The New Face of Hunger by Tracie McMillan

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The source under discussion is an article that was written by Tracie McMillan and which was then published in the National Geographic Magazine under the title “The New Face Of Hunger.” The author adopted a typed document as the medium of communication to present her views and arguments. In the text, the writer addresses the issue of “The New Face Of Hunger” in the United States (McMillan).

Food Insecurity in American Families

This entirely speaks of the inadequacy of nutritious meals for many American citizens. The author gives a general overview that a good number of Americans most often go to bed hungry or miss a meal a day. She provides a story of a lady called Christina Dreier, living with her husband, Jim, and their three-year-old son, Keagan. As a result of the fear of failing to provide meals for their son, they opted to send their son to school without giving him breakfast, hoping that at school, he would be provided with a free breakfast to preserve enough food for lunch. Their son, however, proves stubborn and does not like the free breakfast. Dreier’s plan fails when Keagan returns home hungry and needs to be given the breakfast that they were reserving for lunch. Dreier and Jim, who is the husband, find it difficult to provide for the family and at the same time pay for their bills; they decide to open another bank account so that they can pay their bills using means other than cash (McMillan). The family also partly depends on privately run programs like SNAP to supplement their daily food. The author also draws the attention of the audience to the statistical data on the state of food insecurity in the United States. She explains that most of the people suffering from food insecurity in the United States make up more than half of the total population affected. Ironically, in most of the affected families in the United States, one of the adults is employed. She takes into account the sudden increase in the number of individuals going without food, which she says increased to about forty-eight million by 2008 (McMillan). This, she explains, has been an increase of five times from the statistics conducted by the late 1960s. She further explains that the number of food programs or companies owned by the private sector also increased immensely by that same year. Today, these food programs are over 50000 in number, a large contrast to the number that existed by the 1990s. This clearly shows how the rate of poverty has been progressively on the rise.

Poverty in the Suburbs and Food Assistance

The writer not only points us to the problem of food insecurity in the United States but also addresses areas that are more affected. For instance, she says that the rate of poverty in the suburbs has

increased significantly (McMillan). She attributed this to the fact that many middle-class individuals who were living in the cities moved into the suburbs as a result of the increase in housing rents in the urban setup. On the contrary, in the suburbs, the poor drive vehicles, which are part of their living and not a luxury! They own televisions and many more home appliances, but not enough beds in their homes! She again speaks of another lady called Jacqueline Christian, who drives a well-maintained vehicle and dresses in expensive clothes, but is always worried about enough food, even for half a year! It is, therefore, a severe matter—the issue of food insecurity in the USA. Many people, however, from the United States are advantaged by the various privately owned relief food programs, which are usually implemented on top of what they earn from their labor. Such applications include the Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which has indeed been of significant help to Americans and many other food pantries. She also talks of subsidized foods, which she says are cheap but less nutritious! For instance, corn, when subsidized, is used to process many other food products such as chicken feed, syrups, and others like soybeans. These foods, through the largest number of Americans, are less nutritious.

Tracie McMillan's Background and Authority

Tracie McMillan is an American citizen and a self-supported journalist working for no press company. Tracie is also the writer of New York Times bestsellers, which is one of the best-selling magazines in the United States (McMillan). She has also written the article, The American Way of Eating, which was adapted from her book. She is an employed citizen of the United States based in Michigan. In the year 2012, Tracie published her book, the New York Times bestseller (The American Way of Eating: Undercover at Walmart, Applebee's, Farm Fields and the Dinner Table). *Later, in 2013, she received her first writing award when her work for the New York Times earned her the Sidney Hillman Prize for Book Journalism for her great work for people's interests.* She was also awarded the "Books for Better Lives" award for the uplifting and encouraging messages she recorded in that book. Tracie is also a lecturer, but most importantly, she walks from one place to another all over the country, speaking to different people of diverse ages and intellectual capabilities about the great works she does in the areas of agriculture—plants and animal production—as well as cooking. Her major concern is the healthy production of foods and the taking of highly nutritious meals. She was later named a "Knight-Wallace journalist" at the University following her work on book journalism about diet and nutrition. Tracie has also been a lecturer in journalism at the University of Wesleyan.

Audience and Purpose

The audience for this text above varies widely from those who witnessed the author when she was doing the work to those who have read the text in various forms. Millions of people across the globe have become, by default, part of the audience of this work (McMillan). This work was first released in a printed document, and so the first audience was those who first read it. Subsequently, the work has been translated into many other forms, and as of now, it has been released on social media where a

good number of people can access it. However, inasmuch as the audience for this text is vast, there remains a particular group of people who directly form part of this audience—the American citizens! The audience has increased in recent times to countless millions of American citizens (McMillan).

When Tracie wrote this text, she had an objective that she wanted to accomplish. This objective forms part of the mission of this article. McMillan wished to sensitize her fellow citizens to the state of their country regarding food insecurity, what could have been the cause, and how they could improve. She laments the state of the country's food. She also wanted to inspire her audience about healthy eating habits. Tracie stresses to her viewers the need to eat a nutritious diet. On this, Melissa Boteach says, "People making trade-offs between foods that are filling but not nutritious and may actually contribute to obesity." She not only educates people on the need to make healthy foods, but she also creates awareness of food scarcity and how individuals can use the little wages they earn, plus the relief they obtain from private food programs like SNAP, to make a healthy diet. A lecturer of sociology from City University in New York states, "Today, more working people and their families are hungry because wages have declined." The author also, in her purpose, tries to compare the dependence rate of various counties in the United States on the SNAP programs. Perhaps she does alert residents and leaders of that county to learn and improve on how they can reduce the overdependence rate on SNAP. This is a challenge, for instance, for the residents of Los Angeles, CA, with the majority of individuals benefitting from the program standing at 971000 individuals, against their counterparts from Humphreys, MS, who are only doing 51000 individuals. From reading the article, perhaps the leaders from Los Angeles could do what the other guys are doing, which they haven't done!

Changing Context of the Article

The article was first written by Tracie McMillan in 2014 to address issues of food security in the United States. However, the context of this work, which was primarily aimed at reaching the audience of Americans, has dramatically changed since the time it was written. The article cannot be said to have a specific setting since, unlike oral speeches, it wasn't delivered orally. However, since this work is a printed document and published on social media, the setting varies with the place where the audience is based.

Visual Rhetoric and Evidence

In trying to communicate her ideas about food insecurity, Tracie employs a lot of visual rhetoric. Visual rhetoric, in a nutshell, is a type of rhetorical situation that a writer uses to make her communications clearer, perhaps by using images, graphs, maps, and many more. In the oral presentation, the visual rhetoric would include the various body language and non-verbal cues (McMillan). In ensuring effective communication and presentation of facts, McMillan uses some visual rhetoric. For instance, in narrating the story of Jacqueline Christian, who works as a home aide, she

presents her photographs when she is performing her daily chores, and at the same time, she attaches the pictures of her little child moving in the nearby farm to look for grapes and mushrooms. Again, in analyzing the top leading subsidized farm produce, Tracie uses a well-presented and drawn bar graph representing each crop against its subsidized price. She also uses maps to give her views. In explaining the distribution of how different regions of the United States are affected, she uses the entire map of the whole country with various states well identified; she also uses different color codes to represent each state and a key to explain the meaning of the color codes.

Summary

The author has indeed wisely employed rhetorical strategies to communicate her opinion in trying to explain food insecurity in the United States. For instance, there are three primary rhetorical strategies that a writer may employ for productive writing. Tracie has used all three of them. For instance, she has employed the use of Ethos, and she has used logical reasoning alone (McMillan). She achieved this by citing credible sources like the USDA, the Food Research and Action Center, and many others (McMillan). She uses well-structured and organized grammar, which is easily read and understood by the audience. Tracie also uses emotional appeal and reasoning in her argument to make her thinking more effective. Emotional appeal is one rhetorical strategy a writer may use. It can be achieved in many ways, such as by giving a real-life story of the affected party and trying to sympathize with them. In her argument, Tracie gives an account of several stories of individuals affected by hunger. She narrates the story of Christina Dreier, who is continuously worried about where their next meal would come from; this is very typical of the appealing emotions Tracie is using to make her story real and factual (McMillan).

Food security in the United States is a serious issue and a major concern and, therefore, needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

Conclusion

To ensure effective communication on this food problem, Tracie has employed a number of rhetorical strategies, including an emotional appeal that makes her argument more real and factual. Food security in the USA is an important issue that needs to be addressed, and it affects both employed and non-employed citizens (McMillan). “Today, more working people and their families are hungry because wages have declined,” said one of the sociologists at City University, New York.

Work Cited

McMillan, Tracie. “The New Face of Hunger.” *National Geographic*, vol. 226, no. 2, 2014, pp. 66–89.