

“Indigo” by Louis Fischer

TEXTUAL QUESTION ANSWERS

(From Flamingo Textbook)

Understanding the Text

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

Answer: Gandhi considered the Champaran episode a turning point because it was his first successful civil disobedience movement in India. It demonstrated that British authority could be challenged through non-violence. It also gave him confidence in leading future national movements.

2. How was Gandhi able to influence lawyers? Give instances.

Answer: Gandhi influenced the lawyers in Champaran by questioning their moral responsibility. When he asked whether they would leave the peasants if he were arrested, they felt ashamed and decided to stay. His dedication and self-sacrifice inspired them to support the cause.

3. What was the attitude of the average Indian in smaller localities towards advocates of ‘home rule’?

Answer: The average Indian in smaller towns was fearful of British authority and hesitant to support advocates of home rule openly. They often stayed away from political activity out of fear of retribution.

4. How do we know that ordinary people too contributed to the freedom movement?

Answer: The support Gandhi received from peasants, students, and villagers in Champaran shows that ordinary people actively contributed. People like Rajkumar Shukla and local peasants joined

the movement, showing mass participation in the struggle for freedom.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS (SHORT & LONG ANSWERS)

◆ **Short Answer Questions (30–50 words)**

1. Who was Rajkumar Shukla?

Answer: Rajkumar Shukla was a poor indigo sharecropper from Champaran who was determined to bring Gandhi to his district to fight against the injustice faced by peasants at the hands of British landlords.

2. Why did Rajkumar Shukla want Gandhi to visit Champaran?

Answer: He wanted Gandhi to help the indigo sharecroppers who were being forced by British landlords to grow indigo and pay unfair taxes. He believed Gandhi could help them get justice.

3. What was the ‘long-term contract’ between British landlords and Indian peasants?

Answer: Under the long-term contract, Indian peasants were compelled to grow indigo on 15% of their land and give it to landlords as rent. Even after synthetic indigo was developed, the British continued to exploit them.

4. Why did the British landlords want to release the peasants from the 15% agreement?

Answer: After Germany developed synthetic indigo, natural indigo lost market value. Landlords no longer found it profitable and wanted to end the 15% arrangement by demanding compensation from peasants.

5. Why did Gandhi refuse to obey the order to leave Champaran?

Answer: Gandhi refused to obey because he felt it was his moral duty

to help the oppressed peasants. He believed staying and supporting the truth was more important than following unjust laws.

6. What was the significance of Gandhi's trial in Champaran?

Answer: Gandhi's trial marked the first act of civil disobedience in India. His refusal to leave Champaran gained massive public support, forcing the British to drop the case, proving that truth and non-violence could defeat injustice.

7. What services did Gandhi and his associates provide in Champaran besides legal aid?

Answer: Gandhi and his team opened schools, improved sanitation, and provided health care. His wife Kasturba taught personal hygiene and cleanliness to women, promoting social upliftment.

8. What did Gandhi mean by the phrase "the real relief for them is to be free from fear"?

Answer: Gandhi believed that true freedom for peasants would come not just from legal justice, but from overcoming the fear of British rulers and their exploitative practices.

9. What role did Gandhi's associates play during the Champaran movement?

Answer: Associates like Rajendra Prasad, J.B. Kripalani, Mahadev Desai, and Kasturba Gandhi assisted by supporting legal, educational, and social initiatives. They contributed to the movement's success.

10. What did Gandhi say about lawyers charging fees from poor peasants?

Answer: Gandhi disapproved of lawyers charging peasants large fees. He believed in selfless service and felt that lawyers should support the oppressed without personal gain.

◆ **Long Answer Questions (120–150 words)**

11. Describe the conditions of sharecroppers in Champaran and how Gandhi addressed their issues.

Answer: The sharecroppers of Champaran were forced to cultivate indigo on 15% of their land and give it to British landlords. Even when synthetic indigo was introduced, landlords exploited peasants by demanding compensation to release them from the agreement. Gandhi, upon learning this, visited Champaran and conducted an inquiry. He gathered written testimonies and met government officials. His peaceful defiance and refusal to leave Champaran led to public support and a trial that was eventually dropped. Finally, the government agreed to a settlement where landlords had to return part of the money. Gandhi restored the peasants' confidence and showed them they could fight oppression non-violently.

12. What lessons did the Champaran episode teach about civil disobedience and self-reliance?

Answer: The Champaran episode taught that non-violent civil disobedience could be a powerful tool against injustice. Gandhi's calm defiance of British orders and his ability to mobilize masses without violence set a precedent for future freedom movements. It also emphasized self-reliance—Gandhi didn't depend on outsiders but inspired locals to fight their own battles. He encouraged them to educate their children, maintain hygiene, and be fearless. This episode proved that common people could assert their rights through unity and moral strength.

13. How did Gandhi's presence in Champaran influence the lawyers and common people?

Answer: Gandhi's dedication and courage deeply influenced local lawyers and common people. When Gandhi was ordered to leave and decided to stay, the lawyers were inspired and resolved to support the peasants. His moral strength united the people and gave them confidence. The peasants, who once feared the British, began to understand their rights. Gandhi's simple lifestyle and commitment

made people trust him. This transformed the movement from a legal struggle to a mass movement against injustice.

14. What role did Rajkumar Shukla play in the Champaran episode?

Answer: Rajkumar Shukla was a persistent and determined sharecropper who convinced Gandhi to visit Champaran. Despite being illiterate and poor, he followed Gandhi to different places until he finally agreed to come. His determination was crucial in bringing Gandhi to the ground reality of rural India. Shukla's efforts sparked the movement that became a turning point in India's freedom struggle.

15. What was the final outcome of the Champaran movement?

Answer: The final outcome was a victory for the peasants. After Gandhi's inquiry and negotiations, the landlords agreed to refund 25% of the compensation money. More importantly, it broke the long-held fear of British rule. The peasants gained courage and self-confidence. It marked the first civil disobedience movement and established Gandhi's leadership in India's freedom struggle.

16. How did Gandhi use the Champaran case to instill self-respect among Indians?

Answer: Gandhi made peasants realize their worth by standing with them against injustice. He encouraged self-reliance and fearlessness. His actions taught them that they need not tolerate exploitation. He also focused on social reforms like education and sanitation, which further empowered the villagers and gave them dignity.

17. How did Gandhi combine political activism with social reform in Champaran?

Answer: While fighting the indigo issue politically, Gandhi also addressed social issues. He established schools, taught cleanliness, and promoted health awareness. He believed true freedom involved moral, educational, and physical upliftment. His holistic approach helped reform both the system and society.

18. What does the episode reveal about Gandhi's leadership qualities?

Answer: Gandhi's leadership was based on empathy, courage, and moral conviction. He didn't impose solutions but involved people in their own liberation. He used persuasion, non-violence, and truth. His ability to unite people and influence educated and uneducated alike shows his exceptional leadership.

19. How did the Champaran episode lay the foundation for Gandhi's role in the Indian freedom struggle?

Answer: Champaran was Gandhi's first active involvement in India's political struggle. His successful use of satyagraha gained national attention. It proved that British authority could be challenged. It earned him the trust of the masses and made him a central figure in India's freedom movement.

20. In what way was Gandhi's method different from traditional political methods of the time?

Answer: Gandhi's method focused on truth, non-violence, and mass participation. He addressed local issues with moral authority, unlike traditional leaders who often relied on speeches or petitions. He engaged directly with the people, lived like them, and used ethical persuasion instead of confrontation or violence.