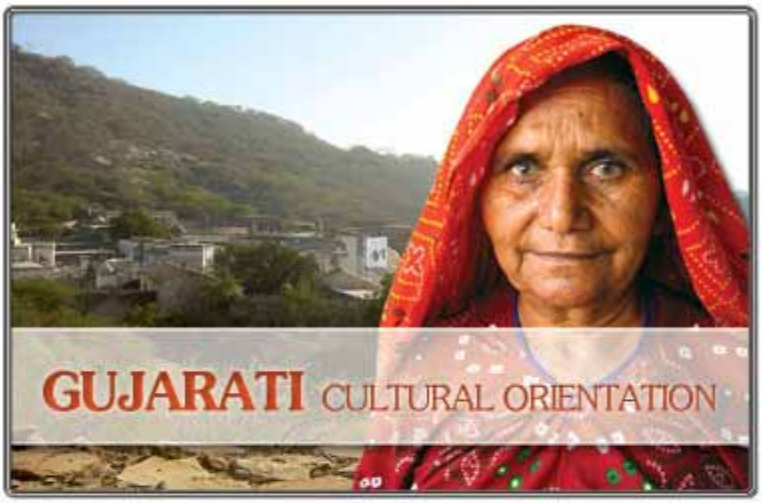


GUJARATI CULTURAL ORIENTATION

Technology Integration Division April 2009

DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER

Table of Contents

MAP OF INDIA 5

CHAPTER 1 PROFILE 6

INTRODUCTION 6
GEOGRAPHY 6
AREA 6
GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS 7
KACHCHH 7
THE KATHIAWAR PENINSULA 7
MAINLAND GUJARAT 8
CLIMATE 8
BODIES OF WATER 9
MAJOR CITIES 10
AHMADABAD 10
MUMBAI 10
SURAT 10
VADODARA 11
RAJKOT 11
HISTORY 12
PREHISTORY AND THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION 12
FROM THE ANCIENT TO MEDIEVAL ERA 12
MUSLIM RULE 13
THE RISE OF COLONIAL POWERS IN INDIA 13
BRITISH INDIA 14
INDEPENDENCE AND THE FORMATION OF GUJARAT STATE 15
ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NATURAL DISASTER 15
HINDU–MUSLIM CONFLICT 16
ECONOMY 17
AGRICULTURE 18
INDUSTRY 19
INFRASTRUCTURE 19
GOVERNMENT 20
ETHNIC AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES 20
LANGUAGES 21

CHAPTER 2 RELIGION 23

INTRODUCTION 23
MAJOR RELIGIONS 24
HINDUISM 24
ISLAM 25
JAINISM 26
THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN GOVERNMENT 27
INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON DAILY LIFE 28
INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON GENDER ROLES AND RELATIONS 29

SITES OF WORSHIP AND DEVOTION **29**
BEHAVIOR IN SACRED LOCATIONS **30**
RELIGIOUS EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS **32**
HINDUISM 32
ISLAM 33
JAINISM 33

CHAPTER 3 TRADITIONS **34**

INTRODUCTION **34**
SOCIAL HIERARCHY: THE CASTE SYSTEM **34**
GENDER ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS **35**
TRADITIONAL JOBS AND ECONOMY **36**
GREETINGS AND COMMUNICATION **37**
HOSPITALITY AND GIFT-GIVING **39**
EATING HABITS **39**
FOOD AND DRINK **40**
DRESS CODES **42**
SOCIAL EVENTS **43**
WEDDINGS 43
FUNERALS 44
NON-RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS **45**
DO'S AND DON'TS **47**

CHAPTER 4 URBAN LIFE **48**

INTRODUCTION **48**
URBAN LIFESTYLES **48**
URBAN AND INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION **49**
TELECOMMUNICATIONS **50**
HEALTH CARE **51**
EDUCATION **52**
TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION **53**
RESTAURANTS **55**
MARKETPLACE **58**
DEALING WITH TOUTS, STREET VENDORS AND BEGGARS **60**

CHAPTER 5 RURAL LIFE **61**

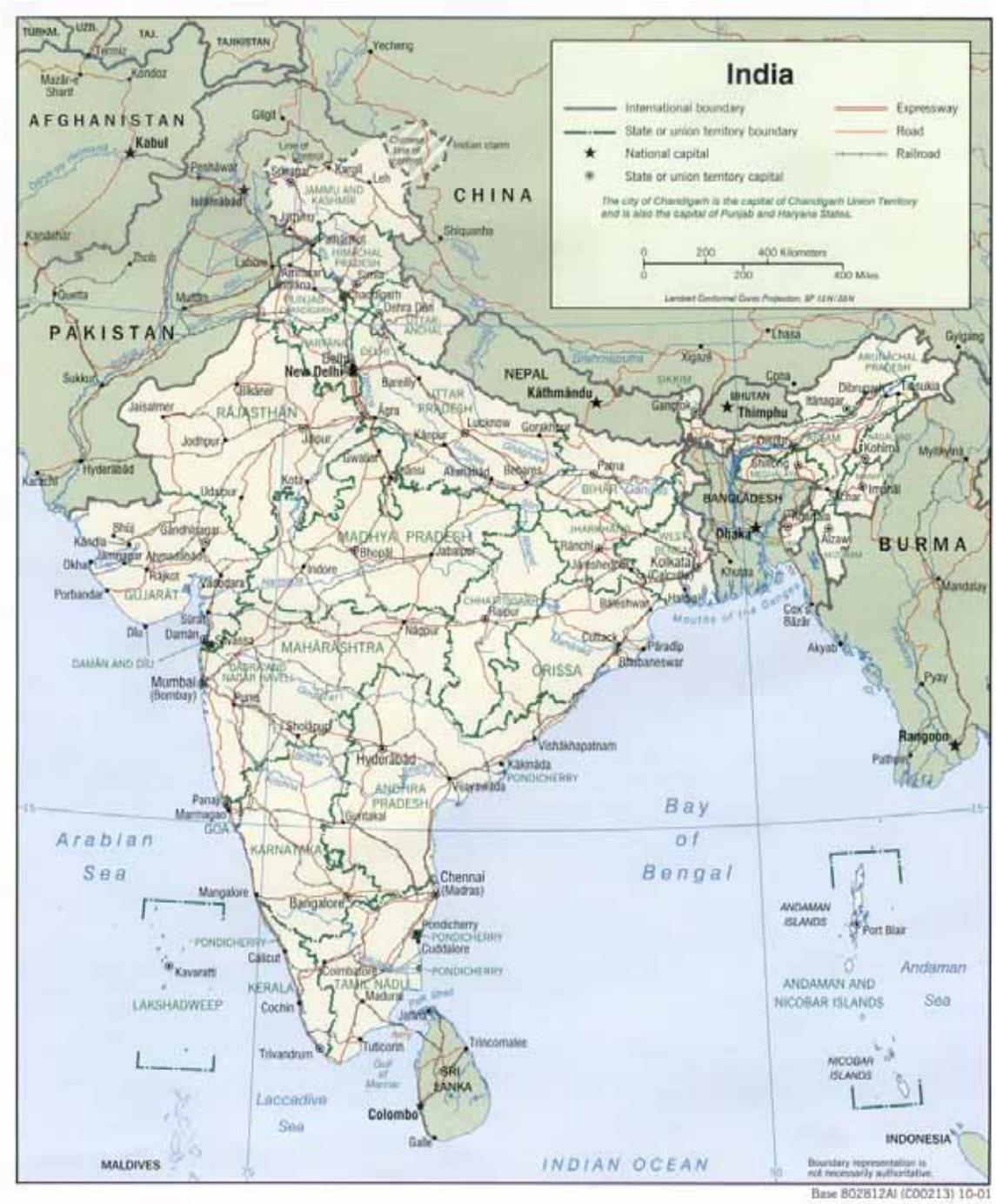
INTRODUCTION **61**
TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION **61**
RURAL ECONOMY AND LIVELIHOODS **62**
LAND DISTRIBUTION AND TENURE **63**
RURAL TRANSPORTATION **64**
HEALTH ISSUES **66**
RURAL EDUCATION **68**
LOCAL ADMINISTRATION **69**
CHECKPOINTS **70**

LANDMINES **72**

CHAPTER 6 FAMILY LIFE **73**

INTRODUCTION **73**
THE TYPICAL HOUSEHOLD **73**
FAMILY HIERARCHY **74**
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE FAMILY **75**
MALE-FEMALE INTERACTION WITHIN THE FAMILY **77**
MARRIAGE, BIRTH, DIVORCE AND WIDOWHOOD **79**
MARRIAGE 79
CHILDBIRTH 79
DIVORCE 80
WIDOWHOOD 81
NAMING CONVENTIONS **82**

Map of India


India
International boundary
State or union territory boundary
National capital
State or union territory capital
Expressway
Road
Railroad
The city of Chandigarh is the capital of Chandigarh Union Territory and is also the capital of Punjab and Haryana States.
0 200 400 Kilometers
0 200 400 Miles
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection, SP 16N/30N
AFGHANISTAN
Kabul
PAKISTAN
Islāmābād
New Delhi
CHINA
NEPAL
Kāthmāndu
BHUTAN
Thimphu
BANGLADESH
Dhaka
BURMA
Rangoon
RAJASTHAN
MADHYA PRADESH
GUJARĀT
MAHĀRĀSHTRA
ORISSA
ANDHRA PRADESH
KARNĀTAKA
TAMIL NĀDU
KERALA
GOA
PONDICHERRY
LAKSHADWEEP
ANDAMAN ISLANDS
NICOBAR ISLANDS
SRI LANKA
Colombo
MALDIVES
INDONESIA
Arabian Sea
Bay of Bengal
Andaman Sea
Laccadive Sea
INDIAN OCEAN
Mumbai (Bombay)
Hyderābād
Chennai (Madras)
Bangalore
Kolkata (Calcutta)
Lhasa
Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.
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Chapter 1 Profile

Introduction

© Meena Kadri
Muslim boys near Mirzapur

Gujarati is one of 22 official languages in India, a South Asian country that possesses remarkable ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity among its population of over one billion people. The majority of the country's Gujarati speakers reside in Gujarat, one of 28 states in the nation.[1] Gujarat has a population of over 50.6 million people,[2] with the majority of them speaking Gujarati as either a first or second language. The state took its present form in 1960, when the former state of Bombay was divided along linguistic lines. The resulting states of Gujarat and Maharashtra correspond, respectively, with their Gujarati- and Marathi-speaking majorities. However, a large population of Gujarati speakers remains in Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra and one of the largest urban agglomerations in the world.

Gujarat is home to an extremely diverse human population, the result of thousands of years of intercultural contact, conflict, and exchange. The state's complex character also reflects the unique local geography, which has played a major role in shaping the region's development over the centuries. Today, Gujarat is a highly industrialized and economically developed state—one of the wealthiest in a nation marked by extreme disparities in socioeconomic standing. In the Western world, Gujarat is most often known as the birthplace and home of Mohandas Gandhi, a pioneer in the use of non-violent protest to advance a political agenda, in this case Indian independence. More recently, the state was the site of both a devastating earthquake (in 2001) and a series of Hindu-Muslim riots (in 2002).

Geography

Area

Gujarat is located in west-central India, on the coast of the Arabian Sea. On its northwestern edge, the state shares an international border with Pakistan. A small portion of this boundary remains under dispute—one of several points of contention between India and Pakistan, two countries with a shared, often antagonistic history.[3] To the north and northeast, Gujarat is bounded by the state of Rajasthan. To the east and southeast, it shares borders with the states of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The Arabian Sea surrounds the state to the south and west, with two marine extensions—the Gulf of Khambhat and the Gulf of Kachchh—bounding the state's peninsular region. Gujarat possesses an extensive stretch of coastline—roughly 1600 km (994 mi) in length—the

[1] National Portal of India, Government of India. "Know India: India at a Glance." 2005. http://india.gov.in/knowindia/india_at_a_glance.php
[2] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Facts at a Glance [p. 19]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[3] Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. "India." 18 December 2008. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html

longest of any Indian state.[4] Overall, Gujarat encompasses just over 196,000 sq km (75,685 sq mi) of total area,[5] making it slightly smaller than the state of South Dakota.

© Cjette / flickr.com
Beach in Diu

The coastal city of Mumbai, which hosts a sizable Gujarati population, is located just south of Gujarat state, in western Maharashtra. Daman and Diu, which together form a union territory (a territory administered by president-appointed officials rather than a state government), are located, respectively, on the coast of mainland Gujarat and the southern coast of the Kathiawar Peninsula. Although technically not a part of Gujarat state, these former Portuguese colonies are populated by Gujarati speakers. Dadra and Nagar Haveli, another union territory formed from former Portuguese enclaves, are located in the state's southern borderlands with Maharashtra. Gujarat is also spoken in these areas, although not exclusively.[6]

Geographic Divisions

Gujarat can be divided into three geographic regions: Kachchh, the Kathiawar Peninsula, and mainland Gujarat. These regions demonstrate significant diversity in landscape, demography, and level of development.

Kachchh

Encompassing the vast northwestern portion of Gujarat, the Kachchh region consists of a low plateau surrounded by the Gulf of Kachchh to the south, the Little Rann to the east, and the (Great) Rann of Kachchh to the north. The Rann and Little Rann are vast expanses of saline deserts and mudflats that flood during the region's brief rainy season, temporarily transforming the central plateau and various outlying highpoints into islands. Together, the Rann and Little Rann cover an area of over 23,000 sq km (9,000 sq mi),[7] with the latter region serving as a refuge for several endangered species. Although the region's extensive saline areas are largely barren, portions of the plateau are cultivable, with crops fed by wells or, more often, sparse rainfall.[8] The region is home to several semi-nomadic pastoral groups, many of whom are skilled artisans who make fine embroidery and other handicrafts. Kachchh's population density and overall level of development are low compared to the rest of the state, in part due to its arid and often inhospitable climatic conditions.

The Kathiawar Peninsula

Also known as Saurashtra, the Kathiawar Peninsula is surrounded by the Little Rann to the north, the Gulf of Kachchh to the northwest, the Arabian Sea to the southwest, and

[4] *India Guide: Gujarat.* Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Geography [p. 19]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[5] *Geographical Dictionary of India*. Johnson, B.L.C. "Gujarat [p. 235]." 2001. New Delhi: Vision Books.
[6] *Geographical Dictionary of India*. Johnson, B.L.C. "Daman and Diu [pp. 179–180]" and "Dadra and Nagar Haveli [pp. 11–178]." 2001. New Delhi: Vision Books.
[7] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Rann of Kachchh." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/309369/Rann-of-Kachchh
[8] *Geographical Dictionary of India*. Johnson, B.L.C. "Kachchh [pp. 291–.292]." 2001. New Delhi: Vision Books.

the Gulf of Khambhat to the east. The region's varied terrain ranges from coastline and marshland to grassy plateau and low-elevation hills. Reaching an altitude of 1,117 m (3,665 ft), the state's highest point is located in Girnar Hills, in the south-central portion of the peninsula. Scattered with Jain and Hindu temples, these low peaks are a sacred site of pilgrimage.[9] Nearby is the rugged, low-elevation Gir Range, a forested region that is home to the Sasan Gir Wildlife Sanctuary, the last refuge of the Asiatic Lion. Despite the region's arid to semi-arid conditions, most residents of Kathiawar work in rain-fed agriculture, although the large cities of Rajkot and Bhavnagar are sites of industry and commerce. The latter city, located on the Gulf of Khambhat, is the peninsula's chief port.[10]

Mainland Gujarat

In terms of topography, mainland Gujarat is dominated by the expansive Gujarat Plain and several series of low-elevation hills in the east. The hills are collectively known as the tribal belt, due to the high concentration of Scheduled Tribes in the region. Stretching from northern Gujarat to the southeastern borderlands, the Gujarat Plain is home to the state's major population centers. Large, bustling cities such as Ahmadabad, Vadodara, and Surat—all densely populated—are major industrial and commercial hubs. The surrounding alluvial plains are fertile and intensely cultivated, with the richest soils found in the south, where rainfall is the most abundant.[11]

Monsoon flooding

Climate

Gujarat demonstrates significant regional variation in climate. In general, as one moves from the salt deserts of the northwest to the coastal plains of the southeast, rainfall increases substantially and temperatures become less extreme. This pattern follows a transition from arid to semi-arid to sub-humid climatic zones.[12] Like much of greater India, Gujarat experiences three general seasons: a hot season (March–May), a wet season (June–September), and a cool season (November–February). January is the coolest month, and May is the hottest. October may also have high temperatures, as it signals the transition from the hot and humid rainy season to the cool, dry season.

Throughout the year, temperature extremes may vary from near freezing to upwards of 48°C (118°F).[13] Temperatures range between 25° and 43°C (77° and 109°F) in the hot

[9] *India*, 10th ed. Singh, Sarina, et al. "Gujarat: Saurashtra: Girnar Hill." 2003. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications.
[10] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Kathiawar Peninsula." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/313238/Kathiawar-Peninsula
[11] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gujarat: Physical and Human Geography: The Land." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/249059/Gujarat
[12] Gujarat State Agricultural Marketing Board, Government of Gujarat. "Gujarat Agricultural Profile: Climate." 2007. http://agri.gujarat.gov.in/gujarati/boards_corporations/gs-agri-mark-board/agri_profile/climate.htm
[13] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gujarat: Physical and Human Geography: The Land." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/249059/Gujarat

season and 12° and 27°C (54° and 89°F) in the cool season.[14] The wet season corresponds with the southwest monsoon and is responsible for the vast majority of the state's precipitation. Annual rainfall may be as low as 250 mm (10 in) in areas of Kachchh, and as much as 1,500 mm (59 in) in the southeastern districts, with intermediary levels of precipitation occurring in the state's central areas.[15]

Bodies of Water

© Will Luo
The Arabian Sea

The Arabian Sea and its two extensions, the Gulf of Kachchh and Gulf of Khambhat, define the state's southern and western borders. Located between Kachchh and the Kathiawar Peninsula, the Gulf of Kachchh extends approximately 180 km (110 mi) eastward from its mouth on the Arabian Sea.[16] The gulf's easternmost extension merges with the Little Rann during the rainy season. Classified as a Marine National Park and Sanctuary, its southern portion is scattered with several small islands.[17] The Gulf of Khambhat lies on the opposite side of the Kathiawar Peninsula. Exposed to the southwest monsoon winds, it is known for its fast-moving and wide-ranging tides. These extreme tidal patterns, as well as the incoming flow of multiple rivers, have caused major silting in the gulf, thereby decreasing its depth and reducing the capability of regional ports.[18]

Gujarat has four major rivers: the Tapti, Narmada, Sabarmati, and Mahi. The Tapti and Narmada each run east–west from their sources in central India, and they are the only large rivers in the country to empty into the Arabian Sea, via the Gulf of Khambhat.[19] The Tapti enters southeastern Gujarat, and flows through Surat District to its mouth on the gulf, where a once-busy port is now closed due to silting.[20] Flowing north of the Tapti through Narmada and Baruch districts, the Narmada is one of the most sacred rivers in India. Hindus believe that it originated from the god Shiva.[21] In recent years, the river has been the focus of a controversial development project involving the construction of numerous large dams for hydroelectric purposes. Running north–south, the Sabarmati

[14] Gujarat Online. "About Gujarat, India: Information." November 2007. http://gujaratonline.com/about/
[15] Forests and Environment Department, Government of Gujarat. "Forests: State Profile: Agro Climatic Zones of Gujarat." No date. http://gujenvfor.gswan.gov.in/forests/state-profile.htm
[16] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gulf of Kachchh." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/309366/Gulf-of-Kachchh
[17] Digital Repository Service, National Institute of Oceanography, India. Nair, V.R. *Status of Flora and Fauna of Gulf of Kachchh.* "Chapter 2: Gulf of Kachchh." 2002. http://drs.nio.org/drs/bitstream/2264/87/2/Gulf%20of%20Kachchh.pdf
[18] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gulf of Cambay." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/90488/Gulf-of-Khambhat
[19] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Ryavec, Karl E. "Chapter 2: Geographic and Demographic Setting: Geography: Rivers." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0034)
[20] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Tapti River." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/583204/Tapti-River
[21] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Narmada River." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/403526/Narmada-River

River enters northeastern Gujarat, and flows through the cities of Gandhinagar and Ahmadabad, before emptying into the Gulf of Khambhat. The Mahi River also enters the state from the northeast and flows through the Gujarat Plain to the gulf. All four major rivers are used for irrigation. Various lakes are scattered throughout the state, including two artificial lakes in the city of Ahmadabad.

Major Cities

Ahmadabad

© Reinhold Behringer
Busy street in Ahmadabad

Ahmadabad is located alongside the Sabarmati River in east-central Gujarat. With a population of approximately 3.5 million,[22] it is the largest city in Gujarat state, as well as its chief industrial and commercial hub. Ahmadabad's size and industrial significance are also notable on a national level; it has India's largest cotton-milling industry and its sixth largest city population. After the creation of Gujarat state in 1960, Ahmadabad briefly served as the Gujarati capital until the administrative center shifted to nearby Gandhinagar in 1970.[23] Gandhi's spiritual retreat, the Sabarmati Ashram, is located in a suburb of the city, which is also known for its diverse architectural traditions.

Mumbai

Formerly known as Bombay, the city of Mumbai is located on the coast of Maharashtra state, directly south of Gujarat. Despite its inclusion in the predominantly Marathi-speaking state of Maharashtra, the city retains a large Gujarati population among the more than 16 million people that reside in its metropolitan area.[24] (Estimates place the city's Gujarati population at approximately 3.5 million.)[25] One of the largest cities in the world, Mumbai is India's business and finance center, as well as an important industrial hub. The city's coastal location has long made it a major port, particularly during the latter stages of the British colonial era, after the construction of the Suez Canal provided a direct shipping route from Europe to the West Indian coast.[26] In November 2008, the city experienced a coordinated wave of terrorist attacks that resulted in numerous fatalities.

Surat

© Setu Vakkil
View of Surat

Situated alongside the Tapti River in southeastern Gujarat, Surat has a population of nearly 2.5 million,

[22] City Population. Brinkhoff, Thomas. "India: Gujarat." 18 March
http://www.citypopulation.de/India-Gujarat.html
[23] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Ahmedabad." 2009.
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/10181/Ahmedabad
[24] City Population. Brinkhoff, Thomas. "India: Maharashtra." 18 M
http://www.citypopulation.de/India-Maharashtra.html
[25] The Times of India. "Blasts Shake Mumbai's Gujarati Heartland." 13 July 2006.
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1748507.cms
[26] *Geographical Dictionary of India*. Johnson, B.L.C. "Mumbai [pp. 381–382]." 2001. New Delhi: Vision Books.

making it the state's second largest city.[27] In the past it served as a major port—particularly for the British during the colonial era—but today it is known as an important hub for textile manufacturing and diamond processing. (The city is known as both "the Silk City" and "the Diamond City.")[28] Surat's population has been identified as the youngest of any city in the nation, with almost three fourths of its residents under the age of 35. Its youthfulness has been attributed to its large population of industrial migrants.[29]

Vadodara

Vadodara, also known as Baroda, is located north of the Narmada River in eastern Gujarat. Its population of 1.3 million makes it Gujarat's third largest city.[30] Although the city hosts significant industrial activity, it is also known for its cosmopolitan character. This is due to its many parks, palaces, and museums, as well as the presence of the famous Maharaja Sayajirao University, where courses are taught in English.

Rajkot

With an urban population of nearly one million people, Rajkot is the largest city on the Kathiawar Peninsula.[31] It serves as a transportation hub and commercial center for the greater peninsular region. Textile production is the major local industry, with agricultural activity common in the surrounding area, despite the peninsula's typically hot, dry weather. A legacy of the British colonial presence, the city's British-founded Rajkumar College remains a prestigious academic institution in India.

[27] City Population. Brinkhoff, Thomas. "India: Gujarat." 18 March 2007. http://www.citypopulation.de/India-Gujarat.html

[28] Surat Municipal Corporation, Government of India. "Introduction." No date. http://www.suratmunicipal.gov.in/content/city/introduction.shtml

[29] The Times of India. Mehta, Yagnesh. "Surat is India's Youngest City: Study." 12 August 2008. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Surat_is_Indias_youngest_city_Study/articleshow/3353885.cms

[30] City Population. Brinkhoff, Thomas. "India: Gujarat." 18 March 2007. http://www.citypopulation.de/India-Gujarat.html

[31] City Population. Brinkhoff, Thomas. "India: Gujarat." 18 March 2007. http://www.citypopulation.de/India-Gujarat.html

History

Prehistory and the Indus Valley Civilization

Archeologists have found evidence of prehistoric human settlements in the Gujarat Plain, near the Sabarmati and Mahi Rivers.[32] The wider settlement of the area corresponded with the spread of the Indus Valley (or Harappan) civilization, which emerged roughly 5,000 years ago and survived into the second millennium B.C.E. Although most of the major Indus Valley settlements lie in present-day Pakistan, ruins have also been uncovered throughout Gujarat and other northwestern regions of India. The Gujarat sites, mostly found on the Kathiawar Peninsula, seem to have both developed later and survived longer than the northern Indus Valley cities.[33] Most famous of the Gujarat ruins are those at Lothal—located in Ahmadabad district—where there is evidence of a dockyard (or reservoir) that once connected to the nearby Sabarmati River, a route to the Arabian Sea.[34]

© Raj Kukreja
Indus Valley seal, ca. 2600 B.C.E.

From the Ancient to Medieval Era

The spread of the Mauryan dynasty (322–185 B.C.E.) to the Kathiawar Peninsula marks the beginning of Gujarat's recorded history. The Maurya established the practice of Buddhism in the region, and they were the first empire to consolidate control over most of the Indian subcontinent. Edicts inscribed in the rock at Girnar Hills are a legacy of Ashoka, the famous Mauryan emperor who ruled from 273–232 B.C.E. Ashoka's grandson, who later came to rule the Kathiawar Peninsula, propagated Jainism, which replaced Buddhism as the dominant religion in the area. After Mauryan power declined and the empire fractured, the Gujarat region was exposed to foreign conquest and division.[35]

Over the following centuries, control of various parts of the Gujarat region shifted successively from the Sakas (130–390 C.E.), also known as the Scythians, to the Guptas (415–470) and Maitrakas (473–788). Throughout this time, dominant religious practices ranged from Jainism and sun-worship to Shaivism, a sect of Hinduism. In the 8th and 9th centuries, the region came under the control of the Gurjara-Pratiharas.[36] The name Gujarat derives from the Gurjara people, whose northwest Indian territory was known as Gujaratta. Over the coming centuries, the term "Gujarat" came to be applied to the general region.[37] For many, Gujarat's "golden age" corresponded with the reign of the

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[32] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gujarat: History." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/249059/Gujarat

[33] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Indus Civilization." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9042359/Indus-civilization

[34] Ahmedabadcity.com. "Excursions: Lothal." http://www.ahmedabadcity.com/tourism/html/lothal.html

[35] *India Guide: Gujarat.* Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: History [p. 20]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

[36] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gujarat: History." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/249059/Gujarat

[37] *People of India: Gujarat, Part One, Vol. XXII.* Singh, Kumar Suresh, ed. "Foreword [p. xvii]." 2003. Popular Prakashan.

Solanki, or Chalukya, dynasty (942–1304). During this time, Solanki rulers consolidated the area comprising modern-day Gujarat into a coherent polity, and artists and scholars produced masterpieces of art and literature that remain prominent today.[38]

Muslim Rule

Muslim trade missions and incursions from Central Asia were common during the Solanki dynasty. One of the most notorious of these invasions was in 1024–1025, when Mahmud of Ghazna, a Turkic sultan and warrior, razed the Gujarati city of Somnath and destroyed its sacred Hindu temple—one of many times that the temple would be demolished by foreign invaders.[39] In the 12th and 13th centuries, the Gujarat region was repeatedly invaded and plundered by various armies of the Delhi Sultanate, a string of Muslim dynasties based in North India. The region ultimately fell to Muslim rule near the beginning of the 14th century, and it later coalesced into an independent Muslim sultanate under the ruler Ahmad Shah, who founded Ahmadabad in 1411.[40] Under the Gujarat Sultanate, Islamic architecture flourished in the region, leaving a rich legacy that remains evident today.

In the 16th century, the Mughal dynasty incorporated Gujarat into its Muslim empire, which grew to encompass most of northern India by the 18th century. While not always consistent, the Mughals' attempts to assimilate native Indian practices and traditions into their Turco-Persian culture helped them maintain power. During this time, Gujarat developed a booming textile industry as merchants and expatriates from European countries began to establish a presence in the region.[41]

The Rise of Colonial Powers in India

The Portuguese, led by the explorer Vasco da Gama, arrived in India in 1498. They ultimately established a chain of outposts along India's western coast, including colonies at Diu and Daman on the coast of Gujarat. In the following years, the Dutch, British, and French also journeyed to the region to compete in the lucrative spice and goods trade. In the early 17th century, the Mughals signed an exclusive trade deal with the East India Company, a British-run trade monopoly, after it defeated the Portuguese in a naval battle off the coast of Surat. Thereafter, the East India Company—based out of Surat and, later, Mumbai—consolidated control over the market, and grew into a powerful commercial and political entity with a wide dominion.[42]

Courtesy of Wikipedia
Vasco da Gama

[38] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: History [p. 20]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[39] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Somnath." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/554131/Somnath
[40] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gujarat: History." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/249059/Gujarat
[41] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: History [pp. 22–23]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[42] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "India: History: India and European Expansion, 1500–1858: The British, 1600–1740." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-47005/India

Meanwhile, in the mid 18th century, control over Gujarat passed from the Mughals to the Maratha Empire, whose armies had invaded and plundered the region during the prior century. The local Maratha dynasty, the Gaekwads, gained control of Ahmadabad in 1758, and they established their capital in Baroda, now known as Vadodara. In the early 19th century, control over much of Gujarat was divided between the Gaekwads and the East Indian Company. At that time, the East Indian Company had gained virtual authority over most of India after successive wars with the Maratha and the decline of Mughal power.[43] The Kachchh and Kathiawar regions, however, retained a level of autonomy. Although they, like the Gaekwads, deferred to British authority; they remained under the local administration of numerous princely states, which numbered over 200 on the peninsula alone.

British India

The British Crown assumed sovereignty over India after widespread Indian mutiny and rebellion against the British presence broke out in 1857 and continued for two years. Already under the virtual control of the British, the Gujarat region thereafter became a province of British India, with various regional subdivisions maintaining a sense of local autonomy. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Gujarat began to develop modern forms of infrastructure, industry, governance, and social services. Some of these advancements, for example, came in the form of railroads and modern textile mills. The native population's role in pursuing and enacting these reforms is reflected today in the common perception of Gujaratis as industrious and entrepreneurial people.[44]

Courtesy of Wikipedia
Queen Victoria, 1887

By the early 20th century, various Indian organizations—most notably the Indian National Congress—had formed with the goal of seeking greater autonomy and, ultimately, independence for the Indian people.[45] Mohandas Gandhi, who was born in Porbandar on the southwestern coast of Gujarat, became a leading figure in the Indian independence movement. Influenced by Jain ideas concerning non-violence, he orchestrated various peaceful strikes, protests, and fasts in an effort to advance Indian civil rights and autonomy. In the mid 1940s, after wide-scale social unrest and numerous public campaigns for Indian independence, Britain agreed to cede power to a native government.

[43] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: History [p. 23]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[44] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: History [p. 24]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[45] Federal Research Division, U.S. Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Paul, John J. "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Independence Movement: ." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0025)

Independence and the Formation of Gujarat State

India gained its independence on 15 August 1947, although not without attendant controversy and conflict. Tensions between India's Hindu and Muslim populations led to the partition of British India along religious lines; resulting in the formation of Pakistan (then consisting of western and eastern divisions) and modern India. This division went into effect on India's first day of independence and was followed by wide-scale migration and communal violence as Muslims in India moved to the Pakistan side of the border and Hindus in Pakistani regions moved in the opposite direction.[46]

Courtesy of Wikipedia
Gandhi (right) and Desai, 1939

After independence, mainland Gujarat became part of Bombay state, to which the Kachchh and Kathiawar regions were subsequently incorporated in 1956. During this time, a regional coalition—known as the Mahagujarat movement—formed with the goal of consolidating the Gujarati-speaking areas of Bombay into a single autonomous state.[47] As a result of the movement's efforts, Gujarat and Maharashtra states were formed on 1 May 1960, when Bombay state was divided along linguistic lines.[48]

In 1965, the Rann of Kachchh region was the site of an armed border conflict between Indian and Pakistani troops. After a series of skirmishes, a ceasefire was brokered between the two sides, and an international tribunal later awarded roughly 90% of the disputed territory to India.[49] A small portion of this region—near Sir Creek in the Indus River estuary on the Arabian Sea—remains under dispute. The issue recently returned to the forefront of Indian-Pakistani relations after the Mumbai terrorist attacks, which were thought to have been carried out by Pakistani militants who entered the country through the disputed region.[50]

Economic Growth and Natural Disaster

In the decades following Gujarat's formation, its leaders instituted various developmental initiatives designed to modernize the state's infrastructure and promote growth in the local industrial and agricultural sectors. Over the years these entrepreneurial efforts—many of them harnessing new technologies—made Gujarat one of the wealthiest and most industrialized states in India.[51]

Gujarat suffered a significant setback, however, in 2001, when an extremely powerful earthquake struck the state, killing an estimated 20,000 people and injuring

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[46] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "India: History: British Imperial Power, 1858-1947: The Transfer of Power and the Birth of Two Countries." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-47005/India
[47] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: History [p. 24]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[48] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gujarat: History." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/249059/Gujarat
[49] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gujarat: History." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/249059/Gujarat
[50] *Wall Street Journal*. Pokharel, Krishna. "Attacks Spur Another India-Pakistan Border Dispute." 13 January 2009. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123180504307175401.html?mod=googlenews_wsj
[51] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: History [p. 24]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

approximately 167,000 more. Measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale, the earthquake was followed by an extensive series of aftershocks. The majority of the damage occurred in Kachchh, where the quake's epicenter was located, but its effects were felt throughout the greater region, including in Kathiawar and the city of Ahmadabad.[52] Overall, the quake caused billions of dollars in damages to regional infrastructure and left hundreds of thousands homeless.[53]

Hindu–Muslim Conflict

© Aksi great / wikipedia.org
Riots in Ahmedabad

Forming an infamous chapter in Gujarat's recent history, a number of Hindu–Muslim riots have occurred in the state over the last several decades, with the most recent and widely publicized series of events taking place in 2002.[54] In February of that year, riots erupted throughout the state after dozens of members of a Hindu nationalist party, known as Vishwa Hindu Parishad, died in a train fire that was initially believed to have been set by a Muslim mob.[55] The next day, the World Hindu Foundation called for a *bandh* (extralegal halt to all commercial enterprise).[56] This opened the door to tit for tat violence between Hindus and Muslims in which over 1,000 people were killed, the majority of them Muslims.[57] (Some estimates place the number of fatalities at upwards of 2,000.)[58] Many more were left injured, missing, or homeless as a result of the unrest. The police reportedly did not immediately intervene to restore order.[59]

In the aftermath, the Gujarat government, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a party associated with Hindu nationalism (*Hindutva*), was accused of both supporting and failing to halt the violent acts that were carried out on Muslims.[60] The state government was also harshly criticized for its failure to actively pursue and justly prosecute many of

[52] The World Bank. "Gujarat Earthquake Assessment: Executive Summary." March 2001. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INDIAEXTN/Resources/Reports-Publications/gujarat-earthquake/executive_summary.pdf
[53] BBC News, International Version. "The Cost of India's Quake." 2 February 2001. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/1142449.stm
[54] The Daily Star, Vol. 5, No. 540. Aziz, Azfar. "Indian Muslims and Communal Conflict." Review of *Tremors of Violence: Muslim Survivors of Ethnic Strife in Western India*, by Rowena Robinson. New Delhi: Sage Publications. 3 December 2005. http://www.thedailystar.net/2005/12/03/d512032103107.htm
[55] Council on Foreign Relations. Zissis, Carin. "Backgrounder: India's Muslim Population." 22 June 2007. http://www.cfr.org/publication/13659/
[56] Common Security Forum, Cambridge University. Ananya Jahanara Kabir. "Violence, History and the State: Gujarat 2002." 6 August 2002. http://www-histecon.kings.cam.ac.uk/events/gujarat_discussion.pdf
[57] BBC News, International Version. "Gujarat Riot Death Toll Revealed." 11 May 2005. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4536199.stm
[58] Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Kronstadt, K. Alan. "CRS Issue Brief for Congress: India-U.S. Relations [p. 13]." 9 February 2006. http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/61525.pdf
[59] European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies. Muralidhar, B.V. "Gujarat Riots - The Ugly Scar on Secular India." 6–9 July 2004. http://www.sasnet.lu.se/EASASpapers/32Muralidhar.pdf
[60] Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Kronstadt, K. Alan. "CRS Issue Brief for Congress: India-U.S. Relations [p. 13]." 9 February 2006. http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/61525.pdf

those who were thought to be responsible for the attacks.[61] In 2005, an investigative committee formed by a ministry of the national government ruled that the train fire was accidental, although many observers—particularly the BJP in Gujarat—questioned the committee's findings.[62]

Three years later, a different investigative committee ruled that the train fire resulted from a pre-planned attack coordinated by a group of Muslims. Critics of the latter findings, which also cleared the BJP-led Gujarat government of any wrongdoing, claimed that they were politically motivated.[63] The U.S. Department of State arrived at its own determination, that official culpability for the Hindu-organized attacks on Muslims was payback for the train fire. In 2005, consular officials were instructed to deny Gujarat's Chief Minister Narendra Modi's request for a diplomatic visa and to revoke his non-official visa as well, preventing him from entering the U.S. in any capacity.[64]

Some perpetrators were convicted and sentenced to prison terms.[65] Yet the larger issue remains unresolved and is a major point of contention in regional politics and Hindu–Muslim relations.[66] In July 2008, dozens of people were killed in a string of bombings in Ahmadabad. An obscure Islamist terrorist group, self-identified as the "Indian Mujahideen," claimed responsibility for the bombings, declaring that they were made in response to the killing of Muslims in the riots of 2002.[67]

Economy

Gujarat has long been a hub of commercial activity, be it as a point of trade between the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia, or as an important base for colonial merchant trade operations. Since its formation as a state, Gujarat's expansive economic growth—largely fueled by industry—has been a success story of greater India. In recent years, the state's diversified economy grew to account for nearly 7% of the national GDP.[68] Accordingly, Gujarat is a leading recipient of foreign investment within India. Even in the face of the global economic downturn, Gujarat attracted hundreds of foreign investors to a major

[61] BBC News, International Version. "Court Raps Gujarat over Riot Case." 12 September 2003. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3102864.stm

[62] BBC News, International Version. Singh, Jyotsna. "Gujarat Train Fire 'An Accident.'" 3 March 2006. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4770718.stm

[63] Indian Express. "Godhra Pre-Planned, Modi Not Involved: Nanavati Panel." 25 September 2008. http://www.indianexpress.com/news/godhra-preplanned-modi-not-involved-nanavati-panel/365822/

[64] Inter Press Service News Agency. Devraj, Ranjit. "Politics-India: Gujarat Pogrom Costs Chief Minister Modi U.S. Visa." 20 March 2005. http://ipsnews.net/africa/interna.asp?idnews=27946

[65] BBC News, International Version. Majumder, Sanjoy. "Thirteen Convicted for India Riot." 18 January 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7196017.stm

[66] Chronicle of Higher Education. Nussbaum, Martha. "Fears for Democracy in India." 18 May 2007. http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i37/37b00601.htm

[67] Bloomberg.com. Shankar, Jay and Bibhudatta Pradhan. "India on Alert, Steps Up Security After Bombs Attacks (Update3)." 28 July 2008. http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601100&sid=aTpQeBBEK2LY&refer=germany

[68] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Economy [p. 26]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

economic conference in January 2009, during which the state secured massive funds—estimated at USD 240 billion—for its future economic development.[69]

© Meena Kadri
Vegetable vendor near Gulbai Tekra

The state's economic success in recent years has often been attributed to the policies of Gujarat's controversial chief minister Modi, a leading figure in the BJP. Modi has been credited with creating a "business-friendly" regulatory environment by streamlining a notoriously cumbersome bureaucracy staffed by people whose palms need to be greased by those seeking their services.[70] Critics have noted that the state has long been economically prosperous.[71] Yet it has been a pioneer in port liberalization, increasing efficiency for shippers.[72] Much of that efficiency has been derived from implementation of flexible labor laws in a traditionally unionized work environment.[73]

Agriculture

Although it only accounts for approximately 15% of the state's GDP,[74] Gujarat's agricultural sector employs almost two thirds of the state's workforce.[75] This is due, in part, to the predominantly rural distribution of the state's population (approximately 62% of Gujaratis live outside urban areas).[76] As poor soils and limited rainfall in many areas (e.g., Kachchh and Kathiawar) historically resulted in low yields, local agricultural development was driven in the 1960s and 1970s by advanced technologies, including hybrid seed stock.[77] Today, the state's primary food crops include wheat, maize, sorghum, millet, rice, and peanuts, as well as a variety of fruits and vegetables. Its major cash crops are tobacco and cotton, of which it produces 57% and 18% of the nation's supplies, respectively. Animal husbandry, particularly dairy farming, is also a major component of this sector.[78]

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[69] India Today. Mahurkar, Uday. "Narendra Modi's Meltdown Cure." 16 January 2009. http://indiatoday.digitaltoday.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&issueid=31&id=25423&Itemid=1&sectionid=21

[70] Christian Science Monitor. Joshi, Saurabh and Mark Sappenfield. "In global trade, wheels greased by greasing palms." 6 October 2006. http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/1006/p01s02-wosc.html.

[71] *Times of India*. Gupta, Dipankar. "The Credit's Misplaced." 31 January 2009. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Editorial/COMMENT_The_Credits_Misplaced/articleshow/4053928.cms

[72] Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, Cato Institute. Aiyar, Swaminathan S. Anklesaria. "The Benefits of Liberalization: A Case Study from India." 3 December 2008. http://www.cato.org/pubs/dpa/html/DPA7/DPA7index.html

[73] New York Review of Books. Mishra, Pankaj. "Impasse in India: Review of Martha Nussbaum's *The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence, and India's Future*." 28 June 2007. http://www.nybooks.com/articles/article-preview?article_id=20339

[74] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Economy [p. 26]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

[75] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gujarat: Economy." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/249059/Gujarat

[76] Official Portal of Gujarat Government, Government of Gujarat. "State Profile: Demography." 2008. http://gujaratindia.com/stateprofile/profile1.htm

[77] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: History [p. 24]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

[78] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Economy [p. 27]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

Industry

© Orange Tuesday / flickr.com
Textile store

Gujarat's industrial sector has achieved an annual growth rate of 15% in recent years, because it has attracted significant foreign investment and propelled the state's economic expansion.[79] The sector is highly diversified, with industries ranging from petrochemicals and pharmaceuticals to textiles, food processing, mineral extraction, engineering, and diamond processing. Many of these local industries are highly significant on a national, and even global, level. The state accounts for over 20% of India's chemical production, 40% of its pharmaceutical output, and 12% of its textile exports.[80] Gujarat's diamond processing industry—based in Surat—polishes nearly 70% of the world's total supply, a niche which developed as a result of India's low wages, good infrastructure in Gujarat, and a Gujarati immigrant network that extends from countries where diamonds are mined to the end markets.[81] Solar energy production has been targeted as an emerging sector with plans for future development.[82]

Infrastructure

Gujarat's economic success has corresponded with the regional development of infrastructure. The state has an extensive modern road network, several airports (including one international facility), and dozens of high-volume ports scattered throughout its coastal and riverine areas. It also possesses a highly developed energy grid, buttressed by a strong regional natural gas industry and delivery system. These infrastructural features, in addition to the region's rich cultural legacy, have provided the basis for the future development of the state's tourism industry.[83]

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[79] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Economy [p. 26]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[80] Business Portal of India, Government of India. "Gujarat: Investment Opportunities." No date. http://business.gov.in/investment_incentives/investment_opp_guj.php
[81] Harvard Business School. Man Yue et al. "The Gujarat Diamond Cluster: Is It Forever?" Spring 2008. http://www.isc.hbs.edu/pdf/Student_Projects/India_(Gujarat)_Diamonds_2008.pdf
[82] India Today. Mahurkar, Uday. "Narendra Modi's Meltdown Cure." 16 January 2009. http://indiatoday.digitaltoday.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&issueid=31&id=25423&Itemid=1&sectionid=21
[83] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Economy [pp. 28–29]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

Government

© Paul Carvill
Bharatiya Janata Party Flag

Gujarat is one of 35 administrative divisions—28 states and 7 union territories—within greater India, a country often described as the world's largest democracy. Broadly, the Indian government is a federal republic with executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Accordingly, the primary entities of the government include a prime minister (with a president performing mostly ceremonial duties), a legislative assembly (parliament), and a supreme court. A council of ministers also serves as a cabinet to the prime minister. This framework is paralleled at the state level of governance, which includes a chief minister and his cabinet (with a governor performing largely ceremonial duties), a legislative assembly, and a high court. Federal agencies also play a role at the state level, although relations between the union government (as the national government is known) and that of the state have not always been harmonious.[84]

States are further subdivided into districts and talukas, the latter of which are similar to townships. Gujarat has 26 districts, with 226 talukas.[85] At the village level, some issues may be resolved by local councils known as *panchayats*. As of early 2009, the Bharatiya Janata Party held majority control over the Gujarat government. Led by the controversial figure Narendra Modi, the reigning chief minister of Gujarat, the BJP had won several consecutive elections in the state and had a majority in the legislative assembly. The state's next elections were scheduled for mid 2009.[86]

Ethnic and Tribal Communities

In India, social groups and communities are created through multiple cross-cutting affiliations including caste, ethnicity, religion, occupation, language, and location. These factors combine to create highly specialized subgroups, be they largely based on one or several of the above variables. An extensive ethnographic study of India, conducted during the latter two decades of the 20th century, found over 280 identifiable ethno-cultural "communities" within Gujarat state alone.[87]

While there are too many to mention, some of the larger or better known groups in Gujarat include the Patels (Patidars)—who have two major subgroups, the Leuva and the Kadva—and the Koli.[88] Dispersed throughout the state, the Patels and the Koli are disproportionately landowners and agriculturists. The Kachchhi Bhatia, a regional subgroup of the larger Bhatia caste of traders, are concentrated primarily in urban centers

[84] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. "Country Profile: India." December 2004. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/India.pdf
[85] Official Portal of Gujarat Government, Government of Gujarat. "State Profile: Location." 2008. http://gujaratindia.com/stateprofile/profile1.htm
[86] *International Herald Tribune*. "Hindu Nationalist Wins in Gujarat Election." 23 December 2007. http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/12/23/asia/23india.php
[87] *People of India: Gujarat, Vol. XXII, Part One*. Singh, Kumar Suresh, ed. 2003. Popular Prakashan.
[88] Rediff.com. Dave, Parag. "Caste May Overshadow Religion in Gujarat Polls." 3 August 2007. http://www.rediff.com/news/2007/aug/03gujarat.htm

in Kachchh. The Rabari, a tribe of semi-nomadic pastoralists, also live in the Kachchh region, although they may be found in other areas of the state, including Kathiawar. The Rabari are renowned for their decorative arts and handicrafts, particularly their embroidery. Another group of pastoralists and shepherds is the Bharwads, who are found throughout the Kathiawar Peninsula. They are known for their distinctive manner of dress reflected in brightly colored, finely embroidered garments.

The Bhil and the Dubla are two of the largest Scheduled Tribes in the region, with their populations (and various subgroups) concentrated mostly in eastern Gujarat. Two smaller communities based largely on religion and ethnicity include the Parsi, Persian descendents who practice Zoroastrianism, and the Siddi, African descendents who are Muslims. The former live primarily in select urban and coastal areas of mainland Gujarat, while the latter are found in small communities on the southern Kathiawar Peninsula. Forming a subgroup of the upper caste, Nagar Brahmins are a highly educated community with longstanding ties to the state concentrated in northern Gujarat.[89] Other prominent groups include the Rajputs, traditionally of the Kshatriya caste, and the Vania (Bania), another group of traders.[90] Overall, Gujarat's tribal populations are mostly found in the hill-covered eastern districts, ranging from the north to the far southeast.

Languages

Gujarati is the official language of Gujarat state and is the primary means of communication in the fields of government, education, commerce, and media. It is a member of the Indo-Aryan linguistic family and is a descendent, through a number of ancient Indic languages and transitional dialects, of Sanskrit. Over the centuries, the region's exposure to diverse cultures led to the incorporation of elements of Persian, Arabic, Hindi, Portuguese, and English into the language. The language also has rich literary tradition dating back several centuries.

Pathan Muslim girl in Zararwadi

Today, Gujarati has multiple dialects; those spoken in the north typically demonstrate a greater influence from Persian and Arabic sources, while those in the south exhibit more prominent characteristics of Hindi, English, and Portuguese.[91] Most of the estimated 46 million Gujarati-speakers in the world live in Gujarat, but they can also be found in neighboring Indian states and various countries worldwide, including Pakistan, several nations in East Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States.[92] In terms of the latter, a large percentage of Indian immigrants in the U.S. are from Gujarat.

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[89] *People of India: Gujarat, Vol. XXII, Parts One and Three*. Singh, Kumar Suresh, ed. 2003. Popular Prakashan.
[90] EveryCulture.com. Shah, Ghanshyam. "Gujarati: Sociopolitical Organization." No date. http://www.everyculture.com/South-Asia/Gujarati-Sociopolitical-Organization.html
[91] Language Materials Project, Center for World Languages, UCLA International Institute. "Language Profile: Gujarati." No date. http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/Profile.aspx?LangID=85&menu=004
[92] *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 15th ed. Gordon, Raymond G., Jr., ed. "Gujarati." 2005. Dallas: SIL International. http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=guj

A variety of other languages—including Hindi, Sindhi, Urdu, Kachchhi, and Marathi—are spoken in the Gujarat region. Bilingualism and multilingualism are characteristic of much of the Gujarati population. Kachchhi is common in the Kachchh region, although some of its speakers may also use Gujarati. Some tribes, such as the Bhil, have retained their own languages and dialects. English is spoken as a second or third language by some Gujaratis.

Chapter 2 Religion

Introduction

© Meena Kadri
Young alms seeker

As is true for the rest of India, religion is the central and defining feature of life in Gujarat. Following the general pattern of the country's religious demography, Hinduism is the predominant religion in Gujarat state, with approximately 89% of the population adhering to one of its many forms.[93] Islam is the state's second most widely practiced religion. According to a 2001 census, roughly 9% of the Gujarati population is Muslim,[94] although some estimates place this number higher.[95] The remaining 2% of the populace includes followers of Jainism (comprising approximately 1%),[96] Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Sikhism, as well as small numbers of Buddhists and animists. Jainism has a special historical importance in the Gujarat region, despite the relatively small size of the local Jain community. Overall, these diverse belief systems form a rich mosaic of religious practice in Gujarat. However, relationships between practitioners of different faiths are, in some cases, not always harmonious.

In addition to providing the basic social and moral framework for daily life, religion has played a major role in regional politics. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a party associated with Hindu nationalism, is the dominant political force in Gujarat, having won several elections over the last decade.[97] The party has often stressed a pro-Hindu agenda that has, in the opinion of many observers, inflamed the divide between the state's respective Hindu and Muslim populations.[98] In recent years, tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities manifested infamously in the riots of 2002.[99] These events and their repercussions have since overshadowed many discussions of religious identity in Gujarat. They were also at odds with the Gujarati and greater Indian tradition of religious tolerance and communal harmony, which have long been a source of pride in the state and the country.[100]

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[93] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Religion [p. 32]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[94] South Asian Voice. "Religion and Demographics in India." October 2004 (Updated May 2005). http://india_resource.tripod.com/religion-demographics.html
[95] BBC News, International Edition. Khanna, Rajeev. "Anger over Gujarat Religion Law." 20 September 2006. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5362802.stm
[96] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Religion [p. 34]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[97] BBC News, International Edition. "India's BJP Wins Gujarat Election." 23 December 2007. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7158037.stm
[98] Reuters, India. Nair, Rupam Jain. "BJP Wins Gujarat Election." 23 December 2007. http://in.reuters.com/article/topNews/idINIndia-31092920071223?sp=true
[99] Council on Foreign Relations. Zissis, Carin. "Backgrounder: India's Muslim Population." 22 June 2007. http://www.cfr.org/publication/13659/indias_muslim_population.html
[100] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Religion [p. 32]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

Major Religions

Hinduism

One of the world's oldest religions, Hinduism is an eclectic belief system that cannot be easily defined or succinctly summarized. It is both a religion and a philosophy, and it is open to diverse interpretation, focus, and practice. As it has no definitive text or founder, Hinduism's various forms have multiplied and evolved over the millennia. This process often entailed the assimilation of outside religious influences, such as Buddhism and Jainism.

© Borayin Maitreya Larios
Students at a Vedic school

The core of Hinduism is found in the Vedas, a set of four ancient texts describing the religious beliefs and sacrificial practices of the Vedic civilization, which developed in northwestern India during the second millennium B.C.E. Other sacred, foundational texts include: the Upanishads, a continuation of the Vedas that focuses on religious knowledge; the Mahabharata, an epic poem describing the inner battles of an extended Indian family and the related exploits of Hindu gods; the Bhagavad Gita, a section of the Mahabharata comprised of a dialogue between the Hindu god Krishna and an Indian warrior, Arjuna; and the Ramayana, the story of Prince Nama, an incarnation of the god Vishnu who overcame evil to save his wife and kingdom. Together, these works outline the basic cosmology, beliefs, practices, and values of the Hindu religion.

The essential Hindu belief is the belief in Brahman, the eternal and infinite force of the universe from which everything else derives. The pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses—numbered at 330 million in Hindu scripture—are all expressions of Brahman, and thus they may be selected and worshipped at will by followers of the religion. The three major Hindu deities are: Brahma, the creator of the universe who is otherwise engaged in meditation; Vishnu, the preserver of the universe and god of "right action;" and Shiva, the destroyer of the universe from whom creation can come anew. Other important gods include: Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu who combats evil forces on earth; Ganesha, the elephant-headed god of fortune; and Shakti, a goddess associated with motherhood and creation.[101]

In general, Hindus believe that the soul (*atman*) is reincarnated after death, and that the quality of a person's next life is determined by his or her actions in the previous one (*karma*). This concept is tied to the Hindu caste system, in which people are born into different social strata. In order to improve their position, Hindus must remain spiritually devout and follow the social and moral guidelines that accord to their station in life (*dharma*).[102] Ultimately, the cycle of rebirth, known as *samsara*, can only be overcome through the eradication of desire and ignorance. Achieved through various monastic or

[101] *India*, 10th ed. Singh, Sarina, et al. "Facts about India: Religion [pp. 57–60]." 2003. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications.
[102] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Religion [p. 33]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

devotional paths, this liberation from rebirth is known as *moksha*, which is, in some conceptions, a union with the infinite.[103]

Hindus often worship these and other deities according to caste tradition, locality, or personal choice. The three major sects of Hinduism are Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Shaktism, which take, respectively, Vishnu, Shiva, and Shakti as their primary deities. These factions also have various subgroups, each with their own practices. In Gujarat, some of the most popular sects include Pushtimarg, whose practitioners worship manifestations of Krishna, and Swaminarayan, a sect in which gurus, or spiritual teachers, act as intercessors between people and the gods.[104]

Many Gujaratis are Satsangis, or devotees of the Swaminarayan school of Hinduism, although its influence extends beyond the state. Named after its founder, Bhagwan Swaminarayan, adherents believe this 19th century priest was the most recent incarnation of Brahman on earth. The current leader of the sect, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, is the fifth spiritual successor to Swaminarayan. Some have criticized devotees' uncritical acceptance of his utterances.[105]

Islam

Islam is a monotheistic religion, meaning that its followers profess faith in a single God. In the Muslim community, or *ummah*, this God is known as Allah. The Arabic term *islam* means to "to submit" or "to surrender." A Muslim, therefore, is one who submits to the will of Allah. Muslims believe that Allah revealed his message to the Prophet Muhammad, a merchant who lived in Arabia from 570 to 632 C.E. They consider Muhammad to be the last of a long line of prophets that included Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Allah's message, as relayed by Muhammad, is recited in the *Quran*, the sacred scriptures of Islam. Additional sacred texts include the *Hadith*, a collection of the sayings of Muhammad, and the *Sunnah*, which describes the practices of Islam by way of Muhammad's example.

© Payal Vora
Prayer in an Ahmadabad mosque

The essential beliefs and rites of the Muslim faith are encapsulated in the five pillars of Islam. The first and foundational pillar is the faithful recitation of the *shahada*, or Islamic creed: "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah." The remaining pillars include: the performance of ritual prayers five times per day; the giving of alms to the poor and needy; fasting during the holy month of Ramadan; and the undertaking of a pilgrimage to the Islamic holy city of Mecca.[106] Muslims believe

[103] BBC. *Religion & Ethics*. "Hinduism: Moksha." 19 July 2006. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/beliefs/moksha.shtml
[104] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Religion [pp. 33–34]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[105] McGill University. "Convocation Address – Martha Nussbaum." 2007. http://www.mcgill.ca/files/convocations/MarthaNussbaum.pdf
[106] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Islam." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/295507/Islam

that they will be judged for their actions on earth, with the consequences of spending their afterlife in either heaven or hell.

Islam has two main branches—Sunni and Shi'a—which differ primarily over the succession of authority after Muhammad's death. The majority of Muslims in India are Sunnis, but there are both Sunni and Shi'a communities in Gujarat. Sufism, a mystical branch of Islam, also has a presence in Gujarat, where followers have incorporated elements of Hinduism into their Islamic practices.[107]

Jainism

© Sergio Morchon
Jain temple in Ranakpur

Jainism is an ancient ascetic religion that originated in India, where the majority of its practitioners are found today. The movement's teachings were consolidated in the 6th century B.C.E. by Vardhamana Mahavira, a prince who reformed and propagated the Jain doctrine. The essential principle of Jainism is *ahimsa*, or non-violence. This principle is based on the notion that all living creatures have souls of equivalent value and are thus spiritually connected. In adhering to this belief, Jains are devout vegetarians who strive to avoid causing harm to any form of life, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant.

Jains do not believe in a supreme deity or creator, nor do they subscribe to the Hindu caste system. They do believe in reincarnation, and they seek to end this cycle of birth, death and rebirth by purifying their souls and attaining *moksha*, a state of total knowledge and infinite bliss. In addition to non-violence, the spiritual and ethical ideals of the religion include: honesty, non-theft, chastity, and non-attachment to possessions. The religion has two primary sects: the Svetambara and the Digambara. The latter is the more rigidly ascetic and conservative of the two. Digambara monks do not wear clothing and do not believe that women can attain *moksha*.[108]

Historically, the Jains' adherence to non-violence has limited their choice of profession. In Gujarat, they developed a strong class of merchants and traders. Their commitment to vegetarianism and non-violence also influenced regional habits, as well as the practices and precepts of Hinduism. Gujarat's most famous native, Mohandas Gandhi, was both a vegetarian and a practitioner of non-violence, although not a Jain.[109]

Finally, there are those who participate in a combination of religious rituals, and therefore cannot be neatly classified as adherents of just one faith. There are Muslim groups who pray at temples, for example, as well as Hindus who participate in some Muslim holiday observances. Among the former are the "Maul-e Salaam Girasiyas, the Jams and Jaths of

[107] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Religion [p. 34]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[108] BBC. *Religion & Ethics*. "Jainism: Jainism at a Glance." 31 August 2006. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism/ataglance/glance.shtml
[109] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Religion [pp. 34–35]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

Kutch and the Mirs of Sabarkantha, who, while nominally 'Muslim,' still practice many 'Hindu' customs."[110]

The Role of Religion in Government

On a national level, India is officially secular and the constitution allows for freedom of religion. In legal matters concerning personal status, the constitution provides religion-specific laws for the respective Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Parsi (Zoroastrian) groups. While caste-based discrimination associated with the Hindu religion is officially banned, the system still casts a strong influence on social and political relationships.

© Darrel Ronald
Political billboard in Mumbai, 2009

On a state level, the BJP-led Gujarat government has implemented policies restricting certain religious practices. In 2003, the state passed a "Freedom of Religion Law" that contained regulations prohibiting religious conversion. Implemented in 2008, the anti-conversion law restricts Gujarati citizens from converting anyone from one religion to another by "means of allurement, force, or fraud." Furthermore, those wishing to conduct a conversion must apply for permission from the local magistrate, who has the power to reject any such requests. Both the persons who perform and undergo the conversion must also submit lists of those who were present or involved in the rite. Penalties for unapproved or unregulated conversions include fines and imprisonment.[111]

In 2007, an amendment to the "Freedom of Religion Law" sought to officially classify several of the state's minority faiths as denominations of larger religions. This would have allowed persons to convert from one denomination to another without governmental permission, so long as the denominations were of the same religion. Most notably, the bill called for Jainism and Buddhism to be classified as sects of Hinduism rather than independent religions. However, after much public controversy, this portion of the bill was withdrawn by the state legislature in 2008.[112]

The issue of conversion remains controversial in the region due to the state's large number of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, who many observers see as prone to proselytization. Some observers have claimed that the BJP is concerned that these groups could be converted to non-Hindu religions (such as Christianity) in increasing numbers, thereby reducing the BJP's voting base.[113] The pro-Hindu BJP and its state representatives have also been criticized for what many observers have perceived as an

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[110] CounterCurrents.org. Sikand, Yoginder. "Shared Traditions In Gujarat Challenge The Communal Divide." 25 February 2006. http://www.countercurrents.org/comm-sikand250206.htm

[111] Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *2008 Report on International Religious Freedom*. "India." 19 September 2008. http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108500.htm

[112] Express India. "Gujarat Withdraws Controversial Religious Bill." 10 March 2008. http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Gujarat-withdraws-controversial-religious-bill/282610/

[113] BBC News, International Edition. Khanna, Rajeev. "Anger over Gujarat Religion Law." 20 September 2006. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5362802.stm

institutional marginalization of the state's Muslim minority, particularly in relation to their response to the communal riots of 2002.[114]

Influence of Religion on Daily Life

Religion is interwoven into daily life in India, where distinctions between the sacred and the secular are less stark than in many Western countries. In Gujarat, daily religious activities for Hindus vary according to their sect and degree of devotion, socioeconomic background, and other variables. In general, Hindus perform devotional worship, or *puja*, daily. This typically takes place in the form of prayers and small offerings—such as food, water, incense, or flowers—which are dedicated to the devotee's deity of worship. The devotee typically performs these actions at shrines that contain images of their god. These shrines are often located in the practitioner's home, although there are public venues that range from large temple complexes to small roadside altars or sacred sites.

Puja may be performed multiple times daily and, depending upon the devotee, may involve elaborate, multi-staged rites. Chanting, singing, and scripture reading may be performed as part of these observances. Fasting, meditation, and yoga are also common forms of religious practice that serve to cleanse and concentrate the mind and body.[115] As the notion of purity—both of a physical and spiritual nature—is important in India, bathing and ritual purification are often performed before or as part of a devotee's offerings, prayers, or other religious observances. Likewise, water, especially in certain rivers, is a sacred element for Hindus. Overall, Hindu religious practices are usually performed individually, but they may also be conducted in a public setting, sometimes under the guidance of a priest or guru.[116]

For Muslims, daily religious practice is centered on the five ritual prayers. Traditionally, these prayers are performed at set times around dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening.

Exchange 1: When do you pray?

Soldier:	When do you pray?	tame kyaare prartanaa karo cho?
Local:	We pray at noon.	ame madyanhe prartanaa kariye chie

Muslims may perform these prayers alone or with other Muslims at mosques. Friday is the Islamic holy day, when members of the Muslim community meet at the local mosque to participate in group prayer. On this day, the *mullahs*, or Muslim clergy members, give special sermons.

© Reinhold Behringer
Friday prayer

[114] BBC News, International Edition. Majumder, Sanjoy. "BJP Dismisses Gujarat Riot Claims." 26 October 2007. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7063327.stm

[115] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Religion [p. 33]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

[116] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Heitzman, James. "Chapter 3: Religious Life: The Worship of Personal Gods." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0051)

Jains perform a variety of religious acts of devotion and self-control each day. These activities include ritual prayers, temple visits, scripture reading, demonstrations of respect to monks, and a 48-minute-long period of meditation and concentrated "self-study."[117]

Influence of Religion on Gender Roles and Relations

As influenced by their respective religions, the roles of Hindu and Muslim women in Gujarat may vary according to caste, family, socioeconomic standing, and location. Broadly, there are strains of both the Hindu and Muslim religions that have instituted patriarchal or discriminatory practices against women. These include the subordination of females to male family members, the restriction of women from the clergy, and the limitation of inheritance rights for women. In extreme cases, bride burning (upon the death of the husband) and other forms of honor killing have occurred in India, although such incidents are less common today. The veiling and seclusion of women, known as *purdah*, is practiced to varying degrees in some Hindu and Muslim communities.[118] In Muslim communities, women's roles in public religious functions are limited, and they are not allowed to worship at some mosques. In mosques that allow female visitors, women worship separately from men.

These various practices are often associated with traditional ideas concerning the preservation of feminine chastity and honor, the perceived susceptibility of women to corruption or impropriety, and the supposed impurity of women during menstruation. Economic considerations tied to the maintenance of honor and the extension of familial networks also play a major role in these social mechanisms.

© Meena Kadri
Woman from the Ahir tribe, Chapredi

Although Hindu women are barred from joining the clergy, they do play a major role in domestic worship. They typically maintain their own *puja* rituals, and they are integrally involved in planning and carrying out the rites involved in major life-cycle events such as weddings and funerals. It is also more common for women to engage in personal religious vows and fasts for the benefit of the family.[119] The Hindu religion is unique in that it recognizes powerful feminine aspects of god, as exemplified in the deities of Shakti, Durga, and others.

Sites of Worship and Devotion

Religious compounds, temples, mosques, shrines (either domestic or public), and other sacred sites are common throughout Gujarat. Foremost, the state is home to two of the

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[117] BBC. *Religions & Ethics*. "Jainism: Daily Spirituality." 29 October 2003. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism/worship/dailyspirituality.shtml

[118] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Family and Kinship: Veiling and the Seclusion of Women." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0085)

[119] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Hinduism: Practical Hinduism: Women's Religious Practices." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/266312/Hinduism

most sacred pilgrimage destinations for Hindus—the temple of Somnath and the city of Dwarka—both of which are located on the Kathiawar Peninsula. The Somnath temple, situated on the peninsula's southwestern coast, is the latest reconstruction (circa 1950) of a sacred complex that has been destroyed and rebuilt several times since the early 11th century. Dedicated to Shiva, the temple is an important structure in Hindu mythology, as its most ancient incarnations are believed to have been built by various gods, including Soma (the moon god) and Krishna.[120] Located on the far western coast of the peninsula, Dwarka is one of the seven sacred cities of the Hindu religion. According to Hindu belief, Krishna founded the original city of Dwarka—now believed to be submerged in the sea—as his capital and home. Measuring 51 m (167 ft) in height, the Dwarkadeesh Temple is the city's most famous structure.[121]

The Kathiawar Peninsula is also home to several sacred sites for Jains. Built in the 12th century, the large Jain temple complex of Neminath, located in the Girnar Hills, is one of many Jain and Hindu structures in the region. Likewise, Shatrunjaya, a complex of some 863 temples—nearly all of them Jain—is located outside the city of Palitana in southeastern Kathiawar.[122] The city of Ahmadabad, founded by the Muslim ruler Ahmad Shah, is home to many of Gujarat's most famous mosques, including Jama Masjid (commissioned by Ahmad Shah) and the mosque of Sidi Saiyad. These structures represent only a small portion of the state's many impressive sites of worship and pilgrimage. On a smaller, more local level, simple shrines and religious mementos—often made of natural elements—are prevalent throughout the state as well.[123]

Behavior in Sacred Locations

© Bhārata Gaṇarājya
Hindu temple in Ahmadebad

Guidelines for visiting Gujarat's many sacred sites vary according to location and the religious affiliation of the temple, as well as that of the visitor. Some Hindu temples may require non-Hindus to pledge an oath of respect for the religion before entering.[124] In many cases non-Muslims are not allowed to enter mosques, nor are women of any religious affiliation.[125] Jain temples are frequently open to the public, but visitors should remember to respect Jain principles while on site. This includes not eating meat and not wearing any leather items, as well as respecting all forms of life. In any case, foreigners should inquire about visitation hours and regulations before attempting to enter a temple or mosque.

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[120] *India*, 10th ed. Singh, Sarina, et al. "Gujarat: Saurashtra: Somnath [pp. 667–668]." 2003. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications.
[121] *Eyewitness Travel Guides: India*. DK Publishing. "Western India: Gujarat: Dwarka [p. 427]." 2002. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited.
[122] *India*, 10th ed. Singh, Sarina, et al. "Gujarat: Saurashtra: Palitana [p. 661]." 2003. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications.
[123] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Religion [p. 33]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[124] *India*, 10th ed. Singh, Sarina, et al. "Gujarat: Saurashtra: Dwarka [p. 675]." 2003. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications.
[125] *India*, 10th ed. Singh, Sarina, et al. "Facts for the Visitor: Religious Etiquette [p. 120]." 2003. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications.

Exchange 2: May I enter the temple?

Soldier:	May I enter the temple?	shu hun aa mandir ni andar aavi shaku chu?
Local:	Yes.	haa

When visiting any religious site, guests should wear clean and conservative attire. Shorts, sleeveless tops, and other revealing clothing should be avoided. Before entering a sacred building, visitors are required to remove their shoes.

Exchange 3: Must I take off my shoes inside the temple?

Soldier:	Must I take off my shoes inside the temple?	mandirman maare jutaa kaadavaa padsheh?
Local:	Yes.	haa

There may be a person who is charged with looking after guests' shoes; these persons are often tipped for their services. Visitors to some mosques and Hindu temples are also required to cover their head before entering.

Exchange 4: Do I need to cover my head?

Soldier:	Do I need to cover my head?	shu maare maatu dako padseh?
Local:	Yes.	haa

When inside or in the vicinity of religious structures, visitors should maintain a solemn and respectful demeanor. Smoking, loud talking, and public displays of affection are prohibited. Photography is also usually restricted, although some places may allow it if visitors purchase a permit. In any case, permission to take photos of religious buildings, sacred images, or people should be explicitly obtained before doing so.

© cactusbones / flickr.com
Jain temple

Hindu and Jain temples are often filled with sacred imagery; visitors should avoid touching any of these objects or images. They should also not point their feet at other people or at sacred imagery, and they should avoid touching anyone on the head or with their feet, as this is considered extremely disrespectful. In mosques, visitors should not walk in front of those who are praying, as such an act is thought to invalidate their prayers. Food and drink are often prohibited in sacred spaces. Finally, because of cultural notions concerning purity, menstruating women may not be allowed to enter certain temples or mosques.

Religious Events and Holidays

Hinduism

There are a vast number of Hindu holidays, festivals, and observances. They are observed according to the Hindu lunar calendar, and thus their dates vary from year to year. The largest and most widely celebrated of these events are the festivals of Navratri, Diwali, and Holi. Typically celebrated in September or October, Navratri, or the Festival of Nine Nights, is dedicated to Durga, a powerful goddess who is credited with slaying the evil demon Mahishasura. This festival is particularly popular in Gujarat, where locals fill painted pots with water (or place a lamp inside them) to represent Durga's strength. Participants typically pray, fast, and perform rituals during the day and take part in feasts and folk dances at night. The festival's tenth day, known as Dussehra, marks Durga's victory and honors the maternal aspects of god.[126]

Diwali the Festival of Lights

Diwali, typically celebrated in October or November, is often considered the most joyous and popular of Hindu holidays, as it represents a time of hope and goodwill. Each of the festival's five days involves different activities and dedications, with Rama, Krishna, Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth), and Kali among the gods and goddesses who are honored. During this time, it is customary to place oil lamps outside homes and businesses (in order to help guide the gods), and firework displays are also common. For these reasons, Diwali is known as the Festival of Lights. The holiday is especially popular among children, who traditionally receive sweets as part of the celebration.[127]

Known as the Festival of Colors, Holi typically occurs in February or March. Traditionally, it is an ancient festival marking the advent of spring, but it also commemorates the Hindu legend of the death of Holika, an evil demon. Bonfires symbolizing Holika's annihilation are held on the eve of the festival, and the day is celebrated by throwing colored water and powders on fellow revelers. Holi is considered one of the most fun and carefree (and also the rowdiest) of Hindu festivals, as it involves the temporary suspension of traditional hierarchical roles and its ritual requirements are few.[128] Other Hindu festivals of note include: Shivaratri (February/March), a day of fasting and ritual in honor of Shiva; Ganesh Chaturthi (August/September), a festival celebrating Ganesha, the god of fortune; and Janmashtami (August/September), a celebration of the birth of Krishna.[129]

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[126] BBC. *Religions & Ethics*. "Hinduism: Holy Days: Navaratri." 8 September 2008. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/holydays/navaratri.shtml

[127] BBC. *Religions & Ethics*. "Hinduism: Holy Days: Diwali." 1 November 2007. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/holydays/diwali.shtml

[128] BBC. *Religions & Ethics*. "Hinduism: Holy Days: Holi." 9 March 2006. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/holydays/holi_1.shtml

[129] *Rajasthan and Gujarat: The Travel Guide*. Bradnock, Robert and Roma Bradnock. "Holidays and Festivals: The Hindu Calendar [pp. 58–61]." 2001. Footprint Travel Guides.

Islam

© Ragesh Vasudevan
Henna decorations for Eid

Muslim holy days and festivals are observed according to the Islamic lunar calendar and thus their dates change from year to year. Ramadan, a month-long fast held during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is the major religious event for Muslims. During this time, Muslims are required to abstain from eating, drinking, and smoking during daylight hours. This period is an opportunity for Muslims to demonstrate their piety and devotion to the Islamic faith as they purify their body and soul.

The major Muslim holidays include: Id-ul-Fitr, a three-day feast marking the end of the Ramadan fast; Id-ul-Zuha, a feast commemorating Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ismail out of obedience to Allah; Milad-an-Nabi, a festival commemorating the birth of the prophet Muhammad; and Muharram, a period honoring the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, Muhammad's grandson. The latter holiday is particularly significant for Shi'a Muslims.[130]

Jainism

The major Jain festivals are Mahavir Jayanti and Paryushana. Commemorating the birth of Mahavira, the reformer of the Jain religion, Mahavir Jayanti typically falls in March or April. On this day, Jains attend sermons in temples and parade images of Mahavira throughout the streets. Paryushana is an eight-day period of fasting, worship, and repentance. Jains also participate in Diwali celebrations.[131]

[130] *Rajasthan and Gujarat: The Travel Guide*. Bradnock, Robert and Roma Bradnock. "Holidays and Festivals: Muslim Holy Days [pp. 61–62]." 2001. Footprint Travel Guides.
[131] BBC. *Religions & Ethics*. "Jainism: Holy Days." 21 October 2003. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism/holydays/holydays.shtml

Chapter 3 Traditions

Introduction

As in greater India, the disparities between the lifestyles and socioeconomic standing of different Gujarati communities are often stark. Although consistent with a society as diverse as that of Gujarat, such disparities are in part the product of longstanding social traditions, both within specific communities and across society as a whole. The caste system, an ancient Hindu institution, has long provided Indian society with a hierarchical underpinning. Although the institution has tempered somewhat in recent decades, its repercussions nonetheless ripple across the social and economic sphere, often shaping both the long- and short-term opportunities of individuals.

While customs vary widely within the many communities in the state, their central purpose is to ensure adherence to religious and caste-related observances. This extends not only to occupation and major lifecycle events, but to dietary habits and daily social interaction.

Social Hierarchy: The Caste System

© Akshay Mahajan
Poverty in Mumbai

Despite modern democratic and egalitarian reforms in the civil arena, the caste system—a traditional hierarchy of social classes—continues to play a major role in organizing Indian society. It is most directly associated with the Hindu religion, but similar practices are followed by other religious groups in India, including some Muslim communities.[132] Hindu castes, known as *varnas*, are traditionally based on occupational status, with membership determined by birth. There are four major castes. At the top of the hierarchy are Brahmins (priests, academics), followed by Kshatriyas (rulers, warriors), Vaishyas (merchants, landlords, artisans), and Sudras (peasants, laborers). Each *varna* has hundreds of subgroups known as *jati*, which are also arranged hierarchically. In Gujarat, the term *jati* is associated with caste by birth, while a similar term, *gnati*, refers to social groupings made through connections in the community at large.[133]

Dalits, formerly known as "the untouchables," are the lowest class, one traditionally placed outside the caste system. Members of this group have historically been associated with jobs that involve cleaning or removing animal or human waste. Today, the Dalits, or "downtrodden," are officially known as Scheduled Castes (SC). Likewise, India's many indigenous tribal groups, or *adivasi*, are known as Scheduled Tribes (ST). Finally, members of lower, typically impoverished classes who meet a variety of criteria are

[132] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. "Country Profile: India." December 2004. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/India.pdf
[133] Gujarat Information Bureau. "Places, Incidents, and Personalities: Castes of Gujarat." No date. http://www.gujaratinformation.net/places/places.html

known as Other Backward Castes (OBC).[134] Gujarat has a substantial percentage of scheduled castes and tribes, who together form around 20% of the state's population.[135]

Traditionally, the caste hierarchy was based on measures of purity and pollution, with the Brahmins perceived as the most pure and the Dalits perceived as the most polluted. This scale determined the level of interaction between the castes, with higher classes traditionally prohibited from touching or receiving items from members of lower castes—for fear of losing their purity. (The name, "untouchables," derives from this concept.) There were exceptions and qualifications to this practice, and today some higher-caste Hindus may follow it less rigidly or choose to disregard it altogether. Officially, "untouchability" and caste-based discrimination are prohibited by the Indian constitution, but they nevertheless remain influential, especially in rural areas.[136]

© Meena Kadri
Elderly woman

Broadly, a person's caste often determines his or her occupation, eating habits, marriage partner, social circle, and measure of income. For example, as members of the highest caste, Brahmins are often highly educated professionals or priests who practice vegetarianism and marry and socialize only within their caste. In order to maintain caste purity, some Brahmins may only eat food that has been prepared by persons of a certain status, and, likewise, they may use separate facilities from those used by Hindus of lower castes. On the end of the spectrum, members of the Dalit class often work low-paid cleaning jobs, and their social interaction is typically limited to fellow Dalits. Because they are thought to be inherently impure, Dalits are typically unable to better their standing through any form of social mobility. However, many have converted from Hinduism to other religions, such as Buddhism, in an attempt to escape the caste system.[137] Overall, a person's status is generally identifiable to fellow community members, whose interactions are thus carried out accordingly.

Gender Roles and Relationships

The roles of men and women and the interactions between the sexes may vary according to religion, caste, and socioeconomic standing. Traditionally, Indian families are patriarchal and organized by age, with the eldest male, typically the father or grandfather, serving as the leading authority figure. Female family members thus generally remain subordinate to their older or similarly-aged male relatives. At the same time, they hold authority over younger males in the family, with the eldest woman having authority over all other female members. As newlywed brides traditionally move into the familial homes

[134] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. "Country Profile: India." December 2004. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/India.pdf
[135] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gujarat: The People." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/249059/Gujarat
[136] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. "Country Profile: India." December 2004. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/India.pdf
[137] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Themes in Indian Society: Purity and Pollution." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0081)

of their husbands, they have the lowest esteem among the adults. This gender and age-based pattern generally extends to greater Indian society, although the caste system has served to organize the social structure along many additional lines.

© Meena Kadri
Young girl carrying water

In general, the imbalance in gender status allows men greater freedom and mobility than women. Women are typically held to much higher standards of modesty and chastity, and thus the practices of veiling and seclusion of women are followed by some communities, both Hindu and Muslim. In any case, a woman's reputation and honor are often linked to those of her family. Accordingly, women are expected to dress and behave conservatively. Both sexes are raised to be loyal and responsible to the family, as interdependency among relatives remains strong.[138] Wives are expected to be devoted and obedient subjects to their husbands, and the stigma of adultery is much greater for women. The latter trend is tied to the concept of ritual pollution, in which women are traditionally perceived as impure during their menstrual cycle or of less worth after losing or betraying their husband. Overall, a woman's role will vary according to family. In many cases, Indian woman are highly educated professionals who work in the public sphere, while in other cases they may be secluded to the home or obligated to work low-paying labor positions in addition to completing domestic chores.[139]

Traditional Jobs and Economy

Although the state has experienced expansive industrial growth, a large number of Gujaratis continue to earn their livelihood through agriculture and animal husbandry. These include landowners, cultivators, laborers, and dairy farmers, whose activities range from rain-fed subsistence farming to large-scale commercial production of crops or animal products. Because of its location along oceanic and overland trade routes, Gujarat has long been home to developed trade networks, with several local castes, such as the Bania and Bhatia, well-known for their operations.[140] Representative of the famous Gujarati entrepreneurial spirit, many Gujarati merchants and businessmen have expanded their operations throughout India, as well as to foreign countries such as the U.S.[141] The production of textiles and handicrafts—both on a small and large scale—is another longstanding Gujarati tradition that remains significant among many of the state's communities. The growth of local industry over the last few decades has also created many factory worker positions, a trend that has drawn migrants from other states.

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[138] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Family and Kinship: Family Authority and Harmony." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0085)

[139] *Culture Shock!: India*. Kolanad, Gitanjali S. "Chapter Two: Perceptions: The Woman in India [pp. 49–53]." 2001. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.

[140] EveryCulture.com. Shah, Ghanshyam. "Gujarati: Economy." No date. http://www.everyculture.com/South-Asia/Gujarati-Economy.html

[141] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Gujarat: The Economy." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/249059/Gujarat

Greetings and Communication
Manners of greeting may vary according to a person's religion, caste, and education. In general, Hindus greet each other by pressing their palms together in a prayer-like manner and offering the salutation, "*namaste*," sometimes with a slight bow of the head.

© Tetyana Pryymak
Namaste greeting

Exchange 5: Greetings.

Soldier:	Greetings.	namaste
Local:	Greetings.	namaste

Namaste is an acceptable greeting at any time of the day. If visitors wish their greeting to correspond with the time of day, then use the following:

Exchange 6: Good morning.

Soldier:	Good morning.	suprabatam
Local:	Good morning.	suprabatam

Or if it's already late in the day:

Exchange 7: Good evening!

Soldier:	Good evening!	shubh sandyaa!
Local:	Good evening!	shubh sandyaa!

When meeting a group of people, the elders or group leaders should be acknowledged first, using their appropriate title, if known.

Exchange 8: Hi, Mr. Patel.

Soldier:	Hi, Mr. Patel.	namaste sreemaan patelo
Local:	Hello!	namaste!
Soldier:	Are you doing well?	tame saaraa cho?
Local:	Yes.	haa

If one departs a group of people, goodbyes should be offered individually.[142]

Exchange 9: Good night!

Soldier:	Good night!	shubh raatri!
Local:	Good night!	shubh raatri!

It is generally acceptable to inquire about the well-being of an acquaintance's family.

[142] Kwintessential: Cross Cultural Solutions. "India: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette." No date. http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/india-country-profile.html

Exchange 10: How is your family?

Soldier:	How is your family?	tamaaru kutumb kem che?
Local:	They are doing fine, thank you.	teo saaraa che

In urban areas and among educated or Westernized Indians, handshakes are also common, more so among men.

Exchange 11: How are you?

Soldier:	How are you?	tame kem cho?
Local:	Fine, very well.	o saaro chu, garNoj saaro chu

© Meena Kadri
Poverty in Gujarat

Traditionally, Indian women do not shake hands with men, as physical contact between the sexes is limited in public, especially between unacquainted persons. Westernized Indian women may shake hands with other women, but this is not always the case. In general, foreign visitors should not initiate handshakes with women. If an Indian woman initiates the handshake, then the gesture should be reciprocated. In settings where traditional values remain strong, women may seem distant and reserved during greetings. In such cases, visitors, especially males, should avoid making direct eye contact with their female acquaintances.[143]

While contact between persons of different sexes is generally inappropriate, it is common for friends of the same sex to engage in casual physical contact, such as back-patting or even holding hands. Such behavior is normal and should not be interpreted as a sign of homosexuality.

It is common for Indians to move their heads in a side-to-side manner when listening or responding to a person during conversation. While in the West this movement is suggestive of "no," in India it is typically a sign that the person is following the conversation and may be in agreement, although that should not be assumed to be the case.[144] It is also common for Indians of little or no acquaintance to ask relatively detailed questions about a person's life; such inquiry should be received with patience and politeness.[145]

[143] *Rajasthan and Gujarat: The Travel Guide*. Bradnock, Robert and Roma Bradnock. "Touching Down: Rules, Customs and Etiquette [pp. 33–36]." 2001. Footprint Travel Guides.
[144] *Culture Shock!: India*. Kolanad, Gitanjali S. "Chapter Five: Getting the Message: Body Language [p. 114]." 2001. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.
[145] *Rajasthan and Gujarat: The Travel Guide*. Bradnock, Robert and Roma Bradnock. "Touching Down: Rules, Customs and Etiquette [pp. 33–36]." 2001. Footprint Travel Guides.

Hospitality and Gift-Giving

© Ajay Tallam
Serving tea

Hospitality is often demonstrated by an invitation to dine with a person and his family at their home. When making such a visit, guests should wear clean and conservative clothing, and they should remove their shoes before entering the home. It is generally appropriate, but not expected, to bring a gift. In such a case, gifts should not be expensive or extravagant, as the gesture itself is more important. Sweets, fruit, and flowers are common presents. For Hindus and Jains, presents should not be made out of leather nor consist of meat products. For Muslims, gifts of pork or alcohol should be avoided.

Exchange 12: This gift is for you.

Soldier:	This gift is for you.	aa bet tamaaraa maate che
Local:	I cannot accept this.	hun aa svikaaree sakato natee

Gifts should be presented with the right hand or both hands together, as the left hand is considered unclean. Green, red, and yellow are appropriate colors for wrapping; white should be avoided as it is the color of mourning in India. Finally, gifts are typically not opened in front of the person who offered them.[146]

Eating Habits

Dining customs vary according to socioeconomic and religious background, but, without exception, the guest will be treated with the utmost hospitality. As Indian meals are typically eaten with fingers rather than cutlery, guests should wash their hands thoroughly before sitting down for the meal. The host will probably take the initiative of directing the guest where to sit, and he or she should wait until asked to do so. In accordance with the social hierarchy, those present at the meal will likely be served in a certain order, with the guest served first, followed by the men, and, finally, the children. In traditional settings, such as rural areas, women prepare and serve the meal, and thus they will likely eat afterwards. In some cases, the guest will eat while the hosts look on; in others, everyone will eat at the same time.

Food is often served in large communal bowls, from which everyone takes a portion. Hosts may serve their guests, or guests may serve themselves from the communal bowl. A large spoon is typically used to transfer food to individual plates, while the right hand is used to eat. The left hand should not be used to eat with or to pass any items to others, as it is associated with matters of personal hygiene. Bread, typically in the form of *roti*, can also be used to scoop up food in the absence of cutlery.[147]

[146] Kwintessential: Cross Cultural Solutions. “India: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette.” No date given. http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/india-country-profile.html
[147] Vayama. “Indian Etiquette Tips.” c.2006–2009. http://www.vayama.com/india-etiquette

It is acceptable to inquire about the dishes when the meal is served.

Exchange 13: What is the name of this dish?

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	aa vaanageenu naam shu che?
Local:	This is Dhokla	aa dokaLa che

Guests should express their satisfaction with the meal.

Exchange 14: The food tastes so good.

Soldier:	The food tastes so good.	aa kavaanu gaNuj svadishta che
Local:	Thank you	aabaar

It is customary for guests to leave a small portion of food on their individual plates in order to demonstrate that they have had plenty to eat. Hospitality dictates that empty plates be replenished with additional servings.[148]

Guests should, of course, thank their hosts for their hospitality.

Exchange 15: I really appreciate your hospitality.

Soldier:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	tamaara parorNagateenee hun garNeej kadar karu chu
Local:	It is nothing.	e to kashu natee

Food and Drink

The Jain and Hindu emphasis on non-violence has heavily influenced the dietary habits of Gujaratis, who are predominantly vegetarian. A prominent feature of most Indian cuisine is the absence of beef. Hindus consider cows to be sacred animals, and thus abstain from eating beef, although some non-Hindu minority groups may incorporate it into their diet. In any case, foreign visitors to India should demonstrate respect for cows, which roam freely in both densely populated and outlying areas.

Gujarati serving platter

In general, Gujarati cuisine is known for its combination of sweet, salty, and mildly spicy flavors, with meals composed predominantly of vegetables, pulses (e.g., beans, lentils, or peas), and cereals. Gujarati dinners are typically served on a *thali*, or a platter containing small servings of various dishes. A traditional *thali* in Gujarat includes rice, bread (usually the flatbread *roti*, also known as *chapati*), beans or lentils (often in some form of *dal*), pickles (a Gujarati specialty), various vegetable curries and chutneys, and yoghurt. Buttermilk (*chhaas*) is a common beverage paired with the *thali*, although tea (*chai*) and coffee are also popular drinks.

[148] Kwintessential: Cross Cultural Solutions. "India: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette." No date given. http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/india-country-profile.html

A typical curry dish in North India is known as Paneer Mutter.

Exchange 16: This food is very good.

Soldier:	This food is very good.	aa kaavaanu gaNuj saras che
Local:	It's *paneer mutter*.	e paneer matar che

It consists of cottage cheese and a variety of vegetables and spices.

Exchange 17: What ingredients are used to make Paneer Mutter?

Soldier:	What ingredients are used to make *paneer mutter*?	paneer matar maan shu shu hoy?
Local:	Paneer, peas, tomatoes, onions, salt, cumin, chilies, and mixed spices.	paneer, vatarNa, tametaa, kandaa, mitu, jeeru, marachu, ani garam masaalo

Other common Gujarati dishes include: *undhyoo*, a mixture of potatoes, beans, and eggplant; *dhokla*, a cake-like dish made from lentils or chickpeas and topped with green chilies; and *kadhi*, a spicy yoghurt curry. Gujarat is also known for its wide range of *farsan*, or small (often fried) snacks, typically available in food stalls. Sweet desserts, nuts, and various fruits are also common; the latter should be eaten only if washed or peeled.[149]

Dhokla

Public water sources are typically unsafe for consumption and should thus be avoided. Likewise, visitors should order drinks without ice. Only water from bottles secured with an official safety seal should be consumed. Visitors should be wary of buying water from street vendors since they often recycle and reseal used bottles filled from unsafe sources.[150]

As a legacy of Ghandi's influence in the state, Gujarat prohibits the general sale and consumption of alcohol. However, foreigners can purchase an official permit allowing them to drink in the privacy of their hotel rooms, or they can visit hotel alcohol shops that cater to tourists.[151] In either case, foreigners should not drink in public in Gujarat state where prohibition laws are strictly enforced.

[149] *Rajasthan and Gujarat: The Travel Guide*. Bradnock, Robert and Roma Bradnock. "Food and Drink [pp. 53–56]." 2001. Footprint Travel Guides.
[150] *Rajasthan and Gujarat: The Travel Guide*. Bradnock, Robert and Roma Bradnock. "Food and Drink [pp. 53–56]." 2001. Footprint Travel Guides.
[151] *India*, 10th ed. Singh, Sarina, et al. "Red Tap and Tonic [p. 648]." 2003. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications.

Dress Codes

© Akshay Mahajan
Wrapping a sari

In India, clothing is an important sign of status and self-respect. The diverse ethno-cultural groups in Gujarat exhibit a wide range of styles, but the underlying theme in the state and the greater country is to dress conservatively and with care. The *sari* is the traditional garment for women in India. Consisting of a long rectangular cloth, the *sari* is wrapped and folded around the body in a variety of manners according to regional culture. In Gujarat, the *pallav*, the richly embroidered section of the *sari*, is draped over the shoulder and across the front, rather than across the back as in other regions.[152] The *sari* is paired with a *choli*, or blouse. In Gujarat, women also traditionally wear outfits known as either *lehenga choli* or *ghagra choli*. In these cases, the open-backed c*holi* is matched with a flowing skirt that reaches to the ankles. This outfit is accompanied by a shawl, known as either an *odhni* or *dupatta*, and a wide array of jewelry. All of these garments are typically brightly colored and embroidered with rich designs.[153]

Gujarati men traditionally wear a *dhoti*, a piece of white cotton fabric that is wrapped around the waist as either a skirt or a loin cloth. A shirt, jacket, and, sometimes, a turban are paired with the *dhoti*.[154] Today, pants may be more commonly worn, with Western attire adopted by some.

Visitors to Gujarat should dress with the knowledge that their attire will serve to identify their social status to others. Clean and conservative attire will be considered the most respectful. Visitors should avoid wearing any tight or revealing clothing, such as tank tops, low-cut blouses, short skirts, or shorts.

Exchange 18: How should I dress?

Soldier:	How should I dress?	maare kevaa kapadaan paheravaa joye?
Local:	Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.	aaku shareer dankaay tevaa dilaa kapadaa perjo

It may be prudent to ask a local if one's attire is appropriate for the site or occasion, such as for entry into a sacred venue.

Exchange 19: Is this acceptable to wear?

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	aa kapadaa svikarya che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

[152] *Culture Shock!: India*. Kolanad, Gitanjali S. "Chapter One: India Profile: The Indians [p. 10]." 2001. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.
[153] India Travelogue. Butalia, Romola. "India Facts: Tradition, Style and Splendour." No date. http://www.indiatravelogue.com/pass/pass8.html
[154] EveryCulture.com. "Gujaratis: Clothing." No date. http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Germany-to-Jamaica/Gujaratis.html

Social Events

Weddings

© Ajay Tallam
Hindu wedding ceremony

In India, marriages are traditionally arranged by the families of the bride and groom. The ceremony therefore represents a merger of families and social networks rather than a romantic union between two individuals. A family's selection process for their son or daughter's spouse may be prolonged, and many *jatis* have customs that require their members to marry partners of certain standing, often from within the same caste, but typically outside the clan. Today, the search for marriage partners commonly involves reviewing online ads or matchmaking sites that list the heritage and qualifications of a potential spouse.[155] Such qualifications may be subject to background checks, as families with financial means hope to avoid poor marriage partners and fraudulent contracts.[156] Negotiations over dowries are also often involved, despite the existence of laws banning the practice.[157] Because their families manage the process, the bride and groom will often have limited knowledge of each other before the event, although they may have some say in the matter. In any case, the marriage signals the couple's entry into adulthood, an essential rite of passage in a person's individual and social growth.[158]

Exchange 20: Congratulations on your wedding!

Soldier:	Congratulations on your wedding!	tamaaraa lagnaprasange abinandan!
Local:	We are honored you could attend.	tame padaaree shakyaa tetee amaarun sanmaan vadyu

As they are traditionally the most important social events in Indian culture, wedding ceremonies are extravagant affairs, often testing or exceeding the financial means of the bride's family, who traditionally pays for the wedding. The event provides the opportunity for families to display wealth and garner prestige in the community, with many receptions attracting upwards of several hundred or even a thousand attendees. The city of Ahmadabad, the state's industrial and commercial hub, has seen a growth in its local wedding industry in recent years as a result of lavish spending on festivities, including wedding processions with limousines rather than the traditional horse carriage.[159]

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[155] *Culture Shock!: India*. Kolanad, Gitanjali S. "Chapter Four: Home and the World: The Life Cycle: Marriage [pp. 86–89]." 2001. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.
[156] *The Washington Post*. Wax, Emily. "In Thriving India, Wedding Sleuths Find Their Niche." 23 February 2008. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/22/AR2008022203178_pf.html
[157] *International Herald Tribune.* Gentleman, Amelia. "Indian Brides Pay a High Price." 27 November 2006. http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/10/22/news/dowry.php
[158] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Family and Kinship: Life Passages: Marriage." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0087)
[159] The Economic Times. Mehta, Shramana Ganguly. "The Great Indian Wedding Just Got Fatter." 14 February 2008.

Exchange 21: I wish you both happiness.

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	tame ban ne sukee raho tevi maaree shubechaao
Local:	We are honored.	amaarun sanmaan vadyu

Hindu wedding ceremony

Although marriage rituals and festivities vary according to religion and socioeconomic background, the typical Hindu wedding is an elaborate multi-day affair involving both religious and social events. They are usually held during the cool season, after the rains. The ceremony itself begins with the arrival of the groom's procession at the marriage site, and the exchange of garlands between the bride and groom. The groom participates in various rites, including a feet washing ceremony and a traditional meal of milk and honey. The bride thereafter joins him in the marriage tent, where her father gives her away to the groom, with the transfer symbolized by the joining of the couple's hands. Together, the couple walks around a sacred fire and then takes the sacred "seven steps" while reciting their vows. After additional rites, they receive the blessings of the priest and family members.[160] Many of these rites, including small, mostly symbolic sacrifices, are suggestive of ancient Vedic rituals. After the ceremony, the couple departs to the groom's familial home, where they will live together as husband and wife.

Funerals

Religious traditions dictate the funeral and mourning process for Gujaratis. For Hindus, death marks the passage of the soul from the present life to the next. If possible, priests (*Brahmins*) will visit the dying before they pass in order to conduct rites and offer blessings.[161] Upon death, the body is prepared for cremation, the most common funeral practice among Hindus. (Young children are typically buried, however.) The deceased's relatives traditionally perform these preparatory duties, which include cleaning and dressing the body. Once prepared, the body is taken in a procession to the funeral site and placed upon a pyre—all of this typically occurring within 24 hours of death. It is the responsibility of the deceased's eldest offspring to start the cremation fire, a filial duty for which he earns religious merit.[162] The ashes and remaining pieces of bone are gathered in order to be scattered into a sacred river at a future date.

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http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/News_By_Industry/The_great_Indian_wedding_just_got_fatter/articleshow/2781286.cms

[160] WeddingGuideUK.com. "Hindu Ceremonies: Gujarati." No date. http://www.weddingguideuk.com/articles/ceremonies/hindugujarati.asp

[161] Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Antyesti." 2009. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/28986/antyesti

[162] *Culture Shock!: India*. Kolanad, Gitanjali S. "Chapter Four: Home and the World: The Life Cycle: Cremation [pp. 90–92]." 2001. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.

Exchange 22: I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	tamane ane tamaaraa kutumbeejanone maaree garNeej sahaanubuteeo aapu chu
Local:	Thank you.	aabaar

Those who attend the funeral must afterwards undergo ritual purification in the form of a bath. The family of the deceased remains impure for a sustained period of time, the length of which depends upon the customs of the caste or community. This period usually lasts at least ten days, during which the family undertakes additional rites in order to smooth the transition of the deceased's soul into its next life, as well as to purify themselves from the pollution of death. The conclusion of mourning rites is traditionally marked with a ceremonial meal.[163]

Hindu funeral procession

Exchange 23: Please be strong.

Soldier:	Please be strong.	krupayaa majboot rajo
Local:	We will try.	ame prayatna karishun

Muslim communities practice a similar funeral preparation of the dead, including cleaning the body and dressing it in fresh linens. However, they traditionally bury their deceased, placing the corpse on its side in order to face Mecca.

Non-religious Celebrations

India observes three national holidays. Republic Day, held annually on 26 January, commemorates the formation of the Republic of India in 1950. On this day, parades are typically held in all state capitals, including Gandhinagar.

Exchange 24: Will you be celebrating the Republic Day?

Soldier:	Will you be celebrating the Republic Day?	tame prajaasataak din ujavasho?
Local:	Yes!	haa!

Observed on 15 August, Independence Day celebrates the anniversary of the end of British rule in India in 1947. The holiday of Gandhi Jayanti, held on 2 October, is especially important in Gujarat as it commemorates Mohandas Gandhi's birth in Porbandar, Gujarat in 1869. Local celebrations, most notably one held at Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram retreat outside of Ahmadabad, pay respect to the human rights activist

[163] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Heitzman, James. "Chapter 3: Religious Life: The Ceremonies of Hinduism: Life-Cycle Rituals." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0056)

through tributes and prayer ceremonies.[164] On these national holidays, public buildings, banks, and businesses typically close.

© Dave Morris
Woman and children in Ahmadabad

The country also celebrates a vast number of public holidays, many of them directly or indirectly tied to religious tradition. Outside of the major religious festivals, one of the most important celebrations in Gujarat is the International Kite Festival, which corresponds with the celebration of Uttarayan, or the end of winter. Uttarayan, also known as Makar Sankranti, typically falls on 14 January, when the sun begins to move north across the Tropic of Cancer (which passes through Gujarat). The corresponding kite festival draws thousands of kite enthusiasts, many of whom participate in competitions, or "kite fights," in which opponents try to sever the strings of other kites using their own kite strings. Large crowds assemble to watch the competitions, and at night there are additional events in which kites are flown with lanterns.

Other important celebrations include: the Modhera Dance Festival (January), an exhibition of classical dance in north-central Gujarat; Kachchh Mahotsav (March), a desert festival showcasing the culture of the Kachchh region, especially its handicrafts; and Tarnetar Fair (August/September), a traditional betrothal event in which potential brides are showcased for tribal members in Kathiawar.[165]

[164] India Holiday. "Gandhi Jayanti Gujarat." No date. http://www.indianholiday.com/fairs-festivals-india/gujarat/gandhi-jayanti.html

[165] *Rajasthan and Gujarat: The Travel Guide*. Bradnock, Robert and Roma Bradnock. "Holidays and Festivals: The Hindu Calendar [pp. 58–61]." 2001. Footprint Travel Guides.

Do's and Don'ts

© John Haslam
Take off your shoes

Do take your shoes off before entering a home or place of worship.

Do keep the soles of your feet flat on the ground when sitting.

Do eat with your right hand.

Do wear clean and conservative clothing.

Do respect all animal life in Gujarat.

Don't drink water from the tap or public wells unless it has been boiled.

Don't smoke in public places; it is illegal.

Don't drink alcohol in public, or in private quarters without a permit.

Don't point with your fingers; use the whole right hand instead.

Don't use your left hand to eat with or pass items to others.

Don't initiate handshakes with women.

Don't point your feet at sacred images or other persons.

Don't display physical affection in public.

Don't touch anyone on the head.

Don't take photographs of people or religious sites without permission.

Chapter 4 Urban Life

Introduction

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Street in Ahmadabad

Gujarat is one of the most urbanized states in the country. Approximately 38% of the population lives in urban areas, and that number is expected to grow in the coming decades. The state's seven largest cities—Ahmadabad, Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, and Junagadh—are classified as municipal corporations. Together they account for over 50% of the urban population. With over four million people living in its greater metropolitan area, Ahmadabad alone comprises 23% of the state's urban populace. It is expected to grow into a megacity, incorporating several nearby urban centers—including Gandhinagar, the capital.[166] The Maharashtran city of Mumbai, where many Gujaratis live, is already a true mega-city. With a greater metropolitan population of approximately 16.5 million,[167] Mumbai is one of the five largest urban agglomerations in the world, according to many estimates.

Urban Lifestyles

Gujarat's urban population demonstrates significant disparities in socioeconomic standing, with living conditions ranging from the lavish to the impoverished. While professional careers and modern residential developments are available to some urban dwellers, a larger percentage of residents live in slums that may or may not have access to basic services.[168] Thus, although the state's urban areas have received greater support and development than rural regions, the Gujarati government continues to face the challenge of spreading the benefits of the state's wealth to a greater share of the urban population.[169] Overall, Gujarat's urban centers are crowded, noisy, and bustling metropolises where visitors can expect a wide range of social situations and encounters including self-segregation by religion. Communal violence in 2002 left Muslims fearful of living in close proximity to Hindus.[170]

Life often operates according to a set of unwritten rules in Indian cities. In Mumbai, for example, an émigré who returned to his homeland discovered plumbers bribed the local police to shut off access to the public water supply so residents would be forced to employ their services to install private piping.[171]

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[166] Urban Development and Urban Housing Department, Government of Gujarat. "Urban Scenario." No date. http://www.udd.gujarat.gov.in/Default_files/UrbanScenario.htm

[167] City Population. Brinkhoff, Thomas. "India: Maharashtra." 18 March 2007. http://www.citypopulation.de/India-Maharashtra.html

[168] Indian Express. Nayudu, Ujjwala. "City Slums Show the Dark Side of Urban Development." 2 October 2008. http://www.indianexpress.com/news/City-slums-show-the-dark-side-of-urban-development/368529

[169] Indian Express. Kale, Sumita. "Figuring Out Gujarat." 24 December 2007. http://www.indianexpress.com/news/figuring-out-gujarat/253788/0

[170] Relief Web. Faret, Tone. "India: Conflicts Have Displaced at Least 650,000 Persons." 27 October 2003. http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/f3e75445f4cb7b4dc1256dcc00437a14

[171] Suketu Mehta. Hochschild, Adam. "Underworld: Capturing India's Impossible City." Review of *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found* from *Harper's.* February 2005. http://www.suketumehta.com/harpers.html

Urban and Industrial Expansion

Between 1991 and 2001, the last two census years, Gujarat's urban population rose by almost 33%.[172] The state's economic gains in industry and commerce propelled the high rate of urbanization. Specifically, the flourishing business and industrial environments of Gujarat's major cities attracted many people, both rich and poor, in search of opportunity. As the economy continued to grow, public and private investment in infrastructure helped fuel widespread industrial, commercial, and residential construction in urban centers.[173] Industrial expansion is particularly pronounced in southeastern Gujarat, where a vast number of manufacturing and processing centers are located. Running north–south from Vadodara district to the city of Vapi in the southern borderlands, this industrial belt, known as the "Golden Corridor," is 400 km (248.5 mi) in length. A large number of migrant workers have established themselves in the corridor after flocking to the region to find employment in industrial facilities.[174]

© Meena Kadri
Flower vendor

While carrying immense economic benefits, the expansion of urban and industrial areas has also exacerbated a number of problematic trends. Foremost, the gap between the living conditions of the rich and the poor has grown increasingly stark. This disparity is particularly striking in the city of Ahmadabad, where commerce and industry have flourished, but over 40% of the population lives in slums. Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes comprise most of Ahmadabad's poor, although migrants from bordering states also fall into this demographic. While efforts have been made to expand basic municipal services to slum dwellers, many residents live without them or are forced to obtain them illegally. For example, approximately 25% of the city's slums do not have access to electricity. As a result, many slum dwellers have resorted to purchasing power from informal suppliers, who illegally wire electrical connections from existing meters.[175]

Pollution, particularly of air and water, is also a major problem in Gujarat's urban areas. This trend is most evident in the industrial belt, where toxic waste and emissions have severely contaminated the air, soils, and groundwater of much of the region, in turn causing serious health complications for residents.[176] Most infamously, the city of Vapi was identified in 2007 by the Blacksmith Institute as one of the ten most polluted places in the world.[177] The Gujarati government has charged various agencies, including the

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[172] Urban Development and Urban Housing Department, Government of Gujarat. "Urban Scenario." No date. http://www.udd.gujarat.gov.in/Default_files/UrbanScenario.htm

[173] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Economy [p. 26]." 2007. India Guide Publications.

[174] Monsters and Critics. Indo-Asian News Service. "Parties Out to Woo Migrant Voters in South Gujarat." 9 December 2007. http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/india/news/article_1379618.php/Parties_out_to_woo_migrant_voters_in_south_Gujarat

[175] Indian Express. Nayudu, Ujjwala. "City Slums Show the Dark Side of Urban Development." 2 October 2008. http://www.indianexpress.com/news/City-slums-show-the-dark-side-of-urban-development/368529

[176] *Asia Times Online*. Murthy, Laxmi. "Industry Poisons Land and Water in Gujarat." 17 December 1999. http://www.atimes.com/ind-pak/AL17Df02.html

[177] Indian Express. "Named in Pollution Report, Vapi Begins Crackdown." 17 September 2007. http://www.indianexpress.com/news/named-in-pollution-report-vapi-begins-crackdown/217521/

Central Pollution Control Board, the Gujarat Urban Development Mission, and the Ahmadabad Slum-Networking Project, with addressing these issues. They remain pressing, however, as the state anticipates further urban and industrial growth. As part of its plans for wide-scale urban development and beautification, the government continues to look to the private sector as a major source of investment.[178]

Telecommunications

Gujarat's telecommunications network is more developed than those of most Indian states. Telephone service—either through landline or cellular networks—is available in almost all areas of the state.[179]

Exchange 25: What is your telephone number?

Soldier:	What is your telephone number?	tamaaro telifon nambar shu che?
Local:	My phone number is 0 79 2654 2025.	maaro telifon nambar shunya saat naw be cha paanch chaar be shunya be paach che

The cellular industry in particular has expanded rapidly in recent years. As of 2007, more than 10 million people, or one out of every five Gujaratis, had mobile phone service,[180] with many subscribers hailing from the lower castes.[181] This growth has been driven by wealthy and young consumers, who have contributed to a high turnover rate of mobile phones in the state—the highest in the nation.[182]

With the growing popularity of cell phones, it is possible that an urban resident will have a phone of some sort. It may be necessary to borrow a phone in case of emergency.

© Dave Morris
Community phone in Ahmedabad

Exchange 26: May I use your phone?

Soldier:	May I use your phone?	shu hu tamaaro fon vaaparee shaku chu?
Local:	Sure.	jaroor

[178] *The Hindu Business Line*. Trivedi, Divya. "Gujarat Goes Big on Urban Development." 25 January 2009.
[179] *The Financial Express*. "Telecom Matches Economic Growth." 17 July 2005. http://www.financialexpress.com/news/telecom-matches-economic-growth/141006/0
[180] The Hindu Business Line. Pandit, Virendra. "Gujarat Making Strides in Infrastructure." 9 October 2007. http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2007/10/09/stories/2007100950171200.htm
[181] NDTV.com. Bhan, Rohit. Cellphones Help People Rake in Moolah." 4 August 2007. http://www.ndtv.com/convergence/ndtv/story.aspx?id=NEWEN20070021405
[182] Business Standard. Umarji, Vinay. "Gujarat Most Frequent in Changing Mobiles."

Health Care

The quality of health care in Gujarat ranges widely according to location and facility. In general, medical services are of higher quality and more widely available in urban areas.[183] Many Indian doctors are Western-trained or otherwise well-qualified, and many speak English. The best and most advanced medical care is found in major cities such as Ahmadabad, where specialized treatment is available. The city is currently developing its eastern district into a major medical center for the state and greater region.[184] Such development corresponds with Gujarat's goal of promoting and expanding its medical tourism industry, which draws to the region many non-resident Indians and foreign nationals in search of affordable but quality health care.[185]

For urban residents, access to health care largely depends upon a person's financial means. Public hospitals and clinics are available to the poor, but advanced and specialized treatment of a higher quality is more often found at private hospitals, which are typically too expensive for those with limited finances. There are, however, clinics operated by charity organizations; these institutions offer services at moderate prices.[186] In an attempt to improve the overall quality of the state's health care system, the Gujarati government recently initiated efforts to expand upon the capacities of the state's many primary health centers (PHC) and community health centers (CHC).[187]

One of the most common causes of health problems for locals and visitors alike is infection from contaminated food and water sources, typically caused by either poor sanitation practices or pollution. Visitors should practice good hygiene and demonstrate significant caution in selecting food and drink. Most notably, they should only consume water from sealed bottles and they should avoid drinks with ice cubes. In case of sickness requiring medical treatment, visitors should consult the local U.S. Embassy for a list of recommended physicians or clinics.

© Akshay Mahajan
Mumbai pollution

[183] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004.* "Chapter 5: Health and Nutrition [p. 139]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute. http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208

[184] The Times of India. "Eastern Ahmadabad to Turn into Medical Hub." 31 January 2009. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Ahmedabad/Eastern_Ahmedabad_to_turn_into_medical_hub/articleshow/4055278.cms

[185] Daily News and Analysis (DNA), Diligent Media Corporation. Tiwari, Kuldeep. "Gujarat Hospitals Eye Medical Tourism." 15 July 2008. http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?newsid=1177694

[186] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004.* "Chapter 5: Health and Nutrition [pp. 147–178]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute.

[187] Business Standard. Unnithan, Chitra. "Gujarat Govt. to Invest Rs 300 Cr for Healthcare." 5 February 2009. http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/gujarat-govt-to-invest-rs-300-cr-for-healthcare/00/06/347977/

Exchange 27: Is Dr. Desai in, sir?

Soldier:	Is Dr. Desai in, sir?	daaktar desaaee andar che?
Local:	No.	naa

Private hospitals and clinics are usually recommended over government-run facilities. In case of emergency, however, one may be required to find the nearest hospital.

Exchange 28: Is there a hospital nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	najeekamaa koee aspataal che?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	haa, gaamnee vache

Likewise, locals may need assistance in case of accident or injury.

Exchange 29: Do you know what is wrong?

Soldier:	Do you know what is wrong?	tamne kabar che ke shu gadbad che?
Local:	No.	naa

Education

Officially, the Indian constitution calls for free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14. However, enrollment and retention rates throughout the country are typically not all-encompassing. In Gujarat, the education system comprises four general levels. The first two levels, primary school (grades 1–4) and middle or secondary school (grades 5–7), together form the elementary education program. For the most part, these schools are administered by local entities with funding from the state. High school and higher secondary school (grades 8–12) comprise the third level. These schools are predominantly privately-run, but they also receive financial assistance from the state. Colleges, universities, and vocational schools represent the fourth, advanced level of education. Most of these higher education facilities are located in urban areas.

© Lakshman Anand
Classroom in the Kutch Desert

While the net enrollment rate for primary school in Gujarat (76%) is high in comparison to the rest of the country, a substantial percentage of students—37% of girls and 41% of boys—quit school after grade seven. Overall, Gujarat's literacy rate of 70% (as of 2001) is above the national average; the rate is significantly higher in cities (83%) than in rural areas (60%). There are also gender-based discrepancies in literacy rates. While approximately 81% of men can read and write, only 59% of Gujarati women are literate.[188] This trend results in large part from traditional ideas concerning the respective roles of men and women. While boys are encouraged to receive an education in order to seek paid employment outside the home;

[188] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004.* "Chapter 6: Literacy and Education [pp. 140–143]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute.

girls will be expected to shoulder domestic responsibities and therefore their education may be seen as less of a priority.

In recent years, the BJP-led[189] Gujarat government has garnered criticism for the content of the state-produced textbooks used in the education system. Critics have claimed that many textbooks include factual and grammatical errors, as well as distortions, oversights, and politically-motivated content. For example, some history textbooks have been described as depicting Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist party in a positive light, while only briefly mentioning the Holocaust.[190] The state's educational material has also been criticized for allegedly emphasizing and affirming Hindu and caste-based concepts—to the detriment of Muslim and lower-caste groups. While some changes have since been made to the curricula, much of the original material remains in print.[191]

Traffic and Transportation

© Akshay Mahajan
Rickshaw in Ahmadabad

Gujarat's urban areas are generally crowded and congested with vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In terms of short and long-distance public transportation, cities are serviced by trains and various types of buses and taxis. The state's major cities and towns are linked by a relatively well-maintained highway network comprising almost 75,000 km (46, 875 mi) of roads.[192] Urban roads are for the most part in good condition, but road travel in any form can be quite dangerous. Accidents occur frequently, as heavy traffic and reckless and aggressive driving are the norm. Traffic laws are often disregarded and unenforced, especially since the Gujarat government has had difficulty in establishing a cohesive and well-trained force of traffic cops.[193] Larger vehicles, such as trucks and buses, often assume right-of-way, and pedestrians and various types of small transport, such as bicycles and rickshaws, serve as hazards.[194] Visitors should be alert and cautious when traveling by either foot or vehicle in urban areas. Most notably, visitors should be aware that, like Britain, traffic moves on the left-hand side of the street in India which is the reverse of the U.S. This needs to be kept in mind when crossing the street on foot.

Cars of varying quality are available to rent, often with the option of hiring a driver.

Exchange 30: Where can I rent a car?

Soldier:	Where can I rent a car?	ahee daadi baade kyaan maLsheh?
Local:	Downtown.	shaher maa

[189] Bharatiya Janata Party
[190] BBC News, International Version. "'Nazi' Row over Indian Textbooks." 23 July 2005. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4711475.stm
[191] India Together. A, Deepa. "Gujarat's Textbooks: Full of Biases and Errors." 19 February 2007. http://www.indiatogether.org/2007/feb/edu-gujtexts.htm
[192] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Economy [p. 28]." 2007. India Guide Publications.
[193] Express India. Nayudu, Ujjwala. "Gujarat Cops Ill-equipped to Handle Traffic." 16 December 2008. http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/gujarat-cops-illequipped-to-handle-traffic/399064/
[194] Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "India: Country Specific Information." 3 February 2009. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html

In many cases this option may be advisable, as hired drivers are likely well-accustomed to local driving habits, which may seem careless and irresponsible in comparison to Western standards. Foreigners who wish to drive themselves are required to have a valid Indian or international driver's license and an acceptable form of car insurance.

Automotive services are widely available in urban areas.

Exchange 31: Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	najeekamaa petrol pamp che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

It may be necessary to visit a mechanic in case of a breakdown.

Exchange 32: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	najeekamaa koee saaro motar meekenik che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

If involved in a traffic accident while driving, it is advisable to leave the scene and seek assistance at a local police station before an angry crowd has time to materialize. This is especially true if the driver strikes a pedestrian or cow, the latter of which is considered a sacred animal.[195]

Gujarat is home to one international and eight domestic airports, most of which are located near large urban centers.[196] As road signs may be unclear or absent, it is often necessary to ask for directions.

Exchange 33: Which road leads to the airport?

Soldier:	Which road leads to the airport?	vimaangar javaano rasto kayo?
Local:	The road heading east.	purv taraf jato rasto

City and intercity bus lines provide travel in and between the major urban centers of Ahmadabad-Gandhinagar, Surat, Vadodara, and Rajkot.[197]

Exchange 34: Will the bus be here soon?

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	shu bas aheen tara taawsheh?
Local:	Yes.	haa

Although typically inexpensive, local buses are frequently crowded and subject to many stops as well

© Reinhold Behringer
Bus station in Ahmadabad

[195] Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "India: C
February 2009. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.
[196] *India Guide: Gujarat*. Desai, Anjali. "About Gujarat: Economy
[197] India Transit. Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation. "GSRT
http://www.indiatransit.com/public_transport/gujarat_state_road.asp

as aggressive driving. Many private companies tout “luxury service” but in fact the vehicles are usually poorly maintained and provide only marginally greater comfort. There is no restroom service onboard.

“Yellow top” taxis, auto-rickshaws, and *chhakras* (a type of auto-rickshaw formed from a modified motorcycle) are the most common forms of inner city auto travel for visitors. Cycle-rickshaws are also available.

Exchange 35: Where can I get a cab?

Soldier:	Where can I get a cab?	aheen teksee kyaa maLsheh?
Local:	Over there.	tya

Taxi and auto-rickshaw fares should be determined by meter, and customers should request and ensure its use. If meters are unavailable or the driver claims it is broken, the fare should be negotiated before travel, often in consultation with a fare chart. To prevent misunderstandings, have the agreed amount written down before starting off. Fares are typically more expensive at night.

Exchange 36: Can you take me there?

Soldier:	Can you take me there?	tame mane tya laee jasho?
Local:	Yes, I can.	haa, hu laee jaee shakeesh

Small fees for luggage may also apply. Some drivers may receive compensation from hotels or other tourist locales for persuading customers to visit their establishments. Visitors should remain firm in requesting travel to their desired destination.[198]

Trains provide transportation between major cities, where stations can usually be found.

Exchange 37: Is there a train station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	aheen najeekmaa relwey steshan che?
Local:	No.	naa

Travelers can purchase various classes of service, with carriage conditions ranging from relatively plush and comfortable to cramped and crowded. Indians themselves may ride on the roof to avoid buying a ticket. High-speed trains offer faster service, while longer trips often involve sleeper accommodation. Depending upon rail line and class, train travel can be one of the safer, cheaper, and more comfortable methods of transportation. They do not, however, always run on time.[199]

Restaurants

Gujarat’s urban areas have restaurants specializing in both regional and international cuisine. Venues range

© Dey Alexander
Thali dinner

[198] *Rajasthan and Gujarat: The Travel Guide*. Bradnock, Robert and Road [pp. 42–47].” 2001. Bath, England: Footprint Travel Guides.
[199] *Rajasthan and Gujarat: The Travel Guide*. Bradnock, Robert and Train [pp. 47–50].” 2001. Bath, England: Footprint Travel Guides.

from food stalls and small cafes to busy dining halls and expensive fine-dining establishments. Coffee shops may also offer a variety of food items. Alcohol is generally unavailable at Gujarati restaurants since it is prohibited in the state.

A typical lunch or dinner at a Gujarati restaurant is served in the form of a *thali*, or combination platter of various dishes, sides, and condiments. Coffee and tea are two of the most common beverages. In India, they are both typically served with milk and sugar.

Exchange 38: I would like coffee or tea.

Soldier:	I would like coffee or tea.	mane cha gamsheh
Local:	Sure.	jaroor

When dining out, it is important to ensure that one's drinking water comes from a sealed bottle, and that no ice is used when drinks are served in a glass.

Exchange 39: May I have a glass of water?

Soldier:	May I have a glass of water?	mane ek pyaalo paarNee maLsheh?
Local:	Yes, right away.	haa, tarataj

As Indians traditionally eat with their hands, many restaurants may not provide cutlery. It is therefore imperative that visitors thoroughly wash their hands before and after dining. Although they may vary according to the style of dining establishment, ordering practices will likely be similar to those in the West.

Exchange 40: I'd like some hot soup.

Soldier:	I'd like some hot soup.	mane todo garam soop gamsheh
Local:	Sure.	jaroor

The composition of *thali* dinners will often be fixed, but other dishes may be more open to customization.

Exchange 41: Are you still serving breakfast?

Soldier:	Are you still serving breakfast?	tame hajee naasto pirso cho?
Local:	Yes.	haa

Gujarati cuisine is primarily vegetarian with stews (*saaks*) being popular. Meat dishes will be limited or wholly unavailable in most restaurants. In particular, beef and pork are both subject to religious restrictions (by Hindus and Muslims, respectively) and are not typically eaten in Gujarat. Visitors should not ask for these items, as to do so would be considered highly inappropriate. Lamb, chicken, or fish may be available in restaurants that serve meat dishes.

Exchange 42: What type of meat is this?

Soldier:	What type of meat is this?	aa kayu maas che?
Local:	Lamb.	bakaraanu

Gujarat is known for its very sweet desserts, including *kheer*, a rice pudding.

Exchange 43: Do you have a dessert?

Soldier:	Do you have dessert?	tamaaree paase meetaee che?
Local:	Yes, we have Kheer.	haa amaaree paase keer che

Waiters in middle or upscale restaurants should be tipped 5–10% of the bill if their service was satisfactory.[200] In some cases a service charge may already be added to the bill; additional tipping is optional.

Exchange 44: Can I have my total bill, please?

Soldier:	Can I have my total bill, please?	mane maaru kul bil maLee shakasheh?
Local:	Yes, of course.	haa, jaroor

It is customary for the person who arranged the dinner to pay for the meal; "dutch treat" is an alien arrangement to Indians.

Exchange 45: Put this all in one bill.

Soldier:	Put this all in one bill.	aa ekaj bil maan naakjo
Local:	Okay.	bale

Restroom facilities will vary according to restaurant. Upscale establishments will likely have flushable sit-down toilets, while inexpensive dining facilities may have the traditional squat toilet.[201]

Exchange 46: Where is your restroom?

Soldier:	Where is your restroom?	tamaaru jaajaru kyaa che?
Local:	That room to your left, over there.	aa tamaaree dabee taraf orado che, tyaa

[200] Vayama. "Indian Etiquette Tips." c.2006–2009. http://www.vayama.com/india-etiquette

[201] *India*, 10th ed. Singh, Sarina, et al. "Facts for the Visitor: Toilets [p. 119]." 2003. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications.

Marketplace

In Gujarat's urban areas, shopping venues range from traditional marketplaces and bazaars to private shops and modern mall complexes. The style of shopping varies according to venue. Government-run emporiums offer goods and souvenirs at fixed prices, as do department stores. In the traditional bazaar, however, prices are typically determined through bargaining.[202] In Ahmadabad, numerous bazaars are located in the old city center.

© owenstache / flickr.com
Market scene in Ahmadabad

Exchange 47: Is the bazaar nearby?

Soldier:	Is the bazaar nearby?	shu bajaar najikmaan che?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	haa, tyaa jamarNi taraf

In traditional marketplaces, it is important to "window-shop" comparatively to familiarize oneself with the market and the goods offered in it. Such research will allow one to conduct informed negotiations with vendors. As Gujarat is known for its handicrafts, a wide range of carpets, textiles, jewelry, and other handmade items will be available.

Exchange 48: Do you sell batik?

Soldier:	Do you sell batik?	tame batik vecho cho?
Local:	Yes.	haa

Groceries, household items, and a variety of other goods are also sold in market stalls. Shoppers should take the time to closely inspect items they may wish to purchase.

Exchange 49: May I examine this close up?

Soldier:	May I examine this close up?	shu hun aane najeekatee joee shaku chu?
Local:	Sure.	jaroor

Depending upon the item, the bargaining process may be lengthy and involved. A vendor's initial asking price will almost certainly be high, to gauge the buyer's reaction to see what price is in the realm of possibility.[203] Customers should respond with counteroffers, at prices significantly lower than what they are willing to pay.

Exchange 50: Can I buy a carpet with this much money?

Soldier:	Can I buy a carpet with this much money?	aatlaa paisaamaan shu hu aa gaalicho kareedee shakeesh?
Local:	No.	naa

[202] *Rajasthan and Gujarat: The Travel Guide*. Bradnock, Robert and Roma Bradnock. "Shopping [pp. 56–57]." 2001. Bath, England: Footprint Travel Guides.
[203] Vagabondish. Alex, Kathryn. "How to Master the Art of Haggling." 2009. http://www.vagabondish.com/master-art-of-haggling/

Initial counteroffers may be met with a reaction of feigned shock on the part of the merchant. At this point, walking away can be used as a bargaining tactic after inquiring how much longer the vendor will be there.

Exchange 51: How much longer will you be here?

Soldier:	How much longer will you be here?	tame ahi haju kyaa sudi cho?
Local:	Three more hours.	haju trarN kalak vadu

The vendor is likely to agree to a substantial discount to make a sale on the spot. Nonetheless, he may have his own tricks, such as claiming the desired size or style is out of stock. This can be a bargaining ruse to include the cost of someone going to fetch it from another location.

Exchange 52: Do you have any more of these?

Soldier:	Do you have any more of these?	tamaaree paase aanaa haju beejaa vadaare che?
Local:	No.	naa

After a price has been agreed upon, the customer should follow through with the transaction, as it is inappropriate to withdraw an offer that has been accepted.

© Akshay Mahajan
Storefront

The basic measure of Indian currency is the Rupee (Rs), which is further broken down into 100 *paise* (p). As coins, *paise* come in dominations of p 5, 10, 20, 25, and 50. Rupees are available in Rs 1, 2, and 5 in coin form, and bank notes of Rs 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, and, rarely, 1000. Discontinued notes of Rs 1, 2, and 5 may also be in circulation.[204] The various denominations of bills come in different colors and sizes. Shoppers should ask vendors about their policies before trying to pay in currencies other than Rupees.

Exchange 53: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Soldier:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	tame amerikan paisaa sveekaarasho?
Local:	No we only accept rupees.	naa, ame fakt baaratiya rupiyaa sveekaareeye chiye

Shoppers should carry small local bills for use with independent vendors. Failure to do so may result in overpayment.

[204] *India*, 10th ed. Singh, Sarina, et al. “Facts for the Visitor: Money [pp. 84–85].” 2003. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications.

Exchange 54: Can you give me change for this?

Soldier:	Can you give me change for this?	tame mane aanaa chutaa aapasho?
Local:	No.	naa

Credit cards may be used at various venues in urban centers. ATMs are also available, although services may vary according to bank and lending company.

Dealing with Touts, Street Vendors and Beggars

© Francisco Martins
Street scene in Ahmadabad

With large numbers of impoverished residents and those marginally employed in the informal sector, Gujarat's urban areas are home to many touts, street vendors, and beggars. Touts are persons, often children, who solicit money from travelers and tourists in exchange for informal assistance with luggage, transportation, and guidance. In many cases, touts are also paid a token commission by hotels, shops, or other businesses to bring tourists to their establishments. They are frequently encountered at tourist locales and transportation stations, and they are often insistent and even aggressive in their solicitations. Rates for goods, rooms, and services will be higher for visitors aided by touts, as businesses have to pay them a finder's fee. Thus, in most cases, visitors should firmly but politely reject the assistance of touts, however persistent they may be. Travelers perceived to be more experienced will receive less attention, although, all foreigners can expect to be targeted.

Street vendors hawking various items may also be persistent. Visitors should politely but firmly deny their solicitations if they do not desire to buy anything.

Exchange 55: Please, buy something from me.

Local:	Please, buy something from me.	krupyaa maaree paasetee kaai karido
Soldier:	Sorry, I have no money left.	maaf karo, maaree paase paisaa bachyaa natee

Beggars are a common sight in India, and they often exhibit signs of sickness, injury, or deformity. The prospect of offering them money can present a dilemma, since those who do will likely be bombarded by other beggars in similar straits.

Exchange 56: Give me money

Local:	Give me money	mane paisaa aapo
Soldier:	I don't have any.	maaree paase jaraay natee

More importantly, however, many beggars, particularly children, may be indebted to human traffickers or criminal gangs who appropriate the vast majority of what they manage to collect. Instead of money, many people choose to offer small food items to those in need.

Chapter 5 Rural Life

Introduction

© dr urvish joshi
Village scene in rural Gujarat

Despite the state's high rate of urbanization, the Gujarati population remains predominantly rural, if only for the immediate future. According to the most recent census data, approximately 62% of the state's population resides in rural areas.[205] The government has made efforts to spread investment and development to rural regions. For example, improvements in rural infrastructure have provided increased access to primary schools, transportation routes, and some basic services. Most notably, the state recently completed a large-scale project to bring electricity to the state's inhabited rural areas. As a result, the 18,000 villages in rural Gujarat all have a full-time electricity supply. This development has slowed the rural-to-urban migration rate and stimulated local commercial activity, as well as educational opportunities.[206] The state also plans to provide broadband internet connections to most rural villages that will have a collective email address.[207] Despite the implementation of these projects, the development process is still incomplete, and many urban-rural disparities remain stark.

Despite these significant improvements however, Gujarat's rural areas still face many challenges in terms of services, opportunity, and overall standard of living. As in the state's urban areas, many rural residents live below the poverty line, and many remain without access to treated water, sanitation services, quality health care, and quality education. Furthermore, as rural residents remain largely dependent upon the agricultural sector, they have seen fewer of the economic benefits stemming from the growth of industry and commerce. This is particularly the case of communities that are dependent on rain-fed agriculture, which makes harvest size unreliable.

Tribal Distribution

While Scheduled Tribes can be found throughout Gujarat, they are predominantly concentrated in the hill-covered regions of the state's eastern districts. Contiguous portions of these districts combine to form the state's "tribal belt." Beginning in the north, these districts and their tribal population percentages as of 2001 include: Banaskantha (8.2%), Sabarkantha (20.2%), Panchmahals (27.5%), Dahod (72.3%), Vadodara (26.6%), Bharuch (32.4%), Narmada (78.1%), Surat (28.2%), Navsari (48.1%), the Dangs (93.8%), and Valsad (54.8%).[208] Since the 2001 census, Surat district has been divided into two

[205] Official Portal of Gujarat Government, Government of Gujarat. "State Profile: Demography." 2008. http://gujaratindia.com/stateprofile/profile1.htm
[206] *Business Standard*. Amin, Ashish and Vinay Umarji. "Power Fuels Reverse Migration in Gujarat." 20 April 2008. http://www.business-standard.com/india/storypage.php?autono=320640
[207] Live Mint, *Wall Street Journal.* Anthony, Regina. "In a first for India, Gujarat to connect all villages via satellite." 19 May 2008. http://www.livemint.com/2008/05/19012321/In-a-first-for-India-Gujarat.html
[208] Office of the Register General, Government of India. "Gujarat: Data Highlights: The Scheduled Tribes: Census of India 2001." No date.

districts, known respectively as Surat and Tapi.[209] Comprising the eastern portion of the former Surat district, Tapi has a tribal population percentage of 83.9%.[210]

© Payal Vora
Traditional tribal housing

In the southeastern districts that adjoin the coast, tribal populations are located in greater number toward the east, in the hilly interior. (The "Golden Corridor" of the southeast does not fall into the tribal belt.) Overall, the tribal belt is the poorest and least developed region in the state. It is also one of the most environmentally degraded areas, and the local populations demonstrate poorer health indicators than those living in most other regions.[211] In reference to the creation of predominantly tribal districts, such as Narmada and, most recently, Tapi, some residents have claimed that the restructuring serves to further isolate and marginalize the tribal population. For example, in the case of Tapi, the district's administration no longer benefits from the economic windfalls produced by the booming industrial and commercial activity in and around the major city of Surat.[212] For these and other reasons, many tribal peoples migrate—either seasonally or permanently—to other areas. Outside of the tribal belt, the Kachchh region is also home to many Scheduled Tribes; they comprise 8.2% of the district's population.[213]

Rural Economy and Livelihoods

Agriculture and animal husbandry are the primary economic activities in Gujarat's rural areas. These activities range from large commercial crop and dairy operations to small-scale subsistence farming. Several groups, such as the Rabaris of Kachchh, retain their traditional nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoral practices. Members of lower caste and tribal groups often work as agricultural laborers, either on small tracts they own, or for commercial producers. Some instead commute to work in nearby urban industries, while many are unemployed.

Although the government-initiated Green Revolution brought advanced farming technologies to Gujarat in the 1960s, the agricultural sector has stumbled behind the burgeoning industrial and commercial sectors since the 1980s. As of 2004, 70% of the state's cultivated areas remain dependent on rain, with Kachchh and several of the tribal districts demonstrating particularly low levels of productivity. As a result, agricultural yields and the corresponding incomes of farmers may vary widely from one year to the

[209] Rediff.com. "Tribals, Muslims Unhappy Over Newly-Created Gujarat District." 6 December 2007. http://www.rediff.com/news/2007/dec/06gujpoll7.htm
[210] Statistics Branch, Tapi District Panchayat, Government of Gujarat. "Population and Area." 23 October 2008. http://tapidp.gujarat.gov.in/Tapi/english/sakhao/ankda%20shakha/samajik-arthik-samixa/population-area.htm
[211] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004*. "Chapter 2: Dynamics of Development in Gujarat [pp. 51, 59]," and "Chapter 5: Health and Nutrition [pp. 115–147]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute. http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208
[212] Rediff.com. "Tribals, Muslims Unhappy Over Newly-Created Gujarat District." 6 December 2007. http://www.rediff.com/news/2007/dec/06gujpoll7.htm
[213] Office of the Register General, Government of India. "Gujarat: Data Highlights: The Scheduled Tribes: Census of India 2001." No date.

next, according to precipitation levels. Low income and general economic insecurity has left many rural residents impoverished.[214]

© Meena Kadri
Harvesting green onions

Similarly, the volatility of the agricultural sector has contributed to the ongoing trend of "land alienation," in which small-scale farmers have been compelled to sell their lands due to a dearth of water supplies and other necessary resources. In the process, land-owning farmers become landless laborers. This trend has been so pervasive that the number of agricultural laborers in the state has risen from just under 1.8 million in 1971 to over 6 million in 2008.[215] An outbreak of male suicides in the rural populace has been linked to landlessness.[216] In order to offset the uncertainty over crop yields, animal husbandry and dairy farming have been identified as important sideline activities to be further developed.[217] The state government has also raised the minimum wage for agricultural workers, doubling it from Rs 50 to 100 in 2008.[218]

Land Distribution and Tenure

During the mid 20th century, land reforms were implemented in the Gujarat region with the general goal of transferring property rights from absentee-owners to tenants. As the reforms were for the most part carried out ineffectively, middle and upper-caste groups largely benefited from the process, while many lower-caste and tribal groups remained landless or marginalized. The Patels (Patidars), a formerly low caste that rose in status, was one group that benefited immensely from the reforms, as its members gained ownership of many properties. Today, the Patels are a strong and well-connected land-owning caste, controlling properties in both mainland and peninsular Gujarat. For the most part, however, the reforms merely served to sustain the traditional disparities between the many caste and ethnic-based groups.[219]

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[214] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004.* "Chapter 2: Dynamics of Development in Gujarat [pp. 26–28]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute. http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208

[215] *Express India*. "Gujarat Doubles Rate of Minimum Wages for Agricultural Labourers." 19 July 2008. http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/gujarat-doubles-rate-of-minimum-wages-for-agricultural-labourers/337562/

[216] *The Hindu.* "489 Gujarat farmers have committed suicide since 2003." 14 October 2007. http://www.hindu.com/2007/10/14/stories/2007101456521400.htm

[217] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004.* "Chapter 2: Dynamics of Development in Gujarat [pp. 26–28]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute. http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208

[218] *Express India*. "Gujarat Doubles Rate of Minimum Wages for Agricultural Labourers." 19 July 2008. http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/gujarat-doubles-rate-of-minimum-wages-for-agricultural-labourers/337562/

[219] *Communalism, Caste, and Hindu Nationalism: The Violence in Gujarat.* Shani, Ornit. "Chapter 1: Setting the Scene [pp. 27–30]." 2007. New York: Cambridge University Press.

In modern Gujarat, land rights can be classified under two general distinctions: old tenure and new tenure. The "new tenure" classification refers to land that was redistributed to poor tenant farmers, while "old tenure" refers to titles that preexisted redistribution or have since been converted from "new" to "old." Significantly, the "new tenure" lands were distributed to poor farmers with a stipulation that they could not be sold. However, in 2008, the Gujarati government reformed its policies in order to allow new tenure agricultural and previously indivisible lands to be reclassified as old tenure non-agricultural land; this allowed them to be used, sold, or subdivided for commercial purposes. Although landowners are required to have governmental permission to reclassify their titles, the new policy allows for a much quicker conversion process. The policy change was expected to promote gains in the construction sector, as more land could be developed commercially.[220] In recent years, the government has also contracted state-owned lands—mostly wasteland—to corporations and farmers for agricultural purposes.[221]

© Meena Kadri
Woman working in the fields

Another significant issue concerning land tenure in Gujarat is the marked gender imbalance in ownership. As Gujarati families are traditionally patriarchal, male descendents are first in line for the inheritance of property, followed by wives and daughters.[222] A study conducted in 2002 by a group of non-governmental organizations, together known as the Working Group on Women and Land Ownership, found that only 13.4% of rural Gujarati women owned land, despite their greater involvement in agricultural activities. (According to the 2001 census, over three fourths of Indian women are involved in agriculture as opposed to just over half of men.) Nearly half of the female landowners were widows. Furthermore, women generally possessed smaller more distant parcels of land that were often of lesser quality than those owned by their relatives.[223]

Exchange 57: Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	tame aa jameen naa maalik cho?
Local:	Yes.	haa

Rural Transportation

Gujarat's network of almost 75,000 km of roads—the majority of them surfaced—provides access to most of the state's rural regions.[224] There are many small settlements—most of which have populations under 500—that remain unconnected, but

[220] Thaindian News. Indo Asian News Service. "Land Conversions Made Simpler in Gujarat." 5 July 2008. http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/business/land-conversions-made-simpler-in-gujarat_10068063.html
[221] Business Standard. "Gujarat to Allot Wastelands for Contract Farming." 28 April 2005. http://www.business-standard.com/india/storypage.php?autono=210424
[222] EveryCulture.com. Shah, Ghanshyam. "Gujarati: Kinship, Marriage and Family." No date. http://www.everyculture.com/South-Asia/Gujarati-Kinship-Marriage-and-Family.html
[223] *The Times of India*. "'Less than 14 PC Women in Rural Gujarat Own Land.'" 4 May 2005. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1098860.cms
[224] Official Portal of Gujarat Government, Government of Gujarat. "State Profile: Infrastructure." 2008. http://gujaratindia.com/stateprofile/profile3.htm

the government is currently working to extend access to these areas as well.[225] The Kachchh region and the hill-covered portions of the eastern tribal belt are the least accessible areas in the state.

Rural border between India and Pakistan

Train and bus services are available at urban and rural stations throughout Gujarat; these services provide direct or indirect access to rural locales. In recent years efforts have been made to expand the state's bus lines, with the goal of running more routes to rural areas.[226] One bus line, based out of Surat, plans to extend its services into the surrounding rural regions in order to transport thousands of daily commuters to and from the city.[227] However, while buses offer a cheap and relatively convenient mode of travel, they are often old, overcrowded, and recklessly driven.

Road travel of any form can be dangerous in Gujarat. Although some rural roads may be in decent condition, driving habits are notoriously poor in Gujarat and throughout greater India. In general, basic traffic laws are neither widely obeyed nor enforced. Larger vehicles, such as trucks and buses, often assume right-of-way, and livestock, pedestrian traffic, and various types of small transport, such as carts and scooters, serve as frequent hazards. Traffic conditions at night are especially dangerous, as many types of transport may not have or use headlights.[228] These factors contribute to the high rate of traffic accidents in Gujarat, with deaths frequently resulting from acts of road rage.[229] Therefore, if a person is involved in a traffic accident, it may be advisable to leave the scene and report directly to a police station, since angry and potentially violent crowds can quickly form. This is especially the case if the driver strikes a pedestrian or cow, which is considered a sacred animal.[230]

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[225] Roads and Buildings Department, Government of Gujarat. "Panchayat Roads." 4 February 2009. http://www.rnbgujarat.org/panchayat.htm

[226] Yahoo News. Indo Asian News Service. 6 February 2009. http://in.news.yahoo.com/43/20090206/836/tbs-gujarat-to-expand-state-transport-bu.html

[227] GujaratGlobal.com. "Surat City Bus to Expand to Rural Areas." 20 January 2009. http://www.gujaratglobal.com/nextSub.php?id=4603&cattype=NEWS

[228] Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "India: Country Specific Information." 3 February 2009. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html

[229] *The Times of India*. "Gujarat Among Toppers in Accidental Deaths." 15 December 2008. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Ahmedabad/Gujarat_among_toppers_in_accidental_deaths/rssarticleshow/3842663.cms

[230] Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "India: Country Specific Information." 3 February 2009. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html

In the absence of clearly marked roads, locals may provide useful information for navigation of rural areas.

Exchange 58: Do you know this area very well?

Soldier:	Do you know this area very well?	shu tame aa vistaarane saaree reete jaarNo cho?
Local:	Yes.	haa

They may also be knowledgeable about the availability of services, such as fuel or lodging.

Exchange 59: Is there lodging nearby?

Soldier:	Is there lodging nearby?	ahi najeekmaa rahevaanee koee jagyaa che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

Health Issues

Due in large part to poverty, poor sanitation, and pollution, Gujaratis are exposed to a number of serious health concerns. Rural residents are particularly affected by high incidence rates of sickness. Illnesses such as dysentery, diarrhea, typhoid, cholera, and hepatitis are common as a result of widespread consumption of untreated water. For example, an outbreak of Hepatitis B in Sabarkantha state caused dozens of deaths in early 2009.[231] Respiratory diseases, such as asthma and tuberculosis, are also common; in rural Gujarat they are responsible for one out of every four deaths.[232] This is in part the result of indoor pollution caused by the burning of biomass fuels for cooking and heating purposes.

Child being weighed

Poor nutrition, including iodine deficiency, is also a major health issue in rural areas, particularly among females, and among members of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. A 2008 report produced by the International Food Policy Research Institute described the prevalence of hunger in Gujarat as "alarming," with the state ranking just below the extremely impoverished country of Haiti on the global hunger index.[233] This trend contributes to the state's high rate of anemia, especially among children. Malaria

[231] CNN, International Edition. Singh, Harmeet Shah. "India Hepatitis Death Toll Reaches 38." 22 February 2009. http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/02/22/india.hepatitis/

[232] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004*. "Chapter 5: Health and Nutrition [p. 128]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute. http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208

[233] *Express India*. Sharma, Gaurav. "Half of Vibrant Gujarat Goes to Sleep Empty Stomach." 21 December 2008. http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/half-of-vibrant-gujarat-goes-to-sleep-empty-stomach/401073/

and jaundice are also common illnesses among the Gujarati population. Overall, infant mortality and crude death rates are higher in rural than urban areas.[234]

In general, medical services are of poorer quality, and are less widely available in rural areas. Many villages do not have a primary health care center within reasonable distance; in any case, the quality of their service is often low.

Exchange 60: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	shu najeekamaa davaakaanu che?
Local:	Yes, over there.	haa, tyaa aagaL

Many rural residents rely on village *anganwadis* (courtyard kindergartens) for primary health care needs such as immunizations. These facilities were badly damaged during the earthquake in 2001 and have been rebuilt slowly.[235] Even when fully operational, they can provide only limited emergency care.

Exchange 61: My arm is broken, can you help me?

Soldier:	My arm is broken, can you help me?	maaro haat tutyo che, shu tame mane madad karee shaksho?
Local:	Yes, I can help you.	haa, hu tamane madad karee shakeesh

Poverty also reduces access to health care for those in rural areas where many residents may not be able to afford to travel to urban centers or pay higher prices for quality, specialized treatment at private facilities. In some cases, doctors or nurses make regular visits to villages in order to provide onsite care.[236] For example, medical personnel travel to remote areas to inform residents about NGO-sponsored free treatment for cleft palate, a deformity more likely to afflict the offspring of mothers with deficient diets during pregnancy. Although they may have little experience with hospitalization and free services, parents invariably agree to the surgical procedure to ensure their children's marital prospects.[237]

© Payal Vora
Children on a donkey

In recent years, efforts have also been made to link rural hospitals and clinics with more advanced facilities in urban areas through the practice of telemedicine. In these instances,

[234] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004.* "Chapter 5: Health and Nutrition [pp. 115–147]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute.
http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208
[235] Relief Web. "Children at the Heart of Gujarat Earthquake Recovery." 28 January 2003.
http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/ACOS-64BTJT?OpenDocument
[236] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004.* "Chapter 5: Health and Nutrition [pp. 115–147]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute.
http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208
[237] Huffington Post. Buncombe, Andrew. "Smile Pinki: The Other Indian Oscar Winner." 25 February 2009.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/02/25/smile-pinki-the-other-ind_n_169807.html

doctors use telephone and internet connections to diagnose and treat patients with out-patient conditions from remote distances. This practice gives rural residents access to well-trained doctors without requiring them to travel.[238] Plans have been made to expand this service to cover all areas of the state by 2010.[239] Additional large-scale investment in rural health infrastructure has been allocated in an effort to further improve the state's health care services.[240]

Rural Education

Basic educational facilities are spread widely throughout rural Gujarat, with 98% of the rural population possessing a primary school in their village (as of 2004).

Exchange 62: Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	ahi najeekmaa koee shaaLaa che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

© Meena Kadri
Doing homework

However, student performance levels and the overall quality of education are lower in these areas than in urban centers. Many rural primary schools do not meet basic standards, and most villages do not have secondary schools. Rural schools may also lack essential services, such as drinking water, textbooks, and a full staff of trained teachers. Because of the limited financial means of many rural families, more rural than urban children are engaged in economic activities that keep them from attending school. Likewise, many children cannot attend owing to their parents' inability to pay basic educational expenses. Girls are at a particular disadvantage in these areas, as they are often expected to stay home to help around the household. Furthermore, children belonging to Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes often face discrimination from peers and teachers. For example, in some rural schools, Dalit children are required to clean bathrooms while children of higher castes work outside or in the classroom.[241] Lower caste and tribal children may also face language barriers as their native tongue may differ from the medium of instruction.

[238] Monsters and Critics. Indo Asian News Service. "Medical Treatment at Doorstep for Poor Gujarat Tribals." 23 October 2007. http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/india/news/article_1367706.php/Medical_treatment_at_doorstep_for_poor_Gujarat_tribals

[239] *Express India*. "'By 2010, the Whole of Gujarat to Be Covered under Telemedicine Network.'" 8 April 2008. http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/by-2010-the-whole-of-gujarat-to-be-covered-under-telemedicine-network/293954/

[240] *The Financial Express*. Das, Sandip and Soma Das. "MP, Rajasthan and Gujarat Top Health Mission Spending." 31 January 2009. http://www.financialexpress.com/news/MP-Rajasthan-and-Gujarat-top-health-mission-spendings/417248/

[241] *India Express.* Bhattacharya, D.P. "In Rural Gujarat Schools, Cleaning Toilets is Still the Job of Dalit Students." 15 October 2008. http://www.indianexpress.com/news/in-rural-gujarat-schools-cleaning-toilets-is-still-the-job-of-dalit-students/373553/

As a result of all of these factors, rural enrollment rates are lower and drop-out rates are higher. These trends contribute to the wide gap between rural and urban literacy rates, which stood at 60% and 83%, respectively, as of 2001.[242] In recent years, the state has been recognized for its improved rural education infrastructure, ranking fourth overall in the country according to one survey.[243] Despite the state's investment, however, there are indications that the quality of the rural education program continues to suffer. In 2008, the state's rural schools posted the lowest average scores in the country on certain tests.[244] Furthermore, as a whole, the Gujarati education system continues to rank below most Indian states in its enrollment of female students, who remain substantially underrepresented.[245]

Local Administration

At the village level, a *gram panchayat*, or village council, serves as the local administrative body. Recognized by the state government, these local bodies are subordinate to *taluka* (township) and district-level authorities, who also form *panchayat* councils. This three-tiered system of local and regional governance is known as *panchayati raj*.[246]

© Meena Kadri
Village elder

Panchayat members are elected by popular vote. While village councils are often composed of men and women; there are rare instances in which women alone comprise the *panchayat*. This is the case in Bhaukhakharia, a small village in Jamnagar district, where locals have elected an all-women council despite their traditional practice of *purdah* (the veiling and seclusion of women).[247] As women are well-represented in the *panchayati raj* system, many of them also act as village, *taluka*, or district-level leaders. Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste, and other Backward Class members are also represented to some extent in local leadership.[248] In any case, the

[242] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004*. "Chapter 6: Literacy and Education [pp. 147–178]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute.
http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208
[243] *The Economic Times*. "Gujarat Climbs to 4th Position in Rural Education: ASSOCHAM." 10 January 2009.
http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/News_By_Industry/Services/Education/Gujarat_climbs_to_4th_position_in_rural_education_ASSOCHAM/rssarticleshow/3960698.cms
[244] Assessment Survey Evaluation Research Centre. The Hindu. "Gujarat Worst in Rural Children's Education, MP Excels." 13 January 2009. http://www.asercentre.org/impact/news/2009-news048.php
[245] *The Times of India*. Shah, Rajiv. "Few Girls in Gujarat Make it to High School." 15 June 2008.
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Ahmedabad/Few_girls_in_Gujarat_make_it_to_high_school/articleshow/3130002.cms
[246] *Indian Express*. Pathan, Bashir. "Govt. to Amend Panchayat Act." 5 April 1999.
http://www.indianexpress.com/ie/daily/19990405/ige05094.html
[247] *Thaindian News*. Parekh, Suresh. "All Women Panchayat in Gujarat Village." 23 September 2008.
http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/india-news/all-women-panchayat-in-gujarat-village_10099043.html
[248] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004*. "Chapter 7: Gender Development and Distance [p. 199]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute.
http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208

leader of the village council is known as the *sarpanch*. He or she likely lives in the immediate vicinity of the village.

Exchange 63: Does your leader live here?

Soldier:	Does your leader live here?	shu tamaaro netaa anhi rahe che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

Locals will likely be able to direct inquiring persons to the *sarpanch* or other members of the village council.

Exchange 64: Can you take me to your leader?

Soldier:	Can you take me to your leader?	tame mane tamaaraa netaa paase laee jaee shaksho?
Local:	Yes.	haa

As a general practice, village councils typically oversee local administrative tasks, such as the development and maintenance of basic services (e.g., water and waste management). They may also hold judicial proceedings in certain matters, especially in civil cases.

Exchange 65: Respected leader, we need your help / advice / opinion.

Soldier:	Respected leader, we need your help / advice / opinion.	maananiya netaajee, amane tamaaree madad / salaaha / abipraay joee che
Local:	Yes.	haa

In this way, the council often serves as a venue for the resolution of local disputes.

Exchange 66: Did these people threaten you?

Soldier:	Did these people threaten you?	shu aa lokoe tamne damakee aapee che?
Local:	No.	naa

Checkpoints

Gujarat maintains established checkpoints along its international and, like all Indian states, along its internal borders. Travelers passing through international checkpoints along the border with Pakistan are particularly subject to scrutiny due to terrorism threats, the ongoing border dispute at Sir Creek, and the generally tense relations between India and Pakistan. (Officially, non-Indian and non-Pakistani foreign nationals are only allowed to cross the Indian–Pakistan border through the Indian city of Atari, located in Punjab state.)[249]

[249] Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "India: Country Specific Information." 3 February 2009. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html

Exchange 67: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Soldier:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	najeeknee chokee kyaa che?
Local:	It's two kilometers.	e be kilomeetar door che

Gujarat state border checkpoints are more focused on levying tolls on commercial transport vehicles.[250] Temporary security checkpoints may be established in case of terrorist attacks (such as the bombings in Ahmadabad in July 2008) or communal violence (such as the riots in 2002).

© d ha rm e sh / flickr.com
Indian Border Security Force

Security checkpoints require individuals to present a form of identification. Foreign nationals will be expected to present their passport. In Gujarat, forms of ID include national passports, driver's licenses, voter registration cards, local ID cards issued for security purposes, and other varieties.[251] An ongoing initiative to provide Multi-Purpose National Identity Cards (MNIC) to all Indian citizens is currently underway, with a short-term goal of providing MNIC to coastal villagers in Gujarat.[252] However, depending upon their socioeconomic background, some Gujaratis may not possess ID.

Exchange 68: Is this all the ID you have?

Soldier:	Is this all the ID you have?	tamaaree paase bas aatalaaj oLkpatra che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

During traffic stops and in many checkpoint situations, drivers will need to present their vehicle registration form.

Exchange 69: Show us the car registration.

Soldier:	Show us the car registration.	tamaaree gaadeenu nodarNeepatra amne bataavo
Local:	OK.	bale

[250] Center for Democracy and Technology. CDT and InfoDev. *E-Government Handbook for Developing Countries*. "Strategic Investment." November 2002. http://www.cdt.org/egov/handbook/strategicinvestment.shtml
[251] NewsX. Patel, Ronak and Mosiqi Acharya. "Identity Cards Help Secure Gujarat Village." 5 August 2008. http://newsx.com/story/21762
[252] *The Times of India*. "National Body for Unique IDs Set Up." 28 January 2009. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/National_body_for_unique_IDs_set_up/articleshow/4038757.cms

In international border-crossing and heightened security situations, passengers may need to be removed from the vehicle.

Exchange 70: Please get out of the car.

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	krupyaa gaadeemaantee baar neekaLo
Local:	OK.	bale

Since each Indian state collects its own taxes, goods in transit within India are often taxed at border checkpoints.[253] The Gujarati police will be primarily interested in checking for taxable goods. In certain situations, vehicles may also be searched for weapons.

Exchange 71: Are you carrying any guns?

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	tame bandooko laee jaee rayaa cho?
Local:	Yes.	haa

Landmines

During a period of heightened Indian–Pakistani tensions in 2001–2002, the Indian army placed approximately two million landmines along the length of the country's 2,880 km (1,790 mi) northwestern border. The mined territory included Gujarat's borderlands with Pakistan.[254]

© Barry Silver
Warning sign

Exchange 72: Is this area mined?

Soldier:	Is this area mined?	shu aa shetromaa surango beechaavelee che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

After tensions between India and Pakistan settled in late 2002, the Indian military initiated mine clearing missions to remove the explosive devices.[255] In 2005, the government claimed to have cleared 99% of the mines scattered along the border, with remnant mines limited to the Jammu and Kashmir region in northern India.[256] While the Gujarat borderlands are ostensibly clear of landmines, the presence of isolated remnant mines—perhaps shifted by weather or other forces—remains possible.

[253] *Christian Science Monitor*. Baldauf, Scott. "Tolls and Taxes Keep India From the Fast Lane." 28 June 2006. http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0628/p01s04-wosc.html
[254] Landmine Monitor, International Campaign to Ban Landmines. *Landmine Monitor Report 2005*. "India." 18 November 2005. http://www.icbl.org/lm/2005/india
[255] BBC News, World Edition. Jolly, Asit. "India Mine Clearing to Take Months." 10 January 2003. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2647255.stm
[256] Landmine Monitor, International Campaign to Ban Landmines. *Landmine Monitor Report 2007*. "India." 6 November 2007. http://www.icbl.org/lm/2007/india

Chapter 6 Family Life

Introduction

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Father and children

The family remains the most important social unit in India. In most cases, familial networks extend into broader social groupings based on caste (*jati*) or tribal affiliation. In the absence of state-run social services, these kinship and caste networks historically served as the sole support systems for their members. This traditional reliance on family remains strong. Ideally, families and castes both operate according to the principle of social interdependence, in which members provide mutual, broad-based support to each other in order to ensure group solidarity, success, and well-being.[257] This applies to the daily functioning of the household, as well as the group's broader social engagement in the economic and political sphere. Jobs, marriages, business contracts, and political appointments may all be secured through such connections. In this way, the interests of the family and its *jati* are consistently fostered and reinforced by the group's members.

Accordingly, familial responsibilities are prioritized over individual needs. Likewise, a person's social standing is often inherently tied to that of his family and caste; he remains obligated to uphold the traditions and reputation of his kinship group. Such practice is, of course, more important for members of intermediate and upper-level *jatis*, although the level of adherence to caste-based traditions may nonetheless vary by group. Overall, with its emphasis on hierarchy and personal duty, the family provides the model for Indian society in general. At the same time, however, patriarchal traditions often contradict progressive reforms aimed at promoting gender equality.

The Typical Household

Household size and composition vary according to the family's socioeconomic background and location. Extended families, also known as joint families, are the traditional norm in India, although smaller, nuclear families have become increasingly common in the modern era. In the case of traditional extended families, it is typical for three to four generations of relatives to live together.[258]

Exchange 73: Does your family live here?

Soldier:	Does your family live here?	tamaaru kutumb mahi rahe che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

[257] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Themes in Indian Society: Social Interdependence." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0082)

[258] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Family and Kinship: Family Ideals." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0083)

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Family at the market

Following patrilocal customs, the traditional household includes a father and mother, their unmarried children, and their married sons with wives and children. Once married, daughters traditionally move in to the family home of their husbands, although they often maintain relations with their natal families. Households may therefore include a combination of grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins (who are often treated as siblings), and/or offspring. In any case, quarters are typically close and individual privacy is often limited or non-existent.

Exchange 74: How many people live in this house?

Soldier:	How many people live in this house?	aa garmaa ketalaa loko rahe che?
Local:	Ten.	das

It is common for kinship groups to reside in a specific region for many generations. Nuclear families consisting of a husband and wife and their unmarried children are more common today, particularly in cities. In Gujarat, urban households have an average of 4.6 members; in rural regions, 5.1 is the average household size.[259]

Family size has decreased in recent years as the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has declined in the state. As of 2005–2006, Gujarat's TFR was 2.4, down from 2.7 in 1998–1999. Corresponding with an increased use of contraceptives, the decline has followed a trajectory promoted by the National Population Policy, which calls for the TFR to fall to 2.1 by 2010.[260]

Family Hierarchy

Indian families are organized according to gender and age, with the eldest male, typically the father or grandfather, having authority over the household. Older members have authority over younger ones, with males having authority over females of similar or younger age. While the father may be the dominant figure in the home, the eldest woman is often in charge of the other females in the household. In some situations, particularly in the case of widows, a woman may serve as the leading authority figure. However, in India's patriarchal society, these circumstances often place the family at an inherent disadvantage, as it lacks the economic input and familial connections of a male representative. Therefore, households headed by women are susceptible to poverty, especially in urban areas, where they are most common.[261]

[259] The Hindu Business Line. Srinivas, A. "AP, Karnataka Are Literacy Laggards: Survey Report." 18 November 2008. http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2008/11/18/stories/2008111850802100.htm

[260] *The Times of India*. "In Gujarat, Families Going Smaller, Waistlines Bigger!" 23 August 2006. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1917410.cms

[261] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004.* "Chapter 2: Dynamics of Development in Gujarat [p. 51]," and "Chapter 6: Gender Development and Distance [pp. 185–186]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute. http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208

The young brides of junior male members of the family will have the least authority among the adults in the household, as they are new to the home. Over several generational cycles, they may rise to the leading female position.[262] Overall, each member is expected to accept his or her station within the family hierarchy. In nuclear families, this hierarchy may be streamlined in the immediate household, but it will nonetheless extend throughout the kinship group.

Exchange 75: Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	shu aa tamaaroo pooroo kutumb che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

Roles and Responsibilities within the Family

© Meena Kadri
Father and son

The roles and responsibilities of each family member vary according to the family's socioeconomic standing, location, and religious or caste-based customs. As the authority figure, the father is generally in charge of inculcating *jati* values and ensuring his family's proper social conduct. Likewise, he often makes the major decisions that shape the individual lives of his offspring, including those concerning education, marriage, and career. The father will often make these decisions in consultation with his wife, although this may not always be the case.

Men are traditionally responsible for earning and managing the family's income; their occupation is often determined by *jati* tradition or through related connections. Depending upon caste, men in urban areas may work in various professional or commercial fields, or in low-paid service positions or menial labor. Men in rural areas often work as farmers, herders, or laborers; members of wealthier rural *jatis* may be landowners.

Exchange 76: Where do you work, sir?

Soldier:	Where do you work, sir?	shrimaan, tame kyaa kaam karo cho?
Local:	I am a farmer, sir.	hu ek kedoot chu

In extended families, the household will likely have multiple income earners.

Exchange 77: Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

Soldier:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	tamaaraa kutumbmaa shu fakta tamaaree paase nokree che?
Local:	No.	naa

[262] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Family and Kinship: Family Authority and Harmony." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0085)

Regardless of caste or family income, women are expected to be devoted wives and mothers. They provide support and, in some cases, council to their husbands, and they often perform acts of religious devotion for the sake of the family. In terms of work, women are traditionally charged with the daily operation of the household, including cooking, cleaning, and child rearing.

In some communities, women may be subject to some form of *purdah*, which traditionally involves the veiling and seclusion of women. In these instances, women may be largely restricted to the home, and thus their domain of responsibilities does not extend beyond the household. In many cases, this practice is a sign of wealth and status for the family, as women's labor is seen as unnecessary and servants may be employed to fulfill certain menial duties.[263]

Exchange 78: Are these people part of your family?

Soldier:	Are these people part of your family?	shu aa loko tamaaraa kutumbeejano che?
Local:	No.	naa

At the other end of the spectrum, women from less traditional backgrounds may have the means and support to pursue an advanced education and a professional career outside the home. This is increasingly common today, particularly among progressive families who view *purdah* practices as archaic. The rate of women's participation in the workforce is much greater in rural areas, however, where they often engage in agricultural and subsistence activities in addition to household tasks. In any case, women's efforts are often undervalued: much of their work—be it informal or for subsistence purposes—is not reflected in official economic data.[264]

Kite making

Elderly family members who are no longer in the seat of authority remain well-respected and cared for by the family. They often participate in child-rearing. To the extent that the family is financially capable, children are generally treasured and indulged at a young age, with boys given more special attention than girls.[265] As they grow older, children are tasked with individual responsibilities. In families with sufficient means, children of appropriate age attend school, with the education of boys given higher priority than that of girls in many families.

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[263] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Family and Kinship: Veiling and the Seclusion of Women." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0085)

[264] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004.* "Chapter 2: Dynamics of Development in Gujarat [p. 51]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute. http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208

[265] *Culture Shock!: India*. Kolanad, Gitanjali S. "Chapter Four: Home and the World: Childhood [pp. 81–82]." 2001. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.

Exchange 79: Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	tamaaraa baaLako shaaLaamaaa jaay che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

Children from poorer families, particularly those in rural areas, may be kept home from school or are forced to drop out since the family needs their labor. In these cases, children, especially girls, are expected to care for younger siblings and perform essential household chores. Most notably, girls are often charged with collecting water, fuel, and animal feed for the family and its livestock.[266] Children may also be required to assist on the family farm or find paying jobs in the informal sector to supplement the family's income. In 2007, a study of cotton field workers in Gujarat found that 33% were below the age of 14; the majority of these minors reported they were sent to work by their fathers.[267]

Exchange 80: Did you grow up here?

Soldier:	Did you grow up here?	shu tame ahee ucharelaa cho?
Local:	Yes.	haa

Male-Female Interaction within the Family

Patriarchal customs shape the interactions between males and females within the home. Following the example of the father, younger males adopt authoritative attitudes toward their female counterparts, as appropriate to their position within the familial hierarchy. In turn, females are expected to obey and defer to their male relatives of older or similar age. Within this structure, women often remain largely subservient to the needs of the family, and they may have little input in the major decisions concerning their individual lives, such as the selection of their marriage partner.

Married couple

Females may also be subject to male supervision, as traditional ideas concerning the vulnerability of feminine chastity and honor remain prevalent among many families. This extends to the larger social sphere, where Western-style dating practices are not widely accepted. Unions are instead typically formed through arranged marriages between families, and brides are expected to be chaste, or they may be otherwise considered impure and not worthy of marriage. Overall, such traditions require females to observe modest and conservative behavior. This is especially the case in traditional joint households, where a young bride may live with several of her husband's male relatives. On the other hand, the males in the family may be less restrained in demeanor and may

[266] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004.* "Chapter 4: The Status of Environment in Gujarat [p. 77]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute.
http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208

[267] India Express. Thacker, Teena. "'Child Labour Rampant in Gujarat Cotton Fields.'" 7 November 2007.
http://www.indianexpress.com/news/child-labour-rampant-in-gujarat-cotton-fields/236923/1

enjoy greater freedom of choice and expression. In any case, codes of propriety generally require the married couples in the household to limit their display of affection when in the presence of other family members.[268]

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Woman and child

Traditionally, sons receive better treatment from their parents than daughters, as male offspring propagate the family, accumulate its wealth, and care for the parents in their old age—all in line with patrilineal custom. Daughters, on the other hand, become members of other families. Not only do her parents lose her labor; marrying her off imposes the potentially ruinous expense of a dowry on them. The relationship between a mother and her son is seen as particularly important since the birth of a boy—an heir to the family's name and wealth—often plays a strong role in determining a woman's status within the family. Furthermore, in nurturing her relationship with her son, a woman can wield influence on the family's future leader. By the same token, she may treat her daughter-in-law in a more severe manner to demonstrate where his loyalties should lie.[269]

Exchange 81: Do you have any brothers?

Soldier:	Do you have any brothers?	tamne koee baaee che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

In many cases, women are subject to spousal abuse or abuse from their husbands' families. In the National Family Health Survey of 2005–2006, over 27% of the married women polled in Gujarat claimed to have been abused in some manner by their husbands.[270] Furthermore, in 2007, Gujarat state had the second highest number of reported domestic abuse cases in the country.[271] However, domestic violence against women often goes unreported out of a desire to maintain the family's reputation.[272] In extreme cases, young brides may be killed by the husband's family due to disputes over insufficient dowries, even though the practice of giving dowries is officially illegal. These "dowry killings" often involve death by fire, and many of them may be disguised

[268] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Family and Kinship: Family Authority and Harmony." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0085)
[269] *Culture Shock!: India*. Kolanad, Gitanjali S. "Chapter Four: Home and the World: The Joint Family [pp. 78–83]." 2001. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.
[270] The Times of India. "In Gujarat, Families Going Smaller, Waistlines Bigger!" 23 August 2006. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1917410.cms
[271] Outlook India. Press Trust of India. "Chhattisgarh Has Most Number of Domestic Violence Cases." 4 November 2008. http://www.outlookindia.com/pti_news.asp?id=628765
[272] United Nations Development Programme. Hirway, Indira and Darshini Mahadevia. *Gujarat Human Development Report 2004*. "Chapter 6: Gender Development and Distance [pp. 201–202]." 2004. Ahmadabad: Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute. http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=208

as accidents or suicides.[273] In Gujarat, these incidents have occurred most often in the Kachchh and Kathiawar regions.[274]

Marriage, Birth, Divorce and Widowhood

Marriage

In India, marriages are, for the most part, social and economic contracts between families, rather than romantic unions between individuals. For Hindus, spouses are typically chosen from outside the family's lineage, but often from within the same general caste group. A bride and groom often first meet in a communal setting with their families; thereafter, they may or may not have a say in the matter before getting married.

Exchange 82: Is this your wife?

Soldier:	Is this your wife?	shu aa tamaanee patnee che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

For Hindus and Muslims, marriage is a religious sacrament and a social requisite for an individual's passage into adulthood. It is not only considered abnormal, but shameful for healthy people to go unmarried in India.

Although the legal marriage age is 18, many Gujarati girls continue to marry at a younger age, typically as a result of arrangements between families. As of 2008, between 20% and 25% of marriages in the state involved underage girls. The trend is particularly strong in tribal areas, where it contributes to a cycle of malnutrition as young, undernourished mothers are unable to sufficiently feed their babies.[275]

Childbirth

As perpetuation of the family line is the most important duty of Gujaratis, a new bride's first monthly period in her husband's home is heralded as an omen of fertility. Early pregnancy is considered desirable as are large families. Numerous ceremonies are held to mark the various stages of gestation. A married woman with sons, for example, will present an expectant mother in the seventh month of her first pregnancy with a coconut which she will carefully keep until childbirth.[276]

Sleeping infant

[273] Times Online. Page, Jeremy. "Indian Women Twice as Likely to Burn to Death." 3 March 2009. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article5832650.ece?token=null&offset=0&page=1
[274] *The Times of India.* "Gujarat to Appoint Officers to Curb Domestic Violence." 29 December 2005. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1351507.cms
[275] *Express India*. "20–25 Per Cent of Girls Tying the Knot in Gujarat are Underage." 5 May 2008. http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/2025-per-cent-of-girls-tying-the-knot-in-Gujarat-are-underage/305376/
[276] *People of India: Gujarat.* Singh, K.S. Kumar, ed. Brahman, Sachora. [p. 1213]. 2003. Popular Prakashan, India.

The birth of a son, for whom there are numerous rites of passage, is met with great joy. The arrival of a daughter, by contrast, may receive little or no family celebration at all.[277] To avoid giving birth to a girl, some families avail themselves of fetal sex selection through ultrasound. Indian women have been legally allowed to seek abortions since 1971.[278] The technology-assisted practice of sex selective pregnancy termination has been denounced by the Prime Minister and made illegal under Indian law.[279] Yet its effects are widespread in Gujarat, where there are 879 girls born to every 1,000 boys.[280] As a countermeasure, the state government sponsored a "Save the Girl Child" campaign.[281] It features extremely blunt messages such as a television advertisement that asks viewers, "Are you going to kill your daughter?"[282]

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Young woman in Mumbai

The gender imbalance, higher in wealthier Gujarat than in several poorer Indian states, reflects the strength of patrilineal tradition, in which familial lineage is traced through the male line.[283] As workers and heirs to the family inheritance, males are perceived as more economically viable than girls, who are ultimately transferred—along with their dowry—to other families through marriage. In this way, females may be seen as more of a liability than an asset, even by wealthy families. Males are also valued for the important role they play in their parents' funeral rites.[284]

Divorce

Divorce has traditionally been a highly taboo act in India, and its occurrence remains relatively rare. Many estimates place the country's divorce rate around 1%;[285] even high estimates of 6–7% are low compared to those of many countries.[286] Although divorce rates have increased in recent years, particularly in urban areas, the breakup of a marriage

[277] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Family and Kinship: Life Passages: Children and Childhood." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0086)
[278] Princeton University. Visaria, Leela. "Sex Selective Abortion in India: Some Empirical Evidence from Gujaratand Haryana States." 2005. http://iussp2005.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=51652
[279] *New York Times.* Gentleman, Amelia. "Indian Prime Minister Denounces Abortion of Females." 29 April 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/29/world/asia/29india.html?ref=world
[280] *The Times of India*. Raghuram, Aruna. "Sex Determination Still a Worry." 24 January 2009. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Ahmedabad/Sex_determination_still_a_worry/articleshow/4023900.cms
[281] Media Centre, UNICEF. Gulati, Gurinder. "Gujarat Launches Save the Girl Child Campaign to Arrest Declining Sex Ratio." http://www.unicef.org/india/media_3284.htm
[282] *In Spite of the Gods: The Rise of Modern India*. Luce, Edward. "Chapter 8: New India, Old India." [p. 309]. 2007. New York: Anchor Books.
[283] The strength of culture as opposed to economics in family decision-making is addressed in Policy, "Back to Nature? Andrew Norton Talks to Francis Fukuyama." September–November 2002. http://www.cis.org.au/POLICY/SPRING02/polspring02-5.htm
[284] *Culture Shock!: India*. Kolanad, Gitanjali S. "Chapter Four: Home and the World: The Joint Family [pp. 78–83]." 2001. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.
[285] Time. Robinson, Simon. "Divorce and Remarriage—Indian-Style." 5 July 2007. http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1640200,00.html
[286] *The Independent*. Buncombe, Andrew. "Monsoon Divorce." 22 April 2008. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/monsoon-divorce-813342.html

remains a highly stigmatizing experience for the parties involved.[287] This is particularly the case for women, who are subject to strict customs concerning purity and thus may have difficulty finding a new marriage partner. Furthermore, since brides are traditionally assimilated into their husband's families, a divorce can have a devastating effect on a woman's economic standing and social network, leaving her alone and destitute or compelled to rejoin her natal family, if they welcome her return. Divorced women are also often subject to scorn in the larger community.

Exchange 83: Are you married?

Soldier:	Are you married?	shu tame paraNelaa cho?
Local:	No.	naa

However, as middle and upper-class women have achieved a degree of financial independence that has empowered them, the rate of divorce has increased. Higher expectations for a marriage partner—including a desire for romance rather than an exclusive focus on economic security—have also contributed to the trend. Along these lines, specific matchmaking sites have arisen in order to help divorcees find new marriage partners.[288]

As it becomes more available, the option of divorce provides some women with a viable escape from failing or abusive relationships. Historically, Indian women have been forced to endure these abusive environments, or they have been driven to suicide, often by self-immolation.[289] Today, marital and familial issues such as domestic violence, dowry disputes, infertility, and adultery remain major causes for female suicides. As it continues to carry a stigma, divorce itself is also a cause of suicide.[290]

Widowhood

In India, widowhood can have markedly different effects upon men and women. Men of appropriate age and means are likely to remarry, and they will retain the financial and social support of their kinship group. On the other hand, widowhood, like divorce, often leaves women in an extremely vulnerable and stigmatized social position. Foremost, a widow may be seen by the deceased's family as a financial liability, in which case she may be forced to leave. In these instances, which are common in poorer, rural areas, it is typical for a widow to have to fight for any property to which she may be legally entitled through inheritance.[291] In addition to potentially

© Meena Kadri
Elderly woman in Raikad

[287] *The Times of India.* "Divorce No Longer Taboo in Conservative Gujarat." 23 October 2002. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/26098030.cms

[288] *International Herald Tribune*. Giridharadas, Anand. "With India's New Affluence Comes the Divorce Generation." 19 February 2008. http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/02/19/asia/divorce.php

[289] Times Online. Page, Jeremy. "Indian Women Twice as Likely to Burn to Death." 3 March 2009. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article5832650.ece?token=null&offset=0&page=1

[290] *The Times of India*. Mohan, Vishwa. "More Men Committed Suicide in India than Women: Report." 16 December 2008. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/More_men_committed_suicide_Report/articleshow/3842361.cms

[291] *The Times of India.* "'Less than 14 pc Women in Rural Gujarat Own Land.'" 4 May 2005. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1098860.cms

losing her economic and social connections with her deceased husband's family, a widow may be subject to restrictions or social disgraces that further limit her opportunities.

In the past, widows were often ostracized from the family and the greater community by superstitious traditions that attribute the husband's death to the wife's supposedly unlucky or immoral character. *Sati*, or the burning of the widow on the husband's funeral pyre, was also a traditional practice within certain communities in India. In these instances, the woman's self-sacrifice was perceived as bringing honor to herself and her deceased husband.[292] Today, these traditions may persist in some form, more so in rural areas. Most notably, occasional incidences of *sati* still occur, despite longstanding and recently strengthened laws banning the practice.[293]

In Gujarat, the state government provides limited financial assistance to eligible widows in order to help them subsist.[294] An organization known as the International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Career Development (ICECD) has also worked to provide business training to thousands of Gujarati widows, many of whom have since experienced significant success.[295]

Naming Conventions

Gujaratis traditionally hold a naming ceremony, known as *namkaran*, after the birth of a child. The specific day of the ceremony may vary according to caste tradition and the child's sex, but it is typically held in the first week or two after birth. On this day the baby is dressed in new clothes and a priest joins the family to conduct the ceremony. The name is selected according to the horoscope. The priest chooses an auspicious letter to be used as the first letter of the name and, traditionally, the father's sister then selects a name using that letter.[296] The priest may then whisper the name into the baby's ears.[297]

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Mother and child

Exchange 84: Are these your children?

Soldier:	Are these your children?	shu aa tamaaraa baaLako che?
Local:	Yes.	haa

[292] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Heitzman, James and Robert L Worden, eds. *A Country Study: India*. Jacobson, Doranne. "Chapter 5: Social Systems: Family and Kinship: Life Passages: Marriage." September 1995. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+in0087)
[293] *International Herald Tribune*. Associate Press. "7 Arrested in Indian Widow's Burning Death." 14 October 2008. http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/10/14/asia/AS-India-Widow-Burning.php
[294] *The Times of India*. Misra, Leena. "Gujarat Counts 'Real' Widows." 3 June 2003. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/2590.cms
[295] Live Mint, *The Wall Street Journal*. Raghu, Sunil. "Widow Entrepreneurs of Gujarat Working to Earn a Decent Living." 7 July 2008. http://www.livemint.com/2008/07/07003453/Widow-entrepreneurs-of-Gujarat.html?h=B
[296] *India Times*, Spirituality. "Birth Rituals Among Gujarati Hindus." No date. http://spirituality.indiatimes.com/articleshow/-333109820.cms
[297] *Culture Shock!: India*. Kolanad, Gitanjali S. "Chapter Four: Home and the World: The Life Cycle: Birth [pp. 84–85]." 2001. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.

Gujarati names typically consist of a first and last name, the latter of which is the family name. Family names are often determined by *jati* or religious tradition. According to convention, married women adopt the family name of their husbands. Gujaratis may also have a middle name, usually the father or husband's given name. Thus Pratibha Patel may also go by Pratibha Ashutosh Patel. Ashutosh can be either her husband or her father, something discernible by her marital status.

© Meena Kadri
Young boy in Mumbai

The surnames of Muslims and Hindus are indistinguishable. It is thus only possible to determine a person's religion through his given name. Rajkumar Jetha is Hindu, while Jamal Jetha is a Muslim name.[298]

[298] BBC Your Voice. "Gujarati." No date. http://www.bbc.co.uk/voices/multilingual/gujarati_writing_system.shtml