

Urban development in Mumbai | A1 Sample answer

Explain why an urban area in a sub-continental region developed. (2013 Q6B)

Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay, is a major urban area of the sub-continental region of India. Mumbai was originally a collection of islands that were connected up by land reclaimed from the sea. It is one of the main cities in India and is home to 18 million people. 30% of the Indian population live in cities like Mumbai.

Mumbai was first established as a trading port for the East India Trading Company in the 17th century. The population was roughly 60,000 at that point. It was known as a place of religious freedom in India because when the conflict between Muslims and Hindus started many ended up fleeing and settling in Mumbai. This meant that the city had a large workforce for the newly created cotton and weaving industries. It was strategically located and became an important trading centre for the British after colonisation. They exploited it mainly for the textiles industry.

Today, Mumbai had the largest port in India. It experiences 25% of India's trade. It is the financial capital of India and Bollywood, the Indian film industry, is located there. It is the most populous city in India and second most in the world. It has the highest GDP of anywhere in India which means it is the richest city.

However Mumbai suffers from many problems associated with cities of its size, especially in the developing world. Pollution is a large problem as waste is not collected in many parts of the city and smog caused by burning fossil fuels is a huge problem. Since cows are sacred to Hindus, they cannot be interfered with and wander all over the city and there is cow dung everywhere. Overcrowding is also a major issue. In 2007, the population density was 3000 people to every square kilometre. This means there is not enough open space and no room to expand the necessary facilities to hold this population. There has been an increase in the number of bustees which is the term used for temporary houses made out of plastic, tin or cardboard. Bustees are rapidly expanding in the city because labourers come there looking for a better standard of living and there is nowhere to house them. Dharavi, the largest bustee in Asia, is a temporary home to almost 10 million people. Through an 800 million euro development project, the government in India plans

to demolish Dharavi to build business parks, a university and hotels. They plan to house the inhabitants elsewhere in the city. The people cannot protest as legally they are squatters with no rights to their homes. There are also poor hygiene standards as there is no running water. The risk of waterborne diseases such as cholera is high and many Indians die each year from this.