

Chapter 6: Global inequalities: the victims

1. Which of these statements relating to the causes and incidence of world poverty between 1990 and 2009 are true and which are false? (see pages 112-115 of your textbook)

(a) According to a World Bank Report for 2004, the widespread adoption of open market, neo-liberal economic policies between 1981 and 2001 resulted in an 18% reduction in world poverty as measured by people living on \$1 dollar per day. This took 350 million out of absolute poverty during those years.

(b) China's success in reducing poverty from the late 1970s was especially spectacular. But nearly all of this was due to government willingness to adopt strong pro-capitalist and open market policies including opening its economy to foreign investment and competing to sell its goods in world markets.

(c) Revised data analysed by Chen and Ravallion (2008) and which takes \$1.25 as the poverty line suggested that approximately one quarter of the world's population remained in poverty by 2005.

(d) Very little of the reduction in world poverty by 2005 was due to China's achievements. Marked declines in poverty have occurred very widely across the less developed world.

(e) If we take a broader definition – as Chen and Ravallion did – and measure poverty as those living on a daily income of between \$1.25 and \$2 (still pretty meagre by any standards) then the numbers living in this way increased from 600 million to 1.2 billion between 1981 and 2005.

(f) The huge rise in food and other prices in 2006 and 2007 (when the world economic boom continued) and then the rising unemployment caused by the financial collapse of 2008, and since, have (and will have) very little impact on long term changes in the incidence of world poverty.

(g) Based on the data available in 2007, the Millennium Development Goal (see page 113, Box 6.1) of reducing global child malnutrition substantially from its 1990 level by 2015 is set to be attained.

2. Read pages 117-121 of your textbook on understanding issues relating to famine and food security. Decide whether a 'yes' or 'no' response is appropriate to the following statements:

(a) Technically, is there sufficient food available at the global level at any one time to feed everyone in the world adequately?

- (b) Does famine primarily involve a scarcity of food supplies within particular regions and localities?
- (c) Are most famines entirely due to natural disasters such as floods, diseased crops or animals, droughts, and so on?
- (d) For people who are not farmers, is the possession of money the only guarantee of being able to gain access to food supplies?
- (e) Can the notion of food 'entitlement' (in the sense developed by Sen, 1981, and Dreze and Sen, 1989) include such phenomena as gaining access to items such as berries or wild animals through hunting or turning to kin and fellow community members for assistance?
- (f) Is it the case that there is no credible evidence to suggest that some groups – such as warrior elites or politicians – have deliberately diverted or controlled food supplies in order to impose deprivation on others?

3. Read the section on workers in the deindustrializing countries (on pages 121-123). Now find the missing word(s) or phrase in the text which fits the sentences below. Note that these sentences do not copy the surrounding and relevant text word for word.

- (a) By the mid 1980s more than _____ of the labour force in the advanced countries had left manufacturing and were now classified as service workers.
- (b) The new jobs replacing the previously permanent and well-paid ones normally consist of McJobs in low grade service non contractual occupations that are _____ and _____ involving part time, seasonal or temporary work with few prospects or benefits.
- (c) Often, foreign born migrants fill these McJobs as in London, for example, where in 2005 they made up _____ of the total city workforce.
- (d) In Japan one third of the workforce was employed in _____ jobs, defined as ' _____ ' by 2008 compared to only 23 per cent in 1997.
- (e) Prolonged economic deprivation and unemployment over several generations within families and in formally prosperous working class communities often give rise to sink estates characterized by a _____ and _____ plus family disintegration and violent behaviour.

4. The section entitled 'Peasants and landless labourers' (on pages 123-124) argues that across the world very few peasants still remain as subsistence farmers or as producers purely for local markets. Instead, they have mostly been tied into global markets. We discuss four processes that have been involved in this vast transformation of rural, peasant life in recent decades. One consists of the Green Revolution which began in the 1960s

across the Third World. This meant that farmers switched to growing their crops by using high yielding (often laboratory-grown) seeds combined with fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation and sometimes the deployment of expensive machinery. Although this type of farming increased most crop yields substantially it was mostly the larger and more prosperous farmers who could afford the resources and the risks required for engaging in this system.

Read about the other three processes listed below which have also affected small farmers. These are:

- (a) Vast government projects such as building dams and roads
- (b) Scientific developments in biotechnology financed by businesses and governments
- (c) The rise of agribusiness led by huge global corporations moving into all forms of farm production plus supermarkets.

Explain briefly why and how each of these additional processes has pushed peasants off the land or onto marginal land or into becoming landless labourers.

5. Many of the rural population across the South have been migrating into the cities for some considerable time thereby helping to swell urban population growth. Read the section entitled 'The urban poor: mega cities and slum dwellers' (pages 125- 127) and then match the expert sources on the left with the arguments attributed to them in the right hand column.

Guy Standing	<p>A. Two thirds of the economically active populations living in the cities of the South depend on the Informal Economy in order to feed their families. This means that they struggle and compete to carve out some kind of micro-livelihood in one or more of the numerous and sometimes illegal and/or dangerous occupations such as garbage picking, drug dealing, casual labour, petty thieving, selling minute quantities of goods, on 'entitlement theory', relating to the causes and nature of famine, prostitution, and so on.</p>
Mike Davis	<p>B. The urban poor living in the growing cities of the South can be regarded as mainly detached or separate not only from the urban economies where they live but in a larger sense from the mainstream of the global economy itself. Thus, one way of looking at the urban poor in the South is that they could exist as a kind of surplus humanity who are strangely and sadly irrelevant to the workings of the contemporary global economic</p>

UN-HABITAT

C. Extrapolations based on current rates of urban expansion worldwide indicate that by 2015 there will be around 550 cities containing at least one million inhabitants. This contrasts with only 86 such cities in 1950. Moreover, much of this city growth involves the rise of slum living on a vast scale. Slum habitations include squatting in illegal shanty towns, camping out on the streets or living in overcrowded tenement buildings. It is estimated that currently one third of the world's urban population – or one sixth of humanity - live in slums (at least one billion people).