

CHAPTER

5

INDIGO

—Louis Fischer

Chapter Analysis

Question Type & Marks	Year					
	2016		2017		2018	
	D	OD	D	OD	D	OD
SA	2	-	-	-	1	1
LA	-	-	-	-	-	-

Introduction :

Louis Fischer was an admirer of Gandhiji. He met Gandhiji several times and wrote his biography, 'The Life of Mahatma Gandhiji'. This lesson 'Indigo' is taken from that book.

Gandhiji considered Champaran a turning point in his life. Probably, it was the turning point in the history of India. Gandhiji visited Champaran in 1917. The British government was well-trenched in India at that time. Indian masses had a deep-rooted fear of the British.

An illiterate man Rajkumar, was greatly perturbed by the injustice meted out to Indian peasants by the British landlords. The cause of the problem was indigo and the greed of the landlords.

The British landlords owned large estates in Champaran. In those days, harvesting indigo was very profitable. The British landlords, through a long-term agreement, forced Indian tenants to plant 15% of their holdings with indigo and surrender the entire product to the landlord as rent. Harvesting indigo was an unpleasant job.

But the things changed. Germany developed synthetic indigo.

Naturally, the prices of indigo were sure to plummet. Harvesting indigo was no longer profitable. So, the landlords offered to release the peasants of the irksome job of harvesting indigo. They demanded compensation for it. Illiterate peasants, who did not know the real motive of the British landlords, gladly agreed to this while there were others who resisted.

But soon, the peasants learnt about the synthetic indigo. Then, those who had paid compensation demanded their money back. The landlords hired thugs to calm them down. The peasants engaged lawyers. At this point, Gandhiji visited Champaran. He felt it was no use going to courts. He wanted to free the peasants from the fear of the British. Gandhiji campaigned their cause and finally succeeded. He remained firm, fearless and dedicated.

Summary :

The annual convention of the Indian National Congress was held in Lucknow in December 1916. A poor illiterate peasant came there to complain against the injustice meted out to the peasants in Champaran. He met Gandhiji. Gandhiji had never heard of Champaran. He had many engagements. So he did not give any assurance to Shukla. But Shukla was resolute. He followed Gandhiji wherever he went. At last, Gandhiji fixed a date. He told Shukla to meet him in Calcutta on that particular date.

In Calcutta, Gandhiji found Shukla waiting for him. Both of them went to Patna by train. Shukla led Gandhiji to the house of a lawyer, Rajendra Prasad. (He became the first President of India). The lawyer was out of town. But the servants knew Shukla. He had been there several times to request the lawyer to help the indigo sharecroppers. They let them stay on the grounds as they mistook Gandhiji for another peasant and untouchable. They did not allow them to draw water from the well lest the entire water in the well should become polluted.

Gandhiji decided to break his journey to camp at Muzaffarpur, because he wanted to gather more information that Shukla had been unable to provide. He sent a telegram to Professor J.B. Kripalani whom he had met at Shantiniketan. Kripalani came to the station with his students to receive Gandhiji. At Muzaffarpur, Gandhiji stayed in the house of Mr. Malkani, a government school teacher. In those days, Indians were afraid to harbour men like Gandhiji who were advocates of home rule, but Malkani had the courage.

The news of Gandhiji's arrival in Muzaffarpur and his mission spread quickly. Sharecroppers came to Muzaffarpur to see him. The lawyers also called on him. They briefed him about their cases. Gandhiji chided the lawyers for collecting heavy fees from poor peasants. He thought the most important thing was to free the peasants from the fear of their British landlords.

British landlords held large estates in Champaran. Indians worked as sharecroppers on their land. By a long term agreement, the sharecroppers were compelled to plant 15% of their holdings with indigo and surrender the entire indigo produced to the landlords as rent. Harvesting indigo was an irksome business for the peasants.

Recently, the landlords had heard that Germany had developed synthetic indigo. British landlords knew that the prices of indigo would fall and planting indigo was no longer profitable. They offered to release the sharecroppers from their obligation to harvest indigo. But the Britishers demanded compensation. Many peasants agreed, while a few of them resisted. Soon, the peasants learnt about the synthetic indigo. Those who had paid compensation demanded their money back.

A dispute arose between the landlords and the sharecroppers. The landlords hired thugs. The sharecroppers engaged lawyers.

Gandhiji wanted to get the facts. He visited the secretary of the British landlords association. But, the secretary refused to give any information saying that Gandhiji was an outsider. Gandhiji told him that he was not an outsider.

Then, Gandhiji called on the commissioner of Tirhut division. He was rude to Gandhiji. He told Gandhiji to leave Tirhut immediately. But Gandhiji did not leave. Motihari was the capital of Tirhut. Gandhiji made it his headquarters. He started his investigations. A peasant was maltreated in a nearby village. Gandhiji decided to go and find the facts. But the police stopped him. He was served with a notice to leave Champaran. Gandhiji wrote back that he would not concede the notice. Consequently, Gandhiji was summoned by the court. Gandhiji sent a report to the Viceroy.

The peasants learnt that the Mahatma who wanted to help them, was in trouble with the authorities. Thousands of peasants gathered around the court building. This spontaneous show of their courage baffled the British authorities. They felt powerless. Gandhiji helped them to regulate the trial.

In the court, Gandhiji pleaded guilty. He asked for penalty. He read out a statement. He said he was faced with conflict of duties, he respected the lawful authority. He was not a law-breaker. But he could not disregard the voice of his conscience to do the humanitarian and national service.

The judge said he would take several days to deliver the judgement. But he let Gandhiji go free.

Gandhiji asked his lawyer friends what they would do if he went to jail. They replied they would go home. Gandhiji asked again what would happen to the poor peasants. Then, the lawyers felt ashamed. Gandhiji, who was a stranger, was willing to go to jail for their sake. The lawyers claimed to have been serving the peasants. Going home would mean the shameful betrayal. They told Gandhiji that they too would follow him to jail. Gandhiji was pleased. He declared that the battle of Champaran was won.

He, then, divided the group into two pairs and put down the order in which each pair would court arrest.

But, the Lieutenant Governor of the province decided to drop the case against Gandhiji. This was the victory of civil disobedience.

Gandhiji and lawyers now proceeded to conduct an enquiry. They recorded the statements of thousands of peasants. In the meantime, the Lieutenant Governor summoned Gandhiji. After long interviews, the Lt. Governor constituted an official commission of enquiry to go through the indigo peasants' complaints. The commission comprised of British officials, landlords and Gandhiji as the sole representative of the sharecroppers.

The commission collected the crushing evidence against the British landlords. The landlords were nervous. They agreed in principle to refund the peasants' money that they had extorted illegally.

Gandhiji demanded 50% of it. But, the landlords offered only 25%. Gandhiji agreed to it. He had won a moral victory.

Gandhiji explained that the amount of money was not important. By agreeing to refund the peasants' money, the landlords had lost their prestige. They were no longer dreaded. The peasants learnt that they had rights and there were people to defend their rights.

The landlords abandoned their estates which went back to the peasants. This was the end of indigo sharecropping in Champaran. Gandhiji was not satisfied by just winning the indigo battle. During his stay in Champaran, he saw that the people of Champaran were socially and culturally backward. He decided to remove their backwardness. Gandhiji decided to open primary schools. He appealed to teachers, two of his young disciples, their wives and several other volunteers. Gandhiji's wife Kasturba taught about personal hygiene and community cleanliness.

Gandhiji had come to Champaran casually at the entreaty of Shukla. He expected that his visit would last a few days. But he had to stay there for seven months continuously. He kept a distant watch on the Ashram. He called for regular financial accounts. He even wrote to them that it was time to fill in the old latrine trenches and dig new ones.

Charles Freer Andrews was a devoted follower of Gandhiji. He came to Champaran. Gandhiji's lawyer friends wanted Charles to stay on to help them. But Gandhiji opposed the idea. He said they should not seek an Englishman's help in their fight. They must fight their battle themselves. For Gandhiji, self-reliance, India's independence and helping the sharecroppers were all bound together.

Extracts for Comprehension*[4 Marks each]*

Q. 1. Read the given passage and answer the questions that follow:

He had gone to the December 1916 annual convention of the Indian National Congress party in Lucknow. There were 2,301 delegates and many visitors. During the proceedings, Gandhi recounted, "a peasant came up to me looking like any other peasant in India, poor and emaciated, and said, 'I am Rajkumar Shukla. I am from Champaran, and I want you to come to my district!'" Gandhi had never heard of the place. It was in the foothills of the towering Himalayas, near the kingdom of Nepal.

- a. When did Gandhiji go to Lucknow? 1
- b. What did he go to Lucknow for? 1
- c. Who did he meet there? 1
- d. Where did Shukla want Gandhiji to come? 1
 - (a) Nepal
 - (b) Muzzafarnagar
 - (c) Cawnpore
 - (d) Champaran

- Ans.**
- a. Gandhiji went to Lucknow in December 1916.
 - b. He went there to attend the annual convention of the Indian National Congress.
 - c. Apart from the delegates and the visitors, he met Rajkumar Shukla, a peasant.
 - d. (d) Champaran.

Q. 2. Read the given passage and answer the questions that follow:

Months passed. Shukla was sitting on his haunches at the appointed spot in Calcutta when Gandhi arrived; he waited till Gandhi was free. Then the two of them boarded a train for the city of Patna in Bihar. There Shukla led him to the house of a lawyer named Rajendra Prasad who later became President of the Congress party and of India. Rajendra Prasad was out of town, but the servants knew Shukla as a poor yeoman who pestered their master to help the indigo sharecroppers. So they let him stay on the grounds with his companion, Gandhi, whom they took to be another peasant. But Gandhi was not permitted to draw water from the well lest some drops from his bucket pollute the entire source; how did they know that he was not an untouchable?

- a. Where was Shukla waiting for Gandhi? 1
- b. In 1917, Gandhi and Shukla boarded a train in Calcutta for
 - (a) Patna
 - (b) Ahmedabad
 - (c) Cawnpore
 - (d) Champaran

- c. To whose house did Shukla lead Gandhi to? 1
- d. Why was Gandhi not permitted to draw water from Rajendra Prasad's well? 1

Ans. a. Shukla was waiting for Gandhi at Calcutta.

- b. (a) Patna
- c. Shukla led Gandhi to the house of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.
- d. Gandhi was not permitted to draw water from Rajendra Prasad's well because the servants thought him to be another peasant.

Q. 3. Read the given passage and answer the questions that follow:

Gandhi decided to go first to Muzzafarpur, which was en route to Champaran, to obtain more complete information about conditions than Shukla was capable of imparting. He accordingly sent a telegram to Professor J.B. Kripalani, of the Arts College in Muzzafarpur, whom he had seen at Tagore's Shantiniketan school. The train arrived at midnight, 15 April 1917. Kripalani was waiting at the station with a large body of students. Gandhi stayed there for two days in the home of Professor Malkani, a teacher in a government school. "It was an extraordinary thing 'in those days,'" Gandhi commented, "for a government professor to harbour a man like me". In smaller localities, the Indians were afraid to show sympathy for advocates of home-rule.

- a. Gandhi decided to obtain complete information about the go first to _____ to understand conditions of Champaran. 1
- b. Who received Gandhi at the station there? 1
- c. What were the places visited by Gandhi between his first meeting with Shukla and his arrival at Champaran? 1
 - (a) Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Patna, Muzaffarpur
 - (b) Calcutta, Patna, Gaya, Muzaffarnagar
 - (c) Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Gaya, Calcutta, Patna, Muzaffarpur
 - (d) Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Patna and Muzaffarnagar
- d. With whom did Gandhi stayed for two days? 1

Ans. a. Muzzafarpur.

- b. J. B. Kriplani met him at the station.
- c. (a) Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Patna, Muzzafarpur.
- d. Gandhi stayed for two days at the house of Professor Malkani.

Short Answer Type Questions*[2 Marks each]*

(Answer the following questions in about 30-40 words each)

Q. 1. How did Rajkumar Shukla establish that he was resolute ?

Ans. Rajkumar Shukla, the Champaran sharecropper, requested Gandhiji at a Congress Session in

Lucknow, to fix a date to visit Champaran where the sharecroppers were being subjected to injustice. Until Gandhiji fixed a date to go with him, he did not leave him rather he accompanied

him wherever he went. Gandhiji was impressed by his tenacity and determination and finally agreed to go there from Calcutta. 2

Q.2. What were the terms of the Indigo contract between the British landlords and the Indian peasants ? [Outside Delhi Set III, 2015]

Ans. Value Points :

- the arable land was divided into large estates owned by Englishmen and worked by Indian tenants
- the landlords compelled all tenants to plant 3/20 or 15% of their holdings with indigo (the chief commercial crop) and submit the entire indigo harvest as rent

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2015] 2

Detailed Answer : The arable land was divided into large estates owned by Englishmen and worked by Indian tenants. The terms of the indigo contract were that the farmers would have to grow indigo on three twentieth or fifteen percent of their land holdings and give the entire indigo harvest to the landlords as tax.

Q.3. Why did Gandhiji feel that taking the Champaran case to the court was useless ? [Delhi Set-I, 2014]

Ans. Value Points : According to Gandhiji, peasants were so crushed and fear-stricken, law courts were useless/lawyers were collecting big fees from poor peasants/little hope of getting justice as the case was against the British landlords.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

Detailed Answer : Gandhiji went to Champaran to fight the case of the peasants. He collected all the information there and reached a conclusion that it was useless taking the Champaran case to the court. He found that the peasants were crushed and fear-stricken. There was little hope of getting justice as the case was against the British landlords. He realized that making the peasants free from the fear of British landlords was more important than fighting for them in Court.

Q.4. When Gandhi got the whole hearted support of the lawyers, he said, "The battle of Champaran is won". What was the essence behind his statement? [SQP 2018-19]

Ans. Suggested Value Points:

- Gandhiji made lawyers realize their duty towards the peasants
- it would be shameful desertion on their part if they left the peasants if Gandhiji was arrested
- lawyers understood, approached Gandhiji and said they would accompany him to jail
- getting support of educated Indians like lawyers, Gandhiji gained confidence that now they would win against the British. 2

[CBSE Marking Scheme 2018-19]

Q.5. Why did Gandhiji agree to a settlement of mere 25 percent ? [Delhi Set-I, 2016] (NCERT)

Ans. Value Points:

- amount less important than the fact that landlords had to surrender money and part off with prestige
- breaking deadlock was more important than amount of money
- lesson in self-reliance for Indians / showed Indians they had rights / Britishers not above the law / conquered fear / learnt courage

(Any two) [CBSE Marking Scheme, 2016] 2

Detailed Answer : Gandhiji agreed to a settlement of mere 25 percent compensation from the British because he wanted them to part not only from money, but also from their prestige.

Q.6. Though the sharecroppers of Champaran received only one-fourth of the compensation, how can the Champaran struggle still be termed a huge success and victory ?

[Delhi/Outside Delhi 2018]

Ans. Value Points : Landlords obliged to surrender part of money and part of prestige; peasants saw they had rights; defenders ; learnt courage; broke the deadlock between landlords and farmers. 2

Detailed Answer : Gandhiji's persistent efforts, firm determination and resolution led to his success in Champaran. He went to Champaran at the request of an illiterate peasant and there he listened to the grievances of the sharecroppers and started the Civil Disobedience Movement. He became victorious and the landlords withdrew their claims over their estates and were reverted back to the farmers.

They learnt courage and realised that they too, had defenders. The landlords obliged to surrender part of their money and prestige. Thus, Gandhiji broke the deadlock between farmers and landlords.

Q.7. Why did Gandhiji oppose when his friend Andrews offered to stay in Champaran and help the peasants ? [Foreign, 2014]

OR

Why was Gandhiji opposed to C.F. Andrews helping him in Champaran ? [Delhi Set-I, 2016]

Ans. Value Points : Mr. Andrews was an Englishman and Gandhiji did not want his help/did not believe in seeking a prop in him/the cause was good and he believed their victory was certain/wanted the peasants to be self-reliant.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

OR

Ans. Value Points:

- in the unequal fight, support of Englishmen would show weakness of heart
- wanted Indians to rely on themselves and not seek a prop / wanted Indians to be self-reliant

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2016] 2

Detailed Answer : Mr. Charles Freer Andrews was an Englishman and Gandhiji did not want his help. He did not believe in seeking a prop in him. Since, the cause was good, he believed that their victory was certain. He wanted the peasants to be self-reliant.

Long Answer Type Questions**[6 Marks each]****(Answer the following questions in about 125-150 words)**

Q. 1. Why is Raj Kumar Shukla described as being 'resolute' ? [Comptt., 2015]

OR

Why and how did Rajkumar Shukla persuade Gandhiji to visit Champaran ?

[Comptt., Delhi, Set-I, 2010]

Ans. Rajkumar 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 wanted Gandhiji to come to Champaran district. He accompanied Gandhiji wherever he went for several weeks. Ultimately, Gandhiji asked him to meet in Calcutta on an appointed date and at a fixed spot. 6

Q. 2. Why did Rajkumar Shukla invite Gandhiji to Champaran ? How did Gandhiji solve the problem of the indigo farmers ?

[Outside Delhi Set-III, 2012]

Ans. Rajkumar Shukla invited Gandhiji to Champaran to fight against the injustice meted out to the peasants in Champaran.

Gandhiji scolded the lawyers for collecting high fees from the sharecroppers. He telegraphed Dr. Rajendra Prasad to come from Bihar with his friends who conferred with Gandhiji, who asked them what they would do if he was sentenced to prison. The senior lawyers replied that they had come to advise and help him. Being a stranger, Gandhiji was prepared to go to prison for the sake of the peasants. They also agreed to follow Gandhiji to jail.

Gandhiji and the lawyers had written down depositions by about ten thousand peasants and prepared notes based on other evidence. Gandhiji was served summons but he remained firm. Then, he received a written communication from the magistrate that the Lt. Governor of the province had ordered the case to be dropped. Gandhiji agreed to a settlement of 25% refund to the farmers. 6

Q. 3. Give an account of Gandhiji's efforts to secure justice for the poor indigo sharecroppers of Champaran? [Outside Delhi Set-I, 2012]

OR

Describe the difficulties faced by Gandhiji in Champaran.

*[CBSE, SQP I, 2012, Comptt. Delhi Set-I, 2010]***Ans. Value Points :**

- studied the problems and got the facts
- visited the Secretary of the British landlords' association
- met the British Official Commissioner of Tirhut Division

- consulted the lawyers and chided them for collecting fee from the sharecroppers
- disobeyed the court order and listened to the voice of conscience
- inspired the peasants to overcome fear and be self-reliant
- was prepared to go to prison for the sake of peasants
- agreed to 25% refund to make the poor farmers realize their rights
- inspired the lawyers to go to jail with him
- four protracted interviews with the Lieutenant Governor
- ensured the triumph of civil disobedience

(Any six) [CBSE Marking Scheme, 2012] 6

Detailed Answer : First of all, Gandhiji began by trying to get the facts, for this purpose he visited the secretary of the British Landlord's Association, but he refused to give any information to an outsider. Next, he called upon the British official commissioner of the Tirhut division in which Champaran district lay. The commissioner bullied him and advised him to leave Tirhut. This shows that Gandhiji was a staunch seeker and believer of truth.

Gandhiji consulted the lawyers and chided them for collecting fee from the sharecroppers

But Gandhiji disobeyed the court's order and rather proceeded to Motihari, the capital of Champaran. He mobilized the support of the lawyers and peasants. He got an official notice to quit Champaran immediately. But he disobeyed the order and was summoned to court. The spontaneous demonstration of thousands of farmers was their liberation from the fear of the British. Gandhiji just wanted the civil disobedience movement or Satyagraha in a non-violent manner. Later on Satyagraha and non-violence became the main pillars of strength for India's freedom struggle.

Commonly Made Error

- Though the students know the answer but fail to focus on the problems faced. Rather, the entire chain of events of Champaran is narrated.

Answering Tips

- The answer must focus on the problems. The related incidents need to be covered but not as highlighted in the answer as the problem.

Q. 4. Describe how, according to Louis Fischer, Gandhiji succeeded in his Champaran campaign.

[Comptt., Delhi Set-I, Outside Delhi Set-I, 2014]

Ans. Value Points : Gandhiji's campaign to provide justice to the sharecroppers of Champaran

- got unstinted support of the common man, his followers and other leaders
- moral courage to fight injustice
- leadership qualities
- organizational abilities
- thorough investigation of the problems
- rational arguments
- charismatic personality

(Any three)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 6

Detailed Answer : Gandhiji's persistent efforts, firm determination and resolution led him to success in his Champaran campaign. He went to Champaran at the request of an illiterate peasant and there, he listened to the grievances of the sharecroppers and started the Civil Disobedience Movement. He became victorious and the landlords withdrew their claims over their estates which were reverted back to the farmers. Gandhiji had long discussions with the lawyers and he asked them to help the poor peasants and he taught the peasants to let go off the fear of the Britishers. He even tried to improve the social life of the people by providing them with doctors and teachers.

Gandhiji's organizational abilities, thorough investigation of the problems and rational arguments with the British helped him succeed in his Champaran campaign.

Q. 5. How did a visit to Champaran become a turning point in Gandhi's life ? How does this show Gandhi's love and concern for the common people of India ? [HOTS] [Comptt. Delhi Set I, 2015]

OR

The Champaran episode was a turning point in Gandhiji's life. Explain. (NCERT)

[HOTS] [Outside Delhi Set-II, 2012, CBSE SQP, 2012,

Comptt. Outside Delhi Set-I, 2008]

OR

How did Gandhiji use Satyagraha and non-violence at Champaran to achieve his goal ?

[Comptt., Set-I, II & III, 2011]

Ans. In Champaran, the peasants were greatly in fear of the British government. The cause of the problem was indigo and the greed of the landlords. They had forced the tenants to plant 15% of their holdings with indigo and surrender the entire produce to the landlords. When synthetic indigo came, the landlords were ready to release the above condition. They demanded compensation, the repercussions of which the peasants did not know and agreed to it. Later, when the peasants came to know about synthetic indigo, they asked for their money back. The British hired thugs to oppose them. Gandhiji realized that there was no need for lawyers. He realized that it was necessary

to release them of their fear which was difficult to achieve as they were uneducated. But with his determination, he championed their cause. Soon, he led a movement of non-violence and Satyagraha. Many farmers demonstrated around the courtroom where Gandhiji was summoned. This made the British feel challenged. Sharecroppers from Champaran came barefooted to see Gandhiji. Muzzafarpur lawyers too called on him. He explained what he had done was an ordinary thing. He had simply told the Britishers that they could not order him in his own country. Gandhiji tried to mould new free Indians who could stand on their own feet. This new realization gave him a direction to lead the freedom struggle and thus, proved to be a turning point in his life. This was the first time Gandhiji realised that India was capable of mass movements and it was after this episode that he started the national struggle for freedom across the country.

6

Commonly Made Error

- The students know the events but are not able to explain their effect on the life of Gandhi and how it helped in securing freedom from British rule.

Answering Tips

- Read the lesson thoroughly and revise it

Q. 6. Why is the Champaran episode considered to be the beginning of the Indian struggle for independence ? [HOTS] [CBSE 2014]

Ans. Value Points :

- Champaran episode was a landmark in Gandhian style of fighting against the British
- a long-drawn out but patient and peaceful agitation
- a turning point in Gandhiji's life – it was during this struggle that he decided to urge the departure of the Britishers
- it didn't begin as an act of defiance but it grew out of an attempt to make the sufferings of the poor peasants less severe
- a triumph of the first Civil Disobedience Movement
- the farmers learnt courage, learnt that they too had rights/it was a spontaneous demonstration around the courthouse/was the beginning of their liberation from the fear of the British
- in Champaran episode, self-reliance and freedom struggle went hand in hand

(Any three) [CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 6

Detailed Answer : The peasants of Champaran were in great fear of the British government because they were forced to plant 15% of their holdings with indigo and surrender the entire produce to the landlords. When synthetic indigo

came, the landlords released them from this condition after demanding compensation from them. The innocent peasants agreed without realising what they were doing. When Raj Kumar Shukla told Gandhiji about it, Gandhiji visited Champaran and realized that the peasants were greatly in fear of the British. He realized that it was necessary to rid them of their fear. He started the Civil Disobedience Movement. That is why the Champaran episode is considered to be the beginning of the Indian struggle for independence as everyone realized that they could stand against the British, and they could not order them around in their own country. The farmers learnt courage and realised that they too had rights just like the defenders. Thus the Champaran episode was a landmark and is considered to be the beginning of Indian struggle for independence.

Q. 7. What did Gandhiji do to remove the cultural and social backwardness in the Champaran village ?

[Comptt., Delhi Set II, 2015]

OR

Gandhiji's was not a loyalty to abstractions; it was a loyalty to living human beings. Why did Gandhiji continue his stay in Champaran even after indigo sharecropping disappeared ? [HOTS] [Outside Delhi Set-III, 2014]

Ans. There is no denying the fact that Gandhiji's loyalty was not to abstractions. It was a loyalty to living human beings. The Champaran episode turned out to be an episode of moral victory. Gandhiji agreed to take 25% as a refund which the landlords offered as he explained that money was not important. The refund by the British stated that they were agreeing to what the Indians said. They were no longer dreaded by the peasants. But Gandhiji didn't leave Champaran after this victory. During his stay there, he had realized that the people of Champaran were culturally and socially backward so he decided to work on this front also. He decided to open primary schools and taught about personal hygiene, community cleanliness etc. to the people of Champaran. Gandhiji's wife Kasturba joined him in this movement. He kept a distant watch on his ashram also from this place and called for regular financial accounts. He even wrote to them that it was time to fill in the old latrine trenches and dig the new ones. Thus, with his firm determination and persistent efforts, he was able to bring changes in the ordinary man's life.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 6

Q. 8. Why did Gandhiji consider freedom from fear more important than legal justice for the poor peasants of Champaran ? [SQP 2015-16] (TBQ)

Ans. For Gandhiji, the amount of the refund was less important than the fact that the landlords had

been forced to return a part of the money and with it, a part of their prestige. So he agreed to the settlement of 25 percent refund to the farmers. The episode of Champaran brought more than one change in the plight of the peasants of that district. These peasants gained confidence which was evident in their spontaneous demonstration on the morning of Gandhi's trial. After the successful refund of the compensation, the peasants, for the first time, realised their own rights and were liberated from the fear that had plagued them.

This episode brought an end to the fifteen percent arrangement of sharecropping. However, the most radical change that the episode brought about was in their social and cultural standards. Gandhiji opened schools in six villages. His wife took pains to make the peasants aware of the importance of general sanitation and personal hygiene. He even appointed a doctor. Gandhiji admitted that he had done a very ordinary thing. He declared that the British could not order him about in his own country. Hence, he considered the Champaran episode as a turning point in his life. 6

Q. 9. Why did Gandhiji agree to the settlement of 25 percent refund to the farmers ? How did it influence the peasants and landlords relationship in Champaran ?

[Outside Delhi Set-I, II & III, 2013]

Ans. Gandhiji and the lawyers had written down dispositions by about ten thousand peasants, and prepared notes made on other evidences. The documents were collected. In June, Gandhiji was summoned by Sir Edward Gait, the Lieutenant Governor. After four meetings, the Lieutenant Governor appointed an official commission of enquiry into the indigo sharecroppers' situation. The commission consisted of landlords, government officials and Gandhiji as the sole representative of the peasants. They agreed, in principle, to make refunds to the peasants. "But how much must we pay ?" they asked Gandhiji. Gandhiji asked only 50 percent. The representative of the planters offered to refund to the extent of 25 percent. To break the deadlock, Gandhiji agreed to a settlement of 25 percent refund to the farmers. I think the settlement made by Gandhiji was totally justified. I fully agree with him that under the circumstances, the amount of refund was less important than the fact that the landlords had been obliged to surrender part of their money and, with it a part of their prestige. 6

Commonly Made Error

- The students are able to answer first part of the question. However, they fail to explain the influence it had on society relationships.

Answering Tips

- The students must focus on both parts of the questions.