

## Unit Seven

# People and Occupations



After we have studied this unit, we will be able to

- read and understand texts through silent reading
- listen for information
- ask and answer questions
- write down the main ideas in our own words
- write short paragraphs

## Lesson 1: Pearls! Pearls! Pearls!

**Key words :** mythology ancient dissolved status unparalleled association delicate

**A Look at the pictures and discuss in pairs.**



**B Read the text and answer the questions that follow.**

Thousands of years ago, the first pearl was probably discovered while human beings were searching for food at the sea shore. Throughout history, the pearl with its shine has been one of the most highly valued gems.

Pearls have been mentioned many times in religious texts and mythologies from the earliest times.

The ancient Egyptians valued pearls so much that they were buried with them. It is said that the famous queen of Egypt, Cleopatra would dissolve a pearl in a glass and drink it as a sign of love and respect for the entire nation.

The Greeks thought of pearls as a sign of wealth and social position. The beauty of pearls was associated with love and marriage.

In ancient Rome, pearls were considered the greatest sign of wealth and social status.

At that time the young women of noble families loved to wear beautiful pearl necklaces. The brave knights used to wear them in the battles for good luck.

**Questions**

- 1 Do you think 'pearls' were discovered by accident? Why?
- 2 Why do you think pearls were valued so much in the past?
- 3 What good luck did the knights think pearls would bring them?

**C Read the text in B again and write the information in the table.**

Who	When/ where		
The ancient Egyptians	wore	pearls	
The Greeks			
The ancient Romans			
The brave knights			

**Lesson 2: The Ama Divers**

**Key words :** rare descend hazardous rely

**A Read the text and answer the following questions.**

Before the beginning of the 20th century, pearls were obtained from pearl oysters. These oysters were collected from the bottom of the ocean, lake or river.

To get enough pearl oysters, free-divers were often forced to descend to a depth of more than 100 feet in one breath. Because of the difficulty of diving, pearls at that time were of different quality as well as very rare.

In Asia some pearl oysters could be found on shoals at a depth of 5–7 feet from the surface. At times the divers had to go 40 feet or even up to 125 feet deep to find enough pearl oysters. These deep dives were extremely hazardous to the divers.

**Questions**

- 1 What is the text about?
- 2 Where did the people get the pearls from?

**B Read about the Ama divers of Japan. Discuss in pairs the information that you have got from the text and answer the questions.**

In some fishing villages along the coast of Japan, there are amazing groups of women known as 'Ama divers'. These women worked and are still working as Ama. The word 'Ama' means 'women of the sea or sea women'. They are independent divers. They make their living by diving. They can dive to the depth of the sea up to 25 metres. And they dive without using oxygen tanks or other breathing equipment.

The Ama divers rely on their own skills and breathing techniques. They use that skill and technique to push themselves down to the bottom of the sea and back to the surface again. They can hold their breath for up to two minutes. Careful watching, lung capacity and hunter instincts are the special qualities of Ama divers.

However some of these young villagers are now going to the city in search of other jobs. The remaining Ama divers are now aged between 50 and 60. But there are still some who continue to dive even at their 70s. If the young people do not take up Ama diving, soon this profession will die out.

**Questions**

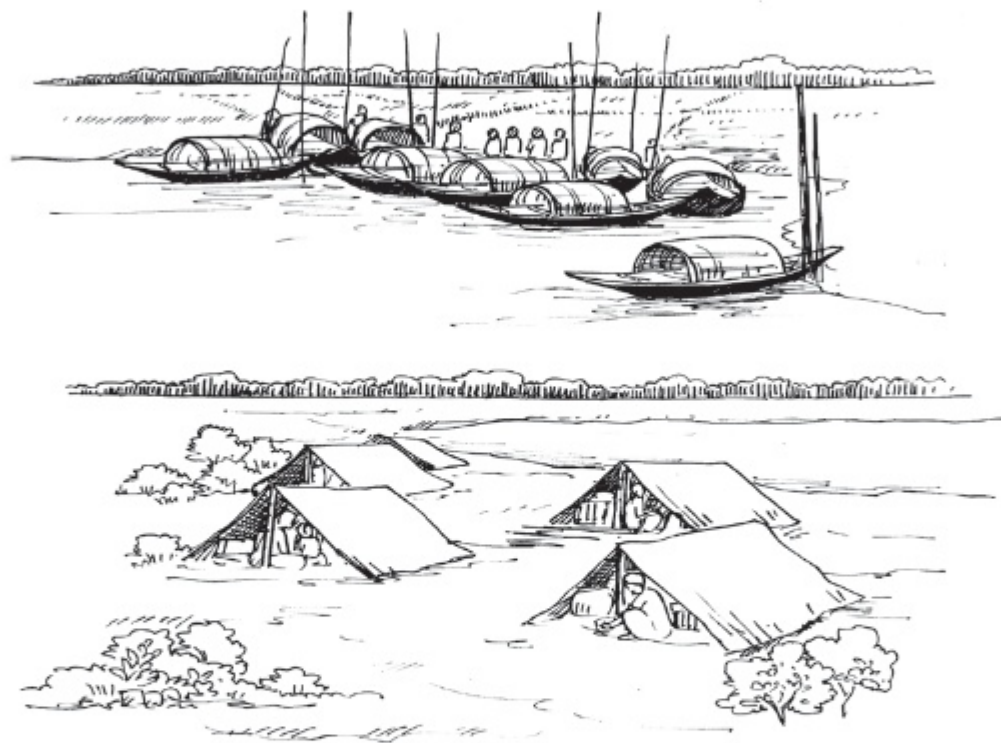
- 1 Why are the Ama divers amazing?
- 2 How deep can the Ama divers go down into the sea?
- 3 What techniques and skills do the Ama divers use in diving?
- 4 Why do you think the young villagers are going to the city?



## Lesson 3: River Gypsies in Bangladesh (1)

**Key words :** gypsy ethnic nomadic roam tarpaulin tents remedy vend heal talisman

**A Look at the pictures and discuss with your partner what you see**



**Read the text and answer the following questions.**

River gypsies are an ethnic group of people in Bangladesh. They are known as *bedey* to local people. The gypsies have their own lifestyle and culture. They live in groups and do not own any land. Therefore, they live a nomadic life, travelling from one place to another. These people roam across our rivers and waters from May to December in small country boats. These boats are their houses and these people are a part of our waters. In winter, many water bodies dry up. At that time they return to the mainland and live in make-shift tarpaulin tents on open river banks. You can see their men relaxing in the tents. Toddlers play with dogs or other pets in the dust. Women often idle away time by picking off lice in twos or threes sitting in a row.

Throughout the monsoon, they remain busy with fishing. They also dive for natural pearls in waters. Sometimes, they camp for a couple of weeks. Men catch snakes and entertain people with snake charming and sell herbal cures. Women go from door to door to selling bangles, cosmetics and other things. They also try to heal pains of old people by sucking out blood from their body.

Many villagers believe in the magical power of the gypsies. They can make an evil spirit leave someone's body by magic or special powers.

### Questions

- 1 Who are river gypsies?
- 2 How do they live?
- 3 What do river gypsies do in winter?
- 4 What do river gypsy men do for a living?
- 5 What do river gypsy women do for a living?

### B Discuss with your partner and circle the right answer.

#### 1 The term 'ethnic' is connected to

- |            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| a people.  | b plants. |
| c animals. | d fishes. |

#### 2 River gypsies roam around on their boats about .....months a year.

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| a six   | b seven |
| c eight | d nine  |

#### 3 River gypsies live in tents in

- |            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| a summer.  | b winter. |
| c monsoon. | d spring. |

#### 4 The term 'nomadic' refers to a person who

- |                                 |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a stays permanently at a place. | b travels from place to place. |
| c lives in one's own house.     | d lives in a rented house.     |

**C Listen to the teacher/CD and fill in the following gaps with right word/s.**

**U7, L3 C**  
**Listening text: 6**

- 1 The river gypsies are among the Nation's ----- groups.
- 2 A 2007 report said ----- percent live below the poverty line.
- 3 Only 2 percent of gypsy children are given primary -----.
- 4 Most gypsy children travel with their parents for an ----- 8 months of the year.
- 5 So, they end up in a cycle of -----.

**D In summer vacation last May, Sohan went to Lauhajang in Munshigonj to visit his maternal uncle. His elder cousin, Jihan studies sociology at Dhaka University. One afternoon, Jihan took Sohan to a *bedey* camp to know about their life. They talked to a middle aged *bedey* woman who was cooking in front of her tent. Read the conversation and do the following activity.**

- Jihan : Good afternoon. Can I ask you a few questions ?
- Woman : Good afternoon. Umm..... you see I'm busy cooking. I've to feed my son and then...
- Jihan : Well, I won't take much time. Just a few questions if you please....  
How long have you been here in this camp?
- Woman : Four months. Since last January. And if it rains, we're going to rivers again next month.
- Jihan : What do you do for a living?
- Woman : We catch fish. Our men are snake charmers and we heal toothache and joint pains of old people.
- Jihan : How do you heal people?
- Woman : With traditional herbs and healing art.
- Jihan : Well, if you don't mind, how much do you earn?
- Woman : Not enough. About 3000 taka per month. Now many people don't believe in our remedies. They go to doctors. So we go to remote villages...
- Jihan : What about your son? I guess he is already 5. Does he go to school?
- Woman : Not yet. But I've heard about mobile boat-schools in rivers. I'll try to find one for my son.

- E Suppose you were with Sohan. Ask the *bedey* woman some more questions. For example, you can ask questions to know about her family members, their names, age, work, their past living places, future plans, food habit, etc.
- F Have you ever seen any gypsies/*bedey*/snake charmers or any person selling things from door to door in your area? Write your experience about any one of them.

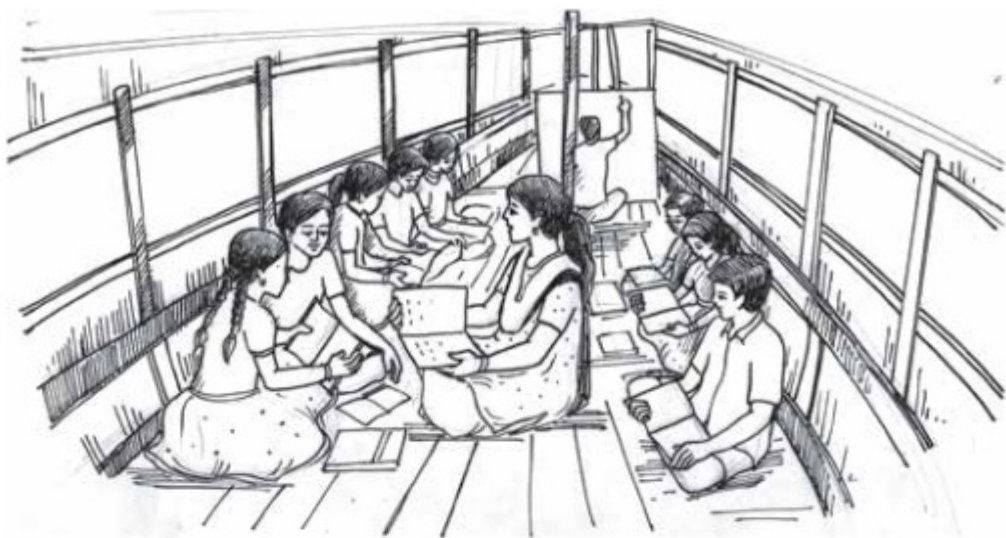
## Lesson 4: River Gypsies in Bangladesh (2)

**Key words :** survive used to inherit mainstream petty trick integral part  
community settle urbanise (v) urban (adj)

- A Look at the pictures. Discuss with your partner and say who they are, where they are, what they are doing, etc.







**B Read the text and answer the following questions.**

River gypsies in Bangladesh face various problems. First, Bangladesh is getting urbanised very rapidly. Gypsy people are losing their customers among the urban population. Hence, their income is threatened. Secondly, 24,000 kilometres of previous waterways shrink to only 6,000 kilometres in the country in dry seasons.

Scientists believe that Bangladesh will be worst affected by global climate change. The unpredictable rain and drying out of rivers have made boat movement heavily restricted. Thirdly, many river gypsies are changing their lifestyle in the context of changed reality. They are thinking of living permanently on land. The state feels that river gypsies need help to survive in the mainstream population. Therefore, the government is offering voting rights, permanent housing and bank-loan facilities. However, changes do not come overnight.

Traditionally, river gypsies are used to water life. They have inherited from their forefathers necessary life skills to survive in water. They have no education and training to adapt to mainstream modern society. So the state feels the need to bring them under formal education network. But they have no permanent living place. Gypsy children are born and brought up on the boats. Therefore, they cannot go to conventional schools. And hence,

mobile boat-schools are being established for gypsy children. Some voluntary organisations are running special schools on boats to educate river gypsy children in some areas.

### Questions

- 1 What are the main problems that river gypsies are facing?
- 2 What is the effect of global climate change in Bangladesh?
- 3 Why are many river gypsies thinking of changing their lifestyle?
- 4 Why can't river gypsy children go to conventional schools?
- 5 Who are running special schools for river gypsy children? Why?

### C Listen to the teacher/CD and tick the best answer.

U7, L4 C Listening text: 7
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- 1 *Bedeys* catch snakes during the winter/rainy/summer season.
  - 2 Females of the *bedey* families contribute to the family income/education/health with petty trades.
  - 3 They sometimes go vending far from home by rickshaw/ on foot/ by cart.
  - 4 Many *bedeys* have settled near the riverbanks/lakesides/seashore.
  - 5 *Bedeys* are an integral part of our history and literature/culture/tradition.
- D Imagine there is a boat-school in your area to teach river gypsy children. Write a short composition about how you can help the gypsy children with learning.

## Lesson 5: Refugees

**A. Look at the picture and discuss in groups the possible answers to the questions**



Illustration: Dan Williams

1. What comes first in your mind when you look at the image?
2. What is the relationship between the child and the man?

**B. Now read the text titled “Sea Prayer” by Khaled Hosseini and answer the questions that follow:**

My dear Marwan, in the long summers of childhood, when I was a boy the age you are now, your uncles and I spread our mattress on the roof of your grandfather's farmhouse outside of Homs.

We woke in the mornings to the stirring of olive trees in the breeze, to the bleating of your grandmother's goat, the clanking of her cooking pots, the air cool and the sun a pale rim of persimmon to the east.

We took you there when you were a toddler.

I have a sharply etched memory of your mother from that trip, showing you a herd of cows grazing in a field blown through with wild flowers.

I wish you hadn't been so young.

You wouldn't have forgotten the farmhouse, the soot of its stone walls, the creek where your uncles and I built a thousand boyhood dams.

I wish you remembered Homs as I do, Marwan.

In its bustling Old City, a mosque for us Muslims, a church for our Christian neighbours, and a grand souk for us all to haggle over gold pendants and fresh produce and bridal dresses.

I wish you remembered the crowded lanes smelling of fried kibbeh and the evening walks we took with your mother around Clock Tower Square.

But that life, that time, seems like a dream now, even to me, like some long-dissolved rumour.

First came the protests. Then the siege.

The skies spitting bombs. Starvation. Burials. These are the things you know.

You know a bomb crater can be made into a swimming hole. You have learned dark blood is better news than bright.

You have learned that mothers and sisters and classmates can be found in narrow gaps between concrete, bricks and exposed beams, little patches of sunlit skin shining in the dark.

Your mother is here tonight, Marwan, with us, on this cold and moonlit beach, among the crying babies and the women worrying in tongues we don't speak. Afghans and Somalis and Iraqis and Eritreans and Syrians. All of us impatient for sunrise, all of us in dread of it. All of us in search of home.

I have heard it said we are the uninvited.

We are the unwelcome. We should take our misfortune elsewhere.

But I hear your mother's voice, over the tide, and she whispers in my ear, "Oh, but if they saw, my darling. Even half of what you have.

If only they saw. They would say kinder things, surely."



I look at your profile in the glow of this three-quarter moon, my boy, your eyelashes like calligraphy, closed in guileless sleep.

I said to you, "Hold my hand. Nothing bad will happen."

These are only words. A father's tricks. It slays your father, your faith in him. Because all I can think tonight is how deep the sea, and how vast, how indifferent. How powerless I am to protect you from it. All I can do is pray.

Pray God steers the vessel true, when the shores slip out of eyeshot and we are a flyspeck in the heaving waters, pitching and tilting, easily swallowed. Because you, you are precious cargo, Marwan, the most precious there ever was. I pray the sea knows this. Inshallah.

How I pray the sea knows this.

### **Note**

Etched – Deeply marked or engraved in memory.

Persimmon – A type of orange fruit; here, it describes the pale color of the sun.

Soot – Black powder or ash left from fire or smoke.

Bustling – Full of energy and movement, busy.

Haggle – To bargain or argue over the price of something.

Siege – A military attack where enemies surround a place and cut off supplies.

Crater – A large hole made by an explosion.

Guileless – Innocent, without trickery or deceit.

Heaving – Moving up and down, as in the motion of the sea.

Flyspeck – Something very small, like a tiny dot.

Pitching – Moving up and down suddenly, especially in rough waters.

### **C. True or false? If false, write down the correct statement**

1. Marwan's father recalls waking up to the sound of cars and traffic during his childhood summers.
2. Marwan's father remembers showing him a herd of cows when he was a toddler.
3. Marwan's father remembers building dams in the creek near the farmhouse when he was a boy.

4. Marwan's father feels powerless to protect him from the sea during their journey.
5. Marwan's family was taking a trip to the beach for a holiday.
6. Marwan's father says the Old City of Homs had both a mosque and a church.
7. Marwan's father believes the sea is friendly and will protect them on their journey.

**D. Answer the questions below:**

1. Where did Marwan's father and his brothers sleep during the summers of his childhood?
2. What sounds did Marwan's father wake up to in the mornings at the farmhouse?
3. What does Marwan's father wish Marwan remembered about Homs?
4. Why does Marwan's father feel worried about the sea during their journey?

**E. "Sea Prayer" was inspired by the story of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian refugee who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in September 2015 while trying to reach safety in Europe. In the year after his death, 4,176 more people died or went missing on similar journeys. Imagine you are a refugee child. Write down how you would feel if you were one.**