

Unit Eleven: Tours and Travels, Lesson 1 - Travelling to a Village in Bangladesh

We set out on the evening of July 21st. Food was scarce in the village so Abdul packed a suitcase with two loaves and some tea and tins of milk, cheese and jam. We travelled Intermediate class in a cross-country train not uncomfortably crowded, through a country of shadowy loveliness. It was a moonlit night of broken soft clouds; the land was mostly under water, with paddy and coco-palms growing from it, and a few raised cart-tracks and groups of cottages islanded among clumps of bushes, all reflected among shadows. Here and there was the red glow of a cooking-fire or the lantern of a fisherman's boat in open water. At dawn we reached Sonaimuri, a small canal-side station among wide fields; from there we had eight more miles by country boat, some of it along the canal, some of it across the flooded paddy fields. I was looking forward to that tranquil water-journey in the early morning, and tranquil it must have been, for I fell instantly asleep and knew no more till we reached the landing-ghat at Khorshed's house, in a blaze of sunlight. It turned out that his letter saying that he was bringing me was still on its way, but they rallied to the crisis and gathered round to make me welcome, though as none of them spoke any English they could only stare and laugh and offer me coco-nut juice.

Khorshed set me up a camp, a wooden bed, chair and table in a thatched bamboo outhouse. It was a lovely spot among bamboo and coco-palms, facing a tank where fireflies wove intricate dances at night. He put his own bed beside it for protection, and there I stayed, holding permanent court from dawn to bedtime. Within village memory-and that went back for some two centuries, I was the first European to go there: it was too remote even for a District Commissioner to pass through. Also since I was a woman, the women could come (at different times from the men) to look at me without losing their characters. People kept coming and coming: only the rains and the fact that few of them were rich enough to have boats prevented them from coming from ten miles round. When he saw that they would not stop coming Khorshed fixed some curtains round the bed so that I could crawl behind them when I was tired of being looked at, like a zoo animal into its sleeping hut. Even then the little hut would fill up with women and children. Children followed when I went out, and when Khorshed remonstrated a small boy pleaded, "Don't send us away! After she's gone not even a strange bird will come to the village." I stood up to the celebrity for the two days we had planned, but it was enough.

A Choose the correct answer from the alternatives:

1x5=5

(a) The expression "In a blaze of sunlight" implies-----

- i. In the sun ii. Under the sun iii. With the sun iv. At the sun

(b) The word "Scarce" mentioned in the passage means -----

- i. unavailable ii. cheap iii. unbelievable iv. modified

(c) what does the word "loveliness" means-----

- i. love ii. ugliness iii. beauty iv. dear

(d) The word "mostly" could be replaced by-----

- i. rarely ii. about iii. mainly iv. clearly

(e) The village women mostly visited the writer as she was-----

- i. Teen ager ii. A woman iii. A girl iv. An adult

B. Answer the following Question:

2x5=10

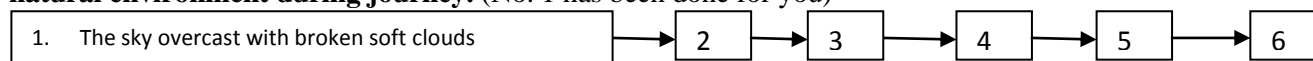
- When and why did the author fall asleep during her journey?
- What trees and insects are mentioned in the passage?
- Why did the small boy plead, "After she's gone not even a strange bird will come to the village?"
- Why was there a "crisis" when the author arrived?
- Why did the women visit her?
- Find three evidences which suggest that the narrator enjoyed her visit.
- Why does the narrator compare herself to a sleeping zoo animal?
- What is the general tone of the passage?

2. Read the passage and complete the table below with the given information.

1x10=10

what	How	The journey made by/ where	When
The journey	through a country of shadowy loveliness	train	(i)-----
The land	(ii)-----	to a village in Bangladesh	(iii)-----
(iv)-----	A small canal side	(v)-----	At dawn
The clouds	broken soft	in the country side	(vi)-----
(vii)-----	tranquil	(viii)-----	In early morning
Reaching the landing -ghat	tranquil water journey being very (ix)-----	at Khorshed's house	(X)-----

Or Based on your reading of the Passage below, make short notes in each of the boxes in the flow-chart showing the natural environment during journey. (No. 1 has been done for you)



3. Summarize the text.