

# Essay on name

Technology, Innovation



## ‘ Instructor’s Name’

The Social consequences of the American industrial revolution

The industrial revolution is the single most important economic phenomenon that happened in human history, next only to the invention of agriculture.

The phrase collectively denotes the transition to new production techniques, that took place in the later part of eighteenth century and in the beginning of nineteenth century, and it introduced the usage of coal in place of wood as a fuel for manufacturing processes. It originated in England, and gradually engulfed the whole of Europe and the American continent. In America, industrialization and the resultant switch to water power in place of horse power was initially restricted to North-Eastern part of the country, where there were a lot of swift-moving river basins. But with the dawn of civil war the industrial revolution spread across the entire country.

The process of industrial revolution in America involved improvement in three distinct areas – transportation, manufacturing and refining processes, and electricity harnessing. The raw materials (cotton) from the south were easily transported to the north, thanks to better transportation facilities.

Many inventions like Francis C. Lowell’s integration of spinning and weaving process, Elias Howe’s sewing machine, John Deere’s steel plough and so forth, boosted this progress and the result was overall economic prosperity, for the nation as a whole. Inventions in communication like the telegraph technology by Samuel F. B. Morse, proved to be vital, given the enormous size of the geography of the United States.

These inventions not only made production processes easier, they also made the life style of common people better. For example, till the advent of the

sewing machine, women were solely responsible for creating the family garments. Mending torn clothing or stitching a new garment, took most of the time of a woman's daily routine. After the advent of sewing machines, not only did this time drastically reduce, but women were also able to earn huge income for their family by working as a seamstress. Further inventions like electric bulb, telephone, railroads etc, made manufacturing and distribution easier, and the quality of the end product improved drastically. It offered large scale employment opportunities, and for the first time, the economic development of a nation, engulfed the commoners as much as it did the wealthy land owners and nobility.

The standard of living in general witnessed a marked change during the industrial revolution. The mass production of goods, improvement in agriculture techniques and better transport conditions, meant that the price of consumer products was drastically reduced and food materials were easily distributed. But not everyone of the populace was benefited by this phenomenon. The living conditions during that period, varied from the splendors of the mansions to the shambles in which the poorest of the poor lived. The people who were lower down the social ladder did not receive the benefits of the industrial revolution, like the middle class and the rich did. Though ordinary people were able to find a lot of jobs, working conditions for the laborers were not friendly, and they were forced to work for longer hours. Despite the lengthy working hours, they were paid very little, and they earned almost 20-40% less than the earning required for leading a decent life in that period.

Child labor was another menace which was widely prevalent in that era.

Children were not given proper education and were forced to put in hard labor in the factories. They were paid very little when compared with the adults, despite there not being any significant difference in the productivity or skill level. Additionally, the industrialized and urban regions were unable to cater to the growing population, and the housing conditions were congested and sanitation facilities were not adequate, and this resulted in widespread epidemic outbreak. Thus, the social costs, involved in the gigantic growth in the American social status, were really steep. But the labor conditions improved considerably in the later part of the nineteenth century, with the advent of various labor laws and through establishment of trade unions. Despite these glitches, the contribution of the industrial revolution to the American economy was monumental, and its impact on the social development of the twentieth century cannot be underestimated.

## **Works cited**

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