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Register Number:

DATE:

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BENGALURU-27**

**SEMESTER EXAMINATION: APRIL 2019**

**NSA/ SSA/ EJP/ CPE – IV SEMESTER**

**GE 414: General English Special Course – Consuming the City**

Time – 2 ½ hrs Max. Marks – 70

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **This paper is meant for NSA/SSA students who have opted for the Special Course and for IV Semester EJP/CPE students**
2. **The paper contains FOUR printed pages and THREE sections**
3. **You may use a dictionary**

# I. Read Passage A, an edited version of ‘The House on Serpentine Street’ by Samar Halarnkar in *LiveMint*, 2013

# Passage A

Perhaps it is a yearning for childhood innocence, a golden past—real or imagined, I cannot say. Perhaps it is an olfactory whisper that crept through a cranial nerve at the back of my mouth sometime in the 1970s and lodged itself in the temporal lobe, seat of my memory.

Every Ramzan, I cannot help but think of “Didi aunty", a robust woman, neatly clad in a sari, her hair plaited and a smile that never seemed to leave her, as guests walked in to partake of the feast. Her real name was Anwari Taher, the wife of a garrulous civil servant. “Mumtaz uncle" always held court on a cane chair on the verandah of his bungalow, over which loomed a giant fir tree. The men streamed into the verandah, the women made a beeline for a bedroom inside. “Didi aunty" shuttled between the two worlds, which merged when food came to the table from her wood-fired stove.

Under a soaring roof of red tiles and skylights, we gathered every year for the feast. Usually, we motored down about 600km—which in those days took at least 13 hours—from the ends of Karnataka to be in Bangalore in time for Id. I would eat nothing that day, for I wanted to eat as many of the dense but soft kebabs, the mirchi ka salan, the haleem and the mutton biryani, smoky and steamy and redolent with effort, time and love. I would eat all I could, perhaps four helpings of everything. At the end of it, Didi aunty would bustle in, point to my empty plate and accusingly say in her flowery Dakhni, “Kya ji Samar, khayich nahi. Ettah Id ka khana banaya…(What Samar, you haven’t eaten. I made so much Id food…)

“Lekin, itna khaya Didi aunty." (But I ate so much.)

“Haou, maluum." (Yes, I know.)

My protestations never had an effect. A fifth helping was inevitable.

My father and Mumtaz had served together sometime in the 1960s in the dry Deccan. Though they came from dramatically different backgrounds—my father a Goan Hindu and Sanskrit scholar; Mumtaz a Hyderabadi Muslim with no knowledge of Kannada—they became friends for life. Later, when Mumtaz’s son would fall in love with his friend’s daughter, a Sindhi Hindu girl, it was my father who would bring Mumtaz around. Didi aunty did not have a problem because she—without being aware of it, despite being religious—stressed friendship and character over religion.

So, Id was certainly about Didi aunty’s great feast, but it was so much more. It was the thrill of journeying across old Mysore state and turning into Serpentine Street in Bangalore’s Richmond Town area, knowing the Tahers’ sanctuary was just around the corner. It was enjoying the characters who swept into the Tahers’ old bungalow—stately old men with canes, well-coiffed matrons with their saris over their heads (hijabs were rare then), poor families collecting food and donations, young men in greased hair and tight pants, roaring in on souped up Standard Herald or Fiat cars and Jawa motorcycles, luminous young women with strong perfumes; Muslims, Anglo-Indians and Hindus; neighbours from down and up the road. It was the easy, value-forming experience of diversity without being aware of such a thing. It was the knowledge that wherever we were in India, we would always return for Id to Didi aunty’s on Serpentine Street. It was a memory that, to my mind, can never be equalled

But this is a different time, and a different country.

I wander through my neighbourhood to explore the sights and smells of Ramzan. On the main thoroughfare, Madhavaraya Mudaliar Road, you can get everything from “North Indian delicacies" to “Mumbai falooda" to Hyderabadi Pista House haleem and the singular brain puffs of Albert Bakery. There are heaving crowds, smoky fragrances and a great air of fasting, feasting and celebration.

But there is no Didi aunty. She and Mumtaz are dead. Serpentine Street is full of cookie-cutter flats, whose occupants rarely get to know their neighbours. The Tahers’ bungalow is gone. So is the fir tree.

Only the whispers in my mind remain.

# Now examine Comic B by Paul Fernandes, “Old Fashioned Good Manners.” It is taken from a series titled *Walk Down Memory Lane*

# Comic B



**The text reads: “The chaps in Bangalore were always polite and pleasant.”**

**I.A. Answer the following questions in 200-250 words each. (2x15=30)**

1. “It was the easy, value-forming experience of diversity without being aware of such a thing,” Halarnkar says about his childhood Ids. What is his argument?
2. Unspoken in both pieces is contemporary Bangalore. Do you see any continuities between these past experiences and your own? Draw upon your experiences of the city to discuss.

**II. Read the following article, an edited extract from ‘Study Reveals Caste-Based Segregation in Bengaluru’ by Mohit M. Rao. It was published in *The Hindu,* in January 2019.**

A first-of-its-kind snapshot of the distribution of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes community in the city reveals a patchwork of caste-segregated neighbourhoods where socio-economically backward castes are ghettoised.

Older areas such as Malleswaram or Basavanagudi exhibit a caste-based pattern, perhaps due to urban planning where caste segregation was inculcated by design a century ago.

However, this divide is equally stark in newer areas where unequal economic growth is driving segregation, shows the study by Indian Institute of Management-Bengaluru researchers Naveen Bharathi, Deepak Malghan and Andaleeb Rahman.

At the base of the study is Census 2011, which shows that 13.21% of the city’s inhabitants are from the SC/ST community.

The study, *Isolated by Caste: Neighbourhood-Scale Residential Segregation in Indian Metros*, shows the spatial segregation of this population within blocks: in nearly 40% of blocks, the SC/ST community constitutes less than 5% of all residents.

While this shows inherent exclusion, on the other side, nearly 10% of the blocks shows a ‘high’ congregation of SC/ST population (that is, more than 35% of the residents here were from socio-economically backward classes).

Consequently, the Gini Index, a statistical tool that captures inequity, shows Bengaluru as highly unequal.

The city has a Gini Index of 0.62, which though better than other Indian metros, is still on the higher end of the spectrum (0 being ideal with no segregation, and 1 being complete segregation).

“There is a myth that cities are caste-free spaces and caste segregation exists only in rural areas. But data clearly shows that there is segregation across the city. Lower castes are being ghettoised into pockets,” says Mr. Bharathi who undertook the project at IIMB.

The portrait of caste distribution in neighbourhoods on a street-level indicates that Bengaluru’s immense growth acts as a driver of segregation in “new areas” of the city.

Researchers from Indian Institute of Management-Bengaluru (IIMB) spent over five months digitising and geo-registering 16,019 census enumeration blocks in the city and merged block-level data of distribution of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes community to present the “first visual portrait of the extent of caste-based residential segregation”.

The complex map shows that segregation is spread out across Bengaluru: from older areas which have been designed a century ago keeping caste-based segregation in mind, to newer areas where the growth has been seemingly haphazard and driven by a multitude of private developers.

Blocks with no SC, ST population (which comes to 8.08% of the total blocks) and blocks with more than half of their residents being from the community (around 5.69%) are spread out between old and new areas, whether it is K.R. Market area or H.S.R. Layout or Yelahanka.

“In older areas, diversity is increasing slightly as other castes are moving out of older houses to better houses in newer areas. However, in new areas, segregation is subtle. Economic benefits of Bengaluru’s immense growth is being borne by only a few sections, and it is only these classes and castes that can afford housing in newer areas. In the process, socio-economically backward communities get marginalised to slums and other informal spaces,” says Naveen Bharathi, who undertook the study along with IIMB professor Deepak Malghan and Andaleeb Rahman from Cornell University.

With caste being ingrained in society’s fabric, Issac Arul Selva, a human rights activist who has focussed on marginalised community in urban areas, says segregation is being driven from both upper and lower caste communities, albeit for different reasons.

“Upper castes do not allow lower castes to settle within their areas. This is seen in numerous forms of discrimination, particularly in ensuring houses are not rented to socially-marginalised castes. Even builders fear that if they follow rules and allocate a quarter of developing layouts to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), then the non-reserved plots or flats will not be sold. On the other side, lower castes don’t find protection of their identity or an outlet for cultural expression in upper caste communities. In these cases, plots or houses are sold and they tend to migrate elsewhere,” he says.

Aggravating the diversity is the government policy of relocating slums outside the city: those from Ejipura were shifted to Sarjapur, Baiyappanahalli to Sadamangala, Sanjaynagar or Gandhinagar slums to Kudlu, among others. “Eventually, this will leave a central area, much like the agraharas, where only upper castes stay, while the SC, ST community will be in the fringes,” he says.

For Ejipura slum-dwellers, who have been shifted 15-km away to quarters in Sulikunte near Sarjapur, discrimination in their new environs is a daily experience. Even when slum rehabilitation quarters were being built, locals had risen in protest, claiming the influx of slum-dwellers would lead to increased crime or garbage dumping.

“I cannot find work in this area. The people see us as thieves and criminals. If they treat us this way because we belong to a lower income group, where are we supposed to live?” says an impassioned John Gabriel, 49, a construction labourer.

**II. A. Answer the TWO questions that follow in 150-200 words each. (2X10=20)**

1. What, according to this study, is the link between economics and caste in the housing situation in Bangalore?
2. Consider an area of Bangalore you are familiar with. Have you experienced or witnessed such caste and class segregations? Describe this system or structure of segregation.

**III. Answer the following question in 300-350 words. (1x20=20)**

1. The first article and the comic share a mood: nostalgia. Do you think this nostalgia is justified? Does it include everybody? Draw upon both articles, the comic, and your own experiences to discuss this nostalgic Bangalore and the people and experiences it excludes.