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Study Material

In the Bazaars of Hyderabad - Sarojini Naidu

About the Poem

In the Bazaars of Hyderabad is a colourful and musical poem by Sarojini Naidu. The poet presents the lively market of Hyderabad through a series of questions and answers. The speaker asks merchants, vendors, maidens, pedlars, goldsmiths, fruitmen, musicians, magicians and flower-girls about what they sell, weigh, grind, call, make, cry, play, chant and weave. Their answers create a rich picture of Indian life, art, trade, celebration and ritual.

Word Meanings

Word	Meaning
ye	old-fashioned word for you
wares	goods or items for sale
turban	cloth wrapped around the head
brocade	rich fabric with raised designs
amber	yellowish-brown precious substance
jade	hard green stone used in ornaments
vendor	seller
pedlar	small travelling seller
wristlet	bracelet worn around the wrist
anklet	ornament worn around the ankle
girdle	belt or band worn around the waist
scabbard	cover for a sword
chaplet	garland worn on the head
new-garnered	newly gathered or collected

Detailed Summary

The poem describes a busy and beautiful bazaar in Hyderabad. It is written as a conversation between the speaker and different groups of sellers and workers. The speaker first asks the merchants what they sell. They reply that they sell rich goods such as crimson and silver turbans, purple brocade tunics, amber-panelled mirrors and jade-handled daggers. These objects show wealth, colour and skilled craftsmanship.

Next, the speaker asks vendors what they weigh and maidens what they grind. The answers include saffron, lentil, rice, sandalwood, henna and spice. These items connect the bazaar with daily life, food, beauty and fragrance. The pedlars call out chessmen and ivory dice, suggesting leisure and traditional games.

The goldsmiths make wristlets, anklets, rings, bells for blue pigeons, golden girdles for dancers and scabbards for kings. The fruitmen cry out citron, pomegranate and plum. Musicians play instruments like the sitar, sarangi and drum, while magicians chant spells for future ages. Finally, the flower-girls weave tassels, crowns, chaplets and sheets of blossoms for weddings and funerals. The poem ends by showing that the bazaar serves every stage of life - joy, beauty, worship, marriage and death.

Analysis and Discussion on Themes

The poem is a celebration of Indian culture. Sarojini Naidu does not describe the bazaar in a plain way. She fills it with colour, sound, smell, movement and rhythm. Every stall becomes part of a larger picture of life in Hyderabad. The repeated question-and-answer pattern makes the poem sound like a song, while also allowing different voices of the market to be heard.

One major theme is the richness of Indian tradition. The items in the bazaar are not ordinary goods only; they are linked with art, royalty, worship, dance, games, food, marriage and death. Another important theme is the dignity of labour. Merchants, vendors, maidens, pedlars, goldsmiths, fruitmen, musicians, magicians and flower-girls all contribute to the life of the city.

The poem also uses strong sensory imagery. We see crimson, silver, purple, amber, jade, gold, azure, red and white. We hear the sounds of musical instruments and street calls. We smell saffron, sandalwood, henna and spices. Through these details, the bazaar becomes alive before our eyes.

Poetic Devices

Refrain: The repeated pattern of “What do you...” gives the poem a musical structure.

Imagery: The poet uses colourful images like “turbans of crimson and silver” and “sheets of white blossoms”.

Alliteration: Phrases such as “frail as a dragon-fly’s wing” and “spells for the aeons” create sound effect.

Simile: “Frail as a dragon-fly’s wing” compares delicate bells to a fragile insect wing.

Catalogue: The poem lists many objects to show the variety and abundance of the bazaar.

Stanza-wise Explanation

Stanza 1: The speaker asks merchants what they sell. They display rich and royal objects such as turbans, tunics, mirrors and daggers. This stanza highlights colour, wealth and fine craftsmanship.

Stanza 2: The vendors, maidens and pedlars speak of everyday things like saffron, lentil, rice, sandalwood, henna, spice, chessmen and dice. This stanza brings in food, fragrance, beauty and leisure.

Stanza 3: The goldsmiths make ornaments and royal articles. Their work ranges from anklets and rings to scabbards for kings. It shows skilled artistry and the importance of decoration in Indian culture.

Stanza 4: Fruitmen, musicians and magicians add sound, taste and mystery to the bazaar. Fruits, instruments and spells make the market appear even more lively and magical.

Stanza 5: Flower-girls weave flowers for different occasions. Some are for bridegrooms and bridal beds, while others are for the dead. This stanza connects the bazaar with both celebration and sorrow.

Solved Short Answer Questions

1. What is the poem mainly about?

The poem is mainly about the lively bazaars of Hyderabad. Through a series of questions and answers, the poet shows the many goods, sounds, colours and people found in the market. The bazaar is not shown as a simple shopping place. It becomes a centre of culture, art, work, celebration and daily life. The poem celebrates Indian tradition and beauty.

2. Who are addressed in the first stanza?

In the first stanza, the merchants are addressed. The speaker asks them what they sell. They reply that they sell rich goods such as crimson and silver turbans, purple brocade tunics, amber-panelled mirrors and daggers with jade handles. These items suggest wealth, colour, fine taste and skilled craftsmanship. The opening stanza immediately creates a bright and grand picture of the bazaar.

3. What do the merchants sell?

The merchants sell turbans of crimson and silver, tunics of purple brocade, mirrors with panels of amber and daggers with handles of jade. These are not simple goods. They are rich, colourful and artistic items. Through them, the poet highlights the beauty of Indian textiles, ornaments and weapons. The merchants' wares make the bazaar look royal and attractive.

4. What do the vendors weigh?

The vendors weigh saffron, lentil and rice. These items are connected with food and household life. Saffron also suggests luxury and fragrance, while lentil and rice suggest daily nourishment. By including these objects, the poet shows that the bazaar is useful to ordinary people as well as rich buyers. It provides both beauty and necessity.

5. What do the maidens grind?

The maidens grind sandalwood, henna and spice. These items appeal mainly to the sense of smell. Sandalwood is used for fragrance and worship, henna for beauty and celebration, and spice for food. This line fills the poem with scent and cultural meaning. It also shows women working in the bazaar and taking part in traditional Indian life.

6. What do the pedlars call?

The pedlars call out chessmen and ivory dice. These objects are linked with games, leisure and entertainment. Their presence in the poem shows that the bazaar does not only provide food, clothes and ornaments. It also offers objects of play and recreation. This makes the market seem complete, serving different needs and pleasures of the people.

7. What do the goldsmiths make?

The goldsmiths make wristlets, anklets, rings, bells for the feet of blue pigeons, girdles of gold for dancers and scabbards of gold for kings. Their work shows great skill and imagination. They make ornaments for ordinary decoration, for dancers, for birds and even for royalty. This stanza highlights the artistic excellence of Indian craftsmen.

8. Why are the bells described as “frail as a dragon-fly’s wing”?

The bells are described as “frail as a dragon-fly’s wing” to show how delicate and light they are. A dragonfly’s wing is thin, fragile and graceful. By using this comparison, the poet helps us imagine the tiny golden bells made for blue pigeons. The simile also adds beauty and softness to the description of the goldsmiths’ work.

9. What do the fruitmen cry?

The fruitmen cry out the names of fruits such as citron, pomegranate and plum. Their calls add sound and movement to the bazaar. The fruits also bring colour and freshness to the poem. Citron, pomegranate and plum suggest different shades, tastes and textures. Through these lines, the poet appeals to both sight and taste.

10. What instruments do the musicians play?

The musicians play the sitar, sarangi and drum. These instruments create the soundscape of the bazaar. Their music adds rhythm, excitement and cultural charm. The mention of Indian instruments also gives the poem a strong local flavour. The bazaar is therefore not silent; it is filled with music, calls and human activity.

11. What do the magicians chant?

The magicians chant spells for the aeons to come. This gives the bazaar a mysterious and magical touch. While other sellers deal with visible goods, the magicians deal with wonder, belief and imagination. Their presence suggests that the bazaar contains not only material objects but also dreams, traditions and old-world charm.

12. What do the flower-girls weave?

The flower-girls weave tassels of azure and red, crowns for the brow of a bridegroom, chaplets to garland his bed and sheets of white blossoms to perfume the sleep of the dead. Their flowers are used for both happy and sad occasions. This shows that the bazaar is connected with every stage of human life.

13. How does the poem appeal to the sense of sight?

The poem appeals strongly to the sense of sight through its rich colours and objects. We see crimson and silver turbans, purple brocade, amber mirrors, jade daggers, gold ornaments, azure and red tassels, and white blossoms. These images make the bazaar bright and vivid. The reader can almost see the crowded stalls and shining goods.

14. How does the poem appeal to the sense of smell?

The poem appeals to the sense of smell through items like saffron, sandalwood, henna, spice and flowers. These objects suggest strong and pleasant fragrances. The final image of white blossoms perfuming the sleep of the dead is especially powerful. The smells in the poem make the bazaar feel real and deeply connected with Indian customs.

15. What makes the poem musical?

The poem becomes musical because of its repeated question-and-answer pattern, its rhythm and its use of sound-rich words. Each stanza begins with a question such as "What do you sell?" or "What do you make?" The answers flow like a chant. The mention of musical instruments such as sitar, sarangi and drum adds to this musical quality.

16. Why is the bazaar important in the poem?

The bazaar is important because it represents the life and culture of Hyderabad. It brings together sellers, craftsmen, musicians, magicians and flower-girls. It contains goods for food, beauty, worship, marriage, dance, royalty and death. The bazaar becomes a symbol of Indian tradition, community life and artistic richness.

17. How does the poem show dignity of labour?

The poem shows dignity of labour by giving importance to different workers in the bazaar. Merchants, vendors, maidens, pedlars, goldsmiths, fruitmen, musicians, magicians and flower-girls all have a role. The poet does not ignore any of them. She presents their work as useful, beautiful and valuable to society.

18. What is the mood of the poem?

The mood of the poem is lively, colourful and celebratory. The bazaar appears full of movement, sound, fragrance and beauty. There is also a serious touch in the final stanza when flowers are woven for the dead. Still, the overall mood remains one of admiration for Indian life, art and tradition.

19. How does the last stanza differ from the earlier stanzas?

The earlier stanzas focus mainly on beauty, trade, music, food and enjoyment. The last stanza adds emotional depth by mentioning flowers for both marriage and death. Crowns and chaplets are used for a bridegroom, while white blossoms are used for the dead. This shows that the bazaar is linked with both joy and sorrow.

20. Why is the title suitable?

The title *In the Bazaars of Hyderabad* is suitable because the whole poem presents the sights, sounds and life of those bazaars. Every stanza introduces a different group of people and the goods or services they offer. The title clearly places the reader inside the market and prepares us for a rich picture of Hyderabad's culture.

Solved Long Answer Questions

1. How does Sarojini Naidu present the bazaar as a place full of life?

Sarojini Naidu presents the bazaar as a place full of life by filling the poem with colours, sounds, smells and movement. The merchants sell crimson and silver turbans, purple brocade, amber mirrors and jade daggers. Vendors weigh saffron, lentil and rice, while maidens grind sandalwood, henna and spice. Goldsmiths make delicate ornaments, fruitmen cry out fruits, musicians play instruments and magicians chant spells. Flower-girls weave garlands for weddings and flowers for funerals. These details show that the bazaar serves every need of society. It is not merely a market but a living centre of culture, trade, art, joy and human emotion.

2. Discuss the use of imagery in the poem.

The poem is rich in imagery. Sarojini Naidu uses visual, auditory, olfactory and tactile images to make the bazaar come alive. Visual images include crimson and silver turbans, purple brocade tunics, amber mirrors, jade daggers and white blossoms. Sound imagery appears through the cries of fruitmen and the music of sitar, sarangi and drum. Smell is suggested through saffron, sandalwood, henna, spice and flowers. The delicate simile “frail as a dragon-fly’s wing” creates a light and graceful image. These details allow readers to experience the bazaar almost directly. The imagery also celebrates Indian craftsmanship, tradition and beauty.

3. What picture of Indian culture does the poem create?

The poem creates a rich and proud picture of Indian culture. It shows traditional clothes, ornaments, food items, perfumes, spices, games, music, magic and flowers. The bazaar brings together many kinds of people, including merchants, vendors, maidens, pedlars, goldsmiths, musicians and flower-girls. Their work is linked with daily life, royal life, dance, worship, marriage and death. This shows that Indian culture is colourful, artistic and deeply connected with rituals. The poem also respects Indian workers and craftsmen by showing their skill and value. In this way, the bazaar becomes a symbol of India’s cultural wealth and living traditions.

Unsolved Practice Questions

1. What are the different groups of people addressed in the poem?
2. Explain the repeated use of “What do you...” in the poem.
3. What colours are used in the poem and what effect do they create?
4. How do the goldsmiths’ products show fine craftsmanship?
5. Why does the poet include both marriage and death in the last stanza?
6. Write a note on the sensory imagery used in the poem.
7. What does the poem tell us about traditional Indian markets?
8. Explain the line “Frail as a dragon-fly’s wing.”
9. How does the poem celebrate Indian art and labour?
10. Why can the bazaar be called a miniature picture of life?