

Q1)

"The Open Air Prisons for ISIS Supporters— and Victims" by Anand Gopal

1. Voice

Tone: Gopal's voice is soothing but haunting, allowing stark facts to speak with emotional gravitas.

Style: Utilizes vivid imagery and narrative exposition while remaining rooted in reporting.

2. Structure

Opening: Starts in medias res — with grim images of death and desperation — to at once pull readers into Al-Hol's horror.

Development: Progresses from individual experience (Jihan) to wider context (camp history, politics, administration), and back again to characters.

Framing: Switches between personal narratives and systemic problems to underscore the tension between human resilience and institutional collapse.

3. Pacing

Initial Hook: Quick-paced with high tension — the dire discoveries, the urgency of escape.

Middle Sections: Slower, explanatory to construct background and deepen insight.

Later Parts: Focus on Hamid introduces a new narrative pace, with faint hope and nuance in the midst of darkness.

4. Character

Jihan Omar: Emotional core. Her persistent promise to flee propels reader concern for her fate.

Hamid al-Shumhari: A thoughtful, resourceful older man who represents subtle resistance and survival.

Others: Anonymous but compelling characters — children, women, guards — contribute to a congested but emotionally rich setting.

5. Emotional Depth

Themes: Injustice, survival, dehumanization, resilience, betrayal, and the failure of global governance.

Imagery: Dead bodies in cesspits, worm-infested water, religious patrols — all used to create disgust, sympathy, and horror.

Impact: Readers are left unsettled, introspective, and informed of a crisis that's both current and largely unreported.

Q2)

"More Than Just a Meal: The Real Taste of Campus mess Life"

Daily, at 1 PM, a familiar group files into a campus mess—plastic trays held, weary eyes scanning the menu board more habit than expectation. The clang of utensils, the hiss of steaming rice, and the faint aroma of masala punctuate a ritual that's as habitual as it is divisive. For some, lunch is sustenance. For others, it's a skirmish with mediocrity.

Prakhar, a second year, stops mid-chew and shrugs. "It's okay, I suppose. But occasionally, I ask myself whether they have lost their taste for salt." He eyes the day's aloo matar skeptically before heaping it aside.

Similar to Prakhar, more than 70% of surveyed students scored the taste of daily food between 2 and 3 out of 5, pointing to "bland dal," "overcooked rice," and "dry rotis" as perennial problems. There were still islands of approbation—Khushal confesses, "The Friday chole bhature is the only thing that makes me look forward to the mess."

But taste is not the only thing on the menu.

"I've seen the same menu cycle for three weeks straight," says Om, who's been trying to eat vegetarian for health reasons. "I'm bored of it." His sentiment echoes across the data: 82% of respondents said the menu lacks variety, with many requesting the inclusion of more regional cuisines, fresh fruits, and non-veg options beyond egg curry.

Hygiene is another pet peeve. Most students concurred that the tables and cutlery were "usually clean," but overall hygiene was rated an average of 2.8 out of 5. "It is not dirty, but when you find a hair in your sambhar, you re-evaluate your life choices," Dibyanshu says, laughing but only half-jokingly.

Price, amazingly, evoked conflicted thoughts. "It's ₹40 for a thali full. That's a bargain," opines Udit, who hails from a city where lunch is twice the price. Anand does not share the same thought. "If you charge me for quality, then at least provide me with quality. I'd pay ₹60 and eat something I want to."

Behind all the statistics and criticism is a deeper issue: students aren't looking for five-star meals. They're searching for dignity on a plate—clean, respectable food that varies once in a while and doesn't taste like wet cardboard. "It's not about food," says Adarsh, leaning back in his chair and sighing. "It's about the one hour where you take a break, breathe, and feel human. We just want that hour to be slightly improved."

For the time being, the rice will remain lukewarm, and the rotis rubbery. But the voices are growing louder, and perhaps—just perhaps—change is bubbling on the stove.