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English 101

Feb 17, 2020

Seminar paper 5 Second Part

In the second part of this chapter, McKibben talks about places where the quality of life has increased in places where poverty has struck. McKibben compares places like Bhutan, Kerala, Western Europe to America in terms of literacy rate, equality, political participation, and energy consumption. McKibben once again states “More does not always mean better” when talking about Kerala. Being rich is what leads to higher rates of literacy, life expectancy, and equality. But McKibben states that Kerala is proving us wrong due to its increasing life expectancy and literacy rate. McKibben proves this by stating “Its life expectancy is now seventy-three years for males which means that the average resident lives longer than the average black person in the United States” (p.219). Even with extreme poverty such as earning a few dollars a day, Kerala is having a life expectancy rate which is quite like America. Another way in which Kerala proves the claim more is better is their high literacy rates. McKibben states “The Literacy rate, after a five-year campaign conducted by volunteers who organized classes under coconut trees and by riverbanks, approaches 100 percent” (p.219). Kerala shows us that whatever ways, we are using to grow are wrong even though they may accomplish these goals. But there are other environmentally friendly ways. McKibben compares how America does a lot to contribute to raising the world’s temperature in which he said, “Any American suburb has more cars than the whole crowded Indian state.” This comparison shows us how Kerala which is in poverty and uses the most unique ways to grow still can compete with American in a lot of ways. McKibben also compares Western Europe to America. He notes that many European countries are affluent, cosmopolitan, and humane, using fewer resources than half that of the US. McKibben also said, “Sixty-nine percent of Europeans believe that environmental protection is an immediate and urgent problem, and more than half agree that “it is necessary to fundamentally change our way of life and development if we want to halt the deterioration of the environment”. In contrast, only one American in four is anxious about the environment” (p.225). This shows how these new ways of growth are negatively impacting our environment and community. McKibben is not saying that the old way is good and new way bad but that there is a need for some sort of community involvement. At last, McKibben states a bold statement which is our resources crisis is moving at a faster speed than originally anticipated. He brings up issues of hurricanes from 2005 and issues of melting point and states “The movement toward more local economies is the same direction we will have to travel to cope with the effects of these predicaments, not just to fend them off” (p. 231). With McKibben’s last statement, he said that local communities can be applied to helping the earth now and helping us survive later. In conclusion, McKibben is trying to say that we need to switch to the local economy which will increase our satisfaction of living and increase our chances of surviving this climate change and resources crisis.