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Although some people refer to the Dharavi section of Mumbai as a “slum,” the people who live there have carved-out a life for themselves. This image depicts an embroidery shop located in Dharavi. Image by Ekabhishek; online via Flickr and Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

Over the years, Britain’s influence grew in the cluster-island area now known as Mumbai. The [sport of cricket](#) (which can trace its first direct reference to sixteenth-century southern England) became popular, for example, during India’s [British domination](#).

Today Indians, young and old alike, are passionate [cricket lovers](#).

The real growth of Bombay, as a major metropolitan area, coincided with a major problem facing Britain. As people in India began to agitate for freedom, British forces needed a safer place from which to run their affairs on the subcontinent.

Forced to leave Delhi, they began to [develop Bombay](#). Before long, the islands were essentially joined and [trains connected the area](#) to other parts of India.

As the seven islands of Bombay were transformed into one major area, during the nineteenth century, another phenomenon was about to unfold. People fleeing natural disasters, political oppression and crushing poverty began to migrate toward the growing [Bombay metropolis](#) where [they created](#) a small village in nearby marshlands.

The British gave artisans and small traders occupancy rights, but no one could have predicted what would eventually happen.

A [city-within-a-city](#), known today as [Dharavi](#), grew out of those modest marshland origins as more and more people came to the area. Unable to afford living in Bombay/Mumbai itself, immigrants gravitated toward Dharavi where they began to eke-out a living.

The developing “shanty town,” located between Bombay/Mumbai’s central and western [rail lines](#), held a [sense of hopefulness](#) for poor people and dislocated families. Without government support, residents have created a place to live and work. Its industries include [recycling](#), [pottery](#) and [textiles](#).

Although outsiders refer to Dharavi as a “slum,” Bhau Korde (a social worker who lives there) has observed:

Dharavi is an economic success story that the world must pay attention to during these times of global depression.

Living in [Dharavi](#) isn’t easy:

- People share [communal water taps](#).
- Women often make the trek for water ten, or more, times a day.
- Some residents (it is estimated that about a million people live there) get power to their homes by illegally tapping into the city’s electrical grid.
- During monsoons, drains which are infested with mosquitos (and serve as bathroom facilities for some families), overflow. A messy situation can quickly become a major cesspool.

Despite its [obvious problems](#), however, the people of Dharavi [produce goods](#) and services collectively valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars. And ... they [do not like it](#) when [their living area](#) is called “the biggest slum in Asia.”

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DHARAVI-and-the-SLUMS-of-MUMBAI-Slumdog-Millionaire>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/DHARAVI-and-the-SLUMS-of-MUMBAI-Slumdog-Millionaire>

Media Stream



Fort St. George - Bombay

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Cricket Stadium in Mumbai

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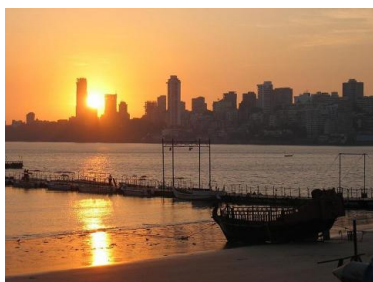
Mumbai - Central Railway Station

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Beach in Mumbai - Chaupati

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Dharavi - City Within a City

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Dharavi - Entrance in Mumbai

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Dharavi - Recycling Sector in the City

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Dharavi - Making and Selling Pottery in the City

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DHARAVI and the SLUMS of MUMBAI

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Cricket - Explanation of the Sport

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Dharavi - Its Beginnings and Current Status

Clip from a documentary, filmed in April, 2008, by the Stanley Foundation - a nonpartisan foundation.

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