

Indigo

Prose section

Textual questions & answers :

Think as you read :

Q.1. Strike out what is not true in the following :

(a) Rajkumar shukla was-

(1) a sharecroppers.

(2) a politician.

(3) delegate.

(4) a landlord.

Ans : (1) a sharecroppers.

(b) Rajkumar shukla was -

(1) poor.

(2) physically strong.

(3) Illiterate.

Ans : (3) Illiterate.

Q.2. Why is Rajkumar described as being resolute ?

Ans : Rajkumar Shukla wanted Gandhi to take up the cause of the poor peasants in Champaran. The peasants were indigo sharecroppers. He met Gandhi in Lucknow. Gandhi had many places to go. Shukla accompanied him everywhere. He waited until Gandhi was free. So, he was resolute though illiterate.

Q.3. Why do you think the servants thought Gandhi to be another peasant ?

Ans : The servants knew Shukla who was a poor peasant of Champaran. He always troubled Rajendra Prasad to fight for the cause of the sharecroppers. Gandhi was simple and so they thought him to be another peasant from Champaran.

Q.4. List the place that Gandhi visited between his first meeting with Shukla and his arrival at Champaran.

Ans : Lucknow ---> Ashram (Ahmadabad) --> Calcutta
---> Patna ---> Muzaffarpur ---> Motihari ---> Champaran.

Q.5. What did the peasants pay 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 ?

Ans : The peasants were compelled to plant 15% of their holdings with indigo. They had to surrender the whole harvest to the land lords as rent. Indigo plantation was no more profitable. Therefore, the landlords wanted compensation for freeing the peasants. The peasants saw through their tricks.

The natural indigo became cheap. The indigo plantation became quite unprofitable after the development of synthetic indigo in Germany.

Q.6. The event in this part of the text illustrate Gandhi's method of working. Can you identify some instances of this method and link them to his ideas of satyagraha and non-violence ?

Ans : Gandhi had a deep respect for legal authority. But he could defy the authorities when they violated natural justice and human values. For him the voice of conscience was above any law. So, he defied the others to go away from champaran. He was a polite and friendly when he helped the British to regulated the crowd. He tried to obey law. But he had also the power to disobey it for any nobler cause. All these can be linked with his ideas of satyagraha and non-violence.

Q.7. Why did Gandhi agree to the settlement of 25% refund to the farmers ?

Ans : Gandhi explained that the amount of refund was less important than the landlords were humbled. They

were compelled to surrender not only money but also their prestige. Therefore, Gandhi agreed to accept the settlement though earlier he had claimed 50% refund.

Q.8. How did the episode change the plight of the peasant.

Ans : Previously the landlords behaved as lords above the law. Now, the peasants understood that they had rights and person too to defend their rights. They learned courage. Within a few years the British planters abandoned the lands. The peasants at once owned them. The sharecropping system died it's natural death.

Understanding the Text :

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

Ans : Champaran movements was the turning point of Gandhi's life. It was the first mass movements of India. The motive of it was to release the peasant from the cruelty of landlords.

The success of Champaran marked the first triumph of civil Disobedience in modern India. For the first time the landlords who behaved as the lords above the law, had to be humbled by surrendering the money and their prestige. The peasants learned courage. They knew that they had rights and they had men also to defend their rights.

Moreover the Champaran episode was the beginning of their liberation from fear of the British.

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

Ans : The lawyers of Muzaffarpur called on Gandhi to brief him. Gandhi chided the lawyers for collecting big fees from the poor share-coppers. He explained that in such situations law, courts were useless for them. Next Gandhi met the lawyers of Bihar. Rajendra Prasad and many prominent lawyers went to help him. He consulted them and asked if he was sentenced to jail, what would they do. A senior lawyer said that they would go home.

Then Gandhi asked again what the fate of the peasants would be after that. He wanted to know whether they would run away leaving the battle-ground, to see the peasants exploited. The lawyer discussed and understood that being a stranger, if Gandhi could go to prison, why, being neighbours they could do nothing. They decided to follow Gandhi to the prison.

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

Ans : The attitude of the average Indian in smaller localities was quite indifferent and evasive. They were unorganised. They were afraid of showing sympathy for advocates of home rule. Before the advent of Gandhi, the people could not imagine of any mass-movement.

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

Ans : The freedom movement would not have been successful without the participation of ordinary people. Gandhi took the struggle for freedom even to the huts of millions. In the case of Champaran, peasant did not know about Gandhi's movement in South Africa.

But they came out spontaneously to the court only after hearing that a 'Mahatma' wanted to help them and he was now in trouble. The people began to realise the dream of a free-country where they should not obey the order of British. They participated in large number at every stage of freedom struggle. In the journey to Dandi, in the call of avoiding British products, the ordinary people took part actively.

Q. 1. " freedom from fear is more important than legal justice for the poor" you think that the poor of India Are free from fear after independence ?

Ans : The statement is quite true in Indian context. A poor peasant is unable to go to the court for fear of retainer. They can't engage good lawyers, Seeking Justice as the lawyers often take heavy amount of fees. therefore. Legal justice remains far off from them. In the time of Gandhi also, he had to chide the lawyers of Bihar for Collecting heavy fees from the miserable share-croppers. Therefore, the poor must be out of fear

to understand their rights. Then, they could even Change law in a body.

It is untrue that the Indian poor are out of fear today. The poor have to work hard to keep their the body and soul together. Money and crime go hand in hand. Poor peasants are still being exploited. They can't have proper price for their crops. Similarly, workers in factories are suffering from the fear of insecurity. The corrupted people have occupied the high places everywhere and consequently poor people had to live under the fear of politicians. dons of underworld, industrialist and even musclemen.

Q. 5. The qualities of a good leader.

Ans: To be a good leader, one should have power to understand the people . He should first think for the general welfare of the people. One who can lead people to progress and personality is a true leader. Courage, determination. Ability to grasp the situation, and above all unselfish attitude are the great qualities of a leader. He should be a good orator. He should have such an image that can influence the others. He should also be clear with his ideas and action.

working with words :

1. List the words used in the text that are related to legal procedure. For example : deposition.

Ans : the words are : (1) proceeding.

(2) Relief.

(3) compensation.

(4) summon.

(5) trial.

(6) penalty.

(7) evidence.

2. List other words that you know that fall into this category.

Ans : They are :

(1) conviction.

(2) bail.

(3) warrant.

(4) hearing.

(5) prosecution.

(6) witness.

(7) prison.

Thinking about language :

Q. 1. Notice the sentences in the text which are in direct speech. ' why does the author use quotation in his narration.

Ans : (1)" I will tell you how it happened that I decided to urge departure of the British . It was in 1917."

(2)" I am Raj Kumar skukla. I am from Champaran and I want you to come to my district! "

(3) "I have to be in Calcutta on such and such a date. Come and meet me and take me from there. "

(4) I have come to the conclusion that we should stop going to law courts. The real relief for them is to be free from fear".

(5) "The commissioner , , " Gandhi reports " proceeded to fully me and advised me forthwith to leave Tirhut."

(6) " The battle of Champaran is won! " he exclaimed.

(7) " what I did ". He explained ". Was a very ordinary thing. I decided that the British could not order me about in my own country ."

The writer uses quotation to enliven the episode. He repeats exactly those words as they were actually uttered.

2. Notice the use or non use of the comma in the following sentences.

(a) When I first visited Gandhi in 1942 at his ashram in Seagram, he told me what happened in Champaran.

(b) He had not proceeded for when the police superintendent's messenger overtook him.

(c) When the court reconvened, the judge said he would not deliver the judgement for several days.

Ans : In Sentence (a) and (c) the use of comma indicates a pause between two actions.

The visit of the author -the telling of Gandhi in sentence

(a). The court reconvened - the statement of the judge

(c) In sentence (b) no comma is used as there is no pause between the two incidents.