

**STELLA MARIS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), CHENNAI 600 086**  
**(For candidates admitted during the academic year 2019-2020 and thereafter)**  
**SUBJECT CODE:19CE/ME/LA45**

**B.A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 2022**  
**ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS**  
**FOURTH SEMESTER**

**COURSE :MAJOR ELECTIVE**  
**COURSE TITLE: LITERATURE OF ASIA**

**TIME: 3 HOURS**  
**MAX. MARKS: 100**

**SECTION A**

**I. Answer any three of the following questions in about 350 words each. (3x15=45 marks)**

1. Comment on the socio-economic condition of the protagonist in “Old Man Xinjiang”.
2. Discuss the themes of war and death in “Beit Byout (Play House)”.
3. Examine the violence against women during Partition with reference to “Khol Do”.
4. Analyse Mahmoud Darwish’s “The Passport” in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict.
5. Explain, with suitable illustrations, the form and structure of the haiku.

**SECTION B**

**II. Answer any two of the following questions in about 600 words each. (2x20=40 marks)**

6. Discuss the trauma of refugees with reference to Emily Nasrallah’s “The Green Bird”.
7. How does Shanmugalingam’s *Land of our Parents* provide an account of the marginalised status of Sri Lankan Tamils?
8. Can the personal narrative of an individual be treated as a record of the political history of a nation? Discuss with reference to Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*.
9. Comment on the themes of love and darkness in Amos Oz’s *A Tale of Love and Darkness*.

**SECTION C**

**III. Analyse the excerpt given below. (1x15=15 marks)**

10. Jaigun lights the earthenware stove. When she came to the relief camp, Jaigaon had somehow managed to salvage a few battered pots and pans, some patched clothes wrapped in a quilt, a couple of rusty tins of powdered milk and her old earthenware stove. The stove had given her good service during storms and monsoon rains. People like Jaigun have to move frequently. Sometimes the police come and break up their shanties. Sometimes during heavy rains, the low-lying roadsides are inundated. Their temporary shelters are flooded. Cellophane and sacking can no longer give them refuge. And sometimes there are foods, as this time. This is no ordinary flood. It is a deluge. Everything is inundated. Even a small flood is bad enough to uproot them, send them Looking for a dry shelter. But wherever she goes, Jaigaon is careful to take her earthenware stove with her.

As soon as the floods started, several parts of the capital Dhaka were submerged. Relief camps were set up in areas that remained above flood level Jaigun came to this relief camp with her pregnant daughter Batashi and her ten-year-old son Abul.

This is a primary school. Many people have taken shelter here. Many have come with their entire family, others have come alone. The place is crowded. It doesn't matter. They are safe from the deadly reach of the flood. They have a place to rest their heads at night. It is true that

perhaps they have only one full meal of khichuri or bread each day. If they get something to eat for lunch, they might not get something for dinner. But it does not hurt them too much even if they get nothing for dinner. They are used to having nothing to eat. Sometimes they miss one meal, sometimes both. Here they are getting at least a meal a day. Of course, they have only had either khichuri or bread for several days and they are all longing to eat rice. Yesterday afternoon some people distributed relief materials. They brought a huge truck full of bags of rice, lentils and small packets of salt. They also

gave them some candles and matchboxes. Those people were really kind. They had crossed the black floodwaters to bring them so many things. How much sympathy they had for poor folks!

Deep in her thoughts, Jaigun takes two more scraps of paper from the bundle that Abul has brought and feeds the stove. The flames brighten. She also throws in the broken leg of a bench. She is cooking rice after such a long time. Batashi is nearing her term. She should be delivering any day now. Before the floods came, Abul used to carry lunch boxes to offices. Now all work has stopped. How is he going to wade through these waters to do anything? He is such a little boy. Batashi's husband is a rickshaw-puller. When the floods came he just disappeared one day - and has not returned. Jaigun's husband was also a rickshaw-puller. He used to suffer from asthma. Towards the end, despite his illness, he had to continue pulling in order to feed his family. He died a couple of years ago of asthma. Jaigun managed to carry on working as a daily woman in several houses. She has the added responsibility of her pregnant daughter now. She can't even go to work now because of the floodwaters. What can she do? Everything is God's wish.

Jaigun washes the rice and puts the pot on the stove. The girl asked for rice the other day. She said, 'Mother, I don't feel like eating khichuri anymore. If only I could eat some rice.' Jaigun gave her a good scolding. Rice, rice, rice! Where will I get rice for you? If I could go to work, I could get a little rice for you. But isn't it enough that you are getting some khichuri and bread to eat? It isn't in your destiny to eat rice, so how do you expect to eat it?

After getting the rice yesterday, Jaigun thought of cooking it for dinner, but she was too exhausted to do so. They had to be satisfied with a little left-over khichuri for dinner. Today she will cook some rice and lentils and give it to Batashi as soon as it is ready. After all, she is pregnant. And there are so many things one wants to eat in her state. Jaigun rues her fate. Not to be able to satisfy her daughter's craving! She heaves a sigh and returns to her cooking.

Jaigun's family used to live in a Rayer Bazaar slum. They had been able to find some shelter on the sloping banks of the dying river. When the floods came, their slum was inundated. During last year's floods at least their bamboo rooftops remained standing above the floodwaters. This time the black, swirling floodwaters came so rapidly that, even before they knew it, their entire slum was inundated. The slum-dwellers hurriedly moved to the higher ground near the tiled house. They raised bamboo shelters to keep their humble possessions: patched quilts, bundles of clothes, pots and pans, a few tins of powdered milk. Jaigun also kept her mud stove on the bamboo platform. No, the waters could never reach this high. In a couple of days, they would be able to return to their old homes. But that very night the floodwaters covered the bamboo platform and all. Much of Dhaka was by then under chest-deep water. Boats were navigating the main streets. Jaigun's family had to carry their bundles on their heads and wade through shoulder-high water to reach this relief camp.

People had come from all over for shelter. So many people, so many faces. There was a small field in front of the schoolhouse. On the east was a spreading mango tree. Rahima Bibi from Rahmatganj laid out her betel leaf and areca nuts under the tree. She managed to earn a tidy sum selling betel. Naimuddin from Keraniganj sold lentils and potatoes. He used to have a small grocery shop in Keraniganj. The flood inundated his shop.