



Class: SSC Batch
Subject: English Literature
Unit Seven-Lesson 1

Zainul Abedin, the great artist

The **pioneer** of Bangladeshi modern art Zainul Abedin is **widely acclaimed** for his Bengal 'Famine Sketches'. Through a series of sketches, Zainul not only documented the harsh famine of 1940 but also showed its **sinister** face through the skeletal figures of the people destined to die of starvation in a man-made **plight**. He depicted these extremely shocking pictures with human **compassion**. He made his own ink by burning charcoal and using cheap ordinary packing paper for sketching. He produced a series of brush and ink drawings, which later became **iconic** images of human sufferings.

Zainul developed a **knack** for drawing and painting when he was a high school student. After completing high school, he got admission to the Government School of Art, Calcutta (now Kolkata). He graduated with the first position in first class in 1938. He was appointed teacher of the Art School while he was still a student there. He also attended the Slade School of Arts, London in 1951-52.

Zainul Abedin is considered the founding father of Bangladeshi art. He was an artist of **outstanding** talent and earned international reputation. For his artistic and **visionary** qualities, he is referred to as Shilpacharya meaning 'great teacher of art' in Bangladesh. He was the first Principal of the first art school in Dhaka in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). He organized the Nabanna (harvest) exhibition in 1969. In the exhibition, a 65-foot long scroll portraying the rural East Pakistan in phases from **abundance** to poverty. This **intensified** the already heightened non-cooperation movement against the Pakistan regime. The exhibition was symbolic of the artists protest and a milestone in demanding cultural and political freedom. Zainul's **dynamic** style of work is evident in a 30 foot long scroll painting called Manpura, which was done to **commemorate** the death of hundreds and thousands of people in the devastating cyclone of 1970.

He designed the pages of Constitution of Bangladesh. He founded the Folk Art Museum at Sonargoan, and also Zainul Abedin Shangrahasala, a gallery of his own works in Mymensingh in 1975.

The river Brahmaputra plays a predominant role in his paintings and a source of inspiration all through his career. Much of his childhood was spent near the **scenic** beauty of the river Brahmaputra. A series of water colours that Zainul did as his tribute to the river earned him the Governor's Gold Medal in an all-India exhibition in 1938. This was the first time when he came into **spotlight** and this award gave him the confidence to create his own visual style.

Zainul was born in Kishoreganj on 29 December 1914, and died on 28 May, 1976.

1. Choose the best answer from the alternatives.

(a) Zainul Abedin was the — of Bangladeshi modern art. (i) follower (ii) admirer (iii) forerunner (iv) painter

(b) There was severe famine in Bangladesh in —. (i) 1938 (ii) 1943 (iii) 1939 (iv) 1970

(c) He is greatly — for his 'Famine Sketches'. (i) praised (ii) disliked (iii) condemned (iv) followed

(d) Zainul Abedin developed a — in drawing when he was a high school student. (i) liking (ii) position (iii) skill (iv) practice

(e) 'Manpura' painting was — foot long. (i) 65 (ii) 45 (iii) 95 (iv) 30

(f) Zainul Abedin studied art at the Government school of art in —. (i) Dhaka (ii) Mymensing (iii) London (iv) Calcutta

(g) 'Manpura' is the name of a —. (i) school (ii) place (iii) painting (iv) film

(h) The river Brahmaputra had an — on Zainul Abedin. (i) role (ii) influence (iii) ignorance (iv) education

(i) He organised the — exhibition in 1969. (i) art (ii) Nabanna (iii) Manpura (iv) Famine Sketcher

2. Answer the following questions

a) Write in detail how Zainul Abedin portrayed the sufferings of people.

- b) What influence did the river Brahmaputra have on Zainul Abedin? How did he show this influence in his works?
- c) What did these works earn him in his life?
- d) How did his art help to intensify the noncooperation movement against the Pakistani regime?

3. Fill in each gap with a suitable word of your own based on the information in the text.

Zainul is our (a)—. His Bengal `Famine Sketches' were admired (b)—. He not only documented the harsh famine of 1940 (c)—showed its sinister face through the skeletal figures of the people (d)—were destined to die of starvation. These pictures were (e)—pathetic, During his school life, he (f)—a skill on drawing and (g)—. He (h)—from the Govt. School of Art in Calcutta. He got first class in (i)—. He also attended the Slade School of Arts in (j)—.

4. Now, write a paragraph based on the information about `Zainul Abedin'. Use the clues in the list below. Write the information in a logical sequence as it appears in the text. The paragraph should not exceed 70 words.

pioneer—enthusiastically praised—inauspicious—iconic—knack—outstanding—heighten—milestone—commemorate—scenic--spotlight

5. The following sentences are in wrong order. Write them in correct order.

A. He was also appointed as a teacher there. He graduated from the Govt. School of Art in Kolkata. He is highly admired for his Bengal `Famine Sketches'. He is the pioneer of Bangladeshi modern art. Zainul Abedin is our pride.

B. He graduated from the Government School of Art in Kolkata. He was born in Kishoreganj. Zainul Abedin is the harbinger of modern Bangladeshi art. Finally he earned Governor's Gold Medal in 1938. Later he founded the Folk Art Museum at Sonargaon.

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