

## ENGLISH

Though accompanied and advised by scholars and savants, Alexander the Great had only hazy ideas of what he would find in India; he seems to have thought that the Indus was part of the Nile and that beyond it lay more of Ethiopia. A fair amount had long been known by the Greeks about the Indian north-west, the seat of the Persian satrapy of Gandhara. But beyond that all was darkness.

Under the Seleucids more reliable information became available in the West about what lay beyond the Punjab. One of our informants is a Greek ambassador, Megasthenes, sent to India by the Seleucid king in about 300 BC. Fragments of his account of what he saw were preserved long enough for later writers to quote him at length. As he travelled as far as Bengal and Orissa and was respected both as a diplomat and as a scholar, he met and interrogated many Indians. Some later writers found him a credulous and unreliable reporter; they dwelt upon his tales of men who subsisted on odours instead of food and drink, of others who were cyclopean or whose feet were so large that they used them to shelter from the sun, of pygmies and men without mouths.

Such tales were, of course, nonsense. But they were not necessarily without foundation. They may well represent only the highly developed awareness shown by Indians of the physical differences which marked them off from neighbours or remote acquaintances from Central Asia or the jungles of Burma. Some of these must have looked very strange indeed, and some of their behaviour was, no doubt, also very strange in Indian eyes. Others among these tales may dimly reflect the curious ascetic practices of Indian religion which have never ceased to impress outsiders and usually improve in the telling. Such tales need not discredit the teller, and they do not mean that other things he reports must be wholly untrue. [1] They may even have a positive value if they suggest something of the way in which Megasthenes's Indian informants saw the outside world.[1]

He describes the India of a great ruler, Chandragupta, founder of the Maurya line. The ancients believed that he had been inspired to conquest by having as a youth seen Alexander the Great during his invasion of India. Whether or not this story about Alexander was true, Chandragupta usurped the Magadha throne in 321 BC and on the ruins of that kingdom built a state which encompassed not only the two great valleys of the Indus and Ganges, but most of Afghanistan (taken from the Seleucids) and Baluchistan.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from *The Penguin History of the World*, by J.M. Roberts and O.A. Westad, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Penguin, 2012.]

**1.1 Based on the information in the passage above, which among the following best describes what the Greeks knew about India before Alexander arrived?**

- (a) They knew about India's people, but not much about its terrain.
- (b) They had complete knowledge of India and its people.
- (c) They had some knowledge of the area around Gandhara, but nothing else.
- (d) They had some knowledge of all of India, other than the area near Gandhara.

**1.2 Why, according to the authors, was Megasthenes able to meet and interrogate many Indians?**

- (a) Because he had been sent to India by the Seleucid king.
- (b) Because he traveled very far into India, and was respected as a diplomat and as a scholar.
- (c) Because he had a very friendly disposition, and was able to put people at their ease.
- (d) Because he used torture to extract information from people, which proved a successful interrogation technique.

**1.3 Why did some later writers think Megasthenes was a ‘credulous and unreliable reporter’?**

- (a) Because he told many tales that seemed unbelievable and fantastical.
- (b) Because they were jealous of him and wanted to discredit him.
- (c) Because they were unable to visit India themselves.
- (d) Because he did not keep written records.

**1.4 Which of the following best describes what a ‘credulous’ person would be like?**

- (a) Having great intellect and analytical abilities.
- (b) Having too much willingness to believe things without reasonable proof.
- (c) Having great generosity of heart and a willingness to donate to charitable causes.
- (d) Having a weak and sickly physique.

**1.5 Which of the following best describes what the authors feel about the story of how Chandragupta was inspired by Alexander?**

- (a) They are unsure about whether the story is true.
- (b) They are completely sure that the story is true.
- (c) They are completely sure that the story is false.
- (d) They are completely sure that Chandragupta and Alexander were allies.

**1.6 The sentence enclosed within ‘[1]’ in the passage above is grammatically incorrect. Which of the following would make it correct?**

- (a) Replace ‘values’ with ‘value’.
- (b) Replace ‘suggests’ with ‘suggest’.
- (c) Neither (a) nor (b).
- (d) Both, (a) and (b).

Malay Bhanjo was happiest when he was at his sweet shop. The smell of sweets pervaded the air and slowly made its way to the small counter where he sat with his back to the portraits of Durga, Kali, Satya Sai Baba and Lok Nath Baba – all in a harmonious row.

Malay's shop, Bhanjo Mishtanno Bhandar, was located in a nondescript lane in Hatibagan in Kolkata. This was his entire world. He left home after his bath every morning. A few minutes of prayer in front of Ma Kali, and some of the other gods that his wife had collected on her various temple visits and effectively managed to push into their home, ensured that the day goes well.

Malay liked to laugh off any mention of religiosity – he felt it wasn't masculine enough. Secretly, though, he visited the Shani temple down the lane from his shop. One might even presume that Malay was slightly scared of Shani thakur (god worshipped on Saturdays under a tree) and hence tried his best to pacify him. At times, when he forgot to slide a ten-rupee note into the donation box, he has nightmares of the blue-skinned god chasing him down the streets of Hatibagan.

For the past few days, rumours had been rife about a virus that had descended on the country. Malay was worried, and wondered whether prayers hadn't been offered to Ma Shitala in the villages. Shitala was the goddess known for her prowess in curing incurable diseases, especially small pox. But since its eradication in India, her popularity had taken a beating.

[1] Malay was engrossed in these thoughts as he walking down to his shop.[1] He noticed that a few shops were closed. Unimaginable! He shuddered at the very thought of it. Just think of not being able to make mishtis every day. The juicy khirer chawp, the roshomalai that his customers loved eating standing right there inside the shop, the whiff of shingara and roshogolla heralding the evenings – Malay quickened his steps at the probability.

Suddenly he was sure that there would be more customers in the shop today. And in the circumstances, they might even have to make more of everything than usual, he pondered, while also doing some quick mental calculations about the profits. Maybe if he closed his eyes and prayed to Ma Kali really hard, she might even tell him the exact time when the maximum number of customers would drop in.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from "'The Roshogolla Makers': A sweet short story for the age of the pandemic", by Maitreyee Bhattacharjee Chowdhury, *Scroll.in*, <https://scroll.in/article/963404/the-roshogolla-makers-a-sweet-short-story-for-the-age-of-the-pandemic>]

**2.1 Which among the following best explains why Malay “liked to laugh off any mention of religiosity”?**

- (a) Malay was an atheist and did not believe in gods or religion.
- (b) Malay thought the religious feelings or beliefs were for women, and not manly things.
- (c) Malay thought that the best way to worship god was to ignore organized religion.
- (d) Malay had been upset at the way things had gone in his life and was upset with god.

**2.2 What does the word ‘nondescript’ mean?**

- (a) Crowded and busy.
- (b) Narrow and winding.

- (c) Wide and tree-lined.
- (d) Lacking distinctive or interesting features or characteristics.

**2.3 Why did Malay sometimes have nightmares of Shani thakur chasing him down the streets of Hatibagan?**

- (a) Because his wife had told him that Shani thakur would punish him if he did not return home on time.
- (b) Because he thought Shani thakur had gotten angry with the country and unleashed a virus on it.
- (c) Because he thought Shani thakur would punish him for not putting money in the donation box at the Shani temple.
- (d) Because he sometimes cheated, and used cheap ingredients to make the sweets he sold his customers.

**2.4 Why did Malay think the virus that had descended on the country was connected to Ma Shitala?**

- (a) Since Ma Shitala was known for curing incurable diseases, and after the eradication of small pox, fewer people had been offering prayers to her.
- (b) Since Ma Shitala was upset with the increasing popularity of Shani thakur, and was trying to punish people for forgetting her.
- (c) Since the Ma Shitala temple in the city had had to be shut down.
- (d) Since he had not prayed to Ma Shitala in many years.

**2.5 The sentence enclosed within '[1]' in the passage above is grammatically incorrect. Which of the following would make it correct?**

- (a) Replace “engrossed” with “engrossing”.
- (b) Replace “walking” with “walked”.
- (c) Replace “down” with “up”.
- (d) Replace “these” with “those”.

**2.6 How did Malay hope to learn the exact time when the maximum number of customers would come to his shop?**

- (a) By examining his sales records from the past few days.
- (b) By placing an advertisement in the paper announcing discounts would be available at a particular time.
- (c) By paying tribute to Ma Shitala.
- (d) By praying to Ma Kali.

Keshav Singh was a resident of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, about 300 kilometres east of the state capital, Lucknow. He was a worker of the Socialist Party, an opposition party of ‘much noise but little electoral success’ in Uttar Pradesh. On one occasion, he successfully generated some ‘noise’ among opposition ranks and in the Congress party, which governed the state, by publishing a pamphlet in collaboration with two of his colleagues. This pamphlet, entitled ‘Exposing the Misdeeds of Narsing Narain Pandey’, alleged that Pandey, a Congress party MLA, was corrupt. The pamphlet was signed by its three authors, and distributed locally in Gorakhpur as well as in the vicinity of the legislative assembly in Lucknow.

This pamphlet did not go down well with the Congress party MLAs or Pandey, who once listed the reading of books (but not pamphlets) as one of his recreational activities. They complained that the pamphlet constituted a breach of privilege, that is, the rights and immunities enjoyed by the assembly and its members. Keshav Singh and his colleagues were ordered to appear before the assembly in Lucknow to receive a reprimand. For Keshav Singh, complying with this order would have required making a railway journey of several hours from Gorakhpur to Lucknow. While his colleagues appeared before the assembly and accepted a reprimand on 19 February 1964, Keshav Singh failed to do so, citing a lack of funds to make the journey. The assembly then decided that what could not be procured voluntarily must be acquired by force. Singh was arrested and brought to the assembly on 14 March.

The matter would have ended there had Singh done the same as his co-pamphleteers and silently allowed himself to be reprimanded. But he had other ideas. When the speaker of the assembly repeatedly asked Singh to confirm his name, he refused to answer. He stood with his back to the speaker, and remained silent as the speaker posed questions to him. Matters got even worse after this. The speaker brought to the attention of the assembly a letter that would cause further consternation among Congress MLAs. Singh had written a letter to the speaker protesting against the reprimand, confirming that the statements in the pamphlet were accurate, and condemning the warrant for his arrest as tyrannical. By then, the MLAs had heard enough, and the Chief Minister moved a motion in the assembly for Singh to be imprisoned for seven days.

The assembly eventually passed a resolution in the form proposed by the Chief Minister, and Singh arrested and taken to prison for his week-long sentence.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from *The Cases That India Forgot*, by Chintan Chandrachud, Juggernaut Books, New Delhi, 2019.]

**3.1 Which of the following most accurately describes the Socialist Party, as described by the author in the passage above?**

- (a) It ran a printing press used to print pamphlets of various types.
- (b) It was in power in Uttar Pradesh.
- (c) It generated a lot of publicity, but had not had won many elections.
- (d) It believed strongly in socialist values.

**3.2 Why did the Keshav Singh’s pamphlet ‘not go down well’ with the Congress party MLAs?**

- (a) Because it was printed poorly on very thin paper.

- (b) Because it had been distributed locally in Gorakhpur.
- (c) Because they thought it constituted a breach of privilege.
- (d) Because it had been signed by three authors, and not just by Keshav Singh.

**3.3 What does the word 'consternation' mean?**

- (a) A feeling of boredom.
- (b) A feeling of dismay at something unexpected.
- (c) A feeling of joy at something unexpected.
- (d) A feeling of rage.

**3.4 Keshav Singh had, according to the passage, written a letter to the speaker, confirming that the statements in the pamphlet were accurate; which of the following most accurately describes what these statements were?**

- (a) They were statements to the effect that the Chief Minister was sheltering Narsing Narain Pandey.
- (b) They were statements to the effect that the speaker was not corrupt.
- (c) They were statements to the effect that Keshav Singh was corrupt.
- (d) They were statements to the effect that Narsing Narain Pandey was corrupt.

**3.5 What reason did Keshav Singh give for not appearing before the assembly on 19 February 1964?**

- (a) That he did not have the money to travel to Lucknow.
- (b) That it was not an auspicious date.
- (c) That it took several hours to travel by train from Gorakhpur to Lucknow.
- (d) That he preferred not to accept a reprimand from the assembly.

**3.6 How did Keshav Singh answer the questions posed to him by the speaker of the assembly?**

- (a) He yelled at the speaker.
- (b) He did not answer the speaker's questions.
- (c) He told the speaker he could not hear their questions.
- (d) None of the above

It's tempting to think that the male bias that is embedded in language is simply a relic of more regressive times, but the evidence does not point that way. The world's 'fastest-growing language', used by more than 90% of the world's online population, is emoji. This language originated in Japan in the 1980s and women are its heaviest users. And yet, until 2016, the world of emojis was curiously male.

The emojis we have on our smartphones are chosen by the rather grand-sounding 'Unicode Consortium', a Silicon Valley-based group of organisations that work together to ensure universal, international software standards. If Unicode decides a particular emoji (say 'spy') should be added to the current stable, they will decide on the code that should be used. Each phone manufacturer (or platform such as Twitter and Facebook) will then design their own interpretation of what a 'spy' looks like. But they will all use the same code, so that when users communicate between different platforms, they are broadly all saying the same thing. An emoji face with heart eyes is an emoji face with heart eyes.

Unicode has not historically specified the gender for most emoji characters. The emoji that most platforms originally represented as a man running, was not called 'man running'. It was just called 'runner'. Similarly the original emoji for police officer was described by Unicode as 'police officer', not 'policeman'. [1] It was the individual platforms that all interpreted these gender-neutral terms as male.[1]

In 2016, Unicode decided to do something about this. Abandoning their previously 'neutral' gender stance, they decided to explicitly gender all emojis that depicted people. So instead of 'runner' which had been universally represented as 'male runner', Unicode issued code for explicitly male runner and explicitly female runner. Male and female options now exist for all professions and athletes. It's a small victory, but a significant one.

It's easy to slam phone manufacturers and social media platforms as sexist, but the reality is that even if they had somehow managed to design an image of a 'gender neutral' runner, most of us would still have read that runner as male, because we read most things as male unless they are specifically marked as female. And so while it is of course to be hoped that angry grammarians will come round to the idea that saying 'he or she' (or even, God forbid, 'she and he') instead of just 'he' may not be the worst thing that has ever happened to them, the truth is that getting rid of the generic masculine would only be half the battle: male bias is so firmly embedded in our psyche that even genuinely gender-neutral words are read as male.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from "Women use emojis the most, but world's fastest-growing language was all male until recently", book excerpt from Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed by Men, by Caroline Criado Perez, <https://theprint.in/pageturner/excerpt/women-use-emojis-most-but-worlds-fastest-growing-language-was-all-male/413460/>]

#### **4.1 Why, according to the author, is the male bias embedded in language not simply a relic of more regressive times?**

- (a) Because Japan imposed a rule that made using male pronouns compulsory in 2016.
- (b) Because of the way in which emoji was male until 2016.
- (c) Because of the manner in which English speakers use pronouns.
- (d) Because most people use 'he' when referring to people of either gender.

**4.2 Which of the following most accurately describes what the main activity of the Unicode Consortium is?**

- (a) It tries to create software standards that are used across the world.
- (b) It tries to make language gender-neutral.
- (c) It tries to encourage more women to enter the world of technology.
- (d) It tries to improve the aesthetic design of software.

**4.3 Which of the following most accurately describes how different phone manufacturers or platforms may design emoji?**

- (a) They accept the same design from the Unicode Consortium.
- (b) They do not design emoji.
- (c) They must all design the emoji in an identical fashion.
- (d) They may design their own interpretation of the same emoji.

**4.4 Which of the following most accurately describes the change Unicode brought about to the way in which they specified emoji in 2016?**

- (a) They did not bring about any changes in 2016.
- (b) They explicitly gendered all emoji.
- (c) They explicitly gendered all sports emoji.
- (d) They explicitly gendered all emoji that depicted people.

**4.5 The sentence enclosed within '[1]' in the passage above is grammatically incorrect. Which of the following would remove the grammatical error in the sentence?**

- (a) Replace 'is' with 'as'.
- (b) Replace 'individual' with 'individualistic'.
- (c) Add a semi-colon after the word 'that'.
- (d) Remove the word 'that'.

**4.6 How, according to the author, do we read most things?**

- (a) We read them as female unless they are specifically marked as male.
- (b) Unless they are specifically marked as female, we read them as male.
- (c) We read them as male, regardless of how they may be marked.
- (d) We read them as female, regardless of how they may be marked.



When the Salt Department was established, and a general prohibition was imposed on the enjoyment of one of Nature's bounties, people found the front door closed and so began to look for openings and cracks. Embezzlement, misappropriation of money, and bribery prevailed everywhere. They gave up the respectable and profitable appointment of *patwari* (land record officer) and accepted the post of guards, in the Salt Department.

An Inspector of this Department was envied even by pleaders. It was the time when English education and Christianity were regarded as synonymous terms. Education in Persian served as a certificate of distinction: and people, after reading a few love stories, became qualified for the highest position in life.

Munshi Bansi Dhar too, had read through the story of Zulaikha and had made himself familiar with the sad stories of Majnun and Farhad. These stories he supposed to be more important than the discovery of America, of the Battle of the Nile, and so set out to earn a living. His father who had a wide knowledge of the world, reasoned with him and said, "My son, you are aware of the wretched condition of our family; we have run heavily into debt; the girls are growing up fast; I am just like a tree on the bank of a river in flood, and don't know when I am going to fall; so now you must be the head and manager of the family. Don't worry for a minute about your pay or position, which is like the tomb of a saint, but rather you should regard the offerings and the *chadar*. You should look for a job which has some 'perks' attached to it. Monthly pay is like the full moon which appears for one day only and then gradually disappears. The 'perks' are a running stream, from which thirst is always quenched. You are a learned and educated man, so it is unnecessary for me to tell you what to do. It depends largely on the ability to read a man's mind and the expression on his face. Study each man, see what he is in need of, look for your opportunity, and act warily. You may be cruel or indifferent to one who is in need of something, but it is difficult to conclude a bargain with one who is not in need of anything. You must bear all this in mind, for this is what I have gathered from the experience of a life-time."

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from *The Salt Inspector*, by Munshi Premchand]

**5.1 Which of the following best describes what the author means when he says "people found the front door closed and so began to look for openings and cracks"?**

- (a) Since people were not able to do what they used to do by direct means, they tried to do it indirectly and by using unscrupulous means such as bribery.
- (b) Since people were not able to make salt themselves directly, they started going to shops to buy salt in ready packages.
- (c) Since people were not able to have their land records updated by the patwaris in a timely fashion, they started buying and selling land without any paperwork.
- (d) Since people were worried that others would steal salt from their homes, they started using the back door to enter their own homes, rather than the front door.

**5.2 Which among the following most accurately describes the condition of Munshi Bansi Dhar's family at the time the incidents described in the passage took place?**

- (a) They were well-off and prosperous.
- (b) They were in a precarious financial position.
- (c) They had a very large house to live in.

- (d) They owned a large salt production facility.

**5.3 What does the word ‘embezzlement’ mean?**

- (a) Using public funds for one’s own ends
- (b) Surreptitiously listening in on other’s conversations
- (c) Overeating
- (d) Theft or misappropriation of funds kept in trust with one

**5.4 Why does Munshi Bansi Dhar’s father tell him not to worry about his “pay or position”?**

- (a) Because he had read stories in Persian.
- (b) Because he had had an education in English and was about to convert to Christianity.
- (c) Because he felt that he would make far more money through bribes rather than his regular pay.
- (d) Because they were a very respectable family and did not care for money.

**5.5 In the context of the passage, which of the following would best describe the author’s tone as regards the statement “Education in Persian served as a certificate of distinction: and people, after reading a few love stories, became qualified for the highest position in life”?**

- (a) Sincere
- (b) Sarcastic
- (c) Sad
- (d) Secretive

**5.6 Which of the following best describes what Munshi Bansi Dhar’s father tells him is the difference between monthly pay and ‘perks’?**

- (a) Monthly pay only occurred at fixed, long intervals, whereas ‘perks’ could be available on a continuous basis.
- (b) Monthly pay should be taken only in person, whereas ‘perks’ could be provided indirectly, or through intermediaries.
- (c) Monthly pay should be accepted only if it were given to one by the government, but ‘perks’ could be provided by private employers as well.
- (d) Monthly pay was only paid directly into one’s bank account, whereas ‘perks’ could also be provided in cash.