

# Progressive era success and failures

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Progressive Era Success and Failures From 1890 to 1920, United States undergone tremendous changes in social activities and politics and this period is marked as progressive era in history. Progressive movement objectives were the elimination of corruption through political, economic and educational reforms. People who supported and worked for the implementation of these reformation activities were later referred as progressives. Progressives were mainly middle class people including lawyers, teachers, physicians, ministers and business people. Progressives supported the implementation of scientific methods virtually in every segment of human life in America. They believed that the existing strategies in economics, government, industry, finance, medicine, education etc were outdated and need upgrading. They found that America was not developing as rapidly as Europe during this period because of the failures of the existing strategies. Americans were bit reluctant in accepting scientific methods compared to the Europeans during this period. Gilded Age, predecessor of progressive era was not successful enough in eliminating inefficiencies and injustices and the progressives calculated that the drawbacks of Gilded Age could be rectified only through the implementation of scientific methods in every segment of human life in America. Gilded Age refers to a period in the late nineteenth century after the Civil War and Reconstruction period. During this period America witnessed huge advancements economic activities. It is believed to be the period which laid foundations to the construction of modern America. Industries developed rapidly during this period because of various kinds of inventions took place during this period. However, majority of the advancements during this period occurred only at the surface level and in the grass root level, still the traditional concepts were prevailing. In <https://assignbuster.com/progressive-era-success-and-failures/>

other words, America looked like a gilded object or an object covered by a thin layer of gold during this period. In short, developments happened only at the surface level during the Gilded Age period which forced the progressives to work for more reformations in political, social and economic sectors. Progressives waged battles over issues like government regulation of the economy and democratic reform of the electoral process. Some of them worked for female suffrage, others for temperance, and still others for immigration restriction, government inspection of foods and drugs, the abolition of pornography and prostitution, or the improvement of wages and working conditions, especially for women and children (Progressive Era Politics Summary & Analysis) Before the interference of progressives, the government activities were mainly controlled by the business groups. Governmental involvement in economic activities was intended only for safeguarding the interests of the business groups before the progressive era. Progressives argued for a stable society in which all the people irrespective of rich and poor get fair treatment from the government. They argued for individual rights or human rights and demanded more freedom and liberties in America's social life. Workers started to question the improper treatments of their employers during this period as a result of the works of progressives. Strikes were illegal before the progressive era. The monopoly of employers in the industrial sectors has been destroyed and workers started to get more wages because of the efforts of progressives during this period. Progressives created a third political party called progressive party during this period in order to fight for social and political reforms. Progressives proposed governmental intervention at all levels of American political, social, economic and cultural activities. They argued for legislation to control the power of

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Corporates and also to control the social injustices prevailing in the country at that time. Their proposals were appeared to be bit unorthodox at that time. However, American Supreme Court has supported majority of the arguments of the progressives. Many of the reformation Court supported the proposals of progressives in implementing reforms in policing, healthcare etc. “ Corrupt city officials were publicly exposed, voted out of office, and replaced by reform leaders. Under progressive administrations, cities like Toledo, Ohio, established the minimum wage, the eight-hour day, and paid vacations for workers” (The Progressives and Direct Democracy). Progressive movement helped America to become a gentler nation. As discussed earlier, workers got more power and the monopoly of employers have been destroyed. The distance between the rich and poor reduced considerably because of the efforts of the progressives. Historians have different views about the developments in progressive era. Some historians are not much interested in labelling this era as a progressive one whereas others are of the view that this era helped America’s future progress immensely. Some point to the disunity of this movement and the contradictions within it, while others are uncomfortable with a term that connotes “ goodness” and “ enlightenment” – features that Progressivism in practice did not always possess. Some scholars see liberal themes in this period, while others have focused on the reactionary strains, such as coercive efforts to regulate people’s lives. Yet even with its limitations, the concept of Progressivism is part of both the language of contemporaries and the writings of historians (Greene, p. 1). It is a fact that progressives contributed heavily to the building of America to its present status as one of the most civilized and wealthy country in the world. Many of the existing legislations in social,

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political and economic sectors are the contributions of progressives. In fact progressive movement contributed three eminent presidents -Theodore Roosevelt, William H. Taft and Woodrow Wilson- to America. Works Cited Greene, Elly. “ The Progressive Movement – what was its impact?”. Web. 22 October 2011. “ Progressive Era Politics Summary & Analysis”. Web. 22 October 2011. “ The Progressives and Direct Democracy”. 2011. Web. 22 October 2011.