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B. A. Part - III : English

Semester-VI : Major Mandatory-10

Non-Fiction in English

(In accordance with National Education Policy 2020)
(Academic Year 2026-27 onwards)

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Preface

This SLM book on 'Non-fiction in the English' has been designed in accordance with the objectives of NED-2020. It is offered as four credit Major Mandatory course which introduces non-fictional writings of great personalities from India and West.

There are four modules. The first module, 'Non-fiction' gives meaning and characteristics of non-fiction, types of non-fiction and also difference between fiction and non-fiction. The second module introduces autobiography of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. *Waiting for Visa*, which share six experiences of him and emphasises message of equality. The Child module gives travel experiences of Mark Twain, Swami Vivekananda and Jawaharlal Nehru and the fourth module discusses the essays of George Orwell.

The writing team has made sincere efforts to fulfil the intent of the course. The Board has endeavoured to ensure the quality and comprehensiveness of the book in the accordance with the guidelines of NEP-2020.

Heartful thanks are also given to the writing team and University Press staff for their dedicated efforts.

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Each Unit begins with the section objectives -

Objectives are directive and indicative of :

1. what has been presented in the unit and
2. what is expected from you
3. what you are expected to know pertaining to the specific unit, once you have completed working on the unit.

The self-check exercises with possible answers will help you understand the unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answers only after you write your answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as study tools to keep you on the right track as you study the unit.

Dear Students,

The SLM is simply a supporting material for the study of this paper. It is also advised to see the new syllabus 2026-27 and study the reference books & other related material for the detailed study of the paper.

Module 1

Non-fiction

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1.0 Objectives :

1. The present module aims to enable students understand the meaning, types and characteristics of nonfiction.
2. To comprehend various forms of non-fiction.
3. To compare and contrast fiction and non-fiction.
4. To understand purpose, format and style of nonfictional works.
5. To understand the types and characteristics of nonfiction.

1.1 Introduction :

In the present module, we will discuss the definition and meaning of the term, 'Nonfiction'. We will also study major types of nonfiction. Difference between fiction and non-fiction will also be explained in detail with examples.

1.2 Presentation of the Subject Matter :

1.2.1 Meaning of Nonfiction:

Nonfiction refers to prose writing that deals with actual people, events, facts and ideas. It seeks to inform, explain, persuade or document reality. It is a literary genre that presents factual, real-world information rather than imaginative or invented content. Fiction is based on the author's creativity and storytelling. Nonfiction is grounded in truth, accuracy and objectivity

Nonfiction is a form of literature that reflects the world as it is. Nonfiction seeks to deepen our understanding of reality, enrich our thinking, and guide our actions through truth-based narratives.

Nonfiction provides knowledge and understanding about the world. It keeps readers updated on current affairs and developments. It also offers insight into human experiences, cultures, and philosophies. It also helps readers learn skills, solve problems and make informed decisions.

Characteristics of Nonfiction

1. Nonfiction is based on real events, data and verifiable information.
2. It aims to inform, explain, argue or reflect rather than simply to entertain.
3. The writer is expected to present facts truthfully and cite reliable sources when needed.

4. Though nonfiction is factual, it can be written in a narrative or storytelling format, especially in creative nonfiction or memoirs.
5. In some forms (like essays or autobiographies), the author's personal voice and opinions are central; in others (like journalism or academic texts), objectivity is emphasized.

1.2.2 The difference between fiction and nonfiction:

The difference between fiction and nonfiction lies primarily in their relationship to reality: fiction is imaginative and created, while nonfiction is based on facts and real events.

Fiction is a literary work based on the imagination of the author. It includes stories, characters, and events that are not real, even if they are inspired by real life. Nonfiction is a prose narrative based on facts, real events, real people, or actual information. It aims to inform, explain, or reflect reality.

The purpose of fiction is to entertain, inspire or provoke thought. Fiction may also teach moral or philosophical lessons through storytelling. The purpose of nonfiction is to inform, explain, persuade or document. The main goal of nonfiction is truthfulness and accuracy.

Fiction contains imaginary characters and plots. It may include fantasy, science fiction, romance or thrillers. Nonfiction is about real people, real events and verifiable facts. Nonfiction includes biographies, essays, journalism, history and self-help books.

Authors of fiction use creative writing techniques like dialogue, conflict, plot structure and symbolism. They have freedom to invent or distort reality. Nonfiction is based on research, evidence or personal experience. It requires accuracy, citations and objectivity.

Readers of fiction expect to be transported into an imaginary world. They suspend disbelief and engage emotionally with characters and events. Readers of nonfiction expect truthful, well-researched and factual information. The writer's credibility is important.

In fiction truth is not required. Fiction can reflect truth or convey themes but is invented. In nonfiction truth is essential. Even personal opinion or interpretation must be based on real experience or evidence.

Sub-genres of fiction include fantasy, mystery, thriller, historical fiction, romance and science fiction. Sub-genres of nonfiction include biography, memoir, travel writing, essay, reportage, academic writing and self-help books.

Examples of fiction:

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling

1984 by George Orwell

Examples of Nonfiction:

The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank

Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari (history/science)

I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai (autobiography)

Check your progress -1 :

Select the correct alternative of the following:

1. What is nonfiction primarily concerned with?
 - A. Imagination and fantasy
 - B. Real people, events, and facts
 - C. Mythological stories
 - D. Supernatural elements
2. What is the main goal of nonfiction writing?
 - A. Entertainment only
 - B. Emotional engagement
 - C. Truthfulness and accuracy
 - D. Fantasy creation
3. Which of the following is a key characteristic of nonfiction?
 - A. Invented characters
 - B. Use of magic and fantasy
 - C. Based on verifiable information
 - D. Unreal settings
4. What is the primary purpose of fiction?
 - A. To document reality
 - B. To inform and educate
 - C. To entertain and inspire
 - D. To present facts only
5. Which of the following genres belongs to nonfiction?
 - A. Biography
 - B. Romance
 - C. Science fiction
 - D. Fantasy

6. In nonfiction, the writer is expected to:
- A. Create imaginary worlds B. Distort reality freely
 - C. Focus only on entertainment D. Present facts truthfully
7. Which of the following is true about fiction?
- A. It is always based on real events B. It requires citations and evidence
 - C. It uses imagination and storytelling D. It avoids creativity
8. What do readers expect from nonfiction?
- A. Fantasy and adventure B. Emotional drama only
 - C. Factual and well-researched information D. Imaginary worlds
9. Which of the following is an example of nonfiction?
- A. Pride and Prejudice B. Harry Potter
 - C. 1984 D. The Diary of a Young Girl
10. What distinguishes nonfiction from fiction?
- A. Use of dialogue B. Emotional appeal
 - C. Relationship to reality D. Use of characters
11. Which statement best captures the epistemological basis of nonfiction?
- A. It constructs alternative realities through imagination
 - B. It is grounded in verifiable truth and factual accuracy
 - C. It rejects objectivity in favor of emotional truth
 - D. It prioritizes aesthetic form over factual content
12. Which of the following best distinguishes nonfiction from fiction in terms of authorial responsibility?
- A. Nonfiction allows complete creative freedom
 - B. Fiction demands factual accuracy
 - C. Nonfiction requires adherence to truth and evidence

- D. Fiction relies entirely on real-life documentation
13. How does creative nonfiction challenge traditional definitions of nonfiction?
- A. By rejecting factual accuracy
 - B. By incorporating fictional characters
 - C. By using narrative techniques while maintaining factual truth
 - D. By focusing only on entertainment
14. Which of the following statements best reflects the function of nonfiction in society?
- A. It primarily serves as escapist literature
 - B. It offers imaginative alternatives to reality
 - C. It informs, educates and enables critical decision-making
 - D. It avoids engagement with real-world issues
15. In which type of nonfiction is subjectivity most prominently accepted?
- A. Autobiography and essays B. Journalism
 - C. Academic writing D. Scientific reports
16. Which of the following best explains the reader's role in engaging with fiction versus nonfiction?
- A. Fiction requires critical verification of facts
 - B. Nonfiction requires suspension of disbelief
 - C. Both require the same reading strategy
 - D. Fiction invites emotional immersion while nonfiction demands critical evaluation
17. Which feature is essential for establishing credibility in nonfiction writing?
- A. Use of fantasy elements B. Emotional exaggeration
 - C. Reliable sources and evidence D. Symbolic storytelling
18. Which of the following statements about truth in fiction and nonfiction is most accurate?

- A. Both demand literal factual accuracy
 - B. Fiction rejects all forms of truth
 - C. Nonfiction requires factual truth, while fiction may convey thematic truth
 - D. Neither is concerned with truth
19. Which of the following genres would most likely emphasize objectivity over personal voice?
- A. Memoir
 - B. Personal essay
 - C. Journalism
 - D. Autobiography
20. What is the primary limitation placed on nonfiction writers compared to fiction writers?
- A. Limited audience reach
 - B. Restriction to real events and factual accuracy
 - C. Lack of narrative techniques
 - D. Inability to express opinions

1.2.3 Types of Nonfiction :

Nonfiction is a broad literary category that includes writing based on facts, real events and actual people. Nonfiction aims to inform, explain, document or persuade readers about the real world. Over time, nonfiction has evolved into a rich and diverse field with multiple subgenres. Each of these subgenres serves a distinct purpose to its audience. Understanding the types of nonfiction helps appreciate how truth can be presented in different styles and formats.

1.2.3.1 Narrative nonfiction :

1. Narrative nonfiction tells true stories using the techniques of fiction, such as character development, dialogue and vivid descriptions. It blends factual accuracy with storytelling. It makes real events engaging and emotionally compelling. Examples include biographies, memoirs and literary journalism. For example, A memoir focuses on specific experiences from the author's life. A biography provides a comprehensive account of another person's life. Narrative nonfiction allows readers to connect deeply with real-life experiences while still learning factual information.

Narrative nonfiction is a form of writing that tells true stories using the techniques and style of fiction. While everything in narrative nonfiction is grounded in factual reality, the writer presents it in a way that feels like a story. The story has characters, settings, dialogue, conflict and a clear narrative arc. This makes it one of the most engaging and accessible types of nonfiction. It combines the credibility of facts with the emotional appeal of storytelling.

The defining feature of narrative nonfiction is its balance between truth and storytelling. It does not simply list facts or explain concepts. Instead, it reconstructs real events in a way that draws the reader into the experience. Writers often rely on research, interviews, historical records and personal memories to ensure accuracy.

For example, in *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank, the author recounts her real-life experiences hiding during World War II. Although it is a factual account, it reads like a deeply personal story, with emotions, reflections and a sense of unfolding tension.

Narrative nonfiction is powerful because it makes reality meaningful and memorable. Instead of presenting dry facts, it helps readers understand the human side of events how people think, feel, and react. It is widely used in education, journalism, and literature because it both informs and engages. For instance, a historical account written as a narrative can help readers better grasp the impact of events by showing how individuals experienced them, rather than just listing dates and outcomes.

Characteristics of Narrative Nonfiction

1. The foundation of narrative nonfiction is truth. The events actually happened, and the people are real. However, the writer may organize or present these facts in a structured way to enhance readability.
2. Writers use elements typically found in fiction, such as plot (beginning, middle, and end), character development, dialogue, setting and atmosphere. A good example is *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer. The author tells the true story of Christopher McCandless. The book builds suspense, explores motivations and develops the central figure much like a novel would.
3. Narrative nonfiction aims to make readers feel emotions like sympathy, curiosity, tension or inspiration. It connects readers to real-life experiences on a personal level.

4. While facts remain accurate, the structure may not always be strictly chronological. Writers may use flashbacks, shifting perspectives or thematic organization to make the story more powerful. Rich descriptions help readers visualize scenes and understand the context. This is especially important in travel writing and historical narratives.

Major Forms of Narrative Nonfiction :

1. Memoir

A memoir focuses on specific experiences or periods in the author's life. Example: *Educated* by Tara Westover, which recounts her journey from a strict and isolated upbringing to receiving a formal education.

2. Biography and Autobiography

These works tell the life story of a person. In an autobiography, the author tells his/her own story in own voice. A biography is the story of a person's life written by another. Example: *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* by Mahatma Gandhi, which presents his life experiences and philosophical development.

3. Literary Journalism (Creative Nonfiction) :

This form combines journalistic research with narrative style. Example: *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote, a detailed account of a real murder case written like a novel.

4. Travel Writing :

These narratives describe real journeys and cultural experiences. Example: *The Great Railway Bazaar* by Paul Theroux, which documents the author's train journeys across multiple countries.

5. Personal Essays:

These are shorter reflections on real experiences, often with a strong narrative voice and insight.

1.2.3.2 Expository nonfiction :

Expository nonfiction is a type of writing that aims to inform, explain, or clarify a topic in a clear, logical, and straightforward manner. Unlike narrative nonfiction, which tells a story,

expository nonfiction focuses on presenting facts, ideas and processes so that the reader can understand a subject thoroughly. It is one of the most widely used forms of nonfiction, especially in education, research and everyday communication.

The word “expository” comes from “expose,” meaning to reveal or explain. In this type of writing, the author’s main goal is not to entertain or persuade, but to deliver accurate information in an organized way. For example, a science book explaining how the Photosynthesis works is expository nonfiction. It breaks down a complex process into understandable steps using facts, definitions, and examples.

Characteristics of Expository Nonfiction :

1. Expository writing uses clear and precise language. The focus is on making ideas easy to understand, even if the topic is complex.
2. Information is presented in a structured format. Common organizational patterns include: Cause and effect, Problem and solution, Compare and contrast, Chronological order, Definition and explanation.
3. All information is based on verified facts, data, and evidence rather than personal opinions or imagination.
4. The tone is neutral and unbiased. The writer avoids emotional language and focuses on explaining rather than influencing.
5. Writers often include examples, diagrams, or step-by-step explanations to make the content clearer.

Types of Expository Nonfiction :

1. Textbooks and Educational Books : These are designed to teach students about specific subjects such as science, history, or mathematics. For example *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking explains complex ideas about the universe, such as black holes and time in a simplified and structured way.

2. How-To Guides and Instruction Manuals : These provide step-by-step instructions to complete a task. Examples: A manual explaining how to use a smartphone, a guide on how to bake a cake or start a business. These texts are highly practical and focus on clear, sequential instructions.

3. Informational Articles and Essays : These include encyclopedia entries, research summaries, and educational articles. Example: Articles explaining events like the French Revolution, where causes, key events and outcomes are presented in a logical sequence.

4. Reports and Research Papers : These are more formal types of expository writing, often used in academic and professional settings. They present findings, data, and analysis on a specific topic.

5. News Reports (Informational) : While some journalism can be narrative or persuasive, straightforward news reporting often falls under expository nonfiction because it presents facts about current events clearly and objectively.

Example of Expository Writing : Imagine explaining how rain forms. An expository paragraph would describe the process step by step. How water evaporates, forms clouds, condenses, and eventually falls as precipitation without telling a story or expressing personal feelings. The goal is simply to help the reader understand the process.

Expository nonfiction plays a crucial role in everyday life. It is the foundation of learning in schools and universities. It Helps people understand instructions, policies and information. It makes complex ideas accessible to a wider audience. Without expository writing it would be difficult to communicate scientific discoveries, historical knowledge or technical skills effectively.

Expository nonfiction is essential for explaining the world around us. By presenting facts in a clear, logical, and structured way, it helps readers learn new concepts, solve problems, and make informed decisions. Whether in textbooks, manuals, or informational articles, this form of writing ensures that knowledge is accessible, reliable, and easy to follow.

1.2.3.3 Persuasive nonfiction :

Persuasive nonfiction is designed to convince the reader to adopt a particular viewpoint or take a specific action. This type includes opinion essays, editorials, speeches, and argumentative articles. Writers use logic, evidence, and rhetorical techniques to support their claims and influence readers. Persuasive nonfiction plays a crucial role in public discourse, shaping opinions on political, social, and cultural issues. For instance, an editorial arguing for environmental conservation or a speech advocating for social justice would fall into this category.

Persuasive nonfiction uses facts along with arguments, reasoning, and emotional appeal to influence the reader's thinking.

It is widely used in public life. It is important in politics, media, advertising and social movements. It shapes opinions and drives decisions.

Persuasive nonfiction presents real issues, real facts, and real arguments, but organizes them in a way that supports a specific position. The writer's goal is not just to inform, but to argue and convince. For example, speeches during the Indian Independence Movement often aimed to persuade people to support freedom from British rule. These speeches combined facts, moral arguments, and emotional appeals to inspire action.

Characteristics of Persuasive Nonfiction :

1. The writer takes a definite stand on an issue. Example: "Climate change is the most urgent global problem and requires immediate action."
2. Use of Evidence: Persuasive writing relies on facts, statistics, examples, and expert opinions to support its claims. Example: Data about rising global temperatures or pollution levels may be used to strengthen an argument.
3. Logical Reasoning: Arguments are presented in a structured and logical way so that the reader can follow the reasoning.
4. Emotional Appeal: Writers often appeal to the reader's emotions such as fear, hope, anger or compassion to make their argument more powerful.
5. Credibility: The writer establishes trust by showing knowledge, experience, or authority on the subject.
6. Call to Action: Many persuasive texts end by encouraging the reader to take action such as changing behavior, supporting a cause or adopting a belief.

Types of Persuasive Nonfiction :

1. Speeches

Speeches are one of the most powerful forms of persuasive nonfiction. Example: 'I Have a Dream' by Martin Luther King Jr. This speech uses repetition, emotional appeal and moral arguments to advocate for racial equality during the Civil Rights Movement.

2. Editorials and Opinion Articles

These appear in newspapers, magazines, and online platforms. They present the writer's opinion on current issues. Example: Opinion pieces discussing the impact of policies related to the COVID-19 often argued for or against lockdowns, vaccinations or public health measures.

3. Essays and Argumentative Writing

These are structured pieces that present a thesis, supporting arguments, and a conclusion. Example: 'A Room of One's Own' by Virginia Woolf argues for women's independence and access to education and creative freedom.

4. Advertisements

Advertisements are a common everyday form of persuasive nonfiction. They use both facts and emotional appeal to convince people to buy products or services.

5. Political Writing

This includes campaign speeches, manifestos, and debates. Example: 'The Communist Manifesto' by Karl Marx presents arguments about class struggle and calls for political and social change.

Example of Persuasive Writing

Topic: Plastic pollution; A persuasive paragraph might argue that single-use plastics should be banned. It would include facts about environmental damage, examples of harm to marine life, emotional language about the planet's future, and a call for readers to reduce plastic use.

1.2.3.4 Descriptive nonfiction :

Descriptive nonfiction is a type of writing that aims to create a vivid and detailed picture of real people, places, objects, or events. While it is based entirely on facts, its primary goal is not just to inform, but to help the reader see, feel, and experience reality through rich sensory details. Descriptive nonfiction emphasizes imagery, observation, and atmosphere, making real-life subjects come alive in the reader's mind.

Descriptive nonfiction presents factual content in a way that appeals to the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. The writer carefully observes and then recreates those

observations using expressive language. For example, instead of simply stating facts about the Taj Mahal, a descriptive nonfiction piece might describe the glow of white marble at sunrise, the quiet reflection in the water and the intricate carvings on its walls. The goal is to make the reader feel as if they are actually there.

Descriptive nonfiction helps readers visualize real-world subjects. It makes factual writing more engaging and memorable. It also preserves cultural, historical and natural experiences. It encourages careful observation and appreciation of reality. It is especially important in travel, journalism and environmental writing.

Descriptive nonfiction transforms real-world observations into vivid experiences through detailed and sensory-rich language. By focusing on how things look, sound, and feel, it allows readers to connect deeply with real places, people, and events. Whether in travel writing, nature essays, or personal reflections, this type of nonfiction brings reality to life in a powerful and memorable way.

Characteristics of Descriptive Nonfiction :

1. Focus on Sensory Details

Writers use detailed descriptions to appeal to the five senses. They describe what does it look like, what sounds are present, Are there any distinct smells or textures?

2. Accurate but Vivid Language

Although the writing is imaginative in style, it remains factually correct. Nothing is invented, but details are carefully selected and presented in an engaging way.

3. Strong Imagery

Descriptive nonfiction relies heavily on imagery that includes language that helps readers visualize scenes clearly.

4. The writing is based on close observation of real-life subjects. It often reflects the writer's personal experience or perspective.

Types of Descriptive Nonfiction

1. Travel Writing

This is one of the most popular forms. Writers describe places they visit, including landscapes, cultures, and experiences. Example: *In Patagonia* by Bruce Chatwin. The book vividly portrays the landscapes and people of Patagonia through detailed observations.

2. Nature Writing

Nature writing focuses on the natural world including plants, animals, weather and ecosystems. Example: *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau. It describes life in natural surroundings with rich, reflective detail.

3. Profiles and Character Sketches

These describe real people in detail—their appearance, behavior, and personality. Example: Biographical sketches of figures like Rabindranath Tagore may include vivid descriptions of his personality, surroundings and creative life.

Techniques Used in Descriptive Nonfiction :

Writers use several techniques to enhance description. Figurative language like similes and metaphors are used while staying truthful to details. They use specific details. Instead of “a tree,” describing “a tall banyan tree with wide, hanging roots” is more effective description. Spatial organization is achieved by describing a scene from left to right, near to far or top to bottom. Mood and tone are used for Creating a particular feeling, such as calmness or excitement.

An illustration of Descriptive Nonfiction :

Instead of writing “Varanasi is an old city in India”, an effective description would be “The early morning sun casts a golden glow over the ghats of Varanasi, where the sound of temple bells mixes with the gentle flow of the Ganges and the murmured prayers of pilgrims.”

1.2.3.5 Reflective nonfiction :

Reflective nonfiction is a type of writing in which the author examines real experiences, thoughts, or ideas and reflects on their deeper meaning. Unlike other forms of nonfiction that focus mainly on facts or description, reflective nonfiction emphasizes interpretation, insight, and personal understanding. It answers not just what happened, but what it meant and why it matters.

Reflective nonfiction is grounded in real events or ideas, but its main purpose is to explore the writer's internal response like their thoughts, emotions, lessons, and personal growth. It is often introspective and philosophical, encouraging both the writer and reader to think deeply.

For example, in *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau does not just describe living in nature; he reflects on simplicity, self-reliance, and the meaning of life. The writing goes beyond description into thoughtful interpretation.

Reflective nonfiction is valuable because it encourages self-awareness and personal growth. It helps readers relate to shared human experiences. It develops critical thinking and deeper understanding. It also connects individual experiences to larger life themes. It is widely used in education, literature, and personal development.

Reflective nonfiction goes beyond simply recording reality it seeks to understand and interpret it. By combining real experiences with deep thought and personal insight, it allows writers to explore the meaning behind events and ideas. For readers, it offers not just information, but wisdom and perspective, making it one of the most thoughtful and introspective forms of nonfiction writing.

Characteristics of Reflective Nonfiction :

1. **Focus on Personal Insight:** The writer explores their own thoughts and reactions to experiences or ideas.
2. **Real-Life Basis:** The content is based on actual events, experiences, or observations, not imagination.
3. **Deep Analysis and Interpretation:** Rather than just describing events, the writer analyzes them, asking questions like What did I learn? How did this change me? Why is this important?
4. **Reflective nonfiction is often personal and subjective.** It expresses the writer's unique perspective rather than an objective viewpoint.
5. **Writers often link personal experiences to universal ideas** such as identity, morality, culture, or human relationships.

Types of Reflective Nonfiction :

1. Personal Essays

These are short pieces where writers reflect on specific experiences or ideas. Example: ‘Notes of a Native Son’ by James Baldwin. Baldwin reflects on race, identity and his personal experiences in America, connecting them to larger social issues.

2. Memoirs

While memoirs are narrative, many include strong reflective elements where the author analyzes past experiences. Example, *Educated* by Tara Westover. The author reflects on how education transformed her life and identity.

3. Philosophical or Spiritual Writing

These works reflect on life’s deeper questions. Example: *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* by Mahatma Gandhi. In his autobiography Gandhi reflects on truth, morality and his personal and political journey.

4. Reflective Journals and Diaries

These are more personal and informal, often written regularly to explore thoughts and feelings. Example: *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank. Beyond recording events, she reflects on fear, hope and human nature during a difficult time.

1.2.3.6 Journalistic nonfiction :

Journalistic nonfiction is a type of writing that focuses on reporting real events, issues, and people in a factual, accurate, and timely manner. It is the foundation of journalism and plays a crucial role in informing the public about what is happening in the world. Unlike other forms of nonfiction, journalistic writing emphasizes objectivity, credibility, and clarity, though some forms may also include storytelling elements.

Journalistic nonfiction is based on real-world events and verified information, gathered through research, observation, and interviews. Its primary purpose is to inform the public, although it can sometimes also interpret or analyze events. For example, news coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic provided factual updates about infection rates, government policies, and scientific developments. This kind of reporting helped people understand a rapidly changing global situation.

Journalistic nonfiction keeps the public informed about current events. It promotes transparency and accountability. Good journalism supports democracy and informed decision-making. It documents history as it unfolds. Without journalism people would struggle to stay aware of important developments in society.

Characteristics of Journalistic Nonfiction :

1. **Accuracy and Truthfulness:** All information must be fact-checked and reliable. Journalists are expected to verify sources before publishing.
2. **Objectivity:** Traditional journalism aims to present information without bias. Writers avoid inserting personal opinions (except in specific formats like editorials).
3. **Clarity and Conciseness:** Journalistic writing is usually direct and easy to understand, avoiding unnecessary complexity.
4. **Timeliness:** News reporting focuses on current or recent events, making it highly time-sensitive.
5. **Use of Sources:** Journalists rely on interviews, eyewitness accounts, official records, data and statistics.
6. **Structured Format:** Many journalistic pieces follow the inverted pyramid structure, where the most important information appears first, followed by supporting details.

Types of Journalistic Nonfiction :

1. News Reports

These provide straightforward, factual accounts of recent events. Example: Reports on elections, natural disasters or economic changes in countries like India.

2. Feature Articles

These are longer and more detailed than news reports. They often include background information, human interest elements, and descriptive writing. Example: ‘Into the Wild’ by Jon Krakauer began as a journalistic feature and explores a real-life story in depth.

3. Investigative Journalism

This involves in-depth research to uncover hidden truths, corruption, or wrongdoing. Example: Reporting that led to the exposure of the Watergate scandal, which revealed abuses of power in the U.S. government.

4. Profiles and Interviews

These focus on individuals, presenting their lives, achievements, and perspectives. Example: Interviews with public figures like A. P. J. Abdul Kalam often provide insight into their ideas and experiences.

5. Editorials and Opinion Pieces

Although more subjective, these are still part of journalistic nonfiction because they are based on real issues and facts.

1.2.3.7 Scientific and Technical Nonfiction :

Scientific and technical nonfiction is a type of writing that focuses on explaining, analyzing, and communicating scientific knowledge, technological processes, and specialized information in a precise and structured way. It is widely used in fields such as science, engineering, medicine, and information technology, where clarity and accuracy are essential.

Unlike other types of nonfiction that may use storytelling or emotional appeal, scientific and technical nonfiction emphasizes facts, data, logic, and evidence-based reasoning.

Scientific and technical nonfiction presents verified knowledge about how the world works or how systems and tools function. It may explain natural phenomena, describe experiments, report research findings, or provide instructions for using technology. For example, a research paper explaining the theory of Relativity or a medical article describing Diabetes are both forms of scientific nonfiction. These texts aim to inform with precision and depth, often for a specialized audience.

Scientific writing advances scientific knowledge and innovation. It helps professionals communicate complex ideas. It also educates students and researchers. It supports technological development and provides reliable information for decision-making. Without it, progress in science, medicine, and technology would be extremely limited.

Scientific and technical nonfiction is a highly structured and precise form of writing that communicates complex knowledge about science and technology. By relying on facts, evidence, and logical organization, it ensures that information is accurate, clear, and useful. Whether in research papers, textbooks, or manuals, this type of nonfiction plays a crucial role in expanding human understanding and driving progress in the modern world.

Characteristics of Scientific and Technical Nonfiction :

1. Accuracy and Precision

In scientific writing every statement must be correct and supported by evidence. Even small errors can lead to misunderstandings.

2. Use of Technical Language

Writers often use specialized terminology related to their field. For example, biology texts may use terms like “cell,” “enzyme,” or “photosynthesis.”

3. Logical Structure

Information is presented in a clear and organized format including Introduction, Method or Process, Results or Findings or Conclusion.

4. Evidence-Based Writing

In scientific writing claims are supported by data, experiments, observations and references to other studies.

5. Objective Tone

The scientific writing avoids personal opinions and focuses on facts and analysis. Charts, graphs, diagrams, and tables are often included to make complex information easier to understand.

Types of Scientific and Technical Nonfiction

1. Research Papers and Journal Articles

These present original findings from scientific studies. Example: Papers published by organizations like Nature or Science report new discoveries in various scientific fields.

2. Textbooks and Academic Books

These explain established knowledge for students and learners. Example: *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking explains complex scientific ideas in an accessible way.

3. Technical Manuals and User Guides

These provide instructions on how to operate machines, software, or systems. Examples: Manuals for using a computer program like Microsoft Excel. Guides for assembling or repairing machinery.

4. Scientific Reports

These summarize experiments, research projects, or field studies.

5. Popular Science Writing

This is a simplified form of scientific nonfiction aimed at general readers. Example: *The Selfish Gene* by Richard Dawkins explains evolutionary biology concepts in an engaging and understandable way.

Check your progress - 2 :

Select the correct alternative of the following.

1. Which of the following best defines narrative nonfiction?
 - A. Fictional stories based on imagination
 - B. True stories presented with storytelling techniques
 - C. Scientific writing with only data and facts
 - D. Poetry based on real events
2. What is the primary aim of narrative nonfiction?
 - A. To entertain through fantasy
 - B. To present only statistical data
 - C. To inform while engaging readers emotionally
 - D. To criticize fictional works
3. Which of the following is an example of narrative nonfiction?
 - A. A fantasy novel
 - B. A scientific report
 - C. A memoir
 - D. A dictionary
4. What is the key characteristic of narrative nonfiction?
 - A. It avoids storytelling techniques
 - B. It presents only chronological facts
 - C. It balances factual accuracy with storytelling
 - D. It includes only imaginary characters

5. In narrative nonfiction, writers may use which of the following techniques?
- A. Only bullet points B. Dialogue and character development
- C. Mathematical formulas D. Abstract theories without examples
6. What is the main purpose of expository nonfiction?
- A. To entertain readers with stories
- B. To persuade readers emotionally
- C. To inform and explain a topic clearly
- D. To present fictional ideas
7. Which of the following best distinguishes expository nonfiction from narrative nonfiction?
- A. It uses dialogue and characters
- B. It focuses on storytelling
- C. It presents facts in a logical and structured way
- D. It is based on imagination
8. Which of the following is an example of expository nonfiction?
- A. A fantasy novel
- B. A science textbook explaining photosynthesis
- C. A short story
- D. A poem
9. What type of tone is used in expository nonfiction?
- A. Emotional and dramatic B. Humorous and playful
- C. Neutral and unbiased D. Critical and judgmental
10. Which of the following is a common organizational pattern in expository nonfiction?
- A. Stream of consciousness B. Cause and effect
- C. Free verse D. Symbolism

11. What is the primary purpose of persuasive nonfiction?
- A. To entertain readers with stories
 - B. To inform without opinion
 - C. To convince readers to adopt a viewpoint or take action
 - D. To describe fictional events
12. Which of the following is a common feature of persuasive nonfiction?
- A. Use of imagination only
 - B. Neutral and unbiased tone
 - C. Use of evidence and logical reasoning
 - D. Lack of structure
13. Which of the following is an example of persuasive nonfiction?
- A. A scientific textbook
 - B. A poem
 - C. An editorial article
 - D. A fantasy novel
14. What is meant by “call to action” in persuasive nonfiction?
- A. Describing past events
 - B. Encouraging the reader to take a specific step or decision
 - C. Presenting neutral information
 - D. Providing definitions
15. Which of the following techniques appeals to readers’ feelings in persuasive nonfiction?
- A. Chronological order
 - B. Emotional appeal
 - C. Definition and explanation
 - D. Comparison

16. What is the primary aim of descriptive nonfiction?
- A. To argue a viewpoint
 - B. To present only statistical facts
 - C. To create vivid, sensory-based descriptions of real subjects
 - D. To tell fictional stories
17. Which of the following is a key feature of descriptive nonfiction?
- A. Use of imaginary events
 - B. Focus on sensory details
 - C. Strictly persuasive tone
 - D. Lack of observation
18. What makes descriptive nonfiction different from other types of nonfiction?
- A. It avoids factual accuracy
 - B. It uses only technical language
 - C. It appeals to the five senses to create vivid imagery
 - D. It focuses only on arguments
19. Which of the following is an example of descriptive nonfiction?
- A. A political speech
 - B. A research report
 - C. A travel writing piece describing landscapes
 - D. A scientific formula
20. Which technique is commonly used in descriptive nonfiction?
- A. Mathematical calculation
 - B. Figurative language like similes and metaphors
 - C. Legal arguments
 - D. Statistical graphs only
21. What is the primary focus of reflective nonfiction?
- A. Presenting only factual information
 - B. Describing events without interpretation
 - C. Exploring personal insights and deeper meaning of experiences
 - D. Persuading readers to take action

22. How does reflective nonfiction differ from other forms of nonfiction?
- A. It avoids real-life events
 - B. It focuses only on external descriptions
 - C. It emphasizes interpretation and personal understanding
 - D. It uses only statistical data
23. Which of the following questions is commonly addressed in reflective nonfiction?
- A. What is the formula?
 - B. What happened exactly?
 - C. What did I learn and why does it matter?
 - D. What is the price of the object?
24. Which of the following is a characteristic of reflective nonfiction?
- A. Objective and neutral tone only
 - B. Focus on imagination
 - C. Personal and subjective perspective
 - D. Lack of analysis
25. Which of the following is an example of reflective nonfiction?
- A. A user manual
 - B. A research report
 - C. A personal essay reflecting on life experiences
 - D. A news bulletin
26. What is the primary purpose of journalistic nonfiction?
- A. To entertain readers with fiction
 - B. To persuade readers emotionally
 - C. To inform the public about real events accurately and timely
 - D. To describe imaginary situations
27. Which of the following is a key characteristic of journalistic nonfiction?
- A. Use of imagination
 - B. Lack of structure

- C. Accuracy and truthfulness D. Personal bias
28. What does “objectivity” mean in journalistic nonfiction?
- A. Including personal opinions B. Presenting information without bias
C. Using emotional language D. Avoiding facts
29. Which structure is commonly used in journalistic writing?
- A. Stream of consciousness B. Chronological storytelling only
C. Inverted pyramid structure D. Free verse
30. Which of the following is an example of journalistic nonfiction?
- A. A fantasy novel B. A news report on elections
C. A poem D. A play
31. What is the main purpose of scientific and technical nonfiction?
- A. To entertain readers with stories
B. To express personal opinions
C. To explain and communicate scientific knowledge accurately
D. To describe fictional events
32. Which of the following is a key feature of scientific and technical nonfiction?
- A. Emotional appeal B. Use of imagination
C. Evidence-based reasoning D. Personal storytelling
33. What type of language is commonly used in scientific and technical nonfiction?
- A. Poetic language B. Informal slang
C. Technical and specialized terminology
D. Dramatic dialogue
34. Which of the following is an example of scientific and technical nonfiction?
- A. A fantasy novel B. A research paper on relativity
C. A short story D. A play

35. What kind of tone is used in scientific and technical nonfiction?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Emotional and subjective | B. Humorous and playful |
| C. Objective and factual | D. Critical and biased |

1.3 Summary :

In the present module on Nonfiction, we discussed meaning and definition of nonfiction. We also discussed difference between fiction and nonfiction. We also dealt with various types of nonfiction.

Nonfiction reflects the world as it is. It seeks to deepen our understanding of reality, enrich our thinking and guide our actions through truth-based narratives. It provides knowledge and understanding about the world. It keeps readers updated with current affairs and developments. It also offers insight into human experiences, cultures and philosophies. It also helps readers learn skills, solve problems and make informed decisions.

1.4 Questions for further study :

(A) Write short notes on the following in about 200 words.

1. Importance of nonfiction in academics
2. Difference between fiction and nonfiction
3. Definition and meaning of nonfiction
4. Autobiography and biography as subgenres of nonfiction
5. Characteristics of Nonfiction
6. Purpose of Nonfiction
7. Forms of Narrative Nonfiction
8. The purpose of expository nonfiction
9. The purpose of journalistic nonfiction
10. The aims of descriptive nonfiction

(B) Answer the following questions in about 400 words each.

1. Bring out the difference between fiction and nonfiction.

2. Discuss the types of narrative nonfiction.
3. Discuss the characteristics of narrative nonfiction.
4. Explain descriptive nonfiction with examples.
5. Discuss types of Journalistic Nonfiction. Explain with examples.
6. Explain types of Reflective Nonfiction with examples.
7. How does narrative nonfiction achieve balance between truth and storytelling?
8. Discuss the purpose of Expository Nonfiction.
9. How does Expository Nonfiction differ from narrative nonfiction?
10. Discuss the purpose of scientific and technical nonfiction.

1.5 Answers to Check your progress - 1 :

1. B. Real people, events, and facts
2. C. Truthfulness and accuracy
3. C. Based on verifiable information
4. C. To entertain and inspire
5. A. Biography
6. D. Present facts truthfully
7. C. It uses imagination and storytelling
8. C. Factual and well-researched information
9. D. The Diary of a Young Girl
10. B. Emotional appeal
11. B. It is grounded in verifiable truth and factual accuracy
12. C. Nonfiction requires adherence to truth and evidence
13. C. By using narrative techniques while maintaining factual truth
14. C. It informs, educates and enables critical decision-making
15. A. Autobiography and essays

- 16. D. Fiction invites emotional immersion, while nonfiction demands critical evaluation
- 17. C. Reliable sources and evidence
- 18. C. Nonfiction requires factual truth, while fiction may convey thematic truth
- 19. C. Journalism
- 20. B. Restriction to real events and factual accuracy

1.6 Answers to Check your progress - 2 :

- 1. B. True stories presented with storytelling techniques
- 2. C. To inform while engaging readers emotionally
- 3. C. A memoir
- 4. C. It balances factual accuracy with storytelling
- 5. B. Dialogue and character development
- 6. C. To inform and explain a topic clearly
- 7. C. It presents facts in a logical and structured way
- 8. B. A science textbook explaining photosynthesis
- 9. C. Neutral and unbiased
- 10. B. Cause and effect
- 11. C. To convince readers to adopt a viewpoint or take action
- 12. C. Use of evidence and logical reasoning
- 13. C. An editorial article
- 14. B. Encouraging the reader to take a specific step or decision
- 15. B. Emotional appeal
- 16. C. To create vivid, sensory-based descriptions of real subjects
- 17. B. Focus on sensory details
- 18. C. It appeals to the five senses to create vivid imagery
- 19. C. A travel writing piece describing landscapes

20. B. Figurative language like similes and metaphors
21. C. Exploring personal insights and deeper meaning of experiences
22. C. It emphasizes interpretation and personal understanding
23. C. What did I learn and why does it matter?
24. C. Personal and subjective perspective
25. C. A personal essay reflecting on life experiences
26. C. To inform the public about real events accurately and timely
27. C. Accuracy and truthfulness
28. B. Presenting information without bias
29. C. Inverted pyramid structure
30. B. A news report on elections
31. C. To explain and communicate scientific knowledge accurately
32. C. Evidence-based reasoning
33. C. Technical and specialized terminology
34. B. A research paper on relativity
35. C. Objective and factual

1.7 Books for further reading :

1. Gerard, Philip. *Creative Nonfiction: Researching and Crafting Stories of Real Life*. Story Press, 1996.
2. Rand, Ayn. *The Art of Nonfiction*. Penguin, 2001.
3. Root, Robert L., Jr., and Michael Steinberg, eds. *The Fourth Genre: Contemporary Writers of/on Creative Nonfiction*. Pearson, 2012.
4. Schrag, Zachary. *The Literary Guide to Writing Essays*. Princeton UP, 2011.
5. Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. 30th ed., HarperCollins, 2006.



Module 2

Autobiography

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2.1.0 Objectives :

The present module consists of the autobiographical experiences written by Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. It aims:

1. To enable students understand the autobiographical and historical context of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's *Waiting for a Visa*.
2. To make students identify the major themes of caste discrimination, untouchability, social exclusion, and human dignity presented in the text.
3. To analyse Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's experiences of caste-based discrimination and their impact on his life and thought.
4. To help students interpret Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's use of personal experiences as a means of exposing social injustice.
5. To develop sensitivity towards issues of equality, dignity, social justice, and human rights among students.
6. To appreciate Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contribution to the struggle against caste discrimination and social inequality.
7. To encourage students to critically reflect on the relevance of the text to contemporary society.
8. To relate the values of equality, liberty, fraternity, and justice to everyday social experiences and constitutional principles.

2.1.1 Introduction :

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (14 April 1891–6 December 1956), popularly known as 'Babasaheb' was one of the greatest social reformers, jurists, economists, and political leaders of modern India. He dedicated his life fighting against social discrimination, caste inequality, and untouchability and worked for equality, justice, and human dignity.

Dr. Ambedkar was born on 14th April 1891 at Mhow in present-day Madhya Pradesh. He belonged to a socially disadvantaged community and experienced caste discrimination from an early age. Despite many hardships, he pursued education with determination.

He studied at Elphinstone College in Bombay and later went abroad for higher education. He studied at Columbia University in the United States and the London School of Economics in Britain. He also trained in law at Gray's Inn. His extensive education gave him a strong foundation in economics, law, politics, and social thought.

Dr. Ambedkar became a powerful voice for the rights of oppressed and marginalized communities. He founded organizations and newspapers to spread awareness and encourage social reform. Through movements such as the Mahad Satyagraha, he challenged discriminatory practices and demanded equal access to public resources.

He strongly opposed untouchability and the caste system. He believed that political freedom would have little meaning without social and economic equality. He advocated education, organization, and collective action as means of achieving social progress.

Dr. Ambedkar also played an important role in India's political development. He represented the interests of disadvantaged communities in constitutional and political discussions during the period leading to independence.

Dr. Ambedkar served as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly of India. He played a central role in preparing the Constitution, which came into force on 26 January 1950.

The Constitution reflects many principles that Ambedkar strongly supported, including equality before the law, fundamental rights, prohibition of discrimination, and protection of the dignity and liberty of individuals. He also served as India's first Law and Justice Minister after independence.

Dr. Ambedkar was a prolific writer and scholar. Some of his important works include:

1. *Annihilation of Caste* (The book is a powerful evaluation of the caste system and social inequality).
2. *The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution* (The book is a study of currency and monetary policy).
3. *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India*.
4. *Who Were the Shudras?* (This book presents an examination of the historical origins of the Shudra community).
4. *The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables?* (This is a study of the origins of untouchability).
5. *The Buddha and His Dhamma* (A major work expressing Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's understanding of Buddhism).

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a prolific reader. As his house at Prabhadevi could no longer accommodate his growing book collection, he decided to build a new house for himself and his family. He planned for his new home to have a library to accommodate massive personal collection of books. On the ground floor of the house in the two blocks of three rooms were built for the family to live. And on the first floor of the house, he arranged his library and office. He named the house, 'Rajgruha'. And it is one of the largest personal libraries in the world. It had more than 50,000 books at time of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's death.

Ambedkar was not only a social reformer but also an important economist. He studied issues relating to currency, finance, agriculture, labour, and economic development. He emphasized industrialization, education, and economic opportunities as important for India's progress.

He also believed strongly in the power of education. His famous message, 'Educate, Agitate, Organize,' reflected his belief that knowledge and collective action were essential for social transformation. In 1956, Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism along with a large number of his followers. He passed away on 6th December 1956 in Delhi.

Dr. Ambedkar's contribution to India extends far beyond his role in drafting the Constitution. He remains a symbol of social justice, equality, democracy, and human rights. His ideas continue to influence debates about caste, education, political representation, economic equality, and social reform.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar dedicated his life to creating a society based on liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice. Through his scholarship, social movements, political work, and contribution to the Constitution, he made an enduring contribution to India. His life teaches the importance of education, courage, equality, and the struggle for human dignity.

2.1.2 The Autobiography- 'Waiting for a Visa' :

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was one of India's greatest social reformers, jurists, and champions of equality. The six extracts under the title 'Waiting for a Visa' were originally Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's handwritten drafts. They were found among Dr. Ambedkar's notes and papers. They were later on published as a booklet by People's Education Society on 19th March, 1990. 'Waiting for a Visa' is an autobiographical work that presents the painful experiences Dr. Ambedkar faced as a member of the untouchable community in India. These extracts are

written in the form of a series of personal incidents. These are illustrations of cruel realities of caste discrimination and untouchability in India. They are based partly upon his own experiences and partly upon the experiences of others.

‘Waiting for a Visa’ presents his personal experiences of caste discrimination and untouchability. The title is significant because it refers to incidents in which the untouchables like Dr. Ambedkar, in spite of being an educated and highly accomplished person, were forced to wait for a means of water, food, transport, employment and everything. Not only Hindus but also people belonging to other religions in India refused to help them when they learned that he belonged to the untouchable community.

The word ‘waiting’ in the title has a deeper symbolic meaning. It represents not merely a physical wait but the helplessness, humiliation, and exclusion faced by the untouchables in Indian society. Ambedkar’s education and achievements could not protect him from caste prejudice. The title therefore highlights the painful contradiction between his individual accomplishments and the social discrimination he experienced.

The word, ‘visa’ is also symbolic. A visa normally gives a person permission to enter or move freely within a place. In Ambedkar’s experience, caste functioned like an invisible barrier that denied the untouchables ordinary social acceptance in their own villages, towns, and country. Dr. Ambedkar was treated almost like a stranger in his own homeland.

Thus, the title ‘Waiting for a Visa’ captures the central theme of the sketch: the denial of human dignity, equality, and social belonging because of caste. It exposes the cruelty and irrationality of untouchability and reflects Ambedkar’s lifelong struggle for social justice and equality. The title is therefore both literal and symbolic, making it a powerful representation of the discrimination suffered by oppressed communities.

In the beginning Dr. Ambedkar points out that the foreigners know untouchability but they cannot realize its real oppressiveness. The untouchables live on the edge of a village having a large number of Hindus. They go through the village daily to carry out the filth of the village, to do sundry works, and to beg food from the Hindu houses. They go in the village to buy the daily necessities from the Hindu baniya from a distance. The village is their home but they are not allowed to touch or be touched by a person from the village. The foreigners do not know how the caste Hindus treat the untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar gives these six

extracts as illustrations. Out of the six extracts, the first four present Dr. Ambedkar's own experiences and the last two extracts relate the experiences of other educated untouchables. In the first extract Dr. B. R. Ambedkar tells his first-hand experience humiliation and oppression on account of being an untouchable while travelling at the age of nine from Masur to Koregaon to meet his father. In the second and forth extracts, he shows that caste discrimination is observed by the non-Hindu communities in India like Parsis and Muslims. In the third extract he points out that even education does not bring dignity to the untouchables and the working class caste Hindus like tongawalas consider themselves superior to the highly educated untouchables. The fifth extract presents the pitiable life of an untouchable school teacher and the sixth shows how the upper caste Hindus humiliated and excluded the educated untouchables.

The experiences vividly describe how social prejudice influenced through inhuman traditions affect ordinary aspects of life, including education, travel, accommodation, employment, and human relationships. Through these experiences Dr. Ambedkar shows the humiliation and injustice suffered by the untouchables under the caste system.

2.1.2.1 Experience – ONE :

The excerpt ONE is the first hand experience of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. It is his childhood experience that takes place when he is just a nine year old boy. Here he tells about the journey from Satara to Koregaon, especially from Masur to Koregaon. Masur is the nearest railway station for Koregaon which is also a small village in Khatav Taluka of Satara district.

In the beginning Dr. B. R. Ambedkar tells that his family comes originally from Ambawade, a village from Dapoli Taluka of the Ratanagiri District of the Bombay Presidency. His forefathers were not doing their hereditary occupation. They were serving in the Army of the Company. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's father retired from the army as a Subhedar. After the retirement he took the family to Satara instead of living in Dapoli. In Satara the family lived up to 1904.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had the present experience in 1901. Then his father was working as a cashier at Koregoan in the Satara District. His father had left Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, his elder brother and two sons of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's eldest sister with Babasaheb's aunt and some kind neighbours. His sisters had been married and they were living with their husbands.

The aunt was a dwarf and could not move on her own. She had to be lifted. The children had to cook their food and go to school. As they could not prepare bread, they used to prepare Pulav by mixing rice and mutton. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's father could not leave the place of work, as he was a cashier. In 1901 Babasaheb's father told the children to come to Koregaon. And this journey exposed Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to the stark reality of untouchability.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's father has given the children detailed information about the journey. As a part of preparation new shirts of English make, decorated caps, shoes and silk border clothes are purchased for the children. His father has told the children that he would send his peon to the Masur railway station to take them to Koregaon. Accordingly, the four children keep the aunt with the neighbours and go to the Satara railway station in a hired tanga. And their journey begins happily. At the station Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's brother buys tickets and gives 2 annas each to Dr. Babasaheb and their sister's sons as pocket money. They enjoy lemonade at the station and then take the train to Masur where their father has told them to detrain or get off the train.

The four children (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, his elder brother, and his sister's two sons) reach Masur railway station around 5 in the evening. They take down their luggage and wait for their father or his servant to come and take them to Koregaon. Neither the father nor his servant comes there. All the other passengers go to their destination. But the four children have to wait there. After an hour the station master comes to them and makes inquiry. The children tell him that they are waiting for the father or his servant who would take them to Koregaon. The stationmaster is Hindu. From the children's dresses and talk he mistakes them as Brahmin. He shows empathy to them but as is the custom, he asks the children who they are i.e. what their caste is. Dr. Babasaheb very spontaneously tells him that they are 'Mahars'. The station master is shocked and he starts hating the children and goes away to his room. The four children are afraid and become sad and they keep waiting for father.

After an hour the station master returns to the children and asks them about their plan. The children wished to hire a bullock cart to go to Koregaon. But as they are Mahars no cartman is ready to carry them. They believed that they would suffer for being polluted. The children are even ready to pay them double fare but money also does not work. Finally, the station master proposes that the children would pay the cartman double the fare and drive the

cart and the cartman would walk on foot along with the cart. A cartman agrees to this proposal as he gets the fare and is saved from being polluted. They start their journey from Masur to Koregaon around 6:30 pm after getting assured that they would reach Koregaon before it is dark. The cartman assures the children that it would not take more than 3 hours to reach Koregaon. So one of the children drives the cart and the cartman walks by their side. This shows the deep impact of untouchability on common people. They are ready to take any kind of hardship for not being polluted. The touch of the untouchables pollutes them. This is utterly inhuman.

Very soon the cart reaches a dry river with small pools of water at places. The cartman tells the children to take halt there and have their meals as they may not get water on their way. The children agree to this proposal. The cartman takes a part of his fare from the children and goes to the village to have his meal. The children start eating the tasty food from their tiffin basket. They need water to drink while eating. One of them goes to the pool of water in the river basin. It is found that the water is very dirty. It stinks of urine and dung of the cattle. So the children stop eating their meal before their hunger is satisfied and wait for the cartman who comes back very late. Again they start their journey. After covering 4 or 5 miles, the cartman suddenly jumps into the cart and takes the reins of bullocks and starts driving the cart. The children are fear stricken. They are traveling in darkness. They have money and gold jewellery. They fear that the cartman would take them to a lonely place and kill them. They have been traveling for more than three hours but there is no sign of Koregaon. The children become suspicious about the cartman's intentions. They ask him why it is so late in reaching Koregaon. He keeps telling them that they would soon reach Koregaon. The children start crying and abusing the cartman. But he stays calm. Then they see a light of toll- collector. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and other children become anxious and keep asking various questions to the cartman.

At last after two hours they reach the collector's hut by midnight. It was situated at the foot of the hill but at the other side of the hill. They see many other bullock carts resting for night there. They are very hungry but there is the problem of water. The cartman tells children that the toll collector is a Hindu and he would not give them water if they tell him the truth that they are Mahars. The cartman suggests them to tell that they are Mohamedans and try their luck. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar goes to the toll- collector's hut and asks him for some water.

When the toll- collector asks who they are, he replies that they are Mohammedans. He talks in Urdu with the toll- collector so as to make the toll- collector feel that he is a real Musalman. But this trick doesn't work. The toll- collector curtly replies that he has no water. He tells Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to go on the hill and get the water. In this way he refuses to give him water.

The children feel very hungry. They have food. But they cannot eat it as they do not get water. They cannot get water only because they are untouchable. They sleep without eating food. They are terrified. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar suggests that it is not wise for all four of them to go sleep. He fears that anything might happen. So he suggests that at one time two of them should sleep and two should keep watch and that is how they pass the night at the foot of the hill at the toll collector's house.

Next day early at 5:00 am their cartman comes and tells them to start for Koregaon. But the children refuse his proposal out of fear and tell him that they would not begin the journey until 8 o'clock. They do not want to take any risk. At 8 am they leave the toll collector's hut and reach Koregaon at 11 am. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's father is surprised to see the children. He tells that he has received no intimation of their coming. It is discovered that it is the fault of father's servant who has got the children's letter intimating father of the coming, but he has failed to give it to father.

The incident of traveling from Masur to Koregain is very important in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's life. It leaves an end undeniable impression on his childmind. Before this incident, he had many experiences of untouchability. He knew that he was an untouchable. He had also known that the untouchables have to suffer certain indignities and discriminations.

In the school Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was not allowed to sit in the midst of his class students as per his rank in studies. He had to sit in a corner alone. He had to bring his separate piece of gunny cloth from his house. The servant employed to clean the school did not touch the gunny cloth used by Dr. Ambedkar who had to carry the gunny cloth to his home every evening and bring it back to school every other day.

Secondly, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar was not allowed to touch the water tap in the school to satisfy his thirst. He had to wait for a touchable person to open the water tap. And the duty of opening tap was assigned to the school peon. So Babasaheb had to depend upon

the school peon for drinking water from school water tap. If the peon was not present Babasaheb had to stay without water. He sums up this situation using phrase, ‘No peon, No water’. It proves that even basic survival for an untouchable child depended entirely on the mercy of upper-caste people.

During the childhood Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar experienced untouchability at home too. Though they were rich enough to pay the washerman, his sisters had to wash the clothes. As they were untouchable, no washerman washed their clothes. Furthermore, his elder sister used to do the work of cutting hair or shaving the boys in the family, as no barber shaved or cut the hair of the untouchables. But Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar finds the incident of traveling from Masur to Koregaon shocking. This horrible journey gave him a massive shock and made him realize for the first time that society treated his people as less than human. This experience changed his mind forever.

To conclude, the provided excerpt offers a deep look into the socio-cultural dynamics of early 20th-century India, specifically highlighting how systemic discrimination operates outside the institutional setting. The excerpt emphasizes a striking contrast between class appearance and caste identity. Because the children were well-dressed, clean, and educated, they were initially assumed to be upper-caste (Brahmin) and treated with respect. This highlights that caste discrimination is not based on actual hygiene, behavior, or economic standing, but purely on the arbitrary label of birth.

The station-master’s sudden transformation from empathy to repulsion upon hearing the word ‘Mahar’ illustrates how deeply internalized ritual purity laws were. His immediate physical withdrawal demonstrates that prejudice overrides basic human compassion.

Further, the cartmen’s refusal to carry the children, even when offered double the fare, proves that social stigma held more power than economic incentive. The compromise—forcing the children to drive while the cartman walked—shows how systemic oppression accommodates financial gain only if physical boundaries of ‘pollution’ are strictly maintained.

The most dreadful part of the experience lies in the denial of basic survival needs. Despite having food and money, the children were forced to endure severe hunger and thirst because the public infrastructure (clean water) was weaponized against them. Even attempting to pass as a Muslim failed to secure water, showcasing how tightly guarded resources were from anyone deemed “other”.

Check Your Progress –I :

Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

1. What is the name of the original native place of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar?
2. Where did the fore-fathers of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar serve?
3. What was the rank of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's father in the Army at the time of his retirement?
4. Where did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's family live after the retirement of his father?
5. Where did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's father work as a cashier after his retirement from Army?
6. How was Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's aunt?
7. How old was Dr. B. R. Ambedkar when he travelled from Satara to Koregaon?
8. What did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his nephews buy at the Satara railway station?
9. Why were the cartmen not ready to carry the children to Koregaon?
10. Where did the cartman take halt at night during the journey from Masur to Koregaon?
11. Who used to give water to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the school in Satara?

2.1.2.2 Experience – TWO (Untouchables to Parsis) :

In the second incident Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar relates his experience of being an untouchable in relation to Parsi people. He had the experiences of Hindus following untouchability. This experience teaches him that untouchables are untouchables to the Parsis in India

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar had been sent to America by His Highness the Maharaja of Baroda for higher education. He studied at Columbia University in New York from 1913 to 1917. In 1917, he went to London to join the post-graduate department of the School of Economics of the University of London. However in 1918, he was compelled to return to India without completing his studies to serve the Baroda State, as it had educated him. Here, he tells about his social experiences in Baroda.

Due to his five years of stay in Europe and America, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar has completely forgotten that he was untouchable. And he has no idea that whenever an untouchable goes in India is a problem to himself and to others. But when he comes out of the Baroda railway station, he does not understand where to stay in Baroda. He thinks about the Hindu hotels but he realizes that being an untouchable the Hindu hotels would not accept him. He even understands that it is possible for him to stay in Hindu hotels only by impersonation. However, he is not ready for it, as the discovery of his identity as untouchable would result into dire consequences. He also thinks of staying in one of his friend's house in Baroda who had come to America to study. But he does not want to embarrass them, by making them allow an untouchable in their household. So he decides to stay in a hotel in the camp. He calls a Hackney driver and asks if there is a hotel in the camp. The driver tells him that there is a Parsi inn where paying guests are taken. This gladdens Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar as he knows that Parsis follow the Zoroastrian religion which does not have the vicious tradition of untouchability. So he expects that the Parsi inn would not treat him as an untouchable. So with his 'heart glad with hope and mind free from fear' Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar tells the driver to take him to the Parsi inn in the camp.

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar finds that the Parsi inn is a two storied building where an old Parsi lives with his family. In fact, the Parsi is a caretaker and he supplies food to tourists who came there to stay. When the carriage taking Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar reaches the inn, the Parsi tells Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to go upstairs. The carriage driver brings the luggage, takes his fare and goes away. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar feels happy that at last he has solved his problem of finding a sojourn. But this happiness does not last long. As he is undressing himself to be comfortable, the Parsi caretaker comes to his room with a book and finds that Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar wears no sadra and kasti which are used by Parsis and that is their identity. The caretaker becomes angry when he learns that Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar is a Hindu and tells Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to leave the inn. In fact, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar does not know that the inn is run by the Parsi community for the use of Parsis only. The caretaker cannot allow him to stay in the inn as he has to maintain the resistor of those who stay there and nobody except Parsis is allowed to stay in the inn. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar is completely shocked. But he cannot leave the inn as there is no other place where he can stay. So he suggests the caretaker a compromise. He assumes a Parsi name for entering in the register. The caretaker agrees because he has no tourists for a long time and wants to have the

opportunity of making money. The caretaker charges him one and half rupee per day for board and lodging and enters Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar name as a Parsi in his register. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar is relieved and becomes happy.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Describes the inn in detail. On the first floor of the inn there is a small bedroom. There is a small bathroom with a water tap near the bedroom. And the remaining is a big hall filled up with all types of rubbish, planks, benches, broken chairs, etc. And Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar lives alone on this floor. The caretaker comes up to the first floor thrice a day. He comes there with a cup of tea in the morning, with breakfast at 9:30 and dinner at 8:30 in the evening. He comes up only when it is unavoidable. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar has to live there as he has no other shelter. He passes his day from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM at the place of work in the company of friends. But he has to return to the inn during night as he has no other place under the sky for rest. During the night there is complete darkness in the hall. There are no electric lights or oil lamp. He is given a small hurricane lamp. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar feels that he is in a dungeon and wishes the company of some human being to talk to. His books become his only company and he reads the books in the light of the hurricane lamp. The place terrifies him. It makes him sad and angry. During the night the place is occupied by chirping and flying bats that send cold shivers through Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. Here he is in such a heart rending condition that when his sister's son come from Bombay with remaining luggage, he starts crying so loudly that Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar sends him back immediately. Moreover he stays there impersonating a Parsi. So he tries to get a state bungalow. He has applied for the same to the Prime Minister who does not take it urgently. Being an untouchable Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar experienced hatred and malice everywhere in Baroda.

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar stays in this dungeon place for 10 days. But the 11th day comes as the doomsday. He is ready to go to office after taking his morning meal. At that time he hears footsteps of many people climbing up the staircase. They are angry, tall, sturdy Parsis. Each of them has a stick. They stand in front of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's a room and angrily ask him questions - who he is; why he has come here; and how he dares to take a Parsi name. They accuse Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar for polluting the Parsi inn. But Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar stands quietly. He does not oppose them. In fact, his meekness and silence saves him from being attacked. Otherwise the fanatic, angry Parsis would have killed him. One of the Parsis asks when Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar would vacate the inn. Upon

which instead of thinking of life Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar requests the Parsis to let him stay there for a week at least. He thinks that during a week he would get a bungalow from the Minister. But the Parsis are not in the mood to listen. And they order Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to leave the inn before the evening. They threaten him of the dire consequences. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar is bewildered. He curses all and weeps bitterly. He ironically points out that he cries for the loss of his precious possession- his shelter- no better than a prisoner's cell. He's being driven out of such a shelter as he has no visa- a legal document that allows a person to stay in a foreign land. The untouchables are not allowed to stay with caste Hindus in their own country. They are not offered a visa.

After the Parsis are gone, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar thinks for some time to find a way out. He has hopes that he would soon get a state bungalow and his troubles would come to end. He thinks that going to friends would be a good solution to this temporary problem. He has no friends among the untouchables of Baroda Sate. However he has two friends among other classes, one is a Hindu and the other is an Indian Christian. First he goes to his Hindu friend and tells him about the plight. The friend becomes angry and sad but he points out that if Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar comes to his house, the servants in his house would leave the work. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar understands the hint and does not insist the Hindu friend to allow him to stay in the house. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar does not like to go to the Christian friend as his habits are not pleasant. And because of that he prefers to stay in the Parsi inn. So he goes to office where he consults a friend and then goes to the Christian friend who tells that his wife is coming to Baroda and he would have to discuss about this with her.

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar understands this diplomatic answer. He remembers that the Indian Christian friend and his wife are originally Brahmin by caste. They are converted Christians. After the conversion, the husband has become liberal in thoughts but the wife has remained orthodox in her ways and she would not have allowed an untouchable to stay in her house. Hence, at 4:00 PM of that day he leaves the House of his Indian Christian friend. Now he has one supreme question- where to go. He has to leave the inn but has no friend to go to. So he decides to return to Bombay.

He has to wait for five hours as the train to Bombay is at 9:00 PM. He has no place to spend the time. He is in pitiable condition but he does not like to be pitied. So he decides to spend the five hours in the public garden called Kamathi Baug which is on the border of the

city and the camp. He sits in the garden thinking about his plight. He remembers his parents and the children in forlorn condition. So at 8:00 PM he goes to the inn to get his luggage. The caretaker comes out but neither of them speaks a word. The caretaker seems to be sorry Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar pays him the bill which he takes in silence and then Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar leaves the place without any word.

In fact, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar has gone to Baroda with high hope. He goes there to serve the Maharaja of Baroda who has financed his education. He is very honest. He has rejected many offers as many positions are vacant due to wartime. But being an untouchable he has no visa to stay in Baroda. Even after 18 years he cannot forget the angry Parsis standing before him in terrifying mood and he requesting them for mercy. Here he learns the lesson that in India a person who is an untouchable to Hindu is also an untouchable to a Parsi. The vicious tradition of untouchability is also followed by the Indian Parsis.

To conclude, this painful experience leaves a permanent scar on Dr. Ambedkar. It teaches him for the first time that the social humiliation of untouchability is not confined to Hinduism, but is practiced by other religious communities in India as well. The central revelation of this experience is that untouchability is not exclusive to Hindu society. The Parsis, despite following a religion (Zoroastrianism) that does not recognize untouchability, fiercely apply the same social exclusion when they discover his true identity, threatening him with violence for ‘polluting’ their space, the Parsi Inn.

Check Your Progress – II

Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

1. Who had sent Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to America to take higher education?
2. Where did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar take higher education in America?
3. When did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar study in Columbia University?
4. Where did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar study in London?
5. Why had to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar return to India from London without completing his studies?
6. Where did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stay in Baroda?
7. What is the religion of Parsis?

8. Which things prove that a person is a Parsi?
9. At what position did Maharaja of Baroda appoint Dr. B. R. Ambedkar?
10. How many days did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stay in the Parsi inn?

2.1.2.3 Experience – THREE (Dignity of the Untouchable) :

In this extract Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar writes about ‘Dignity of the Untouchable’. This is the experience of 1929 when Bombay Government appoints a Committee to investigate the grievances of the untouchables. The committee is supposed to investigate allegations of injustice, oppressions and tyranny against the untouchables. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is a member of the committee. He with another member was assigned two districts of Khandesh for the investigations. After completing the given work, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar’s colleague goes to visit a Hindu saint but Dr. B. R. Ambedkar takes the train to Bombay. On the way he gets down at the Chalisgaon railway station to go to Dhulia to investigate a case of social boycott declared by the caste Hindus against the untouchables of that village. His plan is to visit Dhulia and go to Bombay. But the untouchables of Chalisgaon insist him to stay with them over night. So he goes to Dhulia and investigates the case of social boycott and returns to Chalisgaon.

At Chalisgaon the untouchables are waiting at the railway station for Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. They welcome him with garland. The Maharwada of Chalisgaon is two miles distance from the railway station. It is necessary to cross the river having a culvert to reach the Maharwada. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has to wait at the station for one hour, though there are many horse carriages at the station on hire. Actually all the tongawalas have learned that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is an untouchable. They are not prepared to carry an untouchable passenger in their tonga, as they think it is below their dignity. And the Mahars of Chalisgaon are determined to take Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in a tonga in order to maintain his dignity. Finally the Mahars and the tongawalas come to a compromise that the owner of the tonga would not drive the tonga but only give it on hire. It is decided that the Mahars may take the tonga but find someone to drive it. And the Mahars happily accept the solution. They forget that the safety of the passenger is more important than the maintenance of his dignity. In fact, none of them can drive a tonga as it is not their trade. Hence, they ask one of them to drive the tonga.

And such an inexperienced tonga driver takes Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in a tonga. Only Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the driver are in the tonga and others go to the Maharwada on foot by a short cut.

The inexperienced driver drives the tonga in such a way that the tonga would have collided with a motor car. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is shortly saved from the accident as the policeman shouts loudly and driver of the car controlled it. The tonga somehow comes to the culvert on the river. The culvert has a row of side stones fixed at five to ten feet. There is a sharp turn to the culvert from the road. And the horse takes a turn instead of going straight and bolts with the very first side stone. It is a so terrible bolt that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is bodily lifted up and thrown down on the stone pavement of the culvert and the horst and the carriage fall down into the river. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar lies unconscious due to the heavy fall. The Maharwada is just on the other bank of the river. Men come, lift and take Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to the Maharwada. The men, women, children cry and lament. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has several injuries. His leg is fractured and he is disabled for several weeks. The accident takes place only because of the inexperienced driver. He thinks that there is nothing in driving the tonga. But when he actually drives it, he understands the difficulty and he cannot control the tonga and the accident takes place. To maintain the dignity of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar the Mahars of Chalisgaon put his life in danger. Here Dr. B. R. Ambedkar learns that a menial or lowly Hindu tongawala can consider himself superior to the untouchable who is even a Barrister-at-law.

To conclude, this experience teaches Dr. Ambedkar that even a low-ranking Hindu driver maintained a sense of social superiority over any untouchable, regardless of that untouchable's high professional or educational standing (such as being a Barrister-at-law). The incident highlights a rigid social hierarchy where Dr. Ambedkar's high professional status as a member of a government committee and a Barrister-at-law was entirely neutralized by his caste identity. To the Hindu tongawallas, Dr. Ambedkar's identity as an 'untouchable' displace or remove his professional and educational achievements.

This experience makes Dr. Ambedkar realize a harsh truth about society: even a poor, working-class Hindu driver feels superior to an untouchable person, completely ignoring the fact that Dr. Ambedkar is a highly educated lawyer and government official. Caste prejudice mattered more to society than education or success.

Check Your Progress – III :

Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

1. Why did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar go to a village on Dulia line?

2. Why did the Mahars of Chalisgaon insist on taking Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in a tonga?
3. How long was Maharwada from the Chalisgaon railway station?
4. Where did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's accident take place in Chalisgaon?
5. Why did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's accident take place in Chalisgaon?

2.1.2.4 Experience – FOUR :

The Daulatabad Fort Incident (Untouchables to the Muslims)

Here Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar tells his experience of the year 1934. In those days he leaded the movement of depressed classes. His Co-workers wish to go on a site- seeing tour with him. When Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar agrees, it is decided to visit the Buddhist caves at Verul. It is planned that Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar should go to Nashik where his Co- workers should join him.

To reach Verul they have to go to Aurangabad, then a town in the Mohammedan State of Hyderabad under the rule of Nizam. On the way to Aurangabad there is a historical town, Daulatabad which was once the capital of Ramdeo Rai a famous Hindu king. They decide to visit the Fort of Daulatabad, an ancient historical monument.

Accordingly, they start their tour. They purposefully do not announce their tour program and travel incognito i.e. without informing others about their journey to avoid the difficulties. But they inform their people at the places where they have planned to halt. That is why though they travel by many villages in the Nizam State none of their supporters can meet them and disturb their tour. In this way about 30 of his co-workers hire some buses and cars and start their tour from Nashik with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. They have informed their people at Daulatabad. So when Dr. Ambedkar and his co-workers arrive at Daulatabad, their people from Daulatabad gather at the entrance of the town. They request to the travellers to have tea and refreshment and then go to see the fort. But as Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and his companions wish to spare more time to see the fort they do not agree for tea. They directly go to the fort.

It is the month of Ramjan, the holy period when the Muslims fast. There is a small tank of water full to the brim just outside the gate of the fort. Some of the co-workers wash their faces and legs with the water from the tank to clean the dust gathered during the journey. Then

they go to the gate of the fort. There are armed soldiers inside the gate, who take them inside the gate. While they are asking the guard the procedure for getting permission to see the fort, an old Mohammedan with a long white beard comes shouting from behind that the Dheds have polluted the tank. The Mohammedans call untouchables Dheds. Soon all the Mohammedans near the gate gather together and abuse Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and his co-workers for polluting the tank. The Mohammedans become fanatic and in terrifying mood they abuse that the Dheds have become arrogant; forgot their religion; and must be taught a lesson. When Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and his men tell Mohammedans that they are outsiders and do not know the local custom, the Mohammedans became very angry with the local untouchables, who are not there when the visitors enter the tank. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar accepts that it is the mistake of visitors that they entered the tank without any enquiry. But the Mohammedans are not in a mood to listen to Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. They keep abusing the untouchables. There is the possibility of riot and even murders. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and his men controll themselves to avoid criminal cases against them and that would end their tour abruptly.

However, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar becomes angry, when a young Muslim in the crowd says that everyone must conform to his religion. He suggests that the untouchables must not take water from a public tank. Dr. Ambedkar angrily asks the young man if that is what his religion teaches him. He questions further whether the Muslims would prevent an untouchable from taking water from the tank if that untouchable becomes a Mohammedan. These questions calm down the Muslim crowd. They become speechless. After that Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and his co-workers are allowed to go into the fort on the condition that they would not touch water anywhere in the fort. And an armed soldier is ordered to keep watch on the visitors.

Through this experience Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar points out that a person who is untouchable to a Hindu is also an untouchable to a Muslim. This clearly proves that untouchability has prevailed in all the communities in India. It is observed by the people of all religion. And everywhere the untouchables have to wait for a visa to do anything in their own country.

To conclude, this is incident shows that untouchability in India is not exclusive to Hinduism. Caste discrimination transcends religious boundaries. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar notes that just as an untouchable is treated as such by a Hindu or a Parsi, they face the exact same systemic discrimination from Muslims. In spite of Islam's theological stand on equality, local

cultural practices and social hierarchies heavily co-opted the practice of untouchability. This story shows that untouchability and discrimination do not just come from Hindus; other religious groups (like Muslims in this story) practice it too. This shows the deep influence of the Hindu practices on the Indian minority communities like Muslims and Parsis.

Check Your Progress – IV :

Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

1. When did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his co-workers visit the Daulatabad fort?
2. Which place did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his co-workers plan to visit in 1934?
3. Why did Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his co-workers travel incognito?
4. Why were the Muslims at the Daulatabad fort angry with Dr. Ambedkar and his co-workers?
5. What did the Muslims call the untouchables?

2.1.2.5 Experience – FIVE (The Untouchable School Teacher) :

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, in this extract, tells us about the experience of an untouchable school teacher from a village in Kathiwar. The teacher shared this experience through the letter to Mr. M. K. Gandhi who published the letter in his journal, 'Young India' on 12th December, 1929. This shows the inhuman approach of even educated Hindus towards the untouchables. The experience is about how a Hindu doctor denies treating an untouchable mother and her newly born baby and leaves them to die.

In his letter the untouchable teacher writes that on 5th of December 1929 his wife gives birth to a child but on 7th December she falls ill and suffers from loose stools. She loses her energy and has difficulty in breathing with acute pain in her ribs. So the teacher goes to call a doctor who denies going to the House of a Harijan. The doctor is not even ready to check the newly born child. Then the teacher goes to Nagarseth and Garasia Darbar and pleads them to help him. The Nagarseth stands surety to the doctor that the teacher would pay the doctor fee of two rupees. Then the doctor tells the teacher to bring the ailing new mother outside the Harijan colony. The teacher takes the ill new mother along with her newly born child outside the colony about 8:00 in the evening. The doctor gives his thermometer to a Muslim who gives it to the teacher who gives it to his wife. And the thermometer is returned to the doctor in the

same process. The doctor checks the thermometer in the light of the lamp and tells that the patient is suffering from pneumonia. Then the doctor goes away and sends the medicine. The teacher pays the fees of the doctor. He himself applies some linseed on his in wife. The doctor refuses to see the patient again. The untouchable teacher's wife dies.

Even while writing the letter, the untouchable teacher is scared. He requests Mahatma Gandhi not to disclose his name and the name of the doctor.

To conclude, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar points out that untouchability makes the caste Hindus inhuman. Even a Hindu doctor, in spite of being educated, refuses to treat an ailing new mother in a critical condition. He does not even follow the code of conduct of his profession. It is seen that the Hindu prefers to be inhuman rather than touch an untouchable.

The story is a sharp critique of modern education's inability to fight systemic bigotry. The doctor, despite his Western or institutional medical training, chooses to abide by traditional caste taboos rather than the universal ethical codes of his profession. Education, in this context, does not civilize or humanize; it merely coexists with deep-seated cruelty.

Check Your Progress – V :

Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

1. Where did the untouchable teacher work?
2. Which journal did Mr. M. K. Gandhi publish?
3. When was the untouchable teacher's letter published in 'Young India'?
4. How much did the untouchable teacher pay to the doctor?
5. What is Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's opinion about the doctor?

2.1.2.6 Experience – SIX (The Untouchable Talati) :

This is a first-hand account narrated by Parmar Kalidas Shivram, a bhangi boy. He shared his experience in the meeting of Bhangi's held at Kasarwadi (behind Woolen Mills) Dadar, Bombay, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Indulal Yadnik on 6th March, 1938.

Parmar is educated. Having studied English up to 4th standard and passed the vernacular final examination in 1933, he applies to the schools committee of the Bombay Municipality for the post of teacher. But due to no vacancy he cannot be a teacher. Then he applies to the

backward classes officer, Ahmedabad for the post of a Talati (Village Patwari) and he becomes a Talati. He is appointed as a Talati in the office of Mamlatdar of Barsad Taluka in the Kheda District in Gujrat.

Though his family originally comes from Gujarat, he has never been to Gujarat. He also does know that untouchability is observed in government offices. In addition, he mentions that he is a Harijan in his application, so that his colleagues in office would know who he is beforehand.

When he goes to the office in Borsad the Karkun (clerk) in the office disrespectfully asks him who he is. When the Karkun learns that he is a Harijan, he insults him. The Karkun tells him to drop his certificate and the appointment order as a Talati on the ground and then picks up those documents from the ground.

In Borsad, Parmar has great difficulty in getting drinking water. The cans of drinking water are kept in verandah of the office. There is a Waterman. He is the in charge of the cans. It is his duty to pour out water to clerks in the office. When he is absent the clerks can take water from the cans on their own. But Parmar is not allowed to touch the water cans and take water from the cans on his own as that pollutes water. A small rusty pot is kept specially for Parmar's use. And except him no one touches or washes that rusty pot and the waterman supplies water to Parmar only through this pot. Besides, he gets water only when the waterman is present in the office. The waterman hates Parmar and does not like to supply water to him. He manages to disappear from the office seeing that Parmar he is coming for water. Consequently Parmar has no water to drink and has to remain thirsty throughout the day.

Similarly in Borsad he cannot get a house to reside. He was a stranger there. No caste Hindu rents a house to him. The untouchables of Borsad also do not give him lodging. They are afraid of the Hindus who do not like Parmar working as a clerk. Likewise in Borsad nobody gives Parmar meals. He has to leave on bhajhas. He buys bhajhas and eats them in some lonely place outside the village. As he has no house to live, he has to sleep at night on the pavement of the veranda of the Mamlatdar's office. He lives like this without drinking water, eating only bhajhas and sleeping on the pavement of the veranda for four days. When it is unbearable to him, he goes to live at the Jentral, his ancestral village. Jentral is 6 miles from Borsad and to attend the office Parmar has to walk 11 miles every day, which he does for one and half month.

Then the Mamlatdar sends Parmar to the Talati who is in charge of three villages – Jentral, Khapur and Saijpur to learn the duties of Talati. The headquarters of that Talati is Jentral. Parmar remains with this Talati in Jentral for two months. But the Talati teaches him nothing and Parmar never enters the village office. The headman of the village is very mean and aggressive. He tells Parmar to give up the job of Talati.

The Talati and the headman try everything to insult Parmar. One day the Talati calls Parmar to Saijpur to prepare the population table. When Parmar goes to Saijpur the Talati and the headman are engaged some work in the village office. Parmar goes and stands near the door of the office. He greets them with good morning but they ignore him. Parmar stands there for 15 minutes. He is very tired, insulted and ignored. So he sits down on a chair lying there.

The Talati and the headman see Parmar sitting on the chair and quietly go out of the office. Soon after that a large crowd gathers round Parmar. The crowd is led by the librarian of the village. Parmar cannot understand why the educated person like the librarian should have bought the big mob. The librarian has done this because the chair used by Parmar is his chair and his chair is polluted. The librarian abuses Parmar in the worst terms. He calls Parmar dirty dog and bhangi. Then the Ravania, the villager servant takes away the chair from Parmar who then sits on the ground. After that the crowd enters the office and surrounds Parmar. The crowd is very angry. They abuse him. Some of them threaten to cut him to pieces with Dharya (a sword like sharp weapon). Parmar requests them to excuse him but nobody listens to him. To save himself from being killed, he decides to show the crowd that he would write the report to the Mamlatdar. He takes a piece of paper from Ravania and writes in big bold letter about his death. He does that to stop the crowd from attacking him. The librarian reads the written matter and asks Parmar to tear the paper off. Parmar also does so. The crowd abuses him with shower of insults. Parmar requests them for mercy. He promises them to give up the job. Parmar is kept in the office till seven in the evening. Till then the Talati and the village Mukhiya have not come to the office. After that Parmar takes 15 days leave and goes back to his parents in Bombay.

To conclude, this narrative offers a raw look into the deep-seated realities of caste-based discrimination in pre-independence India. It illustrates how the caste system violently resisted the upward mobility of marginalized individuals. Even when an individual successfully

crossed the system to secure a position of minor authority, the community used social boycotts, systemic humiliation, and the threat of death to force compliance and maintain the traditional status quo.

Check Your Progress – VI :

Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

1. Who was the chairman of the meeting of the Bhangis held in Kasarwadi of Dadar on 6 March, 1938?
2. What is the name of the Bhangi boy in the extract No. SIX?
3. What was Parmar's educational qualification?
4. What was Parmar Kalidas Shivram?
5. Where was Parmar appointed as a Talati?
6. Where did Parmar use to sleep during nights during his stay in Borsad?
7. What did Parmar use to eat during his stay in Borsad?

2.1.3 Conclusion :

'*Waiting for a Visa*' by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is a collection of six experiences. It is a powerful autobiographical account that shows the harsh realities of caste discrimination and untouchability in India. Through his personal experiences, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar shows how the caste system denied Dalits basic human dignity, equality, and respect. The incidents described in these extracts show that untouchability was not merely a social practice but a deeply rooted form of injustice that affected every aspect of a person's life.

The experiences also highlight Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's courage, determination, and commitment to social equality. Despite facing humiliation and rejection, he continued his struggle for justice and human rights. *Waiting for a Visa* therefore remains relevant because it reminds us that true progress is possible only when society rejects discrimination and respects the dignity and equality of every individual. The work is therefore not merely a personal narrative but also an important social document that helps readers understand the destructive effects of caste discrimination in Indian society. It helps readers understand the realities of caste discrimination and the importance of **human dignity, equality, education,**

and social justice. *Waiting for a Visa* therefore remains a significant text for understanding Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's life, ideas, and struggle against untouchability.

2.1.4 Keys to Check your Progress :

I) 1. Ambawade in Dapoli Taluka in Ratanagiri District

2. In the Army of the East India Company
3. Subhedar
4. Satara
5. Koregaon
6. A dwarf having troubles with legs
7. Nine years old
8. Lemonade
9. Because of the fear of pollution of touch of the untouchables
10. At the toll-collector's house
11. The school peon

II) 1. His Highness the Maharaja of Baroda

2. Columbia University in New York
3. from 1913 to 1917
4. PG department of School of Economics of University of London
5. to serve the Baroda State
6. in the Parsi Inn
7. Zoroastrian
8. Sadra and Kasti
9. a probationer in the Accountant General's office
10. 11 days

III) 1. To investigate a case of social boycott

2. To maintain his dignity

3. two miles
4. on the culvert on the river in Chalisgaon
5. because the tonga driver was not trained

IV) 1. in 1934 in the month of Ramjan

2. Buddhist caves at Verul
3. to avoid difficulties in travelling as untouchables
4. because they had polluted the water in the tank at the gate of the fort
5. the Dheds

V) 1. in a village in Kathiawar

2. Young India
3. on 12 December, 1929
4. two rupees
5. The doctor is inhuman and does not even follow the code of conduct of his profession

VI) 1. Mr. Indulal Yadnik

2. Parmar Kalidas Shivram
3. He had passed Vernacular Final Exam.
4. a Talati
5. in the office of the Mamlatdar of the Borsad Taluka in the Kheda District.
6. on the pavement of verandas of the Mamlatdar's office
7. the Bhajhas

2.1.5 Exercises :

Q. A. Answer the following question in about 250 words:

1. Discuss the theme of caste discrimination in *Waiting for a Visa*.
2. How does Ambedkar use personal experiences to expose the evils of untouchability?

3. What role does education play in Ambedkar's struggle against caste discrimination?
4. Describe Ambedkar's experience in Baroda and explain what does it reveal about caste discrimination.
5. Why Waiting for a Visa is relevant even in the modern world?
6. "Waiting for a Visa is not merely Ambedkar's personal story but the story of an entire oppressed community." Discuss.

Q. B) Write short notes on the following:

1. The station master
2. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's journey from Masur to Koregaon
3. The toll-collector
4. No peon, No water
5. The Parsi Inn
6. Dr. Babasaheb's Hindu and Indian Christian friends in Baroda
7. The Chalisgaon incident
8. Dr. Babasaheb's visit to the Daulatabad fort
9. The Hindu doctor
10. The untouchable teacher's letter
11. Parmar Kalidas Shivram's life in Borsad
12. Oppression of Parmar
13. Incident with Parmar in Saijpur
14. The title, 'Waiting for a Visa'

2.1.6 References for Further Study :

1. Ambedkar, B. R. Waiting for a Visa. *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Speeches and Writings*, Vol. 12, ed. Vasant Moon, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, 2014, pp. 661-691
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Module 3

Travel Writings

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3.0 Objectives:

After studying this module, the students will be able:

- 1) To understand the literary genre of travel writing.
- 2) To appreciate the art of description.
- 3) To develop observational skills.
- 4) To explore the connection between travel and personal growth.
- 5) To examine cultural encounters through travel literature.

3.1 Introduction :

In this module, you will study three travel writings by well-known persons around the world. “The Train to Darjeeling” by Mark Twain is a first-person travel narrative about author’s journey to the Himalayan hill station of Darjeeling. The second prescribed essay “Travels in India as an Unknown Sannyasin” is a collection of autobiographical anecdotes of Swami Vivekananda from his wandering period, before achieving international recognition. In his narrative “Friends in Prison,” Jawaharlal Nehru provides detailed observations of his physical surroundings, the animals and insects that shared his confined space, and the

natural world he could observe from his jail. All these three travel writings offer distinct observation of the respective writers of things around them. Let's study these travel writings in detail.

3.2 The Train to Darjeeling - Mark Twain

3.2.1 About the Author:

Mark Twain is the pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835–1910). He was an American writer, humourist, and lecturer who is widely regarded as one of the greatest authors in American literature. He was born in Florida, Missouri and worked as a Mississippi River pilot before getting recognised as a writer. He adopted his pen name from the riverboat term meaning “two fathoms deep” which means safe water for navigation. His most famous works are *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884). Twain's trademark style combines informal, humorous, and satirical writing with sharp social observation which sets him apart from many 19th century writers.

3.2.2 About “The Train to Darjeeling”:

The prescribed passage is taken from Twain's travelogue, *Following the Equator* (1897). It was written, when he was 60 years old and went bankrupt after failed investments. To repay his substantial debts, he went on a worldwide lecture tour through the British Empire colonies which included Australia, New Zealand, India, and South Africa. The prescribed part of Darjeeling section describes his journey up the Himalayan foothills by train and his thrilling handcar return journey or descent down the mountain. This essay shows Twain's mastery of blending of humorous exaggeration, vivid sensory description, cultural observation, and self-deprecating wit, transformation of a simple railway journey into an unforgettable adventure.

3.2.3 Summary:

This first-person travel narrative retells the Mark Twain's journey to the Himalayan hill station of Darjeeling and his breath-taking descent back to the plains. This narrative gives vivid description of Himalayan landscape, humorous exaggeration, and keen cultural observation. These all things are delivered with the author's signature wit.

The adventure begins as the author and his companions approach the mountains. They leave their regular train for a unique little canvas-sheltered car. These cars skim within a foot of the ground, creating a thrilling illusion of great speed more than real one. When the curtains up, the passengers are essentially outdoors and can enjoy the breeze and the outside scenery.

The upward journey takes halt at a lonely station surrounded by a dense jungle. The author humorously notes the area's reputation for bold tigers with a fabricated telegram: "Tiger eating station master on front porch; telegraph instructions." He then boasts that he had his first tiger hunt there and he killing thirteen in total and later mentions seven wild elephants crossing the track, two of which escaped before he could overtake them.

The forty-mile railway journey up the mountain is a slow. It seems eight-hour crawl which the author finds perfectly suited to the enchanting surroundings. He describes the jungle as a living museum which contain every rare and curious tree and shrub. The road is "infinitely and charmingly crooked," winding under vine-smothered cliffs and along the edges of bottomless chasms. Twain then describes natives, labourers from tea gardens, and a colourful wedding procession. As they climb higher, they see a stunning view: the vast Plains of India stretching to the horizon, shimmering with heat and cut by shining rivers. Below them is a jumble of hilltops etched with winding roads.

Upon reaching Darjeeling, perched at 6,000 feet, Twain observes the local transport "open coffins" carried on men's shoulders. He then checks into a "fairly comfortable hotel" run by an indifferent landlord. He satirically notes that the owner of the hotel pays close attention only to the final bill. He visits the local British Club which is a comfortable and welcome refuge for travellers.

The following morning, while Twain's companions ride off on horseback for a better view, he watches a majestic sunrise from his window. He spends two hours observing the sun's rays paint the snow peaks of Kanchenjunga over 28,000 feet high with delicate pink and gold colour. He then spends the rest of the morning watching a different kind of amusement: a stream of "swarthy strange tribes" from the Himalayas, including Tibetans with their prayer wheels, flocking to the bazaar. He finds this human procession so fascinating that it alone would have been worth the journey.

After a couple of days, they prepare for the descent. They board a small, six-seat handcar for the 35-mile journey down. This car has no engine. It relies entirely on gravity and

a strong brake. Twain recalls a story, though untrue, about the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal plunging over a precipice in such a car. It heightens the author's nervousness and, consequently, the thrill of the experience. They plan a pilot car to go ahead of them. If it goes over a cliff, they will apply their brake and send for a new guide.

When the descent begins, and the sensation is immediate and overwhelming. He calls it a shock of "deadly fright and unimaginable joy". He declares this journey as the "perfection of human delight." The pilot car swoops down the track and they race after it at exhilarating speed. They play a game of tag with the following train. They often stop to admire the scenery, then dart away. The brake of the car is excellent, allowing them to pause at will.

They stop at the Gladstone Cliff, a crag naturally sculpted into a portrait of the statesman. They see a massive banyan tree and a leafless tree covered in crimson butterflies but are actually brilliant red flowers. They pause to watch an open-air Tibetan dramatic performance. Further down, they witness a remarkable feat of engineering: a spiral loop in the track where the train appears to chase and nearly overtake its own tail. It looks like "a snake swallowing itself."

Further they stop at an engineer's house and enjoy refreshments while listening to the surrounding forest. It leads to a long, humorous, and terrifying digression on the songs of two local birds: the brain-fever bird and the coppersmith. The author provides a comical description of their maddeningly repetitive calls, which he claims can bore into a listener's brain until they go crazy. He announces his intention to bring specimens of these birds, along with nightingales and cue-owls from Italy, back to America. After this interlude, they resume their thrilling flight and finally reach the plain and board the regular train for Calcutta.

Twain concludes that this day is the most enjoyable day he has ever spent. For sheer "rousing, tingling, rapturous pleasure," he asserts that nothing compares to the "bird-flight down the Himalayas in a handcar." Its only fault is that it is a mere 35 miles long instead of 500 miles.

3.2.4 Analysis:

This travel narrative, written by Mark Twain presents his travel experience that operates on multiple levels: physical adventure, aesthetic appreciation, cultural observation,

and humorous self-reflection. The journey to Darjeeling and the handcar descent becomes a vehicle for exploring not just a geographic location, but the very nature of travel itself.

1. The Physical Experience:

The most important aspect of the travel experience is the physical sensation of movement. Twain here masterfully contrasts two modes of travel: the slow, contemplative ascent and the exhilarating, dangerous descent.

The Ascent Journey:

Twain describes the eight-hour; forty-mile crawl up the mountain as a sensory feast. According to him, the pace allows for detailed observation. It is so wild and interesting and exciting and enchanting that it ought to take a week. The physical experience here is one of gradual revelation: entering clouds, emerging above them, and watching the plains recede below. The crooked road, the lofty cliffs, the bottomless chasms.

The Descent Journey:

This is the emotional and physical climax of this narrative. The handcar ride produces a “mixed ecstasy of deadly fright and unimaginable joy.” He explicitly identifies this combination as “the perfection of human delight.” The physical sensations are described with remarkable precision: the “gasp shock” of departure, the sensation of flying “like an arrow from a bow,” the wind, the speed, the precariousness. The danger, though partly theatrical, is essential to the experience. Twain admits that the fictional story of the lieutenant governor’s accident “had value for me, for it made me nervous, and nervousness wakes a person up and makes him alive and alert, and heightens the thrill.” This is a sophisticated understanding of how perceived risk enhances travel pleasure.

2. The Aesthetic Experience of Nature:

Twain deals with the Himalayan landscape as both a painter and a spectator. His descriptions reveal his appreciation for natural beauty filtered through a distinctly human and artistic lens.

The Sunrise View:

The description of sunrise over Kanchenjunga is perhaps the most beautiful passage in the text. He watches as the sun “drive away the veiling gray and touch up the snow peaks

one after another with pale pink splashes and delicate washes of gold, and finally flood the whole mighty convulsion of snow mountains with a deluge of rich splendors.” The language is painterly as he uses words like “washes,” “splashes,” “flood”.

The Plains of India:

Twain has described the panoramic view of the Plains of India from the cloud region as: “soft and fair, level as a floor, shimmering with heat, mottled with cloud-shadows, and cloven with shining rivers.” The scene below a “shaven confusion of hilltops” with “ribbony roads and paths squirming and snaking cream-yellow”, suggests a cosmic perspective.

The Jungle as Museum:

Twain repeatedly frames nature in custodial terms. He describes the vegetation as “a museum” containing “samples of every rare and curious tree and bush.” This metaphor positions the traveller as a knowledgeable person collecting visual specimens. The banyan tree, the leafless tree with crimson flowers, the torch plants on the hillside etc. are presented as they exhibit nature’s gallery.

3. Observations of the Natives and their Culture:

Twain’s observations of the native peoples reveal both curiosity and attitudes of his era. He is an ethnographer recording what he sees with a mixture of respect, amusement, and also a superior human being than them.

The Ghurkas:

He admires the Ghurkas as “strong and resolute” soldiers. Their strength is “astonishing,” and he notes with admiration that they stride “smartly along under these astonishing burdens with the air of people out for a holiday.” But his attention is captured more by the women carrying immense burdens up the mountain. This anecdote about a woman carrying a piano up the mountain elevates these observations into the realm of legend.

The Himalayan Tribes:

The description of The Himalayan Tribes as “swarthy strange tribes” passing by Twain’s hotel window become an amusement show to him. He explicitly wishes this “strange and striking pageant” could be transported to Europe or America “to refresh eyes weary of the pale monotonies of the circus pageant.” Here, he inverts the typical colonial

gaze: it is not the traveller who is exotic, but the audience back home that is bored and in need of renewal.

The Prayer Wheel:

His observation of the Tibetan prayer wheel brings a moment of cross-cultural connection. He describes it as, “It brought me near to these people, and made them seem kinfolk of mine. Through our preacher we do much of our praying by proxy. We do not whirl him around a stick, as they do, but that is merely a detail.” This characteristic of finding the familiar in the strange or the universal in the particular reveals Twain’s a humane intelligence beneath the humour.

The Tibetan Drama:

Twain describes The Tibetan Drama as “outlandish” and accompanied by “barbarous noises.” A Chinaman’s pidgin English explanation also makes this obscure play “opaque.” But Twain praises it as a “wild and barbarous spectacle” beyond criticism. He asserts that some experiences go beyond intellectual comprehension and must be appreciated as a pure spectacle.

4. Humour and Wit:

The description of various places and people have a touch of humour and wit. Throughout the narrative, the humour serves on multiple levels: it entertains and it establishes the author’s persona as a self-deprecating observer.

Exaggeration:

The tiger hunt where he claims “I killed thirteen” and elephant encounter where he remarks “two of them got away before I could overtake them” are clearly tall tales. They signal that this narrative is not a literal account but a playful performance.

Self-Deprecation:

Twain freely admits his fears and limitations in this essay. He stays behind rather than riding unfamiliar horses in the cold. He fears of handcar derailing. He confesses that Mount Everest, being too high, is “disagreeable.” All this remarks and presentation of self makes him a relatable narrator and also contrasts with heroic figures like Mr. Pugh and Mr. Barnard.

Ironic Observation:

The description of hotel landlord who neglects everything but the bill prompts that “the tourist cannot do better than follow his example.” The comparison of hotel bill and Kanchenjunga is also ironic. According to him, a tourist who misses Kanchenjunga after twenty-two days is not disappointed because his hotel bill reveals “the highest thing in the Himalayas.” These ironies reveal us that travel is also a commercial transaction.

The Birds:

The digression on the brain-fever bird, coppersmith, nightingale, and cue-owl is pure comic thing in the essay. Their songs are described in terms of torment, culminating in madness and death. Twain's plan to import these birds to America, where "they will multiply like rabbits," is a masterpiece of mischief. He mocks both American enthusiasm for exotic imports and the traveller's urge to bring home souvenirs.

5. The Time and Distance of Journey:

Twain is unusually attentive to time and distance of journey. The eight-hour ascent journey “ought to take a week” because the scenery is worth of observation. The thirty-five-mile descent journey, by contrast, is too short. It should be five hundred miles. This awareness of temporal compression and expansion reveals an understanding of how travel creates memory.

In this narration, Twain combines several elements of travel experience: physical thrill that awakens the senses, aesthetic beauty that rewards contemplation, cultural novelty that challenges assumptions, and humorous reflection that keeps experience from becoming solemn. The descent journey by handcar synthesizes all these elements. It is dangerous, beautiful, culturally situated, and laughably delightful. His final concluding remarks of his journey summarises all his feelings as this was “the most enjoyable day I have spent in the earth.”

3.2.5 Check your progress:

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

- i) Darjeeling, which is feet above the level of the Plains.
a) 6000 b) 8000

- c) 9000 d) 7000
- ii) The summit of is often hidden in the clouds.
- a) Kalasubai b) Everest
- c) Kanchenjunga d) Naples
- iii) The author travelled uphill by the regular
- a) train b) bus
- c) handcar d) aeroplane
- iv) The downward journey by handcar was of miles only.
- a) 35 b) 45
- c) 65 d) 70
- v) Mark Twain plans to bring some birds back to
- a) Britain b) China
- c) Europe d) America

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

- i) What was the real speed of canvas-sheltered cars?
- ii) How many tigers were killed by Twain?
- iii) Who had a disastrous trip made down the mountain by the handcar?
- iv) Who was the chief engineer of the mountain division of the road?
- v) What was chasing its own tail?

3.2.6 Answers to check your progress:

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

- i) a) 6000
- ii) c) Kanchenjunga
- iii) a) train
- iv) a) 35

v) d) America

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

- i) Twenty miles per hour
- ii) Thirteen
- iii) The lieutenant governor of Bengal
- iv) Mr. Barnard
- v) The train

3.2.7 Exercises:

(A) Answer the following questions in detail:

- 1) Write a note on Twain's observations of the native peoples.
- 2) Narrate various sightseeing experiences of Mark Twain as depicted in "The Train to Darjeeling".
- 3) Describe Mark Twain's upward and downward journey to the summit Kanchenjunga in your own words.

(B) Write short notes on the following:

- 1) The Sunrise View
- 2) The Himalayan Tribes
- 3) The Birds
- 4) The Humour and Wit in "The Train to Darjeeling".

3.2.8 References for further study:

- Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Edited by Shelly Fisher Fishkin, Oxford UP, 1996.
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- *Mark Twain's Letters, 1853–1880*. Vol. 1, U of California P, 1988.
- *Roughing It*. Edited by Harriet Elinor Smith et al., U of California P, 1993.

- *The Selected Letters of Mark Twain*. Edited by Charles Neider, Harper & Row, 1982.

3.3 Travels in India as an Unknown Sannyasin - Swami Vivekananda :

3.3.1 About the Author:

Swami Vivekananda was born as Narendranath Datta in Calcutta in 1863. He was a key figure to introduce Indian philosophy of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world. He was a chief disciple of the mystic Sri Ramakrishna. He travelled across India on foot as a monk between 1890 and 1893, living on alms. During his journey he experienced the country's poverty. He got global fame after his historic 1893 speech at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. In 1897, he founded the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission to combine spirituality with social service. His birthday, 12th January is celebrated in India as National Youth Day. He passed away in 1902 at the young age of 39.

3.3.2 About the Essay “Travels in India as an Unknown Sannyasin”:

The essay “Travels in India as an Unknown Sannyasin” is a collection of autobiographical anecdotes from this wandering period. These narratives illustrate his core teachings through direct personal experience. In the Himalayas, he taught that we are divine and can overcome any obstacle. In Varanasi, he learned to confront hardships boldly, like facing aggressive monkeys. In a desert, he realized the world is an illusion, like vanishing mirages. He also overcame caste prejudice by sharing a pipe with a sweeper which transcends social divisions. In his last experience he faces a tiger and is ready to accept death peacefully, but god protected him. Through these stories, he illustrates key spiritual teachings about strength, fearlessness, self-realization, and the illusory nature of the world. The narratives are not merely travel accounts but convey profound philosophical truths about the nature of the self and the spiritual path.

3.3.3 Summary:

This text is a collection of autobiographical anecdotes from Swami Vivekananda's life. The first anecdote takes place in the Himalayas. He was traveling on foot with an elderly monk. The old man became overwhelmed by the long, arduous road stretching before them. He feared that he cannot continue and that his chest will break. Vivekananda's response was simple yet profound. He said to him, “Look down at your feet.” He explained him that the

road beneath them is the same road they have already travelled and the same road that lies ahead. It will be soon under their feet. He used this moment to teach about the divine nature of the self. According to him, “The highest things are under your feet, because you are Divine Stars... such is your real nature.” He described numerous incidents when he was near death. He was starving, footsore, weary, unable to walk or speak and at the point of collapse. He would then assert his true nature. He said to himself, “I have no fear nor death; I never hunger nor thirst. I am It! I am It! The whole of nature cannot crush me; it is my servant.” After it, he would rise reinvigorated and continue his journey.

Another memorable lesson about facing difficulties comes from an encounter with aggressive monkeys in Varanasi. While passing through a narrow street with a tank on one side and a high wall on the other, he was attacked by a troop of large, surly monkeys that clutched at his feet and bit him. He began to run faster but the more fiercely the monkeys pursued him. Just when escape was impossible, a stranger called out, “Face the brutes!” He turned and faced them, and the monkeys fell back and fled. Here Vivekananda draws a universal lesson from this experience, “Like the monkeys, the hardships of life fall back, when we cease to flee before them.”

While traveling through the desert part of western India, Vivekananda had a profound realization about illusion. For nearly a month, he walked through what he believed a beautiful landscape of lakes, trees, and plains, with shadows reflecting in the water. One day, he was thirsty and he approached one of these clear lakes for a drink but it vanished before his eyes. At that moment, he recognized the mirage he had read about all his life. This realization stroked him that for an entire month. He had been watching the mirage daily without knowing it. He extended this metaphor to the outer world as, “We are all traveling in this mirage of the world day after day, month after month, year after year, not knowing that it is a mirage.”

During his journey from Agra to Vrindavan without money, Vivekananda encountered a man smoking a chillum by the roadside. He asked for a puff from his chillum. The man hesitates as he is a sweeper from “untouchable” caste. Vivekananda also stepped back and continues walking but he is struck by the contradiction. He realised that he is a sannyasin who has renounced caste, family, and prestige, yet still recoiled from sharing a pipe with a sweeper. He returned to the man, and insisted on smoking from his chillum despite the man’s objections. He enjoyed it gladly.

His next mysterious encounter in a Himalayan village reveals the limits of rational understanding. Hearing drums, Vivekananda came to know that a villager is possessed by a spirit. He saw a red-hot axe being applied to the man's body and hair without causing burns or pain. The village headman asked Vivekananda to exorcise that man. When he touched the axe, now cooled to blackness, he burned his fingers. He placed his hand on the man's head and repeated japa (mantra) for a short while. Within minutes, the man recovered consciousness. The villagers revered Vivekananda as a divine being, but he admitted that he cannot understand what happened. He recalled Shakespeare's words: "There are more things in heaven and earth... than are dreamt of in your philosophy." He also noted that his guru Sri Ramakrishna discouraged interest in supernatural powers as they hinder attainment of supreme truth. Yet he accepted that even 90 percent of sadhus are attracted to such powers.

In Madras (now Chennai), Vivekananda dreamt that his mother has died and became anxious. His host arranged a visit to a man living near a cremation ground. That man had mystic powers over spirits and could read past and future. Vivekananda reluctantly agreed to visit this man to relieve his mental state. The man, after drawing figures and entering concentration, accurately gave his name, genealogy, and history. He reveals that Sri Ramakrishna was always with him. He also delivered good news about his mother and predicted Vivekananda's journey to far-off lands to preach religion. Upon returning to Madras, Vivekananda received a telegram confirming his mother's wellbeing. Everything that man foretold eventually came true. Vivekananda reflected on encountering many such mysteries. He remarked as "Maya, it is all Maya!"

The final anecdote from this passage occurs during his wandering days in the Himalayas. He begged for food from door to door. He was feeling guilty as poor hill people who could barely feed their own families were saving food for him. He questioned the value of such a life and stops begging. For two days he was without food and drank only stream water. While meditating on a stone deep in the jungle, he found a large striped tiger staring at him. He felt his life is over and he thinks that, "At long last I shall find peace and this animal its food." He closed his eyes and waits for tiger to kill him. But the tiger retreated into the forest. Vivekananda felt that his master Sri Ramakrishna is protecting him until his work in the world could be completed.

3.3.4 Analysis:

This text, “Travels in India as an Unknown Sannyasin” is special because it is not just a travel diary but it is a collection of true stories from Swami Vivekananda’s early life. He spent many years traveling across India on foot, with no money, facing many difficulties. Each anecdote in this text teaches us something important about life and spirituality. Let us look at them in detail:

A) The Old Monk in the Himalayas:

Swami Vivekananda was walking through the Himalayas with an old monk. The road was very long, with so many obstacles. The old monk became tired and asked Vivekananda, “Oh sir, how to cross it? I cannot walk anymore. My chest will break.” Vivekananda assured him as, “Look down at your feet.” He explained him that his feet have been on the same road he had already walked on and the same travelled road is laid ahead. He then told him that “You are Divine Stars. All these things are under your feet. You can swallow the stars if you want. That is your real nature.”

After sharing this story, Vivekananda shared his own experience from the past. Many times, he was near death, starving, tired and unable to walk. He would sit under a tree with a feeling that soul is leaving his body. But his mind would encourage him with words: “I have no fear nor death. I never hunger nor thirst. I am It! I am It!” And he would feel strong again and continue walking.

This story teaches us about our true nature. According to Vedanta philosophy, we were not just this body and mind. Our real self or “Atma” is divine, eternal, and unlimited. The old monk was suffering because he thought about himself as a weak person with old body. Vivekananda reminded him of his true identity and strength. This anecdote suggests that when we remember who we really are, we find strength to face any difficulty.

The Monkeys of Varanasi

In Varanasi, Vivekananda was walking on a narrow road. There was a large tank on one side and a high wall on the other side. Many big, aggressive monkeys were there. They allow him pass through. They howled and grabbed at his feet. Vivekananda started running but the monkeys ran faster and bit him. When he thought there was no way to escape, a stranger shouted, “Face the brutes!” He then turned around and faced the monkeys. They fell back and ran away.

This incident gives a simple but powerful lesson about fear. When we run away from our problems, they chase us and grow bigger. When face them, they often lose their power. So here, the monkeys represented problems and difficulty in our life. Most of us try to avoid problems but a wise person knows that facing problems is the only way to solve them. This teaching can be applied to all areas of our life. If we were afraid of something, facing it, even when scared, makes the fear disappear.

The Desert Mirage

Once Vivekananda was traveling through a desert in western part of India. Every day, he saw beautiful lakes with trees around them and he could see the reflections of trees in the water. He thought, “How wonderful! And they call this a desert!” For almost a month, he enjoyed these scenes.

One day, he was very thirsty and walked toward one of the lakes. But as he got closer, the lake disappeared. He realised that it was a mirage. He had heard about mirages but never seen one. The next morning, he saw the lake again, but now he knew it was not real.

Vivekananda then applied this thing to our world. According to him, we spend our whole lives chasing things like money, fame, pleasure. We think they will make us happy but like the mirage, they disappear when we try to grasp them. We do not realize that they are illusions. When we get spiritual knowledge, we see the world as what is real and what is not.

This story explains the concept of Maya. The world was like a mirage or Maya. It looks real and beautiful, but can’t give us lasting happiness. The problem is not the world itself, but our belief that it can fulfil us. When we realise this, we live in the world, but not attached to it. We enjoy it without being trapped by it.

The Sweeper’s Chillum

Once, Vivekananda was walking from Agra to Vrindavan without money. Near Vrindavan, he saw a man smoking by the roadside. He desired to smoke and asked the man for his chillum. The man hesitated and as he was a sweeper from “untouchable” community. People from higher castes would not touch them, or eat or drink with them. Vivekananda, without thinking, stepped back and continued his walking. After going a short distance, contemplated as “I am a sannyasin. I have renounced caste, family, and all social status. But when that man said he was a sweeper, I stepped back. I could not smoke from his pipe.”

This thought disturbed him. He went back to the man, asked him to prepare the chillum. He smoked it gladly. Then he continued his journey to Vrindavan.

This story is about real renunciation. It is easy to give up external things like money, home, family but the hardest thing to give up is the conditioning in our minds. Vivekananda was grown up with caste prejudices. After he has become a monk and he believed all people were equal but his old habits (called Samskaras) made him react without thinking. Here he suggests that true spiritual progress means changing not just what we believed, but how we reacted automatically.

This incident gives the lesson that we must examine ourselves deeply. Our actions should match our beliefs and real change happens at the deepest level of our mind.

The Possessed Man

When Vivekananda was in a Himalayan village, he heard drums at night. He came to know that a man was possessed by a spirit. He went there to see it. A large crowd was there and a tall man with long hair was pointed out as the possessed person. Nearby, an axe was being heated in fire. It had become red hot. Then same hot axe was touched to the man's body and hair. Amazingly, the man was not burned at all and he showed no pain.

The village headman requested Vivekananda to remove the spirit from him. Vivekananda approached and examined the axe. It looked black and cool now. When he touched it, it burned his fingers badly. His theories about what happened disappeared. Then he put his hand on the man's head and chanted a mantra. Within ten or twelve minutes, the man became normal. All villagers thought Vivekananda was a great holy man but Vivekananda was confused. He could not explain what happened. He remembered his teacher Sri Ramakrishna. He used to say that supernatural powers were obstacles to real spirituality. Most people, even monks, were attracted to such powers but this thing takes us away from the real goal.

This story gives us several lessons. First, there are many things in this world that cannot be explained. Science and logic yet to understand everything. Second, supernatural powers are real but they are dangerous for spiritual seekers. People who have such powers often becomes proud and get attached to them. They forgot the real purpose of life. Here,

Vivekananda's confusion and honesty are admirable as he did not pretend to understand and he remained humble.

The Fortune-Teller and the Tiger

Once, Vivekananda was at Manmatha Babu's place and dreamed that his mother had died. He was very worried and at the same time, his friends in Madras were ready to send him to America. But he was not ready leave without news of his mother. So his friend took him to a fortune-teller who had power over spirits. The man sat near a cremation ground. He looked strange and frightening. At first he ignored them, then he drew some figures, concentrated, and told Vivekananda about his name, his family history, and the names of his ancestors. He said his master, Sri Ramakrishna was always with him during his travels. He gave good news about his mother's wellbeing and also predicted that Vivekananda would soon go to faraway lands to teach religion. Later, a telegram confirmed news about his mother. Everything the man said about Vivekananda, came true.

Vivekananda was in the Himalayas, and was begging for food. The hill people were very poor and barely had enough for their own children. But they were saving a little food for him. Vivekananda felt guilty and stopped asking for food. He didn't eat anything for two days and drank water from streams. He went a deep into the forest and sat on a stone to meditate. When he opened his eyes, he saw a large tiger staring at him. He accepted his end and thought, "Finally I will find peace, and this animal will get food. It is enough that my body can be of use to this creature." He closed his eyes and waited for tiger to kill him. but the tiger walked away into the forest. He then smiled and realised that his master Sri Ramakrishna was protecting him until his work was done.

Here these two stories together show something beautiful. The fortune-teller story shows that there are powers that know the past and future. Vivekananda also did not deny it. But he called it all "Maya", the great magic show of the universe. The tiger story is the most important of all. After all his struggles, teachings, his encounters with strange powers, what finally mattered is surrender or acceptance of fate. When Vivekananda faced the tiger, he was not afraid or pray for protection. He simply accepted whatever would happen. He was even happy that his body might feed the tiger. This state of complete surrender and no desire for himself, he was protected. He recognized this as the grace of his master, Sri Ramakrishna.

3.3.5 Check your progress:

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

- i) Vivekananda saw..... every day while traveling through the desert.
 - A) large cities
 - B) beautiful lakes with trees around them
 - C) other travellers
 - D) ancient temples
- ii) Vivekananda heard in the Himalayan village at night.
 - A) music
 - B) the beating of drums
 - C) people screaming
 - D) thunder
- iii) The fortune-teller sit.....
 - A) in a temple
 - B) close to a cremation ground
 - C) in a marketplace
 - D) on a mountain top
- iv) The fortune-teller predicted about Vivekananda's future that
 - A) he would become a businessman
 - B) he would soon go to far-off lands for preaching religion
 - C) he would get married
 - D) he would build many temples
- v) When the old monk saw the long road ahead, he said to Swami Vivekanand,
.....
 - A) "Let us rest here for a few days"
 - B) "Oh sir, how to cross it; I cannot walk anymore; my chest will break"
 - C) "We should find someone to carry us"
 - D) "This road is easier than I expected"

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

- i) Where did the monkey incident take place?
- ii) What did the stranger advice Vivekananda to do?

- iii) What did Vivekananda desire when he saw the man by the roadside?
- iv) What happened when Vivekananda touched the axe?
- v) What did Vivekananda dream about when he was at Manmatha Babu's place?

3.3.6 Answers to check your progress :

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

- i) B) Beautiful lakes with trees around them
- ii) B) The beating of drums
- iii) B) Close to a cremation ground
- iv) B) He would soon go to far-off lands for preaching religion
- v) B) "Oh sir, how to cross it; I cannot walk anymore; my chest will break"

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

- i) In Varanasi
- ii) "Face the brutes"
- iii) To smoke the chillum
- iv) It burned his fingers even though it looked cool
- v) That his mother had died

3.3.7 Exercises:

A) Answer the following questions in detail:

- 1) Discuss in detail qualities and teachings of Swami Vivekananda from travel anecdotes depicted in this narrative.
- 2) Compare and contrast the different kinds of challenges Vivekananda faced in these anecdotes in your own words.
- 3) Analyse the fortune-teller episode and the tiger incident together.

B) Write short notes on the following:

- 1) The concept of Maya as presented in the desert mirage anecdote

- 2) The sweeper's chillum incident
- 3) The Possessed Man
- 4) The Monkeys of Varanasi

3.3.8 References for further study:

- Chakrabarti, Mohit. *Swami Vivekananda, poetic visionary*. M.D. Publications, 1998.
- Ramakrishna Mission. Institute of Culture, ed. *Swami Vivekananda: New perspectives: an anthology on Swami Vivekananda*. Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2013.
- S, Paul. *Swami Vivekananda*. Learners Press, 1998.
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3.4 “Friends in Prison” - Jawaharlal Nehru

3.4.1 About the Author:

Jawaharlal Nehru was a key leader of India's freedom movement and the country's first Prime Minister. He was born in 1889 in Allahabad. He was educated in England at Harrow and Cambridge. After returning to India, he joined the freedom struggle under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance. He spent nine years in British jails due to his political activities. During these imprisonments, he wrote several notable books including 'The Discovery of India' and 'Glimpses of World History.' He was a modern thoughtful writer with a scientific outlook. He shaped modern India after independence in 1947 and was Prime Minister of India until his death in 1964.

3.4.2 About “Friends in Prison”:

“Friends in Prison” is an essay by Jawaharlal Nehru recapture his imprisonment during his fourteen and a half months in Dehra Dun Jail. It is part of his book, 'The Discovery of India.' It describes how Nehru found companionship of nature, insects and animals. He observed every detail of his small cell, seasons, the Himalayan mountains, and the various insects and animals around him. This essay reveals Nehru's ability to find meaning and comfort in natural world. The title suggests that one can find friendship even in the loneliest places, if one observes carefully and feels deeply his surroundings.

3.4.3 Summary of “Friends in Prison” :

Jawaharlal Nehru spent fourteen and a half months in a small cell in Dehra Dun Jail. During his stay there, he became extremely familiar with his surroundings like every mark on the whitewashed walls, every dent on the uneven floor, and every hole in the moth-eaten ceiling. Outside of his cell, he would greet small tufts of grass and bits of stone as they were old friends. He was never alone as several colonies of wasps and hornets and many lizards behind the wooden rafters lived in his cell.

He had stayed in better cells in other prisons but Dehra Dun gave him one privilege that he valued greatly. This place was so tiny and there was no room to walk inside. So every morning and evening, the prisoners were allowed to go out and walk up and down in front of the gate. They remained within the jail but it allowed them to see the mountains, the fields, and a public road in the distance. This was not a special privilege just was given to all A and B class prisoners in Dehra Dun. Nehru understood the psychological value of these outside walks and open views. He loved these outings and never missed them, even during the monsoon season he would walk in ankle-deep water to see it. The towering Himalayas nearby gave him extra joy that helped him to remove the weariness of prison life. During this long period, he had no visitors and spent many months completely alone. He gazed at these mountains that he loved. There was a secret closeness seemed to grow between him and the mountains.

Spring in Dehra Dun was long and pleasant, unlike the plains below. After winter left the peepal trees bare, the warm spring air brought sudden life to it. Small bits of green leaves started appearing on it everywhere and then millions of leaves glistening in sunlight. Nehru found this transformation wonderful. He noticed fresh mango leaves were reddish-brown before turning green. The monsoon rains ended summer heat but it also brought excessive rain fifty to sixty inches within weeks. While sitting in a narrow space and trying to avoid dripping water was unpleasant to him. Autumn and winter were pleasant except but rain brought piercing cold winds. Hailstorms with large hailstones made tremendous noise on iron roofs. He recalled the day, December 24, 1932, as one of his most miserable day in jail days. It was bitterly cold with thunderstorms all day. In the evening it cleared and the sight of snow-covered mountains lifted his misery completely.

When Nehru was unable to engage in normal activities, he became observant of nature. He noticed countless insects in his cell and yard. He complained of loneliness but the yard

was actually full of life. He tolerated wasps and hornets, despite an initial conflict when one stung him. After a brief war, he left them in peace, and they also never attacked him again. Both respected each other. He endured bats despite finding them eerie, watching flying foxes higher in the sky. He spent hours watching ants and lizards. He observed lizards stalk prey and chase each other. Squirrels grew bold in Lucknow Jail. One squirrel once climbed his leg and sat on his knee, then fled upon realizing that he was not a tree. When baby squirrels fell from tree, their mothers rolled them into balls and carried them to safety. One person from the jail raised three orphaned squirrels using a fountain-pen filler with cotton wool as a feeding bottle.

Pigeons were plentiful except in Almora Jail, thousands filled the evening sky. Mainas nested near his cell door in Dehra Dun. They grew tame and demanding food loudly if delayed. In Naini Jail, thousands of parrots lived in barrack wall cracks. Nehru found their courtship fascinating, watching males fight while females calmly awaited the winner. Dehra Dun offered a constant mixing of bird songs, with the koel's sad call rising above. The brain-fever bird visited during monsoon, persistently repeating its notes day and night.

Monkeys in Bareilly Jail provided entertainment. He noticed incident: a baby monkey fell into the barrack enclosure and was captured and tied with string. Watching from above, a large monkey bravely charged into the crowd of men with sticks. The humans fled in terror, and the baby monkey was rescued.

Nehru's unwelcome visitors included scorpions as they were found in unlikely places like beds and books. He once kept one in a bottle but it escaped. Snakes appeared occasionally but news of one made newspaper headlines, which Nehru welcomed as a distraction from dull prison life. While he feared snake bites, centipedes horrified him far more. In Alipore Jail, waking to find a centipede crawling on his foot. It made him jump with such speed he nearly hit the wall.

In Dehra Dun, Nehru saw a strange two-foot creature with claws and a scaly covering. It was something between a lizard and crocodile. The owner carried it twisted into a knot through a pole. He was calling it a "Bo" and planning to make curry. Nehru later learned it was a pangolin.

Nehru observed that prisoners serving long sentences often kept pets to overcome emotional starvation. Squirrels and mongooses were common. Dogs were not allowed, but

cats were encouraged. He befriended a kitten but was taken away when its owner transferred. Despite restrictions against dogs, Nehru was attached to an abandoned female dog left by a transferred official. She lived under drains and starved until he began feeding her. She gave birth to puppies. Out of them, three survived, and he fed them. When one puppy fell ill, Nehru nursed it through the night. He got up a dozen times and the puppy survived. He felt great satisfaction.

Nehru came in contact with animals far more in prison than outside. He was grateful for their company. He observed that Indians generally did not approve of household pets. Despite philosophy of non-violence, Indians were often careless and unkind to animals. Even the cow which worshipped by many Hindus, was not treated kindly. According to him, worship and kindness did not always go together. Nehru also reflected that countries adopt animals as national symbols, for example, the eagle for America and Germany, the lion and bulldog for England, the fighting cock for France, the bear for old Russia. He wondered that these animals mould also national character. Most of these are aggressive and fighting animals. So, it was not surprising that people growing up with these examples mould themselves after them and prey on others. So, it was also not surprising that the Hindu, whose patron animal is the cow, should be mild and non-violent.

3.4.4 Analysis of “Friends in Prison”

Jawaharlal Nehru, in his narrative “Friends in Prison,” provides remarkably detailed observations of his physical surroundings, the animals and insects. Written during his fourteen and a half months of imprisonment in Dehra Dun Jail, he reveals how a prisoner deprived of human companionship finds companionship in unexpected places. This narrative provides Nehru’s descriptions of places, animals, and insects and his philosophical outlook, and his growing connection with the natural world.

A) Descriptions of Places:

1) The Cell

Nehru’s description of his cell is intimate, detailed and thorough. He says that he “was familiar with every bit of it” and “knew every mark and dent on the whitewashed walls and on the uneven floor and the ceiling with its moth-eaten rafters.” This detailed description gives monotony of prison life, where a man has nothing to do but observe his surroundings. The cell

becomes a part of himself; when he says “began to feel as if I was almost a part of it.” This merging of person and place describe the psychological impact of long-term confinement.

The cell is not merely empty space but a living environment. It contains several colonies of wasps and hornets and many lizards found a home behind the rafters. Nehru’s choice to mention these inhabitants suggests that he is not alone. He philosophically observes that “if thoughts and emotions leave their traces behind in the physical surroundings, the very air of that cell must be thick with them.” It reveals him as a man who believes in the imprint of human experience on physical space.

The small yard outside his cell receives similar attention. He feels little tufts of grass and odd bits of stone as old friends. The walking area in front of the jail gate is a distance of about a hundred yards. But Nehru finds it has “extraordinary psychological value” and notes that a prisoner who has been confined for long behind high walls can appreciate it. His dedication to these walks is evident even during the monsoon, when the rain came down for days in torrents and he walks in ankle-deep water. This persistence shows importance of it to his mental health.

2) The View of the Himalayas

The Himalayas represent the most significant place description in Nehru’s narrative. He calls the sight of the towering Himalayas nearby an “added joy which went a long way to removing the weariness of prison.” The mountains serve multiple functions. First, they represent freedom and the outside world. Second, they embody permanence and stability in contrast to his inner fluctuating emotions. He writes that the mountain’s wisdom of a million years mocked at my varying humours and soothed my fevered mind.

The mountains become his a silent companion. When he could not see the mountains from my cell, his mind was full of them and a secret intimacy seemed to grow between them. This relationship with natural feature reveals his ability to find meaning and connection in the natural world. The quotation from the Chinese poet Li T’ai Po about sitting alone with a mountain peak states same idea of companionship between man and nature.

3) Seasonal Changes in the Landscape

Nehru’s descriptions of the changing season’s cycles reveal his keen observation and his emotional response to nature. He describes winter when trees became naked and bare. He noted with surprise that even “four magnificent peepal trees... dropped nearly all their

leaves.” The trees description as “gaunt and cheerless,” also reflects his own emotional state during the cold months.

Spring brings transformation stir both in the peepals and the other trees. His choice of words to describe it like “mystery” and “secret operations” suggests wonder and childlike delight. The description of rapid leaf growth with leaves glisten in the sunlight and play about in the breeze provides joy and hope. His exclamation, “How wonderful is the sudden change from bud to leaf!” reveals his genuine wonder at natural processes.

His observation about mango leaves being “reddish-brown, russet coloured, remarkably like the autumn tints on the Kashmir hills” shows how prison sharpens his perception. This comparison to Kashmir suggests that memory and imagination allow him to connect his present confinement with past freedom.

The monsoon receives his mixed treatment. It was welcomed for ending summer heat but the excessive rain in Dehra Dun (fifty to sixty inches in five or six weeks) makes life uncomfortable. He sits “cooped up in a little narrow place trying to avoid the water dripping from the ceiling or rushing in from the windows.” This physical discomfort reminds readers that prison remains physically harsh to Nehru.

The hailstorm is described in detail as “hailstones bigger than marbles coming down on the corrugated iron roofs and making a tremendous noise, something like an artillery bombardment.” This simile connects his prison experience to the world of warfare which reflects his political consciousness.

December 24, 1932 provides a powerful contrast between physical misery and emotional uplift in Nehru’s life. After one of the most miserable days, the evening clearing reveals “all the neighbouring mountains and hills covered with a thick mantle of snow.” His misery then departed instantly. This passage demonstrates how natural beauty can provide genuine emotional healing.

B) Descriptions of Insects:

Nehru has described various insects he has encountered during his imprisonment. He had fight with some of them and he had to tolerate some of them also. He lived within the boundaries to avoid conflict with them. He gives acute description of these insects in this passage.

1) Wasps and Hornets

Nehru's relationship with wasps and hornets evolves throughout his imprisonment. Initially he tolerated them despite there being hundreds of them in his cell. After a wasp stings him, he tried to exterminate the lot, but their brave fight in defence caused him to stop. This decision to coexist with them rather than destroy reflects his respect for other life forms. For over a year after that he lived in that cell surrounded by these wasps and hornets, and they never attacked him, as both respected each other. This mutual respect demonstrates Nehru's capacity for peaceful coexistence and his recognition that even the smallest creatures deserve consideration.

2) Bats

Nehru's description of bats reveals his fear and discomfort rather than appreciation. He calls them "eerie things". Their soundless flight in the evening dusk, appearing as dark shapes against the darkening sky, creates an atmosphere of unease to him. He feared that they might hit him, as they pass within an inch of one's face. It shows how even harmless creatures can become sources of anxiety in the confined prison environment.

3) Ants and Lizards

Nehru used to watch ants and lizards by the hours. It suggested both the abundance of time in prison and his genuine interest in their behaviour. His description of lizards is also affectionate. He describes they "crept about in the evenings and stalked their prey and chased each other, wagging their tails in a most comic fashion." The word "comic" reveals his ability to find humour and entertainment in adverse situation.

His detailed observation of lizards hunting wasps is scientific. He describes "twice I saw them stalk them with enormous care and seize them from the front." His uncertainty about whether this avoidance of the sting was intentional or accidental shows the limits of his observation. It also demonstrates his careful attention to minute details.

4) Bedbugs, Mosquitoes, and Flies

Nehru makes distinction between creatures he tolerates and those he fights. With bedbugs, mosquitoes, and flies, there is continuous war. It suggests a moral framework that creatures that live and let live deserve respect, while those who actively harm or annoy him becomes his enemies.

5) Scorpions

Nehru notes that Scorpions were frequently found in their cells, especially after a thunderstorm. His surprise at never being stung by them, despite being found on his bed, or sitting on a book, suggests either his luck or careful avoidance. His experiment of keeping one in a bottle and feeding it flies, shows his scientific curiosity. The scorpion's escape, despite being tied, provides a small drama and a mystery.

6) Centipedes

Centipedes provoke the strongest negative reaction to Nehru. He distinguishes between fear and instinctive repulsion. His description of the Alipore Jail incident is vivid and almost comic. He felt something was crawling on his foot, seeing the centipede, he jumped out of bed with amazing rapidity. He was nearly hitting the wall. His reference to "Pavlov's reflexes" shows his analyses of his own instinctive reactions.

C) Descriptions of Animals and Birds:

1) Squirrels

Squirrels receive the most affectionate treatment. Nehru describes them as "venturesome" and willing to come "right near us." He describes Lucknow Jail incident, where a squirrel climbs his leg and sits on his knee. The moment when the squirrel "look into my eyes and realize that I was not a tree," creates a brief connection between man and animal. The squirrel's fear is described with understanding rather than disappointment.

The description of mother squirrels rescuing her fallen babies reveals Nehru's appreciation for animal parenting. The method of saving lost babies, "roll them up into a little ball, and carry them off to safety" is described with care. His companion's ingenious solution for feeding lost babies using "a fountain-pen filler, with a little cotton wool attached" shows human creativity for animal care.

2) Monkeys

The monkey incident in Bareilly Jail is one of the most dramatic incident. He noticed that incident as: a baby monkey fell into the barrack enclosure. It was captured and tied with string. Watching from above, a large monkey bravely charged into the crowd of men with sticks. The humans fled in terror and the baby monkey was rescued. Nehru's commentary on

this incident reveals his admiration for monkeys. It says, “It was an extraordinarily brave thing to do” and “The triumph of “reckless courage”. This incident reflects Nehru’s political beliefs about courage in the face of oppression.

3) The Pangolin

The pangolin encounter stands out as Nehru’s encounter with the unknown. He describes it as “something between a lizard and a crocodile, about two feet long with claws and a scaly covering.” The person was carrying it—”twisted round in a most peculiar way, forming a kind of knot, and its owner had passed a pole through this knot.” The owner was going to take it to make curry. Nehru’s later identification of that animal through reading shows his commitment to understanding.

4) Dogs

Dogs receive the most emotionally charged treatment in this essay. Nehru’s description of the abandoned bitch as, “The poor thing became a homeless wanderer, living under culverts, picking up scraps from the warders, usually starving” make it a sympathetic figure. He regularly feeds takes care of her the surviving puppies. The sick puppy with “violent distemper” receives his devoted nursing. He says, “sometimes I would get up a dozen times in the course of the night to look after her.” It reveals his deep commitment. His reflection on this experience is important: “I came in contact with animals far more in prison than I had done outside. I had always been fond of dogs, and had kept some, but I could never look after them properly as other matters claimed my attention. In prison I was grateful for their company.” Prison gave him time for relationships.

5) The Kitten

There’s a brief mention of a kitten. He says it “made friends with me once” and it was taken away when its owner transferred. It reveals the pain of losing his animal companions. His simple statement “I missed it” brings forth his pure emotions.

6) Birds

Birds receive extensive description in his essay. It reflects their abundance and variety. Pigeons are noted for their numbers as “thousands of them” making “the sky... thick with them.” But jail officials would shoot them down and feed on them. This thing provides a grim contrast to Nehru’s observational appreciation.

The mainas nested over his cell door. He used to feed them and they grew tame. They were sitting quite near to him and loudly demand their food, when meals were delayed. Nehru finds pleasure in watching “their signs” and listening to “their impatient cries.”

Parrots in Naini Jail provided entertainment. Their “courtship and love-making” fascinated him. He observed the drama of competition between males for a female who “sat calmly by waiting for the result of the encounter.” This observation of animal behaviour reflects his own understanding of human social dynamics.

The variety of birds in Dehra Dun creates chattering and twittering atmosphere. The koel’s “plaintive call”, the brain-fever bird’s repeating the same notes in daytime and at night, in sunshine and in pouring rain suggests Nehru’s both admiration for the bird’s dedication and a touch of irritation at its monotony.

Eagles and kites provide visual entertainment. They were “gliding gracefully high up in the air, sometimes swooping down and then allowing themselves to be carried up by a current of air.” Their freedom of movement contrasts with his imprisonment. Wild ducks flying overhead represent the passing by of outside world.

D) Philosophical Reflections on Animals:

1) Indian Attitudes Toward Animals

Nehru observes a paradox in Indian society. Indians with general philosophy of non-violence to animals, are often careless and unkind to them. The cow provides the prime example. Though it is “looked up to and almost worshipped by many Hindus and often the cause of riots,” is not treated kindly. He says that worship and kindness do not always go together. This comment shows his ability to critique his own culture.

2) National Symbols and Character

The final paragraphs of the essay provide Nehru’s cultural analysis in relation to national animals. He lists national symbols: the eagle for America and Germany, the lion and bulldog for England, the fighting cock for France, the bear for Russia. He notes that these are “aggressive, fighting animals, beasts of prey.” He also notes that these power symbols also shape their behaviour. He concludes that people who grow up with such examples “mold themselves consciously after them and strike up impressive attitudes, and roar, and prey on others.” It connects animal symbolism to national aggression. His final observation regarding

Hindus as, “Hindu should be mild and non-violent, for his patron animal is the cow,” provides a contrast between aggressive and peaceful national symbols.

3.4.5 Check your progress:

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

- i) Nehru found scorpions in his cell.
 - a) only in corners
 - b) on his bed or sitting on a book
 - c) outside in the yard
 - d) in the ceiling
- ii) In jail were pigeons not found in abundance?
 - a) Dehra Dun Jail
 - b) Naini Jail
 - c) Almora Jail
 - d) Bareilly Jail
- iii) The brain-fever bird was named so
 - a) because it caused fever
 - b) because it persistently repeated the same notes day and night
 - c) because it was only heard during fever season
 - d) because its call sounded like a fever patient’s cries
- iv) Nehru saw an animal being carried twisted into a knot with a pole through it was
 - a) a snake
 - b) a pangolin (called “Bo” by the owner)
 - c) a large lizard
 - d) a monkey
- v) According to Nehru, is the symbol of the United States of America and Germany.
 - a) the lion
 - b) the bear
 - c) the eagle
 - d) the bulldog

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

- i) How long did Nehru live in his cell in Dehra Dun Jail?

- ii) How far could Nehru walk in front of the jail gate?
- iii) Which Chinese poet did Nehru quote in this essay?
- iv) What did the forest dweller plan to do with the pangolin?
- v) How many puppies remained with the stray dog after many were taken away?

3.4.6 Answers to check your progress:

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

- i) b) On his bed or sitting on a book
- ii) c) Almora Jail
- iii) b) Because it persistently repeated the same notes day and night
- iv) b) A pangolin (called “Bo” by the owner)
- v) c) The eagle

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence:

- i) Fourteen and a half months
- ii) About a hundred yards
- iii) Li T'ai Po
- iv) Make curry (bhujji) out of it
- v) Three

3.4.7 Exercises:

A) Answer the following the questions in details:

- 1) Write a detailed note of Dehra Dun Prison.
- 2) Describe encounters of Nehru with animals and insects during his imprisonment.
- 3) Comment on Nehru's views on Indians approach towards animals.

B) Write short notes on the following:

- 1) National Symbols and Character
- 2) Descriptions of Insects in prison

- 3) Descriptions of animals in prison
- 4) Seasonal Changes in the Landscape

3.4.8 References for further study:

- Brecher, Michael. *Nehru: A Political Biography*. Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Brown, Judith. *Nehru: A Political Life*. Yale University Press, 2003.
- Wolpert, Stanley. *Nehru: A Tryst with Destiny*. Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography: With Musings on Recent Events in India*. John Lane, 1936.
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- *Glimpses of World History*. 1934. Penguin Books, 2004.



Module 4

Essays

- 1. Shooting an Elephant**
- 2. A Hanging**
- 3. Reflections on Gandhi**

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4.0 Objectives

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4.5 Answers to check your progress

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4.0 Objectives:

After studying this module, the students will be able to:

- 1) Understand the different elements of Non-fictional essay as a form of literature
- 2) Explore how Non-fictional essay works as a medium of intellectual inquiry
- 3) Analyze the persona developed by the author
- 4) Find relationship between objective facts and subjective experiences in Non-fictional essays.

4.1 Introduction :

George Orwell's essays "Shooting an Elephant," "A Hanging," and "Reflections on Gandhi" serve as profound explorations of the intersection between individual conscience and institutional power. While the first two are narrative-driven accounts based on Orwell's experiences as a police officer in colonial Burma, the third is a critical intellectual autopsy of a global political figure. Collectively, these works showcase Orwell's signature "plain style"—a commitment to clinical observation and brutal honesty that strips away the romanticism often associated with empire and sainthood. By focusing on seemingly small, visceral moments—the death throes of an animal, a prisoner's instinctive step around a puddle, or the practical limitations of non-violence—Orwell forces the reader to confront the ethical contradictions of the modern world. In "Shooting an Elephant" and "A Hanging," Orwell utilizes the "narrative essay" form to deconstruct the moral rot of British Imperialism. He portrays the colonial official not as a powerful master, but as a hollow puppet forced to commit acts of violence to maintain a fragile facade of authority. Transitioning from the personal to the political in "Reflections on Gandhi," Orwell shifts his lens toward the nature of leadership and morality. He offers a balanced, often skeptical, assessment of Mahatma Gandhi, weighing the efficacy of non-violence against the demands of humanism. Together, these three pieces act as a cohesive study of human dignity, illustrating Orwell's belief that true literature must serve as a "windowpane" through which we view the uncomfortable truths of our political and social existence. Let us study these essays.

4.2 About the Author - George Orwell

George Orwell, born Eric Arthur Blair, is widely regarded as the 20th century's most

vital moral conscience, a writer whose work serves as a relentless pursuit of objective truth in an age of propaganda. His identity was fundamentally forged during his five-year tenure as a colonial police officer in Burma, an experience that transformed him from a servant of the British Empire into its most articulate critic. This period provided the visceral raw material for “Shooting an Elephant” and “A Hanging,” where Orwell moves beyond simple political rhetoric to expose the “hollowness” of imperial authority. By documenting his own internal conflicts—the “secret shame” of the oppressor and the agonizing realization of a victim’s humanity—Orwell established a literary persona defined by a brutal, self-stripping honesty that remains unparalleled in non-fiction. At the heart of Orwell’s literary philosophy was the belief that “good prose is like a windowpane,” a style characterized by a clinical, unadorned clarity that refuses to hide behind euphemisms. This commitment to transparency is evident in his observational narratives as well as his analytical work, such as “Reflections on Gandhi,” where he applies a secular, humanist lens to the concept of sainthood. Orwell’s writing is driven by a deep-seated suspicion of all forms of totalitarianism and a steadfast

loyalty to individual experience over abstract ideology. Consequently, his work does not merely describe historical events; it acts as an ethical interrogation of power, forcing the reader to confront the messy, often contradictory reality of the human condition under the weight of social and political institutions.

4.3 About "Shooting an Elephant" :

“Shooting an Elephant” stands as George Orwell’s most profound charge of British Imperialism, masterfully utilizing a single, visceral incident in colonial Burma to expose the inherent contradictions of global conquest. Writing from the perspective of a young, conflicted police officer, Orwell deconstructs the myth of the “powerful” colonizer, revealing that the white man’s dominion is, in reality, a hollow performance directed by the expectations of the colonized. The act of killing the elephant becomes a powerful metaphor for the Empire itself: a slow-moving, destructive force that the narrator feels compelled to unleash not out of necessity, but to avoid the personal humiliation of “looking like a fool.” Through this lens, Orwell argues that when the white man turns tyrant, it is his own freedom that he destroys, leaving him as nothing more than an “absurd puppet” trapped by the very system he is supposed to lead.

4.3.1 Summary:

George Orwell's 1936 essay is more than a narrative about a hunt; it is a scathing critique of imperialism. Orwell uses a specific incident in Burma to illustrate how the "hollow" nature of colonial rule forces the oppressor to act like a puppet to satisfy the expectations of the oppressed.

The Hostile Environment : Orwell establishes his position as a sub-divisional police officer in Moulmein, Burma. He describes the intense anti-European sentiment of the local population, who insult and harass him. This creates a psychological tension: he hates the British Empire he serves, yet he also resents the local Burmese for making his job miserable.

The "Must" Elephant : The incident begins when an elephant in "must" (a period of high aggression) breaks its chains and ravages a bazaar. Orwell is called to intervene. Upon arriving, he finds a "coolie" (a laborer) crushed to death by the beast. This death shifts Orwell's duty from observation to necessary action; he sends for an elephant rifle. The Expectation of the Crowd as Orwell follows the elephant into the paddy fields, a massive crowd of thousands follows him. He finds the elephant peacefully eating grass—the fit of "must" has clearly passed. Orwell realizes he does not want to shoot the animal, which he compares to a piece of "costly machinery." However, looking at the expectant faces of the crowd, he realizes he is trapped. The Puppet of Imperialism In the essay's most famous philosophical turn, Orwell realizes that when the white man turns tyrant, it is his own freedom that he destroys. To maintain the "image" of a powerful colonial master, he must act decisively. He cannot be laughed at; he cannot show hesitation. He realizes he is merely an "absurd puppet" pushed about by the will of the locals. The shooting compelled by the crowd's pressure, Orwell fires. He describes the agonizingly slow death of the elephant in brutal detail. The animal does not die instantly; it takes multiple shots and a long period of gasping breath before it finally expires. The slow, messy death serves as a metaphor for the slow, messy decay of the British Empire itself.

The Aftermath and Rationalization : In the final paragraph, the aftermath is debated. The owner is angry, the younger Europeans think it was a shame to kill an elephant for killing a "coolie," and the older ones agree Orwell did the right thing. Orwell admits he was glad the laborer was killed, as it gave him a legal justification for the shooting. He concludes by wondering if anyone else understood that he did it "solely to avoid looking a fool."

4.3.2 Analysis :

1. The Paradox of Colonial Power

The central irony of the essay is that the more power the British Empire exerts, the less freedom its individual agents actually have. Orwell describes himself as the “leading actor” of the piece, but he realizes he is actually a puppet.

The White Man’s Burden: In trying to appear as the “resolute” and “invincible” master, the colonizer becomes a slave to the expectations of the colonized.

The “Hollow” Master: Orwell argues that to rule effectively, the tyrant must spend his life trying to impress the people he rules, thereby losing his own autonomy.

2. Symbolism of the Elephant

The elephant is the most complex symbol in the essay, serving multiple analytical functions:

The British Empire: Like the elephant, the Empire is a massive, “costly piece of machinery.” In its fit of “must” (imperial expansion), it is destructive and violent. When Orwell shoots it, its slow, agonizing death mirrors the slow, inevitable decline of British colonial rule.

The Victim: Conversely, the elephant represents the innocent victims of the colonial system powerful and noble, but ultimately destroyed by a “white man” who didn’t even want to pull the trigger.

3. The Psychology of the Crowd

Orwell treats the Burmese crowd not as a collection of individuals, but as a single, overwhelming force of nature.

The Gaze: The thousands of eyes watching Orwell act as a psychological prison. He doesn’t shoot the elephant because of the “coolie” it killed; he shoots it to avoid being laughed at.

The Shift in Dynamics: In this moment, the “power” shifts. The crowd ostensibly the subjects effectively dictates the actions of the “master” through the sheer weight of their presence.

4.3.3 Check your progress :

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

- George Orwell's "Shootong an Elephant" presents the charge on British.....
 - Imperialism
 - Freedom
 - Liberty
 - Democracy
- Orwell argues that when the white man turns, it is his own freedom that he destroys.
 - victim
 - follower
 - disciple
 - tyrant
- Orwell establishes his position as a sub-divisional in Moulmein, Burma.
 - Road Officer
 - police officer
 - Agriculture officer
 - Revenue officer
- To maintain the "image" of a powerful colonial master, he must act
 - wisely
 - helpfully
 - decisively
 - shrewdly
- The slow and messy death symbolizes slow of British Empire.
 - growth
 - progress
 - expansion
 - decay

B) Answer the following question in one word / phrase / sentence.

1. What is the central irony of the essay "Shooting an Elephant?"
2. What does Orwell realize in the end of the story "Shooting an Elephant?"
3. What is the impact of expectations of the colonized?
4. What is the common point between British Empire and Elephant?
5. How does Orwell treat the Burmese crowd?

4.3.4 Glossary :

Conscience : ability to define good or bad

empire : ruling power

humanism : treat with humanity

totalitarianism : dictatorship

Hostile : unfriendly or against

Imperialism : Colonialism

4.3.5 Answers to check your progress :

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

1. A. Imperialism
2. D. tyrant
3. B. police officer
4. C. decisively
5. D. decay

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence

1. The central irony of the essay is that the more power the British Empire exerts, the less freedom its individual agents actually have.
2. He realizes that he is the puppet of British Imperialism
3. Colonizer becomes a slave to the expectations of the colonized.
4. Both are massive
5. He treats it as overwhelming force of Nature.

4.3.6 Exercise :

1. Explain various themes discussed in "Shooting an Elephant."
2. Discuss the George Orwell's views on colonial environment in "Shooting an Elephant."

3. Elaborate the symbolism in "Shooting an Elephant."
4. Discuss Orwell's personal conflict in the "Shooting an Elephant."

4.3.7 Reference for further study :

1. Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*, Penguin, 2007, Print.
2. *The Wretched of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon, Grove Press, 2021, Print.
3. The Orwell Foundation Essays: George Orwell, Kalamos Litearary Publishers, 2026, Kindle.
4. *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee, Vintage Publishers, 2000, Print.

4.4 A Hanging :

"A Hanging" is a powerful short essay by George Orwell first published in August 1931 in the British literary magazine *The Adelphi*. The essay is based on Orwell's real experiences as an officer in the British Imperial Police in Burma (present-day Myanmar) from 1922 to 1927. The narrative describes a routine execution by hanging in a colonial prison in Burma, where Orwell, serving as the narrator, witnesses the execution of an unnamed Hindu prisoner who has been condemned to death. The condemned man is given no name, and the crime he committed is never explained, which adds to the essay's sense of impersonal bureaucratic cruelty. The setting is an early morning in a prison yard in Burma, where brown and silent prisoners squat in cells like small animal cages.

4.4.1 Summary of "A Hanging" :

"A Hanging" is a short essay by George Orwell. The essay is set in Burma, where Orwell served in the British Imperial Police from 1922 to 1927, and describes the execution of a criminal by hanging. Early in the morning, Orwell (the narrator) waits outside several prison cells in Burma while a group of guards prepares a Hindu prisoner for his hanging. The guards are careful with the prisoner, though he shows no inclination to resist. The prison superintendent, a British man, urges Francis, an indigenous man, to hurry the execution. The condemned man is given no name, nor is it explained what crime he has committed. For the British police who supervise his execution, the hanging is an unpleasant but routine piece of business.

As the guards and Orwell march the prisoner to the gallows, a stray dog breaks into

the prison yard and jumps on both the guards and the prisoner. After a brief chase, Orwell uses his handkerchief to restrain the dog and holds it as the group continues its march. A few feet later, the prisoner steps aside to avoid a puddle of rainwater, and Orwell is struck by this small display of agency on the man's part. This moment triggers Orwell's profound realization about the cruelty of the hanging about to take place.

Orwell reflects deeply on the active life, growth, and reasoning of the prisoner, becoming upset by the idea that this healthy man's life is about to be forcibly ended. He writes: "It is curious, but till that moment I had never realised what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. This man was not dying, he was alive just as we are alive. All the organs of his body were working-bowels digesting food, skin renewing itself, nails growing, tissues forming-all toiling away in solemn foolery. His nails would still be growing when he stood on the drop, when he was falling through the air with a tenth of a second to live. His eyes saw the yellow gravel and the grey walls, and his brain still remembered, foresaw, reasoned-even about puddles. He and we were a party of men walking together, seeing, hearing, feeling, understanding the same world; and in two minutes, with a sudden snap, one of us would be gone-one mind less, one world less.

The prisoner, who is small and "puny" and handcuffed and chained, is led to the gallows where a fellow prisoner serves as hangman. When the noose is tightened, the condemned prisoner begins to chant "Ram" (his god). Orwell notes that it is not a prayer or a nervous action, but a steady rhythm. The prisoner continues chanting and the small crowd grows uncomfortable, but the superintendent waits for a while before ordering the execution. The chant is cut short, and Orwell releases the dog, which runs around the gallows and seems shocked by the hanging body.

After the execution, the execution group moves to breakfast with the rest of the guards and prisoners, and together they feel immensely relieved. A young boy shares with Orwell the story of how the late prisoner heard his sentence and details how the man peed himself in fear. Francis and the superintendent join the meal, and the men laugh freely despite what has just occurred. Francis shares a story of a man who clung to the bars of his cell to delay his hanging, and the men find this hilarious. Finally, the superintendent invites the entire group, indigenous

and colonial alike, to his car for a drink. They laugh at Francis's story while they drink whisky, mere feet from the hanging body of the prisoner.

The essay ends with the guards and prisoners feeling sudden relief as they leave the scene where the dead man still hangs. Orwell feels disturbed by this casual acceptance of death and the insensitive, comic way the British treated both death and the local people under their imperial rule. The condemned man is given no name, nor is it explained what crime he has committed, emphasizing the impersonal, bureaucratic nature of capital punishment.

4.4.2 "Analysis of A Hanging" :

"A Hanging" by George Orwell is a hauntingly vivid essay that plunges the reader into a prison yard in Burma where a unnamed Hindu prisoner is led to the gallows, capturing the chilling normalcy of capital punishment under British colonial rule. Orwell writes with calm, unadorned precision, describing how the condemned man, still fully alive and conscious, instinctively steps aside to avoid a puddle on the path a small, Ordinary gesture that suddenly reveals the profound wrongness of destroying a healthy human being whose brain is reasoning, whose nails are growing, whose organs are functioning even as he walks toward death. The moment shatters the narrator's detachment, making him realize for the first time the true horror of execution: it is not merely ending a life but cutting short a world of living experience, a realization that weighs heavily as the trapdoor opens and the body drops in silence. Afterward, the British officials, who moments before had treated death with cold bureaucratic efficiency, suddenly feel relief and even break into laughter, sharing a celebratory drink as if nothing terrible occurred, exposing their emotional numbness and the dehumanizing logic of empire that treats both the colonized prisoner and the act of killing as routine. Through this stark narrative, Orwell transforms a simple account into a powerful moral indictment of both the death penalty and imperial oppression, using irony, symbolism like the puddle representing calm before death and the prison symbolizing Burma itself trapped under British rule, and a tone that is observational yet deeply morally troubled, forcing readers to confront not abstract arguments about execution but the raw, sensory reality of taking a conscious human life.

4.4.3 Check your progress :

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

1. "A Hanging" is first published at.....

- A) The Times of London B) The Adelphi magazine
C) Penguin Books D) Burmese Days
2. small action by the prisoner triggers Orwell's profound realization about the cruelty of hanging.
- A) The prisoner began chanting "Ram"
B) The prisoner begged for his life
C) The prisoner stepped aside to avoid a puddle of rainwater
D) The prisoner clung to the bars of his cell
3. According to Orwell,was "the unspeakable wrongness" he realized in that moment.
- A) The prisoner was innocent of any crime
B) Cutting a life short when it is in full tide, destroying a healthy, conscious man
C) The British superintendent was rushing the execution
D) The dog was shocked by the hanging body
4. the condemned prisoner chant as the noose is tightened around his neck.
- A) "Lord have mercy" B) "God save me"
C) "Ram" D) "Farewell friends"
5. was feeling the guards and prisoners feel after the execution, according to the essay.
- A) Guilty and haunted by what they witnessed
B) Deeply sorrowful and reflective
C) Immensely relieved and laugh freely while drinking whisky
D) Angry and frustrated with the British superintendent

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. What country is the essay set in?

2. What religion was the unnamed prisoner?
3. What small object on the path did the prisoner avoid?
4. What emotion do British officials feel after the execution?
5. What two systems does Orwell indict in this essay?

4.4.4 Answers to check your progress.

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

1. B) The Adelphi magazine
2. C) The prisoner stepped aside to avoid a puddle of rainwater
3. B) Cutting a life short when it is in full tide, destroying a healthy, conscious man
4. C) "Ram"
5. C) Immensely relieved and laugh freely while drinking whisky

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence

1. Burma
2. Hindu
3. Puddle
4. Relief
5. Capital punishment and imperial oppression

4.4.5 Exercises :

1. Explain various themes of the essay "A Hanging".
2. Charactersketch of prisoner
3. Write a note on symbolism in the story

4.4.6 References for further study :

1. Orwell, George. A Hanging: And An Appeal for Publishing the Truth about Burma, Renard Press Ltd, 2023. Print.
2. Swift, Jonathan. Gulliver's Travels, Fingerprint! Publishing, 2015. Print.

4.5 Reflections on Gandhi :

In his 1949 essay “Reflections on Gandhi,” George Orwell delivers a remarkably candid, nuanced, and clear-eyed assessment of Mahatma Gandhi, written shortly after the Indian leader’s assassination. Rather than offering a typical hagiography or a harsh critique, Orwell approaches Gandhi with a mixture of deep respect for his political integrity and profound scepticism toward his saintly, ascetic ideals. As a fierce opponent of totalitarianism and a staunch humanist, Orwell uses the essay to grapple with a fundamental question: can the absolute, non-attached demands of religious sainthood ever truly reconcile with the messy, deeply human demands of political and social liberation?

4.5.1 Summary of "Reflections on Gandhi" :

George Orwell’s “Reflections on Gandhi” is not a fictional story, but rather a deeply analytical, autobiographical essay. In it, Orwell unpacks his complicated feelings about Mahatma Gandhi, separating Gandhi the shrewd political strategist from Gandhi the religious saint. Orwell admits that he was initially highly prejudiced against Gandhi, admitting to being repelled by the “saintly” aura, the asceticism (giving up worldly pleasures), and how British conservatives used Gandhi’s peaceful nature to stall actual Indian independence. However, Orwell opens by conceding that as a person, Gandhi left a clean record: even his political enemies admitted he was a man of immense personal courage and integrity who was entirely free from malice, vanity, or ordinary ambition.

The heart of the essay is a brilliant philosophical contrast between Gandhi’s monastic ideals and the reality of being human. Orwell examines Gandhi’s autobiography and critiques his strict rules for living, such as *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and *Brahmacharya* (celibacy). Orwell points out that to be a saint, one must detach themselves from individual human love, close friendships, and physical pleasures to focus entirely on God or humanity as an abstract whole. Orwell strongly rejects this, arguing that:

“The essence of being human is that one does not seek perfection, that one is sometimes willing to commit sins for the sake of loyalty... and that one is prepared in the end to be defeated and broken by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one’s love upon other human individuals.”

Despite his distaste for Gandhi’s spiritual asceticism, Orwell deeply admired his

political genius. He notes that Gandhi understood the nature of power incredibly well. Gandhi's genius was utilizing *Satyagraha* (passive resistance) as a massive, highly organized political weapon that effectively put the British Empire in an impossible moral dilemma. Orwell also praises Gandhi for his open, transparent style of politics—he had no secret police, no hidden agendas, and always published his intentions openly.

Orwell inserts a massive historical reality check regarding Gandhi's pacifism. He argues that Gandhi's non-violent methods only worked because he was dealing with a relatively liberal, civilized opponent: the British Empire, which allowed him a free press and the right to public assembly. Orwell pointedly questions whether Gandhi's methods would have worked against totalitarian regimes, like Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia, where opponents simply disappeared in the middle of the night. He notes that Gandhi's advice to the British people during WWII (to let Hitler invade and conquer them without fighting back) showed a fundamental misunderstanding of modern totalitarianism.

Orwell concludes that Gandhi's political legacy is a monumental achievement, and his peaceful methods are worth striving for wherever possible. Yet, he leaves the reader with a sharp warning to separate the admirable politician from the terrifyingly rigid ideals of the saint. He summarizes Gandhi as an incredibly wholesome, fragrant memory in a modern political landscape usually dominated by dictators, purges, and atomic bombs.

4.5.2 Analysis of "Reflections on Gandhi" :

An analysis of George Orwell's "Reflections on Gandhi" requires looking at it through two lenses simultaneously: it is a critique of a major historical figure, but it is also a mirror showing Orwell's own deepest anxieties about the 20th century. Written in 1949 the same year he published *1949* (historically known as *1984*) the essay serves as a battleground between two competing philosophies: Sainthood (religious asceticism) and Humanism (secular life).

1. The Core Conflict: The Saint vs. The Humanist

The most profound element of Orwell's analysis is the philosophical divide between Gandhi's spiritual demands and the secular human experience. Orwell uses Gandhi's autobiography to highlight what sainthood actually requires: the total abandonment of individual attachments. Gandhi believed that to love all of humanity equally, one must not love any single

person *more* than others—meaning no close friendships, no exclusive marital love, and an willingness to let loved ones suffer if a strict moral code demands it.

Orwell fiercely rejects this. To Orwell, the choice is absolute:

- ▶ **The Sainly Ideal:** Avoids the dirt and pain of the physical world to achieve spiritual perfection and immortality.
- ▶ **The Humanist Ideal:** Accepts the messiness, the sins of loyalty to individuals, and the inevitability of being broken by life.

Orwell concludes that sainthood is inherently “anti-human.” He argues that regular people shouldn’t feel guilty for failing to meet Gandhi’s standards, because ordinary human love is built precisely on favoritism and vulnerability.

2. The Political Strategy: Asymmetric Warfare

Orwell performs a brilliant political autopsy on *Satyagraha* (soul-force or passive resistance). He strips away the mystical aura around Gandhi’s non-violence and analyzes it as a highly calculated, pragmatic weapon.

Orwell notes that Gandhi understood his enemy perfectly. Passive resistance was an asymmetric strategy designed specifically for the British Empire. It worked by exploiting the British public’s conscience and the liberal nature of British law (which allowed a free press, public trials, and protests). By refusing to fight back physically, Gandhi forced the British to choose between looking like brutal tyrants on the world stage or giving in to his demands.

3. The Totalitarian Reality Check

The most severe critique Orwell levels at Gandhi is his apparent blindness to modern totalitarianism. Writing in the shadow of World War II and the rise of Stalinism, Orwell points out the fatal flaw in universal pacifism: it requires a free press and an opponent with a conscience.

Orwell argues that if Gandhi had tried his methods in Stalin’s Soviet Union or Hitler’s Germany, he and his followers would have simply disappeared into a gulag or concentration camp overnight. No one would have ever heard of their protests. Orwell exposes Gandhi’s advice (such as telling the Jews to commit mass suicide to shock the

A) Satyagraha
B) Brahmacharya
C) Humanism
D) Asceticism

- B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence.**

- #### 4.5.4 Answers to check your progress :

1. B) saint
2. C) stall
3. B) Brahmacharya
4. C) liberal

5. C) atomic bombs

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. Modern totalitarianism (or Nazi Germany/Stalinist Russia).
2. Sainthood (or religious asceticism / *Brahmacharya*).
3. To focus entirely on God or love humanity as an abstract whole, without favoritism.
4. *Satyagraha* (or soul-force).
5. A free press and an opponent with a liberal conscience (like the British Empire).

4.5.5 Exercises :

A) Answer the following questions in detail

1. Explain the conflict between secular humanism and sainthood.
2. Discuss 'Satyagrah' as a weapon of Gandhi

B) Write short notes

1. Satyagrah
2. Totalitarian Reality
3. Gandhi as a Political Genius

4.5.6 References for further study :

1. Knopf ,Alfred A., Essays, Everyman's Library Publishers,2002 Print.
2. Dr. Radhakrishnan S., Gandhi: Reflections on His Life and Work, Gandhi Peace Foundation / Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Publications,1968, Print
3. Clarke, Ben. Orwell in Context: Communities, Myths, Values, Palgrave Macmillan Publishers,2007, Print.

