EXERCISE 10

Questions **1** *to* **8** *are based on the following passage.*

1 On a crisp autumn morning, the dew just rising from the fields, dozens of children streamed into the two-room school in this small, poor village, their hair freshly oiled, used rice sacks tucked under their arms for lack of chairs to sit on. One teacher showed up 90 minutes late. A second was a no show. The senior-most teacher, the only one with a teaching degree, was believed to be on official government duty. "When they get older, they'll curse their teachers," said Arnab Ghosh, 26, a social worker trying to help the government improve its schools, as he stared at clusters of children sitting on the grass. "They'll say, 'We came every day, and we learned nothing.'"

2 Sixty years after independence, with 40 per cent of its population under 18, India is confronting the perils of its failure to educate its citizens, notably the poor. More Indian children are in school than ever before, but the quality of public schools has sunk to spectacularly low levels, as government schools have become reserves of children at the very bottom of the Indian social ladder.

3 India has long had a legacy of weak schooling for the masses of its young, even as it has promoted high quality government-financed universities. But if in the past, a largely poor and agrarian nation could afford to leave millions of its people illiterate, that is no longer the case. Not only has the roaring economy hit a sets have fuelled new ambitions for economic advancement among its people – and new expectations for schools to help them achieve it.

4 That they remain ill-equipped to do so is clearly illustrated by an annual survey, conducted by Pratham, the organisation for which Ghosh works. The latest survey, carried out across 16 000 villages in 2007 found that while many more children were sitting in class than before, vast numbers of them could not read, write or perform basic arithmetic, to say nothing of those who were not in school at all.

5 Education experts and officials debate the reasons for the failure. On the one hand, some argue, the children of illiterate parents are less likely to get help at home, more likely to be malnourished or in poor health, and therefore have a harder time learning. Others blame longstanding neglect and insufficient public investment in education, along with a lack of motivation among teachers to pay special attention to poor, outcaste children.

6 Arguments aside, India is engaged in an epic experiment to uplift its schools. Along the way lie many hurdles, and Ghosh, on his visits to villages like this one, encounters them all. Either the aides who have been hired to draw more village children into school complain that they have not recieved money to buy educational materials, or the school has stopped serving lunch even though sacks of rice are piled in the classroom, or a parent agrees to enrol his son in school, but knows that he will soon send the child away to work.

7 Or worst of all, from Ghosh's perspective, all these stick-thin, bright-eyed children trickle into school every morning and take back so little. "They're coming with some hope of getting something," Ghosh muttered. "It's our fault we can't give them anything."

8 Even here, the kind of place from which millions of uneducated men and women have traditionally migrated to cities for work, an appetite for education has begun to set in. And educated person would not only be more likely to find a good job, parents here reasoned, but also less likely to be cheated in a bad one. "I want my children to do something, to advance themselves," is how Mohammed Alam Ansari put it. "To do they must study."

LIVEWORKSHEETS

9 Education in the new India has become a crucial marker of inequality. Among the poorest 20 percent of the population, half are illiterate and barely two per cent graduate from high school, according to government data. By contrast, among the richest 20 per cent of the population, nearly half are high school graduates and only two per cent are illiterate.

10 "The link between getting your children prepared and being part of this big changing India is certainly there in everyone's minds," said Rukmini Benerji, the research director of Pratham. "The question is: what's the best way to get there, how much to do, what to do? As a country I think we are trying to figure this out."

11 "If we wait another 5 or 10 years," she added, "you are going to lose millions of children."

(Adapted from *Herald Tribune*, January 17, 2008)

1 Paragraph 1 draws attention to the

A poverty of the villagers
B over-crowded classroom
C lack of facilities in the school
D eagerness of the children to attend school

2 In paragraph 3, the writer develops his ideas through

A cause and effect
B problem and solution
C compare and contrast
D example and illustration

3 ... *that is no longer the case.* (line 16) This implies that

A the young today need to be educated
B weak schooling should no longer be an Indian legacy
C in an agricultural society the young will remain illiterate
D the poor still cannot afford to send their children to school

4 Which of the following are reasons for *new ambitions for economic advancement* (lines 17 – 18)?

I The growing economy
II Schooling of the masses
III A shortage of skilled labour
IV High quality tertiary education

A I and II
B I and III
C II and IV
D III and IV

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5 In paragraph 5, the writer mentions reasons for the children's failure to learn. Which of the following is **not** mentioned as a reason?

A The health of the children is poor

B The children need to help out at home

C Teachers neglect children who are poor

D Illiterate parents are unable to help their children.

6 According to the writer, which of the following is the greatest obstacle to educating the young?

A Child labour

B School lunches not provided

C A lack of educational materials

D Children not learning much in school

7 Education in the new India has become a crucial marker of inequality. (line 43) This means that in India today,

A education divides the rich from the poor

B there is an awareness of the importance of education

C the lack of education has prevented the poor from securing good jobs

D while 20 per cent of the poor are illiterate, only two per cent of the rich are illiterate

8 The purpose of the article is to

A criticise

B entertain

C motivate action

D provide solutions

LIVEWORKSHEETS