Essay - Mumbai, **Maximum City**: Modernity and Inequalities in Emerging India [CA v1.2]

Summary

Introduction ........................................................................................................... 1
1. Mumbai, Gateway of India ........................................................................... 1
2. Tradition and Modernity in Mumbai .......................................................... 2
3. Inequalities in Mumbai ................................................................................. 2
4. Mumbai and Globalization .......................................................................... 3

Introduction

India is an emerging country and a member of the BRICS (Federative Republic of Brazil, Russian Federation, Republic of India, People's Republic of China and Republic of South Africa). Mumbai is India's largest city (by population: 20.7 million as of 2011) and the financial and commercial capital of the country as it generates 6% of the GDP.

1. **Mumbai, Gateway of India**

   • Mumbai (formerly Bombay) is known as the "Gateway of India". In fact, it's the name of a famous monument completed in 1924 (during the British Raj) located on the waterfront in South Mumbai (it can be seen on our map near the Taj hotel). Mumbai's top tourist attraction is a basalt arch, 26 metres high [panorama]. The jetty was used as the landing place for British Viceroy and other V.I.P.

   • Mumbai lies on the western shore of India and has a deep natural harbour on the Arabian Sea (near Butcher and Elephanta islands on the map). Mumbai port (Prince's Dock was commissioned in 1880) is primarily used for bulk cargo (3rd Indian port in 2013-2014), while most container traffic is directed to Jawahar Lal Nehru Port (1989) [JNPT on our map]. Also known as Nhava Sheva, it is located near Navi Mumbai (i.e. "New Bombay", 1972) and spread over 10 square kilometres. It is the 33rd largest port in the world and the largest container port in India (4.3 million TEU in 2010-11).

   • Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (CSIA) [web site] is the second busiest airport in India (30 million air travellers in 2011) and was ranked 48th worldwide in 2013. It is situated in the suburb of Santa Cruz (see map). The new T2 (450,000 square metres) [video] was opened for international operations on February 2014. CSIA will be capable of handling 40 million passengers and 1 million tonnes of cargo annually.

   • Bombay emerged as a significant colonial trading town during the mid-18th century. Today, Mumbai contributes 60% of customs duty collections and 40% of India's foreign trade. Along with the rest of India, Mumbai has witnessed an export boom in the last decade.
2. **Tradition and Modernity in Mumbai**

- We can see, on the photographs, the mix of old and new quite typical of today India and her thriving "maximum city":
- The **University of Bombay** was established in 1857 by Dr John Wilson at the Fort campus, which is located near the southern end of Mumbai (near The Gateway of India on the map). As can be seen, it's built in the Victorian neo-gothic style of architecture. The Rajabai clock tower stands in the lawns of the campus (on the right of the photography). Completed in the 1870s, it was modelled on the Big Ben clock tower of London.
- The University of Mumbai is one of the premier universities in India. The language of instruction for most courses is English.
- Another reminder of the British Raj Era is on display: the cricket fields. By the end of the 18th c., cricket had developed to be the national sport of England. The last World Cup in 2011 was won by the co-hosts, India.
- But Mumbai is also a hub of IT industry. On the same picture of Mumbai University, we can see modern buildings with powerful antennas.
- The **Imperial** is a twin-tower residential complex located at the sea front in Tardeo, South Mumbai that are the tallest (240 m.) completed (2010) skyscrapers in India. They are surrounded by other tall towers.

3. **Inequalities in Mumbai**

- Rising income inequality is globalisation's theme tune. Technological progress, market-oriented reforms, and excessively generous tax regimes are driving a wedge between rich and poor, magnified by the opportunities created through trade and finance – and by a parallel failure to finance decent public services for the poor.
- Go back 15 years, and there were just two dollar billionaires in India. Now there are 46. The $176bn total net worth of the billionaire community has climbed from about 1% of GDP to 12% (that's enough to eliminate absolute poverty in India twice over).
- The **Imperial** towers are one of India's most expensive residential condominiums address: each are 60-storeys high, with flats priced in 2010 between Rs8.5 crore to Rs90 crore (i.e. $1.4 million and $15 million).
- Mumbai is also home to **Antilia**, the world's most expensive ($1 billion) house [photogr; photogr], towering above its modest environs. With spectacular Arabian Sea views, swimming pool with spa and gym facilities, and no fewer than three helipads, the 27-storey shaft of steel and glass is the residence of Mukesh **Ambani**. Chairman of Reliance Industry, a global energy conglomerate, Ambani - net worth $21bn - is India's richest person and ranks 22nd on Forbes' list of global billionaires.
- Stroll up to poor districts and you enter what feels like a parallel universe. This is the world inhabited by Mumbai's 6 million slum dwellers. Most people survive on less than $2 a day. Malnourished kids who should be in school are collecting metal to sell as scrap. **Dharavi** is the biggest Mumbai slum (featured in the film **Slumdog Millionaire**) where 600,000 residents are crammed. On the photography, there is no paved road but makeshift housing and street peddlers.
According to the founder of the National Slum Dwellers Federation of India, foreign investors are attempting to clear large parts of the shanty town and replace them with 23-storey apartments.

4. **Mumbai and Globalization**

- Mumbai is home to one quarter of India's industrial production. In fact, the Dharavi slum is a production and export hub for leather goods. As can be seen on the last map, Special Economic Zones (SEZ) are expanding.

- Mumbai is the financial capital of India (~70% of capital flows) and hosts the Reserve Bank of India and two stock exchanges: the Bombay Stock Exchange founded in 1875 ($1,260 billion of market cap., 10th world rank in December 2012) and the National Stock Exchange ($1,230 billion, 11th world rank) [src].

- Mumbai has a powerful entertainment industry: "Today, every major American studio -- from Walt Disney to 20th Century Fox -- has a presence in India, either by itself or via partnership. This has been a two-way exchange: the Mumbai-based Reliance group is now the parent company of Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks". In the 2000s, Bollywood (= Bombay + Hollywood) has gone global (Ex.: Devdas at Cannes in 2002) by targeting the Indian diaspora (Sri Lanka, Persian Gulf, United-Kingdom, California....). One of the biggest Bollywood star, Amitabh Bachchan (more than 180 movies since 1969) was elected "Millenium Superstar" by the BBC in 1999 and his statue stands at Madame Tussaud in London since 2000 (thanks to Indian tourists, other Bollywood stars are there too: the "King" Shahrukh Khan and Aishwarya Rai).

- As a global city, Mumbai is also a melting pot. There has been clashes between Hindus and Muslims (December 1992–January 1993: 900 deads) and numerous terrorists attacks (Ex.: November 2008, the siege of the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower).