

6. Panchlight

About the passage

A. Read to understand

1. a) The village leaders wanted to do a puja of the petromax lamp as it would not be appropriate to use a technical object with nuts and bolts without first having it suitably blessed.
- b) Agnu Mahto was their toli's orderly. He asked the villagers not to come too close to the Panchlight or touch it as they might damage it.
- c) When the shopkeeper had asked the chief to pay five cowries and five rupees for the Panchlight, the chief told him that he was not an ignorant rustic and had seen many Panchlights before this. After this, the shopkeeper concèded and gave the Panchlight at a discount for only five cowries. He even gave them a box in which they could carry it. This made the people from the toil look at the chief with new respect.
- d) The villagers began to have serious doubts about the intelligence of the chief as they felt that the chief, along with the secretary and the orderly, had set out to do things without any idea of how they were to be done. They did not know how to light the Panchlight, and when Godhan came to light it, there was no spirit available for him to do so.

e) The people from the neighbourhood community were not called for help because they would insult and mock the Mahto Toli for the rest of their lives.

f) The people from the Rajput Toli were laughing at the villagers because they were not able to turn on the Panchlight.

g) Godhan was banned from interacting with the villagers because Munri's mother had complained to the panchayat that he would look at her daughter and sing film songs. The panchayat members already wanted to teach him a lesson as he had come from another village and started living there without ever giving even a paisa to them. So they fined him ten rupees after Munri's mother complained and banished him when he refused to pay.

2. a) i) The chief said this to the shopkeeper.

ii) The shopkeeper gaped at him and said that since the chief himself had come to his shop to buy the Panchlight, he would charge only five cowries for it.

iii) This line was said when the Mahto Toli chief had gone to purchase the first Panchlight for the toli.

b) i) Gulri Kaki, Munri's mother, said this. She wanted to go and try to persuade Godhan to come and light the Panchlight.

ii) Yes, Gulri Kaki managed to persuade Godhan to come and light their first Panchlight.

iii) Gulri Kaki made this suggestion because Godhan was banished due to her complaint that he looked at her daughter, Munri, and sang film songs. She thought that she would be able to reason with him better than anyone else.