

## UPSC Preparation

### Industrial Revolution in the United States

The Industrial Revolution in the United States helped greatly improving the overall production and economic growth of the United States. This would lead to the United States emerging as a major industrial power of its time. The Industrial Revolution brought social and economic changes that marked the transition from a stable agricultural and commercial society to a modern industrial society.

#### Origin of the Industrial Revolution in the United States

- England was the first country to industrialise, but others in Europe - namely France and Germany - soon followed.
- Western Europe began to be industrialised in the late 1700s, the United States still remained primarily an agrarian society.
- The effect of the Industrial Revolution was felt worldwide. France after 1830, Germany after 1850 and U.S. after the Civil War soon started industrialisation.
- But the land was abundant in resources, and the demand for such resources began to pour in.
- To meet this demand, it was necessary to expand the technological capabilities of America.
- To this end, American entrepreneurs began to compete with each other to develop such technologies and in the process learned from each other.
- This technological innovation altered the US economy by changing the methods of production.
- One such entrepreneur was Samuel Slater.
- Fully aware that British manufacturing designs were in demand in the United States, he memorised as much as he could, since the export of such designs were illegal under British Law.
- Moving to New York, Slater's services were hired by industrialist Moses Brown, who made investments in a mill that would incorporate British designs.
- The first water-powered textile mill opened in 1793 making Slater a wealthy man.
- For his efforts, Samuel Slater was called the "Father of the American Industrial Revolution" by President Andrew Jackson, but he also earned the nickname of "Slater the Traitor" from his countrymen in Great Britain for revealing British designs to the Americans.

- Other innovations would come in the form of steam-powered vessels by Robert Fulton that would make navigation easier in the great American rivers.
- The most significant advancement would be the Erie Canal, whose construction would begin in 1817. Once completed, it would connect New York city's ports to other US port cities and contribute to a growth in population in New York state, as well as opening up regions farther west to settlement.

## The Settlement of the American West

- Since the United States had declared its independence from Britain in 1776, many settlers had arrived from Europe. At first, most made their home in the United States, but a few travelled farther west towards the states of Ohio, Michigan etc.
- Many more moved into the area around the Great Lakes after the 1825 opening of the Erie Canal, which made the transport of people, farm products and manufactured goods much easier. Until 1803, however, the area to the west of the Mississippi Rivers, known as Louisiana, was controlled by the French, who sold it to the US in 1803. Soon, explorers and traders would set up routes and trails, bringing in more settlers to the region.
- More territories in the California region would be acquired from 1848 onwards. With encouragement from the government, more pioneers would go west, setting up industrial bases in the region. In order to connect these territories with the Union and encourage rapid settlement, the Union Pacific Railroad Company would open the transcontinental railroad in 1869. The railroads would play a crucial role in the rapid industrialisation of the American West.

## Impact of the Industrial Revolution in the United States

- The Industrial Revolution forever changed the US economy, which ultimately would dominate the world on an unprecedented technological level.
- The American Industrial Revolution would decrease labour shortages, which were in part due to the headway made regarding transportation and the low population density of the US.
- Through industrialisation, American agriculture became the most efficient agriculture in the world, at least in terms of the dollar and cent costs of production. This in turn made it possible for this nation to build the strongest economy in the world.
- The phenomenon of urbanization led to the rise of the labour force in cities such as New York, eliminating labour shortages of the time.

- Interchangeable parts were first developed in the US, which allowed for rapid manufacturing and easy repair of weapons. When the American Civil War would begin, rifles with interchangeable parts would be commonplace. After more items like typewriters would be made using the same technology.

## Frequently Asked Questions about American Industrial Revolution

### When did the American Industrial Revolution take place?

While most historical accounts place the start of the full-scale American Industrial Revolution at either 1820 or 1870, factory labour and entrepreneurial innovation, such as the Slater Mill, were the driving forces of industrialisation.

### What was the important factor that led to the American Industrial Revolution?

The most important cause of American industrialisation was the abundance of raw materials, such as coal, iron, timber, copper, and petroleum. The growth of railroads heavily impacted American businesses.