

# Champanan Satyagraha

A Socio-Political Crucible

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# Champanan Satyagraha: A Social Work Perspective

Rashmita Ray & Asutosh Pradhan

## Introduction

Champanan Satyagraha has been a landmark in the history of the making of an independent India. It was a successful experiment of a social movement that became a germplasm or mother of many more such social movements that contributed to the achieving of independence of India from British rule.

The setting on which this article is based is the Champanan District of North Bihar and dates back to the early twentieth century (1914-1917) when Gandhiji returned from South Africa in 1914 and tried his method of Satyagraha on a mass scale for the first time on Indian soil.

Champanan was the hub with regard to indigo plantation and manufacturing of indigo and the growers were tenant peasants also referred to as *ryots*. Majority of the owners of the factories for processing of indigo were Europeans or British. The land originally belonged to the *Zamindars* and was leased out to the factory owners on long term basis or such land that belonged to the Bettiah Raj. Lease of land in early nineteenth century went to the hands of the Europeans who engaged in indigo and sugarcane cultivation and towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century the takeover of land from Indian Lessees by Europeans became complete. The tenants or *ryots* were forced to cultivate indigo as per the *Tinkathia* system. According to this

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