

The Age Of Industrialisation

Practice Questions

Q. 1. Who is the bourgeoisie?

Answer: The bourgeoisie was the upper-class section of the population in Victorian Britain. They were the upper-class communities of the mid-nineteenth century who had gained prominence among the communities after the industrial revolution.

Q. 2. How did handloom cloth production increase in the early 20th century?

Answer: Handloom production expanded rapidly in the 20th century, especially between 1900 and 1940. The driving force for this was technological changes. Every time a new technology was introduced in the handicraft industry, it enabled them to improve their products without an extreme increase in the costs. By the second decade of the twentieth century, a new technology with the fly shuttle was introduced in most of the mills. Fly shuttle is a device used for weaving with the help of ropes and pulleys. It enabled the weavers to operate larger looms. This increased the productivity of the handloom mills even though it reduced the demand for workers.

Q. 3. How did the early Indian entrepreneurs make their fortune?

Answer: The early Indian entrepreneurs made their fortune and wealth with their increasing trade with China. From the late eighteenth century, the British in India began exporting opium to China and procured tea from China back to England. Many Indians traders who were involved in this exchange became wealthy with their involvement in providing finance, obtaining supplies, and other infrastructural facilities. With their involvement in these activities, they acquired wealth and were able to establish vast business enterprises. Other than this, capital and wealth were accumulated through other trade networks like trade with Burma, the Middle East and East Africa.

Q. 4. Why did the bourgeoisie prefer handmade goods?

Answer: The bourgeoisie was the upper-class section of the population in Victorian Britain. They were the upper-class communities of the mid-nineteenth century who had gained prominence among the communities after the industrial revolution.

The bourgeoisie and other upper community preferred handmade goods instead of the machine-made commodities. Since the machines were focused on producing uniform, identical and standardised commodities for the market, the demand in the market was for handmade goods with intricate designs, precise features and specific shapes. Since this required human skill, they were the symbols of refinement and class. They were better finished, individually produced and carefully designed.

Q. 5. How did the factory production begin in England?

Answer: England was the hub of industrialisation that commenced in the early 18th century. The early factories were established in England by the 1730s. The number of factories increased dramatically in the late 18th century. The first good whose production boomed during this period was cotton. It was followed by the rapid establishment and expansion of the iron and steel industry.

The driving force of industrialisation was the inventions and technological changes of the 18th century. These innovations increased the efficiency at each stage of production and enhanced the output produced per worker, especially in the case of cotton and other textile industry. Increased managerial efficiency also resulted in the expansion of production. This efficient management ensured a vigilant supervision and control over the production process, maintaining the quality and the regulation of the labour force employed.

Factories began to be considered as an inseparable part of England by the early 19th century. But this did not hamper the production taking place in the bylanes and the workshops.

Q. 6. Why did the people of the rural side accept the offer made by the merchants?

Answer: In the 17th and 18th centuries, merchants living and trading in the towns and cities of Europe started moving to the countryside to expand their production. They started providing money and resourced to the peasants and artisans, urging them to start producing for the international market. They started relying on the countryside for increasing their production since they were not able to expand their production within the towns as the dominant urban crafts and trade associations were the only group involved in training craftspeople, maintaining control over production, regulating competition and prices and restricting the entry of new traders into the market. Also, the rulers had given many organisations the monopoly to manufacture and trade in specific products. This prevented the merchants from expanding their production. Thus they started to depend on the artisans and craft persons of the countryside to expand their production.

In the countryside, poor peasants and artisans readily accepted the offer from the merchants and started working for them. Since the open fields and commons were being converted to private property at an increasing rate, the poor peasants and artisans who had depended on them for a living had to find other alternative sources. Thus they willingly accepted to work for the merchants of the towns and cities.

By working for the merchants, the rural artisans were able to remain in the countryside and cultivate in their plots. Income incurred by producing for the merchants enhanced the income received from cultivation. This led to the development of a network by which a close relationship developed between the town and the countryside.

Q. 7. How did the Indian National Movement affect Indian entrepreneurs?

Answer: The colonial rulers restricted Indian trade. The Indian traders were barred from trading with Europe in manufactured goods. They had to export mostly raw materials and food grains, especially cotton, opium, wheat and indigo. They were also gradually restricted from the logistics business. In most situations, the capital was provided by the Indian financiers and the European Agencies made all the investment and business decisions. The European Managing Agencies dominated industrial production in India. They were interested in the production and export of tea, coffee, indigo, jute and other plantations crops. They were primarily exported and was not for sale in India.

With the inauguration of the swadeshi movement during the 20th century, nationalists mobilised people to boycott foreign cloth and commodities. Thus the market for Indian commodities and services increased throughout the country. The production of swadeshi goods increased. This contributed to the rapid growth, especially in the small-scale sector. Thus the National Movement largely benefitted the entrepreneurs.

Q. 8. Why could Manchester never recapture its old position in the Indian market after the First World War? Explain.

Answer: The First World War was fought in Europe between 1914 and 1918. It was fought between two major powers of the time- the Allies comprising of Britain, France and the Central Powers comprising of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Ottoman Turkey. The First World War was the first war of its own kind.

The commencement of the war created a new situation and new possibilities. The European industries were restricted for the production of wartime commodities. With the British mills involved with the production of war goods, their imports into India declined. Thus, suddenly the Indian mills had an immense home market to supply goods. Thus the production and sales of Indian goods in the domestic market increased.

With the war continuing, the Indian factories and industries were required to supply war needs: jute bags, cloth for army uniforms, tents, leather boots, horse and mule saddles and many other items. New factories were set up and old ones ran multiple shifts. The employment increased and the existing workers were required to multiple shifts and sometimes, overtime. Over the war years, industrial production raised in the country.

But even after the war, Britain was not able to recapture its old place in the Indian market. The economy of Britain was disintegrating after the war. This reduced the production and export of their commodities to the colonies. Within the colonies, the local industrialists were gradually involved in consolidated their position by substituting foreign commodities with their local goods and gradually capturing the home market.

Q. 9. Why the system of advanced proved harmful for the weavers?

Answer: India was the abode of many cottage industries and other small-scale industries from time immemorial. When the East India Company had consolidated its

political power, it emphasised a monopoly on the trade activities. To consolidate and manage the trade activities and to increase their gains from trade, they developed a system of management and control. This enabled them to reduce competition, control costs and ensure regular supplies of cotton and silk.

To consolidate their power and control, the Company eliminated the existing traders and brokers and tried to establish direct control and relation with the weavers. It employed a gomastha to control the work of the weavers, collect the materials and examine the quality of cloth. It also prevented the weavers employed under them from trading with other buyers. They consolidated the group of weavers through the system of advances.

Under this system of advances, once an order was placed with the weavers, they were given loans and advances to procure raw materials and other requirements to expand their production. The weavers had to produce for the company and had to sell the products only to the gomestha who had given them the loans. They could sell the clothes only to the designated persons and were forbidden from selling them to others.

Because of the increased demand for textiles and increased availability of loans for production, weavers readily took the advances. They started substituting farming activities for weaving and even started leasing out their land to others and concentrating more on weaving.

But this created many problems for the weavers. Conflicts between weavers and gomasthas were reported in many villages. The relationship the weavers maintained with the merchants was not confined to only trade. The merchants were willing to help the weavers during the periods of crisis. But the gomasthas were outsiders, with no social relation and commitment with the villagers. They behaved arrogantly and even punished the weavers if the supply was delayed. This created serious issues in the weaving villages.

At the time when the contract with the company was agreed upon, the weavers lost their space to bargain. They were not able to quote different prices and sell them to other buyers. Also, the price they received from the Company was very low. The company had tangled them to its hinges with their liability to the company because of the loans taken. This resulted in varied consequences. In many places, the weavers deserted villages and migrated. Those who stayed protested against the Company and its officials. Many others refused the loans granted to them, closed down their workshops and diverted themselves to agricultural labour.

Q. 10. The Industrial Revolution had a mixed impact. Explain?

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boomed during this period was cotton. It was followed by the rapid establishment and expansion of the iron and steel industry.

The driving force of industrialisation was the inventions and technological changes of the 18th century. These innovations increased the efficiency at each stage of production and enhanced the output produced per worker, especially in the case of cotton and other textile industry. Increased managerial efficiency also resulted in the expansion of production. This efficient management ensured a vigilant supervision and control over the production process, maintaining the quality and the regulation of the labour force employed.

This led to the emergence of a new class of people called the bourgeoisie and gave more power to the aristocrats who benefitted largely from the trade prospects that arose from the increasing industrialisation. The merchants and entrepreneurs incurred huge profits from the increased industrialisation of the economy.

Factories began to be considered as an inseparable part of England by the early 19th century. But this did not hamper the production taking place in the bylanes and the workshops. This did not imply that there was a shortage of human labour. Poor peasants and others moved to the cities in search of jobs. This large inflow of labour reduced the wage rate. This enabled the industrialists to use all the available human labour and did not undertake capital investment in improving machinery. But the increased demand for labour reduced after a period when the industries were employed to their full capacity. Thus there were many unemployed workers who had to wait in poor conditions by living in the streets and sleeping under bridges till they were employed.

In many industries the demand for labour was seasonal. Industries like gas works and breweries were seasonal with their demand during the cold seasons increasing rapidly. Thus the workers were employed in the peak seasons and they were largely unemployed during the off-season. Some returned back to villages and others started doing odd jobs during the period.

Thus the commencement of industrialisation had a mixed impact with the bourgeoisie and merchants benefitting from the increased trade opportunities and the workers suffering for their survival.

Q. 11. Industrialisation brought a big change in the social structure. Do you agree? Why? What values do you think emerged among the people due to this change?

Answer: Yes, industrialisation brought about a drastic change in the social structure. Industrialisation created many class structures with the bourgeoisie and the prominent class attaining a higher social status and the workers were largely exploited. Even though it resulted in the production of more standardised products, generation of more

employment opportunities, improved the choice of buyers, created additional investment and contributed to technology improvement. But it has adversely affected the lives of small artisans by closing down the local companies. It has also contributed to widespread unemployment, uncertainty in jobs and created a huge disparity in income distribution.

Thus the commencement of industrialisation had a mixed impact with the bourgeoisie and merchants benefitting from the increased trade opportunities and the workers suffering for their survival.

But the period had resulted in the generation of many values. The main that emerged during the period are:

- It resulted in the empowerment and development of women by extending their employment opportunities.
- It gave emphasis to individualism and independence among both men and women.
- It helped in doing away with the backward thinking in the rural areas and gave them a fair share of industrialisation in the beginning stages.