

INDIGO

Q.1) Who was Rajkumar Shukla? Why did he come to meet Gandhi?

Ans.1)- Rajkumar Shukla was a poor, illiterate peasant, an indigo sharecropper from Champaran in Bihar.

-To complain about and to do something about the injustice of the landlord system in Bihar. Somebody had told him to speak to Gandhi.

Q.2) why is Rajkumar Shukla described as being 'resolute'?

Ans.2) Gandhi could not accompany Shukla immediately to Champaran. He had an appointment in Kanpur and also had to go to other parts of India. Shukla accompanied him everywhere. He stayed in his ashram near Ahmedabad for weeks till he got a date fixed.

Q.3) why do you think the servants thought Gandhi to be another peasant?

Ans.3) The servants knew nothing about Gandhi. He had accompanied Shukla, whom the servants knew as a poor peasant (yeoman), who pestered their master Rajender Prasad to help the indigo sharecroppers. So, they thought that Gandhi was also a peasant.

Q.4) Why was Gandhi not allowed to draw water from the well? What is ironical about it?

Ans.4)- The people in Bihar did not know that Gandhi was not an untouchable. So, he was not permitted to draw water from the well lest some drops from his bucket pollute the entire source.

-It was Gandhi only who later on fought against inhuman practice of untouchability and gave them the name Harijans.

Q.5) In whose house did Gandhi stay at Muzzafarpur? Why was it an extraordinary thing in 'those days'?

Ans.5) In the house of Professor Malkani, a teacher in a government school.

-In those days of British rule, the Indians were afraid to show sympathy for the advocates of home rule. So it was unusual for a government professor like Malkani to harbour Gandhi.

Q.6) Why did Gandhi go to Muzzafarpur first?

Ans.6) -To obtain more complete information of the injustice of the landlord system in Bihar and the exploitation of the poor sharecroppers.

Q.7) Why was Gandhi annoyed with the lawyers of Muzzafarpur?

Ans.7) --For collecting big fee from poor sharecroppers.

-He said that law courts were useless where peasants were so crushed and fear-stricken. The real relief for them would be liberation from fear.

Q.8) List the places that Gandhi visited between his first meeting with Shukla and his arrival at Champaran?

Ans.8) Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Patna, Muzzafarpur.

Q.9) What did the peasants pay the British landlords as rent? What did the British now want instead and why? What would be the impact of synthetic indigo on the prices of natural indigo?

OR

What was the long-term contract between the landlords and the tenants? Why and How did the landlords break this contract?

OR

How were the Indigo sharecroppers duped by the landlords?

Ans.9) –The peasants were compelled to plant 15% of their holdings with Indigo and surrender the entire Indigo harvest as rent.

–Presently the landlords learned that Germany had developed synthetic Indigo. So, they released the sharecroppers from the 15% arrangement and obtained agreements from them to pay them compensation instead, in the form of money.

–The prices of natural Indigo would definitely fall sharply.

Q.10) What agreement did some peasants sign with the British landlords? Why? Why did they want their money back?

Ans.10) –To pay them compensation for being released from the 15% arrangement.

–Because sharecropping agreement was irksome to the peasants.

–When they learnt about the synthetic Indigo developed by Germany, they felt duped and wanted their money back.

Q.11) At what point did Gandhi arrive in Champaran?

Ans.11) –By a long term contract, Indigo sharecroppers were compelled to plant and surrender 15% of the crop as rent to the British landlords. When Germany developed synthetic Indigo, the landlords made peasants sign an agreement to pay them compensation for being released from 15% agreement. Those who resisted engaged lawyers. Later, when illiterate peasants learnt about synthetic Indigo, they wanted their money back. At this point Gandhi reached Champaran.

Q.12) What was the first proof of the peasant's liberation from the fear of British?

Ans.12) The morning of Gandhi's trial found the town of Motihari black with peasants. On hearing that a Mahatma who wanted to help them was in trouble with the authorities, thousands of peasants gathered around the courthouse in Champaran to demand that the British should be removed from the region.

Q.13) Why did the prosecutor request the Judge to postpone Gandhi's trial?

Ans.13) Thousands of peasants demonstrated spontaneously outside the courthouse in Motihari on the morning of Gandhi's trial. The officials had to take Gandhi's help to regulate the crowd. The government was baffled. Their might and authority had never been challenged before. They wished to consult their superiors. So, the prosecutor requested the judge to postpone the trial.

Q.14) What had been the attitude of lawyers towards the problem of sharecroppers?

Ans.14) Their attitude was quite impersonal and selfish. They were only concerned about their fees. There was no willingness to sort out their problems or liberate them from fear. The injustice being done to them did not bother the lawyers.

Q.15) How did their attitude and thinking change?

OR

"The battle of Champaran is won" exclaimed Gandhi. Explain.

Ans.15) When Gandhi reminded the lawyers about the injustice being done to sharecroppers, they realized that Gandhi, a total stranger was prepared to go to the prison for their sake whereas they, who claimed to have served them thought of going home if Gandhi was sentenced to prison. It would be shameful desertion. So they told Gandhi that they would follow him to jail. This changed attitude and their willingness to fight for the cause of peasants made Gandhi remark that the battle of Champaran is won.

Q.16) Why did the commission get ready to make refunds to the sharecroppers?

Ans.16) The official enquiry into the Indigo sharecroppers' situation collected a mountain of evidence against the big planters. On seeing this, they got ready to make refunds.

Q.17) Why did Gandhi agree to a settlement of 25% refund to farmers?

Ans.17) – Because it broke the deadlock. Gandhi believed that the amount of refund was less important than the fact that the landlords had been obliged to surrender part of the money and with it, part of their prestige

Q.18) How did the episode change the plight of the peasants?

Ans.18) The planters had behaved as lords above the law. But after 25% refund, the peasants saw that they had rights and defenders. They learnt courage. After a few years, the British planters abandoned their estates, which reverted to the peasants. Indigo sharecropping disappeared in Champaran village.

Q.19) What was Gandhi's idea of bringing transformation?

Ans.19) Gandhi believed in bringing change at the grassroots. He never contented himself with large political or economic solutions. He wanted to do something about cultural and social backwardness in villages like Champaran

Q.20) What efforts did he make to remove social and cultural backwardness of villages of Champaran?

Ans.20) –Gandhi appealed for teachers. Many volunteers including his wife Kasturba offered to teach.

-Primary schools were opened in 6 villages

-Kasturba taught Ashram rules and personal hygiene and community sanitation.

-Gandhi engaged the services of a doctor to look after health conditions.

Q.21) What was typical Gandhi pattern of working? Give 2 examples?

Ans.21) – His politics was intertwined with the practical day to day problems of living human beings.

-In everything Gandhi did, he tried to mould a new free Indian who could stand on his own feet and thus make India free.

Q.22) How did Gandhi teach his lawyer friends a lesson in self-reliance?

OR

Why was Gandhi opposed to the idea that Andrews, the English pacifist, should stay in Champaran?

Ans.22) Gandhi told his lawyer friends that in their unequal fight, they should not seek a prop in Andrews because he happened to be an Englishman. This would show the weakness of their hearts. The cause is just and they must rely on themselves to win the battle.

Q.23) How do we know that the ordinary people too contributed to the freedom movement?

Ans.23) Professor J.B.Kriplani came to receive Gandhi at Muzzafarpur railway station at midnight.

-On the morning of Gandhi's trial thousands of people demonstrated spontaneously outside the courtroom.

-Sharecroppers from Champaran came on foot and by conveyance to see Gandhi, their champion at Muzzafarpur.

-Rajkumar Shukla, a poor Indigo sharecropper waited patiently for months till Gandhi gave him a date to visit Champaran.

LONG QUESTIONS

Q.1) How was justice meted out to the Indigo sharecroppers?

OR

Why did Gandhi go to Champaran?

OR

Give an account of Gandhi's efforts to secure justice for the poor Indigo sharecroppers of Champaran?

"Indigo sharecropping disappeared" Which factors helped to achieve freedom for the fear-stricken peasants of Champaran?

Ans.1) Gandhi had gone to Champaran on the insistence of a poor Indigo sharecropper, Rajkumar Shukla, to do something about the injustice being done to them by the British landlords. By a long term agreement, the Indigo sharecroppers were compelled to plant 15% of their holdings with indigo and surrender the entire harvest as rent. When Germany started producing synthetic indigo, the landlords obtained agreements from the sharecroppers to pay them compensation for being released from 15% agreement. Those who had paid felt cheated and wanted their money back.

Gandhi began by collecting facts. At Motihari, he met prominent lawyers who briefed him about the cases. They then proceeded to conduct a detailed inquiry into the grievances of the farmers. Depositions by about 10,000 peasants were written down and notes made on other evidence. Documents were collected. After four meetings with Gandhi, the Lt. Governor appointed an official commission of enquiry to look into the sharecroppers situation.

The commission assembled a mountain of evidence against the big planters. Consequently, they agreed to make refunds. Gandhi agreed to a refund of 25% as more than money it was a moral victory for the peasants. They now saw they had rights and learned courage. Within a few years the British planters gave up their estates. The peasants now became the masters of the land. Indigo sharecropping disappeared completely.

Q.2) 'Civil- disobedience had triumphed, the first time in modern India.' Elaborate?

Ans.2) Gandhi had gone to Champaran to do something about the injustice being done to Indigo sharecroppers. Once while his way to peasant's house, who had been ill-treated, he received an official order to quit Champaran immediately. Gandhi disobeyed the order. Consequently, he was summoned to the court the next day.

The morning found the town of Motihari black with peasants who had gathered around the court house in spontaneous demonstration. This was the first solid proof of the beginning of their liberation from fear of the British.

The officials felt powerless and had to seek Gandhi's help to regulate the crowd. It was a concrete proof that their might could be challenged by the Indians. The government was baffled. Gandhi read a statement pleading guilty. After a recess, the judge said that he would not deliver judgment for several days.

Meanwhile Gandhi was able to influence other prominent lawyers that if he was sentenced to prison, they would follow him too. Several days later Gandhi received a written communication from the magistrate that the LT. Governor of the province had ordered the case to be dropped.

Thus civil disobedience had triumphed, the first time in modern India.

Q.3) Why do you think Gandhi considered the Champaran episode to be a turning point in his life?

OR

"Self-reliance, Indian independence and help to sharecroppers were all bound together"
Elucidate on the basis of your reading of Indigo.

Ans.3) The Champaran episode did not begin as an act of defiance. It grew out of an attempt to ease the suffering of a large number of poor peasants. However, it led Gandhi to declare that the British could not order him about in his own country. It was during this struggle in 1917 that he decided to urge the departure of the British. He stood up firmly against the injustice, exploitation, oppression and tyranny of the British rulers.

Gandhi concentrated on the practical day to day problems of living human beings. He analyzed that the root cause of their problem was fear and tried to eradicate it. The voluntary demonstration by thousands of peasants on the morning of his trial was a concrete proof of their liberation from fear of the British and that their might could be challenged by the Indians.

Champaran gave him an opportunity to test the basic principles of his movement. He used non-violent means to achieve his aim. In everything Gandhi did he tried to mould a new free Indian who could stand on his own feet and thus make India free. He taught his lawyer friends a lesson in self-reliance. Their cause was just and they must rely on themselves to win the battle. Thus self-reliance, Indian independence and help to sharecroppers were all bound together.