



Original Article

Industrial Revolution and Ecological Impacts

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Manuscript ID:

Abstract

JRD -2025-171017

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 17

Issue 10(IV)

Pp. 68-69

October 2025

Submitted: 22 Sept. 2025

Revised: 05 Oct. 2025

Accepted: 13 Oct. 2025

Published: 31 Oct. 2025

The Industrial Revolution is an important phase in human history, where technology, manufacturing and transportation developed tremendously. This revolution, which began in the middle of the 18th century, made human society scientifically progressive, but also had serious effects on the environment. The purpose of this research paper is to analyze the environmental problems — such as air pollution, water pollution, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and rise in global temperature — that arose with the development of the Industrial Revolution.

Keywords-Industrial Revolution, Environment, Pollution, Industrialization, Biodiversity, Global Warming, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Industrial revolution is a process of technological change that brought fundamental changes in the productivity and lifestyle of human life. This revolution, which began in Europe, especially Britain, between 1760 and 1840, pushed human society from an agricultural-based economy to an industrial-based economy. This change led to the growth of industries, cities, and transportation systems around the world. But with this development came adverse effects on the environment due to fumes emitted by industries, chemical wastes and excessive use of natural resources.

Historical Background

The Industrial Revolution began in England, where new inventions—such as the steam engine (James Watt), the spinning genie, the power loom, and coal-fired power—were widely used. These inventions replaced human labor with machine power, increased production, and gave a new direction to global trade. But this industrialization led to overexploitation of natural resources and pollution of land, water and air.

Phases of Industrial Revolution

1. First phase (1760–1840): Development of steam engine and textile industry.
2. Second phase (1840–1900): Rise of iron, steel, railway and coal industries.
3. Third phase (1900–1950): Development of electrical industry, automobile and chemical industries.
4. Fourth Phase (After 1950): Modern Industrial Age with digital and automation technology.
5. Each stage poses new challenges on the environment with progress.

Ecological Impacts

Air Pollution

Smoke produced by the burning of coal and oil by industry increases the amount of carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide in the atmosphere, resulting in problems such as acid rain and global warming.



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How to cite this article:

Raju Kamol, Dr. H. G. Agrawal (2025) Industrial Revolution and Ecological Impact sjournal of Research & Development, 17(10(IV)), 68-69



Land Degradation and Deforestation

Large amounts of forests were cut down to obtain minerals and raw materials. As agricultural land was used for industry, soil fertility declined.

Loss of Biodiversity

Due to industrialization many species became extinct as the forest area decreased. Man's intervention in the natural environment disturbs the biological balance.

Global Warming

Greenhouse gases — especially CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O — emitted from industries have continued to increase Earth's average temperature, causing glaciers to melt and sea levels to rise.

Impact on Human Health

For people living in industrialized cities, air and water pollution increased respiratory problems, skin diseases, lung cancer, and waterborne diseases. This situation proved to be more dangerous especially for children and the elderly.

Social and Economic Dimensions

The Industrial Revolution spurred new employment, transportation, and trade, but also increased urbanization, unemployment, and inequality in wealth distribution. The combined impact of environmental destruction and economic inequality poses a serious challenge to society.

Modern Context

Industrialization today is more technology driven. Emphasis is placed on new technologies such as green energy, recycling technologies, and sustainable production methods. Adoption of eco-friendly policies for industries has been recommended by the United Nations under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Measures for Environmental Protection

1. Use of renewable energy: Increased use of solar, wind and hydropower.
2. Proper disposal of industrial waste: recycling and reuse system.
3. Forest conservation: Reforestation and tree plantation campaigns.
4. Compliance with environmental laws: Implementation of eco-friendly technologies in industries.
5. Public Awareness Programmes: To increase environmental awareness among citizens.

Need for Sustainable Development

It is necessary to maintain a balance between industry and environment. Sustainable development is the way in which the needs of the present generation are met without jeopardizing the resources of future generations.

Conclusion

The industrial revolution propelled mankind towards modernity, but this progress came at a cost to natural resources and the environment. Now is the time for industries to embrace environmental responsibility and move towards a "Green Industrial Revolution". Reconciliation between human development and natural balance is possible only through sustainable and eco-friendly industrialization.

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