

APPENDIX B: Reading Comprehension

In Famous Mumbai Slum, Redevelopment Plans Stir Controversy

Questions and Answers

1. Where is Dharavi Slum and why has it become famous? *It was the scene of the filming of academy award winning film “Slumdog Millionaire” and home to several of its actors.*
2. What are some of the conditions that make living here difficult?
Lack of clean water and facilities for private bathing or clothes laundering; open sewers creating very unpleasant smells; many people living in crowded dwellings
3. What about its location makes it appealing to developers?
It is a large area of land close to the country’s financial capita, making it prime real estate close to two commuter train lines and near the airport.
4. What plans have been recently developed by government leaders concerning changes to the area? *A plan to bulldoze the area, relocating those who live there to modern apartment buildings, using the land for higher priced housing, office space and commercial areas for India’s new middle class.*
5. What criticisms have been made to this plan from current residents of the area?
 - a. *no real accurate estimate has been done to determine the current population*
 - b. *many residents call this home, have lived there for many years and are happy where they are*
 - c. *moving to apartments will mean new property taxes and little to no opportunity to continue small family businesses which now exist*
6. Who developed this plan and what reasons do they give for supporting it?
Shaan Mehta and his father, urban designers from New York, returned to India and want to help provide residents with new state of the art housing, health care, schools and other modern facilities and then allow developers to use the rest of the land for profit making enterprises.
7. What do opponents say?
A group of residents formed the National Slum Dwellers Federation and want to protect the small home industries that have existed and supported local families and would be put out of business in the current plan. An example cited was potters who use space for their own kilns and drying operations. The culture that surrounds life in this area is not being respected and people are not being appreciated for their skills and talents they have developed. Instead they are being forced to move away.
7. How has the government intervened?
The government has promised each family an apartment with a carpeted area of 269 square feet – more than developers offered and more than residents were asking for.
8. What do you think? Which side of the debate do you support? Why?
9. How might this issue be resolved? What compromise solutions would you offer?