

Flamingo Chapter-5

Indigo

“Indigo” portrays Gandhiji’s struggle for the poor peasants of Champaran. He managed to get justice after a yearlong battle for the peasants. He also made arrangements for the education, health and hygiene for the families of the poor peasants. He gave them the lesson of self-reliance.

- Raj Kumar Shukla- A poor sharecropper from Champaran wishing to meet Gandhiji.
- Raj Kumar Shukla- an illiterate but resolute (determined) hence followed Gandhiji to Lucknow, Kanpur, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Patna, Muzzafarpur & then Champaran.
- Servants at Rajendra Prasad’s residence thought Gandhi to be an untouchable because of his simple living style, scanty clothes and company of Raj Kumar Shukla.
- Decided to go to Muzzafarpur first to get detailed information about Champaran sharecropper.
- Sent telegram to J B Kriplani and stayed in Prof. Malkani’s home - a government servant.
- Gandhiji went to the British Official Commissioner who asked him to leave Trihut, Gandhiji disobeyed, went to Motihari the capital of Champaran where a vast multitude greeted him, continued his investigations.
- Indians afraid to show sympathy to the supporters of home rule.
- The news of Gandhi’s arrival spread- sharecroppers gathered in large number to meet their champion.
- Gandhiji chided the Muzzafarpur lawyer for taking high fee.
- Champaran district was divided into estate owned by English people, Indians only tenant farmers.
- Landlords compelled tenants to plant 15% of their land with indigo and surrender their entire harvest as rent.
- In the meantime Germany had developed synthetic indigo –British landlords freed the Indian farmers from the 15% arrangement but asked them to pay compensation.
- Many signed, some resisted, engaged lawyers, landlords hired thugs.



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- Gandhiji reached Champaran- visited the secretary of the British landlord association to get the facts but denied as he was an outsider.
 - Visited maltreated villagers, stopped by the police superintendent but disobeyed the order.
 - Motihari black with peasants' spontaneous demonstrations, Gandhi released without bail Civil Disobedience triumphed.
 - Gandhiji agreed to 25% refund by the landowners, it symbolized the surrender of the prestige.
 - Gandhiji worked hard towards social economic reforms, elevated their distress aided by his wife, Mahadev Desai, Narhari Parikh.
 - Gandhiji taught a lesson of self-reliance by not seeking help of an English man Mr. Andrews.
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