

Chapter:-8

MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD

SUB- CONCEPTS:-

- Transcultural Discrimination
- Cultural Uniqueness
- Accommodating Cultural Diversity
- Social Superstitions
- Evils of Casteism and Discrimination
- Plight of Dalit Communities in India

STEP-WISE LEARNING PROCESS:- (Page-93-96)

THE TOPIC:- The Cutting of my Long Hair—Zitkala-Sa

- The topic is about racial and cultural prejudice and oppression.
- Zitkala-Sa is the pen name of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin.
- She is an extraordinarily talented native American woman.
- She recalls her childhood experience in an American school.

Zitkala-Sa's First Day at School:-

- The writer recalls the first day at school with some outlandish air around.
- She feels isolated there amidst the sounds of clatter of shoes crashing noises of students.

THE NAGGING EMBARRASSMENT:-

- The writer felt awkward when she observed the system of eating by formula in the canteen.
- She was afraid looking at the pale faced woman staring at her.
- All the new changes were too much for her. She started crying instead of eating.

THE TERRIBLE WARNING:-

- The narrator's friend Judwin knew some English and she had overheard the pale-faced woman talk about cutting their long and heavy hair.
- The thought of having her hair cut was unacceptable to the narrator.

THE NARRATOR'S PROTEST:-

- Zitkala-Sa was determined to put up a fight against the cutting of her long hair.
- She told her friend that she would not submit to the force of the authorities.
- She got a chance to escape and went upstairs and crawled under a bed to hide in a dark room.

THE CUTTING OF ZITKALA-SA'S HAIR:-

- Zitkala-Sa was searched for everywhere and was finally captured from under the bed where he had hid.
- This was the end of her resistance. She was forcefully dragged like an animal and at last her long hair was cut.
- This gave her the most embarrassing experience of her life in a transcultural set-up
- She was reminded of all the humiliations she went through since the day she parted with her mother.

MESSAGE OF THE STORY:-

- People find them in a stranger's land while living in a transcultural set-up.
- Children are the most vulnerable group when they have to live in a culture completely different from their own.
- One needs some qualities of adaptability to survive in a different culture than one's own.
- Sympathy and tolerance can go a long way to create an inter-mingling of cordial culture.
- People having upper hand over others in times of their susceptibility should understand the values of fellow-feeling and benign gesture.

WE TOO ARE HUMAN BEINGS—(THE STORY OF BAMA)

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THE NARRATOR'S ENTERTAINING WALK HOME:-

- The narrator takes the readers back to her school days during her childhood.
- She narrates a myriad things that show up on her way home from school and admits how because of these entertainments a ten minutes journey takes half- an-hour.
- She considers herself to be the happiest and the luckiest child to experience life at that stage.

THE NARRATOR'S ENCOUNTER WITH UNTOUCHABILITY:-

- Bama, the narrator, observes one day how one man of her community was carrying snacks for her landlord who belonged to a higher caste.
- The man was holding the packet by its string in a meek and very careful way so that he could give the packet to the landlord without touching him.

LAUGHTER TURNS INTO SADNESS:-

- At first Bama was laughing at the funny way in which the man was carrying and handing over the snacks to the landlord.
- But her brother (Annan) was not amused at this story narrated by Bama. He informs that this was due to the practice of untouchability in societies.
- After getting to know this Bama sinks into deep sadness and depression.
- Bama could not have imagined such kind of horrible practice prevalent in society.
- She desperately longs for a just and fair society with equality and justice.

ANNAN'S ADVICE TO THE NARRATOR:-

- Annan explained to Bama they were born into lower community as a result of which they have been suppressed in life.
- Annan also advised Bama as to come out of this cursed situation.
- He told that getting good education and working hard at it would take away this social stigma from them.
- These words made a deep impression on Bama. She takes Annan's advice into heart and studied hard and ultimately stands first in the class.

THE MESSAGE OF THE STORY:-

- The practice of untouchability is a social stigma upon the Dalit community.
- The so called higher class people of society are responsible for the backwardness of the population in a society.
- The injustice done to the downtrodden must be resisted sooner or later by virtue of their perception of inherent equality of life.
- Hard work and determination can work wonders for the exaltation of one's life.

Changing your Tomorrow

SUMMING-UP THE STORY:-

- The first episode of the chapter gives an account of transcultural adjustment and cultural domination over others.
- It gives an indication that fellow-feeling and tolerance are very much required to effect an ideal inter-mingling of cultures.
- The second episode--the story of Bama, describes the curse of casteism and social oppression of the Dalit community.
- The story also gives hope that intense longing for a just cause can transform people and situations.