The Context: Demography and Population Movements in Gujarat

Gujarat, the westernmost state of India with its landmass reaching out into the Indian Ocean forked by the Gulf of Kutchh and Gulf of Khambhat to form a large coastline has had a history of maritime trade going back to four millennia as well as of migrations from within and outside the subcontinent. The state has been known historically for its culture shaped by mercantilism, industrialization and entrepreneurship and most recently for its unabashed march towards economic liberalization. Gujarat is among India’s most urbanized and industrialized states and one of the fastest growing states since 2000. While Gujarat has historically had a high number of immigrants and migrants that came as traders, nomads, missionaries, travelers, merchants, refugees and conquerors, in recent times the state has witnessed many migrations that are not always voluntary as in the case of displacement due to development, natural disasters and communal violence. This chapter examines the demographic profile of Gujarat in the light of major population movements witnessed in the state.

Geography and Demography

Linkages between land and human habitations have been made not just in common sense assumptions but disciplines of geography and anthropology as well. The demographic spread and culture of Gujarat has often been attributed to its location on the western coast of the Indian subcontinent to the North of the Indian Ocean along which it has a large coastline that has since as far back as four millennia facilitated maritime trade through sea ports such as Mandvi, Kandla, Dwarka, Bhavnagar, Porbandar, Veraval, Gandevi, Surat and Bharuch in South Gujarat with two major gulfs Cambay and Kutch that have linked inland and overseas trade routes and led to immigration of various people groups across time.

The modern day state of Gujarat has been classified as having “four eco-cultural sub regions or cultural linguistic regions” namely: North Gujarat that is hilly on the eastern and central sides with undulations in the central part and sandy plains on the west where Charotari is spoken comprises the districts of Panchmahal, Sabarkantha, Banaskantha, Mehsana, Kheda, Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar, (ii) South
Gujarat or the Gujarat plains dominated by Gujarati speakers consists of the districts of Valsad, Bharuch, Vadodara, Surat and Dangs (iii) Saurashtra zone which is peninsular region where Kathiwadi is spoken that covers Junagadh, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Amreli, Surendranagar and Bhavnagar districts; and (iv) Kutch the western most district in Gujarat that has a wide stretch of desert sand where Kachchi is spoken.\(^1\)In comparison to the other sub regions North Gujarat is considered to be the least developed economically while central Gujarat the most economically developed owing to its agriculture (that does not lack in irrigation), industry and commerce is consequently also among the most densely populated areas in Gujarat. South Gujarat is considered to be the granary of the state and has both agricultural and industrial bases.\(^2\) Districts in central and south Gujarat such as Surat, Ahemedabad, Anand and Gandhinagar are the most populous districts in the state.\(^3\)

Among the many socio religious communities that are found in the state Hindus form the majority at 89.9 per cent while Muslims are the largest minority at 9.0641 per cent among other minority communities such as Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains.

\[
\begin{array}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
\text{All Religious Communities} & 50,671,017 & \text{Percentages} \\
\hline
\text{Hindu} & 45,143,074 & 89.09 \\
\hline
\text{Muslim} & 4,592,854 & 9.064 \\
\hline
\text{Christian} & 284,092 & 0.56 \\
\hline
\text{Sikh} & 45,587 & 8.99 \\
\hline
\text{Buddhist} & 17,829 & 3.51 \\
\hline
\text{Jain} & 525,305 & 1.03 \\
\hline
\text{Other Religious Communities} & 28,698 & 5.66 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

Table 2.1: Source: Government of India, Census of India, 2011,\(^4\)

Among the majority Hindus that consist of 186 enumerated communities, a typical feature of Gujarat is the scenario in terms of caste order where compared to the national order, the largest proportion of communities are identified as middle order caste group of ‘Kshatriya’ at 28.8 per cent of total population compared to the national average of 15.50 per cent. In the case of upper caste ‘Brahmins’ it is 7.27 per

\(^4\)Ibid.
cent which is almost the national average of 7.81 per cent and 'Vaishyas' 9.34 per cent against the national average 9.36 per cent and the lowest percentage of 'Shudras' at 12.8 per cent as against the national average of 29.1 per cent.\(^5\) This is in part due to the absorption of a large number of groups in the Kshatriya group. The Scheduled Tribes that constitute 15 per cent of the population in Gujarat outnumber the Dalits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GUJARAT</th>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Sikhs</th>
<th>Buddhists</th>
<th>Jains</th>
<th>Other religions &amp; persuasions</th>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.54</td>
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<td>The Dangs</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>9.06</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.56</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.09</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.04</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.04</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.06</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2. Source: Census of India, 2001, C-1, Table 1

\(^5\) The caste groupings mentioned here are those used by the Anthropological Survey of India. *Op.cit.* p 25. These are the four main *varnas* groups of Hindu social hierarchy in the order of Brahmans the highest followed by Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Shudras. These groups comprise many castes and each caste is divided into various sub groups.
The most recent enumeration found 87 different Muslim communities in Gujarat as against an earlier survey by Satish C Mishra in his study on Muslim Communities in Gujarat in a historical and comparative perspective from 1959-1961 which found the existence of 69 Muslim. Muslim communities include those that claim their origins to be historically from outside the Indian subcontinent and those that have converted from Hindu communities. Besides the denominational divisions of sects such as Shias and Sunnis both of which are found among Gujarati Muslims, a social hierarchy found to be existent among them places the Syeds as the highest followed by Shaikh, Moghul and Pathan in that order. There are also other agrarian castes such as Malek and Molesalam Girasia, trader and artisan communities such as

\[\text{Map 2.1}\]

\[\text{Ibid p xxvi.}\]
Memon, Khatri, Khoja, Bohras and lastly service communities. The Arab and Baloch communities occupy the middle order. A section of Muslim communities converted from lower castes and artisans follow their ancestral occupations and marry within their community and also follow the norms of clan exogamy. Muslims that historically converted to Islam from Hinduism include Bohras, Khojas and Memon that claim to have converted from upper castes Hindu communities; peasant communities such as Patel Muslims and Patidars, Rajputs such as Rangrej, Samma, Sepai, Sumra, Langha, Miyana, Kher etc as well as those from artisans communities such as Pinjara, Nagori and Lohar.

Some communities such as Wagher, Banjara, Patel, Salat, Samma, Sanghar, Pinjara, Lohar, Multani are found among both Hindus and Muslims and they continue to share language, cultural traits such as naming patterns and many elements of life cycle ceremonies. The Anthropological Survey of India seems to be making a case for the existence of a syncretic culture in Gujarat by pointing out various elements of commonality of socio religious practices and inter community linkages. Their data on Gujarat suggests that, “within an eco cultural sub region or a cultural linguistic region there is a larger sharing of traits among all communities across religious divide.” Which include consumption of foods based on crops/ grains locally grown, dress, elements of material culture, kinship structure, many a ritual of life cycle ceremonies, participation in activities of a socio religious nature and in political movements and sharing of political power across all levels.

For instance, what the survey points to a unique case of similarity between Hindu and Muslim communities is the endogamous mode of mate selection and a strong sense of birth and lineage. Some interesting features are common to marriage rituals of Hindus and Muslims as well as naming pattern among communities such as Wadha Koli of Kutch and Molesalam Girasia, a dominant agricultural community of Vadodara and Kheda districts that follows Rajput patterns of naming. They observe clan exogamy besides heriarachy within clans in mate selection. There are also instances of communities such as Athia Panthi (also called Andheria division) of Kachchia that to date mourn during Muharram month and also observe a fast during

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7 See also, Ashgar Ali Engineer, Muslim Communities of Gujarat: An Exploratory Study of Bohras, Khojas and Memons, Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1989.
9 Ibid p xxv.
10 Ibid, p xxvi.
the entire month of Ramzan with one meal a day. The Qazis of Surendranagar take part in local fairs and festivals of Hindus and even observe fast on seventh and eight day of shravan month. Kanthiwala Lohars observe Holi and Diwali festivals of Hindu religion. Hindu and Muslim communities have also traditionally had socio economic inter dependence. Dance forms common to a region such as garba ras, danda ras are found in celebration across communities.\textsuperscript{11}

Achyut Yagnik points to a rise in the number of communities that followed both saints and pirs as well as sects, such as Pirana and Pranami which amalgamated the teachings of the established religion and occupied the space in the twilight between Hinduism and Islam. The evolution of Gujarati language and literature, the emergence of Indo-Islamic and later Indo-European architecture, the development of classical Hindustani music and introduction of new musical instruments from western Asia and Europe give us a clear indication of cultural synthesis that occurred historically.

A sort of socio economic inter dependence called gharogi (jajmani system) prevailed between agricultural communities and artisan communities where foodgrains of two maunds once a year were given in return for their services rendered. This is retained by a few members of Girasia community with Hajam, Fakir, Lohar, Suthar, Chamar and until recently, even with Brahmans. A few members of the Girasia community also have share cropper relationship with Patel or Vankar community on a yearly basis through an oral contract called bhagyyador (share cropper).

Since as a matter of policy aggregate data such as census records, but does not make available in the public domain details of caste and religion at the individual level, the demographic spread according to caste and religion of the state cannot be demonstrated. The last time such data was available was in 1931. From the 2001 census data, at the district level the trends that are discernable are as demonstrated in Maps 3 and 4 with the highest number of Muslims in Bharuch followed by Kuchch, Jamnagar, Ahmedabad, Junagadh, Kheda and Anand. As is convention, Muslims can be found living in villages and cities among members of their own community in what are called mohallas as well as side by side among members of other communities. Even in remote villages of Panchmahal, one or two Muslim families of traditional

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Ibid and Field visits from 2008-2009.}
trading communities such as Bohras, Memons as well as those that have taken to trade in recent times such as Mansooris that lived in isolated tribal dominated villages and ran local businesses such as grocery shops and petty businesses such as flour mills were found until very recently. The 1981 census noted that out of the 18114 inhabited villages enumerated in the state most of them were multi community villages. These villages have not only members of the same religion (12.6%) but also of other religions (59.8%).\textsuperscript{12} Gujarat is a highly urbanized state with 31.10 per cent of its population living in urban areas.\textsuperscript{13} This high level of urbanization is nowhere more


\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.} p 7.
visible than in the district of Ahmedabad where 80.2 per cent of the population lives in urban areas while 19.8 per cent lives in rural areas. Ahmedabad is known for its fabled pols where communities have historically lived in close proximity but distinct from one another and continue to do so today. The state has also had a history of violence on caste and communal faultlines that has led to an ostensible polarization among communities and their living spaces. A number of factors have shaped Gujarat’s demographic spread and settlement pattern.

Migrations of refugees, missionaries, soldiers and conquerors

For the Anthropological Survey of India, “Gujarat’s ecology explains its ethnographic features”. As many as 206 communities i.e. 71.28 per cent in today’s Gujarat claim to have migrated to the state at some time in the past. Out of the total migrants 29.51 per cent migrants are from within the states, 3.38 per cent are from other states and union territories and 0.43 per cent are from outside India. 60.90 per cent of Gujarat’s enumerated communities, which is higher than the national average of 40.93 per cent, can recall their migration in oral tradition. Indeed given Gujarat’s long coastline and ancient ports there have been migrations to its west from Iran, Arabia, Africa as well as from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Sumatra, Java etc. as refugees, warriors, missionaries and conquerors. While the foreign groups came with their cultural influences they eventually went through a process of linguistic synthesis, social interaction and of indigenization. Migrants groups and those who had already settled in the area now called Gujarat participated in battles to obtain territory, status and loot.

The early medieval period brought Arab traders to Gujarat. Both the Arabs and their colonies were initially resisted by the Rajputs but eventually flourished in Gujarat’s port cities. In 1026 Mahmud, a Sunni Muslim Turkish ruler raided the wealthy Somnath temple. With the conquest of Gujarat by Turks, Afghans

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16 ibid. p xxiv.
19 This event has been invoked in by the Hindu right since before independence to signal the birth of hostilities between Hindus and Muslims. However, through an analysis of various accounts of the events in Sanskrit, regional languages, colonial records and writings from the Indian nationalist
established their colonies in Gujarat as well. Cordial relations existed between local Hindus and the significant number of Ismaili Muslims\textsuperscript{20} although there were tensions and violent conflicts between the Arabs and the Turks.\textsuperscript{21}

The various groups of Muslims such as Abyssinians and Habshis came from the North and from central Asia and from the seas and made Gujarat their home. In the course of time some local communities such as some groups of Rajputs, traders and artisans were converted to Islam. The native communities that converted to Islam retained continued to retain some of their earlier practices and customs from Hinduism. Caste pattern with its sense of birth, lineage and endogamy has generally survived among Muslim communities. Some of the norms of higher Hindu castes were also adopted by groups that traced their origin to outside the Indian subcontinent. For instance Syeds, who are considered to be one of the four divisions that claim direct descent from prophet have absorbed upper caste norms such as prohibition of widow remarriage, payment of dowry and adoption of child marriage.\textsuperscript{22}

Quite a few Syeds were invited from different countries to act as spiritual guides to the Muslim rulers of Gujarat state and their subjects and were given jagiras (estates). Eg. Raskhulla Shah Khodari was invited by Janagadh Navab 400-500 years ago invited as *peerzada* from Iraq. He accepted and settled in Junagadh. Similarly Baruni Syed came from Behrain and Mattari Syed from a village in Sindh province in present day Pakistan and Bukhari Syeds ancestors came to Ahmedabad to act as spiritual leader on the invitation of Ahmad Shah the then ruler of Gujarat during early 15th C.

 Refugees fleeing religious persecution also found their way to Gujarat. It is believed that Bukhari Syeds were forced to migrate to India and other countries in Asia to save them from the plundering and burning of their cities like Samarkhand, Bagdad and Bokhora by Chengeezkhan, the Mongolian chief and Tartar who did not embrace Islam.\textsuperscript{23} Parsis who were fleeing religious persecution in Iran also landed in Gujarat and found refuge. Some communities such as Pathans are believed to have been invited historically by rulers to serve as soldiers from Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, p 185.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid p 115.
Another feature that has been attributed to the state’s geographical location is that Gujarat has a larger percentage of trading communities. Historically trading communities have lived along the many trade routes that have passed through Gujarat owing to its location and many of these communities continue to do so even now.\textsuperscript{25} According to Achyut Yagnik and Suchitra Sheth a mercantile ethos developed in Gujarat fuelled by values of competition and compromise. They attribute the growth of this mercantile ethos to social processes from the early Chalukya period. One was the expansion of the merchant community itself and the other was the communities who converted to Islam under the influence of Pirs and subsequently took to trade and commerce. At the beginning of the 12\textsuperscript{th} century communities such as Bohras, Khojas and Memons are believed to have converted peacefully from erstwhile Vania and Lohana communities that considered themselves to be Rajputs. The fact that communities such as the Lohanas of Sindh, Kutch and Saurashtra that were not traditionally associated with trade also took up trade after their conversion to Islam has been held to contribute to the spread of the mercantile ethos in Gujarat. The mercantile class in Gujarat therefore was diverse including Hindus, Jains, Muslims and Parsis that participated in the bodies that developed to facilitate trade such as mahajans\textsuperscript{26}.

Such bodies enabled the mercantile elite to organize themselves and even take collective action such as in an instance during the reign of Aurangzeb in 1600 after some Vaniyas of Surat were being forced to convert to Islam there was a strike and a \textit{hijrat} (exodus) by the community for eight months. In the case of artisans, they organized themselves through regulatory bodies called \textit{panch}.\textsuperscript{27} In 1411 Ahmad Shah founded the city of Ahmedabad on the eastern side of the river Sabarmati and encouraged artisans to work and settle there. Since artisans, as in the case of other occupations were defined by caste, the settlements in Ahmedabad in the medieval times were organized according to castes in living spaces called \textit{pols}, a practice that has continued to have currency in the city to date.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid}., p 8.
It has been postulated that relationships between ruler and ruled and political belonging to territorial states was a tenuous affair under traditional conditions in precolonial Indian power centres where, due to an ‘absent’ centre the caste system governed boundaries and controlled transactions between social groups more than any of the political authorities of regional kingdoms or empires that collided and expanded with each other over the same space. As people who inhabited a particular space could be part of different kingdoms in a short space of time, made ‘belonging’ to a particular political community thin in contrast to modern practices. Belonging in precolonial times was more diffused across layers of caste, region etc. and membership to caste was of greater significance than membership to a political community. Loyalty to a single religion could not also be assumed as a guarantee of subjects’ support to their rulers.

The encounter with the colonial state and modernity, it is argued, affected social and political reality in the Indian subcontinent though, not quite in the same way as it did in Europe. The colonial gaze on the society of its subjects meant a systematic gathering of information on them through enumeration of communities but this had the effect of congealing hitherto fuzzy identities. This argues had far reaching political ramifications in that people were now seen as members of such abstract religious identities such as Hindu and Muslim and which by corollary opened up possibilities of “a new kind of impersonal and abstract violence” when people ascribed to them motives as a group.

**Urbanisation: Migrations and changing demographic pattern**

The mid 19th century saw the coming of industrialization and the introduction of modern industry and railway networks that changed the socio economic landscape of Gujarat. The first to capitalize and dominate these modern processes was the traditional mercantile class of Gujarat that undertook exploratory and enterprising measures such as the setting up of the first textile mills in the subcontinent and the share market. This expansion of industries drew labor from the surrounding rural areas and this migration from rural to urban areas led to urbanisation.

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33 *Ibid* p 122.
urbanisation however, had begun at the beginning of the century when the Great famine of 1900 forced Brahmns and Dalits to migrate out of rural Gujarat taking some as far away as Africa and Fiji that now form a part of the Gujarati diaspora. ³⁴ The Gujarati diaspora continues to invest and give back to villages, cities and towns in Gujarat. Gujarat has a number of ‘NRI villages’ where non resident Indians (NRIs) who may own property in the village but even in their absence, invest in infrastructure such as schools and hospitals in their original village.

Gujarat already had cities built by Mughals or in the princely states by their rulers or developed during the British colonial rule such as Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat and Rajkot. These ‘old’ cities saw the influx of people and newer cities and towns developed as industries grew. Ahmedabad continued to have, as it does to date, ancient and now often dilapidated living spaces called pols. Pols are enclosed living spaces of houses connected by very narrow and interconnected streets guarded by a gate for protection. The narrow alleys, gates and passages of low ceiling were intended to make it difficult for mobs of attacking thieves or armies to enter. For centuries a pol served as a residential area for members of the same caste or castes with similar social status although within a caste families across class distinctions live in the same pol. Therefore castes across the caste hierarchy, Dalits and Muslims lived very close to each other but separately in “mixed but not intermixed localities”. ³⁵ With the establishment of textile mills chawls that were one or two storeyed structures of one room houses lined up with a common corridor came up on private land to house workers of the textile mills also became a part of the cities topography. In these working class areas Dalit and Muslim workers lived side by in mixed living areas. As the textile mills flourished, the owners of the mills moved out of the old city and settled in bungalows and apartments of two to three rooms on the western side of the river Sabarmati. The dynamics of caste based settlements however were reproduced by those who moved out of pols into these areas. ³⁶

Although Gujarat shares a boundary with Pakistan, the massive displacement of millions at the time of Partition that left a trail of destruction of life and property

did not affect Gujarat in the scale and intensity that it did Punjab and Bengal. Only 2.2 per cent of those who migrated to Pakistan were from the Bombay Presidency of which the present state of Gujarat was then a part.\textsuperscript{37} Most of the immigrants are settled in urban areas and had very close socio economic ties with Sind in Pakistan till partition. Displaced persons from Pakistan predominate among the immigrants in Kutch which lies on the Indo Pakistan border. The percentage of immigrants from the time of partition is higher in Surat and Baroda.\textsuperscript{38}

The state of Gujarat as a polity in the Union of India after independence from the colonial rule and the separation from the state of Bombay in 1960 continued to push for industrial and economic growth. Under the Nehruvian model of development while the state invested in large public sector industries it also followed a policy of promoting small and medium scale industries. The production of cash crops was encouraged under the ‘Green Revolution’ in the 1960s through initiatives like large irrigation projects, subsidized electricity and credit resources for farmers. The state had the most successful story in the history of the Indian co-operative movement that was started in 1946 but received a major fillip in 1974 with the formation of the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Manufacturer’s Federation (GCMMF) that under the leadership of Dr. V Kurien led to the formation of Asia’s largest brand of milk and milk products, Amul that benefits a network of 12 million farmers today. The success of this movement was referred to as the White Revolution. New urban centres also came up along initiatives like the ‘Golden corridor’ of setting up petrochemical industries from South to North Gujarat and ‘Silver Corridor’ of mineral based industries in Saurashtra and Kutch regions. These processes further fuelled migration into existing cities like Baroda (now Vadodara) where petrochemical and fertilizer industries among others were established, Rajkot that came to be known for its agro industries, engineering and machine tool industries and eventually into Surat which after an initial decline which went on to become a centre of the diamond polishing industry and textile industry. Segregated living spaces however were typical of Ahmedabad rather than other cities like Baroda, Rajkot and Surat as well as other

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urban centres such as Nadiad, Anand, Himmatnagar etc. until recently where mixed living settlements were not uncommon.39

Gujarat also began to attract migrants from neighboring states of India. Ahmedabad is the largest industrial metropolis of the state that attracts people in larger numbers from the neighboring states of Rajasthan, Maharashtra and UP, while the majority of immigrants from outside India are displaced persons from Pakistan. Ahmedabad has the highest number of immigrants among its populations.40 Migration from rural areas to smaller developing towns also significantly increased.41 Another drought from 1984-1988 led to further migration from urban to rural areas so that while by 1980 Gujarat was among the most industrialized states of the country, by 1991, one in 3 Gujaratis lived in a city.42 The increase in migration from rural to urban areas also contributed to the casualisation of urban labour that had already set in with the decline of textile mills in the 1980s.43

Building a majority: Unrelenting upper castes and the rise of the middle class

While there has been a consistent pursuit of economic growth evident in industrialization and urbanization which had much consensus in Gujarat, there has also been an increasing contest for social, economic and political power among various caste and communities reflected in the fact that from 1960 to 1995 when the BJP came to power, no Chief Minister except Madhavsinh Solanki (who headed the Congress ministry from 1980-1985) completed full five year term and President’s rule was imposed in Gujarat four times.

39 It was pointed out that Ahmedabad is not typical of the rest of Gujarat. “Its (communal violence) there in Baroda as well but if you only look at Ahmedabad you will come away with a very skewed picture of Gujarat.” Interview with journalist of the Indian Express, Ahmedabad, 13/12/2008. Also Interviews with Rabia Ismailbhai Vohra, Mogri Siswa Relief Colony, Anand, 20/2/2009, Professor Ghulamhrai Waliibhai Memon, retired Principal, Himmatnagar, 30/3/2009 and Fakruddin Ibrahim (businessman who lives in Godhra whose shop is in Panchmahal), Baroda, 7/3/2009.
41 Mario Rutten, “Elite Attitudes Towards the Poor: Patidar Entrepreneurs in Rural Central Gujarat”, in Takashi Shinoda (Ed.), Op. cit. p 265. Mario Rutten highlights the trend where affluent Patidar families in the Charotar belt in central Gujarat that were the main beneficiaries of the green revolution moved out of their traditional places in the centre of the village to build plush residential plots at the edge of the village or moved o nearby district towns. Also see Dr. V Kurien, Chairman’s Speech: 31st Annual General Body Meeting on 23rd June 2005, www.amul.org (accessed on 19 June 2011).
Redistributive measures as fundamental rights have been incorporated at the very time of the framing of the constitution of the modern Indian state and defining its citizenship, to ensure participation and access to resources to historically deprived groups. The state of Gujarat was allotted seven per cent reservation for Scheduled Castes and fourteen percent for Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population. In Gujarat’s peculiar social landscape which didn’t show much deviation compared to the national population in terms of the strength of the Brahmin and Vaishya castes of the Hindu social order in terms of their percentage in the total population, but was the lowest for Scheduled Castes who are outnumbered by Scheduled Tribes and where no caste named Kshatriya traditionally existed, it was the upper castes that dominated for the first twenty years after independence. These included the Brahmin, Vaniya and Patidar communities whose combined population came up to 21 per cent of the population and who constituted the majority in electoral politics for these two decades.

Leadership in co-operative institutions such as cooperative banks, credit societies, milk or sugar cooperatives, agriculture produce market committees as well as educational institutions came to be social bases of power particularly in cash crop rich areas of the state that had benefitted from the Green Revolution and White Revolution such as the parts of Saurashtra and the Charotar tract in central Gujarat. The introduction of the Panchayati Raj institutions in 1960 and their strengthening through the 73rd amendment of the Indian Constitution even before which elections to local self-government institutions in Gujarat were conducted regularly came to be important local bases of political power. Educational institutions also came to be means through which class and caste interests were consolidated.44 It was also not uncommon for leaders of various castes and communities in Gujarat to begin their public life through co-operative and educational institutions at the local level before moving on to more evidently political posts.45

Various communities and sections of communities had acquired social mobility as a result of institutions such as these as well the reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in educational institutions and government jobs. To the upper castes Hindus and the economically better off communities among Muslims and Jains that constituted the middle class was added the artisan castes who benefitted

from government initiatives of promoting small scale industries etc. as well as SCs and STs that had benefited from the reservation system. While there was a significant increase in the middle class there was also increasing contest for greater goods and resources. For the upper castes in this social contest in the densely populated cities of Gujarat, the system of reservations instituted to set right historical inequalities seemed to create an unequal field in much sought after places in educational institutions, government jobs and promotions and a threat to their traditional dominance.

One of the first communities to benefit from the Green and White revolutions was the Patidar community. The Patidar community is a peasant community and a middle class group. Under the land reform measures undertaken after independence, "The Bombay Tenancy Agricultural Land Act 1948" was implemented in Gujarat that then came under the erstwhile state of Bombay. According to an important provision called 'Farmer day' inserted in the act in 1956 with a view to give tillers rights over the land, if any person legally tilled the land of any other person on 1st April 1957, he was entitled to purchase the said land. Among the beneficiaries of the land 1,77,171 were from Scheduled Castes, 2,58,132 from Scheduled Tribes and 8,42,822 from 'other' category. As a result of this Act, many of erstwhile Rajput communities had to sell their land to Patidar community. This community went on to benefit greatly from the Green revolution and even diversified from agriculture to agro-based and other industries. Forming 14 per cent of the population this community consolidated their growing economic and social base even politically by securing a quarter of the assembly seats in five assembly elections from 1957 onwards. Over the years, the Patidar community turned to the Swaminarayan sect which over the years has become enormously influential and wealthy in Gujarat as well as in the United States among the Gujarati diaspora. Despite its peaceful ideology, it has become a locus for rightwing politics and sectarian community organizations.

Faced with the growing dominance of the Patidars, the Rajputs who were not numerically strong but sought to find a place of reckoning in the emerging space of Gujarat polity formed the Kshatriya Mahasabha in 1948 by creating a caste

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46 Ibid.
combination called Kshatriya that combined their numbers with another traditionally arms bearing community, the Kolis. This combination did not then make a significant show at the hustings. In 1969 after the Congress party split into Congress (I) for Indira led by Indira Gandhi and Congress (O) for organizational leadership led by Morarji Desai. While Congress (I) led by Indira Gandhi at the national level and consequently in Gujarat sought to mobilise poor and deprived groups who formed the majority which would provide the new electoral support base, many upper caste Congressmen defected to join Congress (O) in Gujarat. This period also witnessed a number of protests due to shortage of food grains and increasing prices and what was perceived as the callous and corrupt attitude of the government. Students and professors of Gujarat University in Ahmedabad started a movement against corruption called the Navnirman movement in 1974 which the predecessor of the BJP the erstwhile Jana Sangh and the Congress (O) successfully identified themselves with.\(^5\)\(^0\) The formation of the Congress had created a void in the support base of the Congress which it tried to fill by the creation of a new combination of electoral support in the 1970s. The new combination known by the acronym KHAM was a combination of Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims. The formula helped Congress win an emphatic victory in the 1980 elections. For the first time not a single member from the Patidar community had a cabinet rank while a majority of ministers in the new cabinet were from either Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi or Muslim communities and the Chief Minister Madhavsinh Solanki himself came a lower caste Kshatriya community.\(^5\)\(^1\)

These developments however had the effect of antagonizing the upper castes. The Patidars in particular also felt a threat to their economic and political dominance.\(^5\)\(^2\) This resulted in the mobilization of an upper caste-class unity of Brahmin-Vania- Patidar against a prospective social change through full blown protests against the reservation system. The Madhavsinh Solanki had however not launched any radical pro poor economic reforms and on the contrary adhered to the demands of the industrial lobby by following a policy of rapid industrialization with the intention of making Gujarat a ‘mini- Japan’.\(^5\)\(^3\)

Displacement by Development

The models of agriculture and development of large infrastructure based on exploitation of natural resources however was causing involuntary migration of people from their places of original residence that for a long time was not visible through the rhetoric of creating the most industrialized and urbanized state in India. The most publicized and longstanding case in this regard is the Sardar Sarovar Project, the first and largest of major dams to be built as part of the Narmada Valley Project on the Narmada river whose weakest plank was the resettlement and rehabilitation of those displaced on account of the project. The Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal (NWDT) was constituted in 1969 to deliberate over the distribution of Narmada waters between the four states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. The NWDT delivered the Award in 1978 for sharing of water among the riparian states and relief and rehabilitation of those to be displaced by the dam. However while the NWDT’s Award fixed the nature and quantum of compensation to be given to displaced persons which was a definite advance in large dam related displacement and relocation in India, it had adopted a very legalistic notion of land harking back to colonial times and had not at all appreciated the fact that most of those displaced were adivasis whose existence was very closely intertwined with the land.\(^{54}\)

In 1980 an NGO Gujarat Chhatra Sangharsh Vahini (ARCH- Vahini), an NGO based in Gujarat that started visiting the adivasis got involved in helping the affected people obtain adequate resettlement. However, successive governments ignored problems related to relief and rehabilitation of the project that was touted as the answer to the problems of areas facing acute water scarcity till the 1980s when first middle class activists and subsequently national and even international activists got involved in the struggle for the rights of the displaced. After the World Bank intervened to finance the construction it sent an Independent Review Mission (IRM) headed by Bradford Morse in 1991-1992 to review resettlement and rehabilitation related to those affected by the project. Professor Thayer Scudder’s Report in 1983 had already pointed out that basic data regarding the extent of displacement was not

known and therefore no clear plans of resettlement could be envisaged. The World Bank Report held that, "the Sardar Sarovar Projects as they stand are flawed, that resettlement and rehabilitation of all those displaced by the project is not possible under prevailing circumstances, and that the environmental impacts of the project have not been properly considered or adequately addressed." The report was welcomed by the anti dam movement but strongly criticized and publicly burnt in Gujarat. Even then on the question of rehabilitation for adivasis who depended on forest produce, the government accused them of being thieves, law breakers and encroachers in its affidavits to the Supreme Court. Since the ‘oustees’ are adivasis the issue of displacement by the SSP has raised the larger issue of preservation of adivasi culture versus their assimilation in the mainstream. The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) i.e. the Save the Narmada Movement that has relentlessly campaigned for the rights of the adivasis arguing that such development is in fact destruction. The figures for number of displaced vary greatly from pro-dam and anti-dam supporters. Estimates for number of people to be displaced by the Sardar Sarovar Project ranged from 6603 families according to the NWDT, to independent estimates of that range from a conservative 7,600 families to 4,00,000. The NBA’s calculation of number of displaced includes those in the submergence areas, catchments areas and other measures related to the dam such as compulsory aorestation. The World Bank also following NBAs reasoning for assessing Project Affected People held that the figure of those displaced rose to six times the current estimate of 40,000 families. Since the NBA’s involvement in 1987 the campaign for the rights of the displaced has become a no-dam campaign that has received much support by scholars and activists outside Gujarat but is vehemently opposed inside Gujarat. In fact those who opposed the dam were labeled anti Gujarat.

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57 Quoted in Ibid. p 126.
58 See Amita Baviskar, In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1995.
Increasing Violence on caste and communal fault lines

Serious fault lines began to show on caste and religious issues in the beginning of the 1980s. In 1972 the Congress led government appointed the Gujarat Backward Classes Commission under the chairmanship of A. N. Baxi to identify communities that were socially and educationally backward in Gujarat and to determine redistributive action for them in the line of what had been done for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes in the constitution. The Baxi Commission identified backward communities on the basis of caste and submitted its report in 1976 recommending 10 per cent reservation for 82 identified castes. In 1980, six months after the KHAM strategy brought Madhavsinh Solanki led Congress government to power protests against the reservation for scheduled castes by upper castes medical college students started in Ahmedabad. The protests turned violent and attacks that were mainly aimed at Dalits started in the industrial and working class areas of Ahmedabad and spread to middle class localities. The violence that went on for three months further spread to 18 out of 19 districts in Gujarat and to the many Patidar dominated villages of North and Central Gujarat who were the main actors in the violence.61 The agitation saw some of the worst caste violence for more than 3 months and claimed a reported a death toll of 40 before subsiding after the High Court rejected the petitioners plea opposing reservations.62

After groups that had not been listed by the Baxi Commission Report demanded to be included on account of their backwardness, the Solanki government appointed another commission under the chairmanship of retired High Court judge CV Rane to look into the possibility of inclusion of such groups. The Rane Commission submitted its report in 1983 and arguing for greater egalitarianism identified Socially and Educationally Backward Classes/Castes (SEBC) and included income along with occupation in place of the earlier caste based identification. It also recommended the an increase of 18 per cent to the existing reservation of 10 per cent for the identified SEBCs. The Commission’s Report was initially ignored and when the Solanki government decided to implement it after 14 months, it replaced class with caste as the criterion of backwardness. It appointed another committee under the chairmanship of Harubhai M Mehta to look in to the claims of additional 239 castes

for inclusion into the original list of 82 communities. The Solanki government’s decision to increase reservations in government jobs and educational institutions led to protests leading to the outbreak of a major riot in 1985.

The agitation that once again was begun by upper caste’s opposition to the reservation led to closing of schools and colleges, arson looting and outbreaks of violence over a period of 7 months. In the course of the violence which began as caste conflict, the killing of a Muslim boy gave a communal turn to the events and tensions continued to rage even after a visit of then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Various professional associations such as the Ahmedabad Bar Association and the Ahmedabad Medical Association supported the struggle and went on a sympathy strike. The law and order situation only seemed to worsen after the police went on rampage after the killing of a police officer. Muslims complained that Hindus had damaged life and property of Muslims with the connivance of the police. After a lull when violence broke out again, 8 members of a Hindu family were burnt alive in a locality in Kalupur area of Ahmedabad followed by Hindu retaliation. The Solanki government’s reservation policy was not implemented and the agitation subsided after the government reached a settlement with its employees. According to one estimate 220 people had died in the riots.

While a number of explanations have been offered for the 1985 riots highlighting political calculations to bring the downfall of the Solanki government, the role of the BJP in fostering feelings of communalism, the role of the liquor mafia and the attempts of the land mafia to clear slum land for more profitable uses, Ornit Shani has highlighted the fact that there were many riots in 1985 that cannot be ascribe to a single group, class or religious community but rather demonstrates the flexibility and fluidity of caste and communal identities. She however goes on to:

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67 *Ibid*.
attribute to the riots, the strengthening of the upper caste position and the beginnings of a political shift in Gujarat from the Congress to the BJP.\textsuperscript{70}

**Rise of the BJP**

However even before the 1985 riots as far back as the 1974 Navnirman movement, the BJP through its predecessor, the Jan Sangh has successfully aligned itself with the causes of upper castes and the middle class such as anti reservation and anti corruption. In the 1981 agitation against reservations by upper caste students as well, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthishi Parishad (ABVP) the Sangh Parivar’s student wing was the first organization to protest reservation of seats in medical colleges. It also initiated the agitation aimed at the beneficiaries of the reservation system namely the Adivasis and Dalits and also took the agitation to the middle class localities of Ahmedabad. The Jana Sangh’s alignment with the anti reservation agitation which the Congress (O) also supported and later with Jayprakash Narayan’s call for ‘total revolution’ gave it credibility with the middle classes. In 1982 it also started relief work among the Dalits and Adivasis and began to win their support.\textsuperscript{71} According to the Commission of Inquiry instituted to investigate into the 1985 riots, Patels of Khaira and North Gujarat and the students belonging to ABVP “combined together to intensify the anti-reservation agitation.\textsuperscript{72} The Congress’s combination of redistributive measures with electoral politics that had united the upper castes in opposition had found a ready ally in the BJP.

In 1986 amidst continuing tensions in the city of Ahmedabad from the major riot in the last year, during the annual rath yatra procession from the Jagganath temple in the old walled city when violence broke out yet again the BJP and VHP even openly invited Dalits to join the holy war against the Muslims. From 1987 to 1992 through a series of yatras (campaigns through publicized journeys) by BJP leaders in open air vehicles from one place to another that would hold public speeches and meetings on the way, the BJP sought to mobilize a Hindu unity through its ideology of Hindutva. The issue of building a temple in Ayodhya on what is believed to be the birthplace of the Hindu God Ram where a 16\textsuperscript{th} century mosque now stands was successfully made into a national political issue by the BJP in the 1980s. Through

\textsuperscript{70} Ornit Shani, *Ibid* pp 89, 132.


its yatras and ramshila pujans (the worship of bricks) that were collected from different parts of the country and taken to Ayodhya the BJP mobilized sought to mobilize support across all castes and classes of Hindus. In 1990, the BJP came to power in a coalition arrangement along with the Janata Dal. L. K. Advani sought to undertake another yatra from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. The yatras had left a string of communal clashes in their wake. When Advani was arrested in Bihar, communal riots broke out in most towns and cities in Gujarat. Narendra Modi, who was then BJP’s General Secretary in Gujarat organized a series of meetings and a bandh during which violence erupted on a large scale in many areas during which an estimated 220 persons were killed.  

During the BJP’s campaign for the building of a Ram temple in Ayodhya in 1992 when kar sevaks climbed on the Babri mosque and demolished it, riots between Hindus broke out in different parts of India. In Gujarat as well rioting was reported from several places including the otherwise peaceful Surat that recorded the highest death toll of 190. Through the 1980s and 1990s BJP and its supporters had captured social and economic bases of power through institutions such as professional organizations, educational institutions and co-operative institutions at the local levels in both rural and urban areas. In 1995 the party captured political power at the state level as well by winning the assembly election.

In the same year, in a town called Kadi located 6 kms away from Ahmedabad, a 4000 strong mob of mainly Patidar upper castes brutally assaulted Dalits and burned their houses and shops. The mob which went on rampage in order to ‘put Dalits in their place’ and ‘teach them a lesson’ was not stopped by the police. Although a few arrests were made, the perpetrators of the arson were not brought to book. In a 10 day spate of violence against Christians from December 1998 to January 1999 Christians churches and institutions were attacked and in the tribal dominated districts of Gujarat while there were reports of the state police’s refusal to register complaints.

In 2001 Narendra Modi replaced Keshubhai Patel as Chief Minister of Gujarat. The year 2002 saw the worst violence Gujarat has witnessed where according

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to conservative estimates more than 1000 people,\textsuperscript{76} most of whom were Muslims lost their lives and thousands of Muslim families were displaced.

\textbf{Displacement due to communal violence}

Displacement due to communal violence however was not without precedent in Gujarat. "Throughout the night of 19 September 1969," the Justice Reddy Report has recorded that, "incidents of arson, murders, and attacks on Muslims and places of worship escalated. By the morning Muslims families particularly in the suburban, eastern areas, had begun leaving their homes to safe areas, and "the stream in the morning almost became a flood within 24 hours".\textsuperscript{77} Several trains carrying fleeing Muslims were stopped and attacked. Muslim refugees gathered in the railway station and in camps established by Muslim organisations.\textsuperscript{78} Within a week between the afternoon of 19\textsuperscript{th} September and the morning of 24\textsuperscript{th} September, 514 people were killed and 6,123 houses, huts and shops were damaged, looted and set on fire mainly by Hindus.\textsuperscript{79} Relief camps had then come up in the city, four of which were run by the Government of Gujarat itself. After the riots in 1969 some Hindus as well as Muslims moved out of parts of Ahmedabad such as Saraspur that had witnessed large scale rioting where their particular communities has been attacked to places of greater concentration of their own communities.\textsuperscript{80} The violence in the 1969 riots was concentrated in the walled city had taken place in the walled city area. The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation had then allotted temporary accommodation to some of the displaced, most of which were Muslims in plots adjacent to Gujarat Housing Board flats in the working class area of upcoming New Bapunagar.\textsuperscript{81}

In 1985 this same area of Bapunagar as well as Gomtipur on the eastern industrial belt of Ahmedabad, beyond the railways suffered severe communal violence and mass-scale destruction, which left thousands of people displaced, especially in Bapunagar.\textsuperscript{82} Approximately 2500 houses were damaged and 12,000 Muslims had been displaced including an instance of a woman whose house was

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[76] \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4745926.stm}, (accessed on 24th February 2006).
\item[80] See Omrit Shani, \textit{Ibid.} p 120.
\item[81] \textit{Ibid}. p123.
\item[82] \textit{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
burned 6 times over.\(^{83}\) A relief camp was opened at Aman Chowk to provide shelter for hundreds of Muslims who had fled there in the midst of the violence. However, while the 1969 riot was not followed by large scale communal violence for the next 12 years, since the 1985 riots which went on for 7 months and subsequent communal riots that continued to occur through the 1980s and 1990s till 2002 caused an evident polarization of the population. In 1990 following Advani’s arrest during Rath Yatra, the BJP and VHP called for a general strike and systematic attacks were made on government property and upper class Muslim homes while in the industrial neighborhoods of Ahmedabad, Dalits and Muslim clashed. In 1985 only one high wall had come up between a Patidar and a Muslim neighbourhood.

By the end of 1990, the residents of almost all Dalit chawls near Muslim chawls in the industrial areas had erected high walls around them, interrupted by iron gates.\(^{84}\) In the 1992-93 communal violence that erupted in several parts of India due to the demolition of Babri masjid, Muslim property including homes were burned again and once again residents of areas such as Bapunagar in Ahmedabad were rendered homeless. By the 1990s there were very few localities with mixed populations from the two communities in Ahmedabad and processes of ghettoisation intensified in Vadodara as well.\(^{85}\)

Nowhere is the segregation of living spaces more evident than in Ahmedabad, the largest of the three metropolitan cities of Gujarat state and the seventh largest metropolis in India. The apparently cosmopolitan areas of bungalows and middle class residential apartments, Gandhian institutions such as Gujarat Vidyapeeth (a Gandhian University) and the Sabarmati Ashram, premier educational institutions, malls and vegetarian restuarants\(^{86}\) fall on the Western side of the river Sabarmati while the old city with its ancient gates and living spaces and working class areas around the mills where Dalits, Muslims and OBCs with their non vegetarian food habits lived side by side, in addition to the industrial periphery that developed in the 1980s, fall on the eastern side of the river Sabarmati. The living spaces in Ahmedabad already showed community based segregation such as in the pols that was reproduced to some extent in the Western side of Ahmedabad in the residential colonies of mill

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\(^{86}\) It is difficult to find a restaurant serving non vegetarian food in the Western side of Ahmedabad.
owners with names of colonies like Thakorvas etc. Such division is not peculiar to
the city of Ahmedabad, as pointed out by Marcuse, “Divisions in cities have always
existed. It is not the fact that they are divided that is the particular characteristic of the
partitioned city today; rather, it is the source and manner of their division. Some
divisions arise of economic functionality, some are cultural, and some reflect and
reinforce relationships of power; some are combinations of all three.”

In Ahmedabad, according to a study by Darshini Mahadevia, the city structure
which earlier reflected divisions on the basis of class, now increasingly appears to be
divided by religion. A series of communal riots in 1980s, 1990s and in 2002 have had
an effect on the city structure where each riot led communities to shift to areas that
they consider safe and hence, has increased the localized congregation of people
belonging to one religion or caste into a particular region of the city. The trading
castes called Vanias including Hindus and Jains for instance stay in upmarket
Navrangpura, Paldi and Usmanpura areas while the Dalits of low income group live
in low income areas in the city’s periphery.

Juhapura in particular is a case in point here. Juhapura was village in the
periphery of Ahmedabad that in 1970 became a site for a reconstruction program of
the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) along with NGOs in Sankalit Nagar
for flood victims who had been displaced from the banks of the Sabarmati
river. Despite its distance from the main city, the building of Sankalit Nagar opened
up the possibility of housing for the expanding middle class of the city looking for
affordable housing alternatives. Sankalit Nagar had both Hindu and Muslim
occupants as did other residential complexes that came up in the following years.

With each riot however more and more communities moved into localities
with their caste fellows and co-religionists. For instance while Dalits migrated out of
Dani Limda and Shah Alam areas, Muslims from the walled city with fewer choices

88 P. Marcuse, “Cities in Quarters”, in Bridge G. and S. Watson (Ed.), A Companion to the City,
89 Ibid p 362. Also Ormit Shani, Communalism, Caste and Hindu Nationalism, Cambridge University
90 Darshini Mahadevia, Development Dichotomy in Gujarat, Research Foundation for Science,
91 Darshini Mahadevia, “A City with Many Borders: Beyond Ghettoisation in Ahmedabad”, in
92 Interview with Achyut Yagnik, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad, 21/10/2008.
93 Interview with Zakia Jowther, New Delhi, 4/4/2009. Zakia was living in Paldi, Ahmedabad during the
violence in 2002 and subsequently moved to New Delhi.
in other parts of Ahmedabad, moved into areas like Dani Limda and Shah Alam and increasingly, to the upcoming Juhapura area. Juhapura had an estimated population of 1.5 lakh to which 50,000 were added at the time of the violence in 2002. Juhapura also has 30 percent Hindu population. However with the influx of Muslims since the late 1980s, Hindus moved out of the older residential areas into areas like Gupta Nagar and Praveen Nagar. Juhapura gradually became a Muslim dominated area so that even buildings with Hindu names such as Amba Towers have only Muslim residents. Muslims who would have liked to live in cosmopolitan settings and in the more serviced western parts of the city also feel cornered into staying in Juhapura or any one of the pockets of Muslim concentration in the city. Living spaces of communities in other parts of Ahmedabad are also not difficult to discern in Ahmedabad where localities are referred to by the communities living there such as a Hindu ilaka, area territory or Muslim ilaka and where these spaces are separated by corners, streets, roads and name plates.

Although Ahmedabad cannot be extrapolated for the rest of Gujarat, there are obtrusive signs of the polarization of the population elsewhere as well. Baroda in particular has seen a fair number of riots due to religious processions especially in its old city areas such as Wadi, Panigate and Fatehpur areas where co religionists and community members live in pockets. However, compared to Ahmedabad, Baroda had a number of areas with mixed living areas in many localities. After the violence in 2002 however, city space in Baroda also shows clear signs of polarization with even government residential colonies that are otherwise known to be mixed living areas of employees now belonging to those of a particular community. The Gujarat Tractor Company' Residential Quarters and the Patrakar Colony for Journalists in Tandalja have less than 5 Hindu families as these colonies come in Tandalja which is a Muslim dominated area. During the series of yatras held by the BJP since the late 1980s and particularly L. K. Advani's rath yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya, the Vishwa Hindu

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94 Interview with Dr. Lakdawala, Ahmedabad, 24/10/2008.
95 Interview with Javed Ameer, Action Aid, Ahmedabad, 5/1/2009. Javed’s wife a lecturer in a prominent college in Ahmedabad struggled in vain to get a loan for a house back in the 1990s in places that are considered to be cosmopolitan parts of Ahmedabad such as Vastrapur, Satellite etc. However, even banks were not willing to give them loans for houses in these parts because of their Muslim names and suggested that they take up a house in areas of Muslim concentration.
96 Interview with Ayesha Khan, Ahmedabad, 13/12/2008. Ayesha grew up in Baroda in the upmarket Ellora Park but had to move out of her home of 17 years in the midst of the violence.
97 Interview with Tripti Shah, Tandalja, Vadodara, 19/2/2009.
Parishad (VHP) put up signboards in each city and town on the route declaring them to be cities of a Hindu Rashtra. Signboards declaring a place to be a Hindu Rashtra are common today in parts of Gujarat.98

These processes of segregation were also visible in relief and rehabilitation work after the massive earthquake that hit the Kutch region in Gujarat in January 2001. Over 13,000 people were killed in the earthquake and 900 villages were reduced to rubble.99 Relief was routed through the Sangh Parivar instead of the established practices of local self-government institutions and upper caste homes were relocated away from the destruction and therefore away from Dalit and Muslim homes.100

Gujarat’s geographic location has been credited with the immigration of different people groups over time as well as with the development of its mercantile culture along the western coast and ancient trade routes. With the coming of modernity processes of industrialization and urbanization rapidly caught on in Gujarat. However the state which continues to attract a large number of migrants from all over the country has witnessed population movements that are not always voluntary. In addition to natural disasters and processes such as the famines in 1906 and in 1984 and the earthquake in 2001, Gujarat has witnessed displacements both by development and conflict. Polarization of population along religious lines that has been visible in Ahmedabad since the 1980s is now evident in other parts of Gujarat particularly in north and central Gujarat where the violence was most intense in 2002. However the BJP that condemns reports of displacement whether by development or communal violence in Gujarat as criticism of Narendra Modi and by extension the whole of Gujarat, insists that what is called displacement of Muslims by human rights groups is nothing but migration between communities that has always happened.101 The next chapter therefore seeks to address the migration-displacement debate by examining what happened during the violence in 2002.

98 For instance the road from the relief colony of displaced Muslims at the outskirts of Himmatnagar to the main city in Himmatnagar marked with a signboard which says ‘Here begins the Hindu Rashtra’.
101 Interview with Yamal Vyas, Spokesperson for BJP in Gujarat, Ahmedabad, 10/2/2009.