

FREE EXTRACT

General Studies Previous Year Questions

Three questions from inside the book, with the explanation written out as it appears throughout. Nothing here is abridged for the sample.

1

Consider the following statements with reference to the Champaran Satyagraha of 1917:

1. Mahatma Gandhi was persuaded to visit Champaran by Raj Kumar Shukla, a cultivator of the district.
2. The tinkathia system obliged a tenant to grow indigo on a fixed portion of his holding for the European planter.
3. The satyagraha was launched by the Indian National Congress as part of its all-India programme.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1 and 2 only
- (B) 2 and 3 only
- (C) 1 and 3 only
- (D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (A) 1 and 2 only

Raj Kumar Shukla, an ordinary cultivator of Champaran, pursued Gandhi from session to session until he agreed to come to the district in April 1917, so the first statement is sound. The grievance was the tinkathia system, under which a tenant had to plant indigo on three kathas out of every twenty kathas of his land for the planter, which is exactly what the second statement says. The third statement is where most candidates slip. The Congress did not sponsor this struggle at all; Gandhi went as a private individual, worked with local men such as Brajkishore Prasad, Rajendra Prasad and Anugrah Narayan Sinha, and quietly recorded thousands of peasant statements until the government was obliged to appoint an enquiry committee on which he himself sat. The agitation ended with the Champaran Agrarian Act of 1918, which abolished tinkathia. For the exam, hold on to the pattern rather than the detail: Champaran was a local agrarian dispute settled by enquiry and legislation, and it was Gandhi's own initiative, not a party campaign.

2

Consider the following statements regarding the Legislative Council of a State:

- 1. Parliament may create or abolish a Legislative Council if the Legislative Assembly of the State passes a resolution to that effect by a special majority.**
 - 2. The total strength of a Legislative Council shall not exceed one-third of the total strength of the Legislative Assembly of that State.**
 - 3. One-third of the members of a Legislative Council are nominated by the Governor.**
- Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- (A) 1 and 3 only
- (B) 2 and 3 only
- (C) 1 and 2 only
- (D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (C) 1 and 2 only

Article 169 makes the second chamber of a State optional: the Assembly must first pass a resolution by a majority of its total membership and by not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting, after which Parliament may pass an ordinary law creating or abolishing the Council. Notice that such a law is not treated as a constitutional amendment under Article 368, which is a favourite point with examiners. Article 171 fixes the size, and the ceiling is one-third of the Assembly's strength subject to a floor of forty members, so the second statement is correct. The third statement inverts the figures. The correct arithmetic is one-third elected by local authorities, one-third by the sitting MLAs, one-twelfth by graduates, one-twelfth by teachers, and the remaining one-sixth nominated by the Governor from persons with special knowledge of literature, science, art, the co-operative movement or social service. Bihar is one of the handful of States that still retains a Council, so this composition is worth memorising as a fraction chain rather than as loose sentences.

3**Which one of the following rivers joins the Ganga on its southern bank in Bihar?**

- (A) Bagmati
- (B) Burhi Gandak
- (C) Sone
- (D) Kamla

Answer: (C) Sone

The whole of Bihar's drainage can be sorted by asking which bank of the Ganga a river reaches. The northern group, which includes the Ghaghara, Gandak, Burhi Gandak, Bagmati, Kamla, Kosi and Mahananda, descends from the Nepal Himalaya, carries a heavy silt load, shifts its channel often and is responsible for most of the State's flooding. The southern group, which includes the Karmanasa, Sone, Punpun, Falgu and Kiul, rises on the Chhotanagpur plateau and its margins, is rain-fed and shrinks to a sandy bed in the dry months. The Sone is by far the largest of the southern tributaries and meets the Ganga near Maner, a short distance west of Patna. Since Bagmati, Burhi Gandak and Kamla all belong to the northern group, they can be struck out at once, leaving the Sone. Fix this north-south division firmly and a whole family of Bihar geography questions becomes routine.

The full book

Every question from the papers, each explained like this.