

# Indigo

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## 1. Read the following extracts and answer the questions. (2024)

Their spontaneous demonstration, in thousands, around the courthouse was the beginning of their liberation from fear of the British. The officials felt powerless without Gandhi's cooperation. He helped them regulate the crowd. He was polite and friendly. He was giving them concrete proof that their might, hitherto dreaded and unquestioned, could be challenged by Indians. The government was baffled. The prosecutor requested the judge to postpone the trial. Apparently, the authorities wished to consult their superiors.

(i) The result of the demonstration was that \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans.** government was baffled / official felt powerless / concrete proof of Indian might

(ii) The participants of the spontaneous demonstration were :

- (A) Gandhi's lawyers.
- (B) people of Champaran.
- (C) Indigo landowners.
- (D) Indian soldiers.

**Ans.** (B) people of Champaran.

(iii) Gandhi cooperated with the British by :

- (A) not going to the court.
- (B) remaining quiet when he was accused.
- (C) helping to manage the mob of people.
- (D) leaving Champaran for Delhi.

**Ans.** (C) helping to manage the mob of people.

(iv) The statement Apparently, the authorities wished to consult their superiors was indicative of the Britisher's \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Ans.** bafflement / might, hitherto dreaded and unquestioned could be challenged by Indians / official felt powerless without Gandhi's cooperation

**(v) With reference to the extract, the word 'baffled' most nearly means:**

- (A) strengthened.
- (B) disgusted.
- (C) frightened.
- (D) confused.

**Ans.** (D) confused.

**(vi) Whose 'might' did this demonstration question ?**

**Ans.** might of the British / government / officials

### **Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions**

#### **SA I (2 marks)**

1. What does Gandhi refer to as 'conflict of duties'? (2023)
2. How did Gandhi try to improve the cultural and social backwardness of people living in Champaran villages? (2022 C)
3. What conflict of duty was Gandhi involved in? (2022)
4. In the Motihari court, what caused the delay in the trial? (Term II, 2021-22)
5. 'The settlement given to the sharecroppers was symbolic: Justify why Gandhi thought so. (Term II, 2021-22)
6. Why did Gandhiji feel that taking the Champaran case to the court was useless? (Delhi 2014)
7. How did the Champaran peasants react when they heard that a Mahatma had come to help them? (AI 2014C)
8. What made the Lieutenant Governor drop the case against Gandhiji? (AI 2014C)

#### **SA II (3 marks)**

9. Why do you think Gandhiji considered the Champaran episode to be a turning point in his life? (Delhi 2019)
10. 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? (2018)
11. Why was Gandhiji opposed to C.F. Andrews helping him in Champaran? (Delhi 2016)

12. Why did Gandhiji agree to a settlement of mere 25 percent? (Foreign 2016)

13. At Champaran what did the British landlords want from the sharecroppers?

(Delhi 2016)

14. After initial reluctance why did the lawyers tell Gandhiji that they were ready to follow him into jail? (Foreign 2016)

15. How did Rajkumar Shukla establish that he was resolute? (AI 2015)

16. How was Gandhi treated at Rajendra Prasad's house? (AI 2015)

17. What were the terms of the indigo contract between the British landlords and the Indian peasants? (AI 2015)

18. How did Gandhi show that he cared for the cultural and social backwardness of Champaran villagers? (Foreign 2015)

19. How is Gandhi critical of the lawyers? (Foreign 2015)

20. Why did Gandhi tell the court that he was involved in a 'conflict of duties'?

(Foreign 2015)

21. Why is Raj Kumar Shukla described as being 'resolute'? (Delhi 2015C)

### SA III (4 marks)

22. Gandhi worked for the social backwardness in the Champaran villages. Elaborate. (2022)

23. Gandhi came to the conclusion that the peasants should stop going to law courts. Explain. (2022 C)

### LA I (5 marks)

24. Why is the Champaran episode considered as the beginning of the Indian struggle for independence? (2023)

25. Why is Champaran episode considered to be the beginning of the Indian struggle for Independence? (AI 2014)

26. 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? (AI 2014)

27. Describe how according to Louis Fischer, Gandhiji succeeded in his Champaran campaign. (Delhi 2014C)

### LA II (6 marks)

28. How did Civil Disobedience triumph at Motihari? (2020)

29. How did Gandhiji use Satyagraha and non-violence at Champaran to achieve his goal? (2020)

30. How did Mahatma Gandhi help the Champaran peasants? (2019 C)

31. When and why did the author say that civil disobedience had triumphed for the first time in modern India? (AI 2019)

32. What did Gandhiji do to remove the cultural and social backwardness in the Champaran villages? (Delhi 2015C)

33. How did a visit to Champaran become a turning point in Gandhiji's life? How does this show Gandhi's love and concern for the common people of India?

(AI 2015C)

### CBSE Sample Questions

#### SA I (2 marks)

1. As the host of a talk show, introduce Rajkumar Shukla to the audience by stating any two of his defining qualities.

You may begin your answer like this:

Meet Rajkumar Shukla, the man who played a pivotal in the Champaran Movement. He .....

(Term II, 2021-22)

#### SA III (4 marks)

2. Biographies include features of non-fiction texts factual information and different text structures such as description, sequence, comparison, cause and effect, or problem and solution. Examine Indigo in the light of this statement, in about 120-150 words.

(Term II, 2021-22)

## ANSWERS

### Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

1. According to Gandhi, his involvement in the Champaran case is a "conflict of duties". He referred to the conflict between his duty to the people of India, his people, who were suffering at the hands of the colonisers. On the other hand, he also had the duty to uphold the law as a law-abiding citizen. He decided to disobey the order to leave not because he wanted to break the law, but that he needed to listen to the higher law, that of the voice of conscience.

2. Gandhi started schools in six different villages and also opened clinics. He also enlisted the help of his friends and family to teach the people about personal cleanliness and sanitation. He also had doctors to provide medical help to the people of Champaran.

3.

Ans: Gandhi was involved in a 'conflict of duties' as whether he should break the law, rule and regulation of active British government and act as a 'lawbreaker' or to render his duties as render humanitarian or in motherland service as it is prime and some duty of an individual to support his brethren and save his motherland. So, Gandhi put his foot down and went with his apex duty as a human being and a patriot and began an act of defiance by neglecting court's order.

[Topper's Answer, 2022]

4. When the peasants of Champaran heard about the impending trial of someone who had stood up for them, they assembled in large numbers. This mobilization of the peasants in thousands resulted in the supposed trial of Mahatma Gandhi to be postponed.

5. The settlement of 25% refund was offered by the British landlords in the belief that the peasants would reject and then create a deadlock and prolong the dispute. But Gandhi agreed to the said amount, though meagre. To him, the amount of the refund was less important than the fact that the landlords had to surrender not only financially, but also lose part of their prestige.

6. Gandhi felt that taking the Champaran case to the court was useless because according to him, peasants were quite crushed and fear-stricken. Gandhi felt that there was little hope of getting justice as the case was against the British landlords. Moreover, the lawyers were collecting big fees from the poor peasants.

He knew that the actual relief for the peasants would come when they become free from fear.

7. When the peasants of Champaran heard that a Mahatma had come to help them they came out in large numbers and demonstrated around court house demanding their leader to be set free.

8. The Lt. Governor dropped the case against Gandhiji because he was fighting a just cause because of which he had the support of the peasants and the local people. The authorities felt powerless. Mr. Fischer writes, "Civil disobedience had triumphed, the first time in modern India."

9. Gandhiji considered the Champaran episode to be a turning point in his life perhaps because he declared that the British could not order him in his own country. It was for the first time that Gandhiji introduced a non-violent resistance, which came to be known as Satyagraha, against the Britishers.

10. For Gandhiji the amount of the refund was less important than the fact that the landlords had been forced to return part of the money and with it, part of their prestige too. It was also a lesson in self-reliance for Indians. They learnt that they too had rights and that Britishers were not above the law. Hence, the Champaran struggle can still be termed a huge success and victory.

11. Gandhiji opposed to C.F. Andrews helping him in Champaran because the Indians were fighting an unequal fight. Therefore, support of an Englishman would show weakness of heart of the Indians. Gandhiji even wanted Indians to rely on themselves and to be free of fear.

12. For Gandhiji the amount of the refund was less important than the fact that the landlords had been forced to return part of the money and with it, part of their prestige too. It was also a lesson in self-reliance for Indians. They learnt that they too had rights and that Britishers were not above the law. Hence, he agreed to settlement of 25 percent refund to the peasants.

13. At Champaran, the British landlords initially insisted that the Indian farmers plant 15% indigo and surrender entire crop as rent. However, when the Britishers learnt that Germany had developed synthetic indigo and that it could affect the demand and price of naturally grown indigo, they asked farmers to pay compensation for release from 15% agreement.

14. Gandhiji, who was an outsider, had come to Champaran to help the peasants in their fight against injustice. He was also willing to go to jail for them. The lawyers, who were locals, who had taken fees from the poor peasants, realised that deserting fellow Indians, especially Gandhiji and his cause, at this point would be shameful. This is why, after initial reluctance, the lawyers told Gandhiji that they were ready to follow him into jail.

**15.** Raj Kumar Shukla came from Champaran to Lucknow to speak to Gandhiji. He accompanied Gandhiji everywhere even to Cawnpore and his Ahmedabad ashram. Gandhiji asked Raj Kumar Shukla to come and meet him on a fixed day in Calcutta. But, the appointment day was several months later. When Gandhiji arrived in Calcutta, Raj Kumar Shukla was waiting for him on the appointed day at the appointed spot.

**16.** Raj Kumar Shukla and Gandhiji were not well received at Rajendra Prasad's home. He was out of town. The servants knew Shukla as the peasant who pestered their master. Since Gandhiji accompanied Shukla, the servants took him to be a peasant as well. They allowed him to be on the grounds, but he was not allowed to draw water from the well as servants were unsure about Gandhiji's caste. They did not want drops from his bucket to pollute the water in the well.

**17.** At Champaran, the British landlords initially insisted that the Indian farmers plant 15% indigo and surrender entire crop as rent. However, when the Britishers learnt that Germany had developed synthetic indigo and that it could affect the demand and price of naturally grown indigo, they asked farmers to pay compensation for release from 15% agreement.

**18.** Gandhiji genuinely cared for the cultural and social backwardness of Champaran villagers. Therefore, Gandhiji opened primary schools in six villages and called for teachers to teach the children. Kasturba and their son joined. He also called doctors to look into health conditions and taught the villagers about hygiene and personal cleanliness.

**19.** Gandhiji was critical of the lawyers because the peasants of Champaran village were quite crushed and fear-stricken with the injustice done to them by the Britishers. Gandhiji, who was an outsider, had come to Champaran to help the peasants in their fight against injustice, but found that the lawyers of the village were also collecting huge fees from the poor peasants. This scenario made Gandhiji to be critical of the lawyers.

**20.** Since Gandhiji was a law abiding citizen, he did not want to go against the court's orders. Gandhiji did not want to set a bad example as a law breaker on one hand and on the other wanted to render humanitarian and national service to the people. For this reason, Gandhiji told the court that he was involved in a conflict of duties.

**21.** Raj Kumar Shukla is described as being 'resolute' because, in order to convince Gandhiji to come to Champaran, Raj Kumar Shukla accompanied him everywhere. He did not leave Gandhiji's side for weeks, begging him to come to Champaran. He even followed Gandhiji to his ashram in Ahmedabad. Impressed by his perseverance, Gandhiji asked Raj Kumar Shukla to meet him in Calcutta on

a particular date and take him from there. On the appointed date, Gandhiji found him at the appointed spot waiting for him.

22.

Ans 3) Yes, Gandhiji worked for the social & educational backwardness in Champaran. He stayed there for months and opened his primary school with his disciples Mahadevi Desai, Mahadevi Prasad and their respective wives. He also called his elder son Devdas from Mumbai to render his helping hand and his wife Kasturba taught about personal hygiene & communal cleanliness to the women. Gandhiji noticed about miserable state of a woman & told his wife to help her. He called a doctor for six months on his schedule with three medicines as - castor oil for people suffering from scatted lumps, castor oil & quinine for person with malarial fever and castor oil with sulphur ointment for skin eruptions. He also chided lawyers for charging huge loads of money from poor, much sharecroppers and had filled coverage in newspaper to fight against repressive activities of imperialist Britishers as he started a series of self-sacrifice with self-dependence with help of education & society upliftment, he doesn't believe in abstract & economical or financial solutions, he rather resort to day-to-day misery of serf peasants.

[Topper's Answer, 2022]

23. When Rajkumar Shukla came to Gandhi for help, his persistence paid off and he was able to bring Mahatma Gandhi to Champaran. Their sole aim was to help the indigo sharecroppers in their fight against the injustice of the landlord system in Bihar. When Gandhi arrived, Muzaffarpur lawyers called on him to brief him and also talked about their cases, including the fees they charge the peasant groups they represented. When he heard the big fees collected by the lawyers, he chided them and said that he had "come to the conclusion... to stop going to law courts." This was because the peasants do not get justice while still paying dearly. He believed that the real relief for the peasants will come only when they are free from fear itself.



**24.** The Champaran episode is significant as it marked the first-time people came together and rose against the Britishers. Although it did not begin as an act of defiance, it laid groundwork for civil-disobedience movement, a movement which has had immense contribution towards India's freedom. When Gandhi arrived at Champaran, he realized that courts were useless for crushed and fear-stricken peasants. He concluded that the real relief for them would be to be free from the fear. He disobeyed the order to leave Champaran and got summoned to court the next day. The farmers all gathered outside the court to support him, which made the officials feel powerless. Eventually, lawyers who were earlier asking for huge fee from farmers to represent them, decided to support Gandhi in his endeavor and promised to follow him to court if need be. In the end, the farmers were offered the refund up to 25 percent. Gandhi agreed to it explaining that the verdict would teach the farmers that they had rights and defenders too. It also taught them courage.

**25.** The Champaran episode is considered to be the beginning of the Indian struggle for Independence because it was for the first time that Gandhiji introduced a non-violent resistance, which came to be known as Satyagraha. It was a long drawn out but patient and peaceful agitation against the British. During this struggle, Gandhiji decided to urge the departure of the Britishers for the first time. Therefore, it was also a turning point in Gandhiji's life. The struggle did not begin as an act of defiance, but it grew out of an attempt to make the sufferings of the poor peasants less severe. The farmers learnt courage to face their fears. They learnt for the first time that they too had rights and that self-reliance is the key to fight any battle. The Champaran episode was the beginning of their liberation from the fear of the Britishers and its success, a triumph of the first civil disobedience movement.

**26.** Unsatisfied with mere political and economic solutions, Gandhiji wanted to bring about a change in the social and cultural conditions of Champaran. He wanted to make the peasants self-reliant. He noticed the unhealthy living conditions and poor sanitation in the village. He also realised the need for literacy. Hence, he decided to continue his stay in Champaran even after the disappearance of indigo sharecropping. He opened up schools in six different villages, and several of his disciples and family members volunteered as teachers. His wife, Kasturba, worked on the personal cleanliness and community sanitation of the place. Gandhiji also hired a doctor for the improvement of the health conditions. This proves that Gandhiji's was not a loyalty to abstractions; it was a loyalty to living human beings. This also made him keen to eradicate social and cultural backwardness of Champaran.

**27.** Gandhiji's campaign to provide justice to the sharecroppers of Champaran was not an act of defiance. Therefore, the methods he used to win this battle were also non-violent. In order to help the peasants, Gandhiji was even willing to get

arrested. He was asked to leave Champaran. However, he refused. He met various high ranking government officials, who could not help but agree with his rational arguments. Seeing the efforts put by Gandhiji to alleviate the distress of the poor peasants even though he was a non-resident of Champaran, he received full support of the common man, his followers and other leaders. His powerful words instilled moral courage in every Indian; he asked fellow Indians to have courage, be self-reliant and united. This is how, Gandhiji eventually succeeded in his Champaran campaign.

**28.** When Gandhi visited Champaran to look into the grievances of the peasants, he was served with an official notice to quit Champaran immediately. Gandhi returned the notice with the remark that he would disobey the order. This was the beginning of civil disobedience. As a result, Gandhi was ordered to appear in the court next day. Thousands of peasants put up a demonstration at the courthouse in Motihari. The crowd, in support for Gandhi was beyond the officials' control and the officials appealed to Gandhi to help them manage the crowd, which he did so. In the trial, the magistrate demanded Gandhi to furnish bail, but Gandhi did not comply with the orders and later on he was released without bail. After several days, the case against Gandhi was dropped by the Lieutenant-Governor implying his defeat against the fervor of the masses backing Gandhi. This was how civil disobedience triumphed at Motihari.

**29.** Satyagraha was actually a mass civil disobedience movement. Gandhiji set up an ashram in Champaran to protest against the British government for forcing farmers to cultivate cash crops in place of food crops and payment of low wages to the growers. His form of agitation included cleaning up the villages, building hospitals and schools and demolishing evil social practices like untouchability and purdah system. This non-violent protest won him the support and admiration of the masses, non-violent protest gained huge momentum. Subsequently Gandhiji was asked to leave Champaran by an official order. Thousands of people held a demonstration protesting his arrest in front of the police station and the court. The officials were helpless against the fervor of the crowd and Gandhiji was released without bail. So civil-disobedience had triumphed for the first time in modern India. The Champaran movement brought to heel the British rulers and the poor farmers were subsequently paid remunerative wages and their farming rights to grow crops of their choice was restored.

**30.** Gandhiji went to Champaran to look into the matter himself. He began by studying the problems and getting the facts. He visited the Secretary of British Landlord's Association and met the British Official Commissioner of Tirhut division. He consulted the lawyer's and chided them for collecting fees from the sharecroppers. He disobeyed the court order to leave Champaran immediately. Gandhiji inspired the peasants, with his talks and actions, to overcome their fear

and be self-reliant. Gandhiji ensured the triumph of civil disobedience. Eventually the British landlords were obliged to refund 25% of the peasants' money. Within a few years, the British landlords gave up their estates.

**31.** Gandhiji visited Champaran to look into the problems of the poor peasants. There, he was greeted by thousands of peasants. This was the beginning of the peasant liberation from fear of the British. A peasant had been maltreated in a village called Motihari. Gandhiji set out to see him. The police superintendent's messenger overtook him and ordered him to return. Gandhiji complied. At home, he was served an official notice to leave Champaran. Gandhiji signed the receipt and wrote on it that he would disobey the order. This was the beginning of Civil disobedience movement. Gandhiji again received a summon to appear in court the next day. The peasants thronged the courtroom. They wanted to help the 'Mahatma' who was in trouble with the authorities for trying to help them. The officials were powerless. Gandhiji helped them regulate the crowd. This shocked the officials. The magistrate postponed announcing the sentence by two hours and asked Gandhiji to furnish bail. Gandhiji declined. The judge released him without bail. The judge said he would not deliver the judgment for several days. Later, the case was dropped by the Lt. Governor himself. This way the Civil disobedience had triumphed.

**32.** The purpose of Gandhiji's visit to Champaran was to bring justice to the sharecroppers. During their struggle, Gandhiji made the poor, illiterate peasants realise that they too had rights. He wanted them to become self-reliant and fight for their rights. Gandhiji's aim was to mould the Indians in such a way that they could stand on their own feet and make India free. He felt that this was possible only if the cultural and social backwardness in the Champaran villages is removed. Therefore, after achieving victory for the Champaran sharecroppers, Gandhiji stayed on to alleviate their sufferings. He started schools in six different villages and clinics. His disciples, wife and sons and many others volunteered to help him. Mrs. Gandhi taught the ashram rules on personal cleanliness and community sanitation. Health conditions were bad. So, Gandhiji and his volunteer doctor took care of that as well by providing the available medical aids.

**33.** Gandhiji's fight against the injustice of the landlord system in Bihar made people realise the power of civil disobedience. They became self-reliant and gained courage to stand up against injustice. With Gandhiji's help and local support, the peasants received 25% compensation out of the full amount. This was a turning point for them, Gandhiji and all those who were involved in the struggle. It was the first time in India that natives won against the British. Gandhiji was not a local yet he fought for the rights of the poor peasants of Champaran. Post victory, he even had his wife, son and medical representatives work for the welfare of the farmers. This shows Gandhiji's love and concern for the common people of India.

## CBSE Sample Questions

1. Meet Rajkumar Shukla, the man who played a pivotal role in the Champaran Movement. He showed great tenacity and determination that would eventually lead Gandhiji to finally come to Champaran and help the struggling peasants with their case. Had it not been for his perseverance and resolution to achieve what he set out for; the peasants would not have got the help they needed. Thank you.

2. 'Indigo' by Louis Fisher is a biographical work from the time of Mahatma Gandhi and the start of the Indian independence movement. While biographies are generally non-fictional, the thing about Indigo that makes it a true biography is that it is taken from a biography that is narrated by a first-person narrator.

The narrator presents events in sequence, the issues faced by the farmers in Bihar, the emergence of Gandhiji, the Champaran movement that is an important part of the Indian freedom struggle, all presents a nonfictional tale of that time. Being narrated by a first person with "I", the excerpt can be understood to be a non-fictional and not just something that the author wants to present to the readers.

Also, the Champaran episode was one event that would lead to an increased desire for Indians to be free of British authority, something that is historically true and learned. Thus, this presents the best example of why the excerpt Indigo is indeed biographical and not a work of fiction.