

# South Asia

SG 2 - Population & Demographics

# I. Rural & Urban Contrasts

- A. Extremes of abject poverty coexist with tremendous wealth & modern luxuries.
  - 1. Traditional village life in rural areas contrast with...
  - 2. cities (urban) and their high-rise office buildings, prestigious apartments, modern hotels & global influences
  - 3. even though some of the largest cities in the world (by population) exist in South Asia, the majority of the population lives in rural areas.
    - (a) Subsistence and low-paid farming lifestyles linked to long-term poverty, access to education & healthcare.

# II. Rural Poverty

- A. Laborers have little chance to escape their lifetime of poverty and their debts are inherited by their children.
  - 1. Cash incomes are small
  - 2. Unexpected obligations such as sickness, death of plowing oxen, demands for a dowry on the marriage of a daughter all deplete any savings that are accrued
  - 3. In India, caste discrimination is most obvious in rural areas.
    - (a) Untouchables or dalits still have their homes burned and cannot use upper-caste wells

# III. Urban Differences

- A. India has over 90 billionaires & over 14,800 millionaires while the average Indian earns about \$11/day. The urban wealthy live in guarded colonies, send their children to private schools, & spend their money on lavish lifestyles that include: imported cars, luxury vacations, etc...
- B. The urban middle-classes usually have secure jobs, can buy items such as TV's & computers, have access to healthcare & educate their children in private English-language schools.
- C. The urban poor "slum-dwellers," struggle daily for a basic existence in slums called bustees or on the sidewalks in "hutments."
  - 1. Child labor is common.
  - 2. Foreign companies have moved manufacturing to places like India where the work environments can be unsafe and the workers are poorly paid (in many cases).

# IV. Urbanization

- A. Most migration is from rural areas to urban areas.
- B. Five of the world's largest cities are found in South Asia:
  - 1. The largest city in South Asia by population is Mumbai (Bombay), India at about 22.6 million people. India has the largest population in South Asia.
  - 2. Delhi, India is second; Dakar, Bangladesh is 3rd; Calcutta, India is 4th.

- C. South Asia's cities, over 46 having at least one million people, still house only about 30% of the region's growing population.
- D. Population is growing faster than infrastructure can keep up, however education is important and good quality schools are available to many.
  - 1. Example: Calcutta - electrical power is inadequate for population; sewer system cannot handle flooding during wet season; issues between Hindu & Muslim population

- 2. Cities such as Mumbai, Calcutta, & Delhi have high housing densities, poor transportation access and winding alleys.
- 3. In the slums that do not have piped water & electricity, disease is endemic: cholera, plague, hepatitis, HIV, & typhoid are common.
- 4. High-tech cities, such as Bangalore & Hyderabad, are on the rise where service industry call-centers are outsourced to by Western countries. Computer software & hardware development has brought in companies such as IBM & Motorola. Google has operations in Hyderabad.