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Q6

Why did the industrial revolution first occur in England? Discuss the quality of life of the people there during the industrialization. How does it compare with that in India at present times?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · GS I · 12 marks · History of the World

History of the world will include events from the 18th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, redrawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc. - their forms and effect on the society.

Core demand of the question

- Why did the industrial revolution first occur in England? Discuss the quality of life of the people there during the industrialization. How does it compare with that in India at present times?
- **Answer all three parts:** causes in England, living conditions then, and a careful present-India comparison
- Keep the explanation within a 12-mark length

Revision summary

Britain combined coal, cotton colonies, capital markets, and political stability.

Early industrial life meant child labour, crowding, and later slow legal reform.

Present India has democracy and better public health than 1820 England.

Informal work and slums still echo early industrial insecurity.

India also faces global and climate constraints Britain did not have at take-off.

Flow diagram

Coal colonies capital -> England first
England first -> Mills towns disease
Mills towns disease -> Later factory acts
India now -> Health vote laws
India now -> Informal slums

Conclusion

- **Keep the three parts separate:** location of the first revolution, grim early British life, then India as mixed modern rights plus informal hardship.
- Do not claim India has already repeated or already escaped the English path; name both the welfare gap closed and the decent-work gap still open.

England industrialised first because coal, capital, colonies, and a stable market state coincided. Many of its people paid in dirt, hours, and disease before reform. India now lives longer and votes, yet millions still work without the security that a mature industrial society promised, so the comparison is of stage and of rights, not of simple comfort.

Facts & figures

James Watt and steam

Improved steam power that, with coal, freed mills from depending only on waterwheels.

Cotton and colonies

Atlantic and Asian trade supplied fibre and markets; Indian handloom faced British mill cloth.

Manchester towns

Symbol of factory urbanisation, smoke, and working-class housing stress.

Factory Acts

Nineteenth-century British laws that slowly limited child hours and inspected mills.

India's informal workforce

A large share of Indian workers still lack regular contracts and social security.

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