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Dawn of the Century Image

This image titled "Dawn of the Century," published by E.T. Paull Music Co. in 1900, symbolises the optimism and hope at the start of the 20th century. The central figure, a woman representing progress and enlightenment, holds a banner marked "XX Century" indicating the new era. Surrounding her are depictions of technological advances such as trains, cars, and industrial machinery, highlighting rapid modernization. A large bird at her feet symbolizes freedom and power. The music described as "March & Two Step" reflects the energetic spirit of the time.

Two Magicians Image

The "Two Magicians" illustration from 1901 contrasts Eastern and Western achievements. The Oriental magician represents ancient wisdom and traditional architecture, while the Occidental magician symbolizes modern industrial progress with tools and engineering marvels. This metaphor highlights how different cultures create remarkable advancements through either mystical knowledge or technological innovation.

Proto-Industrialisation Before the Industrial Revolution

Before factories emerged, large-scale industrial production existed through proto-industrialisation. Merchants moved to the countryside, financing peasants and artisans to produce goods for international markets. Urban guilds restricted production in towns, so merchants sought rural producers. This system linked towns and countryside, with merchants controlling production stages while families worked from home. It supplemented peasant incomes and utilized family labour effectively.

Exam Question

Q: What was proto-industrialisation and why did merchants turn to the countryside for production?

A: Proto-industrialisation was early large-scale production outside factories, where merchants financed rural peasants and artisans to produce goods. Merchants turned to the countryside because urban guilds restricted production in towns, making rural production more feasible.

The Coming Up of the Factory

The first factories in England appeared in the 1730s, with rapid growth in the late 18th century. Cotton production boomed, supported by inventions improving carding, spinning, and rolling processes. Richard Arkwright's cotton mill centralized production under one roof, allowing better supervision and quality control. Factories became prominent features of the industrial landscape, symbolizing technological progress.

Exam Question

Q: How did Richard Arkwright's cotton mill change textile production?

A: Arkwright's cotton mill centralized all production processes under one roof, enabling better supervision, quality control, and regulation of labour, unlike dispersed rural production.

Hand Labour and Steam Power

In Victorian Britain, abundant labour kept wages low, reducing incentives to adopt machines that replaced human labour. Seasonal industries preferred hand labour to meet fluctuating demand. Many products required skilled handwork, which machines could not replicate. The introduction of machines like the Spinning Jenny faced resistance from workers fearing job loss.

Exam Question

Q: Why was there resistance to machines like the Spinning Jenny in Victorian Britain?

A: Workers feared machines would reduce demand for hand labour and cause unemployment, leading to protests against new technology.

Life of the Workers

Workers faced harsh conditions with low wages, seasonal employment, and poor living standards. Many migrated to cities seeking work, relying on social networks for jobs. Unemployment was common, and workhouses provided humiliating shelter. Long working hours and unsafe environments were typical. The fear of unemployment made workers hostile to technological changes.

Exam Question

Q: Describe the living and working conditions of industrial workers in Victorian Britain.

A: Workers endured low wages, seasonal jobs, poor housing, long hours, and unsafe

workplaces. Many faced unemployment and relied on workhouses for shelter, which were harsh and humiliating.

Industrialisation in the Colonies

This section focuses on India's industrialisation under colonial rule, especially in textiles. Before machine industries, Indian silk and cotton goods dominated international markets, with extensive trade networks. The East India Company gradually gained monopoly control, disrupting traditional trade and weakening Indian merchants. The decline of old ports and rise of colonial ports like Bombay and Calcutta marked the shift in economic power.

Exam Question

Q: How did the East India Company affect traditional Indian textile trade?

A: The Company established monopoly rights, eliminated competition, controlled weavers through agents, and shifted trade to colonial ports, causing decline of traditional merchants and ports.

What Happened to Weavers?

Initially, Indian textiles remained in demand, but the Company imposed control by appointing gomasthas to supervise weavers and enforce monopoly. Weavers lost bargaining power, faced low prices, and were often punished for delays. Many deserted villages or revolted. Later, British machine-made textiles flooded Indian markets, collapsing local weaving industries. Weavers faced loss of markets and raw materials, leading to decline and migration.

Exam Question

Q: What challenges did Indian weavers face under colonial rule?

A: They lost market access due to British monopoly, faced exploitation by Company

agents, and could not compete with cheap machine-made imports, leading to decline and migration.

Manchester Comes to India

British industrial growth led to import duties protecting domestic industries and promotion of British goods in India. By mid-19th century, British cotton goods flooded Indian markets, undermining local weavers. The collapse of Indian textile exports and local markets caused widespread hardship among weavers, who could not compete with cheaper machine-made cloth.

Exam Question

Q: How did British industrialisation affect Indian textile markets?

A: British goods were promoted and protected by tariffs, flooding Indian markets with cheap machine-made cloth, causing decline of Indian weaving industries.

Factories Come Up

The first cotton mill in Bombay started in 1854, followed by mills in Bengal, Kanpur, Ahmedabad, and Madras. Early industries were set up by businessmen with capital from trade, including Indian entrepreneurs linked to China trade. European managing agencies controlled many industries, with Indian financiers providing capital but limited decision-making power. Industrial machinery and capital goods were mostly imported.

Exam Question

Q: Who were the early industrial entrepreneurs in India and what challenges did they face?

A: Early entrepreneurs included Indian businessmen with trade capital and European agencies controlling management. Challenges included colonial restrictions, imported machinery, and limited control over industries.

Where Did the Workers Come From?

Factory workers mostly came from nearby districts, with peasants and artisans migrating to industrial centres for work. Many moved seasonally between villages and cities. Jobbers, trusted workers, recruited and controlled labourers, often demanding payments. Despite growing factory employment, jobs were limited and competition was high. Child labour was common, and working conditions were harsh.

Exam Question

Q: Describe the origins and conditions of factory workers in colonial India.

A: Workers were mainly migrants from nearby rural areas, recruited by jobbers who controlled access. They faced competition for jobs, long hours, and poor conditions, including child labour.

The Peculiarities of Industrial Growth

European managing agencies focused on export-oriented industries like tea, coffee, mining, and jute. Indian industrialists avoided competing with British imports, producing coarse yarn initially. Nationalist movements promoted swadeshi and tariff protection, leading to growth in cotton cloth production. World War I boosted Indian industry as British mills focused on war needs. Post-war, British industry declined, allowing Indian industries to expand.

Exam Question

Q: How did World War I affect industrial growth in India?

A: British mills focused on war production, reducing imports to India, which expanded its own industrial production to meet domestic and war demands.

Small-scale Industries Predominate

Despite factory growth, small-scale and handicraft production remained dominant. Most industrial workers were outside registered factories. Handloom weaving expanded with technological improvements like the fly shuttle. Some weavers producing finer cloth survived better due to stable demand. Handicraft workers worked long hours but were integral to industrialisation.

Exam Question

Q: Why did small-scale industries continue to thrive during industrialisation in India?

A: They adopted new technologies to improve productivity, produced specialized goods not easily replaced by factories, and served stable markets, especially for finer cloth.

Market for Goods

Advertisements played a key role in creating consumer demand during industrialisation. Early ads used religious and cultural symbols to appeal to buyers. British manufacturers used labels like "Made in Manchester" to assure quality. Indian manufacturers used nationalist messages promoting swadeshi products. Calendars and labels often featured gods and historic figures to gain trust and cultural acceptance.

Exam Question

Q: How did advertisements influence consumer culture during industrialisation?

A: Advertisements used cultural and religious imagery to create trust and desirability, promoted quality and nationalism, and helped expand markets for new products.

Conclusion

The age of industrialisation brought major technological changes, factory growth, and a new industrial workforce. However, hand technology and small-scale production remained important. The images of progress and modernity reflect both the promise and complexities of industrial change.

Exam Question

Q: Summarize the main features of industrialisation discussed in this chapter.

A: Industrialisation involved technological innovation, factory growth, and new labour systems, but small-scale and hand production persisted. It transformed economies and societies with both progress and challenges.

Solved Examples

Example 1

Q: Explain why proto-industrialisation was important before the rise of factories.

A: Proto-industrialisation allowed large-scale production outside factories by involving rural households financed by merchants. It supplemented rural incomes and prepared the way for factory-based industrialisation.

Example 2

Q: Describe the impact of British industrial goods on Indian weavers.

A: British machine-made goods flooded Indian markets, were cheaper, and caused the decline of Indian weaving industries by collapsing their export and local markets.

Practice Set

Easy

- What does the image "Dawn of the Century" symbolize?
- Define proto-industrialisation.

Moderate

- Explain the role of gomasthas in colonial Indian textile trade.
- Why did workers resist the introduction of the Spinning Jenny?

Challenging

- Discuss the reasons why small-scale industries continued to thrive during industrialisation in India.
- Analyze the impact of World War I on Indian industrial growth.

Answer Key

1. The image symbolizes hope, progress, and technological advancement at the start of the 20th century.
2. Proto-industrialisation is early large-scale production outside factories involving rural households financed by merchants.
3. Gomasthas were Company agents who supervised weavers, collected supplies, enforced monopoly, and often exploited weavers.
4. Workers feared machines would reduce demand for hand labour and cause unemployment, leading to resistance.
5. Small-scale industries adopted new technologies, produced specialized goods, and served stable markets, allowing them to survive.
6. World War I reduced British imports to India, boosting Indian factories to meet domestic and war demands, accelerating industrial growth.

Quick Reference

- **Proto-industrialisation:** Early rural production financed by merchants before factories.
- **Factory System:** Centralized production under one roof with machines and supervision.
- **Gomastha:** Company agent controlling weavers in colonial India.

- **Spinning Jenny:** Machine that increased thread production but faced worker resistance.
- **Swadeshi Movement:** Nationalist campaign promoting Indian-made goods.
- **Fly Shuttle:** Mechanical device improving handloom weaving productivity.

Glossary

Proto-industrialisation

Early phase of industrial production outside factories involving rural households.

Gomastha

Company-appointed agent who supervised and controlled weavers in colonial India.

Spinning Jenny

A machine invented in 1764 that allowed one worker to spin multiple threads simultaneously.

Fly Shuttle

A mechanical device that increased the speed and width of weaving on handlooms.

Swadeshi

A nationalist movement promoting the use of Indian-made goods and boycott of foreign products.

Jobber

A worker who recruited and controlled labourers in factories, often demanding payments.