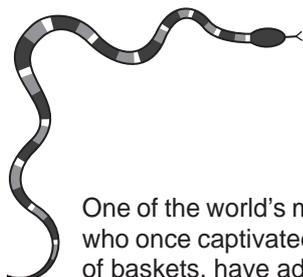


## Exercise 2

Read this article carefully, and then answer the questions on the opposite page.



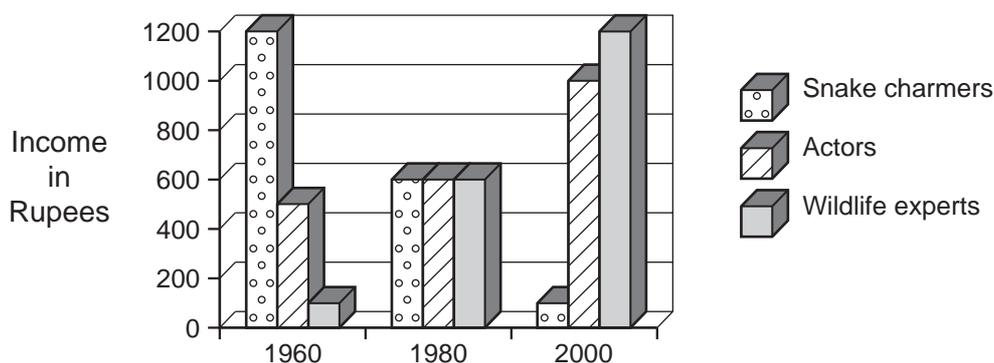
# India's Snake Charmers

One of the world's most fascinating and individual traditions is under threat. India's snake charmers, who once captivated generations of small children by playing music to cobras to make them rise out of baskets, have admitted that they have fallen on hard times.

The Sapera people, India's traditional snake charmers, no longer manage to attract big crowds and are finding it difficult to earn enough money to live. They fear that their community might disappear forever if their income from snake charming continues to go down or if they cannot find an alternative means of making a living.

Most of India's snake charmers come from one small northern village, Salenagar, about an hour from the ancient city of Lucknow. The villagers have been in the snake charming business ever since their ancestors migrated there from Bengal. Snake charming is one of the main things which characterise the Sapera and they have been working with snakes for hundreds of years.

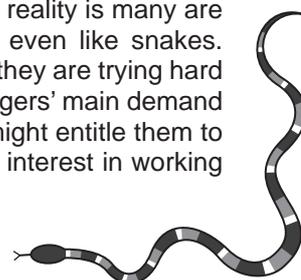
But now the Sapera's livelihood is being threatened. As the chart indicates, the income earned by snake charmers has decreased significantly over the last forty years. In 1960, a snake charmer earned 1200 rupees a day; actors were earning only 500 rupees and wildlife experts barely made 100 rupees for working for one day. Twenty years later, India's snake charmers were earning only 600 rupees daily.



Snake charmers are blaming the decline of their profession on the increasing popularity of wildlife television programmes and films, a particular attraction for younger people. The traditional snake charming act involves playing a traditional wailing tune on a *bean*, an instrument that sounds a bit like a pipe. "The new generation is not listening to the old songs and melodies, they only want modern songs or pop music, with its high tech' instruments. They are no longer interested in traditional *bean* music," says a representative of the village.

The world has changed and now younger people are more interested in the latest technology; their mobile phones, computers and DVD players. Many older people just do not understand these developments and regrettably the new generation takes no interest in many traditional ways of life.

While snake charmers may seem exotic to much of the rest of the world, the reality is many are suffering financially. Many snake charmers have admitted that they don't even like snakes. However, they are very proud of their ancestral profession, to the extent that they are trying hard to make sure that snake charming maintains a role in modern India. The villagers' main demand is that they are properly recognised by the government. Under the law this might entitle them to government aid and certain privileges. Any such help may even revive their interest in working with snakes.



- (a) What did the Sapera do to captivate hundreds of small children?  
..... [1]
- (b) Give the **two** factors that the Sapera believe may lead to the loss of their community.
  - (i) ..... [1]
  - (ii) ..... [2]
- (c) Where did India's snake charmers originally come from?  
..... [1]
- (d) Which profession doubled its income in the last twenty years of the twentieth century?  
..... [1]
- (e) Compare the earnings of a snake charmer in 1960 to those of a snake charmer in 1980.  
..... [1]
- (f) Give **two** reasons why the Sapera think that young people are responsible for the declining interest in snake charming.
  - (i) ..... [1]
  - (ii) ..... [2]
- (g) How would proper government recognition help the Sapera people?  
..... [1]
- (h) What do you think is the attitude of the snake charmers to the younger generation?  
..... [1]
- (i) Give **four** details of the Sapera snake charmers.  
.....  
.....  
.....  
..... [4]

Total: [14]