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Class: VIII

CHAPTER - 2

The Tsunami

Summary

A tsunami is a very large and powerful wave and is often caused by the earthquake under the sea. On 26 December 2004, a tsunami hit Thailand and parts of India such as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Tamil Nadu coast. Here are some stories of courage and survival.

In the tsunami, Ignacious, the manager of a cooperative society lost two of his children, wife and father-in-law as he could not get alarmed by the tremor.

Sanjeev was a policeman. He jumped into the water to rescue his cook's wife, but they were both swept away.

Both Meghna's and Almas' families were washed away. Both of them kept floating in the sea for days. Meghna floated in the sea for two days holding on to a wooden door. She was brought to the shore by a wave. Similarly, Almas climbed onto a log of wood and fainted. She woke up in a hospital. Both the girls were traumatized after the incident. While Meghna was seen walking on the seashore in daze, Almas could not talk about the incident to anyone. Both of them were not noticed by the relief helicopters.

Tilly Smith, a British school girl, saved many lives when the tsunami struck Phuket beach in Thailand, where she had gone to celebrate Christmas with her family. On seeing the condition of the sea she was reminded of her geography lesson in which the geography teacher had shown the students a video of the tsunami that had struck Hawaiian Islands in 1946. The tourists thanked Tilly for saving their lives. She had won a number of awards.

Before the tsunami, in India and Sri Lanka, wild and domestic animals fled to safety, elephants ran for higher grounds; dogs refused to go outdoors; flamingoes abandoned their low-lying breeding areas as they seemed to know what was about to happen.

It is believed that animals either possess a sixth sense or have more acute hearing power that helps them to hear or feel earth's vibration. Approximately 150,000 people were killed in the tsunami in a dozen countries but not many animals were reported dead.

Students kindly read thoroughly the summary.

Kindly note down the following word meanings and question answers in your English notebook.

Archipelago: a group of many islands and the surrounding sea

Tremor: a shake, quiver or vibration
Chaos: complete disorder or confusion

Relief helicopter: helicopters bringing help
to people (e.g. during
floods)

Recede: to move back

Traumatized: greatly shocked and
distressed

Resort: a place where people go on holiday Triggered: caused (describes a sudden violent
reaction- here an undersea earthquake caused the tsunami)

Hysterical: uncontrolled emotions

Refuge: shelter or protection from danger

Withstood: endured without collapsing

Surge: force, momentum

Answer the following questions.

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QUESTION 1: Why did Tilly's family come to Thailand?

ANSWER:

Tilly's family came from England to Thailand to celebrate Christmas.

QUESTION 2: What were the warning signs that both Tilly and her mother saw?

ANSWER:

Tilly's mother saw that the water was swelling and the beach was getting smaller and smaller.
Tilly saw that the sea was slowly rising, bubbling and forming a whirlpool.

QUESTION 3: Do you think Tilly's mother was alarmed by them?

ANSWER:

No, Tilly's mother was not alarmed by them. She was alarmed by her daughter's reactions and when Tilly screamed and asked the family to get off the beach, she was sure that something serious was happening.

QUESTION 4: Where had Tilly seen the sea behaving in the same strange fashion?

ANSWER:

Tilly had seen the sea behaving in a similar fashion in one of the videos shown by her geography teacher to her class. The video was of the tsunami that had struck the Hawaiian Islands in 1946.

QUESTION 5: Where did the Smith family and the others on the beach go to escape from the tsunami?

ANSWER:

The Smith family and the other tourists took refuge on the third floor of a hotel.

QUESTION 6: How do you think her geography teacher felt when she heard about what Tilly had done in Phuket?

ANSWER:

Tilly's geography teacher felt very proud and happy because Tilly had saved many lives and the way Tilly had applied her teachings of the geography lesson.

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QUESTION 1 : In the tsunami 150000 people died. How many animals died?

ANSWER:

Although no data is given in the story, but it says the number of dead animals was far less compared to human casualties.

QUESTION 2: How many people and animals died in Yala National Park?

ANSWER:

Sixty visitors died in the Yala National Park and only two water buffaloes were found dead.

QUESTION 3: What do people say about the elephants of Yala National Park?

ANSWER:

The people at the Yala National Park had seen three elephants running away to higher grounds about an hour before the tsunami hit.

QUESTION 4: What did the dogs in Galle do?

ANSWER:

The dogs in Galle refused to go for their daily run on the beach.

WORKING WITH THE TEXT

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QUESTION 1: When Ignésious felt the earthquake, do you think he immediately worried about a tsunami? Give reasons for your answer. Which sentence in the text tells you that the Ignésious family didn't have any time to discuss and plan their course of action after the tsunami struck?

ANSWER:

No, Ignésious did not suspect a tsunami when he felt the earthquake. He carefully took the television set off the table and put it on the ground so that it would not fall and break. This shows that he did not get worried of a tsunami. Otherwise he would have rushed out of the house at that moment only.

The Ignésious family did not have any time to discuss and plan their course of action after the tsunami struck. The following sentence tells that there was only chaos and confusion.

"In the chaos and confusion, two of his children caught hold of the hands of their mother's father and mother's brother and rushed in the opposite directions. "

QUESTION 2: Which words in the list below describe Sanjeev, in your opinion?

cheerful	ambitious	brash	brave	careless
heroic	selfless	heartless	humorous	

ANSWER:

The words that would describe Sanjeev best are brave, heroic and selfless.

Use words from the list to complete the three sentences below.

(I) I don't know if Sanjeev was cheerful, humorous or ambitious.

(ii) I think that he was very brave, heroic and selfless.

(iii) Sanjeev was not heartless, brash or careless.

QUESTION 3: How are Meghana's and Almas' stories similar?

ANSWER:

Both Meghana's and Almas' families were washed away. Both of them kept floating in the sea for days. Meghna floated in the sea for two days holding on to a wooden door. She was brought to the shore by a wave. Similarly, Almas climbed onto a log of wood and fainted. When she woke up she found herself in a hospital. Both the girls were traumatised after the incident.

QUESTION 4: What are the different ways in which Tilly's parents could have reacted to her behaviour? What would you have done if you were in their place?

ANSWER:

Tilly's parents could have ignored her or tried to calm her down, thinking that she had been frightened by something. As a result, they could have been washed away by the tsunami waves. If I were in their place I too would have listened to her and realised that there was a danger approaching. Consequently I too would have rushed away from the beach.

QUESTION 5: If Tilly's award was to be shared. Who do you think she should share it with- her parents or her geography teacher?

ANSWER :

If Tilly's award was to be shared she should share it with her geography teacher who made her aware of the tsunami by showing her class the video of the tsunami that had hit the Hawaiian Islands in 1946. She remembered the visuals of the tsunami and warned her parents. It was this awareness that helped her save so many lives.

QUESTION 6: What are the two different ideas about why so few animals were killed in the tsunami? Which idea do you find more believable?

ANSWER :

A very few animals were killed in the tsunami. Many people believe that animals possess a sixth sense. They can guess the coming disaster and so run away to safer places. Some experts believe that animals' more acute hearing power helps them to feel the tremors much before than

the humans do. I find the second idea (about animals' more acute hearing power) is more believable.

Geography Lesson

Can you imagine what your city would look like if you saw it from ten thousand feet above the ground? Neatly planned and perfect in proportion like a geometric design, it would strike you as something very different from what it actually is while you are in the thick of it.

Here is a poet's description of just such a view of the city, and some questions that come to his mind.

When the jet sprang into the sky,
it was clear why the city
had developed the way it had,
seeing it scaled six inches to the mile.
There seemed an inevitability
about what on ground had looked haphazard,
unplanned and without style
When the jet sprang into the sky.

When the jet reached ten thousand feet,
it was clear why the country
had cities where the rivers ran
and why the valleys were populated.
The logic of geography —
that land and water attracted man —
was clearly delineated
When the jet reached ten thousand feet.

When the jet rose six miles high,
it was clear the earth was round
and that it had more sea than land.

But it was difficult to understand
that the men on the earth found
causes to hate each other, to build
walls across cities and to kill.
From that height, it was not clear why.

ZULFIKAR GHOSE

Geography Lesson (Poem)

By- Zulfikar Ghose

About the Poet

Zulfikar Ghose (born in 1935) is a novelist, poet and essayist. He is a native of India and current resident of Texas. His works are primarily magical realism, blending fantasy and harsh realism. His books of poetry include 'The Violent West', 'A memory of Asia', and 'Selected Poems'.

Summary

Stanza -1 In the first stanza of the poem the poet describes the city. He tells us how it appears from the window of a jet plane. It is clear that the city is developed just as it's necessary for the people. So what appears haphazard and unplanned on the ground, seems inevitable and necessary when it is viewed from the sky.

Stanza - 2 When the plane rises to a height of ten thousand feet. The poet is able to understand the logic of geography. He comes to know why the cities in the country have grown along the river side. The valleys are populated for similar reasons. It is land and water that attract the people.

Stanza -3 When the plane attains another six miles, the earth looks round. From that height it is

clear that the earth has more sea than land. However one question remains unanswered. It is difficult to understand why people hate and kill one another and build the high walls across the cities. Even from that height, the causes behind human hatred remains unclear.

Students kindly note down the following word meanings and question answers in your notebook.

Inevitable - that cannot be avoided

Haphazard- without plan or order

Delineated- shown

Working with the Poem

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QUESTION 1: Find three or four phrases in stanzas one and two which are likely to occur in a geography lesson.

ANSWER :

Some phrases that are likely to occur in a geography lesson are:

- Scaled six inches to the mile
- Cities where the rivers ran
- The valleys were populated
- Land and water attracted man

QUESTION 2: Seen from the window of an aeroplane, the city appears - as developed as necessary.

QUESTION 3: Which of the following statements are examples of "the logic of geography"?

- (I) There are cities where there are rivers.
- (ii) Cities appear as they are not from six miles above the ground.
- (iii) It is easy to understand why valleys are populated.
- (iv) It is difficult to understand why humans hate and kill one another.
- (v) The earth is round and it has more sea than land.

ANSWER :

The following statements are the examples of "the logic of geography".

- (I) There are cities where there are rivers.
- (iii) It is easy to understand why valleys are populated.
- (v) The earth is round and it has more sea than land.

QUESTION 4: Mention two things that are

- (i) clear from the height.
- (ii) not clear from the height.

ANSWER:

The two things which are clear from the height are - the earth is round and it has more sea than land.

The two things which are not clear from the height are - why men hate each other and build walls across the city.
