

Urban Growth in Mumbai

Mumbai is a megacity in India. It was formerly called Bombay when part of the British Empire. It is located on the west coast, next to the Indian Ocean. Mumbai grew due to trade. It used to export spices from Maharashtra state. Today it is a major industrial and financial centre, exporting cars, chemicals and textiles.

Mumbai has a GDP of US\$ 368 billion and the city accounts for 6% of India's total GDP. Its main industries are Bollywood films, finance and banking, textiles and clothing, IT. Its main employers are Tata (steel, cars, trucks, chemicals, food), Alliance Industries (oil, energy, chemicals)

Mumbai is the largest city in India with a population of 18.4 million people. It is rapidly growing: 600 000 people are added to the population each year. Its rapid growth is due to urbanisation: the movement of people from rural areas to cities. The push factors from the countryside include lack of jobs and low wages. The pull factors for the city include the ease of finding work in the informal sector. Mumbai also has a high rate of natural increase. This is because Mumbai's population is relatively young and, therefore, more likely to start a family.

The economic opportunities of living in Mumbai include higher pay. For example, In Mumbai, the pay for a typical maid would be 10 000 rupees a month (£120). In rural areas, the majority earn less than 5000 rupees a month (£60). In urban areas, there is better access to healthcare. Consequently, life expectancy is 21 years longer in Mumbai than in the countryside. There is also improved access to education (literacy rate is 85% in urban areas but 69% in rural ones). There is better transport (2 billion journeys are made on Mumbai's trains). Homes are more likely to be connected to electricity (20% of rural homes are not). There is better telecommunication in Mumbai (88% of urban dwellers own a mobile phone).

62% of Mumbai's population live in slums. Dharavi is India's largest slum, where 1 million people live in each square mile (400 000 per km²). Dharavi is overcrowded, there is on average 6 people per room. 12 neighbours share a tap and water rationed to between 5.30am and 7.30am each morning. Sanitation is poor as 500 people share a toilet, many defecate in the open and most sewers are open drains. Consequently, there are 4000 cases of water borne disease a day.

In Dharavi 85% of people have a job and unemployment is low. 80% of Mumbai's waste is recycled in Dharavi. For example, there 35 000 rag pickers. Many products are made the 15 000 one room factories and workshops in the slum, such as potteries, bakeries,

clothing, leather goods and manufactured components. The output from Dharavi's businesses is US\$ 1 billion per year. However, working conditions can be poor with hazardous chemicals used and long hours and pay in this informal sector can be low - £1 per day. 85% of Dharavi's homes have electricity, although many connections are illegal and dangerous. 90% of all homes in Dharavi are illegal. People are squatting on the land.

Elsewhere in Mumbai, traffic congestion is a problem. There has been a 57% increase in cars 23% increase in buses. Nitrous oxide emissions are 3 times their safe limit. Air pollution leads to 80 000 deaths per year. Rapid growth also creates problems for educations. For example, 65% of primary schools have more than 35 pupils per class. Hospitals are under pressure due to the rising population and poor sanitation: Dharavi's hospital admits 3000 patients a day. Crime is not a serious problem in Mumbai. For example, racist incidents are low. However, bribery and corruption of officials is local people's main crime concern.

Mumbai's 'Slum Rehabilitation Authority' is trying to improve the quality of life for slum dwellers with clearance and redevelopment. If 70% of an area's residents agree, then they will all be relocated to other parts of the city and given a home in a new 14 storey tower blocks.

An alternative approach is illustrated by 'National Slum Dwellers' Association'. This incremental approach installs underground sewers and paved roads. Small loans have been granted to slum residents to improve their homes. Small single-story homes are now houses with 2-3 levels. Families have added bathrooms and kitchens and replaced tin roofs with tiles.