



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Class: XII	Department: ENGLISH	
Question Bank	Topic: INDIGO – LOUIS FISCHER	Short Answers and Long Answers

Central Idea of the Lesson.

Leadership is shown by Mahatma Gandhi to secure justice for oppressed people through convincing argumentation and negotiation. The chapter 'Indigo' emphasizes the fact that effective leadership can solve any kind of problems without any harm to anybody. This chapter deals with the way Mahatma Gandhi solved the problem of poor sharecroppers of Champaran in a non-violent way.

Justification of the Title

The title 'Indigo' focuses our attention on the issue of exploitation of indigo sharecroppers at the hands of cruel British planters. The British compelled them through a long-term agreement to plant indigo on 15 per cent of their land and surrender the entire harvest as rent. After the development of synthetic indigo by Germany, the British planters extracted money from the peasants as compensation for being released from the 15 per cent agreement. The peasants who wanted their money back filed civil suits. Rajkumar Shukla persuaded Gandhi to take up the case of Indigo sharecroppers. So indigo sharecropping exemplifies the injustice of the British and the Indians' submission to British authority. The Champaran movement that centred on indigo sharecropping led to the social and cultural upliftment of the peasants. Thus the title 'Indigo' is highly suggestive and appropriate.

Message of the lesson – Indigo : The story 'Indigo' highlights the unequal economic system that existed during colonial British rule. It resulted in Indian peasants suffering, while the British planters exploited them. It also highlights the importance of Gandhi's decision to take up their case, which exposed the unjust system.

COMPETENCY BASED QS

He said, "I have come to the conclusion that we should stop going to law courts. Taking such cases to the courts does little good. Where the peasants are so crushed and fear-stricken, law courts are useless. The real relief for them is to be free from fear."

1. Gandhi addressed the actions of the people of Motihari

- A) As liberation from the fear of the British
- B) by calling them courageous
- C) by chiding the lawyers
- D) none

2. Gandhiji helped peasants of Champaran.....

- A) by fighting and securing justice for them
- B) by hiring lawyers for them
- C) by educating them
- D) by teaching them cleanliness

3. Taking such cases to law courts was useless as.....

4. Gandhiji always defied law and authority. TRUE / FALSE ?

5. Look at the following statements and answer the questions.

Statement 1. The peasants were so crushed and fear-stricken

Statement 2. Gandhi believed there was no use going to the law courts.

- a. Both statements can be drawn as true from the extract
- b. Statement one is true and two is false
- c. Statement two is true and one is false
- d. Both statements are false.

6. A synonym of 'fear-stricken' could be

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS-

1. Why is Rajkumar Shukla described as being 'resolute'?

Rajkumar Shukla is described as being 'resolute' because even after being told about the prior engagements of Gandhi at Cawnpore and other parts across the country, he does not quit. He continues to accompany Gandhi everywhere. Furthermore, he persistently asks Gandhi to fix a date for his visit to his native district of Champaran. His resolution and determination finally impress Gandhi and the latter complies with his request.

2. Why do you think the servants thought Gandhi to be another peasant?

Gandhi was a simple and humble man dressed in a plain 'dhoti' (loincloth). To the servants, he must have looked like just another poor farmer in this country. Moreover, he was accompanied by Rajkumar Shukla whom they knew to be a poor indigo sharecropper. Thus, when the servants saw both of them together, they mistook Gandhi to be another peasant. Gandhiji's modesty and unassertiveness also led to the assumption that he was a peasant.

3. List the places that Gandhi visited between his first meeting with Shukla and his arrival at Champaran.

Gandhi first met Shukla at Lucknow. Then he was in Cawnpore and other parts of India. He returned to his ashram near Ahmedabad. Later he visited Calcutta, Patna and Muzaffarpur before arriving at Champaran.

4. What did the peasants pay the British landlords as rent? What did the British now want instead and why?

The peasants used to pay indigo as rent to the British landlords. Germany had now developed synthetic indigo. So the British landlords wanted money as compensation for being released from the natural arrangement.

5. Why did Gandhiji feel that taking the Champaran case to court was useless? (Delhi 2014 Modified)

Answer. When Gandhiji got to know about the plight of the peasant groups in Champaran from his discussion with the lawyers, he came to the conclusion that the poor peasants were so crushed and fear-stricken that law courts were useless in their case. Going to courts overburdened the sharecroppers with heavy litigation expenses. What really needed to be done was to make them free from fear.

6. How did the Champaran peasants react when they heard that a Mahatma had come to help them? (Compartment 2014)

Answer. When the Champaran peasants heard that a Mahatma had come to help them, they assembled in Motihari in large numbers. Thousands of peasants held a demonstration around the courthouse where Gandhiji was supposed to appear. The crowd was so uncontrollable that the officials felt powerless, and Gandhiji himself helped the authorities to regulate the crowd.

7. What made the Lieutenant Governor drop the case against Gandhiji? (Compartment 2014)

Answer. When Gandhiji was asked to appear in the court in Motihari, thousands of peasants held a demonstration around the courthouse. The officials felt helpless and the government was baffled. The trial was postponed, as the judge didn't want to aggravate the situation. He held up the sentence for several days, after which Gandhiji was released without bail. All these events made the Lieutenant Governor drop the case against Gandhiji.

8. Why did Gandhiji oppose when his friend Andrews offered to stay in Champaran and help the peasants? (Foreign 2014)

or

Why did Gandhiji object to CF Andrews' stay in Champaran? (Foreign 2009)

Answer. CF Andrews, an English pacifist, was a devoted follower of Gandhiji. The lawyers thought that being an Englishman, Andrews could be of immense help to them in their cause of fighting the battle of Champaran. Gandhiji, however, was against this because he felt that enlisting an Englishman's help showed weakness. Their cause was just, and they had to win the battle by relying on themselves. This would make them self-reliant.

9. Why do you think Gandhi considered the Champaran episode to be a turning point in his life? (All India 2011)

Answer. The Champaran episode began as an attempt to alleviate the distress of poor peasants. Ultimately it proved to be a turning point in Gandhiji's life because it was a loud proclamation that made the British realise that Gandhiji could not be ordered about in his own country. It infused courage in the masses to question the British authority and laid the foundation of non-cooperation as a new tool to fight the British tooth and nail.

10. What did the peasants pay to the British landlords as rent? (Foreign 2011)

Answer. The British landlords had entered into a long-term contract with the farmers according to which they compelled all tenants to plant 15% of their holdings with indigo. The sharecroppers had to surrender the entire indigo harvest as rent.

11. Why did Gandhiji decide to go to Muzaffarpur before going to Champaran? (Foreign 2011)

Answer. Rajkumar Shukla had given quite a lot of information to Gandhiji about the indigo sharecroppers of Champaran. However, Gandhiji wished to obtain more complete information about the conditions than Shukla had imparted. He visited Muzaffarpur, which was en route to

Champaran, to inquire from the lawyers there about the issue, as they frequently represented the peasant groups in the court.

12. “The battle of Champaran is won!.” What led Gandhiji to make this remark? (Foreign 2010)

Answer. The lawyers first decided to return home if Gandhiji was arrested. But they soon realised their mistake. When they declared that they would fight for the peasants’ cause in the event of Gandhiji’s arrest and volunteered to court arrest for the cause of the sharecroppers, Gandhiji was very pleased and exclaimed, “The battle of Champaran is won!.”

13. Why did Gandhi agree to the planters’ offer of a 25% refund to the farmers? (Delhi 2009)

Answer. Gandhiji agreed to a settlement of 25% refund to the farmers in order to break the deadlock between the landlords and peasants. For him the amount of the refund was not very important. The fact that the landlords had been obliged to surrender a part of their money as well as their prestige gave a moral victory to the farmers. Thus, Gandhiji not only made the landlords accept their dishonesty but also made the farmers learn a lesson in defending their rights with courage.

15. How was Gandhi able to influence the lawyers? Give instances. (All India 2009)

Answer. Gandhiji’s sincerity towards the peasants’ cause and convincing arguments and negotiations, thoroughly influenced the lawyers. He chided them for overcharging the peasants and encouraged them to court arrest for the peasants’ noble cause. He even rejected their proposal to seek Mr Andrews help in their battle against the Britishers in order to be self-reliant and independent.

Long Answer Type Questions (5 Marks, 120-150 Words)

Question.1. Why is the Champaran episode considered to be the beginning of the Indian struggle for independence? (All India 2014 Modified)

Answer. The Champaran episode was one of the major events in the struggle for independence. It was in the course of this small but significant movement that Gandhiji decided to urge the departure of the British from India.

A close examination of the problems of the Champaran peasants opened Gandhiji’s eyes to the unjust policies of the British. He realised that people had to be made free from fear and only then could they be freed from foreign oppression. The spontaneous demonstration of the people proved that Gandhiji had the nation’s support in his fight against the Britishers. It also aroused patriotism in the heart of the Indians.

The triumph of the civil disobedience at Champaran motivated the launching of the movement on a large scale during the freedom movement. Gandhiji’s winning the case of the sharecroppers proved that British authority could be challenged. Hence, the Champaran episode served as a stepping stone to the Indian struggle for independence.

Question.2. Gandhiji’s loyalty 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? (All India 2014 Modified)

Answer. After the Champaran battle was won and the land reverted to the peasants, Gandhiji continued to stay on in the region. His loyalty was, indeed, to living human beings and he realised that a lot needed to be done for the upliftment of the peasants in the villages of Champaran.

Gandhiji took the initiative and began the work of eradicating their cultural and social backwardness. Primary schools were started so that the poor peasants and their children could be educated. Gandhiji appealed to teachers, and many of his disciples, including his wife and son, volunteered for the work.

Health conditions in the area were also miserable. Gandhiji got a doctor to volunteer his services for six months. All this goes to prove that Gandhiji's loyalty was not to abstractions, but his politics was always intertwined with the practical day to day problems of the millions.

Question.3. Describe how, according to Louis Fischer, Gandhiji succeeded in his Champaran campaign. (Compartment 2014)

Answer. The Champaran campaign was an attempt to free the poor peasants of Champaran from injustice and exploitation at the hands of the Britishers. Gandhiji succeeded in this campaign using his method of satyagraha and non-violence. He visited Muzaffarpur to obtain complete information about the actual condition of the sharecroppers. He first appealed to the concerned authorities, but when there was no positive response, he organised a mass civil, disobedience movement with the support of the peasants.

Gandhiji's main objective was to remove the fear of the British landlords from the heart of the poor peasants and mould a new free Indian, who could participate in the freedom movement of the country.

He made the peasants aware of their rights and gave them a new-found confidence for fighting their own battles. He also taught them to be self-reliant by refusing to take the help of CF Andrews, his English friend.

Question.4. Why did Gandhiji agree to a settlement of 25% refund to the farmers? How did it influence the peasant-landlord relationship in Champaran?

Answer. Under an ancient arrangement, the peasants of Champaran were sharecroppers. The landlords forced the Indian tenants to plant 15% of their holding with indigo and surrender the entire indigo harvest as rent.

After Germany developed synthetic indigo, the landlords wanted to dissolve the agreement, as synthetic indigo would be cheaper. They asked the peasants for compensation to release them from this arrangement. Most of them signed it willingly, but felt cheated after they learned about synthetic indigo.

Gandhiji fought their case and the evidence that he collected was so overwhelming that the landlords were asked to repay. When Gandhiji asked for 50% repayment, the landlords offered to pay only 25%, as they wanted to create a deadlock, and thus prolong the dispute. To everybody surprise, Gandhiji agreed to a refund of only 25%. Gandhiji explained that the amount of refund was not important. What mattered was that the landlords were obliged to surrender a part of their money and with it, part of their prestige.

Question.5. Give an account of Gandhiji's efforts to secure justice for the poor indigo sharecroppers of Champaran.

Answer. In the course of his journey to Champaran with Rajkumar Shukla, Gandhiji stayed at Muzaffarpur where he met the lawyers and concluded that fighting through courts was not going to solve the problem of the poor sharecroppers of Champaran. He declared that the real relief for them was to be free from fear.

With this intention, he arrived in Champaran and contacted the Secretary of the British Landlord's association. The Secretary refused to provide him any information. After this, Gandhiji met the Commissioner of the Tirhut division who served a notice on him to immediately leave Tirhut. Gandhiji accepted the notice by signing it and wrote on it that he would not obey the order. He was even willing to court arrest for the cause of the peasants.

After four rounds of talks with the Governor, an official commission of inquiry was appointed in

which Gandhiji was made the sole representative of the peasants. Through this commission Gandhiji succeeded in getting 25% of the compensation award for the poor sharecroppers from the British landowners.

Question.6. The Champaran episode was a turning point in Gandhiji's life. Elucidate.

Answer. Gandhiji himself accepted the proposition that the Champaran episode was a turning point in his life. It was then that he decided to urge the departure of the British from India.

In fact the Champaran episode was the first experiment of civil disobedience in India. When Gandhiji was on his way to Champaran, he stayed in Muzaffarpur, where he met the lawyers who were fighting cases for the sharecroppers. The peasants were so crushed and fear-stricken . that Gandhiji concluded that law courts were useless. The real relief for them was to be free from fear. The spontaneous demonstration by the peasants showed that they were instilled with a new strength and spirit. Gandhiji showed the poor peasants how to fight the British with 'satyagraha'. He made them aware of their power and the power of ahimsa.

All this laid the foundation of his future movements and served as a great source of strength and motivation for all Indians.

Question.7. "Freedom from fear is more important than legal justice for the poor."

Do you think that the poor of India are free from fear after Independence?

Answer

1. In the story, Gandhi makes it possible for the sharecroppers of Champaran to shed their fear of the British landlords. According to Gandhi, freedom from fear is the first step towards self-reliance. However, it is unfortunate that the poor of the country are not free from fear, even decades after independence. Their actions, work, etc. are still under pressure; they are under the mercy of the bureaucratic system. Furthermore, the poor live in a continual fear of the police, who instead of taking care, often end up maltreating them. The already poor farmers are becoming poorer, because of globalisation and the craze for foreign products. This leaves them in fear of further destitution.

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