

Long Answer Questions

Q. 1. Explain the picture of the new middle class families, which the novel Pariksha Guru portrays.

Ans. Srinivas Das's novel published in 1882, was titled Pariksha Guru. It cautioned young men of well-to-do families against the dangerous influences of bad company and consequent loose morals. The world of colonial modernity seems to be both frightening and irresistible to the characters.

(i) In the novel, we see the characters attempting to bridge two different worlds through the actions they take.

(ii) They adopted new agricultural technology, modernised trading practices, changed the use of Indian languages, making them capable of transmitting both western sciences and Indian wisdom.

(iii) The young were urged to cultivate the 'healthy habit' of reading the newspapers.

(iv) But the novel emphasised that all this must be achieved without sacrificing the traditional values of middle class household.

Q. 2. What kind of caste war is shown in Indulekha?

Ans. Indulekha was a love story but it was also about a caste issue.

(i) It is about the marriage practices of upper caste Hindus in Kerala, especially the Nambuthiri Brahmins and the Nayers.

(ii) A younger generation of English-educated Nayar men who had acquired property and wealth on their own, began arguing against Nambuthiri alliances with Nayar women. They wanted new laws regarding marriage and property.

(iii) In Indulekha, Suri Nambuthiri, a foolish landlord comes to marry Indulekha. The intelligent heroine rejects him and chooses Madhvan, an educated and handsome Nayar as her husband.

(iv) Suri Nambuthiri desperate to find a partner for himself, finally marries a poorer girl and goes away pretending that he has married Indulekha.

(v) There example is that of Potheri Kunjambu's Saraswativijayam mounting an attack on caste oppression. This novel shows a young man from an 'untouchable caste' who runs away from his village to escape the cruelty of his Brahmin landlord.

(vi) Later on, he becomes a judge and returns to a local court as one. In the end of the trial, he reveals his true identity and then Nambuthiri repents and tries to reform his ways.

Q. 3. How were the effects of 'Industrial Revolution' reflected in the novels?

Ans. (i) When Industrial Revolution began, factories came up, business profits increased but workers faced problems.

(ii) Cities expanded in an unregulated way and were filled with overworked and underpaid workers.

(iii) Deeply critical of these developments, novelists such as Charles Dickens wrote about the terrible effects of industrialisation on people's lives and characters.

(iv) His novel *Hard Times* depicts a fictitious industrial town as a grim place full of machinery, smoking chimneys and rivers polluted.

(v) Dickens criticised not just the greed for profits but also the ideas that reduced human beings into simple instruments of production.

(vi) Dickens' *Oliver Twist* is the tale of a poor orphan who lived in a world of petty criminals and beggars. Oliver was finally adopted by a wealthy man and lived happily ever after.

(vii) Emile Zola's *Germinal* was written on the life of a young miner and ends on a sad note.

Q. 4. What kind of novels were written for the younger generations?

Ans. Most of the novels for the young were full of adventure and love stories.

(i) Books like R.L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* became great hits.

(ii) G.A. Henty's historical adventure novels for boys were also popular during the height of the British empire.

(iii) Love stories written for adolescent girls also became popular in this period.

(iv) In US *Ramona* by Helen Hunt Jackson and a series called, *What Katy did* by Sarah Woolsey, who wrote under the pen name Susan Coolidge also were very popular.

Q. 5. What is the contribution of the novel to colonialism?

Ans. (i) The novel originated in Europe at a time when it was colonising the rest of the world.

(ii) The early novel contributed to colonialism by making the readers feel they were part of a superior community of fellow colonialists.

(iii) The hero of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is an adventurer and slave trader. His ship wrecked on an island; Crusoe treats coloured people not as human beings equal to him but as inferior creatures. He rescues a 'native' and makes him his slave and calls him 'Friday'.

(iv) Crusoe's behaviour was not seen as unacceptable as most of the writers of that time saw colonialism as natural.

(v) Colonised people were seen as primitive and barbaric less than human, and colonial rule was considered necessary to civilise them, to make them fully human.

It was later in the 20th century that some novelists depicted the darker side of colonial occupation.

Q. 6. Describe the development of novels in Bengal.

Ans. In the 19th century, the early Bengali novels lived in two worlds. Many of those novels were located in the past, their character, events and love stories were based on historical events.

Another group of novels depicted the domestic life in contemporary settings. Domestic novels frequently dealt with social problems and romantic relationships between men and women.

Novels were read individually. Sometimes, in a group also. The great Bangla novelist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay would host a 'jatra' in the courtyard, where novels were read aloud among family members.

The novel was also relished for its language. The prose style became a new object of enjoyment. They also used Mayeli, the language associated with women's speech.

Q. 7. How did novels present modernity in their vision?

Ans. (i) Social novelists often created heroes and heroines with ideal qualities, whom their readers could admire and imitate.

(ii) The characters in the novels show how to be modern without rejecting tradition; how to accept ideas coming from the west without losing one's identity.

(iii) Chandu Menon portrayed Indulekha as a woman of breathtaking beauty, high intellectual abilities, artistic talent and with an education in English and Sanskrit.

(iv) Madhavan, the hero of the novel was a member of the newly English-educated class of Nayers from the University of Madras. He was also a Sanskrit scholar. He dressed in western clothes but had kept a long tuft of hair, according to the Nayar custom.

(v) Characters like Indulekha and Madhavan showed readers how Indian and foreign lifestyle could be brought together in an ideal combination.

Q. 8. Give a brief history of how 'novel' was born.

Ans. (i) In ancient times, manuscripts were handwritten. These circulated among very few people.

(ii) In contrast, because of being printed, novels were widely read and became popular very quickly.

(iii) At this time, big cities like London were growing rapidly and becoming connected to small towns and rural areas through print and improved communications.

(iv) As readers were drawn into the story and identified with the lives of fictitious characters, they could think about issues such as the relationship between love and marriage, the proper conduct for men and women and so on. So novel is a modern form of literature, born from print, a mechanical invention.

Q. 9. What does epistolary mean? How were epistolary novels written?

Ans. Epistolary is written in the form of series of letters. The epistolary novel, used the private and personal form of letters to tell its story. Samuel Richardson's Pamela written in the 18th century told much of its story through an exchange of letters between two lovers. These letters tell the readers of the hidden conflicts in the heroine's mind.

Q. 10. What is the theme of Charlotte Bronte's 'Jane Eyre'?

Ans. (i) In Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, published in 1874, young Jane is shown as independent and assertive.

(ii) While girls of her time were expected to be quiet and well behaved, Jane at the age of ten, protests against the hypocrisy of her elders with startling bluntness.

(iii) She tells her Aunt who is always unkind to her; 'People think you a good woman, but you are bad. You are deceitful. I will never call you aunt as long as I live.'

(iv) Such stories allowed women readers to sympathise with rebellious actions. Often women novelists dealt with women who broke established norms of society before adjusting to them.

Q. 11. What do you know about Devaki Nandan Khatri's bestseller 'Chandrakanta'?

Ans. (i) Chandrakanta is a romance with dazzling elements of fantasy—is believed to have contributed immensely in popularising the Hindi language and Nagri script among the educated classes of those times.

(ii) Although it was apparently written purely for the 'Pleasure of reading', this novel also gives some interesting insights into the fears and desires of its reading public.

Q. 12. What types of characters are portrayed in Chandu Menon's novel 'Indulekha'?

Ans. Menon portrayed Indulekha as a woman of breathtaking beauty, with high intellectual abilities, artistic talent and with an education in English and Sanskrit.

Madhavan, the hero of the novel, was also presented in ideal colours. He was a member of the newly English educated class of Nayers from the University of Madras.

He was also a 'first-rate' Sanskrit scholar.

He dressed in western clothes, but at the same time, he kept a long tuft of hair, according to the Nayar custom.

Characters like Indulekha and Madhavan showed readers on how Indian and foreign lifestyles could be brought together in an ideal combination.

Q. 13. Why did Indulekha decide to marry Madhavan out of the way?

Ans. (i) Suri Nambuthiri, the foolish landlord who comes to marry Indulekha, is the focus of much satire in the novel.

(ii) The intelligent heroine rejects him and chooses Madhavan, the educated and handsome Nayar as her husband and the young couple move to Madras, where Madhavan joins the civil services.

(iii) Suri Nambuthiri, desperate to find a partner for himself, finally marries a poorer relation from the same family and goes away pretending that he has married Indulekha.

(iv) Chandu Menon clearly wanted his readers to appreciate the new values of his hero and heroine and criticise the ignorance and immorality of Suri Nambuthiri.

Q. 14. What kind of life is depicted in the novel, "Titash Ekti Nadir Naam"?

Ans. (i) It is an epic about the Mallas, a community of fisherfolk who live off fishing in the river Titash.

(ii) The story is about a child Ananta, whose parents were tragically separated after their wedding night.

(iii) Ananta leaves the community to get educated in the city. The novel describes the community life of Mallas in great detail, their Holi and Kali Puja festivals, boat races, bhatiali songs, their relationships of friendship and animosity with the peasants and the oppression of the upper castes.

(iv) Slowly the community breaks up and the Mallas start fighting amongst themselves as new cultural influences from the cities start penetrating their lives. The life of the community and that of the river is intimately tied. Their end comes together; as the river dries up, the community dies too.