**Chapter – 2**

**LOST SPRING**

***By: Anees Jung***

**Textual Questions**

**Q1 What is Saheb looking for in the garbage dumps? Where is he and where has he come from?**

**Ans.** Saheb is looking for gold(something valuable) in the garbage dumps. He is in the neighbourhood of the author. Saheb has come from Bangladesh. He came with his mother in 1971. His house was set amidst the green fields of Dhaka. Storms swept away their fields and homes. So they left the country.

**Q2 What explanations does the author offer for the children not wearing footwear?**

**Ans.** One explanation offered by the author is that it is a tradition to stay barefoot. It is not lack of money. He wonders if this is only an excuse to explain away a perpetual state of poverty. He also remembers the story of a poor body who prayed to the goddess for a pair of shoes.

**Q3 Is Saheb happy working at the tea-stall? Explain.**

**Ans.**No, Saheb is not happy working at the tea-stall. He is no longer his own master. His face has lost the carefree look. The steel canister seems heavier than the plastic bag he would carry so lightly over his shoulder. The bag was his. The canister belongs to the man who owns the tea-shop. He has lost not only his freedom but friends too.

**Q4 What makes the city of Firozabad famous?**

**Ans.** The city of Firozabad is famous for its bangles. Every other family in Firozabad is engaged in making bangles. It is the center of India’s glass-blowing industry. Families have spent generations working around furnaces, welding glass, making bangles for the women in the land.

**Q5 Mention the hazards of working in the glass bangles industry?**

**Ans.**Boys and girls with their fathers and mothers sit in dark hutments, next to lines of flames of flickering oil lamps. They weld pieces of coloured glass into circles of bangles. Their eyes are more adjusted to the dark than to the light outside. They often end up losing their eyesight before they become adults. Even the dust from polishing the glass of bangles is injurious to eyes. Many workers have become blind. The furnaces have very high temperatures and therefore very dangerous.

**Q6 How is Mukesh’s attitude to his situation different from that of his family?**

**Ans.** Mukesh’s grandmother thinks that the god-given lineage can never be broken. Her son and grandsons are born in the caste of bangle makers. They have seen nothing but bangles.Mukesh’s father has taught them what he knows—the art of making bangles. But Mukesh wants to be a motor mechanic. He will go to a garage and learn, though the garage is far away from his home.

**Q7 What could be some of the reasons for the migration of people from villages to cities?**

**Ans.** People migrate from villages to cities in search of livelihood. Their fields fail to provide the means of survival. Cities provide employment, jobs or other means of getting food. The problem in the case of the poor is to feed hungry members. Survival is of primary concern.

**Q8 Would you agree that promises made to the poor children are rarely kept? Why do**

**you think this happens in the incidents narrated in the text?**

**Ans.**The promises made to the poor are rarely kept. The author asks Saheb half-joking, whether he will come to her school if she starts one. Saheb agrees to do so. A few days later he asks if the school is ready. The writer feels embarrassed at having made a promise that was not meant. Promises like hers abound in every comer of their bleak world.

**Q9  What forces conspire to keep the workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad in poverty?**

**Ans.**  Certain forces conspire to keep the workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad in poverty. These include the moneylenders, the middlemen, the policemen, the keepers of the law, the bureaucrats and the politicians. Together they impose a heavy burden on the child.

**Q10  How, in your opinion, can Mukesh realise his dream?**

**Ans.**Mukesh is the son of a poor bangle-maker of Firozabad. Most of the young men of Firozabad have no initiative or ability to dream, but Mukesh is an exception. He has the capacity to take courage and break from the traditional family occupation. He has strong will power also. He does not want to be a pawn in the hands of the middlemen or moneylenders. He insists on being his own master by becoming a motor mechanic.

He can realise his dream by joining a garage and learn the job of repairing cars and driving them. He will have to overcome many hurdles before he succeeds. Then comes the transport problems. Money is the first one. He will have to earn some money himself. The garage is a long way from his home. He will have to cover it twice every day anyhow—by walking on foot

**Q11 Mention the hazards of working in the glass bangles industry.**

**Ans.** The glass bangles industry has many health hazards. It usually employs small children. It is illegal to employ very young children in hazardous industries, but certain forces like middlemen, moneylenders, police, and politicians combine to entrap the poor workers.

They work in the glass furnaces with high temperatures. The dingy cells are without air and light. Boys and girls work hard during the day next to lines of flames of flickering oil lamps.

They weld pieces of coloured glass into circles of bangles. Their eyes are more adjusted to the dark than to the light outside. That is why they often end up losing their eyesight before they become adults.

Glass blowing, welding, and soldering pieces of glass are all health hazards. Even the dust from polishing the glass of bangles adversely affects the eyes and even adults go blind. Thus, the surroundings, prevailing conditions, and the type of job involved-all prove risky to the health of the workers.

**Q12  Why should child labour be eliminated and how?**

**Ans.**Child labour should be eliminated because the children employed at a tender age as domestic servants, dish-washers at road-side dhabas, and in hazardous industries making glass bangles, biris, crackers, etc. lose the charm of the spring of their life. Their childhood is stolen. Burdened by the responsibility of work, they become adults too soon. Most of them are undernourished, ill-fed, uneducated, and poor. They have stunted growth.

Child labour can be eliminated only through concerted efforts on the part of government agencies, NGOs (Non-Government Organisations), co-operative societies, and political leaders. Mere passing of law will not help. Laws should be enacted faithfully. The children thrown out of work should be rehabilitated and given proper food, clothes, education, and pocket money. Their feelings, thoughts, and emotions should be respected. Let them enjoy the sunshine and fresh air.