

5. The Professor

- I. (i) The speaker wants to say that all his children, i.e., his sons are economically well off and his two daughters are happily married.
- (ii) By saying, “Both have cars”, the speaker wants to convey that both his sons are well off and have a status in society. It conveys that in Indian society the worth of an individual is measured more by his financial status than anything else.
- (iii) The “other” is a reference for the speaker’s third son. The speaker says that he is not doing “so well” because in comparison to his

other two sons, who have managerial jobs and are economically well off, he is not as successful as they are.

- (iv) By saying, “Every family must have black sheep”, the speaker intends to say that in every family there is a person, who is different from the rest of the family and is an embarrassment to the family. The speaker considered his third son as the black sheep in his family because he was not as well off as his other two sons.
 - (v) The extract shows that Indians value economic success more than academic success through the speaker’s attitude, who measures the success of his two sons by their managerial jobs and the cars they owned.
- II.**
- (i) Sarala and Tarala are the speaker’s daughters. The practice of giving rhyming names to the siblings like ‘Sarala and Tarala’ is shown in this extract.
 - (ii) The speaker says that his two daughters ‘Sarala and Tarala’ are happily married to nice boys. The speaker’s comment about the marriage of Sarala and Tarala hints at the gender bias prevalent in Indian society, which considers the success of a man by his economic status and a woman’s by getting married to a nice boy.
 - (iii) By saying, “How many issues you have”, the speaker wants to enquire from his student about the number of children he has. He is directing this question to his former student.
 - (iv) In reply to his former student’s remark that he has three children, the speaker says “That is good”. The speaker considers his student having three children as “good”.
 - (v) The speaker is not against family planning. The irony in this statement is the fact that though the speaker says that he is not against family planning, yet he feels proud at having eleven grandchildren.
 - (vi) The poem *The Professor* is a satire on the urban Indian way of life as it satirises:
 - (a) the urban Indian society, which measures the success of a man by his economic success rather than his academic excellence.
 - (b) gender bias present in Indian society which believes that woman should be happily married and confined within the four walls of their domestic life.
 - (c) the pretence of the urban Indians, who consider it as a prestige to speak in a foreign language rather than their mother tongue.

- III.** (i) The speaker says that “we have to change with times” because he feels that since the whole world is changing, so we should also change with the changing times. It shows the pretence of the speaker, who feels that we should change with the changing times, but in reality, he himself clings to the old traditions and does not want to change.
- (ii) India is “keeping up” with the changes and development going on in the world.
- (iii) According to the speaker, new values are replacing the old ones. He feels so because of the rapid changes taking place in society.
- (iv) According to the speaker, “Everything is happening with leaps and bounds” because of the rapid changes and development that is taking place in Indian society and the world at large.
- (v) Examples of the use of Indian English in the extract are:
- (a) *We are keeping up. Our progress is progressing.*
- (b) *Old values are going, new values are coming*
- IV.** (i) The speaker says that he rarely goes out because of his old age. The “price of old age” which the speaker has to pay is that he rarely goes out.
- (ii) The speaker says that apart from usual aches and pains associated with old age, he is hale and hearty without any major disease like diabetes, blood pressure or heart attack.
- (iii) The speaker ascribes his good health to sound habits practised by him in his youth.
- (iv) The sound habits followed by the speaker in his youth might have been — eating balanced diet, regular exercise and abstaining from smoking and drinking.
- (v) The main theme of the poem is the hypocrisy and pretence of the urban Indian middle class, which measures the success of an individual in terms of wealth and status rather than academic excellence.
- V.** (i) By saying “hope to score a century”, the speaker wants to say that he hopes to live upto the age of hundred.
- (ii) “Man of weight and consequence” means a man, who is physically healthy, economically sound and has a status in society. The speaker says these words to his former student because he finds him physically healthier than what he was earlier and also because of his status in society.

- (iii) The “good joke” referred to by the speaker is that his former student, who is now healthier, once used to be thin like a stick.
- (iv) Example of Indian English used by the speaker in the given lines is:
 - (a) You were so thin, like stick. (*Stock usage of Indian English*)
 - (b) If you were coming this side by chance. (*Use of Present Continuous Tense instead of Simple Present Tense*)
 - (c) I am living just on opposite house’s backside. (*Direct translation of the local language*)
- (v) The title of the poem is quite apt because:
 - (a) the entire poem revolves around the character of a retired Professor, his life, his thoughts and actions.
 - (b) through the character of the Professor, the poet has ridiculed the urban, educated, middle class of India, its hypocrisy and pretence.