

CHAPTER- 19

A SEED TELLS A FARMER'S STORY

2 MARK QUESTIONS

1. Are rotis made in your home? From which grains are they made?

ANSWER:

Yes, rotis are made in my home. They are made from wheat and sometimes from rice and ragi.

2. Have you eaten roti made from bajra or jowar? Did you like these?

ANSWER:

Yes, I have eaten roti made from bajra and jowar. They were very tasty.

3. In your house, what is done to protect grains and pulses from insects?

ANSWER:

We use to keep pulses and grains in airtight containers, and some pulses are sun-dried.

4. Talk to the elders in your family and find out if there were some special foods cooked earlier that are not cooked anymore.

ANSWER:

Gruel is a food consisting of some type of cereal – oat, wheat, or rye flour or rice – boiled in water or milk were prepared at home earlier.

5. Find out about the crops – cereals, vegetables, pulses – that are grown in your area. Of those, is there anything that is famous across the country?

ANSWER:

Many crops like wheat, coffee, pepper, banana, and rice are grown in our area. Of these, rice is famous across the country.

**6. Hasmukh said, “With profits from our fields, we can progress.”
What is your understanding of ‘progress’?**

ANSWER:

Progress means a better lifestyle. People get better standards of living like education, medical facility and nutritious food.

7. What kind of progress would you like to see in your area?

ANSWER:

I would like to see well-equipped hospitals, better roads, a good transport system and a good education system in schools.

8. What can happen to Hasmukh’s farm after some years?

ANSWER:

Hasmukh’s farm will lose fertility after some years because he is using chemical fertilisers.

9. How did the introduction of new seeds and chemicals affect the soil and crops?

ANSWER:

The use of new seeds and chemicals led to soil degradation and affected crop growth due to overuse and dependence on certain varieties.

10. Why did farmers like Damjibhai face financial difficulties despite growing crops?

ANSWER:

Farmers faced financial difficulties due to low crop prices, increased expenses on fertilizers and pesticides, and the need to take loans.

11. What challenges did Hasmukh's son Paresh face when he took up farming?

ANSWER:

Paresh faced challenges as a farmer, including the burden of loans, changing agricultural practices, and a desire to explore alternative occupations like truck driving.

12. How did Hasmukh adapt to the changing times in agriculture?

ANSWER:

Hasmukh adapted by introducing new technologies, like machines and tractors, to increase productivity and efficiency on the farm.

13. Why did Paresh look for Damaji's wooden seed box, and how did he intend to use it?

ANSWER:

Paresh looked for the seed box to repurpose it for keeping tools and screws for his truck, showcasing the shift from traditional farming to modern occupations.

5 MARK QUESTIONS

1. Which are the different festivals related to farming, celebrated in different seasons? Find out more about any one such festival and write in your notebook – The name of the festival, in which season it is celebrated, in which states of India, what special foods are made, whether it is celebrated only at home with the family, or together with many people.

ANSWER:

There are many festivals related to farming. They are Pongal, Lohri, Baisakhi, Makara Sankranti, Holi and more. Makara Sankranti is celebrated in Karnataka during the winter season. Yellu Bella is made as the main dish in this festival. In Tamilnadu, Makara Sankranti is celebrated as Pongal. Likewise, Lohri is celebrated in Punjab during the winter season.

2. The bajra seed saw differences in the way Damjibhai and Hasmukh did farming (for example, in irrigation, ploughing, etc.). What were these differences?

ANSWER:

Damjibhai did farming in a different way than how Hasmukh did. Damjibhai followed the traditional method of farming. He used bullocks to plough the field. He stored grains to be used as seeds. Hasmukh, on the other hand, started modern or new methods of

farming. He bought a tractor to plough the field. Expensive fertilisers were used to grow more crops.

3. The seeds were not sure that what Hasmukh was talking about was really progress. What do you feel?

ANSWER:

I think the new method of agriculture tends to overexploit the soil and other resources. This leads to the loss of fertility of the soil, which may result in the land becoming barren. A machine can do the work of many people, which leaves many people jobless. Too much irrigation depletes the groundwater and thus leaves little water for the future. Apparently, it looks like progress, but it is not real progress.

4. Have there been any changes near your area which may be difficult to call 'progress'? What changes are these? What are the different opinions about them?

ANSWER:

Yes, there are many changes which may not be called progress in the real sense. Let us take the example of the growing number of vehicles on the road. More vehicles made travelling easier, but it is also the reason for air and noise pollution. Similarly, many machines have been invented which can do the job of thousands of people, and thus thousands of people are jobless.

5. How did the introduction of new technologies impact farming practices in Damjibhai's village?

ANSWER:

The introduction of new technologies, including tractors and electric motors, led to changes in traditional farming practices. This modernization aimed at improving efficiency and productivity, but it also resulted in the neglect of traditional seeds and practices.

6. Explain the challenges faced by farmers like Hasmukh due to changes in agricultural practices.

ANSWER:

Farmers like Hasmukh faced challenges such as increased expenses on fertilizers, dependence on loans, and a shift towards monoculture, affecting soil fertility and overall sustainability.

7. How did Hasmukh define 'progress' in farming, and why did the seeds in the box doubt its significance?

ANSWER:

Hasmukh viewed progress as growing crops that could be sold for a good price in the market, leading to an improved life. However, the seeds doubted this definition, questioning the impact on traditional seeds, bullocks, and the livelihoods of those involved in farming.

8. Explore the consequences of relying on a single type of crop, as seen in Damjibhai's village.

ANSWER:

Relying on a single type of crop, such as wheat and cotton, led to reduced crop diversity, lower prices, and increased vulnerability to market fluctuations, impacting the overall sustainability of farming in the village.

9. How did the availability of canal water and electricity bring changes to agricultural practices?

ANSWER:

Canal water and electricity availability allowed for irrigation and improved lighting. However, it also influenced farmers to focus on specific crops with better market prices, neglecting traditional crops and seeds.

10. Discuss the role of loans in modern farming and its impact on farmers' lives.

ANSWER:

Modern farming practices often require significant investment, leading to farmers taking loans. The burden of loans, coupled with

unpredictable market conditions, resulted in financial challenges and stress for many farmers.

11. Analyze the impact of using chemical fertilizers and pesticides on the soil and crops.

ANSWER:

The use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides led to soil degradation and affected crop growth. The soil became less fertile, and over time, farmers faced challenges in maintaining sustainable agricultural practices.

12. How did the story of Nallappa Reddy in the newspaper reflect the struggles faced by farmers in India?

ANSWER:

Nallappa Reddy's story highlighted the harsh reality of farmers facing financial difficulties, high-interest loans, and even imprisonment for failing to repay debts. This narrative sheds light on the larger issue of farmer distress and suicides in India.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. The bajra seed was stored in a beautiful wooden box since _____.
(1940)
2. The seeds were stored in a dried gourd coated with _____. **(Mud)**
3. The pot used for cooking undhiya was sealed and kept between _____. **(Hot coals)**
4. The undhiya pot was placed _____, giving the dish its name.
(Upside down)
5. Damjibhai's son Hasmukh used an _____ to pump water on the farm. **(Electric motor)**
6. Hasmukh's son Paresh chose to work as a _____ instead of being a farmer. **(Truck driver)**
7. The new seeds bought from the market were considered _____.
(New kinds of seeds)
8. Earthworms in the soil helped in making it _____ for air and water. **(Soft and crumbly)**

9. The traditional way of farming involved using _____ for plowing the fields. (**Bullocks**)

10. The farmer's son Paresh was looking for Damaji's wooden seed box to store _____ for his truck. (**Screws and tools**)

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Where was the bajra seed born?

- a. Mumbai
- b. Vangaam
- c. Sinduri
- d. Khedi

Answer: b. Vangaam

2. In which year did the bajra seed start telling its story?

- a. 1950
- b. 1940
- c. 1960
- d. 1970

Answer: b. 1940

3. What was used to store the bajra seeds in Damjibhai's house?

- a. Wooden box
- b. Plastic container
- c. Earthen pot
- d. Steel drum

Answer: a. Wooden box

4. What did Damjibhai put in the wooden box to protect the seeds from insects?

- a. Neem leaves
- b. Mint leaves
- c. Tulsi leaves
- d. Rose petals

Answer: a. Neem leaves

5. What was the special cooker used for making undhiya?

- a. Pressure cooker

- b. Slow cooker
- c. Clay pot
- d. Microwave

Answer: c. Clay pot

6. What did Hasmukh use to pump water on the farm?

- a. Bullocks
- b. Electric motor
- c. Hand pump
- d. Canal water

Answer: b. Electric motor

7. What did Paresh, Hasmukh's son, choose as his profession?

- a. Farmer
- b. Doctor
- c. Truck driver
- d. Teacher

Answer: c. Truck driver

8. What signaled Bhaskarbhai about the dryness of the soil in his farm?

- a. Birds chirping
- b. Croton plants
- c. Rainfall
- d. Wind direction

Answer: b. Croton plants

9. What did the earthworms do in the soil according to Bhaskarbhai?

- a. Create tunnels
- b. Eat crops
- c. Damage roots
- d. Attract insects

Answer: a. Create tunnels

10. What did Paresh want to use Damaji's wooden seed box for?

- a. Storing jewelry
- b. Keeping vegetables
- c. Tools for the truck
- d. Storing clothes

Answer: c. Tools for the truck

SUMMARY

The narrative unfolds through the perspective of a bajra seed, sharing its journey and intertwining it with the lives of farmers in Vangaam, Gujarat. Born in 1940, the seed describes the joyous times in the village marked by abundant crops and communal celebrations. Damjibhai, the farmer, meticulously stored seeds in a wooden box with neem leaves for protection, symbolizing a traditional and sustainable approach.

However, as time progresses, the village undergoes significant changes. Modernization, marked by the arrival of electricity and new crops, transforms farming practices. Damjibhai's son, Hasmukh, embraces these changes, introducing machines, electric pumps, and tractors for efficiency. Yet, with a shift towards monoculture and dependence on external inputs, the charm of traditional farming wanes. The once-close-knit community now only gathers on special occasions.

The narrative questions the idea of progress as Hasmukh's farm faces challenges like expensive fertilizers, insecticides, and declining soil fertility. Hasmukh's son, Paresh, opts for a non-agricultural profession, highlighting the generational shift away from traditional farming.

The story prompts reflection on the broader implications of agricultural transformation, raising concerns about sustainability, ecological balance, and the impact on rural communities. The plight

of farmers, as portrayed through changing practices and the farmer's struggle to adapt, serves as a poignant commentary on the complex interplay between tradition and progress in the agricultural landscape.