

Green revolution between the positive effect of food growth and negative use of a...

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



Whether or not the Green Revolution in the period from 1945 to the present was a success is greatly debatable, as the topic faced positive arguments as well as negatives. While the revolution overall implemented a positive change in both aspects of economical and social, there were also consequences. These consequences are shown by people with dissatisfaction with the negative changes resulted from the Green Revolution, and they showcase considerable contrast between itself and the two positive changes.

To begin with, the Green Revolution caused great advancements in the overall economy of the world. In Document 1, by 2005, wheat yields in Mexico and India had gradually risen significantly and noticeably since its beginning year, 1950. By knowing that they had an increase in wheat, we can assume that the regions were gradually flourishing not just economically but in all aspects, because more food can mean less hunger and an increase in human population. And although it may seem that India was relatively less successful than Mexico, both regions had its own prosperities with its gradual and impressive increase in wheat yields. Document 2 also displays an economic prosperity due to the Green Revolution. Beginning with only 1 food supply index in the 19th century, the index value grew up to 9 by the 21th. Moreover, the population also underwent a significant increase – from around only 1 billion in 1800 C. E., the number skyrocketed to above 7 billion and is predicted to keep rising to the 9th billion by 2050. Furthermore, in 1970, a United States Nobel Peace Prize winning agricultural scientist, Dr. Norman Borlaug, made a statement acknowledging the significance of the Green Revolution to the world. (Doc 4) He states how billions of people in “the forgotten world” suffering from starvation and depleted lands were

saved with the ideals of the revolution, which gave them not only food but also a “breathing space” for mankind. Although he does emphasize the need to put a strict restriction on human reproduction to maximise the success of the revolution, he states that if all goes well, the Green Revolution would provide enough food for the next three decades. Also around this period, 1970, a wife of a Mexican agricultural official named Mrs. Dula enthuses over the wealth of wives of rich Mexican farmers. (Doc 6) She speaks of how many of them have the wealth to fly from Tucson, Arizona to Hermosillo, Mexico monthly, together with a formed club of other wealthy women just for the sake of shopping. Although this document depicts the general wealth of some Mexicans at the time, it is biased – because she herself is a wife of a Mexican agricultural official, she could be exaggerating the seeming wealth of her and the other wealthy women. She also does not give exactness in her descriptions – she says things like: “You will see houses like you’ve never seen in Mexico City, swimming pools and everything.” What would greatly help here is an unbiased journal entry written by an acknowledged historian or traveler on his travels to Mexico with only accurate and detailed descriptions on how the area functioned and how it looked like. That would help us to better visualise the surroundings of Mexico during the flourishing period of the Green Revolution, without it being an overly exaggerated piece of evidence from a rich woman of the 1970s.

With the flourishing of worldly economy, the Green Revolution also resulted in some positive social and cultural prosperity. With the president of the United States, Harry Truman in 1949, the country establishes a better sense

of state unity. Truman states, “ The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – has no place in our hands.” (Doc 3) He emphasises the urgent need for free peoples to produce more of their own food and help themselves get wealthier instead of relying on foreign imports, and although it is not clarified within the document, the people of the U. S. were probably very motivated by his speech on his aim for the country’s wellbeing. His point of view is that foreign profit should not be the most of the country’s income in order for the peoples to live a life of economic prosperity, and he makes this clear within his inaugural address as president. When Chidambaram Subarmaniam, the Indian food and agriculture minister was interviewed on behalf of the Green Revolution, he replies very positively with the achievements of his peoples; specifically of the Punjab farmers. (Doc 5) He says, “ When this new technology was offered to them, they took to it like fish to water.” Although his statement helps us see one of the factors behind the success of the Green Revolution, he is biased and is in favor of making his own countrymen to look important and successful. Whether he is just being honest or boasting about his country’s wealth we will not know, but nevertheless, the whole speech seems biased in favor for his own land’s reputation. Lastly and most recently, the Human Development Report issued by the government of the Punjab state shows the important effect on the social aspect in the state of Punjab– the disappearance of strict caste rigidities and the emergence of middle and rich peasants as the dominant peasantry in the state. (Doc 9) India, with its emergence of Hinduism and Islam, has had a strong sense of social hierarchy since very early times. Even with many attempts from foreign powers to lessen this hold on the Indian culture, the caste system

would eventually always return to the land as time passed. The fact that the Green Revolution had actually put such effect on the subcontinent is extremely impressive, because it symbolises a change in the cultural aspect of India. The report also states the change in the traditional extended family system gradually shifting into the nuclear family, another impressive cultural replacement of the time.

As there are positives, there must be some consequences behind any revolutions. Although the Green Revolution originally began with a clear purpose to stabilise and strengthen the economic perspectives of the world, it faced a few downfalls on its way to reaching the ultimate goal. As published on the FAO newsletter as of year 1987, the revolution lead to many unfortunate downfalls in the freedom of women and their lifestyles in many cultures. (Doc 7) For example, women were expected to work like men as agricultural laborers, sometimes even without payment, and mechanization lead for the limitation on many women's wage-earning opportunities. To add onto that, Document 8 introduces an Indian physicist who calls the Green Revolution as a complete failure as of year 1991, approximately 4 years after the FAO newsletter's doubts on behalf of the revolution. Although opposed to the outsiders, because as an Indian she speaks on behalf of the Punjab population, Dr. Vandana Shiva makes reasonable arguments as to why she so strongly believes that the revolution was an ultimate failure. According to her, the revolution gave off consequences and lead to reduced genetic diversity, increased vulnerability to pests, soil erosion and more, along with leaving the Punjab troubled with

discontent and violence. One of the major consequences of the Revolution was that it called for an intensive irrigation system to control the conflicts over diminishing water resources, which led to an attempt for higher class peoples centralising control over the decreasing water supply and local, interstate water conflicts. Last but not least, the Green Revolution resulted in a conflict in which the Guatemalan Nation Coordinating Committee of Indigenous Peasants organised by Latin America referred to as 'loss of native seeds'. (Doc 10) As of November 2006, They declared in their official statement as of November 2006 that the Green Revolution was not leading their culture in a positive direction but rather, "sterilising and contaminating their native seeds" of their Mayan heritage that had stood firm for more than five thousand years. They also noted that the Revolution was in fact, "destroying nature as well as Mother Earth". Although this may be a personalised idea to one culture since not all cultures were damaged in this way, it is important to take into consideration that they were one of the regions that took part in the Revolution and led to what it is defined and known for as of today.

The Green Revolution may have directed some regions to a positive light, but it certainly did not ensure the native development and growth of all inflicted areas. While some cultures benefited from the Revolution in the cultural and economic aspects, some areas were rather thought to be destroyed and 'contaminated' by the movement. Despite the noticeable improvements and increases in numbers showcased by the statistical graphs, individual thoughts believed differently. Furthermore, it would have

been helpful to know exactly how, why and where the Green Revolution first took off, because most of the documents within the set of ten were focused mainly on the Punjab population.