

Directions:

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading. Mark up the text with questions and comments.
3. A one page reflection is due on Thursday. It may be typed and saved in the AoW folder of your GoogleDocs collection or it may be hand-written neatly on lined paper.

India's PM Calls Malnutrition a "National Shame"
Source: Noreen Nasir/ PBS NewsHour/ January 20, 2012

Section 1

While India is the world's largest democracy and boasts of the fastest number of growing "dollar millionaires" a recent study shows that child malnutrition has reached roughly 42 percent—almost double the rate of sub-Saharan Africa.

A new report has found that at least 40 percent of all Indian children below the age of five are underweight.

Hunger studies from India are not uncommon, but this one comes in stark contrast to the country's high economic growth in the past two decades. The study serves as a reminder of continuing problems of poverty and hunger in the world's largest democracy.

"The problem of malnutrition is a matter of national shame," said Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. "Despite impressive growth in our G.D.P., the level of under-nutrition in the country is unacceptably high."

The survey measured children from 73,000 households in over 3,000 villages across India, and focused on key issues relating to malnutrition, including poverty, sanitation, and education and health of mothers.

Section 2

Although India has continuously faced hunger issues for decades despite governmental programs to combat them, the prime minister's comments indicate a new push to link India's many issues—hunger, lack of basic health education, bad sanitation and dirty drinking water—to combat the larger problem of malnutrition.

Despite high economic growth, hunger persists

India's economic progress in recent years can be largely attributed to its huge population of youth. But with so many young people underweight and malnourished, the nation may not be able to reach its full potential.

Poor health and nutrition can harm a child's ability to learn, the study notes, signaling a large setback in the country's advancement.

When compared to much poorer areas of the world, the high rate of malnourished children in India is even more striking. In sub-Saharan Africa, the rate of children under five that face malnutrition is 24 percent, according to the United Nations Children's Fund. In China, a growing superpower alongside India, that number is only six percent.

The survey does, however, note some good news. While the level of malnutrition in India is still embarrassingly high, it has decreased from 53 percent in the past seven years, showing slow, but notable progress.

Section 3

New approaches to tackle the problem

The study was organized by a group of young politicians, artists, directors, social activists and policymakers called Citizens' Alliance Against Malnutrition. They have been asked to come up with a new approach to tackling malnutrition that would be included in India's next five-year plan.

Parliament is also debating a Food Security Bill that would direct billions of dollars towards programs to help the poor.

Their task will be difficult: food security legislation in India has been marred by corruption and a lack of focus in the past.

But the Alliance Against Malnutrition hopes that the stark numbers will embarrass the country at a time when it is trying to establish itself as a world economic and political powerhouse.

Reflection Ideas

- How can a country that boasts the largest growing number of millionaires have such a high percentage of children facing malnutrition?
- Why do you think there is such a big difference between the rich and the poor in India? How could that problem be addressed?
- Who is the intended audience of this article? Why do you think Noreen Nasir wrote this article? Explain.
- What was the most interesting thing you learned? Explain.
- Find a passage from the article and explain why it grabbed your attention.

Indian Prime Minister Calls Malnutrition a “National Shame”- Reading Questions

Directions

- Read through the article and answer the questions below
 - This worksheet is due at the beginning of class on Tuesday February 28, 2012
1. What is malnutrition? According to the article, what are some of the problems it can cause?
 2. According to the article, what key issues regarding malnutrition, was the survey trying to gather information on?
 3. How much has the percentage of children under five who suffer from malnutrition in India gone down in the past seven years?
 4. According to the story, India’s economic progress in recent years can be largely attributed to what factors? Do you think this is a problem? Explain why or why not.
 5. Why do you think there is such a big difference between the rich and the poor in India? Explain your answer.
 6. Do you think malnutrition and hunger are a problem in our community? Explain your answer.
 7. Is there anything the United States could do to fix this problem in India? Explain your answer.