

Chapter- 1

The Lost Child

STUDY NOTES

- Mulk Raj Anand, an Indian writer in English is well-known for his depiction of the Indian society.
- The lesson, 'The Lost Child' vividly depicts an Indian rural village with all its charm, simplicity and gaiety, especially during the festive season.
- The main theme of this lesson is the child's agony and desperation when he is suddenly lost in a crowd and realises that he doesn't have the warm protection of his parents.
- The child is taken by the parents to a fair during spring season. He is filled with joy on seeing the fun and grandeur around him.
- He wants to stop at every shop and every stall to enjoy the colourful scenes. But as the parents find the child lagging behind, they keep shouting for him and the child is alerted. He has to keep moving, lest he is lost in the crowd.
- Constantly, the parents are monitoring the child because they know the risk of losing the tiny child amidst the crowd that have flocked, to enjoy or carry on their business in the fair.
- As is common with kids, the child too, keeps pestering the parents to buy him everything he comes across- the sweets, the flowers, the balloons and all other colourful things he sees displaying the fair.
- The child also knows that it is going to be a stern 'No' from his parents. So, he keeps moving. At the roundabout, the child is determined to have his share of joy, stubbornly ask his father to allow him a ride on the horse.

- He realises that his parents are nowhere near. The child is speechless and helpless. Fear overpowers the child and he starts crying, Frantically trying to search for his parents.
- The only words escape from the child's choking throat amidst his uncontrollable tears is 'Mother', 'Father'.
- A stranger who sees the lost child picks him and tries to pacify him. He offers the child sweets, balloons, flowers and all the beautiful things that the child had earlier pleaded for. But now, the child doesn't even look at them and firmly declines as he did not find them attractive any longer. The little boy was yearning to be with his dear parents.
- A child psychology is very effectively portrayed through this simple incident by the author.
- A child goes to a fair with his parents. He is happy and excited and wants the sweets and toys displayed there. But his parents don't buy them for him.
- Why then, does he refuse when someone else offers them to him?
- It might probably be because his parents have warned him against accepting things from strangers. Most importantly, it would be because he yearned to be in the safe company of his dear parents.