

CLASS XII

FLAMINGO: INDIGO

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In Brief: Rajkumar Shukla- A poor sharecropper from Champaran wishing to meet Gandhiji - an illiterate but resolute hence followed Gandhiji Lucknow, Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Patna, Muzzafarpur & then Champaran-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 Rajkumar Shukla. He decided to go to Muzzafarpur first to get detailed information about Champaran share-cropper. Sent telegram to J B Kriplani & stayed in Prof Malkani home- a government servant. Indians afraid to show 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, and 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 Trihut, 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 symbolized 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.

Short Answer Questions:

Q1 Why is Rajkumar Shukla described as being 'resolute'?

- Q2. Why do you think the servants thought Gandhiji to be another peasant?
- Q3. List the places that Gandhi visited between his first meeting with Shukla and his arrival at Champaran.
- Q4. What did the peasants pay to 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?
- Q5. Why did Gandhi agree to a settlement of 25 percent refund to the farmers?
- Q6. How did the episode change the plight of the peasants?
- Q7. How was Gandhi able to influence lawyers? Give instances.
- Q8. What was the attitude of the average Indian in smaller localities towards advocates of 'home rule'?
- Q9. Why did Rajkumar Shukla go to meet Gandhi?
- Q10. What was the conflict of duties in which Gandhi was involved?
- Q11. When did Gandhi say 'The battle of Champaran is won'?
- Q12. "Civil disobedience had triumphed the first time in India". How did it happen?
- Q13. What did Gandhiji say to his friends when they suggested that Charles Andrews should be retained for the sake of the Champaran movement?

Long Answer Questions:

- Q 1 Why do you think Gandhi considered the Champaran episode to be a turning point in his life?
- Q2. How do we know that ordinary people too contributed to the freedom movement?
- Q3 Justify the appropriateness of the title 'Indigo' to this extract.
- Q4. How did Gandhi use Satyagraha and non-violence to achieve his goal?
- Q5. How did Rajkumar Shukla prove to be an important link between Gandhi and his Champaran campaign?
