

## Chapter- 16. The Holy Panchayat

### A. Answer these questions.

**1. Describe the relationship between Jumman and Algu.**

Ans . Jumman Sheikh and Algu Choudhury were very close friends since their childhood. They were partners in farming. Some of their dealings were also done jointly.

**2. What was Jumman's behaviour towards his aunt? What step did the aunt have to take?**

Ans. Jumman's aunt had some property. She had no other relation than Jumman, who had requested her to transfer the property in his name. Until the transfer deed had been registered the aunt was pampered. But this came to an end as soon as the transfer deed was stamped. Then the poor aunt had to swallow bitter words every day.

The aunt asked Jumman to pay her a sum every month and she would live by herself. But Jumman was not at all ready to pay the money to her. So the aunt was upset and threatened to call the panchayat to settle the matter.

**3. How did the judgement proclaimed by Algu impact their friendship?**

Ans. The case of Jumman Sheikh and his aunt was presented before the panchayat. Algu Chowdhary, as the Sarpanch, announced the judgement against Jumman Sheikh. Jumman was stunned to hear the decision. The judgement shook the very basis of Algu and Jumman's friendship. Their old intimacy was gone.

**4. Why did Jumman say that Algu had been punished for treachery?**

Ans. Algu Chowdhary purchased a handsome pair of oxen from Batesar. The oxen were of the Pachchain breed. Out of pure chance, one of the oxen died just one month after Jumman's panchayat. Jumman was angry with Algu as he gave the judgement against him. So Jumman said to his friends that Algu had been punished for treachery by the hands of God.

**5. How was the altercation between Algu and Jumman settled?**

Ans. Whenever Algu asked Samjhu Sahu to pay the money for the price of the ox, both husband and wife would start abusing him. Finally, both the parties decided to go to the panchayat. Sahu suggested Jumman's name as the head Panch. As soon as Jumman became the head Panch, he understood the responsibility of the judge and the respect and decorum that this office held. His inner conscience did not permit his personal feelings to overpower the way of justice and truth. He announced the judgment in favour of Algu. Then he went to Algu, hugged him and felt sorry for being enemy from the time of last Panchyat. He admitted that, while sitting on the seat of justice, he understood that the Panch should put righteousness and truth above anything else. In this way the altercation between Algu and Jumman came to an end.

**6. Why did the villagers have an unwavering faith in the Panch?**

Ans. When a person used to be selected as Sarpach, he was given the burden of responsibility to keep justice and righteousness at the highest and keep any other personal feelings like friendship, enmity etc. aside. That responsibility often altered the narrow outlook and made it broad. The villagers used to believe that anything uttered by the Panch would be the word of God. Any prejudice of his mind would not creep into his decision. He would not deviate even an inch from the truth. So the villagers had an unwavering faith in the Panch.

**B. Answer these questions with reference to the context.**

**1. Do you think we grow money here?**

- a. Who is the speaker and why did he say it?
- b. What does this reflect about the attitude of the speaker?
- c. What action did the listener take after this?

Ans. a. Jumman Sheikh is the speaker. / He said it to his aunt when she asked him to pay her a sum every month for her livelihood.

b. Jumman was an opportunist, as he pampered his aunt until the property was registered in his name. He was ungrateful and selfish as he started to ill treat her thereafter. He paid a deaf ear to his aunt's request to pay her some monthly sum in lieu of the property transfer. This shows that he was disrespectful to the elders and rude in nature.

c. The aunt became upset with the behaviour of Jumman Sheikh and threatened to call panchayat to settle the matter.

**2. But at this moment you and Khala are equal in my eyes.**

- a. Who is the speaker and who are the two people he is referring to?
- b. What do these lines reflect about the speaker's behaviour?
- c. Why did he say that they were equal in his eyes?

Ans. a. Algu Chowdhury is the speaker. / "you" refers to Jumman Sheikh, "Khala" refers to the aunt of Jumman.

b. These lines reveal the fact that Algu was aware of the duty of Sarpanch, to keep judgement ahead of anything else.

c. Algu was a close friend of Jumman. But when he was entrusted with the responsibility of Sarpanch he kept aside the friendship and became the torch bearer of justice. He was not ready to allow any prejudice to affect his judgement. So he preached equality to both the parties, Jumman and his aunt.

**3. This is justice. This is not the work of man.**

- a. Who is the speaker?
- b. Why were the speakers happy?

**c. What was the 'justice' in this context?**

**Ans.** a. The crowd who were present during the Algu's panchayat are the speakers.

**b.** Jumman had a feeling of enmity against Algu Chowdhry. But when Jumman was seated on the throne of Sarpanch, he understood his responsibility. He kept justice above anything else, did not deviate from the path of truth and gave the judgement in favour of Algu. His verdict was free from any prejudice and satisfied everyone present there. So the crowd was happy as justice was served.

**c.** The judgement announced by Jumman Sheikh in the case of Algu Chowdhry and Samjhu Sahu is referred as "justice". In that verdict, Jumman asked Samjhu to pay the price of the ox to Algu, as the ox had not been suffering from any disease when Samjhu bought it from Algu.