Industrialization and Freedom in the United States

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Industrialization as a Turning Point in American History

United States history witnessed a major turning point during the era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the form of the Industrial Revolution. The renowned second wave of industrialization shifted the agrarian and handicraft national economy to heavy mechanization and massive industrial manufacturing. Such a revolution dissected almost every aspect of human life into multiple divisions, which widened over time. Undoubtedly, it sprouted a massive volume of factory-produced goods, but common people's lives were filled with glitches and complications. The notion of prevailing prosperity and development had exacted a high cost on the lives of the general public while benefiting a very small percentage of the aristocratic and elite class. In other words, industrialization and huge corporations severely decreased freedom in its second wave in the country. This paper will explore decreased freedom due to industrialization, which resulted in the exploitation of the poor and lower-middle class, amplified child labour, mechanization of humanitarian life, and concentrated wealth in a few hands in American society. Additionally, it snatched aesthetic sense and gave birth to inadequate and overcrowded dwellings along with health issues due to augmented pollution all around.

Expansion of Factories and Production

Undoubtedly, shifting to industrialization has snatched and decreased the freedom of the massive common public. For example, it heavily exploited the general working class in a dual dimension. Firstly, the standard of living for experienced and skilled personnel and craftspersons has diminished over the years. They could not compete with emerging industrialization based on the quantity of goods and manufacturing speed. Secondly, factory workers faced stark exploitation with almost no laws, low wages, deteriorated facilities, and consecutive work for long hours (Mohajan, 2019). Such workers were treated like animals in inhumane ways by the factory owners. Specifically, it bred an inhuman salvage period for the working class to embellish 'profit maximization' and to accomplish the lust for wealth.

Urbanization Immigration and Labour Growth

Meanwhile, the worst episode started with the emergence and enhancement of child labour. A vast number of slums were established, and the childhood freedom of humanity was transformed into wealth production. Industrialization decorated the life of a common person with such hardships and disturbances that people had no choice but to make their children apprentices and servants to others (Mohajan, 2019). Though child labour was not an invention of mechanization and industrialization, it reached a zenith during this period. It resulted in stunted mental and physical growth of children, along with sexual violence and brutality. In other words, human generations experienced a shrinkage of freedom at a very early age due to the Industrial Revolution.

Technological Innovation and Economic Freedom

Furthermore, the principal fallouts of industrialization lay in the enhanced wave of materialism. Money had become the mode by which humans started to exchange services. For this purpose, the humanitarian life was totally transformed into a mechanical life. Humans were treated like machines, and the freedom of the commoner for his life vanished from the masses. Development, competition, economic prosperity, and more goods engulfed personal freedom over decades. Human life on the part of the working class became a feeding entity for more production and profit. Hence, proportional demand and high consumption by the world population gifted American men a mechanical life instead of a humanitarian life.

Working Conditions and Unequal Benefits

Moreover, such mechanization and the evolved economic system took the final shape of private ownership and profit maximization. The rise of capitalism replaced free lives with economically bound lives of the general masses with a concentration of wealth (Han et al., 2021). Such concentration of wealth among aristocratic and blue-blooded classes allowed them to snatch the freedom of commoners. The overall power of such accumulated wealth fabricated social, economic, and political systems that the elite class dominated. Multiple rules, regulations, and policies specifically gave an advantage to the upper class of our society, and huge masses were captured for their basic necessities of life.

Corporate Power and the Decline of Individual Freedom

Similarly, another feature of heavy mechanization in the USA was the emergence of urban societies by smashing rural living. The agrarian class speedily became the factory working class, and they

migrated towards cities (Atack et al., 2021). Meanwhile, many migrants from other countries of the world moved to the USA. So, the rise in population and urbanization sprouted problems of dwellings. Overall, inadequate housing facilities, sanitation, drinking water, and a healthy environment became a hindrance to the free lives of both natives and migrants. Such a trend proved an explosion, and the general public had to observe reduced opportunities in this regard. In addition, industrialization destroyed the environment through non-controlled pollution. Augmented pollution and disturbing ecological patterns were vivid consequences of industrialization. Similarly, chemical emissions and hazardous effluents played havoc on the human health of the common public. Besides individual freedom, this miserable condition also affected the overall weather pattern and climate fabric of the whole earth.

Conclusion on Industrialization and Freedom

Last but not least, the unprecedented levels of industrialization decreased the freedom of commoners. Heavy mechanization and huge corporations resulted in huge wealth for the small elite class and enormous malfunctions for the larger population in the United States. The social fabric of American society badly deteriorated, and people had to pay the high cost of modern development in the form of their freedom. From children to old ones, men to women, natives to immigrants, and workers to executives, all had to compromise their liberty and will to lead a free life. Hazardous and severe impacts in the form of exploitation of workers and children, accumulation of wealth, settlement problems, and the curse of pollution had decreased freedom. Such decreased freedom has great motive and significance in putting society and upset units in the right direction, where humans are not bound to lead captive and enslaved lives. The impacts of industrialization are also vivid in contemporary US society. The need of the hour is to transform the social fabric towards the freedom of humans.

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