

“Bina Kutir” by Saurav Kumar Chaliha

TEXTUAL QUESTION ANSWERS

A. True or False

1. Bina Kutir is an RCC building. – **False** (it’s a traditional Assam-type house)
 2. The narrator drinks Coca-Cola. – **True**
 3. The young shop assistant was preparing for an economics exam. – **False** (he was appearing for B.A.)
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B. One- or Two-Word Answers

1. **Which car brand is mentioned in the story?** – *Ford*
 2. **Where is the younger son studying medicine?** – *Dibrugarh*
 3. **Who is Brajen Kalita?** – *PWD overseer*
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C. Short Answers (One or Two Sentences)

1. **Where is Bina Kutir located?**
– It’s in a quiet lane of Guwahati, among rapidly growing multi-storey buildings
2. **Why did the narrator name it “Bina Kutir”?**
– Because a courtyard plant had "bina" flowers, and ‘kutir’ means cottage — he imagined that could be the name
3. **What is the profession of the house’s owner?**
– He was reportedly a Sanskrit teacher, as told to the narrator by the shopkeeper
4. **How does the narrator gather information?**
– He casually questions the shop assistant across the street after sipping Coke

5. What do the sons plan to do?

- The elder son plans a publication house; the younger wants to build an RCC rental building with a clinic
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D. Brief Answers (40–50 Words)

1. Describe the neighbourhood around Bina Kutir.

- It's a crowded urban area marked by rapid modernisation. Amid concrete constructions, Bina Kutir stands alone as a quiet relic, symbolising simpler traditional values in a changing city

2. What role does Coca-Cola serve in the story?

- The Coca-Cola bottle becomes a trigger for the narrator's imagination, blending ordinary modern detail with his mental reconstructions of the house's past and people

3. How do the two sons reflect contrasting mindsets?

- One son values culture and modest living (professor/wp writer), whereas the other embraces commercialism, constructing a money-making rental building. Their contrast captures the theme of tradition vs modernity
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ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

◆ Short Answer Questions (30–50 Words)

1. What impressions does Bina Kutir leave on the narrator?

- It evokes nostalgia, curiosity, and longing for bygone values amid urban change

2. Why is the narrative speculative?

- The narrator's knowledge is incomplete—he fills gaps with vivid imagination based on limited facts

3. Which two Northeastern regions are mentioned?

- *Pasighat* (Arunachal Pradesh) and *Aizawl* (Mizoram)

4. Who was Rehana?

– The younger son’s wife, seen chatting in the backyard of the house

5. Why didn’t the narrator just rent Bina Kutir?

– The house was unoccupied but not available for rent; his interest remained largely imaginative

6. Describe the contrast between Bina Kutir and surrounding buildings.

– As a modest Assam-type house, it stood out starkly against modern concrete structures, symbolising coexistence of tradition and modernity

7. What historic conflict is indirectly shown?

– The tension between cultural values and urban commercialisation

8. Who was Brajen Kalita?

– A local PWD overseer mentioned by the shopkeeper in the story

9. What does the narrator assume about “Bina”?

– He imagines the daughter is named Bina and that the house is named after her flower plant

10. What symbolic meaning does Bina Kutir hold?

– It becomes a symbol of a disappearing ethos of intellectual simplicity and non-commercial tradition

◆ **Long Answer Questions (100–150 Words)**

11. Analyse the theme of modernisation vs tradition in “Bina Kutir”.

– “Bina Kutir” juxtaposes old Assam-type simplicity with encroaching urban modernity. The house represents cultural

heritage and intellectual values, while concrete expansions around it symbolise commercial progress. Though no conflict arises directly, the narrator's speculative meditation highlights how modern growth threatens traditional spaces and values, yet also preserves their memory. Through narrative imagination, the author mourns cultural erosion and questions whether material progress can coexist with ethical depth

12. **How does Chaliha use narrative imagination effectively?**

– The narrator constructs detailed biographies of the house's past residents—like a Sanskrit teacher, his sons, and daughter—based on sparse factual hints from a shopkeeper. This imaginative storytelling blurs lines between memory and speculation. It brings human depth to an unoccupied house while reflecting the narrator's longing for connection, evoking empathy and criticism of a changing world

13. **What role does nostalgia play in the story?**

– Nostalgia infuses the atmosphere. The narrator's longing for meaning, peace, and rooted tradition allows him to imbue an old house with emotional resonance. The story becomes a meditation on loss—not simply of buildings, but of values and human simplicity amid urban change

14. **Discuss the significance of the story's title.**

– The title "Bina Kutir" is not the house's real name but a poetic invention. It evokes the idea of a small, dignified home in contrast with the surrounding chaos. The 'bina' flower suggests purity, memory, and non-commercial beauty. The title reflects how narrative imagination can reclaim meaning from urban alienation

15. **Critically examine the narrator's reliability.**

– The narrator openly admits to speculating and imagining; his account blends observed facts and imaginary reconstruction.

This duality raises questions: is his romance with tradition an escape? Still, his humility about his own invention increases empathy, making the story less about accuracy and more about emotional truth in the face of loss