



Mains Practice Question

Q. What was the significance of Champaran movement in India's journey of freedom struggle? (150 words)

06 Apr, 2019 GS Paper 1 History

Approach:

- Give brief introduction by mentioning chronological facts about Champaran Satyagraha.
- Describe the significance of Champaran movement.
- Give conclusion.

Answer

Introduction:

- Gandhiji returned to India in January 1915 after gaining experience in South Africa with his agitational/ protest methods. After coming to India, he decided to travel India and not to take any position on any political matter for at least one year.
- In 1917 Gandhiji was requested to look into the problems of the farmers in context of indigo planters of Champaran in Bihar.
- The European planters had been forcing the peasants to grow indigo on 3/20 part of the total land (called tinkathia system).

Body

Significance of Champaran movement

- **First lesson in disobedience movement:** Gandhi travelled across the district to different villages, meeting farmers and taking note of their sufferings and complaints against the forced indigo cultivation.
 - He was given an ultimatum by the British government to leave Champaran. Gandhi refused to leave and responded that he was ready to bear "the penalty of civil disobedience".
 - As Gandhi was arrested scores of Champaran tenants turned up in protest outside the jail, police stations and courts. Troubled by this unusual form of resistance that spilled no violence, the government was forced to let go of Gandhi. Gandhiji here remarked "The country, thus, had its first direct object-lesson in Civil Disobedience,".
- **Beginning of Mass movement era:** Champaran movement marked the beginning of mass movement era as from now onwards masses were part of national movement. Gandhi through Champaran movement reposed faith in common masses unlike Congress which did not consider masses were yet ready for mass movement.
- **Emergence of Mass leader:** Gandhiji built on his South African experience and established his reputation as mass leader beginning with Champaran and later Ahmedabad and Kheda movement. He found his feet among the masses and came to have a surer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the masses.
- **First demonstration of Non- violent Satyagraha:** Gandhi demonstrated to the people the

efficacy of his technique of satyagraha.

Conclusion

Champaran movement is landmark event in Indian independence movement as from here on masses became permanent part of movement. Earlier doubts about the capacity of masses were relinquished by Congress to create a genuinely mass based freedom struggle leading to Independence from British rule.

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