

VIDYA BHAWAN

BALIKA VIDYAPITH LAKHISARAI

CLASS~12. SUBJECT~ENGLISH

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“Indigo”——Louis Fischer

Summary:—

“Indigo” is a story that narrates Gandhiji’s struggle for the poor peasants of Champaran. The peasants were sharecroppers with the British planters. There was an agreement between them. As per the agreement, the peasants had to produce indigo on 15% of the land and give it to the landlords as rent. Around 1917, synthetic indigo was developed by Germany. The landlords, thus, did not need to raise indigo on their land any longer. They demanded compensation from the peasants for freeing them from the indigo-raising agreement. The landlords forced the sharecroppers to sign to pay them

compensation to be freed from the 15% agreement.

Rajkumar Shukla, a poor peasant, was among the sharecroppers who refused to sign. He followed Gandhiji and ultimately got success to bring him Champaran to see the plight of poor farmers who were forced to live under the cruel exploitation of the British landlords. After receiving reports of exploitation and being briefed by the lawyers from Muzaffarpur, he got the facts and decided to fight to preserve the rights of the poor peasants.

According to Gandhiji, money was not important at that time. Gandhiji organised a gathering of the peasants at Motihari around the court. This was the beginning of their liberation from the fear of the British. Finally, after the inquiry committee's report, the landlords had to surrender their prestige and the peasants realised that they too had rights which they could defend. Although, the cruel landlords were made to surrender the partial amount of the extorted money but indigo

sharecropping disappeared for all times to come.

Thus,we find that Gandhiji was not bothered about the money but for the crushing of the opponent's pride and prestige which showed that 'self-reliance was of utmost importance'.