

Aankh Micholi

Mapping The Spatial Practices and Visual Identity of The Non-Vegetarianism in The City of Ahmedabad, Gujarat

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Feedback

Abstract

Since the beginning, Gujarat is widely considered by most people as a Vegetarian state. No matter what the facts and figures suggest about the rapid increase of the meat-consumption in Gujarat, the Vegetarian state image is still etched inside people's mind even today.

Meat-consumption and Meat-consumers have frequently faced backlashes from the Authorities as well as residents of Gujarat. The trip to any of the Gujarat's metro city or rural village will yield the different story regarding people's food habits, but due to the prevailing *Mahajan* influence on the Gujarat's political and cultural canvas, Gujarat enjoys the image of being the most *Ahimsak* state of India. When one talks about Gujarat, one seldom talks about its traditional meat-dishes. For most people, Gujaratis are people who indulge in the tastes of *Khakhra, Khaman, Dhokla and Fafda-Jalebi* only!

It is a matter of great surprise that how can a state which boasts the largest shoreline of the country can still maintain the status of being a Vegetarian state for this long! In the field work, I have observed that the non-vegetarian eateries are present in large number in few areas of the city and they have the regular flow of customers as well. Their visual identities also show different patterns, which respond the areas in which the eateries are located. The outlets have found safe locales for their survival and they announce their presence in very subtle yet, affective way.

This work is an effort to understand these spatial practices and the relation of the visual identity of these non-vegetarian outlets. As the place changes, the visual identity elements of the shop changes as well. They have to constantly change their visuals according to the demand of the context and the project tries to convey this narration through the help of maps and images. The maps are chosen since the story has complex layers of spatial practices and in order to link the visual with the location, an interactive format of the map is required.

The narration is an amalgam of the maps, images and text to study the phenomenon by mapping the spatial practices and understanding the visual identities of the non-veg eateries in the case of Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Introduction

a. Understanding the Issue

The idea that Gujarat is a predominantly vegetarian state is a common perception throughout the nation, but it is not entirely accurate. While it is true that a significant portion of the population practices vegetarianism due to cultural and religious beliefs, there is a sizable non-vegetarian population as well.

According to a survey conducted by the Registrar General of India in 2014, around 40% of the population in Gujarat reported consuming meat, fish, or eggs. This figure is higher than other states like Rajasthan, Haryana and even Punjab.

Moreover, Gujarat has a thriving seafood industry, with its coastal cities such as Veraval and Porbandar being major fishing hubs. In addition, meat and poultry consumption have been on the rise in the state in recent years, with the increasing popularity of fast-food chains and the influence of Western culture.

It is also worth noting that while vegetarianism is prevalent in Gujarat, it is not universal, and there is a wide variation in dietary habits across different communities and regions of the state.

In a nutshell, while vegetarianism is certainly an important aspect of Gujarat's culinary culture, it is not accurate to label it as a purely vegetarian state. There is a significant non-vegetarian population in the state, and meat and seafood are an integral part of the local cuisine for many people.

Name of State	Percentage of Population of Non-vegetarians (%)
Telangana	98.70
West Bengal	98.60
Andhra Pradesh	98.25
Tamil Nadu	97.65
Odisha	97.35
Kerala	97.00
Jharkhand	96.75
Bihar	92.45
Chhattisgarh	82.05
Assam	79.40
Karnataka	78.90
Uttarakhand	72.65
Delhi	60.50
Maharashtra	59.80
Uttar Pradesh	52.90
Madhya Pradesh	49.40
Gujarat	39.05
Punjab	33.25
Haryana	30.75
Rajasthan	25.10

Table 1: The amount of Non-Vegetarian Population (%) of the different States of India

Source: A 2018 Survey released by the Registrar General of India

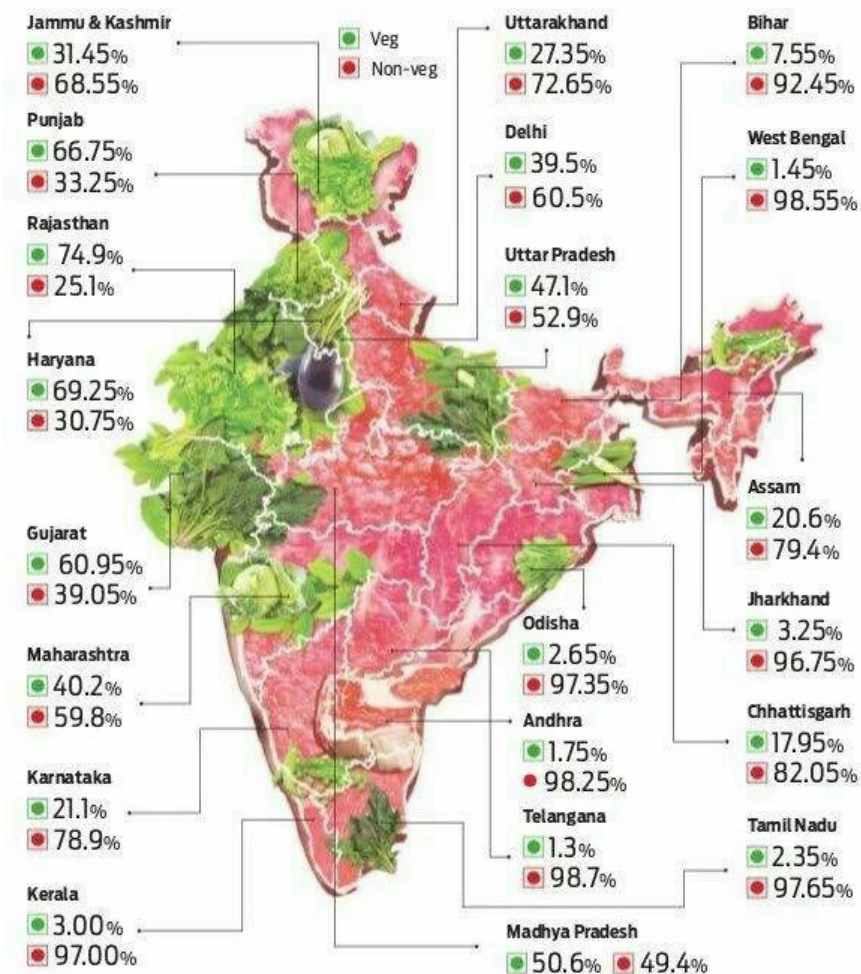


Figure 1: The map of India representing the Dietary Preferences of Indian States (Vegetarian or Non-Vegetarian)

Source: New Indian Express

The facts and figures describe the other part of the story and it is possible to prove that the Gujarat has a huge growing demand for meat, but that is not the main goal of the project. The core idea here, is the co-existence of the both factors – a notion that describes something which is contradicting to the reality that describes the opposite side of the story. These both phenomena exist in the same region and thus, even today, when people talk about Gujarat, they talk about *Khaman*, *Ganthiya* and *Dhokla* etc and meat is seldom mentioned in the cuisine of Gujarat!

Furthermore, few areas of city have higher tolerance towards the presence of meat while few showcase strong abhorrence for the same thing. In both cases, meat has to change its location, form and even shape to survive in different spaces. How few areas of city emerge as a ‘Non-veg Areas’ and how few areas remain completely meat-free zones is an interesting inquiry as a designer to understand. What are the key factors which have helped the spaces to emerge as a Veg or Non-veg spaces over time and how it also affects the Visual elements that announce/hide the presence of the meat? Due to such scenarios, spatial practices have emerged and now, people have a co-existence with meat which is easy and peaceful in few parts of the city and even tensed/uneasy in other parts of the same city.

What kind of *Deception* is used by meat-sellers to exist in the region which has strong disgust towards mere sight of it? Thus, the idea is to understand how the Spatial Practices have emerged within the city boundaries, how the visuals of meat and its presence is being announced/kept hidden and how all these methods change with different parts of city which provide different kinds of environment for selling and consumption of meat.

b. The Problem Statement

The problem statement has emerged from the two extremes of the same Social Phenomenon –

- For most people in Gujarat or Outsiders, Gujarat is a Vegetarian state and the notion remains unchanged since many years.
- According to the facts and figures, and after field work, one can clearly feel that this notion is far from being the accurate.

The project attempts to understand how non-vegetarianism survives or even thrives in a perceived *vegetarian* state of Gujarat. The larger purpose is to tell a story of a state that maybe ridden with social conflict and segregation but is also marked by surprising instances of coexistence. What I gathered from my research in Ahmedabad is that non-vegetarian eateries found safe locales in spaces that lay in the borders of the city or transition zones of mixed neighbourhoods or in areas identified as specific community enclaves or ghettos. At the same time, non-vegetarian eateries have found safe locales in the urban areas of the city which are rapidly growing and attracting affluent crowd. Plus, research also found how non-vegetarian eateries had to constantly play with their visual identities to fit into various locations in order to safeguard their businesses. It was this complex story of spatial practices and visual identities of non-vegetarianism in the city that project tries to communicate through the use of maps and images.

Focus of the Study: Ahmedabad

c. Project Brief

d. Target Audience

To construct the narrative, I firstly decided to map the spatial locations and visual identities of non-vegetarian shops and eateries in four different locations of the city. The mapping of Religious Institutions was also the part of the process. After that, research was done to depict the history and social relations of those specific neighbourhoods. Thirdly, to uncover the spatial and visual strategies deployed by non -vegetarian eateries to both attract customers and also to survive safely, images were captured of the eateries and meat-shops to understand the visual identity and the role of location in the survival.

I have constructed my narration through an amalgam of dynamic maps, images and text. The interactive format allows one to understand and link the social, spatial relations of the areas, their evolution with the time and the visual identity elements of the non-vegetarian eateries.

As a communication designer, it is important to understand how the Visuals change according to the Context, which may be supportive of the sale of product or discouraging of its presence. The product has to announce its presence in some way to attract customer, but according to the area and its context, it also has limited opportunity and permitted boundary within which it has to operate and announce/hide its presence. The main objective here is to understand the supporting visuals and other supporting factors that help the meat to not only survive, but thrive in the city.

- Students of Communication Design who are studying the different modes of communication – to understand how something is told without making things direct and being deceptive
- People who are studying the Evolution of the city of Ahmedabad, since the religion and religious density is the integral part of the project, it can also help how the city boundaries are evolved over time and how different culture merges with each-other
- People who are trying to understand the social fact of meat-consumption in a region where people display shared loathing for meat-consumption and consumers.
- Architects and Architecture students who are trying to understand the façades and its characteristics, the primary and secondary hierarchy of roads and the zoning of spaces
- People of Gujarat who are interested into understanding the prevailing notions and reasons behind them, for an outsider, it can be an insight into people's behavioural patterns and social structure of society

e. Why Ahmedabad?

The Ahmedabad is the largest city of the Gujarat and it has gone through several different reigns such as – Mughals, Marathas and British rule. Due to such different rulers, city has also evolved organically over time. City's location and its connectivity with other main cities of Gujarat has helped Ahmedabad to grow into the metro city which is still rooted within its history and culture.

The city has history of major communal riots of the post-independence era of India. Since last major riot of 2002, city has maintained communal harmony and peace but few areas are still considered sensitive and disturbed areas.

With the majority of population, about 80% consisting of Hindus and with its 13% of Muslim population, Ahmedabad showcases the amalgam of different cultures and values.

Home to the largest Muslim ghetto of India – Juhapura, Ahmedabad is the most segregated city of the India on the basis of religious density. While there are places like Vastrapur, Satellite and Sindhu Bhavan Road which are highly developed and home to affluent people of city, there are areas like Juhapura, Vasana and Rakhial which are home to poor and minorities of the city.

The Ahmedabad is divided into the basis of religion in a way that entire city's geography has evolved organically around the same idea of separation and segregation.

Such factors are the key reasons why the Ahmedabad is considered for the filed work of the Project.

f. Motivations behind choosing this Project

As an individual who has a strong preference for the non-vegetarian food, I have come across more than one incident when people have judged my religious background, my caste and even my nature solely on the basis of my food-preference. Even the people who claimed their mentalities very modern and forwards thinkers showcase very lower tolerance towards the sight or smell of meat, despite meat being the food of more than 90% of world's population.

During my many visits of egg-carts, I have encountered an incident in which out of nowhere, a police vane arrived and confiscated the cart of the seller without any explanation. The customers left without making any payment while cart-seller was trying to reason with authorities. For next few days, all of the egg-sellers and their carts disappeared from the sight and when they came back after a week, they gave one simple answer for their sudden disappearance – Government Pressure! However, Paani-puri sellers, Vada pav sellers and other veg food sellers had no problem from any Government body.

Such questions have always bothered my mind that why this kind of strong abhorrence is shown towards the meat and meat-consumers, especially in the case of Gujarat. People show great ambiguity when it comes to the non-vegetarian food and its consumption.

During the course of Communication Design, I have expanded my query further. As we know, meat-production in Gujarat has increased over the past few years but people's notion for the Gujarat is still unchanged. People still believe that the Gujarat is a Vegetarian State, which is not entirely true.

In such case, it is a fascinating query as a communication designer to understand the presence of meat, which is thriving and yet, it is not allowed to be vocal in the case of Gujarat. It is easy to increase the demand and production of product when one is allowed to announce the presence of product openly, but in case of meat, it is not permitted in the context of Gujarat. Yet, it is surprising that meat's demand keeps increasing every year even after it being under the radar from the authorities.

Such example can help us to understand how the region also helps/discourages the sale of meat. How few areas display higher tolerance and few areas showcase lower tolerance for the same item is a result of many complex layers. Thus, the play of Hide and Seek and its supporting factors are key reasons behind the selection of the project.

a. Places of Gujarat Visited for the Initial Field Work to Understand the Problem:

- Gandhinagar
- Rajkot
- Ahmedabad
- Somnath
- Veraval
- Mahudi

Initial Field Research Findings

The egg stalls and meat serving shops in Gujarat face the survival issues from two major groups of people – one is the Governing body (Municipal corporation, Police department) and second is the civilian group which showcases deep abhorrence for any food item that contains word '*non-vegetarian*' in it. The governing body relies on the support of common civilians' group to justify the actions such as confiscation of carts of non-vegetarian street food sellers and limiting their presence away from main roads and away from sight of public domain. Ironically, the number of customers of the non-vegetarian food items and the consumption of non-vegetarian food has only increased over the last decade in the state of Gujarat.

However, the non-veg stall owners have ingeniously derived the ways to minimize their troubles in the existing context. Some of them are as following –

a. Having the modest and unpretentious kiosks and carts

It is an observed fact that most egg-sellers and meat-serving street cart owners tend to decorate their carts and surroundings less than compared to the vegetarian food stall owners. In fact, the darker corners, places that are not visible from main roads and less crowded streets are preferable places for the non-vegetarian food stalls. Not only for the sellers, but even for the customers who want to maintain their ‘*Shuddha*’ image in society, but cannot resist the taste of meat/eggs.

b. Using the carts with no names or names that suggest relations with religion that allows consumption of eggs and meats

For many street cart owners who sell egg items, it is common to have a cart that does not have any name at all. People refer to place by the name of the owner of the cart and thus, business survives without any actual name tag. Even taking this a step further, few cart sellers occupy the carts which were used previously by vegetarian food item sellers and new owner doesn’t change the name or imageries of old menu. For example, if previously, the cart was used by pau-bhaji seller, the new owner will keep the name and images of pau-bhaji intact and will start selling meat/eggs.

c. Using Islamic fonts, names and patterns to indicate the presence of meat in the menu

As we already discussed earlier, meat-consumption is widely attached trait to the followers of Islam. Due to this fact, most non-vegetarian food outlets are also given name and appearance that signify their relation with Islam and by doing this, they also confirm the availability of non-vegetarian food items in the menu. However, few other religions like Christianity and Sikhism are also linked with meat-consumption. Hindu castes such as Rajput is also linked with consumption of meat, but none of them suggest the meat-consumption as vehemently as the religion of Islam.

Due to this ingrained notion, vegetarian people do not even venture into any kind of business that requires any kind of link with meat. Most non-veg street food outlet owners are followers of Islam, Christianity, Sikhism or belong to the lower castes of Hindu caste system hierarchy. If someone belonging to higher ranks of social pyramid attempts to venture into business that is anyhow related to meat/eggs, the person will face strong backlash from friends and families. In Gujarat, people use the phrase – *Tu kono dikro/dikri chote to dhyan ma raakh!* (Literally means – Keep in mind whose son/daughter you are) to remind people if they are doing such acts that do not go well with their religious beliefs. The sentence itself suggests the listener to bear in mind about his family lineage and his religious values. It is not enough for one to not consume non-vegetarian food, but being involved in making or selling of the same is equally frowned upon. Due to this fact, most people who own the on-vegetarian food carts name their carts after Urdu or Arabic language words – both languages are again linked with the Islam.

Even the fonts used to write names and hoardings use the fonts that give the sense of Urdu/Arabic fonts. For example –

Qismat Fry Centre
Qismat Fry Centre

Zar-e-Biryani
Zar-e-Biryani

Welcome Fry Centre
welcome fry centre

Examples of fonts and nametags of non-vegetarian food stalls

First line of text is written in Times New Roman and second line uses different fonts as example

As shown above, the words used in nametags find their origin from Urdu or Arabic languages and the fonts used to write the names are also based on the script of these languages which have strong link with Islam. For example, **Biryani House** – name might not suggest the presence of chicken biryani on the menu of shop but, same nametags written in different font such as **Biryani** – will surely give idea to reader about the availability of meat on the menu of place. Both names are same and should mean the same

thing, but due to the usage of fonts, one can sense the clear difference between both. Such methods were also used during the times when signages and hoardings were hand-painted by the artists. Even then, the use and choice of fonts played important part in suggesting the availability of meat/eggs on the menu of food outlet.

One more factor that helps the food outlets for communicating their menu is architectural aspect of the outlet. This factor is more relevant for the restaurants or café owners who have built spaces. Some architecture elements also work to establish a link with Islam. Such Islamic architectural elements are – arches, minarets, domes and *girih tiles*. Many cafes and restaurants use the arches in their building's elevation and for the interior design of building, they use *girih tiles*. The *girih* are decorative geometric patterns widely used in Islamic architecture. The New Irani Café, located in Ahmedabad is a very good example of such building.

The front elevation of building does not suggest much about the menu of café as there are no veg or non-vegetarian indication symbols placed on the hoarding. However, the *arcade* (an architectural element, meaning - a covered passage with arches along one or both sides) gives fair idea about the Islamic architectural influence of building. In addition to that, when one enters and sits at the table inside of café, one notices the tabletop which has *girih tiles* patterns which leaves no shred of doubt regarding the building's Islamic influence in its architecture. After seeing such elements, one can fairly assume the availability of eggs/meats in café's menu.

Common Spatial Relations Observations from Initial Research

Any food serving stall or restaurant requires the regular flow of customers for survival and to achieve that constant flow of consumers, location of the food outlet is a very important factor. For street cart owners, location is equally as important as it is for the restaurant owners but they do have the advantage of mobility. Restaurants and cafes cannot change the location without suffering great deal of expenses, that's why they have to be critical regarding the selection of the site.

a. Under developed areas of town – Benefit of authority's negligence

Idea is to locate the outlet in areas which are not so developed as compared to the main areas of the city. Some restaurants are located in the old parts of city area where people don't venture without any proper reasons and most of these areas are surrounded by residential areas occupied by communities who consume meat and eggs. Due to these reasons, many well-established non-veg food outlets are located in such under-developed areas. The key idea here is to stay below the radar of the governing authorities. Many food outlets who provide good non-veg food at cheaper rates are mushrooming in the shanty towns of urban cities. Due to the authority's less interference in this area, such areas become the locus points for activities things that are generally not accepted or illegal.

b. Religious Density of an area – Supporting mechanism

Wherever the followers of one particular religion settle down at one place, whether intentionally or unintentionally, they also create the identity of particular neighbourhood and its surroundings. Due to such religious density, they also provide the unspoken support for acts which are not forbidden by the religion and at the same time, acts which are forbidden in the religion will not survive in that particular region. For example, if the entire neighbourhood is densely populated with the followers of Hinduism, selling of meat/eggs in that area will result in constant friction between seller and residents. In fact, such cases have led to public riots in the past. So, it is a common observed fact that many meat serving restaurants are located in/near the neighbourhoods which are densely populated by followers of Islam or people who belong to the castes which consume meats.

Under-developed areas of cities (Such as city boundaries, shanty towns, very less-populated areas, industrial zones with less residential buildings etc.) provide the great opportunity for such food outlets. It is obvious that such areas will not be occupied by people who belong to the upper ranks of social hierarchy. In case of Gujarat, most cities have such areas which are densely populated by any one particular community. Such areas naturally attract the people from the same religion and due to same factor, religious institutions linked to the religion (Temples, Mosques, Church etc.) also get established in the same neighbourhood. Such religious institutions serve as great markers for the unspoken territory, inside of which the religious rules prevail that one must has to follow to maintain harmony. For example, the temple marks the religious boundary in its surrounding areas and hence, when one is venturing

near these areas, one has to obey the religious rules of Hinduism. For example – an egg seller will never survive (quite literally!) if he/she set up the stall near temple compound. In same manner, it is possible for an egg seller to set up his/her stall in the areas which are in the proximity of mosque.

For meat/egg sellers, the entire idea is to operate within the boundaries – Ironically, the same logic is the root of the entire problem for meat/egg sellers in Gujarat. The problem arises in the first place because the majority of the population of Gujarat follow Hinduism and thus, on a state level scale, non-vegetarianism has become vice or something that associates the consumers with either Islam or the lower ranks of society hierarchy. Clearly, the sale of non-vegetarian food items will not face the same hurdles in countries like Pakistan (where majority of people are followers of Islam) or USA (where majority of people are followers of Christianity) – countries where majority of population is an open consumer of meat/eggs. Since the egg/meat seller of Gujarat does not have this advantage on his/her side, their chances of survival increases when they operate within the areas which are densely populated by any one particular community.

Areas Identified for Final Research

Ahmedabad – City History at Glance

Juhapura – Vejalpur

The Scenario of Two Different Communities Located in Two
Different Areas of the City

Sarkhej

The Scenario of Two Different Communities Located in One Single
Area of the City

Bhatiyaar Gali – Teen Darwaza

The Scenario of Two Different Communities Located in One Single
Plaza of the City

Sindhu Bhawan Road

The Urban Scenario of the City

Ahmedabad – City History at Glance

The walled city of Ahmedabad, also known as the old city, is a historic section of Ahmedabad, the largest city in the Indian state of Gujarat. The city was founded in the 15th century by Sultan Ahmed Shah and was originally enclosed by a fortified wall.

15th Century:

Ahmedabad was founded in 1411 by Sultan Ahmed Shah, who chose the site for its strategic location on the banks of the Sabarmati River. The city was initially enclosed by a wall that was about 10 km in circumference.

16th Century:

During the 16th century, Ahmedabad emerged as a major centre of trade and commerce, attracting merchants from all over India and beyond. The city's prosperity was reflected in its architecture, which featured intricate carvings and ornate facades.

17th-18th Century:

Ahmedabad continued to thrive during the 17th and 18th centuries, under the rule of the Mughal Empire. The city's merchants prospered, and the city became known for its textiles, which were exported to Europe and other parts of the world.

19th Century:

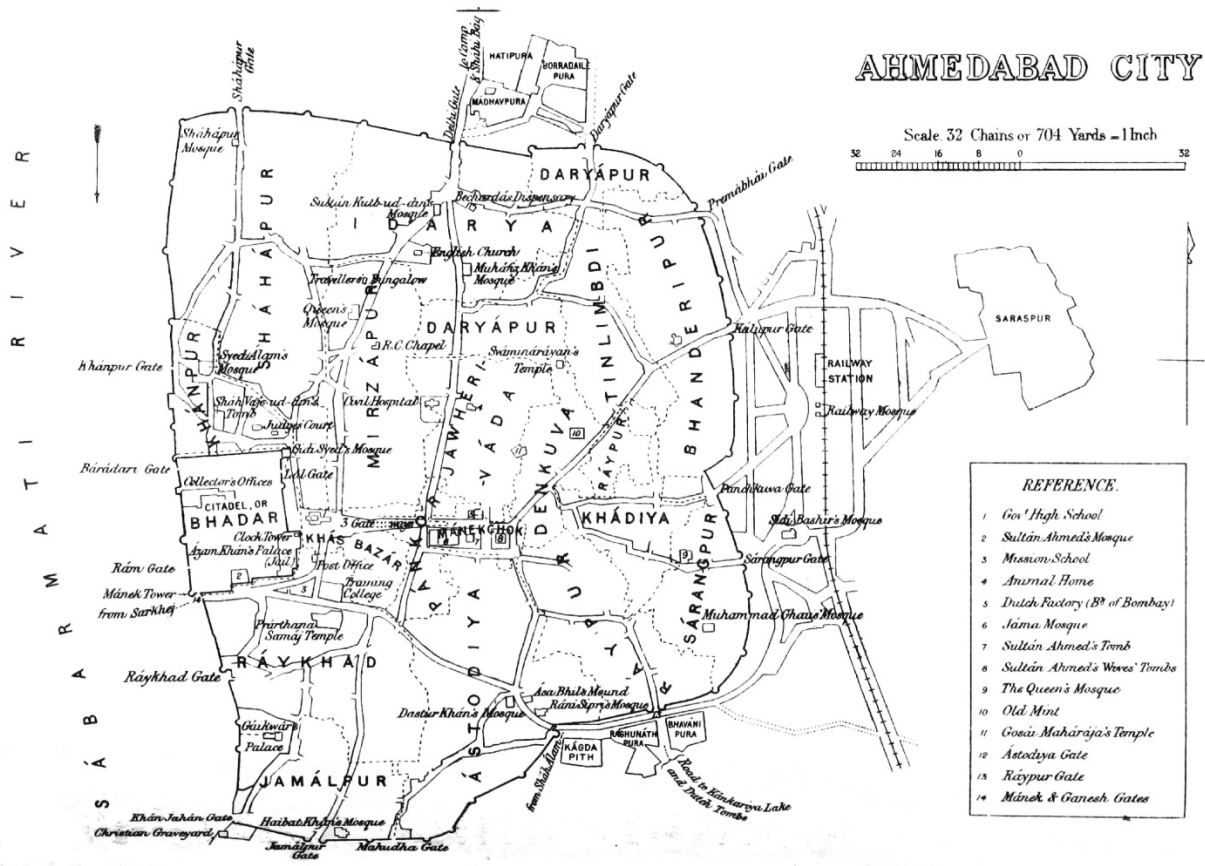
During the 19th century, Ahmedabad was a centre of the Indian independence movement, and the city was the site of several important events in the struggle for freedom from British colonial rule. In 1915, Mahatma Gandhi established the Sabarmati Ashram on the banks of the Sabarmati River, which became an important centre of the Indian independence movement.

20th Century:

In the 20th century, Ahmedabad continued to grow and expand beyond its walls, but the walled city remained an important cultural and historical centre. The city's historic buildings and monuments, including the Jama Masjid and the Sidi Saiyyed Mosque, continued to attract visitors from around the world.

Today:

Today, the walled city of Ahmedabad is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognized for its historic significance and cultural heritage. The city's old buildings and narrow streets continue to evoke a sense of the past, while also serving as a vibrant and dynamic centre of commerce, culture, and tradition.



Old City of Ahmedabad - 1855

Figure 2 The Old City of Ahmedabad, The Fortified City Area – Year 1855

Juhapura – Vejalpur

The Scenario of Two Different Communities Located in Two Different Areas of the City

a. Juhapura – The *Inadvertent* formation of “*Mini Pakistan*”

Juhapura is a Muslim ghetto in the city of Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The area is home to a significant population of Muslims who were displaced/shifted to Juhapura over the course of many years. The ghettoization of Juhapura and its history can be traced back to the aftermath of the 2002 riots of Gujarat, which led to the displacement of over 200,000 Muslims in the state of Gujarat.

The government has been accused of neglecting Juhapura, leading to the ghettoization of the area. The lack of basic amenities, such as proper roads, water supply, and sanitation facilities, has made life difficult for the residents of Juhapura. The area is also prone to flooding during the monsoon season, leading to health hazards and damage to property.

Despite the challenges, Juhapura has grown over the years, with new buildings and businesses being established in the area. The ghettoization of Juhapura has been a contentious issue, with some arguing that it is a result of systemic discrimination and neglect by the government, while others view it as a natural consequence of the displacement of Muslims during the riots.

In recent years, there have been efforts to improve the conditions in Juhapura. The government has initiated several development projects in the area, including the construction of new

roads and the provision of basic amenities. Non-governmental organizations have also been working to improve the living conditions of the residents of Juhapura by providing education and healthcare services.

b. Defining Ghetto, Citadel, Slum and Enclave

Ghetto, citadel, slum, and enclave are terms used to describe different types of urban areas, each with its own characteristics and connotations.

Ghetto: A ghetto is a section of a city, typically inhabited by members of a minority group, who are socially, economically, and politically marginalized.

Citadel: A citadel is an area of spatial concentration in which members of a particular population, group, defined by its position of superiority in power, wealth, or status in relation to its neighbours, cluster as a means of protecting, displaying, and enhancing that position.

Slum: A slum is a densely populated area of a city characterized by poor living conditions, inadequate housing, and lack of basic amenities. Slums are often inhabited by the poorest members of society.

Enclave: An enclave is a small area within a larger city or region that is inhabited by a specific group of people, often with a distinct culture or language. Enclaves are often characterized by a strong sense of community and cultural identity.

To simply put the idea -

Ghetto and Enclave - If spaces are primarily segregated along ethnic, racial, communal or caste lines

Slum and Citadel - If spaces are primarily showing the class-based or economical segregation

“In short: if an ethnic group is relegated to certain neighbourhoods we speak of a ‘ghetto’; if poor people are forced to club together, we see a ‘slum’; if an ethnic group voluntarily chooses to segregate, they form an ‘enclave’; and if rich people isolate themselves, this constitutes a ‘citadel’.”

(See: Susewind, R, 2017)

c. From Sanklit to Asanklit – The Tale of Disintegration

The first housing located on the modern-day Juhapura dates back to the 1970s. Often described as the jungle by the residents of the neighbourhood, the area was not developed at all and was well beyond the boundaries of Ahmedabad municipal corporation.

In the aftermath of the flood of 1973, the issue of relocating the poor slum dwellers was exacerbated and thus, it was one of the key concerns for AMC. The flood had wiped out the residents and livelihoods of the riverside slum dwellers. The AMC decided to take advantage of the situation to kill two birds with the single stone. The ‘Integrated Urban Development Project – IUDP’ was launched into the area known as Sanklit Nagar to address the issue of the relocation of slum dwellers.

The riverbank slums were the locus of many conflicts between the AMC and residents of the area. Since the slums were located at the heart of the entire city, authorities were interested in relocating them to the peripheral area of the city to clear the image of the city. Since the flood destroyed the slum dwellings, authorities looked at it as an opportunity to permanently resolve the issue of riverbank slums.

The IUDP constructed the colony known as - Sanklit Nagar, away from the centre of the city which was initially designed for 2248 households. Among the members of the households, Hindus and Muslims were almost equal in the numbers. The Sanklit Nagar became the new residing place for the people who were relocated with the help of government and two local NGOs – Ahmedabad

Study Action Group (ASAG) and Saint Xavier's Social Service Society (SXSSS).

The project had two major elements which stood out and made the Sanklit Nagar different from other projects of that time. First, the people (residents) were directly involved in the design process of their dwellings. Furthermore, the residents were granted full ownership of their homes through regular instalments to the AMC.

Initially, when the slum-dwellers relocated to Sanklit Nagar, neither the people nor the AMC had any idea that the relocation would only exacerbate the situation for both parties involved. Though the houses were new and designed according to people's needs, they lacked the necessary services like sewage, plumbing and waste management. In addition, Sanklit Nagar's location became another major issue for its residents. Previously, the residents were located on the banks of the Sabarmati River, and thus, they were connected with the city of Ahmedabad. Sanklit Nagar, as the old residents describe, was situated about 8-10 kilometres away from the central city of Ahmedabad and mainly was part of the Jungle area of the city periphery. This situation led to the isolation of the entire locality from the rest of the city's population.

In addition to these poorly serviced houses, it also became evident that the livelihood means of slum-dwellers were also located near their previous locality. Most of the residents were working as blue-collar labourers or rickshaw drivers. Their livelihood was largely dependent on the populous city of Ahmedabad. People who worked as street-cart vendors and hawkers also faced significant challenges due to the remoteness of Sanklit Nagar from the rest of

the town. The less connectivity of the locality from the central city also resulted in the city authorities' negligence towards people's needs. The AMC did not extend its essential services like cleaning, drainage and electricity to the distant locality of slum-dwellers, and their complaints often remained unheard by the concerned departments.

The lack of essential services in the locality left its residents' lives in a constant predicament because the central city was evolving, and those new advancements and development projects were limited to the city boundaries of central Ahmedabad. Since Sanklit Nagar did not come under the AMC boundaries, the people of the locality and their needs were overlooked by the government authorities. Due to this negligence, the feeling of isolation grew stronger among the people of the locality.

d. Promising Example of the Communal Harmony in the Beginning

The flood victims were given the freedom to choose their own neighbours in their new locality and many of them chose people from the other community. Something which is unthinkable in this time of concentrated communal pockets. The word 'Sanklit' literally means 'United' or 'Integrated' and inhabitants of Sanklit Nagar actually showcased the meaning of the word through their initial co-existence.

"We realised that there were equal number of Hindus and Muslims in the 18 clusters on the riverbed washed away in the flood," Shah says. "Once the houses were ready, there was a proposal that one side be given to Hindus and the other to Muslims. But I immediately realised that this would lead to frequent confrontation and preferred that let people choose their neighbours."

-Architect Kirtee Shah of Asag, the NGO which had joined hands with the AMC, the state government, Hudco and Oxfam for the project

The colony was divided in clusters of eight residential units built around an open courtyard, with two families sharing one toilet and three families sharing one backyard.

A family choosing to live in Sanklit Nagar was supposed to identify another family with whom they would not mind sharing a toilet, two other families with whom they would not mind sharing a backyard and seven families who were ready to share the courtyard.

"We were amazed at what we saw. Hindus had chosen Muslims as neighbours and vice-versa. The guiding factor was how close you were to a particular family more than which religion he belonged to."

- *Architect Kirtee Shah*

Alas, thirty years down the line, there is no trace of Bhoi, Thakore and Dalit communities who used to stay here. The Sanklit Nagar is now densely populated by Muslim Community and the communal harmony that it displayed in the beginning has become a story of the past.

The unfolding of events that led to this situation finds their roots in the history of Communal Violence of Gujarat state. In addition to that, the politician and ruling parties have exacerbated the situation by making it a political agenda for vote banks.

e. Communal Riots -The preeminent reasons which turned Sanklit Nagar to Juhapura

“The Nanavati Mehta commission in its report has mentioned the past history of communal violence in Ahmedabad and Vadodara dating back to 1714, suggesting that a sense of mistrust had grown between the communities in the wake of prolonged history of violence and that the Godhra train burning incident acted as a catalyst for the Gujarat riots in 2002.

The Commission while presenting its report has cited 11 instances of riots in Ahmedabad between Hindus and Muslims from 1714 to 1993.”

The report then goes on to mention the riots in 1715, 1716, 1750, 1941, 1946, 1965, 1969, 1985, 1990, 1992 and 1993 in Ahmedabad claiming that acts of looting of shops, cow slaughter, demolishing of temple, ruckus during yearly Rath Yatra, murder of Sikh autorickshaw drivers, agitation against reservation policy and Babri Masjid demolition (not in that order) acted as catalysts for the outbreak of violence.

The report in the preface section claims, “as a repercussion of the Godhra train incident, large number of incidents happened in Ahmedabad.”

The report also observes that it was due to numerous riots which gave birth to the creation of ‘pols’ and ‘Mohallas’ in Ahmedabad where people started to reside with those of their community out of fear. The Commission report further states that it

was the particular pattern of structure of houses in ‘Pols’ and ‘Mohallas’ which facilitated the rioters in fleeing from police.

“The distrust and disharmony created between these two communities got widened and safety and security became matters of paramount interest for them. They therefore abandoned the neighbourhood of each other and started residing with the members of their own community. This was more due to fear than hatred for each other. As a result of this, the Pols and Mohallas assumed the colour of religion and with the passage of time, they became exclusive localities of the communities. The composition of Pols and Mohallas facilitated the miscreants in indulging in riots and then to elude the police very easily and disappear in the labyrinth of Pols and mohallas,” said the report.

Source: The Indian Express - Nanavati Commission report tabled in Assembly: ‘Mistrust grew due to history of communal violence since 1714’ - Written by Vaibhav Jha

Ahmedabad | December 13, 2019 05:08 IST

f. Major Incidents of Communal Violence in Gujarat

1969 Riots

In 1969, the city experienced the deadliest riot of post-Partition India. Some Muslim workers left the industrial area, one of the epicentres of the violence, and migrated to Juhapura, a faraway locality where flood victims had been rehabilitated by the government a few years earlier.

1985 Riots

The caste clashes of the 1980s, related to the issue of reservation, took a communal turn, resulting in the massacre of 1985.

1992 Riots

In 1992, the demolition of the Babri Masjid resulted in another wave of riots, after victory processions were perceived by the Muslim minority as a form of provocation.

The 1992 Ahmedabad riots were sparked by the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindu nationalists on December 6, 1992. The riots lasted for several months, from December 1992 to January 1993, and were marked by intense violence between Hindus and Muslims.

The violence was particularly severe in Ahmedabad, where mobs of Hindus attacked Muslim neighbourhoods, burning homes and businesses and killing hundreds of people.

The state government of Gujarat, which was controlled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was criticized for its handling of the riots and was accused of complicity in the violence.

The riots led to the displacement of thousands of people, with many Muslims fleeing the city to escape the violence.

2002 Riots

The Godhra train burning, also known as the *Godhra kand*, was an incident that occurred on February 27, 2002, in the town of Godhra in the Indian state of Gujarat. A train carrying Hindu pilgrims caught fire, killing 59 people. The cause of fire remains disputed. Scholars remain sceptical about the claims of arson. The violence soon spread into the different parts of the state, particularly in Ahmedabad following the incident.

The chief minister of Gujarat at the time, Narendra Modi, was accused of failing to take adequate measures to prevent the violence and of actively supporting the rioters. The 2002 Gujarat riots were one of the worst incidents of communal violence in India's history, with estimates of the death toll ranging from several hundred to several thousand people.

The aftermath of the *Godhra kand* and the Gujarat riots had a significant impact on the social and political landscape of Gujarat and India as a whole. The BJP gained support among Hindus, who felt that the party was defending their interests, while the Muslim community felt increasingly marginalized and targeted.

g. The Disturbed Areas Act (DAA) – The Unmeant Catalyst for Segregation

“The Gujarat Prohibition of Transfer of Immovable Property and Provisions of Tenants from Eviction from Premises in Disturbed Areas Act, commonly known as the Disturbed Areas Act, was enacted in the year 1986. It was meant to be temporary in order to prevent the distress sale of properties following the riots in 1985-86. However, it was replaced with a new act in 1991, which empowered the Gujarat government to declare a riot-prone or communally sensitive area as ‘disturbed’.

Under the Act, a district collector can notify a particular area of a city as a ‘disturbed area’. Once the area is declared as such, the transfer of immovable property in the disturbed areas can take place only after it gets the collector’s nod on an application by the seller and the buyer. In the application, the seller has to attach an affidavit declaring that he/she is selling the property of his/her own accord at a fair market price. A person can be imprisoned and fined for violating the Act.”

Source for the Verbatim: *‘Us and Them: The Misuse of Gujarat’s Controversial Disturbed Areas Act’* by Damayantee Dhar

h. The Exploitation of the DAA

The DAA imposes limitations on the transfer or sale of property within the designated disturbed zones. These limitations may include rules that prohibit anyone outside of a particular community or faith from purchasing real estate. Such limitations can undermine diversity and integration efforts in the impacted communities and promote pre-existing segregation trends.

The designation of a location as "disturbed" might make locals feel scared and uneasy. This fear may lead to voluntary or involuntary migration of people from different communities, resulting in the formation of more homogeneous and segregated neighbourhoods.

The Disturbed places Act's targeting of particular communities or places has the potential to strengthen communal identities and create tensions between various religious or ethnic groupings. As a result, communities may decide to settle in regions that are controlled by their own group for safety and unity, which can further contribute to the establishment of segregated zones.

The *Irony* of the situation lies in the fact that the Disturbed Areas Act was meant to maintain the religious harmony and equilibrium in the riot-prone cities. Alas, due to the exploitation of the act by Government and Locals, the act itself became a catalyst that precipitated the segregation and ghettoization of the Minority communities.

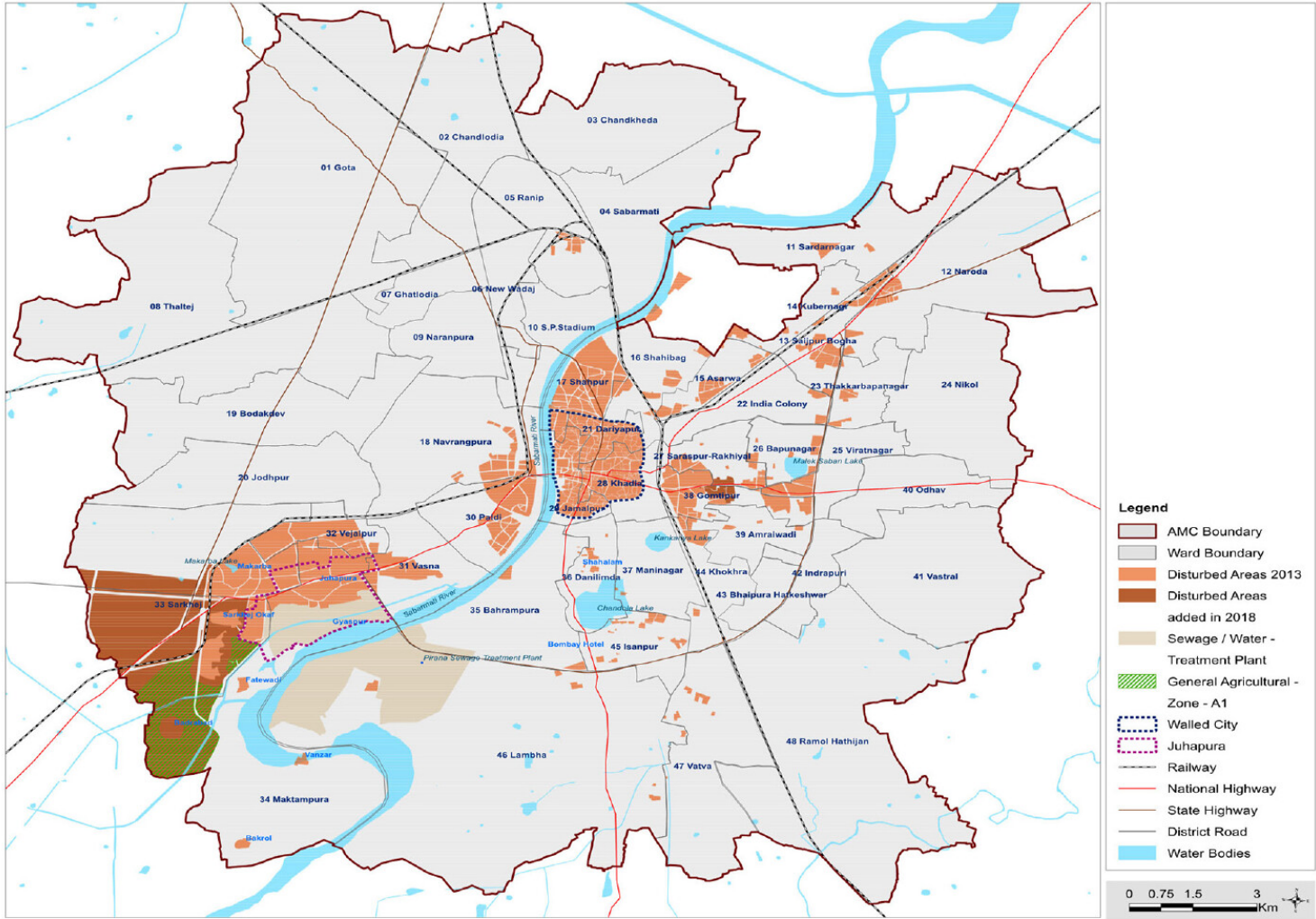


Figure 3: The Area Identified as Disturbed Areas in the Ahmedabad, Source: Saffron geographies of exclusion: The Disturbed Areas Act of Gujarat

i. “The Wagah Border” – The Land between two Areas

The Zalak Apartment Road between the two adjacent localities of Juhapura and Vejalpur is commonly referred as “*Wagah Border*” by the locals due to its location and characteristics.

The road is merely a 1.0-1.5 Kilometres stretch of an empty road that has been ignored by the Authorities as well as the residents of Vejalpur and Juhapura alike.

Since the Juhapura has a preponderance of the Muslim population and the Vejalpur has a majority of Hindu population, the land between these two adjacent localities has become a *No Man’s Land*.

The road remains quiet throughout the day and experiences little to zero traffic on an average week day. The road shares one edge with the Juhapura Muslim residential space and the opposite edge with the Vejalpur Hindu residential society. Two communities come together at this edge but have shown zero interest in communicating with each-other through any means. The Hindu edge has built a solid brick wall with no openings to cut the entire contact with the other edge. The Muslim edge has few shops located on the road which deal with the fabrication and metal works. All of the shops are owned by Muslim owners and the name of the shop is also an Islamic word. The road is used by pedestrians and local rikshaw drivers as a parking space during the day time. People who visit the nearby mosque also park their vehicles on the road. The AMC has removed all dustbins from the road and now, there are piles of garbage are mushrooming.

As we discussed earlier, Meat and Meat-selling restaurants do not find their place at the boundaries where vegetarians and non-vegetarians are coming together. Thus, there are no shops located on the road which sells non-vegetarian food. However, there is a tea-shop which operates because it is a neutral place for both communities.

However, there was one shop named as 'Taj Fry Centre', located on the Muslim Edge of the road among the fabrication shops. However, it has been now converted into the storage room for adjacent shops. The name of the shop is still the same and hoarding is visible in the front, but the shop itself has now changed its purpose. One can see the reason behind this change. The Hindu side of the road has built brick walls to minimize the contact with Muslim side, but walls cannot stop the smell that travels through air. A wall cannot stop the visuals of meat from the balcony of the higher floors from the Hindu side, and thus, it creates an issue for the residents of flats. There is a temple inside the walled area and it even doesn't face the Muslim edge of the road, but still, these factors combined were enough to stop the 'Taj Fry Centre' from operating at the boundaries.

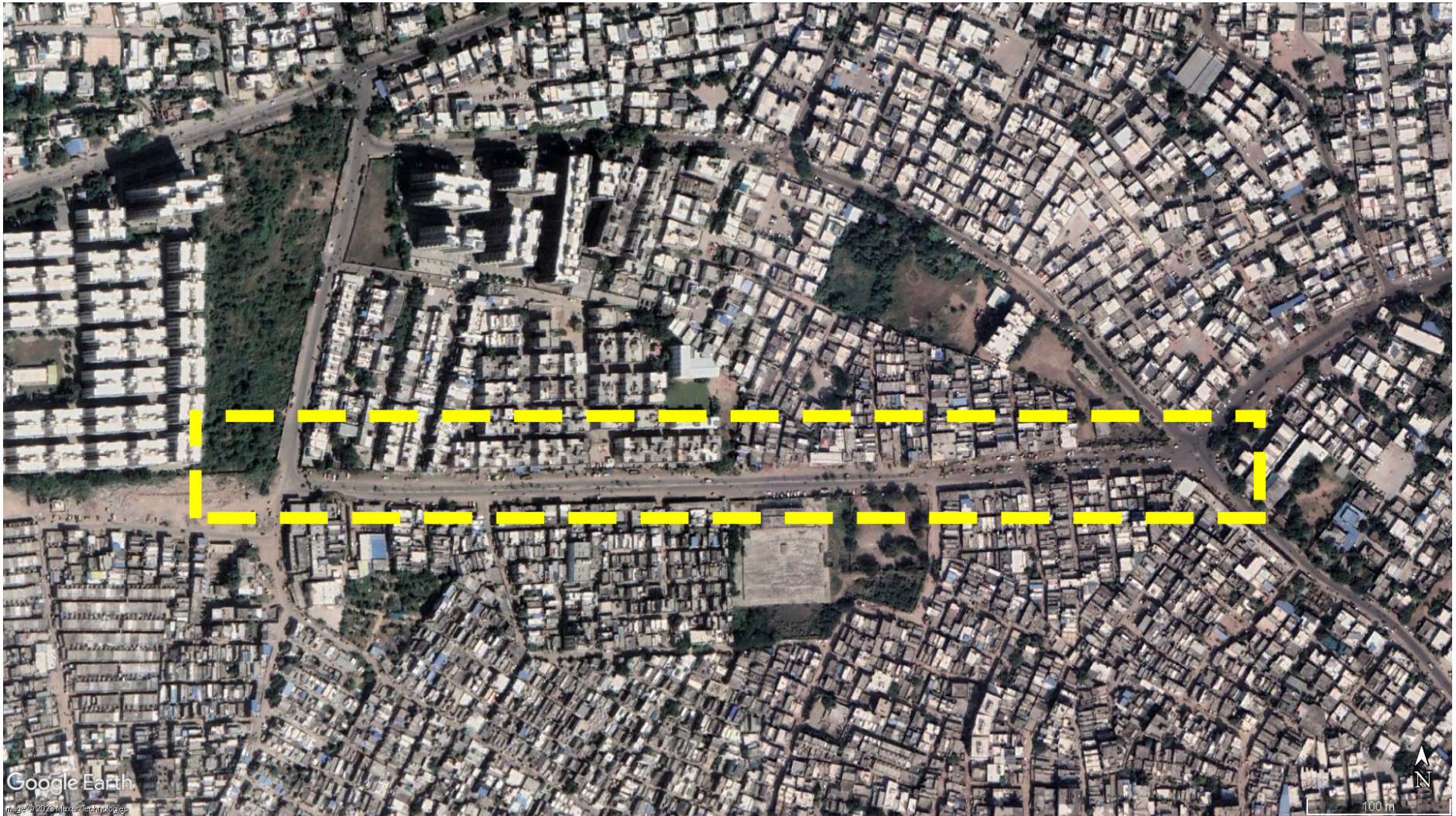


Figure 4: “The Wagah Border” between two areas, Vejalpur (Above Border) and Juhapura (Below Border)

j. The Segregation of Muslims in the City of Ahmedabad

When it comes to the amount of Muslim segregation, the ranking is topped by Ahmedabad, home to Juhapura, whose standing as the prototypical Muslim ghetto of contemporary India was cemented after the '2002 pogrom, when [Ahmedabad] became the most affected Indian city in terms of casualties of communal riots' (Jaffrelot and Thomas, 2012: 45).

The segregation map of Delhi shows most of Delhi as one blank space in terms of Muslim presence – a particularly striking contrast to the adjacent state of Uttar Pradesh to the east and the Mewat region to the south. Due to such existing scenario, in order to achieve a religiously even spatial pattern in Delhi, either half of the capital's Muslim or half of its non-Muslim citizens would need to relocate to another neighbourhood.

Today, most of Ahmedabad appears even more blank when it comes to Muslim presence than Delhi. Ahmedabad City Taluka of Ahmedabad district has a total population of 5,585,528 as per the Census 2011. Around 13.63% of the population consists of Muslims which means there are around 7,61,565 Muslims living in the Ahmedabad city, as per the Census 2011. However, the distribution of the community is very uneven on the cityscape canvas of Ahmedabad. There are places where Muslim population is close to none and there are places like Juhapura where Muslim population has been forced to live in segregation and religious density is almost 100%, since there are no other communities located in/near that area.

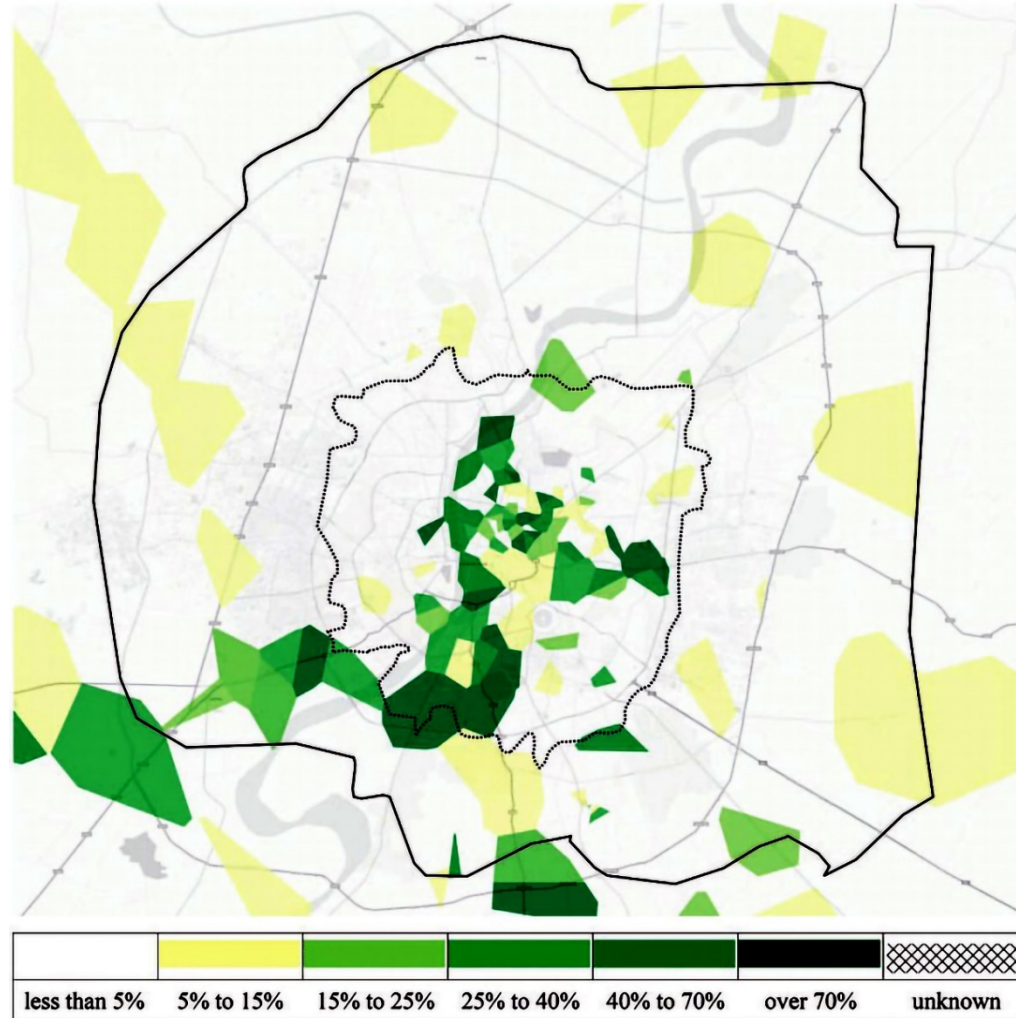


Figure 5: Map of Muslim demography in Ahmedabad. Estimated Muslim share of the electorate in 2014, extent of densely built-up area (solid line) and administrative boundaries (dotted line).

Source: Susewind (2016), OpenStreetMap and ML Infomap.

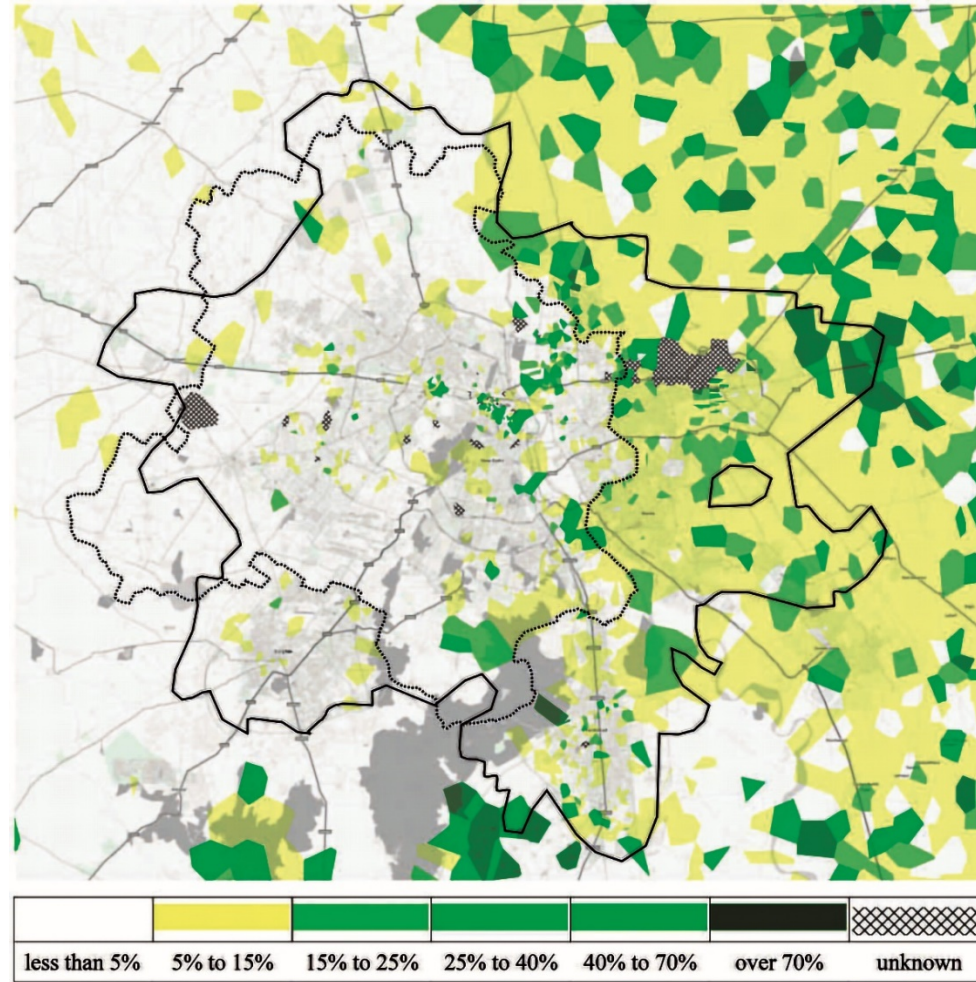


Figure 6: Map of Muslim demography in Delhi. Estimated Muslim share of the electorate in 2014, extent of densely built-up area (solid line) and administrative boundaries (dotted line).

Source: Susewind (2016), OpenStreetMap and ML Infomap

Sarkhej – The Scenario of Two Different Communities Located in One Single Area of the City

Sarkhej was once a village located on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, surrounded by agricultural fields. It has been built on the location where the holy man and religious Muslim leader Ahmed Khattu Ganj Baksh (or Shaikh Ahmad Khattri) lived and died (in 1446). He was the spiritual guide of the sultan Ahmed Shah.

During the Mughal period, Sarkhej became an important commercial center due to its proximity to the Sabarmati River. In the 19th century, it became a popular residential area for wealthy merchants of Ahmedabad.

The area has a significant Muslim population, and it has been politically influential in Gujarat. In the 2002 Gujarat riots, Sarkhej was one of the areas that were badly affected. Many people were killed, and several buildings were destroyed during the riots. Since then, the area has witnessed a rise in communal tensions, and political parties have tried to use it to gain support from the Muslim community.

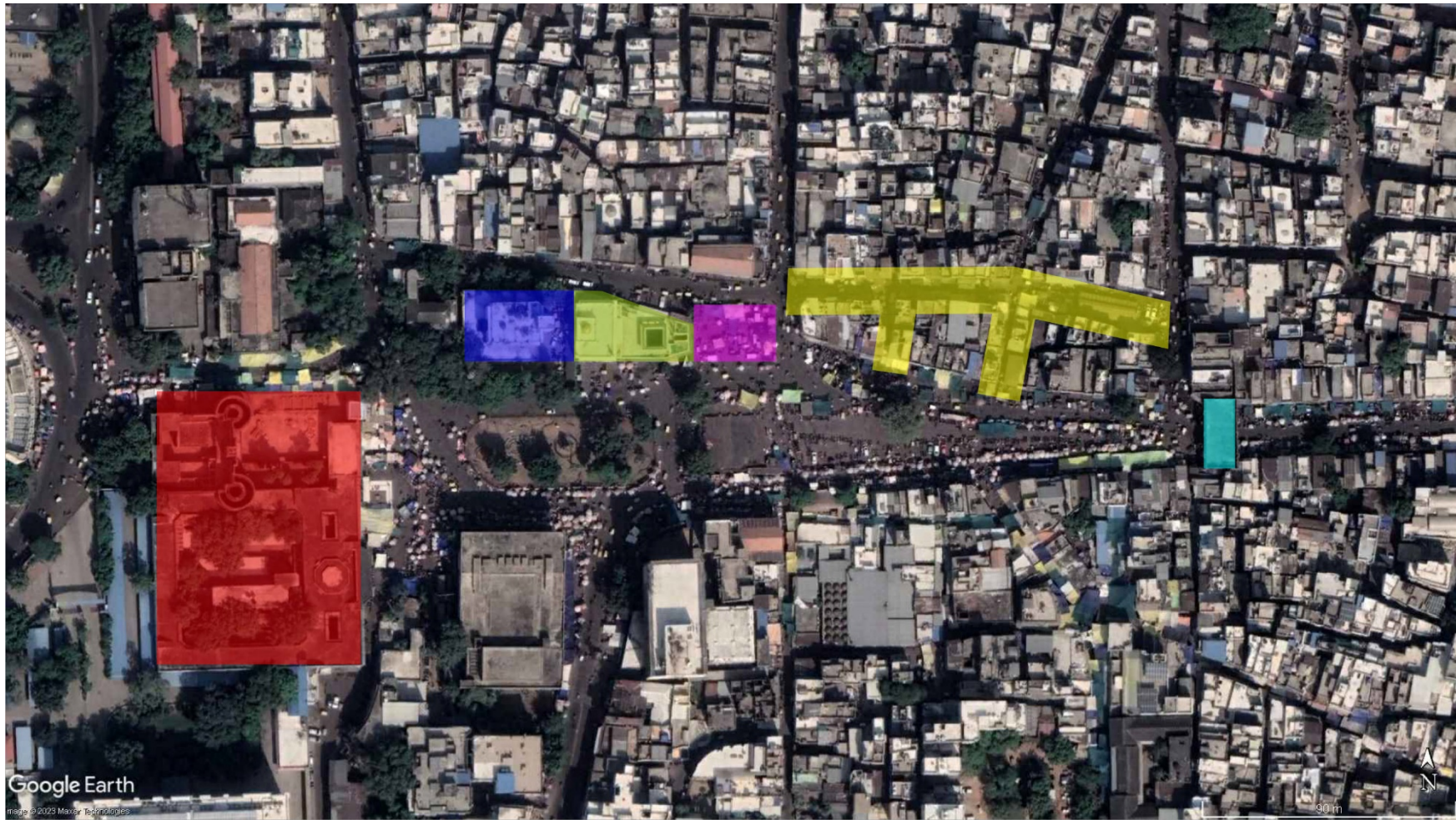
In recent years, the area has seen significant development, with several new housing projects and commercial establishments being built. The government has also undertaken various infrastructure projects in the area to improve connectivity and attract investment.

Bhatiyaar Gali – The Scenario of Two Different Communities Located in One Single Plaza of the City

Located at the heart of the old walled city of Ahmedabad, Bhatiyaar Gali is a non-vegetarian food paradise that has been serving the traditional Mughal non-vegetarian delicacies since the times of Mughal Rule of Gujarat. Most of the food-outlets present at the Bhatiyaar Gali are known for their many generations old recipes, which are passed on from one generation to next generation. Most of the chefs claim that they are direct descendants of the Royal Chefs who used to serve the Emperor at Royal Kitchen. Even today, the Gali stands true to its name and serves the traditional dishes such as – *Khoya*, *Nalli Nihari* and *Barah Handi* to customers with same enthusiasm at affordable prices.

Teen Darwaza is a place where one can see the presence of the meat in the close proximity of a Hindu temple. The Bhatiyaar Gali has many butcher shops operating within the 500 meters radius of a Hindu temple which is dedicated to the Nagar Devi of Ahmedabad – *Bhadrakali Mata*. Another religious institution, *Alif Ki Masjid* is located only 100 meters away from the temple and together, the entire plaza serves as an example of communal harmony and peaceful co-existence of communities.

The underlying story here is a story of Deception, narrated through the tactical placement of various stalls and shops. It is a critical choice made by residents and shop-owners to maintain the peace and harmony of both communities. To understand this, one must understand the existing settings of the entire plaza area.



- Bhadra Fort (Temple)
 - Non-Veg Food Zone (Open)
 - Police Station
- Alif Ki Masjid
 - Bhatiyar Gali
 - Teen Darwaza

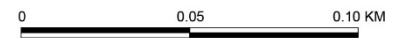


Figure 7: Teen Darwaza Plaza and its Main Zones

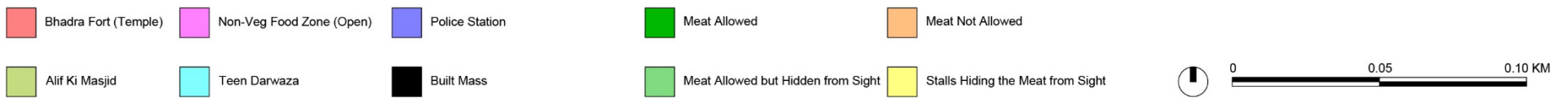
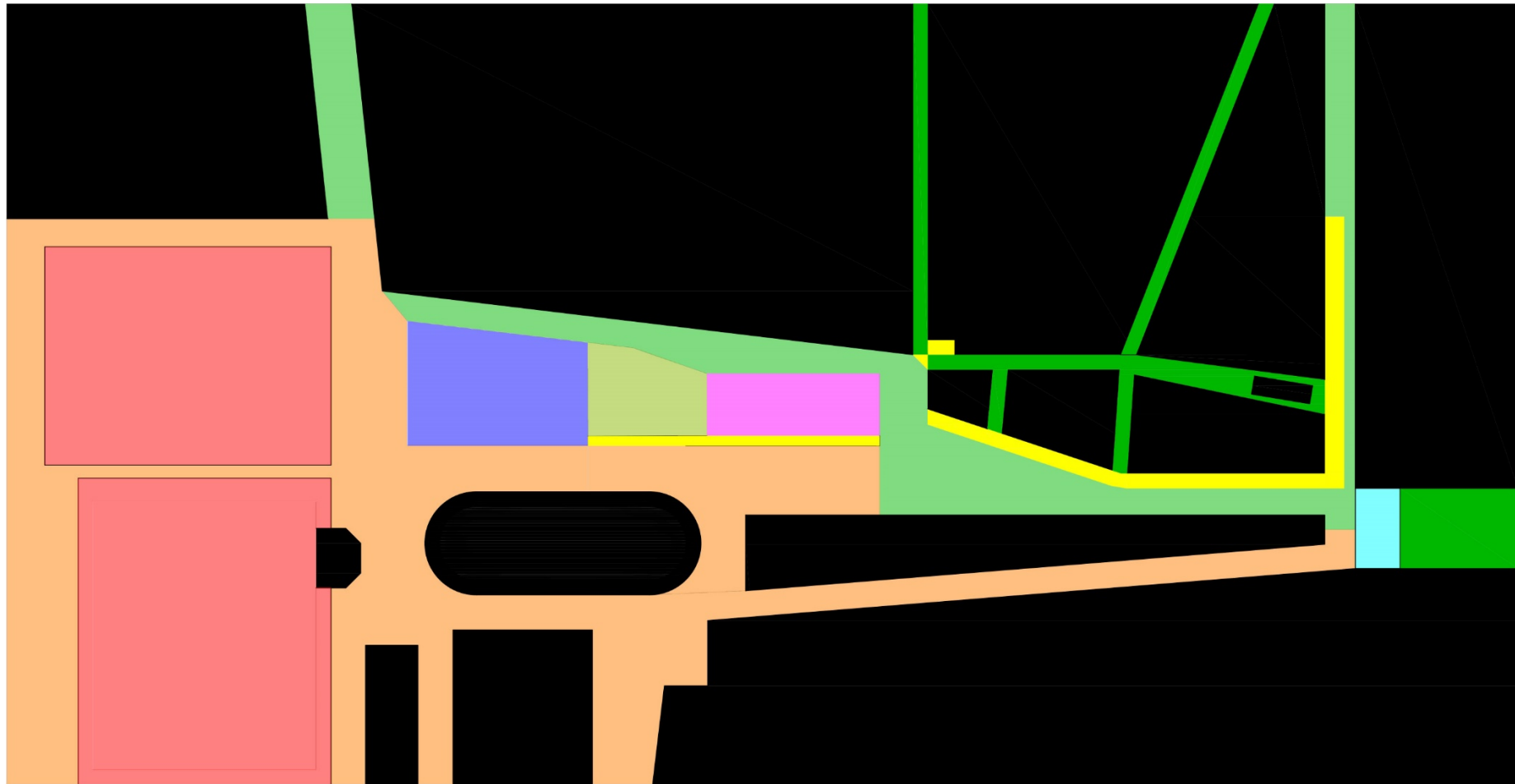


Figure 8: Different Veg and Non-Veg Zones of Teen Darwaza Plaza (Simple Geometry)

As we can see, the location of meat-selling shops and restaurants is the key factor that has helped Bhatiyaar Gali shop-owners for survival near the close proximity of the Hindu Temple. The balance is very critical and area is still considered sensitive area by many locals. The police-station is located in-between areas of the Mosque and Temple. In BG, one can observe the change of ambience and the transition of veg space into non-veg space (or vice versa) by walking just mere 100 steps.

For most locals, this distinguishment of the spaces is a part of life and they don't feel anything unique about it, but for the person who is visiting the plaza for the first time, this balance becomes intriguing. When one observes carefully, it becomes obvious that there is a clear preponderance of the Muslim community in the area. The shop-owners and even the street vendors are mainly Muslims who are selling different types of items in the plaza since many years. Nonetheless, in the case of city of Ahmedabad, where majority of population is Hindu, it is a critical choice for Muslim residents to respect the religious boundaries of the Hinduism and thus, they have derived a simple, yet ingenious way to co-exist.

People who visit temple showcase high chances of abhorrence towards any sign of meat when they are visiting the temple or temple premises. Thus, meat-shop owners have hidden their shop-fronts behind the shops which sells things like clothes and sweets, which are neutral for any religion. One only observes meat when one is looking for it, otherwise, it is easy for one to visit the plaza and come out without any sight of meat. However, there are few stalls which sale fried meat items which are visible from the lane, but they have been placed in a manner that they remain hidden

from the viewer when one is near the temple. The whole idea is to block the viewer's gaze with natural/man-made obstacles such as trees or neutral shops. It is an interesting finding that in the plaza, one cannot find the visual of meat and visual of temple in a single frame. Either one can look at meat shops, or one can have a view of temple, but both do not overlap in a single frame – which is the underlying idea of the deception. Even the main 4 entrances of Bhatiyaar Gali are hidden from the distance by neutral shops, which create false façade as a part of deception.

Sindhu Bhavan Road – The Urban Scenario of the City

The Sindhu Bhavan Road is located in a relatively upscale and well-connected area of Ahmedabad, with easy access to other areas of city due to its location.

The Sindhu Bhavan Road is a 3.5 KMs long stretch of the road which connects the SG Highway and SP Ring Road. The SBR has emerged as a new youth-favourite destination in recent years due to its growing number of cafes and entertainment venues.

Sindhu Bhavan Road has a diverse range of restaurants, cafes, and entertainment venues, offering something for everyone. From fine dining restaurants to street food vendors, from cafes with calm ambience to crowded bowling plaza, The SBR offers variety of options to youngsters.

Many of the establishments on Sindhu Bhavan Road have a pleasant and inviting ambience, which can make them attractive places to hang out. Some restaurants and cafes have outdoor seating areas or rooftop terraces, providing a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere for patrons.

Over time, Sindhu Bhavan Road has become a popular destination for young people and social groups, who come to the area to socialize, network, and meet new people. Most people who visit the SBR belong to affluent families and thus, it has gained a reputation for emerging as a place for *Rich Upper-Class* people of the Society.

a. Eating at the Expensive Café = Better Social Status

The consumption of expensive food and beverages can be also examined by social and cultural parameters, as well as it can be understood by one's individual psychological needs and desires. In the case of eating at an expensive cafe, the act of spending money on high-end food and drinks may provide individuals with a sense of social status and economic power, which can actually make them feel privileged superior than the rest of the society which does not have access to such luxurious goods.

From a sociological perspective, the extravagant behaviour of consumption of fancy food at expensive cafes can serve as a means of displaying one's ability to afford the expensive and lavish standards of living. Eating at an expensive cafe, therefore, may be seen as a way of signalling one's wealth and status to others, and may contribute to a sense of social belonging and acceptance.

As the one's Economical Hierarchy in the society grows, people tend to get more selective and conscious about their daily choices such as clothes, food and vehicles. Going to the cafes where food dishes cost an arm and a leg is a very clear indication to one's higher Economical Status in the society.

The Non-Vegetarian food finds its place in the menus of these fancy menus and surprisingly, people do not raise any problems against the availability of meat in the menu even if they are strictly vegetarians.

As we already established, the abhorrence towards the meat is largely based on the smell and visual of the raw meat, which is not present at fancy restaurants and cafes. Plus, such posh diners are believed to have better hygiene standards than road-side outlets.

People easily believe the claim that expensive restaurants and cafes maintain separate kitchen and utensils for separate type of foods. Since the café itself has to maintain its reputation among the people, they are also careful regarding their hygiene conditions.

The main factor that contributes to this belief is the association of high prices with exclusivity and luxury. Expensive cafes are often associated with high-end experiences, and consumers may view them as providing a higher quality of service, which includes extra hygiene measures. Plus, due to their sophisticated ambience and advertisements, people may believe that expensive cafes are more likely to maintain high hygiene standards as they are expected to cater to people who demand and can afford high standards of cleanliness.

So, one can say that apart from the social factors that attracts one to consume food at such pricy restaurants even if the cafés are serving meat. There are many factors that contribute towards the higher tolerance towards the non-vegetarian food served at such places and due to that, meat is accepted at such places in a very sophisticated, refined and elegant way.

b. Wrapping of Meat – Wrapping the Real Issue

Where one eats and with whom one eats is very important in the state of Gujarat. People boast very casually about their visits of such fancy restaurants and indirectly, suggest that they are mentally and economically sound enough to the part of new progressive world. This is the same reason why in Gujarat, a normal street cart selling meat will not survive in the city's prime location area, but a KFC will survive at the same spot. Plus, it is also important that the food served at KFC is much more sophisticated and elegant than the street food which is raw and has triggering visuals of animal meat. Ironically, the core principle of non-violence (*Ahimsa*) applies to both places in a same way!

Whether it is a chicken burger wrapped in a fancy box or a chicken carcass hanging at rotisserie, in both cases, an animal has been sacrificed for the human desire for consumption. However, in the first case, the death is much more elegant and behind the curtains, while in the latter case, death is much more triggering and visuals are discernible.

It becomes crucial to observe at this point that resistance towards the death of animal itself and the reason for its meat-aversion lies in the core belief of *Jivdaya* (Translation: Empathy and Kindness towards all Living Creatures). However, in most cases, the *Jivdaya* itself only triggers the empathy in one's heart when he/she is faced directly with the raw reality of death of any living creature.

For example, a chicken patty would still look harmless to a vegetarian person due to its lack of gross visuals and bones but the

same person might not feel comfortable in front of a meat-shop where carcasses are hanging on meat-hooks.

Due to the sophistication of the death and the method in which the animal is getting killed, the end-product becomes accepted by psyches of the vegetarians. In fact, if one is not told/aware about the chicken patty and its ingredients, he/she can be easily mistaken into perceiving the patty as a vegetarian food item.

There are many people who dislike the meat from such sophisticated outlets due to the very same reason of the sophistication of the food item. During one field trip, I was told by the person at the restaurant that he does not even consider the KFC chicken as a real chicken. His actual verbatim response – “*Chicken bey haath thi khava vali vastu che, jya sudhi bey haath thi tangdi pakdine modha thi piece no lai tya sudhi santosh j na thay. Ola KFC wala chicken kai chicken no ganay, aani sachi maja vaadi ma pakawela murga khavama che!*” (Translation: Chicken should be consumed by using the both hands while eating. One should hold the leg-piece with one hand and use his/her teeth to pull out the chunk of meat while eating and unless one does this, one does not get the actual satisfaction and taste of the meat consumption. The chicken which they serve at KFCs (Sophisticated version of meat such as chicken burgers and chicken popcorns) are not even worthy of being included in the category of chicken products. To get the real essence of chicken-consumption, one should consume the freshly cooked chicken at farms with traditional methods!)

During one of the conversations, I came across one female student who comes from the family which cooks meat-dishes on almost every weekend. The girl, herself was a non-vegetarian person

until one day when she visited the meat-shop accidentally. The visuals of meat-shops and butchering of animals were too disturbing and left long-lasting impact on her mind. After the incident, she has turned vegetarian while on the other hand, her family still enjoys the meat delicacies. The case is very common for many meat-eaters of Gujarat who belong to the religions which advocate *Ahimsa* and *Jivdaya*. People love the taste but their nurturing and upbringing does not allow them to enjoy the taste without the guilt. Due to this guilty conscience, many people turn vegetarian or only eat the meat which is served in a way that doesn't remind them of the animal's sacrifice (Example – Boneless meat patty, meat slices or meat balls).

One can see the two extremely opposite opinions for the same phenomena. A specific category of people can only consume the meat at fancy cafés and restaurants because it has been curated in a way that allows one to ignore the fact of its ingredients and the sacrifice of an animal. If this person is reminded of the violence by any means (Example – Bone, Shape of Body or Smell), he/she feels instant discomfort while consumption. For such people, meat is enjoyable only in certain forms and dishes. The same fact becomes the reason for other half of consumers who do not have problem with smell or sight of meat. For them, such sophistication becomes *boring* and *tasteless*. According to them, meat is a delicacy best enjoyed at places like *Bhatiyar Gali* or *Juhapura* where one can relish the meat-dishes cooked with traditional methods and ingredients. Such consumers either do not feel or they have learned to ignore any remorse or empathy for the sacrificed animal's life or they belong to a certain religion/caste in which they are permitted by their Supreme Authority/Higher Power for the consumption of certain animal meat.

Many people who do not dare to visit the butcher shops can easily visit the fancy restaurants where meat is being served. This behaviour pattern leads us to believe that there are many factors attached to the consumption of meat that what meets the eye at first glance. *Jivdaya* and *Ahimsa* remain the core principles, but just like any other rules, dietary religious laws too, can be manipulated/ are being manipulated by people according to their understanding. As they say in the Gujarat: “*Badhu joyanu zer chhe*” (Meaning - It is problematic, but only because it is visible). Meat is also a subject prone to disputes and problem in Gujarat, but most of these disputes can be avoided if the meat remains hidden/covered from the plain sight. In a nutshell, most people do not meat's existence in Gujarat, they hate the meat's display/visuals and smell. In order to understand the abhorrence, it is necessary to understand what is the actual reason behind the abhorrence. The mere knowledge of the presence of the meat is sometimes more provoking than the actual presence of meat for staunch Vegetarians.

Pre-Production

a. आँख मिचौली – The Game of Hide and Seek

After field-study, it is evident that the sight of meat is troublesome for many people Ahmedabad. For instance, a lot of individuals stay away from or don't live close to places where meat is sold or consumed. Sometimes tensions between communities who eat meat and those that don't can develop into societal conflicts. The classic example of the *Juhapura* and *Vejalpur* boundary showcases how communities do not merge with each-other due contradicting food habits. Due to such reasons, meat shops and butcher shops always make a very crucial decision for the selection of the location. In fact, a butcher shop can repel the staunch vegetarian customers and due to that, all adjacent shops' businesses can also get affected negatively. Many general shop-owners also do not like the presence of egg/meat shops near them as it can impact their sells in negative way too. That is why it is important to understand how the meat shops are operating and still thriving in such unfavourable circumstances.

As one can decipher after the discussion, majority of people do not have any direct hatred for the meat and meat-consumers as long as the act is not taking place in front of them. This mentality is the key survival factor behind the sell and consumption of meat.

When one think about the butcher shop, one thinks about the gory visuals and animal flesh pieces. One imagines the hanging carcasses and the butchering knife covered in blood. Such visuals can be offensive and so provoking for vegetarians in such a strong way

that they might vomit by the mere thought. Person might not even step inside of the restaurant where rotisserie is kept in the plain sight and chickens are being roasted on slow flame. Many people might find this description of a restaurant mouth-watering and tempting, but majority of Gujarat's population will raise the eyebrows and cover their noses with disgust.

The rotisseries have to survive for the people who enjoy the meat shawarmas, the restaurants have to operate and serve chicken biryanis, the butchers have to slaughter animals for consumption and customers will keep buying the pieces of animal flesh. The cycle of demand and supply never ends regardless of the prevailing scenarios, because meat, meat-sellers and meat-consumers have found their ingenious ways to hide themselves from people's sight. In the state of Gujarat, one cannot hope for the sudden change of the mentality, one cannot hope for the easy acceptance of meat but one can surely learn to cover their tracks to avoid conflicts!

Consumers, sellers and authorities have unspoken mutual understanding developed among themselves. As long as the act of consumption and selling is not harming people's sentiments, it is permissible. The problem arrives only when people complain about their sentiments getting hurt, and then whether the claim is logical or not, the meat seller/consumer has to suffer the consequences. To avoid such conflicts, there are few unspoken boundaries that meat cannot/should not cross in the state of Gujarat.

Following Findings from the Research are selected for the Representation in Final Product:

1 – Strength in Number

Meat shops are generally located in the cluster of minimum 7-8 shops. Due to this structure, entire area gets defined as meat-market and only people who want to buy meat visit the area. Such arrangement is desirable for those who don't want to ruin their day by the sight of raw meat.

2 – Shops in the Muslim dominated areas

As we already established the connection of meat with Islam and since most of the shop owners also belong to religion of Islam, butcher shops have better chances of survival in the Muslim dominated areas of city.

3 – Shops in the poor localities or at outer periphery of city

Again, the idea is to hide the meat from plain sight of people. So, people who have abhorrence towards meat and its smell never visit the area and in turn, they never get affected by the same. Poor people largely make their food choices depending on their budget and few animal meat items are very common food for the poor due to their high protein and easy availability at cheaper prices.

4 – Meat shops and restaurants selling meat away from temples

This is a very small, obvious but extremely crucial point. Any visual of meat, animal body part or bone near the periphery of a temple is more than enough to spark a riot in the city of Ahmedabad which has its history covered in bloodshed of communal violence.

5 – Covering the meat market in a specific designated building

In the case of Gandhinagar, the government meat-market is located near the vegetable market but in a completely secluded setting. Apart from the smell of meat, it is not possible to identify the building as a meat-market and there are no visuals of meat/eggs from the outside of the four walls. Such arrangement is not good for the people who are working inside the building because they have to operate with constant smell and dampness since there are no openings for light and fresh air. However, this kind of isolation allows them to operate their businesses in peace.

6 – Making meat less obvious with different shapes and recipes

A chicken burger looks exactly the same as veggie burger. A chicken sandwich looks same as a vegetable sandwich. A pizza with small cube-shaped chicken pieces will look same as pizza with paneer pieces! Such examples show how the meat's outer form can affect the tolerance of people towards it. A fried chicken leg piece is a commonly recognised sight for everyone, but the fried chicken patty cannot be identified with a single glance as it closely resembles to fried vegetable/paneer patty. By serving meat in such shapes and varieties, one can attract less attention from vegetarians.

7 – Disposing the waste meat and animal parts properly

The residue of the animal body parts after slaughter (Such as – feathers, beaks, intestines and bones) have to be disposed properly and in most cases, discreetly to avoid conflicts. Not only people have problem with the edible items, but also with the waste material. In fact, few societies do not allow the disposal of egg shells and chicken bones in their common dustbins! Therefore, it is important to take care of the waste material in proper way for the meat shop owners, otherwise it can turn out to be the issue for their survival. Hiding the cooking place, Tandoor, Kitchen and dining spaces is not enough, but many shop-owners and café owners pack their garbage in black bags for discreet and easy disposal. Even the government provides special garbage trucks in few areas where large number of meat-shops and restaurants are located.

8 – Less advertisements of meat in the hoardings and menus

In areas where there are chances of conflicts, meat-shops generally do not operate. However, restaurants can still operate with less display of the meat in their menu. For example, without providing any posters/hoardings of meat-dishes, just one red symbol of the availability of non-veg food is enough to convey the message. Once the customer comes inside, they can be served the menu that has only text printed menu. Many restaurants use red coloured text and green coloured text to distinguish the non-vegetarian (red) dishes from the vegetarian (green) dishes.

9 – Not locating meat/non-veg food where boundaries of vegetarian area and non-vegetarian area are coming together

It is a point that can be observed in the areas like Juhapura and Vejalpur. Juhapura and Vejalpur share boundary and both are Muslim dominated and Hindu dominated areas respectively. There are many meat-shops and restaurants located in the core areas of Juhapura, surrounded by Muslim residents. However, as the boundary of the Juhapura approaches the Vejalpur, frequency of meat shops becomes less and ultimately, there are no meat shops and non-veg restaurants at the boundary.

Boundaries between two areas are shared by both of the communities, thus it is important that they are not claimed by any one particular community. That is why there are no meat shops and non-vegetarian food selling restaurants are located at the boundaries. Any act of establishing a meat shop in such area will translate into the act of occupying the area by the meat-consuming community. The act of occupying the area will further translate into the expansion of the territory and that can lead to the quarrel among the communities. Thus, boundaries have a very neutral character, rather than belonging to any one side.

10 – Supporting the meat and its consumption with Religion

Many meat shops and meat serving restaurants are located in the close proximity of Mosques. Not only it provides the necessary religious support to the business, but it also benefits the sell of the goods. For example, during feasts (*Daawat*) and Iftar times, meat dishes are relished by followers of Islam. During Ramadan, such shops and restaurants see the drastic increase in the number of

customers. Religious institutions also help to establish the dominance of the particular community in given particular area.

11 – Meat as a symbol of Progressive Mindset

This point is relevant to high-end cafes and restaurants. Such spaces can afford to sell meat in an ostentatious manner, such as including meat as a part of global cuisine. Such fancy restaurants have customers coming from affluent backgrounds are aware regarding the latest trends. Meat in such places doesn't face the orthodox notions of abhorrence and is generally accepted and enjoyed.

12 – Selling the Packaged Meat instead of Fresh Cut Body Parts

Selling of meat in frozen goods aisle is very common and a good way to remain under the radar for sellers. Frozen meat includes the meat patties, sausages, slices and chicken cut into cubes. This kind of serving reduces the chances of loathing, since they are packaged neatly and stored inside refrigerators. They also have longer shelf lives and can be used in wide range of cuisines. Noodles, cakes and cookies made with eggs, non-vegetarian pickles and chicken chips are example of few dishes that do not provoke any negative feelings with their visuals and smells.

13 – Hiding shops and restaurants by adroitly placing them away from busy roads and hiding them behind other stores

In such cases, the placement and the exterior of the shop plays important role. The meat shops are placed in a manner that does not provide the direct visual of coops, carcasses, knives and other

paraphernalia necessary for butchering. They are located inside of a small street away from main roads and only customers visit them with the sole purpose of purchase. Restaurants can have sitting spaces inside the built structure rather than keeping them in public. If this is not possible, sitting and cooking places are kept hidden from general public by placing other stalls/shops in front of the spaces. The idea of creating a false front is necessary not only for sellers, but also beneficent to customers and consumers who are often not comfortable while indulging in the act of consuming or buying meat products!

Final Product – Story through Maps and Images

a. Why Maps?

After the field work, the maps were chosen as a medium for representation of the Spatial practices prevailing in Gujarat.

The key aspects of project are regions in which shops are located and the visual elements of Identity of the shop. For this, the maps serve as an ideal tool for narration. It allows one to link the images of the shops with the location of the shop. This relation establishes the understanding of higher/lower tolerance for meat in particular regions and the reasons behind the same. Maps are not only used for navigation, but in-fact can be an interesting medium through which one can tell the story of such complex spatial relations and can generate the interesting narration.

b. Example of Created Maps during Project:

- Religious Institutions Location Maps
- Veg, Non-veg and Neutral area zoning maps
- Locations of Meat selling shops
- Border maps between the Veg and Non-veg spaces
- The location of Neutral spaces

c. What did the Maps Show?

The maps show the expansion of the city on both sides of the river - the shifting patterns of settlement in the localities- the lines of division between two communities and location of non-vegetarian shops in border zones, transition zones, interstices or in-between zones and new commercial districts of the city. These are the areas which emerge as the areas where one can observe the presence of the non-vegetarian shops and eateries with different visual identities which change according to the surrounding area.

d. Tools used during Field-work

Most of the field-work was a process of visiting the chosen areas and observing them with keen eyes from the perspective of a designer.

Most learnings were experiential learnings from the site and from the conversations with the following people:

- Residents of Area
- Rickshaw drivers
- Meat shop owners
- Customers of meat-shops
- Owners of Non-veg Restaurants
- Waiters of Non-veg Restaurants

e. The tool used for Photographs

- Mobile – Redmi 6 Pro

The reason behind the selection of Mobile instead of DSLR camera is to avoid any unwanted attention from the authorities and locals of the sensitive areas. Plus, the mobile offers a quick image-capture in the situation when one has to click photograph without making people aware of the process. Thus, the Mobile camera was used instead of DSLR camera.

f. Tools used for the Creation of Maps:

- Google Earth Pro
- Google Maps
- Autodesk AutoCAD
- Adobe Photoshop

g. Brief Introduction of Tools

Google Earth Pro

Google Earth Pro is a powerful geospatial software that revolutionizes the way we explore and understand our planet. One can access the old satellite images to see the evolution of an area with time and can also save the images with HD resolution. Google Earth Pro was used to get the necessary base maps of areas for further processes.

Google Maps

Google Maps is a versatile mapping service that has transformed the way one navigates the world. Google Maps were used extensively during field work and during the creation of maps, they were used to create necessary details and base drawings.

Autodesk AutoCAD

Autodesk AutoCAD is a leading computer-aided design (CAD) software that empowers engineers, architects, and designers to create precise and detailed 2D and 3D drawings. AutoCAD was used to generate accurate maps of areas in the vector format. During the latter stage, it was used to make sheets and layouts of the same maps. The maps were created in the software in the scale of 1:1, so that one can export the maps in any desired scale afterwards.

Adobe Photoshop

Autodesk AutoCAD is a leading computer-aided design (CAD) software that empowers engineers, architects, and designers to create precise and detailed 2D and 3D drawings. Adobe Photoshop was used to enhance the appeal of the maps and in some cases, to crop few images.

Final Product Format

The Final Product is an amalgam of Maps, Text and Images to convey the story of Ahmedabad's meat presence and its deception. Three main types of presence – The clear visibility, the partial visibility and partial hiding and completely hiding it with location/form and shapes are the identified types of deception which are presented through images.

The Veg, Non-veg and Neutral zones and their contributing factors are represented on the Maps which are made after field trips and data-collection.

The final presentation was made in the ArcGIS StoryMaps. It was not the paid version of account and due to that, few features were not accessible in the free-account. However, necessary tools were available for the purpose of the presentation. The data was uploaded into the online templates and was then arranged in a way to convey the story.

The project tells the story of deception to students of communication design, people who are studying the evolution of city, common people of Gujarat and outsiders who consider the Gujarat – a Vegetarian state! The notion and its survival are key examples of how meat has survived as well as thrived in Ahmedabad while also remaining the low-key, without any advertisements.

a. Why ArcGIS?

“A story can effect change, influence opinion, and create awareness—and maps are an integral part of storytelling. ArcGIS StoryMaps can give your narrative a stronger sense of place, illustrate spatial relationships, and add visual appeal and credibility to your ideas.

Use our simple map maker to create custom maps to enhance your digital storytelling. Or add text, photos, and videos to your existing ArcGIS web maps and web scenes to create an interactive narrative that's easy to publish and share.”

- Extract from the Website of ArcGIS StoryMaps

As we discussed earlier, maps were not the only focus of the final product. The visuals were also integrated part of the project and these visuals have to link themselves with their precise location and region. For such requirement, ArcGIS serves as an easy and freely available tool that allows one to create a story with interactive maps and images.

The ArcGIS is built for the same purpose – to narrate the stories through different types of maps, images and audio-video elements. By clicking a simple button, one can see the images and information of the place easily and such interaction also generates more interest when user is going through the presentation.

The story has many layers and requires back and forth movement rather than one single flow of the structure. Many maps and images have to overlap to convey the point in effective manner.

This kind of narration can be achieved by the use of the software that has been created to satisfy the very same need. The spatial relations and visuals combine seamlessly to provide the immersing experience of the entire narration.

Using maps and other geographic data, ArcGIS StoryMaps is a platform that enables user to produce and distribute interactive, multimedia tales. One may use StoryMaps to build interesting, interactive tales that explain complicated geographical connections and data to wide range of audience using a combination of maps, pictures, videos, and text.

The platform is a piece of Esri's ArcGIS toolkit, which includes software and services for geographic information systems (GIS). It is intended to make it simple for users to produce interesting and educational multimedia content that uses geographic data to convey tales about people, places, and events.

Link for the Site:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/>

Link for Final Product:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/37d731faed084ad8a68c3e7a5c2e06ce>

b. User Testing

The user testing was conducted with the group of people who belonged to different communities and showed different food preferences. For the most Vegetarians, few visuals from the presentation were disturbing. The visuals of raw meat were then removed from the presentation. The visuals were removed so that few people's sentiments don't get offended. While few vegetarians showed better tolerance since the images do not have any 'smell'.

One more thing that users showed was the confusion during the navigation of presentation panels. The amount of scrolling was too tiring for few people. Thus, after receiving the comment, few panels were given horizontal navigation arrow keys instead of the scrolling option.

The audio commentary can be included with few images and maps, but due to the limitation of the free version of software, it cannot be added at this time. However, the necessary data is given in the text format to support the argument and explain the visuals in better way.

During the next phase of project, one can use the same method to conduct the similar research in other cities of Gujarat. The emerging results can be compared to generate the holistic scenario of the Gujarat. The study can serve as a prototype that one can expand in scale for different areas.

Conclusion

After reaching at the end of the journey, one can clearly see the prevailing phenomenon regarding the meat consumption and sell of meat in the case of Ahmedabad. One can see that the on the outer surface, the myth of Gujarat's *Vegetarianism* is still prevailing inside people's minds. However, the facts and the field-work suggests the different story.

After roaming in the meat-markets, talking with meat shop owners and restaurants owners, waiters and customers – it became crystal clear that most people, who have so-called *hatred* towards meat, are not even aware about the actual reason behind their disgust. For most of them, it is a belief that has been nailed in their minds without any logical explanation since their early childhood days. Thus, the mere sight of raw meat makes them uncomfortable and most of them, don't even hide to try their clear loathing towards meat. If they are talking about the core values of *Ahimsa* and *Jivdaya*, then why don't they showcase the same disgust for places like McDonald's and KFCs! They visit the food-courts where KFC is located and yet they don't feel the need for covering their noses. One can say that meat's presence only affects the most people when act of consumption is committed in front of the viewer. If the meat stays hidden from the sight, most people do not have any problem with the meat.

One can see clearly that for most people, meat is not that huge issue until they become aware of the presence of meat. If one person is eating chicken burger in front of a vegetarian person, it is very much acceptable. Chicken patty doesn't scream its presence like the leg-piece of chicken with bone. This is an interesting fact that makes us believe that Gujarat is a state where people have problem with the non-vegetarian as long as they are being aware of it. If one can hide meat by any means, it is not an issue for anyone. Plus, if it is served in an elegant way, with good ambience and sophistication, people have no problem with the meat's presence. People seldom raise any issue at expensive cafés and restaurants about their menus. They just put their blind faith in the café's claim that they have separate utensils and spaces for the cooking of veg and non-veg foods. Nobody demands to have a kitchen tour before ordering the food and on the other hand, at places like Muhammadi Restaurant in Juhapura, people never order any veg food even when they are able to see the preparation in-front of their eyes. On the higher levels of economy pyramid, meat also enjoys the status of being a gourmet and desirable thing. In such cases, the meat becomes a gateway towards the modernity! Thus, the idea of deception in terms of meat's location, placement, shape, form and the smell are methods that have helped meat-sellers and consumers to survive in the city of Ahmedabad.

The geography of the city has changed over the time and due to riots, entire communities have shifted their houses to seek safety and belongingness. Such areas where meat-consuming communities live are the areas that have become the meat-consumption areas for people who belong to vegetarian communities and enjoy meat but are afraid of revealing that in-front of society. Thus, Juhapura is no

longer a geographical area, but a 'non-veg space' for the many Ahmedabadis. Vejalpur is the 'Vegetarian space', the Sindhu Bhavan Road is a place for 'rich people' etc. are the relations that people have established with the spaces. The presence of meat shop converts the surrounding area into a nonvegetarian area. Such links are not present on the Geographical maps, but this is how people perceive the area with its whole meaning. Plus, during my field work, I also observed the religious spaces and their influence on the surrounding areas' identities of being veg or non-veg spaces.

One can say that no-matter what the people believe regarding the non-vegetarianism in the case of Gujarat, field work proves that the meat and meat-users have found adroit shop-placement techniques and visuals to not only survive, but also thrive in the context of Gujarat. The visuals play an important part and become the reason behind the survival/fall of the non-vegetarian eateries.

The used method of the project - the maps and the visuals, the use of ArcGIS can serve as a prototype for the different projects having the similar content. The maps are powerful tools to convey the narration with interesting and informative visuals. In future, one can expand the study further by applying the same method and tools to different cities of Gujarat to expand the idea and scale of the Project.

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