

Fishing in Common Waters:

Fishing communities in Coastal Gujarat

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Feedback Page

Acknowledgment

This project involved a considerable amount of work, research and dedication. Its implementation would not have been possible without support and guidance of many individuals. Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to all of them.

First of all, I am thankful to Prof. Vishvajit Pandya and Prof. Madhumita Mazumdar for giving me the idea for my project and guiding me through it with their valuable inputs and suggestions which helped my project take shape.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my project guide Prof. Binita Desai for her constant and invaluable guidance throughout my project. The project would not have been carried out so well without her encouragement, motivation, involvement and support.

I am also grateful to the following people who helped me during my field research with their dedicated efforts and vital support:

In Ahmedabad: Siddharth Rajvanshi, Nishithbhai, Vaibhavbhai Jain, Charmi Shah

In Diu: Shantibhai Solanki, Jagrutiben Fulbariya, Snehal Fulbariya, Nilesh Bariya, Jitendra Bariya, Adv. Suresh Chudasama, Dr. Jitu Solanki, Father Ramdas Gavit, Dr. Pradeep Solanki, Sri Sukar Anjani, Piyushbhai Jadav

In Ghoghola: Patel Sri Hemalbhai Rajput, Meera Rajput, Laxamanbhai “Kaviraj” Kapadiya, Cpt. Devji Fulbariya, Nareshbhai

In Vanakbara: Devji Panjari, Paresh Panjari, Piyush Kotiya, Rakesh Kotiya, Ukhadabhai bava Bamaniya (Kukabha), Ratan Ma, Valuba, Harshad Lodhiya, Chunibhai Kharwa

In Veraval: Patel Sri Jitendra Kuhada, Rajeshbhai Dahyalal Fofandi, Mukeshbhai Vala, Babubhai Fanjaree, Gangaben Fanjaree, Dr. Bhagwan Barad, Dr. A.Y. Desai, Prof. B.G. Chudasama, Haribhai Chauhani, Bharatbhai Khoraba, Khalasi Yash Raju

In Bheediya: Bhailal Bapa and family

In Sutrapada: Sureshbhai Laljibhai Bariya and family, Yagnik Acharya

In Jaleswar: Javedbhai Kasam, Hasambhai P. Rana, Ayubbhai P. Rana, Ishmael P. Rana, Shabbir Hasambhai Rana

I am also thankful to my parents for their unconditional support and motivation.

My special thanks to my colleagues Mitali Sharma and Palak Sanghani for accompanying at my field site and assisting me with their materials and suggestions during the course of the project.

Lastly, I would like to thank my junior batch for their incessant support and encouragement.

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1) SYNOPSIS

This report presents the design of a Graphic Novel as a storytelling medium; communicating ideas visually.

The design project was initiated with an aim of communicating culture of coastal Gujarat to the rest of Gujarat through stories, specifically folktales of the Gujarat fishermen. The objective of the design was to try to fill the gap between these two groups. The graphic novel format was chosen for the purpose of sharing stories visually and in an interesting way, the medium seemed most appropriate and chose to create a graphic novel as the final product for my project. The confirmation of visualizing a Graphic Novel as the final product was done by interviewing a few children and taking their views on the medium.

Compiling a collection of folktales and proved unfruitful and rather ineffective. The focus of the project then shifted to doing research on their culture and preparing a story in the form of an ethnographic narrative. The research work was done on the Kharwa, Koli and Machhwara communities with the field sites being Veraval, Jaleshwar, Sutrapada, Diu, Ghoghola and Vanakbara. Developing a story for the Graphic

Novel with the data gathered from the field turned out to be the most important part of the process. After several iterations of trying to construct a narrative, one option was selected which also seemed exciting to visualize. The plot of the final story describes the scenario of the Kharwa and Machhwara communities; the lives they lead and about fishing which is their livelihood. The narrative is built around the relationships among the people within the community and their relationship with other communities made explicit through their history, fishing business and their relationships with each other at sea. Efforts have been made to include all aspects that are crucial in defining their respective cultures. The flow of the story is maintained by incorporating the facts that were gathered in my field visits.

Scenes from the story were visualised through rough sketches drawn on paper. A track was kept to maintain the continuity in the drawings and modifications were done to them according to the story. The rough sketches were turned into detailed drawings with pencil and were filtered to be organized in panels of the Graphic Novel layout. The product worked out to be an effective representation of the culture. It establishes

the idea of stories as a good medium to convey stories of different cultures and perspectives.

2) INTRODUCTION

a) Statement of Problem

Gujarat is a culturally diverse state. Although the regions share their cultural diversities, the coastal region is set apart from the other parts of Gujarat. Central Gujarat remains far more prominent than the other parts of Gujarat with a weak link to the coastal region.

There are cultural differences between the coastal areas and that of inland Gujarat that results in a gap and unawareness about the culture of the fishermen of coastal Gujarat. Bringing the culture of coastal Gujarat to the other parts of Gujarat will change the paradigm of the Gujarati fishermen; introduce a new way of looking at them.

b) Design Brief

i) Need of Design

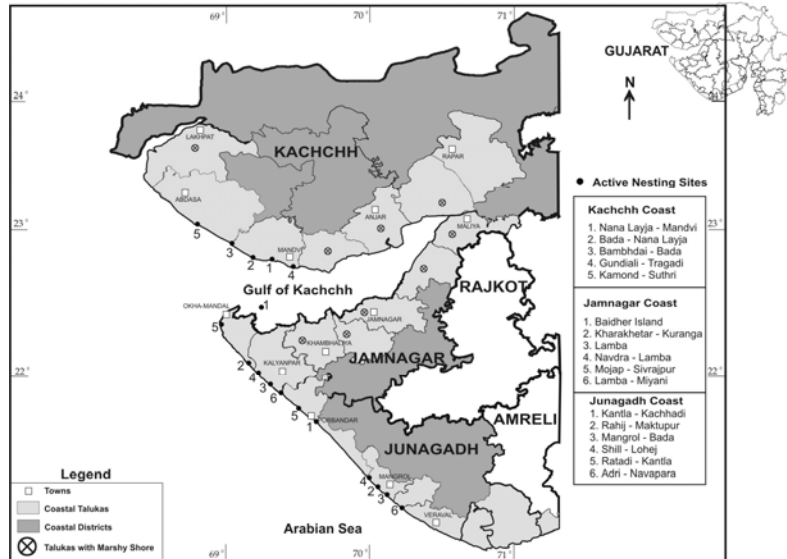


Fig. 1 Fish landing centres on Coastal strip of Gujarat

Gujarat has the longest coastline among all the states of 1600 kms which constitutes 19.7% of the total coastline of India. The population of marine fishermen in Gujarat is 3.27 lakh and they fish in approximately 35 thousand vessels in the Arabian Sea annually. They bring around 700 thousand metric tonnes of fish every year to the coast of Gujarat valued at Rs. 2234 crores that amounts to 25% of the total annual marine fish

production of India. The export value of Gujarat fish and fishery products is approx Rs. 1500 crores. The rest of the fish and fish products are consumed domestically and is transported from Coastal Gujarat to inland Gujarat and other states of India where it is sold to consumers. Hence the economic contribution of fishermen from Gujarat to food production is extremely important.

In recent years the fish landing and the catch per boat of Gujarat fishermen has declined. Struggling for their livelihood, they going far into the sea risking their lives; their boats are sometimes captured by the coast guards of neighbouring Pakistan. While their lives at stake, the people of Inland Gujarat are often oblivious of their problems. The Coastal area of Gujarat has always had a rich heritage and active ports from the time that they traded with Romans in the 1st century AD, the Arabs and Parsis in the 7th and 8th century AD, Europeans in 15th century AD to the 17th Century AD. The coast of Gujarat has been inhabited by the Rajputs of Rajasthan who migrated to the region after 11th Century AD to support the war against foreign invaders and made fishing their occupation. Their history and culture still remains unknown to the inland

population of Gujarat. While all the regions of Gujarat have cultural exchanges with each other, the Coastal region remains obscure to most. Communicating the culture of the coastal region to the people of inland Gujarat could reduce the gap between them.

One of the significant parts of the culture is their stories or tales. It is the essence of any culture. They become an essential part of what symbolizes the people and their culture. Human morals are exemplified in their stories; the significance in the tales overrides facts. It is the message that is valuable. These messages have always inspired the communities and they live by it. Sharing these tales means sharing values: it is a medium through which culture is communicated.

The nature of oral tradition is changing with time. There is a negligible sharing of stories from coastal Gujarat to the inland Gujarat due to the gap between the cultures. The compilation of oral narratives into the written form was done by Gujarati authors like Jhaverchand Meghani and Gunvantrai Acharya to preserve and spread the culture. They travelled around villages and wrote down stories that people narrated and what they observed and experienced. The nature of oral tradition is its

dynamic quality and the likelihood of its loss demands innovative ways of its preservation. Grandparents' narrated tales to their grandchildren to educate entertain and instil moral values; it also gave the children an understanding of their culture. In the past decade reading habit has decreased and children seem to demonstrate a greater interest in the new media. From all the mediums they use, there is rarely any mention of stories from coastal Gujarat. There are local folktales of Gujarat in the written form but the dialects make the narratives difficult for children to understand

ii) Choice Justification

Veraval is the largest fishing port of Gujarat, a commercial fishing base, and hence it was selected as a field site. Its population is 184,855 the Kharwa and the Koli Kharwa community are in majority. The Kharwa are Rajputs who migrated from Rajasthan in the 11th century AD to the coast of Gujarat and took up fishing as their main occupation. They have formed groups and settled in cities and towns all along the coast of Gujarat. They are professional fishermen and are involved at all levels of the fishing process. They also form the majority fishermen population in Gujarat. This became the

inevitable reason to understand and focus the research on the culture of the Kharwa community.

Machhwaras, are fishermen that belong to a minor Muslim community of Veraval, they too were identified and chosen for the research as they are involved in traditional fishing that is different from that of the Kharwas in scale and method. They live and fish out of Jaleshwar, on the outskirts of Veraval.

The Island of Diu has a long history of being habited by various groups of people including the Portuguese in 15th Century AD. Sub groups of Kharwa community live in Diu City, Ghoghola and Vanakbara. To understand the Kharwa community as a whole, the study of its sub groups became important.

iii) Objectives

The main objective of the project is to create an awareness of the culture of Coastal Gujarat in Central Gujarat through their stories.

The key concern in the project was to find appropriate ways to share the stories from coastal Gujarat to children, who are unaware of its culture. The primary focus was on ensuring that

they understood the language and that it was presented in an interesting way by exploring technology to advantage. The project also aimed at providing children with an understanding of the culture of coastal Gujarat including and emphasizing the human values in the stories.

iv) Personal Rationale

Gujarat has a great maritime history; its culture has remained unknown to the people outside the communities and I felt the need to communicate its history; this helped me formulate the idea for the project. It was important to acquire knowledge of the different aspects of the culture and to pass it on. I would in the process learn how to transform an ethnographic study into an interesting story based on the data gathered. Exploring the possibility of presenting the story visually seemed an exciting possibility, and in the process I would learn about the various stages involved in designing such a product with all its intricacies.

v) Target Audience

Children from 9 to 14 years are the target audience for my product. They prefer stories that have images. Images create a quick impact on them than compared to words. The narration

can be integrated into the images and may provide details and add to the impact of the images.

3) DESIGN PROCESS

a) Ideation

The ideation process started with the thought that there are films on sea faring and adventures like Pirates of Caribbean so is it not possible to have such accounts of sea faring in India that date back to 1000 BC the Indus Civilization. It was a sketchy idea which led me to explore and refine an idea that revolved around a story from coastal Gujarat in a visual format for young audience. Visits were made to the children's section in book stores of Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad. The book stores had Indian tales and mythologies folktales, classical books, fairy tales, picture books and comics published by Amar Chitra Katha and Tinkle. There were stories from all over India except from coastal Gujarat.

Five children from the age group 9 to 14 years were selected and interviewed. They were given a Graphic novel format of Jhaverchand Meghani's *Saurashtra ni Rasdhar* to read. Their

review about the book and the outcome of the interviews confirmed that the final product could be a Graphic Novel. A Gujarati author Gunvantrai Acharya's, *Dariyalal* was selected to be turned into a Graphic Novel. The book is about the history of sea faring in Gujarat and the Gujarati diaspora in Africa. The book did not eventually lend itself to a graphic novel apart from the fact that information about the book and author was scarce research. I therefore shifted to collecting oral stories from the people at my field sites and compiling the stories to see if that could lead to an idea for a Graphic Novel.

After several visits to the field sites Veraval and Koliyank, seven stories were recording from Kolis and Kharwas. The stories did not represent the overall culture which is what I was looking for and wanted to represent in the product. Several stories were collected and my attempt to use any one of them did not seem feasible and I subsequently proceeded to attempt writing one myself based on my experiences in the field.

b) Research

i) Methodology

My data from the field and my observations were recorded using photography, sketches, written documents, field notes and audio recordings.

I read Gujarati literature and explored archives to analyze the methods and styles that authors have used in their writings.

I tried to apply the same methods and reviewed documents related to my area of work. It helped in acquiring information on the history of the places and people in the region. I met elders and other resourceful individuals from the communities who helped by narrating stories of their community that I collected through audio recordings and field notes.

The places and people were recorded through photography and sketches. To make my product I needed photographs of their daily routines. The plan was to visit several places in the field, interview people and gather data from them that would give me links to all the information and I tried to cover as much ground as was possible. Government hospitals, civil centres, Coast Guard, Community Centres, colleges, museums

and libraries were visited to collect data on health, population, education, history, lifestyle, social organizations, politics, social rules, laws, their culture and other useful information on the communities. To understand sea faring, I made a couple of trips with them; one in a *bodi* and the other in a trawling boat. Their fishing techniques and their songs were recorded using a video and audio respectively. Participation observation was done by spending a day with them which was helpful it gave me a good understanding of their routines and activities. I ate with them and it gave me a good sense of how different their food was from that of inland Gujarat.

I have also collected data by meeting and interviewing children to know their reading habits and their preferences for content and style. I visited Gujarati Language sections in bookstores to find out what kind of books were available for children..

ii) Field Sites

My initial field site was Veraval and nearby towns. My first visit to Veraval was on 5th October 2014. I was supposed to collect oral narratives from the Kharwa fishermen. I visited the docks and met fishermen of different age groups. I managed to get a glimpse of the activities at the docks. My second visit to

Veraval was on 21st December 2014. The visit was fruitful and I obtained useful data. This time I gathered quite an understanding of the culture of the Kharwa community. I planned out my visits on a map according to the areas in the town. My research over here led me to Sutrapada town on the east of Veraval and Jaleshwar beach on the western coast of Veraval. Sutrapada is a small town where Kharwa and Koli Kharwa fishermen live in an area. The Jaleshwar beach has a settlement of Muslim Machhwaras who are different from the Kharwas and Kolis. The different scales of operations in Veraval, Sutrapada and Jaleshwar appended more information about the fishermen and the culture of coastal Gujarat and constantly altered the direction of my research.

My third field visit was to Diu on 26th January 2015. The initial purposes for choosing Diu as a field site was to find out the history of these fishermen and attend a Kharwa marriage. The research led me to different regions; Diu, Ghoghola and Vanakbara. I encountered sub groups of the community and realised that the culture of the same community changes as the field site changed. The scenario was not what I witnessed in Veraval, as Diu is a union territory and a tourist destination had

an influence on the communities and it led me to study the area in greater detail. I was able to link the data that I had collected till then.

My last visit was on 2nd February 2015 to Veraval and Jaleshwar. I collected the final information that had been left out from my previous visits.

iii) Communities

The focus of the project is on the Kharwa and Machhhwara communities. A minor study of Koli Kharwa and other communities was also undertaken as they affected my focus groups. Kharwas are in majority among the fishermen population of Gujarat and they have a complex social organization. I was able to contact a Kharwa from the Kharwa community of Veraval who helped and led me to other places and people in the city. The Kharwas are socially active people and it took no time to get other leads. The Kharwas in small towns and areas were amicable and open and provided me with information while it took me time to engage with the Kharwas in Veraval. The people in Veraval stayed busy all the time, and were apprehensive about providing me with information.

Having spent time with them through several visits, they were more amicable and free to talk.

The Sindhis of Veraval gave me information on the Muslim fishermen, the Machhwaras, at Jaleshwar. The Machhwaras, are a fishing community that live on the outskirts of Veraval, they are isolated from the rest of the fishing communities which became a cause for interest. They were very open in providing me with information and they required no connections in approaching them.

iv) Field Notes

Diu, Vanakbara and Ghoghola



Fig. 2 Diu Island map

Diu is a small island that lies at the southern tip of the Kathiawar region of Gujarat. It is spread across an area of 40 sq. kms. Diu city can be reached by road only through a single bridge that connects the mainland to the island. At the other end of the bridge is a small fishing town of Ghoghola. The bridge is across the Chassi River whose water level is diminishing and it seems to be turning into a creek. On the

western side of the island is Vanakbara, 10 kms from Diu city, which again is a small town of traditional fishermen. The total population of Diu is 52,074 which includes Diu city, Vanakbara, Bhucharwada, Zolawadi and Saudwadi. The Daman and Diu Union Territories comprises of Hindus, the Kharwa, Koli Patel, Koli Brahmin, Bania, Bhoi, Vanja, Salat, Sanghadaia, Sagar, Baria, Kamli, Mitna, Mangela, Bhandari, Macchi, Kumbhar, Mayavanshi, Christians, the tribals namely the Dhoia, Dubla and Siddi including Momin and the Khoja the Muslim communities.

There is freshness in the air and the scenic beauty instantly catches your attention. Being a tourist destination the island has developed considerably. The island was ruled by the Portuguese from 1535 AD till it was taken over by the Indian Military in 1961. All the houses are painted in bright beautiful colours. The roads are clean with footpaths across the entire town.

I was in Diu to visit the library and while I was there I did the photography for Monica's wedding Sureshbhai Bariya's (of Sutrapada) daughter.

The area behind the Diu collector's office is the kharwawad. The kharwas that live here are the Ghoghaliya Kharwas. This sub group of Kharwa community is named after the Ghoghola town that they come from.



Fig. 3 Ladies applying mixture of turmeric powder and oil on the bride Monica at Diu Kharwa Samaj centre

A kharwa wedding is celebrated across many days. Haldi is applied 5 days before the marriage ceremony to both the

groom and the bride and is removed before the marriage ceremony using millet flour.

They dance the garba on the first two days of the five day marriage celebration. Close women relatives of the bride wear bangles made of elephant tusks plated with gold which are sent by the groom's family. Ivory bangles are banned by the government and so they now give substitute of a white plastic version.



Fig. 4 Bangles duplicate to ivory but with pure gold plate

Around 7 tolas of gold are offered to the groom as a gift. The kharwas are fond of gold and they gift it in every important ceremony. Unlike the Ghogholiya Kharwas, the Vanakbara Kharwas (Moila kharwas) believe in samuh vivaah (community

marriages). It saves money and the offerings are divided equally. The Diu and Sutrapada kharwa samaj does not allow the women love marriages or inter-caste marriages. In such eventualities they are ostracized from the community and if the samaj agrees to the marriage they are compelled to pay a fine of Rs. 2 lakh to the samaj and the bride has to walk to her husband's home after vidaay instead of riding on a horse with the groom as is customary as a sign of shame. They do not have cultural exchanges with the other samaj's. The only way in which a marriage across two samaj's is possible is that both the sides have a good social link in some way or the groom takes special permission from his samaj with adequate reasons one of which could be that he cannot find a bride of an appropriate age in his own samaj. Sureshbhai's son, Nilesh works on a merchant ship as a deck steward, in Diu less than 5% of the Kharwas are involved in fishing; the others have joined cruise boats and cargo ships. They prefer becoming seaman; engineers etc rather than engage in fishing. They train for six months in Goa or Nhava Sheva and are admitted in these institutions through a branch of NUSI (National Union of Seafarers of India) in Ghoghola. They get paid around Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 90,000 annually and stay away from home for 10

months in a year, a less dangerous job in comparison to that of traditional fishermen. Talking of danger, a young lad Akshay of lad of 18 said that the Kharwas are not afraid of anything, not even of whale sharks. He had himself encountered a whale shark that was accidentally dragged to the shore.

The Patel of the Diu Kharwa Samaj, Shantibhai Solanki lives opposite the Diu kharwa samaj centre, despite being a Solanki, he has no connection with Solankis outside the samaj despite being a Rajput. He believes that his family came to the region during the War of Somnath from Rajasthan and after the war they arrived in Diu-Ghoghola. They still follow a few traditions that they followed in Rajasthan. Some of them migrated to Muldwarka, Dhamlej and Sutrapada when the Portuguese took control over Diu. He told me that all the people who migrated and settled in different towns have their own Patels. There are twelve *gnyati* of Kharwa communities and each of them has their own Patel or head. These 12 Patels of different *gnyati* lead under a President which is always the Patel of Porbandar. They do not interfere in matters across *gnyati*'s, they only provide assistance when sought. Most cases of the samaj are solved internally and only severe cases go to the court, most often the

criminal ones. They prefer the least amount of involvement of the government in their affairs.

An engagement of a couple is registered in their panchayats and once they are registered it must be honoured by both parties except when there is a serious problem. Widows do not wear ornaments like other Hindu widows. Their death ceremonies last for 12 days. On the 13th day they perform a Brahma Bhajan like the kshatriyas. They believe in fasting on holy days and the food cooked on such occasions is vegetarian.

Mr. Sukar Anjani, a fishery officer in Diu is a Moila Kharwa from Vanakbara, he gave me valuable information about fishing, a list of common fishes caught at Diu and the time period of their availability. He gave information about the types of low level fishing nets (gill nets, cast nets, hook and line, pole net) that catches fish for home consumption. He explained the procedure of fishing in boats with trawling nets and said that the Japanese in 1969 had helped them in trawling technology. However the actual implementation of trawling nets were not started until the 1980s as environmental issues related to trawling had to be dealt with. Commercial fishing commenced after that. He explained the permissible limits of fishing and

that the areas of the sea were categorized according to the distance from the shore; territorial waters are 12 nautical miles from the shore, the Continuous zone 24 nautical miles and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) 200 nautical miles. The boats gets licenses for fishing only in territorial waters but they often go beyond 50 nautical miles. The fisheries office has a satellite system of finding out the availability of large groups of fish in the waters by analyzing the depths and detecting the amount of green algae. This information is classified and as the government department does not want the region to be exploited.



Fig. 5 The depth chart of the Arabian Sea from Veraval to Diu

The maximum probability of a cyclone is in June and in the post monsoon period.

Mr. Sukar Anjani claims that the Machhwaras came from Afghanistan, settled in Kutchh and then migrated all over the coast; they are not tribe, they are just migrants. There is a considerable population of Machhwaras at Rupen Bandar near Dwarka.

The Vanakbara kharwas only eat fresh fish while Ghogholiya Kharwa also eats dry fish and fish pickle. The Rotibow dish of

Ghogholiya Kharwa is very popular. It is prepared by cooking a fish curry and then covering it with bajra no rotlo, and letting it steam till it gets soft, the rotlo is then crushed and added in the curry. Mr. Sukar said that Myculaab, a fish biryani, of Veraval Kharwa is extremely famous and the Veraval Kharwas are often referred to as the Myculaab Kharwas.



Fig. 6 Myculaab - a dish made of rice and fish

The next day I went to Vanakbara in a local bus. The bus was extremely clean just like the city. Vanakbara was a small dirty town with uneven roads. Boards with names of the societies could be spotted all across the town. I arrived at Devjibhai's

home in one of these societies. Devjibhai works in an industry at the Goa Industrial Area in Diu. He belongs to the Moila Kharwa community. He has a wife Dayaben and a son. He lost one of his sons in an accident at sea. I met Mr. Ukharda Bava Bamaniya, a Koli and a very reputed person in Vanakbara, at Devjibhai's home. Mr. Bamaniya was an old man, tall with a good personality. He was originally a farmer and the unproductive coastal soil forced him to shift to fishing as an occupation. He left fishing years ago and has now become a fish supplier who charges fishermen only a minimum commission. He constantly complains about exploitative nature of exporters and their inadequate fishing experience and how they cannot understand the hard work and risks that fishermen take.

He said "I do not want my son to go for fishing. I tell them, do other work, because at sea the sky is above and with the water below, you have nowhere to go. If anything happens, you do not even get a dead body back. It is a distressful work."

He talks about his fishing experiences. Earlier, at night, kerosene lamps along with flags were used to recognize the nets spread in the water. They used to clean the boat with

sponge, cover it with a plastic sheet and sleep inside the boat. Out of season, they would work on the maintenance of the boats, repair them, prepare the nets and involve themselves in other labour intensive work. In short, they would prepare for the next season.

He said that the Kharwas were the ones who started fishing in Vanakbara when the Kolis used to accompany them in their boats. Later as they progressed the Kolis bought their own boats and started fishing and he has been with the Kharwas to sea as a cook when he was 15 years old.

The Koli and Kharwa communities both have different Patels in the town. They have made community marriages compulsory. They believe that there should be equality in matters of rituals for the rich and poor and no daughter should feel ashamed of her father's status. The amount of jewellery and other valuables are equal for everybody. All the brides are given the same chunni (nose ring). The Kolis perform Hindu rituals when someone dies for 11 to 12 days just like the Kharwas.

The house of Mr. Bamnaniya was lavish like a farmhouse. There was a large compound in front of his two storied house where domestic animals cows, birds were breed. The Kolis wore the same clothes as Kharwas; the ladies wear a saree as their traditional dress.

Mr. Bamaniya has five sons, his wife RatanMa is around 60 years old and his mother Valuba is in her late 80's.



Fig. 7 Koli women at Mr. Bamaniya's home Vanakbara

They talk about old times when their homes were made of cow dung and the roof was of wood. They used to farm products

like onion, coconut, brinjal, sweet potatoes, millet and wheat. The farms were down sized for houses to be built.

The women of the house do not sit on a charpai along with males members as a mark of respect. The responsibility for the women is of a dual nature; work and look after the home and the children and other is to sell fish in the market. The restriction on women are many and one of them is that in the community a newlywed wife is not allowed to see her husband's face for 15 days after their wedding.

According to Valuba, Jivabhai Sidi, started a fishing business in Vanakbara, brewed alcohol and was involved in illegal trading. He used to run the panchayat and help people. He worked for the people of his community, even if it meant engaging with the government on unpleasant issues.

The Laxmibai jetty is a horizontal strip on the western part of Vanakbara that is run by the government. It has wide roads and along the road are a few *dangaas* (warehouses made of wood) to store the tools, supplies ice machines, fuel drums and to store the fish before the auction.



Fig. 8 A road at Laxmibai jetty, Vanakbara



Fig. 9 Moila Kharva fishermen crushing the ice to fill in the ice container (at Laxmibai jetty, Vanakbara)

Harshad Lodhiya, is a young lad who took me to the docked boats, and showed me all the parts in a boat – the deck, engine, nets, machines, stove, toilet boards, pilots, topes, pulleys, fish oil planks, fish contain area, water container, steel line drums, cabin, steering, levers, mast, wireless antennae etc.



Fig. 10 A scene of a boat's cabin



Fig. 11 A view from the upper deck inside the engine room on the lower deck



Fig. 12 Front part of the upper deck

He also explained the operative part of the different features in the boat, how the objects functioned and how they hauled the nets, the anchors, eating, sleeping, bathing etc while at sea.

Another necessary skill that they need is that of swimming and all the Kharwa fishermen know how to swim.



Fig. 13 Float balls used to keep one side of the net floating in the water



Fig. 14 Harshad Lodhiya showing the water drum that is filled with drinking water before going to sea.



Fig. 15 Fishermen's toilet seat

Harshad said that fish are unloaded only in morning, regardless of when the loaded boat arrives at the jetty, because the market at the jetty opens up only in the morning and they get a good price for their catch.

The Sea Trip

I made a sea trip in trawling boat named “Mahashakti” from Laxmibai jetty, a boat owned by Devjibhai’s cousin Piyush accompanied by Devjibhai and his family, Piyushbhai and his family, Rakeshbhai (Piyush’s brother), Pareshbhai (Devjibhai’s nephew) and six other Kharwa fishermen. As soon as the boat

left from the jetty, music started in the cabin, the Kharwas started dancing to it. Some elder Kharwas sat at the rear end of the boat preparing the nets.



Fig. 16 The fishermen tying the ropes and float ball to the net

The boat felt no less than a cruise line until it stopped after half an hour. The fishermen rushed towards the rear end and started preparing the nets. Metal lines coiled around two drums were pulled out and tied to the wooden boards hanging on a pulley with the wooden structure leaning outside the railing.



Fig. 17 Fishermen adjusting the angle of the V structure maintain a spread between two wooden boards

The conical trawling net was hooked up to the boards with four ropes, two on each board. They slowly put the net into the sea. The locks of wooden boards were released when the net was in the water. The float balls attached to the nets were seen trailing behind the boat.



Fig. 18 Laying net in the water

The wooden pieces landed in the water. They kept the opening of the net from submerging into the water and damaging the net. Having set the net, the boat started and the Kharwas settled all around the boat relaxing, chatting and drinking beverages. The floor of the deck was slippery and one young lad started washing it. The pumps started and drew out the water from the cold storage. The metal lines taught as the net dragged behind in the water. Piyushbhai handled the steering and he constantly kept checking the GPS for position. The boat went far in the sea and it began to rock.

After two hours Piyushbhai stopped the boat. The fishermen rushed towards the net shouting in excitement. They pulled the net out helping each with it. One of the Kharwas, Chunnibhai, sang a song called Jhumsa as they pulled the net in. The other fishermen sang after him. Chunnibhai says that the song motivates and gives them strength. They debated on the type of fish they might have caught. The last part of the net was heavy. The catch was at the bottom of the net, the junk was first sorted out from the catch, which was small but was sorted out in buckets.



Fig. 19 Fishermen sorting out the catch

The deck was then cleaned again and the nets were adjusted set in place. The fishermen seemed a little disappointed with the catch but had got used to it and did not let it bother them as they believed a good catch depended on their luck, and that it always was a gamble.

Ghoghola is an elongated extension into the sea. Walking a short distance in any direction gets you to the sea. Close to the Ghoghola kharwawad and opposite the Ram Mandir is the office of NUSI. Hemalbhai Rajput, the Patel of Ghoghola kharwa samaj, is the representative of NUSI in Ghoghola.

Ramdev Pir is the main deity of the Kharwas. The kharwas have different Kuldevis according to their lineage. Ghoghola is the main centre of Ghogholiya Kharwas, who migrated to Sutrapada, Dhamlej, Muldwarka, Diu, Nava Bandar, Una, Matunga, Varseva Mumbai and Danda are the Peta samaj (sub groups) of Ghogholiya Kharwas. There are a total of 11 Peta *gnatis* of Ghoghaliya Kharwas. There are 7 *cholas* (group of residents) in Ghoghola. They have comparatively less restrictions and rules compared to the Porabandar and Veraval samaj. Just like the other kharwa samaj's disputes and other cases are solved by the samaj, the Panchayat and the Patel.

Cases are registered and handled only on Saturday and Wednesday. All legal documents like the Pan Card, Passport, election card, fishing licenses etc are prepared through the Samaj office.

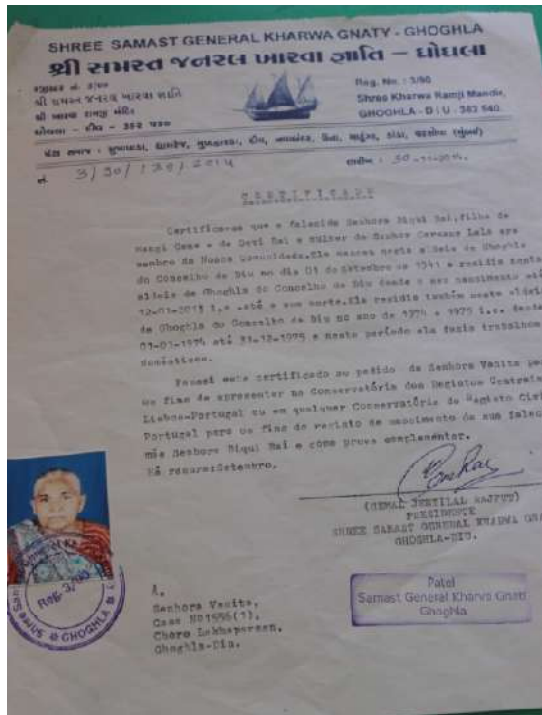


Fig. 20 Passport application of a member of Kharwa community approved by the Kharwa Samaj

99 percent of the kharwas work in the merchant navy and rest 1percent are engaged in small scale fishing primarily for home

consumption. In March each year, elections are held in the *cholas* and a new Patel is elected. The Patel is elected and the order is and pre-decided. After the election, the Patel celebrates Madhi Utsav in which they perform the marriage of Shiv to Parvati.

Their festival of Vaavto is celebrated a day before and on the day of Dariya Poojan. Large flags from all the *cholas* are hoisted and a rally with the flags is taken to their boats at the shore. They check the wind through the fluttering of the flags that announces the commencement of a new fishing season.



Fig. 21 The festival of Vaavto

The samaj has made education compulsory till 10th class. They have made HIV test compulsory for both bride and groom before marriage. No marriages are recognised by the samaj until they are registered in the samaj office before the rituals. Inter-caste marriages and marriages outside the community can be done after paying fine of around Rs. 2 lakh to the samaj.

“Rules are so strict so as to keep the community people together. Rules should be there in every community to make the social bonding stronger. Girls are sent out station for education and they fall in love with boys of other castes and communities. They run away with them as they know that the marriage won’t be allowed by the samaj. We cannot let this happen and so they are engaged at a young age by their parents.” Hemalbhai said. Unlike the other groups they do not believe in community marriages.

He believes that Kharwas are not all Rajputs. People from different professions and background must have gathered over here, took up fishing, formed a group, named it Kharwa and changed their surnames and castes along with it. He says that not all of them have arrived from Rajasthan during the Somnath war, but some must have migrated here due to

different circumstances like the 1956 drought in Gujarat and become part of the Kharwa samaj.

They started fishing here because there were no other resources that they could depend upon for a regular livelihood. Hemalbhai highlights the issue of shrimp farming in the Chassi creek. He says that the government is converting the marshland near Bhucharwada into a bird sanctuary. It is a place where 5000 fishermen get fish from. Moreover the industries involved in shrimp farming, dispose chemicals in the river where the local fishermen fish daily in canoes. The area near the shore was once abundant with shallow water fish, and now bears no fish. To get a catch the fishermen have to go far from the shore now. The water is getting polluted and the green algae, which keep the sea water clean, are now depleting. A new area near the bridge has been allotted by the government to industry for shrimp farming that will provide jobs to people but the fishing tradition will end. He says that allocating areas in the river and sea to industrialists is unnatural; the sea cannot be divided and owned by any individual.

Just next to the NUSI office, 83 year old Laxmanbhai Kapadiya sits in Sarita Studio. He is nicknamed as “Kaviraj” by the

community because of his poetic nature. He was elected twice as the Patel of Ghoghola samaj and used to work in the merchant navy but he is known for being a poet and a theatre artist. He recited some poems to me about the values and pride of the Kharwa Samaj.

The Muslims, Kharwas and Kolis in Ghoghola live and fish together peacefully. Some of the Muslims have settled here after the riots in Central Gujarat. The people over here bear no grudges on people from other religions and castes.

The fish market in Ghoghola is located just beside the bakala (vegetable) market. The fish market is divided into four sections; lower grade fish, higher grade fish, dry fish and chicken mutton (meat) section. The market is built by the Ghoghola government. The Ghoghola fishermen go fishing early in the morning close to the shore and bring back fresh fish to sell in the market. Fish from neighbouring Vanakbara is also sold in the market but the fish is not as fresh as it is fish that has been stored for days in a cold storage. Women also bring fish to the market from other villages and the market here limits itself to local buyers and small quantities.



Fig. 22 The higher grade fish section in the Ghoghola fish market.



Fig. 23 The lower grade fish section in the Ghoghola fish market which usually remains busy with customers.

Fishing has become difficult and coast ineffective which is forcing people to migrate to other parts of Gujarat to find lucrative jobs.

Veraval

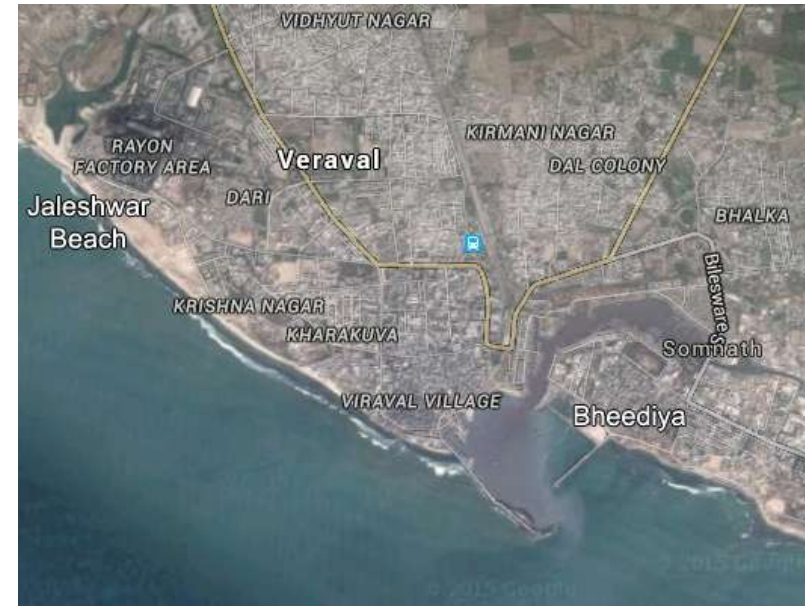


Fig. 24 Map of Veraval with Jaleswar and Bheediya labelled in it

Just 4 kms from Somnath is Veraval - the largest fishing port in Gujarat. Once a fortified port town of the Nawabi family of Junagadh it is now a commercial fishing centre. The air is a combination of smells, of fish, chemicals and garbage. The roads are poorly maintained and town is relatively dirty. One of the main roads (MG Road) passing through the city has

footpaths with open and damaged gutters flanked by local shops. The vehicles on the road mostly constitute 'chhakdas' and diesel rickshaws. It has two harbour jetties: the outer khadi and the inner khadi, the outer khadi is older.



Fig. 25 The dirty and toxic waters at the jetty

Veraval has a population of around 1.9 lakh which includes a number of communities - Kharwa, Koli Kharwa, Brahmin, Sindhi, Patani Muslims, Baniya, Maachhi, Machhwara and Bhoi. The Kharwa, Koli Kharwa, Maachhi and Machhwara are fisher folks among which the Kharwas and Koli Kharwas form majority of the population. The Koli Kharwas live in central

Veraval while the Kharwas live around the city and near the harbour in 'Kharwawad'. The Kharwas in the Bhidiya Kharwawad are Moila Kharwas who migrated from Vanakbara post independence have permanently settled here as the road route from Diu to Gujarat had been blocked by the Portuguese. Kharwas have a joint family system and elders are addressed by their names. We can often hear sons addressing their fathers like 'Bapu, tu kya hato?' or 'Tu ja, hun jetty e jaau chhu' which is quite the opposite in the case of women who addresses elders with respectful terms. Close relatives usually live around the kharwawad. Relatives visiting on a daily basis or living in each other's homes is a common feature. The men go to work to earn a livelihood while the women do household work and few of them also sell fish in the market. The women of Moila Kharwa community are allowed to work in groups in industries. The Kharwas here speak Gujarati in disjointed Saurashtrian dialects. All of them understand Hindi but only some speak the language fluently. Their literacy rate was negligible and is now on the increase since last three decades. They provide their children with basic schooling and some have even got to college. The women still have restrictions when it comes to education most of them do not even get a

primary education. There are a number of colleges and high schools in Veraval with Seth MP High School being the only school for girls which is in the centre of the city.

Chimanbhai Vadarwala, an elder Kharwa *khalasi*, says about education, “We admit our sons in school. But they do not study. When they are young they spend their time at the docks playing with other children. When they grow up, they start go fishing to earn pocket money, or their father’s take them to sea to help them fish so they quit school and continue fishing. Girls are not admitted to school. What will they do after studying? They are engaged at an early age and get married young. They do not need education as for the rest of their lives they have to do household chores.” He called a young boy playing at the old docks near a warehouse and asked him what he would like become when he grew up, and the boy pointed out to the boats and said that he would catch fish. “You see, these children play over here and eventually these docks become their life and fishing their livelihood. This is our world. But the situation is improving and the kharwa sons are entering fields of engineering, medical, entrepreneurship and even politics.”

Rajubhai Fofandi, a fishing company owner says, “My oldest daughter, Roshni, is studying BBA. She should get married before it is too late. She wants to work but that would be permitted to her only by her in-laws and I can ill afford to extend her marriage because she wants to work. She has to manage her home after her marriage so what is the need of doing a job.”

Early morning, the city is quiet. It gets crowded all of a sudden at 8 am when the fish market opens.



Fig. 26 A scene of Veraval fish market where a woman is trying to sell fish

The fresh fish is unloaded at the jetties and taken to the local fish market in the *chbakdas* to Kharakuva. The place has cold storages where the catch is kept for the industry owners, and some goes to the local fish market to be sold. A small dirty path led me to the fish market, a strong smell emanated. The market is busy and crowded both in the mornings and in the evening. The place was an open and they sat leaving a gap in between each other. The women wear thick gold ornaments even when they were working and selling fish. At least fifty women sat in the market in a line, shouting, calling out the names of the fish they were selling. They sat on the ground with small wooden blocks and vessels full of fish, cleaning and cutting the fish into pieces on a wooden block. They first cut the fins, the head, and then make a long cut on the side of the fish to open it wide. The internal organs of the fish are generally treated as waste, after which the pieces are made and sold. The buyers were both men and women who bargained for a good price. Apart from different kinds of fishes, lobsters, crabs, prawns of different sizes, dry fish and bakala (vegetables) are also sold at the market. The women sell a great variety that the fishermen bring in from the sea.

Bhanuma, who is a leading trader in this fish market, owns a house cum shop in the market and has been in this business for years and holds a reputation among Kharwas for being a good trader. Her house cum shop looks like an old Gujarati trader's shop with a big Ramdevji painting on the wall, charpai's with a ceiling that seemed to be rusting with weight balancing scale (*trajvo*) suspended from it. Her son, Jitubhai, is the president of the Kharwa samaj.

The sun had already set, and the market was still busy. The fisherwomen in the market do not seem tired even after all the hard work. At the edge of Bhanuma's shed, away from the lights, an elderly fat guy with dark complexion sat on chair, watching the market street. Nathabhai took care of the market and its supplies. He was a fisherman for several years and had recently retired due to constant knee problem. His son was studying to be a Chartered Accountant in Ahmedabad. Nathabhai actually didn't know what his son was studying until a call was made to his son in Ahmedabad. Nathabhai said, "The sea is vast and endless. When we go to sea, we know that once we go that it's not necessary that we return safely. It is a risk we take. Our families too understand the consequences.

She watches her father and brother on a daily basis. We aren't afraid of anything when we are at sea. On rough days, there are rough winds which we deal with and sometimes big ships destroy and break down our boats, most of the time we do not survive such mishaps. There was a little incident that my grandfather told me about. One of our Kharwa fishermen, during my grandfather's time, named Samji, went to sea with other sea-men; everything was going as it should in the sea when what seemed like a huge wave crashed into them at night while everybody was asleep, it was actually a steamer that did not notice their little boat and crashed straight into it. It blew up the whole boat and everybody drowned. Only Samji managed to pick up a broken wooden board off the boat, and floated he drifted on it for 45 days in the sea until the waves carried him ashore. Nobody spotted him, so nobody could help him. We thought they were all dead did not return. But he survived without food or water. He just lay on the board like a dead man. The waves did their work. We people on the shore found him covered with white barnacles and plants."

The next morning, I went into the fish market to see find that it actually ended at the beach. I was searching for a Kharwa

women named Gangaben whom my colleague had already spoken to. Kharwawad started where the fish market ended. Her home was on elevated ground, may be to avoid the sea water from entering the house during the monsoon season. It was a two storied house, with two rooms of 10x10 ft and common walls on two sides to adjacent houses. Gangaben appeared in a while and she asked me to follow to her home through narrow streets, which had identical houses on both sides of the street. Some of the streets were so narrow that there was hardly any space for a single person to pass through.. The paved streets never saw any sunlight in the kharwa maze and the darkness matched the grey plastered walls of these homes. There were small pan shops, tailors and grocery shops on level lower than the street. An open drain travelled along on the both sides of the streets. There were plasterd pits that served as tanks to store water municipal water supplied to the town every three days. It was also filtered and used as drinking water.



Fig. 27 The pit on the road that stores drinking water for the residents

Gangaben's home the two storied building has two rooms with a washroom on one floor. All members of the family sit in the inner room which consists of kitchen on one side, has a bed in the middle and bags of rice on the opposite side (annual storage) of the room. The family's close relatives live in the neighbourhood and they all spend time with each other every day at Gangaben's home. Casual visits to relative's homes are a common ritual amongst the Kharwas.

Gangaben's daughter operates the kerosene stove in the kitchen. She is a married 19 year old girl who gave me the

appearance of a mature lady in her late 20's. She made fish curry, rice, wheat roti and bajra rotla which is part of their daily diet. Their vegetable consumption is very low in these households.



Fig. 28 Regular diet of Kharwa- fish curry, rotlo, roti and rice

She said that the male members go fishing and the women sell the fish that they bring in, and that both participate in earning a livelihood.

I noticed a framed photo of Ramdev pir in the room which made me curious. They took me to the rear end of the house

through kitchen to a small corner which had images of Gods that served as their temple at home and every year during Bhadarva Sud Agiyaras, they carry a flag from this temple to the Jaleshwar Ramdev's temple, at the kharwa festival of Dhaja. The festival is dedicated to Ramdev Pir and being Rajputs of Rajasthan all the Kharwas believe in him.



Fig. 29 An area behind Gangaben's home that has been made into Ramdev Pir's temple.

Gangaben was talking about her husband and children when her husband, Babubhai and her oldest son returned from a three day fishing trip. She enquired from her son about the catch to which he responded sadly and said, none this time. Gangaben got worried, "You see, there is no fish in the sea these days. They have spent three days have come back with nothing. They do find a good catch sometimes. It is all luck." Babubhai, his son and three other relatives had gone for together. They brought back the nets, a kerosene stove and a steel dabba (box) wrapped in a small net. They had taken cooked food (fish curry, cooked rice and bajra roti) and raw materials for with which they cooked their meals on the boat (dough, rice and spices). The older son is the one responsible for cooking all the meals when they go out fishing trips. They carry with them all the necessary supplies in ample quantity for the number of days they have planned to be out at sea..

Babubhai sat with me and told about his life and work in his very low and deep voice. His grandfather used to work on a merchant ship that carried goods to Mumbai and Dubai. His father owned a small boat and was a fisherman. He said he was very good in school but left it halfway as he failed once. He

realised that he did not want to study anymore. His grandfather used to tell him to stay away from the sea and try to find something better to do, because of a labour crunch in the fishing industry he started assisting his father and it has been 25 years since the day he started fishing. He wishes that his sons get educated and hope that they never have to face the hardships of fishing. He had seen whales being caught and cut in his childhood. In fact he himself has bravely caught two whales in his career. He spoke about the displeasure with the government, on account of the promises made of fisherman subsidies which they have never received. His boat runs on kerosene which is provided two times a week by the government which is less than what they had been promised. In the case of big trawling boats, fuel, food and water are expenses that the owner (who doesn't himself go for fishing) has to bear. He says it is more profitable to have your own *hodi* than to work on somebody else's trawling boats. He owns a small fibre boat operated by outboard motors (OBM) which can go as far out as 50 nautical miles in the sea.

Babubhai uses different size of gill nets to catch different fish but the amount of catch every time varies. The fishermen that

go fishing in small fibre boats (*hodi*) and the catch they bring in is sold at the fish market. Sometimes the catch goes directly to the food processing industry. The catch from the trawling boats is unloaded at the jetties and auctioned from warehouse at the jetties.

Babubhai invited me to go for a ride in his boat. I was excited at the proposition. Babubhai, Gangaben the family and I took the road to the old harbour where Babubhai's son was waiting with a boat. The road to the jetty had several old warehouses. It was noon and the harbour was not crowded at that hour. A ramp ran along the side of the harbour that was used for boarding boats; excited we got into our boat.



Fig. 30 The outer khadi of Veraval

The boat was installed with fuel operated outboard motors and the boat moved out slowly. The boat had several nets on the deck and a large box in the middle which served as the cold storage container. Babubhai stood behind the steering while another man beside him operated the motor lever. The waves were gentle and the water was dirty. There were Sea gulls in the sky that were constantly diving into the water and flying back up. The dolphins swam around in groups moving around in circles. The children on the boats shouted “Juba, Juba” (a local

name of dolphin). Babubhai said that dolphins were very intelligent creatures.

We were headed to Somnath which actually seemed closer compared to a journey by road. The shore was retreating and we could see the long stretch of wave breakers lined the harbours. The wind was strong and the waves started getting bigger as we went further away from the harbour passing through the wave breakers. It was a wonderful experience and after riding out a kilometre in to the sea turned around and returned. The trip was short and I felt like I wanted to stay out longer. That vastness and depth of the waters was an unforgettable experience.

The trawlers arrive at the jetties at different hours in a day and regardless of when they arrive the fish are unloaded only in the mornings and remain in the cold storage on the boats as the auction takes place only in the mornings. There are three sheds at the Bhidiya jetty, provided by the government, where fish is traded. The trawling boat owners have registered fishing companies; the same name is paint on their boats. The owners occupy a space in the sheds that has the cold storage containers

in a locked wooden container which is also used to store the equipment and material of boat (nets, hooks, food etc).



Fig. 31 A scene of warehouse at Veraval jetty

The owner is only present when the catch from his boat arrives for unloading and during the auction. The suppliers are present to buy the catch which they immediately sell to exporters or industrialists who are often present in the case of a direct sale. The catch is already sorted before it gets weighed. After the deal is done the catch is put into chhakdas, and immediately transported to the buyer's location or is kept in a cold storage at kharakuwa for a couple of days till transport is organized. An

accountant is present to prepare the receipts and bills for the process.



Fig. 32 A kharva taking away the unsold fish

Bharatbhai Khoraba, a supplier, said, "This shed is our local market. All the fish from the trawlers is unloaded here and the export quality catch is separated. The trawling boat catch does not enter the fish market at kharakuwa, all transactions for whole sale purchases are made at the warehouse auction; only the fish from small boat owners is taken to the fish market, which is the retail market. Suppliers like me help boat owners

to get a good bid and an immediate sale because of our contacts."

Bharatbhai thinks that the fishing business has no longer remained traditional; it has evolved to be a totally professional business. He is also a kharwa and but distinguishes himself from the Koli Kharwas and Moila Kharwas, despite the fact that all the groups live together peacefully. He says that the wife's of the trawling boat owners do not work in the fish market like the small boat owners. Their work in this fish business is to pack the food supplies from their home, bring it in rickshaws and provide it to the *khalasis* of her husband's boat before the boat leaves on a fishing trip; the women are not seen in the market at anytime. The kharwa men in involved in every aspect of the fish business, they could be workers at sheds, chhakda drivers, *khalasis*, tandels, fishing company and boat owners, suppliers, industrialist and exporters. The level of work in this business is chosen by them according to their preference and economic capabilities. The richer kharwas own fishing companies and the number of owners has increased and the demands for labour therefore has also doubled, the poorer fishermen and labourers from Vapi and Valsad (South Gujarat)

or from other states of India (UP, AP, Madras, Vishakhapatnam, Orissa) are hired who are often in need of labour work with better wages. They are positioned as *khalasis* or tandels on the boat with a salary ranging from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000 per month.

A khalasi from Vishakhapatnam said, "We come here because we do not get paid well enough as khalasi's in our village to take care of the needs of our family, and therefore come here. Generally, owners take good care of us. We are provided with food and the boat to sleep in. So boat becomes our home. We sometimes get out of it to go to market. Everything else is available at the jetty. Our work here is for 8 to 10 months and then we are free for 2 to 4 months when we go home back to our family. Some of them do seasonal work too to earn extra money during these months. We do fear any misfortunes at sea, but we get used to it once we start working."



Fig. 33 A group of khalasi from Andhra Pradesh at the Veraval jetty

Unlike the kharwawad at the Bandar road, the kharwawad at Bhidiya is clean and well maintained. The houses are bigger and the streets are broad with no open drains Bhailalabhai, Devjibhai's father-in-law (Devjibhai of Vanakbara), lives with his family in one of the streets of Bhidiya Kharwawad near the Ramdev Pir temple (where kharwawad was first established). He is an experienced-retired-73 years old Moila Kharwa.

"We migrated from Vanakbara in 1954 due to the conflicts between the Indian Government and the Portuguese Government, a few continued to stay there till Diu got its

freedom. Some Kolis too that used to do farm migrated from Vanakbara and settled with me. When we came here, now called Bhidiya, was a barren land, mainly sand. Over the years we built our homes and the houses became bigger and better with time. Then stone houses were built, stone brings up the ground water level. We used to burn coconut skin as a source of illumination at home and on the boat instead of lamps."

The Bhidiya Kharwawad is therefore a colony of the Moila Kharwas and Kolis who migrated from Vanakbara. They started fishing over here and we were allowed to do so peacefully by the 'Kharwa Bhais' of Veraval. Being from a different samaj, Moila kharwas do not have cultural exchanges with the Veraval Kharwas, and both the Kharwas have different Patels to represent their samaj. Each Koli colony too has one Patel. Bhidiya Koli Patels are also classified according to areas they come from (Vanakbara Koli settlement, Vadishevi or Bakala Market and Timboo who worship Narsimha). Bhailalabhai says that a leader is necessary for every samaj. If there is no leader then crime and injustice increases. They do not interfere in each other's internal affairs although both the samaj's celebrate festivals in the same way and sometimes

together and the fish together. Their customs and traditions are the same as the Vanakbara kharwas. They say they carry their customs wherever they go and through which they are identified and their migration can be proved. They came from Rajashtan and brought their deities and religion with them. Faith in Ramdev Pir, the shrines and their worship are proof; and it is evident in every Kharwa Samaj. They believe in different Goddesses (Kuldevi) chosen by them and is followed by their lineage. Bhailalbai's family kuldevi is 'Lunai Ma'. He is proud of their customs and traditions the way they enjoy their lives and work together.



Fig. 34 Evening prayers at Bhailalbai's home

"Kharwas work hard and enjoy their lives too. Consumption of alcohol is common and it is necessary to enjoy ourselves thoroughly. Hum to rangeele hai bhai!" he comments on the festivity of the Kharwas.

He worked on small boats to catch Pomfret when he was younger, he then moved to working on trawling boats as Japanese technology of trawl fishing started in the region. He says they used to get a good catch with gill and cast nets in small boats but then trawlers swept away all the fish close to the shore. Now there are no fish left close to the shore due to

an increase in the number of fishermen and technology, that even the trawlers have to travel towards Ratanagiri (Maharashtra) and Goa to catch fish. It takes them around 25 days while the small boats during his early days would go in morning and return by noon with a good catch. The price of fuel and food has increased too. Big boats require large quantity of such materials (wood, net, rice, wheat flour, diesel, ice) which costs a lot for one trip of 25 days. If a boat gets a catch worth 3 lakhs, then the profit works out as 1.2 lakh. If the catch is low then the trip runs in a loss. It is a risky business and all the fishermen believe that it depends on luck. Fishing boats earlier were small, about 1/5th of the size of a trawling boat, with no steering; it travelled on sails. Bhailalbhai believes in such traditional small scale fishing and he thinks that there is no match for the expertise that these fisherman possess.

"Technology cannot be stopped in this modern world and these kharwa do not understand it fully yet. We work for their development but they will never get out of their conservative mindset. The result of our efforts speaks volumes and has only improved our efforts by half." Dr. A.Y. Desai, the dean of Fishery College, Veraval, said.

He believes that the expertise of the kharwas can be used with technology to increase better their economy. I personally think that using trawling boats as a means of new technology is a waste of natural talent that experienced fisherman have. So I could not agree with what the dean saying but there were few small proposals, like using diamond shaped nets to get a good catch without affecting the reproduction and exporting finished products instead of raw products, which I think can improve a lot of things in their current fishing business. The lab study of such research is currently being guided by Prof. B.G. Chudasama, who teaches the students about available sea food and marketing strategies in the fishing industry.

I asked the dean about the fishermen sharing their knowledge with his students. He said, "Yes, we have a Rural Fishery Work Experience Program every year in which we send our students to entrepreneurs in the field. We, sometimes, do call Kharwa entrepreneurs for counselling but not the traditional kharwas, they are too stubborn and do not listen to me or follow what we say. The protocol over here is if you want to know something from them, you have to go to them, they will not come to you." He further said "This is the reason why

there are two groups of Kharwa in Veraval, both political rivals. Jagdishbhai Fofandi, owner of Deepmala Seafoods and alumni of Fishery College, believes in embracing new technologies for progress, while the others led by Jitubhai Kuhada believe in retaining their old ways. The Veraval kharwas are thus split in two samaj's and have their own Patels; one is a 'sudharawadi' while the other is traditional. In matter of caste, Hindus and Muslims always have small issues but they also realise the inter-dependency and therefore maintain a professional relationship.”

I went around the fishery college and it reminded me of books. There was only one public library in Veraval, which was named after a renowned Gujarati author Jhaverchand Meghani. The library was divided into two rooms; one large hall and the librarian's office. I hoped to find a lot of books seeing the size of the library from the outside, but on entering I found that the hall had only two big shelves, two tables and a dozen chairs, and most of the of book shelves were empty. I was led by the peon to the office of the librarian, Haribhai Chauhani's. Haribhai welcomed me cheerfully he seemed glad at the fact that I came with a purpose and was ready to help in every way.

He later explained that the library has opened a couple of months earlier and there were no other books apart from novels, spiritual and children books. He was a small stout man. He wore small round spectacles that hung halfway down his nose. He asked me to meet the Patel of the community if I wanted to know more about them. After a pause he said that there are two Patels in Veraval. He tried to tell me that he wished to stay neutral to avoid trouble but proceeded to wip out his phone and called Riteshbhai Fofandi who was a manager of Jagdishbhai Fofandi and got me an appointment with his. I got a sense that he did not support Jitubhai or that he was more inclined towards the industrialist group of and fixed up for me to meet Jagdishbhai.

After leaving the library, Rajubhai Fofandi a middle aged person who turned was turned out in neatly ironed clothes took me to the Kharwa Samaj Centre that was right in the centre of town surrounded by the fish market, Kharakuva, Bakala Market, Satta Bazaar and Kharwawad. The Kharwa Samaj Centre was the place we met each time. The Samaj Centre had a library, meeting halls and rooms for guests to stay. It is a lavish structure in comparison to the kharwa. I

always found a number of people sitting and chatting at the samaj. I enquired about the administration of the Kharwa samaj and he said that its main function is to solve cases of the people in the community. It operates like a government centre for the Kharwas, rules are set for how the community should act and any untoward events where rules are not followed are examined, reviewed and a verdict is provided by the leaders.

I sat with Rajubhai at the Samaj Centre and he talked about himself and his two daughters and young son.

“We do not prefer sending our daughters far from the city to study, as they come in contact with boys in class could be from a different samaj, they fall for the boys’ false promises, run away and get married to them. According to the samaj rules, if a Kharwa girl marries a boy from outside the samaj then the girl and her parents are ostracized from the samaj and cannot stay in touch with the law abiding members of the samaj. This brings disgrace to her family.” Rajubhai said.

“What about a Kharwa boy marrying a girl from different community.” I asked.

“It generally never happens and is also not allowed. If a boy wants to get married then he must provide a letter to the samaj asking for permission to marry. If the reasons are worthy he is permitted under a condition that they pay a huge amount as a fine to the samaj. The same thing is applicable if they want to marry a Kharwa girl from a different samaj. All Kharwa samaj’s do not have cultural exchanges with each other,” he said. “Everything is legalized at the samaj centre. All the cases are documented on stamped paper if required for authenticity and legal purposes. Applications for government documents like the passport, ration card, pan card and election card are given to the samaj, and are then issued from the samaj.

The children are engaged by their parents and the engagement is recorded here to make sure that they carry out the marriage as committed and the marriage certificates too are issued by the samaj. A fishing license is also procured in the same way, a letter of recognition from the samaj is provided based on which a fisherman can get his license.”

At night, the Patel of Veraval kharwa Samaj, Jitubhai Kuhada arrived at the Samaj Centre in an SUV. He was a well built young man, who wore many gold necklaces around his neck

and rings on his fingers. Everybody was alert on his arrival and stood up out of respect. Jitubhai hastened towards me as if in a hurry.. As soon as he sat, every person around came one by one and greeted him with folded hands and touched his feet. He returned a Namaste with a tight small smile.

I was formally introduced to Jitubhai by Rajubhai who said that he was telling me about the samaj.

Jitubhai then turned towards me and said, “Kharwa are Rajputs. We basically came from Rajasthan during the Somnath war. Since then we have settled at various places on the coast and are involved in fishing. The Kharwa community has different samaj’s, and together are 12 gnyati (gotra) samaj or Samasta Kharwa Samaj. The headquarters are in Porbander and the President of it is also the Patel of the Parbander Kharwa Samaj just like I am the Vice President also the Patel of Samasta Veraval Kharwa Samaj.”

I asked him about the election system for choosing the head. He said that there are 14 *daayras* (areas where groups of people lives) in Veraval who have their own *daayra* Patel and two trustees which together forms the Panchayat. The election is

held during the monsoon when everybody is free and at home. The Panchayat conducts the election for the candidate. The election method is decided by hands being raised or through chits and the candidate with highest votes is elected as the Patel of the samaj. This system has been in place for 500 years in the samaj, long before the Indian constitution was formed.

“We exist only because the samaj exists. We facilitate everything for people. We organize a lot of activities and festivals through the samaj. Around 1 lakh people come to our Dhaja festival and the samaj pays for the whole festival including the food which is free for all, these activities keep me going. We fishermen need a break from our routine to enjoy ourselves and hence keeping in mind all the events and festivals and organize them during the monsoon. We also celebrate the election. Eat, drink, work and enjoy.” he said.

In the middle of this conversation, a man and a woman entered. Rajubhai whispered to Jitubhai. Jitubhai nodded followed by an “Ok.”

After a pause he stood up and walked into a room with the couple. Everybody stood up once again with Jitubhai.

Rajubhai said that a Kharwa couple had come resolve their internal problems. The room they entered had a large table and chair. The couple sat opposite the head while others stood around the room. I assumed that they were the Panch and trustees of the daayras who would resolve their issues.



Fig. 35 The Patel of Veraval Kharva Samaj, Jitubhai Kubada, solving internal affairs of community members along with few Panchs at Kharva Samaj Centre

I waited outside and they emerged half an hour later.

“They were a married couple and had come to solve problems they were having in their relationship that needed immediate attention as they believe that even in the worst case scenarios they do not order a divorce. Kharwas do not have divorce even

in their system of rules. Once married, they must stay with each other till the end. Going to the police for any issues is just not permitted by the samaj. We do not even pass any of the complaints to police no matter how extreme the case is. They come to me and we solve their problems. Everything is resolved and registered over here.” Jitubhai said.

“Does the government recognize the certificates or documents worked by the samaj?” I asked.

“Yes, they do. The point is the samaj should recognize it first because we do not involve the government in our matters. So the question remains of no concern.”

“We do not have the support of the government.” He continued, “There are innumerable issues we have with the government, since 1998, after the BJP came to power in Gujarat, the government had stopped caring for fishermen. We have applied for material subsidies, which has been promised to us and we have not received any information on it yet. They recently gave permission to Taiwanese trawlers to fish in our waters. Now the Taiwanese boats enter our fishing territories and sweep away all the fish and the sea bed with it. They harm

their reproduction cycle. Our fishermen come back without catch most times now and we used to catch whales earlier. A single fisherman's family can survive for 2 months with the earnings from a single whale. They prohibited whale fishing in 2008. Since then we do not catch whales. We cut our nets when a whale gets trapped accidentally, thinking that we will get paid for it which the government has often promised but never fulfilled. This will bring starvation and death to fishermen. I went to the authorities and fought and said that whale fish and barrel fish are different and asked for the permission to catch barrel fish but they did not listen. Why do they not stop the agrarian community from growing something and if cannot why stop me? They sent an MLA who set a quarrel amongst our group and the Veraval Kharwa Samaj parted two ways. All samaj work must be done in unity against any odds. People try to instigate us but we fight against them, we fight as one."

After that long monologue I did not know what to say. He was truly a leader. He was hopeful and knew how to speak up for their troubles; most of the others are oblivious of the problems, and just follow their leader. They know they are safe can and have to rely on the samaj to protect them.

The next morning, I went to a chaiwala who had been serving me tea daily whom I had never had an exchange of words with but he surprised me and asked me to tell him something about myself and what I was doing in Veraval. He directed me to an interesting site.

"Go to the Muslim Machhwaras. They live at Jaleshwar beach 3 kms away. They are powerful and experts in fishing compared to the Kharwas. I have heard that they go to sea in monsoon when no one does and come back with boats filled with pomfrets." He said wide eyed.

He also asked me not to go alone and at night, as it was very dangerous according to him, said in a tone as if the Machhwaras were ogres and Jaleshwar was a haunted place from where nobody returns. Nevertheless, I was excited.

I set off for Jaleshwar in a rickshaw. I passed by the Fisheries College a few minutes later we entered a dusty dirty lane with run down houses made of stone and wood. Children, some bare bodied and others wearing tattered clothes were playing in the lane. Dogs and goats wandered around. Women wearing gowns were walking, carrying vessels on their head, possibly

water for their homes. A group of women and children sat under a make shift canopy selling vegetables in small baskets outside a house. The doors of the houses were wooden, bent and broken. The premises around the houses were fenced with fish nets. There was beach sand all around. The rickshaw dropped me at the end of the street which was also the end of the village.



Fig. 36 A lane of Jaleshwar settlement of Macbhvaras.



Fig. 37 Hasambhai's cousin, Ayubbhai at his home with his family

It was a bit difficult to walk my feet sank in the sand. There was a shed on open ground beyond the houses, a little far from this shed, a line of small boats were parked on the shore. I saw three men sitting in the shed, two of them were sitting on the ground preparing nets and one was sitting on a bunch of nets tied together. They spoke with ease and the people were diametrically opposite to the description provided to me by the chaiwala. The three men were brothers. One of them, Hasambhai, took me to the boats at the shore. We all sat down in the sand and were they offered me tea. Hasambhai's son, Shabbir, was preparing nets with his fellow fishermen on his boat close to us as they were to go fishing the next morning.

He owned three boats, all brightly coloured, in which he kept nets of different sizes.



Fig. 38 Shabbir preparing net in his boat at the beach along with fellow fishermen

The sun was sharp but it did not bother me I felt very calm sitting there. The wind from the sea was like nowhere in the Veraval jetties, I felt cool and at the same time it was a warm day. I said to Hasambhai's brother that it was lovely sitting there, he smiled and said that they love to sit around and work all day in the open and on the beach.



Fig. 39 A row of bodis docked at Jaleshwar beach

They had engines installed near the shed to haul the boats onto the shore from the sea. A few boats were in the sea, near the shore, with nets floating on the water beside the boats. At the end of the line of boats, on a cliff, was a Ramdev pir temple. Close to it was a pond that was divided by a bridge. Freshwater enters the lake during monsoon and during other seasons salt water from the sea accumulates in the pond. Hasambhai said that they survive on fish from the pond when they cannot go to sea.



Fig. 40 The temple of Ramdev Pir at Jaleshwar

Shabbir invited me to his home. He was married and had two daughters and one son. Their house was not as clean as the Kharwas. They had a bathroom but no toilet. The drainage system consisted of a furrow in the sand. Countless flies were hovering around in the verandah where we sat. The inner side of verandah had all types of fishing gear, tools, diesel barrels, kerosene bottles and two Hero Hunk bikes covered under a plastic sheet. Shabbir's wife invited me to lunch and fed me fish curry, roti and rice.



Fig. 41 Shabbir's wife using coconut skins instead of wood to create fire in the chulha for cooking

Food was served in a large plate; everybody sat around and ate from the same plate. After the meal, Shabbir gave me all the local names of the fish that they catch, while we were talking their agent arrived. Machhwaras do not sell the fish directly in the Veraval market; they have a supplier from Veraval who does the job of selling their fish. The supplier looked at me in sceptically and then talked with Shabbir in a low voice I found some words familiar and knew immediately that they were speaking Kutchi. The agent was telling Shabbir not to provide

me with much information, and that I could create trouble for him. But Shabbir was convinced that I was harmless.

Shabbir was not educated and he barely understood what I asked him. He was constantly talking about fishing. He told about the kind of fish they eat, what kind of fish they catch and the prices of fish in the market. I said that I had heard that the Machhwaras catch a lot of fish compared to the Kharwas. He confirmed, but sometimes they do not get any fish in some months, particularly the winter. Since fishing is all that they know and so keep trying. Sometimes they wander for more than 3 days towards the Pakistan border to get fish. He said that they earn a lot during a good fishing season and outside it they are in debt. Under such circumstance they borrow money from their agents.

Hasambhai came with his daughter and son-in-law, they greeted Shabbirbhai and sat beside me and I was introduced to the newcomers onto the scene. His daughter seemed very shy and sat beside her husband trying to hiding herself. His son-in-law, Javedbhai, was a friendly man with a moustache and long hair down to his neck, oiled and creased and parted from the centre. I continued my conversation with Shabbir.

“Do any of you use the Veraval jetty? Why park the boats on beach when the city has jetties to park boats.” I asked.

“They do not allow us there. Decades ago our ancestors lived in Patan, and hence our name Patni Muslims and they had gone to the Veraval jetties asking permission to work but they were not permitted. So they came here settled and started fishing out of this beach. Since then the settlement has grown and now a hundred Machhwara families live here.” Javed said with a smile. I was hoping Shabbir would reply.

“You ask him anything. He knows it all. He is the one who has studied a little. Everyone else has not even gone to school.” Javedbhai said to me.

“I used to work in a ship breaking yard as an underwater cutter; I have good experience in underwater jobs. I have even worked on a shrimp catching boat. I do not live here but come often to find work.” Javed said.

Javed was a jolly man and he tchatted quite openly with me. While we chatted tea arrived at every hour that was served in saucers. Our conversation went onto the fishing expertise of the Machhwaras.

“We also catch whales.” Hasambhai said.

“Whales!” I was surprised.

“Yes, ask Hasambhai about it. He is known here as the whale hunter. Aren’t you?” Javedbhai said looking at the Hasambhai.

“That is what some call me because I have caught 12 whales in one month.” Hasambhai said with pride.

“In these small boats?” I asked.

“Yes, with only one boat!” he said, “But I have retired now. Some like you come here under the pretext of collecting information and secretly shoot video footage of us catching whales. Catching whales is now prohibited by the government, so we have stopped. I have earned a lot of money from catching whales and built another house with that money. Fishing is handled by Shabbir now. He is doing a great job”

I was still interested in the whale story and on asking, Hasambhai, he explained the whole process. A fully grown whale is 14 mts long, longer than their boats. When they spot a whale in the sea, they drive the boat close to it and tie a metre long heavy iron hook at one end of an extremely long and

strong rope. The hook is then thrown in front of the whale’s mouth and it pierces into its mouth when the rope is pulled with force. After the whale has been grabbed by the hook, it gets injured and tries to escape; a huge block of thermocol, approximately the size of a human being is tied at a distance on the rope. The whale tries to free itself and goes deeper into the water to save itself. But the thermocol block stops it from doing so. After struggling for half an hour, it gets tired and comes up. Then we drag it to the shore behind the boat.



Fig. 42 The hook of Hasambhai with which he caught 12 whale sharks

Javed left from Shabbir's home saying that he will be back soon to take me to his home.

“Is there any leader of the settlement like the Patel of the Kharwas?” I asked Hasambhai.

“Yes, my eldest son Gaffur is the head of the Machhwaras.”

“How are they selected?”

“A small group selects the head just like that, without any election. They come to believe together that the person is a leader and he becomes one in their eyes.”

“Actually, there is not much unity among the Machhwaras.” He said with displeasure, “We are split into different groups. There is jealousy; there is always dispute among those who earns more and less, those who work hard and those who do not. Some pay their electricity bills and some steal power and use it for free. The other groups are involved in illegal work and so we stay away from them. We work harder than those groups. In our group, nobody fights with each other while others do.”

They almost have the same issues as the Kharwas. They are too are worried about the damage that the Taiwanese trawlers could cause in their fishing areas. They also face a problem of returning without a catch because the population of fish is depleting.

“The government thinks that we do not do anything, we are just burning their fuel. They do not even provide us satisfactory subsidies on fuel or safe drinking water; we often have to buy water. The Kharwas get more subsidies than us because their leaders can afford bribe the government officials. They have litres of alcohol on their boat which they consume and night. They do not see our nets in the sea and drive over. We do keep flags and lamp on the net posts to alert them of our position but often drunk nobody nobody notices. We lose our nets too.” Hasambhai said.

Javedbhai arrived and took me to his house which was a small hut made with sheets of wood. The door was very low and I had to bend to enter. A wooden pillar stood on the centre of the room as a support for the wooden roof. The floor was made of uneven cement coating and the walls were full of fishing equipments hung at different levels.

“Why do you live here and not Veraval?” I asked Javed.

“We do not have any kin in Veraval who can support us; here we have the support of our relatives. Working over there means we have to follow what the Kharwas tell us to do, while here we have our autonomy. The Muslims in veraval are different from us professionally so we do not have any other relationship with them except for occasional business transactions. In Jaleshwar people are unaware even about a fishing license and what the perimeter is in the Indian waters for fishing. Young boys are prepared to work on the boat as Khalasi's. The Machhwaras give birth is high parent's hope that their children will work for them and help in bettering the economy.” Javed said.

I asked him if he they know anything about the Fisheries College which is just a short distance away from Jaleshwar.

“Jaleshwar is our only world. We know nothing outside it. So we do not know about Fisheries College. We do not make any efforts to get any facilities. If the facilities come to us then we accept it. We have little or no knowledge of any system except fishing. We are brave and smart enough to set off in the

monsoon, thrive in the high waves and thunder, and come back with boats full of catch. Even the Kharwas come to buy fish from us, especially in the monsoon. Just think how much we can achieve if we can atleast get a primary education.”

I left Veraval the next day after an insightful experience.

v) Literature Survey

Prof. James R. McGoodwin (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Colorado) in his paper “Understanding the cultures of fishing communities: a key to fisheries management and food security” [FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 401., Rome, FAO. 2001. 287p.] discusses the cultural characteristics of small scale fishing communities. He defines their characteristics as small scale capital commitments, levels of fish production by them and political power along with their vulnerability to external threats. He comments that the fishing communities dispersed on the coastline are mainly depended on marine ecosystems which make them vulnerable to resource depletions. The natures of the ecosystems are the determining factors of their cultural characteristics that include socio-economic organizations and fishing techniques. He states that the fishing occupations that the fishermen pursue are the

subset of the community's culture. The fishermen develop a detailed and functionally-oriented knowledge of the species of the catch they target and their expertise in fishing by themselves. In most of the coastal communities, the males are the primary producers and the females play a dual role; one of handling households and children and second of fish processing, marketing and distribution. Their labour is thus systematically divided. They have a strong social agenda and the work groups are often recruited due to the social tie in the community and rather than their skill, experience or labour costs. They often stick together in the same community and do not allow other communities to fish in their spaces. They develop a management structure which is community based and different from government authority. They develop cultural adaptations to the risks and uncertainties associated with the fishing activities, like taking a conservative approach to fishing, beliefs, ritualized behaviours, taboos that are psychologically common.

Derek Stephen Johnson in his thesis "Emptying The Sea Of Wealth: Globalisation And The Gujarat Fishery, 1950 To 1999" [May 2002, Faculty of Graduate Studies :The University

of Guelph] supports the statement of Prof. James R. McGoodwin in reference to the fishermen of Gujarat that they do not take a conservative approach when the globalisation and technology is changing the scenarios of fishing process. He found in his research on Dhamlej fishermen that once Gujarat was the top producer of fish till 1990 and the fish production declined in the next decade. He states that the reason behind it is that the Gujarati fishermen fail to approach new strategies for fishing. He has done a deep research on Dhamlej fishing communities which include their kinship, social life, religion, work division and employment, fishing process and techniques, species, geographical situation and factors related to it, history, migration and their social structure.

The article "Gathering Storm" by Ayesha Khan, for Fountain Ink magazine [May 2012, Vol 1, Issue 7], speaks of the same thing stated by Prof. James R. McGoodwin about the fishermen and their insisting rights on the spaces around them where they live and fish. The article covers the industrial projects of Gujarat government and how they affect the homes and occupation of fishermen and farmers living on the coastal areas. It explains that how the fishermen dispersed on the

coastline unite to fight for their survival and how they are constantly overlooked by the government. This alliance for the strike against the indifference and arrogance of the government has cut across all the boundaries of religion, caste and communities. They fight for rights and belief even if they have to cut down their livelihood.

Nalini Nayak, in her article “Books or Motors?” [Artisanal fishery, SAMUDRA Report Issue No. 27. December 2000], makes a comprehending statement to what the article of Ayesha Khan states. Nalini Nayak has worked on the Muslim Machhwara community of Jaleswar which are in minority as compared to the Kharwa who are in majority if the fishermen population of Gujarat is considered. She writes that in 1940s the Muslim Machhwaras who live in Patan as cast net fishermen decided to settle in Veraval to have access to the market. But, being Muslims, they were not allowed access to the Veraval jetty and so they settled illegally at the western end of Veraval at Jaleswar beach. The statement of insisting spaces by Prof. James R. McGoodwin applies to the Kharwas here. But Ayesha Khan brings a contrasting account that they do unite disregarding their differences when it is the matter of

their survival. Nalini Nayak also stated the Machhwaras as the one who started artisanal fishing and describes about the negligible transformation in their conditions over the past three decades. She argues about utilization of economy by them and the factors affecting them.

D. B. S. Sehara, K. K. P. Panikkar and J. P. Karbhari gives a detailed understanding of the arguments of Nalini Nayak in “Socio-Economic Aspects Of The Monsoon Fisheries Of The West Coast Of India” [*Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Coc Bull. Cent. Mar. Fish. Res. Inst.*, 1992, 45 : 242 – 250]. They give reasons behind the monsoon fishing and seasonal factor affecting their fish production. They argue about the poor economic situation in fishing villages and risk taking attitudes that leads to it.

“An appraisal of marine fisheries in Gujarat” [Special Publication number 38, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, September 16-18, 1987] by K. Balan, P. Sivaraman, K. P. George and M. Ramachandran, provided the information of Marine fishermen population of Gujarat, their crafts, gears and fishing techniques.

Prior to field work the document “Of Fishers and Farmers: Ethnicity and Resource Use in Coastal Palawan” [Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society, Vol. 31, No. 3, Special Issue: Rural Environmental Issues in the Central Visayas and Palawan (September 2003), pp.207-225] by James F. Eder was reviewed to understand the aspects of cultural research and data gathering. The document tells about how the social organization, food, language, socio-economic activities and interaction among each other changes according to the geographical situations of one island. The communities living in different regions of Palawan have complex relation to each other and with the communities of neighbouring island. The document lacks in covering all the aspects of a culture.

Before starting the work on product five graphic novel and their novelist were analysed and reviewed

- Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind by Hayao Miyazaki
- V for Vendetta by Alan Moore
- Watchmen by Alan Moore

- A Contract with God and Other Tenement Stories by Will Eisner
- Amar Chitra Katha

The collective analysis of the books is that the authors have written the stories based on what they have experience themselves in their lives or what they have observed around them. The experience and observation has formed an idea of human values which they have attempted to show through their stories. They have created scenarios based on the facts from the time and space they have live in. They have effectively introduced an idea of the society and culture of the region by visual representation.

vi) Field Analysis

"It's No Fish Ye're Buying—it's Men's Lives."

- SIR WALTER SCOTT, The Antiquary, Chapter II

“Fishing is a... discipline in the equality of men - for all men are equal before fish.”

- HERBERT HOOVER, 31st U.S. President

These fishermen, no matter how diverse they are from each other, they all have a common theme among them. Just like other non coastal communities they have also formed their confined space where they live with each other. They feel protected and safe in this space. No matter from where they are, this space becomes their homeland and they feel comfortable. They adapt themselves to the ever changing environment and day to day problems. The rules, social organization, political structure, customs and traditions, profession and the interaction among each other of this coastal communities has led to their survival. They have adapted themselves at the coast. Going far away into sea to catch fish to earn their living- it is not only about their survival, it is much more than that. Taking risk at seas, even risks of their lives, bringing fish to the coast to feed the non coastal communities and what do they want in favour to it. On an individual level the sea is their platform to display their pride and strength. They want others to appreciate the expertise they have as fishermen. They want to show what it is to be a fishermen; what it is to be a human.

4) THE FINAL PRODUCT

a) Conceptualization Process

During the field work I gained knowledge about their culture. When the idea of working on their folktales was dropped, thought was put into what story to tell and how. The content of the story was important as the main aim of the project was to show culture through stories. The vast data collected from field was reanalyzed and sorted out. Some pieces from the data were joined together and they told some aspects of the culture. All the aspects were important and it was required that the medium of the product show them show them ethnographic data.

b) Why Graphic Novel

The concept of graphically storytelling started with my memory of Amar Chitra Katha and what I derived from it. They narrate Indian stories to children with a combination of images and text in order to educate children through these stories. The aesthetic appeal helps to communicate a message better.

“Drawings, moreover, can be detached from the natural conditions in which their motifs are bound; they can isolate, single out, decontextualise; they can transport their subjects into different surroundings; they can take imaginary viewpoints. This makes drawings capable of conceptual idealisation and abstraction; of visually presenting symbolical significance; of depicting reality beyond realism; of transcending.”

- ROBERT POWELL, MICHAEL OPPITZ
[Himalayan Drawings 2002:122]

In the past decade, a new wave of Graphic Novels has been populated the Indian book markets shaking and emerged as a new art form. While the medium has been used to tell Indian mythological stories, fables, tales and Indian superhero stories, a recent development in the format has brought allowed areas slike politics, sex and other social issues to be visualized.

An additional thought in this vein of development was that an ethnographic documentation can be done graphically. Superheroes and mythologies have of course remained popular in comics and Graphic Novels but the medium can be

explored to document stories based on facts. Graphic Novels have emerged as a medium in its own right.

A pictorial representation ensures a comprehensive coverage of the context. Events and objects can be presented showing their cultural significance and developed to represent meaning implicitly. Hence, due to its aesthetic and representational power the Graphic Novel was selected as a medium to present the story.

c) Narratives

i) Iterations

Iteration 1

It is a story about a traveller who travels to the land of fishermen and experiences a transition in him as the fishing community unite themselves to survive against a fierce sea dragon. I have created an imaginary scenario of Gujarat and coastal communities. The story lacked the factual events and details and it looked totally fictional. The sea monster, a mythological character, doesn't suit well as an issue of Taiwanese boats I wanted it to represent. The role of the

characters, the imaginary world and the values were not justified.

Iteration 2

It is a story of a group of fish who adapts to the dangers in the sea and survives. I came upon this story with a basic idea of what if the fish that are caught by these fishermen have the same culture under the sea as their fishermen. What if they act in the same way and face the dangers in the depths of water just like the fishermen face the dangers above the sea. The story failed to define the culture effectively and showed an odd representation of fish as human with a lot of boring and too common events.

Iteration 3

The story is about three characters; one kharwa, one Machhwara and one traveller, who goes on an adventurous fishing trip for finding clusters of fish and bring back the catch, when they face difficult situations along their trip. This story

was more inclined towards the facts but it missed a great turning point and excitement in the flow. A little section of the story has drama and makes it uninteresting to read. It also failed to describe the actions of the community in response to difficult situations like storm.

ii) Final Narrative

The Story – “Fishing in common waters”

The Veraval fish market opens up early in the morning. The *Kharwa* women settle across the market to sell fish. Local people walk around the market buying fish. *Chhakdas* travel back and forth transporting fish from the jetty to the fish market. Boats that return from fishing trips dock at the Veraval harbour. Buyers and other fishermen wait at the warehouse for the haul to be brought in by various fishermen. As soon as the boats are docked at the jetty, the fishermen at the warehouse help the crew unload the fish into containers from the boat and move it into the warehouse at the jetty. Most of the fish is auctioned at the house; buyers check, weigh and make a bid for

the fish. The unsold fish is loaded into *chhakdas* and sent to the fertilizers and poultry industries.

The *kbhalasis* are the ones who tend to the boats of the *kharwas*. Once the fish is unloaded at the jetty the *kbhalasis* prepare for the next trip. They clean the deck, plunge into the water and apply fish oil on the hull and tie up all loose ends.

The captain of a boat prepares for his last fishing expedition for the season. He checks the systems in the cabin while the *kbhalasis* load food, water and wood from a *chhakda* into the boat. Some boats are all set for a fishing trip and are seen leaving the jetty; some of them are waiting for their supply of diesel that has not arrived at the harbour. The crew of the boats anxiously ask each other if they have any news of the fuel supply. They believe that some mishap must have occurred that has delayed the fuel supplier, not a good beginning for their trip.

After a long wait the extra diesel drums arrive at the Veraval harbour in a truck. The fishermen leap out of their boats onto the harbour, rush towards the truck and pick up their share of drums that are unloaded from the truck. The drums are loaded

and they are now ready for their journey. The flags unfurl, the engines start and the boats leave. Several boats leave the harbour together in a formation. Not so far from the Veraval harbour, the *Machbwaras* from Jaleshwar watch the *Kharwa* fleet go into the sea from their boats. They are at the sea; and not very far from the shore and they spread their nets into the water.

Few decades ago, the ancestors of these *Machbwaras* were settled at Patan, the east coast of Veraval . They used to work as labourers in small scale industries and some of them were fishing on the shore to feed their families. They planned to work as *kbhalasis* at the Veraval jetties as the payment there was more than working in Patan. A group of *Machbwaras* approached the *Kharwas* at Veraval jetties. Thinking that these Muslims will take over the fishing business and their jetties, the *Kharwas* didn't allow them permission. Outraged due to this event, the Muslims migrated to the West Coast of Veraval at Jaleshwar beach with their families. They bought boats and started fishing independently at the shores. Since then, the settlement grew and so their fishing; they went further into sea. Day and night they wander in the sea and bring back catch to

Jaleshwar to feed their families. In monsoon, when the *Kharwas* restrict themselves at the shore, these *Machbwaras* go to sea and bring back fish which are bought and consumed by the *Kharwas*. Yet they never complied with the *Kharwas* again in their fishing business. No *Machbwaras* deal the fish directly at the Veraval market or use their jetties for fishing. The *Kharwas* keep labourers from other coastal regions to work in their boats as *khalasis* while the *Machbwaras* go for fishing with only their kin.

Engines erected on a cement structure at a distance from the shore are used to help them draw their boats in from the water. Unlike the *Kharwas*, they do not have a harbour and they dock their boats on the shore. Just beside the engines, on the shore, is a shed that had been constructed from where they trade. Buyers come to the village throughout the fishing season; and have been coming year after year. Buyers from the *Kharwa* community and Muslim fish traders from Veraval come to buy fish from the *Machbwaras*. These traders subsequently sell the fish at the Veraval market.

It is late in the morning and the Jaleshwar beach is busy. The boats that have returned after days of fishing at sea are being pulled ashore by the engines using metal lines while other boats

prepare to leave. Some *Machbwaras* sit around the boats mending their nets and drinking small quantities of tea in saucers. The *Machbwaras* who have returned from fishing carry the fish containers to the shed; the fish are removed from the ice and sorted. The buyers wait at the shed to see the fish and make a deal with the *Machbwaras*. Few *chhakdas* wait near the shed ready to load the fish and take it to the Veraval market.

There are a couple of buyers standing at the corner of the shed, waiting for a *Machbwaras* to bring fish.

First buyer to second: “Such a filthy place is this!”

Second to first: “Yes. They are uncivilised Muslim people.”

First to second: “I would have never come to this place if they didn’t have this attitude in them.”

Second to first: “They think they are good fishermen than the *Kharwas*. They don’t know how much skilful and brave *Kharwa* fishermen are.”

A little girl runs down to the shed with a plastic canister full of water and a metal glass. She approaches the buyers, fills the glass with water from canister and offers them.

Girl: “Water?”

The buyers make disgusting faces.

First buyer to the girl: “I don’t want your water. Where is your *abba*?”

Girl: “He must be here in a while. *Ammi* requests you to make yourself comfortable at our home till he arrives.”

First buyer: “No. Tell your *Ammi* to send your *Abba* to us immediately. We cannot bear this place any longer.”

The little girl didn’t like their tone. She turns back quietly and runs to her home. She enters the kitchen where her mother is working and stands at the door.

Girl: “*Ammi*.”

Mother: “Didn’t you bring them along?”

Girl: “They don’t want to come. They said to tell you to send *Abba* to them.”

Mother: “Go to the lane, your *Abba* must be there with his brother. Tell him that the buyers are waiting for him at the

shed and they are getting late. I am going to fetch the drinking water.”

Her mother picks up two buckets and carries outside the home. The little girl rushes out before her mother.

The homes of the *Machhwaras* lie beyond the beach. A lane passes through the settlement; the children have turned the lane into their playground. All the children from the village come to this lane and play in groups or alone. Women stand in the lane beside their meandering line of buckets chatting and laughing amongst themselves and are sometimes seen sorting out quarrels between children. A water tanker arrives and children run behind it trying to drink water from the pipe that trickles. Women pick up their buckets and rush toward the water tanker. The deceptive discipline of the line breaks down and desperation leads to utter confusion with each one trying to fill their containers first. They crowd around and push each other trying to fill up drinking water in their pots, as the tanker comes in only once every two days. Mothers scream out to their children for help..... but busy as they are in playing pay no heed!

The little girl walks through the group of children playing in the lane near the crowd of women. She spots her father under a small shed in the lane with four *Machbwaras*: his father, brother and two uncles. They are preparing the nets, cleaning the motors and calculating the number of fish they have caught while talking about their next trip at sea. They are planning to leave early morning the next day and then take a route far in the sea to catch more fish. The little girl approaches and interrupts them by informing her father about the buyer. His father drops the net, picks up the fish container and follows her daughter to the beach.

First buyer to the *Machbwaras*: “You are late!”

Machbwaras: “We have to go little far in the sea to catch fish. There are very less fish left near the shore.”

First buyer checking the fish: “And still you managed to get such low quality of fish. I will pay you half for it.”

Machbwaras: “This is not fair. We went far, than our boats can go, to catch this fish.”

First buyer: “You know that no other buyer is going to come to you till your fish gets spoiled.”

Machbwaras: “Okay, deal. But the next time I won’t let it go like this. I’ll be bringing good quality and quantity of fish and will want a fair payment for it.”

First buyer: “Well, go for it.”

The fish container is put into the *chbakda*. The buyers pay the *Machbwaras* and leaves with the *chbakda* to Veraval fish market. The *Machbwaras* stands at the shed, holding the money and sad at the event. He holds his daughter’s hand and moves towards his home with her.

The next day the five *Machbwaras* leave from Jaleshwar for fishing. There are three brothers on one boat and two sons of the older brother in the second boat. The sea is calm and the sky clear. They have gone far from the coast of Jaleshwar. The older *Machbwaras* dips his hands in the water and check for sea plants. He take uproot some of them and grabs it out of the water.

Elder Machbwaras: “Algaes...Stop the boats! We fish here.”

The boat stops having reached their spot. The fishermen cast their net into the sea; it spreads out on the surface of the water. The wooden stick with a float ball, attached at one end of the net, drifts far from the boat. The other end of the net is tied to the boat with an extended rope.

It is mid day and two men start setting up the temporary kitchen in their boat. They begin their preparations for their meal of fish and rice. They take out a fish from the ice container, clean it in a sparingly small quantity of fresh drinking water they have carried with them and then cut the fish into pieces. They heat oil in a pan and add spices in it. When the spices are well fried they all gather around to eat it with plain boiled rice and raw onions.

After their meal, they wash the dishes in sea water and proceed to check the net. When the net coils around, the *Machbwaras* draw the net, slowly pulling it into the boat. Some fish are trapped in the net while some bounce out of the net and back into the sea. They take the small quantity of fish that is trapped in the net and put them into a bucket. All the fish is taken out of the net but it only adds up to less than a bucket full.

First Machbwaras to Second Machbwaras: “Have you laid the net properly?”

Second Machbwaras to First Machbwaras: “Yes abba.”

Third Machbwaras to First Machbwaras: “Don’t blame him. These areas are scarce in fish; the trawlers have emptied the sea.”

Disappointed and amidst an animated discussion of the poor catch the motor kicks in and they drive their boats further into the sea.

The crew on the *Kharva* boat is excited about being where they belong. Some of them prepare a net at the rear end of the boat while talking about their previous fishing trips. The others dance to music that emanate from their phones. They pass by some small *Kharva* boats which are fishing near the shore. They shout and wave their hands to greet them.

Khalasi: “Hariya...What did you get this time?”

Hariya on the small boat lifts up a big fish: “A boatful of Pameras.”

Khalasi: “Got lucky eh. I want a meal of it when I return.”

Hariya: “Sure. Good luck to you.”

The captain steers the boat and constantly monitors the GPS for their position and fish finder screen to locate an area with good amount of fish. When many dots start blinking on the fish finder screen, he stops the boat and signals to the crew.

Captain: "Let's start."

The crew moves towards the rear end of the boat to lay out the net in the water. A couple of them uncoil metal lines from two drums attached on the deck, extend it and lock it down on two wooden boards that are on either side of the boat; the others tie float ball on the net. When the net is ready they hook it up with the metal lines and let it slowly glide into the sea till the wooden board falls with a thud into the water.

Khalasi knocking the cabin's window: "The net is laid."

The captain starts the boat and the net swells out behind the boat. Few crew members wait on the deck, while others stand on top of the cabin to keep an eye on the net. There are mattresses, bed sheets, blankets and plastic sheets packed and loaded on the top of the cabin. The captain keeps a check on the time and after three hours he stops the boat again. They gather at the rear end of the boat, ready to haul the net. As they

pull the net they give their opinions about which fish might be trapped. Sea gulls fly around swooping down in an attempt to try and catch a fish and sometimes get lucky. The catch from the net is spread on the deck. Junk like cans, plastic bottles, footwear, wrappers etc have been trapped along with the catch; they remove it and throw it in a bin. After the removal of junk items, the amount of fish they get is poor and not what they were hoping for.

Khalasi: Again less fish and more junk in it. Makes us do extra labour and cuts our earnings in every effort.

Senior Kharwa: Agreed. Sea is our lord. It runs our livelihood. Polluting sea affects the fish and in turn affects our livelihood.

Khalasi: Once I found a piece of plastic from the belly of the fish when I cut it open. How can humans be so wicked?

Senior Kharwa: They will understand when they suffer.

They sort out the fish and put in different baskets. Two fishermen hook the basket with a rod and lower it in the opening on the upper deck that leads down to the lower deck. There are stairs at the opening where on which third fisherman

stands to grab the basket. He keeps passing the basket to the fourth fisherman, down in the cold storage room, telling the number of compartment where the fish are to be stored. The line of fishermen following the fourth one, stands near different compartments and the baskets are passed to them according to their respective numbers. The compartments are 3 foot wide and 6 foot tall and are covered with wooden boards in two partitions. The fishermen open the top wooden board and spread the fish in it. After all the fish are stored in the compartments according to their qualities, they spread ice over it and mix it with fish. The wooden boards are closed and all the fishermen climb to the upper deck to prepare for their next catch. The captain connects to other *kharva* fishing boats fishing in the area through his wireless and informs them of their whereabouts and their catch and enquires about the fishing conditions at their locations. Analyzing the received information, he drives the boat keeping a check on the depth of sea and signals of fish on the fish finder screen. As they search for a good fishing area in the sea, the crew exchange notes about their fishing trip with fishermen in other boats that pass by. The fishermen are returning give the outgoing boats their extra supplies as they head back to the shore; they stop

the boats near to each other, put a wooden board between the boats on the railings and slide over the drums of diesel and water onto the outgoing boat.

The *khalasis* sit on the deck playing cards. They have to spend their time till the boat reaches a good fishing location. One khalasi is standing on the cabin looking out at sea. He sees huge steel boat fishing far away in the sea.

He points at the steel boat and shouts to the khalasis playing cards: "Look over there."

The *khalasis* lift their eyes from their cards and turn towards the steel boat.

First Khalasi: "These Taiwanese boats...they sweep the sea bed with their big nets."

Second Khalasi: "They come till our shore for fishing and catch all the fish."

First Khalasi: "Yeab...that is the reason we don't get a good amount of fish in the areas near the shore."

Second Khalasi: "And then we have to go far into the sea...where it is deep and dangerous."

Third Khalasi: "Now don't you two try to divert from the game. As such I am winning."

First Khalasi: "Is it so? Let us check it out?"

They get back to their game. The depth graph in the fish finder screen is going higher. The boat now goes alone and no other boats are seen around in the sea.

The *Machhwaras* are not glad about their last catch and they still wander about in far sea searching for good fishing area. They drive slowly, stretching out of the boat and catching flying fish with their small landing nets, when they heard a long high pitched cry. They throw their landing nets in the boat and hurry in the direction of the sound. On reaching further they spot a huge fish diving in and out at a distance in the sea. At one moment the fish jumps out of the water showing its long and enormous body.

First Machhwaras: "It's a Magra. A huge one! Prepare the hooks...we are taking it down."

They take a thick rope and tie its one end to a hook and the other end with a huge thick piece of thermocol and floats, which are again tied to the two boats using one long rope.

They reach near the whale shark (*magra*) and steer the boat beside it driving it in front of its nose. They maintain a distance of their boats with the whale as one smash of the gigantic fish's tail can break their boats and drown them. The creature's mouth is wide open and it swallows everything in the sea that comes in its path as it swims. It doesn't attacks the boats and keeps on its serene activity. Its huge tail splash water on the *Machhwaras* and alters the waves behind it as it swims.

First Machhwaras: "We catch this mighty Magra now and feed our family for months."

One *Machhwaras* pulls the hook back and throws it in the air with all his strength. The hook falls a distance away in the path of the whale. They pull the hook back as soon as the whale passes under it but the rope shows no tension and they know they have failed to hook the fish. They try again and throw it back in the water. This time the hook falls just before the whale and gets stuck in its mouth. They feel the tension in the

rope as they pull it and they immediately let the rope go with the whale. The thermocol piece dashes in the water. The whale tries to swim vertically down in the water but the thermocol doesn't allow and it has to come up again making another attempt to swim down. If the thermocol was not there, the whale has the strength to submerge both the boats and take them down in the depths of the sea with it. After many unsuccessful attempts, it starts swimming horizontal just below the surface of the water and tows the boats far in the sea.

First Machhwara: "Abba, What shall we do?"

Second Machhwara: "Nothing. It will get tired after sometime and when it does, it will be us who will take it back to the shore."

They drive the boats after the whale so that the tension in the rope stay released and avoid the uncontrollable drag. The whale is not seen from the boat, only its fins and the thermocol block are visible sometimes and they keep following them.

Dense, dark clouds begin to cover the sky, lightning strikes intermittently and it starts drizzling. As the drizzle turns into

rain the *Kharwa* boats at sea begin their journey back to the harbour, except one boat. It has gone far into the sea. The crew continues to fish while the captain keeps a check on the waves and wind. The net is already laid. Rain water accumulates on the upper deck and it gets poured in the sea through holes in the railings. As it turned dark, the bulbs are lit up on the boat. Few *kehalasi* wait in the cabin, while others sit on the cabin, covering them with plastic sheet, to keep a check on the net.

The boat is beginning to rock as the tranquil waters produce larger waves. The smooth movement of the flag turns into a rapid flutter. The *kehalasis* on the cabin are unable to hold the plastic sheet properly and it flies away in the wind. They stretch themselves and try to seize it but they were unable to. They turn to watch the net after the plastic sheet disappeared. The net moves up and down with the waves, the floats fly and cross each other; the net gets overlapped. The weather is beginning to change. There are signs of urgency in the fishermen's activity. Few *kehalasis* rush toward the net to haul it before it gets damaged.

Senior Kharva to the khalasis who rushed: "Watch your step while moving."

The deck has become slippery; the *khalasis* lose their balance and slips on the deck. They fall and slide on the deck till they get stopped by the railing walls. Seeing this, other crew members walk on the deck clinging tightly onto the railings and help them get up. As soon as they get up, they start hauling the net. It is very difficult to pull the net out of such moving waters and they tried hard. The others assemble together all the supplies on the deck and quickly take them into the cabin. The captain does not pay attention to the movements of the crew; his concentration is entirely on steering the boat and the GPS.

The sudden outburst of the rain, the strong gusts of wind and the choppy waves bring in a sense of anxiety among the crew members. At a distance the boats of the *Machbwaras* drift behind the whale, the fishermen are completely drenched in the rain and their boat is being tossed around. The heavy downpour of water has accumulated in the boat. With a quick rhythmic movement and gasping they try to empty the water from the boats with buckets.

The wind blowing from front decreases their speed. The tension increases in the rope hooked to the whale. The hook gets deeper in the flesh of whale and it cries in pain. It jumps out of the water and with a forceful movement it falls in the water loosening the knot of the rope tied at the nose of one of the boats. The tension releases and the rope slings in the air and slipping out of the thermocol. The *Machbwaras* instantly stretch themselves to catch the rope but their catch had been set free till then. They stand dumbfounded watching the whale as it escapes with the thermocol trailing behind it.

First Machbwaras: "It is injured and tired. It cannot go far. Let us follow it. We cannot leave this great catch."

They chase the whale as it goes far in the sea.

The unexpected rough weather several *Kharva* boats are seen returning from their fishing trip.

First Machbwaras to Second: "There is something wrong. They are returning all at once."

Second Machbwaras to First: "Oh, it is nothing. The rain must have frightened them."

As the *Kharva* boats pass by, they shout and warn the *Machbwaras* about the fast changing weather and that it is likely to get worse and that they should return. Their voices drown in the raging weather the *Machbwaras* cannot hear and can barely see someone trying to signal to them, they return with an urgency too more pressing and urgent things at hand and continue emptying the boat of the accumulated water. The sea is getting rough; the waves bigger and violent. Their boats being tossed and they heave forward with every passing wave. Very rarely they get a vision of the whale; they turn their boats towards it and keep chasing it until the whale is out of sight again. They are having hard time steering the boat. The waves bring their boats closer, make them smash with each other and deviate them. They get thrown in their boats and they manage to get back to their position by holding the railings.

First Machbwara: "Our boats cannot handle these waves."

Second Machbwara: "We have to try. There is no turning back now."

They know that a storm is approaching, but their spirits are high which let them push hard and they move forward.

The National Coast Guard at Veraval is taken aback by the sudden storm and tries desperately to alert the fishermen. The outer harbour of Veraval is being evacuated and all the boats move towards the inner side of the harbour that is fast becoming densely packed. The Coast Guard deploy their boats to find the *Kharva* boats that are still out at sea. They usher to shore all the *Kharva* boats, except one that has ventured into the hazardous stormy zone.

The *Kharva* boat, far in the sea, is now seen trying hard to turn due to bad weather. The waves surge and they appear stranded; the waves lash against the boat almost turning it over. The blankets and mattresses on the cabin slide along with the *khalasis* who were sitting over it. They spread their hands trying to find anything to hold on and with great difficulty they get one. While all the materials from the top fall in the sea, the *khalasis* keep their hold and hang in the air as the boat lean on one side. Some *khalasi* on the deck slide and hit the railing walls while some hold anything nearby with quick reaction. The boat turns back and with difficulty they manage to stabilize it only briefly before a massive wave crashes into the boat. The water sweeps one of the *khalasi*, he slips and gets thrown overboard.

The captain tries to steer the boat to get closer but the boat now is out of control, he screams out to the others in desperation to help him. They remove a tyre from the hull near the railing, tie it with a rope and throw it out, while the other crew members keep an eye on the figure in the water that seems to be visible and disappears from sight intermittently.

The crew shouts: "Catch the tyre. Catch the tyre. It is near...you can reach it."

The *khalasi* tries to swim with all his strength but the waves are strong making it difficult. After a great struggle he reaches the tyre and the crew pulls him out of the water and on board, he lies on the deck gasping. The crew gathers around him in a circle watching him and wondering if he was fine. A senior *Kharwa* breaks the circle.

Senior Kharwa: Move! Move! Let him breathe.

He checks the *khalasi* who coughs and pours out water from his mouth. The captain cannot leave the steering and he is concerned about what is going on the deck.

Captain shouts from his window: How is he?

Senior Kharwa to Captain: He is fine.

Captain to the crew: Somebody take him down in the engine room and others stay in the storage. I don't want anybody up here.

Senior Kharwa to the crew: You people go. I'll stay in the cabin with the captain.

The *khalasi* is taken down to the engine room by one crew member. The other crew members climb down in the storage and sit tight as it has become dangerous to stay on the deck. Only one senior *Kharwa* from the crew stays with the captain in the cabin to assist him. The captain finds it difficult to manoeuvre the boat; it is moving and sliding as if on a rollercoaster. He tries to contact the other boats through the wireless for help but the effort is in vain, the GPS too does not seem to function. The captain tries to figure out the direction through his compass. The boat tosses in the waves. The crew in the storage toss and roll on the passage between storage compartments with the aggressive rhythm of the waves. Unable to balance themselves they fall onto each other. The fish and ice from the compartments fall on their heads from the top opening. A sudden gale hits the boat. The mast of the

boat cracks, the staff with its flag is swept away in the wind. The engine comes to a grinding halt, the boat slows down and the lights blink and go off. The captain pushes the self start button many times. On no response of the self start he operates the manual lever with urgency and desperation.....

Captain: "Come on...why won't you start?"

Senior Kharwa: "I'll go and check the engine."

The *Kharwa* goes to the rear opening on the deck finding his way with torchlight in hand and clammers down. It is pitch dark in the engine room. He flashes the torchlight on the *khalasis*.

Khalasi: "What happened? Why did the boat stop?"

Senior Kharwa, flashing the light on the engine: "I don't know. Maybe the engine failed."

He moves the light on different parts of the engine trying to identify the problem.

First Khalasi from behind: "If Laakho was here, he would have fixed it. The lad is good with electrical stuff."

Second Khalasi from behind: "Yes. But the boat he was in must have reached the dock safely by now."

The torchlight falls on the hull and they notice a leak in it. Water gushes in. The crew nails a wooden plank but the leak will not stop. Moving across tentatively they try pressing it with a cloth. With all systems down and a raging sea, help is what they all secretly hope for.

The *Machhwaras* struggles in the sea not far from the *kharwas*. The waves smash in on them throwing them in the boat and fill their boats with water and toss the boats around. A wave in front of their boats grows larger as they try to get up in their boats and take positions. They manage to have just a glance at the wave.

Machhwara: "Hold tight....."

Before they can act, the wave crashes in on them and one of their boats, with two *Machhwaras* on it, capsizes and they are no longer visible. They struggle in the water, despite being good swimmers they face the challenge of combating the storm. The three *Machhwaras* on the other boat have fallen into their boat. They get up baffled trying to understand the situation. They

look for the other boat and moments later they get an unclear vision of the boat floating upside down.

As the two *Machbwaras* in the water emerge to the surface they can in the distance see their wrecked boat and their only hope. They try to swim towards their boat. Meanwhile the *Machbwaras* on the other boat have spotted them and one of them dives into the water to save them. He manages to reach only to the capsized boat when the other two *Machbwaras* reached near the boat. He holds the boat, extends his other hand and pulls them. They lay on the surface of the boat to breath for a moment.

The other boat have steered and reached to them. They throw one end of a rope towards the capsized boat.

Machbwaras to the three Machbwaras who lay on the capsized boat: "Tie the rope on the opposite side to us and lift on my count. Ok?"

The *Machbwaras* on the capsized boat nod in reply. They tie the rope on one side and lift the boat up on the count of the two *Machbwaras* in the boat who pulls the other end of the rope.

They manage to flip the boat and scramble onto it. In an empty boat now with all their possessions sitting on the ocean floor they are grateful to be alive. They regain their direction composure as they still have to get to the shore. Analyzing the flow of the tide and the currents they try to judge the direction they need to follow. And on the hunch they decide to move in a direction that will hopefully get them back home.

First Machbwaras: "The water current is from the right. We should move towards the left. That is where the shore must be."

Second Machbwaras: "Remove the thwarts. We have to oar the boat."

They pull up and rip off the thwarts from the boat. A wave brings in a wooden staff that hits their boat. They pick up the staff. The cloth attached to it unfurls in the wind. It is a flag from a *Kharva* boat.

The sea is getting calmer. They survey the sea for any signs of fishermen in distress and find a *Kharva* boat drifting towards them in a relatively damaged condition. The *Machbwaras* steers towards them and get closer. The *kharvas* stand on the deck with torchlights in their hands. They are relieved to see them.

Captain to Machhwaras: "Our engine is down."

Machhwaras: "Tie a rope to your boat and throw it down."

The *Kharwas* tie one end of the rope to their boat's nose and throw the other end into the *Machhwaras* boat. The *Machhwaras* hastily tie the *Kharwa* to their boats and start towing it; they thrust the boat forward with all the power the motor can give them and heave forward; while the *Machhwaras* on the other boat row vigorously with all their strength.

The *Machhwaras* were struggling to get back in their battered small boats and now having to tow the *kharwa* boat made it even more difficult. The *Machhwaras* boats soar upwards from the front as they drag the *Kharwa* boat.

The waves normalize and the rain stops. Dawn breaks in and fog has settled across the sea near Veraval, the port is hardly visible. The fishermen are at the jetty waiting anxiously for any sign of the boat. As they watch a vague shadow appears through the fog. It grows and becomes clearer as it comes near. A waving flag appears through the fog.

Fishermen standing at the jetty recognize the flag and relieved to see the flag. Two *Machhwaras* boats appear, towing the *Kharwa* boat behind them. The *Machhwaras* have saved the *Kharwas* and brought them back home safely. The *Kharwas* are disturbed by the appearance of the *Machhwaras* boats at their jetties. They realise that the *Machhwaras* have saved a *Kharwa* boat from the storm keeping their own lives into danger. Putting aside all the differences they appreciate the *Machhwaras* with applaud.

Why this story?

The story is about a *Kharwa* boat and a group of *Machhwaras*, who wander far in the sea in search of fish, get caught up in the storm and how they manage to fight the storm. The story shows the relationship between the *Kharwa* and *Machhwaras* communities. Both the communities are shown as different in their own way. *Kharwas* rely on technologies and have support of government while the *Machhwaras* do traditional fishing with less technological support and are not backed up by the government. The events in the story are made according to the facts collected from the fieldwork. With these events and

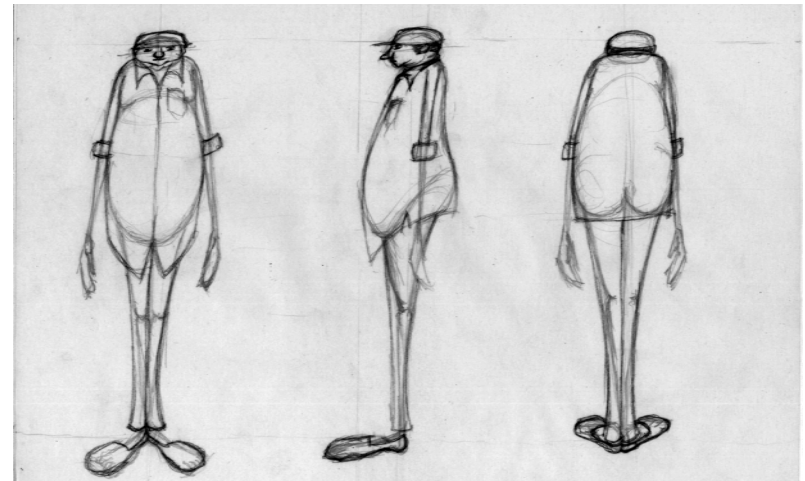
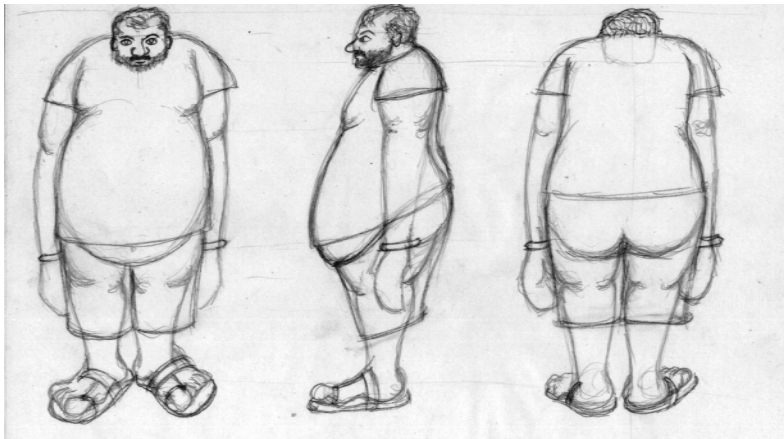
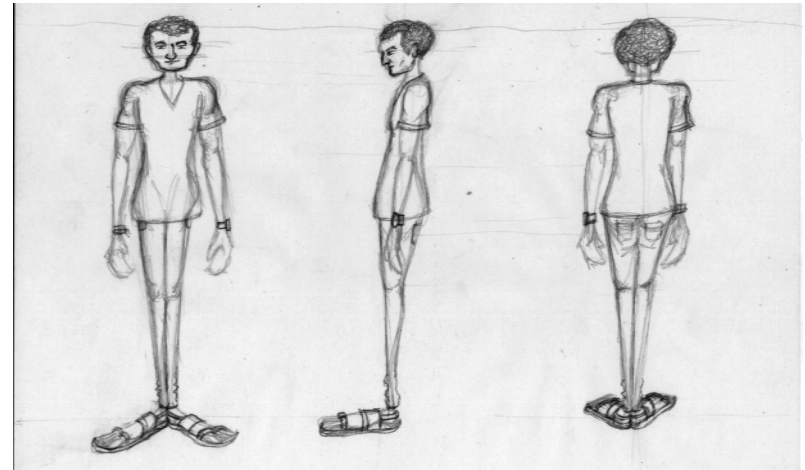
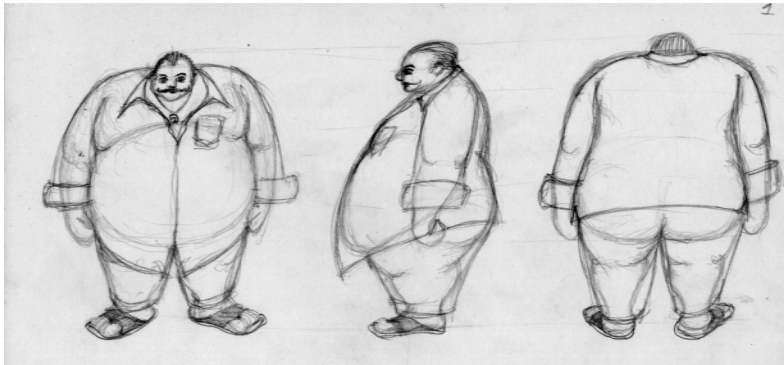
details, I have tried to define different aspects of Gujarat coastal culture like their food, fishing techniques, use of type of boats and equipments, fishing business, daily activities, their values, their fears, reaction to different situations and their issues. I have learnt that the excitement levels in the story can be maintained by bringing in drama. I made an attempt to keep these levels low in the starting of the story where the place and people are introduced and slowly taking it high at the climax of the story which is the crux of the story. This way the story turned out to be more interesting.

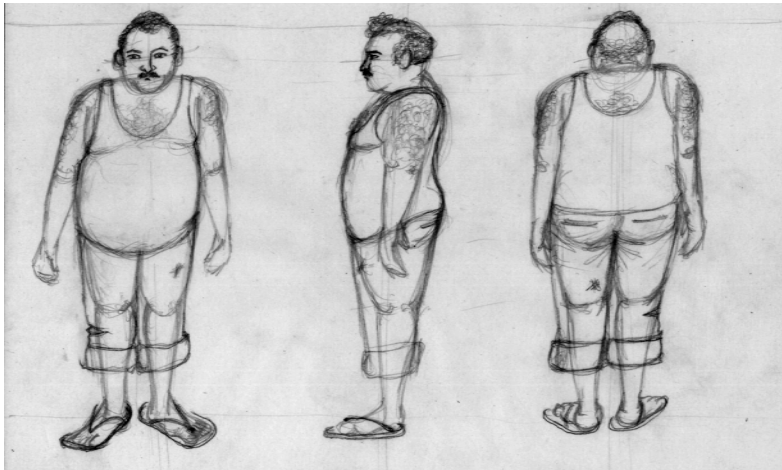
After the details were cleared, the gaps in the stories were found out and filled by adding actions, more details and events. The process here was to maintain the continuity of the story and that in the end it can be visualized. An attempt was made during filling the gaps to introduce the objects of the context properly and previously in the story so that the reader do not feel clueless about their sudden appearance. I can define the narration process just like a jigsaw puzzle where parts are joined together so perfectly that after they are all joined, they make a whole lot more sense and there are no loopholes left or remaining pieces in the puzzle.

d) Character Design

The next step after the story was designing the characters in the story. Five characters each of the Kharwas and Machhwaras were designed to fit the story. While designing the characters the most important concept applied was that the characters of both the communities should look significantly different from each other and still have characteristics that would allow them to work together as a cast of characters. The process was started by drawing the characters in rough shape and slowly building details in a step by step process and finally rendering them into fine drawings. The body language, facial features, clothing and accessories that match their personalities were drawn on a different layer. The physical structure and facial features were exaggerated to make them play their part.

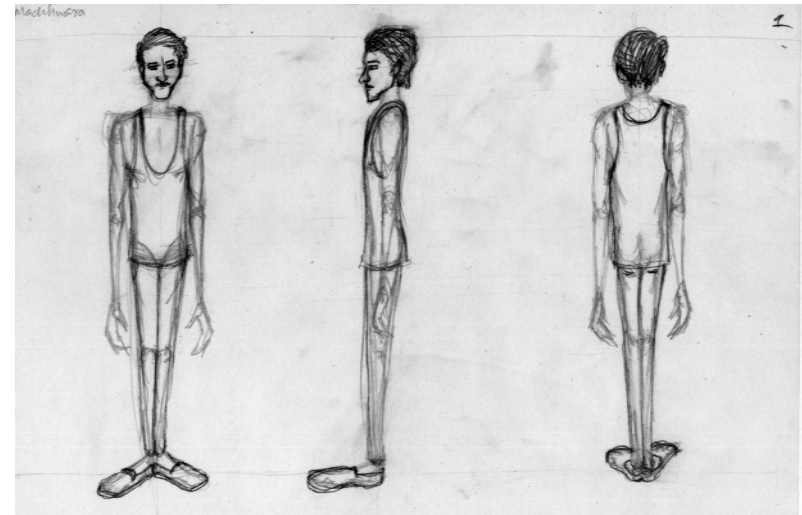
The Kharwas

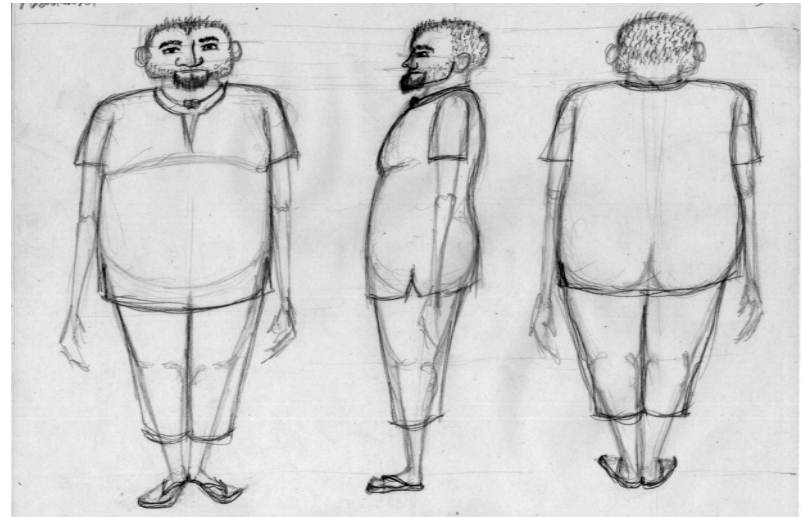
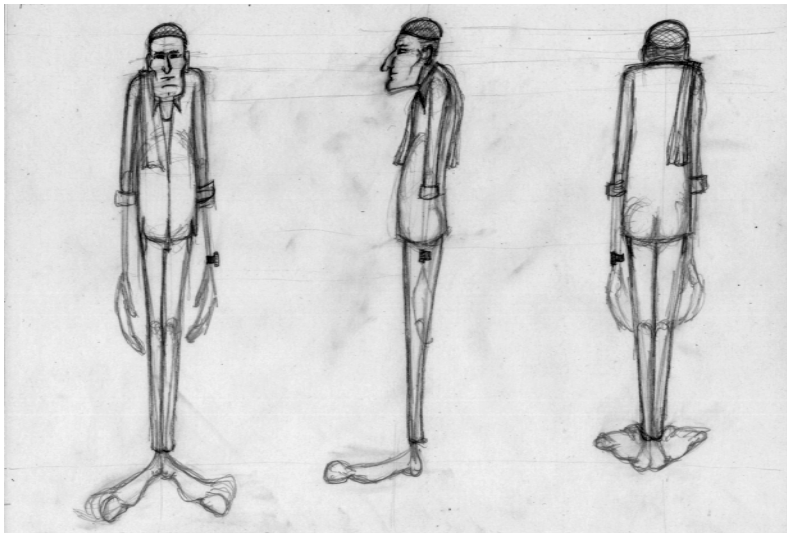
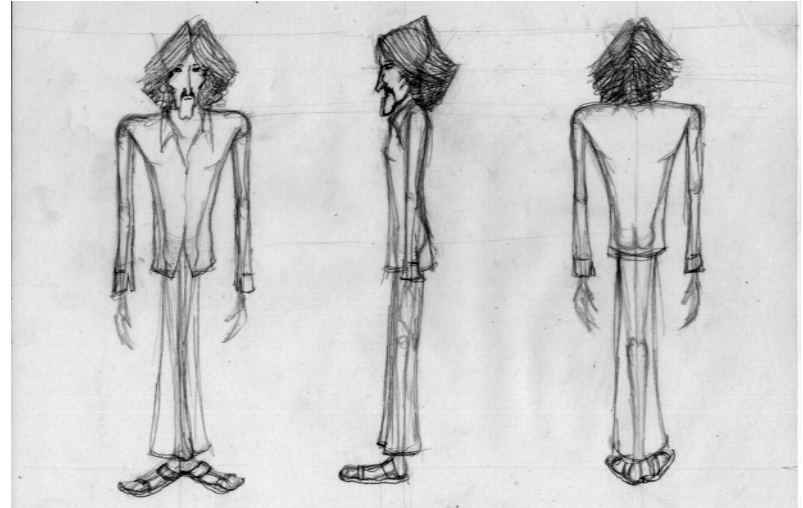
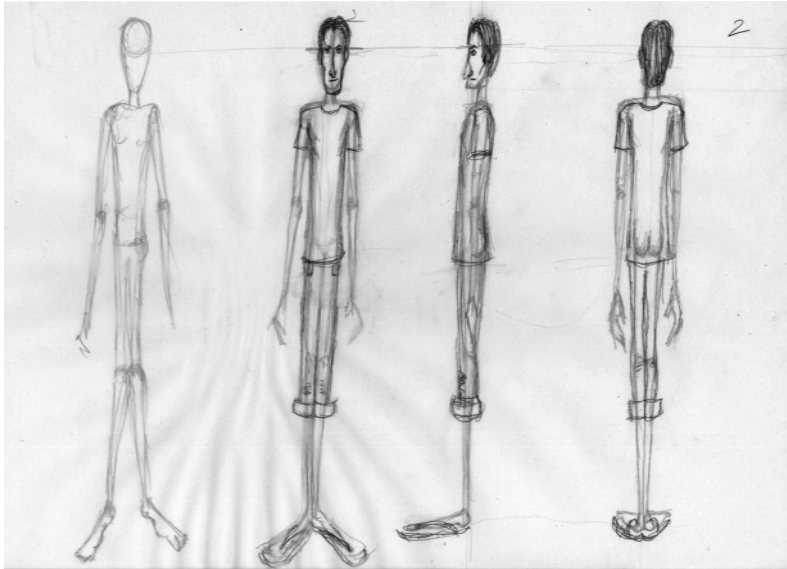




The Kharwas are a Hindu fishermen community and are mostly involved in the fishing business. The community is government assisted and they abide by its rules. They tend to stay away from dangerous situations. They fish in trawling boats that have technological support like fish finders, wireless and GPS and they can travel for upto 20 or more days in sea catching large quantities of fish with relatively less expertise and hard work. The kharwa characters are therefore depicted as fat and flabby bodied in the drawings my inspiration was derived from the people I met in the region. Their head shapes are made round or oval to establish them as a prosperous.

The Machhwaras





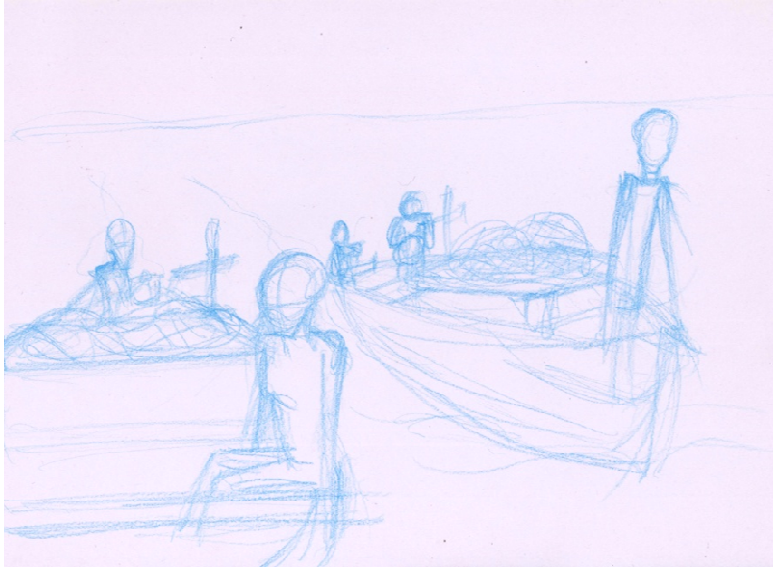
The Muslim Machhwaras are more of a rebellious community. They are braver than the Kharwas and they tend to take risks at going to sea in dangerous situations. They do not get any assistance from the government, they remain isolated and they fish in small hodis with almost no technological support and are thus more inclined to accidents during rough weather. They handle all the dangers that come their way. Their economic status is comparatively and do see economically difficult days and could often be in debt. The Machhwaras are therefore depicted as thin, lean and fragile. Their chests have been designed as muscular and their heads are in square or rectangular shape to define them as brave and valiant.

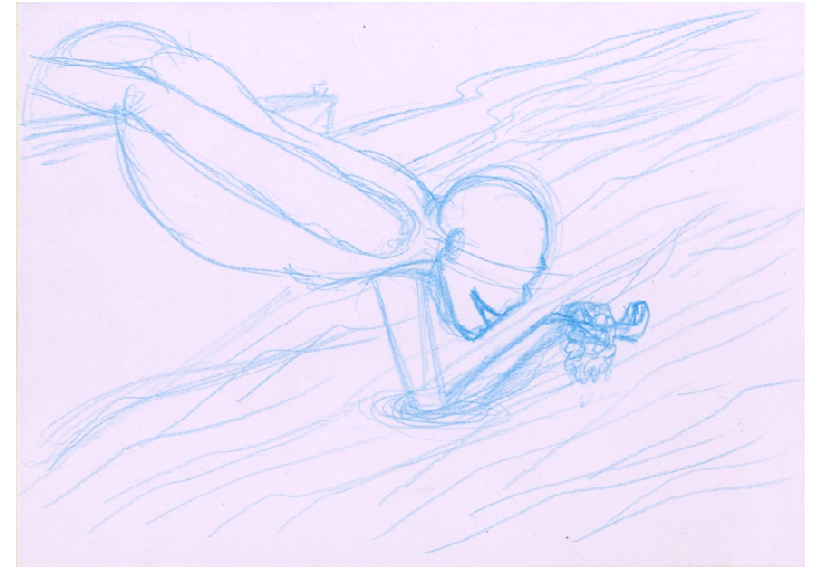
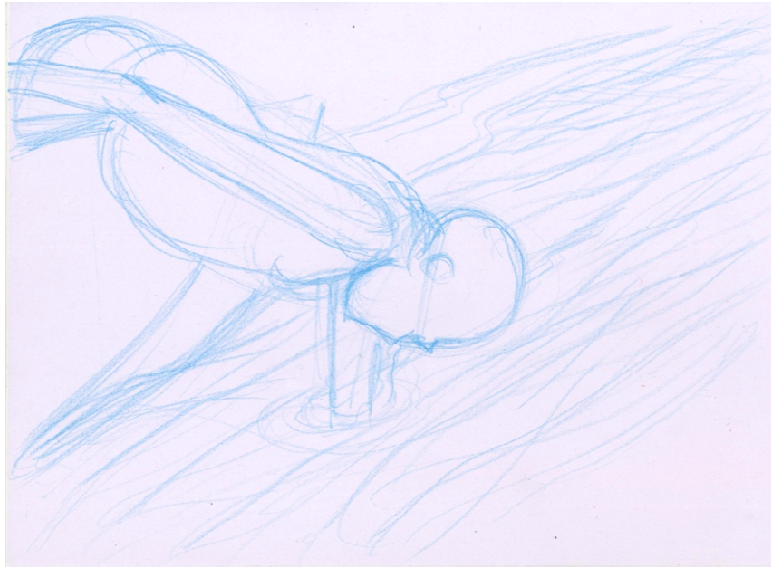
e) Visual Design

i) Visualization

Before starting the drawings on paper, the story was visualized to get a rough idea of how the story will look like and the style of the drawings. Work was done on scenes individually rather than the whole story at a time. The story was then altered during the process so as to get a clearer visualization and continuity in the drawings.

ii) Rough drawings

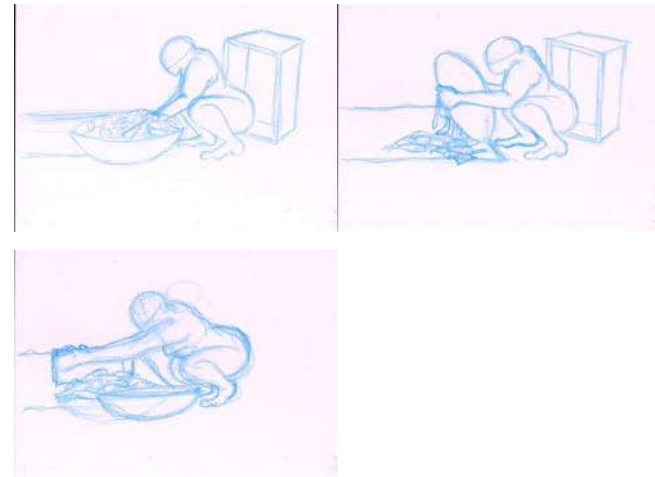
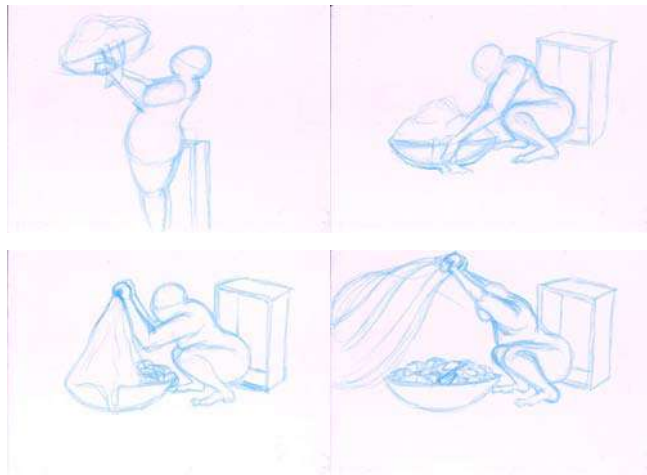




Making rough drawings on paper is the most important part of drawing illustration for a Graphic Novel because it acts as a base drawing for the final detailed drawing that forms part of a panel. While making the rough drawings body language, gestures, angles of the scenes, perspectives and elements in the frame and their positioning have been taken care of; the composition of the elements in the drawings are important.

Different shots were used during composition so as to emphasize on the scenes eg, panaroma shot to get a wide view of the sea and city, close shots to capture the expressions, mid shots for dialogues and expressions and full shots to show actions. The expressions were not shown clearly here but a rough idea was drawn. The expressions in the drawings help to catch the mood of the scenes. The drawings were analysed for continuity, modifications were made and the issues were solved by redrawing. Rough drawings were done with a non photo blue pencil the drawings appear bright while working on next step and maybe scanned without the rough work being visible.

Example of continuity:



iii) Pencilling

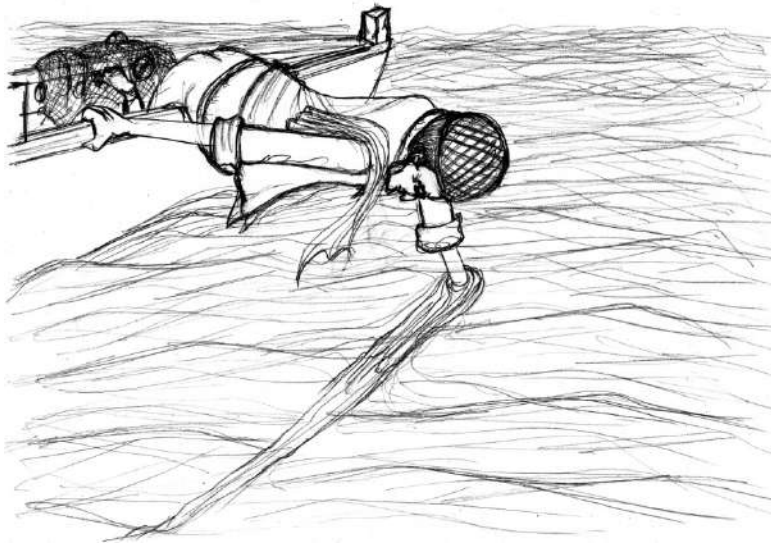




Detailed drawings were made on another sheet with a graphite pencil using the lightbox. In this process, the rough volume lines made in the rough drawings were converted into fine lines adding all the final details in the drawing for both foreground and background.

iv) Clean Ups and Filtering





The detailed drawings were scanned and passed through filters in Photoshop to give them an inked effect. Noise and unwanted lines were erased from the compositions. The pencils drawings now appear clean and free from disturbance.

v) Digital Drawing (Inking)

Filtering the image develops quite a clear idea of the frame but it cannot make a much clear final frame. For the final frame drawings were done digitally in Photoshop using a Wacom tablet. A calligraphic brush was used to vary the thickness in lines. The final drawings looked more detailed than the rough drawings.



vi) Colouring

Colouring the frames was done digitally in Photoshop. The colouring process included many steps. Plain colours were applied on the digital drawing. Effects like shadow, highlight, texture, dirt and wetness were applied to the plain colours to give a more real and lively appearance. Grains and Dark Strokes effects were applied to satisfy the fact that the boats of fishermen are dirty and deteriorated with sea trips. The light changes according the place and time of the scene which have been tried to show with varying shadows and highlights. The frames now have depth and didn't appeared flat like frames from the inking process.



from the all the edges to inside the page. The same page setup is applied reversely to the facing pages.

f) Layout

i) Page Size and Setup

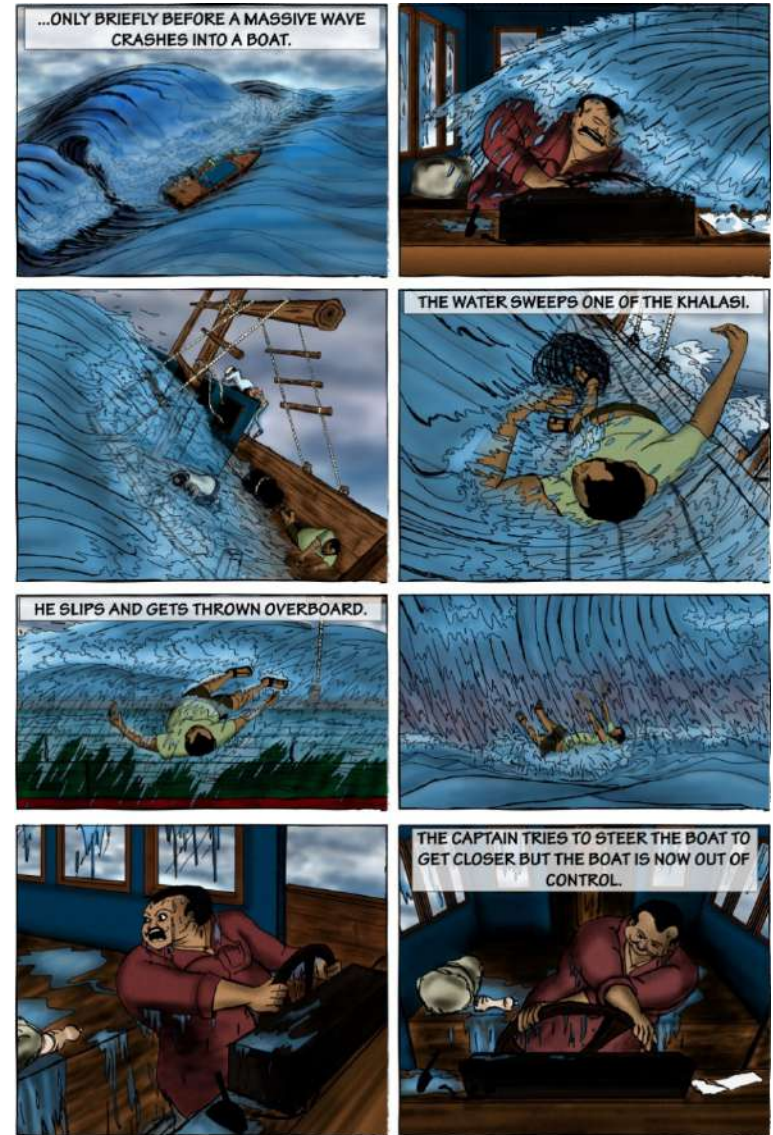
The page size of Graphic Novel is selected as 7"x10" as it is the most popular size for the format. The live area where the panels are adjusted is 6"x9.5". For setting up the page a canvas size of 7.125" x 10.25" is laid out. The bleed is kept at 0.125" on the top, bottom and one side of the outer edges. The gutter space is kept 0.375" on the binding side of the page and same bleed is kept on the same side. The safe margin is kept 0.375"

ii) Panels Structuring



The final drawings have to be put into panels. They are small four cornered boxes in the page that contain all the actions and dialogues of the scene. They are sequentially arranged either from left to right or top to bottom of the page. The panel in one page were arranged according to the flow of a single scene and an attempt was made to change the scenes on new pages. The layouts of consecutive pages enable to visually jump from one scene to another. The size of the panel in each pages bring in the dramatic effect and focus of the scene. To achieve this, less important part of a drawing was cropped while laying out them in the panels. The elements that were to be focused were only shown in the panels. A page with normal scenes have 6 to 9 panels while some have less than 6 panels or even 1. I played with the panels and its layout to get a better visual reading of the story. I have changed the shape of panels and sometimes overlaid one upon other to use the allotted space in the page effectively. A uniform gutter space is kept between the adjacent panels. The sequential arrangement and composition of the panels establish a visual continuity of the story and maintain a theme of the scene. It also records a clear movement of elements, in time and space, in absence of text.

iii) Framing



The panels are framed by lines made through digital pencil strokes. The reason for keeping pencil strokes in frames is that the frame matches with the textural and raw quality of the drawings. Almost all panels are framed to create a physical boundary for the scene.

iv) Text Boxes and Callouts

Simple white rectangular boxes are used as text boxes. The opacity is maintained so as to merge them with the drawings in the panel. Not all the boxes touch the frame, no text box runs out of the panel and no strokes are kept as its border.

Standard rounded rectangular callouts of various sizes are used for the dialogues. They are filled with white colour of reduced opacity.

Both the text boxes and callouts are positioned in a way such that the focusing elements of the scene do not get hidden behind them.

v) Typography

Tekton Pro fonts are used that have the same textural quality as the drawing. The narration and dialogue fonts are kept the same. As the frames are small, the texts have to be kept around

10 pt and its readability has been maintained by the selection of simple fonts and keeping them in capital letters so that they appear bigger.

5) CONCLUSION

First of all I would like to conclude that making a Graphic Novel is not an easy task. Many factors are to be kept in mind at every stage of the process in making a Graphic Novel. But it is interesting and fun too. I learnt many concepts of not only Graphic medium but of all other communication mediums like Videography, Photography and Narratives.

The overall research is to be done to know a culture better, which means no gaps or loose ends should be kept during field work. Through this project I got an opportunity to get a better understanding of the coastal culture and their values. Fishing is not only an occupation to the fishermen but it is a context in which they constantly strive for survival and contributes a base of their behaviour and social interaction. They are dependent on a single resource for production and they have to spend their most of the time in this production space. Their social connection with people using different production space becomes insignificant and so the Inland population of Gujarat remains unaware of the state's coastal culture. One culture can be passed to another culture through interesting ways like stories and tales rather than conventional ways. Articulating

pictures with text is an expressive joint form of representation. The project demonstrates pictorial representation of textual and verbal expressions as a powerful communicative medium.

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