



QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

A. Reading With Insight

Question 1. This play, written in the 1950s, is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the mother in the family.

(i) What are the issues it raises?

(ii) Do you think it caricatures these issues or do you think that the problems it raises are genuine? How does the play resolve the issues? Do you agree with the resolution?

Answer:

(i) The play raises many serious issues. The first and foremost is proper appreciation of a housewife's role and responsibilities. Those who work eight hours a day and forty hours a week treat the housewife as an unpaid domestic servant, who must carry out their orders. They neither request her nor thank her for her services. The second issue is the reciprocity of love and gratitude towards the mother or wife. The husband, son and daughter leave the lady of the house alone every night and go out to enjoy themselves in their several ways. They do not take any notice of her and have become thoughtless and selfish. The mother's excessive love, care and promptness to serve them also spoil them.

(ii) The problems the play raises are serious. The treatment is of course, comic. The playwright adopts an unusual method to resolve the issues. He takes the help of magic of the East. Incantation of a magical spell helps in the interchange of the personalities. Now Mrs Pearson, with the strong and sinister personality of Mrs Fitzgerald, gives rough treatment to the daughter, son and husband respectively. Her stern looks and commanding tone suggests to them that she can be really tough. The spoilt members are brought round by the heavy dose of exposure of reality to them. They agree to stay and help in preparing the supper while the housewife has a talk with her husband. The resolution of the issues seems far-fetched and unnatural but extreme means have to be adopted in disaster management.

Question 2. If you were to write these issues today, what are some of the incidents, examples and problems that you would think of as relevant?

Answer: Various responses are possible. One such response is given below:

The incidents of unfair treatment to the fair sex at home, at work, in public transport and elsewhere will prove handy. The examples of exploitation of female workers with lower wages, harassment by seniors, indecent remarks, eve-teasing and molestation can highlight the problems of social inequality that women face in practice. Even in the twenty first century women face the same problems in spite of the talk of women empowerment. The poor housewives have to bear the physical torment and mental anguish at the hands of bullish husbands who boast of their masculinity by inflicting physical violence, barbs and taunts on the defenseless women. Examples of rapes and sexual harassment which hug the limelight in daily newspapers can also be included to highlight the problems of insecurity of women in modern society.

Question 3. Is drama a good medium for conveying a social

message? Discuss.

Answer: Yes, drama is certainly a good medium for conveying a social message. Direct moralising is often resented and usually ignored. Drama is a presentation of a slice of life through characters placed in various situations. The attention of the spectators centres round their actions and reactions. Most of them feel fully involved with the protagonists. The working out of the theme generally leaves a message—sometimes obvious and explicit but in most of the cases, indirect and implicit. The social message of these plays seems to come out of the interactions of the characters and their traits of character. The victory of evil over good is usually portrayed indirectly. These days we find many plays centred around themes creating social awareness such as evils of drinking and smoking; dangers of pollution, child labour, the decreasing female ratio and need to empower women.

Question 4. Discuss in groups plays or films with a strong message of social reform that you have watched.

Answer: For group discussion at class level. There can be varied responses. One such response is given below: The latest film I have watched recently is 'SWADESH'. It has a strong message of social reform. It tells the story of an Indian scientist at NASA (America) who visits his ancestral home in India. The poor condition of the villagers and lack of basic facilities fills him with deep agony. He resigns his job in America and returns to his native country (Swadesh) to begin his work of rural uplift. He gives the villagers a message that self-help is the best help and we cannot depend for everything on the Government. This remote village is plunged in darkness after sunset as there is no electricity. With the help of a few villagers, the scientist is able to produce hydroelectricity and light the village homes. The water can be used for irrigation purposes also. Thus the economic and social condition of the villagers undergoes a sea change.

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