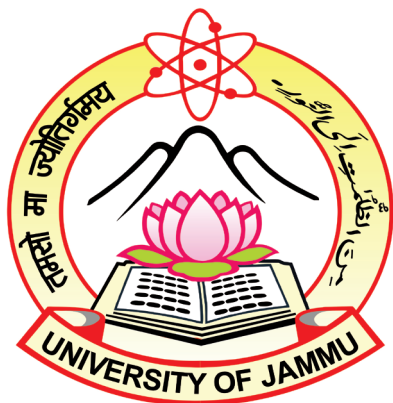


CENTRE FOR DISTANCE & ONLINE EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU
JAMMU



SELF LEARNING MATERIAL
B.A./B.COM. SEMESTER-VI

SUBJECT : GENERAL ENGLISH

UNIT- I - IV

COURSE NO. : AA-601

LESSON- 1 to 14

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GENERAL ENGLISH

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*Detailed Syllabus of General English under NON-CBCS at UG level (CDOE) for the
Examination to be held in May 2024, 2025, 2026*

GENERAL ENGLISH

SEMESTER-VI

Course Title : General English

Course Code : AA-601

Semester End Examination : 80

Credits : 6

Internal Assessment : 20

Duration of Examination : 3 hrs

Total Marks : 100

Unit-I : Novel

R.K. Narayan : *The Vendor of Sweets* (Non detailed

Study) **Unit-II : Drama**

Mahesh Dattani: *Tara* (Detailed Study)

Unit III: Letter Writing

Unit IV: Grammar

- (a) One Word Substitution
- (b) Passage on Vocabulary
- (c) Correct use of Preposition
- (d) Correct use of Conjunction

Mode of Examination

Internal Assessment Test: (20 Marks)

Two Written Assignments of 10 marks each shall be given.

External End Semester University Examination: The paper will be divided into Sections A, B & C.

Section-A

This section will cover units I and II. One long answer type question with internal choice of 15 marks from each unit will be given. The candidate has to attempt all the questions. The prescribed word limit will be 250-300 words. **(2 × 15 = 30)**

Section-B

The section will cover units I and II. Three short answer questions out of which one will be a reference to the context type question from Unit II will be set. The candidate has to attempt any two questions. Each question will be for 9 marks and the prescribed word limit will be 100 - 150 words.

(9 × 2 = 18 Marks)

Section-C

This section will have two subsections with five components.

Section I

Letter Writing: Two topics for letter writing will be given and the candidate has to attempt any one.

(12 Marks)

Section II will have four parts

1. One Word substitution: The candidate will substitute the words in Italics in the sentences given with one word from the given cluster of words and rewrite the reformed sentences in the answer sheet. Four sentences will be given. All to be attempted. **(4 × 1 =4 marks)**
2. Passage on Vocabulary Test: A paragraph with six blanks will be given and the candidate will have to fill them with the correct word option from the cluster of the words given at the end. All to be attempted. **(6 × 1 = 6)**
3. Correction of Preposition: Five incorrect sentences to be corrected with the correct preposition. Five sentences to be set. All to be attempted. **(5 × 1 =5 marks)**

4. Correction of Conjunction: Five incorrect sentences to be corrected with the correct conjunction.

Five sentences to be set. All to be attempted.

(5 × 1 =5 marks)

Note to the examiner: Repetition of any component is to avoided.

Suggested Reading:

Narayan, R. K. *The Vendor of Sweets*. Indian Thought Publications, 2007.

Dnyate, Ramesh. *The Novels of R. K. Narayan: A Typological Study of Characters*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1996.

Biswal, Jayant K. *A Critical Study of the Novels of R. K. Narayan: The Malgudi Comedy*. New Delhi: Nirmal, 1987.

Dattani, Mahesh. *Tara*, New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 1995.

Dattani, Mahesh. *Tara: A Critical Study*. Shakti Batra. Surjeet Publications, 2018.

Bhatta, S. Krishna. *Indian English Drama: A Critical Study*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1987.

Subramanyam, Lakshmi. *Muffled Voices: Women in Modern Indian Theater*. New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications (P) Ltd., 2002.

Gupta, S. C. *A Handbook for Letter Writing*. Arihant Publications, 2016.

Bakshi, S. P. and Richa Sharma, *Descriptive English*. Arihant Publications, 2016.

Murphy, R., *English Grammar in Use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Altenberg, E. and Vago, R., *English Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, Press, 2010.

Eastwood, J., *Oxford Practice Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

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STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Introduction**
- 1.2 Objectives**
- 1.3 Introduction to the Novelist**
- 1.4 Let Us Sum Up**
- 1.5 Self-Check Exercise**
- 1.6 Answer Key**
- 1.7 Glossary**
- 1.8 Suggested Reading**

1.1 INTRODUCTION

R.K. Narayan was the most artistic of all the writers, who was born in Chennai in 1906. As a novelist, R.K. Narayan gained immediate success and popularity. He published three of his novels *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) and *The Dark Room* in quick succession. His beloved wife Rajam passed away only after five years of their marriage. During this period he published volumes of short-stories- *Malgudi Days* (1941) and *Cyclone and other Stories* (1944). His next novel *The English Teacher* was published in 1945. Since then novels have followed from his pen at regular intervals. *An Astrologer's Day and other Stories* (1947), *Mr Sampath* (1949), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *Lawley Road* (1956), *The Guide* (1958), *My Dateless Diary* (1960), *The Man Eater of Malgudi* (1962), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967) are his prominent works.

R. K. Narayan was awarded Sahitya Akademi Award in 1960 for his novel *The Guide*. He was awarded *Padma Bhushan* in 1964. University of Leeds conferred on him the Honorary D. Lit in 1967. His works have been published both in England and the USA_____.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are :-

- a) to acquaint you with the life and works of R.K. Narayan.
- b) to familiarize you with the social perspective of R.K. Narayan.

1.3 INTRODUCTION TO THE NOVELIST

Rashipuram Krishnaswami Narayan is highly acclaimed as a detached observer of life. The reader is easily led to accept him for his so-called objective and beguiling presentation. And doubtless he is a novelist par excellence. However, if one goes through his novels and personal life, the record of which we find authentically maintained in his memoir *My Days*, there is hardly any difficulty in ascertaining the fact, that Narayan lays bare his mind in all its true spirit. In fact, this is not the case with Narayan alone to be singled out for recording his mind's view. It is also with novelists like Defoe, Richardson and even James Joyce who appear to keep themselves out of the action they narrate. In fact, they betray their opinion on the characters and situations and—in as much as every novel is an extended metaphor of the author's view of life — on the life itself. They do so by the very choice of the characters they write about, the thoughts and feelings they give them, and the behaviour and motives they attribute to them.

Every novelist then, gives us in his novel his own personal idiosyncratic vision of the world. The mind of man is a complex phenomenon. It is always in the process of change. It acts and reacts to the events and the situations around him. It all depends how one develops his mind right from his childhood. The vision of life is certainly enlarged and broadened in case of those who come out of their surroundings and develop rapport with eminent personalities of diverse faiths rooted to different soils. Here the faith and beliefs one inherits hardly matter, for they never stick to their age- old beliefs and myths and legends

of the communities they belong to. The writings of Dr. Mulk Raj Anand and Dr. Bhabani Bhattacharya will sufficiently prove this beyond doubt. On the contrary, Narayan's writings are a vision of a man who has never set his foot outside the province, or the intimate circle for that matter, till about forty years of his life. Narayan's vision of the society as we find in Malgudi is the outcome of his intimate familiarity and involvement only with the people of his community. He is brainwashed as it appears, to accept without questioning the things he learnt from his grandmother, the commanding figure of the family, to whom no one, not even Narayan could dare to ask questions. Narayan remains confined to the myth and legends of the Hindu religion which he inherits, however detached he may appear to be in his writings. At certain times, he appears reluctant to accept the things as it so happens when he loses his dear wife Rajam and he is suggested to go in for psychic communion with the spirit of his dead wife but then the ideas so engraved and stored in his subconscious level, suddenly come up to grip his mind and he falls back to his former position leaving everything to fate.

Born in 1907 in an upper middle class Brahmin family of Madras, Narayan sees South Indian as a fundamentally conservative Hindu society which he realistically presents in most of his novels and stories with the lower middle class common man as his base. The imaginary town that he creates and calls Malgudi has all the qualities of a society, Narayan dwells in, and he depicts it with a keenly observant eye. Its members are neither too well off, nor do they know the rub of financial worry, nor too indigent to be brutalized by want and hunger.

R.K. Narayan is not a social critic and is not interested in propagating any ideas. But the stories of his Malgudi novels reveal that Narayan makes his common man hero aware of his talents and potentialities which help him rise above his so-called destined role in the society. That he falls back to his former position, has roots in Hindu culture which has so great an impact that neither Narayan nor his characters have been able to shake themselves off the irrational social customs and superstitions.

Narayan was not a brilliant student in his school days. He somehow managed to pass his B.A. from Maharaja College, Mysore. His further education being discontinued, Narayan had to become a newspaper reporter to support his family. His business was to gather Mysore city news and send it to

a newspaper called, *The Justice* published in Madras. Its aim was to promote the cause of the non-Brahmins who suffered from the domination of the minority Brahmin class in public life, government service and education.

Narayan has published over a dozen novels, two-hundred short stories and four books of non-fiction.

With Graham Greene's recommendation Narayan's first novel *Swami and Friends* saw the light of the day in 1935. Then appeared in quick succession two more novels : *Bachelor of Arts* (1936) and *The Dark Room* (1938). The end of the IIInd War meant the return of spring to Narayan, and we see *The English Teacher* (1945) *Mr. Sampath* (1919), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1938) and *My Dateless Diary* (1960). He has also collected two volumes of his short stories *An Astrologer's Day* and *Lawlay Road* and a volume of his weekly causeries, *Next Sunday* (1960). Then appeared *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), *The Painter of Signs* (1977) and *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983). Narayan also published shorter prose versions of the ancient epics *The Ramayan* and *The Mahabharat. Gods, Demons and Others*, *A Horse and Two Goats* and *My Days : A Memoir* also add to the valuable contributions by R.K. Narayan. It is quite natural, therefore, that there are a number of literary awards and distinctions to his credit : National Prize of Indian Literary Academy (1958), Sahitya Academy Award for *The Guide* (1960), Padma Bhushan (1964), National Association of Independent School Award (1965), D. Litt by University of Leeds (1967), followed by Delhi University (1973).

Narayan is no original thinker; he has no independent philosophy to propagate in his novels. He largely subscribes to the Hindu ideals enshrined in the ancient Hindu scriptures. What makes him original is his

down to earth interpretation of Indian ideals : 'Varnashram Dharma' or a man's roles and duties according to his place in a scheme of castes, and also according to his stage of life; Karma or the principle of deeds and their consequences which are worked out both in this life and in successive births until the ultimate release, moksha, a hierarchy of values generally classified as Dharma or right action, artha or worldly interest, and Karma or human love, and a cyclically ordered time and universe encompassing these values. Not all Hindus would hold these beliefs in their scriptural form to the same extent, nor

would they apply them to all situations, yet they are constantly referred to and they are taken for granted in many Hindu institutions and rituals. A product of the Hindu high caste family, Narayan shares the beliefs, superstitions, traditions, customs and rituals in Indian life. He admitted to Ved Mehta his inability to write novels without Krishna, Ganesh, Hanuman, astrologers, Pandits and devadasis or temple prostitutes, and explained his point of view by adding in his characteristic humble way that in any case that has turned out to be his India.

It is, therefore, little surprising that Hindu myths and ideals have gripped Narayan's mind so much that he naturally takes them up for themes in most of his novels. Ours has been a traditional society admitting and absorbing all change. The huge mass of myths and legends that we have accumulated through centuries, has become the common repository of the people of the land. These myths and legends and our religious and cultural heritage have shaped our mind and imagination, behaviour pattern and general attitude to life. This influence is so deeply engraved that it finds unconscious expression in the very aspect of his novels. William Walsh is worth quoting when he says : "The religious sense of Indian myths is part of Narayan's grip of reality, of his particular view of human life and his individual way of placing and ordering human feeling and experience."

Malgudi is deeply traditional and caste-ridden. Here arranged marriage is a common phenomenon and horoscopes are often matched. This happened in Narayan's own life. Narayan married Rajam in spite of the fact that their horoscope did not match. The astrologer of the girl's side had predicted that Narayan would prove a widower, but he was defeated by Narayan's own pundit who at the sight of rupees was all praise for Narayan's horoscope. Narayan lost his wife after five years, and this confirmed Narayan's belief in horoscopes all the more. Chandran in *The Bachelor of Arts* does not marry the girl he loves because the horoscopes do not tally. This problem crops up in *The Financial Expert* as well. The astrologer who thinks that the horoscopes of Balu and Brinda do not match, is dismissed with a fee of Rupee one, whereas the one who testifies that the horoscopes match perfectly, is rewarded with a fee of Rs. Seventy five.

Varna Vyavastha that has come down to us from generations together has not freed Hindu mind and that is realistically portrayed by Narayan in many of his novels. Raju's mother in *The Guide* is first, sympathetic towards Rosie, but she changed her attitude completely when she learns that Rosie belongs to the dancing girl's class. Shrinivas's wife in *Mr. Sampath* does not take food cooked by a non-Brahmin. So is the case with Savitri in *The Dark Room* who refuses to eat in the house of Mary and Ponni, the low caste couple. It is difficult for Jagan (*The Vendor of Sweets*) to accept a non-Hindu girl as his daughter-in-law. Raman's aunt in the *The Painter of Signs* decides to go on a pilgrimage when she learns that Raman is going to marry a Christian girl. It is also equally true that Chandran (*The Bachelor of Arts*), Mali (*The Vendor of Sweets*), Raman (*The Painter of Signs*) and Raju (*The Guide*) give a jolt to the established customs of the Hindu society.

Most of his characters are innocent and pitied against an unsympathetic environment. They are traditional and superstitious. They believe that everything on earth is preordained and that no amount of human efforts can ease the situation. The heroes of his novels do not control the events but events control them. They are helpless creatures torn by desires and tossed this way and that way by the caprice of fortune.

In Narayan's novels there is generally a flight, an uprooting, a disturbance of order-followed by a return, a renewal, a restoration of normalcy. Swami, Chandran, Savitri, Margayya's son Balu all run away but later come (or are brought) back. Shrinivas returns to his paper, Margayya to his knobby trunk, Natraj to restored quiet of his office. Shriram and Bharathi are back in Malgudi, and Susila herself, defying death (if at all one believes) is with Krishna again.

Growing frustration sometimes makes his characters rebel against the social customs and traditions. The traditional religious values and the modern approach cannot go hand in hand. Hindus are deeply traditional, and the onslaught of science and scientific advancement have confused them considerably. Though the characters make certain attempts to go against the prevailing social customs and traditions, they simply cannot shake them off. They cannot stand the collective force of the society as a whole. The result is, they accept defeat, remorse comes, and they find happiness in submission.

Narayan does not seem to approve of their attitude or any kind of rebellion on their part. There is a marked attack on sentimentality in almost all his novels.

R.K. Narayan is not a didactic novelist. However, he has an extraordinary power of evoking a sense of propriety in life. Though not a critic of society, he is certainly a critic of conduct. There emerges a definite view or vision of life from each of his works. To Narayan life is not normally either an elysium or a vale of tears. Toeing the same line of approach Shrinivas in *Mr. Sampath*, perceived a balance of power in human relationships. He marvelled at the invisible forces of the universe which maintained this subtle balance in all matters; it was so perfect that it seemed to be unnecessary for anybody to do anything.

Women's secondary position in the society has unnerved Narayan as well, and he depicts it realistically in many of his novels. In his autobiographical book *My Days*, Narayan writes : "Man assigned her a secondary place and kept her there with such subtlety and cunning that she herself began to lose all notion of her independence, her individuality, stature and strength." Bullying husbands like Ramani and meek wives like Savitri (*The Dark Room*) are a common feature of our traditional society. Woman is a helpless creature to be guarded by her father as a child, by her husband in her youth and by her son when she is old and a widow.

Narayan moves with the passage of time. He candidly confesses "I suppose, I have moved along with the times. This girl in my new novel, Daisy in *The Painter of Signs* is quite different; not only is she not dependent on man, she actually has no use for them as an integral part of her life."

Narayan is opposed to the present system of education. He appears to be in favour of 'Leave alone system' of the ancient time which we find, expressed in *The English Teacher*. Narayan writes : "My outlook on education never fitted in with the accepted code at home Since revolt was impractical, I went through it all without conviction, enthusiasm, or any sort of distinction." Narayan wanted to be free and read what he pleased and not be examined at all. As a result, he had to make several unsuccessful attempts to cross his Intermediate and B.A. Exam before he graduated in 1930 from Maharaja's College, Mysore.

Narayan is essentially ironic in his treatment of the characters in his novels. He is keenly aware of the fundamental, irremedial incongruities which life and world are constantly confronting us with. He is also active to the facts that there is no possibility at all of reconciling the opposites, which every facet of his experience brings to his knowledge. He, therefore, accepts the reality as it presents before him. What Narayan aims at in his expression is grace and ease rather than artificial glow and picturesqueness. His style is lucid and words seem to flow from his pen without any effort like snow water upon the mountain sides. Today, when he is no more in this world, his works still keep on haunting our minds.

1.4 LET US SUM UP

1. R.K. Narayan is highly acclaimed as a detached observer of life.
 2. He remains confined to the myth and legends of the Hindu religion.
 3. He is not a social critic.
 4. He is no original thinker, he has no independent philosophy to propagate in his novels.
 5. Women's secondary position in society has unnerved Narayan.
 6. He is essentially ironic in his treatment of the characters in his novels.
-

1.5 SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

- a) Write a short note on R.K.Narayan's style of writing.
- b) Name the major works of R.K. Narayan.
- c) Give the full name of R.K. Narayan.
- d) What was the name of R.K. Narayan's wife ?
- e) From where did R.K. Narayan pass his B.A. ?
- f) Name R.K. Narayan's first novel.
- g) What makes R.K. Narayan's characters rebel ?

- h) R.K. Narayan is not a didactic novelist. (T/F)
- i) _____ is an autobiographical book by Narayan.
- j) Daisy is a character in the novel _____ .
- k) Narayan is in favour of 'Leave alone System' (T/F).

1.6 ANSWER KEY

- a) Refer Introduction to the Novelist.
- b) Refer Introduction to the Novelist.
- c) Rashipuram Krishnaswami Narayan.
- d) Rajam_____.
- e) Maharaja College, Mysore.
- f) *Swami and Friends*.
- g) Growing frustration, sometimes, makes his characters rebel.
- h) True_____.
- i) *My Days*_____.
- j) The Painter of Signs_____.
- k) True_____.

1.6 GLOSSARY

- 1. Stimulate—to encourage somebody.
- 2. Incense—a substance that produces a pleasant smell when burnt.
- 3. Glance—look_____.
- 4. Reverently—in an admiring way_____.

5. Coarse—Rough_____.
6. Receded—to move backward from a previous position_____.
7. Tanning—Drying of the skin to become brown as a result of being exposed_____.
8. Adequate—sufficient_____.
9. Extricate—to free or release oneself, to disentangle.
10. Dumped—put something that is not wanted to a place and leave it as rubbish.
11. Giggled—laughed lightly in nervous or silly way.
12. Obscure—not clearly seen_____.
13. Junk—things that are considered use less or of little value.
14. Unflinchingly—in an unflinching manner i.e. not showing reluctance.
15. Slackness—laziness_____.
16. Hushed—stopped talking_____.
17. Clinking—making a sharp ringing sound.
18. Unobtrusively—in a way that is not easy to notice_____.
19. Rankled—caused bitter feelings_____.
20. Babble—to talk quickly and in a way that is difficult to understand_____.
21. Muffle—to wrap or cover something for warmth or protection_____.
22. Immaculate—perfectly clean and tidy.
23. Tugged—pulled something violently.
24. Expatiated—wrote or spoke at great length or in detail about a subject.
25. Snoring—breathing roughly and noisily while sleeping.

26. Vagrant—a person without a settled home or regular work.
27. Benignly—gently.
28. Hovering—waiting in a shy and uncertain manner.
29. Firmament—the sky.
30. Warped—made something become bent or twisted from the usual or natural shape.
31. Fronds—large leaves or stems that are parts of a palm or fern.
32. Litigation—the process of bringing or defending a claim_____.
33. Shovelled—lifted or moved something with a shovel.
34. Elated—excited or proud_____.
35. Ghoulish—like a ghoul_____.
36. Inexplicable—impossible to explain.
37. Aghast—filled with horror or shock.
38. Grimly—Seriously_____.
39. Banalities—Qualities of being ordinary.
40. Apologetic—feeling or showing regret because one has done something wrong.

1.8 SUGGESTED READING

1. *The Vendor of Sweets* - R.K. Narayan.
 2. *R.K. Narayan And His Social Perspective* - S.R. Ramteke.
- _____

STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Introduction**
- 2.2 Objectives**
- 2.3 Introduction to the Novel**
- 2.4 Glossary**
- 2.5 Let Us Sum Up**
- 2.6 Self-Check Exercise**
- 2.7 Answer Key**
- 2.8 Suggested Reading**

2.1 INTRODUCTION

R. K. Narayan is a great Indian writer in whose Writings Indian sensibility finds a fine expression. The joint family system, the family ties, customs and rituals, traditions and beliefs all of which are Indian find a place in the novels of Narayan. The Indian atmosphere in novel, *The Vendor of Sweets* is quite discernible.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are :-

- a) to give an outline summary of the novel *The Vendor of Sweets*
- b) to make the learner familiar with the novel from the examination point of view.

2.3 INTRODUCTION TO THE NOVEL

In *The Vendor of Sweets*, Narayan presents an eccentric widower of sixty with his high-minded Gandhian philosophy which he appears to have been following to suit his own purpose. He seems to be a fake disciple of Gandhi, totally distressed and disgusted with his son. Circumstances so conspire, that he has to leave the house. It shows Jagan's inability to achieve the possible compromise with the world. G.S. Ameer rightly says, "His act is an act of despair, he runs away in tears." The clash between Jagan and his son is a clash between the age-old traditions and the modern occidental civilization. And the solution Jagan arrives at in the end after much pain, humiliation, and self-searching is — running away from the realities of life.

Jagan is portrayed as a fanatic observer of all the externals of Gandhism. He spins and produces yarn for his own clothes, scrupulously observes dietary restrictions, (twenty drops of honey in hot water.... is the natural way of taking in all the sugar we need). Jagan himself says : "I don't drink more than four ounces of water a day, and that must be boiled at night and cooled in mud jug open to the sky." He uses only those sandals which are made of hide of a cow that has died a natural death. As Jagan sits in his sweet shop reading *the Gita*, he has one ear perpetually cocked to the frying noises in the kitchen, and one ear permanently glued to the front stall where customers and beggars crowd.

Jagan's hypocrisy is so deeply ingrained that it has become a second nature with him. He keeps double account books and treats parts of sale produce as 'free cash' a sort of immaculate conception, self-generated, arising out of itself and entitled to survive without reference to any tax, thus amassing huge wealth. And unashamedly he declares : "If Gandhi had said somewhere, 'Pay your sales tax uncomplainingly', he would have followed his advice, but Gandhi had made no reference to the sales tax anywhere to Jagan's knowledge". He rationalizes the recycling of stale stuff by saying philosophically, "after all, everything, consists of flour, sugar and flavour."

Jagan is a bundle of contradictions, a professed Gandhian whose high-minded Gandhian principles are soon found to be a smoke-screen. As a result, he is ever playing a hide and seek game with his

conscience as freely as he hoodwinks almost everyone he meets producing plenty of fun. An inveterate enemy of sugar in personal life, one wonders how this Gandhian disciple could; without compunction, continue to live on the profits of selling sugared sweets to all and sundry. His frequent protestations that his sweet vending is meant solely to serve the country, particularly the children and the poor, is as hollow as a drum. He could not pass his B.A. from sheer incapacity, he is never tired of declaring unashamedly that it was love for his country which made him give up college and throw himself headlong into struggle for political emancipation — under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Penetrating beneath these boasts we discover that his noisy altruism is a mask worn to hide a selfish nature.

The dialogue between Jagan and the cousin will make the point very clear - “You have perfected the art of living on nothing”, said the cousin. Encouraged, Jagan added, “I have given up rice too. I cook a little stone-ground wheat and take it with honey and greens.” “And yet,” said the cousin, “I cannot understand why you go on working and earning, taking all this trouble.” He waved his hands in the direction of the sweets displayed on trays at the window, but stopped short of asking why Jagan should expect others to eat sweets and keep him flourishing.

Jagan came of an orthodox Brahmin family with all the pujas and the Gods; a menstruating woman had to isolate herself as the emanation from her person were supposed to create a sort of magnetic defilement, and for three days she was fed in a far off corner of the house, and was unable to move freely. She was being treated almost as untouchable. His brother was an orthodox man who managed the headquarters of a religious order, established ten centuries ago with a million followers. And yet Jagan plucked up enough courage to join the Gandhian movement. His brother did not approve of Jagan’s outlook. His sister wrote that Jagan had lost all sense of caste by dining and rubbing shoulders with untouchables, going to jail and getting up to all kinds of shameful things. His loyalty to Gandhi made him rebel against many of the caste laws. He found it difficult to enter into the spirit of most of the rites and religious celebrations. To him, sanctity of the age old usages and customs had made the reform in the family or in the society impossible. They stuck to their old ways and never allowed the young ones to develop their individuality. Looking at the bathroom, which remained very much what it had been in

the days of his father, Jagan remarked, “everything in this home had the sanctity of usage, which was the reason why no improvement was possible.

Though a Gandhian disciple, Jagan failed to make a compromise with the world. His Gandhian planks alienated his brother and sister. Besides, there were no persons whom he could address as friends. This had made Jagan confine himself to his sweetmeat shop, and the house shared by Mali and Grace, not married and yet living there as husband and wife; he was terribly shocked, the result being a complete dislocation of his relations with Mali. The only solace to him in his life was the cousin, a practical man of the town-helping Jagan in his difficulties.

Jagan’s duplicity had upset Mali altogether. When he declared that he was a poor man and quoted Gandhi to have advocated poverty and not riches, Mali reacted with a vicious smile, “And yet you earn your thousand rupees a day.” Jagan tried in vain to convince his son to adopt the traditional ways of his ancestors. Mali snapped it saying, “Oh, these are not the days of your ancestors. Today we have to compete with advanced countries not only in economics and industry, but also in culture.” Jagan’s staying in the house had become unbearable. Demand from his son for fifty thousand dollars seemed to him totally unreasonable. He was aware that pressure was being subtly exercised on him to make him part with his cash. And he declared that he was going to meet the situation by ignoring the whole business; a sort of non-violent non co-operation.

But Jagan found his domestic life irksome. The expectant stare of Grace when she opened the door and the significant side-glances of Mali got on his nerves. If he heard them open the front door, he retreated far into the backyard of the house or sometimes even locked himself in the bathing shack. But the state of being alone like a burglar in his very house, made Jagan decide once for all to leave the house. While leaving the house he did not fail to take the cheque book with him. Kirpal Singh points out: “within the context of the novel, the cheque book has played a central role, and since Jagan takes it along with him at the very end, we wonder how sincere his conversion to a ‘new life’ is.” How at all could one take seriously the so-called renunciation of hypocrite and a charlatan, who was clearly incapable of a real change of heart for the simple reason that his heart had already been corrupted beyond

redemption? If old Jagan's Gandhism was only skin deep (as it unmistakably appeared to be) his renunciation could not be authentic either. It was more or less running away from the realities of life.

Modern occidental civilization represented by Mali has been brought in sharp contrast with the traditional Hindu culture. And Jagan found himself choked up in the modern atmosphere.

In running away from the realities, Jagan accepted, "a kind of death actually, although he'd breathe, watch, and occasionally keep in touch, but the withdrawal would not be different from death."

The social surrounding and the family in which Jagan was born and brought up, was deeply orthodox and steeped in superstition and blind belief. It was only after the offerings to the God on Badri Hills that Mali was born to Jagan. He had been married to Ambika for almost ten years; he had failed repeatedly in the Intermediate and was then failing in the B.A. class and still there was no sign of a child in the house. It was natural under such circumstances, that Jagan's father, an old orthodox man as he was, took Jagan and his wife to the temple on Badri Hills, which was known as Santana Krishna (a visit to it, they believed, was the only remedy for barrenness in women), and made offering to God. And as if in fulfilment of the coconut seller's prophecy, Mali was born; the very minute he was delivered, he was weighed on a scale pan, and an equivalent weight in gold, silver and corn was made up to be delivered to the God on Badri Hills, according to the solemn made during their visit.

The kind of blind belief which made Jagan and his wife go to Badri Hills is still in vogue amongst the gullible Indians. It is being fully exploited and taken full advantage of by the Brahmin Pandits and the trustees of the temple. Lakhs of rupees (black and unauthorised) are being poured in the form of presents and offering to the God. Where does all the money that come in the form of presents and offerings in cash, go? Surely not to God, but to the luxury of the Brahmin Pandit.

Narayan had a dig at the dowry system, another social evil prevalent in the society. Before Jagan's marriage was celebrated, the bride's parents had to give five thousand rupees in cash, and some presents — gold and silver vessels which Jagan was totally opposed to, for the fear of losing his would-be-wife, in case they refused. And when the bride's father failed to present a gold belt, Jagan's mother was heard

taunting : “one doesn’t ask for extra-ordinary things; they are not for us, we are not destined to enjoy the spectacle of a gold waist band, like hundreds of others, but one wants at least a sensible”, to which Ambika snapped: “Why are you so obsessed with the gold belt? What has it to do with salt or sugar? Have you never seen a gold belt in all your life?”

The dowry system is still being practised in our society on a large scale. It has now affected almost all the communities of the Indian society. And unless some concrete steps are taken to eradicate the social evil, the situation may slip out of hands. The worst sufferers are the illiterate poor persons. For, the situation is being fully exploited by the cunning foxes of the flesh business, who dupe them very cleverly first by marrying their daughters, and then selling them to the owners of brothels.

The cousin introduced in the novel is an excellent comic creation, the irony of whose parasitical existence is brought out quite admirably. He seems to be the cousin of the whole of Malgudi; and in that capacity he has entry into the houses of judges, businessmen, advocates etc. It seems that he does chores for a great number of families in the city of Malgudi. A great lover of sweets, he is a self-appointed sweet taster extra-ordinary to Jagan. Flattery is his accredited business in life. However, he is of immense help to Jagan in his difficulties. He serves as a mediator to Jagan whenever he wants to contact his son Mali, for, there is a complete dislocation of his relations. It is only through this cousin of the town that Jagan, somehow, is in touch with Mali.

Mali, on the other hand, has no interest in him. He is a college drop out lured away by the West. Stealing ten thousand rupees out of his father’s hidden savings, Mali goes to the United States, and returns a few years later with new fangled ideas and contempt for Indian ways. He embarks on a grandiose scheme for marketing a story writing machine with the help of Grace, a half American-half Korean girl. Mali’s westernism appears to be as skin deep as Jagan’s Gandhism and takes very superficial forms like eating beef and tinned food, drinking and putting on a suit. This is set in complete contrast with the ways and manners of Hindu society of which Jagan is the product. Mali’s girlfriend, Grace is post-graduate in Domestic Economy from Michigan University. In the company of Mali, she makes every effort to become a good Hindu wife bending down and decorating the threshold with white flowers on

Friday. Jagan has great liking for her, though he knows, to his utter shock, that Mali and Grace are not married.

As for Chinna Dorai's role in the life of Jagan, Narayan is in two minds. On the one hand he makes Jagan view him with suspicion when Chinna Dorai tells him, "My master supported me for years." Jagan retorted inwardly, "How could he not, as you were his only son by a passing concubine? , and yet a little later his impact on Jagan is shown to be extraordinary.

Jagan suddenly realises ".....Am I on the verge of a new Janma?" Chinna Dorai can hardly be expected as a credible agent for Jagan's conversion in his last days, which, we find is unconvincing for other reasons too, in relation to Hindu ethics of renunciation.

In Jagan, the chief character in the novel, Narayan has created a person close to his own image. Like Narayan, Jagan has also lost his wife at an early stage. And more important, Jagan and Narayan were both sixty years old at the time the novel was written. Besides, Jagan was of the same caste to which Narayan himself belonged. One may recall here that almost all the chief characters Narayan has drawn in his novels, like Swami, Chandran, Ramani, Krishnan, Shrinivas and now Jagan come from orthodox Brahmin families of which Narayan himself is a member. He simply does not venture to come out of his caste circle to portray the lower caste people. And how could he? The lower caste people never came within his purview. And if at all they did come into his view, he has never gone deep into their lives. He has never thought to give them any substantial role to play in his Malgudi circus. Whatever chief characters we come across in his Malgudi, they all belong to the upper caste. But they all have been grouped together to belong to the lower middle class, owing to their weaker financial position in which Narayan himself is placed. His is a narrow circle realistically portrayed in a satirical tone.

That the old social values have been fast changing is revealed by Narayan through the characterization of Mali. And Jagan, that Gandhian disciple has been made totally incapable to compromise with the world, the end being Jagan's retreat from the realities, which is nothing but a kind of death to him. Jagan's renunciation of the world is in keeping with the Indian tradition. But he is also pushed into

it by his personal circumstances : “Jagan felt [...] that he wanted to explain why he needed an escape his wife’s death, his son’s growth and strange development, how his ancient home behind the Lawley status was beginning to resemble hell on earth [...] Owing to mutual understanding and inability to cope up with the changing values one finds amongst the members of the family, the existence of Hindu joint family at stake.”

2.4 GLOSSARY

1. Vestige—a small remaining part of what once existed.
2. Smacking—an act of hitting somebody with an open hand.
3. Gloating—feeling delight at one’s own success_____.
4. Reminiscential—something related to past events and experiences_____.
5. Strolled—walked in a slow casual way.
6. Speculations—acts of forming opinions without having definite knowledge.
7. Contemptuously—in a manner showing contempt.
8. Flounder—to move or struggle in a helpless or desperate manner.
9. Wiping—removing dirt, liquid etc. from something by rubbing with a cloth.
10. Beckoned—made a gesture to somebody to move in a specific direction.
11. Rambling—spreading in various directions with no regular pattern.
12. Reverberating—repeating several times as an echo.
13. Irksome—irritating.
14. Affable—pleasant and friendly_____.
15. Haughtily—disdainfully_____.
16. Rigorously—strictly_____.

17. Sullen—silent, gloomy_____.
18. Malignant—that cannot be controlled and is likely to prove fatal_____.
19. Petrified—made somebody very frightened_____.
20. Unadulterated—pure_____.
21. Theorizing—forming theories about something.
22. Scraggy—thin and showing a lot of bone.
23. Fastidious—hard to please.
24. Illusory—not real_____.
25. Gratified—satisfied_____.
26. Intoxicated—drunk or under the influence of drugs_____.
27. Equipment—the things needed for a particular purpose.
28. Profound—deep.
29. Reigned —ruled_____.
30. Impracticable—not practical
31. Detached—not influenced by other people or by one’s own feeling.
32. Galling—humiliating.
33. Trooped—came or went together as a troop_____.
34. Naive—showing lack of experience, wisdom or judgement_____.
35. Harrowed—distressed_____.
36. Constrained—forced or embarrassed.

37. Contentment—Satisfaction_____.
38. Scared—frightened_____.
39. Ruthlessly—cruelly_____.
40. Inquisitiveness—the tendency of asking a lot of questions.

2.5 LET US SUM UP

1. In the novel, Narayan presents an eccentric widower of sixty — Jagan with his high-minded Gandhian philosophy.
2. Jagan is portrayed as a fanatic observer of all the externals of Gandhism.
3. Jagan's hypocrisy is so deeply ingrained that it has become a second nature with him.
4. Jagan came of an orthodox family.
5. Jagan's duplicity offends Mali, his son.
6. Mali and Grace stay together without being married.
7. In Jagan, the chief character, Narayan has created a person close to his own image.

2.6 SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

- a) Jagan is portrayed as a fanatic observer of all the externals of Gandhism. (T/F)
- b) Name the book which Jagan used to read_____.
- c) Jagan came of an orthodox Brahmin family (T/F)_____.
- d) Did Jagan's brother approve of Jagan's outlook ?
- e) What made Jagan rebel against many of the caste's laws ?
- f) Who was Mali ?

- g) Was he married to Grace ?
- h) What had upset Mali ?
- i) How is Jagan's domestic life ?
- j) When Jagan left the house, he did not fail to take the cheque-book. (T/F)
- k) Jagan found himself _____ in the modern atmosphere.
- l) Jagan had been married to _____.
- m) Jagan's father was an orthodox man. (T/F)
- n) What was the name of the temple which was situated on Badri Hills ?
- o) How much money Ambika's father had to pay as dowry ?
- p) The cousin seems to be the cousin of the whole of Malgudi. (T/F)
- q) The cousin was _____ of sweets.
- r) Grace is an American girl. (T/F)
- s) Jagan was _____ years old.
- t) _____ was a Gandhian disciple.

2.7 ANSWER KEY

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) True | b) Bhagvad Gita |
| c) True | d) No |
| e) Refer Introduction to the Novel. | f) Mali was Jagan's son. |
| g) No | h) Jagan's duplicity |
| i) Irksome | j) True |

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| k) choked up | l) Ambika |
| m) True | n) Santana Krishna |
| o) Five thousand rupees. | p) True |
| q) a great lover | r) False |
| s) sixty | t) Jagan |

2.8 SUGGESTED READING

1. *The Vendor of Sweets*—R.K. Narayan
2. *R.K. Narayan and His Social Perspective*—S.R. Ramteke

STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Introduction**
- 3.2 Objectives**
- 3.3 Detailed Summary of the Novel**
- 3.4 Let Us Sum Up**
- 3.5 Self-Check Exercise**
- 3.6 Answer Key**
- 3.7 Glossary**
- 3.8 Suggested Reading**

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Vendor of Sweets is one of R.K. Narayan's best novels. He was the most artistic of all the writers. R.K. Narayan gained immediate success and popularity following publication of three of his novels *Swami and his Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) and *The Dark Room* in quick succession.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are :—

- (a) to appreciate the novel *The Vendor of Sweets*.
- (b) to familiarize learners with the plot of the story.

3.3 DETAILED SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

A) CHAPTER-ONE

Summary

The novel begins with Jagan advising his cousin to ‘conquer taste’ as to conquer the self. Jagan is a vendor of sweets. He is a widower of about sixty. His wife died long ago, and he did not marry again. All his affection is centered on his son Mali who is the apple of his eye. The novelist describes his personal appearance thus : “At fifty-five his appearance was slight and selfish, his brown skin was translucent, his brow receded gently into a walnut shade of baldness, and beyond the fringe his hair fell in a couple of speckled waves on his nape. His chin was covered with whitening bristles as he shaved only at certain intervals, feeling that to view oneself daily in a mirror was an intolerable European habit.”

He wore a loose jibba over his dhoti, both made of material spun with his own hand; everyday he spun for an hour, retained enough yarn for his satorial requirements (he never possessed more than two sets of clothes at a time), and delivered all the excess in neat bundles to the local hand-loom committee in exchange for cash. Although the cash he, thus, earned was less than five rupees a month, he felt a sentimental thrill in receiving it, as he had begun the habit when Gandhi visited the town over twenty years ago, and he had been commended for it. He wore a narrow almond- shaped pair of glasses set in a yellowish frame, and peeped at the world over their pale rims. He draped his shoulders in a khaddar shawl with gaudy yellow patterns on it and shod his feet with thick sandals made out of the leather of an animal which had died of old age.

Jagan had a staff of four. The kitchen was at the back of his gaddi (the place where he sits) from where he supervised the transactions. Some members of his staff worked there and prepared the sweets. In front of his gaddi was the shop where the sweets were sold. Jagan had a cousin who was a man ‘about the town’. He had no work to do, daily he used to take a round of the town, and also used to visit Jagan and had philosophical discussions with him.

Jagan was not only a vendor of sweets, he was also a follower of Gandhi. He followed the Gandhian principles, though in his own eccentric manner. As he himself tells us, “I do not like to think that a living creature should have its throat cut for the comfort of my feet”, and this occasionally involved him in excursions for remote villages where a cow or calf was reported to be dying. When he secured the hide he soaked it in some solution and then turned it over to an old cobbler he knew, who had his little repair-shop under a tree near the Albert Mission compound. In this way, he got his shoes made, also making sure at the same time that no animal would be killed for the purpose. Jagan’s tanning activities filled the house with stench; and as they lasted several days, they were the cause of frequent discords. Then his wife died and her last wish was that Jagan should give up his tanning activities. Thereafter, Jagan trusted the cobbler at the Albert Mission to supply him with shoes, whenever he was in need of them.

From his seat Jagan supervised the work both in the kitchen and the shop counter in the front. As he sat in his seat he paused over a copy of *Bhagvad Gita* and gave instructions from time to time. Exactly at six, the boy at the counter would bring to him the cash received during the day from the sale of the sweets. It was brought in two instalments. The first instalment was brought in a smaller jar, it was counted, and was elaborately entered in his ledger which everyone was free to inspect. The second instalment was brought in a smaller jar, and it was entered, after counting, in a small note-book. It was not meant for inspection by the income-tax officers. The other advantage was that the boy at the counter could not know how much cash in all had been earned during the day and handed over to Jagan. The ‘black money’ was soon converted into crisp bank notes and hidden in the loft in which was also kept the portrait of Mr. Noble, a former District Magistrate.

The cooks arrived one after another and gave him an account of the left-overs. At seven the shop was closed and Jagan left for home (constructed by his father) with instructions to the chowkidar (humorously called Captain) to be careful and keep a strict watch.

Comments :— This chapter is expository in nature. We are introduced to Jagan, the hero of the novel

and his ways. We are also told of his son Mali, who would play a crucial role in the novel and would be the cause of his undoing. We also get instances of Narayan's inimitable irony in this chapter.

B) CHAPTER-TWO

Summary

It was about seven-thirty in the evening that Jagan locked his sweets mart and started for home. He walked along Market Road, passed Krishna Dispensary and reached the Truth Printing Press. He had a strong temptation to enter the press and find out if his book Nature Cure and Natural Diet had been printed but he overcame the temptation and walked on for he loved his son Mali. "Must be home, the boy will be lonely. Not today." He wanted to reach home at the earliest.

He crossed Kabir Lane and reached Lawley Extension. At the junction of Kabir Lane and Lawley Extension, there was a culvert and a short parapet over it. Here a vagrant used to sit waiting for leaves thrown by people after they had eaten from them. He would collect these leaves and satisfy his hunger by eating the left-overs. This set Jagan thinking over national problems, "the remedy would be for our nation to change its habits, for people to eat off plates and not use leaves for the purpose, the plates could be washed and kept unlike the leaves which are thrown out after dinner for vagrants to pick." He further reflected, "if everyone gave up dining off leaves, those engaged in the leaf trade would be thrown out of their profession and an alternative engagement would have to be found for them. But the first statistics should be taken of the percentage of the population eating off leaves (and those eating off plates, what kinds of plates? Silver, aluminium or what metal?) How many were engaged in gathering the dry leaves from the forests of Mempi and sewing them with little splinters and how many in cultivating special banana leaves used for dining? Till all this was done on a national scale the vagrant would continue to remain there." Jagan is thus, seen to be a sort of philosopher who thought over national problems and tried to find solutions.

Jagan moved on and reached the statue of Sir Frederick Lawley. Beyond it were Lawley Extension, South Extension, New Extension and a number of other colonies. Round Lawley Statue college boys

used to assemble with their cycles and chat in groups. Mali was also among them. He approved of his son's height, weight and growth. "There are others, but he stands out from among them [...] wonder what God has in store for him," he reflected, "must give him more time." He reached home, his thoughts still hovering about his son.

The house he lived in had been built by his father, after a lot of litigation, details of which he had forgotten. It was a spacious house and quite comfortable. Jagan believed in Nature cure and a simple life on Gandhian principles. As such he shunned tooth-pastes and used twigs of neem tree, instead, as a tooth brush every morning. Jagan had immense faith in the properties of neem and in spite of its bitterness he called it 'Amrita', the ambrosia which kept the Gods alive and sometimes he called it, "Sanjeevini", the rare herbs mentioned in the epic which, held at the nostrils, could bring the dead to life.

His wife refused to associate herself with any of his health-giving activities. She hated his theories and lived her own life. Their first clash occurred when he forbade her to swallow aspirin and suggested that she should fry some neem flowers in ghee and swallow it for relief from headache. She did not agree to this and only wanted to be left alone. She died, soon after, of a tumour of the brain. Mali was only six years old at the time. Jagan looked after him and took great care of him.

As Mali grew up, he was given a separate room to serve both as his bedroom and his study. It was a long hall, without a ventilator or window, known as the "cool room" in those days, which had a stone-topped round table at the centre and a stool and Mali seemed delighted to be assigned the room, as it was near the kitchen and the main hall and he could enjoy privacy, without losing sight of all the goings on in the house. It was some years earlier and now Mali had grown up into a fine youngman.

Comments :—The chapter throws further light on the character of Jagan. We know more about his Gandhian principles, about his wife and about the spacious house in which he lived.

C) CHAPTER-THREE

Summary

One morning, Mali flatly told Jagan that he would study no more. He would not go to the college

or attend his classes. Jagan was much pained and perplexed by the boy's firmness and way of talking. He wanted to know what the boy wanted to do, but could elicit no information. He could not order him to go to his class for he was, "a cowardly father." He was afraid to mention class or college. The boy might scream at the mention of the college or kick away his breakfast.

Jagan then consulted a cousin who was a daily visitor to his shop. He requested him to talk to his son and find out what the matter was. He told his cousin : "Mali is displaying strange notions."

The cousin suddenly assumed a definite stand and said, "It'd be best to know what the boy is thinking, our educational methods being what they are today."

"I was always hoping that he'd be a graduate and that's the basic qualification one should have, don't you think so?" Jagan added with a sigh, "If I had passed the B.A., I could have done so many other things."

"But it was not to be, and yet what's lacking in your present state?"

"I had to leave the college when Gandhi ordered us to non-cooperate. I spent the best of my student years in prison," said Jagan, feeling heroic, his reminiscent mood slurring over the fact that he had failed several times in the B.A., ceased to attend the college, and had begun to take his examinations as a private candidate, long before the call of Gandhi. "But what excuse can these boys have for refusing to study?" he asked.

The cousin, ever a man of caution, repeated, "It's worth finding out from the boy himself." Why don't you have a talk with him?"

"Why don't you?" asked Jagan in a tone of pointless challenge and added sentimentally, "He has called you 'uncle' ever since he could lisp the syllables."

"The only person to whom I'm not a cousin," said the gentleman, and both of them laughed.

The serious burden of life returning to Jagan, presently, he said, "You must do something about it and tell me tonight."

Accordingly, the cousin talked with Mali that very night. He found out that Mali wanted to be a scribe. He wanted to write novels. Soon after, he conveyed this information to Jagan. He told Jagan, “college, college, and of course college. The very word drives him crazy, although you like it so much. He hates his lessons; he hates his syllabus and all his books. The very thought infuriates him. Do you know what he did? He had his class-books in his hand. I ordered dosais for him and we were waiting. He suddenly tore up the pages of his books savagely, beckoned an attendant, and said, “Put these in the fire in the kitchen.”

Then Jagan had a talk with Mali to find out things for himself. He proceeded cautiously, so that there might be no conflict and there might be no tension between them. He offered to purchase white paper, a pen, a desk, a new table, and such other things as a writer is likely to need. Then like a junior press reporter, he questioned him about the novel he planned to write, and Mali told him :

“I saw in Ananda Vikatan an advertisement for a competition for novels,” Mali explained, “They will pay twenty-five thousand rupees for the best.”

“On what conditions?”

“It must be sent before September 30th, that’s all, and a coupon in the magazine must be filled in.”

Jagan leaned over to study the dates on a calender on the wall. “This is just May.”

“Have you begun to write?” Jagan asked timidly.

“I am not the sort to show my story to anyone before I finish it.”

“What’s the story?” asked Jagan persisting. The boy shrank away from him and repeated, “Are you examining me?” in an ominous manner.

“Oh, no, it’s not that.”

“You don’t believe me, I know”, said the boy half despairingly.

Jagan was for a moment confused. He reaffirmed his faith in his son in the loudest terms possible. Secretly his mind was bothered as to why there was always an invisible barrier between them. He had never been harsh to the boy, so long as he could remember, he had always got him whatever he wanted these twenty-odd years, during the last ten particularly, he had become excessively considerate, after the boy lost his mother.

Jagan was proud of his son. Next day he told everybody he knew that his son was going to be great writer, and that he would get twenty-five thousand rupees for his first novel.

Comments :—In this chapter, we get an idea of the central theme of the novel. The ambition of Mali to become a novelist would create endless problems for Jagan. The serious father-son conflict is also hinted at. It is the beginning of disorder in Jagan’s life.

D) CHAPTER-FOUR

Summary

Jagan was proud of his son, and he was thrilled at the idea that instead of his reading the books penned by others, “others will henceforth read the books written by him.” Instead of reading other people’s books, “he is providing reading for others,” he often reflected with a lot of pride. “He is doing a service in his own way.”

The word “service” intoxicated him, sent thrill through his whole being and explained everything. The first time he heard the word was in 1937 when Mahatma Gandhi had visited Malgudi and addressed a vast gathering on the sands of the river. He spoke of “service” explaining how every human action acquired a meaning when it was performed as a service. Inspired by this definition, Jagan joined the movement for India’s freedom from foreign rule, gave up his studies, home and normal life and violated the British laws of the time. Neither the beatings from the police nor the successive periods of prison terms ever touched him when he remembered that he was performing a “service”. “Everyone

should be free to serve humanity in his own way,” he told himself and “Mali is really helping mankind with his writing. What does he really write of he often wondered.”

He wanted to know which language he used, whether Tamil or English. If he wrote in Tamil he would be recognised at home, if in English, he would be known in other countries too. But did he know enough English, Tamil, or any language? He felt worried, his mind was racked with questions. The simplest solution of questioning Mali directly seemed impracticable. What could they discuss Mali seemed to have become detached, more separate than ever. The only link between them was the five-rupee currency note that he left on the hall table every morning and checked later to find out if it had been accepted.

Jagan and Mali now seldom talked. Their timings were so well adjusted that they seldom came across each other, and seldom talked. The 30th of September came and was gone. Time passed, and yet there was no sign of the book which Mali was supposed to be writing. Jagan did not have the courage to knock at the door or peep through the key-hole lest it should annoy Mali. He had grown too sensitive and absented himself from home for long hours. Jagan became care—worn and looked miserable, so much so that his cousin noticed his misery and remarked one day, "You are blessed with every git of life, with what ninety out of a hundred crave for—money, and with what a hundred out of a hundred do not attain—contentment. Yet you have not mastered one thing, that's the art of looking happy. You are always looking care—worn.”

Then Jagan took the cousin into confidence and asked him if he had talked with Mali, and if he knew what he was doing all the time. The cousin assured him to discuss the matter with Mali but Jagan forbade him because he didn't want to offend Mali. The cousin asked him when he had his last conversation with him. Jagan replied, “The trouble is our hours are so different. By the time I open my eyes from prayer, he's gone, it's been a time-honoured custom in our house not to disturb me when I am praying. But that's all beside the point. We are straying away from the subject. I want you to help me. Please find out, as if you were doing it on your own, where he goes everyday and what happened to the story. Did he finish it? Try to meet him and give me some information, please. I'll be grateful for your help.”

“No, no; it’s my duty to be of service to you. Don’t thank me, I’ll see what I can do in my humble way.” He swelled with the importance of the undertaking. Jagan felt relieved.

The cousin came back a few days later and told Jagan all about the antics of his son. No book had been written, and so the prize had been lost. He spent most of the time in Town Hall Library and used the type-writer there to write letters. He proposed to go to America, where there was a college for teaching novel-writing. He had visited Madras without informing him or seeking his approval. There his clothes were being tailored and his passport had already been arranged for. He would go to America by aeroplane. As regards money, he had no difficulty as there was, he said, enough cash in the house. The information increased the misery and anguish of Jagan, though he was still proud of his son for being so practical, so business—like and so independent.

On returning home, he went upto the loft where he kept money. He found that ten thousand rupees had been stolen, five for the air-ticket, and five to cover up other expenses. The novelist says ironically, “At dead of night, he put up the ladder and climbed the loft. About ten thousand rupees had been extracted from the bundled currency.” He calculated, “About four or five thousand rupees for passage, and the balance for clothes and other things. He should ask for more if he wants it, and, of course, a monthly remittance later. Why should he not?” He heard the front door open, he put out the torch and sat still until he felt sure that Mali had safely locked himself in, feeling like a burglar himself, instead of one whose cash had been extracted.”

Comments :—In Narayan’s novels, spoiled sons spell out the ruin of their parents, and Mali is no exception in this respect. He is the cause of Jagan’s suffering and anguish. He does not take his doting father into confidence, he does not seek his help, instead steals his money like a thief, and goes to America, against his wishes, thus causing him intense suffering.

(E) CHAPTER-FIVE

Like in the Previous Sections

Mali left for America, and thereafter Jagan proudly told his acquaintances that his son was in America. He told this to the chemist, the printer, the adjournment lawyer, and even to the vagrant at the

culvert. He was proud of his son and always talked of his being in America, even though this made him late for his work.

After days and days of hopeless waiting, when a colourful airmail letter arrived by post, he almost felt the same joy as if Mali had come back. The message simply was “Arrived. New York is big. The buildings are very tall, not like ours. Thousands of motor cars in the street. Food is difficult. I am in a hostel. Next week I go to school.” Jagan read it with pleasure, although he was somewhat disturbed at the boy’s mention of “school” rather than “college”. It had arrived by the first post and he sat in the hall bench and poured over it for nearly an hour reading every word and visualizing Mali in that enormous background. He could not keep the good news to himself. The first entrance open to him was the Truth Printing Works. Nataraj was at his desk, ever affable and welcoming visitors. “Have you received a telegram?”

“Oh, no, he’s prudent. Won’t waste ten rupees when ten cents—any idea how much a cent is worth in our money?” The news was also told to the cousin and soon it was all over the town.

Mali wrote to him frequently and soon Jagan had a pile of letters which he treasured and which he read constantly instead of the *Bhagvad Gita*. From their study he formed a picture of America and was able to speak with authority on the subject of American landscape, culture, and civilization. He hardly cared or noticed whom he spoke to, anyone on the road seemed good enough. His acquaintances feared that he was afflicted with the talking disease.

Mali remained in America for three years and then he wrote to his father, “I’ve taken to eating beef, and I don’t think I’m any the worse for it. Steak is something quite tasty and juicy. Now I want to suggest why not you people start eating beef? It’ll solve the problem of useless cattle in our country and we won’t have to beg food from America. I sometimes feel ashamed when India asks for American aid. Instead of that, why not slaughter useless cows which wander in the streets and block the traffic?” Jagan felt outraged. The shastras defined the five deadly sins and the killing of a cow headed the list. He suppressed this letter and did not tell of it to anyone. All the same, he was much agitated.

And then after a few days, he received a cable from his son in which he told his father, “Arriving home, another person with me.” Jagan was puzzled. What sort of a person? He had terrible misgivings and the added trouble of not being able to talk about it to the cousin, as he might spread the news of “another person” all over the town.

His worst misgivings were confirmed on an afternoon when the train dumped Mali, “another person”, and an enormous variety of baggage onto the railway platform and puffed away. Jagan slipped into the background pushing his cousin to the fore to do all the talking and receiving. He was overwhelmed by the spectacle of his son, who seemed to have grown taller, broader and fairer and carried himself in long strides. He wore a dark suit, with an overcoat, an air-bag, a camera, and an umbrella on his person. Jagan felt that he was following a stranger. When Mali approached him extending his hand, he tried to shrink away and shield himself behind the cousin. When he had to speak to his son, with great difficulty he restrained himself from calling him “sir” and employing the honorific plural. The readers enjoy the humour of it all. Jagan’s discomfiture is highly comic. All the same he is proud of his son who has grown up into a fair youngman who knows how to manage things and take care of himself.

The “other person” referred to in the cable is “Grace”, whom he probably married in America. She is a Korean girl and when Mali addresses her as, “Honey”, Jagan is confused and thinks that it is her name. The house was suitably modified and furnished to suit the newly weds from America. Grace liked it. Both Jagan and Mali led their own lives without interfering with each other. They seldom talked to each other.

Mali never wore a dhoti at home but a pair of dark trousers over a white shirt, and always had his feet in slippers. He hardly ever left his room or visited any other part of the house. He seldom went out ; if he did, he waited for darkness to descend on the town and then dressed elaborately in socks, shoes, jacket and tie, stepped out in the company of Grace and strolled up a deserted part of New Extension Road, but never in the direction of the statue of Market Road. He carried himself like a celebrity avoiding the attention of the rabble.

One morning, Grace herself came to Jagan's part of the house and tidied it up. She even offered to cook for him. Then she made him bring Mali's letters to her and showed him that they were signed by both of them. Jagan had not noticed it before. Then she told him about her, that her mother was a Korean who married an American soldier and came to America with him. She herself was educated in a school in America. She studied Domestic Science till one day she met Mali and enjoyed seeing a football match in his company, and then they were in love. She was afraid to come to India because of the caste system, but Jagan assured her that the caste system was breaking down because of the teachings of Gandhi. At this the girl felt much relieved.

A day later Mali suddenly came to Jagan and asked him why they could not have a telephone in the house. Jagan simply replied that he had never thought of it. Moreover, Malgudi was a small place and a telephone was not needed there. But Mali complained that he felt embarrassed when he could not give even his phone number to his associates. Naturally, Jagan asked as to who were his associates. At this Mali called Grace and said that she should be with them as they were discussing business. They went to the hall where they could sit comfortably. Mali talked to him at length but Jagan, lost in thought, hardly listened to him. Then Mali went away asking him to think well over what he had said to him, Jagan sat still, quietly enjoying the thought that his son had spoken to him at such length. When he rose to go, Grace held the door open for him and asked, "Do you have any questions for Mali? Is everything clear?" Jagan replied, "I can always go back to the subject, can't I?" with a significant smile, Grace said, "of course."

Comments :—The chapter is a significant one. It tells us much about Mali and America. It also tells us about Grace whom he brings with him from America. Then Mali asks for a telephone and talks to him at length about 'business'. It is clear that Jagan's troubles are on the increase. The readers are left in suspense as regards the 'business' which Mali has talked to his father. It is also not clear if Mali is actually married to Grace or not.

F) CHAPTER-SIX

Summary

Jagan was much agitated by the doings of his son, and he avoided talking of him even to the cousin. This surprised the cousin and he decided to bring in the topic himself so that Jagan might open out and he might know more about him and Mali. First they exchanged small talk to pass the time and then Jagan said that he was late for the shop that morning because Mali wanted to discuss his plans with him. He said so to impress the cousin with his own importance but the cousin thus got the opportunity he was waiting for and remarked, “I had a glimpse of him this morning on a scooter. Has he bought one?” Jagan replied that it must be some friend’s. Many of his friends had scooters: “Scooter-riding boys- one is that kerosene agent’s son ; another is the man who has come from the Punjab to establish a button factory. Another scooter belongs to the District Judge’s nephew- you know that youngman in the Public Works Department incharge of the new roads in the hills. Boys have their own scooters these days, they are always in a hurry and they do not like to walk.” Jagan himself never liked walking. Mali has never fancied walking. He has always cycled. “I bought him his first bicycle when he was seven years old and he could go wherever he pleased. I sometimes found that he would cycle up to Ellaman Street, not in the least minding the crowd at Market Road.” The boy has grown up fearlessly and full of self-reliance.

The cousin felt that they were drifting away from the main topic, so he asked abruptly, “Are you in favour of his scheme?” “Which scheme?” Jagan asked, looking surprised. He hadn’t suspected any scheme. The cousin now realized that the word ‘scheme’ was setting up an agitation in Jagan’s mind. He watched Jagan’s face with satisfaction. Jagan studied avoidance of the subject of his son had not been to the cousin’s liking. It made him feel that he had been suddenly converted into an outsider. He didn’t like the status, and so here he found an opportunity to bring himself back into the fold.

Finally the cousin told Jagan that Mali wanted to manufacture story writing machines. Jagan felt so baffled by his statement that he couldn’t phrase his surprise properly. He blurted out a couple of questions incoherently and lapsed into silence. The cousin watched his face, relishing bewilderment he

saw in it, and said with an innocent look, “Haven’t you heard of story-writing machines?” as if they were an article of daily use. This was a piece of minor victory for him in the matter of American knowledge.

“This is not just an ordinary machine,” said the cousin “Now listen carefully. This story-writing machine, as you might have guessed, is an electronic story writing machine.”

“How does it do that?” said Jagan, genuinely surprised.

Don’t ask me said the cousin "I am not an engineer. Mali constantly used the word ‘eletronic’ or ‘electric’ or something like that, and explained it at length. It sounds very interesting, why don’t you ask him? I am sure he will be able to explain it to you satisfactorily?"

Next morning Jagan sought an interview with his son, and he had to wait for it for full fifteen minutes. When at last he met him, he straightway asked him what a story-writing machine was and how it worked. Mali retorted that he had told him all that on their previous meeting, and he could not repeat the same things day in and day out. But Jagan was bewildered and confused in that meeting and did not remember what had been told to him and what he had replied. He was much agitated at the way his son was talking to him.

Mali showed him that machine and explained its working to him. He said, “with this machine anyone can write a story. Come nearer and you will see how it works.”

“You see these four knobs, One is for characters, one for plot situations, the other one is for climax, and the fourth is built on the basis that a story is made up of character, situations, emotion, and climax and by the right combination.”

He continued, “You can work on it like a typewriter. You make up your mind about the number of characters. It works on a transistor and ordinary valves. Absolutely foolproof. Ultimately we are going to add a little fixture by which any existing story could be split up into components and analysed; the next model will incorporate it.” Jagan asked, “Do you want to use this for writing stories?”

Mali said, “Yes, I am also going to manufacture and sell it in this country. An American company

is offering to collaborate. In course of time, every home in the country will possess one and we will produce more stories than any other nation in the world. In America alone every publishing season ten thousand books are published.” “Yes, ten thousand titles. It is a must for every home ; all a writer will have to do is to own one and press the keys, and he will get the formula on a roll of paper, from which he can build up the rest.”

Jagan left his seat and went over to examine the machine as if it were something descended from another planet. He approached it so cautiously that Mali said, “Touch it and see for yourself.” Jagan peered at the apparatus closely and read the headings. “Characters : good, bad, neural. Emotions : love, hate, revenge, devotion, pity. Complexities : characters, incidents, accidents. Climax : placement and disposal, and conclusion.” It looked pretty, its mahogany veneer was ingrained, its keys were green, red, and yellow to indicate the different categories. One could write stories with it as easily as with a typewriter. At this Jagan inquired,” Do they write all their stories with this machine in America?”

“Mostly, mostly,” said Mali.

“Most magazines,” added Grace, “are now-a-days switching over to the machine in their fiction departments and out of the best sellers last year at least three were a product of it.”

“The suggestion is that we get American collaboration worth two hundred thousand dollars, provided we find fifty-one thousand to start the business,” said Mali.

“Fifty-one thousand dollars would be the equivalent of...” began Jagan, starting the age-old calculation.

“Work it out yourself”, said Mali with a touch of irritation in his voice “Let me first finish my sentence. They will be responsible for the know-how and technical personnel, help us set up the plant, run it for six months, and then quit ; they will also provide us with promotional material.” What a lot of new expressions the boy had learnt, Jagan reflected with admiration, while Mali added, “We shall have to collect forty-nine thousand dollars by public subscription, and the controlling stock will be in our hands.” It was clear that his son was asking him to make a huge investment in a project of which he

understood nothing, and the success of which appeared to him to be impossible. In his view a machine could write novels was an impossibility.

However, he consulted the cousin when he came to him that afternoon. He told Jagan that fifty thousand dollars amounted to over two lakh rupees. It was a staggering amount and Jagan could not make such a huge contribution. It would mean ruin for him. He wanted his cousin to tell his son that he did not have that much of money. The cousin retorted that since he was on speaking terms with Mali, he should himself tell him so, since Mali knew that he had the amount in his bank and he would not be able to convince him to the contrary.

Mali's demands went on increasing. He put Grace on him and she constantly followed him with inquiring eyes. Jagan tried his best to avoid the two. One morning Mali came even to the Puja room and disturbed him in his prayer. Both of them pestered him in his own home and he had to sneak about to avoid them. He was amazed at the intensity of her interest in Mali's fortunes. As ever, he had two opposite feelings; appreciation of her interest in Mali and resentment at her effort to involve him in their business. Mali never thrust himself forward he seemed to have left the task to Grace; even his visit at the threshold of the puja room in the mornings seemed to have been dictated by Grace. An occasional misgiving tainted Jagan's thoughts— "might not Grace's interest, friendliness and attentiveness be a calculated effort to win his dollars?"

On the way to his shop, he passed by the Truth Printing Press and entered in to inquire about his book. Nataraj told him that he was publishing at the time the prospectus regarding Mali's new enterprise and that his name was in it. The prospectus was out within three days and Jagan was surprised at the speed with which it had been printed. The city was soon flooded with the prospectus of Mali's company. The first one came bypost to Jagan himself at his shop. It went into the cultural shortcomings of the country and the need for it to take its place in the comity of nations, and how this machine was going to cut time and distance and lift the country out of its rut, and then followed many facts and figures. One thing Jagan noted was that the jungles on Mempi Hills would provide the soft wood required

for some part of the machine and it could be had for a song. Then it went into details of production and marketing and location. Jagan now realized that the son of the kerosene agent was actually the economic brain behind the whole show-a young fellow in jeans and striped shirt who rode a scooter and carried Mali on the pillion seat.

Very soon they abandoned the scooter and purchased an old car green in colour. Both Mali and Grace constantly hunted him and Jagan decided to follow the Gandhian principles in dealing with them : “Gandhi has taught me peaceful methods, and that’s how I’m going to meet their demand. These two are bent upon involving me in all sorts of things,” he reflected. He was bewildered by his son’s scheme and distrusted it totally. He was aware that pressure was being subtly exercised on him to make him part with cash. He was going to meet the situation by ignoring the whole business, a sort of non-violent non-cooperation.

However, these principles could not be followed for ever. He was aware of silent tensions growing between them. His life became unbearable. It was clear that a firm decision would have to be taken at the earliest. So when Mali talked to him a day later, he firmly told them to do what they liked, but he did not have such a huge amount. If they thought that he was making a lot of money, they were free to run the sweets shop themselves. They were much amazed at his reply. He went to the shop lost in thought, was rude even to the vagrant and when the cousin came to him in the afternoon he told him that he was going to reduce the price of sweets. The cousin was much amazed at this. His amazement knew no bounds when he ordered his staff to give some sweets free of cost to children who had gathered near the counter. At the time of parting, he told the cousin, “Tonight and tomorrow I will have to do a lot of reckoning with concentration. I have left things to drift too long.” The cousin, worrying where these hints were leading, said like the peacemaker he was, “I will speak to Mali; I know I can talk to him. Even to that girl Grace, she is so trusting.”

“By all means, speak to him on any matter you like,” Jagan said and added with firmness, “But not on my behalf.”

Comments :- This chapter is an important one. Further light is thrown on the characters of Grace and Mali. Jagan's troubles, cares and worries are increasing. The father-son conflict-the conflict of the generations-is further developed. Jagan's talk of Gandhian principles and his study of the Gita make him appear a hypocrite. Suspense is here skillfully created and the readers are eager to know what is going to happen next.

(F) CHAPTER – SEVEN

Sentence Case

Jagan was panicky or he had absurdly thought of a new plan to increase his sales and earn more profits, none could be sure. But certain it was that he dramatically reduced the price of his sweets-pure stuff-which he sold. A packet of sweets was priced at 25 paise. It had a roaring sale, and by early afternoon all the sweets in the shop were sold, the staff was allowed to go home as business was over, and the shop was then closed for the day. All were amazed at these strange goings-on. "He knew that his staff viewed him as an astute businessman; although his decision was baffling, doubtless, they thought he must have some sound reason for taking this step, they credited him with some canny purpose, and he could not bring himself to disillusion them. He felt curiously flattered and gratified, and, although a lover of truth generally, in this instance he enjoyed shining in a false light."

One day as the staff prepared to go home early, he gave them a doze of *Bhagvad Gita*. He recited to them a few verses from it. He said, "Sit down, all of you. I will read to you from the *Bhagvad Gita* everyday for an hour. You will benefit by it. Call in the captain also, if he likes to join us." He commanded them to be seated again, looked on them with benign pity from his throne, took out his *Bhagvad Gita*, opened it on the first page, and began : "On the field of Kurukshetra two armies arrayed and ready for battle faced each other.

At this moment the great warrior Arjuna had a misgiving as to how he could fight his own uncles and cousins; his knees shook at the thought. Then God himself, who had chosen to be his charioteer, explained to him the need to fight for a cause even if you had to face your brothers, cousins, uncles, or

even sons. No good has ever been achieved without a fight at the proper time. Do you understand ?” All their heads nodded in assent although their minds were wandering a little. After further explanation Jagan said, “There is no such thing as reading this book finally; it is something to be read all one’s life. Mahatma Gandhi read it to us every day.”

Some sweet-vendors became restive, and came to see him one afternoon as he was reciting the *Bhagvad Gita* to his staff. They were three of them : one was the wait from Ananda Bhavan Restaurant, the second was the person who ran a canteen at the law courts, and the third one was a man with a white beard whom Jagan did not know. They had come to protest against his sudden reduction of prices which had resulted in considerable loss to them. But Jagan was a shrewd man and he did not allow them to come to the point and put them off in one tactful way or another. They went away with the impression that Jagan was a shrewd businessman and he had some new trick up his sleeves. They could not understand upto what he was and left him no wiser than what they were when they came.

They talked to him at length about their problems which had been made worse by his lowering of prices. The wait said, “The sales-tax inspectors who will not accept the accounts we render, the income-tax people who assess arbitrarily, the health inspectors, the food control which has practically driven everything underground- how are we to get the provisions for our recipes? And above all, the frying medium; we can’t always use pure ghee, and the government forces us to announce what we use; how can we do that when our customers like to be told, whatever they may actually consume, that they are being served pure butter-melted ghee?”

“The ideas about pure butter-melted ghee are antiquated,” said the canteen man. In fact scientists have proved that pure butter and ghee bring on heart disease; and the artificial substitutes have more vitamins.” Jagan told him that these substitutes are not much cheaper either, so they should use pure ghee. This irritated his visitors. They all left hoping that Jagan understood the reason of their visit and he would take remedial measures.

But the bearded man returned soon after. He told Jagan that he lived in the near-by Kabir Lane

and that his name was Chinna Dorai, meaning small master and the name of his guru was Peria Dorai, meaning big master and it was he (China Dorai) who carved idols which had been installed in all the temples of the South. It was from the Guru that he himself had learnt the art. Then he began to give a list of the idols his guru had carved. His description of the gods made Jagan regret that he had not gone near a temple for months, being wrapped up in this monotonous job of frying and cash-counting. He declared fervently, “Of course, I have visited every temple in this part of the universe, times out of count, and I know all the one hundred and eight gods and saints enshrined along both banks of the Kaveri. I know the songs that Sambhander composed in honour of those gods.” However, this was all a pose.

The bearded man paid compliments to Jagan which Jagan returned and so the two were on good terms very soon. Then Jagan asked him where his master lived. The bearded man replied that he lived across the river in a garden, trees of which were to be seen even from there. It was a quiet, lonely place and none could go near him except he, the bearded man. This put Jagan in a reminiscent mood and he thought of the past when he was a freer man and could visit such lonely places. He thought of Gandhi and his visit to Malgudi. Says the novelist, “He recollected with a sigh the blaze of colours at sunset, the chatter of birds in Nallappa’s Grove; how he had often wandered along the river, lounged on the sands or sat on the river-step with his class-fellows; how Mahatma Gandhi used to address huge assemblies on the sands of the river and how he himself, a minute speck in such a crowd had felt his whole life changed when he heard that voice. Where now were those friends whose faces and names he could not recollect—dead, flattened out by life, or existing in the same place under new masks like that toothless lawyer, or that man who was so bent that he hardly looked up at anyone, or a dozen other familiar faces, at one time bench companions at school and playmates round the statue every afternoon— passing each other daily but hardly uttering four syllables in twenty years?”

After a little more of small talk, the bearded man came to the point. He was not a maker of idols at all though he knew the art. He was a maker of hair-dyes and such was his art that he could make old men look young. The saint was one of his customers, he dyed his milk-white hair, and made him look

young, Jagan, too, needed his services. He would dye his hair too and make him look much younger. But Jagan put him off for the time being by simply telling him, “Diet has a lot to do with the colour of one’s hair. My book on this subject will be out one day and then you will see for yourself; if your diet is controlled according to Nature’s specifications, you will never see a grey hair anywhere.”

G) CHAPTER-EIGHT

Summary

Next day, the bearded man took Jagan across the river to the garden with a pond in it where his master lived and worked. It was a quiet lonely spot and Jagan was fascinated by it : “The pond was covered with blue lotus, the steps were mantled with moss and crumbling. On the bank stood a small shrine supported on stone pillars, with a low roof of granite slabs blackened by weather, time, and the oven smoke of wayfarers. Over this little building loomed banyan, peepul and mango trees and beyond them stretched away a grove of casuarina, the wind blowing through their leaves creating a continuous murmur as of sea waves. The surroundings were covered with vegetation of every type; brambles, thorn-bushes, lantana and oleander intertwined and choked each other. The sun glittered on the pond’s surface.”

The bearded man remained brooding, watching some birds into the water. Jagan had not enjoyed such peace and quiet for a long time. However, the bearded man had a complaint. The spot was not so quiet as it used to be, the motor-cars that went up the hills disturbed its seclusion and people of all kinds could be seen moving about. Even wild beasts invaded the garden sometimes but his master was not afraid of them. There he died suddenly one night, and the bearded man showed him the exact spot where he was cremated.

Then the bearded man looked at the mountains and pointed out to him the various places from where the different kinds of stones were extracted. The account of the bearded man is punctuated with a description of the beauty of nature which Jagan enjoyed very much. He lived with his master in that lonely spot, and his master never bothered about such petty things as food. As regards wife and children he had none, and so he had nothing to worry on that account. Only he, the bearded man, lived with his

guru and worked with him. His guru had lived all his life there: “All that he possessed could be contained within the palm of one’s hand. I cooked a little rice for him in that corner where you see the walls blackened. All day he sat there working on the image or we went to the quarry to hew slabs. He never saw anyone except when some temple men came to order for an image. People were afraid to come here because of the snakes, but my master loved them and never approved of clearing the wild growth around. This tree was full of monkeys; you can see them now. ‘I’ll share the fruits of those trees with them,’ he used to say. He enjoyed the company of snakes and monkeys and everything, once there was even a cheetah in the undergrowth. ‘We must not monopolize this earth. They won’t harm us’, he used to say, and true to his word, nothing ever did.”

When he died, he was working in the pedestal for an idol of the five-faced Gayatri. The bearded man searched for the pedestal and they went round and round the garden in search of it. At last, he remembered that he had immersed it in the pond for water-treatment. Then he entered the pond and also made Jagan enter it. At last the pedestal was found and it was taken out. The bearded man intended to work on it, till the idol was completed. He suddenly told Jagan, “It is only a man like you that can help me.” He could purchase the garden and install the goddess there. Moreover, the place would be a suitable retreat for him from the cares and worries of the world. Jagan said, “Yes, yes, God knows I need a retreat. You know, my friend, at some stage in one’s life one must uproot oneself from the accustomed surroundings and disappear so that others may continue in peace.”

“It would be the most accredited procedure according to our scriptures— husband and wife must vanish into the forest at some stage in their lives, leaving the affairs of the world to younger people.”

Jagan agreed with him, but did not tell him as to why he needed a retreat from the world. He did not utter even a single word about the queer ways of Mali and Grace. He did not want to show his sores to him.

Comments :- In R.K. Narayan’s novels, queer and knotty people often appear. In the present novel, the bearded man is such a character. The pond across the river with lotus in it also figures in *The*

Financial Expert which preceded *The Vendor of Sweets*. The suggestion that it would be a suitable retreat for Jagan hints at his troubles and his desire to escape from them.

H) CHAPTER-NINE

Summary

Jagan had a separate key so that he could enter his part of the house without making noise and attracting the attention of Grace and Mali. He felt that he was undergoing a strange inner transformation. He seemed to be a changed man. While his dinner was cooking, he sat spinning his charka and his mind was as active as his hands. His mind was in a turmoil, “committed to various things until yesterday, to the shop and the family, he was a different man at this moment. An internal transformation had taken place, although he still cared for the shop and house, this latest contact had affected him profoundly. The gods must have taken pity on his isolated, floundering condition and sent this white-bearded saviour.” He wondered if the bearded man might not be a visitation from another planet - otherwise why did he come to his shop exactly when he needed him ? Who really needed help and from whom? The man had said he needed help for installing the image of the goddess, while he himself thought that he was being helped.

As he was lost in his thoughts he suddenly heard a knock at the door. It was Mali who had arrived. He knew of Jagan’s doings, of his drastic reduction in the price of his sweets. The sait and others had talked to him about the matter and they hoped that Jagan would soon come back to his original prices. After some small talk he came to the point. His ‘associates’ had sent a cable to him and they wanted to know the exact ‘status’ of their enterprise. In other words, he wanted to know immediately if Jagan was going to give him the money or the enterprise should be closed. Jagan enquired for Grace but she was nowhere visible. Jagan at once told him that he was poor, he had no money to give him, and if he so liked he could take over the shop and run it. Mali refused to become a vendor of sweets like him, and if he was not willing to invest, the enterprise would be closed. Grace would then have to go back to America, for she had nothing more to do in India. She had come there only for the enterprise.

She was not in the house at the time. Jagan protested and said she should not go out at that time of night and there was a quarrel between the two :

“Where is she going? Why is she going? Is she unhappy here ?”

Mali rose to his feet and said, “Who are you to stop her from going where she pleases? She is a free person, not like the daughters-in-law in our miserable country.”

Jagan said, “I just want to know why she is thinking of going, that’s all. She is, of course, free. Who says she is not? Has anything made her unhappy?”

“What is there to keep her happy?” cried Mali, “This is a miserable place with no life in it. She was used to a good life. She came here to work and she is going back because she has no work to do. She came here for the project, to work with me; didn’t you see her name in the notice?”

Jagan had learnt the art of ignoring questions. Mali got up, saying, “If she has nothing to do here, she goes back, that’s all. Her air ticket must be bought immediately.”

“But a wife must be with her husband, whatever happens.” “That was in your day,” said Mali, and left the room.

Comments :—Paternal authority has been weakened. Jagan has no hold over his son or his daughter-in-law. The father-son conflict is hotting up. Mali would bring about the ruin of his father.

D) CHAPTER-TEN

Summary

Grace seemed to avoid him. Full ten days passed and he could not talk to her, nor did she come to his part of the house to sweep and clean. It seemed that pressure was being exerted on him to extract money from him. He could hear the sound of Grace dusting in her part of the house and he waited to have a word with her alone. Now that Jagan had made his position clear, the barrier between him and the other two was growing more unbreakable than ever and there was absolutely no way of his approaching her and asking for an explanation. He wondered if he could go in and talk to her, but what would be

the use ? With Mali there, how could he ask her for verification? It would be at best a formal greeting and nothing more. Though he was ready to leave for his shop, he sat on his cot vaguely hoping either Grace would come his way, or Mali would go out on one of his errands and he could have a word with her. But there was no sign of either happening. Mali went on typing in his room; after a while the sound of sweeping ceased, and he could hear some exchange of words between the two; then even that ceased, and tremendous stillness reigned over the house. There seemed to be no hope.

He quietly left for his shop. On reaching there he found that a large crowd had collected clamouring for sweets. They now wanted sweets as a matter of right, without caring whether there was a stock or not. Jagan felt uneasy and thought that he had committed a mistake in reducing the price. He thought of raising the prices again. Just then, his cousin who had gone out for several days came to him. He had enjoyed his trip abroad. He had also heard of Jagan's reduction of the prices of his sweets, which however, had not affected the quality. However, he told him that the Sait and others expected him to raise the prices as their business was being affected. He presented the problem in a new light. He said, "At least that is what they think. It will do them good to stand in the line and see how you do things. I wouldn't be at all surprised if their men are in the crowd and buy the sweets cheap here and sell them at their own price in their shops." It hadn't occurred to Jagan that this was a possibility. He looked desperate when he heard it and the cousin had to say, "I was only joking; don't let it worry you." But this made Jagan see things in a new light. It now seemed certain that he would soon resume the higher prices.

Jagan then came to the point and directly asked him why Grace was going back to America of which he, too, must have heard. The cousin replied, "She is going on business. That's what he told me. Something to do with his machine. You see how plucky these girls are! She goes thousands of miles to settle business matters, while we do not even understand what they are doing!"

Jagan did not correct him but kept his knowledge of facts to himself. "Well, of course, I had heard that, but I wanted to know if there was anything more," he said. "His business seems to be promising," said the cousin. "The Ananda Bhavan sait and a few others have promised to buy shares in his company."

Jagan asked with genuine wonder, “How does he talk to them?” The cousin replied, “He is all over the town and very active. I meet him here, there and everywhere.”

Jagan then told the cousin that he wanted to talk to Grace alone and requested him to arrange for him a meeting with her at a time when Mali was away. The cousin could do so quite easily. He came to him after a day and told him, “If you are prepared to leave the shop, you can meet Grace at home. Mali is waiting for me at the Judge’s house. I have promised to go with him to look for a plot of ground on the Hill Road.”

Jagan at once went home, prayed to the gods and then called out Grace. They sat comfortably in the hall and had a quiet talk. Jagan came straight to the point and asked, “I don’t see you in my house nowadays. Why?” She went red in the face. Her lips twitched and she remained silent. Observing her discomfiture, he said, “Don’t bother to answer my question.” He gave her a little time to recover her composure, then asked, “Do you wish to go back to your country?”

Once again her lips twitched, her face went red and she cast her longish eyes down and remained silent. When the clock struck four, he got up saying with extraordinary clarity, “I must be back at the shop.” She walked to the door with him silently. When he passed her she said in a matter-of-fact way, “Father, Mo wants me to go back?” “Why?” Jagan asked halting. She hesitated. Jagan feared she might cry, but she said very calmly, “It’s all over, that’s all?” “What’s over?” She didn’t answer. He asked, “Is it his idea or yours?” She repeated, “He wants me to go back. He says he can’t afford to keep me here any more. I used to work. I had two thousand dollars when I came here. All that’s gone.” “How?” asked Jagan. She merely said, “Mo has no more use for me.” “Use or no use, my wife-well, you know, I looked after her all her life.” Grace said rather shyly, “The only good part of it is, there is no child”, and added, “we are not married.”

Then Jagan returned to the shop a much tormented man. The cousin arrived soon after, and Jagan had a talk with him and sought his advice. Jagan told him that Mali was not married. They have lived in sin and his home was tainted. The cousin was a practical man. He advised him to remember that young

people are different from them, and if he so desired he could get them married in the Hindu way and the marriage could be arranged in no time in a temple. If he thought that his house has been polluted, he should not turn out the young people, but never visit them, have his house barricaded so that they might not come to him. That, in his opinion, was the only practical solution to his problems. He added, “What is all your study of the *Gita* worth if you cannot keep your mind untouched by all this? You yourself have explained to me that one should not identify oneself with objects or circumstances.”

Jagan accepted this compliment with great pleasure, although if he had questioned it, he might not have been able to explain exactly what he had said or why or when. Obligated to admit his devotion to the *Gita* and the wisdom derived from it, he mumbled, “We are blinded by our attachments. Every attachment creates a delusion and we are carried away by it.” “Too true, too true,” said the cousin, “Equanimity is more important than anything else in life.” “That is what I am seeking, but never attain!” Jagan wailed and quietened his thoughts for a moment. Suddenly he asked, “How do you expect me to go on living there?” “If you have the back-door entrance, use it and don’t go near their portion. Where else could they go now?” said the cousin. Jagan said, “That is true, housing conditions being what they are. Moreover, people will talk. What shall I do now?” Jagan was worried about Mali and Grace. The cousin gave a clear-headed statement, “Get through their marriage very quickly in the hill temple. It can be arranged within a few hours.” But Jagan said that he did not know about Grace’s caste. Then cousin assured him that she could be converted. A burden was removed from his shoulders. Jagan said, “You are my saviour, I don’t know where I should be without you.”

J) CHAPTER-ELEVEN

Summary

Jagan separated his part of the house completely from the part in which Grace and Mali lived. He even closed the ventilator between the two parts, of the house. Thus he completely insulated himself from the sinful life which was being lived in the other part of the house. He even gave up the use of the front gate, and went out and came in through a back door.

This back door had not been used for years, and the path which went from it to the main door was all overgrown with weeds. As Jagan went by this path, he was reminded of the past. His soul was full of anguish and he liked to think how happy he was when he used to play there with his elder brother and catch grass hoppers. He dwelt on those days as he walked in silence along the path : “Nearly fifty years had elapsed since he had traversed this lane. In those days, when his father’s family had lived in a hut in the back yard and the front portion was growing up little by little, he and his brother used to hunt for grasshoppers amidst the weeds. All the blazing afternoons they would be active in this pursuit while the Malgudi summer scorched everything, and even the grasshoppers were reluctant to leave the paltry shade of the weed-plants. His elder brother carried a small tin box; he cupped his palm over the grasshopper and trapped it and, if it was a large one, transferred it to his tin as befitting an elder brother, if it was a little one, it was passed on to Jagan, but on no account would Jagan be permitted to catch one himself. He could only stand behind his brother and wait for his luck, with his own little tin in hand. This would go on all afternoon, until the grasshoppers learnt to anticipate their footfalls and hop off to safety.”

Sometimes their sister would track them down here, and follow them doggedly, uttering sinister remarks: “You are killing the animals here. I’ll tell father, they are found dead every day in the tins. You will both go to hell.” Jagan, afraid of this blackmailer, would plead with her to leave them alone, but his elder brother would say, “Let her talk. No one wants her here. If she speaks to father, I’ll wring her neck,” and rear himself up menacingly and she would run away screaming in terror.

Coming nearer to the present, he would think how the coming of Mali with a Christian lady had made him an outcast in his own family. His relations had all cut him off : “the sister had married a wealthy village idiot, became a rustic, and brought forth an uglybrood of children and the brother had cut all contact after the division of their father’s estate. Ah, how intrigued they would be if only they knew the full story of Mali! Since the advent of Grace, all his relations had ostracized him. The only reminder he had had from his sister was a postcard a year ago on the back of which she had written, “We are ashamed to refer to you as a brother. Even when you joined Gandhi and lost all sense of caste, dining and rubbing

shoulders with the untouchables, going to jail and getting up to all kinds of shameful things, we didn't mind. But now is it a fact that you have a beef - eating Christian girl for a daughter-in-law? I can hardly call you a brother in the presence of my in-laws. No one can blame Mali, with a father like you

And she had concluded with the gratifying thought that their parents were fortunately dead and spared the indignity of watching these unsavoury activities.

Jagan had also heard that his brother, who lived in Vinayak Street, often spoke of him in anger and shame, and he never invited him to join him in performing the anniversary ceremonies for their father. He was an orthodox man who managed the headquarters of a religious order established ten centuries ago, with a million followers and he had begun to disapprove of Jagan's outlook long ago. His remarks were brought to Jagan from time to time by common friends and relatives and occasionally by the cousin, whose standing was secure everywhere.

The elder brother had once remarked, "How can you expect a good type of son when you have a father like Jagan?" What would they say if they knew the latest development? They would doubtlessly remove themselves further. Jagan felt grateful for being an outcast for it absolved him from obligation as a member of the family. Otherwise they would be making constant demands on his time and ever compelling him to spend all his time in family conclaves, sitting on carpets with a lot of kinsmen exchanging banalities while awaiting the call for the ceremonial feast. Thus he had escaped the marriages of his nieces, the birthdays of his brother's successive children, and several funerals. It had all been a blessing in disguise.

Time passed. Jagan had so much isolated himself from the other part of the house, that he did not even notice that Grace had not been there for the last fortnight or so. There was no movement or sound. It was all very quiet. He lost all patience and at last one day, he peeped through the key-hole of Mali's room. He saw that Mali was there, and then he came to the front window. Now Mali saw him and came out to meet him. They went to a corner of the garden, so that the curious eyes of the neighbours might not see them and try to listen to what they were talking about. Then Jagan asked Mali :

“Is Grace inside or not? I’d like to talk to you both on a matter of importance.”

“She is not here. She has gone to stay with some friends for a few days,” replied Mali.

“When did she go? I was wondering, if it was not a very long time since I saw her,” again asked Jagan.

“You have sealed off the middle door and use the back door. What’s your idea, father?” While Jagan was choosing words for a plausible answer, the boy went on, “Do you think my business is going to be dropped because you have shut the door? Our correspondence goes on and I must know where we stand. Do you imagine you have made me drop the project?” Jagan tried to give another turn to their talk. He said, “You must both be married soon.” “What are you trying to say?” screamed Mali. Jagan explained. Mali merely said, “You have been listening to nonsense. I never knew you could listen to such gossip.” He asked, “Does Grace gossip about herself? Anyway, I do not want to go into all that again. There is a very small temple, where you can go through a quick marriage. No one need be invited but just the three of us and a priest, and the whole business can be done in an hour.” “Grace has been getting funny notions, that’s why I told you to pack her off, but you grudged the expenditure” said Mali, “She is not in her right mind, she must go to a psychiatrist.” “What’s that?” said Jagan. “Don’t you know what a psychiatrist is?” With that Mali turned and went in, leaving Jagan transfixed to the spot.

He thought it a very funny situation. He did not know whether Grace was really his daughter-in-law or not. Nor did he know as to which of the two was lying.

Comments :—The chapter shows Jagan in a reminiscent mood. We know much about his past, even about his boyhood days. It is also hinted that there has been a quarrel between Mali and Grace.

K) CHAPTER-TWELVE

Summary

Jagan’s mind was obsessed with the thought of Mali and his real relations with Grace, with the

result that he worked mechanically all day. He talked in an off- hand manner even to the cousin so that he went away rather displeased. Each meeting with Mali displayed a new facet of Mali's personality so that he did not know what to think of him. Unconsciously, he compared him to Lord Krishna who had so many facets, and who could even assume the role of a charioteer to encourage Arjuna to fight his enemies, even though they happened to be his relatives.

Jagan continued to be in a reminiscent mood. He constantly thought of the past. On his way back home from the shop he sat on the pedestal of the Lawley Statue till all others had left and the street was deserted. His house could be seen at a distance. It was dark now, but there was a time when it was brilliantly lighted at this time of the night. There was a time when it seethed with life, lamps burning in every room, and during the festivals hundreds of mud lamps would be lit and arrayed all along the parapet. Theirs had been the brightest home in those days. That was long before the birth of Mali, years even before his marriage.

He suddenly recollected the exact point in time when he had shed his bachelorhood. That day when he had travelled to the village of Kuppam in order to have a look at the bride proposed for him by the elders of his family. The future bride's younger brother, who had come to receive them as a piece of courtesy was also in the carriage. Jagan was in a happy mood and laughed uncontrollably at the way they were progressing in the cross-country run. He had been trained to show respect to a brother -in-law by being reserved. That boy had the grimmest face in the country. Ultimately, he grew a long moustache as a commissioned air-force officer, and was lost sight of in the Burma campaign of 1942.

Jagan's father had sent his elder son to accompany him and commanded Jagan, "Don't stare at the girl. I have seen her and I know she is good-looking. Don't imagine you are a big judge of persons." At the end of the journey, he was received with a lot of fuss and seated on a carpet spread on the pyol of an ancient house. His future father-in-law and a number of his relations had assembled to have a look at the proposed bridegroom and measure him up from different angles. They all engaged him in conversation and tried to form an idea of his intelligence and outlook. Jagan had already been warned by his elder brother not to be too communicative as a certain mysteriousness was invaluable in a son-in-law. Everyone

kept asking as if in chorus, “How was your journey?” Jagan stroked his tuft with one hand, fumbled with his cap and threw furtive glances at his brother for a signal and when his brother nodded slightly, Jagan answered, “Oh, it was good.”

Then the bride named Ambika was called in. Jagan had already seen four girls and none of them was found to be suitable. Jagan had a good look at her despite the advice of his brother not to stare at the girl. But Jagan did not heed the advice. The girl fascinated him. She had a thick wad of wavy hair, plaited and decorated with flowers and many pieces of jewellery sparkled on her person. She wore a light green sari which suited her complexion. Was she fair or dusky? Who could say? His vision was clouded with a happy haze, and he might have kept peering at her a whole day with none to disturb his study, yet he could never clear his doubts about her personality. During these muddled moments, she shot one lightning glance at him, which somehow, through the fates, coincided with a look he was himself shooting at her and their eyes met, and Jagan’s heart palpitated and raced, and before he could do anything about it, it was all over. The assembly was on its feet, people were leaving and the vision was gone.

All through the return journey, he thought of Ambika, his beloved and his wife to be. He wanted somehow to assure her that he would marry her and that he was not in the least prejudiced by her harmonic music. In his excited state of mind it seemed to him a matter of utmost urgency to convey to her this message and also if she really cared for him she should show some slight sign of it at the parting. He had never expected that such factors as train times and the poor sight of bullocks would tear him away from his beloved’s aura so unceremoniously.

On the train journey, he remained brooding. He was troubled by the feeling that he had missed the chance somehow, to say farewell to his beloved, the thought of her was extremely comforting, soothing and also, in a quiet way, thrilling. His brother now having no policing to do, was asleep in his seat, leaving Jagan free to go back to the village in his thoughts and roam unfettered. Thinking it over, Jagan felt charmed by every bit of the expedition, their house was nice and cosy, their hall smelt beautifully of incense which somehow blended successfully with the cow-dung smell from their cattleshed, the harmonium was out of tune, but it would not be proper to judge her music from it. Her voice was gruff

because she had to adjust to that horrid instrument. He was sure that she really had a sweet voice to suit her face.

Very soon it became known all over the town that Jagan was to be married soon. Finally, September was fixed for the marriage, and financial matters too were disposed of to the entire satisfaction of both the parties. They demanded a dowry of rupees five thousand and the other party agreed to the terms. "There were hurried consultations," says the novelist. Jagan's father carried on several consultations with his wife in whispers in a far-off corner of the second courtyard. Jagan being a junior, was careful not to show much personal interest in his marriage, but he was anxious to know what was going on. He would have been snubbed if he had inquired. He had to depend upon his younger sister, who stood about casually while the elders talked, eavesdropped, and brought him news. She would seek him out as he sat at his desk apparently studying, and then whisper to him, "Grand uncle has approved." "Father is writing to the bride's people tomorrow, they are waiting for an auspicious time." "Father wants a dowry of five thousand rupees," which really worried Jagan. Suppose the others refused? Then what? They want to have the marriage celebrated in September." Only three months. Jagan felt scared at the thought of becoming a married man in three months. It was all right as long as one dreamed of a girl and theoretically speculated about marriage, but to become a positive and concrete husband it was a terrifying reality.

In due course, "one evening the bride's party arrived with huge brass trays covered with betel leaves, saffron, new clothes, a silver bowl of fragrant sandal paste, a huge heap of sugar crystals on a silver plate, and a pair of silver lamps. A dozen priests were assembled in the hall. The senior priest of the house, a gaunt- old man stood up and read the notice aloud, his voice quivering with nervousness. It announced that Jagannath, son of so and so was to marry Ambika daughter of so and so, on the tenth of September etc." The father of the bride handed this important document ceremoniously to Jagan's father, together with an envelope in which he had put currency notes, half the dowry in advance and gently suggested, "Please ask your elder son to count the cash." Jagan's father made some deprecating sounds but passed the envelope on to his elder son for counting, who lost no time in performing the task

and confirming, “Two thousand five hundred.” “It was not necessary to count,” said Jagan’s father gracefully, “but since you insisted on it...”

“In money matters it is best to be assured. How could I be sure that my counting was perfect? I always like to get cash counted again and again,” said Jagan’s father-in-law, at which everyone laughed as if it were a brilliant piece of humour. This was followed by a grand feast as was customary on the occasion. The bride’s party left for home by the night train. Sarees for the bride and clothes for Jagan were duly purchased. Three thousand invitation cards were printed and sent out. Then a number of ceremonies were performed. Jagan was overwhelmed by the scent of flowers and jasmine garlands and holy smoke, the feel of expensive silks and lace on his person and the crackling new saris in which his wife appeared from time to time draped as in a vision. Thus Jagan is seen in a comic light.

Then came the wedding feast and it was grand. However, there was a little cause of irritation which worried Jagan for he feared they might break up the marriage. “Someone who held the highest precedence in the family hierarchy, was given a half- torn banana leaf to dine on and was seated in the company of children instead of in the top row. This threatened to develop into a first class crisis, but the girl’s father openly apologized for the slip and all was forgotten. Something that upset all the womenfolk of the bridegroom’s party was that the bride was not provided with the gold waist-belt that had been promised when the original list of jewellery was drawn up. When the piece was finally delivered, it was found to be made not of one gold sheet but of a number of little gold bars intertwined with silk cords. The women felt that this was downright cheating. “They are saving the gold,” they commented angrily. They would have even gone to the extent of stopping the marriage but for the fact that Jagan did not approve of all this hullabaloo over a gold belt, explaining to his mother, “This is the latest fashion; nowadays the girls do not want to be weighed down with all that massive gold.” At which they became very critical of him, saying that he had already become hen-pecked, and was already an unpaid advocate for his wife’s family. Even his brother managed to take him aside during this crisis and said, “Don’t make a fool of yourself so soon. Why don’t you leave these problems for womenfolk to discuss in the way they want ?” Jagan had the temerity to reply, “It is because they are criticizing my wife, poor girl.” Thus Jagan is again presented in a comic light.

Then Jagan commenced his married life. Most of his time was passed in the bedroom, so that he became almost a stranger to other members of the family. His sister frequently teased him about it. He failed in his examination one year after another. If Ambika remained busy in the household work and did not come when he returned home, he was angry with her and there was a quarrel, of course a lovers' quarrel. Jagan's stock was pretty low at home, but he did not care, as he lived in a perfect intoxication of husbandhood. Later, when his wife failed to have a baby and there were whispers and rumours, Jagan told his wife, "I wish people could see us now on this side of the door, and then they would stop talking." Despite all his bragging, there was no outside proof of his manhood. They had been married almost ten years now, he had failed repeatedly in the Intermediate and was now failing in the B.A. and still there was no sight of a child in the house. Narayan's humour here carries a sexual flavour.

Jagan's brother had by now a large family, and he moved to a big house in Vinayak Street with his family. The house was empty. Then his sister got married, went to live with her husband and gave birth to a number of children. But Ambika had no child at all, despite the fact that theirs was a fertile family and there were at least one hundred and three sons and daughters and grandsons and grand-daughters. Fertility was not lacking in the family of Jagan, and so it was presumed that Ambika must be barren. But she also had a photo which established the fertility of her family, and she used this photo to silence those who taunted her.

They often quarrelled, and instead of sleeping in bed with her, Jagan had taken to sleeping in the verandah. He would give her passionate attention for some- time only when she returned from her father's house. He never cared to know whether he was adequate and also he never cared to ask his wife about it. Commenting on his moods and attitudes at the time, the novelist writes "He felt fatigued by all the apparatus of sex, its promises and its futility, the sadness and the sweat at the end of it all and he assumed that his wife shared his outlook. Moreover, he had read in a book that nature had never meant sex to be anything more than a means of propagation of the species, that one drop of white blood was equal to forty drops of red blood and that seminal-waste and nervous exhaustion reduced one's longevity, the essence of all achievement being celibacy and conservation."

It had become imperative for him to produce a child and he didn't know what more he could do about it. Ambika herself was beginning to crave for one. He had to do something about it. She sulked and blamed him with her looks. When she saw him rolling up his carpet, she uttered bitterly, "Why don't you go and sleep at the foot of Lawley Statue? It must be much cooler there". When she taunted him thus, he felt extremely confused and attempted to joke it off with, "That statue was not built for us to sleep on," which even as he was uttering it sounded extremely silly in his own ears. When she taunted him further he would put out the light, and pull her to the bed, and roll about, imagining himself to be the Sheik in the Hollywood film in which Rudolph Valentine demonstrated the art of ravishing women.

Jagan's mother often taunted Ambika as she was irritated by her lack of fertility. Ambika, too, was a proud girl who did not take things lying down. Often, she gave befitting replies. This is clear from a minor incident that took place one day. Ambika added more salt to the sauce and Jagan's mother said, "One doesn't ask for extraordinary things, they are not for us, we are not destined to enjoy the spectacle of a gold waist-band like hundreds of others, but one wants at least a sensible—." She did not finish her sentence. Ambika was heard to cry, "I don't care", and dropping the dish in her hand, she retired from the scene. She shut herself in her room and refused all food, throwing the whole house into a turmoil. She complained that she was not feeling like eating, that was all. Later in the week, when the situation had calmed down, she explained to Jagan, "Do you know what I said to your mother?" Why are you so obsessed with the gold belt? What has it to do with salt or sugar? Have you never seen a gold belt in all your life?" Since that day, his mother was very sparing in her remarks, particularly with reference to the gold belt. They had all along underestimated Ambika's temper. Otherwise, Ambika was a model of goodness, courtesy and cheerfulness generally; but she could lash with her tongue when her temper was roused.

One day she asked Jagan to show his intelligence and pass his examination so that she might not be taunted with dragging him down to her own level (Ambika was illiterate). The result was that Jagan began to study hard. He never arrived late for his class, never missed a lesson and drew up a general chart of subjects and a working time-table. He sat at his desk and studied late in night. Into this new

readjusted life, his father came crashing with his plan to visit the temple. Jagan pleaded, “Can’t we go after the examinations?” His father glared at him and said, “We have waited long enough,” and then, feeling that he sounded too commanding added, “This is the only month when we can go up the hill, if the rains start we shan’t be able to get there. Full of leeches and such things. Ten months in the year it is raining up there.”

So they went to the temple on Badri Hill known as the temple of Santana Krishna and the blessing of the God was supposed invariably to confer fertility. It was supposed that Ambika would certainly give birth to a male child as a result of the blessing of the God. The base of the hill was to be reached by bus. The party consisted of Jagan and his wife, his father and mother. He felt touched by his father’s solicitude in offering to climb the hill at his age. His mother looked extraordinarily pleased at reaching a solution at last for the barrenness of her daughter-in-law. She went on saying, “All good things only come with time. Otherwise, why would I not have thought of all this earlier, last year for instance?”

They reached the temple and there was some higgling with a woman coconut seller over the price of coconuts which were to be offered to the God. Jagan’s father said, “Yes, yes, it was written in the Vedas ten thousand years ago that you must be exploited on this spot of earth by this particular coconut woman, True.” Glaring at his son and daughter-in-law sitting on another boulder hinting that if only people displayed normal fecundity, one would not have to buy coconuts at an exorbitant price. Jagan squirmed at the look his father gave him and felt more important than ever, and Ambika at whom he glanced, looked more defiant than ever, ready to bring out the group photo to prove her fertility.

But for the fact that he was a coward, Jagan would have asked his parents. “Haven’t you enough grand children? Why do you want more? Why don’t you leave me alone?” Meanwhile the woman was saying, “Don’t grudge a little extra expense, the grandson will bring you a lot of good fortune when he arrives?” At which the old gentlemen softened and asked, “How are you sure it’ll be a son, not a daughter?” “No one who prays at that temple is ever disappointed with a daughter.” The woman’s prophecy was fulfilled and Mali was born. The birth was duly celebrated, a grand feast was given and Ambika’s father came with a lot of presentations. Everything was done strictly in the traditional manner, with due rejoicing as was proper for the family.

Comments :—Jagan is now an anguished soul, the conduct of his only son is unbearable to him, and so his thoughts turn naturally to the past. The entire chapter is in the form of retrospective narration and we get an account of Jagan’s past through the sensations floating through his mind. The entire narration will do credit to a “stream-of-consciousness” novelist. The only difference is that Narayan’s narration is by and large chronological. We are told of the choice of a bride for Jagan, his marriage and married life, the various irritations from time to time which seemed so important to the boyish and inexperienced Jagan, of Ambika’s supposed infertility and her high temper, of Jagan’s attempts at passing his examinations, his cowardly nature, of their visit to the temple of Santana Krishna and of the birth of Mali as a result of the blessing of the God. We thus get a peep into Jagan’s past and early life and the narration is frequently enlivened by the inimitable humour of Narayan. And all this retrospective narration has been done in a chronological manner so that here is no incoherence or confusion. It might be Jagan’s stream-of-consciousness but it is remarkable for its clarity and straight- forward progression.

It is only in this chapter that we get a pen-portrait of Jagan’s wife, of her relatives and of Jagan’s love for her. The character of his parents also has been developed in this chapter.

L) CHAPTER-THIRTEEN

Sentence Case

Brooding on the past, Jagan fell asleep at the foot of the state of Lawley. When he woke up it was already morning. He hurried to his house, tied his charkha and a few other things he was likely to need in a bundle and came out of the house. He had decided to renounce the world. He was already sixty and he decided to pass the remaining part of his days in the retreat shown to him by the white-bearded man. Mali had a long time to live and he could live comfortably in the house. The entire house would henceforth belong to him. But he still carried the key of the back-door with him. He thought of leaving it with his elder brother in Vinayak Street. But then he thought that perhaps he would not like him to enter the house lest it should get polluted. So he decided to carry the key with him.

As he went towards the bus-stand, he met the cousin on the way. He was riding wildly on his

bicycle. He was searching for him and seeing him at once came to him. He was in a hurry. Mali had been arrested and had passed the night in a jail, for half a bottle of alcohol had been found in his car. Jagan must come to the lawyer at once so that a bail could be arranged for Mali that very day. But Jagan refused to do so. He was of the view that some time in jail would be good for him. But he was still worried about the comforts of Mali till the cousin assured him, "They'll treat him specially. I know the District Collector and so we can get things done. I got the news at six o'clock. I was returning from the house of the Superintending Engineer, where I had gone to fix up a home tutor for their son. At the turning near the General Post office, an orderly from the Superintendent's house gave me the news. The green car was halted at the Mempi Outpost where they generally check for prohibition offences, as they find a lot of illicit distilling and traffic in the jungles high up. A policeman seems to have stopped Mali's car and found hidden in it half a bottle of some alcoholic drink and you know how it is. The police immediately seized the car, sealed the bottle before witnesses and have charged the inmates of the car under the Prohibition Act."

His cousin further informed Jagan that there were Mali's two friends also sitting in the car and that the police had driven the car to the police station where it would be kept till the case was finished. Jagan sat up, shut his eyes and remained silent, his lips moving in a prayer. "I I didn't know the boy drank," he said, coming on a fresh discovery about his son. "One doesn't have to drink to be caught by the Prohibition. It is enough if one's breath smells of alcohol. There are some fever mixtures which have an alcoholic flavour. A doctor has to certify that he had administered two doses of a fever mixture earlier in the day, that's all," said the cousin. Jagan said, "Who would that doctor be?" Then the cousin cried impatiently and asked Jagan not to waste time and suggested that they should consult a lawyer who would manage all that.

Jagan still stuck to his decision of renouncing the world and going to the retreat. He said, "I am going to watch a Goddess come out of a stone. If I don't like the place, I will go away somewhere else. I am a free man. I've never felt more determined in my life. I'm happy to have met you now, but I'd have gone away in any case. Everything can go on with or without me. The world doesn't collapse even when a great figure is assassinated or dies of heart failure. Think that my heart has failed, that's all."

He gave the cousin a bunch of keys and said, "Open the shop at the usual hour and run it. Mali will take charge of it eventually. Keep Sivaraman and the rest happy, don't throw them out. You can always come over to the retreat if there is anything urgent, or to render an account. I'll tell you what to do. At the market gate buses leave for Mempi every four hours starting from eight-thirty in the morning. You are a busy man, but please help me now."

He gave the cousin, a cheque for two thousand rupees and promised to give more if it was needed. He then asked for Grace and was told that she had got a job in a women's hostel. His last words to the cousin were, "If you meet her tell her that if she ever wants to go back to her country, I will buy her a ticket. It's a duty we owe her. She was a good girl."

Comments :—Thus ends the story of Jagan, the vendor of sweets. At the end he is a tortured soul, because his son is leading a sinful life and his house is polluted. All his money is of no good to him. He can find some comfort only through a withdrawal from the world. He went to pass the rest of his days in the retreat which had been shown to him by the white-bearded man. While the cousin considers him to be a sorcerer, he has been Jagan's messiah, for spiritual calm is possible only in a 'retreat' and not in worldly materialistic life. Gandhian philosophy holds true even in this respect. It is as if Jagan is going to a Gandhi Ashram. Both the teaching of the Hindu scriptures and Gandhi are one in this respect.

However, it will have to be admitted, as a number of critics have pointed out, the end is ambiguous. We do not know what happened to Jagan, whether he cultivated greater detachment or the pull of the world was too much for him. And how did Mali and Grace fare now that he was not there to guide their destiny ?

3.4 LET US SUM UP

1. One morning, Mali flatly told Jagan that he would study no more.
2. Jagan then consulted a cousin who was a daily visitor to his shop.

3. Mali wanted to write novels.
4. He decided to give up his studies.
5. Jagan decided to support his son.

3.5 SELF - CHECK EXERCISE

1. What did Jagan request his cousin ?
2. Jagan said that he had spent the best of his student years in prison.(T/F)
3. What did the cousin find out ?
4. Jagan told everybody that Mali would get_____ for his first novel.

3.6 ANSWER KEY

1. Jagan requested his cousin to talk to Mali, his son.
2. True
3. The cousin found out that Mali wanted to write novels.
4. twenty-five thousand rupees.

3.7 GLOSSARY

1. Slamming—shutting something forcefully and loudly_____.
2. Relieved—feeling or showing relief_____.
3. Panic—a sudden feeling of great fear.
4. Surging—increasing suddenly and intensely.
5. Bemusedly—confusingly.
6. Retreated—moved back or withdraw when faced with danger.
7. Appalled—feeling or showing horror or disgust.

8. Vaguely—in a way one cannot specify_____.
9. Adverse—not favourable_____.
10. Crushed—made something full of small folds or creases_____.
11. Restrained—calm, not showing a motion.
12. Beef—the flesh of a cow.
13. Pork—the flesh of a pig eaten as food.
14. Cynically—in a cynical manner.
15. Stab—to push a knife or pointed object into somebody or something.
16. Nefarious—wicked.
17. Sneaking—secret and reluctant.
18. Brooding—sad and dark or threatening.
19. Extraneous—not directly connected with the subject dealt with.
20. Self-reliant—relying on one's own abilities and efforts.
21. Haphazard—random.
22. Sniggered—laughed in a low unpleasant way.
23. Pathetically—Sadly.
24. Intercede—to act or speak on behalf of somebody to another to end a dispute.
25. Predicament—a difficult or unpleasant situation.
26. Hoarded—collected a large quantity of something and stored it secretly.
27. Remittance—the sending of money sent in payment for something.
28. Acquaintance—a person whom one knows but who is not a close friend.

29. Desperately—in a desperate manner.
30. Gashed—made a deep cut or wound in something.
31. Glimpse—a short look_____.
32. Clapped—applauded somebody by striking the inner surface of one's hands together.
33. Presumptuous—too bold or confident.
34. Groaned—made a deep sound when in pain or showing despair.
35. Brusque—using few words in a rude or abrupt way.
36. Epistles—letters_____.
37. Execution—the killing of somebody as a legal punishment_____.
38. Afflicted—caused trouble_____.
39. Scanned—examined something with great attention.
40. Unwary—not cautious or aware of possible danger.
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3.8 SUGGESTED READING

1. *The Vendor of Sweets—R.K. Narayan*
 2. *R.K. Narayan And His Social Perspective—S.R. Ramteke*
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STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Introduction**
- 4.2 Objectives**
- 4.3 Brief Story of the Novel**
- 4.4 Characters**
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up**
- 4.6 Self-Check Exercise**
- 4.7 Answer Key**
- 4.8 Glossary**
- 4.9 Suggested Reading**

4.1 INTRODUCTION

R.K. Narayan is a comic story writer. His novels have a lot to entertain the readers. He points out the little ironies of life in his writings. R.K. Narayan is a great story teller. His novel follows the Indian tradition of story telling where plots are simple and presented in a straight forward narrative having the beginning and the middle followed by the ending.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are :

- (a) to appreciate the characters in the novel.
- (b) to prepare for the term end examinations.

4.3 BRIEF STORY OF THE NOVEL

R.K. Narayan depicted a class of affections. Jagan was a vender of sweets. His cousin used to visit his shop regularly. He would test his sweets and suggest improvements. His wife Ambika died long back. He lived with his son, Mali. When Jagan was young, he was married to Ambika. Ambika was the girl with whom he had fallen in love at first sight. He would run away from college and spend most of his time with Ambika. After his marriage with Ambika, his mother would always harass his wife. She often taunted Ambika for not bringing gold waist band in dowry. Ambika did not bear any child even after ten years of their marriage. Jagan's father once took Jagan and Ambika to the temple of Santana Krishna for blessings. God listened to their prayer and Mali was born. Jagan was an advocate of nature cure. He had given his book on nature cure to Nataraj for publication. He wanted to cure his wife Ambika's headache by nature cure. Later on, a tumour in her brain was detected, Ambika could not survive long. Jagan's son Mali thought that his mother died on account of his father's nature cure. This was the beginning of conflict between father and son. This resulted in a wide gap between the two. Jagan loved his son madly. Mali would sometime take undue advantage of his over indulgence. Jagan's mother and sister thought that Jagan's mad love was spoiling Mali. Jagan had specialized some new items of sweets. His daily income increased. He saved money from income tax also. Jagan was a staunch follower of Gandhiji. He also read the *Bhagvad Gita* only. He took part in the freedom movement of the country. He being a Gandhian used to spin. He wore the shoes made of the skin of animal who had died of natural death. He brushed his teeth with twigs of Neem. He cooked his food himself.

One day Mali declared that he would not study any longer and was planning to go to America. He stole ten thousand rupees from Jagan's savings. Jagan was not angry in fact he was proud of his son's courage. Finally Mali went to America and Jagan's reading of *Bhagvad Gita* was replaced by reading airmail letter sent by Mali. Things became even more complicated when Mali returned

home with a half-Korean-half-American girl named Grace. He introduced Grace as his wife and his concocted tale was set to get two lakh rupees for the purpose of manufacturing a story writing machine in collaboration with an American company. Jagan was very upset at this scenario. He planned to get Mali and Grace married in a temple. People in the village started having complaints regarding reduction in the prices affecting the earning of other shopkeepers.

In the delegation, there was Chinna Dorai, he was a sculptor turned hair- dyer. He guided Jagan the retreat where he could find shelter and peace. One day the cousin told Jagan that Mali was arrested for keeping illegal wine. He requested Jagan to accompany him but he refused. He decided to renounce the world and had nothing to do with the worldly things. He authorized the cousin to do whatever he liked. He ultimately felt that he could not bear any more and was going to a secluded place, where he could get peace. He gave the cousin a bunch of keys and told him to open the shop as usual till Mali took over its charge. Jagan, now has schematically changed. The cousin replied that Grace had found a job in women's hotel. Jagan was even kind enough to send Grace back in case she decide to. He was very kind and dutiful towards her.

4.4 CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

1. Character-sketch of Jagan :

Jagan or Jagannath is the vendor or seller of sweets. He has his sweets shop in Market Road, a crowded locality of Malgudi and does brisk business. He is the central figure in the novel and the entire action and the other characters are looked at through his eyes, and his point of view is always stressed, but he is an “unheroic hero” a passive character, one who suffers and endures, rather than a man who causes suffering to others. He does not act, but is acted upon.

Jagan is a sweets-seller, a Gandhi believer, and a devout Hindu who reads *Bhagvad Gita* everyday and is also well-versed in other Hindu scriptures. Thus, he is a multi-faceted man, a combination of three in one. He is a widower about fifty-five years of age. He has an impressive physical personality. At fifty-

five his appearance was slight and selfish, his brown skin was translucent, his brow receded gently into a walnut shade of baldness, and beyond the fringe his hair fell in a couple of speckled waves on his nape. His chin was covered with whitening bristles as he shaved only at certain intervals feeling that to view oneself daily in a mirror was an intolerable European habit. He wore a loose jibba over his dhoti, both made of material spun with his own hands.

Everyday he spun for an hour, retained enough yarn for his sartorial requirements and delivered all the excess in neat bundles to the local handloom committee in exchange for cash. Although the cash he thus earned was less than five rupees a month, he felt a sentimental thrill in receiving it, as he had begun the habit when Gandhi visited the town over twenty years ago, and he had been commended for it. He wore a narrow almond-shaped pair of glasses set in a yellowish frame and peeped at the world over their pale rims. He draped his shoulders in a khaddar shawl with gaudy yellow patterns on it and shod his feet with thick sandals made out of the leather of an animal which had died of old age.

He has imbibed fully the teachings of Gandhi and follows them in his daily life. Thus he considers it a sin to kill cattle to make a footwear out of the skin and so goes out of his way to get hides of cattle who have died a natural death. He used to say, "I do not like to think that a living creature should have its throat cut for the comfort of my feet," and this occasionally involved him in excursions to remote villages where a cow or calf was reported to be dying. When he secured the hide he soaked it in some solution and then turned it over to an old cobbler he knew, who had his little repair shop under a tree at the Albert Mission Compound. When his son was six years old he was a happy supporter of Jagan's tanning activities in the back verandah of the house, but as he grew older he began to complain of the stench whenever his father brought home leather. Jagan's wife proved even less tolerant, shutting herself in a room and refusing to come out until the tanning had ended. Since it was a prolonged process, carried on over several days, one can understand the dislocation into which the household was thrown whenever Jagan attempted to renew his footwear.

It was a difficult and hazardous operation. The presence of the leather at home threatened to blast his domestic life, he had to preserve it, in the early stages of tanning, out of his wife's reach in the fuel

shed, where there was danger of rats nibbling it. When she lay dying, she summoned Jagan to come close to her and mumbled something. He could not make out her words, but was harrowed by the thought that probably she was saying, “Throw away the leather.” In deference to what was possibly her last wish, he did give to the Christian mission the last bit of leather at home and felt happy that he was enabling someone else to take to non- violent footwear. Afterwards, he just trusted the cobbler at the Albert Mission to supply him his rather complicated footwear.

It is from Gandhi - and also from the *Gita* - that Jagan has learned the value and significance of a simple life. He has acquired bits-and-bobs of Gandhian philosophy, which are ever at the tips of his fingers. A cousin - who is a cousin to all the town- comes to his shop every afternoon, and the novel opens dramatically with his words to his cousin, “Conquer taste, and you will have conquered the self.” His listener asked, “Why conquer the self?” Jagan said, “I do not know, but all our sages advise us so.” This is followed by another dialogue which throws light on Jagan’s Gandhian principles.

Jagan had his seat or gaddi in the centre of the shop and sitting there all the day, he could supervise the work going on in the kitchen where four cooks worked and at the counter where a boy sold sweets and a chowkidar called ‘Captain’ kept watch and maintained law and order. Sitting on his Gaddi, on one side he could hear, see and smell whatever was happening in the kitchen, whence a constant traffic of trays laden with colourful sweetmeats passed on to the front counter. As long as the frying and sizzling noise in the kitchen continued and the trays passed, Jagan noticed nothing, his gaze unflinchingly fixed on the Sanskrit lines in a red- bound copy of the *Bhagvad Gita*, but if there was the slightest pause in the sizzling, he cried out, without lifting his eyes from the sacred text. “What is happening?” The head cook would give a routine reply “Nothing” and that would quieten Jagan’s mind and enable it to return to the Lord’s sayings until again some slackness was noticed at the front stall and he would shout, “Captain, that little girl in the yellow skirt, ask her what she wants. She has been standing there so long”. His shout would alert the counter attendant as well as the watchman at the door, an ex- army man in khakhi who had a tendency to doze off on his deal-wood seat. Sometimes, Jagan would cry, “Captain, that beggar should not be seen here except on Fridays. This is not a charity home.”

This went on all day. At six in the evening it was time for counting the cash, giving orders for the next day and then closing the shop and going home. The surroundings were hushed when the master counted his earnings for the day. Although the boy at the front stall received all the cash, he was not supposed to know the total. He just dropped every paisa he received into a long-necked bronze jug and brought it in at six o'clock, returned to his seat and brought in another installment in a smaller container at seven, when the shutters were drawn. Jagan would not count the cash yet but continued to read the Lord's sayings (*Gita*) without looking up; he was aware that the frying had stopped. When his staff left he put away his *Gita* and pulled out his table drawer, which was padded with a folded towel in order to muffle the sound of coins being emptied from the bronze jug. His fingers quickly sorted out the denominations, the fives, tens and quarters, with a flourish, his eyes swept the collection at a glance and arrived at the final count within fifteen minutes. He made entry in a small note-book and more elaborate entries in a ledger which could be inspected by anyone. In his small notebook he entered only the cash that came in after six o'clock, out of the smaller jug. "This cash was an independent category, he viewed it as free cash, whatever that might mean, a sort of immaculate conception, self-generated, arising out of itself and entitled to survive without reference to any tax. It was converted into crisp currency at the earliest moment, tied into a bundle and put away in the loft at home."

Thus, Jagan did not hesitate to cheat the Income Tax Department. A large part of his daily income was never shown in the accounts meant for the tax people. However, Jagan sold "pure stuff" and he was proud of the fact that he did so. He would use not only pure desi ghee, but pure butter-ghee from cow's milk. This was his speciality and his sweets were popular for this very reason. He never used flavoured colour as others did and which could easily be obtained from Germany and other countries. This shows that he was a little honest but otherwise he was a money-minded and dishonest fellow.

Not only did Jagan sell sweets, he also pondered over national problems and matters of national importance. There was a parapet over a culvert at the junction of Market Road and Lawley Extension. This was the habitual haunt of a vagrant. At night, he would collect dining leaves and lick vegetables from them and eat the left-overs. This would set Jagan thinking on the problem of beggary. He considered such beggars to be a national disgrace.

Jagan was a loving and caring husband. Unfortunately, Ambika, his wife did not keep good health. She suffered from severe headaches. Jagan believed in Gandhian “Nature Cure” and used a twig of neem made into a brush each morning and it was most unwillingly that he gave an aspirin tablet to his wife to relieve her of headache. But her life could not be saved. It was a rare kind of braintumour, and it ultimately caused her death. Mali was too young at the time to understand the real cause of her death, and uncsciously felt that his father’s principles (Nature Cure) had killed her.

Jagan was a loving and caring father too. He loved Mali, cooked for him and was proud of the fine figure he cut among his friends as he would stand gossiping with his friends round the statue of Sir Lawley. He always talked to his father in short clipped sentences and they exchanged only a few short words each day. Their routine and timings were so different. Then Mali told him one day that he need not cook for him any longer. He would have his lunch at Ananda Bhavan Restaurant. Since that day Jagan placed his breakfast on the table and a five-rupee note beneath it for his lunch and other expenses. He was always worried if the ‘poor boy’ would eat well or not.

Jagan was a coward person. When he refused to give Mali the money he demanded, Mali told him frankly that Grace was not married to him at all and that she would be returning to America as there was no use of her staying in India. Jagan was horrified at the thought that his house had been polluted by those two people living in sin. Since the arrival of Grace, a Christian, he had been an outcast in his own family. His relatives had entirely cast him off. Now he was degraded in his own eyes. Any other father in his place would have reacted sharply and would have kicked off both Mali and Grace out of the house. But he did not have courage to do so. So, he decided to follow the path of non-violence, non-cooperation as taught by Gandhi, and the path of self-sacrifice or negation of self as taught by the *Gita*.

Jagan is not a hypocrite. He vanishes into retreat after enjoining the cousin to look after his business and periodically render accounts. He also gives him a cheque to meet the expenses of arranging a bail for Mali. He is also ready to pay for the fare of Grace so that she can go back to America for, “she is a good girl.” Then he disappears into the retreat. Thus ends the story of Jagan, the vendor of sweets. He has entered Vanaprastha Ashram but not yet the fourth Ashram called Sanyas. Perhaps, this followed in due course.

2. Character-sketch of Mali :

In the novels of R.K. Narayan, sons always cause intense pain and suffering to their loving fathers, and sometimes even ruin them. In the novel *The Vendor of Sweets*, Mali is also one such character. He is Jagan's son who later ruins him. He is tall, well-built and handsome. He towers head and shoulders above his friends and companions as he stands gossiping with them near the statue of Sir Lawley. Jagan is an affectionate father, and he loves Mali and is proud of his imposing figure. Mali is intelligent, can talk fluently and he impresses others with his talk. He is convincing and persuasive, and Jagan is all praise for him for these qualities. He is the apple of his father's eye. His mother died long ago, when he was just a child. Since then Jagan has been both mother and father to him. He has cooked for him, always done his best for him and tried to give him all that he wanted. Such love and affection, such pampering has spoiled him. He has grown to be willful and headstrong. He takes the love of his father and the services which he renders to him for granted, without giving him due respect and love in return.

Mali acts throughout without giving any heed to the sensibilities of his father. He disobeys him in every matter, and does whatever he thinks proper. The fact is that he suffered from a psychological trauma when his mother died in great pain of a rare type of brain tumour, for which no cure was possible. But somehow or the other, Mali felt that it were his father's theories of "Nature Cure" which killed her. We know that Jagan loved his wife, he did not marry again but remained true to her memory. Mali was too young when his mother died and he could not understand the real reason of her death. Henceforth, he spoke to his father in short clipped sentences, never opened out his heart to him and thus caused him much pain and suffering. Jagan continued to serve him and love him despite all this.

Mali has a flickering mind. He intends to write but does not know exactly what he wanted to write. He was not sure whether he wanted to write poetry, short story or novel. Although later he proved to be a failure. Then he decided to go to America as he thought it was the only country in the world where they taught the art of novel writing. Jagan was shocked to know that he had already got the money he needed for the purpose, for he knew where to find the money in the house for the purpose. This shows that he was a carefree person. He goes to the extent of stealing money from the loft in the house where his father, Jagan used to conceal his unaccounted money.

He is not at all an emotional person. He lives with Grace for some time without getting married and when he doesn't feel like staying with her anymore, he tells her that she can go back if she wants. He is a totally insensitive person. He doesn't care at all for Grace and ultimately she takes up a job to support herself.

Ultimately, in order to teach Mali a lesson, Jagan decides to enter Vanaprastha Ashram. There is a 'retreat' on the other side of the river in a garden with a pond. He decides to go and live there carrying with him his charkha and cheque book. On the way, the cousin meets him and tells him that Mali is in jail for carrying half- a-bottle of wine, and bail for him has to be arranged. Jagan gives him a cheque to meet the necessary expenses, though he thinks that a doze of prison life would do Mali good. He had been most ungrateful and stone-hearted to his fond father and now his sins are coming home to roost. Wickedness and crooked practices do not thrive for any length of time, good is ultimately victorious and normality is ever restored after a temporary disequilibrium. The end of the novel is ambiguous and we can only hope that Mali must have learnt a lesson or at least he should have realized his mistakes.

MINOR CHARACTERS

1. Character-sketch of Grace :

Grace is the half-Korean and half-American person whom Mali brings with him from America. She is charming but we do not know much about her personality. Soon after her arrival, she herself tells Jagan about her past. She is an innocent girl who is very much in love with Mali and comes all the way from America to live with him. She has great respect and regard for Jagan, Mali's father.

Grace is a good girl, better than many daughters-in-law. She takes to domestic ways, and does domestic work with great pleasure. She does not complain or feel any difficulty. One day she comes silently into Jagan's part of the house and began putting it in order. He is not used to being helped and felt uneasy while his roll of mat was shaken and put away, and his pillow of hard cotton patted. She washed the vessels in his kitchen and arranged them neatly on a shelf. His protests went unheeded. She clutched the broom and raked every corner of the floor saying, "Father, you think I mind it? I don't ; I must not forget that I'm an Indian daughter-in-law." Moreover, she also learns to wear saree.

Grace certainly seems to be a good girl, but was she so in reality or was she merely in league with Mali, coaxing and flattering Jagan as they wanted to extort a huge sum of money from him? In Narayan's novels, usually the hero falls from grace and is driven to a near tragic end by the arrival of some foreigner in Malgudi. Grace is such a foreigner. Though she is not the cause of Jagan's troubles, she certainly magnifies them through being in league with Mali. Both Grace and Mali want Jagan to give them over two lakh rupees to establish a factory for the manufacture of a novel-writing machine with their American collaborators. Jagan refuses to do so and then Mali begins to talk of her going back to America as there is nothing else for her to do in India. They expect Jagan to pay for her ticket back to America.

The dreams of both Jagan and Mali are shattered and Grace acts as a catalytic agent. She was the ruin of both; neither could enjoy the fruits of a flourishing business established after such shrewd hard work over a long period of time. One has to run away and the other lands in jail.

2. Character-sketch of Ambika :

Ambika or Amba, Jagan's wife, is a weak and shadowy figure who does never make a personal appearance in the novel. From the very beginning of the novel, we are told again and again that when alive she always suffered from acute headache and constantly had to take aspirin to relieve her suffering. But we are never introduced to her. She dies of a strange unusual kind of brain tumour, when Mali is just a child. Mali was too young at that time to understand the true nature of the disease which killed her. So her death creates a barrier between the father and the son, and henceforth Mali always spoke to his father in short clipped sentences and on the whole avoided him.

Whatever little we know of her has been told to us in a flashback in chapter twelve of the novel. We know from this chapter of the fanfare and the traditional customs and ceremonies with which their wedding was solemnised. When Jagan first saw her, "She had a thick wad of wavy hair, plaited and decorated with flowers, and many pieces of jewellery sparkled on her person. She wore a light green sari which suited her complexion"

She used to play harmonium. She had an enchanting smile, voice and laugh, and she spoke to him (Jagan) with shy reserve whenever he was able to corner her and snatch a little privacy in the house, which was crowded every inch with guests and visitors. Jagan now passed most of his time with her in the bedroom, failed again and again in his examination, and became a standing joke in the family.

Ambika had no issue for ten years. After a long wait of ten years they went on pilgrimage to the temple of Santana Krishna and it was with the blessing of the God that Mali was born. Ambika was a proud sensitive girl and when hurt she could hold her own. She was certainly not a coward. She could always refute the charge of barrenness by showing them a family photograph which hung on the walls of both the houses and which showed that in her family there were over 100 members. How could she be barren then? She would do the household chores, but enough was enough, and she would reply back when the taunts of her mother-in-law were beyond her endurance. She was a perfect wife to Jagan. Despite being illiterate, she used to encourage her husband to study more and more.

3. Character-sketch of the cousin :

‘The Cousin’ has been given no name. He is everyman, the representative of common humanity. He is of here, there and of everywhere. Everyone calls him ‘cousin’ except Mali who calls him ‘uncle’. He has no profession, nothing to do to earn his livelihood. He is welcome in every home and everywhere he goes. He is welcome in the house of the District Magistrate, the S.S.P. the Seth of the Ananda Bhavan Restaurant among others. He is welcome at Jagan’s sweets mart which he visits every afternoon. He is a man about town, who is a kind of advisor and liaison man and who by being a patient listener, provides an appropriate outlet for Jagan’s outpouring. In return, he gets a free access to Jagan’s parlour where he can taste the various sweets to his heart’s content, functioning in the process as a sort of quality-control man suggesting what sort of improvements might be made to make the sweets still more delicious and mouth-watering. Like the Greek chorus, he comments on character and action and provides information so as to what has happened off the stage.

He sometimes passes ironic comments to Jagan revealing his hypocrisy and double-standards.

Service is the motto of the cousin, he serves all who need his help, but he is of particular help to Jagan. Jagan seeks his services whenever he is in trouble and needs help. Jagan is shocked when one fine morning his twenty year old son Mali declares that he can't study any more. Through his cousin Jagan learns that Mali has set his heart on becoming a writer. The cousin is very close to Mali and used to tell him everything.

The cousin is also the carrier of news which could not have reached Jagan otherwise. Thus when Jagan reduces the price of his sweets to teach Mali a lesson, it is the 'cousin' who tells him about the other vendors of sweets. Thus he sees things in a new light and it is the cousin who enables him to do so. The cousin also tells him of the strange doings of his son, of the company he keeps, why he goes to such a distant place as Vinayak Street, that he has purchased an old model of a green car in which he drives about in the company of his friends. He also informs him of what the people say about Mali and Grace about a Christian having polluted his house.

Jagan has full faith in his cousin and he serves him upto the last. He is Jagan's saviour who takes each and every responsibility on himself when Jagan decides to enter the retreat. He also agrees to look after Jagan's business in his absence.

4.5 LET US SUM UP

1. Brooding over the past, Jagan fell asleep.
2. He packed his things in a bundle and left his house.
3. He met the cousin on the way.
4. He told Jagan that Mali had been arrested.
5. He gave a cheque of two thousand rupees to the cousin to engage a lawyer for Mali.

4.6 SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

1. What was Jagan's age?

2. The cousin was riding on his _____.
3. Why was Mali arrested?
4. Jagan stuck to his decision of renouncing the world. (T/F)
5. Give the meaning of word : 'Immaculate'

4.7 ANSWER KEY

1. Sixty years.
2. bicycle.
3. Because the police had found a half bottle of some alcoholic drink hidden in Mali's car.
4. True.
5. Clean and tidy_____.

4.8 GLOSSARY

1. Culvert—a drain that passes under a road_____.
2. Sinister—suggesting evil_____.
3. Entangled—caught in something.
4. Lore—the knowledge and traditions relating to something or possessed by a particular group of people.
5. Choked—upset, angry.
6. Grabbed—took roughly or rudely.
7. Steak—a thick flat piece of meat especially beef.
8. Slaughter—to kill.
9. Corded—wired.

10. Muttering—words spoken in a low voice_____.
11. Awful—terrible_____.
12. Overwhelmed—had a very strong emotional effect on somebody.
13. Shield—to protect something by forming a barrier.
14. Honorific—indicating respect for the person being addressed.
15. Indiscreet—too open in what one says or does.
16. Peeped—looked quickly and secretly at something.
17. Gazed—looked long and steadily at somebody or something.
18. Cooed—made the soft cry that a dove or pigeon makes.
19. Rigging—the arrangement of ropes etc. that support a ship's masts, sails etc.
20. Scrubbed—cleaned something thoroughly by rubbing it hard.
21. Bewilderment—the state of being bewildered or confused.
22. Dietary—relating to diet.
23. Weary—tired.
24. Casket—a small usually decorated box for holding valuable things.
25. Polaroid—a thin transparent film put on sun-glasses, car-windows etc. to reduce brightness.
26. Hamper—to restrict.
27. Strolled—walked in a slow casual way.
28. Rabble—a disorderly group of people.
29. Clutched—seized something eagerly.
30. Mumbled—spoke or said something in a low voice.

31. Hued—coloured_____.
32. Drudgery—hard boring work_____.
33. Imparted—gave a quality to something.
34. Fumbled—failed to hold or catch something properly.
35. Clumsy—awkward.
36. Dread—great fear of something that may happen in the future.
37. Hugged—to put one’s arms round somebody rightly to show love.
38. Emanated—came or flowed from something.
39. Hermetically—closed tightly so that no air can escape or enter.
40. Shudder—to shake with fear, cold etc.

4.9 SUGGESTED READING

1. *The Vendor of Sweets* — R. K. Narayan.
2. *R. K. Narayan and His Social Perspective* — S. R. Ramteke.

STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 Objectives**
- 5.3 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 5.4 Let Us Sum Up**
- 5.5 Self - Check Exercise**
- 5.6 Answer Key**
- 5.7 Glossary**
- 5.8 Suggested Reading**

5.1 INTRODUCTION

R.K. Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets* is a novel of generation gap. His writings were inspired and coloured with Hindu ideals. A number of his novels are based on the stories of the Puranas and Hindu scriptures. R.K. Narayan believes that there should be a self-respecting compromise between the two, The Indian Culture and The Western Culture.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are :—

- (a) to help the learners in preparing important questions and answers for their examination.

(b) to analyze critically the novel *The Vendor of Sweets*.

5.3 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

Q.1. Justify that the title of the novel '*The Vendor of Sweets*' is suitable and appropriate ?

Ans. The title of a literary piece of composition should be apt and suggestive. The title should indicate the theme of the novel and it applies to this novel. The title of the present novel consists of two main words - 'Vendor' meaning 'seller' and 'sweets' meaning 'sweetmeats'. It is Jagan who is the seller of sweets. He has his sweets mart or sweets shop in the Market Road, a crowded locality of Malgudi. The novel opens in a dramatic manner with his words to the 'cousin' : "Conquer taste and you conquer the self" and it ends with his going to the 'retreat' across the river in a garden with a pond in it. Thus the entire novel from the beginning to the end is concerned with Jagan, the seller or vendor of sweets.

Jagan is a shrewd man and he knows how to make the maximum profit out of the sweets he sells. His organization and management of his sweets business is perfect. He goes to his shop at right time early in the morning and remains there till 7.30 p.m. when it is dark and day's business in Malgudi comes to an end.

He has his seat or gaddi at a central place in the shop, from where he can keep a watch on the four cooks working in the kitchen and the boy at the front who sells the sweets. If the sound of sizzling or cooking in the kitchen ceases even for a moment he would loudly ask as to what the matter was. At once the sound would recommence and Jagan would be at ease once again. Whenever there is noise in the front he would shout to the captain or the watchman to scare away the school boys who frequently gather in front of the shop. This shouting keeps the 'captain' and the boy at the counter alert and duty conscious.

On one side he could hear, see, and smell whatever was happening in the kitchen whence a constant traffic of trays laden with colourful sweetmeats passed on to the front counter. As long as the frying and sizzling noise in the kitchen continued and the trays passed, Jagan noticed nothing, his gaze unflinchingly fixed on the Sanskrit lines in a red bound copy of the *Bhagvad Gita*, but if there was the

slightest pause in the sizzling he cried out, without lifting his eyes from the sacred text, “What is happening?” This has been his life-long routine and he has made a lot of money by selling his sweets, pure stuff as he calls them, for he uses not only pure desi ghee but butter made of cow’s milk. None has ever been able to compete with him. At sixty, he is still in full control of his business and his faculties and sensibilities are still acute as ever. He has the reputation of being a shrewd man and even when he drastically reduces the prices of his sweets others think that he has something up his sleeves.

He is careful to count the money obtained from the sales of the sweets each day in the evening, and he does so with great secrecy so that none may get wind of the cash that he has with him each evening. The surroundings were hushed when the master counted his earnings for the day. Although the boy at the front stall received all the cash, he was supposed to know the total. He just dropped every paisa he received into a long-necked bronze jug and brought it in at six o’clock, returned to his seat and brought in another instalment in a smaller container at seven when the shutters were drawn. Jagan would not count the cash yet but continued to read the Lord’s sayings (*Gita*).

When his staff left he put away his scripture book and pulled out his table drawer, which was padded with a folded towel in order to muffle the sound of coins being emptied from the bronze jug. His fingers quickly sorted out the denominations, the fives, tens, and quarters, with a flourish over a keyboard, his eyes swept the collection at a glance and arrived at the final total within fifteen minutes. He made an entry in a small notebook, and then more elaborate entries in a ledger which could be inspected by anyone. In his small notebook he entered only the cash that came in after six o’clock out of the smaller jug. This cash was in an independent category; he viewed it as free cash, whatever that might mean, a sort of immaculate conception, self-generated, arising out of itself and entitled to survive without reference to any tax. It was converted into crisp currency at the earliest moment, tied into a bundle and put away in the loft at home.

Before leaving for home he would take stock of the left-overs. Mysore Pak (the name of a sweet) could be sold the next day and so it did not matter if a part of it was left over. If jalabies were left unsold, Jagan knew that they could not be sold the next day and it was a sheer waste. But he also knew that

it could not be helped. He would then see that all the windows were properly closed, and ask the head cook what it was possible to do with the left overs. He would feel much pleased when he was told that the left overs would be turned into pulp and a new sweet would be made out of it. This he thought was possible for after all, “everything consists of flour, sugar and flavour.” Then he would leave for home after warning the captain to be watchful.

Such is Jagan, the vendor of sweets, and such are his business methods. His business continues to flourish till his conflict with his son Mali forces him to drastically reduce the price of his sweets. The novel ends with his leaving his sweets mart to be managed by his cousin. We get a last glimpse of the vendor of sweets as he goes to his chosen ‘retreat’ on the other side of the river.

Q.2. Discuss *The Vendor of Sweets* as an allegory of Good and Evil.

Ans. An allegory is a technique of vision. It serves to convey abstract and mystic truths in an easy and popular way. For the common reader, the writer merely narrates an entertaining story, but for the more discerning reader the story carries a profound moral lesson. Thus the allegory is a literary composition with a hidden moral lesson. Medieval English literature is largely allegorical. Morality plays are all allegorical, depicting the conflict between the Good and the Evil for the possession of the human soul. The Vendor of Sweets is also an allegory, for not only does it narrate an interesting story, but it also represents conflict of the Good and the Evil, of the normal and the uncommon, for the possession of the human soul. These allegorical implications of the story become clear, if we compare and contrast the characters of Jagan, the unheroic-hero, and Mali, with the seed of Evil within him.

While Jagan is the unheroic hero, passive and tolerant, motivated by the teachings of Gandhi and the Hindu scriptures, Mali is possessed by the demon of Evil and this Evil within him compels Jagan to run away from his house and escape from worldly evils in retreat in a secluded garden on the other side of the river. First, Mali steals ten thousand rupees from the hard earned money of his father and then goes to America without his permission. He wastes the money there and then returns with Grace and demands over two lakh rupees for setting up a story-writing machine. He lives in sin with Grace, for he is not married to her and thus spoils the sanctity of a Hindu home.

Evil takes possession of Mali and uses him as a vehicle for fouling the sanctities of home and marriage, and even the sovereignty of the creative imagination. The machine that is offered as a substitute for the imagination is the last abomination of all, and terribly attractive. It could be like the Toy Nightingale in Anderson's fairy tale. In the theatre of Jagan's mind, Mali's machine is pitted against the stone-mason's chisel that can release a Goddess from her imprisonment in stone. Just when Jagan needs a cure for the oppressive feeling induced in him by his son, there comes the bearded man, as if "from another planet", as though he needs Jagan's help. "Who really needed help and from whom?" There is almost an inner revolution in the sweet-vendor, something akin to a religious conversion.

Jagan begins a new life. The end of Mali's dreams to become the manufacturer and vendor of story-writing machines might well be the beginning of his career, after his return from prison, as vendor of sweets, carrying on his father's vocation; the termination of the series of repetitions performed for sixty years might prove for Jagan the start of a new life of study and contemplation in the quietude of the forest, and the death of the heavy amorphous stone might betoken the birth of the Goddess of Radiance and a new lease of life for the now abandoned temple. But not until Jagan sees the Goddess in the stone or at least sees her come out of the stone, will he acquire the ultimate courage to give up even his present discreet reliance on his cheque-book. Faith is asserted at the brink and like Narayan's heroes we too are left in ambiguities and uncertainties. And like Jagan who is expectantly watching the stone-breaker and image-maker at work, we too will have to hold ourselves in patience for Narayan's next novel in which, perhaps, he will at least be able to make his way through the ambiguities and uncertainties of his vision and craft and let the image of faith recognizably emerge.

No doubt Narayan seems to see the world as a mere balance of forces — wrong doers and policemen keeping one another properly engaged, light and shadow endlessly chasing each other, hope and failure forever playing a duel never to be concluded ; but the 'soul' of Narayan's fiction is not this delicately self-adjusted mechanism of ironic comedy, but rather the miracle of transcendence and the renewal of life, love, beauty and peace. Will faith descend into the darkened soul of Jagan and thus there would be a renewal of life and he would be free from the sickness of modern life? Would Mali mend

his ways and the good that is latent in all of us would ultimately awake and drive out of the Demon of Evil? Would he begin to lead a normal life, take over the business of his father and get the benefit of his life-long experience? No clue to the answer of these questions has been provided by the novelist. However, the novelist has succeeded in driving home the moral truth that evil is self-destructive. It drives Mali to jail, and he may fall further. The novelist has told an interesting story but he has also conveyed deep moral and religious truths of perennial significance. However, Narayan's morality is not obtrusive, it can be acquired only by the discerning reader who can read between the lines. The novel is to be read on two levels.

Q.3. How does *The Vendor of Sweets* reflect East-West tensions and conflicts?

Ans. The East-West theme figures prominently in Indian novels in English, particularly those written after independence. The English ruled over India and there were conflicts and tensions, for Indian patriotism and her pride in her own spiritual culture could not tolerate British domination. But R.K. Narayan does not believe with Kipling that the "Twain can never meet"; at least the message of his novels is the message of compromise. India must assimilate the best that is in the Western way of life, in Western science and technology. It is in this way that India will be transformed and modernised and the two will come together.

The most absorbing character of the novel is Jagan. He is no doubt the vendor of sweets of the title, but he is also a devout Hindu, a thorough-going nationalist and a staunch Gandhian philosopher. He is an Indian through and through and as such he is suspicious of western ways and habits. He spins his charkha everyday, believes in nature cure through natural diet, and had his skull cracked during the Satyagraha movement of Gandhi. Since then he has believed in nonviolent, non-cooperation or passive resistance of Gandhi. Also he believes in Nature cure, he did not allow his wife to take aspirin and Mali, too young at the time, always thought that his father had killed his mother, though actually she died of a rare kind of tumour for which there was no cure. Since then there was a barrier between the father and the son and Mali always spoke to his father in short clipped sentences and generally avoided him.

Then he refused to go to his college, went instead to America to learn novelwriting which could be learned only in America and returned home from there with his American-Korean wife, Grace, who, it later came to light, was not married to him. The story had its origin in a law suit in actual life brought by a wasteful son against his indulgent father, a sweetmeat vendor to get more money from him. Narayan dilated at some length to his friend, Mr. Sharda Prasad, on the possibilities of the story. But the novel, as it turned out, is concerned more with character than with plot. It thereby gives the lie factually to Narayan's statement regarding how his novels arose, but emphasises the truth of its basis - viz, that to Narayan the important thing in a novel is not the story but a character who comes alive and holds the interest of the author and the reader by oddity and eccentricity.

Between Jagan and Mali, there are further complications. One is a devout and staunch nationalist, the other is thoroughly westernized. Mali eats beef and demands over two lakh rupees from his father to set up a factory for the manufacture of a novel-writing machine. A Westerner would ask, "why does not the old man simply kick his westernized and disobedient son out and lock the door, when he is so sinful and wicked?" But Jagan is a Hindu father and a Gandhian and so he adopts the way not of confrontation but of passive resistance in dealing with him. Jagan's reading of the *Gita*, his preaching of non-attachment, his abhorrence of violence are not mere pretence and empty words. Vanaprastha Ashram, going into the forest at the appropriate time never to return, and sanyas, cutting all connection with his wife also, are not merely phrases in old books but concepts which a few people in India act on even today.

When Jagan finds that it is his wealth which is the root of all evil and has led Mali into his wicked ways he decides at once to go to the root and give it up with a ruthlessness worthy of his master Gandhi. He orders that the price of the sweets shall be reduced to a fourth so that there will be no further making of money in his shop. This leads to a rush on the shop, the sweets are sold out in no time at all, there is panic among his competitors, and they wait on him in a deputation to see if this quixotic action cannot be checked. Only when Jagan is told that some of the sweets might have been bought by the other sweet-vendors at the new absurd price to be sold by them in their own shops at the usual rates does it occur to him that his action may have other and less desirable consequences than the ones he had intended.

The discovery that his son and his American-Korean companion, Grace are not really married came to Jagan as a shock. His house had become contaminated, a moral plague spot; and since it is not in his nature to burn it down, he must do the next best thing - run away from it. Chinna Dorai, the sculptor turned hair-dyer helps him to do this. There is peace waiting for him, on the other side of the river among brambles and bushes, snakes and monkeys. All he has to do is to shake the city dust off his feet, take his charkha and go there.

Grace, of course, is a foreigner but she tries to learn the ways of a Hindu family and perform the duties expected from a Hindu daughter-in-law. So daily, she sweeps, dusts and cleans the part of the house in which Jagan lives. She does live in sin with Mali. It also appears that she had come to India with the purpose of setting up a factory for making story writing and so the two were in league. They proposed to rob the old man of his hard-earned money. This was the lure which had brought Mali to India. So it is difficult to agree with Jagan that Grace was a good girl. When Jagan refuses to cough out the money, she is left with no other option but to return to America, or take up petty jobs in India and continue to live in sin either with Mali or with someone else.

The charkha, the swdeshi, and Jagan's retreat are symbolic of India and the East. The telephone, the novel-writing machine and the type-writer and the beef-eating Mali, symbolise the West. In between stands Grace. Grace has her faults but we also feel that with a little love and affection, with a little solicitude and considerate behaviour she would have become a 'good girl' Jagan imagines her to be. This is the only way in which the East and the West can come together. An understanding heart is needed to overcome current tensions and conflicts.

Q.4. "The structure of the novel is circular, we end where we begin?" Justify the statement with reference to the novel *The Vendor of Sweets*.

OR

Discuss the theme of the novel.

Ans. In Narayan's novels, the usual order of life i.e. the normalcy is disturbed by the arrival of

an outsider into the sheltered world of Malgudi or by some flight or uprooting, but in the end there is always a return, a renewal and a restoration of normalcy. The normal order is disturbed only temporarily and by the end, we see the usual order established once again and life going on as usual for all practical purposes. Narayan perceives an elaborate system of checks and balances operating in the universe, but in the end it is not the absurd or the Eccentric that is enthroned but it is the moral order which is restored and established. This theme can be easily studied through a brief consideration of his novels.

In the present novel, normalcy is disturbed by Mali's return from America with Grace and with his head full of novel-writing machines which he claims are used in America to manufacture novels. He lives in sin in Jagan's house which is intolerable to him. Jagan refuses to give two lakh rupees to him for setting up a factory for the manufacture of the novel-writing machine. It is a shock to Jagan and he can no longer carry on the usual routine of his life. He cannot endure the idea of first his house having been polluted and secondly that he is to be robbed of the balance of his hard-earned money.

Jagan has his faults, but he is a typical Malgudian living in a static society where even a little disturbance of the even and placid tenor of everyday life is intolerable. Mali is the very opposite of his father and so the conflict between the two is inevitable. *The Vendor of Sweets* highlights the ironies of the life of those leaders of free India who swear in the name of Mahatma Gandhi but actually lead a degraded life. Interested in personal gains they twist the preachings of Gandhi and the *Gita* to suit their corrupt-practices. Clad in Khadi-clothes and with the *Gita* in his hands while selling sweets, Jagan himself looked a typical travesty of Mahatma Gandhi.

His son, Mali, equally mediocre and degenerate, represents that class of young men who, fascinated by American affluence and culture, make airy plans for the improvement of their own prospects. Mali wanted to manufacture novels and short stories on machine according to certain formulas. He lived an immoral life with Grace, the American-Korean girl. Both father and son were rigid in their approach and did not see each other's point of view. Discord is the result, the novel ends with Jagan leaving for the retreat and Mali landing in jail.

The conflict of ideal and reality is made manifest in both the cases of father and son. Their attitudes are contrasted through symbols like charkha and typewriter, renunciation and business correspondence, continence and free sex-life etc. Under the veneer of idealism, Jagan was all too earthly - money minded, selfish and shortsighted and with seeming efficiency and dynamism, Mali was actually tactless, superficial and conceited. Jagan saw his wife dead but did not allow her to touch any medicine since it went against his theories of Nature Cure. In the same way Mali also offended his father by ignoring him completely in matters of personal and business decisions.

The ambiguity at the end of *The Vendor of Sweets* can be explained if the novel is interpreted philosophically. Jagan's renunciation after "a set of repetitions performed by sixty years" is quite in the religious tradition of India, but this spiritual ambition is a little tainted in that he was a pragmatic businessman too. He did not understand why the scriptures prohibited or prescribed the use of certain "things ; but he did not bother to question them:" conquer taste and you will have conquered the self," said Jagan to his listener who asked, "why conquer the self?" Jagan said, "I do not know, but all our sages advise us to do so."

Jagan is a queer combination of strength and weakness, tradition and contemporaneity, the spiritual and the mundane, an average man on the whole. This makes the structure of a Narayan novel circular. From average to extraordinary success to average is the journey of his characters. Thus the success and popularity his heroes enjoy constitutes a short unreal like dreams. The fall of the hero is always a consequence of a very small incident. Jagan's accidental meeting with the crazy old sculptor changed the whole pattern of his life, order is once again restored in the life of the Malgudians and his going away with his cheque book leaving the cousin to look after his business and render account periodically. It is hoped that Grace would soon leave for America as Jagan is ready to pay for her return ticket. It is also hoped that a dose of prison life did good to Mali and he came out of it purified and chastened and took over the business of his father.

In short, in the novel the normal social order is disturbed, there is conflict between the forces of order and disorder and in the end there is restoration of normalcy. It is not the absurd or the eccentric

or the evil that is re-established, but the good and the normal. There is always a renewal of life, love, beauty and peace.

5.4 LET US SUM UP

In *The Vendor of Sweets*, Narayan presents an eccentric widower of sixty with his high minded Gandhian Philosophy. He seems to be a fake disciple of Gandhi, totally distressed and disgusted with his son. Jagan's renunciation of the world is in keeping with the Indian tradition. Owing to mutual understanding and inability to cope with the changing values one finds amongst the members of family, the existence of Hindu joint family at stake.

5.5 SELF - CHECK EXERCISE

1. The Bearded man in the novel *The Vendor of Sweets* is _____.
2. Jagan's father takes Ambika to Badri Hills for blessing of god of _____.
3. R.K. Narayan uses the technique of _____.
4. Jagan is an _____ Hindu.
5. The inhabitants of Malgudi are _____ and _____ and _____.

5.6 ANSWER KEY

1. Chinna Dorai
2. Santana Krishna
3. Stream of Consciousness
4. Orthodox
5. Simple and Custom conscious, God fearing.

5.7 GLOSSARY

1. Accredited—officially appointed or recognized

2. Disparaged—suggested that somebody is of little importance_____.
3. Unscrupulous—without moral principles_____.
4. Jeered—mocked.
5. Abruptly—suddenly.
6. Blurted—said something suddenly and without careful consideration.
7. Baffle—to be too difficult or strange for somebody to understand.
8. Petitioner—a person who petitions especially in a court of law.
9. Retorting—making a quick reply to an accusation or challenge.
10. Hemmed—hesitated while speaking.
11. Trepidation—great worry or fear about something unpleasant that may happen.
12. Moron—a very stupid person.
13. Amassed—collected something in large quantities.
14. Mollified—reduced somebody's anger.
15. Snuff—to stop the flame of a candle burning.
16. Grimness—seriousness.
17. Antiquated—old-fashioned and no longer appropriate.
18. Vanquished—Defeated.
19. Elocution—the art or style of speaking clearly and effectively.
20. Fervently—enthusiastically.
21. Ballast—stones etc. used to make a foundation for a railway, road etc.
22. Besieged—surrounded somebody or something closely.
23. Mantled—the role and responsibilities of an important person or job.

24. Quarry—a person or an animal that is being hunted or chased.
25. Agape—wide open.
26. Jargon—technical words or expressions used by a particular group of persons and difficult for others to understand.
27. Rheumatic—causing or affected by rheumatism.
28. Precariously—dangerously.
29. Cajoling—making somebody to do something by cleverly persuading.
30. Bullying—to force somebody to do something by frightening him.
31. Wispy—not thick or full.
32. Repugnance—strong dislike or disgust.
33. Impregnable—impossible to enter or capture because of being strongly built.
34. Wailed—cried or complained about something in a loud usually high-pitched voice.
35. Barricaded—defended or blocked something with a barricade.
36. Blazing—burning brightly and fiercely.
37. Unsavoury—offensive or unpleasant.
38. Conclaves—private and secret meetings.
39. Gruffly—in a non-friendly way.
40. Scorching—very hot.

5.8 SUGGESTED READING

1. *The Vendor of Sweets* - R.K. Narayan
2. *R. K. Narayan and His Social perspective* - S.K. Ramteke

STRUCTURE**6.1 Introduction****6.2 Objectives****6.3 Life and Works of Mahesh Dattani****6.3.1 Early Life and Education****6.3.2 Mahesh Dattani's Important Works****6.3.3 Contemporary Themes in his Selected Plays****6.3.4 Universal Themes in his Plays****6.4 Multiple Choice Questions(MCQs)****6.5 Let Us Sum Up****6.6 Answer Key (MCQs)****6.7 Examination Oriented Questions****6.8 Suggested Reading**

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Mahesh Dattani is an Indian playwright, screen writer, film-maker and stage director with several scripts and productions to his credit. He is the first playwright in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1998.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to acquaint the learners with the life and works of Mahesh Dattani.

6.3 LIFE AND WORKS OF MAHESH DATTANI

Mahesh Dattani is a playwright, screen writer, film-maker and stage director. He received the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 1998. He has directed and scripted remarkable films like *Mango Soufflé* and *Morning Raga*. The script of *Morning Raga* has been archived by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, USA. Mahesh Dattani is also a workshop facilitator for several writing and acting courses. Besides, he has conducted workshops in many parts of the world, especially at the Portland State University in Oregon, USA. He has collaborated with international theatre companies like Border Crossings, and also in Shanghai with Chinese, Swedish and English actors.

6.3.1 EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Mahesh Dattani was born on 7 August, 1958, in Bangalore, Karnataka. His parents were originally from Porbandar in Gujarat. Mahesh Dattani studied in an English medium Christian missionary school called Baldwin Boys' High School. Here, he performed as an angel without dialogues in a Christmas pageant. He joined St. Joseph's College in Bengaluru and during his college days he was introduced to Bangalore Little Theatre, where his first role was in Utpal Dutt's *Surya Shikhar*.

Mahesh Dattani began his career as a copywriter in an advertising firm. Reading Edward Albee's play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* pushed him toward writing. He was also influenced by Gujarati playwright Madhu Rye's *Kumarni Agashi*. Mahesh Dattani wrote his first play, *Where There's a Will* in 1986 and since then has continued his journey in theatre and films, not just as a playwright, but also as an acclaimed actor, director, and screenplay writer. His choice of language, themes, and set-designs set him apart in various ways from other contemporary or older Indian playwrights. However, what links him to his predecessors is a shared vision of the social responsibility of the artist and a commitment to serious theatre. His plays expose various modes of exploitation and marginalisation, ingrained in different urban spaces, both within and outside the family.

6.3.2 MAHESH DATTANI'S IMPORTANT WORKS

Mahesh Dattani has written 11 stage plays, 7 radio plays and 3 screen plays. His plays are: *Final Solutions*, *Dance Like a Man*, *Bravely Fought the Queen*, *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, *Tara*, *Thirty Days in September 2007* and *The Big Fat City*.

He is the first Indian playwright who has been awarded Sahitya Akademi Award for his excellent presentation of *Final Solution*.

Dance Like a Man was published in 1989. The drama revolves around dreams and reality. It is the story of a dancer couple and their family, full of suspense, which travels through the past and the present.

Final Solutions, published in 1993, is written against the backdrop of the Hindu- Muslim riots in India after the partition. Hardika does not like the Muslims and Smita is not allowed to keep relationship with any Muslim boy, as Hardika's father was killed during the violence of the partition being betrayed by a Muslim friend Zarine. Things get clearer when the two Muslim boys Babban and Javed take shelter on being chased by the Hindu mob.

Seven Steps around the Fire was published in 1998. It is a radio play. The play revolves around Subbu, the son of a wealthy government minister, who marries Kamala, a hermaphrodite. When the father comes to know about it, he gets Kamala killed and prepares a grand ceremony to arrange his son's marriage to a socially acceptable girl from an elite family. At the wedding, Subbu finds that the other hermaphrodites are singing and dancing and after seeing this, he commits suicide.

6.3.3 CONTEMPORARY THEMES IN HIS SELECTED PLAYS

The plays of Mahesh Dattani are genuine , giving audience/ readers food for thought. Mahesh Dattani raises the voice of contemporary urban Indian culture and the quick changing situation of the advanced society.

Mahesh Dattani enriches the methods for making a genuine world in front of an audience with a total depiction of the texture of Indian culture which deliberately and unwittingly separates based on sexual orientation.

Tara is a vivid picture of an Indian family overflowing with male centric qualities where the character of a female exists only in her association with men. The play underscores the very truth that Tara isn't the genuinely impeded young lady however she has been impaired.

In *Where There is a Will*, Mahesh Dattani investigates the absurdities of the male centric code of Indian culture where in a kid is entitled with the deep rooted plan to be trailed by his father even before the introduction of the kid.

The play *Bravely Fought the Queen* focuses on the situation of women in Indian culture. Besides, the play investigates the opportunity that has been presented in our social set-up as Dolly and Alka have diminished simply as show-piece in their home with no genuine declaration of their will. The nearness of Dolly and Alka has been underestimated. The play represents the abuse suffered by the females in urban India.

Mahesh Dattani manages to create play out of the issues existing in society. *Thirty Days in September* is an excellent example in this context.

Homosexuality-as a contention of inclination as opposed to an insane issue has been introduced by Mahesh Dattani in his plays like *Bravely Fought the Queen*, *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* and *Do the Needful*. His plays expose gay relationship as a personality emergency which comes about because of being minimized and mistreated in the Indian society. The personality of gays and lesbians has not yet been accepted and acknowledged, and they are left to have a detached existence within their own limitations.

Mahesh Dattani denounces the untrustworthiness and craftiness in relationship. He doesn't scrutinize homosexuality as sexuality for understanding one's self.

6.3.4 UNIVERSAL THEMES IN HIS PLAYS

The best part of Mahesh Dattani's plays is that they speak to the contemporary society. Here Mahesh Dattani can be contrasted with Bernard Shaw who likewise spoke to his general public in his plays and uncovered the disasters predominant at that time in his plays. He manages issues which are especially a piece of the informed urban culture, however the individuals would prefer not to go up against them; and Mahesh Dattani gives a stage to these issues, with the goal that the individuals know about the way that they are a reality and not simply the dreams of a writer.

Mahesh Dattani handles each issue from sex to sexuality meticulously in the plays. In his play *Tara* he manages the issue of sex separation, in *Thirty Days of September* he manages the effect of kid sexual maltreatment, in *Bravely Fought the Queen* and *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* he amazingly manages the issue of homosexuality and in his Sahitya Akademi Award winning play *Final Solutions*, he manages the issue of communalism gay relations. Homosexuality is one of the issues that figures noticeably in many of his plays.

Hence Dattani as a contemporary playwright investigates socio-cultural prejudices making his plays thought provoking and introspective because he deals with that strata of society, that is facing identity crisis, feeling isolated and marginalized. He takes up fearlessly for the welfare of human beings whatever has been pushed under the rug or neglected.

The themes of his plays are not confined to a society or a country but they are universal in appeal because his themes draw attention of the audience instantly as whatever he writes, he is primarily concerned for humanity at large. Since his themes are universal they cross all social and linguistic barriers eliciting emotional and intellectual response from the audience.

6.4 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. In which year was Mahesh Dattani born?.....
 - a) 1946

- b) 1958
 - c) 1960
 - d) 1965
2. Where were his parents originally from?.....
- a) Gujarat
 - b) Maharashtra
 - c) Uttar Pradesh
 - d) Rajasthan
3. In which city did Mahesh Dattani attend college?.....
- a) Mumbai
 - b) Hyderabad
 - c) Bengaluru
 - d) Jaipur
4. What is the name of his first play?.....
- a) Final Solutions
 - b) On a Muggy Night in Mumbai
 - c) Bravely Fought the Queen
 - d) Where There's a Will
5. Which work of Mahesh Dattani got the Sahitya Akademi Award?.....
- a) Final Solutions

- b) Dance Like a Man
- c) Seven Steps Around the Fire
- d) Where There's a Will

6.5 LET US SUM UP

The lesson acquaints the learner with the life of Mahesh Dattani, his education, and important works. Mahesh Dattani is one of the famous Indian-English dramatists, who has successfully launched the Indian theater in English by demonstrating social issues of common people having universal appeal and realistic tone.

6.6 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

1.) b, 2.) a, 3.) c, 4.) d, 5.) a.

6.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. Give a brief account of Mahesh Dattani's early life.
2. Discuss the contemporary and universal themes in his plays.
3. Which play of Mahesh Dattani's brought him national recognition?
4. **WRITE TRUE/FALSE:**
 - A. For his writing Mahesh Dattani was honoured with the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 1998.....
 - B. The script of *Morning Raga* has been archived by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Canada.....
 - C. Mahesh Dattani also writes scripts for BBC Radio 4.....
 - D. *Seven Steps Around The Fire* was published in 1990.....

- E. Final Solutions is written against the backdrop of the Hindu- Muslim riots in India after the partition.....

6.8 SUGGESTED READING

1. Vijay Kumar Sharma, Shyam Samtani. *Revisiting Mahesh Dattani*. Atlantic, 2018. Print.
2. Mahesh Dattani. *Me and My Plays*. Penguin India, 2014. Print.
3. Bijay Kumar Das. *Form and Meaning in Mahesh Dattani's Plays*. Atlantic, 2008. Print.

STRUCTURE**7.1 Introduction****7.2 Objectives****7.3 Tara: An Outline****7.3.1 Tara: Characters****7.4 Tara: Summary****7.5 Multiple Choice Questions(MCQs)****7.6 Let Us Sum Up****7.7 Answer Key (MCQs)****7.8 Examination Oriented Questions****7.9 Suggested Reading**

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Mahesh Dattani is an Indian playwright and writer, born on 7 August 1958. With his originality of vision, he has enriched Indian English theatrical tradition. Mahesh Dattani became the first Indian playwright in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for his work *Final Solutions* in 1998. Bold themes and unusual styles of his plays have attracted the attention of audience. Through his plays, he has tried to bring invisible issues of society such as child sex abuse, incest, plight of transgender and woman etc.,

into light. As a sensitive playwright, his focus is on the lives of marginalized sections of society and he tries to sensitize and make mainstream society aware about their problems.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to introduce the learner to the play *Tara*, so that the learner gets familiar with the detailed summary of the play and also the characters in the play. This will help the learner to appreciate the play and also prepare for the semester end examination.

7.3 TARA: AN OUTLINE

Tara was written by Mahesh Dattani in the year of 1990. It was first performed as *Twinkle Tara* in Bangalore in 1990 by Playpen Performing Arts Group. Later, it was performed as *Tara*. Mahesh Dattani has represented the issue of marginalization of women in the play *Tara*. The play shows the discrimination against girl child in society. Mahesh Dattani was awarded Sahitya Kala Award for *Tara* in 2000. *Tara* is the story of a girl who wants to twinkle and shine, just like her name. Mahesh Dattani explores the themes: gender identity, discrimination, middle-class life, etc., in *Tara* and through these themes, he has shown the agony of a girl in Indian society. *Tara* is a two-act stage play with the characters - Tara, Bharti, Mr. Patel, Chandan, Dr. Thakkar and Roopa.

7.3.1 TARA: CHARACTERS

There are six characters in the play. Bharati is the loving mother of Tara. Tara is the central character in the play. Chandan is the brother of Tara, and Chandan changes his name to Dan. Mr. Patel is the father of both Chandan and Tara.

Tara:- Tara, the central character of the play, is a victim of Indian social problem of gender discrimination.

Bharti:- Bharti is the wife of Mr. Patel and mother of Tara and Chandan.

Mr. Patel:- Mr. Patel is the father of Tara who always shows unnecessary intervention in all decision-making.

Chandan:- Chandan is a conjoined boy child of Mr. Patel and Bharti .

Dr. Thakkar:- Dr. Thakkar is a greedy doctor who suggests Tara's parents a surgery in temptation of getting materialistic gain in the form of a plot of land from them.

Roopa: -Roopa is the neighbour of Tara, a shallow and malicious girl. Tara's mother bribes her to befriend Tara. Roopa conspires with her friends Prema and Nalini to emotionally scar Tara by calling her a freak.

7.4 TARA: SUMMARY

The play starts with Chandan in London, now called Dan, typing a play *Twinkle Tara: a play in Two Acts*, about his long dead sister Tara. He talks about his memories and a fanatic urge to record them to memorialize his twin sister but he finds himself unable to express his feelings in writing:

DAN: Not to say that I have anything to show
to the world yet, I do. For instance,
(picks up a manuscript) Random Raj.
Short stories on the British Raj. Still
hounding publishers. The publishers here
ignore them because none of them deal with
sati, dowry deaths or child-marriages- all
subjects guaranteed to raise the interest of the
average Western intellectual. And back home,
of course Indo-Anglican Literature isn't worth
toilet paper. (Act 1).

As he speaks, the flashback takes audience into the Patel house as young Tara and Chandan walk in. They speak how they were conjoined in birth and should have remained so; but were forced to separate:

Tara: And me maybe we still are like we've
always been Inseparable. The way we started
in life. Two lives and one body, in one
comfortable womb. Till we were forced out...
and separated. (Act 1)

Bharti, their mother, enters asking Tara and Chandan to unpack as they have moved from Bangalore to Mumbai for their treatment. She shows marked preference for Tara, as she worries for her health. Mr. Patel, her husband, tries to reason with her but stops when she hints how he being the father is not as fond of Tara as he is of Chandan, and besides hates anything to do with their Bangalore house and their maternal grandfather. Mr. Patel tries to take Chandan to the office with him, which he refuses unless Tara accompanies him.

Their fifteen-year-old neighbour Roopa comes to meet them with her ulterior motive to report to her friends on Tara who she considers to be a freak. Tara declares that her mother has made her strong.

At this point, older Chandan is unable to write a word. He feels that he cannot do justice to the strong, gentle and kind Tara; their silent and angry father, and even their mother. He chooses to start his play with Dr. Thakkar, the god-like creature who had performed the crucial surgery separating the conjoined twins. He starts as if he is interviewing Dr. Thakkar from his bedsitter. He introduces him as a talented surgeon associated with some of the most prestigious hospitals in USA and India. When questioned, Dr. Thakkar replies that the twins were three months old when the surgery was performed. He talks about their conjoined condition as a “defect” and specifies how it is rare for such twins to survive and also to be of different genders. The flashback brings young Tara and Chandan back as they talk about the doctors and about different topics like their parents, and how Tara came across three mean girls- Prema, Nalini and Roopa, who is bribed by Bharti to befriend Tara. Roopa asks for time to think about Bharti's offer and goes on spreading the news to her friends maliciously.

Dr. Thakkar continues his jargon filled medical interview explaining how elaborate time-consuming

procedures had shown that Tara and Chandan can survive their surgery. Patel converses with Dr. Kapoor over the phone and shows relief that Tara has found a commercial donor for her kidney transplant. Bharti protests fiercely volunteering to donate her organ, but Mr. Patel stops her forcibly. As Bharti becomes agitated, Mr. Patel hints that Bharti is exaggerating her concern for Tara to coverup something. When Bharti breaks and attempts to confess everything to the twins, Mr. Patel stops her by saying that for their good, the secret should remain a secret.

The twins and Roopa watch films together and discuss “The Mirror cracked from side to side”, and their sympathy toward the Lady of Shallot, who was confined in her tower. Bharti comes in and talks to Chandan regarding her fears and insecurities about Tara’s future, while Chandan tries to comfort her:

Bharti: Yes I plan for her happiness. I mean to
give her all the love and affection which I can
give. It’s what she... deserves. Love can make
up for a lot. (Act 1)

In the meanwhile, Roopa confides in Tara the myth she has heard about the practice of the Patel community of drowning unwanted girl child in milk, so that they can spread the news of the girl child’s death due to choking. As Chandan helps her mother with her knitting, Mr. Patel arrives home to find Roopa and Tara watching films. He shows his anger towards what he considers it wrong for Tara and effeminate practice for Chandan and discloses his plans about Chandan’s future. As Bharti protests, Mr. Patel confronts her about her ‘unhealthy’ obsession with Tara and her repeated attempts to turn their children against him. As Tara approaches them, Bharti tries to stop Mr. Patel from discovering the dreaded secret, and he decides against it assuring her that both her parents love her. An overwhelmed Tara has a seizure and as Bharti breaks down, Mr. Patel resuscitates an almost unconscious Tara with sugar. The older Chandan finishes his tale halfway, as the first act ends.

Act two starts with Bharti demonstrating her affection for Tara. There is a curious intensity in her behaviour towards Tara who obviously enjoys her attention. Bharti is overwhelmed when Tara says

that she has everything in her life as she has her mother with her. The older Chandan is seen researching an old scrap book with paper cuttings on Dr. Thakkar's take on the various complications about their surgery. In the Patel residence Tara returns after her transplant and she is welcomed by Roopa and Chandan. She is later informed by Mr. Patel and Chandan that her mother was hospitalized due to a nervous breakdown. The news disturbs Tara. Chandan tries to cheer her. Chandan refuses to apply for admission in college as Tara does not want to go. He recognises that Tara has more strength than him and can do better. Chandan supports Tara in her crisis more than anyone else. A dialogue which surmise Chandan's love for Tara most aptly is, "That's the nicest thing you have said to me" (Mahesh Dattani 361; Act 2).

Mr. Patel firmly asks him to get on with his life as, in his opinion, Chandan has to earn his living unlike Tara, who is a girl. It is further disclosed that their rich maternal grandfather has left his enormous house to the twins, but the money to Chandan. Mr. Patel reveals his concealed hatred for his father-in-law and advises his children to burn the house rather than live in it. The twins have a poignant moment as Chandan wishes for stars for Tara, and Tara wishes for real legs and a healthy life for her brother.

Roopa comes in to spend time with Tara and Chandan and ends up discussing the film "Sophie's Choice" with Chandan as he talks about a mother choosing her son or/ over her daughter. As she engages him in conversation, Chandan ends up trying to initiate his first sexual encounter. As Tara enters, Roopa tries to convince her that Chandan tried to rape her. Tara forces her to be silent by threatening to disclose her secret of having uneven breasts. Roopa swears away in revenge and discloses that she became her friend after being bribed by Bharti:

Roopa: And to think I pitied you! Oh! I think
You are disgusting! I only come here because
your mother asked me to. No, she didn't ask
me, but she bribed me... friend. Now that
she's finally gone crazy; I guess she won't be

giving me much. So goodbye. (Exists).

(Act 2).

Tara dejected, resolves to spend her life treating the under privileged people with health issues. Chandan tries to comfort Tara. The older Chandan is seen making a phone call to his father and being informed of his mother's demise. He displays a decided lack of concern and refuses to return.

Tara is surprised as she is kept away from her mother. She discloses her suspicion to Chandan that Mr. Patel is deliberately keeping the twins away from their mother to keep her from disclosing secrets about him. As Tara confronts her father, he finally confesses about the secret which Bharti has been keeping all these years:

Patel: A scan showed that a major part of the
Blood supply to the third leg was provided by
the girl. Your mother asked for a
reconfirmation. The result was the same. The
chances were slightly better that the leg would
survive... on the girl. Your grandfather and
your mother had a private meeting with Dr.
Thakkar. I wasn't asked to come... I could not
believe what she told me- that they would risk
giving both legs to the boy. (Act 2)

The play ultimately draws our attention to the fact that Tara is not the physically handicapped girl but who has been handicapped due to her gender.

Mr. Patel reveals that Bharti's father was an extremely wealthy industrialist and an influential MLA. Mr. Patel had to go against his father to marry Bharti. They had a happy marriage and were happy about having twins. But when they were born conjoined hugging each other, family decided to recruit

Dr. Thakkar for surgically separating them. The twins had three legs between the two of them and only one of the twins will have two legs. The medical reports revealed that Tara will have better chances of carrying both the legs than Chandan. But Bharti and her father bribed Dr. Thakkar with three acres of prime land for his hospital, to give the two legs to Chandan. The leg was rejected by Chandan's body and had to be amputated. After this, Bharti always dreaded the secret of her favouring Chandan over Tara becoming public and tried to make it up for Tara by lavishing attention on her and turning the twins against Mr. Patel lest he discloses the secret. Tara is bewildered and shattered on learning of her mother's betrayal and fades away slowly as Roopa and her friends' shouts insult her:

Dr. Thakkar: Yes, indeed, it was a complex case. But modern technology has made many things possible, we are not very far from the rest of the world. In fact, in ten years' time we should be on par with the best in the west. (Act 2).

Chandan banishes Dr. Thakkar with his greedy ugliness from his memories and informs the audience that he needs to atone for his guilt against his sister by writing this tragedy of Tara. He expresses his deep anguish that his family had favoured him over Tara and begs her forgiveness as his life was saved at her expense:

DAN: Forgive me, Tara. Forgive me for making it my tragedy. (Act 2).

As he speaks, Tara comes and faces him and they hug tightly in the manner they were born. In the end, *Tara* is an interesting window into our own life as women are given secondary place in families, office, social and other public and private spaces. Women face various kinds of exploitation in Indian society and in many parts of the world.

7.5 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQS)

1. Tara was written by Mahesh Dattani in the year _____.
 - a. 1980
 - b. 1890
 - c. 1990
 - d. 1986

2. Chandan when the play starts is also addressed as _____.
 - a. Dan
 - b. Chandu
 - c. Patel's son
 - d. Tara's brother

3. Tara and Chandan lived in _____.
 - a. Chandan's house
 - b. Grandfather's house
 - c. Patel's house
 - d. Roopa's house

4. _____ is the mother of Tara and Chandan.
 - a. Roopa
 - b. Bharti
 - c. Prema
 - d. Nalini

5. How old were the twins when the surgery was performed? _____.

- a. 6 months
- b. 3 months
- c. 8 years
- d. 12 years

6. What is the name of the doctor? _____.

- a. Dr. Thakkar
- b. Dr. Patel
- c. Dr. Sanjeev
- d. Dr. Vikas

7. Which film do Roopa, Tara and Chandan discuss. _____.

- a. Sophie's Choice
- b. Tim
- c. Pantaloons
- d. Tom and Jerry

8. Whose father was an influential MLA? _____.

- a. Roopa's father
- b. Patel's father
- c. Chandan's father
- d. Bharti's father

9. Chandan is the son of _____.

- a. Singh
- b. Dr. Thakkar
- c. Sharma
- d. Patel

10. Roopa conspires with her friends _____ to emotionally scar Tara by calling her a freak.

- a. Tara and Chandan
- b. Prema and Nalini
- c. Tara and Bharti
- d. Roopa and Chandan

7.6 LET US SUM UP

The play *Tara* underscores the theme of gendered disability by making Tara and Chandan the victims of the patriarchal marginalization and discrimination. *Tara* underscores how male preference for Chandan during surgery exposes the complex nature of patriarchal preferences in society. In the 21st century, when in India girls repeatedly prove themselves in every field, the deep rooted gender discrimination continues among even the affluent and educated people

7.7 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

1.) c, 2.) a, 3.) c, 4.) b, 5.) b, 6.) a, 7.) a, 8.) d, 9.) d, 10.) b.

7.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. Who is Dan in *Tara*?

Ans: Chandan, the twin brother, appears as Dan in *Tara*. Chandan for no reason suffers at the hands of destiny. After being separated from Tara he acquires his identity but loses

soon with the death of his other half Tara. He learns a bitter lesson of life that his sister became a scapegoat for his survival. Unable to bear the shock he moves to London to escape this sad experience and memory.

2. Why is DAN living in London?
3. Which play is DAN writing and why?
4. How are stereotypical gender roles presented in Mahesh Dattani's play *Tara*?
5. Who is Roopa and what is her role in the play *Tara*?

Ans: Roopa is a young adolescent girl, eager to spend her life as she desires. The moment she learns that in the Patel family Bharati is from Karnataka, she gets involved in the family. She provides humour in the play and speaks bad English and equally poor is her Kannada communication. She is a counterpart to Tara and Chandan in the play. She is a mean, corrupt, offensive and comic character who exploits Bharati's extra concerns for Tara.

6. Comment on the opening of the Act 2 of the play *Tara*.
7. What is the attitude of Patel and Bharti towards Tara?
8. Comment on the issue of three legs between the Siamese twins in the play *Tara*.
9. Is the role of family justified in the play *Tara*?

7.9 SUGGESTED READING

1. Mahesh Dattani. *Me and My Plays*. Penguin India, 2014. Print.
2. <http://puneresearch.com> > media > data > issues
3. <https://www.jetir.org> > papers > JETIRAA06005

STRUCTURE**8.1 Introduction****8.2 Objectives****8.3 Main Characters****8.3.1 Tara****8.3.2 Chandan\ Dan or Chandan****8.3.3 Bharati****8.3.4 Mr. Patel****8.3.5 Roopa****8.3.6 Dr. Thakkar****8.4 Multiple Choice Questions(MCQs)****8.5 Let Us Sum Up****8.6 Answer Key (MCQs)****8.7 Examination Oriented Questions****8.8 Suggested Reading**

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Tara was initially staged as *Twinkle Tara* in 1990. However, in 1991 it was staged in Mumbai

directed by Alyque Padamsee under the name *Tara*. The play portrays the predicament of a girl child and the inherent gender discrimination in Indian society. There are six characters in the play reflecting the diverse human characteristics.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to acquaint distance learners with the different traits of the characters in the play *Tara*. This would help you in better comprehension of the play *Tara*, and preparation for semester end exam.

8.3 MAIN CHARACTERS

8.3.1 TARA

Tara, the central character of the play, is the victim of Indian social problem of gender discrimination. Tara is the twin sister of Chandan. She is a Siamese twin with the other being a male child Chandan. A victim of gender discrimination, she could not live a normal, happy and joyous life because the third leg fed by her blood was given to her brother.

Tara is a victim of the harsh decision taken by her gender discriminatory mother and her dominating, rich and influential grandfather. Her grandfather bribes Dr. Thakkar to take professionally unethical course in performing the operation to separate the infants, when the infants were three months old. However, the leg given to the male child could not survive and after two days becomes life-less. So nature makes both the twins invalid and weak in health.

Tara is angry with her fate. She wants to live a happy life. She dislikes her father, Mr. Patel for his indifference but loves her mother who cares for her self-esteem.

Tara finds no solace for a disabled person in the society. Nature is also not helpful. She is unhealthy and suffers another set-back when her kidneys get damaged. She likes her mother, Bharti's concern for her health. But she is completely destroyed when her father, Mr. Patel discloses how her mother and grandfather took the wrong decision to give the third leg to her brother. The revelation

shatters Tara's spirit and the poor girl dies an unfortunate victim of gender-prejudice and immoral decision of Dr. Thakkar.

8.3.2 DAN OR CHANDAN

The childhood Indian name of Dan is Chandan. Dan is both the narrator and character of the play. He is deemed as the *sutradhar* of the play. All the actions and characterizations pertaining to drama are portrayed through revelations made by Dan.

The play *Tara* opens with Dan who remains busy in typing the text pertaining to his lifelong experience. His mental conflict is caused by the tragic incidents of the past. Dan's soliloquy begins the play and thus it is projected that it is Dan's play. Dan suffers and apologizes to his twin sister, Tara, "Forgive me, Tara. Forgive me for making it my tragedy." Chandan for no reason suffers at the hands of destiny. After being separated from Tara he acquires his identity but loses soon with the death of other half Tara. He learns a bitter lesson of life and moves to London to escape this tragic experience. He takes a new name Dan and tries to hide the old memories under it. His confession is a proof of all the suffering he undergoes. His escape to a foreign land is to stay away from the family, acquaintances and, especially Tara and himself.

Dan is compassionate. He understands that because of his maleness his twin sister had to suffer on account of gender prejudice in the traditional middle class family in India. He accepts the misfortune. Chandan, Dattani says, "...fought by withdrawing, into his music, into his own world and later on he fights by again withdrawing, by going into another space entirely. So these... are ways of fighting his battles."

Though the play is Dan's play yet he is not the hero,; he is only a normal character belonging to urban middle class Indian family. Roopa's sexual advances also make no effect on him and he prefers to be a freak. His life is influenced by other's decisions and values of the society. He suffers due to the harsh decision of his mother and maternal grandfather. An aspiring writer, he attempts to write a play memorializing his conjoined twin Tara, now dead.

8.3.3 BHARATI

Bharati is the wife of Mr. Patel. She is introduced worshipping Tulsi plant and attending to household duties. She is a traditional middle class woman with gender prejudice and takes decision to give the third leg to Chandan in connivance with her wealthy father who bribes Dr. Thakkar. Mr. Patel is unhappy with her on this account but he is helpless. Her unethical decision destroys the life of both her son and daughter.

Bharati feels pity for her children but she feels guilty for Tara. She is conscious that her decision has ruined her life. The leg could survive with her, and Tara could lead a healthy life. But her decision proved disastrous for the children. Her guilt makes her over concerned for her daughter's health.

Bharati suffers from the fear of losing her daughter because she thinks that, if her daughter comes to know the truth, she might start hating her mother. Bharati doesn't even allow Tara to talk to her father because she feels he will disclose the secret to her as he is aware of it.

She requests Roopa to be more considerate towards Tara and bribes her for her daughter's happiness. Her decision to donate her kidney to Tara is her greatest act of compassion to redress for her guilt. But nature is equally cruel. Her daughter Tara dies before kidney transplantation.

Bharati is a mother but she doesn't take a fair decision. She chooses her son over her daughter, and that is the reason why Tara loses one of the vital organs of the body.

Bharati is an educated woman but doesn't have a strong personality. Her personal preference for son, ruins not only the lives of the twins but also her own life. She suffers with the guilt that she has spoiled the life of her daughter knowingly and goes insane.

8.3.4 MR. PATEL

Mr. Patel is from Gujarat. He is married to Bharati from Kannadiga. After his marriage, Mr. Patel has to leave his parental home, because his parents do not accept his marriage. The shadow of insecurity looms large around him. The insecurity of the separation from parents and subsequently the birth of Siamese twins, results in Mr. Patel feeling isolated.

Mr. Patel is Tara and Chandan's father. He is stern and rigid, and apparently favours Chandan and has elaborate plans for his future. He is generously loving towards Tara. He repeatedly confronts Bharati pointing out that she has spoiled Tara and Chandan's life by making them too dependent and in the process has turned them against him.

He is not a matured person. He discloses the news to Tara and Chandan that during their surgery, Bharati and her father had chosen to give Chandan unfair chance over Tara, by letting him keep two of the three legs, which ideally should have suited Tara better. To conclude Mr. Patel is an unfortunate person who loses his wife and daughter to death, and his son Chandan refuses to return to India.

8.3.5 ROOPA

Roopa is the mean neighbour of the Patel's. The moment she learns that in the Patel family Bharati is from Karnataka, she gets interested in the family. Bharati bribes her to be friends with Tara. But she hates Tara for being an amputee.

She provides humour in the play. She speaks bad English and equally poor Kannada. Her language and behaviour make people laugh. She is a good looking girl who exploits Bharati's extra-concerns for Tara. She tries to seduce Chandan but later complains of rape when he touches her. Overall she represents the fickle-minded, unconcerned and inhumane persons existing in society

8.3.6 DR. THAKKAR

Dr. Thakkar is the surgeon who performs the surgery on Tara and Chandan separating them. He sits with a God-like calmness and often speaks deeply about the surgery and the medical complications as if in an interview.

He is not honest to his profession. He conspired with Bharati and her father to unethically deprive Tara of her leg, giving it to Chandan, in lieu of three acres of prime land to build his hospital. Dr. Thakkar's role in tragedy is both powerful and cruel.

Dr. Thakkar as a doctor is the representative of the modern science and technology which plays a crucial role in the contemporary society. And how he uses his noble profession for the satiation of his greed. He cunningly tries to hide his criminal activity by accusing nature for being harsh to Tara. Dr. Thakkar, “Our greatest challenge would be keep the girl alive. Nature wanted to kill her. We couldn’t allow it”(376)_____.

8.4 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQS)

Q.1 Whose father was influential MLA?

- a. Roopa
- b. Chandan
- c. Bharti
- d. Patel

Q.2 Chandan ultimately goes to....

- a. France
- b. China
- c. USA
- d. London

Q.3 Tara and Chandan were surgically separated in....

- a. Mumbai
- b. London
- c. New Delhi
- d. Chennai

Q.4 What happened to Tara's mother?.....

- a. She had a mental breakdown
- b. She died from cancer
- c. She looked after Tara till she died
- d. She was taken to an old age home

Q.5 In the play *Tara*, Bharati bribed Roopa to....

- a. be Chandan's friend
- b. be Tara's best friend
- c. play with the twins
- d. keep secrets

8.5 LET US SUM UP

The characters in *Tara* are common people. And parents love for children is conditioned by social taboos or values. In *Tara* the characters present the class and power-relations in a middle class family. The characters' relationship represents the vacuum in middle class individuals, their dissatisfaction and their hollow morality. They long to live a secure life and so hug tradition, gender discrimination and patriarchal system. They fail to live a natural, free life according to their instinct and nature. Women perpetrate gender discrimination and hatred.

8.6 ANSWER KEY (MCQS)

1.c 2. d 3. a 4. a 5. b

8.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the marital life of Mr. Patel and Bharati.

2. Discuss the character of Chandan.
3. Comment on Bharati as a mother.
4. Analyse the role of Dr. Thakkar in the play *Tara*_____.

8.8 SUGGESTED READING

1. Joshipura, Pranav. *A Critical Study of Mahesh Dattani s Plays*. New Delhi: Sarup Books Pvt.Ltd., 2009. Print.
2. Parmar B. *Dramatic World of Mahesh Dattani: Voices and Visions*. Jaipur: Aadi Publications. 2012. Print

STRUCTURE**9.1 Introduction****9.2 Objectives****9.3 Major Themes in Mahesh Dattani's Play *Tara*****9.3.1 Gender Bias in *Tara*****9.3.2 Women Exploitation in *Tara*****9.3.3 Science and Nature in *Tara*****9.3.4 Gender Discrimination in *Tara*****9.3.5 Women Subjugation in *Tara*****9.4 Check Your Progress (CYP)****9.5 Let Us Sum Up****9.6 Answer Key (CYP)****9.7 Examination Oriented Questions****9.8 Suggested Reading**

9.1 INTRODUCTION

In this lesson you would be introduced to the main thematic concerns in the play *Tara*. This would help you in appreciation of the characters, textual analysis of the story, and also prepare you for the semester end exam.

9.2 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the lesson is to acquaint you with the main themes in the play *Tara*.

9.3 MAJOR THEMES IN MAHESH DATTANI'S PLAY *TARA*

Mahesh Dattani is one of the leading and serious contemporary playwrights in English. His plays, about the marginalized sections of our society, minorities and women, explore issues related to discrimination, including religious prejudice and homosexuality.

9.3.1 GENDER BIAS IN *TARA*

Mahesh Dattani's play *Tara* exposes unequal treatment given to male and female children, who are born physically conjoined twins. Equal treatment and opportunities given to both are superficial. In reality, a female has to face inequality at every level, whether in family or in society.

The play *Tara* underscores how women are victims of gender bias in society. The two major characters in the play, Chandan and his sister Tara remember their childhood. Chandan as a boy has tried to uncover the current patriarchal mind-set of society. Dan considers injustice against Tara an unnatural sin: "She deserves something better." Being a girl, Tara faces discrimination at the hands of her mother and wealthy grandfather who manipulate with the doctor to give the third leg to the boy.

Both Tara and Chandan are physically challenged and experience marginalization on account of life. Chandan feels inferiority complex due to his physical deformity, "They are not the ugly ones. We are. Horrible one-legged creatures." However, Tara is doubly marginalized.

Dattani exposes double standards of society showing how society discriminates between two physically challenged persons on the basis of gender when Bharti says:

"It's all right when you are young. It is all very
cute and comfortable when he makes a funny
comment. But let him grow up....

The world will tolerate you. The

world will accept you-but not him! Oh, the pain when he sees himself at eighteen or twenty. Thirty is unthinkable. And what about forty and fifty! oh God.”

The play *Tara* presents a bitter reality of society: marginalization of women in the male-dominated society.

9.3.2 WOMEN EXPLOITATION IN *TARA*

Indian societies present a male-dominated perception with decision making in the hands of the male members of the family. In Mahesh Dattani’s play *Tara*, Mr. Patel’s father-in-law, the eldest among the three members of the family, a dominating and an affluent politician, bribes Dr. Thakkar to give the conjoined leg to Chandan instead of Tara with whom it would have gone well. Tara is thus a victim of exploitation. Her mother tries to compensate the unfortunate decision by showering extra love and excessive concern for her. Her sense of remorse is so deep that she agrees to donate her kidney to her daughter so that she may survive. The play *Tara* underscores that point of equality between male and female, and equal opportunities given to both are superficial leading to women’s exploitation both in family and society.

9.3.3 SCIENCE AND NATURE IN *TARA*

How science and nature are complementary to each other is another important concern in the play *Tara*. Dr. Thakkar knowing, “A scan showed that a major part of the blood supply to the third leg was provided by the girl. The chances were slightly better that the leg would survive on the girl,” operated her leg and gave it to Chandan with whom it could not survive. It was unethical and criminal medical practice of Dr. Thakkar who forgot the nobility of his profession. A doctor is to save human lives but what happens in the play is almost the opposite. He represents the unethical act of

surgery which haunts and affects the lives of Patel family members. He becomes a part of the partisan decision in agreeing to give the leg to Chandan despite the fact that leg medically was compatible to Tara.

Dr. Thakkar, a ray of hope, a saviour for patients, becomes the destroyer of Tara's future and ultimate death. Mahesh Dattani underscores that Doctors are representative of modern science and scientific innovations, but indulge in corrupt practices for money and lust for better life. Besides, Dr. Thakkar represents the scientific knowledge that has also become a tool in the hands of patriarch for oppression and subjugation of women.

9.3.4 GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN *TARA*

In *Tara*, Dattani picks up the issue of the preference of a boy child over a girl child which forms the plot of the play. The girl may be more enterprising than the boy but she is hardly favoured. Both the twins revel in their love for each other. It is all the more deplorable when such characters as Tara's mother Bharti worsen the conditions for their own sex. If Bharti has not shown extra inclination for the male child over the female child, both Chandan and Tara might have flourished equally well. Therefore, gender discrimination not done by men only but women has an equal part in this as they also will prefer males to a female when given the chance.

In the play *Tara* when Chandan asks Roopa to choose between the two, she chooses male:
CHANDAN: "What would you do if you had to choose between a boy and a girl? Who would you choose?"

ROOPA: "A boyfriend definitely?" CHANDAN: "Definitely?"

ROOPA: "Yes. It's bad enough studying in a girls' school. I would definitely want a boyfriend."

The play *Tara* thus paints a picture of the helplessness of women in our society.

9.3.5 WOMEN SUBJUGATION IN *TARA*

Mahesh Dattani in the play *Tara* deconstructs the myth that Nature and God have made male superior to female. This myth justifies the subordination of woman against man. The playwright tries to

put forth through the conjoined twins that male and female are equal in the eyes of Nature and God, but it is the patriarchal society which has artificially created gender inequality, discrimination and disparity.

Tara exposes the conventional Indian mindset, which has always chosen a boy child over a girl child throughout history. The drama explores the victory and failure of an Indian family dealing with the trauma of disability, which includes the father (Patel), mother (Bharati), and children (Tara and Chandan).

Dr. Thakkar exhibits gender discrimination by slashing Tara's leg. Bharati's powerful and political father succeeds in bribing the doctor with a prime property in Bangalore for his nefarious plan to deprive Tara of her leg. Bharti's special treatment for Chandan leaves Tara paralyzed for the rest of her life. She favours the male child reinforcing the cycle of unfairness. However, she later tries to compensate for her guilt by expressing care and compassion for her daughter. Besides, she offers to donate her kidney to her daughter in order to extend her life for a few more years. During a conversation with her son, she says to him: "I plan to give her happiness. I mean to give her all the love and affection which I can live. It's what she... deserves. Love can make up for a lot". (P 80)

Chandan and Tara's maternal grandfather is a wealthy and powerful politician who distributes his property and fortune to Chandan. This action is an act of gender prejudice by not leaving any asset or money to Tara after his death. Mr. Patel, too represents male chauvinism by giving Chandan more privileges in comparison to Tara. To conclude *Tara* shows the social discrimination between men and women through the character of Tara who becomes a victim of discrimination in her own family.

9.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (CYP)

- 1.. Tara a play by Mahesh Dattani is a _____.
- A. Two act play
- B. Four act play
- C. One act play
- D. Five act play

2. “Let her get older. Yes, Chandan, the planet will tolerate you, the planet will accept you - but not her”. Who is the speaker here? _____
- A. Patel
 - B. Deepa
 - C. Bharati
 - D. Rupa
3. What was Bharati’s strength against her husband?
- A. Her father’s money
 - B. Her wit
 - C. Her educational background
 - D. Her love for her children
4. *Tara* reflects the tragic story of
- A. two conjoined twins
 - B. two lovers
 - C. an Indian family
 - D. middle class family
5. The third leg of the conjoined twins rightfully belonged to _____.
- A. Chandan
 - B. Tara
 - C. Roopa
 - D. Mr. Patel

6. “The Patels in the olden days were unhappy with getting girl babies- you know, dowry and things like that- so they used to drown them in milk”. This statement is indicative of _____.
- A. racial discrimination
 - B. gender-based injustice
 - C. class distinction
 - D. social issues
7. What does Bharati do to ensure that Roopa stays a friend for Tara? _____
- A. By threatening her
 - B. By pleading to her parents
 - C. By bribing her
 - D. By blackmailing her
8. Bharati tried to make up with Tara by _____.
- A. putting the blame on her father
 - B. telling her the whole truth
 - C. allowing her to join the University
 - D. offering to donate her own kidney
9. What happened to Tara’s mother? _____
- A. She had a mental breakdown
 - B. She died from cancer
 - C. She looked after Tara till she died
 - D. She was taken to an old age home

10. *Tara* is a play on _____

- A. social discrimination
- B. gender discrimination
- C. economic exploitation
- D. Child-marriage

9.5 LET US SUM UP

This lesson introduces you to the main thematic concerns in the play *Tara* to highlight that Tara is an innocent victim of society's injustice and she has to carry the burden of being physically disabled all through her life. Her tragedy is that there was a conspiracy behind her deformity and that her mother whom she loved the most, and who so vehemently expressed her concern for her daughter, contributed to that conspiracy.

Tara's mother, maternal grandfather, and Mr. Patel, who are meant to be her guardians play a role in plotting against her. Dr. Thakkar contributes in Tara's crippling and deprivation of all pleasant things in her life. Bharti suffers chronic schizophrenia because of the guilt as she played a part in Tara's early death and deprived her of the chance to live a normal life.

Tara is sacrificed because she was a girl and had no right to have a better life than her brother. Tara and Chandan would have lived happily if Dr. Thakkar had denied surgery. In this context Subhash Chandra comments, "Tara is not killed by any individual, but the socio-cultural system which is responsible for her death...the beliefs, the attitudes and the prejudices that are deep-rooted in the collective cultural psyche become instrumental in taking Tara's life." Tara's marginalization and subjugation reconfirms Manu's statement, "In childhood a female be dependent on her father, in youth, on her husband; her lord being dead, on her sons, if she has no sons, on the near kinsmen on those of her father; if has no paternal kinsmen, on the sovereign; a woman must never seek independence.

9.6 ANSWER KEY (CYP)

1. A. Two act play
2. C. Bharati
3. A. Her father's money
4. A. two conjoined twins
5. B. Tara
6. A. racial discrimination
7. C. By bribing her
8. D. offering to donate her own kidney
9. A. She had a mental breakdown
10. B. gender discrimination

9.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. What are the major themes of the play *Tara*?
2. What is the significance of the title of the play *Tara*?
3. Comment on the theme of guilt in the play *Tara*.
4. What fears has Bharathi as a mother?

9.8 SUGGESTED READING

1. Dattani, Mahesh. "Tara". *Collected Plays*. New Delhi: Penguin Book India, 2000.

STRUCTURE**10.1 Introduction****10.2 Objectives****10.3 Opening of the play *Tara*****10.3.1 Act I****10.3.2 Tara is a noble girl****10.3.3 Opening of Act II****10.3.4 Ending of *Tara*****10.4 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQS)****10.5 Examination Oriented Questions****10.6 Answer Key (MCQS)****10.7 Suggested Reading**

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learner, by now you have come to recognize *Tara* as a work tracing Chandan's search for integrated self and how he relives his personal history and tragedy by writing a play in the memory of his twin sister. Dan (older Chandan) living in London, starts by dropping off different masks or identities that he has acquired in the course of his stay in London. "I am a freak", he declares and frees himself to "Allow the memories to flood in". The memories of his twin sister revive in his conscious mind. and

he decides to write a play in her memory “maybe I didn’t forget her. She was lying deep inside, out of reach...”. He reflects that “we still are, like we’ve always been. Inseparable. The way we started in life. Two lives and one body, in one comfortable womb. Till we were forced out . . . And separated.”

10.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to acquaint the learner with some of the important dialogues from the play *Tara* to grasp the nuances of the characters sufferings in different ways.

10.3 OPENING OF THE PLAY TARA

The opening stage setting of *Tara* is important. It gives insight into a grim environment adding to the sufferings of the characters, and the casual attitude of Dr. Thakkar who sells his professional ethics for money.

10.3.1 ACT I

A multi-level set. The lowest level occupies a major portion of the stage. It represents the house of the Patels. It is seen only in memory and may be kept as stark as possible. The next level represents the bedsitter of the older Chandan (referred to as Dan for clarity) in a suburb of London. There is a small bed, and, in the foreground, a small writing table with a typewriter and a sheaf of papers. A part of a wall covered with faded wallpaper can also be seen. This is the only realistic level. Behind, on a higher level, is a chair in which Dr. Thakkar remains seated throughout the play. Although he doesn’t watch the action of the play, his connection is asserted by his sheer God-like presence. On the stage level, running along the cyclorama and in an L-shape, downstage right, is the galli outside the Patels’ house, which can be suggested by cross-lighting. The play starts without any music. A spot picks up Dan at his writing table. He is typing furiously. He stops and removes the sheet from his typewriter. He looks up and speaks to the audience.

DAN In poetry, even the most turbulent emotions can be recollected when one is half asleep. But in drama! Ah! Even tranquillity has to be recalled with emotion. Like touching a bare live wire. Try

distancing yourself from that experience and writing about it! A mere description will be hopelessly inadequate. And for me . . . I have to relive that charge over and over again. (Pause.) Excuse me while I recharge myself.

Limps to a cabinet, pulls out a bottle of liquor, pours some into a glass and drinks.

Yes. I have my memories. Locking myself in a bedsitter in a seedy suburb of London, thousands of miles from home hasn't put enough distance between us. (Holds up his glass.) My battery charger helps on some occasions. But now I want them to come back. To masticate my memories in my mind and spit out the result to the world in anger. (Picks up the sheet he has been typing.) My progress, so far, I must admit, has been zero. But I persist with the comforting thought that things can't get any worse. I keep staring at my typewriter every day, wondering how best to turn my anguish into drama. All I find every day, without fail, is one typewritten sheet with the title of the play, my name and address and the date. Nothing changes— except the date. (Reads from the paper,) 'Twinkle Tara. A drama in two acts by Chandan Patel. Copyright, Chandan Patel, 93 Fishpond's Road, Tooting, London SW17 7LJ.' Today I made some progress. I even typed my phone number. (Puts down the paper.) Not to say that I don't have anything to show to the world yet, I do. For instance, these. (Picks up a manuscript.) Random Raj. Short stories on the British Raj. Still hounding publishers. The publishers here ignore them because none of them deal with sati, dowry deaths or child marriages—all subjects guaranteed to raise the interest of the average Western intellectual. And back home, of course, Indo Anglian literature isn't worth toilet paper. (Throws the manuscript away.)

But that's all done with. Tonight I drop everything I've desperately wanted to be in my years in England. (Mimes removing a mask and throwing it away.) The handicapped intellectual's mask. (Mimes removing another mask.) The desperate immigrant. (Mimes removing yet another.) The mysterious brown with the phoney accent. The last being the hardest to drop having spent two whole years in acquiring it. And what remains is what I intend making capital of. My freakishness. I am a freak. (Pause.) Now, a freak doesn't have to look very far for inspiration. (Moves to his table.) But what is hard is to let go. Allow the memories to flood in. (Winds another sheet on the typewriter and then stops.)

To tell you the truth, I had even forgotten I had a twin sister. (Music fades in slowly.) Until I thought of her as subject matter for my next literary attempt. Or maybe I didn't forget her. She was lying deep inside, out of reach . . .

A spot on the stage level Chandan and Tara walk into it. They both have a limp, but on different legs.

TARA And me. Maybe we still are. Like we've always been. Inseparable. The way we started in life. Two lives and one body, in one comfortable womb. Till we were forced out.

Patel and Bharati are seen.

10.3.2 TARA IS A NOBLE GIRL

She is disturbed by the attitude of her friends:

TARA You know who I met? The ugliest girls in the whole world. Prema and Nalini. They live in the building opposite. They had a friend with them. Equally ugly. They were all running across the street, laughing their ugly heads off over something. When they saw me get off the car, they stopped. They stopped running and they stopped laughing. And they waited, watching me get off and walk across the footpath towards them. Embarrassing me, making me go slower than I would. When I reached them, they grinned. Nalini whispered something to her ugly friend. I knew what was coming. Might as well play along, I thought. I smiled and introduced myself. We exchanged names. Nalini and Prema. The other one just tittered. I smile to her as well. Then I showed it to them. The duckling couldn't believe her eyes. She stared at my leg. She felt it and knocked on it. Silly as well as ugly, I thought. 'The very best from Jaipur,' I said. 'We get them in pairs. My twin brother wears the other one.'

CHANDAN (laughs). You didn't.

TARA Then they ran off. Pleased with themselves, laughing even harder. Their day was made. One of these days I'm going to tell them exactly how frightful they look.

CHANDAN Maybe they already know.

TARA Still, it would be nice to see their reaction. Oh, play the music real loud. Beethoven was never as good as this.

10.3.3 OPENING OF ACT II

ACT II Spot on Bharati and Tara. Music. There is a certain beatitude in Bharati's demonstration of affection for Tara.

BHARATI Tara! My beautiful baby! You are my most beautiful baby! I love you very much.

TARA (enjoying this affection). Yes, mummy. I know that. BHARATI. I want you to remember that, Tara.

TARA I will.

BHARATI Everything will be all right. Now that I am giving you a part of me. Everything will be all right.

TARA Do you really want to do that, mummy? BHARATI Very much.

TARA Because you love me so much.

BHARATI Yes. That's why. Don't worry. You will be fine. After the operation, we will all be happy together. And I will make up for . . . for . . . your father, and I will make up for all the things God hasn't given you.

TARA I have plenty. I have you.

BHARATI Yes. Thank you, Tara! Thank you.

Bharati is overwhelmed and they embrace. Cross-fade to Dan, who is looking at a book.

DAN I was looking through this old scrap book. A present daddy gave me just before I left. It's got all our news cuttings. Dr. Thakkar is in the headlines. Then there are interviews with my mom and dad. And worst of all a hideous photograph of us. Before and after. I don't think the Elephant Man got so much publicity . . . Two tiny smaller-than-life babies, hugging each other. Only a closer look . . .

Here's the one I'm looking for. 'Tatel twins still twinkling. The Patel twins made medical history today by being the longest surviving pair of Siamese twins . . . Tara Patel, who underwent her seventh prosthesis and a kidney transplant in the same month, was smiling and jovial within hours of a complex surgery. "Surgery for us is like brushing our teeth," joke the twins. Tara Patel, whose recovery was nothing less than a miracle, states that her source of strength was her mother, and of course, her brother and father. Mrs. Bharati Patel, however, was too indisposed to give an interview. A distraught Mr. Patel explained that this has been a trying time for her. For, in spite of the brave facade put up by her, Tara has far too many complications to be completely out of danger. However, the will to survive has proved to work more miracles than the greatest of science' . . . etc., etc. (Thinks about it.) Poor Tara. Even nature gave her a raw deal.

10.3.4 ENDING OF TARA

BHARATI (as if to an infant in her arms). Tara! My beautiful little girl. Look at her smile! Smile, Tara. Smile again for me! Oh! See how her eyes twinkle. You are my most beautiful baby!

The spot fades out with the music. Silence. The street area is lit. Roopa has brought on a poster, saying 'We don't want freaks', which she places prominently against a wall or post.

ROOPA (shouting) There. At least you are not blind! Do you get the message? Freaks. (Exits.) Tara stands alone in a spot, in a daze. Chandan moves to her and gestures to her to hold his hand. Tara turns away from him. Chandan is crushed.

TARA And she called me her star! Lights off on Tara, Patel and Chandan. The poster remains lit.

DR. THAKKAR Yes. Indeed, it was a complex case. But modern technology has made many things possible, and we are not very far behind from the rest of the world. In fact, in ten years' time we should be on par with the best in the west. Dan's area is lit. He applauds mockingly.

DAN Thank you very much, Dr. Thakkar! It has been a real pleasure. Now go, just .. go away.

(Breaks down.) Get out of my mind, you horrible creature! You are ugly and I don't want ugly people in my memories! (Pause. Dr. Thakkar's spot fades out.) Give me a moment and the pain will subside. Then I can function again. (Pause, more controlled now.) Yes. The material is there. But the craft is yet to come. Like the amazing Dr. Thakkar, I must take something from Tara—and give it to myself. Make capital of my trauma, my anguish, and make it my tragedy. To masticate them in my mind and spit out the result to the world, in anger. (Slowly, as if in a trance, picks up his typed sheets and starts tearing them as he speaks.) My progress so far—I must admit—has been zero . . . But I persist with the comforting thought that things can't get any worse. All I find every day is one typewritten sheet . . . with the tide of the play, my name and address, and the date. Nothing changes . . . except the date . . .

His voice-over fades in as the spot fades out.

(Voice-over.) Someday, after I die, a stranger will find this recording and play it. The voice is all that will remain. No writing. No masterpiece. Only a voice—that once belonged to an object. An object like other objects in a cosmos, whose orbits are determined by those around. Moving in a forced harmony. Those who survive are those who do not defy the gravity of others. And those who desire even a moment of freedom, find themselves hurled into space, doomed to crash with some unknown force. (Pause.) I no longer desire that freedom. I move, just move. Without meaning. I forget Tara. I forget that I had a sister—with whom I had shared a body. In one comfortable womb. Till we were forced out . . . and separated.

A spot fades in—empty

But somewhere, sometime, I look up at a shooting star . . . and wish. I wish that a long-forgotten person would forgive me. Wherever she is.

Tara walks into the spot without limping. Dan also appears without the limp. And will hug me. Once again.

They kneel, face to face.

Forgive me, Tara. Forgive me for making it my tragedy.

Tara embraces Dan as the music starts. The explosive opening of Brahms' First Concerto. They hug each other tightly.

Slow fade out.

10.4 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQS)

Q.1 *Tara is a play in _____ Acts.*

- a. Two
- b. Three
- c. Four
- d. Five

Q.2 *Tara is a play that focuses on the evils of the Indian _____ system.*

- a. Caste
- b. Racial
- c. Patriarchal
- d. Class

Q.3 *Dan (Chandan) tries to write a play called _____.*

- a. The Twins
- b. Tara and I
- c. *Tara's Song*
- d. *Twinkle Tara*

Q.4 Tara and Chandan were surgically separated in _____.

- a. Mumbai
- b. London
- c. New Delhi
- d. Pune

Q.5 *Tara* a play by Mahesh Dattani is a _____.

- a. Two act play
- b. Four act play
- c. One act play
- d. Five act play

Q.6 The names of the Conjoined Twins are _____.

- a. Chandan and Bharati
- b. Chandan and Tara
- c. Thakur and Tara
- d. Mahesh and Tara

Q.7 “Let her get older. Yes, Chandan, the planet will tolerate you, the planet will accept you – but not her”. Who is the speaker here?

- a. Patel
- b. Deepa
- c. Bharati
- d. Rupa

- Q.8 Chandan moves to England from India _____.
- a. To flee from his family
 - b. To find his fortune
 - c. To begin a new life away from the guilt of his personal history
 - d. To get medical treatment
- Q.9 One of the major themes in *Tara* is _____.
- a. Gender discrimination
 - b. Guilt
 - c. Partiality
 - d. Female infanticide
- Q.10 Roopa in *Tara* is _____.
- a. The girlfriend of Chandan
 - b. The sister of Tara
 - c. The daughter of Bharati
 - d. The friend of Tara
- Q.11 What was Dan doing as the play starts?
- a. Sleeping
 - b. Reading
 - c. Typing
 - d. Listening to music

Q.12 What according to Dan is “the crux of life”?

- a. Love
- b. Conflict
- c. Family
- d. Friendship

Q.13 What was Bharati’s strength against her husband?

- a. Her father’s money
- b. Her wit
- c. Her educational background
- d. Her love for her children

Q.14 “Stop it! Stop this madness and let me live in peace.” Who said this?

- a. Chandan
- b. Bharati
- c. Mr. Patel
- d. Tara

Q.15 Why did Bharati insist on wanting to give her Kidney to Tara?

- a. Because she was also a match for Tara
- b. Because she loved Tara
- c. Because she did not allow anyone to be near her
- d. Because she felt guilty

Q.16 “Hospitals depress me.” Who said this?

- a. Roopa
- b. Tara
- c. Chandan
- d. Patel

Q.17 *Tara* reflects the tragic story of _____.

- a. two conjoined twins
- b. two lovers
- c. an Indian family
- d. middle class family

Q.18 The third leg of the conjoined twins rightfully belonged to _____.

- a. Chandan
- b. Tara
- c. Roopa
- d. Mr. Patel

Q.19 “The Patels in the olden days were unhappy with getting girl babies- you know, dowry and things like that- so they used to drown them in milk”. This statement is indicative of _____.

- a. Racial discrimination
- b. Gender-based injustice
- c. Class distinction
- d. Social issues

- Q.20 In the play *Tara*, Bharati bribed Roopa to _____.
- a. be Chandan's friend
 - b. be Tara's best friend
 - c. play with the twins
 - d. keep secrets
- Q.21 Chandan changed his name to the westernized moniker 'Dan' to _____.
- a. hide his identity
 - b. become a writer
 - c. begin a new life repressing his past memories
 - d. mourn for his sister's death
- Q.22 The conjoined twins were separated at _____.
- a. Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai
 - b. Children's Hospital, London
 - c. Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, Mumbai
 - d. Children's Hospital, Kolkata
- Q.23 Tara and Chandan were _____.
- a. Conjoined twins
 - b. Identical twins
 - c. Unidentical twins
 - d. Cousins

Q.24 What does Bharati do to ensure that Roopa stays a friend for Tara?

- a. By threatening her
- b. By pleading to her parents
- c. By bribing her
- d. By blackmailing her

Q.25 Bharati tried to make up with Tara by _____.

- a. Putting the blame on her father
- b. Telling her the whole truth
- c. Allowing her to join the University
- d. Offering to donate her own kidney

Q.26 The third leg was finally given to Chandan because _____.

- a. He was a boy
- b. He was the first born
- c. He was favoured by his father
- d. It was medically favourable for him

Q.27 The twins were surgically separated at _____.

- a. King Edward Memorial Hospital
- b. Queen Victoria Hospital
- c. AIIMS
- d. Tata Memorial Hospital

Q.28 What happened to Tara's mother?

- a. She had a mental breakdown
- b. She died from cancer
- c. She looked after Tara till she died
- d. She was taken to an old age home

Q.29 *Tara* is a play on _____.

- a. social discrimination
- b. gender discrimination
- c. economic exploitation
- d. Child-marriage

Q.30 Tara and Chandan were surgically separated in _____.

- a. Mumbai
- b. London
- c. New Delhi
- d. Chennai

Q.31 The opening statement of _____ is spoken from the inside of his head _____.

- a. Dan
- b. Tara
- c. Dr. Thakkar
- d. Mr. Patel

Q.32 Mr. Patel gives more preference to _____.

- a. Tara
- b. Chandan
- c. Bharati
- d. Both Tara and Chandan

Q.33 Chandan ultimately goes to _____.

- a. France
- b. China
- c. USA
- d. London

Q.34 The major concern of the play *Tara* is _____.

- a. Dominance of patriarchal society
- b. Feminist movement
- c. Communalism
- d. Progressive movement

Q.35 Whose father was influential MLA?

- a. Roopa
- b. Chandan
- c. Bharti
- d. Patel

10.5 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

Q. 1. *Tara* depicts emotional and psychological trauma. Explain.

Tara is a play which depicts the emotional and psychological trauma of the forced separation of Tara and Chandan, the two conjoined twins. The twins were conjoined chest down and shared three legs between them besides other medical complications. The third leg's chances of survival were better with the girl. But the greedy Dr. Thakkar manipulated to favour the boy over girl. However, the leg given to Chandan is rejected by his body and amputated.

However, the awful details of separation revealed to the twins finally tear them apart. Tara is unable to bear the truth of her mother's role in making her a cripple in this act. "And she called me her star !." unable to cope with reality she breaks all ties with Chandan leaving him broken. And the mother suffers a nervous breakdown and dies. Mahesh Dattani skillfully depicts how gender bias ultimately not only emotionally and psychologically shatters Patel family but also brings about death, isolation and separation.

Q.2. What is your assessment of Bharathi? Discuss with examples from the text *Tara*.

Q.3. Discuss the theme of gender discrimination in *Tara*.

10.6 ANSWER KEY(MCQS)

1) a,2) c,3) d,4) a,5) a,6) b,7) c,8) c,9) a,10) d,11) c,12) b,13) a,14) b,15) d,16) c,17) a,18) b,19) a,20) b,21) c,22) c,23) a,24) c,25) d,26) a,27) b,28) a,29) b,30) a,31) a,32) b,33) d,34) a,35) c.

10.7 SUGGESTED READING

1. Dattani, Mahesh. "Tara". *Collected Plays*. New Delhi: Penguin Book India, 2000.
2. Chandra, Subhash. "The (un) twinkling Star: Responding to Dattani's *Tara*". *The Commonwealth Review*, 13(2), 60-80.

STRUCTURE**11.1 Objectives****11.2 Types of Letters****11.3 Layout of a Letter****11.4 Two Styles: Traditional and Modern****11.5 Layout of a Personal or Friendly Letter****11.6 Layout of a Letter of Complaint****11.7 Layout of an Application****11.8 Specimen Letters****11.9 Let us Sum Up****11.10 Check Your Progress****11.11 Suggested Reading**

11.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, our aim is to give you practice in Letter Writing. Letter writing is an art which can be learnt by practice. To write a good letter you should write naturally, simply and correctly. A letter reveals the personality of the writer.

Here, we have given you the layout of formal and informal letters. We have also dealt with the

traditional and modern style of business letters. After completing this unit you should be able to have a clear understanding of the format and contents of different types of letters.

11.2 TYPES OF LETTERS

We write letters on a variety of occasions and for a variety of purposes.

There are broadly two kinds of letters-formal letters and informal letters.

Formal letters include official letters, business letters and letters to newspapers. Writing applications, too, comes under this category. The most important among these are:

- (a) application for a job.
- (b) application for a fee concession.
- (c) application for a scholarship.
- (d) application for a telephone connection and other facilities.

Informal letters include personal letters, friendly letters and notes of invitations.

The most important among these are:

- (a) letters to friends.
- (b) letters to relatives
- (c) letters to members of the family and acquaintances etc.

11.3 LAYOUT OF A LETTER

A letter generally comprises the following parts:

1. The Heading

- (a) The writer's address (on the right or left hand top corner).
- (b) The date (just below the address).

Example:

3 Rose Avenue

Dadar Street

Noida

30 Jan 2001

2. The Salutation: (Upper left hand side a little below the date).

Example:

Some forms of salutation:

- (a) My Dear/Dear Father/Dear Uncle/Dear Mother/Dear Brother/Dear Sister.
- (b) My dear Rohit/Dear Sonali.
- (c) Dear Sir/Madam.

3. The Body: The main part of the letter (under the salutation). It should be written in simple language and divided into short paragraphs.

It should be written neatly. Put in commas and semicolons and full-stops in their proper places. Incorrect punctuation may alter the whole meaning of a sentence.

4. The Subscription: below the last line of the body of the letter under the right or left hand margin of the page.

Example:

Some forms of subscription:

- (a) Yours affectionately/Your affectionate son or brother (relatives).
- (b) Yours sincerely (friends)
- (c) Yours truly/Yours faithfully/Yours etc. (formal letters)

5. The Signature/Name: under the subscription at the right or left hand margin of the page.

Example:

B.N. Roy

6. The Recipient's Address

- (a) In case of informal letters, the recipients address is given on the lower left hand side of the letter just below the writer's signature. But generally it is omitted.
- (b) In formal correspondence the recipient's address is written on the top left hand corner of the letter a little above salutation and below the heading.

11.4 TWO STYLES: TRADITIONAL AND MODERN

In terms of punctuation and layout, Business Letters may be divided into two styles: traditional and modern.

Traditional Style

Here are the main features of the traditional style:

- (a) Full-stops for abbreviations (Mr. Mrs. Dr. Ms.)
- (b) Commas after address numbers (24, Trikuta Nagar)
- (c) Comma at the end of each line of an address (except the last line) and after Dear Sir and Yours truly or Yours faithfully.
- (d) Indentations for each fresh paragraph.
- (e) A tendency to centre subject headings and signatures.

Modern Style

Here are the main features of the modern style:

- (a) No full-stops for abbreviations (Mr Mrs Ms Dr).
- (b) A tendency to avoid lazy abbreviations (Road rather than Rd).
- (c) No commas in addresses.
- (d) No commas after Dear Sir Yours truly or Yours faithfully.
- (e) No paragraph indentations but paragraph spacing.
- (f) Subject headings and signatures ranged to the left-hand side of the page.

Which style should I use?

The choice is yours. But it is the modern style which is in practice. On the next page you will find an example of each style.

J.O.E. Soap,
14, Bellevue Ave.,
South Ruislip,
Middlesex.

3rd June, 2000
Personal Manager,
Whatever-it-is Ltd.,
Industrial Estate,
Hayes,
Middlesex.
Dear Sir,

“Trainees Whatever-it-is”

I am writing to apply for the post you advertised in Monday’s edition of the “Daily Howler”.

I enclose details of my education and examination results to date. I am now in the Middle of my last term at school and will be available to start work at the beginning of September.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

(Signature)

Encl.

JOE Soap

14, Bellevue Avenue

South Ruislip

Middlesex

3rd June 2000

Personal Manager

Whatever-it-is Limited

Industrial Estate

Hayes

Middlesex

Dear Sir

Trainee Whatever-it-is

I am writing to apply for the post you advertised in Monday's edition of the "Daily Howler".

I enclose details of my education and examination results to date. I am now in the middle of my last term at school and will be available to start work at the beginning of September.

I am looking forward to hear from you.

Yours truly

(Signature)

Enclosure

11.5 LAYOUT OF A PERSONAL/FRIENDLY LETTER

E-25

Nizamuddin East

(a)-address

New Delhi-110 013

9 July 2000

(b) - date

Dear Pearl

Received your.....

.....

.....

.....

Yours sincerely

Kusum

(KUSUM)

Since, a Friendly Letter is meant to interest and inform your intimates and so to preserve friendships, careless letter writing is inexcusable. Haste, slovenliness or carelessness indicates that you do not have time nor the inclination to treat the correspondent with consideration.

A friendly/personal letter is really a conversation which substitutes the written for the spoken word. Like a conversation it is rarely planned in advance and proceeds by a series of ideas which arise spontaneously in the writer's mind. Just be careful not to shift from one topic to another so swiftly as to bewilder your reader. Of course, you may jot down before hand those ideas you wish to be sure to include in your letter.

A few other cautions must be made :

- (a) Keep a neat letter appearance.
- (b) Let the margins on all sides of the page be straight and wide, and the lines be well spaced and parallel.
- (c) Be legible.
- (d) Make sure that the signature at the end of the letter is clear.

11.6 LAYOUT OF A LETTER OF COMPLAINT

The claim letter lodges a complaint against a company or individual. Remember that even though inconvenienced in some manner, you should write a courteous letter, setting aside anger during the writing.

The beginning of the letter should state accurately and fully the circumstances under which the transaction or exchange of service was made. Give the nature of the business and its date of transaction in full to establish the point of contact with the reader and to put him in possession of the facts so that needless correspondence will not be occasioned. Then make the complaint. To offer some excuse explaining the difficulty which may have arisen is a courteous gesture and indicates that you are reasonable. However, such a gesture should not weaken the force of the letter.

To stimulate the reader to action, include in the letter a statement of the inconvenience to which you have been put by the error, to indicate that the complaint is not just imaginary but based on actuality. Having provided the stimulus, then point out the exact action which the firm is to take, so that it may be sure what is expected of it to give you satisfaction. The tone of the letter throughout be serious, courteous, forceful and reasonable.

Example:

2 Nanak Nagar

Jammu 180001

21 April 2001

Shri B Rao

Bookseller

14 Girgaum Road

Mumbai 151 002

Dear Sir

On February 25, 1999, I ordered the following books from your general catalogue of 2000:

1. No 378 Fowler, H. W. Dictionary of Modern English Usage, 1999.
2. No 411 Hossack, Alfred. Check Your Punctuation, 1980.
3. No 415 Gupta, N. K. English Today, 1999

The order was correctly filled for the first two items on this list, but instead of the third you have sent me D. K Rao's 'History of Indian English Literature.'

I have returned this book and desire you to rush the correct volume to me, as I have immediate need of it. The delay has already caused me a lot of inconvenience.

Yours truly

Sandeep

(SANDEEP)

11.7 LAYOUT OF AN APPLICATION

24 Krishna Nagar

Jammu-180 001 (A)

23 June 2001 (B)

The Principal

Blue Bells School

(C) Janakpuri

New Delhi 110 021

Sub: Application for the post of a teacher. (D)

(E) Sir

(F) I wish to apply for the post of a teacher as advertised in _____

(G) Thanking you

Yours faithfully

(H) Sd/-

Renu Roy

(1) Encl: As above

Notes:

- A) The address of the sender is written at the top right-hand corner. Do not put your address at the bottom of the letter. Also, do not write your name above your address. Take care to write the complete address including the PIN code.

- B) The date goes under the address. The acceptable way of writing it is either 23 June 2001 or 23.6.2001.
- C) The name, official designation and address of the recipient is written on the left, a little below the date. Often the application is addressed to an official by designation. But if you know the name of the official use it. Your letter will then receive prompt attention.
- D) Mention the subject briefly.
- E) The salutation comes below the address of the recipient. For an application, the normal salutation is “Sir/Madam”. But for other official letters you could use ‘Dear Sir/Madam’. If you have written the name of the official in (C), e.g. Mr. Harish Dhawan, Senior Executive, Systems America, then for the salutation you should use the surname, e.g. ‘Dear Mr Dhawan’.
- F) The main body of the letter can be divided into suitable paragraphs. In typed letters, the current practice is to start the main body of the letter at the beginning of the line and to leave one line space between paragraphs. In handwritten letters, the first line of the letter usually begins below the end of the salutation and the first line of paragraphs is indented.
- G) These are words of leave taking. If you have used ‘Sir/Madam’ or ‘Dear Sir/ Madam’ in your salutation, then leave taking should be ‘Thanking you’. However, if you have used ‘Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms’ then leave taking should either be ‘With best wishes’ or ‘With regards’.
- H) Words used in this position are called the complimentary close. The usual form for official letters is either ‘Yours faithfully’ or ‘Yours truly’ only if in your salutation you have used ‘Sir/Madam’ or ‘Dear Sir/Madam’. However, if you have used the name of the official, then the subscription used is ‘Yours sincerely’. In typed letters, the practice these days is to have the subscription at the beginning of a line. In handwritten letters it comes almost to the right edge of the lines.
- I) Below the signature comes your name in full. The person who gets your letter or application should know who you are.

- J) Encl. is the short form for enclosure(s). If you send copies of your certificates, say so in the body of the letter, e.g. 'I am enclosing copies of my Matriculation and Senior Secondary Certificates'. And draw attention to this fact at the end of the application or the official letter, thus, Encl. : 2. The modern practice is not to use any punctuation at the end of the line in addresses, dates, salutations, leave taking and subscription.

11.8 SPECIMEN LETTERS

Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper complaining against frequent breakdown of electric supply in your locality.

44 Trikuta Nagar

Jammu 180 012

17-03-2001

The Editor

The Hindustan Times

New Delhi

Dear Sir

I shall be grateful to you if you kindly publish my views on the frequent breakdown of electricity in our locality in the columns of your esteemed daily.

The residents of Trikuta Nagar have been undergoing a lot of inconvenience due to the faulty electric supply for the last one year. A number of representations and deputations to the concerned authorities have brought no satisfactory response. Every time we are told that there is either shortage or excess of water in the rivers. The authorities make promises to set right the faulty electric supply but those promises are never fulfilled.

I do not know why the attitude of the authorities is so unsympathetic. They have failed to realize that electricity is of utmost necessity for the supply of water, light and even air. The examinations are at hand and the students of our colony have to suffer a lot because of the frequent breakdown of

electricity. Sometimes electric supply is disturbed without any notice 15 to 20 times a day. So one can very well imagine the miserable plight of the people. In case, there is some defect in the main supply line, it can be set right. A student in the study room, a youngster in the bathroom, an old house wife in the kitchen, a washerman in the laundry all are afraid of the failure of electricity at any time. So most of us have to live a life of uncertainty and discomfort.

I appeal through this letter to the concerned authorities of the Electric Department to have pity on us. Without electricity our people have to live like primitives in darkness or in dim candle light.

Thanking you

Yours truly

Vasu

Write a letter to your father explaining why you do not want to accept dowry at the time of your wedding.

Examination Hall

XYZ

9 July 2000

My dear Father

It has pained me to learn that while negotiating about my proposed marriage you have told my would be in-laws in clear terms regarding the kind and quantity of dowry to be given by them. In this connection, I have to submit that I am against, the giving or receiving of dowry in any form at the time of marriage. Dear Father, it appears that you are still thinking in old orthodox way and have not changed your attitude towards the dowry system. I wish you had changed your ideas and marched with the times.

It is needless to point out that the dowry system has commercialised the sacred institution of marriage and spoiled the prospects of a happy domestic life. To treat marriage as a monetary transaction is morally degrading and socially unsound. Many married girls have committed suicide and many promising girls have remained without a life partner because of the curse of dowry. Dowry system as the worst

social evil is evident from the fact that many incidents of bride burning are occurring daily in our country. No doubt, old customs die hard. But why would we not get rid of them at some time? The custom of giving and receiving dowry has done great harm to our society. It is high time that we uproot it once for all.

The dowry system has proved ruinous for the poor and middle class people. The rich can easily make arrangements for a handsome dowry with their black money for their daughters. The poor while imitating the rich are put to great hardship and often go bankrupt.

So, it is my firm belief that the dowry system is a great curse and its abolition is the crying need of the hour.

Marriage is a union of two souls. As such no abiding and deeply emotional relationship can be built between man and woman if it is raised on the shifting sandy foundation of dowry system. It is we, the young boys and girls who have to give lead in eradicating this social evil. We must propagate against the custom of giving and taking dowry.

As you know, the well-known proverb, charity begins at home, so I have solemnly decided not to accept dowry in whatever form it is given by my would-be father-in-law. I hope you would agree with me in my resolve to have a simple marriage without any show.

Is it too much to expect from you, dear father, to encourage me in cherishing high, noble ideals in life calculated to benefit society as a whole?

Kindly inform the concerned party that we will have the marriage without any dowry, whereas, this would relieve the other party of all worries, it will give me great moral satisfaction.

Regards to dear mother.

Your's affectionate son

Rajat

Write a letter to the editor of some newspaper throwing light on the evil of cramming among students.

Examination Hall

ABC

15-03-2000

The Editor

The Hindustan Times

New Delhi

Sir

I shall be thankful if you kindly allow me to express my views on cramming among students through the columns of your esteemed newspaper.

The standard of education is going down day by day. A great evil prevalent among students these days is of cramming some important questions and taking the examinations. In some cases, the evil has assumed menacing proportions. Some students smuggle important questions torn out of help books and guides to the examination centre. They do not even bother to understand what they are writing.

Our system of education is defective. It has encouraged the habit of mugging up a few important portions from the text books or guides and ignoring the rest. These days, the level of knowledge of the students has become very shallow. They may hold some degrees and diplomas but their grasp of various subjects is very poor.

It will be proper if internal assessment is also made by holding fortnightly tests. The format of question papers should be changed. Short answer questions covering the entire syllabus should be set in the question paper. The number of questions should be such, as can be solved with speed within three hours. This would not leave students any opportunity to resort to cramming or to adopt unfair means. I hope the university authorities will take note of these suggestions.

Yours faithfully

Abhishek

Write a letter to a friend to congratulate her on her success in a competitive examination.

22 Ring Road

Amritsar

13-03-2000

Dear Diksha

How should I express the joy I felt on learning that you have been selected in the Indian Administrative Service! Believe me, the news delighted and thrilled me. Accept my heartiest congratulations on your brilliant success and convey the same to your parents who must be feeling proud of you. Your hardwork has been amply rewarded. You were always a bright student but to have been selected from amongst thousands of candidates is a great achievement. The I.A.S. indeed offers one of the most attractive careers in this country, especially, for women. I.A.S. officers command much respect, are well-paid, have authority, power, status and what not! Moreover, your matrimonial prospects too are now enviable. Your example will definitely be a source of inspiration for me. I shall put in hard and sincere work from now on so as to follow in your footsteps.

You still have a couple of months before you are called up for the training. Why don't you pay me a visit and stay with me for a week or so? We shall have a lot of fun together. And you can give me some tips regarding my studies, too.

Yours sincerely Rashmi

Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper stressing the need for technical and vocational education.

Examination Hall

XYZ

22-02-2001

The Editor

Kashmir Times

Jammu

Dear Sir

I shall feel obliged if you kindly publish my views on the “Need of Technical and Vocational Education in India” in the columns of your esteemed newspaper.

The general type of education that is being imparted at present in schools and colleges does not suit the socio-economic needs of the country. Our country is rich in natural resources. But we do not have experts to exploit them. So in spite of the resources, our people are poor. We need technical and vocational education so that we have a large number of trained engineers, technicians and mechanics.

The present system of education produces young persons fit for clerical jobs only. It has produced teachers, clerks, lawyers and white collar officials only.

The increasing number of educated persons has worsened the problem of unemployment. If during their educational career, they are taught to do things with their own hands, many of them would not join service and accept petty clerical jobs. It is therefore, necessary that young persons should be trained in some vocation of their choice. This will enable them to start their own business. The problem of unemployment will be solved to a great extent.

This is an age of industry and scientific development. We cannot make much progress and compete with the advanced countries of the world without a sufficient number of technically trained hands. Hence, for the rapid industrialization of the country, technical and vocational education is the need of the hour.

Today, only those countries in the world are great which are scientifically and technically advanced. Our own country can be great, if we attach more importance to technical and vocational education than to liberal education. In fact, such education alone can ensure progress and prosperity.

It is a happy sign that the government is alive to the problem. Since, Independence many technical and vocational institutions have been established throughout the country. There is a net work of Engineering Colleges, Agricultural Colleges, Industrial Training Institutes, Vocational Centres etc. The new education policy has laid stress on diversified vocationalization and experience right from class six. However, much remains to be done to popularize technical and vocational education in right earnest. The centre and the states should cooperate to step up technical and vocational education. Besides providing employment to young persons and solving the problem of hunger and unemployment, technical education will create respect for manual labour, train both mind and body, and teach the value of self-help and self-reliance.

Yours truly

ABC

Write a letter to the health officer of your town drawing his attention to the insanitary conditions of the area in which you live.

299/4

Channi Himmat

Jammu

14-9-2000

The Health Officer

Municipal Corporation of Jammu

Jammu

Sir

I find it necessary to draw your attention to the deplorable sanitary conditions in Channi Himmat. It seems that the municipal sweepers of this particular area are the laziest of all in the town. They do not realize their duties at all, and when any resident of the area tries to remonstrate with them, they either pay no heed to what is said or become rude. Heaps of filth remain lying in the streets and countless flies

and mosquitoes buzz over them. The gutters are not cleaned for days and many are over flowing. I approached the sanitary inspector of the area but did not receive a satisfactory reply.

I have an apprehension that, if the present state of affairs continues a little longer, an epidemic will breakout. I, therefore, request you to take the trouble of visiting this area and see the insanitary conditions in which the residents are forced to live. I am sure that you will take prompt action on this letter and thereby earn the gratitude of all of us.

Yours faithfully

T S Lal

11.9 LET US SUM UP

The style of letter varies with the form, the subject-matter and the person to whom it is written. A business/official letter, for instance, shall be brief and to the point, while a letter addressed to a close relative will be long and affectionate. An application shall have to be formal.

A letter should not be written in a careless manner. You should always weigh your words before putting them on papers.

11.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Write a letter to your Principal requesting him to provide the students better facilities and equipment for games.
2. Write a letter to the Principal of your college requesting him to conduct morning assembly in the college.
3. Write a letter to your friend in Japan telling him about the earthquake in Gujarat.
4. Write a letter to your younger sister urging her to read the newspaper regularly.
5. Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper giving your views on students indiscipline in the college.

6. Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper giving your views on the T.V. programmes.
7. Write a letter to the Vice-Chancellor University of Jammu, requesting for reforms in the present system of examination.
8. Write a letter to your penfriend in America telling her about an Indian festival.
9. Write a letter to your father telling him about your college Annual Day function.
10. Write a letter to the Principal of your college making suggestions for the improvement of the college tuck shop.

11.11 SUGGESTED READING

1. Arun Sagar Anand *Modern Letters Writing Course*, V & s Publisher 2015.

STRUCTURE**12.1 Objectives****12.2 Specimen Letters****12.3 Examination Oriented Questions****12.4 Let Us Sum Up****12.5 Suggested Reading**

12.1 OBJECTIVES

This lesson on Letter Writing is in continuation of the earlier lessons on the same topic. In this lesson our objective is to give you further practice in letter writing.

12.2 SPECIMEN LETTERS

1. Write a letter to your friend congratulating him on his recovery from illness.

Examination Hall,
Centre.....,
June 20, 2003.

My dear Mohan,

I learnt about your illness last month. Then I wrote a letter to you but there was no reply. I came to see you at your place but you were away. Your parents had taken you to a hospital at Delhi. You were seriously ill. I was all the time praying for your early recovery. Yesterday, I got a letter from

your father. I am very happy to know that you have fully recovered. Please accept my heartiest congratulations. May God bless you with better health in times to come!

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

X, Y, Z

II. Write a letter to your friend to sympathize with him on his failure in the examination.

Examination Hall,

Centre.....,

June 25, 2003.

Dear Ram,

I received your letter yesterday. I was shocked to read it. You have failed in the B.A.Part-III examination. It is a very sad news for us. I can hardly believe it. You were always regular in studies. I know you are a hard working boy. Did you not fare well in the examination?

Chance plays a very important role in the examinations of today. Don't feel it much. You should now work hard. Try to get good marks in the next examination. It is the age of competitions. Poor marks do not help at any stage. Hard work will surely bring you good marks.

You should not lose heart at all. Please start your regular studies without any loss of time. I shall come to meet you next sunday.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A, B, C

III. Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper appreciating the steps taken by Government to check rise in prices.

Examination Hall,
Centre.....,
July 31, 2003.

To

The Editor,
The Tribune,
Chandigarh,

Dear Sir,

I shall be highly thankful to you if you kindly publish the following matter in your newspaper. Here, I want to highlight that the present Government has succeeded in checking the rise in prices.

It is really very good that the prices of many things have come down. The Government is very careful about it. Sometimes back the prices of things were shooting up. Things of daily use were disappearing. The shopkeepers were making big profits. Now the Government has checked all this. There is regular checking and supervision by the officers. Prices of many things have been controlled. The common man is benefited. The whole credit goes to the present Government.

With thanks,

Yours faithfully,

X, Y, Z

IV. Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper giving your views about the students and strikes in the country.

Examination Hall,
Centre.....,
August 1, 2003.

To

The Editor,
The Tribune,
Chandigarh.

Dear Sir,

I shall be highly thankful to you if you kindly publish the following matter in your newspaper. Here, I want to highlight the problem of students and strikes in the country.

Strikes have become very common these days. One way or the other, everybody thinks of a strike. Students have started taking interest in strikes. It is very unfortunate that Politics has entered into schools and colleges.

Generally, the students want to go on strike near the examination. They do not want to study. Perhaps the education system is not good. In fact, strikes are not useful for anybody. The whole loss is of the students. Many students do not think over it. May God make the students really good students!

I hope good time will prevail soon. The students will realise their responsibility.

With thanks,

Yours faithfully,
A, B, C

- V. Write a letter to the editor of Indian Express pointing out the need for the improvement of roads in your city.**

Examination Hall,
Centre.....,
August 2, 2003

To

The Editor,
Indian Express,
Ambala City.

Dear Sir,

I shall feel highly obliged if you kindly publish this letter in your newspaper. In this letter, I want to highlight the problem of roads in the city which need improvement.

Sanitation in the city is the duty of the municipal committee. It depends on the drainage system and the roads of the city. The authorities do not care for it. Almost all the roads in the city are in a bad shape. Water collects on them. During rains, deep water collects there. It does not get dry for many days. The people face great difficulty. People living nearby are badly hit. Mosquitoes breed there. It is a regular disturbance to them.

The roads have not been repaired for the last ten years. The vehicles can't run smoothly. People going on foot can hardly go through without spoiling their clothes and shoes. The municipal committee should see to this problem. For shortage of funds, the higher authorities may be contacted.

It is requested that improvement of roads should be done at the earliest. All efforts should be made to do the work before the start of the rainy season. I hope an immediate action will be taken in this direction.

With thanks,

Yours faithfully,
Roll No. A, B, C

VI. Request for an application form.

C 3/297 Janakpuri

.....

.....2003

The.....

.....

Jammu

Sub :

.....

Kindly to your ad..... in the of 5
for the of trainedin yourI
requestyou to kindly..... for the post at
thegiven above.

.....

Yours

(Amrita Singh)

VII. Write a letter to the Civil Supplies Officer requesting him to make proper arrangement for the supply of kerosene oil in your village.

Saktipur,

P.O. Akbarpur, Kanpur.

12 November, 2003

To

The Civil Supplies Officer,

Kanpur.

I am writing this on behalf of the villagers of Saktipur who are experiencing great hardship in obtaining supplies of daily necessities from local shopkeepers.

Shortage of kerosene oil is particularly acute and we have to close our doors at nightfall for want of this essential commodity-essential for people in the villages. We shall be grateful if you pull up the owners of local ration shops, if they are at fault, or take such other steps as may be necessary to ensure immediate supply of kerosene to our village.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

C.D. Chandel

12.3 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- i) Write a letter to the Principal of your college complaining against your canteen contractor.
- i) Write an application to the Principal of your college for a character certificate.
- iii) Write a letter to your father describing your daily routine and informing him about the progress in your studies.
- iv) Write a letter to the Vice-Chancellor appealing for reforms in the present system of examination.
- v) Write a letter to your friend describing your first day in college.
- vi) Write a letter to your mother describing her the importance of girl's education.

- vii) Write a letter to your friend in America telling him/her about Indian culture.
- viii) Write a letter to your younger brother advising him to become an NSS volunteer.
- ix) Write a letter to your friend describing her your recent visit to Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine.
- x) Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper airing your views about the traffic chaos/
mismanagement in your city.

12.4 LET US SUM UP

Letter writing is a very important branch of composition. It is an art which can be acquired through practice.

12.5 SUGGESTED READING

1. S. G. Gupta, *Attand book for letter writing*, Arihant Publications. 2018.

STRUCTURE**13.1 Introduction****13.2 Objectives****13.3 One Word Substitution****13.4 Self-Check Exercise****13.5 Check Your Progress (CYP)****13.6 Let Us Sum Up****13.7 Answer Key (CYP)****13.8 Suggested Reading**

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learner one-word substitution is an important concept in the English language and a necessary topic of vocabulary to make communication concise, lucid, and easy. Read the sentences given below:

1. Her younger son has *an extreme fear of dogs*: Her son has **cynophobia**.
2. I am interested in *the study of ancient things*: I am interested in **archaeology**.
3. That boy keeps himself *reserved and conservative*: That boy is an **introvert**.
4. She is someone *who puts forth an idea that she herself doesn't believe*: She is a **hypocrite**.
5. This person is a *hater of mankind* : This person is a **misanthrope**.

You must have understood that how the words in italics are replaced by one appropriate word given in bold letters, which we refer to as one-word substitution.

In one word substitution a single word is used to appropriately replace a group of words forming a sentence.

Knowledge of one word substitution helps in achieving proficiency in English Language.

13.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to acquaint the learners with one word substitution.

13.3 ONE WORD SUBSTITUTION

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Something dull and uninteresting. | — Monotonous |
| 2. | A style full of words. | — Verbose |
| 3. | An office for which no salary is paid. | — Honorary |
| 4. | A person who is liked by all. | — Popular |
| 5. | A speech made for the first time. | — Maiden |
| 6. | A person who believes in fate. | — Fatalist |
| 7. | That which ends in death. | — Fatal |
| 8. | A person who is unable to pay debts. | — Insolvent or Bankrupt |
| 9. | That must happen. | — Inevitable |
| 10. | A speech made without previous preparation. | — Extempore |
| 11. | Remarks not to the point. | — Irrelevant |
| 12. | A story which is difficult to believe. | — Incredible |
| 13. | One who cannot be elected according to law. | — Ineligible |

14.	Handwriting which cannot be easily read	— Illegible
15.	Fit to be eaten	— Edible
16.	A loss which cannot be repaired	— Irreparable
17.	One who is all powerful	— Omnipotent
18.	Something that is present everywhere	— Omnipresent
19.	From time to time	— Occasionally
20.	To do a thing at one and the same time.	— Simultaneously
21.	An impression which cannot be easily removed.	— Indelible
22.	That which cannot be satisfied	— Insatiable
23.	A word which is no longer in use	— Obsolete
24.	A person who lives on others	— Parasite
25.	To repeat word for word	— Verbatim
26.	One who knows many languages	— Linguist
27.	A person who looks at the bright side of life	— Optimist
28.	A person who looks at the dark side of life	— Pessimist
29.	That which is contrary to law	— Illegal
30.	A person with a bad reputation	— Notorious
31.	A speech which cannot be understood	— Unintelligible
32.	To lay stress on	— Emphasis
33.	Two persons ruling or living at the same time.	— Contemporary
34.	Incapable of being cured	— Incurable

35.	With one voice	—Unanimously
36.	To root out an evil	—Eradicate
37.	A person who lives on vegetables	—Vegetarian
38.	An assembly of hearers	—Audience
39.	A person who eats too much	—Glutton
40.	A person who can neither read nor write	—Illiterate
41.	Going from bad to worse	—Deteriorate
42.	A person who is a total abstainer from all alcoholic drinks	—Teetotaller
43.	A person who is hard to please	—Fastidious
44.	One who believes in God	—Theist
45.	A place where dead bodies are kept	—Mortuary
46.	Difficulties which cannot be overcome	—Insurmountable
47.	Incapable of being conquered	—Invincible
48.	To injure one's reputation	—Defame
49.	A person who thinks only of himself	—Egoist
50.	To excite a person to commit a crime	—Instigate
51.	Examination of a dead body	—Postmortem
52.	A man interested in the welfare of women	—Feminist
53.	To be reserved in speech	—Reticent
54.	One who eats human flesh	—Cannibal
55.	A substance which can be easily broken	—Brittle

56.	One who knows everything	— Omniscient
57.	Something useful for health	— Wholesome
58.	A medicine that kills germs	— Germicide
59.	A person who goes along a road on foot	— Pedestrian
60.	A cinema show held in the afternoon	— Matinee
61.	Of one's own, free will	— Voluntarily
62.	To make enquiries	— Investigate
63.	Life story of a person written by somebody else	— Biography
64.	Life story of a person written by himself / herself	— Autobiography
65.	Word opposite in meaning to other	— Antonym
66.	Words having a similar but not an identical meaning	— Synonym
67.	A book or paper written by hand	— Manuscript
68.	A man of unusual habits	— Eccentric
69.	Want of rain	— Drought
70.	One who does not believe in God	— Atheist
71.	A person who is indifferent to pleasure or pain	— Stoic
72.	To completely destroy	— Annihilate
73.	A person who cannot be easily approached	— Inaccessible
74.	A place where clothes are kept	— Wardrobe
75.	Animal that eats flesh	— Carnivorous
76.	That which does not bear the name of the writer	— Anonymous

77.	A person who cannot make a mistake	— Infallible
78.	A person who is fond of refined sensuous pleasures	— Epicurean
79.	The act of renouncing the crown by a king	— Abdication
80.	A person living in a foreign country	— Alien
81.	A child born after the death of his father or a book published after the death of the writer.	— Posthumous
82.	Belief in God and nature	— Pantheism
83.	A lover of humanity	— Philanthropist
84.	One who is at home in all countries	— Cosmopolitan
85.	One who is out to destroy all governments	— Anarchist
86.	To favour one's own relatives	— Nepotism
87.	Too much official formality	— Red-tapism
88.	One who bears the same name as the other	— Namesake
89.	That which is found everywhere	— Universal
90.	A man whose wife is dead	— Widower
91.	Without money	— Penniless
92.	Something that cannot be seen	— Invisible
93.	Something that can be seen	— Visible
94.	Easily made angry	— Irritable
95.	A breaker of images	— Iconoclast
96.	To turn friends into enemies	— Alienate

97.	One who is keenly desirous of money	—Avaricious
98.	More advanced for one's age	—Precocious
99.	A person with narrow religious views	—Fanatic
100.	Something that cannot be dispensed with	—Indispensable
101.	A list of books etc.	—Catalogue
102.	Incapable of being corrected	—Incorrigible
103.	A person's last utterance	—Swan-song
104.	A style which cannot be imitated	—Inimitable
105.	A person lacking knowledge	—Ignorant
106.	Something that cannot be heard	—Inaudible
107.	Something that can be heard	—Audible
108.	That which lasts for a short time	—Transient
109.	Incapable of being seen through	—Opaque
110.	A figure with eight sides	—Octagon
111.	A person who is deprived of protection of law	—Outlaw
112.	Capable of being seen through	—Transparent
113.	That which can be dissolved	—Soluble
114.	That which cannot be dissolved	—Insoluble
115.	Murder of one's self	—Suicide
116.	Capable of two interpretations	—Ambiguous
117.	State of being married	—Matrimony

118.	Female animals which suckle their young one's	—Mammals
119.	Worthy to be remembered	—Memorable
120.	One who speaks for others	—Spokesman/Spokesperson
121.	Trade prohibited by law	—Illicit
122.	Giving and receiving	—Exchange
123.	A scheme that can be put into practice	—Practicable
124.	A student who is absent from the class without permission	—Truant
125.	A government carried on through officers	—Bureaucracy
126.	A child brought up by those who are not his parents	—Foster-child
127.	A vote which decides an issue in hand	—Casting vote
128.	Objects having life	—Animate
129.	Objects having no life	—Inanimate
130.	One who spends money lavishly	—Spendthrift
131.	That which cannot be calculated	—Incalculable
132.	Persons working in the same department	—Colleagues
133.	Animals which live in water	—Aquatic
134.	Animals which like to live in flocks	—Gregarious
135.	Government by the priests	—Theocracy
136.	A person in the habit of continual talking	—Loquacious
137.	Animals with two feet	—Biped
138.	The custom of having two wives or two husbands at a time	—Bigamy

139.	Animals which live on land only	— Terrestrial
140.	Liable to catch fire easily	— Inflammable
141.	Incapable of being seized	— Impregnable
142.	Money paid to employees on retirement	— Gratuity
143.	One who does not show favour to anyone	— Impartial
144.	The state of being unmarried	— Celibacy
145.	To preserve from extinction	— Perpetuate
146.	To wander from the main theme	— Digress
147.	To throw light on something difficult	— Elucidate
148.	A formal accusation or charge against a person	— Indictment
149.	Practice of spying	— Espionage
150.	To work out the plan in all its details	— Elaborate
151.	Having many wives at a time	— Polygamy
152.	That which cannot be explained	— Inexplicable
153.	That which cannot be defended	— Indefensible
154.	Government by nobles	— Aristocracy
155.	A man who is too much like a woman	— Effeminate
156.	One who does not care for literature and art	— Philistine
157.	A person suffering from nervous disorder	— Neurotic
158.	An exaggerated statement	— Hyperbola
159.	Government by one person	— Autocracy

160.	This thing is very pleasing to eat	— Tooth-some
161.	The murder of a king	— Regicide
162.	The murder of infants	— Infanticide
163.	The act of speaking about one's thoughts when one is alone	— Soliloquy
164.	Making more rapid in speed	— Accelerate
165.	The murder of one's own father	— Patricide
166.	A person who has no regard for other's feelings	— Inconsiderate
167.	To express disapproval of	— Dissent
168.	Story of old time gods or heroes	— Myth
169.	The art practiced by the statesmen	— Diplomacy
170.	To lower the value of	— Depreciate
171.	The notice of somebody's death in a newspaper	— Obituary
172.	A line of persons waiting	— Queue
173.	One who keeps guard	— Watchman
174.	Of very little worth	— Trivial
175.	Not expert in a profession	— Lay-man
176.	An unexpected good fortune	— God-send
177.	To make the facts known	— Intimate
178.	That which cannot be counted	— Innumerable
179.	To join as friend or partner	— Associate
180.	Speaking in a slow and melancholy manner	— Pensive

181.	What we say about a man after his death	— Epitaph
182.	To run the risk of losing one's right	— Jeopardise
183.	Place of permanent residence	— Domicile
184.	That which can be explained	— Explicable
185.	A general pardon by the government to political offenders	— Amnesty
186.	A member of the middle class	— Bourgeois
187.	Confusion of mind	— Bewilderment / Perplexity
188.	To atone for all sins	— Expiate
189.	A place where birds are kept	— Aviary
190.	The science of plant life	— Botany
191.	A movement which cannot be suppressed	— Irrepressible
192.	A lady's umbrella	— Parasol
193.	A room for storing grain	— Granary
194.	Deviation from the common rule	— Anomaly
195.	That which cannot be changed	— Irrevocable
196.	One who is insensible to kind thoughts or sympathetic feelings	— Callous
197.	A measure which cannot be justified	— Unjustified
198.	A medicine that induces sleep	— Narcotic
199.	To unearth by digging	— Excavate
200.	A rise and fall in the waves	— Undulate
201.	Talking disrespectfully of sacred things	— Blasphemy

202.	Practice of spying	— Espionage
203.	A medicine which prevents putrefaction	— Antiseptic
204.	A disease inherited from birth	— Congenital
205.	One who walks in sleep	— Somnambulist
206.	To compel a person to do a thing	— Coerce
207.	Taking a man out of difficulty	— Extricate
208.	A place for invalids or convalescents	— Sanatorium
209.	The murder of one's own mother	— Matricide
210.	To change one's mind so often	— Vacillate

13.4 SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

1. Which can be eaten -
2. One who loves books -
3. One who speaks less -
4. One who goes on foot -
5. One who believe in fate -
6. One who is quite like women -
7. One who loves mankind -
8. One who is recovering from illness -
9. One who works for free.
10. One who is easily deceived -

13.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (CYP)

Exercise I

Write the correct one word substitution for the words in italics from the cluster of bold words :

1. She is interested in the *study* of living things.
2. Her father is working in *the study of flying aeroplanes*.
3. He has *fear of books*.
4. My brother visited *the college where he studied*.
5. I love *the study of stars*.
6. God is *present everywhere and is all powerful*
7. Japan can boast of having most *elderly number* in their country.
8. *Land animals that breed in water* are considered as an important component of the global ecosystem.

Amphibians, Botany, omnipresent, Bibliophobia, omnipotent, centenarians, Alma Mater, astronomy, aviation

Exercise II

Choose the correct option and rewrite the sentence:

1. I don't mind talking to him about the project but he is *a person who thinks only of himself*.
 1. Eccentric
 2. Boaster
 3. Egoist
 4. Proud

2. The doctors have put him for a *blood purification process as his kidneys malfunctions*.
1. Dialysis
 2. Ventilation
 3. Integration
 4. Catharsis
3. Sameera prefers to *travel on foot* for short distance. She is a _____.
1. Pedlar
 2. Pedestrian
 3. Jogger
 4. Stickler
4. This annual function I am participating in the competition where I have to give a *speech without any previous preparation*. I am participating in _____.
1. Elocution
 2. Dialect
 3. Dialogue
 4. Extempore

Exercise III

Choose the correct option and rewrite the sentence:

1. Ram is an *individual who is unable to express or interact easily*
 - A) Extrovert
 - B) Introvert
 - C) Ambivert
 - D) None of the Above

2. *A stream of water moving very fast hit the ship.*
 - A) Current
 - B) Tide
 - C) Torrent
 - D) Storm

3. Shikha *spends a lot of money* on clothes. Her cousins call her a :
 - A) Frugal
 - B) Economical
 - C) Miser
 - D) Spendthrift

4. Aman is really *scared of thunderstorms*. He suffers :

- A) Acrophobia
- B) Ophidiophobia
- C) Nephophobia
- D) Astraphobia

Exercise IV

- 1. A judge's private room, without the press or the public being present-
- 2. A period of time in the past that was idyllically happy and peaceful-
- 3. A tax or levy-
- 4. An abbreviation formed from the initial letters of other words and pronounced as a word-
- 5. An ability to do several things at the same time-
- 6. An ability to express oneself well in speech-
- 7. An ability to make good judgements and take quick decisions-
- 8. An ability to see what will or might happen in the future-
- 9. An ability to stay calm in difficult or dangerous situations-
- 10. An ability to use one's hands skillfully or an ability to think quickly and effectively-
- 11. An ability, talent, or special skill needed to do something-
- 12. Able to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens-
- 13. Able to do many different things-
- 14. Able to exist together without trouble or conflict going together well-

15. Acceptable according to the law, fair or reasonable-
16. Accepting and closely following the traditional beliefs and customs of a religion-
17. An act of burying a dead person-
18. An act of carefully watching someone or something especially in order to prevent or detect a crime-
19. An act of causing two people or groups to become friendly again after an argument or crime-
20. An act of committing a serious crime such as murder or rape-
21. An act of destroying or damaging something deliberately so that it does not work correctly-
22. An act of ending the employment of a worker or group of workers-
23. An act of explaining something-
24. An act of getting money back from people it has been paid to-
25. An act of going or travelling to a place along a way that is different from the usual or planned way-
26. An act of identifying a disease, illness, or problem by examining someone or something-
27. An act of illegally copying someone's product or invention without permission-

13.6 LET US SUM UP

In this lesson you have learnt that one-word substitution refers to those types of questions where a sentence or a phrase is simply replaced by a word that describes the whole sentence. In this lesson you have been exposed to a long list of one word substitution. Knowledge of these words will not only help you in scoring good marks but also develop excellent proficiency in English language. Besides, it shall also enhance your reading, speaking and writing skills. One-word substitutions makes the sentences structure

more precise. Do consult the dictionary and read books and magazines to have a good knowledge about the use of one-word substitution.

13.7 ANSWER KEY (CYP)

Exercise - I

1. Amphibians
2. Botany
3. omnipresent
4. Bibliophobia
5. omnipotent
6. centenarians
7. Alma mater
8. Astronomy, aviation

Exercise - II

1. Egoist
2. Dialysis
3. Pedestrian
4. Extempore

Exercise - III

1. Introvert
2. Tide
3. Spendthrift

4. Nephophobia

Exercise - IV

1. In camera
2. Halcyon
3. Cess
4. Acronym
5. Multitasking
6. Oracy
7. Acumen
8. Foresight
9. Sangfroid
10. Dexterity
11. Knack
12. Resilient
13. Versatile
14. Compatible
15. Valid
16. Orthodox
17. Interment
18. Surveillance
19. Reconciliation

20. Felony
21. Sabotage
22. Layoff
23. Exposition
24. Clawback
25. Detour
26. Diagnosis
27. Piracy

13.8 SUGGESTED READING

1. Tolani, Roshan. *One Word Substitutions*. Arihant Publications. 2014.
2. Bargohain, Pallvi. *One Word Substitution*. Prabhat Prakashan. 2012.

STRUCTURE**14.1 Introduction****14.2 Objectives****14.3 Specimen Exercises****14.4 Check Your Progress-I****14.5 Check Your Progress-II****14.6 Let Us Sum Up****14.7 Answer Key****14.8 Suggested Reading**

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Passage on vocabulary test is a test for knowledge (as of meaning of use) of a selected list of words that is often used as part of an intelligence test.

Example

It's very simple to ___1___ bank ___2___ in Britain, There are very few ___3___ Just go to your local a few forms, and that's it. You will probably only have to pay ___6___ if there is no money in your account or if you borrow money from the bank, in other words if you have a(an) ___7___.

1. A) account B) close C) open D) fill in

2. A) account B) accountant C) open D) fill in
3. A) overdrafts B) documents C) formalities D) openings
4. A) overdraft B) branch C) formalities D) account
5. A) account B) collect C) open D) fill in
6. A) account B) bank charges C) formalities D) documents
7. A) overdraft B) branch C) formality D) open

14.2 OBJECTIVES

Our objective in this lesson is to acquaint you with the correct meaning/ appropriate use of the correct word in the blanks. This will help you to add new words to your vocabulary and also to use the correct expression.

Exercise 1

Flying is fun. I like being in a big ___1___ with the ___2___ (stewards and stewardesses) looking after me. They walk up and down the ___3___ bringing meals and drinks; and if the flight is going through some ___4___ they warn everybody that it might be bit bumpy and ask us to fasten our ___5___. On a long flight I like listening to music through the ___6___ available to all passengers, and sometimes I have a sleep. I enjoy it all so much that I never want the plane to ___7___.

1. A) airliner B) airline C) cabin D) land
2. A) airliners B) aisle C) cabin crew D) passengers
3. A) airline B) aisle C) turbulence D) land
4. A) seat belts B) aisle C) burbulence D) land
5. A) seat belts B) seats C) belts D) land
6. A) airliners B) headphones C) telephones D) aisles
7. A) take off B) seat C) crew D) land

14.3 SPECIMEN EXERCISES

Exercise 1

Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the cluster of words given :-

Australia is a land of _____. It is _____ one of the oldest of land masses. It is half a _____ away from Europe, but its people are largely of European _____ and they follow a western. One of the most _____ populated of _____, it is also one of the most highly _____ with 85 percent of its people living in cities. Australia is a _____ land of great _____, covering an area of 76,82,303 sq km, almost twice the combined area of India and Pakistan. The _____ point in Australia, Mount Kosciusko has an elevation of only 2228 m.

(Combination, contrasts, lowest, highest, discoveries, distances, richly, sparsely, ascent, descent, highstyle, lifestyle, urbanized, ruralized, youngest, smallest, word, world, notions, nations.)

Exercise 2

One important _____ of this new _____ is that we now _____ that _____ in _____ design and in roads and crossings are most cost effective than money spent on safety _____ drivers. Safety _____, safety _____, and driver 'education' make _____ for the educators, _____, and hoarding _____ but do very little to _____ lives.

(Consequent, consequence, safe, save, advertisements, advertisers, ownership, owners, understanding, grasping, know, now, improvisation, improvement, educational, education, pastels, posters, weeks, weak, money, honey, vehicular, vehicle.)

Exercise 3

_____ researchers _____ the _____ have been saying for _____ that _____ don't just happen. They are very often the _____ of bad

or defective _____ and _____ environmental design. When those in _____ are insensitive to the _____ of safety, the people _____ for no fault of theirs.

(resultant, result, accessory, equipment, relief, trauma, round, around, sullen, suffer, command, authority, concern, issues, world, word, ears, years poverty, poor, accidents, incidents)

Exercise 4

1. This _____ behaviour made the manager think that he was a detective.
2. The writer _____ the amount.
3. _____ he though he was a millionaire.
4. The writer wanted to open an _____.
5. Reckless with misery, I made a _____.
6. I want to _____ a cheque.
7. The manager was a _____ man.
8. When I go to a bank I get _____.
9. My voice was _____.
10. He _____ the accountant.

(called, happy, rattled, millionaire, plunge, step, sepulchral, poked, draw, drawing, former, later, account, picture, strange, obsession, calculated, checked, eccentric, innovation)

Exercise 5

Our _____ with motorcar and motorcycle has blinded us to _____ about other forms of _____. No one seems to be _____ about the more _____ and _____ bus transport. _____ of articles have appeared about the _____

of innovation in Indian cars, but there has been no such _____ over the lack of _____
in bus _____.

(invoke, innovation, reason, concern, design, drawing, clamour, clamp, liking, obsession, transport,
transition, sullen, comfortable, safer, solid, paucity, scores, lack, adequate)

14.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-I

Exercise 1

Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the cluster of words:

1. _____ me, waiter. Can I have another glass of water, please?
2. I'm _____ Sir, but I don't know.
3. I'm taking kids on a _____ to Pindari.
4. May I borrow your book for the _____ please?
5. I _____ you are keeping well.

(vocation, vacation, sorry, sad, excuse, hello, weekend, weak, trust, thrust)

Exercise 2

1. A _____ of lean sheep caught his eye in the plain.
2. The king was _____.
3. The _____ stopped.
4. The shepherd was composing _____ in praise of his love.
5. A _____ is a useless weapon against a hungry wolf.

(cluster, flock, flute, fluid, verses, very, car, can, astonished, instant)

Exercise 3

A man was on a _____ in his _____ and a great _____ arose. All began to _____ and cry out of fear. This went on for sometime and no one could _____ them.

(wale, wail, silent, silence, storm, tide, voyage, journey, ship, sheep)

Exercise 4

1. My grandfather's _____ hung above the mantelpiece.
2. She had always been short and _____.
3. She _____ about the house.
4. Her silver _____ were scattered untidly.
5. He wore a big _____ and loose fitting clothes.

(hopped, hobbled, obsese, absurd, locks, keys, turban, bun, picture, portrait.)

14.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-II

Exercise 5

I love books. I love to read. I'm a real ___1___, and I love ___2___ in bookshops, just looking briefly at one book after another. I look at the ___3___, the photos or drawings. If there are foreign or technical words in the book, I look at the ___4___ at the back for their meanings (unless they're explained in ___5___ at the bottom of the pages) and I look at the ___6___ also at the back, which is a list of other books on the same subject. And I use the library a lot. I ___7___ two or three books a week, and I have to pay a (an) ___8___ if I return them late. Friends often recommend books to me, and I also read book ___9___ in the newspapers. I don't always agree with them, but anyway they let me know what new books are being ___10___.

1. A) review B) footnote C) glossary D) bookworm

2. A) borrow B) browse C) lend D) publish
3. A) reviews B) illustrations C) dictionaries D) bibliographies
4. A) reviews B) footnotes C) glossary D) bookworm
5. A) pricelists B) footnotes C) glossaries D) dictionaries
6. A) reviews B) covers C) contents D) bibliography
7. A) borrow B) browse C) lend D) book
8. A) fine B) attention C) time D) bookworm
9. A) reviews B) illustrations C) pricelists D) names
10. A) created B) produced C) punished D) published

Exercise 6

Maureen often gives dinner parties at home. She loves ____1____. She lays the table: puts the ____2____ in the right places, sets out the plates and puts a clean white ____3____ at each place. For the meal itself, she usually gives her guests some kind of ____4____ first, for example soup or melon. Next comes the ____5____, which is usually meat (unless some of her guests overline ____6____ or if they're on a special ____7____) with a ____8____ of salad. For ____9____ it's usually fruit or ice-cream, and then coffee. When everyone has gone home, she must think about doing ____10____ as in the kitchen the ____11____ is full of dirty ____12____.

1. A) diet B) entertaining C) crockery D) side dish
2. A) dessert B) main course C) cutlery D) side dish
3. A) sink B) paper C) cutlery D) napkin
4. A) main course B) dessert C) starter D) side dish
5. A) main course B) dessert C) main course D) side dish

6. A) vegetarian B) entertaining C) crockery D) cook

7. A) diet B) entertaining C) cutlery D) main course

8. A) diet B) dessert C) cutlery D) side dish

9. A) side dish B) dessert C) starter D) main course

10. A) washing up B) cooking C) diet D) cutlery

11. A) refrigerator B) crockery C) cutlery D) sink

12. A) sink B) crockery C) meal D) napkins

14.6 LET US SUM UP

In this lesson we have learnt through different exercises that vocabulary is useful for developing knowledge and skills as it helps in comprehension, and also fluency. Researcher Johnson O'Connor stated that "a person's vocabulary level is the best single predictor of occupational success." Let us go a step further to add that success in life depends on your communication skills, and vocabulary plays an important role. Develop your vocabulary to enhance your communication skills by reading books, watching documentaries and writing your thoughts and ideas.

14.7 ANSWER KEY

Specimen Exercises

Exercise 3

Trauma, around, world, years, accidents, result, equipment, poor, authority, issues, suffer

Exercise 4

1. Eccentric 2. Checked 3. Later 4. Account 5. Plunge 6. Draw 7. Strange 8. Rattled 9. Sepulchral
10. Called.

Check Your Progress

Exercise 1

1. Excuse 2. Sorry 3. Vacation 4. Weekend 5. Trust

Check Your Progress Exercise 5

1. d; 2. b; 3. b; 4. c; 5. b; 6. d; 7. a; 8. a; 9. a; 10. d.

Exercise 6

1. a; 2. c; 3. d; 4. c; 5. a; 6. a; 7. a; 8. a; 9. b; 10. a; 11. d; 12. b.

14.8 SUGGESTED READING

1. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
2. Good Grammar - Ratna Sagar P. Ltd. (Publisher)

STRUCTURE**15.1 Introduction****15.2 Objectives****15.3 Types of Prepositions****15.4 Check Your Progress-I****15.5 Answer Key****15.6 Common Mistakes with Prepositions****15.7 Check Your Progress-II****15.8 Let Us Sum Up****15.8 Suggested Reading**

15.1 INTRODUCTION

A preposition is a word or group of words used before a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase to show direction, time, place, location, spatial relationships, or to introduce an object. The most common prepositions are *at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, with*, etc. Other common prepositions are *about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, because of, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, closeto, down, during, except, inside, insteadof, into, like, near, off, on top of, onto, out of, outside, over, past, since, through, toward, under, until, up, upon, within, without*.

Prepositions are seen to show some key characteristics and perform some vital functions when used in sentences:

1. The market will be closed **from** 9 p.m. **to** 9 a.m.
2. Can you come **after** some time?
3. Will you be **with** Ram or Mahek?
4. I love sitting **beside** the beach **at** night.
5. Rachel met Phoebe **by** the lake.
6. I will be going **to** church **in** the morning.
7. She placed the plates **on** the dining table.
8. Baskar found the cat hiding **under** the bed.
9. Will you be **with** Raimy or Mazeeka?
10. I love sitting **on** the beach **at** night.

Do it yourself

Write the preposition used in each sentence in the blank given opposite:

- Rachel met Phoebe by the lake.
- Finn stood opposite Lisa.
- The grocery store is right in front of the bus stop.
- My brother climbed onto the roof.
- It feels great to sit beneath the trees and read.

15.2 OBJECTIVES

Our objective in this lesson is to familiarize the learner with the different types of preposition and their correct use in sentences to improve your communication and writing skills :

15.3 TYPES OF PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions can be divided into four main types:

Prepositions of Time – used to show when something is happening. For example:

1. We will be meeting **on** Friday.
2. The supermarket will be closed **from** 9 p.m. **to** 9 a.m.
3. Can you come **after** some time?
4. We have been asked to work from home **until** the end of May.
5. The whole country was asked to stay home **during** the pandemic to ensure safety and well-being.

Prepositions of Place – indicate the place or position of something. For example:

6. I have kept the book I borrowed from you **on** the table.
7. Henry hid **behind** the door.
8. The dog jumped **over** the fence.
9. Can you place the red roses in **between** the white daisies?
10. He was waiting **in front of** the EB office.

Prepositions of Direction – used to denote the direction in which something travels or moves.

For example:

11. The girl ran **toward** her father the moment she saw him.
12. Jagmohan jumped **into** the river to help his sister.
13. Veena passed the book **to** Priya.
14. When will Sat be returning **from** ucknow?

15. Naman lives **across** the street.

Prepositions of Location – employed to denote the location of a particular object. For example:

16. Kim would be staying **at** his cousin's place for the weekend.

17. Make sure you keep all the toys back **in** its place after you play.

18. I lay **on** the floor for a really long time.

Prepositions of Spatial Relationship – used to denote an object's movement away from the source and towards a source. For example:

19. Neena sat leaning **against** the wall.

20. The circus was stationed **opposite** the children's park.

21. Lakhan sat **beneath** the trees.

22. Sham sat **beside** the stairs.

23. We spent the evening walking **around** the pond.

Prepositional Phrase – a combination of a preposition and a noun(the object it is affecting). For example:

24. See to it that you reach the college **on time**.

25. The cosmetics you asked for are **out of stock**.

26. Why don't we try taking classes outside **for a change**.

27. Make sure you fill in all the forms **at once**.

28. Salma was able to finish it only **with the help of** her friends.

15.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-I:

A) Fill in the blanks with the appropriate preposition in the following paragraph:

1. Would you please tell me howget to the baseball park? Certainly. You go down Arch

Street two blocks and turn left....King Street. Stay King Street..... about two miles. You will go to a bridge and through a tunnel. You will come to Ocean Avenue about four blocks after you leave the tunnel. Turn right on Ocean Avenue, and in the middle of the block you will see the main entrance of the ball park. I would suggest that you drive your car to the block and park in the parking lot behind the field.

B) Highlight the prepositions in the paragraph:

2. On June 13 the Circle Players will open at Star Theater a revival of George Bernard Shaw's play, Major Barbara. When the play opened in Philadelphia a week ago, the critics gave the Circle Players enthusiastic reviews. Good reviews are not unusual for the Circle Players, who have thrilled audiences with their performances for the past decade. In fact, they were so loudly acclaimed in London for their performance of Major Barbara that the play ran for three years. Tickets are now on sale in the box office at the Star Theatre during the three week engagement. There will be a performance every night, except Sunday at 8:30p.m., and a matinee on wednesday and saturday at 2:30p.m. Reservations may be made by mail or telephone.

C) Write the correct preposition in the blanks:

1. Look the painting on the wall.
2. He has cut his finger a knife.
3. The novel was written a famous author.
4. He will arrive 7 a.m.
5. Trains pass the tunnel.
6. There are dirty spots the floor.
7. Leave the papers the table.
8. They sat the grass.

9. We stood one foot.

10. Tom had a blister his foot.

D) Underline the correct preposition in the sentences given below:

- He wanted his team to be the best of in the world.
- When I came back in to England, my host family told me a parcel had arrived for me.
- Last Friday we had a party of for one of my colleagues.
- I am not only writing for on my family's behalf, but also on behalf of the whole neighbourhood.
- We decided to go to the south of Srinagar in to a small village called Roo.
- At first, they were in on good terms with each other.
- To be successful in at something is to have a passion.
- We would like a seminar in on the subject of achieving customer service.
- It could be a centre of for recreation and tourism.
- The figures are not available in at the moment.
- The reasons of for the increasing weight (of people) in some countries can be impacted by fast food.
- More than one in five students were enrolled to for further study.
- I often used to go out and play with my friend at in the countryside.
- The technologies are based in on the old history or culture.

15.5 ANSWER KEY:

Check Your Progress I - C)

1. at
2. with
3. by
4. at
5. through
6. on
7. on
8. on
9. on
10. on

15.6 COMMON MISTAKES WITH PREPOSITIONS

Lets read carefully examples of common mistakes with prepositions and how to correct them.

1. **Incorrect:** I cannot agree **to** you in this situation.
Correct: I cannot agree **with** you in this situation.
2. **Incorrect:** He agreed **with** my demands.
Correct: He agreed **to** my demands.
3. **Incorrect:** She is waiting the arrival of the postman.
Correct: She is waiting **for** the arrival of the postman.
4. **Incorrect:** Please wait **inside** the white line.
Correct: Please wait **behind** the white line.

5. **Incorrect:** I have been waiting **from** three hours.
 Correct: I have been waiting **for** three hours.
6. **Incorrect:** He reached **at** the airport at 3 pm.
 Correct: He reached the airport at 3 pm.
7. **Incorrect:** The flight will depart **in** 8:00 am.
 Correct: The flight will depart **at** 8:00 am.
8. **Incorrect:** Yeah! We're just **on** time to catch the train.
 Correct: Yeah! We're just **in** time to catch the train.
9. **Incorrect:** We should pay our bills **in** time.
 Correct: We should pay our bills **on** time.
10. **Incorrect:** I bought the bag **with** \$100.
 Correct: I bought the bag **for** \$100.

15.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - II

Tick the correct sentence:

1. Who is **in** the phone?
2. I meet the board members **at** the office.
3. This is the tallest building **of** the world.
4. I often go to school **by** bus.
5. They go to the bus station **on** foot.
6. I can see many flowers **at** the picture.
7. Have you ever been **to** Singapore?

8. The Sun rises **in** the East.
9. Keep **to** the left, please.
10. Sophia invests her money **in** the stock market.

15.8 LET US SUM UP

English prepositions act as vital markers of a sentence that helps to indicate relationships between locations, persons, or objects. Students will be informed of the preposition for class 4. These structural words displays a relationship between the noun and pronoun in a sentence. This chapter also details the common mistakes that might occur while using themThe most common preposition mistakes include incorrect use of prepositions, incorrect placement of prepositions, and incorrect use of prepositional phrases. These mistakes can lead to confusion or misunderstanding in a sentence, so it is important to be aware of *them* and learn how to avoid them.

15.9 SUGGESTED READING

- 1.H.S. Bhatia. *Preposition and their Usage*. Paperback. 2018. Ramesh Publishing House; Eighteenth edition. Print.
- 2.Abul Hashem .*Dictionary of Preposition (with Meanings & Usages)* . 2023. Ramesh Publishing House. print
- 3.Thomas Celentano. *Beyond Prepositions for ESL Learners - Mastering English Prepositions for Fluency* . 2020. Draft 2 Digital Publishers.

STRUCTURE

16.1 Introduction

16.2 Objectives

16.3 Conjunction & Types of Conjunction

16.4 Check Your Progress

16.5 Answer Key

16.6 Let Us Sum Up

16.7 Suggested Reading

16.1 INTRODUCTION

I like cooking. I like eating. I don't like washing dishes afterward.

Are not the above sentences too many when they can be combined into one with the help of link words:

I like cooking **and** eating **but** I don't like washing dishes afterward.

So in this lesson learners will learn about conjunctions and their usage to form complex, stylish sentences and avoid the hassle of multiple short sentences.

16.2 OBJECTIVES

Our objective in this lesson is to familiarize the learner with the different types of Conjunction and their correct use in sentences to improve your communication and writing skills:

16.3 CONJUNCTION & TYPES OF CONJUNCTION

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, conjunction is defined as “a word such as ‘and’, ‘but’, ‘while’, or ‘although’ that connects words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence.”

According to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary a conjunction is a “word that joins words, phrases or sentences, for example and, but or so.” Thus conjunctions can be termed as connectors as they are employed in sentences to make connections.

Example of conjunction usage:

- Shami **and** I visited Goa last weekend.
- Do you have a rough notebook **or** at least a rough sheet of paper?
- I did not go to work today **because** I was not keeping well.
- She did not like the pickle, **yet** she ate it.
- I will be leaving tomorrow **so** I am trying to finish all the pending assignments.

There are three basic types of conjunctions: coordinating, subordinating, and correlative.

Coordinating conjunctions

This type of conjunction is used to connect items that are grammatically equal: two words, two phrases, or two independent clauses. There are seven coordinating conjunctions in English: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.

A conjunction of this type is placed between the items that it links together.

Coordinating conjunctions can join two nouns, verbs, adjectives, or other types of word.

For example:

The data was gathered through questionnaires and interviews. I don’t like to run or swim.

He was clever but lazy.

Coordinating conjunctions can also join different types of phrases. The dog wagged his tail and panted excitedly.

The results were undeniably intriguing yet ultimately inconclusive. She usually studies in the library or at a cafe.

Subordinating conjunctions

This type of conjunction includes words like because, if, although, since, until, and while. A subordinating conjunction is used to introduce a dependent clause.

In contrast to an independent clause, a dependent clause (also known as a subordinate clause) is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb but cannot stand as a complete sentence on its own. A dependent clause does not express a complete idea, so it must always be attached to an independent clause.

For example:

Can you guess which sentence is correct?

1. Because I woke up late this morning, I went to schoolwithout eating breakfast.
2. Because I woke up late this morning, I went to schoolwithout eating breakfast.
3. I went to school without eating breakfast because I woke up late this morning.

I woke up late this morning is an independent clause, but the subordinating conjunction because turns it into a dependent clause: Because I woke up late this morning does not finish a complete thought. It must be joined to an independent clause to form a grammatically correct sentence. Therefore, 3. is the correct sentence.

Correlative conjunctions

This type of conjunction always comes in a pair and is used to join grammatically equal elements in a sentence.

Common pairs include- either ... or, neither ... nor, not only ... but also, and both ... and.

In most cases, no comma should be used between the two elements. For example

1. Her book on the Vietnam War drew not only from interviews with other survivors but also from her own experiences in the conflict.
2. She planned to collect data by either using an online survey or conducting phone interviews.

16.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Exercise 1

Use the following conjunctions to complete the sentences

(and, but, or, yet, therefore, otherwise, either or, neither nor, not only

.... but also, so ... that, as as, both and, as if, while, as soon as, before, though, although, after, when, where, why, how, still, till, unless, until, if, because, since)

1. _____ he is a busy, he spends time with his family.
2. She is _____ intelligent _____ hard working.
3. Raju will play today _____ he gets a chance.
4. You can't succeed _____ you work hard.
5. We must reach there _____ anyone else.
6. Sam is _____ a fool _____ a stupid.
7. I fell asleep _____ I was watching TV.
8. He is _____ intelligent _____ hard working.
9. Samuel was eating food _____ the postman arrived.
10. I was very angry, _____ I didn't argue.

11. She was unhappy, _____ she was rich.
12. I like him very much _____ he is my best friend.
13. I can't believe you _____ you speak the truth.
14. Liola is _____ tall _____ Sweetie.
15. We don't know _____ Suma failed in the examination.
16. Suresh is clever _____ proud.
17. I can't attend the meeting _____ I am suffering from fever.
18. This is the village _____ I lived in my childhood.
19. Veda is _____ kind _____ humble.
20. You better keep quiet _____ you will be sent outside.

Exercise 2.

1. Tom Lisa went to school.
2. The king died his daughter ascended the throne.
3. Make haste, you will be late.
4. Do die.
5. Peter is a fearless man, he does not feel afraid.

Exercise 3.

1. She turned off the lights she could sleep.
2. We closed the windows the rain wouldn't come in.
3. you come, we shall go there.

4. He will die he takes poison.
5. You will fail you work hard.

16.5 ANSWER KEY

Exercise 1

1. Though he is a busy, he spends time with his family.
2. She is neither intelligent nor hard working.
3. Raju will play today if he gets a chance.
4. You can't succeed unless you work hard.
5. We must reach there before anyone else.
6. Sam is either a fool or a stupid.
7. I fell asleep while I was watching TV.
8. He is not only intelligent but also hard working.
9. Samuel was eating food when the postman arrived.
10. I was very angry, still I didn't argue.
11. She was unhappy, although she was rich.
12. I like him very much since he is my best friend.
13. I can't believe you until you speak the truth.
14. Liola is as tall as Sweetie.
15. We don't know why Suma failed in the examination.
16. Suresh is clever but proud.
17. I can't attend the meeting because I am suffering from fever.

18. This is the village where I lived in my childhood.
19. Veda is both kind and humble.
20. You better keep quiet otherwise you will be sent outside.

Exercise 2

1. Tom and Lisa went to school.
2. The king died and his daughter ascended the throne.
3. Make haste, or you will be late.
4. “Do or die”.
5. Peter is a fearless man, so he does not feel afraid.

Exercise 3

1. She turned off the lights so that she could sleep.
2. We closed the windows so that the rain wouldn't come in.
3. If you come, we shall go there.
4. He will die if he takes poison.
5. You will fail unless you work hard.

16.6 LET US SUM UP

Dear learner, in this lesson you have read and practiced conjunctions. Now you are familiar with conjunctions, which are parts of speech that connect words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. Besides, there are three kinds of conjunctions: coordinating, paired, and subordinating. By employing conjunctions you construct rich, attractive statements and avoid the uneven nature of multiple short sentences. Always remember conjunction is a linguistic technique used to join two or more words, phrases, or clauses together. Do practice using correct conjunctions in sentences/ paragraphs on online worksheets /exercises available for developing good writing and speaking skills.

Given below are the conjunctions we use daily:

and	as well as	otherwise	or else	therefore	so	hence	consequently	either	neither
both...and	so..... ..that	too..... ...to	as...as	whether or	as so	as soon as	but	no sooner than	not only but also
where	wherever	whence	when	whenever	till or until	while	because	because of	since
that	lest	such that	if	unless	provided	as if / as though	although	though	however
no less than	whereas	nevertheless	how	however/ howsoever	as yet	not yet	yet	as	as to
so as to	as far as	as	as now	as then	as yet	as regard	a compared with	as for this	

16.7 SUGGESTED READING

Shah, Arvind. *Better Your Command on Prepositions; Conjunctions; Interjections & Punctuation*.

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Riggs, Ann. *Phrases, Clauses and Conjunctions Understanding Grammar*. 2012. Creative Education.