

SYNOPSIS :

TO CHANGE MUMBAI IN A NEW SHANGHAI

Photo story from **Laetitia DUPIN**

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The poorest people's fate

Far from the ideal scenes of Bollywood movies, the life of more than 6 million people living in the shanty town and slums of Mumbai will soon be turned upside down by the plan of modernization of the town decided by the government a few years ago. Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, stated that he wanted Mumbai to be a new Shanghai. The State wishes to draw the middle classes by developing trade centers, parks, shopping centers, where the shanty towns now exist. Social housing has been planned in Mumbai or its suburbs for the rehousing of the population of these shanty towns.

However, less than half of this population is in fact concerned by this plan. On one hand, because the number of social housing that is built is far from the real needs of this population, and on the other hand, because the monthly rent of these houses will be far too expensive for the inhabitants.

We can therefore expect many human dramas when, according to the announced plan, all the buildings constructed after 1995 will be destroyed and the slums erased.

The great majority of the inhabitants of these shanty towns came in Mumbai for survival reasons. Coming from marginalized groups, nomadic tribes, lowest casts, rural starving populations, all of these persons arrive in big cities to find some work. They are workers, cleaning ladies, or make business inside the slums. A social organization has hence been created in these zones of poverty, and their destruction means, for their population, a new uprooting, a new loss of landmarks, of house, of work and therefore a new marginalization.

It is the case for the inhabitants of this district of Mumbai « Ambedkar Nagar ». This community, coming from the state of Gudjarat, has undergone these massive evictions, without any advance notice, and without being proposed any form of decent accommodations.

It has been estimated that more than 70.000 housings have been destroyed without any human consideration, leaving thus 350.000 people without a roof.

In this context, Dharavi, the Asian biggest shanty town, in the heart of Mumbai, with more than 1 million inhabitants, is at the present time in the line of sight of estate developers.