

# Memories of Childhood



**Zitkala**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Zitkala - Sa:



Zitkala - Sa whose original name is Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, born in

1876, was a writer, editor, musician, teacher, and political activist. She wrote several works chronicling her youthful struggles with identity and pulls between the majority culture and her Native American heritage. Some of her famous works are Old Indian Legends, American Indian Stories, "Why I Am a Pagan.", Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes, Legalized Robbery, Dreams and Thunder: Stories, Poems, and The Sun Dance Opera etc.

### Bama:



Bama is the pen-name of a Tamil Dalit woman from a Roman Catholic family. She has published three main works: an autobiography, 'Karukku', 1992; a novel, 'Sangati', 1994; and a collection of short stories, 'Kisumbukkaaran', 1996. The following excerpt has been taken from 'Karukku'. 'Karukku' means 'Palmyra' leaves, which with their serrated edges on both sides, are like double-edged swords. By a felicitous pun, the Tamil word 'Karukku', containing the word 'karu', embryo or seed, also means freshness, newness.

## INTRODUCTION

The Memories of Childhood summary comprises two autobiographical excerpts of Memories of Childhood written by Zitkala Sa and Bama.

Zitkala Sa experienced racial and cultural discrimination, whereas Bama is a victim of caste discrimination. In the summary of childhood memories, Zitkala Sa and Bama looked back and narrated the extracts of childhood, which reflects the relationship with the existing culture. Memories of childhood explanation recount both excerpts showing resistance and rigidity developed in both females who went through the cruel social differences during their juvenility.

## SUMMARY

### 1. The Cutting of My Long Hair

The first part deals with the account of Simmons, An American Indian, who fought against the prejudices of the society against American Indians. She describes her experiences on her

first day at the Carlisle Indian School. Zitkala SA's first day at school was unpleasant. The customs and rules of the place were strange and new to her. She was forced to wear clothes that were considered undignified in her culture.

At the breakfast table, she does not understand the rules and makes several mistakes. Eating by formula- at the first bell everyone had to pull a

chair. Zitkala sat down and realised that others were still standing. At the second bell everyone had to sit down. Zitkala stood up when the second bell rang. She felt humiliated. Another bell rang and she was too scared to do anything. She burst out crying. She was scared of the pale face woman. She was told about the cutting of her hair by her friend Judewin. In her culture, unskilled warriors who were captured had shingled hair and short hair was worn by mourners. She tried to hide



but was dragged, tied to a chair and her long hair was cut off. This cruelty crushed her spirit. She remembered the comfort of her home.

### 1. मेरे लंबे बालों की कटिंग

पहला भाग सीमन्स, एक अमेरिकी भारतीय के खाते से संबंधित है, जिसने के खिलाफ लड़ाई लड़ी थी

अमेरिकी भारतीयों के खिलाफ समाज के पूर्वाग्रह। वह अपने अनुभवों का वर्णन करती है



कार्लिस्ले इंडियन स्कूल में पहला दिन। ज़िटकला एसए का स्कूल में पहला दिन अप्रिय था।

उस जगह के रीति-रिवाज और नियम उसके लिए अजीब और नए थे। उसे कपड़े पहनने के लिए मजबूर किया गया था

जिसे उनकी संस्कृति में अशोभनीय माना जाता था।

नाश्ते की मेज पर, वह नियमों को नहीं समझती है और कई गलतियाँ करती है। खाना

सूत्र द्वारा- पहली घंटी पर सभी को एक कुर्सी खींचनी थी। ज़िटकला बैठ गई और उसे एहसास हुआ कि

अन्य अभी भी खड़े थे। दूसरी घंटी पर सभी को बैठना पड़ा। ज़िटकला उठ खड़ी हुई

जब दूसरी घंटी बजी। वह अपमानित महसूस कर रही थी। एक और घंटी बजी और वह बहुत डरी हुई थी

कुछ भी करो। वह फूट-फूट कर रो पड़ी। वह पीली चेहरे वाली औरत से डरती थी। उसके बारे में बताया गया था

उसके दोस्त जूडविन द्वारा उसके बाल काटना। उसकी संस्कृति में, अकुशल योद्धा जो थे

कब्जा कर लिया था शिंगल बाल और छोटे बाल शोक करने वालों द्वारा पहने गए थे। उसने छिपाने की कोशिश की

लेकिन घसीटा गया, एक कुर्सी से बांध दिया

गया और उसके लंबे बाल काट दिए गए। इस क्रूरता ने उसकी आत्मा को कुचल दिया। वह अपने घर के आराम को याद किया।

## 2. We Too Are Human Beings

The second part is an excerpt from the autobiography 'Karukku' by Bama – a Tamil Dalit.

Bama was an innocent child living in a village. She used to walk back home from school and covered ten minutes of walk in half an hour to one hour as she watched all the fun games such as street play, puppet show, snake charmer, performing monkey.

Her innocence was lost when she experienced untouchability very early in life. One day she saw an elder of her community carrying a food packet holding it by its strings.



She was amused but her brother told her that they belonged to a low



caste. So people from the upper caste believed that the food packet would be polluted if it was touched by them. Her brother

was once asked about the street he lived in to determine the caste he belonged to. He told her

to work hard to win honour and dignity. She studied hard and stood first in her class.

## 2. हम भी इंसान हैं

दूसरा भाग तमिल दलित बामा की आत्मकथा 'करुक्कु' का एक अंश है।

बामा एक गाँव में रहने वाला एक मासूम बच्चा था। वह स्कूल से घर वापस चली जाती थी और आधे घंटे से एक घंटे में दस मिनट की पैदल दूरी तय की क्योंकि उसने सभी मजेदार खेल देखे जैसे नुक्कड़ नाटक, कठपुतली शो, सपेरा, प्रदर्शन करने वाला बंदर।

उसकी मासूमियत तब खो गई जब उसने जीवन में बहुत पहले ही अस्पृश्यता का अनुभव किया। एक दिन वह अपने समुदाय के एक बुजुर्ग को एक खाने के पैकेट को उसके तार से पकड़े हुए देखा।

वह खुश थी लेकिन उसके भाई ने उसे बताया कि वे एक नीची जाति के हैं। इसलिए उच्च जाति के लोगों का मानना था कि अगर उनके द्वारा भोजन का पैकेट छुआ गया तो वह दूषित हो जाएगा। उसकी भाई एक बार उनसे उस गली के बारे में पूछा गया, जिसमें वह

रहते थे, यह निर्धारित करने के लिए कि वह किस जाति से संबंधित हैं। उसने बताया उसे सम्मान और प्रतिष्ठा पाने के लिए कड़ी मेहनत करने के लिए। उसने मन लगाकर पढ़ाई की और अपनी कक्षा में प्रथम स्थान प्राप्त किया।

## MAIN POINTS

### PART – I

- The first part deals with the account of Simmons, An American Indian, who fought against the prejudices of the society against American Indians.
- She describes her experiences on her first day at the Carlisle Indian School.
- The customs and rules of the place were strange and new to her.
- She was forced to wear clothes that were considered undignified in her culture.
- At breakfast, she was embarrassed as she did not know the routine of the place.
- When she comes to know that they were planning to cut her hair, she protests by hiding under the bed, even though she knew it was futile. In her culture, it was the cowards whose hair was shingled.
- She felt like an animal driven by a herder.

## PART – II

- The second part is an excerpt from the autobiography 'Karukku' by Bama – a Tamil Dalit.
- She was in her third grade when she becomes aware of the indignities that the lower caste people face.
- She happens to see an elderly person from her community abase himself in front of a higher caste person as he was not supposed to touch the food that he was ordered to fetch for the landlord.
- Later, her brother explains to her that the incident was not at all funny as she initially thought, but very pathetic. The people from the lower caste were treated as Untouchables.
- She was deeply saddened and decided to study hard to overcome discrimination.

### WORD MEANING FROM 'THE CUTTING OF MY LONG HAIR':

Bare: uncovered

Belfry: part of a bell tower

Crashing: break through

Clatter: bang, sound of heavy objects

Bedlam: uproar, unrest

Paleface: yellow face

Clinging: tight (dress)

Shingled: cutting of hair

Moccasins: slipper or shoe

Immodest: indecent

Spied: notice, spot

Rear ranks: last

Mutterings: privately explained complaints

Venture: here, a risky task

Unskilled: untrained

Capture: catch, arrest

Mourners: a person at a funeral

Coward: weakling

Fate: destiny, god's will

Rebel: Revolt

Crept: Crawl, move on hands and knees

Squeaking: making high pitched sound

Whither: where

Dim: dark

Huddled: holding arms and legs closely

Peered: try to see

Shuddering: shiver, shake

Drag: pull

Resist: hold out against

Scratch: scrape

Gnaw: here, cut

Braid: Hairs bind into a plait

Indignities: shame, humiliation

Stare: gaze

Tossed: thrown

Puppet: a wooden resemblance of humans or animals controlled with the help of strings



Anguish: pain, agony

Moan: cry, wail

Comfort: console, sympathy

Reasoned: here, discussed

Herder: a person who looks after the live stock (herd of sheep)

## WORD MEANING FROM 'BAMA':

Dawdle: waste time, idle

Novelties: newness, freshness

Oddities: strange things

Snake Charmer: an entertainer who appears to make snakes move by playing music.



Spur: encouragement

Offerings: donation, gift

Demonstrate: to show

Lemur: an animal

Instrument: tool

Harangue: to give lecture

Miracle: wonder

Tumbler: Jug

Tether: tie up

Savoury: a salty or spicy dish

Payasam: sweet dish made with rice and milk

Iced lollies: piece of flavored ice on stick

Gaze: look



Threshing floor: A specially flattened outdoor surface to separate the grain from straw.

Proceedings: events, activities

Sack: bag

Ledge: shelf

Tread: walk

Muzzled: a covering used to cover the mouth of an animal

Double up: laugh out loud

Shriek: burst out

Wrap: cover

Stain: Spot

Strings: thread

Extend: hold out

Cupping: holding hands together to catch something

Amused: finding something funny

Polluted: impure, harmful

Terrible: horrible

Disgusting: unpleasant

Provoked: evoke, arouse

Wretched: miserable, sad

Fetch: bring, carry

Meekly: quietly, submissively

Reverently: with deep respect

Infuriate: anger

Scraped: here, saved

Errands: task, job

Irrigation Tank: water pond made for watering fields

Thambi: brother

Community: group

Dignity: nobility

Indignities: humiliate, disrespect

Frenzy: madness, mania

## CHARACTER SKETCH

### Zitkala-Sa:

Zitkala-Sa was a young Native American who was enrolled at the Carlisle Indian school. She was subjected to humiliation, prejudice, and exploitation at school. She was compelled to get her hair shingled despite her best efforts to object, and she eventually gave up.

She was treated like a wooden toy. She is symbolic of all the Native American women who were exploited at the hands of their masters. They used to enslave them, plundered them and destroyed their culture. She suffered extreme indignities and felt humiliated like a coward. Her long thick braids were cut off which let her spirit down. She was treated cruelly. Zitkala-Sa still demonstrated her determination in the face of all this violence. Having failed,

she didn't give up easily and continued to battle and complain.

ज़िटकला-सा एक युवा मूल अमेरिकी था, जिसे कार्लिस्ले इंडियन स्कूल में नामांकित किया गया था। उसे स्कूल में अपमान, पूर्वाग्रह और शोषण का शिकार होना पड़ा। आपत्ति करने के अपने सर्वोत्तम प्रयासों के बावजूद उसे अपने बाल झड़ने के लिए मजबूर होना पड़ा, और उसने अंततः हार मान ली।

उसके साथ लकड़ी के खिलौने की तरह व्यवहार किया जाता था। वह उन सभी मूल अमेरिकी महिलाओं का प्रतीक है, जिनका उनके आकाओं के हाथों शोषण किया गया था। वे उन्हें गुलाम बनाते थे, लूटते थे और उनकी संस्कृति को नष्ट करते थे। उसे अत्यधिक आक्रोश का सामना करना पड़ा और एक कायर की तरह अपमानित महसूस किया। उसकी लंबी मोटी लटें काट दी गईं, जिससे उसका हौसला टूट गया। उसके साथ क्रूर व्यवहार किया गया। ज़िटकला-सा ने अभी भी इस सारी हिंसा का सामना करने के लिए अपने दृढ़ संकल्प का प्रदर्शन किया। असफल होने के बाद, उसने आसानी से हार नहीं मानी और लड़ाई और शिकायत करना जारी रखा।

### **Bama:**

Bama is a young, naive Dalit girl from a community in southern India. She is not aware of the caste-based allegations. She is shocked to notice caste and class inequalities. She is upset when her brother informs her of reality. She

raises objections to it. She is shocked to discover that the wealthy and upper caste people have completely lost any humanity. However, we are also all human beings. She wants to protest this cruelty since it has given her an awful wrath. She decides to take a positive direction and works hard in class to earn the top grade when her brother informs her that knowledge is the only thing that can bring about change. She gains everyone's respect in this way, and all Dalit women look up to her as a role model.

बामा दक्षिण भारत के एक समुदाय की एक युवा, भोली-भाली दलित लड़की है। उन्हें जाति आधारित आरोपों की जानकारी नहीं है। वह जाति और वर्ग की असमानताओं को देखकर हैरान है। जब उसका भाई उसे सच्चाई बताता है तो वह परेशान हो जाती है। इस पर वह आपत्ति जताती हैं। वह यह जानकर हैरान है कि अमीर और उच्च जाति के लोगों ने पूरी तरह से मानवता खो दी है। हालाँकि, हम भी सभी इंसान हैं। वह इस क्रूरता का विरोध करना चाहती है क्योंकि इसने उसे एक भयानक क्रोध दिया है। वह एक सकारात्मक दिशा लेने का फैसला करती है और कक्षा में शीर्ष ग्रेड हासिल करने के लिए कड़ी मेहनत करती है जब उसका भाई उसे बताता है कि ज्ञान ही एकमात्र ऐसी चीज है जो बदलाव ला सकती है। वह इस तरह से सभी का सम्मान हासिल करती हैं और सभी दलित महिलाएं उन्हें एक आदर्श के रूप में देखती हैं।

## TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1. The two accounts that you read above are based in two distant cultures. What is the commonality of themes found in both of them ?

Answer: The two accounts given in the text 'Memories Of Childhood' are based in two distant cultures. The common theme found in both of them is inequality, injustice, humiliation and discrimination.

Zitkala-Sa faces prejudice being in a native American School. Getting her hair cut short was a sign of humiliation for her which she tried really hard to escape but failed. According to her mother, short hair is for the warriors of lost battles and shingled for the cowards.

Bama, on the other hand, faces social injustice for being a lower class person which basically signifies untouchability. She brings up the situation of how they were treated poorly and made to live separately and run errands for the upper class people.

Question 2. It may take a long time for oppression to be resisted, but the seeds of rebellion are sowed early in life. Do you agree that injustice in any form cannot escape being noticed even by children ?

Answer: Zitkala-Sa realised as soon as she entered the school run by the whites that they meant to change her

into a different person from the one she had hitherto been raised to be. By taking away her cloak, which was an integral part of her native dress, they stripped her of her modesty. Her moccasins were taken away and she was given hard shoes to wear. The discipline that she was subjected to, violated her sense of freedom. She resented the fact that her hair was cut and shingled much against her wishes and this was the final blow to her self-respect. Her mother had always told her that short hair was worn as a sign of mourning, while shingled hair was a sign of cowardice.

Bama, on the other hand, was only in grade three when she was told by her brother that the humiliation that they often suffered was on account of the fact that they had had the misfortune of having been born into the caste of untouchables. She had seen an elder of their street being subjected to humiliation by the landlord and incidents such as these, seen early in life, impacted her deeply.

Question 3. Bama's experience is that of a victim of the caste system. What kind of discrimination does Zitkala-Sa's experience depict ? What are their responses to their respective situations ?

Answer: Zitkala-Sa is the pen-name of an American Indian woman Gertrude Simmons Bonnin who was born in 1876. Bama is a contemporary Indian Tamil Dalit writer whose experience is that of a victim of the caste system



which she saw through the eyes of a child. She saw how even the elderly people of her community were maltreated and discriminated on the basis of their low caste. They were treated as untouchables by the upper caste people. Their mere touch was considered enough to pollute anything belonging to the persons of upper castes.

But what Zitkala-Sa suffered as a child was an oppression caused because of the racial discrimination. The native American Red Indians were treated as animals by those outsiders who had settled in their country. They were insulted and humiliated. They were not treated with equality and respect. They were looked down upon as was done in the case of Bama's community. Such inhuman treatment made both the women of different ages rebellious. However, they emerged as excellent writers who wrote a realistic and powerful account of the sufferings and humiliating experiences of the people of their communities.

### MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD EXTRA QUESTIONS SHORT ANSWER TYPE : (30-40 WORDS)

Question 1. What does Zitkala-Sa tell about the weather on her first day in the land of apples ?

Answer: Zitkala-Sa remembers that it was cold. There was snow outside.

There was a rigid discipline imposed on the children. The teachers were emotionless and rigid. The entire school worked in a monotonous mechanical way. She was forced to get her hair shingled. She resisted a lot but finally had to give up. So it was the most unpleasant day for her.

Question 2. Was there quietness after the bell had rung for breakfast ?

Answer: No, after the bell had rung for breakfast there was annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors, which made it a very noisy place. The constant clash of harsh noises also made it a noisy place within which Bonnin was securely tied.

Question 3. How were the Red Indian girls dressed ?

Answer: The Red Indian girls wore stiff shoes and dresses which were closely sticking to their bodies. The small girls wore sleeved aprons and their hair was cut closed to the head.

Question 4. How did Zitkala-Sa sit for dinner ?

Answer: When a small bell was tapped, Zitkala-Sa pulled out her chair and at once slipped into it from one side. When she found nobody else sitting, she began to rise. Then a second bell rang and all were seated at last.

Question 5. What warning did Bonnin's friend Judewin give her ?

Answer: Judewin knew a few words of English. She had overheard the pale

face woman talk about cutting their long heavy hair close to the head. This was the terrible warning which Judewin gave her.

Question 6. What did the shingled and short hair signify according to Bonnin's culture ?

Answer: According to their culture, only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among other people, short hair was worn by mourners and shingled hair by cowards.

Question 7. Where did Zitkala-Sa hide herself ?

Answer: To escape from her hair being shingled, Zitkala-Sa hid herself in a large room with three white beds in it. The room was very dim as its windows were covered with dark green curtains. She hid herself under the bed.

Question 8. Why was the girl tied to a chair in Memories of Childhood ?

Answer: The girl Zitkala-Sa refused to accept their decision because they wanted to cut her hair and she felt insulted because of this i.e., cutting of her hair.

Question 9. When and why did Bonnin miss her mother the most ?

Answer: Bonnin missed her mother the most when her long hair were shingled like a coward's. She moaned for her mother, but nobody consoled her as her mother used to do.

Question 10. Mention any two reasons because of which it would take thirty minutes to an hour for Bama to reach home ?

Answer: It was actually possible to walk the distance from school to home in ten minutes. But Bama would usually take half an hour. On her way back home, she would watch all the fun and games that were going on in the streets, in the shops and in the bazaar.

Question 11. What did Bama watch the cyclist doing ?

Answer: Bama watched the cyclist who had not got off his bicycle for three days, and kept pedaling as hard as he could from the break of the day. She saw that the rupees notes were pinned on to his shirt to encourage him.

Question 12. In which manner did an elder of Bama's street carry the packet in the bazaar ?

Answer: An elder of Bama's street came along from the direction of the bazaar. He was carrying a small packet of something like 'vadai' or green banana bhajji in a peculiar manner. He was holding out the packet by its string, without touching it. ,

Question 13. To whom and in which manner did the elder hand over the packet ?

Answer: The elder went straight to the landlord, bowed low and extended the packet towards him. He was cupping the hand that held the string with his

other hand. The landlord opened the packet and began to eat the vadais.

Question 14. "That is why he had to carry the package by its string." What did Bama's elder brother tell her about it ?

Answer: Bama's elder brother explained to her that everybody believed that they were upper caste and, therefore, must not touch them. They would be polluted if they did. That is why the elder had to carry the package by its string.

Question 15. How did Bama react when her brother told her that the elder being untouchable could not hold that package in his hand ?

Answer: Bama felt terribly sad. She felt so provoked and angry that she wanted to touch those wretched vadais herself straightway. How they could believe that it was disgusting if one of them held that package in his hands.

Question 16. Why did one of the landlord's men ask Bama's brother on which street he lived ?

Answer: One day when Bama's brother was on his way to home, one of the landlord's men asked him his name and on which street he lived. If he knew on which street he lived, he would know his caste too.

Question 17. Why did Bama's elder brother advise her to 'work hard and learn' ?

Answer: Bama's brother told her that

being Dalits they were never given any honour or dignity or respect. To get these, he advised her to study and make progress to throw away these indignities.

## MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD EXTRA QUESTIONS LONG ANSWER TYPE: (125-150 WORDS)

Question 1. Who was Zitkala-Sa ? How did she find her first day in the "land of apples" ?

Answer: Zitkala-Sa was the pen-name of an extraordinarily talented and educated Native American Woman, Gertrude Simmons Bonnin. She found her first day as a bitter cold one. The snow still covered the ground, and the trees were bare. A large bell rang for breakfast.

There was clatter of shoes on bare floors and it seemed to her a noisy place within which she was securely tied. A pale-faced woman, with white hair, came up after the girls who were marching into the dining room. These were Red Indian girls, in stiff shoes and dresses which were closely sticking to their bodies. The small girls wore sleeved aprons and their hair was cut close to the head.

Then a small bell was tapped, and each of the pupils drew a chair from under the table. Zitkala-Sa pulled out her chair and at once slipped into it from one side. But when she turned her



head, she found that she was the only one seated. Just as she began to rise, a second bell was sounded. All were seated at last, and she had to crawl back into her chair again. Then a third bell was tapped and everybody picked up his knife and fork and began eating. But she began to cry because by this time she was afraid to undertake any more risk.

Question 2. Why did Zitkala-Sa have to hide herself ?

Answer: Late in the morning Zitkala-Sa's friend Judewin gave her a terrible warning. Judewin knew a few words of English. She had overheard the pale-face woman talking about cutting their long heavy hair. Their mothers had taught them that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among their people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards. They discussed their fate for some moments.

Judewin said, "We have to submit, because they are strong." But Zitkala-Sa rebelled. She said that when no one was noticing, she disappeared. She moved slowly and quietly up the stairs as far as she could. Along the hall she passed, without knowing where she was going.

Turning aside to an open door, she found a large room with three white beds in it. The windows were covered with dark green curtains, which made the room very dim. As there was nobody else, she directed her steps towards

the corner farthest from the door. She crawled on her hands and knees under the bed and laid comfortably in the dark corner. Zitkala-Sa had to hide herself so that her hair was not shingled.

Question 3. Was Bonnin successful in hiding herself? What did they do after finding her ?

Answer: Bonnin would tremble with fear at her hiding place whenever she heard footsteps nearby. In the hall loud voices were calling her name. She knew that even Judewin was searching for her. But she did not open her mouth to answer. Then the steps were quickened and the voices became excited. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Women and girls entered the room. Bonnin or Zitkala-Sa held her breath and watched them open closed doors and peep behind large trunks.

Someone then threw up the curtains, and the room was filled with sudden light. She did not know what caused them to look under the bed. She was caused them to look under the bed. She was dragged out though she resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. Thus she could not be successful in being remained hidden.

Then she was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair. However, she cried aloud, shaking her head all the while until she felt the cold blades of scissors against her neck. She heard them gnaw off one of her thick strands of hair. But she had lost her spirit. Since the day she was taken from

her mother, she had suffered extreme insults and humiliations. And now her long hair was shingled like a coward's. In her severe suffering of mind, she moaned for her mother. She felt like one of many little animals driven by a herder.

Question 4. Why did Bama take an unusually long time while walking home from school ?

Answer: Bama was a little Dalit girl who was studying in the third class. She would walk home from school with an old bag hanging from her shoulder. It was actually possible to walk the distance in ten minutes. But usually it would take her half an hour to one hour to reach home.

On her way she would while away the time, watching all the fun and games that were going on in the streets, in the shops and in the bazaar. On her way, she would watch the performing monkey, the snake which the snake charmer kept in its box and displayed from time to time.

She would also watch the cyclist who had not got off his bicycle for three days and the maariyaata temple. She would watch the huge bells hanging in the temple, the pongal offerings being cooked in front of the temple, the dried fish stall by the statue of Gandhi. She would also see the sweets stall, the stall selling fried snacks and all the other shops next to each other. Each and everything would pull her to a stand-still and not allow her to go any further.

On her way back home, Bama would sometimes watch addresses by various political parties, or a street play or a puppet show or a stunt performance. All these would happen from time to time. But almost certainly there would be some sort of entertainment going on. All these and some other sights taken together would stop her from going further. That is why Bama would take unusually long time while walking home from school.

Question 5. What did Bama find funny in an elder man of her street carrying a package ? Was it really funny ?

Answer: One day, while coming from school Bama saw an elder of her street coming from the direction of the bazaar. She wanted to laugh loudly at the sight of such a big man carrying a small packet in a funny way. She guessed that there was something like 'vadai' or green banana 'bhajji' in the packet because the wrapping paper was stained with oil. That elder man came along, holding out the packet by its string, without touching it.

She thought that if he held the packet like that, won't the package come undone and the 'vadais' fall out. She saw the elderly man went straight up to the landlord, bowed low and extended the packet towards him, cupping the hand that held the string with his other hand. The landlord opened the parcel and began to eat the 'vadais'.

Bama went home after watching all this. She narrated the whole story in all its "comic details" to her elder brother.

But the brother was not amused like her. He told Bama that the man was not being funny when he carried the package like that. He told her that everybody believed that they were upper caste and, therefore, must not touch them. If they touched them, they would be polluted. That is why he had to carry the package by its string. But when Bama heard this, she did not want to laugh any more. Rather she felt terribly sad.

Question 6. How did Bama react to her awareness of the first experience of untouchability ? How did her elder brother encourage her ?

Answer: When her elder brother told Bama that the elder man was carrying the packet in such a way that he would not touch 'vadais', she felt so angry and provoked that she wanted to touch those "wretched" 'vadais' herself straightway. Bama wondered why they should have to fetch and carry for these people.

The thought of an important elder of their bowing and bringing snacks to this fellow who just sits there and eats greedily, made Bama angry. She thought that they too were human beings. She thought that they should work in their fields, take home their wages, and leave it at that.

Bama's elder brother, who was studying at a university, had come home for the holidays. Her elder brother told Bama that because they were born into the community of untouchables, they were never given any honour or dignity or

respect. He told her that if they did study and make progress they could throw away these indignities. So he encouraged Bama to study with care and learn all she could.

He told her that if she did always ahead in her lessons people would come to her of their own accord and attach themselves to her. So her elder brother advised her to work hard and learn to the maximum extent. Her brother's words made a very deep impression on her. She stood first in her class and many people became her friends.

### MCQ

Q1. Bama's elder brother was studying at

- (i) school
- (ii) college
- (iii) university
- (iv) medical college

**(iii) university**

Q2. He used to get his books from

- (i) neighbour's house
- (ii) from his teacher
- (iii) from a library
- (iv) from the city

**(iii) from a library**

Q3. What are the names of the two women?

- (i) Zitkala Sa a Native American and Bama Tamilian Dalit



(ii) Zitkala and Sa

(iii) Ba and Ma

(iv) Annan and Bama

**(i) Zitkala Sa a Native American and Bama Tamilian Dalit**

Q4. Zitkala's experience started with her being

(i) handcuffed

(ii) tied to a chair

(iii) tied with chains to a bedpost

(iv) tied to a table

**(ii) tied to a chair**

Q5. Bama's brother was asked by the landlord's men

(i) his name and street

(ii) his address only

(iii) his parents' names

(iv) his caste

**(i) his name and street**

Q6. What advice did Annan give to Bama?

(i) to go away from the place

(ii) to leave the house

(iii) to study hard and progress to rise above all shackles of indignity

(iv) All of above

**(iii) to study hard and progress**

**to rise above all shackles of indignity**

Q7. Bama's brother told her that if she wanted to make progress, she had to

(i) learn to cook

(ii) study

(iii) learn to stitch and knit

(iv) learn to drive

**(ii) study**

Q8. Annan's words for Bama had

(i) deep impression on her

(ii) no effect on her

(iii) made her laugh

(iv) made her cry

**(i) deep impression on her**

Q9. What did Zitkala Sa find?

(i) discrimination against native American culture and women

(ii) her dignity was in danger

(iii) women were in danger

(iv) all these

**(i) discrimination against native American culture and women**

Q10. One day the author was attracted by the sight of

(i) two riders on a horse

- (ii) a monkey performing tricks
- (iii) cattle treading out the grain from straw
- (iv) dogs fighting with cats
- (iii) cattle treading out the grain from straw**
- Q11. The author on learning about the practice of Untouchability was
- (i) amused
- (ii) terribly sad
- (iii) happy
- (iv) very guilty
- (ii) terribly sad**
- Q12. Who is Bama's brother?
- (i) A boy
- (ii) A young boy
- (iii) Annan
- (iv) None
- (iii) Annan**
- Q13. There would always be some kind of entertainment
- (i) in the school
- (ii) in the church
- (iii) in the bazaar
- (iv) in the house
- (iii) in the bazaar**
- Q14. On reaching home, Bama narrated the incident to her
- (i) elder sister
- (ii) cousin
- (iii) father
- (iv) elder brother
- (iv) elder brother**
- Q15. How much time did Bama take to reach home?
- (i) 2 hours
- (ii) 3 hours
- (iii) 4 hours
- (iv) 1 hour
- (iv) 1 hour**
- Q16. Bama used to dawdle along from school because she was
- (i) too slow
- (ii) crippled
- (iii) distracted by lots of things on the way
- (iv) unable to wait for the school bus
- (iii) distracted by lots of things on the way**
- Q17. Which tree had its fruit occasionally blown down by the wind?
- (i) almond tree
- (ii) apple tree

- (iii) mango tree  
(iv) Jamun tree  
**(i) almond tree**
- Q18. What is the meaning of childhood memories?
- (i) memories with a child  
(ii) memories of the times spent with a child  
(iii) memories of olden times  
(iv) memories formed during childhood period  
**(iv) memories formed during childhood period**
- Q19. The author Bama felt she already had experienced the humiliation due to
- (i) dark skin  
(ii) short height  
(iii) poverty  
(iv) untouchability  
**(iv) untouchability**
- Q20. The author enlists numerous things that pulled her to
- (i) eat on the roadside  
(ii) a standstill  
(iii) take a side on the joy-riders  
(iv) watch the snake charmer only  
**(ii) a standstill**
- Q21. What did Zitkala Sa feel when her long hair was cut?
- (i) oppression and victimization  
(ii) happy and delighted  
(iii) relaxed  
(iv) None  
**(i) oppression and victimization**
- Q22. We have to submit because they are strong'. These words were said by
- (i) Zitkala-Sa  
(ii) Judewin  
(iii) Mary-Ann  
(iv) Christine  
**(ii) Judewin**
- Q23. The distance from school to her home usually took Bama
- (i) ten minutes  
(ii) thirty minutes to an hour  
(iii) forty minutes  
(iv) one hour
- Q24. What was Bama victim of?
- (i) gender prejudice  
(ii) violence  
(iii) child abuse  
(iv) caste system  
**(iv) caste system**

Q25. Shingled hair was worn by

- (i) cowards
- (ii) warriors
- (iii) young girls
- (iv) dancers
- (i) cowards**

Q26. As the author pulled out her chair

- (i) the other student snatched it
- (ii) she slipped into it from one side
- (iii) the others clapped
- (iv) the other pupils made fun of her
- (ii) she slipped into it from one side**

Q27. As the bell rang, the whole group of pupils

- (i) sat on the floor
- (ii) drew a chair from under the table
- (iii) sat on the stools
- (iv) knelt down on the ground
- (ii) drew a chair from under the table**

Q28. Why did Zitkala not like her hair cut?

- (i) because her mother told her that mourners and cowards keep such hair.
- (ii) she liked long hair
- (iii) she wanted different style
- (iv) she didn't like anyone to touch her hair
- (i) because her mother told her that mourners and cowards keep such hair.**

Q29. The Indian girls wore

- (i) clinging dresses
- (ii) nightgowns
- (iii) trousers
- (iv) skirts
- (i) clinging dresses**

Q30. The small girls wore

- (i) shorts
- (ii) tunics
- (iii) frocks
- (iv) sleeved aprons
- (iv) sleeved aprons**