Chapter 4

A Critical Analysis of the Socio-cultural Content and Context of NCERT English Textbooks at the Senior-Secondary Level
4.1 Snapshots for Class Eleventh

Snapshots is a supplementary reader in English for Class Eleventh. It is prepared along the lines suggested by the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2005. It is published by the Secretary, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi.

For young adults, awareness of personal development and growing independence begins at the higher secondary stage. It is during this period that they seek to understand themselves and the society in which they live. Literature plays an important role in moulding the young mind. The stories in Snapshots by contemporary writers expose learners to the various narratives of life that the literatures of the world offer.

Lesson-1 The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse  By William Saroyan (1908-1981)

William Saroyan was an American dramatist and author. Being an Armenian American he wrote extensively about the Armenian immigrants’ life in California, United States. Many of his stories and plays are set in his native place Fresno, California. He is recognized as one of the most prominent literary figures of the mid twentieth century.

This is a story about two poor Armenian boys who belong to a tribe whose hallmarks are trust and honesty. Mourad and Aram, the two young boys of Garoghlanian family, an old, probably a fictitious Armenian family, steal a white horse that belonged to a farmer. While the farmer went on searching for his horse, the boys kept on enjoying a jolly ride every morning. They used to hide the horse in a barn of a deserted vineyard.

The writer has tried to throw some light on degradation of moral values in the younger generation. Moral values are generally defined to be the standards of human behavior; principles of right and wrong. The main cause for such degradation especially in today’s youth is the result of inappropriate educational values, right from the childhood and also the disregard for human values which need to be
inculcated in to the student at an early level. Poverty is another issue which has been taken up in this chapter:

We were poor. We had no money. Our whole tribe was poverty stricken. Every branch of Garolhlanian family was living in the most amazing and comical poverty in the world. Nobody could understand where we ever got money enough to keep us with food in our bellies, not even the old men of the family. Most important of all, though, we were famous for our honesty. We had been famous for our honesty for something like eleven centuries, even when we had been the wealthiest family in what we liked to think was the world. We were proud first, honest next, and after that we believed in right and wrong. (p.2)

I knew my cousin Mourad couldn’t have bought the horse, and if he couldn't have bought it he must have stolen it, and I refused to believe he had stolen it. No member of the Garoghlanian family could be a thief. (p.2)

How the mind of a young boy thinks so differently in another direction has been beautifully shown thus:

Well, it seemed to me stealing a horse for a ride was not the same thing as stealing something else, such as money. For all I knew, maybe it wasn’t stealing at all. If you were crazy about horses the way my cousin Mourad and I were, it wasn’t stealing. It wouldn’t become stealing until we offered to sell the horse, which of course, I knew we would never do. (p.3)

While this fun ride went on, the owner of the horse came to Aram’s house and told his parents how he had lost his horse. Aram heard this and informed Mourad of John Byro, the owner of this white horse. One day while taking this horse to its hiding place, the boys stopped shocked at the sight of the desperate farmer, coming towards them. The farmer examined the horse very carefully but he refused to believe that the boys had stolen his horse. The reason behind it was the honesty of their tribe:
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The farmer looked into the mouth of the horse. Tooth for tooth, he said. I would swear it is my horse if I didn’t know your parents. The fame of your family for honesty is well known to me. Yet the horse is the twin of my horse. A suspicious man would believe his eyes instead of his heart. (p.8)

Hearing this, the two boys felt extremely guilty for their act of stealing. Consequently they returned the horse.

The theme of the narrative is the inevitability of change that affects traditions and long established beliefs. The Garoghlanian tribe was always known for its honesty and still the older generation of this impoverished tribe upheld their trademark honesty but the new ones were not ready to follow the traditions of their elders. As shown by the writer, there are elements in the family like Mourad and Aram, who questioned and defied their traditional values in order to enjoy the pleasures of the world.

Lesson-2 The Address By Marga Minco (1920- )

Marga Minco is a Dutch journalist and writer. All of her works are greatly influenced by her experience of war. Her family used to live in Holland. Her family was Jewish and Hitler was planning to kill all the Jews in Germany and Holland and beyond. Probably she was away from home during that period. This story is a poignant account of the daughter who goes in search of her mother’s belongings after the war, to Holland. When she finds them, these objects evoke memories of her earlier life. However, she decides to leave them all behind and resolves to move on.

As I walked slowly back to the station I thought about my mother, who had given me the address years ago. (p.11)

Meanwhile I had arrived at the station without having paid much attention to things on the way. I was walking in familiar places again for the first time since the War, but I did not want to go further than was necessary. I didn’t want to upset myself with the sight of streets and houses full of memories from a precious time. (p.12)
Afraid of being confronted with things that had belonged to a connection that no longer existed; which were hidden away in cupboards and boxes and waiting in vain until they were put back in their place again; which had endured all those years because they were 'things. (p.12)

She held open the door of the living room and I went inside past her. I stopped horrified. I was in a room I knew and did not know. I found myself in the midst of things I did want to see again but which oppressed me in the strange atmosphere. (p.12)

I just looked at the still life over the tea-table. As a child I had always fancied the apple on the pewter plate. (p.13)

This is a story of human predicament that follows war and it is a major problem for every society, for the whole mankind. War is generally characterized by extreme violence, social disruption and economic destruction. It is identified as one of the biggest problems faced by humanity. This story was written after the Second World War which had subjected numerous families to severe strain. During the war, many persons suffered prolonged separation from their families; many lost their family members. Although apparently a very sad story about loss and regret emanating from the persecution of the Dutch Jews during the Second World War, it also more intimately speaks about the personal challenges we all must take an individual in resolving crises in our own lives. The story relays events before and after the war as the female narrator attempts to confront her past as she visits the address where her family’s belongings were stored, a non-Jewish neighbour’s house. At a deeper level, the story is a commentary on memories and remembering- on what is worth remembering and what is worth forgetting. As a way of teaching epiphany and mature perspective, as well as the role of historical background/ context in reading, this story is valuable for young people.

**Lesson-3 Ranga’s Marriage By Masti Venkatesha Iyengarn (1891-1986)**

Masti Venkatesha Iyenger was a well known writer in Kannada language. He was the recipient of Jnanpith Award for Kannada, the highest literary honour conferred in India.
This is a story about Ranga, a young boy from Shyama’s village, Hosahalli. When Ranga returned from Bangalore after completing his studies, the narrator thought it was the right time for Ranga to get married. But he refused because he wanted a mature girl for marriage and not any young girl. Shyama wanted to prove that romance can win over Ranga’s notions. The narrator made him fall in love with a girl who was only eleven years old.

Ranga’s views about marriage have been described thus:

I need to find the right girl. If one gets married, it should be a girl who is mature. Otherwise, one should remain a bachelor. (p.19)

A man should marry a girl he admires. What we have now are arranged marriages. How can one admire a girl with milk stains on one side of her face and wetness on the other, or so young that she doesn’t even know how to bite her fingers? (p.19)

Shyama wanted Ranga to get married to Rama Rao’s niece, a pretty girl of eleven. She was from a big town, so she knew how to play the veena and the harmonium. She also had a sweet voice. The story throws light on two issues: one is child marriage and the other is the love of English language. Child marriage in India has been practiced for centuries. It is an age-old practice that has both social and religious sanction across all sections of society. The reason why child marriages continue is the fact that even today in India, a girl child is considered to be a burden, and traditionally the attitude of the society has been to get her married as soon as possible. The second reason is the demand for the younger bride which creates an incentive for families to marry the girl child early and avoid high dowry payments for older girls. The third reason is the lack of education and awareness about the consequences of child marriage. Therefore, it is the lack of education in the case of Shyama which prompted him to get Ranga married to a girl who was only eleven years old.

The story also discusses the importance of English, an international language. If we want to remain in touch with the outside world, it is necessary to have good command over this language. English acts as a link language because it is easier to find people in every part of the country who know English. In India, after Independence, people had a reaction against it. They wanted English to be abolished,
as it was the language of the British. Even today, our politicians talk against this language. They want people to give more importance to national languages. They want people to promote and use regional Indian languages instead of English. It is important for us to understand that learning of English language does not mean that we will develop a slave mentality. Hence, learning English language should be encouraged:

Our village accountant was the first one who had enough courage to send his son to Bangalore to study. It is different now. There are many who know English. (p.17)

Those days, we did not speak in English, nor did we bring in English words while talking in Kannada. (p.18)

This priceless commodity, the English language, was not so widespread in our village a decade ago. (p.18)

The above lines depict the increasing importance of this English language in the eyes of the village people. Today people give much stress on learning English. Parents often believe that speaking in flawless English from a young age, children are better equipped to work in a global environment, so they use this language much so that their children are not left behind. It is true at some point that we are losing something, whether it is language, culture, values or anything else. Our national values should be distinct and visible to all and binds us together. Different people have different views regarding the learning of English language.

Lesson-4 Albert Einstein at School By Patrick Pringle (1935- )

Patrick Pringle is an American writer. In this extract from The Young Einstein, the known biographer, Patrick Pringle, describes the circumstances which led to Albert Einstein’s expulsion from a German school.
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This extract describes Einstein’s struggle at his school in Munich and his clashes with the teachers regarding his own thinking about the education system. It also presents the problems faced by him when he was staying as a paying guest in one of the poorest quarters of Munich because his father had very little money to spare. Most interesting was his idea of getting a certificate from a doctor which could prove that he was suffering from a major nervous breakdown so that he could leave this school and go home.

The biographer has tried to focus on Einstein’s dissatisfaction with the education system at school and his views about the teaching-learning methodology:

“In what year, Einstein,” asked the history teacher, “did the Prussians defeat the French at Waterloo?”

“I don’t know, sir.”

“Why don’t you know? You’ve been told it often enough.”

“I must have forgotten.”

“Did you ever try to learn?” asked Mr. Braun.

“No, sir,” Albert replied with his usual unthinking honesty.

“Why not?”

“I can’t see any point in learning dates. One can always look them up in a book.” (p.25)

“Then you don’t believe in education at all?”

“Oh, yes, sir, I do. I don’t think learning facts is education.” (p.25)

“I think its not facts that matter, but ideas,” he said. I don’t see the point in learning the dates of battles, or even which of the armies killed more men. I’d be more interested in learning why those soldiers were trying to kill each other.” (p.26)

“I’m not good at learning things by heart.”
Einstein used to think that learning things like a parrot does not make any sense if one does not understand it. According to him, learning does not mean mugging up. One should understand why something happened or is happening. So Einstein was not in favour of rote learning. This kind of learning in schools curbs an individual’s talent. With rote learning we are threatening a child’s creativity. This is an issue which has been raised several times.

Education system constantly needs improvement. Learning habit through thinking and experimentation cannot be inculcated at a higher level. The method of teaching has to be innovative from the primary level.

According to an article published in The Times of India (August, 2012), the CBSE method will be of help in the long run, but much depends on how teachers and students approach the system.

Lesson-5  Mother’s Day    By J. B. Priestley (1894-1984)

Priestley was an English novelist and playwright. This play is a humorous portrayal of the status of the mother in a family. It is about how the family reacts when Mrs. Pearson tries to stand up for her rights.

The play showed what kind of treatment Mrs. Annie Pearson used to get from her family which consists of her husband George and her two children, Doris and Cyril. For them she was no more than a maid working for them from morning till evening without any complaints. She never raised her voice to live the life she wanted to live. Her husband George always used to go alone for the parties but she never asked him to take her so that she could also socialize. However, one day her neighbour Mrs. Fitzgerald made her realize that she needs to take some strict action so that her family start treating her properly. It is not correct to tolerate this kind of behavior any more. So by using a kind of trick which Mrs. Fitzgerald had learnt when she visited the East, they exchanged their personalities. Now Mrs. Fitzgerald after becoming Mrs. Pearson deals with the Pearson family in her own strict way. At the end of the play Mr. Pearson and the two children realized her importance and they actually started behaving properly with Mrs. Pearson.
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The lines below show the status of Mrs. Pearson in the family:

Mrs. Fitzgerald: Put your foot down, once an’ for all, an’ be the mistress of your own house an’ the boss of your own family.

Mrs. Pearson: That’s easier said than done. I’m so fond of them even if they are so thoughtless and selfish. They don’t mean to be… (p.34)

Mrs. Fitzgerald: You think it does them good when you run after them all the time, take their orders as if you were the servant in the house, stay at home every night while they go out enjoying themselves? Never in all your life. It’s the ruin of them as well as you. Husbands, sons, daughters should be taking notice of wives an’ mothers, not giving ‘em orders an’ treating ‘em like dirt’. (p.34)

Mrs. Pearson: But I do hate any unpleasantness. (p.34)

This play tries to make the students understand the importance of mother in a family. Although it is hard to put into words the role of mother in a family. A mother is like the nucleus around whom everyone else orbits in a family. She is the one person who ensures that life functions in an orderly way, right from breakfast, lunch, dinner being served at the table on time, to clothes being ironed and kept in the cupboard, the kitchen always being stocked up with food, the beds perfectly made; the list is unending.

The play highlights the rude behavior of the family members towards Mrs. Pearson.

Doris: Did you hear what I said about my yellow silk? I like it. And I’m going to wear it tonight. So I want it ironed. (p.38)

Cyril: Hello—Mum Tea ready?

Did you put my things out? (p.39)

The message being spread through this play is that mothers also require attention. They also love to be appreciated for their hard work. They never ask for any leave or any money for their work but for them love, respect and appreciation of their family
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is the only thing they want. In the Indian household, lines of hierarchy and authority are clearly drawn. Ideals of conduct are aimed at creating and maintaining family harmony. All family members are socialized to accept the authority of those ranked above them in the hierarchy. In general, elders rank above juniors, and among people of similar age, males outrank females. There is a tremendous emphasis on the unity of the family. Internally, efforts are made to make ties stronger between spouses and between parents and children in order to enhance a wider sense of harmony within the entire household. Psychologically, family members feel an intense emotional interdependence with each other in a family, which acts as an organic unit.

Lesson-6 The Ghat of the only World By Amitav Ghosh (1956-)

Amitav Ghosh is a Bengali Indian author best known for his work in English fiction.

*The Ghat of the only world* is a beautiful warm piece of personal views. Here Ghosh responds not only to the world of Agha Shahid Ali but also to the poet himself and his personal experience of moments shared with him. The title echoes Ali’s famous collection- “The Country without a Post office”. It is a tribute to Ali, a poignant obituary that presents a very poignant vision of his death. Critically speaking, it is an interesting analysis of Ali’s poetry, his experience as a diasporic poet who kept constructing an imaginary homeland through his verse.

In this extract, the writer describes Shahid Ali’s love for Kashmir. During their very short period of friendship, Shahid had put light on an unambiguously different Kashmir. He talked about the Kashmiri food in the Pandit style.

He had a special passion for the food of his region, one variant of it in particular ‘Kashmiri food in the Pandit style.’ I asked him once why this was so important to him and he explained that it was because of a recurrent dream, in which all the Pandits had vanished from the valley of Kashmir and their food had become extinct. This was a nightmare that haunted him and he returned to it again and again, in his conversations and his poetry. (p.58)
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He talked about Kashmiri Pundits not just to focus on their food but to bring into light their problems of which we are generally not aware. Kashmiri Pundits have been facing problems since 1990, the year in which the biggest ever exodus of people happened since the partition of India. The minority Hindus of Kashmir, Kashmiri pundits, fled the valley, leaving behind their homes and homeland to save themselves from persecution. Terrorism in Kashmir valley started with the ethnic cleansing and genocide of Kashmiri Pundits in 1990. Ethnic cleansing refers to an attempt to create ethnically homogeneous geographic areas through the expulsion or forcible displacement of persons belonging to other ethnic groups. Those Kashmiri pundits have been still waiting to return to their homeland. This is an ongoing issue which has become worse now.

He spoke often of a time in his childhood when he had been seized by the desire to create a small Hindu temple in his room in Srinagar. He was initially hesitant to tell his parents, but when he did they responded with an enthusiasm equal to his own. His mother bought him murtis and other accoutrements and for a while he was assiduous in conducting pujas at this shrine. This was a favourite story. ‘Whenever people talk to me about Muslim fanaticism,’ he said to me once, ‘I tell them how my mother helped me make a temple in my room.’ (p.61)

The writer describes how Agha Shahid Ali made a temple in his room in spite of being a Muslim boy. But that was his love for other religions and also due to the support he got from his parents. He was a small boy and was away from the religious differences. That was the time when people used to live peacefully and happily with one another in Kashmir. The above extract gives a social message that religion should unite and not separate people. It should always be a bridge of understanding and goodwill and not a platform of hostility and hatred.
Lesson-7  Birth  

By A. J. Cronin (1896-1981)

A J. Cronin was a Scottish novelist and physician. This is an excerpt from his best-known novel, *The Citadel*. This novel was first published in 1937. It is based on the contentious issue of medical ethics.

The plot summary of this novel is as follows: In October 1921, Andrew Manson, an idealistic newly qualified doctor, arrives from Scotland to work as an assistant to Doctor Page in the small Welsh mining town of Blaenelly. He soon realizes that Page has been practicing with a forged doctor’s certificate and he has to do all the work for a meager wage. Shocked by the unsanitary conditions which he finds, he works to improve things and receives the support of Dr. Philip Denny, a cynical, semi-alcoholic person. Resigning, he obtains a post as assistant in a miners’ Medical aid scheme in ‘Aberalaw’, a neighbouring coal mining town in the South Wales coalfield. On the strength of his job, he marries Christine Baro, a junior school teacher. Christine helps her husband with his research which he was doing on lung disease. Seduced by the thought of making money from wealthy clients rather than by following the principles with which he started his work, Manson becomes involved with private patients and drifts away from his wife. A patient dies because of a surgeon’s ineptitude and the incident causes Manson to abandon his practice and return to his former ways. He and his wife somehow manage to bring their relationship to normal, but unfortunately his wife is overrun by a bus and is killed. Since Manson had accused the incompetent surgeon of murder, he is vindictively reported to the General Medical Council for having worked with a Doctor with a fake medical degree, even though the patient had been successfully treated at his clinic. Despite his lawyer’s gloomy prediction, Manson forcefully justifies his actions during the hearing and saves himself from getting his name struck off the medical register.

This excerpt taken from *The Citadel* as “Birth” focuses on the birth of a child by this newly qualified Doctor Manson. It is of no use taking this aspect of the novel and to keep it in this textbook for Class eleventh. Instead writer would have focused on Manson’s mercenary outlook which leads him to a non-professional attitude. If we look into the history of Medicine, we come to know that it was heavily professionalized during the twentieth century. That is why A J. Cronin, himself being a Physician wrote about the medical ethics. But these ethics are lost somewhere.
Nowadays, the increasing practice of doing everything for the sake of money has killed the human kindness. So knowledge of medical ethics needs to be spread among the students because many of them could be future doctors.

**Lesson-8  The Tale of Melon City  By Vikram Seth (1952-. )**

Vikram Seth is an Indian novelist and poet. “The tale of Melon City” runs like a folk tale. Once a just and placid king used to rule over a country. He got an arch built across the main road. As he passed under the low arch, his head got struck by it and he lost his crown. He took it as a disgrace and ordered the chief of builders to be hanged. The chief put the blame on the workmen. The workmen were surprised. They said that the bricks were of wrong size. So the masons were declared guilty. The masons put the blame on the architect and he said it was the king who brought out some changes in the original plan. The king decided to take suggestions from the wisest man in the country. The old wise man held the arch to be guilty but his ministers refuses, saying that hanging a non-living thing like an arch does not make any sense. Ultimately the king was hanged because he found the people of his country becoming restless and he was very particular about maintaining peace in his country. Later it was announced by the ministers that whoever will pass the arch will choose the king. An idiot came and he suggested ‘A melon’ to be the king.

There is no issue taken up in this poem. Only an instance can be taken as a social message for the young generation.

As the king said, “I need some counsel. Bring to me

The wisest man in the country.

The wisest man was found and brought,

Nay, carried, to the Royal Court.

He could not walk and could not see,

So old (and therefore wise) was he (p.73-74)

In the above extract from the poem, we get a message that everybody requires suggestion at some point in their life. But it is important to understand as to who can suggest us the best. So the answer is that the old, experienced people can counsel us
in the best possible way. Their suggestions at times play a very crucial role in our life whether it is at home or at work. Age adds to the experience and challenges of people. This game of experience and challenges give us an opportunity to learn. However, sometimes experienced/old people want others to benefit from, what they have learnt, while inexperienced/youngsters insist on experimenting themselves.

It is a fact that wise older adults can also learn from the young. The young people of today think about nothing but only themselves. They talk as if they know everything and what is wisdom for older generations is foolishness for them. Good side of being old is that they know the positive and negative aspects of every situation. They have a natural ability to do so. So it is advisable for the young people specially students to consider the lessons learnt and the experiences made by the old generation as asset.

Snapshots consist of eight stories. William Saroyan’s “The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse” deals with moral choices for adolescents. Marga Minco’s “The Address” shows the poignancy of personal loss and reconciliation that follows war. Language and imperialism invading the rural setting has been presented in “Ranga’s Marriage” by Masti Venkatesha Iyengar. “Albert Einstein at School” by Patrick Pringle describes the circumstances which led to Albert Einstein’s expulsion from a German school. J. B. Priestley’s play “Mother’s Day” is a comment on the acceptance of (and rebellion against) the assumed roles of men and women at home. Amitav Ghosh’s “The Ghat of the only world” is a tribute to Aga Shahid Ali, a Kashmiri poet. Professional commitment is shown in A. J. Cronin’s “Birth”, while Vikram Seth’s “The Tale of Melon City” is a humorous satire set in verse.

The analysis of this book would be incomplete if we do not take into consideration the questions given at the end of each lesson. One of the questions i.e. *Did the boys return the horse because they were conscience-stricken or because they were afraid?* in “The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse” makes the reader think about the reason behind returning the horse which has not been mentioned anywhere in the lesson. The question: ‘*The Address* is a story of human predicament that follows war. *Comment*” actually points toward the problems faced by people during and after war. The torture they undergo is not only physical but also psychological. One of the points taken up in “Ranga’s Marriage” is the influence of English
language and the question, *Comment on the influence of English—the language and the way of life—on Indian life as reflected in the story. What is the narrator’s attitude to English?* brings out this point into light. Patrick Pringles’s motive has been successfully covered by this question, *The school system often curbs individual talents. Discuss.* The writer’s intention in writing about Einstein’s life at school was to bring out Einstein’s idea of school system and the writer wanted to show that school system still requires a change. The questions mentioned in “Mother’s Day” have done very little justice to the purpose of this play. They are unable to focus on mother’s character. What is missing, is the questions related to the male character in the play and also none of the questions talk about the behavior of children towards their mother. The question on *Diaspora* in “*The Ghat of the only World*” lead the students towards the understanding of this term which has been affecting people in many parts in India. Overall the questions have fulfilled to a great extent the writers’ intentions.

To conclude, one can say that this supplementary reader for the students of class eleventh incorporates a wide range of human predicaments: one of them is the moral choices for adolescents and how these choices are affecting them. Certainly the moral values in today’s generation are lacking. The youngsters or adolescents are the future of tomorrow so the lack of moral values especially among this section of the society is a serious issue. There could be any reason for it like poverty or even globalization. Poverty leads one to a wrong path. In order to fulfill one’s desires whether they are children or adult, they start stealing things or money and by doing so they feel that they can get whatever they want in life. Similarly, even globalization could be the reason for degradation of moral values. For, there is a societal change contingent upon globalization that creates opportunities for adolescents to live in ways that are significantly different from their parents. At the stage of adolescence they believe that they can try for the sake of their pleasure or do anything what they want to do, regardless of what their parents suggest. So it is the responsibility of parents and teachers together to look after the children in this crucial stage of adolescence and help them in developing good moral values.

Now we move on to another important issue which is seriously affecting the mankind. As we hear the word ‘War’, the picture of violence, destruction, bloodshed,
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disease and starvation, poverty etc. comes in front of our eyes. People who have been victims of war get transformed by being made helpless and by suffering deep pain, both physical or psychological. To them the world becomes a far more dangerous place every day, even when there is nothing to fear. Every sound, every sudden movement, every flash of light, every abrupt word comes as a shock to them. Despite these effects of war, many countries still indulge in it.

During the period when the story “Ranga’s marriage” was written, the British rule was in India. But even today people have issues against English language. Although it acts as a link-language, people try to decrease the use of this language. Regional languages are being promoted so that English language does not get much importance. The young generations have love for this language and it is increasing day by day. In India, the importance of English language is increasing owing to several reasons. The most important one is that in India people speak so many languages and there is always a need to have one such common language which can act as a link language. Secondly, all advanced knowledge about science, technology and medicine is available in English. If we give up this language, we will lag behind in the fields of higher study. English language plays an important role for preserving the integrity of our country.

Another important social issue which needs to be focused on is Child Marriage. This problem still prevails in this twenty first century in our country. It is a traditional practice in many places because it has happened for generations and deviating from tradition could mean exclusion from the community. In many communities where child marriage is practised, girls are not valued so much as boys are. Girls are seen as a burden. The challenge is to change parents’ attitudes and emphasize that the girls who will avoid early marriage and get proper education will be able to make greater contribution to their family and their community in the long run. Another reason for child marriage is poverty. Where poverty is acute, giving a daughter in marriage allows parents to reduce family expenses by ensuring they have one less person to feed. In communities, where dowry is paid, it is often a welcome income for poor families. In those where the bride’s family pays the groom a dowry, they often have to give less money if the bride is young.
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Good education system plays a crucial role in the development of every nation. Rote learning is basically a memorization technique based on repetition. The idea is that one will be able to recall quickly, the more one repeats it. But that was a wrong concept. It curbs an individual’s talent. So nowadays, it is highly discouraged by many curriculum experts. Students who learn with understanding are able to transfer their knowledge to tasks requiring problem-solving with greater success than those who learn only by repetition. In article published in The Times of India (August 13, 2012), it is mentioned that in India, rote learning is still prevalent in top schools too. So there is a need to focus on this issue with great efforts.

Every society is made up of blocks of family units. The stronger each block is, the healthier the structure of the society. Families are thus the building blocks upon which rests the fate of the society. For the development of good families, the mother plays a vital role. A woman, both as a wife and a mother requires respect and love from her husband and children. In a country like India, mothers are more likely to be involved in the details of their children’s life which includes their requirements and problems. In Indian society, the father’s role is by and large is limited to the role of a breadwinner. Still there exists gender discrimination when it comes to the role of a father and a mother in a family. Even if the mother is working, all the responsibilities are on her shoulders. Such discrimination should not be there in our modern society.

Eviction of Kashmiri pundits from Kashmir has been pointed out in one of the lessons in this textbook. Still these people are waiting to return to their homeland. This is an ongoing issue in Kashmir for the last many years. Amitav Ghosh has tried to bring into light problems faced by Hindus in Kashmir. These kinds of stories make the students aware of what is happening in their country and how people are suffering. Some of the incidents described in this lesson also throw light on the importance of unity in a society and also on the removal of religion discrimination.

In today’s world, the relationship between professionals such as doctors, lawyers and teachers and the society they serve has been increasingly and radically changing. The reasons behind the same, however, may go deeper than the obvious mercenary tendencies of the former. The advent of corporate hospitals with multi-storied nursing homes, highly expensive machines and instruments have changed the scenario. Now patients are no longer patients, they are customers who generate
revenue. In a devastating and immensely self critical book that is making waves in the US, an Indian-American physician, with specialization in cardiology, describes how the medical profession has become a pitiless, mercenary medical profession, money ripping vocation where doctors treat patients as revenue generators rather than human beings, keep patients in hospitals for longer than necessary to bill them more, order needless tests to generate profits. This dysfunction is not entirely owing to doctors. The other external sources are responsible for it too. Doctors are under pressure by the hospitals to see more patients to increase the income of the hospital. So particularly, doctors who previously used to spend twenty to thirty minutes with each patient, now hurry out after ten minutes because they now have to see twice the number of patients. As a result, patients do not get the attention they deserve and are not diagnosed properly. These problems are increasing day by day and need to be controlled soon.

Experience comes with age and makes a man wise. But what our today’s young generation thinks is its opposite. They feel they are wise and the suggestions given by the elders are not important. This kind of thinking causes a gap between the young and the old. It is about mindsets and methods and it is not one-sided. Youth is full of passion. The old have wisdom and experience. The problem of generation gap is universal and everybody across the globe faces the unchangeable problem. But this problem is experienced intensely in India, where the families comprising both the young and the old live together. This problem is leading to the breaking up of families because people of different generations with different mindsets are unable to adjust with one another. None of the issues can be sorted out until the whole society and every individual work for it. This lesson is a step in the same direction.

To sum this book Snapshots for class eleventh addresses the following socio-cultural issues:

- Issue of generation gap
- Consequences of war
- Child marriage
- Importance to mother tongue
- Education system
- Family unity
- Professional attitude
4.2 Hornbill for Class Eleventh

The English textbook *Hornbill* for Class Eleventh is prescribed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training. It was reprinted in 2011 and contains 118 pages. It is published by the Publication Department, NCERT, New Delhi.

This textbook for Class Eleventh is based on the English syllabus along the lines suggested by the National Curriculum Framework, 2005. It aims to help learners develop proficiency in English by using language as an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) suggests that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and in turn creates a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks prepared on the basis of NCF indicate an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also tried to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. Syllabus designers have made an effort to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology as well as the time available for teaching.

In ancient India, books played a significant role in fostering values leading to harmonious and complete personality development of people. Epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* became sources of inspiration to millions of people who followed the path of righteousness. Therefore, good books affect people positively. At the beginning of the present century, everyone is realizing the blunders committed by the society at large in the last few decades, particularly the degradation of moral values among citizens. Time has come to reorganize the entire life system, which is based on human values. In doing so, many entities are important. The school has its own role; teachers assume a significant place in fostering value-based education; parents have their own share. However, print materials, especially textbooks contribute substantially towards value-based education at all levels. Therefore, it is essential that textbooks present right knowledge, develop good skills and values that makes the life of an individual meaningful and productive. Textbooks can provide the essential information and support needed by the children in all dimensions of learning. They stimulate the interest of the students. Inspiring stories and unbiased content may
articulate more values than anything. Therefore, the content of the textbooks should be thoughtfully planned to provide the information needed by the children. Textbooks at large provide a sense of security and self-confidence to the students. Therefore, the material in any textbook should be revised and graded properly. As the role of a textbook is to provide an opportunity to the students to review and reorganize their knowledge, they should help in self-learning also.

While writing or organizing a textbook, several points should be kept in mind:

1. The writing style could also help in developing some values. Instead of providing simply the content, some values should be instilled. At the end of each lesson, a section dealing with introspective questions should be included. Through this type of questions the realization of the particular value would be inculcated into the student.

2. Textbooks should not present biased ideas.

3. It should not project a person with disability as an object of pity.

4. Textbook questions should not analyse only factual information. Analytic and application type questions encourage students to think, and it is this thinking process which leads to reasoning. This way an individual will look at the problem in the right perspective. Seeing the problem in the right perspective has a positive impact on the development of an individual. Therefore, a proper level of questioning and reasoning also plays an important role in providing quality education to students.

Let us now analyse the textbook along the above lines:

1. **The Portrait of a Lady**  
   **By Khushwant Singh (1915-2014)**

Khushwant Singh is an Indian novelist. An Indian writer, Singh was best known for his humour, his genuine secularism and an abiding love of poetry. His comparison of social and behavioural characteristics of people from the West with the Indian people is laced with acerbic wit.

The story recounts recollections of Khushwant Singh regarding his grandmother. He describes how he had spent his childhood with her in the village. He
also describes the change that came in the relationship as he moved to the city. He narrates the moving scene of her death. He draws an interesting portrait of his grandmother, representing her as a tender, loving and deeply religious old lady.

She hobbled about the house in spotless white with one hand resting on her waist to balance her stoop and the other telling the beads of her rosary. Her silver locks were scattered untidily over her pale, puckered face, and her lips constantly moved in inaudible prayer. (p.4)

My grandmother always went to school with me because the school was attached to the temple. The priest taught us the alphabet and the morning prayer. While the children sat in rows on either side of the verandah singing the alphabet or the prayer in a chorus, my grandmother sat inside reading the scriptures (p.4)

The lines below show how the relationship undergoes a change when they shifted from the village to the city.

Although we shared the same room, my grandmother no longer came to school with me. I used to go to an English school in a motor bus. (p.4)

As the years rolled by we saw less of each other. For some time she continued to wake me up and get me ready for school. When I came back she would ask me what the teacher had taught me. I would tell her English words and little things of western science and learning, the law of gravity, Archimedes Principle, the world being round, etc. This made her unhappy. She could not help me with my lessons. She did not believe in the things they taught at the English school and was distressed that there was no teaching about God and the scriptures. One day I announced that we were being given music lessons. She was very disturbed. To her music had lewd associations. It was the monopoly of harlots and beggars and not meant for gentlefolk. She said nothing but her silence meant disapproval. She rarely talked to me after that. (p.4-5)
According to the writer’s grandmother, music was something indecent. She was also disturbed because there was no religious teaching in school as it was there in the village school where they used to learn religious material and offer morning prayers. Her way of life was very different in the village and at this stage of life she was not ready to change it but still she managed to adjust with the situation just for her family. Villages have a unique lifestyle. They are free from the hustle and bustle of city life. The surroundings are quiet and peaceful, full of greenery all around them. They have open houses, not like we have in a city, close from all sides. In cities, people are generally busy with their own work. But in villages people help each other when somebody is in need. Their social sense is so strong that the guest of one is considered as the guest of the entire village. But with these there are certain negative aspects of village life too. There are no good schools available. Medical facilities are not up to the mark. Even work in villages does not provide them with enough money to fulfill their basic requirements. This is the reason why many of them try to move to the city in order to earn more money and to provide good education to their children.

When I went up to University, I was given a room of my own. The common link of friendship was snapped. My grandmother accepted her seclusion with resignation. (p.5)

When I decided to go abroad for further studies, I was sure my grandmother would be upset. I would be away for five years. (p.5)

The above extract shows how grandmother was separating from his grandchild slowly and gradually with time. The inner pain was increasing but still there was no sign of sadness on her face. She accepted this law of nature and also this new way of living. Residential relocation is one of the major reasons of separation these days. Sometimes this relationship changes due to the grandchildren’s increasing maturity and grandparent’s ageing as well. In today’s world where mostly both parents are working, children need more care and this care they can get only from their grandparents. Grandparents positively influence the lives of their grandchildren by building deep emotional connections with them.
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A Photograph

By Shirley Toulson (1924-)

Shirley Toulson was born in England. She had a passion for writing as she was highly influenced by her father who was a writer too. She was a writer by profession but also served as an editor of many magazines.

In this poem the poet is admiring her mother’s photograph. With it she can see how her mother used to look when her mother was twelve years old. The photo shows her mother on a beach with her two cousins who were younger to her, each holding her mother’s hand. The wind must be blowing at the time when her mother with her two cousins, were posing for a photograph taken by her uncle as their hair was coming on their faces. Looking at the photograph, the poet says that her mother had a sweet face but that was the time before the poet was born. The poet recounts those moments when after twenty thirty years from the day photograph was taken, her mother again looked at it and laughed. She talks about the dresses they were wearing in the photograph when they went for a beach holiday. The poet realizes that a lot has changed and her mother is no longer the same innocent girl of twelve. Now many years have passed and her mother is no longer with her. And for this situation she has nothing to say.

Now she’s been dead nearly as many years
As that girl lived. And of this circumstance
There is nothing to say at all.
Its silence silences. (p.11)

The above extract from the poem presents what exactly the loss of a mother is for a daughter. Nobody can ever take that place of a mother in our life. We get an opportunity to learn so many different things from her. Her advice always benefits us and she is always there for us in the best and worst of times. Sometimes it is too late for us to realize that she did so much for us and we never appreciated the sacrifices she made for us.

2. We’re not afraid to die… if we can all be together

By Gordon Cook (1959-) and Alan East (1969-)

Gordon Cook and Alan East both are writers of American origin. This is a story of extreme courage and skill exhibited by a family of four on a sinking ship. The family consisted of two parents and two children and they boarded their ship in order to
undertake a voyage around the world. They were also accompanied by two crew members on board as they navigated their way through the Southern ocean. After their journey begins, the weather takes a turn for the worse and this voyage begins to descend into chaos. The sea begins to get rough and the boat is being violently beaten by the high winds and the waves. The waves not only injured them but also damaged their boat. The weather conditions continued to worsen and the boat had no hope of reaching any further than Ile Amsterdam, one of the two small islands a few hundred kilometers to the east. This is where the author’s son exclaims:

   We aren’t afraid of dying if we can all be together- you and mummy, Sue and I. (p.16)

This displays the highest degree of family unity and love as it suggests that even in the face of possible death, they are happy to all be together.

Below are the lines from the text which show how much they were worried about each other and also how they tried to hide their own problems from one another in that situation also because they did not want to lower each other’s morale.

   Sue’s head had swollen alarmingly; she had two enormous black eyes, and now she showed us a deep cut on her arm. When I asked why she hadn’t made more of her injuries before this, she replied, “I didn’t want to worry you when you were trying to save us all. (p.15)

Sue, moving painfully, joined me. The left side of her head was now very swollen and her blackened eye narrowed to slits. She gave me a card she had made. On the front she had drawn caricatures of Mary and me with the words: “Here are some funny people. Did they make you laugh? I laughed a lot as well. “Inside was a message: “Oh, how I love you both. So this card is to say thank you and let’s hope for the best. (p.17)

With their optimistic views and courage, they finally reached the island, Ile Amsterdam. This was the time when the author recounted his views about the people on board as he quotes:

   With land under my feet again, my thoughts were full of Larry and Herbie, cheerful and optimistic under the direst stress and of Mary,
who stayed at the wheel for all those crucial hours. Most of all, I thought of a seven-year-old girl, who did not want us to worry about a head injury, and a six-year-old boy who was not afraid to die. (p.18)

This story shows how the children were calm and cool even in the worst of situations. They did not lose hope. On the other hand, adults were very much worried and were losing hope although they were trying really hard to survive. This was the time of difficulty which showed how much every member of the family cared about each other and was ready to do every possible thing for their family. Optimism is a trait which everybody should possess. Having a positive attitude towards life, make life easier to live.

3. Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues               By A. R. Williams (N.A.)

A.R. Williams is a science fiction and fantasy writer.

As the mummy of King Tut was taken out for performing a CT scan, angry winds started stirring and the dark clouds covered the stars. His scan was being done to reveal the mysteries that had surrounded his death. Tourists were gathered to pay respect to the mummy of the famous Egyptian king Tut and made several speculations about his untimely death. The mummy was in a very bad state as described by Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities. Howard Carter was the British archaeologist who in 1922 discovered Tut’s tomb after years of unsuccessful searching. Numerous treasures were found in Tut’s coffin. These treasures are till date the richest royal collections ever found. Things like board games, a bronze razor, linen undergarments, cases of food and wine which were considered to be his requirement in the afterlife were also kept inside the coffin. This revealed the fact that ancient Egyptians believed in the idea of an afterlife. Carter investigated all the three coffins. In one of the coffin, a shroud adorned with garlands of willow and olive leaves, wild celery, lotus petals and cornflowers were found which indicate towards the time of his burial i.e. March or April. Carter faced difficulty in separating the mummy of the king from the coffin. There was no other way left than to take it out into parts. The only ground for Carter to defend himself for using this way was that thieves would have ripped off the body to rob the gold, if he had not used this trick. With the advent of time as the archaeology changed, it started focusing more on details of life and mysteries related to death than on treasures. In
1968, some forty years after Carter’s discovery, an astonishing fact was revealed by an anatomy professor who did an X-ray of the mummy and claimed the breast bone and front ribs of the mummy were missing.

Some visitors read from guidebooks in a whisper.

Others stood silently, perhaps pondering Tut’s untimely death in his late teens, or wondering with a shiver if the pharaoh’s curse—death or misfortune falling upon those who disturbed him—was really true. (p.23)

The million-dollar scanner had quit because of sand in a cooler fan. “Curse of the pharaoh,” joked a guard nervously. (p. 26)

Through the above mentioned lines, we get a glimpse of superstition present in ancient Egypt. Egyptian kings have always been famous for using magic in order to protect both their throne as well as their tomb. Many stories exist about the archaeologists who opened the tomb of a mummy and died of a mysterious disease after that.

But Tut was also buried with everyday things he’d want in the afterlife: board games, a bronze razor, linen undergarments, cases of food and wine. (p. 23)

In ancient Egypt, the concept of afterlife used to outweigh almost all other aspects of life. After the mummification, the body used to be placed in a coffin and then this coffin was kept in huge tombs. Before sealing the tomb, everything the dead person may require in the afterlife was kept.

The lesson provides a window on cross-cultural ideas focusing on superstition which is here in India much but was a part of the Egyptian culture long back.
The Laburnum Top

By Ted Hughes (1930-1998)

Ted Hughes was born in Yorkshire. He is a British poet. The rural landscape of Hughes’s youth in Yorkshire exerted a lasting influence on his work. The tree in the poem symbolizes the hard part of life and the bird sleek and tender. The worshippers of nature do believe that without river there could be no mountain, and without mountain and river no universe too. In the same way, the tree and the bird are complementing each other. The hard and dull entity of the tree undergoes a transition the moment the bird enters its life. Once the predestined duty has been carried out, the bird has to leave for the infinity.

Again this poem is trying to bring out the importance of a husband- wife relationship: how the two of them are made for each other and how they should complement each other. The circle of family life becomes perfect and harmonious only with the complementary roles of woman and man. This is one of the relationships which resolves many social issues in our society.

This poem is perfect for the young students to make them understand how both parents are important in a family. How they together run a family and that is the reason they should love their parents. Children should know how their parents try to maintain harmony in their family so that they can live with ease. The relationship between the husband and wife is very tender, loving and pure. Thus, it is the duty of each to be protective about the life and modesty of one another. It is necessary for them to realize and understand their mutual duties as a couple.

These lines bring out similarities between a Laburnum tree and bird and man and women:

The laburnum top is silent, quite still. (p.31)

Till the goldfinch comes with a twitching chirrup. (p.31)

She enters the thickness, and a machine starts up

Of chitterlings, and a tremor of wing, and trillings-- (p.31)

Ted Hughes’s wife committed suicide and many feminists blame him for her death. But this poem shows how important his wife was for him and how beautifully she entered his life which was dull and boring. She brought a kind of motion in his life but unfortunately she left him alone in this world.
4. Landscape of the Soul By Nathalie Trouveroy (1965- .)

Nathalie Trouveroy is an art expert from Flanders, Holland. She was in Delhi during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

This lesson deals with a comparative study of European and Chinese paintings. It discusses various expressions with precision. The main focus is on the anecdotes about Chinese and European paintings. The lesson begins with an anecdote. In this story the emperor ordered a painter named Wu Daozi to paint a landscape in order to decorate the palace wall. Once it was ready, the emperor was invited and he appreciated the work of this painter. After the king admired the forests, high mountains, waterfalls, clouds etc. present in it, he asked the king to look at the cave which he had painted at the bottom of the mountain. As he clapped, the entrance of the cave opened. The painter entered the cave but all of a sudden the entrance closed and the painting vanished from the wall. The painter Wu Daozi was never seen again in this world. The writer Nathalie Trouveroy cites another story about a European painting. The story goes like this. Once a blacksmith, named Quinten Metsys fell in love with a painter’s daughter. In order to marry his beloved, he painted a fly with such a delicate realism that the painter did not make out that this fly was not real but a painted one. The first anecdote is about the essence of inner life and spirit in Asia whereas the second one presents the illusionistic likeness with the real in Europe.

These stories representing Chinese and European paintings may be less interesting for those students who either have very little or no interest in painting. But it would be delightful for those who have love for these art forms and the spirit of adventure and curiosity about the new.

The Voice of the Rain By Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Walt Whitman is a poet, an essayist and a journalist from America. Whitman is considered one of the most influential poets in the American literary canon and called the father of free verse.

In this poem, the poet recounts a conversation he had with the rain. The poem begins with a question:

And who art thou? Said I to the soft- falling shower,  (p.41)
Surprisingly, the rain answers to the poet thus:

   I am the poem of Earth.  (p.41)

Then the rain begins to describe how it rises up to the sky from this land and sea towards the heaven where it changes its form. Again it falls on this Earth in order to remove the dust layers to save it from drought and help seeds grow. Here the poet compares his role of writing poetry with the role of a rain. According to him, his songs and raindrops both are meant to give life, to beautify this Earth and to freshen up everything. He adds that as these raindrops return to the Earth giving life to its origin, similarly the poet’s songs return to him as love from his readers. Through this poem, Walt Whitman has tried to show that his poems enrich and galvanize human hearts, fresh them up like rain refreshes everything on Earth.


Nani A. Palkhivala was born in a middle class family and the way in which his father inculcated in him a passion for literature remained as an abiding joy throughout his life. He was a journalist by profession before he was an author. His first article appeared in a newspaper when he was thirteen years old and his first book was published when he was thirty.

   This chapter is all about the Green Movement which started in 1972 in New Zealand and its influence over the world. Many important facts have been brought into light this lesson. It also describes how they are linked to each other:

   In the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia, there is a cage
   where the notice reads, ‘The world’s most
dangerous animal’. Inside the cage there is
   no animal but a mirror where you see yourself.  (p.44)

The above line is a satire on human beings. The way humans are destroying their own world by deforestation, air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution etc. so in that way they are the most dangerous one:
In some places, firewood has become so expensive that “what goes under the pot now costs more than what goes inside it.” (p.45)

The demand for firewood has increased over the past few decades owing to the rise in population and consumption. It is the most important form of household energy, especially in rural areas. This increasing use of firewood is killing forests at a very high rate, leading to deforestation and also causing land degradation.

It has been well said that forests precede mankind; deserts follow.” (p.45)

One of the most important issues of not only India but of the world at large is that of saving our environment. If this problem is sorted out, all other related problems will come to an end.

Article 48A of the constitution of India provides that “the state shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.” But what causes endless anguish is the fact that laws are never respected nor enforced in India. (For instance, the constitution says that casteism, untouchability and bonded labour shall be abolished, but they flourish shamelessly even after forty four years of the operation of the constitution.” (p.45)

In the above extract, terms such as casteism, untouchability and bonded labour are mentioned. Casteism is essentially a rural phenomenon. Its role in the urban areas is less but it is there due to urbanization. With increasing urbanization and modernization, the people are migrating from rural areas to urban areas in search of better work opportunities. They feel insecure in a new place and new environment. This need for psychological security compels them to stay in a cluster formed on the basis of caste, culture as well as the region to which they belong. It is something
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which is against the elevated ideal of the Constitution. It still exists as a big obstacle in the way of nation building and national integration:

There can be no doubt that the growth of world population is one of the strongest factors distorting the future of human society.” (p.46)

The rich get richer, and the poor beget children which condemns them to remain poor. More children does not mean more workers, merely more people without work. It is not suggested human beings be treated like cattle and compulsorily sterilized. But there is no alternative to voluntary family planning without introducing an element of coercion. The choice is really between control of population and perpetuation of poverty. (p.46)

All the social issues are so closely interlinked that a change in one can bring about a change in another. The increase in population results in increasing poverty, less number of children getting education, so in turn increasing illiteracy making people poor, more unemployed. Due to poverty, these people living below poverty line are unable to use gas cylinders so in turn they require firewood for cooking. This will increase the cutting of forests, leaving barren lands leading to the destruction of environment. An important issue of the day is the sensitization of students. This chapter clearly brings into light the effect of population on the environment and how important it is to control the population.

6. The Browning Version By Terence Rattigan (1911-1977)

Terence Rattigan was a British playwright. He was amongst England’s most popular mid- twentieth century dramatists. His plays represent upper-middle class background.
Rattigan’s plays generally talk about issues of failed relationships and adultery. The above complete play has not been included in this textbook. It consists of only an extract showing how after giving so many years of his life to this British school, Mr. Cracker Harris has not achieved any respect from his students as well as from his fellow teachers due to his harsh nature. Actually he does not like to be liked. But one of the students, Taplow, finds him different and still likes him. On Mr. Cracker Harris’s last day at school, Taplow decided to give him a small gift. So he was waiting for him to come. Meanwhile, Mrs. Crocker Harris send Taplow to get her husband’s medicine from the chemist. It is up to this point that the play has been taken up in the textbook. The reason of sending Taplow to the chemists revealed later in the play which has not been included. The reason was that Mrs. Crocker Harris was having an affair with Frank, another teacher working in the same school and she wanted to spend time with him. On the whole, this play as has been taken in this textbook, ends very abruptly. It does not bring into light any issue and does not present any good moral idea.

Childhood By Markus Natten (1979- )

Markus Natten is a Norwegian poet. In this poem, the poet talks about losing his childhood. He has tried to compare the life of a child with that of an adult. According to Natten, being a child was far better than being an adult. A child’s life is full of peace and reflects purity of his soul and character. But an adult life is quite complicated. As the poet has discussed in the second stanza about the adults being hypocrites:

Was it the time my childhood go?
Was it the time I realized that adults were not all they seemed to be,
They talked of love and preached of love,
But did not act so lovingly, (p.58)

The poem presents the dilemma he himself faced when he was thinking about the time he became an adult or in other words he lost his childhood. In first stanza, the poet talks about rationalism:
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Was it the day I ceased to be eleven, (p.58)

Was it the time I realized that Hell and Heaven,

Could not be found in Geography, (p.58)

The third stanza brings out an issue that an adult can stand as an individual but it has its own negative effects attached to it. The idea of individuality is clearly reflected in these lines.

Was it when I found my mind was really mine,

To use whichever way I choose,

Producing thoughts that were not those of other people. (p.58)

In this poem we get a glimpse of adults being hypocrites and so is their society. Adults talk about love and teach their young ones to love and respect their family members as well as the people around them. But what do they do themselves? They talk ill of other people, criticize them and harbour hatred and envy in their hearts. Therefore the poem partially focuses on the negative side of being an adult. In the last stanza of this poem, the poet realizes that he has somewhere in his heart a strong desire to hold on to fantasy bonds or imagined connections to his parents and family members and their symbolic substitutes that offer safety, yet at great cost of their personal development.

7. The adventure By Jayant Narlikar (1938- .)

Jayant Vishnu Narlikar is an Indian astrophysicist. Besides writing scientific papers and books, Narlikar has also written novels, short stories as well as science fiction in English, Hindi and Marathi.

This is a science fiction piece in which the writer has tried to relate history to science. As the story begins, Professor Gaitonde is on his way from Bombay to Pune. As he reaches there, he found a big building outside the station. He soon realizes that he is not in the same world he used to be. He immediately goes to the Asiatic Society library to solve this riddle. He reads up to the fourth volume. He found everything same but the fifth volume tells a different story where Marathas win the war against the Afghans in the Third Battle of Panipat. After this victory, their supremacy was
established in Northern India and it acted as a morale booster to the Marathas. After this victory India moved towards democracy. Professor Gaitonde reached Azad Maidan and found a lecture going on. After finding that the Chairman was missing, he snatches the mike and starts speaking. Soon people started throwing tomatoes and eggs on him. Finally Professor was lost somewhere in the crowd. This is where this strange experience ends and Gangadharpanth found himself as Professor Gaitonde back into the real world. He told his experience of being into another world to his friend Rajendra. He explains the experience of the Professor with the help of two scientific theories, catastrophe theory and quantum theory. Catastrophe theory states that a small change in any circumstance can bring about a sudden shift in behavior. If we apply this theory to the Battle of Panipat, we find that there was a crucial moment when Marathas lost both of their leaders, Viswas Rao and Bhausheb. But in the parallel world Prof. Gaitonde saw the bullet missing Viswas Rao. So all this is catastrophic experience. Rajendra then explained quantum theory in relation to Prof. Gaitonde’s experience of being into a parallel world. The behavior of electrons orbiting the nucleus in an atom cannot be predicted. There are different states of energy- lower and higher. The electron can jump from lower to higher or from higher to lower. Similarly, these levels can applied to the world too. Prof. Gaitonde made a transition from this world in which we live in to another parallel world. The history of this world as we know may differ from the history of the parallel world. Professor neither travelled to the past nor to the future. He was in the present but experiencing a different world. At the time, when the car of Prof. Gaitonde collided with the truck, he was thinking about the Catastrophe theory and its implications in war. The collision and his thoughts at that moment brought about a transition from this world to another parallel world.

This lesson is quite adventurous but of not much use for the students. This is about applying scientific theories to history in a mock-heroic way.

8. Silk Road

By Nick Middleton (1960- .)

Nick Middleton is a physical geographer born in London, England. He has travelled to more than fifty countries.
This is an extract from one of his travelogues. The writer chronicles the challenges and problems he faced in the Silk Road regions as they are now. It is refreshing for the readers to traverse such vast tracts and expanses of the natural world that largely remain unknown.

The author left this place called Ravu with Daniel and Tsetan. Their next destination was Mount Kailash. Tsetan knew a short cut to reach Mt. Kailash. He tells the author that the journey would be smooth if there will be no snow. As they passed by the hill, they could see the drokbas, which means shepherds, tending their flocks. Next they passed the nomad’s tent, they saw Tibetan mastiff. It is a huge black dog. These dogs would explode into action as their car neared the tents. They continued the journey, and found sharper turns. On their way they found snow on the roads and when this snow gets mixed up with soil, it becomes dangerous. The car could slip off the road. By late afternoon, they had reached the small town of Hor. This place was grim and miserable. There was no vegetation, just rocks and dust everywhere. Unlike the past, the place no longer appeared holy. By half past ten at night they reached a guest house in Darchen. The author fell ill. Next day Tsetan took him to the nearby Darchen Medical College. The doctor told him that it is only the cold and the trouble is all due to the altitude. Tsetan left the author in Darchen and continued his journey. This place Darchen was as miserable as Hor. The author felt lonely as he had reached this place very early in the season. The author wanted to reach Mt. Kailash and to do Kora, which is a religious activity. But he does not want to do it alone. One day a person named Norbu saw Nick reading an English book and came to talk with him. Both of them decided to reach Mt. Kailash together. It was the reader’s optimism which helped him complete his journey successfully despite so many hurdles.

The moral of this lesson is that optimism plays a crucial role in everyone’s life. One needs to be excited about overcoming challenges rather than be discouraged by them.

**Father to son**

By Elizabeth Jennings (1926-2001)

Elizabeth Jennings is a British female poet. In this poem, she talks about a father-son relationship:

I do not understand this child

Though we have lived together now
In the same house for years. I know
Nothing of him, so try to build
Up a relationship from how
He was when small.  (p.85)

In the above lines, the father laments that he does not understand his own son. Though they have lived together for so many years now i.e. since the time of his son’s birth, but still he thinks that his father knows nothing about him:

We speak like strangers, there’s no sign
Of understanding in the air.
This child is built to my design
Yet what he loves I cannot share.  (p.85)

Both father and son continue to talk to each other like strangers now and there seem to be no sign of understanding between the two. Traditionally, it is a belief that the son is created and born to the liking of his father, yet in this case, the father cannot share what his son loves. Most of the time it is the silence that surrounds them:

I would have
Him prodigal, returning to
His father’s house, the home he knew,
Rather than see him make and move
His world. I would forgive him too,
Shaping from sorrow a new love.  (p.85)

The father’s biggest desire is that his son may always live with him and for he is ready to forgive him too. This is definitely the better alternative rather than to see his son giving up what belongs to him and moving out into the world blindly on his own, by himself to fall into trouble. This displays a father’s concern for his son and his love for his son which he has never shown.

In the past, the father and son bond was a more distant one based on respect, of course not without its share of love. Yet, there was a kind of mixture of fear and respect which had its advantages but also the fact that there was an emotional gap in
the bond that was tough to bridge. But now this relationship is changing even in Indian society. The fact that the younger generations are becoming fathers, they remember the equation which they shared with their own fathers and are making an effort not to repeat the same faults they noticed in their life.

In this book, the prose pieces are taken from biographies, travelogues, science fiction, art and contemporary expository prose by writers from different parts of the world. The poems relate to universal sentiments and appeal to contemporary sensibilities. Khushwant Singh’s short story “The Portrait of a Lady” revolves around the writer’s grandmother and focuses on their changing relationship when they moved from their village to the city to live a better life. “A Photograph” by Shirley Toulson revives a nostalgic feeling in the poet. Gordon Cook and Alan East’s “We’re not afraid to die…if we can all be together” presents the highest degree of family unity and love. “Discovering Tut: the saga continues” by A. R. Williams is a story about an Egyptian king Tutenkhamun and the mystery behind his death. Ted Hughes’s “The Laburnum Top” brings out the similarity between a tree-bird and a man-woman relationship. Nathalie Trouveroy through her story “Landscape of the Soul” contrasts Chinese art with European art by using two different stories. “The Voice of the Rain” by Walt Whitman is an account of a conversation which the poet had with the falling raindrops. Nani Palkhivala’s “The Ailing Planet: the Green Movement’s Role” deals with the influence of this Green movement over the world. Terence Rattigan’s “The Browning Version” deals with the life of Crocker Harris, a classic master, Rattigan had at school when he was a student. In “Childhood” by Markus Natten, the readers are confronted with a question as to when and where have we lost our childhood. “The Adventure” by Jayant Narlikar creates a relation between science and history. In “Silk Road” the author Nick Middleton chronicles the challenges and the hardships he faced in the Silk Road regions as they are now. Elizabeth Jenning’s “Father to Son” deals with a father son relationship.

It is important to focus on the questions given at the end of each lesson. In the first lesson, one of the questions, “Describe the changing relationship between the author and his grandmother. Did their feelings for each other change?” presents the writer’s intention of writing this lesson. His intention was to show how this relationship between him and his grandmother changed with time and circumstances.
In *A Photograph*, the question: “What does ‘this circumstance’ refer to?” brings into light the poet’s motive of showing what a mother means to her daughter and this loss can never be replaced. But the questions in *We’re not afraid to die… if can all be together* fail to present the importance of family unity shown in the lesson. The questions focus mainly on the experience of the voyagers and on the optimism required at such moments in life. In today’s world, the importance of relationships is changing or degrading at a very fast rate. None of the questions in *The Laburnum Top* brings out the comparison of tree-bird relationship with that of a husband-wife relationship. Ted Hughes’s intention of writing this poem does not reach the students as none of the questions focus on the changing relationships in our society leading to breaking up of families.

To conclude, one can say that this text book for class eleventh has been chosen to mirror the kind of serious reading in real life that a school leaver should be capable of. The book explores on different human relationships.

Family as an organization is largely affected by the changes in the social structure. This change in the social structure affects the status of the family members. Many basic functions of family are now performed by the secondary institutions and associations. For example, earlier child education and their rearing were the primary functions of the family. The level of assimilating in the urban world is concerned with both physical and psychological adjustment required in terms of values, sentiments, prejudices or ideologies of that particular community. This problem of assimilation arises due to the different backgrounds these people come from and also the age factor matters a lot. Young people find it easier to shift from one place to another but after a certain age people become used to their native place and they do not want to bring any change either in their home or their life.

For any daughter, the relationship with her mother is basically the first relationship in her life, and definitely the most important one. This relationship between a mother and a daughter affects women very strongly at all stages of their lives. Dependency has played a particular part in the social role of women. The daughter remains dependent on her mother till she gets married and even after that. In turn she partially transfers her dependency to her husband. This cycle of dependency continues. But in today’s world when daughters are getting independent at a very
young age, their relationship is somewhat changing. It is becoming a problem in our society because the mother is not getting that respect and love which they require the most. It is our mother’s teaching which will help us and guide us throughout our lives.

A curse is a warning and a wish to inflict adversity upon an enemy or the person we do not like, using supernatural powers. It forms part of many cultures around the world, from Greek and Roman curses to the Indian shraap. Hindu mythology presents many instances from the past where either a God or a rishi is enraged and usually casts a curse on the person affected, which usually has a bad effect on the person. Many people still believe in curses. Being in this twenty first century, it seems insane to have such beliefs and follow them.

In today’s India, the family problems have been increasing at a very fast rate. Domestic violence whether between husband and wife or between parents and children is badly affecting the Indian society at large. Family disorganization may be thought to include and sort of non-harmonious functioning within the family. This husband-wife relationship is the central bond unifying the family in any society. When this bond is broken, the family is then automatically broken. Family disorganization in the external manifestation may take the form of separation, divorce, physical violence etc. so in order to save our society it is important to maintain good relationship in marriage. A true relationship can be developed only if there is proper understanding between a husband and wife. A good relationship is possible only when one is able to let go of all one’s preconceived ideas and prejudices. Learn to listen to each other’s problems with love and concern.

Unity is strength and this unity is important in a family too. Family unity means maintaining family identity and togetherness and also balancing family priorities. A quality that constantly appears in strong families is a feeling that they can depend on each other as well as whenever they are in need they will definitely be helped out by the family members. The whole family is always together both in good as well as in bad times. The sense of knowing that someone is always there for your help an individual to develop a well-balanced self-esteem and a sense of individual’s worth in a family. This feeling of security can prevail both in nuclear as well as in joint families. The key to success in building this family unity is planning and
flexibility required in keeping the family members together. The stronger the
dfoundation is, the more strength we can draw from it whenever required.

India has been a country, where the status of family has been of utmost
importance since ages. It is known for its diversity and collective culture. Families in
India are tied with unseen bond, cooperation, harmony and interdependence.
Togetherness is what rules over here. India, like most other traditional societies is a
collective society that emphasizes family integrity, family loyalty, and family unity.
With the onset of modernization and globalization, a chain of transformation has
taken place in almost all the societies. But, one factor that has to be accepted is the
tendency of Indian families to maintain ‘togetherness’ even in nuclear structure and
the emotional bond between the kith and kin. In Indian society, the grandmother plays
a very important role in their grandchildren’s lives. The experience, care and
nurturing of the elder make the kids much more aware of the positives around them. It
also helps them to understand that as the time is changing the value systems have
diminished- these diminished value systems have done so much harm to our society.
Our Indian culture is rich and varied. Grandparents make children appreciate the
values of tradition and provide a platform for moral and religious values. This has
been very clearly shown by Khushwant Singh in “The Portrait of a Lady”. In today’s
world it is very important to teach young children the importance of relationships in
our lives. They should learn to respect elders and to follow what their elders say. The
various lessons in this book throw light on important issues which are actually leading
our society on the path of darkness and in order to bring the society out of this
darkness web need our young minds to think and work for it.

In sum, the following socio-cultural concerns appear in *Hornbill*:

- Effect of industrialization/ Urbanization on human relationships.
- Unity in a family
- Optimistic views/being optimistic
- Weakening relationships leading to broken families, divorce etc.
- Superstition
4.3 Flamingo for Class Twelfth

*Flamingo* prescribed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) for Class Twelfth was reprinted in 2012. It was published by the Publication Department by the Secretary, NCERT, New Delhi.

Syllabi serve several important purposes, the most important of which is to communicate the instructor’s course design (e.g. goals, policies, expectations, requirements) to students. Another important function commonly served by syllabi is to show how this course fits into a broader context. For example how far this book connects with the students regarding their social and cultural background, how far the lessons in this textbook describe the social and cultural issues of contemporary India, how far they teach the values of peaceful co-existence, national integration, respect for elders, respect for other religions, castes and cultures, honesty, truthfulness and dutifulness. Another objective of this study is to find out the socially, culturally, and morally offensive contents, if present in these lessons.

**PROSE**

**Lesson-1  The Last Lesson  By Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897)**

Daudet is chiefly regarded as one of the iconic names of French literature. His own life became a source of inspiration for many of his works. He portrayed human emotions in a very authentic manner.

The writer in this lesson recounts the incident which occurred in 1870 when the Prussian forces under Bismarck attacked and captured two districts of France. The new Prussian rulers discontinue the teaching of French in the schools of these two districts. The French teachers were asked to leave as they were no more required. The story describes the last day of one such French teachers, Mr. Hamel who was transferred by the government to some other place and could no longer remain in his old school. Still he gave last lecture to his students with utmost devotion and sincerity as ever he used to do. The story depicts the tragedy behind the whole situation when people realize that they are not able to learn their own language. They will not get such an opportunity ever again.
This particular lesson presents how not only small children were affected by this but also the old ones felt sorry about not attending the school properly when they were getting an opportunity to learn their language.

… and now I understood why the old men of the village were sitting there in the back of the room.

It was because they were sorry, too, that they had not gone to school more. (p.4-5)

Now these fellows out there will have the right to say to you, ‘How is it; you pretend to be French men, and yet you can neither speak nor write your own language? (p.5)

The above lines indicate that adults were also allowed to attend French classes. They were also present in that last class by Mr. Hamel. Adult education was introduced in France during the 19th century. In India we are still trying to promote it.

Even today in the villages of India people are not ready to send their children to schools. Instead they want them to work and earn money in order to run their family. This situation was there in France during 19th century.

Your parents were not anxious enough to have you learn. They preferred to put you to work on a farm or at the mills, so as to have a little more money. (p.5)

The main theme of this lesson is to show the importance of mother tongue in our life.

…the clearest, the most logical; that we must guard it among us and never forget it, because...
when a people are enslaved, as long as they
hold fast to their language it is as if they had
the key to their prison. (p.7)

Overall this lesson throws light on an important social issue which is poverty which restricts the students from going to the school. This lesson also talks about the importance of mother tongue and importance of Adult Education.

**Lesson-2  Lost Spring: Stories of Stolen Childhood  By Anees Jung (1944- )**

Jung is an Indian woman author. She has been working both as a journalist and columnist for major newspapers in India and abroad.

The first part of this lesson presents a boy named Saheb who is a rag picker from Seemapuri, an area in Delhi. He has a desire to go to school but complains about not having one in his area. His family migrated from Bangladesh in 1971 because their home as well as their fields got destroyed by several storms which struck their area. Saheb sometimes used to stand outside the club to watch how people play tennis. He had a fascination for it. One day somebody gave him his old tennis shoes with a hole in one of them but for this boy wearing them was like fulfilling half of his dream. Another thing which the author noticed about Saheb was that he never used to wear even chappals (a slipper). One day the author found that this boy named Saheb got a job on a tea stall but after getting this job, he lost his freedom. He did not remain his own master anymore. The second part deals with the author’s visit to Firozabad (a town in Uttar Pradesh, India) where she visited Mukesh’s house whose family had a bangle making business. But his dream was different. He always wanted to become a car mechanic. Generation after generation, families of these bangle makers have been engaged in doing the same business but there is no increment in their earning. They are still poor and sometimes they are not able to have a full meal. They are stuck between the middlemen and money lenders. Mukesh has a desire to do something different but this is not easy as he was born in a caste of bangle makers and the stigma of his caste always stops him. He wants to be a motor mechanic in order to be his own master.
The issue of poverty has been focused on in this lesson:

My acquaintance with the barefoot ragpickers let me to Seemapuri… In structures of mud, with roofs of tin and tarpaulin, devoid of sewage, drainage or running water, live 10,000 rag pickers. They have lived here for more than thirty years without an identity, with out permits but with ration cards that get their names on voters’ lists and enable them to buy grain. Food is more important for survival than identity. (p.15)

Someone gave them to me, he says in the manner of an explanation. The fact that they are discarded shoes of some rich boy, who perhaps refused to wear them because of hole in one of them, does not bother him. For one who has walked barefoot, even shoes with a hole is a dream come true. (p. 16)

In this lesson the writer also talks about one of the major socio-cultural issue of contemporary India i.e. Child Labour.

None of them know that it is illegal for children like him to work in the glass furnaces with high temperatures, in dingy cells without air and light that the law if enforced, could get him all those 20,000 children out of the hot furnaces where
they slog their daylight hours, often losing the brightness of their eyes. (p.17)

The writer also discusses poverty which forces parents into not sending their children to school.

Despite long years of hard labour, first as a tailor, then a bangle maker, he has failed to renovate a house, send his two sons to school. All he has managed to do is teach them what he knows-the art of making bangles. (p.18)

“It is his karam, his destiny,” says Mukesh’s grandmother, who has watched her own husband go blind with the dust from polishing the glass of bangles. (p. 18)

Their eyes are more adjusted to the dark than to the light outside. That is why they often end up losing their eyesight before they become adults. (p.18)

This lesson is all about the pathetic condition of children. They do not have even dreams. Their dreams have been snatched away by their own parents or indirectly by other forces.

Listening to them I see two different worlds-one of the family, caught in a web of poverty, burdened by the stigma of caste in which they are born; the other a vicious circle of the sahukars, the middlemen, the police-
men, the keepers of law, the bureaucrats and the politicians.

Together they have imposed the baggage on the child that
he cannot put down. (p.19)

The lesson takes into consideration the various effects of the profession of a rag picker. How difficult it is to work whole day whether it is sunny or rainy. Their dreams are not actually their own. They have been taken away partially by their profession and by their parents. These rag pickers do not get opportunity to attend school as they do not have time and money both. Writer also describes the profession of being a bangle maker. The major problem with such professions is the stigma attached to them. Every family member has to learn and run the same family business whether it is earning them something or they are just wasting their own talent. They cannot leave their family work. This lesson it shows that dreams become meaningless when a person does not have money and does not get opportunity to live his own life. Jung has presented the characters as they are. She has shown that they have dreams, they also have a desire to live like other rich people. They also want to fulfill their dreams but the problem is poverty and the stigma of a profession. The writer has beautifully presented the fact that despite of having their own dreams, her characters have learned to adjust in the situation and to deal with it in a best possible way. This is what life teaches- to adjust and to live happily.

Lesson-3 Deep Water By William Douglas (1898-1980)

Douglas was born in America. He served as a teacher for first two years after completing his graduation. Later he left this job and decided to pursue a legal career. He served as a judge for thirty- six years.

This lesson is an extract from his book *Of Men and Mountains*. The lesson focuses upon how writer overcame his fear of water and how he learnt to swim. The story begins with the writer’s experience of learning swimming. He took this decision when he was ten or twelve. Although he had Yakima river near his house but because many people had drowned in it, his mother never allowed him learning swimming in this dangerous river. But Y.M.C.A. pool was safe for him as it was only two or three
feet deep for the young learners. One day he was standing alone near the pool when a
group of naughty boys came and they pushed him inside the pool where the depth was
too much for the young learner. The writer shouted but they did not listen to him. This
terrifying experience inside the pool left him in fear for many years to come. The boy
who pushed him admitted that he was just fooling around with the narrator but this
was like a near death experience for the narrator. For several years he did not even go
near the water body. He tried many ways to overcome this fear but nothing worked.
After many years he hired an instructor for himself. Step by step he taught him how to
overcome his fear. For weeks he just learned how to kick with his legs. At first his
legs refused to work. But finally they started working under his command. At last the
narrator’s instruction made him a real swimmer. But still he was fearful of going into
the pool alone again for the next few months. So one day he went to Lake Wentworth
in New Hampshire. He used different types of strokes to swim two miles. This
experience gave him confidence and his fear vanished forever.

The message imparted by this lesson is that we can overcome any type of fear
with courage and determination.

**Lesson-4 The Rattrap**

By Selma Lagerlof (1858-1940)

Lagerlof was born in Sweden. She was the first female writer to win the Noble Prize
in Literature.

It is about a man who used to work as well steal things in order to get money
for food. One day he realized that that this world is similar to a rattrap. As people
keep cheese and other things for the rats similarly, riches and joys, shelter and food,
heat and clothing are used for tempting people in this world. His experience with
people was not too good but still he found some who treated him nicely. First, he met
an old man who offered him both food and shelter. But in return this man took his
money and ran away. On the way he decided not to take that highway so he started
walking into the forest. But within few hours he lost his way as it was quite
confusing. So he realized that this forest was now a rattrap for him and he had got
trapped into it. After searching for some time he got so much tired and hopeless that
he eventually lay down on the ground and started thinking about his end. But after a
few minutes he heard a sound of a hammer. Immediately he got up and started
walking towards that direction from where that sound was coming. Finally, he reached a mill where an ironmaster was working with his helpers. They did not say much after looking at him and even this rattrap seller was very tired so he also did not talk much with them. He only asked them for a place to sleep. The ironmaster misunderstood him as his old friend who worked in Army. As the peddler was getting this honour, he decided to hide his real identity from them. The ironmaster asked the peddler to come and stay in his house with him but the peddler did not go with him out of fear. The ironmaster went home and sent his daughter to persuade him. By their good behaviour towards him, the peddler actually changed. He left a letter and also the money he took from an old man for the ironmaster’s daughter, Edla, telling her to return it to that old man and how her behaviour had changed his heart.

The story begins showing how poverty leads one to a wrong path.

Once upon a time there was a man who went around selling small rattraps of wire. He made them himself at odd moments, from the material he got by begging in the stores or at the big farms. But even so, the business was not especially profitable, so he had to resort to both begging and petty thievery to keep body and soul together. Even so, his clothes were in rags, his cheeks were sunken, and hunger gleamed in his eyes. (p.32)

The protagonist used to fool everyone. The lines below show how he was trapped in the forest and was not getting a way out of it. The moral of the story is whatever bad or evil we do, we have to pay for it.

He walked and walked without coming to the end of the wood, and finally he realized that he had only been walking around in the same part of the forest. All at once he recalled his thoughts about the world and the rattrap. Now his own turn had come. He had let himself be fooled by a bait and had been caught. The whole forest, with its trunk and branches, its thicket and fallen logs, closed in upon him like an impenetrable prison from which he could not never escape. (p.34)
Chapter 4: A Critical Analysis of the Socio-cultural Content and Context of NCERT English Textbooks at the Senior-Secondary Level

The story shows certain instances where this man stole things from those people who used to help him. However, he changed owing to the good treatment he received in the house where he reached after being lost in the forest.

“You should not have resigned from the regiment”, said the ironmaster. “That was the mistake. If only I had still been in the service at the time, it never would have happened. Now of course you will come home with me. (p.36)

Please don’t think that I have such fine home that you cannot show yourself there”, He said… “Elizabeth is dead, as you may already have heard. My boys are abroad, and there is no one at home except my oldest daughter and myself. We were just saying that it was too bad we didn’t have any company for Christmas. Now come along with me and help us make the Christmas food disappear little faster. (p.37)

“My name is Edla Willmansson,” said the young girl. “My father came home and said that you wanted to sleep in the forge tonight, and then I asked permission to come and bring you home to us. I am so sorry, Captain, that you are having such a hard time. (p.37)

Honoured and noble Miss, “Since you have been so nice to me all day long, as if I was a real captain, I want to be nice to you, in return, as if I was a real captain- for I do not want you to be embarrassed at this Christmas season by a thief; but you can give back the money to the old man on the roadside, who has the money pouch hanging on the window frame as a bait for the poor wanderers. “The rattrap is a Christmas present from a rat who would have been caught in this world’s rattrap if he had not been raised to captain, because in that way he got power to clear himself. (p.42)

This story brings into light the fact that it is not always necessary that a culprit needs only punishment. Even good behaviour towards such people can sometimes be helpful
in bringing them on the right path. Such behaviour can change their view towards life because there is always a possibility for improvement.

Lesson-5 Indigo By Louis Fischer (1896-1970)

Fischer was an Jewish-American journalist. This story is an extract from his book The life of Mahatma Gandhi. The story portrays Gandhiji’s struggle for the poor peasants of Champaran, Bihar in 1917.

This story is about Gandhiji’s struggle to save the poor peasants of Champaran- a district in Bihar- from the injustice done to them by the Britishers. A sharecropper name Rajkumar Shukla made Gandhiji aware about the injustice of the landlord system in Bihar. After waiting for months, Shukla the sharecropper got a chance to take Gandhiji with him to his home town. So first, both went to Patna (capital of Bihar) to meet the lawyer named Rajendra Prasad who later became the President of India. From there they went to Muzaffarpur. Gandhiji actually wanted to survey before taking any step for the welfare of the people of Champaran. He found out that the chief crop grown in that area was indigo and a large part of the arable land was owned by the Britishers and these sharecroppers were mere peasants working for them. When he visited the place he soon realized that this was not only the problem affecting the people of Champaran. Many more problems came into light such as poor health facilities, filthy state of women’s clothes etc. After seeing their pathetic condition Gandhiji decided to stay there for a long period of time and this became a turning point in his life. He taught the people of Champaran a lesson of self-reliance as he helped them in fighting for their rights.

This lesson brings into light the social and cultural backwardness prevailing in India during the British rule in 1917. Although British rule is no more in India but still these problems are there.

Gandhi never contented himself with large political or economic solutions. He saw the cultural and social backwardness in the Champaran villages and wanted to do something about it immediately. (p.53)
Chapter 4: A Critical Analysis of the Socio-cultural Content and Context of NCERT English Textbooks at the Senior-Secondary Level

Primary schools were opened in six villages. Kasturbai taught the ashram rules on personal cleanliness and community sanitation. (p.53)

Health conditions were miserable. Gandhi got a doctor to volunteer his services for six months. Three medicines were available- castor oil, quinine and sulphur ointment. (p.53)

Gandhi noticed the filthy state of women’s clothes. He asked Kasturbai to talk to them about it. One woman took Kasturbai into her hut and said, “Look, there is no box or cupboard here for clothes. The sari I am wearing is the only one I have. (p.53)

But Champaran did not begin as an act of defiance. It grew out of an attempt to alleviate the distress of large numbers of poor peasants. This was the typical Gandhi pattern- his politics were intertwined with the practical, day-to-day problems of the millions. (p.54)

Self-reliance, Indian independence and help to sharecroppers were all bound together. (p.54)

After so many years of Independence, the condition has not improved much. Poverty is still very much there. People below poverty line do not get square meal. They do not have proper clothes to wear. No house is provided to them. Good medical facilities are not available. Their condition is still pathetic.

Lesson-6 Poets and Pancakes By Asokamitran (1931- )

Asokamitran is a Tamil writer. He spent almost a decade working in the Gemini Studio which is located in Chennai. He wrote a book named My Years with Boss in which he talked about his experiences in the Gemini Studio and also about his
interaction with people from Tamil film industry. It was in 1980s that his works got translated into English and he became a well known writer all over India.

It is an autobiographical account which describes the days he spent at the Gemini studio in Madras (now known as Chennai) as a news collector. ‘Pancake’ is the title that refers to the make-up brand used by the famous actors in those days. He also talks about the national integration present in the studio among the people. He describes a man named Subbu who used to work as a make-up boy. He was a man in his early forties already faced many problems when he started his career. But by being a Brahmin by caste he got many advantages as well. It was like an asset for him. The writer also recounts how many famous poets like S.D.S. Yogiar, Sangu Subramanyam, Krishna Sastry and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya also visited this famous studio. The food in the mess was also good. This lesson represents how the writer met several well known personalities and how he felt about it.

The writer has shown through some of the paragraphs that how one gets various advantages if he is born in an upper caste family.

Subbu was the No.2 at Gemini studios. He couldn’t have had a more encouraging opening in films than our grown-up make-up boy had. On the contrary he must have had to face more uncertain and difficult times, for when he began his career, there were no firmly established film producing companies or studios. Even in the matter of education, specially formal education, Subbu couldn’t have had an appreciable lead over our boy. But by virtue of being born a Brahmin- a virtue, indeed!- he must have had exposure to more affluent situations and people. (p.59)

The writer has recorded a very negative note about Communists.

A Communist was a Godless man- he had no filial or conjugal love; he had no compunction about killing his own parents or his children; he was always out to cause and spread unrest and violence among innocent and ignorant people. Such notions which prevailed everywhere else in South India at that time
also, naturally, floated about vaguely among the khadi-clad poets of Gemini Studios. (p.62)

The national integration as described by the writer shows how people from different regions handled this make-up department one by one.

The make-up department was first headed by a Bengali who became too big for a studio and left. He was succeeded by a Maharashtrian who was assisted by a Dharwar Kannadiga, an Andhra, a Madras Indian Christian, an Anglo-Burmese and the usual local Tamils. All this shows that there was a great deal of national integration long before A.I.R. and Doordarshan began broadcasting programmes on national integration. (p.58)

This lesson talks about the caste system present in the society and how advantageous it is to belong to a high caste. It also focuses on the importance of national integration. Working together, helping others without considering their class or caste always lead a group or an organization to success.

Lesson-7 The Interview By Christopher Silvester (1959- )

Christopher Silvester worked as a reporter for about a decade. He has also written for several newspapers and magazines. This is taken from the introduction he wrote for the Penguin Book of interviews: An Anthology from 1959 to the Present Day.

“The Interview” written by Christopher Silvester gives a brief introduction about a new invention- the interview. In today’s world, an interview has become a common thing in journalism but it was invented one hundred thirty years ago. However, opinions pertaining to the interview-about its function, methods and also its merits and demerits vary considerably. Some claim it to be a source of bringing truth before the world, others call it immoral. They say, it is something which disturbs the personal life of a person. Silvester has listed down well known writers who are not in favour of interviews- V.S. Naipaul, Lewis Carroll, Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells. The second part of this lesson is an extract from an interview of Umberto Eco, a Professor at the University of Bologna in Italy. Through this interview taken by Mukund Padmanabham, a reporter in The Hindu, we come to know about the aspects of Eco’s
style of writings and also about his ideas. Through his modest answers related to his
career, he tells the secret of his success. How he got an appreciation for his thesis
when he was only twenty-two. That appreciation gave him courage to write further
and helped him to reach this level of success. As we go through this interview, it gives
us an impression that Umberto Eco does not think that interview is a taboo, instead he
interacted with the interviewer Mukund properly and modestly.

Lesson-8  Going Places     By A.R. Barton (       )

Barton lives in Zurich. He is a modern writer and writes in English.

The title of this story Going Places is an idiomatic term which means to
succeed especially in one’s career. The story revolves around the life of a teenager
named Sophie. She is also like the other children of her age who have fantasies and
desires. Although she has a weak socio-economic background but still her dreams are
big which she wants to fulfill in future once she will start earning on her own either by
working as a manager or else by becoming an actress. She dreams of owning her own
boutique. Sophie’s friend Jansie is more realistic and always tries to pull Sophie to
reality but fails to do so. Sophie lives in a house with her parents and her two brothers
namely, Geoff and little Derek. Though she always keep telling her parents about her
dreams but they think that she is too young for all this. The central part of this story is
Sophie’s fascination for a famous Irish football player, Danny Casey whom she has
seen several times during matches. She again made a story and tells it to her brother
Geoff. He is more sensible and does not really believe her even if she wants him to.
According to this wild story, made by her Danny Casey has promised her to meet
again. She got so much pulled into the story she made that she herself start believing it
to be true. She waits for him but obviously he never came. She got disappointed by
this incident but after all this was her own story. However, she still dreams about it
undisturbed.

The writer has presented various characters. One is a day dreamer. Other
believes in reality. Overall, this story shows that it is important to be realistic in life. It
is good to dream but one should not live in dream. Sophie has been shown to be a day
dreamer but also the problem is her family’s poor socio-economic condition which
stops her from fulfilling her dreams.
POETRY

1. My Mother at Sixty-six

Kamala Das, one of India’s prominent poets, was born in Kerala. Originality, versatility and the indigenous flavour of the soil are the qualities of her poems. Some of her famous works include the novel, Alphabet of Lust, a collection of short stories, Padmavati the Harlot and other stories. Being a sensitive writer she captured the complex subtleties of human relationships. This poem is a perfect example of her art and craft.

The poem begins with the poet’s journey to the airport with her mother. On the way she suddenly got stuck by the thought that her mother has grown old. In order to avoid the fear which has come up with this realization, she started looking out of the window. The trees were racing past the speeding car. This came as a reminder to her that time is moving fast. She then looks at the children playing and that brings back the memory of her childhood. That was a time when her mother was young but now she has grown old and one day she will leave this world and will get separated from her. As they reached the airport, the poet went inside. Her mother came only to drop. After getting inside the airport the poet looks back again at her mother and felt that similar pain of losing her. But with this mixed feeling of sadness and fear she bade goodbye to her mother with the hope to meet her again. She kept smiling as to hide her real feelings.

The kind of bond a daughter shares with her mother and how they feel when they have to be separated has been beautifully described by Kamala Das thus:

Driving from my parent’s home to Cochin last Friday morning,
I saw my mother beside me,
doze, open mouthed, her face ashen like that
of a corpse and realized with pain
that she was as old as she looked (p.90)
but after the airport’s security check, standing a few
yards away, I looked again at her, wan pale,
as a late winter’s moon and felt that old
familiar ache, my childhood’s fear. (p.90-91)

2. An Elementary School Classroom in a Slum    By Stephen Spender (1909-1995)

Spender was an English poet, novelist and an essayist. He worked mainly on the
themes of social injustice and class struggle. This poem echoes the poet’s political
views and expresses the difficulties faced by the children in slum.

In the first stanza, poet has described the condition of children living in a
slum. They have been presented as unwanted, like rootless weeds. Their untidy hair
and their pale colour show their deprived condition. Boys are very thin. These
children seem to be exhausted both physically as well as emotionally. But still there
are dreams in their eyes. The second stanza is about the state of the classroom in
which they study. The classroom has not been painted for a long time. Therefore, the
atmosphere seems to be depressed inside it. There are several pictures on the wall but
all are meaningless for these children. The poet suggests that these children have been
trapped in this hopeless situation. The third stanza is all about the poet’s aggressive
views related to Shakespeare. He thinks that this beautiful world with ships and sun
which Shakespeare presents through his stories and poems, mislead these children.
The reality is far from this unreal world of Shakespeare. The very last stanza is a kind
of an appeal to the officials who never visit such places and not even bother about the
conditions in which these children in a slum are leading their life.

This poem is a comment on the condition of schools where children from
slums go. The kind of treatment they get and how much attention is paid by the
teachers to them. In India, a similar kind of situation is there in government schools
where number of teachers in proportion to the number of students is very less. They
do not have proper classrooms. Even the teachers are least bothered about how to
teach them properly. These children require special attention in schools, as most of
them have parents who are illiterate so they cannot get any help from them at home.
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The lines below show the pathetic condition of the slum children.

Far far from gusty waves these children’s faces.
Like rootless weeds, the hair torn round their pallor:
The tall girl with her weighted-down head. The paper-
seeming boy, with rat’s eyes. The stunted, unlucky heir
of twisted bones, reciting a father’s gnarled disease,
His lesson from his desk. (p.92)

On the walls of their classroom they have everything hanging
but of no use to them.
On sour walls, donations. Shakespeare’s head,
Cloudless at dawn, civilized dome riding all cities.
Belled, flowery, Tyrolese valley. Open-handed map
Awarding the world its world. And yet, for these
Children, these windows, not this map, their world,
Where all their future’s painted with a fog. (p.92)

Nobody visits them to inspect their bad condition. There is a need to bring them out of
such poor condition and this can be done only when some high officials go there and
do something about this problem. This is a major social problem of our country too.
Unless, governor, inspector, visitor,

This map becomes their window and these windows
That shut upon their lives like catacombs,
Break o break open till they break the town
And show the children to green fields, and make their world
Run azure on gold sands, and let their tongues
Run naked into books. (p.93)
3. Keeping Quiet

By Pablo Neruda (1904-1973)

Neruda is the pen name of Neftali Ricardo Basoal. He was a Chilean poet who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971. His poems are varied and have their own richness. Through his poems he focused on the events that occur on daily basis.

The poem begins with the poet is asking everyone to count till twelve and be still after it.

    Let’s not speak in any language. (p.95)

The line intends to dissolve the boundary of language. The poet wants people to let their thoughts and ideas move freely and suggests them to be calm. The poet also tries to make people understand that it would be a different experience if everything would come to a standstill. The main purpose behind writing this poem is to bring brotherhood not only amongst human beings but also between human beings and nature as well. People should stop hurting each other and this would only be possible when they understand each others’ problems and situations. Exploitation of nature must be stopped soon. The poet puts forward the irony of war where everybody experiences a loss in some way or the other.

    The poem also reveals the reason behind why people work i.e. to live and to survive. But living life with peace is something which needs to be focused on. This mutual understanding is in some way or the other important for peaceful co-existence:

        let’s not speak in any language,
        let’s stop for one second
        and not move our arms so much. (p.95)

The idea behind the above lines is to break the barrier created by language which makes people not to talk with each other.

        Fishermen in the cold sea
        Would not harm whales
        and the man gathering salt
        would look at his hurt hands. (p.95)
People are not only hurting themselves but also nature.

Those who prepare green wars,

wars with gas, wars with fire,

victory with no survivors,

would put on clean clothes

and walk about with their brothers

in the shade, doing nothing. (p.96)

These lines promote brotherhood by urging people to move together and not to get involved in wars.

The message imparted by this poem is to spread brotherhood and to live life in peace. It shows that it is sometimes important to change our daily routine and to think about ourselves as well as about the people around us. It urges people not to be aggressive towards the environment.

4. A Thing of Beauty               By John Keats (1795-1821)

John Keats was a British Romantic poet. His works were not received well during his lifetime but it was after his death that his works were highly appreciated. By the end of the nineteenth century he became one of the most famous English poets. Keats’s poems are characterized by sensual imagery.

This poem is about a young shepherd and a poet named Endymion, who used to live on Mount Latmos. One day he had a vision of moon Goddess, Cynthia. This young man got so much enchanted by her beauty that he decided to find her out and so he wandered away through the forest and down under the sea. This extract talks about the difference that lies between an ordinary object and an object of beauty. According to the poet, the effect of an ordinary thing is temporary but a thing of beauty leaves a permanent effect on our senses. Such effects made by beautiful things remain for a long period of time on our senses and does not easily fade away. Everything in this world has beauty and beauty also lies in the eyes of the beholder. Keats has described the sun, the moon, these trees, the sheep and the daffodils as
objects of beauty. It is patience which is required in order to see the beauty present in this world.

The moral we get is that this world is full of beautiful things and it is time and patience which are essential to admire them. But people in this twenty-first century lack both these.

5. A Roadside Stand By Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Frost has been one of the highly acclaimed poets of the twentieth century. He was born in California, USA. In his poems, he presents characters, people and landscape. He talks about human tragedies and fear and also about his reactions towards the complexities of life and how he accepts the burden in his own life.

The poem describes how poor people living outside the city make small shops on the roadside in the hope that people from the city will pass their way and will buy some goods from them. This will bring to these poor people some money for their survival. But unfortunately, city people do not even bother about these small roadside stands. Sometimes they either stop to buy some fruits or to ask the way. These people living outside the city do not have facilities like people living in cities have. But still they are living with this hope that someday their conditions will improve, or that government will do something for them.

The condition of people living on roadside in India seems somewhat better because large number of people in India live below poverty line and they cannot afford to buy things from malls or large shopping complexes. They cannot go to big restaurants so they are obviously more dependent on these roadside stands whether inside the city or on the highways.

This poem brings into light the lives of poor deprived people. Poverty is an important socio-cultural issue of India and this poem written by Frost presents these issues with clarity and sympathy.

The little old house was out with a little new shed
A roadside stand that too pathetically pled (p.100)
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The lines below show how poor people due to lack of money cannot afford to live in the city and enjoy the city life like other people do and also how they are waiting for the government to help them as they made promises

Here far from the city we make our roadside stand
And ask for some city money to feel in hand
To try if it will not make our being expand,
And give us the life of the moving-pictures’ promise
That the party in power is said to be keeping from us.
(p.101)

It is in the news that all these pitiful kin
Are to be bought out and mercifully gathered in
To live in villages, next to the theater and the store,
Where they won’t have to think for themselves anymore.
(p.101)

6. Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers By Andrienne Rich (1929- )

An American poet, Rich is widely known for her involvement in contemporary women’s movement. She was a poet, an essayist as well a feminist. She is still regarded as one of the most influential poets of the second half of the twentieth century. Through this poem, she has presented the constraints in married life which a woman experiences.

The first stanza begins with the description of an embroidery Jennifer was doing. She was knitting tigers which are fearless of their environment. Their bright colour depicts their powerful and radiant persona. There is certainty and confidence in the movement of these tigers. The second stanza reveals how feeble, weak and enslaved Aunt Jennifer is. She is just the opposite of the kind of tiger she was knitting. The poem clearly indicates how much she is suffering on account of her wedding and also how badly her husband is dominating her. The last stanza is a kind of note
regarding Aunt Jennifer’s death. Though she did not get any freedom when she was alive but her work of art will always remain free from fear and will live proudly ever

Aunt Jennifer’s fingers fluttering through her wool

Find even the ivory needle hard to pull. (p.103)

The massive weight of Uncle’s wedding band

Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer’s hands. (p.103)

When Aunt is dead. Her terrified hands will lie

Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by. (p.103)

This poem was written during the time when the role of a woman was that of a home maker. She was not supposed to go out and live her life freely. This is the presentation of the poet’s inner desire to set herself free from the clutches of her marriage due to which she was living with an abusive husband. It is a kind of criticism on patriarchal society. Domestic violence is very common in India both in poor families and the rich. The reasons may vary. But there is a need to fight against it. Many women remain quiet and keep facing such violence at home.

*Flamingo* for class twelfth is divided into two parts: prose and poetry. The prose section aims to provide an insight into a wide variety of genres and themes, and writings from different parts of the world. They take into account the interests of young adults while making them aware of the socio-political issues that will confront them as they step into the world outside their school. Alphonse Daudet’s “The Last Lesson” deals with the theme of language imposition and language loyalty. Anees Jung’s “Lost Spring” is a description of the lives of the street children. “Deep Water” by William Douglas is an account of his personal experience of overcoming the fear of swimming. Selma Lagerlof’s “The Rattrap” captures the basic goodness in a human being in the face of materialistic cravings. Louis Fischer’s “Indigo” portrays Gandhiji in action, helping peasants in securing legal justice. Asokamitran’s “Poets and Pancakes” is about his own experience in the Gemini studio where he used to work. Christopher Silvester’s “The Interview” is a kind of an introduction to media writing. “Going Places” by A. R. Barton explores the theme of adolescent hero-worship and
daydreaming. In the poetry section, Kamala Das’s “My mother at Sixty-Six” touches a personal chord about the elderly. Stephen Spender’s “An Elementary School Classroom in a slum” sensitively brings out the discrepancy between the formal education system and the reality of the lives of the poor. “Keeping Quiet” by Pablo Neruda emphasizes the need to instil the spirit of brotherhood among the people of the world. “A Thing of Beauty” by John Keats tells us how nature mesmerizes us and takes away all our sorrows. Robert Frost’s “A Roadside Stand” presents the rural-urban economic divide. It compares the life of the poor with that of the rich. “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” gives expression to the voice of women oppressed by the institution of marriage.

Discussing the comprehensive questions provided at the end of each lesson is crucial in bringing out the message imparted by them and also to put light on the socio-economic issues prevailing in India. Mother tongue plays a role in one’s life. It makes a strong bond between the people of a country or a region, and unites them with a common language. This fact clearly comes out with a question in *The Last Lesson*: The people in this story suddenly realize how precious their language is to them. What shows you this? Why does this happen? It is our society most of the times which restricts people living below poverty line to grow economically. For example, in India people keep small children to work in their homes because they can be paid less. Owing to the pathetic condition of poor families, they are bound to make their children work. This problem of child labour does not allow these children to study and also destroys their childhood. Special plans should be prepared to eliminate child labour from India. The issue is highlighted thus: Why should child labour be eliminated and how? In India, caste system has also been a major socio-cultural issue for centuries. This problem has been put forward in *Poets and Pancakes* but questions fail to focus on it. In slum areas the living conditions are poor and even the condition of schools is not better. The kind of attention these children from slums require, the work being done in this direction is not up to the mark. They require special attention from higher authorities but unfortunately they do not visit them in order to improve their school’s condition. The question in *An Elementary School Classroom in a slum*: What does the poet want for the children of the slums? How can their lives be made to change? provides a message that it is important to deal with the issue of slum areas.
Government claims to help people living in villages. They also talk about the number of schemes for the farmers but how much they work for them. This is the reason why people living in rural areas are unable to have those facilities which people in the city get. This problem of rural India has been pointed out by two questions given in A Roadside Stand: The Government and other social agencies appear to help the poor rural people, but actually these do them no good. Pick out the words and phrases that the poet uses to show their double standards. The other question is: Which lines tell us about the insufferable pain that the poet feels at the thought of the plight of the rural poor? The problem of domestic violence is spread all over India. It is not only amongst the poor people but also in the high society. Reasons may vary but it exists in many homes. Women are suffering and still not saying anything owing to the norms of the society. This problem has been exposed by two questions in Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers: What is suggested by the image, ‘massive weight of Uncle’s wedding band’? The second one is Do you sympathize with Aunt Jennifer? What is the attitude of the speaker towards Aunt Jennifer?

To conclude, this book discusses various socio-cultural issues prevailing in India such as poverty, child labour, caste system, poor condition in slum areas and domestic violence. There is also a focus on brotherhood and peaceful co-existence which are essential for our society. Apart from these, the book also throws light on the importance of our mother tongue. Mother tongue plays a crucial role in framing our mind. It helps in the formation of an individual. It represents our cultural identity so lack of its knowledge presents an identity crisis which actually can loosen our roots. So in order to be a part of a society or to follow globalization it is not necessary that we pursue a global language and in turn ignore what is our mother tongue. But if we look this point from the other side, love of our mother tongue does not mean that we should not respect other languages or start treating them as useless or unimportant.

Poverty and child labour are linked together. These problems are acting as hurdles in the development of India. It is children who face poverty acutely. It affects them both physically as well as mentally. They work in order to earn money so that their parents will get some help in order to run their family. Though these problems are universal but in India, it is more crucial. Extreme poverty is basically the main reason for the wide prevalence of child labour.
Caste system is affecting India badly in the sense that it is making people more exposed to stereotyping, prejudice and many other social evils. It does not allow people to mix up properly with each other. Therefore, this issue of casteism comes in the way of unity and integrity of India. In order to remove it completely, it is essential to develop a strong public opinion against it. This can be done by teachers, scholars, thinkers, writers etc. because their words are more effective and they leave a long lasting impression on our minds.

Another problem is of those people who live in slum areas. Not only have they been exploited physically but also psychologically. They do not get proper facilities and not even proper education through which they can grow economically and can lead a better life. In India, there are slums in almost all cities, whether they are small or metropolitan cities. The condition of slums is becoming worse day by day but there is no one to listen to their voice, to redress their pathetic condition and also to understand their problems. Slums are increasing due to urbanization. Many people are shifting from villages to cities. They are mostly skilled or semi-skilled labour. But it is important that their children should get proper education in order to make their future better. The role of education is crucial for the betterment of the people living in slums.

Domestic violence has been an intrinsic part of the Indian society. At present, this social issue of domestic violence afflicts rural areas, towns, cities and metropolitan areas as well. It affects all age groups, social classes, gender etc. Anyone could be a victim or a victimizer. But in majority of cases, it is women and children who are being exploited much. In India, which has a patriarchal society where men exploit women in order to be in a commanding position and also to show their supremacy all the time. It is really a big task for those who are working to remove this socio-economic problem. Many NGOs have been working for it.
Peaceful coexistence is relevant for every society. But in the twenty-first century, nations are more involved in wars both with other nations as well as in internal wars. So these wars are taking people away from each other and converting peaceful environment into a violent one.
4.4 Vistas for Class Twelfth

*Vistas* for Class Twelfth is prescribed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was revised in January 2012, published by the Publication Department by the Secretary, NCERT, New Delhi.

The main objective of this book is to make extensive reading an enjoyable experience, lead students to appreciate some of the best examples of writing and to understand the social milieu they live in. Extensive reading is important in order to make readers fluent and confident.

**Lesson-1 The Third Level By Jack Finney (1911-1995)**

Jack Finney was an American novelist and a short story writer. Thrillers and works of science fiction were his specialization.

This story is about a man named, Charley. He was an ordinary man. One day he was in a hurry and surprisingly reached the third level of the Grand Central station located in New York. He was aware that there were only two levels. He found people dressed differently. Everything at the station seemed very old fashioned. Soon he realized that he had gone back into the time when his grandfather was young i.e. in 1890s. He decided to buy a ticket and visit his hometown which he always wished to. But when he went to the ticket counter he found that he did not have that old currency to buy the ticket for himself and his wife Louisa. So at that moment he left the station and went home. Next day during lunch hour he bought the old style currency from a shop and again reached the station. But this time the third level was not there. He tried searching for that door from where he reached the third level but in vain. When he told his wife Louisa about the incident, she got worried about him. She asked him to visit the psychiatrist and discuss this problem with him. So Charley visited Sam who was his friend as well as a psychiatrist by profession. He told him everything. It was proved that the third level did exist. Sam disappeared one day and Charley found a first-day cover in his grandfather’s collection of stamps. The paper inside it was not blank as it was used to be. When Charley read the paper he got to know that his friend Sam also searched for the third level at the station and now he has reached Galesburg with his wife and living a peaceful life as he always wished to because Sam was a city...
boy and had a desire to live in a place like Galesburg. Sam wanted Charley and his wife Louisa also to join them back in the 1890s.

The story presents one of the major problems of today's world i.e. life is full of fears and worries. Everybody wishes to escape into some other world where they can live happily and can also enjoy their life. What is actually a major requirement is a stress-free living. Stress has been affecting the society and people at large.

Lesson-2 The Tiger King By Kalki (1899-1954)

Kalki was the pen name of R. Krishnamurthy, an eminent Tamil writer. This story “The Tiger King” is a satire on the conceit of those in power. The story also conveys a message about saving environment which is a major issue these days. The writer has presented a picture showing how the rulers in those days as politicians today are not interested in serving people or working for the welfare of the public; instead they spend time on their own pursuits.

The narrative is about the king of Pratibandapuram who later became famous as a Tiger king. This tale takes readers to the days of autocratic and freakish kings who used to waste time and money on their interest and not for the welfare of the people of their kingdom. Tiger King’s real name was Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur and when he was just ten days old, a prophecy was uttered by the astrologers about the manner of his death. They gave the explanation that this boy was born in the hour of bull and since, bull and the tiger are considered as enemies. Therefore, he will be killed by the tiger. The small boy grew up and became the king of his kingdom. He decided to start killing all the tigers present in his state as there were many forests in Pratibandapuram and there were tigers in them. The real danger was the hundredth tiger as told by the astrologer. For attaining his target he banned the killing of tigers by anybody except him in his kingdom. He also issued an order that if anybody will go against his wish, all his property and wealth will be forfeited. The Maharaja decided to keep all his works pending until he will reach his target of hundred tigers. He also did not allow even the British officers to visit his kingdom for hunting tigers. His throne came into danger of being taken away by the British officers but he did not care about it. His major concern was killing tigers at any cost. Gradually with time population of tiger became less in his kingdom. In order to continue hunting further
he married a princess whose father had large forests in his kingdom. When only one tiger remained to be killed to reach the tally of hundred, the king became more anxious and when his anxiety reached its peak, he started suspending his officers and also asked his minister to double the land tax. In order to save the kingdom from going into the hands of the British officers, the minister decided to get a tiger from the People’s Park present in Madras. Maharaja saw this tiger and shot it. The tiger fell down. Finally, he got satisfied that he had killed the hundredth tiger. But when the king left the place, the hunters found that bullet had missed the target. The tiger was still alive. They killed it on their own without telling the king about it. In this way the hunters killed the hundredth tiger and King thought that it was he who had killed it. Later due to an infection caused by the sliver of wood killed the King. This sliver was part of a wooden toy which was in the form of a tiger.

It is a kind of satire on the people in power. Instead of working to improve the condition of people they focus more on their personal whims.

There statement below may act as a social offensive to the people of Hindu religion as they worship cow.

You may kill even a cow in self defence. (p.10)

But If we look at it from the other perspective it tells the importance of cow in our country. Elements of superstition are also present in the story.

In his own state sheep began to disappear frequently from a hillside village. It was first ascertained that this was not the work of Khader Mian Saheb or Virasani Naiker, both famed for their ability to swallow sheep whole. (p.14)

The above statement show how foolish people were to believe in such things as swallowing of sheep as a whole by a human being.

There is a belief in the Hindu religion that if a person is born with some faults in his luck so before getting married to some other person he or she should get married to an object so that whatever wrong is going to happen with his or her wife or husband that will pass on to that object. Again this is an example of superstition.

The lesson indirectly criticizes the killing of innocent animals.
Lesson-3  Journey to the end of the Earth  By Tishani Doshi (1975- )

Tishani Doshi is an Indian poet and a journalist. She works as a freelance writer.

This story is the narration of the writer’s personal experience of visiting Antarctica with a group of teenagers to spread awareness amongst them about saving our environment and ecosystem. Human beings are always curious to know what actually happened in the past and also what will happen in the future. But it is relevant to communicate this message to the people around us that the work done to save our environment at present can eventually help us in the future. Antarctica was a dry and hot landmass million of years ago and it could again become the same if human beings will not discontinue destroying the environment. This story is a kind of warning to the people. The writer gives a description of how Antarctica has several species under the layers of ice. It is a place of peace. There is no disturbance as there are no human beings living there.

Here is a description of Antarctica by the writer:

Antarctica’s expansive white landscape and uninterrupted blue horizon was relief… (p.18)

The visual scale ranges from the microscopic to the mighty: midges and mites to blue whales and icebergs as big as countries. (p.20)

Days go on and on and on in surreal 24- hour austral summer light, and a ubiquitous silence, interrupted only by the occasional avalanche or calving ice sheet, consecrates the place. (p.20)

As to the harm caused by the human beings to the environment:

The rapid increase of human population has left us battling with other species for limited resources, and the unmitigated burning of fossil fuels has now created a blanket of carbon dioxide around the world. (p.20)
Scientists warn that a further depletion in the ozone layer will affect the activities of phytoplankton, which in turn will affect the lives of all the marine animals and birds of the region, and the global carbon cycle. (p.22)

The current debate is on climate change and this lesson focuses on it well.

**Lesson-4**  **The Enemy**   **By Pearl S. Buck (1892-1973)**

Buck was an American writer and a novelist by profession. In this story she talks about a prisoner of war is washed ashore in a dying state and is found at the doorstep of a Japanese doctor. The story very poignantly deals with the doctor’s moral perplexity as regards making a choice between saving the dying man as a doctor or handing him over to the army as a patriot.

It was the time of the World War when Dr. Sadao, a Japanese doctor found a wounded American soldier on the beach near his house. Being a doctor he decided to look after him till he gets well. Hana, his wife initially asked his husband to leave the wounded soldier as she thought it would be dangerous for her husband as well as for the entire family. But later she helped him when the servants left the house. She assisted her husband in operating upon the soldier in spite of her physical discomfort and hesitation. Though it was a war time, everybody was needed at the front. The General was in pain so he asked a messenger to call Dr. Sadao. He went to see the General and told him about the wounded soldier. General assured Dr. Sadao that he will not be in trouble because of that soldier. He decided to send two assassins at night to Dr. Sadao’s house who would kill the wounded soldier quietly. Sadao agreed to this because of Hana and his family. He went back home thinking about the General’s plan. He got surprised to note that American soldier Tom standing on his feet. For two consecutive nights, Sadao did not sleep properly thinking about the assassins when he knew that his patient was improving. Finally, he decided to help the soldier to escape on a boat. After that he told the General that the soldier escaped on his own.

The story gives a moral that every profession has its own responsibilities and it is the duty of every person to fulfill them. Here the writer has discussed the medical
profession as some people worship doctors like a God but in return doctors care less about the patients in today’s world.

He had met Hana in America, but he has waited to fall in love with her until he was sure she was Japanese. His father would never have received her unless she had been pure in her race.

(p.25)

The above statement brings out the fact that this caste system or the mentality of marrying someone of his or her own caste or religion does not exist only in India but also in other parts of the world as it is shown here about Japan.

Sadao hesitated again. “The strange thing is,” he said, “that if the man were whole I could turn him over to the police without difficulty. I care nothing for him. He is my enemy. All Americans are my enemy. And he is only a common fellow. You see how foolish his face is. But since he is wounded…”

(p.28)

Here comes out the feeling of being a doctor before being a patriot. Humanism comes first. Although being loyal to one’s own country is important but saving someone’s life is more important.

Sadao said harshly “Americans are our enemies. But I have been trained not to let a man die if I can help it.” (p.37)

An element of superstition is also present in the statement by the servants of the doctor’s family.

“‘The master ought not to heal the wound of this white man,”’ he said bluntly to Hana. “The white man ought to die. First he was shot. Then the sea caught him with her rocks. If the master heals what the gun did and what the sea did they will take revenge on us.” (p. 30)

Even the servants blame doctor and his wife for being anti-national by saving this American.
That young master is so proud of his skill to save life that he saves any life. The cook said contemptuously. (p.37)

“Sadao, Yumi tells me the servants feel they cannot stay if we hide this man here anymore,” she said. “She tells me that they are saying that you and I were so long in America that we have forgotten to think of our own country first. They think we like Americans.” (p.36)

I guess if all the Japanese were like you there wouldn’t have been a war. (p.42)

War is again a universal issue, a problem for everybody. It not only kills people but also causes a lot of destruction leading to loss of property and life. It is the erosion of values among people which is causing havoc in our society leading to murder, robbery, forgery, dowry deaths etc. in today’s world. Value-based education is essential to save the society. Such education in schools and colleges can help in reforming our society and restoring our faith in humanity.

Lesson-5 Should Wizard Hit Mommy By John Updike (1932-2009)

John Updike was an American poet, novelist, short story writer as well as a literary critic. He received Pulitzer Prize more than once for fiction. His fiction focuses on passions and sufferings of average Americans. The characters of his fiction were those who frequently experienced personal turmoil and responded to crisis whether related to religion, family obligations or marital infidelity. In this story, the writer has raised an issue regarding children’s decision.

The story is about a family which has four members: Jack and his wife Clare and their two kids, Jo and Bobby. Jo used to hear stories from her father at bed time. The peculiarity of Jack’s story was that all his stories had an animal named Roger. Sometimes it is Roger squirrel or Roger fish or Roger Chipmunk etc. Jo decided to name Roger as Roger Skunk in her father’s new story. When he started narrating the story, he described Roger Skunk an animal with a very bad smell. He used to smell so
bad that none of his animal friends was ready to play with him. One day he met an old wise owl and the owl suggested Roger to meet the wizard for help. When Roger met the wizard, he converted Roger’s bad smell into smell of roses. All the animals loved his new smell and started playing with Roger Skunk. When Roger’s mother came to know about it she took Roger again to that wizard and asked him to turn Roger’s good smell into the bad one. Here in the story came a point when little girl Jo asked her dad Jack to change the end of the story. According to her this was not the correct decision taken by Roger Skunk’s mother. But Jack did not agree with her.

The story raises a moral issue regarding parental prejudices on children. It is not always necessary that decisions taken by parents are correct and whatever children feel or say is incorrect. So it is important to hear what children say and if it is correct, it should be considered properly.

The lines below show the prejudices of parents:

He said, ‘But Mommy, all the other little animals run away,’ and she said, ‘I don’t care. You smelled the way a little skunk should have and I’m going to take you right back to that wizard,’ (p.53)

The Wizard said ‘O.K.’ and Roger Skunk did not smell of roses any more. He smelled very bad again. (p.53)

Lesson-6 On the Face of it By Susan Hill (1942- )

Susan Hill is a British writer. In this play she has talked about the friendship between two people who belong to two different generations- an old man and a young boy. The writer has described the old man as very cooperative and lively. On the other hand, the young boy has been shown as obstinate, uncooperative and reluctant.

The play begins with a scene where Derry, the little boy entered the garden which belonged to Mr. Lamb. But Derry felt a bit irritated after meeting Mr. Lamb. He tried to make Derry feel at ease with him. The reason was his condition which was very similar to that of Derry. Mr. Lamb lost his leg in war and knew how it feels to
live a life as a disabled person. Mr. Lamb had a positive attitude to life whereas Derry was extremely sensitive about his scarred face and had a fixed opinion about his disability. But in spite of his skeptical attitude, he was moved by the old man’s spirit. This was evident from the fact that he returned to meet Mr. Lamb but a little too late. When Derry regained the courage and came out of his shell of loneliness he was confronted by the death of the only person he had befriended with.

Derry: You think… ‘Here’s a boy.’ You look at me … and then you see my face and you think. ‘That’s bad. That’s a terrible thing. That’s the ugliest thing I ever saw.’ You think, ‘Poor boy.’ but I’m not. Not poor. Underneath, you are afraid. Anybody would be. I am. When I look in the mirror, and see it, I’m afraid of me. (p.57)

The above extract gives a very clear picture of what this young boy thinks about him. He has this perception that nobody likes him. Everybody avoids him. He is partly right because he has heard many people talking about him in that way:

Derry: … Do you know, one day, a woman went by me in the street- I was at a bus stop – and she was with another woman, and she looked at me, and she said….whispered….only I heard her…. she said, “Look at that, that’s a terrible thing. That’s a face only a mother could love.” (p.61)

The old man tries to make him feel at ease.

Derry: ‘It’s not what you look like, it’s what you are inside. Handsome is as handsome does.” (p.60)

The above presents the positive attitude of Derry towards life but it the society which has made him feel in that way. Even his own mother did not understand his problem.

Derry: And think of all those people worse off than you. Think, you might have been blinded, or born deaf, or have to live in a wheelchair, or be daft in your head and dribble.” (p. 60)
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The above lines by Derry show that after meeting Mr. Lamb he realized that their condition would have been worse than what it is now. It is important to be satisfied with what we have and not to rue over what we do not have.

Derry: And no one’ll kiss me, ever. Only my mother, and she kisses me on the other side of my face, and I don’t like my mother to kiss me. She does it because she has to. (p.60)

It is the society which does not allow such people to forget their disability and move forward in life with a positive attitude. These people require support from their family and society. Instead of pointing out their weakness, a good society should help them in identifying their strengths. It is again one of the important social issues in our society that disabled people are looked upon with pity which makes such people more miserable.

Lesson-7  Evan Tries an O- Level  By: Colin Dexter (1930- )

Colin Dexter was born in England. He is a novelist and an English crime writer. He is currently working as a consultant on the TV series. He served as a teacher for several years but due to some health problem he left that job.

This story is about a prisoner named James Roderick Evans. Evans, a kleptomaniac escaped from three prisons and this was the fourth time he had been kept in Oxford jail. In a prison he started showing interest in German language and decided to appear in O- level German examination in order to gain some academic qualification. The governor of this prison took utmost care to see that this time Evans did not escape. He prepared for the examination with the help of a teacher whom we can call a tutor as Evans was the only one to take classes as well as to appear for this special examination. The day before the examination, Evan’s German teacher wished him good luck as he was sure that Evans hardly had any chance to pass this examination. But he was amazed by the reply he got from Evans. On the day exam was to be held, Evan’s cell was examined properly by Mr. Jackson and Mr. Stephens, the prison officers. The invigilator Mr. Mc. Lerry was also searched before entering Evans’s cell and was left with Evans to complete the further tasks. The examination went on smoothly. Stephen according to the order as he got through the phone call
escorted the invigilator to the main gate and came back to check Evans into his cell. But he found the invigilator wounded sitting in the cell. Actually the person whom Stephen escorted to the gate was not the invigilator but Evans himself impersonating as the invigilator Mc. Lerry. Evans again succeeded in escaping from the jail. But by the clues he left behind, Governor almost captured him again but failed to stop him.

This story by Colin Dexter has a negative theme i.e. a clever escape planned by a convict. In prison, convicts get opportunities to improve themselves so that when they get release they will be able to live a good and honourable life. But according to this story such opportunities should not be provided because they could be used as a means to escape.

Lesson-8 Memories of Childhood By: Zitkala Sa (1876-1938) and Bama (1958- )

Zitkala Sa was an American writer. She wrote several works chronicling her struggles in her youth as she was pulled back and forth between the influences of the dominant American culture and her own native American heritage. In the United States, a distinction is often made between the indigenous culture of native Americans and a dominant culture that may be described as “Anglo”, “White”, “Middle class” etc.

Bama also known as Faustina Soosairaj, is a Tamil novelist. She rose to fame with her autobiographical novel Karukku (1992), which chronicles the joys and sorrows experienced by Dalit Christian women in Tamil Nadu. There is a discrimination against Dalits within the Christian church itself in Tamil Nadu. There are several problems faced by these Christian Dalits such as separate chapels for Dalits and non-Dalits, Dalits are not allowed to sit on chairs in the church, cannot participate in religious ceremonies etc. Bama has not focused on Dalit Christians in particular but Dalits in general.

“The Cutting of my Long Hair” by Zitkala Sa and “We too are human Beings” by Bama explore a common universal theme or a social issue. Both narrate prejudices and humiliation faced from mainstream culture. Both are brave who used their talent and education to stand up for themselves. They both used the power of pen to fight against oppression.
“The Cutting of my Long Hair” by Zitkala Sa is about the discrimination faced by her at school. On the first day of her school she was told by her friend about the cutting of her long hair. She was told by her mother that unskilled warriors who were captured had short hair. She tried to hide but was dragged, tied to a chair and her long hair was cut off. This cruelty crushed her spirit. That was the time when she remembered the comfort of her home and the kind of care and protection she used to get from her mother.

Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shringled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shringled hair by cowards. (p.95)

I cried aloud. Shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. (p.96)

Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. (p.96)

“We too are Human Beings” by Bama is a story about an innocent child living in a village. She used to walk back home everyday. Her innocence was lost when she experienced untouchability very early in life. One day she saw an elder of her community carrying food packet holding it by its strings. She was surprised but her brother told her that the elder belongs to a low caste as they also do. He explained her that the upper caste people believe that the food would be polluted if it was touched by them. He then told her to work hard for her honour and dignity in the society.

When I was studying in the third class, I hadn’t yet heard people speak openly of untouchability. But I had already seen, felt, experienced and had been humiliated by what it is. (p.96)
… an elder of our street came along from the direction of the bazaar. The manner in which he was walking along made me want to double up. I wanted to shriek with laughter at the sight of such a big man carrying a small packet in that fashion. (p.98)

The above lines show the innocence of this small girl who was unaware of this caste system and untouchability.

The girl went home and told the whole story in a comic manner to her brother.

   But Annan was not amused. Annan told me the man wasn’t being funny when he carried the package like that. He said everybody believed that they were upper caste and therefore must not touch us. If they did, they would be polluted. That’s why we have to carry the package by its string. (p.98)

Her brother also told her;

   Because we are born into this community, we are never given any respect; we are stripped of all that. But if we study and make progress, we can throw away these indignities. (p.99)

The above lines indicate that it is necessary to be educated as education shapes our life and also let us live with dignity.

This book contains eight stories discussing several issues of our society such as how important it is to be loyal to our profession, how disabled people get treated in our society, parental prejudices foisted on children etc. Jack Finney’s “The Third Level” creates an ambience of scientific fantasy. “The Tiger King” by Kalki is a satire on people in power. Tishani Doshi’s “Journey to the end of the Earth” motivates the young readers to go on such expeditions to know more about saving our environment. Pearl. S. Buck’s “The Enemy” presents the importance of human fellow-feeling. “Should Wizard hit Mommy” by John Updike is about a child who participates in the construction of a story with her father and how she raises the issue regarding parental prejudices imposed on children. The play by Susan Hill “On the Face of it” focuses
on human disabilities and the courage with which they live with it. Colin Dexter’s “Evans tries an O-Level” is a description of a criminal who escapes jail by insisting on taking an examination in the prison. “Memories of Childhood” by Zitkala Sa and Bama narrate prejudices and humiliation.

The analysis of the questions given at the end of each lesson is essential for bringing out the message imparted by them and to shed light on the socio-cultural issues prevailing in India. In the twenty-first century, people are living a life which is full of stress. Despite the facilities they avail, life is still full of worries and stress. Most of the people desire to escape the worries of their life. This fact clearly comes out with the questions in The Third Level: Do you think the third level was a medium of escape for Charley? Why? And ‘The modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and stress’. What are the ways in which we attempt to overcome them? To save animals in order to save environment has become an issue these days. For human survival in future it is actually a task to save environment. This major concern of today’s world has been pointed out by the question given in The Tiger King: We need a new system for the age of ecology- a system which is embedded in the care of all people and also in the care of the Earth and of all life upon it. Discuss. In the lesson, Journey to the end of the Earth the question: What are Geoff Green’s reasons for including high school students in The Students on Ice Expedition? has been included to highlight the importance of our environment and more importantly to make students aware about this place called Antarctica. Every member plays a crucial role in a society. Similarly, every profession has its own importance. So how a person maintains a balance between his or her duty towards a society as well as towards the nation at large has been debated through the questions in The Enemy: “There are moments in life when we have to make hard choices between our roles as private individuals and as citizens with a sense of national loyalty. Discuss with reference to the story you have just read.” and “While hatred against the member of the enemy race is justifiable, especially during wartime, what makes a human being rise above narrow prejudices?” In the Indian society, people with some kind of disability are often looked upon as unwanted. Such a behaviour affects them in a negative way and makes them more disheartened. These people require support in the form of care and affection. This has been brought out through the questions in On the face of it: The
actual pain or inconvenience caused by the physical impairment is often much less than the sense of alienation felt by the person with disabilities. What is the kind of behaviour that the person expects from others? and Will Derry get back to his old seclusion or will Mr. Lamb’s brief association effect a change in the kind of life he will lead in the future.? Caste system is a serious socio-cultural issue of Indian society. It has been degrading our society and also not allowing the people to progress in various fields. This message has been brought into light through the question in Memories of Childhood: Bama’s experience is that of a victim of the caste system. What kind of discrimination does Zitka-Sa’s experience depict? What are their responses to their respective situations?

To conclude, Vistas for class twelfth focuses on various socio-cultural and global issues: stress free living, saving animals to save environment, responsibilities of people towards their profession, caste system or the particular problems faced by Dalits in our society, prejudices of children etc.

It is good to live a life without stress as it not only keeps people happy but also keeps them healthy. Stress, fear, worries have become a part of our everyday life. When something goes wrong, people start believing that nothing can go well again. This is all happening because of a busy life people are living. This life style has made people more worried even for minute things. In order to escape from such a life people choose a wrong path. Some start drinking and even some choose to commit suicide in order to escape from this stress which they find difficult to handle.

Protection of animals has become a major concern these days. The major reason for it is our environment. Since, the whole world is interrelated, in order to protect our environment it is important to save animals. Hunting of animals should be banned as hunters kill them for fun and also for earning money by selling their skin, and other valuable body parts. Industrialization is the major reason responsible for the destruction of the environment. In order to settle down people require more area and for this reason they cut down trees. Cutting of trees is leading to the increase in the temperature of our environment. Global warming, greenhouse gases, water, air and land pollution all are destroying our Earth. The more the change in the climate, the more negative the consequences will become.
In India, there are several reasons behind the dysfunction of the medical profession. Doctors are not entirely responsible for everything. The government, the insurance companies, the pharmaceutical companies—all have their role to play. Owing to the increasing population, doctors are unable to provide proper attention to every patient. On the other hand, doctors have been forced by the medical authorities to see more patients in order to earn more money. These days doctors suggest large number of tests, some of which are not even required, so as to get more commission from the labs in which these tests are carried out. All these have become a major threat for our society. So day by day, doctors are losing the respect they used to get from the people for saving their lives.

Discrimination against Dalits is widespread and ingrained in the minds of people across India, particularly in rural areas. The condition of Dalits has not changed from what it has been for centuries. They have been oppressed at every level whether culturally or politically. They cannot enter the place of worship, cannot participate in religious ceremonies. Such kind of discrimination seems unacceptable in the twenty-first century. Even in schools, colleges and universities students from the Dalit community face various kinds of prejudices. Even with the promise of upliftment through reservation by various political parties, Dalits continue to be discriminated or ill treated.