Chapter 2

Area and People
2.1. State: Gujarat

Gujarat is one of the 28 states of the Republic of India. It is situated between 20°1’ and 24°7’ North latitudes and 68°4’ and 74°4’ East longitudes along the West coast of India. It is bounded by Rajasthan and Pakistan in the North and North-West, Madhya Pradesh in the East, Maharashtra and the Union territories of Diu, Daman, Dadra and Nagar Haveli in the South and Arabian Sea in the West and the South-West. It has a population size of 60,383,628 (Census of India, 2011). Gandhinagar is the capital city and Gujarati is the official language of Gujarat. The state was probably named after the Gujjars who were the first settlers of the region and ruled the area during 700-800 AD.

2.1.1. History

Traces of Indus Valley Civilization are evident in archaeological findings from the Stone Age settlements around Sabarmati and Mahi rivers. Remnants from the Harappa have also been found at Lothal, Rampur, Amri and other places.
The state has been ruled by different dynasties at different points in time such as Mauryan, Scythian, Solanki and Mughal. Gujarat reached its peak during the rule of Solanki Dynasty. Ancient Gujarat’s last Hindu rulers were from the Solanki clan of Rajputs who ruled from 960 AD to 1243 AD. Karandev was the last Hindu ruler of Gujarat and he was overthrown by the superior forces of Allauddin Khilji in 1297. Ahmedabad was founded by Ahmed-I, the first independent Muslim ruler of Gujarat, in 1411. Later, Gujarat was conquered by Akbar in 1570s.

In 1600s, the Dutch, French, English and Portuguese all established bases along the coast of the region acquiring several enclaves, including Daman and Diu as well as Dadra and Nagar Haveli. The British East India Company established a factory in Surat in 1614, which formed their first base in India, but it was eclipsed by Bombay after the British acquired it from Portugal in 1668. Gujarat was placed under the political authority of the Bombay Presidency, with the exception of Baroda state, which had a direct relationship with the Governor-General of India.

A new era began with the independence movement started by leaders like Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Morarji Desai, K.M. Munshi and several others. Gujarat became a place for some of the most popular revolts, including the satyagrahas in Kheda, Bardoli, Borsad and the Salt Satyagraha.

Post independence, all of the princely states except Saurashtra and Kutch, became part of Bombay State. On 1st May 1960, Bombay state was split into the states of Maharashatra and Gujarat, as a result of Mahagujarat conference to integrate the entire Gujarati speaking population under one administrative body. Government Houses of the new state were based in Ahmedabad till 1970. They were then shifted to Gandhinagar.

2.1.2. Climate and Seasonal Variations

Climate of Gujarat is moist in the southern districts and dry in the northern regions. Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Cambay reduce the temperature and render the climate more pleasant conditions. The year can be divided into the winter season from November to February, the hot season from March to May, the monsoon season from June to September and the intervening month of October.
Winters are mild, pleasant and dry while summers are extremely hot and dry. The average rainfall in Gujarat varies from 33 to 152 cms. Southern region receives an average rainfall ranging from 76 to 152 cms and northern districts get a rainfall varying from 51 to 102 cms. Rainfall in the southern highlands of Saurashtra and the Gulf of Cambay is approximately 63 cms while in other parts of Saurashtra it is even lesser. The semi-desert area of Kutch has a very low average rainfall. Certain areas in Ahmedabad, Mehsana, Banaskantha, Panchmahals, Surendranagar, Jamnagar and Kutch districts face chronic scarcity conditions due to inadequate rains.

As the Tropic of Cancer passes through the northern border of Gujarat, the area has an intensely hot or cold climate. However, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Cambay in the west and the forest covered hills in the east, reduce the harshness of climatic extremes.

2.1.3. Flora and Fauna

The state of Gujarat comprises of three geographical regions namely the peninsula, the desert region and the mainland. The peninsula is traditionally known as Saurashtra and is a hilly region dotted with low mountains. Kutch on the North-East is barren and rocky and contains the famous Rann (desert) of Kutch, the big Rann in the north and the little Rann in the east. The Mainland extends from the Rann of Kutch and the Aravalli Hills up to the river Damanganga. It is a level plain of alluvial soil.

The state has a variety of ecosystems ranging from deserts, scrublands, grasslands, deciduous forests and wetlands to mangroves, coral reefs, estuaries and gulfs. These habitats are home to rare wild life species. It has one of the major forests of India, Gir forest, which has the highest number of Asiatic lions. Gujarat has declared many of its rich and varied habitats as National Parks and Sanctuaries as a step towards the conservation of endangered species.

As many as 500 varieties of mammals, more than 2000 species of birds, a wide range of insects, fishes, amphibians and reptiles are found in the state. Some of the important mammals are black buck, nilgai, chital, wild boar, four horned antelope, hyena and rusty spotted cat. A large number of other animals like snakes, crocodiles, scorpions, bees and silkworm also inhabit the forests of Gujarat. Several kinds of birds such as peacocks, parrots, pheasants, geese ducks and cranes are known to exist in the area.
Flora in Gujarat includes a wide variety of vegetation, which is the result of an extensive range of climatic conditions. It is home to more than 400 species. It has one of the largest dry deciduous forests in the Western region of India, housing trees like *Teak*, *Boswellia serrata*, *Anogeissus latifolia* and *Diospyros*. Owing to the arid climate, the flora of Gujarat also possesses a wide range of xerophytic vegetation such as *Acacia arabica*, *Acacia leucophloea*, *Capparis ophylla* and *Zizyphus mauritiana*.

2.1.4. Sub-Divisions

There are 26 districts in the state of Gujarat namely Ahmedabad, Amreli, Anand, Banaskantha, Bharuch, Bhavnagar, Dahod, Dang, Gandhinagar, Jamnagar, Junagarh, Kutch, Kheda, Mehsana, Narmada, Navsari, Patan, Panchmahal, Porbandar, Rajkot, Sabarkantha, Surendranagar, Surat, Tapi, Vadodara and Valsad. There are a total 225 talukas, 18,225 villages and 348 towns in Gujarat (Census of India, 2011).

Under the revenue system, a district is divided into taluks. From administrative point of view, urban areas are classified into cities/ towns having municipal corporations/ boards, cantonment boards and Nagar Panchayats. In rural areas the Panchayat system is functional at district, block and village levels.

2.1.5. Demographics

Population Census Data (Census of India, 2011) shows that Gujarat has a total population of 6.03 crore which is approximately 4.90% of the total Indian population. Urban population of the state is 42.60%, which was 37.40% in 2001 (Census of India, 2011). Rural population in the state in 2011 fell to 57.40% from 62.60% in 2001. Population of Gujarat according to Census of India (2001) was 50,671,017. Of this, 7,481,160 persons belonged to the Scheduled Tribes (STs), constituting 14.80% of its total population. The state registered 21.40% decadal growth of the scheduled tribal populations in 1991-2001. The state is home to 29 notified scheduled tribes.

According to Census (2001), Bhil tribe with a population of 3.4 lakhs, constitute majority (46.00%) of the total ST population of the state. Dubla (8.00%), Dhodia (7.90%), Rathawa (7.20%) and Naikda (5.30%) are other major ST groups each having a considerable population size. Along with Bhil, these groups constitute about 74.30%
of the state’s total ST population. Gamit, Konkana, Chaudhari, Varli, and Dhanka each account for 3.0-4.00% of the state’s ST population. ST population in Gujarat is predominantly rural with 91.80% residing in rural and 8.20% in urban areas (Census of India, 2001).

As per Census of India (2011), sex ratio of Gujarat is 918. According to 2001 Census, sex ratio of the ST population was 974, which is close to the national average for all the STs (978).

Literacy rate in Gujarat has seen a rise and is 79.30% as per 2011 population census. Of that, male literacy rate stands at 87.20% while female literacy rate is 70.70%. The ST population of Gujarat has recorded 47.70% literacy rate, which is at par with the national average for STs (47.10%). The male and female literacy rates at 59.20% and 36.00% respectively indicate that women are lagging far behind. Merely 2.50% of total literates in the ST population have educational level of graduation and above (Census of India, 2001).

As far as the category of workers are concerned, 41.90% of the total main workers among the STs have been recorded as ‘cultivators’ and 36.10% as ‘agricultural laborers’. Thus, a total of 78.00% of the total scheduled tribe main workers are involved in agricultural sector (Census of India, 2001).

There are three principal religious groups among the people of Gujarat: Hindus, Muslims and Jains. A small minority is of Zoroastrians or Parsis and Christian. According to Census of India (2001), of the total ST population, 97.80% were Hindus, 1.70% were Christians and 0.20% were Muslims. Besides, 11,678 numbers had been reported as followers of “Other Religion and Persuasions” and 11,520 people have been classified as “Religion not stated”. A small number of STs had reported their religion as Jains (2,166), Sikhs (390), and Buddhists (231).

2.1.6. Linguistic Divisions

The official languages of Gujarat are Gujarati (91.50% speakers) and Hindi (2.90% speakers) while some Gujarati people also speak Urdu and Sindhi (1.70% speakers). Beside this, there are several linguistic sub variants of the Gujarati dialect. The linguistic variation is based on geographical factors.
Gujarati language is classified as a member of the Indo-Aryan group of Indo-Iranian languages, a category of the Indo-European family of languages. It is believed to be derived from the ancient Indic language of Sanskrit via Prakrit and Apabhramsha forms. Development of the Gujarati language can be dated back to approximately 12th century AD. It is written using a cursive-style script derived from the Devanagari script. The Gujarati language script differs from Devanagari in that it lacks the horizontal line, which runs above the script’s letters, a central characteristic of Devanagari. Gujarati can also be written using a Persian or Arabic script, although this method is less common and generally confined to specific regions such as the Kutch district.

2.1.7. Health Infra Structure

There are 7274 Subcentres, 1123 Primary Health Centres, 305 Community Health Centers spread across the state (Rural Health Statistics, 2011). There are several medical colleges, district hospitals, dispensaries, referral hospitals and other such institutions functional in different parts of the state.

![Map of Gujarat highlighting Surat district and talukas within Surat district](image)

**Figure 2.2.** Map of Gujarat highlighting Surat district and talukas within Surat district
2.2. District: Surat

Surat is the second largest district of Gujarat after Ahmedabad and is situated at the South of Gujarat. It is situated between 20°7’ to 21°5’ North Latitudes and 72°73’ to 73° East Longitudes. It is surrounded by Bharuch (North), Narmada (North-East), Navsari (South), Dang (South East) and Tapi (East) districts. To the West is the Gulf of Khambhat in the Arabian Sea. The district is spread over an area of 7,761 sq kms.

2.2.1. Sub-Divisions

Surat district was divided into two new districts under the Surat district re-organization act 2007. These include Surat district with headquarter at Surat and Tapi district with headquarter at Vyara. Presently, Surat district consists of ten revenue talukas namely, Choryasi, Palsana, Kamrez, Bardoli, Olpad, Mangrol, Mandvi, Mahuva, Umarwada and Surat.

2.2.2. History

Surat has a splendid history. According to a mythological belief, Lord Krishna stopped in the city on his journey from Mathura to Dwarka. The area is known to be ruled by Chalukyas around seventh century. Local tradition states that in 13th century the region was named Suryapur (city of sun) by a brahmin named Gopi. It was ruled by Hindu kings until it was captured by one of the generals of Qutbuddin Aibak. The Parasis started settling in the 12th century and contributed greatly to its prosperity. During the reigns of Mugal emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, Surat rose to become a chief commercial city of India. As the major port on the West coast of India, Surat has also served as the port for going to Mecca for Hajj. In the beginning of 16th century, Portuguese empire started maintaining its influence in the area and subsequently became the undisputed masters of Surat sea trade. In 1513, Portuguese traveler Duarte Barbosa described Surat as an important seaport receiving ships from various parts of the world. In 1608, ships from the English East India Company started docking at Surat. It was used as a trade and transit point in India. In 1614, following the Battle of Swally, English overcame Portuguese naval supremacy and obtained an imperial firm by establishing an English factory at Surat. The city was made the seat of presidency of the East India Company. In 1664, the Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji attacked Surat. At
that time, Surat was a key Mughal power centre and a wealthy port town. Shivaji conquered the city, looting both the Mughal and English trading centers. Surat was sacked again by Shivaji in 1670. Finding the city rather unsafe, the English shifted their head quarters from Surat to Bombay. There after Bombay was developed and many merchants shifted to Bombay.

At the later stages, Surat made a significant contribution in India’s struggle for independence. Historical sessions of congress were organized at many places in Surat during pre independence and post independence era.

2.2.3. Demographics

According to the Census of India (2011), the population size of Surat district is 60,79,231. Of this, 3,399,742 are males and 2,679,489 are females. There is a change of 42.20% in the population size as compared to population size enumerated in Census of India, 2001. 79.70% of total population of Surat district was found to reside in urban areas, while 20.30% of the population inhabits rural areas. The population density of Surat district is 1,376 people per sq. km. The average literacy rate of Surat is 86.70% compared to 77.60% in 2001. The male and female literacy rates are 91.050% and 81.020% respectively. Surat district presents a sex ratio of 788. This has shown a decline in comparison to 2001 Census figure of 810.

2.2.4. Economy

Economic development in Surat district can be attributed to the presence of a large number of textile industries, diamond-processing units, chemical and petrochemicals industries. There are around 605 medium and large scale industries and over 41,300 small scale industries based in Surat district (Vibrant Gujarat Summit, 2013).

2.2.5. Climate and Seasonal Variations

Surat has a moderate tropical savanna climate due to the proximity of the Arabian Sea. It experiences primarily three main seasons viz. summer, monsoon and winter. The summer begins in early March and lasts till June with April and May as the hottest months. The average maximum temperature is 40° Celsius during the summers. Rainy season/ monsoon starts in late June. The average maximum temperature is 32° Celsius.
during those months. Retrieval of monsoon occurs in the months of October and November with a return of high temperatures till late November. Winters starts in the month of December and ends in late February. Average temperature observed during the winters is of around 23° Celsius.

2.2.6. Flora and Fauna

Surat district is home to tropical moist deciduous forest. Major trees growing in these forests are *Tectona, Terminalia, Madhuca and Bamboo*. Some of the rare animal species including *Petaurista phillipenesis* (flying squirrel), *Pantlrrera pardzsfspanther, Lygosoma lineata* (lined, supple skink), *Tetracerus quadricornis* (four-horned antelope) are also found in Surat.

2.2.7. Education Facilities

There are around 2587 primary school, 542 secondary and higher school, 30 industrial training institutes, 4 engineering colleges and 2 medical colleges in the district. Colleges offering courses in information technology, biotechnology, pharmacy and management are also running. Specialized courses in gems, jewellery and textiles are among the popular professional courses.

2.2.8. Healthcare Facilities

In addition to 375 Subcentres, 51 Primary Health Centres, and 13 Community Centres (Rural Health Statistics, 2011), Surat district has a presence of specialized private hospitals that provide a comprehensive range of secondary and tertiary health care services. Some of the hospitals are equipped with state-of-the-art technology and a highly trained staff. There are also some specialized hospitals for the treatment of life threatening diseases such as cancer and tuberculosis.

2.2.9. Tourism

The district has various tourist destinations. It houses finely carved mosques, Parsi *agiaris* and European monuments. Some of the well known tourist destinations are Surat castle, Mugal Sarai, Sardar Ballabhbhai Patel Museum, Swaraj Ashram and Hazaria beach.
2.3. People: Chaudhari Tribe

Chaudhari is one of the 29 notified Scheduled tribes (STs) of Gujarat. According to the Census of India (2001), population size of the Chaudhari population was 2,82,392 constituting 3.80% of the total ST population of the state. The term “Chaudhara” is also reciprocally used to denote Chaudhari community. During 1961 Census, Chaudhara and Chaudhari community were recorded as independent groups. This fact is well known among Chaudhari community and people of the Chaudhari community claim that both Chaudhara and Chaudhari constitute the same tribal group. They believe that the term Chaudhara is synonymously taken for one of the Chaudhari subgroups namely Mota Chaudhari.

Chaudhari are mainly distributed in Surat district of Gujarat. Out of 25 talukas of Surat district (of pre 2007 division of Surat district), six talukas namely, Mandvi, Vyara, Umarwada, Mahuva, Mangrol and Songadh have the prevalence of Chaudhari population.

2.3.1. Origin

The ethnographic records pertaining to Chaudhari tribe of Gujarat present varied number of endogamous divisions among the tribe. According to the 1961 Census, Chaudhari tribe has nine endogamous divisions viz. Bharutia, Chantala, Chokapur, Takaria, Valvi, Santala, Mota, Nana and Bonda Chaudhari. According to Shah (1964), Chaudhari tribe is subdivided into five sections namely, Nana, Mota, Valvi, Tekaria and Bonda Chaudhari. Bhatt (1985) also documented the subdivision of Chaudhari tribe into five endogamous subunits namely, Nana, Mota, Valivada, Bonda and Pavagadiya Chaudhari. Singh (2003) presented the segmentation of Chaudhari community into three endogamous divisions namely Pavagadia, Naladri and Valavda Chaudhari. However, the contemporary population of Chaudhari tribe considers the above mentioned subgroups as synonyms for the four main endogamous subdivisions of Chaudhari group. These are Nana, Mota, Pavagadh and Valvi Chaudhari.

Various accounts exist about the origin and affinities of Chaudhari subgroups. It is said that originally Chaudhari tribe existed as a single tribal unit. A cow belonging to Chaudhari family died and its corpse was carried outside the village by two brothers,
the elder Mota and the younger Nana Chaudhari. After the disposal of the dead, the elder brother did not observe the obligatory customary ablutions and only sprinkled water on hands and feet. The descendents of the elder brother were hence called “Chatala or Santala” which means “sprinkle with drops”. The descendents of the younger brother (Nana), who had immersed his body in water according to the customs, considered themselves as “Chokhapur” which means “the pure ones”. This difference in the cultural practice led to the division within Chaudhari tribe.

The term Takaria, Rvalia, Nanadri are interchangeably used to refer to Pavagadhi Chaudhari. They also have a story in relation to their origin. It is said particularly about the Chaudhari of Mahuva taluka that they were once carriers of Chavda ruler who ruled over Champaner-Pavagadh region in North Gujarat (present day Halol taluka, district Panchmahal). Pavagadh came under the control of Kichhi branch of Chauhan Rajputs, around 1300 AD, who ruled for 184 years. Patai Rawal was the last Kichhi ruler who was defeated by Mahmud Begada, the Sultan of Gujarat in 1484 AD. Following Muslim invasion, many people fled to south Gujarat and settled in the vicinity of Chaudhari tribe in present day Mahuva taluka of Surat. Legends also claim that they married among the neighboring, local Chaudhari women and started recognizing themselves as another subgroup of Chaudhari.

It is also said that the people from Pavagadh who fled and established permanent settlement in Mahuva district, helped Peshwas to fight against Bhils who were the local rulers. As a reward to their service, they were given piece of land named Naldhara region. The Naldhara region included 6 villages. Since these people owned the land and also aided in administrative work they were given the title of Chaudhari, meaning someone entrusted with the duties of administration. The epic stating this is famous by the name of “Naldhara Vistar”.

The origin of Valvi Chaudhari on the other hand remains enigmatic.

Both Nana and Mota Chaudhari are numerically larger sections while the others are limited in size and restricted to the villages of Mahuva and Vyara talukas. All the subgroups were observed to have lots of similarities in their way of living and customs. However, evidence of Rajput affiliation can be witnessed in the death rituals of
Pavagadhi Chaudhari. This indicates that their connection with Rajput communities of Northern Gujarat is not so improbable.

The community was involved in the movement for independence under the prominent national leaders like Mahatama Gandhi, Sardar Patel and others. They have been actively participating in the political affairs of the state. Through political activities, they have had a close interaction with several communities. At present, the community has a number of political leaders and social workers.

2.3.2. Language

All the subgroups share a common dialect, which is referred to as “Chodhara”. They also speak Gujarati language, which belongs to the Bhili group of Indo-European linguistic family.

2.3.3. Occupation

Chaudhari is primarily a farming community. Agriculture is the main occupation and the major economic resource is the land. The community has combination of both land owning and landless groups. The system of tenancy exists. The rental that a tenant has to pay for a piece of land is fixed by an oral agreement and the payment is referred to as “Ganot”. It can be in the form of money or grains. Many people work as day laborers. Few people earn their living as tailors, carpenters, masons and shopkeepers.

2.3.4. Dietary Habits

Chaudhari are both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Under the influence of various Hindu saints, there has been a shift towards vegetarianism. They consume pulses of Tur (red gram), Mug (green gram) and locally available vegetables. Fruits are consumed occasionally. Mango and Cheekoo are in abundance in this region. They also take tea, milk and buttermilk. Lapsi (broken wheat grains fried with ghee and sugar), Siro (wheat flour fried with ghee), Dudh Pak (rice boiled in milk with dry fruits) and Farsan (commonly known as mixture) are consumed on various occasions. Though alcohol distribution and selling is prohibited in the state, local alcohol consumption is still prevalent. Tadi and Khajuri are used as country liquor.
2.3.5. Family

The extended families are common. Nuclear families are also found, though in a smaller proportion. “Kutumb” is the local term for family. A married woman observes the avoidance relationship with her father in law, with the elder brothers of her husband and with other elderly male members. She keeps a veil in their presence and refrains from direct conversation. Joking relation exists with the younger brothers of one’s husband and also with other male members of husband’s age group. Similarly, a man has a joking relation with the younger sisters of his wife. All the sons get equal share of the parental property. Succession is through the eldest son. The Chaudhari do not permit proprietary rights to women. In family affairs, the opinion of women is taken into consideration particularly during marriage negotiations.

2.3.6. Religion

Most of the members of Chaudhari community profess Hinduism. However, a few have converted to Christianity. Particularly among the tribesmen of Valvi Chaudhari subtribe, high influence of Christianity as compared to other groups. The Christian converts follow Christian way of life but at the same time, they continue to participate in various festivals of the village. The members of the community worship their ancestors on the eve of Divasa, Diwali and Holi. “Ahindo dev”, the god of the hills is considered as their supreme god of the community. “Himaria dev” is considered as the protector of fields and crops. “Morkhi mata” is believed to look after the health of both human and cattle. “Morkhi mata” and “Kiliodio dev” are worshipped and are feared to cause various diseases like plague, fever, cholera and other diseases. Stone images of ancestors known as “Khatrans” are also worshipped. Amongst these images, one image is of “Dabhio dev” who is considered to be the protector of other “Khatrans”. It is believed that a person who commits suicide or dies during an accident becomes a spirit. The term “Dakan” is used to refer to a woman who dies during an accident. If a pregnant woman dies during labor or immediately after giving birth, the term “Vanti” is used for her. Traditional sacred specialist is known as “Bhuva” who serves as shaman. Vows are of two kinds, “Chkhli” (clean) and “Meli” (unclean). In the former, the deity is worshipped with reddened rice, milk and ghee lamp and the latter involves the offering of a goat and cock.
2.3.7. Life Cycle Rituals

All the subgroups were observed to have similarities in their ways of living and customs. However, people of the community who have taken up Christianity follow Christian customs.

2.3.7.1. Child Birth

Child birth takes place within the four walls of dwelling hut. The mother and the child are attended by the local midwife. When a child is born, its umbilical cord is cut with “Boru or Darbha” (sickle) and buried in the cattle shed. The period of pollution following childbirth is twelve days for the child and other members of the family while for the mother it extends up till forty days. On the fifth day of birth, “Pachora” is observed and the name of the child is selected by maternal uncle. On this day, five small heaps of rice grains are placed in the name of the goddess and worshipped for the health, fame and prosperity of the child. “Mundone” or tonsure ceremony is observed during fifth or seventh year. Same rituals are performed on the birth of girl or boy child.

2.3.7.2. Marriage

The unique feature of the Chaudhari tribe is the absence of kul (clan) system. Endogamy is followed at the subgroup level. Inter subgroups marriages are prohibited. Intra-tribe marriages are also forbidden but high incidence of marriages with other tribes was noticed especially among Valvi Chaudhari. Monogamy is the common form of marriage though polygamy is also permitted. The marriageable age for boys ranges from 18 to 25 years and for girls from 16 to 25 years. Mode of acquiring mate is through negotiation. Residence after marriage is patrilocal except in “Khandalia” marriage. Ghar Jamai marriages or marriage by service is called as “Khandalia”. In these, the prospective son-in-law serves the girl’s father for fixed period of time. In such case, the couple settles at the girl’s house after marriage. Such a marriage is considered respectable for the girl’s father. However, the man who marries in this manner suffers a lowered social estimation among his fellow tribesman but still Khandalia marriages are not uncommon among Chaudhari tribe. The patri kins are known as “Paghti-nil-Sagai-vala” and the ones on the female side as “Kapadi-nil-sanga-vala”. Symbol of marriage for a married woman is vermillion on the hair parting. The practice of paying the bride price is also prevalent. Marriage is solemnized at the residence of bride. The ceremony in which the bride and
the groom are anointed with turmeric paste takes place three days before the marriage ceremony. A necklace of black colored glass beads is tied around the neck of the bride and the couple is taken to the kitchen of the house where they walk four times around the “Chula” (hearth). At the end of each round around the hearth, the ends of their garments are tied into a knot. This knot is loosened and again tied after every round. The bride goes to the house of her husband on the same day. She returns on the fifth day and finally joins her husband afterwards. Divorce (Chuta-Chatala) is permitted in case of a mismatch, economic hardship, harassment or adultery. Remarriage of widows is permitted. A widow cannot marry her paternal or maternal cousins but she may marry a relative of her deceased husband or even his younger brother.

2.3.7.3. Death

The dead body is cremated. However, in case of death of children and pregnant women, they are buried. Before the corpse is carried away from the house it is bathed, covered with a new shroud and a coin is placed over the lips. On the way to cremation ground, the son of the deceased places a small stone, a lump of cooked rice and drinking water. Ashes are immersed in water and at night, a lighted earthen lamp along with food and water is placed at the spot where the deceased breathed his last. On the third or the twelfth day of death, “Khatran” (a small stone slab) kept inside an earthen pot (Ghumat) is installed as a memorial. This is followed by a community feast. The “Khatran” is worshiped along with all the other family deities. Among Pavagadhi Chaudhari, instead of earthen pot a flat slab is erected along with “Khatran”. It has a picture of a king riding a horse with sword in his hand. The image reflects their historical connection with Pavagadhi Rajput communities.

2.3.8. Administration

The Chaudhari have their traditional Jati panchayat. The “Karbhari” is the village headmen. The panchayat comprises of the “Karbhari” and few heads of households. It settles disputes between the villagers. The “Police Patel” is another important officer in the village. He is responsible for maintenance of law and order in the village. A Police Patel holds office for a term of five years. Generally, this period is extended by many years and in some cases it has become hereditary. The statutory panchayat is primarily concerned with the implementation of developmental schemes and resolving inter-community disputes.
Figure 2.3. A Chaudhari Woman in the traditional dress

Figure 2.4. A Chaudhari Man playing traditional musical instrument “Davada”
Figure 2.5. Tomb Stone “Ghumat” inside which “Khatran” (a small stone slab) is kept in the memory of ancestors

Figure 2.6. Tomb Stone kept by Pavagadhi Chaudhari
Figure 2.7. *Gram Dev*, Protector of village’s temple

Figure 2.8. Place for making *Meli* (unclean) offering to the God