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BASED ON NCERT

Beehive

Chapter 6

My Childhood

BEFORE YOU READ

Can you think of any scientists, who have also been statesmen?

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, whose projects in space, defence and nuclear technology guided India into the twenty first century, became our eleventh President in 2002.. In his autobiography, "Wings of Fire, "he speaks of the childhood.

Now read the story carefully and write hard words

I was born into a middle-class Tamil family in the island town of Rameswaram in the erstwhile Madras state. My father, Jainulabdeen, had neither much formal

education nor much wealth; despite these disadvantages, he possessed great innate wisdom and a true generosity of spirit. He had an ideal helpmate in my mother, Ashiamma. I do not recall the exact number of people she fed every day, but I am quite certain that far more outsiders ate with us than all the members of our own family put together.

I was one of many children - a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents. We lived in our ancestral house, which was built in the middle of the 19th century. It was a fairly large pucca house, made of limestone and brick, on the Mosque street in Rameswaram. My austere father used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries. However, all necessities were provided for, in terms of food, medicine or clothes. In fact, I would say mine was a very secure childhood, both materially and emotionally.

The Second World War broke out in 1939, when I was eight years old. For reasons I have never been able to understand, a sudden demand for tamarind seeds erupted in the market.

