

Changes in the Quality of Life in the Victorian Empire

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Abstract The Victorian Empire experienced lots of major changes that affected living standards profoundly in different stages of Victorian period. Victorian society bore witness to major penetrating changes at an unprecedented pace, which affected the social, economic, political and educational structure profoundly. It was inevitable that economic progress and industrialization led to population growth in urban life, with the urbanization of rural areas, the intensification of the growth of towns, the coming of the railways, better sanitation, higher living standards, while at the same time the Industrial Revolution created a gap between employers and workers during this mechanization process. These groundbreaking changes naturally transgressed the stereotypical gender roles, by making middle-class women pursue more social rights and independence in both education and work sphere and by attacking the patriarchal structure of the society that condemns women to domestic imprisonment. The aim of the present paper is to demonstrate the changes in the quality of life in Victorian Empire, mainly depending upon social, industrial, economic, gender and demographic issues and question whether these changes produced better or worse living conditions during the years between 1837 and 1901.

Keywords: *Victorian society, industrial, reforms, new woman, population growth*

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1. Introduction

Victorian Empire is called the era of Queen Victoria who ruled in the United Kingdom for about 63 years and a few months, from 1837 to 1901. Under her leadership, Great Britain experienced unprecedented expansion in industry, in the construction of railways, bridges, underground sewers, and power distribution networks throughout much of the Empire. There were great advances in science (Darwin's theory of evolution) and technology (telegraphy and popular press), as there were a large number of inventions. At the same time, the urbanization of rural areas brought about an increase in population. During the reign of Queen Victoria, Britain expanded its imperial reach, doubling the size of its surface and including here Canada, Australia, India, and the South Pacific. It was even said that “the sun never sets in the British Empire”.

In the Victorian period that can be called as the era of transition or radical reforms, Victorian society bore witness to major penetrating changes at an unprecedented pace, which affects the social, economic, political and educational structure profoundly. The most remarkable feature of the age was the feeling of challenge against the traditional institutions, structures, slaving values, customs and viewpoints. Industrial Revolution was one of the greatest developments that dominates the age with

pessimistic or optimistic speculations it created on its way to make itself accept to the conservative nature of the society at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was inevitable that economic progress and industrialization led to population growth in urban life, with the urbanization of rural areas, the intensification of the growth of towns, the coming of railways, better sanitation, higher living standards, while Industrial Revolution, however, creates a gap between employers and workmen during this mechanisation process. These grounding-breaking changes naturally traversed the stereotypical gender roles, by making women pursue for more social rights and independence in both education and work sphere and by attacking the patriarchal structure of the society that condemns women to domestic imprisonment. Appearing at the end of the nineteenth century, the ‘new woman’ was certainly more active, social, self-confident, and economically independent than the old conventional woman was.

In the nineteenth century, British social and political life also bore witness to some leading movements such as conservatism, liberalism, feminism and socialism. With the rise of industrial revolution and democratization (together with capitalism and rise of the British Empire) these movements found the possibility to appear and develop more freely and easily. They were inseparable from each other like the rings of a chain because of cause-and-effect relationship in which the presence of one stipulated the presence of the other. Industrial Revolution

was one of the most influential and significant events in English political and social thought which shaped many different ideologies and on the way through democratization. English society and government took a more liberalistic and socialistic stand which required equality and freedom both for men and women. Through the late-Victorian period independent new-type women different from traditional ones occurred up, and triggered feminism, and challenged patriarchy and restrictions imposed upon them. Interrelated with each other, these movements were the basis that radically affected the role of the individual in the society and the role of government in Victorian era.

Industrial Revolution urged British Empire to search for raw material and markets to sell the products it produced in other countries. Especially railways played a great role in the settlement of colonies and in the extension of colonialism. Victorian Age in British history can be regarded as the Golden Age, since Britain was at its peak in every field (economy, commerce, technology) and even crowning Victoria the Indian empress. The woman was active in the private sphere of the home, while the man was active in the public sphere of business, politics and sociability. Automatically this case affected their choices and experiences at home, at work and in the streets. However, through the end of the nineteenth century a new-type of woman appeared. This woman was different from traditional ones, since she wanted to work and act independently from men in life. This kind of women paid attention to education and developing themselves opposing marriage. This situation caused feminist movements to appear in the era.

In Victorian Age, with industrialization, the condition of the working class in England (1844) became worse and worse. The factories became filled with lots of people working under very hard, miserable and unhealthy conditions, among whom even incest was spread. Many people lived in one room uncomfortably. They had various diseases caused by malnutrition, exhaustion and vice. These unhealthy conditions increased the death rate. Life became cheap both at home and at work. In time, this case led to socialist movements that protected the rights of working people and then liberalism arose, which defends individual rights in terms of law, religion, freedom and equality. The spirit of democratization and the dream of a better society and order triggered all these movements.

Stepping through the twentieth century welfare state as a result of the events, such as the New Poor Law, the repeal of the Corn Laws, the Chartist movement, Victorian society, especially working class, experienced very hard, challenging trials undoubtedly before and after the Industrial Revolution. Although many oppositions or rebellions cropped up during the advent of Industrial Revolution which discharged lots of hand-workers, it was seen that Industrial Revolution provided the working class with better opportunities than before, when evaluated in the long run. The victims of this welfare state and economic progress cannot be denied, but it is a reality that technological advances and industrialization brought drastic changes in the quality of people's lives, most of the time, for the better, compared with the old primitive lifestyle. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to demonstrate the changes in the quality of life in Victorian Empire,

mainly depending upon social, industrial, economic, generic and demographic issues and question whether these changes served better or worse living conditions during the years between 1837 and 1901.

Population explosion was one of the remarkable features of the Victorian period, which made its mark as a result of medical, scientific, technological advances and demographic problems. As J. F. Harrison emphasized, "the most important thing about the population of early Victorian Britain was that it was larger than ever before, and moreover was increasing rapidly still further" ([1]: 15), so the Victorian period can also be called as the women's industrial revolution as there was great increase in fertility. Medical and sanitary developments enabled more children to survive and people to live longer. Rising wages and living standards, along with economic growth triggered the birth rate to increase, while they decreased the death rate. High incomes made it possible to reach sufficient means for subsistence and to pay the necessary medication to struggle with lethal and infectious diseases.

On the other hand, it was inevitable that population growth in great scale brought about many social, economic and political problems. The fear was that available food supply could not cover the needs of rapidly increasing population in the long process. This condition posed a risk for the welfare of society in the opinion of pessimistic economists. "On June 6th/7th 1841 (the nearest census year to 1837, the census is decennially taken) there were (in thousands) 15, 914 people living in England and Wales, along with 2, 620 in Scotland and 8,175 in Ireland", which denotes the total population as 26,709"¹. Especially the great famine of potato in Ireland in 1901 led to substantial decrease in the large population of Ireland although Ireland had three times larger population than Scotland in 1841. However, except for Ireland, the population of England, Wales and Scotland increased in a regular base until 1901 and the population of British Isles reached 41, 459 in total. One of the pessimist economists, Thomas Malthus defended "population must always be kept down to the level of the means of subsistence" (Malthus 1976: 15), though his idea was refuted afterwards. He claimed that "population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio" ([2]: 19). Therefore, rapid population growth was believed to pose a great risk for the future of society, as the food supply would not be sufficient. Hartwell points out "as the 19th century progressed, however, it became obvious that the immiseration of the working classes, the nightmare of Malthus and the hope of Marx, was not taking place. Instead, there was a slow but gradual improvement in the condition of the masses" ([3]: 17). There was a great decline in birth rate in the second half of the nineteenth-century. The surplus of money or wealth did not necessarily mean that there would be an absolute increase in the birth rate. Finally, "control of family size opened the way to the relative prosperity of the British working class since the 1880s" ([4]: 87) and this proved that Malthusian fears were unfounded.

As the living standards of Victorian people improved, their view of life changed accordingly. They wanted to

¹ BR Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics.

enjoy life much more than their predecessor by having less children, but far more comfortable way of life. Pope indicates that “improvements in child survival and changing patterns of work ... a desire for better standards of accommodation and general welfare, led to the association of family size with the quality of life, encouraging many to restrict fertility within marriage to ensure a more secure future” ([5]: 135). Especially the fact that “from 1875 on women in the developed world began to have notably fewer children” ([6]: 193) was the confirmation of refined and improved life standards of Victorian people by confuting the Malthusian theory that contends economic progress will unconditionally lead to population boom and this population growth will exceed subsistence level by inviting a disaster in the end. Nonetheless, as K. Theodore Hoppen demonstrates in his book entitled *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886*, “with rising living standards there was every reason to suppose that death rates would fall, which indeed they did and to an unprecedented degree” ([6]: 87). These demographic changes very clearly show that there were indeed great improvements in the quality of life in Victorian empire, considering the opposite proportion between living standards and birth and death rates in this period.

2. Poverty and Working Class

Poverty and the effects of industrialization on it were another important issue discussed in the Victorian period. There were two opposite sides, which either support or oppose to Industrial Revolution. Some of them thought that poverty was decreased by industrialization, while some claimed that poverty was much worse after Industrial Revolution. Even it is claimed that the origin of modern poverty goes back to the act of industrialization. In the modern sense, it was thought that living standards were ameliorated. “Until the Industrial Revolution”, Hartwell says, “most men, at most times, and in most places, have lived short and miserable lives with little hope of betterment and no concept of progress” ([3]: 4) by attracting our attention to very low level of productivity and uneven distribution of products. Hanson also reinforces this idea by saying: “there has been little or no controversy about the standard of living in the second half of the century because the evidence is so clear that it was rising” ([7]: 113). In the long run, industrial revolution led to material affluence, but the condition of the first factory workers was miserable. There were many underlying reasons for the revolution. Most important was the substitution of sophisticated machines with the development of technology in production for hand power. Although the replacement of steam for hand power played a great role in the revolution, the great improvements in internal and external trade were partly influential as well because “the expansion of internal trade was the effect of unparalleled improvements in the means of communication, the establishment of the canal system, the construction of new roads by Telford, and the introduction of railways” ([8]: 205), as Arnold Toynbee puts it. Many people were made redundant because of the efficiency of machines by creating conflicts between employers and employees.

However, on the other side, there was still need for people to work the machines and most of the work in the factories were based on physical power. Because of the unpopularity of agriculture because of urbanization, many emigrated from rural sides to towns and cities in which they had better job opportunities. However, the abuse of people’s labour for low wages caused the proletariat. Working-class were forced to work as if they were like machines. According to Engels’ vision, “the technical inventions of the Industrial Revolution, had created the proletariat; its factory hands were ‘the eldest children of the Industrial Revolution’, forming the nucleus of the workers’ movement” ([9]: 5). Their working and living conditions were unhealthy. Lots of people or families lived in a single room in slums and this caused deadly and contagious diseases, deaths, incest, vice and “life was as cheap at home as it was at work” ([10]: 45), as Richard D. Altick comments. J.C. Symons gives his observations about the condition of the hand-weavers like this: “in the lower lodging-houses ten, twelve, sometimes twenty persons of both sexes, all ages and various degrees of nakedness, sleep indiscriminately huddled together upon the floor. These dwellings are usually so damp, filthy, and ruinous” ([11]: 116). Family life was almost impossible for the working-class who found the opportunity of meeting each other only night and morning. Social order necessitated this kind of lifestyle, devoid of any comfort or freedom. As Engels describes, “in a comfortless, filthy house, hardly good enough for mere nightly shelter, ill-furnished, often neither rain-tight nor warm, a foul atmosphere filling rooms overcrowded with human beings, no domestic comfort is possible” ([12]: 140). As the urban environment deteriorated, the conditions in the industrial towns started to threaten the health of people by spreading epidemics and contagious diseases. Thompson denotes that “as the new industrial towns grew old, so problems of water-supply, sanitation, over-crowding, and of the use of homes for industrial occupations, multiplied, until we arrive at the appalling conditions revealed by the housing and sanitary inquiries of the 1840s” ([13]: 352) and in his book entitled *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* Tristram Hunt explains that “the noise and pollution, the danger from the machines, and the physical disfigurement from long hours of repetitive manual work were all blamed for the high mortality plaguing the working classes” (Hunt : 21). These offensive and unhealthy living conditions of employees moved some to take action for the betterment obligatorily. The capitalist employers were most worthy being the responsible for these inconvenient conditions of their employees, rather than they were the faults of workers’ own. Industrialization had both dark and bright sides. While it brought wealth and economic progress to the country, it had to victimize or sacrifice some for the sake of a successful conclusion.

The search for wealth by capitalist employers by ignoring the emotions and needs of their workmen, but pursuing for cheap labour destroyed all former intimacies and solidarity between them in the pre-revolution period when masters and workmen lived together and love each other. There was an expansion in the wealth of the country, but the problem was that people had little share in this wealth produced, and this naturally caused poverty and

misery among them. As three reasons for this destitution and depravity among the working class, Arnold Toynbee puts forward “first the old Poor Law, which stimulated increase among a degraded population, and the Corn Laws, which made bread dear and difficult to get, secondly, the exhausting conditions of the new industrial methods; thirdly, the fact that many workmen were fighting with machinery for a miserable subsistence” ([8]: 207). These oppressive working and living conditions induced people to look for more rights, freedom and independence. The miserable condition of working class required the reforms such as the Abolition of Combination Laws, the Reform Bill, the Great Factory Act, the New Poor Law, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, Trades-Unions Legalisation, the Abolition of Law of Conspiracy and the Chartist Movement. Moreover, “workers were first given the franchise in 1867 (men only), and in 1872 trade unions were allowed to operate as lawful associations” ([14]: 110). There was a chain of struggle for more rights and succeeding reforms for the sake of better social, political and economic conditions. Each following reform made up for the shortcomings of the former ones. “The chartist movement came into existence after the breakdown of earlier attempts by the labouring poor to improve their condition” ([15]: 128). It aimed to obtain the right to vote for all men and the secret ballot system under more democratic electoral conditions and this movement showed its effect by the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 passed for the extension of voting system in the nineteenth century Britain. Economically there was also very positive and increasingly better developments in the living standards of some working-class people. “Between 1860 and 1914 real wages doubled. The years of particularly rapid growth were the boom years of 1868-74, and the period 1880-96; during the latter period real wages went up almost 45 per cent” ([4]: 87). Economic growth increased the wages by creating a great difference between the former, poorer and undeveloped early Victorian period and the latter, more prosperous, wealthy and comfortable late Victorian period as Hartwell explains in the following lines:

The Englishman before the industrial revolution, before 1750, was between a sixth and a seventh as well off in material wealth as the Englishman of 1950... By the mid-20th century, life expectancy had more than doubled, the infantile mortality rate was down to 33, and income inequality with a massively enlarged total income was much reduced ([3]: 16).

Economic progress after industrialization affected both the material wealth and life expectancy of the country positively. “Britain was, in the eighteen-fifties, by far the richest country in the world” ([16]: 21). The improvement in the condition of working-class stemmed from not only high wages, but also from shorter work hours, well-paid job opportunities and improved working environment. “The mid-Victorian years were to any great extent less hungry than the thirties and forties” ([16]: 144) and related to real wages from 1790 to 1850 it is thought that “industrialization paid off generally in higher real wages for all groups in society in the second half of the nineteenth century. The net national income (at constant prices) rose from about £550 million in 1851; doubling by the 1880s and reaching over £2000 million in the decade before 1914” ([17]: 343). As seen, increasing wages,

decreasing poverty rate and the general economic welfare were the herald of a gradually and rapidly developing living standards and everything was cooperating for the order of a better society though with some shameful or pitiful life scenes in helplessness at the beginning of this industrial age.

There were also protective reforms about the working-class children exposed to abuse under very heavy working conditions at very early ages. For instance, “the Mines Act of 1842 ended the employment of children under ten in the subterranean parts of coalmining operations. The Factory Act of 1844 cut the hours of work for children aged between eight and thirteen to six and a half a day, and initiated an inspection system” ([18]: 160) to guarantee the security of children and the maintenance of the law later. The reforms were aimed to be more reinforced, influential and permanent. The passing of the New Poor Law was another amendment act which targeted to reform the old poor law and was based on the principle of “less eligibility” and workhouse test. This new poor law was better than the old one, but it did not work very well. As the content of this reform, Snell mentions “an insistence on self-help as the alternative to high rates, and the determination that the poor should remain dependent on and respectful to their social superiors” ([19]: 114), which were conflicting demands and had to be changed with the poor law in 1834 finally. The new poor law had a deterring feature that stipulates the neediest people to be taken into workhouses by making the conditions in workhouses worse than any other place outside; however, this situation caused the rural poor to immigrate to urban area where they can find work, which increased the urban poor rate. Therefore, this law did not become a solution to the poor relief system, in contrast to its principles and objectives.

3. Gender Roles and “New Women”

The great changes in the Victorian period also affected gender roles undoubtedly. In British history, the 19th century is seen as a moment of modernity and change. It sheds light to the lives of “new women” in the Victorian patriarchal circles by reflecting how they transform into self-supporting, self-assertive and independent individuals in society. “Women were mainly responsible for creating and maintaining the house, its contents and its human constituents” ([20]: 360). They were not on equal terms with men and men respected them because of their appearance, rather than their identity. However, through the end of the nineteenth-century “women were fighting to be recognized as persons, the ‘new woman’ was also taking steps to control her body, reconstitute her appearance, and register her presence in public life” ([14]: 115). The divisions of public and private sphere started to disappear with the woman type who are willing and courageous to take place in every square of life. As Jane Lewis observes, “women made substantial progress in moving into the public sphere during the period, but the role of men within the home showed little change” ([21]: 1). Women’s struggle was against patriarchy for the sake of their equal freedom to men. They wanted to get rid of being seen as ‘the other’ in society like a secondary citizen. “Before suffrage, the identity of women rested on

institutions entirely defined by masculine authority after female suffrage was granted in 1918 and 1928, now that they were in, and claiming equality, the differentness of women had to be more finely graded" ([14]: 116). They were not bound to be victimized or sacrificed by patriarchy; on the contrary, they started to threaten the domain of men. On the other hand, "women's position in the family also appears to have undergone dramatic changes between 1850 and 1940" ([21]: 3). There was a general decrease in the number of children in families from the late nineteenth century by 1940 and the infant mortality decreased substantially. The more social and educated women became, the more conscious they became about the quality of their lives. Working-class women were more engaged in paid employment such as teaching, rather than middle-class women and this led to great improvements in their domestic life materially at this period.

At the beginning of the nineteenth-century, gender roles were determined sharply by society, which makes men active in public sphere, while women are active in private life. The roles of men and women in practical life were separated with certain lines. The woman was the master of the house, while the man was the master outside. The woman acts with her emotions, whereas the man acts with his mind. More importantly, obeying is indispensable for the woman, although the man is honoured with commanding. If these roles are not practised properly, it is believed that everything will turn out in confusion and disorder. The woman was regarded as the angel in the house with a spiritual elation as if she gained the title of domestic sainthood. Religious and biblical references, associations and resonances played great roles in the formation of the clichéd woman position. As Altick puts it, "woman's serfdom was sanctified by the Victorian conception of the female as a priestess dedicated to preserving the home as a refuge from the abrasive outside world" ([10]: 53).

The social pressure imposed upon women and the ideal image of woman drawn by patriarchal structure of society underlie all stereotypical depictions and representations of women. Women are forced to take for granted whatever is attributed to their nature as if they were their own characteristic features by birth. There is a fear and dislike about the freedom of women on equal conditions with men, and so there is an effort to make women the legal servant of their husbands. She is circumvented by laws and marriage swears. She cannot do anything without the permission of her husband. When we examine a woman's position in marriage under the common law of England, we see how helpless and disadvantageous she is in the face of the man. John Stuart Mill explains the sanctions applied upon women by society like this: "All women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self-will, and government by self-control, but submission and yielding to the control of others" ([22]: 21). According to Mill's view, the woman is like a statue that society gives shape and moulds. She exists for the sake of others by denying herself. She is beyond herself in the real sense, and hidden under the role of sacrificial woman as the angel of the house in the patriarchal society. It is imposed upon them by society that she is the weak sex who is the slave of her emotions and in stark contrast to the men in

nature. This is the stereotypical woman image drawn by hypocritical male-dominated society.

Through the end of the nineteenth-century, educated middle-class women experienced a developmental process from a traditional position to the new woman position through modern views and improvements in social status and roles, and domestic life. This new woman challenged conventionality and fought to be the master of her own life without being exempted from anything men can reach, and to gain as much influence in public life as domestic sphere. The broadening employment of women led to new liberties in public life by forcing the world to accept their independence. The new women were new in their ideals such as education, marriage for love, social usefulness, economic independence and equal opportunities for both genders. Their novelty was their attempt and deep devotion to women's emancipation. What made them new was the desire to be recognized as human and to fight for freedom equal to men in late-Victorian Britain.

More democratic and rationalistic, the modern industrialized society required the old patriarchal laws to meet the needs and expectations of the rapid transition in the social and economic position of women. The role of women in the male-dominated Victorian society changed tremendously through the end of the nineteenth-century as women gained economic independence, entered into the labour market, and gained greater choice of occupation due to the demands of an increasingly industrializing world. Their protest against the limitations on their sex expresses a conflict between the greater freedom they pursue and the restrictive concepts of womanly nature and duty imposed by external factors. Within the concept of woman as a domestic being, they strived for the amelioration of their rights and liberties by active contribution to society rather than maintaining their existence as useless, passive and idle identities.

It was ideal to undermine the constrained social roles for women and reconstruct them to encourage women's contribution to social life. It was possible within the enlargement of their social rights and reformation of their repressive living conditions. The new woman was new in her ideals such as education, marriage for love, social usefulness, economic independence and equal opportunities for both genders. Most of the time she was offended by anti-liberalist, oppressive, male-dominated Victorian society and so alienated from life in which she could not find her proper place and her beloved, worthy of her high convictions and feelings. In addition, her distinguished, singular ideas and status were mostly repressed. However, she did not give up for the sake of her high cause. The patriarchal nature of their society did not enable all these new women to practice their own rules and be happy and were doomed to death and despair in this world of failures unless humanist tenets such as love, justice, equality and freedom dominate the earth. Nevertheless, they left an invaluable legacy behind that next generation of women will build on for more social, political and economic prominence. Their novelty was their attempt and deep devotion to women's emancipation. What made them new was the desire to be recognized as people and to fight for freedom equal to men in late-Victorian Britain.

When we look at the literature in this period, we see very clearly how women started to change with the

reformed social rules under the effect of industrialization by the end of the nineteenth-century. For instance, in *Mrs Warren's Profession* the character of Vivie symbolizes the new woman type who is educated and ready to earn her own money in business life. She is independent and rebellious against the old image of women. On the other side, her mother's and her aunt's heavy working conditions picture the misery of working-class. While mentioning her sister's pathetic end, Mrs Warren also sheds light upon the wretched working conditions of the period in this way: "One of them worked in a white lead factory twelve hours a day for nine shillings a week until she died of lead poisoning. She only expected to get her hands a little paralyzed; but she died" ([23]: 122). It is a fact that this kind of harsh and unfair working conditions in which women are underpaid and overworked drove some women to prostitution for survival in life. Nevertheless, it is not the only way to stand on your feet as Vivie defends. The new woman is not the slave of conditions or traditional patterns imposed by society any longer. There was an antipathy to domestic life and femininity as understood from Vivie's rebellious words: "I should not have lived one life and believed in another. You are a conventional woman at heart. That is why I am bidding you goodbye now" ([23]: 160). These words also reveal that the new woman wants to be respected and honoured because of her manners and view of life that refuse to be dependent upon the money of men, but inhabits the idea of self-help and self-sufficiency.

In *The Rainbow* by D. H. Lawrence, Ursula, is another representative of the 'new woman', who wants more freedom and independence. She is educated and cannot accept her pregnancy and the belonging one part of hers to a man. She decries domesticity and draws an unconventional woman profile. It is a fact that as time passes, women start to want more, considering the lifestyles of Lydia, Anna and Ursula respectively in the Victorian period. As the Rev. Binney observed, "women are not to be men in character, ambition, pursuit or achievement: but they are to be more; they are to be the makers of men" ([24]: 167). In the novel, there is the clash of love and hate between men and women. They could not understand each other. The man is keen on the earth, materialistic world, while the woman wants to reach infinite world, the world beyond. Not satisfied with the form of life they are presented, women are pursuing for their ideal world. Lawrence compares Ursula's way of life with the taken-for-granted woman life through inner confrontation and questioning and make us realize once again what the ideal life for a woman is in the eye of society as seen:

She had been wrong, she had been arrogant and wicked, wanting that other thing, that fantastic freedom, that illusory, conceited fulfilment [...] was it not enough for her, as it had been enough for her mother. She would marry and love her husband and fill her place simply. That was the ideal ([25]: 448-9).

As these lines show, the expectations of society from a traditional woman conflicted with the desires and ideals of the new woman. The new woman was not satisfied with what she was already given. She was inaccessible in that she was the product of her own illusionary world in her imagination. In addition, this can drive a woman to disappointment sometimes like Ursula's condition. The

realities of the society may not permit the new woman to live happily, however she wants. Thus, for the rebellious new woman the society is, most of the time, a barrier against her and her desires.

4. Reform in Education

In the second half of the nineteenth-century, "education advanced notably at its two opposite ends—in the elementary schools and in the universities" ([26]: 146). One of the most important changes of the Victorian period was also the reform of public schools. Before Clarendon Commission reforms of 1862-64, the state schools did not have a central system of order and discipline. They were corrupted by the tyrannical manners of self-governing boys who were pursuing for their self-independence and freedom by challenging any superior authority over them. Some junior students were exposed to harsh treatment by senior boys under the fagging system. The roles of masters and students were intermingled. Nobody did not know their place in this jungle where even masters were not admitted. On the other side, these public schools had a very great place in the eye of parents. They believed that the ordeals or trials of this vulgar school environment would contribute to the struggle of survival of each boy in their later life. As John Chandos expresses, it was believed by parents that "the experience of public-school education would prove in the end the best training for what was expected of him in life that an English gentleman could receive" ([27]: 67) and even the boy who survived from this warlike school world was described by Tom Hughes as "very much a Victorian hero, an average boy who matures through a series of challenging circumstances and moral dilemmas and translates his sociability into a determined social responsibility" ([28]: xxiv). Thus, the public school training was essential for the education and personal development of male youth. However, it was necessary to make reform in these public schools because of their notoriety such as drinking, sex, violence, fagging, fighting, inescapable deaths, uncontrolled cruelty and vice. Thanks to the reforms, the public schools had better living conditions, including improved hygiene and diet, an end to fighting and strict discipline and surveillance over self-governed boys for the sake of a more democratic school environment. These benign changes led to great improvements in the condition of state schools unquestionably. The symbol of manhood, the unreformed public schools gained a more respectable image and decorum with some alterations and changes in the experience, however much parents support their sons to "scout and scamper, and fend for themselves" ([28]: 350), which was regarded as a favourable period of male education for practical life.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, Victorian Empire experienced major changes that affected the living standards profoundly in different stages of Victorian period. Economic, scientific, medical and technological advances contributed to population growth. The population at the end of the Victorian period doubled the population at the beginning

of the nineteenth century. Industrial revolution led to many poor people all over the world to immigrate to urban places in the empire with the intention of working by increasing the general population in the empire. As “this was a period of transition from one mode of industry to another and all transition is painful” ([8]: 207), workers and employers were in clash with each other for the sake of their own interests in this capitalist world. However, as compared with the earlier century, it is seen that people were much more wealthy and prosperous than their poorer predecessors in every sense. High wages, improving sanitary, housing and working conditions, political liberties such as the enfranchisement of men, educational reforms, economic and technological developments, the new woman who are educated, career-oriented, and unconventional were all indicative of a rapidly developing and democratising empire unquestionably, although it was really hard to experience this transitional period in social respects. Especially working-class was faced to face with poverty and unemployment because of the replacement of machines for hand power, although machines meant nothing without physical labour and required cheap human power in the capitalist system. This situation forced them to move to urban sides and to work under very harsh, unhealthy and oppressive conditions for low wages at the expense of death. This gloomy atmosphere mostly belonged to the early Victorian period.

At the second half of the nineteenth-century and mid-Victorian period, there were acts of amelioration in every sphere of society. There was more focus on educational reforms and movements as well as individual and political liberties. The public schools were reformed to satisfy the requirements of the changing world. These schools, which symbolizes masculinity and played significant roles in the education of male youth, made great progress morally. There was also a substantial decline in death rate because of medical advances, along with decreasing birth rate by the mid-19th century because of the improvements in the quality of life. It was realised that the solution to poverty did not lie in workhouses, but in the state that had to take action against the social ills, so a more humanistic approach was adopted in the treatment of poverty. Although industrial revolution increased poverty partly, it was not the main factor, but a social organizer with its results that promised economic progress and material prosperity in the long run. The nineteenth-century British political and social thought had a deep influence on the central ideas of government such as, conservatism, liberalism, feminism and socialism in the light of industrial changes, their revolutionary consequences and democratic movements and thanks to the works of the representatives of these ideologies. Both Industrial Revolution and democratization were two significant developments that shaped the rise of these ideologies together with capitalist policies and rise of the British Empire. Radical changes and revolutions in British history deeply affect the role of the individual in the society and the role of government by forcing them to inevitable changes in their policies and roles. Conservatism struggles with revolutions and Industrial Revolution brings in capitalism. The hard working conditions of people in factories with industrialization lead to socialist movements and then liberalist ideas

supporting individual rights and encouraging democratic system of government in British history. Through the late-Victorian period the suffering middle-class women under the dominance of patriarchy finds the solution in education which enables them to have better employment opportunities and to have influence over their fate. This group of women compose the first-wave feminists who aim at independence in British political and social life. This case shows how these ideologies are tied to each other with a chain relation following each other by affecting and being affected. Hence, it is right and inevitable to perceive the subjects of Queen Victoria in 1901 in better conditions rather than in 1837 because of all reforms and innovations for the goodness of society.

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