



## 22 FIGHTING A LOSING BATTLE? PLANNING POLICIES OF MUMBAI IN THE WAKE OF GLOBALIZATION

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### Introduction

**G**lobalization is characterised by mobility of international capital. It is not linked to the industrial interests or nation-based productive capital, as existed in the post-war capitalism. This characteristic fluidity of the capital is controlled by one gigantic block of international finance based on quick returns, rather than an independent genuine capital development. This imposes a new International Division of Labour, by the developed nations, based on locating markets in the Third World, irrespective of the needs and relevant issues of the different regions and societies of the Third World.

This phase of globalization is not based on one particular nation. Therefore, to co-ordinate, it needs linkages within the advanced nations, and between them and the developing nations, through major urban nodes. The phenomenon of the post-industrial city is characterised by the post-industrial service economy, supported by the private sector, and accentuated by the liberalization of economic policies embodied in the New Economic Policy (NEP).

In India, a large section of urban researchers and planners, see the city of Mumbai as having potential to become a global city. According to them the city is already showing signs of a post industrial city. It is expected to be a major off-shore financial centre integrating East and West in the globalization process (Sita K. and Gupta K. 1997). The projection has become an agenda for the Indian business and political elite, as well as for the planning authorities of the state Bombay Metropolitan Regional Authority (BMRDA 1996). However, a small section of social researchers do warn us of the dangers of further manipulation by the international capital, of the Third World in general and of the majority of marginalized population in particular; due to the centralised and non-democratic character of a new liberalised economy which wants the control by the State to be reduced to the minimum. (Patnaik P. 1998)

The projections about Mumbai's potential for a global city are substantiated by presenting data regarding the spatial and structural changes in the growth of Mumbai's population, particularly about the shift in the decline and growth in the manufacturing and service sector. The paper examines this analysis, made to strengthen the case for globalization and questions whether there is really any space for globalization in Mumbai, especially the island city and the Central Business District (CBD). It will be seen with respect to the shift of population and densities, the pressure on infrastructure, the redevelopment policies of the state, and the performance and credibility of the private sector.

The second part deals with the politics of vacant urban space

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in the island city in the context of the projected image of the city as a post-industrial city and how it affects the local population. An area called Girangaon (Textile Village), located on the edge of the CBD is chosen as the case study. Identified with 58 textile mills as the main source of livelihood, its predominantly working class population who migrated to the city over the last 150 years has given the city of Mumbai its cultural identity. At present it is undergoing a series of economic, political, social and cultural changes, as a result of the land-use policies of the State which are based on the assumption that the textile industry has become a "sunset" industry.

The paper questions the alleged "sickness" of the mills by tracing the history of the 'Textile Village' and highlights the present agitational struggle by the local population against the forthcoming displacement of the six hundred thousand local population due to the closure of mills and the 'development' of the vacant mill lands.

### Brief History of Mumbai

The city of Mumbai was originally a cluster of seven islands as seen in the map (Map 1). King Ashoka (263 to 229 BC) of the Mauryan dynasty was probably the first known ruler of the region. The islands were successively ruled by many Hindu dynasties till 1348 AD, when Bahadurshah, a Muslim Emperor of the neighbouring state of Gujarat, took over. The Portuguese wrested from the Muslims the control of the islands in 1534 AD, and ruled the islands for 130 years. Though they realised the importance of the islands, because of the lack of adequate revenue and their zeal for spreading Christianity, they succeeded little in developing these islands.

The British attacked the Portuguese but could gain a foothold on the islands only after these islands were presented as dowry, at the marriage of the Portuguese Princess Katharine. The British set about in right earnest. There was an increase in the revenue of the islands as the population increased. The islands were made habitable by reclaiming the low lying areas. The land records were set to suit the rulers and British laws began to be applied in these islands.

The island city started prospering at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. By then the city was established as an important port and was responsible for major import and export activities. Tea was imported from China and in turn cotton and spices were exported. Large-scale trade of opium to China was also being undertaken. However, its export was banned which led the traders to engage in smuggling activities (Rao S. 1997). Hence, from 1805 to 1831, the traders were able to amass immense wealth. By 1850, the city had become a major port with flourishing trading activity.

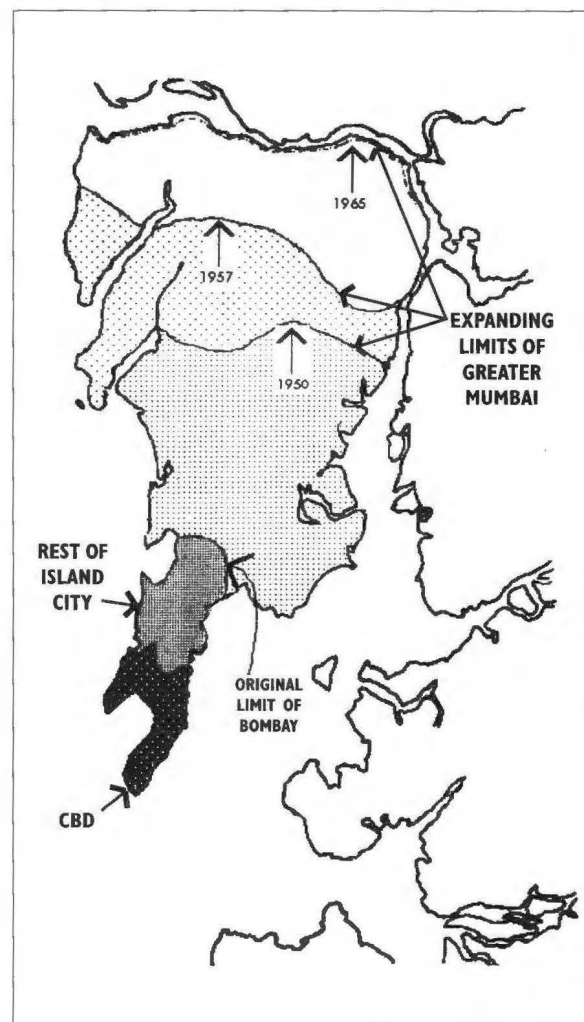
In 1854, the first textile mill started in Mumbai. In the next 20 years, 15 more mills sprang up and employed 15,000 people. This laid the foundation of a strong industrial base, which was consolidated later by about 85 textile mills. By 1930, India was the second largest producer and the third

largest exporter of textiles in the world (Leadbreater, 1993). In 1931, the city of Mumbai had two out of three workers working in textile mills.

The aftermath of the Second World War brought about several changes in the city. The leading textile houses started engineering and petrochemical industries by diverting the profits from the textile industry. This confirmed the status of Mumbai as a leading industrial city, though the decline of the textile industry in the city of Mumbai is noticed only after 1950.

Thus, the city of Mumbai, from a colonial port city, grew initially as a trading city, and later developed as a major industrial city. Between 1960 and 1990, the service sector has been growing at a rapid pace. There has been a marked growth in the information, travel, tourism & hotelling, banking, insurance and other financial services. Today, the city is recognised as the financial capital of India, with population of 9.9 million (as per the census) spread over 169 sq. miles (Map 1, Table 1, Chart 1).

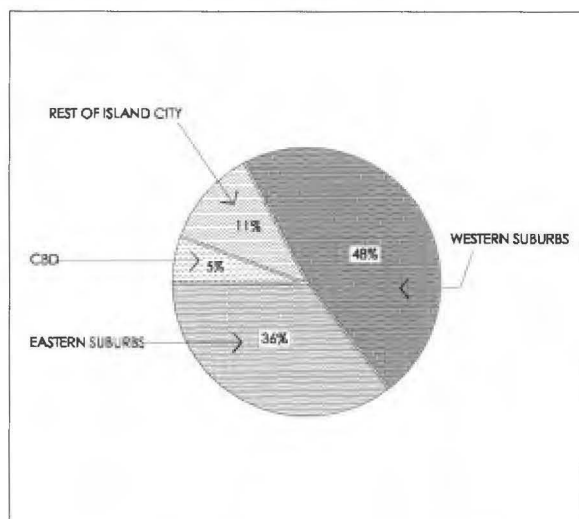
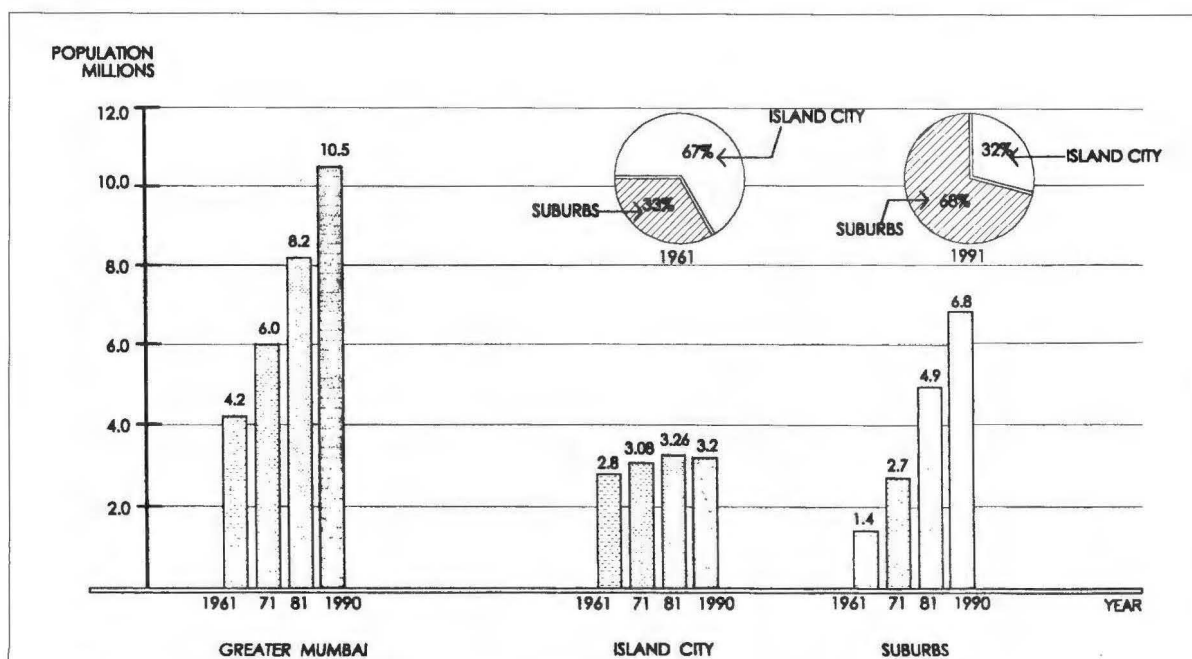
Map 1 Limits of Greater Mumbai



**Table 1** Area (in sq. km) of Mumbai city

Part of city	area sq. miles	% age to total
Island City CBD	8.00	5
Rest of island city	18.00	11
Western Suburbs	82.00	48
Eastern Suburbs	61.00	36
Greater Mumbai	169.00	100
Total		

Source: Socio-Economic Review of Greater Bombay City 1994-95 R&D Centre: Pg. 30.

**Chart 1** Area Distribution in Greater Mumbai**Chart 2** Population Distribution in Greater Mumbai

## Part I: On the Threshold of Globalization: Projections of Planners

### Population and Spatial Changes in Mumbai

The vibrant, dynamic city of Mumbai has undergone many changes in the last 50 years. Presented here are the statistics and data used by the policy makers, the planning authorities and the urban researchers, to state that such changes are not unique, but are part of a larger global pattern, showing signs of a post industrial city, and post industrial service economy, supported by the private office sector. The data relates to the shift of population, the growth rate of population and changes in the employment sectors.

### Shift Of Population: Sub-Urbanisation

The administrative and the municipal limits of Mumbai, were limited to the Island City till 1950. Between 1950 and 1957 the limits were stretched to include suburbs and extended suburbs to form what is known as Greater Mumbai. The process of sub-urbanisation accelerated since 1961. The ratio of population of the island city to the suburbs was 2 : 1 in 1961. In 1991, it reversed to 1: 2 (Table 2, Chart 2).

**Table 2**

Population Distribution: Showing Sub-urbanisation percentagewise

Year	Island City millions	%age	Western Suburbs millions	%age	Eastern Suburbs millions	%age	Greater Mumbai millions	%age
1961	2.8	66.7	0.89	21.2	0.51	12.1	4.2	100
1971	3.08	51.4	1.72	28.6	1.2	20.0	6.0	100
1981	3.26	39.8	2.85	34.7	2.09	25.5	8.2	100
1991	3.2	32.0	3.98	39.8	2.82	28.2	10.0	100

Source: Socio-Economic Review of Greater Bombay 1994-95 R&D Centre: Pg. 24.

### Growth Rate in the Island City

The population of Greater Mumbai in 1991 was 9.9 million. The compounded annual growth rate of population since 1951 decreases but shows an average growth rate of 3.4% during 1961 and 1991. It suddenly drops to 1.9% during 1981 to 1991 (Table 3, Charts 3,4).

The annual growth rate of population of the city and the suburbs shows that the growth of the island city slowed down considerably and for the first time shows a negative growth in 1991 (Chart 4).

The island city, especially the CBD, comprising of A, B, C and D wards (divisions for administrative purposes), shows a decline in the population, in the decade of 1980-90. The shift of population was pronounced in B, C and D wards. In 1991, for the first time, parts of the CBD show a negative growth. There is a decrease in the absolute number of people in the CBD and island city (Charts 3, 4).

### Sectoral and Spatial Changes in Employment: Manufacturing Sector

Growth in the employment in the city was sluggish because of economic stagnation in the region, though during 1980-1990 the economy was buoyant in the country (BMRDA 1996).

The comparative picture of sector-wise employment, as per the economic census, shows that the share of employment in the manufacturing sector declines from 43.8% (in 1971), to 36% (in 1980), to 28.5% (in 1990); while the share of employment in the trade sector has gone up from 18.5% to 29.1% in the same period; indicating a shift in the nature of

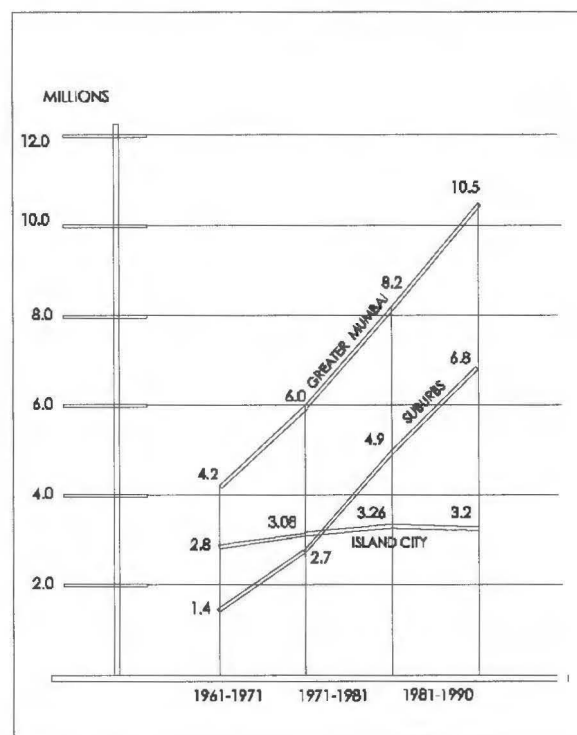
**Table 3**

Population, Annual growth rate, Migrants: Greater Mumbai City			
Year	population millions	annual growth rate % age	migrants % age
1951	3.0	5.1	79.0
1961	4.2	3.3	51.8
1971	6.0	3.6	48.0
1981	8.2	3.2	47.0
1991	9.9	1.9	16.8 as per census
1991	10.5	2.7	39 % as per UN method (see note below)

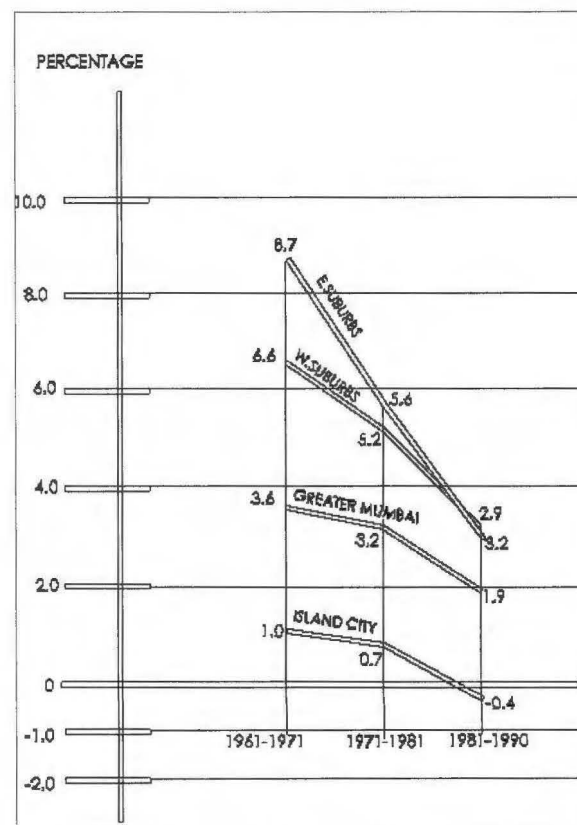
Source: Socio-Economic Review of Greater Bombay 1994-95 R&D Centre: Pg. 23.

Note: There are some doubts about the veracity of population figures for 1991 especially with such low figures for migrants. The figures based on the method adapted by the United Nations (urban rural differential method) seem more acceptable. Based on that the population of the city in 1991 would be 10.5 millions, of which 39% would be migrants. The annual growth rate in that case would be 2.7%.

**Chart 3** Population Growth in Greater Mumbai



**Chart 4** Annual Growth of City and Suburbs



economic activities of Mumbai (Chart 5).

The spatial distribution of employment shows that, from 1971 to 1990, there is a decline of 4% in the CBD in the share of the total employment of Greater Mumbai. Rest of the island city shows a decline of 12%. The Island City, including the CBD, showed a total decline of 16%. The employment in the suburbs has gone up by 16% (more than doubled) with the manufacturing sector playing an important role (Table 4).

The employment in the manufacturing sector has gone up in the suburbs and declined in the city. The manufacturing sector, shows shift toward the suburbs, corresponding to the shift of population, observed over the last two decades (Table 5).

#### Sectoral And Spatial Changes In Employment and Establishments: Office Sector.

The total employment of 2.2 millions in 1980, in Greater Mumbai grew to 2.4 millions in 1990, that is by 10%. The employment in the office sector of 352 thousand in 1980, grew to 628 thousand in 1990, that is by 78%. The percentage of office-sector employment to the total employment grew from 16% in 1980 to 26% in 1990.

The total establishments of 284 thousand in 1980 in Greater Mumbai grew to 423 thousand in 1990, that is by 49%. The establishments in the office sector of 23 thousand in 1980 grew to 42 thousand in 1990, that is by 82 %. The percentage of the office sector establishments to the total establishments

grew from 8% in 1980 to 10% in 1990.

During 1980–1990, in the suburbs, growth in the establishments is 53% and in employment is 38%. In CBD, it is 25% and 38% respectively and in the rest of the Island City it is 22% and 24% respectively. As a result, the share of CBD in the office sector establishments has decreased from 51% to 39% and in the office sector employment, from 55% to 47% during 1980–1990.

#### Projections and Policies

The statistical data of the island city is analysed by the urban researchers and the urban planning authorities for their projections and proposed policies, as follows:

1. There is a shift of population from the island city towards the north, which has resulted in sub-urbanisation. There is a shift of manufacturing sector, corresponding to the above.
2. There is a growth in the trade sector, service sector, and the office sector.
3. These kinds of spatial, sectoral and functional changes are experienced by many other cities of the world, which have transformed into post industrial cities. The post-industrial service economy would be accentuated by globalization with consequent increase in the mobility of the capital (Sita K. and Gupta K. 1997).
4. The city of Mumbai has the necessary support structure to become a “global financial off-shore centre” and to face the impact of the increased international business transactions, increased communications and information flow, and increased international business travelling. It would also be supported by a vibrant private sector (BMRDA, 1996).
5. The island city would be thrown open to the entry of multinationals, international mutual funds, foreign banks and insurance companies who would bring in the necessary foreign capital, giving boost to the office sector.
6. The planning authority of Mumbai, BMRDA, the Bombay Metropolitan Region Authority, had subscribed to the policy of containing the population and urban sprawl in the earlier Development Plan of 1970–90 (BMRDB, 1970) by preventing the growth of office sector in the island city. BMRDA, in its revised plan, reversed the earlier Office Location Policy, to allow the

Table 4

Spatial Distribution of Employment in Greater Mumbai

Year	CBD		Rest of Island City		Suburbs		Greater Mumbai	
no.	no.	%age	no.	%age	no.	%age	no.	%age
1971	515393	33.72	583447	38.18	429424	28.10	1528264	100
1980	707057	32.15	692257	31.47	800069	36.38	2199381	100
1990	715844	29.51	633523	26.12	1076514	44.38	2425881	100

Source: Draft Regional Plan for Bombay Metropolitan Region 1996-2011 - BMRDA 1996: Pg. 133.

Chart 5 Growth of Employment in Greater Mumbai

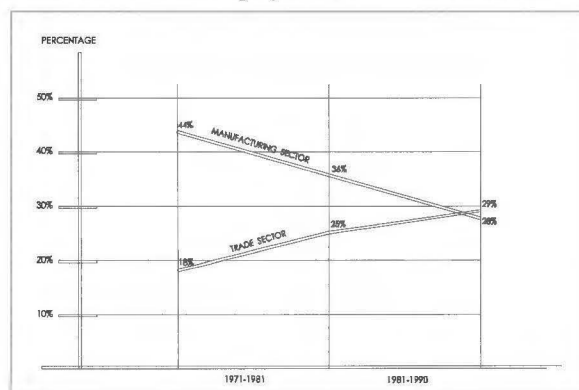


Table 5

Shift of Manufacturing Employment

Year	Island City thousands	Suburbs thousands
1971	446	243
1991	272	417

Source: Draft Regional Plan to Bombay Metropolitan Region 1996-2011 - BMRDA 1996: Pg. 133.



growth of the office sector in the island city in order to facilitate the process set in motion by liberalisation of economic policies.

7. The city, it is said, would create a space for the service sector, as the wholesale markets from the CBD have been shifted to the satellite township of New Bombay (see note 1). The proposed shifting of the diamond and the textile markets is expected to make available additional space. The rest of the island city (excluding CBD) houses the textile mills which are deemed as *sunset* industries. The proposed closure of these textile mills will make available large chunks of land to accommodate the office sector and the "high-tech, non-polluting industries." (BMRDA, 1996)

### *Is There Space in the City for Globalization?*

In the study presented so far, it has been shown how a case is built up to indicate that the city is showing signs of a post-industrial city with a potential to emerge as a global financial and service centre. However, a close analysis of the data, presented by the planning authorities and the researchers, raises doubts about the capacity and the capabilities of the Island city to fulfil the requirements of a global city.

The city of Mumbai is very often compared to the primary world cities such as New York, London, Paris, Frankfurt and Tokyo. However, these cities are located in the advanced industrial countries which allows a smooth transition to the global economy. The secondary cities in the semi-periphery, like Hong Kong, Mexico, Buenos Aires are located in countries which are less advanced. India is not recognised as having an advanced industrial economy. Mumbai therefore has less chances for staking claim to become a global city. It is the political and business elite of Mumbai (the *Indian Merchants Chamber and Mumbai First*; see note 2) that have a vested interest in promoting the cause of a global city.

### **Population Shift and Existing Densities**

It is argued that the growth rate of the population of Mumbai showed a marked decline from 1970, which led to a negative growth in 1991. The actual population of the island city went down by 110,000 people with respect to the population of 1980. However, this average rate of decline which is -0.3% per year is very marginal. The Western cities like New York and London, with which Mumbai is compared to, showed the decline of CBD and a massive decline in the city core. London had lost 750,000 residents and New York city about 820,000. (Dogan and Kasarda, 1988) before the cities rebounded. It is too early at this stage to conclude that the decline of Mumbai's core will further accelerate.

The existing densities in the various wards of the island city are too high to make any effective space available after the shift of 110,000 people. The density of the entire Greater Mumbai is 58,000 people/sq. mile. The island city of which CBD is a part has a density of 118,000 people/sq. mile. One of the wards, the C ward of CBD, has a density as high as 280,000 people/sq. mile and some areas even cross the mark

of 500,000 people/sq. mile. It is needless to mention that these densities are too high, by any international standards, to encourage any additional growth of the office sector.

### **The Office Location Policy and Growth of Office Sector**

Given the agenda of globalization, it is necessary again to compare Mumbai with the Western cities. The cities of London and New York lost 430,000 jobs and 500,000 jobs respectively. These cities had a decline both in the residential as well in the commercial sector, whereas in Mumbai there is no decline in the commercial sector. This is a distinguishing feature, as it has happened in spite of the new satellite township of New Bombay, planned to relieve the pressure on the mainland, and in spite of the adoption of other measures, like dispersal of industries to prevent further growth.

The BMRDA, through its special notification in 1977, imposed a ban on any further growth of the office sector in the island city. In spite of this, 170,000 new jobs mushroomed during 1980–1990. These jobs have more than compensated for the population shift of 110,000 people in the same period. The Office Location Policy now stands completely reversed to support the agenda of globalization. This encouragement would lead to further proliferation of jobs in the office sector. Though it is an addition only to daytime density, its pressure on the poor infrastructure cannot be overlooked.

Any further growth in the office sector of the island city, would be at the expense of the residential population of the island city. The residential premises of the CBD, vacated by the shift in the population, largely get converted into offices. A residential premise of 500 sq. ft. occupied by 5 residents, would be replaced by an office which would employ 15/20 people in the same premises. Although, it is daytime population, it means that the ratio of growth in the office sector employment to the people displaced from the residential premises, would be as high as 3: 1. The pressure on the density in the CBD is clear: 105,000 jobs are added in CBD, over 8.0 sq. miles where as 104,000 jobs are added in the suburbs over 87.0 sq. miles.

### **Pressure on Transport Infrastructure**

The proposals put forward by planning authorities to construct new flyovers to bring the commuters to CBD, are not only inadequate for further growth, but would be ineffective because of the tapering wedge-like shape of the island city. The pressure on the transport infrastructure has already reached a breaking point. For example a suburban railway rake with a capacity of 1800, carries 4000 commuters in the peak hours. Between 9 am to 11 am, 110,000 commuters alight at two railway terminals in CBD. The travelling speed on the road has come down to fifteen miles/hour with a fleet of 3000 public buses, taxis, and the private vehicles plying on the narrow crowded streets. (BMRDA, 1996).

### Shift in the Manufacturing Sector

The industries did not evolve to an extent whereby the industrial economy could be termed as an advanced economy. In majority of the cases where the manufacturing units have shifted, the reason was to select the soft option of the real estate exploitation, by disposing of their land and assets and retrenchment of workers, is done under the pretext of modernisation.

Instead of modernising, the manufacturing sector is downsizing by subcontracting out the production. This is leading to a growth of small workshops and factories resulting in greater informalization of the workforce. The jobs in the informalized manufacturing sector are poorly paid, unsafe and insecure, which also leads to increased exploitation of female labour, a labour force which can be more easily manipulated. Because of the poor performance by the private sector, the jobs created in the tertiary sector are not compensating the losses of the jobs in the manufacturing sector.

### Proposals for Urban Renewal

The wholesale markets from CBD and from the E ward in the island city are planned to shift to the satellite township New Bombay. The wholesale markets of vegetables, steel and iron, have already been shifted, but in the absence of any comprehensive urban renewal proposals for the benefit of the city, the original areas have already deteriorated (Mukhopadhyay T. 1997).

The proposed shifting of wholesale textile markets from CBD to the suburbs has been stalled for fifteen years. The shifting of the diamond market to a Diamond Bourse in the specially designed Bandra-Kurla complex in the suburbs has also run into difficulties (Upadhyay C. 1998). There is no proposal to renew the original areas so that they can be retrieved for the city by way of amenities and open spaces.

### Employment Distribution in Public and Private Sector in the CBD

The private sector is expected to shoulder the responsibilities of ushering in further growth of the office sector. The employment in the private sector establishments range from two to twenty people per establishment. Such establishments are 87% in CBD and offer only 26% employment in the office sector. The major 55% employment is in the public sector, i.e. public administration, defence, banking, insurance etc. CBD, presently, is dominantly an administrative centre. The statistics are hinting at the uncertainty of the private sector to support a global financial centre. In view of this incapability, it is feared, that India is becoming a target for the investment of Multi National Corporation (MNC) controlled capital rather than a genuine, independent capital development (Upadhyay C. 1998).

### Redevelopment of Slums and Old Rented Structures in the CBD

CBD, the oldest area of the city, has a large number of structures built before 1940, which have outlived their economic and structural life. According to the recent state policy, 19,000 dilapidated structures in the island city will be allowed to be demolished and reconstructed on the same site up to three times the otherwise existing allowable built up area (as per the Development Control Regulations in the city). The additional area generated by the reconstruction will be sold in the open market. In the context of the policy of allowing the office sector in the CBD and also in view of paramounting real estate prices, the residential premises so generated are more likely to be sold for the office use. The impact of this on the density and the infrastructure of the city is not even assessed.

## Part II: Fighting a Losing Battle? Case Study of "Textile Village"

### *An Overview of the areas*

The Textile Village occupies the areas of Parel, Lalbaug, Shivri which are adjacent to the CBD and under the E, F, G administrative wards, admeasuring the 18.00 Sq. miles with respect to 8.00 Sq. miles of CBD. The area has 58 textile mills occupying 550 acres of land. The population, predominantly the textile labour force, consists of migrants who were encouraged by the mill owners to come to the city 150 years ago, and were also offered accommodation. The place is fondly referred to as 'Girangaon' (Textile Village) which speaks of the nostalgia of the migrants for their villages back home. These textile workers played an important role in the freedom struggle and continued to make a major contribution in the working class movement. It has produced playwrights, authors, poets and ballad singers who have been instrumental in evolving a culture that occupies a place of pride in the history of Mumbai and in the state of Maharashtra, of which Mumbai is the capital. Today it is not only that the workers face a threat to livelihood but also face the prospects of displacement and destruction of culture, which is very much identified with its geographical location. The textile mills were by and large the only industry till 1931 which shaped the fortunes of the city. These mills laid the foundation of an industrial city, which later grew to be the most important city of India.

### *Decline of the Textile Industries and the Politics of Mill Land*

In 1854, the first textile mill started in Mumbai. In the next 20 years, 15 more mills sprang up and employed 15,000 people. This laid the foundation of a strong industrial base, which was consolidated later by about 85 textile mills. By 1930, India was the second largest producer of textiles in the world and ranked number three in its export. (Leadbreater, 1993). In 1931, the city of Mumbai had two out of three

workers working in the textile mills. 86 textile mills employed 131,000 people out of 178,106 people (73.5%), working in factories (Sita K. and Gupta K. 1997).

After the World War II, the mill owners diverted the profits from the textile mills to set up engineering, chemical, pharmaceutical and petrochemical industries; instead of ploughing the profits back into updating or modernising the machinery.

In 1946, the Bombay Industrial Relations Act (BIR act) was passed by the State, which made it mandatory for only one worker's union to operate in the textile mills. The union called Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh (RMMS), belonged to the ruling party, an arrangement which suited the mill owners. This became possible as the communist trade unions were losing their support base during the pre-independence period.

By 1950, the looms were sold off and the labour was retrenched under the pretext of modernisation and rationalisation of labour, which was never to be implemented. Both the looms and the labour, found their way to the powerloom sector which was earlier exploited by the mill owners, by subcontracting the work to this sector.

In the 60's, the left-wing unions had regained their strength. The mill owners, though with their backs to the wall, succeeded in beating back the left trade unions with the help of the ruling party and a newly emerging parochial party indirectly helped by the ruling party. The same parochial party was later to rule the state.

In the 70's, faulty land use policies of the state (See note 3) resulted in a boom in the real estate prices of the island city. Many of the industries sold their land to make huge profits. However, due to the restriction on the 'change of user', of the mill, the textile industry could not exploit the boom in the real estate market, except by surreptitious means.

Through the 80's, the mill owners continued with the shifting/selling of looms and retrenchment of the workers. The production was being subcontracted. Though the leftist unions were practically non-existent, workers united under a charismatic leadership (see note 4) and succeeded in keeping the mills closed, in the historic strike of the textile workers in 1982. The State Government and the mill owners managed to diffuse the strike, making 110,000 workers lose their jobs. The percentage of textile labour in the city's labour force came down from 44% in 1963 to 12.5% in 1991. The mill owners disposed off their piled up stocks and kept up the production by subcontracting it to the power loom sector. They could retrench the workers en masse without any compensation. The mill owners were jubilant. "Textile labour has been pushed back"...and "The equilibrium is now in favour of the management". (Mr. Ajay Piramal, Chairman, Mill Owners Association; 1992: Baxi R. 1992)

In 1991, the mill owners, under the pretext of modernising the *sick* mills finally secured the permissions from the State to sell in the speculative market, 2 million sq. ft. of land lying

under the mills of the Textile Village. It was feared by the workers that the mill owners would never modernise the mills as the profits from running the mills would never match the profits obtained from the real estate transactions.

This was proved by the response of the mill owners to the New Textile Policy (NTP) formulated in 1985, specially to promote modernisation of the mills. In the policy, a separate fund was created with the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) to disburse soft loans for modernising the mills, along with the liberty to select the product mix. However, only 10 out of 58 textile mills availed of these measures, which would have given a new lease of life to the textile sector. These 10 mills continue to make profits and pay regular wages to the workers till date (Kulkarni S. 1997).

The New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced in 1991, scrapped industrial licensing to enable the industry to face the impending competition from South East Asian countries. NTP and NEP should have made a positive difference to the deteriorating textile industry (Kulkarni S. 1997). However, the mill owners chose the option of quick profits from the sale of real estate, over the option of long term steady modernisation.

The above history shows that in a systematic way, the textile industry was made to appear *sick*, in order to enjoy the higher returns in connivance with the politicians and the local Mafia. The urban planners and researchers regard this *sickness* of the textile industry as one of the important signs of an emerging post-industrial city (Sita and Gupta 1997).

### Resistance Movement of Workers

Failure of the strike in 1982, demoralised the textile workers. In the otherwise socially and culturally vibrant area of the Textile Village, the depression was evident everywhere. It was only in 1989 that a group of political activists with varied backgrounds encouraged the workers of the closed mills to form the Bombay Girmi Kamgar Sangharsh Samiti (BGKSS). Within a span of five years, it succeeded in persuading the managements of the six out of the ten closed mills to reopen and earned the support of like-minded professionals including architects, lawyers, film makers and artists.

The workers, under the leadership of BGKSS, adopted various methods to carry on the struggle. In 1991, a few activists undertook a fast unto death to protest against the closure of the New Great Eastern Mills. Later, when the assurance by the State to re-open the mill proved false, the workers, despite heavy police deployment, scaled the walls and took over the mill to re-start the production. They were evicted after four days by the management in connivance with the police. In June 1993, the management finally capitulated and restarted the mill. The Modern and the Kamala mills also restarted under the pressure of BGKSS, around the same time.

Later, the BGKSS, led the agitation against the Development Control Regulations (D.C. Rules) of Mumbai which allowed the sale of mill lands and encouraged the closures. In 1994,



half clad workers, to show their plight, marched to the Governor's residence at night, demanding the repeal of D.C. rules, only to face a brutal cane charge by the police. The workers of the Ranghuvanshi Mill and the Swan Mill (both closed down by the owners), formed a workers' co-operative and proposed the take-over of the mill by the labour co-operatives. To avoid this, the management hastily withdrew and restarted the mills. The Khatau Mill which closed down in 1997 has been the centre of agitation of the 6000 workers in the past year. More than 600 workers resorted to fast unto death in May 1997, to demand the outstanding wages. A detailed case study of the struggle highlights the connivance of the state, the political parties, the mill owners and the Mafia, to deprive the textile workers their basic human rights to protest against the injustice (Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana, 1996).

### ***Emergence of the Mafia***

The turmoil in the Textile Village has produced a Mafia which has assumed threatening proportions. The young leadership of the Mafia has emerged from the frustrated textile workers and their children. The mill owner of Khatau mills in Bombay used the Mafia to terrorise workers. The Mafia leaders, on the other hand, have quickly learnt the game and want a share in the real estate bonanza as well as in the political power of the State (Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana, 1996).

### ***Urban Renewal Proposal of the Mill Lands***

A committee appointed by the State, to propose renewal of the area by recycling the mill land, comprised of bureaucrats and planners was headed by a well-known architect and planner, Mr. Charles Correa. Report of the well-publicised committee deals with the problem basically as an urban landscape problem. This can be seen by the suggestion of the committee like creating water fronts and shopping malls in place of mill lands, 'conserving' the north light structure of the mills by converting them into artists' studios etc. The report does not address the socio-economic issue of the people, resulting due to the closure of the mills, nor does it question the closure. More seriously the committee did not find the need to involve the participation of the working class residents of the area in deciding the fate of the land, on which they have lived for three generations.

### ***Cultural Resistance***

A group of socially conscious artists and writers from the Textile Village together with their colleagues from the city have formed an organisation called 'Girgangaon Bachao Andolan' (save Textile Village agitation). The organisation has been organising various cultural activities to create consciousness amongst the local population by raising issues of displacement, loss of livelihood, loss of skills and destruction of culture. This group is gaining active solidarity from the like-minded professionals such as the film makers, architects and theatre personalities.

Given the powerful nexus of the industrialists and the

politicians on one hand, and the agenda of globalization projected by the planners on the other, a committed group of activists are waging a battle to prevent displacements, save livelihood and retain the cultural heritage of the people.

## **Conclusion**

1. Based on the statistics of spatial, sectoral and structural changes seen in the population and the employment of the city, the policy makers, the planning authorities and the urban researchers, are locating the city of Mumbai on the threshold of globalization, moving towards the post industrial service economy. However they over look the facts a) that the existing population densities are much higher than the international standards, b) that there is almost no possibility of any geographical expansion, c) that the costs for any further enhancement of the public infrastructure, even if possible, would be taxing the economy heavily.

2. The population shift has brought in its wake a loss of jobs, commuting long distances to work, resulting in the deterioration of quality of life of the people and destruction of their culture. Any urban renewal will have to take into consideration these aspects. Due to the lack of any comprehensive perspective, the proposed urban renewal plans result in a piecemeal approach, with total disregard to the majority of population residing in the city.

3. The history of development projects in India has raised many issues. Lack of transparency in the State policies, and lack of people's participation in the decision making process, has resulted in non-percolation of benefits to the majority of people. The people already on the periphery get marginalized further. The question raised by the Peoples Movements at grass root levels is "Development for whom and at whose cost?"

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> New Bombay, a satellite township across the harbour, was conceived by architects Mr. Charles Correa, Mrs. Pravina Mehta and engineer Mr. Shirish Patel. The aim was to relieve pressure of population and urban growth on the city of Mumbai.

<sup>2</sup> Bombay First is a group formed by entrepreneur and business elite of Mumbai (on the lines of London First) to work out schemes to make the city into a global one. They strive to put political pressure on State Governments.

<sup>3</sup> In 1976, The government of India passed the ULCRA 1976 (Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act, 1976) according to which the government, by paying nominal compensation to the owners of vacant land, could take over the vacant land. The objective was to provide for the poor by way of increased housing stock. The state government neither implemented nor scrapped it. As a

result, there was a short supply of land which pushed the prices of land sky high.

- <sup>4</sup> Dr. Datta Samant, a doctor by profession, arose to become a powerful union leader in the city of Mumbai. He became popular by supporting the mill workers and worked towards securing their benefits and livelihoods. He opposed the sale of land which the industrialists resorted to reap profits through the real estate development projects. As a result, he was eliminated, which has left a deep scar in the history of the industry.

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