

# How did living conditions change in towns as a result of the industrial revolution...

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



This essay shall not only explore the changes that had taken place but to what extent had commoners and citizens in general endured both the negative and positive outcomes of the events . During the Industrial Revolution , several changes had taken place. Baring this is mind , it can be said that some of the movements that had occurred were to the citizens disadvantage. Despite this , towards the end of the 17th century , benefits were beginning to be produced out of the commotion that had taken place and the consequential suffering that many went through .

It is due to this that there is some disagreement about whether or not the Revolution was a benefit ; and if it had not taken place, would there have been less labouring , grief and suffering by workers at that time? It is a known fact that the advantages of the Revolution having it's place in British history was only revealed long after periods of labouring and severe epidemics . This was since after these and several other events had taken place , was there an significant improvement in lifestyle, medical and engineering knowledge . The only noticeable advantaged event that had taken place was the boost in the country's economy and the significant advancement in technology which was relevant to transportation and the development of machines used in industry . A well known catastrophic situation known during the 1800's was the unsanitary living conditions provided in city areas, though this shall be mentioned in great more detail further on in the essay, I can state that this had lead to disease and due to the lack of medical knowledge furthered onto death .

This meant that within the time that the Industrial Revolution lasted, the death and birth rates and fluctuated very often. The appalling conditions had not only taken place in home areas but were also present in factories which produced pollution and eventually contributed to the life threatening epidemics that broke out. The majority of the wealthy population were not drastically effected by the consequential changes since most of the occurrences took place in city areas whilst the affluent lived in larger spaces in rural districts. When one stares at the pros and cons of this matter, it can be seen that it would be rather difficult to draw out a full hearted decision as to whether or not the Industrial Revolution was either one of histories greatest disasters or upbringings. Prior to the Industrial Revolution products were produced at home my the process regarded as the Domestic System.

This system entitled those who did not farm to remain at home to spin or weave. As the result of this system at the time, it was possible for the elderly to contribute to their families sales as well as for mothers to be able to look after their children in a safe environment. In addition to this, families were able to retrieve all the profit made from the produce with out a single part of it going to outsiders that take action in the centre of the trading process when the Revolution took place. This was since families had sold their goods in the local market. When comparing the industrial changes to the domestic practices one can perhaps say that any lower class family would have benefited more from the Domestic process. Once of the aspects that affects this, is that factory workers end up with an incredibly low wage due to the profits made from national sales going to factory owners.

He then in turn pays of debts that are owed to the bank when he had acquired capital to start up the factory . The remainder of the money goes to raw material suppliers in the British colonies and finally of the little that is left , divided among the workers. Initially , it is thought that the first pushing force which begun the Revolution was the fact the British population was gradually increasing . Not only this , but there were incredibly high food demands in the rest of Europe since the Napoleonic wars were taking place . When this is bared in mind, those with a reasonable financial knowledge in the trading area would have found this as an excellent opportunity to make money.

Due to this , it had been found that the traditional methods of cultivation and farming when leaving a field fallow , was much to slow and minimal in lines of production. This is when advantages in farming technology were beginning to occur when financiers where beginning to get ideas of lifting up their own wealth and enhancing the British economy . In addition to this , material was at high supply and at reasonable prices since Britain had numerous colonies abroad . The advancement in farming had lead to more adventurous ideas since many may have thought that technology should be developed in a more noticeable way since there was , again, much opportunity in national and European trade. Despite this fact , it was a relatively long time before much action upon this had taken place since farmers were hesitant to let their land to go use into new and risky business . Some had feared their livelihoods since a couple of established farms may

have needed to give up their land to more industrial purposes and as a result a minority would have lost their jobs.

There is some uncertainty in the success of the British Industrial Revolution. However, it was reported that the British had a more successful time than the French. One of the factors that had effected this speculation was the fact that the British had always took note of their past traditions. Also, people had defended the rights of Parliament which may have prevented the French Revolution taking place .

Aside from this , in the opinion of a particular historian by the name of M . Guizot , believed that the Revolution may have not taken place due to a minority of people's religious obsessions and who wouldn't give way to the general standard of living proposed by the government . This in theory, meant that during the late 1700's up to the late 1800's , there was some conflict between religion and politics because of the proposal of change . Putting aside the events that had occurred with the French and the success of it in comparison to the British; the British Revolution had eventually taken place .

Before the Revolution had taken place , there was a reasonable amount of wealth present . This was normally obtained from the ownership of land . Though , this had altered slightly when the movements took place since the primary source of wealth was not only the ownership of land but the running of factories and machines . Much risk had to be taken when attempting to purchase land and a factory since many had needed to sell several

belongings and the banks were not the most lenient when it came to lending large sums of money . The risk was in that , the purchase of these establishments meant that owners had an uncertainty whether the productivity would be large and so bring much profit to pay of debts or the incoming may have been small if trade hadn't been so successful. Despite this , borrowers had come from a myriad of different backgrounds which meant that several people were more than willing to take risks .

There were different types of capital borrowing from bank lenders . These were long and short term capital . Long term capital was needed was used to establish and to expand businesses . This was whilst the short term capital was used to purchase raw materials from abroad and to finance the little wages paid to the workers . In term of jobs , from a workers perspective , we can clearly see that their lives were dramatically effected .

This is since parents with children , didn't have the privilege of looking after their young since their children were often set to work themselves to help bring money to their family. Employee's were set to all sorts of strenuous and dangerous tasks. Women and the young were given exactly the same jobs to carry out for exactly the same lengths of time as their fully grown male colleagues . Furthermore , they had only acquired a fraction of the wages .

Typically , women had received half as much as man and children were only paid a third. Children especially suffered from the horrific working conditions . Several of them had been beaten if the work set had not been

completed. Also , they were often found collapsed asleep on the factory floor after working for fourteen hours a day with insufficient breaks of rest or meals everyday. In addition to this , pregnant women or those with new-born had little difference in their working condition but persevered with hem since they had to finance their families .

There had been an official report given during 1843 that had included a report on the ways that factories had operated . There had been a mentioning that children which of whom worked in cotton mills were beaten for easily correctable mistakes . They were beaten by not only a belt , but with any other object that the master could find . Amongst them were files and hammers .

Others were violently punched or kicked . Safety at this time was not taken into consideration . Many , perhaps even the majority of employee's working in bare feet and machines had no protective equipment over it . In some cases , young children had to crawl underneath machines in operation in order to retrieve excess cotton . In general , both adults and children had been put at risk and some had even to work with broken arms and fingers whereas this would be incredibly unlikely to happen having remained with the Domestic System .

Moreover , there were additional health problems occurring due to the appalling noise from the machines which often caused deafness. Also , there was always present a ghastly smell as well as dust which made workers terribly ill and some even died due to lung infections and coughs. In general ,

the domestic practice before 1750 was safer and more liberated towards those who were physically incapable of doing tough tasks due to age or medical conditions . During the industrial movement the population had increased even more.

Particularly in cities. One can find many reasons as to why this had taken place . Whilst looking at the facts to do with industry , it can be said that it had provided higher average wages than any of the village establishments . This lead to couples marrying earlier in life and being able to afford more than one child .

City factory owners had also provided apprenticeships to the poor to enable them to explore the working environment that village areas couldn't offer. Individuals and sometimes families had to leave their village homes since the factories that they were working at had moved to city areas . It was these main reasons which caused the population to grow rapidly . The workers dwellings had sometimes been provided by the employers since it gave them a chance to control their workers .

Living in city districts also meant that workers had only needed to travel short distances to work which prevented a lot of tiredness and once the train had been in service , saved them money from the little wages that they received . The factories had used to be typically situated near a large water source when machines were purely only powered by water . Though this was before the invention of steam power which had only required a relatively small amount of water . This resulted in factories moving into city areas .



Due to the giant move into city areas , the wealthy had purchased up to an acre or more of land and built closely packed houses on narrow streets . Most of the houses were terraced . The majority of the homes did lack a clean water supply . It was due to this that several had to travel to the nearest river and collect water .

Though , this wasn't often enough since the poor had only small pans , which when filled wasn't sufficient for all their washing and drinking . Furthermore , rubbish was often just tossed into the roads and animals were left to run free around these housing areas . Not only this but there was no proper sewage system and each street had only one lavatory to share between all the residents . The major problem was most certainly the sewers since excrement was left open in gutter along the streets due to the placement of sewers .

Also , there was no proper disposal of dead bodies and animals and the outcome was that they were simply disposed of in water ways and rivers . It was this that had contaminated the water ways which was used by the rich and the poor all over the country. The result of the poor water supply shall be investigated further on in the essay . Not only was the water a main problem in cities but the living condition inside homes and no only the streets were a great problem . Several health problems had occurred due to this. One of the main factors that contributed to the living conditions was the fact that there were sometimes up to five families living under one roof .

In some instances , there may even be a family living in the cellar . These conditions had often aided disease to spread between family members and had prevented a sufficient amount of ventilation accessing the rooms. Some houses had lacked heating during the colder months which lead to those vulnerable with weak lungs to contract breathing related viruses , such as bronchitis. People had also found children playing in the shared lavatories . It is certain to say that not all workers had lived in these terraced houses but those who had lived in cottages often had their homes to be cold and damp . Cholera was the great killer during the 17th century.

It had originated from abroad and had made it's first appearance on British territory in Sunderland . It was later passed through to other areas via the filthy water . There were several other epidemics which mostly occurred during 1854, 1848, 1838 and the earliest was 1832 . The outbreaks had killed the majority of London alone during 1849 , when seven thousand had died . Aside from cholera , other infectious diseases were spread by the air and the terrible pollution that the factories produced.

Typhoid, tuberculosis and lice were amongst the main outbreaks . The death rates were rather high since hardly anyone had sufficient medical knowledge or cure to such diseases that occurred . Poor hygiene and unsanitary conditions did not help put the epidemics to a halt since they were persisting in the same disposal methods prior to the outbreaks . The outcomes were that due to the lack of knowledge , several had been left to die .

Though, I can question, had putting the epidemics to a halt been more of a job for the doctor than the engineer? I do question this, since it is the poor sanitary disposal and the open sewers that had caused the disease to spread in the first place. So, if engineers had altered their sewers earlier, there may have not been several cases for the physician. In addition to this, if the disease had been controlled through the source of the problem, it may have given physicians a chance to develop on their medical practises and have a reasonably effective cure if epidemics should break out again. Though, none of this had taken place and resulted in those sick being left to die.

During 1839 onwards, a man by the name of Thomas Southwood Smith had formed the Health of Towns Association. This was later regarded as the General Board of Health. Smith was the first to gain in in-depth insight into medical matters and to analyse infectious diseases, such as cholera and yellow fever, to begin with. He also wrote reports on the benefits of quarantine and hygiene improvements.

The Poor Law Commission had drawn conclusions during 1834 that there had to be a means of solving the hygiene problems that often kept occurring. Then, in conjunction with the Health Towns Association had put the Public Health Acts into action during 1848. The first steps was to have sanitation investigated. After this had been done and after several decades of suffering and living in perilous conditions, acts had been taken to dispose properly of human waste. This particular problem was solved during 1875. This act had included that drains leading to underground sewage systems must be provided as well as decent lavatories.

There was also action taken for the recording of births and deaths to be carried out . As well as inspections on medical establishments and hospitals . The progress made in English public health had greatly influenced the Americans . They had taken note of British ways and urgently put them to use since there were several outbreaks of yellow fever , cholera , typhoid , smallpox and typhus . The French in addition had contributed to scientific research in internationally , including England and were significant contributors to the Public Health Acts . The Public Health Acts had also included every citizen , no matter what status , to have fresh water pumped to their house for a small charge .

The laws had also stated that public baths should be built to enable others with no private facility to wash . Furthermore , more acts were being carried out as the Artisans Dwellings Acts had included the right for all homes to have proper insulation on the walls . The acts taken were one giant step in the progress and benefits that the Revolution produced during the mid years onwards . The beneficial developments from the Industrial Revolution had mostly been in relation to technology and the way that it improved industry and the economy . One of the developments that had influenced the forward movement was the productivity and usefulness of transport .

Transportation was vital since in order to send goods to the market and to transport coal and other raw materials , an efficient mode of transport was needed to ensure that the productivity met the demands at a reasonable time . During the 1700 to around 1750 , canals were the main focus on transportation . This had resulted in many of them being constructed

between production and trading areas . This particular method and the usage of canals seemed appropriate for some time but were not ideal when large masses of material needed to be transported . Despite it's usage , it had not lasted for a long time since many engineers were working on the development of the train .

Attempts to build rail rods had taken place between 1804 and 1820 . It was a highly successful project . Richard Trevithick was responsible for the steam power that it was run on. Without his concepts on the powering , there may have been several delays in the trading process .

Also , John Blenkinsop had employed the theory of the gear wheel which was a vital piece of information needed to be used in the construction. In addition to this William Hedley had expanded on the steam engine and had generated ways in which it would be possible to haul large amounts of coal onto trains . It is clear to say that the reliable forms of transport was essential top the steep rise in the country's economy . Prior to 1750 , Britain's population was approximately six million. By then end of the Industrial Revolution it had grown to almost thirty-nine million. Another fact that had taken a significant role in the British reputation was that eventually , the British empire had owned nearly a quarter of the world including several countries in the far east and the Caribbean which meant that a loyal and trustworthy supply of raw materials was always at hand for the use in factories .

Aside from this, during the late 1800's, Britain had become more democratic; meaning that the government and monarchy at the time had eventually given right to commoners to have their say in the running of the country. Before this time, it was only the wealthiest 4% of men whom were permitted to vote. However, when the changes occurred they had given the privilege for all men to vote, no matter what their status. Though, it was still a prolonged period before the females of the country were given the same right. This, though may make me question, having the Revolution never have taken place, would the rights have been given to the citizens to vote? This is since it was through workers unions and other male dominated workers clubs were the changes in working conditions made. Perhaps this had made the government see that through much of the power that workers clubs had and the changes politicians felt compelled to make; the ruling of the country may have benefited and cause less protest if the citizens had their say.

After much protest, the workers during the 1800's had managed to get their factory conditions improved after gathering in workers unions, as I had mentioned before, to campaign about the conditions they endured. After much deliberation by the government and factory owners the working hours were shortened slightly and more consideration was given to pregnant women and children. Breaks were also issued. During the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, almost all people had spent their leisure time at home. Though, during the late 1800's, there was a massive development in entertainment.

This was since more people were having time off work and were willing to travel since the train fares were rather cheap . After protests , the workers of factories were granted permission to have Saturdays off . Furthermore in 1871 , Bank Holidays were being had . Among the entertainment formed were music stages and occasionally circuses . These events and activities were able to take place since the wealth had rapidly increased , technology had developed in transport and the British empire had enough colonies for shipping of raw material for stages and theatre establishments , perhaps . In addition, the government had become more liberated at the time when I would be confident to say that the economy was at a balance and populations weren't frequently fluctuating any more .

In conclusion to the matters explored , I believe that it is fair to say that the Industrial Revolution had both its up and down side as well as changing the majority of peoples lives . In my opinion , I think that it would be perfectly logical to be sceptical about the way that the living conditions had changed due to the enormous actions taken . This is since , there were hardly any upsides to be found during the start of the Revolution . Though , I do think that the changes taken during the early stages had benefited in the way that it provided more jobs , especially where machines and transportation are concerned . The stability of the finance which had been used as capital to start up factories can be doubted since risk takers and borrowers may have backed out at any time .

This may have made a minor decrease in the economy since several pounds would have been lost . Though, this was an incredibly risky affair many had

taken the opportunity to borrowed were willing to give up their livelihoods to start up a factory for a Revolution which begun and could have failed at any one time . Fortunately , the Revolution had been rather successful in industry and so those who had taken out capital had gained . It was innovation that had brought the Industrial Revolution to a start since before the new factories were re-established , inventors had found energy economising ways to produce power other than the water turbines which were unreliable since rain may not have always been constant .

The invention of steam powered machines were perhaps the basis of the success and having that not being thought of it can be doubted that the Revolution may have not taken place as quickly , since the generation of ideas would have been much slower . The development of steam power had lead onto many aspects of the Revolution , especially the trains which was vital to the Revolution . Though trains had come after a short period of when canals were used . As I had mentioned about the factories re-establishment elsewhere , it was clear to say that the employee's who one used to be farmers were forced to move together with their work. This is why the rapid increase in city populations had taken place . In addition , employers had provided the homes since they had wanted more control over their workers.

Having them not done this , may have resulted in more pain , especially for children who suffered a great deal of abuse . If a worker had lived far away and transport had been delayed , as sometimes happens to this day , they would suffer consequential suffering when beaten , kicked or even punched by their masters . Another benefit was that workers would be able to live



nearer their place of work and hadn't needed to fund for transport from the little wage that they had received. Though, the living near the work place wasn't at all a benefit once people had been living in the established homes for some time. My essay explores the difficulties that people had gone through.

In my view, I can see that several commoners had striven to provide a life for their families even to the extent that the children had to work. The working conditions were hideous and had affected people's health to the extent of death occurring. Furthermore, when workers had returned home they had experienced cramped and unventilated conditions, animals in the street, open sewers at their doorstep and a shared lavatory, one for each row of terraced houses. The unventilated and cramped conditions had aided the spread of disease, whilst the open sewers, shared lavatory and animals in the street as well as refuse and rubbish were the main causes of the epidemics.

The main epidemics being among cholera from the water which had killed many and even tuberculosis had broken out. Pollution from the factories had spread air-borne diseases. Having thought, in-depth about this, I can draw a conclusion to say that having not the wealthy and risk takers been in such a rush to build up on new ideas, they may have considered the effects that it would have on their workers. It can even be said that perhaps they were ignorant of what the future would hold if they had taken the actions that they did. Though, if they had done what I had thought of, the development of Britain may have been much slower and in the long run, if the physicians

had discovered that they were under pressure for cures , they may have not really sat down and concentrated on finding cures since they may have believed that it would be possible for these diseases to break out . Though , as the government had noticed the problems and gave commoners the right to vote , I believe that it was then when the country was gradually beginning to improve .

Since have not the campaigns taken place , no views would have been heard and the change to a fuller democracy would have been slowed down .

Though , it was when the workers unions had got together that the Public Health Acts and the Artisans Dwellings Acts had taken place. Now , to come to end this matter , I can formally state that the Industrial Revolution had a drastic effect on the living conditions , though if these negative aspects had not taken place , development in medicine , technology and even engineering would have been delayed since it was after , campaigns once again , had engineers reconstructed the open sewers underground .