

Chapter- 6

POETS AND PANCAKES**By- ASHOKMITRAN****SUB CONCEPTS**

- Gemini Studios- founder S S Vasan.
- Pancake-A make-up brand.
- Make-up Room
- National Integration.
- Hierarchy.
- Panoramic view of the impact and affiliations of that communism and anti-communism
- Visit of an Englishman-A mystery.

Introduction to the Topic and the details of the writer Ashokamitran

- A post-independent Tamil Writer.
- A prolific literary writer with the prize-winning play "Anbin Parisu" and went on to author more than two hundred short stories and a dozen novels and novellas.
- A distinguished essayist and critic.
- He has written over 200 short stories, eight novels, some 15 novellas besides other prose writings.
- Received Sahitya Academy Award for "*Appavin Snegidhar*", a collection of short stories.

VIDEO RESOURCES

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlqnlMvrs4>

Documentary on Ashokmitran

INTRODUCTION

The chapter reveals on the author's account of his years spent at Gemini Studios in his book "My years with Boss" which talks of the influence of movies on every aspect of life in India. Gemini Studios was set up in the year 1940 in Chennai. For nearly thirty years from 1940, Gemini Studios of Madras was the most influential film-producing organization of India, and S S Vasan, the brilliant multi-faceted entrepreneur was its founder and owner. The chapter is an

excerpt from the book "My years with Boss" that brings to life, the leading members, their talents and roles, their frustrations, and ambitions.

Lesson initiation with comprehensive explanations—

- Gemini Studios had been one of the most influential film-producing organizations of India in 1940 in Chennai and owned by S S Vasan.
- The pancake was a makeup brand used by Gemini Studios.
- Make-up room with half a dozen large mirrors, we can imagine the fiery misery subjected to makeup.
- A gang of National Integrated make-up men.
- A strict hierarchy was maintained in the make-up department.
- The office boy was a grown-up man in late forties in the makeup department and was in charge of crowd makeup.
- Ashokamitran was one of the staff whose job was to collect information from newspapers and magazines and paste them in files.
- Kothamangalam Subbu was another talented clerk and was No.2 at the studios. An amazing genius, able to direct the Directors, acted better than actors, incredible poet, ability to look cheerful all the time.

Lesson continuation with comprehensive explanations —(Pages: 61-63)

- The legal advisor worked in the Story Department.
- He was a Lawyer and provided legal advice to the writers yet he was known as the illegal advisor as he spoiled the career of a rising actress.
- Gemini Studios had some great poets like Harindranath Chatopadhyaya and few others who assumed to be great poets.
- Communism was a new political order that was spreading throughout the world, especially in Asian countries.
- Frank Buchman's Moral Re-Armament Army with a team of about two hundred actors and actresses visited Madras in 1952. Gemini Studios proved a warm host. They presented two plays- 'Jotham Valley' and 'The Forgotten Factor'.
- Gemini Studios welcomed another visitor. Some said he was a poet from England.
- He came one afternoon and gave a lecture about Communism on one side and about his struggles to establish as a poet on the other.

Lesson continuation with comprehensive explanations —(Pages:64-66)

- Gemini Studios' staffs were unable to understand what the Englishman had spoken.
- His visit remained a mystery.

- Once 'The Hindu' published an announcement about a short story contest to be organized by a British periodical named 'The Encounter'.
- He then went to the British Council Library and he found there Stephen Spender as the editor, who visited the Studio.
- Finally from the footpath in front of the Madras Mount Road Post office, he found an elegant paperback of American origin. It was called 'The God that Failed'.
- The book contained six essays by six eminent men of letters. They describe their journeys into communism and their disillusioned return. Stephen Spender was one of them, and the mystery was disclosed.

QUESTIONS FOR COMPREHENSION

- 1) Describe the make-up room of Gemini Studios.
- 2) A strict hierarchy was maintained in the make-up department. Explain?
- 3) What does the writer mean by the fiery misery of those subjected to make-up?
- 4) What is the example of National Integration that the author refers to in the Gemini Studios?
- 5) What work did the 'Office Boy' do in the Gemini Studios?
- 6) Why was the Office boy frustrated?
- 7) What advantage did the office boy think Subbu had?
- 8) Why did the author appear to be doing nothing at Gemini Studios?
- 9) Why was the Legal Advisor referred to as the opposite by others?
- 10) What made the Lawyer stand out from the others at Gemini Studios?
- 11) Did the people at Gemini Studios have any particular political affiliations?
- 12) What was the opinion of the khadi clad poets of Gemini Studios about Communism?
- 13) What caused the lack of communication between the Englishman and the people at Gemini Studio?
- 14) Why is the Englishman's visit referred to as an unexplained mystery?
- 15) How did the author discover who was the English poet?
- 16) Why was the English poet who visited the Gemini Studios as baffled as to his audience?
- 17) Why did Stephen Spender visit Gemini Studios?
- 18) What does 'The God That Failed' refer to?