



THE LOST CITIES  
JUNE 2021



# WRITING URBAN HISTORY







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### Academic and Architect

The workshop is lead by Prof. Pratyush Shankar, who is an Academic and a practicing architect. He is an Adjunct Professor at CEPT University, Ahmedabad and visiting professor at TU, Darmstadt, Germany. He was the Acting Dean of Architecture and Head of the Undergraduate Office at CEPT University. He authored the book “Himalayan Cities” and recently finished a forthcoming book titled “History of Urban Form of India” for Oxford University Press. He was awarded the 22nd JK Cement Architect of the year Award in the Residential Design Category and Humboldt Fellowship in Germany. For more information visit <https://pratyushshankar.com>.



## Snigdha Srivastava

### Architect

She is a conservation architect, graduate from SPA Delhi. She is interested in urban heritage, specifically from the point of view of architecture and the city. She has carried out extensive research on the city of Vadodara on works on Robert Chisholm and the larger idea of institute and formation of public places. She is also interested in imaginative fictions and is a ferocious reader.



## Vaibhavi Dave

### Architect

She is an architect from CEPT University, Ahmedabad. She has been co-ordinating CityLabs activities for many years and has been part of previous writing workshops. Her thesis looked at the idea of utopia as reflected in works of subsequent architects. She is interested in ideas of temporality and flexibility. In her latest writing, she explores the idea of a temporary city through the case of Kolkata.



## PARTICIPANTS



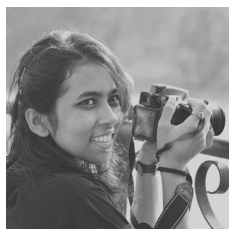
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## **About the Workshop:**

Indian cities have not really been understood with respect to their historical evolution. Often the information is patchy or is just not available. We at CityLabs India wish to address this gap by helping Architects, Designers and Planners write Urban Histories of their own cities.

“Writing Urban History” was an intense, 5-day workshop for learning how to conceptualize and narrate the historical evolution of Indian cities. During this workshop, participants were given theoretical inputs on key urban theories and were taught techniques they can use to create a framework for narrating urban histories of their cities. The focus was however remain in narrating the evolution of Urban Form.

## **Workshop Outcomes:**

Writing Urban Histories has started with flurry of activities: Input lectures, discussions on analytical frameworks and presentation of ideas.

Writing Urban Histories was conducted successfully. A total of ten projects were undertaken by participants exploring different themes of Urban History such as the legacy of governance, the idea of conflict, the burden of history, the role of sacred geography or cities as political strategies.

The workshop participants were from different parts of the country and represented a range of disciplines; Architecture, Urban Planning, Research, and Teaching.

**Abstract:**

The outcome was a Theatrical Play. City streets are important places where people can come together and know each other in the neighbourhood. Referring to Jane Jacobs “ She refers to this constant mix of strangers on the street as an “Intricate Ballet” or a dance where everyone contributes to the well being of the street in making it a liveable place. Here in this case the author is comparing the streets to a stage. The author here is portraying the life of human beings as actors/dancers. The idea is merely a comparison of the streets with a Stage.

The city street is perhaps the most prosaic of the city’s public parts, allowing us a view of the very ordinary practices of life and livelihoods. To animate the tagline “Streets as a Stage” the author gives a theatrical twist.

Now most of us aren’t actors or dancers but we all know to act in our day to day life. We say “Thank you” and smile at strangers and we put a show for our parents when we are late for a curfew. We all are actors at one moment or another. The author just adds a theatrical twist to it. Instead of just being about the acts, this play is about the performances of dances (here referring to the daily activities) on stage that is the Street. However, this dance is not a monotonous one. The audience (here referring to the shops along the streets, Restaurants, Havelis, Hotels) is a Heterogenous mix. The audience referred here keeps on changing as the journey on the street keeps on progressing.

This Play is more like “SYMBOLISM” where men & women are portrayed as Dancers and Streets are portrayed as Stage. Here, the author is reducing the life of human beings to a performance or an acting role. The idea is merely a comparison of the streets with a stage.

Therefore a Politician can use it addressing a rally, or a disappointed person can use it while expressing his depression referring to his good or bad condition. People enter the Stage (Streets) through different routes and exit through a different route.

“ All the streets a stage,  
And all men and women are merely dancers.  
They have their entries and exits,  
And one man/woman in this medley has many parts.”

These lines would be read on the stage in front of the audience. Every person no matter who they are or what they want to do with their lives wakes up everyday with a role.

They enter the Stage, perform and Exit.  
The stage remains permanent, the audience remains lasting only actors and actresses change with time.

When the curtain slides up (here referring to the time when dawn breaks ) , The stage (here the streets) is ready for the performers (here the People) to perform the Medley. (Here referring to

the daily activities) and,

### Scene - 1

When the Curtain slides down (here referring to the time when dusk approaches), The performers find they way to their homes. The stage becomes empty.

It makes way for the new play, maybe the next day or the day after tomorrow.

At this point of time the author wishes to makes us realise that the short span of time that we spend on this stage is not worth it if we don't have a close observation of it.

The just-risen sun shone softly on the city streets, bringing with it a flurry of early-morning activity. The Sun got up like a baby and started painting the dark black sky into a bright blue sky. The bright looking milky clouds got up from sleep and started drifting lazily in the gentle breeze. It is the invitation to the new day.

### Act - 1

Location : Street leading to the City Palace from Jagdish Chowk.

Actors : - A mother & Infant.  
- Solo Traveller

The first performer is that of an infant when he is helpless in his mother's arms. He merely pukes in the nurse's arms.

A mother is carrying her newborn is ascending the stairs of the Jagdish temple where she is taking him for a Vow. The mother is singing the following lines.



“चंदा है तू, मेरा सूरज है तू  
ओ मेरी आँखों का तारा है तू  
चंदा है तू, मेरा सूरज है तू  
ओ मेरी आँखों का तारा है  
तू जीती हूँ मैं बस तुझे देखकर  
इस टूटे दिल का सहारा है तू  
चंदा है तू, मेरा सूरज है तू  
ओ मेरी आँखों का तारा है तू

In a sane world, a baby is a sacred and precious gift, one the community receives as such and is under the protection of all adults.

The baby was enjoying an idea that amused her for it was told in her smiling eyes.

The mother completes her Vow and descends the stairs of the temple and returns with satisfaction. She has prayed to lord Almighty for blessing her with the most beautiful gift he has given to Mankind

The next performer is a “solo traveller”.



“22 tak padhaai, 25 pe naukri,  
26 pe chhokri, 30 pe bachche,  
60 pe retirement aur phir maut ka intezaar.  
dhat.. aisi ghisi piti life thodi jeena chahata hun.”  
“Main udna chahata hun, daudna chahata hun,  
girna bhi chahata hun bas rukna nahi chahata.  
Mein duniya ka kona kona dekhna chahata hun.”  
is what a solo traveller is speaking of while exploring  
the City.

The traveller is on a roller coaster ride of adrenaline. He is constantly being stimulated by meeting new folks and trying new things. The rush is ongoing and nearly constant.

He wants to break the mold of 'normal.' He wants get out there & do it. He wants to break away from the pack and veer off the path we are all preprogrammed to follow. He wants climb out of his comfort zone and dip his toes in strange yet alluring water until finally he dives in.

### Scene- 2

Dappled sun shone through the trees, creating mysterious shadows. The roads shimmered in the heat of the midday sun. The afternoon sun bathed the buildings in its warm light. Tiny specks of dust seemed to dance in the shaft of afternoon sunlight that slanted through the Streets.

### Act - 1

Location : Street leading to the City Palace from Jagdish Chowk.

Actors : - An old man



The old man who lives down the street is a reclusive character. He only comes out of his house occasionally, usually to collect his pension. When the author saw him first, he thought his hair was very unusual.

The clothes he wears are sometimes ragged and threadbare also, as if he is giving in to the passage of time and is unconcerned about his appearance. He has a round tummy full of flesh and meats and also wears a Coat.

“His big manly voice is turning again towards childish treble”. His voice is not clear due to loss of teeth.



Next performance is of a child who goes “creeping like a snail unwillingly to school”.

He has an afternoon school. He is innocent. He is not willing to learn. He wants freedom. For learning, he must lose his childish liberty. The author notices that man keeps on losing one quality and blessing while qualifying for another one.

His mother saying, ‘ab padhlo baad mein maze karna’.

**Scene - 3** (When the curtain slides down)

As evening casts her dusky gown, when the air becomes fresh and restful, the time of joyful reflection has arrived. The evening sun casted long shadows on the ground. The slanting rays of the setting sun gave a warm orange tinge to the sky. The sky was ablaze with the fire of the setting sun. A lover is sitting on the banks of Gangaur ghat playing Guitar and singing love Songs. Even though the beauty of Lake Pichola was captivating , it wasn't the same as the shoreline he had grown up on. It was the same sky , the same moon ; but it was still different. The gentle sound of the waves hitting the ghat sounded almost like a lullaby. He closed his eyes , nestling deeper into his thoughts , taking a deep breathe of fresh air as a small breeze blew by his face and tickled his nose. The sound of Children laughing disturbed him from peace. He sees a group of kids a ways down the ghats, carrying blankets and boxes filled with things that wanted to sell him; things that he didn't wanted to buy but would.

**Act - 1**

Location : Street leading to the Gaungaur Ghat from Jagdish Chowk.

Actors : - A lover.



“ हॊ आँखों में तेरी  
अजबसी  
अजबसी अदायें हैं  
आँखों में तेरी अजबसी  
अजबसी अदायें हैं  
दिल को बना दे जो पतंग  
साँसे ये तेरी वो हवायें हैं ”

The next performance brings before us the lover who sings woeful ballads for his beloved.

The boy had eyes of pure mischief and a heart of gold; he had that way of moving that honest people do, with the spark of the child and a smile that went all the way through to his core. In the youthful age when man is full of energy and might, he does everything to please his beloved. Even this shift of life, filled with merrymaking and joyous songs, passes so quickly as well. He also sings such songs again and again as he burns in his emotions.

He is seen playing the love song “Aankho me Teri ajabsi ajabsi adayein hain”.

**Scene - 4**

It was night, and night sky was picturesque. A black to navy gradient was the backdrop for a full moon; the night sky so clear you could almost see every crater. The moon, a glory yellow-white, loomed large, surrounded by an ethereal glow.

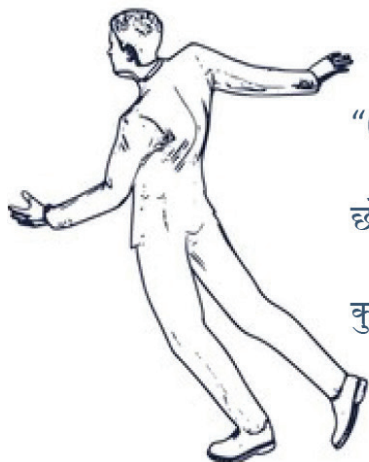
Millions of stars were sprinkled behind it. This was unfamiliar sight from his city life, where the lights never went down, perpetually hiding the beauty of the night time sky.

The lake waves lapped lazily at the ghat. The occasional barking of faraway dogs broke the silence of the night.

**Act - 1**

Location : Street leading to the Gaungaur Ghat from Jagdish Chowk.

Actors : - A drunken man.



“(कुछ तो लोग कहेंगे, लोगों का काम है कहना  
छोड़ो बेकार की बातों में कहीं बीत ना जाए रैना )  
कुछ तो लोग कहेंगे, लोगों का काम है कहना “

The man says,

“I looked out over the glassy surface of the lake, watching the underwater lights distorting with each tiny wave I wanted to reach out and feel the icy water the waves. And before I knew what I was doing, I found myself under the water, sputtering for air below the surface.”

“ Lights off“

This is just a short play which the author is relating to “ Streets as a Stage” where there are different characters performing different roles during different times of the day.

*“The comparison is the guiding framework of the play with each Stage (Street) carrying valuable insights into the lives of ordinary Mankind”.*

#### Sources

“The seven Ages” - William Shakespeare.

The death and life of great American Cities - Jane Jacobs.

City , Streets and Citizens - Suzzane Hall.

**The Jagat Seths and Murshidabad**

*"With joy and great pomp, the assembly set out to visit the god of the Jains. There were tents of velvet and embroidery.*

*There was red broadcloth, calicoes from the Carnatic and covers of different hues. On the way, men flocked to see the sight and when they departed they said,*

*Indra has come down from heaven."*

As royal as it may sound, the verses describe the procession of Manik Devi, wife of the first Seth Manik Chand of the house of Jagat Seth, to the Parasanth Hill to assuage the grief of her husband's decease. An invitation was issued in all countries for this journey where all expenses would be taken care of. Use of such wealth was extensively possible for the family of Jagat Seths, the prominent and richest bankers of the Musnud of Murshidabad. They were Marwari merchants from the state of Jodhpur belonging to the Jain Oswal community. They settled in Murshidabad along with the Diwan Murshid Quli Khan as he transferred his headquarters here. Soon this city was raised as the administrative capital of the province of Bengal with Murshid Quli Khan as the new Nawab. All through the history of this city, Jagat Seths played an influential role in its transformation.

What was it that made them successful as a business in Murshidabad? What was the city offering to their rise in wealth and power? What were they looking for in a city to keep them profitable? What did the merchants, with strong political influence,

appropriate in the city to profit their businesses? How did they maintain and organize their wealth? In the following paper, we will try to investigate the inquiries by looking at the spatial transformation and changing social dynamics of Murshidabad?

**The Marwari Connection**

Marwaris are a well-known commercial community throughout India. They hail from the Marwar region of Jodhpur but the term Marwari is used for every business community which originates from the state of Rajasthan and is sometimes even generalized to other North-Indian merchants. The state of Rajasthan located itself on prominent trade routes of the Mughal empire, both in inland trade and foreign exports. Whereby communities of these regions have been well versed with trade and in fact among the strongest communities of the state have been the trading communities namely the Oswals, Aggarwals, Maheshwaris, &c. Families of these communities lead to forming great business firms majorly involved in banking and funding state financiers and nobles. The Jagat Seths were one of the biggest and most successful families in the Oswal community. The Oswal community adhered to the Jain traditions and customs which played a crucial role in nurturing an entrepreneurial attitude.

Jainism was the vastly adopted religion of the Marwaris. Religion bonded the community tightly and primarily promoted virtues and morals of asceticism, piety, charity, and non-violence. The practice of non-violence, Ahimsa, as Weber argues, was prescribed against the destruction of life which barred the Jains from all occupations involved

in agriculture and industries. The religion also prohibited excessive travelling, thereby restricting them to sedentary practices of commerce which were banking and money-lending. Jainism also prescribed the practice of inner-worldly asceticism, which lead to barring expenses and accumulation of savings, which found a way to investments as capital. Strong backing of such capital and a sense of admiration of a clan formed a network of uninterrupted flow of credits. The Jagat Seth family, staunch followers of Jainism, found their way to a successful business house built on the virtues and morals of the religion.

### **Need of a city**

Large Marwari business families like the Jagat Seths drew their heavy investments in areas where the economy dictated – big cities, near natural resources and so forth – and not necessarily in their home villages or cities. So were big cities constantly in need of a steady flow of capital and uninterrupted production of markets. Traditionally men of the Jain merchant communities moved to cities and settled as bankers and traders, leaving behind women and kids in home villages. The wandering traders in search of a good business found wherever they went support and housing provided by their communal fellows. Collective messes called *basa* came up in cities, which became incubators for young Marwaris to grow by themselves.

Cities were also a place where a merchant could access people in power – nobles, authorities, feudal princes. As mentioned earlier great business firms started in cities by financing states and nobles. These business families used wealth to get power

and power to get wealth. Begin contacted to people in power they could manipulate authorities to suit their business needs. In our case of Jagat Seths, we see a similar phenomenon to its highest extent.

The Jagat Seths had started as banking firms in Patna, then moved to Dhaka the capital of the then Bengal province. The first Seth of the family, Seth Manik Chand, here in Dhaka became a favourite to the Diwan Murshid Quli Khan. The diwan disputed with the ruling governor and on persuasion by Manik Chand made him move his headquarters to Maksudabad. Maksudabad placed itself in a geographically important location along the banks of the Bhagirathi river, from where passed the rich trade of Patna. Soon enough Maksudabad becomes Murshidabad, named after the Diwan himself making him the new Nawab and Murshidabad the new administrative capital of Bengal province. Jagat Seths' uncontested rise to a crucial position in this new capital firmly established the House of Jagat Seths in the city. They became the state treasurers and got to form the state mint in their palace/haveli. Minting coins considerably add to the immense wealth. How did they manage to maintain this wealth and grow beyond? How did their community structure aid their success? What were they aspiring of Murshidabad to hold on their brand of House of Jagat Seth?

### **Jains in the Mohammedan Capital**

Seth Manik Chand constantly desired the Oswal community to settle in Murshidabad and prosper. Accumulation of immense wealth and an influential role in state affairs made it possible. The state of Bengal did not have considerable demography of



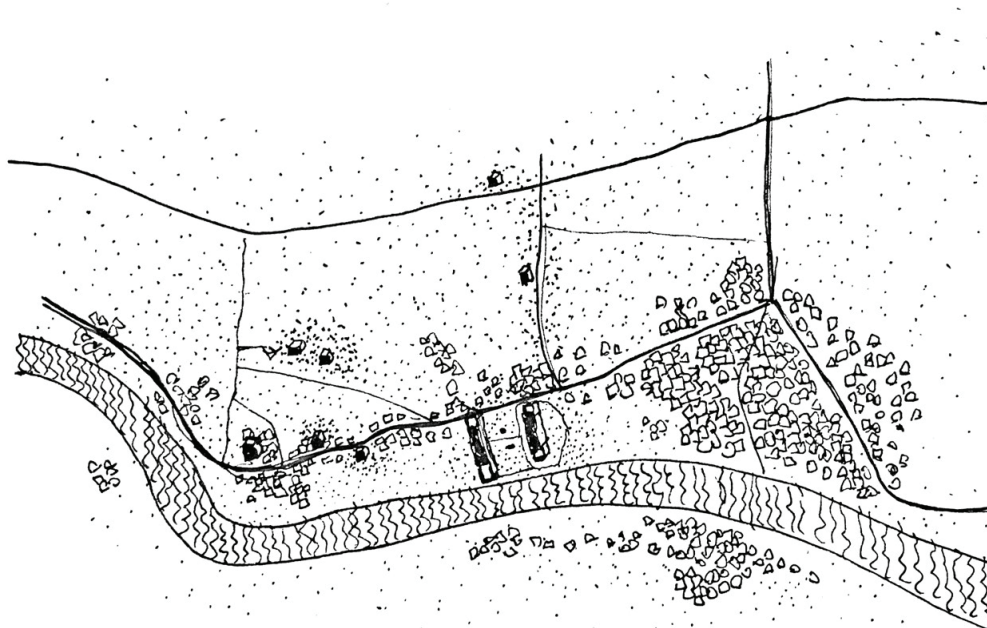
Jains, the Jagat Seth family changed the same. Philanthropic initiatives by the family brought a big influx of the community to Bengal. They build hostels for the young and supported many financially. The family also started building Jain and Hindu temples in the city of Mohammedan rulers. Major institutes in the city of Murshidabad were of an Islamic tradition such as Imambaras, Masjids, Madrasa, etc., with the Jagat Seths' influence small clusters of Jain settlements started moving to the city attracted by institutes familiar to them. New suburbs of the majority Jain community of Jiaganj and Azimganj are formed. Bengal thereby added

a new group of a community called the Sherwalli Jains.

It must be noted that Jain merchants kept a steady flow of capital by funding and giving on-demand credits to one another. An interest-free loan system for people in the community was of key importance.

It is intriguing to the business minds, whether the Jagat Seth family desired the settling of people from their community in the spirit of belonging or was it a convenient business strategy?

*Only for the Business?*



**Abstract:**

The historic medieval towns of the Shekhawati region are culturally rich with their unique urban morphology and paintings expression. The Shekhawati towns describe its boundaries by three districts – Churu, Jhunjhunu, and Sikar. However, the largely identified towns within these districts as urban clusters are Mandawa, Nawalgarh, Fatehpur, Ramgarh, Mukundgarh and Lakshargarh. These are interpreted as my area of focus. Here, this document will be presented with an idea of exploring urbanity and visuality in the region. Furthermore, the focus that took shape upon the urban morphological development from the 18-19th century across the Indian subcontinent. This time frame will be the central idea of recording and establishing the argument as a method & scope of this document.

Towns evolved as vibrant towns' cluster of historic settlement in the Indian context. The shift of visual paintings is influenced by social and political relations of merchants communities with patrons, rulers, and the colonial empire. After independence, the trading and traveling has been raised across the world, merchants who hold their business in the major cities and built their primary homeland in the Shekhawati as their urban identity. These paintings were adopted as hybrid subjects of mural paintings. The set of painting groups like Vaishnava Avatar of Krishna, Rama, folk heroes, troops and everyday environment are constructed by knowledge of different school of thought.

However, these urban paintings introduce an interface between architecture and urban design features in the region. The direction of the essay is about exploring urban formation, beyond the physical boundaries as an experimentation with visuals of frescos, which stand out as a unique urbanscape of Shekhawati.

## Urbanity by Fresco's expression, a case of Shekhawati region

This essay on the historic medieval towns of the Shekhawati region is an idea of exploring urbanity and visuality. The focus that took shape upon the urban morphological development from the 18-19th century across the Indian subcontinent. This time frame will be the central idea of recording and establishing my argument as a method & scope of this document. Urban studies are important to understand cities physical division of built and generated spaces. Further, to explore this experience about urban formation beyond the physical boundaries' as an experimentation of visuals paintings in the Shekhawati region will be the larger argument with an idea of urbanscape. The Shekhawati towns describe its boundaries by three districts – Churu, Jhunjhunu, and Sikar. However, the largely identified towns within these districts as urban clusters are Mandawa, Nawalgarh, Fatehpur, Ramgarh, Mukundgarh and Lakshmangarh are interpreted as rich culturally historic towns as my focus area of analysis.

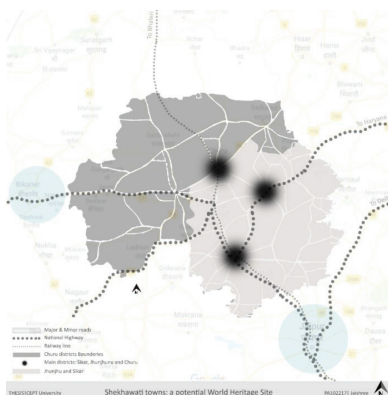


Fig 2.1: Political boundaries of the Shekhawati region, from before and after independence. The routes, districts are a major identity for locating historically and followed by distinct towns.

Commonly, at a primary level, such formation of towns emerged from geography of the place. The basic responsive development took place, considering climatic conditions and topography. Later, culture evolved with the way function of trade, work, and living style developed from 16th to early 20th century in the region. The urban elements emerged over a period of time majorly like, Garh (Fort), Chhatri (Cenotaph), Mandir (Temple), Dharamshal (Cravanserai), Johara (Water tank), Kuan (Well), and Haveli (Mansion) with visual images of richly painted murals. On a larger perspective of towns and cities planned with urban concepts like their vistas, composition of open and built spaces, urban scale, proportion, street, & paths etc. As a whole, it defines their very nature of urbanity. But here, the intention is to look at urban space beyond its physical divisions. This essay will bring an argument that could be imagined and experience through individuals' mental sense. Precisely, it is about painted visuals (mural art), which is something specific to the Shekhawati towns. Composition and uncommon play of visuals that has emerged as a symbolic urban landscape.

## Towns cities and Records

Before stating the main argument about urban vision and visuality, Historically, the Shekhawati region was once a part of the existing political division of Jaipur State. Boundary limits linked with Delhi, Jaipur, Bikaner, Haryana, later Sikar in the late 16th century, and Agra in the 17th century (Cooper, 2014). Relations between Rajput and Mughals started building up the culture and urban morphology of towns chronologically (Jain, 2005). The larger development took place in the medieval

times with mixed architectural styles. These towns grew with a grid-iron pattern, organic, and Inorganic formation as basic planning ideas.

There is no specific urban pattern typology like other towns in the region. It has a set of relationship, expressions developed with the time phases. This distributed urban landscape conveniently defines the local and regional symbolism of rich mural paintings. These towns evolved as vibrant town's cluster of historic settlement in the Indian context. The Shift of visual paintings is influenced by social and political relations with patrons, rulers, and colonial empire (Jain, 2005). The town or city up to some degree was protected by the rulers and patrons from invaders that gave rise to painted surfaces. The urban visual morphology of Shekhawati painted walls are vibrant and vigorous in nature, clearly blended with the legacy of Mughal and Rajputs style of architecture. Region cultural multiplicity of Mughal, Rajputs, Shekhawats and later by the followed by merchants, who defined and set a new identity of Shekhawati.

### Merchants and their Role

The Marwari merchants are businessmen, agents, and moneylenders. They had develop the mixed-diversified network by traveling from 16th-19th century across the world (Tanket, July 2016). Merchants' community by traveling borrowed visuals as an idea of picturing the home. Architecture, planning, & urban design features developed with distributed urban elements like the Fort, Dharamshala, Haveli, Chores, water tanks, and wells constructed in almost every possible corner of the towns. Paintings on surfaces of these

built structures, especially seen in the havelis surfaces as a unique pattern to this region.

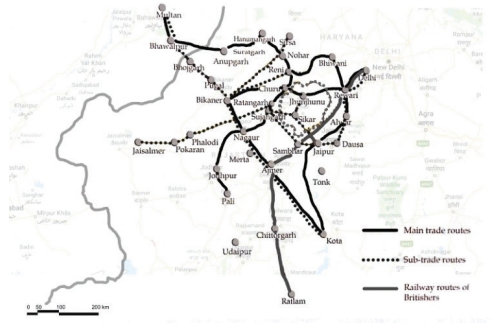


Fig 2.2: Base map \_ Painted town of Shekhawati by Ilay Cooper  
The exchange cultural system has been adapted by traveling. The shape of the Shekhawati landscape by merchants is the result of great economical and socio-political change that happened when railway routes became the main source of trading.

Industrialization gave an opportunity for the spread of mass trading across India. Migration of merchants across the regional boundaries achieved remarkable progress in the trade and other commercial activities. The trading of gems, jewelry, silver, gold, jute, hessian, grains, and along with the import-export system has started in bulk (Tanket, July 2016). Immediate after independence, the trading has been raised outside India. Merchants who later, hold their business in the major cities, started building wealth and power in the towns. After 1813 British rule, Charter Act merchants became British trading agents from a wider perspective (Tanket, July 2016). Their good relationship established to empower their business in every possible directions of the world. The colonization and mass migration to metropolitan cities, majorly in Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai, to raise their business in the working places and establish their identity as a second home.

As the result, their wealth and prosperity are seen by making unique built elements for their patrons and family. The making of mural art with cultural reflection, this whole process has become an expression of cultural exchange identity. The Mercantile community framed the town planning and architecture in the region with the construction of different public utilities as their prime concern. The urban landscape developed by designing water tanks, temples, wells, caravanserai, and cenotaphs in the towns. The havelis were residential personal space as their primary home that leads to their status and wealth. Such development possesses symbolic importance to these historic towns by merchant communities. This multiplicity, which is embedded as knowledge of painted visuals. Such uncommon mixed expression of mural art reflects new knowledge source of Indian culture.

**Notion of Homeland**

However, the belief “Hometown”, the concept of establishing native towns and the notion of going back home comes here with migration across the world. These visual images are the transformation of such urbanscape, specific to Shekhawati towns. The famous communities like Goenkas, Birlas, Dalmia, Kedia, Khaitam, Poddar, Ruias, Jhunjhunwala, and others traced their mixed cultural values of expression (Patel, 2013).



Fig 2.4: Base map \_ The Marwari Heritage by D. K. Tanket  
Major and spread of migration mobility by merchants after industrialization in India.

Famous for painted mansions, this unique community-based culture developed with an idea of homeland, belief, and tradition as living altogether. Richly painted murals in the form of Fresco art form are extraordinary in visuals. Distinct subjects for such visuals borrowed from all over the world, their significant culture caused by the trading and traveling. These images (mural paintings) represent, religious Folk art and Mythology,

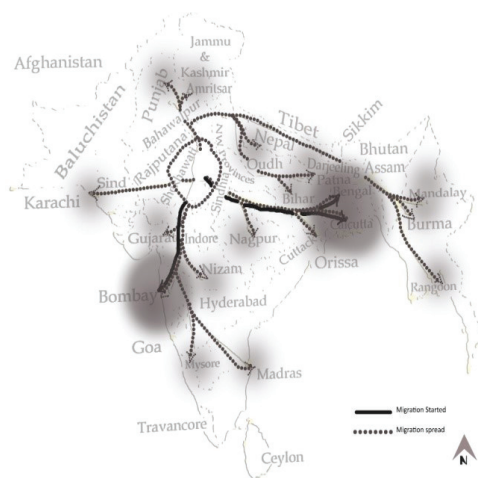


Fig 2.3: Base map \_ The Marwari Heritage by D. K. Tanket  
Major and spread of migration mobility by merchants after industrialization in India.

Ragmala, historical events and Personages, Everyday environment, Maps and Places, foreigners and Decorative Motifs.



Fig 2.5: Above: Every haveli has higher plinths with entrance verandahs or otlas. This offers interactions with the street neighborhood.

Below: Every house with large or small courtyards develops the sense of spaces chronologically. Spatial function encourages interactions spaces for a large family like a central point of gatherings.

Extraordinary uncommon visual paintings largely developed with the havelis surfaces. Selected frames developed by individual artists expression and imagination to the visual panel formation. These migrated artisans who develop image painting collage represent different schools of thoughts. This visual pattern panel is influenced by Mughals, Rajputs, and later Colonial empire. Such mixed and crowded images constructed as trophies/ medals to

the back home notion. These surface paintings with an image and picture pasted every possible corner of the built surface. The exterior wall of the Havelis, other elements like Courtyard, Chhajja, Bracket, Verandah, and main entrance gate.

### An Artistic Expression

The reflection of the image crowds is very typical experience of these local and migrated artisans. The cultural mobility and commercial networks, linking the notion of homeland by creating new paintings particularly by these painters (Mehta, 2013). At the same time, they applied their hands at mural paintings in the Shekhawati and nearby areas. Such decoration as a new application to the urban visual morphology is very dominantly seen in the region.

These paintings were adopted in the region as hybrid subjects of mural paintings. The religious folk art expression is followed in the school of thoughts, Rajsthan and Shekhawati region (Prince, 2003). The set of image groups in one frame with various pictures like Vaishnava Avatar of Krishna, Rama, folk heroes, troops and everyday environment.



Fig 2.6: Almost filled surfaces with paintings are evidences of local, regional, and beyond regional boundaries connections and imagery expression.

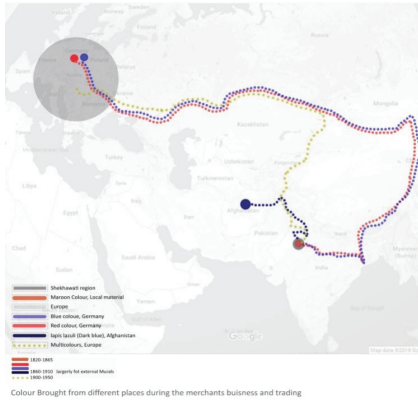


Fig 2.7: Experimentation with pigment's, brought from across the world and then adapted with local techniques by giving new color to the picture and images.

These visuals were constructed, established, and classified based on the selection of pigments, with the combination of Maroon which was locally available, Red and blue from France and other European countries. Later, dark blue pigments from Afghanistan, multicolored pigments from European countries by Kolkata, Jammu and Delhi route to the region (Prince, 2003). The technical process of unique visuals is constructed with fine work inside buildings surfaces and rectangular design frames with local fresco techniques outside surfaces.

These frescos had visual stories of painted gods, Vishnu, Rama and Lakshmi as their cultural hero's, Vishnu avatar universally recognized in different forms. Other famous regional identity is the folk hero's imagined by the artists, Dhola- Maru and Laila- Majnu. Later, railway reached India in 1850s, and travelling influenced mural paintings of train, cars, bicycle and aeroplanes intermingling effortlessly with camels and elephants (Cooper, Painted Town of Shekhawati, 2018).



Fig 2.8:Decorative motifs in the frame of rectilinear decoration in floral patterns, folk stories, human figures, lakshmi ganesh gods in the entrance gate encourages urban space formations.

The above argument about Frescos and visuals is expressed with a concept of re- contextualizing images—the image subjects are replaced with the another object context to give new meanings. Picturing drawing and pigments selection with multicolored composition stands out for the world as a unique urban culture.

### An Urbanity of Painted Murals

The above topics established the argument of picture image culture in the towns of Shekhawati. Of course, it is not simply collecting various visuals. It is also about the aesthetic presence of historical records and metropolitan culture developed over a period of time.

The Homeland concept developed with a sense of visibility and relation with urbanity. Surfaces of havelis are surely like the visual awards constructed in the form of crowded images, pictures, & scenes. These painting being visual will slowly take us to the idea of Visibility in the urbanscape (Mehta, 2013).



Fig 2.9: The Hindu god lord Krishna in a speed car with changing the context of Indian culture with European objects. The fame is re-imagined and contextualized with two different cultural modes. This scene frame is a hybrid in nature of two mixed cultures.



Fig 2.10: Mural art paintings are filled almost everywhere, from a large surface to very small and odd corners, a person cannot see it from far. One has to come closer and allow eye movement to look at these pictures in hidden extreme corners, behind doors, under chhajas and very intricate details on the bracket molded surfaces. The individual surface frames give the notion of stars in the one-frame screen of the sky.

On a larger perspective, the composition of open and built spaces, urban forms, scale, streets, landmarks, largely define their very nature of urbanity. In this context, the urban image is viewed beyond the physical realities of observing paths, nodes, landmarks, and built urban fabrics. Here it is all about the perception of urban space experienced by paintings. Visuality is viewed beyond the physical realities of observing paths, nodes, landmarks, and urban fabric (Lynch, 1960). My essay will bring a unique way of perceiving urban space experience with visual paintings.



Fig 2.11: Terraces and Jharokha's enhancing their ornamentation through paintings on the surfaces and life of these speaking and living objects, who lived across the havelis and streets.



Images are demandingly speak their presence on painted walls, windows, arcades, chhajjas and almost every small corner of the surfaces.

Decoration of surfaces act as a interface between the architecture and urban design features. Somehow, such crowded paintings produce the screen over urban edge. The edge could be experienced as linear break, view angle developed by Jharokha's and Verandah's. The image pictures create hidden boundaries between two continuous phases of long corridors. Further, Shekhawati towns act as urban districts for built elements.



Fig 2.12: The urban landscape of painted murals are plays a role and produces an interface between architecture and urbanity.

Using above concepts to further develop an understanding of the character of this region, the argument about visual urbanity. Within the larger network of towns and relationships, the above argument about urban visual. The image of physical reality shifts the idea with different ways of viewing spaces. These picture qualities are uniquely described in nature within a larger network of towns. Such visual landscape of painted surfaces produce the diversity of subjects to the world in one landscape frame. These worlds collected objects

and elements that reflect the merchants' diversified culture. Merchant's who travelled through and lived in various metropolitan cities borrowed an idea of picture in their native town.

Above all, the records stating multicultural expression of these images as a result of a hybrid school of thoughts. Paintings with different schools of thought—local, regional, national and international appreciate the very hybrid Indian-European style of Shekhawati (Patel, 2013). The paintings became the part of urban space as it allows the observer to perceive through mental awareness.



Observer can sense the orderly formed images once looked at the details of pictures in physical built form. Distinct subjects are distributed with the sense of eye-movement towards the street, verandah, courtyard, extending to the interiors of the room surface. The expression of mural art weaved along every possible interior or exterior surfaces. Paintings, pictures, & images are in the corners, sides, and corners. Some are visible only when walking a direction followed by eye movements.

Objects are crowded, some are above, down or behind the chhajjas, others are on the wall surfaces or along the verandahs and inside courts. This is

an urban environment of images that has been created while picturing diversified towns culture. The pictures exhibiting the life of the collective visual memory worldwide are an appreciation of this created urbanity.

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KHYATI  
ANTROLIA

DWARKA

## A Walk Through the Lost City

### Abstract:

A walk through the lost city is a fictional story where Tejas, the protagonist of the story travels to the mythical city of Krishna. The story explores the idea of utopia that is generally expressed around the ancient cities through the lens of Dwarka. It offers an opportunity to think about our obsession with utopias and would people really be happy if a city like that existed. The story puts forward a subconscious thought of what makes a city alive.



Sitting on a ferry ride, breathing in the sea winds, Tejas thinks of what this 'Bet Dwarka' everyone is talking about looks like. As one reaches the shore and makes their 700 m walk through the narrow streets of Bet Dwarka filled with shops selling shells, conches and pooja materials, he is still wondering what is this hype all about.

Moving through the small island, he hears many mythological stories about how this place that was once gifted to Krishna by his friend Sudama became the Swarnanagari, the home of Krishna & his 16,108 wives; how the mythical city rose from the sea & was lost under the waves. Tejas stands in the middle of this island lost in his imagination of how the 'Dvarika nagari' would have looked in its glorious times.



Sitting in a boat ride taken by the Yadavas, Tejas reaches the Antradvipa – Dwarka, the famous city of gates. As the boat reaches the checkpoint at one of the gates of the city, a guard comes and checks everyone & their belongings in the boats. He then asks for their seals to enter the city. Listening to this, the man in front of Tejas fumbles a little. When asked, he says he doesn't have the seal.

Upon this, the guard says, "I am afraid sir, without the seal you cannot enter the city. Please return."

"But I am here for some trade. I have heard that Dwarka, the sacred city has a lot of options for trade. People from far lands come here with their goods and the markets here are filled with some of the exquisite materials. Even I would like to sell some of my antiques here." said the man.

Listening to this, the guard replies, "Sir, the entry in the city is restricted to very few people. Only those having the seal with them will be allowed in the city. It does not matter what you want to buy or sell. Please take the next boat from the gate and return to the mainland."

On hearing this, the man reluctantly moves in the direction of return boats. With that Tejas moves forward and shows the seal with an image of Vishnu carved on it to the guard. The guard looks at it and opens the gates of the city. As Tejas enters the city, there are many thoughts in his mind. Are only the privileged allowed to enter the city? What is the point of keeping the seal as a necessary thing to enter the city? Does it restrict migration & overpopulation in the city? If so, what about the

opportunities, are those also restricted for the privileged?

Putting the thought aside, Tejas starts walking on one of the boulevards linking all twelve blocks of the city and starts exploring the city. The boulevard is wide enough to let two carriages pass at the same time and has many people walking through the edges of it. It is also lined with sitting arrangements in between the trees and shrubs. The boulevard leads to a chourah. There is a central fountain at the chourah made out of stone and has floral decorative elements carved in it.

At one of the corners of the chourah is a temple in white marble and gold. The shikhara of the temple is clad in gold and inlaid with precious stones. People are seen in the temple in two long orderly queues – one for men and one for women for making an offering. There are some shops outside the temple selling these offerings. Tejas is astonished that he cannot find a single beggar outside the temple. The area inside and outside the temple is unusually clean and maintained.

Moving forward in the road connected to the temple, Tejas sees an assembly of houses and other public buildings made from stone and rubble. The houses are simple but well planned. Every house has a patio and a courtyard to look into. At the end of the road is a pleasure garden for the entertainment of the residents. The pleasure garden boasts a lake, water features and many open areas for children to play in.

The next street that Tejas looks into is a marketplace. As mentioned by the man earlier, the marketplace exhibits many exquisite materials and spices. But to Tejas's surprise, there is no chaos in the marketplace. It has well-lined big shops into which people go and buy whatever they need. The marketplace that Tejas had imagined was where vendors shout for customers, customers bargaining for items, tourists moving through the crowd exploring things and people being free and unknown. But this was the contrast of it. Crowds are maintained in order; people are attracted through hoardings & advertisements and the only way to explore things is by seeing them through windows.

This makes Tejas question the idea of utopia that Dvarika is. It is a perfect city but are the people living inside the city happy? How could people have the freedom of moving anywhere in the city if everything is so ordered? Does this not bring multiple restrictions on the citizens? Can the city really be alive if there is no chaos in it? Isn't too much maintenance required for this utopia to last?

After looking through most of the city, the last thing that Tejas decides to see is Krishna and his wives' residence. After all, the city does boast 90,000 royal palaces. Tejas had heard from a stranger in the city that the royal palaces are placed at the most auspicious place in the city according to Vastu. Excited to see it, Tejas heads in the direction of royal palaces. When Tejas sees the sight, he is awed by the amount of land these palaces have used. They are so widely spread that it makes him question if one person can access them all even in one week!



The palaces are constructed in crystal, gold, silver and are decorated with many precious gems. Looking into Krishna's residential areas, he notices the luxury & extravagance of it. The interiors and furnishings are made of gold & precious metal. The rooms are adorned with pillars of coral forms which are inlaid with precious stones. Huge windows that open in the direction of the city and the sea are seen.

From one of the windows, Tejas sees the double terraced stone wall that protects the city from all sides. The sandstone walls are thick, long and impenetrable. But they make Tejas feel enclosed

rather than protected. It also makes him think, what is the point of living near the sea if people can't access it. Tejas also notices that there is a striking difference in the way that the houses and the royal palaces are built. He can't help but imagine the resources spent behind building the palaces & how many people might be needed to construct this symbolism of power.

Tejas is brought back to reality when a priest questions him where he is from. He absorbs the surroundings of this small island of Bet Dwarka that is now called Krishna's lost kingdom. It is now that he starts questioning what might have gone in building this glorious utopia.

**Abstract:**

Mumbai is a city that has constantly been remodelling itself in accordance with the ages that it has transitioned through. The remodelling of the city has been made possible by the city acquiring, assimilating and adapting to the multiple identities that have been introduced to it through its various inhabitants and making it its own. The narrative is going to closely follow the evolution of Mumbai through the lens of opportunities that this city has cultivated and how these opportunities carved the identity of Bombay, the present Mumbai and how they will impact the identity of Mumbai that is set in a timeline that is yet to be seen.

**The Evolution of Mumbai's Identity**

For anybody that is familiar with Mumbai and its history, it is no news that the city has constantly been remodelling itself in accordance with the ages that it has transitioned through. The remodelling of the city has been made possible by the city acquiring, assimilating and adapting to the multiple identities that have been introduced to it through its various inhabitants and making it its own. The narrative is going to closely follow the evolution of Mumbai through the lens of opportunities that this city has cultivated and how these opportunities carved the identity of Bombay, the present Mumbai and how they will impact the identity of Mumbai that is set in a timeline that is yet to be seen.

It was the year 1661. Bombaim, the Portuguese's name for the Island of Bombay, had been given in dowry for the marriage treaty of Queen Catherine of Braganza to King Charles II of England. However, before Bombaim was handed over to the Crown it had already taken hearty swigs from what the Portuguese had brought to the table. The Portuguese who believed in churches representing the power of their empire, built several churches all over Bombaim. They not only introduced churches to Bombaim, but also brought in their food, architecture as well as living habits with them

to Bombaim. Though not evident in the present then but it was going to become Bombaim's nature to acquire identities from whoever inhabited it, to adapt to it and to assume it as its own. Bombaim was on its way to becoming the gluttonous city that would thrive off of the imposed identities of those who inhabit it.

Focused only on exploiting the military and economic opportunities that Bombaim offered, the East India Company leased it from the Crown in the 17th century. The company was keen on acquiring the islands for its natural and all-season harbour which provided direct communication with the English factories in the western side of the world as well as a hold on the western coast of India where the Dutch Empire was rapidly growing. The East India Company renamed Bombaim as Bombay and in kill-two-birds-with-one-stone move, laid a blanket on the tangible as well as intangible presence of the Portuguese and established their own presence.

Soon after, the East India Company started scattering symbolism of their ownership over Bombay either through monumental buildings, infrastructure or their trade practices. Bombay's geographical existence as an island marked a turning point and set the British identity in stone in the Bombay's history. The 18th century saw the

initiation of the Hornby Vellard project which was named after the then Governor of Bombay, William Hornby. This project's brief enlisted reclaiming the land that would tie the different islands of Bombay into one landmass so that the new land could then also be used to provide for housing and agricultural lands for the immigrants. The other half of the project's name, Vellard, was a corruption of a Portuguese word "vallado" which means barrier. This referred to creating an embankment that would act as a dam for the sea and thus help in solving the problem of the saltwater being left behind by the receding tides. This project is solely responsible for why we see Bombay as one landmass today instead of seven separate islands.

By the 19th century, what had started off as only an economically important conquest for the British soon transformed into not only one of the focal centres of the Indian freedom struggle but also an exhibition of art, architecture, culture and glamour. This sowed the seeds of the bi-polar identity of Bombay. A classic example of this is Marine Drive, one of the most iconic promenades in the city and another back bay reclamation project. It was built as a simple expansion of the city into the west by the British but was soon transformed into an exhibition of the glamorous and contemporary Art Deco style of architecture, a style that was rejected by the British, who preferred Gothic and Indo-Saracenic architectural styles, but adopted by the Indians. What was built by the oppressors but transformed by the oppressed was a way of showing the natives' intent to reject the traditional British way of doing things. This, in a metaphorical manner, marked Bombay as a dynamic metropolis that was breaking

free from the clutches of the British.

By the 20th century, Bombay had acquired, adopted and assumed multiple identities. Another new identity that it forged for itself around that time was from its booming cotton textile industry. The warm and humid climate of Bombay supported the growth of the war material – cotton. Import and export trade practices for the cotton textile trade were also easily taken care of as the city itself was a major port. Thus, once again, Bombay's geographical and climatic context led to the explosive growth of the cotton textile industry so much so that it started shaping the art, architecture and lifestyle of Bombay. In the year 1995, a political party called Shiv Sena, came into power in Bombay. Shiv Sena being of Maharashtrian origin, wanted to strip Bombay of its British identity. This led to Bombay being renamed to Mumbai after a patron goddess of the native Koli community of the city. Towards the end of the 20th century, the deterioration of the cotton textile industry was observed. This resulted in the economy of Mumbai shifting from being a manufacturing based one to a financial and IT services-based economy as newer industrial models started flooding the markets of Mumbai. Thus began the rise of the real estate industry in Mumbai. Time and time again, the opportunities that the city offered kept multiplying and resulted in rapidly evolving the identity of the city. The end of the 20th century marked the downfall of another era. Thus began a new chapter, another new added identity.

By the beginning of the 21st century, Mumbai had transformed into a gluttonous city which was



acquiring new identities, adapting to them and assuming them as its own at a speed that had never been seen before. Development in the real estate sector started changing the skyline of Mumbai. With population exploding with every passing day, the city limits have started expanding. New roads, new localities, new infrastructure have started imposing their new identities on the identities of the past. The prime examples of this being the proposed coastal road and the eastern waterfront development. The coastal road which aims to connect North Mumbai to South Mumbai will bring about massive changes to the identity of the Queen's Necklace, the promenades and some of the most expensive real estate localities of Mumbai. The project is being executed by reclaiming 111 hectares of sea and constructing underwater tunnels. The eastern waterfront proposal aims at extracting the maximum potential from the underused public lands of the eastern waterfront by rebranding it as a "Cruise Tourism Capital" of the country. This project involves erecting a socio-cultural and commercial hub with a modernist-corporate and futuristic extravagance for the financial capital of the country. It includes luxurious commercial skyscrapers, a redesigned jetty, maritime museum, dock equipped with airport like facilities and a waterfront theme park with an arts and culture pier, yoga and meditation pier and theme streets. However, this theme park is set to be built on 92 acres of reclaimed land and 253 acres of public land are going to be converted to private commercial lands.

showing in the 19th century as the onset of a bi-polar identity has now completely set its roots in the very crux of the city's identity. The gluttonous city on its linear line of progression is now more ruthless than ever, consuming everything that comes its way but still warm enough to welcome and accommodate everybody and every change. Massive crowds flock to the city with insurmountable aspirations and dreams. The city feeds on these emotions and continues to barge ahead while growing exponentially. However, at what cost? In order to accommodate the influx of people, the city keeps pushing itself, remodelling itself and in recent times at the cost of its ecology. But for how long can the gluttonous city sustain itself on this steep ascent of progression? Does its gluttony know no boundary or like every other traditional story, even it has its peak glory? Does the city of everybody's dream shatter all myths and come out on the other end of the spectrum victorious or does it crash and burn and become a glorified city of the past?

Now it is the year 2021. Mumbai is a cosmopolitan city which is a commercial, educational, scientific, socio-cultural and glamour hub. What started





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