

India's Rise in the Global Economy

Student Reading

Why Study Global Media Perspectives?

The global media play an essential role in the process of economic and cultural globalization. Today people in India can view commentary from the United States by viewing Fox News Network or The Colbert Report while people in the United States view Indian perspectives by connecting to the The Times of India homepage or by viewing a video made by a young person from India. Whenever we read a webpage, watch a YouTube video, glance at a magazine cover or listen to a podcast we are taking in messages about the world. These mediated messages are constructed for particular purposes, they come from a point of view, and they use certain techniques to influence the viewer, reader or listener. Our ability to make good choices depends on our ability to critically analyze and evaluate the media messages we receive,

India's Economic Rise

With 1.1 billion people India is second only to China in population. In the years since its independence from Great Britain in 1947 India has maintained democracy while reducing poverty by more than half. According to the World Bank India was among the world's leading economies in 2007 with an economic growth rate averaging 8% over the previous three years. For many economists this recent rapid growth has been completely unexpected and its continuation remains unpredictable.

Although a majority of Indian people continues to work in agriculture, a rapidly expanding sector of the economy is devoted to information technology, telecommunications, and pharmaceuticals. It is this sector in particular that has sparked India's recent prosperity. With a young, educated and English-speaking workforce India has taken the lead in providing

overseas services to U.S. companies. Outsourcing is the term used to refer to the multinational business practice of subcontracting certain jobs and services overseas. In India's case the outsourcing industry includes customer service support such as handling credit card problems and troubleshooting computers and business support like collecting debts and conducting customer satisfaction surveys.

One of the consequences of India's rapid growth is the rise of a class of young business professionals who benefit from the economic boom. As the documents in this lesson make clear there are different perspectives within the Indian media about the challenges and responsibilities of this sudden new wealth. Some young Indian professionals are able to pay for lavish lifestyles while others choose to volunteer their time with the many local grassroots efforts to deal with lingering poverty in India's rural areas and poorer states.

Concerns for a Thriving Economy

In spite of the good news of a vital and growing economy some observers have expressed concerns about the challenges that India continues to face. These include the problem of an aging infrastructure, the basic systems an economy needs in order to function such as roads, schools and water and power supplies. Indian businesses have many orders from the rest of the world for manufactured goods but if the supply trucks can't travel on well-maintained roads then the goods cannot get to the port of export on time and business suffers.

Despite increased prosperity for India's growing middle and upper classes, hundreds of millions of Indian people continue to live in poverty. The World Bank estimated that in 2004/2005 one

third of India's people survived on one dollar a day. With an estimated 90% of India's labor force employed in low productivity informal sector jobs the prospects for civil unrest are very real.

Another concern has to do with the dangers of growing too fast. An overheated economy can lead to inflation, credit expansion and risky spikes in stock prices. India's increased integration into the global economy also carries risks. A recession in the United States could have a dramatic impact on India's booming economy.

Questioning Media Perspectives Wherever You See Them

Whenever we receive media reporting, whether it be from Indian media reports on the value of the rupee or from U.S. news media reporting on Indian call centers it is always important to ask these key questions: Who produced this media document and for what purpose? Who might benefit from this media construction and who might be hurt? How credible is this information and what is left out that might be helpful to know? Consider these questions as you explore the material in the following lesson.

This is an Indian ten rupee note. The portrait is of Mohandas Gandhi, Indian independence leader and advocate for nonviolence and simple living. What messages does this image give about India? How might Gandhi feel about his image being used for this purpose?



Money is a form of media that most people use every day. Like all media currency conveys messages through the design of the craftsperson and through the media form itself.

What are the messages about India's economy in these two magazine covers?

