

Prose - Chapter 5

Indigo

S : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 46

Question:

Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meanings from the context.

Answer :

- *urge the departure* -insist on the going away of the British from India
- *conflict of duties* -clash of obligation or responsibility
- *harbor a man like me* -give shelter to an advocate of home-rule
- *seek a prop* -try to find support or assistance

Think as you read : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 47

Question:

1. Strike out what is not true in the following.
 - a. Rajkumar Shukla was
 - (i) a sharecropper.
 - (ii) a politician.
 - (iii) a delegate.
 - (iv) a landlord.



Answer :

- (i) a sharecropper.
- (ii) a politician.
- (iii) a delegate.
- (iv) a landlord.

Question:

1. Strike out what is not true in the following.
- b. Rajkumar Shukla was
 - (i) poor.
 - (ii) physically strong.
 - (iii) illiterate.

Answer :

- (i) poor.
- (ii) physically strong.
- (iii) illiterate.

Question:

Why is Rajkumar Shukla described as being 'resolute'?

Answer :

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 county, 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 impresses Gandhi and the latter complies with his request

Question:

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

Answer :

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 them both together, they mistook Gandhi to be another peasant.

Question:

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

Answer :

After his first meeting with Shukla, Gandhi visited Cawnpore, his ashram near Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Patna and Muzzafarpur before he reached Champaran.



Question:

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?

Answer :

According to the long-term contract, the peasants were forced to plant fifteen percent of their holdings with indigo and pay the entire harvest as rent. Now, with the development of synthetic indigo in Germany, the British landlords did not want indigo from these plantations. Hence, the shrewd landlords decided to release the peasants of Champaran from the fifteen percent arrangement on the payment of a compensation. Development of synthetic indigo would lead to an increase in the price of natural indigo.

Question:

The events 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?

Answer :

There are many instances in the narrative that can be linked to Gandhi's idea of non-cooperation and



satyagraha. One such instance is Gandhi's refusal to obey the court order asking him to leave Champaran immediately. Besides that, Gandhi's protest against the delay of the court proceedings is also an instance of his belief in civil disobedience.

Furthermore, Gandhi does not falter to plead guilty in front of the court. He accepts his guilt but presents a rational case as to what made him disobey the law. For him, truth is above everything and, thus, he decides to follow the voice of conscience and obey the "higher law of our being".

Question:

Why did Gandhi agree to a settlement of 25 per cent refund to the farmers?

Answer :

For Gandhi, it was not the money but the principles that were of utmost importance. He believed that the very fact that the British landlords surrendered was of more significance than the percentage of refund. He wanted the poor farmers to realise that they too had rights and that they need not really live in fear of the British landlords.

Therefore, although he had initially quoted a 50 percent refund, he later agreed to a settlement of 25 percent



refund to the farmers. Besides, Gandhi was interested in long- term solutions rather than immediate benefits. His decision was proved right when, years later, the British landlords decided to leave their estates, putting an end to the sharecropping arrangement.

Question:

How did the episode change the plight of the peasants?

Answer :

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 standard. Gandhi 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.

Understanding the text : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : **54**



Question:

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

Answer :

Gandhi considered the Champaran episode to be a turning point in his life because he realised that civil disobedience, which had triumphed for the first time, could go a long way in the freedom struggle. Moreover, he had succeeded in making the peasants aware of their rights and becoming confident. This success, thus, proved the effectiveness of Gandhi's method of non-violence and non-cooperation.

Question:

How was Gandhi able to influence lawyers? Give instances.

Answer :

Gandhi was able to influence the lawyers through his conviction, earnestness and pertinent questioning. Gandhi reproached the lawyers of Muzzafarpur for charging a large sum of money as fee from the peasants. Later, the lawyers from Bihar opined that they would return to their own places in the event of his imprisonment. But, Gandhi made them realise that it would be impudent for them, being lawyers from a neighbouring place, to



return when a stranger was ready to get himself imprisoned for the peasants. So, they agreed to follow him to jail. Gandhi also convinced the lawyers not to seek support from an Englishman and be self-reliant.

Question:

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

Answer :

During those times, the average Indian in smaller localities lived in fear of the British. They were afraid of the dire consequences of helping the advocates of "home-rule". Hence, though they were supportive of people like Gandhi, they were afraid of showing it explicitly and only a few could actually dare to come out openly. In the story, we find people, like Professor Malkani, who had the courage to give shelter to Gandhi on the latter's visit to Muzzafarpur.

Question:

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



Answer :

In the chapter 'Indigo' Louis Fischer writes of how a small farmer Rajkumar Shukla from a small district, Champaran, helps bring about a very prominent change. Likewise, many other peasants from the villages fought courageously and contributed in their own way to the movement. Their cumulative effort eventually resulted in their winning the battle of Champaran and to finally free themselves of the sharecropping arrangement.

Question:

Notice the sentences in the text which are in 'direct speech'. Why does the author use quotations in his narration?

Answer :

Below are some sentences in the text which are in 'direct speech':

"I will tell you how it happened that I decided to urge the departure of the British. It was in 1917."
--

'I am Rajkumar Shukla. I am from Champaran, and I want you to come to my district!'"
--

"Speak to Gandhi."

"Fix a date,"

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



"It was an extraordinary thing ... for a government professor to harbour a man like me".
"The commissioner ... to bully me and advised me forthwith to leave Tirhut."
"conflict of duties"
"humanitarian and national service"
"not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience"
"But how much must we pay?"
"Look, there is no box or cupboard here for clothes. The sari I am wearing is the only one I have."
"What I did," he explained, "was a very ordinary thing. I declared that the British could not order me about in my own country."
"He had read our minds correctly," Rajendra Prasad comments, "and we had no reply... Gandhi in this way taught us a lesson in eliance".

The author uses quotations to indicate the actual words of a speaker. Usually a quotation is used when a particular passage or sentence is well-written or memorable or is especially relevant in the context under discussion. In 'Indigo,' the author uses quotations when he mentions important commentary or observation, or any pertinent



utterance by Gandhi, or for that matter, by any other character.

Question:

Discuss the following.

1. "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?
2. The qualities of a good leader.

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 the 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 the foreign products. This leaves them in the fear of further destitution.
2. A leader is someone who leads the minds of others and convinces them into following his set of ideas and



beliefs. As such, there are some qualities inherent in the persona of the leader that sets him apart from the rest. One of these qualities includes dedication to one's work. His enthusiasm is evident in his work and life, and this inspires others to follow him. A good leader is courageous in the face of adversity and is never a quitter. He motivates and encourages others, bringing out the best in them. He appreciates the efforts of others and is not biased or impartial.

(The above answer is only a sample provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

Question:

- List the words used in the text that are related to legal procedures. For example: deposition
- List other words that you know that fall into this category.

Answer :

Deposition	Notice	Summon	Lawyer
Court	Cases	Fee	Agreement
Compensation	Order	Courthouse	Judge
Prosecutor	Statement	Guilty	Trial
Penalty	Law	Magistrate	Sentence



Bail	Judgement	Inquiry	Evidence
Documents	Imprison	Appeal	Rights
Investigation	Reconvene	Appear	Pleading
Witness	Accused	Proceedings	Adjourn
Verdict	Decree	Accusation	Defense
Impeachment	Charge	Affidavit	Indictment
Opposition	Prosecution	Offence	Crime

Question:

Choose an issue that has provoked a controversy like the Bhopal Gas Tragedy or the Narmada Dam Project in which the lives of the poor have been affected.

Answer :

Fukushima I nuclear accidents in Japan are regarded as one of the largest nuclear disasters in the recent years.

(The above answer is only a sample provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

Question:

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 Sevagram, he told me what happened in Champaran.
- b. He had not proceeded far when the police superintendent's messenger overtook him.
- c. When the court reconvened, the judge said he would not deliver the judgment for several days.

Answer :

- a. In this sentence, the comma is used after a long introductory phrase.
- b. Essential clauses do not require commas. In this sentence, the clause 'when the police superintendent's messenger overtook him' is an essential clause because it provides essential information. Hence, a comma is not required in this sentence.
- c. In this sentence again we have an introductory clause which provides extra information. The second half of the sentence can stand alone and, therefore, is separated from the introductory clause with a comma.

Question:

Find out the facts of the case.



Answer :

On 11 March 2011, the TÃ...Âhoku earthquake and tsunami occurred disabling the power supply and cooling of three Fukushima Daiichi reactors. The three cores largely melted in the first three days. This accident, which is rated 7 on the INES scale, led to the release of high radioactive substances, including contaminated water leaking from the three units. Although there were no immediate deaths, over 100000 residents were evacuated from their homes.

(The above answer is only a sample provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

Question:

Present your arguments.

Answer :

The contaminated sea water from such disasters is a potential threat across boundaries. The investigations into the Fukushima disaster have proved some faults in the design of the reactors. Lack of adequate safety measures and response actions in the plant have led to a higher risk.

(The above answer is only a sample provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)



Question:

Suggest a possible settlement.

Answer :

A possible way to avert such disasters is by constructing such plants away from residential areas. It is imperative to improve safety measures and take other possible steps to eliminate the release of harmful materials.

(The above answer is only a sample provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

