

## **Abstract**

This research work aims to study an important social phenomenon resulting from the development of the British cotton industry during the nineteenth century, since the growth of cotton industry had been one of the most important foundations in the first phase of the Industrial Revolution in the western world. This type of industry largely increased the country's import and export values, and caused many businessmen to invest in huge amount of the cotton mills. These factory owners were so successful that many of them became very influential, both in the country's economy and politics.

However, findings of this work reveal that although Britain was successful economically as a result of the expanding domestic cotton industry, another side of the British society at that time was covered by an unprecedented distress in the cotton mills. Child labour, both free labour sent by the parents to work in factories, and the parish apprentices recruited by the factory owners, poured into the cotton mills. Several cotton industries exploited these children badly – within the issue of working hours, work environment, and maltreatment which affected them physically and mentally.

Exploitation of child labour began to be criticized by the British public increasingly. Significant social reformers continuously campaigned against the use of child labour. Their movements caused successive governments to pay more attention and to investigate the problems more closely. An important result of the government policies was the making of the factory acts throughout the nineteenth century. The main essence of these factory acts was to help free the kids from maltreatment done to them by their employers. In the mean time, British governments also realized the significance of educational measures. Educational acts were passed, to develop the quality of life, and to improve the children potential to earn their living in the future. Results and repercussions of the government policies were not limited only among child labour in the cotton industry, but also expanded to include a much larger scope of child labour in the British society at that time and in the following years.