Role of Cultural Institutions in Urban Resilience:
The case of Ahmedabad

Authors:
Jigna Desai: Associate Professor, Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University; Executive Director, Center for Heritage Conservation, CEPT Research and Development Foundation, Ahmedabad.
Juhi Bafna: Research Assistant, Center for Heritage Conservation, CEPT Research and Development Foundation, Ahmedabad.

Year 2021

GCRF - ENGAGE Network
ENGAGE PAPER SERIES

ENGAGE Regional Hub: India

Role of Cultural Institutions in Urban Resilience: The case of Ahmedabad

Authors: Jigna Desai and Juhi Bafna

2021

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

Acknowledgement [Headings: Bold Calibri 12]

To start with, we acknowledge the tremendous on ground work done by the Municipality, Trusts, Non-Government Organisations and individuals during the difficult times of COVID19 pandemic in the historic city of Ahmedabad. We thank all the individuals who gave us time to give their candid views and insights while we were conducting the research. We specifically thank Jingnya Trust and Ahmedabad Sunni Muslim Waqf Committee for readily sharing the information about their organisations' activities.

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

Abstract for case study

Historic City of Ahmedabad has through its history seen earthquakes, floods, fires, famines, riots and epidemics. The historic city was also considered to be the 'epicenter' of the COVID 19 pandemic. On one hand there are many narratives that blame the urban settlement pattern, density of people, culture of constant communication and a general lack of upkeep as what negatively affects the city during these times; there are also, on the other hand, recorded instances of cultural (religious and non-religious) institutions that are embedded in the city, that get activated during these times and provide the support for residents to recover and bounce back to their lives. This research looks into these institutional networks, their processes and their outreach during these times. The study will also include the role of cultural heritage as markers of these networks and processes. A historic perspective of this will be developed through literature studies. COVID 19 provides a possibility to study responses of these institutions in such situations. Interviews of residents, institutional custodians and experts will be conducted for this.

Background

In many historic cities of India, one sees cultural networks, with historic knowledge of managing crisis get activated and in most cases succeed in addressing various interlinked issues of physical health, emotional well-being and in many cases livelihood. Dr. Rohit Jigyasu, Project Manager (Urban Heritage, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management), ICCROM, in his talk titled *Harnessing the role of cultural heritage for sustainable recovery following disasters and conflicts* (ENGAGE Workshop, October 10, 2020), identified that cultural institutions are places where certain groups of people put their faith in, especially at the time of crisis. These institutions not only have the capacity to reach the last person of the connected community, but often extend humanitarian aid to all that can access it. This role of institutions that in some cases are also cultural heritage, however, is many times missed when understanding the heritage values of the place. The ongoing COVID 19 pandemic has brought in the front lines the aspect of cultural heritage in historic cities that otherwise remain in margins.

It is in this context this paper examines the role of cultural institutions at the time of crisis in the World Heritage Site of Historic City of Ahmedabad. The Historic City of Ahmedabad is spread over 535.7 hectors and a population of more than 350,000 has a density of more than 700 people per hector and its own share of conflicts. Its current management plan clearly identifies the historic buildings, residential and institutional structures with certain architectural value and the settlement pattern as valuable. The city administration has a list of buildings and urban artefacts that are earmarked for protection and conservation. There are economic incentives and a clearly laid out process for owners of these structures to conserve their buildings. The city, however, sees continuous erosion of heritage sites and structures. As reported in Times of India, Ahmedabad issue in May 2019, many of the actions taken by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) to protect and conserve heritage have not been successful as the deterioration continues. Most of the heritage that gets lost in this process belongs to individuals or communities that are already marginalized in the current political and administrative narratives (Desai, 2019). This paper, by studying the relationships between cultural institutions and residents at the time of the crisis, argues that the management of heritage assets of the city must acknowledge the role of these institutions as key to not only conserving listed heritage structures but also addressing the question of marginalized heritage.

Contextualizing the Objective

The Historic City of Ahmedabad was designated as a World Heritage Site for its outstanding value under two criteria: Criteria (ii), "to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology,

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

monumental arts, town planning or landscape design" and criteria (v), "to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change" (World Heritage Center, UNESCO). In the justification of inscription under criteria (ii), the historic architecture of the city of the 15th century Sultanate period was presented for it's "unique provincial Sultanate idiom… (where) local traditions and crafts were accepted in religious buildings of Islam, even when they did not strictly follow the tenets for a religious building". More than thirty such religious structures representing this unique value of the city are listed. The city's hierarchical settlement planning, neighborhoods (Pol) with is wooden houses and community spaces is identified as an outstanding example of human habitation under criteria (v) (Description, Historic City of Ahmedabad, World Heritage List).

The Sultanate period monuments identified for their architecture are religious places, they have historically, on behalf of state acted as institutions that work for a common good and in contemporary times they also act as places of cultural and scientific interest (Figure 1). The community spaces identified in the neighborhoods are invariably centered around other, small religious institutions that apart from being places of prayer and religious discourse are also places for collective gathering, where small community-based activities related to cultural disciplines are performed. These places are embedded in traditional human networks that are key in the times of disasters and conflicts. This paper starts of by articulating the urban relationships between these cultural institutions that are embedded withing the neighborhoods of the historic city and then goes on to articulate their roles in the day-to-day life of the residents as places of worship, festivities, and celebration. The paper then goes on to identifying, through literature studies the role of they play at the time of crisis, conflicts and disasters. The current COVID 19 pandemic provides a first-hand window into the functioning of these institutions at the time of crisis and the potential of them being introduced as key to managing heritage of the city.

For the purpose of this study, these places are broadly categorized as Cultural Institutions of the city (Figure 2). The city of Ahmedabad has many other cultural institutions, such as museums, libraries, theatres, and art galleries, some of them located within the historic city. However, traditionally, cultural discourse was imparted under the patronage of a religious community organization, and to a great extent, it continues to be the case for many people living in the historic city. The Historic City of Ahmedabad has more than 30 mosques and dargah, more than 30 Hindu temples, a little less than 100 Jain temples, three churches, one Parsi agiyari and one synagogue, most of which are used for practicing daily rituals of spiritual and religious nature by the associated religious groups. There are more madrasa, jamaatkhana, upaashray, dharmashaala, all of which are places that serve as guest houses and places o=for transfer of religious knowledge to new generations, Most of these places continue to be managed and maintained by community trusts that are funded by local residents who are affiliated to these places or families who have moved out but continue to be associated with these places. Desai (2019, p.5-6) points out that these places, most having an architectural significance, continue to be managed by these trusts and communities based on their religious treatises of conservation. These places are also centers through which communities manage emergencies, crisis, and disasters.

Figure 1: Ahmed Shah's Mosque, Photo Credit: Danish Kinariwala (year 2011). Sourced from Center for Conservation Studies, CEPT University.

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

Figure 2: Jain Derasar, Fatasha ni Pol. Photo Credit: Isha (year 2012), Source: Center for Conservation Studies, CEPT University.

It is in this context; this study aims at understanding the role of these cultural institutions in urban resilience and how they become important and symbolic spatial markers to the actions taken during a crisis in the city. While the architecture of it is celebrated through the World Heritage inscription, the intangible relationship these places have with the community are more pronounced during this time. Urban resilience as described in the 100 Resilient Cities Research Report of Urban Institute, Rockefeller Foundation is understood as "the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions,

businesses and systems within a city to survive, adapt and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shock they experience" (December 2018, p, 6). It must be kept in mind that the study is done with the intention of understanding and analyzing these relationships in order to decode the role of cultural institutions in urban resilience, especially in the context of the Historic City of Ahmedabad.   The study is not done with the intention of suggesting a movement back to traditions, but to introduce another dimension to how we value historic places that also play a role as cultural institutions in a city.

Scope and Method of Study

The study is located within the physical boundaries of the historical city of Ahmedabad, the World Heritage Site. However, to study networks of cultural institutions, there are some sites that are identified beyond this boundary. There are two main components to this study: historic perspective on roles of cultural institutions and the current actions in the city in context of the COVID 19 pandemic. The historic dimensions are studied based on a literature study where specific studies on the city, its workings, its urban structure and its cultural practices are looked into. Many of these works are in Gujarati and the author being proficient in the language was an added advantage. The second part of the study is essentially dependent on primary sources. These sources include newspaper articles, twitter feeds by the official handle of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) and Interviews with individuals living in the city or involved in managing activities around pandemic relief and are linked to cultural institutions. It must be noted that some of these interviews were conducted in person while owing to the pandemic, some interviews are conducted on phone. Twitter feeds of AMC are verified through their website with the sole purpose of understanding the gravity of the pandemic in the historic city and actions by the administration.

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and Cultural Institutions, while acting independently are invariably and intrinsically connected to the politics and economics of the place. It must be noted that looking into these aspects and their influences on actions discussed here is outside the scope of this study. This study will only focus on understanding the actions and networks of cultural institutions in the historic city of Ahmedabad to eventually be able to discuss the value and role of these institutions during the time of crisis. The study will conclude with identifying the spatial extents of these traditional networks.

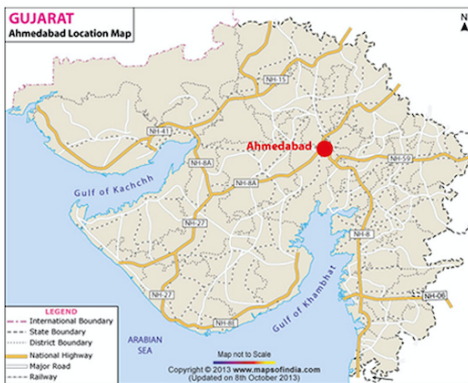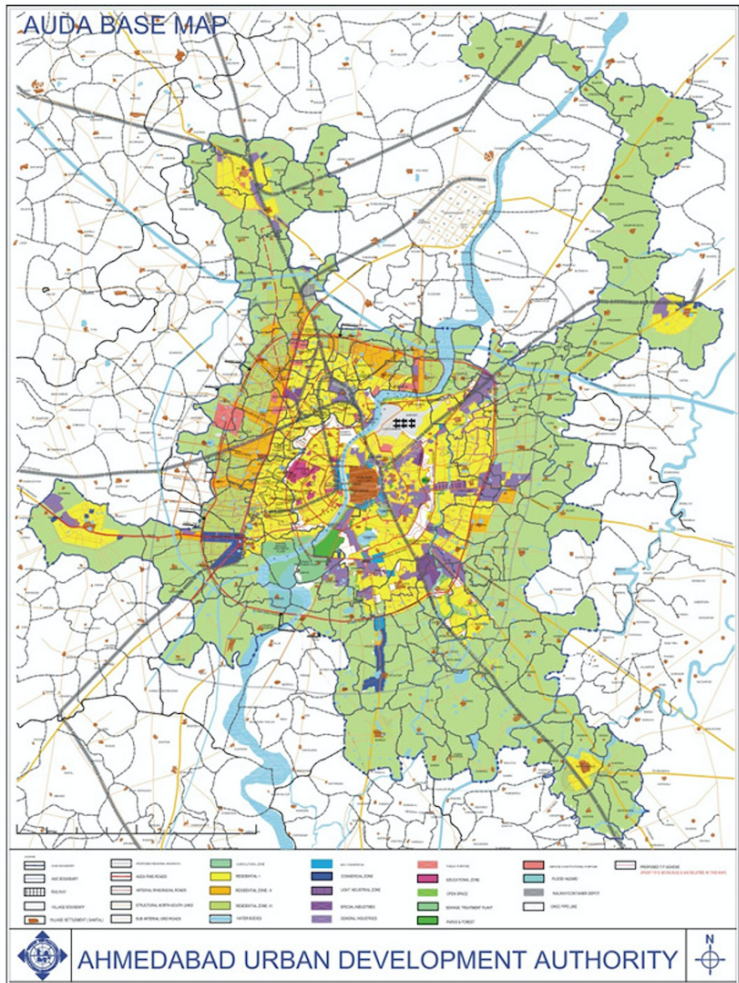## Ahmedabad: Structure, Institutions, Neighborhoods

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Figure 3: Location map of the Historic City od Ahmedabad. Sources: Fig1 http://www.mapsofinfia.com/maps/gujarat/gujaratlocation.html; Fig 2: http://www.mapsofindia.com/india/where-is-ahmedabad.html; Fig3: Map available on the official AUDA web portal (year 2016).

The City of Ahmedabad was established in AD 1411 with the Bhadra Citadel as a fortified town with places for palaces and all other facilities for the king and his noblemen (Figure 3). From there on until the arrival of Marathas in the later 18th Century, the city went through processes of consolidation and densification. The Fort Walls of the city were built 50 years after the Citadel and various pur of the city, located between the Citadel and the Fort Wall came into being one after another. Administratively, these pur were independently headed by the noble men appointed by the king (Gillion, 1968, p.26). Each of these pur also had a prominent Mosque for prayers, usually on the highest land of that pur. These pur consisted of pol; a group of houses with one of two gates. Pol is a self – governing social unit of the residents based on family ties, caste, religion, or occupation (Figure 4).

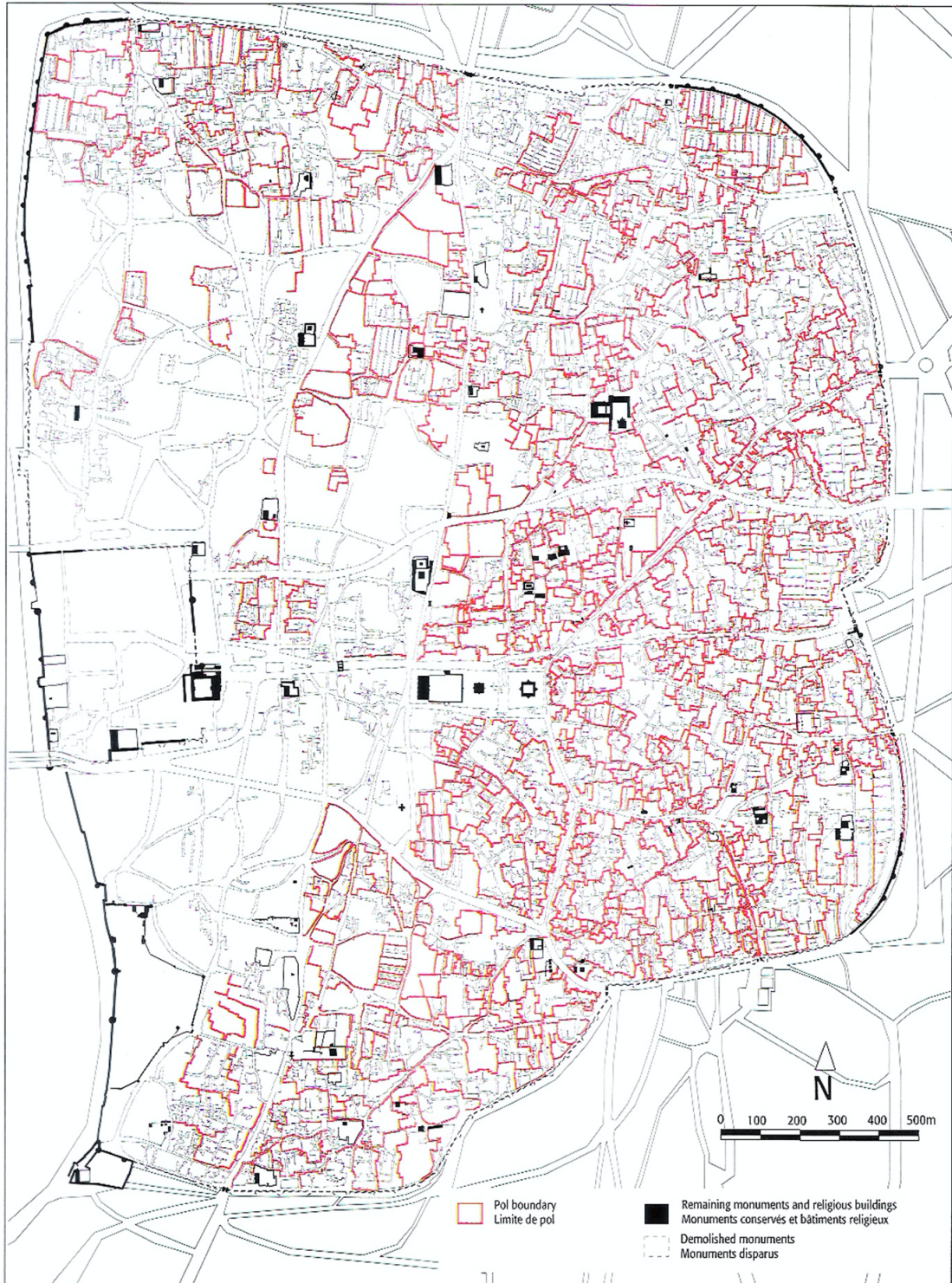ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

Figure 4: Pol Boundaries as per Survey done by Directorate for Architecture and Heritage and French Association of Artistic Action (2001, p.28).

A pol was and continues to be in many cases a close-knit neighbourhood, each marked with a religious structure(s), to respond to the daily rituals of the inhabitants. Gauri Bharat (2020), in her studies of Jain Religious institutions of Ahmedabad, identifies that Jain families who live in such proximity and offer worship to the specific derasar are institutional as sangh. Devout Jains will visit the derasar each morning before consuming any food or drink. This practice is very similar, as identified earlier to Hindu

10

and Muslim communities. Apart from this daily morning prayer ritual, there are other prayer rituals in various communities as practiced by individuals encouraging reflection and possibly feeling of gratitude, mercy, compassion and a general sense of transcendence. The architecture of these structures provide an excellent place to invoke the feeling of awe. There are other rituals and festivities that mark fortnight, months and the year and these usually promote the sense of collective, a sense of belonging to the place. The historic city, with its area of 5.5 sq.km., has more than thirty mosques, more than twenty temples and more than a hundred Jain derasar.

Figure 5: Path Structures and locations of derasars in the Historic City of Ahmedabad as

studied in Mandavi ni Pol. Source: Desai, 2019, p. 41.

Spatially, each pol with Jain residents would have at least one derasar, usually located at the highest point of that particular neighbourhood, forming a chowk in front of it (Figure 5). This enables the residents to follow their daily rituals of prayers, meditation and sewa as a part of their daily routine. Along with the derasar in many cases would be an upashray, which would be a place for the ascetics to rest, conduct religious discourse and host charitable activities. This is also common for the neighbourhoods belonging to other religions and communities. To extend the idea of 'walkability' these structures are usually located on the way out of the neighbourhood, near the gate of the pol and are also interconnected through the main street. In order to make the way finding easier, these structures are also usually the tallest ones in the neighbourhood. There is an understanding among all believers to not build their own houses or any other structures to be higher than the Shikhar or the dome of the religious structure (Shah and Kadia, 1997). Their understanding of these 'norms' are further reinforced through every process of revival and repair that are done through financial support, management and much of the labour from the believers. These spaces in the city are understood to be co-produced by these participants and the knowledge gained through this process is the intangible understanding that is valued.

Historic Perspective on the role of Institutions at the time of crisis

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

The physical structure of the city, with its citadel, pura, and pol also reflected in the governance structure of the Historic City of Ahmedabad. Administratively, pur were independently headed by the noblemen appointed by the king. While the king, with his system of Subahdar, Diwan, Faujdars, Kazis and Kotwals provided and collected taxes for the overall safety and governed the city level trade policy and public infrastructure, the heads of the pur collected property taxes from the residents for living there and trading from there. These pur were usually named after the first nobles of the city, had their own dynamics of growth, decay and regeneration. It had its own religious places, institutions, workplaces and residential neighborhoods (pol) organized in a caste and religion-based hierarchy. Pol is a self-governing social unit of residents based on family ties, caste or occupation. They were administered by Pol Panch (Pol Council), who were responsible for maintenance and management of the neighborhood. Apart from the administrative and organizational responsibilities it held, the panch also were responsible for the social justice given out to the members of the pol. The Ahmedabad Gazetteer (1967, p. 295) records that "no man could sell or mortgage a house to an outsider before offering it to the people of the pol first and through this monitoring the panch ensured that unwanted castes did not enter the pol." The panch also provided financial and social security to the members of the pol by loaning them some amount of money and providing organizational and personal support at the time of need. In return, the members would follow certain social norms of the pol in the events of births, deaths marriages etc.

Laid along with this at the city level was a structure of economic institutions and religious organizations. Ahmedabad's wealth came from being a trade city. The trader's guilds known as Mahajan (literally – the great among people) were institutions in themselves and were headed by the seths. They ensured that the government of the city was responsive to their wishes. During the pre-Mughal and Mughal era, they were as much as the rulers of the city as the royal governors and officials. Any strikes called by the Mahajan could bring the city to a standstill. This economic governance system of guilds was closely interwoven with the religious organizations and would donate heavily to the causes related to them. Jain religious groups, for example, with their foothold in more than a hundred neighborhood derasars and upashray would gain support for their panjarapol (animal home) from the cloth merchants guilds who were predominantly Jains. Together, on many occasions these organizations would push for charities to maintain rest houses for travelers, feed the poor and support the holy men.

An excellent example demonstrating this relationship is of the Town Wall Committee that was set up in 1831 by the prominent citizens and merchants with the purpose of repairing the City Walls. As described by Gillion (1988, p.110 – 112), the city walls had delipidated over the years due to floods, earthquakes and political conflicts. The people of Ahmedabad had been requesting first the Maratha rulers and then the British administration to repair these walls, but in vain. The leading people of Ahmedabad, from these various organizations, suggested that a Committee be formed, consisting of the Collector, the Judge, the Kazi (head of the Muslim community) and the Nagarseth (head of all traders). They committee raised funds through a small increase in town duties, rather than increasing house tax. The Town Wall Committee was not dismissed, it continued to work for maintenance of the city and its infrastructure and was eventually subsumed in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 1856.

Major social and organizational reforms were introduced in the city during the mid-19th Century. During this time and there onwards many cultural institutions that were independent of any political, economic or religious networks were set up in the city. Pir Muhammadshah Library was one of the first cultural institutes to open publicly in the late 18th Century. The Library started as a private collection and was later made public. Many such public institutions were introduced subsequently, including Gujarat Vidhya Sabha, Himabhai Institute, a library and also the site of the first girls school in the city. These institutions along with the religious places were however, sustained by the political and social elite of the city including the Kazi, Jain Mahajan, and later the British elite and the Parsi

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

Panchayat. Many of these groups were also responsible for starting many schools, dispensaries and hospitals in the city. Treasuries of various organisations and institutions became an important safety net at the time of crisis (Gillion, 1968, p. 60). In the early 20th Century, after introduction of industries in the city, the traders – now industrialists continued to support many such organisations including the Gandhian institutions. Considering that these institutions and organisations were a part of a complex network of the political, economic and religious interests, there were ideological differences among them that were addressed temporality, based on the need of the hour.

The city of Ahmedabad has been in many situations of crisis. Many natural calamities are recorded during the last few years of the Mughal reign (1526 to 1712 AD) that resulted into public outcry (after Yagnik and Seth, 2011, p.65 quoting from Mirat – I – Ahmedi. 1681 – 82 AD saw a severe famine that resulted into roti (bread) riot, this was followed by floods in 1684. Another famine in 1685 – 86 AD impacted the food prices in the city, which was followed by a heavy epidemic in 1690 AD and led to a great loss of life in Gujarat. The years between 1694 to 1697 AD saw serious water shortages in the state and the city. During this time the Mahajans contributed a significant amount to the state treasury, while the emperor suspended taxes in food for some time. It is during these times that the Pol Panch, used their collected funds from families for noncompliance of social and community rules (Yagnik and Seth, 2011, pp. 58). Ahmedabad's Mahajans and Nagarseths maintained a close relationship with the communities through these panch and through religious institutions. It was only after the 1731 – 32 AD famine, known as 'Sityasyo' (translated as the one of the year 87, after the 1787 Vikram era) that the city saw a collapse of these systems that resulted into human exploitation. Yagnik and Seth quoting from Mirat – I – Ahmedi narrate that "the Marwari enslaved many Muslim women and children by giving them roti and then 'purified' them by forcing them to eat cow dung and burning a few barley grains over their heads…… (in) retaliation to Aurangzeb's forced conversion of many Hindu captives of Jodhpur in earlier times" (2011, p. 74 – 75).

Since 1714 AD, the city has seen a series of communal discord between the Hindu and the Muslim community. This clearly affected the city's social fabric that was only then politically exploited. During this time of discord, the Mahajans of both the communities continued to find a way of carrying on with commerce and their efforts along with the Nagarseths, the learned elites from various communities, including the British and Parsis, lead to the reforms of the early 19th century. The walled city started being equated to being a place of discord and lacking a progressive vision. In response to many Cholera epidemics in the country, the British doctors and sanitation experts suggested fundamental changes in practices in Indian historic cities and their physical conditions (Tumbe, 2020). Ahmedabad saw a complete shift to piped water and sanitation systems from the traditional systems of rainwater harvesting. Institutionally, city level calamities and epidemics started getting addressed by committees set up by larger citizen led organizations, rather than community organization, Town Wall Committee being one such example. Other examples are the Famine Relief Committee that was set up in 1918 by the Gujarat Sabha (Spodek, 2012, p. 66), Flood Relief Committee of 1927 (Yagnik and Seth, 2011, p. 127) and Ahmedabad Citizens' Peace Committee of 1940 (Yagnik and Seth, 2011, p. 89). These city level Committees however, continued to work with the city administration and the local communities that were closely connected to the religious places and organizations of the city.

The COVID19 Pandemic in Ahmedabad

First two cases of the COVID19 pandemic were reported in Gujarat on 19th March 2020. In less than a month Ahmedabad became the most affected city in Gujarat with a consistent number of around 3000 – 4000 active cases at a given time. In the first week of April of 2020, Ahmedabad was declared as one of the 'hotspots' for the spread of the virus. Within two weeks the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) sprung to action by imposing Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, prohibiting assembly of more than four people in a place, closing all interstate and intercity

transportation and emulating one of the harshest lockdowns in the world as imposed in the entire country. One of the worst affected areas of the city was the Historic City of Ahmedabad. Apart from many responses to tackle the pandemic in the Historic City (discussed later), many newspaper articles written between 8th April 2020 and 20th June 2020, report on the conditions of the Historic City and some speculate reasons for the Historic City being the 'epicenter' of this pandemic as 64% of total cases of the city were reported from this area. By mid-June, however, the Historic City saw respite and as per the reports on 20th June, less than 7% of the total cases were from this area.

During the two months period (April to June) many newspaper articles propagated the communal rhetoric, some also blame the 'culture' of the place where people are too interconnected to observe social distancing. All that is otherwise valued as heritage of the place, the street life, the social networks of the neighborhood, the historic fabric of stacked environmentally friendly houses made of traditional building materials, is pointed at as reasons for the spread of the virus and the ineffectiveness of administrative measures (Figure 6). This narrative in more ways than one is a recall on the image of the 'old' city from the time of continued cholera epidemics of late 19th and early 20th century. Having said that, the historic city, in some areas is quite dense and there are multiple families living in a small house. As Hirway and Mahadevia (The Wire, 19th April, 2020) identify high mobility of people due to trade and tourism, congested living conditions and low expenditure on health sector as key reasons for a rapid spread of the pandemic in the historic city.

Various communities living in the historic city were affected directly due to the pandemic, not only in terms of the number of infections, but also as their social and economic lives came to a complete standstill. As most of the individuals living in the historic city and interviewed for the purposes of this study were dependent on small economic networks, their family earnings were affected substantially. Most of them recalled the plight of the households that were dependent on daily wage being highly affected, most vulnerable of them being the migrant families who had no other social support. Shutting down of religious places for a long period of time also had an impact on the spiritual and mental well-being of many residents. According to H, who lives in the historic city, the month of Ramzan (coinciding with June 2020) was emotionally draining as he was not able to connect with his rituals. He, like most, nevertheless adhered to the strict lockdown. Considering that the social life of the communities living in the historic cities is to intrinsically networked to cultural institutions, as the lockdown eased, many of these institutions started offering alternatives to connect, interact and engage.

Response of the Administration

Figure 6: Sanitisation activities near Teen Darwaza, Historic City of Ahmedabad as reported by Patrika.com on 8th April 2020. Source: https://www.patrika.com/ahmedabad-news/gujarat-old-ahmedabad-city-buffer-zone-corona-virus-walled-city-5982389/

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) was quite swift to spring into action and over the time has been reasonably flexible in adapting to the ever-changing situations. One of the first actions of the AMC was to cordon off the of the area of the Historic City along its fort walls and control the access to and from the city. It deployed paramilitary forces to impose a curfew while allowing women to come out for three hours to buy supplies. The AMC also introduced a dynamic GIS locator for COVID19 positive individuals. This was done to aid people's movements but was later discontinued due to the issues of breach in privacy. The city went on to set up mobile testing vans, health care facilities, public hospitals were readied, private hospitals were coopted and started a drive for disinfecting public places on a regular basis. The disinfecting processes in the Historic City was a particular challenge considering the effect of certain chemicals on the wooden structures. Aashish Trambadia, Director of the Ahmedabad World Heritage Trust, in one of his interviews mentioned the challenge of managing impacts on the most valuable World Heritage Assets (CHC, Tuesday Talks, 5th May 2020).

Figure 7: Municipal Commissioner meeting with head of a particular religious sect, as tweeted by the commissioner on 7th April 2020.

The long lockdown saw many negative impacts. The most visible one was the mass exodus of the migrant labor due to lack of jobs and food. While the administration urged the industry and the building contractors to provide food to the labor, the long break in industries affected their survival. Owing to the fact that many of these labors are not registered or permanently employed and were part of the informal economy of the city, very few organized measured reached them (Hirway and Mahadevia, The Wire, 29th April 2020). The Historic City of Ahmedabad houses much of this informal sector of the city and was impacted due to this. The other negative impact was on people's well-being, considering their day-to-day rituals were severely impacted. The AMC started public campaigns to create awareness about wearing masks, sanitizing and washing hands. The AMC used Police force to manage many of its drive and in a way the Police became the face of all government COVID initiatives. While their main duty was to enforce curfews and law against gatherings, they also came to help many Non-Government Organizations in starting community kitchens, distributing masks, PPE Kits, food packets etc. Some areas within the Historic City also saw some conflicts between residents and the police. While the AMC and the Police were equipped to manage health infrastructure, many of these aspects of the city were managed by the Cultural Institutions of the city (Figure 7).

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, with its singular focus on containing COVID 19 within the historic cities, understandably, placed conservation initiatives in the historic city on low priority for more than six months. However, this singular objective could have been handled with an amount of care towards the physical fabric and community messaging. To begin with, the negative message that the dense neighborhoods and the culture of the place that are otherwise celebrated as having heritage

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

value are responsible for the rapid spread of the virus, could have been countered with the many initiatives that were spread by the AMC using precisely the same networks. This has added to the reasons why communities migrate outside the historic city, leaving the heritage assets and the networks that support the upkeep and maintenance of them vulnerable to neglect and dilapidation. Moreover, as mentioned by an AMC representatives in one of the public interviews at Center for Heritage Conservation (Tuesday Talks, CHC), the coordination between the Heritage Department and the COVID Initiative was missing. For example, he noted that chemical sanitizer spray that was used for disinfecting surfaces of buildings should have been tested by the Heritage Department for its adverse effects on wooden surfaces of the traditional houses.

Role of Cultural Institutions at a time of Crisis

Chaumukhiji ni Pol is a typical Jain neighborhood of the Historic City of Ahmedabad with two derasar and an upashray, from where the Jinagna Trust was operational. Over the years many Jain families have left this part of the city to settle in the western, 'modern' part of Ahmedabad. Many heads of these families, however, continue to be patrons of the trusts that are responsible for the upkeep of the temples and the upashyay, they continue to visit this neighborhood at least once a week for prayers and to coordinate activities with their guardian ascetic, (interviewee D), one of the very few women to hold this position. Her first reaction to the announcement of a strict lockdown was to be concerned about the migrant construction workers who lived in that neighborhood. She took it upon herself to revive a defunct Jain Bhojan Shaala that would provide food for people in need at a very nominal amount. With the help of their network, of more than twenty-seven thousand Jains, she was able to set up a system of delivering free food to the migrant workers. While most families contributed small amounts of cash or grains, women of the pol cooked parts of the meals in their houses. All the food was brought to the upashray and was distributed through the network of rickshaw drivers of the area. As per her account, on the third day of the lockdown, they were able to cater to more than two hundred and fifty migrant workers who were out of job. This network ended up spreading quite beyond the neighborhood as the word spread. The initiative of providing meals to people who have lost their employment continues till date, albeit in a different form. Upashray has now become a temporary Bhojan Shaala and it feeds whoever comes for meals before the sun set. The community, under the leadership of Maharaj Saheb hopes to revive the traditional institute of Bhojan Shaala, most of which were historically set up as community response to crisis (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Food distribution drive as organised by Jinagnya Trust outside the derasar of Choumukhiji ni Pol (May 2020), Source: Jignagnya Trust.

Jain belief of jeev daya, compassion for all the living beings, was also seen in the way a feeding system for stray animal and birds was set up during this time. On a day – to – day basis, stray animals and wandering cattle are fed by people outside their houses or on the way to work or as a part of chores. Bird feeders in the neighborhoods are a symbol of this belief and practice. During the lockdown, when it was felt by the members of the community that there may be many living beings affected due to a break in this ecosystem of feeding the animals and birds, the Trust set up daily routines for feeding birds and animals (Figure 9). The ascetic, D, also responded to the community's need to pray by visiting the deity and participating in their monthly rituals and other festivities by setting up online prayers and in the temple socially distanced events. She initiated online wellness programs for young girls and also carried out religious discourses through recorded online events. Something she says she is not naturally attuned to but had to adapt due to the situation. The Trust helped set up COVID testing centers for the AMC and supported many other programs organized by the city administration and other local bodies. Jinagnya Trust was evidently not the only trust that took up the initiative of supporting the people in this crisis situation. One of the residents, and also the coordinator of the Youth Group, Mr. B, living in Mandavi ni Pol corroborates this by narrating the support he and his group got from other such religious trust. With funding from another such trust guided by another ascetic, the youth group teamed up to organize cooking and distribution of meals to the migrant labor living in their pol. They also distributed vegetables and grains to families with limited means.

Figure 9: Continuous initiative for feeding birds and stray animals by Jinagnya Trust, Source: Jinagnya Trust.

Ahmedabad Sunni Muslim Waqf Committee (ASMWC) informs that during the first weeks and even before the official announcements of the pandemic and lockdowns were announced, they were

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

alarmed by the sudden increase in the number of deaths recorded in the crematoriums managed by the Committee. The Committee representatives contacted the Municipal Commissioner quite early in the pandemic and helped set up COVID care centers in charitable hospitals that are connected to the Muslim communities of the city. The Committee also initiated Mohalla (neighborhood) clinics and distributed food kits till their funds got exhausted. Unlike the Jain trusts, the Waqf Committee funds are dependent upon the zakaat, religious taxes anonymously given for charity, usually during the month of Ramzaan. However, the Committee was successful in securing some funds for this special purposes. Waqf Committee is a custodian of thirty-two mosques, six mausoleums, one orphanage and living charitable traditions such as Naubat and Langar. Their biggest challenge was to care for the children from the orphanage after the government directive of closing all schools. During this time, the Committee set up foster cares for all children by giving small incentives of food and finance to the families. There are many individuals and small charitable trusts that have joined hands to support the activities of the Waqf Committee and while the mosques were kept closed for prayers, most of these activities were managed from the religious places. Like the efforts of the Jain trusts, the efforts and outreach of activities, especially the food drives were not limited to the community and generously extended to the migrant communities who were mainly daily wagers in informal sector and had no food security. As Mr. G from the committee mentions, "these initiatives were successful due to the support of many people…. Perhaps the month of Ramzaan had softened people's heart".

While inquiring into humane initiatives by various organizations, it was found that many small NGOs tied up with the Municipal Corporation to support the people in need along with the religious committees and trusts. For example, Peace and Equality Cell (PEC), an NGO that usually works as legal aid for domestic and sexual violence cases, tied up with the AMC to provide for food and legal support to migrant workers in crisis. Similarly, The Ahmedabad Project, an environmental organization worked with AMC and other educational institutions in arranging for transportation for migrant workers. It was, however, interesting to note that large cultural organizations and non-governmental bodies such as Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and Center for Environmental Education (CEE) otherwise working with issues of human rights had not mobilized themselves during these times. A preliminary inquiry to leaders of some such organizations and institutions revealed that the scale with which they operated proved a deterrent since large meetings and gatherings were not allowed. Many small-scale NGOs such as PEC and the Ahmedabad Project and religious trusts such as Ahmedabad Sunni Muslim Waqf Committee and Jinagnya Trust succeeded in managing that.

The Intangible Networks and Urban Resilience

Ahmedabad, especially the historic city, had witnessed unprecedented communal violence between the Hindus and the Muslims in 2002. As reported by Mahadevia (2007, p 13), there were three main phases of violence that continued as sporadic acts of rioting till the year end. The first phase was when 58 people, mainly Hindus, died because of burning of two carriages of a train at Godhra on 27th February 2002. Following which started organized targeting of Muslims, men, women and children, by armed and trained mobs. There were multiple instances of brutal sexual violence and abuse during this time. This was the most brutal phase of assault and violence and that started from Ahmedabad. The latter two phases in the month of March and April saw similar but dispersed instances. Citing the Concerned Citizens Tribunal – Gujarat 2002, 2002a, Mahadevia (2007), suggests that the city of Ahmedabad saw more than a thousand deaths, and by the end of April 2002, 200,000 people, were displaced as their homes had burnt and looted and were living in relief camps.

The community ghettos of the city have become impenetrable ever since. As narrated in her personal experience by Mahadevia (2007, p.1) and experienced by the author during her mapping processes for preparation of World Heritage Nomination Dossier between 2009 – 2013), Pol and Moholla gates of neighbourhoods had hardened. Each of these neighborhoods, housing 60 – 150 families saw

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

construction of new iron gates at every threshold and the perpetual implementation of Disturbed Area Act of 1990s did not allow for these community boundaries to loosen up. The two communities that are studied here, Jains and Muslims, imagine themselves to be very different from one another an often articulate their lives, beliefs and behaviors in opposition to the other. Since 1990s, the historic city has also seen a steady outmigration of people, sometimes as an entire neighborhood, attracting migrant working class from various parts of the country to settle here.

Over the years there has also been a narrative of the insiders and outsiders. The families living in the historic city since generations as 'insiders' and the migrant workers, their families as the 'outsiders' is a narrative that one hears from the 'experts' wanting to popularize, and possibly brand, heritage as an elitist exotic past (Desai, 2019, p 188). This is not the suggest that the heritage initiatives necessarily consider the day-to-day gendered relationships of residents with places. Both, the religious and the 'insider', narratives get propagated politically and invariably in the discourses of heritage conservation. In one of the studies conducted by the author (Desai, 2019), the need to attract tourism in the deepest part of the historic city to provide 'authentic experience' more often than not, infringe into the open spaces otherwise considered to be the only places where it is accepted for women to loiter. A quick survey into the proposed projects for public place revival by the governments (Central and the State) and city administration, be it the Bhadra Plaza Project, Chowk revival projects, heritage walk, Model Heritage Street project are all concentrated around the narratives of dominant religions.

The pandemic, however, was a reminder to many religious groups of the values embedded in their beliefs and many such boundaries, especially of the insiders and outsiders, were seen to be blurring. Historically, the city of Ahmedabad has addressed situations of crisis by a policy response from the governing bodies and a humane response by the community leaders and the related religious organizations. The current pandemic brough home those memories and actions for these organizations and they acted based on their core values of compassion and value of life.

Religious places, that we otherwise value as built heritage and celebrate them for their architecture and aesthetic, in times like these become symbols beholding these beliefs. They become powerful platforms to share and mediate ideas. Their relationship to the city, its morphology and its people are as crucial to upholding its heritage value as the built environment itself. The heritage narrative of the city, when is devoid of this recognition, leaves out its value in the policy framework. It invariably sees conservation as a top-down process that needs to uphold 'universal' values of the site by the administration and the experts. The right of the people who find their sense of security through these places, especially in the time of crisis, requires processes of conservation also to be led by their beliefs in the place. A policy that provides institutional support to processes led by the inhabitant may possibly take clues from these initiatives that are thoughtful, embedded in the place and driven by compassion for all.

Lessons for Heritage Management in a living historic environment

The Historic City of Ahmedabad, being the first urban settlement to be nominated and inscribed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO's World Heritage Center, has been a pioneer in introducing certain practices and policies of managing historic cities. For example, it has mainstreamed heritage conservation by including the listing of heritage structures other than the ones that are already protected by the Archeological Survey of India as a part of its General Development Control Regulations (GDCR, 2021). The GDCR already states incentives for the owners of heritage properties and for developers to invest in heritage sites. It is possibly one of the only Regulatory Documents in the country that gives provisions of making a special Local Area Plan for the Historic City. The city administration has also set up procedural guidelines for owners and developers. The Heritage Department of the city is supported by the Ahmedabad World Heritage City Trust (AWHCT) and a

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com

Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC) that advise the Department on policy making and actions. It is despite of this well thought out system that the city sees continuous depletion of heritage structures and sites. The heritage of the non-dominant communities is further vulnerable to neglect due to outmigration and marginalized narratives.

This failure to conserve is generally attributed to the lack of awareness among the residents. However, the root cause here could be that the exclusion of the residents in the processes of identification of heritage and the decisions to conserve it, leading to the indifference towards the actions to be taken. The operations of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation that collaborated with cultural institutions of the city during the pandemic and the self-motivated actions of these institutions to support communities around them gives insight into a possibility of a management structure that engages these cultural institutes as nodes of action. The buildings, that are recognized as symbols of community's sense of place can mark physical locations of such engagements. These nodes could further have representations in the small neighborhoods (pol). This in a way mirror's the historic administrative structure of having Pol Panch and Mahajans and it remains to be seen about how this plays off in the times of electoral politics. The potential this structure would present is that all diverse communities will find a representation in the heritage narrative of the city.

India, in the last two decades, has recognized the economic potential of historic cities and through various government schemes such as National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, it plans to rejuvenate historic cities. The past experiences of most of the cities that underwent transformation owing to the funds availed from the scheme have faced similar fate as the Historic City of Ahmedabad. Recognition of only the dominant narratives, failure of public projects, indifference and sometimes resistance from the residents are common issues identified in those cities as well (Desai, et.al, 2017). The lessons learnt from the case study of Ahmedabad, of recognizing cultural institutions as important nodes for identification, conservation and management of heritage could be a much needed shift at all levels.

Glossary

Bhojan Shaala Literally translated as a place for meals. These are either community kitchens or places where meals are provided for anyone who comes there on a charitable basis.

Chabutara A tower like structure with octagonal or pentagonal shaped enclosures at the top, mostly with several holes, where in birds can feed and breed; bird – feeder.

Derasar A Jain Temple

Diwan Chief Treasury Officer.

Jeev Daya Compassion for all living beings.

Kazi Islamic legal scholar, Judge.

Kotwal Policeman.

Langar Community Kitchen, usually a term used for Sikh community practice, but also generically used for all community kitchens.

Mahajan Originally referred to rich merchants, traders, money – lenders and bankers. The word also referred to a group or organization of a particular trade, profession or a labour union.

Moholla The basic neighborhood unit in cities in North India, comparable with the *pol* of Ahmedabad. Also used as an alternative term for the *pol* by some communities.

Nagarseth The leading businessman of the city: the one who publicly represents the business interests of the city and who sometimes represents the collective interests of the entire city.

Naubat Traditional orchestra.

Panjarapol A place where old or uncared for animals (especially cattle) are housed and taken care of by the way of charity.

Panch A traditional committee consisting (usually) five wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local community, who are referred to in case of social or often legal matter of the community.

Pol The basic neighborhood unit of the Historic (Walled) City of Ahmedabad. It is laid out around a narrow, twisty, residential street, usually gated, occupied by a single caste or religious group, giving its people a certain degree of solidarity.

Pur Is a suffix added to a place name to usually mean settlement.

Pura Is a suffix added to a place name meaning settlement, or a suburb.

Sangh Organization or a group of people with a shared aim or interest.

Seth A wealthy businessman.

Sewa Selfless Service.

Subahdar Senior officer of Empire.

Upashray A place of resting for Jain monks. Usually situated in a close proximity of a *derasar*.

Zakaat Tax

References [Headings: Bold Calibri 12]

10th May 2020, *With 350 Covid – 19 deaths in 45 days, what's ailing Ahmedabad and what's the remedy,* Brajesh Kumar Singh, News 18. Accessed from: https://www.news18.com/news/opinion/with-350-covid-19-deaths-in-45-days-whats-ailing-ahmedabad-and-whats-the-remedy-2613557.html

13th November 2020, *AMC ready to tackle festival fallout,* Times of India. Accessed from: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/amc-ready-to-tackle-festival-fallout/articleshow/79200328.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

14th July 2020, *Amid COVID – 19, old age homes in Ahmedabad receive increased queries about vaccines,* ANI News. Accessed from: https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/amid-covid-19-old-age-homes-in-ahmedabad-receive-increased-queries-about-vacancies20200714051656/

14th May, 2019, *Tearing apart Ahmedabad priceless heritage tag,* Times of India. Accessed from: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/tearing-apart-ahmedabads-priceless-heritage-tag/articleshow/69314887.cms

15th April 2020, *Coronavirus: Curfew comes into force in two Ahmedabad areas.* Deccan Herald. Accessed from: https://www.deccanherald.com/national/west/coronavirus-curfew-comes-into-force-in-two-ahmedabad-areas-825666.html

19th April 2020, *Sociology of a pandemic – hidden trends of COVID 19 in Ahmedabad,* Anushka Shah, Health Express, Observer Research Foundation. Accessed from: https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/sociology-of-a-pandemic-the-hidden-trends-of-covid19-in-ahmedabads-walled-city-64844/

20th April 2020, *These 10 cities have over half of India's Covid – 19 cases. Ahmedabad, Indire among top 5,* Swagata Yadavar, The Print. Accessed from: https://theprint.in/health/these-10-cities-have-over-half-of-indias-covid-19-cases-ahmedabad-indore-among-top-5/404998/

25th June 2020, *Coronavirus caseload shifts from walled city to posh West Ahmedabad*, Ritu Sharma, Indian Express. Accessed from: https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/ahmedabad-coronavirus-news-update-coronavirus-caseload-shifts-from-walled-city-to-posh-west-ahmedabad-6475050/

26th May, 2019, *Ahmedabad: Heritage City failing to involve locals.* Times of India. Accessed from: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/ahmedabad-heritage-city-failing-to-involve-locals/articleshow/69502098.cms

29th April 2020, *Why is Gujarat a COVID – 19 Hotspot.* Indira Hiraway and Darshini Mahadevia, The Wire. Accessed from: https://science.thewire.in/health/why-is-gujarat-a-covid-19-hotspot/

2nd May 2020, *Khambhat in Anand 'With its ancient town planning, Covid spread was unavoidable',* Aditi Raja, The Indian Express. Accessed from: https://indianexpress.com/article/india/khambat-in-anand-with-its-ancient-town-planning-covid-spread-was-unavoidable-6389543/

5th May 2020, *Inside Ahmedabad's 'virus chasing' approach to COVID -19 (an Interview with Vijay Nehra),* Nandika Tripathi, Forbes India. Accessed from: https://www.forbesindia.com/article/coronavirus/inside-ahmedabads-virus-chasing-approach-to-covid19/59169/1

8th April 2020, *COVID – 19: Ahmedabad civic body to screen resident of old city.* Business Insider, India. Accessed from: https://www.businessinsider.in/india/news/covid-19-ahmedabad-civic-body-to-screen-residents-of-old-city/articleshow/75049054.cms

8th April 2020, *Purana Ahmedabad Shahar Buffer Zone mein tabdin, kareeb 5 lakh ki aabadi nigraani mein (Hindi),* Uday Kumar Patel, Patrika. Accessed from: https://www.patrika.com/ahmedabad-news/gujarat-old-ahmedabad-city-buffer-zone-corona-virus-walled-city-5982389/

9th April 2020, *Coronavirus, Ahmedabad adopts South Korean model,* Mahesh Langa, The Hindu. Accessed from: https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/coronavirus-ahmedabad-adopts-south-korean-model/article31296758.ece

9th May 2020, *Ahmedabad at 5000 cases and counting: Anatomy of an Epidemic,* Veny Gopal Narayan, Swarajya. Accessed from: https://swarajyamag.com/politics/ahmedabad-at-5000-cases-and-counting-anatomy-of-an-epidemic

Aashish Trambadia, Director of Ahmedabad World Heritage City Trust, interviewed by Dr. Jigna Desai on "Tuesday Talks", Center for Heritage Conservation, CEPT Research and Development Foundation, Instagram Page @chccept.

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation: ahmedabadcity.gov.in

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation: Twitter handle @AmdavadAMC

Ahmedabad Sunni Muslim Waqf Committee: asmwc.org

AlSayyad, N (ed.). 2001, *Consuming Tradition, manufacturing heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism.* Routledge, London and NewYork.

Bharat, Gauri (2021), *Sacred Anchors in Contemporary Neighbourhood: The Case of Jain Religious Institutions in Ahmedabad.* Chapter from Book. Jha, Sadan, Dev Nath Pathak and Amiya Kumar Das (eds), *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In Between Home and the City.* Bloomsbury Academic India.

Center for Environmental Education, https://www.ceeindia.org/

Commissariat, M. S. (1957), *History of Gujarat (Vol. II): The Mughal Period from 1573 – 1957 with a Survey of its Monuments and Inscriptions.* Orient Longman, Hyderabad, Bombay.

Commissariat, M. S. (1980), *History of Gujarat (Vol III).* Gujarat Vidyasabha, Ahmedabad.

Desai, J, Rai and Joshi (2017), *HRIDAY Reflections, A monograph on the Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.* Published by ICOMOS India and CEPT University with support from Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and National Institute of Urban Affairs.

Desai, J. (2016), *The City and the Shophouse, the case of Ahmedabad,* in *Shophouse/ Townhouse, Asian Perspectives,* Chii, W. Y and Widido, J. Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore, pp 16 – 25.

Desai, J. (2019), *Equity in Heritage Conservation, the case of Ahmedabad.* Routledge, Oxon and New York.

Geddes, P. and Tywhitt (eds.) (1947). *Patrick Geddes in India.* L. Humpfires, London and Bradford.

General Development Control Regulations (GDCR), 2021. Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority (AUDA). Sourced from: http://www.auda.org.in/RDP/

Gillion, K. (1968), *Ahmedabad: A study in Indian Urban History.* University of California Press, Berkley and Los Angeles.

Institutionalizing Urban Resilience, A Midterm Monitoring and Evaluation Report of 100 Resilient Cities. Authors, Carlos Martin and Sara McTarnaghan, Urban Institute, Rockefeller Center, December 2018, Sourced from: https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Institutionalizing-Urban-Resilience-A-Midterm-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Report-of-100-Resilient-Cities.pdf

Jinagnya Yuva Group, Chaumukhiji ni Pol, Ahmedabad: jinagnyayuvagroup.com

Jinagnya Yuva Trust, Chaumukhiji ni Pol, Ahmedabad: Facebook Page @JinagnyaYuvaTrust

Jote, B. R. (1929), *Gujarat nu Patnagar Amdavad (Gujarati),* Gujarat Sahitya Sabha, Ahmedabad.

Kadri, R. (2003), *Sardar Patel Ek Sinh Purush (Gujarati),* Gujarat Granthratna Karyalaya, Ahmedabad.

Mahadevia, D (2007), *A City with Many Borders*. in Indian Cities in Transition, Shaw, A (ed), Oriental Longman, Hyderabad, pp. 315 – 340.

Management of the COVID – 19 Pandemic in Gujarat, understanding the governance initiatives, leadership processes and their impact. Principal Investigator, Prof. Ranjan Kumar Ghosh, IIM Ahmedabad, November 2020.

Mariani, Luisana, urbanresiliencehub.org.

Mitigation and Management of COVID – 19, Practices from India's States and Union Territories, NITI Aayog, Government of India, November 2020.

Mukesh Kumar, Municipal Commissioner, Twitter handle @Mukeshias

Peace and Equality Cell, https://peaceandequalitycellcom.wordpress.com/

Reports on Replanning of Six Towns in Bombay Presidency, Patrick Geddes, 1915. Maharashtra State: Bombay, Director Govt. Print and Stationary.

Self Employed Women's Association, https://www.sewa.org/

Shah, A. (2015), *Ahmedabad: A city in the World.* Bloomsbury, London, Delhi, NewYork, Sydney.

Shah, J. B. and Kadia (1997), *Rajnagar na Jinalayo (Gujarati),* Anandji Kalyanji Trust, Ahmedabad.

Spodek, H. (2011), *Ahmedabad: Shock City of the Twentieth – Century India,* Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

The Ahmedabad Project, https://www.theahmedabadproject.com/

Tumbe, C. (2020), *The Age of Pandemics, 1817 – 1920.* Harper Collins, India.

Vathatchand, M. (1850), *Amdavad no Itihas: AD 1850 sudhino (Gujarati),* Gujarat Vidyasabha, Ahmedabad.

Vijay Nehra, former Municipal Commissioner (till May 2020), Twitter handle @vnehra.

Yagnik, A and Sheth, S. (2011), *Ahmedabad, from Royal City to Megacity,* Penguin Books, Gurgaon, India.

Annexure 1

Interviews

All Interviews were conducted by Juhi Bafna, Research Assistance, Center for Heritage Conservation, CEPT Research and Development Foundation. Consent letter and transcripts of the interviews available with the Center.

A: Ahmed Shaikh, Ahmedabad Sunni Muslim Waqf Committee, Resident, Jami Masjid, Ahmedabad
B: Jayesh Rami, Advocate, Resident of Mandavi ni Pol, Ahmedabad
C: Jigish Jhaveri, Jinagnya Yuva Trust, Ahmedabad
D: Maitriratnashriji Maharaj Saheb, Jinagnya Yuva Trust, Resident of Choumukhiji ni Pol, Ahmedabad.
E: Makdoom Merchant, Shahji Charitable Trust, Ahmedabad
F: Parag Shah, Jinagnya Yuva Trust, Ahmedabad
G: Rizwan Kadri, Ahmedabad Sunni Muslim Waqf Committee. Ahmedabad
H: Shahid Kalimi, Kalimi Book Store, Bhadra, Ahmedabad.

List of Questions:

1. What kind of responses did you see around you from the first time you heard about the pandemic and now? What were the responses from administrations, local organisations etc.
2. Any community specific initiatives that you know of? For food, for health, for employment?
3. Where were these initiatives located? Who operated them?
4. How did you manage? Did you receive any support? Did you provide any support?
5. What were your daily activities during this time? Did you go to places of prayer?
6. During this time, what were the social messages being spread by the religious and community leaders?
7. How did people keep their morale during the worst of the times?
8. How were the festivities celebrated?
9. Do you think some thinking and some relationships have changed after this?

ENGAGE NETWORK
www.humanitarianheritage.com