



Routledge Advances in Feminist Peace Research

EMERGING FEMINIST PEACE FROM BELOW AND DISASTER RECOVERY

A QUILTED ETHNOGRAPHY

Marjaana Jauhola and Shyam Gadhavi



‘This book is the product of outstanding research and scholarship and its ethnographic quilting is an innovative method in the co-creation of knowledge. Taking the everyday as a site of epistemic and methodological enquiry that weaves the local and the global together, the book is a valuable exposition of post-disaster recovery from a feminist peace studies perspective. Essential read on the violence of development, disaster recovery and populist politics especially in India.’

Swati Parashar, *Professor in Peace and Development, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg*



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Emerging Feminist Peace from Below and Disaster Recovery

This book offers a critical contribution to feminist peace and disaster research by challenging the successful disaster recovery narrative of the Kachchh 2001 earthquake in Gujarat, India.

Engaging in a feminist intersectional analysis of complex cascades of violence, the book uses a theoretical and methodological approach to studying cascades of violence of populist post-disaster recovery, communal violence, and urban development – each with implications for intersectional social divisions, ecology, and thus, everyday peace. The book follows the mundane everyday and life-historical trajectories of the residents of the temporary shelter neighbourhood in Bhuj, drawing attention to an emerging feminist peace from below through silent resistance, care, and solidarity. It demonstrates that the impacts of disaster populism in the name of being “pro-poor” do not impact the marginalised segments of the society and disaster-affected communities, even within the same neighbourhood of the dispossessed, in the same ways. Combining underexplored newspaper and project documentation archives, the speeches of Narendra Modi delivered in Kachchh, and urban-life historical ethnography, the book offers a rich analysis of gendered and intersectional experiences of how dispossession and mundane violence are embedded in the earthquake recovery – and how international humanitarian aid and urban disaster recovery are entangled with complex cascades of violence.

This book will be of much interest to students of feminist theory, peace studies, post-disaster recovery, and South Asian politics.

Marjaana Jauhola is a senior research fellow at Tampere Peace Research Institute, Tampere University, Finland, and associate professor in Global Development Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Shyam Gadhavi is a founder and president of the Prakrit Foundation for Development Trust, India, an NGO.

Routledge Advances in Feminist Peace Research

Series Editors:

Tarja Väyrynen *Tampere University, Finland* and

Élise Féron *Tampere University, Finland*

This series aims to establish a home for conceptually challenging and empirically authoritative studies about how feminist peace approaches can help to move forward the study of peace, justice, violence, and conflict. More specifically, FPR has the potential to renew approaches to traditional fields such as peacebuilding, mediation, conflict prevention, international interventions, or peacekeeping, by challenging conventional understandings of how peace is built, and by bringing in new perspectives pertaining for instance to environmental peacebuilding, or to indigenous and decolonial approaches to peace.

Gendering Peace in Violent Peripheries

Marginality, Masculinity, and Feminist Agency

Uddipana Goswami

Feminist Peace and the Violence of Communalism

Community, Gender and Caste in India

Emanuela Mangiarotti

The Production of Gendered Knowledge of War

Women and Epistemic Power

Edited by Annika Björkdahl and Johanna Mannergren

Emerging Feminist Peace from Below and Disaster Recovery

A Quilted Ethnography

Marjaana Jauhola and Shyam Gadhavi

Emerging Feminist Peace from Below and Disaster Recovery

A Quilted Ethnography

Marjaana Jauhola and Shyam Gadhavi



Routledge

Taylor & Francis Group

LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2025
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2025 Marjaana Jauhola and Shyam Gadhavi

The right of Marjaana Jauhola and Shyam Gadhavi to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

The Open Access version of this book, available at www.taylorfrancis.com, has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.

Any third party material in this book is not included in the OA Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. Please direct any permissions enquiries to the original rightsholder.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-032-75208-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-75209-9 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-47293-3 (ebk)

DOI: [10.4324/9781003472933](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003472933)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by KnowledgeWorks Global Ltd.

**This book is dedicated to the memory of shepherd and
Gebanshah pir shrine mujāvar Isha, and rewal horse
Marwadi mare Maṇkī.**



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Preface: કચ્છ મુલક જા માડુ - People of Kachchh</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xviii</i>
<i>List of Acronyms and Abbreviations</i>	<i>xxi</i>
<i>Spelling</i>	<i>xxii</i>
PART I	
Studying the Aftermath of Disaster Recovery	1
1 Introduction: Emerging Feminist Peace from Below Amid Disaster Recovery and Complex Cascades of Violence	3
2 Quilted Ethnography of Emerging Feminist Peace from Below	25
3 Modi's Political Transformation from Sangh Volunteer to Viśvaguru and Viśvāmitra, Teacher and Friend of All	42
PART II	
Āvās Landscapes Challenging the Hegemonic Recovery Narrative	57
4 Populist Recovery Narrative Revisited: “Temporary Neighbourhood of Bhuj, or Epicentre of Problems?”	59
5 A “Wasteland” to Be Developed: Temporary Shelter Neighbourhood Reconnected to Its History	90
6 Locating Gendered Spirituality as Care, Healing, and Contestation of Norms	118

PART III

Emergence of Feminist Peace through Life Histories 149

- 7 Beyond Anthropocentric Care: Minority Masculinities,
Rewal Horse Racing, and Love for Maṅkī 151

- 8 “When I Think of Those Days, I Feel Like the Earth
Will Break Apart and I Will Merge into It”: Reconciling
Gendered Intersections of Violence 168

PART IV

Permanently Temporary 191

- 9 Complex Cascades of Violence and Uncertainty
as a Result of Earthquake Recovery 193

Conclusions: From Complex Cascades of Violence
and Uncertainty to Emerging Feminist Peace from
Below in Disaster Recovery 217

Index 222

Figures

2.1	QR code of the video From Haṅgāmī (Temporary) to Permanent Lives (17:29)	26
2.2	QR code of the ધણકીયું – quilts video (09:22)	28
2.3	QR code of the video From Haṅgāmī (Temporary) to Permanent Lives (09:00)	33
4.1	<i>Kutchmitra</i> article clip of 17 April 2001 photographed at the archive of <i>Kutchmitra</i> newspaper	61
4.2	<i>a–c</i> Photo collage of black and white photograph negatives from the film shot by Marjaana in May 2001	64
4.3	Photograph of the newspaper clip of 26 July 2001 on the archive desk of <i>Kutchmitra</i>	66
4.4	Photograph of the newspaper clip of 15 August 2001 on the archive desk of <i>Kutchmitra</i>	72
5.1	Pencil drawing imagining the versatile history of Haṅgāmī Āvās: Sural Bhit, Karsanvari, Samivari, Gebanshah Pir shrine, Bhujiyo hill	94
5.2	Buffaloes bathing in the remains of the Karsanvari lake in 2024	114
6.1	<i>a, b</i> Gebanshah Pir Dargah in 2001 and in 2024	121
6.2	QR code for the video Procession (08:16)	126
6.3	Maruf smiling next to the Horse of Kerbala from Haṅgāmī Āvās at Muharram procession in 2019 in Old Bhuj	132
6.4	Bird tower next to Karsanvari lake	137
6.5	Bhuj high court Jōgaṇī dhām in 2023	140
7.1	Maṅkī and Bullet walking the main road of Haṅgāmī Āvās	159
7.2	QR code for a horse training video “Dancer” (03:17)	163
7.3	QR code to watch the poem in the video “Waiting for Corona/કો કોરોના અચેતો?” (26:49)	165
9.1	QR code for the “Waiting for Corona/કો કોરોના અચેતો?” (26:49)	202

Preface: કચ્છ મુલક જા માડુ – People of Kachchh

Raga: Kachchhi Bhairavi

કચ્છ મુલક જા માડુ મુંડે, વધુ લગે તા વલા
વધુ લગેતા વલા, અઈએ ભલે કના પણ ભલા
કચ્છ વતનજા વાસી મુંડે, વધુ લગેતા વલા
Kacch mulaka jā māḍu muṅkē, vadhu lagē
tā valā vadhu lagēntā valā, a'imē bhalē kanā paṇa
bhalā kaccha vatanajā vāsī muṅkē, vadhu lagēntā valā

સરલ સમજુ ને શુરવીર સચા, ચોખા ચત ને ચલા;
આશા કરેને અચે ઉનજા, ઠા ન વારી ઠલા.
Saral samaju nē śuravīra sacā, cōkhā cata nē
calā; āśā karēnē acē unajā, ṭhā na vārī ṭhalā.

ભરત ભરે કોંચ શસ્ત્ર ભનાય પ્યો, મિટી મંજા
માટલા; કડયા કમ કોચ કરે સુથારી, કઈક વતાઈ કલા.
Bharata bharē kōya śastra bhanāya pyō,
miṭī mañjā māṭalā; kaḍiyā kama kōya karē suthārī,
ka'ika vatā'ī kalā.

ખીર ખચડી મખણ માની, ભોજન ખેતા ભલા;
તેવાર અચે તેર તારે ગનેતા, ચોખે ઘે મે ચલા.
Khīr khicaḍī makhaṇa mānī, bhōjana khēntā
bhalā; tēvāra acē tēra tāre ganēntā, cōkhē
ghē mēm calā.

પ્રભુ અસાનો પર્યા રખજા, બાયર દેશજી ભલા;
હિંદુ મુસ્લિમ હલી મલી 'આલ', ઈશ્વર ભજે કોઈ અલ્લા.
Prabhu asānō paryā rakhajā, bāyara dēśajī
balā; hindu muslima halī malī 'āla', īśvara
bhajē kō'ī allā.

I admire people of Kachchh,
I admire them, they are kinder than
the kind,
I admire people of Kachchh.

They are simple, wise and brave,
pure hearted and honest; They never
let visitors go empty-handed.

Embroiders, toolmakers and potters;
masons and carpenters present
countless arts.

Eating delicious food like milk,
khichdi, butter and millet;
when the festival comes they fry
pancakes in pure ghee.

Oh God, keep such foreign troubles
away from us; Hindus and Muslims
live together here, some worship
God and some Allah.

(આલ, 2013, p. 49)

Shyam Narrating the 2001 Kachchh Earthquake for the Finnish Science Centre Heureka Exhibition Facing Disasters

My disaster experiences as a child came both through stories told us by elders but also when I personally experienced it.¹ I heard stories of how disasters impacted

the land of Kachchh – which is not rare, as they happen again and again and such disasters have played a role in the history of Kachchh, in causing changes such as migration, social structure, and so on.

Then unfortunately, just couple of years afterwards, we had an earthquake in 2001, which was quite strong and it destroyed lives all over Kachchh and big cities. Lot of people died in that.

It was morning. I woke up a bit early because I participated in a school function, as it was 26th of January. It is a public holiday as it is Republican day of India. The function was organized at the school. I participated in a group dancing; we were supposed to dance under the flag. The whole ceremony was divided into two: one was that rest of the pupils who did not dance participated in a march all over the village and they were supposed to return to school. Meanwhile, we had prepared ourselves, put on the uniform for the dance and we were waiting the whole ceremony to start. Hence, we were inside one room, and the door was closed as we were changing our clothes and we were getting ready. It was very normal and exciting morning. All of a sudden, there was explosion, it was a sound of a big boom, and we all were surprised. But because it was national holiday and ceremony day, we thought that maybe it can be a cracker, or maybe the march has returned back to school. After a few moments, some other kind of noise started to occur: windows were breaking, benches were falling, the door was shaking. We were some four to five students, and we could not understand what was going on. The very first impression was that maybe friends are teasing us, because the door is closed. Then it was a bit stronger, so we got confused. When we saw that our benches are falling and everything is shaking, we just rushed outside.

I was wearing shoes and I was trying to put one on. But it was time to rush outside, so I could not put on the shoe, and I ran outside. We were running through a room and a long attic gallery which was part of the inner part of the school. As we could not come directly to the ground, we had to run from the gallery and I remember that while we were running, some concrete stuff was falling on our head. But luckily, we were able to go outside and as soon as we reached outside, I saw that there were people on the ground, sitting there, trying to stand but because the land was shaking, they were not able to stand. My first sight was my English teacher, and I just rushed, I was not able to think of anything else. When he saw me running towards him, he just opened his arms, and I hugged him. We were safe but I saw that the ground was coming up from one side and then soon after that it was going down. I saw that one teacher was trying to reach out to students who got scared and they rushed inside the school. He was trying to rescue them outside. People were shouting and the impression in my mind, or conclusion in our mind, because we had never heard of the earthquake, and we had never experienced it before, but we had heard the stories of the war between India and Pakistan, the bombing and all the stories of the ghosts and like that. The ideas were coming into my mind that this land is going through electric short socket, that's why it is shaking. Or it is a big bomb which has fallen on us by Pakistan. Or that it is a ghost, which is shaking it. This all was going on in our minds, what it can be, this or that. Then while this

kind of things were going on in our minds, I was holding my teacher very tight. We were not able to stand very straight. We had to move. We were moving and shaking with the land. The land was shaking. I saw that some parts of the school collapsed. But luckily nobody was stuck in that, all were outside on the ground.

After few minutes, everything was calm, we all were confused. Nobody was able to see how the things are and what was going on, but few teachers were saying that this was earthquake. Stay calm and stay together.

My uncle was in Bhuj, capital of Kachchh, city which got severely damaged and destroyed nearly all. He was there, and he saw the impact, how people were stuck in structures, and needed help. He came home with his motorbike, something around sixty kilometres and talked with my father. They all met with youngsters and organisations, including RSS.² Then a big truck of people went to Bhuj. They tried to take out bodies of people, and they helped people who were stuck in the damaged structures. Then later I remember that there was an announcement that they were coming to everyone's house to collect food and we all gave them extra food, bread and vegetables and such things which they were providing over there.

Marjaana Recollecting the 2001 Kachchh Earthquake on 26 January 2001 in Her Daily Diary on the 11 February 2001

The last days since the 26th of January have been super busy. There was an earthquake in Gujarat in the morning of the 26th, just when we were on a train to Jaipur [for a long weekend]. We learned of the details only on Sunday morning when reading the newspaper. The epicentre was roughly just 20 kilometres from Bhuj, where we were planned to go for a training workshop [on community radio initiatives] in March. Women from the affected villages had come in Delhi to sell their handicrafts in October. It's blown my mind completely. (Old) Bhuj is totally destroyed, and people are living in the streets in fear of aftershocks.

The past week I have been working with the UN Disaster Management Team, it's been simultaneously really hard but also rewarding at the same time. Most interesting for me has been to work with the team that arrived from the UNDP's Geneva office, who are all experienced relief experts. The UN Humanitarian Affairs Office has also sent their team to do damage appraisal.

These few lines in my daily journal of 2001, the only ones rather strangely on the topic that year, mark the dramatic change in my duties as a junior programme officer at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s New Delhi office. Having been supporting the UNDP's work in mostly rural development, natural resource management, and women's empowerment programmes in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Bihar. This had included collaboration with women's cooperatives in Gujarat that changed their activity focus for a long period of time to immediate

disaster relief, recovery and later longer term recovery - but who all belonged to earthquake affected people.

Having visited Kachchh only two times in 2001 before returning to Finland, I had contemplated on the need to understand the long-term challenges ahead more deeply through research. In particular on the question of just and inclusive recovery. Yet, the journey back to Kachchh took a longer route. After a decade of research on the social, political, and economic impacts of the politics of Indian Ocean tsunami aid, I decided to apply for research funding, which would allow me to return to Bhuj 15–20 years later. With an aim to understand and document the aftermath of aid from the perspective of life trajectories of people who had become residents of a temporary shelter neighbourhood that was built to replace the lost houses in Old Bhuj.

My journey into a disaster aid researcher has been primarily motivated by three troubles: firstly, by the desire to understand the problematic mismatch between the “branding” of the (disaster) aid as “doing good”, and claims to deliver technocratic and straight forward and linear betterment and “building back better” for the disaster affected people (Jauhola, 2013); secondly, it has also included interrogation of the gendered, racialized, and classed privileges of the experts of “the Aidland” – including that of mine in New Delhi (Martini & Jauhola, 2014), and colonial continuities of both aid and academic knowledge practices (Jauhola, 2017); thirdly, this process has also forced me to propose a (decolonialized) methodological turn towards ethnography and lived experiences as sites of resistance and contestation of at times discriminatory and violent forms that “development” or “aid” does (Jauhola, 2015, 2020).

Forming Collaboration to Study Scraps of Hope in the Aftermath of the Earthquake

For Shyam, a few years back, he got a chance to work with one Italian researcher, Francesco Bogoni (2021), who was interested in learning about how the relocation sites which were built to relocate all such people who lost their houses in the city during the earthquake. Government had different plans to establish them, and they made different sites. During that research, Shyam got a chance to meet those people who faced that severe earthquake, not just the experience physically, but they got affected very severely, like they lost their family members, their relatives, their own houses, their whole land, and also some part of their body, few were like that. And it was very deep impact on their lives after the earthquake, they lost their businesses, their important documents, and all such things. So, while he was talking with them, that time he understood the actual impact and big-scale impact on social life in his area was not just that shaking of land; it was not just that what he (at that time) only understood when he was a child, but it was a bit more and thousands of people got affected by that. And the earthquake’s impact is still ongoing in the lives of people. They are still unstable. They are not yet fully recovered. Or they are still going on with that effect of earthquake, so such stories when meeting with the people and the knowledge, which he heard from them and their life stories, it

actually “sucked me” as he describes it, and it made him realise the severity of this earthquake and how it affected them.

Marjaana’s suggestion to join her research allowed continuing this way: focusing on life historical research of people who are affected by the earthquake. That gave Shyam – who was the one responsible for conducting the interviews and discussions in Kachchhi language – a big opportunity to understand their life very closely and very nearby when he got the chance to talk with them about their life history: what earthquake did to them? What happened after the earthquake? How could they survive? How all that happened? This inspired Shyam to understand: disaster is not just that small event of a few minutes or hours, but it travels through the lives of people after it is physically over. It starts to travel through the lives of people when they suffered. When they suffered, they faced problems afterwards of the disaster. That gave me a perspective to understand much more deeply what changes my area got to go through after the earthquake. What are the benefits and negative effects of the heavy establishment of industries in my area?

This book is our collaborative effort to build an ethnographic quilt of the aftermath of the 2001 Kachchh³ earthquake – promises, expectations, and challenges faced by the residents of the temporary shelter, Haṅgāmī Āvās, residents in the city of Bhuj, capital of the Kachchh district in Western Gujarat, India.

Notes

- 1 Throughout the book, although we acknowledge standardised versions of English and will do rounds of language editing to the chapters, such sections that are transcripts of verbal conversations between Shyam and Marjaana are kept as they are as long as the meaning of the conversations is understandable. This is to mark, firstly, the colonial legacies of language, and secondly, celebrate the multiple ways that English is both spoken and written globally, see our previous attempts to highlight this (Vardhani, Gadhavi, & Jauhola, 2021).
- 2 RSS, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, is a Hindu nationalist paramilitary volunteer organisation and a leading organisation of Sangh Parivar (or Sangh family), including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The RSS structures run in both urban and rural areas, and RSS is known for its humanitarian efforts after calamities and disasters, such as the 2001 earthquake.
- 3 In this book, we follow the transcription Kachchh or Kachchhi of the name of the district in Gujarati (કચ્છ), also closest to the pronunciation of the name in Kachchhi language.

References

- Bogoni, F. (2021). *Participatory practices and policies of slum rehabilitation in small cities: The case of Bhuj in north-west India* (PhD thesis). Université Paris Cité, Centre d’études en sciences sociales sur les mondes africains, américains et asiatiques. Paris.
- Jauhola, M. (2013). *Post-tsunami reconstruction in Indonesia: Negotiating normativity through gender mainstreaming initiatives in Aceh*. London: Routledge.
- Jauhola, M. (2015). Scraps of home: Social and vernacular memory and politics of disaster humanitarianism in Aceh, Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 43(6), 738–759.

- Jauhola, M. (2017). Visual ethnographic encounters and silence in post-conflict city of Banda Aceh, Indonesia. In A.-M. Rivas & B. Browne (Eds.), *Experiences with violent research and researching violence* (pp. 179–184): Bristol: Polity Press.
- Jauhola, M. (2020). *Scraps of hope in Banda Aceh: Gendered urban politics of peace in the Aceh peace process*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
- Martini, E., & Jauhola, M. (2014). Journeys in Aidland: An autobiographic exploration of resistance to development aid. *Journal of Narrative Politics*, 1(1), 76–96. Retrieved June 5, 2023, from <https://jnp.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/default/article/view/8/7>
- Vardhani, V. R., Gadhavi, S., & Jauhola, M. (2021). Co-creation through quilting: Connected entanglements and disruptions with care. In T. Seppälä, M. Sarantou, & S. Miettinen (Eds.), *Arts-based methods for decolonising participatory research* (pp. 21–42). New York: Routledge.
- આલ, ક. (2013). કિરતાર કવિતા કુટિર (*Kiratār kavītā kuṭira*). Bhuj: Shreeji Offset/Mr.Ashwin Jinjuwadiya.

Acknowledgements

No research can be completed, nor books can be written, without the generosity of numerous people that we have encountered in the process. It is time for gratitude:

Sonal Raviya, thank you for checking the spelling of Kachchhi words used in our methodology. It means a lot for us to receive your generosity as the first female PhD from Zarpara village in Kachchh with a specialisation in idioms in Hindi, Kachchhi, and Gujarati language!

We also want to thank the following Bhuj-based collaborators in the process: Vijay Kumar from Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology (GUIDE) for the insightful analysis of the ecology of Kachchh that inspired us to do transect walks in the surrounding areas of Hangami Awas, Naveen Bapad a well-known environmentalist and ornithologist for having joined us to such walks and sharing your knowledge with us, Naveen Joshi a journalist leading us to the Kutchmitra archives of 2001–2003, Dipak Mankad an editor of Kutchmitra for allowing us to reprint the English translations of the Haṅgāmī Āvās articles, a historian and museum curator Pramod Jethi – for your courtesy of allowing us to reprint your drawing of the Bhujio hill and Haṅgāmī Āvās, curator Shefalika Awasthi at Kutch Museum for access of the museum archives, Utkantha “Uttuben” Dholakia for Gujarati lessons, COVID-19 lockdown video collaboration, and friendship, Alkabab and Madhuben for having guided Marjaana in Bhuj in the early stages and re-introducing the urban social questions in the city, Namrita and Firoza (we hope your study dreams have come true) for the initial interview translations in Bhuj in 2017, Sonali Srivastava for transcript and English translations of the first crucial interview in Finland (having followed you to complete your own PhD afterwards has been amazing), and Adil Mistri for the numerous transcripts of interviews in Gujarati and translating them in English. This collaboration would not have been possible without Francesco Bogoni introducing us to each other in 2018. Thank you also for sharing archival documents and all discussions connected to our joint research interests.

Special thank you is owed to colleagues at several Indian universities, having invited us to participate in academic activities, and allowing Marjaana to be officially affiliated as a researcher, at your campuses: IIT Delhi, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Jamsetji Tata School of Disaster Studies), and KSKV Kachchh University. We thank firstly, South Asian University colleagues: Soumita Basu for everything really, being a colleague and a friend; Shweta Singh for having invited

Marjaana to present her previous research for your students; and Jayashree Vivekanandan for providing us contacts to researchers based in Delhi, secondly, IIT Delhi colleagues: Ravinder Kaur and Farhana Ibrahim for having invited Marjaana to teach at your courses, and thirdly, TISS colleagues in disaster studies Jacqueline Joseph, Janki Andharia, Niti Mishra, Lavanya Shanbhogue Arvind for the visits, friendships, and co-authoring; School of Development Studies colleagues Ritambhara Hebbar and Mahuya Bandyopadhyay for scholarly collaboration and generosity; Anjali Monteiro and K.P. Jayasankar from School of Media and Cultural Studies for sharing your long visual *prem* for Kachchh; KSKV Kachchh University colleagues Ram Sondarva and Mahesh Thakkar – having invited us to dream and plan new collaborations despite COVID-19 uncertainties.

In addition, thanks go to Mihir Bhatt at All India Disaster Management Institute, with whom the journey goes all the way back to 2001: thank you for offering your staff and facilities for Marjaana's first revisit to Gujarat in 2017.

Thank you to all who have taken time to discuss and comment on our work-in-progress in conferences; they have all provided us inspiration and commitment to complete our work. We also like to thank the co-creation and co-authoring possibilities with Beyond Disaster Recovery workshop participants Maureen Fordham, Punam Yadav, Eija Meriläinen, Eila Murphy, and Juliette Marin – the workshop resulted in an amazing collaborative writing process and participating in the Heureka Finnish Science Centre exhibition. We extend our thanks also to Heureka exhibition curator Emmi Huhtaniemi and director Mikko Myllykoski for inviting us to take part in the preparations and the exhibition Facing Disaster.

Marjaana would also like to thank for the nurturing years spent with the Worlding Feminism collective: Ilona Steiler, Violeta Gutiérrez Zamora, Satu Sundström (special thank you for being the first reader of the full manuscript and the revised introduction), and Minna Lyytikäinen. Thank you is also extended to Gender and Global Development Studies and wider Faculty of Social Science colleagues at University of Helsinki: Johanna Kantola, Paola Minoia, Henri Onodera, Kazimuddin Kazu Ahmed, Johanna Goetz, Marianna Vivitsou, and Emilia Palonen and Tampere Peace Research Institute and wider Tampere University colleagues: Zahra Edalati, Louise Ridden, Aslihan Oguz, Anitta Kynsilehto, Eeva Puumala, Élise Feron, Tarja Väyrynen, Saara Särämä, Tiina Vaittinen, and Vishnu Vardhani for joint quilting processes in Helsinki, Carlo A. Cubero for hosting us at Tallinn University, colleague and a friend Tiina Seppälä, and media education expert and friend Mervi Maatela – hosting us in Rovaniemi a few days before the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also would like to thank Paola Minoia for inviting us for a writing retreat in Torino in June 2022, Johanna Valenius for offering a writing retreat for Marjaana in St Etienne in August 2023, Nordic India Centre in Nizamuddin East for providing us accommodation in Delhi when in need, Sharif Mistri for joining us for the shrine visits, for masala chai, and for accommodating and lending us kitchen equipment in Bhuj when in need, Shyam's parents Mangabhai and Aashbai for their hospitality during the research and especially during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, and Aashbai for holding hand-held sessions on dhaḍkī – quilt making. We also thank

dogs Estra, in Lonavala, and Jack, in Zarpara, for your companionship and honest loyalty. We wish to thank Routledge Advances in Feminist Peace Research series editors Tarja Väyrynen and Élise Féron, senior editor Andrew Humphrys, editorial assistant Max Gethings, and senior project manager Saranya J. and her team for the careful copyediting of the book.

Last but not least, our heartfelt thanks go to all Haṅgāmī Āvās residents who have shared their stories and lives with us and trusted us with retelling them in the book.

The poem “કચ્છ મુલક જા માડુ/People of Kachchh” by Kavi Aal is translated and reprinted in Preface with the courtesy of the poet.

Newspaper articles between 17 April 2001 and 18 April 2003 are reprinted in [Chapter 4](#) as English translations with the courtesy of *Kutchmitra*.

The pencil drawing in [Chapter 5](#) is reprinted with the courtesy of historian and museum curator Pramod Jethi.

The poem “વા વા વટોળયિા!/Oh, Whirlwind Go On!” is translated and reprinted in [Chapter 5](#) with the courtesy of Jagdeep Virani Foundation. Our warmest thank you to the managing trustee, Dr. H.M. Bhatt, for facilitating the process.

We thank the Head of Unit Kim Eling from Transparency unit of the European Commission’s Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) in responding to our application for access to documents in 2017 which gave us the access to the temporary shelter project documentation.

Research undertaken for this book has received Research Council of Finland’s fellowship funding 2015–2020 (286013).

This book is written in the memory of shepherd and mujāvar Isha and Marwadi horse Māṅkī – who passed away during the research process, but whose contribution to our research is invaluable.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
COVID-19	Coronavirus pandemic 2019
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Aid Office
EPC	Environmental Planning Collaborative
GEERP	Gujarat Emergency Earthquake Reconstruction Programme
GSDMA	Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority
GIDC	Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation
KNNA	Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan (KNNA)
MP	Member of parliament
PM	Prime minister
PMAY-HFA	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Housing for All
RAY	Rajiv Awas Yojna, housing programme
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SC	Scheduled caste
ST	Scheduled tribe
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Spelling

Latin-script alphabet spelling of Gujarati and Kachchhi words follows the following principles of pronunciation:

Long vowels are written, for example, as ā;

Cerebral, lateral, and nasal consonants are written, for example, as ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ḷ, ṇ.

Key selected Gujarati and Kachchhi concepts are used with Gujarati alphabets, followed with a Latin-script spelling, and English translation.

Part I

Studying the Aftermath of Disaster Recovery



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

1 Introduction

Emerging Feminist Peace from Below Amid Disaster Recovery and Complex Cascades of Violence

1.1 Towards Epistemology of Emerging Feminist Peace from Below – Practicing મેડાવો Medavo

Central epistemological commitment of this book is in theorising everyday as an act of bottom-up knowledge production. For this, we draw from the tradition of Cāraṇ community¹: praxis of મેડાવો medavo, which translates into dialogue and consultation in Kachchhi language, to mediate between the rulers and the people (for details, see [Chapter 2](#)). We treat such a knowledge production as a form of theorising-from-below: “narration of a lived archive with a decolonial past and a horizon in the future” ([Jauhola, 2020](#), p. 127).

This introduction expands the praxis of મેડાવો medavo beyond our primary sphere, residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās, towards academic audiences. As scholars before us have noted (see e.g. [Kapoor, 2004](#), pp. 632–633), knowledge production may reiterate extractive and colonial practices of treating local knowledge as empirical raw data, which need to be processed and analysed in the West, “information retrieval”, as Spivak has called it ([Spivak, 1990](#), p. 59). Ilan Kapoor describes Spivak’s take on academic cultural imperialism as follows:

Spivak has in mind here researchers who see themselves as transforming “raw facts” or “information” gathered from the South into “knowledge”. Thus, the “field” becomes the repository of data, the academy the “centre” for value-added theory; subalterns/women tell stories, (male) researchers theorise for them; workers have concrete experience and practice, intellectuals distil and systemise them; social movements do local politics, academics formulate “new social movement theory”.

([Kapoor, 2004](#), p. 633)

In the preface of the 2007 edition of *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Dipesh Chakrabarty recalls his childhood in Bengal and how ideas and theories move ([Said, 1983](#), p. 226):

Categories or words borrowed from European histories had found new homes in our practices. It made perfect sense, for instance, when radical friends in

4 *Emerging Feminist Peace from Below and Disaster Recovery*

college would refer to someone – say, an obstructionist would-be father-in-law – as being full of “feudal” attitudes, or when we debated – for interminable hours over cheap cups of coffee or tea in inexpensive restaurants or tea shops where we generally overstayed our welcome – if the Indian capitalists were a “national bourgeoisie” or a “comprador” class playing second fiddle to foreign capital. We all knew, practically, what these words meant without having to put them under any kind of analytic microscope. Their “meanings” did not travel beyond the immediate environment in which they were being used.

(Chakrabarty, 2008, p. viii)

Later in life, when being trained by the Marxist circles in Calcutta, Chakrabarty recalls how the use of certain concepts gained their analytical power. Yet, the uneasiness of using the concepts developed (predominantly) in Europe because of being trained in European political thought grew, and it became his intellectual curiosity:

To “provincialize” Europe was precisely to find out how and in what sense European ideas that were universal were also, at one and the same time, drawn from very particular intellectual and historical traditions that could not claim any universal validity. It was to ask a question about how thought was related to place. Can thought transcend places of their origin? Or do places leave their imprint on thought in such a way as to call into question the idea of purely abstract categories? My starting point in all this questioning, as I have said before, was the silent and everyday presence of European thought in Indian life and practices.

(Chakrabarty, 2008, p. xiii)

Thus, forming an ethical relationship with the life experiences of the residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās as a form of subaltern theorising, and aligning with the attempts of scholars of Subaltern Studies group in order to “democratize the writing of Indian history by looking on subordinate social groups as the makers of their own destiny” (Chakrabarty, 2008, p. 11), we labour on the tension between the postcolonial geographies and life histories, and postcolonial as an analytical approach (Väyrynen, Parashar, Féron, & Confortini, 2021). We suggest that such a research approach, where the research participants themselves actively conceptualise and engage in creating the knowledge with the researchers, participates in praxis of radical democracy (Mouffe, 2005), setting off, or at least slowing down, engines of extraction – epistemology we introduce as a quilted ethnography of emerging feminist peace from below.

The book follows our main research questions: How do lived and embodied experiences of disaster recovery at temporary shelter neighbourhood from 2001 offer modes of contestation for the politics of post-disaster present? In what ways does post-disaster politics reconstruct and reiterate existing social inequalities and national, cultural, and political belonging in Gujarat? Special focus here will be

on Muslim and caste minorities. What kinds of counter publics emerge in urban post-disaster landscapes of the temporary shelter site as a result of dis- and relocation of people? What tensions arise from them? Specific focus will be on religious sites and syncretic religious praxis around Sufist tombs located at the temporary shelter neighbourhood, and official narratives of the disaster recovery success and the ways in which these are challenged by the residents through their life historical narratives. The book is based on the multi-sited ethnographic research between 2016 and 2023, in total of approximately 16 months spent in Bhuj. However, it importantly draws from several months of fieldwork in other locations such as Ahmedabad, Delhi and Mumbai, collecting and reading other sources, such as archival research, interviews with aid experts, government disaster management experts, and civil society organisations and activists – all whom have had a connection to Bhuj in 2001–2002.

The rest of the introduction should be read as a way of facilitating the entry of the readers to the circles of *meḍavo* and emerging feminist peace from below. In [Section 1.2](#), we introduce the context of the 2001 Kachchh earthquake. [Section 1.3](#) focuses on the temporary shelter neighbourhood – *Haṅgāmī Āvās* – whose residents have shared their life experiences with us, and thus provides the landscape in which feminist peace from below emerges in this book. In [Section 1.4](#), we situate the epistemology of *meḍavo* and quilted ethnography to the wider debates on feminist peace research in inequalities and violence, making a call for the analysis of cascading complex of violence. And finally, [Section 1.4](#) narrates the organisation of the rest of the book.

1.2 The Earthquake

The earthquake of 26 January 2001, popularly known as Gujarat, Kachchh, or Bhuj earthquake, left the city of Bhuj, the administrative centre of Kachchh and the most Western district of the State of Gujarat, devastated. Over 13,000 people lost their lives as a result. It is estimated that 70% of the damaged buildings in Gujarat were in the district of Kachchh, this included 75% of the housing stock of Bhuj city. Indian government estimated that the earthquake had affected, both directly and indirectly, nearly 50% of the 38 million population of the state of Gujarat ([Shaw & Sinha, 2003](#), p. 1).

The earthquake response by the Government of India, with the loans from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, resulted in nearly 1 billion USD allocated for the recovery and reconstruction efforts, with additional funding worth of several million USD by other governments as well as international and non-governmental organisations ([Shaw & Sinha, 2003](#), pp. 4–7) – this is hailed by the Indian government and international organisations as a success story. The earthquake occurred at the time when firstly, internationally, humanitarian aid organisations, in line with global policy agenda of sustainable development, were launching a disaster paradigm change: fastening the transition from relief to recovery, and disaster resilience. Secondly, it coincided with accelerated neoliberal economic order of “shock doctrine” ([Biswas & Nair, 2009, 2010; Klein, 2007](#)): major economic

reforms, industrialisation, and resource extractivism that, for example, India and the state of Gujarat had been implementing since the 1980s and opening up of the Indian economy in 1990 (Jaffrelot, 2015; Singh, 2023b, p. 64).

The reforms that followed the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake have become known as the Gujarat Model, as the state had the fastest growing economy in India during the decade that followed the earthquake (Hirway, 2014, p. 96) yet “for the most part, growth occurred without development” (Jaffrelot, 2021, p. 58; see also Jaffrelot, 2024). Heavy reforms to deregulate, privatise, and liberalise included tax exceptions, creation of special economic zones, and heavy industrialisation overall in Gujarat. This included 100% subsidies on investments in Kachchh between 2001 and 2009 (Hirway, Shah, & Sharma, 2014). The past few years of investment into “green technologies” such as solar and wind power (Singh, 2022, 2023a, 2023b) have all focused on creating Gujarat as attractive for investments for large-scale industries (Hirway, Shah, & Sharma, 2014).

What perhaps for the state politicians was an acceleration of economic liberation was vocabularised by the key international disaster actors slightly differently. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)’s director of Emergency Response Unit visioned in December 2001, ten months into the Kachchh earthquake recovery programme, a paradigm change:

The period of transition thus not only determines whether people attain recovery or rebuild risk; it also determines whether the process of recovery leads to sustainable development or hastens a downward spiral of development and livelihoods. The challenge is to cross this transition while protecting the interests of the weakest groups and launching sustainable recovery.

(United Nations Development Programme, 2001, p. 1)

Furthermore, the Gujarat government in the aftermath of 2001 earthquake made a bold commitment:

It [the recovery programme] aims at becoming a people’s program. It emphasizes the empowering process through continuous consultations with the community ... It will apply principles of equity and empowerment, and ensure, through appropriate mechanisms, that the voices of the weak and poor are always held.

(Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority, 2001, pp. 2, 4)

This reads as a statement to “inclusive development” – but it also forms, as this book illustrates, a form of disaster populism: government responding to the needs of “people” – and a promise to address structural inequalities through the recovery programme. However, the reality in Gujarat at the time was dominated by another type of populism: violence of communalism (Goswami, 2023), rise of Hindu nationalism and anti-Muslim violence (Ghassem-Fachandi, 2012; Simpson, 2007, 2013), combined with extractive economic reforms and growth of pollution-prone industries (Hirway, Shah, & Shah, 2014). Furthermore, Mukherji (2008)

suggests that the BJP-led government in Gujarat wanted to guarantee the support of the middle classes in Kachchh before the 2002 elections by focusing on the urban reconstruction. The plan also included a dream of industrialising the district – as it was foreseen that the investments to the earthquake recovery could speed up the state governments public infrastructure plans of 15–20 within just five years (Mukherji 2008, p. 84).

The book at hand thus connects disaster populism to that of the feminist analysis of interlocking oppressions and violence (Combahee River Collective, 2017 [1977]), and the recent calls made for macro- and micro-dynamics of feminist struggle within populist politics (Abi-Hassan, 2017; Singh & Féron, 2021). We challenge the successful disaster recovery narrative by mirroring the 20 years' recovery of everyday lives in the temporary shelter neighbourhood, and the formation of permanent temporariness in the context of post-disaster extractivism, and Hindu nationalist/Hindutva political violence. Thus, the wider relevance of the book lies in the reality where the steady rise in natural hazards, such as earthquakes, cyclones, landslides, and floods, over the past decades has proven to have complex social, political, economic, and environmental impacts on affected populations and regions. Latest, the COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented changes in climate systems have proven to have severe ecological, social, and economic consequences globally (Jafry, Mikulewicz, & Helwig, 2019). Scholars have further warned that disaster recovery efforts that rely on the extractivism of natural resources, labour, production, and supply chains, in fact, reiterate inequalities and continuities of shadows of development. Such efforts create recovery that is linked to continuities of violence and inequalities (Covarrubias & Raju, 2020). Furthermore, such experiences hardly impact society equally but rather are a complex interplay of structures of inequality, studied by disaster scholars since 1990s (Joseph, Jauhola, Arvind, & Gadhavi, 2021), as we discuss in Section 1.4. Yet, research on the inclusion of the most vulnerable in the post-disaster recovery processes has not been sufficient: reconstruction measures and policies may have been totally ignorant or blind to socio-economic inequalities (Rawal, Bothara, Pradhan, Narasimhan, & Singh, 2021, pp. 1–2).

1.3 Haṅgāmī Āvās

The central focus of this monograph is the temporary shelter neighbourhood – locally known as Haṅgāmī Āvās – built in the aftermath of the earthquake on the eastern outskirts of the city of Bhuj. Funded and built by tens of aid organisations, it initially became home for some 5,000 households on land that was officially considered as a “wasteland”, located nearly 5 kilometres from the old centre of Bhuj – where most of the residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās had lived before the earthquake and, in its aftermath, had lost their homes. The monograph follows the trajectory of the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO)-funded temporary shelter project with which over 3,500 housing units were built during 2001 and 2002, making up initially over two-thirds of the temporary shelter houses in Haṅgāmī Āvās. The analysis is based on our ethnographic research conducted in the neighbourhood between 2016 and 2023.

Although initially meant as a temporary site, Haṅgāmī Āvās remains, as of today, a home for over a thousand households: partly residing in the 2001-built temporary shelters and partly later-built permanent housing units. It is the only earthquake relocation neighbourhood in Bhuj where nearly 20 different caste and religious communities reside side by side. The neighbourhood was officially recognised as one of the four earthquake relocation sites of Bhuj in late 2003 after a successful citizen's advocacy campaign formed by the residents and their allies. It was only much later formally included in the 2025 urban development planning process categorised as partly residential, wholesale commercial, and agricultural zone. A small section of the residential zone is labelled as a slum area, and since 2014, it has been the target of a number of state-led urban slum development programmes (Bogoni, 2021; Virmani, 2016).

Amongst the planners, the concept of “New Bhuj” emerged already in 2001, entangled with the plan to relocate earthquake-damaged habitats. Yet, public protests in Bhuj led by business groups and professionals demanded the old city to be rebuilt (Balachandran, 2017, p. 161). Environmental Planning Collaborative (EPC), a non-profit urban planning office in Ahmedabad² chosen to facilitate and lead the Bhuj town planning and road widening process, drew a plan in which house owners of old Bhuj were offered new plots of land in three relocation sites. Haṅgāmī Āvās residents, consisting of mostly renters, were not included in the plan.

Town development plan of Bhuj has later been used by researchers as an example of an entanglement of economic reforms initiated in Gujarat (Simpson & Serafini, 2015), but it also meets the criteria of illiberal urban development: social production of urban space along the lines of spatial segregation, class boundaries, and identity politics (Das & Kumar, 2023, p. 36). In Bhuj, this has meant that the affluent middle classes and their caste- and religious-segregated neighbourhoods in southern and western parts of the city are thriving with a major increase in land and property pricing, whereas the temporary shelter neighbourhood and people who could not afford moving to other parts of the city continue struggling for their rights to basic urban infrastructure. This tension and mismatch between the still-existing quests for justice and completed disaster recovery in Bhuj was concretely felt when conducting this research in Haṅgāmī Āvās.

Over the past two decades after the earthquake, the district capital Bhuj, and the temporary shelter site, is highly, if not over-studied by urban planners, disaster scholars, sociologists, and anthropologists. This includes reflections by urban planners and disaster management experts turned scholars, prominent NGO staff members who have been involved in the town development planning exercise after the earthquake, and those who were otherwise part of the wider earthquake recovery architecture (see e.g. Balachandran, 2010, 2017; Gopalan, 2010; Thiruppugazh, 2016; Virmani, 2010). It includes analyses of the political economy and structural inequality of the earthquake recovery: specific challenges faced by the urban poor and renters and growing urban informality (Mukherji, 2015; Tafti, 2017); long-term socio-spatial urban transformation and formation of social capital in the city (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004; Tafti & Tomlinson, 2016); urban slum redevelopment

(Bogoni, 2021); and finally, post-disaster urban ethnography/anthropology (Simpson, 2013).

Such a rich scholarship points towards questions of the price, or the shadows, of claimed post-disaster urban planning and industrialisation success story, and whether such recovery in fact normalises social and economic inequalities, and dispossession, rather than aims to solve them. It is noteworthy that although those involved in the town planning process (Balachandran, 2017; Ballaney, 2008; Thiruppugazh, 2016) generally acknowledge the (re)production of urban inequalities as a part of the recovery, some have even suggested that attempts to “solve all the economic and social problems created by the disaster and those that existed prior to the disaster” (Thiruppugazh, 2016, p. 174) are unrealistic.

1.4 On Disaster Inequalities and Complex Cascades of Violence

Feminist peace research is in renaissance: within just three past years, two major handbooks (Smith & Yoshida, 2022; Väyrynen et al., 2021) have emerged marking a new, and diverse scholarly input into peace and conflict studies from feminist perspectives: making connections to that of the earlier decades of feminist peace research, but also challenging the Eurocentrism of the overall field of peace and conflict studies. As practitioners of *ṁṁṁṁṁ* *meḁavo*, we aim at contributing to feminist peace theorising in the following ways: firstly, by bridging a divide between research on disasters and structural inequalities and that of continuum of violence (Joseph et al., 2021; Racioppi & Rajagopalan, 2016; Yadav & Fordham, 2022), and secondly, by engaging in feminist conceptualisation of everyday peace and violence (Choi, 2021; Siapno, 2009; Smith & Yoshida, 2022; Vaittinen, Donahoe, Kunz, Bára Ómarsdóttir, & Roohi, 2019; Väyrynen et al., 2021).

Praxis of *ṁṁṁṁṁ* *meḁavo* and our overall commitment to attempt to resist extractivist modes of knowledge production form our commitment towards epistemology for emerging feminist peace from below. Thus, we suggest that the rest of the section should be treated simply as our way to introduce *Haṅgāmī Āvās*-led knowledge production, subaltern theorising, understandable within academia. The section introduces key concepts that are currently being debated in feminist disaster and peace research: understanding of inequalities, violence, and peace.

1.4.1 Interlocking Oppressions in Disasters and Their Aftermaths

For over five decades, disaster practitioners and scholars across the world have produced understanding and analytical tools for mapping diverse impacts of disasters in impacted societies, including those with feminist perspectives (for a thorough literature review, see Enarson & Meyreles, 2004). In a groundbreaking English publication, *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes* in 1998, Enarson and Morrow set the scene for feminist analysis of social structures of inequality in disasters: “Disasters are complex and quintessentially social events, reflecting not so much uncontrolled brute forces as the interaction of hazards and natural events with social structures and political communities” (Enarson & Morrow, 1998, p. 1).

In their introduction, the authors distinguish firstly between disasters that get into the media headlines, such as earthquakes and cyclones, secondly, less headline-prone hazards, such as floods, famines, or environmental degradation, and finally, to lived experiences of “permanent disasters” by people experiencing impoverishment across the world (Enarson & Morrow, 1998). They continue:

Vulnerabilities to disasters are not, however, equally distributed. Unsustainable global patterns of settlement, resource management, social organization and political economy increasingly put some population groups more than others at risk from disaster (Cutter 1995; Blaikie et al. 1994; Downs et al 1991; Anderson and Woodrow 1989, Oliver-Smith 1986; Anderson 1994; Maskrey 1989; Varley 1994a). Exposure to environmental hazard and risk of catastrophic disaster, like life changes, are shaped by overarching social structures of caste and class, race and ethnicity, age and physical ability, sex and gender. Individual and social groups carry different and disproportionate “vulnerability bundles” (Cannon 1994) It’s [gender’s] significance raises in a complex matrix of race, ethnicity, culture, class, sexuality and age and it is changed through life experience and political struggle (e.g. Einstein 1994; Baca Zinn et al. 1994; Peterson and Runyan 1993; Brydon and Chant 1989).

(Enarson & Morrow, 1998, pp. 2, 3)

Located in the critical Marxist analysis of power structures, social vulnerability thinking, to which the above definition aligns, firstly considers disasters as human constructs and secondly suggests that social inequality pushes certain people more vulnerable to disasters (Arora, 2022). The volume, written predominantly by white US-based disaster scholars, has some contributions from scholars and practitioners from the Caribbean, Mexico, and Pakistan. Farzana Bari’s contribution from Pakistan, for example, emphasises that the focus on socio-economic inequalities in disasters emerged as part of the critique of growth-oriented development models, and thus, questioning the naturalness of disasters (Bari, 1998, p. 125; for a similar argument in the Indian context, see e.g. Kapadia, 2002).

The book, and more generally feminist disaster studies literature around the late 1980s and 1990s, was grounded on the analysis of structural inequalities marked by the idea of social structures. However, quite strikingly, most of the feminist disaster studies texts do not dwell into the debates that were ongoing already at that time: what intersectionality refers to precisely, and how does the oppression or social structure operate (for a thorough contextualised analysis of different conceptualisations of intersectionality, see Carastathis, 2016; for an analysis of different understandings of oppression, see Cooper, 2004). Furthermore, when Enarson and Meyreles published a systematic disaster studies literature review in the early 2000s, it was the Global South-based scholarship that was predominantly addressing concerns of disasters with historical, cultural, political, economic, and ecological contexts, whereas Global North-based scholars were more likely to treat gender as an add-on category of analysis, failing to connect gender being

constructed and intersecting with other social relations, such as class and race (Enarson & Meyreles, 2004, pp. 62–65).

Reading the references of the 1998 book, and the ways in which intersections are enlisted, gives an impression that the literature aligns more with the system's theory thinking that focuses on the intersection of capitalism and patriarchy and is less concerned with theorising multiple systems operating simultaneously, as black feminist analysis was focusing on (for these distinctions, see e.g. Cooper, 2004, pp. 43–44). As described by Patricia Hill Collins:

Black feminist thought fosters a fundamental paradigmatic shift that rejects additive approaches to oppression. Instead of starting with gender and then adding in other variables such as age, sexual orientation, race, social class, and religion, Black feminist thought sees these distinctive systems of oppression as being part of one overarching structure of domination. Viewing relations of domination for Black women for any given sociohistorical context as being structured via a system of interlocking race, class, and gender oppression expands the focus of analysis from merely describing the similarities and differences distinguishing these systems of oppression and focuses greater attention on how they interconnect. Assuming that each system needs the others in order to function creates a distinct theoretical stance that stimulates the rethinking of basic social science concepts.

(Collins, 1990, p. 222, 2000 [1990])

Further in the preface of the 2000 edition, she continues:

Rejecting additive models of oppression, race, class, and gender studies have progressed considerably since the 1980s...Intersectionality refers to particular forms of intersecting oppressions, for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation. Intersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice. In contrast, the matrix of domination refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized. Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression.

(Collins, 2000 [1990], p. 18)

Combahee River Collective had already in 1977 in their first joint statement argued that “the major systems of oppressions are interlocking” (Combahee River Collective, 2017 [1977], p. 15), that “the synthesis of these oppressions creates our lives” (Combahee River Collective, 2017 [1977]), and that “we also often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously” (Combahee River Collective, 2017 [1977], p. 19).

In the Indian context, there has been a tension between those who ground their work on gender and those who work in the intersection of gender, class, religion, caste, and age (Purkayastha, Subramaniam, Desai, & Bose, 2003, p. 505). Although some accuse that intersectionality is yet another troubling example of travelling concepts (for critique of the usability of intersectionality in Indian context, see Gopal, 2015; Menon, 2015; Nash, 2015; Rege, Kannabiran, John, Swanimathan, & Sen, 2013), Dalit feminist scholarship and social movement has actively challenged Indian gender studies as a form of epistemic violence – i.e. focused on the invisibility of Dalit women/feminism in theorising in gender studies (Pan, 2021; Purkayastha et al., 2003; Rege, 2006). For example, Madhavi Ariyabandu (2009) has called the social structural analysis of inequalities as rendering visible “vulnerable within vulnerable”, pointing towards interlocking and simultaneously working systems of oppressions. Later on, National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights, based on the experiences from both 2001 Gujarat earthquake and 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and the tsunami, developed analysis and monitoring tools with the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) focusing specifically on Dalit and gender inclusion in disasters (International Dalit Solidarity Network, 2013; Paul & Acharya, 2013).

Responding to the critique of intersectionality – specifically the metaphor of crossroads, i.e. understanding structures of inequality to be separable axes of the crossroad – Rahul Rao (2020) has, drawing on the work of B.R. Ambedkar a leading figure in Dalit social movement, and chairperson of the committee drafting Indian constitution, suggested how the relationship between caste and gender cannot be as separable axes or strands that make up a rope or thread:

By collapsing the distinction between ends and means, Ambedkar takes us away from the base-superstructure imagery of orthodox Marxism. The relationship between caste and gender cannot be visualised as the separate layers of base/superstructure, as the separable axes of a crossroads, or even as the mutual constitution produced by the strands that make up a rope, each of which takes its contours from the other. Instead, rather like a Mobius strip, caste is the regulation of gender, which is caste. The philosopher Elizabeth Grosz uses the image of the Mobius strip to point to the ways in which “while there are disparate ‘things’ being related, they have the capacity to twist one into the other”.

(Rao, 2020, p. 15)

Drawing from the Emily Grabham’s reading of Wendy Brown’s (1995) notion of “wounded attachments”, we have previously suggested that life experiences of intersections of social inequalities could be treated as expressions of trauma – and in the case of aftermaths of disasters – they relate back to the questions of social structures and logics of oppressions at play (Joseph et al., 2021). We further suggest that theorising on vulnerability, structural violence, and inequalities in disaster recovery would benefit from the more in-depth focus on inequalities and their manifestations in everyday lives in disaster contexts, especially to those

exposed to caste-based (Arora, 2022) and Muslim-experienced (Jamil, 2018) vulnerabilities. Here we want to acknowledge Dalit feminism that draws from black feminist intersectional standpointism and epistemologies of the everyday (see e.g. Collins, 1989, 1990, 2000 [1990]). Drawing from Sharmila Rege's (1998) thinking, Anandita Pan (2021) suggests that Dalit feminist standpointism also has the potential for solidarity beyond Dalit oppressions, acknowledging struggles, analysing hegemonic power structures, and counter-narratives of other marginalised groups (Pan, 2021, pp. 18/228, 220/228). Epistemologically, Pan draws from Sandra Harding's epistemology of standpointism that has three steps: firstly, start from the lived experience of the oppressed groups – as the knowledge produced such groups provides a clearer vision of how power and oppressions work; secondly, such standpoints allows create knowledge from such standpoints to make norms and ideals established by dominant institutions and structures visible; and thirdly, “study up” in order to understand conceptual practices of power (see Harding, 2004, pp. 1–10; Pan, 2021, pp. 41–43/228). We suggest that standpointism of the marginalised opens the possibility for contextualised epistemologies where the structures of oppression and power are rendered visible. In the next section, we connect the ideas of interlocking oppressions and standpointism with that of feminist peace theorising on everyday violence. Together, they relate back to the core questions of this book more general: questions of epistemologies, what counts as theorising, and how then, to make sense of aftermaths of disasters and their violent structures.

1.4.2 On Violence and Peace

We suggest that a deeper understanding of the stakes in disaster aftermaths, such as the Kachchh earthquake, requires recognition of complexity and parallelly existing systems of inequalities discussed in the previous section. Thus, for us, disasters are not events that have a starting point in the technically recorded tremors such as those that occurred in Kachchh on 26 January at 08:46am. Rather, as Shyam's life historical narrative in the prologue suggests, these are continuums and parallels, at times cascades emerging in occasions violently and visibly, and other times as violently but slowly and invisible to the unrehearsed eye, such as droughts – but which change everyday routines in dramatic ways. Shyam recalls, for example, how the several years of drought that preceded the 1998 cyclone that devastated the coastal Kachchh increased social reproductive tasks of everyone in the family: major part of the day was spent on fetching water from the village well, instead of attending the school, or attending the income generative tasks at the farm, and thus, having a negative impact on their economy. Therefore, we focus on violence that has descended “into the ordinary” (Das, 2007). Following Veena Das, this book “narrates the lives of particular persons and communities who were deeply embedded in these events, and it describes the way that the event attaches itself with its tentacles into everyday life and folds itself into the recesses of the ordinary” (Das, 2007, pp. 17–18/297).

Feminist scholars have engaged with the everydayness of violence for a long time (Cuomo, 1996; Elias & Rai, 2015) as part of the rejection of binaries, such as

between war and peace and instead conceptualised a continuum of violence (for early iterations, see e.g. [Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group, 2010](#) [1983]; for recent overviews of discussions, see e.g. [Yadav & Horn, 2021](#)). Gendered and intersectional forms of everyday violence are theorised in connection to structural ([Detraz & Sapra, 2021](#)) or epistemic ([Vaittinen, 2017](#), p. 43) violence, and increasingly, to slow violence, to argue for the attention of the mundane, structural, and epistemic violence instead of explosive or eventful such as wars or armed conflicts ([Brown, 2021](#); [Parashar & Orjuela, 2021](#); [Väyrynen, 2023](#); [Väyrynen et al., 2021](#); [Wibben et al., 2018](#)). Most use the definition offered by Rob Nixon, initially developed to describe how environmental harms develop slowly, “a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” ([Nixon, 2011](#), p. 2) – suggesting, as earlier in the case of structural violence theorised by Johan Galtung, that despite the authors do not cite a single, their contemporary, feminist work, their concepts are, nevertheless, applicable to feminist theorising. However, other scholars ([Christian & Dowler, 2019](#); [Pain & Cahill, 2022](#)) suggest that Nixon’s theorisation on slow violence is nothing new and, in fact, is built on an epistemic feminist erasure that has critiqued binaries, such as slow/fast, personal/political, or intimate/war ([Christian & Dowler, 2019](#), p. 1067). They further argue, that Nixon overlooks specifically black feminist scholarship that has both theoretically and empirically addressed questions of banality of normalised and routinised violence ([Christian & Dowler, 2019](#), p. 1069; [Pain & Cahill, 2022](#), p. 362). Black feminist scholarship has previously argued that privileging public, rapid, and spectacular violence in fact operates within gendered and racialised epistemologies and understandings of relevant knowledge of and on violence. Here [Christian and Dowler \(2019\)](#) specifically draw from such black feminist thinkers who have written of racism and sexism “building up over time in the body” ([Christian & Dowler, 2019](#), p. 1068), and that may also lead to fast, spectacular, and physical violence. They further draw from the work of work of Rachel [Pain \(2015\)](#) who has suggested the concept “a single complex” to describe how intimate violence, and war operate as “a foundational part of the geopolitical” ([Pain, 2015](#), p. 72).

Central to all these critiques of slow violence is to build an epistemological commitment “to situated knowledge, and honouring of insights into the relationships between the complex interleaving of everyday lived experiences with broader structures” ([Pain & Cahill, 2022](#), p. 363). This understanding of violence resonates with the black feminist thought on interlocking oppressions (see discussion in previous section), Chandra Mohanty’s call for multilayered, contextual analysis ([Mohanty, 2003](#), p. 501), and Braithwaite and D’Costa’s call for the necessity of interscalarity. Braithwaite and D’Costa suggest that understanding the politics of peace requires “zooming in and out on many scales and to the interscalar...[and] an adjustable lens to be attuned to see and hear the local, and a lens that can be widened to national, regional, global or other levels” ([Braithwaite & D’Costa, 2018](#), p. 21; see also [Golańska, 2023](#)).

We further suggest “a single complex” ([Pain, 2015](#)) to be understood as a cascading complex violence, drawing from the work of [Braithwaite and D’Costa \(2018](#),

p. 4) who have theorised cascade to describe “how other phenomena cascade. Complex cascades of violence are conceived as recursively related to cascades of militarisation, cascades of domination and cascades of refugees, among other cascades”. Such cascades can be a result of human actors, or physical flows, objects, but also action or even political imagination (Braithwaite & D’Costa, 2018). “To cascade” as a verb in English refers to pour, spill, stream, and flow or even overflow and as a noun, a cascade, it refers to waterfall, rapids, torrents, flood, and avalanche. The most used example of a cascading disaster in disaster studies is the Tōhoku earthquake from 2011: although relatively low number of 100 people died because of the earthquake, about 18,000 were killed in the tsunami that occurred in its aftermath. However, the most long-term cascading impacts were caused by the tsunami that damaged Fukushima Dai’ichi nuclear reactors, leading to wider radioactive contamination and evacuation of 200,000 people, and causing long disruption to global supply chains and agricultural production (Pescaroli & Alexander, 2015, p. 63). Political ecologists have called such multiple uncertainties “occurring in spatial and temporal proximity, leading to processes and outcomes that are hard to predict and plan for” (Mehta, Parthasarathy, Pickard, & Srivastava, 2022, p. 2) as compounded uncertainties (Mehta et al., 2022). Closer to the context of this book, Nikita Sud (2022, p. 122) has applied the word cascading to describe the multi-scalar Gujarat Model that accelerated the economic, social, and cultural change in Gujarat, including Kachchh. In this book, we are not trying to establish causality of certain cascades or compounded uncertainties but, rather, illustrate how life historical accounts as layers of experience that speak the language of cascades: how socio-economic inequalities provide the structure through which the cascades of risks and violence take shape and impact lives disproportionately.

Finally, we operationalise the concept of entanglement to draw attention to how phenomena are inseparably related to one another, or as Karen Barad (2007) has defined it: “to be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence” (Barad, 2007, p. ix). The emerging feminist peace, we suggest, lies in the smallest of openings of care and solidarity that emerge entangled with complex cascades of violence. By drawing from a combination of fragments of archives, life historical interviews, everyday participation in the neighbourhood, and the lives of the residents – this book offers epistemology of studying violence and emerging practices of feminist everyday peace (Bhungalia, 2015; Kapadia, 2002; Sharma, 2002). With an ethnographic approach, and a focus on the margins of the recovery, the book enlightens the everyday lives in the aftermath of the earthquake, and the formal earthquake recovery that took place in the aftermath of the communal violence in Gujarat in 2002 from the perspective of intersectional entanglements of violence, but as importantly, care – remaking of worlds (Krystalli & Schultz, 2022) and what Goswami (2023, p. 39) calls organic peace – a way of life. The book thus contributes to the recent call (Wibben, 2021) within feminist peace research to heighten the attention given to the intersection of extractivism, environmental destruction, and to bridge the divide between research on disasters and continuum of violence (Racioppi & Rajagopalan, 2016; Yadav & Fordham, 2022). When such attention on

multi-scalarity, complexity, and interconnectedness of violence is translated into ethics of caring in research, quilted ethnography emerges, which we will discuss in detail in the next chapter.

1.5 Organisation of the Book

The book consists of four parts. **Part I**, “Studying the Aftermath of Disaster Recovery”, includes the following chapters:

Chapter 2. Quilted Ethnography of Emerging Feminist Peace from Below introduces a quilted ethnographic methodology that embraces non-textual forms of research – drawing particular attention to the critique of household survey methods used in the aftermaths of disasters and emphasising instead careful crafting of relationships through convivial ethnography and care through praxis of મેડાવો (meḍavo, dialogue, or consultation in Kachchhi language) and શ્રુતી (śruti, knowledge that has been listened to in Kachchhi language) practice. The chapter proposes a shift from violence to that of ethical care in research and includes decisions to withdraw from such research processes that cause harm. We suggest careful crafting of relationships, responsibility towards those who have participated in research with us, and at times, care requires storing some of the patches, or pieces of work, for later use, or returning them back unused.

The next two chapters (**Chapters 3 and 4**) that follow, focus their analysis on entanglements of disaster recovery to that of the different forms of violence: the populist narrative of Kachchh as a success story, and its shadow of dispossession, and permanent temporariness of the urban poor:

Chapter 3. Modi’s Political Transformation from Sangh Volunteer to Viśvaguru and Viśvāmītra, Teacher and Friend of All analyses Narendra Modi’s speeches delivered in Kachchh between 2007 and 2022. We illustrate how the Kachchh earthquake recovery becomes a vehicle through which BJP as a party, and specifically Narendra Modi as a political leader, constructs his transformation into politician with a successful political career – and even more fundamental message: the earthquake made who he is today. The success narrative of the 2001 earthquake is used as a vehicle for becoming viśvaguru, teacher of the world, and is parallelly used by international humanitarian organisations and civil society, and thus forms a strong case to advocate global disaster politics. Modi emerges, for the Kachchhi audiences, as the muscular father of development who establishes his soul (*ātmā*) to Mother India through the land of Gujarat. By speaking of Kachchhi people as Gujaratis, he thus offers a Hindu nationalist alternative for Kachchhis to move from the developmentalist periphery to that of economic and social prosperity, by invoking his development model as Kachchh model of development, and not Gujarat model of development – as popularised earlier.

Chapter 4. Populist Recovery Narrative Revisited: “Temporary Neighbourhood of Bhuj, or Epicentre of Problems?” builds an archive of the construction of the temporary shelter neighbourhood Haṅgāmī Āvās in Bhuj using three primary sources: firstly, correspondence and formal project documentation between the project funder ECHO and its implementing partner UNDP between 2001

and 2002, secondly, English-translated articles of the local newspaper *Kutchmitra* between 2001 and 2003, and thirdly, our interviews with former aid workers and residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās between 2016 and 2024. Whilst constructing a dialogue between the humanitarian aid machinery, local media coverage, and resident reflections, the chapter portrays an image of the segregated socio-spatial ordering between caste and religious communities in the city. We suggest that the early days of the formation of permanent temporariness, informality, and dispossessed populations, mirrors the wider ideological underpinnings of the recovery programme and wider aims of the extractivist economic development, and the rise of illiberal urban development.

Part II, “Āvās Landscapes Challenging the Hegemonic Recovery Narrative”, consists of two chapters (**Chapters 5 and 6**) which continue focusing on the major political ecology of the temporary shelter reconstruction on one hand, and the diverse landscape of religious praxis in the neighbourhood on the other hand. They both indicate a direction of a resistance – one that was lost in the urban planning process, and the other that is sandwiched between pressures of religious identity politics of Hinduism and Islam.

Chapter 5. A “Wasteland” to be Developed: Temporary Shelter Neighbourhood Reconnected to Its History centres around the question of land, ownership, and conflicts on commons. Drawing from historical sources and interviews, the chapter challenges the popular notion of the area as a “wasteland” before the 2001 earthquake. The chapter highlights the role of the area in connecting the administrative capital Bhuj of the Princely State of Kachchh with the surrounding villages militarily, ecologically, economically, and socially. The chapter suggests that the destiny of the Haṅgāmī Āvās as the underdeveloped fourth formal relocation site follows the overall trend in Kachchh towards new resource frontiers, capital accumulation, and land speculation, and conflicts over the commons and pastoralism, and that of the disaster recovery paradigm.

Chapter 6. Locating Gendered Spirituality as Care, Healing, and Contestation of Norms centres around the spirituality and praxis of religion, both as syncretic, and as an expression of religious identity in the area. It draws particular attention how this praxis enacts both as care and healing, but also as a location of contestation and pressures for communal sentiments in the wider context of Hindu nationalism and political Islam in India. The chapter follows annual procession at the mysterious Sufi sage shrine Gebanshah Pir, annual Muharram procession, bird tower, and a temple built in a memory of a lost daughter in an in-law abuse violence; and the temple of Goddess Jōgaṇī, called as Bhuj high court Jōgaṇī dhām. The chapter suggests that such praxis are examples of managed co-existence and emerging peace, and transforming normative caste, gender, and religiosity boundaries. Thus, such praxis offers spaces for care and healing for the devotees, but also articulations of unanswered injustices in the aftermath of the earthquake. However, as these practices always are embedded in their political economic settings, new economic hierarchies are formed between the ones who hold the assets and donations, compared with those of mere devotees or disciples. Feminist peace, thus, emerges in these negotiations and spaces of care and comfort they offer, but at

the same time it gets entangled in gendered, classed, and caste-based communal dynamics, economic and, social injustice.

Part III, “Emergence of Feminist Peace through Life Histories”, consists of two chapters (**Chapters 7 and 8**) which offer two perspectives into Muslim life histories of two long-term residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās:

Chapter 7. Beyond Anthropocentric Care: Minority Masculinities, *Rewal* Horse Racing, and Love for Maṅkī follows the life story of Daud, *rewal* horse breeder, trainer, and rider, and a resident in Haṅgāmī Āvās for the past three decades. It focuses on the Node community connections across the city of Bhuj, and that of Kachchh district, but it also travels with Daud to *rewal* horse competitions, training, and intimacy that is created between the horses and their trainers/riders, and introduces Daud’s love, Māravāḍī mare Māṅkī માણકી, to whose memory this chapter is dedicated. The chapter suggests that *rewal* horses provide a resistance and alternative to that of the Hindu nationalist “Other” connecting the intimate relationship with the horse to that of social, cultural, and economical respectability.

Chapter 8. “When I think of those days, I feel like the earth will break apart and I will merge into it”: Reconciling Gendered Intersections of Violence follows the life story of a mother and a daughter, Kalila and Sofia, who are both secondarily earthquake-displaced residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās. Their lives in Bhuj centre around negotiation of their Muslim womanhood and motherhood within a diverse caste and religious neighbourhood. The chapter suggests that emerging feminist peace is formed through resilience that resides within the intergenerational dialogue between the mother and daughter, and in the social ontology of “we” and becoming visible – transforming from the moon of the second day, in the words of Kalila. Experiences that challenge recovery beneficiary categories and reinforcement of gendered responsibilities and motherhood in particular indicate the dissidence and resentment required not only to confront the violent familial relations, but also that of the disaster recovery. By accounting of not having anyone to support them initially, Kalila and Sofia describe how the temporary shelter neighbourhood provided the empty canvas into which they were drawing networks of care, support, and mutual cooperation in the midst of communal violence taking place across the Gujarat state – and consequently, emerging feminist peace.

The last section, **Part IV**, “Permanently Temporary”, starts with:

Chapter 9. Complex Cascades of Violence and Uncertainty as a Result of Earthquake Recovery provides an analysis of complex cascades of violence and uncertainty of a quarter of a century in Hahe ch Āvās by focusing on the three elements: firstly, the long-term impacts of the post-earthquake urban planning in Bhuj, secondly, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and thirdly, the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and the third term of BJP’s rule under Modi. The chapter argues that the construction of the temporary shelter neighbourhood, without a long-term plan for the non-owning classes and castes of the city, has contributed to the formation of permanent temporariness and dispossession amongst the residents. The COVID-19 pandemic further reiterated both the internal hierarchies within the neighbourhood but also socio-economic inequalities between Haut al Āvās and the gentrified rest of the city. The Lok Sabha 2024 elections witnessed direct attacks on Muslims and

threats of marginalisation of SC and ST quotas. The results of Lok Sabha may not directly change the futures of Haabha Āvās residents may face; however, it is likely that the future years may bring openings for alternative scenarios for the urban permanent temporariness and dispossession.

Conclusions: From Complex Cascades of Violence and Uncertainty to Emerging Feminist Peace from Below in Disaster Recovery returns to the question of futures of feminist peace research in the contexts of cascading violence, drawing particular attention to the epistemologies of quilting praxis, and the articulations of grievances and hopes that the temporary shelter residents have for their futures in politicising their permanent temporariness.

Notes

- 1 See Section 2.3 for Shyam's narration of the Cāraṇ caste history and peculiar positionality in the caste system.
- 2 EPC is a non-profit arm of the HCP Design, Planning and Management Ltd. led by urban planner Bimal Patel who would later make his career with BJP/Modi-overseen projects across India (Ray, 2024).

References

- Abi-Hassan, S. (2017). Populism and gender. In C. R. Kaltwasser, P. Taggart, P. Ochoa Espejo, & P. Ostiguy (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of populism* (pp. 426–444). London: Oxford University Press.
- Ariyabandu, M. M. (2009). Sex, gender and gender relations in disasters. In D. P. G. Chakrabarti & E. P. Enarson (Eds.), *Women, gender and disaster: Global issues and initiatives* (pp. 5–17). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Arora, S. (2022). Intersectional vulnerability in post-disaster contexts: Lived experiences of Dalit women after the Nepal earthquake, 2015. *Disasters*, 46(2), 329–347. doi: [10.1111/disa.12471](https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12471)
- Balachandran, B. R. (2010). The reconstruction of Bhuj case study: Integration of disaster mitigation into planning and financing urban infrastructure after an earthquake. In A. Revi & S. Patel (Eds.), *Recovering from earthquakes: Response, reconstruction and impact mitigation in India* (pp. 159–203). New Delhi: Routledge.
- Balachandran, B. R. (2017). Planning the reconstruction of Bhuj: Reflecting on the planning process. In M. Banba & R. Shaw (Eds.), *Land use management in disaster risk reduction* (pp. 31–61). Tokyo: Springer.
- Ballaney, S. (2008). *The town planning mechanism in Gujarat, India*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Bari, F. (1998). Gender, disaster, and empowerment: A case study from Pakistan. In E. Enarson & B. H. Morrow (Eds.), *Gendered terrain of disaster: Through women's eyes* (pp. 125–131). London: Praeger.
- Bhungaliala, L. (2015). Managing violence: Aid, counterinsurgency, and the humanitarian present in Palestine. *Environment and planning A: Economy and space*, 47(11), 2308–2323. doi: [10.1177/0308518x15598263](https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518x15598263)
- Biswas, S., & Nair, S. (2009). *International relations and states of exception*. London: Routledge.
- Biswas, S., & Nair, S. (2010). Introduction: International relations and “states of exception”. In S. Biswas & S. Nair (Eds.), *International relations and states of exception: Margins, peripheries, and excluded bodies*. London: Routledge.

- Bogoni, F. (2021). *Participatory practices and policies of slum rehabilitation in small cities: the case of Bhuj in north-west India* (PhD thesis, Centre d'études en sciences sociales sur les mondes africains, américains et asiatiques). Université Paris Cité, Paris.
- Braithwaite, J., & D'Costa, B. (2018). *Cascades of violence: War, crime and peacebuilding across South Asia*. Acton: Australian National University Press.
- Brown, K. E. (2021). Feminist responses to violent extremism. In T. Väyrynen, S. Parashar, É Féron, & C. C. Confortini (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of feminist peace research* (pp. 136–147). London: Routledge.
- Brown, W. (1995). *States of injury: Power and freedom in late modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Carastathis, A. (2016). *Intersectionality: Origins, contestations, horizons*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Chakrabarty, D. (2008). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Choi, S. (2021). Everyday peace in critical feminist theory. In T. Väyrynen, S. Parashar, É Féron, & C. C. Confortini (Eds.), *Handbook of feminist peace research* (pp. 60–69). London: Routledge.
- Christian, J. M., & Dowler, L. (2019). Slow and fast violence: A feminist critique of binaries. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 18(5), 1066–1075. Retrieved from <https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/1692>
- Collins, P. H. (1989). The social construction of black feminist thought. *Signs*, 14(4), 745–773. Retrieved from <https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/1108-how-we-get-free>
- Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Collins, P. H. (2000 [1990]). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Combahee River Collective. (2017 [1977]). The Combahee River Collective statement. In K.-Y. Taylor (Ed.), *How we get free: Black feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (pp. 15–27). Chicago: Haymarket Books.
- Cooper, D. (2004). *Challenging diversity: Rethinking equality and the value of difference*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Covarrubias, A. P., & Raju, E. (2020). Towards sustainable recovery: Future challenges after the Gujarat earthquake, India. *Politics and Governance*, 8(4), 220–231.
- Cuomo, C. J. (1996). War is not just an event: Reflections on the Significance of everyday violence. *Hypatia*, 11(4), 30–45. doi: [10.1111/j.1527-2001.1996.tb01033.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1996.tb01033.x)
- Das, R., & Kumar, N. (2023). *The politics of community-making in new urban India: Illiberal spaces, illiberal cities*. New York: Routledge.
- Das, V. (2007). *Life and words: Violence and the decent into the ordinary*. E-book. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Detraz, N., & Sapra, S. (2021). Climate change, gender, and peace: Thinking differently in a brave new world? In T. Väyrynen, S. Parashar, É Féron, & C. C. Confortini (Eds.), *Handbook of feminist peace research* (pp. 359–367). London: Routledge.
- Elias, J., & Rai, S. (2015). The everyday gendered political economy of violence. *Politics & Gender*, 11(2), 424–429. doi: [10.1017/S1743923X15000148](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X15000148)
- Enarson, E., & Meyreles, L. (2004). International perspectives on gender and disaster: Differences and possibilities. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 24(10/11), 49–93.
- Enarson, E., & Morrow, B. H. (1998). Why gender? Why women? An introduction to women and disaster. In E. Enarson & B. H. Morrow (Eds.), *The gendered terrain of disaster: Through women's eyes* (pp. 1–8). Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group. (2010 [1983]). *Piecing it together: Feminism and nonviolence*. Retrieved December 3, 2024, from <https://wri-irg.org/en/story/2010/piecing-it-together-feminism-and-nonviolence>
- Ghassem-Fachandi, P. (2012). *Pogrom in Gujarat: Hindu nationalism and anti-Muslim violence in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Golańska, D. (2023). Slowness as warfare: Towards a relational approach to political violence in the West Bank. *Geography Compass*, 17(11), e12725. doi: [10.1111/gec3.12725](https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12725)
- Gopal, M. (2015). Struggles around gender: Some clarifications. *Economic and Political Weekly*, L(33), 76–77.
- Gopalan, P. (2010). Women take the lead: Turning a crisis into an opportunity for development. In A. Revi & S. Patel (Eds.), *Recovering from earthquakes: Response, reconstruction and impact mitigation in India* (pp. 118–141). New Delhi: Routledge.
- Goswami, U. (2023). *Gendering peace in violent peripheries: Marginality, masculinity, and feminist agency*. New York: Routledge.
- Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority. (2001). *Gujarat earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation policy*. Retrieved March 7, 2025, from <http://www.gsdma.org/uploads/Assets/iec/earthquakerr06172017024901390.pdf>
- Harding, S. (2004). Introduction: Standpoint theory as a site of political, philosophical, and scientific debate. In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 1–16). New York: Routledge.
- Hirway, I. (2014). Assessing the inclusiveness of growth in Gujarat. In I. Hirway, A. Shah, & G. Shah (Eds.), *Growth or development? Which way is Gujarat going?* (pp. 83–138). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Hirway, I., Shah, A., & Shah, G. (Eds.). (2014). *Growth or development: Which way is Gujarat going?* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Hirway, I., Shah, N., & Sharma, R. (2014). Political economy of subsidies and incentives to industries in Gujarat: Some issues. In I. Hirway, A. Shah, & G. Shah (Eds.), *Growth or development? Which way is Gujarat going?* (pp. 139–192). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- International Dalit Solidarity Network. (2013). *Equality in aid: Addressing caste discrimination in humanitarian response*. Retrieved December 3, 2024, from <https://www.preventionweb.net/publications/view/37866>
- Jaffrelot, C. (2015). What ‘Gujarat model’?—Growth without development—and with socio-political polarisation. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 38(4), 820–838. doi: [10.1080/00856401.2015.1087456](https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1087456)
- Jaffrelot, C. (2021). *Modi’s India: Hindu nationalism and the rise of ethnic democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. (2024). *Gujarat under Modi: Laboratory of today’s India*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Jafray, T., Mikulewicz, M., & Helwig, K. (2019). Introduction: Justice in the era of climate change. In T. Jafray (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of climate justice* (pp. 1–10). New York: Routledge.
- Jamil, G. (2018). *Muslim women speak: Of dreams and shackles*. New Delhi: SAGE.
- Jauhola, M. (2020). *Scraps of hope in Banda Aceh: Gendered urban politics of peace in the Aceh peace process*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
- Joseph, J., Jauhola, M., Arvind, L. S., & Gadhavi, S. (2021). Wounded attachments to disaster recovery: Gendered structural violence and everyday life, Indian experiences explored. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 59, 102242. doi: [10.1016/j.ijdr.2021.102242](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2021.102242)
- Kapadia, K. (2002). *The violence of development: The politics of identity, gender and social inequalities in India*. New Delhi: Kali for Women.
- Kapoor, I. (2004). Hyper-self-reflective development? Spivak on representing the third world ‘other’? *Third World Quarterly*, 25(4), 627–647.
- Klein, N. (2007). *Shock doctrine*. New York: Picador.
- Krystalli, R., & Schultz, P. (2022). Taking love and care seriously: An emergent research agenda for remaking worlds in the wake of violence. *International Studies Review*, 24(1). doi: [10.1093/isr/viac003](https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viac003)
- Mehta, L., Parthasarathy, D., Pickard, J., & Srivastava, S. (2022). The political ecology of COVID-19 and compounded uncertainties in marginal environments. *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, 4. doi: [10.3389/fhumd.2022.840942](https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2022.840942)

- Menon, N. (2015). Is feminism about 'women'? A critical view on intersectionality from India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, L(17), 37–44.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2003). "Under western eyes" revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(2), 499–535.
- Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the political: Thinking in action*. London: Routledge.
- Mukherji, A. (2008) *Negotiating housing recovery: Why some communities recovered while others struggled to rebuild in post-earthquake urban Kutch, India*. (PhD thesis, Architecture). University of California, Berkeley.
- Mukherji, A. (2015). From tenants to homeowners: Housing renters after disaster in Bhuj, India. *Housing Studies*, 30(7), 1135–1157. doi: [10.1080/02673037.2015.1008423](https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2015.1008423)
- Nakagawa, Y., & Shaw, R. (2004). Social capital: A missing link to disaster recovery. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, 22(1), 5–34.
- Nash, J. (2015). The institutional lives of intersectionality. *Economic and Political Weekly*, L(38), 74–76.
- Nixon, R. (2011). *Slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pain, R. (2015). Intimate war. *Political Geography*, 44, 64–73. doi: [10.1016/j.polgeo.2014.09.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2014.09.011)
- Pain, R., & Cahill, C. (2022). Critical political geographies of slow violence and resistance. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 40(2), 359–372. doi: [10.1177/23996544221085753](https://doi.org/10.1177/23996544221085753)
- Pan, A. (2021). *Mapping Dalit feminism: Towards an intersectional standpoint*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Parashar, S., & Orjuela, C. (2021). Famines: 'Slow' violence and gendered memorialisation. In T. Väyrynen, S. Parashar, É Féron, & C. C. Confortini (Eds.), *Handbook of feminist peace research* (pp. 409–419). London: Routledge.
- Paul, L. M., & Acharya, B. (2013). *Inclusive vulnerability mapping & monitoring of post disaster response (IVM & MPDR): Towards developing a methodology and template for field practice (a process to ensure Dalit and gender inclusion)*. Retrieved from
- Pescaroli, G., & Alexander, D. (2015). A definition of cascading disasters and cascading Effects: going beyond the "toppling dominos" metaphor. *GRF Davos Planet@Risk*, 3(1), 58–67.
- Purkayastha, B., Subramaniam, M., Desai, M., & Bose, S. (2003). The study of gender in India: A partial review. *Gender & Society*, 17(4), 503–524. doi: [10.1177/0891243203253793](https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243203253793)
- Racioppi, L., & Rajagopalan, S. (Eds.). (2016). *Women and disasters in South Asia: survival, security and development*. New Delhi: Routledge.
- Rao, R. (2020). *Out of time: The queer politics of postcoloniality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rawal, V., Bothara, J., Pradhan, P., Narasimhan, R., & Singh, V. (2021). Inclusion of the poor and vulnerable: Learning from post-earthquake housing reconstruction in Nepal. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 10, 100162. doi: [10.1016/j.pdisas.2021.100162](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2021.100162)
- Ray, P. (2024, 1 June). Modi's builder: The hostile architecture of Bima Patel. *The Caravan*. Retrieved June 2, 2024, from <https://caravanmagazine.in/government/bimal-patel-modi-builder-hostile-architecture-central-vista>
- Rege, S. (1998). Dalit women talk differently: A critique of 'difference' and towards a Dalit feminist standpoint position. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 33(44), 39–46.
- Rege, S. (2006). *Writing caste/writing gender: Narrating Dalit women's testimonials*. New Delhi: Zubaan.
- Rege, S., Kannabiran, K., John, M. E., Swanimathan, P., & Sen, S. (2013). Intersections of gender and caste. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVIII(18), 35–36.
- Said, E. W. (1983). *The world, the text, and the critic*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Sharma, K. (2002). Surviving violence, making peace: Women in communal conflict in Mumbai. In K. Kapadia (Ed.), *The violence of development: The politics of identity, gender & social inequalities in India* (pp. 183–206). New Delhi: Kali for Women.

- Shaw, R., & Sinha, R. (2003). Towards sustainable recovery: Future challenges after the Gujarat Earthquake, India. *Risk Management*, 5(3), 35–51. doi: [10.1057/palgrave.rm.8240155](https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.rm.8240155)
- Siapno, J. A. (2009). Living through terror: Everyday resilience in East Timor and Aceh. *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, 15(1), 43–64.
- Simpson, E. (2007, March 17). State of play six years after Gujarat earthquake. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 932–937.
- Simpson, E. (2013). *The political biography of an earthquake: Aftermath and amnesia in Gujarat, India*. London: Hurst.
- Simpson, E., & Serafini, M. (2015, July 28). The neoliberal aftershock. *Himal Southasian*, Retrieved June 2, 2024, from <https://www.himalmag.com/comment/the-neoliberal-aftershock-gujarat-bhuj-earthquake-recovery-reconstruction>
- Singh, D. (2022). ‘This is all waste’: Emptying, cleaning and clearing land for renewable energy dispossession in borderland India. *Contemporary South Asia*, 30(3), 402–419. doi: [10.1080/09584935.2022.2099812](https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2022.2099812)
- Singh, D. (2023a). When ‘green’ becomes ‘saffron’: Wind Extraction, border surveillance, and citizenship regime at the edge of the Indian state. *Journal of Political Ecology*.
- Singh, D. (2023b). *Winds of change in a ‘saffronised’ Indian borderland: Dispossession and power in rural Kutch* (PhD thesis, of Food and Resource Economics, School of International Development). University of East Anglia and Department, University of Copenhagen, Norwich/Copenhagen.
- Singh, S., & Féron, É. (2021). Towards an intersectional approach to populism: Comparative perspectives from Finland and India. *Contemporary Politics*, 1–22. doi: [10.1080/13569775.2021.1917164](https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2021.1917164)
- Smith, S., & Yoshida, K. (Eds.) (2022). *Feminist conversations on peace*. Bristol University Press.
- Spivak, G. (1990). *The post-colonial critic: Interviews, strategies, dialogues*. (S. Harasym, Ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Sud, N. (2022). The actual Gujarat model: Authoritarianism, capitalism, Hindu nationalism and populism in the time of Modi. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 52(1), 102–126. doi: [10.1080/00472336.2020.1846205](https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2020.1846205)
- Tafti, M. T. (2017). Reconstruction of informality: Can formal reconstruction re-create informality? *Urban Planning for Disaster Recovery*, 107–128.
- Tafti, M. T., & Tomlinson, R. (2016). Long-term socio-spatial transformation of earthquake-affected neighbourhoods in Bhuj: Who stayed, who left and who moved in? *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*, 7(3), 230–258.
- Thiruppugazh, V. (2016). Positioning stakeholders within owner-driven post-disaster reconstruction approaches: Gujarat, India following the 2001 earthquake. In P. Daly, & M. Feener (Eds.), *Rebuilding Asia following natural disasters: Approaches to reconstruction in the Asia-Pacific region* (pp. 160–180). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2001). *From relief to recovery: The Gujarat experience*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.
- Vaittinen, T. (2017). *The global biopolitical economy of needs: Transnational entanglements between ageing Finland and the global nurse reserve of the Philippines*. Tampere: University of Tampere.
- Vaittinen, T., Donahoe, A., Kunz, R., Bára Ómarsdóttir, S., & Roohi, S. (2019). Care as everyday peacebuilding. *Peacebuilding*, 7(2), 194–209. doi: [10.1080/21647259.2019.1588453](https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2019.1588453)
- Väyrynen, T. (2023). Feminist ecological pacifism and care in the Anthropocene. *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence*, 1(1), 91–103.
- Väyrynen, T., Parashar, S., Féron, É., & Confortini, C. C. (2021). Introduction. In T. Väyrynen, S. Parashar, É Féron, & C. C. Confortini (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of feminist peace research*. London: Routledge.
- Virmani, S. (2010). Compounding disasters — First natural, then man-made: Failed interventions we can learn from. In S. Patel & A. Revi (Eds.), *Recovering from earthquakes:*

- response, reconstruction and impact mitigation in India* (pp. 142–158). London: Routledge.
- Virmani, S. (2016). In the hands of the people: Harnessing the collective power of village life in India. *Architectural Design*, 86(4), 66–71. doi: [10.1002/ad.2069](https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.2069)
- Wibben, A. T. R. (2021). Genealogies of feminist peace research: Themes, thinkers, and turns. In T. Väyrynen, S. Parashar, É. Féron, & C. C. Confortini (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of feminist peace research* (pp. 17–27). London: Routledge.
- Wibben, A. T. R., Confortini, C. C., Roohi, S., Aharoni, S. B., Vastapuu, L., & Vaittinen, T. (2018). Collective discussion: Piecing-up feminist peace research. *International Political Sociology*, 13(1), 86–107. doi: [10.1093/ips/oly034](https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/oly034)
- Yadav, P., & Fordham, M. (2022). Feminist conversations on peace. In S. Smith & K. Yoshida (Eds.), *12: Why aren't we talking to each other? Thinking gender, conflict and disaster as a continuum* (pp. 168–180): Bristol University Press.
- Yadav, P., & Horn, D. M. (2021). Continuums of violence: Feminist peace research and gender-based violence. In T. Väyrynen, S. Parashar, É. Féron, & C. C. Confortini (Eds.), *Handbook of feminist peace research*. London: Routledge.

2 Quilted Ethnography of Emerging Feminist Peace from Below

2.1 Introduction: From Violence of Research Towards Ethical Care in Research

Shyam: Marjaana, last year [in 2018] when we met and...that time I wanted to talk with you about workstyle, how you work. And the pattern how you want to start in that area. Because just before that I had completed one research work over there in temporary shelter area and it was something that which was also creating a kind of pressure on me. Because you know like when we were working over there, the research was about their lives and collecting the data, and all this. So, the people, the residents of the area, were so much confused with that is it really research or survey for new housing or are they going to do a survey for allotments of house or is this a government project to build some other facilities here and collecting data [for it]. Is it for gutter lines, roads – a kind of government survey? People were asking that, hey please also take our information because you are doing really a survey, and we should be beneficiaries. And obviously it was not something new for them, to have that kind of an activity in that area. Because before me, there were several, either research or survey, that had happened over there. So they were so much confused that really, is it a survey, is it research? As a result of surveys there were new projects, housing projects, development projects. Their expectations were really creating work pressure on me that is it really something that I want to continue, the same work in the same pattern of work over there or not.

Marjaana: I am so...you know when you asked that question it was on the first day when we had started working together [in 2018]. It actually, initially ended up causing me little bit of anxiety. I mean, not the question itself but the realisation that this is the reality of the temporary shelter area. I had heard about it in 2017 when I was doing some initial interviews there...for example people would tell me that they have a key chain from SOAS London because the professor of anthropology came with his students and they were collecting data or I heard about an Italian researcher and so and so forth. I kind of started realising that, wow,

this really has been a location where people had been coming, people, outsiders come and that reflection made me think, should I, should we stop, should we not do it at all? I realised that you are the person who is a translator or the connector between the outsiders and the residents. You are the one who gets it most directly, not just verbally or directly, but you get the informal ways and non-verbal ways to express that expectation.

Is it really, I felt that we need to ask, or I need to ask as a researcher that is this the type of research what I really want to do: which is creating stress, which is creating unmet expectations, what both of us observed is that residents are, kind of, just in case collecting documents or just in case doing certain things. It really means that maybe there is a lack of communication from different organisations, researchers to communicate afterwards what they do with this data that they collect. Because the assumption somehow is that everything contributes to better housing (Gadhavi & Jauhola, 2019; Figure 2.1).

This chapter introduces what we call a quilted ethnography – a critical, yet creative reflective process in which questions of harm, violence, and practices of care are brought together to discuss the accumulative violence of research but also wider contexts of violence. By which we mean the history of communal violence, and the violence that has emerged during the disaster aid and recovery period impacting the lives of people over 20 years after the earthquake. We draw particular attention to the violence of the repetitive cycle of household survey methods used in the aftermaths of disasters – by both disaster aid practitioners and researchers alike – and emphasise the need to break such cycles with a careful crafting of relationships through convivial ethnography, care, and praxis of *ṛṣṭi* (meḍavo,



Figure 2.1 QR code of the video From Haṅgāmī (Temporary) to Permanent Lives (17:29).

Source: <https://youtu.be/p8-Oozvr0PI>

dialogue, or consultation in Kachchhi language) and શ્રુતિ (Śruti, knowledge that has been listened to in Kachchhi language). The chapter proposes the urgency to shift from repetition of violence to that of ethical care in research.

We employ the metaphor quilting for number of reasons, firstly, quilts commonly consist of patches of used fabrics collected often over longer periods of time, from such clothes and materials that may no longer be used for their original purpose. Secondly, the patches and pieces of cloth are combined in ways that may surprise at the end, but for those who have had an intimate connection to the fabrics earlier, will always be reminded of the pieces as they remain recognizable in the final quilt.

Roughly at the same time as our own configurations of a quilted ethnography, in 2020, a group of anthropologists published “A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography” (Günel, Varma, & Watanabe, 2020) and stated:

By patchwork ethnography, we refer to ethnographic processes and protocols designed around short-term field visits, using fragmentary yet rigorous data, and other innovations that resist the fixity, holism, and certainty demanded in the publication process. Patchwork ethnography refers not to one-time, short, instrumental trips and relationships à la consultants, but rather, to research efforts that maintain the long-term commitments, language proficiency, contextual knowledge, and slow thinking that characterizes so-called traditional fieldwork (Faubion 2009; Pigg 2013; Adams, Burke, and Whitmarsh 2014), while fully attending to how changing living and working conditions are profoundly and irrevocably changing knowledge production. Patchwork ethnography is not an excuse to be more productive. Instead, it is an effective, but kinder and gentler way to do research because it expands what we consider acceptable materials, tools, and objects of our analyses.

In our previous experiences of crafting collaborative writing processes, we decided to call it “quilted methodology”, drawing from the feminist scholarship that has used the quilt or patchwork quilt as a metaphor to connect individual life histories and structures to wider contexts they take place in (Joseph, Jauhola, Arvind, & Gadhavi, 2021; Lyytikäinen, Yadav, Wibben, Jauhola, & Cecilia Confortini, 2020; Meriläinen et al., 2021). For example, quilts in the Afro-American tradition have specific connotations. hooks, for instance, has described how the data collection process may consist of patches: “I have relied on fragments, bits and pieces of information found here and there” (hooks, 1990, p. 155). Brown describes the importance of carefully crafted combination of patches to bear a specific meaning: “symmetry comes through diversity” (Brown, 1989, p. 924).

In Kachchhi language, ધાઢકી or dhaḍkī, word used for patchwork and quilt, means “pieced together” used mostly to give warmth and cover from the winter cold, but they are also used in daily life to cover woven beds, and as protection when sitting on the floor. Different communities have specific patterns and styles of ધાઢકી and quilts bear an important role in marriage. Shyam shared that, for example, in his family when his mother and father established their own home on a land



Figure 2.2 QR code of the *ਘੜੀ* – quilts video (09:22).

Source: <https://youtu.be/LLm81oYM0E0>

that was separated from his grandfather, the land title also included details of the animals, and number of *ਘੜੀ* that they took with them. Finally, as Shyam’s mother Aashbhai taught us, quilting, preparing *ਘੜੀ* is an embodied practice that can be taught without sharing a common language – as it was in the case of Marjaana and Aashbhai. During the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, Aashbhai taught Marjaana, using Marjaana’s old clothes, how the traditional *ਘੜੀ* is made (Figure 2.2).

Yet, as we’ve discussed earlier (Vardhani, Gadhavi, & Jauhola, 2021), quilts are also subject to appropriation in global capitalism – both in material world, but also through academic extractivism – simply turning the quilted materiality into conceptual and theoretical world – and loosing their contextual and cultural meanings altogether. When we shared our collective quilting praxis with colleagues at the Millennium conference in 2020 in a panel dedicated to “The Textility of the International: Weaving, Folding, Connecting”, we realised being the only ones in the panel reflecting upon the textiles and textility through materiality such as quilts.

Thus, for us, the process of learning quilting (Vardhani et al., 2021) is an inherent part of coming to terms with what, then a quilted ethnography can, or could, consist of. As it will be discussed below, for us, ethnography in and on Haṅgāmī Āvās consists praxis of *ਮੇੜਾਵੋ* (*meḍavo*, dialogue, or consultation in Kachchhi language) and *ਸ਼੍ਰੁਤੀ* (*Śruti*, knowledge that has been listened to in Kachchhi language). It is a careful crafting of relationships, responsibility towards those who have participated in research with us, and at times, it requires storing some of the patches, or pieces of work, for later use, or returning them back unused.

We also relate *ਮੇੜਾਵੋ* and *ਸ਼੍ਰੁਤੀ* as something that a longer term commitment to this research topic, starting from the initial experiences of the earthquake and its humanitarian aid in 2001 onwards, has taught us both: as researchers we take careful steps in the research process to understand our limitations, and the invisible boundaries that exist in tackling some of the topics that emerge. In this chapter, we suggest that *ਮੇੜਾਵੋ* and *ਸ਼੍ਰੁਤੀ* can also be an indirect one, the task that the researchers have to engage with when witnessing topics that cause pain or suffering. By this, we refer to the

withdrawal from such research processes that cause harm, and in this chapter, we identify several of such in the context of Haṅgāmī Āvās.

This chapter's patches consist of the following: we start by discussing what the emerging ethics of care has meant in this research process. We then move to discuss the process of *ṛiṣṭi* and *ṣṛi* and how Gadhavi/Cāraṇ community as traditional knowledge transmitters practice it. We end the chapter by introducing the quilts, or fractions of research data, that this quilted ethnography consists of.

2.2 Emerging Ethics of Care in This Research Process

As described above, the straightforward question posed by Shyam to Marjaana changed the direction of the research and the routine practices that we adopted thereafter. We relate this moment of questioning the “workpattern” as an important step in identifying an existing violent pattern in research: repetitive surveys amongst the residents, and no assurance for the residents that participation in the research would necessarily contribute towards easing the other harm and at times direct violence of the wider context which they experience and which researchers are focused on studying.

We further draw from such scholarship that conducts research on violent contexts without forcing the making of that experience visible and discussed – but rather, centring on the loudness of the silence of it (Alava, 2022; Das, 2007; Jauhola, 2016, 2017). Rob Nixon has contributed to such understandings of invisibility, calling extractivist capitalism and its impacts on the environment as slow violence – although the binary between fast and slow, visible and invisible has been importantly challenged in more recent attempts to understand the complexities of entanglements of violence and peace (Christian & Dowler, 2019; Nixon, 2013; Vaitinen & Confortini, 2019). Yet, what we find convincing is the methodological appreciation what such non-sensational form of a violence does: such violence is not explosive or eventful such as wars or armed conflicts. It is gradual and remains out of sight – most of the time not recognised as violence at all, but rather how it blends into everyday experience (Alava, 2022; Das, 2007).

Here, we want to acknowledge the existence of such violent everyday experiences: firstly, when Marjaana, in-between research grants and precarious contracts, was drafting the research plan that successfully granted five-year Research Council of Finland fellowship – she now recollects how in that moment she was the embodiment of the armchair anthropologist, someone with limited or very little direct contact with the people studied, constructs the research proposal, chooses the research questions, and describes the methods to be used in the study. In retrospect, the experience of having worked for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2001 gave her credibility to do the research. However, the drafting and planning of the research took place without thorough understanding what had happened in the neighbourhood, and the impact of the previous research on temporary shelters, since her last visit in May 2001.

This leads to the next layer of violence present in the neighbourhood: as pointed out by Shyam based on his research assistant experience, the repetitive cycle of

household surveys was causing stress and harm to himself, but also to the residents of the neighbourhood. Repetitive surveys and visits of researchers may not have had such dramatic consequences if the experience of the earthquake recovery, and housing in particular, had been a positive one for the residents. However, as [Chapter 4](#) will narrate in detail, the urban recovery in Bhuj was shaped around infrastructural violence ([Rodgers & O'Neill, 2012](#)), by which we mean the intersection of built infrastructure (disaster recovery housing, town planning), people's relationships with each other, and the built environment and what Rodgers and O'Neill call political economy of social suffering ([Rodgers & O'Neill, 2012](#), p. 403), and further, what Anand calls violence that creates abject residents of the city ([Anand, 2012](#)). Thus, the cycle of returning to the questions of inadequate housing, and the experiences of becoming abjects, did not contribute towards the well-being of residents but rather forced them to relive the experiences and losses again and again.

In fact, during the initial discussions and interviews in 2017 with residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās, and organisations that had since the early 2000s been involved in the housing projects in the neighbourhood, it was clear that the place, houses and their occupants, was heavily surveyed, both by researchers, but also students from India and abroad. At least four architects and urban planners ([Bogoni, 2021](#); [Mukherji, 2008](#); [Taheri Tafti & Tomlinson, 2013](#); [Theckethil, 2012](#)) had conducted their PhD research in the neighbourhood, but there were also others who focused on more widely on the housing reconstruction, town planning, and conditions of informal settlements and slums and, thus, were intimately connected to that of the neighbourhood ([De, Kumar, & Shylendra, 2019](#); [Simpson, 2006](#); [Thiruppugazh, 2016](#)); findings and their positionality towards the recovery efforts are discussed in detail in [Chapter 9](#). Common to all of these efforts is, that the scholars who arrived in Kachchh, in Bhuj, and in the neighbourhood, collected their data through semi-structured interviews and household survey methods – but have never returned back to the neighbourhood when their research is completed, and results disseminated. Most of the academic works have been published in English language, either in journals or book series that are not accessible by the residents. This is due to the language barrier, but also the fact that most of the publications are behind paywalls.

As expressed by Shyam, in 2018, this meant that surveying as a mode of doing research is intimately linked to unmet housing, and other basic infrastructure needs. New survey, thus, is considered as a new promise of better housing and urban infrastructure for the residents – or at least an expectation of it, which means, residents try to make sure that their details, and their grievances are recorded, in order to increase their chances to become housing package beneficiaries.

Yet one of the side effects of the previous research that has drawn light on the most vulnerable and neglected populations of the housing recovery programmes is that it has reiterated the experience of alienation, and in most cases, rendered residents as voiceless, and mere shadow statistics of the recovery success. This all has led, as again expressed by Shyam, into suspicion, loss of trust, and even repetition of traumas of loss, dispossession, and not being seen or heard over the past 20 years. It was clear to us that, yet another research kicked off by a household survey

research on housing would not hold ethically. This meant that the original plan to identify and find the original residents of the 2001–2002 built UNDP temporary shelters could not be approached through a survey. As the Bhuj Area Development Authority (BhADA) refused to engage with our requests for original temporary shelter beneficiary lists in 2018, and no such documentation was available from UNDP, we decided to stop searching for the original residents and focus on the overall situation in the neighbourhood.

Finally, although Kachchh was not at the centre of communal riots of 2002, it was clear that the intensification of communalism over the past decades has had an impact on the social fabric of Kachchh – also reflected upon in the poem by Kavi Aal “Kachchh mulak ja madu – People of Kachchh”, reprinted in the preface of this book. Furthermore, as we will discuss in [Chapter 4](#), the acts of residents to resist the polarisation between Hindus and Muslims and expressions of inter-communal solidarity as a result of the failure to address the urgent housing needs of the residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās were reported in the local newspaper.

2.3 મેઝાવો and શ્રુતી Practice

Marjaana: So when we met in 2018, we sat down and started thinking, how to ethically conduct research in an area where people were tired of being surveyed.

Shyam: I come from Gadhavi community who are migrants from the Himalayan region, following the river streams down south long time ago. Peculiar feature of the community is that it is not traditionally considered to belong to any of the four castes of caste system of India. For a long time, the role of Gadhavi/Cāraṇ in Kachchh has been, and still is, of a messenger and transmitter of knowledge. Traditionally Gadhavi community was engaged with animal herding, of buffaloes and cows with a good connection with rulers of the region they lived in: Kachchh, Sindh, Saurashtra, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh. Societal impression of Gadhavis was that they were worshippers of the truth, and conveyors of knowledge and participated as marshals in wars. If the ruler was doing injustice for any part of the society, Gadhavis opposed the rule by revealing what was happening, and mediated between the ruler and the people. If the king did not change their behaviour, Gadhavis would perform *trāgā*, ritual of final scarification: there would be an open invitation for all belonging to Gadhavi/Cāraṇ, they would gather in one place and stay there for several days to meet each other. An announcement of the ultimatum would be given to the ruler of the performance of *trāgā* with demands that would need to be met before the given date. If demands would not be accepted, *trāgā* would be performed by all who had entered the line of the meeting place, and cannot ethically leave before the ritual. Type of *trāgā* (style of killing oneself) would be collectively decided and the congregation would kill themselves at the end of it, supported by spiritual powers.

Thus, due to the connection with the rulers, Gadhavis had a prestigious position within the princely state of Kachchh, and were considered to be close to the rulers. Gadhavis are known to be good poets. Messages delivered between the ruler and people were disseminated using poems and singing, such as the poem by Kavi Aal performed by Devraj Gadhavi referenced in the preface.

Social interaction by talking and discussion and organising gatherings had an important role in intergenerational oral transmission of history and knowledge, to negotiate collective decisions. મેડાવો Meḍavo tradition, gathering of different communities every evening, has constituted and still constitutes this collective decision-making and knowledge transformation praxis. Topics covered range from discussing events of the day, current day affairs from politics to any incidents, from joyful events to sorrows, from social relations to any other subject that participants bring forward. મેડાવો consists of nine different ways of listening શ્રુતિ (śruta/śruti), which translates into English as knowledge that has been listened to or communicated through performance:

- 1 Śrīṅgāra rāsa: Love and beauty of woman and man.
- 2 Karuṇa rāsa: Mourning and sorrowness.
- 3 Śānta rāsa: Indifference and dispassion to the materiality.
- 4 Raudharā rāsa: Sense arising from condemnation, defiance and torture.
- 5 Vīra rāsa: Feelings of joy due to kindness, charity, bravery.
- 6 Hāśya rāsa: Sense of laughter, generated by speech and organs.
- 7 Bhayānaka rāsa: Sense of dread and terror.
- 8 Vibhāta rāsa: Feeling of hatred, aversion and disgust.
- 9 Ādabhūta rāsa: Moments of wonder and surprise.

The formation of the મેડાવો gathering is open, participants join and leave as per their choice. If મેડાવો takes place at the family sphere, women and men may join a same મેડાવો circle. If at a social function such as a weddings, women and men would form their separate મેડાવો circles, and if it takes place in the evening at the village, participants are men only. When Gadhavi's visit places, people would request them to share their perspectives and topics. This public role is of men, women in my community have another role as embodying holy spirit from whom people seek advice and blessings. Women of the Gadhavi community are honoured as mothers (mātājī).

This specific dialogue praxis described above, we connect to other attempts to build relationships through holistic affects, including pleasure and enjoyment, and staying open for different meanings that phenomena and cultural products may



Figure 2.3 QR code of the video From Haṅgāmī (Temporary) to Permanent Lives (09:00).

Source: <https://youtu.be/p8-Oozvr0PI>

hold (Anjaria & Anjaria, 2020, p. 238). Below is one example of practicing this openness in ethnographic encounters (Figure 2.3).

Marjaana: So, what do you think, makes it possible? How do you enter situations? You can just think about concrete situation: we go, what is it that you do? Because that might help us to understand...

Shyam: Do you mean usually or just particularly with Daud?

Marjaana: It can be general but we can talk about Daud, of course.

Shyam: Now the situation is so different because we know much more about him. If we now go there, it is almost there is a kind of chemistry what we have already built. So now if we are going, then again, we see that what he is doing right now. Or we try to understand that because when we are going to meet somebody, definitely, he is engaged with something. Usually, Daud with his horses or either with some people or any kind of activity. As soon as we see him, we try to understand that what he is doing now and if we understand that if he is doing something then it is so easy to get him talk – ask him what is he doing now.

Marjaana: So, it is like, the now moment, or the moment that is happening right then.

Shyam: Right then, so for him it would be the easiest question to answer that what is he doing now. For us it would be also so nice to participate in his activity. Instead of asking him something which is in our mind or it can be strange for him.

Marjaana: Yea, not to jump, yea, yea exactly, or go into that situation and be around that whatever it is that he is doing.

Shyam: Because it is also interesting when if we are there to know about him then that is also part of his life what he is doing. That also should be interesting for us.

Marjaana: Yes! It is like so simple, but so true and so difficult.

Shyam: Like every time when we are meeting Daud, for him, we, as a people who are going to meet him, he has an idea that we are there to talk to him. Instead of being afraid of us, he really wishes to meet us because we want to know about his present. What activities he is doing and what he wants to share and instead of asking preconstructed questions on what he maybe does not want to share. It happens. So, we don't ask such like hey, you come and answer this! Then he will not really like to meet us because we only want to know what we want. This is something kind of relation what we now have with Daud that he wants to share what he likes. It's also so pleasant for us also because if somebody is sharing his story, or whatever he wants to share. That would be so full of motions and emotions and kind of changes in the mood also. Because when he is sharing, he is passing his memories and those circumstances are like up and down, sometimes it is funny, sometime it is bit sad, sometimes happy sometimes positive, negative and we are also travelling with him while he is giving that. It is very interesting and so amazing and to express our emotions to him also or with somebody with whom we are talking. Like if he is making a bit smile it is so nice to smile with him also if in his story, he is passing he want to make kind of fun, and that time if we remain not so much engaged, it would be a bit odd. We can laugh with him, totally. And if he is a bit sad, we can be sad with him, because we are there to know about him. And if he wants, then only we can understand what he really wants to. If he is feeling a bit negative about that we can try to understand his point of view. For us it can be anything. But while with him, it can be so interesting to see from his views, or his eyes. To involve with his atmosphere because we want to understand. So that which situation you are. So, like he feels, for him, it's like we are taking care of his feelings like we are taking care of the value of his work what he did it was not just for like this moving activity. The value of that task what he was doing, for us, it is so valuable. Then it builds some, for him we are not just some flying birds that just came there to ask but we really appreciate it, or we could understand the value because for him it is also nice to share it – such precious moments of his life.

Marjaana: It is so fundamental for any relationships of course, but to build the rapport, build the trust – it is so important and then of course what comes after is actually to live up to the expectations of that trust, right? That's why the revisits and sharing what the plan is and what to do next and what will happen with the information and how we will come back. So that's why all these kinds of small, small things are building up – not building up the expectations for a house – that's what the survey does, right? This type of growing in a flow with people's everyday life builds up another kind of an expectation which will be

so interesting to see next January (2019) what we can do, how we can deliver. So it doesn't require knowing about topic x, or preparing about the topic x before entering a situation but it is more about, it's almost about somebody is like floating here and then we kind of jump and we are trying to be on the same, follow and be on the same speed and same direction with that person – if it is a leaf on a river or stream. We try to catch the leaf, but we have to be very attentive to be able to do that. Sense the moods and sense, that okay is this now good timing to do something or leave it, and then focus on this one. It's about people's skills...

Shyam: It's, they are so lovely, and however they are sharing whatever they are sharing – for them it is so precious (Gadhavi & Jauhola, 2019).

The above example of engaging with Daud is how in practice *ခေ့ဒါ* and *ဒုဂါ* are practiced.

2.4 Quilted Fractions of the Research Data

The research data collection for this research has taken place between 2016 and 2023. We call the data as fractions, as during the research process, it became clear that even we had spent several years returning back to searching certain basic data – of the temporary shelter project for instance – we were still after seven years – holding fractions, instead of feeling we had completed archival, aid expert, or even first resident interviews. More specifically, the fractions relate to: 2017 made application for the access to European Commission's documents in which 35 documents we identified and provided for the research, but out of which 28 were disclosed for information only and which “cannot be re-used without the agreement of the originator, who holds copyright for them” (Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations [ECHO], 2017). In 2018, visit to the New Delhi office of the UNDP also revealed that since the times of the earthquake recovery programme, the project data systems were changed, and apparently, no old documents from 2001 to 2002 could be retrieved electronically. Some of the early project proposal documentation has remained in the private possession of Marjaana and those are used to fill in some of the gaps that the European Commission's restricted use creates. Marjaana's contract with UNDP ended in October 2001, which leaves several months of project implementation documentation as “for information only”, i.e. we cannot make references to it, and cannot quote or use them in this manuscript. Interviews with former staff members of the UNDP also led to partial success: some of the key people who would have been able to be interviewed of the implementation months did not agree to be interviewed. Similarly, some of the implementation partners of UNDP were either unreachable or they denied their involvement in the temporary shelter construction altogether. Finally, approaching the district and state level Disaster Management Agencies and the BhADA, or the company who oversaw the town planning process did not result in gaining any archived documents of the project – in the case of the town plan, our access was denied in the middle of documenting the archive at their

office in Ahmedabad. This does not mean, however, that we gained no access, nor that the silence, the non-existence, or the non-availability cannot be analysed. In fact, in [Chapter 3](#), we discuss the monetisation of the “success story” amongst the key Indian aid professionals in the global disaster recovery machinery as one possible reason why a story that does not fit into that success story, may be hard to draw, with the help of such persons who have built their careers in disaster diplomacy since the Kachchh 2001 earthquake. In contrast, the archive of the local newspaper *Kutchmitra*, into which we gained access similarly as earlier researchers, has proved to be an under-analysed source, but for us, an important inspiration for the whole book as it has encouraged us not only to cover the microhistory of the temporary shelter neighbourhood construction, but also be as creative as the journalists of *Kutchmitra* have been, in using poetic and Kachchhi-culture embedded idioms and intertextualities, in describing the dramatic events of the recovery process.

As the list of the original residents of the ECHO/UNDP temporary shelters was not made available to us by the authorities, and yet another household survey amongst the residents in finding out the same was doomed unsuccessful, we gave up the idea that such an research should try to get hold of the “original residents” but we rather embarked to approach the neighbourhood more holistically consisting of interviews,¹ walks through the neighbourhood, and audio-visual recordings of religious ceremonies in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, Marjaana’s notebooks and other materials, such as photographs of the time of working at UNDP’s New Delhi office in 2001, have all been useful in constructing some parts of the project implementation story.

Besides quilting the data fractions together in this research, we also want to highlight another fraction that has embodied this research process, i.e. analysis and writing of it:

Another 4,400 words of what was a fragmented mess turned into a beginning of the methodology chapter today. It is a true miracle that the fragmented attention can be turned into something that starts (potentially) making sense. I really feel as if I am suffering from dementia - as bits and pieces of analysis are here and there and when I find them, I have just thin memory that it had ever happened and most of the time I have to redo them to be sure. Analysis appears like a thin layer of dust on a table. Sounds quite poetic, but in fact, is an aftermath of fighting for time for research in weekly/monthly schedules as an academic for a third year in a row.

(Marjaana on social media on 4 May 2023)

The writing of this book has taken time. The first outline was drafted at the end of 2020 in the early months of what was to become two-year long middle leadership and lectureship position heavy with administrative duties that tore the time into fractions where concentration to the analysis of the patches of data – with no research funding to secure employment of Shyam to dedicate time for data and writing. But we’ve not given up even amid of the most dramatic months of the COVID-19 pandemic in India.

This has meant that the fragments of data, such as the Kutchmitra newspaper article archive, have been visited tens of times – both in Gujarati and its English translations – but then with months and months of no possibility of taking the analysis further. Similarly, the data that arrived from Brussels already in 2017 and cover the archives of the European Commission’s communication of the original temporary shelter project have been in a bookshelf untouched for years. The recorded interviews have partially been transcribed years ago, other files remained untouched for long periods of time, to be returned to only when the writing of the chapters between 2023 and 2024 took place. This is what quilting is, and the fear of losing some important patches in the quilt is daunting. Yet, we have decided to approach this as a possibility of making the stitching of patches visible – as the video of making of અભય with Aashbhai so clearly illustrates: that is our, at times painful, labouring, with our handwriting, and our dedication.

2.5 On Ethnographic Narratives

Following the guidance of મેડાવો *medavo* or dialogic principles, this book honours such scholarly attempts that draw attention to collective storytelling as a way of becoming and undoing relations of colonial violence. Such attempts recognise the forms of knowledge production that have been made invisible in the Western science tradition: oral histories and storytelling. Sara Motta connects such a critical praxis as an engagement in “becoming and be-ing political subject” (Motta, 2018, p. 74/221). We further take Sujatha Fernandes’ (2017) call seriously:

We need to reclaim storytelling as a craft that allows for the fullness and complexity of experience to be expressed and which seeks to transform rather than reproduce global hierarchies and structures of power through movements for social change.

(p. 4)

This reclaim of storytelling however, as Fernandes further has suggested, needs to remain aware of the lures of giving voice to invisible and silenced people – as it is a rhetorical construction, always embedded in power relations, and amplification of some voices and silencing others (Fernandes, 2017, p. 5). Thus, writing a book of the life stories and experiences of the aftermath of the Kachchh 2001 earthquake is an act of meaning-making and as anthropologist Michael Jackson explores in his research drawing from Hannah Arendt, storytelling is “the subjective-in-between”, “never simply a matter of creating personal or social meanings” (Jackson, 2002, p. 11). Furthermore, instead of focusing on events as such, we draw attention to narratives as stories of experience (Squire, 2013) and how as such they become connected to both micro and macro level contexts and meanings (Phoenix, 2017).

Drawing from the insight of Patricia Connolly-Shaffer (2012) which we read in Richa Nagar’s book *Muddying the Waters* (Nagar, 2014), we suggest that stories that researchers tell are fragments of truth claims, but which become “interwoven

and reworked to gain a kind of epistemic wholeness” (Nagar, 2014, p. 11). Nagar (2014) further suggests that

a commitment to cultivate radical vulnerability through situated solidarities demands that we grapple with the material and symbolic politics of our locations and imagine how researchers might play a role in evolving ethics and methodologies that seek to build dialogues across locations.

(p. 12)

Finally, in writing the chapters, we’ve spent time also with the narratives of the different fractions of data (Section 2.4) and in the spirit of Richardson & Adams St. Pierre (2005) have practiced creative writing practice paying specific attention to the narrative genres and at times what Anne Ernaux has called it *l’écriture plate* or flat writing – or as we understand it to follow the research participants’ inner worlds: tell the story and incidents as they were told to us. For example, Chapter 4 is constructed from three sources: UNDP’s and ECHO’s temporary shelter project correspondence, poetic Kachchhi language of the Kutchmitra newspaper article archive, and interviews. Our attempt here is to illustrate how different realities were created simultaneous to one another – yet both connected to the lived realities of the temporary shelter residents in fragmented ways. Furthermore, life history-based chapters, such as Chapters 7 and 8, follow as much as possible the interviews as they happened. In Chapter 8, the narration is divided into six scenes that are also the basis of yet to be completed life historical video. We do this suggesting to the reader to embark on a journey that consciously aims at “muddying the water” as Richa Nagar has put it: “the necessity of muddying theories and genres so that we can continue to embrace risks of solidarities that might fail and of translations that might refuse to speak adequately” (Nagar, 2014, p. 2).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has aimed at indicating a quilted ethnographic praxis that works on the premise of building trust, remaining open for change, and reflective of the research journey collectively. We indicated four important moments of wakening that communicated us the importance of shifting the focus, changing the methods and ways of working, and our relationship towards knowledge production: the first one was when we discussed the impacts of the temporary shelter being overstudied, yet under resourced; the second one was the moment of arriving in the neighbourhood and archiving both affective and embodied, but also written archives of traces of unmet needs of housing and basic infrastructure, traces of other researchers, and housing surveys. The third one was the first-hand account of Shyam of the affective impacts of holding the in-between position of a research assistant and a translator between the outside researchers and the residents, and the final one was when we read the articles of the other researchers behind paywalls and were reflecting on the structures of knowledge production and repetition of coloniality – pushing us to different new directions that this manuscript manifests.

These directions led us to consider the importance of collecting microhistories in narrating the bigger picture of the after the earthquake, which explains the structure of the rest of the manuscript: moving from official aid machinery document archives and local newspapers to published research articles, to oral histories of the longer history of the neighbourhood going back in time for centuries, and focusing on the life historical narratives and our participation in events taking place in the neighbourhood and the city of Bhuj that forms the more recent history of the neighbourhood. As COVID-19 changed our plans to establish a kiosk in the neighbourhood, we do not yet know how the next circles of *međavo* on this manuscript will be discussed, but following the ethics and ethos of this research, the manuscript will return to the neighbourhood when it is completed.

Note

- 1 Interview quotes are referenced using the date of the interview and names of the people, where needed, are pseudonymised.

References

- Alava, H. (2022). *Christianity, politics and the afterlives of war in Uganda*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Anand, N. (2012). Municipal disconnect: On abject water and its urban infrastructures. *Ethnography*, 13(4), 487–509. doi: [10.1177/1466138111435743](https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138111435743)
- Anjaria, J. S., & Anjaria, U. (2020). Mazaa: Rethinking fun, pleasure and play in South Asia. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 43(2), 232–242. doi: [10.1080/00856401.2020.1725718](https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2020.1725718)
- Bogoni, F. (2021). *Participatory practices and policies of slum rehabilitation in small cities: The case of Bhuj in north-west India* (PhD thesis, Centre d'études en sciences sociales sur les mondes africains, américains et asiatiques). Université Paris Cité, Paris.
- Brown, E. B. (1989). African-American women's quilting. *Signs*, 14(4), 921–929. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174693>
- Christian, J. M., & Dowler, L. (2019). Slow and fast violence: A feminist critique of binaries. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 18(5), 1066–1075. Retrieved from <https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/1692>
- Connolly-Shaffer, P. K. (2012). *Staging cross-border (Reading) alliances: feminist polyvocal testimonials at work*. (PhD thesis). University Digital Conservancy. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/141437>
- Das, V. (2007). *Life and words: Violence and the decent into the ordinary*. E-book. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- De, I., Kumar, M., & Shylendra, H. (2019). Work conditions and employment for women in slums: A case study of Bhuj City, Kutch. *Economic and Political Weekly*, LIV(21), 37–46.
- Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). (2017). *Subject: Your application for access to documents*. Letter dated 14 September 2017.
- Fernandes, S. (2017). *Curated stories: The uses and misuses of storytelling*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gadhavi, S., & Jauhola, M. (2019). *From hangami (temporary) to permanent lives: Creating space for urban life historical approach in the aftermath of an earthquake*. Paper presented at the beyond disaster recovery: Cascading risks and wellbeing in the age of climate change. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

- Günel, G., Varma, S., & Watanabe, C. (2020, June 9). *A manifesto for patchwork ethnography*. Member Voices, Fieldsights. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/a-manifesto-for-patchwork-ethnography>
- hooks, B. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston: South End Press.
- Jackson, M. (2002). *The politics of storytelling: Violence, transgression, and intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press.
- Jauhola, M. (2016). "Conversations in silence" – Ceramic installations shaping visual and political imagination of gendered tsunami and conflict reconstruction landscapes in Aceh. In A. Peto & A. Gül Altınay (Eds.), *Gendered war, gendered memories*. London: Routledge.
- Jauhola, M. (2017). Visual ethnographic encounters and silence in post-conflict city of Banda Aceh, Indonesia. In A.-M. Rivas & B. Browne (Eds.), *Experiences with violent research and researching violence* (pp. 179–184). Bristol: Polity Press.
- Joseph, J., Jauhola, M., Arvind, L. S., & Gadhavi, S. (2021). Wounded attachments to disaster recovery: Gendered structural violence and everyday life, Indian experiences explored. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 59, 102242. doi: [10.1016/j.ijdrr.2021.102242](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2021.102242)
- Lyytikäinen, M., Yadav, P., Wibben, A. T., Jauhola, M., & Cecilia Confortini, C. (2020). Unruly wives in the household: Toward feminist genealogies for peace research. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 56(1), 3–25. doi: [10.1177/0010836720938397](https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836720938397)
- Meriläinen, E., Joseph, J., Jauhola, M., Yadav, P., Romo-Murphy, E., Marin, J., & Gadhavi, S. (2021). Examining relational social ontologies of disaster resilience: Lived experiences from India, Indonesia, Nepal, Chile and Andean Territories. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal*, 31(3), 273–287. doi: [10.1108/DPM-02-2021-0057](https://doi.org/10.1108/DPM-02-2021-0057)
- Motta, S. C. (2018). *Liminal subjects: Weaving (our) liberation*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Mukherji, A. (2008). *Negotiating housing recovery: Why some communities recovered while others struggled to rebuild in post-earthquake urban Kutch, India*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Nagar, R. (2014). *Muddying the waters: Coauthoring feminisms across scholarship and activism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Nixon, R. (2013). *Slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Phoenix, A. (2017). Analysing narrative contexts. In M. Andrews, C. Squire, & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing narrative research* (pp. 72–87). London: SAGE Publications.
- Richardson, L., & Adams St. Pierre, E. (2005). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 959–978). London: SAGE Publications.
- Rodgers, D., & O'Neill, B. (2012). Infrastructural violence: Introduction to the special issue. *Ethnography*, 13(4), 401–412. doi: [10.1177/1466138111435738](https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138111435738)
- Simpson, E. (2006). The rituals of rehabilitation: Rebuilding an urban neighbourhood after the Gujarat earthquake of 2001. In G. De Neve & H. Donner (Eds.), *The meaning of the local: Politics of place in urban India* (pp. 206–231).
- Squire, C. (2013). From experience-centred to socioculturally-oriented approaches to narrative. In M. Andrews, C. Squire, & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing narrative research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Taheri Tafti, M., & Tomlinson, R. (2013). The role of post-disaster public policy responses in housing recovery of tenants. *Habitat International*, 40, 218–224. doi: [10.1016/j.habitatint.2013.05.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2013.05.004)
- Theckethil, R. K. (2012). *Earthquake rehabilitation and vulnerability reduction: Urban planning in a western Indian town* (PhD thesis, Graduate School of Cornell University). Cornell University, Ithaca.

- Thiruppugazh, V. (2016). Positioning stakeholders within owner-driven post-disaster reconstruction approaches: Gujarat, India following the 2001 earthquake. In P. Daly & M. Feener (Eds.), *Rebuilding Asia following natural disasters: Approaches to reconstruction in the Asia-Pacific region* (pp. 160–180). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vaittinen, T., & Confortini, C. C. (2019). Introduction: Analysing violences in gendered global health. In T. Vaittinen & C. C. Confortini (Eds.), *Gender, global health, and violence: Feminist perspectives on peace and disease* (pp. 1–22). London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Vardhani, V. R., Gadhavi, S., & Jauhola, M. (2021). Co-creation through quilting: Connected entanglements and disruptions with care. In T. Seppälä, M. Sarantou, & S. Miettinen (Eds.), *Arts-based methods for decolonising participatory research* (pp. 21–42). New York: Routledge.

3 Modi's Political Transformation from Sangh Volunteer to Viśvaguru and Viśvāmitra, Teacher and Friend of All

3.1 Introduction: From Smritivan Earthquake Museum to Volunteering in the Aftermath of the Earthquake

My beloved ones, Kachchhi brothers and sisters, how are you?
It was a good rain in Kachchh, the happiness of that is visible on your face.
Friends, today my mind is full of so many emotions.
Smritivan at Bhujio hill, and Veer Bal Smarak in Anjar are inaugurated.
They are symbols of pain, of Kachchh, Gujarat, and the country.
To build them, not only the sweat but also tears of many families have watered the stones.
I remember that the families of the children proposed the court to make a children's memorial.
That time we decided we will complete it with the help of everyone.
That promise we did, that is completed today.
Those who lost their beloved ones, those who lost their children.
Today I dedicate these memorials to them with very heavy heart.
And today is also the inauguration of more than 4.000 crores of projects for the development of Kachchh.
Such projects are related to water, electricity, roads, and dairy.
This shows the determination of the double engine government to develop Kachchh of Gujarat.
Foundation stone has been inaugurated to make the Darshan of Āśāpurā Goddess easier.
Once the development of Mataji madh [temple area] would be completed, the devotees who are coming across the country to visit the temple will get good and new experience.
This is the evidence of how Kachchh is developing forward.

(Modi, 2022b)¹

These are the first words of Prime Minister (from here onwards referred as PM) Narendra Modi's speech in Bhuj in August 2022 – greeting the audience first in Kachchhi, and then the rest of the 40 minutes of the speech, in Hindi. As the first minutes of his speech indicate, loss of lives, pain experienced both in Kachchh, in

Gujarat, in India and importantly, his own personal pain, are intimately connected to that of the price of the development of Kachchh. Furthermore, the “united work” (Kāra sēvā) that was required for the completion of it and the benefits of the “double engine government” – political strategy used by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), referring to the simultaneous power of BJP both at the state and union government level are also intimately connected to Āśāpurā devotion, deity considered as the mother of (Hindu) Kachchh, and an ancestral tutelary deity (kuladēvatā) of Kachchhi caste communities such as Jadeja, Bhanushali, Gosar, and Poladia.

Smritivan earthquake memorial and museum – the key site in Bhuj covered in the inaugural speech, was opened for the wider public three months later in late 2022. Similar with the Veer Bal Smarak or Brave Children’s Memorial in the town of Anjar, the Smritivan complex had been in the making since 2004, initiated in 2001 as part of the World Bank-funded Gujarat Emergency Earthquake Reconstruction Programme (GEERP), although majority of the required funding was secured over the nearly two decades of long construction through the Corporate Social Responsibility scheme. Media reports suggested the cost of the Smritivan memorial and museum was reaching a total of 170 crore rupees (approximately 11 million Euros), but some sources suggest that it would be as high as double of that.² The “united work”, thus, took over two decades to complete, and it was one of the well-known wider business logics of BJP allowing private businesses to show loyalty and commitment to both Modi and his party successfully running elections both in Gujarat, and later at the national level (For the importance of spectacles and mega-infrastructure projects for authoritarian populism, see Akhtar 2023, p. 2462).

The Smritivan complex consists of two parts: The remembrance forest is designed using so-called Miyawaki method, following the Japanese ecologist Akira Miyawaki’s idea from the 1970s of creating a mature forest in a short period of time calculating the amount of native plant species needed for a chosen local environment. It was his response to the deforestation and pollution created by the post-war reconstruction in Japan. Yet, when walking across the forest along the brick-laid walking paths trying to identify the plants forming the forest coverage, we noted the forest was being constructed with many varieties not native to Kachchh, such as bamboo,³ which requires heavy irrigation to survive in Kachchh. Different forestry plots in the memorial park were marked by placates indicating size of the plot, total number of planted trees, and which company had donated the plot. Trees are said to reach to 300,000 in total. Fifty check-dams exhibit the names of nearly 13,000 people who lost their lives during the earthquake in Kachchh. The museum spreads over 11,000 square meters and is divided into seven themes: rebirth, rediscover, restore, rebuild, rethink, relive, renew. The two first ones, rebirth and rediscover, give an overview of the geological history and natural habitat of Kachchh over the millions of years, whereas the rest of the five themes cover the 2001 earthquake and its aftermaths (restore, rebuild, rethink, relive, renew). As it is a project of the Gujarat Government, and the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA), a big portion of the latter sections focus on the formation of the authority, its role in recovery, and the overall efforts that Gujarat recovery entailed. This includes collection of oral histories of

Kachchhis who narrate their trajectories after the earthquake up until 2020s giving hope of the restored lives and better futures. The Gujarat Tourism's (2022) website concludes the experience:

This earthquake has had a significant impact on Gujarat as a whole, but what is impressive is how they have resurfaced from it. Gujarat has emerged as one of the best states in the country, and the credit goes to the courage of its people, and the determination of the government.

As the above example of the inauguration of the Smritivan memorial and earthquake museum in Bhuj illustrates, the disaster recovery success forms an intimate part of how Modi identifies himself in front of the Kachchhi audiences as a politician. This chapter focuses on the narrative construction of Narendra Modi in his speeches that he delivered in Kachchh between 2007 and 2022. Our specific attention is on how he uses Kachchh disaster recovery success, and the role of Indian disaster diplomacy more widely, to indicate a transformation of a Sangh volunteer to that of the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Prime Minister of India, and finally, to *viśvaguru*,⁴ world teacher.

Modi is perhaps the most successful Gujarati and Indian politician for whom the Kachchh earthquake recovery – at least when addressing the Kachchhi audiences – is an emotional trajectory with which he describes his transformation from a Sangh volunteer into a chief minister, and later prime minister. It is noteworthy that he emerged as a politician, as the chief minister, initially without an electoral mandate in a state that has since 1998 been governed by BJP (Jaffrelot, 2024, Introduction, paragraph 1, 11/472). In his own words: the earthquake made who he is today.

We suggest in this chapter that disaster recovery success story has also been actively used by international humanitarian organisations, civil society organisations, and Indian disaster diplomacy since the Kachchh earthquake in 2001 strategically placing Indian experts into what is known as the global disaster management architecture within UN and International Financial Institutions. Thus, the financial investment into a complex such as Smritivan, bears fruit also in global disaster politics. This chapter therefore, compliments earlier analysis that have focused on Modi's populism, growth into a politician from Gujarati Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) cadre, and reign in Gujarat (Jaffrelot, 2021, 2024), and more widely the role of the militarised border of Kachchh and Sindh to that of the Hindu nationalism (Ibrahim, 2008, 2021; Singh, 2023a).

The rest of the chapter unfolds in the following way: we close read Modi's speeches delivered in Bhuj between 2007 and 2022 and focus on the following elements: how Kachchh, Kachchhi people, and the experience of earthquake recovery forms essentially who Modi is today as a politician – at least when his thoughts of the transformation are delivered to the Kachchhi audiences. We also illustrate, how in his speeches this transformative political leadership narrative is parallel to the narrative of Hindu nationalist developmentalist agenda reaching from the smallest villages of Kachchh to that of the vision to make India by 2047 a developed nation and eventually *viśvaguru*, the guide of the world.

3.2 The 2001 Kachchh Earthquake and the Rise of a Populist Politician

This section illustrates how the Kachchh earthquake, and its successful recovery has become over the past two decades a key representation arsenal in Modi's construction of being the father of development – a populist politician with forceful or muscular masculinity (Srivastava, 2015) but also ascetism and self-sacrificing (Basu, 2022). Hand in hand with this individualised and strong gendered national leader imagery runs the discourse of the “double-engine government” – a governance strategy of BJP, referring to power of the party simultaneously at union and state level, i.e. BJP as it was the case after the Kachchh earthquake, and as it is up until today (2024) and envisioning India, and its peoples, through Hindu nationalist vision as the guide of the world (*viśvaguru*).

This section suggests that Kachchh recovery and the development of both national and global disaster architecture through disaster diplomatic efforts using the Kachchh recovery success as its vehicle are examples of how the Modi government uses two of its key policy strategies: double-engine strategy and *viśvaguru* – gaining a leadership role in the world politics. These efforts have offered a competitive alternative for Kachchhi nationalism with that of Gujarati and Hindu nationalism and pride (*asmitā* in Gujarati) and promoting India's role as teacher of the world. These elements are illustrated by reading Modi's speeches in Kachchh alongside with archival research on Indian disaster infrastructure conducted for this research, and the key RSS documents on *viśvaguru*.

3.2.1 Political Transformation from Sangh Volunteer

The success story of the Kachchh recovery is an essential part of Narendra Modi's construct of his own political career when addressing the Kachchhi audiences, first as the Chief Minister of Gujarat (2002–2012), and then as the Prime Minister of India (2012–). Modi's path to BJP politician in Gujarat grew from years of loyal service in RSS when he replaced Keshubhai Patel as the Chief Minister of Gujarat – initially with no electoral mandate – just nine months after the earthquake in a situation where BJP was facing harsh criticism of the way it had handled the earthquake rehabilitation in Kachchh (Sud, 2022, p. 110). Modi secured his assembly seat in 2002 in a by-election in Rajkot district, just a few days before the burning of the train in Godhra and the violence that followed it in Gujarat. The assembly was dissolved in July 2002 due to pressures regarding how Modi's government had handled the riots and the violence.⁵ However, in the elections in December 2002 Modi and BJP returned to power at the legislative assembly elections with the biggest victory in the state (Sud, 2022, p. 112) with the slogan “terrorism versus nationalism” and in 2007 “Gujarat will win” – both attempts to divert the attention away from the aftermath of the communal violence, and said propaganda that was defaming Gujarat and potentially scaring the international investors away (Sud, 2022). Furthermore, as Nalin Mehta (2006) suggests, BJP portrayed the media attention on communal violence as an attack on Gujarati nationalism, and regional

honour, and retrospectively, turned the attack into a populist election affect that worked successfully for them (for detailed analysis of the political career of Modi in wider context of Gujarat, see [Jaffrelot, 2024](#)). The rest of this section analyses the key Narendra Modi's key speeches held in Kachchh between 2007 and 2022 from the perspective of developmentalist recovery populism.

Modi repeatedly returns in his speeches over the past decade to the transformative effect of the Kachchh earthquake experience of 2001 for him. We suggest such repetition is an essential tool in establishing the connection between his soul (*ātmā*), the land of Gujarat of which Kachchh is part of, and India as his Goddess. We further suggest that although Kachchh and Kachchhi people appear important in this construct, they serve the purpose of identifying Kachchh and Kachchhi people primarily as Gujarati – as same as he “a son of Gujarat” – and downplaying the historical fact that Gujarat is a newer identity construction for Kachchh, and Kachchhi people. This is particularly important as at the time of the earthquake, the Kachchhi independence movement was rising its head once more to overcome the difficulties and peripheralisation of Kachchh in the independent federal republic of India. In fact, it is through the Gujarat identity project, and Hindu nationalism, that BJP politicians such as Modi and mass organisations such as RSS have offered an alternative for Kachchh polity to be re-centred from the periphery: culturally, religiously, socially, and economically (see e.g. [Bhattacharjee, 2016](#)).

At the Gujarat state election campaign in December 2012, [Modi \(2012\)](#) reiterated:

There was a big quake in Kutch. I got the opportunity to wipe your tears after the quake ... I followed only one Mantra – I must work to create a better Kutch and ensure the attention of the world towards Kutch.

Less than a year later in 2013, in preparations for the national parliamentary Lok Sabha elections in which Modi and BJP swept the polls and unseated centrist coalition government, Modi addressed his supporters in Bhuj coinciding the 67th Independence Day celebration: the formal flag hoisting event at RR Lalal Collage in Bhuj on 15 August, and a cultural event Kacchaḍō bahāra-māsa⁶ evening before it on 14 August. Not yet as a formal prime ministerial candidate, but BJP's election campaign committee chief. The 2013 campaign has been previously studied as a mediated populism: Nikita Sud suggests that the key message in the campaign had a major shift. Focusing on the Gujarat model of development in the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake, the campaign refocused attention from the Gujarat 2002 violence, opposition's accusations of Modi's involvement in the mass violence against the Muslims, and related images of “butcher of Gujarat” (*mauta kā sandakara*) coined by INC Sonia Gandhi and thus break the dichotomy created both by the opposition (butcher) and his followers (Modiphobia, term used of the English language media critical of Modi at the time) ([Sud, 2022](#)).

When combined, we suggest the speeches serve at least two further strategic motivations. At the flag hoisting ceremony, Modi started his speech in remembrance with freedom fighters, both violent and non-violent ones, and reminded

the audience that Gujarat was fortunate to lead them both. Modi then challenged the audience by asking if the aspirations and dreams of freedom fighters were already fulfilled, following with his response that the country is still suffering from a mental slavery, and ideological dependency that needs to be stopped. He directed his critical words specifically towards Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for not having addressed the President Pranab Mukherjee's request for saving India from a sad state of affairs (Modi, 2013b). Speaking as the Chief Minister of Gujarat offered him the possibility of locating the new BJP-led nationalism to be rising from Gujarat, and thus, what he considered as continuing the unfinished decolonisation process.

Furthermore, talking from Bhuj the evening before, he focused on the success of the earthquake recovery, and the Kachchhi development paradigm. When turning to Kachchh, Modi indicated an important change in his own mindset that would have wider implications for Kachchh: he recognised that he had not reflected on his own prejudices on Kachchh before meeting the people of Kachchh after the earthquake in 2001 and complained more generally how Kachchh is ignored in political discussion, and only recognised as a border area.

He called Kachchh as “mini-India” and specifically hailed development of Kachchh as peace loving, harmonious with rapid progress, and recalling how “now Kutch is seen as a land of development” and “earlier if any officer was transferred in Kutch it was considered a punishment posting” (Modi, 2013a). He even went so far as to say that instead of the Gujarat model of development (well-known slogan worldwide), the focus should be on the Kachchh model of development, and that these days people are focusing on the growth of Kachchh from the point of view of inclusive growth.

In 2017, at the Gujarat state assembly election campaign launch in Bhuj in November, he went further to describe his Kachchh-led political transformation:

The earthquake of Kachchh which forced me to live a new life. This was not my path. I was a person holding a bag on my shoulders, roaming around to serve the society/people.

But then there was an earthquake and people were suffering in Kachchh, because of that AB Vajpayee said to me that brother, you go to Gujarat and work for them.

And like that I had to get that responsibility as a chief minister.

After becoming a CM I learned the very first alphabets such as “ka”, as an administrator from Kachchh. After my swearing ceremony I came to Kachchh within few days. That time I stayed for two days, met people to learn about problems and difficulties. I understood the situation after the earthquake.

I tried to learn very precisely what the difficulties mean for the administration after an earthquake. And I started solving them after understanding them carefully. That was my starting point as a CM.

In a way my training [he uses the English word] has happened here and Kachchhi people who learned from the earthquake have trained me.

(Bharatiya Janata Party, 2017)

In 2022, he again highlighted his role as a simple and small server (*kāryakartā*, word used for volunteering, server of parties and mass organisations) when he gained his first lessons of the Kachchh earthquake (Modi, 2022b). Yet, focusing on the development and recovery of Kachchh, Modi (2022a) positions the transformation having importance to wider declarations of development of Gujarat and of India:

Kutch has not only lifted itself up but has given a new pace of development to the whole of Gujarat. There was a time when one crisis after another was striking Gujarat. There had been conspiracies while Gujarat was dealing with the natural calamity. In order to defame Gujarat in the country and around the world, several conspiracies were hatched to stop investments from flowing here.

Leaving every conspiracy behind, Gujarat had chosen a new path of industrial development in Gujarat by bringing a new industrial policy. Kutch benefited a lot from this initiative. Kutch started receiving a lot of investment. Lakhs of crores of rupees have been invested for the industrial development in Kutch.

...

Kutch has set an example not only for India but for the whole world. There are few such places in the world, which are ahead in terms of multiple fields like agriculture and animal husbandry, industrial development, tourism as well as art and culture. Kutch is ahead in terms of most of the fields. Kutch and Gujarat have also set an example in front of the country in terms of adopting and embracing its heritage with pride.

...

By 2047, India will become a developed country! Those who have heard and seen me in Kutch, they know that I had said something under adverse circumstances during the period of 2001-02 after the earthquake. Today that has emerged as the truth in front of your eyes. Today you must have seen various shortcomings within the country. But I have a dream for the year 2047 today. Friends, in 2001-02, Kutch was under a grave crisis but the dreams that we had at that time have come true and are successful today. In 2047, India will also fulfil today's dreams.

In the 2017 speech he also, aligning with the wider Hindu nationalist agenda of RSS for example, shifts the focus from Kachchhi land and history to that of Gujarat and India (Bhārat) reiterating to the long vision of Gujarati intellectuals since 1930s in imagining Kachchh to form part of Gujarat nationalist ideal, the big Gujarat (Mahā Gujarāta) (Singh, 2023b, p. 76). He continued:

This land is my mother, and I have come to you as a son. You have raised me as a son. You have polished and distinguished my abilities. Whatever good was in me, you have strengthened it. The land of Gujarat has strengthened me. My mother as a land has strengthened it.

(Bharatiya Janata Party, 2017)

The connection between land, identity, development, and religious devotion (see e.g. Jaffrelot, 2021, p. 35, 2024; Sharma, 2023) are further emphasised by connection with Āśāpurā goddess, aspect of Hindu Goddess Devi. Āśāpurā represents the mother of (Hindu) Kachchh since the establishment of Bhuj in the 15th century and specifically through the influence of Hindu Jadeja rulers, who are said to have won battles with her blessings (see Chapter 4 for details). The story of BJP in Gujarat in Kachchh runs through Āśāpurā temple, its devotion, and devotees – as other pilgrimage centres elsewhere in India do (Bhatt, 2021). In two of the speeches (2017, 2022), performing ritual prayers at the Āśāpurā temple and gaining Āśāpurā's blessings for Modi personally and efforts to develop the temple alongside with other development interventions “are evidence of how Kachchh is developing forward” (Modi, 2022). Key people of BJP in Kachchh and Gujarat are members of the trust that runs the Āśāpurā temple. Hindu cosmology is further invoked in the 2022 speech by referring to the Smritivan memorial and museum as “eternal move forward” and speaking of people of Kachchh as immortal children (*vayam amṛtaśya putra*) and their inspiration being led by the mantra of continuity, moving, never stopping, and incarnation.

3.2.2 “Everyone's Effort” – India in 2047

As described in the previous section, development of Kachchh bears the symbolic importance in Modi's vision for the future India. Returning to inaugurate the decades delayed Smritivan earthquake memorial in August 2022 just few months before the Gujarat state assembly elections, Modi referred to the development of Kachchh district as *sabka prayas* – everyone's effort – a term that Modi added to his previous slogan *sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas* (support of everyone, development to everyone, trust of everyone) in his speech on the 75th Independence Day in August 2021. Critical media analysis has suggested, that the latest addition – everyone's effort – is the way in which the prime minister, and his government, dealt with the wide criticism on the shortages of handling the deadly second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic (see Chapter 9) – calling the nation to come together and fight the pandemic rather than criticising the government of its shortages (Singh, 2021). In his speech in Bhuj in 2022, Modi (2022) said:

Kutch has always had one specialty which I always talk about. Even if one person sows the seed of his dream here, then the whole of Kutch gets involved in making it happen. These values of Kutch have proved every apprehension and every doubt wrong. There were many who had said that Kutch would never be able to get back on its feet. But today the people of Kutch have completely transformed the scenario here....

I still remember that in those difficult days, I had said with a great confidence that we would turn that disaster into an opportunity. I had also said that I could see India's “growth” in that “challenge”. And today I have declared from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15th August that by 2047, India will become a developed country! ...Friends, in 2001-02, Kutch was under a grave crisis but the dreams that we had at that time have come true and are successful today. In 2047, India will also fulfil today's dreams.

Clearly, the recovery of Kachchh in his rhetoric of development, and unquestionably as a success, remains an essential one when addressing Kachchhi audiences, over 20 years past the disaster. Yet, the narrative of the success in his speeches is closed in an authoritarian manner: the success speech foresees criticism and closes any public debate on it by condemning and constructing images of enemies, that can be found from political opposition, university campuses, or even in social movements (Sud, 2022, p. 103). Sud further argues that the actual Gujarat Model is that of authoritarianism, capitalism, Hindu nationalism, and populism – gone national (Sud, 2022, p. 104 see also Jaffrelot, 2024). In the speeches addressing the Kachchhi audiences, Kachchh is elevated into a model to be followed by the rest of India.

3.2.3 Disaster Paradigm Change Enabling Becoming Viśvaguru for Global Disaster Architecture

As discussed in the Introduction, the Kachchh earthquake and its recovery are often popularised as a success story: an economic developmentalist miracle but also a model for Indian, and international, disaster management architecture. We suggest, drawing from the recent analysis of Indian foreign policy and civilisational viśvaguru paradigm (de Estrada, 2023), that the Kachchh recovery and the disaster management architecture and expertism built in India in its aftermath provide one example how viśvaguru paradigm works: gaining recognition for India from Western powers serves the purpose to boost domestic politics (de Estrada, 2023, pp. 435–436). Whereas previous scholars have located the role of the foreign affairs for the Hindu nationalist governance since the 2014 regime change (Hall, 2019, p. 17), we suggest that elements of viśvaguru in the disaster architecture can be traced back to 2001 in Gujarat, and how Modi constructs himself as a world-scale politician for the Kachchhi audience.

The 2022 opened Smritivan memorial and museum, thus, has a much wider audience and importance than the Kachchhi survivors Modi referred to in his inauguration speech. Smritivan is in fact in most of the promotional materials of it, put in comparison with that of the Ground Zero in New York and Hiroshima Peace Memorial. The success is exhibited in Smritivan through multiple means: individual life histories, quantifiable data, chronology of establishment of the Gujarati disaster management infrastructure, and that of sectoral recovery projects. It is a wow-architectural piece that magnifies the same narrative of success that has been available in training materials, publications, and reports used by the Indian disaster management architecture – such as National Disaster Management Authority and National Institute of Disaster Management. In 2024, the museum was enlisted amongst the seven most beautiful museums in the world by Prix Versailles, world architecture and design award.

The recovery process has further received several international recognitions: in 2003, UN Sasakawa Award was awarded to the GSDMA and it formally announced the Gujarat government's reconstruction efforts as a success (Mukherji, 2008, p. 2), and in 2004, World Bank announced the Green Awards of World Bank

to Gujarat Disaster Management Authority for the promotion and maintenance of environmental concerns.

In Modi's biography *One vs All: "Beware Mr. Prime Minister, It's India Impossible!"*, Ashok Anand describes how Modi and his team "had reconstructed the city [of Bhuj] and rehabilitated the survivors. There were visible signs of prosperity in the region" (Anand, 2016, pp. 305–306/742). Written in 2016, the book celebrates the investments and infrastructure development Modi's government had accelerated in Kachchh: "since 2001, over 200 companies have invested Rs. 15,000 crores in the Kutch region alone, which has created not only the world class infrastructure but also jobs for the locals" (Anand, 2016, pp. 305–307/742). This success story is further narrated as an exemplar of people- and owner-driven shelter and housing recovery paradigm not just by government infrastructure, or international aid agencies, but also by recovery specialists turned into scholars (see e.g. Thiruppugazh, 2016, p. 173). More critical analyses (Mukherji, 2010, 2015; Tafti & Tomlinson, 2015) will be discussed more in Chapter 9.

Furthermore, an important soft power potential of *viśvaguru* (Hall, 2019, p. 84), the ideology of becoming a teacher of the world, lies in the diffusion of the disaster recovery success through Indian disaster diplomacy. Since the Kachchh earthquake in 2001, the key Indian people in government, but also in different disaster recovery roles at the time in the UN system, and key civil society organisations have become an important part of the Indian disaster governance architecture internationally: several people with expert roles in the Kachchh recovery were traced in this research and located at the disaster management governance structures of the United Nations and the World Bank. Furthermore, the Kachchhi-based organisations have participated in the housing recovery programmes after the Indian Ocean earthquake and the tsunami in 2004, and later in Nepal in 2015 (referred to us in interviews, but see also Chand, 2017; Hall, 2019, p. 132; Roy, 2022). Thus, we suggest that Indian disaster diplomacy building on to the Kachchh recovery is one of the concrete ways of materialising the *Hindutva* ideology of *viśvaguru*, India becoming the guide or teacher of the world (for detailed analysis of the slow saffronisation of Indian Foreign Service, see Huju, 2022).

RSS has actively promoted the idea of *viśvaguru* in its ideology. The second chief M.S. Golwalkar (2000 [1966]) had suggested in 1966 published *Bunch of Thoughts* book that the notion of *viśvaguru* was guiding Hindu ancestors

to reach distant lands carrying the message of world brotherhood. Wherever they stepped, they taught the local people the spiritual and cultural values of life, taught them the sciences of material prosperity as well and built up a homogeneous brotherhood of nations under their benign wings. Our Hindu Society, strong, self-confident and self-effulgent, acted as the fulcrum of that far-flung empire of the Spirit.

(p. 7)

More recently Mohan Bhagwat, the current chief or Sarsanghchalak of RSS when addressing Sangh members completing their third training in 2021,⁷ elaborated in

detail how the world needs India's role as *viśvaguru*, as previous attempts to gain well-being and happiness have failed. He builds this narrative, repeating prophecy often identified back to Swami Vivekanand. In the words of Bhagwat, "the beginning of this century would have started with the victory of Europe, but it should end with a vision of India. Otherwise, it would be the end of human species" ([Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, 2022](#)). On another occasion, he estimated that reaching the position of the teacher of the world would take another 20–30 years and preparation of at least two generations ([Outlook India, 2023](#)). The outward-looking strategy of BJP goes hand in hand with the RSS's social and cultural aiming at future Hindu world order ([de Estrada, 2023](#), p. 435; [Hall, 2019](#), p. 85; see also [Hansen, 1999](#)).

We find such notions of unity also in Modi's speeches, where he transgresses the boundaries of Kachchh, Gujarat, and India fluently – reiterating RSS ideology of worship of *Bhārata māṭā*, not only for Indians, but for everyone. When Kachchh's recovery and developmentalist success are connected to this Hindu nationalist mission, it actively sidelines such dissident voices that were raised in the early days after the earthquake: criticising the state government and BJP but also returning to calls for Kachchhi independence and separation from the Republic of India and State of Gujarat ([Simpson & Corbridge, 2006](#); [Singh, 2023b](#), p. 84). Although Kachchh and Kachchhi people have had ambivalent relationship with Gujarat ethno-religious nationalism, and Gujarati *asmitā*, pride, glory, and identity – a form of Gujarat Hindu nationalism ([Ibrahim, 2008](#), p. 31; see also [Jaffrelot, 2024](#)), as RSS leader Mohan Bhagwat in the 2022 talk reiterates, difference and different characteristics – such as strong Kachchhi identity – are not a problem for Hindu nationalists, as long as such differences remain within the objective of *Bhārata māṭā* (Mother India):

We are one. Although there are diversities. Diversities are in their own place, we respect that. But nation is greater than everything else.

When we worship *Bhārata māṭā*, it means that the greatest is the nation, rest of everything is after that. Rest of everything is for the nation.

If it is helpful/useful such all things are for the nation. That we will not carry. Which ever stops our nation, it is not ours.

([Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, 2022](#))

Bhagwat ends his speech for the future volunteers of the Sangh:

[In Sangh] there are three aims: Individual is getting the benefit: happiness in personal life. Society will be happy. Capability would be developed that it will lead world to the path where the world will get happiness.

([Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, 2022](#))

3.3 Conclusions

This chapter has approached the Kachchh earthquake recovery from the overall Hindu nationalist political sphere and more specifically from the personal transformation

from a Sangh volunteer to that of a politician and a world teacher (viśvaguru) through disaster diplomacy. Entering into the political discourse of Narendra Modi, the chapter located his politics in 2022 at the inauguration of the Smritivan memorial and museum and then turned to closely read his earlier speeches between 2007 and 2017. The chapter illustrated how Narendra Modi, and the double-engine BJP-led government, has adopted the success story of Kachchh and Bhuj recovery into its branding both domestically and internationally. The second term of Modi's government since 2019, and in particular during the G20 presidency in 2022, has seen a rise in debate on the actual contents of the RSS-nurtured ideology of viśvaguru. The success narrative of the 2001 earthquake as a vehicle for becoming viśvaguru, teacher of the world, is parallelly used by international humanitarian organisations and civil society and thus forms a strong case to advocate global disaster politics.

The chapter has illustrated how the actual realisation of the ideology was at play in the aftermath of the Kachchh earthquake through disaster diplomatic efforts predating by more than a decade the formal rise in power nationally in 2014. Modi emerges, for the Kachchhi audiences, as the muscular father of development who establishes his soul (ātmā) to Mother India through the land of Gujarat. By speaking of Kachchhi people as Gujaratis, he thus offers a Hindu nationalist alternative for Kachchhis to move from the developmentalist periphery to that of economic and social prosperity, by invoking his development model as Kachchh model of development, and not Gujarat model of development as popularised earlier.

The following chapter reconstructs the experiences of reconstructing the temporary shelter neighbourhood – as it was discussed and managed between the project correspondence by the two key organisations and covered by a local newspaper *Kutchmitra*. These two chapters also share, a geographical intimacy in the city of Bhuj. Smritivan memorial and the museum and the temporary shelter neighbourhood are located next to one another divided by the railway, highway, and an industrial zone. Residents of the neighbourhood have for two decades witnessed the building of the Smritivan using modern technology in their neighbourhood when simultaneously waiting, protesting, and demanding for the fulfilment of their basic habitat needs.

Notes

- 1 Full speech available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXXqoqwtOqo>, government's transcript in English available at <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1855055>
- 2 Local Kachchhi newspapers complained in few weeks approaching the January 2023 commemoration of the earthquake that the high entrance fees to the museum (for Indian citizen's 300 Rs, equalling 3.4€) were failing Kachchhi people.
- 3 Bamboo, as we will illustrate in the latter parts of the book, has become one of the materials that circulates within the circular economy of lower economic classes in Bhuj after the bamboo sheets were brought as a building material from Maharashtra for the temporary shelters in Haṅgāmī Āvās in 2001.
- 4 Viśvaguru concept has been promoted by BJP politicians over the last few years, indicating that Narendra Modi's leadership is guiding India to become viśvaguru as Swami Vivekananda had predicted it would happen in the 21st century.

- 5 The direct involvement of the government in riots and allowing the violence to take place continues to be disputed in India. In 2022, the Supreme Court's verdict confirmed the 2012 Special Investigation Team's findings, in which there was no prosecutable evidence against Narendra Modi and 63 others.
- 6 Kachchhi idiom that means Kachchh is a favourite place of all.
- 7 Number of key ministerial positions are filled with people who have completed the three trainings, including Narendra Modi.

References

- Akhtar, A. (2023). Protests, neoliberalism and right-wing populism amongst farmers in India. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 50(6), 2457–2471. doi: [10.1080/03066150.2022.2096446](https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2022.2096446).
- Anand, A. (2016). *One vs all: "Beware Mr. prime minister, it's India impossible!"*. Chennai: Notion Press.
- Basu, A. (2022). Ascetic masculinity and right-wing populism in Hindu nationalist India. In S. Tobias & A. Stein (Eds.), *The perils of populism* (pp. 72–108). London: Rutgers University Press.
- Bharatiya Janata Party. (2017). *PM Shri Narendra Modi addresses public rally in Bhuj, Gujarat: 27.11.2017*. YouTube. Retrieved September 5, 2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMej5IHws-8>
- Bhatt, S. (2021, April 14). Here is another side of Modi's Gujarat model. *Gulf News*. Retrieved September 5, 2023, from <https://gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/here-is-another-side-of-modis-gujarat-model-1.78487970>
- Bhattacharjee, M. (2016). Seva, Hindutva, and the politics of post-earthquake relief and reconstruction in rural Kutch. *Asian Ethnology*, 75(1), 75–104.
- Chand, B. (2017). Disaster relief as a political tool: Analysing Indian and Chinese responses after the Nepal earthquakes. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(6), 535–545. doi: [10.1080/09700161.2017.1377893](https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2017.1377893)
- de Estrada, K. S. (2023). What is a vishwaguru? Indian civilizational pedagogy as a transformative global imperative. *International Affairs*, 99(2), 433–455. doi: [10.1093/ia/iac318](https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iac318)
- Golwalkar, M. S. (2000 [1966]). *Bunch of thoughts*. Bangalore: Sahitya Sindhu Prakashana.
- Gujarat Tourism. (2022). *Smritivan earthquake memorial museum*. Retrieved March 7, 2025, from <https://www.gujarattourism.com/kutch-zone/kutch/smritivan.html>
- Hall, I. (2019). *Modi and the reinvention of Indian foreign policy*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Hansen, T. B. (1999). *The saffron wave: Democracy and Hindu nationalism in modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Huju, K. (2022). Saffronizing diplomacy: The Indian foreign service under Hindu nationalist rule. *International Affairs*, 98(2), 423–441.
- Ibrahim, F. (2008). *Settlers, saints and sovereigns: An ethnography of state formation in western India*. London: Routledge.
- Ibrahim, F. (2021). *From family to police force: Security and belonging on a South Asian border*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. (2021). *Modi's India: Hindu nationalism and the rise of ethnic democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. (2024). *Gujarat under Modi: Laboratory of today's India*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Mehta, N. (2006). Modi and the camera: The politics of television in the 2002 Gujarat riots. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 29(3), 395–414.
- Modi, N. (2012). *CM addresses massive rally in Kutch, speaks about development in the region for last 10 years!* Narendra Modi. Retrieved September 5, 2023, from <https://www.narendramodi.in/cm-addresses-massive-rally-in-kutch-speaks-about-development-in-the-region-for-last-10-years-4924>

- Modi, N. (2013a). *Kutch was remembered as a border district or due to the quake but now it is known for development*. Narendra Modi. Retrieved September 5, 2023, from <https://www.narendramodi.in/kutch-was-remembered-as-a-border-district-or-due-to-the-quake-but-now-it-is-known-for-development-5469>
- Modi, N. (2013b). *Shri Narendra Modi's speech on 67th Independence Day celebrations at Bhuj*. Narendra Modi. Retrieved September 5, 2023, from <https://www.narendramodi.in/shri-narendra-modis-speech-on-67th-independence-day-celebrations-at-bhuj-2791>
- Modi, N. (2022). *PM Modi's speech at launch of development initiatives in Bhuj, Gujarat*. YouTube. Retrieved September 5, 2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXXqoqwtOqo>
- Mukherji, A. (2008). *Negotiating Housing Recovery: Why Some Communities Recovered While Others Struggled to Rebuild in Post-Earthquake Urban Kutch, India*. PhD thesis (Architecture, Graduate Division). Berkeley: University of California.
- Mukherji, A. (2010). Post-earthquake housing recovery in Bachhau, India: The homeowner, the renter, and the squatter. *Earthquake Spectra*, 26(4), 1085–1100.
- Mukherji, A. (2015). From tenants to homeowners: Housing renters after disaster in Bhuj, India. *Housing Studies*, 30(7), 1135–1157. doi: [10.1080/02673037.2015.1008423](https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2015.1008423)
- Outlook India. (2023). *Disinformation being spread to stop India's progress towards becoming 'vishwa guru', says Bhagwat*. Retrieved September 5, 2023, from <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/disinformation-being-spread-to-stop-india-s-progress-towards-becoming-vishwa-guru-says-bhagwat-news-277166>
- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. (2022). *तृतीय वर्ष संघ शिक्षा वर्ग समापन समारोह - परम पूजनीय सरसंचालक जी का उद्बोधन*. YouTube. Retrieved September 5, 2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6xcOLnxRMU>
- Roy, S. (2022). India's disaster diplomacy in South Asian region. In S. Roy (Ed.), *Gender and the politics of disaster recovery: Dealing with the aftermath*. United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Sharma, M. (2023). Hindu nationalism and right-wing ecology: RSS, Modi and motherland post-2014. *Studies in Indian Politics*, 11(1), 102–117. doi: [10.1177/23210230231166197](https://doi.org/10.1177/23210230231166197)
- Simpson, E., & Corbridge, S. (2006). The geography of things that may become memories: The 2001 earthquake in Kachchh-Gujarat and the politics of rehabilitation in the prememorial era. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96(3), 566–585. doi: [10.1111/j.1467-8306.2006.00706.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.2006.00706.x)
- Singh, A. (2021). 'Sabka prayas': Unpacking the latest addition to the PM's slogan. *Live Wire*. Retrieved from <https://livewire.thewire.in/politics/sabka-prayas-unpacking-the-latest-addition-to-the-pms-slogan/>
- Singh, D. (2022). 'This is all waste': Emptying, cleaning and clearing land for renewable energy dispossession in borderland India. *Contemporary South Asia*, 30(3), 402–419. doi: [10.1080/09584935.2022.2099812](https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2022.2099812)
- Singh, D. (2023a). When 'green' becomes 'saffron': Wind extraction, border surveillance, and citizenship regime at the edge of the Indian state. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 30(1), 765–789. doi: [10.2458/jpe.5490](https://doi.org/10.2458/jpe.5490)
- Singh, D. (2023b). *Winds of change in a 'saffronised' Indian borderland: Dispossession and power in rural Kutch* (PhD thesis). School of International Development, University of East Anglia and Department of Food and Resource Economics, University of Copenhagen.
- Srivastava, S. (2015). Modi-masculinity: Media, manhood, and "traditions" in a time of consumerism. *Television & New Media*, 16(4), 331–338. doi: [10.1177/1527476415575498](https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476415575498)
- Sud, N. (2022). The actual Gujarat model: Authoritarianism, capitalism, Hindu nationalism and populism in the time of Modi. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 52(1), 102–126. doi: [10.1080/00472336.2020.1846205](https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2020.1846205)
- Tafti, M. T., & Tomlinson, R. (2015). Best practice post-disaster housing and livelihood recovery interventions: Winners and losers. *International Development Planning Review*, 37(2), 165–185.

- Thiruppugazh, V. (2016). Positioning stakeholders within owner-driven post-disaster reconstruction approaches: Gujarat, India following the 2001 earthquake. In P. Daly & M. Feener (Eds.), *Rebuilding Asia following natural disasters: Approaches to reconstruction in the Asia-Pacific Region* (pp. 160–180). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Times of India. (2022, August 28). *Gujarat: PM Narendra Modi inaugurates Smriti Van memorial for 2001 Bhuj earthquake victims*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/gujarat-pm-narendra-modi-inaugurates-smriti-van-memorial-for-2001-bhuj-earthquake-victims/articleshow/93831211.cms>
- United Nations Development Programme. (2001). *From relief to recovery: The Gujarat experience*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

Part II

Āvās Landscapes Challenging the Hegemonic Recovery Narrative



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

4 Populist Recovery Narrative Revisited: “Temporary Neighbourhood of Bhuj, or Epicentre of Problems?”¹

4.1 Introduction: “Ye Tera Ghar, Ye Mera Ghar! This Is Your Home, This Is My Home!”

Ye tera ghar,
ye mera ghar
kisiko dekhana ho ghar
to pehele aake dekhale...
hangami nagar...
hangami nagar...!

This is your home,
this is my home
If anyone wants to see the house
First come and see...
At temporary city...
At temporary city...!

([Kutchmitra, 2001a](#))

When the local *Kutchmitra* newspaper broke the story of the new temporary post-earthquake neighbourhood, Haṅgāmī Āvās, in the making on 17 April 2001, the reportage was filled with enthusiasm indicated already in the article’s title “Ye tera ghar, ye mera ghar!” (“this is your home, this is my home!”)² with a twist in the lyrics. In the original movie, the song is played when a newlywed couple, Avinash Verma and Geetanjali Gupta, are at their house: Geeta, putting laundry to dry, she is courted lovingly by her husband. Both the song and the movie scene illustrate a dream come true: life of a newlywed couple in a middle class in an urban neighbourhood of concrete houses. Whereas in the movie version, the singer suggests “if you want to see someone, come first and ask, my eyes, your eyes”, the *Kutchmitra* suggests that the reader should visit the temporary shelter neighbourhood, Hangami Nagar,³ to witness such a home.

With such a reference to a famous movie, and its domestic sphere filled with romance and new love, the *Kutchmitra* article sets the readers’ mind to expect something spectacular – just three months after the January 2001 earthquake. The

article was published at the time when none of the potential relocation sites had been formally announced (Balachandran, 2010, p. 162) although they were informally discussed in the citizen's consultations of the town planning exercise. Curiously, the temporary shelter neighbourhood, Haṅgāmī Āvās, was not amongst them.⁴ So what was the plan announced in 2001 for the neighbourhood? An article pitching the "New Bhuj" roughly 5km from the earthquake-destroyed old city and centring the announcement to the romantic moments of the movie "Saath, Saath" has surely increased the expectations amongst the city's earthquake-affected residents in Bhuj.

Retrospectively, rising the expectation in the context of the early months of the urban reconstruction of Bhuj is an interesting one, given that the housing reconstruction model adopted focused on property owners and their housing recovery, neglected the question of landless, renters, and inhabitants suffering from pre-earthquake inadequate living conditions – all aspects that this chapter as an archive of Haṅgāmī Āvās, the temporary shelter neighbourhood, will focus on.

Thus, this chapter moves away from the disaster diplomacy and Hindu nationalist political ideologies of viśvaguru to the disaster recovery project sphere in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 Kachchh earthquake. The chapter builds an archive of the construction of the temporary shelter neighbourhood Haṅgāmī Āvās in Bhuj using primarily three primary sources: it draws from correspondence and formal project documentation between the project funder European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) and its implementing partner United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) between 2001 and 2002, English-translated articles of the local newspaper *Kutchmitra* between 2001 and 2003, and our interviews with former aid workers and residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās between 2016 and 2024. This archive offers an overall narrative of the neighbourhoods' segregated socio-spatial ordering between caste and religious communities, formation of permanent temporariness, informality, and dispossessed populations that mirrors the wider ideological underpinnings of the recovery programme, and shadows of the extractivist economic development, and illiberal urban development.

4.2 Chronology of Building the "Temporary Shelters for the Poor and Vulnerable Groups in the Bhuj City of Kutch District of Gujarat"⁵

This section is a reconstruction of a temporary shelter construction chronology: it follows the official aid narrative constructed between 2001 and 2003 of the Gujarat recovery efforts, project documentation of the "temporary shelters for the poor and vulnerable groups in the Bhuj city of Kutch District of Gujarat" project and the correspondence between the funder (ECHO) and the main implementor (UNDP), and local media coverage by the newspaper *Kutchmitra* (2001–2003).⁶ The chronology also mentions other key decisions and events that have occurred during the period of 2001–2003 and refers to sources that we have used. For detailed description of all the financing and government decisions of the urban reconstruction, see Mukherji (2008) (Figure 4.1).

17 April 2001 – Kutchmitra



Figure 4.1 Kutchmitra article clip of 17 April 2001 photographed at the archive of Kutchmitra newspaper.

In the north-eastern part of Bhuj, a temporary city is getting shape.

Government will give those with G4 and G5 damage category homes 12,000Rs with which they will build a house for themselves: school, hospital, telephone booths and government offices also to be built in the neighbourhood.

On 26th January the destroyer earthquake arrived in Bhuj and created a mess. Until the district capital is reconstructed, the affected people can stay (in Gujarati using expression hide their head) near the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC). GIDC has changed from a peaceful forest into an area that is busy with construction.

The State government has given the permission to construct *Haṅgāmī Āvās* for the earthquake affected people of Bhuj in the Northeastern area, that joins Sural Bhīt to GIDC.

The uninhabited area has been levelled.

According to the deputy collector RG Bhalara, although the monsoon is approaching in mid-June, the temporary shelters will be completed by the first week of May.

There will be 9,952 plots divided into 18 sectors, the deputy collector clarifies. So-called sector-policy is being implemented, allotting the plots according to community, caste, organisation, and group so that they can help and support each other and live together in this difficult time. Different community groups have been allocated plots in one sector. Sir Bhalara clarified the allocation of plots and said the meeting with representatives of communities has already taken place and this is believed to build the trust amongst people.

This “temporary Bhuj” will also have government agencies such as Gujarat Electricity Board, Water Supply Board, Health Department, Telephone Department and other district departments. Active water line is already installed from Gada [village] to Bhuj and the testing of the tube well of Gada is already completed. Approximately 50–60 electricity poles are installed and lines are going to be installed on the poles. 1-kilometre-long concrete road is also completed.

Shiva temple of Sural Bhīt and the Muslim shrine will be the centres of Hindus and Muslims in the area. There will be two commercial centres where all the things will be available for buying.

Chief town planner of the state VB Dave has made the plan, permission is endorsed by the Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel, and Business Minister Sureshbhai Mehta.

Houses will be built by people, but all materials will be available at the temporary city: there will be more than one material bank from where people are able to buy materials: two bags of cement 100Rp/each, shed and other construction materials with subsidised rates.

For people who are getting a plot in the temporary city, government will demand a confirmation letter that their house has collapsed or is severely damaged. If it is a false document, government takes back the money and there will be court proceedings against the person.

In this temporary area, there will be sewage and drainage facilities.

Government officials are saying that the drainage will be available shortly. People are opposing the common sewage plan, there should be 1 bathroom per block (i.e. four homes) independently. Drainage will be built. On 20th April the area will get electricity, so that construction work can continue day and night (Kutchmitra, 2001b).

7 May 2001

E-mail from DG ECHO to UNDP requesting clarification on UNDP’s proposal, addresses, amongst others these concerns:

As much time has passed already since the earthquake [over 3 months], and most of the ECHO projects as a response to the earthquake were foreseen for a duration of 4 months and many of them will finalise soon,

we would like to request you to limit the duration of the UNDP project to 4 months;

As remarked on previous version of the UNDP proposal, this proposal lacks a clear description of the BNFs [beneficiaries] and the selection criteria to be used. Could you provide us with the necessary information?

Different names of local partners are mentioned in the proposal but it is not clear what will be the role of all them. Could you explain who will do what?

Best regards,

PS. I hope your husband has recovered well.

([European Community Humanitarian Aid Office, 2001c](#))

18 May 2001

Desk officer report

Background & policy: ECHO has decided to focus on temporary shelter for its intervention in the Gujarat crisis. Such shelter should normally take the form of tents, of high quality to last until after the monsoon, with sufficient space to appropriately accommodate a family. It was also indicated by ECHO that traditional temporary shelter would be acceptable, particularly in case of projects in urban areas.

No more structural solution should be encouraged, as this could seriously compromise chances of receiving assistance in reconstruction while reducing number of beneficiaries of immediate aid.

...

UNDP has always intended to focus on the old town of Bhuj, an urban area not receiving a sufficient degree of attention. The proposal is the result of a very complex and tiresome process of dialogue and preparatory work...

Fortunately all these efforts, the operation has been clearly defined and is entirely satisfactory. If correctly implemented, it would prove extremely useful in securing temporary shelter to the most needy groups in Bhuj old town. Very cost-effective as well. ([European Community Humanitarian Aid Office, 2001a](#))

14 May 2001

Operation contract ECHO/IND/210/2001/02009 Temporary shelter for the poor and the vulnerable groups in Bhuj city of Kutch district in Gujarat details a full budget of the project with worth of 725.000€, costs eligible from 02/05/2001 onwards for 4 months with the end date 02/09/2001.

Marjaana visits Bhuj in May and takes photographs in Haṅgāmī Āvās where the demonstration houses are being built by the UNDP. There are very little written notes available of the visit, but Marjaana recollects that main concern she had having reached the location from the centre of the Bhuj was how people will maintain their livelihoods given the distance to their previous shops and customer-base. She also recalls that the construction on the first sectors (closer to the main road) were well-ahead by the Swaminarayan trust (SNT) and new residents were planning to move in soon ([Figure 4.2a-c](#)).



Figure 4.2 a–c Photo collage of black and white photograph negatives from the film shot by Marjaana in May 2001.

June–September 2001

Correspondence between UNDP and ECHO focus on two key issues, as Marjaana recollects: the change of local partners, and the lack of water and sanitation infrastructure. As already recollected in May during the monitoring and evaluation visit to Bhuj, it was clear that the shelters constructed in the first sectors of the Haṅgāmī Āvās by the Swaminarayan movement strictly to its own members were progressing faster than any other shelter construct at site. Hands full with their own shelter construction for 100 families, Swaminarayan Trust reclined to take part in the ECHO/UNDP project and which led UNDP to start seek out for other partners. The construction of 3,350 shelters is outsourced to six partners each taking responsibility from 250 to 1,250 shelters.⁷

Water and sanitation issues turn into a crisis. Although the Government of Gujarat had initially committed itself to provide full infrastructure to Haṅgāmī Āvās, the longer the shelter construction at site is advancing, the clearer it becomes that there is no plan in sight. One of the partners in shelter project, whose organisation is known for focusing on social interventions of Dalits and women specifically, reflected upon it:

what use of such aid is if it is unliveable material and quick relief and forgetting it is for people. Simplistic notions of aid leads to grotesque housing issue...

actually we decided to put a condition to UNDP that we will not take this project unless they fund the toilets. So finally there were two or three big community toilets...

How can you bring houses for underprivileged people without considering the basic sanitation, then water. UNDP says we will not fund the water pipelines – municipality says we will not fund the gutter lines and roads, because otherwise people will take it for granted and do not want to move [out]...

You cannot deny their rights too prime reasons, everyone was talking about human rights and recovery

It is very appalling, mental condition of aid agencies and state which is responsible towards the GIDC construction, towards the people. People who had no other option. Hundreds of people were forced to go there. People were literally terrorized if they did not leave those houses [in old Bhuj] and go there. How you are terrorizing them to go anywhere, you want them to disappear.

The state never wants to say what went wrong. It always wants to.... white wash everything. It is ok, there is nothing wrong.... Aid agencies don't want to be framed they are wrong because what were they doing would be questioned, so everybody – people's movement is ultimately all about that, how people have been able to fight that and how the agency of people will be silenced. This is the control...

Politics does not disappear just because houses have collapsed... Social fault lines do not collapse, on the contrary they become sharper and more deeper.

(Interview 03122018)

UNDP sought out to use a reserve budget of the ECHO project to construct communal toilets, a proposal towards which ECHO had no objections. It becomes clear during this process that the Government of Gujarat has no allocated budget for the water and sanitation infrastructure for Haṅgāmī Āvās. Instead, the only financial support that Government of Gujarat was able to provide was restricted to that of the house owners with land and building rights.

26 July 2001 – Kutchmitra

75% of the homeless (affected) in four cities have not yet received money/assistance for temporary shelter!

In Bhuj, even that lakhs of money is already used for the temporary shelter, six months after the earthquake the place looks empty: due to the liberal policy (in Gujarati *udaarnitina*) by the government scheme, new barriers have appeared (Figure 4.3).

Six months ago the explosion of earth, four cities of Kachchh lost their souls. Thousands of people in the four cities became homeless and amongst them, most of the people have not got the opportunity to get a temporary shelter.

...

After the government made temporary shelter location some houses are already ready. And some are under construction. No family has yet started to live there.



Figure 4.3 Photograph of the newspaper clip of 26 July 2001 on the archive desk of Kutchmitra.

In the front yard of school and a tent city (in Gujarati *tambu nagri*), ladies in the worst situation of their lives are making tie and dye (in Gujarati *bandhni*) and trying to forget memory of the earthquake.

The lives of the children have changed radically. In the image we can see three months old child sleeping soundly, although after their birth, they have not been fortunate enough to have four walls and a roof. Whereas six months ago, a bit more older children were playing in the colonies and the streets. Now we can see them sitting in the open fields quietly.

Times are different and so are friends also.

Above picture is a symbol of the difficult times of the homeless people of Kachchh. At the centre of the broken city in the courtyard of a school there is a tent city where it is raining. Innocent three months old Amir in a swing/cod is looking at the direction of the sky with questions in his eyes and is laughing loudly. Meanwhile his parents are throwing water outside with a bucket and cursing their bad fortune. This Muslim Arab family has lost their home six months ago, not being able to provide a roof and walls for their baby boy Amir (using expression *lineage lamp*, which refers to Amir as the heir, baby boy).

On the six month anniversary of the most harmful disaster of a century, in the form of an earthquake, still so many pearls of poor (using Gujarati expression *rak na ratno* and thus making an intertextual reference to a Gujarati film of the same name) have no fortune to have a roof on their head.

As this monsoon season is ending, let's take an central example of GIDC: with the expenditure of lakhs of rupiahs used to construct a temporary residence town (Gujarati expression *kāmacalō āvāsa nagara*). Today, none of the affected families have received house. So the result is that the ambitious scheme was a big failure.

6 months after the earthquake, on one hand there is a survey going on about damage of houses and on the other hand people whose damaged house belongs to G-4 and G-5 category are being distributed financial support (cheques) for temporary shelter construction. According to the official data of the four cities, in total 11.696 cheques have been distributed.

Community organisations are helping their own brothers (*bhanduo*)

Haṅgāmī Āvās is delayed and is progressing very slowly due to many conflicts. As a result, it is visible that the situation has been taken care of by the different community organisations. In Bhuj, Lohana, Jain, Brahmin, Kshatirya, Maheswari, Soni, and Muslim communities have tried to settle down their own communities so that hundreds of families are satisfied. Others are ready to move in.

Organisations have saved the situation

In Bhuj, community and religious organisations have contributed to the Haṅgāmī Āvās.

Swaminarayan organisation has given houses to approximately 200 families.

Whereas near Madhapar, many people got space in Halai Nagar which is blessed by the Swaminarayan priest Dhyahi.

Tifac and Dindayal Charitable Trust have provided roof to 200 families. Sitaram family, Swadhyay family, UNDP, Caritas and many other organisations have helped to provide home (using the term *dharatīnō chēḍō* – end of the earth – home).

Liberal policy of the government causes the delay

North East side of Bhuj, near GIDC, temporary shelter neighbourhood is being constructed for the earthquake affected people. The land has been levelled and plotted, infrastructure of roads and water is developed with the expense of lakhs of Rupiahs.

However, during the visit on Tuesday, we could not see any family to have moved to live there yet.

Whereas the Lohana community was preparing to handover 100 houses to the families.

Fabrication work was ongoing very well.

In the coming days, the visibility of people will increase. But the government's plan to provide 10,000 shelters to the families is failing due to the liberal policy, authorised offices are accepting the fact.

Changes in the terms and policies

The reason behind the failure of the temporary shelter neighbourhood plan:

In the presence of the Relief commissioner Jagdishan, it was decided already in February that the families whose house has been either collapsed or seriously damaged, would be paid 12,000 Rs in cash per family as a relief. Further, it would be allotted as per the applications in groups or per community. It was also ordered that affected people would not be allowed to stay inside the town.

After that, due to many applications and strikes, the government loosened its attitude (using Gujarati expression *kunu* – if something was first hot, it is now colder).

Time after time the rules were amended.

And then it was decided that whoever is building a house on a private land would be eligible for 12,000 Rs.

Meanwhile religious organisations started their service work silently.

And some big communities selected some other locations for their people, the numbers of beneficiaries for the government temporary shelter neighbourhood was reduced.

As a consequence, this neighbourhood got very sad result (using the expression *karuṇa rākasa*).

Also, the complaints have increased of the encroachment of good location lands in the colonies in other parts of town.

In addition, the situation of the list of beneficiaries has changed due to the timely arrival of the monsoon, and as a consequence, people have moved to existing rental housing with heavy rents.

17 thousand homeless in Bhuj

The numbers of earthquake affected houses in different parts of Kachchh are as below:

In Bhuj, 36,363 houses have been surveyed up to now. Of which 7,463 are of G4 category. They haven't got any compensation. Similarly, the 9,329 houses considered under G5 are yet to get compensation.

As per the survey up to now, appx. 16,792 families became homeless. Whereas only 4,000 families have received 12,000 Rs. support. So only 25% have received money.

The system has no account of Bhuj

We could not find the data from the government offices what is the actual number of families living in shelters privately.

While trying to contact the offices, we found out that they do not have any compiled reports divided by community nor organisations.

The impression of the administrative system after six months is that it has not been very effective.

Many problems have risen due to many amendments in the temporary shelter plan and delays in execution.

In old colonies, where older residents have lived for years in their own purchased houses, new people have temporarily relocated there, and problems with water, electricity cuts, and garbage have risen.

People are worrying that even after 2–3 years if administrative system remains this slow, then these new informal temporary settlements would be used as a proof to gain legal right for that land.

Riding a tiger

On one hand, organised communities have taken benefit of the government plans, and on the other hand, backward and marginal communities have opted for cash only and they have built their small huts using the money.

Middle-class and lower class have suffered

Due to the delay in the temporary shelter plan, they have to pay expensive rents for the housing and suffer as a victim of rent opportunists.

Not only that but living on the 3rd floor of affected apartments, they are really riding a tiger.

For them this is also a temporary shelter because there is no future of a permanent house.

Issue of the rental slip

Rental slip issue has become a barrier for hundreds of people in order to get 12,000Rs compensation for the temporary shelter.

While visiting a tent city of 200 families at the compound of a school, we got to know about the issue of rental slip.

The leader of the residency, Pradeep Devji Thacker, said that amongst the 200, only 3 people got the check of 12,000Rs.

Because amongst the people who are living here, most of them were renters in the Camp area, Vaniyavad, and others.

During their stay at their previous place, they were not getting any rental slips from the house owners, so they do not have any proof of their stay after the earthquake.

In the beginning, they were staying under the open sky, now when a Japanese organisation gave them a plastic tent, they are settling in.

At that residency, communities are Harijan, Lohana, and many others.

There is no drainage facility here, water is also supplied with unqualified and untrusted water tankers. And patients of malaria are also increasing nowadays

Only 18 toilets are available for 970 people. However, local families are feeling fortunate to have that at least.

Optimism of the government

Meanwhile, government is very hopeful that in the near future, the temporary shelter neighbourhood will be busy very soon.

While talking with Mamlatdar (officer in charge of taluka administration) Shree Valvi, was told that in the first phase 100 amongst 650 Lohana community members are going to live there.

UNDP is preparing 3,000 houses, and gutter/drainage work is ongoing. Plan is ready for a police station, hospital, telephone exchange (booth), and temple and mosque will be built.

Islamic Relief Committee is going to build 100 shelters. This campus is going to be busy, hopefully, he says ([Kutchmitra, 2001a](#)).

10 September 2001

Monitoring report no 1/ECHO [emphasis in the original]

Implementation status: the visit took place on August 29, exactly 4 days before the official end of the contract. I would say that **not even 50% of the work has been completed**, and as of that date, **not one family has moved into new locations**.

It was **disappointing to see that as of August 29, still not one single house was fully built....a major change is now taking place in the type of house built, as agencies are providing a different design**, and in some cases adding their own financial contribution to the project. As a result, one lot of houses will be fully in bamboo plywood, with only one single room, another will be larger with 2 rooms. In some cases villagers agreed to give the government contribution to the implementing agency, so the house will be different there too. **UNDP programme**

manager was not clear however how the families would be selected to be under one or the other agency, whether it was on size of the family, income level, participation, etc....The result however is an **unbalanced** programme, where once again the concept of “temporary” has lost its meaning, and where shape and material will differ from one group to the other....

On Aug 31, I visited a couple of existing camps within Bhuj town: in fact, the families there are already living in temporary shelter, some of the fairly well built with a cement base and metal structure. Caritas and Japanese organisation provided these shelters to them right after the earthquake. **By moving to the GIDC land, it seemed that the families would hardly gain any value, especially since they would be moved several kms from the town centre.** However the main issue there was that they had a deadline after which they had to move out (mid-September and early October). As all these people used to live in the old part of the town where the planning has not even started, their situation remains critical, and they will be likely not allowed to move back for another 2 to 3 years. So GIDC will provide them a small piece of land, on which most of them will bring their existing shelter structure to add to UNDP construction.

The only positive comment is that most probably the temporary housing is still much needed, since rehabilitation is going at a very erratic pace, and most people selected will get a significant relief from moving into these shelters. However, sanitation, transport, and schooling will remain the most acute problems once everybody has moved into the new areas ([European Community Humanitarian Aid Office, 2001b](#)).

The reality became acknowledged also by the District administration: it requests UNDP to construct common sanitation facilities which led to the construction of 16 community toilets (8 for women, 8 for men), 4 community bathrooms (2 for women, 2 for men).

Later in the year, UNDP’s first report to the ECHO provided details of the shelter completion so far. It included a list of beneficiaries divided by firstly, caste and religious communities and secondly specific quotas for widows, elderly persons, disabled people, and persons with G5 and G4 damaged pre-earthquake housing. Out of the caste constellation, this list consisted in total of 16 communities ranging from upper castes such as Kshatriya (Solanki, Parmar, Soni, Brahma Kshatriya Khatri, Thakkar, Jadeja), scheduled castes (Maheswari), and Other Backward Caste (Mochi Gyanti). Those who were categorised within special categories were not broken down by caste, religious nor gender identification. Interviews held at the urban setu⁸ confirmed that majority of residents in GIDC who were “left behind” were especially tenants who belonged to Scheduled Tribe (ST), Scheduled Caste (SC), Other Backward Castes (OBCs), and minority religions – and that what happened were clear examples of neglect (Interview in 2017).

On 15th of August on the independence day of India, *Kutchmitra* releases a high appraisal of ECHO-UNDP collaboration under the title “UNDP builds accommodation in Bhuj at a cost of one crore of rupees In collaboration with the European Commission” ([Figure 4.4](#)).



Figure 4.4 Photograph of the newspaper clip of 15 August 2001 on the archive desk of Kutchmitra.

The article, which includes interviews with the UNDP project manager announces that 1,950 houses will be provided for the beneficiaries free of cost and the accommodation and basic infrastructure facilities will be ready by the end of September – using the expression of the construction as fast as preparation for war (using Gujarati expression *yuddh na dhorane* – as fast as a war standard). The newspaper shares the optimism of the project team: “It was visible that the work was progressing very fast. Due to speedy progress of the project there were some small unfinished deficiencies also visible. Actions have been taken to solve the problems” (Kutchmitra, 2001c). However, the article also points to the difficulties of the construction of the neighbourhood: essential infrastructure and services are yet to be provided, the neighbourhood’s location requires people to travel three to five kilometres to reach out to basic services (Kutchmitra, 2001c).

26 January 2002

Urban Residents by and large continue to be confused, anxious, and unsure of their future. The anxiety has been as much with the pace of urban policy decision making, as much as with the fact that nobody in the urban area prioritized urban interim shelters in a big way – neither the Government, nor NGOs, whose presence in urban areas has been minimal. The lack of

interim shelters for urban residents, especially urban poor, lower and middle income families, and tenants has left many residents in tents, tin sheets, illegal new ad hoc constructions, huddled with relatives, or they have moved to the nearby taluka places and travel to and from to Bhuj for work everyday.

“Though housing in Kutch and Saurashtra after the devastating earthquake of 26 Jan 2001 is rightly being envisaged as a people driven process, the urban planning process in four towns of Kutch has been, unfortunately, more or less conventional, that is planner led and bureaucratic. The conventional urban planning process, ever since colonial times has been disempowering for people. Planner led developments in the modern independent India have failed us miserably, just like in all the other parts of the world. In this background the urban planning process in the four towns of Kutch needs to focus on secured land tenure for the poor, maximizing the pro-poor component in this developmental investment, strengthening of local urban self-governance and integrating community preparedness for disasters”. Vivek Rawal, Unnati.

(Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan,
Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority, &
United Nations Development Programme, 2002)

10 February 2002

Monitoring report 2 (emphasis in the original)

Bhuj

The original construction partners, SNT [Swaminarayan Trust], in Bhuj were requesting more than the allocated amount of Rs. 8,000 per shelter for construction on the basis that some beneficiary families (higher caste) were used to higher standards of living and needed more budget. This was a cause a [sic] serious delay then UNDP whom could not provide additional finance, were dropped by SNT. In the meantime, land was allocated to other organisations and by the time UNDP finally got other project implementation partners together a significant proportion of the land in Bhuj had already been allocated to other organisations. UNDP were certainly not quick to react during this time.

The project has recreated the previous social system as both the higher caste (generally more wealthy) and lower caste (generally more poor) were similarly allocated Rs. 8,000 (approximately 200 Euro) per shelter from UNDP for the construction of temporary shelters. Those with families with financial reserves in Bhuj area have contributed to their housing construction and created more comfortable housing and those without [sic] financial resources have the bare minimum only. In addition, dependent upon the NGO contracted by UNDP, contributions to housing costs have been provided by the NGO concerned. This amount varies amongst the NGOs as some have provided no additional finance and some have provided substantial finance. It is therefore for the beneficiaries a question of luck as which organisation is responsible for the construction of their shelter, as this will directly correspond to the amount contributed by the NGO. Unfortunately the degree of

NGO contribution has not been according to beneficiary need but rather on the financial resources of the NGO.

...

In the favour of Bhuj, all houses are complete although occupancy as of 8th of February 2002 remains at only 70%.

Community participation has been involved in the construction of the shelters, however not for the UNDP part or NGO contributed part.

Other comments: The project designed to provide emergency temporary shelter, is actually providing midterm permanent shelter. This primarily for two reasons. Firstly it cannot be termed emergency if it is utilised almost 9 months after the earthquake and some still not complete, and it cannot be termed as temporary, if it provides shelter to be utilised on a permanent basis. In some cases the wealthier families may consider the new shelter additional accommodation and lease out the premises after they have re-constructed their own permanent housing ([European Community Humanitarian Aid Office, 2002b](#)).

20 February 2002 – Kutchmitra

In the name of a temporary town, the centre of persecution (torture) for the earthquake victims was created at an uninhabited corner of Bhuj.

“If we had occupied land illegally, we would have been happy.”

There are no roads, road lights, cleaning and safety in the temporary town near GIDC. Residents are in the mood of escaping, the Congress is in the mood of fighting.

My house was made of 16 rooms and the annual turnover of my business was close to 40 lakh. But after the earthquake I now have 40 rupees. Do not have to go to the rickshaw till Bhuj from a roomy residential accommodation.

I’m 19 years old studying BA at the Lalal College, I’m in the last year. If I miss the bus, I will hear a lot from my parents, there is just one bus a day, and if I miss it, rickshaw will take 60Rs. for which we cannot afford.

I am in ninth standard in Swaminarayan Vidyalaya. Four days a week I reach late for the school prayer. As I am late I suffer from the physical and verbal punishment for coming late.

I have a tea stall at the Modern movie theatre [near old bus station]. Everyday around 1am I am returning to GIDC, when I am going back, I often fall due to holes in the roads. Many people are also threatening me: who are you and where are you going? Because it is dark I don’t know who are they, and they do not know I am. We are very much in need of the road lights.

These are the words of sadness and pain. In Bhuj, the government came with a big boom (using expression *mōṭā upā kārēlā*) and the failed temporary shelter program.

When we put our eyes on it, we see the failed temporary shelter program which was largely spoken of. Amongst thousands of people, few people’s situation is like when they escaped the fire at home and went to the forest, the forest also got the fire.

If this sentence is most suitable for anyone, these are the people.

It suits to the people of Bhuj affected by the earthquake to live in one room in Haṅgāmī Nāgar. Earthquake has taken away the houses and the front yard where generations and generations lived and developed of thousands of families who are now feeling they belong to nowhere.

To provide short-term home for such families, the government has built Haṅgāmī Āvās – after eight months of the earthquake yet, no facilities have been developed.

Because of that, hardly any people have moved to Haṅgāmī Āvās. Those who came they are spending lot of money outside for the rent, but they do not wish to return to Haṅgāmī Āvās.

Until there has not been any proper decision for the earthquake affected city Bhuj, people who have lost houses, government has allotted 127 acres of land in the direction of North-East of Bhuj.

In April 2001, they claimed that that before the monsoon rain, this Haṅgāmī Nāgar would be ready with complete facilities. But today, after 8 months and four days after the earthquake, the Kutchmitra team visited this Haṅgāmī Bhuj, and we saw very clearly that this 127 acre of land has capacity to spread pandemic in Bhuj.

700–750 families are living here, 4,000–5,000 people are living their lives here. After hundreds of promises, gutter line is not properly developed, the sewage pit is open. Because the land is rocky, this open sewage pits instead of soaking the dirt are spreading. No one is cleaning it. There is only one bus in a day. Theft has increased.

State government has allotted this residency land for 9,952 people who have lost their house due to earthquake.

Presently, approximately 1,000 people have arrived. Many of them, few at evening/morning are leaving their houses and going.

They say, as long as sufficient facilities are not available, why live here?

Firstly Lohana Mahajan built 650 houses and became occupied. The very first person, Hiralal P Thakkar, who came to stay here, with his family and his friends family, and his young daughter. He had a big house in Bhid area which he lost in the earthquake and his business also collapsed. Now you call it [new business, flour mill] either courage or raghuvaṇśī [Lohana people known as this, they are said to derive from Lord Rama who was raghuvaṇśī, from the family of Raghu] quality of fight against difficulties. That's how he came and started the flour mill.

He was earlier engaged with business of “cutlery” (this would include bangles, nail polish, bindis) and catering business. He is saying that I have enough money and I am capable of leaving Bhuj and settling down. But because of my love for my motherland, the future of my daughter, we chose to stay here. There is no road light in the entire area, so this place is unknown to me. Brother, my routine of life has changed now. Whole night I am awake with a stick to protect my home, daytime I do business and some point at night I take sleeping pill and take rest.

At the time of illness, facing vulnerability

The situation of Kakubhai Meghji Thakkar. He was having a beautiful small house in Ravani Falia in Bhuj.

My house collapsed. [Lohana] Mahajan community has given me a home here with kindness. But since I came here, within one month I have visited three doctors but still fever is not leaving the family. Approximately 600–800 I have paid for rikshaw rent to get the medicine, Kakubhai says expressing his anger on the earthquake.

Malaria has added its name too this earthquake family who own a private cabin owned near ST Bus stand.

It is a cruel joke of the family who is already fighting against difficulties that doctors have suggested that go and stay in a healthy and clean atmosphere. where the life is going on in the formula of “Whatever is coming must be digested” [Kachchhi idiom, *ache ea Pache*]. How the diagnosis can be successful?

We became so far away from our community

The family of Haribhai Thakkar who came to live here, is now preparing to escape here after their hardship. The observation told by Haribhai is a bit worrying. Shri Thakkar is saying that we became so alone in Haṅgāmī Āvās. The family members who are not living here do not come here. And we are not able to go there. Rentals of rickshaws are so expensive. Difficulties are as much as that family members who have lost their houses are thinking twice to come here.

We will return back the temporary shelters

Hiralal Bawa who is disciple and giving service at Swaminarayan temple and Mahesh Bawa both are planning to move to houses made by Swaminarayan temple. We made them in Haṅgāmī Nagar. They said that if facilities wouldn’t be developed, then collectively we will return back the keys of temporary shelters to the collector.

Bhuj’s temporary accommodation town became a center of torture

Young rickshaw driver Prataprao Joshi said that petrol was expensive. I have a rikshaw (tuk tuk), in the morning and evening I have to travel without passengers. Sometime at midnight if neighbours are coming to me, to get them to hospital, then for the sake of humanity, I have to go with them with the minimum charge and if I ask more, people become unhappy with me. If I am not asking enough, I am not able to get enough fuel.

The eyes of women get wet

Swaminarayan temple has built prefab [pre-fabricated] Satsaṅgōla [prayer hall] for the purpose of worshipping.

When we talked to women who have gathered for the worship of Kantha gor [ritual] during the month of Purushottam [13th month of Indian calendar], and asked about this place and days before the earthquake, we saw tears and heard gasping.

Dhangaauriben Revashankar Gor was living in a flat at the Yamuna apartment. She lived at the home of her daughters and now she has moved to Hangami

Nagar. She said that in the evening, she has to cover her mouth by hand when talking. Otherwise big mosquitoes go in her mouth. Windows cannot be kept open.

Rameeben Ramji Gor, who already paid money to purchase a new bungalow of six rooms in Khatri Chakla area, still remembers 4.5 lakh Rupiah which she paid. They found a big snake in their temporary shelter last evening. Rameeben is not able to explain the reality of this house of snakes.

A woman who lived years in Mumbai's chawls [low row of houses, first built in 19th century for mill labourers] and saved money to make house in Bhuj. She built a house in Ravani Faliya in Bhuj. She only could say that after years my fortune was the dirty chawls earlier in Mumbai and now this in Hangami Nagar.

What's lacking in this town

As per the promises while constructing the Hangami Nagar, there should be a ward office here.

Cleaning staff should be allotted here. Road lights should be installed. Police station should be here. At night, very strict vigilance should be arranged by the police.

There should be one shuttle bus for Bhuj to Hangami Bhuj as Bhuj-Madhapar has. Which should run every one hour. City bus route which is increased up to Dindayalnagar, should also come here. The sectors [of houses] have been built, but the main or the internal roads are not constructed.

In April the government informed to the media that in this town there would be telephone exchange, electricity board, town planners office, and other important government offices of the district. For that there was a specific plot allotted for this purpose. But up to now, neither any office has started, nor any of the departments has come and chose the place. So there is no any hope that any of the offices will start.

Many types of resentment

While visiting the 196 houses built by Swaminarayan temple, we talked with the people who were staying there and women amongst them blamed that the construction has been done very roughly.

They showed us big holes in many houses. Many people's doors were not able to close and the walls of some houses were almost collapsing.

Lohana Mahajan has built an open gutter line with their own funds but where it ends, we saw that big puddles were filled by dirty sewage water. A post office employee Kodhiya Tarunbhai Ranchod is living here. His two sons Mayur and Veran have fallen ill twice.

Congress is in the mood of agitation

Lohana community has started to inhabit in this temporary shelter neighbourhood and it has saved the reputation of the government on the question of what government has done.

Leader of the same community district Congress president Maheshbhai Thakkar has played a very important role to start residency in this place but government has not provided other facilities. For that he is in the mood of hard agitation.

Mahesh Thakkar brought senior members of Congress to Haṅgāmī Āvās to concretely show the difficult situation of people. While talking to Kutchmitra, he shared his pain with us. Government has built a school in Haṅgāmī Āvās for the children of the neighbourhood. They also promised that they will give all the equipment to start the school, but yet they haven't allotted teachers. They have built the hospital, yet the doctors have not been appointed.

Congress leader blames that the state government has not shown any interest to develop Haṅgāmī Āvās. He said, tomorrow on Monday, we will give an application to the Collector's office for the fulfilment of necessary requirements/facilities of Hangami Nagar/GIDC. If they will not pay any attention, then from 2 October we will do a sit-in demonstration with the people of Haṅgāmī Āvās.

Bad condition of students

In this town, because of the bad fortune that people are living here, employees or students, their situation is very bad.

Urmilaben Jayantilal Gor, who works in the local fund department [not sure what this is, possibly treasurer of govt salaries, pensions etc.], says that the day is short for me as I have to fetch water far away, do the cooking and then try to reach the office in time. It is very difficult and I miss something very important every day.

Bhavik Nilalal Gaur is studying at Swaminarayan Vidyalaya and reaches school late everyday. Rickshaw vehicles that take children to the school take 200–250 Rs per month.

This is the punishment that we didn't encroach on the land

Instead of establishing the residency on the empty lands, in gardens, on vacant grounds, or public places, we respected the government's plan after the earthquake in Bhuj. We are suffering from the result of that decision. These words are from most of the residents of Awas.

27 February 2002

Sabarmati Express returning Hindu pilgrims from the temple town of Ayodhya is stoned and set on fire roughly 1 kilometre after it has left the train station in Godhra, Gujarat. As a result, 59 passengers are killed. In the following morning Chief Minister Modi declares that it was "one-sided collective violent act of terrorism from one community" (Ghassem-Fachandi, 2012, p. 59). Violence spreads over the next three days (Ghassem-Fachandi, 2012; For a detailed analysis of the history of communal violence in Gujarat, see e.g. Jaffrelot, 2024).

The Nanavati Commission report released in 2019 concludes that out of over 4,000 reported incidents, 12 took place in Kachchh of which none were fatal. Eight

people got injuries. Incidents in Kachchh took place between 28 February and 7 April 2002. In addition some of the reported incidents in other districts included people who had been travelling from Kachchh – and who were reported being burnt in other district statistics. Incidents reported in Kachchh were registered in total of 5 police stations, including a damaged Gora Bavudin Pir shrine and Hanuman temple in Anjar which further escalated into attacks on shops of both Hindus and Muslims mobs leading to 8 people being injured, 22 shops, 1 vehicle and 1 house being burnt and 50 shops being damaged. Elsewhere, including the damaged idol of Momai Mata in Bhuj, remained an isolated incident ([Commission of Inquiry, 2014](#), pp. 2165–2173).

28 February 2002

One day after the Godhra incident, there a meeting is held in the office of Kutchmitra to discuss what to do, given the seriousness of the circumstances. Senior journalist Naveen Joshi suggests that Mufti-e-Kachchh whose wisdom was widely appreciated and respected across religious communities and even outside Kachchh, would be interviewed for the newspaper.

He appealed in the interview to take care that there should not be black spot in the harmony of Kachchh. Impression of Mufti was so strong for Kachchhi people – everyone kept their mind calm thinking that since it comes from the Mufti, nothing should take place.

We printed that interview on the front page of the newspaper. Because of that, nothing happened. Mufti passed away two years ago.

(Interview with Naveen Joshi in 2023)

The newspaper also made the decision not to use photos of violent attacks in their paper. Instead, the newspaper decided to focus on how the Muslim community in Kachchh condemned the attack on the train passengers in Godhra, joining the majority Hindu sentiment. That created an alternative for the reporting of hate and hatred and was relying on the leadership in Kachchhi religious communities, such as the Mufti-e-Kachchh.

26 March 2002 – Kutchmitra

Temporary neighbourhood of Bhuj, or epicentre of problems?

14 months after the earthquake hidden problems are now coming into light: children and elders' situation is so poor. Ignorance has added continuous scarcity of primary facilities. It has created nervousness.

Having suffered the cold in the winter, and burnt in the summer, floated during the monsoon, after arriving at the temporary shelter neighbourhood, feels like we are dying with the whole family [using Gujarati expression *sahaparivār*, cruel joke that the whole family suffers, usually used for wedding invitations for the whole family].

Any person who is speaking the above sentence with black, dried skin and sunken eyes, please show that person compassion because the person is firstly, victim of earthquake and then secondly, suffering from the ignorance of government.

Approximately three kilometres far from Bhuj, the area behind the GIDC, government has built a temporary neighbourhood for earthquake affected people of the town with big expense. The situation of small children too and residents who have spent their seven to eight decades is very poor.

People who became so poor here are suffocated but the strike of the earthquake is so deep that they are not strong enough to face any other difficulty. For 10 to 12 months, this area is being without infrastructure. Local residents are comparing it with the punishment of black water [expression meaning colonial time prison, also known as Cellular Jail for freedom fighters at Nicobar and Andaman – *kālā pāñī* refers to the overseas journey the prisoners had to go through].

Now they have some courage and awareness to get their rights and they are going to do the first attempt as a rally on the 27th March. If the suffering of these poor people continues, then the indications exist that something new may occur.

Kutchmitra has already in October 2001 released an article showing the difficulties of this temporary residency under the heading of “under the name of temporary neighbourhood, torture centre has been constructed for the earthquake affected people in one lonely corner of Bhuj”.

After six months of that article, the questions are the same. Yes, the number of suffering people has increased. Administration has just put six border home guards [agency that is mobilised for elections etc. Border Wings – special unit of Border Security Force BSF] otherwise they have not done anything else for the area. That is the bitter truth.

Crisis for the couples

Today noontime when we visited the area, we came across with some facts that were so shocking. No-one had imagined that there would be this worse side-effect of the earthquake. Amongst the families who are living in the residency, we saw that some children and elders were roaming in the hot weather in the open sunny fields and passing their time in the shops and cabins trying to find a shadow.

When we asked one senior person that why all elders and children are out this time of the day, he explains that his son and wife can stay together sometime so for that I have to give this space for them.

Small child looking like a flower holding the finger of the grandfather, and told very seriously that my father and mother are having lot of fights. If I was at home, I would disobey and cause another quarrel, that's why I am playing outside. Earthquake has given a very difficult time to those whose age is not yet to leave the lap of their mother, they are roaming outside in 36–37 degrees Celsius.

The engagement broke, daughter-in-law went back

Earlier we talked about the elders and senior people, but still there are many who are victims of the situation created by the earthquake and those wounds cannot be healed. Let's take 2 or 3 examples with changed names.

Rajeshbhai whose engagement is broken by his in-laws because of Haṅgāmī Āvās.

Temporary town or permanent torture town?

There is one Nanalal kaka whose wife has passed away during the earthquake. Daughter is at her in-law family's home. Parents of the son's wife have taken her forcefully back and said that our daughter will not stay in this kind of house.

Ramaben is taking care of her two sons and one nephew. She allowed her husband to go abroad and earn and now she is struggling in this life circle here.

A girl named Sobha has a complaint that her mother does not leave her alone. That's why her friends are teasing her that you are overwhelmingly mother's dear. But mother has compulsions because of the fear what will happen to her daughter in this insecure environment.

Suffering at the age of 70s

There is a 70 years old mother whose helplessness is beyond the above mentioned pain. She has to be young in her 70s: she is waking before sunrise in the morning everyday because her daughter has lost both of her legs in the earthquake. She has to take her daughter into the forest of acacia for toilet and get her back and she gives a bath openly to her daughter in her front yard. She is saying that her brother complains how can he take her to the toilet in daylight and how can he bathe her in the open in daylight. That's why she is going in the dark. Because we do not have toilets and bathrooms here.

Helplessness is bad

This is disaster for the families who are living in temporary shelter neighbourhood. Before the earthquake they were happily living in their *asiana* [urdu word, used for beloved home] with facilities and in peace like doves.

At that time, and today also, they have a feeling of sacrifice for their own families. But they are helpless in the needs of the real world.

Government has only cleaned the land and built these houses and then felt satisfied. After that they didn't pay any attention or take care of the place at all. That's why the residents are as unhappy with the government as with the elected leaders as well.

Alpesh Pujara and Bakul Soneta said that during the visit of the Chief Minister many people came but at the time of giving the water tank Mukesh Zaveri [BJP State parliament representative of Kachchh at the time] came. Except him, neither *nagarasēvak* [head of nagar palika] nor other responsible officers, nor opposition has visited.

Problems are still the same

Samjibhai Parmar said supportingly this allegation that 6 months ago Congress party promised to organise a strike, but then what happened, only Lord Ram knows.

Today also the problems are the same. Gutter is open, sewage pits are not absorbing the water. Garbage is everywhere. Town planners say that it does not belong to their area. District office is saying that it is not city area.

1,500 people are troubled

Approximately 1,500 families are living in this neighbourhood made of 18 sectors. City bus comes here but it stops at sector 3 and distance from 3 to 18 sectors is 1.5 kilometres.

The schools is approved here for the 1st to 7th standard class, in which 125 students are admitted, but there is just one room and only two teachers.

People of this sufferer neighbourhood has created a committee and they have arranged a silent rally from the temporary neighbourhood to Collectors office on 27 March to demand fulfilment of the rest of the demands from the area. Originally from Khoja Falia, now living here Maruf is very serious about this rally.

He became disabled because of the earthquake and he says he is not able to walk comfortably. He added that Allah has taken away my two sons and one brother from me and gave disability to me and my wife but still I will join the rally.

Now I am useless and helpless. If anything would happen to me, I don't care about that but I will be in front of the rally and help the efforts to solve the problems.

Supporting to this heartfelt statement of Maruf, Prakash Mehta, Shamjibhai, Abdul Majeed, Bakul Soneta and Alpesh Pujara said that we will hold you on our shoulders and will be in the front. This is not the question of yours and ours, this is the question of the whole neighbourhood. And this neighbourhood is not either of Hindus nor Muslims, but is of the earthquake affected sufferers. (Even if they are suffering, we can sense the communal brotherhood of Kachchh in this residency)

Disappointment with Gujarat Electric Board (GEB)

Some time ago GEB conducted an investigation on these homeless citizens and claimed that 100–150 connections are illegal and they disconnected them.

As a result, a truck full of the residents went to the GEB office. They are saying, many of the houses are not having electric meter, electricity comes with low voltage, shops are not getting electricity and road lights are working during the day and turned off at night.

UNDP has built 3,000 houses. They have just built the houses, they haven't taken care of anything else. This was the claim of 60 years old Abdullah bhai. He adds that because the government has not given 3,000Rp, the bathroom and toilet are not constructed. Because of the lack of the above facility, approximately 1,500–2,000 are standing here as a showcase.

If the bathroom and toilet were to be built in these houses, then people who now live in the open fields and gardens in the city and people who are spending lot of money to expensive rents, would be ready to move to the neighbourhood. Comparing the tents with the shelters made of stones and sheets are better to live in.

Shops are increasing

Increasing numbers of residents has attracted businesses but it is not easy for the shopkeepers to get the shop space here. There is a plan to build a shop on the government land and rent it. In some cases shops are already given on rent. For a moment there are 60 shops and some people who are owning a beautiful house in the city are prepared to start their business here.

Don't laugh on the helplessness

Every Sunday evening many people come with the cars with their families to this residency and they watch this temporary neighbourhood to see if there is any demonstration.

One young woman is expressing her disappointment with this, “we are living here with pain and grief and people who come here, they give their advice to their children in front of our eyes that see, my son how people are in pain here. If we do good deeds, then God will be always happy on us. And we are blessed by a God etc.”

The whole residency is tense and tired with this exhibition and noble advices. Anibhai says that we haven't done anything wrong, God is not upset with us. I don't understand why these people are coming here and sprinkling salt on our wounds.

Dhukhnō śērō – Extreme Pain

The residents enduring extreme pain have built dargah, temples, religious structures as per their beliefs and they are worshipping the God and saying, free us from here as soon as possible.

After 14 months of the earthquake, we observed this neighbourhood: one fear also arises that if necessary facilities were not given here, then this could become the epicenter of social problems.

The complaint of the citizens who want a permanent house as soon as possible is that please look at us also. The earthquake affected people in Ahmedabad, they got everything. After the riots you are healing relief camps, then do not ignore us. We don't want anything more, but give us what is our right ([Kutchmitra, 2002](#)).

The above article published in *Kutchmitra* on 26 March 2002 includes an interview with Maruf⁹ who had lost two sons and a brother in the earthquake and he, together with his wife, had become disabled. In an interview with him in 2018, he recalled that at the time of the 2002 violence, he and his family, that survived the earthquake, were living in a tent – as so many others in the town. When the news of the violence reached them and their community, they were considering their options: how to remain safe, “otherwise we could become victims” he pointed out (notebook iv, 160 – interview 10092018). That time, the leader of their community shared the news that Islamic Relief was constructing temporary shelters outside

of Bhuj in Haṅgāmī Āvās and they saw it as an opportunity. Even if there was no direct physical violence targeted towards Muslims locally – but there was fear, he points out. Many people migrated to Bhuj during the violence in search of work, as daily wage labouring was disrupted in other towns that suffered mostly from the violence. Uprooted people arrived in Haṅgāmī Āvās with their relief tent materials and settled there.

We revisited Maruf in 2023 to discuss the above article with him, and he recalled that at the time, the residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās marched from Haṅgāmī Āvās to the collector’s office, “some us were even fasting”.¹⁰ Their main motivation to do it was the disappointment of the temporary shelter conditions and the slowness of progress by both the government, and civil society organisations. Their demand was to get conditions in which people can live comfortably, and the work of the organisations would work fast (interview 01032023). He also recalls that as he was seriously disabled at that time, he chose to be in the front of the rally to show the government officers that disabled people had joined: “we wanted to show that”, he emphasised it. Yet, when asked about the change it made over the next 20 years to come, he was pessimistic: “it is very minimal, the response [from the government] and what it was up until that day. It was the civil society organisations that built what was built”.

Given the context of the published article in February 2002 – one month into the Godhra incident and violence that followed it – it is noteworthy how the newspaper made an effort to report on peaceful coexistence between communities despite the diversity and segregation of castes and different religious groups in the Hagami Awas’ sector division. Other members of the neighbourhood committee formed to advocate for the decent living conditions were quoted in the article as their response to Marif’s determination to join the rally:

we will hold you on our shoulders and will be in the front. This is not the question of yours and ours, this is the question of the whole neighbourhood. And this neighbourhood is not either of Hindus nor Muslims, but is of the earthquake affected sufferers. (Even if they are suffering, we can sense the communal brotherhood of Kachchh in this residency).

(Kutchmitra, 2002)

When in 2023 asked if there was a threat of violence and unrest in Haṅgāmī Āvās in 2002, Maruf responded:

We are so blessed by God, no. People do not believe in politicians who try to worsen the situation. Public is so aware and does not believe them. Public needs each other in business and everything. That’s why the public is not interested in communal politics. In labour and every sector there is a need for each other. Most of the labour work is done by Muslims – also the drivers. You see Ahirs [Hindu community] own 50 trucks, Muslims are driving. That’s why we are living as brothers. Politicians are trying to worsen the situation but they will not get a chance. They’ve tried for years, but they are not

successful. We go together to Haji pir and Ashapura. Also people go together to Mekran dada mela. Public understands and if there are 4 bad people in the society, they cannot ruin everything. Public do not believe in them.

June 2002

ECHO releases an evaluation of its activities in El Salvador and Gujarat. Main observations related to shelter construction in Gujarat are:

Delays in delivery and (few) narrowness.

Delivery of distribution contracts to INGOs well aware of field constraints.

Regarding the shelter project [in El Salvador], an unplanned impact was the foreseeable permanency of new slums, which were intended to be temporary, and the prospect of hazard or social conflicts or increased vulnerability in resettlements not properly chosen or not supported by any further development project (Mottet, 2002, pp. 4, 5).

18 April 2003 – Kutchmitra

When there will be end of suffering for the earthquake affected families from this hot weather?

People who were crying for one room, now they don't want to leave their bathroom!

Rain of fire from the sky has made situation worse for hundreds of families, the situation is sad.

Since the beginning of *Chaitra* (Hindu calendar in Gujarati, meaning April) rain of fire from the sky is shocking to all of us people of Kachchh but the situation is worse for those living in temporary shelters made of iron roofs in GIDC temporary residency.

Underground energy of the earthquake created an unbearable situation which we cannot explain. This article aims at explaining the present summer for the people of Haṅgāmī Āvās and the picture of very hot weather is emerging, shocking to the heart.

In the beginning of the summer the temperature went up to 38–41 degrees. The cruel mercury made people to sit in the bathroom of their house. Because of very hot (burning the body) that's why hundreds of residents, elders and sensitive children they are not able to come out from the house.

Youngsters and teenagers whose feet are otherwise unstoppable, they have established their base at hole. Tragedy is that there is no cold corner in the house.

If you want coolness in this temporary house which is burning like an oven, you can get it only in the bathroom.

Kutchmitra visited this temporary residence and watched this condition first hand. It is showing a pathetic picture of the people affected by the earthquake and this hot summer weather.

We heard the story of bathroom protection from 5 to 7 people. When we visited the actual place, we saw that not only 1 or 2 but 6 to 8 family members were fit in the bathroom. We saw the utensils filled with water and wet cloths around them.

In one house a mother was trying to put her 1.5 years old daughter to sleep in the bathroom.

But daughter was afflicted by the hot weather and the mercury of the mother had reached the 7th sky [super angry].

Within a few moments she became depressed and started to cry and said even if one house could have survived the earthquake, then we would not have to suffer like this.

No need to say it, but because of the suffering of the daughter, mother was very troubled.

There are crude houses in the temporary neighbourhood and the place of the bathroom stays humid all the time so it stays a bit cooler.

Many families have their lunch in the bathroom and some big families have made a timetable for that.

1 or 2 small children, 2 or 3 ladies, and 3 to 5 elders and children enjoy owning the bathroom in groups.

One old man explained a heart touching story of the pain of the earthquake affected people who are suffering from the hot weather. Now whatever size of my house is now, that much big the bathroom was before the earthquake. We never gave such a big importance to the bathroom since the last four generations, now we miss it so much. If one house had survived, we could pass our summer easily.

After the earthquake, it is the continuously third hot summer for these poor people. Most amongst them were hopeful that the next summer would not be like this.

The suffering wouldn't be there for the family members, children, and elders during the next summer. We will do anything to get rid of the temporary home.

We saw one small child sitting in the bathroom without clothes and holding bread and jaggery in the dish. When we asked the innocent boy why you are sitting in the bathroom, he said ask my mother. Earlier she was locking me in the bathroom if I was naughty, but now everyone is fighting for the bathroom ([Kutchmitra, 2003](#)).

Kutchmitra continued reporting on the situation in Haṅgāmī Āvās regularly over the next years. Last articles found from the newspaper archive were from 2016. The ECHO desk officer report from 25 March 2002 states that the project did not reach any of the objectives and requirements during the project and concludes that the implementing partner is not suitable for emergency operations ([European Community Humanitarian Aid Office, 2002a](#)).

4.3 Conclusions: The Urban Shadows of the Paradigm Shift to Disaster Recovery

This chapter aimed at covering the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake from the perspective of a disaster recovery project sphere – “the making of” Haṅgāmī Āvās. The chapter focused on three parallel archival accounts of the building of the temporary shelter neighbourhood Haṅgāmī Āvās using primary sources and was constructed as a chronological and parallel account between 2001 and 2003 consisting of correspondence and formal project documentation between the project funder European

Commission (ECHO) and its implementing partner United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and as it was covered by the local newspaper *Kutchmitra*.

The archival sources and the previous research of the neighbourhood (see [Section 9.2](#)) allow us to push forward the following arguments:

Firstly, the disaster paradigm shift from relief to longer term reconstruction through recovery programmes created a lot of expectations to organisations such as UNDP that was building its own internal organisational infrastructure to focus on it. Archival correspondence and policy documentation of the paradigm shift give a picture of increasing pressures to lighten the government-led initiatives and responsibilities, emphasise private and NGO sector partnerships, but also connecting the relief with longer term development.

The donor (ECHO) with mandate for a short-term relief read the paradigm shift of building semi-permanent shelters into (1) a lack of competence by the implementing partner to involve in short-term relief – construction of temporary shelters and (2) a risk that the residents would not receive further assistance in the reconstruction period. Thus, the allocated funding, meant for the short-term relief measures as per the mandate of ECHO, was used to build “too permanent” structures, which, with the many delays in the process, meant they were geared towards the longer term needs for housing, rather than alleviating immediate housing needs before the June monsoon rains – although the focus on the neglected residents of Old Bhuj was seen a much-needed, inclusive focus.

Secondly, the initial project setup had several structural problems: it relied in its entirety to the optimistic assumption that the Government of Gujarat, or the municipality, would provide the essentially needed water and sanitation, and other infrastructural requirements such as roads, electricity and street lights – with major caste and gender-based negative impacts. Furthermore, due to political, caste-based, and religious dynamics of the city, the project and the neighbourhood, all in all, reiterated caste-based and religious community-based hierarchies that have meant, for the past over 20 years, remaining grievances from the residents on basic housing-related needs – although it remains the only relocation site that accommodates diverse group of caste and religious communities.

Thirdly, besides offering the land to be used for temporary shelters, it is apparent that despite the glorification of the government’s investments to the “New Bhuj”, there was no priority, no dedicated responsibility allocated, nor funding arrangements made for the site and its basic infrastructures. When the residential basis of the neighbourhood started shifting from the “real earthquake affected populations” towards lower class and caste migrant populations, the interest by the politicians and local government to solve the urban planning of the site collapsed.

Fourthly, besides gaining a reputation as a bad neighbourhood, the archives also indicate instances of everyday peace across communal religious divisions. The neglect also gave a rise for a multi-communal (caste and religious wise) movement to demand change from the government.

We further argue, aligning with the previous scholarship that the neighbourhood’s segregated socio-spatial ordering between caste and religious communities and formation of permanent temporariness, informality, and dispossessed

populations mirrors the wider ideological underpinnings of the recovery programme and wider aims of the Hindu nationalist agenda.

The “compulsory requirement to succeed” has meant that there are very few who are keen to publicly explore the shadows of that success. Yet, the residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās were from the start identified as poor and vulnerable, and following the chronology of the recovery aid and its reactions by both local media, *Kutchmitra*, and critical voices from the civil society, all conclude that the creation of the temporary shelter lacked an approach that would have, first of all, treated the “poor and vulnerable” with dignity and respect, i.e. providing humane living conditions. As the residents reflected at the time, opting for illegal encroachment of lands would have resulted in better living conditions. Secondly, organisations catering for their own higher caste members only, managed to create a temporary shelter with needed basic infrastructure, whereas the project targeting the underprivileged groups – consisting of Dalits, lower caste and Muslims – ended recreating and reinforcing gentrified and segregated city which continues to suffer from inadequate housing and basic infrastructure, and cater for the migrating labourers entering the city in a hope of better lives.

All in all, the division between the three initially published relocation sites, and the temporary shelter site of Haṅgāmī Āvās have participated in a financialisation of housing: property and land price development in Bhuj that reiterates caste and religious divisions and difference. Had the initial temporary shelter construction been able to solve immediate temporary shelter needs, the issue of tenants losing their homes during the town planning process would have remained. The implementing partner’s idea of offering a longer term housing, was in the hindsight thoughtful of the longer needs that emerged (as a result of tenant needs, needs of migrants) but as the neighbourhood was pushed forward with no longer term plan for basic water and sanitation infrastructure, ended up creating a neighbourhood with sustained permanent temporariness, informality, and dispossessed populations. This read against Mukherji’s analysis connects to the 2002 election strategy of BJP to focus on the middle class voter bank: urban reconstruction for the property owning classes, and dream of industrialisation of the district: “the investments to the earthquake recovery could speed up the state governments public infrastructure plans of 15–20 within just five years” (Mukherji, 2008, p. 84).

Notes

- 1 Subtitle is a quote from the *Kutchmitra* article of 20 March 2002.
- 2 The title is an intertextual reference to a Bollywood soundtrack of the 1982 released movie *Saath* (together).
- 3 In Gujarati ડુંગમી refers to temporary, seasonal, for the time only. Source: https://www.gujaratilexicon.com/dictionary/gujarati-to-english-translation/ડુંગમી*/
In Hindi हंगामी refers to commotion, storm, uproar. Source: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/hi/dictionary/hindi-english/हंगामा>
- 4 In fact, GIDC was only recognised as a formal relocation site after long advocacy and pressure from the local NGOs, citizens’ groups, and local media pressure in late 2003.
- 5 The official name of the project funded by the ECHO and implemented by UNDP with its partners.

- 6 The different primary sources (ECHO and *Kutchmitra* archives) are differentiated with different fonts, and the source mentioned after each chronological entry date.
- 7 During this research, attempts were made to contact the partners. One denied having any projects in Haṅgāmī Āvās, whilst others had changed their operational structures since the Gujarat recovery programmes had finished and could not be reached. One partner agreed to interviews and provided important critical reflections which are used in this chronology through anonymised interview quotes.
- 8 *Urban setu* is an initiative by Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan established in 2010 to create a bridge between urban residents and the municipal government structures. The name in Kachchh means literally “a bridge”, and it was used initially in 2001 to establish contact points in rural Kachchh to connect the earthquake-affected people with the aid providers.
- 9 Name has been pseudonymised for the anonymity of the person.
- 10 Here he uses such words that indicate that he speaks of “us”, inclusive of both Hindus and Muslims.

References

- Balachandran, B. R. (2010). The reconstruction of Bhuj case study: Integration of disaster mitigation into planning and financing urban infrastructure after an earthquake. In A. Revi & S. Patel (Eds.), *Recovering from earthquakes: Response, reconstruction and impact mitigation in India* (pp. 159–203). New Delhi: Routledge.
- Commission of Inquiry. (2014). *Report (part ii) communal riots in Gujarat after the Godhra incident*.
- European Community Humanitarian Aid Office. (2001a, May 18). *Project appraisal worksheet – Desk officer*.
- European Community Humanitarian Aid Office. (2001b, September 10). *Project appraisal worksheet – Monitoring report no. 1*.
- European Community Humanitarian Aid Office. (2001c). *UNDP proposal (email sent on 7 May 2001)*.
- European Community Humanitarian Aid Office. (2002a, March 25). *Project appraisal worksheet – Desk officer report*.
- European Community Humanitarian Aid Office. (2002b, February 10). *Project appraisal worksheet – Monitoring report*.
- Ghassem-Fachandi, P. (2012). *Pogrom in Gujarat: Hindu nationalism and anti-Muslim violence in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. (2024). *Gujarat under Modi: Laboratory of today's India*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Kutchmitra. (2001a, July 26). *75% of the homeless (affected) in four cities have not yet received money/assistance for temporary shelter!*
- Kutchmitra. (2001b, April 17). *In the north-eastern part of Bhuj, a temporary city is getting shape*.
- Kutchmitra. (2001c, August 15). *UNDP builds accommodation in Bhuj at a cost of one crore of rupees in collaboration with the European Commission*.
- Kutchmitra. (2002, March 26). *Temporary neighbourhood of Bhuj, or epicentre of problems?*
- Kutchmitra. (2003, April 18). *When there will be end of suffering for the earthquake affected families from this hot weather?*
- Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan, Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority, & United Nations Development Programme. (2002, January). *Coming together: A document on the relief and rehabilitation work carried out by various organisations working in Kutch*. CD-ROM.
- Mottet, R. (2002). *El Salvador & Gujarat: Evaluation of ECHO relief operations in favour of the victims of the earthquakes in January-February 2001*. Retrieved from
- Mukherji, A. (2008). *Negotiating housing recovery: Why some communities recovered while others struggled to rebuild in post-earthquake urban Kutch, India* (PhD thesis, architecture). University of California, Berkeley.

5 A “Wasteland” to Be Developed

Temporary Shelter Neighbourhood Reconnected to Its History

5.1 Introduction: Constructing Āvās as “Wasteland”, a Resource Frontier and Possibility for Capital Accumulation

In this chapter, we centre our analysis around the question of land and its ownership: caste and control of land use which we relate to wider questions of developmental infrastructures and pressures they have created on the ecology of the area. The chapter draws from historical sources, life historical interviews, and transect walks conducted at the location. The aim of the chapter is to challenge the notion that temporary shelter neighbourhood was built on an empty wasteland – as it was claimed in the project documents and even media portrayal (see [Chapter 4](#)) – our interest emerged when we came across with narratives of abundance of clear and clean ponds in the past. We examine the importance of the concept “wasteland” in connecting the administrative capital of Bhuj of the princely state of Kachchh, and then later district capital of Kachchh into surrounding villages ecologically, economically, religiously, and socially. By focusing on the earlier land uses, the chapter draws attention to the caste politics of land use, local water conflicts, and attempts to solve them between pastoralists and farmers. The chapter advances an argument that the destiny of the Haṅgāmī Āvās as underdeveloped fourth formal relocation site follows the overall trend in Kachchh towards new resource frontiers and capital accumulation at the expense of pastoralism. Thus, the post-2001 development in Haṅgāmī Āvās is a history of decline of local common property resource management such as grazing, maintenance of common water sources and syncretic shrines, and a shift towards privatisation, industrialisation, and speculation on land price, as part of the new development plan of Bhuj for 2025.

When the local newspaper *Kutchmitra* published its first article of the construction plans of the temporary shelter neighbourhood in April 2001, the land was described as “GIDC (Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation) has turned from a peaceful forest (વાગડો, *vagaḍō*) into an area that is busy with construction” (*Kutchmitra*, 2001). *Vagaḍō* (વાગડો) according to the Gujarat lexicon¹ translates both into a forest, but also waste or desolated land, or simply, wild. According to Shyam, the word *vagaḍō*, or more commonly, *van vagaḍō* (વન વાગડો) in Kachchh bears the meaning of wilderness, or wild forest, which has specific ecological features of a semi-arid ecology and landscape of Kachchh compared, for instance, with that

of the more thick savanna type forest of Gir in Southern Gujarat, or more tensely growing forests in North-East of India – of which the word jungle (જંગલ) is used. Another word used by the shepherds who used to graze their goats and cows in the area, as the later sections of the chapter will discuss in more detail, call it *pādētār* (પાદેતર) – wilderness, or land which is neither occupied nor owned by anyone. In fact, Kachchhi students learn(ed) during the fourth standard a poem “વા વા વડોળધિ! (Oh, Whirlwind Go On!)” by Gujarati poet Jagdeep Virani, that captures gendered ecology of such wilderness:

Oh whirlwind, go on!
Wind was blowing in a forest,
Oh whirlwind, go on!
We were going across with a forest
Oh whirlwind, go on!
Carts were running, Bells were singing
The horns of oxen were swaying
We all were singing together
Oh whirlwind, go on!
The path was bumpy, The dust was flying
Branches of the trees were hanging
We were watching by squint eyes
Oh whirlwind, go on!
The sun was burning, The sky was so hot,
It was wet with the warmth
Oh, we were taking bath in the warm wind²
Oh whirlwind, go on!
We were going by oxen cart
Oh whirlwind, go on!
Wind was blowing in a forest,
Oh whirlwind, go on!

(Virani, 1941, English translation by
Shyam Gadhavi)

Yet, such gendered enjoyment of the wilderness was lost when British James Burnes had described the Kachchhi landscape in general, but also the area around the Bhujjiyo hill, around which the Smṛitivan earthquake memorial and museum, and Haṅgāmī Āvās are located at. In his report “General Remarks on the Medical Topography of Bhooj” of 1828, he stated:

The general appearance of Kutch is barren and uninteresting. Most of the villages are ruinous and dilapidated, bearing marks alike of the shocks of nature and the destructive powers of man. A few fields in their neighbourhood are cultivated, while the remainder of the country presents nothing to the view but a rocky and sandy waste, which in many places is scarcely relieved by a show of vegetation. Water is scarce, and often brackish; and

although the population does not exceed three hundred and fifty thousand souls, the produce of the land under cultivation is insufficient for their support; so that Kutch, even in the best seasons, is dependent upon Sind for supplies of grain.

(Burnes, 1855 [1828], p. 229)

In the middle of the plain, detached from all other high ground, and rising to a height of five hundred feet, is the hill of Bhoojeah, on which the hill-fort is situated, and under the south-west angle of which is the Cantonment of the Kutch Bridge.

(Burnes, 1855 [1828], p. 231)

...the neighbourhood of the City and Cantonment being, for nine months in the year, an arid parched plain, with scarcely a blade of vegetation...The nature of the soil in the immediate neighbourhood of Bhooj is sandy and rocky. The hill of Bjoojeah, which bounds and overlooks the Camp in the north-easterly direction, is a barren rock.

(Burnes, 1855 [1828])

Labelling landscape as barren and uninteresting, and non-cultivated land as “sandy waste”, directs our attention to how notions of waste and wilderness have been constructed of the Kachchh topography since the colonial times, and of the area surrounding Haṅgāmī Āvās, before its usage was about to go through a significant change. Wasteland in the Indian context, according to David Singh (2022, p. 407, footnote 405) is a legal category and part of the attempts to classify land use. Wasteland concept is used when the land is not exploited or cultivated, and it is owned by the state governments. Yet, the label “wasterland”, as Lyla Mehta (2005) has argued, has dismissed the ecological importance of arid and semi-arid lands of grasses, forbs, and scrub vegetation as important “protein banks” of the district. Pastoralism, compared to that of agriculture, Mehta further suggests, is a vernacular form of “drought insurance” as the erratic rainfall suits the grass production, and risks and resources are managed in vast areas, allowing constant adaptation to the environment (Mehta, 2005, pp. 3041–3050/5942). Haṅgāmī Āvās, as the following sections will illustrate, formed such an insurance for number of pastoralist communities until the earthquake recovery changed the ecology of the area dramatically.

The 1971 report by the Kachchh district, drawing from the statistics of the Directorate of Agriculture for the land utilisation purposes, stated that of the 44 lakh hectares of land in Kachchh, over 72% is barren and uncultivable, and further 4% labelled as cultivable waste (Government of Gujarat, 1971, p. 178). Currently, Kachchh has the highest number of wastelands in Gujarat (Singh, 2022, p. 407). Scholars argue that the category of “wasteland” appeared when lands were classified according to their use, and the potential revenues that the colonial

administrators could draw from them. Adding lands under the state taxation, such as farming land and forest lands, and simultaneously categorising others as wasteland, is part of the capitalist expansion over space and nature. It constructs “waste” or “wilderness” as “an untapped potential awaiting transformation into value by dint of human labour and colonial stewardship” (Gidwani & Reddy, 2011, p. 1630).

British colonial property regime of “waste-value-property triad” in India drew from John Locke’s *Two Treatise of Government*, who promoted privatisation of wastelands as societal welfare with a moral dimension: property, granted as a natural right by God, was contrasted with that of the waste land, seen as immoral. This further led to caste-connected categorisation of populations into landowners who were considered as “civilized” whereas the lower or casteless populations depending on the usage of wastelands were considered as “savage” (Baka, 2013, p. 411; Singh, 2022).

This hierarchy of lands as God-given and immoral is clearly present in the above descriptions of Kachchh by James Burnes from 1828. However, as previous scholarship illustrates, the construction of wastelands has permeated into the postcolonial land governance as a resource frontier, and possibility for capital accumulation (Mehta & Srivastava, 2019; Singh, 2022, pp. 405–407). In Kachchh, the earlier research indicates that governments have changed the classifications of wastelands into agricultural and industrial lands at least in three different occasions: in the 1960s to relocate partition refugees (Singh, 2022, p. 407), in the early 2000s after the earthquake when land was offered for the industrialisation of Kachchh (Mehta & Srivastava, 2019, p. 209), and in the past decade, when land is currently dedicated for the green transition and renewable energy industry (Mehta & Srivastava, 2019; Singh, 2022).

In this chapter, we suggest further that the reconstruction of the cities affected by the 2001 earthquake with the new town planning schemes focusing on relocation, rather than on-site reconstruction, became possible, when wastelands were allocated for residential purposes. This offered the possibility for financialisation of housing and capital accumulation in former pastoralist commons. Compared with the other three relocation sites in Bhuj, however, this process is much slower in Haṅgāmī Āvās. The uncertainty of the “temporariness” described in detail in Chapter 4, thus, points to the direction of the futures of Haṅgāmī Āvās, and the revised development plan 2025 of Bhuj.

The rest of the chapter unfolds in the following way: firstly, we establish the history of the Haṅgāmī Āvās as a shadow to the defence of Bhuj and Bhujjiyo hill during the Kachchh Princely State, and British colonialism, for both connecting the ruler and the ruled with road infrastructure crossing the land of Haṅgāmī Āvās, and thus, becoming a battle ground – a site of contestation of the sovereign rule. Secondly, we describe the area as an abundance of ecological commons of desert and arid ecosystem: an important water reservoir and grazing land for pastoralists – which has become contested by other users and owners of the land with focus on the agricultural uses of the land; and the rest of the chapter focuses on the specific pressures and contestations that have occurred in the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake, and the consequent decades that have followed.

5.2 Battlefield in the Shadow of Bhujiyo Fort

In this section, we focus on the military history of the landscape and focus on the two battles that were fought in the vicinity of the Bhujiyo hill in the west (see [Figure 5.1](#)) where the remains of a fort built in the 18th century stand, and where the 2022 opened Smṛtivan earthquake memorial and museum is located at (see [Chapter 3](#)). We illustrate how the area has an intimate connection to the archives that have focused on the history of Bhuj as a capital of Jadeja ruled princely state since the 16th century, with the focus on military conquests and battles over several centuries (for a critique, see e.g. [Kothari, 2013](#), p. xiv of a Banni pastoralist differentiation between *watan* (nation) and *sirkar* (government)). Thus, locating the earthquake remembrance, and success of the earthquake recovery, at the Bhujiyo hill (see [Chapter 3](#)), to be anchored with wider Hindu nationalist aims of defending Kachchh from Muslims.

The city of Bhuj, located west of Haṅgāmī Āvās, and divided by a Bhujiyo hill, was established in 1548 by Jadeja³ ruler Rao Hamirji and it became the capital of Kachchh in 1549 during the reign of his son Rao Khengarji I (1548–1585). This took place at the same time when the area of Kachchh (Eastern, Western, and

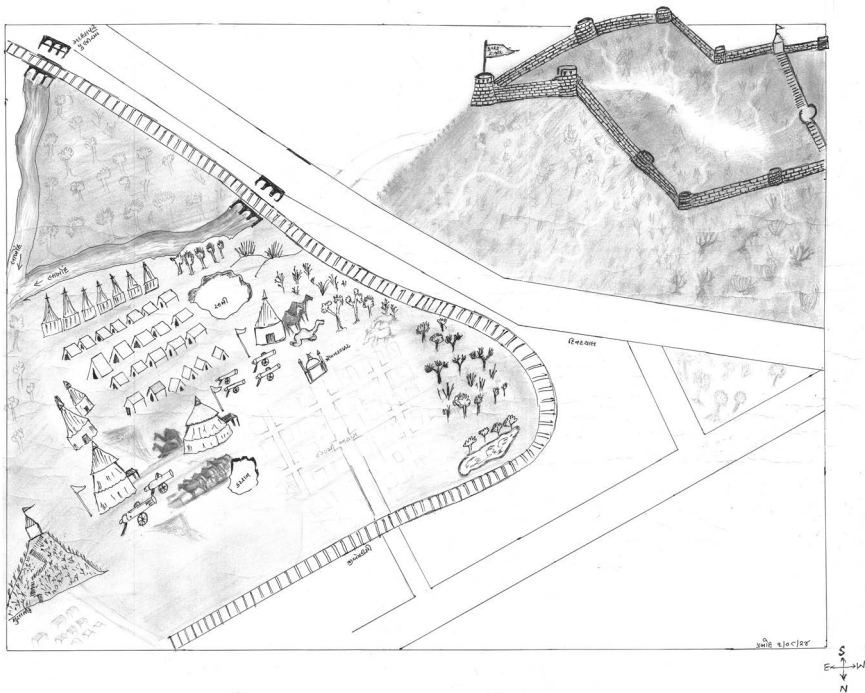


Figure 5.1 Pencil drawing imagining the versatile history of Haṅgāmī Āvās: Sural Bhit, Karsanvari, Samivari, Gebanshah Pir shrine, Bhujiyo hill.

Source: Pramod Jethi.

Central Kachchh), which had for several centuries been ruled by three Jadeja ruler brothers, was merged into one. According to a legend, the name of the Bhujiyo hill, and the town of Bhuj, or Bhooj as the British spelled it, commemorates Bheria Kumar who fought in the area against the last Naga chief Bhujanga who ruled the area at the time and lived on the hill. Naga, in Sanskrit, means snake, often depicted by a cobra.

In late 16th century, Kachchh became part of the Mughal Empire, reigned from Ahmedabad. Bhujang temple, dedicated to the snake god (Bhujang Nag) was built at the same time when the hill was fortified (known as Bhujiyo/Bhujia fort), during the reign of Rao Deshhalji I (1718–1749). The snake is said to have freed Kachchh from the oppression of demons (daityas, rakshasas). Deshhalji I's reign is considered important in advancing agriculture and system of central governance, and extension of water channels and reservoirs in Bhuj, such as Desalsar Lake (Tyabi, 2006, p. 32).⁴ The hill and the fort built around it in its defence have become, since the 18th century, an intimate part of the narratives of self-defence of the Kachchhi lands, Kachchhi identity of the Kachchhi rulers, and Kachchhi's themselves.

Here we recount two battles from the 18th century that connect the Bhujiyo hill to that of the open landscape in the east of it, now known as Haṅgāmī Āvās: the 1730 defence against the Viceroy of Gujarat/Sultanate of Ahmedabad Sarbuland Khan, and the 1762 defence against the king of Sind(h) Ghulam Shah Kalhora. The aforementioned wars were noted in the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency: Cutch, Palanpur, and Mahi Kantha*, Vol. V of 1880 as an end of a more than hundred years of peace during the reign of Deshhalji I for Kachchh as a province of the Ahmedabad Sultanate, or Moghal Empire, as it was called at the time (Campbell, 1880, p. 138).

In 1730, just two years after the fortification of Bhujiyo Hill by Rao Desal I, the Viceroy of Gujarat Sarbuland Khan, in seeking the resources of Kachchh in defence of attacks of Marathis (Williams, 2000 [1958], pp. 128–129), advanced his troops, with force of 50,000 soldiers, towards Bhuj, and reached Padhar, locating just within 9–10 miles from Bhuj. Having heard of the attack from the East, the king of Kachchh made a promise to do several *pujas* at the temple of Āśāpurā in Bhuj, constructed a few years after the establishment and transfer of the capital to Bhuj in 1548. The royal family had already by mid-18th century established a cosmological connection via Āśāpurā deity, and thus rituals and worship at the Āśāpurā temples both in Bhuj, and further to the west in Mata-no-Madh had become part of their reign.

As described in the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency: Cutch, Palanpur, and Mahi Kantha*, Vol. V in 1880:

The army of Kachchh, that was residing on the borders of the lake outside the city, was divided into two armies. One was sent to strengthen the garrison of the Bhujia fort. The day after the defence was arranged, the Musalmán army appeared before the city.

(Campbell, 1880, p. 139)

Williams in *Black Hill* published in 1958 described the battle:

The Moghal forces fiercely attacked the [Bhujjiyo] fort...

...
The Moghal forces were driven out, after desperate fighting, with the loss of their commander. As soon as the news of this success reached the Maharao, who was commanding the army which defended the city itself, he headed a charge of some thousands of his best horsemen into the heart of Sarbuland Khan's camp. The whole Moghal army fell into confusion and abandoning any effort to assault either Bhujia fort of Bhuj city, retired to Lakhona. They were immediately followed up, and mercilessly harassed by the Jadeja and Miyana cavalry,⁵ who cut up supplies, continuously raided the camp and reduced the Moghal forces to great straits.

(Williams, 2000 [1958], p. 131)

The sources differ on the reasons for the withdrawal by Sarbuland Khan. The Kachchhi sources emphasise the powerful fight with the 3,000 of the best Jadeja horses (Campbell 1880, p. 139), whereas the Sultanate's sources refer to the news of riots in Ahmedabad that led to the retreat to Radhapur (Campbell, 1880, p. 139, footnote 1). The legend, written on the wall of the Āśāpurā temple in Bhuj narrates the battle as follows:

In this war, prince Lakhpathji and the leader of Roha fought bravely, and they got a glorious win against Sherbuland Khan. After getting to know this, Rao Shri Delsalji I went to the fort of Bhujia with a royal procession and rewarded all the soldiers. It was a day of Nagpanjmi⁶ and to fulfil his promise Rao Shri Desal I organised a chamarpuja⁷ in Darbarghat on the fifth day of the increasing moon (*sud panch*) of Aso month. On the 8th day, they performed patripuja in Mata-no-Madh and Bhuj Āśāpurā temples. And this is how the royal tradition started.

The 1762 attack with 70,000 soldiers arriving from the East by the orders of the king of Sindh, Ghulam Shah Kalhora, is known as the second battle of Jhara,⁸ hill located ca. 100km to North-West of Bhuj, which Kachchh lost to Sindh. Yet, when the Sindhi troops were arriving in Bhuj,

in the middle of the night, when all was still, the entire artillery of the Maharao – every piece which could be made use of, whether the city or in Bhujia fort, was suddenly discharged at a given signal. Nothing more happened. But Gidoman [Diwan of the Ghulam Shah Kalhora] and his colleagues had been thoroughly startled: the sheer weight of cannon which the Maharao could muster disconcerted them. They returned to their master, warning him that Bhuj and its fortifications were too strong for him to attack. Ghulam Shah hang around Bhuj for some days and there was some skirmishing... He could effect nothing against the newly strengthened castles of the Maharao and

the Maharao refused to meet him in the open field. Overreached once again, Gulam Shah retreated towards his own country.

(Williams, 2000 [1958], p. 159)

Besides these two invasions to Kachchh, threat to Hindu temples such as Āśāpurā, the successful defence of Bhuj, and the stories around the Muslim/Mughal invasions also includes a peculiar period written also on the wall of the Āśāpurā temple in Bhuj:

There are two idols of Āśāpurā maa in the temple, which are historical. At that time, king of Kachchh was Rao Shri Raydhanji II VS 1835–1870 (1778–1813). He came under the strong influence of Muslim religion [Muslim priest who stayed with him – he broke temples and said to people they have to either convert or leave Kachchh] and he thought to destroy the Āśāpurā temple of Bhuj. This information came to the priest and he took the idol and went to an unknown place. All Jadeja brothers Megaji Seth from Anjar got these intentions of Raoji and came to Bhuj with army and captured Redhanaji.

People of Kachchh were rebellions like that, rule of Bharabaya [twelve brotherhood of Jadeja, where different Jadeja communities come together] was established. After that in Āśāpurā temple, the ritual of new idol establishment was going on. When the priest new about that, he also brought the old idol back to its original place. Since that time, there are two idols being worshipped in this temple.

The significance of these legends, connected to the aspects of growth of Hindu nationalist politics, but also the 2002 violence, the need to protect Hinduism, Āśāpurā, and the essence of Kachchh via Bhujiyo hill/fort, all caters towards negative sentiments towards Muslims. As we will discuss in [Chapter 9](#), the plan to create a monument in Bhujiyo hill to celebrate the victory over Muslim rulers and memorialise the death of 35,000 Kachchhi's who joined the soldiers in the battle against Sarbuland Khan was put forward in public as the phase 2 of Modi's dream of Smṛtivan memorial and museum just six months into the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The death of soldiers also travels in the local stories: Brahmin residents of the South of Bhujiyo hill would recollect legends that the mothers and wives of the soldiers who died in the battle around the Bhujiyo hill, keep haunting the current residents when they are still searching for their lost dear ones. Yet, the formal historical records have not paid attention to the eastern side of Bhujiyo hill, where Haṅgāmī Āvās is located, as most of the British colonial time reports focus on describing the Bhujiyo hill, and the cantonment established by the British on the Western side of the hill.

5.3 Land Ownership and Land Use In and Around the Haṅgāmī Āvās Before the 2001 Earthquake

This section focuses on the land use of the area. We first start by describing the area using the three hills as landmarks, and then describe the land and its use in more

detail. Besides the Bhujjiyo hill, there are three other smaller hills that give a South-North boundary to the Haṅgāmī Āvās. Each of their names connects to legends that relate to conflicts: “The two lower hills to the South-East of Haṅgāmī Āvās are said to be named after a fight between a wife of the older brother (Derani) and a wife of the younger brother (Jethani)” (interview with the guardian of Gebanshah 01050209) (see [Figure 5.1](#)).

The highest hill, located in the North of Haṅgāmī Āvās is called Sural Bhit but is locally also known as Pada Bhit:

It [Sural Bhit] was called Pada Bhit. It is believed that the two *padas* (buffalo bulls) were fighting (Jagadi fight) and the hill came to be known as Pada Bhit since then.

(Mama 04052019)

Sural Bhit, also called as Pada Bhit: buffalo was drinking water with her calf, shepherd threw a stick to the calf to stop it drinking the water, but it was saved. The mother of the calf got angry and she followed the shepherd and ran, when she reached Sural Bhit she chased him and then killed that shepherd, from that time it is known as Pada Bhit.

(Isha Juneja 01052019, 13:40)

A male buffalo had run behind someone, and owner of the bull went up the hill, but the bull followed, and the bull killed the owner – thus the name Pada Bhit.

(Ramju Moghal 29042019)

There was shepherd who dyed fabric on the eye of the bull, and tried to mate the bull to the female buffalo who was from the same lineage. When bull realized it, the buffalo ran behind the shepherd, and he climbed up the hill. On top of the hill the bull killed his shepherd.

(Sidhiq Korat 15052019)

Whereas the first legend of Sural Bhit focuses on the two bulls fighting each other in the vicinity of the hill, the three other the legends make a connection between the name and a fight between buffaloes and humans. We will return to these inter-species conflicts in the next section discussing water and grazing resource conflicts that have occurred in the area.

In 1815, the Kachchh state army lost a battle for combined forces of British and Baroda state. The British occupied the Western parts of Kachchh and further negotiations between the British and the Kachchhi rulers were held over several years. Just four months after a devastating earthquake in 1819,⁹ the Kachchh state and the East India Company signed a treaty and consequently, the British Political Resident (James MacMurdo) and British troops, were stationed in the city of Bhuj.

Closest to the temporary shelter area we can get is with the 1855 report on roads ([Holland, 1855](#), p. 238) and the description of the route between Ahmedabad and

“Bhooj”. Bhuj, although perhaps considered uninteresting (see the introduction) to Britts, was a major crossroad for a total of 12 roads. The 1855 report details the Route I between Ahmedabad and Bhuj and lists in total of 16 places between the two cities, seven of them belonging to the Political Agent in Kutch¹⁰: Wandia (Vandhiya), Churwalla (Chhadavada), Buchow (Bhachau), Doodee (Dudhai), Kunyaboy (Kaniyabe), Puddur (Padhar), and Bhooj (Bhuj). Padhar, the closest place mentioned before Bhuj, was calculated to be 9 miles East of Bhuj, approximately 14km from Bhuj. The 9 miles road between Padhar and Bhuj was described to be “a good broad road”, and “in abundance” of water resources and supplies (Holland, 1855, p. 238).

Although we did not find any old maps to indicate the exact location of the Route I, however, the old water ponds, and religious shrines in Haṅgāmī Āvās, such as the Gebanshah pir shrine, shrine of mysterious Sufi sage, built both in the early 20th century (see Chapter 6), indicate this possibility. Daud, one of the oldest residents in the area (see Chapter 7) also confirmed to us that the route ran across what now is known as the main road of Haṅgāmī Āvās:

a shortcut to Bhachau, 80 kilometres East of Bhuj, used by ox carts, horses, and camels, ran across the area and would continue through the next villages of Traiya, Lakhond, Khaitrai and Mamuara – somewhat more Northwards where the National Highway 341 runs these days.

(interview 16092018)

Upon the 1947 independence of India, the princely state of Kachchh acceded to become part of it, first as an independent commissionaire, and then one of its states in 1950. After the 1956 earthquake, Kachchh became part of the State of Bombay, and then in 1960 part of the newly established state of Gujarat. The land reforms of the newly independent India affected Kachchh. Firstly, the 1958 Bombay Inams (Kutch area) Abolition Act (in Gujarati called *inam nabudhi dharō*) dissolved the system of *inam*, land gifted by the rulers of the princely state of Kachchh to loyal servers of the rulers. In accordance with the Second Five Year Plan of Government of India (1956–61), the Land Ceiling Act of 1960 of the newly formed state of Gujarat introduced firstly, a land ceiling that aimed at regulating the size of holdings,¹¹ and secondly, distribution of the surplus land to landless labourers and marginal farmers, overseen by Land Tribunals, but which Nikita Sud describes as “more or less a failure” (Sud, 2007, p. 606). As the powerful landowners refused to hand over their lands, several strategies, such as litigation and dividing the lands in the names of the family members, occurred – which was later in 1973 with the Act 5 of 1973 made legal. In occasions, the surplus land was continued to be cultivated even if the formal land title was transferred to the Government. In 1981, out of the 74,877 hectares acquired through the Land Ceiling Act of 1960, less than half was taken over by the government (Sud, 2007, p. 611). In short, land reforms in the 1950s and 1960s that were supposed to decrease the landholdings of Rajputs to landless and lower caste populations have benefitted the Dalit population very little and instead benefitted the agrarian middle-class Patels (Singh, 2023, p. 74).

One local legal expert concluded with the same observation as [Sud \(2007\)](#) that the

land measurement was not fully successful because at the same time the non-cooperation movement (અસહકારની ચળવળ, *asahakārānī caḷavaḷ*) to resist the 1958 Inams Abolition law related measurement exercise was going on and people were not supporting it. And government wanted to complete it, so without consent of local people they finished the measurement exercise.

(interview 22052019)

Yet, it is hard to pin down the exact ownership of the Haṅgāmī Āvās area. It has been described to us to belong to (State) government “as private owners were not given permission to develop housing society on the land”, and to have been part of “forest area of Bhuj” (interview 22052019).

Moreover, the following details of the area and the land use rely on an oral historical walk in the area with an 85-year-old Mughal shepherd, hereafter called Mama, which in Gujarati it is a respectful word for maternal uncle, mother’s brother. The details are cross-checked with other interviews and data. Mama’s father had worked his whole life grazing goats, but also being caretaker of the forest and farms of many landowners of the area. According to Mama, the three oldest farms (*vadi*, which means they would be fenced with stones, they would have wells and thus, all year around irrigation) in the area were that of the Matawari behind the Sural Bhit owned by Rajgor Brahmins who were named after a shrine for a Goddess built by them, Rameshwari, and Walapapavari towards the South, close to Karsanvari lake (તાળવ, *taḷāv* in Gujarati). The area between the farms and Sural Bhit was a mixture of grazing fields (*khētar*, which means they are owned, and marked with sand fences, irrigated with monsoon rains and thus grown seasonally) and wilderness (*pādētar*, which means they were not owned by anyone). Later on, the land in the South, Southeast, and Southwest of Karsanvari was divided into smaller farms and fields that were owned by Patels and Mistris, some of them living south of the land in Madhapar, some lived outside of Kachchh in Mumbai.

Access to water is a caste issue and connected the land ownership: groundwater horticulture is dominated by Patels and Rajputs, whereas landless pastoralists, who are usually Dalits, rely on monsoons and the water commons ([Singh, 2023](#), p. 74). The main division between the use of the lands, thus, was between the well-irrigated lands (*vadi*) and seasonal monsoon rain irrigated fields (*khētar*). Whereas farmers would predominantly be Hindu Patel and Mistri communities, the pastoralists would be both Hindus and Muslims from Rabari, Gadhavi, Mughal, Node, and Sama communities. Some land was owned by Kolis and Khojas (Muslims) and curiously, land under the two hills of Derani and Jethani, was owned by the mother of Ramju Koli. Yet, the Mughal shepherds grazing and overseeing the water resources had such a powerful role in the area that it also became to be known as “Mughal area” (interview 16092018).

The oldest built landmarks in the area were the two lakes built to storage fresh water – Karsanvari and Samawari lakes – and shrines of Asaba Pir and Gebanshah

Pir – each having hundreds of years oral historical memory of existence. The most western part of the area was acquired by the state government for the use of the GIDC in the 1980s and industrial units had been constructed also to the West of the new railway line that was constructed after the earthquake in 2001 – as was the warehouse of the LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) bottles taken care of Daud (see [Chapter 7](#)).¹² Yet, as Mama explained, when the original landowners had sold their lands into smaller sections, these days it is very hard to know who owns what in the area, and some of it has become illegally occupied.

Whereas the area to South-West, South, and South-East of Haṅgāmī Āvās was described to us as been busy with farms (*vadi*) and fields (*khētar*), the area what became the area for the temporary shelters was a common grazing land (*gauchar*) in which cows from Madhapar were grazing, in between farms (watertour 04052019). Stories we’ve been told of what was the formal land title of the land on which the temporary shelters were constructed, vary. Whereas the newspaper and the formal project document archives suggest it was state government land, local shepherds suggest it was still used as a common grazing land (*gauchar*), whereas the people connected to the worship of Gebanshah pir suggested that the land, on which the shrine is located at, would belong to the grandfather of the person who has been conducting the annual procession at the shrine the past forty years. They further suggested that when the location was chosen for the temporary shelters, one small part was separated for the shrine, and the rest for the temporary shelter. This was even said to be confirmed by the Gebanshah: “Bapu (Gebanshah Pir) told her that until where you see, till there the land is yours” (interview 18082019).

The oldest families have lived in the area for about 50 years, i.e. moved in the area in the 1970s. To our knowledge, such families were landless Muslim Korat joint families who used Kachchhi and Gujarati word “sitting” (*vetho* in Kachchhi, *bēsavum* બેસવું in Gujarati) of their settlement. The word is commonly used by shepherds with a nomadic pattern of settlements to describe their settlement – huts and fences prepared on a piece of land owned by big landowning communities such as Patels. In some other interviews with a Jogi¹³ family such “sitting” that could take place for decades was described as a responsibility towards the land peacefully, and contrasted with that of commercialisation and plotting of agricultural land for non-agricultural purpose (see [Section 5.5](#)), indicating a conflict between pastoralist and land financialisation, and speculation in the area. The industrial zone GIDC was established in the West of the area already in the 1980s and only some of the former agricultural and common wasteland had been turned into non-agricultural/industrial land roughly a decade before the earthquake: “there were just two units of godowns (warehouses) for gas and treatment of leather and bones of dead animals” (interview 16092018).

All the oldest residents, and former pastoralists grazing in the area to whom we spoke to have a migratory history to arrive in Bhuj and Haṅgāmī Āvās: they either were pastoralists from the Northern Banni grassland region directly, or who had migrated first elsewhere, and then moved to Bhuj. Often, they were driven by drought years and attempt to shift their livelihoods from animal husbandry to that of combined wage labouring. Haṅgāmī Āvās and its surroundings were considered

as an opportunity as the rents were lower compared with the other informal settlements in the city. The migration also took place within the area itself: some moved to the outer sections of the area, looking for possibilities to move to Haṅgāmī Āvās later. Some of the families we spoke to had moved to the area before the earthquake, but a bigger number more recently, less than ten years ago. For example, altogether 40 Jogi families had moved to in and out of Haṅgāmī Āvās when the construction of the earthquake memorial and the museum Smṛtivan (see [Chapter 1](#)) started, and the area was emptied from all the informal settlements in the foot of Bhujiyo hill. Thus, the place breathes permanent temporariness, being dislocated and dispossessed. At the same time, the pastoralist notions of temporal occupation, and taking care of the land, are increasingly squeezed in-between urban informality, and speculation on the land use, as we will discuss later.

5.4 Abundance of Commons?

In this section, we focus on water resources and its management in the past. One of the older conflicts that was shared with us was the conflict over the use of the water from the ponds. Our initial interest for searching the longer historical ecological past of Haṅgāmī Āvās was prompted by emotionally attached narratives of abundance of clear and clean water drawn from a stepped pond called Karsanvari (literal meaning is made by Karsan), also known as piprivadi, referring to the people's tree/banyan tree growing next to the pond, but also as Mughalvadi, referring to its caretaker, a Mughal family. The step-well, with 20–30 steps, seems to have got its name after a successful railway contractor, Karsan Bhima Rathod,¹⁴ from the Mistri community who built it.¹⁵ As Lyla Mehta has previously described, the Kachchhi's relation to water, or the idea of scarcity of it, is connected to that of the social and power relations that shape water use and practices, but also specific local culture and history ([Mehta, 2005](#), p. ix).

All the older people who had connections to the area surrounding Haṅgāmī Āvās would talk about Karsanvari's importance. For instance, the caretaker of the Gebanshah pir shrine, who in his early life was a shepherd, would describe:

Karsanvari lake was there, now drainage water is there in it, there was pure water earlier, it was sweet water, people go there to drink, now no water is there.

Too much I had drink [from the lake] I [also] made this wall [of Ghebi] with the water of that lake.

all came over here...people who were travelling from Madhapar to Sural Bhit they were drinking the water.

(interview 01052019)

This same was confirmed with our discussions with the members of Mughal shepherds:

This road was connected to Sural Bhit. The people were using it to go Sural Bhit. They were used to drink water. All the shepherds were also drinking

water from here. People of the Madhapar also were used to get water from here.

There were banyan trees beside this lake and there was a chair to sit under that tree. This lake was meant for *māladhārī*.

I am now 49 years old. When I last saw the Karsanvari, I literally cried and could not stop crying when I saw it. It was because of, if there was drought for 3-4 years, there would be water in the lake. The bottom was as strong [made of mud] that when you drink the water it is as cold as it is from the fridge.

There was no need to clean the lake, the lake overflow during the monsoon and the water cleaned it.

(interview 29042019)

The pond seems to have served as water commons, at least for the dominant castes: be it farmers, shepherds, road users, but also for families living in the South, what is now known as old Madhapar. Similarly, when the owners of the farms came to work in the area during the monsoon, they would use the water from the lake as the groundwater was too saline for drinking. West of Karsanvari, another lake, known as Samivari, or Swamivari, was built by the Mistri community living in Madhapar for the use of the Hindu priests (known as Swami, or Sami) who would take rest at the pond, take bath and they were served food before returning back to the village. The site also had burial stones of Samis. Salinity of the water was also confirmed by a land speculator farmer (see [Section 5.5](#)) saying the land was not suitable for mangoes but they would try date palms next. The groundwater, pumped into a huge tank by submersible pump was said to contain iron (*kaiya*) which has negative impact on the plants: it covers the root of trees and make a layer on them, does not allow the plants to get the nutrition from the soil.

Besides these two ponds, landowners had also water pits (*khād*) and built wells for irrigation and drinking purposes, which would all be located to the East of the land, as that's how the land was sloped towards: all water would flow from West to East. The water for the ponds came from the two separate flows of Bhujiyo hill: the overflow water of a lake on top of the Bhujiyo hill would flow to Karsanvari lake, and Samivari would receive the water flowing from the other side of the hill. Any overflow from these lakes would continue to the river Kagdi in the East passing by the Patel farm, the joining a small stream running to the river. The excessive monsoon rains such as the one when it flooded in Morbi in 1979 were remembered also here, the overflow streams were strong and they overflowed. As the groundwater was saline, the pits and ponds were used during the harvesting time of mung beans for drinking purposes (interview 29042019).

So powerful was the guardianship of the Mughal pastoralists over the water and forestry resources of the area, that some know the area as the “Mughal forest” (interview 16092018). Ecologically the area was rich. There were banyan, pipal, and neem trees. Mama was recalling that there was a place to sit under the trees and stir the water with his hands and feel the water that was colder than the fridge. He also recalled that Bhujiyo hill was covered with Indian bdellium trees

(also known as *Commiphora wightii*, in Gujarati *gugal*), acacias (in Gujarati *kher*), orange gum berry trees (in Gujarati *gundheri*), Indian Jujube (in Gujarati *ber*), and so on. Grasslands were growing with lambh (*Aristida adscensionis*, also known as needle grass) and sweet grass chiyo (*Cyperus rotundus*). Such grassland ecology is a unique feature of Kachchh – with perennial grasses and locally grown trees and bushes. So-called un-reserved grasslands in Kachchh have been diminishing due to multiple reasons such as invasion of exotic species, increase in groundwater salinity, overgrazing, encroachment of grasslands for agriculture and industrial development – and as is discussed in the following section, that was the destiny of the grasslands East of Bhujjiyo hill (Dutta, 2016). Furthermore, the vulnerability of the ecology, and reliance on seasonal rain has caused conflicts for the usage of the resources – which also get connected with shrines of holy sages. Here we indicate at least three: that of digging the sand, use of water, and use of grass. The ecology and the existing holy places were identified to be disturbed at least by two land-digging efforts, Mama recalls:

Once when the railway was under construction, and a bulldozer was digging - stones of the shrine where there, my father was grazing and he warned them that there are spirits here/spiritual place, be careful.

Those people did not care about it, and they kept digging, machine was broken. They called the owners who said that you should have obeyed the shepherd who said not to destroy the shrine. They tried to dig the whole uphill [shrine area]. They could not complete it and owners of the contract stopped the digging and said to the driver that let's stop. Afterwards the Pir came to the dream of my father and told to build the shrine. The family prepared a gate and gradually it developed into a shrine.

(interview 04052019b)

Besides the railway construction, Kumbar people known for pottery making have for a long time been digging in the area. Our visit to a pottery maker family at Bhid gate reconfirmed this: the best quality of sand used to come from where the wholesale market of grains is located at [close to GIDC] and has after its completion shifted to the Haṅgāmī Āvās area, at times illegally.

Farmers were using the area around Samivari as *khāravād* – clean the grain during the harvesting season, a reason why the space was kept open. These different uses of the land, and water, caused tensions, and at times, conflicts. For example, there were strict restrictions on the use of the water put in place. Explained by Moghal shepherds:

Grandfather did not allow anyone to take bath in that – if someone really wanted to, grandfather was telling to sit on one side without soap, water needs to be taken outside.

As long as my father was alive, nobody washed clothes inside this lake, nobody bathed, buffaloes did not drink water in it because my father had a good reputation in this area. No one could spoil this lake, buffaloes could not

enter it, only cows and goats could drink from it and people could drink water. And during that time there was nothing else in the area, it was just open fields, at that time there was no GIDC here either.

(interview 29042019)

The shepherds from Madhapar would use a same daily route from South to North and back: visiting the Karsanvari on the way to North for lunch, staying at Dhori Dhro (means in English white lake) lake close to Nagor village in the North, and then making a return at 4pm and have water at Karsanvari. At the time when the area was open fields, and rains were good, the place was known for a thick coverage of grass. Mama recalls:

We were having 500 goats and enough grass. My youngest son has 90 goats. And he has difficulties to graze them. He is also feeding them wheat at home.

Two major conflicts over the use of grass and water were recollected to us: firstly, over the use of the fields for grazing had happened with Sindhi shepherds from Banni, possibly during the heavy drought years when the pastoralist communities would change their herd's location based on the availability of grass across Kachchh:

Sindhis were sitting in the GIDC area, they were sending the cows at night, cows came to the fields. There was a conflict and my father went to the owners of the farms, office was near the Swaminarayan temple in the Old Bhuj. They wrote a letter that my father is guarding the field.

There was also a physical fight, police case. People who had business in Mumbai, they also wrote a letter saying my father is securing and guarding our land. It was written that this person is the security person of this land, and it is on him if he would let you in or not. It is his choice. After that my father did not allow anyone to enter this area.

Secondly, the strict water use restriction led to local physical violence between Mughal shepherds and Node¹⁶ buffalo herders who resided what is now known as the entrance to GIDC/Haṅgāmī Āvās. The strict ban of entering animals to the Karsanvari – which other old residents recollected of having meant taking rounds around the lake five times a day – led to a conflict, leading to violence and even loss of life (notebook III, p. 52).

Recalled by a member from Node community:

A Mughal was coming to refill his water pot by horse, the strike in his hand. Now it's [the lake] ruined by Āvās establishment. He had goats and horses. He was guarding the land. After he died no one is there to guard that lake. He was a brave man, having turban on his head. Many Meranis [Muslims] went to him with the sticks to fight. There was a big fight. He had beaten them badly.

The case between the Mughal shepherds and Node buffalo herders was solved in the court and the Node buffalo herders lost it. Later, due to seven long draught years, the Node relocated to Madhapar where they nowadays produce over 600kg buffalo milk daily.

Besides being protected as a water source, Karsanvari and the river Kagdi, enacted as central sites for the annual *dobh* (in Kachchhi it refers to milk) ritual for the Mughal community. The ritual coincided the time when goats give birth during the Aasho month (during the Autumn, before the Diwali festival) and is said to have been sustained for over 150 years. As explained by Mama:

We would stay there for a week and cook food. We offered it to the Pirs and then whoever comes to that place we offer the food for them as well.

And continued by his sister:

We would sit there for a week, we would use the water from Karsanvari, two types of food were prepared, relatives and friends invited to the lake. When any Hindu is coming and not eating non-veg, they would serve vegetarian food, normally they were using goat meat.

Nowadays, when the Karsanvari does not exist anymore, the family celebrates the ritual at the Sahensha shrine father of Mama had built before the earthquake close to the Samivari lake. These days the lake gets the Narmada River water, whereas earlier the water was carried from Karsanvari.

As with water resources, strict rules would apply for cutting wood:

Since my father was alive, he would not let anyone to cut any tree in this area. The area between the railway track to the river bank [of Kagdi].

The landowners based in Mumbai had hired the father of Mama Mughal to guard their forests. The guarding role gave his goats access to graze the grass in the area. The agreement was that once the harvesting of the fields was completed, the goats would graze it next. Only then he would allow other animals to graze the fields. This settlement and trust between the landowners and Mughal shepherd overran another locally used agreement: the buyers of the harvest would have the right to bring their cattle and graze on the land that is harvested:

This field was planted by a woman, she planted sorghum (in Gujarati *jowar*) and guar gum (in Gujarati *guar*) inside that field, she sold it [harvest] to the nearby *panjrapol*,¹⁷ when some Rabari shepherds from Panjrapol brought their cows and came, they saw that my father was grazing his goats. Rabaris complained that we have the right for grazing after having given you the money, she responded, I will return your money to you, leave here. These

goats will graze here. She said that you have come here now only. This person is securing our land for four months in a year. And we don't lose any single grain in those four months.

Mama described a similar incident at another farm where his father's successful guardianship of the farm's dates bought him the right for grazing. The guardianship was established against Kolis¹⁸ “who would steal everything”.

The Moghal shepherds described emotionally how their and their male relatives used to walk and run in the area:

My uncle was very fast runner. No one like him. Now he is bit tired due to his age. He was very rough with the thorns of this forest. They were not affecting him.

My feet are used to walk in this forest and this land. They put new sand here, it was not here earlier.

Next section will focus on the big ecological and social changes that took place in the area when the reconstruction in the aftermath of the earthquake started.

5.5 Temporary Shelter Construction Changes Everything

At that time, there was nothing here: just two things.

One was this [gas cylinder] warehouse which we are having now,
and another was a warehouse of leather and bones near the Hanuman temple

(interview 16092018)

Following the above quote from Daud's memories before the earthquake, in this section, we set out to focus on the changes that the earthquake brought with it to the area. Our focus is on the infrastructure and how it changed both the ecology, livelihoods, but how this change also impacted the religious and social life of people.

5.5.1 Changed Ecology, Changed Livelihoods Options

New residents have never drank the water of the lake, that's why they have destroyed it, if they had, they would not destroy it. They did not know about the greatness of the lake, they were thinking it was just a pit.

(interview 29042019)

Most dramatic ecological change in the area happened as a result of both levelling of the land [for the housing], and building of the temporary shelters, and later permanent houses. As described by the pastoralist shepherds, this led to blocking the water flows (inflow/outflow) of the monsoon rainwater from its natural paths, running from west to east, and thus the natural seasonal

streams filling the Karsanvari, and Samivari lakes were blocked. The land filling constantly causes major monsoon flooding in the area. Mama Moghal explained:

the banyan trees are cut [what is instead is *ganda bawal*]... when housing was built, this lake got spoiled... Those people [meaning new residents] used to pour sewage water inside it. One was that they used to pour sewage water into it and the other was that they blocked the place from where the water was coming into this lake. That's why this entire lake got completely spoiled otherwise there was drinkable water inside this lake all year round.

...

See here is the front water channel of this well.

This is the inflow area for the Karsanvari lake. Now there is house on it.

Similarly, as the ponds were no longer refilling, also some of the wells are no longer in use. Some of the ruins remain, but some of them are removed for good – and instead small-scale industries, such as godowns (warehouses) are built on the land.

This has led to the total change in the ecology of the area which is now dominated by the thorny bush known as the mad bush (*ganda bawal*, *Prosopis juliflora*) a plant that was introduced by the British in the late 19th century but introduced in masses in the 1960s to stop the spread of the deserted area of Little Rann of Kachchh. The tree has aggressive growth and it has replaced many indigenous shrubs and trees surviving the dry, hot climate of Kachchh (Kothari, 2013, p. 42).

According to one interviewee, the building of the houses on low-lying areas with too little capacity of soil absorption when the seasonal monsoon rains hit, would be a source of chronic flooding (interview, notebook III, p. 83). Furthermore, as the temporary shelters were initially built without proper water and sanitation infrastructure (see Chapter 4), this dramatically changed the old water sources for the farmers and pastoralists, but also led to a lack of drinkable water for the residents.

As a result of the 2011 conducted slum survey in Bhuj, the 2008 initiated Homes in the City initiative, a joint effort of five Bhuj-based non-governmental organisations,¹⁹ and Hunnarshala Foundation, developed a masterplan for the temporary shelter neighbourhood and built a sewerage recycling plant to Karsanvari. The treatment plant was funded by the German organisation Misereor Germany, although the state government had allocated a total of 4 crores for the infrastructure development. The slum survey in 2011 had noted that the area, built on the government revenue, or waste, land, lacked water supply, sanitation, and electricity. The recycling and sewage treatment plant was maintained for some time with fees collected from the residents and in the report published in 2011 it was still promoted as a “site for social gatherings and functions every evening” (Homes in the City, 2011, p. 45). However,

over the years, the maintenance has suffered from lack of funds, and when the municipality refused to take over the maintenance, the plant and the area constructed as the modernised version of Karsanvari was neglected, and finally unused and in ruins.

The neglect of overall planning of basic infrastructure also led to a vicious cycle of construction, demolition to reconstruct. As explained by two residents:

The previous counsellor made the first road, but that should have been completed only after the water systems, only then the road. The constructors got double money, in fact, triple money of it: first they built the road, then it was dug, and drainage connection was added. Then they completed the road again, to dig it again for the water connection.

(interview 29112017)

Once it was made and it was too good, but then people broke it... someone broke for drainage pipeline, someone broke the water line... maximum 12 months road was good, then it became as it was earlier... they will not make the road of Āvās... plus from 2 years there is no rain...

(interview 12092019)

As the water source was ruined, it accelerated the changes in the area more widely, leading to decrease of grazing lands and increasingly acquiring the land for industrial use. One big farm and one *panjrapol* still exist in the South East corner following the river banks of Kagdi.

Water scarcity has continued in the area. Those with self-built and financed tanks can manage the long periods when the municipality water line has stopped. Sometimes for days, or even for eight days, according to those who felt its absence most acutely. The salinity of the water has further meant that it is not drinkable even if boiled. The water is sourced from number of sources: Gada dam, borewells in Bhujodi, and latest the Narmada River. Hailed as a success by the Modi government after decades, if not hundreds of years of water scarcity, the residents in Haṅgāmī Āvās, however, are not that impressed. The quality of the water remains low: many people fell ill as the Narmada River water travels long distance in open water channels allowing animals to defecate and pollute the water before it reaches to the residents.

5.5.2 “Gebi Cannot Be Disturbed”

At the time of the temporary shelter planning, the 18 sectors were divided between religious and caste communities (see [Chapters 4 and 9](#)). Possibly due to the existing two shrines – Gebanshah pir and Asaba pir located North of Derani and Jethani hills (see [Chapter 6](#) for details) in the most Western part of Haṅgāmī Āvās – the area around them was dedicated for “Muslim housing” built by Islamic Relief Committee. According to

the caretaker (*mujāvar*) of the Gebanshah Pir shrine Isha, the holy saint (Pir) had taken rest at the location where the shrine was built later:

Pir was going somewhere, and he has taken rest here for some time...

Vada pir, Gebanshah, Kasamsha, Ibrahimsha, Sekhipir- they all are brothers, they have 7 sisters, they all have taken rest here, they are Saiyad [Syiad].
(interview 01052019, 02:45–)

The area in the vicinity of the Gebanshah pir shrine was kept clear. However, housing constructed close to the shrine emerged as a contestation that has been sustained all these years. In our discussions at the Gebanshah Pir shrine, Panktiben who had maintained the shrine for several decades before the earthquake in 2001, made clear that to her knowledge, the arrangement for temporary shelters was to be a temporary one:

I cleaned this all land. During the earthquake time government settled people here. They told me that they will vacant this land within one year. But later they gave this land to the people.

Gebanshah told me: “I don’t like all these people around here. I want to be here alone, how it was before”. I have cleaned this land and it should be clean as far as one can see. That much land is mine. These all people who are living in front of me – I don’t like it. I have not allowed all these people to come. This place will end up full with dead bodies and no-one would be here to take their bodies. But I could not announce it to the people. Because there are small children, the prophecy is not yet happening. Gebanshah will not harm small children. But each family has a problem in this area. Even this old lady, she is suffering from problems. In front of the Gebanshah tomb, they are suffering from problems such as illness, death. But they are not leaving. You [speaking to the lady helping in procession] should leave from here. Gebanshah wants to stay alone here. People came after I had cleaned the land for Gebanshah. It is not an area for them.

(notes of the interview 12082019)

The unplanned construction of the temporary shelter neighbourhood and its basic infrastructure also impacted the shrine maintenance:

[This is] too old road, 2 years ago I had made that road too, but then it again vanished... I am now tired by making it again and again... The work is completed in the evening and in the morning nothing is there, I had made it with concrete... but people don’t keep that...

Big truck of the stones came, and I had made this road, but people break it, they take the concrete and they made their house from it... I have taken this much land back by fighting, otherwise I wouldn’t get this land also, people had made houses and road over here...

(interview 11082019)

When the temporary shelter sectors were built, especially the sectors surrounding the tomb/shrine, Panktiben had fenced the shrine to mark its boundaries, and cleaned the land from *ganda bawal*.

The idea of the taboo of disturbing the shrine is a common source of inter-communal conflicts. For example, when Shyam was visiting the most famous Gebanshah Pir in Rajkot in 2023, the caretaker (*mujāvar*) had explained that the serious flooding in Junagadh in Gujarat was a result of demolishment of the Gebanshah Pir shrine in Junagadh as part of the road widening process, and communal violence that followed it. The story goes on that the shrine in Rajkot remained undisturbed during the British times only because Gebanshah Pir appeared in the dream of British Officer who had come to see why the labourers had refused to remove the shrine and complete the railway construction.

Another conflict emerged in Haṅgāmī Āvās when the Muslim residents advanced the plan to build a mosque in the neighbourhood. The physical destruction of mosque property escalated into an attack to shrine and leading to police interference. Finally, the land dispute between the shrine, mosque, and the residents was settled over a court case. The verdict ruled that the shrine has a land of its own dedicated to religious purposes and the rest of the land remains under the town development plan (interview 18082019).

5.6 Futures of Haṅgāmī Āvās Ecology

Up until 2004, the status of the temporary shelter neighbourhood, that time a home for tens of thousands of people, remained uncertain. After being formalised, and even with some budget allocations from the state government and international humanitarian organisations, the development has remained unpredictable. When the formalisation of the area into the fourth relocation site was confirmed in 2004, that allowed, at least on paper, more outward looking strategies for improvement of their well-being, and, basic urban infrastructures, to emerge.

However, continued problems of Haṅgāmī Āvās have now endured for over 20 years. According to one local journalist, it is not that there were no budget allocations made to the area, but such allocations and projects became a major “moneymaking possibility” for some. According to him:

People who were really affected, they found their place somewhere, but people who came, they came silently, and they started to live here [Haṅgāmī Āvās].

Now there are many people who are living and doing antisocial behaviour. Government is not paying any attention for roads, gutters, water [in Āvās].

Over the past years, new permanent housing with the central government schemes (for details, see [Bogoni, 2021](#)) have emerged for those residents considered legitimate to reside in the area. The rest consists of migrants, some who may have arrived already 10–20 years ago during the peak of the earthquake recovery and industrialisation boom. Others are newcomers, mostly in search of livelihoods from

other parts of India. In the outskirts of the area known as Haṅgāmī Āvās, as the previous sections have indicated, also live migrants who continue their pastoralist and agriculturalist livelihoods, occasionally returning to the pasturelands of Banni, or to celebrate Ramadhan with their families.

Unlike in the other three relocation sites, the rise of housing and land pricing, is yet to happen in full-scale in Haṅgāmī Āvās. However, the speculation on land pricing has already started and the newest development plan indicates major changes to the area: Haṅgāmī Āvās lies in the area marked as residential area, sandwiched to industrial area. New horizontal roads cuts across the Haṅgāmī Āvās, connecting Sural Bhit in the North and farms in the South but also the outer agricultural zone in the East.

Our interviewees reflected on the revised plan:

I am having the knowledge of two things, one that they are going to make road from Sural Bhit, that road will be of 18 metre [wide]... from Sural Bhit to Madhapar... other one is from Rajiv Āvās Yojna [new permanent houses], from near to our school, it is the future thing that we are talking [about]...

(interview 20082019)

We will get the benefit, demands of Āvās will increase. Now there is no demand because GIDC is 1.5 kilometres away from the main highway, first GIDC came and then Āvās will come, factory in GIDC is also not working, only 15% of industries are working and 85% are shut down or they sold ... so there is no increase of value of this land. In future 18-metre-wide road will be built then value of this land is going to increase... Rubika [referring to a neighbour] is living here, and if the road comes from this farm, then definitely value of her house is going to increase as it is having road touch now...

If those 2 roads are constructed then it is all right... it will be divided in two parts, now we are having only one road of GIDC, we can't come there from Sural Bhit because we can't travel from the farm. If any project would come here like this, also in the city areas that are connected with roads are having more value compared with other land which is not connected...

Or if development happens near Sural Bhit then, over there in farm they are making bungalows... in all the bungalows swimming pools are constructed... In the city people who are very rich they are going to make such bungalows, they are doing that for the weekend... for example in Mundra near Surya Academy they have made that type only.

Here the reference is made to so-called gated weekend houses, or farms, as they are locally called. Such new type of housing has emerged South of Sural Bhit and more generally built outside of Bhuj for the upper middle class and upper caste residents of Bhuj for their recreation purposes.

Another trend, visible in the lands lying East of Haṅgāmī Āvās was the purchasing of the agricultural land by investors, as the land price is likely to go up with the revised town plan and the new road infrastructure. Here, due to

industrialisation, the trend that has been repeated in Southern parts of Kachchh is foreseen: “land is bought in low price and then resold with higher” (interview 24052019). Furthermore, even the current residents are restless. Several cases of illegal land encroachments were referred to us as was the trend of changing the land use from agricultural land to non-agricultural usage followed by the plotting of land. When visiting the area in 2024, we already saw some new housing societies being built to formally informal squatter areas in South of Derani and Jethani hills. Some suggested that the land pricing started increasing in the area when the revised development plan was announced. One of the reasons being that the area would relate to the National Highway 341 running South of the area and enabling more effective transportation connections to roads out of Bhuj, and that of Kachchh to Eastern parts of Gujarat.

We give two comparisons of the change of land pricing. When Daud was recollecting the land price of GIDC, the industrial zone (most Western part of Haṅgāmī Āvās next to the rail line), the price before the earthquake, some 30 years ago was 100–200 Rs/square metre. In 2019, agricultural land East of Haṅgāmī Āvās was purchased with 14 lakh Rs/acre. This would indicate an increase from 100–200 Rs/square metre to that of nearly 350 Rs. One person we spoke with said that the decision to buy the land was made on the basis of the revised town development plan. The speculation not only included the increase of land value as such, but also that any land that would go under the new road construction would be compensated with a government price, which was suggested to us to be multiplied by 24. This reference was gained from the lands that were acquired from landowners for the building of the Narmada canal in Kachchh, with a pessimistic note that such farmers were yet to receive their compensation. The realisation of the development plan is yet to be materialised. Even previous plans of better roads on maps, have not materialised. In fact, residents are used to the election-related infrastructure improvements such as the street-lights, and few months before the 2022 Gujarat State elections, the over 1km long Haṅgāmī Āvās road was renewed.

Furthermore, unless other basic infrastructures, such as the water uncertainty is addressed, the speculation on land will remain erratic. A legal expert was warning of overexploitation of water resources and continuous shrinking of water levels around Bhuj, as Bhuj itself does not have a hydraulic belt to give certainty of fresh water. Similarly one resident recalled us how in the shortage of water, fresh water is not available for several days and as a relief measure, water is brought from the Bhujjiyo water tank, and from the Narmada canal that have reached Kachchh. The shepherds, when interviewed in 2019 were still optimist that even the water ponds could be restored: “First, the inflowing drains should be closed and the rain-water inflow should be reopened” (watertour 04052019). In 2023, there is an attempt to map all old water tanks and ponds in the vicinity of Bhuj for water source restoration.

The future of Haṅgāmī Āvās remains open. Whilst the new planned roads are yet to change the use of land, Daud (see [Chapter 7](#)) and the other *rewal* horse riders continued to gather at the ground behind the Karsanvari pond and St Mary’s school

to train and race the horses on Sunday until the new housing units appeared and blocked the open space needed for the training.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the longer history of the area of Haṅgāmī Āvās paying specific attention to the question of land use and ecology – and their changes both over the past centuries, but also more specifically in the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake (Figure 5.2). Having labelled as a “wasteland” and simultaneously as an abundance of clear drinking water throughout the years, the area has both provided as a shadow of the militaristically important Bhujiyo hill, the arid land which was used to approach the city of Bhuj for trade, and for battle. The accounts that emphasise the “wastedness” of the land, as it is common for capital-centric governance, have dismissed the importance of the land for pastoralists, and residents of the neighbouring village of Madhapar. The use of the land for pastoralism and its importance as a local water resource, was totally missed by those who, in 2001, allocated the land for the temporary shelters, with no plan how to sustainably change the land use from that of grazing and agriculture to that of residential area. This chapter suggests further that the area which became known as a temporary solution to housing crisis after the 2001 remains in uncertainty, and



Figure 5.2 Buffaloes bathing in the remains of the Karsanvari lake in 2024.

Source: Shyam Gadhavi.

not least for its ecological sustainability. Haṅgāmī Āvās is a history of decline in common property resource use and thus follows a more common trend towards new resource frontiers and capital accumulation: towards privatisation, industrialization, and future speculations on land price, if the new development plan will be materialised.

Notes

- 1 <https://www.gujaratilexicon.com/dictionary/gujarati-to-english-translation/૧૧૬/>
- 2 The Gujarati word ૐ (lū) refers to warm summer wind, known to be dusty and hot, blowing over the Indo-Gangetic Plain.
- 3 Jadeja is a powerful clan and part of the Rajput caste group connected to warriorship and rulers in Western India. The principal deity of Jadejas is Āśāpurā Mata, an aspect of Devi, a Hindu goddess.
- 4 Maintenance and building works of both Desalsar Lake and Hamirsar Lake in Bhuj were the target of famine relief work for food or grain, in which 2,000–3,000 people participated ([Government of Gujarat, 1971](#), pp. 211–212).
- 5 Miyana is a Muslim community belonging to the Rajput/warrior caste that have a specific reputation for fearless fighting with horses and in Kachchh have become known for being pirates/robbing of people at the Navlakhi port in Gulf of Kachchh.
- 6 The fifth day of the Shravan month – celebrated as the establishment of Bhuj.
- 7 Chamar puja is a ritual performed with a fan prepared with the peacock feathers aiming at the well-being of Kachchh on the fifth day of Navratri (worship of Durga and female deities’ energies). The royal family goes with the fan to the Āśāpurā temple in Mata no-Madh taking bath and combine the puja with pattri puja. In pattri puja, palm-sized leaves of a climber are placed on the Āśāpurā ma idol’s shoulders and a member of the royal family sits in front of it. Drums are played and puja is performed until the leaves fall from the idol to the lap of the person. If leaves fall, the Āśāpurā Goddess gives blessings to Kachchh, often interpreted as good monsoon rains for a drought prone region.
- 8 At the time of the Jhara hill battle, the idols of the Āśāpurā temple in Mata-no-Madh were taken away from the temple and were lost ([Williams, 2000](#) [1958], p. 105).
- 9 The most dramatic landscape effect of the 1819 earthquake was the formation of a ridge blocking the access of Puran River, Indus river connection, to Kachchh. The ridge, as long as 80km long and 6m high, became known as the Dam of God (Allah Bund) ([Bilham, 1999](#)).
- 10 Political Agents were representatives of agencies of British India, overseeing certain territories, such as the princely state of Cutch.
- 11 Perennially irrigated land limits varied between 19 and 44 acres; rice and seasonally irrigated land limits varied between 36 and 56 acres, and 56 and 132 acres for dry land ([Sud, 2007](#), p. 610).
- 12 The Kutch district Gazetteer from 1971 mentions a rural industrial estate at Madhapar with four industrial sheds and with Rs. 109.256 investment by the state government. The Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation was established in 1962 to establish and manage industrial estates, but as of 1971, no estates had yet been established ([Government of Gujarat, 1971](#), p. 243).
- 13 Jogis are drummers and singers of the Bhuva tradition (see [Chapter 6](#)).
- 14 Karsan’s brother Jagmal Bhima Rathor had built the Jagasagar Lake in the village of Madhapar (south of Haṅgāmī Āvās) in 1900. On current maps, the lake is named as Kurjar Kshatriya Mistry Lake.
- 15 In interviews, however, it was not sure if the lake was built by a Mistri or Patel.
- 16 The Node in Bhuj/Madhapar is a Muslim community consisting of roughly 500 families that have lived in the area some 100 years and migrated from Andai in the Banni area

- in the North, a village that is known as one of the Indus civilization site and family connections to Sindh in Pakistan and Rajasthan. During the discussions, the connections between Sindh originating families of 13 communities were repeated.
- 17 Trust that maintains aged cattle, a place that still exists in the area.
 - 18 The Koli community is an agriculturalist caste in Kachchh belonging to OBC, known as “armed peasants”, fighting in many armed forces of Gujarat rulers. Raiding villages was a supplement for their income. In the 20th century, it was labelled as Criminal Caste under the Criminal Tribes Act, although the labelling as criminal seems to have a longer history in the region (Piliavsky, 2015). Kolis are known in Kachchh as hunters but since the 1972 Wildlife (Protection) Act, they have tried to transfer their livelihoods to the preparation of charcoal but still hunt in rural areas, leading to arrests by the Forest Department and court cases against them.
 - 19 Hunnarshala Foundation, Setu-Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan, Sahjeevan, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, and ACT. Several organisations also had a role in advocating the formalisation of the temporary shelter neighbourhood as the fourth formal relocation site, and building of the first permanent houses in 2004–2005. See [Chapter 4](#).

References

- Baka, J. (2013). The political construction of wasteland: Governmentality, Land acquisition and social inequality in South India. *Development and Change*, 44(2), 409–428. doi: [10.1111/dech.12018](https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12018)
- Bilham, R. (1999). Slip parameters for the Rann of Kachchh, India, 16 June 1819, earthquake, quantified from contemporary accounts. *Geological Society, London, Special Publications*, 146(1), 295–319. doi: [10.1144/GSL.SP.1999.146.01.18](https://doi.org/10.1144/GSL.SP.1999.146.01.18)
- Bogoni, F. (2021). *Participatory practices and policies of slum rehabilitation in small cities: The case of Bhuj in north-west India* (PhD thesis, Centre d’études en sciences sociales sur les mondes africains, américains et asiatiques). Université Paris, Paris.
- Burnes, J. K. H. (1855 [1828]). General Remarks on the medical topography of Bhooj. In *Selections from the records of the Bombay government* (pp. 227–233). Bombay: Bombay Education Society’s Press.
- Campbell, J. M. (1880). *Gazetteer of the Bombay presidency: Cutch, Palanpur, and Mahi Kantha* (Vol. V). Bombay: Government Central Press.
- Dutta, J. (2016). *Banni Grasslands: An overview*. Retrieved October 26, 2023, from <https://www.sahapedia.org/banni-grasslands-overview>
- Gidwani, V., & Reddy, R. N. (2011). *The afterlives of ‘waste’: Notes from India for a minor history of capitalist surplus* (Vol. 43, pp. 1625–1658). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Government of Gujarat. (1971). *Gujarat state gazetteers: Kutch district*. Retrieved from <https://www.indianculture.gov.in/gazettes/gujarat-state-gazetteers-kutch-district-0>
- Holland, J. (1855). Routes between Bhooj and Ahmedabad, Anjar, Balmer, Baroda, Deesa, Guudra, Hyderabad, Jukkow Bunder, Kotasir Bunder, Kurachee, Lukput, Mandvee, Moondra, Omekot, Sukkur, Tatta, Toona Bunder etc. In R. H. Thomas (Ed.), *Selections from the records of the Bombay government* (pp. 235–287). Bombay: Bombay Education Society’s Press.
- Homes in the City. (2011). *Homes in the city: Sustainable cities, dignity for all*. Printed report.
- Kothari, R. (2013). *Memories and movements: Borders and communities in Banni, Kutch, Gujarat*. New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan.
- Kutchmitra. (2001, April 17). *In the north-eastern part of Bhuj, a temporary city is getting shape*.
- Mehta, L. (2005). *The politics and poetics of water: The naturalisation of scarcity in Western India*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Mehta, L., & Srivastava, S. (2019). Pastoralists without pasture: Water scarcity, marketisation and resource enclosures in Kutch, India. *Nomadic Peoples*, 23, 195–217. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26784419>

- Piliavsky, A. (2015). The “criminal tribe” in India before the British. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 57(2), 323–354. doi: [10.1017/S0010417515000055](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417515000055)
- Singh, D. (2022). ‘This is all waste’: Emptying, cleaning and clearing land for renewable energy dispossession in borderland India. *Contemporary South Asia*, 30(3), 402–419. doi: [10.1080/09584935.2022.2099812](https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2022.2099812)
- Singh, D. (2023). *Winds of change in a ‘saffronised’ Indian borderland: Dispossession and power in rural Kutch* (PhD thesis, of Food and Resource Economics, School of International Development). University of East Anglia and Department, University of Copenhagen, Norwich/Copenhagen.
- Sud, N. (2007). From land to the tiller to land liberalisation: The political economy of Gujarat’s shifting land policy. *Modern Asian Studies*, 41, 603–637. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/196861456?accountid=11365>
- Tyabi, A. (2006). *Bhuj: Art, architecture, history*. Singapore: Mapin Publishing.
- Virani, J. (1941). ડોલારિયો (*Dolariyo*). *Khareget*. Bhavnagar, Gujarat: Shah Nanlal Dharamshi, Shree Krishn Printings Press.
- Williams, L. F. R. (2000 [1958]). *The black hills: Kutch in history and legend: A Study in Indian local loyalties*. Bhuj: Maharao Shri Madansinhji Saheb Charitable Trust.

6 Locating Gendered Spirituality as Care, Healing, and Contestation of Norms

6.1 Introduction: Haṅgāmī Āvās – Mosaic of Religions and Religious Praxis

I love people of Kachchh more and more.
Oh God, please keep away the outside problem (intentionally) thrown at us
Oh Aal [poet], Hindus and Muslims are gently worshipping God/Allah
together
I love people of Kachchh more and more.

(Extract from Kutchi poem by Kavi Aal and performed
as a song by Devraj Gadhvi)

This chapter centres around the spirituality and religious practice in Haṅgāmī Āvās. We address them both as syncretic praxis, but also as expressions of religious identity. With this twofold focus, we draw particular attention on how syncretic praxis enacts both as care and healing, and yet is contested and pressured around communal sentiments in the wider context of Hindu nationalism, and Islamic reform in India and in Kachchh particular. As the above quote from the poem “People of Kutch” by Kavi Aal quoted in full in the preface of this book suggests, syncretism has a long history in Kachchh. Yet, as the poem also suggests, such praxis and tradition are always in connection to influences and pressures that challenge such overlapping practices, or identifications across clearly demarcated religious symbols (Sikand, 2003, p. 2).

Recalling the first visit to the Haṅgāmī Āvās construction site in May 2001, Marjaana remembers how the construction work closer to the main road was progressing faster. Those were the rows of temporary shelters that were constructed by the Swaminarayan Trust exclusively to their members (see Chapter 4). Later, when doing walks in the neighbourhood, we came across in the middle of wild growing bushes and garbage, a platform resembling a foundation of a temple, later confirmed to be the remains of the temple that was built for the Swaminarayan followers. When the temporary shelters for Swaminarayan devotees in Haṅgāmī Āvās became obsolete, the temple was taken down. The big Swaminarayan temple complex in Bhuj was inaugurated in 2012 with a presence of Chief Minister Modi, and it has since become a major pilgrimage destination for the Swaminarayan followers.

DOI: [10.4324/9781003472933-8](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003472933-8)

This chapter has been made available under a CC-BY license.

Questions of temporality of religious infrastructures such as shrines, temples, and mosques interest us. Our focus is twofold: firstly, on such praxis that has existed and practiced in the neighbourhood well before the earthquake and secondly, on such that have much younger history and presence in the neighbourhood as signs of emerging new forms of religiosity. Some of the praxis is syncretic, such as the worship at the tomb of the mysterious Gebanshah Pir (saint),¹ and annual Muharram processions. Some of it relates to settling personal grievances and transforming new religious-economic relations in the neighbourhood and beyond it. Our focus is on the experience, how religiosity enacts both as care and healing, sense of belonging but also as a location of contestation and pressures for communal sentiments in the wider context of Hindu nationalism, and political Islam in India. The chapter argues that although some of the religious praxis, such as worship of Gebanshah, pre-date the earthquake by several decades, the forms of existing and emerging religious praxis in Haṅgāmī Āvās mirror the diversity of its residents and tensions that have risen in the wider context of politicisation of religion and religious praxis – and, as we illustrate, are examples of practice of managed co-existence and peace. Simultaneously, however, such religious praxis continues to offer space for care and healing for its members, and in particular – articulations for unanswered injustice. Haṅgāmī Āvās is religiously diverse neighbourhood and observations made in this chapter draw from the period of 2017 to 2024. For example, in August 2019, when several of the praxis described in the chapter took place, commemoration of Muharram, Shivratri, Gebanshah Pir annual procession, and celebration of Eid Al-Adha all coincided with just weeks separation of each other.

The discussion of religiosity and religious praxis discussed in this chapter connects to several wider scholarly debates: firstly, the analysis of the overall role of religiosity in the aftermaths of disasters (see e.g. Marks, Lu, Cherry, & Hatch, 2015), gendered sexual politics around it (Jauhola, 2016, 2020) and attempts to make sense of the experience, and its aftermath: immediate and long-term grief, pain, loss and change in socio-economic setting; secondly, connection of the rising gurus in Gujarat, or “guru sphere” (Mehta, 2017) with that of ideals and norms on Hindu subject and Indian polity aligned with Hindutva and hegemonic politics in India; thirdly, the role of syncretism as an active process of imagining community (Green, 2012; Pandolfo, 2018; Taneja, 2013, 2017), and finally the political economy of religious donations (Eck, 2013).

This chapter suggests that religiosity and worshipping play an important role in holding on the hope for better futures and seeking healing and justice in the neighbourhood. With examples from the past 20 years, the chapter suggests that religious worship sites, such as shrines and temples, are sites of negotiation, and at times of conflict and mediation. Although in our observations, individuals belonging to both “mosque movements”, phrase used by one of our interviewees, or in Hindu nationalist movements are evident, Haṅgāmī Āvās’ religious sites described in this chapter up until now are not part of any official reform programmes of the said organisations, observed elsewhere (see e.g. Heitmeyer, 2011). However, such may emerge because of changes in leadership and religious guidance as years go by.

Drawing from ideas of intersectionality, the chapter also suggests that religious praxis in the Haṅgāmī Āvās gives light to the relations within religions, boundaries of different religions and their praxis, questions of class, gender, and caste. With the four examples, the chapter allows developing an understanding of both gendered, classed, but also caste-based religious agency, and exercise of power that challenge more formally established and regulated institutionalised forms of religiosity in the rest of the city of Bhuj. Visiting the different sites of religious praxis the chapter also visits and continues the development of the arguments made in previous chapter ([Chapter 5](#)) on negotiated and contested notions of land.

Finally, the chapter draws attention to the political economy of religious donations: visiting both high-cash flow sites and other sites that may have seen their days of abundance and continue their survival through individual donations, and goodwill of their followers. As these religious practices always are embedded in their political economic settings, new economic relationships are formed between the ones who hold the assets and donations, compared with those of mere devotees or disciples – even if considered in religious terms, as worthy recipients.

The chapter has four sections, the first section focuses on the syncretic praxis around Gebanshah Pir (mysterious Sufi sage) predating the earthquake and formation of the temporary shelter neighbourhood. The second section follows the preparations of Muharram procession in Old Bhuj by the Haṅgāmī Āvās residents, and the third section visits the Shiva temple and bird tower built in the memory of a lost daughter in an in-law abuse. The final section visits the newest temple built during the COVID-19 pandemic, the temple of Goddess Jōgaṇī called as Bhuj high court Jōgaṇī dhām.

6.2 Gebanshah Pir Shrine: Crossing Intersections of Boundaries

6.2.1 *Introduction: In the Footsteps of Mysterious Saints*

All people who are coming here with any sickness, they are getting relief. This Pir is mysterious [using word Gebhi]. They treat them like that, all the sickness is solved. Any sickness, such as legs in pain or chest in pain, they are treated here. When no other medicine is helpful, that time Pir's blessings will work. If your *dua* [prayer] is not accepted anywhere else, you can make your *dua* here and if it is accepted, then you will get the blessings.

(mujāvar/guardian of the Gebanshah tomb 01052019)

One of the Marjaana's very first tasks, since returning to Haṅgāmī Āvās in 2017, was to locate the shrine that was visible at the background of the photo of temporary shelter construction site taken by her in May 2001 ([Figure 6.1a, b](#)). The shrine stands in the middle of open landscape, Derani and Jethani hills (see [Chapter 5](#)) visible behind it. When showing the photograph to the residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās they knew immediately what it was: shrine of mysterious Gebanshah Pir.² When



Figure 6.1a, b Gebanshah Pir Dargah in 2001 and in 2024.

Source: Marjaana Jauhola.

any visitor would visit the shrine, the *mujāvar*, the guardian of the shrine, Isha, would open the iron gate, light an oil lamp, and give the visitor a coconut or jaggery *prasad*³ from Gebanshah.

The shrine stands next to the last sectors of the temporary shelter neighbourhood, predominantly Muslim residential area, built by Islamic Relief Committee in the aftermath of the earthquake. As discussed in [Chapter 5](#), the history of the management of the shrine includes a conflict between the Madhapar origin, UK-based Panktiben

in charge of shrine's overall management and decisions, and the caretakers of a mosque that was built in its proximity during the earthquake reconstruction process.

Although this violent dispute was solved and relations have remained peaceful since, the shrine and the annual procession were dividing the Muslim community locally. For the reformists following Ahl-e Sunnat and Ahl-e-Hadith movements and fatwas of Mufti-e-Kachchh (see e.g. [Bond, 2022](#)), visits to such shrines had become considered as unislamic. The status of being “mysterious” or unknown saint further meant that it was not recognised formally and it had unclear lineage to the Prophet. Brian [Bond's \(2020, 2022\)](#) previous research within Sindhi Sufist music performers indicates that the role of the Mufti-e-Kutch played an important role in changing the Sunni Muslim attitudes against shrine worship and participation in Muharram. At the same time, however, as mentioned in [Chapter 4](#), he also was well-respected across religious communities and played an important role in pacifying the communal tensions during the 2002 riots in the more Eastern parts of Gujarat.

According to one local journalist, changes in political Islam in Kachchh took a turn after the 2001 earthquake:

In Kachchh there was no Ahl-i-Hadis/Hadith movement⁴ earlier. There are two different beliefs, Ahl-i-Hadis and the other is Sunnat-ul Jamaat, latter is more liberal belief and the former is radical belief which has entered in Kachchh after the earthquake. Ahl-i-Hadis do not believe in idol worship, nor in *majaar* in shrines. They also go and break down/sabotage sometimes such structures. This sect has an obsession to Middle-East/Arabic Islam in their belief.

(interview in 2023)

Despite the increasing resistance, such tombs and shrine worship practice, remain popular across religious communities across South Asia (see e.g. [Werth, 1998](#)). Visits by people regardless of their religion are frequent to shrines such as Geban-shah connect to, for instance, in Shyam's village, to queries about the timing of monsoon rain.

As explained by another Bhuj-based Muslim “sometimes the name saints they had not visited even this place but to commemorate the saint they make the place” (interview 06082019). Geban-shah Pir shrines also bear a specific roles of communal harmony in an increasingly hostile and polarised context of India: the largest Geban-shah Pir shrine in Gujarat in Rajkot has gained publicity over the past few years, usually highlighting its role in upholding the syncretic practice that surrounds it: the shrine is visited by people from different religious communities and considered, in the current times of communalism and religious violence, as a symbol of religious unification. For example, ANI news published a story in 2019 naming the shrine as the beacon of communal harmony in Rajkot:

Who so ever bows down his head before the shrine of revered saint gets his wishes fulfilled. For the last 200 years, the shrine is visited by the people

of all ages and communities, making it a symbol of religious unification. Moreover, it also keeps on organizing several religious gatherings where the spiritual gurus from almost all the communities are invited. Bringing together all faiths under one roof and promoting the message of love and peace, the dargah serves as perfect representation of the amity and brotherhood that prevails across the country.

(ANI News, 2019)

In Bhuj, there are at least two Gebanshah Pirs: “one in Haṅgāmī Āvās and the other near the bus station” (Mujāvar/Guardian of the Gebanshah Pir tomb 01052019). As described in [Chapter 5](#), the origins of the Gebanshah, and the whole area known now as Haṅgāmī Āvās remains mysterious. However, drawing from the scholarship on Sufism and saint worship at shrines, the mysteriousness gains its own important meaning that builds on memories, but also on belonging. In traditional theological understandings, human saints were rooted to their graves ([Baljon, 1989](#), p. 191) and were embedded in a landscape that their presence made sacred ([Taneja, 2013](#), p. 156). Originally located outside of permanent settlements, Werth suggests that such shrines are connected to liminal spaces and sacred liminality, signifying dangers and uncertainties in the “realm of saints who sustains, nurture and protect” ([Werth, 1998](#), p. 86).

Tombs, however, as [Taneja \(2013, p. 142\)](#) suggests, drawing from the work of Nile [Green \(2012\)](#), are always connected to memories of distant places, besides the local ones. What is further remarkable of the shrine praxis in general is that they follow the principle of *gharib nawazi*, hospitality to strangers – which we suggest has a specific role in the communal dynamics of the Hanagami Awas, the overall rise and tensions around communalism, but also, increasing quests for justice and well-being after the earthquake. Thus, we relate the shrine worship and processions belonging to the wider role of shrines in “faith healing” ([Bellamy, 2011](#); [Pfleiderer, 1988, 2006](#); [Siddiqui, 2019](#)), which we describe in detail shortly. The next section will illustrate how these wider contexts of justice and healing occur in a shrine that crosses both gendered and communal boundaries in its guardianship.

6.2.2 *Mujāvar and the Bodily Host of Gebanshah – Crossing Gendered Communal Boundaries*

In this section, we introduce the three key people who maintain the activities at the shrine: the overall caretaker of the shrine (Panktiben), the religious guardian (*mujāvar* Isha), and a devotee who used to live in proximity of the shrine (Rubi-kaben). Compared with other more established Gebanshah Pir shrines in Gujarat, the shrine in Haṅgāmī Āvās strikes out different in its management and decision-making system: the overall management and decision-making of the bigger Gebanshah Pir shrines, such as the ones in Rajkot, are governed by the shrine committees. In Haṅgāmī Āvās, however, this role belongs solely to Panktiben, a Hindu Kachchhi Patel⁵ woman who had visited the shrine for the first time with

her father when she was 17 when Gebanshah Pir spoke to her (see also [Bellamy, 2011](#), p. xviii):

When we were young and we were used to visit Sural Bhīt temple, at that time our mother and grandmother were instructing us that do not walk in front of the Pir, go very hiddenly and cover your head. We were used to walk like that, secretly. Once when I came back from UK, I just thought, let's go, do darshan and I had no idea and I came with short clothes. It was so hot that day, I was trying to stand on my handbag. I said, this God does not exist, it is all lies. Then after that Dada [Pir] came possessed in the body of the Urbai Maa and he said: why is she saying that I am not here, I am also present [using the word *sotta*] here. I said: if you are present here, then I don't have much money I can do for you, you do something, and once I will be able to do something I will do it. Then, naturally God gave me the wealth and I did it all by myself, as no one wanted to work here as it is so far in the jungle.

(interview 07082019)

The above explanation establishes her connection with the shrine and how she became the bodily host of the saint. Urbai Maa, the bodily host of Gebanshah at the time, passed the position to Panktiben:

On that day I didn't say with loud voice, I said it in my heart...I said it from my heart...if I said it loudly then everybody gets to know...I had seen many miracles, in UK I had seen miracles.

...

I am ready to leave whole world for this, this is only my life

I have two daughters and one son

But I didn't have husband

When my son was 1 year old, he left, after that I have been alone.

(interview 07082019)

Panktiben comes originally from the town of Madhpar that adjoins the border with the Haṅgāmī Āvās and GIDC area. When taking the position of an overall caretaker of the shrine, she cleaned the land from bushes. Ever since, she has used the wealth created with the worship and consultations of people in the United Kingdom to build a shrine around the tomb of Gebanshah Pir, adjoining small building where the *mujāvar* of the shrine resides, and organises an annual procession in August that has grown in size and in following over the past 40 years. In short, belonging to a conservative Hindu family of Swaminarayan worshippers, her transformation since the age of 17 – over 40 years ago – into a bodily host of Gebanshah transgresses gendered role expectations of her own community, but also the Muslim community of the area.

The daily and weekly rituals of the shrine were performed for one decade up until his death in December 2023, by Isha, the *mujāvar* appointed by the earlier guardian Urbai maa before their passing away in 2014. However, Isha had lived beside the shrine

for long time, earlier as a shepherd, recalling the duration recollecting past disasters in Gujarat: “I am here since many years. When there was a flood at Morbi⁶ and then in Kandla⁷ at that time I was the only one here. Earlier it was jungle, no houses were here” (*Mujāvar*/guardian 01052019, 00:37). Panktiben recalls his hard childhood:

It is very big story... my father had brought Isha to the shrine. Someone had thrown him in the thorns [in Madhapar] when he was just born. He was very small. Then one shepherd heard him crying, saw him and had taken care of him. He took the child with him. When Isha grew up he joined to graze the animals. The shepherd beat Isha too much, and when the shepherd passed away, his children threw Isha from their house.

(Panktiben 11082019)

Daud, one of the first residents in the whole area, commemorated Isha's life when we met in 2024:

He was very long time here, since he was young. Earlier he was the main shepherd for the Mughals. He was grazing the cows of Mughals in the whole Awas area but also Bhujio hill area. He used to live earlier in the Kamp area and in Madhapar with Idlabar Mughal, but once he was no longer able to walk long distances, he started to live at Gebanshah shrine. He was roaming with the cows for 24 hours. When Mughals found out that Isha is no longer capable, then they made him to stay at the shrine. Since long time, he had no-one as a parent. He was just staying at Gebanshah and local people were giving him food. Like that he was getting his life on.

(interview 23022024)

Rubikaben, a former resident of Haṅgāmī Āvās, became a devotee of Gebanshah over the years living next to the shrine. Since the passing of way of *mujāvar* in December 2023, she has continued organising the weekly worship at the shrine. She has had a key role for several years in taking part in the procession preparations such as cleaning the shrine, participating in its refurbishment such as the new paint and decorations of the shrine, and helping in the cooking process, and cleaning the shrine afterwards. She used to visit the Gebanshah Pir in Rajkot with her family and relates Gebanshah Pir in Haṅgāmī Āvās to the shrine in Rajkot.

The annual procession deliberations in August were for several years led by the *mujāvar* of Sokha up until his death in 2022. Since passing away, the deliberations are taken care of by the new *mujāvar*, younger brother of the previous *mujāvar*. As his younger brother is not yet fluent in the performance, Panktiben has taken the organisational responsibilities:

She will come for the mela [in August], she is taking responsibilities that Bapu that passed away [person who was coming from Rajkot], so Panktiben is bearing that responsibility.

(interview 01032023)

6.2.3 Procession – Towards Collective Spiritual Renewal

The procession, taking place annually in August, follows the route Panktiben and her father used to walk: starting from another shrine Kasamsha Pir in Madhapar and performing rituals to place the *cādars* (coverings) on the tombs; walking through the close by neighbourhood, across the railway, the farms, grazing land, and St Mary's school before reaching to Haṅgāmī Āvās; visiting the Ashaba pir shrine located close to Gebanshah Pir shrine; placing new *cādars* on the tombs before reaching to the Gebanshah Pir shrine; and repeating the placing of new *cādars* to Gebanshah Pir (Figure 6.2). The procession takes place in the morning after the previous day's *takrir*, discourse and recital performed by the *mujāvar* of Sokha, and followed by hours long qawwali lasting early into the next morning – in 2019 it lasted until 4am – and cooking of food throughout the night for the next day. The communally distributed food would be offered for all after the procession and prayers (for the importance of communal food as a perpetual sacrifice, see e.g. Werbner, 1998).

In 2019, when Marjaana and Shyam joined the procession for the first time, the procession and the event at the shrine that followed were big in size – in both numbers of people following the procession – but also joining the programme at the shrine. As we discussed in Chapter 5, this has not always created positive reactions within the neighbourhood, but rather, the shrine and the procession have become sites of contestation of power and authority to run and even host the saint bodily. This seems to bother Panktiben also but from the point of view of the wishes of Gebanshah Pir: she was worried that Gebanshah will be unhappy of the huge event the procession has turned into. She even went so far to make a remark that if the rains would cancel the procession altogether, it would be a sign that Gebanshah was not happy how the event had turned out, with loudspeakers and all. She further reminded us that this all started as her private journey, not a huge public mela. The increase in size of the event had turned the worshipping into a fair with food stalls and entertainment for children. However, COVID-19 lockdown measures had changed the scenario for several years for at least three years.



Figure 6.2 QR code for the video Procession (08:16).

Source: <https://youtu.be/Smdq3y8nmo>

Besides the procession with drums, the annual event consists of a *kavvālī* ⁸ performance in the evening after the formal prayers and talks by the invited imam. As Bond describes, such performances for the musicians are not just expressive textually, rhythmically, or melodically: they are forms of worship with affect – both in the seen and unseen world (Bond, 2020, p. 119).

6.2.4 *Gift Donation Economy of the Shrine Practice: Renewal of the Self and Community*

Previous research on Sufi shrine practice has emphasised the hierarchical universe of the shrine: gifts, be it food, animals, or money become channelled either “downwards” to the poor, or “upwards” as praise of the saint – who is the ultimate giver accepting gifts from God only (Basu, 1998, p. 134; Werbner, 1998, p. 103). In the context of wider Indian religious praxis of Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism, *dānā* or gift which is understood as a flow from a giver to a “worthy recipient, with no expectation whatsoever of return” (Eck, 2013, p. 361).

Although researchers of Islamic praxis have been, for a reason, wary of the Occidentalism of such research that analyses the shrine gift culture as instances of self-interested motives (see e.g. Werbner, 1998), in the current day’s politicised religious praxis, such possibility was reflected to us on multiple times. Christophe Jaffrelot suggests, that for the wealthy trading classes in Gujarat, patronising religious institutions and spiritual movements has been a way to balance, and even seek catharsis for, the sense of guilt of their material gains (Jaffrelot, 2024, pp. Chapter 9, paragraph 10, 256/472).

Thus, refusals to receive donations, as described by Panktiben below, can also be seen as a form of anti- and counter-structure resistance (Werbner 1998, p. 95):

I am doing this [procession] alone, because I don’t take anyone’s money... otherwise many want to come here saying that I am from BJP and Congress, but I don’t like that.

(interview 07082019)

We read this as a refusal of the influence of direct power by politicians, or RSS, in steering the future and direction of the shrine. Previous research has suggested that, for example, RSS actively engages with Islam, but also syncretic practices, as one form of control and domination (Pal, 2022), with the aim of moulding the older syncretic praxis into that is supportive of their agenda. However, refusal to accept donations can also be seen as a way to hold the power of the shrine decisions and ensure that the wealthy powerful worshippers cannot take over the shrine for their purposes (interview 12082021), but also, that the benefits of the shrine worship get channelled by Panktiben.

However, although keeping the big donors abide and literally refusing to receive their donations, two businesspeople with significant wealth and socio-economic and political position (BJP) in Bhuj, were successful in convincing Panktiben to visit and consult *mujāvar* of Gebanshah Pir in Sokha village close to town of

Rajkot in Saurashtra district regarding the annual procession. This connection was built through a *barkat* practice – a belief that financial donations to such shrines will give them possibilities for further financial gains in business. One of them, who had lived in Rajkot before settling in Bhuj, had gained rewards for his business after having donated for the shrine in Sokha and decided to become a frequent visitor in Haṅgāmī Āvās after having heard there is a shrine and procession organised annually in Bhuj.

Although refusing direct influence of money into her decision making, Panktiben recognises how the shrine has helped her with the wealth accumulation. This, as we discuss in the following, has created tensions between Panktiben and the residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās who are both disciples of Gebanshah Pir, but who also participate in important ways in day-to-day organisation of the shrine activities whilst Panktiben stays in the United Kingdom.

The closest people would reflect on this: when a famous singer in Kachchh used to perform, year after year, he was considered to have become greedy for money and would play only one song that he knew Panktiben is possessed as Pir. As a result, she would throw all the money what she has in front of him. Reflected by Rubikaben: “due to that reason we are not calling him anymore: we were watching the performance until 2 am and he was repeating just one song. Of course, Madam would not be herself and that time no one can stop her”. As Panktiben herself described it: “At the time, I will not recognize anyone, I am not in myself, Pir comes to me, and due to that reason I don’t recognize anyone... This is not allowed in my community, but I do it”, she points out. The food is served to followers and worshippers next day and in recent years it was also advertised in the local newspaper: “all are welcome”, Panktiben pointed out.

As [Chapter 5](#) indicates, Rubikaben’s relationship with the shrine, and the bodily host of Gebanshah Pir, Panktiben, is complicated: at the time of moving in to Haṅgāmī Āvās, she had no choice than moving into the house built next to the shrine, even if she was warned against so (see e.g. [Werth, 1998](#) for the sacred connection between shrines and wilderness). Over the years, she had built the relationship with the shrine, gained consolation from *mujāvar* Isha, but also learned to negotiate with Panktiben. She recalls:

When we built the house at that time, also we got to know that, Bapu (Gebansah) told us, he knows everything. I told to Bava (*mujāvar*) and he asked to Bapu, because he can talk with him. We built the house and my roof was under construction at the time of the fair when Panktiben was here... at that time I met her for the first time, she told me that why you came here to live, your life will be destroyed if you come here. Then I said to her that after too much struggle I am making my house, two times I have lost my home, once at the time of the earthquake, and other at the time of road cutting, this is the third time I am making a home. Then she told here it is nothing, then I cried and over there and went to my home, the whole night I was not able to sleep then next day I came here...

Then I talked with Bava (*mujāvar*), and I asked that if something is like that then we sell the house in this condition I don't want this house, then Bava told me to come in shrine, then he talked with Bapu all the things. Then he said it's okay for you stay here, you will not get any problems... with the blessings of almighty we don't have any problems until now...

In our discussions, we felt that residents in Haṅgāmī Āvās felt their economic hardship was not taken seriously enough by Panktiben – to whom, understandably, main concern was to ensure the safe and sound continuation of the Gebanshah Pir's worship and annual processions (see [Chapter 6](#)). In fact, situation for Rubikaben and her family became critical at the time of the COVID-19 – all livelihoods collapsed, and they decided to move out from Haṅgāmī Āvās. She keeps coming to the shrine for consultations, and after the death of *mujāvar* Isha in December 2023, to organise the weekly worship.

Similarly, in our last discussions with the *mujāvar* Isha in 2023, he was complaining of his difficult and hard living condition according to which he was not receiving monthly money and all repair works of the shrine were due:

During monsoon lot of water is coming inside the shrine, no one can sleep there if it is raining. Bapu does not allow anyone to cut this tree [inside the shrine]. I told to Panktiben [about the tree, and the repairs] but she said there is no order from the Babu. Normally she gives me 10,000Rs but this year she didn't give me anything. Maybe other people have used that money. But I don't care, I am here due to the faith for Gebanshah.

Some people have said to Panktiben that Isha gets lots of money and food from the local people, so that's why she has not paid me anything. There are people who wish me bad things here.

She has said that when there is order from Gebanshah, I will organise the mela again. She wants to establish a shed in front of Gebanshah. There is no order from Gebanshah of the place where Isha will be living. Bapu has said no to her – on the works.

I clean this place every day. It is not easy to stay here. There is no water. She will realise when she asks someone else to take care of this place. It is not easy, the person would need electricity, water. I don't want electricity, I am staying where without it. Because Bapu said to me nothing about electricity. She is not realising it. You please make her understand that you will not find a person like Isha.

I am all alone here. No one is coming to me. If I sleep inside there is no electricity. Then mosquitos bother me. If I sleep outside, I catch a cold and fall ill. There are some people roaming with axes and weapons, so police told me not to sleep outside, always sleep inside. Otherwise I enjoy outside, but police has instructed me to sleep inside. Please make her understand that she would not find a *mujāvar* like me.

Gebanshah will be angry on me if I accept money. She is trying to make me nervous, that she will appoint a new *mujāvar* and she is asking me to feed that *mujāvar*. How would I feed him, she would not find a person like me.

She called me and said she has hurt her leg. She called me and said that Isha I will come and take care of everything. At the time when she comes, she is surrounded by people and there is lot of misinformation about me. They think that Isha will eat everything. No no, I sit here day and night. No one else would be able to do that.

Yet other times he would describe how Panktiben was taken care of him economically, providing clothes and paying for his Hajj pilgrimage. These reflections, all in all, relate to a significant inequality embedded in the shrine practice and its maintenance: whereas the overall caretaker comes from a community and family that has accumulated wealth and land in Kachchh and overseas and is able to organise the annual procession with the accumulated donations locally and in United Kingdom, the *mujāvar* is dependent on the goodwill the caretaker, shrine worshippers and the residents to sustain his life minimally bearable – as a worthy recipient.

6.2.5 Conclusions: Future of the Shrine?

In February 2024, whilst transcribing the interviews made at the shrine, we paid a short visit to the shrine to meet with the *mujāvar* Isha. Instead of meeting him, we learned the news that he had passed away in December 2023, changing the day-to-day affairs and dynamics at the shrine completely. As quoted in the previous section, already few years earlier, Isha was concerned of the future of the shrine, stating that it would be difficult to find anyone to replace him, if the need would arise. After his passing away, a new *mujāvar* was appointed to the shrine, but according to the discussions with the disciples, they were not happy with him and his practice of using intoxicants. Since then, the weekly offerings at the shrine have been managed collectively by Rubikaben and other female neighbours.

To conclude, aligning with the previous analysis of shrine praxis (see e.g. Pfeiderer, 1988, 2006, p. 221; Siddiqui, 2019, p. 21), the leadership role of the shrine by a divorced Hindu devotee of Gebanshah Pir, and *hazri* (trance) experienced by Panktiben both transgress boundaries of gendered public roles worldview of many Hindu and Muslim communities locally. Siddiqui (2019) has further suggested that such transgression further makes the shrines exist as in-between spaces – between Islamic orthodoxy and religious cosmopolitanism. Syncretic shrine praxis further continues to exist despite the pressures from Hindu nationalism, and growth of Sunni Islamic orthodoxy (Siddiqui, 2019, p. 70). However, the shrine practice is also a practice of religious donation economy, and our insights with *mujāvar* and the devotee residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās point towards economic conflicts that appear between them and the caretaker of the shrine, who possesses true power of the donations, and thus, the channelling of the Gebansah Pir's wishes.

6.3 Muharram Procession – Continued Embodied and Affected Presence in Old Bhuj

Lit with colourful lights, the decorated Horse of Karbala (zūljanāḥ) from Haṅgāmī Āvās has reached Bhid Gate and the Alavadi mosque. Maruf stands smilingly next to it taking care of his four-wheeler vegetable cart decorated with lights and rose ornaments that holds offerings, burning incense sticks, small replica of the Horse of Karbala (zūljanāḥ), and a generator that keeps the lights on during the procession. He lids the incense sticks. The road is populated by those participating in the procession, with Horse of Karbala, and replicas of mosques. Groups of drum players, and young boys holding swords are gathering in the middle of the street and both sides of the streets are filled with spectators who are taking selfies with their mobile phones and selling and buying colourful balloons and horns and snacks. A well-known Langa family drummer who we know from the Gebanshah Pir procession, greets us and asks the group of ten young boys, with whom he is following the procession, to start playing. The intensity of the drumming increases. Groups of oṣāṇī performers, some of them very young boys, do circles of dancing and hitting their chests with their hands swinging in the air. Maruf, accompanied with his whole family, pulls forward the cart on which the Horse of Karbala of Haṅgāmī Āvās is standing, with the rest of the procession. His wife walks beside the Horse cart holding on to its rails. Every now and then they have to pause to wait the groups before them continue the walk. A drummer group keeps the beat and the rhythm in front of them.

(construction of notes of the Muharram procession)

[in Haṅgāmī Āvās. we are watching the recordings and photos of the procession described above with Maruf]

Maruf: Oh, it is from that ground... This was at the time when the rain has just started.

Woman who had joined to watch the videos with us: Look, look it is me here, we have just crossed the muddy area. We are saying *jahusein* [mourning shouting meaning, ooh husein]

Maruf: you see that in these busy times, how we are organizing decorations and all, it is so amazing.

Mariya, wife of Maruf: Allah is looking at everything.

Maruf: Look, this is the horse we are having; it is from the mosque area [in Bhid]. This horse which we got is so old, since the princely state, one of the oldest ones. I have taken this horse from Sanjote Nagar. The horse of our community is also like this, very old one. It is also part of the tradition that we gift the horses to one another, and no-one takes money of it.

...

This is my elder son. This video is when our boys were doing *dhaamal*,⁹ they are from Awas. They all are from Awas.

Look, they both [horses] look so beautiful.

Look, that is Rajiv bhai – every community participates in this procession – Maheswari and others – whatever at the time when we introduce the procession with the hand, that time all the worship takes place with coconuts, that all would be by Hindus. Everyone would participate with us.

Our attention to the Muharram commemoration, the start of the Muslim new year, and a commemoration of death of the prophet Muhammed's grandson Hussein ibn Ali, happened precisely at that same moment when we decided to shift the methodological attention away from the 2001 events and the temporary shelter construction (see [Chapter 2](#) for details of this shift; [Figure 6.3](#)). Literally, when meeting Maruf in front of his house, we could see how first his facial expression after seeing us approaching him showed unenthusiasm. Later when he realised, we no longer insisted on hearing the hardships and the failures of the temporary shelter project and instead turned our focus on the ongoing celebration of the Muharram month, first month in Islamic calendar, he was enthusiastically introducing us to the arrangements and preparations for the tenth day Muharram procession (Ashura) taking place in the streets of the Old Bhuj. He showed us their Horse of Karbala (zūljanāh) – donated by a Muslim community in Sanjote Nagar, which Haṅgāmī Āvās-based youngsters had decorated in Haṅgāmī Āvās – process that takes up to 15 days. The horse, as Maruf kept calling the zūljanāh, was kept safe until the procession days approached in one of the remaining United Nation's Development

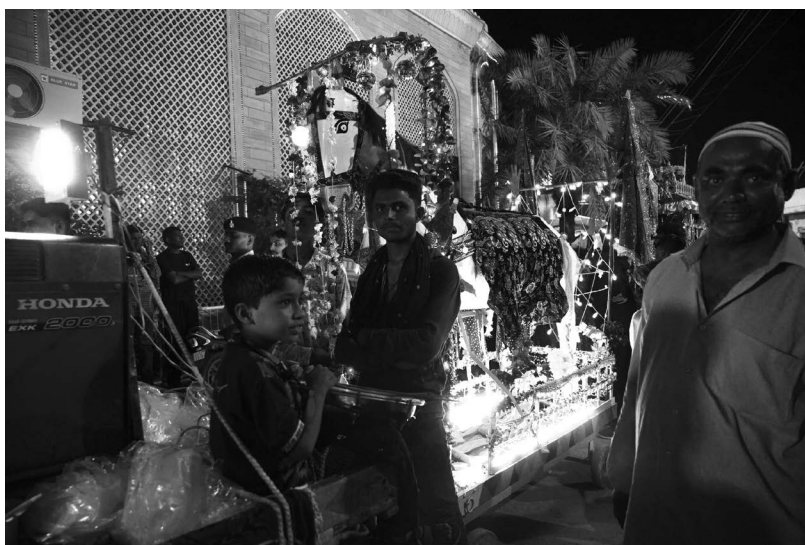


Figure 6.3 Maruf smiling next to the Horse of Kerbala from Haṅgāmī Āvās at Muharram procession in 2019 in Old Bhuj.

Source: Marjaana Jauhola.

Programme (UNDP) temporary shelters of the 16th sector. In 2019, Muharram coincided with heavy monsoon rains, and thus the horse needed special protection. It is when we were reminded once again, how the use, importance, and meaning of the temporary shelters had changed multiple times over the past 20 years.

The Muharram celebration in Bhuj has a long history. The Ashura procession on the tenth day moving across the old Bhuj from the Bhid gate in the East and ending at Sarpat Gate in the West of old Bhuj (Bond, 2022, pp. 13–14) has been conducted for centuries. Curiously, for the many Haṅgāmī Āvās participants such as Maruf, the route passes by their old homes and neighbourhoods which were destroyed either by the 2001 earthquake, or in the subsequent town planning exercise. Maruf and his family lived in Soni Bazaar before the earthquake. His both paternal and maternal families are from Bhuj, and at our first meeting in 2018, he recalled his schooldays in Vaniyavad in old Bhuj, and games that he and his friends used to play on the narrow lanes of the Old Bhuj (interview 10092018). In his words, “I donated my land to the government” as part of the road widening process of the town planning. A new neighbourhood marketplace was built in the place of their small one room home. For a full one year, the family lived at two different temporary tent sites in the city. The loss of home for the urban development feels unjust.

In 2020, along with six to seven other Khalifa families, his family decided to move to Haṅgāmī Āvās, temporary shelters provided by Islamic Relief Committee, as part of the discussion of staying safe at time when the violent riots were taking place in other parts of Gujarat such as Ahmedabad, Baroda and Godhra. Although no direct violence was targeted to Muslims living in Bhuj, it is clear from the discussions that the events have left marks as violence has been experienced and shared indirectly. Maruf recalls how some Muslim families migrated to Bhuj from the violence and its uncertain aftermaths in search of more secure livelihoods. Furthermore, despite being dislocated for over a year due to the earthquake and moving to a new house in 2002 the period is referred to us as “riot” – *danga*.

Thus, we suggest, building on Bond’s notion that Muharram offers working class to take over the streets (Bond, 2022, p. 10) as a combination of martyrdom of Hussain and enjoyment (*maza*) (Bond, 2022, p. 4), it also continues to mark Haṅgāmī Āvās’ residents continued embodied and affected presence in old Bhuj – or as Farhana Ibrahim has called it, to make affective claims to the city (Ibrahim, 2018) – despite their dispossession of home and dislocation from it quite dramatically over 20 years ago. Songs performed at the procession include Sindhi poet-saint Shāh ‘Abdul Latīf Bhitā’ī’s (1689–1752) poetry and according to Kachchhi singers provide perspectives on “love and sacrifice” (Bond, 2022, pp. 15–18), and old Bhuj as a site of the procession provides a specific context of remembrance of the 2001 earthquake and sacrifices made as a result of it. Bond suggests:

although many Muslim communities have stopped commemorating Muharram over the past thirty or so years, Hindu-Muslim tensions have prompted some Muslims to return to attending Muharram events for the sake of Muslim solidarity, even if they believe them to be legally dubious in Islam.

(Bond, 2022, p. 32)

The earthquake in 2001 had totally damaged Maruf's knee, and after four operations in Mehsana district in Gujarat, he had to take rest, as he expressed it, for two years before being able to consider returning to any work. Since 2004–2005 he's been selling vegetables in Haṅgāmī Āvās. A crisis of livelihoods – as he could not return to his old job as loading and unloading of goods arriving at Bhuj railway station. However, as our discussion unfolded, the content towards his life and circumstances became clearer, since moving to Haṅgāmī Āvās he had become in charge of the Muharram celebration in Haṅgāmī Āvās:

Maruf: Since Awas has existed, we have not missed one year. There would be also *majelis* [gathering at one place], *takrir* [discourse] would be there, and *nyaaz* [eating together, *khavo*, fried rice].

Shyam: Who is donating?

Maruf: Everyone, some give 100, some 50 some 500. In the end I am there if there are any unmet costs. I will fill the gaps. It's not necessary that everyone pays, but it is important we ask the contribution, as the feeling grows that it is us and people would go – not a private matter organized by me. As per their faith, they can pay anything, main thing is that they participate.

I am blessed enough that once in a year, if I bear the whole expenses, it is ok. But it would become seen as a private occasion and no-one would come. Then it is useless, we need people to join. Then only *mulana* [mul-lah] would agree to speak and join if there are 150–200 people, the normal amount of people we get here.

Men would be less, compared to women. Only 40–50 men would come, more would be ladies.

If people participate, they also help in the management and labour and it also builds unity.

Shyam: The preparation, where does it start?

Maruf: In Islam, year starts with Muharram. We do the *majlis* [gathering] when it starts, when we see the moon. There is *nisam* [hand of Ali's wife Fatima, symbolizes strength in affliction and protection from pain, abundance and faithfulness], some of us we go around with *nisam* and do *dhamaal* [dance piercing the body with skewers and daggers]. When we come back, we fix the *nisam* here. Then we light the *lomai* [light], coconut, incense sticks. That's how it starts. From the 2nd day the *majlis* would start. *Nisam* would be on *amas* [new moon], the starting of Muharram month. The moon will be visible after two days, when it is seen, then the *majlis* starts and continues for 10 days.

Night of the 10th and day of the 11th, we also take a round with the horse. We do *majlis* at 12 at night, we call local people and *mulana* [mul-lah]. This round on the 10th, we only go until the train tracks in GIDC. The next day we go from here to train track by foot, then from there, we get everything on a small truck, and we reach Bhid gate to join the big procession.

We get legal permission – we always get a police to accompany us. At Bhid we get the procession number [to indicate our location in the procession].

People who organize this event is called *mātāmi*. I am *mātāmi* of my area, and I have all the responsibility if anything happens for people participating from my area, such as injuries. Altogether there are three meetings of the *mātāmi* at the police station. We meet there and they ask us, give us instructions on what not to take into the procession, such as knives, swords: what to do and what not to do. Then they also assure us the protection, if there is anyone who attempts to disturb the procession, we can contact them. They let us sit on the chairs, offer us tea. Also the president of *tajia committee* [procession committee] will be present. The time of filling the form for the procession, we do our signatures that time that we are the responsible persons of the procession. On that evening it was early morning at 4am. When we reached back home, it was already 5am.

The procession and every group have their own numbers. The first is the chariot, then there would be horses. Hijras would always be there.

The procession is the tradition since the princely state. Because Awas is new, we started later, our number is 44. In the beginning, there are numbers of the oldest processions of Bhuj. Earlier it was numbering based on communities. Chariot would be by Siddhis, Hajan community would have horse, then Lohar would have *sage* [tabut type], then also Turks would have something –the procession used to be divided as per community. Meman community had a small sage. Did you see the Khoja with black clothes, that was very interesting, did you see it?

Khoja came a bit late, around 10pm they come from their mosque. They don't have horses, they call it Alam [bibi-ka-alam]. They sing, they do *dhamaal*, they bleed, sometimes it is difficult to look at them, that much they hurt themselves. Knife you cannot take with you but *jenjirs* [iron chains] are allowed. Sometimes people who are already intoxicated, they get injured, last time it was two people. They just try to show off to others and without any manner, they may also hurt others.

Hijras would always be there in the chariot. They have joined recently. Earlier they would have their own procession. Siddhi people are having it since the beginning and they do it as they had the tradition when still living in Africa.

Maruf: This is called *patni* dance. These were from camp site area. They were drunk. They later on hurt themselves with the knife on their forehead.

Dhamaal is different from this. This is *patni*.

Khoja people do it very aggressively, they put knife in a chain, if you see them, you would feel dizzy seeing them. They walk on burning coals.

Someone comments: That area would be *ped pandal* we [round, who is the leader of the procession, will do religious rituals that the area is secure for the people even with knives, and burning coals. Nothing would happen to them as there is rituals completed for the area]. Without that ritual the person cannot tolerate that amount of pain.

Today is the fourth day, after 36 days, the separate procession would take place. Last year they [Khoja] did not do it, because of their internal conflict. They celebrate mostly in Kera. The celebration is called *thandak*.

We're offered lemon soda and the couple starts preparing for the vegetable cart round in Haṅgāmī Āvās. The soda offers a bridge to return to the couples versatile religious practice and service:

Maruf: I was making sharbat for Friday *namaaz*.

Shyam: How many people do you normally expect on that day?

Maruf: Approximately for 100 people. On my expense, it makes me feel good.

Shyam: Which mosque is that?

Maruf: It is ahle Hadis mosque [Rahmaniya mosque, behind the Ashaba Pir Dargah in Awas]. There are two mosques in Awas, one is Ahle Hadis and another is Sunni. They don't worship our pirs and imams. Not dargah not pir, they worship directly Allah. They mullahs and mosques are different. These are all the different sects, as they are Voras and Khojas. They don't worship pirs, or fakirs.

[the discussion turns to Gebanshah Pir]

Maruf: Patel lady is organizing the procession...we go there and we participate in Gebanshah...

Mariya, wife of Maruf: We have very big faith in Gebanshah. When there was an earthquake, my son was one year old [who died in the earthquake]. He was still having breast milk, after that I got two sons, because of the blessings of Gebanshah. Our situation was so bad, he was in the accident and all other things. Due to this all, Allah and Gebanshah, we are ok. We have great faith in them.

6.4 Coping with Daughter's Dowry-Connected Death: Collective Commemoration at Bird Tower and Khetarpar/Shiva Temple

On one of our walks across the area of Haṅgāmī Āvās, we passed the Karsanvari pond (see discussion in [Chapter 5](#)) and the Khetarpar (Shiva) shrine that was initially built after 2001 on a spot where someone had killed a cobra, and the currently existing newer shrine was built where the snake was buried ([Figure 6.4](#)). We stopped at a bird feeding tower (*chabutro* in Gujarati) built just behind the shrine. Such bird towers are common in Indian/Gujarati/Kachchhi towns, the biggest one in Bhuj is at Bhid Gate in Old Bhuj, surrounded by daily street and scrap market. Feeding pigeons is considered auspicious, especially by Kshatriya, and Brahmin communities.

We were greeted by Jigna who invited us to hear her and her family's story – and how it related to the temple and the bird tower. The family belongs to Goswami community¹⁰ living in Haṅgāmī Āvās and before their current house, they lived five



Figure 6.4 Bird tower next to Karsanvari lake.

Source: Marjaana Jauhola.

years in the UNDP temporary shelters in the sector 10. Their old home was demolished to free land for the first permanent houses built to Haṅgāmī Āvās.

The family that lives close to the shrine and the bird tower, consists of Jigna, her husband, elderly mother-in-law, two sons and a daughter. As we ask about the bird tower and its story, the great loss of the family is revealed to us. Their oldest daughter passed away at the age of 18 after 12 months of marriage due to dowry, death staged as a suicide enacted by the in-laws. Described to as a mental torture, the family explained that the position of a daughter-in-law, such as their daughter's, within the in-law family depends on the dowry paid by her parents, but also the dowry paid by other daughters-in-law. The mother explained:

The poor family gets in trouble in these situations, the “money man” [paisa wallah] can afford but the poor family cannot, so they suffer. If one girl brings a big dowry, then another has to suffer. She would be told all the time that you brought just little.

She got married at the age of 18 but her in-laws killed her. Then we made this bird tower (*chabutro*) in her memory. Then we gave punishment to her husband and mother-in-law. The mother-in-law was sentenced to jail for 12 months and then they offered us money in return as a compromise [so that the mother-in-law would not have to go to prison]. We refused to take money but told them to build this temple. It is still incomplete, now there are no donors so it's not getting completed.

The money from the in-laws was used to rebuild the 2001 built Khetarpar shrine dedicated to black cobra deity into a Shiva shrine – but the family complained the money was only enough to build a small temple. Two years later, the bigger Shiva temple, bird tower, and a water tank for animals were to be completed with the donations of the neighbours and beyond.

The father complained,

There is no income but we are covering all the expenses for the temple... Shravan month is there so people are donating.... Here they are taking donations from everyone, but in villages, no one charge Bavaji [Goswami community]... here [in urban areas] no one comes in the temple even in during the Shravan month...

On 30 August 2019, on the new moon of the Shravan month, which is considered specifically auspicious for Shiva and Vishnu followers, the family organised a prayer ceremony in which *arti* – waving of lights in front of deities – was performed at the old Khetarpar/Shiva shrine. *Arti* in Sanskrit means something that removes darkness.

Shiva temples are managed by Goswami community priests, unlike other temples that are taken care of Brahmins. The family had visited other families living in Haṅgāmī Āvās to ask donations for the event. The donations were used to pay for the band and singers and the sound equipment needed for the event. The puja itself consisted of the Goswami priest preparing the shrine by decorating the Shivalinga with fresh flowers and prepared the *dhup* with burning charcoal with drops of ghee and sap of guggul tree (myrrh) and when it smokes it is circulated in front of the Shivalinga by the priest. The ashes were later used for marking the forehead of women participating the worship. The female family members joined in the preparation of the *arti* plate consisting of lights prepared from ghee and cotton buds which was first circulated by the priest, then the mother inside the shrine, and then plate was moved outside the shrine where all women participants from different communities (Goswami, Jadeja, Bhanushali, and so on) had formed a semi-circle and they held and circulated the *arti* plate together. This worship centred the women of the community in the middle, and only the father of the family followed inside the shrine to take part in *arti*. Other male participants remained in a distance observing the worship to take place.

Jigna's husband concluded the establishment of the shrine to both the dowry death of his daughter and to their religiosity:

we told them that do one thing, make a temple here in her name... and then people got together over here and made the temple ... that's why this temple is in our daughter's name... her soul will get benefits for this...

But why we built temple here that people get to know that who is Shiva, why we made bird feeding area, bird come eat and get good things... this all are good deeds...

And if anyone is making the temple then they are making for someone else... any charity has done or something like that, then only they can make...

If you do this thing, then you will not be sad in your lifetime...

We left the puja when Bhajan, devotional song, “Sukh ke sab saathi” (at the time of happiness), made famous in the 1970 Bollywood film *Gopi*, was played. The song contemplates the difficulties in life and how people are accompanied with others at the times of happiness, but abandoned alone when facing sorrows, how at the end of the day, humans possess nothing permanently, and how there is no difference between the royals and their servants when the end of this life arrives. The temple, bird tower, and the collective worship with devotional songs such as “Sukh ke sab saathi” point towards the collective social grief and how both the family, but also the wider neighbourhood participates in commemorating the memory of the dowry-lost daughter.

6.5 Becoming a Bhuvā and Reclaiming of an Old Family Shrine as the High Court of Bhuj

We arrive at the premises of the high court of Bhuj a bit late, but are invited to join the session that is held in a small building behind the temple. Many people have gathered in the room to seek consultation from the Mātāji Jōgaṇī – who speaks through bhuvā¹¹ – the son of the former local project manager of the temporary shelter project in Haṅgāmī Āvās. Bhuvā sits on a raised stool and is surrounded by his closest aides, including his father, Raju. The family seeking help sits in front of him, whilst the others wait their turn behind. A loud recorded North Gujarati Daak-music plays from the speakers and is managed by bhuvā’s aides on a smart phone.

A family has arrived from the city of Mandvi in South of Kachchh. Their son is suffering from heavy shaking (*vaso*) and the family wants to consult mātāji to find out which Goddess has entered him. The family explains they’ve purchased new land some time ago. They had consulted a local bhuvā to know to which Goddess they should dedicate the remains of a temple on the land. Having completed the temple, new problems in the family have arisen and the family thinks it is because they might have dedicated the temple to a wrong Goddess – as they have no family connections to the previous owners of the land, and thus the knowledge would have not passed on to them.

Bhuvā puts his hand on a small pouch and takes out grains of rice for his father to inspect them. Knowing the number of rice grains without seeing them or calculating them with fingers indicates the connection to the mātāji has been established, and the advice can be sought.

After few questions, bhuvā suggests that there has been an unnatural death of a small girl in the family and suggests to the family to return another day, when mātāji will give further light on the matter. Father of bhuvā confirms, if there is an improvement, you come back within a month. The family departs, leaving offerings to the mātāji and new people stand up to get closer to bhuvā. Later in our discussion the father describes how in this case the boy was shaking and became miserable as they had no connection to Dada/God of their temple, as it did not belong to them. The boy also was a bhuvā but he was still too young to know the rules that he needs to follow for eating,

sleeping and worshipping. “Due to our mātāji’s blessings, we have made thirty to forty bhuvās in different areas”, father proudly tells us. When we depart from the premises, we pay attention to the temporary shelter produced bamboo sheets that are used as the roof of the temple. The other situations consulted on the same day ranged from caste-related situations managing job/livelihoods uncertainties and unreturned debt, labour conflict in a housing society, and control of wife to manage husband-wife relations, and management of inter-caste affairs.

On this February Sunday in 2023, we witnessed five more families that had arrived to consult the mātāji through bhuvā (Figure 6.5). Such sessions were in early days of 2021 held daily in the evenings, but in order to cater for the increasing demands from women, the sessions are now held at daytime, two times a week. The temple and consultation room are built to replace a small family temple built by Raju in 2011 on a piece of land that he had got hold of at the time of the earthquake temporary shelter construction – not as an eligible resident who had lost his house in the earthquake (see Chapter 3) – but through his position as the driver of the director of the organisation building temporary shelters in Haṅgāmī Āvās, as some others did too. Life after moving to Haṅgāmī Āvās was rough for the family: Raju claims to have been imprisoned on false accusations of sexual harassment by the powerful



Figure 6.5 Bhuj high court Jōgaṇī dhām in 2023.

Source: Marjaana Jauhola.

individuals within Haṅgāmī Āvās using the SC/ST Atrocity Act of 1989, a common mechanism used in the current societal situation, of which we heard many examples during this research. The family tried number of different ways to earn their livelihoods – truck and rickshaw driving, small-scale shop keeping – but none of them provided enough for the family, and eventually Raju had suffered from major mental depression and had even attempted a suicide. Raju explains:

Earlier the plans were that if Dada agrees, I will get him at our new house and Dada will stay with us. But he did not agree, and he said that I will stay at the old place and he became angry. This land is very special to me because even when I was unemployed, and I had no work, the food was never empty at home.

At that time the Goddess and another dada (pir) they were not separated. Dada was very angry on us. From the last lockdown [second wave, 2021] they are separated and we are expanding this temple, and people suffering from pain are arriving. Now people from all over India, from Mumbai and so on, are coming here. Also, people who have been refused by doctors in acute illnesses.

Now we have half of the compound [purchased by the Sama woman living as the neighbour], she first asked 5 lakhs, then 2 lakhs and 1, and she gave it in Rs. 66,000. [Years earlier] we sold it to her with Rs. 44,000 and she gave a little bite of it with Rs. 66,000. But it is enough for us. We have a plan to make an office where meetings can be held. We are looking for donors, we want to make a guest room for people coming from Maharashtra and other parts of Gujarat. Mātāji is sending the cases to us, and all this is happening thanks to her.

The above descriptions introduce complex realities that are entangled with the Bhuj high court. Both – the shaking boy from Mandvi and the story of establishing the high court – are both connected to landownership and how the land connects with the spiritual powers of Goddesses. This further connects the temple worship to questions of caste, religious differences, and inequalities that exist and how caste and religious relations are managed through such connections to religiosity: sometimes causing conflicts, as the case of Raju and the development of the Bhuj high court illustrates. The temple development can be seen as a careful management of their own difficulties, and inter-religious relations through the piece of land they had sold, and later purchased back from the neighbour: The desire to establish the Bhuj high court on this piece of land, offers the neighbour the opportunity for a high asking price (5 lakhs), which is then lowered just Rs. 22,000 higher than the original asking price from here of both parts of the land were few years back. The neighbour knows that as the family temple is located on her land, she cannot ask too much, but as the temple is a personal one, it is unlikely to create wider communal interest beyond the two parties. Yet, from the experience, both parties know that it could be developed into one, which might lead both worse off than at the moment – as others with their interest on the temple site could come and claim their right to worship and practice.

Let's return back to how it all started:

Shyam: I remember your son was so young and learning to ride autorickshaw...

Raju: This started from 2nd lockdown and we started from our shop.

Shyam: How did you get inspired for this?

Chirak: All of sudden, we got very difficult time in the family. It was very high five [very big] problem. Because my father started to talk about a suicide. Couple of times he also tried with a poison. There was also an internal family conflict going on. Then somebody said to me that there is a bhuvā and he will solve the problem. So, I started to go to bhuvā for long time. Then one problem happened to my younger sister. One person where I was going, he gave me something to throw and when I did that, I fell down and went back to the bhuvā. I started to feel that there is some improvement in the family.

Another person who had asked if I knew any bhuvā, joined me to meet with bhuvā. I told this person about the improvement in my family and I suggested he could come with me. We went together. At that place, bhuvā was not available for some time. When we were sitting in his meeting place, I immediately started to feel and talk about the problem of that person, instead of waiting for the bhuvāji.

Then everyone was very nervous and bhuvāji told me that it was dada who came in me. Then I became interested in the worship of dada and was doing it continuously. Then with my efforts I successfully could get that status/authority [to become bhuvā].

Yet I do not have any guru. I remember that in 2001 when I was so young, my father was bringing bhuvā here, when this dada [idol, stone or wooden] was established here. At that time, when bhuvā was coming, everyone else feared him, but I was 6–7 years old and said to him that make me a bhuvā: “You are highly respected, I also wish to be like that”.

At that time, that bhuvā was drinking alcohol, as his mātāji was with alcohol. Everyone was respecting him and scared of him. When he was sleeping, even his disciples would not wake him up. At that time, I was insisting to become a bhuvā. They arranged it: three days rituals were organized in which I sat but I did not get *pavan*.¹²

At that time in the family alcohol was going on and dadaji did not like it. With blessings of him, I am having an endorsement of *choryasi nu khatu*.¹³ Whenever they want, that type of God or Goddesses would appear to support. It depends on the nature of matter. Just like in the medical science, there are different experts to cure illnesses, there are different goddesses who come. Later on, I did *bhagti* [worship] of one bhuvā, so his mātā also came and is sitting here. Mātāji who is a high court, she is Jognima. She is the goddess who comes into me during the *pavan*.

To make my mātāji stronger and stronger, I was worshipping Jognima in Narola, Mehsana. For that I went to that bhuvāji. He gave me 1 month and 7 days of worship and I completed that. That mātā became so happy about me, and she came here. And I got her presence.

We both bhuvās have YouTube channels of Jōgaṇī, mine is called Jōgaṇī high court of Bhuj.

Raju: Of that Narola bhuvā, if you have Rs. 25,000 in your pocket, then only the *mātā* will come to your home. Sometimes they take 50,000 or even 1 lakh. Everyone has their own level, and they are practicing. If you are celebrity, you have that power.

Chirak: Today I am still learning the basics. Once I reach to fame, then I also must make more strict norms.

Raju: People in Mehsana, they are spending money on this. They believe in *mātā* and *dada*. Here, people have been cheated, so they are scared a bit.

Chirak: Here people are not aware of the goddesses and gods. Here people are illiterate on this. Here people are so mean. Over there, people respect the words of gods.

Shyam: sounds like that it is progressing well here.

Chirak: I am looking forward to send my *mātā* to the parliament [that any member of parliament start believing in *mātāji*], because we are now already receiving people of Supreme Court.

...

Chirak: There was also one neem tree on one of the sides, we have removed it and increased the land. If we want the land, we can still get it, but we do not want to create any difficulty for other people. At that time when my father was with the temporary shelter organisation, he helped one of his friends to get a house free of cost and that friend then sold it without telling my father. Nowadays there are Hindi speaking people [bhaiya, usually refers to people from Bihar, MP] living there. Plan is to install a door and CCTV camera.

If we have CCTV, then no one government official can blame that we are doing anything wrong. Since our *mātā* is establishing spiritual examples. Councillor of ward 6 from Mandvi is coming to us. Our *mātā* has made many sarpanch, lawyers from here. Also youngsters are covered by our goddess. Our place is open for all religions. We also invite Muslims saying you can participate. A to Z people can come. From roundabout of GIDC, if you ask anyone about us, they will help you to bring here. That's how reputed our *mātāji* is. I have a dream that I want to reach to the parliament with *mātā*. People should start talking about me when I just go along the road, they should say: look, bhuvā of that *mātāji* is going. That all are my calculations. If there is anything, just give me a call anytime.

When we compare the Bhuj high court and Jogaṇī Mātā's worship with the urban worship in urban Ahmedabad (Dinnel, 2019), there are several similarities that we have observed: firstly, individuals or families who have suffered from multitudes of hardships, including mental health issues, seek consultations from bhuvās, and in return the spirits they embody, become to be worshipped, using their power to

embody goddess to help others (Dinnel, 2019, p. 272, footnote 205). Secondly, Bhuj high court's ambitions are to become cosmopolitan, and with online sessions, reaching out across the world (see also Dinnel, 2019, p. 304). Furthermore, bhuvā and his family, as well as their worshippers and visitors, all share a desire for socio-economic upward mobility (Dinnel, 2019). In fact, such worship has played an important role for both Dalit and Adivasi's in working against structural caste-based discrimination and exploitation (see e.g. Dinnel, 2019, p. 122). Dinnel (2019) suggests that Jogaṇī worship

exemplifies a positive tantra that satisfies a middle-class need for “quick-fix” solutions in a frenzied modern marketplace, providing fast access to esoteric power. This esoteric aspect is neither off-putting nor transgressive to middle-class and upwardly mobile tastes so long as it presents itself in the context of a respectable form of religiosity

(Dinnel, 2019, p. 304)

Since 1990s, an NGO called Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha mission founded by a rationalist Jayant Pandya in Rajkot, Gujarat, has called out thousands of cases of exorcism in the state, and he himself has become target of attempts of killing and imprisonment (Dhivya Bhaskar, 2020). According to Dalit activists in Gujarat, the practice owes to caste oppression and reliance of bhuvā is maintained with lack of access to alternative ways to solve social and health related concerns (Dhar, 2017).

In January 2024, Bhuj high court is active on social media. Its YouTube channel has some 500 subscribers and there are in total 235 videos posted. In Instagram, there are over 1,600 followers with 391 posts. Having initially addressed concerns that have marked the lives of people in Haṅgāmī Āvās within the family and their immediate neighbourhood, Bhuj high court aims to reach out to wider audiences. Six months later, the high court celebrates the inauguration of the new temple construction.

6.6 Conclusions

This chapter has focused on spirituality and praxis of religion, both as a syncretic praxis, and as an expression of religious identity in the neighbourhood. The chapter introduced four religious praxis: the annual procession at the mysterious Sufi sage shrine Gebanshah Pir, annual Muharram procession in the Old Bhuj, annual prayer ceremony at the bird tower and Shiva temple built in a memory of a lost daughter in an in-law abuse violence, and worship at the temple of Goddess Jōgaṇī, called as Bhuj high court Jōgaṇī dhām. Through the reading of the praxis in these four instances we made five main arguments: firstly, the chapter argued that such a diversity of religious praxis mirrors the diversity of the neighbourhood, and the social and economic tensions that have risen in the wider context of gendered politicisation of religion and religious praxis in India. Secondly, the chapter suggested further that such religious praxis are examples of managed co-existence and emerging peace in the neighbourhood, but that have connections to the wider religious sentiments and belonging more widely. Thirdly, we observed multiple attempts to transform boundaries around normative ideas on caste, gender and religiosity through devotees

religiosity. Fourthly, and relatedly, such praxis offers for their devotees/disciples' spaces for care and healing, but also space for articulating unanswered injustices in the aftermath of the earthquake. Finally, as these practices are always embedded in their political economic settings, new economic hierarchies are formed between the ones who hold the assets and donations, compared with those of mere devotees or disciples. Feminist peace, thus, emerges in these negotiations and spaces of care and comfort they offer, but at the same time it gets entangled in gendered, classed, and caste-based communal dynamics, economic and social injustice.

Notes

- 1 Pir in Sufism refers to a Sufi spiritual leader/saint, Pir is used throughout this chapter. This chapter uses the word shrine, when referring to a tomb of the Pir, which is used for worshipping and processions by the followers/disciples.
- 2 Pir: Saint or mystic guide in Sufi Islam, informally referred to as Baba in Hindi (Siddiqui, 2019). Pir literally in Persian means elder. In Kachchh and Sindh, Pir designations were given by the rulers.
- 3 Prasad sometimes translated as a gift of grace can be food, flowers, or water that are first offered to a saint and then distributed in his/her name to the followers as a good sign.
- 4 Reformist movements that emerged in North India in the 19th century, for nuanced analysis of negotiation of norms locally (see e.g. Jones, 2009).
- 5 Patel refers to a landowning caste in Gujarat that holds a powerful political, and economic position even in Kachchh and outside amongst non-resident Indians (NRIs) in the United Kingdom, for example. Predominantly a farmer community, hundreds of thousands of Patels migrated out of Kachchh due to hardships created by droughts and reside besides United Kingdom in Eastern and Southern Africa, and America. Patels form a powerful caste group in Madhapar, town bordering Haṅgāmī Āvās in South, known to have Asia's highest GDP levels due to NRI residents of the town.
- 6 Dam breakage 11 August 1979 in Morbi – narrated the event that made Modi who he is (RSS volunteering to respond the disaster).
- 7 1998 Gujarat cyclone.
- 8 Kavvālī in Gujarati or qawwali in Urdu is a devotional singing performed at Sufi shrines.
- 9 Dhamaal is a song performed by Siddis, Afro-Indians, descendants of former enslaved people with African heritage (Dey, 2023).
- 10 Goswami are worshippers of Shiva in Gujarat and they belong to OBC caste category. Lineage of Goswami is similar to Brahmin and they are appointed as caretakers of Shiva temples.
- 11 *Bhuvā* gets translated to English, depending on a source as a healer, but also practice of witchcraft or sorcery. The colonial sources often referred to it as exorcist/exorcism, or religious fraudism (Dinnel, 2019, p. 79). The Gujarati term refers to persons who leads religious rites of Goddesses, such as *mātās*, entering trance through the use of intoxicants or heavy shaking of their body (Dinnel, 2019, p. 12, footnote 19).
- 12 Pavan in Gujarati translates as wind or breeze, but in the context of *bhuvās*, it refers to god or goddess overtaking a person in trance (Dinnel, 2019, p. 122).
- 13 According to Hindu mythology, there are 8,400,000 Gods and Goddesses who have endorsed him via dada.

References

- ANI News. (2019). *Gebanshah Baba Dargah: Beacon of communal harmony in Rajkot*. Retrieved March 9, 2025, from <https://www.aninews.in/videos/national/gebanshah-baba-dargah-beacon-communal-harmony-rajkot/#:~:text=For%20the%20last%20200%20years,all%20the%20communities%20are%20invited>

- Baljon, J. M. S. (1989). Shah Waliullah and the Dargah. In C. W. Troll (Ed.), *Muslim shrines in India* (pp. 189–197). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Basu, H. (1998). Hierarchy and emotion: Love, joy and sorrow in a cult of black saints in Gujarat, India. In P. Werbner & H. Basu (Eds.), *Embodying charisma: Modernity, locality and the performance of emotion in Sufi cults* (pp. 117–139). London: Routledge.
- Bellamy, C. (2011). *The powerful ephemeral: Everyday healing in an ambiguously Islamic Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bond, B. E. (2020). Performing pain: Sindhi Sufi music, affect, and Hindu-Muslim relations in western India. *Culture, Theory and Critique*, 61(2-3), 112–132. doi: [10.1080/14735784.2020.1848602](https://doi.org/10.1080/14735784.2020.1848602)
- Bond, B. E. (2022). Song, dance, and the Karbala martyrs: Muharram commemoration and Sunni Islam in Kachchh, Gujarat. *Journal of Sindhi Studies*, 2(1), 1–34. doi: [10.1163/26670925-bja10007](https://doi.org/10.1163/26670925-bja10007)
- Dey, S. (2023). *Dhamaal: The incredible story of how East African culture shaped the music of a state in India*. Retrieved March 12, 2024, from <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/africa/dhamaal-the-incredible-story-of-how-east-african-culture-shaped-the-music-of-a-state-in-india-87491>
- Dhar, D. (2017). *Dalits in Gujarat condemn ministers for promoting superstition about exorcism*. Retrieved January 30, 2024, from <https://thewire.in/caste/dalits-gujarat-protest-felicitation-exorcists-ministers>
- Dhivyaa Bhaskar. (2020). ઢબૂડી માતાનો પરદાફાશ કરનાર જયંત પંડ્યા ઉચાપત કેસમાં પોતે જામીન પર, 10 હજાર ઘતગિરે ખુલ્લા પાડ્યા (Jayant Pandya solve 10 thousand case including Chotalikand and Bidibaba). Retrieved January 30, 2024, from <https://www.divyabhaskar.co.in/news/jayant-pandya-solve-10-thousand-case-including-chotalikand-and-bidibaba-1567238280.html>
- Dinnel, D. (2019). *Upwardly mobile Mātās: The transformation of village goddesses in Gujarat, India*. Montreal: McGill University.
- Eck, D. L. (2013). The religious gift: Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain perspectives on dana. *Social Research*, 80(2), 359–379. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24385605>
- Green, N. (2012). *Making space: Sufis and settlers in early modern India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Heitmeyer, C. (2011). Religion as practice, religion as identity: Sufi Dargahs in contemporary Gujarat. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 34(3), 485–503. doi: [10.1080/00856401.2011.620557](https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2011.620557)
- Ibrahim, F. (2018). Wedding videos and the city: Neighbourhood, affect and community in the aftermaths of the Gujarat earthquake of 2001. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 41(1), 121–136. doi: [10.1080/00856401.2018.1388948](https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2018.1388948)
- Jaffrelot, C. (2024). *Gujarat under Modi: Laboratory of today's India*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Jauhola, M. (2016). Decolonizing branded peacebuilding: Abjected women talk back to the Finnish women, peace and security agenda. *International Affairs*, 92(2), 333–351.
- Jauhola, M. (2020). *Scraps of hope in Banda Aceh: Gendered urban politics of peace in the Aceh peace process*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
- Jones, J. (2009). The local experiences of reformist Islam in a ‘Muslim’ town in colonial India: The case of Amroha. *Modern Asian Studies*, 43(4), 871–908. doi: [10.1017/S0026749X08003582](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X08003582)
- Marks, L. D., Lu, Y., Cherry, K. E., & Hatch, T. G. (2015). Faith and coping: Spiritual beliefs and religious practices after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In K. E. Cherry (Ed.), *Traumatic stress and long-term recovery: Coping with disasters and other negative life events* (pp. 369–387). New York: Springer.
- Mehta, M. G. (2017). From Gandhi to gurus: The rise of the ‘guru-sphere’. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 40(3), 500–516. doi: [10.1080/00856401.2017.1302047](https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2017.1302047)
- Pal, F. (2022). Syncretism in the Hindu right as intentionally incomplete proximity. *Pacific Affairs*, 95(1), 27–47. doi: [10.5509/202295127](https://doi.org/10.5509/202295127)

- Pandolfo, S. (2018). *Knot of the soul: Madness, psychoanalysis, Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pfleiderer, B. (1988). The semiotics of ritual healing in a north Indian Muslim shrine. *Social Science & Medicine*, 27(5), 417–424. doi: [10.1016/0277-9536\(88\)90364-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(88)90364-4)
- Pfleiderer, B. (2006). *The red thread: Healing possession at a Muslim shrine in north India*. Delhi: Aakar Books.
- Siddiqui, S. M. (2019). *Faith healing at a Muslim shrine in Gujarat, India: Exploring the site, subject, and ghost* (Doctor of philosophy, School of Education, Environment and Development). University of Manchester, Manchester.
- Sikand, Y. (2003). *Sacred spaces: Exploring traditions of shared faith in India*. New Delhi: Penguin Book.
- Taneja, A. V. (2013). Jinnealogy: Everyday life and Islamic theology in post-partition Delhi. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 3(3), 139–165. doi: [10.14318/hau3.3.007](https://doi.org/10.14318/hau3.3.007)
- Taneja, A. V. (2017). *Jinnealogy: Time, Islam, and ecological thought in the medieval ruins of Delhi*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Werbner, P. (1998). *Langar*: Pilgrimage, sacred exchange and perpetual sacrifice in a Sufi saint's lodge. In P. Werbner & H. Basu (Eds.), *Embodying charisma: Modernity, locality and the performance of emotion in Sufi cults* (pp. 95–116). London: Routledge.
- Werth, L. (1998). 'The saint who disappeared': Saints of the wilderness in Pakistani village shrines. In P. Werbner & H. Basu (Eds.), *Embodying charisma: Modernity, locality and the performance of emotion in Sufi cults* (pp. 55–94). London: Routledge.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Part III

Emergence of Feminist Peace through Life Histories



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

7 Beyond Anthropocentric Care

Minority Masculinities, *Rewal* Horse Racing, and Love for Maṅkī

7.1 Introduction: “Strength Depends on the Seed, and the Land Where the Plant Is Grown”

My father was a famous wrestler, people knew him as Ibrahim, the wrist. Whenever I was travelling in different villages in Kachchh, people would tell stories of my father and offer coconut and serve lunch for me. If you look at me, you would not know I am his son, that small I am. If you will see my brother, you will wonder if he is a human or animal. I have inherited my small size from my mother who is weak. The strength of the child depends on the mother: the strength of the descendant depends on the seed (father), and the land (mother) where the plant is grown.

(interview 16092018)

This chapter follows the life story of Daud, *rewal cāl*¹ horse trainer, a resident, and a worker in a gas cylinder warehouse/godown in Haṅgāmī Āvās since more than three decades. Through his life story, we get glimpses of his family belonging to Muslim Node community² – his connections across the city of Bhuj, Banni grasslands, and Sindh in Pakistan. Describing Daud’s intimate relation with Marwadi mare Maṅkī મણકી, to whose memory this chapter is dedicated to, we discuss perspectives to minority and Muslim masculinities, care for more-than-human beings, and ways in which the success and reputation as a *rewal* trainer offer insights to alternatives to the Muslim Other narratives in India.

The chapter suggests that becoming of a regionally famous horse trainer has been the way to break away from, firstly, the stigma of a small and weak man – quoted above. Secondly, this breaking away takes place in a context that has very few alternatives for Muslim masculinities to offer than that of a danger, or backward, and inadequate, or less than human (Mehta, 2000). We suggest when closely listening to his life history that he narrates an inner strength that he has used to deal with poverty and uncertainty of livelihoods, dependence on his boss and the landowner in Haṅgāmī Āvās, but also in becoming a renowned horse trainer regionally.

At the more general level, chapter offers insights to the experiences of being in the world in which the mere existence of Muslim (men) in India is being questioned. Commonly Muslims are seen as part of the gendered developmentalist and

militarist project, if not directly a threat and danger. Swati Parashar has suggested that “excessive militarism” in India draws from the wider postcolonial state’s rejection of “colonial emasculation/feminization” drawing from gendered affects. Decolonizing, or reclaiming as Parashar calls it, militarised masculinity gets paired with maternal and nurturing discourse establishing specific bonds and loyalty for ideal citizens, but also policing and punishing for deviants (Parashar, 2018, p. 159). We suggest, that Muslim body and lives lived in the border regions such as Kachchh form an essential part of the praxes of the excessive militarism. Furthermore, Dibyesh Anand (2007) has suggested that in the overall context of Gujarat violence of 2002, Muslim body constitutes danger for the Indian state. As Chapter 9 will illustrate, such a threat is invoked actively in elections, such as the Lok Sabha elections of 2024 using forms of forceful masculinity (Srivastava, 2015).

However, we suggest that Kachchhi Muslim masculinities, and more broadly the district’s very distinct history and migratory borderland history, also offer alternative insights to Muslim every day, that can be seen as producing Muslimhood in other ways and resisting the construction of “other” (Ibrahim, 2008, 2018, 2021). In Bhuj, sub-district Muslims consist of 35% of the population compared with the national average of 14%, comprising of varying communities of pastoralists, and shepherd, such as the ones discussed in Chapter 5. Yet, as Jamil (2018) has pointed out, studies on Muslim men and masculinities are severely understudied, and those that exist tend to focus on religious institutions such as madrasas. In a blog posting after the 2019 Lok Sabha parliament elections, Misria Ali pointedly asked: “However, out of all that is being spoken about in this victory – Shah, Modi, New India and a Hindu nation – the Muslims of the country are left with a question: Where are we in all this?” (Ali, 2019).

Daud’s family has a decades-long border region migratory and nomadic trajectory: originally from the Sindh and Banni borderland area, Node community members are traditionally pastoral nomads, yet also increasingly urban, as in the case of Daud and his brothers, owners of cattle – and horses. According to Wendy Doniger (2021), Indians hold ambivalent attitude towards horses, they are considered both tame, yet wild; divine and demonic; and indigenous and foreign (Doniger, 2021, p. 19/277). Horses appear in both Vedic literature, and they appear ridden by Arabs, Ottomans, Mongolians, and British. Whereas horses have positive connotations for male values in Vedas, they also contain negative misogynist attitudes in the same literature compared with the positive values in Rajput stories that are influenced with Arab culture (Doniger, 2021, p. 19/277). Furthermore, to add to the ambivalence, especially at the age of Hindu nationalism, most of the people who arrived in India over the centuries, came horse-back. This includes Indo-Europeans, Greeks and Scythians, Turks and Mongols (or Mughals as they are called in India), and British. Horse riding arrives were motivated by trade, migration, but also conquer – and horses contributed to each of them (Doniger, 2021, p. 1/277).

Yet, colonial narratives of India connect the descriptions of horse breeds to emasculated Indians. For example, John Lockwood Kipling describes in *Beast and Man in India: A Popular Sketch of Indian Animals in their Relations with the*

People published in 1891 that “[t]he horses, however, which serve native masters are born to Purgatory rather than to Paradise” (Kipling, 1891, p. 183) and that “in India it seems impossible to persuade people that money spent on a growing beast is money invested” (Kipling, 1891, p. 185). Colonial records seem to focus on the Marwari and Kathiawari breeds of Rajasthan and Gujarat, but not on the Sindhi-Kachchhi breed, that Daud has trained for decades. Non-European historians have valued the Kachchhi breed: Abu’l Fazl historian who lived in the 16th century considered the Kachchhi breed to excel in India, being equal to Arabs within his five categorisation of horses (Doniger, 2021, p. 108/277); Arthashastra ranked horses into four classes in which the Sindh bred horses belonged to the best one (Doniger, 2021); and the fifth volume of the 1880 Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency refers to 17th-century sources and the “Cutch Raja” with horses that have power to run for a full day (Doniger, 2021, pp. 208–209/277).

The most well-known horse-connected myth in Kachchh is of the 72 riders. A local King Punwar (985 CE), who oppressed Sanghars, Hindu, and Muslim cattle-men who lived on the northern shore of the Gulf of Kutch, was killed by 72 horsemen from Western Asia. To honour these horsemen, images of 72 horsemen were made Punvaranogad, and since, the place has become a pilgrimage (Doniger, 2021, pp. 209–211/277). This story is being interpreted by locals, and scholars alike, differently. Some interpret the riders were fleeing Muslims, others, such as Stella Kramrisch, suggest that the riders were not fleeing the Muslims, but were Muslims themselves – and thus, the myth could be read not to be about Muslim invasion, but a rather liberating legend in which “Muslims saved the good citizens of Kutch from their tyrant” (Doniger, 2021, p. 212/277). According to another interpretation, the seven horses arrived to the coast of Kachchh as a result of an Arab cargo ship that was wrecked on the coast of Kachchh – seven horses on the ship are believed to be the origin of the Kachchhi horse (Doniger, 2021, p. 212/277). This version is close to other mythical horse stories, including in Ireland – where the Arabs are believed to have swam to the shore and fertilised/raped women, whilst stallions swam ashore and raped local mares (Doniger, 2021, p. 213/277). Ed Simpson (2006) has suggested that the myth is an example of how local’s adopt the values of conquerors and it has become part of local folklores in which the invasion is interpreted as liberation and honour (Simpson, 2006, pp. 47/177). In other words, ungoverned and alien knowledge is domesticated and turned into a source of local power and glory (Doniger, 2021, pp. 46–47/277).

This chapter illustrates how the alternative Muslim masculinities, as expressed by Daud are at an intersection of Kachchhi borderland life trajectories, gaining excellence in *rewal* races, horse breeding and training, and thus, regional horse race political economy, but also that of the caring and intersubjective relationships with non-humans (Hurn, 2012). The rest of the chapter unfolds in the following order: the first section focuses on Daud’s early years, his family history; the second on his economic struggles and years of informal labouring; the third section focuses on physical injuries of the road accident, and the earthquake; and the fourth section on the horses and *rewal* racing. The conclusion draws attention to Daud’s reflections of the future and brings the discussion back to the possibilities of alternative Muslim masculinities.

7.2 Early Years of Economic Struggle – Informal Labouring and Truck Driving

Daud was born in the camp area in Bhuj which is located west of the Bhujiyo hill and opposite of the military compound in the South. It is generally accepted that the name of the camp area derives from the encampment established by the British in 1819. However, Daud explains that the name derives from the Kachchhi word *kamp* that refers to soft sand. Besides British officers, approximately 20 Parsi families lived in the area, other communities included Node, Kumbar and Turk Muslim communities, Bhatias, and Samejas. Daud's father comes from a Kumbar, pottery making, family, and was married to a Node shepherd community. His great-great grandparents migrated from the Banni grasslands to Bhuj. Daud has in total of seven brothers and sisters and the family was grazing cows, in its peak some 250–300, in the Kamp area. Offering milk to the government officials, the father gained a special permission from one government official to graze the cows on the government land nearby as long as he was alive.

Their house was a hut constructed from packing box wood, and it was later coated with *rago* – combination of mud and cow dung. The house was fenced, as at the time, it was far away from the walled city of Bhuj: “no child of human was coming there”, as Daud recalls it. His brothers still live in the area even nowadays, and the place is known as the neighbourhood of Ibrahim, according to his father. In the old days, it was much less populated than nowadays. Jhala Saheb, a well-known Parsi who moved to Mumbai from Bhuj, owned much of the land in the area, and the first office of the local newspaper *Kutchmitra* was built there. Jhala Saheb used to help Daud's family. Daud recalls he fed the children four times a week and opened the doors of his house for the children to come. Times were hard, Daud recalls:

handful of peanuts would cost 1–2 paisas but we did not have the money to buy it. I never saw 1 Rp in my childhood, I was doing labour work from morning to evening, taking stuff for donkey, earning 3 paisas per day (called 1 taka). We did not study, we worked the whole day even in hot weather. As we did not study, we sign with our thumbs.

(interview 16092018)

Daud was married to his wife who was originally from Mundra, but who was living in the walled city. Upon their marriage, they moved to live with their in-laws in the old city. Daud recalls that his jobs kept changing at that time: for ten years he worked at the scrap market in Bhid in the walled city, then he did labour and cash work for the army, being paid 50 Rs per day with all expenses. Due to a conflict with a higher officer, he quit the job and lost his official documents because of it. “I was at that time a bit aggressive”, he confesses. After years and years of odd jobs, he joined for four years the Gujarat Electricity Board, being responsible for the vehicle carrying the electricity poles. He shared the daily earnings of 30 Rs with four people.

7.3 Moving to Haṅgāmī Āvās: Road Accident, Injury, and the Earthquake

Daud moved to the area now known as Haṅgāmī Āvās when he was a truck driver of the gas cylinder company located in the area. The owner of the company had asked him to move in, as he needed someone to protect his land from illegal occupation. But no one wanted to live in the area:

For the owner, the issue was that none of the security guards wanted to stay at the warehouse/godown, because there were no other inhabitants in the area. Everyone was so scared, no-one wanted to stay. Security guards would stay 5 to 10 days and would not return after that. It was impossible to keep inflammable goods, cylinders, alone. The owner requested me to move here.

Daud continues:

That time I was having my own house; it was traditional house from my father and it was super old. Weak, weaker than the one now. No electricity since the beginning, eventually I got electricity there, but the house was small hut and in very bad condition.

My boss was requesting me continuously that you please move there. He was respecting me a lot. I then chose that. My brothers and family members did not agree and in the beginning, I also did not agree to move. I said no, it is so far, I would not move there. After a while, when I moved, my brothers were very upset and angry on me.

I moved here: I was living here and working as a driver for his trucks.

This changed the relations between him and his brothers, who for a very long time were upset with him that he decided to move so far away from the rest of the family. The decision also had dramatic consequences to him, and unsettled his health and economic situation for a long time:

Once what happened was that one truck, just accidentally, I flipped it. It was a modified truck, and we had overloaded it. Thus, I could not control it and it just flipped and turned upside down. I damaged my hands and my legs, and I was still stuck in the truck. At the time, my boss was visiting outside of Kachchh, maybe Mumbai.

Luckily there were other drivers on the road who realized what happened, and as they were my friends, they recognized me as Daud. They were Raima community people³ from Bhachau. They first took me to Bhachau, but surgent doctor there said that I can't do any help, you should go to bigger hospital in Bhuj, so the friends took me to Bhuj civil hospital. Luckily there was one person who was brewing illegal alcohol in the area. He also recognized me and he also helped me to get to the hospital.

We reached to Bhuj and the doctor said that oh, it looks like that the case is finished. I said I am absolutely ok, I still had courage, but there was a lot

of bleeding, so I could not see anything. I was feeling dizzy, but otherwise I said I am absolutely fine. So then the doctor got confidence and treated me.

Insurance people came to me and said like you sign the paper and then we will actually claim this from your boss. I said that I will not do that because, I cannot betray and go against my boss because of money – I would not do that.

My children were so young, so daytime they were roaming around, but at night they were climbing to terrace and sleeping there. For 8 days I was at the hospital and no one enquired about my children. On one hand my brothers were disappointed in me, because I did not obey and I had move over here. And on the other hand my boss and his family did not enquire and take care of my family.

There was one delivery man who was getting tea and cookies and in the evening was getting dinner from his family. For 8 days my situation was bad, there were many lawyers who came, and an insurance claim I did not sign. I asked the doctor and he said that you can go with your own risk. But he said that your one leg is now paralyzed forever. I somehow reached home. I had long beard. My family was hungry. Situation was very bad.

Then my boss came to me, I had no money and I told him that you did not take care of my family, though I was driving for you. Boss said, oh you also broke my vehicle and things went very bad, I had many expenses. I said, no, you have insurance, but you did not take care of my family. I was very disappointed in him.

Then a friend of my boss was with him, and he said that you let us know what you want now. I said that I don't have flour even for bread. Give me 500 Rs. so I can get something for my family. The boss said that I am not having 500 cash with me. I was in a situation where I threatened him by saying that you see that I am in a bad condition and I don't want to hear anything, I will not let you go without money. Then they asked me that, there is one insurance I will claim for you, have you signed it? No, many lawyers were coming but I did not want to betray you. The owner said there is some money I will claim for you. This is 500 for you, can you sign these letters. I signed. He was very clever.

Yet, the owner was stuck in a situation that no-one was able to drive that truck because I had modified it in such a way that it was impossible for others to drive it. He asked me to drive, in fact wife of the boss called and asked me to find drivers, but I could not. Finally, I chose to drive again.

I was in so much in pain but yet I started to drive. My both legs were injured very severely. Doctor said one would be paralyzed. When I was driving my legs started to bleed, but I thought it is not going to work, so let it be. Luckily when I reached to Bhid area by the truck, that leg started to work again. When the wife of the owner saw me driving again, they started to pay me again. My situation was such that if my leg would have not started to work, maybe I would not be alive because I cannot beg.

Daud goes in length to discuss the complexities of the relationship with the owner of the cylinder warehouse. On one hand, he and his sons have got daily wage labouring jobs to drive the trucks, and they had a house built next to the warehouse where to live. And yet on the other hand, Daud feels neglected when it comes to the difficult period after the accident and the injury. The sense of economic injustice, lack of protection when needed, and yet an expectation of loyalty and protection of the owner's property, are repeated themes when he discusses the circumstances he and his family are in.

Similar contradictory expectations were repeated when the 2001 earthquake happened:

Mountains of grief fell upon me. But that man turned out to be selfish. But he also trusts me a lot. When the earthquake happened, he came to me with his millions of valuables. He came with couple of briefcases, full of valuables and asked me to hide it because he knew that in Bhuj there was a lot of stealing, many thieves were coming and there were many thefts and robbery going on after the earthquake. He came and I hid it in my house. After 8 months he asked me to give them back to him.

...

So many people were coming to me to get cylinders. I was not refusing anyone; it was such a time. Many doctors were coming to me. Few people came at nighttime 11–12pm. My boss asked me account and he saw that I have given cylinders, but I had not collected money for it. He actually did not pay me my 2–3 salaries; he was asking me how come I don't take money from people. I said how can I take money in this situation.

Many doctors, big officers, they were saying people are dying, it is an emergency, can you please give us gas cylinders. How can I refuse to such people. I cannot be an opportunist, so I was just refusing any. Anyone would come and I would give it them for free.

My boss said that I will count it from your salary, and I said to him that do that, I am happy – I think I was not earning for 2–3 months. It is not a big deal.

This section has focused on the difficult balancing that Daud has had to endure, being economically dependent on the owner of the business, upholding his loyalty to that economic relationship even after he was severely injured and the whole family suffered economically as a result. The example of the immediate aftermath of the 2001 earthquake illustrates, however, that Daud has not been willing to compromise his ethical stands of helping others – as he recognises his integrity of not begging, but also breaking the loyalty for short-term economic gains. As the next sections will illustrate, however, the knowledge of and relationship with horses, has provided him, and his sons an important way to resist the hierarchical logics of livelihoods and wealth creation, and create an alternative economy of their own in *rewal* horse racing and training.

7.4 Life with the Horses

If there were no horses at my compound, it would mean my story would end.
(interview 16092018)

Big part of our conversations with Daud, circulated around horses. During our visits to Daud's compound between 2018 and 2019, we would often be greeted by Māṅkī માંકી – a Marwari breed mare with great height and beautiful white grey colour. According to Daud, Marwari breed is a loyal horse to her owner, Sindhi is less, and even less is Kathiyawadi. Maṅki's father was purchased with about 12 lakhs, somebody came from Mundra and purchased it. It was fast and running in the race and winning awards all over Kachchh. Then the horse went to Dayaram Maraj.⁴ It was mistakenly crossed with mother of Maṅki – son of Maraj mistakenly crossed them. Mother of Maṅki was purchased by Silubawa of Wadapir shrine in Bhuj, the *mujawar* (caretaker) of the shrine. They had no idea that the horse was pregnant when she came there. Later she gave birth.

At the time of meeting Maṅkī for the first time, Daud was already experienced in training *rewal chaal* horses. *Rewal chaal* is a riding style, which we discuss in detail in the section below, specific to Kachchhi, Sindhi, and Marwari horses. When asked what the loyalty of Marwari breed means, Daud responded:

Nobody can come to your property without [her] permission. Maṅkī will take care of the farm. When you sleep on *khatla*, she will be there all the time. She guards the guests. She will stay close to the bed even if she is thirsty or hungry. It is not possible to tie her with a rope, she will tear it open. But even when she is untied, she will stay with you. When I go out, I put iron locks to her.

(interview 16092018)

We would often see her either freely walking with her foal Bullet in the streets of Haṅgāmī Āvās – to drink water from a Hindu temple next to the railway tracks, or being ridden before the sunset in the evening by Daud or his sons in the open fields in the South of the housing units behind the school (Figure 7.1).

Daud acted as a middleman to make a deal of Maṅkī to one family, but as they were disappointed with their previous horse bought very expensively and with its aggressive behaviour, kicking and biting people, they finally refused. Daud had said, “well if you are not going to take her, I will take her instead – but you should have her as she will guard the place for 24 hours a day, she is like that”. The owners were demanding 4 lakh Rs of her, but she was too expensive for Daud. After a month, they negotiated a deal that he would buy Maṅkī for 1.50 lakh Rs with a payment time of two years. “When I sold her foal with 2 lakhs, I was able to pay the owner back”, Daud explains.

Although Daud very openly describes their relationship as an economic one, that economic relationship would not exist without the respect and bond that exists



Figure 7.1 Maṅkī and Bullet walking the main road of Haṅgāmī Āvās.

Source: Marjaana Jauhola.

between Daud and Maṅkī: “Such a horse is not available anywhere, she is so wise and respected. She cannot be hit. She requires respect” (interview 16092018).

In fact, Maṅkī has a great reputation in the *rewal* circles, and Daud is not shy to embrace her:

If there are races and you take around, she looks so beautiful, people clap. When she runs, she holds her head and neck, she looks so beautiful, she makes moves, if you see her to run, you will want to document that.

Once if you put the saddle on her back, then you can roam/travel within the end of the world, that much power she has. Once you will ride her, you will not want other vehicles, you will want her. As much fast you run with her, water in your stomach will remain calm, there will be no movement.

Whatever command you will give her, she will do it (go slow, go fast).

So many people are coming from places like Surat for the horse. People call me Mama (uncle, brother of mother).

If you want to ride her, you can do it, but I will not sell her, I was very lucky to get her. Otherwise I buy and sell horses.

One week ago someone called me if Maṅkī has given birth yet, saying I will send money and buy it. But it is not mine now, it is for my children.

This is my wish, I am not giving her to anyone.

(interview 16082018)

This was in 2018. However, later in 2019, Daud had given Maṅkī to a friend. It is a common practice amongst horse and cattle holders that moneyless transactions take place between them and their close family members and friends. Shyam

explains that if someone is in need, say for milk, a cow is offered for them with the expectation that the receiver cares for the animal and feeds them. This transaction requires trust between the giver and receiver in sharing the expectation of the wellbeing of the animal, and return of the animal if need be. In the case of Maṅkī, this happened after she had given birth to stallion Bullet, and when a friend was in need of a horse labour for the cart driving. It also coincided with severe drought years in Kachchh when the price of fodder skyrocketed, and thus, we understand that Daud had to do calculations of the feasibility of keeping horses of his own and taking care of them, compared with the trained horses whose maintenance and fodder would be chargeable from their owners.

Maṅkī's presence was felt several times after she moved, and Daud was referring to her strong nature by narrating how others were experiencing her grandiose size and personality: "Recently some guest who came from Mumbai with his family said that you have to sit on the horse but he got scared seeing the height of the horse" (interview 29052019). We later heard Maṅkī had passed away, and when asking about Bullet in 2024, he had been sold.

As the detailed Maṅkī's lineage discussions above reveals, the excellent lineage is everything when trying to find a stallion to breed that has good lineage and good performance in *rewal chaal* racing – both are required if desiring to excel in the trade of horses.

7.5 Rewal Chaal, Breeding, and Training

On second of January 2022, Daud tells us that the annual *rewal chaal* race is taking place in Vekriya Rann, Banni region, about one hour's drive North of Bhuj. The area belongs to the seasonal wetland of Kachchh – during the dry season such as January, it is dry arid land, and only turns into wetland during the monsoon months.

Upon our arrival, hundreds of cars, trucks and lorries are have parked offroad on the arid offroad land on both sides of the race track for a length of three kilometres. The race, an annual tradition that was put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2021, is again organised by the Kachchh horse breeders group (Kachchh Ashwapalak group). The air is filled with thin sand, put in motion by racing horses but also cars and motorbikes of the spectators following the racers. We also see Daud, who is not racing this time with his own horses, but with a horse he is training.

The races are frequently covered in social media, and Kutch Horse Race channel in YouTube has nearly 180,000 followers with more than a thousand of video entries. The run in which Daud participates, is also amongst them. During the race, we stand some 100 metres away from the finishing line, and thus see only the last glimpses of the race, whereas the video captures how the riders are waiting for the start, form a line, and start the race upon the loud blow of a horn of car. Soon the fastest of riders take the first positions and the video illustrates the difficulties the riders and horses have along the way to keep the trot run and not revert it to galloping. Daud is able keep their

position amongst the ten fastest riders and arrives at the finishing line as number 5. The first prize of the big *rewal* race is 11.000Rs, second 7.100 Rs, and the third 4.100 Rs.

(Kutch Horse Race, 2022)

Marwari horses, such as *Mankī*, are trained in two types of race: *serado* in which the horse runs as fast as possible with a rider, and there are no style limits; and *rewal chaal*, style, or in English *monté*, in which the horse uses short and fast steps in which one front leg and back leg on the opposite side move together distinguished from harness racing that uses the same trot. *Rewal chaal* is further divided into two different forms: *chobach*, in which one cannot sit comfortably, and *waro*, in which one sits comfortably.

Daud explained that it is not easy to teach *rewal chaal* for horses: horse gets easily hit from its own legs which leads to injuries.⁵ The *rewal chaal* race is popular amongst the Indian rich people, they want to ride and show off, Daud complained, “to feed them all [who have this desire] is difficult”. Only few people have the patience, and relationship with the horse to ride *rewal chaal* successfully, as usually in the beginning the horse training starts from them being totally uncontrollable: “Fifteen days we have to train and yet have to take care a lot as they can kill us”, Daud explained. One of the horses he showed us, he had trained for a full year. His compound, where the horses stay outside, creates a problem for some of the arriving horses who are used to stay indoors only.

If training of the *rewal* horse is difficult, so is, according to Daud, judging the style in races. When Shyam commented one horse gaining good medals in *rewal chaal*, Daud commented cynically that “it only happens because people (race judges) decide the style – they don’t know *rewal*, she does not run *rewal*. Best people to judge *rewal* are Sama people⁶ from Banni/Pachham area” (interview 16092018).

Once his reputation grew, many horses were brought to him for training from other parts of Gujarat, but also from Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan. During our frequent visits, we would be introduced to the horses he was training, giving details of their lineage and reputation, such as:

Daud: This animal becomes abundant in summer and is very cheerful in winter.

Shyam: Why is this horse looking a bit weak now?

Daud: The four horses standing in front of it have been sick for some time, but now they are fine. The first standing horse I sold was Rajasthan but no one could ride it in Rajasthan.

I gave this horse to Rawal Saheb’s nephew for sale, but no one could ride it in Gujarat. This horse is very good. He is of genuine Pakistan Sindh breed but he is very difficult to ride so no one could ride him in Gujarat and Kachchh. The horse was returned to me in a very bad condition. They left it in the sandy fields and used it for breeding for some time. They tied its front legs and let it be in such open field so it became so weak.

Its babies are so good result. It is original Sindhi breed. Its babies would be so beautiful. When I went last time to join a fair there, I saw the horse in such a situation. I took it back from them. This horse has produced many offspring in Rajasthan and made a name for itself, but no one could ride and drive it so the condition of this horse deteriorated. If you sit on its back and ride it, you will really know how fast it can go.

Both these horses were very sick but now they are fine. This little one is the progeny of Manki Ghodi and this big horse is of original Sindhi breed. The grandfather of this big horse came from Pakistan to Rajasthan and from where Dayaram Maharaj brought him here to Kachchh and since then the horse's lineage continues here. This horse was very lucky that I brought him back here otherwise he would have died in Rajasthan.

Amir Hussain Arbab's horses were very famous in Pakistan. Gani Seth took a mare from him in Banni which is still in Sumrasar village. This horse of mine is also a survivor of the same breed. By nature this breed is very bright and angry. My horse is only comfortable with me. When this horse came back here with me from Rajasthan, tears were in his eyes continuously for two days.

I have two Marwari horses and all others are Sindhi.

When I rode this horse into the desert, I was accompanied by Maharaja Rawal Sahib of Rajasthan who was coming in his jeep. This horse ran at a speed of 8 km for 42 km/hour continuously in *rewal*. Once Rawal Sahib told me that the rider is light on this horse, I did not say anything to him. Recently when I went to take this horse back, I told him that there are thousands of riders in Rajasthan. Why couldn't you find a rider who could ride this horse? Rawal sahib told me that my words seem to have hurt you.

In the video, we follow Daud and his son Husein with other men training a horse that has recently been given for their training (Figure 7.2). Whilst training, a conversation of a forthcoming Vekariya race of 2018 is discussed. Husein describes a stallion which stands next to a mare, and how their intimacy changes depending on the pregnancy – during which she would not allow stallions next to her. Now they stand on the compound next to each other, touching each other with their necks and heads. Husein tells how the horses would freely walk outside the compound, eat leftover foods, and drink water. Whilst the adult men saddle the horse to be trained, two young boys from the next-door Devi Pujak community, join to follow it. The video follows how two boys comment on the training of the horse, and call the horse a dancer, thus the name for the video itself.

These everyday moments captured on the short video speak to us of the intimate relations of the horses themselves, but also the moments the horses are prepared and trained by Daud and his sons Husein and Aslam, but also others involved. It is a sphere of men and masculinities, which the younger Devi Pujak boys are observing in awe and in admiration – it represents to them a world of possibilities and adulthood, but as discussed here, it is also, when one becomes a successful trainer and rider, an economic engagement of its own – with risks, but also with rewards.



Figure 7.2 QR code for a horse training video “Dancer” (03:17).

Source: <https://youtu.be/x9UZZAVkiqo>

However, already in 2018, Daud was acknowledging his aging and said he had to refuse to train four horses that were offered to him: “now I am old enough, I cannot continue”.

To conclude, Daud takes pride of his skills of handling the horses, and the respect and reputation is not only about integrity, but also a matter of finance, as the last section will illustrate.

7.6 Political Economy of Rewal Horses: Mutual Help when in Need

Daud: I remember one time I wanted a horse for a carriage and I got news that a horse was for sale in Navinal village so I took a truck and went there to buy the horse. I met Jadeja, the owner of that horse. That horse could not see with one eye. That horse was very dear to Jadeja’s wife. I bought that horse for 2,200 Rp. Jadeja told his wife that you should call for the horse but when the woman came to know that this horse was sold, she got very angry with me. I said that Jadeja sold it to me. After that the woman got very angry with her husband too. Then I went from there to the neighbouring Bhadiya village where I got a black colored horse.

After some time I met a Gadhavi friend who told me that a very nice horse was for sale. I said let me see. When I looked, I realized that this horse was from Navinal village that I had seen earlier. That horse would not allow the rider to sit, then I gave it training and the horse became very good-natured and gave me a lot of benefit.

I once helped my Gadhavi friend to recover his money from a horse buyer since then we became very good friends.

Once my situation became so bad that I had no money to provide food for my family and I had neither a horse nor a cart for it so I became despondent and sat in a Bhid market.

I saw that Gadhavi was coming from the road so I turned my face away, but he saw that I have ignored him. He came to me and asked me what the

matter was. I said my situation is very bad now. He asked let's have tea. I said I don't have a single rupee so I can't offer you tea. That's why I turned my face away in shame. He said don't worry and come with me, he immediately bought a cart for me. He asked me if I had a horse, I said no. He took me on a bus to his farm and he told me to take the one I liked best out of the four horses he had. And said that you will not worry about money, and you should do business and fulfil the needs of your family. I asked him what I will feed this horse as I have no rupees so he gave me ten rupees at that time and I was very pleased. I slowly repaid him the money after some time.

After a long time, once I worked in the market with my horse cart and sat down at a tea hotel to rest. Again the friend saw me and came to me. Tell me how are you Dahood? I said I am very happy to see you. How are you? He said that now my situation is similar to yours, I said that here is the horse and this carriage, I will auction it and give the money to your creditors. He said you don't need to do that. If you have five hundred or one thousand rupees in cash, give me. I bought it from a dealer and paid for it. I could never meet that person again. He was really a very kind person.

This horse is very aggressive no one has successfully ridden it even in Surat, Mumbai or Gujarat. I have trained this horse. It has a very aggressive mind so any rider hesitates to ride this horse. I have trained him. People wanted to buy a horse for 17.5 lakh rupees. When he came back here, he could not even stand. He slept for a month. Now he has recovered. It has recovered within three months.

His speed in *rewal* style of running is 41 to 42 km/hour. That's why the price is so high. I bought it back from Rajasthan for 25 thousand rupees. His legs were very weak. He was not able to move and was just sleeping. People said that now he will die soon.

When I bought this Shafi (name of horse) horseback, his owner said, I daresay, this dog will never get better. Now I have sent back his photos, the brother is shocked. The person is Raja Sahib's nephew, Raja Sahib who organizes fairs in Rajasthan. That brother called me and said that Daud uncle I want to meet you, I don't understand how you made this horse healthy again.

Those people could not ride this horse so it was left open in the plains. And where there was no grass now, people in Surat and Rajasthan are very surprised what medicine he fed to the horse so that it is now healthy again.

(interview 06082019)

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Shyam used to follow Daud's sons social media accounts, and one video with a footage of *rewal* riding, and a Hindi language poem which quite beautifully captures the connection to the horses and the addiction the relationship between the horses and the riders creates (Figure 7.3).



Figure 7.3 QR code to watch the poem in the video “Waiting for Corona/કો કોરોના અથેતો?” (26:49).

Source: <https://youtu.be/T0ADjM2avf4?si=fzvazu96K4of-ukC&t=1577>

7.7 Conclusions: from Permanent to Temporary and Uncertainties of Horse Training

When we last visited Haṅgāmī Āvās in early 2024 and turned from the main road to pay a visit to Daud’s compound, we were first shocked. In place of their home and open field for horse training, there was a high-security fence with an official entry to a site being developed into an industrial complex. Their old house, constructed after the 2001 earthquake, was demolished. We were introduced to the new living quarters and the horse stall by Daud’s son Husein who explained that the family had only paid for the doors, the owners of the land had provided the rest as a reward for having protected and guarded the land for many decades before. There is a promise for a proper house, so what we were introduced to, was to be a temporary one. The house and the horse stall were built along the fence leading to the new entrance of the industrial zone – an area which Daud claimed to be legally his.

As a result of this new development, the expansion of the industrial zone towards East of Haṅgāmī Āvās, Daud admitted it had major changes to their horse training:

Now we have no longer any other space for horse riding, only behind the school. This field was good, but it is now occupied, so there is no more open space here. Only behind the school and that space is the only one.

Horses are kept in a place where we earlier kept some equipment. We are living in a place what used to be storage of fodder.

They made a boundary with concrete tiles and made this same concrete boundary for us as well. We are looking forward to make a shed for it, to make a shadow for the horses, it does not yet have it and the weather is getting hotter.

Lot of changes have happened, years and decades have passed, and I am still here. No big changes in me. I am here with my horses.

(interview 24022024)

Such a statement, despite the difficulties in economic survival, recovering from the road accident and injury, but also difficult management of the relationship with his boss, and owner of the compound, and dedication to help others when in need, indicates a strong sense of integrity and understanding of one's respectability – in relation to being a Muslim, but also the independence that the horse breeding, training and racing brings about. We connect Daud's live historical reflections of *rewal* horse masculinities to the constructions of other communities connected to both horses, but also being discredited and marginalised by the dominant society, i.e. that of the Roma people (Ahlbeck, 2022). Drawing from Ahlbeck's work we suggest, that the Muslim *rewal* riding and trading connects intimately to that of the possibilities that they provide as forms of resistance. *Rewal* provides the possibility of gaining respect and value, but also become successful financially. *Rewal* respectability is gendered, but it provides an alternative space – sort of resistance to the automated subordination – in the dominant Hindu nationalist narratives where Muslim masculinities only have a space of threat and no real possibility to gain favoured social positions in that system.

In August 2019 on our visit, whilst discussing the horses, Daud was proudly showing us the videos his son had edited and posted on social media. One of them had been edited with the song “Main Hoon Don/I Am Don”, soundtrack from the movie *Don* (1978) with Amitabh Bachchan as the main character. Don is a criminal league boss in Mumbai, roaming free although he is wanted in several countries. During a chase, Don is severely injured and he dies. The movie plot continues with the DSP of Mumbai police hiring a look-a-like street performer to infiltrate Don's gang. In the 2006 remake of the film, Don is played by the Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan. Set in Malaysia Don is a manager of a carter leader. What is perhaps interesting for us in this intertextual referencing to Don and Shah Rukh Khan, is the silent rebellion label to Shah Rukh Khan, representing the Muslim community in India (Agha, 2022) in such a way that no other has done in public sphere. The song speaks volumes of being Othered, but also of the sacrifice and loyalty, and strength that is built on the ruins of experiences of social subordination.

Notes

- 1 In *Rewal cāl* trot, in English called *monté*, horse uses short and fast steps in which one front leg and back leg on the opposite side move together. This form of riding and racing is distinguished from harness racing that uses the same trot but pull a two-wheeled cart.
- 2 Node, or also Nodi or Nodhi, is a Muslim pastoralist community residing in both grassland area of Banni in Kachchh, and Sindh in Pakistan, also involved in animal husbandry and as urban migrants engage in wage labouring.
- 3 Raima community is a pastoralist Muslim community, partially involved in farm labouring.
- 4 Person known amongst horse owner circles as a famous breeder.
- 5 Recent research on trotter horses also suggests that use of bits to control horses from their mouths causes injuries and pain for the horse. Repeatedly wide open mouth may indicate mouth discomfort, or even pain (Tuomola, Mäki-Kihniä, Sirviö, & Valros, 2024).
- 6 Sama are a community of both Hindu Kshatriyas and Muslims, involved in pastoralism and agriculture. During the princely state, they were part of the armed forces and have engaged with horses.

References

- Agha, E. (2022, December 31). Tightrope act: Shah Rukh Khan's silent rebellion. *The Caravan*. Retrieved from <https://caravanmagazine.in/film/shah-rukh-khan-silent-rebellion>
- Ahlbeck, J. (2022). Respectable and masculine livelihoods: Roma stories of horse trading. In J. Ahlbeck, A.-C. Östman, & E. Stark (Eds.), *Encounters and Practices of petty trade in northern Europe, 1820–1960: Forgotten livelihoods* (pp. 251–276): Palgrave Macmillan. E-book.
- Ali, M. (2019). *Being Muslim in new India is an inherently existential struggle, subsumed as community is under an emergent Hindunation*. Retrieved March 7, 2025, from <https://www.firstpost.com/india/being-muslim-in-new-india-is-an-inherently-existential-struggle-subsumed-as-community-is-under-an-emergent-hindu-nation-6742191.html>
- Anand, D. (2007). Anxious sexualities: Masculinity, nationalism and violence. *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 9(2), 257–269. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-856X.2007.00282.x
- Doniger, W. (2021). *Winged stallions and wicked mares: Horses in Indian myth and history*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Hurn, S. (2012). *Humans and other animals: Cross-cultural perspectives on human-animal interactions*. London: Pluto Press.
- Ibrahim, F. (2008). *Settlers, saints and sovereigns: An ethnography of state formation in western India*. New York: Routledge.
- Ibrahim, F. (2018). Wedding videos and the city: Neighbourhood, affect and community in the aftermaths of the Gujarat earthquake of 2001. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 41(1), 121–136. doi: 10.1080/00856401.2018.1388948
- Ibrahim, F. (2021). *From family to police force: Security and belonging on a South Asian border*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Jamil, G. (2018). *Muslim women speak: Of dreams and shackles*. New Delhi: SAGE.
- Kipling, J. L. (1891). *Beast and man in India: A popular sketch of Indian animals in their relations with the people*. London: Macmillan and co.
- Kutch Horse Race. (2022). कच्छ की सुपरहिट रेवाल चाल रेस | Horse Rewal Chal Race | कच्छ अश्व पालक गटुप 2022. Retrieved March 7, 2025, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry3yKDEwTrI>
- Mehta, D. (2000). Circumcision, body, masculinity: The ritual wound and collective voice. In V. Das, A. Kleinman, M. Ramphele, & P. Reynolds (Eds.), *Violence and subjectivity* (pp. 79–101). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Parashar, S. (2018). The postcolonial/emotional state: Mother India's response to her deviant Maoist children. In S. Parashar, J. A. Tickner, & J. True (Eds.), *Revisiting gendered states: Feminist imaginings of the state in international relations* (pp. 157–173): New York: Oxford University Press.
- Simpson, E. (2006). *Muslim society and the Western Indian Ocean: The Seafarers of Kachchh*. London: Routledge. E-book.
- Srivastava, S. (2015). Modi-masculinity: Media, manhood, and “traditions” in a time of consumerism. *Television & New Media*, 16(4), 331–338. doi: 10.1177/1527476415575498
- Tuomola, K., Mäki-Kihniä, N., Sirviö, R., & Valros, A. (2024). Is rein tension associated with horse behaviour and mouth injuries in harness racing trotters? – Pilot study. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 277, 106356. doi: 10.1016/j.applanim.2024.106356

8 “When I Think of Those Days, I Feel Like the Earth Will Break Apart and I Will Merge into It”

Reconciling Gendered Intersections of Violence

8.1 Introduction: “My Story Is Much More Dramatic than a Movie”

This chapter centres around the life histories of a mother and a daughter, Kalila and Sofia who have been residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās since approximately 2002–2003. The chapter, after this brief introduction, takes a form of a life historical narrative, edited from the two life historical interviews conducted in 2018 in Gujarati (Sofia) and in Hindi (Kalila), complemented by later informal discussions held between 2019 and 2023, and translated into English.

In this chapter, we try as much as possible to follow the narrative structure and spoken characteristics of the interviews with Kalila, and her daughter Sofia as they occurred in the interview situations. The text runs as a movie script, with six scenes (Sections 8.2–8.7), titled with a scene theme and a direct quotation from the interviews. The scenes at times have sections that we have been written to contextualise the discussion, or a dialogue between Kalila and Sofia, and/or with Shyam, that is unfolding.

It is important that we also remind the reader that the order of themes is of our construction, as some of the topics were returned to later in the interviews, and others were addressed in both of the interviews. Furthermore, we hope that the chapter conveys how the two women construct their lives in a life historical interview setting through life events, trajectories they’ve taken, but also how life historical storytelling is an act of dramatisation, as Kalila herself sets it out to be: story that is more dramatic than a movie would be.

The interviews were conducted on two consequent days around the celebration of Muharram¹ and Ganesha Chaturthi² in 2018 – which both provided an important temporality and rhythm in the interviews: Kalila and Sofia were preparing their participation in them and wanted to time our meetings to fit their schedule, and related food preparations. We have excluded from the chapter some of the in-between talking that was touching upon food and drink preparations, festivals, and the possibility of Kalila to sell her permanent house, continue living in the temporary shelter, and use the money to travel to Marjaana’s home – an idea which her daughter, Sofia, comments “again she wants to run, she does not want to come back” and provides just one of the examples how humour, jokes, and hospitality were an important affectual parts of the interviews – interwoven to the key to their

mother-daughter relationship, gendered hardships and managing ones feelings, all explored in more detail in this chapter. We have marked some of the affective landscapes of the interviews by marking them: [silence] – [laughter] and so on.

One more observation of the interview language and their translation needs to be mentioned. Whereas Kalila mostly speaks Hindi in the interviews, Sofia her daughter, uses Gujarati and at times Kachchhi language. Kalila's predominant use of "we" (हम, ham) and occasionally shifting to the "I" (मैं, main) when speaking of herself and her experiences, is common in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Singh (2016) has suggested that the tendency to speak as "we" is wider amongst poorer communities, and Urdu-speaking communities, where speaking of oneself as an individual, rather than always part of a community matter. Singh further distinguishes this from the politicians' use of "we" where the attempt is to portray unity with the "people". We – researchers of this book – have followed the shifts between "we" and "I" in the English translation and suggest that the "we" indicates intersubjectivity, belonging, and connection to solidarity and mutual help, whereas the use of "I" points strategic narrative moments of rupture and dissidence.

Focusing on Kalila's and Sofia's lives, this chapter further wishes further to contribute towards a specific Indian, Gujarati and Kachchhi "she history", i.e. Muslim women's lived experience: "how women come to know and understand their world, and how they live within its contradictions" (Jamil, 2018, p. xii). Ghazala Jamil has suggested that such accounts are rare if not totally non-existent. This chapter further tributes to this complexity by acknowledging that the life experiences are always varied, never reducible to a Muslim women victimhood, a trope that travels globally, in the West but also in the Indian context problematically unquestioned (Jamil, 2018, pp. xiii–xiv). Even if one of the wider contexts of this book is the communal violence of 2002 which specifically had traumatic consequences for Gujarati (and beyond) Muslim women, we also wish, by re-narrating Kalila's and Sofia's stories, that their lives are much more than that, and that their lived experiences are part of a web of relations that may be less directly driven by the bigger, "noisy" and violent events but can form a shade in the overall canvas against which their stories gain certain connectivity.

The chapter argues, through the life historical and subaltern theorising (Jauhola, 2020) that disaster recovery (Joseph, Jauhola, Arvind, & Gadavi, 2021; Meriläinen et al., 2021), and thus, the emergence of feminist peace consist of gendered and intersectional wounded attachments and see the emergence of resilience as a social ontology of "we", instead of an individual, or governmental technology/praxis. Kalila's and Sofia's accounts of their lives contribute to questions and debates that should become core of theorising of feminist peace: firstly, complex experiences of the recovery beneficiary categories; secondly, how recovery reinforces gendered responsibilities as "building oneself back better"; thirdly, an active and confrontational negotiation of the norms around respectable mother and provider of care and livelihoods; fourthly, focusing on life historical accounts draws attention to gendered and intersectional (such as religious identity or expression) experiences where recovery causes pain and suffering, and resentment towards the recovery initiatives; fifthly, how complex inequalities and social relations are lived through

and negotiated in the aftermath of disasters; and finally, how to embody agency through forming mutual co-operation and networks of care and support, forming counter cultural everydays to disaster recovery (Joseph et al., 2021). Through this intergenerational dialogue, we suggest, emerges an ontology for feminist peace.

The rest of the chapter is divided into six scenes: leaving UP (“there is nobody for me”); home uncertainty for over three decades (“she is like an allrounder”); recovery through mutual help entangled in violence (“if you are hungry, never beg at the doors of others”); childhood and marriage (“drops of water work as acid if they drop in the same place continuously”); building life and new family from scratch (“as much sugar we put in tea, that much sweet it is”); and careful management of respectability and honour (“stick of blind will be lost just once”).

8.2 Where Kalila Leaves Her Home in Uttar Pradesh to Arrive in Bhuj – “There Is Nobody for Me”

Kalila: My destiny brought me here [smiling]. I have been so angry for so long that I don’t understand what to say and what to do. The travellers who ate and what was leftover, if they felt mercy on my children, they gave to them.

When I think of that day, it seems that the earth would burst, and I would get absorbed in it

.
.
.
[silence]

[Kalila seemed emotional, so Shyam decided not to ask more questions right after that to give her more time]

.
.
.

Kalila continues: I thought that let’s go to my father’s place [in UP]. Uncles are there. And to see them. I missed my parents. 10 years earlier I was married and since that time uncles are there but no-one came to meet me. Meet me and to see if I am alive or dead at my in-laws. But even I had no ticket I can go to see my parent’s family. It is some 12 hours way to go.

Then I remembered my parents (*mā bāp*). I was full of anger towards my in-law family that there was no space even for a small needle in that. Then I thought about my parents. That I have no mother and father. If I leave [my in-laws], to whom should I go? Then it was 2.30am. I found that I was surrounded by darkness everywhere. In one direction there was a bus station which was to go to my maternal home (*mā’ika*), another way was the train station. Both were nearby.

Then I got that much anger in my mind that I thought that if I don’t have my parents, there is no maternal home anymore. And where my husband is, is not good to me, there is no in-law’s place anymore. I got that much far that I never see the face of my husband again. Now there are no more parents, no mother or father, who would may cry or wait for me. There is nobody for me.

Crying and crying I entered the train. I cried and took my children into a coach and near the door I held onto a hook and stood there. Ticket master came and asked for a ticket. I told him gently that I don’t have one.

[laughing in pain]

I said whatever rule you have for the people who travel without a ticket, you can hang me or burn me. He checked the tickets from few other people and then he again asked me. Again, I said I don’t have any ticket, I have no money. He came again for the third time to me. Now I was not afraid even for death at that time. So, he said, ticket, ticket, ticket. Then I said that if my father had a vehicle, why I took this government vehicle. Why did I come? I told you once that I have no money for the ticket. Now you do what you do for your rule if you can burn me or hang me. You do whatever you can, but I have no money. Then he asked me if I have any paper or document for ID. I said no.

[again she laughs in pain].

Then the TC [ticket conductor] left.

[we all laugh].

And like that in anger, anger we reached to the station.

Shyam: Was that train coming here [Bhuj] directly?

Kalila: No, no. What happened was that where everyone left the train I also left. Again where everyone boarded, I also boarded, I did not ask anyone where the train was going.

Shyam: Oh, like where the train was going...

Kalila: I had never reached Delhi before that. But I travelled that much long.

Shyam: But how did you reach here? Like the same?

Kalila: Yes. Where everyone stepped down, I also did that, where everyone boarded, I also followed them.

Shyam: Had you never heard that there is a town called Bhuj?

Kalila: Delhi is twelve hours away from there, but like I said I never saw Delhi before, then this place I had obviously not seen even in my dreams.

8.3 Which Unfolds the Home Uncertainty for Over Three Decades in Bhuj – “She Is Like an Allrounder”

Having arrived in Bhuj, Kalila and the children settled in Ganesh Nagar neighbourhood, dominantly occupied by Maheswari³ community. She says, “I was not able to understand the language here, but it was my situation, what could I do? Then women and men helped me”.

For about a year or 1.5 years, the time she started to understand Kachchhi language, she worked as domestic helper and cleaning hotels, earning at times 500 Rs. or 600 Rs. per month. She compares the time, three to four years before the earthquake, saying “my livelihood (*gujarān*) is now more stable, thanks to the God”.

Kalila: Yes. You see that in Ganesh Nagar, nowadays called Hill Garden, I used to go and collect wood to the forest which men were using as their toilet and I was carrying the wood to home. Then I made big roti, vegetables, and rice quickly with that wood. Then I went to Jay Nagar for work. I went at 9am and came back at 2pm. At 2pm I was having lunch with my children. Then from 2 to 3pm I went to Lalan Collage and watered the plants. Then I was free at 6pm. Then if there was vegetable at home, otherwise I walked to Bhuj, then I bought vegetables and other things and went home.

Shyam: were you doing 2–3 types of work?

Kalila: Yes.

Kalila and the children stayed at the same place until the earthquake, paying a rent of 300 Rs per month – half of her earnings. However, due to severe earthquake damage in their own house, the owners requested Kalila to vacate hers, so that they would be able to move in. She landed at Jubilee Ground, a sports ground located in central area in Bhuj, that became a centre for earthquake relief. According to her:

Kalila: So many came to help, there was no water, also no food. Everybody was there. Whose house was that, those people came to me and told me, sister, we want this house now. We said, sister, God has saved our lives, that is enough. It is your house, you take it. Whatever I had, slowly, slowly, we moved it to Jubilee ground. There we got a tent, what usually police uses/make. Then 1.5–2 years we lived in that. From there we joined my job with Madam.⁴

People in Jubilee Ground told us that if you deposit some money, you will get a house. Then we paid 3,000Rp in the collector’s office. Then we got a house in our name. But then government broke it⁵ and they gave another house to us. Then they broke it again. Then they made that house and gave it to somebody else. Then we thought, where shall we go? What should we do? With these small children. If there was just one child, anyone could keep us, but 4–5 children, who will keep us?

Then Madam came and said that why are you afraid. I have a house here. You stay there but you take care and do some cleaning of my house also. I said ok. I am doing it [cleaning] here in my house, because it is important. If I will not do every day, twice a month I can clean yours also. She said ok. Even we are not going to stay there. So then we asked her how much rent will you take? She said I don’t want any rent, but I want your blessings. And then like this she just gave it like that.

They⁶ also broke my house. And I didn’t get anything for that. But now what I got, it is better. Our Madam also bought house for us. She said you take your children and come to the hospital to stay. We replied that since we are working for you, then only you will keep us. Imagine in case if you become my enemy, and you fire me. Then you will throw me out and then where shall I go? I told to Madam I will not stay here in the hospital. You give me 30,000–40,000 Rp. then I will pay you back with my work. At that time she (Sofia) was just 10 years to 12 years old. So I said that I want a home now.

Currently, whilst waiting for a permanent house in Haṅgāmī Āvās to be completed (in 2019), Kalila lives together with one of her sons and daughter-in-law, sharing a two-room temporary shelter, owned by Madam. Although married and living in another temporary shelter unit, her daughter Sofia has temporarily moved back with her mother with her first child, due to disagreements in the in-law family.

Some Thacker families who became initially beneficiaries of temporary shelter units, continue to own the units and rent them out to others. In the words of Kalila: “Nowadays that family is living in a bungalow. They are living in Bhuj somewhere and how to stay in this kind of a slum?” However, as Kalila explains, Madam never took any rent from them, “she just gave me to stay in like this. She saw our situation and never took any rent”. Later, when the home in Haṅgāmī Āvās was leaking during the rains that had arrived after the five years of drought and no rain, Kalila was not able to go to work as it flooded everywhere. Kalila asked Madam for help, who offered her and the children to stay at the hospital where Kalila was working, but she refused.

Finally, when the government housing scheme, Rajiv Awas Yojnya (for details see [Chapter 9](#)) was initiated in the area in 2014, and rumours of temporary shelter unit demolitions were again circulating, Kalila started thinking she would need to secure her future. She thought that perhaps even this home would one day be demolished, like the others were. Madam helped Kalila with 60,000 Rs to invest in a permanent housing unit. However, the process of gaining one, was far from simple:

Kalila: Amongst them someone told that these people [us] are outsiders. They will not get anything anywhere. At that time we had not even any proof to tell them who we were. Then slowly, slowly ration card and election card was given [to us]. Receipt of children’s school admission, these all were given to them. And then when the list of houses was released, there was also our name in it. Then I said anything would not happen. People who gave the house, said no, nothing will happen. That’s how it happened.

But when asked about the status of the house now (in 2019), Kalila described the complex reality to us: “From the government everything is there, only stairs and water tank is missing. Everything is missing, they have just constructed one box”. The attempts to get a home during the three decades were suspending a process

of belonging and emotional attachment to it, a process that Jauhola (2010) calls “when house becomes home”.

Over half of the money (30,000 Rs) given to the local contractor⁷ disappeared with him after having completed work worth 20,000 Rs and Kalila recalls how “All the line of Muslims, he took 30,000Rp each, and ran away”, consisting of roughly 40 households. In order to continue the construction process, the local organisation facilitating the owner-driven housing programme (for details of the scheme, see Bogni, 2021) issued new loans for the future owners, including Kalila: “organisation issued a loan of 27,000Rp so I have to pay 1,000Rp every month as an instalment”. In a nutshell, it means there have been no court cases against the constructor but the new house owners are paying the lost money again with the bank interest rates.

At the time when things were very uncertain, Kalila recalls:

I cried a little bit in front of Madam so Madam also got mercy on me. And we told also to her, with these small children, where shall we go? Do work, feed my children? And a house anywhere? There was so much tension (English word used to emphasise the stress).

I even did not have energy to work. And Madam asked what happened to you? Why you became so weak? You please tell me and she insisted on me. She insisted on me every day. Then I told and I cried and I had tears in my eyes. She asked why are you crying. You share everything with me. And then I told her the matter. What would I do now. Madam told that you don't tell anyone, we will give you the money. You find a house and you let me know how much they are asking for that. Here are so many people who are working for me, but you don't tell anyone that Madam is helping me. Only we and Madam, we only know this. And I also sometimes take holiday at the time of salary I say her that you take it from my salary. But she always say that you take your salary.

Brother, this house of mine, will I loose it? The house which is given by Madam.

Someone was saying to me that because you have two houses, you will not get a new one. And anyway you are outsiders. So there are difficulties (*taklif* in Gujarati). People who came from organisations, local people told them, that Behenji (sister) has already a house then how can she get another one. Then officers told them that Behenji (sister) has all the proofs and order came from Delhi. We have not given it to her. She got the house from Delhi.⁸

But this house where we are living now does not belong to us. This is still of the nurse, if she tells us that now I need it, where will we go? People told that person who has another house, the government will take that. We said whatever happens, depends on my luck/destiny (*nasib* in Gujarati).

Sofia steps in:

What I tell you about her work. My mother went to give instalment to the bank for the new house then she went to GEB [electricity board] to solve the penalty money. Plus, the contractor took the money and ran away. That 30,000Rp of penalty my mother also arranged and paid it. After having paid the 30,000Rp she had to pay GEB.

- Kalila:* I went to jungle to bring wood and meanwhile my house was locked. Then GEB people came, they took [the electric meter] box. Now obviously we cannot stay without electricity if there was any rain or heat.
- Sofia:* Auntie who was living at the backside, they have moved into a new house. They were not using that unit, they said you take it [electricity] from ours. Sharing is fine, but you cannot take it directly from the line. That's why.
- Kalila:* One notice I got from the court of 57,000Rp and another was 58,000Rp. Then I went there and I shouted and shouted. I said that I will not pay any money of interest but what is the base money, I will pay you that. Then the court did not ask that money again.
- Sofia:* You see that's why my mother was managing it from her own income and brother's income. My brothers were not able to go as they were working in Madhapar. That's why they also don't come. I was staying at my in-laws house and my brother's wife don't know how to manage everything. And my sister-in-law could not manage that much. My mother went to work and also she managed these all debts. Even in the house if there is anything to buy, like grain or vegetables or flour, she took care of everything. She is like an allrounder. And sometimes she also had to go, on occasions like wedding ceremonies and all, she had to take care of everything.

Whilst waiting the "box", the new house, to be finished, there are plans to arrange marriage of the remaining three children. Mother and daughter contemplate about it:

- Kalila:* I thought let me slowly, slowly complete that house first.
- Sofia [in Gujarati]:* They can get married right now, but the thing is that the house is not yet ready. We can add one room, but what about the second one? Where they go to sleep? Outside? They need it. Isn't it a horrible story?

In our later meetings and COVID-19 lockdown phone calls in 2020 Kalila was expressing that a suitable bride had been found in Kolkata, but both the unfinished house, and the COVID-19 measures impacting the family's economics, meant that engagement commitments were yet to be completed.

8.4 Which Focuses on Recovery and Mutual Help Entangled into Violence – "If You Are Hungry, Never Beg at the Doors of Others"

At the time of our first meeting in 2019, we met Kalila when she was completing days' work of wrapping sweets into thin cellophane plastic at her home. The sweets were then sold by someone else to children in the neighbourhood. Kalila explains:

Yet I have to tie it. What else to do, we don't have any work nor children have any work....It [availability of work] has slowed down... Sons are going to work where they have to polish [something]. But there is no work. One goes, rest stay at home

In one day, If I sit from morning until now, I can complete around thousand pieces. If three people join, then only.... If I tie 100, will get 7 Rp.

They came today morning, now they will come tomorrow morning around 10am.

Sofia: We gave them 900 when they came in the morning. And when they came afternoon, that time we gave them 1,100. That's why I was telling that yesterday that we sit to tie from this time we stop around 9.30pm to 10pm. From 6pm to 10pm we tied, and we got 900 Rp. Then again today 11am to 2pm we did something 1,100 pieces and some more are there what we did just now. This time he gave a lot of material, otherwise usually he gives not more than 1,300 to 1,500 pieces.

Shyam: It means that you are doing them fast that's why he gave you more.

Sofia: Yes. And other ladies are not giving that much importance to the work of that man and they are not returning the materials in time. We have just started since couple of days, the twelfth of this month.

Whilst going through the memories of the 2001 earthquake, Kalila describes how the same Madam who had helped Kalila and the family to find a home in Haṅgāmī Āvās had also helped her to find a job at the hospital. Yet, as the above discussion indicates, at the time of our first interview in 2019, Kalila had recently stopped working there. She explains:

Much more than 13 to 14 years I worked there. Since the earthquake I was working there, maybe much longer than 13–14 years. Nowadays also Madam is calling me but I am not going. Because sometimes Sir [Madam's husband] whenever he sees me, he doesn't understand that at least I came there and am working. He will start speaking to me in front of the patients.

Since four months I stopped going there. Because our doctor, he was shouting/blaming (*matha pit ta*), every time same things were repeated in front of me. On that day I took holiday. If I was taking holiday from Madam, it was better. Like this [taking holiday] I got our festival [Ramadhan] I was thinking it would be on the third [of the month], but it was on the first. I had to stay home for emergency. So then I informed Madam by phone. But when our Sir (*sahab*) heard that, he got very angry. He continuously was accusing me for fifteen days. For 15 days I suffered, after 15 days I went to Madam and told her that I will not come for work. If I have done any mistake, I can understand it but if something happens at

home then I have to take holiday, no? Then I asked her to tell me which mistake I have done.

I left the hospital before the Ramadan. I had joined six months after the earthquake there. Madam is saying you can work anywhere, up or downstairs. I said no now, but when Sir will behave nicely with me, then I will come.

[Kalila is still emotional]

Shyam: When you suffered so much God was looking at you, your children are young now and also your daughter is having daughters. [meaning a long time has passed and things are turning better]

Kalila: I taught my children that if you are hungry never beg at the doors of others. If somebody is coming to help you, then later you will return it back to that person. I do my labour with hard work and I have never begged even for five rupiahs in my life. What happens if there is no salt, chilli or turmeric, I will not put it. I will cook my food without that. But I never took credit, nor went to ask someone else for that. I had also a situation before that I was boiling rise and putting chilli and salt into it and we were eating that. But I never went to beg.

.
.
.
[silence]
.
.
.

8.5 Which Focuses on Kalila’s Childhood and Marriage in UP – “Drops of Water Work as Acid if They Drop in the Same Place Continuously”

Kalila: I have no mother or father. Someone murdered [my father] when I was a child. He was killed for money. Even they did not get it. Our father was in the military. But I was a child when he passed away. My mother did not know that I slept in the same room with my father. And thieves came, they killed him and left. Then before the sunrise everywhere was full of cars and vehicles. But they had cut his neck by knife. What to do? My fortune has finished/broke in childhood, no one else is guilty.

Shyam: I think in your childhood when you were young, you were so loved child because you were the only daughter and all gives love to you. Is not like that?

Kalila: Yes, yes. But when my father was murdered, my life got worse. I was so beloved when my father and mother were there. I was that much beloved

that my father was believing in me not like as a girl, but as a boy. Whatever I asked, they never refused to give me that. Because in entire family, no one was having a daughter. Now after us, there are 18–19 daughters in the family.

Our parents' home was approximately 7 to 8 hours away. During the winter if go at 9 o'clock in the morning, then I will reach there at night 8 o'clock. [We] not been there since coming here. Neither in-law family nor parent's family. But the in-law family, they know that we are alive and are living here. Once these our little children were not going to school, so angrily I put them in the train and said that go to your father. And sent them there. Then one returned within 4 months, another within 5 months, and the last within 6 months. They stayed for such a period. They run back one after another. They would not stay there. Because my mother in-law is also not there. She also went to up [passed away] because of coughing and breathing diseases. My mother-in-law passed away when my youngest son was three months old. And then we moved here. After the death of my mother-in-law, my home got totally scattered.

Shyam: I see so all these problems started after that.

Kalila: Yes. My father-in-law. My husband and his younger brother for some time they lived at their home and then they moved to Mumbai.

Shyam: I see, to work there.

Kalila: Yes. When they were at home, there weren't any problems. Women over there, they will never go to buy anything from the market, even if something has finished from the kitchen, such as vegetables, salt, or dal. That much there is a boundary for/control over women.

Shyam: If someone else will go then?

Kalila: If someone will go, then anyone in the area will see it and will let the family know. Then either father-in-law or brother-in-law or even husband will beat the woman so much. This is the system over there.

Then my father-in-law was troubling us so much. Yes. What he was planning was that I may have a [sexual] relationship with his son and him too.

Kalila: I told him. You are like my father to me, if I will beat you, you will be straight.

Shyam: So that's why you ran from there?

Kalila: Yes because of this and my husband got another wife. With the daughter of his auntie [masi, sister of mother]. Once it was a marriage of [nanand=husband's sister] sister-in-law of our sister-in-law's daughter. We went there and knew about that [the new wife]. And I started to cry there. I asked that I want a divorce now.

Then the people of our in-law family and of our village they started to convince me:

Oh daughter, look, he will leave you, it is fine. You [using informal version *tu*] will also go but if you will get a worse husband than him, what will you do? Since you are here, you are able to eat roti at home at least. If you go to another place, what people will tell, that you have no parents, no brother or sister. And you are doing this. And they will also tell that once a woman gets married, what happens if she does not have a husband? Society will always say that look at this woman, she came to another place after she had been already once married. And it is like that. Once that dark spot on the head/you are labeled/marked [*daag*], what else can be done with that?

Shyam: Now you are married like that [*daag*]?

Kalila: Even though, I lived ten years there. In bad words, in beatings, in no food or drink. Then what was eating me was one, that this rascal father-in-law and second, that God has given me the pain to be alone. I cannot live anymore in this world. Watching this world and I was still patient. But he [husband] loved money, not us. If he doesn't like us, why did he not tell me beforehand. Why he destroyed my life? Then I got three sons and one daughter. Then even he was doing like that. Now you tell me you could not take care of us, how will you take care of our children? How you made us like that, you will also treat your children as your servants. I will not let that happen. I said that. In our mind continuously...like drops of water works as acid if they drop in the same place continuously.

Like that, because of my every day's anger, once I told him: since I am here I will be as your heartbeat, but once I will leave, on that day you will also see me, your father will see me, this your village will also see me and your friends will see me. And I will leave you in the presence of all of them. But once I leave, I will never see your face again. Then he said that if you put your feet outside the house, I will break your hands and feet. I said ok. I said, try to break it. Then one day I became angry and told him that I tell you I will go to my parent's house [*mai ke*] and then I lost my mind and I jumped on the train.

The matter is, after the death of my father, my grandmother [father's mother, or mother's mother] troubled me. And never my aunt oppressed me. But they were forcing me to work the double that I was working. Aunties [*chachi, masi, badi maa, badi bhabhi*], I cannot refuse them, whatever they were ordering, I had to do it. Even if I was not able to, I had to do it. I had to prepare fodder for cows and buffalos by a machine. Grass for the fodder I had to take from the farm. The farm was quite far like that corner where we enter to GIDC, from there to here. From there I had to carry all that weight and while reaching home, the neck would be bent like this.

That's why I am not going. There are no relatives in this world for me. My brother-in-law went to Saudi-Arabia. Now he is in Mumbai but since my mother-in-law passed away, he has never returned back. We both are like how we say, the moon of the second day [meaning: there is moon but it cannot be seen], we never go there and not even call and ask how things are. But sometimes my sister-in-law calls and talks to my children. Only one person with whom they are talking. But nobody else. She was a good person. She was a woman but nothing was in her control.

In the in-law family other family members, village, society they are all good. But what to do when your husband is not right. Then who is mine there? Every day to listen the bad words, experience the violence. Who will tolerate it? It is okay if you do not give me food once. But this I cannot tolerate. You beat me in front of others to show off. How much I will tolerate you? I will tolerate everything but when I am not your beloved one, then it is better that I do what I think. First my children's life and then my life.

What happened was that when my mother-in-law passed away, he thought that my son is in Mumbai and here my daughter-in-law will be caught in my trick. Once at night, at the compound I was sitting, and I was sweeping because it was the rainy season and there were no fans. There were no doors in that big house. There were four, five rooms in the house.

And there were two doors, but outside, there were no doors to the compound. I thought my father-in-law is sleeping outside, and I am inside, so there is nothing to worry. And I fell asleep with my children. As soon I woke up and opened my eyes, I was shocked. And I could not understand, what is this? Is this a ghost of a dream, or ghost of a people tree?

Sofia later reflects on it: My mother is originally from UP. Our birthplace is there. But my mother and then, there was fight between husband and wife, in anger she came here, with all of us. That's why I have no father.

Shyam: You came here alone?

Kalila: Yes I came in anger.

Shyam: You came in anger? Even you did not know anyone here?

Sofia: That is what I mean!

Kalila: Below is earth, above is the sky [that's the truth as the earth is below and the sky is above].

8.6 Where Building Life and New Family from Scratches in Kachchh is Described – “As Much Sugar We Put in Chai, that Much Sweet It Is”

After arriving in Bhuj, some 3–4 years before the earthquake, Kalila started her and her children's life from scratch. As she described it already, she did not understand the language spoken by people (Gujarati, Kachchhi) but men and women of her

new neighbourhood helped her. Throughout the interviews she, and her daughter Sofia, give several examples of how solidarity and mutual help has played a role in both building their lives economically (jobs offered to Kalila), finding homes, but also eventually, building social relationships across religious lines that they both call their family. Here's one such a conversation:

Kalila: Their [children's] father was not there.

Shyam: Oh, did father refuse?

Kalila: They have no father [this is before she tells the story of leaving UP].

Shyam: Hmmm...

Kalila: Then here, someone here is as a brother, and someone as a sister. To whomever I say mother and father, they would be...

Sofia: Her brother and sister have also died. I have uncles and aunties, but they are not blood relatives. She has made all these relatives while she is living here. Home, family, and so on.

Shyam: There is another lady who is living inside [maybe pointing at some direction] who is also working on these [cellophane wrapping]. Is she a Muslim?

Sofia: Yes, she is my auntie. Is she wearing a sari?

Shyam: Mmm. Little bit further than the last line.

Sofia: Yes, yes. The whole house is white colour and front is saffron colour painting.

Shyam: Something like that.

Sofia: She is auntie (wife of mother's brother, *mami*).

Shyam: How she became your auntie?

Sofia: My mother is calling husband of the aunt as brother. Before they were living behind us, they got a new house in the project which is completed and they have moved in. Here we got everything we did not have before, auntie, uncle.

Shyam: Husband of the auntie, is he calling your mother as a sister?

Sofia: Yes. They do *rakhi bande*,⁹ and are calling her sister. That's why she is our auntie.

Kalila: They are more than my own relatives. But our own blood is our own. All others are different. As much sugar we put in chai, that much sweet it is.

We interpret this to mean that all are constructed relations and there will be expectations; own blood relations do not require that. Yet, how much effort one puts into creating such relations, such results it will have. Sofia continued:

Sofia: Others became our own, like that we are living here. And you see otherwise there is my mother and the Madam (doctor), people will be telling their servant/person working for them, that there is nothing for them here. Why do I help you? Few people are like that but not all are bad or good.

Kalila: Now you look at the Madam who if I am working at night shift at night 11 o'clock, she gives me ticket [money] and says that you go to your home to do whatever you have to do/you check what you want to see, and then come

back. Sometimes around 2pm if I feel pressure in my heart and tell I want chai. My Madam never makes coffee for Sir (Sahab) but she makes chai for me. The mind of Sir is so aggressive. That's why I stopped working there.

Sofia: Sometimes for two to three months it continues like this but then Madam says you come back, then she (Mother) starts missing her (Madam). And my mother says that I am going to hospital.

Shyam: It means that she is a bit angry and she is not going?

Sofia: Yes. They are like this, not now but since the beginning. Maximum is 2–3 months, that is enough. Then capacity is finished and also calling starts, now come. And then my mother also says, let's go. It's like mother and daughter fight. It is like that. She never took my mother on her mind [she is not hurt by what Kalila does]. Her nature is so good. When I go to give her sweets on the occasion of Eid, then she says that tell to your mother....

In the last section we turn to accounts of recovery pain and suffering – in this case directly affecting mother-daughter relationship, mothering, and being sidelined by the institutionalised care.

8.7 Reveals the Careful Management of Respectability and Honour – “Stick of Blind Will Be Lost Just Once”

Kalila: Let me tell you about these children, brother. My youngest son had breastfeeding.

By this, Kalila suggests that despite working two to three jobs at the same time in one day besides the other home chores, she was able to breastfeed her son – perhaps marking it as a phase of being proud of her motherhood. However later, as she recalled to us, her motherhood was challenged by the disaster aid workers. At the same time when Kalila and her children had reached Haṅgāmī Āvās, disaster aid workers were responding to the lack of schools in the area, and the difficult situations that single women with children were facing economically. Kalila describes, how she was approached and told of the benefits of putting her boy children to madrasa: “sister told me that their life can be good, and they can learn about the [Islamic] law and education”. Two brothers joined a close by madrasa behind the railway track, and Sofia, at the time around 6 years old, with another brother joined a SOS village-run boarding school. This started a long period when the relations between the mother and daughter changed dramatically. Sofia recalls it:

Education over there, and food and drink and to stay was so nice. There was one lady coming to take care of us because we all were too young. They were taking care of everything, our bath, food, everything. They were feeding us on time and giving drink on time. Rules were so strict, you had to sleep at 9 o'clock. Must have to wake up early morning at 5am. Rules and regulations were there, but not in the room. But you must do everything on time.

Shyam: Ok I see, but for people who came to meet, was it strict for them?

Sofia: I don't know how this became later like this. Otherwise, I was meeting my mummy. Every month or fifteen days she would come to meet me.

Kalila steps in to describe the experience from her perspective:

What happened was that once I missed my children and wanted to meet them. So I went to see them. They told me not to come frequently (*bar bar* in Gujarati). I asked why. Since they turn 18, you don't have to see them. I said I came from my home/place (*desh*, referring to UP) with my children here and you know how long 18 years are? I also said children also die, their parents also die in the waiting and waiting. In 18 I will finish my life. Angrily I said I don't let them study here. I took them out of there. Then I got so angry (*gussa*). I said that now I don't want to let them study here. If you will not give me them now, I will go to police station and tell them you have captured my children forcefully.

The stick of blind, will be lost just one time, not regularly. I said that now you are telling me about 18 years, that you don't come to see them until they are 18. Within 18–20 years girl or boy becomes an adult (*javan* in Gujarati). Then they sell them to somebody else. Then you will say to me that what have you done for them. For that I told that I don't want to let her study. It also was still going on. Even I did not get to study. I said she will also not study.

Here we think Kalila is talking about her fear of losing her daughter, responding to possible rumours that children get abducted from such boarding schools – rather than not wanting to school her girl child. Sofia steps in to reflect upon her standpoint of the experience:

Sofia: It was so nice school.

Shyam: I see. Did they also told to you that since you are 18 no one will be able to meet you?

Sofia: Maybe they told to mummy. We don't know. They just asked me, do you want to stay here or want to go to your parents (*mummy papa*). I said no, I want to go to my parents. I don't want to stay. They said that then you will never able to come back again. It will be like this and that. I said no, whatever you say, I want to go.

In the beginning I was so angry at her [Kalila] because I was not able to see her. I just saw her once in a month. So we were not able to recognize her. An example, if a small child sees someone everyday, and once in a month, child cannot recognize/remember the person. Then when I knew, that time my mother asked me, do you want to come, and I said yes I want to come.

Shyam: Maybe you were something 9 years old when you left the boarding school?

Sofia: Yes maybe, approximately.

Shyam: Then you ever went to school?

Sofia: No. Then we sent my brothers. They were studying in madrasa, Muslim school

Kalila: In the madrasa, nobody takes money.

Shyam: Yes they don't take money?

Kalila: No usually they take money, but in my case they said there is no one who is earning. So how will this poor one give us. I wanted to make them study but my children did not go to school. I thought they were going to school, but they were just sleeping in the forest. Now I had no idea. I thought they would be there in the school. In the school they thought they are at home at their mother's house. Once school people came to find them, that time I got to know. I sent them here to there and on the next day, they went to forest and slept there. Sometimes they go to temple and sleep there. Sometimes they go to sleep in somebody's empty hut (*jumpda*).

Sofia: [My] brother was so young. Yesh, younger than her also [she is pointing to her daughter]. I grow up by taking care of my brother and raised him. That's it.

Shyam: I see.

Sofia: Then she has not sent me for further study. When I grew up, and then I realised that everybody is going to study. Why she has not sent me to study. Later on I and my mother were having a brawl because of that. [in Gujarati] I was too young. That's why I am saying I raised my two brothers. One is this and there is other one [talking about the brothers]. She [talking about mother] used to work.

Kalila: Then what to do. Five people to feed and if I don't work then to which door do I go with an empty dish for food.

The second break in the mother-daughter relations, and a concrete physical separation between them happened when Sofia decided to elope with a Hindu boy from the neighbourhood. Sofia explains:

Then I fell in love with one of friend of my brother. He was Hindu and I was Muslim. But since the beginning I was following a Hindu tradition a lot. My mother used to get angry with me, why are you following a Hindu tradition? But I told her that what is wrong. As we are, such are those people also. I do bindi,¹⁰ my mother didn't like it. No-one liked it in our lane. But I liked it so much. Then I asked the father of this girl [she is pointing to her daughter] that see it's like this. Will your family accept me? He said yeah-no, yesh-no.... Everybody was doing the same. Then I talked to my mother. Mother, I love him, so please arrange my marriage with him. If you will arrange with someone else, his life would be worse and my life too. And the life of the third one also. Both of them did not agree. His family did not agree and my family also did not agree to it. Then we fled. [she laughs]

After the escape we ran to Jamnagar. In Jamnagar we stayed at his [husband's] friend. After few days we called home. We knew that they are

filing a criminal case against us. "Your mother has filed a rape case against him" I was told and she was telling everyone that "my daughter has been kidnapped and raped". At the time I was pregnant for few months.

Shyam: At that time what was your age?

Sofia: There were still two months left before I turned 18.¹¹ I had not yet reached 18. I thought I had turned, but I was not. Then my brother-in law [husband's elder brother, jeth] called to his father and asked. His father said that you come and surrender yourself at the police station, then they will not do anything to you. When the girl is still with you, then you don't have to be afraid. Anyway we came back. Then we refused to go [to the police station] and I was telling to him that let's not go as they will separate us. He said nothing will happen, let's go.

Then we surrendered in the B division police station and we explained them everything. They informed my mother that your daughter has returned if you wish to meet her. They also did a medical check-up to me. And they found that I am pregnant. So they were confused about what to do? They asked where I want to go. I said I don't want to go home because if I go, people will make stories about me and taunt us. They will taunt my mother that your daughter did these things.

I said them you send me to ashram. And husband went to Palara jail [district prison]. Then I escaped from the ashram after a week, I jumped the high wall and ran away. Then they came to find me and took me back. Then I was in the ashram. Husband was Palara jail for 3.5 months. I was 3 months and three weeks [*pona char*]. When it was the court date that time the judge asked me "what do you want"? I said I want to stay with him, whether if you say yes or no. My age was 18, then they cannot keep me. My wish was that I stay with him. When I was already married to him, obviously [*je*] I would stay with him. There is no sense to stay with ones parents then. Then we left and withdrew the case.

So they [ashram people] were not letting me to meet my mother. If any girl will get bored, if there is nothing to see or meet anyone, I was used to go twice a day to ask them that I want to meet my mother. But they were not allowing me to meet anyone. My mind was running/roaming so much.

My first child was born at Ashirvad hospital. My mother was working at another maternal hospital but she was not speaking with me. Because I eloped. So of course she was angry with me. I realised how it must feel when I got a daughter. Like, in case if my daughter does the same what I did with my mother. How would I feel then?

The mother and daughter reflected in detail the wider consequences of this episode in their lives in the housing lane relations: they were considered morally inappropriate and bad role models for other women and girls – even before Sofia eloped.

Kalila described a situation where a neighbour's daughter ran away with a boy after she found out of her father had arranged a marriage with another boy. The family, including all the female members, accused Sofia for arranging and influencing their daughter and they attacked her physically number of times. Kalila recollects:

Then once that person came and he said angrily to me: because of your daughter, my daughter ran away. But now I challenge you that because of us, now your daughter will run away.

I angrily said to him that your daughter is not that simple as you think. Then the women of that family came to beat Sofia. His mother, his wife, and two daughters. They came to beat her. They also slapped her maybe twice and I thought that it was also her fault that she delivered the sim-card for her. And I decided to forget everything. The matter is of the land, or my residency, who will make this all so big (talk of the town, gossip).

Then I decided to do nothing and let's forget it. They also kept coming and using bad words of us. They kept coming to beat her. Once they came in four, then I became so angry. My anger was from toes to head, whole body is angry. I said now you come. I will just tear you up. Once if I get that anger, because in my childhood, my father had nine brothers and I had not any auntie. And my grandmother. Once when my health was not so good, that time she gave me meat to eat. Meat was of lion. If I get that anger, what will happen if there are ten people? I just throw them. Then I got that anger.

Yet, to the neighbours, she was actively challenging the sole blame they were casting on Sofia:

If it is only the fault of my daughter, then I will kill her. But because you know that your daughter is guilty, that's why you are not going to call her. You go and take her tomorrow, and then we will decide whose fault it is. When goldsmith and blacksmith will sit together, then only would be there a decision whose fault that was.

My daughter was standing there. I was here. And her grandmother, her mother and her two sisters came to threaten [beat her up] her. And her father and grandfather were standing under that tree and looking at us. Because they [male] all cannot beat us so that is why they were standing there. Now I was so angry and thought that if I will not save my daughter then she will be finished.

Then I looked at her. Before I was just watching them [females] what they are doing, but now I grabbed her hand and bent her. Then she was not able to beat my daughter. Couple of times before I had allowed them [females] to beat her. I thought, let's forget it. This time I thought, if my daughter is guilty, then you then also call your daughter. But they said that your daughter taught our daughter. I said that my daughter is not yet engaged or married, how come she know that much?

Then I said, you just leave. It will not happen what you are saying. What is your right to do like this with us? First you try that, then you will see. Then all four ladies tried to beat us again. Then I got angry. I grabbed her hair and threw her into the gutter. Then to another one, I pushed her down and made her to sit and grabbed her hair from behind.

Then everyone saw that and meanwhile others tried to come to beat up Sofia but son and husband of the woman said [in Kutchi]: "let's go, let's go mother, we will see them later on". I said, don't go. Let them come and I will tear them each and everyone here. I am only one here and you are four but now you try to touch my daughter, and I will show you.

Since today I let them go and thought that it is a matter of neighbourhood but not anymore. How one can clap with one hand, there should be also another one? They said that our daughter is innocent, only your daughter is guilty. I said if your daughter is washed by milk [saying by which is meant that someone is innocent]? Again my mind went and then they started to leave. Then I never thought that someone will take revenge as an enemy with daughters. And then they made our daughter run away. And they did that within 15 days. In 15 days they proved it.

They did black magic. Then we lost our hope (*ash*). That hope reached to the God. But [pointing at Sofia] your brother-in-law paid the cost of that. Within 20 days, he was doing welding work. He was Sofia's brother-in-law. He was uncle [*mama*, brother of mother] of that girl who ran away and they were living here in Abhiyan [houses]. He was not ill at all. He got ache in the chest. They took him to the general hospital, kept in ICU. Within 5 minutes he lost his breath. So God punished them like that.

What I lost was my daughter. This whole neighbourhood was laughing at me. They were sitting on the chairs and *charpoys*. Still when I remember such days, still my heart breaks.

[her voice stop by tears/cry]

Incident passed but I still remember the days. Yes so that is what I am saying that I was patient. I thought every sound of those people which were coming to my ears was listened by God. Their laughter, their bad words, what I heard, God heard it too. Within 20 days her brother-in-law passed away. They also passed the same pain that I had.

Sofia steps in:

Our lane was so famous [for fighting?]. No other lane was like ours. It was a houseful. From beginning to the end. Those all houses which are empty nowadays were full.

8.8 Conclusion – When a House Becomes a Home?

Kalila: What to do? Fools will also learn to behave after experiences of this world.

- Sofia:* She is saying that if that girl [pointing out her daughter] will learn how to face difficulties since her childhood, then there would not be any problems in the future.
- Shyam:* What is she saying?
- Sofia:* She [referring to her daughter] is being prepared since her childhood. Because there were so many fights and quarrels in this area/here.
- Kalila:* This lane is empty now. Otherwise, it was full from the beginning to the end.

This chapter has introduced the lives of two Muslim women, mother and daughter, living in the Haṅgāmī Āvās since its establishment. Their stories unfolded via six scenes touching upon the violence that disrupted their lives in UP to arrive accidentally in Bhuj, describing the uncertainty of their living arrangements over the three decades and mutual help that was embedded in religious discrimination and formal aid mechanism that broke the relations of mother and daughter on two separate occasions, and how social bonds were created across the religious lines in the temporary shelter neighbourhood, and yet how both the mother and daughter had to fight for their choices in life in managing their respectability and honour. The strategic transitions between the use of “we” and “I” and emphasis given on the action driven by anger indicate the strength and power Kalila has embodied since her childhood, violent loss of her father, and decision to leave behind the violent in-law family. The chapter suggests that emerging feminist peace is formed through resilience that resides within the intergenerational dialogue between the mother and daughter, and in the social ontology of “we” and becoming visible – transforming from the moon of the second day, in the words of Kalila. In the experiences that challenge recovery beneficiary categories and reinforcement of gendered responsibilities and motherhood indicating the dissidence and resentment to be required not only to confront the violent familial relations, but also that of the disaster recovery. By accounting of not having anyone to support them initially, Kalila and Sofia have described in this chapter how the temporary shelter neighbourhood provided the canvas on which they were drawing networks of care and support and mutual cooperation in the midst of communal violence taking place across the Gujarat state – emerging ontology for feminist peace.

When Shyam revisited Kalila in April 2023, there were many updates to share: the son got married and their first daughter was born. The newly wedded couple had moved to the new house – within a walking distance from the temporary shelter home where Kalila was still residing. She commented on it:

- Kalila:* We like to be here. Here it is more open and feels like ours. My daughter-in-law and my son go to sleep in the new house and return in the morning. Our kitchen is here, we all eat here.

As witnessed in other post-disaster housing contexts, it takes time before the house, built as a result of a recovery process, feels comfortable, or that one finds it

comfortable, a home. Seeing the children better off as married, with children and a roof over their heads, means Haṅgāmī Āvās has become Kalila's and her children's home.

Notes

- 1 The first month of the Islamic calendar, which also refers to the mourning of Muharram, the mourning of the martyrdom of Husayn Ibn Ali which is commemorated in Bhuj through a procession in the old Bhuj; see more in [Chapter 6](#).
- 2 The festival that celebrates the birth of Hindu god Ganesha and includes exhibiting Ganesha's clay idols both at home but also in public processions.
- 3 Also known as Meghwal, Maheshpanthi. They were traditionally involved in rituals during the drought season in Kachchh to pray for the rains, as per the request of the prince of Kachchh and their name derives from it (*megh*, God of rain; *wal*, the one who brings). The priest of the Meghwal community also played an important role in the coronation of the prince of Kachchh. Where untouchability was practiced, the Meghwal were the target of discrimination. Nowadays, the Meghwal are artisans (leather, weaving) and they belong to the Scheduled Caste category.
- 4 We use here the word "Madam", also used occasionally by Kalila, referring to the two women who have helped her to find a job, and a home in Haṅgāmī Āvās. They belong to Thackar community who are predominant trader and business community (Vaishyas) in Kachchh, but who were also initial beneficiaries of temporary housing units in Haṅgāmī Āvās; see details in [Chapters 3 and 9](#).
- 5 The temporary shelter houses in selected housing sectors were demolished in 2004 when the first permanent housing project, known as Abhiyan houses, were built. Kalila was not amongst the 250 beneficiaries, and thus she had to move; see more details in [Chapters 3 and 9](#).
- 6 See note 5.
- 7 A well-known person in Haṅgāmī Āvās who had run away with the money and got married to a daughter of a powerful person, who had been dominating the finalisation of beneficiary lists of the housing projects in the neighbourhood.
- 8 Delhi here means Rajiv Awas Yojnya, the central government office. In the process, the local organisation wrote a list of beneficiaries to Delhi/central government, which was then confirmed.
- 9 *Rakhi bande* (bond of protection) refers to an annual ceremony where sisters tie a amulet around the wrist of their brothers. These days amulets are tied to voluntary kin relations, cutting across lines of caste, class, and religion ([Vanita, 2002](#), pp. 157–158, footnote 8).
- 10 Bindi refers to a dot placed at the centre of the forehead between the eyebrows. In Gujarat, during and after the 2002 violence, many Muslim women adopted the use of bindi to hide their religious affiliation.
- 11 By law, before turning 18, she is not considered eligible to elope/marry, so she would be returned home by the police and the boy would be considered a kidnapper.

References

- Bogoni, F. (2021). *Participatory practices and policies of slum rehabilitation in small cities: The case of Bhuj in north-west India* (PhD thesis, Centre d'études en sciences sociales sur les mondes africains, américains et asiatiques). Université Paris Cité, Paris.
- Jamil, G. (2018). *Muslim women speak: Of dreams and shackles*. New Delhi: SAGE.
- Jauhola, M. (2010). "When house becomes home" - Reading normativity in gender equality advocacy in post-tsunami Aceh, Indonesia. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 14(2), 173–195.

- Jauhola, M. (2020). *Scraps of hope in Banda Aceh: Gendered urban politics of peace in the Aceh peace process*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
- Joseph, J., Jauhola, M., Arvind, L. S., & Gadavi, S. (2021). Wounded attachments to disaster recovery: Gendered structural violence and everyday life, Indian experiences explored. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 59, 102242. doi: [10.1016/j.ijdrr.2021.102242](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2021.102242)
- Meriläinen, E., Joseph, J., Jauhola, M., Yadav, P., Romo-Murphy, E., Marin, J., & Gadhavi, S. (2021). Examining relational social ontologies of disaster resilience: Lived experiences from India, Indonesia, Nepal, Chile and Andean Territories. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal*, 31(3), 273–287. doi: [10.1108/DPM-02-2021-0057](https://doi.org/10.1108/DPM-02-2021-0057)
- Singh, S. (2016). *Variations between written and spoken Hindi*. Paper presented at the seventh CLS International Conference: Learning in and beyond the classroom: Ubiquity in foreign language education. Singapore: National University of Singapore.
- Vanita, R. (2002). Dosti and tamanna: Male-male love, difference, and normativity in Hindi cinema. In D. P. Mines & S. Lamb (Eds.), *Everyday Life in South Asia* (pp. 146–158). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Part IV

Permanently Temporary



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

9 Complex Cascades of Violence and Uncertainty as a Result of Earthquake Recovery

9.1 Introduction: Three Cascades Violence of Urban Planning, COVID-19, and Political Landscape

The world is facing the scourge of fanaticism, arrogance, and hysteria stemming from religious sectarianism. Any solution to conflicts like the war in Ukraine or the Gaza Strip, which arise due to a clash of interests and extremism, remains elusive. A lifestyle out of sync with nature is producing a string of new physical and mental health issues amid unabashed consumerism. Vices and incidents of crime are on the rise. Families are breaking apart, as a sense of individualism deepens in the society. Pollution, global warming, imbalance in seasonal cycles, and the resultant natural disasters are increasing every year as a result of the unreasonable exploitation of natural resources. Terrorism, exploitation, and totalitarianism are getting a free run to wreak havoc. It has become abundantly clear that the world cannot counter these problems with its inadequate vision. Therefore, the world is looking towards Bharat expectantly to lead by example and show a new path to peace and prosperity, based on its own Sanatan¹ (eternal) values and Sanskars (manners).

(Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, 2023)

Former Kutch MP Pushpadan Gadhvi has submitted a written submission to the Chief Minister that a memorial to the martyrs of the Ahmedabad Suba attack in Arsa 1785 [1730] should be built in phase 2 of Bhujia Dungar's Smrtivan in Bhuj, built in sympathy with the Prime Minister's return to the earthquake victims. It is to be noted that in 1785 [1730], Suba Sher Bulandkhan of Ahmedabad attacked with a large army in parts including the foothills of Bhujia and 35,000 people including Kachchraj's army, local people, Nagas, monks following Shiva, saved the martyred Wahori Kachchh. During the war, 35,000 people, including the Nagas and citizens of all castes of Kachchh, laid down their lives beside the soldiers. A memorial should be built in phase 2 of Bhujia's Smrtivan to keep the memory of these brave martyrs alive forever.

(Divya Bhaskar, 2023)

Half a year into the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Bhuj gained a new political attention nationally. The first quote above is an extract from the Vijayadashami² address by the chief Sarsanghchalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Mohan Bhagwat in which he lists several cascading obstacles, which according to Bhagwat, the world cannot counter successfully without the RSS vision, culture, and values for peace and prosperity. Just 11 days later, the RSS Executive body (Akhil Bharatiya Karyakari Mandal) held its meeting in Bhuj in November 2023 and the vision was further reiterated in the various publicly available speeches. Being in Kachchh, it no longer was a surprise, that the nation-building efforts of the Sangh were connected to the 2001 earthquake. RSS as an organisation made the connection in two ways: firstly, indicating the strength of the movement in making sure that “Kachchh will not be left behind for any reason” (VSK Gujarat, 2023), and secondly, the hard efforts of Sangh volunteers have come to help of “distant Assam, Tripura, Kachchh and Saurashtra...connecting the two ends of the country” (Organiser Weekly, 2023) where any crisis would occur. The second quote above is from the daily newspaper Divya Bhaskar which published an article at the end of November 2023 titled “Commemorate 35,000 Martyrs of 1785 Attack in Smṛtivan Phase 2”. The article outlines the proposal which the former Lok Sabha member submitted to the Chief Minister of Gujarat to extend the current Smṛtivan memorial and museum site with that of the memorial to celebrate the victory of Kachchhi people over the Sultanate of Ahmedabad in 1785 (see the discussion of the battle and its connection to Haṅgāmī Āvās in Chapter 4), calling it as Smṛtivan phase 2. In December 2023, a two-day Kachchh Literature festival (કચ્છ સાહિત્ય ઉત્સવ, *Kachchh sahitya utsav*) was organised at the museum to advocate the proposal further.

Connecting these two iterations of cascades of chaos and violence, their commemoration and getting invoked politically, this chapter provides an analysis of cascades of violence (Braithwaite & D’Costa, 2018) and uncertainty during a quarter of a century in Haṅgāmī Āvās. Thus, this chapter returns to the core analytical lenses of this book, that is a focus on populist Hindu nationalism and disaster recovery and provides a feminist analysis of cascades of violence but also emerging elements of cascades of peace, when possible, in the wider context of socio-political changes taking place in India. For both feminist disaster and peace and conflict studies, cascades intimately connect to questions of structural violence and oppression that often intersect with not just gender, but that of class, socio-economic status, ethnicity, caste, sexuality. And as the earlier chapters in this book have illustrated, the specific political context of Gujarat since 1998 and since 2014 of India, such questions relate to changes that have taken place since BJP and Narendra Modi rose to power. As the critical disaster studies literature suggests, the unaddressed, or recovery-reinforced social inequalities tend to fortify the negative cascades and impacts of future disasters.

The chapter offers three perspectives on cascades of violence in Haṅgāmī Āvās by providing an analysis of the long-term impacts of post-earthquake urban planning in Bhuj, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the temporary shelter neighbourhood that has resulted as permanent urban temporariness, the chapter analyses the cascades of COVID-19, and political landscape during the run up for the Lok Sabha 2024 elections, and the third term of BJP’s rule under Modi. Thus, the chapter zooms

in and out of the Haṅgāmī Āvās neighbourhood – from local neighbourhood experiences to that of wider questions of social inequality – and how the party in power, BJP, and its parent organisation envision the future of Kachchh, and future of India.

The chapter has threefold argument: firstly, we argue that the construction of the temporary shelter neighbourhood without a long-term plan for the non-owning classes and castes of the city has contributed to the formation of permanent temporariness and dispossession amongst the residents. The division of the caste and religious group constellation of Haṅgāmī Āvās in 2001 has for the last over two decades reiterated the discriminative gentrification of the city all in all. This became the shadow of the financialisation of the housing market in the city. Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic reiterated further both the internal hierarchies of the neighbourhood, but also more widely between Haṅgāmī Āvās and the rest of the city. Muslim men were particularly harassed from having broken the lockdown movement restrictions, but the restrictions hit particularly hard also all the castes that were reliant on daily wage labouring – making up approximately 85% of the residents of the neighbourhood. Although COVID-19 cases in Kachchh remained low, the economic impacts of the lockdown became unbearable. Yet in June 2020, Modi's praise how well Kachchh had recovered from the earthquake was not reflecting the realities of Kachchhis: entanglement of economic hardship with other crises of food, water, and climate. Thirdly, and finally, a closer look at the Lok Sabha campaigning and election results suggests, that BJP's power in Kachchh and regions close by has gone unchallenged, although at the national level, BJP lost its absolute power in the government. Furthermore, in areas where BJP launched direct attacks on Muslims and threatened SC, ST, and OBC voters for losing their special quotas if the Congress would gain power, opposition was able to gain seats. The results of Lok Sabha may not directly change the futures that Language (Global): Gujarati; Latin-script spelling residents may face; however, it is likely that the future years may bring openings for alternative scenarios for the urban permanent temporariness and dispossession.

The chapter unfolds chronologically. The first section focuses on cascades of inequalities and violence to have emerged in the temporary shelter neighbourhood during the quarter of a century after the 2001 earthquake. The second section focuses on the lived experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cascading impacts of the lockdown measures adopted at national, state, and local level. The last section returns to political promises made by the ruling party, and the prime minister in the run up for the general elections of 2024.

9.2 કચ્છ રક્ષા (Karūṇ Rakās) – Pathetic Disaster: From Temporary Shelter Neighbourhood to Permanent Temporariness

This section offers a continuation to [Chapter 4](#) which focused on the first 30 months (January 2001–July 2003) after the January 2001 earthquake as an archival chronology. Here, the focus is on the two decades that followed afterwards gazed through academic lenses drawing from the urban planning research that has specifically addressed the situation of Haṅgāmī Āvās between 2004 and 2018, which we call pathetic disaster (Karūṇ Rakās), term used in newspaper *Kutchmitra* in

their article title of 26 July 2001. So whereas [Chapter 4](#) focused on the first years of construction of the neighbourhood, this section narrates the history of the neighbourhood in a much longer perspective drawing from the published works from the scholars who each has collected the data roughly six to seven years between each other: Anuradha Mukherji's research data were collected in 2004–2005 (four years after the earthquake), Mojgan Taheri Tafti's and Richard Tomlinson's research data were collected in 2010–2011 and 2012 (ca. ten years after the earthquake), and Francesco Bogoni's research data were collected in 2017–2018 (ca. 17 years after the earthquake).

All in all it could be argued that the initial lack of focus on landless renter population of the city, and house-owner-driven planning, building, and rebuilding of the city has contributed to the formation of permanent temporariness ([Yiftachel, 2009](#)), informality ([Tafti, 2017](#)), and dispossessed populations ([Jauhola, Mishra, Joseph, & Gadhavi, 2021](#)). Mukherji further suggests that it was the primary focus on homeowners that created “difference in the availability of appropriate financial or material support for homeowners, renters, and squatters from public sources” ([Mukherji, 2008](#), p. 196). In the context of Bhuj, this translated into major inequalities in housing for lower castes, Muslims, and socio-economically poor residents, as the rest of the section will illustrate.

In fact, the town planning process in 2001 and 2002 included the identification of informal settlement or slum issues in Bhuj (Environmental Planning Collaborative, Babbie Consultants (India) Pvt. Ltd, JPS Associates, & Theotech Engineers, n.a., Chapter 12). Based on the 2001 census, it was estimated that nearly 70,000 people live in slums in Bhuj, nearly 42% of the total urban population (Environmental Planning Collaborative et al., n.a., p. 154). However, the census of 2001 did not yet include the Haṅgāmī Āvās population which at its highest was nearly 10,000 people. At the time of the next Development Plan for 2025, Bhada has categorised Haṅgāmī Āvās sectors closest to the railway track as slums (roughly corresponding to the sectors 1–3) – and thus, a target of slum redevelopment programmes. Based on the survey conducted by Hunnarshala foundation in 2018, slum residency is roughly equally shared between Hindu and Muslim communities, whereas the predominant castes include Vaghri, Kumbhar, Rabari, Jogi, Patani, and Lohar. The report suggested that majority of slum dwellers belonged to OBC (65%), SC and ST (29%), and only 6% to general casts groups ([Bogoni, 2021](#), pp. 75–76).

Francesco [Bogoni \(2021\)](#) has suggested that vocabulary, and thus the “problem”, of slums or informal settlements had emerged in the local urban planning fairly recently. Based on his interviews both district management authorities, urban planners, and NGO staff members connect the emergence of slums into the post-earthquake recovery ([Bogoni 2021](#), p. 77). Yet, their geographical concentration in the Northern parts of the city indicates a polarised urban development between the well-being and growing South that is upper-middle-class, Hindu, rich, and kept clean, and the North that is predominantly Muslim, poor, and congested. Apart from socio-economic status, caste, and religious constellation, the South-North divide also relates to that of formality and legality ([Bogoni 2021](#), p. 78) – and thus

reiterates a common trend in urban Gujarat, but also more widely in India (Singh, Vithayathil, & Pradhan, 2019). Yet, as Bogoni highlights, the geographical constellation of informal settlements also connects the settlements, and their people to the feudal governance structures of the Kachchh princely state. Bhuj as the capital of the princely state consisted of residential areas divided by socio-spatial and symbolic hierarchy, which connected the sovereign with that of caste and place-specific relationality in the city. In concrete terms, residents of informal settlements have long histories of migration from rural parts and associated with the multi-ethnic, multilingual, multi-caste, and religious constellation of the region (see also discussion of Haṅgāmī Āvās area in Chapter 4). Edward Simpson (2006) has further suggested that such a socio-spatial and moral ordering of the city has survived in the post-1947 era (Bogoni 2021, p. 82).

Yet, how does Haṅgāmī Āvās relate to this gentrification and segregation of urban space? This is how Sandeep Virmani, a former member of Abhiyan and Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan civil society network, and currently managing director of Hunnarshala foundation, main provider for the slum redevelopment programmes in Bhuj, described the situation in Haṅgāmī Āvās in 2010:

As part of the relief programme in Bhuj 4,500 prefabricated temporary houses were set up. The richer people took possession of these houses, and then rented them out to others. They themselves either moved in with relatives, or left the city temporarily. So it was the poor who had no other option, who moved into this temporary housing. Those who lived in rented housing before the quake also had to move in here, because they would get no compensation. A large percentage of the houses were given on rent to outside people who came in to build the city. Now, however, everyone wants to live in these houses permanently. There are demands for a proper sewerage system. The whole area has turned into a slum. As the people here have come from all over the city there is no community feeling either. It would have been much better to let people decide where they want to re-house themselves, and do that in cohesive groups, rather than resettling them in barrack-like regimented housing where families of different cultural backgrounds and from different income groups are mixed up and share no social connections with each other.

(Virmani, 2010, pp. 156–157)

Thus, the temporariness became a form of seeking profit and benefit from those who were left out in the urban housing schemes. Although initially perhaps planned to offer a buffer zone between the emergency shelters and permanent housing into the newly planned and reconstructed town (Tafti & Bashiri, 2021), it was only after the advocacy campaigning of Kutch Navnirman Abhiyan (KNNA), the newspaper *Kutchmitra*, and the Bhuj Development Council (a community organisation) between 2003 and 2004 three to four years into temporary housing arrangements, when Haṅgāmī Āvās was formally recognised as the fourth relocation site in the city of Bhuj. This also included the inclusion of renters into the reconstruction

package (Mukherji, 2008; Tafti & Tomlinson, 2013). The key demand by the advocates had been that the scheme would allow residents depending on rental properties, i.e. without pre-earthquake landownership, to gain access to government scheme for permanent housing. Haṅgāmī Āvās was included into the municipal limits in 2010 (Bogoni 2021, p. 192).

Whereas the three formal relocation sites reiterate caste and religious community segregation, Haṅgāmī Āvās, in total comprising of 22 hectares of land, became the only new neighbourhood in the city that comprised of nearly 15–20 different caste and religious communities – the 18 sectors divided into community (caste, religion) groupings. These divisions have remained, although the later permanent housing schemes have slightly changed the situation.

Edward Simpson has suggested that the overall urban reconstruction process had a bias towards affluent Hindu communities, and that Muslims were largely absent from the planning procedures (Simpson, 2006, pp. 217, 226). He further suggests that the overall history of communal tensions and violence in the wider history in Gujarat, and some tensions between Muslim and Hindu communities in the city, the atmosphere during the reconstruction cannot be separated from the “macro-polity of Gujarat” (Simpson, 2006, p. 226). Thus, the caste and religious community constellation, and dynamics of Haṅgāmī Āvās is, important to pay attention to.

Although initially conceived to target the needs of the vulnerable and poor populations, it was the stronger community organisations that managed to complete the temporary housing before others, i.e. nearly 1,400 shelters in Haṅgāmī Āvās (Bogoni, 2001, 193 quoting Mukherji, 2008). Mukherji concludes that at the time of her study, such communities were both socially and economically strongest in Bhuj, with a median income range of 20,000–8,000 Rs per month (US \$476–\$190). However, she suggests that the variation in income indicates that a significant number of such households (10–30%) remained as renters. Furthermore, compared with Dalit and Muslim populations in the town of whom just 10% are homeowners and 90% of slum dwellers belong to such communities, Bhanushali and Khatri Hindu communities who all received donations from their own community organisations belong to so-called low home ownership category with 50% homeowner status. Koli, Siddi Muslims, and Vaghari communities had no prior homeownership in the town and were economically weakest and were searching housing arrangements from informal settlements (Mukherji, 2008, pp. 156–157, 164–167).

Bogoni’s most recent research confirms that the caste and religious community division of Haṅgāmī Āvās remains (Bogoni, 2021, p. 193). The clear caste and religious hierarchy in the spatial allocations is reflected in the distance of the community’s location in comparison with the main road towards Bhuj: higher caste Hindus were located closer to the main street and the rail line, whereas the lower castes, Muslims, and poor renters further from the connectivity to the city.

In 2004, the Gujarat State Disaster Management Agency jointly with the Bhuj Bhada and the NGO Abhiyan made a survey and identified 800 renter households living in Haṅgāmī Āvās and prepared a separate housing support programme (so-called GIDC Master Plan) targeting the renters by providing newly built

permanent houses, or upgrading the current temporary houses in Haṅgāmī Āvās (Mukherji, 2015, p. 1150). However, out of the 800 renter households, only 280 were considered eligible for the post-earthquake public assistance as Bhuj Bhada had set a strict criterion of a complete documentation to proof their pre-earthquake tenancy. A categorised housing and financial scheme were prepared for all 800 renters – benefits ranging from their eligibility for public assistance, ability to pay, and resources available from Abhiyan, NGO partnering in the scheme. Thus, despite the low fulfilment of public assistance criteria, all 800 households were offered the option to apply for this housing scheme consisting of subsidised plots and a house of 65 square metres (Mukherji, 2015).

However, these plans did not succeed. The Bhuj Bhada did not allocate the land promised for the housing scheme and the NGO partner Abhiyan was only able to construct 280 units out of the planned 800 housing units with the international aid injection from Germany (Mukherji, 2008, p. 175; Tafti & Tomlinson, 2013). Thus, although initially all the renters were included in the housing scheme, the low-income renters faced the situation that both increased rents in the town and the homeownership costs were too high. Thus, the fear was that low-income renter households would become homeless, or permanently residing in either temporary shelters of Haṅgāmī Āvās, or in the many informal settlements/slums in the city (Mukherji, 2008, p. 184, 2015, p. 1146).

In 2005, the temporary houses in sectors 16–18 – built with the European Commission’s funding by UNDP and its partners – were demolished and the land was allocated to 200–250 single-room permanent houses for residents of illegal settlements having been evicted as a result of the Development Plan of the city. It is noteworthy that the programme was implemented only in the more remote sectors but not in those that were built by caste and religious communities. Lohana and Thakkar community rebuilt their own houses in sectors 6–7 later (Bogoni, 2021, p. 194).

In 2008, new policy was put in place to address the question of those renters who had not been able to prove their pre-earthquake tenure status. This was an active attempt to address the housing needs of the low-income tenants who had been missed in the previous assistance provisions. Yet, as Tafti and Tomlinson (2013) point out, as of 2012, the policy had not been realised and it was due to the difficulty of determining the land price for the plots (Tafti & Tomlinson, 2013, p. 222). Yet, 400 households managed to buy land, receive a house, and become homeowners in Haṅgāmī Āvās. Furthermore, in increasing numbers, the owners either sold it out illegally or rented it out for new incoming residents – especially for incoming migrants who were searching for low-cost housing solutions. The owners themselves would move to other informal settlements in the city that were closer to their livelihoods and educational infrastructure (Tafti, 2017, pp. 115–116; Tafti & Tomlinson, 2013, p. 222).

Around 2011 there were at least 200 households who still could not prove their pre-earthquake tenant status, and who had been residing either in informal settlements inside the old city or staying at the temporary shelter units at Haṅgāmī Āvās. At that time, the temporary infrastructure provisions, such as public transportation

and basic health care services, were stopped, and the school was only available for primary school classes – leading to situations that residents ended up using a big portion of their earnings for transportation (Tafti & Tomlinson, 2013, 222). This was of course also causing problems for the permanent house owners in the neighbourhood: lack of access to jobs and basic services. At that point over 50% of the new permanent house owners had rented out their houses and moved to different parts of the city (Tafti & Tomlinson, 2013, p. 247). This meant, that ten years after the earthquake the former temporary shelter neighbourhood was formally becoming a permanent landscape of informality, or as Yiftachel (2009) calls it – permanent temporariness – mostly occupied by renters, and newly arriving migrants (Tafti, 2017, p. 115). Since the earthquake reconstruction programmes were officially closed, the question remained, how does the municipality deal with the sustained informality and dispossession created in the temporary shelter, but also other informal settlements in the city?

The latest phase of reconstruction started in 2015 when Hunnarshala Foundation, the well-networked and connected organisation that had gained reputation in India, but also more widely in South and South-East Asia in promoting owner-driven model, and earthquake-proof technologies for housing in other disasters, such as the Indian Ocean tsunami Indonesia, and the Nepal earthquake, started pushing pressure firstly at the municipality level, but more importantly at state and central government level to improvement of housing conditions of informal settlements in Bhuj. This has resulted in two slum rehabilitation processes that are still ongoing as of 2024: Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) that has been piloted in Bhuj in three locations of which one is Haṅgāmī Āvās, and the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Housing for All (PMAY-HFA) that was initiated in 2015 when BJP took power at the central government level. Yet, as of 2018, in the three pilot neighbourhoods (of which Haṅgāmī Āvās was one of them), out of 314 total houses, only 217 were completed and less than 200 were occupied (Bogoni, 2021, p. 27).

According to Bogoni, as of 2021, approximately 350 families occupy original temporary shelters in sectors 1–5 and 11–12. Most are not original beneficiaries from 2001 or 2002 but families who had moved later to Haṅgāmī Āvās. Some of them could no longer afford prices of the rebuilt city, others had moved to Haṅgāmī Āvās from informal settlements that were being demolished in different parts of the city, or they were migrants lured by the recovery economy in Bhuj and moving to Haṅgāmī Āvās during the real estate crisis of 2008–2010 to afford living in Bhuj (Bogoni, 2001, pp. 194–195).

As of 2018, the caste and religious constellation of the sectors in Haṅgāmī Āvās has remained the same: in the first rows just quarter of residents come from upper Brahmin (Vyas, Joshi, Srimani, Gor, Gunsai), Kshatriya (Jadeja, Rajput, Bhavsar, Charan), merchants and landowners castes (Patel, Vanya, Thakkar-Lohana, Banushali, Khatri, Soni). All others are from lower artisan and peasant castes (Vaghri, Jogi, Kumhars, Koli, Prajapati), as well as Dalits (Ahir, Marwada, Maheshvari, Gujra, Rabari) and Muslims. Bogoni concludes that common to their housing trajectory is precariousness that urban regularisation projects contributed

towards many residents being evicted due to housing demolition, sometimes multiple times (Bogoni, 2021, pp. 195–196).

To sum up the destiny of Haṅgāmī Āvās, and people who became its residents, Mukherji (2015) suggests that firstly, solutions to low-income renter households were ad hoc ranging from improvised policy of subsidies to temporary housing and economic incentives to rental property owners to the creation of homeownership programme that initially only could construct permanent housing for less than 30% of the impacted renters – leaving questions of equity, land tenure, affordable housing, and uncertainty of recovery of the poorest urban residents unsolved (Mukherji, 2015, p. 1139). Secondly, Mukherji further argues that besides a class and economic status question, this intimately resulted in caste and religious segregation and strengthening of private housing market in the city (Mukherji, 2015, p. 1144).

Thirdly, the residents of the site became part of the overall financialisation of housing markets of Bhuj, but were left out: the three initially recognised formal relocation sites built in prime new locations with sufficient urban infrastructure, attracted people to move into the suburbs. Such residents, often part of higher caste communities became major landholders in Bhuj who soon saw their properties gaining value going way beyond their initial investments (Tafti & Tomlinson, 2016, pp. 120–121).

Whereas in Haṅgāmī Āvās, residents were waiting for years to get formal acknowledgement of landownership. As one of the NGO representatives put it, “It is always the poor of the city who get left till the last” (Mukherji, 2015, pp. 1150–1). Furthermore, the Bhuj Bhada provided the housing plots for renters with a long-term (99 years) tenure known as Navi Sharat, new tenured land, compared with the permanent land tenure known as Juni Sharat, old tenured land, provided for the homeowner households in the other relocation sites. The new tenured land contracts have several restrictions: as it is not full ownership it is non-transferable, not even for descendants. It also could not be sold to a third party unless the owner paid Bhuj Bhada a certain percentage of the total transaction cost. For example, a property sold within the first year of tenure, Bhuj Bhada would receive 75% of the price, five years later, the Bhuj Bhada would gain 25% of the price (Mukherji, 2015, p. 1153).

Finally, Mukherji remains uncertain (in 2015) where the remaining over 70% of the earthquake-affected renters have relocated. She estimates that some have moved to informal squatter settlements, or returned to squat housing in the old Bhuj, or some of them had stayed on living in Haṅgāmī Āvās for a decade, if not more – suggesting that the city would be in need of an inclusive rental housing policy for the entire city (Mukherji, 2015, p. 1154).

9.3 COVID-19 Pandemic: When the Households Closer to the Main Road Get More Benefits

When World Health Organization declared a worldwide COVID-19 pandemic on the 11 March 2020, Marjaana and Shyam had just arrived in Delhi having participated conferences and networking meetings in Finland to connect with scholars



Figure 9.1 QR code for the “Waiting for Corona/કો રોગેના અચેતો?” (26:49).

Source: <https://youtu.be/T0ADjM2avf4>

to discuss the plans for audio-visual elements of the project in Haṅgāmī Āvās to be organised for the next few months (Figure 9.1). On the same day, the Indian government suspended foreign visas and entry of all international flights to and from India – yet, what was to happen next, remained uncertain upon our arrival.

The first COVID-19 cases in India all had a travel history: the first reported cases in India were in Kerala at the end of January 2020 amongst Indian medical students who had returned from Wuhan in China. The first fatality was reported on 12 March, involving an elderly man with travel history to Saudi Arabia. One of the first COVID-19-positive cases in Gujarat was reported by a Gujarati tourist to Finland having returned to Gujarat just a few days before us. Rumours of Finland and Finnish people as potential spreaders travelled locally wherever Marjaana went and it indicated the fears of the yet unknown virus as the news of the COVID-19 virus and knowledge of its symptoms increased.

The central government response to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic was based on two pieces of legislation: Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897 that was enforced to confine bubonic plague in 1896 to Bombay, and Disaster Management Act of 2005 (DMA 2005) that was enforced in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean earthquake and the tsunami in 2004. On 11 March, the joint secretary to the government issued an order (F.No.40-2/2020-DM-I(A)) using the letterhead of the Disaster Management Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs that delegated the powers of preparedness and containment of the virus to Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare as per Section 69 of the DMA 2005, to have come into force retrospectively from 17 January 2020 onwards.

On 15 March, Gujarat government announced the closure of schools for the period of 16–29 March and banned conferences and workshops until the end of March 2020. It also granted power to district collectors, chief district health officers, and district development officers to seal certain geographical areas for confinement.

On 19 March, PM Modi held an address to the nation invoking mantra *Hum Swasth, toh Jag Swasth* – the world will be healthy if we stay healthy – another

variation of the *visvaguru* idea of India leading and guiding the rest of the world. Comparing the pandemic to that of the World Wars I and II, Modi reiterated the virus was affecting much more countries than those wars. The speech provoked sentiments for citizenship duties using words such as determination and patience and asking to “step out of your homes when absolutely necessary” (PM India, 2020a). He also announced 22 March as a one-day Janata (public) curfew from 7am to 9pm, calling it as a “litmus test for us, for our nation” during which,

at exactly 5pm, we all stand at the doors, balconies, windows of our homes and give them all a 5-minute standing ovation. We clap our hands, beat our plates, ring our bells to boost their [doctors, nurses, hospital staff, sanitation workers, airlines employees, government staff, police personnel, media people, people associated with train-bus-auto rickshaw services, and home delivery agents] morale, salute their service.

(PM India, 2020a)

This, he emphasised, would honour the people who had served the nation in accordance with the supreme duty (*seva parmo dharma*), and ended the talk with wishes:

The festival of Navratri is coming up in a few days. This is a festival of worshipping “Shakti”. That India moves ahead with full Shakti, full Strength and Energy, is my heartfelt wish to one and all.

(PM India, 2020a)

On 21 March, Gujarat state government announced a partial lockdown in four cities: Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, and Rajkot. The first death case in Gujarat was announced on 22 March, and one day later, Gujarat was announced to be in a complete lockdown until the end of March. In the TV address on the 24th, two days after the one-day curfew, the government with two orders (National Disaster Management Agency Order and Ministry for Home Affairs Order) and PM Modi’s address, announced a strict nationwide lockdown – complete shutdown of all-but-bare-essential activities (Ghosh, 2023, p. 6) – and social distancing measures for consequent 21 days with severe penal consequences for failing to comply the rules:

From midnight tonight onwards, the entire country, please listen carefully, the entire country shall go under complete lockdown. In order to protect the country, and each of its citizens, from midnight tonight, a full ban is being imposed on people from stepping out of their homes. All the States in the country, all the Union Territories, each district, each municipality, each village, each locality is being put under lockdown. This is like a curfew only. This will be a few levels more than Janata-Curfew, and also stricter. This is a necessary step in the decisive fight against Corona Pandemic. The nation will have to certainly pay an economic cost because of this lockdown. However, to save life of each and every Indian is mine, Government of India’s,

each state Government's, each local unit's top most priority. Hence, it is my plea to you to continue staying wherever you are right now in the country... Stay inside your home, stay inside your home, and do just one thing- stay inside your home. This decision of a nationwide lockdown that has been taken today has drawn a "Lakshman Rekha" at your doorsteps....21 days of lockdown is a long time, but it is equally essential for your safety and that of your family. I am confident that every Indian will not only successfully fight this difficult situation but also emerge victorious. Take care of yourself and your loved ones. Jai Hind!

(NDTV, 2020)

There were roughly four hours between the notification of the lockdown and its commencement. When the roads in Bhuj emptied in the evening, millions of people tried to find solutions their daily income, food, and water provisions. When we called to one resident in Haṅgāmī Āvās six days later, we heard how the lockdown had been controlled by the police on several visits to the area and the main road leading to the neighbourhood was blocked from vehicle entry. Some street vegetable selling was still going on and internally inside the neighbourhood the residents had been gathering. Six days in the lockdown, the situation was hard as roughly 85% of the residents were dependent on daily wages and the total lockdown meant no work and no earnings for them. Food donations had reached the first sections closest to the railway tracks occupied by residents with the lowest economic status. Government medical teams comprised with Anganwadi volunteers had visited the neighbourhood (notebook IV, p. 78)

When Modi delivered his next address to the nation on 3 April on the ninth day of the lockdown, there had been just two confirmed COVID-19 cases in Kachchh, compared with the total of 128 cases in Gujarat. The speech focused on the collective strength of 130 crores of Indians yet did not address the situation of migrants who, despite the lockdown orders and penalty threats in fear of starvation, decided to walk home hundreds and thousands of kilometres. It is estimated that 40,000–60,000 migrants chose "reverse migration" of which several hundred died on the way (Bhattacharyya, Sarma, & Das, 2023). Most severely impacted were seasonal migrants whose consist of close to 30 million people (10% of total number of migrants) and of whom 85% are males (Rao, Narain, Chakraborty, Bhanjdeo, & Pattnaik, 2020, p. 1640). Given the economic boost of the disaster recovery decades, the intra-state migration to Kachchh had increased the past years and the lockdown similarly affected the migrants based in Kachchh.

Phone calls to the family of Kalila and Sofia in Haṅgāmī Āvās on 12 April gave an idea of the toll of the lockdown:

Shyam: This is Shyam Gadhavi calling, how are you?

Kalila: We are fine. We are staying at home because of the virus. We are purchasing vegetables from the people who come here to sell them. But everything is so expensive. Normal vegetables are around 10 Rs., now they have doubled the price. Financial situation is still ok, but I don't know what will happen next. Because all work is stopped.

Son of Kalila: I am going to work every other day – transportation. All other transportation is stopped but medical deliveries still come from Ahmedabad. It takes couple of hours of my time every second day. I was paid 1,500 Rs with which I've paid dues from milk and butter milk.

Kalila: we are managing everything by whatever we are getting with the ration card. For some things, if the shops are closed, I go to Bhid gate [ca. 4 kilometres from Haṅgāmī Āvās] by foot and buy it from there. By foot, because they do not let men to go outside. So only ladies can go outside. If we have finished the things like, vegetables or fruits, oil, some grain, tea and sugar, then I need to go to Bhid market. Shops here are selling very costly.

There were less people roaming around without a proper reason, as police was actively patrolling the area and fining with penalties. Often families had tried to send out their male members to buy food outside of Awas, as the fresh vegetable prices had doubled compared to the Bhid market in Old Bhuj. Due to fines and harassment targeting her family's Muslim male members, Kalila told she had walked 4km to buy vegetables from the Bhid market, and then back. As all work was in full stop, Kalila's sons would stay at home only. Only the son working as a driver was offered medical supply transportation duties, securing them earnings of 500–2,000 Rs/shift. This, ration card, and some of the savings allowed them to purchase fresh milk and vegetables and medical supplies for the family. The food rations offered by charity organisations were not reaching them at the end of the housing line, as they were being delivered at the crossroad of the main road. The economic hardship had also other consequences: marriage of one son was postponed as there was no money left for the expenses. Kalila was preparing the place for Sofia, making sure she would get enough food given she had delivered a baby not long before the lockdown was announced.

On the 14 April address to the nation, Modi announced the extension of the lockdown by another 19 days (until 3 May) coinciding the birthday of Ambedkar. The speech touched upon the hardship of daily labourers:

Those who earn daily, make ends meet with daily income, they are my family. One of my top-most priorities is to reduce the difficulties in their lives....I am well aware of the problems you have faced -some for food, some for movement from place to place, and others for staying away from homes and families. However, for the sake of your country, you are fulfilling your duties like a disciplined soldier. This is the power of "We, the People of India" that our constitution talks about.

Meanwhile, we receive WhatsApp message from Kalila's son, shortly and simply saying:

No business of [auto rikshaw]

Modi's address to the nation month later focused on India's self-reliance, and perhaps not surprisingly, given the importance of the 2001 into his political career (see [Chapter 3](#)), the speech reconnected his experiences in the aftermath of Kachchh earthquake, and how Kachchh recovered:

I had witnessed the Kutch earthquake. There was debris everywhere. Everything was destroyed. It seemed as if Kutch had fallen asleep wearing a sheet of death. In that situation no one could have imagined that the situation would ever change. However, Kutch stood up, Kutch started moving, Kutch moved. This is the grit and determination of we Indians.

If we are determined then we can reach our goals and no path will be difficult. And today there is a will and there is a way. This is to make India self-reliant. Our combined resolve is so strong that India can become self-sufficient.
(PM India, 2020b)

Instead of focusing on the pandemic or the struggles of migrants and daily wage labourers during the lockdown, the speech, turns the focus on the opportunities that disasters, such as COVID-19 pandemic may offer: "Such a big disaster is a signal for India, it has brought a message and also has brought an opportunity" (PM India, 2020b)

Diverting the attention from the everyday struggles of millions, Modi focused on outlining the pillars of self-reliance consisting of economy, infrastructure, "our system", demography, and demand. Yet, as a sign of moving towards this self-reliance in pandemic, Modi announced the economic incentive package of 20 crore rupees directing the support to cottage industry, home industry, and small-scale industries and in his words: "This economic package is for the middle class of our country, which pays taxes honestly and contributes to the development of the country" (PM India, 2020b).

Over the next months, what became to know as the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in India, in Kachchh, the lockdown cascaded into mostly secondary impacts of loss of livelihoods, economic and social hardship, as we illustrate in the "Waiting for Corona" video (for Kachchh-specific details see e.g. [Mehta, Parthasarathy, Pickard, & Srivastava, 2022](#)). Compared with urban India the numbers of COVID-19 patients in Kachchh remained low even when compared with those of the rest of the Gujarat:

On 25th of April, only in 7 days, Gujarat tripled its number of coronavirus infections and number of virus-connected deaths. Now at the end of May having the third highest number of cases in the whole of India.

Until mid-May there were only limited confirmed cases in the Kachchh district. In fact, at the end of April the district was for few days declared free from active tested corona cases. In mid-May the doubling time has however decreased from seven days to just one.

Thus, the direct impact of the virus in Kachchh was so far limited, whereas the cascading impacts of the lockdown and risks have related to that

of economy, communal harmony, and wellbeing especially those of migrant population and urban poor.

(Scraps of Hope, 2020)

When able to visit Haṅgāmī Āvās later in May to return to the residents and find out about their situations, we would see the special trains allocated for the migrant workers departing Bhuj and crossing the road dividing the GIDC industrial site, and the temporary shelter neighbourhood.

Shyam: How is the shop and business, Raju bhai?

Raju: Before it was at noon to shut the shops. Now it is 7pm. So we are closing the shops at 7pm everyday. After closing the shop, we prepare the food. Because we are staying in the shop nowadays.

Shyam: What kind of difficulties are you facing in this lockdown?

Raju: In fact, we didn't face any difficulties until now with blessings of God. But some people were facing problem of food in this area. For that some organisations were distributing the kits and ration packages and all. Some people were using their contacts also. On one hand, who had good relations they got 2 to 4 kits. And on the other hand, people who were really needy, such kits didn't reach to them. It was the one with a stick who got the buffaloes.

As reflected by Raju the shopkeeper, the inequal distribution of aid, once more touched Haṅgāmī Āvās residents. It also reflected the wider phenomena in Gujarat regarding the COVID-19 social protection measures: in spite high number of migrants across India, Gujarat has relatively low number of measures to protect the migrants, neither did the state government announce targeted measures towards them, but rather excepted industries to follow weekly and daily hours and intervals for rest provided in the Factories Act of 1948 (Rao et al., 2020, p. 1646).

The second wave in March 2021 hit India in a devastating manner: starting with shortages of vaccines, hospital beds, oxygen, and medical supplies; the British Red Cross described it as it "hit India like a tsunami". WHO and Indian government have disagreed with the numbers of death, Indian government confirming the number at 481,000, whereas WHO estimates it to be as high as 4.7 million.³ Kachchh, again, remained comparably safe from the mass deaths, although the low capacity to provide essential medical care clearly indicated the unpreparedness to such devastating health emergency. However, the impacts of COVID-19 were felt as compounded uncertainties, consisting of social and economic hardships, affecting the poor and marginalised communities most. In Haṅgāmī Āvās, as the economic activities remained difficult due to the distance to the city, some residents moved out as their livelihoods did not revive even after the pandemic restrictions were released.

The analysis that has emerged of COVID-19 and its cascading impacts highlights major differences between the different states in India. Despite being hailed as the development model for the whole of India, Gujarat state struggled with its COVID-19 response: Israelsen and Malji (2021) suggest that Gujarat had severe fatality rates, disorganised response, and poor access to healthcare services during the

pandemic. This they relate to the fact that the Gujarat development model has prioritised industrialisation and economic growth at the expense of social development.

Furthermore, Kachchh-specific analysis such as by [Mehta et al. \(2022\)](#) suggests that COVID-19 added to the already existing uncertainties and challenges of marginalised and socially oppressed groups, and impacts of the pandemic intersected with other ongoing crises of food, water, and climate – impacting already vulnerable livelihoods, and other intersectional structural vulnerabilities. Authors suggest, however, that due to inadequate state response, other local forms of solidarity, mutual aid, and civil society action have emerged.

Meanwhile, analysis focusing on the caste inequalities of the pandemic, have highlighted how the upper castes, with their socio-economic privileges, have been able to follow with the lockdown restrictions by maintaining quarantine and isolation, and even shift to distance work – such privilege is not available for lower classes, or Dalits specifically ([Mondal & Karmakar, 2024](#)). This lack of privilege in the context of Haṅgāmī Āvās was described as totally collapsed labour market, and thus daily income, but also lack of access to relief items provided by voluntary organisations. The closer your household was to the main road of the Haṅgāmī Āvās, the better chances you would have of receiving aid. Millions of labourers started their journeys to return to their villages ([Rao et al., 2020](#)); however, we are not aware of the level in which this re-migration happened in Haṅgāmī Āvās.

Similarly to the caste-based discrimination, Muslim communities became the scapegoats of the pandemic, resulting in further increase of Islamophobia – and thus indicating that disasters and epidemics are likely to cascade on Muslim communities ([Tieri & Ranjan, 2023](#)).

9.4 Lok Sabha Elections of 2024: Everyone’s India – But What Remains Unsaid?

There is a danger if Modi’s speeches discussed in [Chapter 3](#) are only analysed in isolation of the wider context of BJP rule – in Gujarat since 1998, and at the central government level since 2014 – that of the parent organisation RSS’s visions of Bharat, India. In the context of Modi’s career, it would require understanding his wider political career in Gujarat between 2001 and 2014, but also the ideological work done by the RSS. Furthermore, Modi’s and BJP’s rhetoric of Hindutva is also covered with symbolism. Attacking the opposition – whether it is other parties and in particular INC, or individual politicians, in particular Rahul Gandhi, other critics such as public intellectuals or civil society organisations or independent media – is done using expression “throwing mud towards the government” – and continuing that lotus (symbol of BJP) thrives in mud: be it accusations of igniting and orchestrating communal violence, discriminative policies against minorities, or building close relationships with industrialists and businesses to gain political victory.

Thus, what is missing in the speeches are the iterations that elsewhere, for example, iterate Islamophobia, direct othering of Muslims, and their lived experiences. An example from the Lok Sabha election campaigning in 2024 will illustrate this. Modi held election campaign speeches ahead of the voting day in Rajasthan in April of which two speeches were held on 21 April in Jalore and Banswara, relatively

close to the Southern border of Rajasthan with Gujarat. The first one held in Jalore, published on his website in Hindi transcript and embedded YouTube video, continues a typical narrative: direct attacks on the Congress Party, and that of the reign of PM Manmohan Singh, indicating that Modi has thought of the best interest of Rajasthan since he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. The second speech held in Banswara, became international news during the following week, causing domestic accusations of hate speech, and resulted as demands made for the interference of the Electoral Commission (EC). EC issued a notice in April reminding the party leadership of the “vital role which their respective star campaigners play in maintaining high standard of campaign discourse” ([Election Commission of India, 2024](#)). The Hindi transcript of the speech was not immediately available on the website but has been added there afterwards. In the speech held in Banswara Modi blames the Manmohan Singh’s government for prioritising the needs of Muslims, blaming that:

earlier when their government was in power, they had said that the wealth of the country mostly belongs to the Muslims. This means that after collecting this property, it will be distributed among those who have more children. Will they distribute it to the infiltrators (*ghusapaithe* in Hindi), will your hard-earned money be given to the infiltrators, do you accept this... This Congress manifesto is saying that they will calculate the gold of mothers and sisters, trace it, get the information and then transfer that property. We will distribute it to those to whom Manmohan Singh’s government had said that Muslims have the first right on property. Brothers and sisters, these urban Naxal thoughts, my mothers and sisters, will not let even your *mangalsutra* escape, they will go so far as to say this.

([Modi, 2024a](#))

Two things stand out from this speech. Firstly, the word Muslim in the middle part of the section is replaced with “those who have more children” and two times with “infiltrator”. A rare choice of words of a PM, historically, but repeated again in May in the election campaigning in Punjab ([The Hindu, 2024b](#)). Secondly, such accusations against the Congress Party are a reference to the election Manifesto, but also, according to Indian Express article, to the former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s speech held in December 2006 at the National Development Council in which, according to Indian Express article ([2024](#)), Manmohan Singh called for judicial use of resources:

I believe our collective priorities are clear. Agriculture, irrigation and water resources, health, education, critical investment in rural infrastructure, and the essential public investment needs of general infrastructure, along with programmes for the upliftment of SCs/STs, other backward classes, minorities and women and children. The component plans for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will need to be revitalised. We will have to devise innovative plans to ensure that minorities, particularly the Muslim minority, are empowered to share equitably in the fruits of development. They must have the first claim on resources.

([Kulshrestha & Khan, 2024](#))

A day after the speech of 2006, due to opposition's (BJP's) strong reactions, the Prime Minister's Office clarified that "the first claim on resources" had referred to "all the 'priority' areas... including programmes for the upliftment of SCs, STs, OBCs, women and children and minorities..." (Kulshrestha & Khan, 2024). In 2024, there have not been any public clarifications of Modi's use of words. Both the Congress and the CPI-M (Communist Party of India – Marxist) filed complaints with the Election Commission about the PM's campaign speech after the speech. Few days after the Election Commission notified the BJP Chief Nadda to "set high standards of political discourse and observe provisions of model code of conduct in letter and spirit". According to the newspaper the Hindu:

The Commission said it has taken a view that while individual star campaigners will continue to remain responsible for speeches made by them, the Commission will address party chiefs "on a case-to-case basis". Campaign speeches made by those holding high positions have more serious consequences, the poll panel said.

(Chakrabarty, 2024)

During the 2024 election campaign, unlike all earlier Lok Sabha election campaigns since 2007, Modi did not reach out to Kachchh district during his tour in Gujarat. This may be because the BJP candidate for the Kachchh seat Vinod Chavda faced the elections, successfully, for the third time, after two successful campaigns with the support of Modi's tour visits to Kachchh in 2014 and 2019. In an interview with *Kutchmitra* in May 2024, he reflected upon his "maturing in the guidance of Modi":

- Kutchmitra:* This is the third consecutive election you are contesting. What difference have you felt in the three?
- Vinod Chavda:* During the first election, the voters of Kutch barely knew me even by name. At that time victory was easy in Narendrabhai's yoke. In the first term I focused on strengthening contacts with people. He made continuous trips to solve the problems of Kutch. In the second term, I have continued to focus on programs to strengthen relationships with people of all classes and ages, and on the difficult issues and development plans of Kutch. Today for the third term I find this experience, live interaction with people and immeasurable list of developmental tasks very useful (Kutchmitra, 2024b).

Thus, Modi's two-day election campaign tour concentrated to Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, Anand, Surendranagar, and Junagadh districts to calm down the conflict that had emerged in March 2024 between the local BJP candidate and Gujarati Kshatriya community, leading to Kshatriya coordination committee leaders threatening to boycott the elections and divert the 75 million Kshatriya votes from BJP in Gujarat, and expand the boycott across the country. The conflict emerged after Parshottam Rupala, BJP union minister and Lok Sabha candidate of the Rajkot seat

in Saurashtra, had in March 2024 during a talk at the local evening programme said that many local kings, to avoid conflicts (using the Gujarati word *beti vyavahar*), agreed to marry their daughters to the British rulers. The speech was addressed in front of a Scheduled Tribe Devi Pujak community, reiterating that Devi Pujaks did not form such conjugal relations with the Britts. Although the speech itself did not identify Kshatriyas as such, but was a reference to kings more generally, it was the Kshatriya community, that raised opposition towards such a candidate in the following days, leading to public demands to withdraw Rupala's candidacy (Jha, 2024). Rupala belongs to dominant Patidar/Patel community that constitutes an important "voter bank" in Gujarati elections (for more detailed description of the caste politics in Gujarat, and the role of Patidars specifically, see Jaffrelot, 2024). Right after the incident in March key Rajkot leaders prepared a press release where they accepted Rupala's three public apologies. However, not all were pleased. Rajkot-based Padminiba Vala organised women-led protests demanding the withdrawal of the BJP candidacy by Rupala and threatening to perform a suicide (*zohar*) if it did not happen. Kshatriya Samaj (committee) joined these demands, but later sidelined Padminiba and her group from the formal committee meetings and decisions.

However, no direct reference was made in Modi's election speeches to the conflict depicting sentiments of colonial allegiance, sexual politics, and gendered boundaries of protecting the nation. Rather, Modi continued allegations that Congress plans new reservation for Muslims "by snatching away the right of the marginalised sections" (Tafti & Tomlinson, 2013). Addressing audience in Jamnagar, he reiterated that "India today is a bright spot in the global economy and a 'viśvamitra', a friend of everybody" referring to the sage, author of many Vedas. Modi further reiterated that "India is ensuring the safety of all through the Tiranga [tricolored flag] today" (Modi, 2024b).

Visiting the Jadeja royal family head, Jam Saheb Shatrusalyashinhji Jadeja, to calm the conflict between Kshatriya and local BJP, Modi stating having received a turban from the Jam Saheb is a symbolic act. Indicating that caste and conflicting narratives of the colonial allegiance towards independent India matter (Kutchmitra, 2024a). Furthermore, coordinated by the crown prince of Rajkot, Mandhatasinh, 45 representatives of the royal families across Gujarat, including Kachchh, gave their support for Modi on the same day when he was visiting the Saurashtra region in Gujarat.

Decades after Independence, India has got an alert prime minister in Narendra Modi. (Through the) firm and irreversible decisions that he took during his 10 years as Prime Minister, he has proven that our country, India, was great in the past, and is equally grand in the present and that it will climb the peak of being *viśvaguru* (world leader) in future.

(Indian Express, 2024)

Offering the royal support was a strategic show of allegiance to Modi and BJP, as royal families have, since the formation of BJP as a party, been close to Sangh family and their aims. Rupala performed well in the elections and was elected with

nearly 70% of the votes in his constituency, primarily from the Patidar communities (Kateshiya, 2024).

On 5 May, two days before the election in Kachchh, *Kutchmitra* published an interview with Modi in which he elaborated his views on the two controversies discussed above:

Kutchmitra: Gujarat has embraced developmentalism, but this time the Kshatriya community resents it. How much will it affect the voter turnout? What can be a greater service to Kshatriya and Sanatana Dharma than building a magnificent temple of Suryavanshi Shri Ram?

Narendra Modi: The Kshatriya community of Gujarat and people from all walks of life are with us today. Rupalaji has apologized to the Kshatriya community many times and the Kshatriya community has a very big heart. The relationship between Kshatriya Samaj and BJP is very deep and has been for a long time. If anyone has valued India's culture and heritage the most, it is the BJP. BJP has restored the country's pride. The BJP has made constant efforts to promote the spirit of patriotism and the values of national security for which the Kshatriya community is known. For all these reasons, BJP is the natural and first choice of the Kshatriya community. Ram Lalla's inauguration in Ayodhya was a proud and emotional moment for all of us. He united the entire country and awakened the spirit of India. Lord Rama's return to his birthplace after a wait of 500 years was a proud cultural moment for the entire country. In the history of India, especially the Kshatriya community has made great sacrifices to protect the Sanatan Dharma. People have seen how Congress has behaved during this entire period. He did not pray in the Ram temple but joined with those who considered Sanatan Dharma to be a virus. You will see that the people of this country will give a jaw-dropping response to the Congress against the Hindus and our culture.

Kutchmitra: What is your objection to Congress' X-ray and wealth redistribution plan?

Narendra Modi: The X-ray that Congress is planning is nothing but a house-to-house raid. They will raid every house to see how much money there is. They will raid every farmer's house to see how much land they have. Search the closets of women and see how much jewellery they have. They will give all these assets to the vote bank of their choice. They will loot the wealth that our farmers, poor and middle-class people have accumulated over decades of hard work. They will rob him of what he has saved throughout his life. This is a clear example of Maoist ideology. It saddens me to see that the Congress Party and its henchmen are promoting this Maoist vision. This is very unfortunate for the country (Modi, 2024c).

The Lok Sabha election results were released in early June. BJP and Modi gained the trust of the voters to form the government in a row for the third time. However,

BJP lost their absolute majority in the parliament and, thus, is dependent from their NDA alliance forming the government. Both Rupala in Rajkot and Chavda in Kachchh successfully won their seats. However, BJP lost the full reign of the Gujarat seats for the first time in ten years to a female candidate in Banaskantha and they lost their seat in Banswara in Rajasthan for a candidate from Bharat Adivasi Party. Early analysis of the elections suggests that alliance government will require changes in the government policies. The changes in electoral constituencies also suggest the emergence of opposition to BJP and its policies, especially due to SC, ST, and Muslim voting patterns (Kalyani, 2024). The tight margin in thirty seats across India also indicates that results for BJP dramatically changed from 2019 (Dagli, 2024). Ahmed (2024) suggests however that although Muslims are popularly considered as a vote bank, their motivations to take part in elections rather were driven by worries related to unemployment, price rise, and lack of development and suggesting that although being a Muslim has become demonised over the last years, this has not meant less active role played by them in the elections.

Finally, RSS head Mohan Bhagwat, when addressing RSS cadres in Nagpur at Karyakarta Vikas Varg (KVV) training one week after the election results commented on the election by referring to it as a “competition, not war” and that true volunteers of Sangh would keep their *maryādā* (मर्यादा) – Sanskrit word translated into dignity, and honour, but also limits of decent behaviour. This led to media speculations if in fact, this was a public scolding of the party leaders in front of its emerging new leaders for having invoked hate. How much change is at sight for Kachchh – and more widely to questions of caste and religious-based inequalities and social and economic justice – remains to be seen.

9.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed cascades of violence and uncertainty a quarter of a century into the disaster recovery in Haṅgāmī Āvās in Kachchh by focusing on the three elements, firstly, the long-term impacts of the post-earthquake urban planning in Bhuj, secondly, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and thirdly, the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The chapter made the argument that although in the long term it is clear that lack of inclusive urban planning in the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake has contributed to the emergence of permanent temporariness and urban dis-possession amongst the lower caste and non-Hindu religious groups – as part of the wider shift towards financialisation of the urban housing. Furthermore, such urban hierarchies and gentrification have further led to differentiated impacts on the urban poor during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with dramatic economic impact – entangled with other crises of food, water, and climate. Finally, the political campaigning leading up to the Lok Sabha elections was particularly polarising towards Muslim populations, but also antagonising SC, ST, and OBC communities – reiterating such agenda for the new India that would leave inequalities in tack in place such as Haṅgāmī Āvās. The results of Lok Sabha may not directly change the futures that Haṅgāmī Āvās residents may face; however, it is likely that the

future years may bring openings for alternative scenarios for the urban permanent temporariness and dispossession.

Notes

- 1 The concept Sanatan Dharma, often translated into eternal or absolute religious duties, has become firstly used heavily by Hindu nationalists, as the chapter will illustrate, but also criticised for pushing the idea of religion and religious praxis (by Hindus) towards unification.
- 2 Vijayadashami or Dusshera is celebrated at the end of the Ashvin month of the Hindu lunar calendar. Observed in different parts of India for different reasons and with different traditions, for most Gujaratis and Kachchhis it is observed as a victory of God Rama over the demon king Ravana as per the epic Ramayana.
- 3 <https://www.voanews.com/a/delhi-vs-who-what-is-india-true-covid-death-toll/6560637.html>

References

- Ahmed, H. (2024). *Myths demolished*. Retrieved August 9, 2024, from <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/myths-demolished-understanding-the-electoral-politics-of-muslims/cid/2026589>
- Bhattacharyya, R., Sarma, P. K., & Das, T. K. (2023). Mass exodus of India's internal migrant labourers during the first phase of COVID-19: A critical analysis. *SN Social Sciences*, 3(7), 108. doi: 10.1007/s43545-023-00691-x
- Bogoni, F. (2021). *Participatory practices and policies of slum rehabilitation in small cities: The case of Bhuj in north-west India* (PhD). Université Paris Cité, Centre d'études en sciences sociales sur les mondes africains, américains et asiatiques.
- Braithwaite, J., & D'Costa, B. (2018). *Cascades of violence: War, crime and peacebuilding across South Asia*. Australian National University Press.
- Chakrabarty, S. (2024, April 25). Election Commission sends notice to BJP chief Nadda for complaints against PM Modi. *The Hindu*. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.thehindu.com/elections/lok-sabha/election-commission-issues-notice-to-bjp-chief-nadda-on-alleged-model-code-violation-against-pm-modi/article68105108.ece>
- Dagli, S. (2024). 6.3L votes add 30 seats to BJP kitty. *Ahmedabad Mirror*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from https://www.ahmedabadmirror.com/63l-votes-add-30-seats-to-bjp-kitty/81868542.html#goog_rewarded
- Divya Bhaskar. (2023, November 23). લોકસભાની સ્મૃતિવન ફેઝ 2માં 1785ના હુમલાના 35000 શહીદોનું સ્મારક બનાવો.
- Election Commission of India. (2024). *Notice (25 April 2024)*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://elections24.eci.gov.in/docs/y7YBRtpKS4.pdf>
- Environmental Planning Collaborative, Babbie Consultants (India) Pvt. Ltd, JPS Associates, Theotech Engineers. (n.a.). *Draft development plan (Final report for submission under Section 16 of the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act, 1976)*. Printed document.
- Ghosh, S. (2023). India and the pandemic: Democratic governance at crossroads. *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 20(1), 217–236. doi: 10.1017/S1479591421000188
- Indian Express. (2024). *Royals of Rajkot extend support to Modi's bid for third term*. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/royals-of-rajkot-extend-support-to-modis-bid-for-third-term-9304284/>
- Israelsen, S., & Malji, A. (2021). COVID-19 in India: A comparative analysis of the Kerala and Gujarat Development Models' initial responses. *Progress in Development Studies*, 21(4), 397–418. doi: 10.1177/14649934211030462
- Jaffrelot, C. (2024). *Gujarat under Modi: Laboratory of today's India*. London: Hurst & Company.

- Jauhola, M., Mishra, N., Joseph, J., & Gadhavi, S. (2021). Disaster recovery (after catastrophes). In C. P. Krieg & R. Toivanen (Eds.), *Situating sustainability: A handbook of contexts and concepts* (pp. 163–180). Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
- Jha, S. (2024). Kshatriya community plans statewide agitation against BJP over Rupala's remarks. *Deccan Herald*. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.deccanherald.com/elections/india/kshatriya-community-plans-statewide-agitation-against-bjp-over-rupalas-remarks-2986384>
- Kalyani, K. (2024). The Dalit-Bahujan finally roars. *Frontline*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://frontline.thehindu.com/columns/2024-lok-sabha-results-dalit-bahujan-voters-reshaped-indian-politics/article68263000.ece>
- Kateshiya, G. B. (2024). Rupala won as Kshatriya stir polarised voters in favour of BJP: Rajkot Congress president. *Indian Express*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/rupala-won-as-kshatriya-stir-polarised-voters-in-favour-of-bjp-rajkot-congress-president-9376990/>
- Kulshrestha, P., & Khan, H. (2024). Congress govt used to say Muslims have first right to wealth... they will distribute wealth to those with more children: PM Modi in Rajasthan. *Indian Express*. Retrieved April 25, 2024, from <https://indianexpress.com/elections/pm-modi-rajasthan-congress-muslims-9283196/>
- Kutchmitra. (2024a). જામસાહેબે આપેલી પાઘડી મારા માટે પ્રસાદરૂપ: મોદી. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from https://www.kutchmitradaily.com/news/latest_news/17130
- Kutchmitra. (2024b). 'ભાજપ કચ્છના વિકાસનો નવો અધ્યાય ઉમેરશે'. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from https://www.kutchmitradaily.com/news/mukhya_samachar/17231
- Mehta, L., Parthasarathy, D., Pickard, J., & Srivastava, S. (2022). The political ecology of COVID-19 and compounded uncertainties in marginal environments. *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, 4. doi: 10.3389/fhumd.2022.840942
- Modi, N. (2024a). *Congress has always instilled fear in Dalits, sometimes in tribals, sometimes in minorities: PM in Banswara*. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.narendramodi.in/text-of-prime-minister-narendra-modi-s-speech-at-public-meeting-in-banswara-rajasthan-581787>
- Modi, N. (2024b). *PM Modi addresses powerful rallies in Anand, Surendranagar, Junagadh and Jamnagar in Gujarat*. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.narendramodi.in/prime-minister-narendra-modi-attends-public-meeting-in-anand-surendranagar-junagadh-and-jamnagar-gujarat-582002>
- Modi, N. (2024c). *PM Modi's interview to Kutchmitra, Janmabhumi and Phulchhab*.
- Mondal, S., & Karmakar, R. (2024). Caste in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Contemporary Voice of Dalit*, 16(1), 114–121. doi: 10.1177/2455328x211036338
- Mukherji, A. (2008). *Negotiating housing recovery: Why some communities recovered while others struggled to rebuild in post-earthquake urban Kutch, India*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Mukherji, A. (2015). From tenants to homeowners: Housing renters after disaster in Bhuj, India. *Housing Studies*, 30(7), 1135–1157. doi: 10.1080/02673037.2015.1008423
- NDTV. (2020). "No other way": Full text of PM Modi's speech announcing lockdown. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/coronavirus-india-lockdown-full-text-of-pm-narendra-modis-speech-announcing-covid-19-lockdown-2200156>
- Organiser Weekly. (2023). *RSS' Akhil Bharatiya Karyakari Mandal baithak press briefing Live from Bhuj*. YouTube. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/live/RaiqomDqDJU>
- PM India. (2020a). *PM's address to the nation (19 March 2020)*. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/pms-address-to-the-nation-on-comabting-covid-19/
- PM India. (2020b). *PM's address to the nation on 12.5.2020*. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/pms-address-to-the-nation-on-12-5-2020/

- Rao, N., Narain, N., Chakraborty, S., Bhanjdeo, A., & Pattnaik, A. (2020). Destinations matter: Social policy and migrant workers in the times of covid. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 32(5), 1639–1661. doi: [10.1057/s41287-020-00326-4](https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-020-00326-4)
- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. (2023). *Param Poojaniya Sarsanghchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat Ji's full speech on the occasion of Shri Vijayadashami Utsav 2023 (Tuesday, October 24, 2023)*. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.rss.org/Encyc/2023/10/24/VijayaDashami-2023-Speech.html>
- Scraps of Hope. (2020). *Waiting for corona/હું કેરોના અચેતી?* Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0ADjM2avf4>
- Simpson, E. (2006). The rituals of rehabilitation: Rebuilding an urban neighbourhood after the Gujarat earthquake of 2001. In G. De Neve & H. Donner (Eds.), *The meaning of the local: politics of place in urban India* (pp. 206–231).
- Singh, G., Vithayathil, T., & Pradhan, K. C. (2019). Recasting inequality: Residential segregation by caste over time in urban India. *Environment and Urbanization*, 31(2), 615–634. doi: [10.1177/0956247818812330](https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247818812330)
- Tafti, M. T. (2017). Reconstruction of informality: Can formal reconstruction re-create informality? *Urban Planning for Disaster Recovery*, 107–128.
- Tafti, M. T., & Bashiri, M. (2021). Navigating transition: Post-disaster housing pathways of households. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*. doi: [10.1007/s10901-021-09918-w](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10901-021-09918-w)
- Tafti, M. T., & Tomlinson, R. (2013). The role of post-disaster public policy responses in housing recovery of tenants. *Habitat International*, 40, 218–224. doi: [10.1016/j.habitatint.2013.05.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2013.05.004)
- The Hindu. (2024a, May 3). Modi says Pakistan eager to see Rahul Gandhi as PM. *The Hindu*, p. 6.
- The Hindu. (2024b). *PM targets INDIA bloc over 'vote bank politics'*. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th_delhi/issues/84250/OPS/GU2CR9R91.1+GG9CRBKHH.1.html
- Tieri, S., & Ranjan, A. (2023). Covid-19, communalism, and Islamophobia: India facing the disease. *Social Identities*, 29(1), 62–78. doi: [10.1080/13504630.2023.2207460](https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2023.2207460)
- Virmani, S. (2010). Compounding disasters — first natural, then man-made: Failed interventions we can learn from. In S. Patel & A. Revi (Eds.), *Recovering from earthquakes: Response, reconstruction and impact mitigation in India* (pp. 142–158). London: Routledge.
- VSK Gujarat. (2023). *Arunkumar ji, RSS Kutch Vibhag Ekatrikaran*. YouTube. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BQDm20r8Kk>
- Yiftachel, O. (2009). Critical theory and 'gray space': Mobilization of the colonise. *City*, 13(2–3), 246–263. doi: [10.1080/13604810902982227](https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810902982227)

Conclusions

From Complex Cascades of Violence and Uncertainty to Emerging Feminist Peace from Below in Disaster Recovery

February 2023 in Haṅgāmī Āvās:

Safura: Come to my home, I will offer you chai.

Shyam: We just had it.

Raju: They had ice cream and all...

Shyam: Are these three girls your daughters-in-law?

Safura: No, these are relatives, but my two daughters-in-law are inside. They are 5: 3 sons and 2 daughters-in-law. These ladies are my relatives.

Shyam [reintroducing Marjaana]: She worked with UNDP in 2001.

Safura: Do you think there is power in our hands, or has the power left?

Raju: Now she is just visiting to see how we are doing.

Safura: I know, but I thought that when she came to my house [in 2017] and took photos, that I could get a house.

Raju: Do not fall into such things. The organization has built the house, and they are coming here to check how things are doing.

A circle is closing. When we embarked on this journey together in 2018, we made a conscious effort to avoid the repetition of complex cascades of violence, and trauma for the residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās. Neighbourhood that was initially in 2001–2003 home for some 5,000 households, built by tens of aid organisations of which this book has focused on the 3,500 houses funded by ECHO (European Community Humanitarian Aid Office), overseen by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and built by its implementing partners. When visiting the neighbourhood in 2018 together for the first time, we had committed ourselves into a methodological and ethical journey devoted to ethics of care through praxis of *ಮೆಟಾವಿ* *meḍavo* which we have called in this book as quilted ethnography.

However, on one of our last visits to Haṅgāmī Āvās, the above-quoted conversation starter, whilst standing in the midst of the remaining UNDP temporary shelter houses, pushed us right back to the equation of humanitarian aid with illiberal urban development that produces unequal urban spaces divided by spatial segregation by caste and religious communities, socio-economic class boundaries, and

DOI: [10.4324/9781003472933-14](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003472933-14)

This chapter has been made available under a CC-BY license.

contributes towards identity politics along the lines of caste and religious divides. The above transcript also clearly indicates how the prospect of new housing in Haṅgāmī Āvās continues to have currency and points towards the need for analysis of power and hierarchies in urban aftermaths of disasters and continued need for ethical reflection of a research of the complex cascading violence in the aftermaths of the 2001 earthquake.

This book has been our collaborative effort in weaving an ethnographic quilt of the aftermath of the 2001 Kachchh earthquake – focusing simultaneously to the promises, expectations, and challenges faced by the residents of the temporary shelter, Haṅgāmī Āvās. Encounters with residents of city of Bhuj, capital of the Kachchh district in Western Gujarat, India, in a context where the earthquake disaster recovery efforts were marked by both growth of Hindu nationalist populism, increase in illiberalism, and extractivist developmentalism – which we in the book have described as cascades of violence and uncertainty. Yet, following the entanglements of violence and care, the everyday efforts of breaking gendered caste and religious-based spatial segregation and hierarchies, class boundaries, and identity politics, also indicate that the neighbourhood breathes from the divides, unmet grievances and quests for justice, but also of meanings that being the resident of the neighbourhood allows.

The book bridges a divide between research on disasters and structural inequalities and that of continuum of violence and engages with feminist conceptualization of everydayness of violence. Our ethnographic attention to the everyday violence and solidarities through praxis of મેડવો *meḍavo* and attention to standpointism of the marginalized draws attention to the existence of silent resistance, which we suggest manifests itself as an epistemology of emerging feminist peace from below. Quilted ethnography was proposed to conceptualise complex cascades of violence and uncertainty, and analytical care to entanglements of violence and care in the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake. Analysing the intersection of post-disaster recovery, communal violence, and extractivist developmentalism together, we suggested would enable research praxis to become sensitive to complex set of intersectional social divisions, and possibilities for everyday peace.

In **Part I: Studying the Aftermath of Disaster Recovery**, [Chapter 2](#) introduced quilted ethnography as a method of operationalising ethics of care in research initially as a critique of post-disaster household survey methods, and later woven into an approach that attempts to carefully craft research relationships through praxis of મેડવો (*meḍavo*, dialogue, or consultation in Kachchhi language) and શ્રુતિ (*śruti*, knowledge that has been listened to in Kachchhi language). We suggest that such an approach is a must if research ever wishes to break away from the violent logics embedded in knowledge production, and false expectations that recovery, and research on the unmet recovery needs creates.

The next two chapters provided three perspectives into the violence of the success story of the Kachchh earthquake recovery. [Chapter 3](#) focused on the ways in which the speeches held in Kachchh by Narendra Modi between 2007 and 2022, portray his transformation from a Sangh volunteer into a Chief Minister, and later Prime Minister of three terms, and the ultimate success story: the earthquake

made who he is today. The success narrative of the 2001 earthquake as a vehicle for becoming *viśvaguru*, teacher of the world, is parallelly used by international humanitarian organisations and civil society, and thus forms a strong case to advocate global disaster politics. Modi emerges, for the Kachchhi audiences, as the muscular father of development who establishes his soul (*ātmā*) to Mother India through the land of Gujarat. By speaking of Kachchhi people as Gujaratis, he thus offers a Hindu nationalist alternative for Kachchhis to move from the developmentalist periphery to that of economic and social prosperity, by invoking his development model as Kachchh model of development instead of Gujarat model of development as popularised earlier.

Chapter 4 further moved the analytical gaze more closely to the temporary shelter neighbourhood, Haṅgāmī Āvās. The chapter provided a chronological archive of two sources: formal project documentation by the project funder ECHO and its implementing partner UNDP, and the Haṅgāmī Āvās coverage of the local newspaper *Kutchmitra* between 2001 and 2003, complemented with interviews with disaster aid experts and residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās. The image that emerged from these archives points towards embeddedness of the urban development in Bhuj, and in particular that of the temporary shelter neighbourhood, to the overall disaster recovery politics – creating segregation of socio-spatial ordering between caste and religious communities – but also that of the rest of the affluent middle classes of Bhuj in three other official relocation sites. We suggested that Haṅgāmī Āvās formed a permanent temporariness, informality, and dispossessed populations mirrors the wider ideological underpinnings of the recovery programme and wider aims of the extractivist economic development, and the rise of Hindu nationalist agenda in the Indian political sphere.

The next two chapters that form the **Part II: Awās Landscapes Challenging the Hegemonic Recovery Narrative** turned to the violence of political ecology of the disaster recovery: socio-ecological changes that took place in the area after the earthquake. Both chapters offer direction of a resistance – one, commons, that was lost in the urban planning process, and the other, syncretism, that is sandwiched between pressures of religious identity politics of Hinduism and Islam. More specifically, Chapter 5 focused on the land that the Haṅgāmī Āvās occupies and its immediate surroundings. With the focus on ownership of land, and conflicts on commons, the chapter interrogated the label “wasteland” the area has been described historically, and suggested that disaster recovery infrastructures, and urban development put pressures on ecology and pastoralist life. Thus, Haṅgāmī Āvās as an unfinished fourth earthquake relocation site in Bhuj, follows the wider trend towards extractivism and new resource frontiers – capital accumulation and land speculation, resulting in conflicts embedded in the disaster recovery paradigm.

Chapter 6 zoomed into the diverse spirituality and praxis of religion in the neighbourhood, marked by both syncretism, but also expression of religious identities. The four examples in the chapter focused on annual procession at the mysterious Sufi sage shrine Gebanshah Pir; annual Muharram procession; worship at a Shiva temple and bird tower built in a memory of a lost daughter in an in-law abuse violence; and worship at a temple of Goddess Jōgaṇī, called as Bhuj high

court Jōgaṇī dhām. Mirroring the diversity of the neighbourhood and the social and economic tensions in the city, the chapter suggested the praxis to be examples of managed co-existence, and thus emerging peace that transforms normative caste, gender, and religious boundaries. Such religiosity offers space for care and healing, but also articulations of unmet injustices, although being embedded in the political economy of religiosity and economic hierarchies formed between the ones holding assets and resources for donation, and devotees and disciples yearning for economic justice.

The next part, **Part III: Emergence of Feminist Peace through Life Histories** (Chapters 7 and 8) offered life historical perspective to two Muslim residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās – Daud and Kalila – and their families. All in all, the book has attempted to portray the image of the Kachchhi Muslims as socially, culturally, and religiously diverse – that escapes the stereotypical image of a Muslim man as a threat and danger to the Indian society, but also to that of the Muslim women. By focusing on the *rewal* racing, breeding and training, and the interspecies relations between Daud and his beloved Marwari horse Maṅkī, the chapter suggested their intimate relationship forms a resistance and an alternative to that of the Hindu nationalist “Other” connecting the intimate relationship with the horse to that of social, cultural, and of economical integrity and respectability. Similarly, in focusing the unfolding of the events of Kalila and her daughter Sofia, and formation of a strong social ontology of “we”, the chapter illustrated how the temporary shelter neighbourhood provided the canvas on which they were drawing networks of care and support and mutual cooperation – emerging ontology for feminist peace – in the midst of communal violence taking place across the Gujarat state.

Finally, in **Part IV: Permanently Temporary**, Chapter 9 focused on the cascades of violence and uncertainty in the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake recovery with a threefold focus: long-term impacts of the temporary shelter neighbourhood that have resulted as permanent urban temporariness; the cascades of COVID-19; and political landscape during the run up for the Lok Sabha 2024 elections and the third term of BJP’s rule under Modi. The chapter made the argument of normalisation of cascades of violence and uncertainty which have been materialised as permanent urban temporality and dispossession for the urban poor along caste and religious lines which was deepened due to the socio-economical inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was the same communities that became direct targets of polarised hate speech during the Lok Sabha 2024 elections. The results of Lok Sabha may not directly change the futures that Haṅgāmī Āvās residents may face; however, it is likely that the future years may bring openings for alternative scenarios for the urban permanent temporariness and dispossession – and emergence, and sustenance of feminist peace.

Focusing on the entanglement of cascades of violence and uncertainty, this book has built an overall argument of the politics of temporality and contested yet mutually existing spatial and temporal experiential landscapes as an aftermath of

a disaster (see e.g. Jauhola, 2013, 2015), which keep the tensions, or wounds, that were created as part of the reconstruction, and the attempted “building back better” (Thiruppugazh, 2016, p. 160) still open.

Pre-existing power relations and inequalities such as land tenure, homelessness, social and economic inequalities and inadequate living conditions, tend to be reinforced during the disaster recovery. Unless attended carefully and with long-term endurance, they produce permanent global structures of inequality, dispossession, and conditions that form shadowlands of development and subaltern to the success stories of international reconstruction aid, disconnected from any colonial continuities (Biswas & Nair, 2010, p. 20; see also Gotham & Greenberg, 2014). In the case of Kachchh, and Haṅgāmī Āvās, this forms the shadow of the success story used to advance the mission of viśvaguru, becoming a global teacher of disaster recovery. As the book has demonstrated, however, entangled to the violent logics of disaster recovery, emerges openings for feminist peace, instances of quest for justice, care and cooperation and healing, by residents every day.

Practicing quilted ethnography, our collaborative effort to embody ૐmeḍavo and ૐśruti, we’ve weaved a ૐdhaḍkī of the 2001 earthquake experience in Haṅgāmī Āvās together with the residents. The journey documented here is a living archive of our joint labouring on the tension between the postcolonial geographies and postcolonial methodologies – committed to co-authorship, dialogue, and dialogical approach to knowledge and its production, and practice of feminist peace. Thus, writing this book together as a dialogue for us is not only a feminist peace research method (Smith, Yoshida, Smith, & Yoshida, 2022, p. 5), but it proposes a shift to feminist epistemology of feminist peace theorising from below: in this book we have connected the dialogues held with the residents of Haṅgāmī Āvās to the theorizing on interlocking systems of structural oppressions, Dalit standpoint epistemologies, and conceptualisation of violence as complex cascades of violence and uncertainties – which all form a new epistemology of emerging feminist peace from below.

References

- Biswas, S., & Nair, S. (2010). Introduction: International relations and “states of exception”. In S. Biswas & S. Nair (Eds.), *International relations and states of exception: Margins, peripheries, and excluded bodies*. London: Routledge.
- Gotham, K. F., & Greenberg, M. (2014). *Crisis cities: Disaster and redevelopment in New York and New Orleans*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jauhola, M. (2013). *Post-Tsunami reconstruction in Indonesia: Negotiating normativity through gender mainstreaming initiatives in Aceh*. London: Routledge.
- Jauhola, M. (2015). Scraps of home: Social and vernacular memory and politics of disaster humanitarianism in Aceh, Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 43(6), 738–759.
- Smith, S., & Yoshida, K. (2022). Feminist conversations on peace. In S. Smith & K. Yoshida (Eds.), *Introduction: Conversations on feminist peace* (pp. 1–14). Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Thiruppugazh, V. (2016). Positioning stakeholders within owner-driven post-disaster reconstruction approaches: Gujarat, India following the 2001 earthquake. In P. Daly & M. Feener (Eds.), *Rebuilding Asia following natural disasters: Approaches to reconstruction in the Asia-Pacific Region* (pp. 160–180). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Index

Note: *Italic* page numbers refer to *figures*. Page numbers followed by ‘n’ refer to notes.

- Aal, Kavi (poet) [xx](#), [31](#), [32](#), [118](#); poem “Kachchh mulak ja madu - People of Kachchh” [31](#)
- Abhiyan [187](#), [189n5](#), [198](#), [199](#); *see also* [Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan \(KNNA\)](#)
- abundance of: commons [102–107](#); grassland [93](#); water [99](#), [102](#), [114](#)
- academic cultural imperialism [3](#)
- Adams St. Pierre, E. [38](#)
- Ahlbeck, J. [166](#)
- Ahl-i-Hadis/Hadith movement [122](#)
- Ahmed, H. [213](#)
- Ahmedabad [8](#), [36](#), [83](#), [95](#), [96](#), [143](#), [193](#)
- Ali, Misria [152](#)
- Ambedkar, B.R. [12](#)
- Anand, Ashok [51](#)
- Anand, Dibyesh [152](#)
- Anjar: Veer Bal Smarak, brave children’s memorial [43](#)
- anthropocentrism [151–166](#)
- Arendt, Hannah [37](#)
- Ariyabandu, Madhavi [12](#)
- arthashastra [153](#)
- Ashapura/Āśāpurā, goddess [49](#), [85](#), [95](#), [96](#), [97](#), [115n3](#), [115n7](#); devotion [43](#), [49](#), [95](#); Mataji madh temple [42](#)
- Asian Development Bank [5](#); Gujarat Emergency Earthquake Reconstruction Programme (GEERP) [43](#)
- Atrocity Act of 1989 [141](#)
- Bachchan, Amitabh [166](#)
- bamboo [53n3](#), [70](#), [140](#)
- Banni grassland [101](#), [105](#), [112](#), [151](#), [154](#)
- Barad, Karen [15](#)
- Bari, Farzana [10](#)
- Bhachhau [99](#), [155](#)
- Bhagwat, Mohan [51](#), [52](#), [193](#), [213](#)
- Bhalara, R.G. [62](#)
- Bharabaya [97](#)
- Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) [43](#), [45](#), [52](#), [127](#), [208](#), [211–213](#); 2002 election strategy [88](#)
- Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha mission [144](#)
- Bhīṭā’ī, Shāh ‘Abdul Latīf [133](#)
- Bhooj [95](#)
- Bhoojeh [92](#)
- Bhuj [5](#), [7](#), [8](#), [44](#), [47](#), [49](#), [53](#), [67–69](#), [71](#), [73–74](#), [113](#), [120](#), [151](#), [154](#), [170–171](#), [188](#), [196](#), [197](#), [218](#); age of 70s, suffering [81](#); Area Development Agency, Bhada [196](#), [198](#), [199](#), [201](#); Ashapura/Āśāpurā temple [49](#), [85](#), [95–97](#), [115n3](#), [115n7](#); bad condition of students [78](#); Bhujio hill [42](#), [125](#); building life and new family [180–182](#); Camp area/kamp area [154](#); careful management of respectability and honour [182–187](#); centre of persecution, earthquake victims [74–75](#); crisis for couples [80](#); disaster recovery in [8](#); earthquake relocation sites of [8](#); engagement, broken [80–81](#); epicentre of problems [79–80](#); Establishment of [49](#), [95](#), [115n6](#); Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) [61](#), [62](#), [65](#), [67](#), [71](#), [74](#), [88n3](#), [101](#), [105](#), [112](#), [113](#), [179](#); Hangami Awas, Hangami Nagar [59](#), [75–77](#); “high court” [17](#), [120](#), [139–144](#); High Court of [139–144](#); home uncertainty [171–175](#); Kachchh Literature Festival, *Kachchh sahitya utsav* [194](#); lacking in town [77](#); land price [90](#); middle-class and lower class [69](#); Muharram celebration in

- 133; "New Bhuj" 8, 87; north-eastern part, temporary city 61–62; Old Bhuj 133, 144; organised communities and government plans 69; punishment, encroach on land 78; railway construction 104, 111; resentment types 77; 17 thousand homeless in 69; slum development 8; Sufi shrines 127, 145n8; Swaminarayan temple 76, 77, 105, 118; temporary accommodation town, center of torture 76; temporary neighbourhood of 59–89; temporary town or permanent torture town 81; town development plan of 8; town planning 9, 30, 35, 60, 88, 93; urban development 8, 17, 60, 133, 196; *see also* Bhooj; temporary shelter neighbourhood
- Bhujang temple 95
- Bhuj Area Development Authority (BhADA) 31, 35
- Bhuj Development Council 197
- Bhuj high court Jōgaṇī dhām 140, 143, 144
- Bhujjiyo fort 94–97
- Bhujjiyo hill 91, 94, 95, 97, 114, 154; Smritivan/Smṛtivan earthquake memorial and museum 42–44, 50, 53, 91, 94, 97, 102; defence of 1730 95; defence of 1762 95; *see also* Bhoojjeah
- bhuvā 139–144, 145n11
- bindi 189n10
- bird tower 136–139, 137
- Black feminist theorising 11, 14
- Black Hill* (Williams) 96
- Bogoni, Francesco 196–198, 200
- Bombay Inams (Kutch area) Abolition Act 99
- Bond, B. E. 122, 127, 133
- Braithwaite, J. 14
- breeding, horses 160–163
- Brown, E. B. 27
- Brown, Wendy 12
- Bunch of Thoughts* (Golwalkar) 51
- Burnes, James 91, 93
- capital accumulation 90–93
- capitalism 11, 28, 29, 50
- Cāraṇ /Gadhavi caste 3, 29, 31, 32; music performance by Devraj Gadhavi 32; poets 32; *trāgā* ritual 31
- Caritas 71
- cascade: of violence 9–16, 193–214, 217–221
- caste-based religious agency 120
- caste minorities 5
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh 3, 4
- chamarpuja 96, 115n7
- Chavda, Vinod MP 210
- class 11
- collective storytelling 37
- Collins, Patricia Hill 11
- Combahee River Collective 11
- commons: abundance 102–107; conflicts of 102, 219; *see also* sitting (vetho)
- communal violence 45, 78, 188
- community organisations 67
- conflicts: communal 102, 105, 111; of commons 102, 219
- Connolly-Shaffer, Patricia 37
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) 43
- COVID-19 pandemic 193–195, 201–208, 213, 220; Disaster Management Act of 2005 202; Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897 202; first wave 2020 206; lockdown measures 126, 195; re-migration wave 208; second wave 2021 49, 141, 207; viśvaguru 203
- Criminal Tribes Act 116n18
- dalit feminism 12, 13
- dalit social movement 12
- Das, Veena 13
- daughter's dowry-connected death 136–139
- D'Costa, B. 14
- Delsalji I, Rao Shri 96
- Deshhalji I, Rao 95
- developmentalism: wasteland 90–116; father of development 16, 45, 53, 219; periphery 16, 53, 219; prosperity 16, 53, 219
- Devi Pujak community 162, 211
- dhadkī (ଦାଦକି), quilt/patchwork 27–29, 221
- disaster diplomacy 36, 44, 51, 53, 60
- disaster inequalities 9–16; interlocking oppressions 9–13; violence and peace 13–16
- Disaster Management Act of 2005 (DMA 2005) 202
- disaster populism 6, 7
- disaster recovery: beneficiary categories 18, 169, 188; counter cultural everyday 170; dispossession 9, 16, 18, 19, 30, 133, 195, 200, 220; economic reforms 6, 8; gendered responsibilities of 18, 169, 188; industrialisation 6, 9, 88, 90, 93, 111, 113, 208; infrastructure 7, 8,

- 30, 38, 45, 50, 51, 65, 72, 87, 88, 109, 219; mutual co-operation 170; as pain and suffering 169, 182; permanent temporariness 195–201; resilience (see *resilience*); wounded attachments 12, 169
- discriminative gentrification 195
- dispossession 9, 16, 18, 19, 30, 133, 195, 200, 220
- Divya Bhaskar newspaper 194
- Doniger, Wendy 152
- double-engine government 45, 53
- earthquake 5–7; volunteering 42–44; see also *individual entries*
- earthquake recovery 193–214, 220
- earthquake recovery programme 35
- ecology: arid region plants (bdellium tree, acacia, orange gum berry tree, indian jujube, lambh/needle grass, sweet grass chiyo, banyan tree) 103, 104; commons 104; landlevelling 107; mad bush, *ganda bawal*, *prosopis juliflora* 108; pastoralism 92, 107, 108; political 17, 219
- economic injustice 157
- economic liberation 6
- economic struggle 154
- elections: Electoral Commission 209; 2017, Gujarat State assembly 47; 2014, Lok Sabha 53; 2019, Lok Sabha 152; 2024, Lok Sabha 18, 97, 152, 193, 194, 208–213, 220
- Enarson, E. 10
- entanglement: of violence and care 218
- Environmental Planning Collaborative (EPC) 8, 19n2
- Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897 202
- epistemic violence 12
- epistemology 221
- Ernaux, Anne 38
- ethical care/ethics of care: in research 25–31
- ethical relationship 4
- ethnographic narratives 37–38
- ethnographic research 7
- ethnography 5; collective storytelling 37; conviviality 16, 26; ethics of care 217, 218; flat writing/ *l'écriture plate*, Anne Ernaux 38; intergenerational dialogue 18, 170, 188; knowledge production/power 27, 37, 38, 218; non-textual research 16; patchwork ethnography 27; research result dissemination 30; quilted 25–39
- Eurocentrism 9
- European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) 60, 63, 65–66, 71, 86–87, 88n3, 217, 219
- everyday peace 9, 15, 87, 218
- excessive militarism 152
- extractivism 6, 7, 15, 28, 219
- Factories Act of 1948 207
- family: biological 133; social 32
- father of development 16, 45, 53, 219
- Fazl, Abu'l 153
- feminist disaster studies 9–11
- feminist peace (research): emerging peace 17, 144, 220; methodology 221; ontology of 169, 170, 188, 220
- Fernandes, Sujatha 37
- floods: of Morbi 1979 103, 125, 145n6
- Gadhavi/Cāraṇ caste 3, 29, 31, 32; *trāgā* ritual 31; see also *Cāraṇ* /Gadhavi caste
- Gadhvi, Pushpadan (former MP) 193
- Galtung, Johan 14
- Gandhi, Rahul 208
- Gandhi, Sonia 46
- Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency: Cutch, Palanpur, and Mahi Kantha*, Vol. V (1880) 95
- Gebanshah Pir shrine 109–111, 119; bodily host 123–125; caretaker, mujawar 123–125; Dargah 121; footsteps of mysterious saints 120–123; future of 130; gendered communal boundaries 123–125; gift donation economy 127–130; intersections of boundaries, crossing 120–130; monetary donations 127–130; *mujāvar* of Sokha in Rajkot 125, 126; procession 119, 126–127, 131; self and community, renewal 127–130; Shrine in Rajkot 111, 122, 123, 125; Shrines in Bhuj 99, 102, 123, 125, 126, 128
- Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency on Cutch of 1880* 95
- gender/gendered: agency 120; gender based violence 168–189; mutual cooperation 18, 170, 188; resilience 18, 169
- gendered spirituality: locating 118–145
- gentrification 195, 197, 213
- grazing fields, khētar, gauchar 100, 101
- The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes* (Enarson and Morrow) 9
- “General Remarks on the Medical Topography of Bhooj” 91

- gharib nawazi* 123
 Gidoman 96
 Global South-based scholarship 10
 Golwalkar, M.S. 51
 Goswami community 138, 145n10
 Grabham, Emily 12
 Green, Nile 123
 Grosz, Elizabeth 12
 Gujarat *see individual entries*
 Gujarat Electric Board (GEB) 82
 Gujarat Emergency Earthquake Reconstruction Programme (GEERP) 43
 Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) 61, 62, 65, 67, 71, 74, 88n3, 101, 105, 112, 113, 179
 Gujarat model 6, 15, 46, 47, 50
 Gujarat State Disaster Management Agency 198
 Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) 43, 50
 Gujarat Emergency Earthquake Reconstruction Programme (GEERP) 43

 Hahe ch Āvās 18
 Hajan community 135
 Hamirji, Rao 94
 Haṅgāmī Āvās, temporary shelter neighbourhood 3–5, 7–9, 17, 28–30, 53n3, 59, 60, 63, 66, 67, 75, 76, 78, 84, 86, 88, 94, 95, 102, 111, 115, 119, 120, 123, 125, 128, 129, 131, 134, 136–138, 140, 144, 151, 155, 158, 165, 168, 173, 182, 188, 189, 194, 195, 198, 199, 201, 204, 207, 208, 213, 217–219, 221; constructing, wasteland 90–93; Derani hill 100, 109, 113; ecology, futures 111–114; Gebanshah Pir shrine 99, 102, 123, 125, 126, 128; Jethani hill 100, 109, 113; Karsanvari 94, 100, 102, 103, 105, 106, 108, 109, 113, 114, 136, 137; land ownership and land use 97–102; Muharram celebration in 134; Pada Bhit/Sural Bhit 98, 112; religions and religious praxis 118–120; road accident, injury, and earthquake 155–157; Route I between Ahmedabad and Bhuj 99; Samivari, Swamivari 94, 103, 104, 106, 108; temporary shelter houses 7–8
 Haṅgāmī Āvās-led knowledge production 9
 Haṅgāmī Bhuj 75
 Haṅgāmī Nāgar, temporary shelter neighbourhood 59, 75
 Harding, Sandra 13

 Hindu nationalism/Hindutva 7, 51, 119, 130, 152, 194, 208; pride of (asmitā) 45, 52; soul (ātmā) 16, 46, 53, 219
 hooks, B. 27
 horses: chobach 161; in folklore 153; history in India 114, 153; kachchh horse breeders group 160; kachchhi breed 153; of karbala 131; kathiawari breed 153; life with 158–160; marwadi breed 151; rewal riding, monté 161, 166n1; 72 riders 153; sindhi breed 153, 158, 162; vekariya race 162; waro 161
 horse training 160–163; permanent to temporary and uncertainties 165–166
 housing: contractors 174; demolitions 173; financialization 88, 93, 195, 213; house becomes home 174; owner-driven 51, 174; permanent 8, 74, 111, 173, 197, 198, 201; Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Housing For All (PMAY-HFA) 200; Rajiv Awas Yojna (RAY) 200; reconstruction 7–9, 30, 59–88; recovery 30, 51, 60; slum development 8; temporary 71, 189n4, 197, 198, 201
 humanitarian aid: ECHO 60, 63, 65–66, 71, 86–87, 88n3, 217, 219; UNDP, 29, 31, 35, 60, 62–63, 65, 66, 70–71, 73, 74, 87, 88n3, 132–133, 199, 217, 219
 Hunnarshala foundation 108, 196, 200

 Inams Abolition law 100
 inclusive development 6
 Independence Day, 2013 46
 India in 2047 49–50
 Indian economy 6
 Indian government (union) 5, 202, 207
 Indian Ocean earthquake 12
 inequalities: caste-based 13; grievance 218; intersectionality 10, 12; SC/ST Atrocities Act of 1989 141; social divisions 218; socio-economic 7, 10, 15, 18, 220
 informal labour, daily wage labouring 84, 153–154, 157, 195
 information retrieval 3
 infrastructure 7, 8, 30, 38, 45, 50, 51, 65, 72, 87, 88, 109, 219
 intergenerationality 18, 32, 170, 188
 interlocking oppressions, intersectionality 9–12, 120
 International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) 12
 international disaster actors 6
 Islamic Relief Committee 70, 109, 121, 133

- Islamophobia 208
 Israelsen, S. 207
- Jackson, Michael 37
 Jadeja, Jam Saheb Shatrusalayashinhji 211
 Jadeja rulers: of kachchh 49, 95
 Jaffrelet, Christophe 127
 Jamil, G. 152, 169
 Japanese organisation 71
 Jauhola, M. 174
 Jōgañī dhām, goddess 17, 120, 144, 219–220
 Joshi, Naveen 79
 Juni Sharat 201
- Kachchh earthquake 5, 60, 218; recovery 44, 52
 Kachchhi 17, 43, 90, 93, 95, 206; 27 February 2002 78–79; 28 February 2002 79; development paradigm 47; disaster recovery success 44; district 18, 49, 92, 206, 210, 218; independence movement 46; as land of development 47; language 3, 27, 28, 38; as "mini-India" 47; model of development 16, 47, 53, 219; as periphery of development 16, 46, 53, 219; poem "Kachchh mulak ja madu - People of Kachchh" 31; recovery 51; topography 92; *see also* Bhuj
- Kagdi river 103, 106, 109
 Kalhora, Ghulam Shah 96
 Kapoor, Ilan 3
 Karsanvari lake 94, 100, 102, 103, 105, 106, 108, 109, 113, 114, 136, 137
 Karyakarta Vikas Varg (KVV) training 213
 Khan, Sarbuland 95, 96
 Khan, Shah Rukh 166
khāravād 104
 Khengarji I, Rao 94
 Khetarpar/shiva temple 136–139
 Kipling, John Lockwood 152
 knowledge production 3, 27
 Koli community 116n18
 Kumar, Bheria 95
 Kshatriya Samaj 211
Kutchmitra newspaper 17, 36, 38, 53, 59, 60, 61, 66, 66–71, 72, 79–86, 88, 90, 154, 195, 197, 210, 212, 219
 Kutch Navnirman Abhiyan (KNNA) 89n7, 197
- Land Ceiling Act 1960 99
 language: Gujarati 37, 101, 169, 180, 195; Hindi 42, 164, 209; Hindi, difference of using we and i 169; Kachchhi 3, 16, 27, 28, 38, 169, 172, 180, 218
l'écriture plate 38
 liberal policy 66; government 68
 life histories 4, 18, 27, 50, 151, 168
 listening 32
 Locke, John 93
 Lohana community 68, 70, 75–77
 Lok Sabha Elections of 2024 208–213, 220
- Maheswari community 171
 Malji, A. 207
 Mandhatasinh 211
 "A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography" (Günel, Varma, & Watanabe) 27
 Maṅkī 151–166, 220
 masculinity/ies: butcher of Gujarat 46; father of development 16, 219; Hindu nationalist 45, 166; minority 151–166; Muslim 151, 152, 153, 166; mutual cooperation 188; son of Gujarat 46
mātāmi 135
 meḍavo (મેડવો) 9, 32, 37, 218; epistemology, emerging feminist peace 3–5
 Meghwal community 189n3
 Mehta, Lyla 92, 102
 Mehta, Nalin 45
 Meman community 135
 Meyreles, L. 10
 migration: Banni grasslands 152; To Kachchh, Bhuj 204
 minority masculinities 151–166
 Misereor Germany 108
 Mistri community 103
 Miyana 115n5
 Miyawaki, Akira 43
 Miyawaki method, planting 43
 Mobius strip 12
 Modi, Narendra 109, 194, 204, 205, 209–212; disaster paradigm change 50–52; India in 2047, everyone's effort 49–50; Kachchh earthquake and populist politician 45–52; political transformation, sangh volunteer 45–49; speeches 44, 46; viśvaguru, global disaster architecture 50–52; viśvāmītra 42–54
 Modiphobia 46
 Moghal Empire 95
 Mohanty, C. T. 14
 more-than-human care 151–166
 mother-daughter relations 184

- motherhood: Mother India 16, 52, 53, 219;
 Muslim 18
 Motta, Sara 37
 movies: *Don* (1978/2006) 166; *Gopi* (1970)
 139; story as dramatic as 168–170;
 Saath Saath (1982) 60
Muddying the Waters (Nagar) 37
 Mufti-e-Kachchh 79, 122
 Muharram: Ashura procession 133;
 dhamaal songs, dance piercing the
 body with skewers and daggers 134;
 enjoyment 133; history in Old Bhuj 133;
 horse of Karbala, *zūljanāh* 131, 132;
 martyrdom 133; *Nisam*, hand of Ali's
 wife Fatima 134; organiser, *matami*
 135; *osānī* performers 131; procession
 131–136, 132, 219
 Mukherjee, Pranad 47
 Mukherji, A. 6, 196, 201
 Muslims 5; housing 109; as infiltrators 209;
 masculinities 152, 153; motherhood 18;
 Mughal 97, 100; Node 100, 151; she
 history 169; as a threat 220; womanhood
 18, 188

 Nagar, Richa 37, 38
 Nanavati Commission report 78
 National Campaign for Dalit Human
 Rights 12
 Navi Sharat 201
 New Bhuj 8, 87
 Nixon, Rob 14, 29
 Node community 105
 non-cooperation movement, asahakārānī
 caḷavaḷ 100

 Old Bhuj 133, 144
 O'Neill, B. 30
*One vs All: "Beware Mr. Prime Minister,
 It's India Impossible!"* (Anand) 51
 ontology: social 18, 169, 188, 220
 oppression 11, 13
 orthodox Marxism 12

 Pada Bhit 98
 Pan, Anandita 13
 panjrapol 106, 109
 Parashar, Swati 152
 pastoralism: dobh ritual 106; landuse 90,
 114; livelihoods, grazing 101, 107, 112;
 traditions 152
 patchwork ethnography 27
 Patel, Bimal 19n2
 Patel, Keshubhai 45, 62

 Patel caste 145n5
 pathetic disaster (Karun Rakās) 195–201
 patriarchy 11
 peace 13–16
 permanent disasters 10
 permanent housing 8, 74, 111, 173, 189n5,
 197, 198, 201
 permanent temporariness 195–201
 permanent urban temporariness 220
 political ecology 17, 219
 political economy 8, 30, 120; of disaster
 recovery 8; of religious practice 119,
 120, 220
 political landscape 193–195
 political violence 7
 populism: disaster 6, 7; Hindu
 nationalism 6, 44, 45, 46, 50, 194;
 language 46
 populist recovery narrative 59–89
 post-disaster extractivism 7
 post-disaster urban planning 9
 power 13; structures 10
 Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Housing for
 All (PMAY-HFA) 200
 Prix Versailles 50
*Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial
 Thought and Historical Difference*
 (Chakrabarty) 3
 Punwar 153

 quilted ethnography 25–39, 218, 221;
 meḍavo and śruti practice 31–35;
 see also *ethnography*
 quilted methodology 27
 quilts 28, 29

 Rabaris 106
 race/racism 11, 14
 Raima community 166n3
 Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) 112, 173, 200
rakhi bande (bond of protection) 189n9
 Rao, Rahul 12
 Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)
 193, 194, 208; Chief Sarsanghchalak,
 Mohan Bhagwat 193; Executive Body,
 Akhil Bharatiya Karyakari Mandal
 meeting in Bhuj 194; Vijayadashami
 address 193
 Rathod, Karsan Bhima 102
 Raydhanji II, Rao Shri 97
 recovery beneficiary categories 169
 Rege, Sharmila 13
 religion 11, 12, 71, 97, 118–120, 122, 143,
 144, 214n1

- religiosity 138; Ahl-i-Hadis/Hadith movement 122; Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha mission 144; bhuvā, healer 139–144; bird feeding tower, *chabutro*, 136, 137; care 17, 79, 118–120; contestation of norms, 118–145; faith healing 123; forms of Hinduism 17, 127, 219; forms of Islam 17, 127, 219; Gebanshah Pir Shrine 99, 102, 123, 125, 126, 128; healing 118–145; hospitality to strangers 123; Jōgañī goddess worship 17, 120, 144, 219–220; justice 119, 213, 218; Khetarpar, Shiva temple 136–139; managed coexistence 17, 119, 144, 220; monetary donations 127–130; Muharram, 131–136 (*see also* Muharram); political economy of 119, 120, 220; sites of religious praxis 120; Sufi shrine praxis 127, 145n8; syncretism 118, 119, 219; trance, *pavan* 142, 145n12
- religious discrimination 188
- religious identity 17, 144
- religious praxis 118–120
- relocation site 8, 17, 59, 87, 88, 90, 93, 111, 112, 197, 198, 201, 219
- renaissance 9
- repetitive surveys 30
- research data collection: quilted fractions 35–37
- resilience 18; becoming visible – transforming from the moon of the second day 188; as governmental technology 169; social ontology of “we” 169, 188
- reverse migration 204
- rewal chaal horse racing 158, 160–163, 166n1
- rewal horse racing 151–166; mutual help 163–164; political economy 163–164
- rewal respectability 166
- Richardson, L. 38
- Rodgers, D. 30
- Rupala, Purushottam 210, 211
- Saheb, Jhala 154
- sama community 166n6
- Sanatan Dharma 214n1
- Scheduled Caste (SC) 71, 209, 210
- Scheduled Tribe (ST) 71, 209, 210
- sector-policy 62
- sexism 14
- shrine praxis: caretaker, mujawar 123–125
- Siddiqui, S. M. 130
- Simpson, Edward 153, 197, 198
- Singh, David 92
- Singh, Manmohan 47, 209
- Singh, S. 169
- single complex concept 14
- sitting (vetho) 101
- slow violence 14
- Smritivan/Smṛtivan earthquake memorial and museum 42–44, 50, 53, 91, 94, 97, 102; Phase 2, Martyrs of 1785 attack 194
- social capital 8
- social interaction 32
- social movement 12
- social reproductive tasks 13
- social structural analysis 12
- social structures 10
- social vulnerability 10
- socio-economic inequalities 10
- spirituality: healing 118–145; care 118–145
- Spivak, G. 3
- śruti, श्रुति 27, 28, 31–35
- state-led urban slum development programmes 8
- state taxation 93
- storytelling 37
- structural inequalities 8–10
- Sud, Nikita 15, 46, 50, 99, 100
- sufism 145n1; shrines 123
- sufist tombs 5
- Sultanate of Ahmedabad 95, 194; *see also* Moghal Empire
- Sunni Islamic orthodoxy 130
- Sural Bhit 112
- surveying, method 30
- sustainable development 6
- Swaminarayan organisation 67
- Swaminarayan Trust (SNT) 65, 73
- syncretic praxis 118, 120
- syncretism 118, 119, 219
- Tafti, M. T. 196, 199
- tajia committee 135
- Taneja, A. V. 123
- temporary shelter: bamboo, Maharashtra 53n3, 70, 140
- temporary shelter neighbourhood 36, 38, 53n3, 60, 90–116, 133, 140, 195–201; 1,500 families and 82; 7 May 2001 62–63; 10 February 2002, monitoring report 73–74; 10 September 2001, monitoring report 70–72; 14 May 2001, operation contract 63, 64; 18 April 2003, *Kutchmitra* 85–86; 18 May 2001, desk officer report 63; 20 February 2002,

- Kutchmitra* 74–78; 26 January 2002 72–73; 26 July 2001, *Kutchmitra* 66–70; 26 March 2002, *Kutchmitra* 79–85; changed ecology and livelihoods options 107–109; chronology of building 60–86; community organisations 67; construction 107–111; dhukhnō šērō, extreme pain 83–85; disappointment, Gujarat Electric Board (GEB) 82; families, far away from community 76; helplessness 81, 83; homeless, not received money/assistance 66–67; hot weather 85–86; June 2002 85; June–September 2001 65–66; liberal policy, government 68; middle-class and lower class 69; mood of agitation, Congress 77–78; optimism, government 70; organisations, situation 67–68; planning 109; poor and vulnerable groups, Bhuj city 60–86; problems 81–82; rental slip issue 69–70; return back keys of 76; shops 83; terms and policies, changes 68; women and 76–77
- Thacker, Pradeep Devji 70
- Thakkar, Kakubhai Meghji 75
- thandak 136
- tōhoku earthquake 15
- Tomlinson, R. 196, 199
- town planning 9, 30, 35, 60, 88, 93
- trāgā* ritual 31
- truck driving 154
- tsunami 12
- Two Treatise of Government* (Locke) 93
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 6, 29, 31, 35, 60, 62–63, 65, 66, 70–71, 73, 74, 87, 88n3, 132–133, 199, 217, 219
- UN Sasakawa Award 50
- urban development: gentrification 195, 197, 213; illiberal 8, 17, 60, 217; inequalities 217; planning 8; town planning 8; urban poor 8, 16, 73, 207, 213, 220; urban slum redevelopment 8
- urban inequalities 9
- urban planning 87; cascades violence of 193–195
- urban setu* 89n7
- vadi farms 100, 101
- vagaḍō* 90
- Vajpayee, A.B. 47
- Vala, Padminiba 211
- van vagaḍō* 90
- Veer Bal Smarak 43
- violence 13–16, 29, 78, 170, 220; 2002– communal violence, riot *danga* 133; attritional 14; childhood and marriage, UP 177–180; complex cascades of 9–16, 193–214, 217–221; continuum of 9, 14, 15, 218; : everydayness 13, 218; reconciling gendered intersections of 168–189; recovery and mutual help 175–177; of research 25–29; slow 14, 29; of surveying 25, 26
- Virani, Jagdeep, Gujarati poet 91
- Virmani, Sandeep 197
- viśvaguru 53n4; diplomacy 44, 51, 53, 60; foreign affairs strategy 50; global disaster architecture 50–52
- viśvamitra 42–54
- volunteerism; *kāryakartā* 48; RSS 44, 45, 48
- vulnerabilities 10
- wasteland 92, 114, 219; capital accumulation 90–93; colonialism 93; as drought insurance 92; John Locke, *Two Treatise of Government* 93; as land classification 91, 92; as protein banks 92; resource frontier 90–93; *see also wilderness*
- water management: ponds of Karsanvari, Samivari 103, 108; river Kagdi 103, 106, 109; water pits, khad 103
- water scarcity 109
- Werth, L. 123
- wilderness 90–93
- womanhood; mutual cooperation 188
- World Bank 50; Gujarat Emergency Earthquake Reconstruction Programme (GEERP) 43
- Yiftachel, O. 200