CHAPTER VIII. CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS

VIII.A. Major Findings of the Study

The major findings related to the objectives of the study are as follows:

VIII.A.1. Findings Related to Spatial Structure (with reference to objective 1)

1. The spatial structure indicates that areas of very high and high index of concentration of Hindu and Jain communities have a corresponding very low and low concentration of Muslims and vice-versa. Shahpur II is the only exception among the thirteen wards of the study area. This clearly points out that segregation of communities over space is based on religion and its close link with the social order. Hindus and Jains consider each other as socially equal but they perceive themselves to be of a higher social status than the Muslims.

2. Similarly, within the Hindu community very high and high concentration of low caste areas exhibit a corresponding very low and low concentration of high and medium caste Hindus and Jains. The basis of segregation is the same as mentioned as above. Shahpur I, Dariapur II and Raikhad provides the evidence for the above statement.

3. The relation between the distribution between the Hindu low castes and Muslims are positive. The two are often found living together in the same area with high index of concentration as in the case of the wards of Shahpur I, Raikhad. The two are regarded socially inferior compared to the higher castes...
and Jains and hence, undesirable. Social unacceptance and intolerance push them together in same residential locations.

4. An overwhelming number of pol residents (90 percent) do not want to move out of the walled city. Respondents of all the communities have given the highest rank to the easy accessibility and availability of resources as the reason for preferring to live in the pols. It must be mentioned that availability and accessibility of facilities do not only refer to their physical availability or geographical nearness to such facilities but alludes to utilizing and obtaining them. Other major reasons for preferring to live in the pols of one’s own community are: similar life-styles, culture, belief and value systems of the other residents.

5. Politicisation and institutionalization of communal issues have broadened the existent gap between the social groups due to frequent incidents of communal clashes and social tensions. Thus, political factors have encouraged the maintenance of the spatial structure --- segregating the communities (on the basis of religion and caste in particular) over space.

6. Restrictive and preferential housing market, that is, restricting information and sale or renting of houses to community members; low economic land values are the main reasons for the present spatial structure. This leads to further concentration, segregation and ghettoisation of communities over space.

7. Moreover low levels of occupation (as well as traditional) skills handicap the residents with respect to better opportunities elsewhere. Hence, they are heavily dependent on community members to provide information and source of employment.

8. Spatial structure as in the built environment is of symbolic value. The built-environment and architecture acts as territorial markers, especially socio-religious structures, that is, places of worship. It reflects the social identity of the residents of that area. It also reflects the changes in population due to its residual nature. For example, Hindus or Jains may have moved out of an area.
but the temples and Derasars which they daily visited are left behind like in the wards of Kalupur I, II and III. Visual symbolism of architecture and the built-environment has influenced community living and created opportunities for greater social interaction.

VIII.A.2. Findings Related to Mental Images (with reference to objective 2)

1. Pol is considered as one's own neighbourhood at the micro level. This demarcation of 'pol' is absolute in location due to the familiarity of the area by its residents as reflected in the very limited action space for all the three communities. Moreover, the structural aspect of the pol – the very definite and tangible presence of pol wall encourages great accuracy and absoluteness of its location and delineation as the neighbourhood. A very limited action space results in greater familiarity with the pol and its immediate surroundings. Jains have an average action space of 12.9 minutes, Hindus – 12.3 minutes and Muslims – 11.5 minutes. This encourages the demarcation of the resident’s pol as their neighbourhood.

2. At the macro-level, communities appear to be distributed in a random manner but within the ward they are highly segregated. The relative location of communities, especially their back to front orientation in relation to other desirable/undesirable communities elucidates the anomalies like the apparent random mix or melting pot of communities in Shahpur II.

3. Communities orient themselves with respect to each other at the macro-level. Areas occupied by the respondents and those of their own community are exaggerated while those of others who are undesirable occupy areas, which are limited over geographical space. Areas are demarcated with the help of important landmarks rather than on the basis of administrative ward boundaries nor on the transport network. Thus, emphasizing the symbolic significance of built-environment and architecture.
4. The expressions of territoriality over space as seen in the form of the routes followed by religious processions, mainly Rath Yatra by Hindus and Muharram by Muslims, while the former circumnavigates its core area (that is, area of high concentration). The latter proceeds through the very center of its core area.

VIII.A.3. Findings Related to Pattern of Social Interaction (with reference to objective 3)

1. For all the communities: Hindu, Jain and Muslims, social interaction is extremely restricted within the community as evident from the pattern of marriage and friendship. Above 90 percent of the respondent’s spouse and children’s spouse belongs to the same caste. Similarly, above 50 percent of the respondents best friend belong to the same community. This shows that primary and intimate relations are limited to one’s own sect and sub-sect.

2. Compartmentalisation of social and economic relations is evident from the dramatic reduction in the percentage of best friends belonging to the same caste at work to about an average of 35 percent. This is further proven from the relatively lower percentages of employees, clients and customers from the same community in comparison to those belonging to all communities. Compartmentalisation of social relations has further maintained the bounded community as social interaction with out-group members is restricted to economic relations, in simple employee-employer relation or that of a buyer – seller relationship.

3. The persistence of the social ties is explained not only by the existence of primary, intimate relations but also by the sources of information regarding employment, sale or rent of houses provided by their own community members. Borrowing and lending of money are mostly from their own community members. This restricts the need of community members to seek other ties and relations outside their own community as almost all their needs -
social economic and psychological are satisfied. Moreover, a number of local and community based formal organisations have been able to provide a range of services, from medical facilities to solving personal problems of pol members, which they may have with one another.

4. Respondents have pre-conceived notions and attributes about different communities, which restrict and further compartmentalise social interaction. Moreover, it helps in the development of group identity rather than individual identity. The individual's general qualities are similar to that of his group's and he is not considered as a separate entity differing from his group. Compartmentalisation of social and economic spheres have achieved to re-distribute scarce resources and services and have empowered the people socially and economically by limiting resources, opportunities and information within the group. Thus, it has helped in the creation of social capital.

5. Para-lingual and non-verbal forms of interaction like the distinctive appearance of an individual belie an individual's social identity like the wearing of coloured burkha by the Shias, the red and yellow tilak on the forehead of Hindus and Jains respectively. It influences one's decision and the willingness to interact or not to interact with them and how to behave with them.

VIII.A.4. Findings Related to Changes in Spatial Structure (with reference to objective 4)

1. In the backdrop of communal riots communities have segregated over space. The changes in spatial structure are viewed from the movement of communities, that is, their residential relocation. In-migration is mainly limited to the residents of the walled city. In other words, in-migration from outside the walled city has not taken place. Thus, it implies the intra-ward movement of communities. It is seen that chiefly, the Hindu low castes and
Muslims have in-migrated from one ward to another compared to Hindu high and medium castes and Jains.

2. Out-migration has also taken place. It refers to the movement of the communities from the walled city to the suburbs. Communities have mostly out-migrated en masse forming neo-pols in the suburbs. Out migration has occurred in accordance with religion and caste. Hindu high castes have an out-migration pattern similar to Jains, moving to western side of the city towards Ambawadi and Navrangpura and to Sola, in the north-west. Hindu medium caste on the other hand have moved towards the north and the north west - Ranip, Wadaj, Nava Wadaj, Ghatlodia and Navrangpura. Hindu low castes have moved towards the eastern and western side of the city - to Asarwa, Saraspur, Bapunagar, Rakhial and Amraiwadi and to Vejalpur, Jodhpur Tekra in the east. The Muslim community and Hindu low caste have a similar pattern of out migration. Muslims like the latter have moved roughly towards the eastern, western and southern parts of the city. The community has out-migrated towards Vejalpur, Juhapura, Sarkhej, Paldi, Fatehpura in the west; Behrampura, Dani Limda and Shah Alam Roja in the south and Gomtipur, Shaher Kotda, Bapunagar and Chamanpura in the east.

3. The walled city till date largely remains a residential area with little commercialisation. Nearly 64 percent of the respondents have said that urban renewal has taken place but a significant 36 percent has claimed to the contrary that urban renewal processes has not occurred. Nature of urban renewal is interestingly towards the residentialisation of the walled city rather than its commercialisation. Nearly 42 percent of the urban renewal has taken place in form of residential flats and apartments. A mere 7 percent and nearly 11 percent are in the form of shopping complexes, large showrooms and small retail outlets and convenience stores respectively. Thus, it indicates that urban renewal has intensified residential land-uses. Mixed land-use have increased as the small retail outlets and convenience stores, which have mushroomed within the walled city is actually part of one's home/house/residence. The oatla or the first floor have been converted into shops while the floor above is the residence of the landlord or owner.
VIII.A.5. Findings Related to Changes in Social Interaction (with reference to Objective 5)

1. Changes in social interaction pattern have occurred at the intra-community level. The internal fault-lines that exist between the respective religious groups are eroding and are making them more indivisible. Approximately, 78 percent of Jains, 84 percent of Hindus and 62 percent of Muslims agree that intermixing within the sub-sects has increased. The manifest social identity is shifting more towards the broader identity criterion of religion rather than the numerous sub-sects within each religious group. Participation and interest in social activities have not decreased compared to earlier times. Nearly, 60 percent Jains and 64 percent Hindus agree to this. This creates opportunities for greater social interaction between the members of various sub-sects bonding them together and sustains a strong congressional life. The only exception is the Muslim community. This actually does not reflect that the cohesiveness or the congressional life of Muslims is decreasing but the common perception that in comparison to the Hindu-Jain majority they are less active.

2. Greatest change in social interaction pattern has taken place between the Hindus and Muslims. It must be mentioned that the common perception among all the three major religious groups is that Jain and Hindu communities are not separate religious groups. Jains are regarded as part of the Hindu mainstream. In fact, Jains are treated as a separate caste-group rather than a religious-group.

3. Above 60 percent of Jain and Hindu respondents is of the opinion that there has been no increase of intermixing between the religious communities. On the other hand, nearly 57 percent of the Muslims feel that intermingling with other religious communities have increased. This does not depict the reality. It rather reflects the 'Minority Mentality' that one has little option other than intermingling with the stronger, more dominant Hindu-Jain majority.
4. 51 percent of Hindus, 44 percent of Muslims and 35 percent of Jains perceive that the intensity of public displays of other religious communities have increased in the recent years. This is brought into light that Hindus commonly perceive that the Muslims, despite their minority status, are 'over' expressing and manifesting their social identity and culture. Thereby, the Hindu majority feels that though they form the majority, its identity and status is being overshadowed by the Muslim minority status.

5. Nearly, 92 percent of Jains whereas 65 percent and 64 percent of Hindus and Muslims respectively feel that there is no occurrence of disturbances during religious celebrations. But a sizeable percentage of respondents, nearly 29 percent of Hindus and 33 percent of Muslims are of the opinion that disturbances during religious celebrations do take place. This brings to light the underlying social tension and unrest between the religious communities, in particular between Hindus and Muslims.

6. The changes in relationship between the three major religious groups particularly in the aftermath of the numerous riots in the walled city show that above 30 percent of respondents from all three religious groups is of the opinion that relations have become hostile. Nearly 49 percent of Jains and 43 percent of Muslims feel that no changes have taken place in the relationships with other religious groups. This can be explained by the fact that both Jains and Muslims exhibit a very tightly knit intra-community interaction pattern. Thus, occurrences of riots, social violence will obviously bring little change in relations with other religious groups when in the first place they had very limited and restricted contact with them.
VIII.A.6. Findings Related to Emerging New Spatial and Social Order (with reference to objective 6)

1. Out-migration and in-migration of population have changed the demographic composition of the walled city in terms of age, income and education and not just those based on one's social identity. The walled city's demographic pattern shows a decline in its status with an older, uneducated and low earning populace.

2. The distances both social and physical have increased between the communities. Wards, which have high degree of segregation have absolutely no reported occurrences of communal clashes. Social unrest and tension perpetuates in wards, which are mixed in nature, that is, wards having a mix of all the communities - Jains, Hindus and Muslims - the wards of Shahpur II and Kalupur II have the highest occurrences of communal violence, followed by Dariapur I and Shahpur I, the least reported social tension is recorded for the wards of Raikhad and Kalupur II. The other exception is Kalupur I. This has been mainly due to the preventive measures that have been taken in the ward. At few paces one finds permanent police tents to prevent and pre-empt the occurrences of any communal clashes.

3. The voting pattern of each ward clearly indicates the politicisation of communal issues. Religious and caste identities have been used by politicians for their vested interests, dividing the electorate in such a manner so as to gain and remain in power. Areas which have high Hindu-Jain population have elected Hindus and Jain candidates in the municipal elections. The same is true for Muslim community as well. Politics have played a large role in dividing and distancing communities. Politicisation of communal issues has led to socio-cultural revivalism and greater awareness of one's social and cultural identities. It has driven a wedge between the communities by playing on their differences and making them glaringly obvious. Almost above 50 percent of all the communities believe that due to politicisation barriers between communities have increased.
VIII.B. Reflections

What are the implication of these findings? The question that is raised in one’s mind is that whether the contemporary society is becoming one dimensional with an impoverished view of the world, dividing people into narrow boxes of civilizations, religion, language, race. Is there any hope for a harmonious future? Will there be a conflict free society without any merciless terrorist attacks as seen recently. Is the clash of civilizations inevitable? Cannot it be avoided? Can there not be amity between the various civilisations, cultures and people? Is there no way to cut around the rigid and sharp divisions existing between people and create a relatively harmonious world?

The only thing that comes to one’s mind is that all around the world people have become more intolerant of others. They have become insecure and suffer from an obsessive anxiety of being victimized even if the real chances of so appear lean. Uncertainty and unfamiliarity has been given rise to prejudices, which has governed the narrow-minded attitude of the people with regards to others.

In the Indian context many of our minority communities, particularly the Muslims and Hindu low castes feel alienated from the mainstream, dominated by upper class Hindu majority. The ills flowing from this divide are many. Sooner India solves this problem the better. But how to solve it?

The minority communities in India have been exploited by almost all political parties and ironically, by various leaders of those communities. To achieve the desired end, the most crucial but difficult goal should be de-politicisation of these minority groups. Since there are about 150 million Muslims in India and many more lower caste / dalit Hindus, most of the political parties tend to appease these minorities for short-term gains and to inflate their vote banks. Even the leaders belonging to these communities (particularly the Muslims) try to exploit the situation to remain in power. Perhaps, appropriate election reforms are the order of the day. Unfortunately, unlike the various Hindu or Christian social service organisations like the Ramakrishna Mission or Bharat Sevashram Sangha or Catholic Relief Service, there are very few
adequate Muslim organisations of this kind. The so-called Muslim leaders, although economically and socially well-placed, do nothing significant or meaningful for the backward members of their community. One of the most difficult tasks of segregating these power-hungry parties and groups would be to create an appropriate but strong social awareness in the Indian society at large and among those minorities in particular.

Too much emphasis is now given on the system of caste and religion. But the ideal situation would be to imbibe in ourselves the belief that we all basically belong to the same stock and religion and other considerations come next. This is perhaps an idealistic expectation but the spread of education is needed to reduce the divide and raise the social awareness.

Two other most vital elements to help tackle the social and religious gaps are education for all and economic upliftment of the backward and minority communities. Education and economic upliftment would encourage the possibility of having more horizontal societal interactions, which ultimately would help diffuse many problems and tensions.

The Government of India and the state governments should make a serious attempt to implement the program of extending education facilities to all sections of the populace – particularly among the backward, minority communities. Children from the minority communities (particularly the Muslims) must have easy access to formal education (not the madrasa-type education). It would be a kind of “blackboard revolution” which could enable to establish more schools – at least one for 2/3 blocks. Very serious efforts and not just political declarations should be on to economically uplift the backward and minority communities in the society so that the problem of unemployment and socio-economic backwardness (with accompanying conflict situation) can be routed out. The policy of reservation, as is practiced now, widens the societal gap rather than reduces it. It clearly demarcates different groups on the basis of one’s birth or caste and highlights their existence. To reduce and resolve conflicts, social unrest and tensions there should definitely be a policy of reservation only for the economically backward, irrespective of religion, caste or creed so that the focus should be to uplift the economic condition of those who need it most.
VIII.C. Scope for Future Study

The study can be continued in many directions. The chief one being how to resolve the conflicts arising between the different social groups and reduce the gaps between the social groups. Studies could also be conducted to find out whether social networks and ties could act as an alternative development avenue. Can creation of social capital reduce the gaps between the different social groups, in terms of economic and social backwardness. On a micro level, could segregation of societies over space lead to political empowerment and achieve social justice? Or will it create greater inequalities between social groups as group interests of one may be achieved at the expense of another group? Research could be done to find out what are the future implications of such rigid, narrow group identities. Will this lead to hardened lines of division robbing the society of plural identities and impoverishing society in terms of loss of diversity? Perceptual and experiential studies could be conducted to further investigate the relations and perceptions between people and places and how such bias can be worked around and open people to a newer horizons.

The study could be extended to the macrocosm both at the international and national levels. Comparative studies could be conducted to understand the specific factors and constraints operating across various societies, places, situations and over time.