CLASS SET: DO NOT WRITE ON Modern India DBQ

**Challenges for a Modern India**

**Background**

Ramachandra Guha, renowned historian and author of India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy, says instability is India's destiny.

"Because of its size and diversity, because of the continuing poverty of many of its citizens, because it is (in historical terms) still a relatively young nation state, the Republic of India was never going to have anything but a rocky ride.

"National unity and democratic consolidation were always going to be more difficult to achieve than in smaller, richer, more homogeneous and older countries."

Mr Guha argues that democracy and nationhood in India face several challenges. Four of these are:

* Religious fundamentalism (loyalty to a particular way of practicing religion, strong resistance to change) was once all over India and is fading very slowly.
* The Government suffers from corruption; the police and bureaucracy are not independent but work for particular political parties.
* Scarcity of resources is leading to conflict and inequality. The poor suffer most from lack of resources, infrastructure (like schools, roads , plumbing and electricity) and water pollution.
* The gap between rich and poor is increasing. One example: India's richest man, Mukesh Ambani, is worth more than $20bn, and his new home is a 27-storey high, 400,000 sq ft building in Mumbai, where 60% of the population live in grimy slums

Use the following Documents to answer this focus question:

To what extent is Mr. Guha’s assessment accurate? Please choose one of the above bullet points and provide evidence to support or contradict Mr. Guha’s claim and say why he is or is not accurate in his assessment.

**Document 1**

**The Constitution of the Republic of India (Adopted January 26, 1950 and still in use today)**

We**,** the People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation.

The following are excerpts:

14. Equality before law—The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

15. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth

16. Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment

17. Abolition of Untouchability (*lowest caste*)

25. Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion

**Question 1: How might this document challenge traditional Hindu culture and Indian traditions?**

**Document 2**



***Lowest-Caste Hindu Takes Office as India's President***

By John F. Burn | Saturday, July 26, 1997

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&docid=-H_-TfJUy8g-rM&tbnid=0-ngC4QklSAj5M:&ved=0CAUQjRw&url=http://www.images99.com/pictures/k-r-narayanan/&ei=MZePUpSXF8aTiQKO0YGQCA&bvm=bv.56988011,d.cGE&psig=AFQjCNHCFZBHs250NxpLQlCHWUiJZOS8YA&ust=1385228362853618)Half a century after Mohandas K. Gandhi led India to independence with a vision of a society that would rid itself of its ancient system of caste discrimination, a member of Hinduism’s lowest caste took the oath today as the country’s President and declared his elevation as proof that “the concerns of the common man” have finally been made a priority in the nation’s affairs.

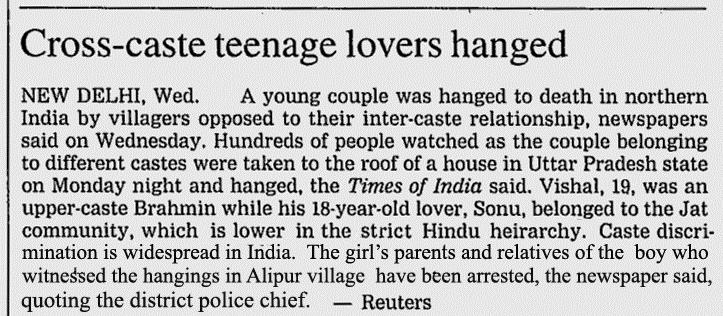
K.R. Narayanan, a 76-year-old former scholar, diplomat and Cabinet minister who once served as India’s Ambassador to the United Sates, was chosen for the ceremonial post last week.

With barely three weeks to go to the 50th anniversary of India's independence from Britain, he called Gandhi’s ambition that a free India would “wipe every tear from every eye” by eliminating the country’s ancient scourges, including poverty, disease, illiteracy and caste discrimination.

**Question 2: How does the election of Narayanan show change over time in Indian culture and religious practices?**

**Document 3**

**Newspaper article on caste conflicts, August 8, 2001. New Delhi, India**



**Question 3: What does this story reveal about the willingness of some Indians to put aside traditional Hindu beliefs?**

**Document 4**



***Hundreds flee homes in northern India following Hindu-Muslim clashes***

By Rama Lakshmi, September 10, 2013

NEW DELHI – Hundreds of villagers fled their homes in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday after three days of bloody sectarian clashes left at least 38 people dead and dozens wounded, including small children.

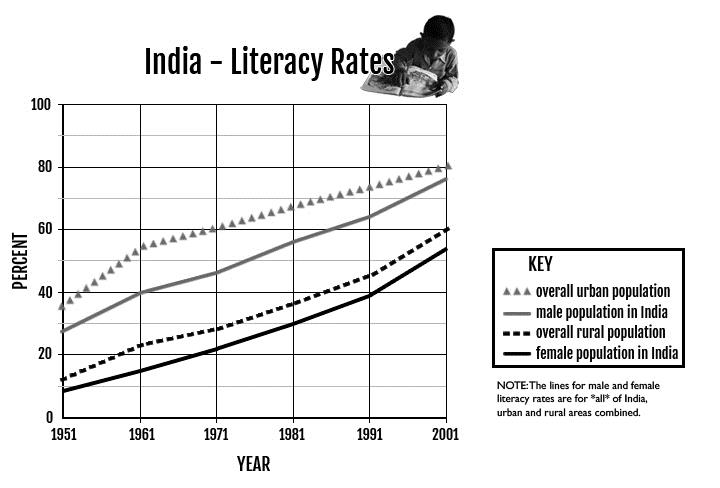
The fighting between Hindus and Muslims in the area, the worst in years, was sparked by a violent dispute between two families of different faiths last month, authorities said. A Muslim youth was killed by two Hindu men after he allegedly sexually harassed their female cousin.

The two were then attacked by a Muslim mob and lynched in reprisal, officials said. On Saturday tens of thousands of sword-wielding Hindu villagers defied curfew orders and attended a massive public meeting, at which they called for justice. Police said some politicians at the meeting gave incendiary speeches against Muslims. Officers have arrested 366 people for rioting and inciting hate.

**Question 4: How are historical tensions and mistrust between Hindus and Muslims affecting Indians today?**

**Document 5**

**Graph comparing Urban/Rural and Male/Female Literacy Rates**

**From: Ministry of Finance, 2002**

**Question 5: What accounts for the differences in literacy rates in India?**

**Question 6: What positive changes could happen when these literacy rates are equalized**?

**Document 6**



**India’s Tata Motors unveils the world’s cheapest car**

By Mark Magnier, Los Angeles Times, March 24, 2009

NEW DELHI – With the flash of cameras and oohs and aahs from the crowd, an Indian company Monday launched what is billed as the world’s least expensive car. The Nano will start at $2,200 after taxes and dealer costs.

“I hope it will provide safe, affordable four-wheel transportation to families who until now have not been able to own a car,” Ratan Tata, company chairman, told reporters.

India’s car industry has ample room to grow by the standards of other nations, with just 14 cars per 1,000 population, according to industry figures. That compares with 28 per 1,000 for neighboring Sri Lanka, 400 to 600 per 1,000 for Europe and Japan, and more than 700 per 1,000 for the U.S.

**Question 7: What does the launching of an affordable car tell you about the Indian economy?**

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| **Document 7**  [File:BBC News.svg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/f/ff/BBC_News.svg)  **India struggles with power theft**  By Mark Gregory , BBC World Service international business reporter in Rohini, Delhi    **How can you live on a few dollars a day? Well, it helps a little if your electricity is free.**  For slum dwellers in Rohini, a residential district in North West Delhi, power theft is almost a way of life. There's little or no effort to hide it, and the method is simplicity itself: just find the nearest overhead power cable, sling a metal hook over it, then run a wire from the hook to the home. The result: an illegal supply of free electricity that lasts until inspectors from the local power utility stage one of their periodic raids. And when that happens, people simply wait for a few hours until the inspectors have gone before reconnecting.  **A National problem** Similar scenes can be seen in many parts of Delhi. According to the latest official estimate, as much as 42% of the power supplied to India's capital disappears through "transmission losses", meaning it is consumed without being paid for. In effect, it is stolen. Three years ago the problem was even more serious. Then transmission losses accounted for over the half the electricity distributed in Delhi. Although Delhi has been dubbed the power theft capital of the world, the situation in other parts of India is little better. There are no hard figures, but the best estimate is that somewhere between a third and half of the country's electricity supply is unpaid for.  No other country suffers revenue losses on this scale. In China, Asia's other emerging economic giant, no more than 3% of the nation's power supply is lost to theft.  **Spreading the blame** Giresh Sant, who works for an NGO called Prayas, campaigning for more efficient and accountable government, says the problem is one of corruption - and an electoral interest in turning a blind eye. No one likes paying their utility bills, he says, so often politicians regard negligence about revenue collection as a vote-winner. And opportunities for personal enrichment through corruption have given them, as well as civil servants and utility officials, further incentives not to rock the boat.  The political aspect is probably most blatant in rural areas. At least 20% of India's power is consumed by farmers' irrigation systems. Frequently they either get free power or pay low set charges that bear no relation to the amount of electricity used. The powerful farmers' lobby is hard for politicians to ignore in a country where a majority of the population still makes its living from agriculture. |

**Question 8: Why are Indians stealing power?**

**Question 9: How is power theft connected to government elections?**

**Document 9**

**The Shiva Rules: Lessons from India's largest slum,** May 17, 2011

**MUMBAI, India –** Barefootchildren chase each other around large brick kilns billowing out smoke. In another area of Dharavi, one of Asia’s largest slums, girls wander onto piles of garbage, while a boy chases a goat near an open sewer. Kalpana Sharma, journalist and author of "Rediscovering Dharavi”, says “The people here don’t survive because of the state; they survive in spite of it.”

Many of Dharavi’s resident,s along with activists, journalists and urban planners, agree that the area needs redevelopment. They welcome the idea of bringing proper infrastructure like water and sanitation to the shanties (*house in a slum*).

India has a nearly 9 percent growth rate a year, and the country has pulled millions out of poverty over the past two decades. But the country still has a massive population of poor people. About half of India’s children aged 5 or younger are malnourished, and the number of people living on less than $1.25 a day is expected to remain close to 300 million by 2015, according to the World Bank.

India’s poor have been streaming out of rural areas into cities like Mumbai (*formerly called Bombay*), leading to a larger concentration of the country’s poor in urban settings. India’s urban population grew from 290 million in 2001 to about 340 million in 2008. Furthermore, the government has not provided enough jobs or housing for these people.

And yet, Dharavi’s massive population of 1 million people has enabled it to be both a consumer and a producer of goods and services. “It’s a humming, thriving place,” said Shirish Patel, an urban planner. “Everyone’s busy, no one’s begging. They’re all up to something or the other. They live there. They work there. They build enterprises. “

An urban planning study has found that Dharavi has close to 5,000 informal businesses, which produce goods worth about $600 million a year. What is particularly remarkable about Dharavi is that its residents have managed to build themselves homes and find or create jobs that support them and their families with virtually no support from the state.

From : [www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/india/110516/dharavi-economy-slums-urban-poor](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/india/110516/dharavi-economy-slums-urban-poor)]

**Question 10: Why do people move from rural areas to urban areas?**

**Modern India DBQ Name: Per:**

Question 1: How might this document challenge traditional Hindu culture and Indian traditions?

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Question 2: How does the election of Narayanan show change over time in Indian culture and religious practices?

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Question 3: What does this story reveal about the willingness of some Indians to put aside traditional Hindu beliefs?

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Question 4: How are historical tensions and mistrust between Hindus and Muslims affecting Indians today?

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Question 5: What accounts for the differences in literacy rates in India?

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Question 7: What does the launching of an affordable car tell you about the Indian economy?

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Question 9: How is power theft connected to government elections?

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**Big Question:** To what extent is Mr. Guha’s assessment accurate? Please choose one of the above bullet points and provide evidence to support or contradict Mr. Guha’s claim and say why he is or is not accurate in his assessment.

**Cite specific quotes from the text to support your answer.**

**Rubric:**

* Clear thesis
* At least 3 pieces of evidence
* 1 explanation connecting quote to author’s view.
* 3 Transition Words
* Concluding thought at the end
* Spelling, complete Sentences

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