of the gods” because they believe that they were born from the mouth of Brahma.

3. How are Dalit women tamed in the name of religion, according to the poet?

In the name of religion, Dalit women are told to become devadasis, and made prostitutes. This is how they are tamed.

4. "And at every step reminded of/ How insignificant your race is." Explain.

Dalits are denied every right. They are abused, and beaten up in public, and they cannot vote. At every step, they are reminded of how insignificant their race is.

5. Why are Dalits kept away from the "threshold of the temple of learning"?

In the past, education was considered to be priestly and it was a privilege enjoyed by the upper castes. So, Dalits were denied the right to education. They were kept away from the threshold of the temple of learning.

PARAGRAPH

1. The poem "What would you do" transforms the experience of pain into a narrative of resistance. Discuss.

The poem, ‘What would you do?’, by Omprakash Valmiki depicts the pain, hurt, humiliation and poverty of the untouchables. It is a rebellion against the age-old inequalities experienced by Dalits. The poem is born out of the poet’s own personal experiences as a Dalit. The upper caste people never thought of the untouchables as human beings. The Dalits were demoralised, beaten up, abused, and insulted in public. These bitter experiences of pain transform into a narrative of resistance in which Valmiki questions the validity of the caste

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system. He makes a strong protest against the social and cultural hegemony of the upper caste Hindus based on exploitation and oppression.

2. Discuss the autobiographical elements in the poem "What would you do?"

The poem, 'What would you do?', by Omprakash Valmiki is full of autobiographical elements. It is based on his own personal experiences as a Dalit. For example, the poet belongs to the sweeper caste. They were forced to eat the left-overs for centuries. In a colony meant for the untouchables, his own home was in front of a stinking cowshed of an upper caste family. His family members worked hard. Instead of payment, they got only abuses from the upper caste people. They were beaten up, ill-treated and abused in public. In this way, the poem gives a startling account of the poet's own miserable birth and life.

3. Relevance of the poem in the contemporary society.

The poem, 'What would you do?', by Omprakash Valmiki depicts the pain, hurt, humiliation and poverty of the untouchables. It is a rebellion against the age-old inequalities experienced by Dalits in the name of religious tenets. In today's society, there have been serious efforts to promote better conditions for Dalits through education, healthcare and employment. The caste-based discrimination is prohibited and untouchability abolished by the Constitution of India. But, in several places, such practices of discrimination, oppression and violence are still widespread. Many of them continue to live in poverty. Many are still landless. The poem has not lost its relevance in the contemporary society.

ESSAY 2

Q. Write an essay on the significance of the title and the theme of the poem "What would you do?"

Omprakash Valmiki is a renowned Indian writer and poet. The poem, 'What would you do?', is a rebellion against the age-old inequalities experienced by Dalits. The title of the poem is equally significant and relevant for its theme.

The poem is made up of a series of rhetorical questions framed from umpteen situations in which Dalits are demoralised, beaten up, abused, and insulted in public. The poet asks if you are thrown out of your village, if you cannot draw water from the well, if you are told to break stones without wages in place of real work w, if you are given leavings to eat, what would you do?

If you are told to drag away animal carcasses and carry away the filth of a whole family, if you are denied the fruits of education, if you cannot write upon paper Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, if you have to live in a shabby mud-hut in sun and rain, if you are told to sleep in knee-deep water, and if you have to battle with hunger, what would you do?

If you have to send your newly-wed women to the landlord's mansion on the first night, if your women told to become devdasis, and made prostitutes, if you are denied your

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own land, and if, at every step, reminded of how insignificant your race is, what would you do?

In the poem, Valmiki makes a vehement protest against the social and cultural hegemony of the upper caste Hindus based on exploitation and oppression. The title of the poem is a challenge to the self-proclaimed 'descendant of the Gods' (Brahmins) to live the life of a Dalit. The poet also revolts against the age-old injustices that Dalits experience in the society.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

4

Poem

Munda & Kondh songs

Ganesh N. Devy

INTRO

Prof. G. N. Devy is a well-known scholar, literary critic, cultural activist and a former professor of English from Gujarat. He is known for the Adivasi Academy created by him in Tejgadh, Gujarat. He is the Director of Sahitya Akademi's Project on Literature in Tribal Languages and Oral Traditions. He is a recipient of numerous awards, including Padma Shri in 2014.

This lesson, consisting of two tribal songs, is an interesting study on the life and culture of the tribal people, Mundas and Kondhs.

ESSAY

Q. What do you think is the relevance of tribal songs like 'A Munda Song' and 'A Kondh Song' in the contemporary society?

Tribal songs are literary compositions that have been transmitted orally through generations. These songs are very rich thematically and ornamentally. They have great relevance in the contemporary society.

The tribals live in groups. They show very little interest in accumulating wealth. The tribals accept a world view in which nature, human beings and God are closely linked. They believe in the human ability to spell and interpret truth. They consider the space around them to be more sacred than secular.

The tribals live in perfect harmony with nature. They treat nature as a living being. They also consider nature to be the mother who nurtures them. The tribals have a positive ecological outlook. They are simple minded, and their world view is not materialistic. They have not been influenced by evils like consumerism. Some tribal communities follow matrilineal system. Tribal societies do not follow dowry system.

The Munda song, for example, is sung on the occasion of childbirth, whereas the Kondh song is performed on the occasion of death. These songs are an expression of the tribal vision of life. Their close connection with nature is evident from the songs. They

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believe in the interdependence between human beings and nature. Nature for them is living and responsive to human actions.

A closer look at the tribal songs reveals that the modern society can learn useful lessons from the life and culture of the tribals. These songs have a lot of relevance in the contemporary society.

SHORT ANSWER

1. Why is the birth of a girl child associated with "a cowshed: filled up" in 'A Munda song'?

In a Munda song, the birth of a girl child is associated with "the cowshed filled up" because the Munda people regard the birth of a girl child as auspicious. So, the song welcomes the birth of a girl child and celebrates the event.

2. Why is the symbol of 'a cowshed depleted' associated with the birth of a boy?

To the Mundas, the birth of a son is not as auspicious as that of a daughter. So, the event is marked as, "A son was born/The cowshed was depleted."

3. What is the request of Kondhs to the dead spirits?

Kondhs request the dead spirits not to trouble those who are alive in the family by its visits. They also request them not to inflict pain on them after the spirits depart.

4. "Don't inflict pain on us/After your departure." Comment on these lines.

This is the request made by Kondhs to the dead spirits not to inflict pain on them after the spirits depart. Kondhs believe that after death, the spirits are not willing to leave the earth, and they trouble the people here.

5. "We give a small baby fowl", Why do Kondhs give offerings to their dead ancestors?

Kondhs believe that after death, the spirits are not willing to leave the earth, and they trouble the people here. For this reason, they make offerings to the spirits and request not to inflict pain on them after they depart.

PARAGRAPH

6. Write a note on the Munda tribe.

The Mundas are tribals who live in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Their language is Mundari. It does not have a script of its own. They are one of the most studied tribal communities of India. There is an encyclopaedia on the Mundas, *Encyclopaedia Mundarica* by Reverend John Baptist Hoffman and other Jesuit scholars. The Munda are probably the first of the adivasis to resist colonialism. They revolted

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repeatedly over agrarian issues. A Munda song celebrates the birth of a son or daughter. It regards the birth of a girl child as auspicious.

7. Write a note on the Kondh tribe.

Kondhs are Adivasi tribal people who live in Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Odisha. They speak the Kondh language. Their religion is a mixture of the faith of Adivasis and Hinduism. Kondhs believe in the existence of Gods and spirits. They observe rituals with folk dances and songs in connection with birth, puberty, marriage and death. A Kondh song is sung after the death of a person. The soul of a dead person is believed to be unwilling to leave earth. Kondhs perform rituals to appease the spirit. The spirit is requested not to trouble those who are alive in the family.

8. Comment on the symbols used in 'A Munda Song'.

The Munda song is sung to rhythmic folk tunes at the time of the birth of a daughter or a son. It is believed that while doing this, the tribe connects itself with nature. The birth of a daughter is related to a cowshed full of cows whereas the birth of a son marks the depletion of the cowshed. The symbol of the "cowshed" effectively conveys the roles of the male and the female children in a Munda family. The daughter is considered to be a more precious asset than the son. In Munda society, the women have a dominant role to play in the various economic, social and ritual activities.

9. Do you think Mundas prioritize girl children? How is it different from the mainstream communities?

The Munda song celebrates the birth of a son or daughter. The song welcomes the birth of a girl child and celebrates the event. Contrary to the attitude of the mainstream communities, the Munda song regards the birth of a girl child as auspicious. This is beautifully expressed in the lines, "A daughter was born, the cowshed filled up." In mainstream communities, on the other hand, the birth of a son is celebrated with more colour and pomp. The son is usually treated as the carrier of the baton of the family line. The girl child is like a burden and an object of neglect.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

5

Poem

(Other) Worldly Folk Tale

Geet Chaturvedi

ESSAY

Q. How do you relate the themes of the poem with human life?

Geet Chaturvedi is a widely-read Hindi poet. The poem, "(Other) Worldly Folk Tale", is based on the Buddha doctrine that highlights mind as the only reality. It portrays the relationship between the earth and the seed like the bond between a mother and a child.

Once upon a time, there was a Seed and an Earth. They loved each other. The Seed rollicked in the lap of the Earth; it wanted to remain there forever; it did not want to grow. One day, it rained and the Seed put forth shoots. It rose to a great height. The earth does not grow in height but spreads out. They both grew apart.

The Tree wishes to become a Seed again. The Earth wishes to take back her blessing. The Tree is sad that it can never again become that single Seed. The Earth would never be able to feel the soft touch of that very same Seed. Every single thing in life does not have an obverse to it. Night is not a dark Day, and Day is not a bright Night.

In fact, the tree has not grown; it has just achieved heights; it is still the very same seed. The tree is merely Earth's imagination. All trees grow in imagination. In memory, they always remain seeds.

The poem relates the relationship between the earth and the seed to the bond between a mother and a child. The tree's desire to return to the earth's lap is like a man's desire to go back to his childhood. The poet advises the readers not to be intoxicated by the victories in life.

SHORT ANSWER

1. Why was the seed reluctant to grow?

The Seed and the Earth both loved each other. The Seed enjoyed itself in the lap of the Earth and wanted to remain there forever. For this reason, the seed was reluctant to grow.

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2. Why couldn't the seed defer its sprouting?

Rollicking in the comfort of the lap of the Earth, the Seed was reluctant to grow. But one day, it rained and the Seed could not defer its sprouting.

3. Why does the tree wish to go back as a seed and what obstructs it from doing so?

The tree desires to return to her mother earth's security as a seed. But the tree can never again become that single Seed.

4. "You are merely Earth's imagination." Why is the tree called the imagination of the earth? And how is this connected to the Buddhist doctrine?

The tree has not grown; it has just achieved heights; it is still the very same seed. The tree is merely Earth's imagination. According to Buddha, all objects of the world and forms of experience are manifestations of the mind.

PARAGRAPH

5. "Every single thing in life does not have an obverse to it. Night is not a dark Day, and Day is not a bright Night. Moon not a cold Sun, and Sun not a hot Moon." How does the poet speak against binary opposites through these lines?

The Seed and the Earth loved each other. The Seed rollicked in the lap of the Earth; it was reluctant to grow. But one day, it rained and the Seed rose to a great height. The earth does not grow in height but spreads out. They both grew apart. The Tree wishes to become a Seed again. The Earth wishes to take back her blessing. The Earth would never be able to feel the soft touch of that very same Seed. Every single thing in life does not have an obverse to it. Night is not a dark Day, and Day is not a bright Night.

6. "All trees grow in imagination. In memory, they always remain seeds." Explain.

The Seed and the Earth both loved each other. The Seed rollicked in the lap of the Earth. It wanted to remain there forever; it was reluctant to grow. But one day, it rained and the Seed could not defer its sprouting. It put forth shoots and rose to a great height. In fact, the tree has not grown; it has just achieved heights; it is still the very same seed. The tree is merely Earth's imagination. All trees grow in imagination. In memory, they always remain seeds. According to Buddha, all objects of the world and forms of experience are manifestations of the mind.



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READINGS ON INDIAN LITERATURES:

II. 1.

Short Story

Scorn

Bama

ESSAY 1

Q. Elucidate the undertones of caste segregation in the story with examples.

Bama is a Tamil Dalit feminist and novelist. Her story, 'Scorn' is a powerful representation of the social evil of caste segregation.

Chinnapponnu, a Dalit girl, tells her mother Paripoornam that she does not want to go to school. She says she will go to the forest with her mother, instead. Paripoornam tells her that if her father comes to know about this, he will be very angry. She also tells her that if she studies, she'll have a good future. Otherwise, she'll suffer like a dog. Paripoornam also gives her a coin for her to buy something to eat. Chinnapponnu threw down the coin and cried.

A neighbour girl tells Paripoornam what happened at school. Chinnapponnu was beaten by some upper caste children for trying to borrow the lunch box of an upper caste girl. When she complained, the teacher beat her again. Paripoornam goes to the school and asks the teacher softly about the incident. The teacher gestures to the headmaster. So, the headmaster replies that her daughter is at fault. They should know the customs of the country. The incident becomes the talk of the slum. The way the headmaster and the teachers treat their children is not acceptable to them.

In another incident, Komalavalli, the teacher of Class III, finds that her purse containing her Pongal festival bonus is missing. The authorities implicate Kattari, Vellukannan's son. Finally, it is found that the purse is with the son of the headman of the temple street.

The caste system is a social evil. In this system, the upper castes are associated with moral values while lower castes relate to immorality. The marginalised people often face discrimination in all walks of life.

SHORT ANSWER

1. What stops Chinnaponnu from going to school?

Chinnapponnu was beaten at school by some upper caste students from the temple street. So, she was angry and sad at the thought of going to school.

2. How does Paripoornam try to convince her daughter to go to school?

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Paripoornam tells her daughter that if she studies, she'll have a good future. Otherwise, she'll suffer like a dog. Paripoornam also gives her money for her to buy something to eat.

3. How did the teacher at school react to Chinnaponnu's complaint?

When Chinnapponnu complained, the teacher at school beat her again. The teacher asked her why she asked the kids from their street. Chinnapponnu should have asked the kids from her street.

4. Who cleans the school campus?

It is the Dalit children who sweep and clean the whole school campus.

5. What happened to Komalavalli's Pongal festival bonus?

Komalavalli, who taught Class III, had put her Pongal festival bonus in her purse but couldn't find it in the evening. It was stolen.

PARAGRAPH

1. Caste is a social construct. Explain.

Caste is a social construct. It started with the Manu dharma sastra. A caste is a hereditary social class. It is a system in which membership is determined by birth and remains fixed for life. The caste a person is born into determines his/her status in social hierarchy. An offspring automatically becomes a member of his/her parents' caste. As a system, caste refers to numerous restrictions as regards membership, occupation, marriage and communal and social relations. The dharma sastra laws prohibit them outside one's caste. High caste norms are associated with moral values while lower caste norms relate to immorality. Lower castes often face discrimination in all walks of life.

2. Explain the dialogue between Paripoornam and the school teacher.

At school, Paripoornam softly asks the class teacher about the incident. She tells him that children give and take things among themselves. For such a small thing, the kids of his street have beaten her daughter and she does not want to come to school. Then the teacher says something to the headmaster who says that her daughter is at fault. They should know the customs of the country. Their children cannot eat the things touched by a Dalit. It happens because they all study in one school. He also advises her to get her daughter four piglets. She can look after them. It would be good for her.

3. Critically analyse the traumatic experiences of Chinnaponnu and Kattari.

Chinnapponnu is beaten at school by some upper caste students from the temple street. Her crime is that she asks an upper caste girl to lend the lunch box. The headmaster tells Paripoornam that they should know the customs of the country. In another incident, Komalavalli, the teacher of Class III, finds that her purse containing her Pongal festival bonus is missing. The authorities implicate a Dalit boy Kattari. Finally, it is found that the purse is with the son of the headman of the temple street. Caste system is the curse of the Indian society. The Varna laws associate moral values with upper castes and immorality with lower castes.

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4. Caste segregation is a social evil - Explain with reference to the dialogue between Vellukannan and the head man.

Komalavalli, the teacher of Class III, finds that her purse containing her Pongal festival bonus is missing. The authorities implicate Kattari, Vellukannan's son. Kuttiyan, the headman of the slum, says that all children should be questioned, not just the slum children. The head man of the temple street is furious that their children are called thieves. Vellukannan questions the way his son is called a thief. He openly asks his son, Kattari about the incident. Kattari says the purse is with Aravind, the son of the headman of the temple street. Caste segregation is a social evil. The Varna laws associate moral values with upper castes and immorality with lower castes.

ESSAY 2

Q. Caste is a social evil - Explain in the context of the story.

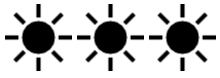
Bama is a Tamil Dalit feminist and novelist. Her story, 'Scorn' is a powerful depiction of the social evil of the caste system.

The caste system originates from the Manu dharma sastra. It divides the society into four varnas or castes. A caste is a hereditary social class. It is a system in which membership is determined by birth and remains fixed for life. It decides a person's status in social hierarchy. In this system, there are numerous restrictions as regards membership, occupation, marriage and communal and social relations. The dharma sastra laws prohibit them outside one's caste.

Chinnapponnu is beaten at school by some upper caste students from the temple street. Her crime is that she asks an upper caste girl to lend the lunch box. The headmaster tells Paripoornam that they should know the customs of the country.

In another incident, Komalavalli, the teacher of Class III, finds that her purse containing her Pongal festival bonus is missing. The authorities implicate Kattari, Vellukannan's son. Finally, it is found that the purse is with the son of the headman of the temple street.

Caste is a social evil. It is the curse of the Indian society. The Varna laws associate moral values with upper castes and immorality with lower castes. High caste norms are associated with moral values while lower caste norms relate to immorality. The discrimination against the Sudras is characterised by the dehumanising practice of untouchability. A lower caste person cannot come near or touch a higher caste person, not can he/she touch food or other items of consumption.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

II. 2

Story

Two in the Next World

Rajendra Yadav

Intro

Rajendra Yadav is a famous Hindi novelist and short story writer.

The story, ‘Two in the Next World', is narrated from the other world by the soul of a man who died as a result of surgery by an incompetent and corrupt doctor. The second soul is that of the doctor’s young wife who committed suicide because she could not extract enough dowry from her parents to meet her husband's needs. At the end of the story, the narrator says he will look for her and make friends with her. This is the summary of the story titled ‘Two in the Next World.’

Essay

Q.1. Explain the title of the story.

In the story, ‘Two in the Next World’, Rajendra Yadav addresses the social evils such as caste discrimination, corruption and dowry deaths. In order to create a powerful impact, he creates metaphors of two souls, as given in the title.

The narrator tells his story from the other world. In his last days on the earth, he had to undergo a complicated operation. He refused to get it done by a government doctor who, in his opinion, was "from the reserved quota”, i.e., a Dalit. Being a member of the upper caste, he believed that a doctor from the reserved quota would be neither capable nor skilled. So, he got it done by a young, presentable and clever doctor in a famous nursing home.

The doctor happened to be incompetent and corrupt. The narrator died on the operating table itself. The young doctor had passed the medical course by unfair means by greasing palms with lakhs in cash and grabbing the feet of ministers and officers. The drugs which he had prescribed for him were fake, from a chemist's shop located in the nursing home.

The young doctor had collected a dowry worth crores and set up this nursing home overnight. His young wife committed suicide because she could not bring enough dowry to

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satisfy her husband's needs. After that, he also made an alliance with a highly placed and prosperous family for his second marriage.

Now, standing comfortably in the other world, the narrator says he will look for the doctor's first wife and make friends with her. In this way, the writer presents the evils of casteism, corruption and dowry deaths with the help of two dead souls. Thus, the title becomes relevant and significant.

Short Answer

1. What happened to the narrator?

The narrator was not well, so he was scheduled to undergo a complicated operation.

2. Why did the narrator and the family decide to replace the doctor?

The narrator and the family learned that the government surgeon was from the reserved quota, and he would be neither capable nor skilled. So, they decided to replace the doctor.

3. Whom did the narrator choose to replace the first doctor?

The narrator chose a young, presentable and clever doctor in a famous nursing home. Of course, the fees and other charges were very high.

4. What happened to the young doctor's wife?

The doctor's young wife committed suicide because she could not extract enough from her parents to meet her husband's needs.

5. Who are the two of the title 'Two in the Next World'?

The narrator and the doctor's young wife are the two of the title, 'Two in the Next World'.

Paragraph

6. How has the narrator presented the government in the story?

In the story, 'Two in the Next World', the narrator has presented the government as unethical and corrupt. He says that the young doctor had passed the medical course by greasing palms with lakhs in cash and grabbing the feet of ministers and officers. The day he graduated, he collected a dowry worth crores of rupees and set up this nursing home overnight. The doctor's young wife committed suicide because she could not extract enough dowry from her parents to meet her husband's needs. People cannot live with dignity. They do not trust government medical facilities. There is corruption and inefficiency everywhere.

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7. Corruption as a social evil.

Corruption is a social evil that hinders social development. It involves abuse of power for one's personal gain. It takes its roots because of man's greed for money, power and position. In the story, 'Two in the Next World', the narrator presents the government as corrupt. The young doctor had passed the medical course by corrupt means grabbing the feet of ministers and officers. He set up his nursing home with his dowry. His young wife committed suicide because she could not bring enough dowry to satisfy her husband's needs. People cannot live with dignity. They do not trust the government.

8. Caste discrimination in the story.

The story, 'Two in the Next World' addresses the issue of caste discrimination. The narrator says that he was scheduled to undergo a complicated operation to be performed by a government surgeon. But he learned that the surgeon was from the reserved quota. Being a member of the upper Brahminical caste, he believed that a doctor from the reserved quota would be neither capable nor skilled. The caste system has reserved only certain manual jobs for the people who belong to the lower castes. The upper caste people believe that the marginalised people are not capable of undertaking jobs that need higher level skills.

9. Dowry and its associated evils in the story.

In the story, 'Two in the Next World', Rajendra Yadav addresses the dowry system and its associated evils along with other issues such as corruption and caste discrimination. The narrator says that "the young, presentable and clever doctor" who performed his surgery had passed the medical course by unfair means. The day he graduated, he had collected a dowry worth crores and set up his nursing home overnight. The doctor's young wife had committed suicide because she could not extract enough from her parents to meet her husband's needs. The doctor also made an alliance with a highly placed and prosperous family for his second marriage.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

3

Short Story

The Bride's Pyjamas

Akhtar Mohiuddin

Intro

Akhtar Mohiuddin is a leading Kashmiri short story writer. He has written more than 40 radio plays and six collections of short stories.

'The Bride's Pyjamas' portrays a love story between a seventy-year-old man, NabirShalla and his wife, Khotan Didi. The story focuses on the permanence of love. It also draws our attention to the hypocrisies of the society in its attitude towards old people. The story reduces age into just numbers.

NabirShalla repairs clothes. The couple had lost eight of their ten children in their infancy. But away from the tragedies of life and other geriatric concerns, the old couple is still so full of love and make most of their life.

The story was originally written in Kashmiri, and translated into English.

Essay

Q. Age is just a number. Explain with reference to the story.

'The Bride's Pyjamas' written by Akhtar Mohiuddin is an interesting story. It portrays the warmth of love in marital relationships. The story focuses on the permanence of love. It reduces age into just numbers.

Seventy-year-old NabirShalla and his wife, Khotan Didi have been married for many decades. They still had a passion for each other. They had ten children; they lost eight of their children in their infancy. Only two daughters survived. NabirShalla was a shawl-maker. He mended cloth for living. One day, he finished darning a patch, and to cut the cord, he looked for the scissors. He asked his wife about the tool.

Khotan Didi, while looking for the scissors on the shelf, pulled a bag. It was full of old clothes and worn-out garments of their children. As she was pulling out the old clothes, she chanced upon a pair of rose-red pyjamas. They were the pyjamas she had worn on her

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marriage day, a long time ago. Those pyjamas were still there, the only thing left of her dowry. Her heart gave a sudden throb as she plunged into the memories of her youth.

NabirShalla persuaded Khotan Didi to put on the pyjamas. Just as she put them on, NabirShalla hugged her with the passion of their youth. The sight of the rose-red pyjamas gave them a chance to drive away the monotony of their old age. They danced to the memories of their wedding day without worrying about societal judgements. Love is for all ages. Age is just a number.

Paragraph

1. The significance of the red- rose pyjamas in the story.

Khotan Didi, while looking for the scissors of NabirShalla on the shelf, pulled a bag. It was full of old clothes and worn-out garments of their children. As she was pulling out the old clothes, she chanced upon a pair of rose-red pyjamas. These were the pyjamas she had worn on her marriage day, a long time ago. They were still there, the only thing left of her dowry. Her heart gave a sudden throb as she plunged into the memories of her youth. The sight of the rose-red pyjamas gave them a chance to drive away the monotony of their old life. They danced to the memories of their wedding day. The story focuses on the permanence of love.

2. Love is for all ages - Explain in the context of the story.

'The Bride's Pyjamas' is an interesting story that portrays the warmth of love in marital relationships. Seventy-year-old NabirShalla and Khotan Didi have been married for many decades. They still have a passion for each other. They had ten children; only two daughters have survived. The man mends cloth for living. One day, Khotan Didi, while searching through a bag full of old clothes, finds the red pyjamas she wore on her marriage day. NabirShalla persuades her to put them on. Just as she puts them on, NabirShalla embraces her with the passion of their youth. Love is for all ages.

3. Character sketch of NabirShalla

NabirShalla is a seventy-year-old shawl-maker. He had passed most of his years sitting in the verandah, mending clothes. He and his wife Khotan Didi have been married for many decades. He remembers two songs and sings them all the time. The songs sum up his philosophy of life, i.e., live, love and enjoy. In the story, the sight of the rose-red pyjamas gives NabirShalla and Khotal Didi a chance to drive away the monotony of their old life. They forget themselves for a moment and dance to the memories of their wedding day without worrying about societal judgements. Love is for all ages. To NabirShalla and his aged wife, age is just a number.

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Short Answer

1. What did NabirShalla do for a living?

NabirShalla was a shawl-maker. He mended cloth for a living.

2. What did Khotan Didi go in search of?

Khotan Didi went in search of the scissors of NabirShalla.

3. What made Khotan Didi sad all of a sudden?

When Khotan Didi pulled out her children's old garments from the bag in the shelf, she remembered her children one by one and she became very sad. They had ten children; only two daughters survived.

4. What did Khotan Didi chance upon in the middle of her old clothes?

As Khotan Didi was pulling out the old clothes, she chanced upon a pair of rose-red pyjamas. These were the pyjamas she had worn on her marriage day, a long, long time ago, but they were still there— the only thing left of her dowry.

5. Who had come to visit them at the end of the story?

Their elder son-in-law had come to visit them at the end of the story.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

II. 4

Story

The Night Train at Deoli

Ruskin Bond

Intro

Ruskin Bond is a well-known award-winning Indian writer. He is the author of a large number of novels and short stories. He has been awarded ‘Sahitya Akademi Award’ (1992), ‘Padma Shri’ (1999) and ‘Padma Bhushan’ (2014). Ruskin Bond lives in Mussoorie, near Dehradun in the state of Uttarakhand.

Essay

1. ‘The Night Train at Deoli' cashes in on the element of nostalgia. Justify.

Ruskin Bond's ‘The Night Train at Deoli’ is a romantic story. The entire story is built upon the enchanting power of nostalgia. It tells us how the narrator, when he was at college, fell in love with a basket selling girl in their first meeting. The story describes how the memory of the girl turns into a nostalgic desperation in love.

The narrator reflects on his annual visits to his grandmother in Dehra in his college days. He takes the overnight train which stops at the small village of Deoli. On one such journey, he happens to see a girl selling baskets at Deoli station. He is smitten by her. The scenic background makes the girl appear like an angel. He fancies about meeting her.

In his second journey, the narrator has a brief encounter with the girl, but he never pursues her. In the following years, his attempts to find the whereabouts of the girl do not succeed. Still, he continues to dream about her. The story portrays an unspoken yet powerful infatuation he feels for the girl.

The narrator is not able to let go of the girl at Deoli despite the passing of time. It is as though he has reserved a place for her in his heart. In fact, nothing happens at Deoli. It is the place where the narrator has fallen in love for the first time. He no longer gets off the train at Deoli. He prefers to hold onto his memories, his nostalgia. The story cashes in on the element of nostalgia.

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Short Answer

1. How does the author spend his summer vacation?

The author spends his summer vacations in Dehra, at his grandmother's place. He would leave the plains early in May and return late in July.

2. What happened during one of his journeys to Dehra?

During one of his journeys to Dehra, he met a girl selling baskets on the platform at Deoli station. She was a poor young girl, walking graciously and with dignity.

3. What does the girl at the Deoli train station sell?

The girl at the Deoli train station sells baskets made of the finest cane.

4. What happened between the author and the girl?

The author looked at the girl intently and she pretended not to notice. But their eyes met. Then they stood looking at each other. Finally, the author bought a cane basket for one rupee.

5. Does the author succeed in finding the whereabouts of the girl?

No, the author does not succeed in finding the whereabouts of the girl.

Paragraph

6. Character sketch of the girl who sells baskets.

The girl came down the platform, selling baskets, on the lonely Deoli railway station. The narrator first met her in a cold morning. She had a shawl thrown across her shoulder. Her feet were bare and her clothes were old. She was a young girl, walking with grace and dignity. She had pale skin, with shiny black hair and dark, troubled expressive eyes. The narrator looked at her intently. Even though the girl pretended not to notice, their eyes met. After the second meeting, the girl was no longer seen at Deoli. The narrator holds on to his memories of this modest village girl.

7. Character sketch of young Bond.

Young Bond in 'The Night Train at Deoli' is an adolescent person who often gets infatuated towards beautiful things around him. In the story, he meets a poor girl selling cane baskets at a small station at Deoli on the way to Dehradun. He falls in love with her. He meets the girl only twice, never to see her again. But she remains in his memory ever after. He still remembers her face even after having left her a long time ago. He says, "I could not rid my mind of the picture of the girl's face and her dark, smouldering eyes."

8. Explain the literary significance of the train station at Deoli in the story.

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The station at Deoli appears strange to the narrator. No one gets on or off the train there. Nothing seems to happen there. He wonders why the train stops there for ten minutes regularly without reason. He also feels sorry for the lonely little platform. The night train is significant because it serves as a symbol of the journey of self-discovery and the experiences that shape the narrator's life. Deoli represents the destination and a new chapter in his life. He meets the girl only twice, never to see her again. But she remains in his memory ever after.

9. Imagination paves the way for hope. Explain with reference to the story.

Ruskin Bond's 'The Night Train at Deoli' is a romantic story. It tells us how a college student falls in love with a basket selling girl in their first meeting. It also portrays how the memory of the girl turns into a nostalgic desperation in love. The scenic background makes the girl appear even more beautiful, almost like an angel. The young man fancies about meeting her, but he never pursues her. In the following years, his attempts to find out the whereabouts of the girl do not succeed. Still, he continues to dream about her. The entire story is built upon the enchanting power of imagination and nostalgia. Imagination paves the way for hope.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

III. 1

Editorial

The Future of the Past

from *The Hindu* daily

Intro

'The Future of the Past' is an editorial from 'The Hindu' daily of February 9, 2010. It was published on the occasion of the death of Boa Sr, the last speaker of the tribal language, Bo. It tells us what happens when a language dies. It also reminds us about the need to protect the future of the past.

Essay

Q. Comment on the significance of protecting the 'Future of the Past.'

'The Future of the Past' is an editorial from 'The Hindu' daily of February 9, 2010. It was published on the occasion of the death of Boa Sr, the last speaker of the tribal language, Bo. It tells us what happens when a language dies. It also reminds us about the need to protect the future of the past.

The death of a language means the passing of many things - a way of life, a cultural identity, and a repository of indigenous knowledge. Bo is one of the ten languages of the Andaman tribes. Boa Sr was its last speaker. Her death marks the irreplaceable loss of a part of the world's heritage. It represents the passage of the remnants of a living culture into memory.

Three tribes survive in the Andamans. The Jarawas, 250 in number, are one of the largest tribes. They resisted contact with outsiders until two decades ago. Their way of life is threatened by the Great Andaman Trunk Road that cuts through their forest homeland. The Onges, around 100, live in a remote pocket in the Little Andaman. The last tribe, the Sentinelese, have fiercely resisted outside contact, and their numbers and language remain unknown.

The indigenous people speak dialects of the Great Andamanese language. These dialects are regarded as one of the five language families in India. It is very important that we preserve this linguistic diversity. For that, the indigenous communities are to be

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empowered to protect their ancient traditions and tap into local resources in a sustainable way. In the Andamans, more than elsewhere, we need to protect the future of the past.

Short answer

1) **What does the death of a language suggest?**

The death of a language suggests the passing of many things - a way of life, a cultural identity, and a repository of indigenous knowledge.

2) **What is the important observation that Wittgenstein made about language?**

The Austrian philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein observed that the limits of one's language are the limits of one's world.

3) **What is Bo and who is Boa Sr?**

Bo is one of the ten languages of the tribes that populated the Great Andaman archipelago. Boa Sr was the last speaker of the Bo.

4) **What does the passing of Boa Sr represent?**

The passing of Boa Sr, the grand old lady, represents the irreplaceable loss of a part of the world's heritage, the passage of the remnants of a living culture into memory.

5) **What caused the dwindling number of indigenous people in Andaman?**

Most of them were either killed by British colonisers or died through diseases imported by settlers. This is the reason for the dwindling number of indigenous people in Andaman.

Paragraph

1) **The surviving tribes in Andaman.**

Originally there were around ten different tribes in the islands in the Andaman. Now, only three tribes survive there. The Jarawas, 250 in number, are one of the largest tribes. They resisted contact with outsiders until two decades ago. Their way of life is threatened by the 'friendly contact' promoted by the Great Andaman Trunk Road that cuts through their forest homeland. The Onges, around 100, are one of the most primitive tribes. They live in a remote pocket in the Little Andaman. The third and last tribe is the Sentinelese. They have fiercely resisted outside contact, and their numbers and language remain unknown.

2) **Importance of the linguistic diversity of Andaman.**

The linguistic and cultural diversity of the Andamans has largely been neglected. The indigenous inhabitants of the Andaman Islands speak dialects of the Great Andamanese language. These languages or dialects are regarded as one of the five language families in

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India. As some people believe, if Onge-Jarawa is derived from a separate linguistic ancestor, then this remarkable region would have contributed to two of six language families. It is very important that we preserve this linguistic diversity. For that, the indigenous communities are to be empowered to protect their ancient traditions and tap into local resources in a sustainable way.

3) Significance of the death of Boa Sr, the last speaker of Bo language.

The death of a language means the passing of many things - a way of life, a cultural identity, a repository of indigenous knowledge. Bo is one of the ten languages of the Andaman tribes. Boa Sr was the last speaker of the Bo language. Her death at the age of 85 marks the irreplaceable loss of a part of the world's heritage. It represents the passage of the remnants of a living culture into memory. It shows how fragile the indigenous people of the Andaman are. It also reminds us of the importance of protecting their lives and their culture from further degradation.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

3.2.

Speech Excerpt

On University Education

Bhupesh Gupta

INTRO

Bhupesh Gupta was a leader of the Communist Party of India from West Bengal. He was a member of the Rajya Sabha for five terms.

'On University Education' is an excerpt from Gupta's speech in the Rajya Sabha on 01 September 1965 on M. C. Chagla's bill introducing the initial concept of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi. He expresses his reservations, and puts forward his vision of a new Central University.

JNU, as it stands today, is structured on the ideas put forward by Bhupesh Gupta.

ESSAY

Q. Bhupesh Gupta's observations and critique of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Bill.

Bhupesh Gupta was a leader of the Communist Party of India and a member of the Rajya Sabha. 'On University Education' contains Gupta's observations and critique of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Bill.

Gupta says that the concept introduced by Chagla is "pedestrian", just a common-place legislation, lacking inspiration. Chagla wants to immortalize the name of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by this new university. Gupta says that Nehru would be immortal even otherwise.

In Gupta's opinion, the problems of our universities must be addressed from the standpoint of the requirements of our country. It should be done in the light of the experience about education in the contemporary world. We should set up universities and colleges that our people need, that our development needs, for the remaking of our material and cultural being.

The real beneficiaries of the new university must be the sons of the working people, and the peasants. For this, the education must be highly subsidized. This investment for imparting higher scientific and technical education to the poorer sections of the community

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will get repaid in course of time. It will come in the form of creative and constructive labour which would benefit the entire society.

Gupta says that autonomy should be completely guaranteed to this university. There should be no bureaucratic intervention. The younger generation should be educated in areas such as the world affairs and the affairs of the state, the spirit of the worldwide struggle for peace, socialism, scientific socialism and Marxism. Then, they will become useful, enlightened citizens. JNU, as it stands today, reflects more of Gupta's vision than that of M.C. Chagla.

SHORT ANSWER

1. What was M.C. Chagla's vision of JNU?

M.C. Chagla's vision of Jawaharlal Nehru University was to immortalize the name of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by this new university.

2. According to Bhupesh Gupta, how the problems of our universities must be addressed?

The problems of our universities must be addressed from the standpoint of the requirements of our country. It should be done in the light of the experience about education in the contemporary world. (Essay par 3.1,2)

3. Why did Bhupesh Gupta stand against allocating more money to the new university without getting assurance from the government?

Gupta stood for allocation of more money with proper assurance from the government. This was the only way to impart higher scientific and technical education to the poorer sections of the community.

4. According to Bhupesh Gupta, what kind of universities need to be set up?

According to Bhupesh Gupta, we should set up universities and colleges that our people need, that our development needs, for the remaking of our material and cultural being.

5. What is the first thing to ensure before setting up a new university?

The first thing to ensure is that the sons of the working people, the worker, the peasants and the middle classes do have the doors of the universities thrown wide open to them. For that, you have to provide money as well as a different outlook.

6. Why should the students be trained in world affairs and the affairs of the state?

When the students are educated in world affairs and the affairs of the state, they may become useful, enlightened citizens.

7. What was Bhupesh Gupta's opinion on the student community of India then?

Bhupesh Gupta had a deep appreciation of the manner in which the student community as a whole conducted themselves. He said he had no hesitation in extending the best feelings to the student community.

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PARAGRAPH

8. Why did Bhupesh Gupta call the approach of the minister "pedestrian"?

M. C. Chagla's vision was to immortalize the name of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by the new Jawaharlal Nehru University. Bhupesh Gupta said that they are wasting time on the biographical sketch of Jawaharlal Nehru. Instead, they should discuss the specific proposal for a university. By the new university, Delhi would have a large scope for higher education in humanities, science and technology. The concept of the university as introduced by Chagla was "pedestrian", i.e., it lacked inspiration. It was just a common-place legislation. There was nothing particularly new or exciting in it.

9. According to Bhupesh Gupta, who must be the real beneficiaries of the new university?

According to Bhupesh Gupta, the real beneficiaries of the new university must be the sons of the working people, the worker, the peasants and the middle classes. The doors of the universities must be thrown wide open to them. For this, the education must be highly subsidized. This investment for imparting higher scientific and technical education to the poorer sections of the community will get repaid in course of time. It will come in the form of creative and constructive labour which would benefit the entire society. So, the emphasis is to be shifted from the upper classes to the lower classes. (Essay par 4.2-4)

10. Bhupesh Gupta's suggestions on the running of the new university.

Bhupesh Gupta suggests that the university be run on a broad basis. He would not like the intervention of the bureaucracy. The autonomy should be completely guaranteed. He said that there was nothing wrong in giving autonomy in a larger measure to a university of this kind. It also requires a special faculty to impart education in the spirit of the worldwide struggle for peace. The younger generation has to be taught about the struggle that humanities are waging for peace. They should also be educated in the world affairs and the affairs of the state. Then, they may become useful, enlightened citizens.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

III. 3. Speech

World as One Economic and Cultural Unit

Meghnad Saha (1893 – 1956)

Intro

Meghnad N. Saha, was a renowned Indian scientist. He was also a Member of Parliament. 'World as One Economic and Cultural Unit' was his presidential address at the Indian Science Congress in Bombay in 1934. The speech gives expression to his concerns relating to the education system of those days as well as the development of India.

Main Points

1) The world is fast becoming one economic unit. Examples.
2) The rulers of countries must become earth-wide in their outlook. The people who guide the nations are mostly men with a rigid outlook, unfit to fathom the depths of present-day troubles.
3) The present system of education is faulty. The system should change.
4) The world has sufficient resources to feed the entire world. We need a rational programme of production and judicious and equitable distribution. Then nobody should suffer from hunger.
5) But for this purpose, nations should have cooperative construction.
6) The politician should hand over many of his functions to an international board of trained scientific industrialists, economists, and eugenists. They will think of the whole world as a unit, and plan accordingly.
7) The educational programme is to be thoroughly revised. The new system should train the coming generation to a proper grasp and sufficient appreciation of the beauty and powers of science.

Short Answer

1. What are the examples given by Meghnad Saha to suggest that the world is fast becoming one economic unit?

Meghnad Saha says that the world is fast becoming one economic unit. For example, a crash in Wall Street leads to a strike in Bombay Mills. Unemployment in Lancashire leads

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to fall in the price of jute in Bengal, and ultimately to Hindu-Muslim riots. A prosperous year in India leads to increased consumption of foreign goods.

[**Lancashire in Britain** was the first place where spinning and weaving of cotton into fabric began. It was the hub of cotton and textile mills. This place was responsible for half of the world's cotton production.
Wall Street – a street in the Financial District of Lower Manhattan in New York City. – home to New York Stock Exchange, Federal Reserve Bank, HQs of many investment banks]

2. Why did Saha call the present system of education faulty?

Saha says that the present system of education is faulty. It seeks to perpetuate the medieval mind and brings only a small percentage of the population under the humanising influence of science.

3. According to Saha, what is the result of the present faulty system of education?

The result of the present faulty system of education is disastrous. The people who are called upon to guide the nations are mostly men with a rigid outlook. They are unfit to fathom the depths of present-day troubles or analyse the intricacies of political and economic issues. They are also unable to hold out any programme of reconstruction.

4. What is the role of eugenists in nation-building?

Eugenists (or eugenicists) are scientists concerned with improving human species by selective breeding - through careful selection of parents. They should devise means for assigning a fixed quota of population to each geographical unit which should not be allowed exceed.

5. How will the joy of life be provided for grown-up men?

The joy of life for the grown-up men will be provided in administering to their needs, and in free development and display of the finer faculties of the mind (not in designing means for the exploitation of our fellow-men in various ways).

Essay

Q.1. Saha's ideas on the development of India.
Q.2. Saha's critique of the education system.

Meghnad N. Saha, was a renowned Indian scientist. ‘World as One Economic and Cultural Unit’, was his presidential address at the Indian Science Congress in Bombay in 1934. Here, Saha talks about the development of India. He also expresses his concerns relating to the education system of those days.

Saha says that the world is fast becoming one economic unit. For example, a crash in Wall Street leads to a strike in Bombay Mills. Unemployment in Lancashire leads to fall in the price of jute in Bengal. He says that the rulers of countries must become earth-wide in

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their outlook. But this is prevented by the present faulty system of education. It brings only a small percentage of the population under the humanising influence of science.

The result of the present system of education is disastrous. The people who are called upon to guide the nations are mostly men with a rigid outlook. They are unfit to fathom the depths of present-day troubles. They are unable to analyse the intricacies of political and economic issues. They are also unable to hold out any programme of reconstruction.

The rivalry among nations should give way to cooperative construction. For this, a new educational scheme should be devised by a World's Congress of foremost thinkers like Einstein, Russel, and others. Its purpose should be to weed out medieval passions from the minds of the coming generation. It should also train them to a proper grasp and sufficient appreciation of the beauty and powers of science. The joy of life for the grown-up men will be in free development and display of the finer faculties of the mind.

Paragraph

1. Saha's views on cooperative construction among nations.

Saha says that the world has sufficient resources for the entire population. We need a rational programme for production and equitable distribution. Then, nobody should suffer from hunger. For this purpose, rivalry among nations should give way to cooperative construction. There will be an international board of trained scientific industrialists, economists, and eugenists. They will consider the world as a unit, and devise means by which more necessities of life can be got out of the earth. Production should be controlled by scientific industrialists, and distribution should be supervised by the economists. Eugenics will devise means for assigning a fixed quota of population to each geographical unit.

2. The world as one great economic unit.

Meghnad Saha says that the world is fast becoming one economic unit. For example, a crash in Wall Street leads to a strike in Bombay Mills. Unemployment in Lancashire leads to fall in the price of jute in Bengal, and ultimately to Hindu-Muslim riots. The rulers of countries must become earth-wide in their outlook. A new educational scheme should be devised with the special objective of weeding out medieval passions from the minds of the coming generation, and for training them to a proper grasp and sufficient appreciation of the beauty and powers of science. Also, the rivalry among nations and communities should give way to cooperative construction.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

IV. 1.

Play

Beyond the Land of Hattamala

Badal Sarkar

Intro

Badal Sarkar (1925 – 2011) is a renowned playwright and director. He is known for his anti-establishment plays.

Sarkar was not happy with the conventional stage. Taking inspiration from the well-known Polish theatre director and theorist, Jerzy Grotowski and his Poor Theatre movement, Sarkar started a new movement in the Indian theatre called the 'Third Theatre'. It did not require a stage, heavy set-up, spotlight, furniture or costumes. It fulfilled Sarkar's intention of bringing theatre to the working class and the marginalised people.

Beyond the Land of Hattamala was originally written in Bengali in 1977. It is a satire that questions the ideals of the materialistic world. The play explores themes of materialism, societal norms, and the search for a meaningful existence.

Summary

The characters

K: Older thief
B: Younger thief
U: Utopia: Characters of the new land
D: Doctor

The story revolves around two thieves, K (Older Thief) and B (Younger Thief). They escape from their pursuers by jumping into a river. They end up in an unfamiliar place called Utopia.

The people in Utopia know nothing about the ways of the materialistic world. As they interact with the people of Utopia, K and B begin to question their own values and perspectives.

Essay

Q. Discuss the play *Beyond the Land of Hattamala* as a satire on contemporary society.

Beyond the Land of Hattamala, by Badal Sarkar is a satirical play on contemporary society. It questions the ideals of the materialistic world.

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A satire is a literary work that holds up human vices and follies to ridicule. It uses exaggeration, irony, humour or ridicule to criticize or expose flaws. The protagonists of the play are two thieves (K) Kenaram and (B) Becharam. They jump into a river to escape from their pursuers and reach a strange society, a new land.

The new land represents the values and ideals of the new society. There are no concepts of ownership or material possessions. People live without individual ownership. The place is the embodiment of cooperation, collective contribution, and a rejection of materialism. People work collectively for the greater common good. Everyone's needs are met through everyone's contributions.

The characters of Utopia symbolise the potential for positive transformation and the importance of community and shared responsibilities. Kenaram and Becharam are representatives of the materialistic world, where everything can be bought and sold. They struggle to understand the new way of life. As they interact with the people of Utopia, they begin to question their own values and perspectives.

The thieves' journey from a world of self-centeredness to a community-oriented society allows the audience to reflect on their own values and priorities. The play also highlights the importance of work, contribution, and cooperation in building a meaningful life. Through the transformation of K and B, the playwright emphasises that personal growth is achievable when individuals embrace new perspectives and actively engage in productive endeavours.

Short Answer

1. What forces Kenaram and Becharam to jump into the river?

Kenaram and Becharam jump into the river to escape from their pursuers.

2 What was the response of the character from Utopia while he listened to the words, "pay" and "cash" from Kenaram?

When the character from Utopia listened to the words, "pay" and "cash" from Kenaram, he wondered what these words meant. He did not understand what he was talking about. He asked, "Cash??? Ash??? Sash??"

3. How did the character from Utopia respond to the words "police station", "prison" and "dungeon"?

When Kenaram asked about the location of the police station, the character from Utopia said he had not heard of a place like that. Regarding "prison" and "dungeon", he gave him the directions to the eatery.

4. What was the response of the character from Utopia for Kenaram's confession that they are thieves?

The character from Utopia didn't understand the word "thieves". He asked why they had not entered through the front door.

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5. Why did the people of Utopia misunderstand Kenaram and Becharam as architects?

Kenaram and Becharam poked a hole in a wall. They also said that they were testing the soundness of their buildings. Then the people of Utopia misunderstood them as architects.

6. What was the attitude of the people of Utopia towards gold and silver?

The people of Utopia didn't care about gold and silver. They were more interested in fresh flower ornaments which were so lovely, amazing, beautiful and fragrant.

7. Why did the characters of Utopia feel strange when they listened to Kenaram's comment about eating "doctor's jackfruit"?

They felt strange because in that land nobody owns anything. The jackfruit just grows on trees. Everyone eats them. Everything is for everyone.

Paragraph

1. **Write a short note on Badal Sarkar's "Third Theatre".**

Taking inspiration from Grotowski's 'Poor Theatre', Badal Sarkar started a new movement called 'Third Theatre.' He was not happy with the conditions of the conventional theatre's proscenium stage. This dissatisfaction paved the way for the formation of the 'Third Theatre'. It did not require a stage, heavy set-up, spotlight, furniture or costumes. So, the theatre became portable. Instead of people going to the theatre, the theatre went to the people. It eliminated spaces between the actors and audience as they staged plays in halls, courtyards or in open spaces. It fulfilled Sarkar's intention of bringing theatre to the working class and the marginalised people.

2. **How is the new land different from Hattamala?**

The new land represents the values and ideals of the new society. There are no concepts of ownership or material possessions. People live without individual ownership. The place is the embodiment of cooperation, collective contribution, and a rejection of materialism. People work collectively for the greater good. Everyone's needs are met through everyone's contributions. The characters of Utopia symbolise the potential for positive transformation and the importance of community and shared responsibilities. K and B, representing materialism, struggle to understand this new way of life. As they interact with the people of Utopia, they begin to question their own values and perspectives.

3. **Write a short note on the socio-political and economic issues that are discussed in the play.**

The story revolves around two thieves, K (Older Thief) and B (Younger Thief), who escape from pursuers by jumping into a river. They end up in an unfamiliar place called

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Utopia, where they encounter a society that challenges their worldview. K and B represent materialism. In the new land, there are no concepts of ownership or material possessions. People live without individual ownership. The play highlights the importance of work, contribution, and cooperation in building a meaningful life. Through the transformation of K and B, the playwright emphasises that personal growth is achievable when individuals embrace new perspectives and actively engage in productive endeavours.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

IV. 2.

Short Film

Burning

V. S. Sanoj

Intro

'Burning' by V.S. Sanoj is a 2018 short Hindi film in 17 minutes. The film has bagged several national and international recognitions. It was also screened at 40 film festivals.

V.S. Sanoj is a Malayali journalist-cum-filmmaker. His short film, 'Burning' is filmed in the funeral ghats of Varanasi (Kasi, Banaras). It tells us how women are subjugated to various forms of violence: born of patriarchy, religion, caste and class. The film portrays how death plays a pivotal role in both destroying and building barriers between different classes and castes. In the film, we occasionally hear a voice-over of the controlling men. It is because patriarchy is invisible but its impact is very much visible.

This film introduces us to two young mothers from different socio-economic backgrounds. Forced by patriarchal and societal forces, they meet at Varanasi's funeral ghats for a traumatic negotiation over the mortal remains of their children. The story unfolds through the dialogue between Prita and Shakuntala Mishra, two women who belong to two classes and castes, connected by shared experiences of oppression.

Essay 1

Q. Explain the inherent patriarchy and its associated evils in the light of the short film 'Burning'.

'Burning' is a 2018 short film in Hindi by V.S. Sanoj. It discusses the issue of female subjugation, touching upon religion, class, caste, and financial disparities. The film also illustrates the inherent patriarchy and its associated evils.

The action of the film takes place at Kashi, the funeral ghats in Varanasi. The film revolves around an emotional negotiation between two young mothers, Prita and Shakuntala Mishra over the mortal remains of the former's son. They come from different walks of life.

Prita is a poor girl. She marries a man of different caste. The people of her husband's community are very angry and murder her parents. They also set fire to the whole village. Her husband is also dead now. It makes things difficult for her to provide for her family. Now that she has lost her only son, Chand, she doesn't know how to survive.

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Shakuntala Mishra is an upper caste girl from an affluent background. She falls in love and gets married. All her dreams are lost one by one after her marriage. Her in-laws do not like this marriage. When Shakuntala's son, Puran dies by drowning, her husband's family blame her. They punish her by sending her to Varanasi to get the dead body of a boy of similar size for performing the rituals.

Marriage is believed to serve patriarchy primarily. It costs Shakuntala and Prita dearly. In the film, male characters are represented through voice-overs, underscoring the often unseen but ever-present grip of patriarchy. The film sheds light on the deep-rooted influence of patriarchy and the challenges faced by women within this social context.

Essay 2

Q. The place of action is also a character in the short film. Substantiate.

'Burning' is a short film that showcases a heart-breaking dialogue between two young mothers for the mortal remains of one's son. Interestingly, the place of action becomes an important character in the film.

The action of the film takes place at the footsteps of the Kashi, the funeral ghat in Varanasi. The film revolves around an emotional negotiation between two young mothers, Prita and Shakuntala Misra. They come from different walks of life, from different classes and castes.

Prita is a poor girl. She marries a man of different caste. The people of her husband's community are very angry, murder her parents, and set fire to the whole village. The early death of her husband makes it extremely difficult for her to provide for her family. Now that she has lost her only son, she doesn't know how to survive.

Shakuntala Mishra is an upper caste girl. She falls in love and gets married. All her dreams are lost after her marriage. Her in-laws do not like the marriage. When Shakuntala's son, Puran dies by drowning, her husband's family blame her, and punish her by sending her to Varanasi to get the dead body of a boy of similar size for performing the rituals.

The entire action of the film takes place at the funeral ghats in Varanasi. It is a place of never-ending burning, a place where dead bodies are cremated round the clock. Kashi, the place of perpetual burning, acts as a leveller as it destroys all kinds of barriers between different classes and castes. A strong sense of solidarity is forged from the shared experiences of patriarchal challenges. In this way, the place of action becomes another important character of the play.

Short Answer

1. How did the dreams of Shakuntala Mishra get shattered?

Shakuntala Mishra had many dreams. One of them was to play hockey at the state and the national levels. However, all her dreams were lost one by one after her marriage.

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2. What happened to Prita's parents?

Prita fell in love with a man from a different caste, eloped and married him. The people of her husband's community were very angry and murdered her parents. They also set fire to the whole village.

3. What happened to Chand's father?

At Kashi, Chand's father noticed people lifting valuables from dead bodies, and he crafted poems on the stone walls there. The next day, his throat was slit by the rich people.

4. What happened to the mortal remains of Chand at the end of the short film?

The mortal remains of Chand were cremated after the last rites were performed by his mother, Prita, as per her wishes.

5. Who is Puran?

Puran is Shakuntala Mishra's son who had an unfortunate death by drowning.

Paragraph

1. How are Pritha and Shakuntala similar?

Prita and Shakuntala Misra come from different walks of life. Prita is poor and is struggling to make ends meet. The money that is offered for Chand, her son's body is believed to be helpful. But as a mother, she is unwilling to let go of her son's body in this manner. Shakuntala Mishra, who hails from a rich family, has also lost her son Puran to drowning. When caste and gender become the villain in Prita's life, it is patriarchal beliefs that make life terrible for Shakuntala. Both women are affected by the weight of caste and gender oppression. These experiences make them similar.

2. Justify the title "Burning"

The action of the short film, 'Burning' takes place in Kashi, the funeral ghat in Varanasi. It is a place of never-ending burning, a place where dead bodies are cremated round the clock. It is here that Prita and Shakuntala Misra navigate a complex negotiation over the rights to Prita's son, Chand's dead body, for burning, i.e., for cremation. Kashi, the place of perpetual burning, acts as a leveller as it destroys all kinds of barriers between different classes and castes. Here, the societal differences fade, and a strong sense of solidarity is forged from the shared experiences of patriarchal challenges. In this way, the title becomes relevant and significant.

3. How does financial security fail to protect Shakuntala from the clutches of patriarchy?

Shakuntala Mishra is an upper caste girl. During her college days, she was very active in academics as well as sports. She aspired to become a national level hockey player. She fell in love with a young man of the same caste and got married. All her dreams were lost one by one after her

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marriage. Her in-laws did not like the marriage. They knew that something was wrong in this marriage. When Shakuntala's son, Puran dies by drowning, her husband's family blames her. In this way, she becomes a victim of caste and gender oppression. Her financial security fails to protect her from the clutches of patriarchy.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

IV. 3.

Short Film

That Day After Everyday

Anurag Kashyap

Intro

Anurag Kashyap is an Indian filmmaker, director, writer, editor, producer, and actor known for his works in Hindi cinema. He is the recipient of several laurels, including four Filmfare Awards.

'That Day After Everyday' is a Hindi short film directed by Anurag Kashyap. It was released in 2013. It is a woman-centric film. It sheds light on the challenges faced by women in their daily lives, at home as well as outside. It also portrays how the women rise to the occasion and take control of their lives.

The story revolves around three women. They decide to step out from under the so-called protection of their homes. Inside these houses, they encounter deep-rooted misogyny, manifested in overprotective husbands and mothers-in-law. They deal with it with studied silence. However, once they leave their homes, the misogyny takes a more aggressive form through physical and mental violence. These three women deal with it with an iron hand. The molesters are taught a big lesson, and put behind the bars.

This message reverberates far and wide. It reaches the men within their own households. It compels them to acknowledge the rightful place of women.

Essay

Q. Self-defence is the best defence. Explain in the light of the short film.

'That Day After Everyday' is a Hindi short film directed by Anurag Kashyap. This woman-centric film sheds light on the challenges faced by women in their daily lives. It illustrates the idea that self-defence is the best defence.

The story revolves around three women who decide to step out from the so-called protection of their homes. Inside these homes, they encounter deep-rooted misogyny, manifested in overprotective husbands and mothers-in-law. When these helpless women work hard inside the home and kitchen, the husband sits comfortably under the fan, reading newspaper, watching TV, and making comments. Patriarchy keeps them chained within the four walls of home. The abuses inside the homes are fought with studied silence.

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These women decide to stand tall as independent figures with jobs. However, once they leave their homes, the misogyny takes a more aggressive form through physical and mental harassment. Initially, they resort to silence and feigned neglect as their defence mechanisms. But then, they realise the need to fight back and reclaim their space and voices.

As a sisterhood, the three women decide to battle not only bullying but also patriarchy at large. With the help of one whom they call Didi, they muster courage and take basic lessons in martial arts. In an act of survival, they charge against the intruders. The men succumb to the sisterhood.

This message reverberates far and wide. It also reaches the men within their own households, and compels them to acknowledge the rightful place of women. Self-defence is the best defence.

Short Answer

1. How does the husband advise the wife to handle the bullying she faces from the men?

The husband advises the wife to ignore the bullies. He also tells her that those men are bad people under the influence of drugs, and dealing with them will invite more troubles. So, he advises her to work from home.

2. What happens to the women on their way to work?

The women are harassed by various groups of roadside Romeos. There are also lecherous gazes from men. One group of young men take videos of these women while another group attempts to physically molest them.

3. How do women react to bullying in the beginning?

In the beginning, the women resort to silence and feigned neglect as their defence mechanisms.

4. What happens to the woman in the bus?

In the bus, the male co-passengers physically ill treat and abuse them by deliberately pushing their bodies against the bodies of the women.

5. How does she react to the ill-treatment in the bus?

The woman throws an elbow punch below the belt of her molester in the bus

6. How do they react to the bullying at the end?

With the help of a Didi, the women muster courage and take basic lessons in martial arts. In an act of survival, they charge against the intruders. The men fail to resist the pressure of the charge of the sisterhood, and are put behind the bars.

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Paragraph

1. Explain the mental torture experienced by women inside their houses?

The film, *That Day After Everyday* addresses the difficulties experienced by women in their everyday life. It shows three women, who decide to leave the imagined protection of the roof above their head, which one calls home. The deep-rooted misogyny takes the form of overprotective husbands and mothers-in-law inside the houses. When these poor women work hard inside the home and kitchen, the husband sits comfortably under the fan, reading newspaper, watching TV, and making comments. In the film, these women from different households battle the barriers inside their house. They also decide to stand tall as independent figures with jobs.

2. Explain the concept of sisterhood as seen in the short film.

The film addresses the difficulties experienced by women in their everyday life. It shows how they rise to the demands of the time and eventually take charge of their life. The journey is not easy, as they live in a patriarchal society. If the attacks inside the houses are fought with struggling silences, it becomes impossible for them to survive from the attacks that lie outside their houses. The women decide to brave against the odds as a sisterhood. They take basic lessons of martial arts and physically battle bullying as well as patriarchy at large. The men succumb to the sisterhood. It sends a clear message to the world, far and wide, to the men in their houses and shows them their places.

3. Comment on the beginning and end of the short film.

The film turns the spotlight on the challenges faced by women in their daily life. The story revolves around three women who decide to step out from the so-called protection of their homes. Inside homes, they encounter deep-rooted misogyny, manifested in overprotective husbands and mothers-in-law. Outside, it takes a more aggressive form through physical and mental harassment. Initially, these women resort to silence and feigned neglect as their defence mechanisms. But then, they take matters into their own hands. When the film comes full circle, the place occupied by a woman at the beginning, the kitchen, is willingly occupied by a man at the end.



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Readings on Indian Literatures

IV. 4. Classical Drama

Abhijnanasakuntalam (an excerpt)

Kalidasa

Essay 1

Q. The unique relationship between Sakuntala and the Holy Grove.

The play, *Abhijnanasakuntalam* is a great blend of nature and human nature. In the play, Sakuntala is in perfect harmony with every aspect of nature found in the Holy Grove. Her relationship with the Holy Grove is unique.

Sakuntala is a child of nature. She is as beautiful as a blossoming flower, as nimble as a deer, and as happy as a dew-washed leaf of the forest. When Sakuntala leaves the hermitage to join her husband, King Dushyanta, she creates a gap in nature. Whenever Sakuntala appears in the play, she is accompanied by Nature in her different forms. Her permanent companions are birds, animals and plants in the forest. She has given names to her pets. Even the flora and fauna share with Sakuntala her joys and sorrows.

When Sakuntala was about to leave, the Holy Grove bids farewell to her in as loving a manner as her own kinsfolk. First, a koel sings. The invisible spirits of the Holy Grove sing prayers for Sakuntala's path to be safe and gracious. The peacocks dance no more, and the pale leaves flutter down as if the vines are shedding their limbs. The little fawn is at Sakuntala's heels, tugging again and again at the hem of her garment. The cakravaka answers not the call of his love.

Priyamvada says that the Holy Grove grieves. Anasuya says that every living thing in the Hermitage is sorrowful at the thought of leaving Sakuntala. The relationship between Sakuntala and the Holy Grove is unique.

Essay 2

Q. Sakuntala's departure from the Holy Grove.

This extract from Kalidasa's *Abhijnanasakuntalam* portrays Sakuntala bidding farewell to the Hermitage and the Holy Grove. Before leaving for King Dushyanta's palace, she takes leave of the inmates of the hermitage and its flora and fauna. Her relationship with the Holy Grove is unique.

Sakunthala is a child of nature. She is as beautiful as a blossoming flower, as nimble as a deer, and as happy as a dew-washed leaf of the forest. Her permanent companions are birds, animals and plants in the forest. She has given names to her pets. When Sakuntala leaves the hermitage to join her husband, she creates a gap in nature. Even the flora and fauna share with Sakuntala her joys and sorrows.

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When Sakuntala is about to leave, the Holy Grove bids farewell to her in as loving a manner as her own kinsfolk. First, a koel sings. The invisible spirits of the Holy Grove sing prayers for Sakuntala's path to be safe and gracious. The peacocks stop dancing, and the pale leaves flutter down as if the vines are shedding their limbs. The little fawn is at Sakuntala's heels, tugging again and again at the hem of her garment.

Sarngarava suggests that it is enough that they accompany a loved one only up to the water's edge. So Kanva gives him instructions and turns back at that point. The sage Kanva tells Sarngarava to present Sakuntala to the good King with kind words from him. In his message to the King, after greetings, the sage requests the king to consider Sakuntala well in esteem equal to his other consorts. Sarngarava, then, exits with Sakuntala.

Short Answer

1. Why did Gautami tell Sakuntala to bow to the divinities of holy grove?

The divinities of the Holy Grove were bidding farewell to Sakuntala in as loving a manner as her own kinsfolk. So, Gautami told her to bow to the divinities of the Holy Grove.

2. Write some of the examples of the Holy Grove grieving.

The doe tosses out mouthfuls of grass, the peacocks dance no more, and pale leaves flutter down as if the vines are shedding their limbs. These are some of the examples of the Holy Grove grieving.

3. How does Kanva plan to take care of Madhavi?

Kanva says that he will now make the Mango by the side of Madhavi (jasmine) to be her loving bridegroom.

4. Why did Kanva say that it is shameful that Priyamvada and Anasuya are weeping at the time of parting with Sakuntala?

Kanva says that it is shameful because at a time like this Sakuntala needs their support to be firm.

5. Who was tugging again and again at the hem of Sakuntala's garment and why?

It was the little fawn, the adopted son of Sakuntala, that was tugging again and again at the hem of Sakuntala's garment. Sakuntala fondly reared the fawn with handfuls of millet, she dabbed his mouth with healing ingudi oil when the fawn was hurt by sharp blades of Darbha grass.

Paragraph

1. Holy Grove bidding farewell to Sakuntala.

The Holy Grove bids farewell to Sakuntala in as loving a manner as her own kinsfolk. First, a koel sings. The invisible spirits of the Holy Grove sing through voices in the sky. The doe tosses out mouthfuls of grass, the peacocks dance no more, and pale leaves flutter down as if the vines are

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shedding their limbs. Priyamvada says that the Holy Grove grieves, knowing that the hour of parting for Sakuntala is near. The little fawn is at Sakuntala's heels, tugging again and again at the hem of her garment. The cakravaka answers not the call of his love. Anasuya says that every living thing in the Hermitage is sorrowful at the thought of leaving Sakuntala.

2. Relationship between Madhavi and Sakuntala.

Madhavi is a jasmine who is Sakuntala's woodland sister. Sakuntala is very much attached to her and loves her so much. She goes to the jasmine and throws her arms round her. She addresses her as "O, Madhavi, beloved sister". She also asks Madhavi to twine her branching arms around her. Sakuntala says that from that day onwards, she is going to be far away from her. So, she requests Kanva to care for her as if she were with her. Kanva says that he will now make the Mango by the side of Madhavi to be her loving bridegroom.

3. Divinities of the Holy Grove bidding farewell to Sakuntala.

The Holy Grove bids farewell to Sakuntala in as loving a manner as her own kinsfolk. First, a koel sings. The invisible spirits of the Holy Grove sing through voices in the sky. They pray for Sakuntala's path to be safe and gracious. They also wish for gentle breezes to blow, and her way to be pleasant, dotted by lakes where green lotus-creepers grow. They pray for the burning rays of the sun to filter mellowed through thick shade trees. The pollen of water-lilies drift to lie as softest dust beneath Sakuntala's feet.

4. Warm relationship between Sakuntala and the little fawn.

When Sakuntala is about to leave the Holy Grove for King Dushyanta's palace, the little fawn is at Sakuntala's heels, tugging repeatedly at the hem of her garment. The sage Kanva says that it is the little fawn, the adopted son of Sakuntala. Sakuntala fondly reared the fawn with handfuls of millet. When the fawn was hurt by sharp blades of Darbha grass, she dabbed his mouth with healing ingudi oil. The sage says that the fawn will not move out of her path. Sakuntala consoles the fawn telling him not to worry about her absence; Father Kanva will take care of him. She weeps and moves on.



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