



Name:
Date:

Duration: 30 min
Marks Obtained: /25

SECTION ONE - READING COMPREHENSION

(15 marks)

Read the given passage and answer all the questions that follows it.

The Experiment that Changed Hearts

Late last year in 2011, Tushar and Matt -two wealthy young men from America- decided to do an experiment. They would live a month of their lives on the income of an average poor Indian person. Tushar, studied at the University of Pennsylvania and worked as an investment banker in the US and Singapore. Matt, migrated as a teenager to the United States with his parents, and studied at the **prestigious** university, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. 1

Both young men returned to India in the **vague** hope that they could be of use to their country. An idea suddenly struck them one day. But, they knew very little about the lives of the average Indian people. Tushar suggested one evening - "Let us try to understand an 'average Indian', by living on an 'average income'." His friend Matt was **captivated** by the idea. They shared a flat and became close friends. They began a journey which would change them forever. 2

To begin with, what was the average income of an Indian? They calculated that India's Average National Income was Rs. 4,500 a month, or Rs. 150 a day. All around the globe, people spend about a third of their income on rent. Excluding rent, they decided to spend Rs. 100 each a day. This meant all their expenses including food, transport and all other expenses had to be less than Rs.100. They were shocked that this did not make them poor, only average in India, because 75 percent Indians lived on less than this average! 3

The young men moved into their maid's tiny apartment- to live on Rs.100 a day- much to her amusement. What surprised them was to spend a large part of their day planning and organizing their food! Eating out was out of the question; even dhabas or cheap street-food stands were too expensive. Milk and yoghurt were expensive and used **sparingly**, meat, eggs and chicken were out of bounds, as were processed food like bread. No ghee or butter, only a little refined oil. Both are passionate cooks with healthy appetites. They found soy nuggets a wonder food — affordable and high in protein, and worked on many recipes. Parle G biscuits again were cheap: 25 paise for 27 calories! They innovated a dessert of fried banana on biscuits. It was their treat each day! 4

Living on Rs.100 made the circle of their life much smaller. They also lost weight and became much skinnier. They found that they could not afford to travel by bus more than five km in a day. If they needed to go further, they could only walk. They could afford to have electricity only five or six hours a day, therefore, they rarely used lights and fans. They also needed to charge their mobile phones. They used one cheap Lifebuoy soap cut into two. They passed by shops, gazing at things they could not buy. They could not afford the movies, and hoped they would not fall ill or it would be disastrous. 5

However, the next part of their experiment was a bigger challenge: Could they live on the official poverty line? It was Rs.32 for cities but for villages, it was even lower, at Rs. 26 per person a day! They went to Matt's ancestral village in Kerala to try to live on Rs.26 per day. They ate boiled rice, a potato and banana and drank black tea: a balanced diet was impossible on only Rs. 18 a day which their briefly adopted 'poverty' permitted. They could not even afford to buy any milk for their tea. Both men found themselves food the whole dreaming about food all day. They walked long distances, and had to save money even on soap to wash their clothes. They could not afford communication, by mobile and internet. It would have been a disaster if they fell ill. For the two 25-year-olds, the experience of 'official poverty' was **harrowing**. 6

Finally, their experiment ended. Tushar and Matt learnt many lessons from their brief **encounter** with poverty. They wrote the following letter to their friends:

“We wish we could say that we are happy to have our 'normal' lives back. We wish we could say that our celebratory feast last night was as satisfying as we had been hoping for throughout our experiment. It was one of the best meals we've ever had. However, each bite was a sad reminder of the harsh reality that there are 400 million people in our country for whom such a luxurious meal will remain a dream. That we can move on to our comfortable life, but they remain in the battlefield of survival — a life of tough choices. A life where freedom means little and hunger is plenty. 7

After this experiment, it disturbs us to spend money on most of the things that we now consider excesses. Do we really need that hair product or that branded perfume? Is dining out at an expensive restaurant every weekend or travelling on holidays necessary? Do we really deserve all the riches we have around us? Is it just plain luck that we were born into circumstances that allow us to build a life of comfort? What makes the other half any less deserving of many of these material possessions, which many of us consider essential? 8

We don't know all the answers to these questions. But we do know the feeling of guilt that is with us now. Guilt that is compounded by the love and generosity we got from people who live on the other side, despite their extremely tough lives. We may have treated them as strangers all our lives, but the people we call poor surely didn't treat us that way.

We now know that poverty and hunger can make you angry and desperate. Most of all, poverty does not allow you to achieve even little dreams. Therefore, we recommend that the government should provide cheap but nutritious food, pass a food law which guarantees adequate nutrition to all poor people of a country. And above all, the private sector, all wealthy citizens, young or old, men or women, business people and professionals should show empathy and kindness to the poor around them, especially if their government is not able to do so. This is the meaning of true freedom and democracy.” 9

1. What was the experiment that Tushar and Matt planned to conduct? (Paragraph 1) ( /1)

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2. Quote any three reasons that compelled Tushar and Matt to do this experiment. (Paragraph 1 & 2) ( /3)

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3. Why was the second part of Tushar and Matt’s experiment a harrowing experience? Quote any two examples from the passage that you found the most disturbing. (Paragraph 6 & 7) ( /2)

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4. “It disturbs us to spend money on most of the things that we now consider excesses.” Explain what implies in your own words. (Paragraph 9) ( /3)

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5. How would your life change after reading this passage? Which practical tips you will adopt from Tushar and Matt’s experiences. (From the entire passage) ( /3)

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6. Use **any three** of the given words in sentences of your own. ( /3)

**prestigious                      encounter                      captivated                      sparingly**

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**SECTION TWO – CREATIVE WRITING**

**(10 marks)**

Write an essay of 120 to 150 words on any one of the following topics. Extra credit will be given for vivid descriptions, strong vocabulary and a powerful storyline.

Select any one of the following topics:

- The day everything went wrong.
- If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go? Describe the sights and sounds of that location. Why did you choose that spot?

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**Marking Scheme**

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Marks Allocation</b>	<b>Marks Obtained</b>
Planning/Mind-mapping	1	
Content with Descriptive Elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sensory Details</li><li>• Adjectives and Adverbs</li><li>• Relevant Vocabulary</li></ul>	5	
Organization (Title/Sequencing and Paragraphing)	2	
Spellings/Punctuation/Presentation	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	