

# ***READINGS ON SOCIETY***

***II SEMESTER***

***COMMON COURSE  
IN ENGLISH***

*(2014 Admission onwards)*

*(CUCBCSS)*



**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**Calicut university P.O, Malappuram Kerala, India 673 635.**

**504**

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

STUDY MATERIAL

## Common Course In English

II Semester

### ***READINGS ON SOCIETY***

	Module -1	Mr. Abdul Samad K Assistant Professor PSMO College Tirurangadi
Prepared by:	Module – 2 & 4	Mr. Haris K Assistant Professor PSMO College Tirurangadi
	Module – 3	Ms. Shamna Vahid Assistant Professor PSMO College Tirurangadi
Scrutinized by:		Sri. P. Mahamood, Asst. Professor, Dept.of English, P.S.M.O.College, Thirurangadi
	Layout:	Computer Section, SDE © Reserved

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGES</b>
<b>MODULE - I</b>	<b>05-11</b>
<b>MODULE - II</b>	<b>12- 16</b>
<b>MODULE -III</b>	<b>17-23</b>
<b>MODULE -IV</b>	<b>24-26</b>

Dear learners,

The text book prescribed for you to study includes four modules; module 1 focuses on Social Issues, module 2 discusses various Environmental concerns, module 3 draws your attention to Gender issues whereas module 4 makes you aware of Human Rights. All these modules aim at improving our concern about the society we live in.

As a person, are you happy with the way our society is functioning? Do you feel disturbed when some people are being discriminated? Do news reports upset you so much that you are empathetic to the victims? Or do you ignore social, environmental and gender-related issues that are reported every day in the world we live?

Living in a human society, it is our responsibility to be aware of those issues and strive for a society which practice democracy, equality and fraternity.

# **Module 1**

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Social Costs of Economic Globalization**

#### **Vandana shiva**

Vandana shiva, born in 1952, is a physicist turned social activist. She is an Eco-feminist. An eco-feminist is an activist who fights for the rights of woman and environment. Are woman and environment related? It is easy to see that both the environment and women are violated by men, and we need to see how women and environment are treated by our society. Vandana shiva actively participated in the Chipco movement of 1970's. She joined the group of people who circled around trees to prevent felling trees. She is one of the leaders of the international forum on Globalization and alter-globalization movement. She is recipient of several awards including the Save the World Award in 2009.

#### Chapter Summary

In this essay, Vandana shiva discusses various aspects, especially darker side, of globalization. Before we continue, what is globalization? Though it is a complex topic, I can briefly say that globalization is the process of linking our national economy with the world economy. In other words, Indian economy will be linked with the economies of European and American states. Is it bad for all nations? If so, why do nations all over the world try to link with the global economy?

In the 1990's India also took part in the globalization process, how does it affects our nation? Are we beneficial by the process? Can you compare the situation of India before and after 1990's?

In the first part of the essay, Vandana shiva questions the claims of the people who support globalization. Supporters of globalization argue that globalization brings nations all over the world together so that goods produced by one nation will be available in another country. This helps international co-operation. They also states that globalization provides equal opportunity to all nations to sell their products in another country's market. A globalized world is a global village where all nations can do business without any limitations. In other words, American/European countries can sell their goods without paying any import tax. In pre-1990 India, foreign companies were forced to pay import tax to government. In a globalized world, no nation is allowed to tax other nation's products as all nations have equal opportunity on all parts of the globe. Sounds good, doesn't it? This is one of the positive aspects of globalization emphasized by the supporters. Vandana shiva exposes this argument saying that equal opportunity to unequal people is not equality. According to her, globalization is the rule of the greed. It legitimizes the exploitation of multinational companies. She also says that globalization is good for highly industrialized

and developed nations who can get access to the markets of under developed nations. It is right, isn't it? Can Indian farmers who are uneducated, poor and helpless compete with American/European companies? How can Indian farmers produce goods which are cheaper than multinational companies? It is to be noted that American/European nations demand all nation to reduce taxes on their products, so that they can amass large chunk of wealth out of poor nations. In this case, developed nations get the benefit of globalization whereas the poor nations get poorer.

Vandana shiva explains her point by presenting the situation of Indian farmers. She focuses on the rising number of farmers' suicide, hunger and malnutrition in India. It is to be noted that globalization promised of equal opportunity and development of all nations, but in the case of Indian farmers, they are getting poorer over the years. In order to substantiate her ideas, she compares per capita calories intake of Indian households. She quotes that per capita calorie intake has fallen from 1830 kcal in 1989 to 1600 kcal in 1998. In 1999-2000, almost 77% of the rural population consumed less than the required calorie intake of 2400 kcal. Why does it happen? As India has linked itself with global economy, Indians must be able to get equal opportunities with Americans and Europeans. Indian citizens must be able to access quality services and goods that are accessible Europeans/Americans. But what is the reality? Do villagers of India get international accredited quality goods and services? Do poor people in India get high quality education, health services as that of Americans? These questions help to look deeper into the problem.

The role of globalization in the agrarian crisis in India needs special attention as Indian economy still depends on the agriculture sector than any other nation in the world. How did globalization stimulate our agrarian crisis and led to farmers suicide? Vandana Shiva points at the increase of cost of production. As a part of modernization, highly costly machines are introduced in to the traditional agriculture sector of India with the effect that farmers could not manage the rising cost of production. They were forced to depend on exploitation of banks for agricultural loans. As a part of the globalization process, all nations supposed to follow General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) imposed by world trade organization (WTO). Because of GATT, tax on importing has been removed. As a result, cheaper products produced by foreign countries flood the market. This stimulated the falling price of farm produce. Farmers who produce crops with expensive machines found the cheaper imported products a challenge to their existence. The falling price of farm products drives them to suicide. Following dictate of WTO, India had weakened its Public Distribute System (PDS) and the Essential Commodities Act. This made life unbearable for Indian farmers. The govt. of India followed a lot of regulations which made life of Indian farmers more tragic. Some of them are listed below:

- a) Liberalization of fertilizers imports and deregulation of domestic manufacture.
- b) Removal of land ceiling regulation.
- c) Removal of subsidies on irrigation, electricity and credit.

- d) Dismantling of food security system.
- e) Abolition of the Essential Commodities Act.

The issues of farmers' suicide, hunger in the villages and suburbs and malnutrition caught media attention and people protested in the streets. The government was forced to act. In order to patch up the misgivings, it adopted a few regulations which, according to Vandana shiva, added fuel to the fire. To address the high price of food grains, the government imported various food grains from other nations. It also implemented a few methods to grow food grains especially wheat. Ignoring the genuine problems of farmers, the government introduced a few hybrids, genetically modified seed varieties and asked farmers to replace the time-tested seed varieties they plant. These seeds were produced by Multinational Companies (MNCs) who prepared seed banks and the corporations were given- subsidies. In addition to this, the govt. encouraged use of chemical fertilizers which risk the soil health. The government also allotted subsidy for micro- nutrients, gypsum and diesel.

In this part of the essay, Vandana shiva suggests a few positive methods to stimulate the dreams of Indian farmers. She recommends the time tested farmers seed varieties instead of the genetically modified seeds. She also prefers to use organic fertilizers and organic manure instead of chemical fertilizers. She also points at the need of conserving the seed varieties.

The last part of the essay deals with the cultural impact of globalization. She is aware that globalization is not just an economic process, but it has deeper social, cultural, and political impact. She warns us that globalization will take away all kinds of cultural varieties and diversities across the globe. She also refers to the effect of artificial food grains on human body and culture. She feels that distorted proteins will infect human culture also, and the infected cultures become self-infecting agents. Globalization threatens diverse cultural values, norms and practices of indigenous cultures. The mono culture of Mc Donald and Coca-Cola with monopolies our cultures and gradually hate between cultures and negatives idealities will be promoted.

#### Things to remember

1. Vandana shiva is a social activist and an eco-feminist. She also criticizes the dark aspects of globalization.
2. She questions the claims of supporters of globalization. She argues that farmers and rural villagers are paying the highest price of globalization. Globalization widens the gap between the rich and the poor.
3. Globalization is responsible for farmers suicide, increase in incidents of hunger and malnutrition. The cost of farm production shoots up whereas the price of farm products falls down.

4. WTO insists on GATT. As a result, essential commodities are not distributed through PDS by govt. Fertilizer import, removal of land ceiling regulations etc. have worsened the situation of the farmers.
5. Initiatives taken by the government to patch up the crisis are not effective. It has made life unbearable for farmers. Seed replacement and support to chemical fertilizers are not the right move.
6. For a healthy world, time tested seed varieties must be preserved; use of organic fertilizers and manure are to be encouraged.
7. Genetically modified seeds and food grains will have cultural impacts. Cultures will be infected. Inequality and ethnic conflicts will be heightened. All cultural diversities will be replaced by the mono cultures of Mc Donald, and Coca-Cola.

#### Model questions

#### Short answers

1. Who is an eco-feminist?
2. Who are paying the highest price for globalization?
3. Why does the author say that globalization poses 'a threat to be a decent human being'?
4. Which are the two aspects of food and agrarian crisis in India?
5. What is 'seed replacement'?
6. What are the advantages of traditional seed varieties?
7. What is 'mono-culture'?

#### Paragraphs

1. What are the major reasons for farmers' suicide?
2. 'World bank', IMF and WTO, have made trade more unfair than free' Discuss.
3. Impact of globalization on culture?
4. How culture and economy are related?
5. Role of TNCs in economic globalization?

#### Essay

1. Impact of globalization on vulnerable sections of our society.
2. Impact of globalization on indigenous cultures.
3. Contrast the way economic globalization felt by first world and third world nations.



## Chapter -2

# Unity amidst Diversity

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was born in Zeradei, Bihar. He completed his education in Calcutta University and Presidency College. He had mastered two languages and continued his studies on law. Dr. Prasad was attracted to the dedicated, patriotic works of Mahatma Gandhi, and followed Gandhian ideals. A renowned scholar, he wrote articles for two journals-The search light and Dosh. He was elected as the president of Indian national congress in 1934. And he became the first president of Independent India. He was awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1962.

### Chapter Summary

Have you heard of a book titled 'The wonder that was India'? It is written by A L Basham. Why do you think the author call India a wonder? Is India a different nation? What makes a nation?

In the first part of his essay, Dr. Rajendra Prasad takes a western tourist's surprise to see India as a nation. In Europe, a nation is formed on the basis of a common language [English, French, and Italian etc.] or religion or race. But when we look at India, India has got many languages, cultures, races, etc. but still India is a nation. Not only Indian people and cultures are different, but the landscape also differs. When we travel east to west of India, we will see all kinds of varieties; the cold of Himalayan regions, the scorching heat of plains, rainfall in the Assam hills and dry climate in Jaisalmer. In terms of the physical features, intellects, manners, diet, languages of the people, no nation can match the variety one finds in India. So outsiders often say 'India is not a nation; it is a collection of nation'. Dr. Rajendra Prasad observes that there is unity amidst all there diversities which casual tourist fails to see. He also adds that this unity of diversity has preserved the unique culture of India over the centuries. Just like the landscape, India allows numerous independent fountains of thought to flow, so that a single stream of Indian culture flows over the subcontinent.

Indians have formed their life based on this unique culture of the nation. Dr. Rajendraprasad observes that it is the good fortune of India that whenever Indians move away from the path of tolerance and ahimsa, great men are born who guide us back to the glorious path of ahimsa and truth. Though democratic system of govt. was first established in Europe, India has established a democratic govt. for itself. The challenge faced by many cultures at present is the conflict between the freedom of individual and society. When an individual longs for absolute freedom, social responsibilities are to be sacrificed. Following the principle of ahimsa and truth, India can easily resolve the issue. An Indian view of life is based on sacrifice, renunciation and self-realization. Since sacrifice is the opposite of self-indulgence, India will not have to face such conflicts

between possessive individuals and social responsibilities. In the long- nourished history of the sub-continent, Indians never used 'force' on another country but won their hearts through truth, tolerance and nonviolence.

The arrival of colonial powers to the subcontinent has marked a new history in India. Europe has exposed a highly progressive and industrialized world to us. Can we use this historical, ethical consciousness in the changed world? He acknowledges that Europe has influenced Indians that one group of people believe that this traditional ethical consciousness is invalid in a highly competitive era. They opine that this age is the age of self-aggrandizement and there is no room for ahimsa and truth.

The writer appreciates the impressive growth of western science and industry. At the same time, he warns us blind imitation of European knowledge and science will not be good for India. He also cautions that industrialization has unleashed the evils of class war and imperialism. India has to harmonize science with the demand of the indigenous culture it is good to follow European knowledge, but we have to keep its evils out of the bay.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad expresses his confidence that India can survive all calamities that fall on it. He views that even in the age of darkness, our culture has produce great men like Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore and Arbindo who guided our people to light. The secret of our culture lies in the collective consciousness based on the historical, ethical consciousness. The stream of ethical consciousness is the foundation of our culture which lies buried deep in the people. Mahatma Gandhi has realized the power of this consciousness so that awaken the consciousness of the people and led them to freedom.

According to the visionary president of the India, the need for the modification of this moral consciousness is debatable. Since the world has been drastically changed, values also need to be changed. But human race has to break the boundary of class, religion and race to utilize the full potential of our knowledge and skill. The selfless concept of Indian society is highly needed for the competitive industrialization of the west; he also suggests that social welfare activities are to be encouraged. Science will be a tool of suppression in the hands of wrong doers. So that a moral consciousness of the people need to awakened.

### **Things to be remember**

1. What makes a nation? The wonder of European tourists about the diversity of Indian landscape, society and culture. The unity amidst the diversity of India.
2. Indian has a time-tested moral consciousness which support tolerance, ahimsa and truth. India won the hearts of people by this value. India produces great men to lead it.

3. Western conflict between individual and society will not happen in India. Indian visions of life include sacrifice, renunciation and self-realization. It is against self-indulgence.
4. In a westernized world, is this moral consciousness relevant? He feels it is unavoidable. Western science is impressive. Indian have to harmonize science with culture
5. The moral consciousness may be modified by the time; Indian values can help the man to break the barrier of class/ religion/ region/ race.
6. Services have to replace self-indulgence; otherwise science will be handled by wrongdoers.

#### Short answer questions

1. Why does the foreign traveler wonder at India?
2. When did India produce great men?
3. Which are major values of ethical consciousness?
4. How did India win the hearts of other people?
5. Which are the evils of western egoism?
6. How did Gandhi awaken the people of India against colonizers?
7. What is poet Iqbal's observation of India's unity as a solid nation?

#### Paragraphs

1. "India is not a nation; it is a collection of nations" Explain.
2. How can India resolve the conflict between individual and society?
3. Why did Dr. Rajendra Prasad suggest modification of the moral consciousness?
4. How can Indian culture remedy the foibles of aggressive egoism of the west?

#### Essay

1. Is the historical, ethical consciousness valid in contemporary society? Substantiate
2. How can Indian consciousness resolve the conflicts of European culture

## MODULE II

### Man and Nature in India: The Ecological Balance

Dr. Salim Ali

Salim Ali (1896 –1987) was an Indian ornithologist and naturalist referred to as "The birdman of India". He is famous for his autobiography *Fall of a Sparrow*. Salim Ali was among the first Indians to conduct bird surveys across India and his bird books helped develop ornithology. He was instrumental in the creation of the Bharatpur bird sanctuary (Keoladeo National Park). He was awarded India's second highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan in 1976.

#### Chapter Summary:

The essay proposes the idea that an environmental consciousness is quite necessary for the balanced conservation of wild life and wild places on the face of earth. The interrelationship of man with other animals- fauna and flora should make him aware that his future cannot be separated from other beings' lives.

Unlike the past life of man tuned in nature's balance, the present is highly disastrous due to human interventions upon nature. This negative impact is visible in the aridity and desert formation in the ruined civilizations of Egypt, West Asia, Carthage and Indus valley. In the modern era the advanced technology and communication devices detrimental to natural resources have affected forests and wildlife so badly.

MS Randhawa in *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* gives historical evidence to argue that in the last 2000 years there has been progressive desiccation in northern India like that of Mathura region in Uttar Pradesh.

This drying up resulting in lesser rainfall and extinction of wild life brought about far reaching and irrevocable consequences. Deforestation directly affects the life of wild animals. For instance the absence of swampy grass jungle leads to the extinction of rhinoceros. In the first quarter of twentieth century the pinheaded duck disappeared due to the same reason. Similarly the withdrawal of moist conditions in the Indo-Gangetic Plain resulted in the lessening of the number of lions. Later on lions fell a victim to the rising population losing their habitat to cultivation. The disappearance of these animals is sufficient to attract the attention of mankind to nature, but much of the fact leaves unnoticed.

Salim Ali takes our grave concern to agricultural area. To refer to the natural balancing in agricultural economy he talks about the natural checks and balancing processes. As an example snakes and lizards are effective checks on rats and crop pests respectively. Man's superstitious beliefs too sometimes lead to the destruction of some animals which are necessary for ecological balancing. Human beings often tend to forget the damage they cause to nature.

Scientific and technological progress seems to be making mankind less controlled by natural environment. Pollution of air, water and soil has started boomeranging on man himself. Now-a-days we cannot consider nature self-balanced, self-controlled.

As a solution to this hazardous problem we should resort to knowledge so profound that educate us that we are no way different from animals physically and we should use our intellect for this knowledge. We cannot consider nature's resources inexhaustible.

Important Points to remember:

- An environmental consciousness is quite necessary for the balanced conservation of life on earth
- Man forgets to consider his dangerous activities on the composition of atmosphere and hydrosphere.
- In the past man lived in harmony with nature. When he got separated he got dangerously alienated.
- Shockingly this negative impact is visible in the aridity and desert formation in the ruined civilizations.
- MS Randhawa argues that in the last 2000 years there has been progressive desiccation in northern India like that of Mathura region in Uttar Pradesh.
- Deforestation directly affects the life of wild animals.
- In agricultural economy natural checks and balancing processes are highly inevitable.
- With large-scale construction and technological progress we tend to forget huge burden we impose on earth.
- Pollution of natural resources boomerang on man himself with potential danger.

**Model Questions:**

**Short Answer Questions**

1. What causes ecological imbalances?
2. How does the progress in communication and technology affect the ecological balance?
3. What does Salim Ali say about the desiccation in North India?
4. What causes the extinction of lions in India?
5. How does population pressure affect ecology?

**Paragraph Questions**

1. Write briefly about the intellectual and physical levels at which man overcomes ecological problems?
2. What is the need for environmental consciousness in agricultural fields?

**Essay:**

1. Write an essay on Dr. Salim Ali's views on the relationship between man and Nature.

## **Climate Change and Human Strategy**

E. K. Federov

E. K. Federov is the former director of hydro-meteorological services in the Soviet Union and a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. He has bagged the prestigious award of International Meteorological Prize.

### **Chapter Summary:**

This article by E. K. Federov talks about the evolution of climatic changes over the years and the factors behind those changes. The author says that human beings are increasingly concerned about irreversible changes taking places in the natural environment, especially in regard to climate change. The environment has been transformed by scientific and technological progress from a human point. In the course of large scale development, man forgets the irreversible changes in the natural environment. In the light of such developments, the modern life frantically requires a balanced understanding and adjustment to climate and other natural elements framed in a sustainable development. Human activity nowadays is measured both by its size and by the duration over which it takes place comparable with natural occurring phenomena of nature. As our environmental resources are not inexhaustible, any human error can lead to very large cumulative error and climate change results.

Climate can be defined as a consequence and a demonstration of the workings of complex process in atmosphere, the oceans and on land. These complex factors do exhibit some continuity and permanence. Number of atmospheric and oceanic parameters can be seen responsible for the overall stability of climate in different parts of the world. In short, climate is the sum of all these relatively stable characteristics of the atmosphere.

The climate of the earth was much more homogenous during the last several hundred million years than it is at present. There were not the noticeable differences in climate between latitudes. This situation began to change several tens of millions of years ago. About two million years ago this process accelerated and Arctic temperature dropped sharply. Consequently a glacial period had taken place in which repeated advances of ice sometimes reached mid latitudes with intervening periods when the ice moved back. The last glacial advances ended in northern hemisphere about ten thousand years ago.

According to the author the factors causing the climate to change over long periods of time may be external or internal. The external factors might include the variations in the quality of radiation emitted by the Sun or changes in the Earth's orbit around the Sun. The internal factors include the formation and movement of continental areas, the growth of mountain ranges and volcanic activity of various kinds that produces dust and gases which may alter transparency and other characteristics of the Earth's surface.

Federov argues that human existence would not have been possible without simultaneously transforming various elements of the natural environment. Human existence and development has affected climate patterns on the earth in many ways. The transformation land surface of the planet was by deforestation, ploughing land reclamation, the construction of huge man-made lakes, reservoirs, and the conversion of large areas to a built-up environment and so on. The water and energy balancing have also significant elements led to climate change. These noticeable changes are so far local but likely to become regional and global during the next 200 years.

E.K.Federov recommends three strategies to stop irreversible climatic changes. The first one is the appropriate assessments (understanding) of the meteorological parameters of climate change. The second one is the impacts of climatic change on socioeconomic development and vice versa.

The third element of the strategy is to make recommendations to all the people on how to avoid the adverse results of climatic change, or if possible to avoid such change altogether. It is, for example, often suggested that fuel and energy use should be reduced to prevent the percentage of Co<sub>2</sub> content of the atmosphere. Restriction of energy use is also recommended in order to preserve the planetary balance.

The majority of these kinds of recommendations are aimed at the preservation of present climate. While international cooperation, peace and disarmament are also very essential to achieve these strategies.

We must plan a set of long-term actions which enables man to avoid the adverse consequences of climate changes. They will inevitably occur in the future. It is matter of urgency we should find out what the critical values of different meteorological parameters to avoid such irreversible changes. Finally, Federov believes that it is possible with the international co-operation to access global problems and calls for 'Change for the Better'. An international cooperation becomes the need of the hour.

Points to remember:

- Human beings often tend to forget the environmental damage they cause when engaging in large-scale developmental activities
- The present humanity as measured both by its size and by the duration over which it has taken place, has increased so much that it can almost be compared with the natural phenomena of nature.
- Climate is a consequence of the workings of complex processes in the atmosphere, in the oceans and on land.
- The main features of this general atmospheric circulation in the average time span of some years or decades, do exhibit some continuity and permanence.



- There is a good reason to believe that during the last several hundreds of millions years, the normal climate of the earth as a whole was almost similar than it is at present.
- From the recent one thousand years, less marked climatic changes have taken place
- There are two kinds of factors that cause the climate to change over long periods of time. They are; external factors and internal factors.
- External factors include variations in the quantity of radiation emitted by the sun and the changes in the earth's orbit around the sun.
- Internal factors include the formation and movement of continental areas, the growth of mountain ranges and the volcanic activity of various kinds.
- Some of the impacts that are of the most relevance to the subject of climatic changes are: (Transformation of land surface of the planet, Changes in the water balance, Changes in the energy balance)
- Only with an international co-operation it is possible to address this global problem.

**Model Questions:**

1. What do human beings often tend to forget when engaging in large-scale developmental activities?
2. What is Federov's definition of climate?
3. What is the difference between the natural and transformed environment?
4. What makes atmospheric circulation complex?
5. Mention two external factors responsible for climatic changes.

**Answer in a short paragraph:**

1. What are the parameters responsible for the overall stability of climate in different parts of the world?
2. What are the two kinds of factors that cause the climate to change over long periods of time? Give two examples of each kind
3. What are the main ways in which human development has affected climate patterns on the earth?
4. What are E.K.Federov's recommended three strategies to stop irreversible climatic changes.

**Essay:**

1. How does E K Federov present the problem of climatic change as a major challenge to human life on earth?



## **Module III**

# **Widow**

### **Gudipat Venkat Chalam**

Gundipat Venkat Chalam (1894-1979) is a well known telugu writer. His works are known for their unconventional attitude to various social institutions such as marriage. Young Chalam was upset with the way his father treated his mother and his sister's marriage against her will. These experiences made him a crusader for women's rights in Telugu literature. His works explore physical and psychological difficulties women experienced in a male dominated Indian society. As a keen social observer, his writing portrays the role of social values and institution in making human life miserable. He wrote nine novels, twelve plays, hundred short stories and numberless poems.

#### Detailed summary of the story

The story 'Widow' is narrated by a seventeen year old village girl who was married at an early age and became a childless widow. When the story begins, the young widow complains of the winter cold, and longs for the warmth of her husband who is deceased. She feels jealous of her sister in law, Mangamma, who has got a husband and a child. She has nothing to protect herself from the winter cold as her shawl has been taken by Mangamma. She laments the death of her young husband as she is sitting all alone near an extinguishing fireplace. Her body growls for sexual gratification in the cold night of the winter. The sleepless nights of a widow! As she spent the night around the hearth, she thinks of her glorious childhood. She recollects the compassionate face of her father who cared very much for her and the lovable brother Annayya. She wonders at the way life has changed for her.

At midnight, the widow hears the cry of Mangamma's child. The child has awakened the mother and beats it. The widow feels that Mangamma's love for the child is superficial as she fondles the child during the day and beats it during the night. The widow dreams of having a baby to care and cuddle and feels that she would do anything to please the child. As the night passes, she hears the police whistle across the street.

The widow wishes to have a child so that her days will be filled with the mirth of the child. She thinks that those people who do not love children have children. Why does she never get a child? If her husband were alive, she would have three or four children by now. She also thinks of the custom of shaving the head of a widow. When the hair cutter touches her, she may get goose pimples. As a widow is kept away from the men folk, she even wishes to have a male touch.

She hears the hungry cries of a cat from the kitchen. She has sympathy for the cat as she is hungry for love; the cat is hungry for the milk. The thought of Mangamma sleeping comfortably with her husband makes the widow feel sick. She thinks of her husband who

got a fatal disease and died before the nuptial ceremony. If he were alive for a few days, she would have got a baby. Loneliness eats her mind and she prepares herself to do anything to get a baby. She also thinks of different ways of getting a baby and feels that her child must come from her womb.

The Karma theory is widely accepted in India. According to this theory, our present life is a reward or punishment of our good or evil deeds of the previous life. The widow is made to believe that she is punished for the crime of murdering someone's child in the earlier birth. This makes her childless in the present life. She wanted to ask the priest whether she would get a child in the next birth. She dares not to ask it because everyone gets angry when a widow asks questions. She also criticizes the fortune of men who are not affected by the karma of the previous birth. When one wife dies, another wife is ready to serve. She also notes that only Hindu widows are supposed to suffer the humiliation of widowhood.

She prepared to have a child. She imagines the consequences of carrying the child of someone. Her sister in law may throw her out of her house. Annayya's head may hang in humiliation. He may try to keep it in the family. Whatever happens, her craving for a child remains. She questions people who say that her karma made her a widow. She assumes that bearing a child may also be a part of her karma. How can people know the karma? She is aware that none of the villagers will show pity to her and her child as the child is begotten of a widow. Out of desperation, the widow wishes to be born as a cow or hen because people take care of animals when they cry for mating. A human widow is deprived of all the comforts that are given even to animals.

## Section 2

In the second part of the story, the widow is impregnated by unknown fellow. She can sense the movement of the child in her womb. Warmth and love for the child fills her life. Though scared, she never regrets the act of sexual intercourse she had with the man. If her husband were alive, how everyone would have welcomed the news! There will be Soodithalu and festivities. Her sister in law would have flicked on her cheek and Annayya, her brother, would be proud of her. Now, once people come to know about her pregnancy, she will be ostracized from the caste, thrown out of her house by Mangamma and the brother will be humiliated in public. She longs to have a baby boy. A girl may have the wretched life of a widow. She despises the man who impregnated her. She approached him to have a baby but he masters her and made a lot of false promises. She is determined to have the baby

The widow is conscious of the consequences of her act. She will be a fallen woman, isolated and forced to live in humiliation. Not a single soul will sympathize with her and the child. It baffles her the way society assigns hell and heaven to its members. She believes that God owes her an explanation for giving hell to a widow whose life was filled with

loneliness and sorrow whereas people who have all the comforts in the present life are promised of heaven.

The widow knows that she is a slave in the house as she has to attend all the household chores whereas Mangamma spends her time cuddling and playing with the baby. At moments she doubts her motives and feels that she is stung by evil thoughts. The future of the baby haunts the widow. Annayya may hand over the child to someone and make her a slave again. She is determined to keep the child and wonders whether the child will realize her suffering and sacrifice.

### Critical appreciation

One of the striking aspects of the story 'Widow' is its narrative. The story reveals the thoughts of a childless young widow in the form of an interior monologue. This narrative device helps the reader to understand the broken thoughts of the widow and how she experiences the social restrictions thrust on her. A stream of thoughts flows through her mind and her emotions vary from moment to moment. She is not able to focus on one emotion but her baffled mind presents the complex mental conditions she is undergoing. The narration also hints at the way social institutions stress the individual psyche.

The author's commitment to social issues is also to be appreciated. He has introduced a narrative which succeeds to expose some of the biggest social malaises in India, child marriage and gender discrimination. Uneducated and isolated, the innocent rendering of the narrator draws our attention and we sympathize with the Indian village women who have been subject to inhuman discrimination and social taboos. Her flitting mind showcases the intricate emotions of a girl whose dreams were broken by the weight of age old traditions and values.

### Short Answer Questions

1. Who is the narrator of the story?
2. According to karma theory, what is the crime committed by the widow in the previous birth?
3. What is Kalagni?
4. Why does Mangamma beat the child?
5. Why does the widow say that Mangamma's love for the kid is not genuine?
6. What happened to the husband of the widow?
7. How does the stranger who impregnated the widow behave to her?
8. How does the family welcome the news of a wife's pregnancy?
9. How did the widow shield Annayya when they were young?

### Paragraph Questions

1. How does the widow question the Karma theory?
2. How does society respond to the bodily needs of a widow?

2. What are the consequences the widow has to face once her pregnancy is revealed?
3. The childhood of the widow.
4. Why does the widow feel that God owes her an explanation?
5. Narrative consciousness in 'Widow'
6. Role of religion in the subjugation of women.

### Essay Questions

1. 'Widow' as an expression of the prevailing gender discrimination in Indian society.
2. Do religious and social values are responsible for the miseries of widows in India? Discuss.

## **More than 100 Million Women are Missing**

**Amartya Sen**

### **Amartya Sen- The Author**

Amartya Sen (1933- ), the renowned Indian economist and the Nobel laureate, was born in Santiniketan, West Bengal, India. His works on human development theory, famine, the mechanism of poverty, gender inequality, and political liberalism have made him one of the most popular non-fiction writers today. Some of his noteworthy publications include 'On Economic Inequality', "On Ethics and Economics", "The Possibility of Social Choice", "The Argumentative Indian" "More than 100 Million Women are Missing" etc. A leading intellectual, Sen's books have been translated into more than thirty languages across the world and he has received over 80 honorary doctorates so far. He is currently employed as the Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University and is also a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. He has won an array of laurels including Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in India.

"More than 100 Million Women are Missing" is an extract from an article of the same name published in the *New York Review of Books* in 1990, which throws light on gender imbalance, and the "missing women" all over the world.

### **Brief Summary**

Amartya Sen in his much appreciated article "More than 100 Million Women are Missing", discusses the issue of mass numbers of women missing all over the world due to a various factors. He explains the dreadful ways females are treated globally in terms of life expectancy, child mortality, literacy etc, and explicates how we must use a complex diagnosis of cultural, economic, and social factors to comprehend global and regional differences.

He begins the article by pointing out that it is a mistaken belief that women constitute the majority of the world's population. It is based on generalizing from the contemporary situation in the much developed countries like Europe and North America

where the men-women ratio is fairly high unlike South and West Asia, China, Africa, and Latin America.

Sociologists say that boys outnumber girls at birth, but after conception, as research has shown, provided with proper health care and medical attention women tend to have better survival rates than men. In Europe, Japan and the U.S. women outnumber men as there is less discrimination in basic nutrition and health care. However, the social and environmental reasons for the higher mortality of men (propensity for violence, smoking) on these countries also need to be accounted of. In contrast, the fate of women in most of Asia and North Africa is quite different and in fact female mortality is fairly high as they do not receive the same level of healthcare and social services as men.

Sen says that this pattern is not uniform in all parts of the world. To prove the disparities in this pattern, he takes up the example of the “Third World” countries. One example is that of Sub Saharan Africa. Though ravaged by extreme poverty, hunger, and famine, the country has an excess of women than deficit (the ratio being around 1.02.). This is the perfect example of a situation where the usage of the term Third World fails. There is even a contrast in gender ratios within regions. In India, for example, the wealthy state Punjab has a shortage of women in contrast to Kerala, where women outnumber men.

Amartya Sen draws our attention then to the drastic difference in the gender ratios over the world, and to the concept of “missing women”. He says that to estimate the number involved in this different gender ratios, we can calculate the number of “missing women”; that is the number of extra women that would have been there in a country, say China or India, if no biased gender patterns were there. When calculated, this figure comes approximately to more 100 million globally. These numbers infact reveal the “terrible story of inequality and neglect leading to the excess mortality of women.”

Sen furnishes the two simplistic explanations which the sociologists often used to account for this neglect of women: one is the cultural contrast between East and West, and the other based on the stages of economic development. The cultural explanation is that European nations are less sexist than their Oriental counterparts. The economic explanation is that seeing the unequal nutrition and healthcare provided for women as a feature of poor economies awaiting economic advancement. But Sen argues that neither of the theory is convincing. Because, the East-West explanation is flawed by Japan as it has a ratio during the postwar decades somewhat similar to that in Europe or North America. It also fails to account for other characteristics of these societies like women's presence in the public sphere. For e.g. though South Asia is among the world's lowest proportion to gender ratio (.094 in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan), they have been the pioneers in electing women as top political leaders though such women headships have not been open to everyone, but to the powerful elites. Nonetheless it is hopeless to assume that the gender imbalances are due to the East- West sexism.

Now taking up the economic explanation, Sen also accept the fact that most countries with large deficits of women are more or less poor, and a reduction of female mortality can be expected with economic progress. But even this explanation is weak according to Sen since many poor and underdeveloped countries like sub-Saharan Africa do have a surplus of women instead of deficit. In fact, economic development is often accompanied by a worsening of women's relative positions. For e.g, in India until very recently women's life expectancy worsened in comparison to men, could India balance it out? This deterioration in women's position was largely due to the unequal sharing of the advantages of medical and social progress.

However, Sen firmly asserts these explanations as inadequate in understanding the geography of female deprivation in social well-being and survival. So, he demands for a different pattern of analysis that addresses various other factors. We have to examine the complex ways in which social, economic, and cultural factors influence the regional differences. He adds that women's power and status within the family differ greatly from region to region, and that these social features have an impact on the economic role and independence of women. An employment outside home and ownership of assets are crucial to women's status. Men and women have both cooperative and conflicting interests that affect family decisions. Empirical evidence has shown that a "gainful" employment or a "productive" occupation in contrast to the unpaid, unhonoured housework enhance the deal that women get. It offers women ease of access to income, improves their status within the family, and results in an improvement in security and legal protection. These factors may not only improve the "deal" that women get in the family, but also changes the way girls are raised. Besides that, if the status of women rises and their contributions are recognized, female children begin to receive more attention, and the economic importance of boys will be reduced. Similarly, the exposure of women to the world through the work outside their home can weaken the hold of traditional believes and behavior. Or in other words, a social economical and cultural paradigm shift can improve the status of women across the borders and reduce, towards a certain extent, the ratio of "missing" population.

In short, a voice of the poor and malnourished, Sen has tirelessly engrossed in the problems of the poorest and the neglected sections of world. He points out that despite certain biological advantages, the mortality of women in most developing nations is much higher than their male counterparts. The number of "missing women" all over the world is fairly high. Taking up certain conspicuous instances of gender disparity which imperils the lives not only of women but also of men, Sen emphasizes the necessity of a complex analysis of cultural, economic, and social factors in overcoming the recent threat of a surplus in "Missing women"

## **Questions**

### **I. Short Answer Questions.**

1. What made the sociologists to say that women make up the majority of the world's population?
2. What does research prove about women's longevity of life?
3. What do you mean by the term “missing women”?
4. What does Amartya Sen mean by “gainful” employment?
5. What are the two explanations presented to account for the neglect of women?

**II. Answer the following in a paragraph not more than 100 words**

1. According to Amartya Sen, how does the “gainful” employment of women act as a solution for the “cooperative conflicts” within the family?
2. Discuss the inadequacy of the cultural and economic explanations on the “missing women”
3. The complex ways proposed by Sen to improve women's deal.

**III. Write an essay in about 300 words.**

1. How can women's deal be improved especially in the Third World countries as proposed by Dr. Amartya Sen?
2. How does Amartya Sen differ from other sociologists on the question of gender disparity or women-men ratio in countries all over the world?



## MODULE IV

### Stigma, shame and Silence

#### Kalpana Jain

Kalpana Jain is a social activist and journalist working in the areas of health and population issues. She has made extensive journey through AIDS epidemic areas as part of her health journalism. She is the editor of *Health e-Letter* and has written many research articles on a variety of health issues.

#### Chapter Summary

The present story is an extract from Kalpana Jain's book *Positive Lives: The Story of Ashok and Others with HIV* (2003) that deals with hundreds of men and women who fought out the battle against HIV conquering shame and fear and by providing confidence and inspiration for others who got infected with the disease. The story criticizes the medical establishment and armed forces for their callous and insensitive approach to such afflicted folk.

In the story we find a man named Ashok, declared as HIV positive, struggling with confidence to face the rest of his life. As the story opens we find Ashok, working as a radio operator in Navy, brooding over his youth playing in water with paper boats. He meditates on how he has to go on with new phase of his life.

He realizes that he is an HIV infected person rather casually on discovering blisters on his arm. He is made to undergo test in naval hospital where he spends around four weeks. The writer gives much importance to the attitude of doctor who treated Ashok first after discovering that he is an AIDS patient. His brutal words "you know you are positive" echoes throughout the chapter. When the man remained composed the doctor tried to aggravate his feelings with the words "you are suffering from AIDS ... your life is short. Eventually you shall die". He even gave the blunt prescription "not to have sex".

A series of thoughts pass through the mind of Ashok regarding the consequences of this affliction: Stigma, shame and silence. He resolved that he should work and earn for his family. A variety of feelings disturbed him oscillating between his self esteem and the shame he has to face. He even thought of hitting the doctor who mortified him. The restraints and restrictions made him laugh at mankind sometimes. These fluctuating impulses in his behaviour took him to psychiatrists.

When he was hospitalized in Command hospital he was seen in complete pacific contemplation. There he spent his time in playing cards and watching TV. He is made to accept reality and resorted to the wise notion of "why one opens umbrella before it starts raining". With this resolve in his mind he started to face life again, though he was sure it was a life of Stigma, Shame and Silence.



Points to Remember:

- The story is about an AIDS victim and the alienation he suffers thereby.
- Ashok, the victim, was a radio operator in Navy
- When he was detected positive, his doctor quite frightened him.
- His self confidence made him look at life positively
- The story talks about the internal and external trauma that an afflicted man passes through.

Model Questions:

1. How did Ashok's friends react when they know about his disease?
2. How did he realise the syndrome first?
3. How did he react to the doctor's blunt revelation?
4. How did Ashok manage at the end?

**Paragraph**

1. The attitude of doctor in the story.
2. Human estrangement as presented in the story

Essay

1. Write an essay on the reality of the stigma, shame and resultant silence thrust upon HIV victims as portrayed by Kalana Jain.

**Yes I am Happy! Don't You Believe?**

**Santhosh John Thooval**

Shanthos John Thooval is a senior journalist in Malayala Manorama specialized in writing human interest features since 2003. He has bagged many awards like National Safety Council Media award, Banerjee Memorial Media award and so on.

The present article is translation of *Rappai ee veedinte aiswaryam* published in Malayala Manoram supplement on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2013. It talks about a physically challenged person named Rappai in Ollur and how he was treated by the other members in the family in way that served a right model on how to treat such people.

Rappai was born imbecile and handicapped and started toddling at the age of 11 only. Now he is 60 and the eldest among the five children of Ouseph and Veronica couple. His brothers James and Thobias and sisters Alphonsa, Mercy and their children all treated Rappai in utmost care and without any discrimination due to his handicap.

Even the daughters in law in the family considered Rappai as their eldest brother. Ouseph attracts the attention of all in such a family with a man like Rappai. He taught his

children to treat Rappai as their head. He ensured Rappai's involvement in every activity in the family. He was very particular about the choice of daughters in law in regard of Rappai.

The author talks about an incident at Veega Land to show how considerate the family was. When the security man denied entry to Rappai the whole family refused the partying and the Rappai too was given entry. Ouseph's business group ANGEL GROUP always believed that Rappai was the basic element in its prosperity. Rappai's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated in the presence of all dignitaries including Cardinal George Alanchery. Rappai was clad in golden colour suit and glossy shoes and seen so happy. He seemed to say "Yes I am Happy! Don't You Believe?"

Points to Remember:

- The article is translation of *Rappai ee veedinte aishwaryam* published in Malayala Manoram supplement on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2013.
- Rappai is a physically challenged person in Ollur born in the family of Ouseph and Veronica couple
- He was treated equally in the family.
- Family's empathy becomes a highlight in the chapter.
- Veegaland episode is a prime example.
- 60<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated with much grandeur.
- He tried to speak.

Model Questions

1. How was Rappai treated in the family?
2. How does Rappai answer visitor's call at home?
3. How does Rappai communicate with those at home?
4. What happened at Veega Land?
5. How does the article end?

**Paragraph**

1. Write a brief description of the Rappai's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration

Essay

1. How does the article "Yes I am Happy! Don't You Believe?" relevant in the contemporary social scenario?