

Rhode island



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Cotton is estimated to have been grown, spun and woven into clothes in Pakistan, in the Indus River valley, 3000 years B. C. The natives of Egypt Nile valley also used cotton to make clothes at the same time. Cotton was introduced to Europe by the Arab merchant about 800 AD cotton was found growing in the Bahamas Islands in 1492, a discovery by Columbus. Cotton became known worldwide, by 1500. Cotton was first planted in 1556 in Florida and 1607 in Virginia. In 1730 cotton was first spun by use of machinery in England.

This led to the industrial revolution and later invention of the cotton gin in US that paved way for the modern cotton industry. A patent of gin in 1793 was secured by a native of Massachusetts known as Eli Whitney. The machine would do the work 10 times faster than by use of hand. The gin made it possible for the later fast growing textile industry. The supply of large quantities of cotton fibre led to the growth of cotton growing in the early 1800s. Cotton had its importance in late 1700s and early 1800s; the research paper will be discussing cotton's importance then.

Earlier on James Hargreaves in 1760s invented the spinning Jenny which was later improved on by Richard Arkwright (Waterwheel Spinning Frame). Springing up of textile mills and cottages for imported workers was to follow. This saw the birth of factory system with the first successful system of mass production. Others who contributed to industrial revolution in cotton production included; Fulton's steamboat in 1807, Stephenson's locomotive in 1825, Cyrus McCormick's reaper in 1831, the Howe-singer sewing machine in 1854 and Sir Henry Bessemer's converter in 1858. Discussion

Cotton growing in the early 1800s led to the textile industry development. For example the invention of spinning machines led to further improvement to produce better machines to be used in the textile industry. James Hargreaves invention of spinning Jenny in 1760s resulted to further improvements on the machinery. The inventions led to the industrial revolution, which led to the increased production of cotton. The textile industry grew very fast to produce cotton fibre, which were used by the people in the early 1800s. Cotton growing led to the improvements in transportation system.

Coal was required as fuel and iron for the new machinery in the cotton textile manufacturing. Both coal and iron mining increased to provide raw materials for the manufacturing companies. New roads were developed to satisfy the transportation requirements. There was the development of rail roads and steamships for easy access of mines and easy supply of the material to the textile industries. Employment was created in the newly created factories. Between the years 1793-1858, invention of cotton gin, steam engine, steamboat, locomotive, sewing machine and the converter was seen.

The cost of producing cotton clothing was lowered by the introduction of the new devices. This created a worldwide demand for cotton. The farm workers in the cotton farms were freed to enter into the newly created factories. This promoted employment of the people in the factories. Cotton enhanced huge amount of capital investment by the south. The south region due to increased rate of cotton manufacturing invested a lot of capital and labor in cotton growing plantations. Profits were made by big planters by use of slaves in labor.

For example Mississippi in United States quickly developed an economy based on growing cotton. This led to the growth of the economy in years that followed. Development of electric power was as a result of shortage of waterpower in Mississippi. The advent of steam power later led to the development of electric power. In the given economy electric power increased efficiency and led to rapid growth of the cotton industry in other regions. The economy was able to grow very fast due to increased revenue and investment. Cotton growing led to the growth of the agricultural economy.

New species of cotton were introduced to maximize the yield. Use of slave labour and poor payment of workers reduced the textile's industries expenditure. High revenue was channeled back to move production of cotton. The cotton plantations continued to increase in number enhancing growth of the agricultural sector. On the other hand cotton growing promoted the use of slave labor in the plantations for example, cotton manufacturing in the south led to investment of capital and labor in cotton growing. The big plantations used slave labor. The slaves would do a lot of work without payment.

Slaves were exploited by cotton manufacturing industries to provide labour in their farms. Worker's had very poor living and social conditions. Apart from the slave labour, those who were employed in the plantations were paid very poorly. The workers could not afford to live well due to the low income they earned from the cotton farms though they continued working. This influenced the later movement of people from the colonial farms to the

urban areas in search of greater income and better working conditions. There was use of child labour in cotton growing.

In Rhode Island, Samuel Slater in 1790 reconstructed spinning machines to establish a 72-spindle mill (first successful water-powered spinning mill in America) . Young children between 7-12 years were employed to operate machines. This left cabin and domestic weavers to weave yarn into cloth. This was referred to as “ Slater or Rhode Island system’ and was later emulated by manufacturers in other states. Cotton production increase can be attributed to the inventions of machines in the textile industry, availability of cheap or slave labour and increased investment of capital and growth of the agricultural economy with time.

In 1793, the south produced 10, 4510 bales of cotton, then 177, 824 bales in 1810 after the invention of cotton gin. This later increased to up to 7 million bales by 1850. In conclusion, cotton had both positive and negative effects on the economy of the states where it was grown in the early 1800s. From those many years, cotton has become one of the most important textile fibre in the world. From few regions where it was grown, it has spread to many areas while technological advancements have increased its productivity.

References

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