

5-INDIGO

-Louis Fischer

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.

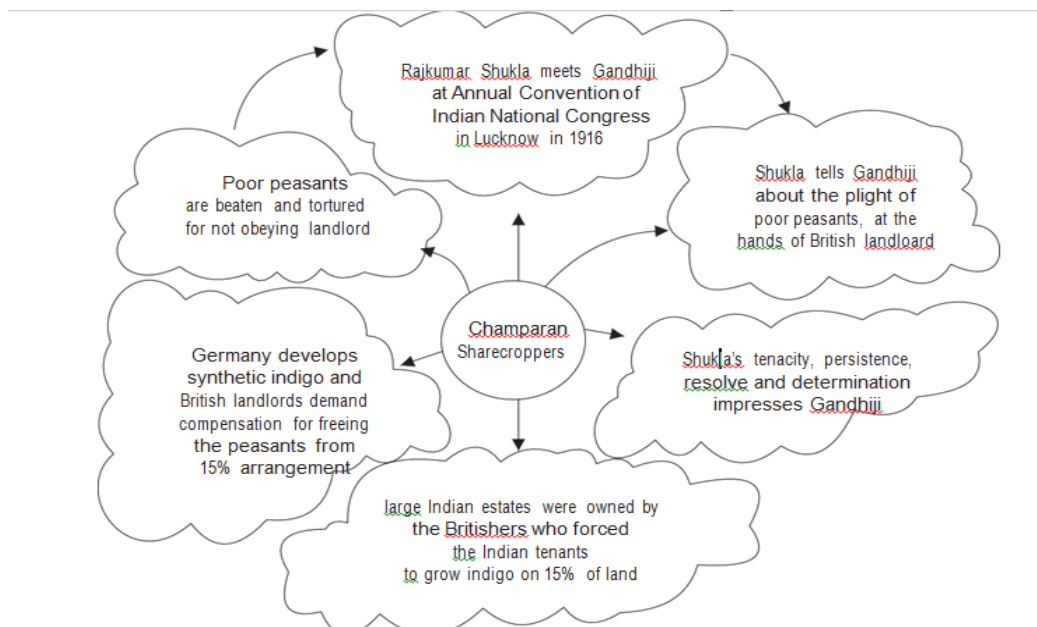
Gist of the lesson:

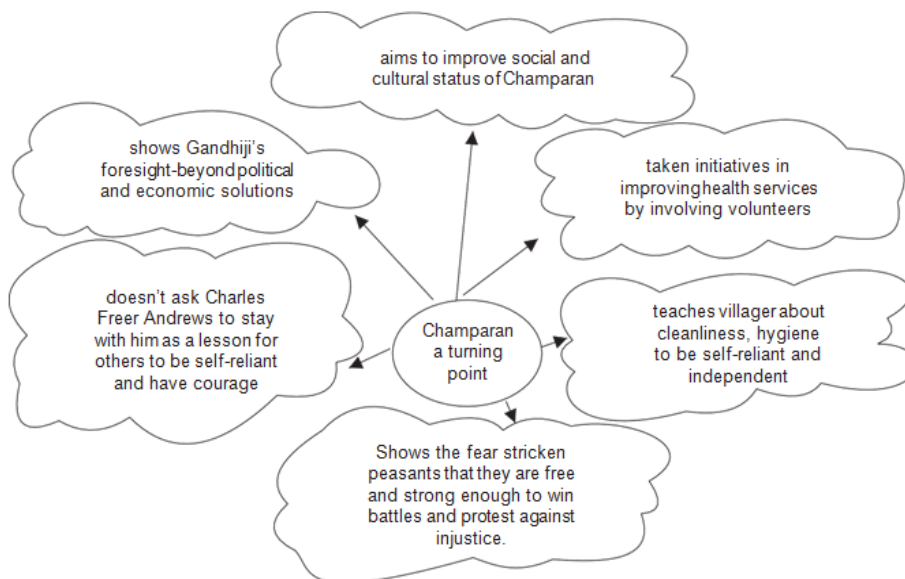
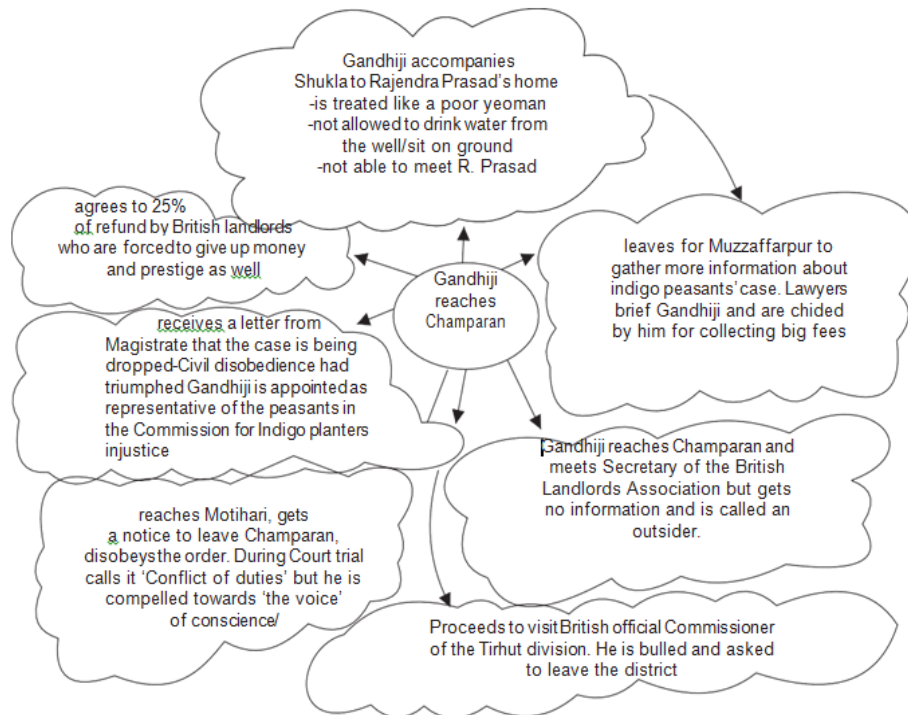
- Raj Kumar Shukla- A poor sharecropper from Champaran wishing to meet Gandhiji.
- Raj Kumar Shukla – illiterate but resolute, hence followed Gandhiji to Lucknow, Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Patna, Muzzafarpur and then Champaran.
- Servants at Rajendra Prasad's residence thought Gandhiji to be an untouchable. □ Gandhiji considered as an untouchable because of simple living style and wearing, due to the company of 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.

Lesson at a Glance





SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS (30-40 WORDS) SOLVED

Q.1 Who was Raj kaumar Shukla ? why did he went to meet Gandhi?

Ans:- Rajkumar shukla was a poor peasant from Champaran he wanted to meet Gandhi to complain about the injustice of the land lords in Bihar he wanted Gandhi's help.

Q.2 Why did Gandhi decide to go to Muzzafarpur before going to Champaran? What sort of reception did he get there and why was it unusual?

Ans:- Gandhi decided to go to Muzzafarpur to obtain more and complete information about the peasants conditions than Shukla was capable of imparting he was given a warm and grand reception. The unusual thing was that a government professor harboured him in his house.

Q.3 Why had the sharecropper peasants to pay compensation?

Ans:- British landlords were interested in synthetic indigo to get more profit .they asked the peasants to pay compensation for being freed from the 15 present long term contract made earlier.

Q.4 What made the British realize that the Indians could challenge their might hitherto unquestioned?

Ans :-Gandhi was summoned to appear in the court at Motihari. Thousands of peasants crowded around the courthouse in spontaneous demonstration Gandhi helped the officials to regulate the crowd. The British then realised the Indians could challenge their might hitherto unquestioned.

Q.5 How did Gandhi teach his followers a lesson in self-reliance.

Ans:- During Champaran action Gandhi 's lawyer friends wanted C.F. Andrews to help them. Gandhi opposed the Idea and motivated them to rely upon themselves to win their unequal fight instead of showing the weakness of their heart.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS (UNSOLVED) 30-40 WORD

1.Why did Gandhi chide the lawyers who represented the interests of sharecroppers of Champaran?

2.Why did the prominent lawyers who had come primarily to advise Gandhi change their agenda?

3.How did 'civil Disobedience triumph, the first time in modern India?

LONG ANS. TYPE QUESTIONS (125 WORDS) SOLVED.

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

Ans. Gandhi visited Champaran on receiving reports of exploitation of poor sharecroppers at the hands of British planters. He began by trying to get the facts. British landlords as well as commissioner of Tirhut were non- cooperative. Gandhi and his lawyer friends collected depositions by about ten thousand peasants. Notes were made on other evidence. Documents were collected. After four protected interview with the lieutenant governor an official commission of inquiry was appointed to look into sharecroppers situation. The huge quantity of evidence went against the planters. Finally, a settlement of 25 percent refund to the farmers was agreed on. Peasants recognised their rights and learned courage.

Within a few years the British planters gave up their estates. Thus indigo sharecropping disappeared.

LONG ANS. TYPE QUESTIONS (POINTS ONLY)

Q 1. What steps were taken by Gandhi to solve the problem of social and cultural backwardness in the Champaran village?

Ans.

1. Made appeal to teachers.
2. Primary schools opened.
3. Got a doctor to improve health conditions.
4. Kept watch on Ashram's financial accounts.
5. Tough self-reliance and freedom from fear.
6. Paved Indian mind for an independent India.
7. Peasants were taught ashram rules on personal cleanliness and community sanitation.

Q2 Describe the sharecropping system in Chamapran.

Ans.

1. Big indigo estates in Champaran.
2. Owned by British planters and worked by Indian tenants.
3. Tenant peasants had to grow indigo on 15 percent of the land by an old long-term agreement.
4. Entire product used as rent by landlords.
5. System irked the peasants who were helpless.
6. Later synthetic indigo reduced the price of natural indigo.
7. British planters forced Indian peasants to give compensation for release from long-term contract, opposed by peasants.
8. Long struggle under Gandhi's leadership.
9. With British planters returning 25 percents compensation and their leaving the estates, sharecropping system comes to an end.