

### **INDIGO by Louis Fischer**

#### **Gist of the lesson:**

- Raj Kumar Shukla- A poor sharecropper from Champaran wishing to meet Gandhiji.
- Raj Kumar Shukla – illiterate but resolute, hence followed Gandhiji to Lucknow, Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Patna, Muzzafarpur and then Camparan.
- Servants at Rajendra Prasad’s residence thought Gandhiji to be an untouchable.
- Gandhiji considered as an untouchable because of simple living style and wearing, due to the company of Raj Kumar Shukla.
- Decided to go to Muzzafarpur first to get detailed information about Champaran sharecropper.
- Sent telegram to J B Kriplani & stayed in Prof Malkani’s home –a government servant.
- Indians afraid of showing sympathy to the supporters of home rule.
- The news of Gandhiji’s arrival spread –sharecroppers gathered in large number to meet their champion.
- Gandhiji chided the Muzzafarpur lawyer for taking high fee.
- Champaran district was divided into estate owned by English people, Indians only tenant farmers.
- Landlords compelled tenants to plant 15% of their land with indigo and surrender their entire harvest as rent.

- In the meantime Germany had developed synthetic indigo –British landlords freed the Indian farmers from the 15% arrangement but asked them to pay compensation.
- Many signed, some resisted engaged lawyers, landlords hired thugs.
- Gandhiji reached Champaran –visited the secretary of the British landlord association to get the facts but denied as he was an outsider.
- Gandhiji went to the British Official Commissioner who asked him to leave Tirhut , Gandhiji disobeyed, went to Motihari the capital of Champaran where a vast multitude greeted him, continued his investigations.
- Visited maltreated villagers, stopped by the police superintendent but disobeyed the order.
- Motihari black with peasants spontaneous demonstrations, Gandhiji released without bail Civil Disobedience triumphed.
- Gandhiji agreed to 25% refund by the landowners, it symbolised the surrender of the prestige.
- Gandhiji worked hard towards social economic reforms, elevated their distress aided by his wife, Mahadev Desai, Narhari Parikh.
- Gandhiji taught a lesson of self reliance by not seeking help of an English man Mr. Andrews.

### **SOLVED QUESTIONS**

#### **Short Answer Questions:**

1.. What strategy did Gandhiji follow in removing the problems of sharecroppers?

Gandhiji discussed the problems with lawyers. He disregarded British order of eviction. He insisted peasants to remove their fear.

2. Why did Gandhiji feel that it was useless for the peasants to go to law courts?

The peasants are crushed and fear stricken. The lawyers charged high fee.

3. Why did the British landlords free the sharecropper from growing Indigo? What did they want instead?

The British came to know that synthetic indigo was developed in Germany and the 15% of land was released and in return, the peasants were asked to pay compensation for release from the agreement.

4. Why did Gandhiji agree for the 25% refund by the British landlords?

Gandhiji agreed for 25% refund because the amount was not important but the landlord's prestige was surrendered.

5.What was the important lesson taught by Gandhiji to his disciples ?

Gandhiji taught rules of personal hygiene and cleanliness. He also taught the -Champarans to win freedom independently without any support of British.

### Long answer question:

1. Why did Gandhiji consider freedom from fear more important than legal justice for the poor peasants of Champaran?

Value Points :British ruthless exploitation—farmers fight through lawyers—battles were inconclusive—terror-stricken—Gandhiji’s declaration—no need of law court –overcome terror—be bold and courageous.

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. What made Gandhiji urge the departure of the British?
2. How was Gandhiji received in Motihari?
3. What made Mahatma Gandhi declare ‘the battle of Champaran is won’?
4. How did the Champaran episode change the plight of the peasants?
5. Why did Gandhi agree to a settlement of 25% refund to the farmers?
6. How do we know that ordinary people too contributed to the freedom movement?
7. What argument did Gandhiji give for not complying with the official orders to quit Champaran?
8. How were the Britishers shown that their dreaded and unquestioned authority could be challenged by the Indians?

### LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Why did Gandhiji’s casual visit to Champaran get extended to over a year?
2. How did civil disobedience triumph?
3. What idea do you form about the Britishers from the chapter “Indigo”?
4. How did the peasants learn courage?
5. Are Gandhiji’s socio, economic and political ideals relevant today? Discuss with reference to the Champaran episode.

6. **Value Based Question:** Answer the following in about 100 words. 5

‘Champaran episode’ was a turning point not only in Gandhiji’s life, but also in the history of Indian freedom struggle. Don’t you agree that Gandhiji’s practically proven ideals of truth, non violence, and empathy for the deprived are still relevant? Write your ideas on “Relevance of Gandhian ideals today” in the form of an article.