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Class 12 English (Flamingo) Notes

INDIGO

Key Notes and Important Questions with Answers

5. Indigo

Louis Fischer reviews 'The Life of Mahatama' observing closely 'The Champaran episode'. A simple peasant's entreaty brings the historical change to learn courage and self reliance to protest against the wrong doers for their rights.

—Louis Fischer

Points to Remember

- Gandhiji's meetings with Shukla
- Gandhiji at Indian National Congress Annual Convention
- Shukla, a poor Indigo peasant, requested him to come to Champaran
- Gandhiji agreed to do so after completing task in Calcutta
- visited Rajendra Prasad's place in way to Champaran
- peasants came to meet him at Muzaffarpur
- Gandhiji met lawyers and scolded them for charging fee from poor peasants.

Problems of Peasants

- landlords forced sharecroppers to grow indigo in 15% of the land
- Germany developed synthetic indigo
- landlords demanded compensation for freeing the peasants from 15% arrangement.

- some agreed but later demanded money back.

Gandhiji Arrived at Champaran

- wanted to meet Secretary of British Landlord's Association but was refused
- tried to meet Commissioner of Tirput region
- was bullied and ordered to leave Champaran but he defied orders.
- prohibited from meeting peasants
- disobeyed notice to leave Champaran
  - was summoned at court
  - worked whole night to get support
  - peasants gathered in large number to show support to him
  - Gandhiji proved that British power was no longer unchallengeable.
  - authorities got afraid and postponed the case, Gandhiji, released on bail.
  - lawyers decided to follow Gandhiji

First Attempt of Civil Disobedience

- case dropped against Gandhiji
- he planned Civil Disobedience
- Commission of inquiry appointed by Governor
- evidence against landlords found
- Gandhiji agreed for 25% refund as was agreed by landlords
- indigo share cropping abandoned and land given to peasants.,

Gandhiji's foresight – beyond political & economic solutions

- aimed to improve social and cultural status of Champaran.
- aimed at improving health services
- took help of volunteers
- taught villagers about cleanliness and hygiene and to be self-reliant and independent
- freedom from fear more important than freedom from legal justice
- real relief for peasants was to be free form fear, courts were useless for fear stricken peasants
- Self reliance, strong will and courage to win battles, must protest against injustice.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Why did Rajkumar Shukla want to meet Gandhiji?

Ans. Raj Kumar Shukla was a sharecropper from Champaran. He was illiterate but resolute. He had come to the Congress session to complain about the injustice of the landlord system in Bihar. He was sure that Gandhiji could help them. He wanted Gandhiji to come to Champaran district. So he wanted to meet Gandhiji.

2. What was the main problem of Sharecroppers in Champaran?

Ans. The land was divided into large estates that were owned by Englishmen. The Chief commercial crop was indigo. The landlord forced all the tenants to plant 15 percent of their holdings with indigo and surrender the entire indigo harvest as rent. This was done by a long term contract.

3. How did Gandhiji react after receiving summon to appear in court the next day?

Ans. Gandhiji received a summon to appear in the court but disobeyed the order. He remained awaken all night. He telegraphed Rajendra Prasad to come from Bihar with influential friends. He sent instructions to the ashram. He wired a full report to the Viceroy.

4. How did Civil Disobedience triumph for the first time in modern India?

Ans. Gandhiji did not obey the British authorities, order to leave Chamapran. The summons were also served but he remained firm. Then he received a written communication from the magistrate that the Lieutenant Governor of the Province had ordered the case to be dropped.

Questions for Practice :

1. How could Shukla convince Gandhiji to come to Chamaparan?
2. What arrangements did Gandhiji make before reaching Champaran?
3. How was Gandhiji treated at Rajendra Prasad's house?
4. Why did Gandhiji agree to a settlement of 25% refund to the farmers?
5. How did the Champaran episode change the plight of the peasants?
6. What was the conflict between the land lord and the share croppers when Gandhiji reached a Champaran ?
7. Why did Gandhiji oppose 'Charles Freer Andrews' proposed stay in Champaran ?
8. Exploitation is universal phenomenon. The poor indigo peasants were exploited by British landlords to which Gandhiji objected. Even after the long independence unorganised labour is exploited. Suggest the ways to counter the problem.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Why did Gandhiji consider the Chamapran episode to be a turning point in his life?

Ans. **Key Points**

- Gandhiji felt perturbed to see the plight of Indian peasants.
- Share croppers in Champaran were morally and economically shattered.
- Gandhiji fought successfully to get justice for the Champaran peasants.
- Gandhiji explained that what he did was an ordinary thing
- But Champaran did not begin an act of defiance
- It grew out an attempt to alleviate the distress of large number of poor peasants.
- Gandhiji tried to mould a new free Indian who could stand on his feet and thus made India free.

2. What steps were taken by Gandhiji to solve the problems of social and cultural backwardness in the villages of Champaran?

Ans. Gandhiji never restricted himself to political or economic solutions only.

- He wanted to bring about some socio-cultural transformation.
- He appealed for teachers. Primary schools were opened in six villages. Many disciples of Gandhiji volunteered to teach in Champaran and adjoining villages.
- Kasturba Gandhi taught ashram rules on cleanliness and community sanitation.
- To improve the miserable health conditions, Gandhiji got a doctor who volunteered to render his services for six months.
- Three medicines were made available - Castor oil, quinine and sulphur ointment.
- The filthy state of women's clothes was also noticed by Gandhiji.
- His was not a loyalty to abstractions, it was a loyalty to human beings.

Questions for Practice

1. How was Gandhiji's method different in solving the problems of the farmers?