

## **LOST SPRING**

### **THE STORY OF “SAHEB” (seemapuri)**

**Q. What is the irony in the name of Saheb-e-Alam?**

**A.** Saheb-e-Alam is the name of the rag picker boy that/which means the Lord of the Universe. But the boy is unaware/oblivious of it. It is a big irony that he is just a rag picker who wanders in streets of Seema Puri scrounging dumps of garbage to earn his living. The boy is deprived of good education, training and health facilities.

**Q. How do an adult and a child rag picker look at garbage differently?**

**A.** The adult and the child rag pickers have different outlook to see the garbage. For a child, it is wrapped with wonders and entertainment. Some time he finds a ten rupee note and make merry with friends. But for an adult it is the mean of survival, food for their stomach and roof over their heads.

**Q. Where has Saheb’s family come from and why?**

**Q: Why have the ragpickers settled down in India?**

**A.** Saheb’s and thousands of other families left their beautiful country Bangladeshi and came to India as illegal migrants. Their homes and fields were devastated/ruined by frequent storms. Moreover, they had very little to survive in that country. Finally, they had to migrate to India in search for a better life and opportunities.

**Q. What is the priority of the rag picker?**

**A.** Around ten thousand rag pickers have been living in Seemapuri in wretched living conditions. Though the government has provided them the ration cards to get food grain and their names in the voter list. Still they have to depend on different social security schemes for survival. But food is more important for them to survive than identity.

**Q. “Garbage to them is gold”. What does this statement mean?**

**Q: How do the rag pickers help their families?**

**A.** Around ten thousand migrant rag pickers have been living in Seemapuri in wretched living conditions. Because they are migrant, they are deprived of the right to get job opportunities. They have to depend on the piteous work of rag picking. The author rightly says that ‘Garbage is gold’ to these rag pickers. It is mean of survival-food for their stomach and a roof over their heads.

**Q. What explanation is given for children/rag pickers not wearing chappals/footwears?**

**A.** Most of the rag pickers do not have footwear and wander in the streets. The author thinks that it is not the lack of money but a tradition to stay barefooted. Perhaps it is a way of showing their perpetual poverty and win the sympathy of others.

**Q. From where has Saheb managed to get/procure a pair of shoes and what is special about them?**

**A.** Saheb has got a pair of shoes which look strange over his pathetic look. In fact, they are the discarded shoes of a rich boy who might have refused to wear them as one of the shoes has a big hole in it. But it is a dream come true for the barefooted boy who wanders barefooted in the streets of big city.

**Q. Why has Saheb ‘Lost the carefree look’? Is he happy working at the tea stall?**

**A.** Saheb, now, works at a tea stall where he gets eight hundred rupees and two times meal. But he is not happy with the work. The steel canister feels heavier than the garbage bag because he was the owner of the bag. He was free to work and earn at his wish. But now the boy works for somebody else and has lost his carefree look and the mastery.

## **THE STORY OF “MUKESH” (Firozabad)**

**Q. What is the common lament in Firozabad?**

**A.** Every house in Firozabad has a common lament that they don't have enough food for the stomach and money to start a new business. So, they have to continue the old job of bangle making. Moreover, they are harassed by the vicious circles of middlemen, policemen, Shahukars and bureaucrats.

**Q. What is the significance of Mukesh's dream to become a motor mechanic?**

**A.** Mukesh has dared to see a dream to become a motor mechanic to free himself from the clutches of his exploiters. The author believes that if he frees himself, he can become a role model for the thousands of young boys and girls across Firozabad who are struggling to free themselves from this deadly snare/trap of exploiters.

**Q. Mention the two hazards of working in a glass blowing industry?**

**A.** Thousands of bangle makers work in dehumanized condition around the hot furnace, in dingy cells with dust, smoke and no ventilation. Many a time these small children lose their eyesight and catch other serious diseases. They are deprived of good education and health facilities. Without any good education, health and training, these small children are destined to have a bleak and uncertain future.

**Q. What are the two distinct worlds which have become a burden on a child in Firozabad?**

**A.** We find two distinct worlds in Firozabad, first the bangle makers who have been doing this business for generations and the second is the vicious circle of Politicians, Policemen, Middleman and the Shahukars who have been exploiting them.

**Q. What right of the children are the people unaware of in Firozabad?**

**A.** Around ten thousand small children work in the bangle making industry of Firozabad but they are unaware that small children below the age of fourteen cannot work in such hazardous industry. If the law is enforced/implemented, they can get their freedom.

**Q. Little has moved with time; it seems in Firozabad' state any one reason why the author says this?**

**A:** Firozabad bangle and glass industry is more than two hundred years old. But the author rightly says that little has moved with time. Families engaged in this industry are destined to lead a pathetic life. Families of bangle makers live in hovels that look like broken hearts. With burden of slavery over their heads, the children are destined to have a bleak future.

**Q: Why can't the bangle makers organize themselves into a cooperative?**

**A:** We find two distinct worlds in Firozabad, first the bangle makers and the second is the vicious circle of Politicians, Policemen, Middleman and the Shahukars who have been exploiting them for generations. If they try to organize themselves, they are caught, beaten and dragged to police stations. There is no support and hope for these bangle makers.

## **THE LOST SPRING**

### **Q.1 What is the condition of the people living in Seema Puri?**

- A.** Seema Puri is the backward area situated at the periphery of Delhi. There are about 10,000 Bangladeshi refugees who migrated to India in post 1971 war and settled down in different parts of the country. Seema is one of those areas developed by these illegal migrants. Moreover they had to leave their beautiful homeland Bangladesh as frequent storms and flood devastated/ruined their fields and homes. In Seema Puri, they live in mud structure with roofs of tin and tarpaulin. They are deprived of the basic facilities like sanitation, sewage, drainage and fresh drinking water. Though they have been living here illegally for more than five decades but they have got their names in ration cards that enable them to get food grain. Being illegal migrant and having no skill, they do not get better job opportunities. They have no source of earning their livelihood except rag picking and some other pity jobs. The garbage for them is gold, it is food for their stomach and roof over their heads. These people have to struggle hard for every kopek. The elders and the children can be seen wearing tattered sarees and rags scrounging hope in the dumps of garbage. With no education and health facilities, these children are destined to have an uncertain future.

## **FIROZABAD**

### **Q.2 What is Firozabad famous for? Describe the working condition of the people in glass industry.**

- A.** Firozabad is the center of India's glass boiling and bangle industry. The families have spent generations working around furnace, making beautiful bangles and bringing happiness and prosperity in the lives of people who wear them.

The people, here, have been living a very pathetic and wretched life. They have to work in dehumanized conditions. Working around hot furnace, in dust, dingy cells without air and light and no ventilation, these bangle makers catch lethal/serious disease. Trapped in the vicious circle of exploiters, they are destined to lead a miserable life.

The living condition of these bangle makers is no less miserable. They live in the houses that look like hovels with crumbling walls, wobbly doors and crowded families. The humans and animals coexist/live together under the same roof. One can see the line of the boys and girls sitting beside oil lamps and soldering glasses into bangles. They can never think about better education and health facilities. The cry of starvation and lack of money rings in every other house of Firozabad. The author rightly says that these people are the victim of the apathy of the government and society. They are harassed by the vicious circle of policemen, politicians, middlemen and bureaucrats who have been exploiting them for generations. If they try to protest or get organized, they are hauled, dragged and beaten up by the police.

### **Q.3 'The Lost Spring' is the story of the lost childhood of the two children explains.**

- A** There is no deny that 'The Lost Spring' is the story of the lost childhood of two children Mukesh and Saheb. These two boys represent the life of millions of children of this country, who are forced to work as child labours. With no education and related skill, these children have to do pity jobs to support their families. Whether it is the stone cutting industry of Rajasthan, Bidi making in Bengal, cracker industry of Shivkashi, carpet making in Jammu and Kashmir or pottery making in Uttar Pradesh, these industries are flourishing at the cost of Indian childhood who sacrifice their everything to bring prosperity to their

owners. Working in inhuman condition like garbage, dust, dingy smoky cells, they end up catching lethal disease, losing some vital organs. They are the partner in survival as they share the joy and misery with their parents. These flowers can never bloom to the full as before that they have to accept the burden of slavery that is transferred on them.

Mukesh dreamed to become a car driver/motor mechanic to free himself from the trap/clutches of his exploiters. He can become a role model for millions of other boys and girls who want to free themselves from the deadly trap of exploiters.

**Q:4 The beauty of the bangles made in Firozabad is in direct contrast to the life of the people who make them. Elaborate.**

**A:** Thousands of families in Firozabad are engaged in the art of making bangles. They make bangles of all beautiful colors of the world. How ironical it is that the women working in bangles industry have no prosperity and happiness in their life.

But there is a darker side of their lives. Though these bangles makers are adding colours to the life of people, but there is no colour in their own life. They are surrounded with abject poverty. Working in inhuman condition - in dust, smoke and fume of furnace, they lose everything. They are just slogging their lives in dark cell and hutments with dim lights and no ventilation. The elders go blind and the little children lose their beautiful 'spring'. Child labour, exploitation and mental and physical torture is common/omnipresent in every house of Firozabad.

Women see their husbands and children go blind and catching serious diseases. "kabhi ser bhar khana bhi nahi khaya" depicts the deep pain and indignation that these people have to face. The children are suffered with malnutrition with no education, health and related skill. The elders are drudging their lives in unthankful labour.

**Q:5 Justify title of the story 'The Lost Spring'.**

**A:** I agree that the title 'The Lost Spring' Suits the story most. There could be some other titles as well like the 'Lost Childhood' that show the misery and the suffering that child labours are subjected to. Literary 'Spring' means childhood of a person. Generally, we make a picture of a child who is free from all the worldly sorrows. He should get all the love, care and affection of his elders. He should go to school, be taught by his teachers and play in the company of his parent and friends. But this is the picture of a imaginative child who is blessed with all the happiness of the world. We generally ignore the bitter face of the lived reality of Indian childhood that is crushed under the cruel fate and apathy of society.

'The Lost Spring' depicts the torture and exploitation of this childhood. Mukesh and Shaheb represent the millions of children who have lost their 'Spring' due to the apathy of the society and government. At their school going age they are forced to/have to work in hazardous factories, mill and farms. Working in dehumanized condition like in dingy cells with smoke, dim light and no ventilation, they catch serious diseases or become victims of serious accidents. They are subjected to mental and physical suffering by their owners. In short, these beautiful and tender flowers have 'Lost' their 'Spring' in this harsh world.

