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Mains Practice Questions

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Q. The Industrial Revolution was not only a technological revolution but a social-economic revolution that changed the way people lived afterwards. (250 words)

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Approach

- Introduce by writing what is meant by the Industrial Revolution.
- Discuss the revolution that took place in technology.
- Explain various social and economic changes that took place during the time.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

- The Industrial Revolution, which took place from the **18th to 19th centuries**, was a period during which predominantly agrarian, rural societies in **Europe and America** became **industrial and urban**.
- Industrialization marked a shift to **powered, special-purpose machinery, factories and mass production**. The iron and textile industries became the mainstay of the industrial revolution. From cooking appliances to ships, all had components of iron and steel. The process went into hyperdrive with the advent of steam engines and ships.

Body

Technological changes that took place during the industrial revolution

During the industrial revolution, acceleration in the processes of technological innovation brought about an array of new tools and machines.

The following are key technological changes that took place during the industrial revolution:

- **Textiles:** During the period, the organization of cotton production shifted from a **small-scale cottage industry**, in which rural families performed spinning and weaving tasks in their homes, **to a large, mechanized, factory-based industry**.
The boom in productivity began with a few technical devices, including the **spinning jenny, spinning mule, and power loom**.
- **Agriculture:** Several factors came together in 18th-century Europe to bring about a substantial **increase in agricultural productivity**.
 - These included new types of equipment, such as the **seed drill** developed by **Jethro Tull** around 1701. Progress was also made in **crop rotation and land use, soil health, development of new crop varieties, and animal husbandry**.
 - The result was a **sustained increase in yields**, capable of feeding a rapidly growing population with improved nutrition.
- **Energy:** The mining and distribution of coal set in motion some of the dynamics that led to Britain's industrialization. The coal-fired steam engine was in many respects the decisive technology of the Industrial Revolution.

- **Transportation:** Concurrent with the increased output of agricultural produce and manufactured goods arose the need for more efficient means of delivering these products to market.

Steam engines and railways became important features of the industrial revolution during the 19th century.

Social and economic changes that took place during the industrial revolution

A lot of socio-economic change took place during the Industrial Revolution. It changed the character and culture of people in the whole world.

- **Population Explosion:** Advancement in technology and better agricultural production led to better medical facilities and greater employment which led to population explosion.
- **Development of Banking and Finance System:** the middle class began opening up new factories for which they required financing and therefore, the banking and finance system began developing.
- **Status of Women:** The Industrial Revolution marked a dramatic change for women as many of them entered the workforce for the first time. Women had to compete with men for jobs. Female factory workers often made only one-third as much as men.
- **Rising Middle Class:** The middle-class men started owning factories, sent their male children to school and rose up in society due to an increase in wealth.
- **Urbanisation:** People started moving to urban areas in search of better jobs in factories due to which these areas became highly populous with poor housing facilities.
- **The exploitation of resources:** industrial Revolution made the production of goods easy and ready in much less time. Therefore, more and more goods began to be produced which led to the exploitation of resources.

Conclusion

The Industrial Revolution was a revolutionary experience. It also increased material wealth, extended life, and was a powerful force for social change. And therefore, **there was more to the Industrial Revolution than a bunch of machines**, it was not only a technological revolution but a social-economic revolution that changed the way people lived afterwards.